

**ANTICIPATION OF MOVING AND PREPARATIONS FOR DISPOSING OF
POSSESSIONS AMONG OLDER WOMEN**

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Abstract

Data collected from a convenience sample of 250 women in Florida, age 55 and older, were used in a discriminant analysis to predict the characteristics of older women who would be likely to anticipate moving to smaller dwelling units and who would be making preparations for disposing of excess possessions. Predictor variables included housing conditions, demographics, and personal variables including personality types and feelings about possessions. Women who anticipate moving tend to have more resources and opportunity. They are more likely to be younger, married, have higher incomes, and be living in single family housing in urban areas. They have not moved to smaller housing in at least 10 years and although they are still accumulating possessions, they feel the pressure of limited resources (time, energy, mental) for caring for their possessions. Potential movers are more likely to have personality types which make them more open to new ideas and experiences, and adapt more easily to new situations. Women who have begun disposing of possessions are older and have already moved to smaller dwelling units, with no intention of moving again. They tend to have higher education levels compared with those not beginning to dispose of possessions. In addition, personality measures used in the study indicate that they are practical, sensible women.

Introduction

Most people accumulate many possessions over the course of a lifetime. With advancing age, however, people often find it necessary or desirable to move to a smaller dwelling unit, necessitating the disposal of possessions. For many, this is a threatening and difficult process (McCracken, 1987). They have come to view their possessions as their personal record of memories and experiences; therefore, losing them can be a threat to their identity (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Anecdotal evidence, such as that provided by focus groups, indicates that the process of disposing of possessions is much more traumatic for some elderly than for others. This would suggest that perhaps more personal factors, such as personality, play an important role in the effects of possession loss.

This study concentrated on women and their possessions because women are more likely to live longer and to be housed in facilities designed for the elderly (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). Women have also been found to want to keep as many of their possessions as possible when they relocate, while men tend to keep only the essentials (Howell, 1976).

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the basic premise of Lewin's (1951) theory that behavior is a function of personality and environment, $B = f(P, E)$. Myers and Myers (1985, pg. 1) theorized that "seemingly chance variation in human behavior is not due to chance; it is in fact the logical result of a few basic, observable differences in mental functioning." The relationship of the person and the environment is also supported by Kahana's (1982) person-environment congruence theory. If a person's needs and capacities change, resulting in a lack of congruence, adaptive measures must be taken to maintain well-being. Based on this theoretical framework, possession-related behavior such as anticipation of moving to a smaller

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dwelling unit and preparations for disposing of possessions, would be expected to be influenced by personality and other personal factors, and by environmental factors.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of personality and older women's feelings about their possessions on their anticipation of moving to a smaller dwelling unit and upon their preparation for disposing of possessions. Several variables were examined to identify groups of older women who would be more likely to anticipate moving to smaller dwelling units and to identify those who would be more likely to have begun disposing of some possessions.

The main objectives of the study were to determine (a) the variables that best predict the characteristics of older women who might be likely to move to smaller housing units, and (b) the variables that best predict the characteristics of older women who will be involved in making preparations for disposing of possessions. Objectives also included determining the importance of personality and feelings about possessions in anticipated moving behavior and disposal of possessions, relative to demographic and housing variables.

Knowledge regarding possession-related behavior of elderly women and the effects of personality on their behavior can help designers and housing administrators better understand the needs of their elderly clients. More sensitivity to the emotional impact of possession loss and retention could lead to more satisfactory designs for retirement housing and other housing alternatives for the elderly.

Background

The house and its contents have been equated to our sense of self. Cooper (1976) has suggested that the interior represents our self as viewed from within and revealed only to those we invite inside. The exterior is the facade we display to others. Therefore, the possessions we include in our home are expressions of our self-image. As a maker and user of objects, the human self-image may also be viewed as a reflection of the objects with which a person interacts (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Elderly people are more likely to see their possessions as extensions of themselves or as a personal record of their experiences and memories. Thus, depriving them of these objects may be equivalent to destroying their identity (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

Possession loss by elderly women may be a difficult and threatening event, and may be more difficult than the changes in social support that occur with a move (McCracken, 1987). Social supports can be replaced or may remain the same when a person moves; however, possession loss may represent a loss on continuity with life history or a change in role. For example, the older woman who has always served as hostess for family gatherings may find herself switched to the role of guest if she has to give up the large family table when she moves to a smaller home.

Difficulty of a move may be lessened by moving possessions that support memories, that are particularly useful, or that facilitate the continuance of important roles (McCracken, 1987). Attachment to objects may also be related to attachment to people. Those who have strong attachments to people tend to represent these attachments in concrete objects (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

Having cherished possessions has been significantly linked to well-being and life satisfaction among the elderly (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Sherman & Newman, 1977; Storandt and Wittels, 1975). Men and women are equally likely to show attachment to possessions. Older women, however, are more likely to cherish sentimental objects while men are more likely to identify consumer items as cherished possessions (Sherman & Newman, 1977).

By middle age, women tend to identify furniture as being cherished for its memories and relationship to people and past experiences, rather than for comfort and enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Photographs are of prime importance to the elderly, preserving the memory of relationships to family and friends. Kalymun (1986), however, has found that older women who have moved to smaller dwelling units usually retain furniture

items for their usefulness. Decorative items are retained because of their sentimental value and family attachment (Kalymun, 1986).

Whether or not people desire to move may be influenced by several variables. Speare (1974) and Baillie (1990) both found housing satisfaction to be an intervening variable between individual and dwelling variables and how these related to mobility. Indirectly, individual and household characteristics, location characteristics, and social bonds also affected the desire to move. Morris, Crull, and Winter (1976) also found housing and neighborhood satisfaction to be determinants of desire to move, as well as tenure-structure deficits. While these studies were based more on people's desire to move, the current study will focus on whether or not the participants actually anticipate moving.

Personality has been considered as a factor in marriage and mating behavior, learning styles, occupational outlook (Keirse and Bates, 1978; Myers & Myers, 1985), hazard perception (Bell & Byrne, 1978), and determinants of spatial behavior (Duke & Norwicki, 1972; Patterson & Holmes, 1966). Studies of possession-related behavior, however, have virtually ignored the effects of personality. Feelings about possessions and environment have been considered regarding self-image (Cooper, 1976; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981), life continuity (McCracken, 1987), and the association of objects with memories and attachments (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; McCracken, 1987), but not regarding feelings about the time, energy, or mental resources needed to take care of possessions. This study will fill in major gaps in the literature by analyzing the effects of both personality and feelings about possessions on behavior related to anticipation of moving and disposing of possessions.

Methodology

Data Source

The data were collected in 1990 using a convenience sample of women age 55 and older who resided in Florida at the time of data collection. Questionnaires were distributed by county home economics extension agents to older members of Extension Homemakers groups and retirement communities in 16 counties. Counties were selected from throughout the state, with 22.6% of responses from three north Florida counties, 35% from six central Florida counties, and 24.3% from seven south Florida counties. The remaining 8.6% of the respondents did not identify their county of residence, or gave a response such as "U.S.A." Each respondent was given a questionnaire and a stamped pre-addressed return envelope. Completed questionnaires were returned by 250 women. Because this was a convenience sample, no attempt was made to contact nonrespondents. An exact response rate was not available because no data were collected on women who did not volunteer to complete the questionnaire. Because of age, not all participants in the groups who were asked to volunteer were eligible for the study. The extension agents did not keep track of how many women did not volunteer or of the number who took questionnaires, but did not complete them.

Variables

Variables were selected based on the review of literature and the objectives of the study. The two dependent variables included anticipation of moving and preparation for disposing of possessions. Three types of independent variables were used: housing variables, demographic variables, and personal variables.

Dependent Variables

Anticipation of Moving. Anticipation of moving was measured by a single question, "Do you anticipate moving to a smaller dwelling?" Responses marked "never" or "haven't thought about it" were coded no, and responses marked "in the near future" (defined in the questionnaire as within the next two years) or "in the distant future" (defined as more than two years from now) were coded yes. Preliminary testing did not find significant differences between respondents who checked near or distant future.

Preparation for Disposing of Possessions. Preparation for disposing of possessions was measured by the question, "Have you made any preparations for disposing of any of your possessions in the event that you do ever move to a smaller house, retirement home,

or other dwelling unit?" If respondents answered yes to this question, they were asked to mark all responses that applied from the following list: a) have only thought about what I would do with things, b) have made lists of what to do with things, c) have marked items I want to go to certain individuals, d) have told special people about items I want them to have eventually, and e) have started giving away, selling, or throwing away objects.

Housing Variables

Six variables were created to measure the current housing environment of the respondents. These included whether respondents had already moved to a smaller home, current housing type, the adequacy of their current housing for their possessions, location of the current home, housing satisfaction, and neighborhood satisfaction.

Already Moved. The propensity to move or dispose of possessions may be affected by whether or not a person has already moved recently and the type of housing currently occupied. This variable was created from questions asking for a comparison of the size of the current home compared to the previous home. Responses were scored zero if the respondent had moved to a smaller home within the last 10 years and one if she had not moved in 10 years or if she had moved but the current home was the same size or larger than the previous home.

Current Housing Type. This variable was created to reflect the type of current dwelling unit. Responses were coded for three categories: 1) single family detached or mobile home not part of a retirement community, 2) multifamily housing unit not part of a retirement community, and 3) any type of housing unit that is part of a retirement community or facility for senior citizens.

Adequacy of Housing. The variable for adequacy of housing was based on a question assessing the size of the home in relation to possession. Respondents were asked whether they felt the size of their current home was adequate for their possessions and activities. Response categories included very inadequate, inadequate, adequate, and very adequate.

Location. For the location variable, respondents were asked where their home was located based on population. Five options were given ranging from rural area to large city.

Housing Satisfaction. For the housing satisfaction variable, the respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their current dwelling. Five options were given ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.

Neighborhood Satisfaction. Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their current neighborhood. Five options were given ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.

Demographic Variables

Several demographic variables were identified for inclusion in the analysis. Whether one lives alone or has children, and one's age, education, and income might affect whether a person would move or dispose of possessions.

Living Alone. A variable was created to determine if living alone had any separate effects on women's propensity to move or dispose of possessions. Respondents were divided into three categories, 1) those who were not married and lived alone, 2) those who were married and lived in households with two or more people, and 3) those who were not married but lived in households with at least one other person.

Children. This variable measured the number of living children. It was included because children may influence their parent's decision to move or may be the recipient of the parent's possessions.

Age. Age of the respondent was measured by asking respondents to state their current age. Age was used as a continuous variable for analysis.

Education. Education was measured by level of last year of schooling completed. Seven options were given ranging from eighth grade (or less) to graduate degree.

Income. Household income was measured on a scale with nine options. Increments of \$10,000 were used with options ranging from less than \$10,000 to \$80,000 or more.

Personal Variables

Feelings About Possessions. How respondents felt about their possessions was measured by a group of 10 statements to be marked 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) no opinion, 4) agree, or 5) strongly agree. The statements were selected to reflect respondents' feelings about adequacy of resources for caring for possessions, identifying with possession, and accumulation of possessions. The following statements were included:

- (1) I have difficulty keeping all my possessions clean.
- (2) I have difficulty finding specific objects among my things.
- (3) I wish I had fewer possessions to take care of.
- (4) I feel like my possessions own me instead of me owning them.
- (5) I would lose my sense of identity without my possessions.
- (6) I have too much "stuff" in my home.
- (7) I value my possessions because of the memories they signify.
- (8) I would feel lost without my possessions.
- (9) I am still accumulating possessions.
- (10) I try to discourage people from giving me nonconsumable objects.

A factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to group the statements into three factors. Two statements were recoded so that all responses for each factor were coded in the same direction.

Resource Factor. The factor analysis grouped statements 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 together, with factor loadings of .704, .736, .789, .599, and .760, respectively, and an eigenvalue of 2.851. An index of the responses to these statements was created for the resource factor. This factor reflects the respondent's adequacy of resources (time, energy, mental) in dealing with her possessions.

Identity Factor. Statements 5, 7, and 8 were grouped together by factor analysis as the second factor, with factor loadings of .695, -.662, and .817, respectively, and an eigenvalue of 1.587. An index of these responses was created to reflect the extent that one identifies with possessions and values them because of memories.

Accumulation Factor. The third factor identified by factor analysis included statements 9 and 10 with factor loadings of .735 and -.827, respectively, and an eigenvalue of 1.231. This index reflects the degree to which a respondent is still accumulating possessions.

Personality. Personality was defined according to the four pairs of preferences defined by Keirse and Bates (1978) and measured by the Keirse Temperament Sorter. The temperament sorter includes a series of questions with two possible responses. Each question measures one of four pairs of preferences. For example, the question "In company do you a) initiate conversation, or b) wait to be approached?" would measure the preference for introversion or extraversion. For the complete list of questions, please refer to Keirse and Bates (1978). The responses for each of the four types of preferences were scored to give each respondent a rating for one or the other type of preference for each pair. For example, if a respondent marked the preference for extraversion more often than the preference for introversion, then the respondent was rated as extravert on the extraversion/introversion pair of preferences. The four pairs of preferences include introversion/extraversion (IE), sensation/intuition (SN), thinking/feeling (TF), and judging/perceiving (JP).

IE. Extraverts (E) are people who have a need for sociability and tend to be energized by interactions with other people. Introverts (I) are more likely to be territorial and prefer solitude or interaction with only a few known others (Keirse & Bates, 1978). Approximately 75% of the general population prefers extraversion (Bradway, 1964).

SN. The person who prefers sensation (S) could be described as practical or sensible, wanting facts. The intuitive (N)-preferring person is more innovative, future-oriented, a day-dreamer (Keirse & Bates, 1978). About 75% of the general population reports a preference for sensation (Bradway, 1964).

TF. The thinking (T) vs. feeling (F) preference refers to a more impersonal or personal basis of choice, respectively. The thinking person is more comfortable with objective, impersonal judgments and may be described as "cold" by feeling-preference persons. The feeling type is more comfortable with value judgments, may be put off by excessive rules, and may be described as "too emotional" by thinking people. Although everyone is capable of making either personal or impersonal choices, most people have a preference for one or the other (Keirsey & Bates, 1978). About one half of the general population reports a preference for thinking and one half reports a preference for feeling (Bradway, 1964).

JP. The preference for judging vs. perceiving is distributed about equally in the general population (Bradway, 1964). People with a judging preference tend to push toward decisions and prefer closure, and plan ahead so that tasks can be finished. Those with a perceiving preference like to keep things more flexible and open ended (Keirsey & Bates, 1978).

Analysis

Discriminant Analysis

For the first analysis, the respondents were grouped into two categories: those who anticipated moving into smaller housing at some point in time and those who did not. For the second analysis, respondents were grouped into two categories: those who had begun making preparations for disposing of some of their possessions and those who had not.

Two stepwise discriminant analyses were used to determine the variables that could best predict the characteristics of women who would be most likely to anticipate moving to a smaller dwelling unit and those who would be most likely to be making preparations for disposing of possessions. Predictor variables were selected based on the theoretical framework rather than on prior probabilities, because prior probabilities do not reflect the attributes of a particular case and may be influenced by the bias of the nonrandom sample.

Wilk's lambda was used to indicate significant differences in group means. The standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients were used to assess the relative importance of variables in relation to each other, and the direction of relationships was determined by the coefficient signs. The entire sample was used to establish determinants in both analyses, rather than dividing the sample into a developmental sample and a validation sample. The main purpose of a validation sample is to ensure maximum generalizability to the larger population; however, because the sample used was nonrandom, any determinants identified may be specific to the sample. The significance level was set at .05.

Although the linear discriminant function assumes that predictor variables have a multivariate normal distribution, it also works with dichotomous variables (Moore, 1973). Six of the 17 variables used in the two analyses were dichotomous.

Findings

Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1. Characteristics are included for those who anticipated moving and those disposing of possessions.

Sixty-two percent of respondents were married; the majority of those who were not married were widowed. Those who anticipated moving were somewhat more likely to be married. Respondents ranged in age from 55 to 92, with a mean age of 68.4. Those anticipating moving were somewhat more likely to be younger, while those disposing of possessions were more likely to be older. Household size ranged from one to 13 with a mean of 1.82. The mean household size was larger for those who did not anticipate moving or were not disposing of possessions. Eighty-seven percent of respondents had living children. The mean number of living children was 2.28.

Educational level ranged from less than 8th grade to graduate degrees, with the majority having a high school diploma or some college. Women who were anticipating moving and were disposing of possessions tended to be somewhat better educated than those who were not. Nearly all the women surveyed were retired or were not working outside the home. About half of the women rated their health as average for their age; however, an additional

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents, by anticipation of moving and by preparation for disposing of possessions. N=250.

Variable	Total		Anticipate Moving				Disposing of Possessions			
	#	%	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Marital Status										
Married	155	62.2	53	67.1	102	60.0	65	56.5	90	67.2
Not Married	94	37.8	26	32.9	68	40.0	50	43.5	44	32.8
Age										
55-59	27	12.9	14	17.5	18	10.7	13	11.3	19	14.3
60-64	37	14.9	14	17.5	23	13.7	16	13.9	21	15.8
65-69	78	31.2	26	32.5	52	31.0	34	29.6	44	33.1
70-74	52	21.0	17	21.3	35	20.8	23	20.0	29	21.8
75-79	28	11.3	6	7.5	22	13.1	16	13.9	12	9.0
80-84	14	5.6	3	3.6	11	6.5	9	7.8	5	3.8
85 and over	7	2.8	0	0.0	7	4.2	4	3.5	3	2.3
Mean Age	68.4		66.5		69.3		69.5		67.4	
Household Size										
One	81	32.8	23	29.1	58	34.5	44	38.9	37	27.6
Two	147	59.5	2	65.8	95	56.5	62	54.9	85	63.4
Three or more	19	7.7	3	5.1	15	8.9	7	6.2	12	9.0
Mean	1.82		1.76		1.85		1.68		1.93	
Number of Children										
None	34	13.7	11	13.8	23	13.6	19	16.5	15	11.2
One	41	16.5	11	13.8	30	17.8	16	13.9	25	18.7
Two	80	32.1	22	27.5	58	34.3	36	31.3	44	32.8
Three or more	94	37.8	36	45.0	58	34.3	44	38.3	50	37.3
Mean	2.28		2.38		2.24		2.25		2.31	
Education										
Less than high school	20	8.0	5	6.3	15	8.9	11	9.6	9	6.7
High school graduate	77	30.9	21	26.3	56	33.1	29	25.2	48	35.8
Beyond high school	152	61.0	54	67.5	98	58.0	75	65.2	77	57.5
Employment										
Employed	26	10.4	10	12.5	16	9.5	11	9.6	15	11.2
Not employed	223	89.6	70	87.5	153	90.5	104	90.4	119	88.8
Health Status										
Poor or fair	21	8.4	6	7.5	15	8.9	8	7.0	13	9.7
Average	125	50.2	39	48.8	86	50.9	64	55.7	61	45.5
Very good	103	41.4	35	43.8	68	40.2	43	37.4	60	44.8
Income										
Less than \$10,000	38	16.0	9	12.0	29	17.9	20	18.2	18	14.2
\$10,000-19,999	63	26.6	17	22.7	46	28.4	28	25.5	35	27.6
\$20,000-29,999	63	26.6	21	28.0	42	25.9	26	23.6	37	29.1
\$30,000-39,999	39	16.5	16	21.3	23	14.2	17	15.5	22	17.3
\$40,000-49,999	17	7.2	4	5.3	13	8.0	13	11.8	4	3.1
\$50,000-59,999	6	2.5	3	4.0	3	1.9	2	1.8	4	3.1
\$60,000 or more	11	4.6	5	6.6	6	3.8	4	3.6	7	5.5

Note: Total numbers for each variable may not sum to 250 due to missing responses.

41% considered their health to be very good. Household income ranged from below \$10,000 per year to over \$80,000 per year, with about half of the respondents in the \$10,000 to \$30,000 income range. Higher incomes were more often reported by women who anticipated moving.

Compared with the population of older women in Florida, the sample was somewhat over-represented in the 65-74 age category, probably because this age group may be more likely to take part in homemaker groups or live in retirement communities where the questionnaires were distributed. The respondents were more likely to be living alone (33% compared with 27% of the state population of older women) and more likely to be married (62% of the sample, 49% of the state population of older women). In this sample, 95% of women either lived with their spouse or alone, while in the general population of older women nearly one-fourth live with other family members, in group settings, or in institutions. Older women in Florida are generally less educated than the sample respondents (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). No current comparison data were available regarding health status and income.

Housing Characteristics of Respondents

Housing characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 2. Characteristics are displayed according to those who anticipate moving and those who are disposing of possessions, as well as for the total sample.

Respondents' homes were fairly evenly distributed among rural, small town, small city, medium city, and large city locations. Those who anticipated moving tended to be somewhat more urban, although there were no statistically significant differences between any of the groups. The majority of respondents lived in community based housing; however, more than 30% lived in some type of retirement community or housing for senior citizens. Those who lived in community based housing were more likely to anticipate moving.

The majority of respondents lived in single-family housing. Of those who lived in community based housing, 89% lived in single-family and 11% lived in multi-family housing. Those who anticipated moving were more likely to live in single-family housing than those who did not. Very little difference was observed in the housing type of those who were disposing of possessions and those who were not. Most respondents owned their homes and had no mortgage.

Four out of five respondents felt that the size of their housing was adequate for their possessions and activities. About three-fourths of all groups were also satisfied with their housing and neighborhoods, including those who anticipated moving.

More than one-third of respondents had moved to smaller dwellings within the last 10 years, including one-fourth of those who anticipated moving again. Over 60% of all respondents had moved within the last decade, although 38% of those had moved to housing that was as large as, or larger than their previous dwelling. Others had lived in the same home for over 40 years. Their homes were relatively large, with most having two or three bedrooms and two bathrooms. Thirty-two percent of respondents anticipated moving to a smaller dwelling at some time in the future, with 8.4% planning to move within the next two years.

Preparation for Disposing of Possessions

Nearly half of the respondents had begun making some preparations for disposing of excess possessions. Of those who anticipated moving to a smaller dwelling unit, retirement home, or other dwelling unit, 65% had started making preparations for disposing of possessions. Of those who had begun making preparations for disposing of objects, over half had actually started giving away, selling, or throwing away possessions (see Table 3). Forty-four percent had told people about items they wanted them to have and 28% had marked items to be given to individuals eventually. Less than one-fifth had made lists of what to do with possessions and less than 30% had only thought about what they would do with possessions. The low popularity of list making may be a reflection of organization style.

Of those who anticipated moving, 19% had only thought about what they would do with things, 11% had made lists, 16% had marked items, 26% had told special people about items they wanted them to have eventually, 40% had started giving away, selling, or throw-

Table 2. Housing characteristics of respondents, by anticipation of moving and by preparations for disposing of possessions. N=250.

Variable	Total		Anticipate Moving				Disposing of Possessions			
	#	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
Location										
Rural	45	18.6	12	15.2	33	20.2	19	16.8	26	20.2
<20,000	39	16.1	10	12.7	29	17.8	15	13.3	24	18.6
20,000-49,999	60	24.8	15	19.0	45	27.6	31	27.4	29	22.5
50,000-299,999	51	21.1	20	25.3	31	19.0	23	20.4	28	21.7
300,000 or larger	47	19.4	22	27.8	25	15.3	25	22.1	22	17.1
Housing Type										
Single Family	145	58.7	58	72.5	87	52.1	69	60.0	76	57.6
Rowhouse	21	8.5	5	6.3	16	9.6	11	9.6	10	7.6
Mobile Home	41	16.6	9	11.3	32	19.2	17	14.8	24	18.2
Apartment	40	16.2	8	10.0	32	19.2	18	15.7	22	16.7
Retirement Housing										
Yes	77	30.9	12	15.0	65	38.5	33	28.7	45	33.6
No	172	69.1	68	85.0	109	61.5	83	72.2	89	66.4
Tenure										
Own - no mortgage	151	60.6	51	63.8	100	59.2	71	61.7	80	59.7
Own - mortgaged	49	19.7	15	18.8	34	20.1	24	20.9	25	18.7
Rent	30	12.0	9	11.3	21	12.4	14	12.2	16	11.9
No rent paid	4	1.6	2	2.5	2	1.2	1	.9	3	2.2
Mobile home on rented lot	15	6.0	3	3.8	12	7.1	5	4.3	10	7.5
Adequacy of Housing										
Adequate	200	80.0	66	82.5	134	78.8	93	80.2	107	79.9
Inadequate	50	20.0	14	17.5	36	21.2	23	19.8	27	20.1
Housing Satisfaction										
Dissatisfied	25	10.1	7	8.8	18	10.7	9	7.8	16	12.0
Neither	35	14.1	15	27.5	20	11.9	17	14.8	18	13.5
Satisfied	188	75.8	58	72.5	130	77.4	89	77.4	99	74.4
Neighborhood Satisfaction										
Dissatisfied	25	10.0	10	12.5	15	8.8	13	11.2	12	9.0
Neither	29	11.6	12	15.0	17	10.0	9	7.8	20	14.9
Satisfied	196	78.4	58	72.5	138	81.2	94	81.0	102	76.1
Already Moved										
Smaller residence	91	36.4	20	25.0	71	41.8	45	38.8	46	34.3
Not moved	159	63.6	60	75.0	99	58.2	71	61.2	88	65.7

Note: Total numbers for each variable may not sum to 250 due to missing responses.

ing away objects, and 35% had made no preparations for disposing of possessions. This was a multiple response question; therefore, percentages sum to more than 100%.

Table 3. Preparations for disposing of possessions, by 116 respondents including 65% of those who anticipated moving and 37.6% of those who did not anticipate moving.

Method of Preparation

Have only thought about what I would do with things	34	29.3
Have made lists of what to do with things	22	19.0
Have marked items I want to go to certain individuals	32	27.6
Have told special people about items I want them to have eventually	51	44.0
Have started giving away, selling or throwing away objects	63	54.3

Note: Multiple response question; percentages do not sum to 100.
N=250

Personality Preferences

The personality characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 4. The sample was fairly representative of the general population with 75% tending toward extraversion, 86% toward sensation, and 56% toward thinking. On the judging/perceiving variable, however, the sample was more weighted toward judging than the general population.

Table 4. Personality characteristics, by anticipation of moving, and by preparation for disposing of possessions.

Personality Variable	Total		Anticipate Moving				Disposing of Possessions			
	#	%	Yes		No		Yes		No	
Extraversion (E)	186	74.7	62	78.5	124	72.9	89	76.7	97	72.9
Introversion (I)	45	18.1	13	16.5	32	18.8	21	18.1	24	18.0
Equal IE	18	7.2	4	5.1	14	8.2	6	5.2	12	9.0
Sensation (S)	214	85.9	64	81.0	150	88.2	101	87.1	113	85.0
Intuition (N)	21	8.4	9	11.4	12	7.1	11	9.5	10	7.5
Equal SN	14	5.6	6	7.6	8	4.7	4	3.4	10	7.5
Thinking (T)	140	56.2	42	53.2	98	57.6	63	54.3	72	57.9
Feeling (F)	85	34.1	29	36.7	56	32.9	42	36.2	43	32.3
Equal TF	24	9.6	8	10.1	16	9.4	11	9.5	13	9.8
Judging (J)	210	84.3	63	79.7	147	86.5	95	81.9	115	86.5
Perceiving (P)	28	11.2	11	13.9	17	10.0	16	13.8	12	9.0
Equal JP	11	4.4	5	6.3	6	3.5	5	4.3	6	4.5

N=250

Feelings About Possessions

The percentages of respondents who agreed with the statements about how they felt regarding their possessions are shown in Table 5, which is subdivided by the three factors identified by factor analysis. More than one-fourth of all respondents felt that they had too much "stuff" in their homes, had difficulty finding specific objects among their things, and/or wished they had fewer possessions to take care of. More women who anticipated moving felt that they had too much "stuff" than did those who did not anticipate moving. Those who had begun disposing of possessions also were more likely to feel that they had too much "stuff."

Most of the respondents valued their possessions because of the memories they signify. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they would feel lost without their possessions. Over one-fifth even felt that they might lose their identity without their possessions,

Table 5. Percentages of respondents who agreed with statements regarding feelings about possessions, by anticipation of moving and preparation for disposing of objects.

Factors	Total	Anticipate Moving		Disposing of Possessions	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Resource Factor					
Difficulty keeping possessions clean	31.2	38.8	26.5	33.6	29.1
Difficulty finding specific objects	29.2	38.8	24.7	31.0	27.6
Wish for fewer possessions to take care of	26.4	31.3	23.5	33.6	20.1
Feel like possessions own me	10.8	11.2	9.4	12.9	9.0
Have too much stuff	39.2	52.5	31.8	51.7	28.4
Identity Factor					
Would lose identity without possessions	21.2	21.3	20.0	19.8	22.4
Value possessions because of memories	78.8	82.5	71.2	81.9	76.1
Would feel lost without possessions	46.4	48.8	41.2	48.3	44.7
Accumulation Factor					
Am still accumulating possessions	43.2	58.8	34.1	40.6	45.6
Discourage people from giving non-consumables	51.2	47.5	48.2	53.4	49.3

Note: Statements have been altered slightly for brevity in this table.
N=250.

although few felt that their possessions owned them instead of them owning the possessions.

In an effort to curb their accumulation of things, more than half of the respondents discouraged others from giving them nonconsumable objects. Almost as many, however, indicated that they were still accumulating possessions.

Discriminant Analysis - Anticipation of Moving

Table 6 presents the results of the discriminant analysis to determine the variables that best predict characteristics of women most likely to anticipate moving to a smaller dwelling unit. Housing variables, demographic variables, and personal variables were included in the equation. Initial analysis included 18 variables; however, three-variables were found to have no relationship to anticipation of moving. Deleting number of children, housing satisfaction, and neighborhood satisfaction from the equation improved the fit of the model; therefore, these variables were eliminated from the analysis.

The univariate analysis of the 15 remaining variables shows that taken individually, six variables are significantly related to anticipation of moving. These include whether the respondent had already moved to a smaller dwelling, current housing type, the resource factor, the accumulation factor, age, and location of the dwelling. When studied in relationship to each other in the discriminant analysis, however, four other variables are also significant, including whether a person lives alone, her income, and two of the personality types (JP, IE).

The best predictors of anticipation of moving to a smaller dwelling unit were whether women had already moved, whether they lived alone, their current housing type, the resource factor, the accumulation factor, their age, the location of their home, their income, and the personality type indicators JP and IE. According to this analysis, those who anticipate moving to a smaller dwelling are less likely to have already moved to smaller housing, and more likely to be living with their spouse in single family housing. They have too many possessions for their personal resources but are still accumulating possessions. They tend to be younger and living in urban areas, have higher incomes, and have the personality types for extravert and perceiving.

Table 6. Univariate and discriminant analysis results for anticipation of moving.

Variables	Univariate Analysis	Discriminant Analysis - Predictive Variables	
	F(1,222)	Wilk's Lambda	Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients
Housing			
Location	5.32*	.9353***	.4074
Current Housing	10.27**	.9558**	-.3085
Already Moved	5.74*	.8599****	.2289
Adequacy of Housing	.02		
Demographic			
Age	7.33**	.9141***	-.3808
Income	3.02	.8719****	.3276
Living Alone	.15	.8545****	-.2270
Education	1.34		
Personal			
Resource Factor	5.48*	.8902	.4866
Identity Factor	.60		
Accumulation Factor	4.43*	.8636****	.2342
IE	.76	.8806****	.3337
JP	3.28	.8499****	-.1934
SN	1.56		
TF	.11		

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001 ****p<.0001 N=250

Discriminant Analysis - Preparation for Disposing of Possessions

Table 7 presents the results of the discriminant analysis to determine variables that best predict characteristics of older women who would be most likely to be making preparations for disposing of possessions. The initial list of variables for this analysis contained the same variables as the discriminant analysis for anticipation of moving, with the addition of the variable for anticipation of moving. Variables that did not contribute to the model were removed. These variables included income, housing and neighborhood satisfaction, and the accumulation factor.

Of the 14 remaining variables, only four were significantly related to preparation for disposing of possessions in the univariate analysis, including anticipation of moving, the resource factor, education, and age. The discriminant analysis added three more significant variables: whether the respondent had already moved, adequacy of housing, and the personality type indicator SN.

The best predictors of women who would make preparations for disposing of possessions were anticipation of moving, whether women had already moved, the resource factor, education, age, adequacy of housing, and the personality type indicator SN. According to this analysis, those making preparations for disposing of possessions are most likely to be those who have already moved into smaller housing units and are not anticipating another move, who feel that they have too many possessions for their personal resources, are older and have higher education, feel that their housing is adequate size for their possessions and activities, and have the personality type for sensation (practical).

Both discriminant analyses correctly classified nearly 70% of respondents (see Table 8). Housing type and location are the strongest predictors for correctly classifying those who anticipate moving. Anticipation of moving was the strongest predictor for correctly classifying those most likely to be making preparations for disposing of possessions. Because these predictor variables are based on a nonrandom sample, the number of cases correctly clas-

Table 7. Univariate and discriminant analysis results of preparations for disposing of possessions.

Variables	Univariate Analysis	Discriminant Analysis - Predictive Variables	
	F(1,233)	Wilk's Lambda	Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients
Housing			
Anticipate Moving	17.31**	.9308**	.7782
Already Moved	1.03	.8545**	-.2926
Adequacy of Housing	.57	.8431**	.1709
Location	1.25		
Demographic			
Age	6.16**	.8862**	.4928
Education	3.97*	.8741**	.3034
Living Alone	2.51		
Children	.18		
Personal			
Resource Factor	5.91*	.8642**	.3282
Identity Factor	.34		
SN	1.53	.8469**	.2400
TF	.01		
JP	.43		
IE	.72		

*p<.05 **p<.0001 N=250

Table 8. Cases correctly classified by stepwise discriminant analysis.

Anticipate Moving		Disposing of Possessions	
Predictor Variable Added to Equation	Cases Correctly Classified (in percentage)	Predictor Variable Added to Equation	Cases Correctly Classified (in percentage)
Prior Probability	50.00	Prior Probability	50.00
Current Housing	55.65	Anticipate Moving	63.20
Location	60.58	Age	64.11
Age	62.08	Education	66.13
Resource Factor	63.33	Resource Factor	64.11
IE	64.44	Already Moved	66.13
Income	66.23	SN	68.02
Accumulation Factor	64.47	Adequacy of Housing	68.83
Already Moved	66.67	All 14 Variables	66.81
Living Alone	67.86		
JP	68.30		
All 15 Variables	67.41		

N=250

sified in the general population of older women may be somewhat lower. Therefore, these results should be applied with caution. Further research is needed before generalizations can be made with any degree of certainty.

Discussion

The results of this study show that housing conditions, demographics, and personal characteristics such as personality and feelings about possessions all play a role in determining who will be most likely to move to smaller dwelling units and who will be making preparations to dispose of excess possessions. It is clear from the analysis, however, that the characteristics of those who may move do not help define those disposing of possessions.

The predictors of those who anticipate moving indicate the importance of resources and opportunity in the decision to move. Potential movers tend to be younger, married, and have higher incomes, suggesting more personal resources. The fact that they are more likely to live in urban areas would also suggest that there may be more opportunities for moving to alternative housing types or retirement facilities. Rural areas are often very limited in housing options. Potential movers tend to live in single-family housing and have not moved to smaller housing in at least a decade, indicating that large single-family housing may no longer be congruent with their needs. It is interesting that the adequacy of the current home for possessions and activities was not a factor in determining anticipation of moving, considering that potential movers were still accumulating possessions and felt that they had too much "stuff" to take care of.

Personality appears to play a role in identifying potential movers. Extraversion as a predictor may indicate that potential movers are anticipating the more gregarious lifestyle that often accompanies retirement facilities or multi-family housing. The selection of the perceiving type as a predictor of movers is consistent also, in that perceiving types are more open to new ideas and experiences, and adapt more easily to new situations.

While previous research has shown housing satisfaction to be an important predictor of desire to move (Baillie, 1990; Morris, Crull, & Winter, 1976; Speare, 1974), the current study did not find any significant relationship between either housing satisfaction or neighborhood satisfaction and anticipation of moving. This inconsistency can probably be explained by the different definitions of moving. The previous studies examined the desire to move while this analysis examined the actual expectation of moving. If housing is undesirable, people would be inclined to desire something better, but may not have the resources to actually move. The elderly potential movers in the current study tend to have more resources and may be making amenity moves, that is moving toward something they perceive as desirable, rather than moving away from something they perceive as undesirable.

Housing conditions, demographics, and personal variables play a role in predicting those who are disposing of possessions, as well as those who anticipate moving. The interpretation of these variables, however, indicates a very different profile of those disposing of possessions. Women who are disposing of possessions tend to be older and have already moved to smaller housing units with no intention of moving again. Although they perceive their housing to be of adequate size for their possessions and activities, they also feel that they have too much "stuff" to take care of. Women who are disposing of possessions also tend to have higher education and have a preference for the sensation personality type, indicating that they tend to be practical or sensible. These women clearly value their possessions for sentimental reasons, but also recognize the impracticality of trying to maintain a household full of possessions as they continue to age.

Whether or not women had spouses or living children was not a factor in determining who would be disposing of possessions. Although children and grandchildren were most often mentioned as recipients of possessions by those who had descendants, those who had no descendants indicated that possessions would be given to siblings, children of siblings, other relatives, or friends. Those who had already disposed of possessions had often sold or simply thrown things away because of lack of perceived value.

The prospect of moving to a smaller dwelling unit and disposing of excess possessions from a life time of accumulation may seem like a daunting task to many older women. Know-

ing more about women's feelings toward their possessions and about how and when older women begin disposing of excess possessions may make it possible to develop guidelines that could be distributed to older individuals, for use as a self-help planning aid or by social workers, extension agents, and families assisting the elderly. Such a tool could be useful to those aging in place who simply need to reduce clutter, as well as to those planning a move. Many respondents commented that even the survey questions had heightened their awareness of their excess possessions and started them thinking about the future. Perhaps in a similar manner, guidelines could help people develop awareness of their feelings toward their possessions and help them prioritize items to be saved. When people anticipate a move, concerns about which items to dispose of and how to dispose of them may require a reordering of their values. Poor decisions about possessions can lead to feelings of loss or can lead to crowded and unsafe living conditions if people are unable to sufficiently reduce the number of their possessions.

Due to the exploratory nature of the nonrandom sample, the findings of this study are suggestive of the relationships rather than conclusive. The results of the study, however, do suggest some important implications for those who work with the elderly. Anyone assisting an elderly woman with the process of moving should consider her feelings about her possessions. Knowledge regarding possession-related behavior of elderly women and the effects of personality on their behavior can help designers and housing administrators to better understand the needs of their elderly clients. More sensitivity to the emotional impact of possession loss and retention could lead to more satisfactory designs for retirement housing and other housing alternatives for the elderly. Weeding out the unnecessary clutter can make the home safer, healthier, and easier to maintain. But saving the prized possessions can also provide an essential life continuity which may promote well-being. The fact that many women appear to be disposing of excess possessions after they move rather than before, would also suggest the need for ample storage in retirement units to facilitate possessions while decisions are being made.

The limitations of this study should be addressed in future research, including the needs of older men regarding possessions, as well as the needs of older women. A longitudinal study also would be useful to determine if there are any changes in feelings toward possessions and saving behavior as people age.

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