

## The Binding Factor for “Aging In Place”: A Literature Review

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore and synthesize the factors that bind older people to age in place. Aging in place is an alternative policy that determines older people's choice to stay in place. It is important to express this concept in a holistic approach to support the provision of age-friendly housing. A literature review was used to identify the main categories that bind older adults choosing to age in place. A total of 55 articles were reviewed to identify 18 qualified studies. The findings are five main binding factors: physical, social, economic, psychological, and autobiographical attached. The concept of aging in place is formed from the attachment of older people to their place of residence and affects their life satisfaction. And it operates at multiple scales including home, neighborhood, and broader context. Therefore, there is a need to design inclusive environments and consider emotional bonds to achieve their well-being.

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### 1. Introduction

The increase in the elderly population has become a global phenomenon. The World Health Organization (2022) estimates that in 2020 the world's population aged 60 years and over has reached 1.4 billion and it is predicted that by 2050 the population could increase by 20% or around 2.1 billion. This population trend poses a global challenge in affecting the welfare of society, both in terms of health, economic, social, cultural, spatial, and housing-related aspects – in the form of providing adequate housing needs because it triggers an increase in demand for housing type choices that are suitable for all age groups [1], one of which is the elderly. This issue is critical given its significant impact on individuals at various stages in their lives, and solutions are needed to support the provision of an age-friendly environment. Therefore, the

increasing number of elderly people should be accommodated in housing policy.

Currently, the concept of “aging in place” is a policy alternative for older people to choose to age in the same geographic area - without moving [2]–[8]. The term aging in place refers to the ability to choose to live in their home or community safely, comfortably, and independently regardless of their age, income, or ability level [9], [10]. Elderly people are given the opportunity to live independently in a familiar environment, giving them a sense of belonging [2], [7]. They benefit in terms of attachment, a sense of security, and familiarity with home, community, and connection to nature [10], [11]. Therefore, aging in place is not only about the quality of housing but also the quality of the surrounding environment – where older adults can achieve independence and well-being [12]. The decisions made by older people regarding their place of residence

can impact their capacity to attain a state of enhanced physical and mental well-being, independence, activity, and enjoyment [13]–[15].

The decision to age in place in the elderly is formed from a place attachment [16]. This attachment is created by a positive emotional connection between a person and a place – where people tend to stay close to the place – based on their experience of the meaning and function of a place that has its character and role [11], [17]. Research shows that place attachment plays an important mediating role in older people's satisfaction with remaining in their homes [18], despite challenges related to inadequate home and neighborhood conditions or limitations due to the older person's condition. Memories embedded in place, social relationships with neighbors, a sense of belonging to the home and community, availability of amenities, and easy access to public services are the main ties for older people to choose to age in place and be part of the support for achieving well-being – not creating a desire to move [19]. Housing adaptation is also an effort to create comfort for older people who choose to age in place by reducing normative deficits [5] through physical modification practices. Social support and a safe, supportive, and conducive environment – an important parts of achieving their well-being and happiness [20].

Although many studies have examined these factors separately, there is still limited understanding of the elements of attachment that influence older people's decisions to age in place. Some previous studies describe the factors that influence older people to age in place only focus on three main dimensions physical, social, and autobiographical incidence [12], [21]. In addition, some consider economic aspects to be a determining factor for aging in place [22], [23]. Some relate aging in place to individual, social, and spiritual motives [24]. As well as

environmental and social aspects are also part of strategies and decision-makers for aging in place [20], [25], [26]. This gap in the development of models and concepts needs a comprehensive review to explore the experiences and perceptions of older adults as a whole regarding the binding factors that shape older adults' decisions to age in place.

Therefore, the question for the scope of this research is what factors influence older adults' decision to age in place?. This study aims to explore and synthesize the binding factors that influence older adults's decisions to age in place. With a holistic approach, this study is expected to enrich the understanding of aging in place in academic and practical discussions, to support the provision of elderly-friendly housing.

## **2. Material and Methods**

### ***Research Design***

In this study, aging in place is defined as the choice by older people to remain in their homes and communities rather than move into a nursing facility. Aging in place is associated with an older person's sense of attachment to a place to achieve comfort, security, familiarity with their living environment, and independence, regardless of age, income, or ability level. In this case, aging in place considers not only the quality of housing, but also the environmental, social, experiential, psychological, and economic aspects of aging in place, which are thoroughly explored. The focus of this research is only on older people living in urban areas who choose to age in place.

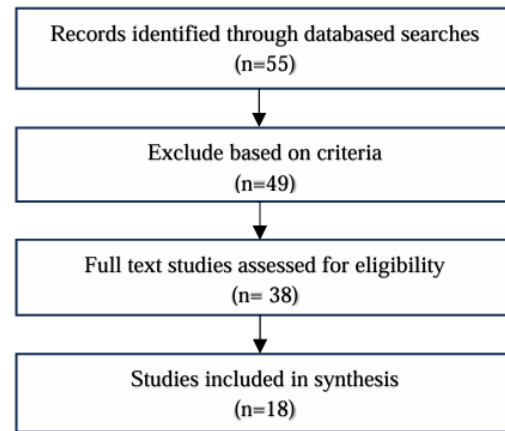
This research uses a literature review method with a holistic approach. The focus was to explore and synthesize various scholarly sources related to the factors that influence older adults to choose aging in place. A comprehensive review was conducted from the perspective of older adults – who play an

important role in understanding and explaining it – taking into account all relevant aspects, to enrich the understanding of this concept in academic and practical discussions. The conceptual framework of place attachment is used to understand the connection between individuals and the place where they live, as a factor that binds older people to age in place. The method is applied by identifying relevant research topics, and then collecting and summarizing them based on criteria using scientific methods [27].

### **Search Strategy**

The search strategy was conducted to achieve the research objectives using the following literature databases: Google Scholar, Taylor & France, Science Direct, Scopus, ELSEVIER, PubMed, and Researchgate. A total of 18 research studies from 55 relevant scientific articles were collected and identified for a comprehensive review to fit the scope. The keywords used were ‘aging in place’, ‘place attachment’, ‘older adult’, ‘elderly’, both spelling of ‘ageing and aging’ with the limitation of research years from 2014-2024. Additional keywords were combined with the code ‘AND’ to support the search, namely ‘aging in place AND place attachment’. The data search was conducted from January to December 2024.

To support the review, each selected research article had to be written in English. Titles and abstracts were screened by the authors using some criteria, including objectives, methods – both qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods – theories and research findings included in the study. All research texts were searched, screened, and examined to identify items that fit the purpose of the review. From the confirmed review, 18 articles had an appropriate context for this study. The following Figure 1 shows the number of studies identified as relevant to this study.



Source: (Author, 2024)

Figure 1: The number of identified and included studies in the study

From the 18 selected studies, the author used open coding to identify the binding factors that influence older adults to choose aging in place. The synthesized research will be grouped into subcategories and main categories as a step in clustering. The binding factors that influence older adults's decisions are presented in the conceptual model in the main categories based on the findings.

### **3. Results and Discussions**

To investigate older adults' perspectives on the decision to choose aging in place, the authors used a literature review method and derived results by synthesizing findings. The literature included in this study was published between 2014 and 2024. The majority of the studies focused on the concepts of aging in place and place attachment within the context of older adults. Some of the findings from studies on aging in place were derived from research conducted in Western and Asian countries. A substantial body of qualitative and quantitative research has addressed the debate on this concept from a variety of perspectives. Quantitative research tends to focus on physical attachment, whereas qualitative research prioritizes social and emotional attachment as a binding factor. The majority of the results indicate that social factors play a significant positive role in supporting the

attachment of the elderly to aging in place. Experiences, memories, and psychological factors are integral to shaping the elderly's decision to age in place.

Tabel 1 Review studies of aging in place

No	Authors and year	Aims	Study Sampel	Methods	Factor of Aging In Place in the Elderly
1	Place Attachment and Aging in Place: Preferences and Disruptions  Clark et al., 2023	To examine the links between place attachment and older person's preferences to age in place, and factors that disrupt these preference	Data from the 2001–2021 Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey and panel data modelling	Quantitative	Closeness to children/family and tenure security
2	The Importance of Place Attachment in the Understanding of Ageing in Place: “The Stones Know Me”  Lebrusán & Gómez, 2022	To delve into the meaning of place attachment, its importance, and how it is built by the elderly population in urban areas	37 people aged 65–95 and 1 focus group among elderly aged 65–71	Qualitative	Emotional investment, staying in the familiar environment, the importance of family ties, community connections, and expressed satisfaction with the neighborhood
3	Factors Associated with Aging in Place among Community-Dwelling Older Adults in Korea: Findings from a National Survey  Cho and Kwon, 2023	To identify the AIP intentions of older adults aged 65 years and older living in the local community using data from a survey on older adults in Korea and to analyze the factors influencing these intentions using an ecological approach, which explains how different environmental system types affect human development	9930 older adults (aged between 65 and 99 years old), data sampled from the 2020 National Survey of Older Koreans	Quantitative	Personal factors (education, income, smoking, house ownership, exercise, depression), interpersonal and communal factors (unmet healthcare needs, need for home care services, family contact), and policy level factors (basic pension beneficiary, long-term care services) using an ecological model
4	Understanding Aging in Place: Home and Community Features, Perceived Age-Friendliness of Community, and Intention Toward Aging in Place  Choi, 2022	To examine the interrelationship between the availability of age-friendly features, perceived age-friendliness of community, and intention toward AIP	14 communities of older adults	Quantitative	A greater availability of age-friendly consist of 8 domain housing, outdoor spaces and buildings, and transportation, community and health services, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, and communication and information
5	The Concept of Aging in Place as Intention  Ahn et al., 2020	To frame the aging in place (AIP) concept within an extended theory of planned behavior (TPB) model incorporating environmental domains	650 older adults	Quantitative	interpersonal environmental constructs (social connectedness) and built environment (neighborhood satisfaction)
6	The impact of housing tenure in supporting ageing in place: exploring the links between housing systems and housing options for the elderly	To reveal the link between the scope of housing aid designed to support aging in place and the housing system.	8 European countries (Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Italy)	Quantitative	Tenure-based of housing supports available features and innovation, independent housing helps in considering time and budget

	Lux & Sunnega, 2014				
7	Perceptions on residential environments for urban low-income elderly homeowners aging in place  Lee et al., 2017	To understand residential environment (neighborhood and city) perceptions were explored for urban low-income elderly homeowners who were aging in place	30 participants from urban low income of elderly	Qualitative (phenomenological approach)	neighbors' helping each other, a friendly/nice neighborhood, a quiet environment, or privacy, conveniences within the city (i.e., easy access to retail or service facilities) and the feeling of a hometown
8	Factors Affecting Place Attachment and Types of Living Arrangement Preferences for Ageing-In Place of the Malaysian Generational Housing Consumers in Malaysia  Ismail et al., 2023	To provide an in-depth overview of the place attachment factors and living arrangement structure preferences that affect the generations in Shah Alam, Selangor.	110 responden	Mix Method (Qualitative Quantitative)	4 main place attachment factors: Facilities & Amenities, Geographic Location, Physical Environment, and Social & Wellbeing.  The 5 main types of preferred living arrangement for aging in place are Living alone, Living with parents, Living with spouse, Living with son/daughter; and Living with family members.
9	'Ageing in place': experiences of older adults in Amsterdam and Portland  Dobner et al., 2016	To tell about the importance and meanings of formal and informal social support relationships and neighborhood ties for older adults  'aging in place' in urban neighborhoods in 2 different welfare state settings: Portland and Amsterdam	40 participants elderly	Qualitative (Study Case)	Strengthened and fostered community support and social cohesion, available services and amenities.  Emotionally attached to the neighborhood, and national and local policies as well as personal resources
10	From Sociospatial Experiences to Well-Being: Implications for Aging in Place  Sun et al., 2023	Examines the relationship between socio-spatial experiences and well-being through a sequential path analysis model.	501 community-dwelling individuals aged 65 and older in Hong Kong	Quantitative	5 dimensions of socio spatial experiences: "homes and housing estate," "social environment," "living convenience," "pedestrian experience," and "blue and green" features. All dimensions predict emotional, social, and psychological well-being via residential satisfaction and then place attachment.
11	Aging in Place: From the Neighborhood Environment, Sense of Community, to Life Satisfaction  Zhang et al., 2022	Aims to contribute to the existing literature by examining the relationship between older people's person-environment fit, activity-travel patterns, sense of community, and life satisfaction	6 community centers for older people in Hong Kong	Quantitative	activity time spent in the common neighborhood, sense of community, the importance of high-quality pedestrian infrastructure and public transport facilities
12	Exploring the impact of social network change: Experiences of older adults ageing in place  Vos et al., 2020	Explores the impact of social network change on older adults' lives by examining their experiences	4 focus groups were held in total with 14 older adults	Qualitative	Older adults experience a good quality of life, although it takes hard work to adjust and adapt to circumstances in which social networks change. 4 social network changes impact older adults' lives the most: illness/death of (self/)

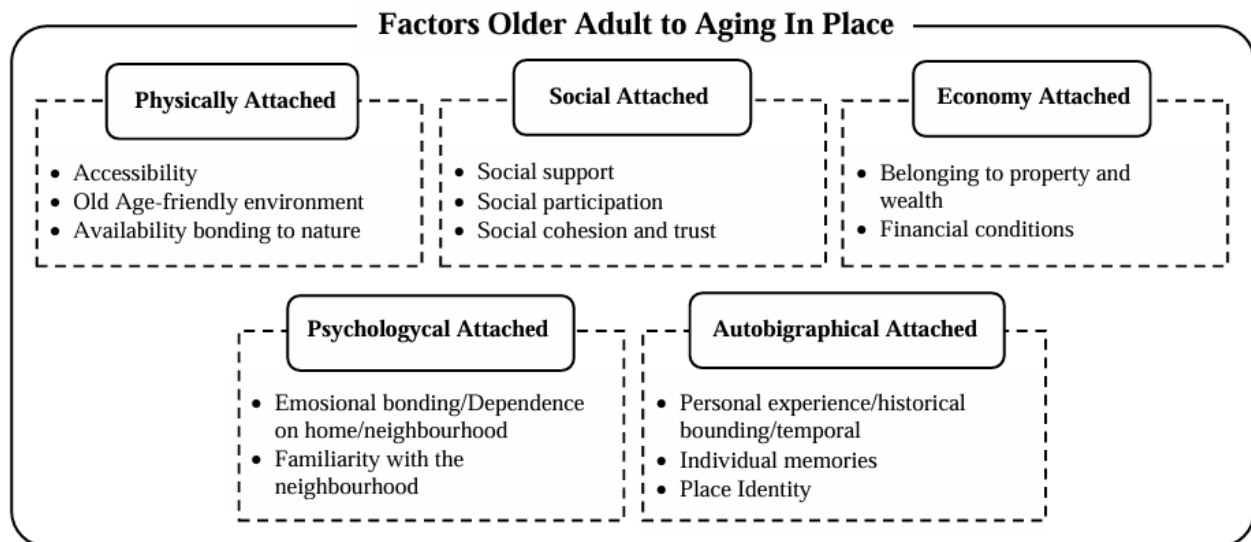
					spouse, accepting help from their children, deletion of the ones they have known for so long and helpers entering the network
13	Aging in Place for Community Dwelling Older Adults in India: A Qualitative Exploration of Prospects and Challenges  Thampi & Mathew, 2024	Aims to provide a profound understanding of the meaning, attitude, and perceptions of older adults toward aging in place	15 community-dwelling older adults who chose aging in place in Kerala, India	Qualitative Thematic network analysis	personal experiences, social motives (freedom to connect with neighbors, relatives, and various community resources without hindrances or restrictions), and spiritual motives (living in their own homes allows them complete independence to follow their beliefs and participate in spiritual activities)
14	The Effects of Place Attachment on Social Well-Being in Older Adults  Farokhanezhad Afshar et al., 2017	Aimed to determine the effect of place attachment dimensions on social well-being dimensions in older adults.	550 community-dwelling older adults in a metropolitan area of Tehran	Quantitative	Place identity and social relations in the neighborhood (social contribution and social coherence)
15	Attachment to place in advanced age: A study of the LiLACS NZ cohort.  Wiles, 2017	Measure how indicators of attachment to place are associated with health for people of advanced age in New Zealand.	671 older adults (267 Māori and 404 non-Māori)	Qualitative	Positive feelings, feeling connected to one's neighborhood and community, perceived importance of the environment in terms of health and well-being, the importance of nature and the outdoors, sense of connection, expectations of aging in place over time
16	The impact of place attachment on well-being for older people in high-density urban environment: a qualitative study  Sun et al, 2022	To explores how older people, who live in high-density urban environments, make sense of well-being and place attachment by articulating their daily lives	Community-dwelling older people aged 65 and above, who came from neighborhoods with high aging population and residential density but high and low median household incomes (focus group discussions)	Qualitative	individual (health, personal competence), collective (close social ties and social relation, social stability, family relation), material spiritual/ psychological (incomes to support living, positive mind, positive evaluation of life and self-actualization), values (convenience, natural environment), bonding ties to (close social connections, consistency between place a self-identity) and memories about places
17	Supporting Aging-in-Place Well: Findings From a Cluster Analysis of the Reasons for Aging-in-Place and Perceptions of Well-Being  Ahn & Kwon, 2020	Aims to fill this gap by investigating perceptions of well-being that could act as a driver or result of aging in place	328 older individuals (60+) living in their homes nationwide random sample of non-Hispanic White	Quantitative	Individual perception (easy to maintain and manageable house, confidence in mental and physical health status) and inclusive community-based supports and services (proximity to local services, strong sense of social connection to the community and frequent interactions among neighbors, being

					close to family, financial status)
18	Aging in place and the places of aging: A longitudinal study  Lewis & Buffel, 2020	Illustrates how aging in place is affected by changing life-course circumstances and the dynamics of these neighborhoods over time	24 participants aged 50, 4 case study of older adult living in neighborhoods characterized by high levels of deprivation and rapid population change	Qualitative longitudinal data (Case Study)	Aging in place is affected by changing life-course circumstances and the dynamics of these neighborhoods over time, sense of attachment to the community, private home is the only place one can 'age in place'.

Source: (Author, 2024)

A synthesis of the 18 selected studies was conducted to identify binding factors for older adults aging in place. The factors influencing older adults' decisions are presented in the conceptual model in the form of proposed main categories: physical attached, social

attached, economic attached, psychological attached, and autobiographical attached. The results of the analysis of factors influencing the elderly's decision to age in place are presented in Figure 2.



Source: (Author's analysis, 2024)

Figure 2: Factors that bind older adults to aging in place

### ***Physically Attached***

Physical embeddedness consists of three subcategories: accessibility, old age-friendly neighborhoods, and the availability of bonds with nature. This factor was defined through the findings of 6 studies which were then coded. In the discussion of accessibility, most older people choose to age in place as part of achieving satisfaction with easy access to adequate public facilities and services around their neighborhood - which is part of their

preferences [11], [28]–[31]. Meanwhile, an old age-friendly environment is another important subcategory of physical attachment in the elderly. An environment that suits the conditions of the elderly allows them to bond with the place more effectively and supports the involvement of the elderly to contribute to society [11], [32]. The subcategory of availability bounding to nature, which relates to the landscape as well as the ease of accessing nature, is another component that

shapes older people's bounding to age in place [11].

### ***Social Attached***

This category includes three subcategories, namely social support from the family and the community, social participation, and social cohesion and trust. These categories include 10 studies. Social support includes issues related to relying on family and community support to achieve a sense of comfort and satisfaction [29], [30], [33]–[37]. Social participation plays an important role in shaping older people's engagement and connectedness in community settings [24], [31], [33], [35], [37], [38]. Social cohesion and trust relate to the trust older people have in their neighborhoods, increasing their sense of attachment to aging in place [31], [35], [37], [38].

### ***Economy Attached***

This category includes two subcategories of ownership of property and wealth which was found in 3 studies. Tenure-based housing can have a positive impact on the diversity and innovation of housing for the elderly that supports stability and creates more innovative features [34], [39]. Financial conditions also influence the decision to age in place as it relates to uncertainty in accessing housing or facilities [30].

### ***Psychological Attached***

This category includes two subcategories, emotional bonding and familiarity with the environment. These categories include 7 studies. Emotional bonding is strongly related to dependence on family and community through the choice to stay close to family in achieving a sense of comfort and security [28], [30], [37]. A sense of belonging to place and community [29], [35], [37], [40] is part of influencing older people to continue aging in place. Familiar environments are associated with older people feeling positively attached to

familiar surroundings that support their health and well-being outcomes [11].

### ***Autobiographical Attached***

This category consists of three subcategories, namely personal experience/historical bounding/temporal, and memories. This category. These categories included 6 studies. The experience of living influences older people to age in place because it is part of their history and memories of their life process which contains sentimental meaning whether the conditions are favorable or unfavorable [8], [24], [40]. Place identity is associated with living in one's own home, which allows for complete independence [30] to follow one's beliefs and participate in social or spiritual activities [24], [37] so that the elderly can tie their identity to the home or neighborhood they have lived in for a long time [30], [38]. Therefore, all of this ultimately creates an attachment for the elderly to age in place.

This research aims to explore and synthesize the factors that bind older people to aging in place. Current literature on aging in place often does not consider the comprehensive perspective of older adults themselves. In this study, we seek to fill this gap and provide a complete picture of the concepts of aging in place and place attachment through a literature review. By understanding the experiences and perspectives of older adults, we can better understand what older adults consider in making their housing choices. The limitations that the elderly have do not ignore other aspects that support their physical and mental well-being. Therefore, based on a literature review, five factors were found to influence the decision of the elderly to age in place. Aging in place in older adults is shaped by place attachment. These factors are physical, social, economic, psychological, and autobiographical. Physical factors refer to anything related to the environment that supports a sense of comfort and security for the elderly. Social factors refer to social



interactions in the form of support from family and community, involvement of the elderly, and a sense of trust in the environment where they live. Economic factors relate to property ownership of the elderly that has material value in supporting life stability and financial conditions. Meanwhile, psychological factors refer to the emotional attachment of the elderly to a place that creates dependence on family or community to support their achievement of well-being. Finally, the autobiographical factor relates to experiences and history connected to certain events or memories in the past, thus influencing the choice of elderly housing.

Based on the results of the above synthesis, the relationship between aging in place and place attachment is formed from five factors that influence older people's decision to age in place. A significant level of attachment to a place tends to lead to life satisfaction and behavior in older people [18], making it easier for older people to lead healthier, independent, active, and enjoyable lives [13]. Aging in place operates at multiple scales including the home, the neighborhood or neighborhood, and the wider context [3]. It involves not only physical aspects, social connections – including the freedom to connect with neighbors, relatives, and various community resources without barriers or restrictions [24], and needed services, but also relates to meeting the psychological needs necessary for older adults to make the most of life in old age [37]. Meaningful residential experiences and memories are integral to achieving the emotional and social well-being of the elderly. Homeownership and financial condition are also part of the consideration. The fit between the person and their environment, as well as the ongoing process, are part of the considerations for deciding whether to stay or move [3].

#### 4. Conclusion

This research explores and synthesizes the factors that bind older adults to age in place from the perspective of older adults. Aging in place becomes a residential choice for elderly individuals. Meanwhile, the decision to age in place is influenced by place attachment [16]. The emotional attachment of the elderly to the place where they live supports their tendency to maintain closeness to the place. Physical factors [11], [28]–[32], meaningful social interactions [24], [29], [31], [33], [35], [37], [38], home ownership [30], [34], [39], financial conditions [30], familiarity with the environment [11], fulfillment of psychological needs [28]–[30], [35], [37], [40], personal experience, and memories created in a place [8], [24], [40] become part of supporting their well-being and strengthening the attachment, thus triggering an influence on the elderly to continue aging in place. Therefore, in supporting aging in place, it is necessary to design an environment that is inclusive and supports their emotional bond to improve the quality of life of the elderly. The limitation of this research is the absence of research published in languages other than English. It is recommended that similar research be conducted in other cultures and in more detail with perspectives from various disciplines to provide a comprehensive understanding and concrete recommendations for policy and environmental design that supports aging in place.

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