

Preferences of Polish and Slovenian seniors concerning kitchen interior design

BEATA FABISIAK¹, JASNA HROVATIN²

¹Department of Furniture Design, Poznan University of Life Sciences

²Faculty of design, Associated member of University of Primorska

Abstract: *Preferences of Polish and Slovenian seniors concerning kitchen interior design.* The aim of the study was to collect information on preferences of users aged 65+ regarding kitchen interior design and to perform comparative analysis of data gathered in Poland and Slovenia. Based on the survey research and direct interviews conducted among 456 seniors living in Poland and Slovenia kitchen interior design guidelines were developed. The issues of preferred kitchen arrangement, style and colours range were taken into consideration.

Keywords: kitchen, design for elderly people, preferences, interior design

INTRODUCTION

In the recent years more and more attention is paid to the problem of ensuring an adequate quality of life for the elderly. Within this subject design, ergonomics, quality and functionality of furniture used by seniors play an important role. The raising interest in this issue stems from the fact that Europe, including Poland, is aging at a rapid pace. In Europe now lives about 90 million people over the age of 65, which represents about 18% of the European population. In Poland in 2013, approx. 14% of the population was aged over 65 years (EUROSTAT 2013). It is estimated that in the period of just two decades, the analysed rate will be doubled. The similar situation is observed for example also in Slovenia. According to the statistical data, in 2013 as much as 17% of Slovenian population was over 65 years old (Brnot, Peršin 2013). Such age structure of the society causes the need to develop research to get to know the characteristics of this group of users to be able to tackle societal challenges concerning, inter alia ensuring adequate quality of life and home environment meeting the needs of seniors both in within design and functional aspects. Numerous research indicate that kitchen consists one of the most important rooms of the senior households, with many hours a day spent there (Behera, Jindal 1991; de Miguel-Bilbao *et al.* 2014).

Taking the above into consideration the aim of the study was to collect information on preferences of users aged 65+ concerning kitchen interior design and to perform comparative analysis of data regarding this issue gathered in Poland and Slovenia.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

It was decided to collect data relating to the described aim of the study with the method of survey research and direct interviews conducted among people over 65 years old. Estimated sample size was 500 people over 65 years old living in Poland and Slovenia. The analysed sample of respondents was selected on the basis of a quota selection method. It was divided into layers according to the following criteria: age, gender and country of living. Collected data was coded and next subjected to comprehensive statistical analysis with the use of STATISTICA 10.0 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Taking into consideration the percentage of returned questionnaires, their completeness and the number of direct interviews conducted, it was decided to perform further analysis based on data coming from 456 respondents (342 living in Poland and 114 in Slovenia). The

age structure of the analysed sample is presented in Figure 1. Women constituted 71% of the analysed sample.

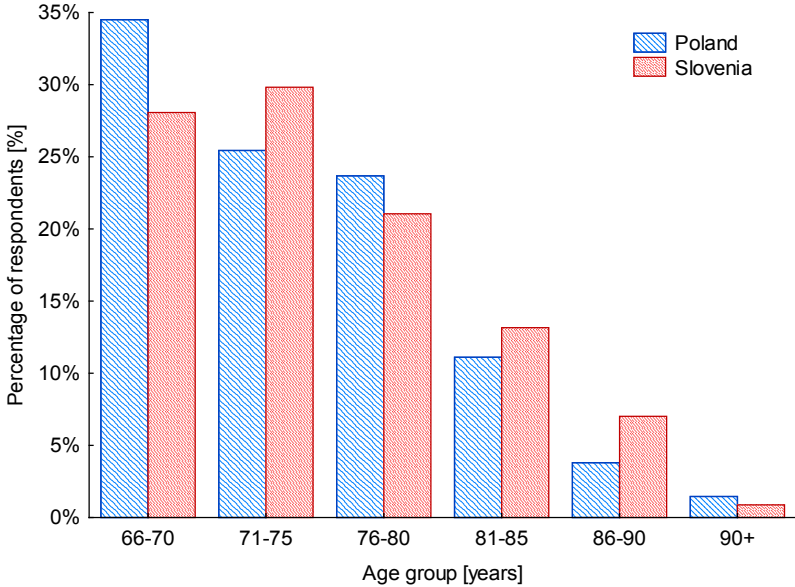


Figure 1. The age structure of the analysed sample of respondents depending on the country of living
 Source: Own elaboration based on performed empirical research

The first aspect of kitchen interior design that was taken into consideration was the localization of kitchen within the apartment or a house. The results of performed research indicate that in 84% of cases kitchen constituted the separate room in homes of Polish seniors (Figure 2). The situation looked slightly different in the households of Slovenian seniors. Although kitchen as a separate room was still the most common solution and appeared in 45% of analysed cases, the connection of kitchen with living room was quite popular as well (with 36% of cases). In Poland this variant was observed in no more than 3% of senior households.

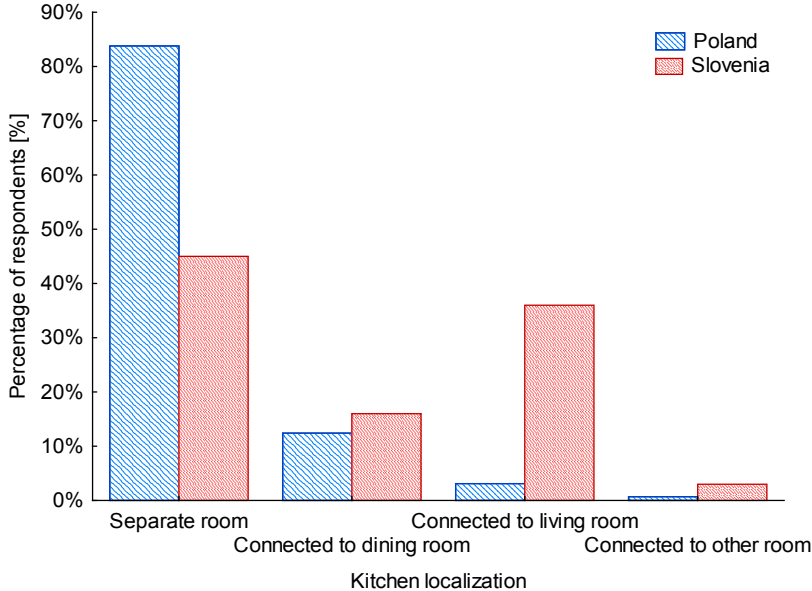


Figure 2. The structure of analysed households regarding the localization of kitchen depending on the country
 Source: Own elaboration based on performed empirical research

More detailed analysis of the issue showed that all Polish seniors who had kitchen space connected with the dining room, would like to change that variant into separate room (Figure 3). Respondents indicated that the preferred solution seems to be more comfortable

for them. Another interesting remark is that over 30% of elderly people having kitchen connected to a living room would also choose kitchen as a separate room. For people living with partner or family separating kitchen from other rooms is important due to noise and smells appearing during cooking of meals. In case of over 60% of people having kitchen as a separate room this solution was an optimal one and they would not change it.

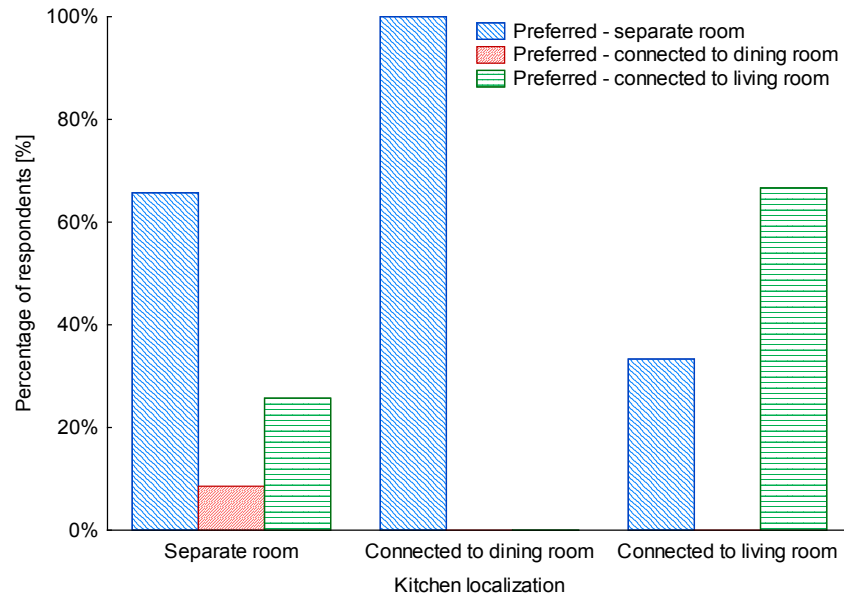


Figure 3. The structure of Polish respondent preferences concerning localization of kitchen depending on the solution already existing in the household

Source: Own elaboration based on performed empirical research

It is interesting to note that the results concerning preferences of kitchen localization gathered in the group of Slovenian seniors vary from those presented above (Figure 4).

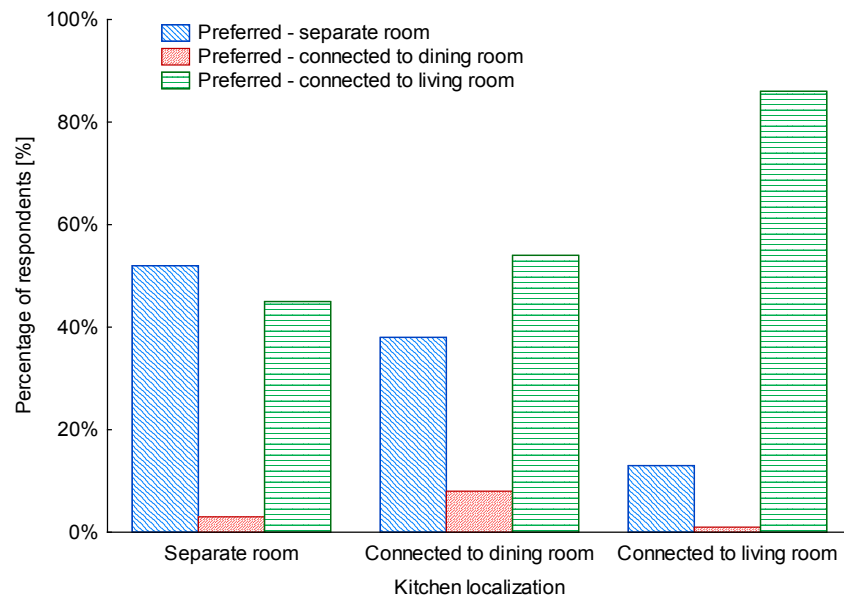


Figure 4. The structure of Slovenian respondent preferences concerning localization of kitchen depending on the solution already existing in the household

Source: Own elaboration based on performed empirical research

Half of respondents living in households where kitchen consists a separate rooms claimed this is a preferable variant, whereas as much as 45 % of them would make decision on connection

kitchen to living room in their dream house. Furthermore over 85% of respondents already having this kind of room arrangement was satisfied with it and wouldn't like to change it.

Many respondents, both Polish and Slovenian ones, noted that kitchen should be large and bright with a lot of daylight and well lightened with other sources of light as well. Much attention was paid to the existence of at least one window as an essential element of kitchen interior design.

As it was mentioned above, kitchen is a very special place in each household. Over 23% of Polish seniors and 25% Slovenian ones spend in that room more than 4 hours a day. It is important therefore that it positively affects the well-being of users. While analysing the feelings and emotions that kitchen interior design: its style and décor should evoke, most of the respondents (56%) replied that it should have a relaxing impact on their body and mind (Figure 5). They wanted it to help them to calm down, regenerate, alleviate the symptoms of stress, give rise to optimism and counteract depression.

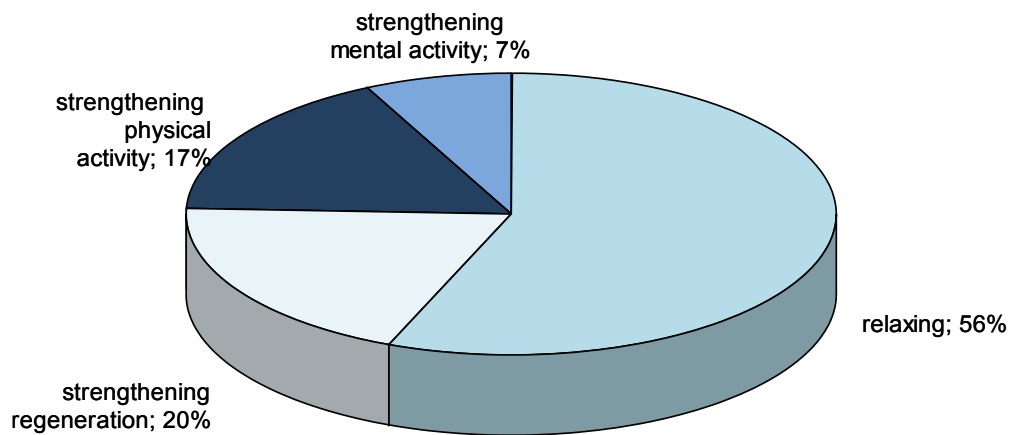


Figure 5. The structure of senior preferences on kitchen style and its influence on human well-being
Source: Own elaboration based on performed empirical research

Colours of the walls in kitchens of the respondents reflect preferences described above. The most common colours that can be seen in senior kitchens are: yellows - colours of the sun, that have a positive effect on the human nervous system and reduce tiredness (23%) and oranges that evoke a lot of optimistic feelings (23%). Often also beige (18%), white (13%) and greens (13%) tones occur. Senior preferences concerning colours indicate that they like pastel colours the most. Over 80% of respondents both in Poland and Slovenia would choose pastel colours for their dream kitchen (Figure 6).

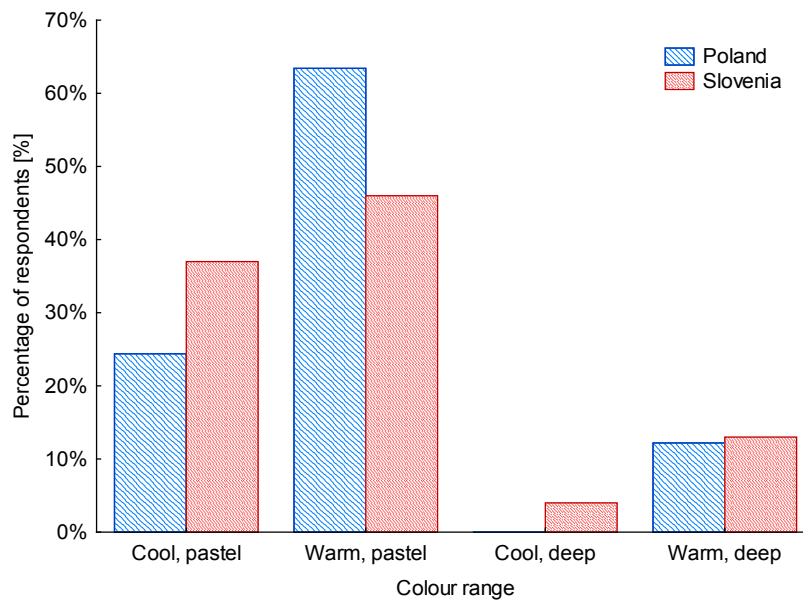


Figure 6. The structure of senior preferences concerning colours of kitchen interior design
 Source: Own elaboration based on performed empirical research

Favourites of most of them are warm colours. This is significant since this colour range not only gives rise to optimism, and influences in a positive way the activity of human body strengthening its mental and physical aspects but also improves appetite, which is of crucial importance in the old age. Furthermore elderly users highlighted the positive attitude they have to natural wooden elements in the interior design of kitchen and the willingness to have various plants they can take care of there and thereby feel closer to nature.

SUMMARY

Analysis of the opinions of Polish and Slovenian seniors concerning their ideal kitchen interior design, based on survey research and direct interviews indicates that there are not much differences in the preferences of elderly people in both studied countries. The preferences were stemming more from the need of comfort and willingness to evoke feelings associated with positive emotions, sense of security and relax, closeness to nature and childhood memories of home. They prefer cosy space, that is large and bright, full of plants, equipped with furniture and elements made of natural materials, especially solid wood. The differences were noted in the aspect of localisation of kitchen space within the household. Polish seniors represented more traditional approach and mostly had kitchen separated from other rooms, while Slovenian seniors more often had it combined with the living room space. Analysis of preferences of Polish respondents indicated that those living alone preferred kitchen to be connected with the living room, while others – living with families or partner would mostly like to have kitchen as a separate room to avoid noise, smell and mess occurring during the cooking process. In Slovenia however, seniors were more satisfied with that solution. Respondents from both countries agreed that style and colours of kitchen should have a relaxing and optimistic impact on their mental and physical state. Investigations on preferred colour range revealed therefore they choose warm colours with pastel tones more likely for their ideal kitchen interior design.

REFERENCES

1. BEHERA D., JINDAL S.K., 1991: Respiratory Symptoms in Indian Women Using Domestic Cooking Fuels, *Chest* 100(2); 385-388
2. BRNOT N., PERŠIN M., 2013: International Day of Older Persons 2013, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, on-line source: www.stat.si
3. DE MIGUEL-BILBAO S., GARCÍA J., LÓPEZ F., GARCÍA-SAGREDO P., PASCUAL M., MONTERO B., CRUZ JENTOFT A., SALVADOR C.H., 2014: Home Monitoring of Elderly for Early Detection of Changes in Activity and Behavior Patterns, XIII Mediterranean Conference on Medical and Biological Engineering and Computing 2013, IFMBE Proceedings 41; 1205-1208
4. EUROSTAT, 2013: Proportion of population aged 65 and over
5. FABISIAK B., KŁOS R., 2012: Comparative analysis of difficulty of activities performed in kitchen by people aged 40-60 and over 60 years with visual impairment in the context of furniture design, *Annals of Warsaw University of Life Sciences – SGGW, Forestry and Wood Technology* 77; 216-221
6. HROVATIN J., ŠIROK K., JEVŠNIK S., OBLAK L., BERGINC J., 2012: Adaptability of Kitchen Furniture for Elderly People in Terms of Safety, *Drvena Industrija* 63(2); 113–120
7. KŁOS R., FABISIAK B., KACZMAREK M., 2014: Analysis of human needs in kitchen design for people with visual impairment, *Drvena Industrija* 65 (1); 43-50

Streszczenie: *Preferencje osób starszych dotyczące aranżacji wnętrz kuchennych.* Celem przeprowadzonych badań było zebranie informacji o preferencjach użytkowników w wieku powyżej 65 lat dotyczących aranżacji wnętrz kuchennych oraz przeprowadzenie analizy porównawczej danych pochodzących od respondentów mieszkających w Polsce oraz Słowenii. Na podstawie danych informacji otrzymanych w trakcie badań ankietowych oraz wywiadów bezpośrednich przeprowadzonych wśród 456 seniorów sformułowano wytyczne do projektowania przestrzeni kuchennej odpowiadającej potrzebom osób starszych. W pracy uwzględniono takie aspekty jak preferowana przez osoby starsze aranżacja kuchni, jej styl oraz kolorystyka.

Corresponding author:

Beata Fabisiak,
Poznan University of Life Sciences, Department of Furniture Design,
ul. Wojska Polskiego 28, 60-637 Poznan, Poland
e-mail: beata.fabisiak@up.poznan.pl
phone: +48 618487475