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IDENTIFYING THE PATTERNS OF CO-PRESENCE AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN THE DWELLINGS OF CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKAN SUBURBS THROUGH THE VIRTUAL FIELDWORKS

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ABSTRACT

Co-presence is the idea that the presence of other actors shapes the individual behavior and creates the base for social interactions leading to a harmonious society. This paper discusses the structure of the observational means for the fieldwork of a research which clarifies the relationship between co-presence and social interactions while identifying patterns of co-presence in the dwellings of the contemporary Sri Lankan suburbs.

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation. To identify the lifestyle, patterns of co-presence and social interactions of Sinhala Lower middleclass, which occupies the majority of the population and has the highest influence in the social dynamics of Sri Lankan society, this research has mainly focused on domestic places, in which a major part of their life is spent.

Due to COVID19 travel restrictions, onsite fieldwork was difficult. Hence two online field methodologies were developed as alternative fieldwork systems in this research, to clarify the patterns of co-presence and feelings related to them in creation of social interactions. The findings clarify that there are four main types of co-presence patterns which are related to functionality and frequency of co-activities of the co-presence occurrences. It was observed that among these types, co-presence occurrences with functional co-activities have less flexibility

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leading to limited social interactions while co-presence occurrences with non-functional co-activities have more flexibility leading to higher possibilities of social interactions.

Keywords: *Co-presence, Dwellings, Sri Lanka, Long-Distance, Field Study*

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss the structure of the observational means for the field work and its findings, clarifying the relationship between co-presence and social interactions and the number of types of co-presence patterns and related feelings.

As the research was started amidst the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, the researchers from Japan were unable to visit the case study premises in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the researchers developed two types of long-distance online field study methodologies with special reference to two intensive case studies, which facilitated the level of observations and interviews needed for this study.

The Lower Middle Class, domestic place field studies were conducted in suburbs of Western Province, Sri Lanka namely Galle View Watta, Korosduwa, Wadduwa.

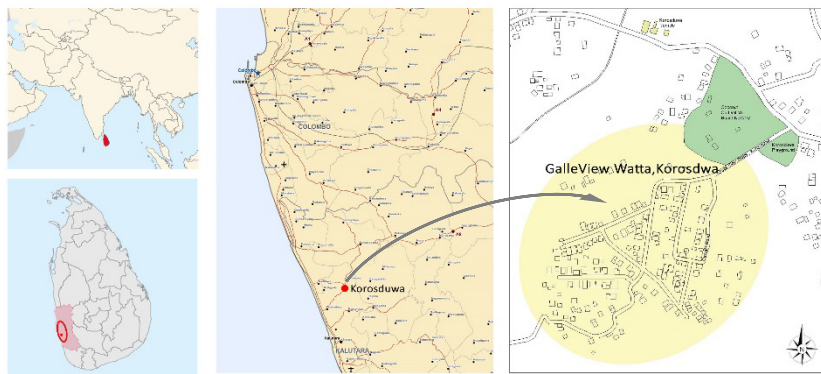


Figure 1. Selected Case Study Area

Source: Survey Department, Sri Lanka, Edited by Author

2 CASE STUDY 1 – FIELD STUDIES WITH METHODOLOGY TYPE 1

The main intention of this methodology was to observe the relationship between co-presence and social interactions. An appointed Technical Assistant (TA) recorded data from 6.00 SLST (9.30 JST) to 22 SLST (1.30 JST) on a selected day and the main researchers joined to the field studies via a Zoom meeting.

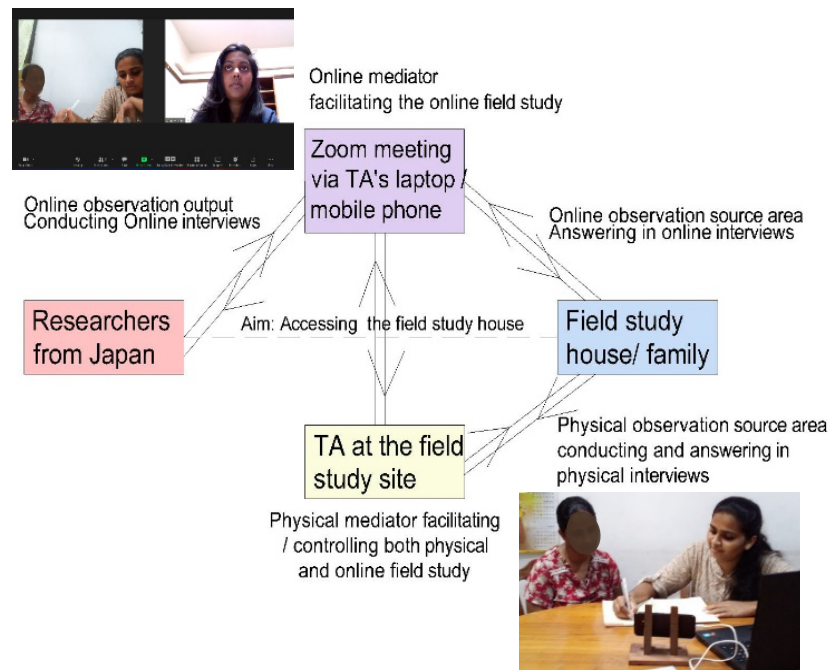


Figure 2. Pilot Study Online Field Study Observation and interview Data Collection System

2.1 Analysis of Pilot Study Data and Findings

Research findings identified two main types of co-presence: A. Co-presence with co-activities and B. Co-presence without co-activities.

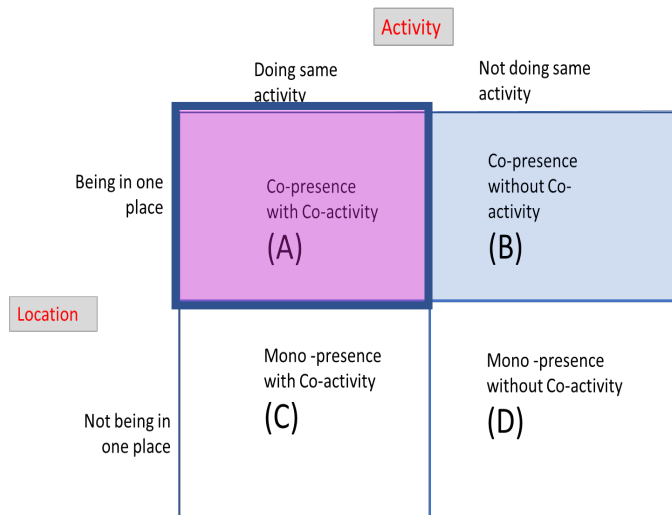


Figure 3. Identified Main Two Types of Co-presence

The detailed observations and interview data revealed that Co-presence occurrences with co-activities have higher levels of interactions, and this type has four more types of co-presence occurrences. The identified four types of co-presence types with co-activities are A1. Co-presence with functional and repeated activities, A2. Co-presence with not functional and repeated activities, A3. Co-presence with functional and not repeated activities, A4. Co-presence with not functional and not repeated activities.

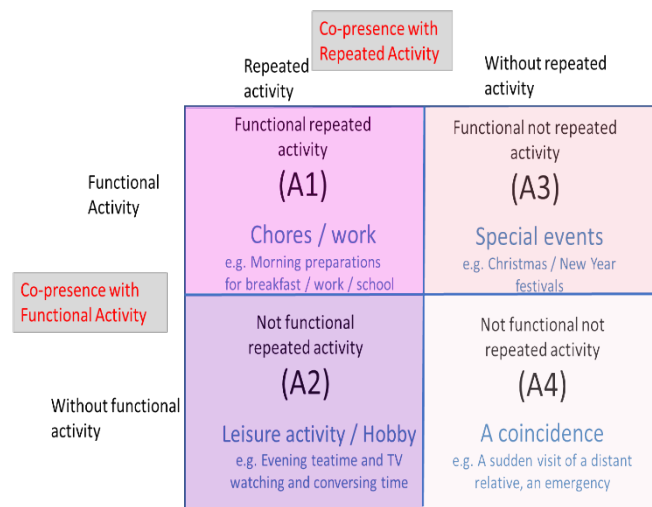


Figure 4. Identified Four Types of Co-presence with Co-activities

It was identified that co-presence types without repetition (A3 and A4 types) are rare in daily life and only co-presence types with repetitions (A1 and A2) can be observed in daily life. The observations and interviews show that co-presence occurrences without specific function (A2) create more possibilities of social interactions with feelings of joy and relaxation.

2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Data Collection Methodology Type 1

In this method, from the interviews and online site observations, a general idea about the feelings in specific functions at different times were obtained. But since this methodology had no video recording facility, it was difficult to determine and analyze the feelings related to concrete activities, behavior of the members, body language and verbal communications.

3 CASE STUDY NO. 2 – FIELD STUDIES WITH METHODOLOGY TYPE 2

To understand the dynamism of creation of the types of co-presence patterns identified in the first case study, second type of online field study methodology was designed.

In these intensive case study three remote controllable, 360° CCTV cameras were used. Placements of CCTV cameras were No.1 at living room, No. 2 at kitchen, No. 3 (a) at dining area, CCTV no. 3 (b) at verandah. Online fieldwork and observations started from 6.00 SLST (9.30 JST) to 22.00 SLST (1.30 JST).

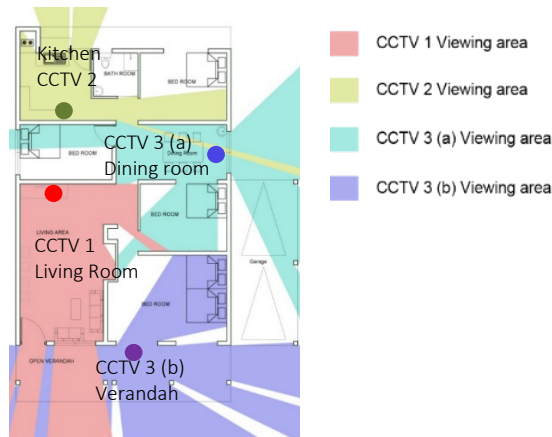


Figure 5. CCTV Camera Locations & Viewing Areas at Case Study No.2 House

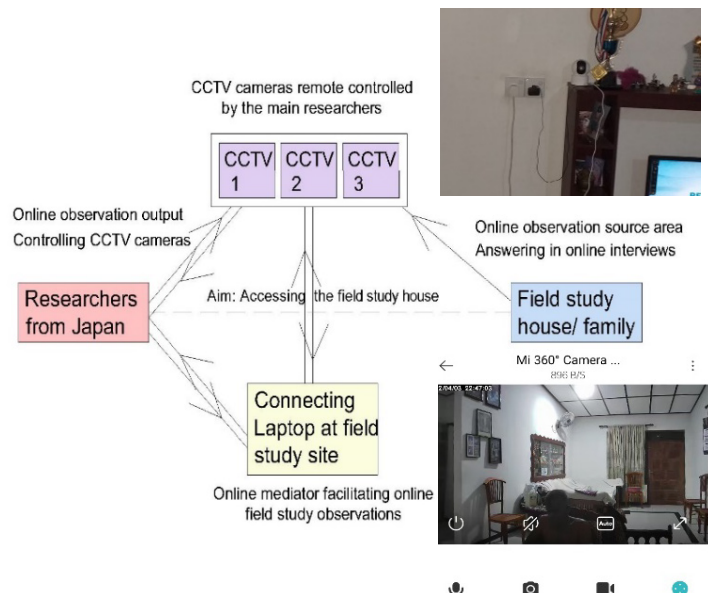


Figure 6. Case Study Online Field Study - Observation Data Collection System – Day 1

Family interviews were taken on the next day by the TA and the main researchers joined to the interviews via a zoom meeting.

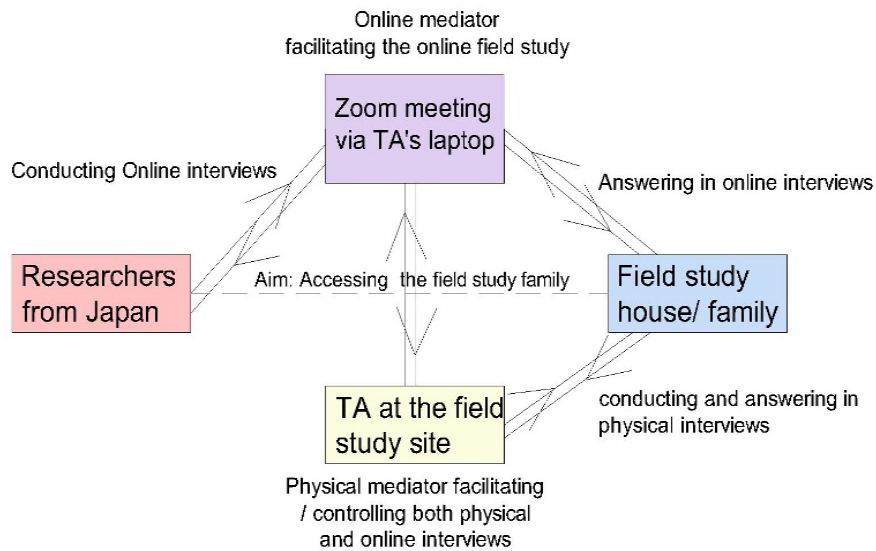


Figure 7. Case Study Online Field Study - Interview Data Collection System – Day 2

3.1 Analysis of Pilot Study Data and Findings

In the intensive case study analysis, the whole process from start to end of the co-presence occurrences were observed. From the video record observations and interviews, the feelings related to concrete activities, behavior of the members, body language and verbal communications during the co-presence type A1 and A2 were obtained and analyzed.

following behavioral patterns in each co-presence type were observed and identified.

- A1. Co-presence with functional and repeated activities - e.g., morning preparations of breakfast before going to school or work - body language and verbal communications are tensed and rapid and feelings are related to busyness and anxiousness with high focus on the task. These resulted limited social interactions.



Figure 8. Morning Cooking time on a weekday (Case Study Family 2) – Day 1

- A2. Co-presence with not functional and repeated activities – e.g., evening teatime - body language and verbal communications are relaxed and free flowing, and feelings are related to joy, relaxing, and openness. These resulted high level of social interactions.



Figure 9. Early evening relaxing time / Teatime on a weekday
(Case Study Family 2) – Day 1

3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Data Collection Methodology of the Intensive Case Studies

The CCTV cameras allowed the researchers to obtain simultaneous, multiple viewing areas with remote controllability. This method was more effective as after some time the family members' awareness of the CCTV cameras reduced, and they started to behave freely. The detailed video recordings were used for the in-depth analysis of co-presence types, feelings, body language and verbal communications of the members and the level of social interactions during each occurrence.

4 CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the structure of the observational means for the field work of a research which clarifies the relationship between co-presence and social interactions while identifying patterns of co-presence in the dwellings of the contemporary Sri Lankan suburbs. In the field studies, two online field work methodologies were experimented.

In the first methodology, two main types of co-presence, namely co-presence with or without co-activities were identified. From co-presence with co-activities four other main types were identified. They are A1. Co-presence with functional and repeated activities, A2. Co-presence with not functional and repeated activities, A3. Co-presence with functional and not repeated activities, A4. Co-presence with not functional and not repeated activities. These four categories indicate that functionality and frequency of a co-activity are important aspects in creation of co-presence. Though the 1st methodology was able to identify these four categories of co-presence through observations and interviews, the methodology was not adequate to understand the

dynamism of creation of these types of co-presence and related feelings resulting in social interactions.

Hence the second methodology with CCTV cameras was developed to understand the dynamism of creation of the types of co-presence patterns identified in the first case study with detailed video record observations to analyze the whole process of co-presence, related feelings, body language and the verbal interactions of the members leading to social interactions. The second methodology clarifies that co-presence patterns with specific functions (A1) result in limited social interactions due to the focused functions with feelings of anxiousness, busyness. Co-presence patterns without specific functions (A2) create more possibilities of social interactions due to the flexible activities with feelings of joy and relaxation.

From the second method, it was attempted to clarify why and how social interactions were generated from some copresence types and why and how social interactions were not generated from other co-presence types. The intensive case study number 2 shows that this second methodology is adequate to identify the sense of co-presence among members and their feelings at each co-presence occurrence leading to interactions. But to clarify and confirm these points in detail, a further developed future study with increased number of case studies are needed.

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