



SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE ELDERLY IN URBAN APARTMENT COMPLEXES: A STUDY IN HANOI CITY

Hoang Thi Hai Yen¹, Nguyen Manh Thang²

^{1,2} Trade Union University, Hanoi, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

In the context of rapid population aging along with height-intensive urbanization in Hanoi, more and more elderly people are living in urban apartment complexes. The change in residential space from a traditional community to a modern apartment environment has transformed the structure of social relationships, the level of community involvement and access to social support resources of the elderly. On the basis of approaching social capital as a social resource formed from the network of relationships, social beliefs and mutual support between individuals and communities, the article analyzes the relationship between social capital and the spiritual life of the elderly in apartment complexes in Hanoi city. The article focuses on the four components of social capital, including: social networks, community participation, social beliefs and social support; At the same time, it considers the manifestations of spiritual life through life satisfaction, feelings of happiness, feelings of loneliness, and feelings of self-worth. The results of the study show that social capital is closely related to the spiritual life of the elderly; In which close networks and regular social support have a pronounced positive effect on life satisfaction and mental security. On the contrary, limitations in community communication and social participation increase the risk of loneliness and deterioration in the quality of mental life of the elderly in urban apartment environments. From the research results, the article suggests a number of implications to build an elderly-friendly apartment environment through strengthening community connections, developing social activities for the elderly and strengthening social support networks at the residence.

KEYWORDS: social capital; spiritual life; the elderly; urban apartments; Hanoi; social support.

1. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam is entering a period of population aging with the fastest rate in Asia. According to this trend, the proportion of elderly people in the total population is increasing, leading to profound changes in family structure, care needs, and issues related to the quality of life of the elderly. In this context, the spiritual life of the elderly becomes a topic of significance not only for sociological research but also for policy-making for sustainable social development.

In parallel with the aging of the population is a strong urbanization process, especially in Hanoi city. The rapid development of high-rise apartment complexes has significantly changed the residence pattern of urban residents. If in the past, the elderly mainly lived in traditional residential communities with high social interaction, close neighborly relations and relatively close community support, now more and more elderly people live in apartment complexes with the characteristics of closed living spaces. High privacy and social interaction are highly dependent on individual initiative and organized community activities.

This change in the living environment poses many social issues of concern. In fact, although the material conditions and living infrastructure in modern apartment complexes can be significantly improved, it does not mean that the spiritual life of the elderly is correspondingly improved. Many international studies have shown that feelings of loneliness, lack of social connection, and decline in social roles are common risks for older

adults in modern urban environments. The spiritual life of the elderly is not only affected by physical health or economic conditions, but also strongly depends on the quality of social relationships, the level of community involvement and access to social resources.

In contemporary social science, social capital is seen as one of the important resources that promote personal development and improve the quality of life. Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam's approaches all emphasize that social capital is formed from networks of social relationships, beliefs, norms of interaction, and interpersonal support in the community. Social capital not only facilitates access to material resources and information, but also contributes to strengthening a sense of belonging to the community, enhancing peace of mind and improving the mental health of individuals. Recent studies have also shown that social capital plays a particularly important role for older people in maintaining social cohesion, reducing feelings of loneliness, and improving life satisfaction. In Vietnam, research on social capital has been conducted in many areas such as community development, employment, migration and career transition. However, studies focusing on the relationship between social capital and the spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment environments are relatively limited. The majority of existing buildings mainly reach the elderly from the perspective of social security, health care or family support, while the impact of social networks, community engagement and social support in



modern apartment spaces has not been fully and systematically analyzed.

Stemming from that research gap, this article focuses on analyzing the social capital and spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes in Hanoi city. The article considers social capital through four basic components: (1) social networks, (2) community participation, (3) social trust and (4) social support; At the same time, the spiritual life of the elderly is assessed through expressions such as life satisfaction, feelings of happiness, feelings of loneliness, and feelings of self-worth. The objective of the study was to clarify the level of social capital of the elderly in urban apartment complexes, analyze the reality of their spiritual life, and determine the relationship between the components of social capital and spiritual life. On that basis, the article contributes to supplementing empirical evidence for sociological research on the elderly in the context of height-based urbanization in Vietnam, and at the same time suggests some implications for building an elderly-friendly apartment environment. strengthen community connections and improve the quality of spiritual life of the elderly in today's urban society.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This study approaches social capital as a social resource formed and operated through networks of relationships, trusts, and interpersonal support mechanisms in the community. According to Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam, social capital not only reflects the existence of social relationships, but also demonstrates the ability to mobilize material, informational, and spiritual resources from those relationships in the service of individual adaptation and development. For the elderly, social capital is especially important because it is a social group that tends to narrow professional roles, reduce the intensity of social interaction, and increase the need for emotional support during the aging process.

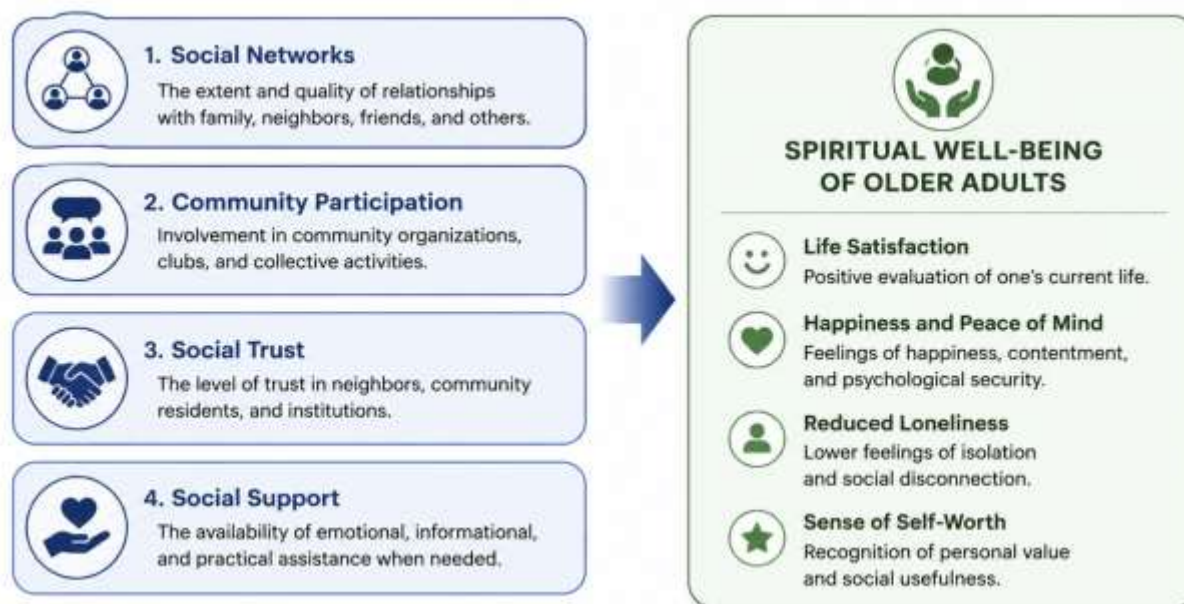
In the context of height-driven urbanization in Hanoi, the apartment environment creates a new social space for the elderly. This space not only opens up opportunities to access urban utilities, medical services, transportation and modern living conditions, but also transforms the forms of social interaction that are associated with traditional residential communities. If in traditional residential areas, neighborly relations are often maintained through direct contact and daily community activities, in an apartment environment, the interaction between residents is strongly influenced by the design of the living space, the building management mechanism, and the level of active participation of each individual. Therefore, the social capital of the elderly in the apartment cannot be seen as a fixed personal characteristic but as

a result of the dialectical interaction between the structure of the urban environment and the social participation behavior of the elderly.

From this perspective, the study examines social capital through four closely interconnected dimensions: social networks, community participation, social beliefs, and social support. Social networks reflect the level of maintaining relationships with neighbors, friends and relatives; community participation shows the ability to participate in collective activities of the Elderly Association, residents' clubs or socio-cultural activities at the apartment complex; social trust reflects a sense of safety, trust and cohesion with the community; and social support shows the ability to receive emotional and living help when facing difficulties in daily life. These four elements do not exist independently but interact with each other: a wider network of relationships facilitates community participation; regular community participation contributes to strengthening social trust; and social trust creates the foundation for the formation of sustainable social support mechanisms. The spiritual life of the elderly in the study is approached in the direction of human development, emphasizing the positive psycho-social state of the individual in the process of life. On the basis of a synthesis of studies on aging and mental health, mental life is reflected through life satisfaction, feelings of happiness and security, feelings of loneliness, and feelings of self-worth. These dimensions both reflect the subjective experience of the elderly and show their level of engagement with their families and social communities.

From the above approach, the study assumes that the urban apartment environment impacts the spiritual life of the elderly through the intermediate mechanism of social capital. When older adults maintain a regular network, actively participate in community activities, have trust in the community, and receive the necessary social support, they tend to feel more satisfied with life, less lonely, and maintain a sense of usefulness to their family and society. Conversely, limitations in social interaction and community participation can impair social capital, which in turn leads to feelings of isolation, reduced emotional peace of mind, and increases the risk of loneliness in old age.

This relationship is summarized in Figure 1, in which the urban apartment environment creates structural conditions that affect the formation of social capital; social capital has a direct impact on the spiritual life of the elderly; At the same time, active spiritual life promotes social participation and further strengthens social networks, forming a dynamic and continuous process of social capital regeneration.

Figure 1. Dialectical analysis framework on social capital and spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes

Source: Developed by the author based on Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam, and studies on ageing and social well-being.

Figure 1 shows the study of access to social capital as a dynamic intermediary mechanism between the urban apartment environment and the spiritual life of the elderly. Different from the linear approach that sees social capital as just a collection of existing social relationships, this study emphasizes the dialectical nature of the process of forming, operating and regenerating social capital in the context of height-oriented urbanization in Hanoi. The urban apartment environment creates structural conditions that are both favorable and restrictive for the accumulation of social capital of the elderly. On the one hand, concentrated residential spaces, common utility systems, community living areas and resident activities provide opportunities for the elderly to expand social interaction and form new networks of relationships. On the other hand, the characteristics of self-contained apartments, high privacy and diversity of residents' social backgrounds can degrade traditional neighborly relations and limit community cohesion. Therefore, the social capital of the elderly in the apartment is not an individual resource that exists independently, but is the result of the interaction between the structural conditions of the urban environment and the level of social participation of the elderly themselves.

The study examines social capital through four elements that are organically related to each other: social networks, community involvement, social beliefs, and social support. Social networks reflect the ability to maintain relationships with neighbors, friends and relatives; community participation shows the level of participation in collective activities of the Association of the Elderly, residents' clubs and socio-cultural activities; social trust reflects a sense of safety, trust and cohesion with the community; while social support demonstrates the ability to receive emotional and living help when facing difficulties in daily

life. These components do not exist separately but form a unified system of social interaction, in which the increase of one component often entails the consolidation of the others.

The spiritual life of the elderly is approached in the direction of human development, emphasizing the positive psycho-social state of the individual in the process of life. The study focused on four core manifestations: life satisfaction, feelings of happiness and security, reduced feelings of loneliness, and feelings of self-worth. These expressions both reflect the subjective experience of the elderly and show the degree to which they are connected, recognized and participated in social life. An important point of the analytical framework is the emphasis on social feedback mechanisms. When older adults have an active spiritual life, they tend to be more involved in community activities, expand social interactions, and maintain supportive relationships. This process continues to strengthen networks of relationships, increase trust and enrich social support resources, thereby regenerating and developing social capital. Therefore, spiritual life is not only the result of social capital but also a condition for the reproduction of social capital in the urban community.

From the above approach, the study assumes that the impact of the apartment environment on the spiritual life of the elderly does not take place directly but is mediated through the level of accumulation and application of social capital. Older adults who have a wider network of relationships, participate in the community more frequently, have higher social beliefs, and receive more social support are more likely to maintain life satisfaction, a sense of well-being, and a better sense of self-worth, at the same time, it significantly reduces the risk of loneliness in the current context of urbanization. This analytical framework therefore provides a theoretical basis for



simultaneously considering the impact of urban structure, the operating mechanism of social capital and the mental adaptation of the elderly in urban apartment complexes in Hanoi.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1. Characteristics of the study sample

On the basis of the developed analytical framework, this section presents empirical results aimed at clarifying the social characteristics of the elderly in urban apartment complexes, the level of social capital they possess, and the relationship between social capital and spiritual life. The analysis was carried out in

sequence from the socio-demographic characteristics of the study sample to the specific dimensions of social capital and finally the manifestations of the spiritual life of the elderly. In sociological research, the determination of the characteristics of the survey sample is important because factors such as gender, age, form of residence and length of time living in an apartment complex can directly affect the ability to form social networks. the level of community involvement as well as the need for emotional support of the elderly. Therefore, the analysis of the research sample characteristics is the necessary basis for interpreting the subsequent results of social capital and spiritual life.

Table 1. Basic characteristics of the elderly in the survey sample

Characteristics	Quantity	Rate (%)
Gender		
Male	112	43,1
Female	148	56,9
Age Group		
60–69 years old	118	45,4
70–79 years old	96	36,9
Be 80 years of age or older	46	17,7
Forms of Residence		
Living with spouse and children and grandchildren	156	60,0
Living with spouse only	74	28,5
Living alone	30	11,5
Duration of residence in the apartment		
Less than 3 years	52	20,0
3–10 years	134	51,5
Over 10 years	74	28,5
Total	260	100,0

Source: Author's survey results.

The results in Table 1 show that women account for a higher proportion than men (56.9%), reflecting the prevailing trend of the elderly population structure in Vietnam, where the average life expectancy of women is often higher than that of men. This disparity has certain sociological implications because older women tend to have a wider network of family and community connections, and tend to participate in local social activities more than men. In terms of age group, the group aged 60–69 accounted for the largest proportion (45.4%), followed by the group aged 70–79 years (36.9%). This shows that the majority of the surveyed people are young and elderly, still able to maintain social activities, participate in community activities and establish supportive relationships outside the family. This is a favorable condition to consider the role of social capital in improving spiritual life. Notably, 11.5% of seniors live alone, while 28.5% only live with a spouse. Although the majority still live with their children and grandchildren, the increasing trend of independent nuclear and elderly households in urban apartment complexes shows a significant transformation of the traditional family structure. From a social capital perspective, the group living alone is often more dependent on extra-family relationships, especially neighborly relationships and community support networks, so they are at higher risk of social loneliness and declining mental life if they lack the right social connections.

In terms of residence time, more than 80% of the elderly have lived in apartments for three years or more, of which the group of residents from 3-10 years accounts for the highest proportion (51.5%). The relatively long period of residence shows that the majority of respondents have had a certain process of adaptation to the apartment environment and have the opportunity to form stable social relationships with the surrounding resident community. This provides an important premise for further analysis of the level of social interaction, community involvement, and forms of social support in subsequent sections of the study. In general, the characteristics of the study sample reflect quite clearly the image of the elderly in urban apartment complexes today: most of them are in the relatively active age group, have a long enough residence period to establish social relations at the place of residence, but at the same time there is also a trend of increasing forms of independent residence. These characteristics show that the spiritual life of the elderly in the apartment building is not only influenced by material conditions but also closely associated with the ability to maintain and develop social resources in a modern urban environment. This is also the basis for continuing to consider the current situation of social networks and the dimensions of social capital in the next part of the article.



3.2. Social networks of the elderly in urban apartment complexes

Social networks are a fundamental component of social capital because they reflect the individual's level of connection to the surrounding community and the ability to access social resources through regular interactions. For seniors living in urban apartment complexes, social networking includes not only relationships with relatives, but also relationships with neighbors, friends, and other residents of the same building. In the context of

a shrinking family structure and an increasingly privatized urban pace of life, the level of social interaction of the elderly becomes an important indicator to assess the ability to maintain social capital at the residence. To examine the level of social connection of the elderly in apartment complexes, the study surveyed the frequency of communication with neighbors – a group of relationships that are of special significance to the daily life of high-rise urban residents.

Table 2. Frequency of communication with neighbors of the elderly

Frequency of communication	Quantity	Rate (%)
Daily	72	27,7
Several times a week	104	40,0
Several times a month	56	21,5
Rarely	28	10,8
Total	260	100,0

Source: Author's survey results.

The results in Table 2 show that the majority of elderly people still maintain a certain connection with the surrounding community. 67.7% of respondents communicated with their neighbors at least several times per week, of which 27.7% communicated daily and 40.0% communicated several times a week. This shows that the apartment environment is not yet a completely socially isolated space; Daily interactions in hallways, elevators, common areas or resident activities still create certain opportunities for social connection for seniors. However, the level of daily communication accounted for less than a third of the people surveyed. Compared to the characteristics of traditional residential communities, where neighborly relations frequently take place in daily life, this result reflects the trend of declining intensity of direct social interaction in modern urban environments. A proportion of 21.5% only communicate a few times a month and 10.8% rarely communicate with neighbors, indicating that there is still a group of elderly people with a fairly limited level of social connection. From the perspective of social capital theory, this result shows that spatial proximity does not automatically lead to social proximity. In high-rise apartment complexes, apartments are designed to ensure privacy, while the contact time between residents is often short and functional rather than strong community ties. This makes the social network of the elderly more dependent on the ability to actively communicate and participate in common activities of the community of residents.

Notably, when compared with the characteristics of the sample in Table 1, it can be found that the group that lives alone or only lives with a spouse often has a higher need to communicate with neighbors to compensate for the lack of interaction within the family. However, if neighborly relationships are not formed or maintained effectively, this group will be at higher risk of social loneliness and declining mental life. The results of Table 2 therefore not only reflect the level of

communication but also show an important feature of the life of the elderly in urban apartments: social capital exists but is differentiated, in which a part of the elderly still maintain relatively frequent interaction networks, while another part tends to narrow social relations and easily fall into a state of separation from the community of residents. The findings suggest that improving the spiritual well-being of older people in apartment complexes cannot be based solely on improving physical conditions or infrastructure, but rather on enhancing opportunities for social interaction and strengthening community networks. This is also the basis for continuing to consider the second dimension of social capital, which is the community participation of the elderly in urban apartment complexes.

3.3. Community participation of the elderly in urban apartment complexes

If social networks reflect the individual's level of connection to those around them, community involvement reflects the elderly's ability to maintain social roles and how engaged they are with the collective life of the residence. According to Putnam's approach, participation in community organizations and activities is an important mechanism that helps form and strengthen social capital through the creation of norms of cooperation, the expansion of social relations, and the strengthening of trust among community members. For older people living in urban apartment complexes, community involvement is especially important because this is a period when many people have left the labor market, professional relationships are gradually shrinking, and the need to maintain social interaction becomes more prominent. The level of participation in community activities is therefore considered an important indicator reflecting the ability to accumulate and apply social capital in a modern urban environment.

**Table 3. The level of participation in community activities of the elderly**

Community Activities	Frequency (%)	Occasional (%)	Opt-out (%)
Activities of the Elderly Association	48,1	31,2	20,7
Nutrition/Fitness	54,2	22,7	23,1
Arts – Entertainment	26,9	38,5	34,6
Neighborhood/resident group meetings	41,5	35,4	23,1

Source: Author's survey results.

The results in Table 3 show that older adults in urban apartment complexes still maintain relatively active levels of community involvement, despite significant differences between activity types. The activities with the highest rate of regular participation are health and physical training (54.2%), followed by activities of the Association of the Elderly (48.1%). This reflects the combined need for maintaining physical health and social communication among older adults in urban environments. The rate of 41.5% regularly participating in neighborhood group meetings or resident activities shows that a significant part of the elderly still retain interest in the general problems of the community where they live. This is a positive feature because participation in community governance activities not only helps the elderly access information but also provides an opportunity for them to maintain their social role and sense of recognition in the community.

However, the results also show that participation is uneven across different types of activities. Cultural and entertainment activities have a fairly high non-participation rate (34.6%), significantly higher than other activities. This shows that emotional, creative and entertaining activities have not really attracted many elderly people in apartment complexes. The cause may be related to differences in interests, health, mobility, or a lack of diversity in current community living programs.

When compared with the results in Table 2 on social networks, it can be seen that community involvement is strongly related to the level of social interaction. People who regularly participate in activities of the Elderly Association, health clubs or resident activities often have more opportunities to meet, exchange and maintain social relationships than those who participate little or no participation. This reinforces the thesis that community engagement is an important mechanism for expanding and regenerating social capital in urban apartment environments. From a dialectical perspective, community participation is not only the result of owning social capital, but also the motivation to continue accumulating social capital. People with a wider network of connections are more likely to

participate in group activities; On the contrary, it is the process of collective participation that helps them expand relationships, strengthen social trust and create mutual support mechanisms in the community of residents.

The results of Table 3 show that the social capital of the elderly in urban apartment complexes is formed not only through personal relationships but also through forms of organized social participation. Regular community activities act as "intermediate social spaces" to help older people maintain a social presence after retirement, reduce the risk of social isolation, and provide a foundation for emotional support in their daily lives. This finding has important implications for improving the spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes. The development of community activities tailored to the needs, health and interests of the elderly not only contributes to improving the quality of collective life but is also an important solution to increase social capital and prevent social loneliness in the context of population aging and urbanization today. This is also the basis for further analysis of social trust and social support – two other important aspects of social capital in the next part of the article.

3.4. Spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes

After examining the dimensions of social capital through relationship networks and community involvement, the study went on to analyze the spiritual life of the elderly in order to clarify their level of psycho-social adaptation in the urban apartment environment. According to the approach to human development, spiritual life not only reflects a subjective emotional state but also shows the degree to which the individual feels connected, recognized, and still maintains a meaningful social role in the community. To assess the mental life of older adults, the study used four indicators: life satisfaction, feelings of joy and optimism, levels of loneliness, and feelings of self-worth. These indicators allow for a relatively comprehensive reflection of both positive emotions and the risks of declining social cohesion in old age.

Table 4. Assessment of the spiritual life of the elderly

Indicators	Good (%)	Average (%)	Low (%)
Satisfied with life	62,3	28,5	9,2
Feeling happy and optimistic	58,8	31,9	9,3
Less lonely feeling	44,6	32,3	23,1
Feeling useful	65,4	24,2	10,4

Source: Author's survey results.

The results in Table 4 show that the majority of older people have a relatively positive assessment of their mental life. The rate of satisfaction with life reached 62.3% and the rate of feeling useful reached 65.4%, reflecting that the majority of

elderly people still maintain psychological stability and a positive sense of their role in the family and community. The rate of 58.8% feeling happy and optimistic shows that the living environment in modern apartment complexes can bring certain favorable



conditions in terms of security, sanitation, transportation and access to services, thereby contributing to supporting the positive emotional state of the elderly. However, the results also show that about 41.2% of the elderly still have only moderate or low levels of positive emotions, reflecting significant differences in the level of psycho-social adaptation between individuals.

Most notably, the indicator is related to feelings of loneliness. Only 44.6% reported feeling less lonely, while 23.1% regularly experienced high levels of loneliness. This is a relatively noteworthy rate in the context that the majority of elderly people are still living with their families or have relatively stable material conditions. These results suggest that loneliness in old age is not only caused by material deprivation or living alone, but is also closely related to the quality of social relationships and the level of participation in community life. When compared to the results in Tables 2 and 3, a relatively clear trend can be observed: people who have more frequent networks and active community participation tend to have higher levels of life satisfaction and feel less lonely. This is consistent with the theoretical assumption that social capital serves as a mental protection mechanism for older people, helping them maintain a sense of connection and care in modern urban environments.

In particular, the indicator of "feeling useful" reached the highest level (65.4%), which has remarkable sociological significance. This shows that many elderly people still maintain a certain role through taking care of grandchildren, supporting household chores, participating in activities of the Association of the Elderly or contributing to community activities. According to social role theory, continuing to be entrusted with responsibilities and recognized by the community is an important factor in helping older people maintain their self-esteem and mental stability after leaving the labor market. The disparity between the relatively high rate of feeling useful (65.4%) and the rate of feeling less lonely at only 44.6% shows a fact worth thinking about: older people may still maintain a certain social role but may not have achieved a deep emotional connection with those around them. In other words, the presence of social roles is not enough to replace the need to be shared, heard, and interacted with regularly in everyday life.

From a dialectical perspective, the results of Table 4 show that the spiritual life of the elderly is the product of the interaction between material conditions, social roles and the quality of social relationships. In an urban apartment environment, where traditional community relations tend to be looser, maintaining a social network and participating in community activities becomes an important condition for transforming social resources into life satisfaction, feelings of well-being and the ability to minimize loneliness in old age. These findings show that improving the spiritual life of the elderly in apartment complexes cannot only focus on improving housing conditions or urban services, but should focus on strengthening social connection mechanisms, creating opportunities for community participation, and strengthening forms of emotional support in the community. This is also the basis for further direct consideration of the relationship between social capital and the elderly's feelings of loneliness in the subsequent analysis of the study.

3.5. The relationship between community involvement and the elderly's feelings of loneliness

The results in the previous sections show that the elderly in urban apartment complexes have a completely uneven level of community involvement and spiritual life. To further clarify the role of social capital in spiritual life, the study continues to directly examine the relationship between community involvement – an important component of social capital – and older people's feelings of loneliness. In the study of aging, loneliness is considered one of the important manifestations of declining social cohesion and has a negative effect on the mental health, physical health as well as social adaptability of the elderly. According to the social capital approach, participating in community activities not only helps to expand the network of relationships, but also provides an opportunity for the individual to maintain a social role, receive recognition, and feel part of the community. Therefore, analyzing the relationship between these two variables is important in testing the central assumption of the study.

Table 5. The relationship between community involvement and feelings of loneliness

Community Involvement	Feeling less lonely (%)	Occasional loneliness (%)	Frequent loneliness (%)
Regular	68,4	24,1	7,5
Occasionally	43,7	36,5	19,8
Opt Out	21,3	38,3	40,4

Source: Author's survey results.

The results in Table 5 show very clear differences between groups of older people according to the level of community participation. In the group that participated regularly, up to 68.4% reported feeling less lonely, while the rate of regularly feeling lonely was only 7.5%. In contrast, in the group that did not participate in community activities, the rate of feeling less lonely decreased to 21.3%, while the rate of frequent loneliness increased to 40.4%, more than five times higher than in the group that participated regularly. This disparity suggests that community involvement is strongly linked to the social and

emotional state of the elderly. Those who regularly participate in activities of the Association of the Elderly, health clubs, arts or resident activities have many opportunities to contact, chat, share life experiences and maintain a sense of belonging to a specific social community. It is these regular social interactions that help reduce feelings of isolation and create emotional support in daily life.

These results also reinforce the findings in Tables 2 and 3. If Table 2 shows that communication networks with neighbors are still differentiated, and Table 3 reflects the relatively active



level of community involvement of a segment of the elderly, Table 5 shows that community involvement is an important mechanism for transforming social relationships into specific spiritual benefits. especially the ability to minimize feelings of loneliness. From the perspective of social capital theory, this result can be explained through the mechanism of social interaction and recognition. When participating in community activities, the elderly not only expand their network of relationships, but also receive attention, feedback, and recognition from those around them. This process helps to reinforce a sense of place and role in the community, thereby improving self-esteem and reducing feelings of neglect in old age. The participant group had an intermediate rate of occasional loneliness, with 43.7% feeling less lonely and 19.8% being lonely frequently. This suggests that the impact of community participation is not entirely "yes or no", but depends on the level of participation and frequency of social interactions. Formal activities or intermittent participation may not be enough to create sustainable social relationships and stable emotional support.

The results of Table 5 provide important empirical evidence for the hypothesis that community involvement has an impact on reducing older people's feelings of loneliness in urban apartment complexes. This is especially significant in the current context of urbanization, where many older people have to adapt to highly private living environments and traditional community relationships are becoming more and more lax. From a social policy perspective, the findings suggest that the development of communal living spaces, senior clubs, intergenerational activities, and resident engagement programs is not only recreational or movement but also an important social intervention to protect the mental health of older people. In other words, increasing community involvement is an effective way to strengthen social capital and improve the quality of spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes in Hanoi. These results confirm that social capital, especially the dimension of community participation, has an important role to play in maintaining social cohesion and reducing the risk of loneliness in old age. This is the basis for moving on to the Discussion section, where empirical findings will be contrasted with theories of social capital and studies of the elderly in the context of modern urbanization.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that social capital is closely related to the spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes in Hanoi. Elements of social capital such as social networks, community involvement, social beliefs, and social support all have a positive impact on life satisfaction, well-being, and self-esteem of older people. at the same time, it contributes to reducing the feeling of loneliness. These findings reinforce the study's central assumption that social capital is an important intermediate mechanism that helps older adults adapt to height-oriented urbanization.

A remarkable finding is that the social network of the elderly in apartments exists but is not really deep and frequent. Although the majority of seniors still communicate with their neighbors at least a few times per week, the rate of daily

communication is relatively low. This reflects the characteristics of the modern apartment environment, where households live close to each other spatially but the level of social interaction is highly dependent on individual initiative and community organization mechanisms. This finding is consistent with Putnam's view of the decline in forms of direct social interaction in modern urban societies, where the physical presence of a community does not automatically translate into substantive social cohesion. Research also shows that community engagement serves as an important mechanism for maintaining and regenerating social capital. Elderly people who regularly participate in activities of the Association of the Elderly, health clubs or socio-cultural activities have significantly lower levels of loneliness than those who do not participate. This result shows that social capital is not a resource that exists in place, but is formed through organized social interactions. Community activities provide opportunities for older people to maintain their social roles, expand relationships, and gain recognition from those around them, thereby strengthening their sense of belonging to the community. The results of the analysis in Table 5 show that the rate of frequent feeling lonely in the non-community group is more than five times higher than in the group that participates regularly. This provides strong empirical evidence for the thesis that community involvement is an important protective factor for the mental health of older adults. From a sociological perspective, it can be argued that community activities create an "intermediate social space" where older people can maintain emotional interactions, share life experiences, and continue to feel like a meaningful member of the community.

Among the four components of social capital, social support emerges as the factor with the strongest influence on the spiritual life of the elderly. People who feel attention, sharing, and support from family, neighbors, or friends tend to have higher levels of life satisfaction and less anxiety about health problems and daily living. This finding is consistent with studies on successful aging, in which social support is considered one of the important protective resources for the mental health of older adults. In the context of urban condominiums, support from neighbors and the resident community is especially meaningful for those who live alone or have limited family networks. One point to note is that favorable material conditions do not mean a positive spiritual life. Although the majority of seniors have a relatively high appreciation of housing conditions and living environments in apartment complexes, a significant portion still feel lonely on a regular basis. This shows that the quality of spiritual life of the elderly needs to be viewed from the perspective of social relations and community cohesion, rather than just based on physical indicators or urban infrastructure. In other words, the modernity of the living space may improve the quality of physical life but it does not necessarily create a sense of spiritual connection and sharing.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to confirming the relevance of the social capital approach as a social resource that has the potential to impact human development and quality of life. In the context of population ageing and height-oriented urbanization in Vietnam, social capital can be seen as a



form of soft resource to help older people adapt to changes in family structure, living environment and social roles. This expands the approach to elder research from a traditional model of well-being and care to a model of social cohesion and elder-friendly community development. The findings also suggest some important practical implications. Firstly, it is necessary to strengthen common living spaces in apartment complexes to create conditions for the elderly to meet and maintain regular social interaction. Secondly, it is necessary to support the development of intergenerational clubs and community activities for the elderly, because this is an important mechanism to expand relationship networks and reduce social loneliness. Third, apartment management needs to focus on building an environment where residents cohesive and support each other, instead of only focusing on technical and physical infrastructure management.

Overall, the study shows that social capital is an important factor for the spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes. In the context that Hanoi is continuing to expand its high-rise urban model and facing an increasingly pronounced aging population, strengthening social networks, promoting community participation, and strengthening forms of social support at residences will be necessary conditions to improve the quality of life and ensuring the sustainable social adaptation of the elderly in the current urban society.

5. CONCLUSION

Research on social capital and spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes in Hanoi city shows that the spiritual life of the elderly is significantly influenced by the quality of social relationships and the level of community cohesion at the place of residence. In the context of simultaneous height urbanization and population aging, examining the spiritual life of the elderly from the perspective of social capital allows to clarify the social dimensions of old age adaptation in the modern urban environment. The results of the study show that the social capital of the elderly is formed mainly through social networks, community involvement, social beliefs and social support. Although the majority of older adults maintain certain relationships with their neighbors and communities, the frequency and depth of these relationships vary significantly between groups of residents. In particular, those who live alone or participate in less community activities tend to have more limited social networks and face a higher risk of social loneliness. The study also shows that the spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes is generally relatively positive, as shown by a relatively high level of life satisfaction and self-worth. However, the feeling of loneliness is still a matter of concern for a part of the elderly, suggesting that the improvement of material conditions and living environment is not enough to ensure a positive spiritual life without meaningful social relationships and substantive participation in community life.

An important finding of the study was that components of social capital were positively linked to spiritual life, with social support and community involvement having the most pronounced effect. People who receive regular attention, sharing, and support

from family, neighbors, or community residents tend to be more satisfied with their lives, feel more secure, and experience fewer feelings of loneliness. At the same time, regular participation in community activities helps the elderly maintain their social roles, enhance their sense of belonging to the community, and reinforce their sense of being a useful member of the family and society. From an academic perspective, the study contributes to the addition of empirical evidence on the role of social capital as an important social resource for the quality of the spiritual life of older people in the context of urbanization in Vietnam. The results of the study show that social capital is not only the result of social interactions, but also a mechanism to help older people adapt to changes in family structure, residential environment, and social roles in old age. This expands the approach to elder research from the traditional model of well-being and care to an approach to social engagement and developing an age-friendly community.

On the basis of the research findings, the article proposes a number of implications to improve the spiritual life of the elderly in urban apartment complexes. First of all, it is necessary to increase common living spaces and community activities for the elderly in apartment complexes to create conditions for them to maintain regular social interaction. Secondly, it is necessary to promote intergenerational club models, cultural and sports activities and community support networks to expand opportunities for communication and social participation of the elderly. Thirdly, the management and development of apartments should focus on building a cohesive, mutually supportive and elderly-friendly environment for residents, considering this as an important criterion of sustainable urban development in the context of the current aging population. The study confirms that social capital is an important condition for maintaining life satisfaction, a sense of well-being, and social adaptability of the elderly in urban apartment complexes. In the process of modern urban development, strengthening social networks, strengthening community participation and developing social support mechanisms at residences should be considered as a priority in urban development and elderly care policies in Viet Nam in the coming period.

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