

# HOUSING ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND KOREA

Bokcha Yoon, Yonsei University  
Rosemary Carrucci Goss and Youngjoo Kim, Virginia Tech

Many changes in the home-building industry, society, and the economy have occurred since Montgomery (1963) examined the first home expectations of women college students in the early 1960s. A follow-up study of males and females at Virginia Tech and Radford University in 1988 revealed that students' expectations and aspirations had increased dramatically (Goss and Dagwell, 1992).

In only one major area of comparison did the college student of 1960 and 1988 agree. In terms of what influenced their housing expectations, both groups agreed that other homes they had seen had influenced their ideas about housing most.

As one might expect, housing preferences and expectations for many items changed over the 28-year period. Features such as microwaves and whirlpools did not exist on the consumer market in 1960. For those items that can be compared, one can note that 66 percent of the students in 1988 expected a family room as compared with 26 percent in 1960. Only 23 percent of the 1960 respondents expected an office or den as compared with 57 percent in 1988.

The world today is changing dramatically as we become more interconnected as a global economy. How do students in other countries and cultures view their future housing? Do these views differ from housing aspirations and expectations of college students in the United States? Are international students who study in the United States influenced by American housing styles and norms? Will these influences impact foreign students' aspirations and expectations for housing when they return home?

The purpose of this study was to determine the differences between housing aspirations and expectations of college students at a major university in the United States and at two Korean universities.

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the Korean portion of the study were collected in November/December, 1997. Data for the United States sample was collected in March/April, 1998.

The questionnaire, "Housing Survey of Senior University Students," developed for the 1988 study was used. In some cases the questions were modified for the Korean sample because certain housing options were not available.

The Korean sample was distributed to 948 students in the classroom. Of the 948 distributed, 248 were distributed to housing, architecture, and urban planning students. Four hundred other students at Yonsei University and 300 students in the consumer and housing areas at Catholic University in Buchon received the questionnaires. A total of 805 questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 85%.

The U.S. sample was collected at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University using the same methodology as the 1988 study. The questionnaires were distributed through U.S. mail. Follow-up procedures, as described in the Dillman (1978) total design method for mail surveys, were implemented.

Differences between the Korean and U.S. sample were examined using the T-Test procedure and chi-square procedures resulting in the following findings:

- American students had greater desires for specific features; however, expectations were similar for both groups.
- Korean students (76%) expected their first purchased home to be an apartment while American students expected to buy a single-family home (68%).
- American students differed significantly in the number of bedrooms (3 for Americans, 2 for Koreans) and bathrooms (2 for Americans and 1 for Koreans) expected.
- There were no housing values differences between Korean and American students in terms of affordability, a well-planned house, individuality, a beautiful house, and the importance of a healthy environment. Korean students valued privacy, being close to work and living near entertainment more than Americans. Americans valued a large lot and good schools more than Korean students.

Few housing research studies have used almost identical instruments to measure housing desired and expectations of two groups from such different cultures in

the same time period. These research findings make possible a discussion of cultural housing differences in an international setting. For many variables there were differences between U.S. and Korean students. However, the results presented here raise the question: Are differences related to culture or location? Would students from a New York City university respond more like the Korean students because of the urban environment? As housing researchers, we must be careful about attributing differences to culture when other factors may be involved.

### References

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