

ACCOMMODATION PREFERENCES AMONG A SELECT GROUP OF FILIPINO COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper's inquiry is on accommodation preferences of select college students in Manila. The study asserts that business owners must give prime to students' preferences as a coherent housing business approach of mutual benefits. Furthermore, sought out preferences are deemed to help architects and planners in addressing market needs. Conjoint analysis is employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire, orthogonal cards, and Robotfoto to analyze the responses of 200 college students from various private schools in Manila. Using an SPSS 23 software, preferences on housing accommodation are, in sequence: price, facilities, type of housing, and location. The results reveal that students are willing to pay around Php 7,000 monthly, in favor of condominiums over apartments. Additionally, places near the city center and workplace are preferred, with a significant number who specified an individual rather than a sharing -type of accommodation. Results were further discussed with supporting literature.

Keywords: accommodation preference, conjoint analysis, college students

INTRODUCTION

While leaving parents' homes is a crucial stage for young adults (Jordyn & Byrd, 2003), it also provides them a greater sense of responsibility and self-management (Shehper, 2015). This study ascertains the accommodation preferences of a selected group of college students in Manila via conjoint analysis. The study asserts that the accommodation preferences of college students should be given priority for the benefit of consumers and business owners. Besides, property practitioners can use the findings of this study to analyze their current marketing strategy, business model, and pricing alternatives, leading to significantly better products for consumers (Rahadi, Wiryono, Koesrindartoto & Syamwil, 2015). These preferences according to Shehper (2015) can be of help in the planning and designing of student residences from a managerial point of view.

Furthermore, understanding users' preferences will allow architects and planners to provide affordable and more acceptable housing projects, alongside reasonable profits for developers (Delgado & De Troyer, 2017). Finally, this study will provide insights into students' preferences in off-campus housing (Johari, Mohd, Abdullah, AhmadMohamed, & Sani, 2017).

In the current trend, housing development and rapid enrolment change show an impact on students' well-being in inconvenient ways (Muslim, Karim & Abdullah, 2012). Collective housing or co-housing has gained popularity in the market because it promotes social, economic, and environmental sustainability, advancing a better quality of life (Verhetsel, Kessels, Zijlstra, Van & Bavel, 2016).

In recent decades, the term student housing has been highlighted as a body of knowledge in housing studies (Johari, Mohd, Abdullah, Mohamed, & Sani, 2017). Before this, one of the most ignored areas in studies about issues involving college and university students is their preferences for housing accommodation. While housing accommodation has been a conventional topic in the discipline of environment and behavior, the lack of scholarly works in this area of study may be due to the paucity of theoretical foundation, relevant research instruments, unidentified underlying factors, (Khozaei, Hassan & Razak, 2011), and lack of attention to student housing preferences in both student housing and co-housing researches (Verhetsel, Kessels, Zijlstra, & Van Bavel, 2016).

This investigation probes into researches on residential satisfaction, housing adjustment theory, and housing careers towards understanding the students' preferences on accommodation (Moore, Carswell, Worthy & Nielsen, 2019).

Although this topic has been widely studied in different countries such as Nigeria (Taiwo, Yusoff & Aziz, 2018) (Kolawole & Boluwatife, 2016); Ecuador (Delgado & De Troyer, 2017); Korea (Han & Jung, 2016); India (Kumar Gupta & Malhotra, 2016); and Turkey (Zortuk, Koç & Burhan 2014), it has occurred to the researchers that literature is insufficient when it comes to college student's accommodation preferences in the Philippines.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researchers employed the Rational Choice Theory to find out the accommodation preferences of college students in Manila. As stated by Scott in 2000, Rational Theory, an idea built by sociologists and political scientists, states that all action is fundamentally "rational" in character and that people quantify the possible costs and benefits of every exertion before deciding what to do. The rational choice theory comes in many varieties, depending on the assumptions that are made concerning preferences, beliefs, and constraints—the key elements of all rational choice explanations. Preferences can have many roots, ranging from culturally transmitted tastes for food or other items, to personal habits and commitments (Witteck, 2013). Additionally, based on Coleman in 1986, Rational Choice Theory has “a special attractiveness” as a starting point for hypothesis because it is an absolute conception of activity that “needs no additional questions”.

In the housing context, the said theory was used in determining residential satisfaction (Weidemann & Anderson, 1985), housing choice (Mulder, 1996), older people's decisions about extra-care housing (Baxter, et.al, 2019), and dynamics of public housing (Freeman, 1998). Similarly, in this study, the theory will be used in determining accommodation preferences of college students studying in Manila, aiming to help the managerial point of view and student assessment in choosing the house (Shehper, 2015).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Price

Within the scope of housing, the rent price is a determining factor of accommodation preference. Nijenstein, Haans, Kemperman, & Borgers in 2015 concluded that price is considered as the primary housing attribute that affects the housing preferences of students. According to Republic Act no. 9653 of the Philippines known as Rent Control Act of 2009, “Rent” is defined as the amount paid for the use or occupancy of a residential unit whether payment is made on a monthly or another basis. The price of houses, a model of rent payment, and time of payment are the categories of pricing that has relevance to preferences (Afma, Rahadi & Mayangsari, 2019). As stated by Reichert in 1990, population shifts, employment, and income trends are the local factors that often have a unique impact on housing prices. Additionally, income has a statistically significant impact since those in the low-income bracket of consumers are most likely to choose apartments as their dwelling type preference (Opoku & Abdul-Muhmin, 2010). As a result, in high rates of urbanization, it is difficult to get accommodation easily which results in a high rate of house rents; hence, the level of satisfaction on house rents was very low. (Akinyode, 2014).

Notably, previous studies have highlighted that price is among the top 3 most important attribute of accommodation preferences (Afma, Rahadi & Mayangsari, 2019) (Johari, Mohd, Abdullah, Ahmad@ Mohamed, & Sani, 2017) (Verhetsel, Kessels, Zijlstra, et al. 2017) (Kolawole & Boluwatife, 2016) (Nijenstein, Haans, Kemperman, & Borgers, 2014) (Shehper, Z. 2015) which contradicts studies with results concluding that price is less important in accommodation preferences (Tavares, Pacheco & Almeida, 2019) (Khan, Azmi, Juhari, Khair, & Daud, 2017) (Muslim, Karim, Abdullah, & Ahmad, 2013). The foregoing discussion has considered a wide range of variables and the effects of price on students' accommodation satisfaction. To date, there have been no studies that examined the preferences of Filipino students regarding the price of house accommodation.

H1: Students prefer accommodation priced at around 7,000 Php.

Type of Housing

Among the basic facilities which can enhance the academic productivity of students of a tertiary institution is decent housing (Akinyode, 2014). According to Thomsen and Eikemo in 2010, housing satisfaction depends on the architectural characteristics of a building. Several researches concluded that the type of housing is considered a significant attribute affecting the preference of students' accommodation satisfaction (Verhetsel, Kessels, Zijlstra & Van Bavel, 2016) (Johari, Mohd, Abdullah, Ahmad@ Mohamed & Sani, 2017). Zortuk, Koç, and Burhan in 2014 stated that students do not prefer to stay in an old apartment. Additionally, studies have shown that there are different preferences when it comes to the type of housing such as medium or large scale dormitory, layout type to small-sized apartment type (Han & Jung, 2016), small house, specifically the duplex and apartment (Opoku & Abdul-Muhmin, 2010), studio flat (Verhetsel, Kessels, Zijlstra & Van Bavel, 2016), small house apartment and duplex (Opoku, Abdul-Muhmin, 2010), and apartment-style and self-contained singles (Krum, Davis & Galupo, 2013). However, the above studies were conducted in countries apart from the Philippines; hence, no studies have been made to know the preferences of Filipino students in terms of the type of housing.

H2: Students prefer accommodation in an apartment type.

Location

Previous researches considered location as one of the significant variables in housing preferences (Zikmund, 2003), (Amole, 2009), (Nel Korevaar, 2004), (Thomsen & Eikemo, 2010), (Hilmy et al, 2013), (Khozaei & Ramayah, 2012), opposing the study of Delgado & De Troyer in 2017 and Opoku & Abdul-Muhmin in 2010, which indicates that location is the least essential in housing preference. On the other hand, Murray, Enke, and Ramakrishnan (2004) stated that the location of a place to reside is often associated with transportation costs, the security of jobs, moving expenses, and more time for daily activities. Moreover, location categories include the distance from campus, distance from the restaurant, and the availability of public transportation (Afma, Rahadi & Mayangsari, 2019). Besides, the choice for outside campus accommodation could be induced from the rules and restrictions that are operational in halls of residences on

university campuses. The choice of accommodation locations does not have a significant relationship on the academic performance of students (Etikan, Bala, Babatope, Yuvali & Bakir, 2017). Nevertheless, different location preferences have emerged from different studies, namely: housing preference in the city center (see Zortuk, Koç & Burhan, 2014); near-religious center; near activity center; near shopping center; near education center; unique and overall location (see Rahadi, Wiryono, Koesrindartoto & Syamwil, 2015); and 10 minute distance from the apartment to school (Shehper, 2015). These studies have examined how satisfied users are with their environments in other countries. Nevertheless, there is very little research to inform whether the results of studies are generalizable to other developing countries such as the Philippines.

H3: Students prefer accommodation near the school.

Facilities

The study of Thomsen and Eikemo in 2010 indicates that ownership in facilities is considered a significant factor in students' accommodation preferences. There is high pressure on the private housing market, which often results in high rent, low-standard accommodation, and problems between students and other residents in certain areas of the city (Thomsen & Eikemo, 2010). According to Verhetsel, et al. (2016), there is a high preference for private facilities. Students prefer sharing facilities with fewer people, living on higher floor levels, and studying outside the bedroom which falls under wanting for privacy. In contrast, the increase in rent prices of private student housing may lead to part of the student population to opt for co-housing to lower housing expenses.

Co-housing is an umbrella term used for various types of collective housing. It promotes social, economic, and environmental sustainability, and contributes to a better quality of life which results in gaining popularity in the housing market (Verhetsel, Kessels, Zijlstra & Van Bavel, 2016). House sharing is advantageous because of 'reduction of rental and maintenance cost' whilst disadvantageous on "difference of daily life pattern". Also, a housemate who has a similar lifestyle and same gender is preferred (Han & Jung, 2016). In terms of double-sharing room, students' prefer staying in a single room with a shared bathroom (Khozaei, Hassan, Al Kodmany & Aarab, 2014), nevertheless, the double bedroom was the most preferred type of bedroom because they want to share privacy with fewer people (Amole, 2011). To have a better understanding of students' accommodation satisfaction, there must be at least a firm understanding of the ownership of facilities they prefer.

H4: Students prefer accommodation that implements shared facilities or cohousing

METHODS

Research Design

Conjoint analysis was used in this study to determine the accommodation preferences of college students studying in

Manila. In a study conducted by Braganza, De Guzman, Gonzaga, Llamasaresa, in 2016, a conjoint analysis was also used as a research design in finding out the listening activity preferences of a select group of Grade 7 and 8 Students from Philippine Provincial Schools. It is a popular marketing research technique that is utilized to regulate what features a new product should have and how it should be priced (Curry, 1996). It is a concept based on the integration of information whereby users will integrate the information on a set of determinant attributes, further forming an overall opinion on the product profiles (Moore, Gray-Lee & Louviere, 1998). Within the scope of housing preferences, conjoint analysis was used to find out the buyers' preferences for residential property (Iman, Pieng, & Gan, 2012), low-income consumers in Saudi Arabia (Opoku, & Abdul-Muhmin, 2010), housing choice, and preference (Wildish, B. 2015) (Zinas & Jusan, 2012) and residential area preferences (Hasanzadeh, Kytta & Brown 2016).

Study Site and Sample

To achieve the overall purpose of the study, a total of 200 respondents will be purposively selected. The survey questionnaire will be distributed to students possessing the following criteria: a) 18-25 years of age; b) college student; and c) studies in private schools in Manila. In a news article published by the Philippine Star: "Student population soars to historic 27.7 million" in 2018, around 4.1 million students are enrolled in private schools in Manila; hence, the chosen locale of study.

Data Measures

Upon reviewing recent studies, researchers have identified four major attributes of student accommodation preferences. An equilateral cluster has been made using the SPSS 23 and four (4) sets of orthogonal plan choice of possible combinations had emerged. From there, we attained 13 cards and had reserved three (3) sets of orthogonal plans. These bundles of choices were then presented through an equilateral card, prepared by using illustration board cutouts and layouts containing pictures and large fonts for each level.

Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

The data collection of the study underwent ethical considerations to guarantee the willingness of the students living and studying around the city of Manila. Data gathering was carried out from November 18 to 23, 2019, with a total of 200 participants. Before the data gathering, an informed and written consent was obtained to ensure the permission of each participant. Also, the researchers fully informed the respondents about the background of the study before survey questionnaires were congruously signed by each of the respondents indicating their uncoerced participation. It was conferred that voluntary participation includes the right to disassociate themselves from the study at any time without requiring explanation. The respondents were likewise guaranteed confidentiality which ensured that access to all information was only granted to the researchers. Furthermore, the safety and security of the respondents were assured, making sure that only information relevant to the study were collected and assessed.

Robotfoto was utilized as the main tool for questionnaire orientation. The Balanced Incomplete Block Design (BIBD) was also explained to the participants for data collection. BIBD includes a ranking of the choice bundle from the most preferred to the least preferred (Baek, et al. 2006).

RESULTS

Table 1 depicts the demographic profile of the respondents. Out of the 200 respondents, 102 (51%) were male, 66 (33%) are age 20 years old, and 141 (70.50%) are living with their parents at home. 101 (50.50%) of the respondents have employment as their source of income. In terms of family’s monthly income, 50 (25%) has an income of less than ₱30,000. Out of 200 respondents, 103 (51.50%) has less than ₱5,000 monthly income, while 85 (42.50%) has less than 30 minutes of travel time from home to school.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents (n=200)

Profile		Count	%
Gender	Male	102	51.00
	Female	98	49.00
Age	18.0	43	21.50
	19.0	61	30.50
	20.0	66	33.00
	21.0	18	9.00
	22.0	6	3.00
	23.0	3	1.50
	24.0	1	.50
	25.0	2	1.00
Persons Living Within Your Household	Parents	141	70.50
	Relatives	65	32.50
	Peers	11	5.50
	Alone	10	5.00
	Others	5	2.50
Source of Income	Employment	101	50.50
	Business	82	41.00
	Pension	4	2.00
	Allowance	27	13.50
	Others	3	1.50
Family’s monthly income	Less than 30,000	50	25.00
	30,000-50,000	47	23.50
	50,000-70,000	35	17.50
	70,000-90,000	22	11.00
	90,000-110,000	15	7.50
	110,000-130,000	8	4.00
	130,000-150,000	5	2.50
	More than 150,000	18	9.00
Monthly allowance	Less than ₱ 5,000	103	51.50
	₱ 6,000 - ₱ 10,000	76	38.00
	₱ 11,000 - ₱ 15,000	14	7.00
	₱ 16,000 - ₱ 20,000	5	2.50
	More than ₱ 20,000	2	1.00
Currently enrolled in College	Yes	199	99.50
	No	1	.50
Type of school currently enrolled in	Public College/ University	0	0.00
	State College/ University	8	4.00
	Private College/ University	192	96.00
Travel time from home to school	<30mins	85	42.50
	30 mins-1hr	52	26.00
	1hr-1hr & 30mins	29	14.50
	1hr & 30 mins to 2hrs	23	11.50
	More than 2hrs	11	5.50

Table 2 shows the estimated part-worth for each level of price, housing, location, and facilities. Overall, the most desirable levels of these factors are around 7,000 monthly, condominium, location, and privacy, respectively. These are the levels with the highest estimated part-worth or utility estimate. The table also indicates the average importance score of each of the factors. This result compares the effects of each of the factors on the total utility of accommodation. The values indicate that the most significant factor when choosing accommodation is the price. The importance values of the other three factors are quite near to each other concerning the importance value of the price. This implies that a large part of the total utility of accommodation is based mainly on its price.

Table 2. Conjoint Analysis Results (n=200)

Attributes	Levels of Attributes	Utility (part-worth)	Importance Value (%)
Price	around 7,000 monthly	1.129	63.11
	around 10,000 monthly	.336	
	around 13,000 monthly	-1.464	
Housing	boarding house	-.038	12.46
	condominium	.039	
	studio apartment	-.001	
Location	school	-.004	11.1
	city center	.002	
	workplace	.002	
Facilities	individual	.079	13.27
	shared with peers	.056	
	shared with the house of landlord	-.134	
Pearson’s R = 1.000 (p < 0.05)			
Kendall’s Tau = 1.000 (p < 0.05)			
Kendall’s Tau for Holdouts = 0.667 (p = 0.087)			

The outcomes of the statistics exhibited by the conjoint analysis model performed by this study were considered fit because Pearson’s R significance was 1 and Kendall Tau’s significance was 1.

The correlations between the observed rankings and the rankings based on the estimated utilities are shown as footnotes of Table 2. Given the nature of the rankings, Kendall’s Tau is more appropriate as an agreement measure of the rankings. The estimate for Tau is 1.000, and the p-value suggests that it is significant at the 0.05-level (evidence in favor of the positive association between the observed and estimated utilities). The computed coefficient indicates perfect agreement between the actual rankings of the respondents and the rankings based on the estimated part worth. Notably, this estimate is only based on the design cards. To further test the predictive power of the estimated conjoint model, Kendall’s Tau was also estimated based only on the holdout cards. The estimated coefficient is 0.667, indicating a moderate to a strong agreement between the actual rankings and the rankings based on the estimated part-worth; however, this is not significant at the 0.05-level.

Concerning the part-worth of the price which results from conjoint analysis—the lower the price, the higher the part-worth. As for the housing attribute, condominium exhibited the highest part worth. When it comes to the location of accommodation, it

showed that both the city center and workplace revealed to have the highest part worth and is a top priority when it comes to location preferences (.022). Lastly, for the Facilities, the results revealed that individual (.079) is the most preferred of students in manila to be followed by sharing with peers (.056) and the least important is shared with the landlord (-.134).

Table 2 reveals the results of the conjoint technique which showed that price is the most important factor in accommodation preferences of selected college students (63.11), followed by facilities (13.27), type of housing (12.46), and location (11.15).

DISCUSSION

Using preference-based conjoint analysis, this study elicited the accommodation preferences of a selected group of (n=200) college students in Manila. According to the assessed accommodation preference, the price was deemed the most important, and the location of accommodation as the least important. Price ranked the most important because students studying at universities gave more attention to low rental prices. Reichert in 1990 asserted that population shifts, employment, and income trends are the local factors that often have a unique impact on housing prices. For the least ranked attribute, the location was chosen because it is widely believed that in modern times, location is becoming the least important consideration. The presence of sub-centers that provide the necessary urban facilities such as health care, education, sports, and entertainment make this attribute less significant (Delgado, A., & De Troyer, F., 2017). This is supported by Opoku, R. A., & Abdul-Muhmin, A. G. in 2010 that low-income consumers would give more priority to having accommodation rather than its location.

Regarding the first hypothesis (H1), the most preferred level is around ₱7,000. This can be attributed to the family's income since the respondents are college students studying in private schools. It is stated by Hofman et al. (2006) that although people generally prefer to select as many options as possible in other characteristics in accommodations, they are less interested if this also means an increase in price. Additionally, income has a statistically significant impact on those in the low-income bracket of consumers. (Opoku & Abdul-Muhmin, 2010).

A condominium type of accommodation was chosen in the type of housing attributes. In contrast to our second hypothesis (H2), college students prefer condominiums. Findings indicate that there is a growing segment of the population choosing to live in downtown condominiums (Willcocks, 2011). This can be explained by the security and convenience provided by a condominium unit. Also, reports claimed that condominium ownership offered women new-found freedom, financial independence, and personal security (Kern, 2011), (Donovan and Giesecking, 2012). This result is supported by Ariyawansa, R. G., & Udayanthika, A. G. P. I. (2012), stating that condominium properties are preferred because it offers higher security than living in single houses. Furthermore, condominium units have high-speed modern lifts, swimming pools, gymnasiums, club, restaurant, playground, laundry, etc, that gives comfort to renters.

Regular maintenance of works and repairs were carried out by the management corporation which makes living convenient.

Near the city center and workplace were preferred following our third hypothesis (H3). College students prefer to stay near the city center since social life takes place in city centers which gives them entertainment opportunities. A central location of the accommodation also ensures a much easier and less tiring transportation opportunity to the students (Zortuk, M., Koç, E., & Burhan, H. A., 2014). Additionally, the location of a place to reside is often associated with transportation costs, the security of jobs, moving expenses, and more time for daily activities (Murray, Enke and Ramakrishnan, 2004).

In terms of the facilities of the accommodation, levels were arranged in the following order, individual, shared with peers, and shared with the house of the landlord, respectively. As with our fourth hypothesis (H4), college students prefer to live in an individual type of accommodation because privacy is significant in choosing a place to stay. This is supported by Verhetsel, Kessels, Zijlstra & Van Bavel in 2016, who stated that students preferred sharing facilities with fewer people, living on higher floor levels, and studying outside the bedroom, which falls under wanting for privacy.

CONCLUSION

This paper inquires on the accommodation preferences of a select group of college students in Manila via conjoint analysis. It asserts that the accommodation preferences of college students should be given importance and be recognized for better decision making in choosing housing and for business owners to better develop their products. We surveyed conjoint analysis using Robotfoto and orthogonal cards. The results of the conjoint analysis technique revealed that the accommodation pricing preference of college students studying in private schools in Manila: 7,000 Php monthly, with a 1.129 part worth. The condominium is revealed to be the priority of college students when it comes to their preference for the type of housing with a part worth of 0.39. Both the city center and workplace are the students' preferences when it comes to their location preference with a part worth of .002. Lastly, for the facilities, they preferred to accommodate individuals with a part worth of .079. The researchers hope that the findings presented in this study will encourage future researchers with an interest in the inquiry of College Students' accommodation preferences.

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