

MASTER'S THESIS

Perceived environmental quality of commodity housing in China: Guangzhou and Beijing case study

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**Perceived Environmental Quality of Commodity Housing in China:
Guangzhou and Beijing Case Study**

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for the degree of
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Abstract

Commercialization of urban housing is the core of housing reform programs in China. Its ultimate goal is to change housing from a kind of welfare to a commodity in which housing prices are determined by market mechanism. The buyers or renters of commodity housing, therefore, become the 'consumers' in the emerging housing markets. The concept of consumer sovereignty has perceptibly emerged and housing preferences and needs of consumer become a vital factor in designing housing development projects.

In this study, the Perceived Environmental Quality Scale (PEQS) developed by Carp and Carp (1982) is used to assess respondent's satisfaction with the residential environment in Guangzhou and Beijing. The PEQS score can be used to imply the degree of satisfaction of the housing environment of the resident. The data of the household surveys conducted in the two cities revealed that Beijing respondents were more satisfied with their residential environment than the Guangzhou respondents. However, respondents in both cities gave more positive appraisal on the quality of the neighborhoods than their own housing units. Particularly, the most dissatisfied items for respondents in both cities include the provision of privacy, lighting and ventilation of their housing units.

There are many factors influencing people's satisfaction in a housing. In this thesis, it is postulated that the dissatisfaction of residents towards their housing environment might be due to the "incongruent" between residents' expectation and the actual residential environment. Several socio-psychological theories are used to explain the empirical findings. For instance, Maslow's need hierarchy theory is used to explain the pattern of human needs in housing and its effects on the degree of satisfaction. Several more notable items, such as lighting and ventilation, were selected for discussion. Place attachment theory addresses the emotional feeling of the respondents and how does it influences the PEQS score. Finally, the actual-aspiration gap concept is used to illustrate the relationship between the degree of the actual - aspirational gap and the magnitude of the PEQS scores.

As market forces play an increasingly important role in the housing market in China, resident's (consumer's) satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the residential environment must be adequately addressed. The current study advanced the user's perspectives of housing assessment. The results should prove helpful to the planning and design of future housing projects that geared to the needs of their consumers. Thus, this kind of research could contribute to accelerate the pace of housing commodification and privatization in China.

Table of Contents

		Page
Declaration		i
Abstract		ii
Acknowledgement		iii
Table of Contents		iv
List of Tables		vii
List of Figures		viii
List of Maps		ix
List of Appendices		x
Chapter One	Introduction	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	The Organization of the Thesis	2
Chapter Two	Study Background	4
2.1	Pre-reform Housing Policy in the People's Republic of China (1949-1978)	4
2.2	Housing Problems During the Pre-reform Era	6
2.3	The Housing Reforms and its Problems - the Development of Commodity Housing (1980 - To date)	9
2.4	General Background of the Two Cities under Investigation	16
2.4.1	Guangzhou City	16
2.4.2	Beijing City	20
2.5	The Importance of Residential Satisfaction Research during the Process of Commodification of Housing in China	22
2.6	Purpose and Scope of the Study	24

Chapter Three	Methodology	25
3.1	The Household Survey	25
3.1.1	Brief Description on the Urban Districts in Guangzhou and Beijing	25
3.1.1.1	Guangzhou City	26
3.1.1.2	Beijing City	29
3.1.2	Sampling Framework	32
3.1.2.1	Guangzhou City	33
3.1.2.2	Beijing City	36
3.2	Respondents Characteristics	37
3.2.1	The Guangzhou Sample	39
3.2.2	The Beijing Sample	40
3.2.3	Guangzhou and Beijing: Compare	43
3.3	Measurement of Residential Satisfaction	44
3.3.1	Concepts of Residential Satisfaction	44
3.3.2	The Perceived Environmental Quality Scale (PEQS)	46
3.3.2.1	Items used in the Household Survey Questionnaire	46
3.4	Scope of Data Analysis	48
3.4.1	Housing Units and Neighborhoods	48
Chapter Four	Data Analysis and Findings	51
4.1	Overall Perceived Environmental Quality	51
4.1.1	Guangzhou	52
4.1.2	Beijing	55
4.2	Factors Affecting Residents' PEQS	58
4.2.1	Demographic Characteristics	58
4.2.1.1	Guangzhou	58
4.2.1.1a	<i>Gender</i>	58
4.2.1.1b	<i>Age</i>	60

4.2.1.2	Beijing	62
4.2.1.2a	<i>Gender</i>	62
4.2.1.2b	<i>Age</i>	63
4.2.2	Socio-economic Status	65
4.2.2.1	Guangzhou	69
4.2.2.1a	<i>Educational Attainment Level</i>	69
4.2.2.1b	<i>Annual Income</i>	70
4.2.2.1c	<i>Occupation</i>	72
4.2.2.2	Beijing	74
4.2.2.2a	<i>Educational Attainment Level</i>	74
4.2.2.2b	<i>Annual Income</i>	75
4.2.2.2c	<i>Occupation</i>	77
Chapter Five	Discussions	79
5.1	Neighborhood Versus Housing Unit	79
5.2	Differences between Guangzhou City and Beijing City	81
5.3	Residential Needs	83
5.4	Place Attachment	92
5.5	Actual- aspirational Gap Concept	94
5.5.1	Living Size	95
5.5.2	Housing Type	96
Chapter Six	Conclusions and Implications	98
Bibliography		100
Appendices		106
Curriculum Vitae		144