

**THROUGH THE YEARS... AAHE, HOUSING PROBLEMS AND CHANGE:
A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE**

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History of research! How do you begin the evaluation of an organization's contribution to the housing research literature? First, a review of previous works including Brewer and Day (1984), Weber, McCray, and Day (1987), Tremblay (1982) and Baillie and Day (1988) provided excellent background related to research issues, the theory base of housing research, the empirical examination of the AAHE journal, and a history of housing. After completing this first review, it was apparent that a complete review of all AAHE journals, proceedings, and refereed conference papers from 1965 to the present could enhance the previous studies, and also provide additional information of housing issues pertinent to AAHE members.

These reviews revealed that research in the early history of the association relates to topics prevalent today. The topics of research are cyclical and respond to the needs of society as illustrated by the following summary of the mid-1960s.

In 1966, housing was conceived as a broad topic to cover several areas such as socio-psychology, planning and design, home management, interior design, finance, and other economic aspects. The need for knowledge based on research to support the instruction program was emphasized. The prevalent issues of the '60s included the population explosion creating a demand for housing, high residential mobility, high human-land ratio, home ownership and its importance, quality of the environment and residential sprawl, and concern for the elderly with implications for housing design. The quality of the environment in the late '60s had special concern for air and water pollution.

With this early description of housing research as a baseline, a systematic review of the research reported through AAHE publications was conducted. A total of 460 manuscripts were reviewed including all volumes (n=246) of the journals *Housing and Society* (1977-present) and *Housing Educators Journal* (1974-1977), as well as all annual conference proceedings (n=214) and refereed conference papers. All manuscripts and abstracts in these publications were classified by topic, year and volume, purpose of research, modes of observation, sample size, presence or absence of a theoretical framework, and data analysis. A review of proceedings from 1965-1974 provided an overview of research topics, but little information on research design and analysis. Emphasis on research design became apparent after publication of the journal in the mid 1970s.

Topics were classified using the taxonomy developed for the AAHE research agenda for the 1990s (Table 1). The areas are identified by six broad categories. The specific topics, which are identified within each broad category, were developed during the coding process.

1. Private Market/Public Policy Interface: discrimination, displacement, affordability, homelessness, mobility, availability, public/private partnerships, intergovernmental shifts in responsibility, housing supply, actors in provision of housing (builders, financiers, suppliers, brokers),

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- economic conditions, rural/urban conditions, housing services such as management, relocation companies, and buyer/sales agents.
2. Public Policy: impact of codes and zoning regulations, effectiveness and enforcement of protection/disclosure laws, assessment of federal policy and programs, impact of proposed policy changes, and functioning of state and local policy.
 3. Technology Applied to Housing: manufacturing and building technology, materials development, testing, and performance; energy efficiency; security; lighting and systems-control technology; and universal design.
 4. Environmental and Safety Issues: pollutants, indoor air quality, city smog, acid rain, hazardous waste disposal, material resource scarcity, conservation, preservation, and land use planning.
 5. Behavioral Aspects of Housing: psychological, sociological, and aesthetic concepts applied to housing; function and space use; and work simplification.
 6. Housing Consumption: tenure, demand, use of stock, special needs groups, consumer behavior.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of articles by topic.

Topic	n	%
Private market/public policy	51	11.1
Public policy	27	5.9
Technology	85	18.6
Environment and safety	9	2.0
Behavior	171	37.3
Housing consumption	67	14.6
Other	48	10.5

In summary, the largest number of studies were classified by topic in the behavioral category (37.3%) followed by technology (18.6%) and then consumption topics (14.6%), with the other categories having ten or fewer percentage points each. Because many studies related to special needs groups, demand, tenure, and consumer behavior pertaining to psychological and sociological concepts, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between the behavioral and consumption oriented research.

Research Design

After classification by topic, manuscripts were classified by purpose for research using Babbie's (1986) three major areas of social research: 1) exploration, 2) description, and 3) explanation (Table 2). The studies were classified as exploratory if the information was more of an investigative nature, descriptive if it appeared the main purpose was to look at a description or association among the variables, and explanatory if the theory base was clearly defined and included analysis of relationships and interactions. The largest proportion of studies were descriptive (41%), followed by exploratory (38%) and explanatory (21%).

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of articles by purpose of research.

Purpose of research	n	%
Exploration	119	37.7
Description	130	41.3
Explanation	66	21.0

Modes of observation were also classified using Babbie's (1986) system and included 1) experiment, 2) survey, 3) field study, 4) unobtrusive measures, and 5) evaluation (Table 3). In classifying the modes of observation, the mode of data collection was sometimes difficult to discern. However, the majority of the manuscripts appeared to be field studies (46%), followed by surveys (30%) and unobtrusive measures (18%). Of the field studies, many involved in-depth interviews, which might also be classified in the survey area.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of articles by data collection methods.

Data collection methods	n	%
Experiments	10	3.3
Survey	92	30.3
Field	140	46.2
Unobtrusive	55	18.2
Evaluation	6	2.0

Sampling patterns of the research reviewed ranged from a case study sample of one to a study with over 12,000 respondents. Sample size was arbitrarily divided into four categories: less than 100, 100-499, 500-999, and 1,000 and over (Table 4). The largest percentage of studies utilized samples between 100-499 (36.8%), followed by under 100 respondents (29.6%) and over 1000 (23.3%).

Table 4. Frequency and percentage of articles by sample size.

Sample size	n	%
0001-0099	75	29.6
0100-0499	93	36.8
0500-0999	25	10.3
1000 and over	59	23.3

Theory

Theoretical frameworks were obvious in about one-third of the studies (Table 5). The remainder of the studies were more descriptive in nature and did not address specific theories. Of the studies incorporating theories, 64% were based on the collective models of Morris and Winter's Theory of Family Housing Adjustment including residential adjustment, deficient norms, and residential satisfaction (Morris, Crull, and Winter, 1976; Morris and Winter, 1978). Distant second and third rankings indicated seven percent of the studies used neighborhood change theory, and six percent used the adoption/diffusion theory. A number of other theories or frameworks were used and are listed in Table 5.

Classification of studies by type of analysis revealed that multiple analytic techniques were utilized in several of the studies (Table 6). Over half of the studies were descriptive and reported frequencies, means, and medians. Almost 13% used regression analysis

Table 5. Theoretical framework.

Adoption/diffusion theory
Altman's territoriality framework
Change theory
Consumer behavior
Decision theory
Eames and Goode's contemporary complex society theory
Ecological model of neighborhood change
Economic exchange theory
Economic theory of choice
Lawton and Nahemow's environmental press
Michaelson's theory of mobility
Neimeyer's model of energy adjustment
Organizational theory
Parsons and Bales' social systems theory - 1955
Residential housing adjustment
Revealed preference theory (consumer behavior)
Risk theory
Selye stress theory
Supply/demand theory

and 8.4% used chi square analysis. A further review of the analysis included other statistical procedures used by housing researchers.

Findings and Discussion

A review of the topical content of the research by five year increments revealed that behavioral research with a sociological emphasis has predominated every period since 1968. In the 1980s, technology research increased with the large number of energy studies.

Exploratory studies were dominant between 1975 and '79, while descriptive studies became more prevalent in the 1980s. Field studies have continued to be the primary mode of observation; however, survey research became more prevalent during the latter part of the '80s. A considerable number of studies used the survey methodology developed by Dillman in 1978.

In the late '70s, sample sizes under 100 were most common. By the '80s, the predominant sample size had increased to 100-499 with large data bases becoming more prevalent. A large number of manuscripts have been published from large, multi-state regional projects.

The Morris and Winter theoretical framework was used most frequently throughout each of the time periods studied. However, the use of theory to frame housing research is increasing, and other theories are being utilized in the study of housing problems.

Over time, descriptive statistics were the most used analytical approach for housing research data. During the '80s, other types of analyses gained wider use.

Table 6. Frequency and percentage of articles by data analysis.

Data analysis	n	%
Descriptive (percents, means, frequencies)	134	51.3
t-test	14	5.4
Anova	19	7.3
Correlation	14	5.4
Analysis of covariance	1	0.4
Regression	36	13.7
Manova	1	0.4
Path	6	2.3
Chi Square	24	9.2
Factor Analysis	2	0.8
Logit	1	0.4
Discriminant analysis	4	1.5
Other (time series, Kuder Richardson reliability, gamma, Kendalls Tau, Probit, McNemar test) Multiple classification system)	5	1.9

Implications

A major implication that can be drawn from these data is the increasing use of theory for framing problems. Theoretical frameworks will strengthen research in the housing field and allow wider distribution of results. As research becomes more focused on theory, a need for theory development within the housing field arises. Several theories used from the root disciplines that underlie the study of housing are relevant, but need adaptation. Future journal manuscripts with inductive studies that pose problems and develop a hypothesized framework for theory development are needed. Researchers could then begin testing and refining the frameworks and, in the process, develop additional theories for the field. For example, the Morris and Winter theory first appeared in 1976 as a proposed framework and was based largely on a literature base with some known observations. Throughout the years, it has been tested, refined and used by a large number of researchers.

Housing researchers have made many contributions to the literature over the years. Early research related to space standards has continued to provide the basic dimensions for kitchen, bath, and work-space plans. The large body of behavioral research has focused on the interplay between the housing environment and family needs, which has provided a better understanding of norms and satisfaction. The decision process in housing has also allowed for a better understanding of deficits and mobility intentions. The energy studies of the '80s provided information for conservation behaviors and design improvements in the residential structure.

Another implication is that the publication of housing research results tends to lag behind housing problems. Although housing technology and residential air quality are prevalent topics in the instruction and extension areas today, the research base for these areas of study is presently inadequate. Other critical areas in need of research-based information and policies include homelessness and housing accessibility.

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The future for research in housing has a lengthy agenda and includes some of the following:

- Technological changes (SmartHouse) affect the technical aspects of housing as well as the resultant family adaptation patterns and changes in lifestyle.
- Changing demographics, including single parent households, elderly, and mid-lifers will influence future housing forms.
- As society continues to become more global, housing norms will be challenged and research on cultural differences will be needed.
- Affordability has long been a research question; however, new challenges are posed as the policy shifts from the federal to the state and local governments.

Continued opportunities for research include not only the topics mentioned but many others. As an association, the challenge is to strengthen research in providing the solution to major problems related to "shelter as it becomes a home."

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