

PREFERENCE AND SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNITY SERVICES : A CASE STUDY OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF DISTRICT GUJRANWALA

Muhammad Asghar Cheema* and J. Allan Beegle

*Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

Department of Sociology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the attitudes of rural high school students towards rural community life. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaire from 486 high school students in 10 high schools located in rural areas of District Gujranwala. The findings indicated that students showing community preference other than home communities tended to have different attitudes toward their communities. As anticipated community preferences were found to be negatively correlated when controlled for sex and community size but correlation was weak and insignificant.

INTRODUCTION

Community preference refers to the place where people would eventually like to live. If community preference is other than rural communities, it means that they are less satisfied with their home communities and have intention to move. Heaten *et al.* (1979) explored the role of size of place as future residence preference in the evolution of intention to move out of the present community. They found that people who preferred to live in a community having different size or location characteristics than their present residence, had a low level of community satisfaction and were five times more likely to intend to move than those who had attained their preferred types of residence. The same kind of views were offered by Zuiches (1982). In this paper, it is expected that:

- H 1 : A difference in attitudes toward home communities exists among students who prefer to live in other than home communities. It is expected that students who prefer larger communities in which to live will have a lower level of community satisfaction than students who prefer to live in small communities.

H 2 : The above relationship is expected to hold true both for males and females and for small and large communities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study population consisted of all seniors enrolled in 10 high schools located in the rural areas of District Gujranwala. The selection of the District was arbitrary but typical of many districts where rural areas are deprived, have fewer jobs and inferior educational, medical, sports, recreational and public facilities. The district is typical of those having high out-migration rates from rural areas.

All students in tenth class in 10 high schools in the rural areas of District Gujranwala constituted the test population. Of the 605 students in the tenth class, 486 or 80.3 % completed the questionnaire for this study in November and December of 1983 (See Appendix Table 1). The remaining 119 (19.7%) who did not participate were either absent on the day of survey or were preparing for an examination.

The interview schedule, after pre test, was administered in the class room situation. The questionnaire was translated into Urdu by the senior author and it took about 100 minutes on average to complete the schedule.

STUDY VARIABLES

Community satisfaction: In operationalizing the dimension of community satisfaction (dependent variable) a question with 12 items was used. The students were asked to rate each item as follows : Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. As all items were positively worded, the scoring for strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree were 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

A scale, sumating rate/Likert scale (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981), was constructed for community satisfaction variable applying a test of reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and standardized Alpha (Nie *et al.*, 1975). The scale is recorded from 8 to 24 as a low level of community satisfaction, 25 to 28 as medium level and 29 to 40 as a high level of community satisfaction.

Community preference: A single straightforward question was used in the

questionnaire to measure community preference. The student's preference to live in a community was determined from the question which read :

Which of the following indicates the best kind of community in which you would prefer to live ?

- a) in the open country
- b) in a village, under 2,500 population
- c) in a city under 100,000 population
- d) in a city over 100,000 population
- e) in a suburb outside a large city

(a) and (b) above representing village residence, were scored as 1, (c) representing a small city was scored as 2, and (d) and (e) above representing a large city, were scored as 3. The distribution of students according to community preference is given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution of rural Pakistan high school students according to community preference*

Community preference	Number of males	Percentage	Number of females	Percentage
Village	43	14.6	25	14.8
Small city	62	21.1	74	43.8
Large city	189	64.3	70	41.4
Total	294	100.0	169	100.0

As shown in Table 1, male rural high school students preferred to live in large cities in much larger proportions than female rural high school students. Females preferred small cities in much larger proportions than males.

The data were digested into percentages, proportions and other relative measures which permitted their easy interpretation. To analyse these data, method of partial correlation was employed. The reason for using the method of partial correlation was that the present study was dealing with two control variables, that is sex and community size. Partial correlation indicated the degree of association and its significance for predictor variable and dependent variable when controlled for other variables (Nie *et al.*, 1975).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that there was a very weak association between community preference and level of community satisfaction both for males and females from small and large communities. The degree of association was $-.0083$ for males and $.0595$ for females in the case of small communities, while it was $.0012$ for males and $-.0256$ for females in the case of large communities. The correlation in all cases was very weak and

Table 2. *Correlation between community satisfaction and community preference by sex and community size*

Predictor variable	Small community		Large community	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Community preference	$-.0083$	$.0595$	$.0012$	$-.0256$

insignificant. When sex and community size was controlled the community preference and level of community satisfaction were negatively related but the association was insignificant (Table 3.) Based on this, we were unable to accept our hypothesis.

Table 3. *First-order and second-order partial correlation coefficients of community preference with level of community satisfaction when controlling for sex and community size*

Independent variables	Dependent variables	Control variable (s)	Partial correl. coeff.	Variance
Community preference	Level of com. satisf.	Sex	$-.0126$ ($P=.393$)	$.0023$
Community preference	Level of com. satisf.	Community size	$.0548$ ($P=.120$)	$.003$
Community preference	Level of com. satisf.	Sex and community size	$-.008$ ($P=.429$)	$.00006$

The level of significance is shown in parentheses.

The reason for this weak association between community preference and level of community satisfaction may be that students from both small and large

communities, are unaware of the situations and conditions in the already swelling cities. Unfortunately, no data are available concerning push and pull factors in the communities where students would eventually like to live, and which are necessary to comprehend migration decision making (Lee, 1966). Lack of information in this respect and uncertainty may be creating a weak degree of association between community preference and level of community satisfaction.

This finding is contrary to that of Heaton *et al.* (1979). Their study indicated that people who preferred to live in a community of different size or location characteristics than their present residence have a low level of community satisfaction and are five times more likely to move than those who have attained their preferred types of residence. This finding is also contrary to that of Zuiches (1982). To him, people selecting residence in other than home communities show dissatisfaction with their communities which is an important antecedent to their desire to move.

Appendix Table 1. *Number of students who completed questionnaire from 10 high schools in Gujranwala District*

Location of school	Students who completed questionnaire	
	Boys	Girls
Abdal	33	—
Ahmad-a-Nagar	—	32
Aroop	44	—
Eminabad	—	43
Kalaske	42	—
Naushera Virkan	—	35
Qila D. Singh	112	—
Qila D. Singh	—	51
T. Rahwali	74	—
T. Musa Khan	—	20
Total	305	181

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