INTERNATIONAL HOUSE: HOME AWAY FROM HOME?

This dissertation analyzes an international house at the University of California, Berkeley, a residence hall and cultural center housing over 200 foreign and American graduate and undergraduate students and visiting scholars. The house celebrates its 50th anniversary in 1981, and this research presents suggestions for future directions for its social and managerial development.

The primary goals of the study are to describe the degree to which residents perceive the house as home, or feel away from home. A second goal is to evaluate residential satisfaction. The study also analyzes residents' detailed evaluations of specific physical and social features, such as administration, programs, housekeeping, roommates, recreation, privacy, cooking, noise, and security. Second project interested faculty members by analyzing data from a 1979-1981 time series study of the International House. The data analysis, generated by means of causal analyses and statistical tests, particularly the Chi-Square test, indicated that residents felt more like residents (95%) and less like residents (90%) after living there for one year. The variables most important for residents feeling like residents were the ability to predict their behavior and satisfaction meeting expectations. High regard for the residence hall's role as a cultural center and its community, having favorable expectations, and feeling like residents were most important factors in feeling like residents. The study also indicated that residents are more likely to feel like residents in the second year, while the average residence period was one year. A total of 100 students resided in 1979-1981, while 118 students resided in 1980-1981. The results are presented in detail in a separate report.

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This dissertation analyzes International House at the University of California, Berkeley, a residence hall and cultural center housing almost 600 foreign and American graduate and undergraduate students and visiting scholars. I House celebrated its Fiftieth Anniversary in 1980, and this research generates suggestions about future directions for its physical and managerial development.

The primary goal is to assess the degree to which residents perceive I House as home, or home away from home. A secondary goal is to evaluate residential satisfaction. The study also analyzes residents' detailed evaluations of specific physical and social attributes, such as administration, programs, bathrooms, furniture, restrictions, privacy, crowding, noise, and security. Social processes examined include reasons for moving into I House, expectations, first impressions, friendship patterns, personalization, territoriality, study patterns, and reasons for moving out. Finally, it considers the extent to which the goals of I House are fulfilled.

Methodologies used to collect data include both unobtrusive (archival records, participant-observation, and field notes) and obtrusive (resident interviews, staff interviews, resident questionnaires, alumni questionnaires, and photography) techniques. The data analysis consists of content analyses and statistical tests, particularly the Chi-Square and correlation.

Just over half the residents (55%) feel at home in I House, while just under half (43%) perceive it as home, or home away from home. From most to least important, significant correlates of perceiving I House as home away from home are: feeling at home, high residential satisfaction, meeting expectations, high opinion of the administration, not feeling crowded or restricted; having favorite possessions, owned for long periods of time, in one's dormitory room; high assessment of programs, relatively long residence, high amount of territorial behavior, strong territorial attitudes, high degree of risk-taking behavior, feeling able to modify one's room, feeling an adequate level of privacy, and satisfaction with the level of social interaction. The institution's social qualities contribute to some residents' sense of home, while its physical qualities prevent others from viewing it this way.

Those who do not feel at home in I House also tend to perceive a lack of privacy, do not like the food, find the population too transient and the building overcrowded. When asked what could make I House more homey, most describe physical changes, especially redesigning corridors and adding small lounges throughout residence areas.
About three-quarters (72%) of the residents like living in I House, half (54%) like their rooms, and half (50%) like their corridors. Significant correlates of residential satisfaction are also identified.

Of the architect's goals, two have been achieved with the utmost success: stressing I House as a focal point for the Berkeley campus, and providing a variety of spaces for informal interaction. Most programmatic goals have been achieved to a modest degree.

Several suggestions are generated for the current renovation of I House and for the design and management of future International Houses and related facilities. The psychological, social, and cultural tradeoffs of living in this type of institution are weighed. The study concludes by advocating facilities modeled after International House as prototypes for high-density living.