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Apartment Resources

A Real Estate Research Periodical



Apartment Resources is a monthly publication designed for apartment developers, lenders and builders involved in all forms of multifamily housing.

Volume 6 Number 1 April 1992

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Married With Children

THE AGGREGATED POP SURVEYS: MARRIED WITH CHILDREN

Over the last four years we have been giving periodic updates regarding results of our Project Opening Plan (POP) surveys of upscale apartment shoppers across the country. Now, we have aggregated our data base of over 1,100 respondents over four years to give you insight into upscale apartment shoppers. In previous articles we have examined the overall results of and the differences between "serious shoppers" and "browsers." In this article, we profile married shoppers and examine some of the differences between married shoppers with children and those without.

The Respondents

The respondents in the POP survey had all shopped at recently-opened upscale apartment communities across the country, presenting a profile of shoppers to be expected at an upscale community. We filtered our data base to identify households by marital status and household composition. In this article, we examine married respondents, who totaled 45.7% of overall respondents. Of the married respondents, 34.2% (15.9% of total respondents) had a child under 18 living in the household, while 65.8% (29.8% of total respondents) did not.

Of particular importance was determining what differences there were between the married households with children and those without. We found some significant differences, particularly regarding age, tenure, future moving plans, and unit amenity preferences.

For the purpose of this article, married householders with children under 18 at home will be referred to as "parents" while those without will be referred to as "nonparents." It should be noted that those identified as nonparents may indeed have children; however, these children are either over 18 or do not live at home.

Age

By age, the majority of respondents were under 34. The median age of parents was 30.7 years, while the median of nonparents was over a year higher at 31.9 years. It should be noted that both of these medians are over the overall median of 30.0

years. A distribution of married respondents by age is as follows:

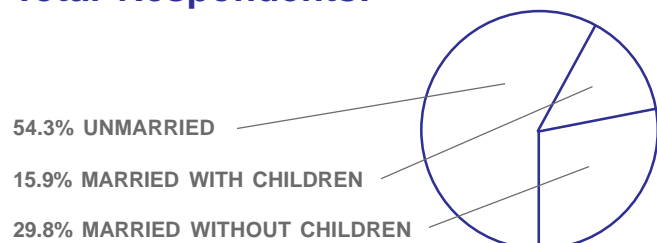
AGE (years)	PERCENT	
	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
18 TO 24	23.6%	22.6%
25 TO 34	46.1%	40.0%
35 TO 44	23.0%	7.5%
45 TO 54	6.7%	7.8%
55 TO 64	0.6%	13.6%
65 OR OLDER	0.0%	8.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%
MEDIAN AGE	30.7	31.9

As this distribution indicates, there are key differences in the 35 and over age groups. The percentage of parents in the 35 to 44 group is compared to the percentage of nonparents, while the percentage of nonparents, while the percentage of nonparents is high in the 55 and over groups.

It is likely that the 55 and over shoppers are empty-nesters looking to simplify their life-style. Of the nonparents between 55 and 64, a total of 61.7% own their home and 63.8% live in a single-family home. Despite the high percentage of owner and single-family residence, 86.2% of those who say they are very or somewhat likely to move in the next 12 months say they want to move into an apartment.

For the over-65 group, the percentages of home ownership (72.4%) and single-family residence (75.8%) are even higher, yet 94.7% of those who say they will move in the next 12 months are looking to move into an apartment.

Total Respondents:



Household Income

A distribution of household income for parents and nonparents is as follows:

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PERCENT	
	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
UNDER \$10,000	0.0%	0.3%
\$10,000 TO \$10,999	8.5%	12.0%
\$20,000 TO \$29,999	37.0%	33.0%
\$30,000 TO \$39,999	25.5%	27.8%
\$40,000 TO \$49,999	14.5%	17.5%
OVER \$50,000	14.5%	8.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%
MEDIAN	\$31,786	\$31,543

It is interesting to note the higher percentage of parent households with higher incomes. One possible reason might be that parent households need a higher income than nonparent households in order to step up into single-family housing because of the financial obligations of parenting. In addition, some married couples may put off having children until they feel they can afford it.

Household Size

A distribution of household size for parents and nonparents is as follows:

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	PERCENT	
	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
TWO	2.8%	90.1%
THREE	59.7%	7.5%
FOUR	28.5%	2.0%
FIVE	6.1%	0.3%
SIX OR MORE	2.8%	0.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

This distribution indicates two important facts: first, almost one in ten of the nonparent households have a third or fourth member, and second, that the majority of parent households consist of only three members. Of the parent respondents, 68.7% had only one child, while 27.9% had two children, 2.8% had three children and 0.6% had four children.

Current Residence

A distribution of parents and nonparents by type of current residence indicates no significant differences between the groups:

RESIDENCE	PERCENT	
	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
APARTMENT	58.6%	58.3%
SINGLE-FAMILY	36.3%	37.7%
DOUBLE/DUPLEX	2.8%	2.0%
CONDOMINIUM	1.1%	1.4%
MOBILE HOME	0.6%	0.0%
OTHER	1.7%	0.6%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

However, there are some important differences in the groups when considering whether they rent, own, or live with parents or friends. As the following distribution indicates, parent households are not only more likely to be renters, but are also more likely to live with their parents or friends, while nonparent households are more likely to be owners:

	PERCENT	
	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
RENT	72.6%	66.6%
OWN	21.8%	28.8%
LIVE WITH PARENTS/FRIENDS	5.6%	4.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

Tenure

Following is a distribution of parent and nonparent households by their tenure at their current address:

TENURE	PERCENT	
	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
UNDER 3 MONTHS	17.9%	15.4%
3 TO 6 MONTHS	12.4%	6.4%
7 TO 9 MONTHS	3.4%	3.2%
10 TO 12 MONTHS	16.3%	16.0%
13 TO 18 MONTHS	3.4%	8.7%
19 TO 23 MONTHS	6.2%	9.3%
2.0 TO 2.9 YEARS	17.9%	12.8%
3.0 TO 4.9 YEARS	10.7%	8.1%
5.0 TO 6.9 YEARS	5.1%	6.4%
7.0 TO 9.9 YEARS	3.9%	4.4%
10 OR MORE YEARS	2.8%	9.3%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

As the table on the previous page indicates, parent households have a substantially shorter median tenure than nonparent households. However, the concentration of parent households who have been in their current residence for 2.0 to 3.9 years is particularly important to note. This is particularly important given the importance placed by parent households on larger units. It may be that 2 to 4 years is the amount of time it takes a parent household to "outgrow" an apartment. In addition, it is likely that this figure is impacted by the high percentage of home ownership among this group.

Likelihood of Moving

We asked shoppers how likely they were to be moving in the next 12 months. Parent households were both most likely and least likely to move, which appears to indicate that they are more definitive in their plans. Parent respondents gave a higher percentage of "very likely" responses than nonparents, indicating that parent households are not likely to shop until they are ready to move. They also gave the highest percentage of "not likely at all" responses, which could indicate that they are pleased where they are, that they are particular about the kind of housing into which they move, or both.

Nonparent households, on the other hand, gave the highest percentage of "somewhat likely" responses, indicating that they may have a great deal more flexibility or that they are undirected in their housing options. The following table gives a distribution of responses.

LIKELIHOOD OF MOVING	PERCENT	
	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
VERY LIKELY	47.4%	37.2%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	20.0%	28.8%
NOT TOO LIKELY	2.3%	8.0%
NOT LIKELY AT ALL	30.2%	26.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

We asked those who were "very" or "somewhat likely" to move over the next 12 months to tell us what type of housing they planned on moving into. Not surprisingly, more parent households than nonparent households planned on moving into a single-family home, as indicated in the following table.

PREFERRED TYPE OF NEXT HOUSING	PERCENT	
	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
APARTMENT	62.1%	75.8%
SINGLE-FAMILY HOME	26.7%	16.6%
CONDOMINIUM	2.6%	1.8%
OTHER	8.6%	5.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

Unit and Project Preferences

We asked respondents to indicate how important they felt a variety of unit and project types were when they were shopping for an apartment.

As indicated on the table on the following page, significant differences exist between parents and nonparents, particularly regarding school district and size of unit. After agreeing on the first three priorities, parent households placed having a larger unit and a better school district as the fourth and fifth priorities, compared to nonparent households, which placed a larger unit sixth and a better school district nineteenth.

In addition, the emphasis placed by parent households on cheaper prices/rents should be noted. Although it finished as the tenth highest priority, it was still rated as very important by over half (58.0%) of the parents, compared to only 48.0% of the nonparents.

It is significant that, with the exception of the top few items on the list, parents had a tendency to give a higher rate of "very important" responses and a lower rate of "somewhat important" responses. Six amenities were given "very important" ratings by parents over 75.0%, compared to only three by nonparents.

Amenities that nonparent households ranked higher than parent households are project landscaping, being closer to employment, being closer to shopping, fireplaces, and having a microwave oven. However, it should be noted that 82.0% of the parents already owned a microwave, compared to 74.3% of the nonparents.

It is important to note that the priorities as rated by both groups confirm some of the differences between attraction amenities and retention

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING AMENITIES WHEN SHOPPING FOR AN APARTMENT?

"VERY IMPORTANT" RESPONSES

AMENITY	PARENTS	NONPARENTS
WASHER/DRYER HOOKUPS	97.0%	94.7%
PLUSH CARPETING	86.0%	78.9%
STORM DOORS/WINDOWS	85.0%	75.0%
LARGER UNIT	84.0%	67.1%
BETTER SCHOOL DISTRICT	77.0%	24.3%
BALCONY/PATIO	75.0%	74.3%
FROST-FREE REFRIGERATOR	64.0%	60.5%
PROJECT LANDSCAPING	60.0%	68.4%
SELF-CLEANING OVEN	59.0%	51.3%
CHEAPER PRICES/RENT	58.0%	48.0%
CLOSER TO EMPLOYMENT	45.0%	46.7%
GARAGE	45.0%	44.1%
SWIMMING POOL	45.0%	36.2%
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES	42.0%	29.6%
CEILING FAN	35.0%	27.0%
CLOSER TO SHOPPING	31.0%	33.6%
FIREPLACE	30.0%	32.9%
ALL FIRST FLOOR UNITS	27.0%	30.9%
MICROWAVE OVEN	20.0%	26.3%
VAULTED CEILINGS	16.0%	9.9%
SMALLER UNIT	2.0%	1.3%

amenities. Shoppers may move into a project because they are attracted to the vaulted ceilings or the fireplace, but they leave because they want to have a washer and dryer in the unit or because they have no good place to put the sofa. Shoppers at an upscale community have often lived in several apartment communities, and they know what they have that makes their life better - and what they don't have that would make their life better still. Therefore, these rankings are reflective not only of what pleases them about their current unit, but also of what displeases them.

Shoppers at an upscale community have often lived in several apartment communities, and they know what they have that makes their life better..

Coming Soon:

A look at some subgroups by age and household size, and a special look at single tenants.