

**HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION PATTERNS : COMPARISON BETWEEN KOREAN AND UNITED STATES HOUSEHOLDS.** Chung, Y. S. Department of Consumer and Family Science, Taegu University, Taegu, Korea

The most important reason to study the consumption patterns of countries other than our own is that knowledge of other countries provides us with a standard of comparisons, and thus enables us to make better assessment of the level and quality of consumption in our own country, leads us to raise questions about the reason for and value of specific consumption practices, and generally gives us a better understanding of our own consumption behavior. Thus, the knowledge of consumption patterns in other countries provides us with a wider range of behavior to study, and the wider range of data can help us to get a better understanding of the fundamental relationships that shape consumption patterns. The purpose of this study is to identify household consumption patterns in Korea and to find if these patterns are different to those of U.S. households.

Data are cluster analyzed and the results revealed four different consumption patterns for Korean and U.S. households. The budget shares for both countries varied with consumption categories and cluster membership. In Korea, four of patterns were dominated, respectively, by food, apparel, housing, and education. In U.S., three of the patterns were dominated by food, housing, and transportation, and the fourth was a more balanced pattern in which domestic services played an important part. Food and housing dominated patterns are found in Korea as well as in U.S. indicating their existence in both ethnic groups. Education and apparel dominated pattern are found only in Korea whereas service and transportation dominated pattern are found in America. Logit analysis showed that consumption patterns are likely to vary depending on socioeconomic factors.

The high budget share of food at home among households in food-dominated cluster in both countries reflected their low income because families with low income devote a large share of the budget to food purchase rather than to other goods such as apparel and entertainment. The apparel-dominated pattern exist in Korea not in the U.S. Clothing serves well as a symbol of social differentiation because of its high visibility. The kind, quality, and style of clothing a person wear is closely linked to that person's social class. This may be true in both countries. However, Koreans tend to concern more about their clothing than Americans. The education-dominated pattern clearly represents the cultural aspect of Korean society. Regardless of clusters, Korean households allocated higher proportions of their budget to education than the U.S. households. In Korea, education is serious and people are judged by their educational level. It is believed that higher levels of education are closely associated with socially favorable and qualified characteristics which are often not directly observed. Education is widely used as a credential or screening device and influences on every aspect of individual's life such as marriage, promotion, and social relationship. Therefore, educating children is very important family matter and regarded as the most valuable investment for children's future as well as parents themselves.