

# THE INVESTIGATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS' HABITS IN REDUCING FOOD EXPENDITURES<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The sample group for the survey consisted of 202 teachers working in primary schools in the Seyhan and the Yüreğir central districts of Adana city in 2009. The teachers' efforts to reduce the food expenditures were examined by considering the iradoption of habits believed to reduce food expenditures: "habits adopted to reduce the kitchen expenditures" and "habits adopted to find affordable store services." We found that the majority of the sample group have habits that contribute to reducing food expenditures: the average points scored by the group on "habits adopted to reduce the kitchen expenditures" (% 86.6) and "habits adopted to find affordable store services" (% 71.3) categories were quite high. In the study we analyzed the relation among a number of variables and the factor categories by "Pearson Correlation Coefficient." After some statistical analysis, no significant relations were found between the habits adopted and some variables (gender, age, total family income, monthly food expenditures, mode of payment) ( $p > 0.05$ ). But those who do budget plan ( $p < 0.01$ ), prepare shopping list ( $p < 0.01$ ) or/and have bigger family size ( $p < 0.05$ ) were found to score higher in their choice of habits that reduce food expenditures.

**Keywords:** food expenditures, kitchen expenditures, affordable store services, consumers' habits

<sup>1</sup>Presented at the International Interdisciplinary Social Inquiry Conference at the Uludag University (in Turkey) 17-21 June 2012.

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## 1. Introduction

When the share of food expenditure in total income urban families in our country in 1994 was 31, 1%; this ratio regressed to 23, 9% in 2002 and then 19, 8% in 2010 with an increase in the level of education and income (AilelerinTüketimHarcamalarıİçindeKonutveKira İlk Sırada, 2012). Kalyoncu also (2009) examined the ratio of revenue expenditure of food in 17 provinces representing Turkey's seven regions between 1994-2003. While the ratio was 0, 27 in 1994, Kalyoncu found that it dropped 0, 02 in 2003. An increase with income, in the purchasing power of consumers, the development of industry, as well as the development of a cause and effect inter-firm competition may decrease the cost of food market and the reason of decrement in food expenditure which is described as an inferior food in an economic sense.

Especially in urban areas in recent years, major changes have occurred in the format of food stores. In these formats, hypermarkets, supermarkets, chain stores and discount markets have been important places. This shift significantly changed consumers shopping habits and costs (Azabağaoğlu and Dursun, 2008:2). The markets in question mediate the consumers to buy the products that they want at anytime, anyplace and at any price. But on the other hand, by encouraging to buy substances called impulse items like gum, candy etc., they cause every members of a family to spend a large amount of money. Even those with very little money can buy the cheapest things easily. Moreover, the other sales techniques (an array of products on the shelves, the language of colors, promotions and advertising activities implemented, discounts etc.) of artificial needs and desires of consumers is being encouraged to purchase products and services. For these reasons, today many consumers carry out impulse buying without considering to compare the price of the products' alternatives, ability to pay for their own and their family's needs. For this reason, when consumers enter shopping malls, they can purchase many unnecessary products. Moreover, credit card facilities are also offered by banks to expedite such expenditures. Thus, the recurring purchase patterns of emotional rather than rational consumers, spending increases and exceeds their budgets. This causes the consumers to consume their incomes and even run into debt most of the time without satisfying their real needs (Surlu, 2003: 87; Çakır et. al., 2010: 88).

However, economical shopping is important for the individual and the family's economic well-being. The first step is a good comparison between planning and cost. However, there are two extreme views about the cost: one of them is at the best is the highest price; the other one is

that the lowest price is the best. Both views are wrong. The price should be evaluated by the quality of goods or services as well as by the needs and requests to be satisfied. In this case, the product which provides the optimal value for the money is the best determinant in affordable shopping. In short, while shopping individuals should be able to distinguish their real needs from numerous wants and available options. (Surlu, 2003: 88; Altunışık and Çallı, 2004: 232).

Since the sample group for this study consisted of well educated teachers, this study was conducted to check which factors were considered in shopping by those who were most aware.

## **2. Research Methods and Tools**

### ***2.1. Implementation of Research and Sample Group***

The research is a questionnaire developed and applied to individuals in 2009. The study sample included the central districts of the province of Adana-Seyhanin Turkey and were randomly selected and assigned by a random, cluster sampling method, consisting of 202 primary school teachers.

Participating teachers 56,4% women, 43,6% were male and 92,1% graduated from universities and 7,9% of them had a master degree 34,6% of teachers are 36 and over, 33,7% under age 29 and 31,7% among the 30-35 age group. 35, 7% of the participants family income was over 2401 TL per month, while 37, 1 % between 1401-2400 and 27, 2% in the 1400 TL and have less family income. 38, 1% of the families of the participants with monthly food expenditures between 301-500 TL, with 32, 2 % 300 TL and under, 501 TL and over with 29, 7%. 43, 1% of the participants family consisted of four or more people, 34, 6% were three people and 22, 3 % were two people.

### ***2.2. Data Collection Tools***

A questionnaire has been used as a working tool. The demographic characteristics were taken into consideration in order to determine what percentage of food expenditure, "Expenditure to Reduce Food Habits Scale" took place. The habits in question developed from research conducted on the subject (Robert and Wortzel, 1979; Tayfur, 2001; Richard, 2002; Terzioğlu et al., 2002; Nazik, 2002; Kesic and Piri-Rajh, 2003; Ersoy, 2003; Şanlıer and Şeren, 2005). People who participated in the research questions "Never=1", "Sometimes=2", "Always=3"; were asked to respond in this form.

### ***2.3. Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Tool***

Factor analysis was conducted to determine the most relevant habits (22) reflecting the reduction of expenditures on food habits of the teachers to determine the efficacy of those choices. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was applied in order to test the suitability of data set factor analysis. Scale value of the habit (KMO) is more than 0.70 and Bartlett's test was 0.05 and this level was significant (KMO= 0.827;  $\chi^2_{\text{Bartlett test}}(276)=3.057E3$ ;  $p= 0.0001$ ). (Table 1).

**Table 1. Factor Analysis Results on the Effectiveness of Teachers' Habits in Reducing Food Expenditures**

Name of factor	Habit expression	Factor weights	Explanatory the factor (%)	Reliability
<b>Habits Adopted to Reduce Kitchen Expenditures</b>	Instead of eating out we usually take homemade food to our work.	0.708		
	We ourselves make some food at home (yoghurt etc.).	0.600		
	As vegetables and fruits will be less expensive to buy, we always pay attention to buy them in season.	0.573	19.011	0.580
	We buy wholesale, legumes, rice, flour, sugar and large amounts of such foods, those that have a long shelf life.	0.561		
	Our work organization has a cafeteria and we buy lunch by using a monthly card.	0.559		
	We rarely go food shopping.	0.347		
<b>Habits Adopted to Find Affordable Store Services</b>	Which store you follow the discount for each product separately; we buy discount products in a store.	0.709		
	We follow the day off.	0.632	15.354	0.508
	We do not prefer to pay the additional services that require a shopping center (such as diced potatoes, grated cheese,	0.568		

shredded meat).		
If you have enough money and food we prefer promotional prices of the product .	0.515	
When we are hungry, we don't go shopping.	0.379	
	Total	34.366
Kaiser Meyer Olkin Validity of Scale		0.607
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	223.877	
sd	55	
p value		0.0001

The habit materials have been analyzed by using the method of principal components analysis and Varimax Perpendicular Rotation. First, the scale of sampling adequacy of the habit separated into seven factors below 0.50; the only remaining under factor, which factor weighs close to each other and the weight factor below 0.30 were removed. The factor analysis repeated on the remaining materials for the eigenvalues of 1 and more obtained two broad factors: "Habits adopted to reduce kitchen expenditures" and "Habits adopted to find affordable stores services". Total explained variance was 34.666 % (Table 1).

Statistical analysis was conducted to test the reliability of the habit statements. Alpha coefficient for the scale of habits as a result of the analysis reliability (22 items) was calculated as =0.710. This value indicates the habit scale is sufficiently reliable. After the internal consistency of the factor analysis, two factors obtained Cronbach's Alpha values were used in the calculation (These values, respectively, 0.580 and 0.508) (Table 1).

#### 2.4. Data Analysis

Using "Pearson Correlation Coefficient" analysis, this study was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the reduction of expenditures on food habits of the teachers and the demographic variables associated with them.

### 3. Findings

Food expenditure in this section for teachers' preferences and habits of this matter were investigated.

**3.1. Investigation of Teachers' Preferences for Expenditure of Food**

The participants' preferences for the exchange of food distributions are given in Table 2.

**Table 2. Expenditure on Food Preferences of Teachers as Independent Variables and Pearson Correlation Coefficient Scores (n=202)**

Categories of habit	Substantive variable						
	Make a budget plan	Do shopping list	Gender	Age	Total monthly household income	Monthly food expenditures	Household number of individuals
Method of payment							
1= Cash	-0.016	<b>-0.229**</b>	<b>-0.191**</b>	<b>0.198**</b>	<b>0.247**</b>	<b>0.161*</b>	<b>0.170*</b>
2= By credit card							
Make a budget plan							
1= Make plan		<b>0.386***</b>	<b>-0.182**</b>	-0.020	0.078	0.123	-0.061
2= Don't make plan							
Do shopping list							
1= do a list			-0.028	-0.112	0.029	-0.052	-0.073
2= Don't do a list							
*1= Female	*2= Male	*p<0.05	**p<0.01	***p<0.001			

It is detected that 63, 9% of the teachers who participated in the study made their payments in food shopping using credit cards and 36, 1 % of them made it in the form of cash payment. It is found that while 54.5% of the teachers make budget plans for food shopping, 45.5% of them do not make budget plans. Although the teachers forming the sample make low-budget plan for food shopping, majority of them (71.3%) prepare a shopping list before they go out but only 28.7% percent of them do not prepare the list.

In the study, it is detected that the people who especially uses credit cards ( $r=-0.229$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and make budget plans ( $r=0.386$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) are more likely to prepare shopping lists (Table 2). In this case, the obvious reason why the individuals who use credit cards and who have tendency to prepare shopping list may be demonstrating significant care not to exceed their credit limits.

When the relationship between teachers' preferences for food expenditures and independent variables is examined, it is determined men - comparing with women- mostly make their payments in cash in food shopping ( $r=-0.191$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and make more budget plans. ( $r=-$



0.181;  $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 2). Thus, it is observed male teachers behave more economical on food expenditure compared to female teachers.

In addition, in Table 2 it is determined that as long as teachers' ages increases, households' incomes increase, households' food expenditure increases and the number of individuals in households increases; they use more credit cards. There may be some other reasons why the sample group chooses shopping with credit cards. Some of the reasons may be; not carrying much money, identifying easily how much money is spent and where it is spent, evaluating their salary in different ways and their loan or expenses are paid, or increasing purchasing power temporarily because they do not have enough income.

### 3.2. Examination for Reducing Teachers' Habits for Food Expenditure

The average scores of reducing teachers' habits for food expenditure are given in Table 3.

**Table 3. Average Points of the Effectiveness of Teachers' Habits in Reducing Food Expenditures (n=202)**

Name of Factor	The Number of Items	Minimum	Maximum	$\bar{X}$	$S_x$	Sum	$\bar{X} = 1.67$ and over f %
Habits Adopted to Reduce Kitchen Expenditures	6	1.17	2.83	2.01	0.38	405,67	175 86.6
Habits Adopted to Find Affordable Store Services	5	1.00	2.80	1.95	0.40	394,20	144 71.3

The average scores of sample group's habits adopted to reduce the kitchen expenditures (86.6 %) and the habits adopted to find affordable store services (71, 3 %) are found high (Table 3). In this case, it may be said that teachers mostly have the habits in reducing food expenditure.

### 3.3. Studying the Relationship between Reducing Teachers' Food Expenditures and Independent Variables

When the Table 4 was examined, statistically a significant correlation as required (since the sub-factors forming scale must be independent of each other) was not found between the habits adopted to reduce the kitchen expenditures and the habits adopted to find affordable store services. ( $r = 0.100$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). At the same time the teachers' gender, age, total monthly household income, monthly food spending and habit of payment methods were not found related to either habits adopted to reduce the kitchen expenditures ( $p > 0.05$ ) nor

habits adopted to find affordable store services ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, it was observed that among the teachers who are more inclined to reduce the cost of the budget plan were the kitchen makers ( $r = -0.215$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), while the ones who do not make budget plans (and perhaps they did not know what they really needed to spend up to) are taking into account more cost-store services. Among the participants, those who make shopping lists have much more habits of not only adopting to reduce the kitchen expenditures, but also adopting to find affordable store services ( $r = -0.116$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) compared to those who do not make shopping lists. According to this data, making food budgets and preparing shopping lists are important criteria in reducing food spending.

**Table 4. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Scores Related To Reducing Teachers' Habit Of Food Expenditure.**

Categories Of Habit	Independent Variables								
	Habits Adopted to Find Affordable Store Services	Gender	Age	Total monthly household income	Monthly food expenditures	The number of households	Making budget	Type of payment	Preparing shopping list
Habits Adopted to Reduce Kitchen Expenditures	0.100	0.056	0.026	-0.025	-0.069	0.172*	0.215**	0.072	0.150*
Habits Adopted to Find Affordable Store Services		0.128	0.071	-0.079	0.018	0.058	0.225**	0.061	0.166*

\* $p < 0.05$       \*\* $p < 0.01$       \*\*\* $p < 0.001$       \*1= woman      \*2= man  
 Making budget: \*1= Make plan      \*2= don't make plan  
 Type of payment: \*1= cash      \*2= with credit card  
 Preparing shopping list: \*1= do a list      \*2= don't do a list

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

It was noted 63.9% of the teachers participating in the study made their payment in food shopping by using credit cards, but 36.1% of them made it in the form of cash payment. Similarly, it is noted that 54.3% of respondents in Güler and Özcelik's study (2002) did their food shopping in cash. In other research it was identified that consumers mostly do shopping with their credit cards. (Altunışık and Çallı, 2004; Şanlıer and Şeren, 2005; Azabağaoğlu and Dursun, 2008;



Mokhtarian et. al., 2009) These results suggest that consumers prefer more of their shopping by credit cards with each passing day. Although as stated in the findings there are different reasons for doing the shopping with credit as we do not notice how much money we spend, it is a reality that it facilitates and encourages more of us to buy. And this is an undesirable situation in rational consumer behavior.

It was found while 54.5% of the teachers in the research make budget plans, 45.5% of them did not make budget plans. Although the planning rate before going food shopping is high in Korkmaz(2006) and Gultekin and Bener's(2008) research, it was found 41.7% similar with Sohail's(2008) survey. This is because samples taking part in such studies in the field have different demographic characteristics (Education, income, culture, etc.).

It is identified that the majority of teachers(71.3%) who constituted the samples of this study prepared shopping list before going out, but only 28.7% of them did not prepare. These obtained results are encouraging. Similarly, the results of their work (Şanlıer and Seren(2005) and Korkmaz(2006) were found to be close to the rates found in the study published before. However, in other researches the rate of making the shopping list was found relatively low (Sağlam et.al., 1999; Güler and Özçelik, 2002; Kesic and Piri-Ranjh, 2003; Azabağaoğlu and Dursun, 2008). In this case, it is likely that consumers who did not prepare shopping lists purchased items they did not need by seizing product diversification and retailers' sale strategies.

It was found in the research that 86.6% of the sample group adopted to reduce the kitchen expenditures. Similarly it was noted that working women in McCall's study (1977) career-oriented and income-oriented women in Polegato and Zaichkowsky's study (1999) did food shopping less frequently than the housewives. In addition, it was noted in Şanlıer and Şeren's survey (2005) more than half of the participants kept minimal frequency of shopping to reduce their kitchen costs. In Özmetin's survey(2006) it was identified majority of consumers usually do not prefer to eat out except for required situations (such as business lunch or being a student etc.).

In other studies, unlike our own, it was noted that working women tended to eat out more often (Nichols and Fox, 1983; Jackson et.al., 1985); households that are young, educated and experiencing time shortage mostly prefer ready-prepared or semi-prepared foods (Park and Capps, 1997). Moreover, according to a study in the United States, while the rate of food preparation at

homewas 73.4%, eatingout was 26.6% in 1960; rate of meal preparationat home (54.6%) and the rate ofeatingout(45.4%) almost equaled to onehalf (NaygaandCapps, 1992: 550). Because in today'sconditions woman began to work outside of the home in paid jobs, this shift caused the reductionof timespent in the kitchen; kitchen expenditure shifted to ready or semi-finishedproducts; the ratio of eating outside increased. This situation caused in increase in their food expenditure apart from saving time. On the other hand, the fast-foodindustryevolved and this reduced the cost of ready or semi-finishedproductsand made it easy to obtain these products for almost everyincome groupof consumers.

It was found 71.3% of the group sample hadhabitsadoptedtofindingaffordablestoreservices. In a similar way, in a number of studies that havebeen madepreviously, it was noted that consumers shopping for food cared about prices of products: They should be cheap and promotional.(Ünsal and Terzioğlu, 1988; Çelebi et. al., 1991; Sağlam et. al., 1999; Cingöz, 2001; Zorlu, 2002; Erdoğan and AkarŞahingöz, 2004; Şanlıer and Şeren, 2005; Özmetin, 2006; Korkmaz, 2006; Topuzoğlu et.al., 2007) (Özmetin, 2006; Korkmaz, 2006).

A significantcorrelation was not observed related to teachers'habits ofreducingthe kitchen costaccording to gender( $p>0.05$ ) and habit of takinginto accountcost-store services ( $p> 0.05$ ). Insome studies, it was noted men are more careful about when buyinglow-pricedfood products (Çekal and Aktaş, 2004; Özmetin, 2006), they buythe products they need most and theyrarelyshop (Gönen and Özmete, 2006). It was found in these three studies that men did more economical shopping, and it did not overlap with the finding obtained from this study.

It was not found statistically that a significantrelationship between adoptiontoreducethekitchenexpenditures according to teachers' gender ( $p>0.05$ ) and habitsadoptedtofindaffordablestoreservices( $p> 0.05$ ). Unlike research conducted; it was determined that as the participants' ages increased, they cared much more about the price of food they bought in RobertandWortzel'sresearch (1979). In Soberon-Ferrer's andDardis's (1991) andNayga'sandCapps's(1992)research; it was determined that as the individuals' ages decreased, they spend more on dining out.

According to teachers' total monthlyfamilyincomeand their monthlyfood expenditures in research, it was not found that an important relationship related to habitadoptedtofindaffordablestoreservicesto the habitadoptedtoreducethekitchenexpenditures. It

could be connected to this sample group which entirely consisted of teachers and also the research was carried out mostly by the teachers who just began working and who have a monthly income around 1391 TL (Temmuz 2011 İtibariyle Öğretmen Maaşları, 2009). However, the income status of individuals is an important determinant in the habit of reducing food spending. Therefore, these results are considered to be specific. Indeed, in other studies on this subject it was identified that low-income individuals preferred cheap products (Robert and Wortzel, 1979; Jones, 1997; Özmetin, 2006; Çakır et al., 2010). It was found in previous research that the action of eating out which increases kitchen expenses was positively related to the family income. (Redman, 1980; Lee and Brown, 1986; Nayga and Capps, 1992; Gület. al., 2003). In this research, as long as the consumers' income levels increase, their habits of eating outside of the home increase, too.

It was not identified as a significant correlation related to teachers' payment types in buying food items and the habit adopted to find affordable store services ( $p > 0.05$ ) as well as the habit of adoption to reduce the kitchen expenditures ( $p > 0.05$ ). Unlike the research conducted by Mokhtarian and his friends (2009), it was found that those who were materialist and tended to entertainment in shopping, were more prone to using a credit card. It was suggested that those who have a habit of not using a credit card in shopping have a habit of more economical shopping.

In this study, the number of individual families of teachers have shown a positive correlation to the habit of adoption to reduce the kitchen expenditures; it was found as the number of individuals increased, they were more inclined to reduce the kitchen expenses. Similarly, in Redman (1980), Brandt and McCracken's (1987) studies, it was found that family size had a negative effect on the kitchen costs including eating out.

It was found among the participants taking part in the research, the ones who prepared shopping lists had more habits adopted to reduce the kitchen expenditures as well as adopted to find affordable store services compared to the ones who did not prepare shopping lists. Similarly, Brunson and Grunert's (1998) study in which he made the comparison between the countries, it was found that Germans and Danes – compared to the British and the French – pay more attention to shopping lists and cared much more about the price of the product they purchase. Therefore, it was concluded that the Germans and the Danes had more of a habit of economical shopping.

#### 4.1. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The sample of research was chosen from the teachers who live only in the province of Adana. It is likely there are different results in the studies carried out in other cities of Turkey. Since the study was only on teachers, this also prevented the detection of the gap between different income groups. Also not included in the study were women who work in a paid job, or the unidentified number of individuals working in the family. Because it is likely to increase the frequency of eating out and women's work in the family may limit time for preparing meals during the day or as they spend the time outside the house. The next survey is planned to implement a more comprehensive manner by eliminating these deficiencies.

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