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Shell, Adeline Garner

**AN INQUIRY INTO FOOD PRICE INFORMATION: SPECIALS AND
NONSPECIALS**

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

PH.D. 1984

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AN INQUIRY INTO FOOD PRICE INFORMATION:
SPECIALS AND NONSPECIALS


by

Adeline Garner Shell

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
1984

Approved by


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APPROVAL PAGE

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Harman Hess Shell, whose support, encouragement, love, and understanding helped make a wild dream become a reality.

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The major objectives of this study were to determine the food price information available to consumers, to determine factors which influence consumers' choices, to determine what home economics teachers teach on how to get the most for the food dollar, to determine teachers' and consumers' awareness of the Consumer Price Finder Program, and to determine teachers' and consumers' definitions of a food special and how to identify a special in a newspaper advertisement.

The data were obtained from two populations: 39 secondary school home economics teachers from Guilford and Mecklenburg Counties in North Carolina, and 150 consumers from six intact community groups in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area. All participants were volunteer subjects who lived in areas where the Consumer Price Finder Program was available.

Two questionnaires were developed to collect the needed data from the teachers and the consumers. The data were analyzed descriptively.

Three of the major findings were that (a) over 50% of the teachers and consumers believed there was not sufficient food information available to consumers; (b) there was no standard definition for food special; and (c) there were no criteria for the identification of specials based on the information in food advertisements.

The following were some of the implications of this study:

- (1) Standardization of definitions of terms used in food buy-manship could be of benefit to shoppers in making food choices in their own best interests.
- (2) Additional study on food price information is needed as a basis for recommendations on specific change in food buymanship which could improve the consumers' capacity to discriminate among alternative food prices offered for goods and services in the consumer food field.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Many of the 45 million family food shoppers in America help to maximize their economic well-being and nutritional status by the kind of choices they make in purchasing foods (Fagot, 1967). To get optimum value for each dollar spent, Barney and Morse (1967) determined that families needed help in the decision-making processes which precede actual buying. The significance of choice to economic wellness was also confirmed by Schlater (1970), who wrote, "Daily choices, made consciously and subconsciously, markedly affect the present and future quality of our lives" (p. 44).

Choice making involves a multitude of interlocking steps which relate the purchased product to basic needs, aspirations, or self-image of the consumer (Morse, 1965). Three factors which affect the choices are skill in buymanship, standard of living (goals), and money budgeting and management.

Kolter (1965) viewed the buying (choice) process as a system of inputs and outputs which are channeled through determinants and processed by the buyer's psyche. The buying inputs (influences) include price, quality, availability, service, style, options, and images. These influences are channeled to consumers through advertising, salespeople,

acquaintances, and family. The consumer's processing of influence/channeling determinants results in outputs as product choice, dealer choice, quantities, and frequency.

The importance of determinants which influence choice becomes more evident when one is exposed to the varied information available on food shopping practices. Food shopping practices and price awareness studies identified newspaper ads featuring "specials" as one of the major sources of information used for planning food purchases prior to shopping (Fagot, 1967; Haugh, 1977; Thompson, 1975; Washington, 1969). Additional determinants, such as radio, television, friends, family, extension service, leaflets, etc., influencing food purchases are also well documented in the literature (Barney, 1965; Bassler & Newell, 1982; Lewis, Ascota, & Johnson, 1972; Schmolder, 1969; Vasser, 1970). In addition, price has been established as an important food choice determinant ("Consumer Trends," 1983; Moore, 1973; Schaeffer, 1983; Shilliff, 1971).

Importance of the Study

The need for research to improve consumer competence is evident. The prolonged rising costs of consumer goods and services, together with current inflation and increased unemployment, have added urgency and even despair to the insights stated in the first paragraph of the publication, "For a Better Nation" (1978):

Life isn't simple for most individuals and families and "confronted by economic uncertainty, inflation and unemployment, America's families are trying to cope." "Unprecedented societal changes, pressures and problems have had a major impact on the mental and physical well-being of the American family unit." Similar comments in almost any daily newspaper underscore the plight of family groups. (p. 1)

The National Goals and Guidelines for Research in Home Economics (Schlater, 1970) formulated goals and specific problem areas in which research was needed to maximize the satisfaction and well-being of individuals and families. Among the specific research areas highlighted which were related to this study were (1) identification of factors which determine food choices and (2) knowledge contributing to consumers' capacity to discriminate among alternatives offered by the market for goods and services.

Further support for the need of the study surfaced when Schlater (1970) reported that most consumers were inadequately informed to function in the marketplace. The lack of consumer competency was attributed to the complex process in choice-making when faced with a variety of offers (overchoice) in the market combined with the glut of information and misinformation. Naisbitt (1982) referred to the problem as drowning in facts and starved for knowledge.

An additional insight into the magnitude of the problem related to making food choices in one's own best interest emerged when McCracken (1983) observed:

While surprisingly little is known about the role and effects of market information at the retail sector, there is reason to believe that consumers face a difficult task in securing adequate and accurate information upon which to judge relative price levels of competing foodstores. (p. 5)

The experience of the writer in conducting community consumer nutrition classes for the past 15 years has produced consumer observations that are contrary to many traditional guidelines on selecting best food buys. Consumers who put into practice some of the traditional, as well as the nontraditional food shopping practices recommended by the writer (Shell, 1973), reported consistently that the use of nonadvertised in-store foods produced more savings than most of the current advertised "specials." Should this repeated consumer observation be valid, one must question the prevailing food price information and the role of the "specials" for budget-minded consumers.

In classes conducted for deprived or marginal income consumers, most of the participants reported that the food-buying skills acquired and implemented made the difference between survival and disaster in savings made. Consumers of less critical financial status reported that the food savings that they made improved their families' quality of life.

It was not suggested that the money saved on the food budget alone was the solution to all of a family's financial problems. What consumers did gain was a degree of control

over one area of family spending. This alleviated some of the day-to-day pressures of getting good, adequate food on the table despite high food prices in the market and a realistic budget. Once in possession of effective food-buying skills, consumers reported that some of these skills and principles were applied to buymanship areas other than food, which also produced savings and more value for money spent.

Many of the feelings and observations expressed by the participants in the community consumer nutrition classes and the professional experiences of the writer were confirmed when Marion, Mueller, Cotterill, Geithman, & Schmelzer (1979) concluded:

The complexity of the retail grocery market requires consumers to possess substantial amounts of information in order to evaluate alternative sellers. Individual consumers can seldom afford the time required to become adequately informed when the average supermarket stocks 8,000 items, changes prices relatively often, and offers a variety of weekly specials to attract customers. A significant gap between the information needed and available to consumers is therefore likely. (p. 153)

The observations made by the consumers mentioned earlier, the increased economic instability of families and individuals, and the insights of McCracken (1983) and Marion et al. (1979) provided additional support for the need of an inquiry into food price information accessible to the budget-minded consumer. Such a study could contribute to the economic wellness of consumers and heighten the awareness of food price information available to consumers and educators.

Purposes of the Study

Although the importance of the newspaper food advertisements featuring specials and price have long been used by consumers as food choice determinants, few references have clearly delineated what a special is or addressed price information available to consumers. This study included an extensive search of the literature to determine the food price information on specials and nonspecials (regular prices) available to consumers interested in making food choices in their own best interests, to determine factors which influence consumers' food choices, to determine what home economics teachers teach in relation to getting the most for the food dollar, to determine home economics teachers' and consumers' awareness and use of the Consumer Price Finder program, and to determine home economics teachers' and consumers' definitions of a food special and how to identify specials in newspaper food advertisements.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the secondary home economics teachers in Guilford and Mecklenburg counties in North Carolina. It was further limited to intact groups of consumers who resided in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area and who were willing to complete the questionnaire between December 8, 1983, and February 8, 1984. The findings of this study are not generalizable to other populations and are limited to the populations described.

Definitions

Definitions applying to this study were defined in the review of literature when the term was first mentioned. The lack of uniformity in definitions made it advisable to use the specific definitions given in a variety of references.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

One of the primary interests of researchers, theorists, and marketing practitioners has been the search for better scientific explanations of consumer behavior (choice) in the marketplace. The Home Economics profession's research concern is total consumer wellness. This was emphasized when Schlater (1970) reported that the Home Economics Research Assessment, Planning and Projections (HERAPP) study formulated the following research goals:

- Goal I. Improve the conditions contributing to man's psychological and social development
 - Goal II. Improve the conditions contributing to man's physiological health and development
 - Goal III. Improve the physical components of man's near environment
 - Goal IV. Improve consumer competence and family resource use
 - Goal V. Improve the quality and availability of community services which enrich family life
- (p. 15).

This need for improved consumer competence and family resource use is evident when one reviews the economic realities faced by families in the United States. In fact, it seems

reasonable to assume that the current reality of high rates of inflation and unemployment is altering consumer behavior vis-a-vis choice in the marketplace. These grim realities have set into motion a "ripple" effect of consequences and damages affecting consumers' lives.

Because of the interrelationship of unemployment to every aspect of family life and individual well-being, the review of literature for this study was divided into the following sections: (1) personal economic indicators, (2) food shopping determinants and practices, (3) food specials shopping information, (4) food price information in food advertisements, and (5) nontraditional food price information sources.

Personal Economic Indicators

One needs only to turn on the television or radio and listen to the morning news or scan the headlines of the local newspaper to know that the American public is being bombarded with statistics which mirror economic instability. The statistics represent cold, impersonal facts that do not measure the ravages of poverty, inflation, home mortgage foreclosures, unemployment, consumer debt, and personal bankruptcy. For this reason, this section addressed both the statistics and the resulting consequences of economic instability.

Unemployment and Underemployment

Unemployment in 1982 meant joblessness and economic loss to 10,427,000 workers. This was more than double the 1974 figure (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1982).

Not included in the 1982 figure cited was the growing phenomenon of involuntary part-time workers (workers who want to work full-time and find only part-time work available to them). Serrin (1983) revealed that up to a fifth of U.S. workers now rely on part-time jobs. This translates into 5,852,000 involuntary part-time workers. In addition, there were also 1,568,000 discouraged workers in the work force (unemployed workers who looked for jobs, became discouraged, and gave up looking for work). One of the most recent estimates for the number of people who were out of work for part of the time in 1982 (not to be confused with the annual averages of the monthly figure of 10,427,000 for 1982) was set at 26.5 million, or approximately 22% of the labor force ("26.5 million", 1983).

The degree of change in family income level was demonstrated by the worker whose last full-time job paid \$14.00 an hour plus benefits which were estimated at about \$10.00 an hour. The only work available to this worker when faced with unemployment was a part-time job which paid \$3.35 an hour with no benefits (Serrin, 1983).

A closer look at unemployment statistics also provided insights on how unemployment affected expenditure levels and

patterns in families. Hefferan (1983) used data from the 1972-1973 Consumer Expenditures Survey to demonstrate this point. In the area of food expenditures the unemployed and employed families spent the same percentage (19.1) of the family budget for total food expenditures. However, the income of the employed family was \$15,623, while the income of the unemployed during all or part of the survey year was \$8,784. The employed family spent \$2,983.99 on food while the unemployed family spent only \$1,677.74 for food during the same period.

Another phenomenon is "the new unemployed" (usually persons who were unemployed for the first time). This group includes white-collar workers from the executive suite to the typing pool. Unlike the blue-collar worker, many of these unemployed are out of work for the first time. According to Dentzer, McAleve, Zuckerman, and Robinson (1982):

The widespread layoffs point up what management experts say is a new attitude: some companies now consider their white-collar employees as expendable as blue-collar workers. That is understandably demoralizing to people who once thought they were immune to layoffs. (p. 63)

Scope and Consequences of Unemployment

The "ripple" effect mentioned earlier manifested a spread of unemployment which moved from the poor and the chronically unemployed and underemployed to the blue-collar sector of the work force. Next, it spread to the white-collar worker.

Eventually, it reached the executive suite. The effect of mass unemployment has been underscored by a number of researchers and writers concerned with the economic wellness of the public.

The ramifications and "ripple" effect of unemployment were succinctly stated when Brody (1982) reported:

The unemployment problem cuts across all races, ages and economic levels and affects many people who had never before thought they would be involuntarily jobless. A growing number are family men in their 50's who see a quarter-century of hard-won equity dissolve before their eyes, with few prospects for restoring what they have lost. In many families, wives who previously had not worked outside the home are being forced to take unskilled jobs. The results are often an undercurrent of resentment and anger, disruption of personal and family routines, and a growing sense of desperation and fear. (p. C12)

After reviewing diverse selected literature from the behavioral, medical, and social sciences, Liem and Rayman (1982) noted that job loss was not necessarily a source of overwhelming stress and disorganization for everyone. However, the evidence supported the assumption that joblessness can increase health risks. The problems reported ranged from the exacerbation of chronic and latent disorders to the alteration of usual patterns of health-seeking behavior.

Additional health and other problems encountered by other unemployed workers were reflected in a study of 2,000 jobless aircraft employees. Rayman's study (cited in Collins, 1982) stated:

One in five of the unemployed workers studied reported temporary or chronic insomnia; one in four had headaches or stomach ailments; 28 percent began smoking; and 12 percent reported new alcoholism. Twenty-seven percent had been forced to leave bills unpaid, and 33 percent had survived lengthy unemployment only by depleting savings. (p. C-8)

Riegle, Jr. (1982) broadened the "ripple" effect and consequences of economic instability when he said:

Unemployment, in particular, touches every aspect of family and community life, resulting in higher divorce rates, increased incidence of alcoholism and drug abuse, child and spouse abuse and juvenile delinquency. (p. 1113)

It was also noted that children of the unemployed suffered from physical problems which may have resulted from a decrease in parental nurturance. The health problems faced by the children included irritability, digestive disorders, and retarded physical and mental development.

The far-reaching effects of stress and gloom created by persistent high unemployment and the depressed economy were verified by Yoa (1981), Hughes (1982), Sheppard, Jr. (1982), and Hymowitz (1982). The collective summary of the interviews of unemployed persons by these writers showed that unemployment affected the mind, body, family and personal relationships, and personal behavior and habits as well as the pocketbook.

According to Clymer (1983), The New York Times/CBS poll found joblessness was experienced by one out of every three American households last year. The findings of the study,

which explored the financial, emotional, and political consequences of unemployment, also underlined the element of gloom when Clymer (1983) stated:

Persistent high unemployment is translating into more than meals of macaroni instead of steak and evenings of television instead of a night at the movies. It is contributing as well to family stress and sometimes violence, and to increasing gloom about the nation among the joblessness and their families. (p. A-19)

It was further reported that not all unemployed suffered devastating losses of homes and cars or a change in lifestyle which forced the unemployed to double up with one parent or another family. However, the poll did reveal that among the households polled, 36% had an adult who had been unemployed during the past year. Approximately one-third had borrowed money, missed payments on homes, cars, apartments or loans. Eighteen percent had qualified for food stamps or welfare. Sixty-three percent reported having purchased lower quality food, while approximately 50% had used money from their savings and reduced medical or dental care. More family quarrels were reported by 47% of the families.

Human and Financial Losses

Many professional workers have "observed" that the experience of unemployment has been physically and mentally debilitating for many of the jobless. Some have felt their ability to assume job responsibilities has been seriously undermined; that their impressions and concerns may have been understated is brought to mind when one reviews the work of M. Harvey Brenner. Brenner's study (Joint Economic Committee, Congress

of the United States, 1976) indicated that when unemployment rose one percentage point, suicides increased 4.1%; homicides, 5.7%; deaths from heart disease, liver cirrhosis and other stress-related disorders, 1.9%; and 4.3% more men and 2.3% more women were admitted to mental hospitals.

H. H. Humphrey (JEC, 1976) translated into human and economic terms the findings of the Brenner study:

In 1970, unemployment rose 1.4 percent to 4.9 percent. This 1.4 percent increase has been sustained since that time. A one-percent sustained rise in unemployment increase (cardiovascular renal) CVR disease deaths by a total comparable to 1.9 percent of all such deaths in the fifth year thereafter. The 1.4 percent rise in unemployment during 1970 increased total CVR disease deaths through 1975 by 2.7 percent (1.9 percent times 1.4). There were 979,180 CVR disease deaths in 1975. Therefore, 2.7 percent, or 26,440 CVR deaths, are directly attributal to the rise in unemployment during 1970. . . .

The 1.4 percent rise in unemployment during 1970 has cost our society nearly \$7 billion in lost income due to illness, mortality, and in added State prison and mental hospital outlays. To this must be added public outlays of some \$2.8 billion annually over the 1970-1975 period for jobless and welfare payments associated with the sustained 1.4 percent rise in unemployment. Additional outlays not included here are the costs of care in Federal institutions. Even excluding these latter outlays, the cost of the sustained 1.4 percent rise in unemployment during 1970 is at least \$21 billion. And as noted earlier, this entirely excludes the impact of the further increases in unemployment since 1970 as well.

These dollars represent resources lost or diverted from productive use. They represent wealth never to be realized, lost forever to our economy and society. They, in part, measure the human tragedy of unemployment. (pp. vi, ix)

Family Violence

The recent increase in reports of family violence (also characterized as private violence) is generating an increased awareness of problems that were once not considered mentionable (Barden, 1981; O'Reilly, 1983; Rule, 1981; Steinberg, Catalano, & Dooley, 1981). All indications are that family violence now competes with the statistics of crimes of murder, street crime, and robbery. However, there is one alarming difference that makes family violence more nightmarish than other crime: family violence is what people who know each other, do to each other.

After reviewing the reported statistics on crime and violence, the place of family violence was put into focus when Anderson (1983) said, "There is no place so violent as home" (p. 18). One must ponder long and hard on the implications of such an observation. What can it mean to the quality of life for families, individuals, and the nation?

Although researchers are cautious in discussing the causes of family abuse, in an article on wife beating O'Reilly (1983) stated that:

Unemployment does not cause battering, but hard times make it worse. In Youngstown, Ohio, for example, where the unemployment rate in 1982 reached 21%, domestic violence increased a staggering 404% over 1979. (p. 24)

The reported child neglect and abuse cases rose from 515,400 in 1977 to 785,100 cases in 1980 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982). Steinberg, Catalano, and Dooley (1981), in

cross-correlation analyses of data covering a period of 30 months, concluded that increases in child abuse were observed following long periods of high job loss.

Consumer Debt

Although consumer debt, in itself, is not solely an outgrowth of unemployment, recent figures from the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1982) showed that in 1981, consumer credit outstanding had reached the all-time high of 409.5 billion dollars. The dollar figure for 1981 was more than double the amount reported in 1973.

According to O'Toole (1983), the scope and severity of the debt level for the U.S. Americans suggested that:

- Debt, like the flu, visits itself upon people in all income brackets--and right now the problem is of epidemic proportions. . . . According to the Federal Reserve Board, Americans are more than \$340 billion in debt--upward of \$1,500 for every man, woman and child in the country--and that doesn't include home mortgages. (p. 60)

The cost of debt to the consumer adds a hidden factor which contributes to the "ripple" effect of economic instability. It is obvious that the cost of services and goods is greater when the interest paid for credit is added to the original cost of the service or goods. When one starts to pay interest on interest, the cost of service and goods becomes an additional burden to the consumer which often goes unnoticed.

Home Mortgages

A study of the figures of the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1982) revealed that the delinquency rate on 1- to 4-unit residential mortgage loans had reached the all-time high of 5.24 billions of dollars in 1981. Brooks (1982) noted that according to the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, the nation was experiencing the highest foreclosure-to-loan ratio since record-keeping was started by the association 30 years ago. It was estimated that 140,000 homes in the United States are currently in foreclosure. In addition, it was the opinion of a representative of the association that foreclosure rates could continue to rise as long as unemployment and interest rates remained high and the market stayed weak.

In reporting the reactions of one woman faced with the foreclosure of her home, the reality and agony of home loss was highlighted when Brooks (1982) wrote:

'You work all your life for something, and you blink your eyes and there it goes . . . for a few dollars you couldn't raise in time,' she said looking wistfully out at her small back yard. Above her, on the wall, hung a sign that read: "God Bless Our House." . . . Hardest of all, she said, was the day they came to put up the wooden foreclosure auction sign on the front lawn, just before she found a buyer. It seared into her soul like a scarlet letter. (p. 72)

One must stop to question if the agony of this family, and others, could have been avoided had there been greater insight into the role of choice in economic wellness?

Personal Bankruptcy

According to Dunkelberg (1982), the personal bankruptcy rate in 1980 was about 410,000. Personal bankruptcies in 1980 had more than doubled in number since 1970. The increased rate of bankruptcy was attributed to a weak economy, declining employment, record high interest rates, and the law which makes bankruptcy a more attractive alternative to consumers since it is less costly than repayment of debt. The figures from the U.S. Bureau of Census (1982) indicated that non-business bankruptcy petitions in 1981 increased to a record high of 452,730.

Vicker (1981) cited that the demand for credit counseling rose as the personal bankruptcy rate increased in the United States. The review of services and observations provided by representatives of counseling groups highlighted two seldom-cited factors which contributed to the demand for counseling. A North Carolina counseling representative was credited with the observation that schools teach how to make money; they don't teach how to spend it. Another representative suggested that the proclivity of people to divorce (50,000 a year) in one California county added to the load of debt counselors.

The review also revealed that most of the participants in one San Francisco money management counseling program were white-collar employees. Many of them had some college training. Their incomes ranged from about \$15,000 to over

\$35,000 a year. They voluntarily attended classes which required the preparation and analysis of a personal budget. Additional topics included the dangers of excessive credit buying, efficient shopping methods, and how interest rates may raise the cost of a purchase.

It was also pointed out that many of the people seeking counseling did not understand the long-term effects of bankruptcy. They felt that once they were free of debt, they could resume credit buying. To clarify this misconception, an Ann Arbor credit bureau advertisement alerted the public to the fact that once an individual filed for bankruptcy, the bankruptcy action remained on his/her credit record for ten years.

Without research and supporting evidence, the consequences and impact of economic instability faced by the unemployed were humanely expressed by a volunteer community worker to the researcher. The simply and poignantly stated observations told it all. The unemployed suffer the feelings of powerlessness, loss of control over their lives and of their family's welfare, and a great loss of personal and family dignity. Dignity and self-worth feelings collapsed for whole towns full of people when industries closed down and lifetime employees were suddenly without status or resources to continue their traditional family structure in a community.

Federal Government Food Programs and Poverty

Federal food programs are designed to improve the nutritional status of families and individuals who lack money to meet nutritional needs in times of economic stress. The scope of federal food programs covers food stamps, the national school lunch program, school breakfast, special school milk program, women-infant-children, child care programs, summer feeding, and the needy family commodity program.

According to the figures of the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1982), there were a total of 22 million participants in the food stamp program in 1981. The cost of the program was 10,633 million dollars. In contrast, the number of participants in the program in 1970 numbered 4.3 million, and the cost of the program was 550 million dollars. The cost of the total food programs for 1981 was put into a human needs perspective when one added to the 10,633 million dollars for food stamps \$2,397 million for school lunch, \$330 million for the school breakfast, \$56 million for special school milk, \$733 million for the women-infant-children, \$296 million for child care feeding, \$105 million for needy family commodity foods, \$929 million for charitable institutions, and \$90 million for nutrition for the elderly programs which qualified for donated commodity foods.

The increase in those who qualify for food programs dramatizes the rising tide of poverty in the United States.

Thurow (1983) reported the incidence of poverty in the United States rose to 14% of the population in 1981. That was an increase of 2.2 million people in one year. Nearly 1 million of the increase were children. The report further stated that food program funds were cut in late 1981, and an additional cut was being proposed for the spring of 1983.

About the same time, President Reagan called for a study group because he was "perplexed" and "deeply concerned" about reports of hunger in America. The unspoken feelings of many toward poverty and hunger in America were reflected when Thurow (1983) said:

Do we just watch the conditions of the bottom strata of American society get worse over the next several years without doing anything about it? If one were making a political or economic forecast, "do nothing" would seem the most likely outcome. Yet to do so is to demean ourselves, as well as to permit real deprivation among those who are unable to help themselves. (p. 62)

Although the motivation on the part of elected officials to face the issues of poverty and hunger is met with skepticism and doubt, the scope and seriousness of hunger are highlighted by the following reports. A \$20,000 federal grant was approved to distribute groceries to 2,000 Toledo, Ohio, residents in need of food. Those who expressed or demonstrated need for help had to prove they were unemployed or in need for other reasons ("Hundreds Seek Free Food," 1983).

Breslin (1983) reported that the summer schoolyard free dinner program in New York City usually was able to provide enough food for the neighborhood children in need of a meal. However, there were days when there were twice as many children as there were meals.

The scope of need was again confirmed in a report in the Greensboro Daily News ("America's Child," 1983), when a child was quoted as having said:

"Child abuse and other family problems are increasing because people are laid off and have a lot of anger inside," said 9-year-old Angela Blocher of Aliquippa, Pa. "If we didn't have free lunches and free breakfasts, many children would go to bed hungry at night," she said. (pp. A1, A3)

Pear (1983) reported the recent rediscovery of hunger in America by recalling the following history of the issue:

The doctors who reported finding starvation in rural Mississippi in 1967; the creation of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, under George McGovern in 1968; and the White House Conference on Food and Nutrition and Health in 1969. At that conference President Nixon declared: "The moment is at hand to put an end to hunger in America itself. For all time." He said it was "embarrassing and intolerable" that hunger should persist in "the world's richest nation."

President Reagan used similar language Tuesday, saying he wanted to "solve the problem of hunger in America once and for all." (p. A8)

Food Shopping Determinants and Practices

According to the findings of Bassler and Newell (1982), Consumer Trends Report in Progressive Grocer ("Consumer Trends," 1983), Johnson (1970), Trier, Smith, and Shaffer (1960), and Williams (1972), the price of food is one of the most important determinants in food selection. The findings

of Fagot (1967) were not in agreement with the previous results which determined price to be of major importance. The determinants which were reported as more influential than price were family likes and dislikes, previous use of products, nutritive requirements, and brand names.

It has been the experience of this writer that when the shopper's economic outlook was good, the price factor became less important as a determinant in food choice than when the shopper was faced with economic instability. Economic well-being of participants may account for part of the differences in results in studies done on shopping habits. Another factor which may have influenced the findings may have been that the majority of the studies which were available for review concentrated on low- and moderate-income groups rather than representative populations from all income levels.

Most of the food purchasing studies reviewed also included inquiries on the sources of food information most important to participants in making food choices. As would be expected, the list of sources of food information varied from study to study. Some of the differences may be attributed to the selected participants in different geographical areas, the methodology used to collect the data, how the participants perceived the terminology used, reading ability, time frame, instruments used, content of list, and/or directions given for answering questions. Some studies listed specific sources without space for the addition of source(s)

not listed (Barney, 1965; Schmolder, 1969). Others listed an open-ended group of sources which allowed for additional responses. In addition, in a limited number of studies, the sources of food information and the determinants which influenced food purchase choices were not clearly defined and/or separated. Because of the differences in objectives, the design, and lists of determinants in studies, comparisons of the results are often misleading and/or difficult to justify. For this reason, rather than making comparisons of the results of the studies reviewed, the results were reported in summary form for each study.

Fagot (1967) used an instrument which measured the responses to the sources of information used by participants by percentage of use in terms such as always, sometimes, seldom, never, and no answer. The results indicated that few of the sources for information were always used by the respondents. Twenty-two percent reported that newspaper ads were always used to aid them in food planning and purchasing, while 61% sometimes used the newspaper ads. Although 22% appears to be a low value for the response to always, it was the highest percentage recorded for any of the given sources always being used. The next most used source which was always used was suggestions by children of the respondents, and the percentage reported was a low 5%. It was concluded that the only purpose of the newspaper food ads as used in the study was to identify foods on sale for that week.

When participants in an East Los Angeles study were asked to check those determinants which most influenced their food purchases, 15 out of the 21 answering said store "specials," 12 indicated family requests, and 10 checked season. Only four families noted that advertisements influenced their shopping (Lewis, Acosta, & Johnson, 1972). The differences between the perception of "specials" and advertisements were not delineated in the report on the study.

Annual family income and race were considerations in the food buying practice study conducted in Americus, Georgia. Williams (1972) reported that the food shoppers for 84 families indicated that newspapers were the most frequently named source of food buying information. In fact, newspapers were used by 50 respondents. The next most frequently named sources of information were radio and television, followed by circulars and flyers, and in-store displays. In this study, special questions were asked to determine if the participants planned menus and purchases around advertised "specials." Williams (1972) defined "specials" as "foods or nonfood items in the grocery store advertised and sold for low prices to draw customers into the store" (p. 5). The results indicated that 33 participants usually shopped for specials, 9 shopped for specials occasionally, and 28 seldom or never used specials.

It was also noted that sources of food buying information named by the income groups did not vary greatly.

However, more middle- than low-income families used newspapers for information. Food buying information sources were similar for both races except for radio and television. Eight black families relied on these sources compared to only two white families that reported using radio and television.

Moore (1973) compared factors influencing food purchasing practices based on surveys conducted before and after an educational nutrition program. The first survey indicated newspapers were the most significant factor in influencing food purchasing practices. The survey conducted before the educational nutrition program found that 76% of the mothers were most influenced by the newspapers, 43% by television, and 23% by friends and neighbors. The second survey conducted after the educational program revealed 93% were most influenced by the newspaper, 83% by television, and only 7% by friends and neighbors. These data supported the results of Shipman and McCannon (1964) as well as the findings of Lamkin, Hielscher, and Jones (1970).

In a study of food consumption and shopping habits of a recent refugee group, Orson (1982) reported that television was the most often used source of information for new food products. Next most frequently indicated source of food product information was WIC (the special federal government food program for women-infants-children). The third most frequently noted source of information about new food

products was the newspapers. The papers mentioned were Vietnamese and American newspapers.

In another study, Bassler and Newell (1982) reported the three most important factors influencing food purchases were cost (price), family preferences, and nutritive value of food. However, it was emphasized that 75% of the respondents indicated they purchased specials advertised in newspapers compared with 68% of the respondents in a national study (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976).

A Kansas study by Barney (1965) utilized both observation and direct questions in noting the sources of information used by the participants. The results indicated that over half of the participants did some preplanning of food purchases using the newspaper food advertisements. In addition, the participants were influenced to a lesser degree by specials in the store, where friends shopped, and by radio and television advertising.

This Kansas study differed from other studies. The major purpose of the study was to compare food expenditures of low-income families with cost estimates of the senior home economics students enrolled in a home management course and a comparative shopping related independent study. It was observed that given the food choices the homemakers were making, students failed to demonstrate better shopping skills. The homemaker group costs were 7% less than the students' cost estimates.

According to Haugh (1977), the use of the newspaper as a source of food information had declined to 32% in 1973, but had moved upward to 38% in the up-date study. In addition, the results showed an increased use of coupons and that two out of three purchases made by consumers fall into "unplanned" purchases.

In a study conducted by Washington (1969) in Ohio, it was found that 67% of the respondents were usually influenced by newspaper advertisements in making food choices, while 10% reported that food purchasing choices were never influenced by the newspaper advertisements. Washington reported that "Some of the housewives were very interested in the weekly newspaper advertisements of special food sales and weekend specials" (p. 62).

The work of Vassar (1970) confirmed the basic results reported by Washington. About 95% of the participants studied by Vassar placed the grocery store advertisements in newspapers as the major influence on food selection. In addition, it was observed that 50% of the participants purchased in large quantities when a "best buy" was available. The researcher raised a question of doubt concerning the results. For this study Vassar (1970) defined "leads" as "Leads, like specials, are good value merchandise priced low to entice customers into the store" (p. 4). It was suggested that the lack of understanding of the meaning of the word "lead" may possibly have prevented one or more of six respondents from replying to the inquiry.

The Consumer Trends Section in the 50th Annual Report of the Grocery Industry in Progressive Grocer ("Consumer Trends," 1983) reported on a survey of 500 participants in a national food purchasing study. The results showed that 64% of the participants almost always read newspaper ads, 55% almost always read advertising circulars, and 18% consulted other family members. In addition, the findings revealed that consumers continued to shop economically, stayed conscious of exact prices, traded down, and practiced "cherry picking" of specials (buying only the specials offered by the food store).

Although a few studies defined specials and other terms indicating a lower than normal price, not one of the studies and reports reviewed, explained, or discussed how the participants or other shoppers could identify a "special," "leads," "best (good) buys," and/or "economy foods" in the newspaper food advertisement which has been shown to be one of the major sources of food information. One must question how consumers can use "specials" in making choices in their own best interest when how to define and identify specials is not spelled out for the consumer.

In a price awareness study (Thompson, 1975), the results showed that almost half of the price-aware and non-aware shoppers reported that they always checked newspaper advertisements prior to grocery shopping. About 41% of price-aware consumers shopped certain stores only for specials

compared to about 35% for the non-awares. Like most of the previous studies and reports reviewed, this study did not define "specials" nor how to identify them. However, comments on the complexity of the marketplace and the confusion created for the consumer faced with conflicting claims and a bewildering array of food prices (some 'leader priced' and some at regular retail) were included by Thompson.

In another study of the determinants of consumer price sensitivity, it was highlighted that the dynamic environment in which the consumer must operate and make decisions created difficulties in developing marketing theory (Shilliff, 1971). It was also acknowledged that the indistinctness and the dynamism of the packaging and labeling virtually made it impossible for consumers to determine how much was being paid per unit for the product being purchased. This quandary faced by the consumer was attributed to the fact that the information placed on packages was not sufficiently adequate to appraise the choice being made. Like the other studies reviewed, Shilliff did not address price information available to those shoppers wanting to make decisions in their own best interests.

Food Specials Shopping Information

Food shopping information sources which influenced food purchases in studies and reports reviewed varied from researcher to researcher. Some of the information sources

which were most often included in the studies were information from friends and relatives, food store advertisements, radio and television, circulars and leaflets, advertisements, and newspaper and magazine food features. Requests from children and other family members were also included in this grouping. One researcher mentioned that children and other family members often provided information and requests for given foods as a result of exposure to advertisements in the media.

Sources of food information which were listed less often in the studies were cookbooks, handout materials in stores, extension service, samples tasted in stores, in-store displays, and labels on packages. Industry-sponsored materials and information from W-I-C each were mentioned in two different studies. None of the studies listed books, adult education classes (other than extension service programs), dietitians, nutritionists, or professional service groups. However, a number of responses from participants included as sources of information former home economics training, high school, experience, doctor, and dentist.

Most professionals conducting food shopping habit and practices studies have had some training in the food field or related services to consumer economics and/or the food industry. For this reason, a review of books concerned with food shopping information used by those being trained and/or used by those using them in providing others with food shopping information were included as part of this study. The

primary purposes of the review of such books was to determine what information, if any, was available on the adequacy of food price information for the budget-minded shopper, the definitions of "specials," and how consumers could identify "specials" in supermarket newspaper advertisements.

One of the main suggestions found in the tips for saving dollars when food shopping was the use of food advertisements in planning shopping lists (Garman & Eckert, 1974). Special emphasis was placed on planning meals around advertised specials whenever possible. However, a qualifying statement surfaced when Garman and Eckert said, "Newspaper advertisements . . . contain the best prices for comparison. Buying the specials that actually are at lower prices can save many dollars" (p. 173). The text contained no definition of "specials" and how one would identify a "special" in a food ad.

A suggestion included in the principles for managing and marketing for meals and snacks was to check the news media for the best "specials" that were needed or could be stored for later use (Peck, Moragne, Sickier, & Washington, 1974). In addition, shoppers were advised to shop when the most "specials" or bargains were available. It was suggested that the availability of specials was indicated in the newspaper each week. However, the definition of specials and how to identify them were not included in the text.

Cronan and Atwood (1971) highlighted the importance of comparing prices of food before buying foods in order to get one's money's worth at the market. Specific instructions

were given on how to make price comparisons. In addition, it was suggested that a second way of getting the most for one's money was to buy food on sale or food that was a weekly special. No definition of sale or special and how to identify a special in a food ad were included.

According to White (1976), one of the factors to consider in getting the most for the food dollar was to be aware of the "specials" listed in the local newspaper as well as advertising on radio, TV, and in the newspapers' magazines. It was suggested that these sources may also provide information on the use, nutrition, and price of food. Emphasis was also placed on interpreting advertising, comparative shopping, and comparison shopping of specials, costs, convenience, quality, and national and private brands. White (1976) said that specials were items that were sold at or near cost. In addition, some specials are offered for sale at lower than cost to get shoppers into the store. These items are called loss leaders. Although specials were defined, no specific tips or instructions were given on how to identify the specials or loss leaders in the food ads.

The Money Management Institute (1982) stated that to find the best buys, food shopping had to start at home. One of the eight major suggestions made in the plan ahead approach was to check the newspaper ads for special sales, and then plan menus around the special sales items. It was also suggested that one would benefit from price comparison of

competing store ads. Interestingly enough, in the section on the selecting of best food buys, two of the many shopping tips included on how to get more for your money were related to specials. The first tip was that one would benefit by knowing the regular prices of items generally purchased. This would be one way to identify when an advertised special was really a bargain. The second tip was to be alert to the unadvertised specials once you are in the store. The definition of specials and how to identify them were not included in the text.

Schoenfeld and Natella (1966) listed the checking of current food prices, especially weekend specials in the newspapers and in other advertisements, as one of the aids in making an adequate shopping list. In addition, one of the "Shopper's Commandments" stressed that the shopper should use advertising to advantage, rather than as the sole guide to buying. However, the definition of "specials" and how to identify specials in the ads were not a part of the text.

Jelly and Herrman (1978) highlighted the complexity of making wise choices of specials on meats when one compares costs as well as the quality and trimming practices in evaluating a store's meat specials. In addition, shoppers were reminded that not all the items appearing in a store's ad are a special. Some items were included because the processor has shared with the store in the cost for part of the ad. Other items were included in the ad because the store wanted to stress its everyday low prices.

The complexity of comparing price levels among different stores and difficulty in selecting a supermarket were put into perspective when Jelly and Herrman (1978) said:

Comparing price levels among different stores may be difficult because of the frequent use of "specials." Specials are used by many stores to focus attention on their offerings and to help them differentiate themselves from their competitors. Such stores constantly shift prices as part of their promotional efforts. Prices of some items are shifted down and emphasized in store ads, while the prices of other items are raised. This procedure, which is common in supermarkets, is called variable price merchandising. As a result of it, we should not judge a store just by its specials. Some studies have indicated that supermarkets with the best specials have higher average prices for other items. Some shoppers take advantage of these specials and do their regular shopping elsewhere. This can be worthwhile if the extra time and travel costs involved are not too great. (p. 65)

Although the text gave some information on the food price information, the term special was not defined. In spite of the helpful information about the difficulty in determining a good meat buy, how to identify meat specials as well as other specials was not discussed.

Miller (1981) attributed the desire to economize in food shopping to the high cost of food. It was stated that shoppers planned menus for the week, often taking the meat specials into account. It was also suggested that the amount of time, the cost for wear and tear on the car, and the cost of gasoline should be evaluated against the savings one realizes on specials. In addition, the text did not define specials and how to identify them in the ads.

According to Troelstrup (1974), one could get more for the food dollar by a survey of food ads in the newspaper and listening to radio food programs which highlighted the best buys. These before-shopping activities were basic and profitable economically as well as time-saving. However, the text did not define best buys and how to identify them in newspaper ads.

According to the book Guide to Wise Buying (The Better Business Bureau, 1980), defined "food specials" fell into the following categories:

- Items available in large quantities for a lower-than-usual price.
- Seasonal specials: Fresh fruits and vegetables in season, grown locally, are usually less expensive than out-of-season foods shipped long distances.
- Foods in abundant supply: Meat prices, for example, fluctuate with the season and with the supply. Look for special prices on beef, lamb, pork and poultry.
- Special "promotion" prices offered by manufacturers to increase slow sales, introduce new products or prompt new business.
- "Quick-sale" specials: Look for special prices on items that your neighborhood store or supermarket can't keep overnight or over the weekend, such as fresh seafood, produce and bakery goods.
- "Close-out" specials: These are products that will no longer be available and which are reduced in price to clear shelf space for faster-moving products.
- Damaged packages or cans specials: Examine these carefully before you buy. A dented can may not change the quality of the contents, but never eat anything from a can that has bulged--the contents are definitely spoiled. Buying unmarked cans (labels removed) is risky. You have no way of knowing whether you will want what you get or whether the product is worth the money. (p. 151)

Shoppers were encouraged to make sure "specials" were bargains before buying. It was also suggested that one way

to identify the "special" was to check to see if the ad listed the "regular" price and the "special" price. In addition, the Guide to Wise Buying (1980) stated:

Make sure any special offer makes sense to you, applied to a product you can really use, and actually save you money within the framework of your planned expenditures. (p. 153)

According to Gray and Anderson (1962), the prices of "feature" items in food ads were reduced considerably from the regular prices. It was concluded that specials could have reduced food bills up to 10%. The savings was realized when consumers paid enough attention to specials and when one-fourth of the food purchases were specials and the remainder nonspecials. It was also stressed that the savings may have been overstated to the extent the study selection procedure favored specials more than the "housewife" likely did. However, it was also pointed out that the savings may have been understated savings to the extent that some consumers shop for specials in more than one store. In addition, the pricing and selection procedures of foods to be priced each week during the test period were determined from eight newspaper food advertisements. The items were also expected to be available in all the stores.

The results of the study confirmed one of the observations of Jelly and Herrman (1978) that the stores offering lower prices on "specials" maintained higher prices on its nonspecials. This insight was highlighted when Gray and Anderson said:

The store with the lowest priced specials obviously maintained higher prices on its non-specials. For the bewildered and beleaguered consumer, the simple maxim that it pays to shop the specials needs to be redefined: it pays to shop the specials, but beware the non-specials, especially where the specials are best. (p. 133)

A check on the meaning of "special(s)" as related to a food purchase was made in a number of business dictionaries. Not one of the dictionaries consulted included the definition of the term "special(s)" as related to a food buy. However, the Dictionary of Business and Management (Rosenberg, 1978) and the Concise Dictionary of Business Terminology (Giordano, 1981) both listed the term "loss leader." A loss leader is an item priced below cost and designed to bring shoppers into the store.

Longman Dictionary of Business English (Adam, 1982) listed "bargain price" as specially low price, and "cut price" as low price. Numerous other definitions on price variations were included. However, the terms generally associated with food shopping tips were not listed.

The Modern American Business Dictionary (Berenyi, 1982) included the terms loss leader and price leader. Both had the same meaning.

Dictionaries by Ammer and Ammer (1977), Nemmers (1978), and Sloan and Zurcher (1970) listed the term loss leader. However, the definition of special(s) was not included.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Davies, 1973) defined special as related to food as "A

featured attraction such as a reduced price: a special on lamb chops" (p. 668).

Food Price Information in Food Advertisements

The food price information in supermarket advertisements varies from store to store. Many supermarkets use the traditional approach with respect to price information in advertisements. Included in such advertisements are the brand name of the product, the size or weight or unit, and selling price. Other supermarkets use traditional price components in addition to one or more symbols or identifying words to focus attention on specific foods. A few of the supermarkets invite instant comparison of the store's prices to their competitors' prices by actually listing the prices of one or more competitors along with their prices.

A review of newspaper food advertisements confirmed the scope of differences in components of price information available to shoppers. The review also revealed that the number of food items in the same size advertisement also varied.

In a Kroger food supplement advertisement which appeared in the Greensboro Daily News during the pricing period covering September 11 through September 17, 1983, a symbol of scissors was used to focus on particular items termed the "cost cutter weekly specials." Such flagged food items had a specific price listed. In another section of the same advertisement labeled "Everyday Low Prices," food items were identified as "cost cutter brand" featuring a

different scissors symbol along with the selling price of each item. Also located in this area was a caption which indicated a shopper could save 10% to 40% with "scoper" cost cutters compared to other brands. Another small section in the same advertisement was called "Reduced Bonus Buys." One food item offered in this section showed the selling price of \$1.41 for a 32-ounce jar of Hellmann's mayonnaise, along with the notation that the price "was \$1.57." All the items in this boxed section displayed a "selling price" and "was price." In addition, throughout the same four-page advertisement were food items priced in the traditional manner.

The Pioneer Supermarket featured an 8-page supplement in the August 7, 1983, issue of the New York Daily News. The theme of the supplement was "A Bonanza of Savings." All but two items were priced in the traditional manner featuring the brand name of product, size or weight or unit, and selling price. The two items flagged as "Glad Specials" were for two types of garbage bags. The format and design of this advertisement included illustrations for some products. In addition, the point size of the lettering varied on different items and prices for the specific food items.

In the "Summer Savings" A & P advertisement distributed within a limited number of stores in New York City during the week of August 13 through August 20, 1983, some of the food items were flagged with the symbol P and headings such as "meat specials," "grocery specials," "dairy specials,"

and "frozen specials." Some of the designated specials not only were flagged and priced but also were tagged with a boxed figure which indicated the savings per pound. For example, chicken drumsticks were priced at 79¢ lb. and the boxed figure read "Save 30¢ lb." Bottom round beef roast was priced at \$1.89 lb. and the boxed figure read "Save 70¢ lb." In the same advertisement appeared flagged specials without an indication of the savings per pound or size or unit of sale.

The Shop 'N Save advertisement which appeared in the St. Louis-Dispatch on Wednesday, October 26, 1983, listed the Shop 'N Save food item selling prices along with the prices of four competitors. Shoppers were invited to compare prices in order to determine the savings in Stop 'N Shop in contrast to the prices being offered by competitors promoting "double coupon" offers. For example, one of the 49 food items listed in the advertisement was pascal celery at 68¢ at Shop 'N Save. The celery prices listed in the advertisement for Kroger was 89¢, for National 89¢, for Schnucks 89¢, and for Dierbergs 79¢.

In a newspaper supplement dated October 12, 1983, and distributed in the selected areas in Washington, D.C., and Maryland by Safeway, the food items in the advertisement were flagged in a variety of ways. For example, a 12 oz. jar of Peter Pan peanut butter was priced at 99¢. The food item was flagged with the logo "Safeway Special" as well as

a sun-like symbol showing "Save 50¢." Alongside the peanut butter offering was the listing of a 64 oz. bottle of Cliffstar apple juice priced at \$1.29 and flagged with the symbol "Safeway low price," as well as the sun-like symbol with the words "Great Value." Other items were priced with notations on the amount of savings made. For example, Progresso Tomato Sauce was priced at two 8-oz. cans for 75¢ and the savings was indicated by "save 10¢." In the same advertisement there were food items which just listed the name of the item, weight or size or unit, and price.

Food Lion, in an advertisement appearing in the Greensboro News & Record on November 3, 1983, used the traditional price information which included the name of product, the size or weight or unit of sale, and selling price for most of the items listed in the advertisements. The remaining items featured the selling price plus the phrase "Why pay XX." For example, a half gallon Tropicana Donald Duck Orange Juice was priced at 99¢. In addition to the selling price "Why Pay \$1.19" was included.

Big Star, in an advertisement in the Greensboro News & Record on November 2, 1983, used the Red Dot as a symbol to designate the specials. All of the items in the advertisements were flagged with either a large or small dot. More will be noted on price information offered by Big Star in the next section of this chapter.

In the D'Agostino advertisement which appeared in The New York Times on September 10, 1983, the price information offered was the traditional name of product, weight or size or unit of sale, and selling price. However, the point size of lettering and the amount of space allotted each item varied.

The Winn Dixie advertisement in The Atlanta Journal/
The Atlanta Constitution on September 7/8, 1983, was 3½ pages. The first page featured "Buy One Get One Free." No prices were offered for items listed. For example, one offering read, "Free--One 1 lb. cup Gov't Inspected Fryer Livers with the purchase of one."

The second and third pages of the advertisement used the traditional price approach as well as the highlighting of some of the buy-one-get-one-free items. In addition, some food items were flagged with the logo "Cash Saving Specials." For example, one of the "Cash Saving Specials" was a 17-oz. can of Le Sueur peas for 1¢ with one filled cash-saving special certificate good for a designated time period. The certificate required 30 top value "ten" stamps or 6 top value "fifty" stamps. Stamps were available to shoppers at the check-out counter after payment of purchases. In addition, a very limited number of items were priced and the amount saved on the item was noted. The remaining half-page section of the advertisement included traditional pricing of listed items.

Nontraditional Food Price Information Sources

The traditional sources of food price information have been food advertisements in newspaper and store flyers, announcements and/or advertisements on radio or television, in-store prices on individual items or groupings of a specific food item, and on posters on the store window. In recent years some stores have eliminated pricing individual food items. Instead, the price is only tabbed on the shelf below the stocked food item. A scanner is used at the check-out counter to record the price of most items on the cash register receipt.

Although there are numerous pointers on how to save on the money spent for food, most of the money-saving food shopping plans emphasize that food shopping begins at home by studying the food ads in the local papers. Such comparison of food costs before marketing can be both economical and time-saving.

The importance and need for adequate consumer price information in an economic democracy were highlighted when Marion et al. (1979) said:

The results of this study indicate that a firm's prices in different metropolitan areas are positively related to its market share and the level of market concentration. This suggests that price differences within markets persist, at least in part, because consumers are unable to accurately evaluate the price levels of the competing sellers.* (p. 152)

*Since, in market economy, "sovereign" consumers are relied upon to direct the allocation of resources, either misinformed or uninformed consumers can lead to faulty

market signals. Consumers may be "sovereign" in a technical sense (their decisions still determine the allocation of resources among alternative uses) but are unable to exercise this power knowledgeably for their own best interest.

In addition, it was suggested that the individual shopper could seldom realistically expend the time to become an informed consumer because of the amounts of information needed in order to evaluate alternative sellers (and prices). In conclusion, Marion et al. (1979) said:

A significant gap between the information needed and available to consumers is therefore likely. (p. 153)

The question of adequacy of food price information available to the consumer came to national attention when confidential memos from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) became available to Advertising Age (Cohen, 1974). According to Cohen, Mayo J. Thompson, Commissioner of the FTC, reported that any plan for improved food price information which would bring down (food) prices 1% would save consumers \$750 million of the supermarket \$75 billion value business. The Commissioner pushed for the disclosure of gross margins (what the store pays for its goods and what it sells them for at the retail level) data rather than the FTC publishing tables in major markets which would show comparable prices at leading grocery stores for market-basket list items. It was suggested that the gross margin was more useful because the emphasis would be on retailing efficiency rather than profit. It was further explained a gross margin of 17% when compared

to 21% did not indicate one firm was less profitable than another. What was indicated was that the company operating at the 17% gross margin level was simply more efficient than one operating at 21%. It was indicated that some of the income from efficiency could possibly be passed to the consumers in order to increase their patronage.

Shoppers in Miami reduced food bills through a unique computerized program which identified best shopping specials in supermarkets in the area (Dooley, 1978). The information available to consumers not only automatically compared the prices of seven major supermarkets, but also broke down the price of each product into cost per unit and weight or volume. In addition, the system compared the current price of a food item against what it sold for a week ago and a year ago. As part of the program, the system also compared the prices of different brands of food being sold within one chain and compared those prices to those of other supermarkets.

The programmed system was also capable of storing nutritional data given individual specials and comparing it against 500 stored menu plans from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For those shoppers who chose to use both the price and menu components of the program, the system produced 30 menus a week based on the best buys.

This weekly price and menu service was available to shoppers by mail (33,000 shoppers), at mobile pick-up spots

near the major stores, and as part of the library's circulation material. Also available to shoppers was information on the unadvertised bargains in the supermarkets. The unadvertised specials information was available on a walk-in basis at one of the three mobile roving units which were scheduled at different stores in the area. The shoppers viewed the listed unadvertised specials on the computer screen.

The Ottawa-Hull study (Devine, 1976) examined the effects of increased retail food price information to determine the adequacy or influence of market information. Food price information was collected over a 28-week period in 26 supermarkets for 65 food items. Although the prices were collected, they were not published for 17 weeks. However, after the 17 weeks they were published for the following five weeks in the daily newspapers. After this publishing period, the prices were still monitored but not published for the last 6 weeks.

The impact of the information was substantial on the level and dispersion of store prices in the test area. A difference of 15% in weighted market basket price at the highest- and lowest-priced stores was recorded prior to the publication of food price information. The difference between the average prices of the highest- and lowest-corporate or voluntary chains was 8%.

Interestingly enough, average prices declined 7% for the entire market when price information was published in the newspapers. During that period it was noted that high-priced store prices declined rapidly in order to stay competitive to the low-priced stores. On the other hand, average prices increased by 8.8% during the 6-week postinformation period when prices were monitored but not published. In spite of inflationary food prices throughout Canada during the test period, the Ottawa-Hull prices at the end of the 28-week study were lower in comparison to other markets than before the comparative price information study.

Special mention was made to indicate that although the results were impressive, the time period of price publication was short. One would need to consider whether the results could be sustained over longer periods of time. In addition, special studies would be needed to determine if price publication could be a vehicle for collusion amongst leading companies. This is a possibility in highly concentrated markets.

Similar though less dramatic results were reported in a follow-up study done in Regina and Saskatoon, Canada (Devine, 1978). When prices in the two cities were compared to prices in other Canadian cities prior to the information period, the figures showed that over a 6-month period of the information program there was a 1 to 2% decline in prices. Even though the reduction in prices in this study was less

than the Ottawa-Hull study, after a 6-month publication period a substantial portion of the price decreases was maintained. In spite of the highly concentrated markets, no noticeable change in concentration was attributed to the results of the information program.

According to Marion et al. (1979), the effect of comparative price information on market concentration and prices was important as a long-term concern. Additionally, it was pointed out that no studies comparable to the two Canadian studies appeared to have been done in the United States. Some consumer organizations or newspapers have published limited comparative prices of specific food items. However, these isolated efforts have not been assessed for accuracy, duration, and effects.

The Grand Union Company developed a new consumer tool and consumer service for comparison food shopping. The July 25th press release ("Computerized Grand Union," 1983) announced:

. . . It's a booklet called the Consumer Price Finder that lists prices for more than 9,000 food items--practically everything on the shelves, except a few items like beer, soda and perishables.

Consumer Price Finder booklets contain 32 pages and are available free to shoppers so they can take them to other supermarkets for comparison shopping.

Grand Union is introducing the Consumer Price Finder as part of an overall change in pricing policy. The company's new policy is to match, price for price, all regular retail prices (excluding specials) of the top low-price supermarket chain in each area. In addition, the company plans to continue its hundreds of weekly Red Dot Specials, but these will not be listed in the Consumer Price Finder.

If a shopper spots a Grand Union price that is higher than a competitor's, Grand Union, after verifying the price, will lower its own shelf price to match it. The company has developed a toll-free telephone number to help shoppers seek expert answers to any pricing questions the local store's management cannot answer. The telephone number is 1-800-221-1835.

Printing Consumer Price Finders each week creates a logistical problem that would have been all but impossible just a few years ago. No supermarket chain could have moved fast enough to record all of its price changes on a weekly basis, set new type, print hundreds of thousands of booklets and get them to its stores.

What makes it possible now are technological advances in computerized printing. The process for each week's booklets goes like this: price changes are sent to the company's computer center where they are captured on computer tape. The computer tape is then linked to a typesetter which automatically sets the type at the speed of one page every 13 seconds. Then, the type is converted into plates for printing.

The printing process itself requires a constant 72-hour run, consuming 66,000 pounds of paper.

The Consumer Price Finder gives the everyday shopper the kind of buying tool used by professional purchasing agents. The shopper no longer has to rely solely on information in weekly newspaper ads for comparison shopping, but can readily and easily compare thousands of items.

In short, the Consumer Price Finder turns comparison shopping from an art into a science. (pp. 1, 2)

The Peter Pan illustration (Figure 1) priced at \$1.18 for an 18-oz. jar of regular or chunky peanut butter appeared in the Grand Union advertisement. A shopper could check the Peter Pan price in the advertisement against the other peanut butter price choices available in the store by checking prices in the Grand Union Consumer Price Finder. In the Price Finder as of July 31, the listings of peanut butter would be located

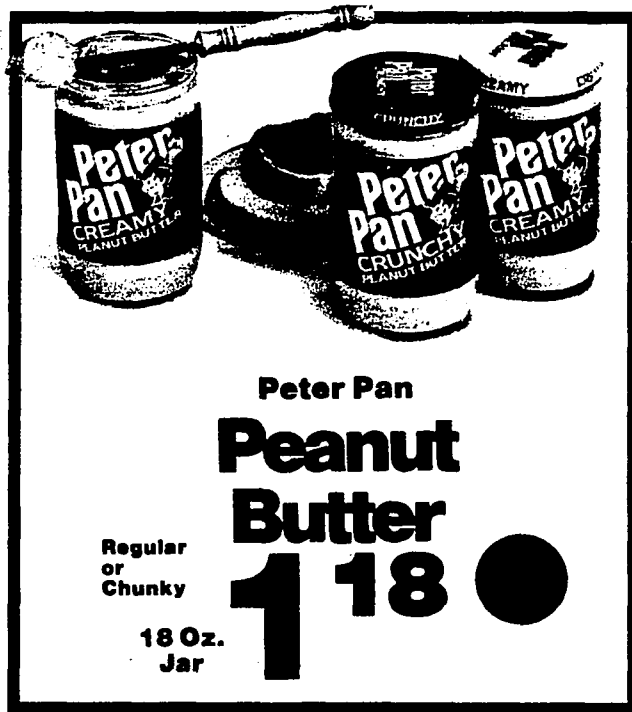


Figure 1. Peter Pan offering as of July 31.*

*Written permission was granted for the use of advertisement information by the Grand Union Company.

under Section 003 Peanut Butter and Section 098 Generics, Basics (Figure 2). Price could be checked for jars of equal weight and/or on a unit price comparison of smaller or larger amounts. Quality preference and other factors influencing consumer choice would be determined by the shopper. The same comparisons, as suggested in the press release, could be made to prices of peanut butter in other stores.

The Grand Union Company operates three supermarket chains under the names of Grand Union, Weingarten, and Big Star. It also operates the Basics Food Warehouses.

The review of the literature substantiated the need for additional food price information in order to improve the consumer's capacity to evaluate the competitive prices of sellers. This study was designed to examine the kind and scope of food price information that was available to the consumer and the extent to which consumers utilized the information.

| Product | Size | Price |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|
| 098 GENERICS, BASICS | | |
| BAS.DRY RST MX NUTS W/PNUT | 7.0OZ | 1.29 |
| BASIC TAGLES TEA BAGS | 100S | .99 |
| BASIC STUF THROWN MANZ OLV | 5.7OZ | .79 |
| BASIC SWEET PICKLE RELISH | 16 OZ | .89 |
| BASIC KOSHER DILL PICKLES | 32 OZ | .89 |
| BASIC 2 LITER REG COLA | 67.6Z | .67 |
| BASIC CUT SWEET POT & YAMS | 4 OZ | 1.09 |
| BASIC P/S MUSHROOMS | 4 OZ | .55 |
| BASIC 2-LITER DIET COLA | 67.6Z | .69 |
| BASIC P/S MUSHROOMS | 8 OZ | 1.09 |
| BASIC 2-LITER ORANGE | 67.6Z | .67 |
| BASIC 2-LITER GINGER ALE | 67.6Z | .67 |
| BASIC LEMON LIQ DISH DET | 32 OZ | .49 |
| BASIC 2-LITER ROOT BEER | 67.6Z | .69 |
| BASIC SINGLE ROLL TT 1 PLY | 1000S | .33 |
| BASIC CREAM STYLE CORN | 16 OZ | .39 |
| BASIC PAPER NAPKINS | 300CT | 1.09 |
| BASIC CRANBERRY JCE COCKTA | 64 OZ | 1.59 |
| BASIC FAC TISS WHITE 2 PLY | 200S | .53 |
| BASIC SWEET PEAS | 16 OZ | .33 |
| BASIC SPAGHETTI | 1LB | .43 |
| BASIC ELBOW MACARONI | 1LB | .43 |
| BASIC LONG GRAIN RICE | 96 OZ | 1.39 |
| BASIC STD ALUM FOIL 12X25 | 25FT | .43 |
| BASIC WHIPPED TOPPING | 16 OZ | .99 |
| BASIC WHITE VINEGAR | 32 OZ | .49 |
| BASIC PEAS | 18 OZ | .99 |
| BASIC SPAG SAUCE MEAT FLAV | 32OZ | .99 |
| BASIC FROZ CONCENTRATED CJ | 12 OZ | .89 |
| BASIC DRY ROASTED CASHEWS | 6.5OZ | 1.99 |
| BASIC FAB SOFTNER PINK | GAL | .79 |
| BASIC HD LIQ LDRY DET | 64OZ | 1.59 |
| BASIC FABRIC SOFTNER SHEETS | 40S | 1.29 |
| BASIC BLEACH LIQUID | GAL | .53 |
| BASIC DRY LAUNDRY DETERGENT | 49 OZ | 1.19 |
| BASIC ALL FABRIC BLEACH | 40 OZ | .99 |
| BASICS PURE HONEY | 2LB | 1.99 |
| BASICS PEARS IRREG PAS | 29OZ | .89 |
| BASICS PEAR HALVS | 16 OZ | .59 |
| BASICS BUCK MARAS CHERRIES | 8OZ | .79 |
| BASICS HLVS YELL CL PEACHES | 29 OZ | .79 |
| BASICS WHOLE WHITE POTATOES | 16 OZ | 3/.99 |
| BASICS SLICED CARROTS | 16 OZ | .39 |
| BASICS MIXED VEGETABLES | 16 OZ | .35 |
| BASICS GRAPE JUICE | 40 OZ | .99 |
| BASICS WHOLE KERNEL CORN | 16 OZ | .39 |
| BASICS APPLE JUICE DRINKS | 64 OZ | 1.19 |
| BASICS CUT GREEN BEANS | 16 OZ | .31 |
| BASICS CUT BEETS | 16 OZ | 3/.99 |
| BASICS MACARONI & CHEESE | 7.25Z | .23 |
| BASICS SLICED BEETS | 16 OZ | 3/.89 |
| BASICS TOMATOES | 16 OZ | .49 |
| BASICS THIN SPAGHETTI | 1 LB | .43 |
| BASICS BATHRM TISS 1PL 400S | 4S | .79 |
| BASICS CUT WAX BEANS | 16 OZ | 2/.69 |
| BASICSBR TOW WH 2PLY 120'S | 1S | .53 |
| BASICS PORK N BEANS | 16 OZ | .37 |
| BASICS RED KIDNEY BEANS | 15 OZ | 3/1.00 |
| BASICS TOMATO SAUCE | 15 OZ | .34 |
| BASICS TRASH CAN LINERS | 20CT | 1.35 |
| BASICS CHOC FLAV BAKE CHIPS | 12OZ | .79 |
| BASICS TOMATO PUREE | 28 OZ | .77 |
| BASICS TALL KITCHEN BAGS | 15'S | .99 |
| BASICS ORANGE JUICE | 64 OZ | 1.25 |
| BASICS HOT COCOA MIX | 23 OZ | 1.49 |
| BASICS IMIT HWS CRSE FOOD | 12 OZ | 1.29 |
| BASICS CLR PLS SANDWICH BG | 160'S | .59 |
| BASICS RATION 6 % CHICKEN D | 15 OZ | 4/.99 |
| BASICS IMITATION CHEESE SPD | 32OZ | 2.49 |
| BASICS SPREAD OLEO OTRS | 16 OZ | 2/.89 |
| BASICS RATION 6% E MEAT DF | 15 OZ | 4/.99 |
| BASICS VEG-OIL SPREAD | 32 OZ | .99 |
| BASICS RATION 6% LIVER DF | 15 OZ | 4/.99 |
| BASICS VAN ICE CREAM | 1/2GL | 1.49 |
| BASICS CIDER VINEGAR | 32 OZ | .85 |
| BASICS FISH CAT FOOD | 15 OZ | .27 |
| BASICS 18% DRY DOG FOOD | 25LB | 3.79 |
| BASICS FRIED POTATOES | 5.00 | 1.69 |
| BASICS SOFT MOIST DOG FOOD | 72 OZ | 2.19 |
| BASICS BROCC CUTS | 18OZ | .99 |
| BASICS P BUTTER SMOOTH | 18OZ | .99 |
| BASICS CHICKEN CAT FOOD | 15 OZ | .27 |

| Product | Size | Price |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|
| BASICS CRUNCHY P BUTTER | 18OZ | .99 |
| BASICS SOFT MOIST TUNA CAT | 12 OZ | .59 |
| BASICS CUT GREEN BEANS | 16OZ | 1.09 |
| BASICS SOFT MOIST GOURMET | 12 OZ | .59 |
| BASICS CATSUP | 32 OZ | .85 |
| BASICS CUT CORN | 16OZ | 1.09 |
| BASICS CAT LITTER | 25LBS | 2.59 |
| BASICS MAC. & CHEESE PIE | 06 OZ | 3/1.00 |
| BASICS D R PEANUTS UNSALT | 16 OZ | 1.69 |
| BASICS CHICKEN PIE | 06 OZ | 3/1.00 |
| BASICS MEATLESS SPAG SAUCE | 32OZ | .99 |
| BASICS TURKEY PIE | 06 OZ | 3/1.00 |
| BASICS SALAD STYLE MUSTARD | 24 OZ | .59 |
| BASICS DRY RST PEANUTS REG | 16OZ | 1.69 |
| BASICS GRAPE JELLY | 32 OZ | .85 |
| BASICS SALTINE CRACKERS | 16 OZ | .57 |
| BASICS STRAWBERRY PRESERVE | 2LB | 1.39 |
| BASICS SNACK CRACKERS | 11 OZ | .79 |
| BASICS SALAD DREEING | 32 OZ | .89 |
| BASICS HONEY GRAHAM CRACKER | 16 OZ | .89 |
| BASICS MAYONNAISE | 32 OZ | .97 |
| BASICS WHITE CAKE MIX | 16.5Z | 1.85 |
| BASICS VEG. OIL | 48 OZ | 1.85 |
| BASICS YELL OW CAKE MIX | 16.5Z | .55 |
| BASICS DEVILS FOOD CK MIX | 16.5Z | .55 |
| BASICS VEGETABLE OIL | 24 OZ | .89 |
| BASICS INSTANT COFFEE | 6OZ | 1.99 |
| BASICS CORN OIL | 24 OZ | .99 |
| BASICS ICED TEA 100T | 32 OZ | 1.89 |
| BASICS CORN OIL | 48 OZ | 1.88 |
| BASICS BLACK PEPPER | 8 OZ | 1.09 |
| BASICS WHIP VEG SHORTENING | 42 OZ | 1.45 |
| BASICS NON DAIRY CREAMER | 22 OZ | 1.19 |
| BASICS WHL UNPEELED APRICOT | 29 OZ | .89 |
| BASICS PANCAKES SYRUP | 24OZ | .85 |
| BASICS MANDARIN ORANGES | 11 OZ | .45 |
| BASICS MIXED FRUIT LT SYRUP | 29OZ | .83 |
| BASICS YC PEACHES SLICED LS | 29OZ | .79 |
| BASICS YC PEACHES LITE SYRU | 29 OZ | .73 |
| BASICS APPLESAUCE | 25 OZ | .56 |
| BASICS AUTOMATIC DISH DET | 50 OZ | 1.39 |
| BASICS PINK LIQ DISH DET | 32 OZ | .49 |

003 PEANUT BUTTER

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|
| GU CRUNCHY PEANUT BUTTER | 12 OZ | 1.19 |
| GU CRUNCHY PEANUT BUTTER | 28 OZ | 1.99 |
| GU CRUNCHY PEANUT BUTTER | 18 OZ | 1.29 |
| GU OLD FASH SMOOTH PEAT BTR | 18 OZ | 1.59 |
| GU SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 12 OZ | 1.19 |
| GU SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 28 OZ | 1.99 |
| GU SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 18 OZ | 1.29 |
| GU SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 40 OZ | 3.59 |
| GU SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 5LB | 4.99 |
| JIF CRUNCHY PEANUT BUTTER | 18 OZ | 1.49 |
| JIF SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 40 OZ | 3.79 |
| JIF SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 12 OZ | 1.35 |
| JIF SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 18 OZ | 1.49 |
| JIF SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 28 OZ | 2.69 |
| JIF SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 28 OZ | 2.69 |
| PET PAN SMOOTH PEANUT BTR | 40 OZ | 3.79 |
| PET PAN SMOOTH PEANUT BTR | 18 OZ | 1.49 |
| PET PAN CRUNCHY PEANUT BTR | 18 OZ | 1.49 |
| SHEDD OLD FASH CRMY PNT BTR | 18 OZ | 1.79 |
| SKIPPY SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 6 OZ | .75 |
| SKIPPY CHUNKY PEANUT BUTTER | 40.Z | 3.79 |
| SKIPPY SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 12 OZ | 1.35 |
| SKIPPY CRUNCHY PEANUT BTR | 18 OZ | 1.69 |
| SKIPPY SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 18 OZ | 1.69 |
| SKIPPY SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 28 OZ | 2.29 |
| SKIPPY SUPER CHUNK PNT BTR | 28 OZ | 2.29 |
| SKIPPY SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER | 40 OZ | 3.79 |
| SMK GOOBER GRAPE | 18 OZ | 1.69 |
| SMUCKERS CRUNCHY PEANUT BTR | 16OZ | 1.79 |
| SMUCKERS NAT PEANUT BUTTER | 16OZ | 1.79 |
| SUPERMAN PNUT BTR CREAMY | 18OZ | 1.89 |
| SUPERMAN PNUT BTR CREAMY | 28 OZ | 2.69 |
| SUPERMAN PNUT BTR CRNCH | 18 OZ | 1.69 |

Figure 2. Peanut butter price offerings in Grand Union Price Finder as of July 31.*

*Written permission was granted for use of Price Finder information by the Grand Union Company.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

It was determined that a descriptive study would be most appropriate for the purposes of this study, which were to determine the food price information on specials and nonspecials (regular prices) available to consumers interested in making food choices in their own best interests, to determine factors which influence consumers' food choices, to determine what home economics teachers teach in relation to getting the most for the food dollar, to determine home economics teachers' and consumers' awareness and use of the Consumer Price Finder program, and to determine home economics teachers' and consumers' definitions of a food special and how to identify specials in newspaper food advertisements. Following the detailed description of the procedure used to ascertain food price information on specials and nonspecials available, the remainder of the chapter deals with the selection of the populations and samples, instruments, and data collection and analysis.

Food Price Information

In-depth library research methods were followed to establish and identify the kind and scope of food price information available to consumers. In addition, the intensive probing characteristic of library research produced

nontraditional food price information insights which would not be found ordinarily in traditional resource references.

A search of the literature was initiated in February, 1983. The primary sources investigated were the indexes and abstracting services in the Social Science & Humanistic Index, The New York Times Index, News Bank Index, Current Index to Journals in Education, Sociological Abstracts, Dissertation Abstracts International, Business Periodical Abstracts, the Home Economics Research Abstracts, and Book Review Index. In April, 1983, additional insights and references were gained from computer searches through ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) and ABI/INFORM (Data Courier Inc., Louisville, Kentucky) data bases and the Comprehensive Dissertation Index.

Textbooks and other printed resources cited were selected on the basis of availability from the library of the researcher, the New York City Reference Library (40th Street and 5th Avenue), Jackson Library (UNC-G), Home Economics Education Department Library (UNC-G), and the Greensboro Public Library. In addition, the interlibrary loan service of UNC-G made available for study the dissertations and theses not available in the libraries mentioned previously.

Populations and Samples

The populations in this study were secondary school home economics teachers in Guilford and Mecklenburg Counties

and consumers in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area. These populations were selected because there were Big Star food stores that offered Price Finder information in these geographic areas. All subjects, regardless of the population, participated on a voluntary basis.

On December 8, 1983, a questionnaire, self-addressed stamped envelope, and a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study were mailed to all 87 secondary school home economics teachers in Guilford and Mecklenburg Counties in North Carolina (see Appendix A). Participants were requested to return the questionnaires by December 21, 1983. A follow-up letter and questionnaire were mailed on January 19, 1984 (see Appendix B).

The second population surveyed were intact groups of consumers in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area. The population, made up of 150 consumers, included 43 participants in an extension service workshop, 23 residences of a specific neighborhood, 17 members of a church group which had a vegetarian food store for the convenience of the church members, 20 UNC-G graduate students, 23 UNC-G undergraduate students, 16 members of a garden club, and 8 members of a second church group unrelated to the first group.

Since most of the leaders of the intact groups could not release mailing lists or approve face-to-face interviews during specified group activity periods, a questionnaire was distributed to and collected from each member of the groups

by the leaders (see Appendix C). Each leader was given instructions on how to administer the questionnaire.

Instruments

One instrument developed for use in this study was a questionnaire designed to determine the food buying tips and related information taught by home economics teachers at the secondary school level. Numerous questionnaires on food purchasing practices, such as those developed by Moore (1973), Vasser (1970), and Williams (1972), and appropriate subject matter textbooks used in the secondary schools in North Carolina were reviewed prior to the development of the instrument. Based on this review, an instrument consisting of seven questions was developed. Teachers were asked to respond to four open-ended questions. Responses to these questions provided the data needed to ascertain what food buying practices were taught, a definition of "food specials," how to identify "food specials" in newspaper advertisements, and the text or references used. Two of the remaining three items were forced choice related to the perception of food price information, and the last question requested a response to the number of years of teaching experience.

The questionnaire was submitted to professional personnel in the area of home economics for suggestions. Revisions were made based on the responses received. In addition, the questionnaire was pretested by 10 employed secondary school home economics teachers. The pretesting was conducted to

determine the appropriate amount of time needed to administer the questionnaire, the clarity of the questions, and the ease or difficulty in administering the questionnaire. Minor revisions of the instrument were made after the pretesting.

The second instrument for use in this study was adapted from the first instrument. The questionnaire was designed to collect information from consumers in intact groups in Greensboro, North Carolina. Consumers were asked five open-ended questions. Responses to the questions provided the data needed to ascertain which factors influenced consumers to buy the foods they did, what consumers did to save on the food bill when the budget was tight, a definition of "food specials," how consumers identified "food specials" in food ads, and to determine if consumers thought there was enough food price information available to consumers. The remaining question was forced choice and designed to determine the extent to which consumers were aware of a new price information program called the Price Finder.

This second questionnaire was submitted to personnel in the area of home economics for suggestions. Revisions were made based on the responses received. In addition, the questionnaire was pretested with 10 consumers. Pretesting was conducted to determine the appropriate amount of time needed to administer the questionnaire, the clarity of questions, and the ease or difficulty in administering the questionnaire. Minor revisions of the instrument were made after the pretest.

Collection and Analysis of Data

The library search data on food price information were collected through a review of the literature and computer searches through ERIC and ABI/INFORM data bases and the Comprehensive Dissertation Index. This information was presented through documentation and summarization in the review of the literature.

As the questionnaires were returned from each of the two populations, the responses to each questionnaire were read. Responses to each item in each of the populations were recorded and numbered on a tally sheet. Those responses which were identical or had the same meaning were tallied. Inherent categories were formed as a result of this step in the categorization process. Those responses which did not fall into such categories were assigned to categories in terms of the function or use of the determinants. The assignments of such responses to categories were based on the insights gained through the food buying studies and references noted in this study. Occasionally, only one response formed a category. This occurred when the response could not be assigned to categories according to function or use.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The major objectives of this study were to determine the food price information on specials and nonspecials available to consumers interested in making food choices in their own best interests, to determine factors which influenced consumers' food choices, to determine what home economics teachers teach in relation to getting the most for the food dollar, and to determine home economics teachers' and consumers' definitions of a food special and how to identify specials in newspaper food advertisements.

Two questionnaires were developed to obtain the information needed for this study. One was designed to collect data from consumers, and the other was designed to collect information from secondary school home economics teachers. The data were summarized and are presented as follows:

1. A description of the consumer population who participated in this study in terms of their responses to determinants influencing food purchases, actions taken to save money on food bills, definitions of food special, explanations on food special identification, whether enough price information was available to those wanting to make choices in their own best interests, and their awareness and use of the Consumer Price Finder Program.

2. A description of the secondary school home economics teachers who participated in this study in terms of their responses to major tips taught secondary school students on how to get the most for the food dollar, definitions of food special, explanations on food special identification, whether enough price information was available to those wanting to make choices in their own best interests, awareness and use of the Consumer Price Finder program, grades taught, texts/references used, and years of teaching experience.

Description of Consumer Respondents

The consumer population for this study was comprised of six intact community groups who resided in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area. Leaders of the intact groups administered and collected the questionnaires. The consumer population consisted of 43 extension service workshop participants, 23 residents of a specific neighborhood, 17 members of a church group, 20 University of North Carolina at Greensboro graduate students, 23 University of North Carolina at Greensboro undergraduate students, 16 garden club members, and 8 members of a second church group unrelated to the first church group. The majority of the consumer population were female according to the group leaders.

Determinants Influencing Food Purchases of Consumers

The 444 responses from the 150 consumers on what influenced them to buy foods were first listed and then tallied when responses were identical. Eight categories were identified in this manner. The remaining responses were then coded and assigned to categories according to function or use. This categorization process produced a total of 25 categories (see Appendix D).

The determinant cited most frequently was price. The next five highest determinants in descending order of frequency were sales and specials in newspaper advertisements, nutrition, family likes/dislikes, shoppers' likes, and health/special diet needs (see Table 1). These six determinants accounted for 55% of the responses.

The ranking of price as the determinant with the greatest influence on food purchases made by consumers was supported by the findings of Bassler and Newell (1982) and Williams (1972). It was difficult to draw more extensive and accurate relationships of the findings on influence determinants to other studies in the literature. Part of the difficulty was attributed to the differences in the format of the question(s) used to solicit the information. For example, the influence determinants reported in a study by Moore (1973) were collected through two forced-choice questions. In this study the information on influence

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Responses to DeterminantsInfluencing Food Purchases of Consumers^a

| Influence Determinants | Number | Percentage |
|--|--------|------------|
| Price | 55 | 12.39 |
| Sales and specials in newspaper advertisements | 50 | 11.26 |
| Nutrition | 47 | 10.59 |
| Family likes/dislikes | 44 | 9.91 |
| Shopper's likes | 25 | 5.63 |
| Health/special diet needs | 23 | 5.18 |
| Appearance/odor of food and/or store | 20 | 4.50 |
| Quality of food | 19 | 4.28 |
| Replacement of depleted foods | 17 | 3.83 |
| Habit/tradition | 15 | 3.38 |
| Foods in season | 15 | 3.38 |
| Advertising (other than newspapers) | 15 | 3.38 |
| Brand name foods | 13 | 2.93 |
| Non-brand name foods | 13 | 2.93 |
| Convenience | 13 | 2.93 |
| Coupons | 11 | 2.48 |
| Size of food budget | 9 | 2.03 |
| Labels/packaging | 7 | 1.58 |
| Recommendations of others | 7 | 1.58 |
| Serving yield per unit purchased | 6 | 1.35 |
| Desire to try new foods | 6 | 1.35 |
| Shopping time | 5 | 1.13 |
| Store preference | 4 | .90 |
| How hungry when shopping | 4 | .90 |
| Entertainment plans | 1 | .23 |

^aN=444 (number of multiple responses from the 150 subjects)

determinants related to food purchases was solicited through one open-ended question.

Influence determinants such as shopper's likes and habit/tradition surfaced in this study. None of the studies cited in the review of the literature mentioned these determinants. Some of the possible reasons for the appearance of these determinants in this study may be attributed to more family units of one person, the liberation movement, stronger identity to ethnic groups, dietary patterns of given religious groups, and the type question(s) used to solicit information.

Consumer Actions Taken to Save Money on Food Bills

The 392 responses from the 150 consumers on actions taken to save money on food bills were first listed and then tallied when responses were identical. Nine groups were identified, and the remaining responses were categorized according to function and/or use. This produced a total of 30 categories (see Appendix E).

The seven most frequently noted actions taken by consumers to save money on food bills in descending order were check and buy sales, specials, and low-priced advertised foods; use coupons/refunding; buy less expensive foods (trade down); use less meat/no meat/increase use of protein (meat) substitutes; reduce use of high-sugar/high-calorie foods; cook low-cost recipes from scratch; and buy non-brand name foods (see Table 2). These seven consumer actions represented 67% of the consumer responses.

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Responses to Consumer
Actions Taken to Save Money on Food Bills^a

| Consumer Actions | Number | Percentage |
|--|--------|------------|
| Check and buy sales, specials, and low-priced advertised foods | 60 | 15.31 |
| Use coupons/refunding | 50 | 12.76 |
| Buy less expensive foods (trade down) | 41 | 10.46 |
| Use less meat/no meat/increase use of protein (meat) substitutes | 33 | 8.42 |
| Reduce use of high-sugar/high calorie foods | 26 | 6.63 |
| Cook low-cost recipes from scratch | 26 | 6.63 |
| Buy nonbrand name foods | 25 | 6.38 |
| Use foods on hand | 18 | 4.59 |
| Buy less convenience foods | 16 | 4.08 |
| Buy only what is needed | 16 | 4.08 |
| Buy/eat/use less | 11 | 2.81 |
| Buy foods in season | 10 | 2.55 |
| Buy from planned menus/lists | 10 | 2.55 |
| Avoid waste | 8 | 2.04 |
| Buy more "meal stretching" foods (complex carbohydrates) | 7 | 1.79 |
| Comparison shop | 6 | 1.53 |
| Less/no eating out | 6 | 1.53 |
| Shop stores with low prices and convenient to home | 4 | 1.02 |
| Less/less expensive entertaining | 3 | .77 |
| Limited number of shopping trips | 3 | .77 |
| Buy for intended use | 3 | .77 |
| Do not shop when hungry | 2 | .51 |
| Use food stamps | 1 | .26 |
| Buy less nonfood items | 1 | .26 |
| Set limit on amount spent on food | 1 | .26 |
| Buy sandwich makings | 1 | .26 |
| Buy frozen foods | 1 | .26 |
| Cook in quantity (lots of only a few foods) | 1 | .26 |
| Buy in bulk and share with neighbor | 1 | .26 |
| "Let my wife shop" | 1 | .26 |

^aN=392 (number of multiple responses from the 150 subjects)

The results on some of the actions taken to save money on food bills by the consumers in this study were similar to the findings reported in the 50th Annual Report of the Grocery Industry ("Consumer Trends," 1983). Both studies showed that consumers shopped with price in mind, redeemed more coupons, checked newspaper advertisements, and shopped for sales and specials. In addition, the findings of both studies indicated consumers traded down by buying less expensive foods, purchased more nonbrand name food items, made fewer meat purchases, and purchased cheaper cuts of meats.

Consumer Definitions of Specials

The 150 consumer responses defining a food special were listed and tallied when responses were the same or of the same meaning. The process resulted in 23 categories.

Thirty-four percent of the consumers defined the term food special as meaning sale, special price, low cost, reduced price, savings, and/or less expensive. The terms and words included in this category denoted a reduction in price. Twenty-nine percent of the consumers defined food special as food on sale for a price lower than the regular or normal price (see Table 3).

Nine percent of the consumers altered the previous definitions by noting a food special was a food with a reduced or lower price, or over-stocked, damaged, a special buy, or

Table 3

Number and Percentage of Responses of ConsumerDefinitions of Food Special^a

| Definitions | Number | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| Sale, special price, low-cost, reduced price, savings, and/or less expensive price | 51 | 34.00 |
| Food on sale for price lower than regular (normal) price | 43 | 28.67 |
| Reduced prices on overstocked, damaged, special or seasonal foods for quick sale | 13 | 8.67 |
| Means nothing or not much | 6 | 4.00 |
| Items reduced in price because of the <u>expiration date and discontinued items</u> | 5 | 3.33 |
| Loss leader to get buyers into store | 4 | 2.67 |
| Name brand foods at reduced price | 3 | 2.00 |
| Low price on foods of lower quality and freshness | 3 | 2.00 |
| Large size items (packages) that are marked down | 2 | 1.33 |
| Foods available on a percentage discount <u>of regular price</u> | 2 | 1.33 |
| Foods in big print--stars and symbols around it--often in coupon form | 2 | 1.33 |
| No response | 2 | 1.33 |
| Lowest price as best buy | 2 | 1.33 |
| Food which has equal nutritional value for a lower price | 2 | 1.33 |
| <u>Foods at a low price that you can use</u> | 2 | 1.33 |
| Food marked down in price, but not a bargain | 1 | 0.67 |
| Overpriced foods that are reduced in price, but not a bargain | 1 | 0.67 |
| Lower promotional price on normally overpriced item | 1 | 0.67 |
| Bargain on 2 for price of 1 | 1 | 0.67 |
| Special is not a special if it isn't good food | 1 | 0.67 |
| <u>Buy our specials so we can soak you on everything else</u> | 1 | 0.67 |
| Do not know what it means | 1 | 0.67 |
| Check advertisements | 1 | 0.67 |

^aN=150

seasonal food reduced for quick sale. Another 3% of the consumers, who also defined food specials in terms of the "reduced for quick sale" concept, defined food specials as items reduced in price because of the expiration date and discontinued items.

Negative statements were also included in the responses to defining food special. Some feelings of the consumers were expressed and reflected in their responses as follows: "means nothing," "foods marked down, but not a bargain," "over-priced foods that are reduced in price, but not a bargain," "lower promotional prices on normally overpriced item," and "buy our specials so we can soak you on everything else."

Two consumers failed to answer the question. Only one respondent reported she did not know the meaning of the term food special.

The consumers' responses indicated there was no agreement on a standard or universal definition of food special. This finding was supported by the lack of a special or food special definition in seven business dictionaries (Adam, 1982; Ammer & Ammer, 1977; Berenyi, 1982; Giordano, 1981; Nemmers, 1978; Rosenberg, 1978; Sloan & Zurcher, 1970).

Consumers' Explanations on Food Special Identification

The responses from the 150 consumers on how one would explain how to identify food specials in newspaper food

advertisements were listed, tallied, and categorized. This produced 19 categories of explanations (see Appendix F).

Two explanations--consumers needed to compare the price of the special with prices in other ads and/or in stores, and shoppers must know the regular price, special price, and then compare prices in other ads/stores in order to determine a food special--were given by more than one-third (36%) of the consumers on the identification of a food special in the newspaper ads. A closely related explanation was given by 9% of the consumers who stated that shoppers should compare unit pricing of food items to determine food specials (see Table 4).

Six percent of the consumers felt one could not identify a special from the information available in the newspaper food advertisement. In contrast, 5% of the consumers indicated that specials could be identified by the big print (type size) in the advertisement; 4% noted that the specials could be identified by the words special, sale, and coupon offers in the advertisements; and less than 1% indicated the "lead" items in the advertisement identified the specials (see Table 4).

The four most frequently noted consumers' explanations on food special identification in newspaper advertisements accounted for 56% of the explanations. Three of the explanations did not say there was not enough information. This was implied by the explanations that additional actions were

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Consumer Responses to
Explanations on Food Special Identification
in Newspaper Advertisements^a

| Explanation | Number | Percentage |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Compare special prices with prices in other ads and/or in the store | 27 | 18.00 |
| Shopper must know regular price, special price, and then compare to prices in other ads/store | 27 | 18.00 |
| Study/check newspaper advertisements | 16 | 10.67 |
| Compare unit prices to determine special | 14 | 9.33 |
| <u>No response</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>8.67</u> |
| Look for lower prices | 13 | 8.67 |
| Cannot identify specials from information in advertisements | 9 | 6.00 |
| Big print | 7 | 4.67 |
| Look for the words special, sale, and coupon offers in advertisements | 6 | 4.00 |
| Look for low price for quality, reliability and quantity of food | 3 | 2.00 |
| <u>Name brands on sale</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>2.00</u> |
| Lower priced foods which you use and want | 3 | 2.00 |
| Do not use specials in ads; look at prices in store | 2 | 1.33 |
| Do not buy specials or use coupons on food you do not need | 2 | 1.33 |
| Lead items in advertisement are the specials | 1 | 0.67 |
| Use Price Finder and compare prices to determine specials | 1 | 0.67 |
| Show them; tell them | 1 | 0.67 |
| Look for special and regular price | 1 | 0.67 |
| A special is a special only if you can use it | 1 | 0.67 |

^aN=150

needed in order to identify a special. The fourth explanation simply stated that one should study the advertisement, but failed to explain how a food special could be identified. In reality, the four most frequently noted responses did not address the question asked. The consumers' explanations may reflect the dilemma created by the lack of a standard definition for the term food special. However, the appearance of the Price Finder ("Computerized Grand Union," 1983) showed that one supermarket chain management confirmed that more than the information in the supermarket advertisements was needed for comparison food shoppers interested in identifying the specials. The supermarket chain boasted that the Price Finder was designed to give consumers the kind of information needed and used by professional purchasing agents. The chain's management said that the Price Finder was designed to make comparison shopping a science rather than an art.

Consumers' Responses to Whether Enough Price Information is Available to Consumers Wanting to Make Choices in Their Own Best Interests

Forty-three percent of the consumers indicated there was enough food price information available to consumers interested in making choices in their own best interests (see Table 5). Over one-half of the consumers (51%) expressed there was not enough information. Five percent were not sure if there was enough information, and the remaining three consumers did not answer the question.

Table 5

Number and Percentage of Consumer Responses to Whether
Enough Food Price Information Is Available to Consumers
Interested in Making Choices in Their Own Best Interests^a

| Answer | Consumers | |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | Number | Percentage |
| Yes | 64 | 42.67 |
| No | 76 | 50.67 |
| Not sure | 7 | 4.67 |
| No answer | 3 | 2.00 |

^aN=150

It was suggested by the participants who believed there was enough information available that many consumers do not utilize the price information available to them. It was specifically mentioned that consumers did not take advantage of the unit pricing available.

The findings of the references cited in the review of the literature strongly supported the belief that consumers needed more food price information if they were to accurately evaluate the price levels and prices of competing sellers (Cohen, 1974; Devine, 1976; Dooley, 1978; Marion et al., 1979).

Awareness and Use of the Consumer Price Finder Program

Although 61% of the participants reported an awareness of the Consumer Price Finder Program available in the Big Star Supermarkets in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area (see Table 6), only 15% indicated that they used the Price Finder (see Table 7). Of the 14 participants who indicated using the Price Finder, 10 reported the Price Finder was helpful as a shopping tool (see Table 8).

Consumers who were aware of the Price Finder indicated it made comparison shopping easier and less time consuming. It was also reported that it helped determine the overall price level of individual stores. Of those consumers who were aware of the Price Finder and did not use it, the main reasons for not using it were that the location of the store was not convenient, not their store preference, or just had

Table 6

Number and Percentage of Responses to Consumer
Awareness of Price Finder^a

| Answer | Number of Responses | Percentage |
|--------|---------------------|------------|
| Yes | 92 | 61.33 |
| No | 57 | 38.00 |
| Other | 1 | 0.67 |

^aN=150

Table 7

Number and Percentage of Responses to Use of the Food
Finder by Those Consumers Who Had an Awareness of
the Consumer Price Finder Program^a

| Answer | Number | Percentage |
|-----------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 14 | 15.22 |
| No | 75 | 81.56 |
| No answer | 3 | 3.26 |

^aN=92

Table 8

Number and Percentage of Responses to Helpfulness
of Consumer Price Finder Program to Consumers
Using the Price Finder^a

| Answer | Number | Percentage |
|-----------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 10 | 71.43 |
| No | 3 | 21.43 |
| No answer | 1 | 7.14 |

^aN=14

not gotten around to it yet. Other reasons cited were that they were satisfied with their own shopping systems, could not locate the Price Finder in the store, tried to shop in U.S. owned stores, felt it was more promotional "hype," and did not like Big Star and Food Lion. One consumer stated, "I do like the idea, but I feel the stores involved should clean up their act. I can get better quality for the same dollars or, sometimes, less dollars at stores not so involved in the media contest of who has the 'lowest prices.'"

The responses from four of the consumers indicated that although they had been exposed to the advertising related to the Price Finder they were confused as to which store offered it. The statements indicated it was offered at both Big Star and Food Lion and at Food Lion instead of Big Star.

When asked where information about the Price Finder program had been obtained, the 92 consumers who were aware of the program identified six sources of information. Eighty-one of the 92 consumers identified television as the main source of information. Other responses included radio, newspaper, friend, store, and relative (see Table 9).

Description of Teacher Respondents

Questionnaires were mailed to all 87 secondary school home economics teachers employed in Guilford and Mecklenburg Counties in North Carolina for the 1983-1984 school year. Specific subject matter teaching assignments for these teachers were not available at the time the data were collected.

Table 9

Source of Information Which Provided Awareness of
Consumer Price Finder Program to 92 Consumers

| Source of Information | Number ^a |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Television | 81 |
| Radio | 11 |
| Newspaper | 7 |
| Friend | 6 |
| Store | 4 |
| Relative | 2 |

^aMultiple responses cited by consumers.

Fifty-three (61%) of the 87 teachers returned the questionnaires. Of the 53 questionnaires returned, only 39 of the 53 teachers were involved in teaching assignments which addressed the subject matter concerns of this study. The data obtained from the 39 teachers were used as the basis for the descriptive analysis.

Major Tips Taught Secondary School Students on How to Get the Most for the Food Dollar

The 163 responses from 39 secondary school home economics teachers on the major tips taught to students on how to get the most for the food dollar were listed and tallied when identical. Nineteen categories were identified and the remaining responses were categorized according to function and/or use. This categorization process produced a total of 30 categories (see Appendix G).

The five tips most frequently taught were check and/or utilize specials and sales items; comparison shop; make and use shopping list; use coupons/rebates/stamps; and plan menus/meals (see Table 10). This comprised over 60% of the responses.

Teacher Definitions of Food Specials

The 39 responses of teachers who defined the term food special were listed and tallied when responses were identical in meaning. This process produced 11 categories.

Table 10

Number and Percentage of Teacher Responses to
Major Tips Taught to Secondary School Students
on How to Get the Most for the Food Dollar^a

| | Number | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| Check and/or utilize specials and sale items | 29 | 17.79 |
| Comparison shop | 25 | 15.34 |
| Make and use shopping list | 18 | 11.04 |
| Use coupons/rebates/stamps | 15 | 9.20 |
| Plan meals/menus | 13 | 7.98 |
| Read labels | 9 | 5.52 |
| Buy in quantity/bulk/larger sizes | 8 | 4.91 |
| Do not shop when hungry | 5 | 3.07 |
| Nutrition | 5 | 3.07 |
| Evaluate advertising/coupons | 5 | 3.07 |
| Buy only what can be used | 4 | 2.45 |
| Consider quality of food | 3 | 1.84 |
| Evaluate store policies/staff/services | 3 | 1.84 |
| Limit shopping trips and time in supermarkets | 2 | 1.23 |
| Know regular and special prices | 2 | 1.23 |
| Check sales receipt | 2 | 1.23 |
| Store food properly | 2 | 1.23 |
| Use Price Finder | 1 | 0.61 |
| Buy foods with multiple use | 1 | 0.61 |
| Do not rush shopping | 1 | 0.61 |
| Use economical cuts of meats | 1 | 0.61 |
| Know principles of cookery | 1 | 0.61 |
| Utilize leftovers | 1 | 0.61 |
| Higher price brands not always best buys | 1 | 0.61 |
| Buy grade and/or quality for intended use | 1 | 0.61 |
| Make substitutions for foods in same food group | 1 | 0.61 |
| Check conditions of packages/containers | 1 | 0.61 |
| Compare cost per serving rather than total cost | 1 | 0.61 |
| Leave children at home when shopping | 1 | 0.61 |
| Fallacy of casseroles | 1 | 0.61 |

^aNumber of responses from 39 teachers = 163 (teachers cited more than one response).

Of the teachers 16 defined a food special as foods priced at lower than regular (normal) price; 5 as foods with reduced, cheaper, special, or sale price; 5 as foods being promoted at a lower price to attract customers into the store; and 4 indicated that a food special meant that the price was reduced because of the expiration date, overstocking of items, and fast or slow selling items. These four definitions garnered 77% of the responses (see Table 11).

One teacher responded to the question with the phrase that a special was "vague terminology." The remaining responses ranged from definitions which related price to need and shopping plan to prices which made a food a good buy. It appeared that one teacher misinterpreted the question and responded that the term meant a person with a specialty in foods and nutrition. The teacher responses, like those of the consumers, indicated there was no standard or universal definition for a food special. As noted earlier, this finding was supported by the lack of a definition for a food special in seven business dictionaries (Adam, 1982; Ammer & Ammer, 1977; Berenyi, 1982; Giordano, 1981; Nemmers, 1978; Rosenberg, 1978; Sloan & Zurcher, 1970).

Teachers' Explanations on Food Special Identification

The responses of the 39 teachers on how students were taught to identify specials in newspaper advertisements were listed, tallied, and categorized. The explanations formed 10 categories.

Table 11

Number and Percentage of Teacher Responses to
Definitions of Food Special^a

| Definitions | Number | Percentage |
|--|--------|------------|
| Food price at lower than regular (normal) price | 16 | 41.03 |
| Foods with reduced, cheaper, special, or sale price | 5 | 12.82 |
| Food being promoted at lower price to attract customers into store | 5 | 12.82 |
| Reduced prices because of expiration date, overstocked items, fast or slow selling items | 4 | 10.26 |
| Foods new to the customer and for a time might be on sale for a reduced price | 2 | 5.13 |
| A good food at a good price which fits needs/shopping plan | 2 | 5.13 |
| Vague terminology | 1 | 2.56 |
| Foods that are priced especially good at particular time of year (seasonal) | 1 | 2.56 |
| Food buys that promote greater saving | 1 | 2.56 |
| A good buy for a food item | 1 | 2.56 |
| A person with a specialty in foods and nutrition | 1 | 2.56 |

^aN=39

Almost two-thirds of the teachers indicated that in order to identify a special, one must have knowledge of or access to the regular price as well as to the special price and that one must compare the prices in several ads and stores (see Table 12). Three teachers did not respond to how students were taught in their classrooms on how to identify a special in newspaper advertisements. Only two teachers indicated that one could identify specials from the information available in the advertisement.

The studies cited in the literature failed to establish criteria for the identification of a food special based on the information in newspaper food advertisements. However, many of the studies revealed that the consumer perceived the food special as a money saver, and consumers reported using specials ("Consumer Trends," 1983; Fagot, 1967; Johnson, 1970; Moore, 1973; Thompson, 1975).

Teachers' Responses to Whether Enough Food Price Information Is Available to Consumers Wanting to Make Choices in Their Own Best Interest

Seventeen of the teachers indicated that there was enough food price information available to consumers interested in making food choices in their own best interest. However, more than one-half of the teachers (20) indicated that there was not enough information available. Two of the teachers were uncertain (see Table 13).

Teachers indicated that the main sources of food price information available to consumers were newspaper

Table 12

Number and Percentage of Teachers' Explanations on
Food Special Identification from Information in
Newspaper Food Advertisements^a

| | Number | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| Must have knowledge or access to regular prices and compare to special prices | 15 | 38.46 |
| Comparison shop several ads and stores to determine specials | 9 | 23.08 |
| Use past food price lists and/or past newspaper ads for price comparisons to determine the special | 3 | 7.69 |
| No answer | 3 | 7.69 |
| Develop price awareness | 2 | 5.13 |
| Look for special price and regular price | 2 | 5.13 |
| Compare unit price of special with prices regularly paid or in other ads | 2 | 5.13 |
| Use Price Finder or price index provided by some stores and compare prices among local stores | 1 | 2.56 |
| Big print (type) in ads or flyers (signs in stores show special) | 1 | 2.56 |
| Usually special takes up larger space in the ad and buyer must compare special prices to known regular prices | 1 | 2.56 |

^aN=39

Table 13

Teachers' Responses to Whether Enough Price Information
Is Available to Consumers Wanting to Make Choices
in Their Own Best Interests^a

| | Number | Percentage |
|-------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 17 | 43.59 |
| No | 20 | 51.28 |
| Other | 2 | 5.13 |

^aN=39

advertisements, store flyers, in-store prices, and, in some stores, unit pricing. Special mention was made that many of the stores no longer marked prices on individual food items.

Teacher Awareness and Use of Consumer Price Finder Program

Although 22 of the teachers reported an awareness of the Price Finder available in the Big Star Supermarket (see Table 14), only 12 indicated that they utilized the service. The teachers who utilized the Price Finder believed the service was helpful and used it as a classroom teaching tool.

Fourteen of the 22 teachers who were aware of the Price Finder service indicated that they had learned of it from watching television. Other sources of information included store, newspaper, friend, or radio (see Table 15). Some teachers cited more than one source of information.

Grade Levels Taught by Teachers

All but two of the teachers indicated that they taught more than one grade level. The responses indicated 11 combinations of grade levels taught (see Table 16).

Texts/References Used

Today's Teens, Discovering Foods, and Teen Guide to Homemaking were the texts teachers indicated as being the most frequently used in teaching food buymanship skills. Only one teacher wrote, "Do not use text for the following

Table 14

Number and Percentage of Teacher Response to
Awareness of Consumer Price Finder Program^a

| Answer | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 22 | 56.41 |
| No | 17 | 43.59 |

^aN=39

Table 15

Teacher Responses to Source of Price Finder
Information^a

| Source | Teacher Responses |
|------------|-------------------|
| Television | 14 |
| Store | 9 |
| Newspaper | 8 |
| Friend | 2 |
| Radio | 1 |

^aTeachers cited more than one source.

Table 16

Grade Levels Taught by Teachers^a

| <u>Grade(s)</u> | <u>Number of Teachers</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 10 and 12 | 9 |
| 10, 11, and 12 | 8 |
| 8 and 9 | 7 |
| 9, 10, and 11 | 3 |
| 9, 10, and 12 | 2 |
| 7 and 8 | 2 |
| 9 and 12 | 2 |
| 9 and 10 | 2 |
| 9, 10, 11, and 12 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 |
| 8 | 1 |
| No answer | 1 |

^aN=39

reasons: (1) most texts do not have creative approaches to this type info, therefore less stimulation to students, (2) by the time a text is released, it is already out-of-date, (3) most texts do not have the in-depth info I desire for my students." This teacher indicated she devised her own learning materials and learning experiences through trips to the grocery stores to get information. The teacher also used published materials such as Consumer Report.

The teacher responses also reflected that in addition to the text, newspapers, leaflets, film strips, business sponsored educational materials, guest speakers, and handouts were used. Field trips were utilized when it was possible to make the appropriate arrangements.

Years of Teaching Experience

All of the teachers responded to the item requesting information on the number of years of teaching experience. Forty-nine percent (19) of the teachers indicated they had taught 16 or more years. In contrast, only 36% (14) of the teachers had taught 10 years or less (see Table 17).

Discussion of Findings

Comparison of What Influences Consumers to Buy the Food They Do and What Actions Consumers Take to Save Money on Food Bills

The potential for major changes in food buying habits was revealed when influence determinants responsible for food purchases were compared with the actions that consumers

Table 17

Number and Percentage of Years of Teaching Experience^a

| Years | Teachers | Percentage |
|------------|----------|------------|
| 16 or more | 19 | 48.72 |
| 11-15 | 6 | 15.38 |
| 7-10 | 8 | 20.52 |
| 4-6 | 3 | 7.69 |
| 1-3 | 3 | 7.69 |

^aN=39

indicated they would take to save money. The major shopping actions which consumers reported they would have taken had money been a concern were general trading down to less expensive foods, specials, and non-brand foods; increased use of coupon offers; using less, or no meat and making substitutions for meats; reducing high-sugar/high calorie foods; and reducing convenience foods reflected in the preparation of more low-cost recipes made from scratch. In contrast, the major influence determinants on the choice of food when money was not a consideration showed that consumers' choices were affected by price, specials, nutrition, family likes/dislikes, shopper's likes, health/special diet needs, and the appearance of food and store as well as the quality of food. These findings were similar to the findings reported in Progressive Grocer ("Consumer Trends," 1983). The results of the survey reported by the magazine staff indicated that during the 1982-1983 period of high unemployment and high inflation, consumers shopped with price in mind, redeemed coupons, checked newspaper advertisements for sales and specials, and purchased less convenience food and did more cooking from scratch.

Comparison of Responses of Consumer Actions on How to Save Money on Food Bills to Tips Teachers Taught Students on How to Cut Food Costs

In comparing the actions consumers stated they would take to save money on food bills when shopping and the money-saving tips stressed by secondary home economics teachers,

checking and using specials was the action or tip most frequently cited. In addition, the use of coupon offers was given a high priority as an action taken or a tip stressed.

The teacher tips reflected a broader emphasis on conceptual factors related to buymanship, while the consumers' responses revealed more concrete examples of a concept. The language level and phraseology used in each of the groups was different but yet conveyed the same meaning. A simple example of this was demonstrated in the wording of the most frequently reported action listed by consumers and tips taught by teachers. The consumer statement read, "check and buy sales, specials, and low-priced advertised foods," while the teacher wording for the same activity stated, "check and/or utilize specials and sales items." The teachers' responses stressed more preplanning and evaluation of advertising and incentive buying offers before shopping than did those of the consumers.

Comparison of Consumer and Teacher Definitions of Food Special

The two definitions of a food special cited most frequently by both the teacher and consumer populations were (1) food prices lower than the regular (normal) price and (2) food with reduced, cheaper, special, or sale price. The teachers' responses were as stated, but the consumers' definitions were in reverse rank order. The teacher and consumer responses indicated that there was no standard or universal

definition for a food special. This finding was also supported by the lack of a food special definition in seven business dictionaries that were cited previously in this chapter.

Comparison of Teacher and Consumer Explanations
on Food Special Identification in a
Newspaper Advertisement

It was noted in this comparison that the two most frequently cited responses to the question on how one would explain how to identify a food special in a newspaper advertisement were the same for both the consumer groups and the teachers but reversed in rank order. Consumers responded that one must compare special prices with prices in other ads and/or in the stores, while the teachers stated that one must have knowledge or access to regular prices and compare them to special prices. Neither of the two explanations stated clearly how to identify the special by the information provided in the advertisement. Each of the definitions revealed that additional activity was needed in order to identify a special. Although the role of specials as a money-saving determinant was cited repeatedly in the literature (Cronan & Atwood, 1971; Garman & Eckert, 1974; The Money Management Institute, 1982; White, 1976), no writers offered criteria for identifying a special in a newspaper advertisement.

Comparison of Awareness and Use of Consumer Price Finder Program

The findings showed that 61% (92) of the consumers were aware of the Consumer Price Finder Program but only 15% (14) used the program offered. In contrast, 56% (22) of the teachers reported an awareness of the program and 36% (14) used it. In addition, the teachers using the Price Finder Program reported it was a helpful teaching tool.

Comparison of Consumers' and Teachers' Responses to Whether Enough Food Price Information Is Available to Consumers Wanting to Make Choices in Their Own Best Interests

Over half of the consumer and teacher populations indicated there was not enough food price information available to consumers wanting to make choices in their own best interests. The literature supported the belief that there was insufficient information available to make choices in their own best interests. One major study indicated that consumers were unable to accurately evaluate the price levels, prices, and price information because of the type and amount of information available to them as well as to the influence of market share and the level of market concentration of competing sellers (Marion et al., 1979).

The Ottawa-Hull study (Devine, 1976) examined what effects the publication of increased food price information would have on food prices. The objective of the study was to determine the adequacy and influence of market information. The findings of the study revealed the average prices

declined 7% for the entire market when the prices in 26 supermarkets for 65 food items were published for a period of 5 weeks.

Comparison of Consumer and Teacher Comments on Nonspecials

Only one participant in this study made a comment which could be related to the prices of nonspecials. The consumer, in defining a special, stated, "Buy our specials so we can soak you on everything else." This comment reflects, in a cynical and exaggerated manner, the information revealed in the literature. Jelly and Herrman (1978) pointed out that many stores using specials to differentiate themselves from their competitors often shift prices. While some of the prices are lowered, others are raised. This common pricing practice is known as variable pricing merchandising.

Gray and Anderson (1962) said it all in a quote which read:

For the bewildered and beleaguered consumer, the simple maxim that it pays to shop the specials needs to be redefined: it pays to shop the specials, but beware the non-specials, especially where the specials are best. (p. 133)

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Researchers, theorists, marketing practitioners, and professional writers have documented the fact that price, supermarket food advertisements, and specials are three of the major factors influencing food purchases made by consumers. The three factors form an interesting trio since price is set by the seller, the newspaper food advertisement is sponsored by the seller as a source of food price information, and the special is a buying incentive determined by the seller. The literature has also revealed that the seller often dominates the price differences that persist within given markets. This is because of the seller's market share and the level of market concentration. It was further noted that because of this, consumers are unable to evaluate the price levels of competing sellers. This study attempted to examine the kind and scope of food price information available to shoppers through the review of the literature and the designated food buymanship insights and actions of teachers and consumers.

The Purposes of the Study

The major objectives of this study were to determine the food price information on specials and nonspecials available to consumers interested in making food choices in

their own best interests, to determine factors which influence consumers' food choices, to determine what home economics teachers teach in relation to getting the most for the food dollar, to determine home economics teachers' and consumers' awareness and use of the Consumer Price Finder Program, and to determine home economics teachers' and consumers' definitions of food specials and how to identify specials in newspaper food advertisements.

Limitations

This study was limited to the secondary school home economics teachers in Guilford and Mecklenburg Counties in North Carolina. It was further limited to intact groups of consumers who resided in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area. All participants were volunteer subjects who resided in areas where the Consumer Price Finder Program was available at the time the study was initiated. The findings of this study are generalizable only to these populations.

Design of the Study

Data for this study were obtained from two populations. The data from one of the populations were obtained from 39 secondary school home economics teachers employed in Guilford and Mecklenburg Counties in North Carolina during the school year of 1983-1984. The data from the second population in this study were obtained from 150 consumers who were members of six intact community groups in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area.

Two instruments were developed as vehicles for collecting data for this study. One questionnaire was designed to collect data from the consumers on what influenced them to buy the foods they do, what actions they take to save money on food bills, how the term food special was defined and identified in a newspaper ad, whether there was or was not enough food price information available to consumers to make choices in their own best interests, and the extent of awareness and use of a new price information program called the Price Finder.

The second questionnaire was designed to collect data from secondary school home economics teachers. Information solicited through the questionnaire included a list of the major tips taught students on how to get the most for the food dollar, how teachers defined specials, how students were taught to identify food specials in newspaper food ads based on the information provided, whether teachers thought there was or was not enough information available to consumers in newspaper ads and the store to make choices in their own best interests, the extent of awareness and use of a new price information program called the Price Finder, grade levels taught, text or reference used, and years of teaching experience.

Major Findings

Some of the major findings of this study were as follows:

1. Over half of the consumer and teacher population indicated there was not enough price information available to consumers interested in making food choices in their own best interests. Teachers indicated more price information such as unit pricing in newspaper ads and in stores, regular price listed with special, and in-store leaflets on specials was needed. None of the teachers addressed such issues as the possible need for public policy related to such efforts as disclosure of gross margins, published tables of prices which would show prices at leading grocery stores for market-basket items, consumer computerized programs which would identify best buys related to price and nutrition, or information on marketing procedures such as variable price merchandising which usually result in an increase in price for nonspecials.

2. The major determinants which influenced the food choices made by consumers were, in descending order, price; specials; nutrition; family likes/dislikes; shopper's likes; and health/special diet needs. The likes and dislikes of family and shopper's likes indicated that shoppers usually purchased foods to please others rather than themselves.

3. The two major actions suggested by consumers to save money on food bills when the budget was tight (reduced)

were to check and buy sales and low-priced advertised foods, and to use coupons/refunding. The consumer actions reflected a major change in buying habits, possible reduction in sugar consumption, and an increase in preparation time of meals.

4. Three major tips home economics teachers taught on how to cut food costs were, in descending order, to check and utilize specials and sales, to comparison shop, and to make and use shopping lists. In general, the teacher tips on how to cut food costs were expressed conceptually rather than with concrete examples.

5. The teacher and consumer responses indicated that there was no standard or universal definition for a food special. Ten different definitions were cited by 39 teachers. Thirty-four percent of the consumer definitions were stated in single words or phrases which indicated a reduction in price.

6. Of the 150 consumers in this study, 61% of the consumers were aware of the Consumer Price Finder Program available in the Big Star Supermarkets. However, only 15% of them used the Price Finder. Television was named as the main source of information on the newly introduced program.

7. Over half of the home economics teachers in this study reported an awareness of the Consumer Price Finder Program. Thirty-six percent of those aware of the program used the Price Finder. Teachers who used the Price Finder indicated it was helpful, and it was used as a teaching tool.

8. The teacher and consumer responses indicated that there was no apparent criterion for the identification of a food special based on the information available in newspaper advertisements. The majority of explanations revealed that both consumers and teachers used more information than appeared in an advertisement to explain how to identify a food special.

9. Only one of the participants in the study expressed a veiled, cynical insight on the pricing of nonspecials when food specials are best in terms of savings. The consumer said, "Buy our specials so we can soak you on everything else." Although the wording is not that of a marketing specialist or economist, the wording of the statement did reflect a common pricing practice followed by most supermarkets. It is called variable price merchandising.

10. Over 50% of the teachers indicated there was insufficient food price information available to consumers; however, no one expressed the need for changes in the type of price information currently available to consumers. The information which the participants suggested was needed was primarily the expansion of price information currently available to some shoppers.

11. Teachers indicated that the major sources of food price information available to consumers were newspaper advertisements and unit pricing. Other sources for food price information which were cited were radio and television advertisements and store flyers.

Implications

The findings were interpreted and the implications were stated with an awareness of the limitations that existed in this study. Implications resulting from this study may provide a frame of reference for the planning and evaluating of food buymanship curricula at all levels of education. Implications from this study were the following:

1. Standardized definitions of food buymanship terms could be of benefit to shoppers in making food choices in their own best interests. The lack of a standardized definition of a food special may have been one of the reasons for the variety of definitions cited by teachers and consumers. It may have been responsible for the difficulty of the respondents in this study to identify specials in the newspaper advertisements in terms of the information available in the advertisements.
2. Alternative food price information could narrow price differences among competing sellers. The literature revealed that weekly published prices of major stores in a given area reduced the cost of food 7% during the test period.
3. Greater emphasis on nonspecial food prices could help consumers evaluate price levels in specific areas and improve their capacity to evaluate prices of competitive sellers. The lack of awareness of variable price merchandising by the consumers and teachers may cancel out any savings the shopper may have gained in purchasing specials.

Further Research

1. Further study is needed on food price information as a basis for recommendations on specific changes in food buymanship which could improve the consumer's capacity to discriminate among alternative food prices offered for goods and services in the food field. The limitations of this study necessitate further research to support the findings presented.

2. In consideration of the nature of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Similar studies should be conducted with larger samples of teachers and consumers in other geographical areas.
- b. Studies should be conducted with sellers in the supermarket industry to determine how sellers define specials and nonspecials as well as how to identify food specials in their respective newspaper advertisements.
- c. Studies should be conducted to examine the validity and reliability of the basic concepts being taught on how to get the most for the food dollar.
- d. A study to determine the role of public policy in the area of food price information should be considered.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE TO
HOME ECONOMICS TEACHERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT GREENSBORO



School of Home Economics

December 8, 1983

Dear Colleague:

I am conducting a research project on food price information in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in Home Economics Education. It is hoped that the information gained will contribute a body of knowledge to one of the major goals of the Home Economics Research Assessment, Planning and Project Study. Goal IV reads, "Improve Consumer Competence and Family Resource Use."

In addition to consumer populations included in the study, it is important to ascertain what is being taught in food buymanship at the secondary school level. You are the only person that can provide accurate information about what you are actually teaching. For this reason, I would appreciate the completion and return of the attached questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope, by December 21 if possible.

You are assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire does not request your name. In addition, you can be assured that the questionnaire is not numbered or coded with a symbol.

The results of the research will be included in the dissertation. You may receive a summary of the results of this questionnaire by writing "copy of results requested" on the back of the return envelope, and printing your name and address below it. Please do not put this information on the questionnaire itself.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please call or write me. I can be reached by telephone at _____ or at my address which is Adeline Garner Shell,

Thank you for your help and every consideration extended this request.

Sincerely,

Adeline G. Shell
Graduate Student

Mildred B. Johnson, Professor
Home Economics Education

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA / 27412

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA is composed of the sixteen public senior institutions in North Carolina
an equal opportunity employer

HOME ECONOMICS TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Food Buying Tips Taught in Home Economics Classes

1. List the major tips you include in your courses when teaching students how to get the most for the food dollar. (If more space is needed, please use reverse side.)

2. Define the term "food special."

3. How do you explain to students how to identify food specials in newspaper food ads based on the information provided?

4. Do you think there is enough food price information available to consumers in newspaper ads and/or the store to make choices in their own best interests?

Yes No

If yes, please indicate the sources.

If answer is no, what additional information do you think should be available?

5. Are you aware of a new price information program called the "Price Finder?"

Yes No

If yes, how did you hear about it?

Radio TV Newspaper Store

Friend Relative Other

If yes, do you use it? Yes No If so, does

it help? Yes No

If yes, do you use it as a teaching tool? Yes No

If you do not use it as a teaching tool, is there any special reason for not using it?

6. Indicate grade levels taught and text or references used with each grade level.

| <u>Grade</u> | <u>Text/References</u> |
|--------------|------------------------|
|--------------|------------------------|

1.

2.

3.

4.

7. Years of teaching experience:

_____ 1-3 _____ 4-6 _____ 7-10 _____ 11-15

_____ 16 or more

APPENDIX B
LETTER AND FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE TO
HOME ECONOMICS TEACHERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT GREENSBORO



School of Home Economics

January 19, 1984

Dear Colleague:

Recently a questionnaire was sent to you concerning what food buying tips are included in your Home Economics classes. I realize that you are busy and perhaps this is the reason your questionnaire has not been returned. In addition, teaching food buying tips may not be an area of teaching concern in your current teaching assignment.

Since you are the only one who can provide the information on what is being taught by you, your participation is imperative if the findings of the study are to accurately reflect what is being taught. If you have already returned the questionnaire, please disregard this letter and the enclosed questionnaire. However, if you have not returned the questionnaire, your cooperation in answering the questions included would be appreciated. In addition, if your current teaching assignment does not cover the food buymanship area, check the last item on the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for your help, effort, and every consideration extended this request.

Sincerely,

Adeline G. Shell
Graduate Student

Mildred B. Johnson, Professor
Home Economics Education

Enclosures

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA / 27412

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA is composed of the sixteen public senior institutions in North Carolina
an equal opportunity employer

HOME ECONOMICS TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE*

Food Buying Tips Taught in Home Economics Classes

1. List the major tips you include in your courses when teaching students how to get the most for the food dollar. (If more space is needed, please use reverse side.)

2. Define the term "food special."

3. How do you explain to students how to identify food specials in newspaper food ads based on the information provided?

4. Do you think there is enough food price information available to consumers in newspaper ads and/or the store to make choices in their own best interests?

_____Yes _____No

If yes, please indicate the sources.

If answer is no, what additional information do you think should be available?

5. Are you aware of a new price information program called the "Price Finder?"

_____Yes _____No

If yes, how did you hear about it?

_____Radio _____TV _____Newspaper _____Store

_____Friend _____Relative _____Other

If yes, do you use it? _____Yes _____No If so, does

it help? _____Yes _____No

If yes, do you use it as a teaching tool? _____Yes _____No

If you do not use it as a teaching tool, is there any special reason for not using it?

APPENDIX C

FOOD BUYMANSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONSUMERS

FOOD BUYMANSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What influences you to buy the food you do?
2. What things do you do to save money on your food bill when your budget is tight?
3. What does the term "food special" mean to you?
4. How would you explain to another person how to pick or identify food specials in a newspaper ad?
5. Do you think there is enough information available to consumers on the price of food to make a choice in their own best interest?
6. Are you aware of a new price information program called the Price Finder?

yes _____ no _____

If yes, how did you hear about it? Radio _____, TV _____,
friend _____, relative _____, other(s) _____

If yes, do you use it? yes _____ no _____

If yes, does it help you? yes _____ no _____

If yes, in what way(s) does it help you?

If aware of the Price Finder program and have not used it,
is there any special reason for not using it?

APPENDIX D
CATEGORIZATION OF DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING
FOOD PURCHASES

The following categories resulted from frequency of response:

Coupons

Entertainment plans

Family likes/dislikes

How hungry when shopping

Nutrition

Price

Shopper's likes

Store preference

The following categories were identified based on function and/or use of the determinant:

Advertising other than newspapers

- commercials
- TV
- radio
- magazines

Appearance/odor of food and/or store

- appearance of store
- appearance of food
- odor of food
- food displays in store

Brand name foods

- previous satisfaction with brand
- name brands
- product brand
- brand preferences

Convenience

- ease of preparation
- convenience foods

Desire to try new foods

- desire to experiment
- trial and error

Foods in season

- seasonal foods
- availability of food in abundance

Habit/tradition

- habit
- traditional foods
- holiday foods
- traditions

Health/special diet needs

- calories
- appetite
- health needs
- special diets

Labels/packaging

- labels
- additive information on labels
- pictures on labels
- packaging
- nutrition information

Non-brand name foods

- house
- store
- generic

Quality of food

- quality of food
- keeping quality of food

Recommendation of others

- information in health magazines
- what mother used

Replacement of depleted foods

- replaced food items
- ingredients needed for recipe
- cupboard bare
- need of item

Sales and specials in newspaper advertisements

- sales in newspaper ads
- specials

Serving yield per unit purchased

- amount of servings for quantity of food
- serving yield of purchased food item

Size of food budget

- budget
- amount of money for food

Shopping time

- time in store
- shopping time
- time shopping

APPENDIX E
CATEGORIZATION OF CONSUMER ACTIONS TAKEN
TO SAVE MONEY ON FOOD BILLS

The following categories resulted from frequency of response:

- Buy frozen foods
- Buy in bulk and share with neighbor
- Buy less non-food items
- Buy sandwich makings
- Cook in quantity: lots of only a few foods
- Do not shop when hungry
- Let wife shop
- Set limit on amount of money spent
- Use food stamps

The following categories were identified based on the function and/or use of actions:

- Avoid waste
 - utilize leftovers
 - avoid waste
- Buy cheaper food to keep costs of meals down
 - buy cheaper brands
 - buy lower price bargain foods
 - buy lower priced cuts of meats
 - do not buy brand name items
 - buy more low-cost vegetables
 - substitute low-cost foods for high-cost foods
 - substitute reduced priced foods for regular priced foods
 - buy low-cost foods and freeze them
 - buy and test cheaper brand foods never used before
 - substitute lower priced nutritionally equal food for higher priced items
 - buy fewer vegetables
 - do not buy frozen foods
 - plan low-cost meals around low-priced foods

Buy/eat/use less

- buy in smaller quantities
- buy and eat less
- reduce size of portions
- do without condiments
- buy less

Buy foods in season

- buy vegetables in season
- buy foods in season

Buy for intended use

- buy grades of food for intended use
- buy brands for intended use

Buy less convenience foods

- no TV dinners
- buy less convenience foods
- no convenience foods
- cut down on convenience foods
- buy larger low-cost cuts of meat and cut into smaller high-cost cuts
- buy whole chicken and cut into higher priced cuts

Buy more meal stretching foods (complex carbohydrates)

- buy foods that can be used to stretch expensive foods to 2 or 3 meals
- eat more fillers
- buy more rice
- purchase "multi-use" foods
- eat more potatoes, rice, and macaroni
- buy more rice, pasta, etc.

Buy non-brand name foods

- generic
- store brands
- house brands

Buy only what is needed

- no extras
- stick to staple foods
- no luxury items
- buy only what is needed
- stick to necessities
- cut out unnecessary items
- buy only for essential needs
- buy only for basic needs
- do without

Buying from planned menus/list

- stick to shopping list
- no impulse buying
- list from planned menus

Check and buy sales, specials and low priced advertised foods

- buy specials
- shop special sales
- buy food on sale
- buy advertised food specials
- buy in large quantities when price is special
- check sale items
- buy low-cost special foods in bulk
- read newspaper ads for best buys
- shop stores with cheaper advertised specials
- use ads in paper for specials
- advertised specials
- buy meat on special, cut, and freeze
- buy in quantity when price is lower
- buy meat special in large quantities and freeze
- buy weekly specials
- plan menus and shop around specials
- buy at store with best specials
- buy specials and freeze them
- buy loss leaders

Comparison shop

- comparison shop
- compare prices vs. quality for price
- comparison shop ads and stores
- shop with calculator and buy by unit price
- use unit pricing and compare
- serving cost per unit purchased

Cook low-cost recipes from scratch

- prepare one-dish meals
- prepare more casseroles
- cook from scratch
- prepare nutritious soup
- prepare stews/pot roasts
- use "mixed dishes" with less meat
- serve more meatless meals cooked from scratch

Less/less expensive entertaining

- cut down on entertaining
- cut down on entertaining costs

Less/no eating out

- no eating out at "fast foods" (McDonald's, etc.)
- don't eat out as often
- eat out less
- don't eat out
- carry lunch

Limit number of supermarket trips

- shop once a month
- shop once a week
- shop every two weeks

Reduce use of high-sugar/high-calorie foods

- buy no junk foods
- cut down on snack foods
- no munchies
- do without extra sweets
- no snack foods
- cut down on desserts
- less sweeteners
- buy less "kiddie" cereals
- buy no cookies
- buy no soft drinks
- buy less sweets

Shop stores with low prices and convenient to home

- shop and buy in specific stores known for low prices
- avoid small convenience stores
- buy in store with lower prices which are convenient to home

Use coupons/refunding

- use coupons
- mail in refunds
- buy in stores which give double value on coupons

Use foods on hand

- use food on hand or in storage
- use food from freezer
- use home canned foods

Use less/no meat or increase protein substitutes

- cut down on beef purchases
- buy no meat
- buy less meat
- buy less beef, buy more chicken, substitute eggs, cheese, etc. for meat
- use more dried beans, peas, etc.
- use more protein (meat) substitutes
- use meat substitutes

APPENDIX F
CATEGORIZATION OF CONSUMERS' EXPLANATIONS ON
FOOD SPECIAL IDENTIFICATION

The following categories resulted from frequency of response:

A special is a special only if you can use it

Big print

Compare unit prices to determine specials

Do not buy specials or use coupons on foods you do not need

Do not use specials in ads; look at prices in store

Lead items in advertisements are the specials

Look at weight of item; it usually is a larger size when it is cheaper

Look for lower prices for quality, reliability, and quantity of food

Look for the words special, sales, and coupon offers in advertisements

Look for special and regular price

Name brands on sale

No response

Show them; tell them

Use Price Finder and compare specials to prices listed

The following categories were identified based on the function and/or use of the explanation:

Cannot identify special from information in newspaper advertisements

-cannot explain it because I do not know how to identify it nor the meaning of special

-do not know how to explain it with just the information in the advertisement

Compare special prices with prices in other ads and/or store prices

-comparison shop

-compare specials with prices in other ads or store prices

Look for lower prices

- lower prices such as 2-for-1 offer
- look for lower-priced items
- price is lower

Lower-priced foods which you want and can use

- special is lower-priced food which you want and can use
- check ads for prices that are right for the brands you usually want and buy

Study/check newspaper advertisements

- study ads of well-known supermarkets
- check grocery newspaper ads on Sunday/Wednesday/Thursday
- look at advertisements
- look at advertisement: self-explanatory

APPENDIX G
CATEGORIZATION OF MAJOR TIPS TAUGHT TO STUDENTS ON HOW
TO GET THE MOST FOR THE FOOD DOLLAR

The following categories resulted from frequency of response:

Buy brand and/or quality for intended use

Buy food with multiple use

Check conditions of packages/containers

Compare cost per serving rather than total costs

Do not rush shopping

Do not shop when hungry

Evaluate store policies, staff, and services

Fallacy of casseroles

Higher price brands not always best buy

Know principles of cookery

Know regular and special prices

Leave children at home when shopping

Make substitutions for foods in same food group

Plan meals/menus

Read labels

Store food properly

Use Price Finder

Use economical cuts of meat

Utilize leftovers

The following categories were identified based on function and/or use of the buymanship tip:

Buy in quantity/bulk/larger sizes

- quantity
- buy economical size when wise
- buy in bulk/larger quantity when prices are low
- buy in quantity
- buy what you can use and/or store
- buy in amounts you can store or can/freeze when price is low and food is in season

Buy only what can be used

- buy size items to meet needs
- buy only quantity needed

Check and/or utilize specials and sale items

- compare price of specials in newspaper advertisements
- check newspapers for real specials
- plan meals around specials
- shop and use specials
- buy weekly specials
- make list from newspaper advertisement specials
- buy specials to can and freeze
- check newspaper advertisement specials
- watch for sales
- check newspaper advertisement for specials at your store

Check sales receipts

- know how to figure subtotals and sales tax
- check total of sales receipt

Comparison shop

- comparison shop
- comparison shop at different stores
- compare price and quality
- compare prices of neighborhood stores vs. supermarkets
- compare cost of different brands
- compare cost of different forms of same foods
- compare price of house brand vs. name brand

Consider quality of food

- purchase quality
- beware of off-brands (poor quality)

Evaluate advertising/coupon use

- advertising is an inducement for buying
- study advertising practices and promotions of store
- evaluate coupon use
- evaluate lures and traps on promotions

Limit shopping time and trips to supermarket

- limit number of trips to store
- limit time in supermarket

Make and use shopping list

- make a list and stick to it
- make and shop with list
- use shopping list, but be flexible
- plan list by categories of foods

Nutrition

- establish need
- choose foods from basic 4 groups
- match nutrition with need of family, nutritional value of food

Use coupons/rebates/stamps

- take advantage of rebates
- use coupons only for items normally purchased
- use coupons
- redeem coupons in stores with double face value offer
- use stamps to save money