EVENING MEAL PATTERNS AND MEAL MANAGEMENT DECISIONS
IN FAMILIES OF EMPLOYED AND NONEMPLOYED MOTHERS

THESIS

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By

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The purpose of this research was to determine if evening meal patterns and meal management decisions are related to the marital and employment status of mothers. Two hundred eighty-two usable questionnaires were completed by mothers who attended elementary school parent-teacher meetings in a suburban city in North Texas. The questionnaire gathered data about family demographics, family evening meal patterns, and factors affecting meal management decisions. Little difference was found between meal patterns of employed and nonemployed mothers in single and two-parent households. Factors found to affect meal pattern decisions were values, traditions, time, energy, nutrition, and family influence. A traditional family evening meal was important to the families studied.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The structure of the family is changing. The typical stereotyped American family is a father in the role of breadwinner, a mother in the role of homemaker, and two children (1, p. 1). This typical family is a picture of only 7 per cent of all families in the United States today (2, p. 137). Children today are likely to be living with only one parent and are likely to have a mother who is employed outside the home (3). Between 1970 and 1978 the number of children under eighteen living with a single parent increased from 11 to 17 per cent. Most of this increase was due to children living with only their mother. Median family income for two-parent families was about three times that of families headed by the mother. About half of all children in 1978 had a working mother. Children living with a female head of household (61 per cent) were more likely to have a working mother than children with both parents (48 per cent) living in the home (4).

Food behaviors are influenced by the changing family and by the increase in working mothers as indicated by
increased sales of convenience foods, fast food restaurants, and microwave ovens (5, p. 49). The trend toward dual-income families with more disposable income makes time valuable. Meal patterns that save time such as fast food, restaurant dining, convenience foods, or eating while engaged in other activities are becoming evident (6). Between 1965 and 1977 the total amount of food money spent away from home rose from 17 per cent to 24 per cent. This reflects changes in socioeconomic status, demographics, and lifestyle of Americans. Factors believed to contribute to this increase are more working women, higher household income, and easier access to fast food restaurants (7).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine if evening meal patterns and evening meal management decisions are related to the marital and employment status of mothers.

Research Questions

There are three questions with which this research was concerned. Do the evening meal patterns differ between families with mothers of single and two-parent households? Do the evening meal patterns differ between households with mothers who are employed outside the home and mothers who are nonemployed? What factors affect decisions related to the family evening meal pattern?
Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to learn more about family evening meals in order to update available information, and to provide this current information to parents and students through nutrition education materials and programs.

The Delimitations

This study was restricted to families with mothers present in the home.

Only families with elementary school children were studied.

The sample was drawn from a suburban city in North Texas.

The quality and quantity of food eaten were not considered.

Basic Assumptions

The first assumption was that the health and well-being of each individual is affected by what the family eats.

The second assumption was that the family is responsible for the evening meal for its members (8).

The third assumption was that decision making is a meal management task.
The fourth assumption was that the mother is dominant in meal management decisions, regardless of the employment patterns of the husband (9, 10).

The fifth assumption was that the mother is able to accurately recall the requested information (11, 12, 13).

Definition of Terms

Decision making is a process which results in making a choice among alternatives and selecting a course of action.

Family is a father, and/or mother, and children all living in the same home.

Meal management includes meal-related decisions and the action required to carry out the decisions.

Meal patterns refers to the evening meal eaten daily, including types of foods, where eaten, and with whom they are eaten.

Single parent refers to a mother who is a head of household.

Importance of the Study

Health and well-being are affected by life-long eating habits. Food habits of the family play a major role in what children eat throughout the life cycle (14). Both families and values influence food patterns. There are differences among families and their mealtimes, and there is a direct relationship between an individual's food
habits and his family's food habits (15). What families eat depends on resources such as time, energy, money, and skills, as well as food and nutrition information. It takes time and energy to acquire, prepare and serve food; thus time and energy available can be a limiting factor. Mental energy affects decision making in planning meals and controlling nutrient intake (16, p. 215).

It is the traditional role of the mother to plan and prepare meals for her family, and even working women retain major responsibility for meal preparation. With an increasing number of mothers working outside the home there is less time and energy to devote to meal management tasks (17, 18, 19, 20). Because of more dual-career and single-person households there is an increased interest in convenience foods, indicating less time available to prepare meals (21).

Family nutrition education programs are traditionally conducted for the homemaker (22, p. 184). In a study of parental influences on children's food preferences, mothers were found to be responsible for planning over half of the meals; however, "father's food likes" were the most important factor influencing menu planning. Since the father has the most influence on the mother's decisions about menus, nutrition education efforts must be geared toward the father as well as the mother (23). The mother
usually does the meal planning for foods served at home, but does not have authority over the snacks eaten throughout the day (24). Studies regarding food consumption show that Americans are eating fewer structured meals and more snacks (25, 26). Snacks provide 12 to 23 per cent of the total calories consumed by children and teenagers; therefore, each individual has more choice in foods selected (27).

Mothers can no longer be sure that each member of the family is eating a balanced diet because each individual is now "gate-keeper" of his or her own food choices (5, p. 35). Even in many traditional households, each individual may be responsible for food choices. There are so many available foods that it is difficult for children and teenagers to make wise food choices, indicating a need for nutrition educators to teach decision-making skills to students. Research regarding contemporary meal patterns and meal decisions is important if nutrition educators are to teach a realistic curriculum that relates to the current practices and needs of society (28).
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The problem with which this research was concerned is the relation of evening meal patterns and meal management decisions to the working and marital status of mothers. The questions to be answered were: (1) Do the evening meal patterns differ between families with mothers of single and two-parent households? (2) Do the evening meal patterns differ between households with mothers who are employed outside the home and mothers who are nonemployed? (3) What factors affect decisions related to the family evening meal patterns?

Meal Patterns

Traditional meal patterns include traditional foods at specific meals, such as eggs for breakfast, and eating as a family unit. Goebel and Hennon (1) found that families average one meal a day together as a family unit, and that most meals eaten together are eaten at home. Meal time is traditionally a time for family interaction.

Brown, Bergan, and Murgo (2) studied junior high students in home economics classes and found that the predominant meal pattern was regular meals eaten at defined
times. In this study (1979) 75 per cent of the males and 62 per cent of the females ate breakfast everyday, compared to a 1950 study with 87 per cent of males and 80 per cent of females who ate breakfast everyday. Almost half of the students ate school lunch at least three days a week. The remaining students ate sack lunches prepared at home. Students only rarely missed lunch. Snacks were usually eaten after school and during the evening. Evening meals consisted of a wide variety of foods and usually milk as the beverage. More diverse meal patterns and more irregular times were found to be typical of weekends.

Martin (3) studied daily meal patterns of adolescents. She defined meals as customary times for eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The author's findings indicated that contemporary meal patterns of adolescents are less structured than three meals a day, that many adolescents do not eat, and when they do eat the meals are usually inadequate. There are so many foods available that teens have trouble making nutritious decisions. Eating was non-scheduled, even in traditional households.

According to Community Nutrition Institute in Washington, D. C. (4), a typical American eating pattern no longer exists. Americans today use more processed or convenience foods that have been prepared fully or partially outside the home. Snacking habits have changed very little between the 1960's and the 1970's. People average eating three to five times a
day and get 20 per cent of calories from snacks (4). Surveys on food consumption taken by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (5) show that Americans are eating more snacks and fewer structured meals.

According to Brooks (6), whose study was planned to compare food intake and patterns of suburban and rural school children, similar breakfast and snack patterns were found. In both groups of children, over 50 per cent of the Recommended Daily Allowance for food energy was received from snacks, which is a larger contribution than breakfast. It is important to realize that children make independent choices of what to eat as snacks.

In a 1968 study (7) of eighth grade girls, it was found that even though the mother usually did the meal planning for foods served at home, she had no authority over the snacks eaten. Snacks were found to be popular all through the day, and these students frequently chose the least nutritious foods.

In a study of fifth and sixth grade students in New York (8), snack scores were separated into those eaten at home and those eaten away from home. Scores for snacks eaten at home were found to be significantly higher, suggesting that home and/or the family influence snacks eaten there. There was, however, much room for improvement even in the snacks eaten at home.
A pattern of eating that is becoming popular is eating brief, small meals throughout the day. Many attribute this eating pattern change to the recent entry of women into the work force. Time is precious because of the trend toward dual-income families. Meal patterns that save time, such as eating while engaged in other activities, are appealing (9).

Campbell Soup Company (10) conducted a study to compare what working women buy to eat and what they look for in food compared to housewives. Working women looked for quality, convenience and nutrition. In addition to quality, convenience and nutrition, housewives also looked for economy. Both groups desired foods that were easy to prepare and that could be prepared in less than half an hour. When both husband and wife worked outside the home, everyone was responsible for his or her own breakfast, except for children under five. Lunch was eaten out at either a restaurant or a cafeteria. Dinner was the meal which the family ate together.

Iowa adolescent students who participated in a study (11) were found to be traditional in food-related behavior. At least one meal each day was eaten with the family by 86 per cent of the respondents. About 70 per cent ate breakfast, and 77 per cent ate two hot meals each day. Eating out with the family was a frequent or regular occurrence with 42 per cent of the adolescents, and another 40 per cent sometimes ate out with the family.
In a study designed to look at food buying practices of single and married working and nonworking women (12), no significant difference was found in buying finished or semi-prepared foods. Reasons given for buying finished and semi-prepared foods were: easy to prepare, save time, and enjoy the taste. No significant difference between the two groups was found in the number of visits to restaurants. The evening meal was the meal found to be most frequently eaten away from home. Pleasure, break, and variety were the reasons given for eating out; time was not a major consideration.

Skinner, Ezell, Salvetti and Penfield (13) studied the differences in meal patterns and nutrient intake of adolescents with employed and nonemployed mothers. Food intake was analyzed using Nutritive Value of Foods for computers. Mothers employed both full and part-time were considered employed for purposes of the study. Since most of the adolescents ate lunch away from home, only breakfast and the evening meal were analyzed. Breakfast was not eaten by 35 per cent of the adolescents, and the working status of mothers was not related. Bread or cereal was eaten for breakfast by two-thirds of the adolescents, and one-third had milk. Ninety-four per cent of the total sample ate the evening meal, but again no significant difference was found between those with working and non-working mothers. No significant difference was found in
either meal patterns or nutrient intakes between those with working and nonworking mothers. Employment of the mother was not found to be a factor in the marginal quality of the diets of the studied adolescents.

Reported statistics (14, p. 9) say that Americans eat one out of three meals away from home. Men most often eat breakfast out, people who work eat out at lunch, and families eat out at dinner. Children prefer eating at fast food restaurants to eating at home, and frequently decide where the family will eat.

The 1977-78 Nationwide Food Consumption Survey conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (15) studied about 7,000 households in the United States with a female head of household working twenty or more hours a week, or a female or male head of household sixty-five years or older. The total dollar value for food expense both at home and away from home was found to be higher for households of working women than for other households. Working women also purchased more meals away from home. Regardless of the working status of the woman head of household, the noon meal was the meal most often eaten away from home. Even though households of working women spent more money for food, nutrients were slightly lower for eleven nutrients than in other households. Meal planning, shopping, and preparation were done by the female head of household.
The traditional three-meal a day meal pattern is disappearing. With increased employment of mothers there is an increase in the number of meals skipped or eaten alone. The only meal a day a family eats together is generally the evening meal. No noon meal is served in one-fourth of all households. About three-fourths of all households do not eat together as a family at breakfast, and even school-aged children have full responsibility for preparation of their own breakfasts. Both children and adults frequently eat ready-to-eat cereal and milk, as well as other convenience foods. Many skip breakfast (16, pp. 11-12). Schexnayder (16) found that the meal most frequently eaten out was the noon meal and one person ate this meal. The majority of these meals was the school lunch eaten by children. Since each family member prepares his or her own breakfast, the noon meal is most frequently eaten away from home, and the evening meal is the meal that the family eats together, this study will focus on evening meal patterns.

Decision Making

Household task responsibility includes both decision making and the activities required to implement the decision. In a study of one hundred young families living in Ohio (17), husbands and wives independently completed interviews regarding who makes and implements household task decisions.
Both partners were found to share the roles in some tasks, but wives were found to have more responsibility in implementing decisions. It was found that the wives maintained responsibility for traditionally female tasks such as cooking. The dinner menu is decided upon by the wife, and she implements the decisions by doing the grocery shopping, preparing dinner, and doing the evening dishes.

A study was done in the North Central United States (18) to find how to plan and conduct nutrition education programs that would benefit preschool children. About half of the 3,444 preschoolers studied had experience in deciding the amount of food eaten, but had little experience making food selection decisions. These decisions were generally made by the mother. Decisions about what to eat for breakfast and snacks were made by five to six year old children about 35 per cent of the time, but only 1.6 per cent of the time for the evening meal.

The purpose of a study by Szybillo, Sosanie, and Tenenbein (19) was to examine family role structures in making buying decisions. Questions on one-hundred and ninety usable questionnaires completed by wives of New York City families pertained to restaurant decisions made by the family. Subdecisions included were: when to eat; what type of restaurant to visit; what specific restaurant to visit; and how much to spend. Three decision stages were defined as: initiating the idea to eat away from home;
obtaining information on restaurants; and making a final decision. The study found that children were definitely involved in family decision making, with at least 80 per cent of decisions involving adult-child interaction. As might be expected, husbands and wives had more to say in deciding how much to spend. In conventional restaurant decisions, 40 per cent of the categories involved joint decision making of the husband and wife. In fast food restaurant decisions, however, 82 per cent involved adult-child interaction. The results of this study implied that decision-making communication should be taught with an emphasis on husband and wife joint decision making and on full family involvement in family decisions.

Scanzoni and Szinovacz (20) explored changes in sex roles and in decision making in families. The authors found that the presence of children in a family affects the decision-making process of the parents. The authors concluded that children and adolescents should be involved in family decision making in order to learn effective decision making styles, since children learn techniques of decision making from their parents. In this way they can also learn to think for themselves, or to be autonomous.

A Gallup survey taken in April of 1983 (21) found that Americans ate 42 per cent of meals away from home and spent $43 billion on fast foods. Before World War II, the mother was responsible for meals served family style at home.
Lifestyles have changed dramatically since that time, including increased numbers of women employed outside the home. As a result eating away from home is no longer a rare treat, but a necessity.

In the past ten years the term "junk food" has become a common expression used frequently in reference to fast foods. Fast foods are not totally worthless foods, but must be chosen wisely to complement the rest of the diet. With proper nutrition education, consumers can learn to make better food choices both at home and away from home.

Trotter (14) found that the meal most likely to be eaten away from home was lunch. One-third of these lunches were eaten at school cafeterias, one-fifth at restaurants, and 16 to 19 per cent at fast food establishments. The most meals eaten away from home occurred in families in which the mother was employed fifteen or more hours per week, and the fewest meals eaten away occurred in families in which the mother was nonemployed. Trotter found no significant relationship between family income and meals eaten away from home. An interesting finding was that almost one-half of lunches eaten out were eaten by families with a nonemployed mother and this group had the highest mean cost for lunch of all the families. Most meals were eaten out by only one family member, indicating that families did not eat out together frequently as a family. Families need to be made aware of these trends in regard
to family relationships, family expenditures for meals, and satisfaction with meals consumed, so that conscious and intelligent decisions can be made about evening meal patterns.

**Marital Status**

Children today are very likely to be living with only one parent. Since 1940 the number of families headed by women has almost tripled (22). In March of 1983, 16 percent of all families in the United States were principally supported by single women (divorced, separated, widowed, never married). A soaring divorce rate and an increase in the number of single women bearing children have helped increase the number of single-parent families. Most of the employed women supporting families work at full-time jobs (23). Studies have shown that single-parent families without a husband have less adequate food habits (24). Nutrition educators should focus on these families as having a need for nutrition education. There are gaps in knowledge of cultural and behavioral influences on family food choices in the area of single-parent families (25).

**Working Status**

The family and the impact of work on the family have been a major focus of research in recent years (22, 26, p. 1). This is partly due to the changes in the working status of women. The increasing involvement of women in
the labor force is a major social and economic change in this country which affects family life. Women no longer leave the labor force when they have children; thus they are becoming permanent labor force participants. Married women account for most of the growth in female labor force participation. These women retain the major responsibility for child care and housework (27). Women make up about seven of ten persons who are not in the work force. These women cite household responsibilities as the reason they do not work (28, p. 1). Traditionally, wives are the housekeepers and child care providers. When not employed outside the home, the wife is available for these responsibilities, and employed wives spend less time completing household tasks. Employment is an important factor in determining the wife's time allocated to housework (29). Working mothers increase the family income by a significant amount; therefore, more money is available for the purchase of convenience foods and eating out at fast food restaurants (30).

**Responsibility for Meals**

Results of a study by Wheeler and Arvey (29) showed that 69 per cent of wives had total responsibility for planning meals, 53 per cent for cooking, and 48 per cent for washing dishes. According to Reed and Fanslow (31), division of labor in the household remains traditional even
though more women are employed. Men and children spend little time helping and household help is very seldom hired. Daily (32) found that the foods that preschoolers eat at home are usually selected by the mother, because she is the one who decides which foods are to be purchased and how they are to be prepared. Activities in the home related to foods are the most frequent and time-consuming tasks. Food-related decisions, selection, and preparation are tasks most often performed by women, whether employed or not. About 15 per cent of husbands with employed wives helped plan or prepare meals, compared to 7 or 8 per cent of husbands of unemployed wives (1, 15). Skinner et al. (33) indicated that over 75 per cent of working and nonworking adolescents said their mothers prepared most of the evening meals, while 15 per cent said they prepared most of their own evening meals. In a study by Smith (11), it was found that only 17 per cent of children ages eleven to fourteen prepared meals for the family, even though 65 per cent frequently or regularly worked in the kitchen.

Nutrition educators traditionally assume that everyone in the family unit eats the same meals together, the "common pot" theory. The traditional mother plans, prepares, and serves meals; therefore, she can be sure that her family is getting a balanced diet. However, many women who perceive that they are responsible for the family meals actually do not control many meals. Meals which she does not control
may be school lunches, after-school snacks, fast-food meals, business lunches, and coffee breaks. Husbands and children make the decisions in these instances (34).

**Meal Management**

What families eat depends on resources such as time, energy, money, skills, and food and nutrition information. It takes time to acquire, prepare and serve food, so time affects what is eaten. Energy available determines such aspects as planning meals, shopping frequency, convenience foods purchased, and the quantity of food that is prepared. Knowledge of food and its preparation gives individuals the ability to compensate somewhat for the lack of time, energy, or money (35, p. 215). Whereas 71 per cent of nonworking women plan meals, only 61 per cent of working women do so (12). Working women save time by lowering standards and doing less household work (31).

Ortiz et al. studied three aspects of family meals and how they are affected by employment of the homemaker. The three aspects were: time spent in preparing food; the number of meals eaten together at home; and the percentage of meals that were eaten away from home. The study was limited to homes with two adults and two children under the age of eighteen. A significant relationship was found between food preparation time and time in employment. Part-time employment meant less time spent preparing meals than
nonemployment, and full-time employment meant less time preparing meals than part-time employment. The number of meals eaten together at home were not significantly related to employment of the mother. Families of full-time employed mothers ate a large portion of meals away from home. Part-time employed and nonemployed homemaker households did not differ from each other. It was concluded that the food consumption of a family is changed by the employment of the mother in the following ways: less time spent preparing meals; more meals eaten out; and use of more processed foods. The effect of the use of convenience foods was small.

In a study of time-buying and time-saving strategies, Nickols and Fox (37) found that the employment or nonemployment status of wives made no difference in the purchase of durable household equipment such as microwave ovens. Likewise, no real relationship was found to the use of disposable kitchen products. More families of working women purchased lunches away from home than families of nonemployed wives. For school-aged children, buying school lunches was a time-saving measure over the mother preparing the lunch at home. Employment of the wife did not relate to purchasing restaurant meals, but did relate to eating at fast food establishments. Buying meals did appear to be a time-buying strategy. No matter how many hours worked, employed wives prepared fewer meals. The following meal management
techniques studied were not found to be related to employment: frequency of preparing food ahead of time; mean number of items prepared for each meal; and mean difficulty of preparing food.

Changes in the American lifestyle will continue through the 1980's. More convenience foods will allow easier meal preparation by more people; more frequent, smaller meals and snacks will replace formal meals. More interest will be shown in nutrition, and fast food restaurants will need to change their menus. Unless changes in food patterns are made, obesity and nutrient related diseases will continue (6).

The school must aid the home in establishing better food habits in childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Adults should be educated in order to interest children in improving food habits (38, p. 2). Generally what the adults in a family want to eat are the foods that are prepared. Research has shown that 89 per cent of mothers do not prepare the foods the father dislikes, and this limits a child's exposure to those foods (32, p. 36). Food habits and nutrition are affected by the family, and nutrition educators can utilize information to enhance nutrition education programs. It is important to view the family unit rather than individuals as the nutritional decision makers. Nutrition educators must work with the family as an entire unit, since individual
decisions are influenced by the structure of the family unit (24). Programs, newsletters and other educational media must be planned to teach those responsible for the family meals how they can use meal management techniques to effectively and efficiently prepare nutritious meals and how they can get the whole family to help (39).

Summary

Changes in the structure of the family, such as the increase in the number of single mothers, and the increase in the number of mothers who are employed outside the home, may be affecting the eating patterns of families. This research was intended to determine if evening meal patterns are related to the marital and working status of mothers and to predict meal management decisions based on factors such as resources, values, goals, and standards.

Home economics educators need to know what the evening meal patterns of families and individuals are and who is making the ultimate food choices in the family in order to plan effective nutritional and meal management curricula. If eating patterns are changing, the educational emphasis must also change to meet the current and future needs of families.


CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of two hundred eighty-two mothers who attended eight elementary school parent-teacher association meetings in a suburban city in North Texas. Mothers of families with elementary school children were chosen for the study because this stage of the family life cycle is assumed to be the one in which parents can most reliably report meal patterns for individual family members. Questionnaires completed by fathers were not included in this research.

Presidents of city-wide councils of parent-teacher associations in cities in North Texas were contacted by telephone regarding possible participation in the research. The city selected for the study was geographically accessible, the city-wide council was willing to cooperate with the researcher, and there were twenty elementary schools from which to draw a sample. According to current Chamber of Commerce data, the city is prosperous and rapidly growing with a population of over one hundred thousand and a school enrollment of more than twenty-seven thousand students. The population mix is one-half male and one-half
female, with about 90 per cent white and 10 per cent other races. Median age is twenty-seven and a half years. The family household size is approximately three persons, and about 80 per cent of households have an income over twenty-five thousand dollars.

Presidents of each elementary school parent-teacher association in the selected city were contacted by telephone and requested to estimate membership, to predict attendance, and to determine willingness of members to cooperate in the study. A nutrition education program for a parent-teacher meeting was offered as an incentive for cooperation in the study. The small-sample formula found in The NEA Research Bulletin (1, p. 99) and an approximate city-wide membership of six thousand were used to determine a desired sample size of two hundred and sixty respondents. Using attendance estimates provided by each parent-teacher association president, and allowing for low attendance and nonparticipation of some mothers, eight parent-teacher associations were required for an adequate sample size. A convenience sample of eight associations was selected from those parent-teacher associations willing to participate who had an appropriate meeting scheduled during the time set for data collection. Acceptance (Appendix A) or nonacceptance (Appendix B) letters were mailed to the individual presidents to confirm selection of associations for participation in the research.
Instrumentation

The data were collected by the use of a questionnaire entitled "Assessment of Family Evening Meals." The instrument was designed jointly by the researcher and the major professor, Arminta Jacobson, as part of a North Texas State University Faculty Research Grant through the School of Home Economics. A model (Appendix C) was drawn to aid in designing the instrument. The three parts of the instrument used for this research were designed to gather data about family demographics, family evening meal patterns, and factors affecting decisions related to family evening meals (Appendix D). Demographic information collected and analyzed included: size and composition of family; educational level and nutrition education background of mothers; employment status of mothers; and total household income. The questionnaire assessed frequency of family evening meal patterns by using code numbers from zero to seven to indicate level of frequency (2). A rating scale was designed which required the respondent to rate from zero to seven the level of importance of factors including: values, tradition, economy, time, energy, nutrition, health, management, preparation skill, task distribution, family influence, outside influence, and entertainment. One to six questions were asked for each factor.

The design and content of the questionnaire were based on research findings. The instrument was adequate to gather
the desired information, yet was as short as possible in order to encourage response. It was simple enough for use with persons at an eighth grade reading level (3). The reliability and validity of self report measures in relation to food intake and meal patterns have been substantiated by research (4, p. 407). The questionnaire was pilot tested for clarity and understanding by a panel of faculty experts and fifty graduate and undergraduate home economics students.

Collection of Data

The questionnaire, "Assessment of Family Evening Meals," and an introductory letter (Appendix E) were presented to each family present at a monthly meeting of the eight cooperating parent-teacher associations in a geographically accessible suburban city in North Texas. The wife or mother in each family was asked to complete the questionnaire and to return it to the researcher upon completion. A brief program explaining the importance of the study was presented and an educational handout with tips for feeding children was also available for each family. Time was made available during the meeting for completion of the instrument. A total of two hundred and eighty-two usable questionnaires were completed by mothers and returned to the researcher at the close of the meeting.
Analysis of Data

The data collected were analyzed by computer using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the responses of the mothers to the demographic section of the questionnaire.

Means and standard deviations were computed for use in comparing evening meal patterns of families with nonemployed mothers and families with employed mothers. Differences between these two groups are reflected in differences in means. Differences within each group are reflected by how much the standard deviation differs from zero. Means and standard deviations were again used to compare evening meal patterns in single and two-parent families. The mean and the standard deviation are the most commonly used measures of central tendency and of variability.

To assign numerical value to decision making, a rating scale was used to identify possible factors affecting decisions about meal patterns, such as whether to eat out or to eat at home. Pearson product-moment correlations were used to test relationships between the factors affecting decisions and the meal pattern decisions. Pearson correlation coefficients are used to analyze interval/ratio data.

To further identify factors affecting family evening meal patterns, frequency distributions and percentages were computed for single, married, employed and nonemployed respondents.
Limitations

1. Data collected solely from the North Texas area cannot be generalized nationwide.

2. The mothers served as the respondent for the entire family, and since they were a secondary data source for other family members, the results of the study may be biased.

3. The questions may have been misinterpreted or may not have fit a family's particular situation.

4. The memory of the respondent and other personal or environmental factors may have influenced the results of the study.

5. The effects of unemployed or part-time employed fathers or other adults living in the home were not considered in the study.

6. The number of single mothers constituted less than ten per cent of the sample; thus it was difficult to make comparisons between single and two-parent families.

7. The answers to the questionnaire may have been biased by knowledge of the respondents of the purpose of the research.

With these limitations and the use of the statistical methods discussed, family evening meal patterns were compared between employed and nonemployed mothers and between single and two-parent households. Factors affecting decisions related to family meals were also identified.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The questions this research proposed to answer were:

1. Do the evening meal patterns differ between families with mothers of single and two-parent households? 
2. Do the evening meal patterns differ between households with mothers who are employed outside the home and mothers who are nonemployed? 
3. What factors affect decisions related to the family evening meal pattern? 

In order to answer these questions, the data were analyzed by computing frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Frequency and percentage tables were used for analysis of the sample. Descriptive statistics were used to compare single and two-parent families as well as to compare families of employed and nonemployed mothers. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used in order to determine any relationships between meal patterns and factors affecting meal patterns. To further identify the factors affecting meal pattern decisions, means and frequencies were computed.
Sample Characteristics

The sample for this study consisted of two hundred eighty-two mothers who attended parent-teacher association meetings. Twenty-seven were single, two hundred fifty-four were married, and one did not indicate family status. Single mothers made up only 9.6 per cent of the sample.

As shown in Table I, one hundred twenty-four of the mothers were employed thirty-five or more hours per week, forty-four were employed from fifteen to thirty-five hours per week, thirty-three were employed less than fifteen hours, and eighty were nonemployed. One respondent did not indicate her employment status. Of all the mothers, 71.5 per cent were employed either part-time or full-time, whereas 28.5 per cent were nonemployed. Only 44.1 per cent of the respondents worked full-time.

TABLE I
EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MOTHERS
N = 281

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Weekly Employment</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 35</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 or more</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sample for this research was taken from mothers who attended eight elementary school parent-teacher association meetings, yet four mothers had no elementary school-age children. As shown in Table II, one hundred and fifty-nine mothers had one elementary school-age child, and one hundred and two had two children who were in this age group. Six per cent of the mothers had three or more children in elementary school.

Table II shows that two hundred nine of these mothers of elementary school-age children had no preschool children. Fifty-nine of the households had only one preschooler. Thirteen, or 4.6 per cent, had two preschoolers living in the home. Preschoolers were present in only 25.6 per cent of these households.
TABLE III
FREQUENCY OF MOTHERS WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN
N = 281

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Preschoolers</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>281</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adolescent children were members of 40.3 per cent of these families. Seventy-eight mothers had one adolescent child, twenty-seven mothers had two adolescents, but one hundred sixty-two mothers had no adolescents present in the home, as shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV
FREQUENCY OF MOTHERS WITH ADOLESCENT CHILDREN
N = 271

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Adolescents</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or more</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>271</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table V shows that 92.9 per cent of the households had two or more adults living in the home. Only six per cent of the households included more than two adults. Even though twenty-seven of the mothers were single parents, only twenty respondents reported being the only adult present in the household. The effect of the presence of adults other than the parent or parents was not analyzed in this study.

TABLE V
FREQUENCY OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLDS
N = 282

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Adults</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or more</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of education of the respondents is given in Table VI. Only 1.1 per cent of the mothers had less than a high school education. The largest number of respondents, 36.5 per cent, reported having some college. The majority of the mothers, 81.2 per cent, had at least attended college. College degrees were held by 44.7 per cent of the mothers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level of Education</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Work</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>282</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One hundred seventy-three, 61.3 per cent, of the respondents reported taking a formal food and nutrition course in high school or college. One hundred nine, 38.7 per cent, reported they had taken no such courses.

Household income for the sample families was high, with 46 per cent indicating a total household income of over $50,000. Only four respondents had an income of $10,000 or below, and only ten respondents had a household income below $20,000. Seventeen respondents chose not to reveal household income, and are not included in Table VII. Eighty-three per cent of the sample had an income of $30,001 or more, which is comparable to the city-wide statistic of 80 per cent of families with an income over $25,000.
### TABLE VII
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF RESPONDENTS
N = 265

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Household Income</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 and below</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,001 to $15,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,001 to $20,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,001 to $25,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,001 to $30,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,001 to $40,000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,001 to $50,000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001 and above</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>265</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statistical Analysis**

In order to compare evening meal patterns of employed and nonemployed mothers, the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) was used to compute means and standard deviations for mothers employed thirty-five or more hours per week and for mothers who were nonemployed. There is very little difference in the evening meal patterns of these two groups, as seen in Table VIII. One difference is that of the almost five meals eaten at home each week, employed mothers use slightly more ready to heat and carryout foods. Families of employed mothers eat out together one more time each month than families of nonemployed mothers.
TABLE VIII
EVENING MEAL PATTERNS OF FAMILIES FOR
EMPLOYED AND NONEMPLOYED MOTHERS

N = 124   N = 80

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Evening Meal Patterns</th>
<th>Employed Mothers*</th>
<th>Nonemployed Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean**</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals Eaten at Home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Eat Together</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Eat Together</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None Eat Together</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals Eaten Out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Eat Together</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Eat Together</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only One Eats Out</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No One Eats</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carryout</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready to Heat</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Prepared</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Establishments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mothers employed 35 or more hours per week
**Mean number of meals per week

Means and standard deviations were also computed for comparison of evening meal patterns of families with single and married mothers (see Table IX). Single mothers served
TABLE IX
EVENING MEAL PATTERNS OF FAMILIES FOR SINGLE AND TWO-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Evening Meal Patterns</th>
<th>Single Mothers</th>
<th>Married Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean*</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals Eaten at Home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Eat Together</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Eat Together</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None Eat Together</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals Eaten Out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Eat Together</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Eat Together</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only One Eats Out</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No One Eats</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carryout</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready to Heat</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Prepared</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Establishments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean number of meals per week

home prepared meals four nights each week as compared to five home prepared meals served by married mothers. The single mother served slightly more carryout and ready to heat foods.
Single-parent families were also slightly more likely to eat at fast food establishments.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to determine if factors affecting meal patterns and the evening meal patterns were related. Only weak to moderate relationships were found. Table X summarizes the findings.

Weak positive relationships existed between the importance of eating together as a family and the dependent variables of all the family eating together at home \((r = .37)\) and eating food that is prepared at home \((r = .37)\). A weak negative relationship was found between the importance of eating together as a family and eating foods that are ready to heat or eat \((r = -.31)\).

There was a weak positive correlation \((r = .35)\) between eating a regularly scheduled meal and the family eating at home together, and a weak negative correlation \((r = -.31)\) between eating a regularly scheduled meal and eating heat and eat foods. A moderate relationship \((r = .46)\) was found between eating regularly scheduled meals and eating food that is prepared at home.

The tradition of sitting down to eat at a completely set table was weakly related to eating together at home as a family \((r = .30)\) and to eating home prepared foods \((r = .39)\). A low inverse relationship was found between
TABLE X

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR EVENING MEAL PATTERNS AND FACTORS AFFECTING MEAL PATTERNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Meal Patterns</th>
<th>Corr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>All Eat at Home</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Eating Together</td>
<td>Heat and Eat Foods</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>All Eat at Home</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly Scheduled Meals</td>
<td>Heat and Eat Foods</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>All Eat at Home</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat at Completely Set Table</td>
<td>Heat and Eat Foods</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>-.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Time to Cook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Heat and Eat Foods</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick/Easy Preparation</td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>-.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Heat and Eat Foods</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable Containers</td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Heat and Eat Foods</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable Containers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Carryout Foods</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>-.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose Nutritious Foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Influence</td>
<td>All Eat at Home</td>
<td>-.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Home Prepared Foods</td>
<td>-.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Significance = .0001
eating at a completely set table and eating heat and eat foods \( (r = -0.37) \).

As might be expected, a weak inverse relationship was found to exist between limited time to cook and serving home prepared meals \( (r = -0.35) \).

A moderate relationship \( (r = 0.41) \) was shown between choosing foods that are quick and easy to prepare and eating foods that are ready to heat and eat. A slight negative relationship \( (r = -0.36) \) existed between choosing quick and easy to prepare foods and eating home prepared meals.

Preparing and serving food with disposable containers in order to save time was moderately related to serving foods ready to heat and eat \( (r = 0.42) \), and was slightly related to serving home prepared foods \( (r = 0.33) \). There was also a slight tendency \( (r = 0.37) \) for mothers to use disposable containers to make mealtime easier when using foods that were ready to heat and eat. Fatigue was slightly related to serving carryout foods \( (r = 0.31) \) and was negatively related to serving home prepared foods \( (r = -0.36) \).

Choosing foods according to nutritive value was slightly related to serving home prepared meals \( (r = 0.32) \). Activities of family members negatively influenced the family all eating the evening meal together \( (r = -0.34) \) and eating foods that were prepared at home \( (r = -0.30) \).
No significant relationships were found between formal nutrition education of mothers and evening meal patterns when Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed for these variables. Neither were any significant relationships found between family status and family evening meal patterns.

To analyze factors affecting meal management decisions for single and two-parent families with mothers employed or nonemployed, frequency distributions were computed for single and married mothers by hours of employment. All but two single mothers were employed full-time. Table XI shows comparisons of employment status. Frequency distributions were compared for single, full-time employed mothers, for married, full-time employed mothers, and for married, nonemployed mothers.

TABLE XI

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF SINGLE AND TWO-PARENT MOTHERS

N = 280

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Employment</th>
<th>Number of Single Mothers</th>
<th>Number of Married Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonemployed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 35 hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 35 hours</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eating together as a family was not rated as important to single working mothers. Only 24 per cent always valued eating together as a family compared to over 45 per cent of married mothers. Single working mothers are more inclined to always enforce table manners (45.8 per cent) than are married working mothers (34.4 per cent), and married non-working mothers (35.1 per cent). Only 8.3 per cent of single employed mothers always scheduled regular evening meals, while 31 per cent of married employed and 38 per cent of married nonemployed mothers always scheduled regular meals. Eight per cent of single employed mothers always seat the family at a completely set dinner table. Twenty-five per cent of employed married mothers always set a table, and 33.3 per cent of nonemployed mothers always set the table. Only four per cent of the mothers in this sample never serve meals at a completely set dinner table.

Families of employed mothers, both single and married, watch television while eating more frequently than do nonemployed married mothers. Over one-third of families of nonemployed mothers never watch television during the evening meal, 18.8 per cent of two-parent employed households never watch television, and only 12 per cent of single employed mother's families never watch television during the evening meal.
A spouse that travels affects meal decisions of married, nonemployed mothers to a greater extent than married, employed mothers. This factor is never a consideration for about 40 per cent of nonemployed mothers, or for over 70 per cent of employed mothers.

Newspaper advertising never influences 49 per cent of two-parent, employed mother households in deciding where and what to eat. Newspaper advertising never influences single, employed mothers 44 per cent of the time, and never influences married, nonemployed mothers 37.7 per cent of the time.

Time to cook is never limited for eight per cent of single mothers, for 6.2 per cent of married, employed mothers, or for 7.6 per cent of married, nonemployed mothers. Twenty-four per cent of single, employed mothers reported that time to cook is always limited. This compared to 32 per cent of married, employed mothers, and to only 7.6 per cent of married, nonemployed mothers. Employment also limits time to purchase groceries. Sixteen per cent of single mothers claimed time to purchase groceries was always limited. Of the married mothers, 20.4 per cent of employed mothers felt their time to purchase groceries was always limited, while only 1.3 per cent of nonemployed mothers felt their time was limited.
Several of the factors affecting evening meals were not major considerations of the mothers in this study. Religion had no effect on what over 75 per cent of all families ate at the evening meal. Over 73.7 per cent of mothers, regardless of marriage and employment status, never use food for reward or punishment. Lack of cooking knowledge was not considered a problem for 90.8 per cent of all mothers. The amount of help available in the kitchen never affects where the family eats 65.4 per cent of the time. The only mothers who hired outside help were four per cent of two-parent, employed households.

In order to further identify factors affecting meal patterns, means were computed as seen in Table XII. Statements were rated by respondents on a scale from zero (never) to seven (always). The highest mean computed (\( \bar{X} = 6.10 \)) indicates that eating together as a family is a highly rated value of this sample. Mothers also rated enforcing table manners (\( \bar{X} = 5.56 \)) and eating regularly scheduled meals (\( \bar{X} = 5.17 \)) as very important. These mothers gave a high rating to the tradition of feeding the family at a completely set table (\( \bar{X} = 4.70 \)). Also rated highly were considering family food needs, likes, and dislikes (\( \bar{X} = 5.44 \)) when planning meals, and preparing special foods for a sick family member (\( \bar{X} = 5.26 \)). Families chose food according to nutritive value (\( \bar{X} = 4.86 \)). Meal management techniques which
### TABLE XII

**MEAN RATINGS FOR FACTORS AFFECTING MEAL PATTERNS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Eating together as a family is important.</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Our religion determines what we eat.</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Table manners are enforced.</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Members of my household have a regularly scheduled meal in the evening.</td>
<td>5.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. The family sits down to eat at a completely set table.</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. We eat while watching TV.</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Meals are planned using advertised weekly grocery specials.</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Food coupons are used to help purchase food more economically.</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. We compare the cost of eating out with eating at home.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Time to cook is limited.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Time to purchase groceries is limited.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. We choose foods that are quick and easy to prepare.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. We use a microwave oven to save time.</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. We prepare and/or serve food with disposable containers in order to save time.</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. We prepare and/or serve food with disposable containers because it is EASIER.</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Fatigue is a factor in where the family eats.</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. We need a break from preparing, serving, and/or cleaning up from meals.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Foods are chosen according to their nutritive value.</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Special diets of family members influence evening meals.</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Special foods are prepared for a member of the family when he or she is sick.</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Foods are prepared ahead for future needs.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. We plan menus for the week.</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. A written shopping list is used.</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Groceries are purchased only once a week.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. We eat out because of a lack of cooking knowledge.</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. We eat ready-prepared or carryout foods because we enjoy foods that are difficult to prepare.</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. The amount of help available in the kitchen determines whether or not we eat at home.</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. We hire someone to prepare, serve, and clean up after the family evening meal.</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Activities of family members affect family evening meals.</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. We prepare home cooked meals because family members will not eat frozen, ready-prepared dinners.</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. My spouse travels, so we eat at home when he or she is home.</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. My spouse travels, so we eat out when he or she is away.</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. We consider family needs, likes and dislikes when planning food purchases.</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Food is used for reward or punishment.</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Evening meals are influenced by business obligations.</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Evening meals are influenced by social obligations.</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Newspaper advertising influences our decisions about where and what to eat for the evening meal.</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. We eat out together or with friends as a means of entertainment.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. We cook at home because cooking is fun.</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. We enjoy entertaining guests at home for the evening meal.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mothers indicated were practiced in the home were using written grocery lists ($\bar{X} = 4.69$) and purchasing groceries only once a week ($\bar{X} = 4.08$). Time to cook is limited ($\bar{X} = 4.14$) for this sample, and activities of family members do have an effect on evening meals ($\bar{X} = 4.19$).

**Discussion and Summary**

The sample for this study was more homogeneous than had been anticipated. A shortcoming of the sample was that only twenty-seven of two hundred eighty-two respondents were single mothers. Single-parent families headed by mothers make up about 16 per cent of the general population (1, p. 1; 2; 3), as compared to 9.6 per cent of this sample. One reason for this small percentage of the sample may be that mothers who are single parents do not have the time or energy to attend meetings. Other research has indicated a lack of knowledge of influences on food decisions in single-parent families (4, p. 50). Single mothers in this study served fewer home prepared meals, but more carryout and more heat and eat meals.

Since only twenty-seven respondents were single, statistical comparisons between mothers of different family and employment status was difficult. Of the twenty-seven single mothers, all but two were employed full-time. These frequencies support prior research findings (1, p. 1; 2; 5) that most single mothers who are supporting families are
employed in full-time jobs. Bureau of Labor Statistics for 1984 show that most women work full-time, regardless of marital status. Sixty per cent of mothers of preschool or school-age children were in the labor force in 1984 (5). Only 44.1 per cent of all mothers in this study worked full-time.

Findings of Goebel and Hennon (6) indicated an added importance to shared family meals if the mothers were employed. The present research showed about six meals per week eaten together as a family, five meals at home and one meal away from home. This occurred in both employed and in nonemployed mother households. In addition, Skinner et al. (7) found no significant difference in meal patterns of adolescents with working and nonworking mothers. Bartel (8) found no significant difference between working and nonworking mothers in frequency of eating out in restaurants. Both working and nonworking mothers valued convenience foods for the same reasons. Still another study (9) concluded that employment had no effect on the number of meals families ate together at home. Other researchers found that employed mothers purchased more meals away from home (10, 11, 12). Still another researcher (13) found that employed mothers purchased more prepared foods, but that they do not eat out more than nonemployed mothers.

The education level reported by the mothers who responded to the questionnaire for this research was high.
The majority of the respondents indicated college attendance, graduation from college, or graduate work as the highest level of education attained. Skinner et al. (7) found that education level has an effect on family meals. Parents who are well-educated are aware of the importance of a family mealtime. Mothers in this study valued eating together as a family. Ortiz (9) found that families were more likely to eat together if the mother had a college degree.

Redman (13) found a negative effect of a mother's college education on buying ready-prepared foods. Educated mothers may be more nutrition conscious as shown by the high rating mothers in this study gave to buying foods for nutritive value. This is supported by Siler (14), who found a distinct relationship between the level of education of parents and the consumption of major nutrients and food habits of children, regardless of whether or not the mother worked.

A total of 61.3 per cent of the respondents in the present study reported taking a formal food and nutrition course in high school or college. This would indicate the presence of food-related skills for over one-half the mothers. Lack of food preparation skills was not a problem for almost all the mothers in this research. Skill in food preparation allows an individual to compensate somewhat for lack of time, energy, or money (15, p. 216).
Only four per cent of households in this study reported hiring outside help. Goebel and Hennon (6) also found that hiring help was not often used as a time-buying technique.

Newspaper advertising was seldom used in deciding what or where respondents would eat, yet Schmandt et al. (16) says that food advertising shapes consumers' buying and eating habits. Shapiro (17) claims that advertising has been important in the growth of the fast food industry.

Results of the current study showed activities of family members were negatively related to the family eating the evening meal together. More family involvement in activities has been given as one of the reasons more meals are skipped or eaten away from home (18). Peterson, (19, p. 47) also suggested that activities outside the home might influence meal preparation time, number of meals a family eats together, and the number of meals eaten away from home.

A recent news report (18) claimed that shared traditional family meals served at a dinner table have all but disappeared. Only four per cent of the mothers in this sample never serve meals at a completely set dinner table. Meal patterns other than traditional evening meals are evident in this sample, however. Other meal patterns include eating out, bringing home carryout meals, and serving ready to heat and eat foods. Meals are also eaten by only part of the family together.
Mealtime is traditionally a time for family interaction and sharing (6). The family meal is important in teaching children acceptable family roles, values, and behavior (18, 20). Families in this research were found to value and serve traditional family evening meals. Home economics educators should continue to teach parents and students a traditional evening meal pattern along with the importance of family togetherness.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was concerned with family evening meals of single-parent and two-parent households with employed and nonemployed mothers. The purpose of the study was to determine if evening meal patterns and evening meal management decisions are related to the marital and employment status of mothers.

The data were collected by using a questionnaire entitled "Assessment of Family Evening Meals." The first part of the questionnaire requested demographic information. A second section assessed frequency of family evening meal patterns in a typical week by using code numbers from zero to seven. The third part of the instrument was a rating scale which required the respondent to rate the level of importance of various factors related to meal pattern decisions.

The sample chosen for the study was mothers who attended elementary school parent-teacher association meetings in an affluent suburban city in North Texas. The questionnaires were handed directly to the mothers who attended selected parent-teacher meetings. The study was
explained at each meeting. Time was allowed for completion of the instrument, and the completed questionnaires were collected at the close of each meeting. The data were collected at eight parent-teacher meetings and resulted in two hundred eighty-two usable questionnaires. The data were analyzed by computing frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients.

Of the two hundred eighty-two respondents, only twenty-seven were single mothers. There were only 28.5 per cent who were nonemployed; 27.4 per cent were employed up to thirty-five hours per week; and 44.1 per cent were employed thirty-five or more hours per week.

College degrees were held by 44.7 per cent of the sample, and only 1.1 per cent had less than a high school education. Well over one-half (61.3 per cent) reported having taken a high school or college level food and nutrition course.

A household income of over $50,000 a year was reported by 46 per cent of the respondents, while only 3.7 per cent reported an income of less than $20,000 a year.

These statistics indicate a homogeneous sample with a high socioeconomic status.

The first research question asked for a comparison of meal patterns of single and two-parent households. One slight difference was that single mothers served four home
prepared meals each week, while married mothers served five. Single mothers utilized carryout, heat and eat, and fast foods more frequently than married mothers. No significant correlation was found between family status and family evening meal patterns.

To answer the second research question, meal patterns of employed and nonemployed mothers were compared. Only slight differences were found. Families with employed mothers ate out about one more time each month, and they ate slightly more carryout and ready to heat and eat foods.

The third research question asked for an identification of factors that affect decisions related to family evening meal patterns. Only weak to moderate correlations were found between meal patterns and factors affecting the meal patterns. The tradition of eating regularly scheduled meals was moderately related to the meal pattern of eating home prepared meals. Choosing foods that are quick and easy to prepare was a decision moderately related to eating heat and eat foods. A third moderate relationship was found between the variables preparing and serving foods in disposable containers to save time and eating heat and eat foods.

Means were computed to further identify factors affecting meal patterns. Eating together as a family, eating regularly scheduled meals, enforcing table manners, and eating at a completely set table were identified as having high ratings. Other factors with high mean ratings were
choosing nutritious foods, considering family food preferences, and preparing special foods if a family member gets sick. Preparing written grocery lists and buying groceries only once a week were highly rated meal management techniques which have an effect on family meals. Two other factors affecting meal patterns received high ratings by this sample. One was limited time to cook, and the other was activities of family members.

Conclusions

The sample for this research was homogeneous with a high socioeconomic status. These families can afford to eat what and where they want to eat. In a suburban city there are many options when it comes to meal pattern decisions. There are major supermarkets, specialty food stores, and convenience stores all within a few blocks of the family home. Fast food restaurants include every popular chain and every food imaginable. Restaurants vary from casual to formal. It is possible to purchase foods representative of different ethnic groups. It is also possible to either "grab a bite" or to spend an evening dining.

In suburban cities the lifestyle is fast-paced and can become hectic. Competition is always present, and success is the expectation. Mothers can easily feel compelled to be the best at all they do. This includes serving the best meals possible. It can be assumed that nutrition knowledge
and food preparation skills make it easier for these mothers with busy lifestyles to manage the family meals.

The evening meals of the families studied were not merely snacks chosen and eaten by individual family members. The families sampled valued a traditional evening meal served at the dinner table with home-prepared foods. Even employed mothers served traditional meals. The traditional family meal has not disappeared.

There were other meal patterns evident in this study. In addition to all eating together at the table, some meals included only part of the family. This may be due to activities of the family or to a parent traveling or working late. Other meal patterns included eating carryout foods or ready to heat and eat foods. Families also ate out, usually at fast food establishments or at restaurants. Families ate out for entertainment, for a break, or for variety. These families seldom ate at cafeterias, which specialize in family-style meals.

When feeding the family, the single mother is not as traditional as are married mothers. Single mothers served fewer home prepared foods and more carryout, heat and eat, and fast foods. They are more influenced by limited time and economy than two-parent families because of the absence of a partner to help with responsibilities and to contribute financially. There is also the absence of an adult companion at mealtime.
Mothers who are employed do almost as well as nonemployed mothers in managing and serving traditional meals. Since family members are absent from the home during hours of employment and other meals are eaten away from home, there may be an expectation that at least one meal will be prepared and served at home when all family members are present.

Mothers who are nonemployed are also busy with volunteer work and the many activities that are available in a prosperous suburban city. According to this study, though, nonemployed, married mothers do have the time, energy, and monetary resources to serve the types of meals they value.

Since time is limited for all mothers, and since family activities interfere with the family evening meal, mothers should be taught to include other family members in meal-related activities. By involving children and spouses in meal planning, preparation, and cleanup, they can be taught to make wise food choices and to value the traditional family meal. Families who value a traditional evening meal can teach through example. The respondents in this study value a traditional evening meal, and the meal patterns do reflect that value.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Since health and well-being are affected by what families eat, it is important to continue to study meal patterns so that home economics educators can plan programs, classes and teaching materials that will benefit families with varying and changing lifestyles. The following are recommendations for further research that might be conducted as part of a comprehensive food and nutrition program.

1. Meal patterns of single mothers who are heads of households should be studied since this population is rapidly increasing and there is little information about food habits of these families.

2. Research might focus on other types of families where work might interfere with the family evening meals.

3. An interdisciplinary study could be conducted which would include consumer decisions in addition to meal management decisions. Such a study would look more closely at decisions on whether to purchase ready to heat and eat foods or to eat out.

4. Since families spend time together at the evening meal, a study of the ways families share this time would be beneficial for educators teaching family relations, meal management, and nutrition.

5. Meal management techniques of employed mothers could be studied in order to learn how these households
compensate for time when evening meals are prepared and served at home.

6. This study could be repeated periodically to evaluate any changes in family evening meals. The result would be well-planned nutrition and meal management education that is locally relevant.

Changes in family meal patterns are related to changes in lifestyles and changes in society. With the rapid increase in our society of single-parent families and mothers who are employed outside the home, lifestyles are changing. This research has provided current information about evening meal patterns and meal-related decisions of employed and nonemployed mothers, and of single and two-parent households. This information can be used by home economics educators when planning educational curriculum for both parents and children.
APPENDIX A

ACCEPTANCE LETTER
Dear PTA President:

Thank you for your willingness to help in our research. As I explained in our telephone conversation, our research study at North Texas State University involves completion by parents of a questionnaire regarding evening meal patterns and meal management decisions in families. Your PTA was selected as a sample group. Our research will only involve one visit to a meeting of your PTA. Explaining the study and having the parents complete the questionnaire will require approximately fifteen minutes. If you have requested a short program, an additional ten minutes will be required. The parents will be given a handout, "Food Needs of Children," which gives tips on how to help children form good eating habits.

The date and time we have discussed to visit your PTA meeting is (day, date, time). I will be in touch with you before my visit.

Thank you again for your cooperation. We appreciate your participation and your interest in important research.
APPENDIX B

NONACCEPTANCE LETTER
Dear PTA President:

Thank you for your willingness to help in the research on family evening meal patterns and meal management decisions being conducted in suburban Parent-Teacher groups in North Texas. Your PTA was not selected for participation as a sample group, so a visit to your PTA meeting will not be necessary.

We appreciate your interest in important research which will update information on family life.
APPENDIX C

MODEL FOR QUESTIONNAIRE
### FAMILY EVENING MEAL PATTERNS

1. **Employed Mothers**
   - 1 - Single
   - 2 - Married

2. **Nonemployed Mothers**
   - 1 - Single
   - 2 - Married

---

### EVENING MEAL PATTERNS

#### Where
- **1**
  - Eat Away From Home

- **2**
  - Eat At Home

#### Types
- **1**
  - a Fast Food
  - b Restaurant
  - c Cafeteria

- **2**
  - a Ready Prepared/ Carryout
  - b Prepared At Home

---

#### With Whom
- All of Family
- Some of Family
- None of Family
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER
Dear Parent:

A study entitled "Evening Meal Patterns and Meal Management Decisions of Families of Employed and Non-employed Mothers" is being conducted by the School of Home Economics at North Texas State University. The results of this study will be used to update nutrition education information.

As a parent of an elementary school age child, you are asked to complete and return a questionnaire. Filling out this questionnaire may benefit you personally in becoming aware of your methods of managing the evening meal. Filling out the questionnaire should only take about ten minutes. Please do not sign your name as we are only interested in the responses to each item on the questionnaire. Please read the directions for each section carefully and complete the entire questionnaire.

Thank you for your willingness to cooperate with our research.
ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY EVENING MEALS

PART I

DIRECTIONS: Circle the number which indicates your answer to each question.

1. What is your role in the family? (5-10)
   - mother ........................................ 0
   - father ....................................... 1

2. How many preschool children live in your home?
   - none .......................................... 0
   - one ........................................... 1
   - two .......................................... 2
   - three ......................................... 3
   - four or more .................................. 4

3. How many elementary children live in your home?
   - none .......................................... 0
   - one ........................................... 1
   - two .......................................... 2
   - three ......................................... 3
   - four or more .................................. 4

4. How many adolescent children live in your home?
   - none .......................................... 0
   - one ........................................... 1
   - two .......................................... 2
   - three ......................................... 3
   - four or more .................................. 4

5. How many adults live in your home? including yourself?
   - none .......................................... 0
   - one ........................................... 1
   - two .......................................... 2
   - three ......................................... 3
   - four or more .................................. 4
6. What is your family status?
   Single parent                      0
   Two parent                         1

7. What is your highest level of education?
   Less than high school graduate     0
   High school graduate               1
   Some college                      2
   College graduate                  3
   Graduate work                     4

8. Have you had formal food and nutrition courses
   in high school or college?
   Yes                                0
   No                                 1

9. How many hours weekly are you employed?
   Thirty-five or more hours per week 0
   Fifteen to thirty-five hours per week 1
   Less than fifteen hours per week   2
   Nonemployed                        3

10. How many hours weekly are you engaged in volunteer
    activities?
    Thirty-five or more hours per week 0
    Fifteen to thirty-five hours per week 1
    Less than fifteen hours per week   2
    Nonemployed                        3

11. What is your main occupation?
    Managerial or professional specialties 0
    Technical, sales or administrative support 1
    Service occupation                   2
    Precision production, craft, or repair 3
    Operator, fabricator, or laborer      4
    Farming, forestry, or fishing         5
12. What is your household's total income?

$10,000 and below ........................................... 0
$10,001 to $15,000 ............................................. 1
$15,001 to $20,000 ............................................. 2
$20,001 to $25,000 ............................................. 3
$25,001 to $30,000 ............................................. 4
$30,001 to $40,000 ............................................. 5
$40,001 to $50,000 ............................................. 6
$50,001 and above ............................................. 7

PART II

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to the following statements about the evening meal in your family by circling the correct number of times each item occurs in a typical week.

13. How many evening meals per week does your family eat AT HOME with ALL of the family together?  (17-29) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. How many evening meals per week does your family eat AT HOME with PART of the family together? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. How many evening meals per week does your family eat AT HOME with NONE of the family together? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. How many evening meals per week does your family EAT OUT together? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. How many evening meals per week does only PART of your family EAT OUT together? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. How many evening meals per week does only ONE of your family EAT OUT? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. How many evening meals per week does NO ONE in your family eat at all? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. How many evening meals per week does your family eat CARRYOUT food?  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. How many evening meals per week does your family eat foods that are READY TO EAT OR HEAT?  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. How many evening meals per week does your family eat FOOD THAT IS PREPARED AT HOME?  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. How many evening meals per week does your family EAT OUT at a FAST FOOD ESTABLISHMENT?  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. How many evening meals per week does your family EAT OUT at a RESTAURANT?  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. How many evening meals per week does your family EAT OUT at a CAFETERIA?  
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

PART III

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to the following statements about the evening meal in your family. Circle the number that best represents how often the statement is true in your household using: 0 = Never to 7 = Always.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Eating together as a family is important.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>(30-54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Our religion determines what we eat.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Table manners are enforced.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Members of my household have a regularly scheduled meal in the evening.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. The family sits down to eat at a completely set table.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. We eat while watching TV.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Meals are planned using advertised weekly grocery specials.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Food coupons are used to help purchase food more economically.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. We compare the cost of eating out with eating at home.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Time to cook is limited.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Time to purchase groceries is limited.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. We choose foods that are quick and easy to prepare.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. We use a microwave oven to save time.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. We prepare and/or serve food with disposable containers in order to save TIME.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. We prepare and/or serve food with disposable containers because it is EASIER.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Fatigue is a factor in where the family eats.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. We need a break from preparing, serving, and/or cleaning up from meals.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Foods are chosen according to their nutritive value.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Special diets of family members influence evening meals.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Special foods are prepared for a member of the family when he or she is sick.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Foods are prepared ahead for future needs.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>47. We plan menus for the week.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>48. A written shopping list is used.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>49. Groceries are purchased only once a week.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>50. We eat out because of a lack of cooking knowledge.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>51. We eat ready-prepared or carryout foods because we enjoy foods that are difficult to prepare.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. The amount of help available in the kitchen determines whether or not we eat at home.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. We hire someone to prepare, serve, and clean up after the family evening meal.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Activities of family members affect family evening meals.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(55-69)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55. We prepare home cooked meals because family members will not eat frozen, ready-prepared dinners.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>56. My spouse travels, so we eat at home when he or she is home.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. My spouse travels, so we eat out when he or she is away.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. We consider family needs, likes and dislikes when planning food purchases.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>59. Food is used for reward or punishment.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>60. Evening meals are influenced by business obligations.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Evening meals are influenced by social obligations.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Newspaper advertising influences our decisions about where and what to eat for the evening meal.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. We eat out together or with friends as a means of entertainment.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>64. We cook at home because cooking is fun.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. We enjoy entertaining guests at home for the evening meal.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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