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## Quantity-based analysis of household food consumption patterns and drivers: The case of Israel

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### **Abstract**

The interest in better understanding the characteristics and drivers of food consumption by individuals and social groups has grown in recent years, because of various social, environmental, health and economic issues. Most analyses have focused either on the macro or national scale, using food balance/disappearance data, or on the micro scale, focusing on nutrition analysis in limited groups of individual consumers. While various household characteristics are expected to influence food-purchasing habits, the scope and methodology of most previous studies limited their ability to relate to multiple factors, and integrate all into specific consumption patterns. A third, mezzo approach focuses on analyzing household food purchasing, mostly using expenditure surveys. However, focusing on the value spent may result in different quantities of food purchased. This paper aims capturing the amount of food purchased by Israeli households and to analyze the socio-economic factors shaping that consumption. It joins limited number of studies worldwide that focused on the quantity purchased, and the first such analysis of household food purchasing in the State of Israel. It quantified food purchased by more than 30,000 households, and analyzed key shaping factors e.g., income, household size and age. It first, established the need for quantity based analysis. Then, an extensive breakdown of consumed food is presented and the unique diets of different parts of the society were identified. Finally, it examined the consumption of different lifestyles to find that couples lifestyles tend to consume more per capita, and that income has a crucial role in determining the rate of consumption both in terms of quantity and variety purchased. However it highlights that other variables should also be examined in order to assess properly why households consume the way they do. Nevertheless, the findings of this research can be used as the basis for examining the health, social, or environmental implications of the different identified food consumption habits, support long-term research that examines changes over time, and may be the basis for examining the potential benefits of implementing specific policies.

**Keywords:** food consumption; household purchasing; weight based measures; lifestyles; Israel, socio-economic.

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