

AN EVALUATION OF CULTURAL VALUES AND FOOD SPENDING WITH A FOCUS ON FOOD CONSUMPTION

*Yiyecek Tüketimi Kapsamında Kültürel Değerler ve Yiyecek Harcamalarının
Değerlendirilmesi*

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ABSTRACT

Cultural value of each society differs, though there may be some similarities in some aspects. Food consumption and nourishment understanding of each society are affected both by cultural values and their level of economic development. Therefore, when evaluating the food consumption parameters, it is important to take into account the cultural values and consumption habits. In this respect, the aim of this study is to analyze the level of food spending and cultural values and food consumption parameters. This study is based on the secondary data obtained from the following two studies: one is the Hofstede's (1980a) grouping of various cultures in his study of "Cultural Dimension Model" and the other is the Menzel and D'Aluisio's (2005) study of "Hungry Planet: What the World Eats?". The countries included in both studies have been included in this study as well to make an evaluation in a comparative manner. The findings indicate that there is a tendency of low food consumption spending in the countries where the large power distance exists. On the other hand, there is a tendency of high food consumption spending in the countries which have individualistic cultural values in their own nature.

Keywords: Cultural Values, Food Consumption, Food Spending

ÖZ

Birtakım benzerliklerine karşın toplumların kültürel değerleri birbirinden farklıdır. Her toplumun yiyecek tüketimi ve beslenme anlayışı, toplumların kültürel değerleri ve ekonomik gelişmişlik düzeyleriyle yakından ilişkilidir. Bu nedenle, toplumların yiyecek tüketimini değerlendirirken toplumsal kültürel değerlerini ve tüketim alışkanlıklarını dikkate almak önemlidir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın amacı yiyecek harcama düzeyi ile kültürel değerler ve yiyecek tüketim kalıpları arasındaki ilişkiyi bir arada değerlendirmektir. Bu çalışma Hofstede'in (1980a) "Kültürel Boyutlar Modeli" çalışmasıyla Menzel ve D'Aluisio'nun (2005) "Aç Gezegen: Dünya Ne Yemektedir?" çalışması kapsamında ikincil verilere dayalı olarak hazırlanmıştır. Sağlıklı bir karşılaştırma yapabilmek için birbirinden bağımsız olarak hazırlanmış olan her iki çalışmada da yer alan ülkeler ele alınmıştır. Bulgulara göre, yüksek güç mesafesi olan ülkelerde yiyecek tüketim harcaması düşükken, bireyselliğin yüksek olduğu ülkelerde yiyecek tüketim harcaması yüksektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültürel Değerler, Yiyecek Tüketimi, Yiyecek Harcaması.

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INTRODUCTION

PEOPLE HAVE TO EAT, or in other words, they have to consume food to survive since eating is a biological need for individual nourishment. However, eating types and styles are both shaped the socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of societies (Beşirli, 2010). Therefore, eating or food consumption is not only carried out to meet the biological or physical need of a person but also to meet the requirements of his/her socio-economic class and socio-cultural values. Culture is an inevitable part of a society that acts as a glue to keep each individual together, and shapes societies. Without culture and related values, it is impossible to mention a society with its own characteristics and values. Culture of a society is shaped by beliefs, values, norms, symbols, language, religion, etc. And more recently globalization and the widespread use of recently developing technologies have had significant effects on the cultures depending on the levels of technological developments and usage of as well as the degree of globalization they take part in. It is worth noting that cultural values have both visible and invisible aspects (Turan, Durceylan and Şişman, 2005). Societies either resemble each other or differentiate from each other in terms of the values they accept.

Culture forms individuals' way of life and consumption styles with choice of products and purchasing styles, etc. However, besides culture geographical factors such as climate affect these preferences. In this context, food consumption styles and traditions are shaped both by cultural values and regional climate, as well as other related geographical conditions (Özgen, 2015). While climate shapes vegetation types and the livestock, cultural roots based on traditions, ethnicity and religion influence the choice of food and form food consumption manners (Özgen, 2015; Özçelik Heper, 2015). Because of geographical, cultural, social and ecological differences, world's widely known cuisines have their own unique dimensions which are (Aktaş and Özdemir, 2007): (a) reputability, (b) originality, and (c) variety. However, current literature review has shown that there is a lack of studies carried out to evaluate the food consumption parameters in the context of cultural values and economic indicators. Therefore, there is a need for an intensive study with a focus on food consumption, cultural values and economic indicators such as food expenditure level.

Against the background briefly presented above, the aim of this study is to relate the Hofstede's (1980a) with Menzel and D'Aluisio's (2005) to understand the implications of culture on food consumption and food spending. The study has been carried out depending on the secondary data gathered from the above mentioned two studies. To reach its aim, both the studies of Hofstede (1980a) and Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005) have been summarized first and then the possible relations amongst cultural values, food expenditure and food consumption parameters have been examined.

HOFSTEDE'S MODEL OF CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Hofstede (1980a) conducted a study to measure the differences among individuals from 40 different countries. The main aim of his study was to determine the major criteria which differentiate one culture from another. The primary data used in the study of Hofstede were gathered from the branches of a multinational company operating in those countries. Data collection instrument used in his study consists of 60 questions to determine and measure the importance of individual goals and individual satisfaction levels of those goals. In addition, his research aimed to determine employees' organizational loyalty to the institutions where they were working. The survey was carried twice with 116.000 employees. The former survey was carried out between the years of 1967 and 1969, the latter was between the years of 1971 and 1973. The survey was carried out in different time spans to determine variations during different periods. He administered the questionnaires with the assistance of the managers participated in international management courses. Hofstede (1980a) classifies human behaviors into four: (a) power distance, (b) the uncertainty avoidance, (c) individualism/collectivism and (d) femininity/masculinity. According to his study, the mean scores of each dimension differ from one country to another.

This model groups 40 countries based on cultural values to facilitate cultural variations. Even though its validity and generalization are arguable, the application of Hofstede's model is extensively used in peer reviewed publications (Png, Tan and Wee, 2001). According to Chandy and Williams (1994), the study of Hofstede is one of the most influential studies in international management literature. Subsequently, Hofstede and Bond (1988) conducted another study on the Chinese employees and managers, hence added a new dimension to the cultural values model. They defined this new dimension as "long term orientation" and explained it as being the thinking capability of the society, be it either long-term or short-term.

Hofstede's (1980a) study of cultural dimensions is amongst the first studies carried out to measure human perceptions and behaviors on cultural values. This study has practical implications on studying cultural values from different aspects (Leonard, Van Scotter and Pakdil, 2009). The five dimensions, as named in the study of Hofstede (1980a), are briefly described below.

Individualism/Collectivism

Individualism and collectivism are deemed important in determining individual and group behaviors (Earley and Gibson, 1998). This dimension deals with the individualistic or collectivistic human behaviors. While in some societies individualistic behaviors can be dominant, in others collectivistic behaviors can dominate. While in the former case the individual is in the forefront, in the latter one the focus is on the group. For instance, in collectivist societies, groups

can be regarded as a family (Hofstede, 2015). Moreover, those accepted individualistic behaviors give importance to the individual's success, on the other hand those accepted collectivistic behaviors give importance to the group's success (Leonard et al., 2009; Ford, Connelly and Meister, 2003). Individualistic concerned with "me" while collectivistic cultures focus on "we". In this respect, it can be asserted that ties amongst people are relatively weak in the societies where individualistic cultural characteristics are dominant; on the other hand, strong ties can exist among people in collectivistic societies (Ford et al., 2003). It is generally known that people who live in societies individualistic with dominant individualistic behavior tend to work alone. Hofstede's study reveals that Western societies attach high cultural values to individualistic characteristics while Eastern societies attach high cultural values to collectivistic characteristics (Hofstede, 1980a; 1980b; 2015).

Power Distance

Power distance dimension of national cultures relates to the level of acceptance of individuals' inequality within the society and power of the authority (Hofstede, 2015); inequality and power are perceived from the followers, or the individuals belonging to a lower level. Some individuals or groups within a society may have more power than others or try to dominate others and interfere in decisions. In this respect, power distance can be seen as a cultural dimension related to the level of individuals power acceptance (Ford et al., 2003). In other words, power distance is a cultural dimension in which hierarchical distance and inequality among people are seen as normal. In societies where small power distance exists, managers can increase the employee loyalty by imposing less power on them; and, hence, they can exhibit more participative management. In these types of businesses, employees do not question the decisions given by managers. Hofstede (2015) argues that in societies where large power distance exists, inequality is dominant, and additionally individuals avoid asking questions and they can be more sensitive to hierarchy. In addition, in large power distance cultures, employees are loyal to their managers when giving a decision (Lim, 2005).

The Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (1991) define the uncertainty avoidance as the level of individuals' fears against an uncertain occasion. This dimension refers to individuals' discomfort under unspecific occasions (Ford et al., 2003). In this dimension, it is believed that fear is the power which motivates the individual. In cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance, failures, risks or disagreements are not tolerated; however, in cultures with weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, these factors can be acceptable (Mueller and Thomas, 2001). In strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, obeying rules can be widespread among indivi-

duals, though in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, creativity, adaptation to changes and innovative thinking can be dominant. In strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, individuals are expected to look for open and clear rules; on the other hand, in weak uncertainty cultures, individuals are expected to look for flexibility (Hofstede, 2015).

Femininity/Masculinity

This dimension refers to classification of cultural dimensions based on gender roles. In masculine cultures, men are supposed to be decisive, tough and focused on material success while women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. In feminine cultures, however, both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life.

Femininity/masculinity dimension is related to how interpersonal relations should be (Çarıkçı and Koyuncu, 2010). Men are supposed to be assertive while women are supposed to be nurturing. The widespread comment made to the dimension of femininity/masculinity is related to the confusion of the quality of life and physical success with competition (Ford et al., 2003). In masculinity dominant cultures, individuals tend to impose their powers on others (Hofstede, 2015). However, in feminine cultures, it is argued that the power owner is less willing to use power and have authority. In the societies where masculine characteristics are dominant, work stress tends to be high. However, in the societies with high feminine characteristics, work stress tends to be low. Although this dimension is related with the gender, women may have masculine values and men may have feminine roles.

Long Term Orientation

Hofstede and Bond (1988) relate the dimension of long term orientation particularly to the Asian culture. While long term oriented cultures emphasize future oriented behaviors, frugality and tolerance, short term oriented cultures focus on past and current behaviors (Ford et al., 2003). Performing religious rituals and social obligations can be shown as examples of short term orientation. Long term orientation can manifest itself as a utilitarian approach such as in seeking status.

MENZEL AND D'ALUISIO'S STUDY

There are only a few studies that examine whether the amount and the quality of household food consumption changed in accordance with geographic regions or not. In 2005, Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio carried out a study called "Hungry Planet" to examine weekly food consumption of 30 families in 25 countries, including Turkey.

Families show differences in terms of what they purchase, how much they purchase, how much they store, how much they consume and how much food

they waste (Williams et al., 2014). Aforementioned differences have also been touched on the study of Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005). According to the study of Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005), the food expenses in terms of weekly food consumption vary from US\$1,23 in Chad to US\$500,07 in Germany. The food expenses of the families in the study of Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005) are given in Table 2 which shows that type and quantity of food consumed vary in accordance with countries which are either developed or developing.

RESEARCH RATIONALE

Two studies on which this study is based have been briefly introduced above while one is theoretical and empirical on its own nature, the other is just empirical. Food consumption and the level of food expenditure are, to some extent, related to cultural values (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002) as well as countries' level of economic development (Vasileska and Rechkoska, 2012).

In this respect, with the help of the secondary data gathered from the review of Hofstede's (1980a) and Menzel and D'Aluisio's (2005) studies, the study aims to reveal the mutual relations as follows.

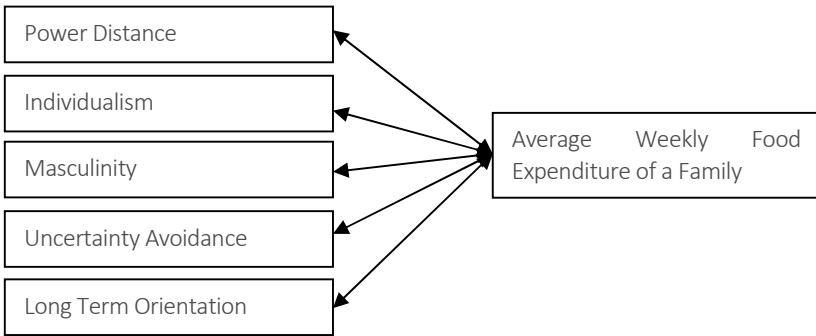


Figure 1. Proposed Mutual Relations Among Variables

Following propositions have been examined and tested within the frame of this study;

Proposition (P₁): There is a significant relationship between food expenditure and the dimension of power distance.

Proposition (P₂): There is a significant relationship between food expenditure and the dimension of collectivism/individualism.

Proposition (P₃): There is a significant relationship between food expenditure and the dimension of femininity/masculinity.

Proposition (P₄): There is a significant relationship between food expenditure and the dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

Proposition (P₅): There is a significant relationship between food expenditure and the dimension of long term orientation.

METHOD

This study has been based on the review of Hofstede's (1980a) and Menzel and D'Aluisio's (2005) studies. Countries exist in both studies have been included in the context of this study to investigate further. In this respect, this study compares 25 countries in the studies of both Hofstede (1980a) and Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005). A quantitative approach has been adapted based on the secondary data gathered from the above mentioned studies. In this respect, the points related to cultural values as mentioned in the study of Hofstede (1980a), and weekly household food consumption as mentioned in the study of Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005) are compared and holistically investigated.

With the purpose of statistical comparison among 25 countries available both in the studies of Hofstede (1980a) and Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005), mean scores were given in Table 1 and average food expenditure values with cultural dimension indices were presented in Table 2. However, some countries in Hofstede's study are not given cultural value points; therefore, these countries are recorded as missing values. Data are analyzed by means of a statistical package program. Frequencies and percentages are used to summarize the data and make the comparisons. In order to measure the relationship between cultural values and food expenditure correlation coefficients are used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings are presented below in a description and an explanation in the context of cultural values, food expenditure and consumption.

Description with Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows mean scores both for cultural values and weekly food expenditure. As can be noticed from Table 1, the average weekly food expenditure for 25 countries in the study of Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005) is US\$204,36. On the other hand, the average point of power distance for 21 countries in the study of Hofstede (1980a) is 60,76. While the average point for individualism is 55,38, the average point of masculinity is 57,42. Additionally, the average point of uncertainty avoidance is 64 while the average point of long term orientation is 44,41.

Table 1. Mean Scores of Countries in terms of Cultural Values

	Mean Scores	Number of Countries
Food Expenditure of a Family per Week	204,36	25
Power Distance	60,76	21
Individualism	55,38	21
Masculinity	57,42	21
Long Term Orientation	64,00	21
Uncertainty Avoidance	44,41	21

In terms of weekly average food expenditure of a family, Germany is the country with the highest food expenditure levels with the average food expenditure rate of US\$500,07. The least food spending country is Chad with the average food expenditure rate of US\$1,23. As noticed from Table 2, the average weekly food expenditure of a family in most of European and North American countries is higher than African and Asian countries.

Table 2 also indicates that Guatemala (95%) is the country with the highest power distance, and Germany (35%) is the country with the lowest power distance. Meanwhile Table 2 shows that the most individualistic culture is in the USA (United States of America-California) (91%) and Guatemala (6%) is more collectivist. In addition, Table 2 indicates that Japan (95%) is the most masculine country while Bhutan (35%) is the least masculine country. In terms of uncertainty avoidance indices, the uncertainty avoidance index is the highest in Guatemala (99%) while it is the lowest in Bhutan (28%). Finally, in terms of the dimension of long term orientation, Japan (88%) is the country with the highest rate of long term orientation whereas Egypt (7%) is the country with the lowest rate.

Table 2. Food Expenditure of a Family for a Week and Scores of Cultural Values According to Countries

COUNTRY	Food Expenditure for a Week (US\$)	Power Distance (%)	Individualism (%)	Masculinity (%)	Uncertainty Avoidance (%)	Long Term Orientation (%)
Germany	500,07	35	67	66	65	40
Luxembourg	465,84	40	60	50	70	64
France	419,95	68	71	43	86	63
Australia	376,45	36	90	61	51	21
Canada	345,00	39	80	52	48	36
USA (North Caroline)	341,98	40	91	62	46	26
Japan	317,25	54	46	95	92	88
Greenland	277,12	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	260,11	50	76	70	75	61
Great Britain	253,15	35	89	66	35	51
USA (Texas)	242,48	40	91	62	46	26
Kuwait	221,45	90	25	40	80	-
Mexico	189,09	81	30	69	82	24
USA (California)	159,18	40	91	62	46	26
China	155,06	80	20	66	30	87
Poland	151,27	68	60	64	93	38
Turkey	145,88	66	37	45	85	46
Guatemala	75,70	95	6	37	99	-
Egypt	68,53	70	25	45	80	7
Mongolia	40,02	-	-	-	-	-
India	39,27	77	48	56	40	51
Ecuador	31,55	78	8	63	67	-
Mali	26,39	-	-	-	-	-
Bhutan	5,03	94	52	32	28	-
Chad	1,23	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Derived from D'Aluisio (2007) and [<http://geert-hofstede.com>].

An Explanation with the Test of Relations

In order to test the aforementioned propositions, a correlation analysis has been carried out. The results of the *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients*, and their levels of significance are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings of Correlation Analyses Between Variables

	Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients	Level of Significance (<i>p</i>)
Power Distance	-,706*	,000
Individualism	,560*	,008
Masculinity	,276	,225
Uncertainty Avoidance	,076	,742
Long Term Orientation	,179	,492

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. (2-tailed).

As noticed from Table 3, there is a significant negative correlation between the dimension of power distance and average weekly food expenditure of families from different countries ($r=-0,706$, $p<,01$). It means that when power distance index increases the average weekly food expenditure of a family decreases. Ilgar's study (2010) supports this relation, as he asserts, the increased wealth of countries may result in a decreased power distance in general. In short, these results support P_1 . In addition, depending on the determination coefficient ($r^2=0,50$), it can be stated that 50% of total variation in average weekly food expenditure of families is caused by the dimension of power distance. Similarly, De Mooij and Hofstede (2002) found out that the percentage of food expenditure was negatively correlated (-0,70) with the dimension of power distance. The study indicates that in countries with large power distance, people spend their free time with family and relatives, whereas people in small power distance countries spend more time in organized leisure activities (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002).

On the other hand, there is a significant linear correlation between the dimension of individualistic/collectivistic cultural value and average weekly food expenditure of families from different countries ($r=-0,560$, $p<,01$). It means that when the individualistic index increases, the average weekly food expenditure of a family increases. This supports P_2 . Depending on the determination coefficient ($r^2=0,31$), it can be asserted that 31% of total variation in average weekly food expenditure of families is caused by the dimension of individualistic/collectivistic. However, contrary to the current study, De Mooij and Hofstede (2002) found out that there is negative correlation (-0,76) between consumption expenditures and individualism; and they specified this situation due to the social function of food in collectivist cultures.

There is not any significant relationship between the dimensions of femininity/masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long term orientation, and average weekly food expenditure of a family. In other words, the results do not support P_3 , P_4 and P_5 .

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study is an attempt to understand the influence of culture on food consumption and food expenditure. It has been carried out depending on the secondary data gathered from the studies of Hofstede (1980a), and Menzel and D'Aluisio (2005). Both studies have been elaborated and their statistical data have been examined comparatively.

In the light of the analysis, it can be inferred that not only cultural values affect food choice and food consumption of societies, but also climate and economic conditions have significant influences on food choice and consumption. There are complex relations among cultural values, climatic conditions, the level of economic development and food consumption. Therefore, it is difficult to relate food choice and consumption parameters only to cultural values; because climatic conditions are also important for food cultivation and while economic conditions are important for the development of various industrial food products.

An attempt to evaluate food expenditure depending on the dimensions of cultural values has revealed that countries which are small in power distance have more individualistic cultural values. On the contrary, countries with large power distance spend less on food consumption. The most probable reason for this can be related to their weak economies; and, hence, to reduced individual purchasing power, like in Bhutan and Guatemala. People living in the countries with weak economies may prefer eating at home rather than eating out. Countries with large power distance and abundant agricultural products may tend to consume mainly agricultural products. In this respect, the importance of climate in food choice and consumption is crucial.

Evaluating food consumption parameters depending on the Hofstede's dimensions of cultural values was an attempt to understand the effects of cultural elements on food choice and consumption. However, since Hofstede's study of cultural values is based on the managerial point of view, it lacks in explaining the effects of cultural values on food choice and consumption. Further empirical studies are needed to understand the relations with culture, food expenditure, choice and consumption.

In conclusion, it can be said that there seems to be a negative correlation between the Hofstede's Cultural Dimension and nations level of economic development independence. Hence, this probably leads variation in food spending

among different countries depending on their level of economic development. However, this requires further researches and discussions which are beyond the scope of this study. □

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