

**KENAN AYDIN**

## **Life Style and Consumption Patterns of the People Living in Hereke, Turkey**

### **Introduction**

Life style concerns human groups who have distinctive and special characteristics. Human groups influence individual and the individual influences the human groups. Life style is important for marketers, since life style influences buying behaviors. So, marketers have to know life style of the individuals or groups. For this reason, it is needed to conduct researches on this issue. In this area, the most popular method has been used by SRI International's Value and Lifestyles (VALS) program. In this study the income level, life style differences, individual life cycle, values etc. are used as the parameters. The amount of the allocation of household income to each expenditure item differs from one country to other, because every country has different per-capita income, life style and values. Life style is important on marketing. William Lazer is the first author who used the concept of life style in marketing literature. As a result, marketers widely use life style concept for learning consumer's behavior. So, life style is a useful tool for marketers.

### **1. Background of the Subject**

#### **1.1. Concept and Definition of Life Style**

It is not clear when the term *life style* was first mentioned in the literature, but the first definitions of the term go back to the 1920's. When the sociologist Max Weber and – shortly after him – the psychologist Alfred Adler introduced the term, they also gave birth to its ambiguity. Later on the concept was introduced to marketing by William Lazer and hereafter modified several times. Today the concept is still not well-defined (Uth, 1996, 3).

In his early studies of farm labor in eastern Germany and the stock exchange, Weber used the term “Stand” (status group) in an offhand manner to refer to such groups as

Junkers, industrialists, and German civil servants. In imperial Germany a stand designated the social rank of an individual and of his group. In common parlance the term occurred frequently when people spoke of a marriage as being in accord with, or beneath, the station of the bride or groom. This rank-consciousness was part of a complex phenomenon. Weber emphasized that the collective actions of Junkers as well as of farm workers could not be understood in economic terms alone. It also was necessary to analyze the ideas derived from the subculture of each group-in Weber's terms, it's "style of life" – which entered into the evaluation of its economic interests. Though one would commonly apply the term stand only to higher social ranks, Weber used it for all social groups, stressing that the distinctions of prestige had a positive as well as invidious aspect (B e n d i x, 1977, 85).

According to Adler, "life style", essentially is something that individual had created and it's a product of human's creative power. This creative power, does not belong to only selected a few type of people, it belongs to all the human beings according to Adler. All the psychological process is affected by the individual's life style. Not only it forms the movements, and emotions, but is also affected by its own cognitive process. Even emotions and movements have less impression near the cognitive process. Individual's observation character, opinions, thoughts about himself, thoughts about world, all of these enters to extent of cognitive process (Adler, 1996, 16).

According to Adler, the life style is not the same as behavior. The life style guides behavior which consists of thoughts, emotions and actions. Still, observing behavior seems to be the only way of drawing a picture of the life style of the individual, since the life style is hard to detect in any other way. Recall that the life style consists of the guiding principle which directs all the actions of the individual in pursuit of the life goal of the individual. The individual is mostly unaware of this guiding principle and the goal pursued, which makes the principle and the goal hard to detect and describe. So, since the life style cannot be studied directly, it can only be detected by inference. In this process, it is crucial to remember that according to Adler, behavior consists not only of overt behavior, such as actions, but also of feelings and thoughts by which he means the individual attaches subjective meaning to his actions (U t h, 1996, 6).

The life style is a concept that has various meanings and usages. In British sociology, life style is used in the nature of Britain's class origin's bourgeois structure process discussion. In this special connection, workers are increasingly adopted on middle class customs and attitudes. In this way, social behavior models and social class differences will be less important. However, this term can have a more widespread usage. For example, it may symbolize different life styles such as city life and rural life. In this way, if we look after George S i m m e l and Louis W i r t h, city life can start to be a life style. Alternative to the life style term, in the society between different groups can be seen contradictory life styles young, unemployed or pervert people can be forwarded to this kind of life style. According to its widest usage, life style conceptualizes the alternative ways of living, such as consumption values and styles that decomposes the capitalist societies (*Sociology Dictionary*, 1999).

Lifestyle is defined simply as how one lives. One's lifestyle is a function of inherent individual characteristics that have been shaped and formed through social interaction as one moves through the life cycle. Thus, life style is influenced by the factors like culture, values, demographics, subculture, social class, reference groups, family, and individual characteristics such as motives, emotions, and personality. Individuals and household both have life styles. While household life styles are in part determined by the individual life styles of the household members, the reverse is also true. Our desired life style influences our needs and attitudes and thus our purchase and using behavior (Mottersbaugh, 1997, 109).

Life style of consumer is very important for us as cultural life style. We define life style of the consumer as his labor, time and money spending, ideas, interest and activity style (Karabulut, 1998, 34–35).

### 1.2. Income and Spending Style

Various studies have been held on the issue of individual and household income spending. Consumption functions is related to this subject on macro level. The most popular study on this issue has been done in 1857 by Ernst Engel, a German Statistician, who studied on household income and out his findings are known as "Engel Law". According to the Engel Law, as the household income increases:

- Expenditure of food items decreased by percentage,
- Expenditure of clothing and other obligatory spendings doesn't change by percentage,
- Non-obligatory spendings (luxurious spendings) increase by percentage.

These statements which determines the relationships between the household income and consumption expenditures shows that comparative changes occur on each spending category while the overall amount of expenditures increases. Engel Laws are still useful to express the behavior of the families which pass from one income group to another, as they depend on the researches about the worker-families that spend their whole income. But, it is needed to be careful when predicting the spending model in the whole economy by using the changes in GNP (Gross National Product). Because, in this case, the research depends on the comparison of household incomes, not the changes on GNP. So, naturally, this is very useful in marketing area (Mucuk, 1994, 78–79).

Families or family members don't spend their income completely. Disposable income is later on taxes income. Families: donation, gift, retired bonus, cash dispositions etc. with the assets, they make their expenditure from this disposable income some of the families save one part of this income. So when marketing experts is guessing their potential sale they must distinguish their income, disposable income, and amount if expenditure in act most of the families expand most of their incomes in food, rent pay, house payment, car insurance etc. obligatory items. Some of the families' consumption expenditure reaches nearly 75% of their incomes (Tek, 1997, 193–194).

### 1.3. The Diversity of the Life Styles

The people who are in the same income class, can have different life styles. Very rich person, can have a life with his Ferrari, Rolex watch, Valentino clothes and can travel like the high society. But in spite of this person who owns the same riches, can work hard, save money, can make his expenditure very carefully and also can have a conservative life (Kotler, 2000, 109).

We are all a product of the society in which we live. We learn very early concepts such as honesty and the value of money, and these values stay with us throughout our lives. Cultural influences, plus individual economic circumstances, produce consumer lifestyles-traits, activities, interests, and opinions reflected in shopping behavior. Individuals can be grouped into distinct market segments based on the similarities of their lifestyles (Mason, Mayer and Ezell, 1991, 176–177).

Marketing researchers use lifestyle analysis (psychographics) to develop consumer profiles based on consumers' ways of living. Lifestyle profiles are composite pictures of consumers' activities, interests and opinions (AIO) (Lewison, 1991, 111–112).

The people who are in the same social class, low culture and in the same business even can have different life styles. Life style can contains more than a person's social class and his personality. If we know someone's social class, we can make guesses about his behaviors, but this situation doesn't give us to know him completely. Living style shows the relations with his environment as a whole. It reflects the person's individuality. Living style is being measured by the psychographic techniques (Tek, 204).

### 1.4. Household

Family is a unit that is occurred by two or more people's marriage, blood tie or adopting a child. But we can't classify the people as a family that are living in the same house and share the same life, always. These kinds of groups are called as household. For example when you share a house with your school friends, you create a household. The people who are living in the resting home, student pension, care house can also be named as household. At this point, it motivates the household to make decisions, consume the specific things, and make a budget for the house. For example sharing the rent, electricity, food or purification items. (Odabasi and Baris, 256–257)

### 1.5. Values and Lifestyles System-VALS

By far the most popular application of lifestyle and psycholagraphic research by marketing managers is SRI International's Value and Lifestyles (VALS) program. Introduced in 1978, VALS provided a systematic classification of American adults into nine distinct value and lifestyle patterns. Despite widespread use, many managers found it difficult to work with. For example, VALS classified about two-thirds of the population into two groups, which made the other seven groups too small to be interesting to many firms. In addition,

the maturing of the American market during the 1980s and VALS' heavy reliance on demographics reduced its utility somewhat.

For these reasons, SRI introduced a new system called VALS 2 in 1989. VALS 2 has more of psychological base than the original, which was more activity and interest based. The psychological base attempts to tap relatively enduring attitudes and values. It is measured by 42 statements with which respondents state a degree of agreement or disagreement (Mothersbaugh, 113).

VALS 2 (Values and Life Style) grouping which has been used to determine 8 Groups, 5 Demographic Structures and 42 Attitudinal Behavior as seen in the following exhibit (Erdal, Murat, 2001, 40) Based on these two concepts, SRI has identified eight general psychographic segments as shown in Exhibit 2 (Mothersbaugh, 114–115).

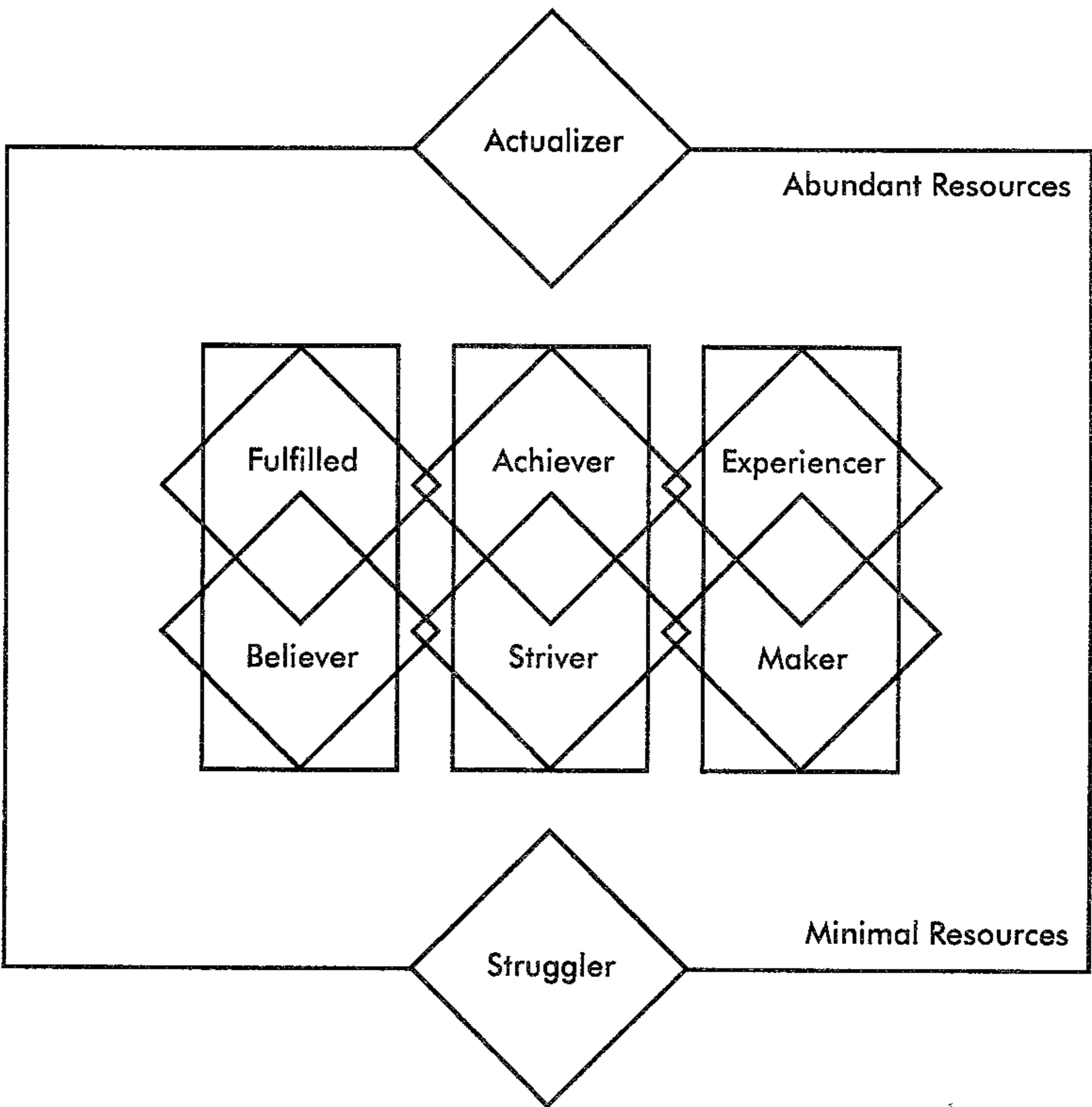


Exhibit 1. VALS 2 Grouping

It is useful to discuss about the basic specifications of those 8 Groups which were showed in VALS 2 Life Style System (Mothersbaugh, 115).

**Actualizers** are successful, sophisticated, active, “take-charge” people with high self-esteem and abundant resources. They are interested in growth and seek to develop, explore, and express themselves in a variety of ways. Image is important to actualizers, not as evidence of status or power, but as an expression of their taste, independence, and character.

**Fulfilleds** are mature, satisfied, comfortable, reflective people who value order knowledge, and responsibility. Most are well educated, and in professional occupations. They are well-informed about world and national events and are alert to opportunities to broaden their knowledge.

**Believers** are conservative, conventional people with concrete beliefs based on traditional, established codes: Family, church, mosque, community, and the nation.

**Achievers** are successful career- and work- oriented people who like to, and generally do, feel in control of their lives.

**Strivers** seek motivation, self definition, and approval from the world around them. They are striving to find a secure place in life. Unsure of themselves and low on economic, social, and psychological resources, Strivers are concerned about the opinions and approval of others.

**Experiencers** as young, vital, enthusiastic, impulsive, and rebellious. They seek variety and excitement, Savoring the new, the offbeat, and the risky.

**Makers** are practical people who have constructive skills and value self-sufficiency. They live within a traditional context of family, practical work, and physical recreation and have little interest in what lies outside that context.

**Strugglers'** lives are constricted. Chronically poor, ill-educated, low-skilled, without strong social bonds, elderly and concerned about their health, they are often resigned and passive.

### 1.6. Measuring the Life Style

It has been examined whether there is a relationship between personality and life style, by the researches about the brand preferences of the customers. No significant relationship between life style, personality and brand preferences has been found in the researches about this subject. One of these researches shows the difference in dashing characters between the owners of Ford car and Chevrolet. Although Ford is a more attack car than the Chevrolet car, in the research it didn't show us that the person who took more points on dashing character didn't buy Ford car. It had made a contrast (Islamoglu, 2002, 131–132).

There may be lots of factors affecting the research that doesn't give us the expected result. These factors can be summarized as inadequate techniques that have been used to measure the personality and life style; not appropriate use of the present techniques and the lack of a concrete basis to be used for interpersonal distinctions (Islamoglu, 132).

Traditional use of motives and demographic analysis doesn't cover the needs of the marketing strategists in consumer researches. For this reason, the "psychography" has been developed as a research and measuring type in 1960. In this method, demographic analysis tries to answer the question of "who buys", as well as the psychographic analysis tries to answer the question of "why does he/she buy". From this view, the psychographic analysis measures and defines lifestyle. Most of the analysis depends on AII method (activity, interests, and ideas). For this kind of analysis, initially it is needed to determine which kind of lifestyle is creating an enough market section. Users and consumers of the product

and brand are examined by grouping the users as high, medium, and low users (O d a b a s i and B a r i s, 221).

Psychographic is used to determine the effects of psychological, sociologic, and anthropologic factors, to express the tendency of the groups in the market (E r d a l, 39).

The life style can be measured by using the factors mentioned below (T e k, 204).

Table 1. Several Components of AIOD Questionnaires

Activities	Interests	Opinions	Demographic
Work	Family	Themselves	Age
Hobbies	Home	Social issues	Education
Social events	Job	Politics	Occupation
Vacation	Community	Business	Income
Entertainment	Reaction	Economics	Size of the Family
Club membership	Fashion	Education	Residence
Community	Food	Products	Geographic Location
Shopping	Media	Future	Size of the City
Sports	Achievement	Culture	Life Cycle Stage

While it is a useful addition to demographic data, marketers found the original AIO inventories too narrow. Now psychographics or lifestyle studies typically include the following (M o t h e r s b a u g h, 112):

- Attitudes: evaluative statements about other people, places, ideas, products, and so forth.
- Values: widely held beliefs about that is acceptable and/or desirable.
- Activities and Interests: nonoccupational behaviors to which consumers devote time and effort, such as hobbies, sports, public service, and church.
- Demographics: age, education, income, occupation, family structure, ethnic background, gender, and geographic location.
- Media patterns: which specific media the consumers utilize.
- Usage rates: measurements of consumption within a specified product category. Often consumers are categorized as heavy, medium, light or nonusers.

In Turkey, an important study was done by the DAP company. According to 2000 data of, there are six groups at two main categories about life styles (O d a b a s i and B a r i s, 220).

2. Methodology

2.1. Sampling

Hereke is a municipality which is located near Kocaeli Province in Turkey. The population is around ten thousand. Four faculties and two colleges of Kocaeli University

are located in Hereke. In this study, it has been aimed to examine the life styles of local community. This research will help to solve the local consumption problems, such as lack of food services, transportation and utilities.

2.2. Sampling Method and Sample Size

Main population of the research was the whole households living in Hereke Municipality. The sample was constituted by randomly selected households from a list of 1454 records, which was taken from the local authority. The list included the address information and household size data. 151 households were randomly selected but the data of 136 households could be analyzed. Interviews were held face to face by using a survey questionnaire.

2.3. Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Data was coded and entered into the computer. SPSS has been used for data analysis. First, descriptive statistics were prepared to determine the education level, income level and marital status of the family-head. Average household size and average number of the working members in households are computed. The possible relationships between spending patterns and basic demographics were examined by ChiSquare tests.

2.3.1. Data Analysis

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

		F	%			F	%
Family Head's Education Level	Graduated From Primary or Elementary School	74	54.5	Is There a Budget Prepared Every Month?	Yes	39	28.7
	Graduated From High School	51	37.5		No	77	56.6
	Graduated From University	11	8.1		Sometimes	17	12.5
					Total	133	97.8
					No Answer	3	2.2
Family Head's Marital Status	Single	6	4.4	Working Person in the Family	Mean	1.3 person	
	Married	124	91.2				
	Divorced/Widow	5	3.7				
	Total	135	99.3	Household Size	Mean	3.3 person	
	No Answer	1	0.7				

		F	%			F	%
	< 350 Million TL*	27	19.9	Workers at the Family's Total Monthly Income	< 500 Million TL	41	30.1
Family Head's Income Level	350–700 Million TL	71	52.2		500 Million –1 Billion TL	68	50.0
	700 Million –1.050 Billion TL	29	21.3		1–1.5 Billion TL	16	11.8
	1.050 Billion > TL	8	5.9		1.5 Billion TL>	10	7.4
	Total	135	99.3		Total	135	99.3
	Missing System	1	0.7		Missing System	1	0.7
TOTAL		136	100	TOTAL		136	100

\* 1 \$= 1.650.000 TL

Table 3. How Households Allocate Their Income in Hereke According to Their Monthly Income

ITEM	AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME				Percentage in Total Expenditure
	500 Million TL or Less	500 Million –1 Billion TL	1–1.5 Billion TL	1.5 Billion TL or More	
Food	33.6%	33.9%	36.3%	33.1%	34.0%
Clothing	6.4%	7.7%	9.0%	8.0%	7.6%
Utilities	12.5%	12.0%	12.0%	12.5%	12.1%
Health	5.0%	3.8%	4.2%	3.6%	4.1%
Education	9.8%	8.4%	9.2%	8.1%	8.8%
Transportation	5.0%	8.1%	7.8%	9.8%	7.5%
Communication	6.3%	8.6%	8.4%	10.2%	8.2%
Social Activities	1.0%	1.4%	1.9%	1.4%	1.4%
Housing (Rent)	20.5%	16.1%	11.2%	13.4%	16.4%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As seen in Table 3, the income of the Hereke household' the biggest portion is allocated for food which is 34%. Housing rent is at second order with 26% and social activities are the least with 1.4%.

Table 4. Preferences for Transportation Vehicles

OR- DER	COE- FFI- CIENT	FREQUENCIES					VALUES				
		Mini- bus	Bus	Taxi	Auto- mobile	Train	Mini- bus	Bus	Taxi	Auto- mobile	Train
1	1	35	42	5	44	6	35	42	5	44	6
2	2	46	49	11	8	18	92	98	22	16	36
3	3	35	30	18	5	44	105	90	54	15	132
4	4	11	10	55	27	29	44	40	220	108	116
5	5	5	0	43	49	35	25	0	215	245	175
		TOTAL					301	270	516	428	465
		PREFERENCE ORDER					2	1	5	3	4

As seen in Table 4., Hereke population used Bus as the most preferred transportation vehicle. Taxi is the least preferred transportation vehicle.

Table 5. The Relationship between the Age of the Family-Head and Most Preferred Transportation Vehicle

		Most Preferred Transportation Vehicle					TOTAL
		Minibus	Bus	Taxi	Auto- mobile	Train	
Age Of the Family -Head	<25	25.00%			75.00%		100.00%
	25–35	25.00%	45.00%		30.00%		100.00%
	35–55	24.10%	27.60%	5.70%	39.10%	3.40%	100.00%
	55>	38.10%	42.90%		4.80%	14.30%	100.00%
TOTAL		26.50%	31.80%	3.80%	33.30%	4.50%	100.00%

As seen in Table 5: If family head has 55 age or upper who preferences bus firstly, and age is less than 25 who dosen't use bus and he or she preferences automobile firstly.

2.3.2. Testing the hypothesis

2.3.2.1. Testing  $H_1$  Hypothesis

Ho1 = There is no significant relationship between the education level of family-head and going out for dinner.

Ha1 = There is a significant relationship between the education level of family-head and going out for dinner.

Table 6. The Relationship between the Education Level of the Family-Head and Going out for Dinner (Observed Frequencies)

		Going out for Dinner		TOTAL
		At Least Once a Week	Less Than Once a Week	
Education Level of The Family-Head	Primary/Secondary School	8	33	41
	High School	16	29	45
	University or Higher	3	6	9
TOTAL		27	68	95

Test Statistic : ChiSquare Test  
(df) : (3-1) \* (2-1) = 2  
Confidence Level : 95%  
Value in Chi2 Table : 5.99  
Computed Value : 2.83\*

2.83 < 5.99; not significant.

There is no significant relationship between the family-head’s education level and the frequency of going out for dinner.

2.3.2.2. Testing H<sub>2</sub> Hypothesis

Ho2 = There is no significant relationship between the education level of family-head and the frequency of social activities.

Ha2 = There is a significant relationship between the education level of family-head and the frequency of social activities.

Table7. The Relationship between the Education Level of the Family-Head and the Frequency of Social Activities (Observed Frequencies)

		Frequency of Social Activities		TOTAL
		More Than Once a Month	Less Than Once a Month	
Family -Head’s Education Level	Primary School	6	41	47
	Secondary School	6	21	27
	High School	24	27	51
	University or Higher	7	4	11
TOTAL		43	93	136

Test Statistic : ChiSquare Test  
 (df) :  $(4-1) * (2-1) = 3$   
 Confidence Level : 95%  
 Value in Chi2 Table : 7.81  
 Computed Value : 19.668\*

19.66 > 7.81 significant

There is a significant relationship between the family-head's education level and the frequency of social activities.

### Conclusion

The life-style is an important variable for the marketers. Consumption patterns are widely influenced by the life style, as well as the social, psychological and cultural factors. This study has found that there is a similarity about the income allocation through different consumption items among Hereke population and some developing countries as expected. But, it has been found that the income allocation for educational services is higher than in some developed countries.

It has been found that Hereke people mostly use buses and minibuses for transportation. This is closely related to the income level of the population. So, it can be suggested to local administrators to invest and improve this area by considering these findings.

There has been found no significant relationship between the family-head's (mostly the money and the decision maker) education level and the frequency of going out for dinner.

There is a significant relationship between the family-head's education level and the frequency of participating social activities, as expected.

### References

- Alder A., *Psychological Activity: Superiority and Social Care*, transl. by Belkis Corapci, Say Distribution Ltd. Co., Istanbul 1996.
- Bendix R., *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1977.
- Erdal M., *Life Style Analysis and Psychographic*, Marketing World, Year 15, Issue, 2001-5, September-October 2001.
- Hawkins D., Roger B., and Kenneth Conney, *Consumer Behavior* in: *Consumer Behavior Customized Text*, Ed. Mothersbaugh, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 1997.
- Islamoglu A.H., *Marketing Principles*, Beta Printing Publication Distribution Co., Istanbul 2002.
- Karabulut M., *Professional Salering and Sales Management*, Universal Scientific Publishing, Second Edition, Istanbul 1998.
- Kotler P., *Kotler and Marketing: Creating Market, Gaining Market and Dominating to Market*, transl. by Ayse Ozyagcilar, System Publishing, Istanbul 2000.
- Lewison M.D., *Retailing*, Fourth Edition, Macmillan Publishing Company, USA, 1991.

Marshall G., *Sociology Dictionary*, transl. by Osman Akinhay and Derya Komurcu, Science and Art Publishes, 1999.

Mason J.B., Mayer L.M., Ezell F.H., *Retailing*, Fourth Edition, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., USA, 1991.

Mucuk I., *Marketing Principles*, Sixth Edition, Der Publishing, Istanbul 1994.

Odabasi Y. and Gulfidan B., *Consumer Behavior*, MediaCat Books, Capital Media Services Co., Istanbul 2002.

Tek O.B., *Marketing Principles: Global Managerial Approach and Turkey Practices*, Developed Seventh Edition, Izmir 1997.

Uth T., *Definition of Life Style and its Application to Travel Behavior*, Department of Marketing at the Aarhus School of Business, Paper Prepared for Trafikdage pa AUC, Denmark, 1996. Adress: [http://www.i4.auc.dk/trg/td/papers/papers96/tr\\_og\\_ad/uth/uth.pdf](http://www.i4.auc.dk/trg/td/papers/papers96/tr_og_ad/uth/uth.pdf) 2003-03-09.