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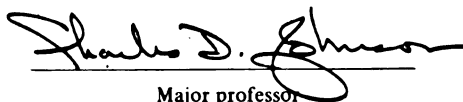
FACTORS RELATED TO NONPARTICIPATION BY
CERTIFIED FOOD STAMP CLIENTS: AN
EXPLORATORY STUDY

presented by

Isidore Flores III

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in Psychology


Major professor

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FACTORS RELATED TO NONPARTICIPATION BY CERTIFIED
FOOD STAMP CLIENTS: AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY

By

Isidore Flores III

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS RELATED TO NONPARTICIPATION BY CERTIFIED FOOD STAMP
CLIENTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

By

Isidore Flores III

Twenty percent of those who apply for food stamps in Michigan and are found eligible to receive them choose not to acquire them. Two hundred newly certified and recertified clients from Bay County, Michigan were surveyed using a structured interview format on demographic and attitudinal variables that could possibly be related to this problem area. Economics, transportation, and institutional stigma variables were found to be significantly related to not acquiring food stamps. A discriminant analysis of the data generated a discriminant function capable of correctly classifying 78% of the sample into the groups acquiring and not acquiring their stamps using only five variables. Non-acquirers were less likely to participate in the General Assistance of Medical Assistance program, more likely to be female, have recently had a decrease in income, and feel stigmatized by contacts with welfare personnel in the food stamp certification process. Since the data were collected while regulations still required a "purchase price" so

clients could get the "bonus", economic variables may no longer be a factor in nonparticipation after certification. The data, though are still valuable as baseline measures for assessing the effects of changes in regulations eliminating the "purchase price". Recommendations were made for future research.

To my father

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

This study was designed to examine the Federal Food Stamp Program; specifically, to initiate an exploration as to the reasons why all of those who are certified as eligible to receive food stamps do not purchase them. It is indeed paradoxical that this study was necessary given the economic stature of the United States of America. This country is one of the strongest economic entities in the world; one would expect hunger to have been eliminated long ago. Its historically unparalleled affluence has only recently been matched in other countries as is illustrated by Table 1.

Table 1

Gross National Products and Per Capita Incomes
of Selected Countries in Recent Years

<u>Country</u>	<u>GNP</u>	<u>PCI in US\$</u>
U.S.	\$1,872.50 billion (1977)	6,995 (1976)
Australia	88.08 (1977)	6,311 (1975)
Canada	193.87 (1977)	7,340 (1976)
Denmark	40.24 (1976)	6,803 (1976)
Finland	29.95 (1977)	5,351 (1976)
France	397.51 (1977)	5,860 (1976)
W. Germany	398.70 (1975)	6,451 (1976)
Japan	562.17 (1976)	4,478 (1976)
Kwait	12.80 (1976)	11,431 (1975)
Norway	31.63 (1977)	6,511 (1976)
Sweden	75.24 (1977)	8,044 (1976)
Switzerland	73.15 (1977)	8,248 (1976)

Persistently high unemployment has, in part, contributed to the number of poor people who do not get sufficient

nutrition. The official national unemployment rates for 1972-1977 are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

UNITED STATES UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (DEPT. OF LABOR, 1978)

1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
5.6	4.9	5.6	8.5	7.7	7.0

For comparison, the latest available unemployment rates from the United Nations of some other countries are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

1972-1975 NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES
(UNITED NATIONS, 1977)

Country	1972	1973	1974	1975
Canada	6.3	5.6	5.4	6.9
Finland	2.5	2.3	1.7	2.2
W. Germany	1.1	1.2	2.6	4.7
Iceland	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.7
Japan	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.9
Netherlands	2.7	2.7	3.3	4.7
Sweden	2.7	2.5	2.0	1.6

Official U.S. unemployment rates are relatively high compared with other economically powerful countries. The true extent of unemployment in the U.S., though, is greater

than the figures reflect. The "unemployment rate" is calculated as a percentage of the "labor force" which is officially composed of people who are working, on strike, waiting to start work within 30 days, who aren't working because they are sick, and who are looking for work in the four weeks prior to an unemployment survey (Taylor and Peppard, 1976). Officially, the unemployed include only the last three categories.

People who have stopped looking for work are never included in the rate of unemployment; they are primarily those whose unemployment benefits have recently expired. The law requires able-bodied workers to register periodically with the job section of the unemployment office as one condition for drawing benefits. Many people whose benefits expire feel that the employment security commission cannot find them a job as desirable as the one they held and see little reason to continue looking for work there. When this happens, they are no longer considered part of the labor force and consequently are not included in the "unemployment rate".

Also not included in the "unemployment rate" are people who lost jobs that were not covered by unemployment insurance. Part-time employees looking for full-time work do not enter the formula as being partly unemployed, but rather are counted as being fully employed as are full-time workers on below poverty level incomes (Taylor and Peppard, 1976). Those workers include qualified teachers and bricklayers,

Y
 young single mothers and single income mates, as well as undergraduate and graduate students. When the number of workers just entering the work force who cannot find a job are added to those mentioned above, the resulting true rate of unemployment is considerably greater than the official figures.

High inflation rates increase the hunger problem. Inflation has seriously eroded the ability of those on fixed or lower incomes to maintain their socio-economic standing. The effects of inflation are best illustrated through the poverty standard which was developed through the Social Security Administration (Orshansky, 1963, 1965) in an attempt to specify a minimum income level for individuals and families. Orshansky coupled a 1955 United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) Household Food Consumption Patterns survey finding that low income families spend one-third of their income for food, with the least expensive of the four U.S.D.A. nutritionally sound food plans (designed for emergency or temporary use when funds were low). The poverty threshold, therefore, conservatively assumes that any family with a yearly income less than three times the cost of a minimal diet is poor.

Since 1969, year-to-year increases in the poverty threshold, which is typically expressed in terms of a non-farm family of two adults and two children, have been based on the yearly inflation rate, which, in turn, is based on increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Recent CPI's inflation rates, and poverty thresholds are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

CPI's Inflation Rates and Poverty Standards (non-farm family)
of Two Adults and Two Children

	YEAR					
	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
CPI ¹	125.3	133.1	147.7	161.2	170.5	181.7
Inflation rate ¹ (yearly average)	3.3%	6.2%	11.0%	9.1%	5.8%	6.6%
Inflation rate ¹ 12-month span (Dec. to Dec.)	3.4%	8.8%	12.2%	7.0%	4.8%	6.8%
Poverty ² Standards	4,275	4,540	5,038	5,500	5,815	6,190

Note: 1. Commerce Department 1978 data
2. Census Bureau 1978 data

As the poverty threshold rises, so does the hunger problem since those sinking below the threshold can be assumed to be keeping up with rising fixed expenses by economizing on non-fixed ones. People with low or fixed incomes do not have the same power to bargain for increases to keep up with inflation as do unionized workers.

The United States has not been able to deal with relentlessly high rates of unemployment and inflation effectively but the hunger problem must be dealt with because the issue of nutritional adequacy affects the poor most strongly. The loss of human potential and productivity in young people

whose inadequately nourished minds will not develop properly is ill afforded. The government has only three schemes to cope with the present hunger problem: the commodities distribution program, which is being phased out in all areas with the exception of some indian reservations; the child nutrition program which has a very limited scope; and the food stamp program.

Historically, the first programmatical attempt to ^{help} alleviate chronic hunger came through distributing surplus commodities by the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation to state welfare agencies. This was made possible through the 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act (Public Law 73-10). The purpose of this act was to raise farm prices by dealing with seasonal, temporary or localized farm surplus situations. ((The emphasis was on building a strong agricultural economy; directing surpluses to charitable purposes was cheaper than storing them.)) The variety and availability of surplus food fluctuated widely, thus disenchanting program participants and their advocates. Out of this disenchantment grew the first food stamp program in 1939.

Initial Food Stamp Program. The ¹1939 program was begun on an experimental basis and grew to its peak in 1941 with over half the nation's counties participating. It featured a two color coupon scheme and tried to cater to the problem of low farm prices while answering poor peoples' need for a nutritionally adequate diet. Program participants

(limited to public assistance recipients who prepared meals at home) were sold a quantity of "orange" coupons equivalent in value to the regular food expenditures of a national average of corresponding size families. A bonus of "blue" coupons, equivalent to half the value of the "orange" coupons, were given to the family. The blue coupons could only be used to acquire surplus items. The orange coupons could be used to purchase any food item including those in surplus. Which foods were considered "surplus" was determined by the Secretary of Agriculture on a monthly basis. War shortages eventually exhausted much of the food surplus and, consequently, brought the first food stamp program to an end in 1943.

After the war, the commodity distribution program was re-established to cope with low farm prices. Once again cries for a nutritionally adequate diet for the poor were heard. Efforts to re-establish a food stamp program in the 50's brought opposition from farm interests, who felt government purchase and direct distribution of surpluses was a more attractive alternative to a food stamp program that involved the much slower system of distribution in the commercial marketplace. There was also the fear that a new food stamp program might not include the "specific purchase" provision of the earlier program, and thereby, not address itself to specific goods in surplus.

✓ Food Stamp Act of 1964. In 1961, food stamp proponents finally achieved success when President Kennedy issued an executive order establishing experimental food stamp projects

in eight test areas, involving approximately 138,000 persons. The program was extended to 35 additional areas as of February, 1964. The projects were found to be successful enough to bring about the passage of the Food Stamp Act of 1964 by Congress. The stated purpose of the program was much the same as its forerunner: "To strengthen the agricultural economy; to help achieve a fuller and more effective use of food abundances; to provide for improved levels of nutrition among low-income households through a cooperative Federal-State program of food assistance to be operated through normal channels of trade;..." (Public Law 88-525).

Amendments. The Food Stamp Act had undergone three major changes by the time the data for this study was collected in 1977. The 1971 Amendment standardized eligibility requirements and benefits at the national level. It also made elderly persons eligible to purchase delivered meals with food stamps; it allowed households with little or no income to receive free stamps. The 1972 Amendments denied participation in the program to persons who were eligible to receive supplemental security income benefits under Title XVI of the Social Security Act. The 1973 Amendments provided for the program to be operated nationally in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, and the District of Columbia. These amendments also provided for semi-annual adjustment of food stamp monthly allotments for different sized households to compensate for inflation.

X Food Stamp Act of 1977. The new food stamp act, subsumed under Title XIII of the Food and Agricultural Act

(Public Law 95-113), went into effect January 1, 1979. Its purpose is much the same as the prior act. Most changes are aimed at decreasing overall administrative costs while increasing program utilization by needy households.

The Department of Agriculture administers the program through its Food and Nutrition Service, which in turn deals with state and local welfare agencies. The financing of the program is through Federal appropriations from the general fund. Prior to the new program the Federal government paid for 62½% of the salaries and normally paid benefits of food stamp certifiers (not dealing with public assistance clientele), their immediate supervisors, and hearing officials. It also paid the same percentage of the cost of quality control and outreach efforts, and 100% of the cost of bonus coupons. Under the new program the Federal government pays 50% of each State's administrative costs of operating the program but adjusts it to 60% if the error rate drops to less than 5%. In addition, authority is given to fund research that will help improve program administration and effectiveness.

Changes designed to limit participation in the program to needy households and expand utilization among them include lowering the net income eligibility standard to the official poverty level (\$6,500 for a family of four for fiscal year 1978), removing the eligibility requirement that household members be related, changing the allowable deductions, taking into account the income that will actually be available for the

certification period and eliminating the purchase price. The last two changes are of special interest to this study because they present solutions to hypothesized problems (elaborated upon later). The last change in particular may have such an impact on program utilization that Congress has required the Secretary of Agriculture to report on its effects six months after implementation and yearly after that.

Program Description. Under the program, households, are calculated to need on amount of food stamps corresponding to household size. For example, four person households are calculated to need \$191 a month in food based on U.S.D.A.'s Thrifty Food Plan. Eligibility standards, household income, other financial resources and deductions : to income are used to determine whether the household is financially limited toward purchasing an adequate diet. Under the old program, the difference between the amount a household was calculated as being able to pay for food (the "purchase price") and the amount that was needed was given to it as a "bonus". The household had to pay the "purchase price" to get the "bonus". Under the new program, the household does not have to pay the "purchase price". For example, a four-person household with no net income left after deductions is given \$191 in food stamps; one with a net income of \$300 a month is given \$101 in food stamps; one with \$542 in net income (the eligibility maximum) is given \$29 in food stamps.

Application Procedure. The application procedure for participation in the program is standardized throughout all

localities. Either the head of the household, a household member at least 18 years old designated by the head, or a non-household member at least 18 years old designated to represent the applicant, presents him or herself at the local office of the welfare department by standing in line at a reception window. S/he completes a (sic page) application form and is then interviewed by a representative of the welfare department. S/he should have papers to show where s/he lives, how many are in the household, what their income and mandatory deductions are, and how much they are paying for rent, medical bills, child care, education, utilities, and other expenses. In most cases, due to poor outreach/informational attempts in most areas, the client will find it necessary to go home and return to the welfare office with the required documents. Under the old regulations, after the food stamp certifier had verified the family's income, resources, and deductions and found them eligible, the family received an "Authorization to Purchase" card. This card denoted the purchase price and the total amount of stamps to be issued. It was then presented along with the appropriate amount of money at a post office, bank, or other site (depending on locality) designated to sell food stamps.

Program Controversy. Opponents of the food stamp program claim that neither of the two expressed purposes of the program are being met. Sixty-two percent of every food dollar goes to transportation, processing wholesale and retail handling rather than to the farmer. They also contend

that nothing in the Food Stamp Act insures the purchase of a nutritionally adequate diet; participants may very well choose to buy soft drinks instead of milk or fruit juices (Clarkson, 1975). These arguments may be valid; whether or not farmers are assisted by the program, millions of Americans could be suffering unnecessary hunger without it.

Results of an initial evaluation of two of the eight pilot projects (AMS-472, U.S.D.A., 1962) showed a definite increase in dietary nutritional adequacy among participants. This increase may have been due to efforts by concerned entities and existing state and local nutrition education agencies to help participants to get the best possible nutrition with their augmented food budgets. Unfortunately, the evaluation design did not isolate the impact of the educational effort (Reese and Adelson, 1962). Such an evaluation effort could have led to the incorporation of educational devices into the full scale program. Proponents of the program argued, however, that the Department of Agriculture could compensate for this omission as well as improve the existing program through the authorization granted to it by the Food Stamp Act, 1964; Section 4 (c): "The Secretary (of U.S.D.A.) shall issue such regulations not inconsistent with this Act, as he deems necessary or appropriate for the effective and efficient administration of the food stamp program".

Proponents have set forth a number of arguments as documented by the Senate Select Committee on Nutritional and

Human Needs (1975). They charge that the Department of Agriculture has maintained an attitude of noncompliance with the intent of the law, which has only served the interests of opponents to the program. The Department has been blamed for the program's poor administration; state and local officials constantly complain about the restrictive, confusing inconsistent and ambiguous nature of regulations as well as deal in issuing regulations. They argue that hunger is on the increase, that the Agriculture Department is doing next to nothing to alleviate the situation, and point out that it has yet to commission a study to find out just how many people are eligible for the food stamp program.

Combined participation in the food stamp and commodities program remained the same for two years ending September, 1975 (Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, 1975, p. 25). The number found eligible, though, rose by almost 50% from approximately 26 million in 1972 (Hunger, 1973) to 38.6 million in 1974 (Bickel and MacDonald, 1975) indicating a drop, from 52% in 1972 to 38% in 1974, of eligibles participating in the program. A decision in October, 1975, by Judge Miles W. Lord of the U.S. District Court in Minneapolis ordered that U.S.D.A. spend \$278 million earmarked for the food stamp program that was being withheld and noted that the Department of Agriculture had failed to encourage the states to pursue a vigorous program of outreach and, thereby, contributed to the withholding of benefits from millions of people.

He also stated that, "The Secretary's (of U.S.D.A.) response to the Congressional directive (the Food Stamp Act), when viewed in its totality, is fairly described as a total failure on his part to do what the Congress clearly intended him to do".

Problem. Problems also occur at the service delivery level that have not been reflected in the literature. One such problem is that of non-participation after certification. In Michigan roughly 20% of the households certified for participation in the food stamp program each month do not go to an outlet to acquire their monthly allotment. It is sad that a social program that is already falling short of its primary goal of protecting Americans from hunger can only be 80% effective at any one time with the people it does reach.

Although the problem has remained uninvestigated, possible clues to factors underlying the problem are provided by related research.

Rungeling and Smith (note 1) in an interview study of non-participating program eligibles reported that the most frequent primary response was that the stamps cost too much. They also reported transportation difficulties, excessive red tape, and attitudes toward welfare as important secondary considerations. McDonald (note 2) found evidence that attitudes toward the food stamp program as a result of stigma could be limiting participation.

Stigma has been conceptually linked to prejudice (Adorno, et. al., 1950; Allport, G.W., 1957) by Goffman (1963). He suggests that the stigmatized person is seen as inferior

and therefore easily discriminated against. Although there are various and sundry concepts of "stigma", the concern here is solely upon stigma as an effect upon social program participation. For our purposes the stigma effect can be defined as the loss of face, dignity, self respect, and/or social acceptance which occurs as a result of exposing personal poverty or economic dependency to public scrutiny (Wyers, 1977). According to Titmuss (1968), welfare programs involve unilateral transfer as opposed to the bilateral transfer found in the economic sector. He goes on to identify stigma as a main issue that arises as a result of the unequal and therefore unstable relationship between giver and receiver. Continuing this argument, Pinker (1971) points out that "while a minority of people go so far as to make vocations out of either service or dependency, most of us prefer a measure of equivalency in our social relationships" (p. 153). Stigma thus becomes a useful factor in helping those in need, while discouraging them from long-term dependence. It's usefulness is at question when it keeps those who need help from seeking it.

Since this study is of an exploratory nature, demographic characteristics, attitudes, experiences and motivations that may influence participation after certification were also examined. This investigation is in the interests of policy makers, program administrators, and most importantly, the people who need the more nutritionally adequate diet the food stamp program seeks to provide.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1. Income: Those who do not purchase their food stamps have economic reasons for their behavior. Possible reasons: (1) People with low incomes may find it difficult to gather enough money at any one time to buy their stamps, since they tend to receive income in small quantities at several different times during a month. (2) A decrease in household monthly income could result in non-participation since certification is based upon the previous month's income. (3) Some household expenses (e.g., car payment) are not deducted in determining the amount participants must pay for their food stamp allotment. (4) A household may be accustomed to a very tight food budget. Having to budget more money for food stamps than is usually budgeted for food would seem ridiculous. (5) Participants might become ambivalent about purchasing the stamps if they became aware of households perceived similar to their own that did not have to pay as much for their allotment. (A recent change in regulations may have altered the parameters of this problem area).

Hypothesis 2. Transportation: those who do not purchase their food stamps have inadequate transportation and thus cannot do so. People with low or no income are necessarily limited in their access to transportation.

Hypothesis 3. Social Stigma: Those who do not purchase their food stamps fear that they are looked down upon by friends or others while purchasing or using the stamps.

Because of the stigma involved in social contexts, some people may choose not to participate after they have been certified.

Hypothesis 4. Institutional Stigma: Those who do not pick up their food stamps feel stigmatized by their association with personnel in the food stamps certification process.

Stigmatization could cause clients to become disenchanted with the program to the point of non-participation.

Methods

Subjects. Two hundred newly certified and recertified households from Bay County, Michigan were referred for participation by Department of Social Services (DSS) case workers. Sample characteristics are contained in Appendix A, Table 8-10. There is no way of assessing the representativeness of the sample to the Bay County food stamp population because such data is not available. Although the research was to utilize a random design, it was confabulated due to a breakdown in procedure.

Instruments. The survey instrument contained 69 items and was administered in a structured interview format. The use of a self administered instrument was ruled out due to high illiteracy rates of the poor in the area. Two female interviewers and the experimenter administered the survey. They were M.S.U. undergraduates who lived in the Bay City area during the summer months. Both were carefully trained by the author in structured interview techniques. Some items necessitated response schemes printed on cards. These were fully explained at the appropriate times during administration. The questionnaire contained sections for non-response information needed to more completely describe the subjects (i.e., race and sex) and for the DSS case number. An open-ended comments section for non-specific subject

responses and interviewer comments was also included. A copy of the orientation sheets and the instrument are contained in Appendix B.

The reliability of the instrument was assessed through the use of test-retest criterion. Subjects were initially administered the instrument at the DSS offices. The same interviewer then visited them at home under pretense of having lost the previous completed instrument and asked whether they would mind completing another. If the person refused, that subject was dropped from the reliability sample and another DSS client tested and later approached for a retest. This was repeated until 10 subjects had been tested and retested. Twenty-three percent of the subjects that were tested refused to be retested. Ninety-seven percent agreement between testing and retesting over the demographic portion and a Pearson product-moment reliability coefficient of .79 over the attitude portion of the instrument were attained. Test-retest Pearson product-moment correlations of individual attitude items are contained in Table 10 of Appendix B.

After the experiment was conducted a number of attitudinal subscales were identified through factor analytic techniques. They are described in Tables 12-15 of Appendix C. Although they did not attain an acceptable level of reliability for typical applications in a social psychological study, they were deemed acceptable for hypothesis testing given the exploratory nature of this research. The

"Critical" subscale ($\alpha = .74$) is made of items that reflect direct criticism of the food stamp program. The subscale "Social Stigma" ($\alpha = .74908$) is composed of items that deal with social encounters in the process of using food stamps. The "Institutional Stigma" subscale ($\alpha = .51624$) is comprised of items that probe the attitudes of the client to encounters with personnel that interface the client to the food stamp program. The subscale "Accepted" contains items that measure surrender to long term food stamp use.

Procedures. The interviews were conducted over a ten week period at the Bay County DSS during normal business hours on newly certified and re-certified food stamp program applicants.

Subjects were to be chosen each day by randomly selecting a time and then testing the client most closely finishing the certification process at that time. As data gathering began, it was apparent that some social workers were more conscientiously cooperative with the survey procedure than others. This situation affected random client selection and probably led to a disproportionate sample of clients. The Food Stamp Program may be the only program in which a client participates. Other clients may receive "Aid to Dependent Children" benefits and/or others, as well as food stamp benefits.

As a client was certified or recertified, s/he was issued an "Authorization to Purchase (food stamps)" (ATP)

card and told by the social worker that there was an extension of the process. S/he was then directed to the survey area. The client was greeted by the interviewer, told the purpose of the survey, assured of confidentiality, and asked for his/her participation; 210 out of 220 chose to participate. After the instrument was administered, the subject was asked if s/he had any additional comments to make about the food stamp program or had questions about the survey. His/her comments were recorded, questions answered, and his/her time and effort gratefully acknowledged. The interview lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Administrative procedures for conducting the survey and finding which clients purchased their food stamps were rather straightforward. As each client was taken to the survey area, the social worker logged the other programs the client was participating in upon a blank survey form. The interviewer then handed the social worker an adhesive-backed paper disk to affix upon the cover sheet of the client's food stamp records. Its purpose was to alert the social worker that the client had been asked to participate in the survey should the client be scheduled to return for recertification before the survey was completed. After each successful interview, the client's case number was secured. There were no further attempts to identify clients or acquire information other than that volunteered by them. The case numbers were later used to identify which clients actually purchased their stamps by physically checking all the redeemed ATP cards

for the entire state issued in July, August and September, 1977, against the list of survey participants.

Results

Hypothesized relationships

A t-ratio was utilized as the primary test of significance between groups on all items used to measure the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1. Income: Those who do not purchase their food stamps have economic reasons for their behavior. The relevant questionnaire items were:

___ Do your food stamps cost you more than what you are used to spending in a month for food?

___ Would it be hard for you to get the money together to get your food stamps?

___ Have you or has someone in your household recently had a decrease in income?

___ I have to pay too much for my food stamps.

___ Do you understand what receipts are important to bring in to help reduce the price of your food stamps?

___ How many times during the month does the household receive income other than food stamps? What amount at each of those times?

Responses to the first four of the above items differed significantly between those who picked up their food stamps and

those who did not. Those who did not purchase their food stamps were more apt to reply that food stamps cost them more than they were used to spending a month for food ($t_{36.01}^* = -1.83$, $p < .05$), say that it would be hard to get the money together for food stamps ($t_{198} = -1.41$, $p < .08$), reply that someone in their household had a recent decrease in income ($t_{197} = -2.99$, $p < .004$), and say that they had to spend too much for food stamps ($t_{198} = 1.83$, $p < .05$). These results indicate strong support for Hypothesis 1 although responses to the remaining two items did not differ between the two groups. Group means and percentages on all items measuring Hypothesis 1 are presented in Table 5.

Further, considering only the non-purchasing group, responses to two of the four significant items were found to be uncorrelated. They were:

____ Do your food stamps cost you more
than what you are used to spending
in a month for food?

____ Have you or has someone in your
household recently had a decrease
in income?

This strongly indicates that more than one economic factor may be responsible for stamps not being purchased.

Hypothesis 2. Transportation: Those who do not purchase their food stamps have inadequate transportation and thus

*

Because of different within groups variances, separate variance estimates for the two groups were used.

Table 5
Group Percentages and Means on Items Testing H1

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purchasing Group</u>		<u>Non-purchasing Group</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>%Yes</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>%Yes</u>
Do your food stamps cost you more than what you are used to spending in a month for food? ^a	.078	7.8	.220	21.9
Would it be hard for you to get the money together to get your food stamps? ^a	.310	31.0	.438	43.8
Have you or has someone in your household recently had a decrease in income? ^a	.423	42.3	.710	71.0
I have to pay too much for food stamps. ^b	3.2	----	2.8	----
Do you understand what receipts are important to bring in to help reduce the price of your food stamps? ^a	7.14	71.4	.719	71.9
How many times during the month does the household receive income other than food stamps?	4.6	----	5.7	----

^ayes = 0; no = 1

^bLikert scale: strong yes = 1; yes = 2; undecided = 3; no = 4; strong no = 5.

cannot do so. Responses of purchasers and non-purchasers differed significantly ($t_{55.98}^* = -2.35, p < .05$) to the attitude item:

___ I have trouble getting around town.

Since non-purchasers were more apt to agree with this item, some support for this hypothesis is evident. Responses to the item:

___ Do transportation problems keep you from buying or using food stamps?

did not, however, differ between groups. Interestingly there was a negative, significant ($r = -.5749, p < .001$) relationship to responses to these two items across the sample indicating the possibility of a conscious effort to display acceptable behavior.

Hypothesis 3. Social Stigma: Those who do not purchase their food stamps fear that they are looked down upon by friends or others while purchasing or using the stamps.

The analysis of responses to the items:

___ I usually see people I know when I go to the post office.

___ Customers in the check-out line look down on people when they use food stamps to pay for their groceries.

___ The kinds of groceries I buy with my food stamps should only be my business and no one else's.
(Marginally significant, $p < .007$).

___ I have several friends on food stamps.

___ I usually shop at the same grocery store.

- Check-out clerks tend to treat people negatively when they use food stamps instead of cash.
- I try to avoid customers I know when I go to the grocery store.
- Grocery store personnel are usually friendly to me.

and to the social stigma subscale derived through factor analysis composed of the items:

- There seems to be a difference in the way I am treated at the grocery store check-outs when I use food stamps.
- Check-out clerks tend to treat people negatively when they use food stamps instead of cash.
- Customers in the check-out line look down on people when they use food stamps to pay for their groceries.
- Grocery store personnel are usually friendly to me.

yielded no significant differences between the purchasers and non-purchasers.

In addition, the responses only of clients who were certified for the first time ($n=31$) were examined. Since the study was designed to first interview recently certified clients and later ascertain which purchased stamps and which did not, it could be argued that the only subgroup that could yield an accurate reflection of the effects of stigma would be the first time certified. It would seem that the subgroup of re-certified clients would necessarily be lacking those already disenfranchized by stigmatization. Only one of the items

("The kinds of groceries I buy with my food stamps should only be my business and no one else's") even marginally differentiated between the first time purchasers and non-purchasers. The first six individual items and the subscale listed above for this hypothesis were responded to in the expected direction (non-purchasers felt more stigma attached to using food stamps).

Hypothesis 4. Institutional Stigma: Those who do not pick up their food stamps feel stigmatized by their association with personnel in the food stamps certification process.

The following items comprised the social worker subscale:

- ___ I have been treated well at the welfare office.
- ___ What I do with my food stamps is none of the social workers business.
- ___ The social worker asks too many personal questions.
- ___ When someone breaks a food stamp program rule, he should suffer some kind of punishment for it.
- ___ The social worker should enforce the food stamp rules strictly.

Purchasers' and non-purchasers' responses to this subscale were significantly different ($t_{198} = -2.98$, $p < .0015$) to a strong degree. Non-purchasers were more apt to have a negative attitude toward certification social workers than purchasers.

Individual items used to test the hypothesis were:

- ___ The food stamp program is properly run.

___ Everyone should be treated equally;
the same food stamp rules should
apply to everyone.

___ The food stamp program could be im-
proved.

___ The rules to get food stamps are
too strict.

___ The food stamp rules are fair.

___ I like the food stamp program.

None were found to be significant although the first five were in the expected direction. All of the items related to testing the hypothesis were subjected to a sign test for predicted direction. There were significantly more items that were in the predicted direction than in the non-predicted one ($p < .006$): non-purchasers felt more institutional stigma than purchasers.

Predictability. A multiple discriminant analysis (Cooley & Lohnes, 1971) was performed on the data to identify which variables would best predict whether a client would become a purchaser or a non-purchaser after certification. These results are summarized in Table 6.

In the initial step, a Chi-square test of Wilks' (1932) lambda was conducted to ascertain whether a sufficient amount of discriminating information was available in the set of variables to distinguish between purchasers and non-purchasers. The analysis indicated that a significant amount of discriminating information was available ($p < .003$). Examination of the univariate F-ratios showed that those who did not purchase their stamps were significantly less likely than those who

Table 6

Discriminant Analysis of Group Differences on Demographic
And Attitudinal Characteristics

Means

Variable (mnemonic)	Means		Pooled Groups Standard Deviations	Univariate F-ratios (df=1, 194) Coefficients	Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients
	Purchasers N = 165	Non-purchasers N = 31			
Aid to dependent children (Type 1)	.37	.23	.48	2.39	-.190
General Assis- tance (Type 2)	.32	.13	.45	4.49*	-.547
Social Security client (Type 3)	.02	.06	.17	1.42	.219
Public assis- tance/Food Stamp client (Type 4)	.65	.32	.49	12.66**	.111
Medical assis- tance client (Type 8)	.48	.29	.50	3.78***	-.606
Married client	.27	.42	.46	2.97***	.104
Client residing with unrelated person(s) (livothr)	.05	.07	.23	.05	.034

Table 6 (continued)

Variable (mnemonic)	Means		Pooled Groups Standard Deviations	Univariate F-ratios (df=1,194)	Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients
	Purchasers N = 165	Non-purchasers N = 31			
First-time food stamp applicant	.13	.23	.35	2.07	.205
Client with an urban residence	.72	.81	.46	1.10	.208
Sex of Client	.32	.19	.46	2.02	-.336
Race of Client	.04	.10	.21	2.18	.262
Continuous participant of the food stamps program since initial certification (always)	.61	.55	.59	.55	-.082
Client feels the purchase price of his/her food stamps exceeds usual household monthly food costs (costmore)	.08	.19	.30	3.97*	.281
Client is entitled to receive food stamps at zero purchase price (free) ¹²		.19	.33	1.44	.191

Table 6 (continued)

Means

Variable (mnemonic)	Purchasers		Non-purchasers		Pooled Groups Standard Deviations	Univariate F-ratios (df-1, 194)	Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients
	N = 165		N = 31				
Client's house- hold has recently experienced a de- crease in income (lessmny)	.41		.71		.50	9.67**	.313
Household monthly gross income (money)	4.65		5.87		3.98	2.49	.434
Client feels it would be difficult to get the money together to pur- chase the food stamps (paystamp)	.30		.42		.47	1.62	-.002
Whether client owns or rents his/her domicile	.29		.29		.47	.00	-.192
Client feels trans- portation problems keep him/her from buying or using food stamps (transprb)	.24		.16		.42	.97	.060

Table 6 (continued)

Variable (mnemonic)	Means		Pooled Groups Standard Deviations	Univariate F-ratios (df=1, 194)	Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients
	Purchasers N = 165	Non-purchasers N = 31			
Client feels he/ she has trouble getting around town (att 19)	3.33	3.77	1.03	4.87*	.096
A scale of five attitude items that probe the client/welfare institution relationship (sociwrkr)	12.04	13.45	2.46	8.89**	.420
Client feels self-conscious about food stamp use (sensitv)	.26	.19	.45	.59	.039
A scale of four attitude items probing the social as- pect of using food stamps (negsocl)	13.53	13.58	2.57	.01	-.019

Table 6 (continued)

Variable (mnemonic)	Means				Pooled Groups Standard Deviations	Univariate F-ratios (df=1,194)	Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients
	Purchasers N = 165	Non-purchasers N = 31					
A scale of five items measuring clients' attitudes towards the food stamp program (accept)	14.31	14.26	2.68	.01		-.051	
A scale of seven attitude items that probe clients' criticisms of the food stamp program (criticl)	22.68	22.32	3.97	.22		.252	
Eigenvalue 3218	Canonical .49341	Correlation .75654	Wilks lamda 50.49855	Chi-square 25	df 25	significance < .003	

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .10

did purchase their stamps to be receiving medical assistance, general assistance or any other form of public assistance in combination with receiving food stamps. Further, non-purchasers were significantly more likely than purchasers to be married, perceive that their food stamps cost them more than what they were used to spending in a month for food, state that someone in the household recently had a decrease in income, say that they had trouble getting around town, and feel a degree of "institutional stigma".

The last four variables also significantly supported three of the five experimental hypothesis. H1. Income: Those who do not pick up their food stamps have economic reasons for doing so was supported by responses to item variables:

___ Do your food stamps cost you more than what you are used to spending in a month for food?

___ Have you or has someone in your household recently had a decrease in income?

H2. Transportation: Those who do not pick up their food stamps have inadequate transportation and thus cannot purchase food stamps was supported by responses to the attitudinal item variable:

___ I have trouble getting around town.

H4. Institutional Stigma: Those who do not pick up their food stamps feel stigmatized by their association with the food stamp certification process was supported by responses

to the "Institutional Stigma" subscale.

Continuing the analysis, a factor analytic procedure was employed that finds the smallest, linear combination of variables that can account maximally for the amount of discriminating information available in the multivariate space. The component variables thus derived are analagous to beta-weights in a regression equation (Cooley and Lohnes, 1971). Only one discriminant function was derived in this analysis since there were only two groups defined according to whether food stamps were purchased after certification. Examination of the standardized discriminant function coefficients revealed that discrimination occurred most strongly and efficiently using the following combination of variables: whether they were on general assistance or medical assistance programs, sex, whether they had recently had a decrease in income, monthly income, and the attitudinal items comprising the "institutional stigma" subscale.

As a final check upon the accuracy with which the discriminant function was able to discriminate purchasers from non-purchasers, a classification analysis for prediction using the discriminant function scores was conducted. As can be seen by turning to Table 7, approximately 78% of the sample could be correctly classified as purchasers or non-purchasers on the basis of their discriminant function scores.

Table 7
Accuracy of Prediction of Group Membership through
Discriminant Functions

Group		Accurately Predicted Group Membership
1	165	128 (77.6%)
2	31	35 (80.6%)

Total percent of correctly classified cases: 78.1%

$$\chi^2 = 61.735, df = 1, p < .0001$$

DISCUSSION

Non-participation in social programs by eligibles is a pervasive problem throughout the welfare institution. This general problem is compounded within the food stamp program by non-participation after certification. Twenty per cent of those certified eligible to receive food stamps in Michigan do not actually participate. Although there is little information available directly pertaining to this problem, some related research (Rungeling and Smith; McDonald) offered direction for hypotheses, as did theoretical considerations of "stigma" as it pertains to welfare recipients (Titmuss, 1968; Pinker, 1971). Economic considerations, transportation problems, social stigma, and institutional stigma seemed most strongly related to non-participation after certification in the food stamp program and were formally examined.

Of all the hypotheses, non-participation because of economic reasons was the most strongly supported. Not being able to amass the purchase price, a recent decrease in income, having to pay more for food stamps than what is usually paid for food monthly, or feeling that a household's stamps cost more than another that is perceived comparable were thought the most likely economic reasons for non-participation. Among the six items used to measure the hypothesis, four yielded significant responses. Of those four, the item

"Have you or has someone in your household recently had a decrease in income?" produced the most significant figures. Only 42% of the purchasing group responded affirmatively to the item; for the non-purchasing group, the figure was 71%. This significant difference may be due to a greater concentration of short-term decreases in income among the non-purchasing group. If this were the case, and after having resolved their short-term financial problems, clients would no longer feel the need to use the food stamps they had been authorized to buy.

Alternatively, this evidence could be interpreted as implying that a recent decrease in household income would necessarily keep a household from purchasing stamps whose purchase price was based on the household's previous monthly income. This occurred under regulations at the time of this study (see below) when a low income client, upon realizing that an income decrease was imminent, applied and was found eligible for food stamps before the decrease was shown through pay stubs. A client in such circumstances was required to buy the stamps at a cost based upon a regular monthly income, instead of at the one reflective of the next paycheck which was actually used to buy them. A client in this situation under present law would either be found ineligible or would receive a lesser amount of food stamps than they would otherwise be entitled to.

When considering only the responses of the non-purchasing group, an orthogonal relationship was found between the

item variable discussed above and another found significant in testing this hypothesis: "Do your food stamps cost you more than what you are used to spending in a month for food?" This may indicate that more than one economic factor was responsible for stamps not being purchased. Since lower income people tend to economize on non-fixed expenses (such as food), some clients may have chosen not to purchase their food stamps if the price did not seem right to them. They may have been accustomed to spending less money for food than what the cost of their stamps was calculated to be by the food stamp certifier.

Although this hypothesis may be no longer viable since present regulations no longer require a purchase price, Congress has directed the Secretary of U.S.D.A. to report what effect this change in regulation has upon participation in the program. This data can provide baseline measures that are not otherwise available.

Some support was found for the hypothesis that non-participation is due to inadequate transportation. Some evidence of this has been reported in related research. Only one of the two items that were used to test this hypothesis was found to be significant, but a negative, significant correlation was found between the two when only responses of clients that did not pick up their stamps were considered. Non-purchasers were significantly more likely to agree that it was difficult to get around town, but not significantly

more apt than purchasers to say that transportation problems would hinder them in using the program. Since the significant item was the more general, less direct one, it would seem that client did not want to directly say that transportation problems would keep them from buying or using stamps since the certification process was so closely tied to the interview situation.

Only marginal support was found for the hypothesis that clients do not participate because they fear stigma in social contexts. Stigma has been identified as operating in the social welfare institution. Since this institution does not exist in a vacuum, it seemed appropriate to distinguish the crossover, social aspect of its stigmatizing effect upon clients. Responses of only first time certified clients were examined when no significant differences between purchaser and non-purchaser responses to all items were found. This strategy was followed since it can be argued that first-time certified clients would be the only group able to accurately reflect the effects of stigma. One marginally significant difference was found, but six of the eight single items and the attitudinal scale had responses indicating that non-purchasers felt more stigma attached to using food stamps than purchasers. Increasing the number of first-time certified in the sample may increase the chances of significance.

Strong support for the hypothesis that non-purchasers feel stigmatized by the certification process was found. A number of sources have identified and elaborated upon the effects of stigma as they pertain to the welfare institution.

These effects are not readily acknowledged by welfare personnel. In the close association with agency staff during the planning phase of the study, it became apparent that a number of social workers were uncomfortable about inclusion of items which might reflect negatively upon them. Questions which tapped the issue of stigmatization more directly were dropped from the survey to heighten willingness on the part of social workers to cooperate. Although less direct items were chosen to test the hypothesis, results were nevertheless encouraging.

Only one significant relationship was found in support of the hypothesis but this could be considered relatively strong support because it involved a scale of responses rather than a single item. The order of the items in the sub-scale reflect the strength (descending) with which each item correlated with the entire sub-scale (Appendix B, Table 1). This order also reflects what rationally appears to be the descending strength of the items to measure institutional stigma.

Additional evidence was generated through a sign test of all eleven individual items used to examine the hypothesis. Since only one item was in the direction opposite of that predicted, a strong probability in support of the hypothesis was attained. Hence, institutional stigmatization can in fact result in non-participation after certification in the food stamp program. A more in depth study with a research design that would allow a closer, more direct examination

of the issues is indicated.

Responses to the item "I like the food stamp program" are of interest in that, in addition to being the only responses not supportive of the hypothesis, their strength indicated a tendency towards significance. This may have been use to clients' reluctance to express their true feelings since the survey was conducted at the welfare office. Although efforts to appear detached from the welfare office were made and promises of confidentiality were given to try and quell client fears, the interview setting may nevertheless have had a strong effect in coloring responses to items pertaining directly to the food stamp program or its local administrators.

Of course, there were limitations in the present study that affect the interpretation of the results. The strength of all hypothesized relationships were necessarily limited by the small sample. A larger sample would have increased the probability of observed relationships in the predicted direction attaining statistical significance. The small number of subjects in the non-purchasing group also precluded plans for a cluster analysis to identify possible subgroups within that group. It may be misleading to assume that the pattern of factors found to be associated with non-participation in this study is the only pattern so associated. Other patterns may or may not be associated with non-participation. A larger sample would allow this issue to be addressed.

In addition, the generalizability of the study is limited because of a breakdown in randomization due to non-cooperation by welfare office personnel. All cooperated with the study at its inception. Cooperation diminished as the social workers began to realize that there were no consequences for non-cooperation. This was primarily due to the director letting the study slide into a lower priority as time went on. A full accounting of problems related to this study can be found in Appendix D.

Hypotheses were individually tested, but their combined influence is, from a pragmatic standpoint, a more important consideration in predicting participation in the food stamp program after certification. Since millions of dollars are spent needlessly to certify people that do not participate, it would be more economical if it were possible to predict this high risk group. To this end, a multiple discriminant analysis (Cooley & Lohnes, 1971) was performed on the data to identify sample characteristics that best predict group classification. Very good results were attained through the use of this analysis. The χ^2 test of significance of the Wilks lamda was highly significant, indicating a considerable amount of discriminating information among the predictors. One discriminating function was extracted, with maximum discrimination being a function of four demographic variables and the institutional stigma attitude scale. Non-purchasers tended not to be on General Assistance or Medical Assistance, and were more likely to be female, have recently had a decrease in household income, and have had a negative

attitude towards the certification process and the food stamp program in general. As previously noted, the economic variable may no longer be a viable predictor because of the new regulation eliminating the purchase price.

The discriminant function was then used to see how effectively the sample could be classified into the group that picked up its stamps and that which did not. Using these four variables, 78% of the clients were correctly classified.

Although the replicability of the study may be questioned because of environmental effects, biased sampling, and the small number of participants, the strength of the multiple discriminant analysis results certainly indicates that a modified replication of this study would indeed be worth the effort. A change in procedure would help eliminate most of the problems encountered in the study. If the Michigan State Department of Social Services were able to produce computer output indicating certified participants and non-participants shortly after the end of monthly business, the sample could be drawn randomly from among the two groups and interviews conducted during that month in the clients' homes. Besides eliminating the biasing effects due to conducting interviews at the welfare office (e.g. due to fear of reprisal) and biased sampling, it would also insure a larger sample.

If the data gathered through future research in this area is to be of maximum utility, more precise monitoring

of food stamp program participation in relation to participation in other programs must be maintained by local welfare offices. Such baseline information is presently not gathered as a matter of regulation or policy. It is necessary to define what other social programs clients are participants of so as to monitor whether certain social welfare recipients are less apt than others to participate in the food stamp program after certification. This is absolutely necessary to effect an accurate intervention. At present, the available information breaks down food stamp participation into only an Aid to Dependent Children client category, General Assistance client category, and a combined category of Supplemental Security Income, Medical Assistance, and Non-Assistance Food Stamps client category. A further breakdown of the last category into its individual units, as well as expanding monitoring to include programs not previously considered (e.g., Emergency Assistance clients) is desirable.

A possible criticism of the instrument is that relatively few items were used to directly measure each hypothesis. Since this was an exploratory study, it seemed a more suitable approach to focus upon a wide range of factors that could conceivably have an effect on the problem. The focus of a revised instrument would be narrowed to factors found associated with non-participation in the present research. This would allow expanding the range of items in appropriate areas (e.g., transportation problems) and elaborating subscales (i.e., institutional stigma subscale), resulting in more reliable measurement of focal variables.

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Appendix A

Table 8
Program Participation Rates of Food Stamp Clients

<u>Program</u>	<u>Non-Purchasing Group (N=32)</u>	<u>Purchasing Group (N=168)</u>
Aid to Dependent Children	7 (22)*	62 (37)
General Assistance	4 (13)	53 (32)
Social Security	2 (6)	4 (2)
Public Assistance Food Stamps	10 (31)	110 (65)
Supplemental Security Income	3 (9)	14 (8)
Non-Assistance Food Stamps	22 (69)	58 (35)
Protective Services	0 (0)	2 (1)
Medical Assistance	9 (28)	80 (48)
Day Care	0 (0)	3 (2)
Emergency Assistance	0 (0)	2 (1)

*Numbers in parenthesis are percents

Note: Figures do not sum up to the sample N because clients many times participate in other programs as well.

Table 9
General Demographic Characteristics of the
Food Stamp Sample

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Aid to Dependent Children	69	35	----	----
General Assistance	57	29	----	----
Social Security	6	3	----	----
Public Assistance Food Stamps	120	60	----	----
Supplemental Security Income	17	9	----	----
Non-Assistance Food Stamps	80	40	----	----
Protective Services	2	1	----	----
Medical Assistance	89	45	----	----
Day Care	3	2	----	----
Emergency Assistance	2	1	----	----
Married	58	29	----	----
Family Size	----	----	2.55	1.826
Families claiming all members at home for food stamps	191	96	----	----
First time certified recipients	31	16	----	----
Months recertified clients have received food stamps	----	----	30.91	26.980
Felt cost of food stamps was greater than usual monthly food costs	20	10	----	----
Bought monthly food stamp allotment in two installments	94	47	----	----
Interviewee belongs to an organization	31	16	----	-----

Table 9 (continued)

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Months until next scheduled contact with certification worker	----	----	3.69	2.352
Definitely plan not to keep next scheduled contact with certification worker	12	6	----	-----
Receiving food stamps free	26	13	----	-----
Reside in city	146	73	----	-----
Reside outside the city	53	29	----	-----
Rent Domicile	143	72	----	-----
Rooms in Domicile	----	----	2.53	.918
Interviewee has a job	28	14	----	-----
Households with two incomes	51	26	----	-----
Recent decrease in household income	93	47	----	-----
Understand what papers are important in the certification process	143	72	----	-----
Felt it difficult to gather money for food stamps	66	33	----	-----
Interviewee years of education	----	----	10.63	2.369
Years of education of interviewee's mother	----	----	8.10	4.522
Years of education of interviewee's father	----	----	7.75	4.727
Felt transportation problems inhibit food stamp use	45	23	-----	-----
Felt concern over what others thought of their food stamp use	47	24	-----	-----

Table 10

Monthly Income of the Sample

Number of times Amount Received	0	Average Amount Received Each Time				
		\$1-50	51-100	101-150	151-200	200+
0	28	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	34	8	8	10	18
2	0	2	7	21	17	15
3	0	1	0	2	1	2
4	0	4	10	6	2	0

APPENDIX B

Introductory Script

Good morning (afternoon), my name is _____. I am a research assistant for Michigan State University in East Lansing. We are presently studying how the Food Stamp program can be improved. We are doing this by finding out how the Food Stamp program fits into peoples lives and how they feel about it. We think that people know best what they need and are in the best position to give us advice on the subject. In order to make this easier, we have prepared a number of questions so that we can be sure we get complete information from everyone. No one connected with the Department of Social Services will see your answers. We want you to know this because just how much we can improve the Food Stamp program depends on how people answer the questions. If people give us accurate answers, we can improve the program for you and everyone else; if we don't get accurate answers, the time and money spent on this project will have been wasted.

At the end of the day, your answers, along with everyone elses, will be sent to Michigan State University. All the information we get from people will be studied there and suggestions for improving the program will be made to the federal government.

Before Question 32

This card has written on it a number of replies. They are, left to right: a strong yes, a yes, undecided, a no, and a strong no. I am now going to make a number of statements. After each statement, please tell me how you feel about what I've said by answering me with one of those replies. For example: if I say "Christmas is a good time of year", what would you say?

Food Stamp Program Participation Questionnaire

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

(4-5) 01-26
 k = 11, C = 03
 (6-12) 0-9
 (13) 1-9
 (14-23) 0-1

ADC	GA	SS	PA/FS	SSI	NA/FS	PS	MA	DC	EA
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23

1. What is your marital status? (1) single (2) married
 (3) divorced (4) separated (5) widowed (24) 1-5
2. How many people are in your family that live at home including yourself? _____ (25-26) 01-19
 If one (1), go to #4
3. Are you receiving food stamps for all the members of your family that live with you at home? Yes No
 (27) 1-2
4. Do unrelated people live with you/your family? Yes No
 (28) 1-2
 If yes: how many? _____ (29) 0-9
 Are they also on food stamps? Yes No (30) 0-2
 If yes: Are they on food stamps with you? Yes No
 (31) 0-2
5. Is this the first time you received food stamps? Yes No
 (32) 1-2

If yes: go to #6

If no: When was the first time you received them?

_____ (33-34) 00-99
(to the nearest month recollectable)

If no: have you been receiving them continuously since
then? Yes No (35) 0-2

If no: how long did you receive them the first time?

(Please document starting date and indicate approximate
lengths of time periods in which they received them and
did not receive them up to the present.)

starting date_____ending date_____ # of months_____

starting date_____ending date_____ # of months_____

starting date_____ending date_____ # of months_____

Total number of months food stamps have been received

_____ (36-37) 00-98

6. Do your food stamps cost you more than what you are used
to spending in a month for food? Yes No (38) 0-2

7. Are you getting them once or twice a month? Once
Twice (39) 1-2

If twice: go on to #9

8. Would it be easier for you to buy them twice a month?
Yes No (40) 0-2

If yes: Why? _____

9. When are you supposed to come in to talk to the food
stamp worker again?_____ (41) 1-9

10. Do you think you will come in then? Yes No Maybe
(42) 1-3

If no: If maybe: why? _____

11. Are you getting your food stamps for free? Yes No
(43) 1-2

12. Do you live in the city or the country? _____
(44) 1-2

13. Do you have a job? Yes No

If yes: doing what? _____

- 1) factory/blue
- 2) factory/white
- 3) education/blue
- 4) education/white
- 5) other service/blue
- 6) other service/white
- 7) farmer
- 8) farm work
- 9) no

(45) 1-9

If no: go on to #15

14. Do you plan to keep your job for at least five years?
Yes No (46) 0-2

15. What kind of job does your wife/husband/parents (if
living in the same home) have? _____ (47) 0-3
(same scheme as for #13) (48) 0-8

How long has it been since you/she/he worked? _____
(49-50) 00-98

Doing what? _____ (51) 0-8
same scheme as #13

16. If parents live outside the home or are deceased: What
kinds of jobs did your parents have? _____ (52) 0-8
dad
_____ (53) 0-9
mom

(same scheme as #13, but: 9 housewife)

17. Have you or has someone in your household recently had a
decrease in income? Yes No 0) N/A because of no

initial income

If yes: due to what? 1) job loss 2) layoff 3) strike
4) pension loss 5) pension reduction 6) welfare check
termination 7) welfare check reduction 8) specify
other 9) no (54) 0-9

18. How many times during the month does the household receive income other than food stamps? ____ (55) 0-4

What amount at each of those times? ____ (56) 0-9

1) \$1-50 2) 51-100 3) 101-150 4) 151-200 5) 201-250
6) 251-300 7) 301-350 8) 351-400 9) none

19. If you could have any job you wanted, what job would you choose? _____ (57) 1-8
same schemes as for #13

20. Do you understand what receipts are important to bring in to help reduce the price of your food stamps? _____

21. How did you find out about food stamps? (59) 1-9

How else? _____ (60) 1-9

1) friends 2) relatives 3) notice by mail 4) newspaper 5) other literature 6) TV ad 7) radio ad
8) other source 9) general exposure

22. What is your biggest monthly bill? _____ (61) 1-9

how much is it? _____ your next biggest bill? _____
(62) 1-9 (63) 0-9

how much is it? _____ and the next? _____ and how
(64) 0-9 (65) 0-9

much is it? _____
(66) 0-9

1) rent 2) car payment 3) utility 4) hospital bill

5) phone bill 6) loan 7) taxes 8) food 9) tuition

0) N/A 0) N/A 1) \$1-50 2) 51-100 3) 101-150

4) 151-200 5) 201-250 6) 251-300 7) 301-350

23. What week during the month do you plan to get your stamps? (67) 1-4 (if 1st and 3rd: use 5; If 2nd and

4th use 4)

24. Would it be hard for you to get the money together to get your Food Stamps? Yes No (68) 0-2

If yes: why? _____

25. How much education do you have? (69-70) 01-30

your wife/husband/parents - if living in the same home

(71) 0-3

(72-73) 00-30

If parents were discussed - to to #27

26. If parents live outside the home or are deceased:
how much education do/did your parents have?

 /
mom dad
(64-75) 00-30 (76-77) 00-30

27. Do you own or rent this home? Own Rent (78) 1-2

How many rooms does it have? 1) 1-2 2) 3-4 3) 5-6

4) 7-8 5) 9+ (79) 1-5

28. Do transportation problems keep you from buying or using food stamps? Yes No (80) 1-2

29. What kind of transportation do you usually use the most? 1) walk 2) bus 3) taxi 4) relative 5) non-relative 6) personal car (81) 1-6

29. Continued

If #3: how often do you use a taxi?

- A. more than once a week
- B. once a week
- C. once every two weeks
- D. once every three weeks
- E. once every month (82) 0-5

If #4 or #5 how often can your friend (or relative) take you to town?

- A. more than once a week
- B. once a week
- C. once every two weeks
- D. once every three weeks
- E. once every month (83) 0-5

Do you pay for this transportation Yes No (84) 0-2

30. Are you concerned about what others think of your use of Food Stamps? Yes No (85) 1-2

31. Do you belong to any organization? Yes No (86) 1-2

If yes: which ones? _____

Card A

Strong Yes (1)	Yes (2)	Undecided (3)	No (5)	Strong No (5)
-------------------	---------	---------------	--------	------------------

32. I have to pay more for my Food Stamps than do other people I know in similar circumstances. (87) 1-5

33. The food stamp program is properly run. (88) 1-5

- 34. I like to get out and work in the yard. (89) 1-5
- 35. Anyone who lies to the food stamp social worker shouldn't
get Food Stamps (90) 1-5
- 36. Everyone should be treated equally: the same Food Stamp
rules should apply to everyone. (91) 1-5
- 37. I like to go downtown (92) 1-5
- 38. Someone should come around and teach people how to
make their Food Stamps last longer. (93) 1-5
- 39. I have several friends on food stamps. (94) 1-5
- 40. I need more information about nutrition. (95) 1-5
- 41. The social worker asks too many personal questions.
(96) 1-5
- 42. I am an active person. (97) 1-5
- 43. I have been treated well at the welfare office. (98) 1-5
- 44. Most people receiving food stamps need to have them.
(99) 1-5
- 45. The social worker should enforce the Food Stamp rules
strictly. (100) 1-5
- 46. I like the Food Stamp program. (101) 1-5
- 47. Someone should come around and teach people how to
buy food for a proper diet. (102) 1-5
- 48. Many people receiving food stamps don't need them.
(103) 1-5
- 49. The food stamp program could be improved. (104) 1-5
- 50. I have trouble getting around town. (105) 1-5
- 51. When someone breaks a food stamp program rule, he
should suffer some kind of punishment for it. (106) 1-5

52. In the future, it will be easier to get food stamps.
(107) 1-5
53. The kinds of groceries I buy with my Food Stamps should only be my business and no one elses. (108) 1-5
54. I usually shop at the same grocery store (109) 1-5
55. Check-out clerks tend to treat people negatively when they use food stamps instead of cash. (110) 1-5
56. I try to avoid customers I know when I go to the grocery store. (111) 1-5
57. I am a better person than most other people on food stamps. (112) 1-5
58. The rules to get food stamps are too strict. (113) 1-5
59. I usually see people I know when I go to the post office. (114) 1-5
60. I will probably be on the food stamp program for a long time. (115) 1-5
61. Grocery store personnel are usually friendly to me. (116) 1-5
62. Customers in the check-out line look down on people when they use food stamps to pay for their groceries. (117) 1-5
63. What I do with my food stamps is none of the Social Workers business. (118) 1-5
64. I have to pay too much for my food stamps. (119) 1-5
65. There seems to be a difference in the way I am treated at the grocery store check-outs when I use food stamps. (120) 1-5

66. Everyone is treated the same under the food stamp regulations. (121) 1-5
67. The food stamp rules are fair. (122) 1-5
68. I think I need to know more about the food stamp program to use it effectively. (123) 1-5

A-Z (4-5) 01-26
 K=11, C=03
 (6-13) 0-9
 A-I (13) 1-9

Case #

Card B

Store Clerks
 Minister
 Policeman
 Landlords
 Doctors
 Councilman
 Lawyers
 Relatives
 Social Workers
 Friends

69. What type of person do you find to be the most helpful to you? _____ (14-15) 01-10
- The next most helpful? _____ (16-17) 01-10
- And the next? _____ (18-19) 01-10
70. Sex: M F (20) 0-2
71. B W C O I (21) 1-5

Other comments:

APPENDIX C

Table 11
Test-Retest Pearson Product-Moment Correlations
of Individual Attitude Items

<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>r</u>
32	.8717	51	.4678
33	.908	52	.3371
34	.5590	53	.8685
35	.9456	54	.99
36	.4082	55	.6541
37	.8729	56	.9183
38	.8487	57	.2274
39	.99	58	.3194
40	.7192	59	.6561
41	.01	60	.9430
42	.6124	61	.1111
43	.7384	62	.9444
44	new item	63	.9316
45	.6409	64	.3360
46	.9265	65	new item
47	.9583	66	.8989
48	new item	67	.6124
49	.8468	68	new item
50	.8327		

Table 12

Subscale: Critical

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>Standard Deviations</u>	<u>Corrected item-total correlations</u>
-The food stamp rules are fair	3.630	.68955	.58922
-I have to pay too much for my food stamps	3.145	1.12709	.56240
-The food stamp program is properly run	3.240	.92013	.44950
-Everyone is treated the same under the food stamp regulation	3.310	.85296	.44004
-I have to pay more for my food stamps than do other people I know in similar circumstances	3.405	1.06142	.43778
-The food stamp program could be improved	2.335	.80997	.42502
-The rules to get food stamps are too strict	3.595	.79000	.31051

Standardized Item Alpha = .74476

Table 13

Subscale: Social Stigma

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>Standard Deviations</u>	<u>Corrected item-total correlations</u>
-There seems to be a difference in the way I am treated at the grocery store check-out when I use food stamps	3.495	.81443	.66618
-Check-out clerks tend to treat people negatively when they use food stamps instead of cash	3.245	.99999	.60866
-Customers in the check-out line look down on people when they use food stamps to pay for their groceries	2.985	.96926	.53096
-Grocery store personnel are usually friendly to me	3.790	.60641	.40285

Standardized Item Alpha - .74908

Table 14

Subscale: Institutional Stigma

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>Standard Deviations</u>	<u>Corrected item-total correlations</u>
-I have been treated well at the welfare office	2.210	.74070	.35529
-What I do with my food stamps is none of the social workers business	2.955	.98887	.33405
-The social worker asks too many personal questions	2.360	.87420	.27620
-When someone breaks a food stamp program rule, he should suffer some kind of punishment for it	2.440	.83660	.24603
-The social worker should enforce the food stamp rules strictly	2.315	.72692	.21933

Standardized item alpha = .51624

Table 15

Subscale: Accepted

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>Standard Deviations</u>	<u>Corrected item-total correlations</u>
-I have several friends on food stamps	3.030	1.05101	.33942
-I will probably be on the food stamp program a long time	3.305	1.00350	.29668
-I usually see people I know when I go to the post office	3.245	.97454	.29636
-I like the food stamp program	2.355	.77588	.27121
-Most people receiving food stamps need to have them	2.340	.71902	.19051

Standardized item alpha = .52072

Appendix D

Field Encounters

Framework: The Ecological Psychology graduate training program at Michigan State University was established in 1970. It's overall objective has been to teach utilization of experimental methods in addressing current social problems. To this end, the model of Experimental Social Innovation (ESI) was advanced by Fiarweather (1960), as follows: (1) The researcher defines the parameters of a problem found in a social sub-system through experimental derivation: (2) S/he then devises an alternative to the particular set of behaviors (procedures) s/he had found to be counter productive or destructive and proceeds to: (3) experimentally evaluate the adjustment within the context of the social sub-system. If the results indicate that the adjustment was, indeed, a worthwhile one, the researcher then: (4) assumes the change-agent role and proceeds towards disseminating the innovative adjustment to the extent that it is properly generalizable: carefully monitoring his or her efforts experimentally. The present study addresses a probelm at the first step of the model.

In psychology, as in many other professions, graduate training programs provide the learning experiences that are the foundation for a person's career. As new graduate programs geared to "field" methods (like Ecological) emerge

among the traditional programs geared to theory development and collecting supporting data, new types of learning experiences must necessarily become available to the graduate student.

In a typical social-psychology program, the thesis is generally accepted as an accounting of the required research and most experiences related to it are rather standard. An accounting of the present research is contingent on discussing events not ordinarily encountered in traditional thesis data gathering since readers may not readily realize what events can occur.

Experience: These events, most assuredly, can center around problems. They may be due to lack of control over the contingencies inherent in field placements and/or to the reluctance of most operating social agencies to admit researchers. Reluctance born of fear that such outsiders may disrupt routine, increase someone's workload, find out something that could cause embarrassment, and/or result in future changes that may complicate goals.

If research positions are available through projects that professors manage to get funded or through agencies that have established mechanisms for funding such positions, it becomes a relatively straightforward matter for a student to establish his or her research design. Such opportunities, however, are not plentiful and few afford the chance for contact with consumers of services rendered through established institutional channels. Students seeking to get a feel

for the position of the consumer of an ongoing social service must, in the majority, deal with some local agency on their own.

Intervention on the local level has its disadvantages. It is much safer to enter a multi-level agency on the highest possible level because agency-wide policy favorable toward research would be more likely to be supported. Any social agency with a multi-level administration, such as the welfare system, must necessarily yield some of its power down to the local office.

An example of the possible consequences of "local level" entry evolved during this thesis research. Having worked in Bay County, Michigan for three summers as a Migratory Farm Worker Services worker for the Department of Social Services, I decided to approach the director about conducting this research, taking advantage of the excellent working relationship that had developed. The ESI model espouses that administrative agreements be negotiated and documented before the research is initiated to assure that the conditions that are necessary for proper implementation of the research design are understood, and to assure continuity of policy toward the project throughout its course. Having negotiated such agreements with the director, a sequence of events followed beyond the control expressed in the agreements.

The research was initially proposed in February of 1975. Subjects were to be selected randomly in a given month from

among those with proper authorization that acquired their food stamps and those that did not. The mechanism for recognizing these two groups was contingent upon two pieces of computer output that were referred to as an Authorization to Purchase journal and a Participation journal.

All households authorized to purchase stamps in a given month were listed by an independent computer facility at the end of a month and the journal sent to the county office. Also, a list of all those authorized that actually participated in the food stamp program by purchasing their food stamps was compiled and sent shortly after the end of the month. By comparing the two outputs, the sub-group that was authorized but did not acquire its stamps could be determined. The research design called for administering a questionnaire face-to-face through visits to the subjects' homes. Through the resulting data, comparisons could have been made to determine the critical variables responsible for the difference between the group purchasing stamps and the non-purchasing group.

At that point in time, the state office ordered the few county offices that had independently hired computer companies handling their food stamp program bookkeeping to terminate such relationships so that the state office could hire a company on a competitive bid basis to do the work statewide. Because there was to be virtually no delay involved in switching over to the new computer company, to protect the counties that already had a computer-based bookkeeping

system for their food stamp program, there seemed little reason for alarm at this time.

The new company began operations within a month but at the beginning did not provide all the computer outputs that had been contracted. The Authorization to Purchase journals were provided without interruption, but the Participation journal was not. In order to carry out the research design, it was imperative to receive the Participation journal shortly after the end of the month so that interviews could begin the following month while subjects' recollections of events would be recent ones and thus unbiased by subsequent events. It was a rather simple decision to wait for the new computer company to gain its equilibrium; there was little reason to suspect that it would not--after all, it had a state-wide responsibility to do so. The Participation journals finally began to be produced, but they lagged five months behind the initial schedule, which was much too long a period to be useful. Whenever I inquired as to when they thought they might be catching up, I was assured it would be soon. My faith in them was intermittently reinforced by an occasional one month shrinkage in lag time. As months drew on, confidence that the company would ever begin to function appropriately (i.e., within a reasonable amount of time) waned. The study had to be redesigned, even though this meant that the research design would be less than optimal.

After redesigning the study and finalizing plans for collecting the data, the state terminated its relationship

with the "lagging" computer company and began to use its own computer facility. It was to take over operations the same month that the data collection for this research was to begin. Although postponing again to see what surprises might surface seemed to be the most prudent course of action, time pressures dictated taking a chance and proceeding as scheduled.

The state computer facility provided a Participation journal for the first month of its operation, skipped the next two months in order to catch up to its schedule, and said it would print out the two missing journals as time permitted.

Because data collection extended over the three month period that coincided with the first three months of state-based computing, two-thirds of the needed data was to become available at a later date. This data became extremely difficult to acquire because of the reluctance of the local director to put pressure on the appropriate people to get the computer facility to catch up as promised. This reluctance, of which I was to become aware as months passed, stemmed from the director's unwillingness to notify the state office of my study. This action would have entailed following a set of state office research guidelines that included his submitting the appropriate forms. In effect, local research policy conflicted with "general" research policy, which eventually led to extreme discomfort for me. The existence of a "general" research policy would most likely have come

to my attention had I chosen to do research that logistically could have been handled by the state office, e.g. something related to administrative policy.

I finally gave up hope (under time pressures) in ever receiving the needed output and arranged by delicate negotiations to gain access to the stores of paper in which my data was buried. Two weeks after gathering friends and wading through, the data was finally in hand.

These experiences not only indicate some of the problems research on the local level is prone to, but also provide a window to the quality of service delivery available to clientele. Close association with the agency revealed that the computer problems that plagued this research were not the only problems (e.g. computer check issuing foul-ups). Poor people that depend upon the welfare agency for subsistence cannot be well served by an inefficient bureaucratic structure.

Conclusion. Obviously, these sorts of experiences have educational value to graduate students interested in field research, but unascertainable time frames can discourage professors (graduate programs) from letting their students conduct the field research necessary to provide an appropriate learning base.

If students are discouraged from conducting field research by lack of opportunity or the inflexibility of graduate programs, the perpetuation of psychology's ivory tower image appears certain. Ecological begins to answer this criticism. It encourages field research and is flexible in the time it allows for its completion but it must still operate within

the larger status-quo oriented system and is therefore subject to its pressures towards conformity. Unfortunately, its students cannot be totally insulated from these pressures.

