

survey. Further detailed study is needed on a large number of items to confirm pricing practices in chainstores. Such a study should seek further information as to the quality and condition of foods offered, the breadth of selection carried, and the size, condition, and orderliness of the store, in addition to the actual prices charged.

In one large chain, 94 stores were found, spread among 38 city districts, for an average of 2.5 stores per district. Eighty-two of the stores were located in 27 districts considered to be middle income or higher, or 2.7 stores per district. In contrast, 12 stores were located in seven recognized low-income districts, or 1.7 stores per district. (No stores in this chain were reported in four districts.) This bears out the obvious—fewer chain outlets in poorer districts.

For this chain, although there was a modest variation in prices among the stores, there was no pattern by borough or district, or by low-income or other area, of higher or lower prices. For example, a can of nationally advertised brand of peas was priced at 27 cents in 83 stores spread over 29 districts, including such diversity as South Jamaica (Queens), Williamsburg (Brooklyn), and Hunts Point (Bronx) on the one hand, and Murray Hill (Manhattan), Flushing (Queens), and University Heights (Bronx) on the other.

A 2-cent higher price was reported for the identical can of peas in stores in two middle-income areas in Brooklyn, while a 2-cent lower price was found in one less affluent area of the Bronx.

A similar check of 39 stores of another chain showed a greater variation in prices among individual stores, but the data revealed no pattern of higher or lower prices.

A survey of 14 stores of another chain, was taken on a given day (August 28), in Manhattan. This covered stores in east, central, and west Harlem, as well as in the upper East Side, upper West Side, Washington Heights, and Murray Hill. While identical prices were not found on identical items in all stores, there was no pattern of higher or lower prices in the poorer areas for the 37 items on our list.

Further study suggested

Special projects of a research nature, taking advantage of the existing summer survey data but requiring additional field work, would provide answers to several questions. These, researchable by undergraduate or graduate students in marketing, economics, statistics, sociology, or other disciplines, might include the following:

(a) What is the quality and condition of foods in stores in poverty areas versus nonpoverty ones? Equate with price.

(b) What is the extent of stock and selection in stores in poor areas? Number and kind on hand, variety of goods, opportunity for selection, range of quality—all this compared to stores in middle-income areas.

(c) What is the condition of the stores in poor areas compared to those in more affluent areas? Cleanliness, orderliness, attractiveness, space, display, etc.

(d) To what extent are "specials" offered in poorer areas? How much do they mean to consumers? Do consumers take full advantage of them?

(e) To what extent do grocery stores carry nonfood items (soap, detergents, etc.) in poverty areas versus middle-income areas? What prices are charged?

(f) To what extent are food ads deceptive, if they are? A careful study of ads, and practices attached to their use, would be a real service to the consumer.

(g) To what extent do small stores, particularly in poor areas, provide extra services (as often claimed)? Check cashing, delivery, store hours, days open, etc. What do these stores charge for cashing welfare (or other) checks?

(h) Do prices rise on welfare check days, and if so, how extensive is the practice? Might be conducted on a "complaint" basis and by the purchasing of food.

(i) What are the pricing practices of major food chains in the poor areas versus others. Compare statements of company officials with actual survey in the field.

(j) To what extent do families in poor areas utilize delicatessens? How much extra do they pay for this practice?

(k) What is the product cost in small stores versus large? What is the extent of their markup? What are these buying practices?

(l) What are the increased costs of operating in poor areas, particularly for chainstores where a comparison is possible? Compare costs of rent, insurance, protection from pilferage, and other.