

# The Effects of Household Life Transitions on Food Baskets

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## **Abstract**

Households experience multiple events such as marriage, divorce etc. which causes them to transition across different stages in their life cycle (e.g. single, couple etc.). Despite the significant behavioural implications of life transitions, there is a conspicuous lack of comprehensive research on this topic. In this paper, we empirically investigate the effects of household life transitions on grocery consumption. Drawing from economic and psychological theories, we develop propositions about how life transitions affect households' consumption of healthy and fresh foods. We utilize longitudinal data on households' actual grocery purchases in the U.S. Using propensity score matching and difference-in-difference analysis, we find that divorce in the absence of children, empty nesting and time progression reduce the healthiness of household food baskets. Further, empty nesting and divorce in the presence of children affect households' food basket freshness positively and negatively, respectively. Findings hold significant implications for researchers, retailers and public health professionals.

**Keywords:** *Household life cycle transitions; food basket healthiness; propensity score matching*

**Track:** Retailing & Omni-Channel Management