



BACKGROUND

- People may be more inclined to snack when they're stressed out, which can lead binge-eating (Errisuriz Et al., 2)
- College students who were stressed were more likely to eat unhealthily than those who were not as stressed (Tariq et. al 21)
- One in four college students are either overweight or obese (Du et. al, 2022)
- Stress could increase bad eating behaviors, including emotional or uncontrolled eating, affecting dietary risk and weight status, such as obesity (Du et al., 2022; Choi, 2020)

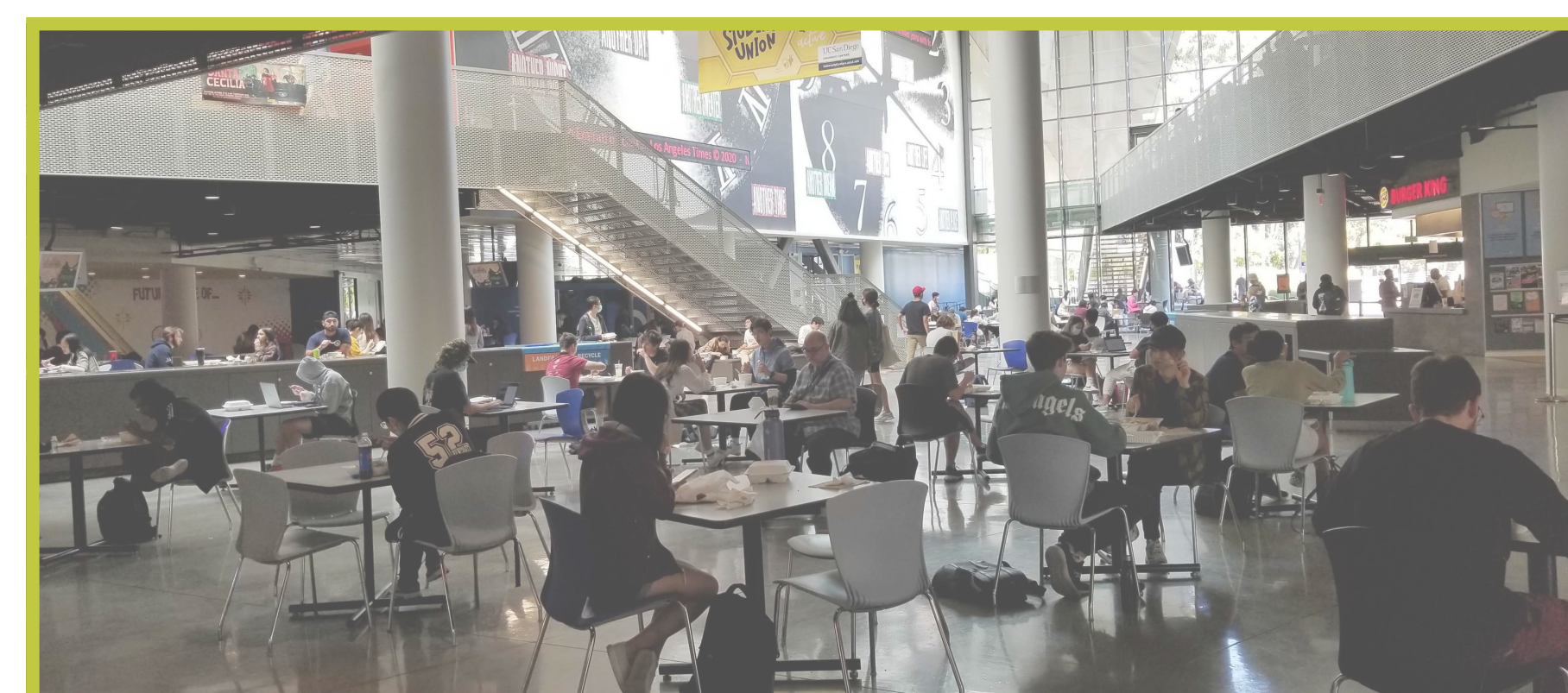


OBJECTIVE

- To determine the relationship between academic stress and dietary eating habits among UCSD undergraduate college students enrolled during the 2022-2023 school year

METHODS

- A cross-sectional study by using convenience sampling among UCSD undergraduate college students ages 18-30+ yrs old enrolled during the 2023-2023 school year
- A 24-item anonymous, online survey was distributed through different social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Whatsapp
- We collected scalar and open-ended questions from UCSD undergraduate students
- **Exposure variable: academic stress**
- **Outcome variable: unhealthy dietary eating habits**
- Descriptive and Statistical test: Chi-square



RESULTS

TABLE 1. POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS (N=79)

Age Groups	Count (%)	Class Level	Count (%)	Gender	Count (%)
18-21 yrs. old	64 (81%)	Freshman	4 (5.1%)	Female	66 (83.5%)
22-25 yrs. old	14 (17.7%)	Sophomore	16 (20.3%)	Male	9 (11.4%)
25-29 yrs. old	0 (0.0%)	Junior	20 (25.3%)	Non-Binary	4 (5.1%)
30+ yrs. old	1 (1.3%)	Senior	39 (49.4%)	Prefer not to say	0 (0.0%)

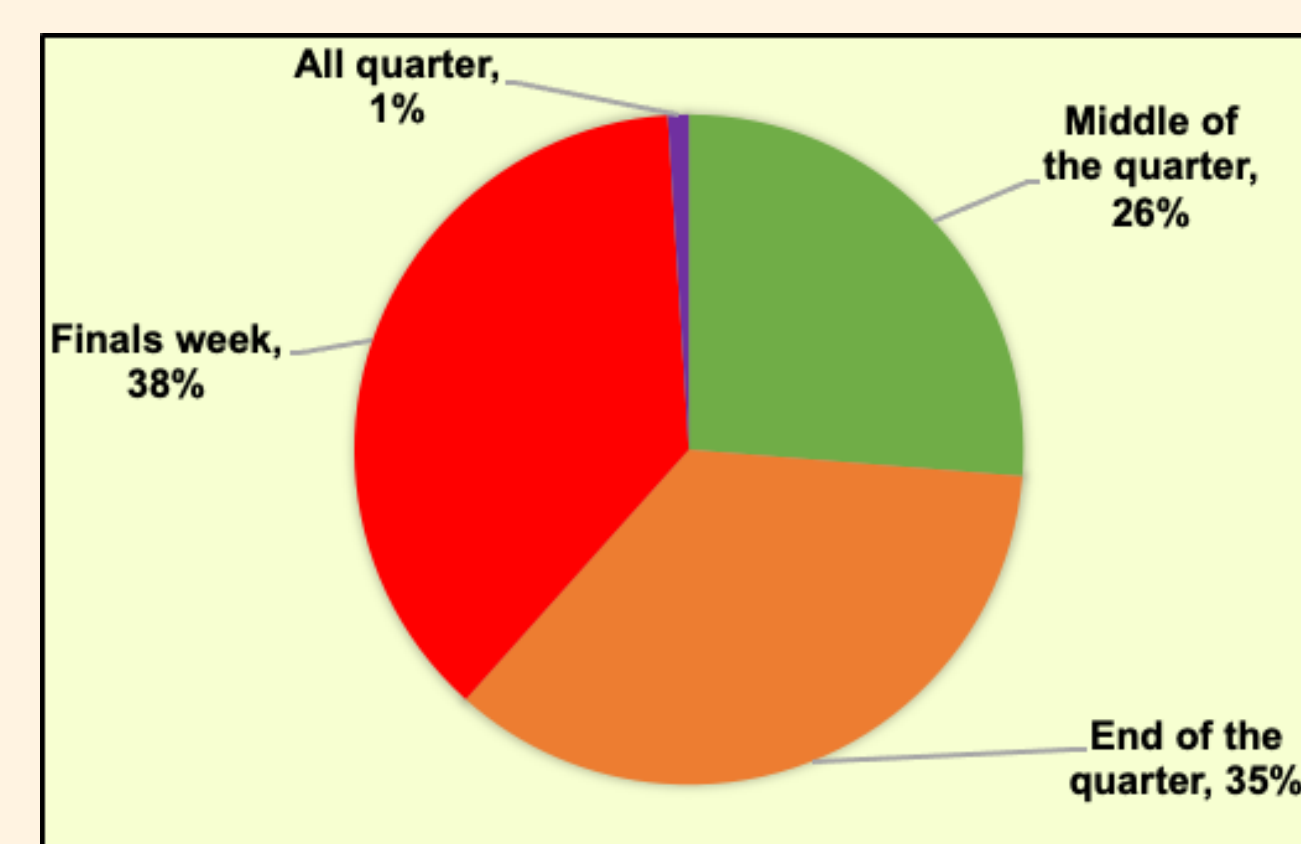


FIGURE 1. STUDENTS SHOW AN INCREASE OF STRESS TOWARDS THE END OF THE QUARTER

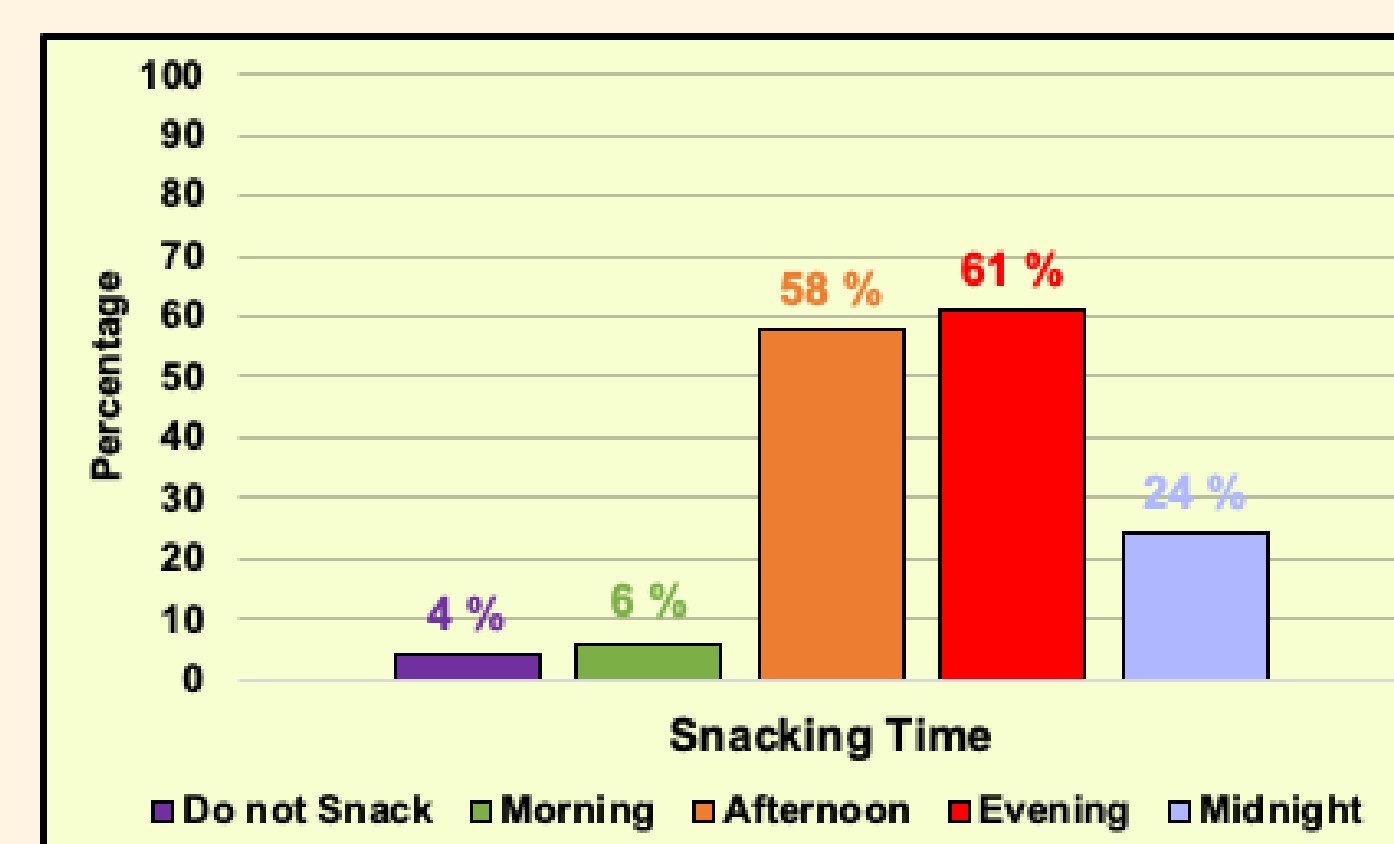


FIGURE 2. RESULTS FROM THE DIETARY EATING HABITS SURVEY QUESTION

- 86% (N=67) of students found that their academic workload directly impacts their eating habits
- 61% (N=48) in general, UCSD students tend to snack during evening hours (**Fig.2**)
- 60% (N=47) of UCSD students tend to eat snacks while studying; 25% ate chips, 24% ate candy
- Chi-square results where **p-Value > .0001**, indicates that there is **no significant difference** between stress academic perception and class level

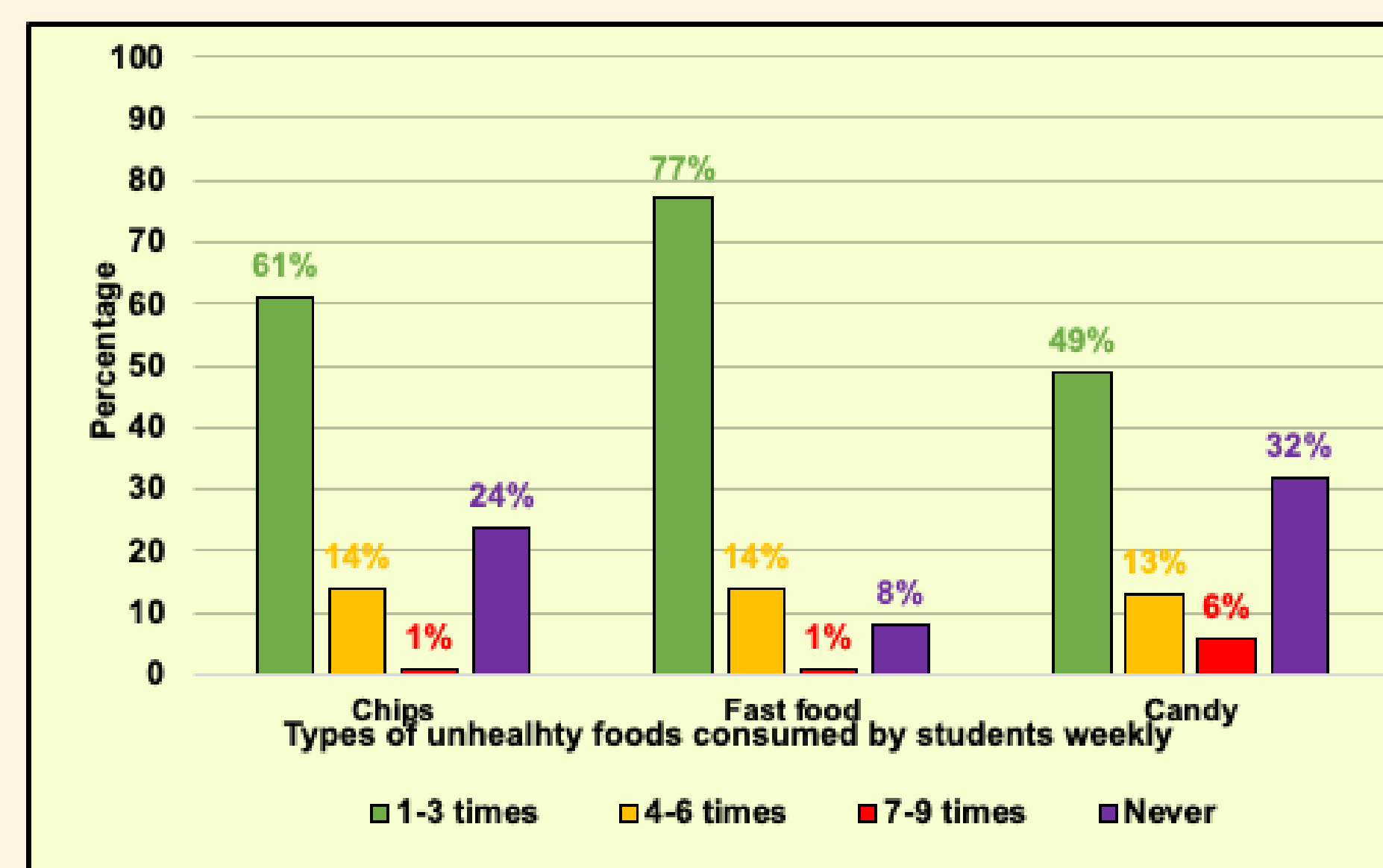
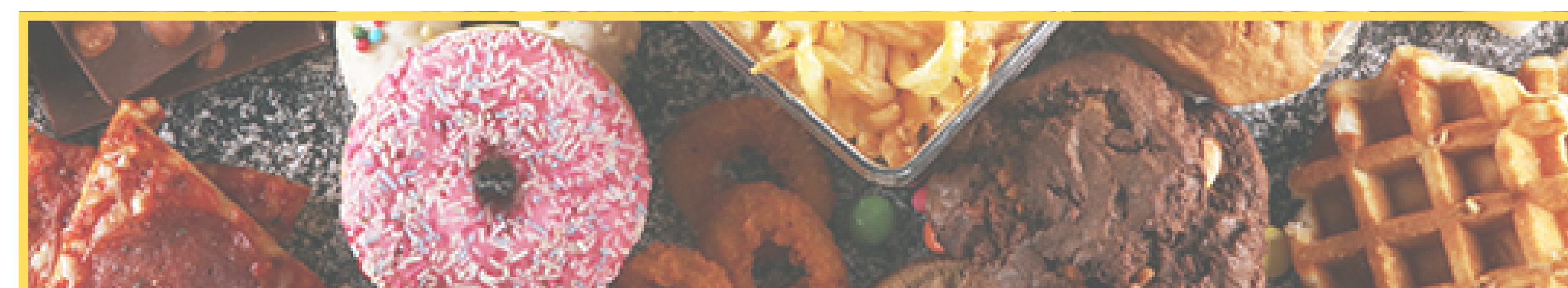


FIGURE 3. FREQUENCY IN WHICH UCSD STUDENTS TEND TO EAT DIFFERENT TYPES OF UNHEALTHY FOODS

- On average, 61% of students reported eating chips, candy or fast food 1-3 times a week, whereas 24% reported never eating those food items
- There is a 3:1 ratio difference between students who eat junk food 1-3 times a week and those who do not

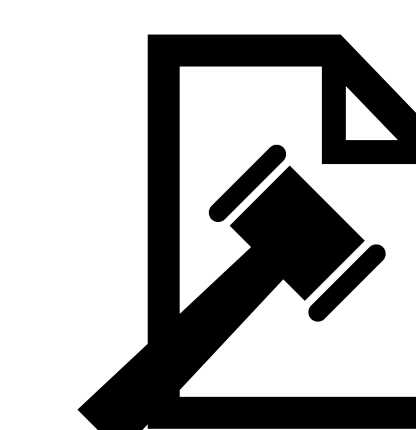
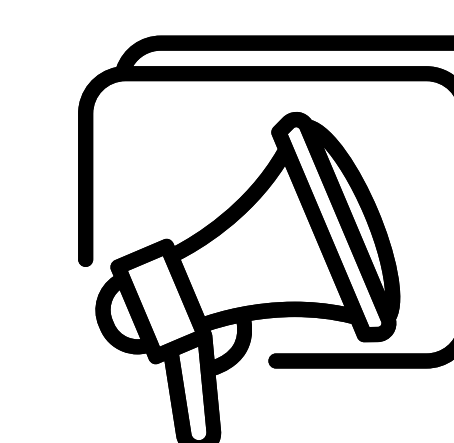


CONCLUSIONS

- Snacking while studying is a common practice amongst students which supports the literature regarding binge-eating and the risk of gaining weight leading to health issues
- Students tend to stress the most during the end of the quarter, leading to an increase consumption of fast-food and unhealthy snacks such as chips, candy, and foods high in sugar, fat, or sodium
- One limitation of our study was that there was no survey question regarding the times in which students tended to study

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Implementing healthier food options on campus, including the dining halls, Price Center, markets, and on-campus Target
- Implementing policies that require universities to offer less unhealthy snacks and replace them with fruits and vegetables



REFERENCES



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Dr. Nguyen-Grovazu, Francisca Rivera, and Behnan Albahsali for helping us facilitate our study. A special thanks to our peers who helped review and provide feedback for our project.