

Hi,

This draft is currently super drafty and not completed, with something pending to do:

1. I need to find two more sources as there is only 8 sources
2. Maybe add some more subsections, as there is only three subsections and my essay is really short now.
3. Expand the conclusion.
4. Finish the in-text citation
5. Calculate a function for the experiment part and add some graphs

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University Dining hall promoted obesity in students

Every kid loves foreign food, same was I. As a Chinese kid, I enjoyed eating western food. However, as I grew up and decided to attend a university in the US, I heard about “freshman 15,” which means that first year university students will gain 15 pounds on average. After I entered the university, I fully understood that term: The unlimited food encourages students to eat excessively, and the desserts contain too many calories. And I have already gained some weight since entering the university. Then, I began wondering whether “freshman 15” is just a joke or do the university dining halls really promote the obesity in students.

What is obesity and how is obesity spreading:

Before we talking about the obesity in university, we need to at first figure out the definition of obesity. Broadly, obesity means overweight; medically, obesity means the body mass index (BMI) to be above 30. BMI can be calculated by weight in kilograms divided by square of height in meters. In this case, if a 1.8-meters high person get over 97.2 kilograms, he has obesity. Unfortunately, we can easily observe many people around us with that weight-to-height ratio or higher. US has the highest obesity rate among the world, which is almost ten times as high as the rate of Korea, and that rate is increasing quickly. (Pérez) In 2005, about 60% people in US are overweight and 34.3% people have obesity. (Taubes) In 2017, 39.6 percent of US citizens have obesity. (Sofferlin)

It is widely believed that the high rate of obesity is the negative effect of quickly developing economy. As people gained more income and the society produced more food,

people tended to eat more than necessary. This situation took place in every country, but especially severely in US, which was partly due to the higher speed of economic growth and partly due to the high-calory dining culture.

Dining culture in University of Virginia:

As the quickly growing rate of obesity might be related to the dining culture, I decided to research on the dining hall of UVA. I hypothesis that the high calory food and low-quality food together might cause the obesity in students. I spread a survey in my classmates about the dining hall, and I gathered the information that no participants liked the dining hall food—all participants rated the food for 3 or below with highest 5. Also, almost half of the participants gained weight after entering the university and more than 80% of them thought the gain in weight is related to the dining hall food. Moreover, more than two third of the participants thought they would turn to unhealthy food if the normal food is not good. Those responses together showed that food in UVA dining hall is not delicious overall, and that low quality have negatively influenced students' health. Besides that, the UVA dining halls provided calories label for each food. For an adult male, the calories take in per day should be around 2500. However, 9 percent of participants took more than 2500 and 6 took more than 3000 calories in the dining hall per day. Although my sample is relatively skewed, it showed that food in dining hall provided too many calories yet with a low quality.

This result of sample reminds me McNamee's article on the Cavalier Advantage. "Escape the dining halls and swipe elsewhere," which introduced the meal exchange in UVA. The introduction sentence is really interesting: "The first few weeks of school have passed, which is plentiful time to realize that dining halls are not the most ideal spot to curb your hunger. Although this sentence is probably written for fun, but it really showed that UVA

students are not satisfied with the dining hall food that they would rather eat some potentially less healthy meal exchange food.

After the survey, I set up a simple experiment to observe students' food choice in the Runk Dining hall during dinner time. I choose 6:30 to 6:40 p.m. in two normal work days and counted the number of students taking food from different food bars. I included four food bars, including two normal food bar, one pizza bar, and one burger bar. Normally, the pizza and burger (with about 300 calories per serving) would contain more calories than the food from normal food bar (with about 200 calories per serving). On the first day, the normal food bars provided roasted chicken and pork, each with 180 and 190 calories. In ten minutes, 28 students took chicken, 23 students took pork, 34 students took pizza, and 23 students took burger. This seems pretty balanced: the number of students taken different foods are close. However, on the second day, there is a "special menu" in a normal food bar: BBQ chicken with 550 calories, which can satisfy a healthy adult's 1/4 calory need per day, while another food bar provided roasted pork with 180 calories. Within 10 minutes on this day, 54 students took the BBQ chicken, 11 took pork, 16 took pizza, and 18 took burger. More than half of the students chose the food with highest calories. [Expand] These results showed that there is a relatively positive relationship between the calories of the food and the number of people taking the food.

The result of the observation corresponded to the result of survey: students are not satisfied with the normal dining hall food. They would rather take some more delicious food with higher calories, which may cause the excessive consuming of calories. In this case, the low-quality food contributed to the obesity rate in university.

Buffet or menu:

When eating buffet, people tend to eat more as they do not need to pay extra money for extra food. However, if people eat buffet every day, they will eat more on average—and this may cause an increase on weight. That is the problem of meal plan. First-year students are forced to pay for the unlimited meal plan with 50 swipes per week. For every meal, students tend to eat more since the dining hall provide food in buffet pattern. Moreover, as there are about 7 swipes per day, students also go to the dining hall frequently. For example, one might take some drink in afternoon and another might eat some desserts at night. Consequently, the unlimited meal plan and the buffet pattern also promoted overweight.

Cynthia Radnitz, a psychology doctor, and her peers did an experiment on how the free array, or the buffet style, food affect students' choice on the food. She separated the participants, and all of them are first-year university students, into three groups, one with optimal default (OD), the menu with healthy food, one with suboptimal default (SD), the menu with unhealthy food, and one with free array (FA), that students can choose whatever they want unlimitedly. In the OD setting, 94% students chose the healthy food with more nutrition and less calories; in SD setting, none of students chose healthy food, as there is no healthy food; and in FA setting, 47% students chose healthy food, which is exactly a half of the number under OD setting.

We can readily see that only less than half of the participants under FA setting, who are also the first-year university students, chose the healthy food. Consequently, the current food-offering pattern is not healthy enough. Students might take excessive and unhealthy food.

Conclusion:

Overall, the university dining halls are not healthy in the terms of calory. As the food

is not delicious, students will turn to unhealthy but more tasty food, and as the food is offered in a buffet pattern, students tend to eat excessively and eat more unhealthy food.

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