

## ABSTRACT

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Title: THE USE OF VENDING MACHINES AMONG DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHICS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Obesity rates have been growing rapidly in the United States, making it an urgent public health issue. As students transition into a college lifestyle, many changes occur that contribute to the rising obesity rate-one of them being dietary choices. Because students gain more autonomy in college, they gain control over their dietary choices. Vending machines on college campuses play a role in the dietary choices of many college students. Vending machines, which offer high energy/low nutrient snacks, serve as quick and easy ways for students to fight off their hunger. The objective of this research was to compare college students' demographic characteristics by frequency of vending machine usage. Understanding more about college students who use vending machines provided further insight on how to effectively market healthier alternatives in vending machines. This research also contributed to the current knowledge of eating differences among different groups of people. Significant differences were observed. Vending machine usage was more common in the following groups: men, non-Hispanic black students, students living off campus without a parent or guardian, and freshman. Overall, the difference in vending machine use among these demographic variables will help those working on healthy eating initiatives on college campuses focus on the subpopulations that need it most.