Understanding Awareness of Food Security Resources Available to University Students

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Background

- **Food Insecurity Prevalence¹,²,³**
  - National: 11%
  - Oklahoma: 14%
  - Payne County: 20%
  - OSU: 43%

- **Food Security Resources Usage³**
  - Very Low Food Secure: 78%
  - Low Food Secure: 10%
  - Marginal or High Food Secure: 54%
  - Hungry but didn’t use resources: 2%

Focus Group Findings

- A lack of awareness of resources results in students not using available resources.
- Students believe food insecurity is a threat to academic performance and is more prevalent at the end of semesters.
- Using food resources is not normalized on campus.

Intervention Development

- Based on focus groups results, a social media campaign was created to address low awareness and stigma surrounding food assistance resources.
- Campus A-Frames with QR codes were used to advertise the Instagram, with the aim of increasing awareness of availability and locations of food resources.

Survey Methods

- A survey assessing awareness and usage of each resource pre and post following was created on Google Docs and sent to all OSU followers through direct messages.
- Students could leave their school email to be entered in a drawing to win 1 of 6 $10 OSU Dining Cards.
- Paired T-Test was used to analyze the pre and post data.

Findings: Instagram Survey

- **Food Resource Awareness**
  - Before Following: 33.3%
  - After Following: 55.6%
- **Food Resource Usage**
  - Before Following: 7.4%
  - After Following: 55.6%

Conclusions

- Students at OSU engage in social media content about food security resources.
- Students had an increased awareness of available food security resources after following the social media campaign.
- Social Media campaigns, specifically Instagram, pose as a promising strategy to increase awareness and usage of food security resources.
- Further research on the effects of a social media campaign over an extended time period.

References


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Problem Statement

- Almost half of OSU students experience some level of food insecurity.
- Students reporting low and very low food security are not utilizing available food resources.
- The project’s purpose was to understand why resources are underutilized and to develop an appropriate intervention to address it.

Methods

- In-person and virtual interviews with OSU Students were conducted.
- Questions were validated by OSU Leadership and Campus Life.
- Recruited from a list of 1,000 random email list of non-first year students over the age of 18 and from minority student organizations.
- Responses were analyzed for common themes.