

Fad Diet or Exercise? Maintaining Weight among Millennials

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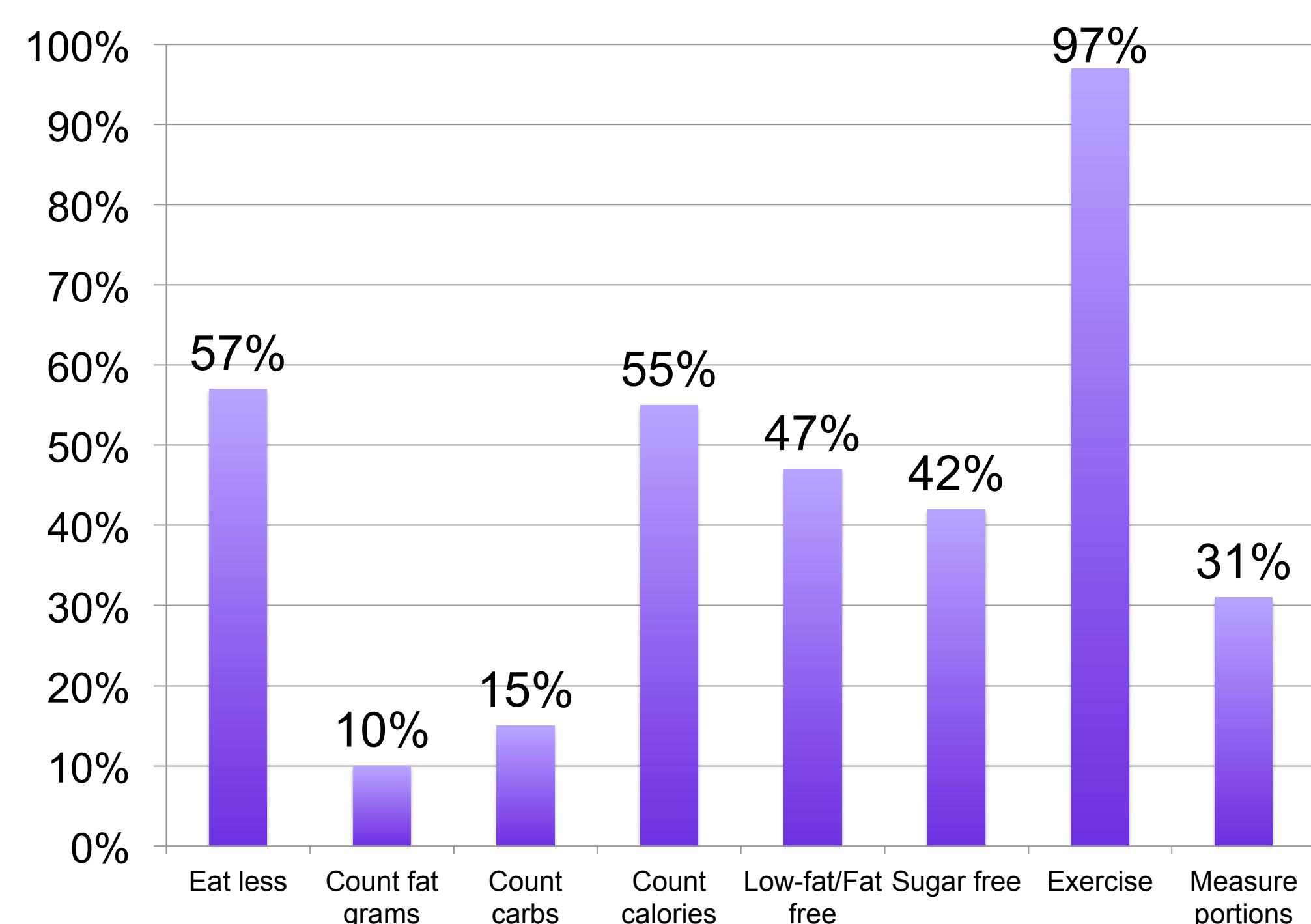
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Background

- Approximately 45 million Americans follow a diet every year (Boston Medical Center 2018), and although these diets may provide quick results, the likelihood of keeping the weight off is low, and about half of the individuals who follow fad diets gain the weight back within a year (Truby, 2006).
- Upon research of common fad diets, four were chosen to focus on: Weight Watchers®, the Atkins Diet®, Gluten-free Diet, and the Paleolithic® Diet (Best Health, 2016).
- Along with fad diets, millennials often exercise as a means to lose weight or maintain a healthy lifestyle. Four out of five millennials exercise at least once a week which is 15% higher than their baby boomer counterparts. (Valentine, 2017).

Weight Loss Behaviors Identified by Participants



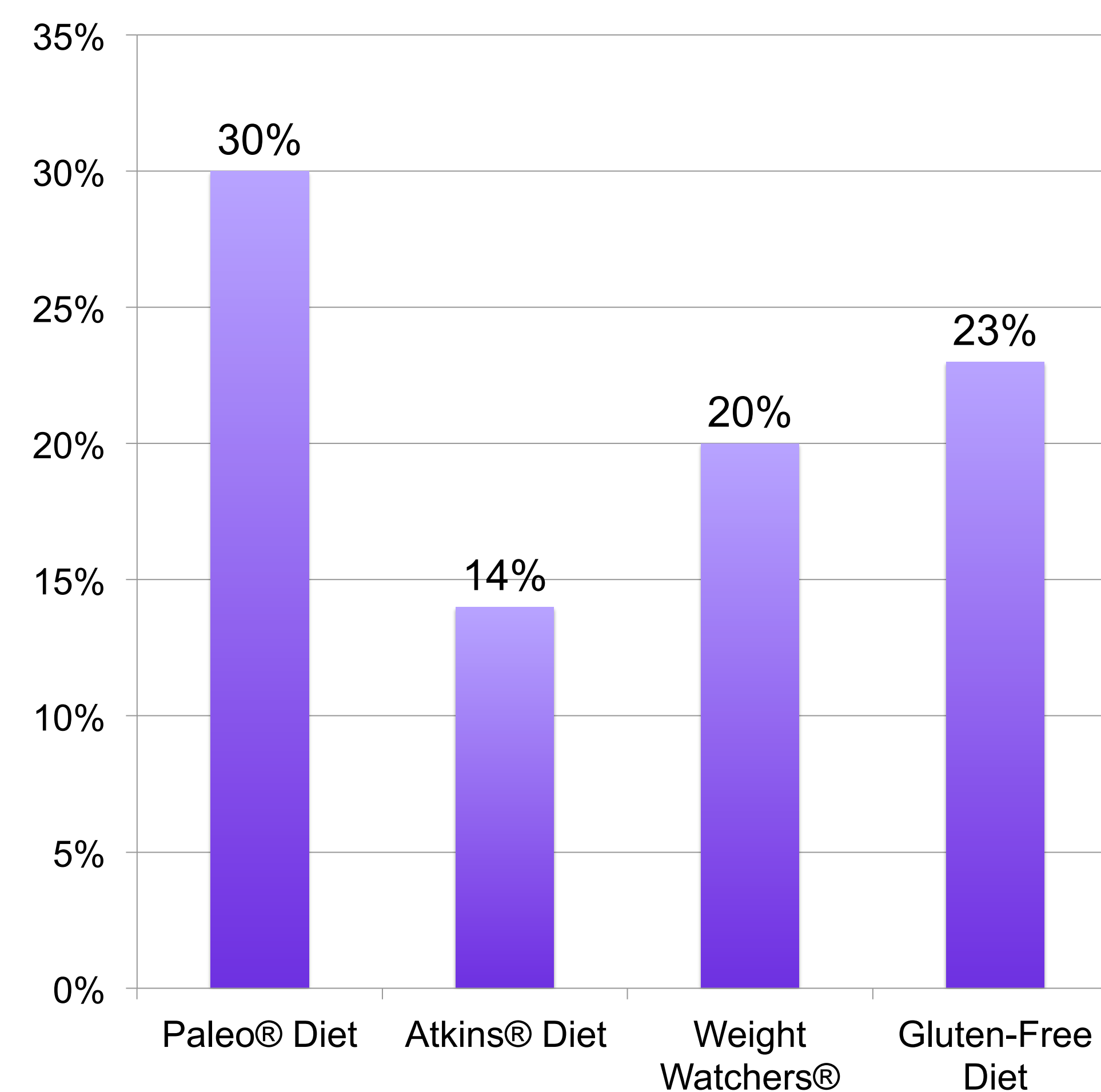
Methods

- Un-blinded, randomized trial approved by Texas Christian University Institutional Review Board.
- Participants completed an online research questionnaire after providing informed consent.
- Population included 236 TCU male and female students ages 18-22.
- Analyses assessed participants' history of fad dieting and outcomes, perceived health status based on body weight and image, eating and exercise habits, and incidence of lifestyle practices such as smoking and alcohol use.
- Data was analyzed using SPSS ($p \leq 0.05$). Frequency distributions, descriptives and correlations were analyzed for trends in health maintenance behaviors.

Study Objectives

The purposes of this study were 1) to determine reasons university students follow fad diets, and 2) to determine other methods students utilize for weight management.

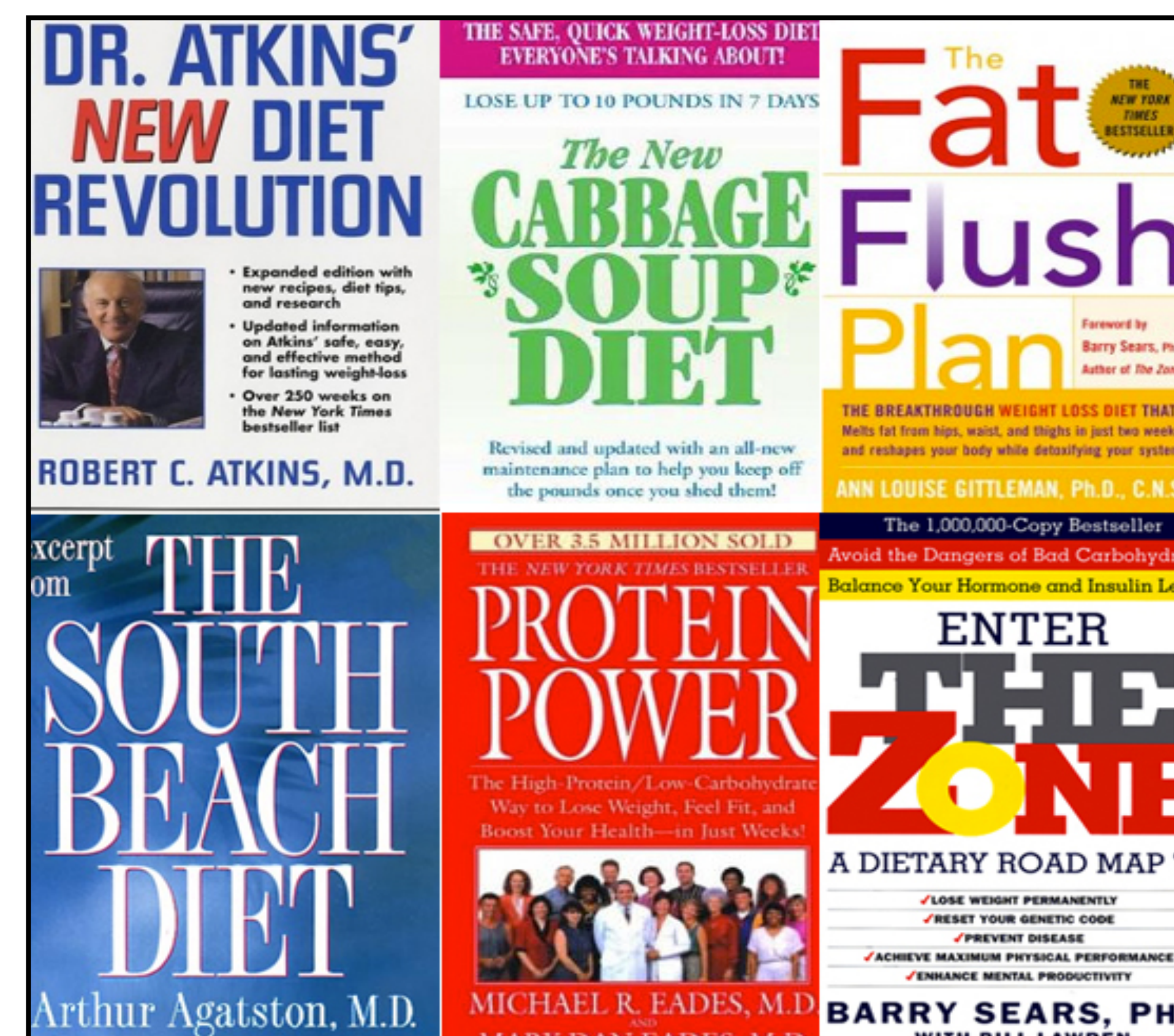
Types of Fad Diets Followed by Participants



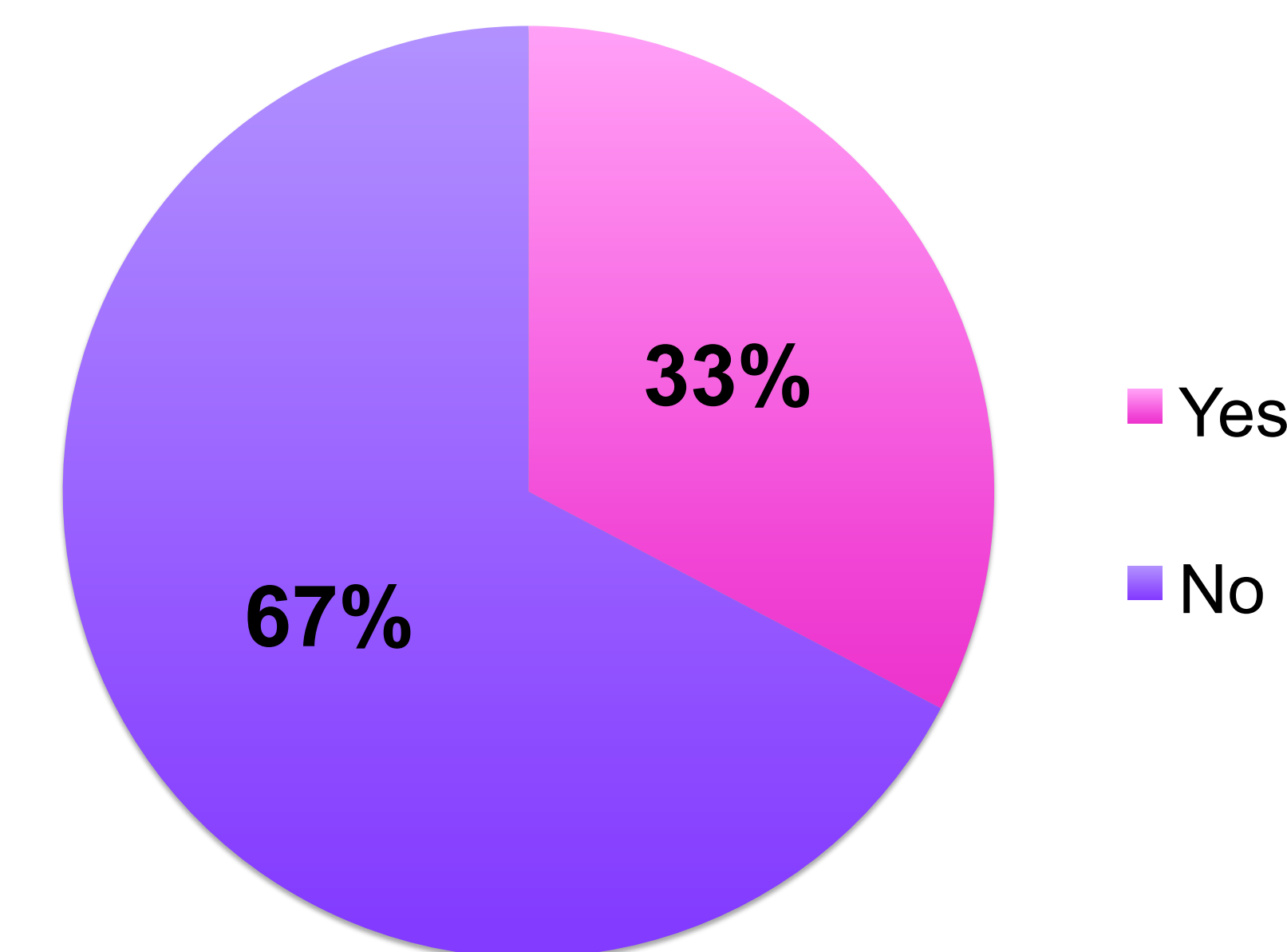
Participant Profile

The majority of participants were female (78.2%), white (84.9%), aged 18-20 years (59.3%), sophomores (32.4%) lived in residence halls (52.3%), and had a family income of over \$100,000 (67.8%).

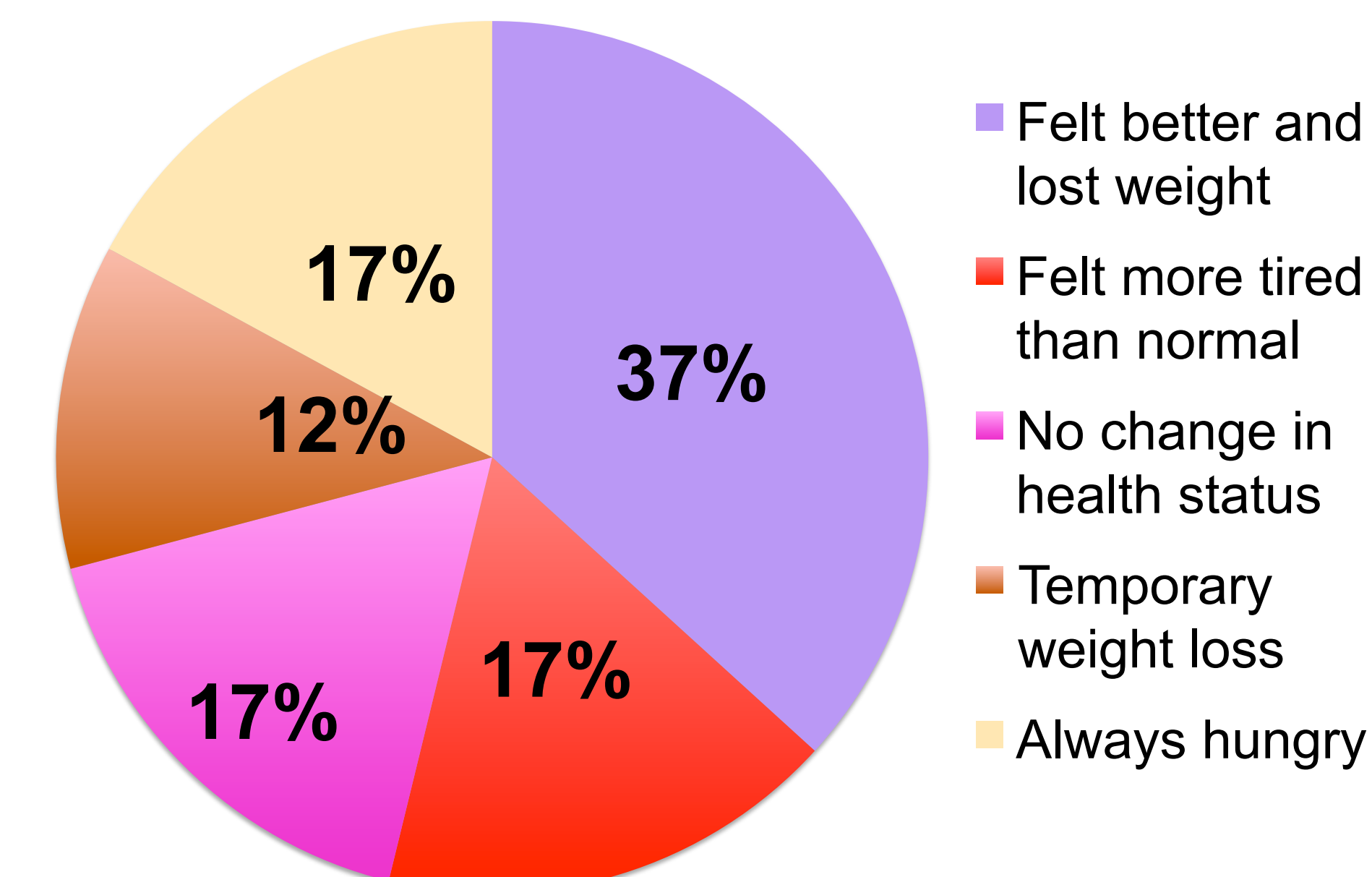
Fad Diets



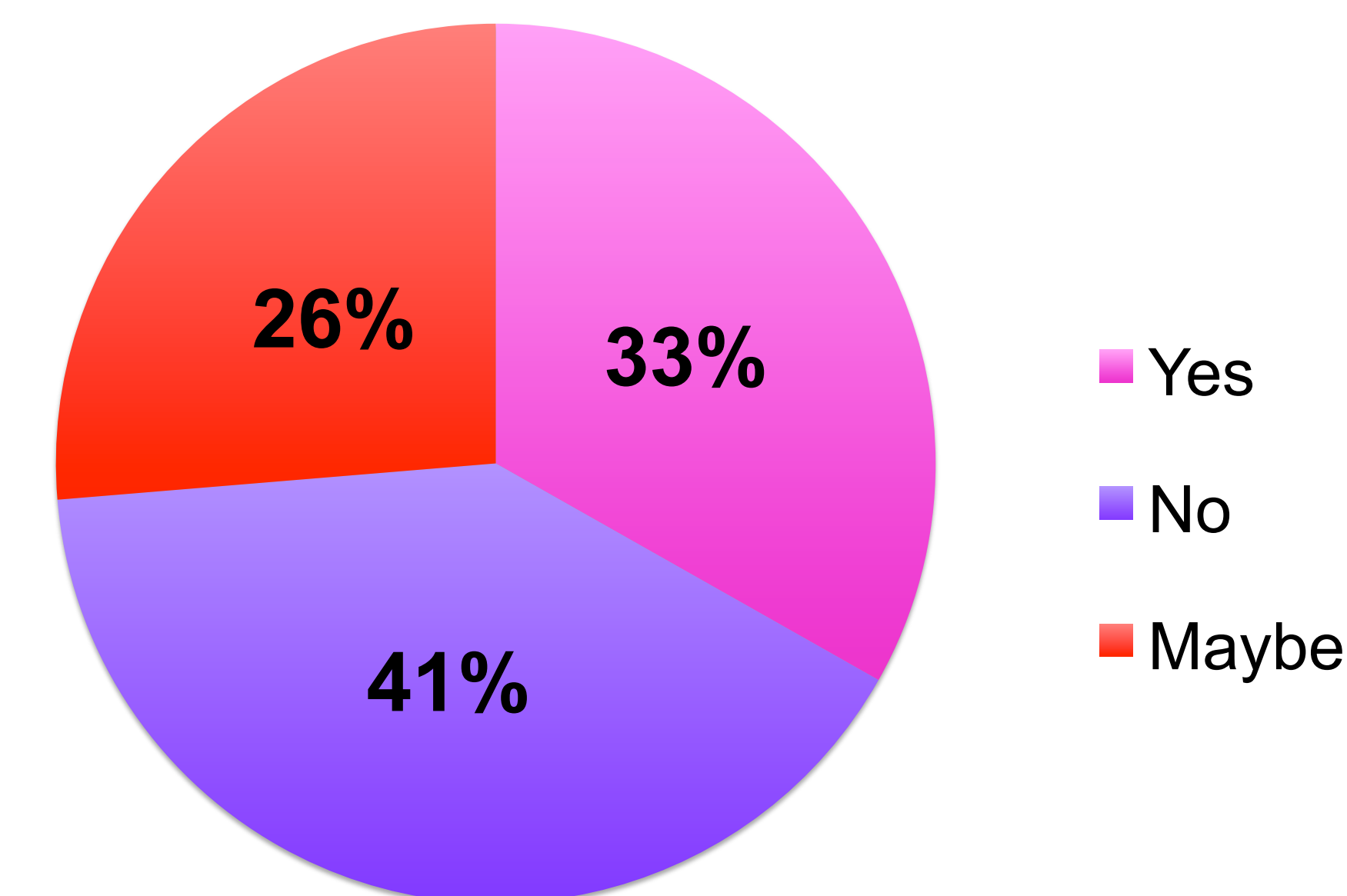
Fad Diet Experiences Identified by Participants



Participants Who Followed Fad Diets Before

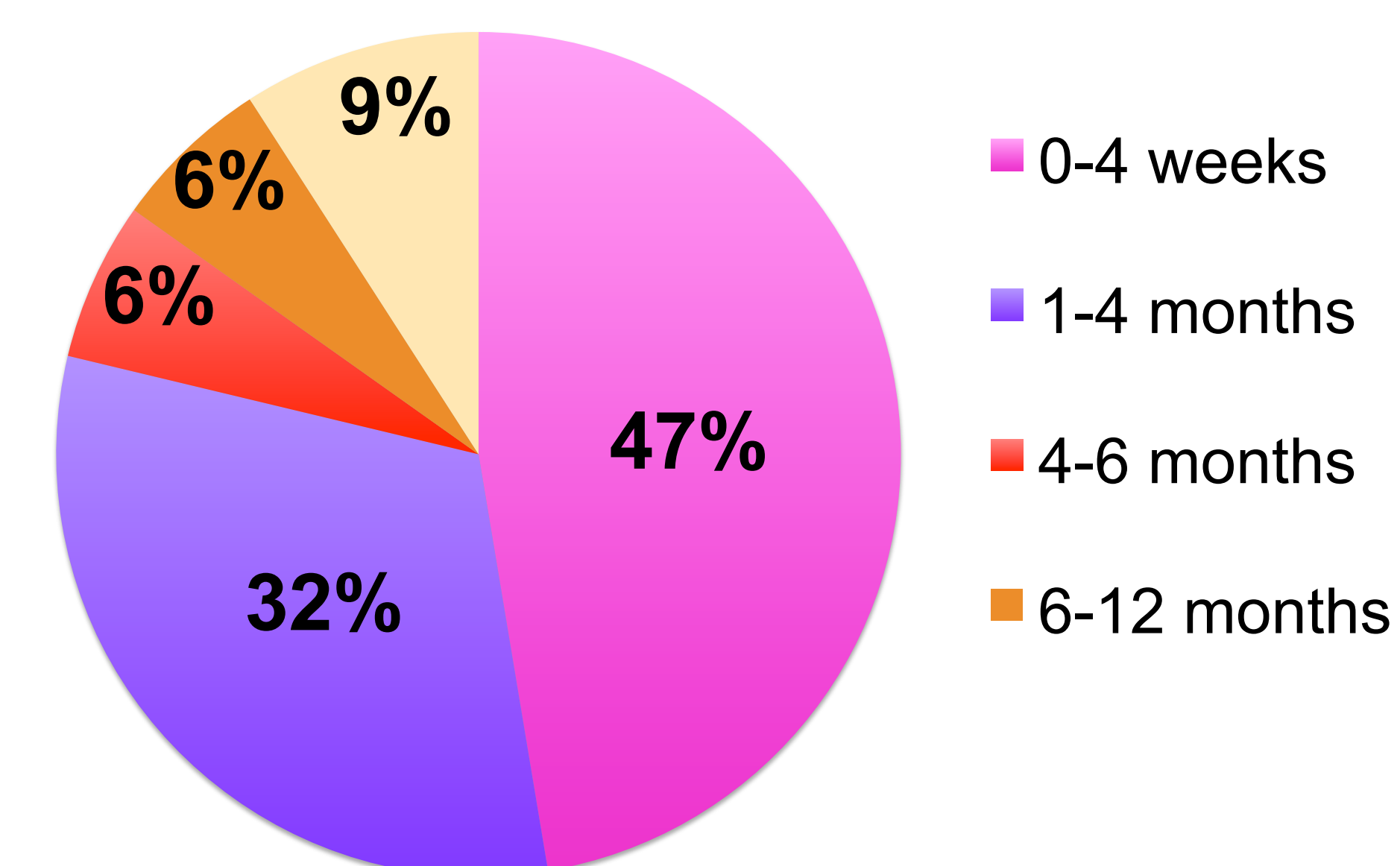


Participants Effects of Dieting

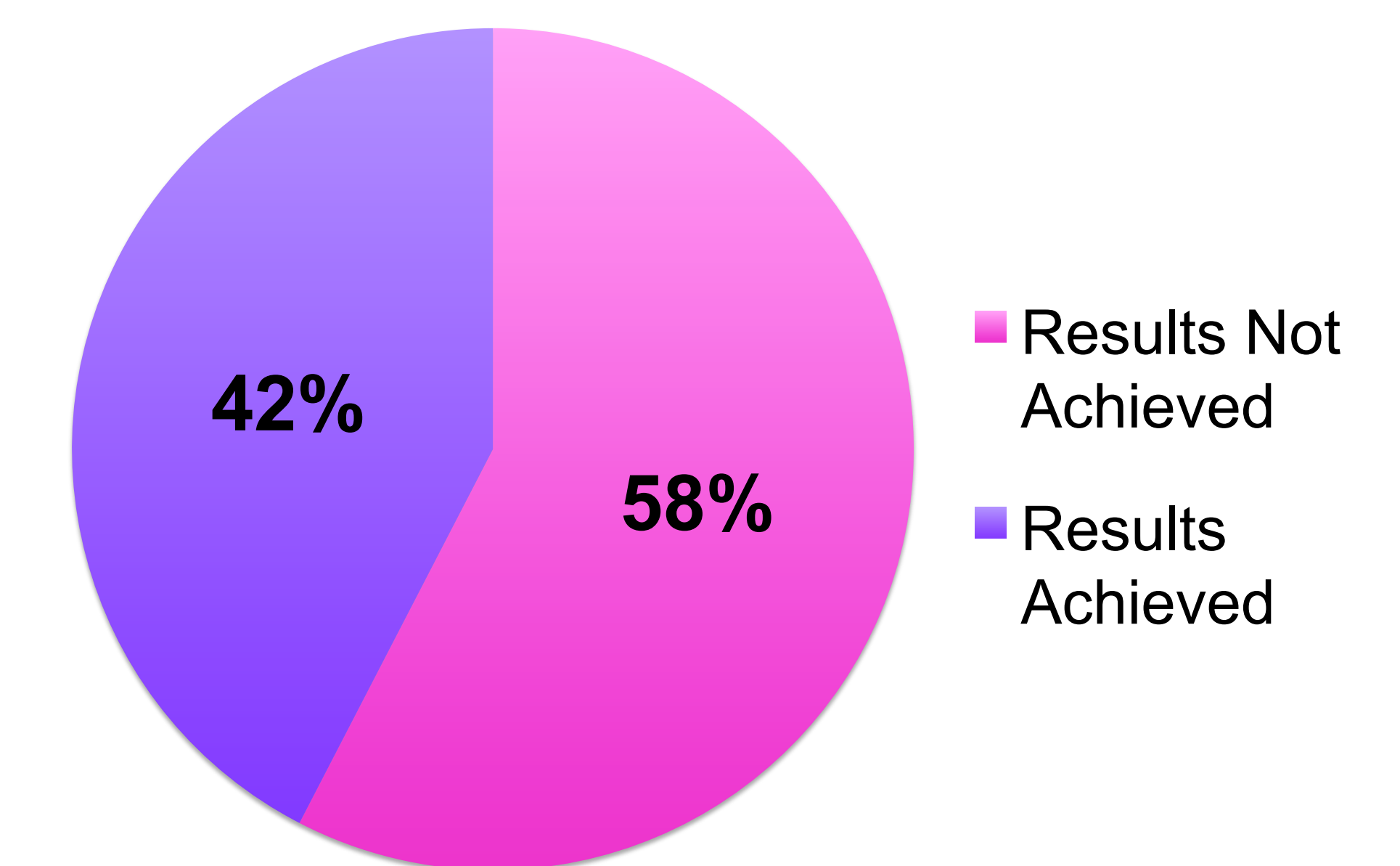


Participants Who Would Follow Fad Diet Again

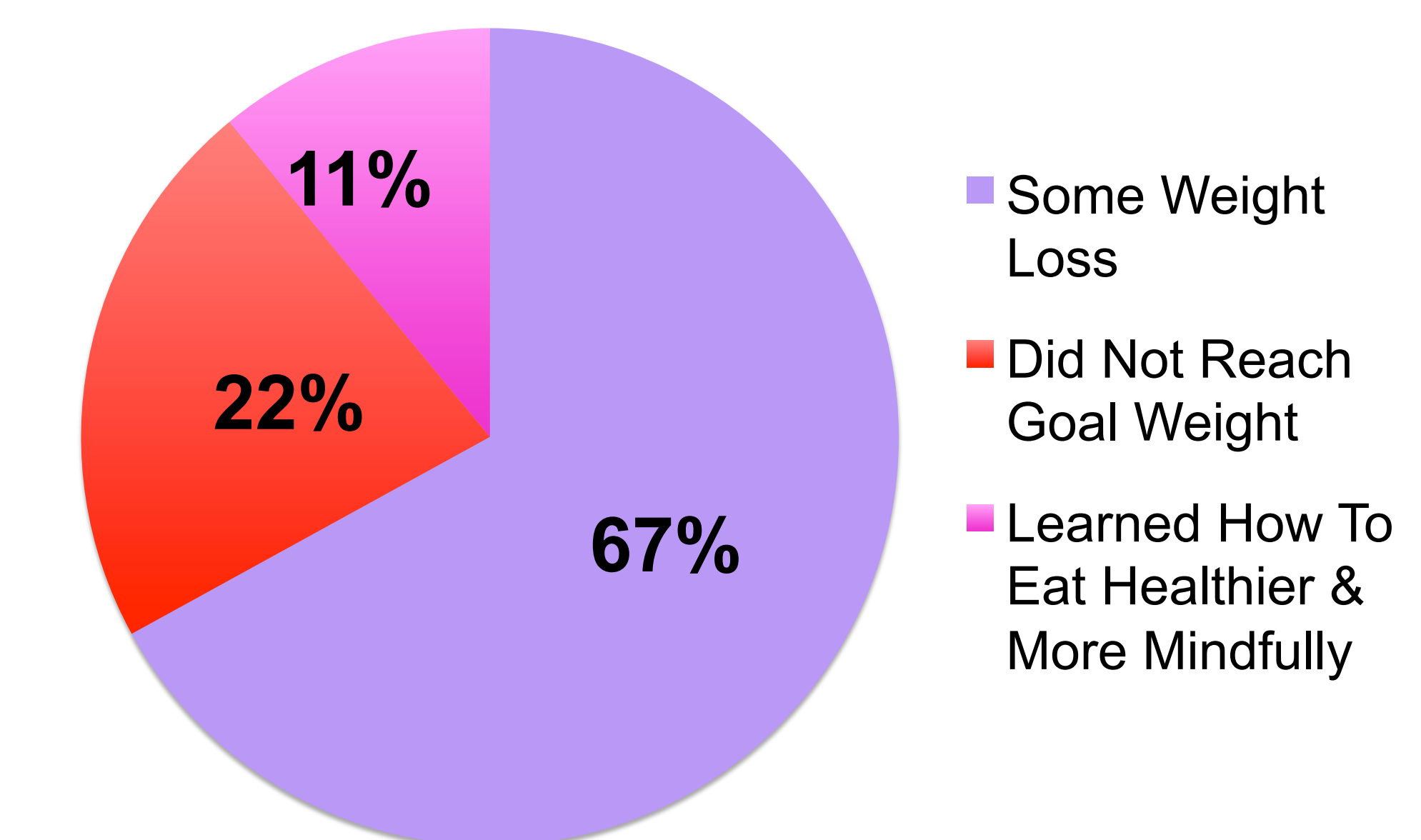
Length of Time Participants Followed Fad Diets



Results Among Participants Following Fad Diets



Participants Following Fad Diets Desired Results



Effects of Dieting Among Participants Following Fad Diets

Discussion and Conclusions

- The majority of millennials today primarily utilize exercise, while baby boomers utilize dieting, to aid in weight loss and weight maintenance.
- Most females feel pressured by the media, friends, family, or themselves to physically look a certain way.
- The positive correlation between females and healthy eating habits, pressure to be a certain weight, and perceiving themselves to be a normal weight ($p=0.01$).
- Of the fad diets followed by 32.7% of university students, diets included Paleolithic, Gluten Free, Weight Watchers, Atkins, Whole 30, Vegan, Ketogenic, Juice Cleansing, Diet Pill usage, Clean Gut, Advocare, Rice Diet, Nutriystem, Cosmo diet, Grapefruit Diet, Ideal Protein, and Intermittent Fasting.
- University students who followed fad diets experienced temporary or adverse results. Exercise was preferred rather than dieting to maintain weight.