

### Project Incentive and Goals:

- Optimal health is essential for successfully completing the prolonged academic journey that college entails.
- However, achieving good health necessitates a healthy diet, which can pose challenges for minority and low socioeconomic students.
- Our project aims to investigate the barriers to adopting healthy eating habits among these students to identify viable solutions for addressing healthy eating insecurity.
- Specifically, we evaluate the impact posed by four possible obstacles: lack of initial exposure (1), lack of time (2), price (3), and information confusion (4).
- Based on the results, we aim to evaluate the efficacy of our project and determine whether similar initiatives should be implemented on a larger scale.

### Workshop Objectives:

- Considering the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students, it is plausible that exposure to healthy recipes is a privilege. Consequently, we dedicated a large portion of our workshop time to exposing students to healthy recipes (1), which were intentionally designed to be quick, nutritious, and economical (2), (3).
- The abundance of dietary information available on social media can be overwhelming and may lead to confusion as students generate their understanding of what constitutes healthy eating. Thus, we hope to assess students' existing knowledge and educate them on the topic so they are well-equipped in making well-informed decisions regarding healthy eating practices (4).



### Data Analysis:

- While the majority of the students do not perceive being healthy as adhering to a diet, over fifty percent of the group regards a diet as a weight-loss regiment. Thus, notwithstanding the majority's view that dieting is not a prerequisite for good health, the conceptualization of a diet is actually more inclusive than what the students believe.
- While marginally over half of the students (55%) agree to the notion that "healthy" involves consuming mostly whole, minimally processed foods, further enhancements are needed to increase students' awareness of this crucial aspect of dietary practices.
- Lack of time and lack of exposure seem to be the greatest barriers to healthy eating.
- 0% of the students express strong disagreement with the premise that being healthy involves avoiding carbohydrates and fats in favor of a high-protein diet (\*). This result reflects a prevalent misconception that currently pervades the discourse surrounding healthy lifestyle choices.
- 47.6% of students responded neutral to eating low-calorie and organic foods as being healthy (\*). The result suggests the complex nature of these debatable topics and thus interesting areas of focus for future initiatives.
- (\*) These results yet are not shown in the Figures.

### Project Description

- We held two workshops at Carter Riverside High School, our community partner.
- According to U.S. News & World Report, students enrolling at the school primarily come from minority groups and have low socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Over 90% of students are enrolled in the school's Free Lunch Program.
- In the first workshop, we hosted a nutrition information game and instructed students to make overnight oats.
- In the second workshop, we instructed students to make two quick yet nutritious snacks, hummus rice cakes and fruit parfait as well as asked them to fill out a survey, whose results help us evaluate our project.

### Survey Results:

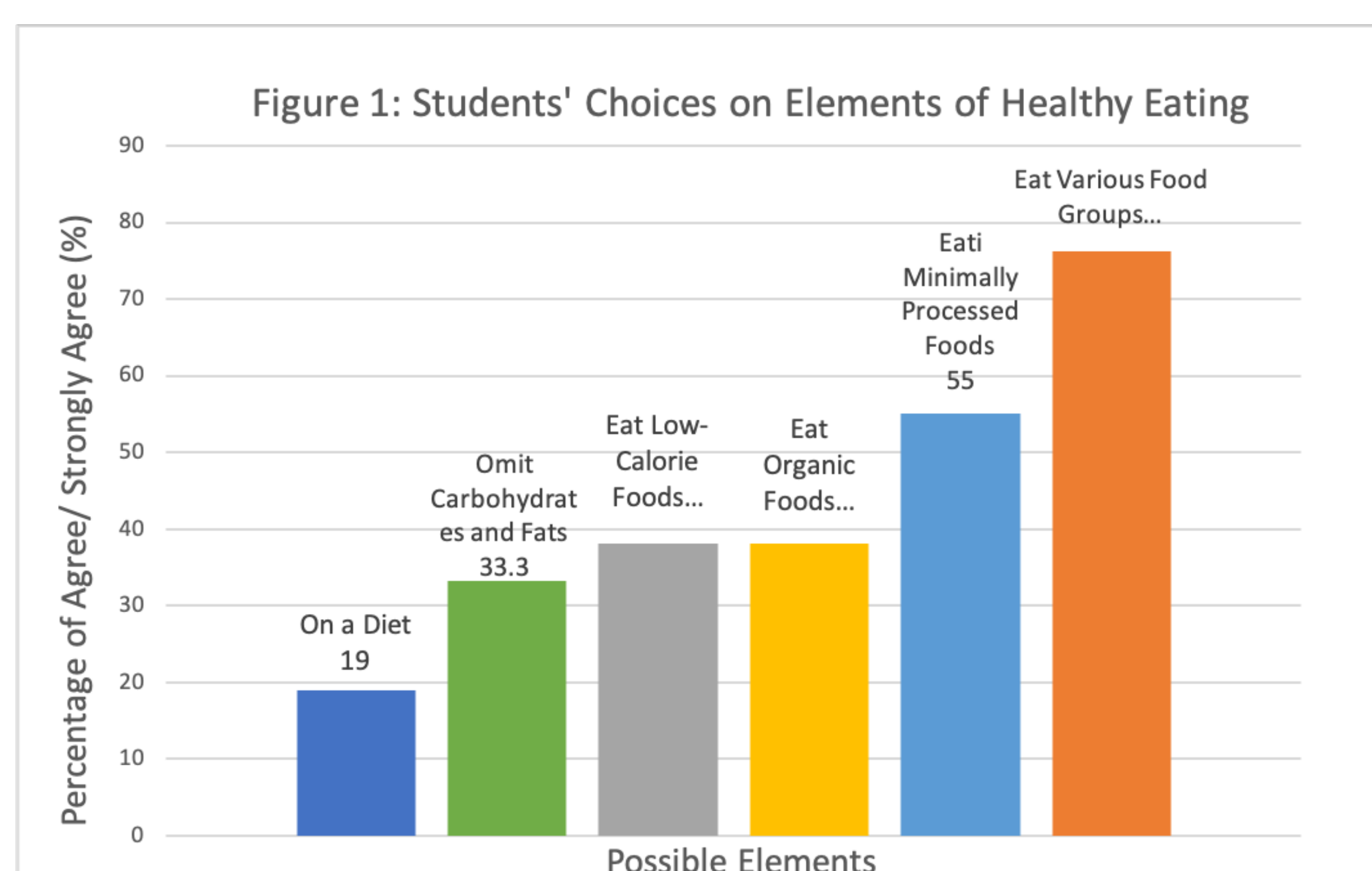


Figure 1: Students' responses to elements that they regard as constituents of a healthy diet.

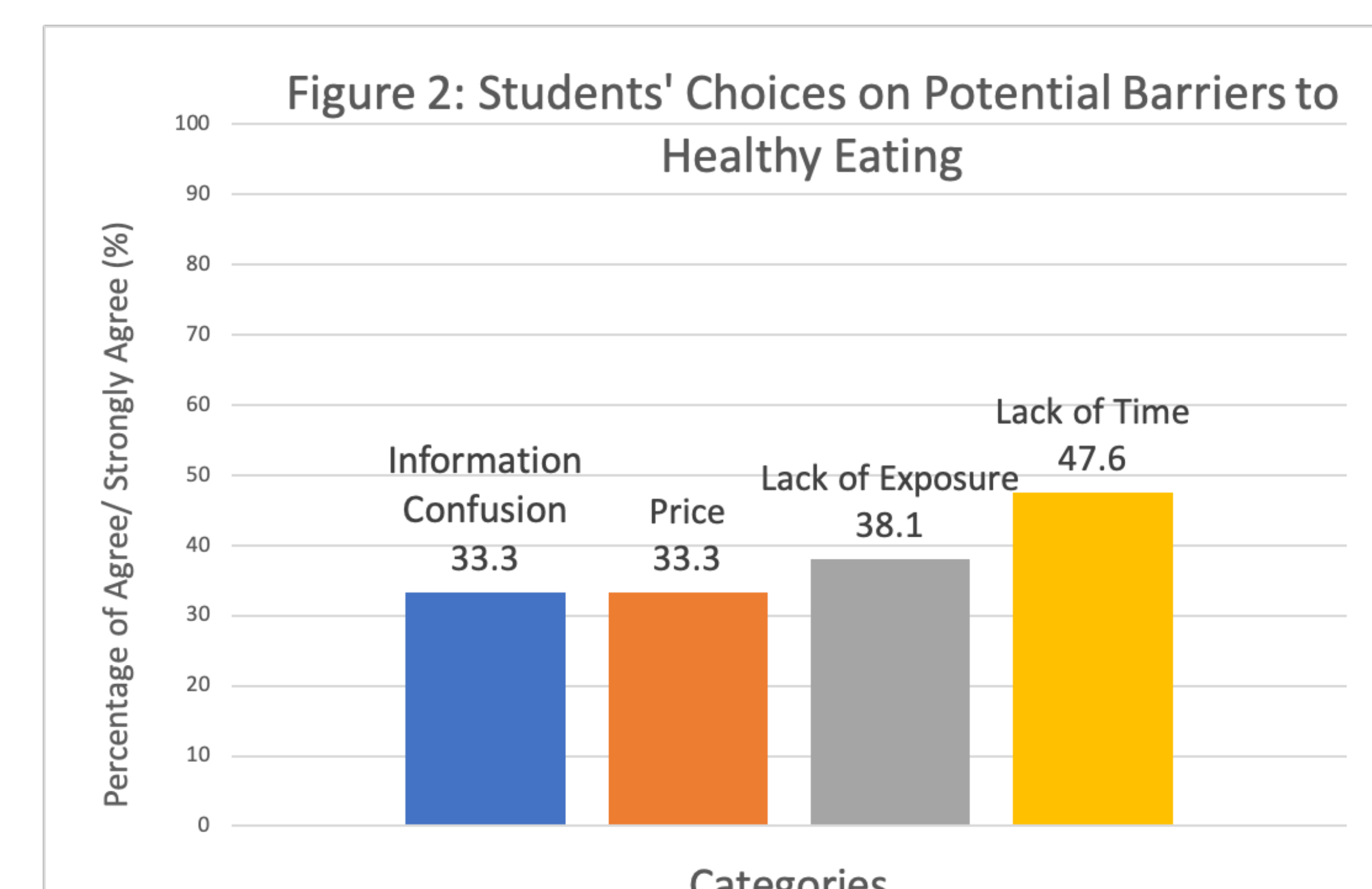


Figure 2: Students' responses to obstacles that apply to them in the pursuit of adopting and maintaining healthy eating habits.

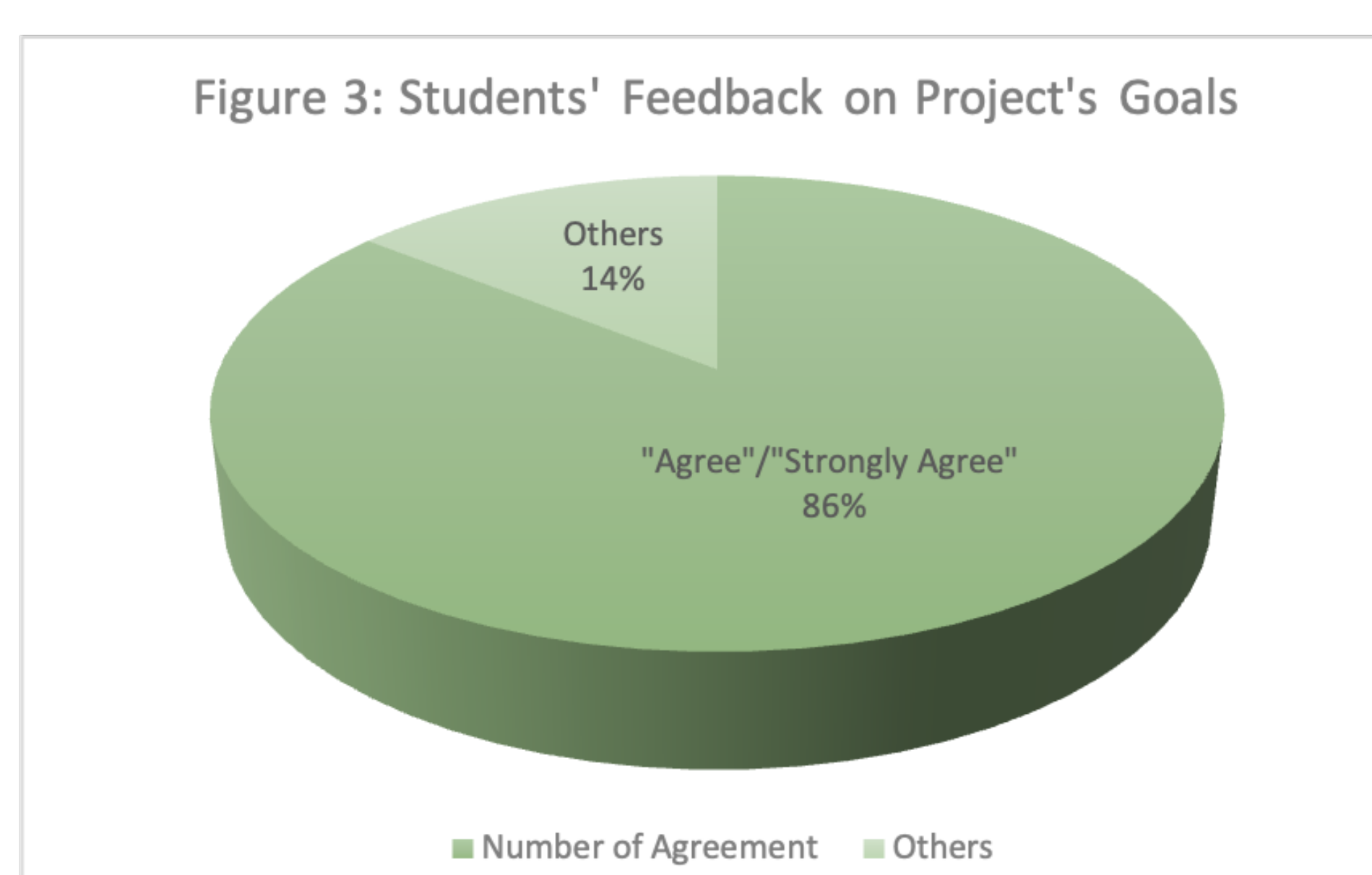


Figure 3: Students' responses to the project's accomplishments: 85.7% of the respondents affirmed that our initiative achieved four goals, namely: providing exposure to healthy recipes, dispelling the notion that healthy recipes are complex, emphasizing the existence of affordable healthy recipes, and instilling in the students a desire to further their understanding of healthy eating and how to attain it.

### Conclusions:

- The students exhibit a reasonably comprehensive understanding of the fundamental principles of good nutrition, a crucial precursor to cultivating healthy dietary habits. Nevertheless, certain fallacious beliefs necessitate correction to foster a more accurate comprehension on the subject matter.
- Recognizing that lack of time and limited exposure are the primary impediments hindering students from maintaining healthy eating habits, we posit that, based on the feedback pertaining the efficacy of our initiative, similar endeavors should be implemented on a larger scale to assist students in adopting and sustaining these habits.