# Observation Project

Study Group 2

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## How to utilize lunch time in the Johnson Center?

### Excludes sit down restaurants

### Main food court in between the bookstore and the first stair case

### 12:30 to 1:00 PM

* Eating / Drinking only
* Studying / Working only
* Socializing without food and study material
* Multitasking of other categories
* Other activities (EX. Sleeping, PDA, no activity, etc.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activities | Gender | Number of people |
| Eating/Drinking only | Male IIIIIII  Female IIIIIIII | Alone IIIIIIIII  Group IIIIII |
| Studying/Working only | Male IIII  Female III | Alone IIII  Group III |
| Socializing without food or study material | Male III  Female IIIIIII | Alone III  Group IIIIIII |
| Multitasking of other categories. | Male IIIII  Female IIIIIIII | Alone IIII  Group IIIIIIIII |
| Other activities | Male IIII  Female IIII | Alone III  Group IIIII |

Tally = one person

Influential factors affecting results:

Slow turn over of tables causes less data to be discovered.

Many people would take up a huge table for just one or two people, inhibiting availability of tables and thus, more people to observe.

Interpretations:

Results reflect possible behaviors pertaining to males and females such as sociability, ability to multi-task, time-management capabilities, self-maintenance, etc.

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**Observation Written Report**

Our group did an observation and analysis of the behavior of people in the Johnson Center food court. Specifically we hoped to examine the utilization of tables in the food court. This space consisted of the tables between the bookstore and the main staircase, excluding any sit-down restaurants, and including only occupied tables. We did not include areas where people were only sitting without a table (i.e. blocks and couches next to stair case). Our observation time frame consisted of the duration between 12:30PM and 1PM.

We observed the activity of the occupants of the tables and recorded their behaviors into sets of categories. These included: eating and drinking only, studying and working only, socializing only, multitasking (combination of any of the categories), and other activity. The results were tallied by counting each person who was performing each task. The analyzed data was then stratified into male and female categories for comparison. We also considered whether or not theses persons were performing the task alone or in a group with other people, too.

In order to better comprehend, analyze, and interpret our data, we took the counted results and converted them into percentages. Our group noted we had observed a sample of 53 people during the half hour lunch time frame – consisting of 23 males and 30 females. For the Eating / Drinking category there were 7/23 males and 8/30 females, while the Studying / Working category there were 4/23 males and 3/females. However in the Socializing only category we observed 3/23 males and 7/30 females, the Multitasking category had 5/23 males and 8/30 females, and the other category consisted of 4/23 males and 4/30 females. Below is a chart of these counted recordings in tallied form:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activities** | **Gender** | **Number of people** |
| Eating/Drinking only | Male IIIIIII  Female IIIIIIII | Alone IIIIIIIII  Group IIIIII |
| Studying/Working only | Male IIII  Female III | Alone IIII  Group III |
| Socializing without food or study material | Male III  Female IIIIIII | Alone III  Group IIIIIII |
| Multitasking of other categories. | Male IIIII  Female IIIIIIII | Alone IIII  Group IIIIIIIII |
| Other activities | Male IIII  Female IIII | Alone III  Group IIIII |

\*note that each tally represents one person

Based on the data, males tended to spend more time eating, with 30.4% of men doing this compared to 26.6% of females. Perhaps this can be attributed to the higher metabolic rates possessed by most men, and the tendency to participate in sports and other physical activities. Conversely, women probably tend to eat less because of their tendency to be more self-conscious and concerned about their body weight. Males also tended to spend more time studying and multitasking than females. This can possibly be attributed to the lack of time management skills, unlike females, who have these skills. Thus, males are more likely to have to study and multitask at lunch in order to make up for what they were unable to do prior, such as studying the night before. Females only outpaced the males in the category of socializing. This could possibly be attributed to the increased social tendencies of females. Based on the personal accounts of several males, we inferred that possibly males are less likely to socialize with another male that they are unfamiliar with.

To improve upon our design of the observation and to better our understanding of our results, we could have used a larger group of people for a longer period of time. Also, we could have looked at a different location to make a more general statement of the behavior of males and females. In researching, we could determine possible statistics and correlations between each gender and the respective behavior. To learn more about the motivation of our subjects, we could have gone beyond interviewing and asked them for their motive behind their action.

The competencies of critical thinking and problem solving were evident throughout our project in several instances. We were forced to think critically and intuitively about what motivations people could have for performing each action while at the lunch table. We tried to grasp our minds on various concepts around why certain types of people would perform certain tasks at the lunch table. We had to use the problem solving competency to determine how we might organize the protocol and observation structure. We had to work as a group to reach agreement to the best solution.