

## CONSUMER PROFILE OF A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT IN MALL PLAZA MAULE, CHILE

### PERFIL DO CONSUMIDOR DE UM RESTAURANTE DE FAST FOOD NO MALL PLAZA MAULE, CHILE

### PERFIL DE CONSUMIDORES DE UN LOCAL DE COMIDA RÁPIDA DEL MALL PLAZA MAULE, CHILE



<https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2026.008-173>

Moacyr Portes Júnior<sup>1</sup>, Patricio Wladimir Gurtiérrez Montecino<sup>2</sup>, Marcela de la Paz Inostroza Figueroa<sup>3</sup>, Sebastián Eduardo Retamal López<sup>4</sup>, Natalia de los Ángeles Toloza Salgado<sup>5</sup>, Lisbetty del Pilar Morales Mora<sup>6</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Four out of ten Chileans consume junk food at least once a week.

**Objective:** To describe the consumer profile of a fast-food restaurant in the Mall Plaza Maule, Maule, Chile.

**Methodology:** A quantitative, descriptive, non-experimental study with a grounded theory design; sample: 990 subjects over 18 years of age, collected over a one-week period.

**Instrument:** A survey created by the researchers and validated by experts; eight questions: weight/height, age, gender, occupation, educational level, frequency of visits to the fast-food restaurant, what they usually eat, three meals they most often eat, who they go with, the reason for eating, whether they engage in physical activity and how often, and what types of exercise they do.

**Results:** Consumers are predominantly male (82%), young adults (18-40 years old), students or workers with secondary to university education, and an average BMI in the overweight range (20-25%). Consumption frequency is weekly (mainly 1-2 times), with a preference for traditional fast food such as french fries (537), hot dogs (457), pizza (282), and hamburgers (259), over healthy options (258). Consumers visit in the company of friends (282), partners (228), or family (184), motivated by price (372), taste (291), and speed (586). Although 75% engage in physical activity (1-2 times/week, 30 min-2 hours), moderate exercise such as weightlifting, cardio, jogging, or walking predominates, which is insufficient

<sup>1</sup> Dr. in Human Motricity Sciences. Universidad Autónoma de Chile. E-mail: [mportesj@uautonoma.cl](mailto:mportesj@uautonoma.cl)  
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8459-865X> Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/2024338048420561>

<sup>2</sup> Graduated in Education. Universidad Autónoma de Chile. E-mail: [patitoloino93@gmail.com](mailto:patitoloino93@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Graduated in Education. Universidad Autónoma de Chile. E-mail: [Marce.inostroza@gmail.com](mailto:Marce.inostroza@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> Graduated in Education. Universidad Autónoma de Chile. E-mail: [Seba.retamal12@gmail.com](mailto:Seba.retamal12@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup> Graduated in Education. Universidad Autónoma de Chile. E-mail: [Nathita.toloza@gmail.com](mailto:Nathita.toloza@gmail.com)

<sup>6</sup> Master's degree in Teaching and Management for Higher Education. Universidad Autónoma de Chile.  
E-mail: [Lisbetty.morales@cloud.uautonoma.cl](mailto:Lisbetty.morales@cloud.uautonoma.cl)

to counteract high caloric intake.

**Conclusion:** Given the Chilean context of overnutrition and obesity, the profile reveals urban lifestyles with a nutritional-activity imbalance, suggesting interventions for healthy menus and the promotion of exercise.

**Keywords:** Consumers. Fast Food. Physical Activity. Mall Plaza Maule.

## RESUMO

**Introdução:** Quatro em cada dez chilenos consomem junk food pelo menos uma vez por semana.

**Objetivo:** Descrever o perfil do consumidor de um restaurante de fast food no Mall Plaza Maule, Maule, Chile.

**Metodologia:** Estudo quantitativo, descritivo, não experimental, com delineamento baseado na teoria fundamentada; amostra: 990 indivíduos com mais de 18 anos, coletados ao longo de um período de uma semana.

**Instrumento:** Um questionário elaborado pelos pesquisadores e validado por especialistas, composto por oito questões: peso/altura, idade, gênero, ocupação, nível educacional, frequência de visitas ao restaurante de fast food, o que costumam consumir, três refeições que mais ingerem, com quem costumam ir, motivo para comer, se praticam atividade física e com que frequência, e quais tipos de exercícios realizam.

**Resultados:** Os consumidores são predominantemente homens (82%), jovens adultos (18–40 anos), estudantes ou trabalhadores com escolaridade do ensino médio ao superior, e com IMC médio na faixa de sobrepeso (20–25%). A frequência de consumo é semanal (principalmente 1–2 vezes), com preferência por alimentos tradicionais de fast food, como batatas fritas (537), cachorros-quentes (457), pizza (282) e hambúrgueres (259), em comparação com opções saudáveis (258). Os consumidores visitam o local acompanhados principalmente por amigos (282), parceiros (228) ou familiares (184), motivados por preço (372), sabor (291) e rapidez (586). Embora 75% pratiquem atividade física (1–2 vezes por semana, entre 30 minutos e 2 horas), predominam exercícios moderados, como musculação, cardio, corrida ou caminhada, o que se mostra insuficiente para compensar a alta ingestão calórica.

**Conclusão:** Diante do contexto chileno de sobrenutrição e obesidade, o perfil identificado revela estilos de vida urbanos marcados por desequilíbrio entre alimentação e atividade física, sugerindo a necessidade de intervenções voltadas para cardápios mais saudáveis e promoção da prática de exercícios.

**Palavras-chave:** Consumidores. Fast Food. Atividade Física. Mall Plaza Maule.

## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** Cuatro de cada diez chilenos consumen comida chatarra al menos una vez por semana.

**Objetivo:** Describir el perfil de consumidores de un local de comida rápida en el Mall Plaza Maule, Maule, Chile.

**Metodología:** estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo, no experimental, con diseño basado en la Teoría Fundamentada; muestra: mayores de 18 años, durante un período de una semana,

990 sujetos. Instrumento: encuesta creada por los investigadores, Validación por Expertos; ocho preguntas: peso/talla, edad, género, ocupación, nivel educacional, frecuencia de asistencia al local de comida rápida, lo que habitualmente consume, tres comidas que mayormente consume, compañía con la cual asiste al local, el motivo por el que consume, practica de actividad física y con qué frecuencia la realiza, qué tipos de ejercicios realiza.

**Resultados:** Consumidores predominantemente masculinos (82%), jóvenes adultos (18-40 años), estudiantes o trabajadores con educación media-universitaria y IMC promedio en rango de sobrepeso (20-25%). La frecuencia de consumo es semanal (principalmente 1-2 veces), con preferencia por comida rápida tradicional como papas fritas (537), completos (457), pizza (282) y hamburguesas (259), sobre opciones saludables (258). Consumidores acuden en compañía de amigos (282), pareja (228) o familia (184), motivados por precio (372), sabor (291) y rapidez (586). Aunque 75% practica actividad física (1-2 veces/semana, 30 min-2 horas), predomina ejercicio moderado como pesas, cardio, trote o caminar, insuficiente para contrarrestar ingesta calórica alta.

**Conclusión:** Ante contexto chileno de malnutrición por exceso y obesidad, el perfil revela estilos de vida urbanos con desbalance nutricional-actividad, sugiriendo intervenciones para menús saludables y promoción de ejercicio.

**Palabras clave:** Consumidores. Comida Rápida. Actividad Física. Mall Plaza Maule.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Based on dietary habits in Chile in 2024 and 2025, the nutritional landscape continues to reveal perceptions and behaviors relevant to understanding the relationship between Chileans and healthy eating. The findings indicate that healthy eating practices are interpreted as a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods, with the intention of avoiding those considered harmful to health. Furthermore, disease prevention and body image awareness emerge as the main motivations driving people to adopt healthy eating habits. These perceptions align with the new Dietary Guidelines for Chile, which promote a holistic approach to food, not only from a nutritional perspective but also from a sociocultural and environmental one, highlighting the importance of diversity, sustainability, and overall well-being as principles for healthy and responsible eating (MINSAL, 2025).

In Chile, nutrition campaign strategies designed with the specific characteristics of the target audiences in mind—considering sociocultural factors, psychological constructs, and the underlying meanings of preventive behaviors in nutritional health—and integrated with intermediate structural measures, prove to be the most effective. These campaigns achieve greater relevance and ownership of the message, thus fostering the intention and realization of changes in eating behavior. This approach, focused on comprehensiveness and contextualization, is fundamental to ensuring the success of public health nutrition interventions (Caichac Hoppe, 2022).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health and other institutions have promoted policies that foster food education with a community-based approach, integrating nutritionists into schools, community spaces, and local markets, thereby strengthening the connection with specific audiences and their cultural needs. These campaigns are also linked to regulations to improve the nutritional quality of foods available on the market, encouraging the consumption of natural and minimally processed products and limiting the supply of ultra-processed foods (Loyola Pérez, 2021).

These coordinated and contextualized actions not only improve knowledge, but also transform eating habits in the population, positioning themselves as pillars for achieving effective results in health promotion and prevention of nutrition-related diseases in Chile (Gutiérrez Turner, et al., 2022).

Research has indicated that in recent years Chilean families have changed their eating habits, shifting from consuming traditional and minimally processed foods, such as fruits, vegetables, stews, and legumes, to highly processed products that are more energy-dense, contain more saturated fats and sugars, and have lower levels of micronutrients and dietary fiber, posing a significant public health challenge. In a context marked by obesity, it is

essential that individuals develop dietary self-regulation strategies that promote adherence to nutritional recommendations and contribute to maintaining a healthy nutritional status (Saavedra, 2022). This regulation involves adopting conscious behaviors that limit the consumption of foods high in calories, saturated fats, and sugars, promoting a balanced diet in accordance with current public policies, such as the Nutritional Labeling Law in Chile, which seeks to facilitate informed and healthy choices. Thus, self-regulation becomes a key component in addressing the obesogenic environment and preventing nutrition-related diseases (Henríquez, 2021).

The country has been undergoing profound changes, transformations that have been affecting the daily lives of new generations of Chileans who work, study, and even spend their leisure time. The current nutritional situation is related to economic and sociodemographic changes in diet and lifestyles, as well as in clothing, food acquisition, and how free time is managed, thus creating a complex and dynamic landscape (Garay-Rivera, 2022). With changes in lifestyle, fast food has become an economical and convenient way to eat, which often does not provide the necessary nutrients, and the regular consumption of these foods can lead to various health problems.

This type of food has become very popular lately, due to the pace of life people lead, since the little free time they have means they end up consuming something quick and, often, unhealthy. Currently, because of social, labor, and educational changes, 4 out of 10 Chileans consume junk food. While the number of people consuming fast food has increased, whether students or workers, approximately 41% of the population consumes it at least once a week. People between 15 and 24 years of age are the most frequent consumers of these foods. Within this population, 44% are male, while 39% are female, who consume fast food at establishments (Loyola Pérez, 2021).

Although 2013 saw the largest increase in the population consuming fast food, with a 9% rise compared to previous years, 2015 saw a 3.3% increase, marking a third year of weak growth after the notable increase in 2013. However, in 2016, there was another 3.5% increase, considering all establishments; this trend has continued to rise (Loyola Pérez, 2021).

## **2 OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this study is to describe the consumer profile of a fast-food restaurant in the Mall Plaza Maule, Maule, Chile. This objective is further broken down into other objectives that will help answer the premise, including classifying the body mass index (BMI) of the sample; examining the frequency of fast-food consumption, considering gender, age,

frequency of consumption, type of food consumed, physical activity levels, and reasons for consuming fast food.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This was a quantitative, descriptive, non-experimental study with a grounded theory design (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018). The study population consisted of daily customers who visit one of the fast-food restaurants or shop at the Mall Plaza Maule location, totaling approximately 400 people per day and 10,000 consumers per month. The population was defined as all consumers over 18 years of age who visited the restaurant during a one-week period. The sample comprised 990 subjects. To reach at this “n”, a survey was conducted among customers who visit the establishment, resulting in a total of 990 surveys. A 95.5% confidence level was obtained for the data, indicating a sampling error of approximately 5% based on the surveyed population. These customers were considered satisfied, representing 50% of the total sample. A total sample of 990 customers who visit the establishment was required; all were over 18 years of age, signed informed consent, and provided their exact weight and height were known after the study proposal was presented to each customer who approached the establishment.

The instrument used was a survey created by the researchers, which was validated through the Expert Validation process in Research Methodology, Physical Education, and Nutrition (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018), belonging to the Universidad Autónoma de Chile, Talca campus, Maule Region, Chile. The instrument is structured in eight questions, such as weight/height indices, age, gender, occupation, educational level, frequency of visits to the fast-food restaurant, what they usually consume, the three most frequently consumed meals, the company they visit the restaurant with, the reason for consuming the food, whether they practice physical activity and how often, and finally, the category of the types of exercises they perform. Based on the data collection, the categories were established, and the frequency of each response (descriptive statistics) was determined for each section, leading to the generation of a table that clearly and concisely presents the resulting frequencies.

The primary categories established were: sociodemographic data (secondary categories: identification, gender, age, weight, height); the frequency of fast food consumption (secondary categories: weekly frequency of consumption, attending fast food establishments, what is usually consumed in these establishments, and in the company of whom it is consumed); the practice of physical activity (secondary categories: how many times per week it is practiced and how much time is dedicated to these activities, indicating the sport or activity preferred by the respondent).

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eighty-two percent of the respondents were male, and they were the most frequent respondents, while 18% were female. Regarding BMI, 131 people were classified as underweight, representing 13% of the sample; 631 people were classified as having a normal weight, representing 64%; 25 people were classified as obese, representing 3% of the sample; and 203 people were classified as overweight, representing 20%.

Relating gender to BMI, the results indicate that, for the male group, 13% are classified as underweight; 62.5% as normal weight; 2.23% as obese; and 21.93% as overweight. For the female group, 12.63% are classified as underweight; 69.23% as normal weight; 2.8% as obese; and 3% as overweight.

Of the total sample surveyed, 741 people perform physical activity, representing 74.85%, the remaining 249 people who do not perform physical activity represent 25.15%.

Of the sample that does not engage in physical activity, 83% are male and 17% are female. Therefore, they were divided into subcategories according to gender. In the underweight category, females represent a minority, at 9.5%. In the normal weight range, men show greater stability according to their BMI than women, with 53.6% compared to 42.8%. In the overweight category, the percentage is higher for males, at 29.4% compared to 11.9% for females. Finally, in the obese category, there is a higher rate of obesity in the female group, at 35.7% compared to 3.3% for the male group.

The table below presents the overall sociodemographic results:

**Table 1**

*Description of the sample: sociodemographic*

Sociodemographic	18-20 years	18-20 year s	21-30 years	21-30 year s	31-40 years	31-40 year s	41-50 years	41-50 year s	51-60 years	51-60 year s	61-70 years	61-70 year s	71-78 years	71-78 year s
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Age	23	54	95	331	37	235	17	82	6	62	3	24	1	16
Weight	69,5	72,6	74,7	78,6	76,8	79,9	78	79,4	67,5	77,2	78	81,6	84	77,4
Height (meters)	1,64	1,71	1,69	1,74	1,72	1,74	1,70	1,74	1,64	1,72	1,66	1,74	1,81	1,69
BMI	25,88	24,65	25,91	25,89	25,91	26,21	26,56	26,15	25,00	25,94	28,14	26,63	25,64	27,22
Occupation (work, job, studies)														
Did not respond		age: 4	worker 4											
Student	13	38	41	123	6	49	5	17	3	9	1	4	0	2
Worker	7	7	40	187	27	149	11	58	2	46	2	16	0	2
Student/Worker	1	3	2	15	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No working	2	6	12	6	3	29	1	7	1	3	0	3	1	11
Educational Level														

Did not respond	32	Postgraduate	4											
Basic	2	0	10	5	7	16	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	5
High school	9	9	32	105	19	94	10	34	4	22	2	15	0	2
University	12	33	53	205	11	101	5	37	2	27	0	7	0	5
Postgraduate	0	12	0	9	0	18	0	3	0	5	0	2	0	0

The sociodemographic description of the sample allows for a fairly accurate characterization of the profile of those who consume food at the Mall Plaza Maule fast-food restaurant. Overall, the data show a predominantly young adult clientele, with weight and BMI consistent with overweight, a high proportion of people who study and/or work, and a mostly secondary and university level of education.

The majority of consumers are between 18 and 40 years old, both men and women, suggesting that the establishment primarily attracts young adults, age groups that tend to frequent shopping malls and have greater exposure to ultra-processed foods. The presence of people aged 41 and over is significantly lower, indicating that older customers use this type of service less frequently or prefer other food options.

Average weight, height, and BMI across almost all age groups are within the range of overweight, for both women and men, a situation consistent with the trends in overnutrition described in Chile (Casanueva Arratia, et al., 2022; Hernández, 2022; Medina-Morales, 2022). This reinforces concerns about the role fast-food restaurants may play in consolidating unhealthy eating habits, especially among young populations that already exhibit cardiometabolic risk factors.

In terms of occupation (work, job, studies), the clientele is predominantly students, workers, and those who combine work and study, with few individuals who are neither employed nor in academic pursuits. This suggests that the fast-food establishment functions as a quick meal option for those with limited time, who need practical solutions between classes and workdays, and who use the mall as a place for daily transit rather than solely for leisure.

The high number of students in the 18–30 age group indicates that the establishment positions itself as an accessible and socially attractive option for university and technical-professional students, who tend to value speed and price over strictly nutritional criteria. In the 31–40 age group, the predominance of workers suggests a more instrumental use of the space (work breaks, informal meetings, quick meals during work hours), which could guide future healthy food offerings and marketing strategies aimed at this segment.

At the educational level, secondary and university education clearly predominate, while the proportion of consumers with only basic education is low, and there is also a

significant group with postgraduate studies. This indicates that the establishment's customer profile is characterized by a medium-to-high level of education, which challenges the idea that fast food is consumed primarily by people with low levels of education and suggests that factors such as fast-paced lifestyles, convenience, and socialization carry more weight than formal education.

The fact that a significant portion of the sample has university or higher education opens possibilities for more sophisticated food education interventions, incorporating information on nutritional composition, healthier options within the menu itself, and the promotion of informed choices. Likewise, the coexistence of diverse educational levels reinforces the need for segmented communication strategies that consider both simple, visual messages and more detailed content for consumers with greater cultural capital.

The sample appears to primarily represent young adults, students, and workers with secondary and university education levels, who, on average, have BMI values in the overweight range. This sociodemographic and anthropometric profile suggests that the establishment operates as a food space associated with urban lifestyles, limited time, and consumption practices that may reinforce patterns of overnutrition, but which also offer a strategic opportunity to incorporate healthier alternatives aimed at a population with potential receptiveness to health promotion messages.

Table 2 below presents the categories and subcategories of fast-food consumption, and their respective frequencies.

**Table 2**

*Sample Description: Consumption*

Consumption		18-20 years	18-20 years	21-30 years	21-30 years	31-40 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	51-60 years	61-70 years	61-70 years	71-78 years	71-78 years	Total
		Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	
Frequency	(Times per week)															
	1-2 times per week	14	29	42	178	16	116	2	50	2	44	0	16	1	16	526
	2-3 times per week	5	13	33	74	14	57	3	13	0	7	0	1	0	1	221
	3-4 times per week	1	6	16	43	4	32	6	7	2	0	3	2	0	1	123
	4-5 times per week	2	5	2	20	3	13	1	5	0	1	0	4	0	1	57
	5-7 times per week	1	1	1	14	0	11	0	2	1	7	0	1	0	0	39
What they consume																
	Fast-food	17	42	64	245	28	187	15	78	3	48	3	15	0	7	752
	Health-food	6	12	31	86	9	48	2	21	3	20	0	9	1	10	258

Fast-food consumed																
	French fries	16	29	51	187	18	96	9	49	9	49	3	13	0	8	537
	Hot-dog	10	30	42	145	15	128	10	23	1	22	3	24	0	4	457
	Steak sandwich	6	24	21	83	5	95	2	13	0	26	0	14	0	5	294
	Hamburger	2	11	15	80	6	38	3	14	5	62	0	6	1	16	259
	Beef sandwich	2	11	13	48	8	43	1	8	1	9	1	3	0	1	149
	Chicken Nuggets	0	6	10	20	2	16	3	5	0	2	2	4	0	0	70
	"Empanadas"	4	8	11	32	3	23	2	13	2	11	0	1	0	3	113
	Pizza	6	18	13	75	12	70	31	28	1	16	0	10	0	2	282
With whom they consume																
	Family	7	7	22	61	13	47	3	15	0	7	0	2	0	0	184
	Friends	3	18	22	106	17	76	5	19	0	10	0	6	0	0	282
	Partner	6	15	19	87	1	58	4	15	1	13	1	7	0	1	228
	Alone	1	3	11	33	2	27	2	18	1	14	0	5	0	5	122
	Coworkers	0	0	6	26	0	12	2	8	0	3	2	0	0	1	60
Why they consume																
	Price/cost	4	17	34	137	12	89	9	30	1	24	0	15	0	0	372
	Taste	7	18	22	87	5	87	4	33	1	14	1	7	0	5	291
	Speed	14	37	51	190	21	143	11	50	3	42	3	14	0	7	586
	Quality	2	1	3	11	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	24
	Family Activity	4	4	6	32	5	17	0	4	0	7	0	4	0	0	83
	Work Schedule	3	0	11	31	6	32	3	9	1	5	2	1	0	4	108

The consumption characteristics table reveals how, what, with whom, and why customers use the Mall Plaza Maule fast-food restaurant. Overall, the data show high-frequency consumption patterns, a clear preference for typical fast-food products, and motivations focused on price, taste, and speed of service.

Most participants eat at the establishment between 1 and 2 times per week, with a smaller group reaching frequencies of 2 to 3 and even 3 to 4 times per week, indicating regular rather than occasional use of the service. This weekly frequency, predominant in the 18-40 age group, suggests that fast food is part of consumers' usual eating pattern, which may have implications for caloric intake and the risk of overnutrition observed in the sociodemographic profile.

Regarding the kind of food consumed, the majority of consumers opt for traditional "fast-food," in contrast to a smaller proportion who report consuming options categorized as "healthy-food." This indicates that, despite the growing availability of healthier alternatives in some establishments, the actual preference remains concentrated on high-energy and high-fat foods, reinforcing the need to review the offerings and promotional strategies for healthier options.

Within the fast-food category, french fries, hot dogs, and pizza appear as the most consumed products, followed by hamburgers, steak sandwiches, chicken nuggets, and “empanadas” (traditional Chilean food: dough and meat). This pattern reflects a strong preference for ultra-processed foods, rich in saturated fats, sodium, and refined carbohydrates, as described in the literature on consumption in fast food establishments (Mohatar, 2025; Peralta Morales & Quezada Feijoo, 2024).

The high demand for French fries and hot dogs is particularly relevant, as these products are often accompanied by sugary drinks and sauces, creating combinations with very high caloric density. From a public health perspective, this preference suggests that interventions focused on reformulating recipes, reducing portion sizes, or incorporating healthier side dishes could have a significant impact on the nutritional profile of meals consumed at the establishment.

The table shows that customers typically eat out in the company of family, friends, or partners, while a smaller group eats alone or with coworkers. This indicates that eating at the establishment is configured as a social and leisure experience, rather than a mere nutritional need, reinforcing the mall's role as a space for meeting and socializing (Letelier, 2025; Toloza Ruiz, 2025; De Simone, 2024).

Consumption with family and friends also suggests that food choices can be influenced by group norms and dynamics, which has implications for the design of promotional campaigns for healthy options aimed at groups (for example, more balanced family menus or promotions associated with lower-calorie combinations). The segment that consumes with coworkers reinforces the idea that the establishment also serves as a food service in work contexts, especially for employees of the mall itself or nearby offices (Toloza Ruiz, 2025).

Regarding consumption reasons, price, taste, and speed stand out as the most frequently mentioned factors, above perceived quality, family activities, or work schedules. This demonstrates that the decision to visit the establishment is strongly influenced by criteria of economic accessibility and convenience, reinforcing the typical positioning of fast food as a “fast, tasty, and cheap” option (Pascacio Bermudez & Andrea Michelle, 2024).

The fact that “quality” is mentioned less frequently than price and taste suggest that consumers may prioritize immediate gratification and cost over nutritional or health value considerations. However, the presence of family activities and work schedules as additional motivations indicates a functional and relational component that could be leveraged to introduce balanced eating messages without sacrificing the appeal of speed and convenience.

The consumption profile reveals a customer who visits the fast-food restaurant weekly, prefers typical high-calorie foods, consumes primarily in social contexts, and bases their choice on price, taste, and speed of service. This profile, combined with the predominance of young adults with a BMI in the overweight range described in the sociodemographic table, reinforces the importance of considering these establishments as key settings for health promotion interventions (Franco Giraldo, 2022) and for offering healthier food alternatives in the Mall Plaza Maule, Maule, Chile (Rojas et al., 2025; Del Río Expósito, 2021; Loyola Pérez, 2021).

Table Number 3 presents the results related to the practice of physical activity.

**Table 3**

*Sample description: Physical Activity*

Physical Activity	18-20	18-20	21-30	21-30	31-40	31-40	41-50	41-50	51-60	51-60	61-70	61-70	71-78	71-78
	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
1-2 times per week	9	10	25	84	11	87	5	21	2	10	1	5	1	2
2-3 times per week	5	7	27	52	14	42	3	11	0	11	0	2	0	1
3-4 times per week	3	17	13	58	8	20	2	12	1	11	0	6	0	1
4-5 times per week	1	5	5	23	1	14	0	5	2	2	0	0	0	0
5-7 times per week	0	5	1	35	0	18	0	6	0	3	0	2	0	0
Does not practice	5	10	24	75	3	53	7	26	1	25	2	9	0	8
Duration (Hours per Session)														
30 min to 1 hour	7	15	26	125	16	90	5	27	2	13	1	6	1	6
1 to 2 hours	8	15	35	84	16	59	5	17	3	12	0	6	0	0
More than 2 hours	3	13	11	48	1	30	0	11	0	9	0	3	0	2
Sports Practiced														
Soccer	0	18	7	48	4	9	1	3	0	6	0	0	0	0
Basketball	2	0	4	17	1	11	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Cycling	1	1	3	18	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Volleyball	0	4	2	12	3	6	1	3	0	1	0	3	0	1
Track & Field	0	0	1	2	0	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

The data in Table 3 show that most fast-food customers engage in some form of physical activity, but with low to moderate frequency, primarily 1 to 2 times per week, especially among the 18-40 age group, both men and women. This pattern suggests that, while exercise is present, it does not reach the levels recommended for optimal health

promotion, which is particularly relevant considering the fast-food consumption pattern described in the other tables of the study.

In almost all age groups, the predominant category is exercise 1 to 2 times per week, with few cases reaching 4 or more weekly sessions and a significant proportion reporting no physical activity, especially among adults aged 31 and over. This pattern is consistent with what has been described in the literature on urban populations, where a high proportion of insufficiently active individuals are observed who combine sedentary work with regular consumption of high-energy-density foods, which is associated with a greater risk of overweight, obesity, and cardiometabolic diseases.

Most people who engage in physical activity concentrate their practice between 30 minutes and 2 hours per session, with the 18-30 age group standing out, primarily reporting sessions between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Sessions longer than 2 hours are in the minority across almost all age groups. This pattern indicates that, even though there is a willingness to exercise, the combination of low weekly frequency and moderate session durations likely does not reach the activity volumes recommended by the WHO (150–300 minutes per week of moderate intensity). This reinforces the idea of a generally sedentary lifestyle among a significant portion of the establishment's customers (Cardiology, 2021; World Health Organization, 2019).

Among those who participate in organized sports, soccer and basketball predominate, especially among young men, while among women, participation is less distributed among various disciplines (soccer, volleyball, cycling), with very few reporting participations in athletics or other sports. This preference for recreational and competitive team sports is related to social and recreational motivations (Vinagre, 2022; Pellicer de Juan, et al., 2021), which opens opportunities for interventions promoting physical activity associated with tournaments, championships, or partnerships with the mall itself, integrating benefits or incentives linked to healthier consumption within the fast-food establishment.

When these results are cross-referenced with the sociodemographic and consumption characteristics, it is observed that the restaurant primarily attracts young adults who are students and/or workers, with an anthropometric profile in the overweight range, and who regularly consume high-calorie foods. In this context, the presence of predominantly sporadic or low-frequency physical activity suggests an imbalance between caloric intake and energy expenditure, which positions the fast-food restaurant as a critical setting for the design of integrated strategies to promote healthy lifestyles, combining more balanced menu offerings with campaigns that encourage increased frequency and duration of physical activity in this population.

Table Number 4 shows more results regarding the type of physical activity practiced in other sports, because there are other important subcategories to point out.

**Table 4**

*Type of physical activity practice in other sports*

	18-20 years	18-20 years	21-30 years	21-30 years	31-40 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	51-60 years	61-70 years	61-70 years	71-78 years	71-78 years
Gym (Modality)	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Weights	1	6	6	51	2	30	1	9	0	7	0	4	0	2
Cardio	2	3	2	32	0	39	1	12	1	10	0	3	0	2
Zumba/aerobics	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Category														
Jogging	3	11	17	84	3	58	2	10	0	17	1	8	0	6
Walking	5	9	15	51	4	47	4	15	1	8	2	3	1	0
Dance	1	3	4	4	0	5	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Zumba/aerobics in government programs	2	0	2	6	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

The data in Table 4 indicate that, among fast-food customers, recreational, accessible, and low-intensity forms of physical activity predominate, such as weight training and cardio at the gym, along with individual activities like jogging and walking, especially among young men and adults aged 21 to 40. This pattern suggests that, although some exercise is incorporated into customers' routines, it is organized more around general fitness and weight management goals than around systematic participation in competitive sports or structured disciplines.

In the gym section, weightlifting and cardio on treadmills or stationary bikes are the most prevalent activities, with particularly high participation from men aged 21 to 40. Zumba classes, on the other hand, are very limited and almost exclusively attended by young women. This distribution reflects a preference for modalities associated with strength and cardiovascular endurance training, consistent with current urban fitness trends. However, it also reveals low participation in choreographed or more recreational activities, which could be linked to gender stereotypes and a focus on quick aesthetic results rather than diverse physical experiences.

Within the categories of unstructured exercise, jogging and walking account for the largest number of responses, with very high figures among men aged 21 to 40 and significant, though lower, female participation. Dance and Zumba/IND appear less frequently and are mostly practiced by young women. These activities, due to their low cost and flexible scheduling, are functional for students and/or workers who use the mall as a thoroughfare.

However, they are often performed intermittently and without planning, which limits their impact on physical fitness and weight management (Peñafel et al., 2024; Strale et al., 2024).

The combination of strength and cardio training at the gym with free activities like jogging and walking creates a consumer profile that perceives itself as relatively active, but tends to choose individual, short-duration activities focused on calorie expenditure rather than overall health improvement. Relating these findings to the regular consumption of fast food and the predominance of young adults with overweight BMIs, as described in the sociodemographic tables, suggests a lifestyle where exercise appears as a compensatory strategy against a high-calorie diet (Garnica-Quintero, et al., 2023), rather than as a stable component of a healthy lifestyle. This reinforces the need for educational interventions and a healthier food offering at Mall Plaza Maule.

## 5 CONCLUSION

In recent years, Chilean culture has undergone various changes due to social, physical, and genetic factors. However, one thing we have never lost is our instincts; as the word suggests, we use them as a means of survival to get what we want. Furthermore, fast food consumption has become more than just an instinct; it's a habit. Whether due to time constraints, quality, taste, or any other reason, it's becoming more important than our overall nutrition. Over the years, large chains have directly influenced eating habits in some countries. This has impacted the choice between eating well, taking a little more time, or consuming fast food for its quick preparation and more affordable price.

This study has concluded that dietary changes have profoundly affected the quality of people's food. Consequently, as time progresses rapidly, we tend to seize upon anything that is important to us, forgetting ourselves as rational beings capable of distinguishing between good and bad. This research has revealed that fast food consumption has become a habit for both men and women, often due to time constraints, cost, or any other reason that takes precedence over our well-being.

This shows that people, in addition to not eating well, do not have a significant frequency and intensity of physical activity, which, as mentioned above, can generate nutritional alterations and this can lead to different pathologies, which affect health.

However, this study provided information regarding the number of people who have a normal BMI classification, encompassing most of the people surveyed, but always without neglecting the percentage of obese people, which lies in the fact that their lifestyle is showing warning signs in relation to nutrition and the practice of physical activity.

## REFERENCES

- Caichac Hoppe, A. (2022). Pertinencia de las estrategias comunicacionales gubernamentales para el fomento de conductas alimentarias saludables. Disponible en <https://repositorio.uchile.cl/handle/2250/191329>.
- Casanueva Arratia, J. R., Escobar Román, A. C., Parra Godoy, R. M., & Valenzuela Castillo, F. A. (2022). Hábitos alimentarios, estado nutricional y factores condicionantes de riesgo de malnutrición por exceso en escolares del Colegio Chileno Árabe de Chiguayante, Concepción 2022 (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad del Desarrollo. Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud).
- de Cardiología, S. A. (2021). Guías para la recomendación y prescripción de actividad física en adultos para promover la salud cardiovascular. *Revista Argentina de Cardiología*, 89(4), 1-52.
- De Simone, L. (2024). *Metamall: espacio urbano y consumo en la ciudad neoliberal chilena*. CANOPUS EDITORIAL DIGITAL SA.
- del Río Expósito, F. (2021). Caracterización del ambiente alimentario de abastecimiento en Molina, Chile, 2020: aportes para la construcción de ambientes alimentarios saludables en Chile: "El ambiente alimentario de abastecimiento en Molina, Chile" (Master's thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (Chile)).
- Franco-Giraldo, Á. (2022). Modelos de promoción de la salud y determinantes sociales: una revisión narrativa. *Hacia la Promoción de la Salud*, 27(2), 237-254.
- Garay-Rivera, J. (2022). ¿El oasis chileno?: el funcionamiento del discurso neoliberal de la felicidad visto a través del estallido social en Chile. *International Journal of Political Philosophy/Las Torres de Lucca*, 11(1)).
- Garnica-Quintero, V., Ramírez-Arzola, O., García-García, M., Granados-Hernández, S. G., Méndez-Aguilar, A. A., González-Yebra, A. L., & Muñoz-López, D. B. (2023). Estrategias de intervención para la reversión de Síndrome Metabólico. *JÓVENES EN LA CIENCIA*, 21, 1-7.
- Gutiérrez Turner, M., Morales, I., & C Gelabert, R. (2022). Eficacia de un programa de estilo de vida de salud en Chile. *Revista Cubana de Medicina General Integral*, 38(2).
- Henríquez, M. F. C. (2021). Alfabetización alimentaria, autorregulación alimentaria y su asociación con la dieta, estado nutricional y bienestar de adultos en Chile (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad de Concepción).
- Hernandez, F. B. (2022). Análisis de las Políticas Públicas de Salud para el Combate del Sobrepeso y la Obesidad en Chile: Evolución de la Malnutrición por Exceso en Estudiantes de Establecimientos Educativos Públicos entre el Año 2011-2020.
- Hernandez Sampieri, et al., (2018). Metodología de la investigación. Las rutas cuantitativa, cualitativa y mixta, Ciudad de México, México: Editorial Mc Graw Hill Education, Año de edición: 2018, ISBN: 978-1-4562-6096-5, 714 p.
- Letelier, V. (2025). Comida en el espacio público: La ciudad de Talca y el \_completo\_. *SOBRE: Prácticas artísticas y políticas de la edición*, (11), 6.
- Loyola Pérez, C. (2021). Identificación de desarrollo, innovación, tecnologías de producción y consumo de alimentos saludables en Chile. Disponible en <https://repositorio.uchile.cl/handle/2250/181318>.

- Medina-Morales, A., Navarrete-Escalona, M., Moraga-Muñoz, R., Olate-Pastén, Y., Gutiérrez-Turner, E., Pavez-Adasme, G., ... & Gómez-Álvarez, N. (2022). Prevalencia de malnutrición por exceso y cambios antropométricos asociados a riesgo cardiometabólico en escolares de colegios públicos pertenecientes la zona centro sur de Chile con una alta densidad rural y de bajos ingresos (Prevalence of malnutrition. *Retos*, 45, 496-501.
- MINSAL. (2025). Guías Alimentarias para Chile. Ministerio de Salud, Gobierno de Chile. Disponible en <https://www.minsal.cl/guias-alimentarias-para-chile/>.
- Mohatar Barba, M. (2025). Consumo de alimentos ultraprocesados, actividad física y alteraciones de marcadores metabólicos en adolescentes: estudio para la prevención de Diabetes Mellitus tipo 2 en un contexto multicultural (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad de Granada).
- Organización Mundial de la Salud (2019). Plan de acción mundial sobre actividad física 2018-2030: personas más activas para un mundo más sano. Organización Mundial de la Salud. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/327897>. Licencia: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO
- Pascacio Bermudez, M., y Andrea Michelle, R. C. (2024). Estrategias de e-commerce utilizadas por restaurantes de comida rápida en Santa Tecla y su efecto en el consumidor (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad Evangélica De El Salvador).
- Pellicer de Juan, E., García Martínez, S., & Ferriz Valero, A. (2021). Necesidades psicológicas básicas asociadas en la práctica de deporte individual y colectivo. *Retos*, 42, 500-506.
- Peñafel, M. U. A., Párraga, M. A. V., Villacrés, A. D. V., Alvarado, M. M. G., & Salazar, M. E. G. (2024). Sistemas de tecnología aplicados a dietas hipocalóricas y la actividad física para la prevención del síndrome metabólico. *Revista Ibérica de Sistemas e Tecnologías de Informação*, (E74), 227-239.
- Peralta Morales, L. M., & Quezada Feijoo, C. A. (2024). El consumo de alimentos ultra procesados frente a los no procesados incrementa la obesidad significativamente en pacientes mayores de 18 años, durante los últimos 5 años (Master's thesis, Quito: Universidad de las Américas, 2024).
- Rojas, D. E., Espinoza, P. G., Osiac, L. R., & Vásquez, F. D. (2025). Mejorar el acceso a alimentos saludables:: Propuestas para transformar los ambientes alimentarios en Chile. *Revista Aportes: Evidencias y Recomendaciones para la Política Pública*, 1(1).
- Saavedra, I. (2022). Calidad de alimentación en la población adulta chilena y su relación con el estado nutricional y síndrome metabólico en la Encuesta Nacional de Salud 2016-2017 (Master's thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile).
- Strale, C. M., Ramírez, F. G., Pinochet, F., Cumillaf, A. G., Merino, P. F., & Bastías, D. D. (2024). Condición física, actividad física y calidad de vida en estudiantes universitarios chilenos. *Retos: nuevas tendencias en educación física, deporte y recreación*, (56), 521-530.
- Tolosa Ruiz, C. P. (2025). Modelos de predicción de demanda a centros comerciales usando datos de movilidad. Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en gestión de operaciones, memoria para optar al título de Ingeniera Civil Industrial, Universidad de Chile.
- Vinagre, M. Á. D. (2022). Regulación motivacional y motivos de práctica deportiva en jóvenes universitarios. *Revista iberoamericana de psicología del ejercicio y el deporte*, 17(3), 107-113.