



Paly Students College Resources Experience

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INTRODUCTION

Access to a higher education is a prominent issue for many individuals due to a variety of obstacles. Among the many concerns of attaining higher education include college entrance exams (SAT and ACT) and financial capabilities. Although there are many different programs and scholarship opportunities available for students, the complications of the testing and the financial aid application process is still a deterrent. Having a specific resource - like a website that informs and helps students prepare for college entrance exams, and complete the financial aid application - would increase the amount of individuals that see college in their future.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The researchers were interested in the gaps students were facing while applying to college. The first step in applying to college is taking standardized tests - like the SAT and ACT - typically during a student's junior year. This was the first variable the researchers looked at. Researchers looked at how easily available SAT and ACT preparation was for students to obtain. This is important because there are many studies showing correlation between good scores (or at least improving scores) and test prep, which would indicate that the more exposure and preparation a student gets, the better they score on the test. The second variable the researchers looked at was in relation to students applying for financial aid. For this variable, the researchers looked at the level of difficulty students claimed to have with the financial aid process. Both variables were examined within the Palo Alto community in an effort to bring a large issue closer to home.

QUESTIONS

Q1: On a scale of 1-10, 10 being impacting/informing every student effectively, how would you score communication from the school to students about college deadlines?

Q2: What is your preferred method of communication for scholarship/financial aid/standardized testing deadlines?

Q3: How many times, if any, have you found out about a college deadline at the last minute?

Q4: Did you apply for financial aid?

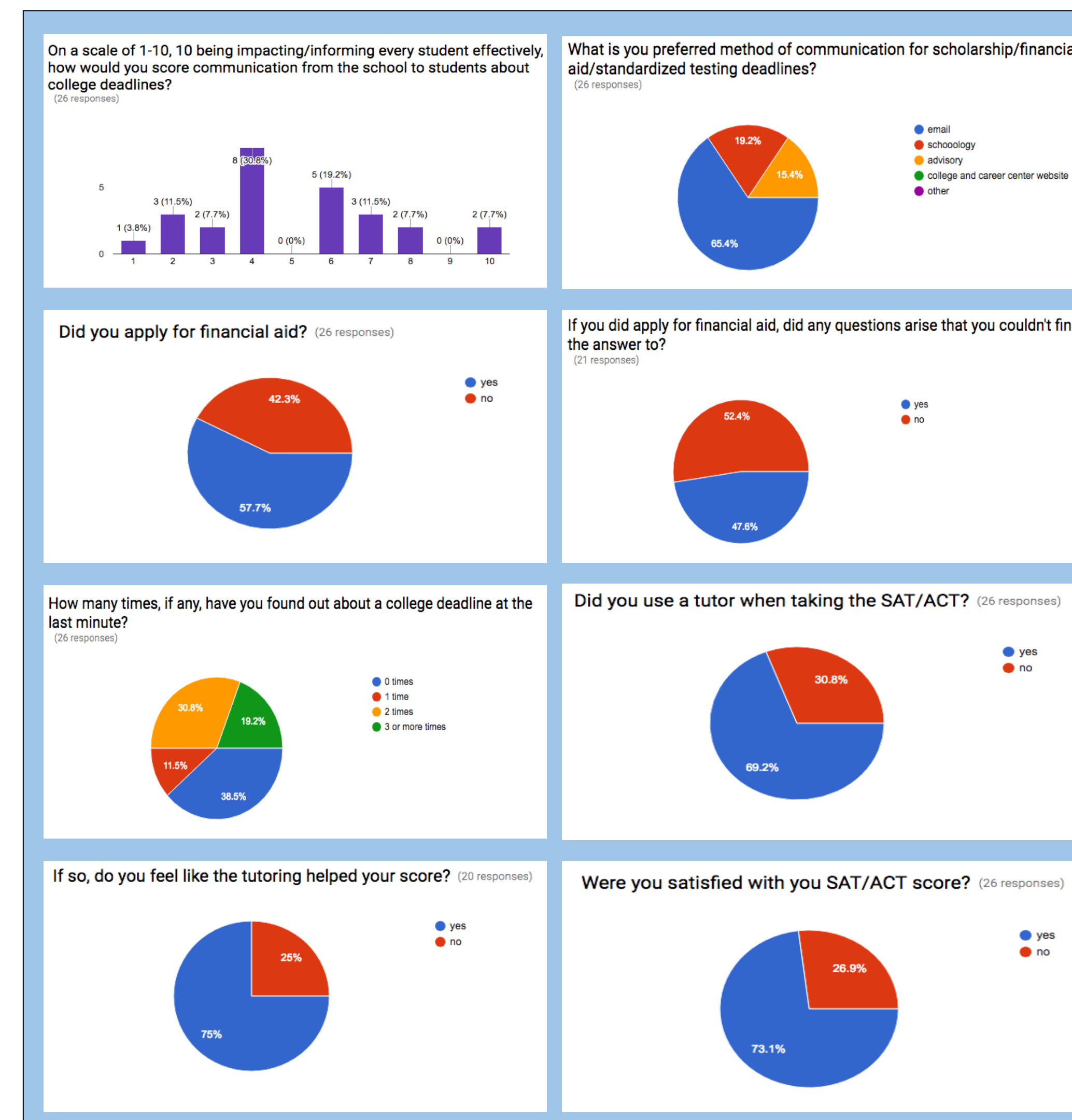
Q5: If you did apply for financial aid, did any questions arise that you couldn't find the answer to?

Q6: Did you use a tutor when taking the SAT/ACT?

Q7: If so, do you feel like the tutoring helped your score?

Q8: Were you satisfied with you SAT/ACT score?

DATA



RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Three teachers at Palo Alto High School gave seniors in their classes a link to our survey and encouraged them to take the survey. We had a total of 26 responses. The survey was only given to seniors.

RESULTS

Overall, there was a mix of positive and negative responses to our survey questions. As the graphs show, most questions were close to 50/50. The first three questions got a variety of results.

The preferred method of communication, which is shown to be email, is not the main way the college and career center connects with students.

61.5% of students found out about a college deadline at the last minute at least once.

In addition, most students *did* use a tutor in preparation for either the SAT or ACT. Of those who used a tutor, the majority thought tutoring improved their score.

Finally, the graphs show that almost 75% of students were satisfied with their test score.

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