

U. Miami Non-undergraduate Survey: How Do Participants Perceive Their Majors and Others' Majors?

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In this report, we analyzed a cluster of questions (Q20, Q146, Q22, Q28, Q27) centered around students' opinions about their majors.

I. Visualizations and Statistics

Q20: How did you decide what to major in? What factors contributed to your final decision?

Total Respondents: 209 out of 236

For this question, we placed discursive responses in the below categories; some answers were appropriate for multiple categories, and were flagged as such.

Category	Responses	Percentage
personal interests	112	47%
career objectives	51	22%
college experience	20	8%
high school experience	15	6%
worldviews	8	3%
previous experience	7	3%
family influence	5	2%
credits to graduate	5	2%
funding/financial concerns	5	2%
random	2	1%
non-US entrance exam	2	1%
media	1	0%
N/A	4	2%
No answer	27	11%
Total	237	

This question is a multiple choice question for [undergrads](#), but it is a discursive response question for non-undergrads, which may contribute to the very different answers featured in the non-undergrad responses. Non-undergrad responses reflect more independent decision-making

based on personal interests, career aspirations, and interests developed through educational experiences. Influence from family and friends are rarely mentioned.



Fig. 1: Word cloud for Q20, with the words "want," "major," and "school" removed.

Q22: How did you feel about your major while you were in college?

Total Respondents: 206-207 out of 236, depending on subfield

- I enjoyed my major on a daily basis (207 respondents)
 - Yes: 68%
 - Depends: 15%
 - No: 5%
 - No Answer: 12%

- I felt passionate about my major (207 respondents)
 - Yes: 72%
 - Depends: 11%
 - No: 4%
 - No Answer: 12%

- My major was challenging (207 respondents)
 - Yes: 71%
 - Depends: 9%
 - No: 8%
 - No Answer: 12%

- I expected my major to lead to a profitable career (206 respondents)
Yes: 45%
Depends: 25%
No: 18%
No Answer: 13%
- I expected my major to lead to a specific career/the career I wanted (207 respondents)
Yes: 63%
Depends: 11%
No: 13%
No Answer: 12%
- I considered my major a "risk" (207 respondents)
Yes: 21%
Depends: 13%
No: 54%
No Answer: 12%
- I hated my major (207 respondents)
Yes: 3%
Depends: 6%
No: 79%
No Answer: 12%
- I was bored by my major (207 respondents)
Yes: 4%
Depends: 11%
No: 73%
No Answer: 12%
- I was indifferent to my major (207 respondents)
Yes: 3%
Depends: 7%
No: 78%
No Answer: 12%
- I considered changing my major (207 respondents)
Yes: 14%
Depends: 8%
No: 66%
No Answer: 12%

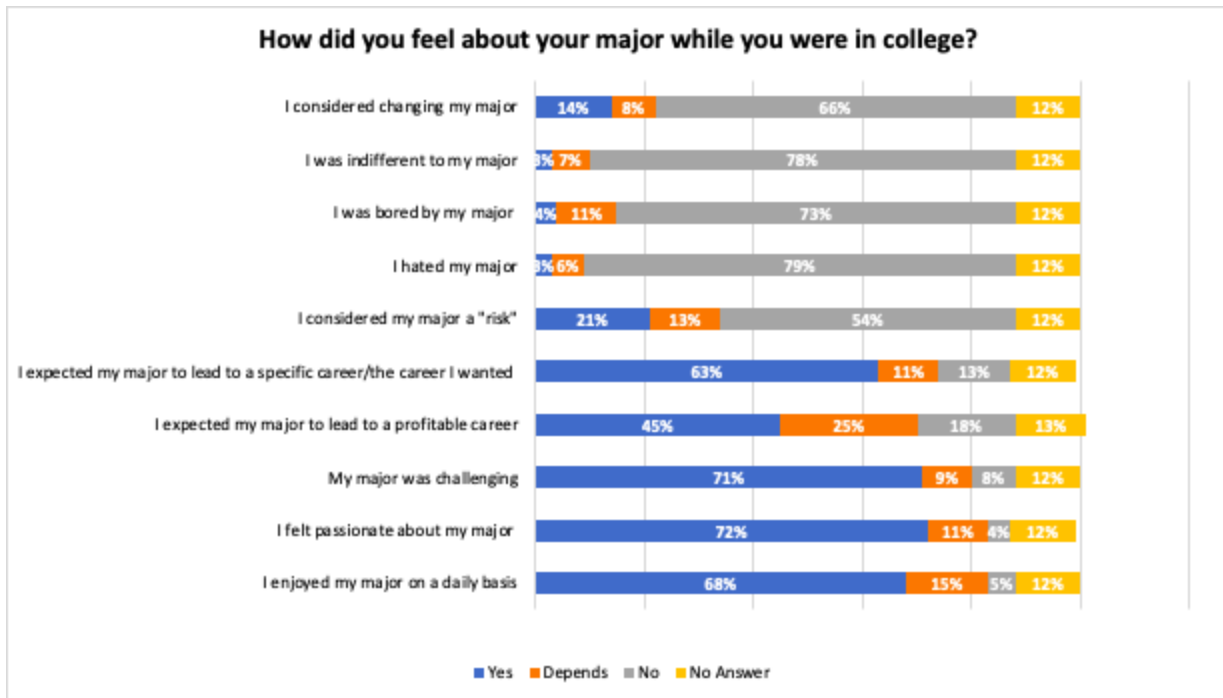


Fig. 2: Q22

Compared to [undergrad participants](#), non-undergrad participants report 10% lower responses in “expected my major to lead to a profitable career.” Other measurements are about the same level. This may be related to the fact that non-undergrad participants answered these questions based on memories. However, their judgments may have changed over time based on their college experiences.

Q146: I felt that my major was important to my own identity in college

Total Respondents: 207 out of 236.

- Strongly Disagree: 8%
- Disagree: 6%
- Neutral: 12%
- Agree: 30%
- Strongly Agree: 31%
- No Answer: 12%

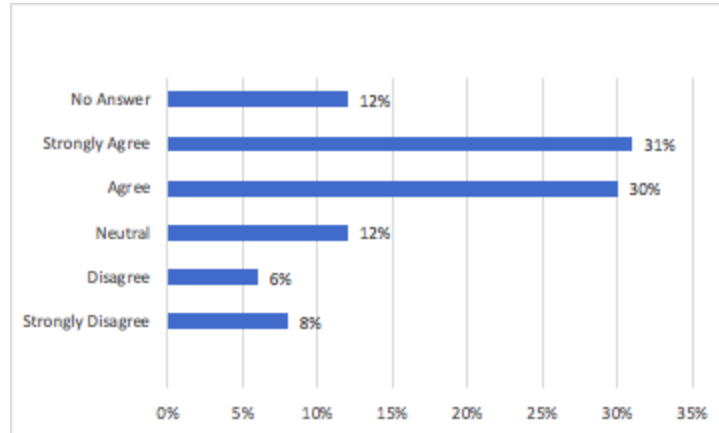


Fig. 3: Q146

Non-undergrad responses are broadly similar to [undergraduate responses to this question](#). The primary difference is the strength of their responses: slightly more of the non-undergrads either strongly agreed or strongly disagreed (31% of non-undergraduate respondents strongly agreed versus 26% of undergraduate respondents), while 8% of non-undergraduate respondents strongly disagreed versus 4% of undergraduate respondents.

Q27: Do/did you think that others have preconceived ideas about you based on your major?

Total Respondents: 207 out of 236

Yes: 67%
No: 20%
No Answer: 12%

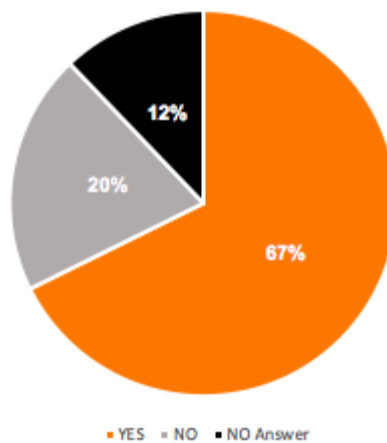


Fig. 4: Q27

67% of non-undergraduates respondents answered “yes,” while 73% of undergraduate respondents answered “yes.” This difference might indicate a change over time of the stereotypes around majors, but it might also be due to changes in self-perception over time.

Q28: Did you define others based on their majors?

Total Respondents: 207 out of 236

Yes: 52%

No: 36%

No Answer: 12%

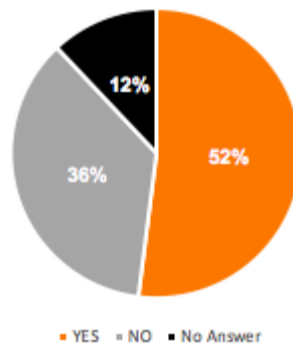


Fig. 5: Q28

52% of non-undergraduate respondents selected “yes,” while 45% of undergraduate respondents selected “yes.” Part of the reason for this difference could be the nature of our non-undergraduate respondents. Many of them were graduate students, and all worked within the university system, and thus continued to work within the structures and stereotypes of majors in a way that respondents who were not affiliated with a university might not be.

Considering the two questions together, non-undergraduates report a slight tendency that they might be more likely to define others based on their majors and non-undergraduates are less likely to think that others have preconceived notions about them based on their majors than undergraduates.