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.

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

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.

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%
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%
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%
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%

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.