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(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction With my College Major: Impact of Motivation to Choose a College Major on First-Year Students' Satisfaction and Sense of Belonging

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I Can't Get No Satisfaction (With My College Major):

Impact of Motivation to Choose A College Major on First Year Students' Satisfaction and Sense of Belonging

Andrew J. Morrow

Advisor: Dr. Nasser Razek

"Have you thought about your strengths, personality, interest, and career fit?"

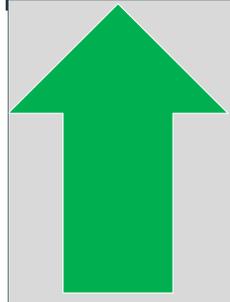
"My mom basically chose for me"



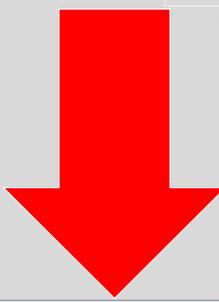
Abstract

Social norms, parental desires, peer influence, and money. Some students resort to these extrinsic motivations to choose their major, while ideally, students should be utilizing intrinsic motivations to inform their decisions. Choosing a major can be a difficult process for first-year students, as the complex and stressful decision influences a multitude of future implications. This study connects the motivations first-year students at the University of Dayton used to choose a major to their self-identified satisfaction and sense of belonging as they approach their sophomore year. Findings provide a glimpse into the procedures that first-year UD students prioritized and how their satisfaction and sense of belonging has been affected while at the institution due to choice of academic program.

Research Questions



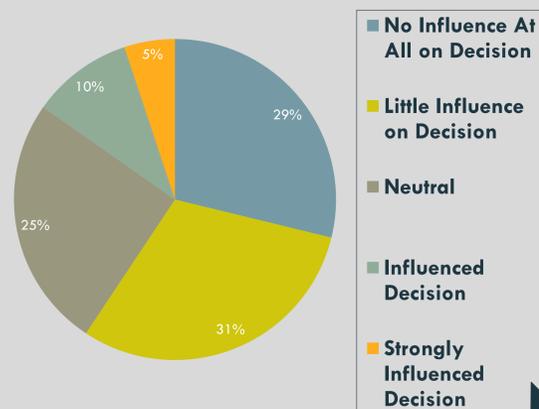
Does utilizing intrinsic motivations correlate to higher satisfaction and sense of belonging?



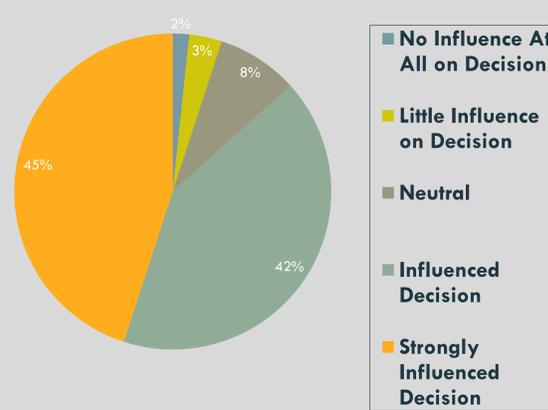
Does utilizing extrinsic motivations lead to lower satisfaction and sense of belonging?

Findings

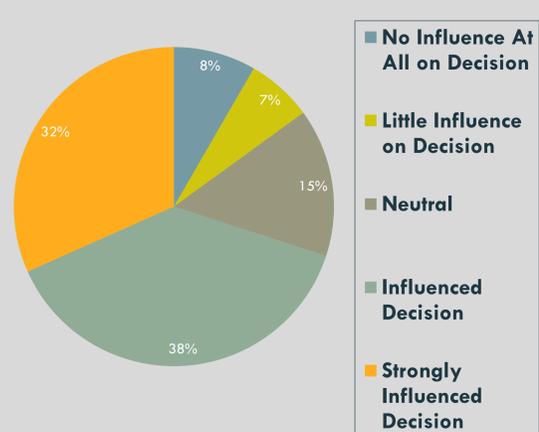
Peer Influence as Motivator



Intellectual Curiosity as Motivator



Potential Earnings as Motivator



Extrinsic

Intrinsic

Both

Statistical Significance

- Those who chose a major because of intellectual curiosity are more likely to experience a sense of belonging, are enriched by their education rated faculty instruction higher, and would still enroll at the University of Dayton.
- Those who chose a field that interest them have a higher sense of belonging, higher perception of faculty instruction, and satisfaction with academic program
- Those who chose a career they found to be fulfilling career rank faculty instruction higher, have a higher sense of belonging, and are more likely still enroll at UD

• Overall, students who utilized intrinsic motivators (e.g. fulfilling career, intellectually stimulating, and fits curiosities), experienced higher satisfaction (enrichment), and reported higher sense of belonging!

• The majority of students sampled utilized intrinsic motivations!

• And reported high satisfaction and sense of belonging at UD!

• Students often choose their major before college and some still report relying on extraneous variables as vital decision factor – important for professionals to know!

Conclusions

Methods

Quantitative

- Convenience Sampling of First-Year Students at Founders Hall

In-Person Survey

- 62 Respondents

Analysis

- Bivariate
- Chi Square
- Paired T-Tests

Future Directions

- Further Research
- Qualitative study
- Test validity
- New frame for understanding topic
- Challenge reliability of current research
- Control for extraneous variables
- Multiple Institutions
- Analyze demographics
- Catch students early – many had already switched from original choice!

Selected References

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