

FACTORS IN CHOOSING A BUSINESS MAJOR: A SURVEY OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Neil Granitz, California State University, Fullerton
Steven Chen, California State University, Fullerton
Keerit Kohli, Diamond Bar High School

Abstract

Choosing a college major can be the most important decision high school students make. It has significant implications for their professional careers. Interestingly, the behavior of high school students in choosing business as their major has never been studied. We surveyed high school students to understand their decision making process. Our findings indicate that the decision process starts rather early, in high school. Eighty-eight percent were in high school when they started thinking about the major they'd like to pursue in college, the majority in their senior year. Most students finalize this decision before they finish high school. Ninety-five percent limited their decision to one, two or three options. Marketing in Business often clubbed with non-quantitative fields such as International Business or Entrepreneurship. Family was by far the most extensively used source of information followed by teachers, college websites, and peers. The decision to choose a major is primarily that of the students themselves (70%) and only 30% were significantly influenced by others (family, parents, friends, peers). Many of those considering business majors mostly stick with business majors after evaluating their options. In choosing a major, the more important factors for students related to careers that were monetarily rewarding and suits their skills set. These findings illustrate a need on behalf of students and an opportunity on behalf of the universities to educate high school students about the skill sets and monetary rewards in different business majors.