What Drives Job Satisfaction in New Graduates/Entry-Level Employees?

MPACE 2016

By:
Max Wartel
Contributors:
Michael Bell
The Research Team

Max Wartel
Head
Research & Analysis

Michael Bell
Research & Analysis
Associate

Esme Smith
Client Care &
Research Associate
The National Standard

New Graduates: First Destinations

• Data for this analysis was drawn from institutions which followed TOS “Gold Standard” methodology.

• Data represents outcomes reported up to 6 months post-graduation by undergraduate students receiving baccalaureate degrees during the 2014-2015 IPEDS year.
New Graduates: First Destinations

CAREER OUTCOMES QUESTIONS*
- Employment/Self-Employment/Entrepreneur
- Graduate School/Additional Education
- Military Service, Service Program
- Unemployment (seeking & non-seeking)
- When did you begin your search?
- Where did you look for an occupation?

ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS (optional)
- Job search resources used . . .
- Use of career services . . .
- Helpfulness of services . . .

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION (optional)
- Internships, Co-ops, Assistantships
- Field Experiences, Practicums
- Clinical Experiences, Research
- Service Engagement, Volunteering
- And more

SATISFACTION QUESTIONS (optional)
- Relation of your occupation to your major
- Importance of correlation to major
- Relation of your occupation to your career goals
- Initial satisfaction

MOTIVATION QUESTIONS (optional)
- Income
- Employment opportunity
- Prestige
- Personal enrichment
- Job satisfaction
- Ability to impact the world

CUSTOM QUESTIONS (optional & local)
- Unique and editable
- School-specific
- Limited in scope

*Meets NACE, NUBS and MBA CSEA reporting standards.
Sample analysis

Graduates from 75 Institutions in 28 States were Surveyed
Response Rate 30.2%
Population (Surveyed) N: 62,723
Sample (Respondents) n: 18,946

GENDER: $X^2 (2, \ n=107) = 2.37, \ p > .10$
DEGREE LEVEL: $X^2 (3, \ n=121) = 1.68, \ p > .10$
ETHNICITY: Based on modified categorizations from the US Census Bureau. $X^2 (8, \ n=167) = 1.90, \ p > .975$
ACADEMIC MAJORS: Based on modified IPEDS CIP classification codes. $X^2 (34, \ n=287) = 5.98, \ p > .995$
Income and Satisfaction Analysis: Dependent Variables

- GPA
- Job Search (When)
- Job Search (Where)
- Job Search (Resources)
- Experiential Learning
- Relation to Major (Importance)
- Relation to Major
  - Likert type ratio variable
- Relation to Career Goals
  - Likert type ratio variable
- Income
  - Continuous ratio variable
Major Clusters

• Groupings of similar majors were created using cluster analysis based on industry, job function, and income resulting in the list below:
  • Business
  • Math and Information Sciences
  • Media and Communication
  • Biology and Bio-med
  • Arts and Sciences-Public Administration
  • Arts and Sciences-Education
  • Engineering
  • Social Science
  • Health
Satisfaction/Income Analysis: Methodology

• Path analysis/SEM via Linear Regression

  • Power and Multicollinearity- Power and multicollinearity were addressed using the same methods as in the previous analysis. Measures of multicollinearity were within acceptable tolerance levels.

  • Satisfaction structure—Using reliability measures and factor analyses it was determined that RM, RCG, and SAT were the most closely related measures (Medium – Large effects), and that RMI was not a mediating variable as initially expected, but rather appears earlier in the model. This was confirmed using step-wise regression analyses. Additionally, regression analyses showed that RCG completely mediates the effect of RM on SAT. It was determined that RMI → RM → RCG → SAT. This path held consistently for every major cluster.
Satisfaction/Income Analysis: Methodology Cont.

• Path analysis/SEM via Linear Regression

  • After confirming the “satisfaction” path, the other hypothesized predictor variables with temporal precedence were included in stepwise regression analyses to determine which provided significant contributions to each of the above variables, as well as INCOME.

  • Since temporal precedence could not be determined between INCOME and RCG, that relationship was maintained as bi-directional.

  • Using the knowledge gained from these analyses a preliminary model structure of relationships was created. The statistical “fit” of this reduced model was tested against the null model with all hypothesized variables included.

  • Each cluster group (as available) was analyzed for deviation from the structure of the overall sample.
Income and Satisfaction - Overall (Full Model)

Relation to career goals is the primary modeled driver of satisfaction.
Relation to career goals is the primary modeled driver of satisfaction
Experiential learning has a direct influence on relation to major, but a smaller impact than you might expect.
Income and Satisfaction - Engineering Cluster

Experiential learning has meaningful direct effects on relation to major and career goals
Income and Satisfaction - Social Science Cluster

When and where graduates start their search is largely moot.
Relation to major and relation to career goals impact some groups more heavily than others
Income and Satisfaction- A&S Education (6)

Those for whom relation to major is important may put off the job search
Medium to large effects related to satisfaction were robust and consistent between clusters.
Practical Applications

• Identification of factors that lead to successful outcomes
  • Relation to Career Goals
  • Relation to Major
  • Job Search (When)
  • Experiential Education

• Identification of unique major specific factors in successful outcomes
  • Importance and the factors to consider vary between different types of majors

• Targeting of areas with the greatest potential impact
  • Consider effect sizes when determining which factors to address
Limitations and Next Steps

- Small increase in predictive power (employment analysis)
- Skip-logic leads to inability to compare employed and unemployed (employment analysis)
- Lack of granularity of CIP code major groups
- Non-quantitative variables and small effect size
- Limited information on pre-graduation factors
- Analysis did not consider demographic variables including gender, ethnicity, and region of the country outside of testing