

# **Marketing an Academic Program: A myth maybe?**

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## **Abstract**

Undergraduate students choose on an area of concentration or the major. There are a lot of factors that influence this decision including the following: risk, expected earnings level, family background, instructors, friends, probability of success, future career prospects etc. Business students likewise are faced with this decision and will be influenced by various variables in making a decision on the area to major in.

Our research focuses on business students of Thompson Rivers University who are in their early part of their studies. We have analyzed the reasons for students choosing their major and have presented our recommendations paying particular attention to the differences between domestic and international students.

## **1. Introduction**

This study focuses on the undergraduate students and the selection of their major in School of Business and Economics at Thompson Rivers University.

## **2. Literature review**

Previous research has examined the marketing of the sales program as a major. Sales education is typically perceived to be part of the marketing department. Many students have been staying away from this type of education due to the job insecurities they might have in the future. The students think that with majors like accounting and finance the probability to earn better salaries is higher than with the marketing as a major (Allen et al., 2014). The marketing educators need to take this into account and see what the employers are demanding in the ever changing job market. These studies did not, however, examine the differences between domestic and international students.

## **3. Methodology**

The survey instrument was developed by reviewing previous research papers and asking for feedback from the MIBE faculty members. In the descriptive statistics section, we calculated means, standard deviations, and distributions. For inferential data we have used techniques like correlation, test of significance, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression analysis. In addition a exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to the selection variables data set. There were 17 selection variables used altogether in the survey. The purpose of using EFA was to examine if there was an intrinsic structure in the variable set.

## **4. Findings**

The international student body is significant at Thompson Rivers University. Therefore examining their viewpoints is important. The key findings of the research indicate that between domestic and international students:

1. There were no significant differences as far as selecting the major. In other words their preferences were similar.
2. Potential job opportunities had a much more significant impact for the selection of the major for the domestic students than for the international students.
3. Potential career opportunities had a much more significant impact for the selection of the major for the domestic students than for the international students.
4. Compensation had a much more significant impact for the selection of the major for the domestic students than for the international students.
5. There were no significant differences between the two groups for to the selection of the major in terms of interest in the subject, aptitude (skill) in the subject, help to run his/her own business someday, advice given by parents/guardians, high school guidance counselor, related subject(s) in high school, amount and type of promotional information, high school advisor/teacher, advice given by friends, advice given by faculty members, previous work experience, interesting courses in major, reputation of the major at my school, and perceived quality of instruction.

The exploratory factor analysis revealed the existence of 5 intrinsic factors among the 17 selection variables in Table 1. The factors were “Communication”, “Career”, “School”, “Aptitude”, and “Own business”.

Table 1. The intrinsic structure of the selection variables for the whole data set.

Variable	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Q32 High school advisor/teacher	<b>0,864</b>				
Q29 High school guidance counsellor	<b>0,844</b>				
Q31 Promotion	<b>0,759</b>				
Q30 Related subjects in high school	<b>0,745</b>				
Q36 Friends	<b>0,641</b>				
Q37 Faculty	<b>0,591</b>				
Q34 Career opportunities		<b>0,926</b>			
Q33 Job opportunities		<b>0,896</b>			
Q35 Compensation		<b>0,736</b>			
Q25 Intrest in the subject		<b>0,592</b>			
Q39 Interesting courses			<b>0,802</b>		
Q40 Reputation of the major			<b>0,661</b>		
Q41 Quality of instruction			<b>0,630</b>		
Q38 Work experience			<b>0,601</b>		
Q26 Aptitude				<b>0,715</b>	
Q28 Parents				<b>0,499</b>	
Q27 Own business					<b>0,867</b>
Eigen value	5,19	2,74	1,61	1,21	1,09
Descriptive name	Communication	Career	School	Aptitude	Own

Table 2. The intrinsic structure of the selection variables for the domestic students' data set.

Variable	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Q32 High school advisor/teacher	<b>0,898</b>				
Q29 High school guidance counsellor	<b>0,771</b>				
Q31 Promotion	<b>0,764</b>				
Q30 Related subjects in high school	<b>0,761</b>				
Q36 Friends	<b>0,637</b>				
Q34 Career opportunities		<b>0,906</b>			
Q33 Job opportunities		<b>0,887</b>			
Q25 Intrest in the subject		<b>0,643</b>			
Q39 Interesting courses			<b>0,842</b>		
Q40 Reputation of the major			<b>0,750</b>		
Q41 Quality of instruction			<b>0,674</b>		
Q26 Aptitude				<b>0,784</b>	
Q35 Compensation				<b>0,614</b>	
Q37 Faculty				<b>0,529</b>	
Q38 Work experience					<b>0,680</b>
Q27 Own business					<b>0,852</b>
Eigen value	3,67	2,50	2,28	1,56	1,49
Descriptive name	Communication	Career	School	Aptitude	Own+work

Variable 28 Parents was excluded due low loading into any factors in Table 2.

Table 3. The intrinsic structure of the selection variables for the international students' data set.

Variable	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Q32 High school advisor/teacher	<b>0,915</b>				
Q29 High school guidance counsellor	<b>0,825</b>				
Q31 Promotion	<b>0,803</b>				
Q30 Related subjects in high school	<b>0,755</b>				
Q38 Work experience	<b>0,723</b>				
Q40 Reputation of the major	<b>0,620</b>				
Q37 Faculty	<b>0,609</b>				
Q41 Quality of instruction	<b>0,575</b>				
Q34 Career opportunities		<b>0,965</b>			
Q33 Job opportunities		<b>0,862</b>			
Q35 Compensation		<b>0,753</b>			
Q25 Intrest in the subject		<b>0,609</b>			
Q28 Parents			<b>0,926</b>		
Q36 Friends			<b>0,675</b>		
Q39 Interesting courses				<b>0,868</b>	
Q27 Own business				<b>0,748</b>	
Q26 Aptitude					<b>0,800</b>
Eigen value	3,67	2,51	2,28	1,56	<b>1,49</b>
Descriptive name	Communi- cation	Career	Parents + friends	Courses + own business	Aptitude

## 5. Discussion

If we examine the variables that influence the choice of major between domestic, and international students; there significant differences in terms of potential job opportunities, potential career advancement and compensation. Thus there were significant differences in 3 out of 17 influencing variables. It appears that the domestic students pay more attention to potential job opportunities, potential career advancement and compensation when selecting the major. Furthermore the intrinsic structure in the selection variables appears to somewhat different.

## References

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