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Three in Ten (28%) Post-Secondary Students Agree they Chose their Program of Study to Please their Parents

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Students and Their Parents Don't Always See Eye-to-Eye When it Comes to School and Life After

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

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Toronto, ON – With the end of Labour Day marking the unofficial end of summer, post-secondary students are setting their focus on school and their future after it. But according to an Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of RBC, many students are trying to please their parents through the process, and many parents under-estimate the degree to which this is happening.

Three in ten (28% - 7% strongly/21% somewhat) students 'agree' that they 'chose the program they're in to please their parents' while seven in ten (72% - 46% strongly/26%



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somewhat) 'disagree'. However only two in ten (21% - 5% strongly/16% somewhat) parents 'agree' that their children 'chose the program they're in to please them' while eight in ten parents (79% - 55% strongly/23% somewhat) 'disagree', under-estimating the impact they have on their children's school-related decisions.

Moreover, parents also play a big part in whether or not their child decides to go to post-secondary school at all, with one in ten students (10%) saying the decision to go to post-secondary school is a result of them trying to satisfy their parents. Meanwhile, only 5% of parents think their child goes to post-secondary school to satisfy them. A desire to satisfy their parents is only one of many influences on what makes students decide to go to post-secondary school, with the chart below displaying other influences and the proportion of parents that agree their child was driven in this manner.

Influences	Students	Parents
To maximize the chances of having a career that I will be happy with	32%	38%
To maximize the chances of finding a job	21%	19%
I thought it would make me happy	12%	12%
To satisfy parents	10%	5%
To maximize the chances of graduating successfully	7%	8%
How much it would cost	6%	5%
Location of the school	2%	4%
What my friends were doing	2%	3%
What other people (not friends) were doing	2%	1%
I didn't really know what else to do	6%	5%

• Circles show significant differences

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Three quarters (75% - 41% very/33% somewhat) of post-secondary students say that they are 'concerned about choosing a program that doesn't help them get a job after graduation' while one quarter say they are not concerned

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(25% - 8% not at all/17% not very). However, only two thirds (66% - 27% very/38% somewhat) of parents say that their children are concerned about the matter, while one third (34% - 11% not at all/23% not very) say their kids are not concerned.

Parents and students don't see eye to eye on what will bring students happiness after graduation with significantly more parents (67%) saying that finding a job that is meaningful and fulfilling will bring their child happiness, but only 42% of students agree with parents. Other large discrepancies in what will bring students happiness after graduation between students and parents include making lots of money (14% students/8% parents), travelling (12% students/4% parents), finding love (8% students, 2% parents), paying off debt (6% students/2% parents) and prestige (3% students/1% parents). However, students and parents see eye to eye on two influences - getting a job (15% students/16% parents) and the envy of peers/friends (1% students/1% parents).

The 2015 RBC Student Finances Poll was conducted by Ipsos Reid through a national online survey of 1,003 students aged 17 to 24 and of 1,001 parents of students in post-secondary school (as of September 2015). Data were collected from June 23 to July 7, 2015. The results are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian student population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Unweighted, probability samples of this size, with 100 per cent response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, for each sample group. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to, coverage error and measurement error.

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