

Parental Influence Project

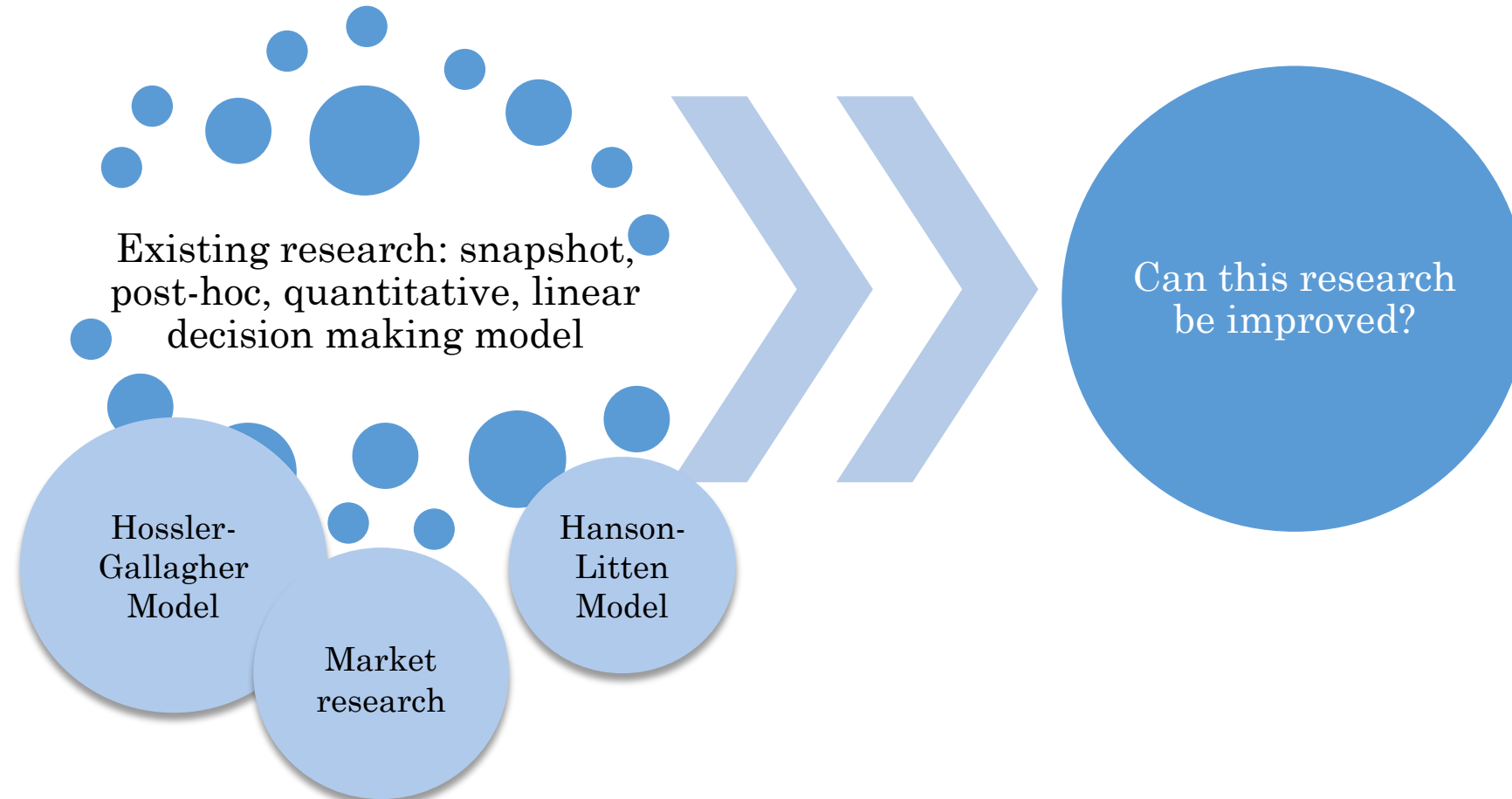
SEMM 2016



What leads students to chose a particular institution and program?

- When do they make their decisions?
- What resources do they rely on to seek information?
- Whose opinion influences their choices, and when?
- What is the relationship between their economic, social, and cultural *capital* and their decision making process?

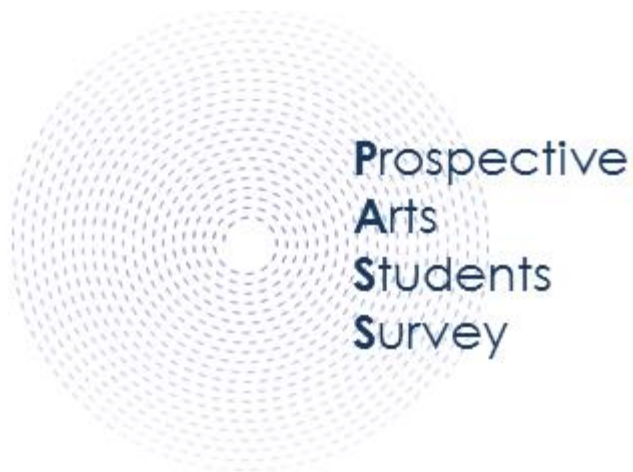
Rich field of prior research



Our approach: round 1



- ~400 grade 12 students across canada
- Long-form, qualitative interviews
- Four interview waves throughout the school year



- ~300 students
- Target the reasons why students choose, or don't choose, art programming

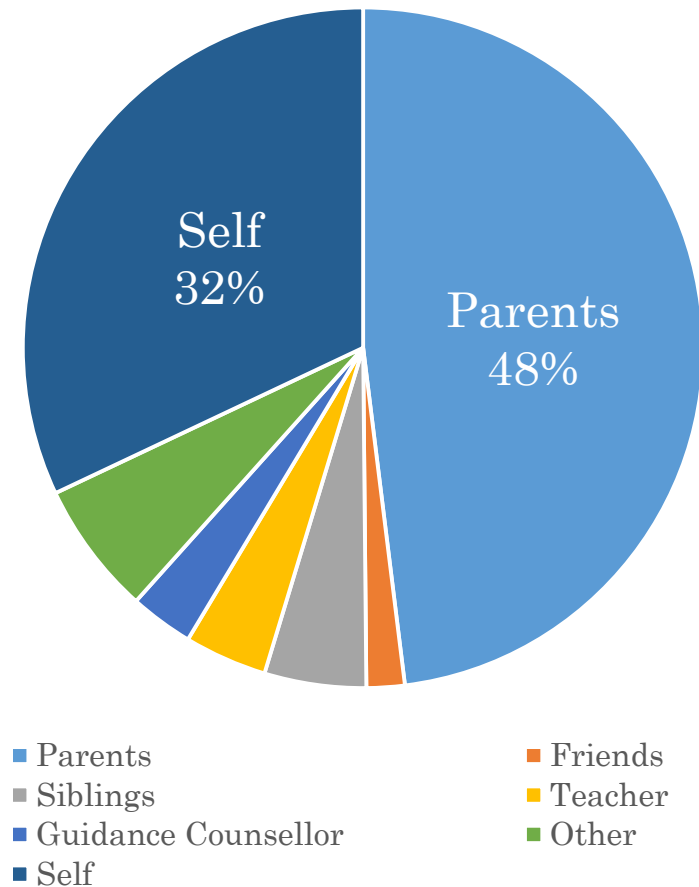
Our approach: round 1



- Decision making is non-linear
 - Hedgehogs and Foxes
 - Timing is everything
 - Trust wavers (direct vs indirect marketing)
 - 45% of decision happen before grade 12
 - Parents play a huge role in all aspects
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- Discipline assumptions are cultural
 - Prospects want to be part of a vision
 - STEM recruitment strategies can be applicable in Arts

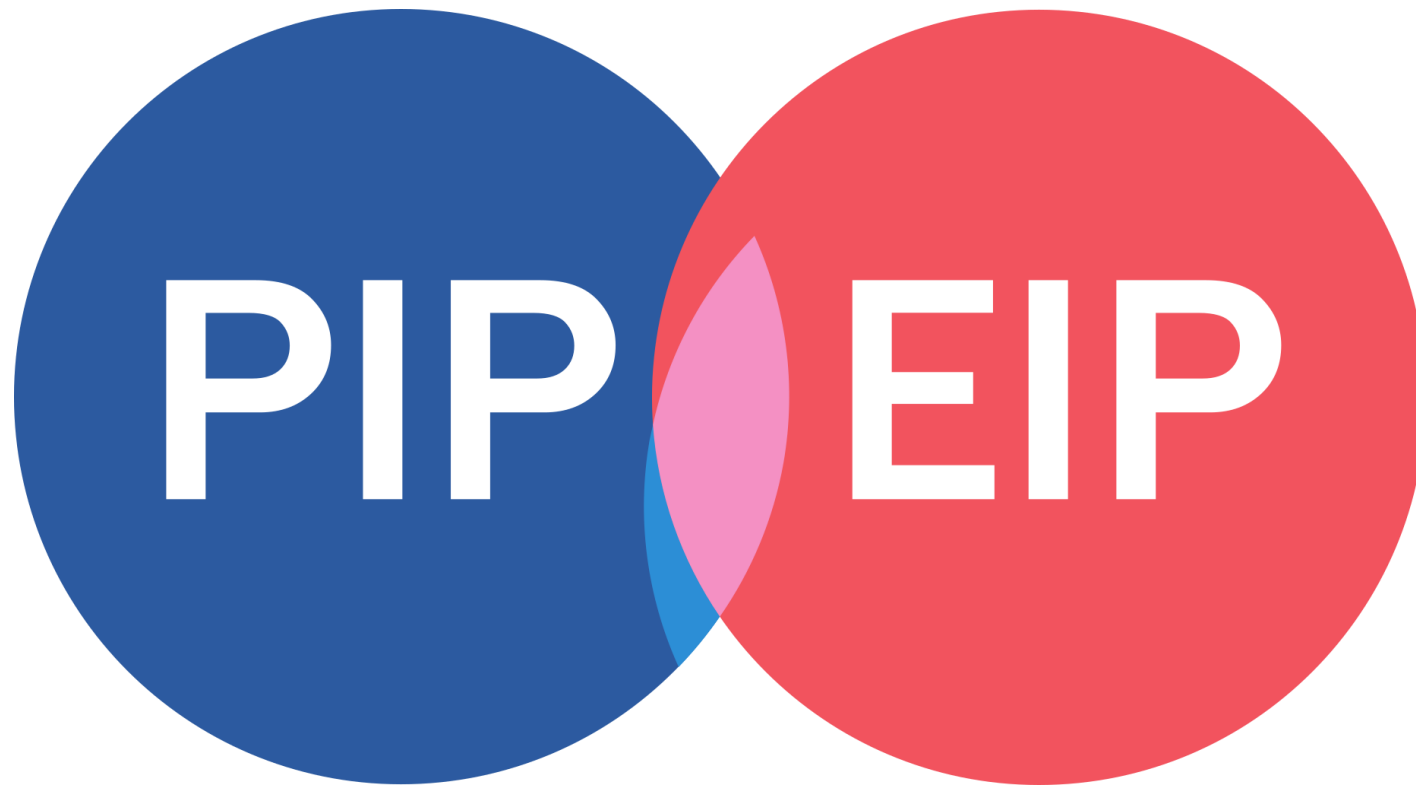
Key Evidence: influencers

Students' Most Valued Opinions

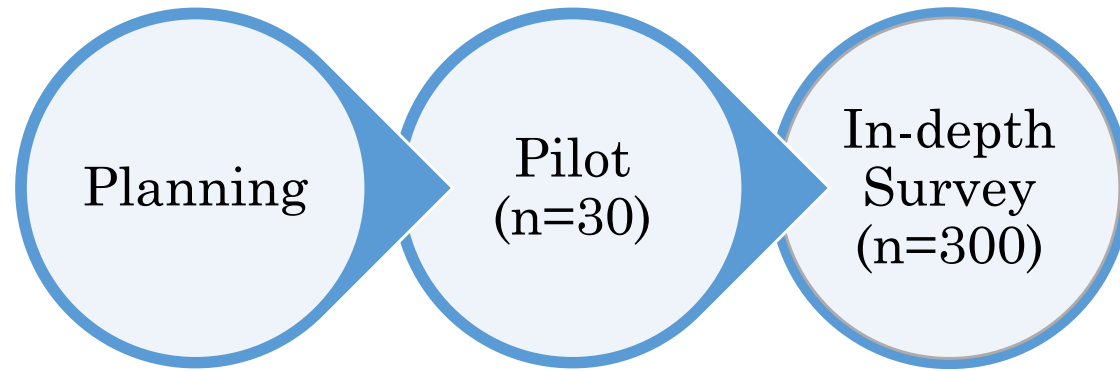


- Can the role of parents be more clearly understood, particularly when that role is implicit and long-term?
- How do parents choose an institution, and impact the decisions of their students?
- How are parental characteristics related to their choices?
- Can parents be intelligently targeted by recruitment efforts?

Our approach: round 2



Parental Influence Project



In-depth interviews with 300 parents across Canada
Atlantic, 15%; Western, 40%; Ontario 50%

- Parents' experience and knowledge of PSE
- Parental expectations of their grade 12 child
- Communication and conversation about postsecondary options
- Information-seeking about postsecondary education
- Finances and knowledge of student aid

Preliminary results: Influence

“I’m happy to be supportive off whatever he wants to do, but I’m very happy he chose engineering”

“My mom doesn’t know anything, but she listens.”

“I talk to them to keep them in the loop; not so much for advice.”

“I write the cheques, I set the deadlines”

“They definitely expect me to go to university, but I don’t think they would get mad at me if I went to college.”

Understanding influence

- Rooted in long-terms norms, expectations, identity development
- Both parties have an interest in portraying the relationship differently, i.e.:
 - (parents think they are influencing, children pretend to be influenced but make a largely independent decision) OR
 - (Parents manipulate children to chose particular institutions, but must let child feel they are making their own decision)
- Explicit constraints appear to be rare; parents prefer to reinforce agency of their children
- The most important factors (discipline, cost, moving away from home) appear to be closely tied to culture and economics.

Preliminary results:

Choice constraint networks

- Program, Cost, Location (closely tied, matches student priorities)
 - Alma Mater matters
 - Employability (economic and cultural component)
 - Reputation / quality
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- How will cultural background and geography influence outcomes?
 - How are assumptions about employability and reputation influenced?
 - Can we identify meaningful market segmentation?

Preliminary results: Seeking information

- Online (more google and institutional websites, fewer social networks)
 - Far more in person / phone
 - Guidance counsellors and advisors
 - Financial advisors are surprisingly common
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- How do parents use and interpret info from different sources?
 - Do they hate institutional websites? If so, for the same reasons?
 - How do they respond to specific recruiting campaigns?
 - Are their trust patterns the same as those of students?



Thank you!

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