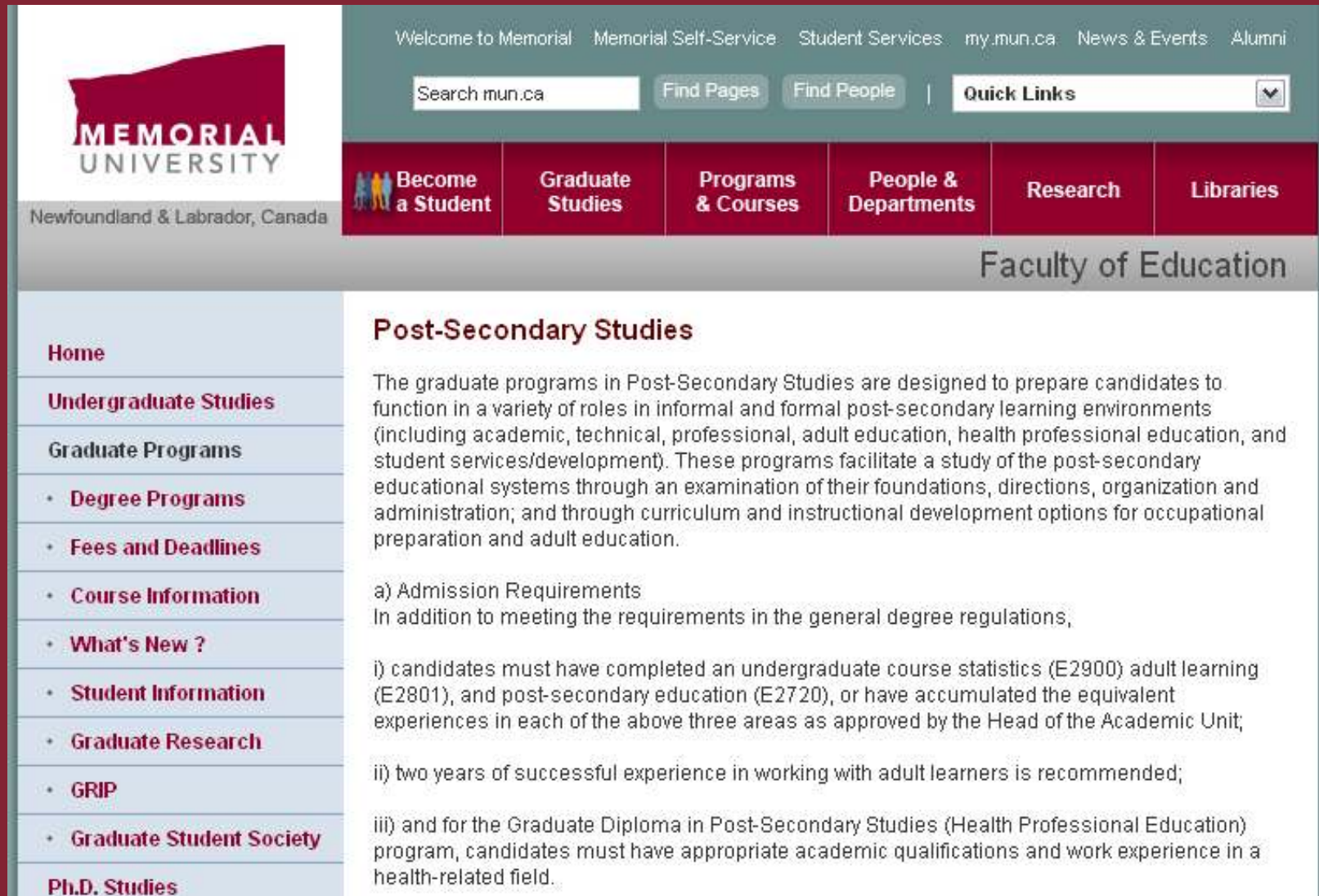


Transition of Rural High School Youth into Post-Secondary Education: Challenges and Issues

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Post-Secondary Education Studies



The screenshot shows the Memorial University website. At the top left is the Memorial University logo with the text "MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY" and "Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada". To the right of the logo is a navigation bar with links: "Welcome to Memorial", "Memorial Self-Service", "Student Services", "my.mun.ca", "News & Events", and "Alumni". Below this is a search bar labeled "Search mun.ca" and buttons for "Find Pages" and "Find People". To the right of the search bar is a "Quick Links" dropdown menu. Below the search bar is a horizontal menu with six items: "Become a Student", "Graduate Studies", "Programs & Courses", "People & Departments", "Research", and "Libraries". Below this menu is a grey bar with the text "Faculty of Education". The main content area has a left sidebar with a list of links: "Home", "Undergraduate Studies", "Graduate Programs", "Degree Programs", "Fees and Deadlines", "Course Information", "What's New?", "Student Information", "Graduate Research", "GRIP", "Graduate Student Society", and "Ph.D. Studies". The main content area is titled "Post-Secondary Studies" and contains the following text:

The graduate programs in Post-Secondary Studies are designed to prepare candidates to function in a variety of roles in informal and formal post-secondary learning environments (including academic, technical, professional, adult education, health professional education, and student services/development). These programs facilitate a study of the post-secondary educational systems through an examination of their foundations, directions, organization and administration; and through curriculum and instructional development options for occupational preparation and adult education.

a) Admission Requirements
In addition to meeting the requirements in the general degree regulations,

i) candidates must have completed an undergraduate course statistics (E2900) adult learning (E2801), and post-secondary education (E2720), or have accumulated the equivalent experiences in each of the above three areas as approved by the Head of the Academic Unit;

ii) two years of successful experience in working with adult learners is recommended;

iii) and for the Graduate Diploma in Post-Secondary Studies (Health Professional Education) program, candidates must have appropriate academic qualifications and work experience in a health-related field.

Purpose of Presentation

- Outline an ongoing study of youth transition in Newfoundland and Labrador
- Briefly review the context of the study
- Situate the research in post-secondary transition (choice) theory
- Review an analysis the results of high school student surveys

Killick Project for E-Learning Research



- SSHRC CURA - 8 studies in total
- Goals:
 - Build capacity and increase e-learning research activity
 - Facilitate knowledge exchange in e-learning



Setting: Newfoundland and Labrador

- Easternmost province of Canada
- Larger rural population than Canada as whole
- 40% population outside centres with 1K population
- Most schools considered rural (184 of 285 are in settlements with population < 5K)
- 1/3 of schools designated as *necessarily existent*
- Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) - web-based delivery of high school courses in NL

Student Transition Study

Examine and compare the post-secondary education and workforce transition experiences of students who have taken on-line courses in high school and students who have not.

- Post-secondary Choice Study: High School Cohort
- Also completed a Post-Secondary Persistence Study: University Cohort

Research Questions

Do rural students who have taken on-line courses in high school differ from those who have not with regard to selected factors such as:

- high school academic performance
- parental education levels
- participation in after school activities
- sources of PSE funding
- sources of PSE funding information
- post-secondary plans

Post-Secondary Choice: Theories

1. What is the process of decision-making in HS about post-secondary plans and goals?
2. What are the major factors that explain variations in this process across different groups of HS students?

Post-Secondary Choice: Definition

Process that involves 3 key decisions:

1. Deciding whether to participate in post-secondary education after completing high school.
2. Selecting a post-secondary institution/program.
3. Applying for admission to a post-secondary institution/program.

Source: Hossler, D., Braxton, J., & Coopersmith, G. (1989). Understanding student college choice. In J.C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research: Vol. 5* (pp. 231-288). New York: Agathon Press.

Post-Secondary Choice: 3-Stage Model



Source: Hossler, D., Schmit, J. L., & Vesper, N. (1999). *Going to college: How social, economic, and educational factors influence the decisions students make*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Economic Model of Choice

- Post-secondary education an investment decision
- Rational Choice Theory: assumes all information available
- Students maximize cost-benefit in their choice
- Costs: Tuition, net tuition (tuition less aid), fees, books, living expenses & forgone income
- Benefits: Earnings, status
- Undertake post-secondary education when rate of return outweighs that of alternative activity

Source: McDonough, P. M. (1997). *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity*. New York: SUNY Press.

Sociological Model of Choice

- Impact of socio-economic characteristics on post-secondary aspirations and attainment
- Social Reproduction Theory
- Social capital: ways in which social relationships provide access to information, resources and supports
- Cultural capital: sum total of all of the intangible goods, such as habit, attitudes and beliefs, acquired from parents

Source: Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. C. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95-120.

High School Student Study

Method: Census survey of all rural Grade 12 students, April - June 2007

Survey Population: ~2800 students at 106 schools with Grade 12 students

Respondents:

- 72 of 106 schools participated
- total of 1,169 students (60% response rate)

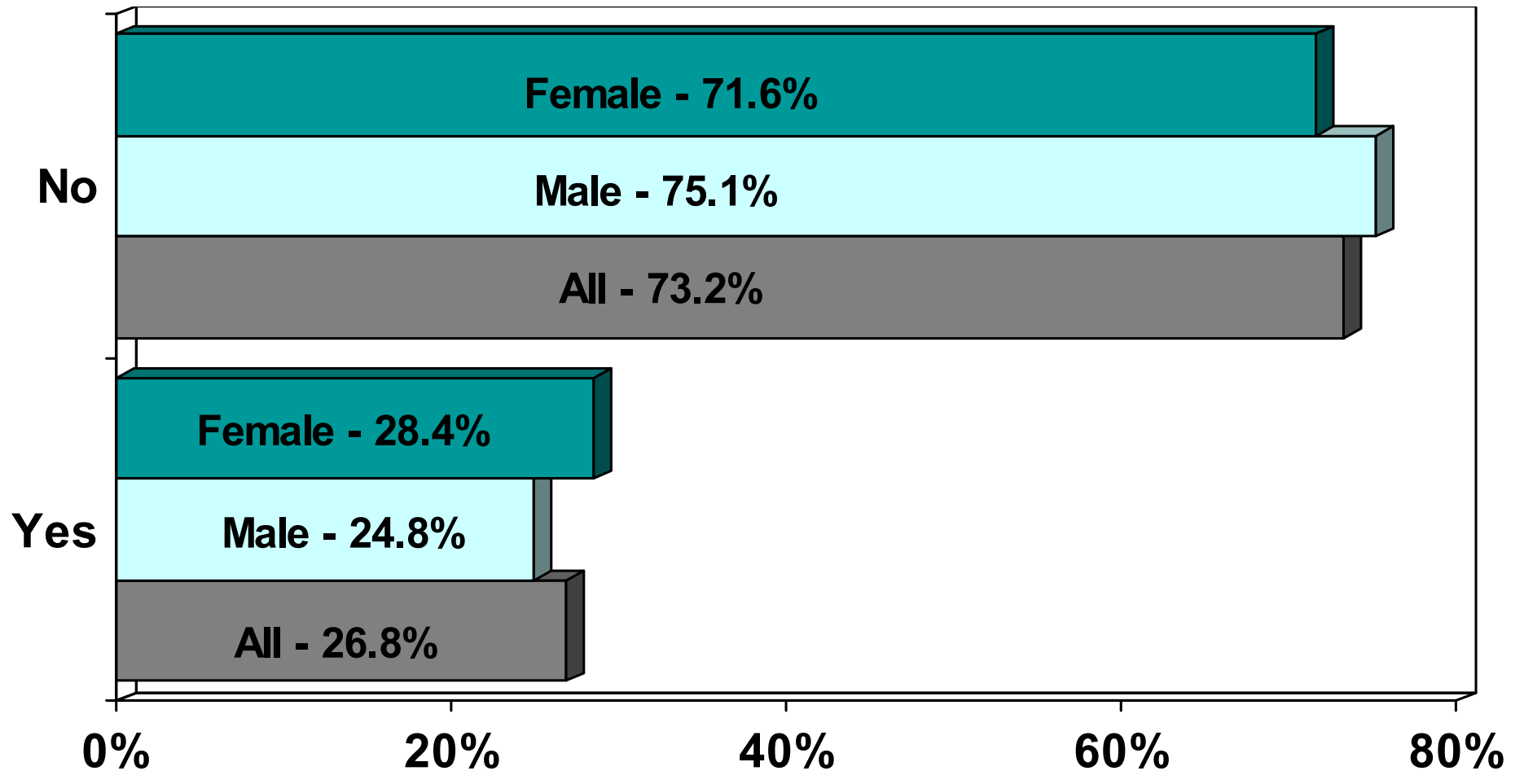
High School Student Study

Factors	Survey Questions
Demographic Characteristics	Gender, Number of siblings, Family structure, 1 st vs 2 nd Gen
After School Activities	Works part-time, Volunteers, Homework, Extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, clubs)
Academic Factors	Level of Grade 12 math completed (Basic, academic or advanced), Self-reported overall average, high school distance courses
Sources of Information	Friends, Parents, Siblings, PSE students, Teachers, Guidance counsellors, Campus tour, Promotional materials, Media advertising, Recruitment officer
Sources of Funding	Unsure, Summer job, Job during academic year, Scholarship/bursary, Student loan, Private loan, Personal savings, Tuition voucher

Selected Findings

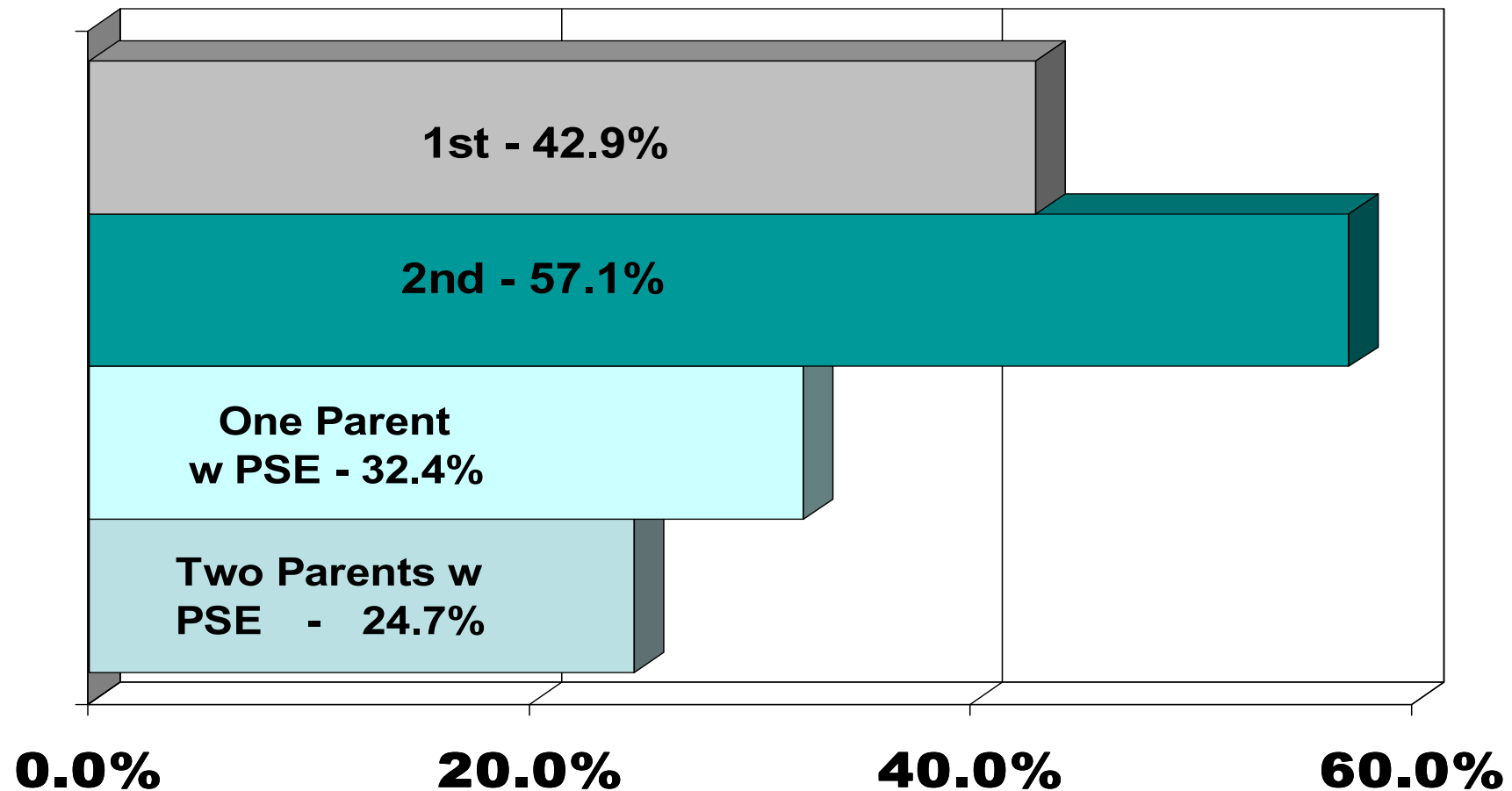
Findings: Descriptive Statistics

Figure 1: Enrolment in High School Distance Courses



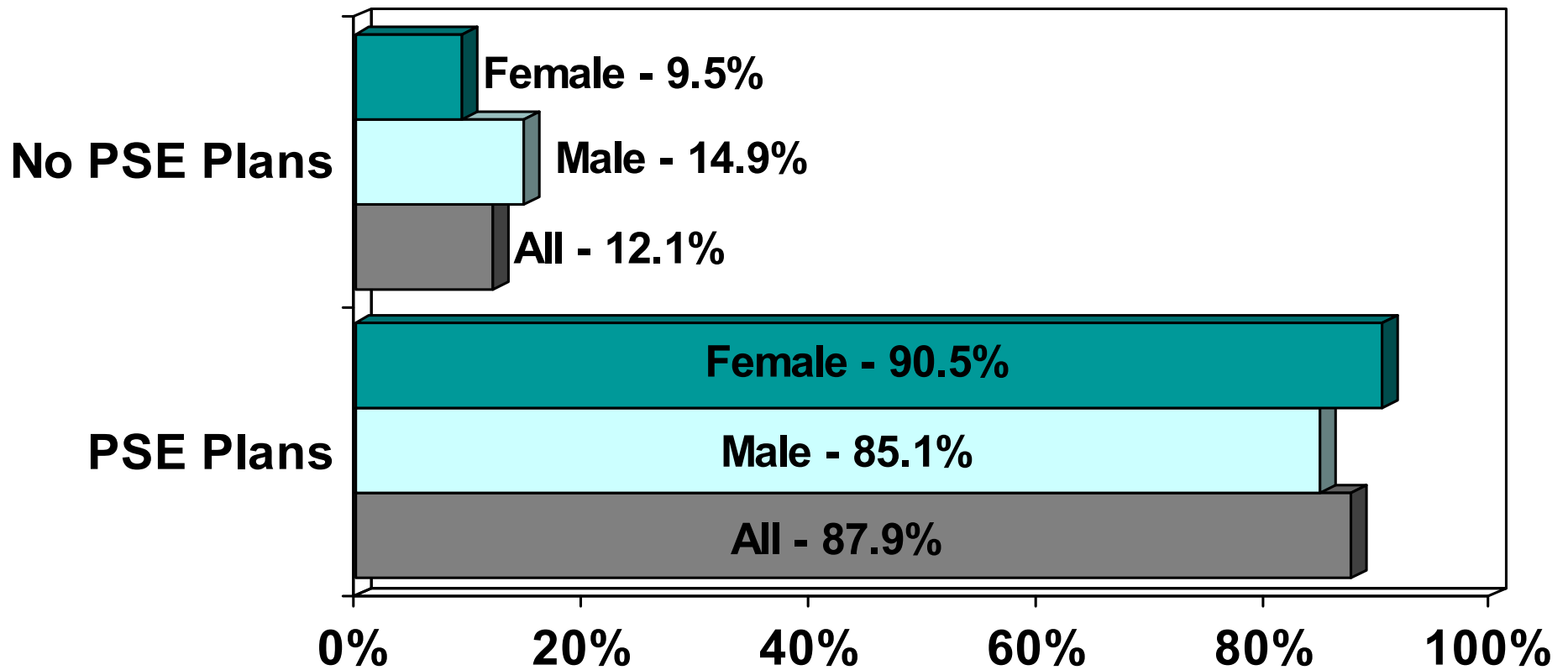
Findings: Descriptive Statistics

Figure 2: First vs. Second Generation Students



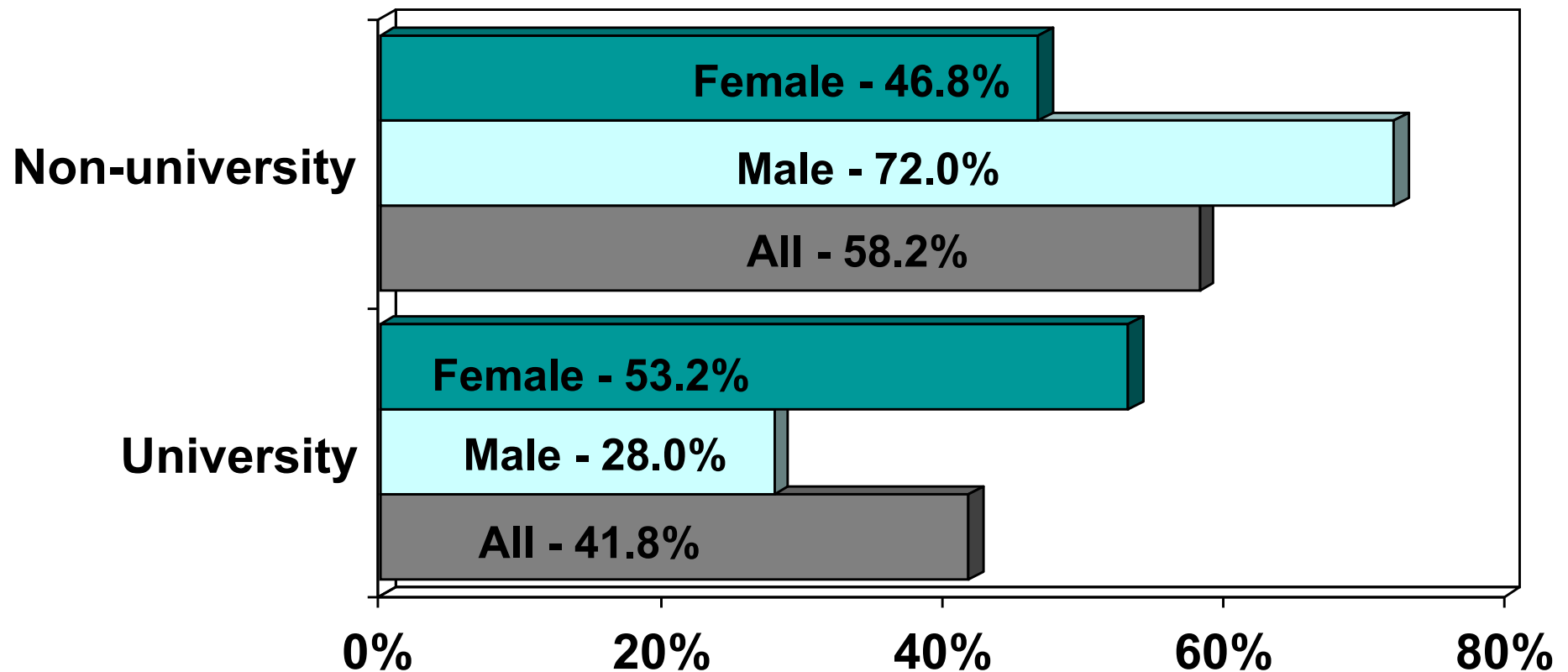
Findings: Descriptive Statistics

Figure 3: Students' post-secondary plans



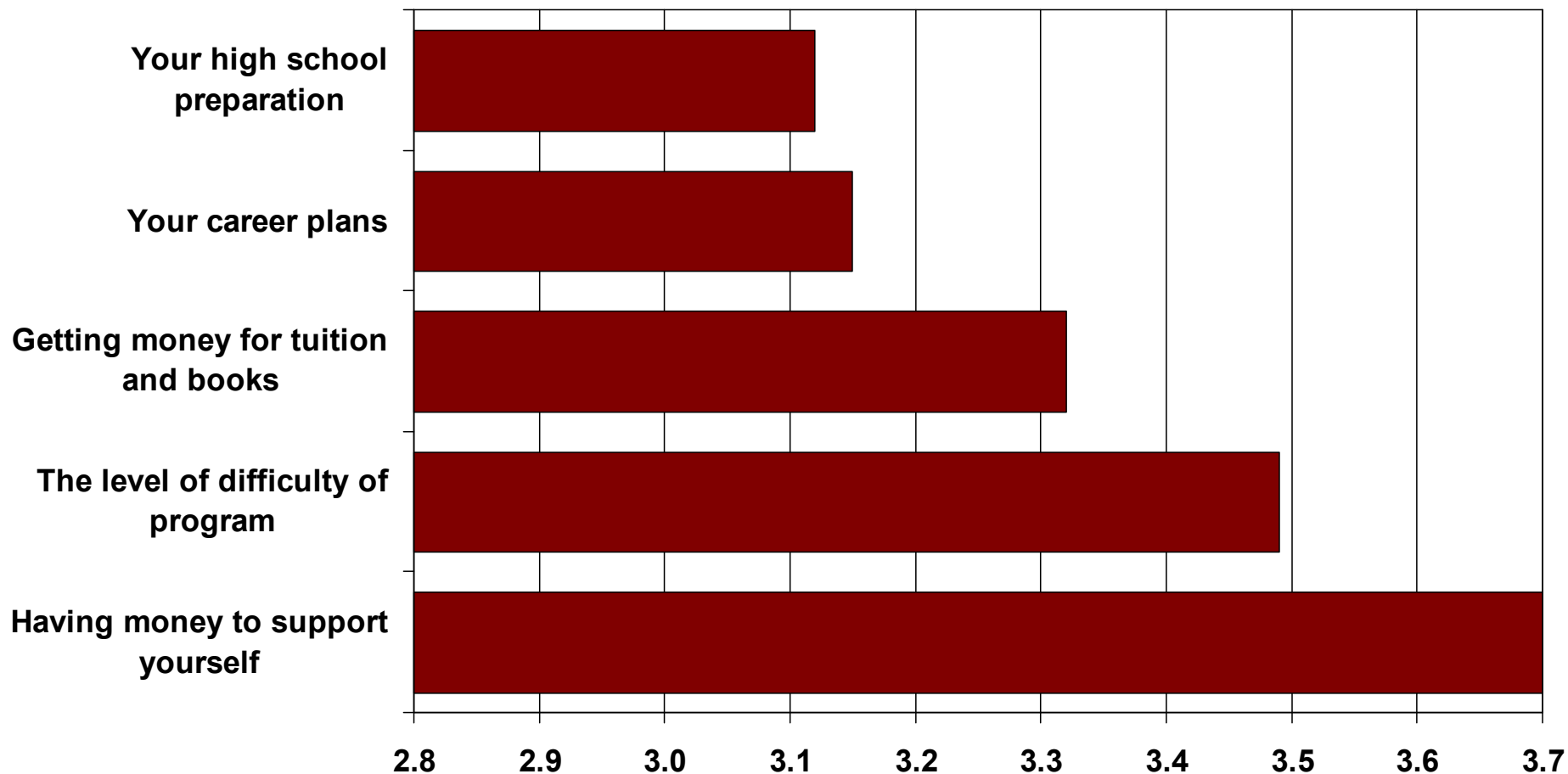
Findings: Descriptive Statistics

Figure 4: Students plans (University v. non-university)



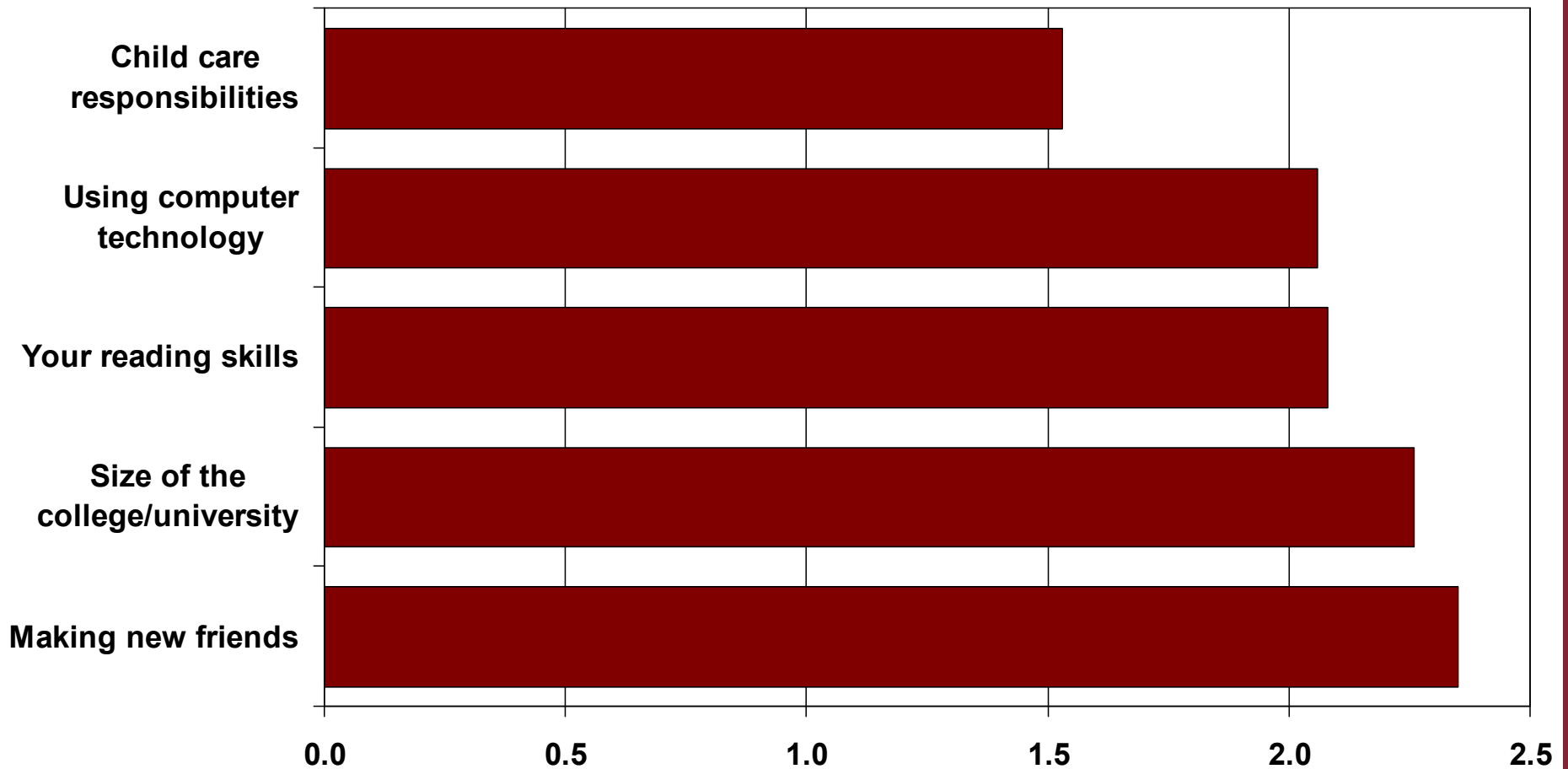
Findings: Descriptive Statistics

Figure 5: Top 5 Student Concerns



Findings: Descriptive Statistics

Figure 6: Bottom 5 Student Concerns



Findings: Multivariate Analysis

Distance education variable is not significant in multivariate statistical models

Findings: Multivariate Analysis IA

Predictor	Model 1: PSE (Y/N)		Model 2: University (Y/N)	
	β	Odds Ratio	β	Odds Ratio
BACKGROUND				
Gender	.56	1.74	-.98***	.38
Generation	.92**	2.50	.31	1.4
AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES				
Works part-time	.49	1.63	.89**	2.44
Volunteers	.65	1.91	.64**	1.89
Homework	-.09	.91	2.13**	8.44
Extracurricular	-.04	.96	.55*	1.73
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE				
Academic math vs. none	1.53**	4.63	1.78	5.93
Advanced math vs. none	2.20**	9.06	2.75*	15.70
Overall achievement	.11***	1.12	.20***	1.22

Note: Model 1 R² = .271 (Cox & Snell), .597 (Nagelkerke). χ^2 (29) = 319.60, $p < .001$. Model 2 R² = .527 (Cox & Snell), .709 (Nagelkerke). χ^2 (29) = 645.78, $p < .001$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Findings: Multivariate Analysis IB

Predictor	Model 1: PSE (Y/N)		Model 2: University (Y/N)	
	β	Odds Ratio	β	Odds Ratio
<i>SOURCES OF INFORMATION</i>				
Friends	.02	1.02	-.33**	.72
Parents	.63***	1.88	-.16	.85
Siblings	-.90***	.41	.09	1.09
PSE students	.83***	2.30	.01	1.01
Teachers	-.37*	.69	.48***	1.61
Promotional materials	1.00***	2.71	-.26*	.77
Advertising (TV, print)	-.49**	.61	-.24	.78
Recruitment officer	-.21	.81	.48***	1.61
<i>SOURCES OF PSE FUNDING</i>				
Unsure of funding	-1.11*	.33	.12	1.13
Student loan	1.16**	3.18	-.13	.88
Private bank loan	-.98	.38	-1.65***	.19
Tuition voucher	.35	1.42	.76*	2.14

Key Observations

- First-generation students and students who do not consider student loans to be a funding option for them are at a particular disadvantage in PSE decisions
- Rural students' PS choices are influenced by a variety of sources of guidance and support that may not necessarily be well-informed sources
- Distances course participation has no impact on student PSE choices
- Rural students' PSE decisions are strongly influenced by academic factors

Key Observations

- Females more likely to select university program; males more likely to select non-university program
- Rural students' selection of university and non-university studies are also strongly connected to academic factors and after school activities
- PSE decisions are less dependent on students' sources of funding as compared to other variables

Questions & Comments