

PARENTS
as
INFLUENCERS

JULY
2020



HYPE
COLLECTIVE



Hype Collective is a student marketing agency. But it's run by two people whose student days are, sadly, long behind them. So, every few months, we conduct research into what students actually want, to prevent the agency from working on the assumptions of the past.

This time, we spoke to students' parents as well.

With Springpod, an early careers network for students to explore their options and connect with employers, we conducted separate nationwide surveys of students and parents, and also sat down with some of the latter for an in-depth conversation, to learn their opinions about our chosen topic.

That topic was employment. We wanted to find out if parents are influencers when it comes to students and young people choosing career paths, from the kinds of job available to how each generation prioritises salary and satisfaction.

The results were often surprising.

The Knowledge Gap

INVOLVEMENT WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING

"You see, today's generation don't want the jobs we had... they want to work in social media... build their brand on Instanap..."

This is what we tell ourselves that older generations tell themselves. It's lazy and sweeping – but, seemingly, not that far from the truth. Parents of young adults do think the internet age has changed their children's career ambitions. It's their own assumption that is wrong.

We extended Hype Collective's nationwide pool of students to include students' parents, and we discovered an interesting difference of opinion.

In all, 70% of the parents we spoke to said young people's

futures lie in career paths relating to social media, influencers, and the creative industries. In our separate survey, meanwhile, parents were asked to name career branches that most appeal to their children's generation, and they picked Information & Communications Technology, PR & Media, and Sports & Recreation. (The ampersand business is booming.)

But that theory isn't reflected in reality. Our survey suggested that people entering the workforce are choosing more traditional industries: Construction, Works or Engineering accounts for 37%, followed by Science, Technical Research & Development (26%) and Business or Corporate Services (25%).

What to take from this?

That parents are, like, so totally out of touch, and think their children use phrases such as ***'like, so totally'***? Possibly, but there's another simple and more accurate conclusion: people need money.

"It is very, very difficult to find a job," said one parent about today's working environment. Students are trying to navigate a new world that brings competition as well as opportunity, and some forms of employment are more reliable guarantees of income. Despite one parent explaining, ***"Everyone's aspirations have grown"*** and another telling us that, ***"There are lots of things [now] I could've done instead of social work"***, traditional careers aren't being ignored.

This generational disconnect doesn't mean disinterest, though – far from it. Parents are influencers. Half of the students polled said their parents were ***'very'*** or ***'extremely'*** involved with their careers, and a further 42% said they were ***'somewhat involved'***. Apprenticeships were also received positively: in our survey, 85% of

parents said they could confidently describe what one is, and of the parents we interviewed, 90% were supportive of their child taking up an apprenticeship. Yes, that number is higher. Evidently some parents have commendable faith in their offspring.

Parents, it seems, don't necessarily understand what their children want, but will support them in trying to get whatever it may be. **That sounds about right.**



THE SALARY GAP

Money isn't everything... is it?

We conduct these research pieces to prevent us from working on assumptions – and one assumption might be that 'kids these days' want to enjoy themselves, while their parents want them to prioritise financial stability. In fact, we found it's the other way around.



Although every parent we spoke to recognised the importance of earning a decent crust, and middle-class respondents in particular expected their offspring to lead comfortable lives, 60% said salary **“isn’t everything”** (though it’s notable that a common insight from BAME parents in our interviews was that they didn’t want their children to struggle as they once had). In our survey, only **30.5%** of parents described a good salary as ‘very important’. On the whole, parents placed more importance on passion and job satisfaction.

It’s tempting to project onto this a sort of maudlin hindsight; a life well lived, but not lived well. Alternatively, parents just want their children to be happy. One said, **“If you’re getting paid for doing something you love, you’ve cracked it.”**

Their children, though, are a little more grounded.

To our surprise, **52%** of students described salary as ‘very

important’, compared to **30.5%** of parents.

It ties into our findings in Chapter One: students are more worried about financial stability than their parents may realise.

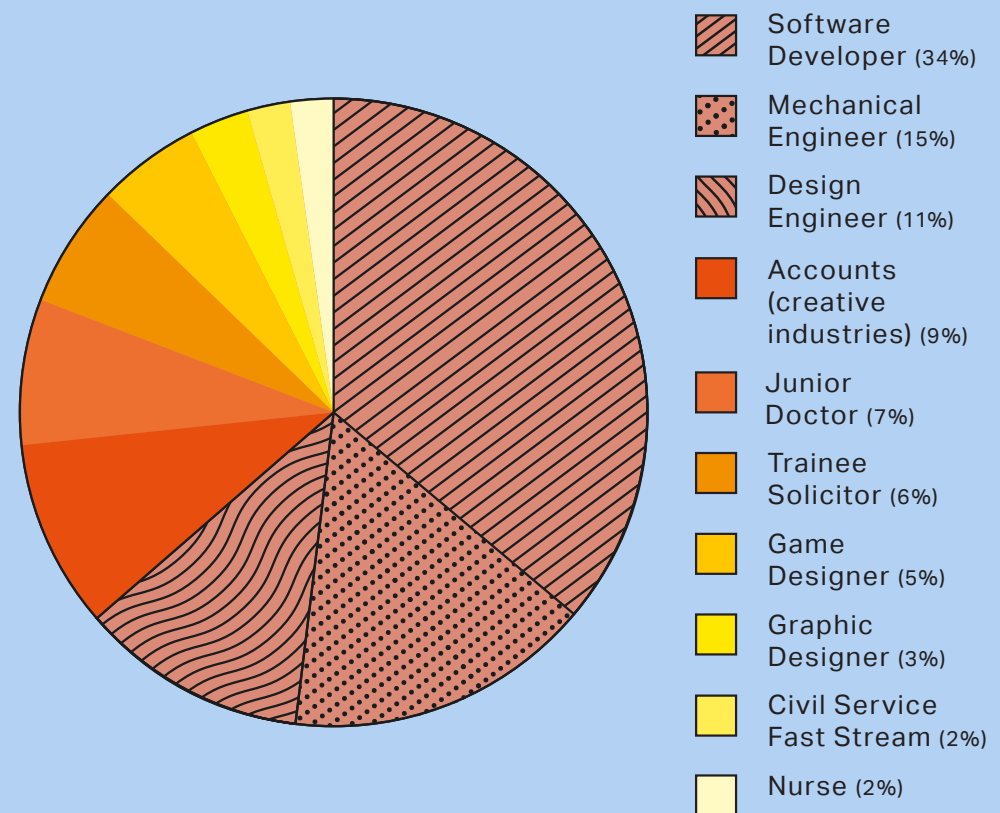
The good news is that when it comes to identifying which careers pay well and which don’t, both generations – and we’ll give you prior warning here that there’s a pun coming, so prepare yourselves – are on the money. Look, we did warn you.

When asked to pick the highest-paid jobs from a list provided, students and parents alike suggested the roles of software developer, design engineer and mechanical engineer. All three were in the top five, of 14 options available.

While students and parents may not agree on the importance of having a well-paid job, at least they know where to find it.

“WHICH JOB DO YOU THINK EARNS THE HIGHEST SALARY”?

Survey of 674 students who live in the UK



THE HAPPINESS GAP

Enjoyment vs Fulfilment



When it's 9pm in The Red Lion and you casually ask, ***"Are you happy in your job?"***, you don't expect to hear your friend reply, ***"Well, what is happiness?"*** Yet, even as you drain your glass and check the bus times, this is a question that apparently can't be ignored, judging by Hype Collective's interviews.*

Our conversations with students and parents – separately, of course – revealed that each define job satisfaction differently.

Parents generally took a holistic approach, weighing up job stability, appreciation and, for **90%** of those interviewed, the need for a base level of income before such things as happiness can be considered. Nor did stability refer to salary alone: company loyalty, ownership and even accolades cropped up in our conversations on the subject.

Meanwhile, **94%** of students surveyed – compared to **42%** of parents – strongly agreed that enjoying the day-to-day aspects of their work was important to them.

You may now be frantically scrolling back a few pages and thinking, ***"But wait: the previous chapter implied that those entering the workforce care about money above all else!"*** True, the majority of students we met rated a good salary as being 'very important', but this seems mostly attributable to an understandable anxiety about needs fulfilment, and a far greater number suggested that enjoying the daily 9-to-5 is still paramount.

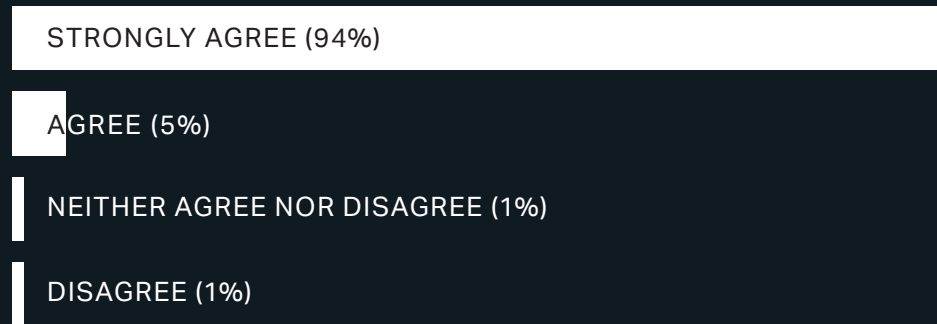
The new workforce is passionate about enjoying a job but also consider a decent salary to be important. That isn't naive, nor greedy – merely a reflection of how difficult it is to enter the job market, and also that they may not be aware of the many varied opportunities available. A groundbreaking study concluded that in attitudes towards career options, there are only "minimal changes" between the ages of 7 and 17. We think at age 7 we still harboured hopes of being a cowboy astronaut footballer.

Overall, these questions split our audience more than any other – but we learned plenty from their answers.

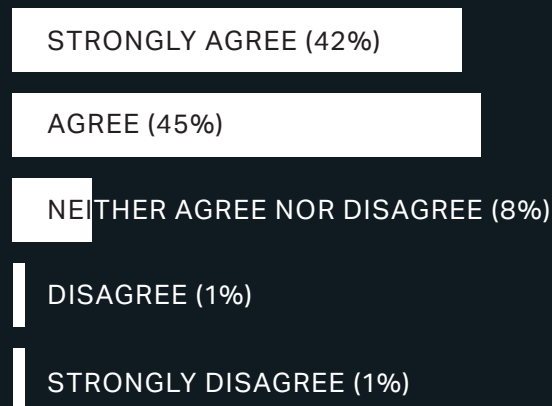
*Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-50042459>

“IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENJOY THE DAY-TO-DAY ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB”; HOW FAR DO YOU AGREE?

Survey of 674 students who live in the UK



Survey of 565 parents who live in the UK



QUOTES FROM PARENT INTERVIEWEES

“THERE’S MORE TO LIFE THAN WORK”

“LESS AND LESS PRESSURE TO SQUEEZE PEOPLE INTO THE SAUSAGE MACHINE OF LIFE”

“HAPPY PEOPLE ARE THE MOST PRODUCTIVE”

“IF YOUR JOB IS THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES YOU FEEL SECURE, THEN WE HAVE A PROBLEM”

“HAVING ENOUGH MONEY AND STABILITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ENJOYING [THE MONEY]”

“HAPPINESS DOESN’T PAY YOUR BILLS”

The worst job for your child to get?

"AS LONG AS YOU'RE HAPPY, DARLING..."

No parent wants their beloved offspring, their unique creation, their pride and joy, to become a social media manager. At least, that was our theory.*

We had a working hypothesis, namely that there would be jobs that offer security and decent pay – things that parents want their children to have – but are

nonetheless seen as *'bad'* careers. Somehow, we just happened to think of social media. So, we hoped to learn which jobs parents, due to misconceptions, would hate their children to have.

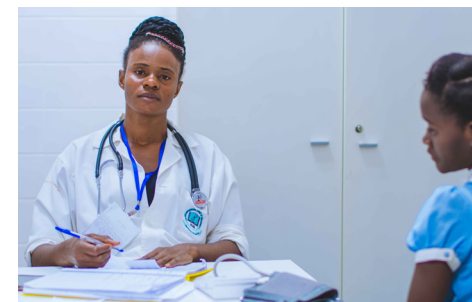
There weren't any.

"You have to make sure they're happy in this life," said one participant in a discussion about potentially *'bad'* career

choices, and this reflected a broader trend: for parents, the worst job for their child is simply the job that their child thinks is the worst.

Nobody we spoke to would dissuade their children from entering a certain career – and there were no certain careers they wanted to discourage. Although 40% of parents did say they didn't want their kids to do anything

'unethical or unhelpful',



the consensus was that the making of a bad job centres around how it makes the employee feel, as opposed to a specific hated profession. Job satisfaction trumps parental approval, even for the parents.

But before traffic wardens become too excited, it's worth noting that people who worked in the public sector themselves

generally disliked the idea of their children doing the same. One in six employed people work in the public sector, in a diverse array of roles from cleaners to government officials and everything in between, so why the opposition?

The public/private sector money gap was the most common reason given. Many public-sector roles are also thankless: social work, nursing and policing, for example, are professions seen as more punishing than popular.

Finally, and fascinatingly, when each survey asked respondents to name career sectors that don't appeal to young people, parents and children were united in shrugging their shoulders at Purchasing & Procurement and Planning/Policy/Strategy. Two generations, of one mind; in terms of careers perception, those entering the workforce could be unconsciously influenced by their parents. Perhaps those family evenings spent playing Game Of Life had some impact, after all.

*Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicspending/articles/howworksinthepublicsector/2019-06-04>

Thanks for reading – we hope you enjoyed it.
(No, really, we do. We hate dull industry research papers and so we always try to make something a bit more interesting.)
We'll be running a couple more research pieces this year; one on students' morals and the other on travel.

If you've got any burning questions or bright ideas about either of those areas, we'd love to chat.

Drop Hype Collective's MD, Simon Lucey, a line on simon@hypecollective.co.uk, or Springpod's Head of Employer Strategy, Conor Cotton, on conor.cotton@springpod.co.uk

*That's
your lot.*



Editorial Team

Paul Stollery
Simon Lucey
Josh Akapo
Conor Cotton
Huw Davies

Designed by:
Giuseppe Alagna

HYPE

COLLECTIVE

Hype Collective help brands engage students on campus, on social and in the media.

We aim to be the most creative student marketing agency you'll come across whilst fully understanding the world of education and what makes our audience tick.

We believe the best way to market to young people is to work with them. Every campaign we run creates opportunities for students. These opportunities are shared across our network of 10 city managers, 100+ brand ambassadors and 5,000+ student societies nationally.



Springpod is an early careers network for young people aged 13-24 to explore options, build connections with employers and industry leaders, and take better control of their future.

We work with leading employers across industries and educational institutions to help young people discover a host of career opportunities including work experience, apprenticeships, university and graduate options.

The Numbers

This report was written following a three-month research project which involved nationwide surveys of both parents and students, in-depth interviews with parents, and workshops with industry professionals.

Workshops:

Number of workshop participants: **18**

Who attended:

A mixture of graduate recruitment and early careers specialist from a variety of brands, bodies and organisations.

In-depth interviews:

Number of parents interviewed: **10**

Who we interviewed:

Parents with children aged **11 – 26** from all over the UK. Due to the nature of these interviews, with parents sharing sensitive information relating to their families, parents' identities are to remain anonymous.

Surveys:

Number of respondents: **565** qualified parents / **674** qualified students in the UK.

All research was carried out by both Hype Collective and Springpod.

Steering group

Special thanks go to our steering group, who gave up their time and shared industry insights to help give direction to this report.



Please note that our steering group helped us by offering up their time for interviews at the start of the project. This helped us to decide how to structure the focus groups.

They do not endorse the findings themselves.

