



Government of Saskatchewan

Public Opinion Polling

from April 1, 2003 – June 30, 2003

**Saskatchewan
Executive Council**

**Omnibus Polling
Program**

Report of Results
May 2003

Introduction

Objective

The objective of this poll was to query a sample of Saskatchewan residents on a range of issues identified by Saskatchewan Executive Council and its client departments.

A number of the queries are repeats from polls that have been conducted regularly over several years, in ongoing monitoring of issues and trends. Others are unique to this particular survey.

Methodology

Interviews were conducted across Saskatchewan with respondents aged 18 or older in households selected at random by computer. All fieldwork was done by telephone from Sigma's call centre.

A total of 1005 interviews were completed. The results from a sample of this size can be expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Queries were supplied by Saskatchewan Executive Council and in some instances modified at the suggestion of Sigma Analytics.

Cautions

Interpreting the results in this report should be done with the following cautionary considerations in mind:

- Sample surveys provide estimates of the prevalence of the measured factors in the total population from which the sample is drawn. The estimates are statistically reliable within the ranges indicated, at the 95% level of confidence. This means that the actual prevalence of the factor could be greater or lesser than the estimate, by the amount of the margin of error. It also means that 5% of the time, the estimate can be expected to differ from reality by more than the margin of error. Results from sample surveys should therefore be treated as contributing to knowledge, but not as defining it precisely.
- While polling results for the entire sample are statistically reliable within the range indicated, results for sub-sets of the sample will have a larger margin of error because they are based on smaller numbers. They should be treated with more caution.
- Polls are “snapshot” approximations of reality. Subject to the foregoing considerations, they can be expected to reflect reality validly, within the indicated

ranges, at the time they are conducted. Opinions change. It is important to bear in mind that a single poll cannot describe a trend.

- Indicators from the sample can be projected to estimate the prevalence of the measured factor in the total population from which the sample was drawn. They cannot be interpreted as describing any other population.

Highlights

- *Healthcare issues dominate at the national level as the issue category most important to the largest group. Next most important is the economy.*
- *Provincially, there is a greater diversity of issues, none with a strong lead over the next. Agricultural and rural issues around economy and population led, scoring in the mid-thirties, followed by economy and population issues in the high twenties, and healthcare, at 20%. .*
- *Two in three respondents feel the Saskatchewan education system is about the same as in the rest of the country.*
- *A majority feels Saskatchewan high school graduates are prepared for post-secondary academic education, though most hold this view only moderately. Respondents feel students are prepared to enter the workforce, but the proportion holding this view is smaller than those finding students prepared for post-secondary education.*
- *By a small margin, respondents indicated that they had not taken an in-province pleasure trip in 2002. Of those who did, roughly half went camping, and six in 10 visited a provincial park.*
- *Satisfaction with provincial parks is very high among those who visited. Over half indicated they are very satisfied, with another 40% indicating satisfaction.*
- *Seventy percent stated they plan to visit a park in 2003, whether regional, provincial or national.*
- *Large majorities believe Saskatchewan residents have safe drinking water. The proportion that finds local water supplies safe is much larger than those holding the same view for the province as a whole.*
- *About six in 10 would be prepared to pay more to improve the water supply, or to ensure its safety.*
- *A majority of 75% think employment in Saskatchewan is stable or rising.*

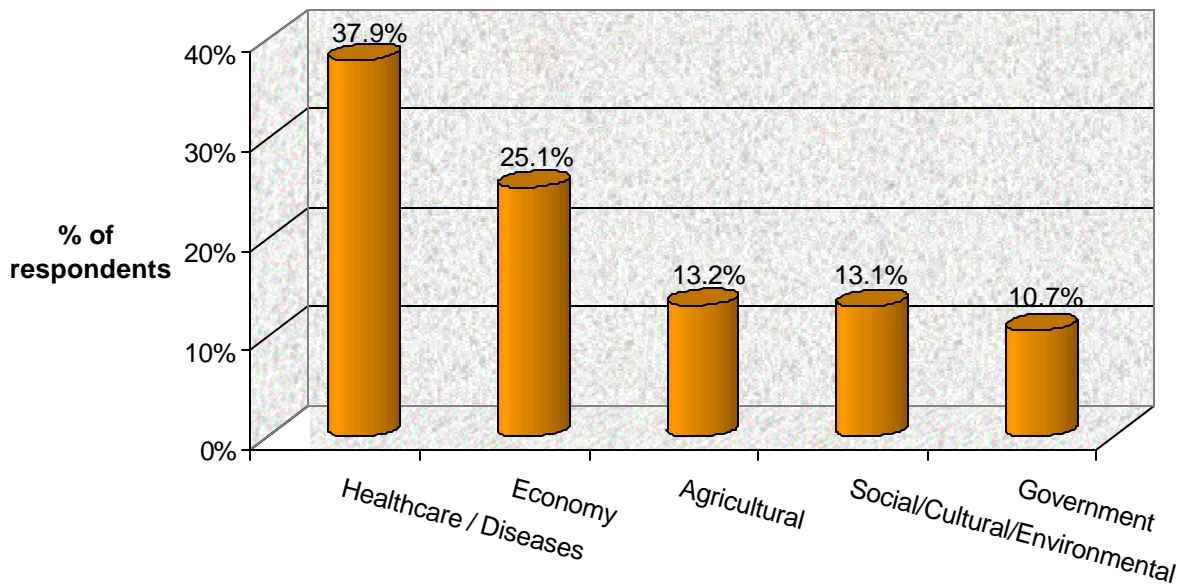
Section A: Executive Council General Issues

A1. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

Saskatchewanians continue to identify healthcare and diseases as the issue category of greatest importance at the national level. The largest group of respondents, 37.9% overall, cite this issue as most important.

The second most-often selected issue is the economy, chosen by one in four.

A1. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

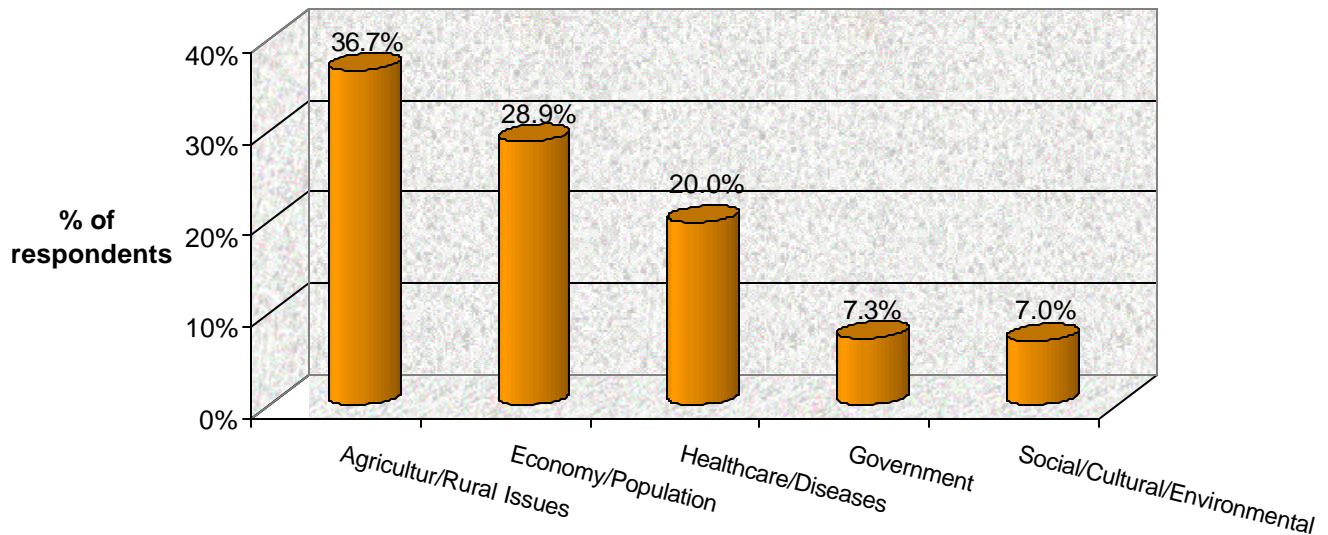


A2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?

Provincially, agricultural and rural issues are important to the largest group of Saskatchewan residents. One third (36.7%) of respondents identified it as the top issue area.

Following was the economy and population (28.9%), with healthcare and diseases (20.0%).

A2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



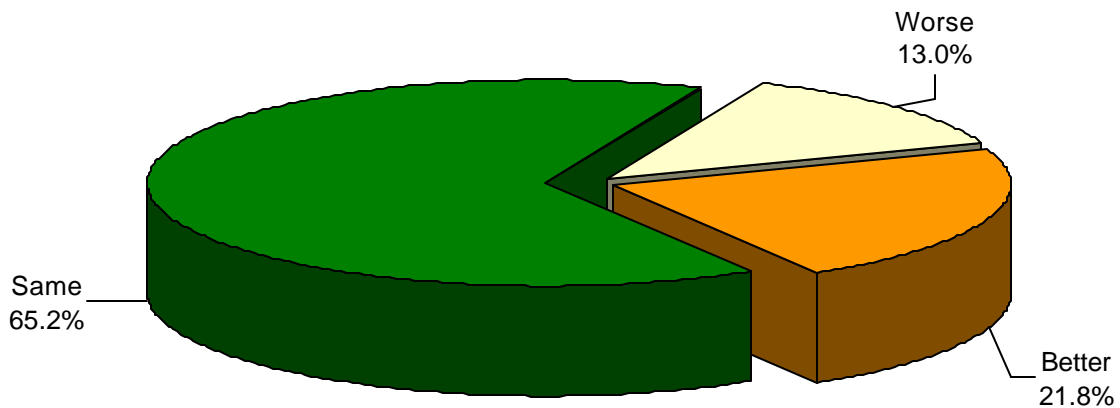
Section B: Learning

B1. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same, or worse?

Two in three find little difference between the education system in this province and the systems elsewhere.

One fifth believe Saskatchewan's system is better, and somewhat over half that number indicate it is worse.

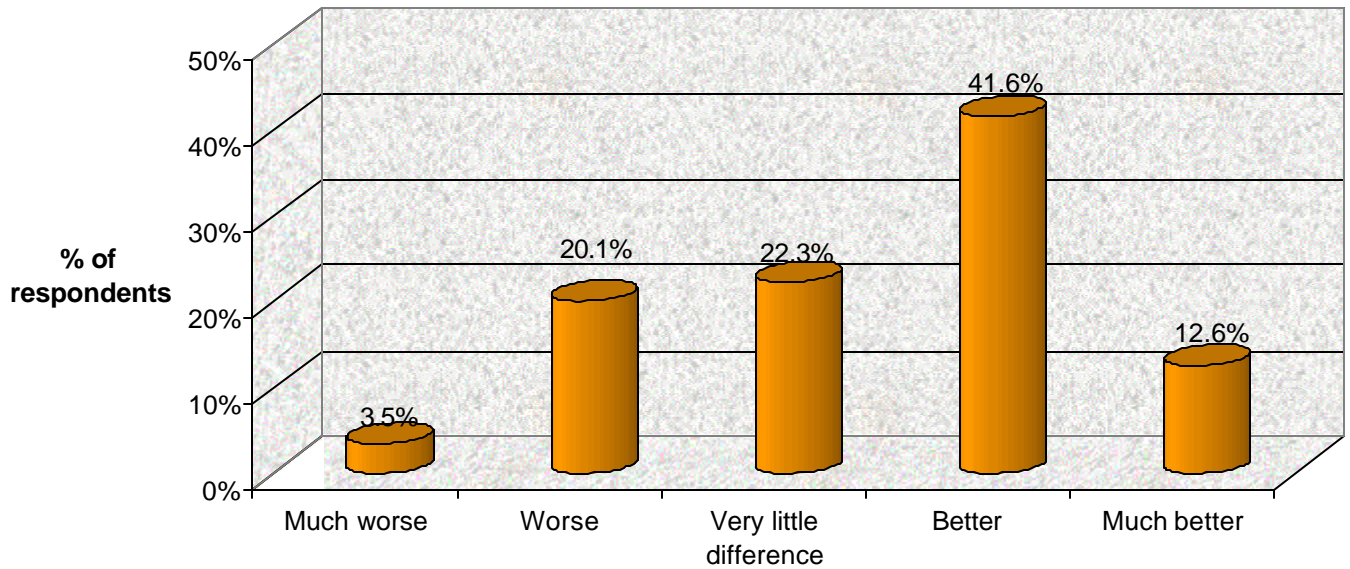
B1. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same, or worse?



B2. When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little difference compared to yours?

A majority indicates that education today has improved from the time when earlier generations attended. About one in four believes education is worse today.

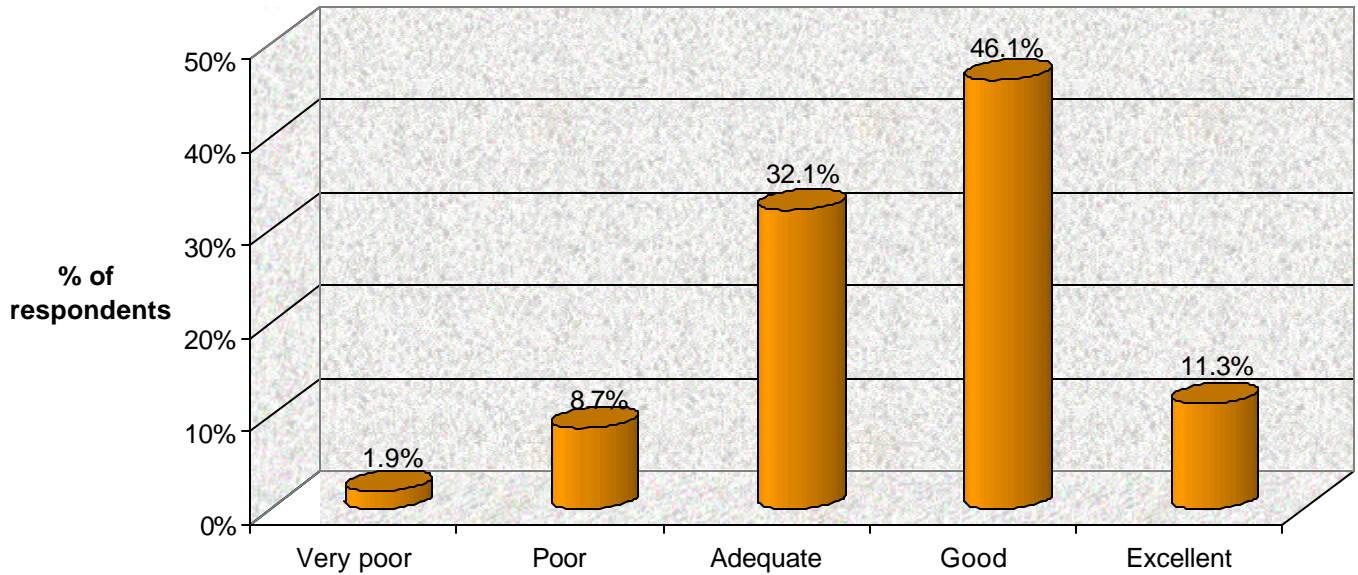
B2. When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little difference compared to yours?



B3. Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?

Those who think elementary education is good to excellent greatly outweigh those who find it poor to very poor. The margin is larger than five to one.

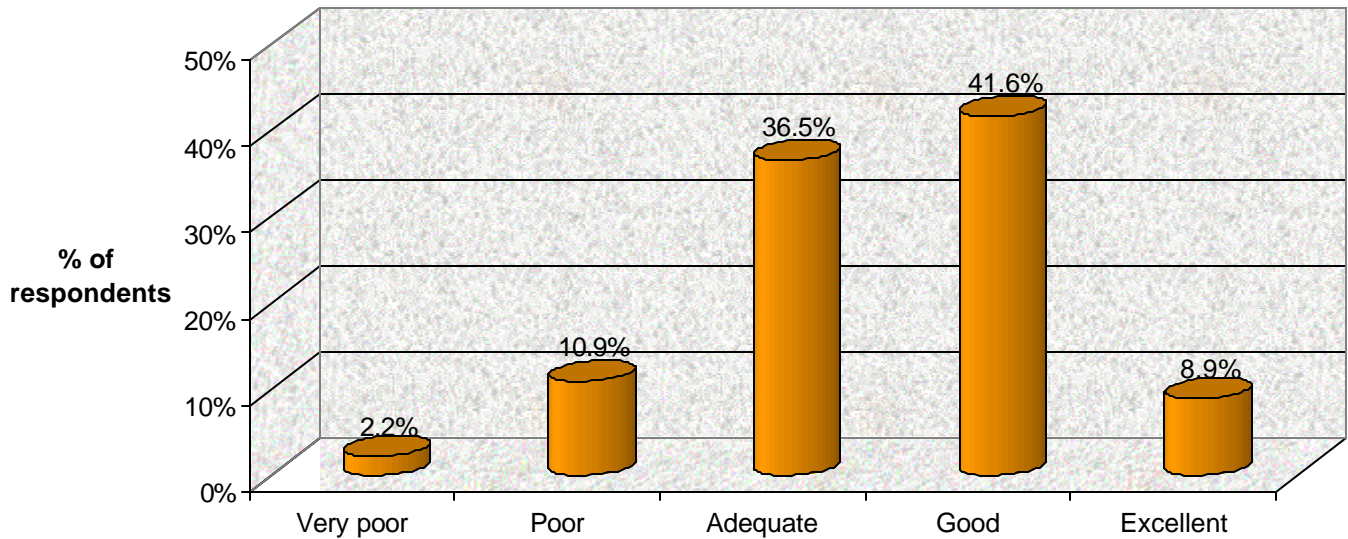
B3. Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



B4. Do you think that the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?

The quality of high school education is also viewed favourably by many more than view it negatively. Here the ratio is approximately four to one.

B4. Do you think that the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?

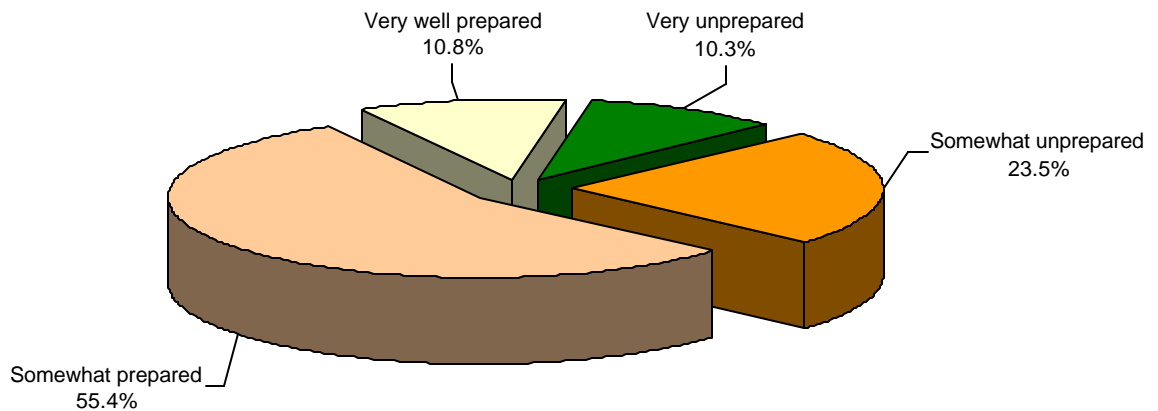


B5. Which best describes how well prepared you think Saskatchewan high school students are for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities? Do you think they are very well prepared, only somewhat prepared, somewhat unprepared or very unprepared?

Roughly two thirds of respondents find students well or somewhat prepared for post-secondary education.

The strongest views are nearly balanced. Virtually identical proportions believe students are either very well prepared, or very unprepared.

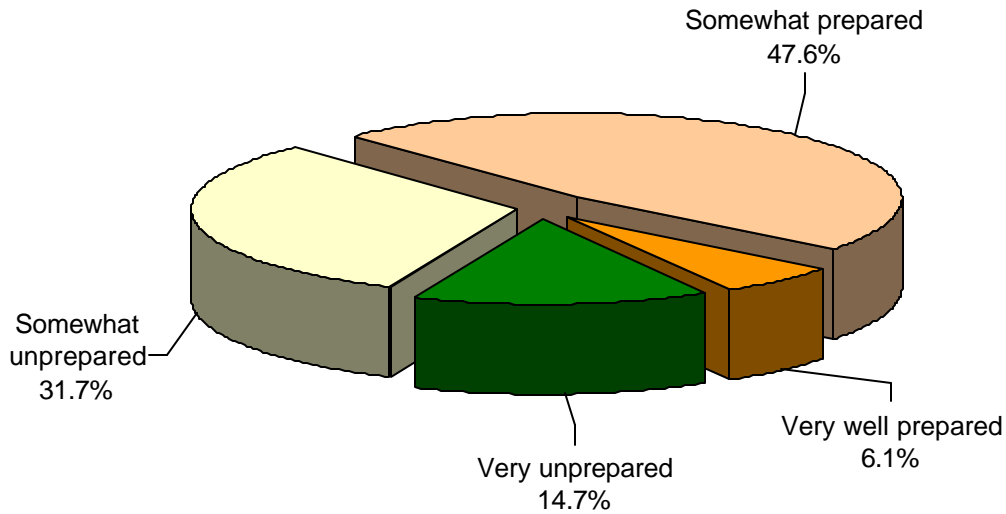
B5. Which best describes how well prepared you think Saskatchewan high school students are for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities?



B6. How well prepared do you think high school students are for entering the workforce? Do you think they are very well prepared, only somewhat prepared, somewhat unprepared, or very unprepared?

In terms of being prepared to enter the workforce, opinion is split. While those who find students somewhat prepared constitute a sizeable group, nearly one half, those who find them very unprepared greatly outweigh those who find students very well prepared.

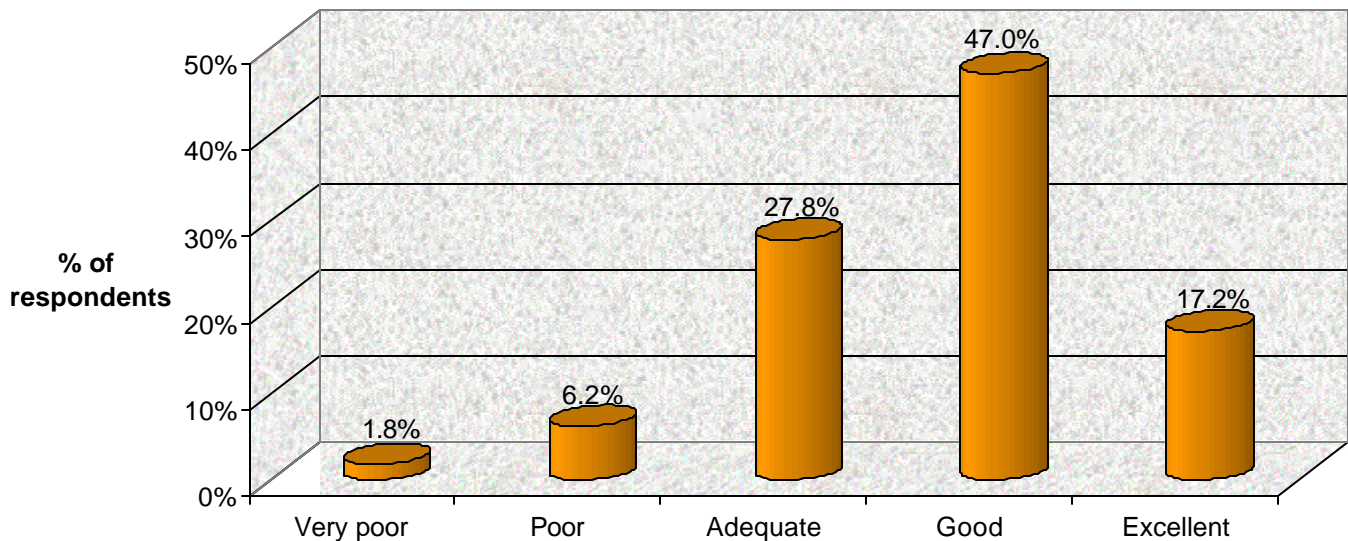
B6. How well prepared do you think high school students are for entering the workforce?



B7. How well do you believe Saskatchewan's education system is doing in using new technology like computers and the internet to enhance learning opportunities for students? Would you say they are excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?

A strong majority of about two in three indicates that Saskatchewan's education system is doing well at using technology. They vastly outweigh the single-digit numbers who hold a negative view.

B7. How well do you believe Saskatchewan's education system is doing in using new technology like computers and the internet to enhance learning opportunities for students?

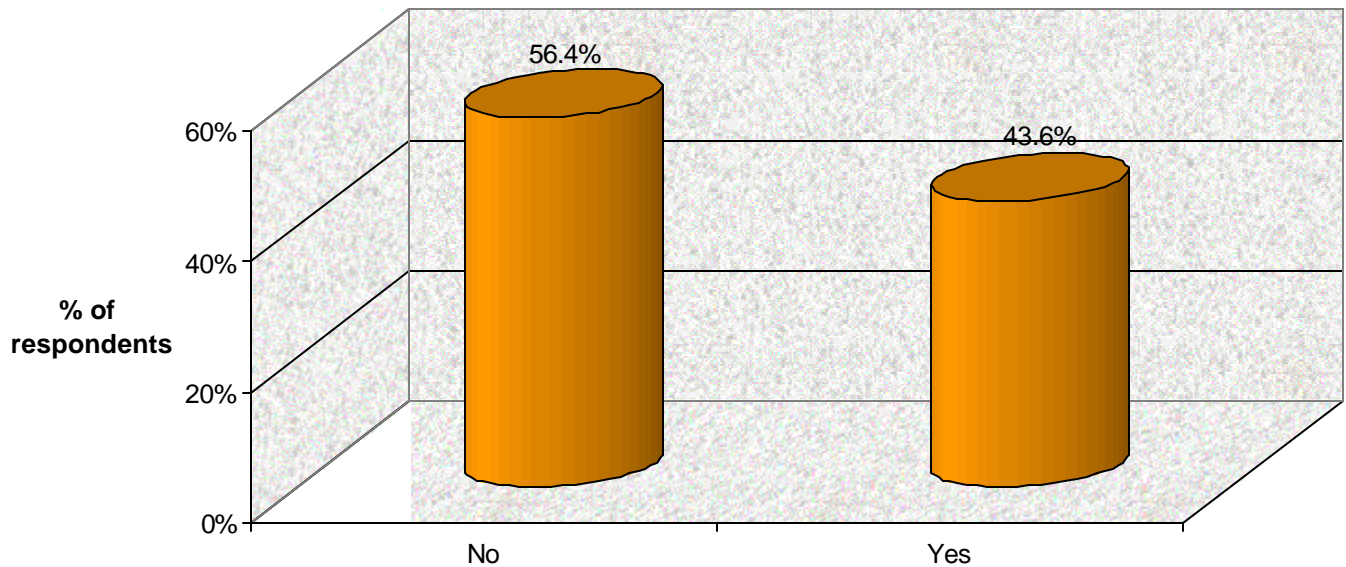


Section C: Saskatchewan Tourism

C1. During the period May to October 2002, did you take a vacation or pleasure trip within Saskatchewan but outside your community or area?

Over half of respondents indicate they did not take a pleasure trip in Saskatchewan last summer and fall.

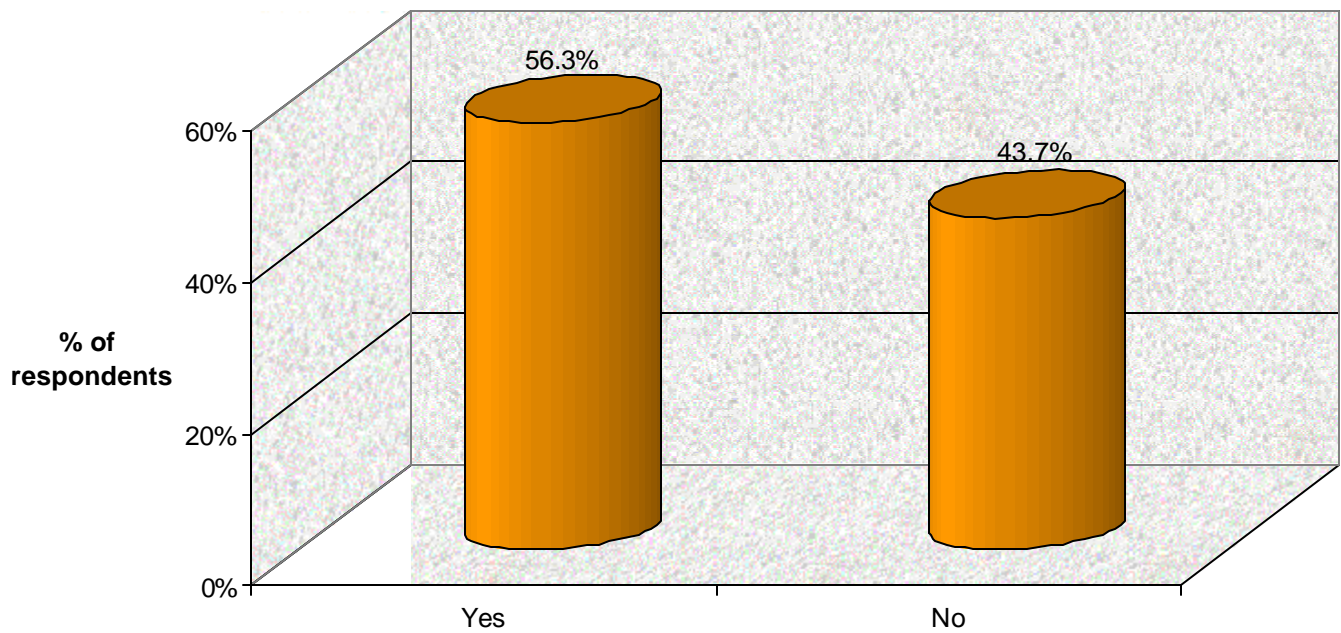
C1. During the period May to October 2002, did you take a vacation or pleasure trip within Saskatchewan but outside your community or area?



C2. If yes, did you camp on any of these trips?

Among the just-under-half who did take a pleasure trip inside the province in 2002, over half went camping on one or more of their trips.

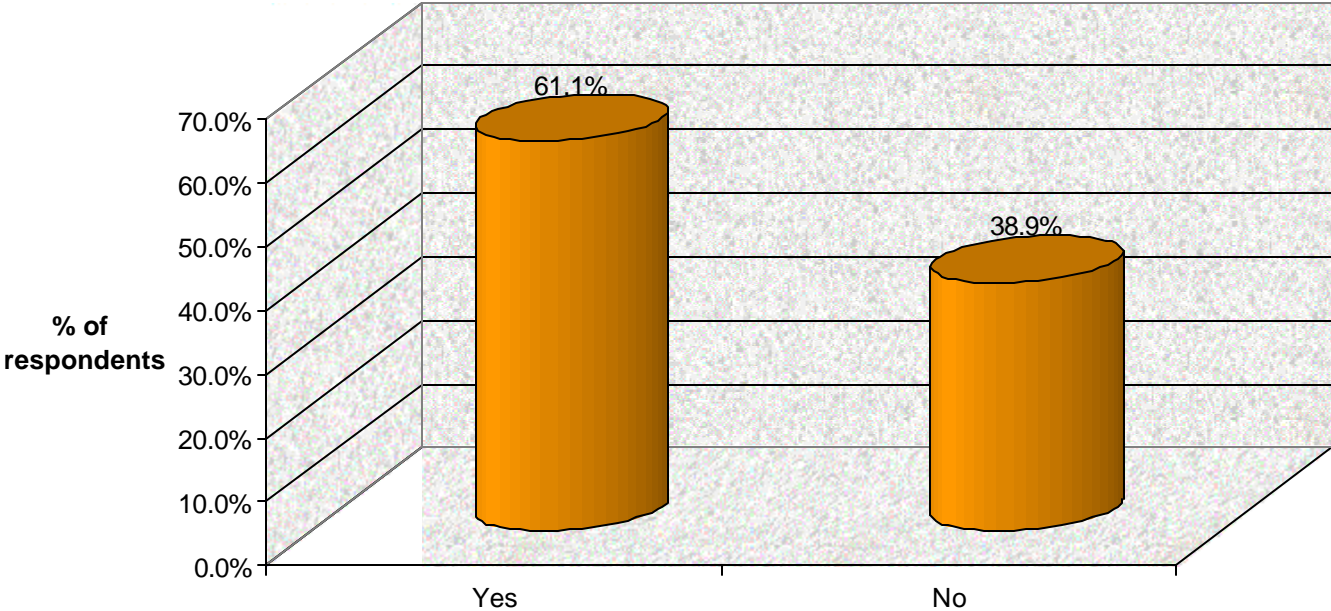
C2. If yes, did you camp on any of these trips?



C3a. During these trips did you visit any provincial parks?

Approximately six in 10 in-province pleasure travelers visited provincial parks.

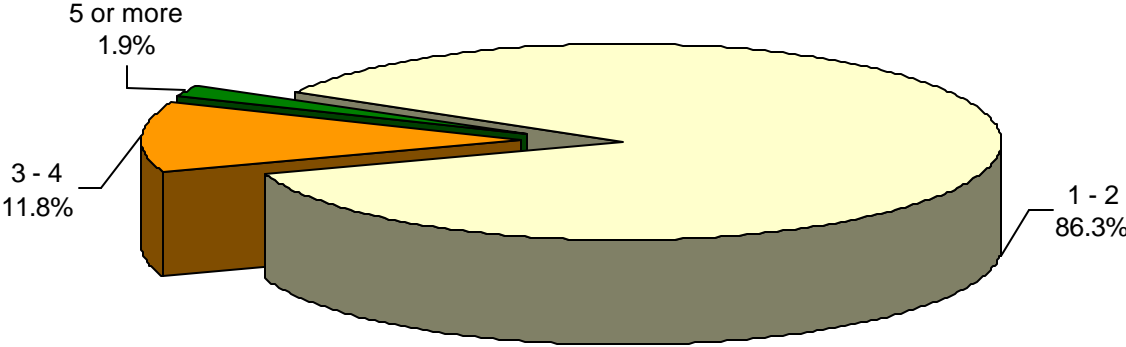
C3a. During these trips did you visit any provincial parks?



C3b. How many provincial parks did you visit?

The vast majority of respondents indicate a visit to one park, or to two.

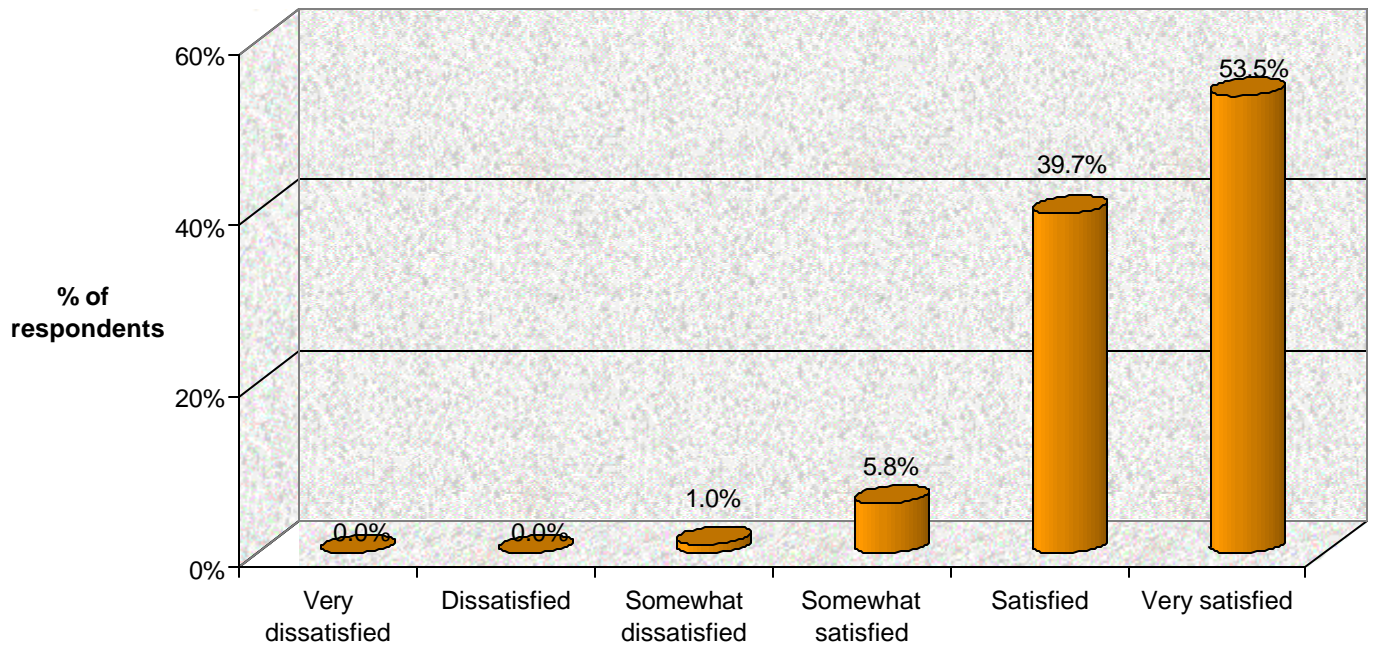
C3b. How many provincial parks did you visit?



C3d. Overall, how satisfied were you with your visits to provincial parks? Is that...

Among parks visitors, satisfaction was very strong. Over half report being very satisfied, and a further 40% report “satisfaction.” Virtually no respondents indicate being dissatisfied.

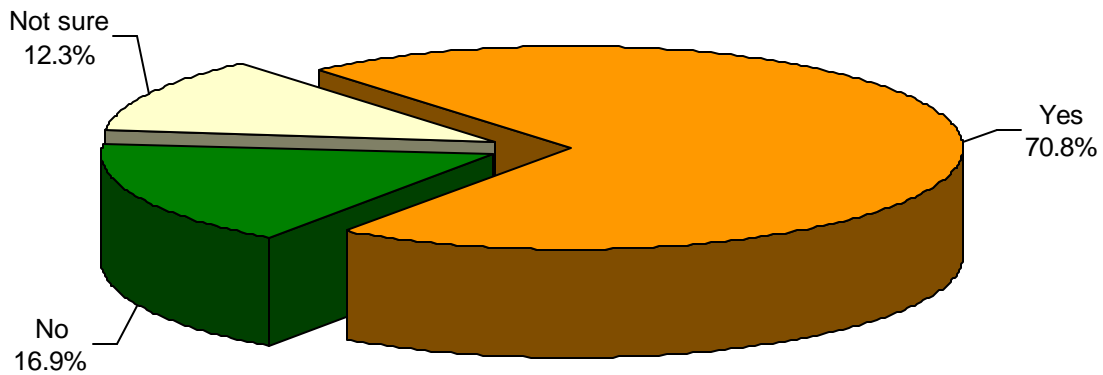
C3d. Overall, how satisfied were you with your visits to provincial parks?



C4. Are you planning to visit any provincial, national or regional parks in Saskatchewan during summer 2003?

Seven in 10 indicate intent to visit a park operated by the provincial, national or regional authority.

C4. Are you planning to visit any provincial, national or regional parks in Saskatchewan during summer 2003?



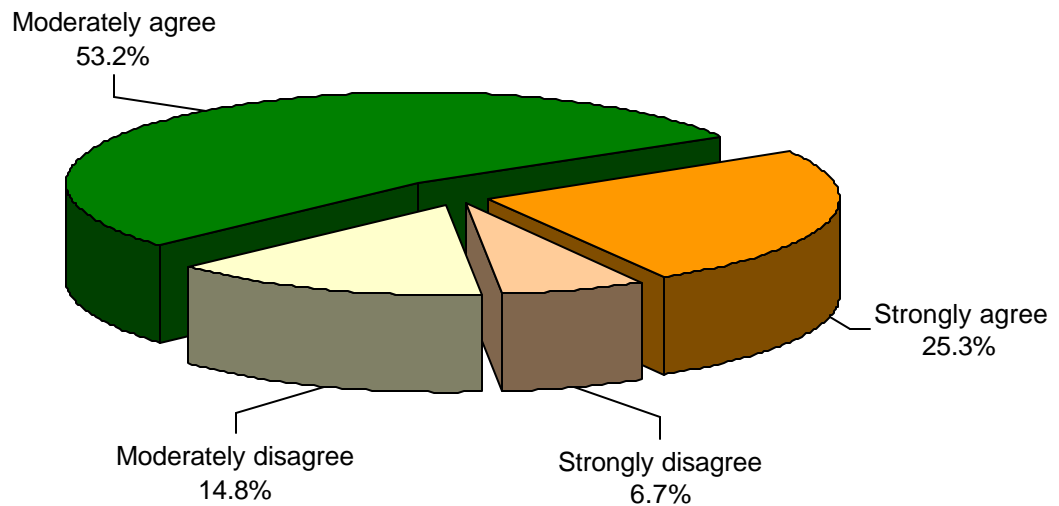
Section D: Saskatchewan Environment

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

D1. Saskatchewan residents have safe drinking water. Do you...

Three in four respondents agree that Saskatchewan residents have safe drinking water. One in five disagrees.

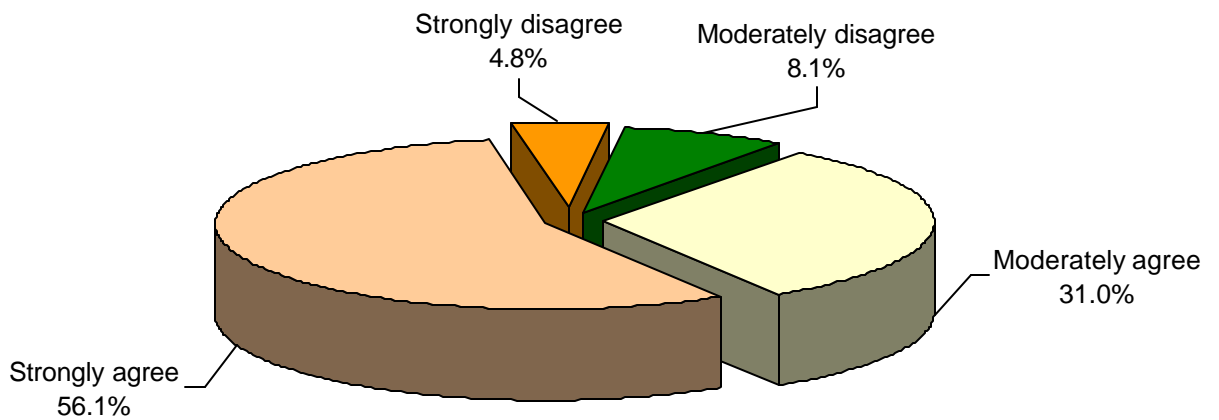
D1. Saskatchewan residents have safe drinking water.



D2. I am confident that my drinking water is safe. Do you...

When asked about their own supply of drinking water, the proportion that believes the water is safe rises considerably from the level at which the provincial supply as a whole is deemed safe. Most significantly, the number that agrees strongly is much higher, exceeding half of respondents.

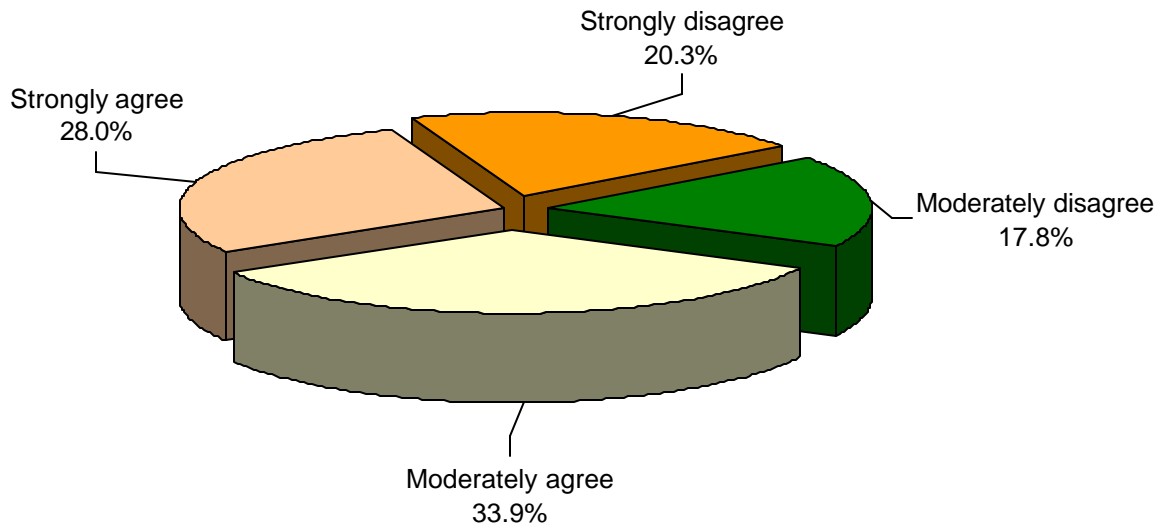
D2. I am confident that my drinking water is safe.



D3. If improvements are required to make my drinking water safe or to generally improve the drinking water quality, I would be willing to pay higher water rates. Do you...

By a ration of six to four, respondents indicate they would be prepared to pay higher rates if necessary to improve or ensure safety of the water supply. However, consequential numbers indicate they hold strong views, both pro and con.

D3. If improvements are required to make my drinking water safe or to generally improve the drinking water quality, I would be willing to pay higher water rates.

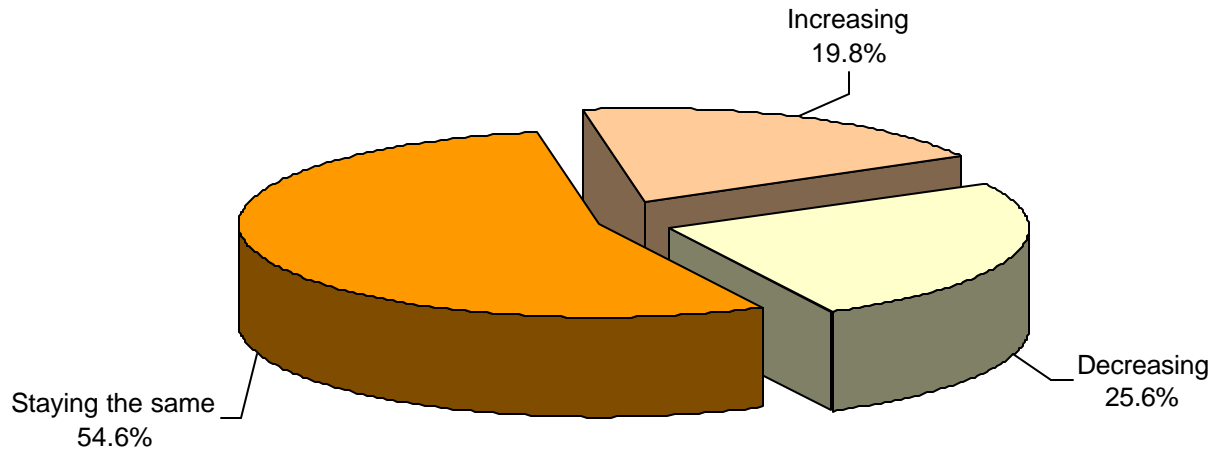


Section E: Industry & Resources

E1. Do you think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan in recent months has been increasing, decreasing or staying about the same?

A small majority believes Saskatchewan's employment levels are more or less unchanged in recent months. One in four believes the level is declining, one in five, that it is rising.

E1. Do you think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan in recent months has been increasing, decreasing or staying about the same?



Demographics:

Gender:

Male	50.0%
Female	50.0%

Age:

18 – 34	23.1%
35 – 54	40.3%
55 and over	36.5%

Location:

City	56.4%
Town/Village/Hamlet	25.3%
Rural Municipality	18.4%

Occupation:

Retired	26.1%
Student	6.0%
Homemaker	5.7%
Not employed	1.9%
Farmer	8.9%
Professional	9.8%
Trades person	4.7%
Business owner/self-employed	5.0%
Employee – private sector	8.8%
Employee – local government	2.7%
Employee – provincial/federal government	5.6%
Manager – private sector	1.4%
Manager – public sector	0.7%
Other	12.7%

Education:

Less than grade 12	20.9%
Grade 12	24.7%
Some technical or university	15.9%
Technical diploma	14.3%
University degree	18.8%
Graduate degree	5.4%

Income:

Less than \$25,000	23.1%
\$25,000 - \$50,000	34.3%
\$50,000 - \$100,000	32.2%
Over \$100,000	10.4%

Region:

Saskatoon	19.8%
Regina	18.1%
Moose Jaw	3.3%
Prince Albert	2.8%
Southeast	9.6%
Southwest	11.1%
East Central	6.8%
Central	11.9%
Northwest	13.5%
North	3.0%