



Back-to-College Amid Inflation

September 2022

A SINGLE DATA SOURCE. INFINITE INSIGHTS.



Key Takeaways

Parents and students have **different attitudes and motivations** when back-to-college shopping.

- **Parents** are more likely to purchase an item because it's a **good value, high-quality**, or they like the **brand**.
- **Students** are more likely to purchase because it was the **cheapest option** or they liked the color or packaging.

Retailer location and convenience is most important to parents, while students seek out the **best deals and best selection**.

- To market to parents, retailers should show that they're a **one stop shop** so buyers can get everything they need and **items are easy to find** within the store.

46% of parents and 54% of students stated **rising prices had a large impact** on back to college shopping.

- Parents were more likely to shop around for the best deals, stock up, and switch brands/retailers, while students were more likely to purchase smaller quantities or not purchase an item entirely.
- Deals and discounts are important and both parents and students **found % off total purchase** deals to be most appealing.

Back-to-college shopping behaviors vary depending on whether the shopper is a parent or the student.



Over **50%** of shoppers said they were done or almost done with back-to-college shopping.

However, students were significantly more likely than parents to say they still had most of their back-to-college shopping to do.



Student shoppers were significantly more likely to say that they were **solely responsible** for paying for back-to-college items.

Parent shoppers were more likely to say that they were **sharing the responsibility of paying** for the purchase with someone else.



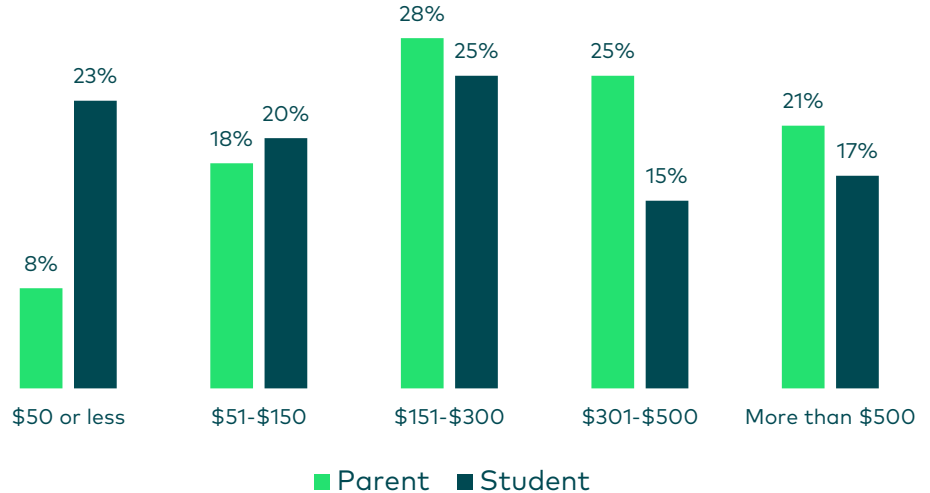
Most shoppers prefer to **purchase everything at once or to purchase most necessary items** at the same time.

However, **parents** were much more likely to say that they liked to **buy most necessary items at one time**, while **students** were significantly more likely to prefer **purchasing all items at once or to shop around for individual items.**

Parents are spending more money on back-to-college items than students.

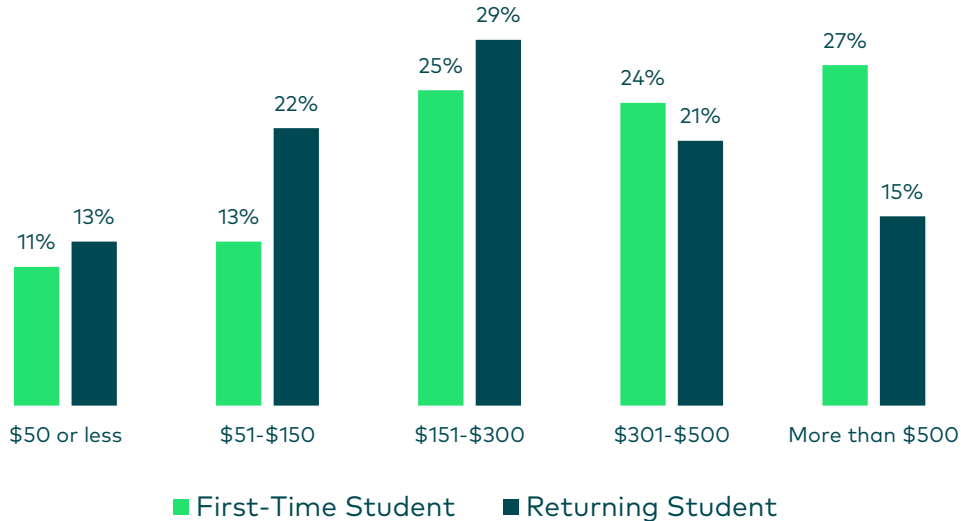
- **Students** were significantly more likely to say they were planning to spend **\$50 or less** on back-to-college items.
- Parents were much more likely to say they were going to spend \$301-500 on back-to-college items than students.
- Overall, **most parents and students spent between \$151-300 on back-to-college items.**

SPEND ON BACK-TO-COLLEGE ITEMS



First-time students tend to spend more than returning students.

SPEND ON BACK-TO-COLLEGE ITEMS



- **First time** students or those that purchase for them were much more likely than returning students to say they were going to **spend over \$500 on back-to-college items.**
- Returning students or those that purchase for them were significantly more likely to say they were going to spend \$51-\$150.

The primary purchase drivers for parents are the value & quality of an item.

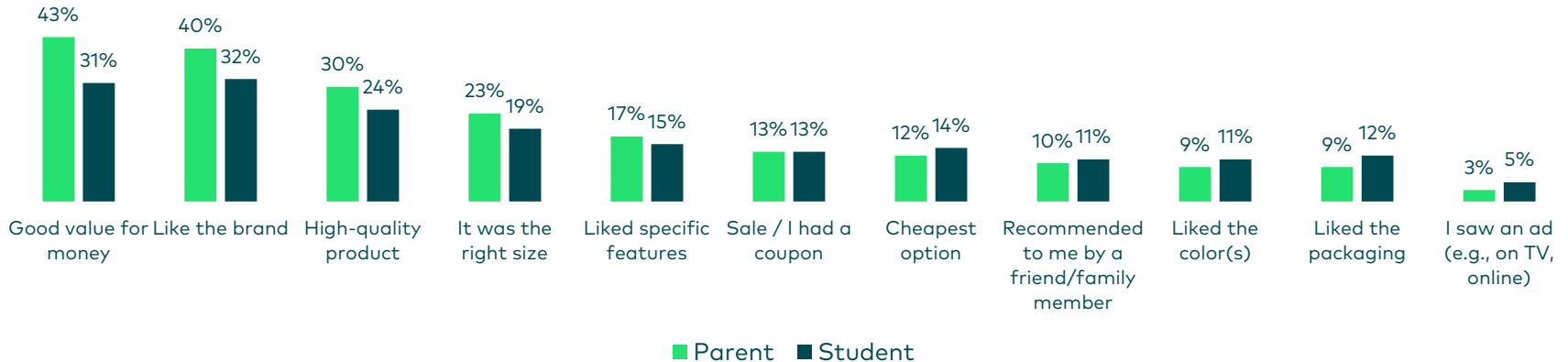
When asked what motivated them to purchase a certain item...

Parents were more likely to say they:

- Thought it was a **good value** for the money
- Liked the **brand**
- Thought it was a **high-quality** product

Students were more likely to say they:

- Found it was the **cheapest option**
- Liked the **packaging** or color
- Saw an **ad**



Retailer location and convenience are more important to parents.

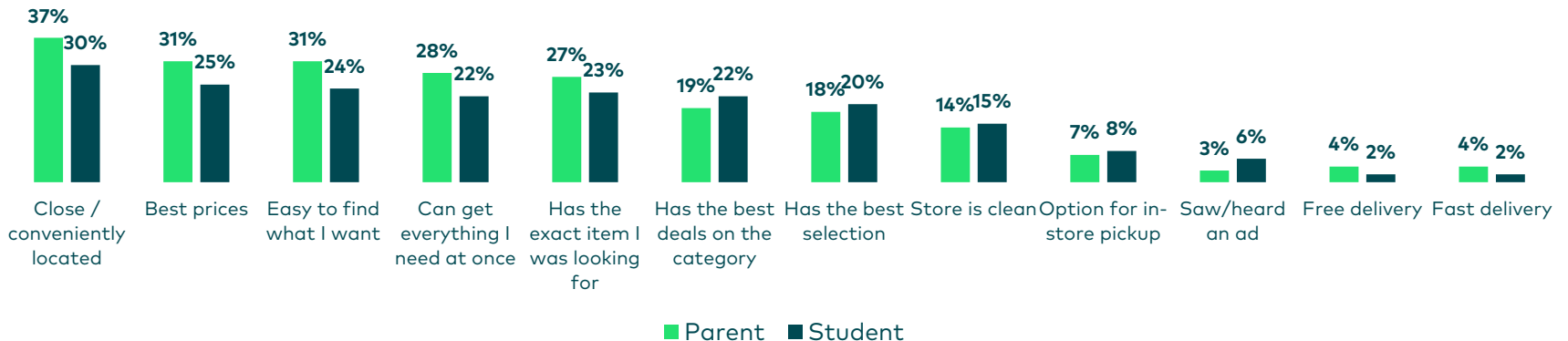
When asked what motivated them to purchase an item at a specific retailer...

Parents were more likely to say it was because:

- It was **close/conveniently located**
- Retailer has the **best prices**
- It's **easy to find** what they want
- They can get **everything they need** at once

Students were more likely to say it was because:

- Retailer has the **best deals** on a certain category
- Retailer has the **best selection**
- Saw/heard an **ad**



Amazon, Target, and Walmart are the most popular choices among parents and students, regardless of their year in school for back-to-college shopping.



- The majority of parents (**three-fourths**) and students (**two-thirds**) say they have made or plan to make or have purchased back-to-college items on Amazon.
- **76%** of shoppers purchasing for a first year of college, and **70%** buying for a returning student them have purchased or will purchase back-to-college from Amazon.



- **Almost 60% of parents and 43% of students** have already shopped or will shop at Target for back-to-college shopping.
- **Just over 50% of first time students and returning students** or those shopping for them have or will shop back-to-college at Target.



- **Nearly three-fourths of parents and two-thirds of students** have purchased or will purchase back-to-college items from Walmart.
- **72% of first year students or those purchasing for them and 68% of returning students** or those purchasing for them are planning on or already have purchased back to school items at Walmart.

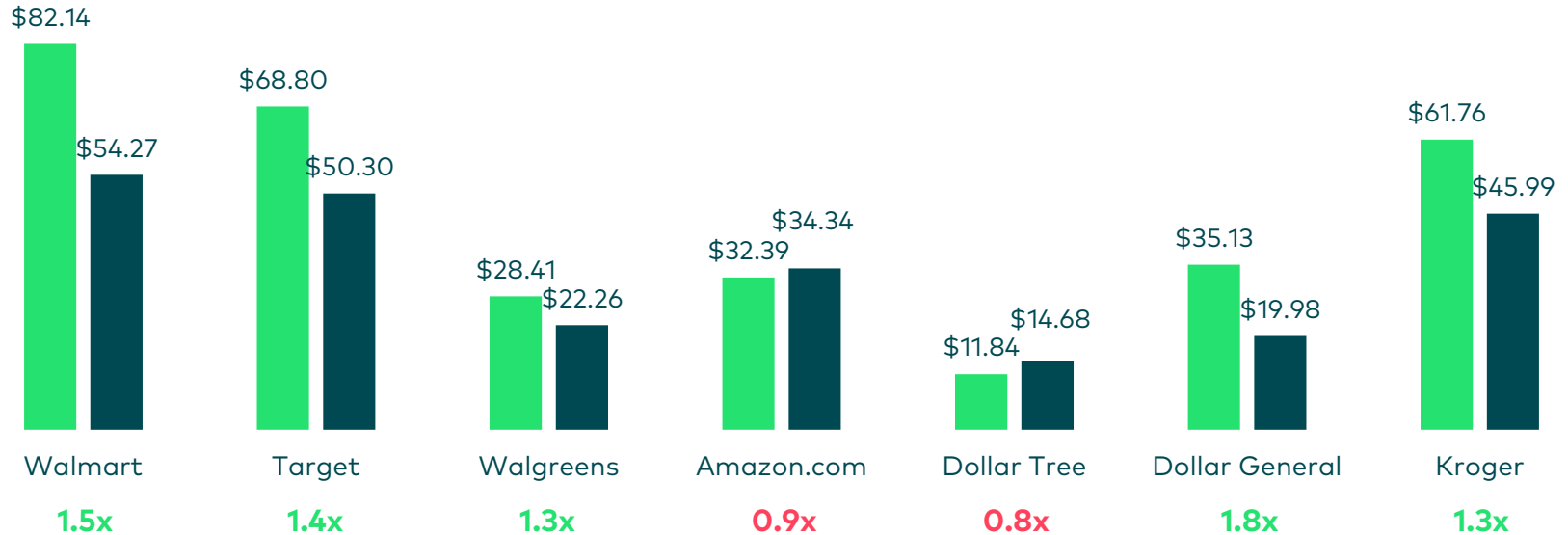


- Though not as popular as Amazon, Target, and Walmart, **students** are much more likely to shop for back-to-college items at **Best Buy & Home Depot**.
- **Parents** are significantly more likely to shop at a **grocery store or department store** for back to college.

Most retailers saw larger basket sizes on back-to-college trips compared to all other trips.

AVERAGE BASKET SIZE BY RETAILER

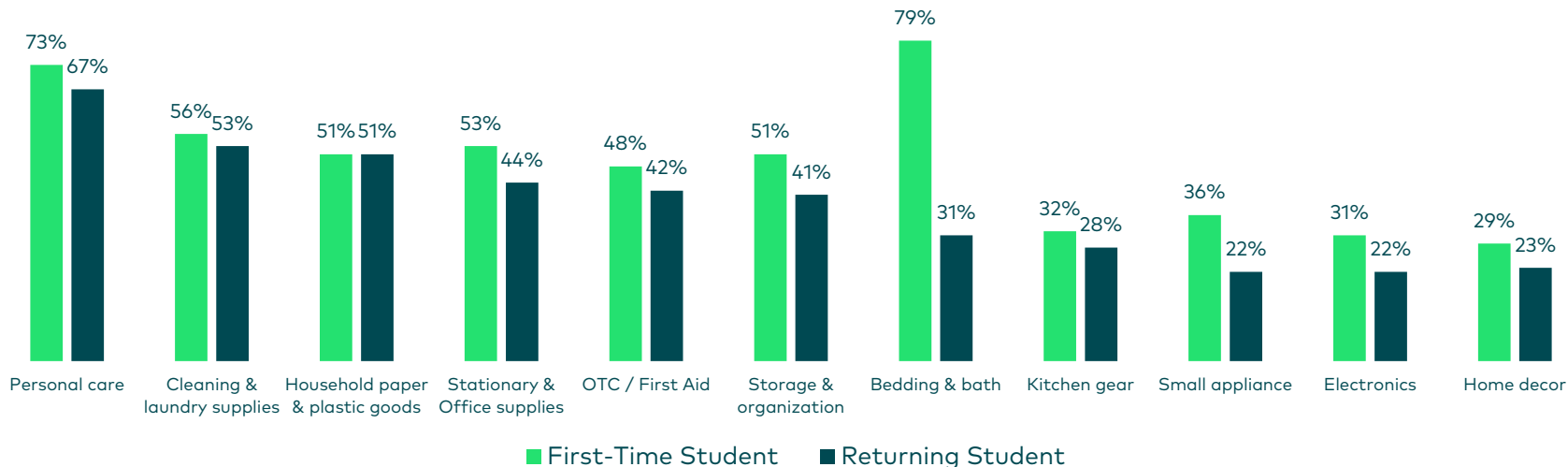
■ Back to College Trips ■ All Retailer Trips



Both first-time and returning students purchased personal care, cleaning & laundry supplies, paper & plastic, and OTC items.

First-time students were more likely to buy bedding & bath, storage & organization, small appliances, and electronics.

BACK-TO-COLLEGE CATEGORIES PURCHASED



Both parents and students report that inflation had a large impact on back to college purchases.

Students felt the impact of higher prices slightly more than parents.

INFLATION IMPACT ON BACK TO COLLEGE PURCHASES



Overall, consumers are now shopping around for the best deals and lowest prices because of inflation.

- **Parents** are more likely to **shop around** for the best deals, **stock up** on sale items, & **switch brands/retailers**.
- **Students** are more likely to **purchase smaller quantities** or **not purchase** an item entirely.

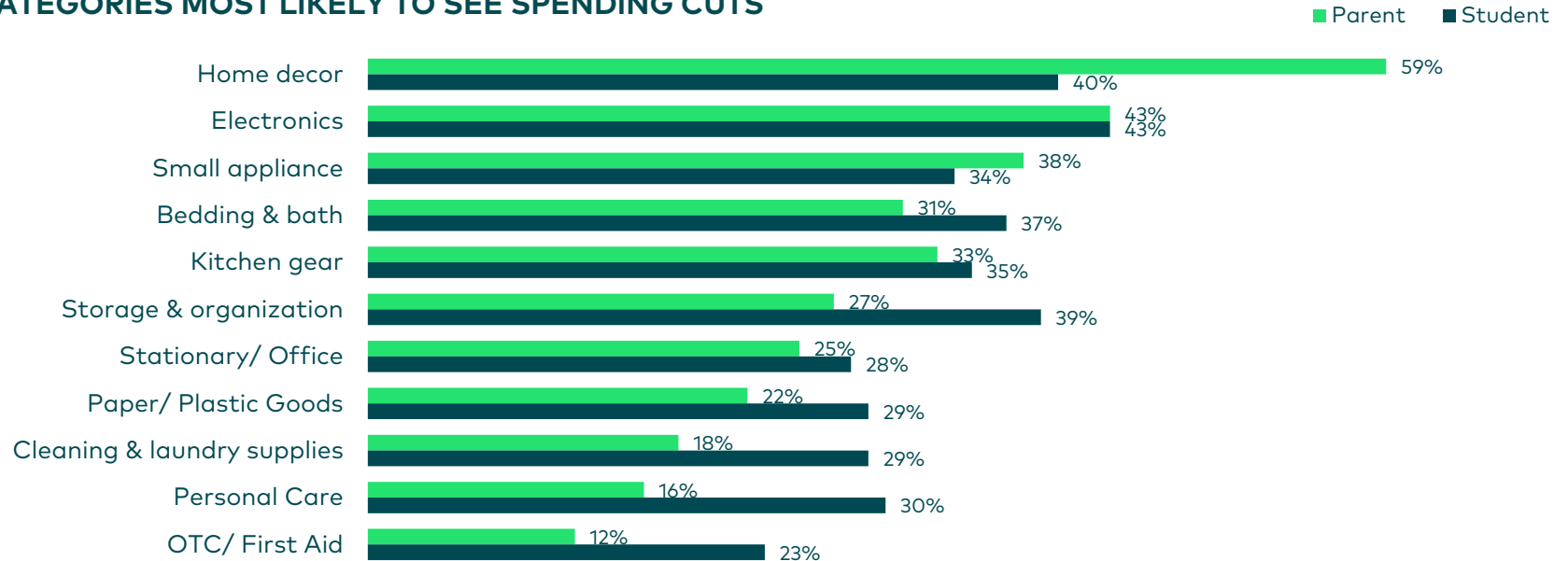
INFLATION IMPACTS ON BACK-TO-COLLEGE SHOPPING



Among shoppers cutting back/not purchasing to combat inflation, Home Décor, Electronics, & Small Appliances are most likely to see cuts.

Students are more likely than parents to not purchase storage & organization, paper & plastic goods, cleaning supplies, personal care, and OTC.

CATEGORIES MOST LIKELY TO SEE SPENDING CUTS



'% Off total purchase' promotions were the most preferred offer types among parents and students alike.



Parents were significantly more likely to prefer '% off total purchase' and '% of other items' promotional offers.

Returning students (or those that purchase for them) were more likely to say that '% off a certain category' or '% off certain items' were prererrable for back-to-college items.



Students were more likely to say that **Buy One Get One** (BOGO) deals were preferable when purchasing back-to-college items.

First time students (or those that purchase for them) were more likely to prefer **BOGO** deals.



There's So Much More to Know!

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