



Caltrans Division of Research,
Innovation and System Information

Research



Results



Planning, Policy &
Programming

SEPTEMBER 2015

Project Title:

The Role of Environmental Concerns, Lifestyles, Mobility-Related Attitudes and Peers' Influence in Affecting Travel Behavior and Aspirations

Task Number: 2829

Completion Date: September 30, 2015

Task Manager:

David Chursenoff,
Associate Transportation Planner
david.chursenoff@dot.ca.gov

The Role of Environmental Concerns, Lifestyles, Mobility-Related Attitudes and Peers' Influence in Affecting Travel Behavior and Aspirations

An investigation of travel behavior, lifestyles, personal attitudes, and propensity to purchase a vehicle of young adults in California.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

Recent research has highlighted significant modifications in travel demand, suggesting a "VMT Peak", and a peak in car ownership among young adults in California and the rest of the United States. The impact of economic cycles and fuel prices, the high levels of traffic congestion in urban areas, together with the changes in the household composition and personal lifestyles, e.g. the desire of a large number of young individuals to relocate near the most accessible and vibrant parts of the cities, are all possible factors influencing these trends. Still, very limited information is available on this topic, to date, and most studies and conclusions have been based on speculations that are not supported by robust data or empirical findings yet.

In order to investigate this topic, and the motivations behind these trends, this study undertook a detailed investigation of travel behavior and the propensity to purchase a car among young adults (aged 18-30) in California.

WHAT WAS OUR GOAL?

The goal of this study is to provide critical insights into the motivations affecting young persons' travel behavior and car-ownership aspirations.

WHAT DID WE DO?

The research team designed an in-depth online survey that collected empirical data on young adults' travel behavior and propensity to purchase a private vehicle, and the factors affecting these trends. These factors included personal attitudes and preferences regarding travel, the adoption of technology and the adoption of alternative-fuel vehicles, their environmental concerns, the role of peers' influence and social media, cultural background, lifestyles, sociodemographic



Caltrans provides a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability.



traits, travel behavior and the respondents' future propensity to purchase a car. The survey was then distributed to a total of 2,400 respondents (1,400 Millennials and 1,000 members of generation X (age 35-50) which served as a control group.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

The result is the California Millennials Dataset, an unprecedented dataset which contains detailed information on the respondents' personal attitudes and preferences, lifestyles, adoption of online social media and information and communication technology (JCT), residential location, living arrangements, commuting and other travel-related patterns, auto ownership, awareness, adoption and frequency of use of the most common shared mobility services (including car-sharing, bikesharing, dynamic ridesharing and on-demand ride services such as Uber or Lyft), propensity to purchase and use a private vehicles vs. use other means of travel, major life events from the past three years, environmental concerns, political ideas and sociodemographic traits.

Analysis of the survey data highlights several high level trends amongst Millennials. For instance, Millennials are found, on average, to drive fewer miles by car (the average self-reported weekly VMT are 15% lower, in the unweighted sample) than members of the previous Generation X. The different driving behavior pattern among Millennials and members of Gen Xis confirmed among residents of both urban and suburban areas of California. Consistent with expectations, Millennials are found to adopt technological solutions, and they use smartphone Apps for a number of purposes, to a higher degree than the members of Gen X. They report using the internet and/ or smartphone apps more often, in order to identify possible destinations (e.g. restaurant, cafe, etc.), learn how to get to new places, and decide which means of transportation, or combinations of multiple means, to use for a trip.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

The study will improve transportation professionals' understanding of the travel behavior and lifestyles of young adults. The analysis of the rich dataset collected as part of this project will enable better transportation planning and decision-making in California.

LEARN MORE

Project Information on National Center for Sustainable Transportation (NCST) Website

<https://ncst.ucdavis.edu/project/role-environmental-concerns-lifestyles-mobility-related-attitudes-and-peers-influence>