
Are “Millennials Rising?”: Initial Findings from the CIRP Freshman Survey

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Select Current Findings Concerning Millennials

- More ethnically diverse
 - Class of 2006: 67% stated that “the importance of helping others” was important in their lives (highest in 20 years)
 - Majority reported receiving the “right amount” of involvement from their parents about their college careers
 - Parents are the most highly educated: 1 in 4 has at least one parent with a bachelor’s degree or higher
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Background

- To determine if the seven attributes of the Millennial generation differs from previous generations
 - CIRP Freshman Survey selected due to its ability to provide data spanning 3 different generations
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Characteristics of Millennials

(born 1982-present)

- Special
- Sheltered
- Confident
- Team-Oriented
- Achieving
- Pressured
- Conventional

Source: Millennials Rising, Neil Howe & Howard Strauss

Generational Characteristics

- Boomers (*born 1943–1960*)
 - Free-spirited, oriented toward social causes, pessimistic, cynical, distrusting of government
 - Influential events: assassinations of the Kennedys and MLK Jr., Vietnam War, civil and women's rights movements, sexual freedom
 - Generation X-ers (*born 1961-1981*)
 - Values individualism, relies on small groups of friends for support, low self-esteem, cynical, untrusting, emphasizes similarities among individuals
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Methodology

- Source: *The American Freshman: Forty Year Trends*
 - Selection of year to represent each generation (subject to data availability; mid-point)
 - Boomer Generation: 1971/1974
 - Generation X: 1989
 - Millennial Generation: 2006
 - Summated scales
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Results for Attribute #1: Special

Variable Description	Baby-Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Realistically, an individual can do much to bring about changes in our society ^a	58.4%	-	73.0%
Becoming an authority in my field	64.2%	67.6%	58.2%
Creating artistic work	14.4%	12.7%	16.2%
Becoming successful in a business of my own	36.5%	43.7%	41.9%
Mean ^b	43.4%	41.3%	47.3%

Note. Dashes in all tables indicate unavailable data. [a] Original variable reads: "Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society." Calculated data reflects 100% minus 41.6% (Baby-Boom) and 27% (Millennial). [b] All mean calculations reflect only the number of variables available each year.

Results for Attribute #2: Sheltered

Variable Description	Baby-Boom	Gen X	Millennial
My parents wanted me to go	23.0%	33.7%	46.4%
My relatives wanted me to come here	7.5%	8.2%	11.6%
I wanted to live near home	-	16.0%	18.3%
How many miles is this college from your personal home: 50 miles and less ^a	37.8%	32.0%	35.3%
Mean	22.8%	22.5%	27.9%

Note. [a] Reflects sum of combined variables.

Results for Attribute #3: Confident

Variable Description	Baby-Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Academic Ability	63.8%	67.1%	68.6%
Artistic Ability	20.7%	26.1%	29.2%
Drive to achieve	65.3%	70.5%	72.6%
Emotional health	-	60.3%	54.6%
Leadership ability	46.7%	56.7%	61.0%
Mathematical ability	39.8%	46.0%	43.7%
Physical health	-	61.5%	55.7%
Popularity	33.9%	46.5%	-
Public speaking ability	24.7%	34.2%	37.0%
Self-confidence - intellectual	47.1%	57.2%	59.7%
Self-confidence - social	36.7%	47.4%	52.8%
Writing ability	35.6%	45.9%	47.7%
Mean	41.4%	51.6%	53.0%

Results for Attribute #4: Team-Oriented

Variable Description	Baby-Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Participating in a community action program	30.1%	25.2%	27.0%
Helping others who are in difficulty	63.2%	60.8%	66.7%
Participate in student government (2006)/ be elected to a student office (1974/1989)	2.2%	3.7%	7.5%
Join a social fraternity or sorority (2006)/ join a social fraternity, sorority or club (1989/1974)	16.0%	21.6%	10.1%
Mean	27.9%	27.8%	27.8%

Results for Attribute #5: Achieving

Variable Description	Baby-Boom	Gen X	Millennial
What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain: BA and above ^a	93.9%	96.7%	96.3%
Becoming an authority in my field	64.2%	67.6%	58.2%
Mean	79.1%	82.2%	77.3%

Note. [a] Reflects sum of combined variables.

Results for Attribute #6: Pressured

Variable Description	Baby-Boom	Gen X	Millennial
My parents wanted me to go	23.0%	33.7%	46.4%
Participate in student government (2006)/ be elected to a student office (1989/1971)	1.5%	3.7%	7.5%
Join a social fraternity or sorority (2006)/ join a social fraternity, sorority or club (1989/1971)	16.1%	21.6%	10.1%
Make at least a "B" average	26.7%	44.4%	60.6%
Get a job to help pay for college expenses (2002)/ have to work at an outside job during college (1989/1973)	-	35.3%	44.1%
Mean	16.8%	27.7%	33.7%

Note. [a] Reflects sum of combined variables.

Results for Attribute #7: Conventional

Variable Description	Baby-Boom	Gen X	Millennial
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals	49.6%	68.1%	55.9%
Marijuana should not be legalized ^a	54.4%	83.3%	62.9%
The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family	27.3%	23.8%	-
How would you characterize your political views? Conservative / Far Right ^b	15.1%	24.2%	25.6%
Mean	36.6%	49.9%	48.1%

Note. [a] Original variable reads: "Marijuana should be legalized." Calculated data reflects 100% minus 45.6% (Baby-Boom), 16.7% (Generation X), 37.1% (Millennial). [b] Reflects sum of combined variables.

Generations by Millennial Attributes

Attribute	Baby-Boom	Gen X	Millennial
Special*	43.4%	41.3%	47.3%
Sheltered*	22.8%	22.5%	27.9%
Confident*	41.4%	51.6%	53.0%
Team-Oriented	27.9%	27.8%	27.8%
Achieving	79.1%	82.2%	77.3%
Pressured*	16.8%	27.7%	33.7%
Conventional	36.6%	49.9%	48.1%
Mean	38.3%	43.3%	45.0%

Limitations

- Absence of raw data
 - No analyses to determine if variables cluster
 - Assumes data is representative of the generational time frames used
 - Limited to those who enrolled in college
 - Framing: whether students born of immigrant parents would exhibit the same characteristics
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Recommendations

- Use of raw data
 - Internal consistency of scales
 - Higher level data analyses

 - Data Disaggregation
 - Race/ethnicity
 - SES
 - Immigrant status
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