

SCIENCE OUT OF THE BOX

Exploring Pathways to Relevance for the Millennial Generation

PROJECT OVERVIEW

To gain a deeper understanding of the young-adult population in the United States, help fill gaps in the current research picture, and identify potential public engagement mechanisms, the National Academy of Sciences LabX team partnered with Slover Linett Audience Research Inc. to design and conduct a targeted audience research study. This national survey investigated the interests, behaviors, and perceptions of young adults, both in relation to science and more broadly, to determine how (if at all) science fits—or could fit—in their world.

METHODOLOGY

In partnership with NORC's nationally representative AmeriSpeak panel, we invited a general population sample of U.S. adults ages 18 to 37 to complete the survey (expanding the millennial category to include the college-aged portion of Generation Z, as well), with sampling strata for age, race/ethnicity, education, and gender. The survey was completed by 1,003 respondents in September, 2018. The data was weighted to external population totals from the Current Population Survey associated with age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, and Census division.

CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

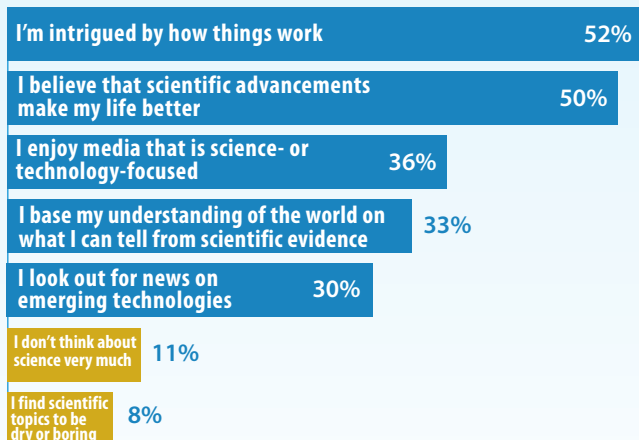
Connection to science

- The most common connections to science are a general curiosity about how things work and the underlying belief that science makes life better.
- It's less common for young adults to base their understanding of the world on scientific evidence.

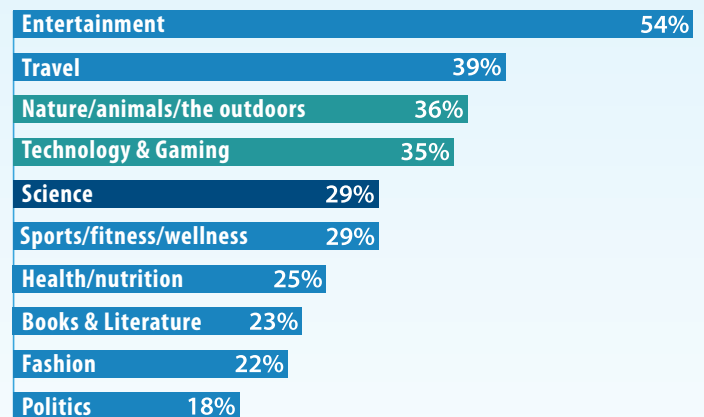
Interest in science

- Almost a third of young adults signal a strong interest in "science" as a category.
- Young adults express similarly high levels of interest in science-related fields—particularly nature and technology.

Percentage of people strongly agreeing with this statement

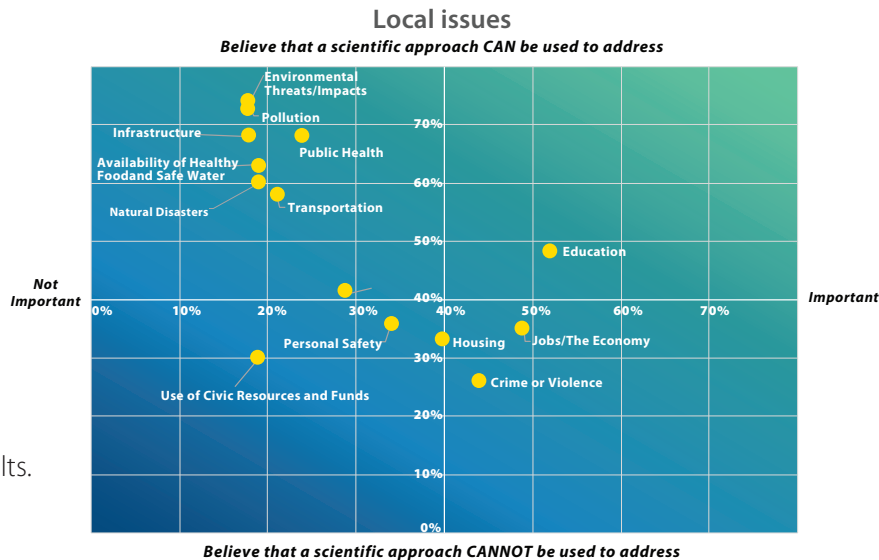


What kinds of things interest you?



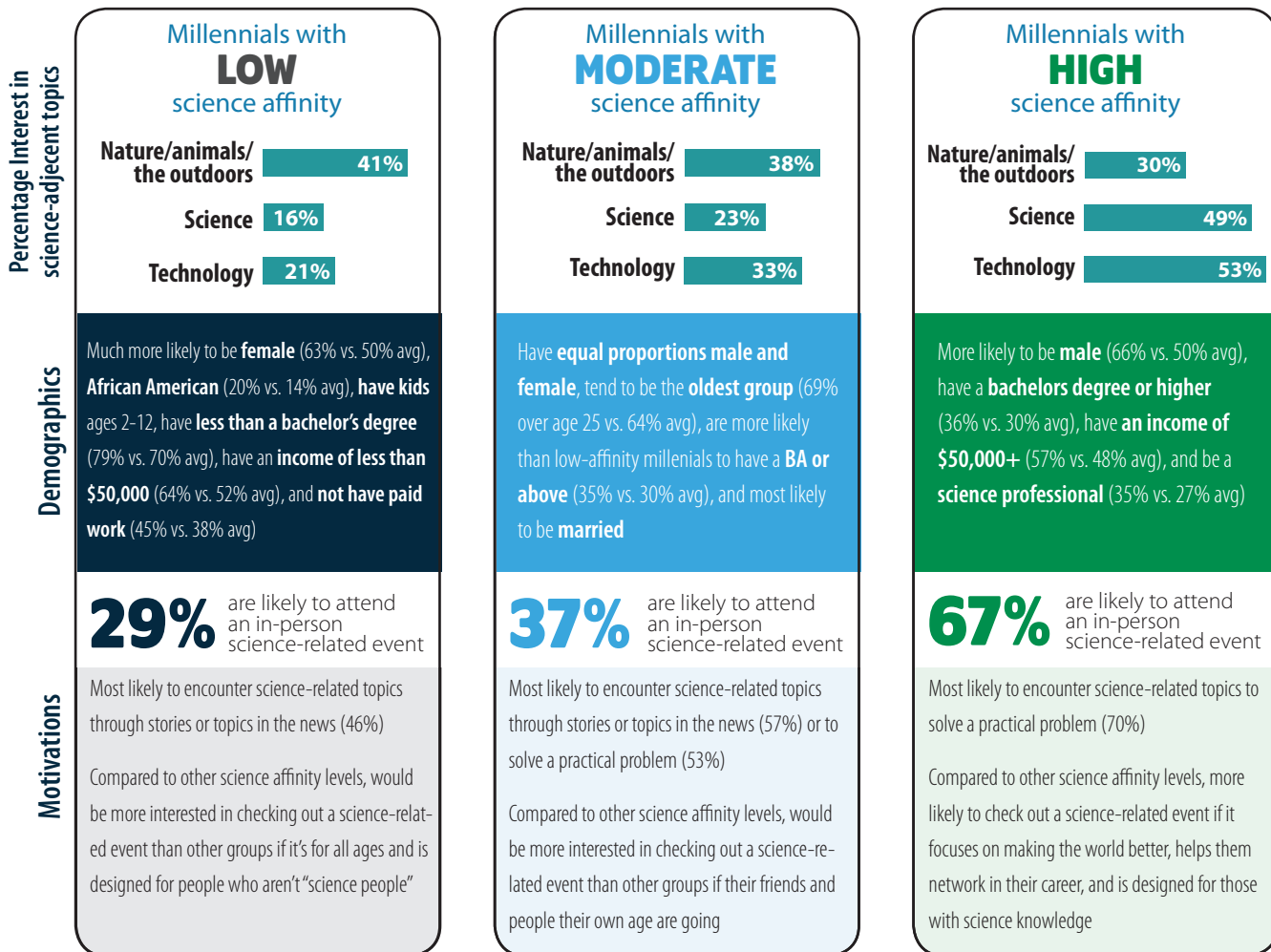
Science as a tool

- Most young adults don't feel that a scientific approach can improve or solve the issues in their communities that they care most about (which are mainly social or economic ones like jobs or crime).
- By contrast, local issues that are seen as being solvable by science (e.g. environmental issues, pollution) hold less importance for young adults.



Science affinity

- We pooled indicators of indirect, implicit connections to science into one broad measure termed **science affinity**.
- This measure can be leveraged through a broad set of interest-areas to reach young adults **at every level of science affinity** with relevant programming.



Next Steps

- LabX will focus on mechanisms that engage the moderate science affinity group.
- Interested in collaborating? Contact Geoff Hunt (ghunt@nas.edu)
- Questions about this study? Contact Jen Benoit-Bryan (jen@sloverlinett.com)