

Trends & Findings

Keeping you informed of current topics in youth and education research.

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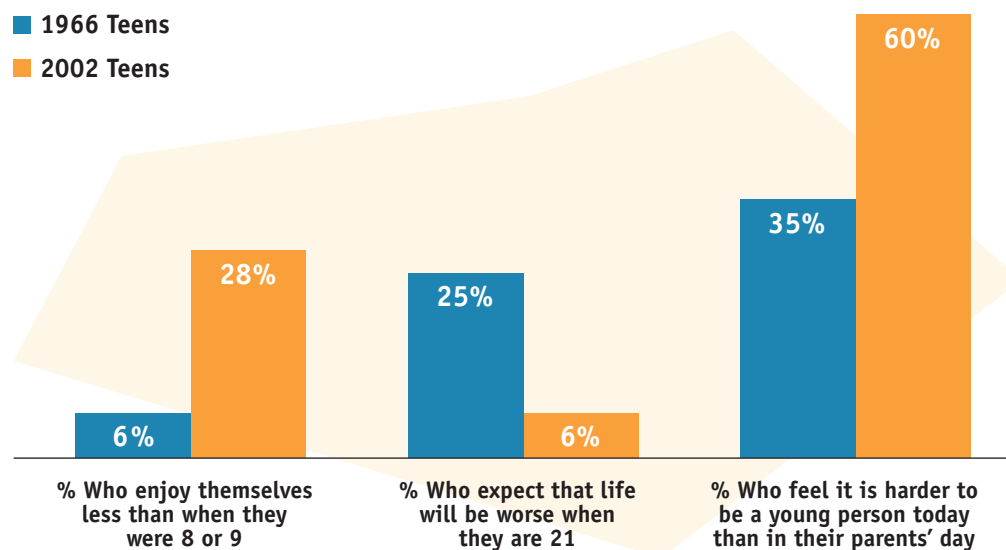
Then (1966) And Now (2002): *How Have Teenagers Changed?*

Louis Harris & Associates, Inc. conducted a poll among teenagers for *Newsweek* in 1966. Thirty-six years later, the Harris Interactive Youth Research team has replicated a portion of this study in a recent wave of YouthQuerySM.

In this issue, we spotlight some of the more interesting trends.

Comfortable Being a Teen

As the chart below indicates, we find that today's teenagers are less comfortable with being teenagers than Boomer teens were 36 years ago. Today's teens are far more likely to say they enjoy themselves less than when they were 8 or 9, and at the same time, they are *more* optimistic than 1966 teens were for how their life would turn out at 21. It seems that teens in the 1960s were more at ease and contented with their stage in life, and as the chart shows, they were much less likely than today's teens to say that it was harder to be a teen than in their parents' day. Today's teens also report a greater pressure from parents to go to college. They also reveal having fewer friends than what teens told us in 1966.



Source: 1966 Louis Harris & Associates, Inc. Teenager Poll for *Newsweek*; 2002 Harris Interactive YouthQuery

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Editorial: Our Take On It

by **John Geraci**

VP Youth & Education Research

When it comes to being young, it is perhaps true that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Harris Interactive has always stressed to our clients that it is important to separate out aspects of teen life that are inherent to being young from those that are specific to the Millennial generation.

When viewing the results of Louis Harris & Associates' 1966 teenager poll, we saw many constructs and assumptions about teenagers that youth marketers commonly attribute as unique to today's teens. The 1966 *Newsweek* article discusses the dangers of marketing to teens, the need to protect school environments from commercial influences, a burgeoning over-the-top commercial culture, and a disengagement of the young from a broader political world. The article discussed a yearning for teens to discover new trends and fads, and a need to shed them as soon as they became popular with the adult generation. These are all concerns we often see ascribed to today's teenagers, and it is important to note that these concerns are not new.

That said, there certainly are unique traits to Generation Y teens. In 1966, *Newsweek* stated that "teenagers are prosperous...they have some \$12 billion per year to spend."

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Best Parental Punishment

Both polls asked teens about the types of punishment teens felt worked the best. Interestingly in 1966, teens were most likely to credit "grounding" (defined as being confined to a house or their room) as the most effective punishment. In 2002, teens are most likely to say that taking away privileges (such as the telephone, the Internet, television, etc.) works best. Half (50%) of today's teens report that their parents seem unsure at times about how to tell them what to do and how to punish them.

Which punishment do you feel works best?*				
	1966		2002	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Grounding	31%	31%	13%	19%
Taking away privileges	18%	20%	39%	31%
Talking over the problem	13%	23%	23%	23%

*Top three responses shown

Source: 1966 Louis Harris & Associates, Inc. Teenager Poll for *Newsweek*; 2002 Harris Interactive YouthQuery

Compared to 1966 a greater percentage of today's teens tell us that they are more likely to be making purchases that their parents oppose (44% vs. 66% respectively). And, even though today's teens have more money to spend than teens in 1966, they tell us that they enjoy the process of shopping much less.

If you would like a reprint of the 1966 *Newsweek* article on teenagers, contact **Larry Brown** at 585.214.7135 or lbrown@harrisinteractive.com.

Recent Research for Public Release

From time to time, the Harris Interactive Youth Research team is fortunate to work with media, leading foundations and non-profit organizations, and we often are able to release the results of these studies publicly.

Youth And Violence: Students Speak Out For A More Civil Society

Young people describe teasing that goes beyond being playful, put-downs and cruel gossip as very real violence to them and as triggers for the physical violence that almost half of them endure, according to a new study by Families and Work Institute and The Colorado Trust. Rather than blaming parents or schools as many youth violence experts have done, young people point to an overbearing culture that rejects diversity.

The report—*Youth Violence: Students Speak Out for a More Civil Society*—is the first study to ask a nationally representative sample of kids: "If you could make one change that would help stop the violence that young people experience today, what would that one change be?" Conducted by Harris Interactive and created by the Families and Work Institute, the study polled more than 1,000 youths in fifth through twelfth grades. A parallel study of more than 1,000 Colorado youths was also conducted.

Key findings of the study include:

- The majority of young people experience some form of emotional violence.
- Almost half of young people experience physical violence.
- Young people who have been harmed are much more likely to harm others.

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In today's dollars, a teenager in 1966 was spending \$4,568 per year. Today, Harris Interactive estimates that per capita spending among teens is \$8,831 per year—an increase of 93% in real dollars. Interestingly, the study suggests that today's teens are no more likely to be working at a paid job than teens were 36 years ago. Today's teens are clearly a more essential part of the consumer economy.

In 1966, a majority of teens felt it was easier to be a young person compared to being a young person in their parents' day. In our 2002 study, teens feel the opposite—60% believe that it is harder to be a young person today.

In 1966, half (50%) of teens said they were certain to go to college after high school—in 2002, 82% say they are certain to go. The percent that feel "a lot" of pressure from parents to go to college has grown from 18% to 30%.

Viewing the results from the two polls, we are left with a feeling that today's teens are more fully integrated into society and are a more accepted part of the American culture, but that they are less comfortable with who they are. They look forward to being adults more than their Boomer parents did, perhaps because in many ways they have been asked to become adults already. While today's teens can be shown to develop faster cognitively, physically and commercially, we

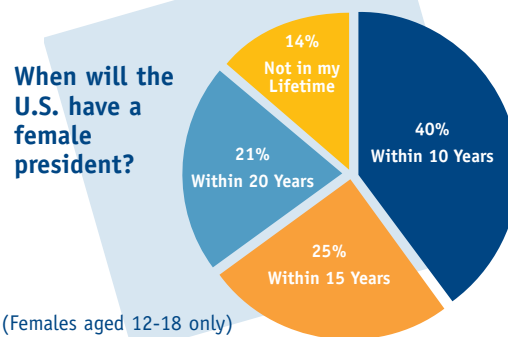
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The findings illustrate that while public debates about violence have focused on extreme violence—such as school shootings—as emblematic of a major societal problem, the largest proportion of young people write about teasing that goes beyond being playful; about put-downs and gossip that are cruel; and about rejection as very real violence to them. They say this emotional violence hurts, and that it triggers more extreme violence.

Summaries and discussion guides containing action steps and additional findings from the national and Colorado Youth and Violence reports are available at www.familiesandwork.org and www.coloradotrue.org.

When Will The United States Have A Female President?

In a Harris Interactive survey for The Gillette Co. (and as reported in a *USA Today* Snapshot), girls express doubt that the United States will have a female president anytime soon.



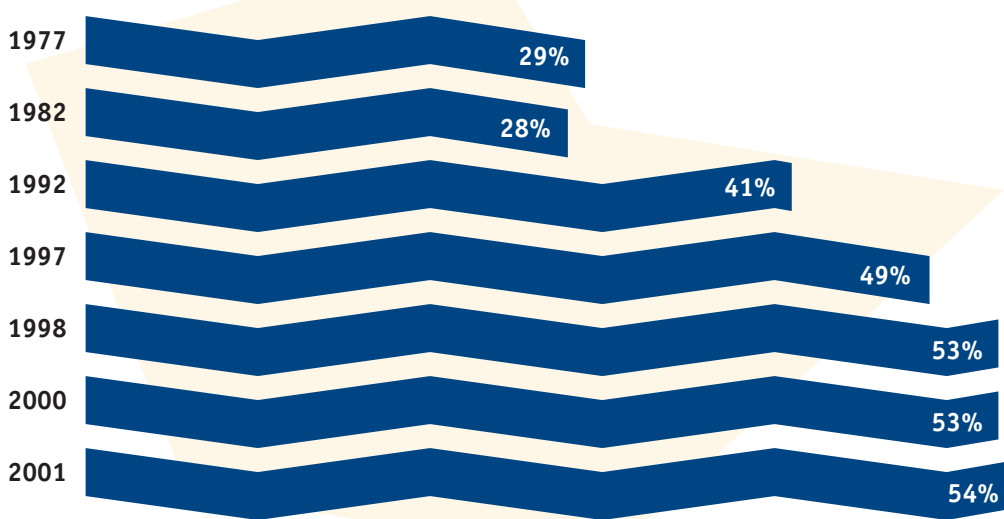
Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuery Monthly Omnibus (Females aged 12-18 only)

Teacher Status Rises Over Time

The Harris Poll® recently reported in *USA Today* Snapshots the percentage of Americans who rate the prestige of teachers as "very good." Teachers will be happy to know that 25% more Americans in 2001, as compared to 1977, rate them as "very good."

The graph below shows that Americans have gradually improved their perception of teachers over time.

Percentage of Americans Who Rate the Prestige of Teachers as Very Good:



Source: Harris Interactive

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need to be sure that they also develop emotionally as it seems clear that they are expected to become part of the adult world much more quickly than previous generations.

Contact Us:

To discuss this newsletter or your upcoming research project, call

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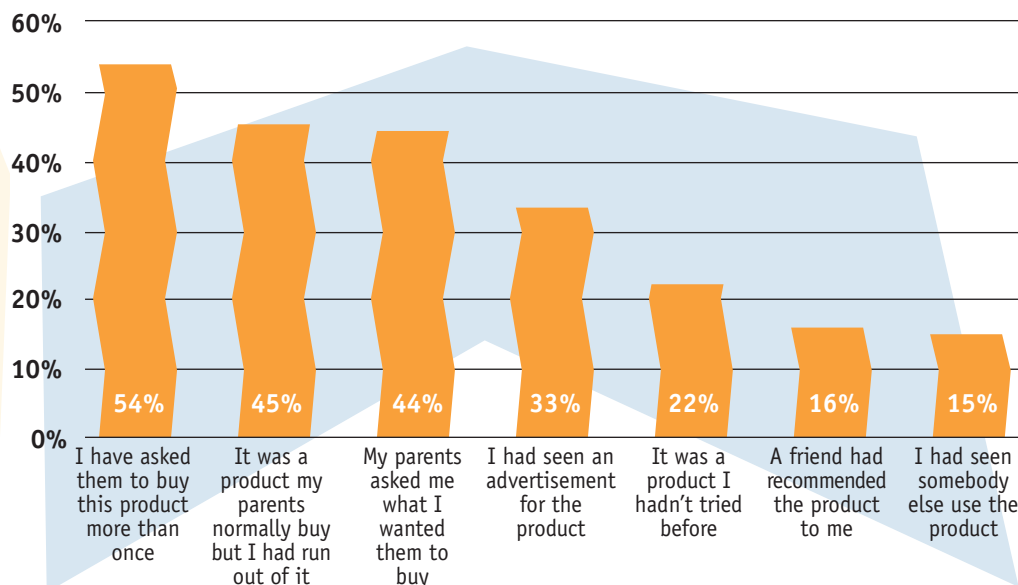
Ask a Question...

Have a burning question you would like to ask to kids and teens? Here's your chance to submit a free question for possible inclusion in our upcoming YouthQuery youth omnibus. Just send us an email with your suggestion. We will pick one question each month and publish the results in the next issue of this newsletter.

...Get an Answer

Terah Weese from Kellogg's submitted the following question...

Think about the last time you asked your parents to buy something for you at a grocery store. Which of the following are true?



Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuery Monthly Omnibus