

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

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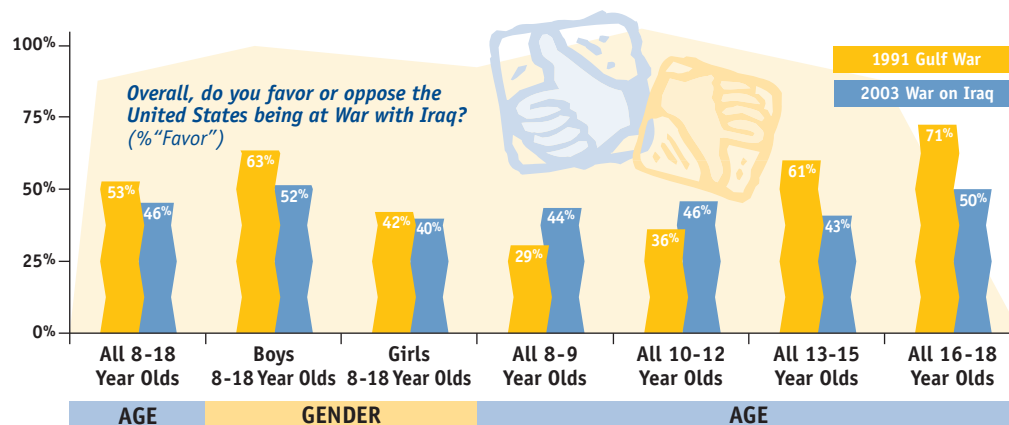
Youth Opinions of the 1991 Gulf War Compared to Those of the 2003 Iraq War

At the height of the 1991 Gulf War, Louis Harris & Associates™ (now Harris Interactive), in conjunction with Scholastic, fielded a poll of U.S. youth aged 8 to 18. During the 2003 Iraq War, Harris Interactive repeated this poll using an online methodology. Questions and question order were identical to the original poll. The result is an interesting comparison of youth opinion today and youth opinion 12 years ago.

In total, there was slightly less support among 8- to 18-year-olds for the 2003 Iraq War (46% in favor) than for the 1991 Gulf War (53% in favor). For both wars, support was higher among boys than girls. In 1991, support for the war was much greater among older youth, while in 2003 support was consistent across all age groups.

Youth opposition was moderate toward both wars – with 28 percent opposed in 1991 and 25 percent opposed in 2003. In 1991, opposition was concentrated among younger youth (aged 8 to 12), while in 2003 opposition was more common among teens.

Support for the War (% in Favor)



Sources: 1991 Louis Harris & Associates™/Scholastic poll of 1,379 3rd to 12th graders; 2003 Harris Interactive poll of 1,171 8- to 18-year-olds

Trends in young people's views on the money spent on the war were consistent with their support. In 1991, young people were more likely than not to say the money being spent on the war was worth it. In 2003, young people were more likely to say the money being spent on the war was not worth it.

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Editorial: Our Take On It

by **John Geraci**

Vice President,
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Survey research and public opinion polls play an important role in our culture. Just as we sometimes wonder how we ever did our jobs before the personal computer and email came into widespread use, we also wonder how public policy makers or marketers made decisions before polling methods became reliable.

Research polls have become so ubiquitous that they are integrated into most marketing processes. Almost any newspaper you pick up or newscast you watch contains the results of a poll. Showing what the public or your customers think is somewhat of a national obsession. In many situations, taking a poll is not even optional; it has become an established way things are done.

When well designed and intelligently analyzed, survey research studies can be an important link between an organization and its customers. Public opinion polls help to keep elected leaders accountable to the electorate. Research can prevent resources from being wasted, can identify unmet needs in a consumer group, and can motivate employees to act. Opinion polls can help to provide the public with a voice in policy debates. Our obsession with polls flows from our obsession with democracy.

But at times research and polling data are misused. All polls are not created equal, and there is no such thing as a perfect poll. Those who commission polls and those who read the results may not always fully understand the difference between good and bad studies.

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Support for both President George H.W. Bush (66%) and President George W. Bush (61%) was strong among young Americans. While support for the elder Bush was stronger among teenagers than tweens, support for his son showed the opposite pattern. For both wars, American youth had very little doubt that the United States and its allies would prevail.

America's youth faced a very different media environment during the 2003 Iraq War than they did for the 1991 Gulf War. Most notably, the Internet has now become a mainstream media source followed by a proliferation of television news channels – and to add to this, reporters were embedded with coalition troops during the 2003 Iraq War. What impact, if any, has this had on young people's views about the information they received about the conflicts? In 1991 and 2003, a plurality of young people felt that they were getting the right amount of information about the war (47% and 45%) However in 1991, young people were more likely to say they were not getting enough information than to say they were getting too much (35% vs. 14%). In contrast, as many youth in 2003 said they were getting too much information as said they were getting not enough information.

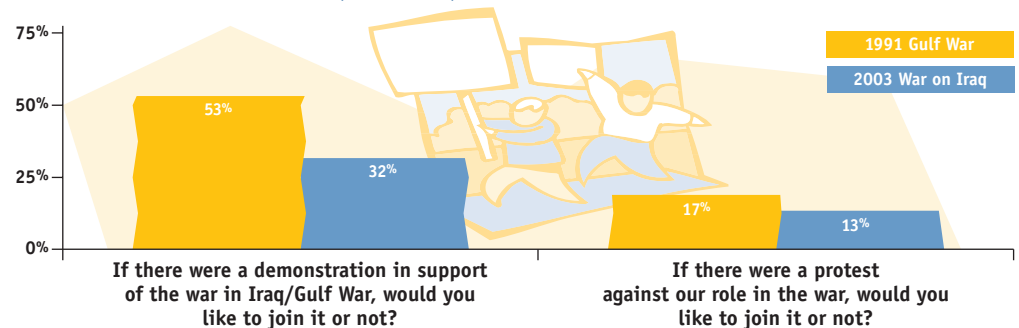
What has changed is the frequency with which young people discuss the war with their teachers. Young people talked more often with teachers about the war in 1991 than they did in 2003. They were also far more likely to discuss the war with their friends or their parents in 1991. Interpersonal communication regarding the 2003 war clearly had decreased.

During the Gulf War, two-thirds of 8- to 18-year-olds agreed with their parents' position on the war. This remained high for the recent Iraq War with 63 percent supporting their parents' viewpoint toward the war. In 1991, 63 percent said the war made them proud of their country, while in 2003, 55 percent felt proud of their nation as a result of the war.

A big difference between 1991 and 2003 is in the fears of young people. In 1991, 53 percent of 8- to 18-year-olds told us they were scared about how the war would affect them personally. Twelve years later, just 31 percent exhibited this fear. Fears that Saddam Hussein might sponsor terrorist acts near them were common in 1991 (40% very or quite worried) and still existent in 2003 (28% very or quite worried) despite widespread reports that Hussein was out of power during the period when the poll was conducted.

In both polls, young people were more likely to back those who demonstrated support of the war and oppose those who protested against the war. In 1991, 53 percent said they would be willing to join a support-the-war demonstration, while 17 percent would join a protest against it. In 2003, 32 percent said they would be willing join a support-the-war demonstration, while 13 percent would join a protest against it.

Protests/Demonstrations (% "Yes")



Sources: 1991 Louis Harris & Associates™/Scholastic poll of 1,379 3rd to 12th graders;
2003 Harris Interactive poll of 1,171 8- to 18-year-olds

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On the corporate side, we are always balancing the need to strive for a perfect design with the need to do things quickly and within a reasonable budget.

Poll questions can be worded poorly. Some might say that wording of polling questions has affected history. For instance, in the early 1970s polling data showed that the American public was not in favor of “impeaching” President Nixon over his role in Watergate. Congress delayed serious discussions over impeachment, in part, because they did not feel they had public support for it. Later, pollsters realized that the public had misunderstood the word “impeachment” to mean “removal from office” (which it does not). Historians will say that the public was in favor of impeachment, a term that correctly means stating charges against a public official. There are those who believe Nixon’s tenure in office was elongated because of this error and perhaps that the Vietnam War would have ended sooner had the pollsters defined the term correctly.

Polls can be based on unsound sampling procedures. I’ve seen news reports about a call-in poll that first stated the poll was “unscientific” and then went ahead and drew definitive conclusions from it anyway. I’ve read front-page headlines based on call-in polls conducted with highly questionable sampling.

Sometimes poll results are taken out of context. I’ve conducted polls for school districts that provide a full range of data showing how to improve teacher productivity, parental support and student motivation for the district, only to see a headline in the local paper state how many students told us they have gotten into a fight in the past year.

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Young people in 1991 were more likely to say that, if they were old enough, they would be willing to enlist to fight in the war. In 1991, 44 percent were very or somewhat willing to join the military to fight in the war, while in 2003 this percentage was 30 percent.

Harris Interactive has created a Power Point deck that shows the findings of these polls in greater detail. If you would like a copy of this deck, contact Larry Brown at 585.214.7135 or lbrown@harrisinteractive.com.

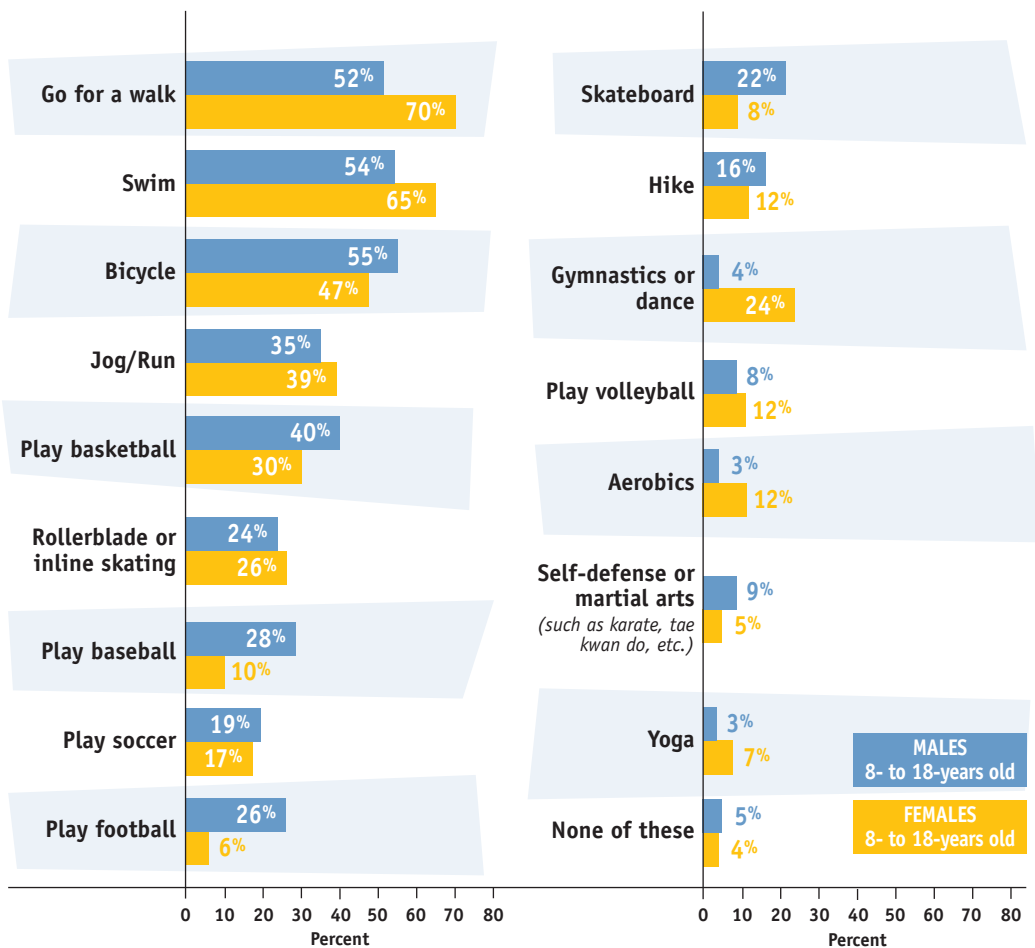
Ask a Question...

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

...Get an answer

Judy Schoenburg from the Girl Scout Research Institute submitted the following question:

This summer, which of the following do you plan to do at least a few times a week?



Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuerySM

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I would stress to you that when you see a poll – always look to see who commissioned it. Do they seem to have a vested interest in the polling result? Polls commissioned by political parties and candidates are regularly reported on as if they are unbiased. “Hired-gun” surveys abound.

I have been involved in constructing news releases for polls that Harris Interactive has conducted and subsequently have seen news outlets publish stories that are verbatim copies of those releases. From the lack of calls I have personally received to verify methodology of polls that have been released publicly, I can only wager that the media does not always look into the validity of the polls that they report on; but in the case of our releases, I hope that it is a sign that the information we release regarding the methodologies used is thorough. Harris Interactive welcomes those calls. We stand behind our methodologies, and we’re willing to share information on our methods used with reporters so they will get a better understanding of surveys that are constructed well.

I should mention that polls you see from the major polling organizations or sponsored by major media outlets are typically well designed and trustworthy. At Harris Interactive, we require all clients who commission publicly releasable polls to agree to our policies:

1. The survey must be fair, balanced and comprehensive.
2. If the survey is publicly released, the full survey report must be released.

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Come See Us at Teen Power!

Harris Interactive is proud to be a sponsor of Teen Power 2003, September 15-18, in Chicago. We will be leading a conference panel session on September 16. For more information on this event, go to www.kidpowerx.com.

Come See Us at the AMA Symposium for the Marketing of Higher Education!

Harris Interactive will be presenting “What Do Youth Marketers Know that Higher Education Marketers Should?” at the AMA Symposium for the Marketing of Higher Education on November 5 in Miami. For more information on this event, go to www.marketingpower.com.

Console and Computer Gamer Specialty Panel

New from Harris Interactive!

Harris Interactive has created a new online research panel that can put you in contact with console and computer gamers – one of the fastest growing technology sectors. The panel includes more than a million U.S. console and computer gamers, and can be targeted to tweens, teens, and adults. This panel is ideal for studies concerning game concept development, beta testing, feedback on existing games, or any other custom research projects.



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3. The survey must not be used to mislead the public, the media, policymakers, or anyone else.
4. Harris Interactive must review all information that is being publicly released prior to its release in order to check for the accuracy of the data and the context within which it is reported.

Why do we insist on these rules? They certainly cost us business. Scarcely a month goes by without our turning away business from organizations that cannot abide by our rules, business that often goes to other survey firms. Are we being high-handed, moralistic or unrealistic? Surely any organization should be entitled to commission its own survey, with whatever questions they want asked, to be used in whatever way they want?

We have these integrity policies for good reasons. We believe they are essential for our clients and also for Harris Interactive. These rules are necessary, because there are plenty of examples of abuses which we believe are designed not to inform but to lead or, all too often, to mislead policymakers and the public. Some published surveys are designed to show that the public, or a key interest group, supports the clients' public policy positions.

Many surveys are designed for testimonial or advertising purposes showing that consumers prefer one product to others. Many of these surveys use methodologies, questions or question orders that are designed to maximize the positive news and avoid or minimize the negatives.

Some polling firms and their clients have been found "cherry-picking" their findings to play up the positive and suppress the negative – thereby

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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.

National Study Shows Barriers to the Diagnosis and Treatment of ADHD Among African American and Hispanic Children

Fear of social stigma, lack of knowledge, and fear of over-diagnosis probably inhibit many African American and Hispanic parents from seeking diagnosis and treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) for their children. A recent survey by Harris Interactive compared the experiences, attitudes and levels of knowledge of African American and Hispanic parents with other American parents. The survey found significant differences between them. The results strongly suggest that parental fear of social stigma ("being labeled"), fear of over-diagnosis and a general lack of knowledge are more likely to inhibit the diagnosis and treatment of minority children with ADHD than of other children.

"These results indicate the need for educators and health care professionals to make additional efforts to reach out to minority parents, to make sure that those parents of children who may have ADHD know to whom they should turn if they suspect their children may have ADHD and that they have sufficient access to both diagnosis and treatment," stated Humphrey Taylor, chairman of The Harris Poll, Harris Interactive. "They must also insure that the parents of children who do have ADHD are not inhibited from seeking treatment for them because of fears that they or their children will be stigmatized as a result."

More information on this study is available at http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/030429/nytu171_1.html

Mothers... and Fathers... Are Top Teen Role Models

Teenagers may give their mothers and fathers a hard time, but the fact is parents top the list of role models identified by teens in a recent Junior Achievement (JA)/Harris Interactive Poll. In all, 32 percent identified parents as the best role models for teens, according to the demographically weighted survey of 624 teens between the ages of 13 and 18. Next came teachers at 15 percent, basketball star Kobe Bryant at 5 percent and talk show host Oprah Winfrey at 3 percent, who tied with President George W. Bush.

"It's apparent that while teens look up to many people in our society, it's those who are involved in their daily lives that have the most profound impact," said David S. Chernow, president and CEO of Junior Achievement. "This is one of the reasons JA has been working with parents as volunteers for its new JA Finance Park™ program."

Divided by gender, 36 percent of males identified parents as their top choice, while they were selected by 28 percent of females. Other choices included Microsoft founder Bill Gates (2%), National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice (2%), entertainer Jennifer Lopez (1%) and Dell Computer founder Michael Dell (1%). An additional 36% identified "somebody else" as their role model choice.

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generating negative publicity. We call these “hired-gun surveys,” and we do not support them. We believe that they harm the integrity of our industry and can create mistrust.

Harris Interactive neither supports polls that create mistrust nor seeks out clients who abuse survey trust. Our survey policies are designed to engender trust in how we conduct surveys and to protect the interests of citizens worldwide by providing balanced and statistically valid results. When they read *The Harris Poll*® surveys, the public, policymakers and the media can have confidence that we are trying to provide the most honest, reliable, balanced and comprehensive measures of public opinion possible.

Increasing the literacy of all who publish and read polling data is a major challenge for those in the research industry. Harris Interactive has literally spent millions of dollars studying the efficacy of online polling, to develop the technology and the sampling and weighting algorithms that are necessary to make online polls projectible and credible.

As I think back, I was able to communicate and do my job well before I had a personal computer and email. However, I am glad these technologies are in place. Similarly, marketers and public policy makers made many sound decisions before opinion polls. Today's polls and research studies have the ability to make our jobs more efficient, improve our communication, and make our decisions sounder – if they are created, executed and reported properly.

Thanks to Humphrey Taylor, Chairman of The Harris Poll, for establishing Harris Interactive's policies regarding surveys intended for public release, and for contributing to this editorial.

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JA Finance Park™ is an experiential program that offers middle school students personal financial management and career exploration through classroom instruction and active participation in a simulated community. The curriculum is designed as an integrated unit, preparing students for an all-day visit to JA Finance Park™. Parents and business volunteers serve as on-site mentors.

The Junior Achievement/Harris Interactive Poll was conducted between April 15 and 23, 2003, in conjunction with the Junior Achievement National Business Hall of Fame, which is sponsored by career site Monster. On May 13, seven business legends will be inducted into the Junior Achievement National Business Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Minneapolis, MN. These laureates serve as role models for today's youth.

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