

Abstract #: 319

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Abstract Title: Driver's Licensing Delay: A Retrospective Study to Explain Intergenerational Differences

Abstract Text:

Recent media attention in the U.S. has focused on the observed apathy towards car ownership and use among the Millennial generation (those born between 1981 and 1996). This trend could have lasting impacts on our transportation system if Millennials' apathy proves to be permanent. Our research examines generational differences in travel attitudes as well as driver's licensing delay (how long individuals waited to get their driver's license after reaching the age of eligibility) using a retrospective survey of UC Davis students, staff, and faculty. We focused on driver's licensing delay because it serves as a good indicator of relative excitement or apathy toward driving and it is more easily recalled than other metrics, such as personal vehicle miles traveled. After finding promising bivariate relationships between years of delay and generation cohort group, we fit a statistical model to explain driver's licensing delay. Though the explanatory variable of interest was the effect of age cohort, we attempted to control for the influence of high school social and physical environment, high school travel attitudes, and socio-demographic characteristics. High school travel attitudes and physical environment in particular both proved to have strong influences on driver's licensing delay. Yet even after including these covariates, the model still indicates that important differences remain among age cohorts - campus community members from age 18 to 33 are substantially more likely than their older peers to delay getting a driver's license.