

A power hungry generation

May 4 2012



Few generations have been as dependent on electricity as Gen Y, however new research has found the energy conservation message might not be getting through.

Monash University PhD candidate Samantha Smith from the Department of Marketing has explored the environmental opinions and influences of Gen Y (commonly seen as people aged 13 to 30) students, and found few feel the need to conserve energy in the face of environmental messages.

“Without question, Gen Y’s are big users of technology as multiple aspects of their life involve and rely on online technologies,” Ms. Smith said.

“The results of the research confirmed the heavy reliance Gen Y’s have on [electricity](#) and highlighted the role that social media plays in creating this reliance.

“Feedback from participants also indicated that Gen Y’s are dismissive of the impact they can and do have on the environment and that, when electricity is restricted, it is not uncommon for Gen Ys to experience a degree of stress.”

The findings also confirmed the “effort” Gen Y’s associate with being environmentally friendly, and highlighted the role that parents play in curbing their electricity usage.

“In this age of climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and using energy more efficiently it is vital to ensure the future health of the environment. Yet, paradoxically, this is also the age of advances in energy hungry technology - plasma TVs, iPods, iPads, smart phones and lap top computers are all affordable, common place and well-used items in Gen Y households,” Ms. Smith said.

“Environmental social marketing campaigns are therefore vital to ensure consumers are aware of and act to curb their electricity usage.”

In order to encourage Gen Y to be both mindful of how they use electricity and of their need to reduce it, Ms. Smith believes it is important marketers have a better understanding of the relationship Gen Y has with electricity and the factors that influence the way they use it.

“Any social marketing campaign attempting to influence Gen Ys to limit their electricity usage should employ a call to action that relates directly to them and their life stage,” Ms. Smith said.

“It should also take into account the higher value Gen Ys appear to give

to cost or monetary savings than to environmental benefits.

“The results of my research hopefully provide both social and consumer marketers with a new and valuable insight into the environmental thoughts and actions of an elusive yet instrumental group.”

Provided by Monash University

Citation: A power hungry generation (2012, May 4) retrieved 12 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-05-power-hungry.html>

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