



ASIA PACIFIC
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DU CANADA

+ DECEMBER 2021

2021 National Opinion Poll

Canada's Generational Perspectives on Asia



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About APF Canada

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF Canada) is a not-for-profit organization focused on Canada's relations with Asia. Our mission is to be Canada's catalyst for engagement with Asia and Asia's bridge to Canada.

APF Canada is dedicated to strengthening ties between Canada and Asia with a focus on seven thematic areas.

Our research provides high-quality, relevant, and timely information, insights, and perspectives on Canada-Asia relations. Providing policy considerations and business intelligence for stakeholders across the Asia Pacific, our work includes [Reports](#), [Policy Briefs](#), [Case Studies](#), [Dispatches](#), [Digital Media](#), and a regular [Asia Watch](#) newsletter that together support these thematic areas.

APF Canada also works with business, government, and academic stakeholders to provide custom research, data, briefings and Asia Competency training for Canadian organizations. Advisory [services](#) are available by request. We would be pleased to work with you to meet your research and business intelligence needs.

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EDUCATION ›
Asia Competency

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About the National Opinion Poll

Since 2004, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada has been conducting regular nationwide surveys to assess Canadian attitudes toward countries in the Asia Pacific, and their perceptions of Canada-Asia relations. Unique in its construction and its objectives, APF Canada's National Opinion Poll has been instrumental in drawing a portrait of Canadians' perspectives on Asia and the region's increasing relevance to Canada's prosperity.

The *2021 National Opinion Poll: Canada's Generational Perspectives on Asia (2021 NOP)* is a thematic survey and focuses on analyzing Canadian perspectives about the Asia Pacific, its importance for Canada's future growth, and Canadians' awareness about the region – areas of exploration crucial to strengthening Canada-Asia relations. In keeping with its thematic approach, the *2021 NOP* further explores generational divides in knowledge, awareness, and perceptions of Canada-Asia relations to better inform future engagement by government, businesses, APF Canada, and other stakeholders. The objectives of this national poll are three-fold:

- + To determine Canadians' feelings towards and awareness of the Asia Pacific.
- + To gauge Canadian perspectives on the need for building Asia competency, and identify barriers and best methods to build knowledge, awareness, and competency.
- + To inform policy-makers, educators, and practitioners' strategies to build Canada's Asia competency as the country prepares to actively engage with countries in the region.

Executive Summary

The Asia Pacific is the current epicentre of global economic growth, innovation, and talent. While Canada considers deeper engagement with the region, it is pertinent to consider Canadian perspectives and awareness of the Asia Pacific, especially among young adults, to ensure that the country is keeping pace with changing global dynamics. With this in mind, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's *2021 National Opinion Poll: Canada's Generational Perspectives on Asia* explores Canadians' views about the Asia Pacific and their opinions on the need and ways to build more awareness and competency about the Asia Pacific, with a thematic focus on young adults' awareness, knowledge, and perceptions of Asia.

According to 2016 Canadian census data, Canada's younger generation (18-to-44 years) is more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity than the country's older generations. This NOP explores how this diversity, and the experience of multiculturalism, translates into differences in opinions and views about Asia across generational lines. Awareness about Asia and its diversity is arguably the first step towards understanding and accepting differences and identifying similarities with Asians and Asian countries. It is central to combating anti-Asian racism in Canada, nurturing a sustainable, multicultural Canadian society, and maintaining and developing business and government relations with the whole of the Asia Pacific. This poll helps identify the gaps in Canadians' awareness about Asia – and effective ways to fill those gaps and prepare Canadians for the changing socio-economic structure of Canada and the global economy.

The data has been weighted to the population estimates across provinces, age, and gender. The generations are identified as follows:

- + **Generation Z:** 18 to 24 years old
- + **Millennials or Gen Y:** 25 to 34 years old
- + **Generation X:** 35 to 54 years old
- + **Baby Boomers:** 55+

11 Key Takeaways

1

Generation Z is more likely to identify as Canadians of Asian descent than Baby Boomers.

In this NOP, 15% of all respondents self-identify as being of Asian descent. But strikingly, 29% of Gen Z (18-to-24 years) identify as Canadians of Asian descent, compared to less than 6% of respondents aged 55 and above. Across the survey, Canadians of Asian descent report higher interest and awareness about Asian culture, languages, and current events, and express warmer feelings toward Asia.

IMPRESSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

2

Three out of five respondents name China as the first country or territory that comes to mind when thinking about 'Asia.'

Furthermore, when thinking about China, the first words that come to mind for most respondents are "communism" and "population." For 13% of Canadians, Japan is the first country they associate with 'Asia,' and 6% name India. When thinking of Japan, Canadians most commonly relate the country with "cuisine" or "technology." For India, respondents think primarily about "cuisine," but also "population" and "poverty." Baby Boomers are the most likely generation to think of China first, while they are the least likely generation to think of Japan or the Philippines first.

INTEREST, AWARENESS, AND KNOWLEDGE

3

China and Japan are the two Asian economies Canadians have the most knowledge about.

About one-quarter of Canadians believe they have "a fair amount" to "a lot" of knowledge about China and Japan. One in two respondents say they have at least "a little" knowledge about the three most commonly associated Asian economies – China, Japan, and India. Self-assessed knowledge for the Southeast Asian countries of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Singapore is the lowest. Slightly more Gen Z respondents reported "a fair amount" or "a lot" of knowledge about China, Japan, India, and the Philippines compared to all other generations.

4

A majority of Canadians are interested in learning more about Asia.

More than half of the respondents are interested or currently engaged in learning more about Asian cuisine, history, or tourism. Younger Canadians (below 34) are generally more interested in learning more about Asia. Specifically, they show more interest than their older counterparts in Asian languages and culture, such as music, art, literature, gaming, media,

and entertainment. Meanwhile, older Canadians (55+) are more interested in Asian history, tourism, politics, and current affairs compared to young Canadians.

LEARNING ABOUT THE ASIA PACIFIC

5

Respondents who are interested in learning more about Asia identified community engagement, emphasis on Asia in the education system, and more media coverage as the top three most effective methods to build Canadians' awareness about Asian countries or Asians.

Interestingly, compared to other respondents, Canadians of Asian descent are more likely to believe that more community engagement and teaching Asian languages are effective methods. However, they don't find an increased emphasis on teaching about Asia or more news media coverage of Asia as effective as the rest of Canadians.

6

Traditional mainstream news outlets are the most popular source of knowledge and exposure to Asia for Canadians, followed by online mainstream news outlets and conversations with personal networks.

But there are significant generational divides. Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to get information from their social circles and popular culture about/from Asia, with social media close behind as the third most popular source. By contrast, a majority of Baby Boomers choose traditional mainstream news outlets as their top source of information about Asia. Generation X is equally likely to choose traditional or online mainstream news outlets or conversations with personal networks as their top sources of information about Asia.

7

Seven in 10 respondents across all age groups say they had too little or no exposure to Asia in their high-school education.

Only 18% of Canadians identify education as a source of their knowledge and exposure to Asia. Furthermore, among the respondents interested in learning about Asia, 46% said that an increased emphasis on teaching about Asia in the Canadian education system would be an effective method to build Canadians' awareness about Asia and Asians.

ASIAN LANGUAGES

8

Thirteen per cent of Canadians have conversational fluency in at least one Asian language, the majority being Canadians of Asian descent.

Among respondents who can speak an Asian language, 70% know Cantonese or Mandarin (Chinese), about 21% speak Hindi, and 15% speak Punjabi. The remaining languages saw 10% or less. Younger Canadians are more likely to express conversational fluency than the older generations.

9

When asked about languages Canadians would like to learn the most besides English or French, Chinese, including Mandarin and Cantonese (12%), and Japanese (6%) are the second and fourth top choices, behind Spanish (46%) and Italian (8%).

Nonetheless, seven out of 10 respondents said they would be open to learning an Asian language. The most popular factor that would encourage Canadians to learn an Asian language is visiting an Asian country for tourism purposes (42%). Three out of 10 respondents said that factors such as free courses, the need to work or study in an Asian country, and family would encourage them to learn an Asian language. The younger generations are more enthusiastic about learning an Asian language compared to the older generations.

IMPACT OF ASIA PACIFIC ON CANADA

10

A majority of Canadians think that Asian technology, immigrants, culture, and economic growth will positively impact Canada in the next 10-to-20 years.

Seven out of 10 think technology and innovation in Asia will positively impact Canada's future, 62% think the same for immigration from Asia, 58% for the influence of Asian cultures and traditions on Canada, and 57% for economic growth in the Asian region. Baby Boomers are significantly more pessimistic about the impact of most factors than the younger generations.

11

Compared to older Canadians, younger generations are more likely to believe that building Asia competency about society, culture, and protocols will be important for Canada's future economic growth and social diversity.

Almost half of Gen Z and Millennials believe it is "important" or "very important" to understand Asian society and culture for Canada's future economic growth and social diversity, compared to about 35% of the two older generations. Notably, twice as many Canadians of Asian descent think understanding Asia is "important" or "very important" for Canada's future economic growth and social diversity compared to the rest of respondents.

Survey Results

The following sections of this report highlight the key findings from APF Canada’s 2021 *National Opinion Poll: Canada’s Generational Perspectives on Asia*, and, in addition to presenting general Canadian views, provides an analysis of generational differences. Where relevant, differences in opinions expressed by self-identified Canadians of Asian descent and non-Asian descent have also been discussed. Variations in attitudes across provinces, gender, and education have not been reported.

Identifying the Generations

While the data is weighted to the population estimates across province, age, and gender to be representative of the Canadian population, in this survey, young adults (18-to-34 years) were oversampled to provide more confidence in our findings of their opinion. Throughout the report, we have analyzed the data by generations as identified in *Table 1*.

TABLE 1

Identifying the Generations

Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
18-24 years	25-34 years	35-54 years	55+ years

Unweighted Sample

453	555	745	839
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Weighted Sample

282	425	884	1002
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Base: n=2592

Canadians of Asian Descent

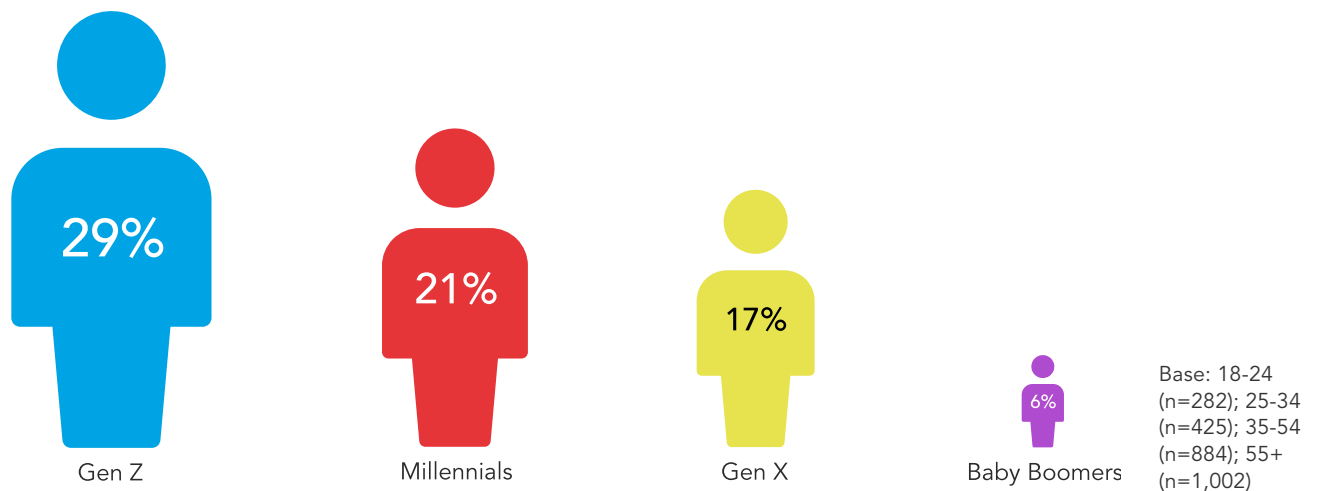
Over the last 20 years, the population of Canadians of Asian descent has steadily grown by 4.3% annually. According to Canada's 2016 population census, the latest available, 17.7%¹² of the Canadian population identify as people of Asian origin, with 5.1% of Canadians of Chinese origin, 4.0% of Indian origin, and 2.4% of Filipino origin – the three most prominent Asian diasporas in Canada. Given Canada's fast-changing demographics, it is important to monitor how Canadians' awareness of Asia, their sources of information about Asia, and Canada's education system are evolving along with these trends. It is also important to keep track of Canadians feelings toward Asia and Asian people, especially as anti-Asian racism continues to be a pressing issue in Canada.

In this NOP, 14.6% of respondents identified as Canadians of Asian descent with the majority of those respondents under the age of 35. Specifically, 29% of respondents aged 18-to-24 identify as Canadians of Asian descent³ (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Asian Canadians, by age (% of sub-group sample)

Question: Do you identify as a Canadian of Asian descent?



¹ Includes all residents of Canada above the age of 14.

² In October 2022, Statistics Canada will release the 2021 census demographic data, which promises to better reflect Canada's diversity as the agency recognizes the growing diversity of the Canadian population.

³ According to the 2016 Census data, 21.5% of Canadians aged 15 to 24 and 21.2% of Canadians aged 25 to 34 identified as Canadians of Asian descent.

By the Numbers: Canadians of Asian Descent

- + 55% identify as male
- + 48% live in Ontario, 26% in British Columbia, and 15% in Alberta
- + 39% consider themselves East Asians, 22% South Asians, and 13% Southeast Asians

Across the report, we compare responses from Canadians of Asian descent with those of other Canadians and highlight significant differences. While our report focuses on the overall Canadian opinion and generational divides, we find ethnicity plays a significant role in experiences, awareness, feelings, and perspectives about Asians and Asia. And since Canadians of Asian descent make up a significant share of Canadian youth, those differences significantly impact overall Canadian opinion.

Section 1:

Impressions and Perspectives About the Asia Pacific



KEY POINTS:

+ When thinking about Asia, a majority of Canadians (64%) think of China first. Still, Canadians' perception of Asia has broadened compared to 2017 (NOP), with more respondents in 2021 thinking about Japan (13%) and India (6%) first.

+ Millennials hold the warmest feelings of all generations toward Asian countries, while Baby Boomers hold the coldest feelings.

+ While Canadians still reserve their most unfavourable feelings for China, overall feelings toward China have picked up from 3.6 in 2020 to 4.5 in 2021. Millennials hold neutral feelings (5.0) toward China. (This survey was in the field in early September 2021, before the release of Meng Wanzhou and the two Michaels later that month).

+ More than half of the respondents say they don't know enough about the Japanese and Indian prime ministers, but most Canadians know Chinese President Xi Jinping. However, respondents have the least confidence in President Xi to do the right thing regarding world affairs, with 56% saying they have "no confidence at all."

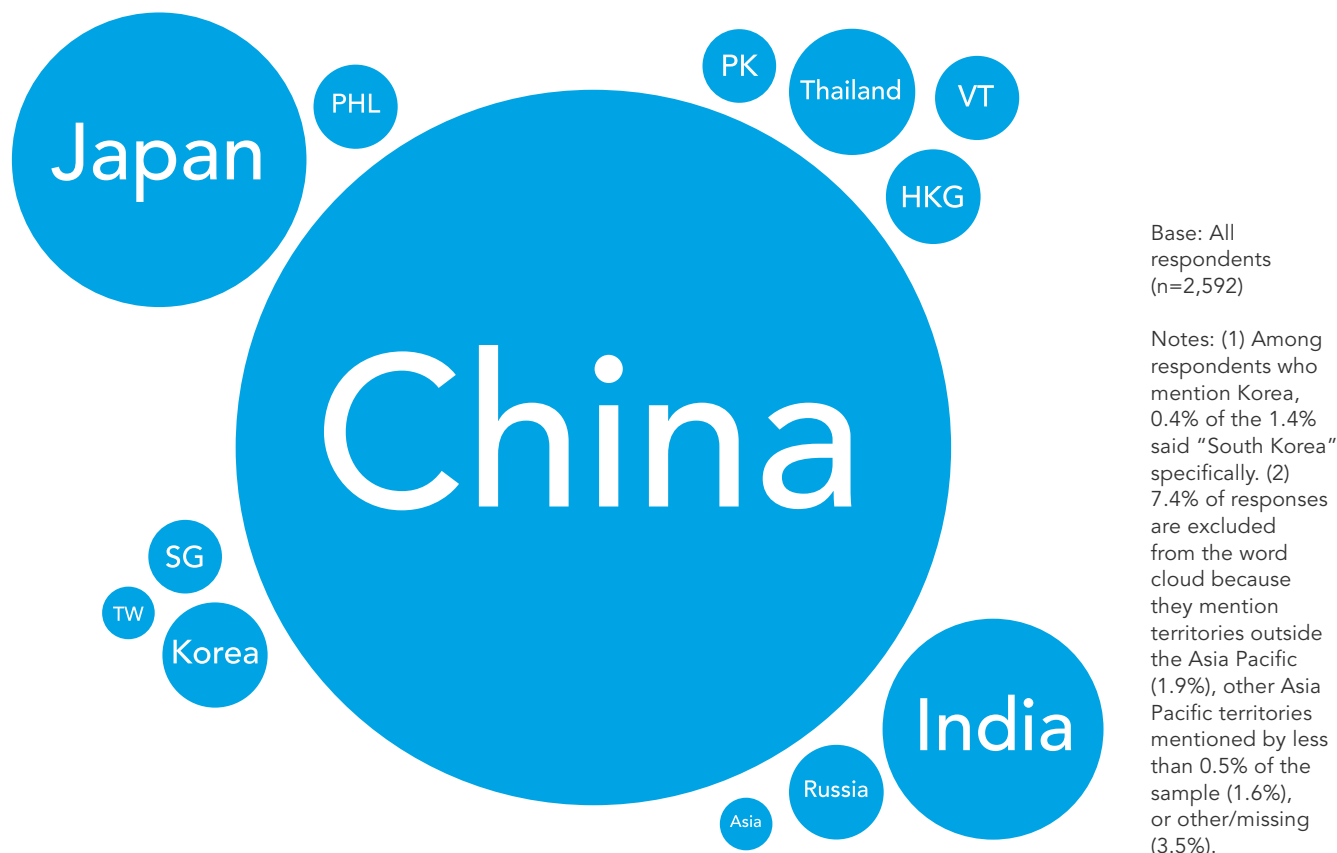
First Impressions

China continues to dominate Canadians' mental image of Asia, but to a lesser degree than in our 2017 NOP. For 64% of Canadians, China is the first country to come to mind when thinking about Asia (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

China dominates Canadians mental image of Asia

Q: When you think about "Asia," what is the first country or territory that comes to your mind?



While a majority of respondents across all generations think of China first, Baby Boomers are the most likely generation to associate Asia with China. In contrast, they are the least likely generation to think of Japan or the Philippines.

When we asked the same question in 2017, 69% of respondents said they thought of China, and only 10% and 5% thought of Japan and India. This year more respondents think of Japan (13%) and India (6%), especially youth, suggesting that Canadians' perceptions of Asia are slowly broadening.

Canadians first impression of Japan tends to be positive, but it tends to be negative for China and India

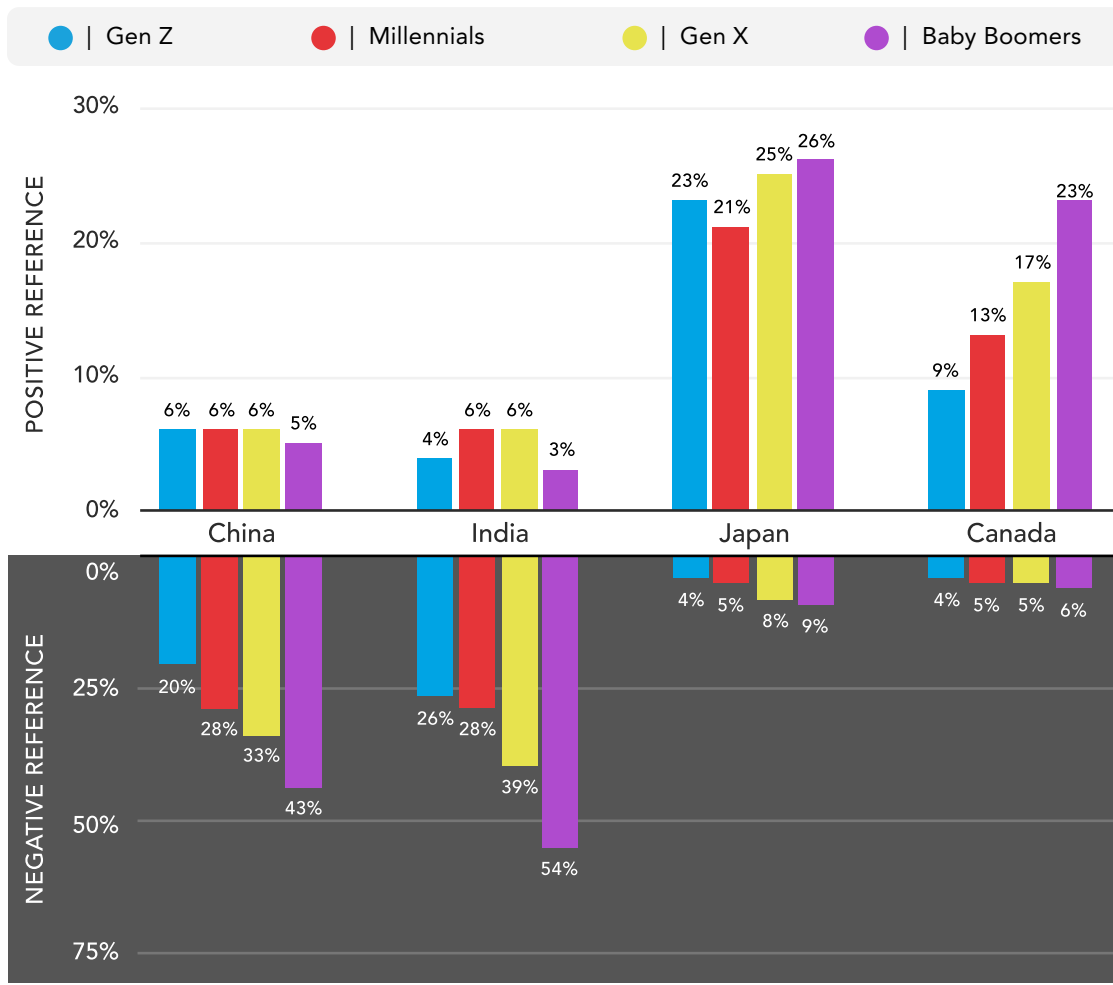
We also asked Canadians about the first things that come to mind when thinking about China, Japan, India, and Canada. Their answers, limited to a maximum of 20 words, were coded and grouped into categories.

We found that more than one-third of respondents think of something negative first when thinking about China and India, and very few think of something positive. For Japan and Canada, more respondents thought of something positive first. Also, as shown in *Figure 3*, the older the respondents are, the more they think of something negative first for all countries.

FIGURE 3

A third of respondents think of something negative when thinking about China and India

Q: When thinking about the following countries, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?

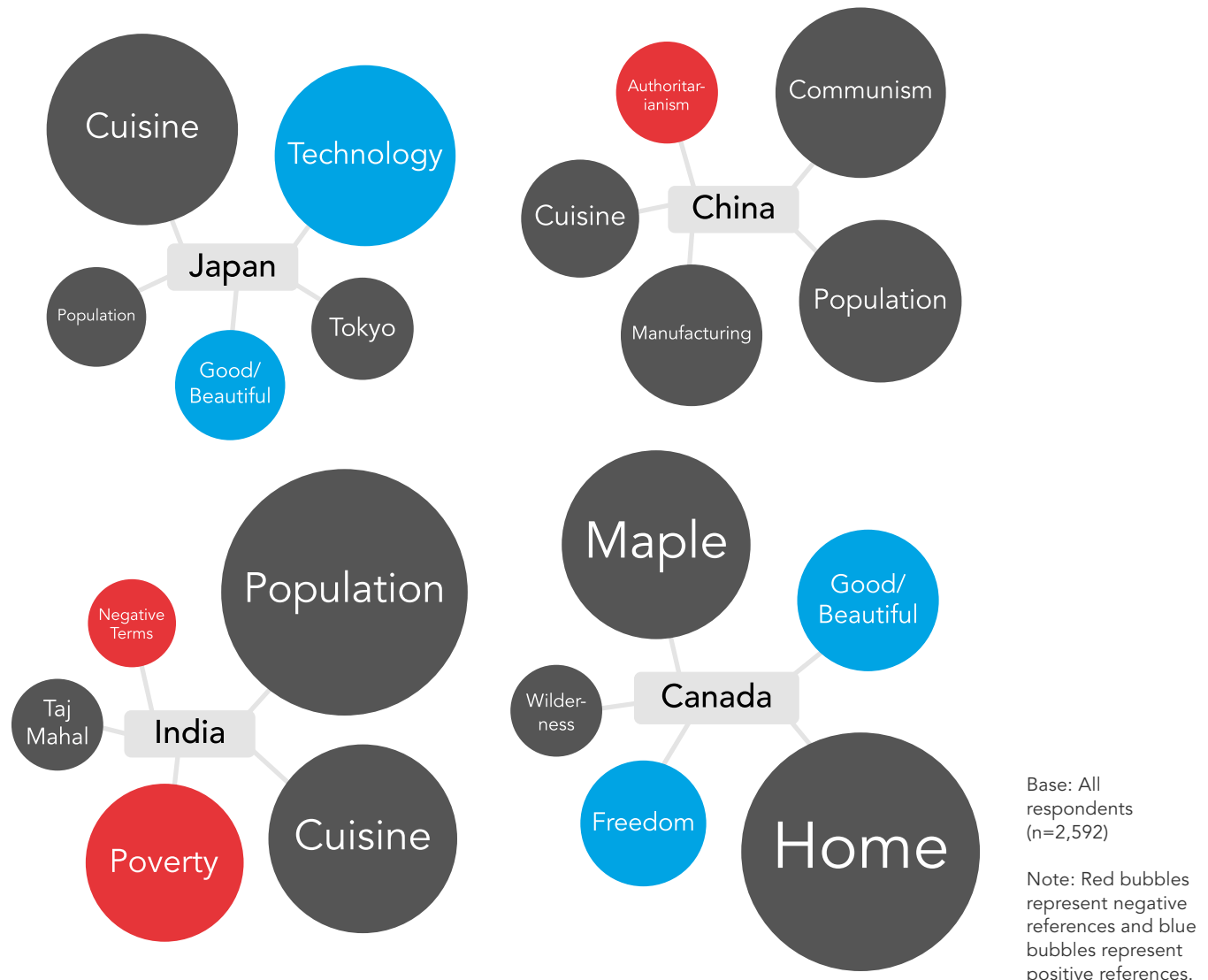


The most common reference made for China was “communism” (11%). For India, Canadians reference “crowds” and large “population” the most (21%), and for Japan, “food and cuisine” was referenced the most (13%). Interestingly, for all three countries, references to the large population and to cuisine fall within the top five ‘first things’ to come to mind for Canadians (Figure 4). And for all countries, the younger the respondents are, the more likely they are to reference “food and cuisine,” while the older they are, the more likely they are to reference the population and crowds.

FIGURE 4

Top FIVE “first things” that come to Canadians’ minds when thinking about ...

Q: When thinking about the following countries, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?



Feelings toward Asia Pacific economies

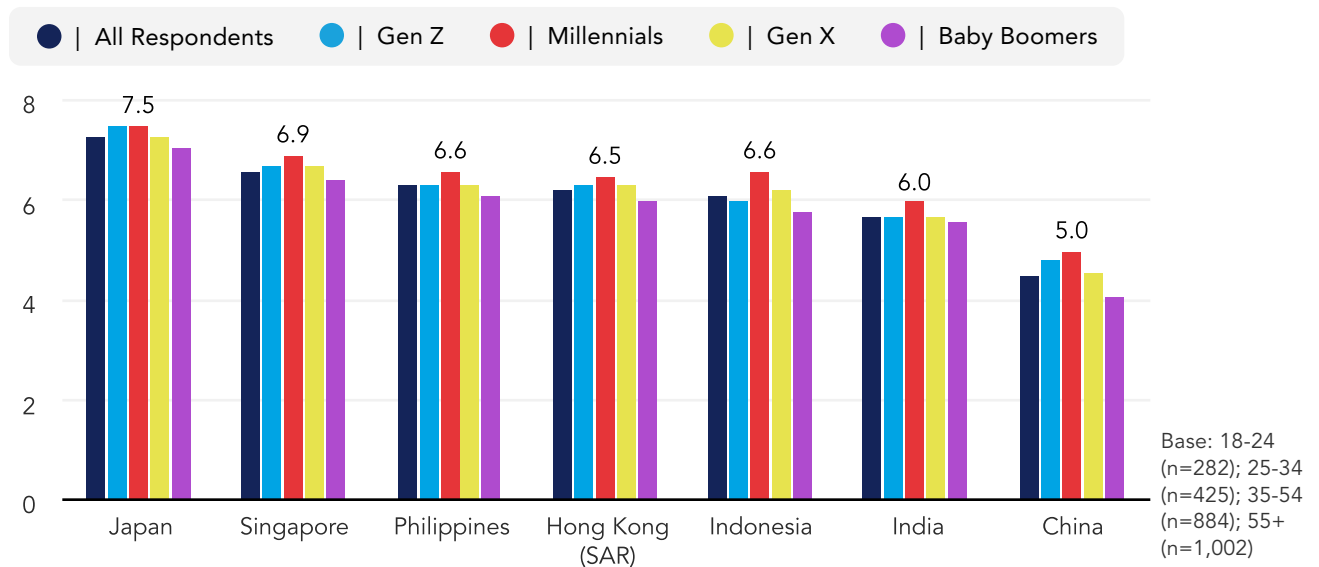
Through our NOPs, APF Canada has tracked Canadians’ feelings toward Asian economies for more than a decade. Canadians are asked to rate their feelings on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning a “very cold, unfavourable” feeling, and 10 meaning a “very warm, favourable” feeling.

As has always been the case⁴, Canadians hold the warmest feelings toward Japan of all Asian economies and the coldest feelings toward China. This year, the average feeling toward China bounced back from a decade-low of 3.6 in 2020 to an average of 4.5. It should be noted that Canadians were polled in early September 2021 before the resolution of the Meng Wanzhou case and the release of the two Michaels at the end of September.

FIGURE 5

Millennials hold the warmest feelings toward all Asian economies

Q: Please rate your feelings towards each of the following countries, regions, or territories, with 1 meaning you have a “very cold, unfavourable” feeling, and 10 meaning you have a “very warm, favourable” feeling.



As Figure 5 shows, in 2021 Millennials hold the warmest feelings of all generations toward all Asian economies, while Baby Boomers hold the coldest feelings toward all Asian economies. Conversely, older generations hold warmer feelings toward Australia. The gap in feeling is the largest for China, where Millennials rated their feelings toward China at 5.0 compared to 4.1 for Baby Boomers.

⁴ Figure 8 of APF Canada’s 2020 National Opinion Poll shows the evolution of Canadians feeling over the last decade.

Canadians of Asian descent hold warmer feelings toward all Asian economies compared to the rest of Canadians, and most significantly for China (+1.3 pts) and Hong Kong (SAR) (+1.0 pts) (see *Table 2*).

As Canadian youth are ethnically more diverse and boast a larger population of Canadians of Asian descent, we might assume that this is the reason Millennials hold warmer feelings toward Asia than Baby Boomers. However, we found that ethnicity does not explain the difference in opinion between the two groups for most countries. As shown in *Table 2*, Millennials hold the warmest feelings toward most Asian countries – for both the Canadians of Asian and non-Asian descent groups.

TABLE 2

Generational Divide and Feelings Towards Asia Pacific Economies

Question: Please rate your feelings towards each of the following countries, regions, or territories, with 1 meaning you have a “very cold, unfavourable” feeling, and 10 meaning you have a “very warm, favourable” feeling.

Generations	AUS	CHN	HKG	IND	IDN	JPN	PHL	SGP	ZAF	USA
Canadians of Asian descent	7.3	5.6	7	6.2	6.6	7.7	6.6	7.2	5.9	6.2
Gen Z	7.1	5.4	6.8	6	6.2	7.7	6.1	6.9	5.6	5.8
Millennials	7.4	5.8	7	6.5	6.9	7.9	6.8	7.6	6.5	6.8
Gen X	7.3	5.6	7.1	6.1	6.5	7.5	6.5	7.3	5.9	6.2
Baby Boomers	7.2	5.4	6.6	6.4	6.4	7.6	6.9	6.8	5.4	5.7
Canadians of non-Asian descent	7.9	4.3	6	5.6	6	7.2	6.2	6.4	6	6.1
Gen Z	7.7	4.6	6.1	5.5	5.9	7.5	6.3	6.6	6.1	5.9
Millennials	7.7	4.8	6.2	5.8	6.4	7.4	6.5	6.6	6	6.2
Gen X	7.9	4.4	6	5.6	6.1	7.2	6.3	6.5	6.1	6
Baby Boomers	8.1	4	5.9	5.6	5.8	7.1	6.1	6.3	5.9	6.2
Canadian Average	7.8	4.5	6.2	5.7	6.1	7.3	6.3	6.6	6	6.1

Base: All respondents (n=2,592);
Canadians of Asian descent (n=379);
Canadians of non-Asian descent (n=2,213)

Note: Data referenced in the report’s text is highlighted in yellow

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, overall, Gen Z holds more negative feelings toward Asia compared to Millennials. However, this is not the case among Canadians of non-Asian descent for Singapore and Japan, whereas among Canadians of Asian descent, Gen Z hold more negative feelings toward Singapore and Japan compared to Millennials. For other Asian economies, the difference in the feelings of Gen Z and Millennials is larger for Canadians of Asian descent than it is for Canadians of non-Asian descent. As a result, among Millennials, Canadians of Asian descent hold vastly more positive feelings toward Asia compared to Canadians of non-Asian descent. However, within Gen Z, the feelings of Canadians of Asian descent are only slightly more positive than those of Canadians of non-Asian descent, except for the Philippines, where it is more negative.

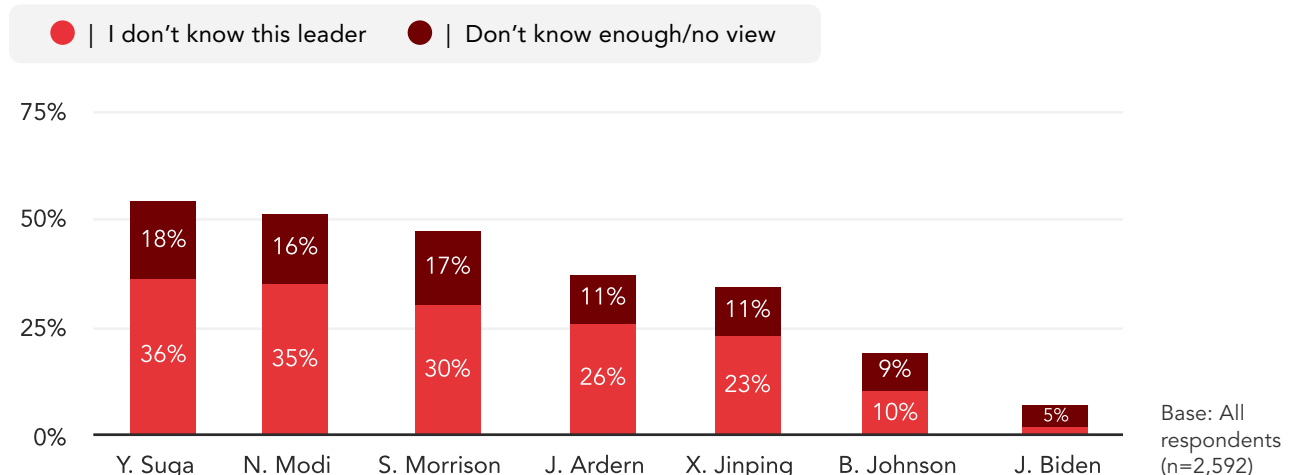
Trust in Asia Pacific leaders

Most Canadians say they don't know enough about Asian leaders, except for Chinese President Xi Jinping, who has been in power since 2013. When asked about their level of confidence in leaders to "do the right thing regarding world affairs," 36% say they don't know about the Japanese Prime Minister – Yoshihide Suga at the time of polling – and 35% say they don't know about Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Figure 6). For China, only 23% say they don't know Xi Jinping. In comparison, 93% of respondents have an opinion of Joe Biden. Finally, for all leaders, significantly more Gen Z and Millennials say that they "don't know the leader" compared to the two older generations.

FIGURE 6

Among Asian leaders, more than half of Canadians don't recognize or know enough about Japanese and Indian leaders, while the majority knows about China's leader

Q: How much confidence do you have in each leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs?



Generational Divide

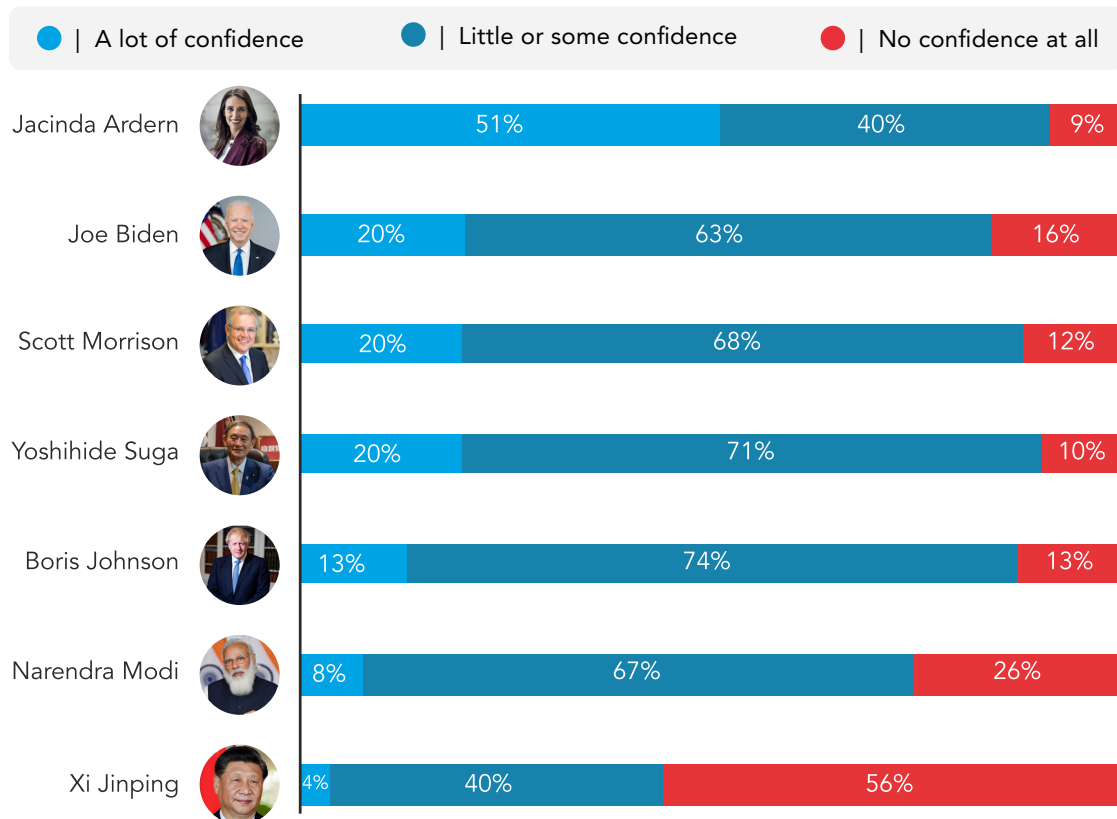
There are only minor differences between generations in the confidence they have in world leaders. Interestingly, of all four generations, more Gen Z respondents say that they have “no confidence at all” in Narendra Modi (India) (40%), Scott Morrison (Australia) (20%), and Yoshihide Suga (Japan) (17%).

The respondents who have no view or say they don’t know about the leaders were scaled out in *Figure 7*, in order to compare the level of trust Canadians have in each leader. With 56% saying that they have “no confidence at all” in him to “do the right thing” regarding world affairs, Xi Jinping is the least trusted leader from the list, followed by Narendra Modi (26%). For the two leaders, more say they have “no confidence at all” than “a lot of confidence.” On the other hand, Canadians have the most confidence in New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, with 51% saying they have “a lot of confidence.”

FIGURE 7

Canadians have the least confidence in Xi Jinping to do the right thing regarding world affairs

Q: How much confidence do you have in each leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs?



Base: All respondents (n=2,592)

Note: Responses exclude respondents who said “I don’t know this leader” or “I don’t know enough/no view.”

A person is seen from behind, sitting in a large, empty lecture hall with rows of brown seats. They are holding and reading a large book or document. The lighting is dim, creating a quiet, studious atmosphere.

Section 2:

Interest, Awareness, and Knowledge About Asia

KEY POINTS:

- + A majority of Canadians under the age of 55 are “somewhat interested” about Asia and willing to receive information about Asia.
- + The most popular areas of interest for Canadians interested in learning about Asia are Asian food and cuisine (66%) and Asian history (64%).
- + Canadians report limited knowledge about Asia. At most, 26% say they have a fair amount or a lot of knowledge about China.
- + Gen Z respondents reported slightly more knowledge of most Asian economies compared to other generations.
- + Despite Gen Z’s perceived superior knowledge of Asia compared to other generations, Baby Boomers display more actual knowledge of Asian geography and current events.

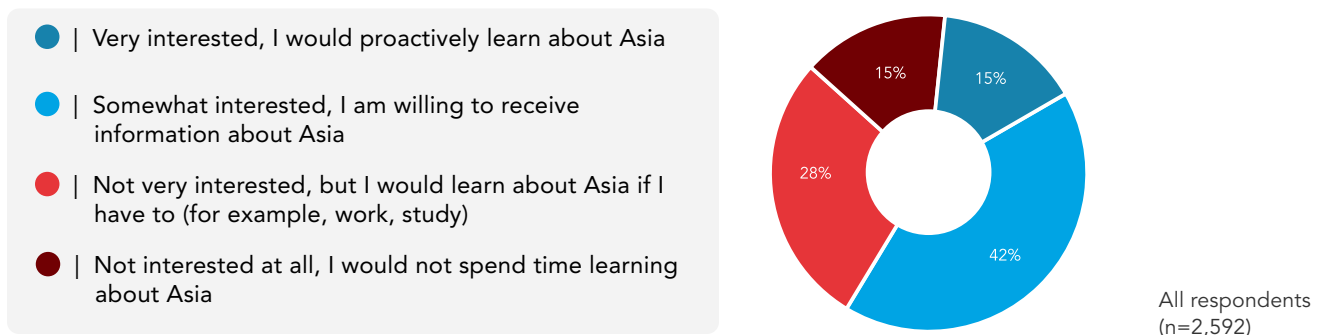
Interest in Learning About Asia

Measuring Canadians’ interest in Asia provides insight into Canadians’ openness to Asia and Asians and their willingness to learn about Asia, a region of significant economic and social importance for Canada.

FIGURE 8

A majority of Canadians are interested in learning about Asia

Q: How interested are you in learning more about Asia (e.g. its politics, society, people, culture etc.)?

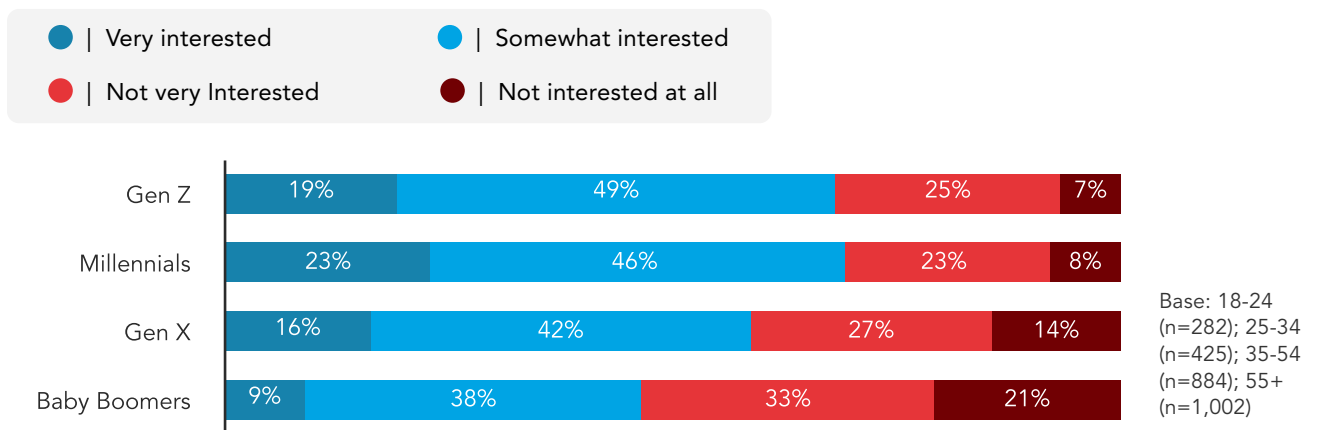


Our 2021 NOP found that a majority (57%) of Canadians are somewhat or very interested in learning about Asian politics, society, people, and culture. However, only 15% say they are “very interested” and would proactively learn about Asia (see *Figure 8*).

FIGURE 9

Gen Z and Millennials are more interested to learn about Asia than older generations

Q: How interested are you in learning more about Asia (e.g. its politics, society, people, culture etc.)?



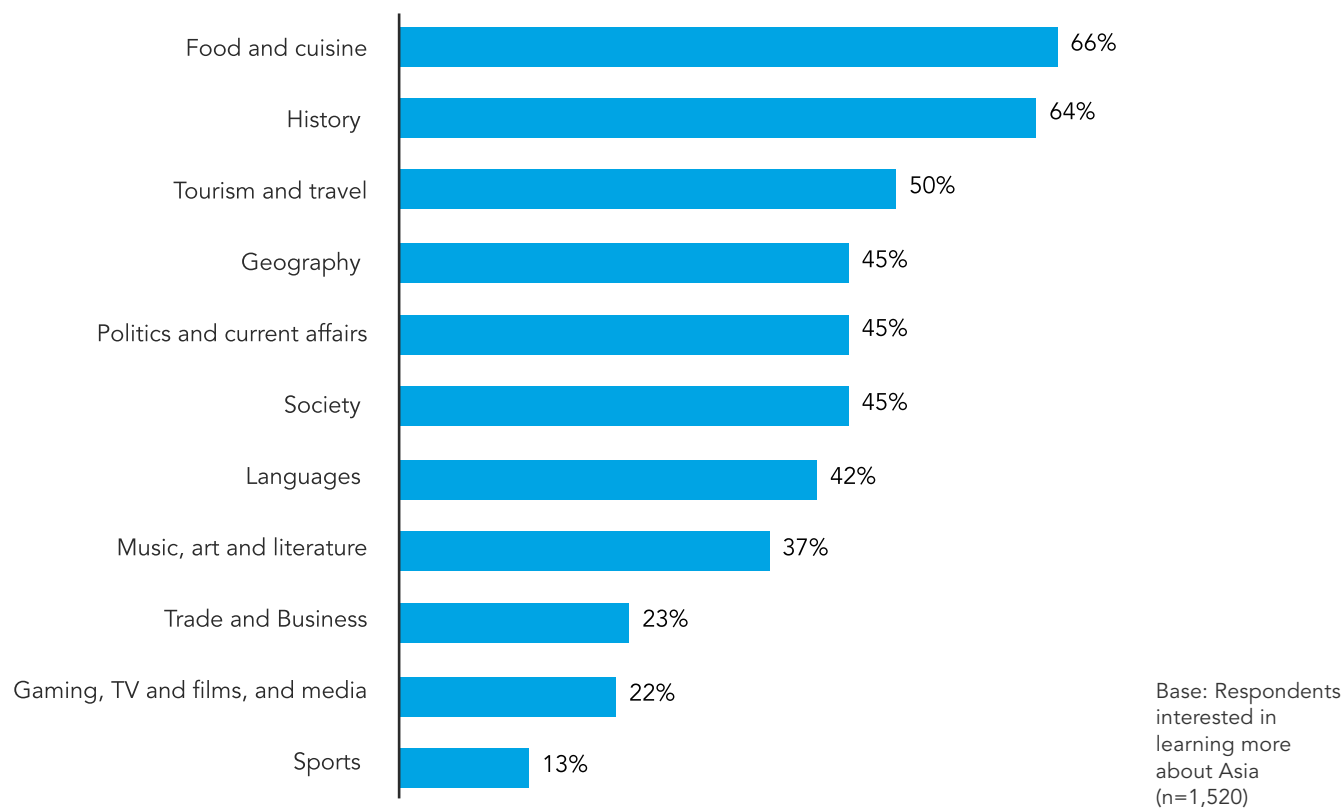
Baby Boomers are the only group where a majority of respondents is not interested in learning about Asia (53%, *Figure 9*). For respondents younger than 35 years, 68% are interested in learning more about Asia.

Among respondents interested (very/somewhat) in learning more about Asia, 66% are interested or engaged in Asian food and cuisine, and 64% are interested or engaged in Asian history (*Figure 10*). Canadians are also widely interested in Asian tourism, geography, politics and current affairs, society, languages, and music, art and literature.

FIGURE 10

Canadians are most interested about Asian cuisine and history

Q: Which of the following Asia-related areas are you most interested in or currently engage in among the following? Please select all that apply.

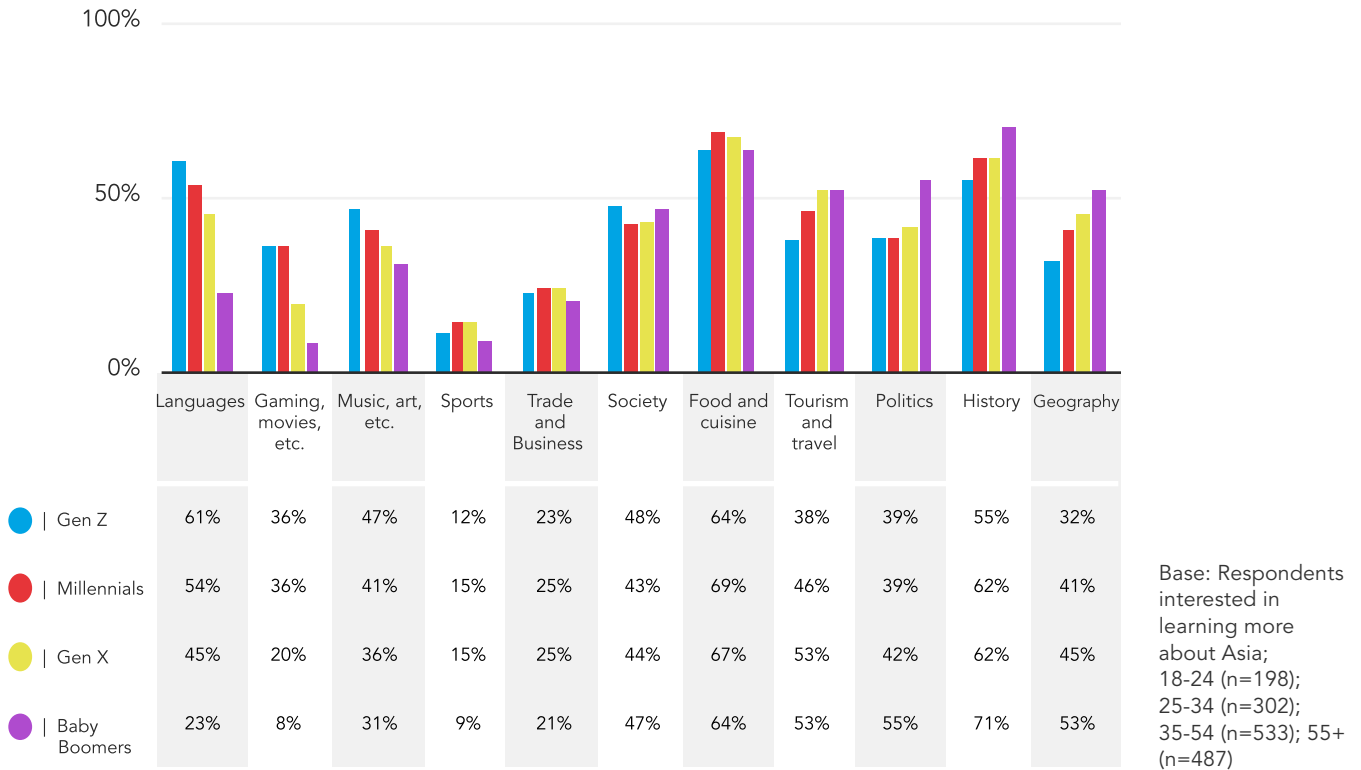


There is a significant interest or engagement in languages, gaming and movies, and music and art among Canadian youth. But with age, interest in these areas diminishes (*Figure 11*). Notably, Baby Boomers stand out for their low interest in Asian languages (23%), which contrasts with all other generations. It becomes a prominent trend, as noted further in this report. Instead, Baby Boomers interested in Asia are more interested or engaged in Asian geography, history, and politics than any other group.

FIGURE 11

Asia-related area Canadians are most interested or currently engage in, by generations

Q: Which of the following Asia-related areas are you most interested in or currently engage in among the following? Please select all that apply.



Interestingly, among respondents interested in Asia, Canadians of non-Asian descent across all generations show more interest in Asian history compared to Canadians of Asian descent. The difference is most striking for Baby Boomers, where 74% of Canadians of non-Asian descent are interested or engaged in Asian history compared to only 44% of Canadians of Asian descent. However, Canadians of Asian descent of all ages are more interested in Asian languages than Canadians of non-Asian descent. Again, the difference is striking for the oldest generation as 52% of Canadians of Asian descent who are Baby Boomers are interested in Asian languages compared to 20% for Canadians of non-Asian descent who are also Baby Boomers.

Self-assessment of Awareness About Asia

Before testing Canadians on their knowledge of Asia, we asked them to self-assess their level of knowledge about Asian history, culture, demographics, and current events for different Asian countries.

At most, 26% say they have “a fair amount” or “a lot” of knowledge about China, followed by Japan (24%) and India (17%). About half of the respondents say they have a little bit of knowledge for all three countries, and the rest say they have almost no knowledge of the countries. For other Asian economies, about half the respondents say they have almost no knowledge (see *Figure 12*). In comparison, only 4% say they have almost no knowledge about the United States, while reported knowledge of Australia is comparable to that of China and Japan.

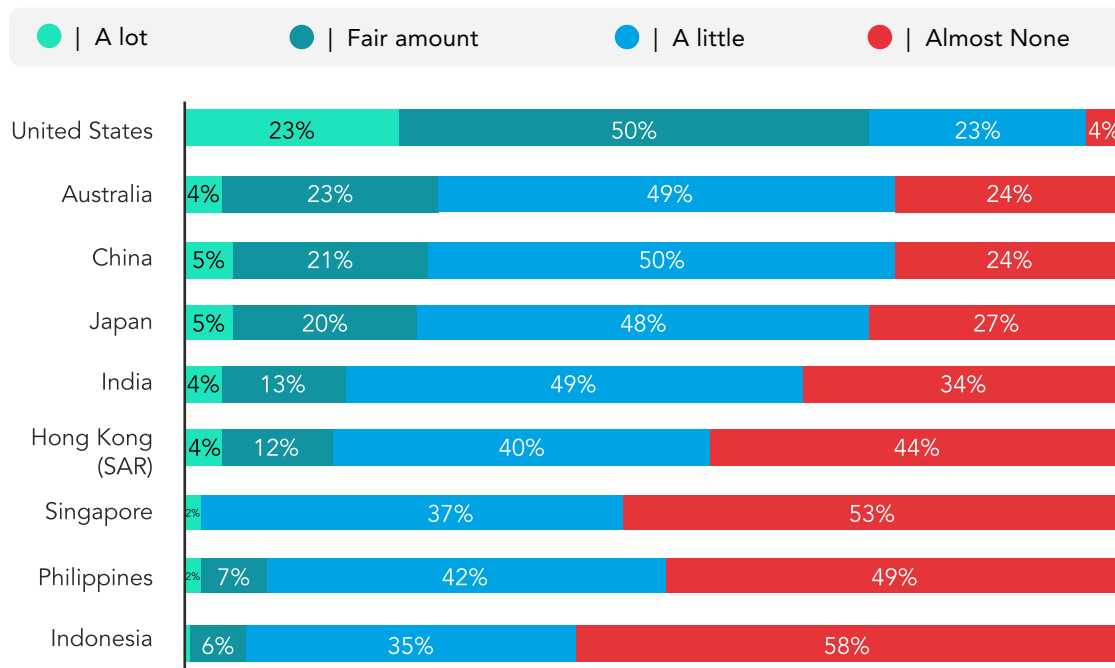
Perceived Knowledge Among Canadians of Asian and Non-Asian Descent

Canadians of Asian descent reported significantly more knowledge about Asian economies compared to other Canadians. About twice as much for China, Japan, and India, and three times as much for other Asian economies.

FIGURE 12

Three-quarters of Canadians report at least a little bit of knowledge about China and Japan, but few have a lot of knowledge

Q: How much knowledge (history, culture, demographics, current events) do you have about the following regions and economies?

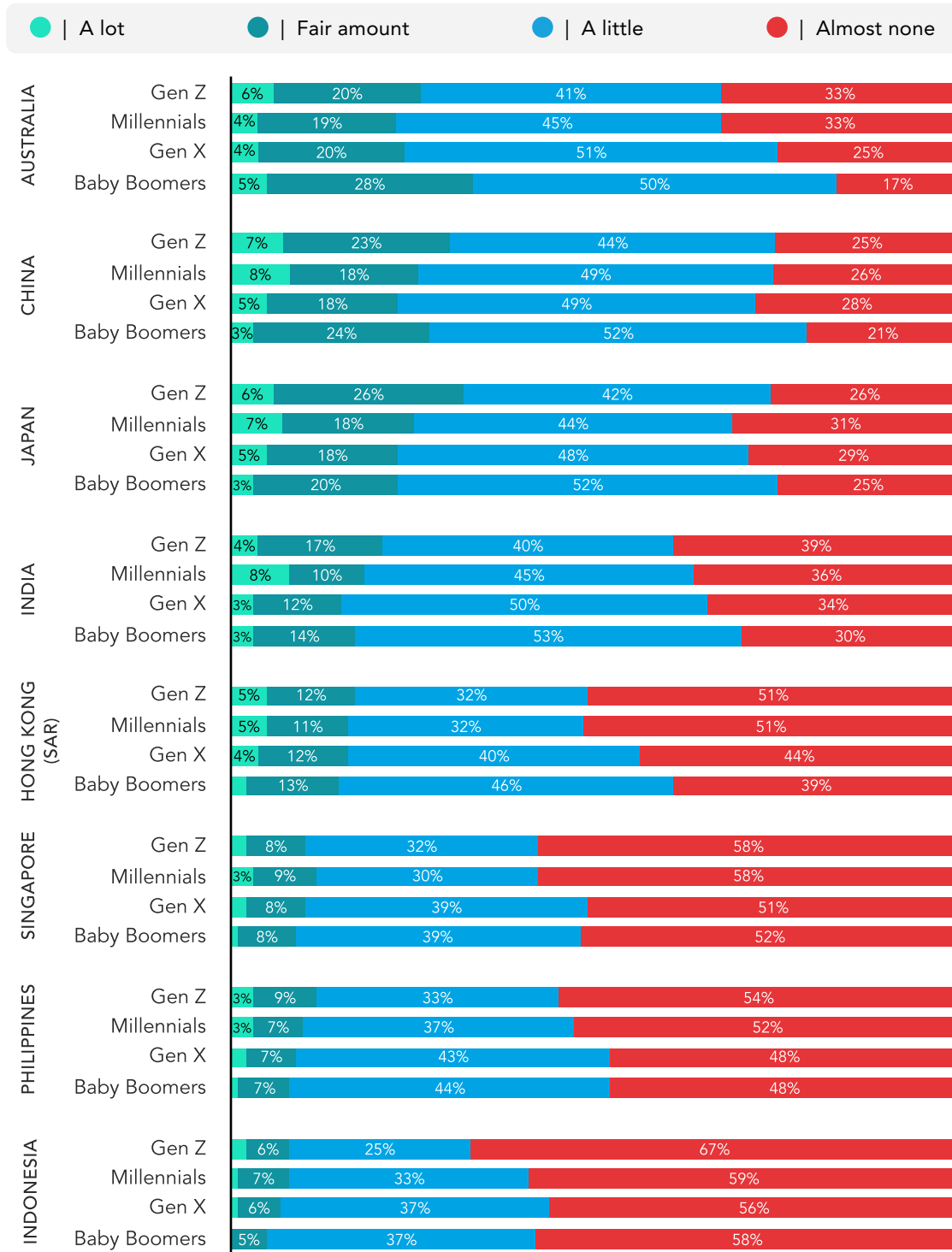


Interestingly, slightly more Gen Z respondents reported “a fair amount” or “a lot” of knowledge of China, Japan, India, and the Philippines compared to all other generations (*Figure 13*). Reported knowledge of these economies is nearly the same for Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers. Notably, 32% of Gen Z reported at least a fair amount of knowledge about Japan while the population average is 24%, and 30% reported the same for China, while the population average is 26%.

FIGURE 13

Knowledge of Asia, by age

Question: How much knowledge (history, culture, demographics, current events) do you have about the following regions and economies?



Base: 18-24 (n=282); 25-34 (n=425); 35-54 (n=884); 55+ (n=1,002)

Measured Awareness About Asia

After asking Canadians about their perceived knowledge, we posed questions about Asia and current events to measure actual knowledge.

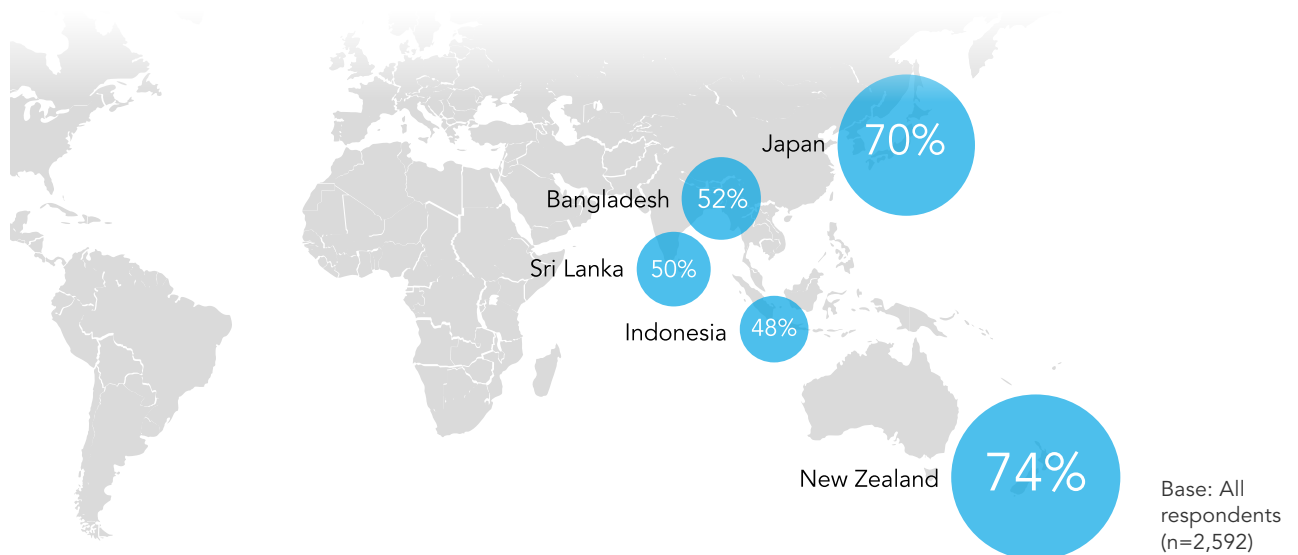
In the first question, respondents were asked to identify five Asia Pacific countries pinpointed on a map. Just above one-quarter of all respondents (27%) correctly identified all five countries, with Baby Boomers having slightly more success than the other groups (29%).

Nonetheless, 74% identified New Zealand correctly, 70% identified Japan correctly, and about half of the respondents correctly identified the remaining three Asian countries (*Figure 14*). Particularly, Baby Boomers had more success identifying Sri Lanka and New Zealand compared to other generations.

FIGURE 14

Seven in ten correctly identified Japan on a map

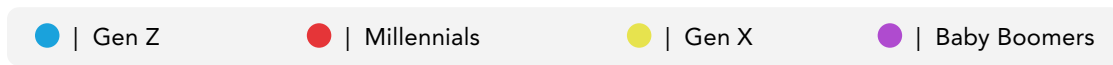
Q: Name the five countries pinpointed on the map. Choose from the following list...



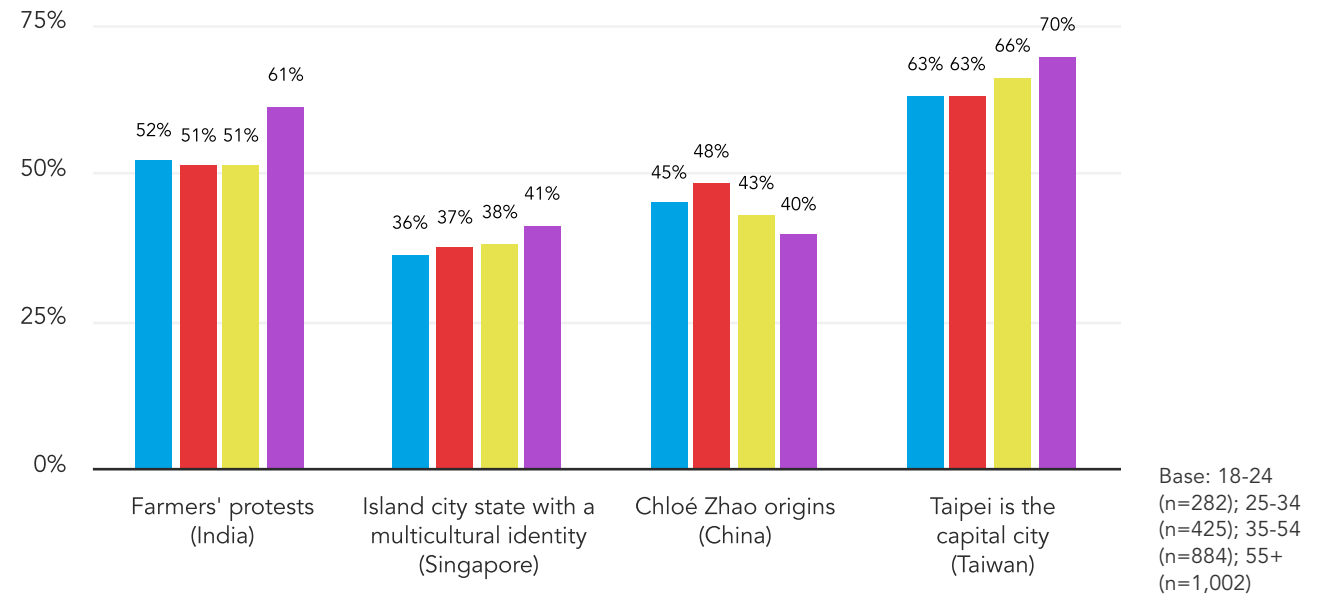
In a second question, the respondents were asked a set of unrelated questions that they had to link to corresponding Asian economies. Only 14% of the respondents answered all four questions correctly. Again, Baby Boomers had more success with geography compared to other generations and were more aware of the current events, but had a more challenging time with the popular culture question about Oscar-winning Chinese filmmaker Chloe Zhao (*Figure 15*). For all questions, the success rate of Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X is very similar.

FIGURE 15

Baby Boomers score higher in Asian geography



Q: Please match the items and current events listed below with the related/concerned Asian economies



Finally, we checked for Canadians' awareness of current humanitarian crises in the Asia Pacific. *Figure 16* displays the share of respondents that have heard about the humanitarian crises.

Overall, Canadians are much more aware of the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan than other crises, with only about one-tenth of respondents unaware of it. However, it is worth noting that only weeks before our polling in September 2021, the Afghan crisis intensified with the Taliban taking over the South Asian country. Conversely, only two-thirds of respondents report having heard about the National Security Law in Hong Kong or the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh.

Baby Boomers are significantly more aware of all events than other generations. On average, 79% of Baby Boomers are aware of an event compared to about two-thirds of respondents from younger generations. The three younger generational groups have similar awareness of events with minor differences (see *Figure 16*).

Interestingly, we found that Baby Boomers have more knowledge of Asia than Gen Z, although a higher share of Gen Z respondents self-reported having at least "a fair amount" of knowledge about history, culture, demographics, and current events in China, India, Japan, and other

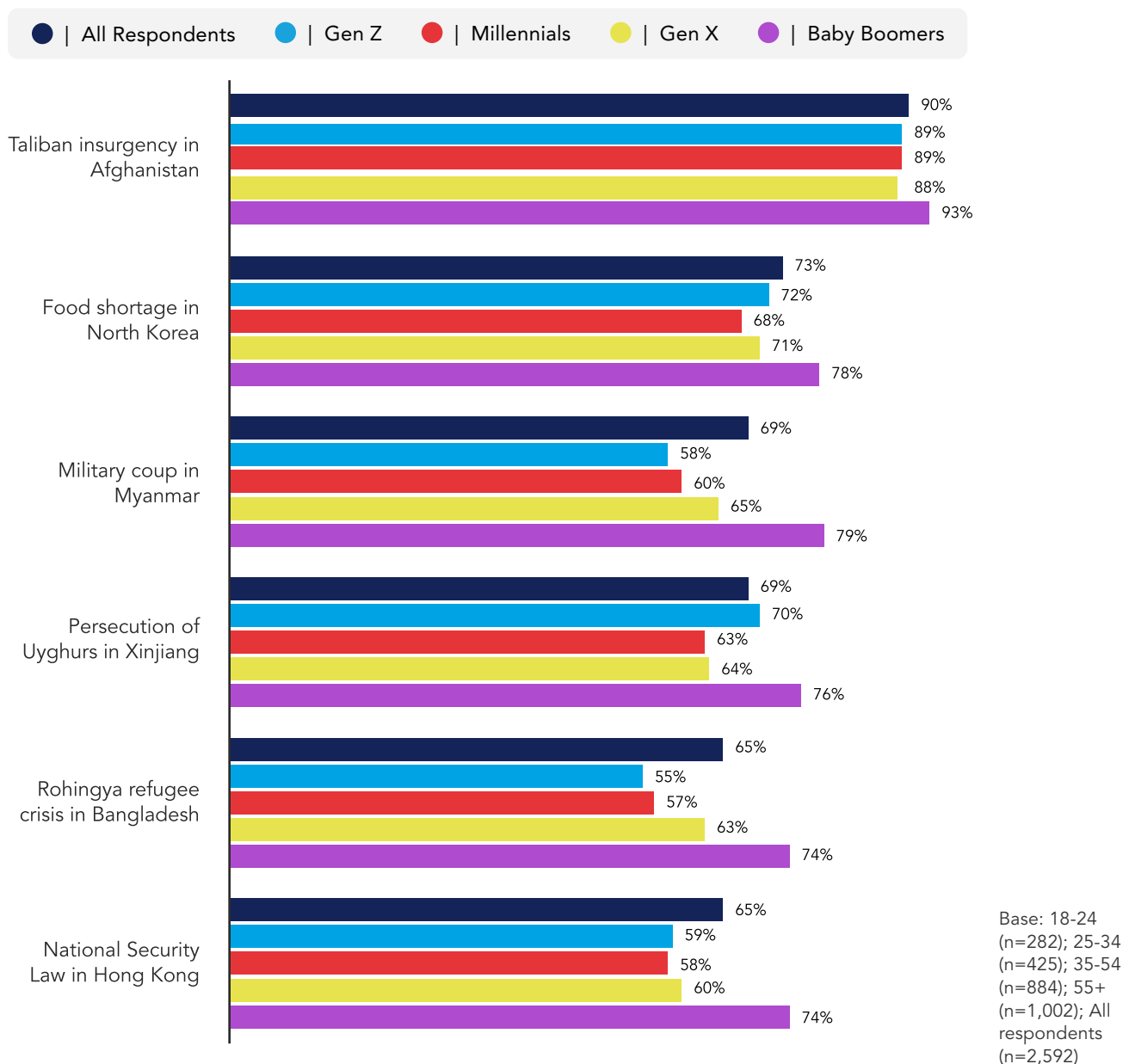
Asian countries. While we only tested Canadians on their awareness of geographic knowledge and current events in this poll, it would be interesting to see how the different generations fare on a language or cultural awareness test in future studies. After all, Baby Boomers reported the highest interest of all generations for Asian geography, history, and politics, but were the least interested of all generations in Asian languages and culture.

FIGURE 16

Baby Boomers are the most aware of humanitarian crises in Asia

Q: Have you heard about the following humanitarian crisis in Asia?

Share of respondents who have heard of the following events:



Section 3:

Where Do Canadians Learn About Asia?

KEY POINTS:

+ Popular culture about or from Asia is the most popular source of information about Asian history, culture, people, politics, and current affairs for Gen Z and Millennials, unlike the older generations who mostly source their information from traditional mainstream news outlets.

+ Younger generations (Gen Z and Millennials) are more likely to consider education as a source of information about Asia/Asians compared to older generations.

+ Although Facebook dominates social media usage across all generations, TikTok is a popular medium for Gen Z social media users.

+ When searching for more information about Asia/Asians, almost half of Gen Z and Millennials cite “language barriers” as a key challenge. Meanwhile, three out of 10 Baby Boomers say they don’t seek additional information about Asia/Asians, compared to 12% of Gen Z and Millennials.

+ Consistent with the average opinion, Gen Z recommends increasing community engagement and an emphasis on teaching about Asia in schools, but they also highlight the need to increase access to student exchange programs and have Asian languages as optional foreign languages at schools.

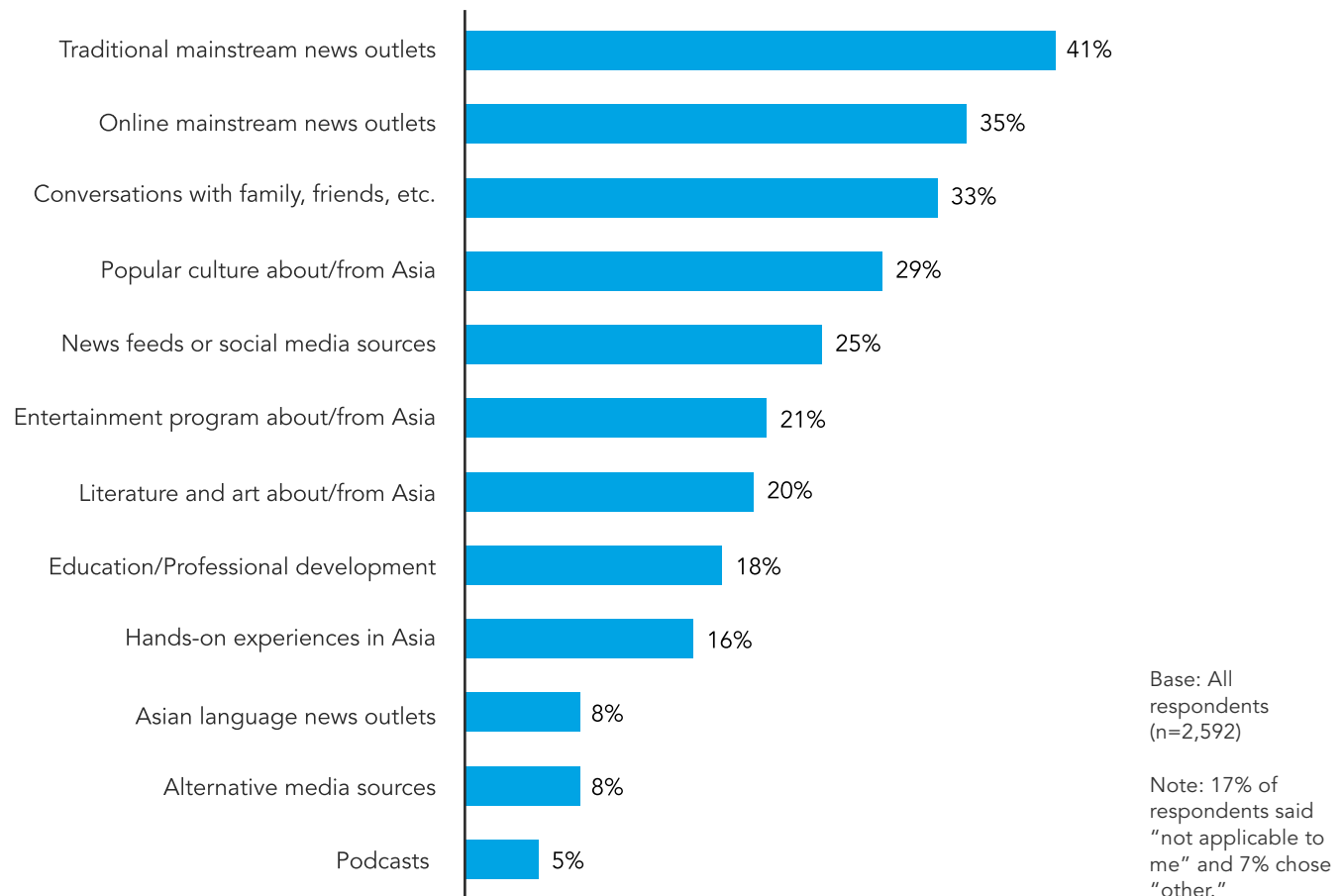
Sources of Information

Most Canadians acquire their knowledge about Asian history, culture, people, politics, current affairs from traditional mainstream news outlets such as television, newspapers, and radio.

FIGURE 17

Traditional mainstream news outlets top the list of sources for information about Asia and Asians

Q: Through which sources and channels have you acquired some knowledge and exposure to Asian history, culture, people, politics, and current affairs? Please select all that apply.



The source categories in this poll were expanded since our 2020 NOP to provide clarity about the medium of delivery. For example, online and social media sources were broken down by online mainstream news outlets and newsfeeds or social media sources. As a result, the data provides a more nuanced understanding of Canadians primary sources of knowledge about Asia, as seen in *Figure 17*.

TABLE 3

Sources of Information About Asia and Asians, by Generations

Question: Through which sources and channels have you acquired some knowledge and exposure to Asian history, culture, people, politics, and current affairs? Please select all that apply.

Sources of information	All Respondents	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-34)	Gen X (35-54)	Baby Boomers (55 +)
Traditional mainstream news outlets (TV/radio/print)	41%	28%	31%	36%	52%
Online mainstream news outlets (e.g. CBC online, Globe and Mail online, etc.)	35%	31%	34%	35%	37%
Conversations with family, friends, and co-workers, in Canada/Asia	33%	39%	39%	34%	27%
Popular culture about/from Asia (e.g. music, movies, fashion, video games)	29%	45%	39%	31%	19%
News feeds or social media sources (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	25%	38%	35%	28%	15%
Entertainment program about/from Asia (e.g. talk show, drama, reality show)	21%	25%	24%	20%	19%
Literature and art about/from Asia (e.g. books, artworks)	20%	23%	23%	18%	20%
Education/professional development (e.g. research, courses, seminar, conference)	18%	31%	23%	18%	12%
Hands-on experiences in Asia (e.g. work, travel, student exchange, lived in Asia, etc.)	16%	11%	17%	16%	16%
Asian language news outlets (TV/print/digital)	8%	11%	13%	10%	2%
Alternative media sources (e.g. The Tyee, Democracy Now!, etc.)	8%	16%	14%	7%	3%
Podcasts	5%	7%	8%	7%	2%
Not applicable to me	17%	14%	14%	16%	19%

Base: 18 to 24 years (n=282); 25 to 34 years (n=425); 35 to 54 years (n=884); 55+ (n=1002); All respondents (n=2,592)

Note: Generations that have a statistically significant difference in opinion from other generations have been highlighted

The source breakdown further helps to discern the differences across generations, particularly in terms of online sources and traditional media prevalence (*Table 3*). For Gen Z and Millennials, the top three sources of information are popular culture about or from Asia, conversations with family, friends, and co-workers, and news feeds and social media sources. Apart from the conversations with close social circles, the younger generations significantly differ from the two older generations, especially the Baby Boomers.

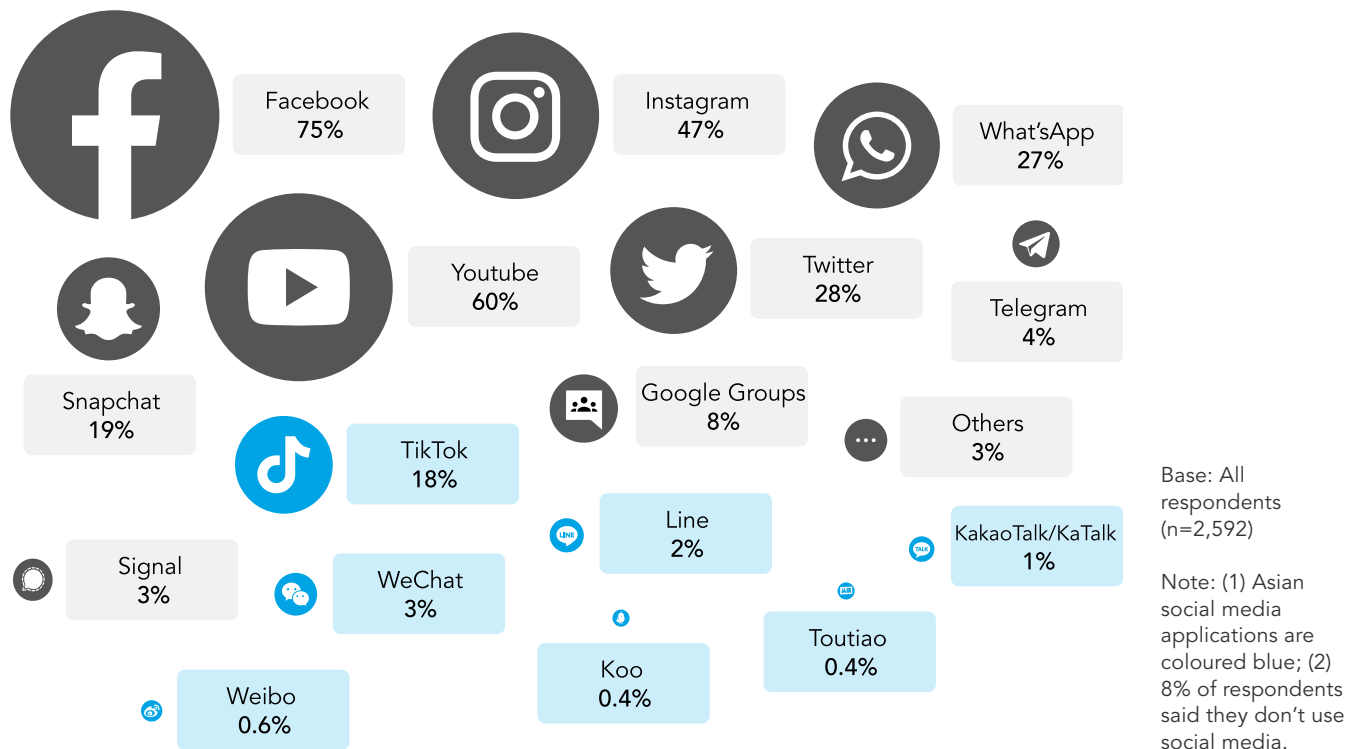
Arguably, Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix have made it easier for Asian popular culture to reach a broader audience. Furthermore, such Internet-based media are generally more appealing to the tech-savvy younger generations than their older counterparts.

While American platforms Facebook and YouTube top the list of social media applications used by Canadians today, Asian platforms such as TikTok also have a fair number of users, particularly among Gen Z.

FIGURE 18

Facebook and YouTube are some of the most used social media applications by Canadians today

Q: What are some of the social media applications that you are currently using? Please select all that apply.



Asia-Based Social Media Applications

The younger generations (below 54) and Canadians of Asian descent are more likely to use a diverse set of social media applications, including Asian applications such as Korea’s KakaoTalk or KaTalk, Japan’s Line, and China’s WeChat and Weibo, compared to other Canadians.

“Newsfeeds and social media sources” emerged among the top five sources across all generations, except for Baby Boomers, underscoring the importance of social media platforms as a source of information for three Canadian generations.

While Facebook is the most popular social media platform with 75% of Canadians (Figure 18), it is interesting to note that 18% of Canadians say they use TikTok, a video-focused social networking service by a Beijing-based company. A majority of the respondents who are currently using the application are Gen Z and Millennials (Table 4).

TABLE 4

Top Seven Social Media Platforms by Generations

Q: What are some of the social media applications that you are currently using? Please select all that apply.

Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-34)	Gen X (35-54)	Baby Boomers (55 +)
Instagram (80%)	Facebook (81%)	Facebook (80%)	Facebook (70%)
YouTube (73%)	Instagram (69%)	YouTube (62%)	YouTube (54%)
Facebook (71%)	YouTube (64%)	Instagram (51%)	Instagram (24%)
Snapchat (60%)	Snapchat (38%)	Twitter (33%)	Twitter (22%)
TikTok (46%)	WhatsApp (35%)	WhatsApp (32%)	WhatsApp (17%)
Twitter (36%)	TikTok (33%)	TikTok (17%)	Google Groups (9%)
WhatsApp (30%)	Twitter (26%)	Snapchat (14%)	TikTok (6%)
I don't use social media (2%)	I don't use social media (2%)	I don't use social media (5%)	I don't use social media (14%)

Base: 18 to 24 years (n=282); 25 to 34 years (n=425); 35 to 54 years (n=884); 55+ (n=1002); All respondents (n=2,592)

Global media consumption across myriad international delivery and sharing platforms is on the rise among Canadians, especially young Canadians. This will be an area to watch, and more research will be required, as Canada looks to build policies to address data security and disinformation in the years ahead.

Barriers to Information Access

Most Canadians find “language barrier” to be a significant challenge to accessing information about Asian countries or Asia.

APF Canada’s 2021 NOP indicates that a majority of Canadians want to learn more about Asia, and many are dependent on media sources such as news, popular culture, and social media to gain more knowledge. As seen in Figure 19, language was identified as a key challenge by 41% of Canadians, more than information credibility (28%), availability (21%), and access (18%). “Language barrier” is a key challenge across all generations. For Baby Boomers, 31% also indicate that they don’t look for more information about Asia or Asians. It marks a significant departure from the challenges expressed by Gen Z and Millennials.

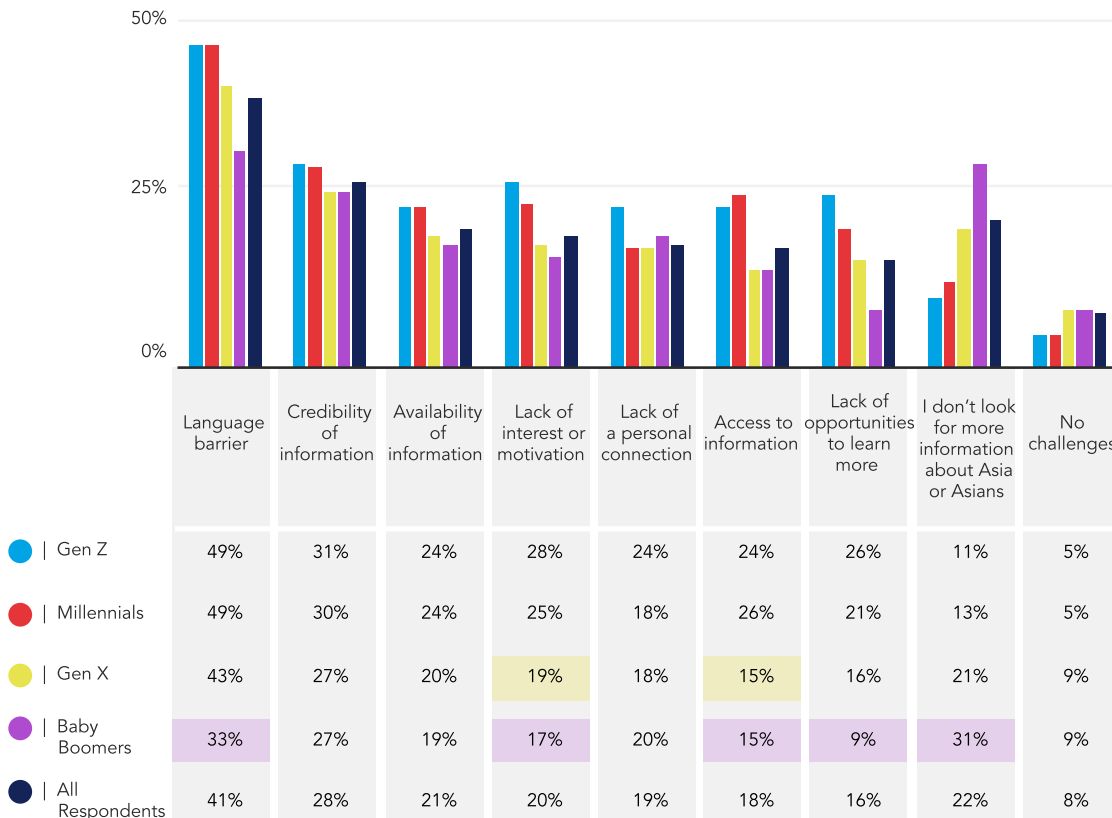
Barriers for Canadians of Asian and Non-Asian Descent

Language barrier and credibility of information are key challenges for at least three out of 10 Canadians of Asian descent. Of note, 21% also cite “lack of interest” and 15% said “lack of a personal connection.” Among Canadians who did not identify as a person of Asian heritage, one in four say they “don’t look for more information about Asia or Asians.”

FIGURE 19

Challenges in accessing more information about Asia or Asians

Q: What are the key challenges you face when looking for more information about Asian countries or Asians? Please select all that apply.



Base: 18 to 24 years (n=282); 25 to 34 years (n=425); 35 to 54 years (n=884); 55+ (n=1002); All respondents (n=2,592)

Note: Generations that have a statistically significant difference in opinion from other generations have been highlighted.

Effective Methods to Build Awareness About Asia

Community engagement, increased emphasis on teaching about Asia in the education system, and more news media coverage were identified as the top three most effective methods to build Canadians' awareness about Asian countries or Asians.

TABLE 5

Generational Differences on Effective Methods to Build Awareness About Asia/Asians

Q: In your opinion, what are some of the most effective methods that can help build Canadian awareness about Asian countries or Asians? Please select your TOP THREE methods.

Methods to build awareness about Asia	All Respondents	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-34)	Gen X (35-54)	Baby Boomers (55 +)
Engage in more community/social events and activities celebrating different Asian cultures	47%	43%	46%	45%	52%
Increase emphasis on teaching about Asia in the education system (e.g. history, culture, politics, economics)	46%	44%	44%	41%	55%
More news media coverage of current affairs in Asia	30%	22%	23%	28%	39%
Have Asian languages as optional foreign languages course at school	29%	36%	33%	32%	20%
More media coverage of Asian history, culture, and people	27%	22%	22%	24%	35%
Increase access to exchange programs as a student	27%	37%	28%	26%	22%

Methods to build awareness about Asia	All Respondents	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-34)	Gen X (35-54)	Baby Boomers (55 +)
Increase access to exchange programs as working professionals	21%	22%	25%	26%	14%
Increase first-hand experiences of Asian culture through music, art and literature (e.g. live music by a K-pop band; Asian art exhibition)	19%	22%	26%	20%	13%
Exposure to social media channels about Asian culture, people, politics, etc.	13%	14%	13%	13%	13%

Base: 18 to 24 (n=191); 25 to 34 (n=292); 35 to 54 (n=515); 55+ (470); All respondents (n=1,468)

Note: (1) This question was asked to respondents who said they were “very” or “somewhat” interested to learn more about Asia in Section 2. (2) Generations that have a statistically significant difference in opinion from other generations have been highlighted.

More than half of Canadians surveyed expressed an interest in learning more about Asia, highlighting the need to build effective methods of disseminating information and building awareness, particularly given identified challenges, such as language. The respondents who expressed an interest in learning more about Asia were asked for their opinions on the best methods to enable Canadians to build awareness about Asian countries and Asians.

As seen in *Table 5*, there are differences between generations, particularly Baby Boomers, who are more likely to recommend changes such as increasing emphasis on teaching about Asia, community engagement, and media coverage of Asian current affairs and history than the younger generations. On the other side, the younger generations, especially Gen Z, are more likely to recommend increasing applied activities such as increasing access to student exchange programs, making Asian languages optional foreign languages in schools, and increasing first-hand experiences of Asian culture.

Effective Awareness-building Methods for Canadians of Asian and Non-Asian Descent

Among Canadians of Asian descent, 53% believe more community engagement and participation in diverse cultural activities can help build Canadians’ awareness about Asia compared to 45% of Canadians who don’t identify as a person of Asian heritage. Curiously, Canadians of Asian descent are less likely to recommend increased emphasis on teaching about Asia but more likely to encourage making Asian languages optional in schools, compared to other Canadians.

Canadian Perspectives on Education, Travel, and Social Network

Most Canadians feel they have had insufficient exposure to Asia in their high-school education.

Three out of 10 Canadians feel that they had “no exposure” to Asia in their high-school education (Figure 20). That feeling is consistent across almost all generations except for Baby Boomers, among whom 40% expressed they had “no exposure.” Arguably, with growing diversity in Canadian society and increasing globalization, the education system is adapting to incorporate more knowledge about global cultures. However, a majority of Gen Z also indicate they had “too little” exposure to Asia in their high-school education – an important consideration as Canada prepares the future generation for the changing global dynamic and shifting Canadian demographics.

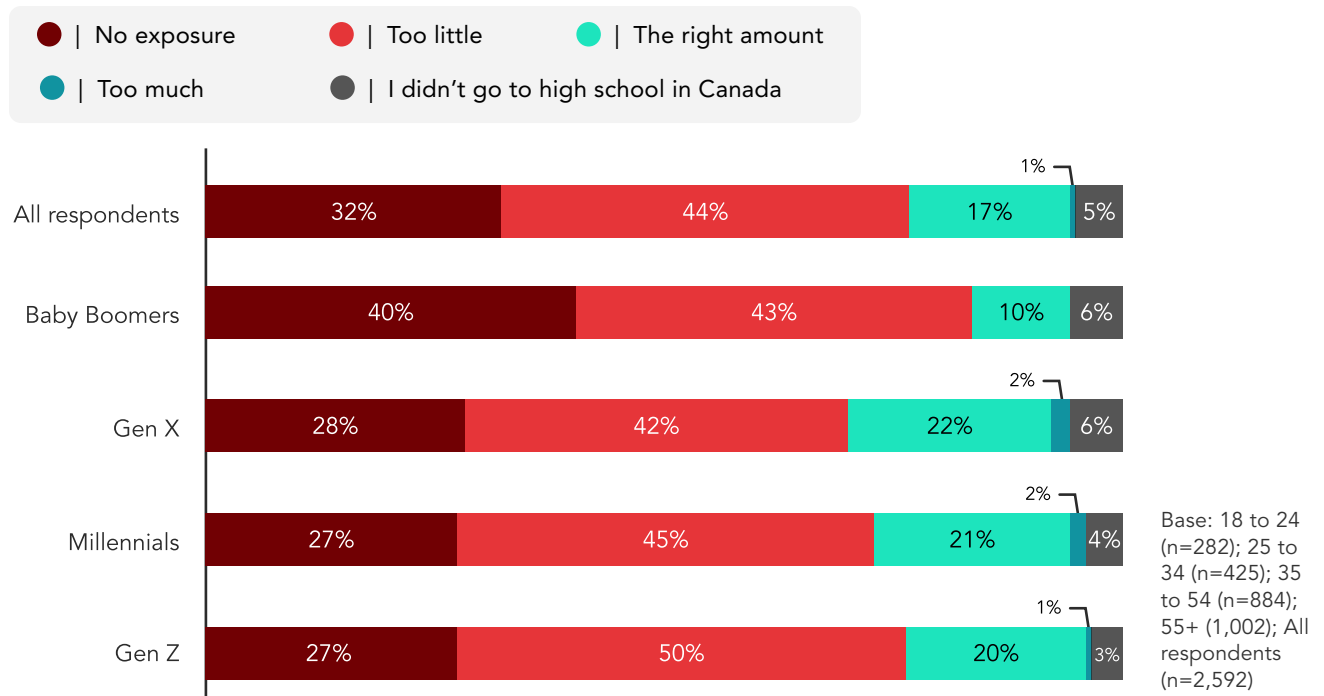
Canadians of Asian Descent Say Not Enough Exposure to Asia in Education

A vast majority of Canadians of Asian descent (80%) feel that their Canadian high school education was insufficient in terms of exposure to Asia. Meanwhile, 30% of Canadians of non-Asian descent feel their high school education provided the right amount of exposure to Asia.

FIGURE 20

All generations believe they have had none to very little exposure to Asia in their high school education

Q: When thinking about your high school education in Canada, how much exposure would you say you had to Asia (e.g. history, culture, geography, language, politics, etc.)?

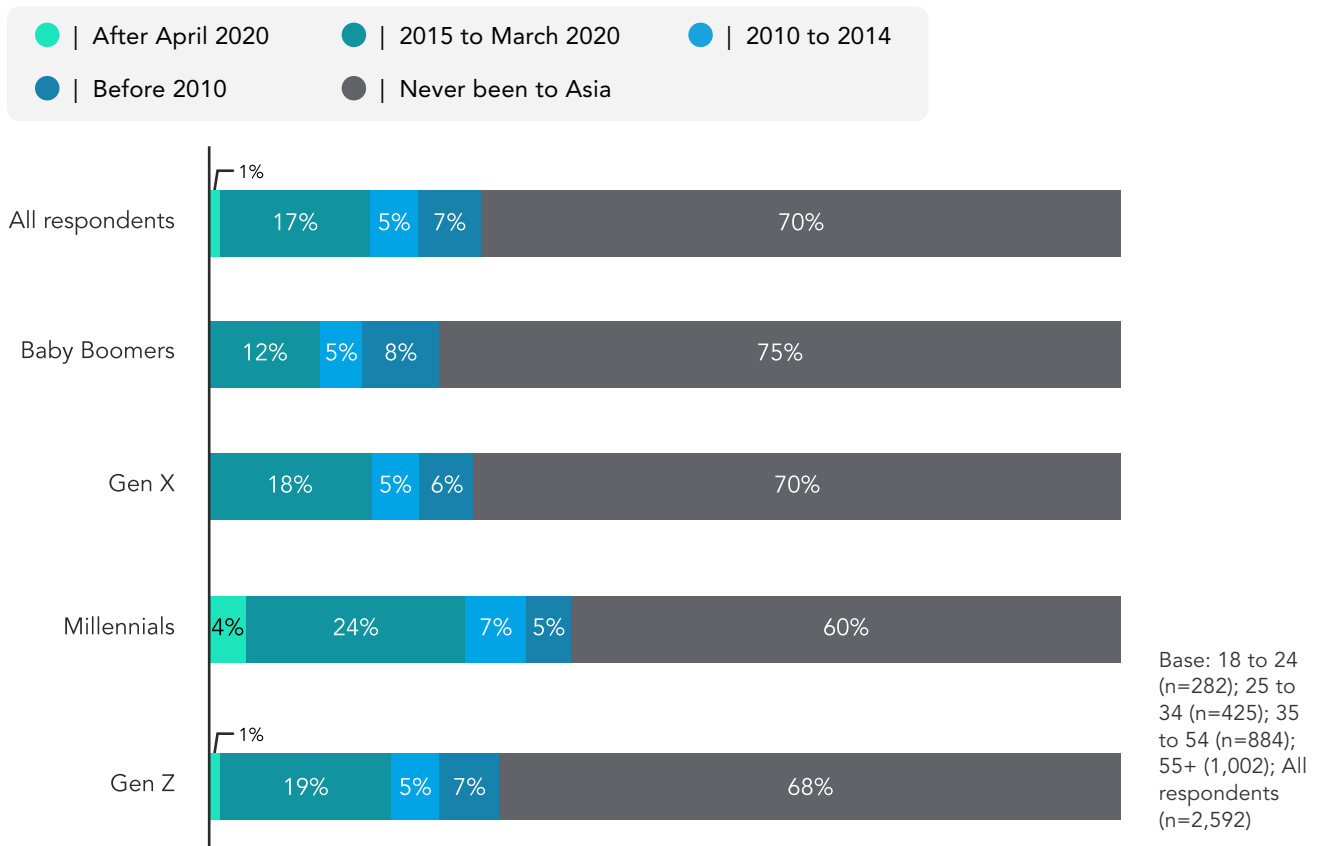


Two out of five Millennials have travelled to Asia, mostly for tourism and visiting family or friends

FIGURE 21

Millennials have travelled the most to Asia compared to other generations

Q: When was the last time you visited an Asian country?



Travel is another way to build awareness and knowledge about diverse cultures and people. A vast majority of Canadians have never been to Asia (Figure 21). Among the 30% who have been to Asia, most travelled in the past decade. Across generations, Millennials are the most well-travelled, with 4% travelling to Asia since Canada implemented travel restrictions to curb the impacts of COVID-19 in March 2020. Most Canadians travelled to Asia for tourism (62%), but 42% also went to visit family or friends, especially Gen Z, underlining Canada-Asia diasporic connections (Table 6).

Three out of 10 Canadians plan on travelling to Asia in the near future, and one-third of them want to visit Japan.

TABLE 6

Generational Differences in Reasons for Travelling to Asia

Q: Please choose [all that apply] among the following reasons for travelling to Asia. I travelled to Asia for...

Reasons for travelling to Asia	All Respondents	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-34)	Gen X (35-54)	Baby Boomers (55 +)
Tourism	62%	45%	65%	63%	65%
Visiting family/friends	42%	65%	46%	47%	28%
I live or lived in Asia	15%	20%	20%	20%	7%
Visiting place of birth	13%	15%	15%	17%	6%
Work	12%	1%	12%	10%	19%
Education	4%	6%	5%	3%	2%
Volunteer work	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Other	3%	1%	1%	3%	4%

Base: 18 to 24 (n=89); 25 to 34 (n=170); 35 to 54 (n=263); 55+ (n=253); All respondents (n=775)

Note: This question was asked to respondents who said they have travelled to Asia.

Gen Z socializes more regularly with Asians or Canadians of Asian descent compared to Baby Boomers.

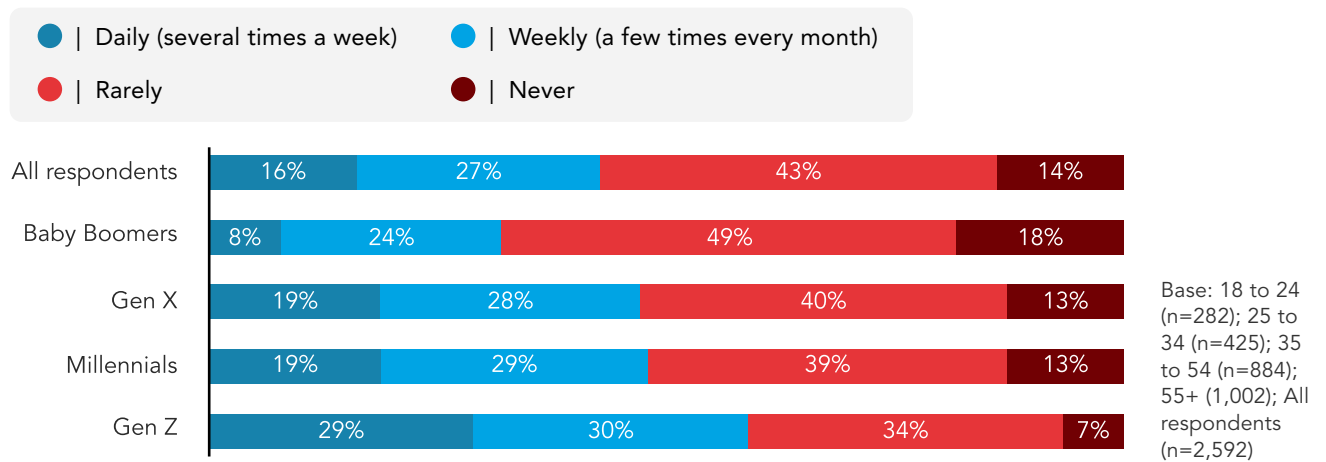
Most Canadians (57%) “rarely” or “never” socialize with Asians or Canadians of Asian descent (Figure 22). However, there are significant differences by generation, as 29% of Gen Z indicate they have daily interactions with Asians or Canadians of Asian descent, compared to 19% of Millennials and Gen X, and 8% of Baby Boomers. It is possible that the growing cultural diversity

in Canada due to a steady flow of newcomers from Asia and elsewhere over the past decade has led to increased diversification of social networks for the younger generations more than the older generations.

FIGURE 22

Generational differences in socialization with Canadians of Asian descent or Asians

Q: Aside from the limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, how often would you say you normally socialize with people from Asia or those who identify as Canadians of Asian descent/heritage (i.e. family, friends, peers, colleagues, neighbours, etc.)?





Section 4:

Perspectives on Asian Languages

KEY POINTS:

- + About one in five Canadian respondents mention one of 22 different Asian languages as their top choice of language to learn.
- + Gen Z and Millennials have more conversational fluency in Asian languages compared to older generations.
- + Cantonese and Mandarin are the top two Asian languages that Canadians can speak fluently, followed by Hindi.
- + Baby Boomers are the least likely to be encouraged to learn an Asian language.

Learning a New Language

Excluding English and French, one in five Canadians would choose to learn an Asian language if available for free.

If a language course was available and free, 95% of Canadians would like to learn a new language aside from Canada's official languages, and 47% chose Spanish (see *Figure 23*). Interestingly, 12% of Canadians chose either Mandarin, Cantonese, or mention 'Chinese' among their choices. Altogether, the respondents made 68 distinct choices when asked about languages, and 22% of Canadians mentioned an Asian language as their top choice (see box for all the language choices).

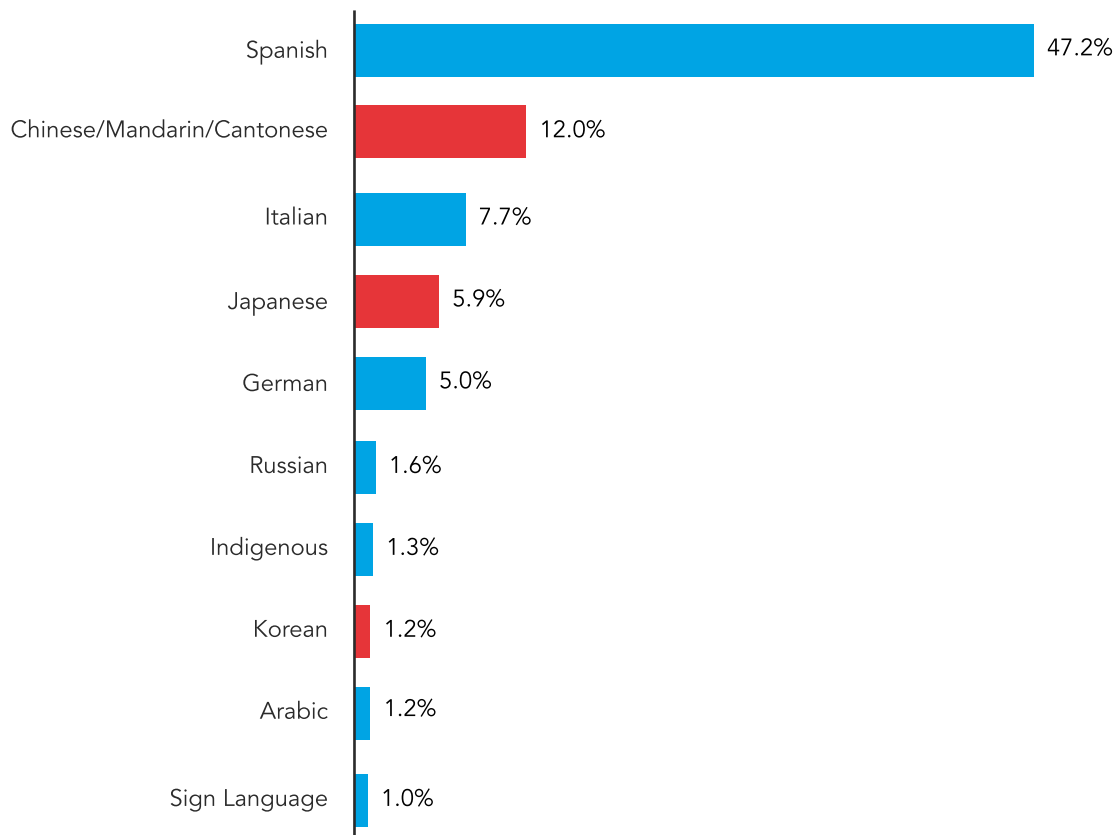
Canadians would like to learn these Asian Languages

Japanese, Mandarin, Chinese, Korean, Hindi, Tagalog, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Tamil, Farsi, Sinhala, East Indian, Thai, Urdu, Assamese, Bahasa, Bengali, Malay, Sanskrit, Cebuano, Taiwanese

FIGURE 23

Asian languages feature among Canadians top 10 choices of languages to learn

Q: Excluding Canada's official languages (English and French) what language would you most like to learn, assuming it was available and free?



Base: All respondents (n=2,592)

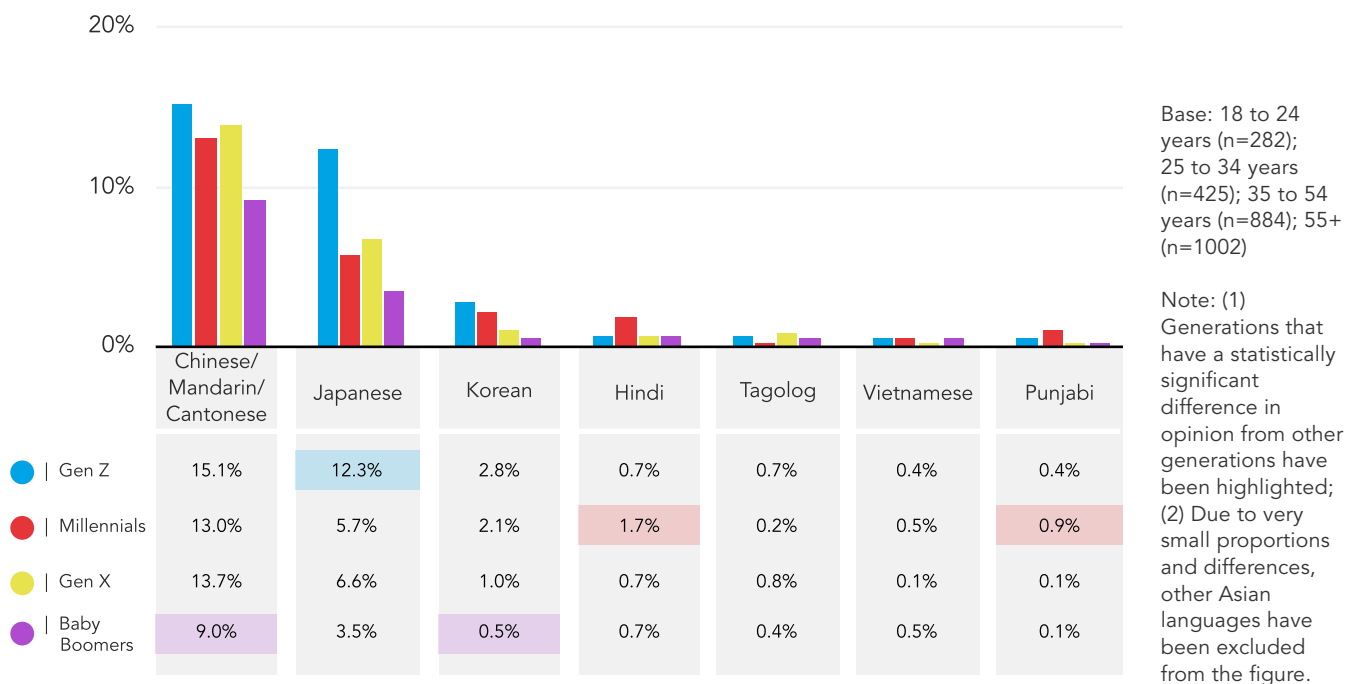
Note: (1) 3.8% of the respondents said "none"; (2) Combined into one category, 7.1% of respondents mention Mandarin, 3.6% mention Chinese, and 1.3% mentioned Cantonese; (3) Indigenous category includes respondents who specifically mentioned languages such as Ojibwe, Cree, Innu, Michif, Mohawk, Inuktitut, Mi'kmaq, among others.

Even across generations, Spanish remains the top choice. However, where 55% of Baby Boomers want to learn Spanish, only 34% of Gen Z do. While every other generation's top-three language choices are Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese), and Italian, for Gen Z, the choices are Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese), and Japanese. As seen in *Figure 24*, at least 15% of Gen Z respondents would like to learn Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese) and 12% Japanese, more so than any other generation. Baby Boomers consistently show lower interest in Asian languages compared to other generations, and only 16% want to learn an Asian language, which is significantly lower than Gen X (24%), Millennials (26%), and Gen Z (33%).

FIGURE 24

Among Asian languages, Gen Z is keen on learning Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese

Q: Excluding Canada's official languages (English and French) what language would you most like to learn, assuming it was available and free?



Asian Language Fluency

Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to have conversational fluency in an Asian language compared to older generations.

In our 2021 NOP, 13% of Canadians say they can speak at least one Asian language fluently (*Figure 25*). In total, respondents with conversational fluency mentioned 22 different Asian

languages, with some respondents indicating they know multiple languages. Similar to the trend in respondents' interest to learn new Asian languages, the younger generations are more likely to have conversational fluency in an Asian language than Baby Boomers, especially Gen Z and Millennials. In the case of languages such as Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, and Bengali, there are more Millennials than Gen Z who can speak the languages fluently.

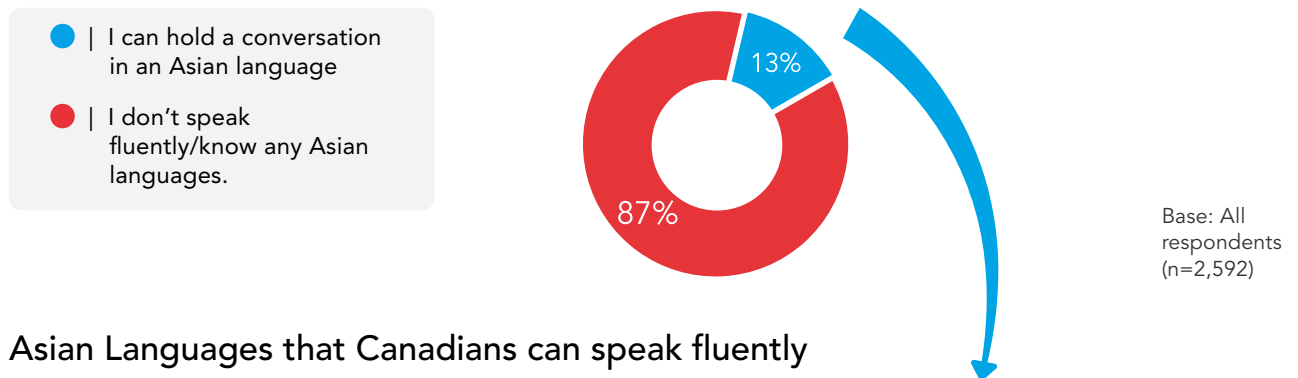
Asian Language and Identity

Among Canadians who can speak an Asian language, 83% identify as a Canadian of Asian descent. Meanwhile, among Canadians of non-Asian descent, Mandarin tops the list of spoken Asian languages, followed by Hindi, Punjabi, and Japanese.

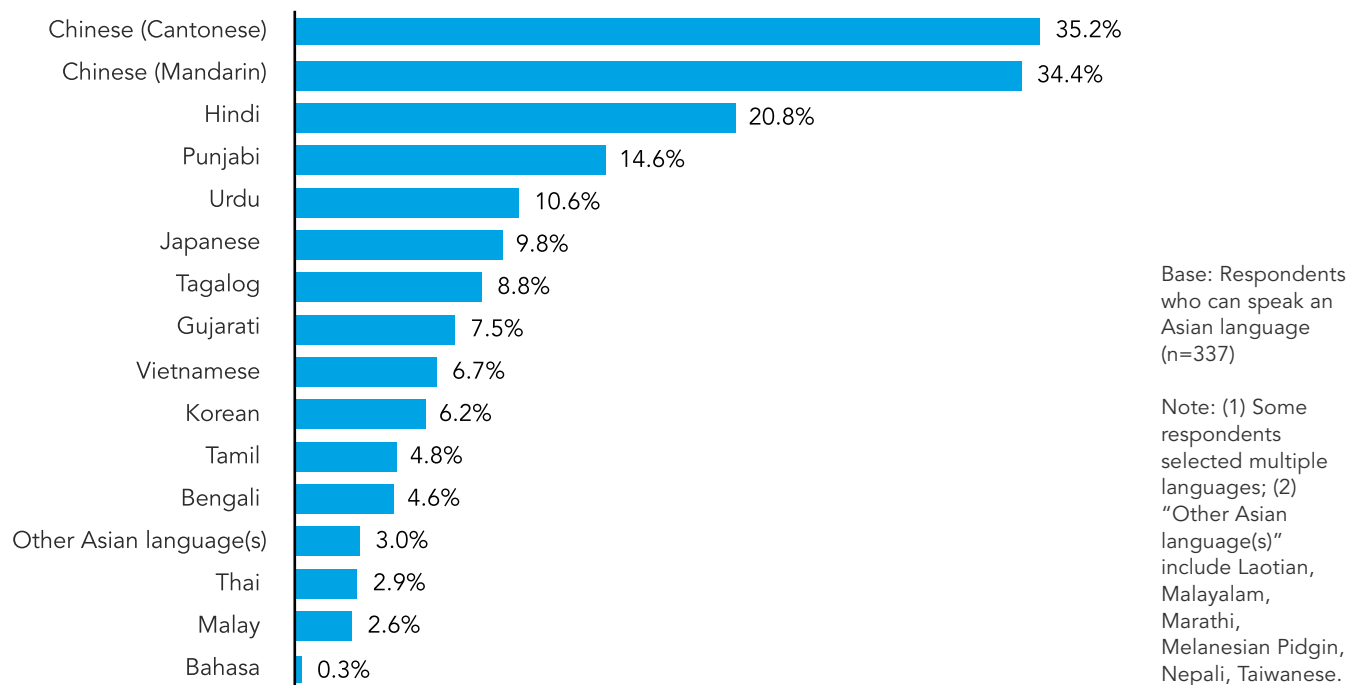
FIGURE 25

13% of Canadians can fluently converse in at least one Asian language

Q: Can you hold a conversation in any of the following Asian languages? Please select all that apply.



Asian Languages that Canadians can speak fluently



Encouraging Learning of an Asian Language

Across all generations, travel and tourism is the main factor that would encourage Canadians to learn an Asian language.

Almost three in 10 Canadians consider a foreign language course for Asian languages to be one of the most effective methods to build awareness about Asia or Asians, particularly the younger generation. Meanwhile, 22% of Canadians would choose to learn an Asian language if a course was available and free. We asked Canadians what factors would further encourage them to learn an Asian language. For most Canadians, tourism is the primary reason. While the factors that would encourage people to learn a new language remain consistent across generations, the lack of interest varies – 37% of Baby Boomers say nothing would encourage them to learn an Asian language compared to only 7% of Gen Z.

TABLE 7

Factors to Encourage Learning an Asian Language, by Generations

Q: What factors would encourage you to learn an Asian language? Please select all that apply.

Factors to encourage learning an Asian language	All Respondents	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-34)	Gen X (35-54)	Baby Boomers (55 +)
If visiting an Asian country (tourism)	42%	54%	48%	43%	34%
If working/studying in an Asian country	31%	52%	43%	32%	20%
Family member(s) speaks the language	29%	46%	41%	28%	20%
Free class/course available to all	33%	43%	40%	36%	24%
If required by work	25%	40%	36%	27%	15%
An opportunity for professional advancement or development	21%	40%	34%	23%	8%
I like learning languages (personal development)	23%	39%	31%	23%	15%
Other reason	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%
Nothing would encourage me to learn an Asian language	24%	7%	10%	20%	37%

Base: 18 to 24 years (n=282); 25 to 34 years (n=425); 35 to 54 years (n=884); 55+ (n=1002); All Respondents (n=2,592)

Note: Generations that have a statistically significant difference in opinion from other generations have been highlighted.

Section 5:

Impact of Asia on Canada

KEY POINTS:

- + Most Canadians believe stability and security issues and environmental issues in Asia can have a negative impact on Canada's future.
- + Younger generations are significantly more positive in their perception of Asia's impact on Canada than Baby Boomers.
- + While most Canadians across all generations agree on the importance of Canada-Asia collaborations in certain areas, there are generational divides on areas related to public health. Gen Z and Millennials prioritize the need for improving public health-care systems, while Baby Boomers emphasize the need for developing an international public health emergency preparedness system.
- + Finally, Gen Z is more likely to consider it important for Canadians to build Asia Competency in areas such as Asian society, culture, and etiquette for Canada's future economic and social growth, compared to older generations.

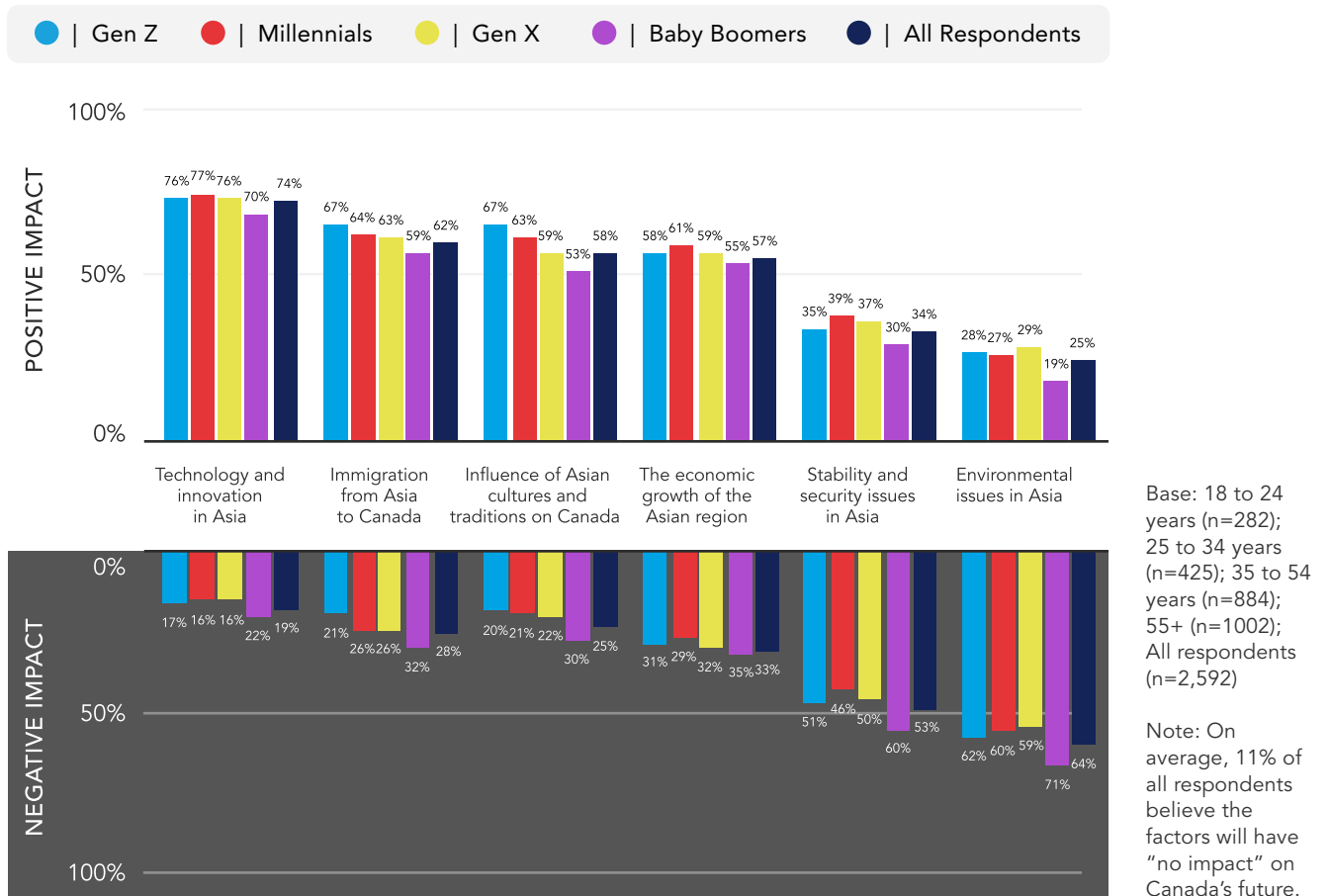
Perceived Impact of Asia on Canada's Future

A majority of Canadians believe that technology and innovation in Asia, immigration from Asia to Canada, influence of Asian culture and traditions on Canada, and the economic growth of Asia will have a positive impact on Canada in the next two decades.

FIGURE 26

Younger generations are generally more positive about Asia's impacts on Canada's near future

Q: What kind of impact do you think each of the following factors will have on Canada's future in the next 10–20 years?



Canadian perceptions of various factors related to Asia that can impact Canada's future varies by generations. Our polling data suggests that Baby Boomers are significantly more negative in their perceptions compared to the younger generations (Figure 26). Even for factors such as "stability and security issues" and "environmental issues" in Asia, where all generations have a more negative perception, Baby Boomers' negative perceptions stand out.

In line with results from past NOPs, in 2021 we find that Canadians across all generations perceive a positive impact of Asians migrating to Canada and in turn the influence of Asian cultures and traditions on Canada. Furthermore, 17% of the respondents indicate that Asian cultures and traditions will have “no impact” on Canada’s future, compared to 12% or less Canadians who perceive the other factors (technology and innovation, economic growth, etc.) will have “no impact.”

While the perception of Asia’s importance to Canada is evident from Canadians’ willingness to learn more about the region and the generally positive perception of the impact of Asian development, influence, and immigration on Canada’s future, it is also important to understand how Canada-Asia relations can be strengthened, and in what areas.

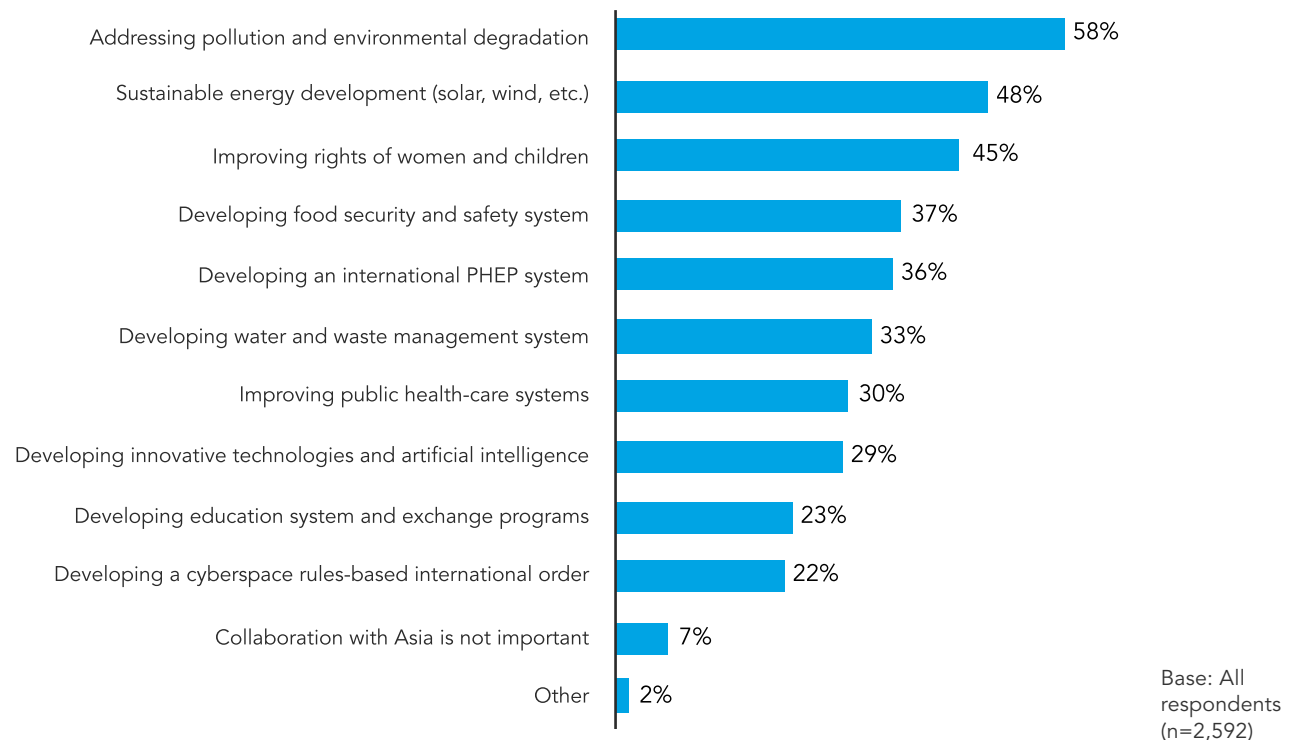
Canada-Asia Collaboration

Collaborations with Asia on sustainable development and environment and pollution management are of strategic importance for Canada.

FIGURE 27

Strategically important areas for Canada-Asia collaboration

Q: When thinking about the ways Canada can collaborate with Asian countries/partners, what areas do you think are the most strategically important for Canada? Please select up to five areas from the following list.



In our 2021 NOP, Canadians were specifically asked about areas of Canada-Asia collaboration that are of strategic importance for Canada. As shown in *Figure 27*, addressing pollution, sustainable energy development, and inclusive development (improve women and children’s rights) are perceived as the most strategically important areas for collaboration, followed by developing food security and safety systems. Across generations, these four areas remain consistently among the top five. Interestingly, while slightly more respondents in the younger generations (Gen Z and Millennials) feel “improving public health-care systems” should be a priority area of collaboration, Baby Boomers place more emphasis on “developing an international public health crisis management and preparedness system” (*Table 8*).

TABLE 8

Generational Differences on Strategically Important Areas for Canada-Asia Collaboration

Q: When thinking about the ways Canada can collaborate with Asian countries/partners, what areas do you think are the most strategically important for Canada? Please select up to five areas from the following list.

Collaborative Areas	All Respondents	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-34)	Gen X (35-54)	Baby Boomers (55 +)
Addressing pollution and environmental degradation	58%	58%	53%	51%	66%
Sustainable energy development (solar, wind, etc.)	48%	49%	50%	46%	50%
Improving rights of women and children	45%	44%	37%	40%	53%
Developing food security and safety system	37%	34%	34%	36%	41%
Developing an international PHEP system	36%	33%	30%	32%	43%
Developing water and waste management system	33%	32%	31%	31%	36%
Improving public health-care systems	30%	35%	33%	28%	30%
Developing innovative technologies and artificial intelligence	29%	28%	27%	32%	27%

Collaborative Areas	All Respondents	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-34)	Gen X (35-54)	Baby Boomers (55 +)
Developing education system and exchange programs	23%	31%	27%	22%	20%
Developing a cyberspace rules-based international order	22%	15%	17%	23%	26%
Collaboration with Asia is not important	7%	3%	7%	8%	7%
Other	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%

Base: 18 to 24 years (n=282); 25 to 34 years (n=425); 35 to 54 years (n=884); 55+ (n=1002)

Note: The factors that are different across generations and cited in the report's text have been highlighted in this table

Importance of Asia Competency

Most Canadians feel competency about Asian society, culture, and protocols will be important for Canada's future.

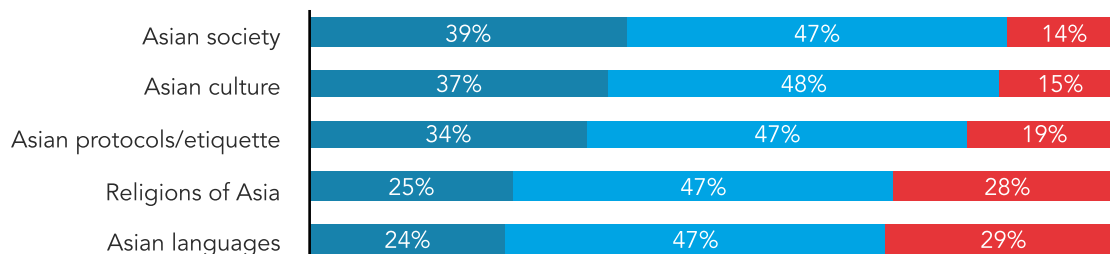
Although Asian language courses at schools are considered an effective method of building awareness about Asia and Asians by only three out of 10 Canadians, about two-thirds of Canadians think competency in Asian languages will be important for Canada's future economic growth and social diversity (Figure 28).

FIGURE 28

Canadians believe building competency about Asian society, culture, protocols are pertinent to Canada's future economic growth and social diversity

Q: Thinking about Canada's future economic growth and social diversity, how important do you think it is for Canadians to build competency about Asia in the following areas?

● | Important/Very important ● | Somewhat important ● | Not at all important



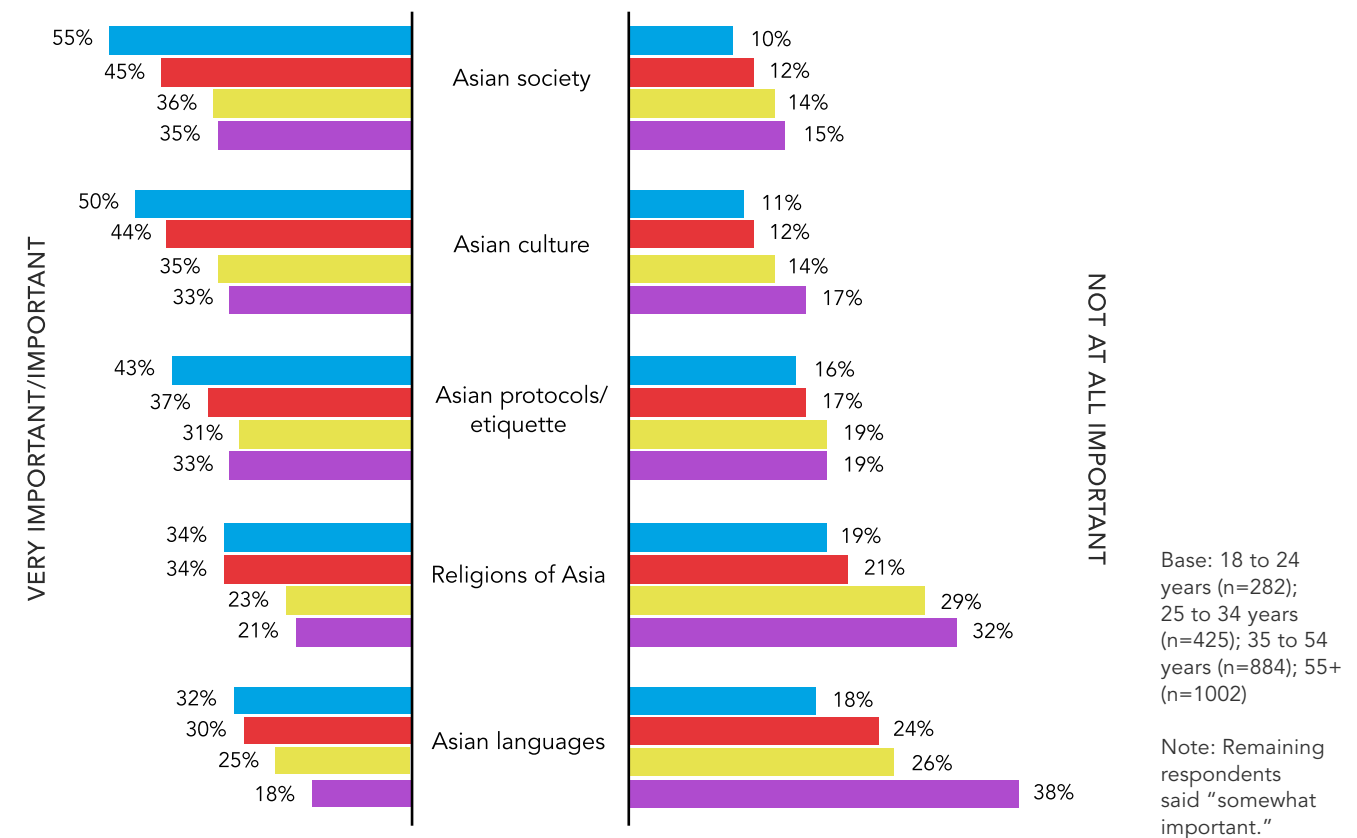
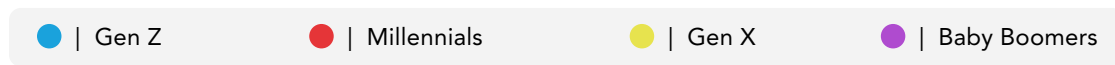
Base: All respondents (n=2,592)

When reviewing the generational divide, we find that 38% of Baby Boomers believe “Asian languages” is not an important area compared to about one-quarter or less of the other generations (Figure 29). Consistent with findings in previous sections of this poll, we notice that Baby Boomers are less likely to know an Asian language, be encouraged to learn an Asian language, or find it an effective method of building awareness about Asia or Asians. As a result, they are also less likely to consider language an important area for competency building for Canada’s future growth and development.

FIGURE 29

Compared to older generations, Gen Z is more likely to find almost every Asia competency factor important or very important for Canada’s future

Q: Thinking about Canada’s future economic growth and social diversity, how important do you think it is for Canadians to build competency about Asia in the following areas?



Across all generations, more than four in five Canadians think it is at least somewhat important to build competency in the areas of Asian society, Asian culture, and Asian protocols/etiquette.

Conclusion

With the Asia Pacific's rapid economic growth, burgeoning young, middle-class population, and increasing political importance, countries worldwide are doubling down on their efforts to solidify their economic and political relations with the region. Canada is moving in the same direction and must compete with other countries for market share, attract students and high-skilled talent, and secure its seat in the region's multilateral institutions and forums. Meanwhile, the Canadian population continues to grow, and new immigrants, primarily from Asia, accounted for more than three-quarters of the country's total population growth from 2016 to 2020, which arguably impacts Canadians' perceptions of Asia and Asians and Canada's thinking on how to better engage with the economies comprising the world's most dynamic region.

In the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's *2021 National Opinion Poll: Canada's Generational Perspectives on Asia*, we find that 29% Gen Z and 21% of Millennials identify as Canadians of Asian descent, similar to the most recent population census. Against this backdrop, our NOP results show that China – Canada's leading trade partner in Asia and boasting the largest Asian diaspora in Canada – remains top-of-mind for Canadians when thinking about Asia. Compared with previous NOPs, we now see a growing share of Canadians thinking about Japan and India when considering Asia, indicating a shift in awareness about the region. Interestingly, despite heightened tensions in the bilateral relationship exacerbated by the Meng Wanzhou affair and the arbitrary detention of Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig in China, we also find that Canadians' feelings toward China recovered in 2021 compared to a decade-low in 2020, reaching a near-neutral average feeling of 4.5 out of 10.

As one of APF Canada's cross-cutting research themes is education and Asia competency, we were also interested to poll Canadians, particularly young Canadians, on these topics. We find in 2021 that most Canadians perceive the positive implications of immigration from Asia on Canada's future, as well as the positive impacts of Asian technology and innovation, economic growth, and cultural influence on Canada. Coupled with Canadians' perceptions that building competency about Asia in the areas of society, culture, protocols, and etiquette is of significant importance to Canada's future economic growth and social diversity, this NOP highlights the need for building a framework that helps support Canadians who are interested in learning more about Asia.

In our 2021 poll, we also find that given an opportunity, 57% of Canadians would like to learn more about Asia and currently report limited knowledge about the region. While Canadians top sources of information about Asia vary by age, from mainstream news to popular culture,

education is not among the top sources. Indeed, Canadians of all ages recognize a lack of exposure to Asia during their high-school education, and they identify an increased emphasis on teaching about Asia as one of the most effective methods to build awareness about Asia.

Importantly, this NOP explores generational differences in Canadians' opinions about Asia to better inform policies and programs aimed at fostering engagement with the region. Younger generations, particularly Millennials, share warmer feelings toward Asian economies. Canada's younger generations also have more interest in learning about Asia, particularly Asian languages and culture. Compared to older generations, they are also more fluent in Asian languages and have a more positive perspective about Asia's impact on Canada's future.

Finally, Canadians across all generations agree on the importance of Canada-Asia collaboration, particularly in the areas of addressing pollution and environmental degradation, sustainable energy development, and improving rights of women and children, all significant factors for Canada's inclusive foreign policy goals and development work.

Methodology

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's research team designed the survey instrument to gauge Canadians' awareness, opinions, and perspectives about the Asia Pacific. The research team built the survey items after careful and extensive research about Canada-Asia relations and ongoing efforts to build Asia competency. The team also consulted previous polls conducted by APF Canada and other polling firms and think-tanks such as Asia New Zealand Foundation, Environics Institute, Lowy Institute, and Pew Research Centre, among others.

APF Canada commissioned Leger to survey 2,592 Canadian adults (permanent residents and citizens 18 years and older). The survey was conducted from September 9 to September 20, 2021, using Leger's online research panel, LEO. The LEO panel includes more than 460,000 Canadian adults. A random stratified sample for this study was drawn from the panel database. All data were collected online. The average completion time for the survey was 22 minutes. To ensure the sample's representativeness, Leger has statistically weighted the results according to Canada's current census data on age, gender, and region. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size would be +/- 1.93%, 19 times out of 20. The results presented in this study comply with the public opinion research standards and disclosure requirements of CRIC (the Canadian Research and Insights Council) and the global European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR) network. Leger is a founding member of CRIC and is actively involved in raising quality standards in the survey industry. President Jean-Marc Leger is a member of the CRIC's Board of Directors and the Canadian representative of ESOMAR.

Statistically significant: Throughout the report, relations between variables are mentioned as statistically significant, or the difference between groups is statistically significant. In simple terms, statistical significance means that a relationship between two or more variables is most likely caused by something other than chance or sampling.

| Acknowledgements

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