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THE BENEFITS BROUGHT BY SPACE - GENERAL PUBLIC VERSUS SPACE AGENCIES
PERSPECTIVES

Abstract

Space agencies and governments have been long striving to find justification for the budgets allocated to non-commercial space missions. The most frequent justifications were scientific discoveries, technological development as well as national prestige. The current study aims to have a different look at the question “Which are the benefits brought by Space?” by investigating/sampling/interrogating the public opinion and identifying the perception and view of the generation that will be forming the bulk of the tax paying citizens for the immediate future and will be actively financing any future missions. The study focuses on the answers provided to an online survey by an international sample of population. The target individuals are in the age range of 25-40 and are users of social networks. They are working and have a higher education degree, but they are not directly involved with the space sector. The survey aims to establish whether the promotional activities of ESA, NASA and other space agencies are aligned with the perceived benefits of this sample population. Is space contributing to what the target people consider important? What could be done to improve/change this perception? How did the public perception evolve? Which are the biggest problems humanity is confronted with today according the sample population? Could Space help addressing these major problems? The paper will firstly present the statistical analysis of the sample answers and the conclusions that can be drawn from them. In a second step it will compare the perceptions and expectations of the public in regards to space with the current space agencies strategies and identify the gaps and discontinuities.