

Good Housekeeping debunks the SA millennial mom with the GH Motherhood Survey

By [Maroefah Smith](#)

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Good Housekeeping recently set out to debunk the South African millennial parent.

Fed up with only finding research on this particular market segment – the parenting magazine’s core audience, its median age is 34 – in European and American contexts, *Good Housekeeping* launched the GH Motherhood Survey 2019.

The survey comprised 90+ questions and took 20 to 30 minutes to complete – 52% of respondents were millennial parents and 47% were Gen X+ parents.

Good Housekeeping editor Sally Emery lets us in on what the survey uncovered, how the survey demystifies the millennial parent and three things that every marketer should know about a millennial parent.

▣ According to the survey, what differentiates a millennial parent from a Gen X parent in South Africa?

The most striking difference is the role social media plays in millennial mothers’ (MMs) lives – particularly when it comes to sharing product and brand discoveries with her friends. At least 77% of MMs spend two hours or more on social media per day, with 83% of MMs sharing product and brand discoveries with followers and friends on social media, versus just 42% of Gen X+ mothers.



Sally Emery. Image supplied.



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And 63% of MMs recommend a product or service via social media once a month or more. Plus, she window-shops online before going in-store; 70% of MMs do research online before buying items.

“ If brands can manage to win a millennial mom’s stamp of approval, they’ll go on and spread the message for them ”

▣ What, to you, is the most interesting finding in this study?

Good Housekeeping’s core audience is millennial moms, so what was particularly interesting for me was the confirmation this survey gave me with regards to why this woman engages so enthusiastically with GH across all channels – print, digital and events.

The survey highlighted how desperate this woman is for solutions around running and managing her home life. *Good*

Housekeeping speaks to this woman's core need, and the survey data gives us the opportunity to highlight this to brands too.



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At least 55% of MMs work full-time, versus just 6% of Gen X+ mothers. Time is her most precious commodity: she is working, raising children and managing her home.

“ Brands need to understand that this woman really needs information and solutions that will make her life easier. ”

The survey highlighted this core need and provided the data and statistics to back-up why she trusts and relies on GH.

▣ How will the study help to demystify this market segment?

There are so many stereotypes around the word 'millennial'. Brands need to remember that millennials have grown up, had children and make up a very powerful economic segment as mainstream consumers.

Many brands and marketers, when they think of and address millennial moms, feed into the stereotype that she is this super-cool woman, sitting in a coffee shop, drinking a flat white and typing on her Mac – the picture of freelance creativity. Or that she is permanently dressed in activewear, leaving a mid-morning yoga class and sipping on green juice.

The survey data highlights that this is a myth and that this stereotype represents just a tiny niche segment of very wealthy non-working moms.



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The reality check is that MMs actually represent a mass and mainstream audience: 55% of them are working full-time (only 9% freelance or are on contract, compared to 60% of Gen X+ mothers); 55% contribute 50% or more to household income; 68% are married; 65% are currently not exercising; and her faith plays a big role in her life and support system.

Only 36% are satisfied with their social life and she is in the midst of a sleep crisis (only 23% of millennial moms get the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep a night).

Running her home (laundry, cleaning, life admin) are her biggest pain points – the areas where she is looking for help and solutions. Even though she doesn't define herself as a homemaker, the reality is that the home still needs to be made.



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When we asked her: "Where do you need the most support in your life since becoming a mother?" 31% said 'at home' and 30% said 'with my health (physical and mental)'.

This is a far cry from the pervasive stereotypes around this market segment. The survey helps paint a true picture of this woman's life and needs in South Africa right now.

■ **What are three things that every marketer should know about a millennial parent, based on the survey?**

Firstly, and most importantly, **she is the main purchasing decision-maker in the home.**

She does the bulk of the shopping for clothing (90%); groceries (83%); cosmetics and toiletries (91%); and shopping for children's needs (93%). When it comes to insurance, 71% said the purchasing decisions are made either by herself or jointly with her partner. And 71% of purchasing decisions around motor vehicle purchases are made either by herself or jointly with her partner.

She is working, she is earning, she is economically empowered and represents a spending powerhouse that brands cannot afford to ignore.



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Secondly, **her product choices are driven by value.**

This is understandable in today's economic climate – she wants to know that she is getting value for every Rand spent. The top scorers when we asked: "How important are these characteristics of a brand? Choose the three that are most important to you" were 'good value' (27%); safe for children (24%) and simplifies my life (12%).

Marketers need to ensure they are addressing this need. They need to highlight why their product is a value proposition for this woman. They need to emphasise why and how it will help simplify her life. They need to recognise and understand her needs, and show that they have her back – by doing so they will earn her spend and her loyalty.



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Thirdly, **she doesn't trust influencers blindly; she is much more receptive to messages from the brand itself.**

“ *This is one of the areas where the local data shows a big departure from international research. This woman is switched and doesn't believe everything she sees and reads on social media.* ”

While she has influence within her circle of friends, this doesn't necessarily translate to brand 'influencers'. When we asked her: "When deciding between different product options for your child whose opinion do you trust the most? Tick two", 'other moms' (34%) and 'online reviews' (31%) came in the highest.



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But 'the brand' also scored really high at 25%. 'Influencers on social media' scored a very low 7%. This is a big opportunity

for marketers in South Africa to control their own messaging, and to highlight why and how their brand can help this woman. In the US data, consumers were much more cynical around brand messaging.

Fourthly, **the rapid uptake of non-ad running TV streaming service Netflix.**

When we asked: “Where do you watch your favourite TV shows? Tick all applicable”, Netflix came in with an impressive 29%, with DSTV at 35%, Showmax at 11% and SABC at 9%. This is a very interesting insight for marketers, keeping in mind that Netflix is an ad-free service. It will be particularly interesting to see how this stat changes in the next 12 to 24 months.

▣ **What other surveys should we expect from Good Housekeeping in the future?**

The GH Motherhood Survey will definitely be conducted annually – it will be interesting to track this data to see shifts in behaviour. This survey has also highlighted key areas that deserve more focus and in-depth research, particularly around health and sleep.



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It also gives GH the opportunity to explore areas with our advertisers where they feel they would like more in-depth focussed research around particular areas, given the fact that GH has direct access to this core market who is highly engaged with *Good Housekeeping*.

Stay tuned on the *Good Housekeeping* [website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#).

ABOUT MAROEF AH SMITH

Enthusiastic UCT graduate with a passion for fashion, film and words.

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