

# South Africa's new generation of dads are cool, committed and in charge

By  Rachel Thompson, issued by GfK – An NIQ Company

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Today's South African dad is different from dads of the past. Better educated and with more earning power than his grandfather or even his father, he is carving out a new social standing and position in the family.



Where many working-class fathers were once separated from their family homes to become migrant workers to provide for the family, today they are part of the household. These dads are establishing a place for themselves in the home not only as providers, but also as home builders, role models and heads of the household.

They have increasing power and influence in the home and at the shelf. Brands should establish themselves as dad friendly, especially as we can expect to see dads have more sway over purchase decisions that they may once have left in the hands of their wives or partners.

All of that said, a young South African dad's life is by no means all housework and no play. This group is trendy, loves cool clothes and gadgets, and spends as much time clubbing as single men. Contrary to global trends, even Gen Y South African dads are not taking on more household chores than earlier generations.

Here are some revealing facts about our country's fathers from *GfK Consumer Life\**, an annual longitudinal survey based on face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of connected, urban South African consumers:

## **South African fathers love technology and convenience**

The new of generation of dads is finding smart solutions through digital technology, a trend that will amplify as more members of Generation Z become fathers. Nearly 30% of Generation Y dads report they have bought groceries online, as have a quarter of Generation X dads.

Nearly half (46%) of all dads in the survey say they are passionate about technology. They are also early adopters, with 31% reporting that they have used a virtual assistant such as Amazon Alexa, Apple Siri, Google Assistant or Microsoft Cortana, and 41% saying that they have made mobile payments with solutions like Apple Pay and Samsung Pay.

## **They still don't do as much in the kitchen as their spouses and partners**

Generation X and Y men spend an average of around 3.7 hours a week cooking, compared to 6.4 hours for Generation Y women and nearly 6.5 for Generation X women. Dads tend to delegate or automate domestic jobs – they are more likely to own a dishwasher or to employ a domestic worker than moms.

They often live in large households (around a third of Generation X and Y men live in households of five or more) and rely on female family members to help with domestic tasks. More than half (51%) of dads will pay more for products that make life easier and one in five sits down for a meal in restaurant most days or every day.

## **Dads want to have fun**

He may be dutiful, but the South African father is also modern and fun-loving rather than self-sacrificing. Delegating domestic tasks to others and using technology frees his time up to hustle and have fun. Around 70% of Generation X and Generation Y dads say they value enjoying life. Compared to just 7% of moms, 23% of dads go clubbing once a week. And more than half (55%) play videogames weekly.

## **Young dads are financially savvy and responsible**

Young fathers are mindful of their responsibility to protect the family and improve its financial future. More than half (51%) of Generation Y men have life insurance and nearly half (48%) have private health insurance. More than half of Generation X men have life insurance (56%) and private health insurance (54%). And 60% of men report that education for themselves or a family member will be one of their spending priorities for the year ahead.

## **Self-care is part of their routine**

The new generation of South African father has a higher awareness of the importance of looking after himself as well as an interest in personal grooming. Out of our male respondents, 42% reported that it is important to indulge and pamper themselves regularly. Some 37% of Generation Z men go to salons for treatments and 40% of this generation have a regular skincare routine.

## **Dads are interested in what others have to say about brands**

South African fathers are open to guidance and advice about which products and brand to buy – especially younger dads. Around 43% of Generation Y men in our survey said they are interested in other people's opinions about what to buy – compared to 37% of all South African respondents and 35% of the total male sample.

## **Implications for brands**

Expect these trends to accelerate as the next generation of dads focuses on protecting and providing for the extended family on one hand and enjoying themselves on the other. The evolving role of fathers in the home and in society will challenge brands to adapt to rapid changes in male consumers' behaviour and values, the touchpoints they use to interact with brands, and their role in choosing household products.

*\*[GfK Consumer Life](#) is a global data and insight service that provides a longitudinal view on how consumers' everyday lives are evolving. It is an annual survey that GfK conducts in 27 countries, including South Africa. Our 2018 research is drawn from online mobile interviews with a representative sample of 1,000 LSM 6-10 South Africans who have internet access.*

## **ABOUT RACHEL THOMPSON**

Rachel Thompson is the Insights Director at GfK South Africa. She has 16 years of experience in market research, working first for Research International and then moving to GfK

South Africa in 2009. She has experience across a wide range of research disciplines and a strong interest in innovation. Rachel has an Honours degree in Economics from the University of Natal.

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