GEN Z SOUTH AFRICANS STRUGGLE TO FIND HAPPINESS THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

Ipsos Love Life Satisfaction 2026

Ipsos in South Africa

12 February 2026
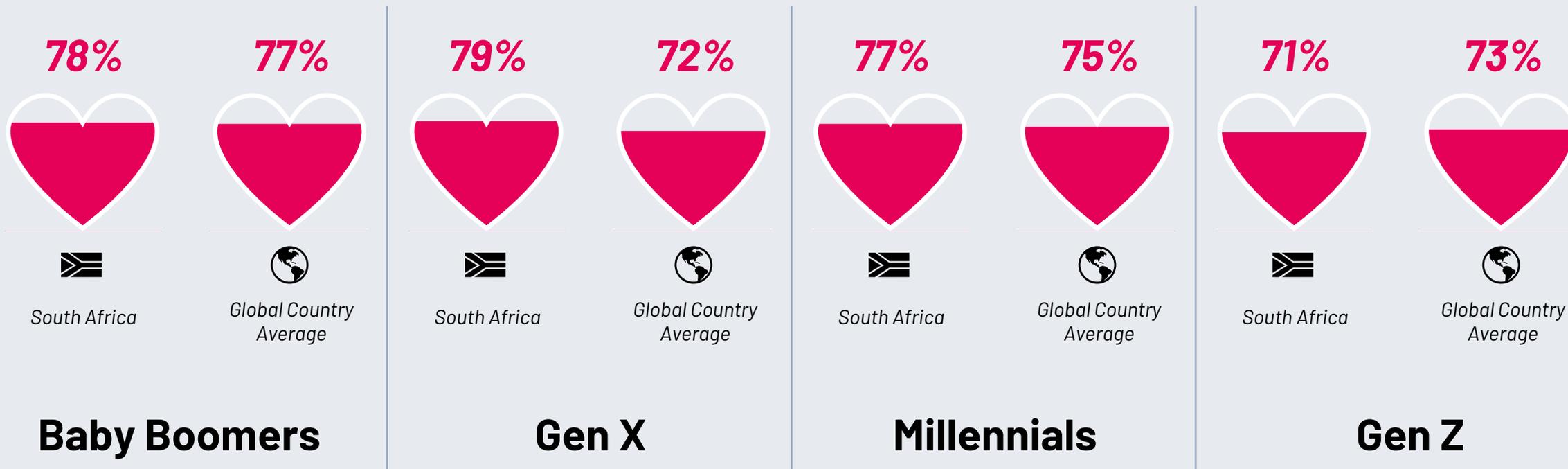
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Generational happiness gap

Gen Z is the only South African generation trailing global peers

HAPPINESS BY GENERATION

	Baby Boomers		Gen X		Millennials		Gen Z	
	78%	**77%**	**79%**	**72%**	**77%**	**75%**	**71%**	**73%**
	South Africa	Global Country Average	South Africa	Global Country Average	South Africa	Global Country Average	South Africa	Global Country Average

Question:
Taking all things together, would you say you are: very happy, rather happy, not very happy, not happy at all?
(% Total Happy)

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South African Gen Z happiness by gender

Young South African women less happy overall despite stronger romantic satisfaction

OVERALL HAPPINESS

78%
Gen Z Men

66%
Gen Z Women

Question:
Taking all things together, would you say you are: very happy, rather happy, not very happy, not happy at all?
(% Total Happy)

SATISFIED WITH ROMANTIC/SEX LIFE

55%
Gen Z Men

64%
Gen Z Women

Question:
Overall, how satisfied are you with: My romantic / sex life
(% Total Satisfied)

SATISFIED WITH FEELING LOVED
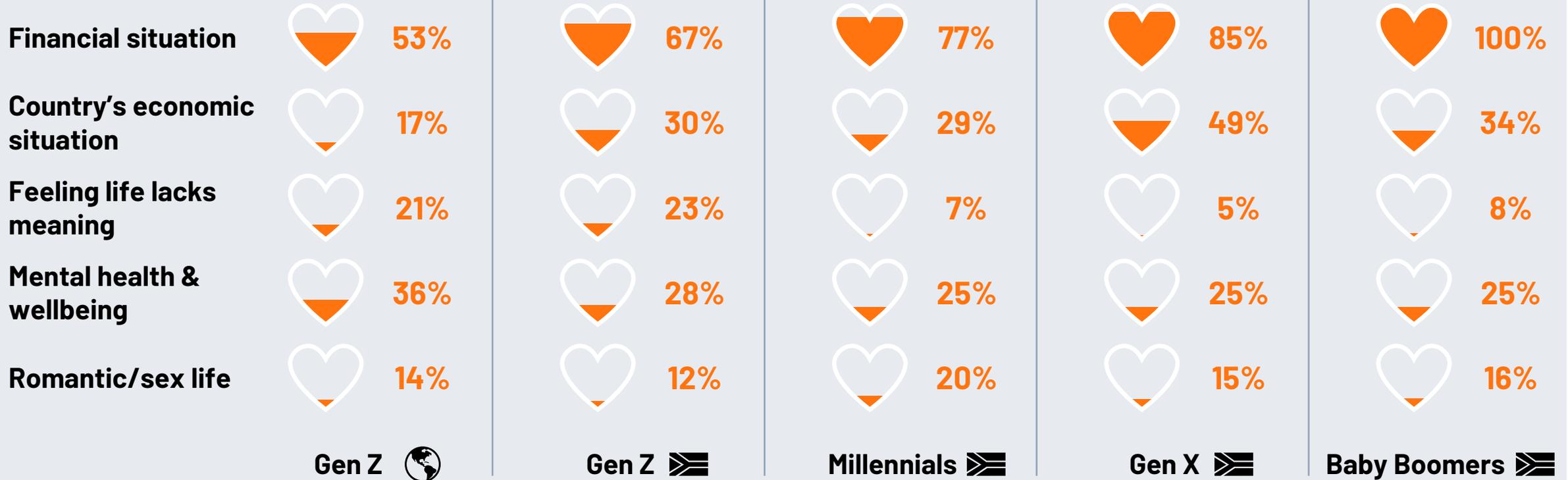
85%
Gen Z Men

80%
Gen Z Women

Question:
Overall, how satisfied are you with: Feeling loved
(% Total Satisfied)

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Unhappiness drivers by generations in South Africa

Gen Z uniquely struggles with meaning and control – not just money

TOP DRIVERS OF UNHAPPINESS

	Gen Z 🌍	Gen Z 🇿🇦	Millennials 🇿🇦	Gen X 🇿🇦	Baby Boomers 🇿🇦
Financial situation	53%	67%	77%	85%	100%
Country's economic situation	17%	30%	29%	49%	34%
Feeling life lacks meaning	21%	23%	7%	5%	8%
Mental health & wellbeing	36%	28%	25%	25%	25%
Romantic/sex life	14%	12%	20%	15%	16%

Question:
Please choose the top three areas of your life that are contributing to you feeling happy - South Africa

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Gen Z love life

Gen Z South Africans feels MORE loved than global peers

FEELING LOVED

83%

76%

South Africa

Global Country Average

Question:
Overall, how satisfied are you with:
Feeling loved

(% Total Satisfied)

ROMANTIC/SEX LIFE SATISFACTION

60%

57%

South Africa

Global Country Average

Question:
Overall, how satisfied are you with:
My romantic / sex life

(% Total Satisfied)

PARTNER/SPOUSE RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

83%

83%

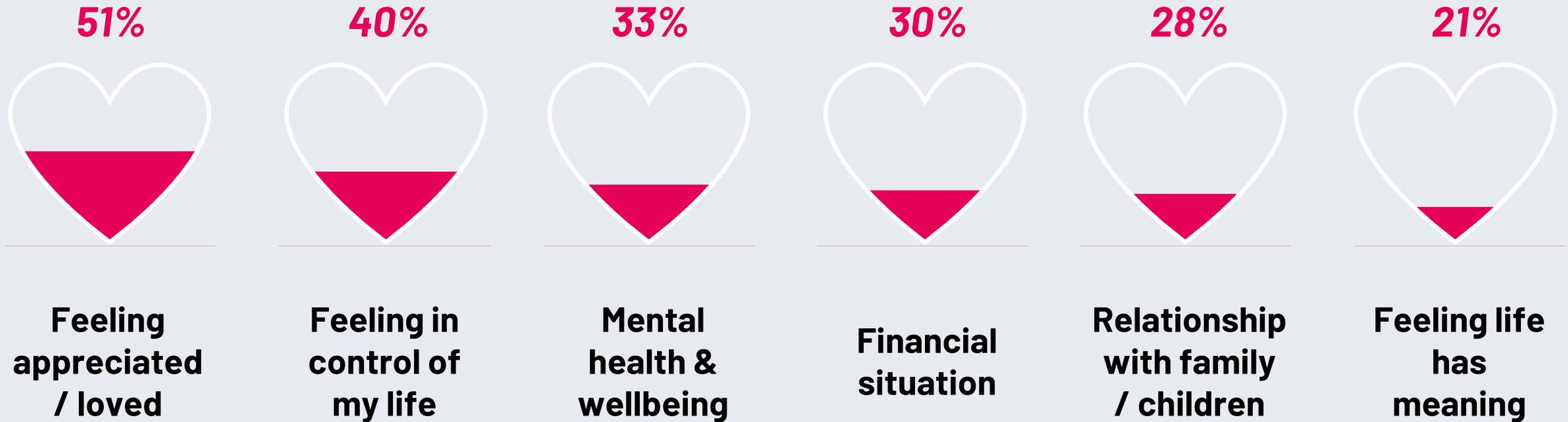South Africa

Global Country Average

Question:
Overall, how satisfied are you with:
My relationship with my partner/spouse*

(% Total Satisfied) *Asked only of those who are married or partnered

Gen Z South Africans struggle to find happiness this Valentine's Day (13 February 2026)
Source: Ipsos Love Life Satisfaction 2026 | © Ipsos 2026

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South African Gen Z happiness drivers
Love and control matter most to Gen Z

TOP CONTIBUTORS TO HAPPINESS

51%
Feeling appreciated / loved

40%
Feeling in control of my life

33%
Mental health & wellbeing

30%
Financial situation

28%
Relationship with family / children

21%
Feeling life has meaning

Question:
Please choose the top three areas of your life that are contributing to you feeling happy
(% Total Happy)

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Survey Methodology in detail

These are the results of a 29-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform and, in India, on its IndiaBus platform, between Wednesday, December 24, 2025 and Friday, January 9, 2026. For this survey, Ipsos interviewed a total of 23,268 adults aged 18 years and older in India, 18-74 in Canada, Republic of Ireland, Malaysia, South Africa, Türkiye, and the United States, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Indonesia and Singapore, and 16-74 in all other countries.

The sample consists of approximately 2,000 individuals in Japan, 1,000 individuals each in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and the U.S., and 500 individuals each in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand, and Türkiye. The sample in India consists of approximately 2,200 individuals, of whom approximately 1,800 were interviewed face-to-face and 400 were interviewed online.

Samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. can be considered representative of their general adult populations under the age of 75. Samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, and Türkiye are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of their population.

India's sample represents a large subset of its urban population - social economic classes A, B and C in metros and tier 1-3 town classes across all four zones.

The data is weighted so that the composition of each country's sample best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data. "The Global Country Average" reflects the average result for all the countries and markets in which the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country or market and is not intended to suggest a total result.

When percentages do not sum up to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 percentage point more/less than the actual result, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of "don't know" or not stated responses.

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll where N=1,000 being accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of where N=500 being accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

THANK YOU

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