

Kidfluence: How SA children are influencing household purchase decisions

By [Giuliana Dias](#)

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Children are proving to be a consumer group that cannot be ignored in SA households as their influence continues to rise, stretching beyond the purchase of just toys and sweets. Today's children are important decisionmakers in the purchase of low- and high-ticket items in SA households.



Source: [Pexels](#)

A ViacomCBS Networks Africa insights study dubbed “*Kidfluence Global 2021 – The SA Edition*” has uncovered the growing influence of children in SA household purchase decisions.

After connecting with more than 500 children aged between six and 12 and parents online, ViacomCBS highlights the rising influence of children across a range of consumer categories, from everyday to more expensive items. The result is children have emerged as a significant consumer group that shows no sign of slowing down.

Beyond pester power, more than half of six to 12-year-olds surveyed in SA are using their powers of persuasion and are using all the tools at their disposal to pitch their requests to their parents when it comes to household purchase decisions. It's no longer only the responsibility of the parents to keep family households running smoothly; children are helping around the household and doing tasks. And they want to be included in small and big purchase decisions.



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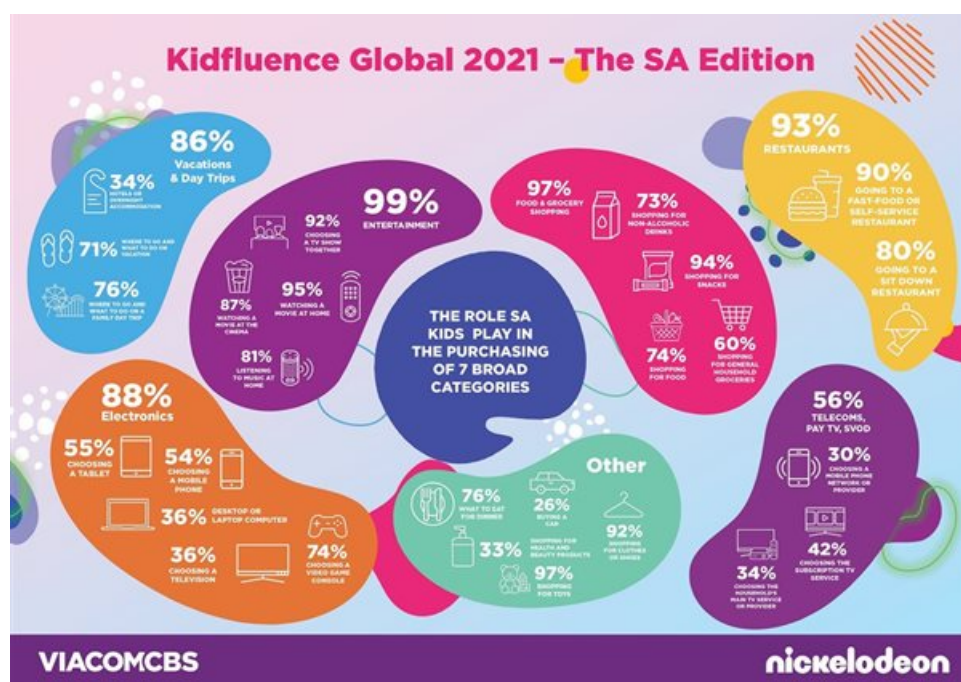
Sources of guidance

This emerging consumer group also researches brands to determine the best fit for the household. Using technology and mobile devices, ViacomCBS found SA children look to various sources for guidance before spending money. At least 48%

of children in SA look at online sources, such as YouTube, for information on brands, citing the internet's important role when it comes to children and their choices. This is aided by children having access to many devices.

Our research highlights that the percentage of children that own or use most of these devices increases with age. By age 12, all SA children (that form part of the online population) have access to a smartphone, and research products and brands accordingly to make informed decisions.

Interestingly, 89% of children in SA look to their parents for approval or opinion on brands. Parents in SA remain the trusted figures and the best source of guidance for children. This collaborative approach to household purchases is the keystone of modern-day families.



Source: Supplied

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Entertainment, groceries and restaurants

ViacomCBS also researched the levels of influence children have across 26 broad categories ranging from vacations and day trips to food and grocery shopping, electronics, restaurants, telecommunications and entertainment.

SA children have an overwhelming influence on the decision-making process in all 26 categories. However, their biggest influence is on the household's choice of entertainment (99%), followed by food and grocery shopping (97%), then choice of restaurants, at 93%.

This presents an opportunity for brands to be more inclusive of children's perspectives and opinions and pay attention to the dynamic of today's families. Children are valued in today's families and should not be underestimated. They can be experts and masters of persuasion when it comes to household purchases.

SA children are also eagerly using their own money to purchase big and small ticket items. With the money received for birthdays, allowances, doing chores, doing well at school, or selling toys, children are emerging with a lot of spending power.

On average, and among the online population in SA, children have an allowance of about R65 a week to spend. Globally, children are receiving a total of \$894m on average each week – which is a significant amount of spending money to purchase items.

Brand preference

Whether children see products online, in-store or somewhere else, they understand and value specific brands. A staggering 85% of SA children told us that they only choose certain brands, and 67% said it's worth paying more for a brand or product they prefer.

This indicates that children are aware of, and up to date on, brands in SA and beyond. In fact, in their formative years, they already form opinions about which brands they prefer, and they understand the value of premium brands. This emphasises just how important children are to brands and businesses – as consumers and as influencers of those around them.

Children are engaged and open to brand messaging. Most SA children say they enjoy watching adverts for products they like, and they follow certain brands, especially on social media. They are also more loyal to brands than their global counterparts.



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What does this mean for SA brands?

They need to be more inclusive of children's perspectives and opinions. Children have a significant amount of influence in decisions about small and big purchases in the household. Brands can leverage this path to purchase, in various categories.

Our Nickelodeon content and marketing strategies have been inspired by the research we conduct to ensure as a channel we become more accurate in depicting the current family dynamics. Research indicates there's an opportunity for more brands to do the same.

From the ViacomCBS Networks Africa perspective, co-viewership between children and parents for content is at its pinnacle. This is more evident on children's channels, where as much as 50% of the viewership on these channels is driven by parents ages 25+.

This is an ideal environment for advertisers to communicate with families as a unit (rather than children and parents separately) and leverage the collaborative process that we see in families in an uncluttered advertising environment.

There's value to engaging both children and adults in the household. A new generation of children and parents has emerged, and there is an opportunity to communicate with families collectively, rather than as separate individuals.

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