

Ladies, it's not just you! Globally – we're all stressed!

Written by Cheryl Pearson-McNeil
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So ladies, I'm sure if you're like me and any of the women I know personally, you have been running hither and yon to keep all of your hats – home, work, parents, children, finances, and relationships – in the air all at once. And sometimes, you find yourself wondering, “Is it just me? Am I the only one feeling like I'm an exotic juggling act in the three ring circus of life trying to keep all these things balanced?” Well, shout hallelujah and signal the ringmaster to shine the spotlight on you in the center ring because the answer is a resounding No! You are not alone! Nielsen's latest comprehensive report *Women of Tomorrow: a Study of Women around the World* confirms women around the globe are feeling pressure like never before and are stressed!

Nielsen is known for its measurement capabilities and for analyzing consumer behavior and trends in media, online, mobile and more around the globe. We recently conducted this study among nearly 6500 women in 21 countries throughout Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and North America, representing 60% of the world's population and 78% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). We included women in both developed markets – like ours – and several emerging markets like India and Nigeria. Some of the key findings:

- 90% of women believe their role is evolving for the better from gender equality to workplace opportunities.
- Women control 12 trillion dollars in global spending of 18 trillion dollars, but want to share *jointly* in life responsibilities and decision making
- While women are indeed increasingly empowered, we are increasingly *stressed*.

Whoop! There it is! Call your girlfriends and tell them “Girl, it's official! Women everywhere around the world report being pressured for time, rarely have the time to unwind; feel stressed and overworked most of the time. And yes, want just a tad bit of help from the fellas' time to time. It is NOT just us!”

How we cope with stress varies between developed and emerging markets. Our sisters in

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emerging countries are often faced with maintaining every day basics like food and clothing. The percentage of their household spend on food is staggering. In Nigeria, for example, 40% of household spending is on food, vs. 7% in the US. So if women in emerging countries found themselves with any additional dollars it would go toward savings, clothes and education. While women in developed countries like ours are more likely to use extra cash for luxuries like vacations, savings and paying off debt.

In conducting this research, women were divided into three segments – daughters (average age 30), mothers (average age 47) and grandmothers (average age 67). The high stress factor is universal, but it breaks down generationally. The “daughter” generation is the most stressed. This stands to reason as this woman’s family is young and she has not likely achieved her full earning potential. Among “mothers” the stress is mid-level. Makes sense because by the average age of 47, income levels are (usually) higher; but finances are still cause for concern. Lastly, “grandmothers” are the least stressed segment. Perhaps not surprisingly, grandmothers are also most likely to believe that they have successfully achieved that delicate work-life balance.

Fellas, I think the most notable take away from this study for you is that women would like to *share* more male/female responsibilities. We may be *doing it all* but would love to have a little more help from you. Umm hmm, did you hear that? Ladies, they may have missed that point, so if you want to cut this column out and post it up on the ‘fridge for those times when you need a little back up, feel free. Guys don’t like arguing with *you*, let alone taking on women from 21 countries and arguing in multiple languages! (You should highlight the multiple languages part).

Consider this ladies: if based on our global spending power of \$12 trillion we were our own *country* (and lord knows there are times we wish we were don’t we?) we’d be about the size of the United States (based on GDP). That’s a lot of power. So, there’s no doubt that you and I and our sisters across the globe are agents of change. Can you imagine how much more powerful we’d be if we got a little more support on the home front? So, when’s the last time you actually asked for the help you need? I’m just sayin’.

Cheryl Pearson-McNeil is senior vice president of public affairs and government relations for Nielsen. For more information and studies go to www.nielsenwire.com