

# The Spirit Index



Created by Mutiny GP

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# The Spirit Index

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# 1: The Introduction



The World Happiness Report is an annual publication, published on the International Day of Happiness (23rd March), by the United Nations which contains rankings of 157 countries "national happiness." You can check the report out here: <http://worldhappiness.report/ed/2018/>



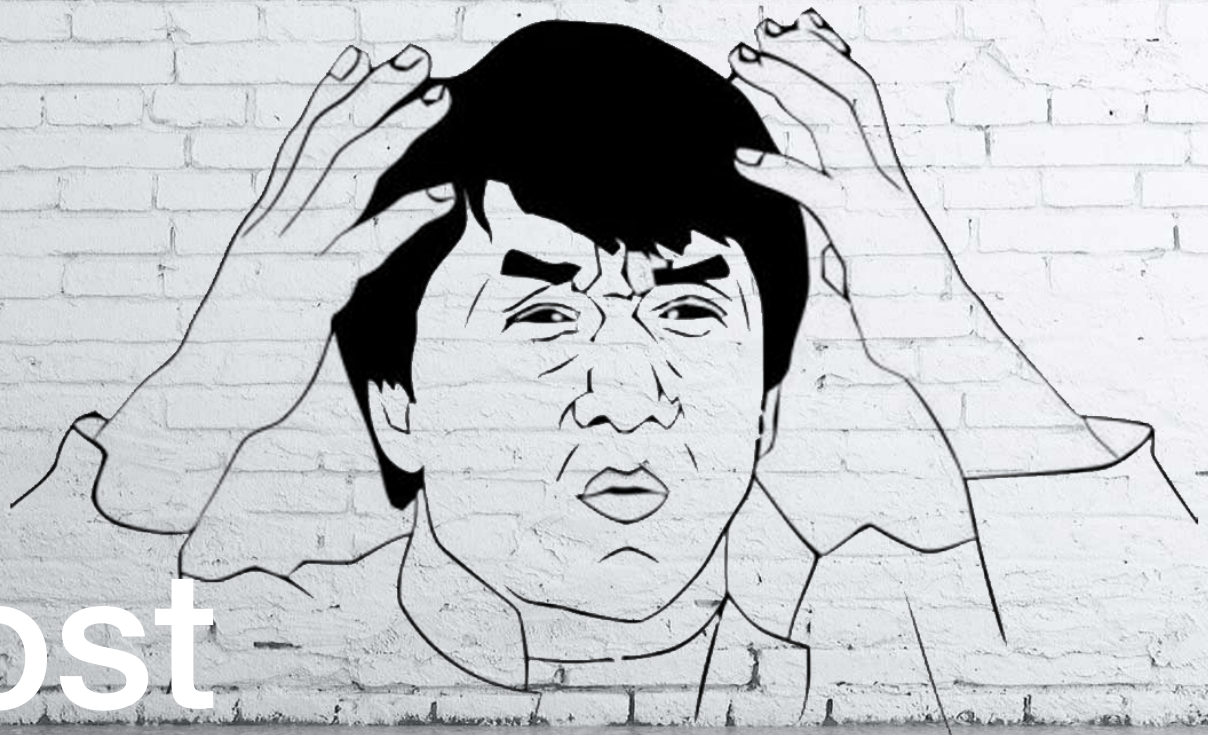
In summary, happiness according to the UN is:

- GDP Per Capita (How much money we earn)
- Life Expectancy (Prevalence of diseases and how long our medical institutions and medicines keep us alive)
- Social Support (How long we can go without employment and formal income)
- Trust (Perceived levels of corruption)
- Freedom (Agency)
- Generosity (Perhaps the only measure we agree with)

The above attributes have conveniently put four countries; Denmark, Norway, Switzerland

and Finland at the top four places since the inception of the report. The ten least happy countries are mostly African countries. South Africa is 101 out of 157 countries. Any Africans reading this will very well know that this can't be completely correct, considering the high number of suicides, violent crimes (Outside of poverty), and general mental or psychological health issues that occur from developed markets.

The aim of the Spirit Index is to redefine happiness with research that first understands what Africans view happiness as, then to measure it, and illustrate it in the most irreverent way possible.



# Lost in Translation

In the first steps to redefine happiness and create an index of our own, we launched a series of focus groups with Africans from all walks of life. The first (and prime) indicator of happiness was discovered to be **how much individuals understand each other**. You can understand anything if you understand the language it is being communicated in. This concept may be lost in countries like USA, Japan or Australia where the medium of communication is limited to 1 or a maximum of 2 languages. South Africa has 11 official languages while Nigeria has over 100 tribes with various customs and dialects. Language gives cultures the

basis with which we define certain human experiences.

Karōshi is a great example of a cultural term or word that can be translated literally as "overwork death" in Japanese. This term refers to individuals who die suddenly while at their desks, doing work. The major medical causes of Karōshi deaths are heart attacks and strokes from stress and improper diets (Due to uneven eating schedules while at work). African languages do not have this word in their lexicon, however this further goes to illustrate how fulfilment and happiness would mean vastly different things for these two cultures.

Source: <https://www.economist.com/asia/2018/08/02/japans-habits-of-overwork-are-hard-to-change>

“Language gives cultures the basis with which we define certain human experiences.”



# Back to the Future

While looking for a new definition of happiness focus groups assisted us in illuminating a second theme to base African happiness on. It was the idea that you may not be content in any given moment however knowing that contentment is coming can be a source of joy.

It is here that we notice a sense of spirituality and faith in the way the future will pan out versus those things that are neither tangible or immediately obvious.

Happiness is often derived from expectation. Not expectation meeting reality, but simply having positive expectations (Although expectations coming to fruition are a huge bonus).

“Happiness is often derived from expectation.”

**The expectation of future perfect moments coming to be realised** as they relate to other individuals and circumstances have the potential to leave Africans in a state of good fortune.

To conduct this research we'd have to do a systematic investigation to establish seemingly ethereal concepts.

Instagram innovates and continues to do so with a number of customisable features including polls and questions. We all love a good filter but while influencers are asking which outfit they should

wear, or assuming the world wants to know what their thinking, we decided to conduct The Spirit Index research using the plethora of items at our disposal on Instastories.

A set of 7 individuals garnered over 500 responses per question. From the result of their interactions the learnings for the Spirit Index were formed.

14:39  
Thursday, 21 March 2019 (GMT+2)  
Time in Cairo, Egypt  
13:39

Addis Ababa (EAT)  
13:39

Algiers (GMT+1)  
14:39

Cape Town (SAST)  
13:39

Rabat (GMT+1)  
14:39

Harare (CAT)  
15:39

Nairobi (EAT)  
15:39

Dar es Salaam (EAT)  
14:39

Lusaka (CAT)

African Time

During the focus groups held to suss out what true happiness entailed the third theme that emerged was based on the idea of fate. The concept of expectation and future moments can also translate into the ever-popular "African Time" ideology.

the notion of being able to adequately live and perform at their own individual pace.

**Happiness can come from a sense of being in charge of reality while not trying to modify it.** The lesson here was that the universe is ultimately in charge and having the ability to run at ones own pace while respecting the pace of others is a spiritual construct a lot of western ideologies leave out of the global narrative. In this search for true happiness, focus groups consistently touched on

“The universe is ultimately in charge.”



# Energy

The fourth definition of happiness, sourced from various focus groups was explained by the two-way interactions we have with strangers. **The giving and receiving of positive energy** through communication, a smile and general acknowledgement and how often this occurs defines happiness in Africa.

Can you strike up a conversation with random people and have your energy reciprocated?

Can you strike up a conversation with random people and have your energy reciprocated? Surely this should be a global measure of innate happiness? The brief yet special moments in which we make short-term (And then ultimately long-term) friends should define a countries level of happiness.

In comparison to the overwhelming positivity towards the idea of general acknowledgement a [recent survey](#) of 20,000 U.S. adults found that nearly half of Americans suffer from feelings of loneliness.

A summary of the reasons below:

- Overworked people face lonely nights.
- Social media and social isolation go hand in hand.
- Prescription drugs.
- Retail therapy.
- Generation X and the struggle to regain wealth

The above illustrates the notion that without human interaction and the act of giving people positive energy on a daily basis we are destined to feel loneliness. To analyse the presence of the quintessential feeling of sadness (Next to loss), is imperative in also defining happiness in Africa.



## 2: The Questions



# What is Happiness?

Damn, what a loaded question.  
Let's start with Oxford?

Happy  
/'hapi/  
Adjective  
1. Favoured by luck or fortune. 2. Notably fitting, effective or well adapted.

Let's surmise that Happiness is therefore feeling favoured or feeling content.

In conjunction with typical dictionary definitions a series of focus groups were conducted to expand on the idea of what happiness is. We find absolutely no mentions of happiness being tied to the material or physical experience of the world. This is in direct opposition to the World Happiness Index which measures social progress with a number of attributes that rely on worldly manifestations of fortune.

The following four themes came up repeatedly when attempting to define happiness.

- **How much individuals understand each other.**
- **The expectation of future perfect moments coming to be realised.**
- **Being in charge of reality while not trying to modify it.**
- **Giving and receiving of energy through communication.**

Please see [The Introduction](#) for an explanation of each. Moving forward the above themes would become the attributes we use to define happiness.

These four themes were then developed into 10 questions:

- **If you lived alone on a remote island with everything you needed to survive and be entertained with, how alone would you feel?**
- **If you could fluently speak any language what would it be?**
- **If Superheroes existed how often do you think the news would change?**
- **If you could, would you add more public holidays to the South African Calendar?**
- **How often do you strike up conversations with complete strangers?**
- **Do you think you'd be more successful if you had a clone?**
- **If we found out that wi-fi was inadvertently adding to climate change would you still want to continue using it?**

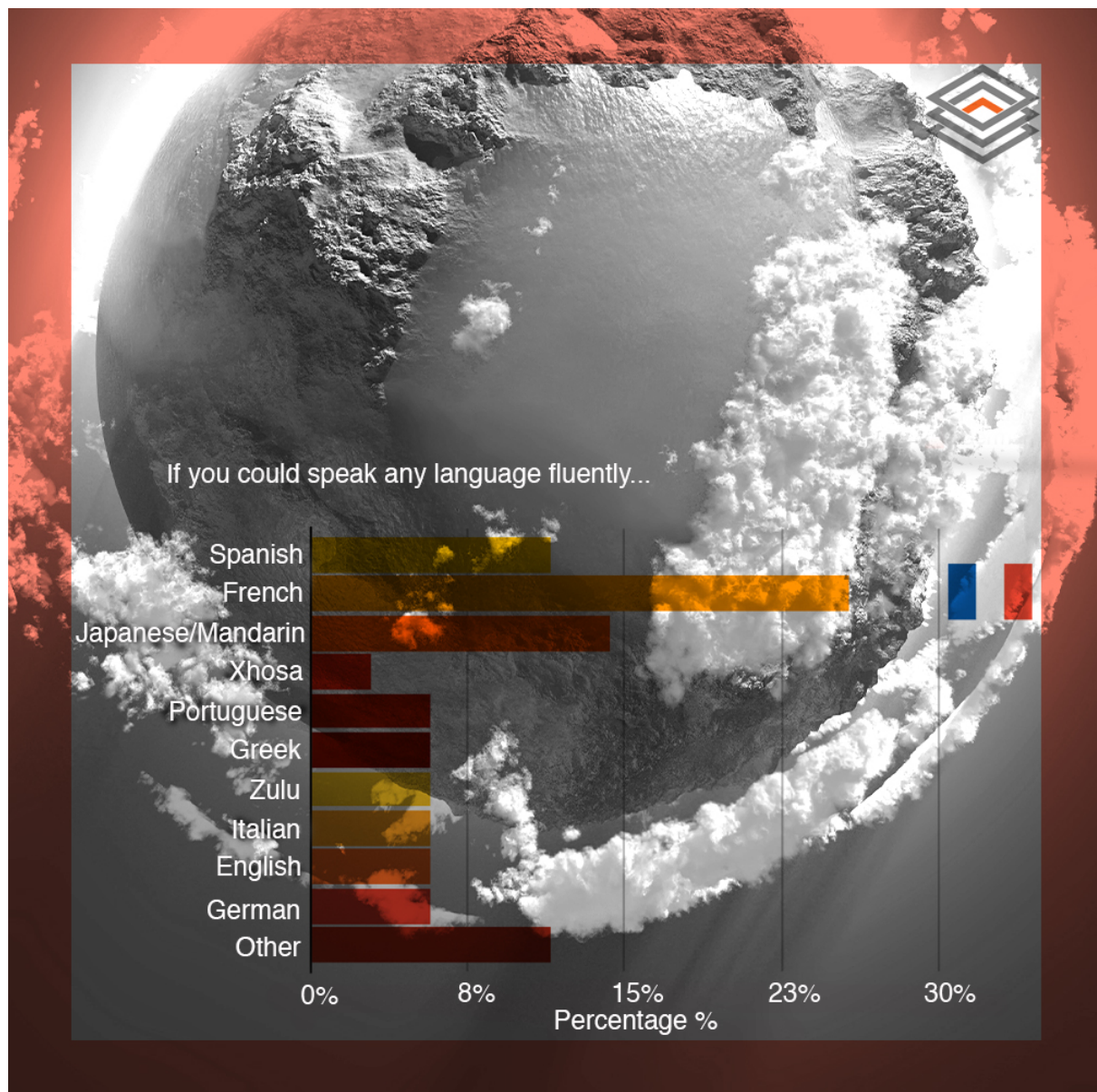
Strange questions right? Since we've already deduced that happiness is non-material and subjective, we'd obviously have to run a study that matched.



# 3: The Index



This one really speaks for itself  
and the result is overwhelmingly  
true of Africans.  
People over solitude.  
Engagement over passivity.  
Humans over technology.  
Interaction over entertainment.



Pourquoi faire vous aimez tellement le français?

Africans ability to understand each other is pivotal in the quest to find happiness.

Language is the most obvious way and there is certainly a liking to more foreign languages. French is widely spoken by Africans, however there is

still a desire for more to learn it, and a disturbingly low amount of people who would rather learn the languages of their peers.

However in another question, not illustrated here, 60% of respondents said that they regularly have random conversations with random people.

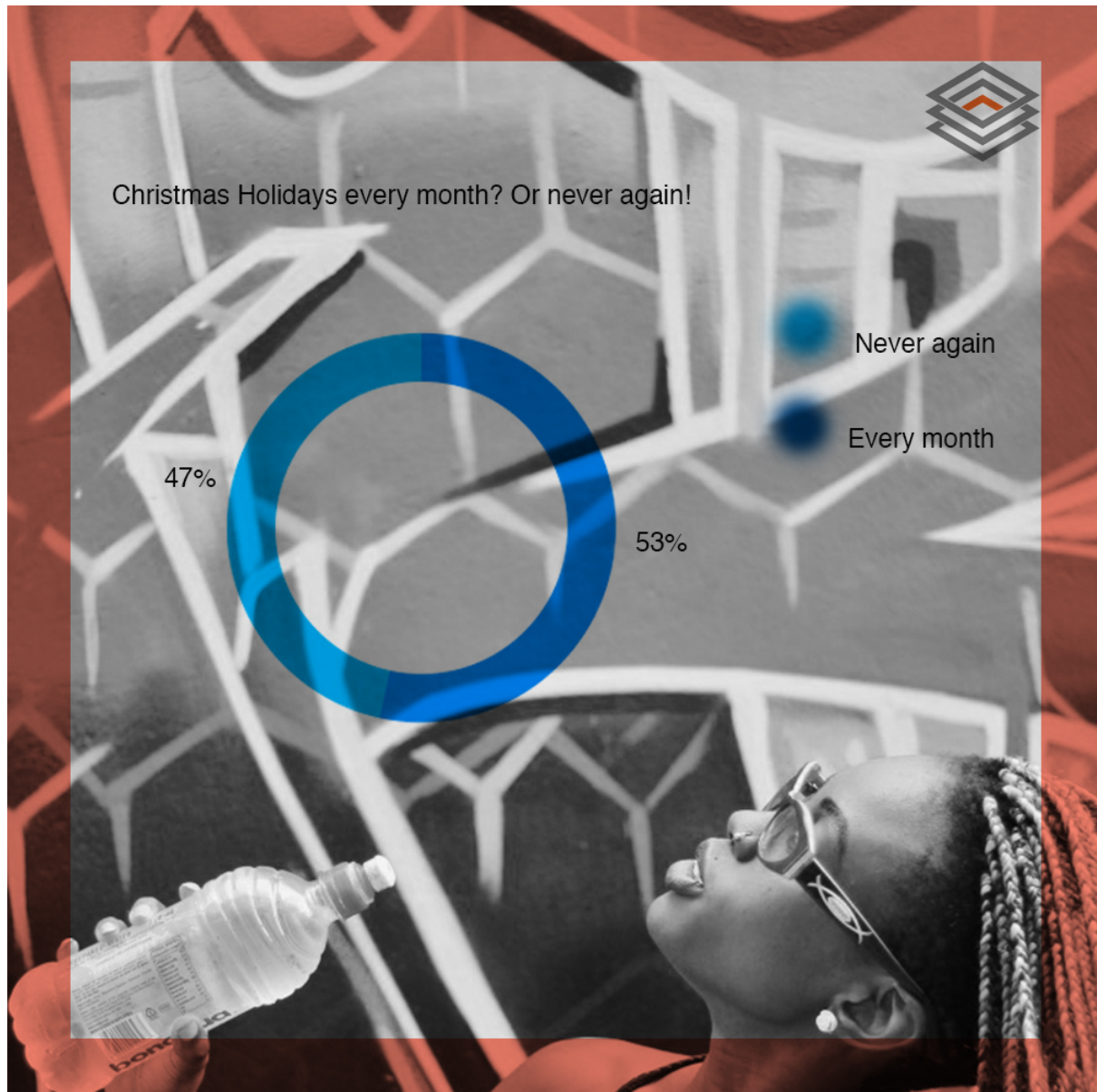
While the need to communicate is high Africans feel the need to open up opportunities to communicate with new connections.

PS: Other languages included Klingon, Persuasion, Brazillianese, Gibberish and Mansplain.



How productive are you? Do you wish you could do more? Ever wanted to be in two places at once. This question borrowed insight from the theme of "The expectation of future perfect moments coming to be realised."

The thinking here is that those who are truly content in their ability as a single being to accomplish all of their goals, and live successfully, would not require a clone. That being said, perhaps some people simply fear the consequences of meeting their true selves.



Unlike the northern hemisphere, the festive season is celebrated by the minority in a very different way. In South Africa for example "KiDezemba" is a phrase that trumps the concept of Christmas spirit in most homes. December is a time to go to the beach, sunbathe, eat with friends and family, vacation, reconcile and

spend bonuses. While there are certain similarities to a western ideology of Christmas they are ultimately very different to the mistletoe, Santa Claus, gifts, snowmen and cosy lounge side fire tropes that pervade the media and entertainment.

This question was born from the theme of "The

expectation of future perfect moments coming to be realised," and while only 53% of Africans would rather live in festive bliss it's enough to illustrate where a lot of people's priorities lie. Consider that in another question, not illustrated here, 74% of respondents said they'd love to have more public holidays.



In 2019 there has been no visible increase in positivity around the narrative behind [#MenAreTrash](#). The curious thing about the result to this question is that all women who participated in the study rated men as trash 100%. While most, but not all

men, rated men as 0% trash.

This question was intended to illustrate the theme of "How much individuals understand each other" If the sexes cannot come to an understanding than this most definitely doesn't bode well for the future.

It is a very contentious issue that needs a middle ground in favour of what women have to deal with on a daily basis whether its [#MeToo](#), sexual abuse, cat calling, mansplaining or cheaters.

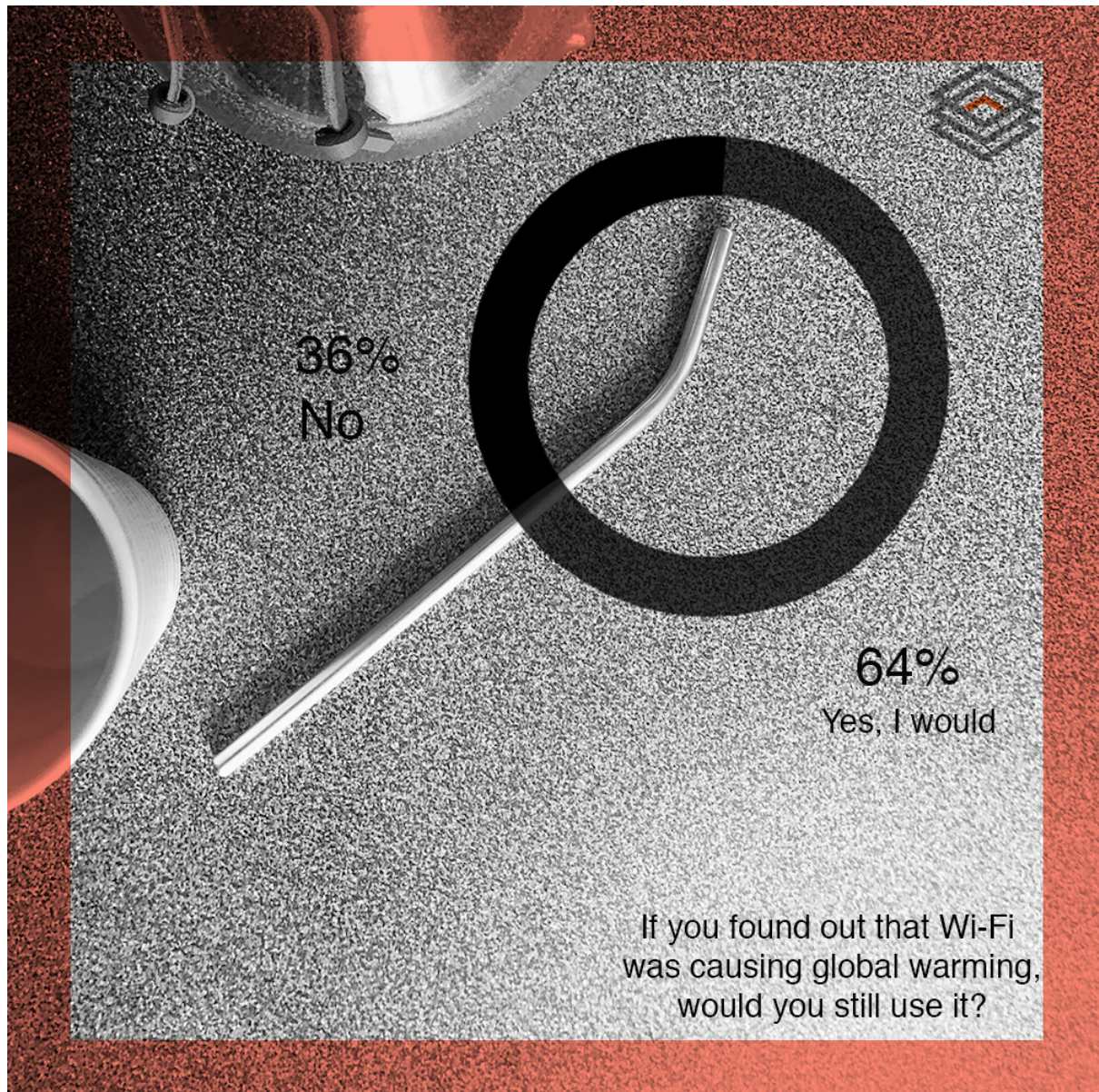


This question came from the theme of "Being in charge of reality while not trying to modify it." Focus group respondents were originally asked on their emotions regarding the media and the news. How does it make you feel on a daily basis? Do you feel like it affects your positivity? Do you feel like you can alter the news for the better, or worse?

Asking about Superheroes, while they currently rule all areas of entertainment, was intended to put people in a state of contemplation on whether they believe that supernatural forces would allow the current world to turn out as positively as fiction tends to project or if they were aware that despite these lofty saviours

the news would remain unchanged.

If the feeling that one is in charge of their own destiny brings a level of happiness, then it is quite ironic that we rely on others to give us good fortune. Africans definitely agree with the idea that without Batman, Gotham would be a whole lot worse.



Strange turnout.

With climate change, water conservation and other planetary concerns gaining popularity we certainly expected Africans to ditch Wi-Fi and find different sources of internet access. It would seem that the need for convenience trumps the requirements of Mother Nature.

That being said this is very telling of the drama behind the plastic straw issue. The truth is that nobody wants to use paper straws. Is it the strange texture, the horribly cardboard taste they leave in your mouth while you're trying to enjoy your Nature's Protein smoothie from Kuauui or is it just that it stops being sturdy before you can start sipping on your beverage?

This question was born from the theme of "Being in charge of reality while not trying to modify it."

Technology continues to bless and annoy us and Africans would rather some things not change despite a looming apocalypse, especially when those effects are too far off to have agency about.

# The End



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