

# Millennials: Profiling the South African Quantity Surveyors of the Future

Danie Hoffman and Elzane van Eck

University of Pretoria, South Africa

## ABSTRACT

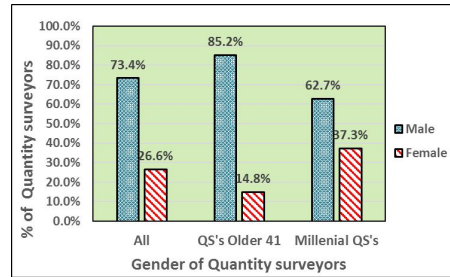
The future growth and prosperity of organisations, or the professional discipline of quantity surveying in South Africa, is linked strongly with effective succession planning. The success and prosperity that the South African quantity surveying profession will enjoy during the next decade rest on the current generation of new entrants and young professionals recently established in the profession, often referred to as the millennials. Millennials are people born between 1980 and 2000. At the time of the study in 2021, millennials were, therefore, between 21 to 41 years of age. In 2020, between 50% and 60% of all registered quantity surveyors in South Africa were millennials. They will become the future leaders and visionaries to carry the quantity surveying profession into the future. This study was based on a questionnaire from the Association of South African Quantity Surveyors (ASAQS) distributed to all the South African quantity surveyors on the database. The study evaluated various aspects describing the profile of South African millennial quantity surveyors. Some of the most important findings were the increase of females to make up 37,3% of all millennial QS's, the decrease in Whites to 29,9% and the increase in African to 52,1% of millennial QS's and that 36,3% of millennial QS's are not ASAQS members. This information will be of value to the Association of South African Quantity Surveyors and the management of quantity surveying firms and institutions such as universities that offer accredited academic programmes for the training of quantity surveyors. The findings may also be shared with quantity surveying professions across international borders to compare against the profiles of their millennial cohorts of quantity surveyors.

**Keywords:** Millennials, Profiling, Quantity surveyors, South Africa

## INTRODUCTION

According to the South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession (2021), more than 70% of all quantity surveyors in South Africa were younger than 45 years in 2021. The majority of this younger generation is often referred to as millennials or the cohort of people born between 1980 – 2000 (Axten, 2015; Barnett, 2014; Bussin, 2014; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014; Van Eck, Burger, 2018).

In contrast to previous generations, Millennials have grown up and were educated and trained in the electronic and digital age. Their differing roots may carry with it challenges that may hamper effective communication with the current leadership of the profession. The better the current leaders know



**Figure 1:** Gender of Millennial QS's (Source: Author, 2022).

and understand the millennials in their fold, the more likely the current leaders will be to pass the batten to the next generation successfully.

## MILLENNIALS IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTRUCTION

Quantity surveyors act as the financial consultants of the construction industry (Maritz & Siglé, 2010). The future success and prosperity of the QS profession rest largely with the cohort of millennial QS's. The motivation and job satisfaction of millennial QS's will be important factors to consider. Very little research has yet been conducted on the job satisfaction of millennial QS's (Asad & Dainty, 2005; Bowen & Cattell, 2008). Herbison and Boseman (2009) stated that organisations unable to embrace millennial employees and whose management style and culture reflect that what has worked before will be unable to attract and retain millennial employees. Companies that recruit and retain young professionals will gain a competitive advantage (Lassen, 2015).

## METHODOLOGY

The study follows a quantitative research approach based on data secured utilising questionnaires. The University of Pretoria assisted the Association of South African Quantity Surveyors (ASAQS) to compile the research instrument and analysing the data. The ASAQS distributed the questionnaire to all South African quantity surveyors (QS's) on their database. A total of 626 valid responses were received from respondents, representing approximately 14% of registered QS's in South Africa.

## FINDINGS

### Age and Gender

Figure 1 confirmed that the gender of millennial QS's differed substantially from QS's older than 41 years. Only 14.8% of QS's older than 41 are female, but females make up 37.3% of millennial QS's. According to figure 2, millennial QS's make up 52.4% of South African QS's, 44.8% of male QS's and 73.5% of female QS's.

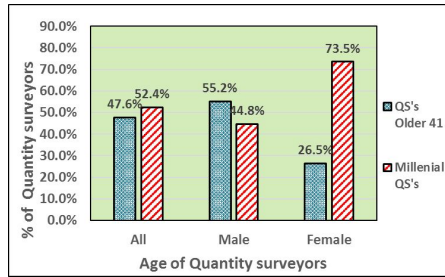


Figure 2: Age of Millennial QS's (Source: Author, 2022).

Table 1. Locational spread of Millennial QS's (Source: Author, 2022)

	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	Gauteng	Free State	North West	Northern Cape	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	KwaZulu-Natal
QS's Older 41	4.1%	1.4%	41.3%	4.4%	3.1%	0.3%	20.8%	8.2%	16.4%
Millennial QS's	2.5%	2.8%	44.3%	4.9%	1.5%	0.9%	16.0%	9.2%	17.8%

**Location**

Table 1 details the spread of QS's amongst the country's nine provinces. The spread of millennial QS's in some Provinces with large urban areas and major national economic hubs increased (Gauteng from 41.3% to 44.3%; KwaZulu-Natal from 16.4% to 17.8%), but others such as the Western Cape declined (20.8% to 16.0%).

**Qualification Level**

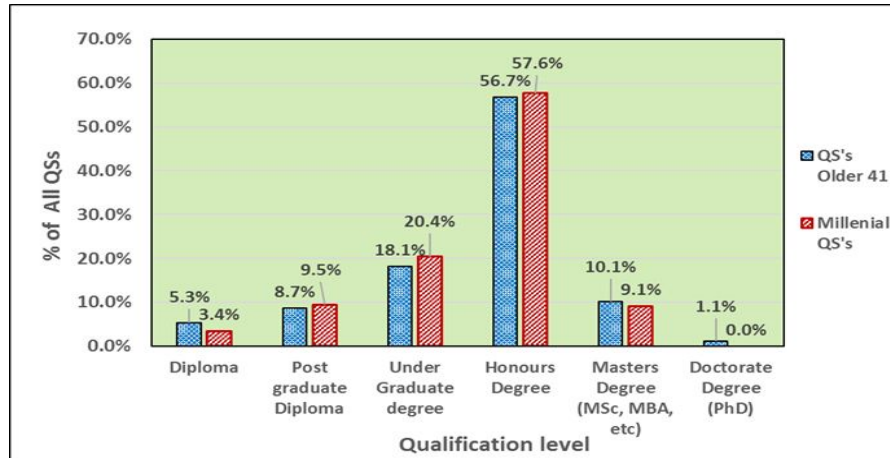
Millennial QS's were found to, compared to QS's older than 41, hold slightly larger portions of postgraduate diplomas, undergraduate degrees and honours degrees (see Figure 3). Due to their relatively younger age, fewer millennial QS's had master and doctorate qualifications than QS's older than 41.

**Race**

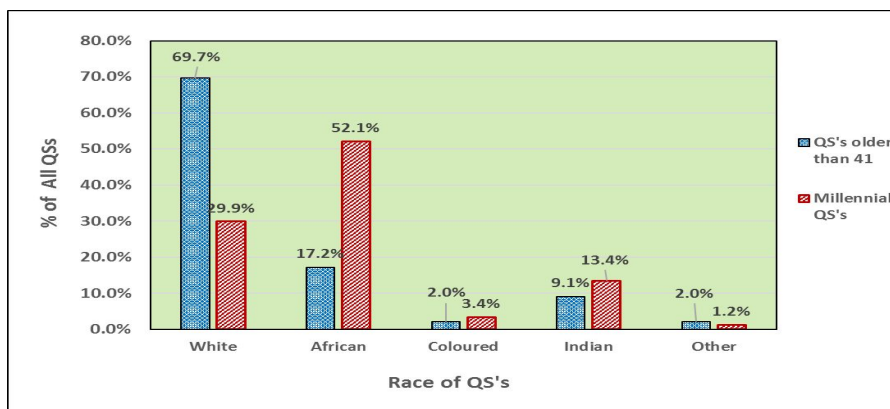
The racial compilation of QS's showed the most dramatic change amongst all the study's findings. Figure 4 confirmed that White QS's decreased from 69,7% for QS's older than 41 to 29,9% amongst millennial QS's while African QS's increased from 17.2% to 52.1%. Indian QS's also increased from 9.1% to 13.4%.

**Employment Sector**

The employment sectors preferred by millennial QS's also showed some changes. Some 23.3% work for construction companies, compared to 18.3% of



**Figure 3:** Qualification level of Millennial QS's (Source: Author, 2022).



**Figure 4:** Racial makeup of Millennial QS's (Source: Author, 2022).

QS's older than 41. Likewise, the public sector also employs 13.6% of millennial QS's and only 10.2% of QS's older than 41. However, fewer millennial QS's are employed in private practices (58.7% vs 66.4%) (see Figure 5). These employment changes may be linked to the significantly larger number of Africans amongst millennial QS's.

### ASAQS Membership

The study found that a much larger portion of 36.3% of millennial QS's is not ASAQS members compared to 22.0% for QS's older than 41 (see Figure 6). The changes in the portions of student members or PMAQS can be largely attributed to the younger age of millennial QS's.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study made several important findings that will be of particular importance to the ASAQS. Companies and firms employing QS's and academic

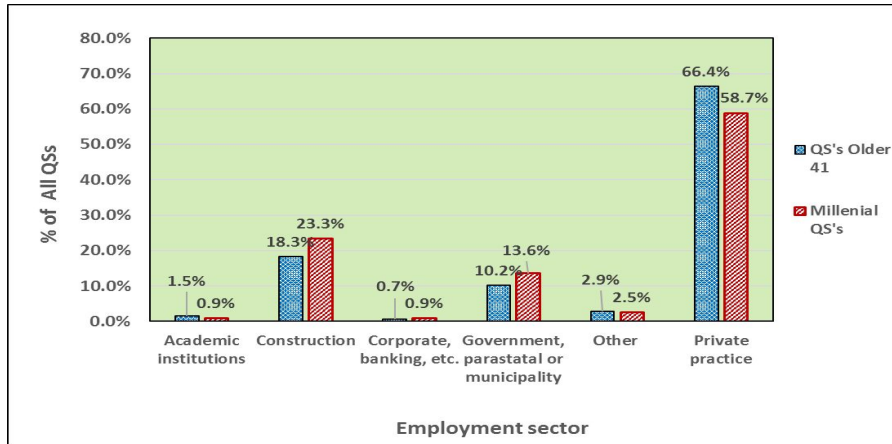


Figure 5: Employment sector of Millennial QS's (Source: Author, 2022).

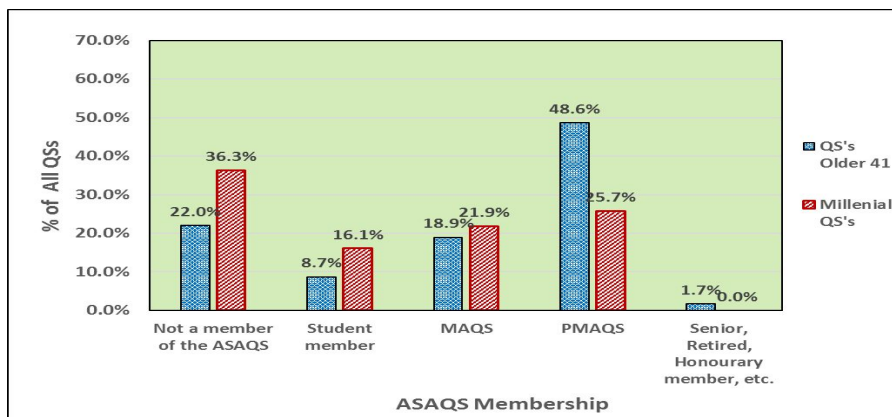


Figure 6: ASAQS membership of Millennial QS's (Source: Author, 2022).

institutions involved with training QS's will also benefit from these findings. Some of the most important findings were the large increase in females amongst millennials QS's, the decrease in White and the increase in African millennial QS's and the fact that a larger number of millennial QS's are not ASAQS members.

The study should be repeated regularly to assist the ASAQS in keeping track of the demographical changes in the dynamic South African construction and socio-economic landscapes.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

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