

# Nielsen investigates 'the new shopper normal'

## South Africans shift from pantry loading to everyday shopping

The nature of South African shopping trips has shifted during the Covid-19 lockdown from an initial focus on bulk, stock up shopping to everyday needs shopping, which is up a significant 10 points from pre-Covid-19 levels, both online and offline. This data stems from a significant new Nielsen study 'The New Shopper Normal' conducted at the end of May 2020 that analyses how the mindsets and behaviour of South African shoppers have evolved during the nationwide lockdown.

Nielsen South Africa, Consumer Insights Director Kim Reddy says ...

“The lockdown has led to key changes in the channels that South Africans shop at and the product categories they purchase.”

“Before Covid-19, bulk shopping accounted for 55% of shopping trips. We know this continued through the first few weeks of the lockdown as people bought products that had a longer shelf-life in bulk and looked for items they could store. As a result, many consumers had to switch to cheaper brands to balance their increased basket sizes with their available funds,” she explains.



However, as the situation developed, there was a distinct increase in shopping for everyday needs and meal preparation, both in offline and online shopping. By the end of May, close to the

implementation of Level 3 of the lockdown, 74% of South African shoppers said they needed the items they purchased right away versus 26% of shoppers who purchased to stock for the future.

## 'In and out' shopping

During this period, there has ...

“ also been an increase in the number of shopping channels visited with higher spend per trip. ”

The number of store types visited increased towards the end of May 2020, with an average of 7.5 stores visited and more shoppers including online retailers in their repertoire versus pre-Covid-19.

Pharmacy, Convenience (Forecourt/ 'Garage Shops') and Online shopping all saw significant increases (pre-Covid-19 versus last few weeks of May) as shoppers focused on ensuring their health needs were taken care of, looked to convenient, quick 'in and out shopping trips' for their daily needs or chose to stay at home entirely and engaged in online shopping trips.

## Online safety

There has also been a deepening of many consumers' relationship with online shopping, with 24% more shoppers saying they used this channel "in the last week" and 58% of shoppers visiting a new online store in the same period.

The main reasons for an increase in online shopping were people not wanting to risk going outside and coming into contact with other people. Online shoppers were also more likely to shop

around given they could do so from the safety of their home and once they were online, they spent more than when shopping offline.

However, barriers to online shopping like availability, range and delivery were the main drivers for shoppers going offline, where store choice was mainly driven by well-established relationships with brick and mortar stores. For example, 64% said they prefer shopping in a real store, and 32% stated they prefer the familiarity of their favourite store.

Looking to the future, Reddy says that the Covid-19 pandemic has given rise to a far more

self-sufficient South African shopper. "As South Africans settled into and accepted the new normal of a lockdown lifestyle; issues like quarantine living and concerns around exposing themselves to potential health risks have created a far more insular consumer. This has resulted in them embracing a homebound lifestyle that focuses on home-based meal preparation and cooking.

"As more South Africans return to work, we expect this trend to continue, as shoppers seek out convenient options like ready to eat meals, meal kits, DIY personal care, that still meet their needs for health and safety," Reddy concludes. **SR**

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