

THE
COVID-19
CONSUMER

Research conducted during Lockdown Level 3

Findings released October 2020



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Introduction and approach

Consumer behaviour and preferences are influenced by many factors, most notably the times we find ourselves in, referred to as the Zeitgeist.

It is the culmination of forces - like the economy, politics and technology - combining to create unique moments in humanity that augment and impact how we feel and in turn, how we respond to the world around us.

This Zeitgeist is always shifting and changing; but, for the first time in human history, the world has found itself in the exact same state at the exact same time. However, we are seeing that different cultures are responding differently to the same pandemic.

South Africa itself has been quite unique in its handling of the pandemic, and this report is an attempt to contextualise that response and its impact on citizens and, ultimately, businesses and brands.

So, we set out to identify how COVID-19 is impacting South Africans' lives in terms of their feelings, finances, shopping behaviour and entertainment and socialising.

Methodology and sample

624 South Africans completed the online survey. The sample included a broad range of monthly household income groups, age groups, ethnicity and gender.

Respondents were recruited through our existing consumer panel, influencer network, and through promotion on Facebook and WhatsApp.

Fieldwork was conducted over the lockdown period from 23 July until 5 August 2020. The survey included 20 close-ended and 7 open-ended questions.

12 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 49	50 - 69	70 or older
21%	38%	20%	19%	2%
Gauteng	Cape Town	Durban	Other	
47%	30%	17%	6%	

Key Insights

The Consumer

The generational divide

The biggest divide was not seen so much in income or race but rather in age (or life stage). The generational divide was the biggest differentiator in behaviour. For example, middle income parents and upwards were the most blasé about social distancing.

A new 'decision-making' algorithm

One of the major impacts is of course financial. While people have been forced to recalibrate their personal and professional priorities, the consequences have been seen in how consumers judge value and a shift from conspicuous consumption to a more 'prioritised consumption'.

COVID-19 has changed the consumers' decision-making algorithm, with a new formula slowly being defined based on the life experience and financial resources currently available to cash-strapped consumers. While cost has always been a factor, it will be even more important now, and we will see consumers making more purchase decisions based on perceived value.

Understanding what that value is to a consumer is imperative, and not always explicitly even known by consumers themselves. It may be tangible benefits, such as a physical product to be stretched further, or intangibles, such as status, belonging or peace of mind. Or, it could be an enhanced customer experience. The closer companies listen to their customers, the better they will be able to serve their needs in the post COVID-19 economy, which is likely to have more emphasis on wellness and be increasingly contactless and online.

VUCA = SCSC

The consumer mindset is being very largely impacted by the combination of four factors:

- a very bleak future outlook for our country

- low trust in our government
- increasing levels of anxiety and stress
- reduced income

We have been speaking about the impact of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) for two years already. However, this is now an acute issue with consumers looking for the opposite, referred to as SCSC (Stability, Certainty, Simplicity, Clarity).

As a result, people will go back to what they know and trust. They will return to places they feel safe in, they will take less risk, gravitate towards aesthetics that are minimalistic and messaging that is clear, simple and easy to understand. This pattern of behaviour will continue until things turn around economically, or categories where they feel confident begin to take risks and embrace novelty.

In response to this, trust is a major value for people and brands need to show credibility and reliability; they need to lead with strong, humanistic values and purpose.

Brands will need to be the opposite of the chaotic threat that people are currently dealing with; they need to be optimistic, provide solutions and show guidance.

With everything an existential crisis, with no molehills and only mountains, and everyone worrying that every part of the world and country is about to implode, they need a saviour and brands can play a considered role in this.

Distrust

COVID-19 and biased news reporting has led to more distrust in science, experts, government and established leaders. Instead, people are looking more to their tribes and themselves to determine what they believe in. This has had the impact of increasing local love, neighbourhood support, helping out friends and supporting families. But, it also means relationships are becoming more lateral than vertical, building critical mass of opinion and word of mouth among real people, rather than from experts, is imperative to change beliefs.

Being part of culture and being on the ground with consumers is now essential.

On Facebook, from February to May 2020, clicks on searches for local businesses increased by 23% and local groups on Facebook grew their membership by 3.3 times.

Seeking connections

The need for social interaction and belonging has been amplified and people are craving interpersonal connections. Anxiety and loneliness will continue to increase, pushing social media usage and engagement to higher levels as people seek out feelings of connection and belonging.

Fearful vs Fearless

Some, not most, are now more cautious about others and the spread of germs, disease and infection. Hygiene practices will stick with many, specifically those who have experienced the negative impact of Coronavirus, as well as those who have a leaning towards a fear of germs.

However, those who lean the other way, who haven't experienced a negative impact from the virus may be more emboldened, which would lead to two very strong and opposing behaviours that are commonplace on every street across the country - the 'paranoid protected' and the 'ambivalent rebel'.

BLM has not yet penetrated South African culture in the same way it has overseas

While this has been one of the biggest news stories globally, at times overshadowing the pandemic itself, it held much less resonance in relation to the respondents other concerns. Racism was not a top priority, ranking below other concerns such as corruption, GBV, mental illness and food supply. This may be due to its constant presence in our culture, rather than an ambivalence to it.

Purchase

Offline still beats online

Fear of COVID-19 and the restrictions imposed by the Lockdown stimulated mass online grocery shopping adoption. However, almost all consumers were still going in store and future indicators of intent point to a preference to shift back to this. But, online usage is fast becoming a normal purchase channel within the mix and brands need to ensure they are ready and accessible at the points consumers want to be able to purchase.

The future of ecommerce post pandemic might be more about how it works in tandem with destination shopping, rather than about it replacing a trip to the shops entirely.

Innovation needed in grocery ecommerce

Grocery retailers need to offer reasons beyond safety to hook and keep people online and should review delivery costs, speed, deals, and fuller ranges based on consumer preferences. 60Sixty have showed that quick adoption can happen if blockers related to delivery costs and speed are removed.

Innovation with customer centricity in mind can enable bold leaders to leapfrog their competitors. Retailers have collaborated to enhance delivery speed and 'click and deliver' has been adopted in some stores. However, while there is still low uptake among the lower income groups, suppliers such as Yebo Fresh have innovated in the township delivery space to great effect.

Overall, there exists an opportunity to get a deeper understanding of what shoppers need and how online and offline can live together more holistically in the future.

Instore adaptation needed

Safety is a key reason for online purchase and this learning should be applied in physical stores to reduce stress and save shoppers time so that they get in and out quickly. Reducing stress through minimal human interaction, such as contactless payment, social distancing or click and collect is going to be a major factor in the rate of return to physical shopping. Store UX is also going to be critical in the long term to reducing time 'on the floor' by ensuring that shoppers can find the products that they are looking for as quickly as possible. However, in the short term, this is not the time to make changes to the store layout or packaging as people are relying on familiarity.

Innovation in mobile payment

Mobile payment still had low adoption, particularly among the low and middle income groups, where cash was preferred. In an effort to support businesses during this difficult time, SnapScan is waiving the admin fee at signup and SnapScan beacon payments are increasing in availability.

Facebook and TikTok have announced their planned 'shop now' features that will bring these giants into the retail space.

People still prefer real life experiences

Being with people and socialising was probably the hardest restriction for South Africans to endure and the technology to fulfill this need did not deliver on the fundamental human hunger for connection. The novelty of virtual events has died down and, until technology can deliver on the full sensorial experience and provide the feeling of meaningful interactions, people will defer back to IRL. Novel ways of creating meaningful connections will be a creative challenge brands will need to solve.

DSTV is downgraded as a status brand

DSTV is no longer the status symbol it used to be as Netflix and other online streaming platforms have now become the pop cultural badges to show off, discuss and bond around.

While these streaming platforms are much cheaper, they do require good internet access and do not come with the sports package that has driven much of DSTV's allure. It is worth noting that the Competition Commission is currently investigating a proposed deal that would see MultiChoice, Netflix and Amazon Prime Video offer a bundled product to include DSTV.

YouTube is still the lead platform for content viewing and is the channel that's able to reach all South Africans online, allowing for targeting based on personality or content preference.

Downgrade in purchase leads to uptick in sales.

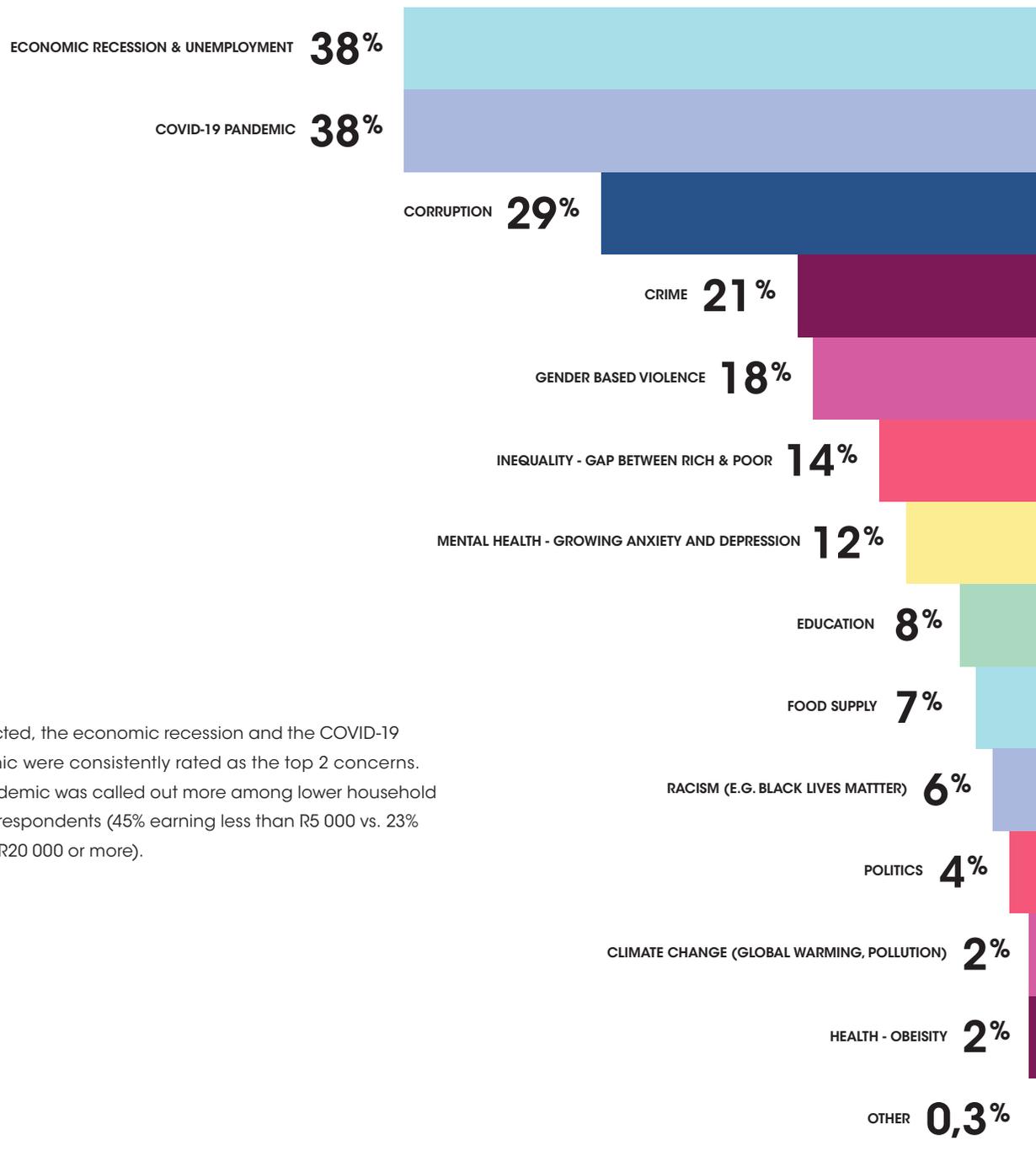
People who don't have large financial safety nets or support will be hardest hit, potentially dropping from middle income, to low income, or low income back into poverty.

Big ticket purchases in life will be delayed or downgraded - i.e. new car sales may stall, but the 2nd hand car industry is booming. Unemployment has risen and our already struggling economy has been further devastated resulting in the rise of counteracted debt (and therefore interest on that debt). **Some industries may not recover.**

The Mood of South Africa

What are the 2 biggest issues that South Africans face that are most important to you and your immediate family?

As expected, the economic recession and the COVID-19 pandemic were consistently rated as the top 2 concerns. The pandemic was called out more among lower household income respondents (45% earning less than R5 000 vs. 23% earning R20 000 or more).



Contrasting concerns across generations

Whilst other age groups rated the economy and COVID-19 as their 2 main concerns, the 50 years plus segment named Corruption as their chief concern.

This age bracket who are more at risk to COVID-19 than others, rated the pandemic and health risk as only their 4th biggest concern (there was no difference across race) with Crime a very close 3rd.

This highlights how they are most sensitive to corruption, crime and the economic impacts inflicted by lawlessness in SA as well as their slight disregard towards the threat of infection to their health.

In contrast, whilst the 18-24year-old segment were most concerned about the economic recession and the COVID-19 pandemic, they showed less concern for corruption and crime. However, multiple sources and historic data highlight that the youth are often hit harder by economic recession, with youth unemployment rates rising faster than the overall rates.

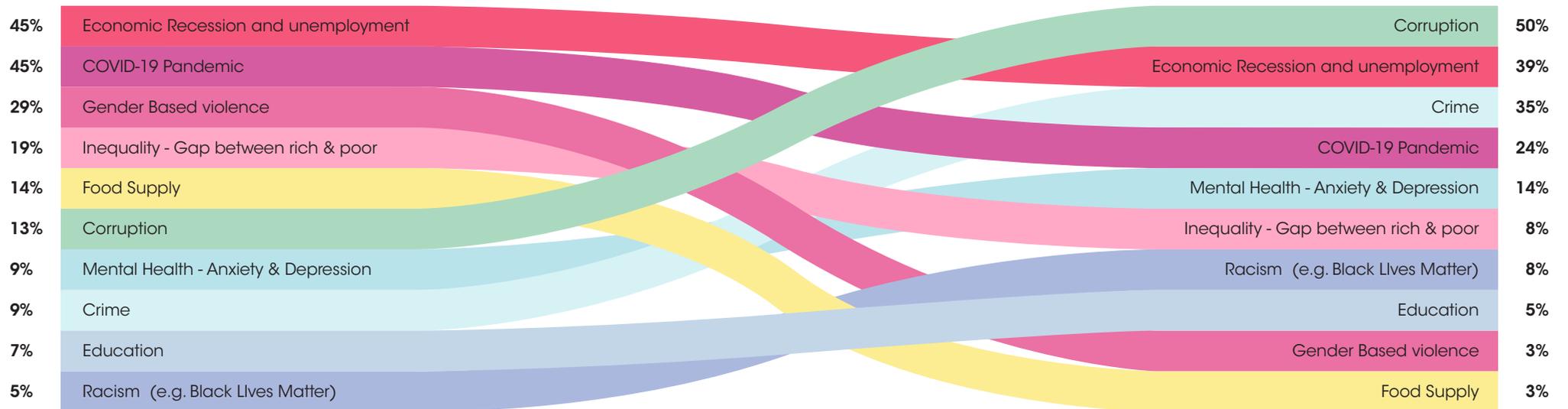
This may be based on different sources of information feeding each generation - traditional media will cover and focus on crime and corruption, whilst social media does not.

Top 2 issues (ranked)

18 - 24
YO (n=129)

Top 2 issues (ranked)

50 - 69
YO (n=119)



GBV is only a main concern for the youth

For the 35 years and younger segment, GBV is a concern (3rd ranked), however, this concern drops drastically the older people get and the higher MHI increases.

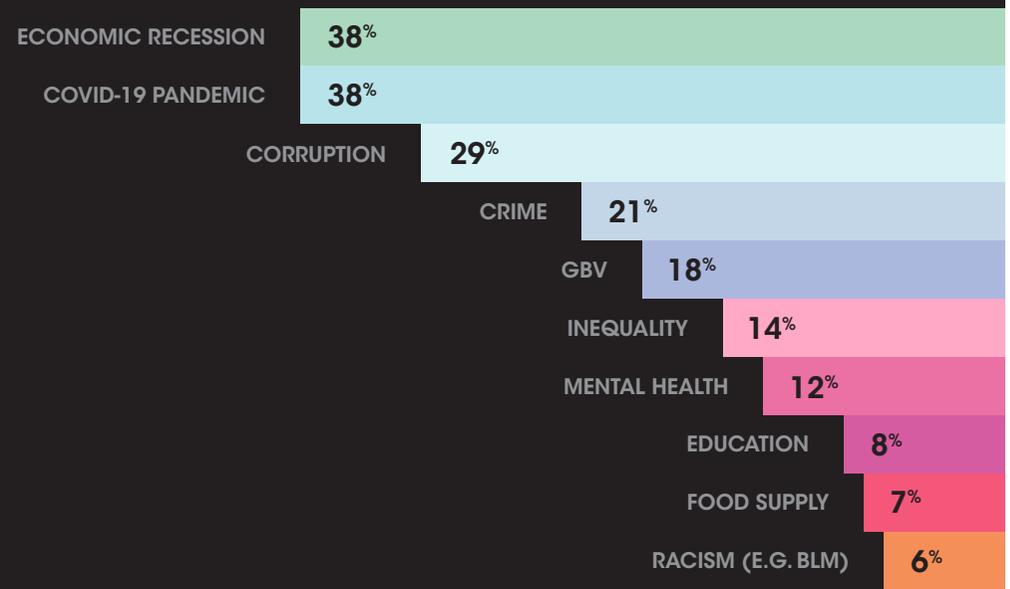
It is worth noting that SA is ranked at #1 globally for violence against women, with the most interest being shown by the youth across all genders.

Online search interest coincided with lockdown, potentially prompted by President Cyril Ramaphosa addressing this issue and his concerns for the impact of this "second pandemic".



Source: Google Trends

While **racism and BLM** has been one of the biggest news stories globally, at times overshadowing the pandemic itself, it held much less resonance among respondents in relation to their other concerns.



The impact on people's livelihoods is the common denominator across all races in terms of their chief concerns; be they recession, unemployment, corruption or crime. The big difference is in how this is caused and inadvertently who is to blame; pandemic led recession vs. corruption and crime.

How I Feel about South Africa's Future?

South Africans are extremely concerned and uncertain about SA's economic future. Only 2% state they are extremely confident, whereas 44% are extremely concerned (this increases to over 70% among 50-years plus).

Younger people are less negative. However, this does not mean they are optimistic, they are just unsure. White respondents have a more negative outlook (82% versus 61% for black and 56% for coloured) than other races.

As South Africa faces its worst recession in 90 years, these figures are in line with other reports indicating drastically dropping business and consumer confidence. The RMN/BER Index released earlier this year, for example, showed business confidence was at its lowest since the index began in 1975.

How do you feel about the next 5 years of South Africa's economic future?

EXTREMELY CONFIDENT 2%
FAIRLY CONFIDENT 6%
UNSURE 24%
FAIRLY CONCERNED 24%
EXTREMELY CONCERNED 44%



Increased stress and anxiety since lockdown

The majority (62%) of respondents were feeling more anxious and stressed since the start of the nationwide Lockdown. Only 1 in 10 people are feeling more relaxed and calm. Impact on personal finances are likely a contributing factor.

Streetbees Mood of the World (<https://moodoftheworld.streetbees.com/#>) highlights how South Africans were more anxious or stressed at the height of lockdown level 5, but this is starting to lessen as restrictions are relaxed.



"I'm really depressed and worried about the safety and security of my fellow South Africans as the pandemic is affecting and derailing all our future plans."

"We can't go to events or play any sports, so we're always in our homes which is depressing, going out decreases stress and anxiety."

Personal Finance

Some of us are earning less and almost half of us are spending less

The biggest financial action taken by South Africans across all income levels has been on cutting down monthly expenses.

Over a third of respondents across all income levels are earning less money.

People are prioritising where they spend their money in order to survive or, if possible, save for the future. Store accounts were at the top of list of items either canceled or defaulted on since the start of Lockdown with 20% being impacted. This is followed by online streaming subscriptions (13%) and DSTV (12%).

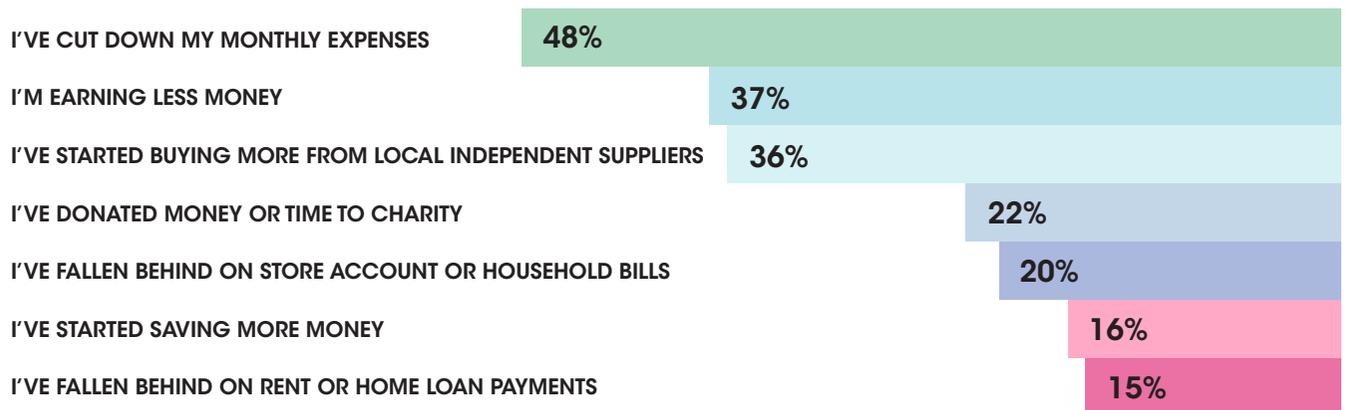
We've also seen a trend of people supporting local independent suppliers, with just over a third claiming that they have started buying more from them.

"Covid 19 has drastically changed my life and how I deal with priorities. I just stopped paying for unnecessary things and focused on what's essential. I just learned to save for future purposes."

"It hasn't been easy with downgrading my DSTV access but, as soon as things get better, we would love to upgrade again. My son has already started to complain, but I have sat him down and explained that we need money to buy food. COVID-19 has changed our lives emotionally as we have adapted into something new and scary. Surviving from hand to mouth."

"It is more difficult now than it was before in terms of sustaining our living with the current issues that we are facing as a country."

Which of these apply to you since the start of lockdown in March 2020?



Cash is the preferred method of payment among those earning R10 000 or less

Half of respondents (49%) earning less than R10 000 prefer cash, while only 14% of those earning R20 000 or more choose to pay with physical currency.

The Generational Divide: Responsibility vs Entertainment

Between the ages of 35 and 49 years seems to be a threshold for taking on more responsibility. Medical Aid usage increases while online streaming decreases.

	18 - 24 ^{y/o}	25 - 34 ^{y/o}	35 - 49 ^{y/o}	50 - 69 ^{y/o}	70+	TOTAL
MEDICAL AID	13%	32%	56%	63%	86%	40%
ONLINE VIDEO OR STREAMING MUSIC SUBSCRIPTION	33%	42%	53%	30%	21%	39%

eCommerce

Food is driving recent online purchases

68% of respondents have shopped online in the past month, skewing higher as the income bracket increases. Surprisingly, more than half of respondents who earn less than R10k per month have said they have purchased online.

Fast food and groceries have driven this behaviour (propelled by Lockdown restrictions), followed closely by clothing, electronics and cosmetics.

Interestingly, usage was down with people over the age of 50 (55% only) compared to 72% for those under 50 years, showing that this older age group still preferred to go in store and stick to their usual habits of purchase, despite the threat of infection.

Which of these bought to you since the start of lockdown level in March 2020?

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME	TOTAL	R0 to R4 999	R5 000 to R9 999	R10 000 to R19 999	R20 0000 or more
SAMPLE	624	155	75	84	127
BOUGHT ONLINE	68%	53%	59%	68%	87%
FAST FOOD OR RESTAURANT DELIVERY	39%	27%	29%	49%	53%
GROCERIES (E.G. FOOD AND CLEANING PRODUCTS)	27%	15%	13%	25%	40%
CLOTHING FOR YOURSELF	23%	16%	16%	24%	32%
ELECTRONICS OR HOME APPLIANCES	22%	11%	23%	26%	35%
COSMETICS OR BEAUTY PRODUCTS	16%	10%	13%	20%	20%
TOYS, GAMES OR BOOKS	12%	6%	8%	10%	21%
CLOTHING FOR A CHILD	12%	10%	4%	14%	14%
ALCOHOL	10%	1%	8%	7%	18%
SHOES FOR YOURSELF	9%	5%	8%	10%	13%
SPORT / TRAINING EQUIPMENT	7%	3%	4%	10%	11%
NONE	32%	47%	41%	32%	13%

Middle-upper income are using grocery ecommerce more

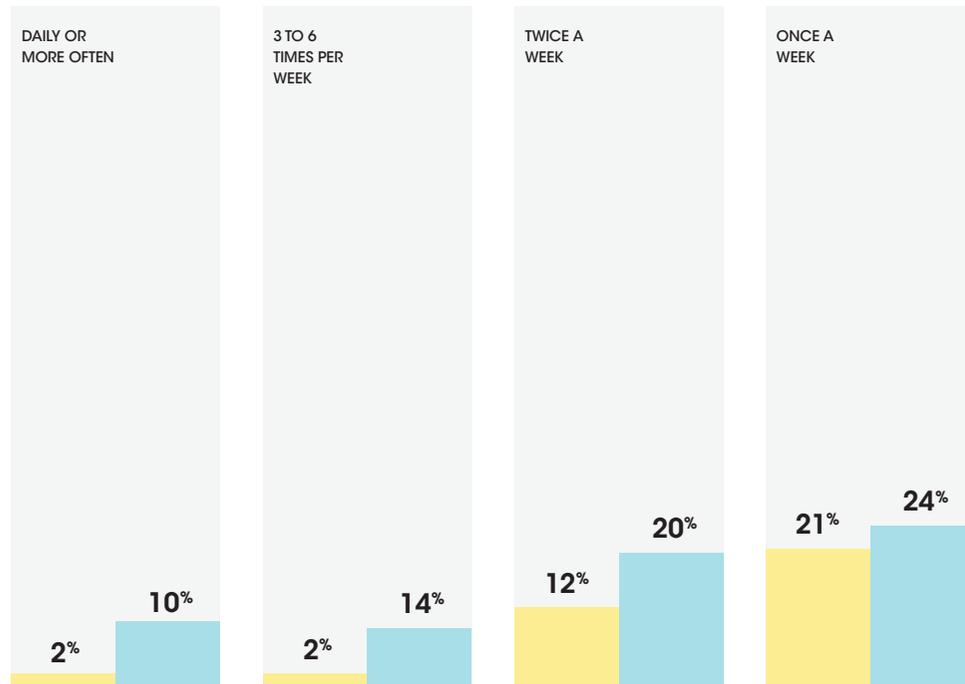
The majority of online grocery shopping (40%) was done by the segment that fell into the R20 000 or more MHI. However, there were signs of rising adoption recognised across all income levels. A barrier to this becoming permanent is access to grocery delivery as it is still difficult in some areas. However, companies such as Yebo Fresh are making inroads.

Online grocery shopping is supplementing rather than replacing store shopping

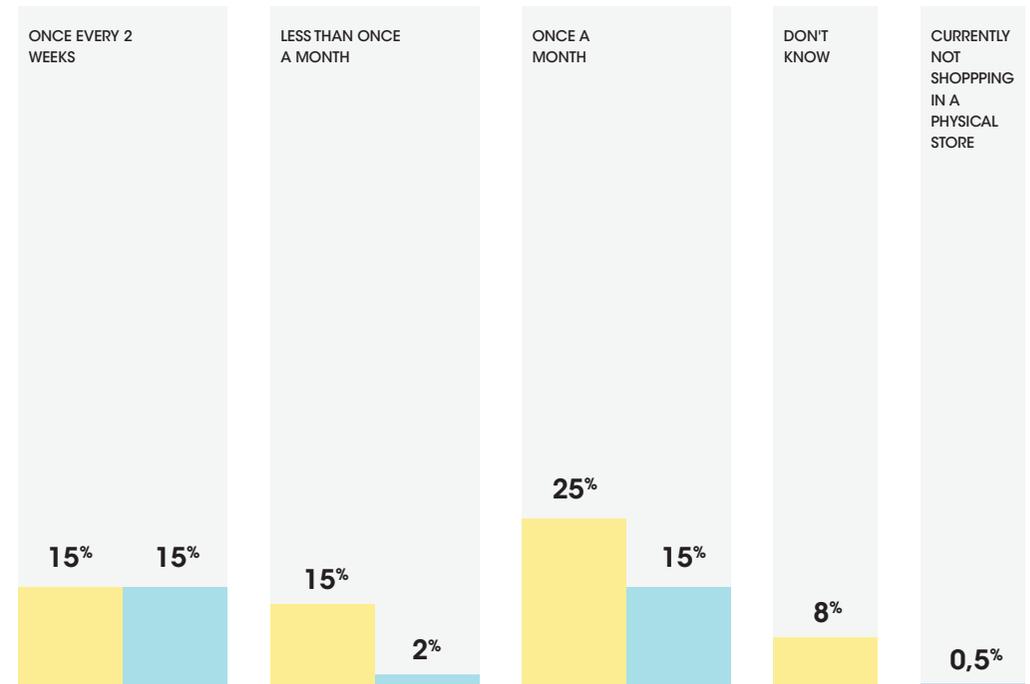
Almost all respondents are still going into a physical store to buy groceries. Of these:

- 68% of total respondents shop in a grocery store once a week or more (44% twice a week or more)
- 38% online grocery shoppers shop for groceries online once a week or more (17% are more than twice a week.)

Approximately how often are you currently shopping for groceries online n=169



How often are you or someone from your household going into a physical store to buy groceries? n=624



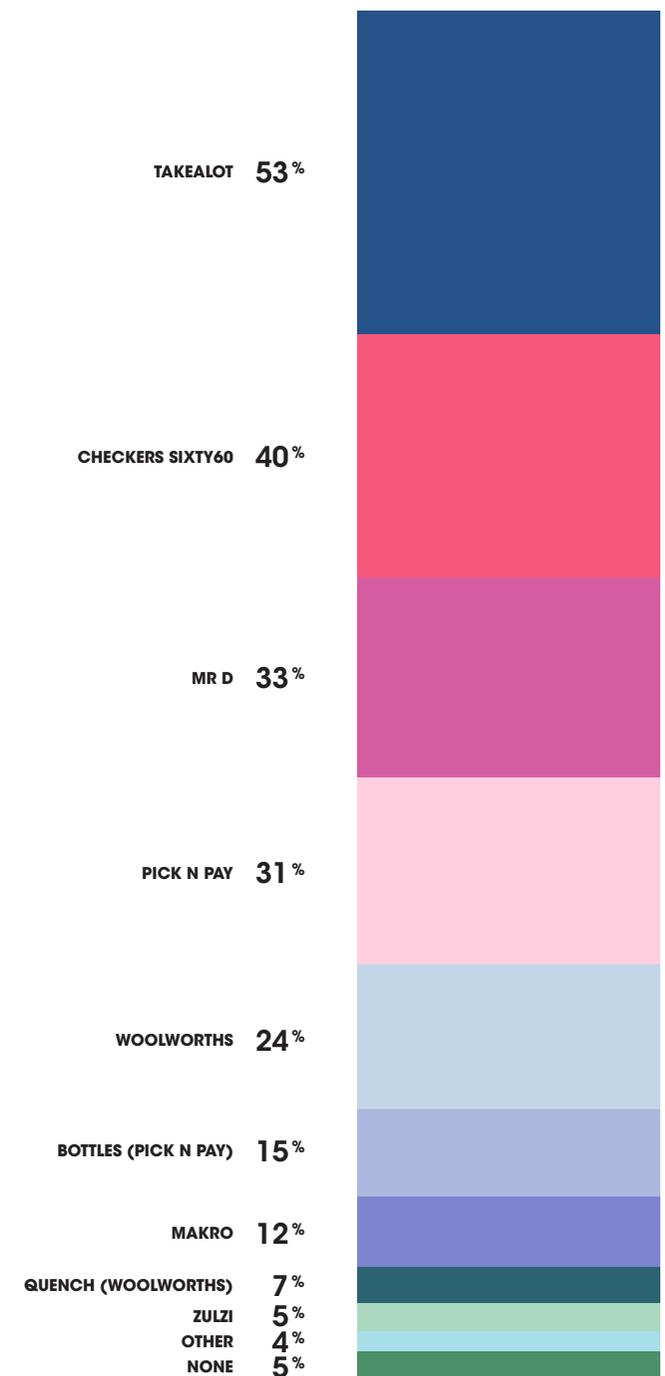
Checkers Sixty60 has taken SA by storm

Having launched less than a year ago, Checkers Sixty60 (40%) has done exceptionally well to be mentioned ahead of established online grocery competitors, Pick n Pay (31%) and Woolworths (24%). The latter were supported by Bottles and Quench to support demand and decrease lag in delivery times.

Checkers Sixty60 has over 100 000 downloads and is ranked as the 5th most downloaded app in the shopping category (App store/ Android), with Takealot still in the number one position.

Which of these online grocery stores have you used since the start of lockdown?

n=169

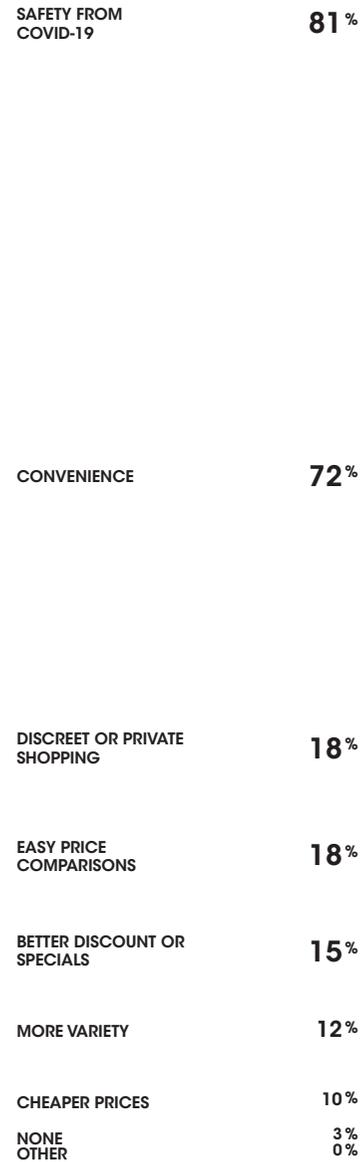


What do you feel are the biggest benefits of shopping for groceries online?

n=169

COVID-19 has without doubt been the driver behind online purchase followed closely by convenience (most probably linked to Lockdown restrictions).

Convenience was less important to lower income earners, in contrast, the upper income segment weighted convenience as more important than their concern for COVID-19 (perhaps showing how more protected and inoculated the upper income may feel from the virus).

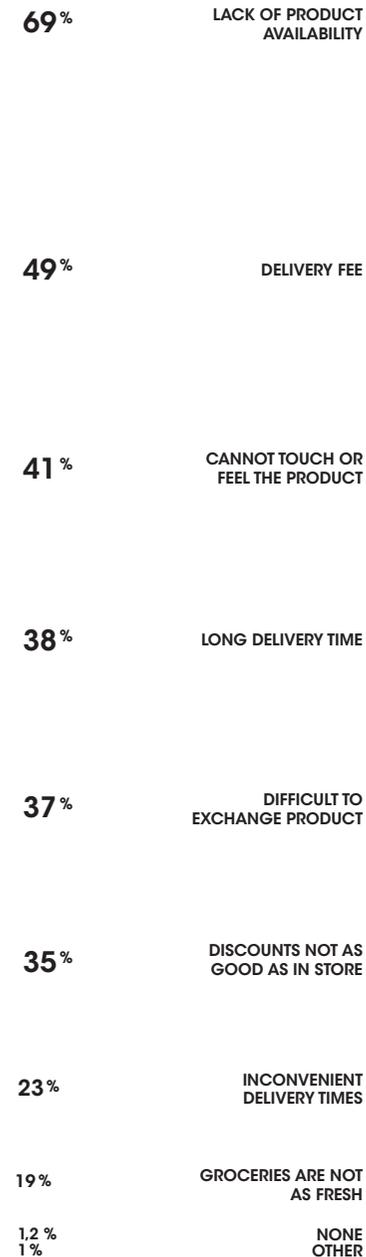


What do you feel are the biggest drawbacks of shopping for groceries online?

n=169

Lack of product availability was listed as the top drawback, peaking in the upper income and age categories.

This was followed by the cost of the delivery fee and then the expected tactile deficit of not being able to touch and feel the product.



Grocery Online store Comparison on Delivery Fee, Delivery Time and Assortment

*We have included the info we have been able to find and actual data may vary.

Ecommerce retailer

Claimed delivery time

Delivery fee

Grocery assortment



2 to 4 working days

R60. Free for orders over R450

Dry groceries and cleaning products. No fresh food.



1 Hour

Initially free. R35 Fee introduced in May. Current promo offer - get R35 off your next delivery

Maximum of 30 items. The same items per individual are limited to 3.



1 Hour

R15

Takeaways and also some groceries. Can only order from one outlet at a time.



Select a time slot

R50. Free for certain Woolworth credit cardholders. Click and collect at some stores



10 - 14 Working days

R70

Frozen, dry food and cleaning products. No fresh food.



Same day delivery

R60. Free if you order is over a certain amount. Click and collect option at some stores



Same day delivery

A standard delivery fee of R35 and service fee of R15

Partners are collaborating with Pick N Pay to deliver groceries.



Same day within an hour

Standard delivery fee R60

Have partnered up with Woolworths to deliver groceries. Sells alcohol.



Same day within an hour

Delivery fee ranges from R20- R85, some case delivery can be free

Groceries and medication

Online grocery shoppers are on the fence about future usage.

While COVID-19 safety concerns have been the number one driver for online grocery shopping (81%), it seems plausible that only a quarter of current online grocery shoppers (7% of the total sample) claim that they are extremely likely to continue shopping for groceries online once the pandemic is no longer a threat.

However, and very importantly, almost half of grocery online shoppers are either fairly likely or unsure about future online activity, which indicates that they are on the fence and can be pushed in either direction. The onus is on retailers to provide more reasons to convince these consumers to stay and continue spending online.

How likely are you to continue shopping for groceries online once COVID-19 is no longer a threat?

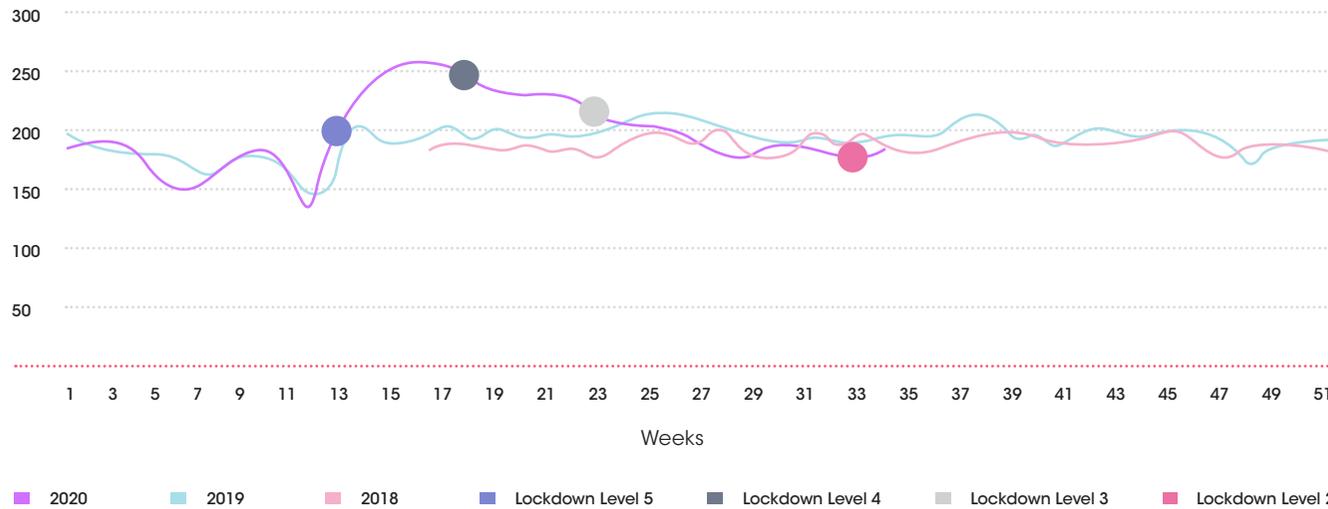


Entertainment & socialising

Average time spent viewing content is 'back to normal'

Nielsen data indicates that at the peak of Lockdown Level 5 (week 15), the average time spent viewing per week was 1 hour longer than the same time last year (203 vs. 152 minutes in 2019). This started to decrease as Lockdown levels eased and is now similar to those seen in 2018-2019 (185 vs 193 minutes in 2019).

Average time spent viewing



Change in schedules due to production delays

The Ampere Analysis Report states that up to 60% of scripted titles around the world that were set to air later this year will be delayed, and up to 10% of planned dramas and comedies are more than likely to be discontinued.

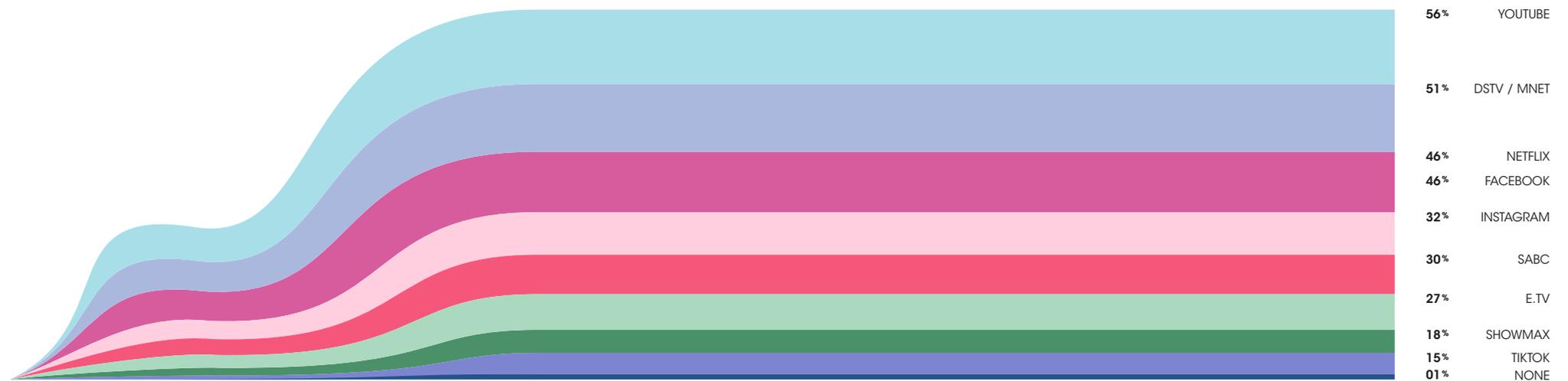
In South Africa during Lockdown, shows such as The River, Isibaya and Gomora had to temporarily stop airing as they did not have enough new episodes due to filming restrictions. This led to an increase in airing past episodes (e.g. IsiBaya) and replacements (e.g. Makoti replacing UZalo).

Production delays caused both an increase and decrease in viewership. With shows having reruns due to production delays, many viewers were able to catch up or even start watching shows. DSTV shows that were reserved for Premium subscribers were made available to Standard subscribers. It's also worth noting that production delays and reruns also made users turn to other platforms for content, like YouTube and other streaming services.

Viewers watching content across multiple platforms

Viewers watched video content on approximately 3 different platforms over a 2-week period. YouTube is the most popular source of entertainment (56%), however, it is not seen as a streaming service in the same way as Netflix or Showmax. It is the generic, ubiquitous platform for video content used by all and ranks first consistently for age, income and race. This is followed by DSTV, Facebook and Netflix.

On which of these platforms have you watched TV or video content during the past 2 weeks?



DSTV is no longer the status symbol it once was for the wealthy as they have now shifted to Netflix

Netflix (46%) is the premium content provider, showing highest usage amongst the R20 000 and more income group (72% vs. 23% among R0-R4 999) compared to DSTV at 55%.

Within entertainment, there is a growing divide in choice around online streaming versus DSTV, with those with higher income preferring the online streaming option. However, good quality wifi is still a barrier for some.

On which of these platforms have you watched TV or video content during the past 2 weeks?

	R0 to R4999	R5000 to R9999	R10000 to R19999	R20000+	PREFER NOT TO SAY	TOTAL
SAMPLE	155	75	84	127	183	624
DSTV OR MNET	43%	55%	58%	55%	50%	51%
NETFLIX	23%	37%	51%	72%	48%	46%

Content is playing a more important role in people's lives due to COVID-19

With increased anxiety and stress caused by the pandemic and recession, compounded by people being confined to their homes (whether working, studying or unemployed) and not socialising, the role of TV/content is heightened. With the news media focusing on current problems such as corruption, inequality, crime and economic recession, some people are questioning whether they want to engage in current affairs or temper it with something lighter.

"The news is too depressing, more especially news about how the SA government is handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Sure, they have some good aspects but unfortunately the majority is terrible. So, this content is a breath of fresh air and offers much needed bliss."

1.

Affordable entertainment while reducing boredom being confined to home.

2.

Information and news about the outside world, including COVID-19 updates, which was spontaneously mentioned.

"To keep up on what's happening around the world and to hear when the president will address us again."

3.

Many people are currently reflecting and exploring ways to improve or monetise their passions and skills through content that educates, stimulates the brain and inspires.

"Food shows have been great since we're now cooking more at home it provides ideas."

4.

Escape and distraction from stress of life and COVID-19.

"Soapies made me forget a little about the pandemic that we are currently facing as a country."

5.

Provide relaxation and a form of therapy to ease anxiety and helping to cope with COVID-19. "

"It has been an outlet for me. Especially when working from home. It has been the way I decompress and cope with Lockdown."

6.

Bring laughter and joy to compensate for not seeing friends.

"Comedy, because laughter is in short supply based on restrictions being placed on connecting with friends."

7.

Bonding with the family at home or watching what others are watching.

8.

Connection and relatedness to other people and normal life.

"I watch reality TV sometimes to escape my own reality and worry about someone else's problems."

People are trying to find a balance between purely frivolous entertainment/escapism and informative/educational content.

The role that television is playing during the pandemic (Ranked):

News is the top content, driven by older respondents with music videos remaining extremely relevant when tapping into the youth market

Genres watched the most in the past 2 weeks (top 6)?

News is the number 1 content both globally and locally with the highest mentions among respondents. It is higher among 50-69 YO (62% vs 36% among the 18-24)

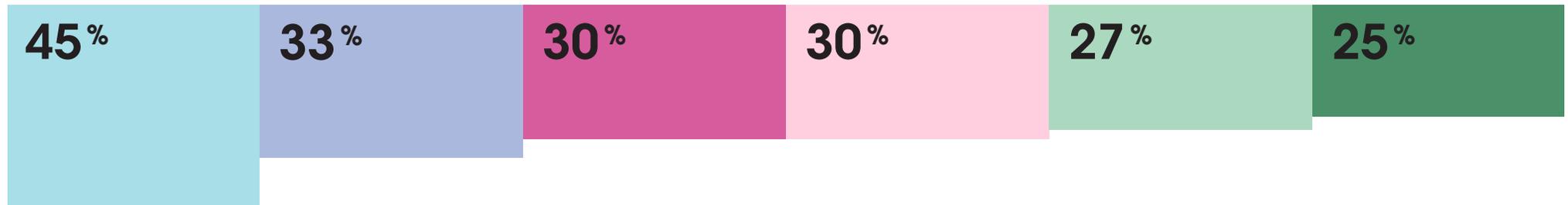
Drama/soapies are the second most watched and skew towards women (39% women vs 20% men). SABC 1 soapie UZalo broke a record with over 11 million viewership during Lockdown, the highest viewership numbers ever for South Africa's biggest channel. Netflix released its second South African drama Blood and Water.

Action/thriller/science fiction are third. Ironically Contagion was the most viewed show on SABC 3 in the month of April, with more than 4 million tuning in and #Contagion also trending on Twitter.

Comedy tied third. Viewership was slightly lower among 50 years and older (19%). Sitcoms and local standup comedy, such as Savannah Comedy Club, Mark Lottering and Barry Hilton were called out by participants.

Reality TV ranked higher among females (30% women vs 18% men) and those earning between R5000 - R9999. Uyajola 99 (i.e. Cheaters) was also the most watched show on DSTV in June overtaking Gomora and regularly trending on Twitter with #Uyajola99Sundays

Music videos remain extremely relevant among youth (32% 18-24 year-olds) and male audiences (34% men vs 19% women).



Virtual event attendance

A third (33%) of respondents had attended an online virtual event or concert for entertainment since Lockdown began. This ran consistently across all income levels, but decreased substantially among 50-69year-olds (16%). Music concert/festival/parties, such as The Lockdown parties that were hosted by Channel O and sponsored by Hunters, had the highest spontaneous mentions.

Those who would definitely attend in the future sits at 19% (but only 8% among over 50year-olds). Of those that attended, 41% claimed that they would do so again.

Online virtual events filled a gap during Lockdown. However the novelty has shown signs of slowing and the technology to deliver the full sensorial and emotional impact of attending a live event has a long way to go.

How likely are you to attend a virtual event in the next 6 months?

	Total (n=624)	Yes (n=206)	No (n=410)
DEFINITELY WOULD ATTEND	19%	41%	8%
FAIRLY LIKELY TO ATTEND	23%	33%	18%
NOT SURE	30%	19%	36%
FAIRLY UNLIKELY TO ATTEND	18%	5%	24%
DEFINITELY WILL NOT ATTEND	10%	1%	14%

"Virtual concerts are appealing now because we cannot physically attend concerts, festivals and shows."

Our cellphones are our key tools of communication

The predominant form of 'socialising' during this pandemic has been via text message with an average of almost 7 out of 10 people selecting it as their predominant form of communication, predictably skewing highest amongst 18 – 24year-olds (at 77%).

Phone calls for all other age groups were placed 2nd (54%), followed by Zoom at a distant third (29%). Those that didn't socialise at all were at a meager 10%.

Home outdoor socialising highest among white respondents

How have you socialised in the past 2 weeks?

	Total	Black	White	Coloured
SAMPLE	624	283	203	66
WHATSAPP, SMS OR EMAIL	68%	75%	68%	59%
PHONE CALLS	54%	64%	47%	41%
ONLINE CONFERENCE CALLS (E.G. ZOOM)	29%	28%	31%	30%
AT YOUR HOUSE	23%	19%	29%	27%
IN NATURE OR OUTDOORS DURING EXERCISE	13%	3%	30%	9%
AT OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES	11%	4%	23%	9%
OUTSIDE HOMES, IN THE STREET OR DRIVEWAYS	11%	6%	20%	9%
RESTAURANTS OR COFFEE SHOPS	8%	5%	16%	3%
SHOPPING CENTRES	5%	7%	4%	3%

There was a higher mention of home and outdoor socialising among white respondents who self-reported between two and five times the amount of physical interaction with others.

Surprisingly, respondents in the youth category were 50% more likely than other age groups to quit social media. This could be because of the more important and therefore more drastic influence it has on their identity and general wellness.

Pre and Post COVID-19

Is a post-pandemic world much different to a pre-pandemic world?

Much has been made about the 'new normal' and the drastic impact on consumer behaviour. However, in reality, there has been very little change with core human drivers remaining constant and therefore not creating the post apocalyptic world many anticipated/predicted.

The pandemic, reinforced by a recession, has not led to a host of new behaviours. But, given behaviour is influenced largely by how we feel and with the major impact of COVID-19 being on how we feel (our health, our survival, our wallet, our status all being threatened), this will start driving different behaviors and how we respond to the same stimulus, messaging and interaction will likely change.

More activity is now happening online and e-commerce adoption has been fast forwarded several years in the space of just a few months, but the core drivers of being human are now more important than ever. People are more anxious and stressed than ever before. However, we are seeing the mood lift as the country makes progressive steps forward back towards some semblance of normality with the easing of Lockdown restrictions.

The major impacts are on the following:

Finance

Our financial state has been threatened and millions of South Africans have been, and more will continue to be, impacted. Spending power for the majority will be down and pressure will be on brands and businesses to fight for less. **Brands will need to work harder to convince consumers to buy them.**

Emotionally

Our emotional state is one that is more threatened; we are under more pressure and stress than ever before (to different degrees for different people) - this in a country that already boasts the highest levels of anxiety in the world.

A person's financial wellbeing acutely affects their emotional wellbeing and in addition, one's psychological safety (feeling calm and confident about your reality) affects how we feel and as a consequence, how we behave.

This causes different responses in different people; some will look to fight (in different ways such as activism, xenophobia, proactive positive action etc.), others will flee (emigrate, suicide), some will freeze (do nothing except experience increased levels of internal stress) while others will look for opportunities to flock together (socialise, connect, laugh or do all the above in tribal groups).

Brands will need to be cognisant of the evolving emotional state of their consumers across the different brand touchpoints, occasions and at the point of purchase.

Behaviour

Our behaviour has been forced to shift. The most notable changes have been across the following domains:

- **Social** - we now know how much we need other people and, while winter is currently keeping the crowds at bay, summer and less social restrictions will see people flocking out to be with others. Social connection over the next 12 months is going to be central to much of our activity and will shape our behaviour.

Many key purchase decisions in the past have been driven on social status, badging and presenting an image to others. This has been stripped for the time being, but it will come flooding back as soon as people start engaging with others once again.

- **Home** - At the same time, and in direct contradiction, being at home has become a new comfort zone, unleashing new habits, rituals and comfort providing activities. We have become better at doing not much and enjoying it, which will persist for much, much longer as people juggle between these two contradictions.

- **eCommerce** - Purchase behaviour has been forced online, but not in the whole and not with a sense of everlasting adoption. That being said, this is a powerful new sales channel that brands need to take advantage of. This scalable and efficient way to drive sales and ecommerce is going to become a staple of many brand teams' focuses.

Ideological in-grouping

Our fear of germs and viruses is now either very important or not important at all. We either believe in science and follow experts or believe in conspiracy theories flouted across social media. But what drives these beliefs is a trend called Ideological In-Grouping, which is a fancy way of saying that we no longer look at issues individually and make up our own mind

by weighing up both sides. Now, we are following our tribes wholeheartedly and it isn't about what is right, rather who is right. So, badging, beliefs and behaviour are now set via association, or who you want to be seen with. The herd mentality has been amplified by social media.

Brands are responsible too

The past few years have shown a shift in how consumers no longer view brands as separate entities but include the business, people and CEO behind the brand in their estimations.

Likewise, there is a growing expectation for these entities (brands/business/people) to make positive impacts on society and play responsible roles.

These issues provide direction for what consumers care about, and what brands should prioritise when wanting to be seen as a positive, influential contributor to their community/tribe/country.



HaveYouHeard is a full service agency immersed in culture to influence it. We believe that the lines in the world of marketing and media have been rubbed out. They've been replaced by a fast and fluid cultural wave of information, entertainment, advertising, news, fact and opinion, ridden by an audience who choose how and when they interact with it.

As a business, brand, entrepreneur or creator if you're not obsessed with culture - understanding it, commenting on it, being a part of it and ultimately creating it - you're going to get left behind.

To live this belief, we place insight and strategy at the heart of everything we do; not simply to understand the 'what' of our audience's behaviour, but more importantly the 'why'. This simple change in approach allows our strategy team to develop work which influences behaviour in real time, creating work that delivers value for businesses, in achieving the set objectives, but also for their consumers, resulting in long term loyalty and organic brand advocacy.

To find out more visit www.haveyouheard.co.za or contact us directly.

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