

TOWNSHIP SHOPPING: WHO, WHERE AND WHY?



Despite the raising income levels of township residents, many people prefer to remain resident in the townships. They also prefer to make use of the local shopping centres located within these townships, or within close proximity, such as Maonya Mall, Jabulani Mall, Diepkloof Square, and The Glen Mall. This raises the question: why do these consumers shop where they do?

A recent study was conducted in order to develop a meaningful segmentation tool, based on township consumers' demographics, life stage, attitudes towards township shopping centres and LSMs, to understand shopping behaviour of township consumers. The study was conducted by Nontuthuzelo Mashaba, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), in Gauteng amongst a sample of 230 Soweto township respondents.

Enticed by the billions of consumers and opportunities presented by emerging markets around the world, multinational corporations (MNCs) have spent the past two decades exploring the untapped fast growing emerging market. In South Africa, this low-to-middle income consumer is likely to be a township dweller. When looking at outshopping behaviour (shopping outside of ones' local community), retailers need to be aware of the factors that influence a local consumer's decision to spend their money in the local community or outside of it.

Overall, the study revealed four shopper segments, labelled as "disappointed crusaders", "local loyals", "social seekers" and "non-invested apathetics". These segments revealed differences in demographic variables, attitudes towards township shopping centres as well as shopping frequency. In addition, it was interesting to note that despite the availability of shopping centres all over Soweto, shoppers continue to make use of street vendors and spaza shops on a daily basis. Also, shoppers make regular use of basic need stores such as the Supermarket, with younger consumers making use of social offerings such as restaurants.

Results suggest that retailers and developers need to consider the demographic profile of the township before developing a mall. They also need to pay careful consideration to tenant mix to ensure shops will be used frequently by township shoppers. In addition, specific mall attributes need to be considered to ensure that shoppers have a positive attitude towards the township malls.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2013 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Nontuthuzelo Mashaba under the supervision of [Dr M. Wiese](#).