MARKET FACTS & OPINIONS

COVID-19
Wave 2 Consumer Outlook Study
2020

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COVID-19: Research Framework

LOCAL CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only presented immediate global challenges but has lasting implications for society moving forward. Worldwide, consumer behavior continues to evolve as attempts are made to manage resources in a period of uncertainty. After the recording of our first case of COVID-19 on March 12, 2020, the Government began taking steps to mitigate the spread.

The period March 16 to March 18, saw businesses, within the private and public sectors, taking their first hit with the closure of schools, bars and dine-in services.

There were announcements of a Pandemic Leave (March 15), Rental Assistance Grant (March 18), increase in Food Assistance (March 18), as well as a Salary Relief Grant (March 23). The national borders were closed on March 23.

Practicing of physical distancing and staying at home as a means of flattening the curve continue to be the resonating messages of the Government.

On March 30, further stringent 'stay at home' measures were put in place with the closure of non-essential businesses initially until April 15. There have been two subsequent extensions, the first being April 30 and then May 15 and now a roll out of phased re-opening of businesses.

Businesses deemed 'essential' were required to adjust their staff and work arrangements to have only their 'core' employees report for work. The decision was also taken for transportation services to operate at 50% capacity.

On April 7, all food services were closed while the operating hours of supermarkets and pharmacies were shortened. As a precaution against the virus, several businesses limited the number of persons allowed within their buildings and expanded delivery and e-commerce options.

Initially, schools were set to reopen on April 20. However, Government officials speculate this would not be possible prior to the new September 2020 term.

Prior to the start of fieldwork (April 27) there were 116 cases of COVID-19 locally. This figure remained the same by the end of fieldwork on May 10.

On May 9, the day before the end of the online survey (May 10), the Government announced that the country will undergo Phases which will gradually help bring the country back to some form of normalcy. Phase 1 (May 11 – May 23) involved the reopening of restaurants and food services (excluding dine-in services). Phase 2 was rolled out on May 21, with the reopening of the manufacturing and construction sectors. The roll out date of Phase 3 was set at June 1.

COVID-19: Research Framework

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study is the second wave of the Consumer Outlook Study (2020) conducted by MFO to gauge the national perceptions and sentiments about the impact of the disease.

The main objectives of the study are to determine:

- The general perceptions of COVID-19 based on the Government response measures and the timing of these responses
- The level of trust in leadership, frontline workers, the media and the general public in managing COVID-19
- The changes in purchase behaviour as a result of COVID-19
- Plans to uphold new behaviours after COVID-19
- Satisfaction with services provided by businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19: Research Framework

COVID-19 AT A GLANCE

NUMBER OF CASES

CASES OF COVID-19: WORLDWIDE
Approximately 7,082,263 cases as of June 7th, 2020.

CASES OF COVID-19: CARICOM
Approximately 4,414 cases as of June 7th, 2020.

CASES OF COVID-19: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
Approximately 117 as of June 7th, 2020.

RELATED GOVERNMENT MEASURES

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS, BARS AND DINE-IN SERVCIES
Schools closed from March 16th. Bars and dine-in services closed from March 18th. Closure of all food services took place from April 7th.

CLOSURE OF BORDER
Took effect from March 23rd.

PANDEMIC LEAVE AND COVID-19 SOCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS (Rent, Food Card and Public Assistance)
Proposed on March 15th and 23rd respectively.

CLOSURE OF NON-ESSENTIAL SERVICES
Took effect on March 30th.

REOPENING OF THE COUNTRY – PHASES 1- 3
Phase 1 - April 11th
Phase 2 - May 21st
Phase 3 - June 1st

*Counts reflect the total cases that have tested positive for COVID-19

COVID-19: Research Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Market Facts & Opinions (2000) Ltd conducted the COVID-19 Consumer Outlook Study (Wave 2) over a two-week period (April 27th to May 10th) via an online platform.

MFO provided a unique link to persons within its MFO database via email and mobile, and a universal link to its social media audience. A total of 367 surveys were completed (273 via the MFO database and 94 via the Facebook database).

MFO considers this sample size with its characteristics to be adequate in providing a reliable indicative understanding of the national consumer sentiment. It is expected that this sentiment will be subject to change as events unfold. The final sample was weighted to reflect the demographic proportions of age and gender represented within census data.

We acknowledge the limitations associated with the incorporation of a proportion of the sample from the social media universe, inclusive of an over-representation of the middle-income group. The data would be subject to sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate. These include errors associated with coverage, non-response and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

It should be noted that while there is a question about 'trust' in specific political figures relative to COVID-19, this study's objectives and methodology do not represent an assessment of their political fortunes. MFO, as a matter of policy, does not engage in political polls.

GENERAL COMMENTS

This report gives full result details for an in-depth view of the general public's perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We thank all the participants of this study for their contribution to make this study a success.

COVID-19: Research Framework

UNDERSTANDING THE SCORES

The **Mean** is the average score calculated based on the five (5) points of each scale and reports the results as a score out of the maximum of 5.

The **Standard Deviation** measures the spread of the data about the mean value. A low standard deviation means that most observations cluster around the mean. A high standard deviation means that there is a lot of variation in the answers. Applied to this study, the higher the standard deviation the more variability was present in the responses from the mean or the more inconsistent the persons' views are from each other.

The **Net Score (NS)** measures respondents' ratings on their satisfaction with the business community's performance. The calculation is based on an examination of the Two Top Box scores against the Two Bottom Box scores. Using this metric allows for an examination of both ends of the scale which enables a better appreciation of the wider perception of consumers' views.

Note: Numbers are subject to rounding therefore calculations may not reflect manual calculations.

Executive Summary

In keeping with Wave 1 of the Consumer Outlook Study, the public continues to place their confidence in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The highest levels of trust are placed in the hands of the hospital staff and the Prime Minister.

The efforts of the Government to address COVID-19 has not gone unnoticed, as the public endorses the security protocols employed to ensure their safety. The public's trust in the Government is evident, with at least half of respondents noting that the timing of implementing restrictions and measures was impeccable.

However, satisfaction with the efforts of the business community to offer relief to those impacted by COVID-19 are split down the middle. This is further impacted with twice as many persons disagreeing compared to those who agree that employers are seeking their employees' best interest. In alignment with this perception, persons foresee the worsening instability of job security occurring even after some form of normalcy has been restored.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and even as persons become weary with its uncertainty, they maintain the belief that the protection measures and restrictions should continue to be upheld, given the belief that 'the worst is not yet over' for many are under the impression that there are more cases of COVID-19 present in T&T than what is being reported.

Apprehension levels are high and persons remain cautious. This is reflected in most respondents believing that the ordinary people are just 'somewhat trustworthy', the desire to maintain physical distancing even after restrictions are lifted and split views on whether persons are acting irresponsibly and failing to adhere to stay at home directives.

As persons adapt to the changes that arise from COVID-19, they form three consumer segments: the traditional, transitional and the tech-savvy. The traditional consumer, the largest group-50%, maintain their usual way of conducting business via face to face interactions only. The transitional consumer uses both online and in-person methods of doing business, but has shifted their usage to more online methods as a result of COVID-19. The Tech-Savvy consumer is most familiar with online, continues to use this method to conduct business and is most open to exploring new delivery services made available. While the traditional consumer waits to resume a life similar to what existed before COVID-19, the transitional and the tech-savvy consumers have adapted to what has become the new normal.

Executive Summary

Other shifts in consumer behaviour and the customer journey are observed. Because of the restrictions on food/restaurant services, persons have had to prepare more meals at home. More bulk shopping remains consistent with Wave 1 and the shift to purchasing non-perishable items, as a buffer in times of uncertainty continues.

Physical distancing and good hygiene measures have been establishing some degree of permanency, which ultimately will continue to impact how persons shop, where they shop and their level of comfort at business places.

While few have deviated to purchasing brands they would not normally, most have maintained their sense of brand loyalty or plan to return to their regular brands post-COVID-19.

The closure of non-essential businesses has greatly impacted retail businesses. Many were forced to create and implement online and delivery options for their business. The wide-reaching effects of COVID-19 has significantly altered the consumer journey, whether served via local or international sources. It has been noted that there has been lower customer satisfaction scores compared to the relevant MFO experience and database.

On the other hand, essential businesses such as supermarkets, pharmacies, financial institutions and telecommunication providers have done well to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction during these trying times. Having remained open throughout this period, modifying their operations to contend with increased demand, these business, particularly supermarkets, have emerged as a rock of stability for persons having to cope with the uncertainty of COVID-19.

Implications

The scare and uncertainty of COVID-19 has led the people of Trinidad and Tobago to look to the Government for a sense of comfort and direction. Persons' vulnerability during this period is strategically comforted by the careful directives of the Government. Similar to Wave 1 of the Consumer Outlook Study, a high sense of trust in the Government has been engendered by these actions. Many will continue to physical distance even after restrictions are lifted, since this trust is not reposed in others.

While most endorse the Government's swift and calculated responses, persons remain fearful of the uncertainty that lies ahead. Questions about the full extent of knowledge about COVID-19 linger. And while the Government has made efforts to promote their transparency, there is need for continued reassurance on the steps being taken to treat with COVID-19. The sustenance of trust is a tough balancing act which, if mishandled, can lead to public distrust.

Job uncertainty is a major concern. Employees look to their employers for some semblance of relief or assurance to ease their burden. However, with a split in reported satisfaction with the efforts of the business community, and the uncertainty surrounding the duration of this pandemic, financial concerns and future instability serve as a source of dissatisfaction. With a majority of persons not ready for the removal of restrictions, and with the potential increase in unemployment levels, expectations of the business sector and the Government remain high.

Purchase behaviour reflect those observed in Wave 1 and portend a shift in the customer journey. Persons banking online continue to do so, with no major shift in this behaviour. The incipient shift to using grocery delivery services contains uncertainty about the transition and raises the need for supermarket operators to do more than promote the benefits of alternative methods but to provide support to interested customers. With half of respondents maintaining a traditional posture, it is imperative for businesses to strike that balance between maintaining relevance in meeting the requirements of 'the new normal' and ensuring that their customers are able to cross that digital bridge.

Demographics

SAMPLE 367

Fig 1.0 Age

18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years
16%	23%	18%	18%	13%	12%

Fig 1.1 Gender

Female 50%

Male 50%

Fig 1.2 Ethnicity

African	East Indian	Mixed /Other
31%	24%	45%

Fig 1.3 Region

	%
West	37%
East	22%
Central	19%
South	21%
Tobago	1%

*9 persons did not answer

Fig 1.4 Living Situation

Home is Owned	Rented Residence	Other Arrangement
72%	15%	14%

Fig 1.5 Essential vs. Non-essential Workers

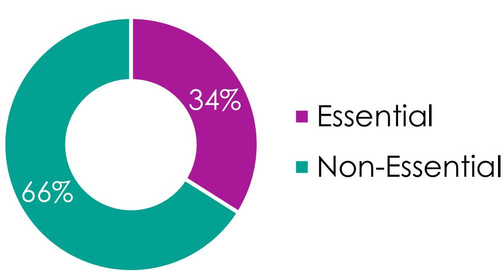


Fig 1.6 Household Composition

Avg. number of persons in household

3.78

Demographics

SAMPLE 367

Fig 1.6 Employment Category

	%
Professional degree or equivalent (but non-managerial/non-supervisory)	17%
Technical/Operations	13%
Administrative/Secretarial/ Clerical	12%
Unemployed/ Retired	11%
Self-Employed	9%
Manager	8%

	%
Executive and Senior Management	5%
Business Owner	5%
Student	5%
Supervisor	4%
Home-maker	3%
Other (specify)	9%

*2 persons did not answer

Other includes Sales worker, Service worker, Unskilled labourer, Don't know, Refused

Fig 1.7 Highest Level of Education

	%
Primary	0%
Secondary – up to 3rd form	0%
Secondary – up to 5th form	17%
Secondary/ college – up to 6th form	10%

	%
Vocational / Technical / Associate Degree	20%
University First Degree / ACCA	28%
Post Graduate Degree	24%
No formal education	1%

01

Economic and Humanitarian Impact

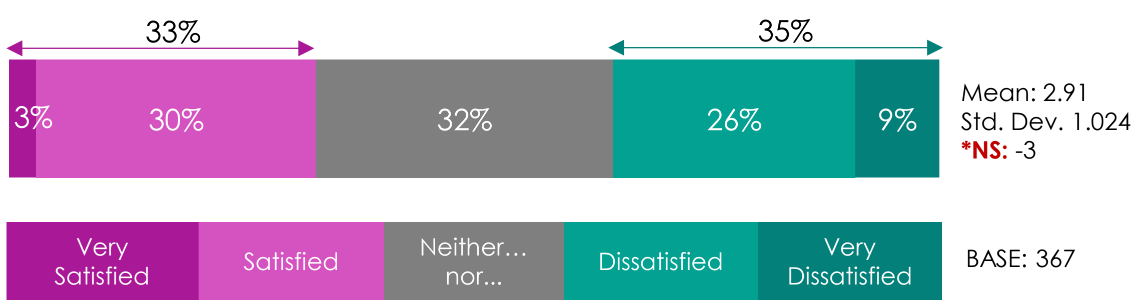
Economic And Humanitarian Impact

There is a split in satisfaction with business community's relief efforts. A third of participants indicate their satisfaction with the business community's relief efforts for those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, while a similar proportion express dissatisfaction with their efforts.

Those noting satisfaction with the business community's relief efforts are more likely to be the older participants and those living in West Trinidad. However, persons expressing dissatisfaction tend to be those between the ages of 45-54 years and those residing in the South.

Persons who are also more likely to be satisfied with the business community's relief efforts for those impacted by COVID -19, are more likely to believe that employers are doing their best to look out for their employees' interests during this time.

CHART 1.0: BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S RELIEF EFFORTS- SATISFACTION



02

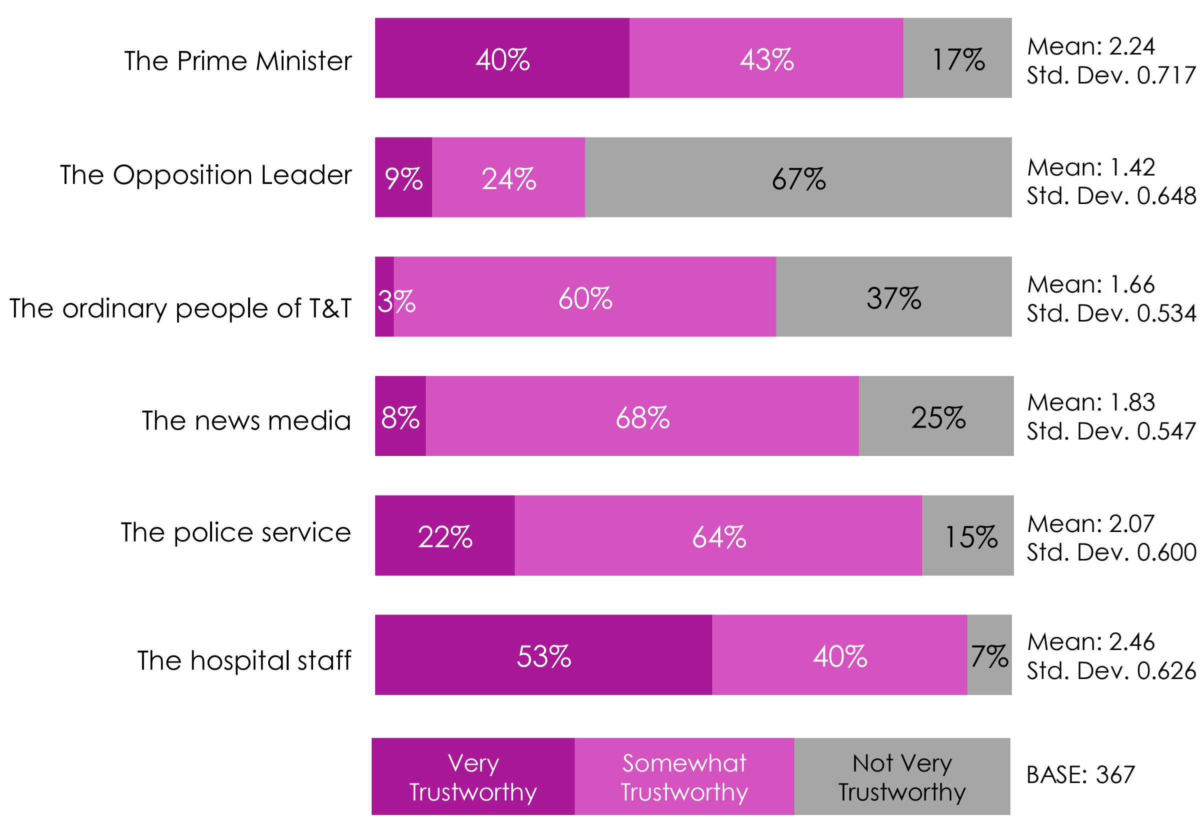
Who do you Trust?

Trust in the PM & Medical Experts

Nine in ten persons perceive the hospital staff as capable of managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Trinidad and Tobago with half reporting this source as 'Very Trustworthy'. Following are the police service and the Prime Minister (Dr. Keith Rowley) with about 4 in 5 participants reporting their trust in them. The Opposition Leader (Ms. Kamla Persad-Bissessar) is considered the least trustworthy with about 7 in 10 stating 'Not Very Trustworthy'.

Persons who believe that there is a lack of transparency with the number of cases reported and testing for COVID-19 are more likely to trust the Opposition Leader. However, greater trust in the Prime Minister, police service and hospital staff is exhibited among those who believe that the Government has put in place enough security measures to protect the residents of T&T.

CHART 2.0: ABILITY TO MANAGE COVID-19- TRUSTWORTHINESS



03

Attitudes & Perceptions About COVID-19

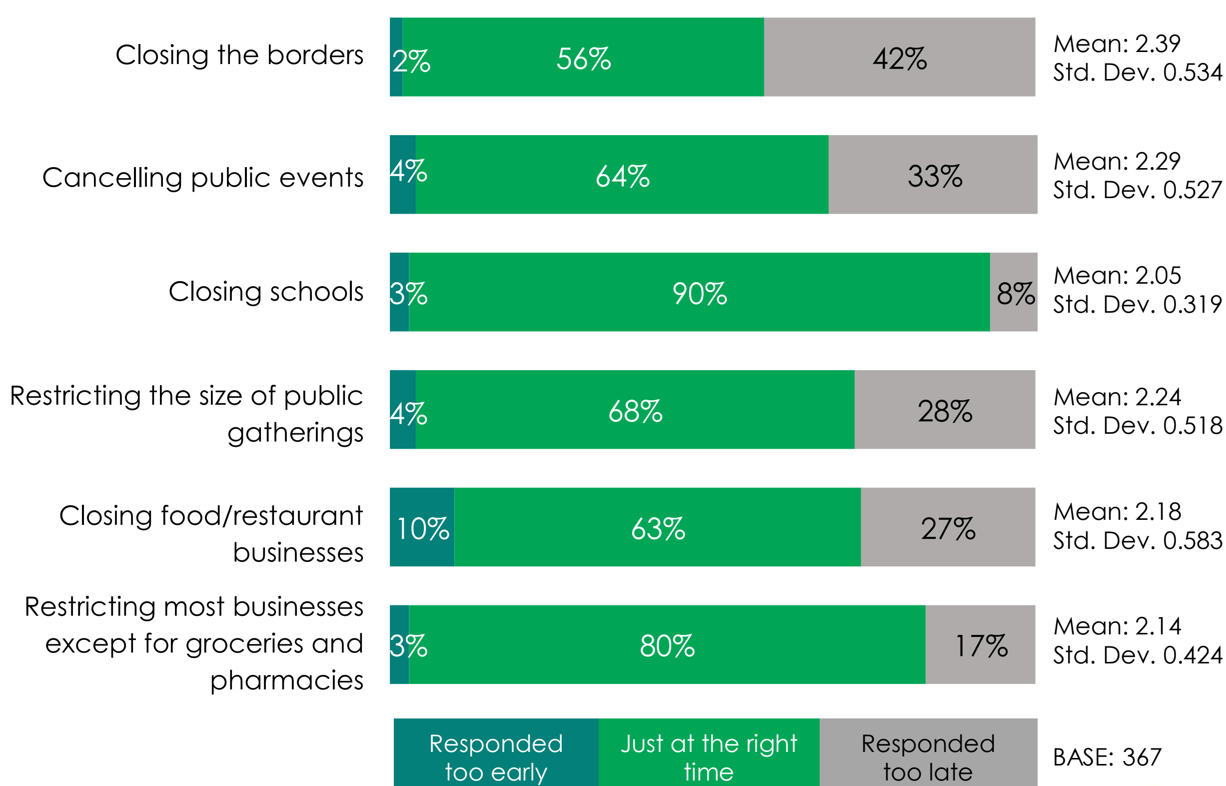
Schools and Businesses Closed At The Right Time

Almost all respondents (90%) believe that the Government responded at just at the right time with the closure of schools. The same opinion is noted by 8 in 10 for restricting most businesses and 7 in 10 for restricting the size of public gatherings. About 6 in 10 agree with the timeliness of closing of the borders, cancelling of public events and closing of food/restaurant businesses.

Persons who are more likely to believe that there are more cases than what is being reported are more likely to believe that the borders were closed too late and that restricting the size of gatherings was also done too late.

On the other hand, those more likely to exhibit trust in the Prime Minister are more likely to believe all measures taken by the Government were done just at the right time.

CHART 3.0: ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNMENT CONTROL MEASURES



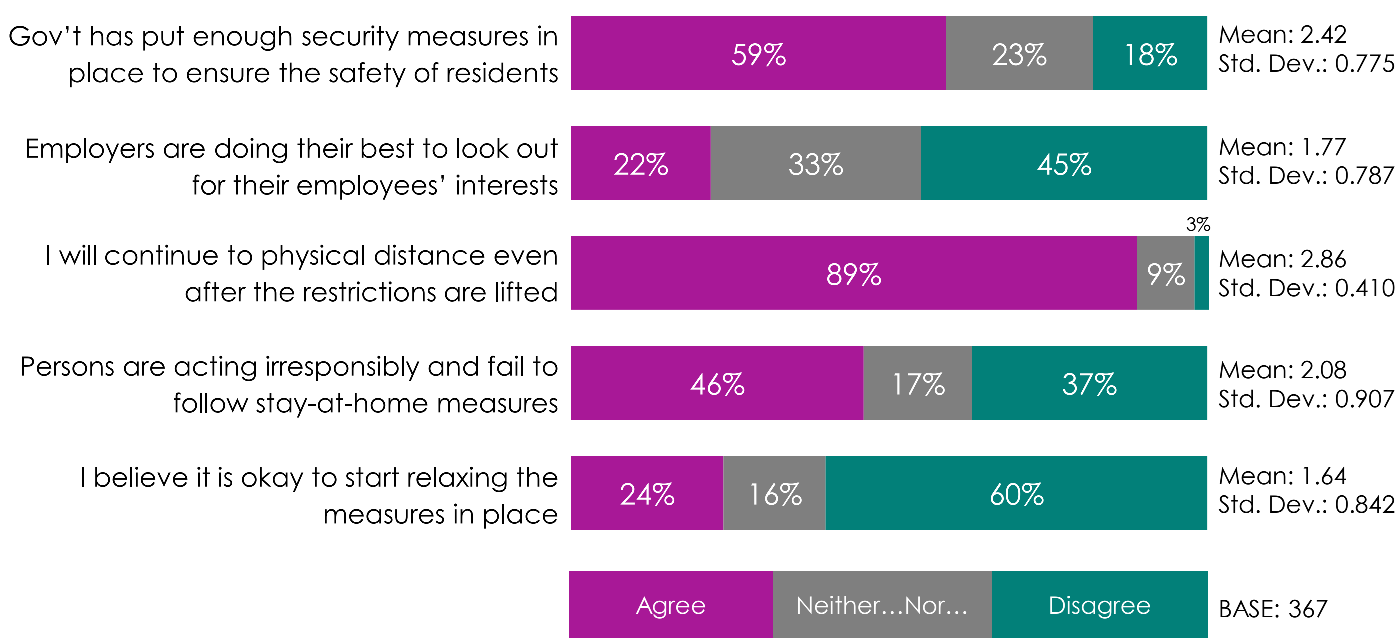
Continue to Physical Distance

Nine in ten persons (89%) report that they will continue to physical distance even after the restrictions are lifted. Six in ten agree that the Government has put enough security measures in place to ensure the safety of residents while there is a split in opinion about whether persons are acting irresponsibly and are not following the Government's directive to stay at home.

Those who believe that the Government has put in place enough security measures to ensure the safety of residents are less likely to believe that persons in their own community are acting irresponsibly.

Almost two thirds of the respondents (6 in 10) do not believe it is okay to start relaxing measures put in place, while at least 4 in 10 do not hold the view that employers are doing their best to look out for their employees' interests.

CHART 3.1: ATTITUDES TOWARD CONTROL MEASURES



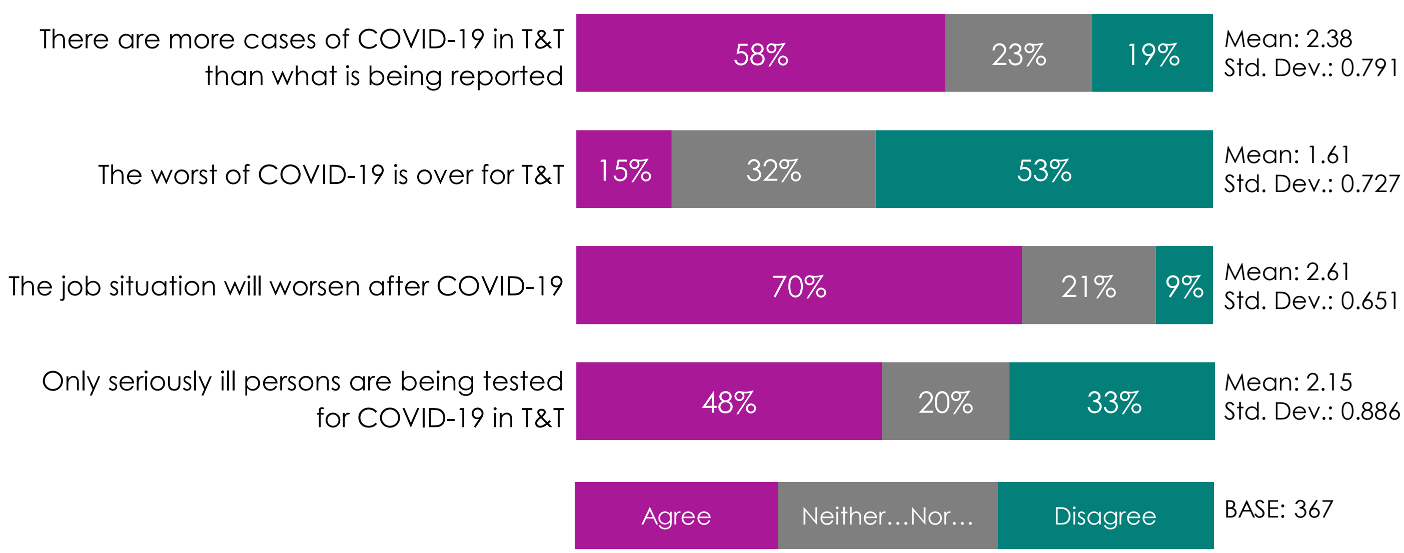
The Job Situation will Worsen

Seven in ten respondents agree that the job situation will worsen after COVID-19, while 6 in 10 believe that there are more cases of COVID-19 in T&T than what is being reported. Only about a half believe that only seriously ill persons are being tested for the virus in the country.

Persons who believe that there are more cases than what is being reported are more likely to believe that only seriously ill persons are being tested. Similarly, those more likely to believe that only seriously ill persons are being tested for COVID-19, also tend to believe that the Government responded too late to closing the borders and restricting the size of public gatherings.

A half of persons note that they do not believe that the worst of COVID-19 is over for T&T. Those who do believe that the worst of COVID-19 is over, tend to also believe that it is okay to start relaxing the measures in place.

CHART 3.2: ATTITUDES TOWARDS COVID-19 IMPACT



04

Consumer Profiles

Consumer Profiles

Traditional 49%

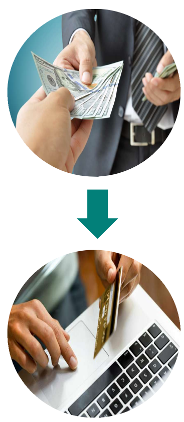
- Resides in East Trinidad
- Unemployed/Retired
- Non-essential
- Banks in-person

Base: 181

- Walk-into a store and pay using cash/card
- Satisfied with Telecommunication providers

Transitional 29%

- Resides in Central Trinidad
- 25-34 years old
- Professionals
- Non-essential
- Massy stores shoppers
- Banks in-person
- Walk-into a store and pay using cash/card
- Preparing more meals at home and plans to continue



Base: 105

- Make less frequent and larger shopping trips
- Purchasing the same brands and will continue to do so
- Doing more online-banking and will continue to do so

Tech-Savvy 22%

- Resides in East and West Trinidad
- Banks Online
- Preparing more meals at home and plans to continue
- Make less frequent and larger shopping trips and plans to continue
- Using credit card more often

Base: 81

- Doing more online-banking and will continue to do so
- Using grocery delivery services and will continue to do so
- Satisfied with retail online shopping companies
- Satisfied with Courier/Skybox companies

05

Adaptation & Impact on Purchase Behaviour

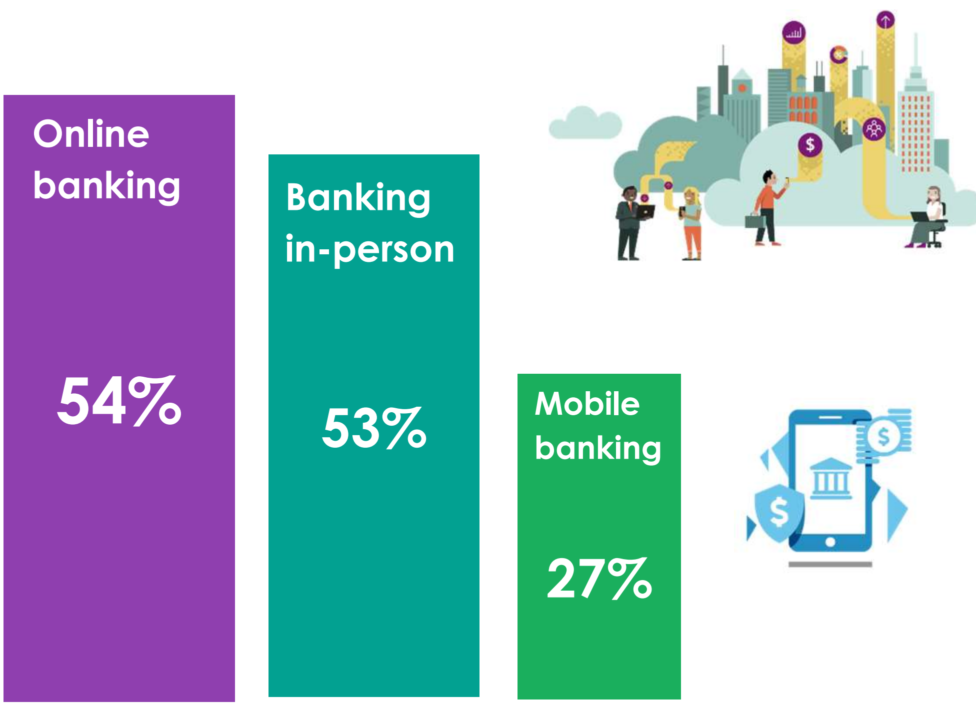
mfo MARKET FACTS & OPINIONS

Banking Online and In-person

Before COVID-19, a half of persons report typically using online banking and banking in-person as their main means of interacting with their bank or credit union. Three in ten persons use mobile banking.

Only 6% of respondents report the use of telephone banking.

CHART 5.0: BEFORE COVID-19- BANK/CREDIT UNION USAGE



**6% use Telephone banking

*Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

BASE: 367

Local Shopping: Brick & Mortar

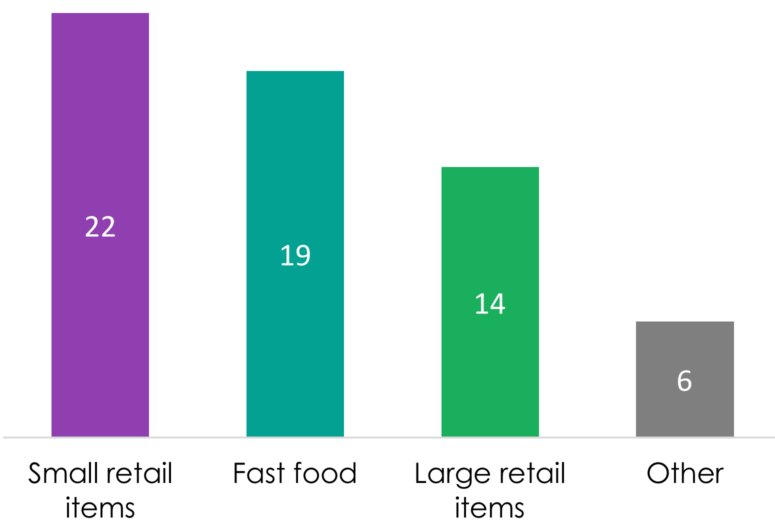
Virtually all persons (96%) indicate that they usually shop in-person and pay using cash or card. Only 8% (29 persons) report that they pre-order items locally and schedule an in-store ‘pick up’ or a ‘home delivery’.

Twenty-two of these twenty- nine persons, who have items delivered, note that these are typically small retail items such as clothes and cosmetics, while 19 persons have fast food delivered. Fourteen respondents note having large retail items delivered.

CHART 5.1: BEFORE COVID-19- PURCHASE HABITS & DELIVERY

BASE: 367

96% walk-into a store and pay using cash or card while only 8% pre-order online or by phone and schedule a ‘pick up’ or ‘home delivery’.



*Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

BASE: 29*

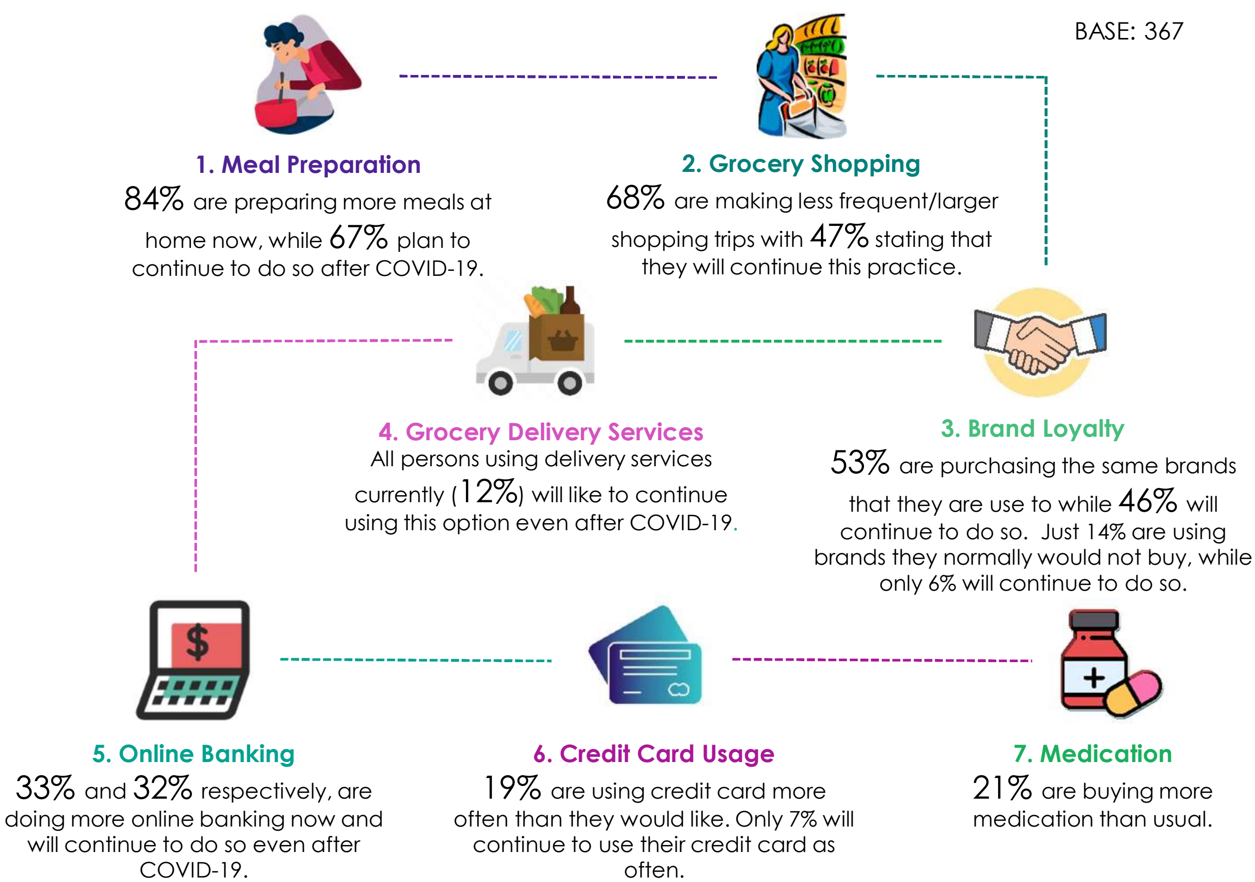
COVID-19 Customer Journey

The important insight here is that respondents who have switched to online grocery shopping do not want to go back. This 'stickiness' is similar to that of online banking. Credit card usage is expected to be more likely to return to previous levels.

It is also noted that four in five of those persons who have been preparing more meals at home intend to continue. It is noted that two –thirds of respondents are indicating that they will not return to as frequent a shopping trip as they did before COVID-19.

Brand loyalty remains strong with almost 90% of respondents indicating that they would remain with their customary brands.

CHART 5.2: CHANGES IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY



*Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

06

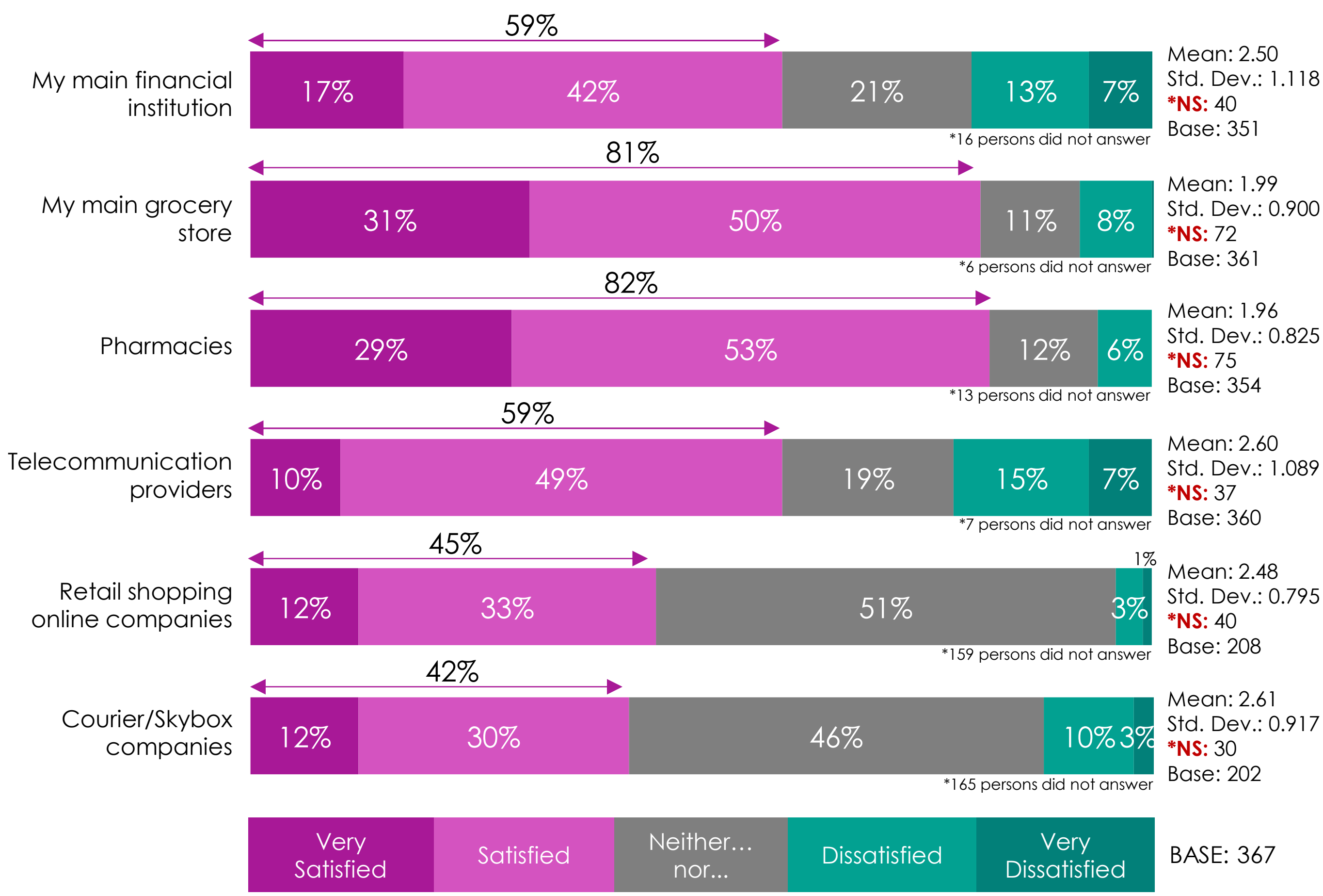
Satisfaction with Services

Satisfaction with Business Services

A super-majority report satisfaction with their pharmacies and main grocery store with Net Scores of 75 and 72 respectively. This is followed by 6 in 10 indicating satisfaction with their main financial institution (NS: 40) and telecommunication providers (NS: 37).

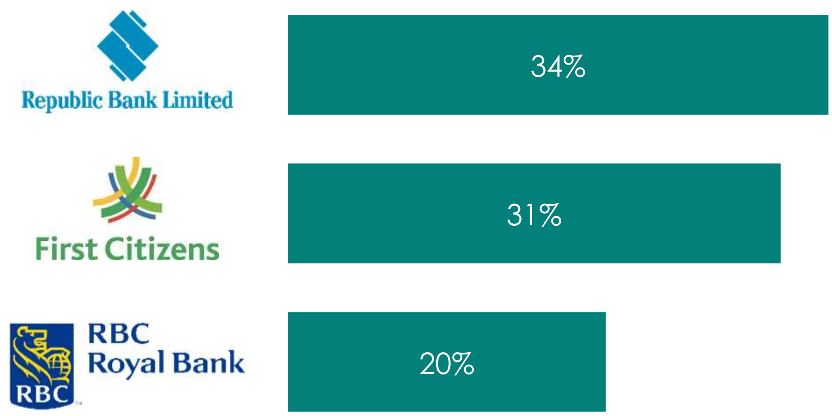
The services provided by retail online shopping and courier/skybox companies received a Net Score of 40 and 30 respectively. This is influenced by higher passive scores.

CHART 6.0: SATISFACTION WITH BUSINESS SERVICES



Main Financial Institutions & Grocery Stores

CHART 6.1: TOP 3 MAIN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS



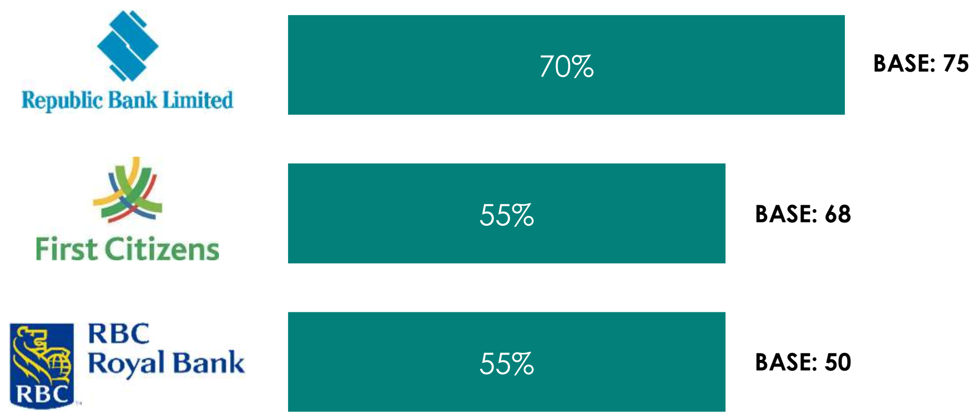
BASE: 227

CHART 6.2: TOP 3 MAIN GROCERY STORES

BASE: 244

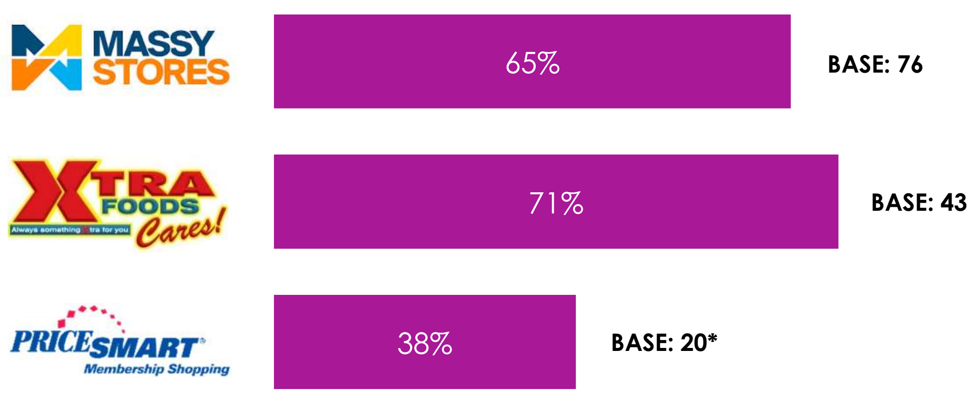
Main Financial Institutions & Grocery Stores

CHART 6.3: SATISFACTION WITH TOP 3 MAIN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS



BASE: 227

CHART 6.4: SATISFACTION WITH TOP 3 MAIN GROCERY STORES



BASE: 244

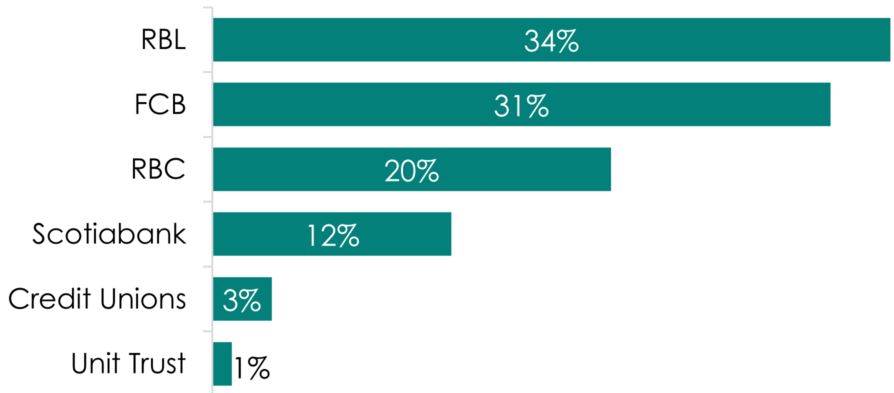
*Satisfaction based on two Top-box scores

07

Appendices

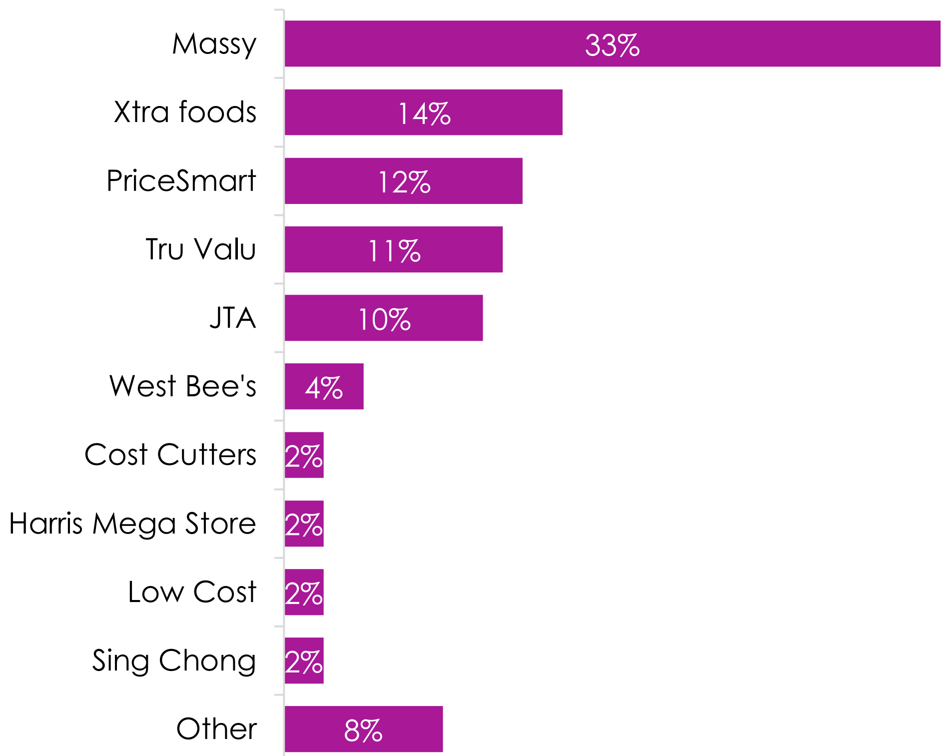
APPENDIX I
'Main Financial Institutions & Grocery Stores'

Chart 1.0: Main Financial Institutions



*140 persons did not answer.

Chart 1.1: Main Grocery Stores



*123 persons did not answer.

*Other includes: Family Mart, Penny Savers, Price Club, S&S Persad's, ADM.

APPENDIX II
'Demographics by Business Community's Relief Efforts'

Table 2.0: Age by Business Community's Relief Efforts

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither.. Nor…	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall	**3%**	**30%**	**32%**	**26%**	**9%**
18 - 24 years	-	30%	40%	25%	5%
25 – 34 years	1%	19%	43%	25%	12%
35 – 44 years	6%	32%	24%	26%	12%
45 – 54 years	2%	19%	34%	39%	6%
55 – 64 years	2%	43%	22%	25%	8%
65+ years	11%	47%	18%	11%	13%

Table 2.1: Education Level by Business Community's Relief Efforts

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither.. Nor…	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall	**3%**	**30%**	**32%**	**26%**	**9%**
Up to 6th form	2%	28%	27%	35%	9%
Post Secondary	1%	30%	31%	30%	8%
Tertiary	5%	31%	35%	20%	10%

Table 2.2: Gender by Business Community's Relief Efforts

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither.. Nor…	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall	**3%**	**30%**	**32%**	**26%**	**9%**
Male	1%	30%	31%	28%	10%
Female	5%	30%	33%	23%	9%

BASE: 367

APPENDIX II

'Demographics by Business Community's Relief Efforts'

Table 2.3: Region by Business Community's Relief Efforts

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither.. Nor…	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall	**3%**	**30%**	**32%**	**26%**	**9%**
West	5%	33%	31%	23%	8%
East	4%	36%	30%	23%	8%
Central	2%	27%	34%	25%	13%
South	1%	22%	30%	38%	8%
Tobago	-	50%	50%	-	-

Table 2.4: Ethnicity by Business Community's Relief Efforts

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither.. Nor…	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall	**3%**	**30%**	**32%**	**26%**	**9%**
African	3%	31%	35%	24%	8%
East Indian	1%	18%	26%	41%	13%
Mixed/Other	5%	35%	32%	20%	9%

Table 2.5: Essential/Non-Essential by Business Community's Relief Efforts

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither.. Nor…	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall	**3%**	**30%**	**32%**	**26%**	**9%**
Essential	2%	23%	31%	33%	10%
Non-Essential	3%	33%	32%	22%	9%

BASE: 367