

Binary Bandits

Online shopping has become a very popular choice opposed to in person shopping with around 48% of South Africans using e-commerce websites for general shopping in all categories such as clothing, appliances etc.. Around 84% of that was grocery shopping[8] which isn't surprising as online shopping has been shown to be 5% cheaper and saves 77% of the consumers time [6] being the biggest factor driving the growth of this sector. The focal point of this is an analysis of online grocery shopping apps, specifically the most popular in south africa consisting of Woolworths Dash, Checkers6060, pnpASAP and Spar2U, with checkers being the largest in the sector followed closely by woolworths dash. Online shopping has become a huge market for grocery stores with online shopping making up close to 50% of grocery sales for both checkers and woolworths and online grocery shopping growing by 150% for checkers and 75% for pick n pay with the entire sector growing by 16% from 2024 to 2025 [7]

The most popular items sold by any grocery store is always milk followed by bread[1] but each shop has its own category that its known for with premade meals and luxury products being sold the most by Woolworths dash with fruits and vegetables being the most common category of items sold by both Checkers and Spar and lastly pick n pay's most sold item being coca cola with their most popular category being shelf stable foods. Though all apps have their own most sold categories the main categories consumers shop for in online grocery stores consists of fresh vegetables and pantry staples[3]. Though all these apps have very different price points for the items[4]. Overall checkers was the cheapest in all retailers, with spar being the cheapest for only food, and woolworths being the most expensive in both food only and overall.

These statistics can only be seen to the consumer though comparison sites, whose purpose is to compare the price of the same item in different retailers. The most popular sites being used in south africa consist of PriceCheck, OneCart, Pryce and buck cheap[5] being some of the most common in south africa with PriceCheck being rated number one. Though the comparisons are good not all of the websites include the biggest retailers with PriceCheck excluding Spar and all of their user interfaces being very difficult to manage with most of them requiring upwards of 3 to 5 minutes to set up or even having to search specifically for grocery comparisons in google to access the comparisons making the user experience very bad.

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