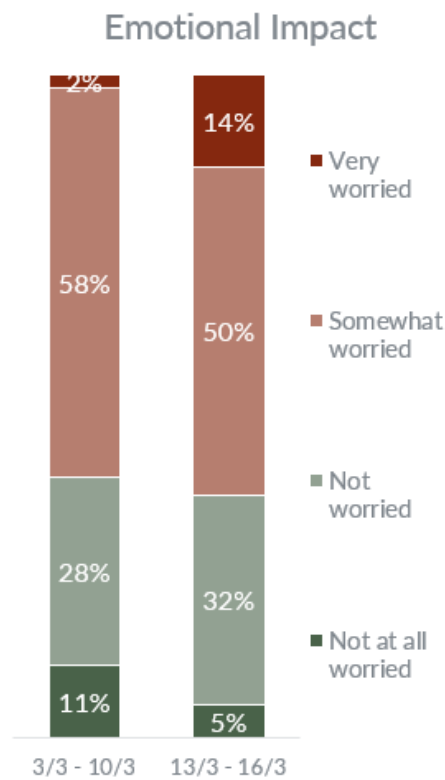


Press release

How did Belgians react to the COVID-19 outbreak?

March 19th, 2020

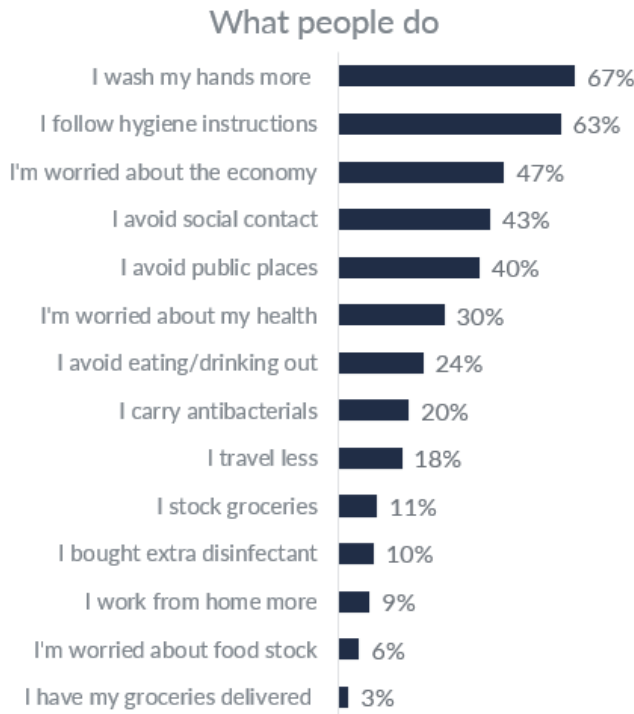
Concern seemed to be contained among Belgians until the 10th of March, with still almost 40% of the population stating to be “not worried” and “not worried at all” about the virus.



The situation, however, changed in the days following the growing number of infected individuals and the new measures announced by the government.

While 14% of the population became extremely worried during the week 13/3 – 16/3, the share of ‘not worried at all’ Belgians significantly dropped: the general concern has increased and can be expected to increase further in the coming weeks following the new confinement measures announced by the Belgian government starting the 18th of March.

With the growing concern, came different reactions.



Applying appropriate hygiene measures was one of the first reactions Belgian households had following the virus spread. 63% of Belgian households started to follow the hygiene instructions to limit the virus spread.

With the economic unemployment, the restaurants and public places closing, another major concern among the population is the impact this sanitary crisis will have on the Belgian economy.

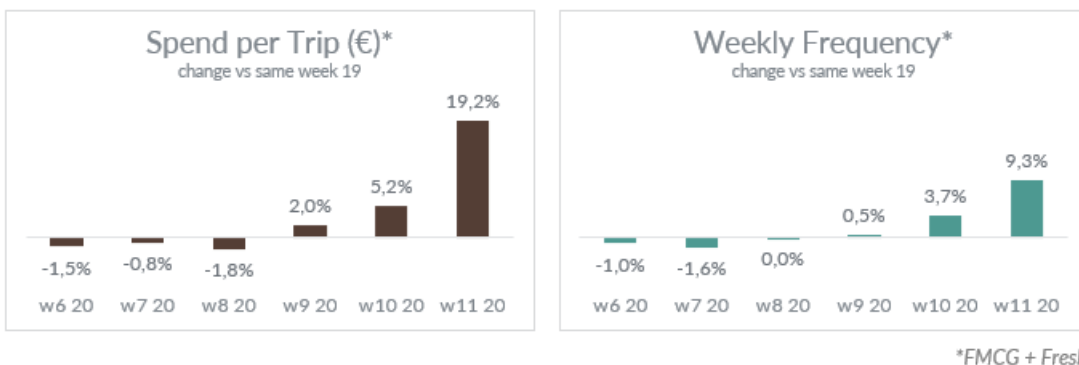
As the crisis continues to evolve in the country, the emotional impact and top concerns of the population are expected to evolve in the coming weeks.

What about the purchase behavior of Belgian households?

Crowds were observed in supermarkets following the government communication on the 12th of March. But how was the actual purchase behavior impacted?

Well, it looks like Belgian households were already getting ready for a possible lockdown.

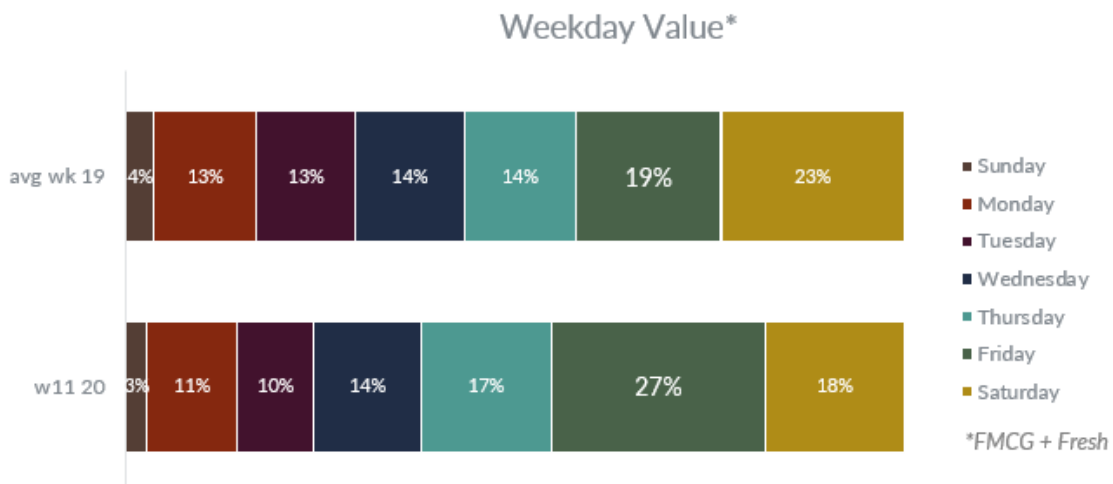
They increased their basket value by +19.2% and went shopping +9.3% more last week (week 11) in comparison to last year.



While usually the largest part of FMCG turnover is generated on Saturdays, the newly applied

measures rushed the Belgian households to go in store even before Saturday.

On average, Fridays generate close to 20% of the FMCG turnover (2019). But they became more important last week: almost 30% of the weekly turnover was realized on Friday the 13th of March.



As new confinement measures have been taken starting the 18th of March, the purchase behavior of Belgian households will surely continue to evolve in the coming weeks.

For more information, please get in touch with your GfK Account Manager.

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