


SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF
FOOD SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
**CONGRESS
2021**

Welcome to SAAFoST's
24th Biennial International
Virtual Congress

20 - 22 September 2021



Mindful Plant-Based Convenience – An Emerging Post-COVID Food Trend

Annchen Mielmann, Celeste Botha, Lize Janse van Rensburg

North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

Abstract

Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic has changed local food trends and heightened consumers' craving for convenience, once taken for granted, as well as their health-awareness and meat-free eating habits, because of the health and environmental impact of their food choices. This led to a growing increase in the production of plant-based foods. The aim of this poster is to provide more insight to food companies on the emerging post-COVID trend, *Mindful Plant-based Convenience*, as to lead the improvement of this innovation in the right direction for the South African market.

Methodology: Trend reports from three market research firms (Euromonitor, Mintel and Wunderman Thompson) were consulted and evaluated by a panel of three Consumer Scientists from which an emerging post-COVID food trend for the South African market was formulated. The retrieved literature was scanned for relevance, organized, and then classified into constructs as to provide food companies more insight on this trend and to provide suggestions on how this trend can be accommodated as to benefit the consumer, whilst being profitable for the food sector.

Results and Discussion: This trend consists of three components: 1) concerned with consumers altering their behaviour in order to adopt a holistic approach to physical and mental well-being; 2) directed at consumers' elevated demand for sustainability and planet-friendly lifestyle; and 3) related to the convenience consumers are craving as they experienced pre-pandemic. Products should be convenient and consist of functional and plant-based ingredients that will enable intentional and out of habit purchases. Strategies such as virtual video conversations between consumers and food retailers; adding logos on packaging labels to identify plant-based products; and developing more product ranges for the flexitarian lifestyle, are necessary so that both parties benefit from this trend.

Conclusions: In a post-pandemic world, nothing will be the same as before and in order to survive, food companies will have to innovate and incorporate the *Mindful Plant-based Convenience* trend. Convenience, sustainability, and health consciousness should become the focal point driving the business strategy of food companies forward in post-COVID South Africa.

Biography: Annchen Mielmann

Annchen Mielmann obtained her Ph.D. Food Sciences (2014) from the University of the Free State. From 2008 she lectures food modules at the School of Physiology, Nutrition and Consumer Sciences. In 2017

she received the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship for postdoctoral studies at the Bern University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland. In 2019 she received an Y2 rating from the National Research Foundation (NRF). She is a member of the South African Association of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences (SAAFECS), The South African Association for Food Science and Technology (SAAFoST) and South African Association of Dairy Technology (SASDT). Her research falls under the research unit, African Unit for Transdisciplinary Health (AUTHeR). She focuses on the link between food, sensory research, and consumer behavior to provide a composite mosaic of scientists' current understanding of sensory qualities and the global consumers' food choices.