

SEA TRENDSPOTTING REPORT: The Retail Industry and COVID-19 Essentials in the Philippines



Eavesdropping Into The Conversations

This report aims to provide the retail industry with an understanding of the consumers' behaviors. Specifically, what and how people talk about COVID-19 essentials on different social media platforms.

In terms of **media type**, this report includes materials from:

Social Media

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Blogs
- Forums

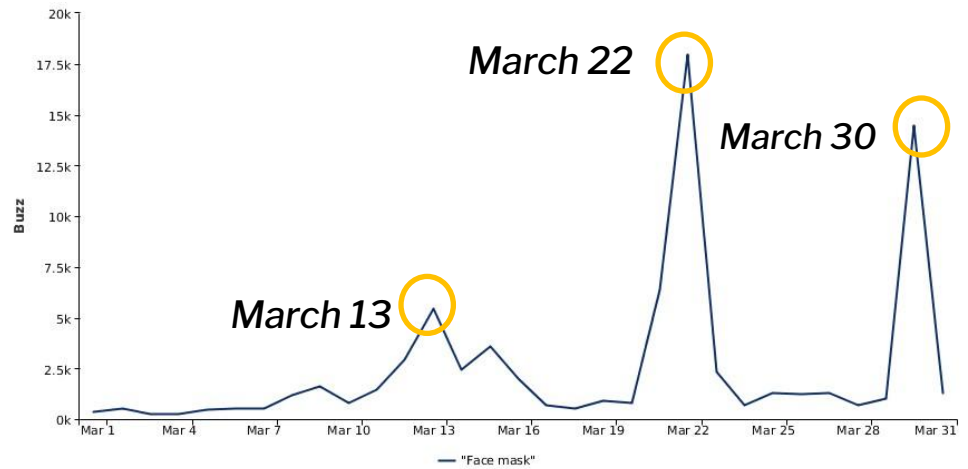
The date range for this study is the month of March 2021.



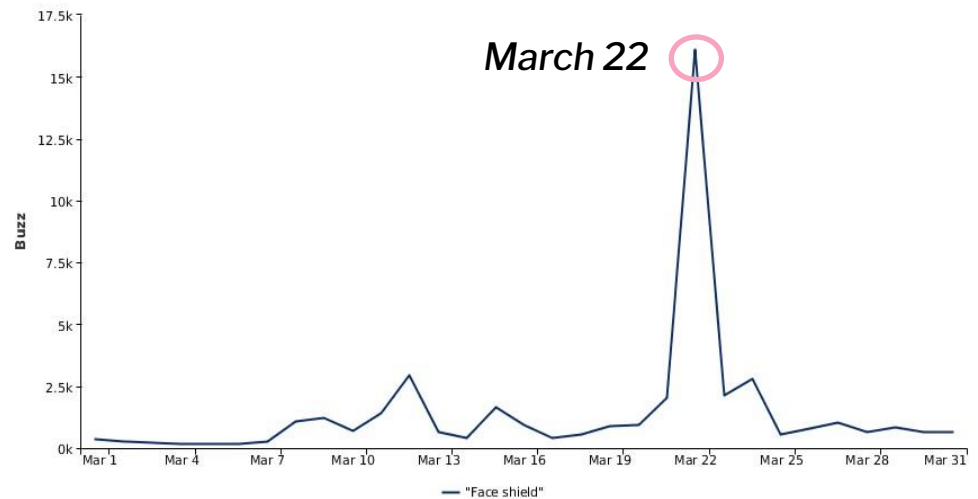
Coronavirus Chitter-Chatter: What's the latest Buzz on COVID-19 Essentials?



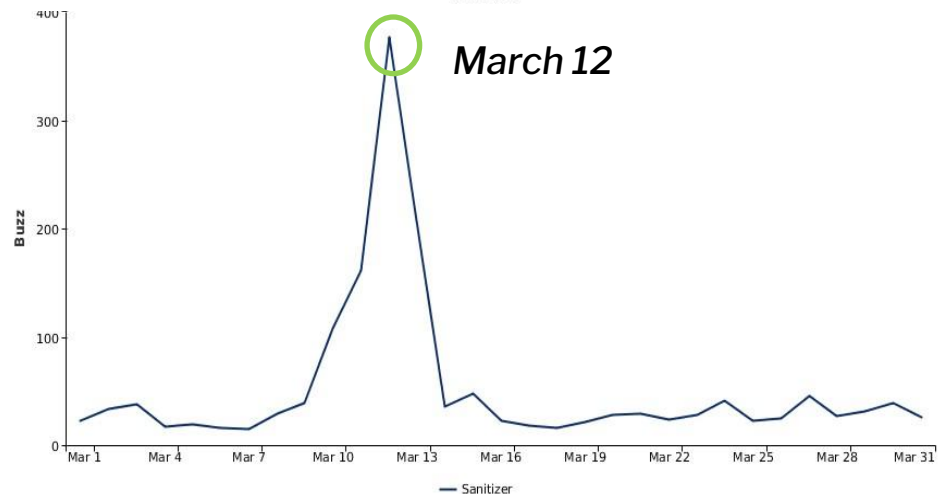
Face Masks
75,715 total Buzz



Face Shields
43,599 total Buzz



Sanitiser
1,605 total Buzz



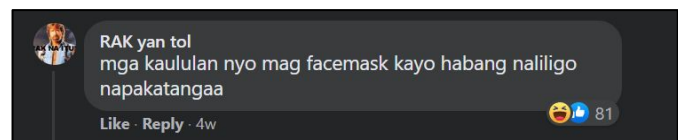
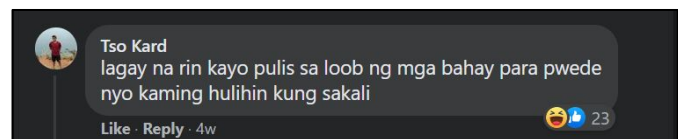
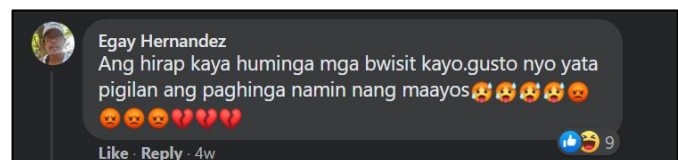
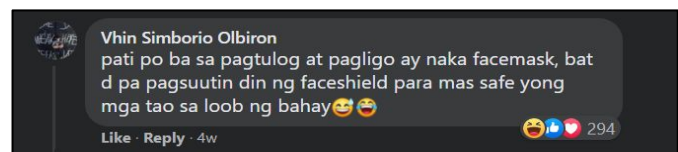
Data was derived from Isentia's Workbench on March 01 – March 31, 2021, using the keywords "face mask," "face shield," and "sanitizer."

Pandemic Crowd Favorite: The Facemask Fanfare

On face masks

"DILG: Magsuot ng face mask kahit sa loob ng bahay (Wear your face mask even inside your home)"

On 13 March, The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) released a statement saying that people should **keep wearing masks** even inside their homes. Majority of the people responded **negatively** towards this news.



GMA News posts the article on the DILG's mandate on wearing face masks at home (Left). The article above was posted on Facebook and was met with backlash from netizens, most of which mocked the directive from the government agency.

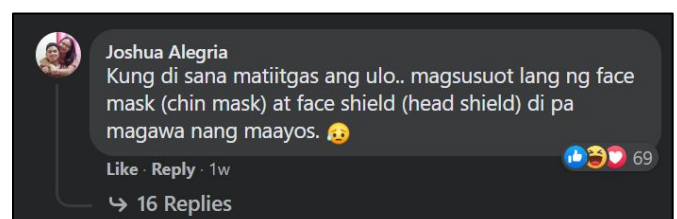
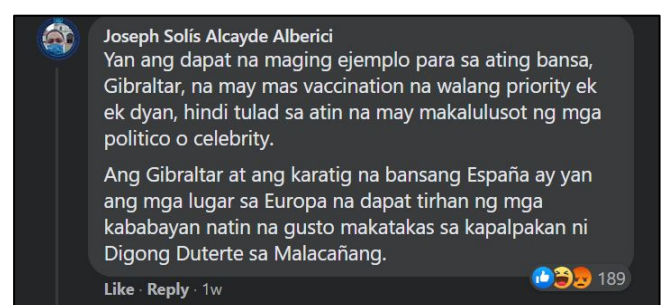
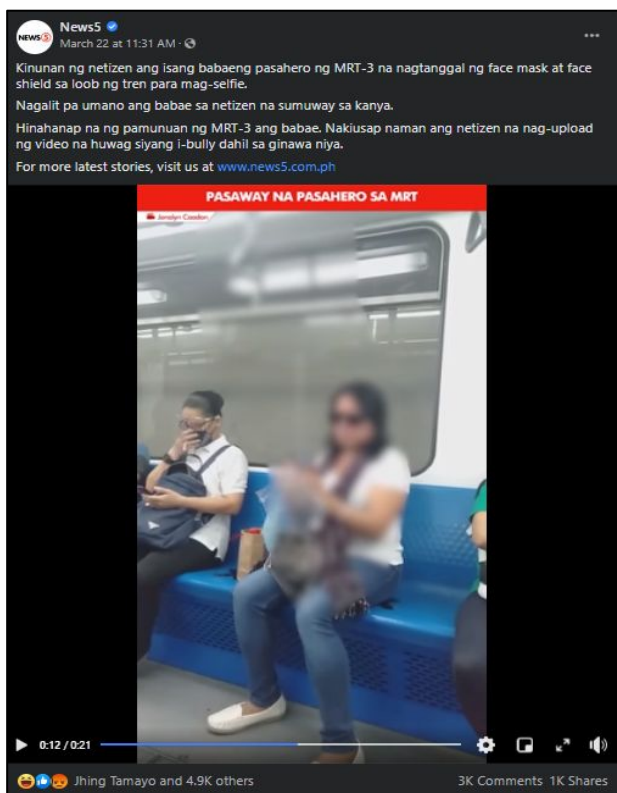


“Sumunod ka sa protocol (Abide by the [COVID-19] protocols)”

On 23 March, another video circulated online and went viral. The video showed a woman who was confronted for **taking off her face mask** and face shield while on the Metro Rail Transit-3 train line (MRT-3) with other passengers.

“Sana all taga Gibraltar! (I wish we all lived in Gibraltar!)”

On 30 March, online media picked up news that the population of the British Overseas Territory Gibraltar **does not need to wear face masks** anymore due to the island having no COVID-19 cases.



News5 posts the viral video which circulated online. The article above was posted on Facebook.

Face mask options?

Disposable Masks

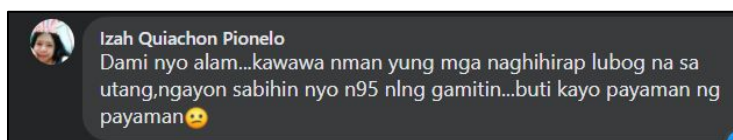
Notable conversations about disposable masks revolved around how it contributes much more waste than other types of masks. One twitter user said she was **tired of wearing disposable masks** especially when she has her makeup on.



Quote Tweet on Disposable Masks

N95 Masks

There were articles citing the head of the Philippines' vaccine expert panel suggesting that wearing double face masks reduces the risk of getting the virus by 90%. Reactions from commenters were **negative** and they were quick to suggest why not just wear N95 masks instead.



Facebook commenter posting about wearing N95 masks as a better option

Coppermasks

Main buzz contributor for Coppermasks was Doc Adam, an Australian doctor and social media personality who gives free medical advice to Filipinos through his YouTube videos. He made a series featuring him **ridiculing Coppermasks** for having a hole in it, defeating the purpose of wearing one in the first place. Filipinos praised Doc Adam for his critique of the mask and even said that wearing this is **just a fashion statement** for most people.



YouTuber Doc Adam

'So Extra': The Fuss on Face Shields

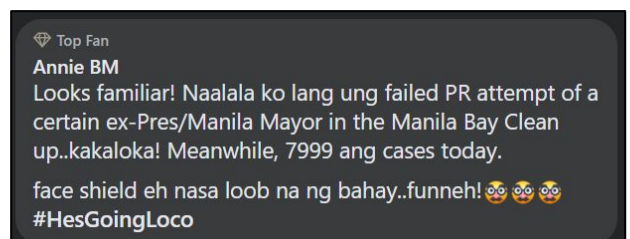
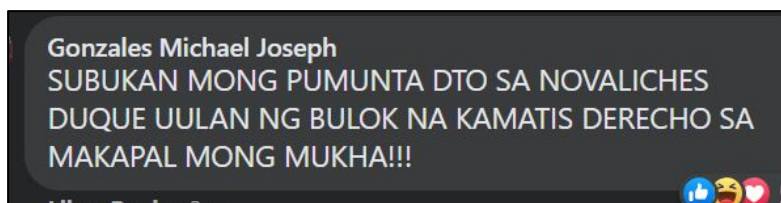
On face shields

"Failed PR attempt"

Conversations about face shields were driven by multiple events during the month of March. One was on Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Francisco Duque III who went out on the streets of Baclaran to **hand out face shields**. Majority of the comments were **very negative** in nature.



News articles on the DOH Secretary Duque distributing face masks in communities have been circulating on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. This move was criticised by social media users as a failed PR move by the government authority.



Spritz and Spray: Sanitizers as Safety Net

On hand sanitisers

"Para mawala ang virus (...so that the virus may be eradicated)"

One news article that included the mention of sanitizers struck out on 13 March when Thailand Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha **sprayed hand sanitizer** to the reporters of his press conference to avoid answering questions. Filipino commenters still found a way to correlate the news to Philippine Government leaders such as President Rodrigo Duterte and Vice President Leni Robredo.



GMA News posts the article which centres around the Thai Prime Minister spraying hand sanitiser on media reporters in a press conference.

On To The Next Steps: “Now What?”

The Streisand Effect

Is a social phenomenon that occurs when an attempt to hide, remove, or censor information has the unintended consequence of further publicizing that information, often via the Internet. Coppermasks were no stranger to this effect during the period.



Keep it cool: Avoid Aggressive Responses

Regardless of what type of face masks, face shields, or sanitizers you provide to the public, as long as it does its function, people will use them in these times.

Professionals, especially doctors, who mention your product in a negative light should not be suppressed. Do not engage in an aggressive manner. You are better off not interacting with them at all. Try to focus on other issues with **more positive materials** that are related to your brand. Better yet, embrace the criticism and **adjust to what was said by the professional about your product.**



Raising The Bar: People Always Come First

Make it “more human”: Market from the perspective of a fellow concerned citizen, not from a corporate brand

The pandemic is not going away anytime soon, and even if it does, masks are going to be part of the post-pandemic norm. Even now, conversations about its long term environmental effects are circulating on all platforms. The impact of disposable masks is evident with an estimated 1.56 billion being disposed into our oceans yearly. (via *OceanAsia*)

Again, it does not matter what type of mask you wear as long as it protects you and others around you. But from a marketing perspective, it is highly recommended that **brands push on the point that disposable masks have a more harmful environmental effect compared to reusable ones.**



What Our Insights Leaders in the Philippines Say



Francis Angelo Calucin, Insights Analyst, Philippines

“With the threat of COVID-19 still lingering, you can never underestimate any measure when it comes to your safety. A lot of luxuries were taken away from us but what we still have is a choice, an option to choose your face masks, face shields and even the hand sanitizer that goes along with your bag. This trendspotting report will help you inform yourselves better in choosing what's best for your safety.”

Gladys Mae Ruiz, Insights Analyst, Philippines

“A critical situation like the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed human behavior in different directions. Trendspotting studies such as this will help brands and businesses better understand and respond to the ever-changing consumer behaviour.”



What our Insights leaders in the Philippines say



Victoria Bernadette Lazo, Insights Manager, Philippines

"Since the pandemic, what the public deems as essential has very much shifted. Masks are now a must-have and retailers and producers have found ways to cater to different tastes. The use of trendspotting studies would help these entities spot growing themes and possible concerns and make data-driven decisions on how to act on, respond to, and take advantage of the conversations."

Ivane Kate Dudang, Insights Manager, Philippines

"Social media, given its volatile nature, is a good avenue for retail brands to gain insights into customer preferences. Amid the clutter in online platforms, trendspotting reports unlock relevant organic conversations that may be leveraged by brands in devising strategies that will impact their consumers."





Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us for more information on this whitepaper.

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