

OK dominates as Zimbabwe's preferred retailer

By [Staff reporter](#)

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Zimbabwe's retail super-brand winner 2010, supermarket franchise Spar, and TM Supermarkets, the biggest supermarket by outlets, trailed rival OK Supermarkets as the most preferred outlet, with emerging Chinese-owned Afro-Foods Supermarkets taking the fourth spot.

This was revealed in the latest Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS) for the fourth quarter of 2010 commissioned by the Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (ZARF) to provide both media and product information to allow marketers to more effectively target and reach consumers.

Significant interest to various parties

The survey has however been of significant interest to political organisations, diplomats, the corporate sector and other stakeholders because of the diversity of information available from the survey.

OK Supermarkets, a unit of listed OK Zimbabwe currently splurging on massive refurbishment and stock hoarding after a US\$20 million equity loans and rights issue that brought in South Africa-based Investec Africa Frontier Private Equity Fund as a new shareholder early last year, emerged top as the "most preferred outlet" among urbanites, followed by Spar (24%), TM Supermarkets (15%) and Afro-Foods (8%).

OK also dominated as the "most often outlet" with a 34% score, followed by TM Supermarkets and Spar Supermarkets with 18% each, the survey showed.

OK also led as the outlet where food and groceries are bought with a score of 71% followed by TM at 59% and Spar at 56%.

"(The) most preferred outlets in this quarter were OK, SPAR and TM," noted the survey authors, Research Bureau International.

TM has 51 supermarket outlets, against 49 outlets owned by OK Zimbabwe. However, only 35 outlets are under the OK brand, with five under the Bon Marche brand, three operating as OK Express stores and six as Pax Cash & Carry stores.

Spar, aggressively expanding

Spar, a South African franchise controlled by the Inncor Africa group in Zimbabwe, has been aggressively expanding

since 2004 and now has over 50 outlets in Zimbabwe's northern region alone. The ability of Spar to take advantage of the buying power of its counterpart in South Africa has meant that it has been able to offer its members a wide range of imported products at reasonably affordable prices.

Spar clinched the Marketers Association of Zimbabwe-run Superbrand 2010 retail sector award in December.

Afro-Foods, which emerged out of a decade-old economic crisis that ended in 2009, has also been growing significantly and late last year took over 12 town and country outlets owned by Zimbabwe Stock Exchange-listed CFI Holdings.

But the survey showed that the majority of Zimbabwe's urbanites preferred buying meat from butcheries (77%), with 8% preferring Spar, 5% preferring OK and 2% preferring TM Supermarkets.

Open markets were the preferred outlets for the purchase of fruits and vegetables (63%), with informal traders or hawkers commanding an 11% share of this market and fruit and vegetable shops in high density suburbs getting a 6% slice of the market. Spar led its rivals in this market with a 6% share with OK and TM getting 2% of the market apiece.

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