

South Africans unsure of what to expect in 2020

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To many South Africans, it would seem as if 2020 is likely to bring "more of the same" - drought, economic woes and a low growth rate, political uncertainty and squabbling within and between political parties, loadshedding and concerns about unemployment. So, it is no surprise that South Africans view the year ahead with trepidation. However, not everyone feels the same and although working and non-working people are almost unanimous in their views, younger South Africans are more optimistic than older people, and political party allegiance does make a difference to views on the future.

These are the main findings of an Ipsos Pulse of the People™ study conducted at the end of last year, interviewing 3,590 randomly selected South African adults face-to-face in their homes and home languages.

The statement "In general, I feel optimistic about 2020" was put to respondents and they indicated whether they "strongly agree", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "disagree" or "strongly disagree".

According to the findings, almost half (49%) of South Africans, 15 years and older, agree or strongly agree that they view 2020 with optimism. 16% disagree or strongly disagree, but a large proportion – 35% - said they neither agreed nor disagreed - showing a significant level of uncertainty amongst South Africans.

Youth more optimistic

This feeling of uncertainty is echoed by all age groups:

29% of those 15-17 years old, 36% of those 18-24 years old, 35% of those 25-34 years old, 33% of those 35-49 and 36% of those older than 50 have stated their uncertainty. However, more than 6 in every 10 (61%) of those 15-17 years old indicated that they felt optimistic about 2020. This contrasts with only 46% of those older than 50 sharing this sentiment.

	Total %	15-17 years old %	18-24 years old %	25-34 years old %	35-49 years old %	50+ years old %
Strongly agree	15	19	16	17	14	12
Agree	34	42	31	32	36	34
Neither agree nor disagree	27	15	30	28	26	25
Disagree	12	8	12	13	12	13
Strongly disagree	4	2	5	3	5	5
Don't know	8	14	6	7	7	11

Working status does not influence optimism

It is very interesting to look at the findings for those South Africans who work (full-time or part-time) versus the opinions of those who do not work (unemployed, retired, students or stay at home). Against the background of South Africa's increasing unemployment figures, one would assume that those who have a job should look at the future with more optimism than those who are not employed. However, this is not the case and those who work and those who do not work have largely similar feelings about 2020.

In general, I feel optimistic about 2020	Total %	Working %	Not working %
Strongly agree	15	15	15
Agree	34	35	33
Neither agree nor disagree	27	27	26
Disagree	12	13	12
Strongly disagree	4	4	5
Don't know	8	6	9

Even when looking in detail at the sub-groups of those South Africans who work full-time versus those who are unemployed (and mostly looking for work), we find that feelings about 2020 are similar.

In general, I feel optimistic about 2020	Total %	Working full-time %	Unemployed %
Strongly agree	15	15	15
Agree	34	35	33
Neither agree nor disagree	27	27	26
Disagree	12	13	12
Strongly disagree	4	4	5
Don't know	8	6	9

Political party of choice influences optimism

The political party an individual would choose to vote for (if eligible to vote) has an influence on feelings of optimism about the year ahead. Although the differences are not vast, ANC supporters are the most optimistic at 55%, followed by EFF supporters at 51%, IFP supporters at 50% and DA supporters at 45%. (Taking those who “agree” and “strongly agree” together.)

In general, I feel optimistic about 2020	Total %	ANC %	EFF %	IFP %	DA %
Strongly agree	15	17	20	21	12
Agree	34	38	31	29	33
Neither agree nor disagree	27	27	27	20	27
Disagree	12	10	14	18	14
Strongly disagree	4	3	6	7	6
Don't know	8	5	2	5	2

Global Predictions 2020

The “Pulse of the People” study was conducted only in South Africa, but around the same time Ipsos also undertook a study in 28 countries around the world, probing about feelings of optimism and “predictions” for 2020. This study called “Global Advisor Predictions 2020™” looked at world affairs, issues of society and culture, technology, and comparisons between 2019 and 2020.

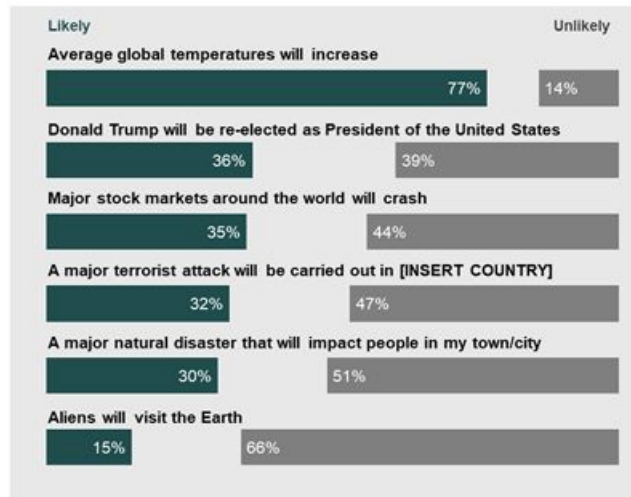
This study was undertaken online.

Global Predictions: most likely to occur in 2020 (Opinions from 33 markets)

- 77% of people globally think that temperatures will increase.
- People are unsure about Donald Trump's chances of being re-elected as US President – 36% think it is likely, 39% unlikely.
- 35% of people think it is likely that major stock markets around the world will crash in 2020.
- A third (32%) of people globally think a major terrorist attack will happen in their country in 2020.
- Just under a third (30%) expect that a major natural disaster will impact people in their area.
- AND 15% think that aliens will visit the Earth!

Global Advisor Predictions 2019

World Affairs



Base: 22,512 adults aged 18-64 across Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States

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Rising temperatures and a poor economy in 2020

Four in five online South African adults (80%) felt it was likely that global temperatures would increase in 2020, as do much of the world: 77% of people in the 33 countries polled thought average global temperatures would increase in 2020. Citizens of Saudi Arabia (54%) are not as convinced about temperature increases as the rest of the world. (Rising temperatures were also a key prediction for 2019. At the end of 2018, 78% of people around the world believed average global temperatures would increase in 2019.)

In addition, more than three-quarters of online South Africans (77%) also felt it was likely that there would be large-scale public unrest such as protests or riots in South Africa in 2020 to protest the way the country is being run. This is twenty-one percentage points above the global average of 56%. Only Colombia (82%), Chile (82%) and France (79%) were stronger than South Africa in predicting unrest in their countries for 2020.

Limited faith in the economy going into 2020

Globally, around half of people (52%) believe the economy will improve this year, while a comparable 56% of online South Africans share this opinion.

81% believe 2019 was a bad year for South Africa, compared to 65% worldwide who believe this about their own country in 2019. Two-thirds (68%) of South Africans are also of the opinion that 2019 was a bad year for them and their families. On the contrary, 85% of online South Africans look forward to 2020 to be a better year than 2019 for them personally. (This is in contrast to feelings about the prospects for the country in general, expressed in the Pulse of the People™ study.)

Online South Africans' top predictions for 2020

1. "I will make some personal resolutions to do some specific things for myself and others in 2020" (88% likely)
2. "I am optimistic that 2020 will be a better year for me than it was in 2019" (85% likely)
3. "People around the world will spend more time online than watching TV" (83% likely)
4. "Average global temperatures will increase" (80% likely)
5. "There will be large-scale public unrest (such as protests or riots) in South Africa" (77% likely)

Unlikely outcomes for online South Africans for 2020

1. "Aliens will visit the earth" (74% unlikely)
2. "I will feel lonely most of the time" (63% unlikely)
3. "Self-driving cars will become a usual sight on the streets of my town/city" (61% unlikely)
4. "I will use social media less" (60% unlikely)
5. "A major terrorist attack will be carried out in South Africa" (56% unlikely)

Gender equality might be written into our constitution, but it is clear that we still have a long way to go to achieve this ideal: opinions are sharply divided on whether women will be paid the same as men for the same work in 2020 (48% likely versus 47% unlikely)

It seems as if most South Africans have doubts about the country's chances on the world's sports fields: only 52% believe that we will win more medals in the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo than four years ago in Rio de Janeiro!

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