

Global shopper confidence surging as consumers return to stores - study

Shoppers are beginning to return to physical stores in significant numbers as pandemic measures lift around the world, according to a new global research report by Mood Media, an on-premise media solutions company.



Source: Getty

A follow-up to Mood Media's *Shopper Sentiments: A September 2020 Global Mood Survey*, this new study, entitled '[Shopper Sentiments: A June 2021 Global Mood Survey](#)', was carried out by Censurwide and surveyed more than 8,000 consumers across four major markets – the US, UK, China and France.

The report found that four out of five (80%) consumers now feel either 'somewhat' or 'very comfortable' visiting physical stores, up from 71% in 2020.

Three in five (60%) consumers surveyed expect their shopping habits to be back to pre-pandemic levels by or before the end of this year, while one-fifth (21%) of respondents report their shopping habits have already returned to pre-pandemic levels. These findings and predictions for physical stores are bolstered by the fact that only 5% of respondents across the US, UK, China and France reported not feeling 'comfortable at all' about returning to stores.



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Scott Moore, global chief marketing officer (CMO) at Mood Media, said: "We're experiencing a healthy buzz as shops reopen to a 'new normal' throughout the world. Consumers are eager to get back into stores to experience the joy of shopping again.

"This new study validates what we are seeing and hearing every day – both online and offline play an important role in retail, oftentimes in harmony with one another. That balance is now returning with solid foot traffic in shops around the world."

Allure of omnichannel

Revealing what global shoppers have missed most about the physical shopping experience during lockdown – largely pointing to benefits that don't exist when shopping online – nearly half (45%) said it was the experience of 'touching and trying on' items on the spot that they missed most when stores were closed.

The fun and social experience of shopping with friends and significant others is the second most missed aspect of physical shopping (35%), tied with the opportunity to bring the purchase home immediately at 35% as well.

Consumers have also enjoyed the merging of physical and digital, with a third (33%) of them citing plans to continue using click and collect/Bopis (Buy Online, Pickup In-Store) services beyond the pandemic, with US consumers above the global average at 38%.

Globally, most consumers (84%) say there is no significant difference in the amount of money they are currently spending compared to before the pandemic.

However, after over 15 months of global uncertainty, the data also indicates that consumer spending overall is on the rise. The percentage of respondents reporting an uptick in their spending compared to before the pandemic has increased from 23% in September 2020 to 29% in June 2021.

The percentage of consumers reporting they are spending less has also gone down, from 38% in 2020 to 25% today, while those citing spending the same as before the pandemic has increased from 40% to 46%.



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Moore added: "The pandemic placed pressure on stores to innovate at a faster pace, leading to an accelerated 'phygital' evolution which merges the physical and digital shopping experience. The survey highlights key phygital trends that will be a focus for retailers and the customer journey beyond the here and now.

"Consumers have told us they want 'click and collect' and 'buy online, pick-up in-store' options to continue well beyond the pandemic. And in China, we're seeing longevity in the future of virtual try-ons and QR codes.

"The figures generally show positive sentiment across all four countries surveyed. While some reservations remain with regard to safety measures, people are generally voting with their feet and their wallets. We're delighted that we appear to be approaching the end of a fairly grim 15 months, and life seems to be improving for the retail sector as a whole."

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