Socially aware, localised, and globally connected

2022 Global Consumer Insights Pulse Survey

Qatar findings

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Executive Summary

Our first country-level survey of consumer attitudes in Qatar launches a series that will track shopping behaviour in one of the Middle East's leading economies. These findings form part of PwC's Global Consumer Insights Pulse series, allowing retailers, investors and policymakers to compare Qatar with wider regional and worldwide trends.

In several ways, consumers in Qatar who answered our survey have the same profile as their peers in other Gulf countries. 90% of the sample group are between 18 and 44 years old, reflecting the region's young demographic profile, while 73% are working full-time. Qatar's shoppers also share many of the attitudes and preferences found among other Middle East consumers. For example, consumers in Qatar favour in-store and online retailers who provide efficient delivery; they will pay more for locally made products; and they take environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues more seriously than the global consumer, when buying a brand or product.

The survey findings also reveal distinctive characteristics displayed by consumers in Qatar. For example, only 21% of respondents say they have a hybrid weekly working pattern compared with an average of 33% for the wider **Middle East survey**, comprising Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE. This gap suggests the pandemic may have reshaped Qatar's employment landscape somewhat less than in neighbouring countries. Also 64% of respondents are willing to pay more for a product to support their domestic economy, compared with an average of 55% for overall Middle East respondents.

Qatar's international appeal is rising. This survey of consumer trends provides valuable insights on consumers in a country that is taking its place on the global stage as a result of the FIFA World Cup

Our main findings are:

Positive consumer sentiment and a growing economy against a backdrop of supply chain disruptions

The post pandemic desire for hybrid work and travel

Growing consumer focus on ESG that will determine the future of brands and retail in Qatar

Trust and transparency are key for consumers in Qatar

Positive consumer sentiment and a growing economy against a backdrop of supply chain disruptions

In Qatar, the most visible expression of a positive sentiment is the steadily rising number of shoppers who are visiting physical stores. 55% of Qatar respondents say they have purchased non-grocery items such as clothes and electronic items in-store during the previous 12 months, significantly higher than the Middle East and global averages (45% and 43%, respectively).

At the same time, 74% of Qatar respondents say they have taken to shopping more online as a result of the pandemic, reflecting the degree to which changes to ways of working and lifestyles caused by COVID-19 have accelerated a trend that was already well underway across the Middle East.

All of this vibrant consumer activity is occurring against a background where Qatar's shoppers, like their global and Middle East counterparts, are experiencing in-store and online price rises. However, inflation is less severe in Qatar and other GCC countries than worldwide, principally due to energy revenues; in October, the IMF forecasted Qatar's annual inflation rate would rise to 4.5%, compared with 8.8% globally.*

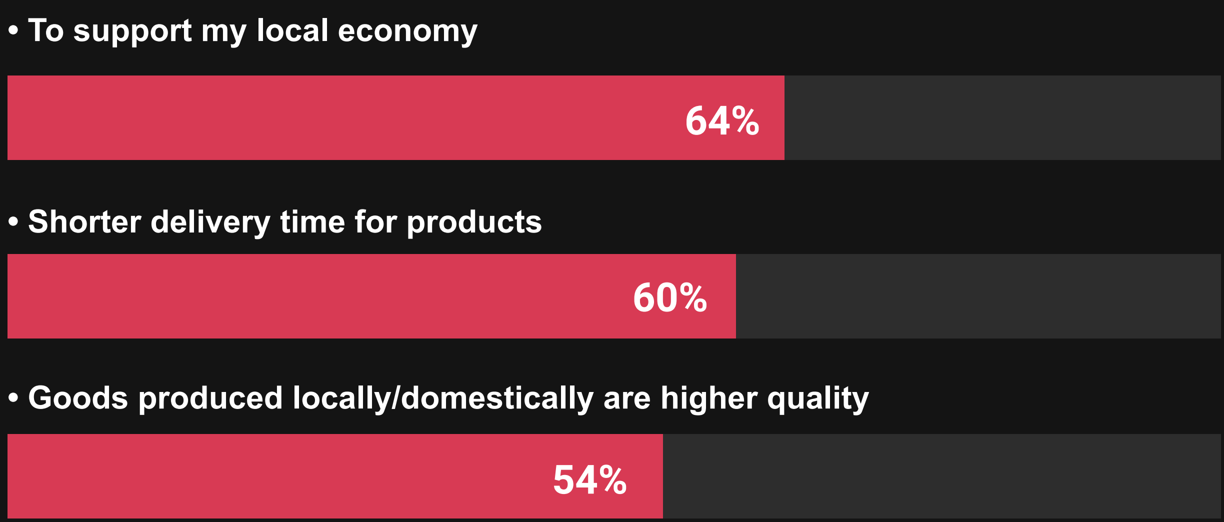
Base: 156 consumers (Qatar)
Source: June 2022 Global Consumer Insights Pulse Survey

*IMF World Economic Outlook (October 2022)

This helps explain why only 21% of the Qatar sample cite rising prices for groceries as their top concern when they shop in-store, well below the global survey average of 37%. The relative success of Qatar's retailers in holding price rises is underscored by the fact that the country's physical stores and malls are suffering from the same supply chain disruptions and shortages as their counterparts worldwide. 30% of respondents in Qatar report being unable to purchase a product in-store over the previous three months because of it being out of stock. Meanwhile, 32% have experienced reduced product ranges, and 31% have been obliged to wait longer than expected for goods to be delivered. All these results are similar to global findings.

Amid these shortages, retailers in Qatar should perhaps take note of two other findings. When asked how the pandemic has affected their behaviour, **67% of Qatar favour retailers that provide an efficient collection or delivery service**, compared with 48% globally. Separately, 60% are willing to pay more for domestically sourced or manufactured products to shorten the delivery time, well above the other Middle East countries and global averages (both at 42%).

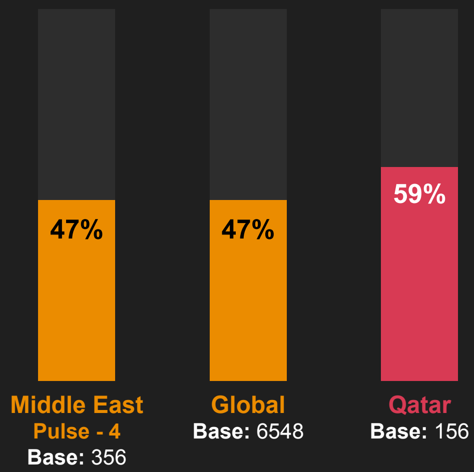
Top 3 reasons why consumers in Qatar are willing to pay more for products produced/sourced domestically:



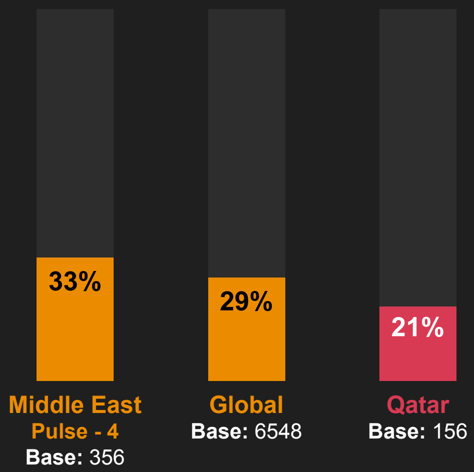
The post pandemic desire for hybrid work and travel

Based on the survey results, Qatar's employers seem relatively comfortable with employees working from their main place of work. 59% of Qatar respondents say their employers expect them to be physically present in their place of work, significantly higher than the Middle East and global averages, both at 47%.

I am required to be physically located in my place of work all the time



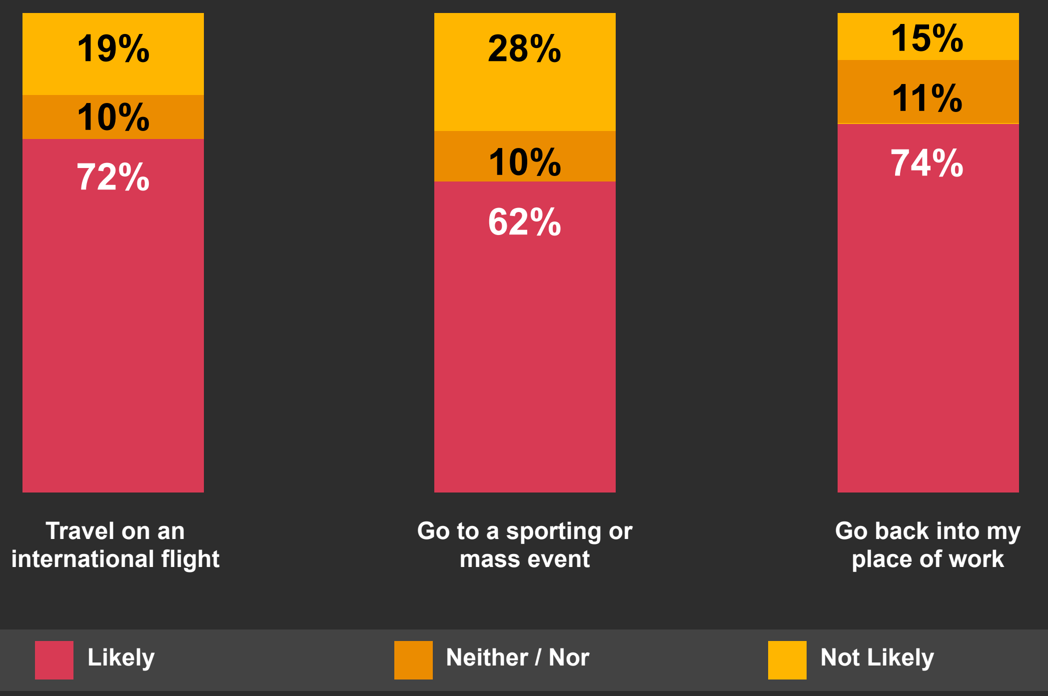
I am required to work in a hybrid way, splitting my working week between my place of work



These results also need to be seen in the context of our latest annual 2022 Middle East Workforce Hopes and Fears survey, where 56% of the Qatar sample said that whilst they would be able to do their role remotely 40% of that group still felt the expectation to be physically present at their workplace on a full time basis. Moreover, only 31% of them said they would prefer to still be doing so 12 months from now. There seems to be a mismatch - while many employees in Qatar expect to work at least some of the time from home, only 21% of respondents to the consumer insights survey describe their typical working week as hybrid.

When it comes to leisure, what is clear is that after spending long periods at home during the worst of the pandemic, Qatar's consumers are eager to travel. 72% expect to take an international flight in the next six months, more than double the global survey average, while 60% are likely to stay in a hotel and 62% cited visiting a sporting or mass event including, of course, the FIFA World Cup. Like other Middle East consumers, Qatar's shoppers want to enjoy the increased sense of freedom that has returned as vaccine roll-outs and less lethal COVID-19 variants have reduced the pandemic's threat.

Consumers in Qatar are the most likely to participate in the following activities:



It is not just the physical world that they are keen to explore. One intriguing fact uncovered by our Global Consumer Insights survey is that Qatar **(45%) has the third highest proportion of respondents who have used or purchased virtual reality** devices or media in the previous six months, behind only China (59%) and India (46%).

Growing consumer focus on ESG that will determine the future of brands and retail in Qatar

Across the Middle East, a rising generation of younger consumers is increasingly conscious of environmental and social factors when deciding what products or brands to purchase. And in this respect, Qatar respondents appear to be even more aware of issues such as climate change and corporate engagement in local communities than their Middle East peers, who in turn are also well ahead of the global survey average.

68% of Qatar respondents, compared with 58% across the Middle East and 48% globally, say they **would always or often recommend a company or brand to others, based on environmental considerations such as the business's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions and using recycled materials.** What holds for the region appears particularly true for Qatar. Retailers in Qatar need to pay attention to the strong desire of a rising generation of younger consumers by living up to their mission statements on issues such as climate change and waste.

Regarding social factors, 41% of the Qatar sample say that their purchasing decisions are influenced by whether the company is seriously engaged in areas such as supporting diversity and inclusion among its staff and its involvement in local communities. That is in line with the global average (40%), but Qatar's consumers are ahead of their worldwide peers on whether they would recommend a brand or product for social reasons (57% versus 49%). Increasingly, Qatar's shoppers need assurance that they are buying from companies with a genuine social purpose.

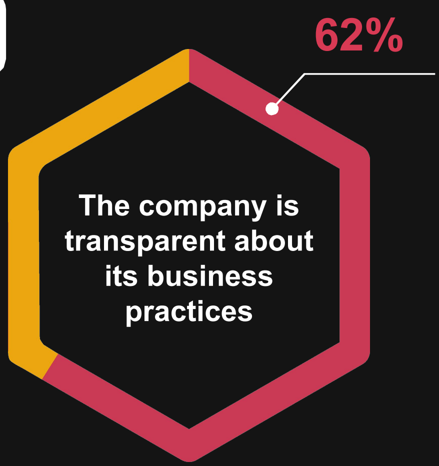
Trust and transparency are key for consumers in Qatar

Building trust is at the heart of **PwC's New Equation,** our global strategy for a new, post-pandemic environment, where businesses must unlock value for wider society, as well as themselves. Based on the Qatar results, we believe this theme is already a prominent feature of the consumer landscape that retailers should bear in mind.

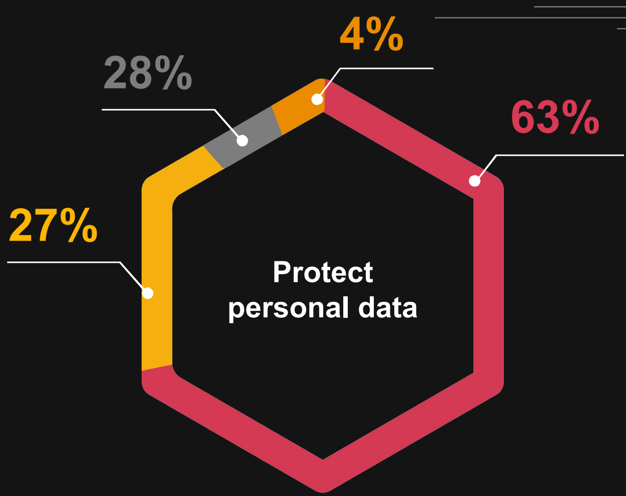
For example, 71% trust a brand or product if the business has strong corporate governance in areas such as ethics and personal data protection, compared with 61% across the Middle East and 53% globally. Furthermore, 60% say they would always or often recommend a brand or product from a company that scores highly on such issues, in line with the Middle East results (58%) and higher than the global survey average (51%).

It is especially noteworthy that 62% of Qatar shoppers expect companies (whose products and services they buy) to have transparent business practices, ahead of both the Middle East and global respondents (52 percent and 53%, respectively).

Similarly, 63% also say they are more inclined to trust a brand that protects their personal data.



Top governance factor influencing choice of companies or products



Brand trust by consumers highest for companies that protect data

Consumers in Qatar are also happy to share their data when they know there is a clear data security policy in place to protect them (60%) and that they have guarantees that their information will not be sold or shared with a third party (53%).

Conclusion

What is motivating consumers in Qatar?

This first in-depth consumer insights survey across Qatar highlights several themes that we expect to re-examine with future Pulses. Clearly, Qatar's consumers have much in common with their counterparts in KSA, UAE and Egypt. They are mostly in their twenties and thirties, and as such are completely at ease switching between in-store and online retail channels. Notably, they are often more conscious of environmental and social factors than their peers in other global regions.

Yet as the survey results confirm, Qatar's consumers also have their own local identity; not least, their pride in supporting their country when buying domestic brands or products. All these perspectives – local, regional, and global – add up to a consumer market that demands close attention as Qatar cements its place in the global economy.

About the survey

This Qatar report references the equivalent findings of the following PwC global and Middle East (KSA, UAE and Egypt) Consumer Insights surveys:

June 2022 Global Consumer Insights Pulse Survey	**Global Consumer Insights Survey 2022 | Pulse 4 - Middle East findings**
Both these surveys, and this Qatar survey, were undertaken by PwC Research, our global centre of excellence for primary research and evidence-based consulting services.	**www.pwc.co.uk/pwcresearch**

Of the 156 consumers questioned in Qatar **63%** were male. Overwhelmingly, **89%** were working and of this number **73%** were in full-time employment. Only **10%** were over 45 years of age.

Get in touch

If you would like to find out more, visit us at **www.pwc.com/me** or contact us

Norma Taki

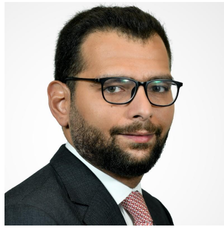
Partner, Middle East
Consumer Markets Leader
PwC Middle East

norma.taki@pwc.com

Bassam Hajhamad

Qatar Country Senior Partner and
Consulting Lead
PwC Middle East

bassam.hajhamad@pwc.com



Kamal Fayed

Partner, Deals and Transaction
Services Qatar
PwC Middle East

kamal.fayed@pwc.com

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