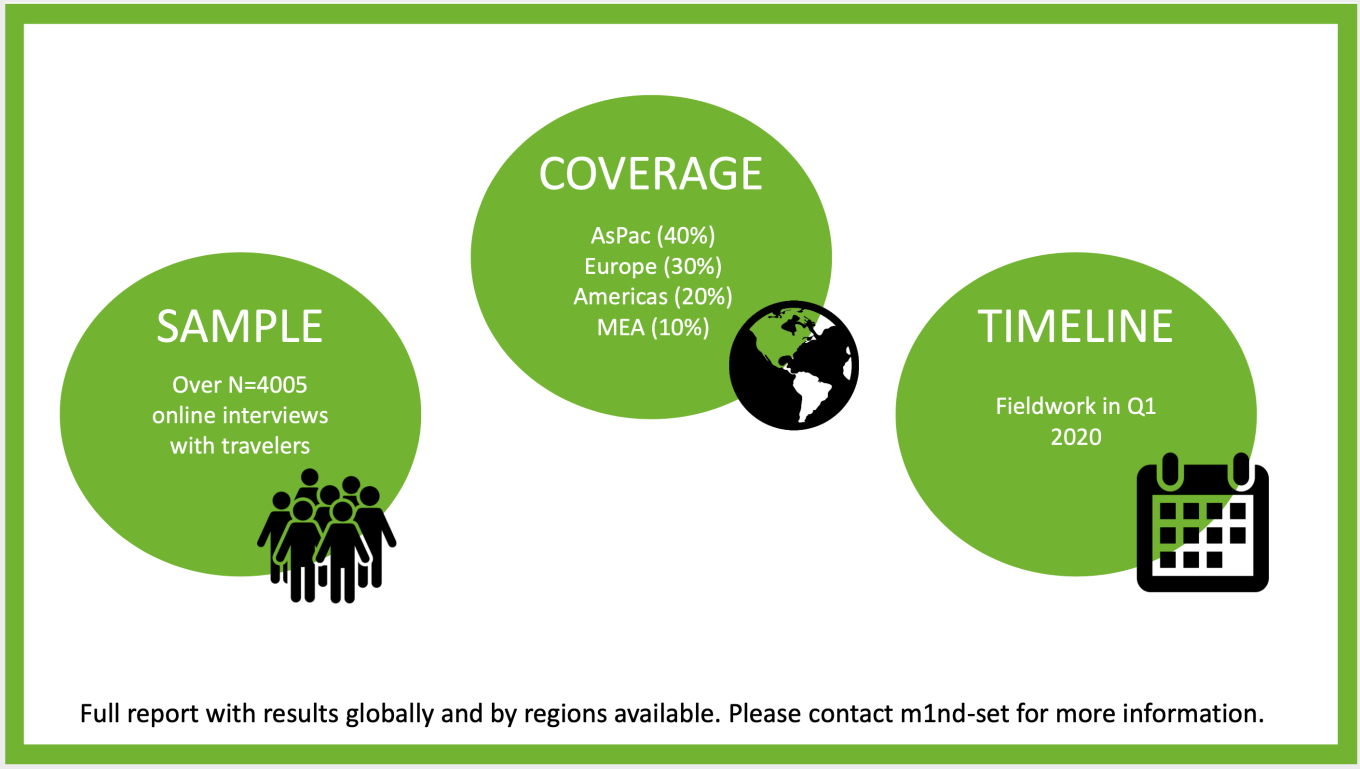
DFWC reveals COVID-19 impact on shopper behaviour with research by m1nd-set

The KPI Monitor for the first quarter of 2020, which is released by the Duty Free World Council (DFWC) and produced by Swiss research agency m1nd-set, reveals a drop in passenger satisfaction compared to the same period in 2019. The Monitor is produced for the Council by and compiled from over 4,000 interviews with shoppers globally.



Because of the dramatically decreased passenger numbers this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traffic data is not covered in this edition, but the impact on shopping behavior is featured.

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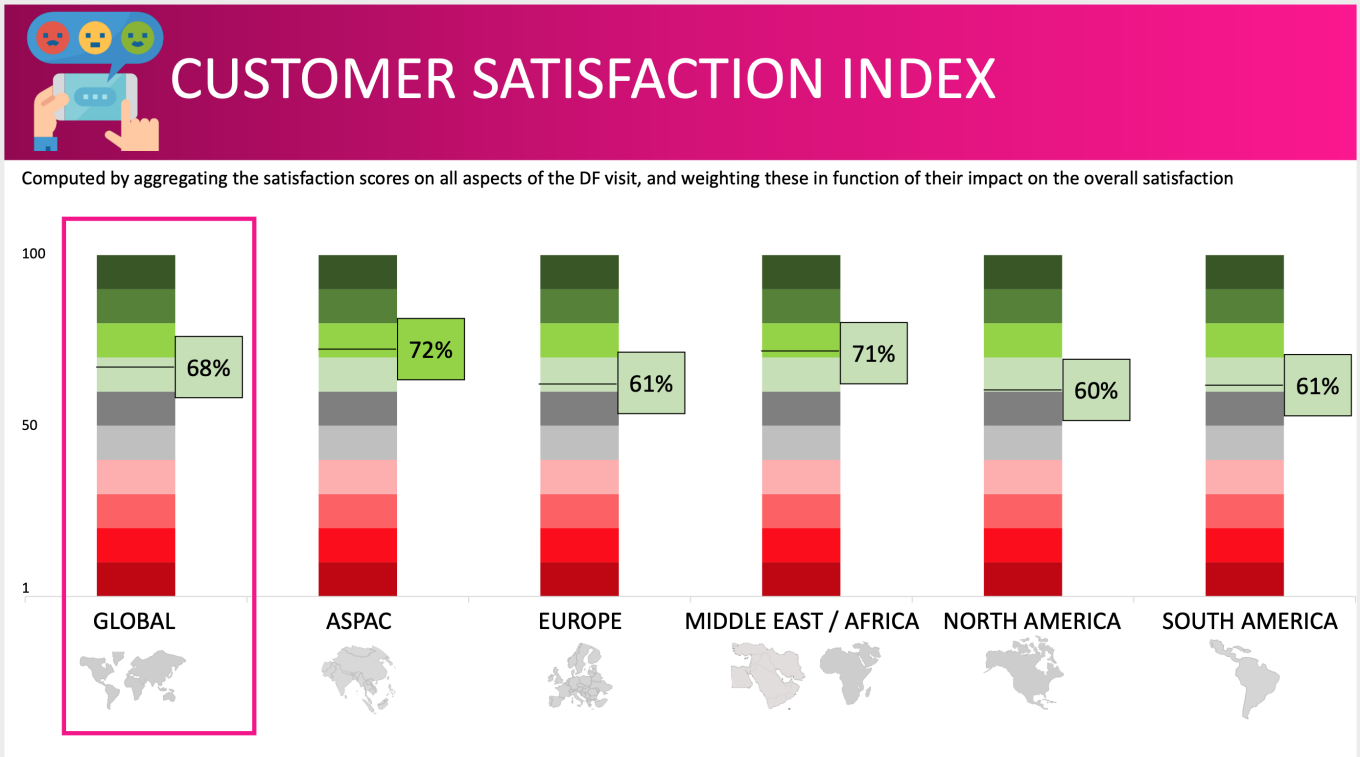
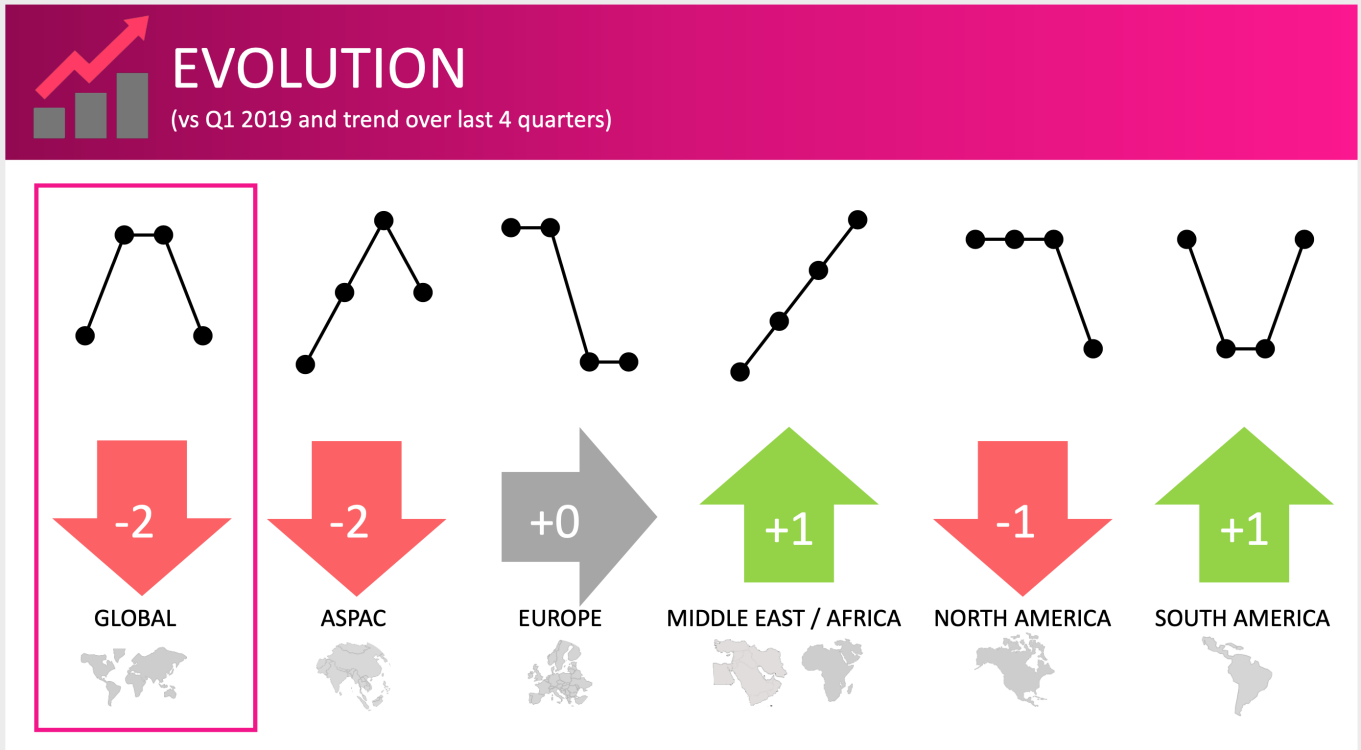


Research shows a decline in satisfaction in both Asia Pacific (-2% vs Q1 2019) and North America (-1%), stable levels in Europe and only the Middle East and South America posting moderate increases (+1%). The global average also falls by 2% compared to the same period in 2019.



During this research period, 21% of travellers who say they usually visit the Duty Free shops to browse would not do so because of COVID-19, and 26% of those who did visit the shops said they spent less time in the shops.

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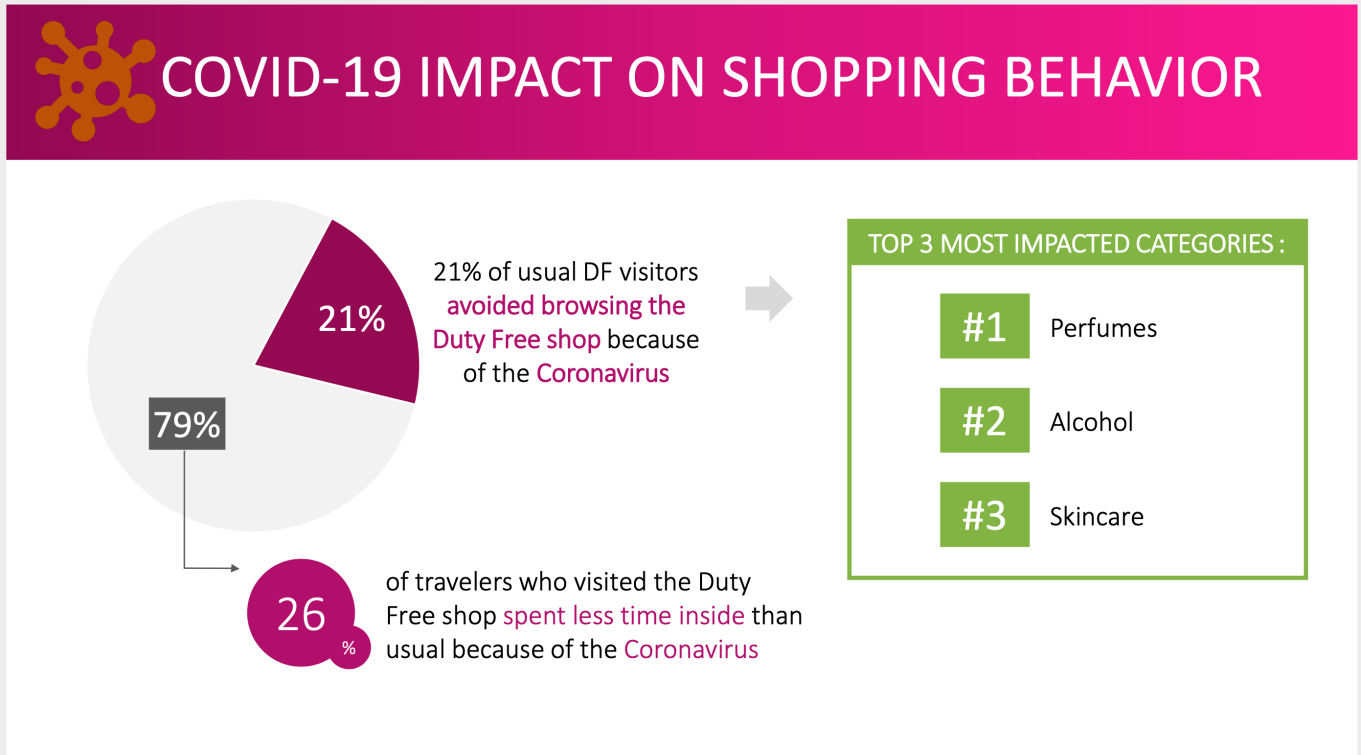

The categories most affected by the shopper behaviour change are Perfumes, Alcohol and Skincare.

Value for money is the core driver of purchasing behavior, followed by the variety and uniqueness of products in stores, the atmosphere in the shops and level of service and in-store communication, which all feature prominently.

Exclusives and gifting also emerge among these key elements to the overall positive passenger experience.

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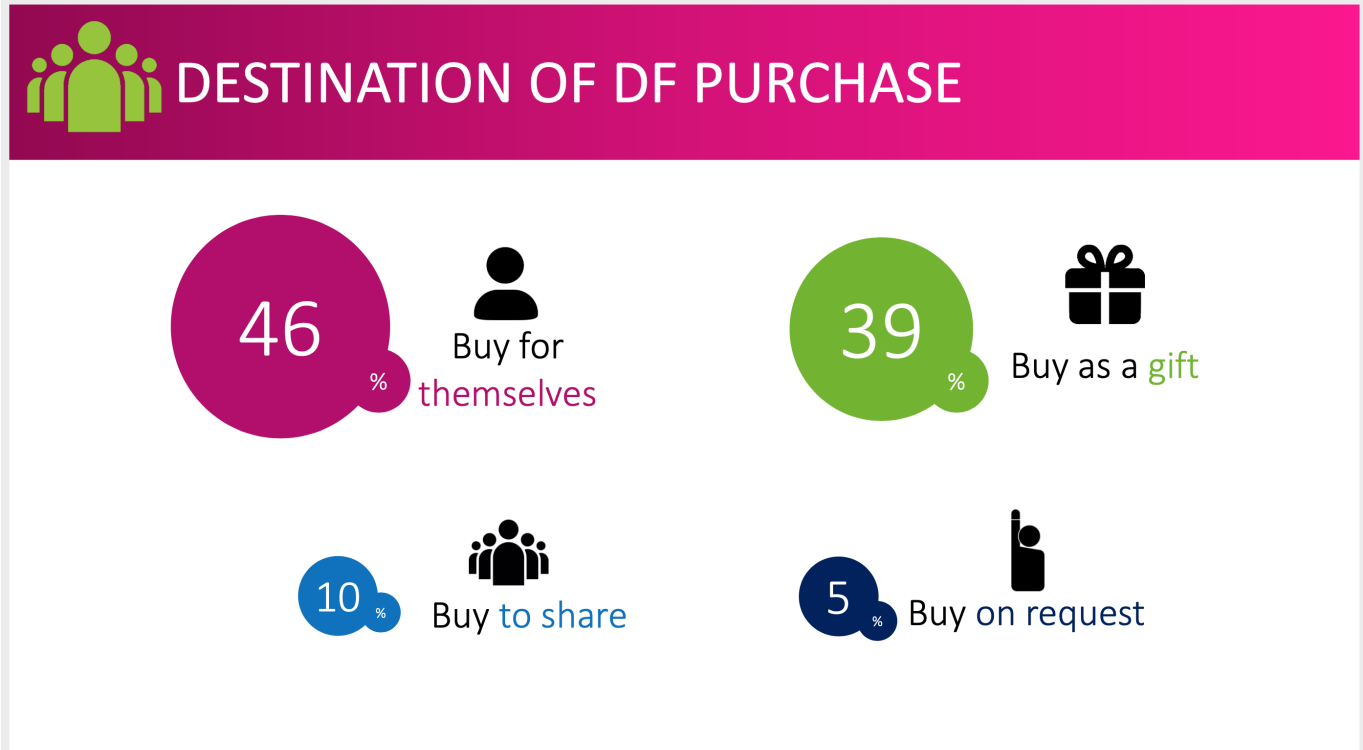

This is also reflected in the main reasons passengers give for shopping at airports. 31% say both price quality ratio and price advantage are the primary reasons they purchase at an airport duty free shop.

The unavailability of the products at home is the third most stated reason with 28% of shoppers citing this, further underlining the importance of variety and uniqueness of products.

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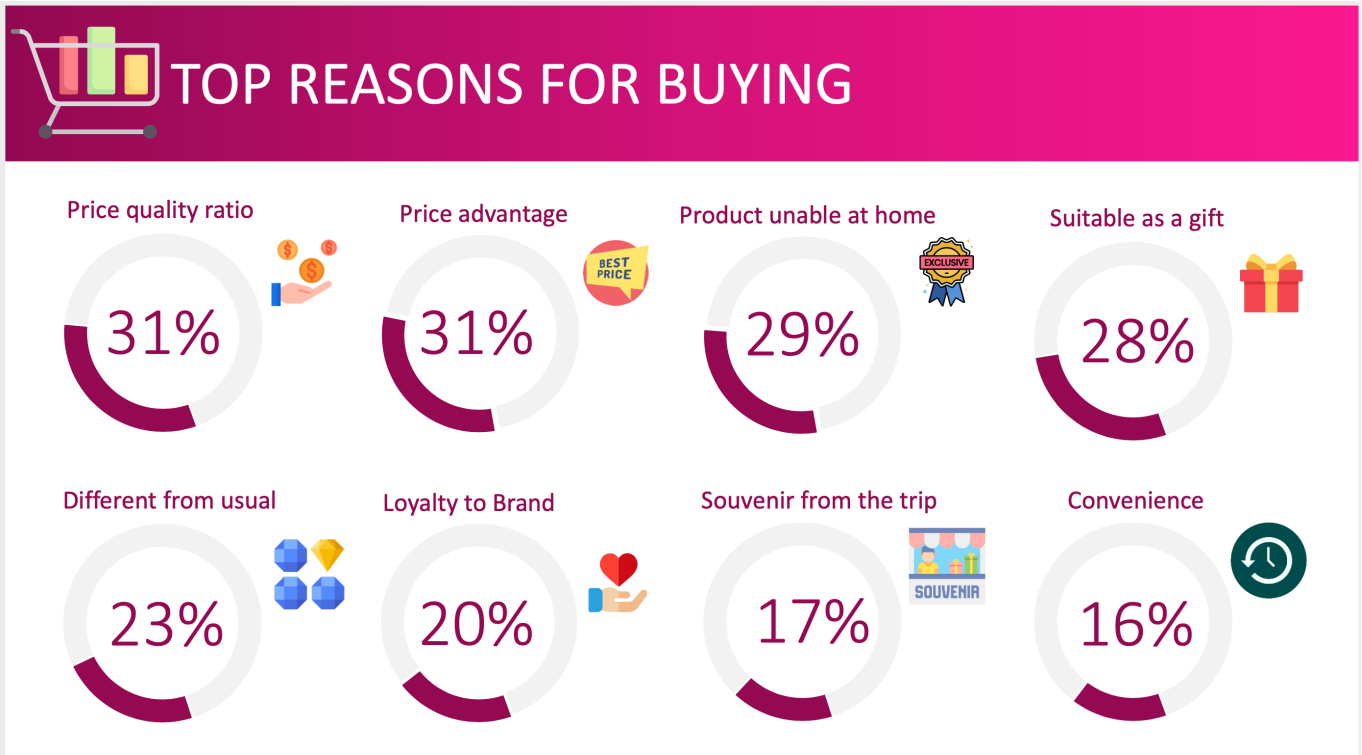

The suitability of products for gifting is also high among the reasons for purchasing at 28%. The other main reasons are differentiation (23%), brand loyalty (20%), souvenir purchases (17%) and convenience (16%).

Seventy-five percent of travellers interviewed at this time said they would avoid travelling to certain destinations for the next six months.

DFWC President, Sarah Branquinho, stressed the importance of maintaining checks and balances on performance and passenger satisfaction, given the current global crisis. “Shopper insights have always been a necessity to ensure we are in line with customer expectations and aware of new trends and behaviours. They have never been so important as in times of crisis like that which we are

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currently experiencing on a global scale. The DFWC KPI Monitor continues to gauge how shoppers in our stores perceive our offer. More than ever before, over the next few months we will need to pay attention to what our customers are telling us."

Dr. Peter Mohn, Owner and CEO at m1nd-set added: "These unprecedented times will call for new ways of thinking and operating. While differentiation, exclusives, variety and value for money are currently key elements of shopper satisfaction, we can expect to see new benchmarks emerging in the future such as 'safe place to shop' and 'hygiene level and cleanliness of store' or even 'possibility to shop without interaction'."

Further information about the various aspects studied in the Monitor is available from m1nd-set upon request (info@m1nd-set.com.)

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