Lockdown: Boredom or Opportunity?

A study on how young women made the most out of the pandemic.
The last 18 months have been exceptional for customers and brands alike. But what are the long-term effects? As two companies that take great pride in relentless customer centricity, we quickly identified that few studies focused on how Gen Z and Millennial women are faring during this very challenging time.

As a way to better understand the pandemic’s impact on this group of women we partnered to conduct a comprehensive international study including 8,000 young women across Europe and the USA* - and the findings are truly inspiring.

Showing incredible resilience and agency, young women are taking action to create a better future - both for themselves and society at large. Using the past year as a catalyst for change, majority of the respondents channeled their energy into creative outlets, new hobbies or side hustles. They’ve also built stronger relationships with the people they love and taken control of their finances long-term. Many have also used technology to overcome physical barriers and challenges.

But it doesn’t end there. We can also see that - despite being in tough situations - young women are looking beyond themselves. Many have taken a more active stance in social and environmental issues, and as many as 1 out of 10 have become involved in political activism. The findings are very impressive and it shows just how strong young women are - a fact we never questioned.

*Online survey sent out to a representative sample of women aged 16-30. Data was collected between April 6th and 12th 2021. The total number of respondents is 8000 (USA, UK, Germany, Spain & Italy with a 1000 respondents per market. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Belgium and the Netherlands with 500 respondents per market).
About NA-KD.

The hottest online brand bringing you the best in fashion and accessories from around the world. As our customer, you are at the heart of everything we do. From offering you new arrivals every day and free delivery and return, we aspire to provide you with the best online shopping experience. Born 2015 in Sweden, we are getting ready to take over the fashion world and prove that clothing can be affordable and on-trend. Working together closely with brand ambassadors and content creators from all over the world, we strive to show you the most updated, on-trend styles on all channels.

About Klarna.

We make shopping smooth. With Klarna consumers can buy now and pay later, so they can get what they love today. Klarna’s offering to consumers and retailers include payments, social shopping, and personal finances. Over 250,000 retail partners, including H&M, IKEA, Expedia Group, Samsung, ASOS, Peloton, Abercrombie & Fitch, Nike and AliExpress have enabled Klarna’s innovative shopping experience online and in-store. Klarna is one of the most highly valued private fintechs globally with a valuation of $45.6 billion. Klarna was founded in 2005, has over 4,000 employees and is active in 17 countries. For more information, visit klarna.com.
Personal finances.

Amidst the uncertainty, young women took a careful approach to money - one they’re likely to continue moving forward.

We’ll be talking about young women’s resilience, side hustling and entrepreneurial spirit. But first we’d like to focus on their financial smarts - a great addition to this list.

Despite almost 2 in 3 saying that their jobs have been impacted by the pandemic, less than 1 in 5 have borrowed more money. More than 2 in 5 have instead been able to save more.

They are also thinking about their finances long term. Half have started budgeting and 2 in 3 have thought about financial planning for the future. Apps are also helping 2 in 5 to manage their money.

- 2 in 3 have thought about financial planning for the future.
- 1 in 2 have started budgeting.
- 39% have used online apps or tools to manage their money.
- 42% have saved more money.
Creativity and entrepreneurship.

From coping strategy to cash cow – young women are turning their pandemic hobbies into small businesses.

The pandemic has uprooted our usual routines and young women are making the most of the situation. Many have channeled their energy in productive ways - turning to healthy activities like working out and being in nature, or picking up new hobbies to cope.

And it’s paying off. Not only do most young women claim they feel more confident and resilient, but 1 in 5 women are also thinking about or have started their own small business during the pandemic. Women who found new creative outlets are overrepresented in this group - in fact, they were twice as likely to start their own businesses.

Young women’s entrepreneurial spirits also come across in data on peer-to-peer sales. 2 in 5 young women have used online platforms to buy and/or sell personal items or services - a side hustle that has resulted in extra income for this group.

- **2x** Women who found new creative outlets or hobbies are twice as likely to start their own businesses.
- **1 in 2** feel they are more confident and resilient.
- **2 in 3** have found new creative outlets and/or taken up a new hobby.
- **30%** used technology to help them buy and sell personal items on sites like Facebook Marketplace.
Social and political engagement.

Young women are taking action against social injustices - 1 in 10 are now involved in political activism.

The pandemic has been an awakening for many young women with the majority growing more concerned about social and environmental issues - so they took action.

During the pandemic, 1 in 5 young women educated themselves further on political issues and almost 1 in 10 became involved in political activism - a number that’s even higher in the Netherlands and the USA.

This growing concern for the world and its citizens shows young women’s capacity for empathy, even when they themselves are struggling.

1 in 2 feel they are more confident and resilient.

83% have grown concerned about one or more social or environmental issues.

1 in 5 have taken the time to educate themselves on political or social issues.

1 in 10 have gone so far as to become involved in political activism online or in person.
Personal relationships.

Zoom ≠ IRL, but despite (or thanks to) the distance, young women feel closer to their loved ones.

It’s clear that young women care for society at large but they are also passionate about their personal relationships. In fact, most say that the pandemic has brought them closer to their loved ones and made them appreciate family and friends more - proof that (physical) absence does make the heart grow fonder.

Two thirds of young women found it challenging not to be able to see nor hug family and friends, and tech has been their saving grace. Nearly all young women used more video platforms to communicate with loved ones in the past year. Close to 1 in 5 have even gone old-school, sending handwritten letters and parcels to family and friends.

But despite finding alternatives, a huge majority of young women are still longing to meet IRL again.

- 67% appreciate their personal relationships more.
- 3 in 4 have become closer to family, friends and/or their partner.
- 85% want to work/study full or part time at the office/school post pandemic.
- 85% have started to use more video communication platforms.
- 15% have written letters or sent parcels to stay in touch with family and friends.
- 2 in 3 have used the phone to call family and friends individually.
With most nations in some form of lockdown and #WFH becoming the new normal, fashion habits have changed a lot in the past year.

Most young women have spent less on fashion, beauty and entertainment. 3 in 5 have worn more lounge and nightwear than ever before - comfort has been key.

But now people feel the need to break free and dress up. Almost all young women are longing to go back to work or school, and 2 in 3 can’t wait to wear party clothes again.

However, the heels might have to stay home. Almost as many women who are looking forward to wearing them once more are saying they will never put on another pair again.

Celebrating after the pandemic.

Pyjamas and heels – what’s the future of post-pandemic fashion?

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63% are longing to wear going out or party clothes.

58% have used more lounge and/or nightwear during the pandemic.

1 in 5 are looking forward to wearing high heels again.

1 in 5 state they will never wear high heels again.
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