

A man with a beard and dark hair is sitting on a wooden bench at night. He is wearing a plaid shirt over a white t-shirt and jeans. He is looking down at a smartphone in his right hand and holding a coffee cup in his left hand. He is wearing earbuds. The background is a blurred city street at night with lights and trees.

Qualcomm

The State of Sound report 2021

A global analysis
of audio consumer
behaviors and desires



2021 State of Sound

Sample size:
1,000
per country

Research
conducted:
**May
2021**

Geographies:
**United States, United Kingdom,
Germany, China , India, and Japan**

Demographic:
**Smartphone users
aged 18-64 years**

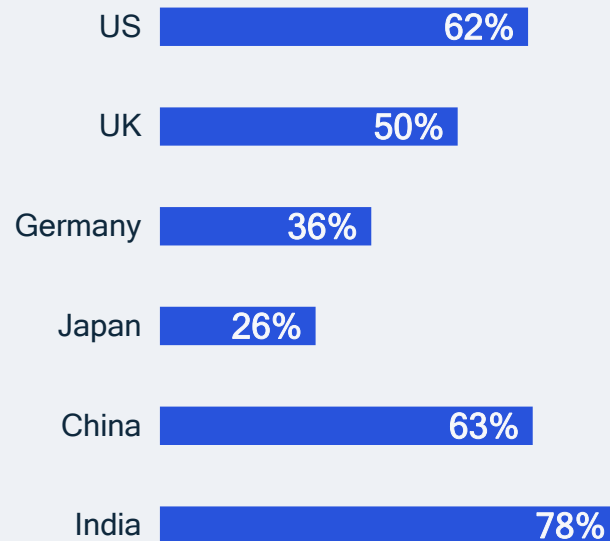
Source: Qualcomm State of Sound report 2021.

All percentages, consumer behaviors and attitudes stated in this report are based only on the responses of the individuals who participated in our annual survey.

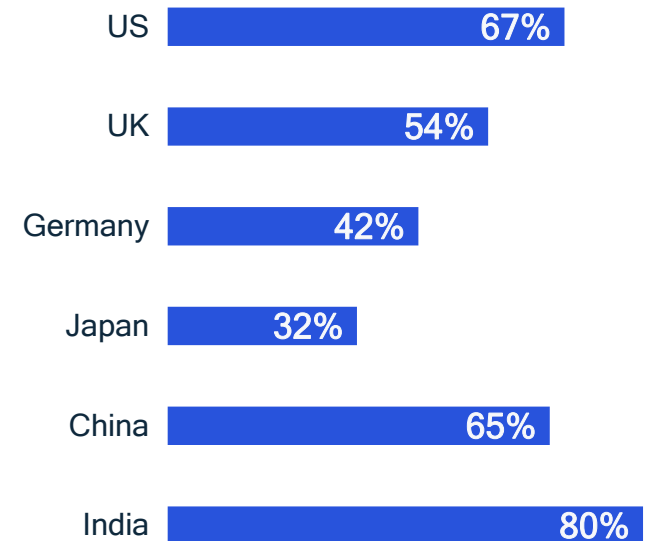
Sound is more important than ever

Around the world, majority became permanently more dependent on their audio devices in 2021

53%
Globally
Became more
reliant on
audio devices



57%
Globally
Will continue to use
devices more frequently
after the pandemic ends



A person with dark hair and visible tattoos on their arm is shown from the side, wearing a black true wireless earbud. They are holding a smartphone in their hand, which displays a vibrant image of a person. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Sound quality and battery life still most fundamental consumer requirements

True wireless earbud purchase drivers

Global average

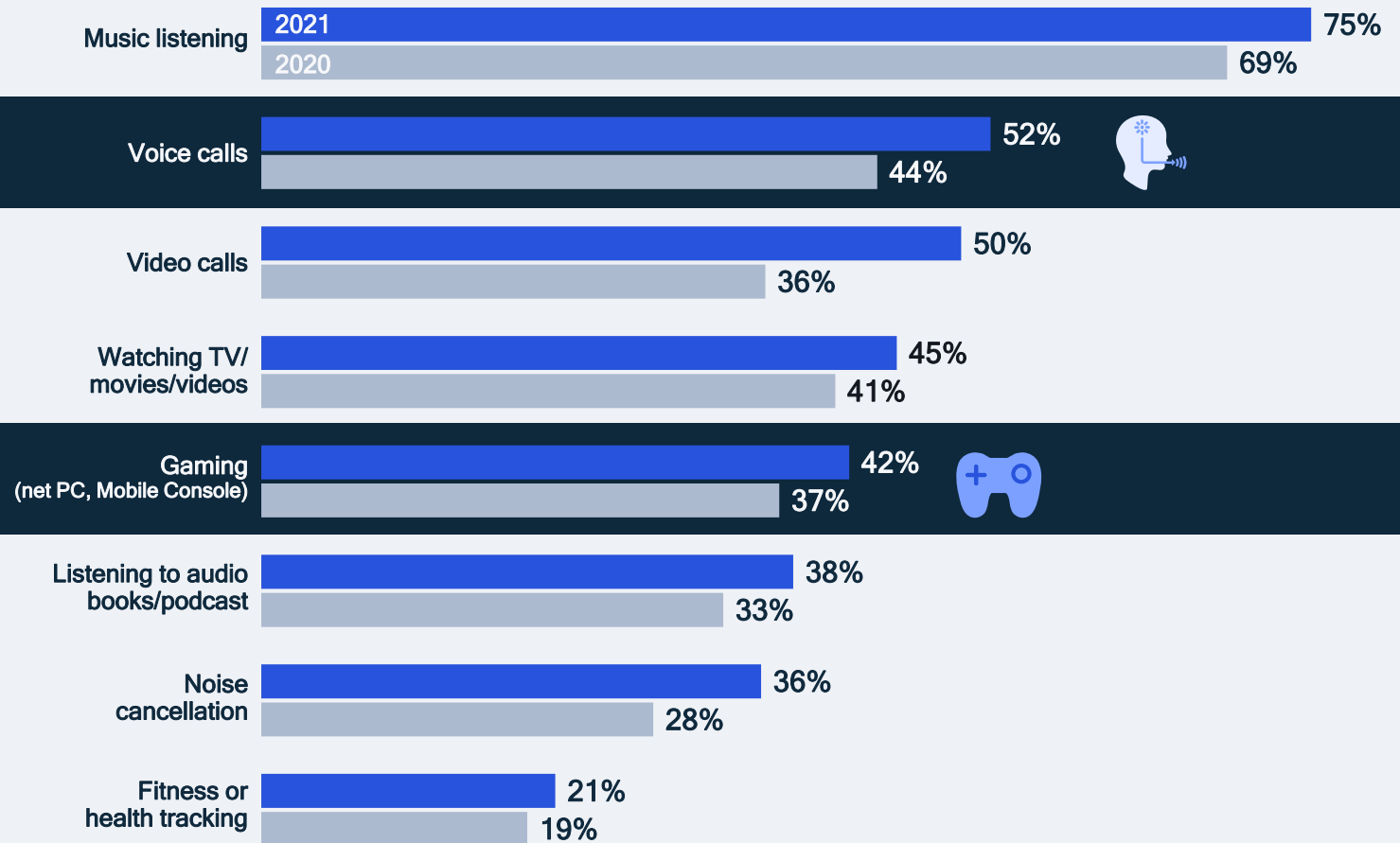
- 1 Sound quality 🔊
- 2 Battery life 🔋
- 3 Price
- 4 Comfort in the ear
- 5 Ease of use
- 6 Voice call audio quality
- 7 Active noise cancellation
- 8 Compatibility with smartphone

Source: Qualcomm State of Sound report 2021.

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Use is
increasing
across
virtually all
activities

True wireless earbud use



Source: Qualcomm State of Sound report 2020 and 2021.

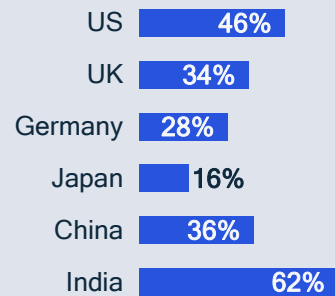
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Awareness of sound quality differentiation is growing

52%

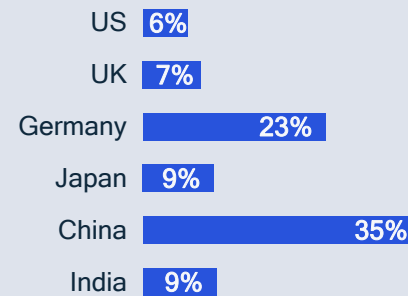
now looking for high resolution or lossless sound quality

High resolution audio (24-bit, 96kHz)



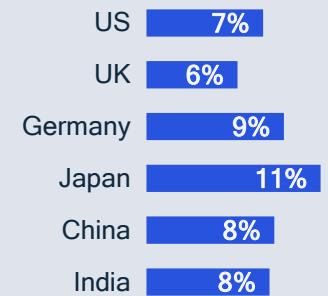
37% Global average

Lossless audio



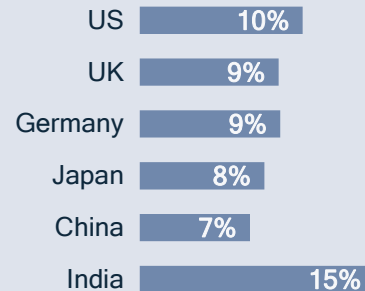
15% Global average

CD-quality audio (16-bit, 44.1kHz)



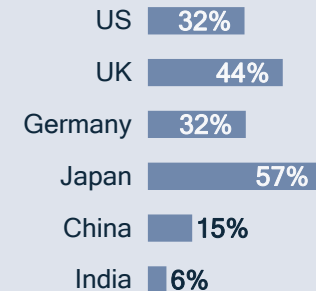
8% Global average

MP3-quality audio



10% Global average

Don't know / not sure



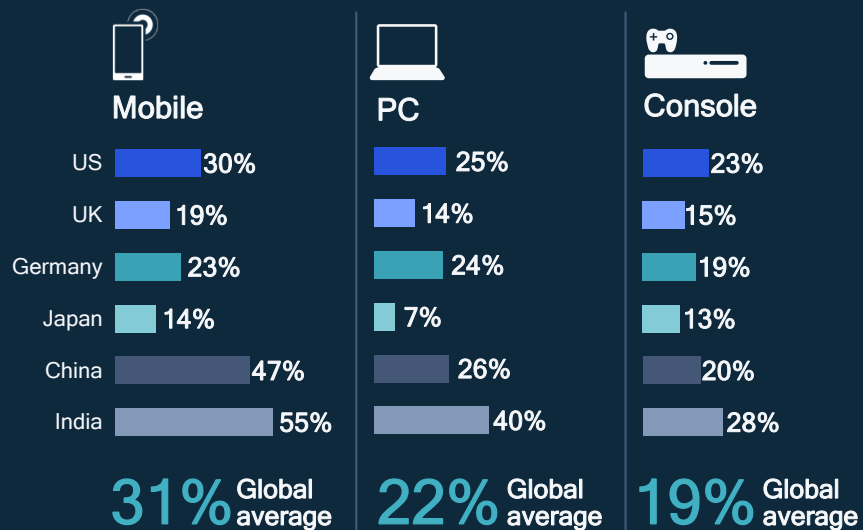
31% Global average

Source: Qualcomm State of Sound report 2021.

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Mobile gaming popularity continues to expand

Consumers using true wireless earbuds when gaming



Source: Qualcomm State of Sound report 2021.

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68%

smartphone game more than 2X per week, and 46% game every day

51%

interested in devices with voice backchannel to talk to teammates

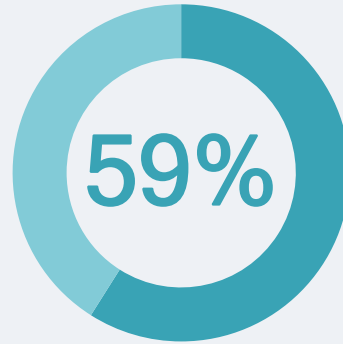
36%

reported experiencing issues with audio latency/delay

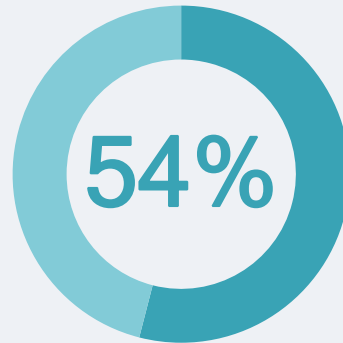


Shift to remote and hybrid working

Connected audio devices can play a major role in facilitating voice and video call quality



Using wireless earbuds or headphones for voice/video calls helps work from home



Doing more voice/video calls for work since 2020

Work remotely and do not expect to return

US 48%

UK 40%

Germany 25%

Japan 22%

China 42%

India 71%

41%
Globally



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