

Methodology

Harris Interactive® fielded the study on behalf of National Endowment for Financial Education from November 22-26, 2013, via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus service, interviewing 2,033 U.S. adults aged 18+. Data were weighted using propensity score weighting to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

Key Findings – Largest Holiday Expenditure

93% of U.S. adults will have any holiday expenditures this holiday season.

- The majority (63%) said their largest expenditure will be gifts
- 16% indicated their largest expenditure will be food/groceries for holiday meals
- Less than 10% said that travel (9%), entertainment/entertaining (2%), gift wrap/decorating (1%), holiday greeting cards (1%) or something else would be their largest expenditure.

Key Findings – Concerns About Affording Holiday Expenses Compared to Five Years Ago

When considering the current economic climate, nearly two in five (39%) U.S. adults are more concerned about affording holiday expenses this holiday season compared to five years ago.

- Women (43%) are significantly more likely to feel this way than men (34%)

Over two in five (41%) U.S. adults are equally as concerned about affording holiday expenses this year compared to five years ago.

Roughly one fifth (21%) of U.S. adults are less concerned about affording holiday expenses this year compared to five years ago.

Key Findings – Holiday Spending

Over half (57%) of U.S. adults say they don't set/have a budget when deciding how much they will spend on holiday shopping

- Thankfully, 29% said while they don't set a budget, they don't spend more than they want to
- 21% don't have a budget, they just buy things that seem like good ideas for recipients on their list
- Over one in ten (12%) U.S. adults don't set a budget and often spend more than they want to
 - Men (14%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than women (10%)

Over one third (37%) of U.S. adults say set a budget for holiday spending and stick to it.

7% say they have some other way of deciding how much to spend on holiday shopping

Key Findings – Payment Methods/Sources for Holiday Spending

93% of U.S. adults anticipate having holiday-related expenses this year.

Among those who do...

- 66% plan to use cash to pay for these expenses
- Over two in five (44%) plan to use credit cards for holiday-related expenses
 - 32% will pay the full balance within the first statement cycle
 - 14% will not pay off the full balance within the first statement cycle
- One fifth (20%) plan to tap into their savings to pay for their holiday-related expenses
- 6% plan to use layaway services to help with holiday-related expenses
- 6% plan to use a holiday or year-end bonus to cover these expenses
- 4% plan to get help from relatives or friends to pay for these expenses
- 3% plan to take a short-term loan to help cover holiday-related expenses
- 5% plan to find some other way to pay for their holiday-related expenses
 - Women (7%) are significantly more likely to indicate this than men (3%)

Key Findings – Concerns Over Credit Card Usage

Over three quarters (76%) of U.S. adults who had or will have holiday-related expenses this year will use credit cards to pay for these expenses

Among those who use credit cards to pay for their holiday expenses...

- Over one third (35%) are at least somewhat concerned that their use of credit cards will affect their credit in the near future
 - 19% are very/fairly concerned
 - 9% are very concerned
 - 10% are fairly concerned
 - 16% are somewhat concerned
- Nearly two thirds (65%) are not at all concerned that their use of credit cards will affect their credit in the near future

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