



Findings from SP2024 Pre-Conference Poll

Monday, 29 January 2024
9.00 am – 9.30 am

Poll Background

Aims:

- To measure the attitudes, values, and opinions of Singaporeans towards issues concerning well-being, work, family, civic engagement, as well as life transitions
- To understand whether and how these sentiments may vary across age groups
- Broadly aligned with the key themes of Singapore Perspectives 2024 – well-being, work, family, and politics

Methodology

- Inclusion criteria: Singaporean Citizens and PRs aged 21 – 64
- Respondents recruited from online panels
- Utilised quota sampling (i.e., targeted equal proportions across age groups)
- Poll was conducted between November and December 2023
- Weights were applied for age group, gender, and ethnicity to reflect a more representative distribution
- Final sample size (n) = 2,356

Note

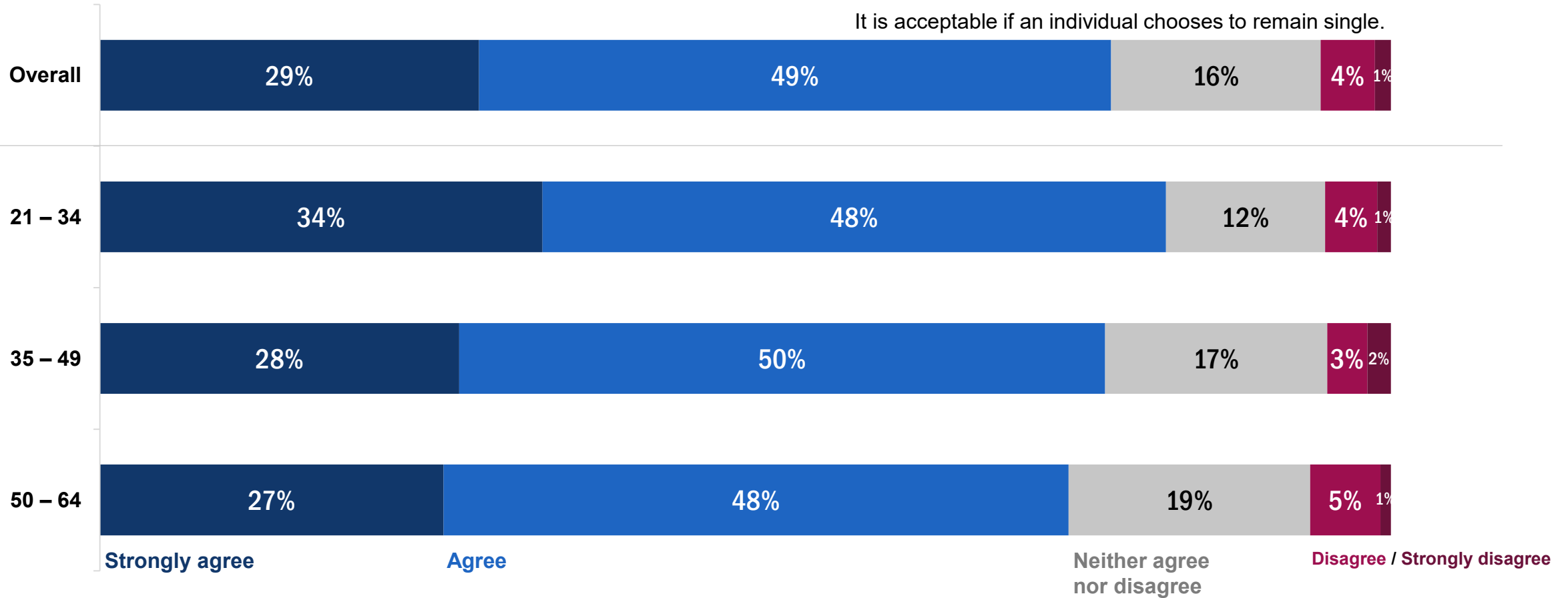
Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Family

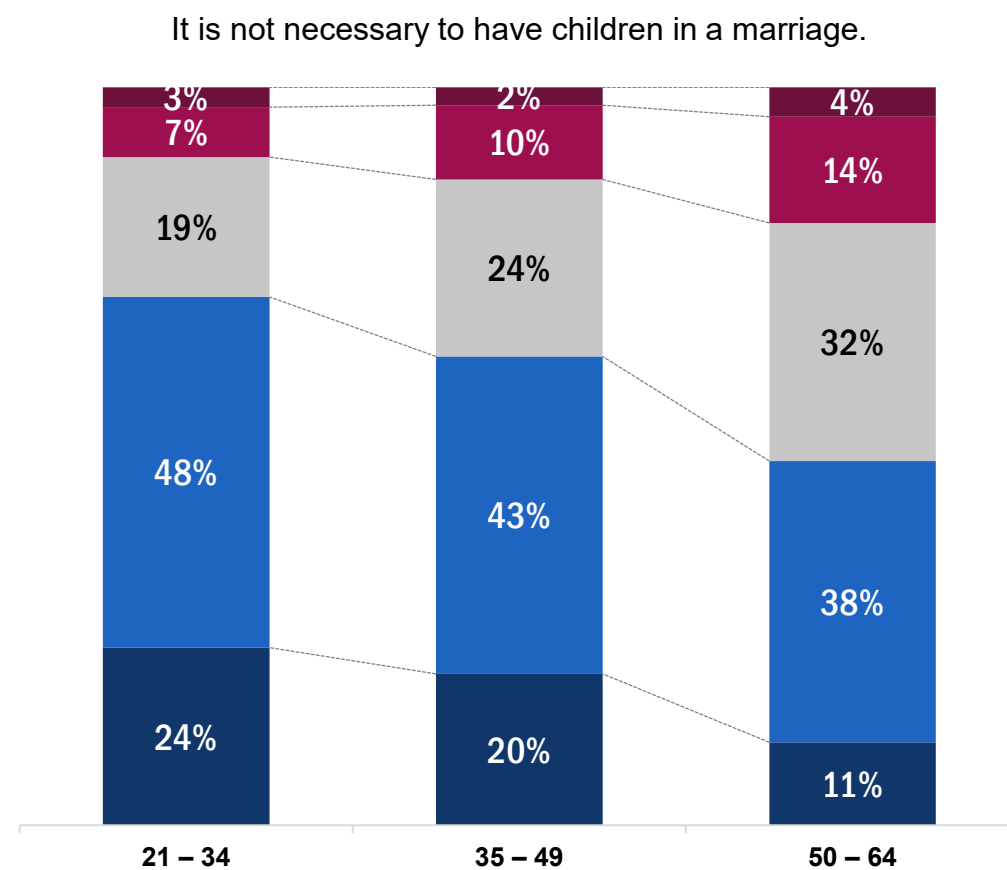
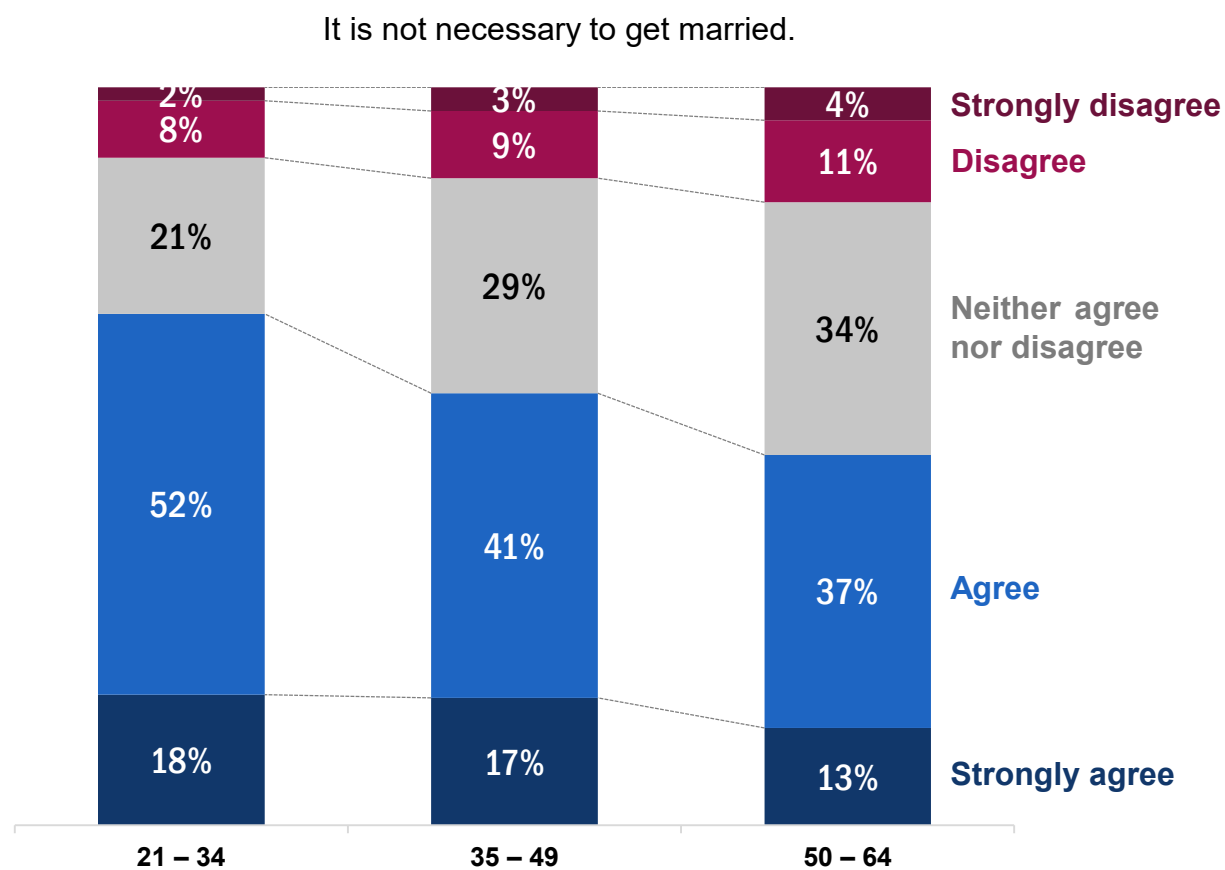
How do attitudes towards dating, marriage, and parenthood vary across age groups?

78% of respondents agree that it is acceptable if an individual chooses to remain single. Younger respondents are more likely to hold this view, with 82% agreeing:

It is acceptable if an individual chooses to remain single.



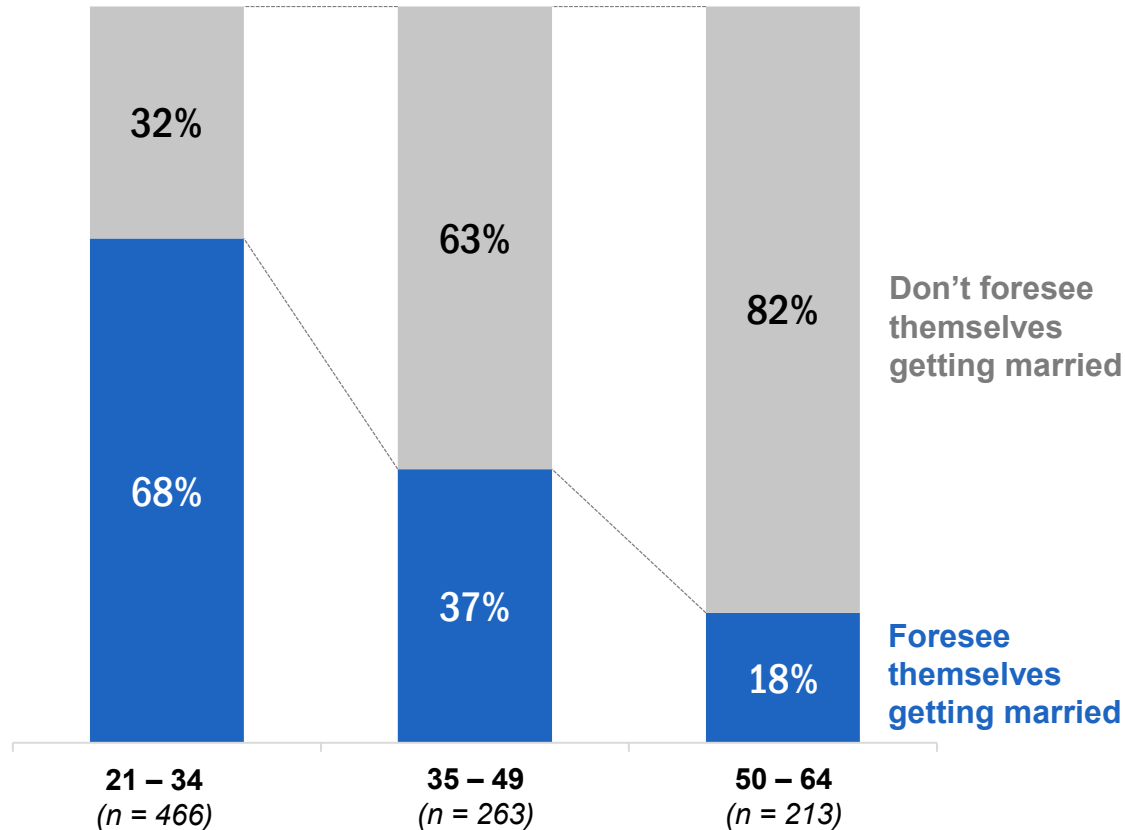
Younger respondents are also more likely to agree that it is not necessary to get married or have children in a marriage, with 7 in 10 of those aged 21-34 indicating so:



But 7 in 10 of unmarried respondents aged 21-34 also foresee themselves getting married.

Similarly, 7 in 10 of respondents aged 21-34 without children also hope to have children in the future:

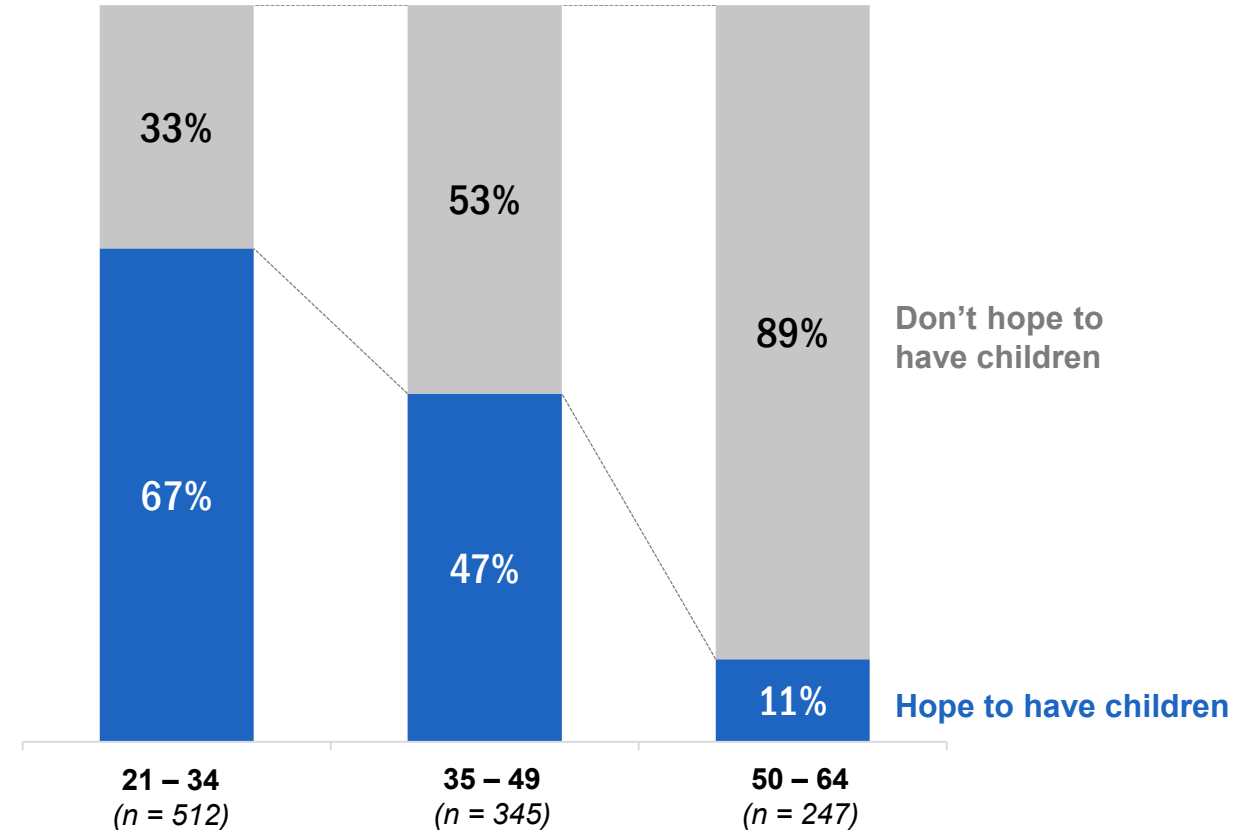
Do you foresee yourself getting married in Singapore in the future?



Note

Asked to unmarried respondents (i.e., never-married, separated, divorced, and widowed).

Do you hope to have children in the future?



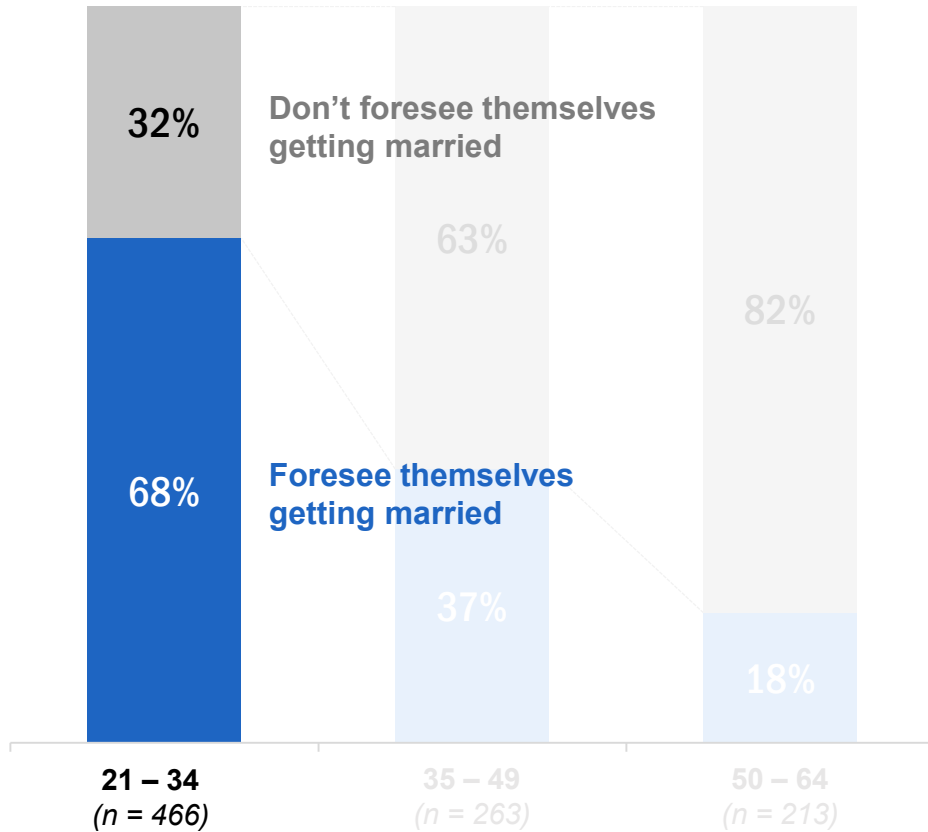
Note

Asked to respondents without children.

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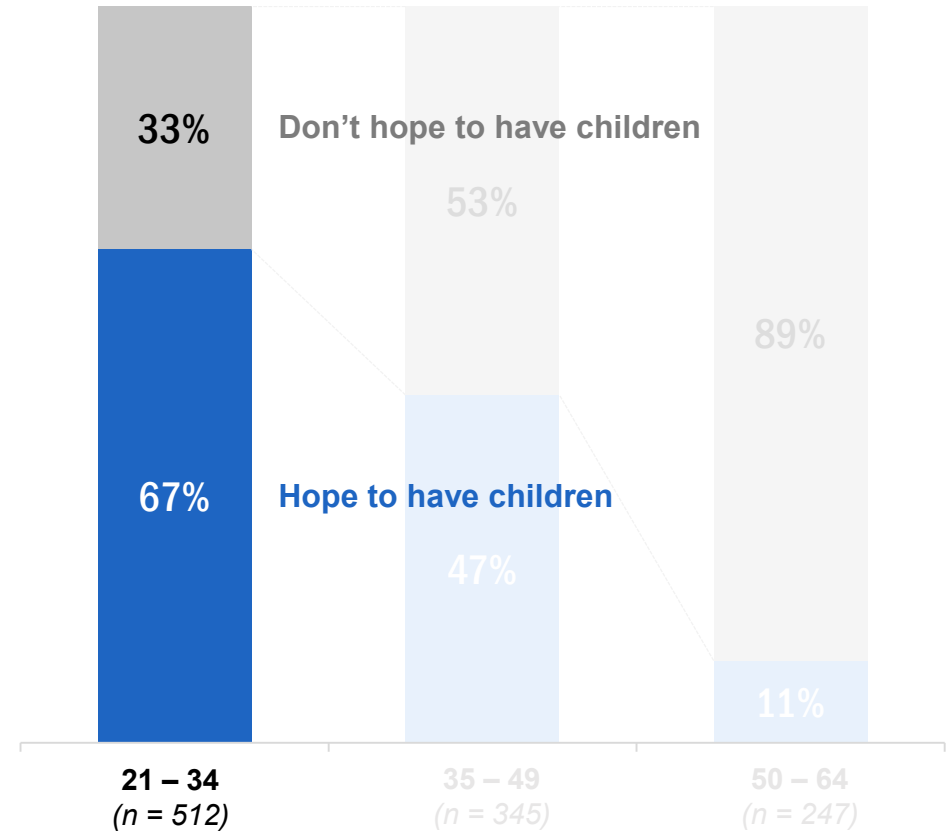
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Asked to unmarried respondents (i.e., never-married, separated, divorced, and widowed).

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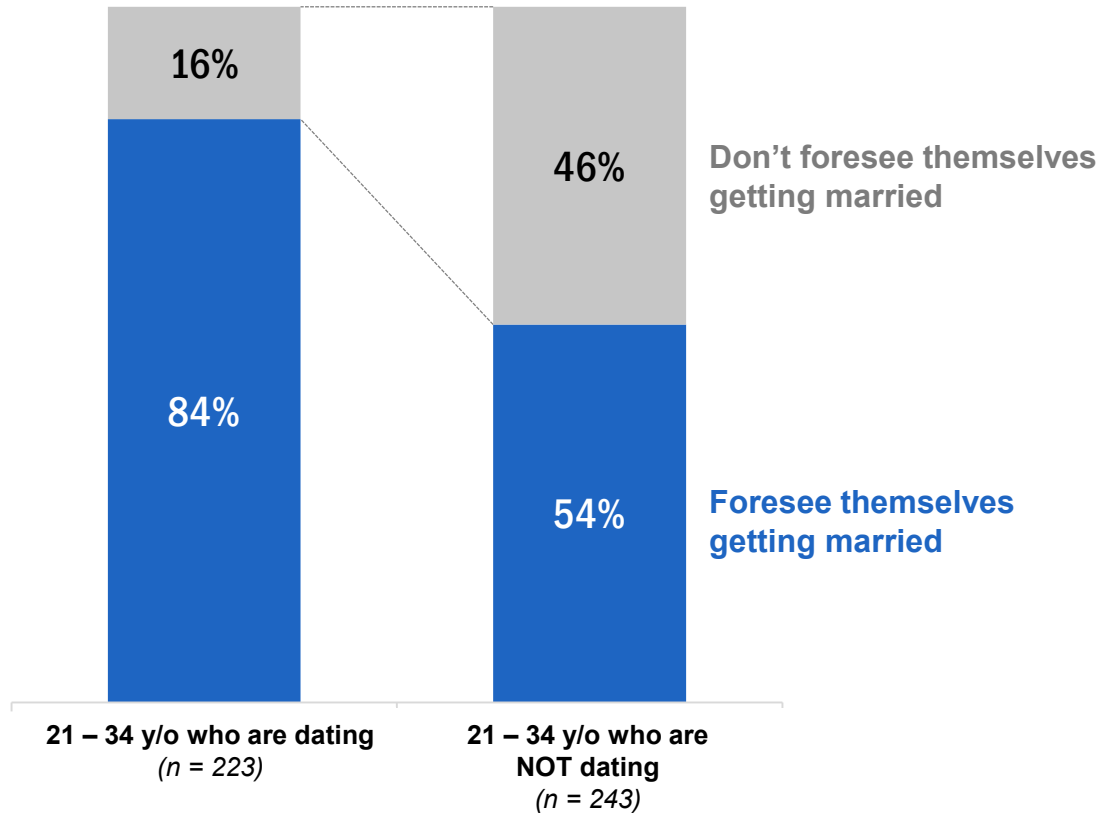
Note

Asked to respondents without children.

Aspirations for marriage and parenthood remain strong for the under-35 group.

Around 4 in 5 of those in a relationship foresee themselves getting married or having children in the future. Even among single youth, more than half aspire for marriage and parenthood:

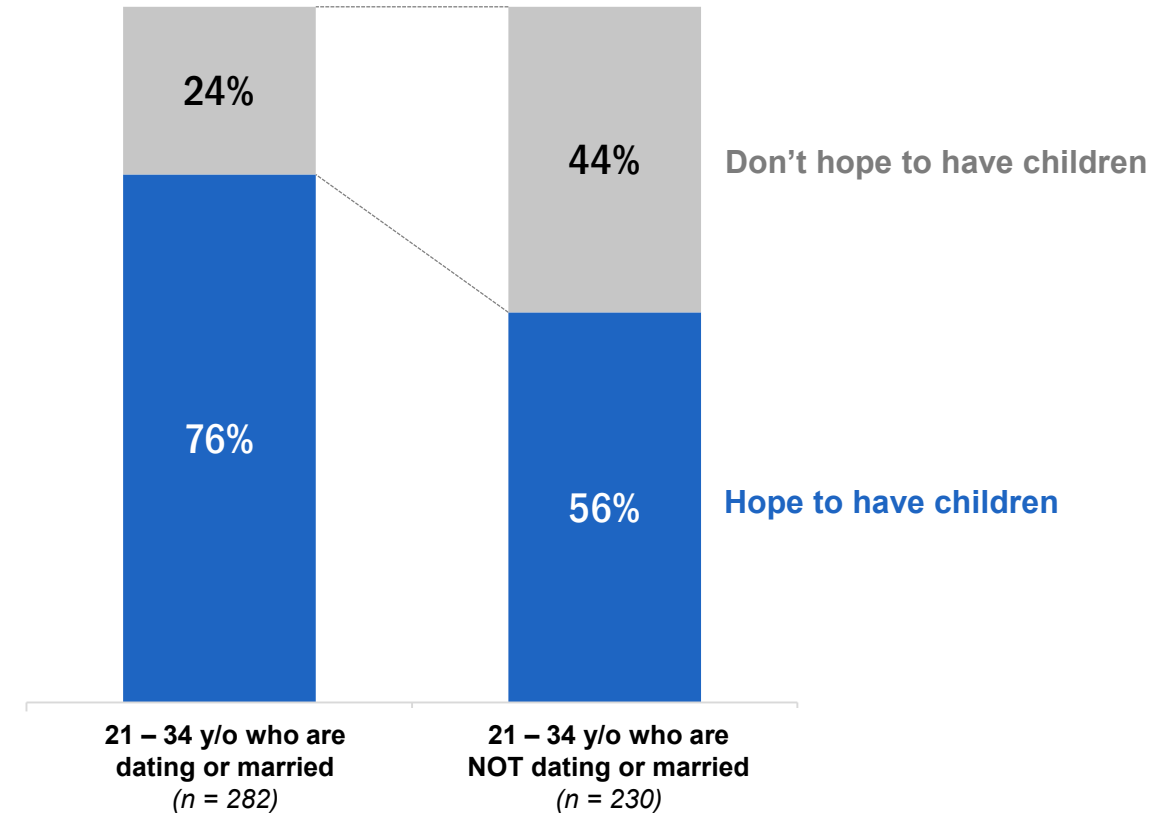
Do you foresee yourself getting married in Singapore in the future?



Note

Asked to unmarried respondents (i.e., never-married, separated, divorced, and widowed) aged 21-34.

Do you hope to have children in the future?



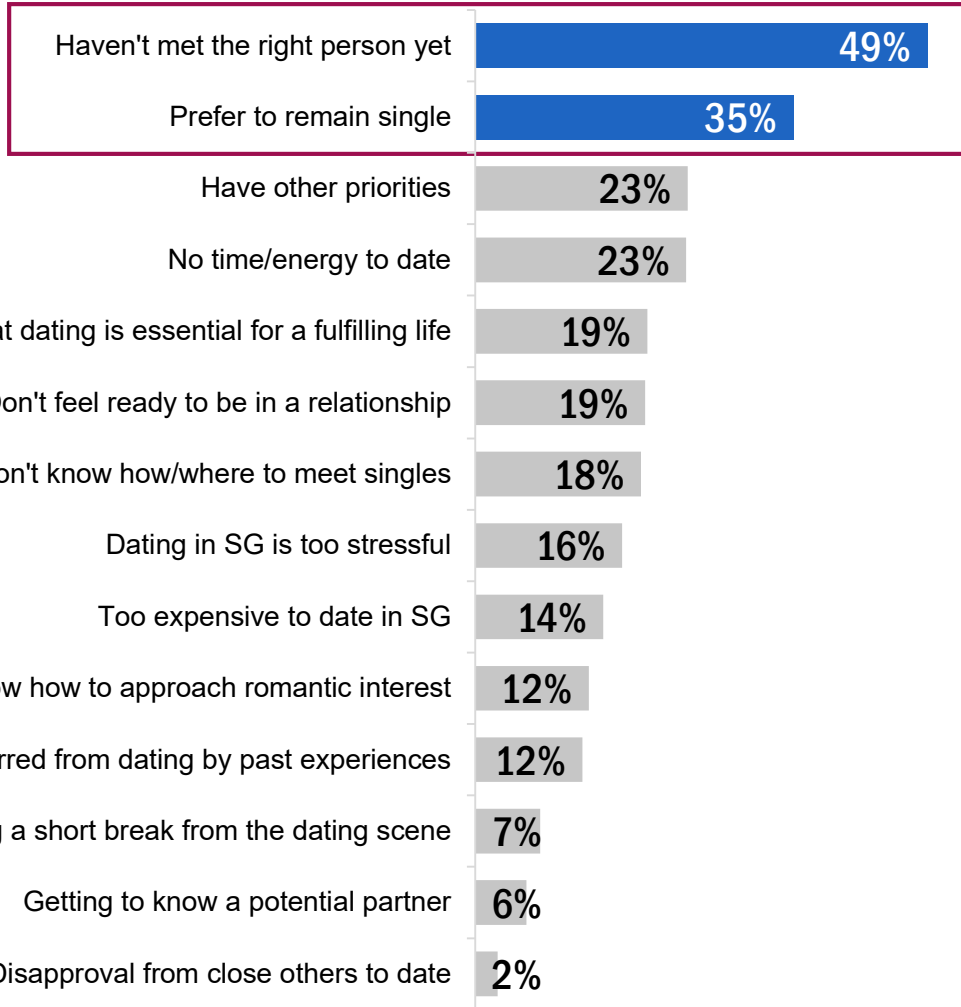
Note

Asked to respondents aged 21-34 without children.

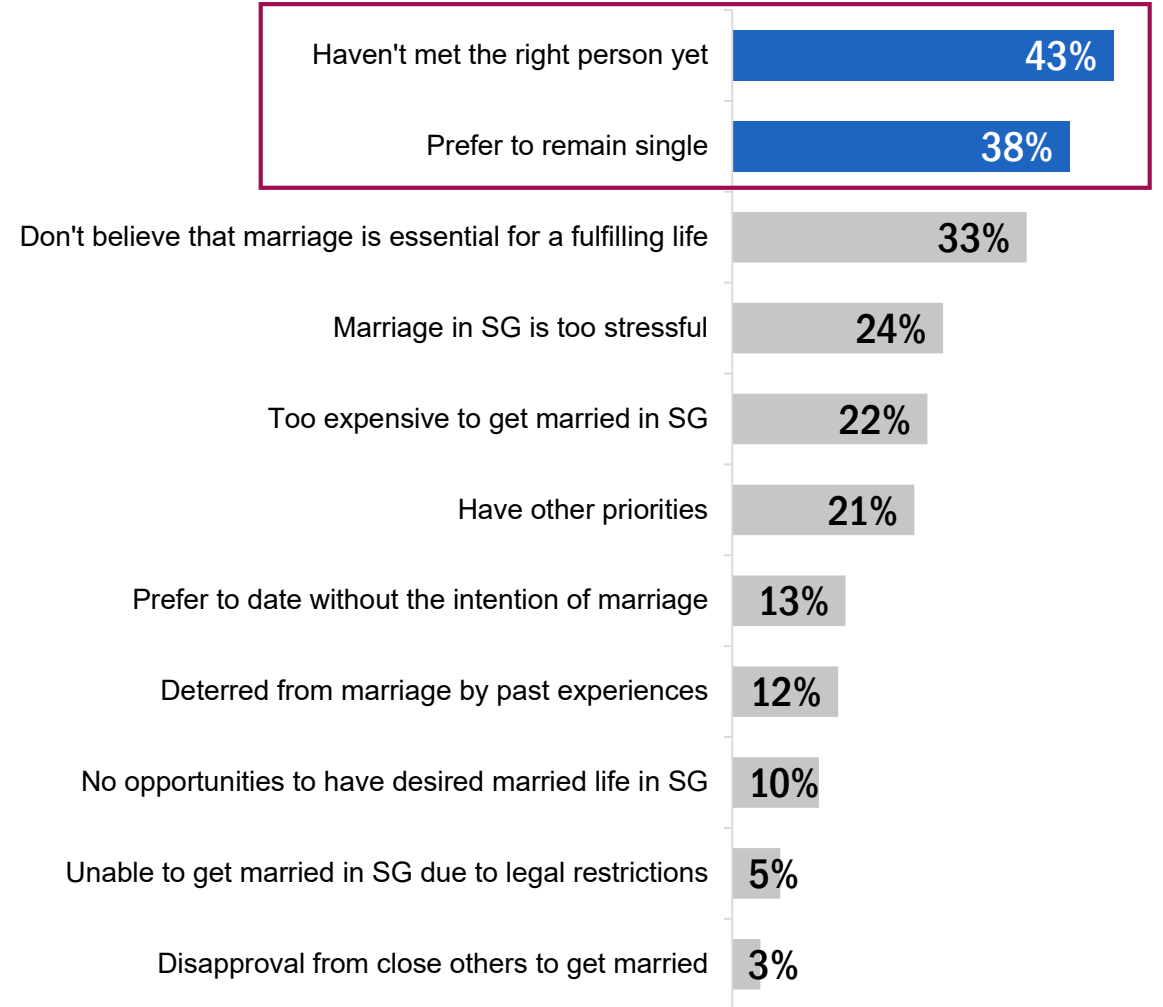
Family

What is holding Singaporeans back from their family aspirations?

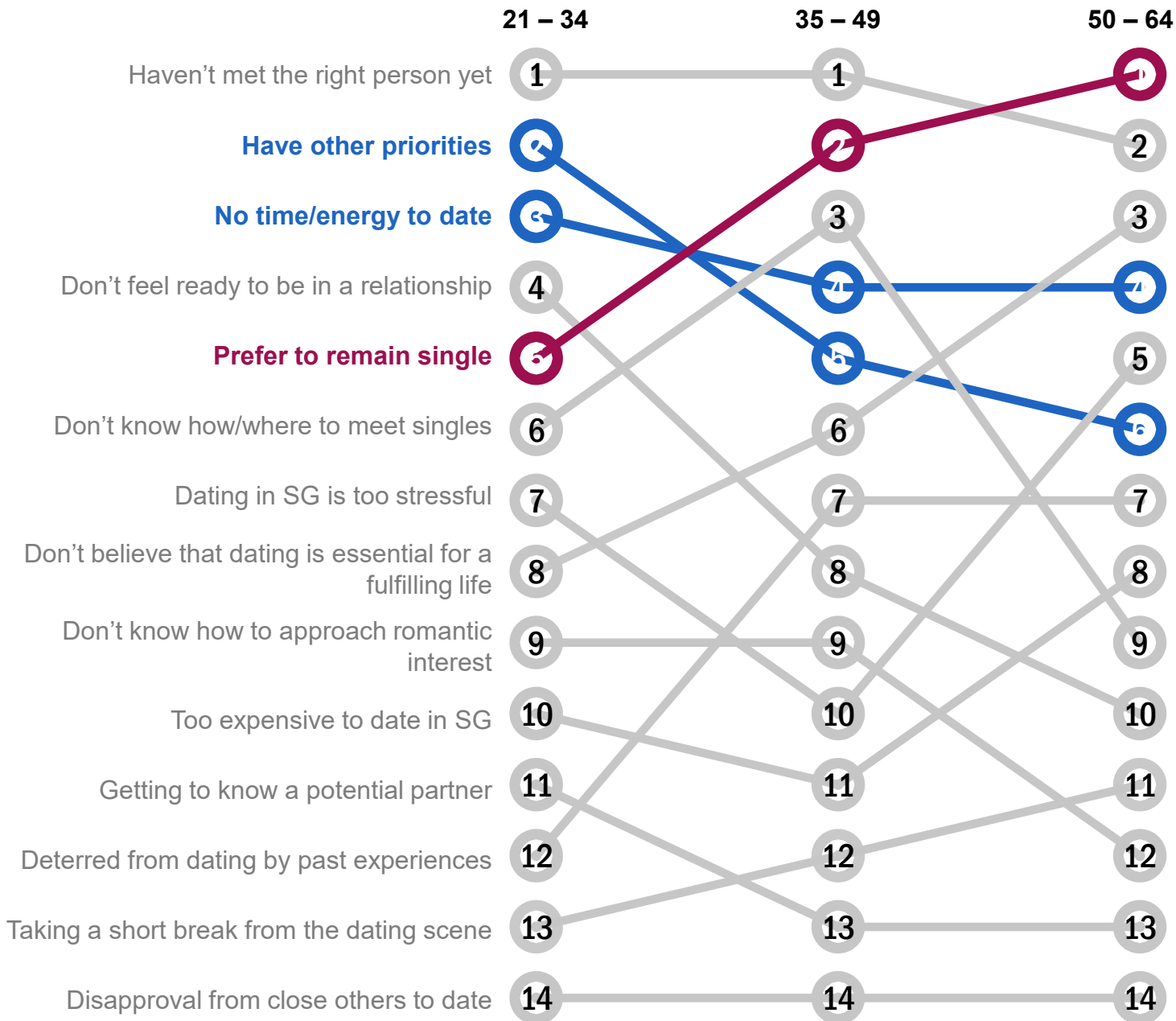
Not having met the right person yet and a preference for singlehood are the top reasons for not dating and getting married:



Why are you currently not in a romantic relationship? Please select all that apply.
 – Reasons paraphrased for brevity; “Others” responses excluded



Why do you not foresee yourself getting married in Singapore in the future? Please select all that apply.
 – Reasons paraphrased for brevity; “Others” responses excluded



Younger respondents are more likely to cite **having other priorities** and **lack of time/energy** as their reasons for not dating.

Older respondents are more likely to cite a **preference to remain single** as their reason for not dating.

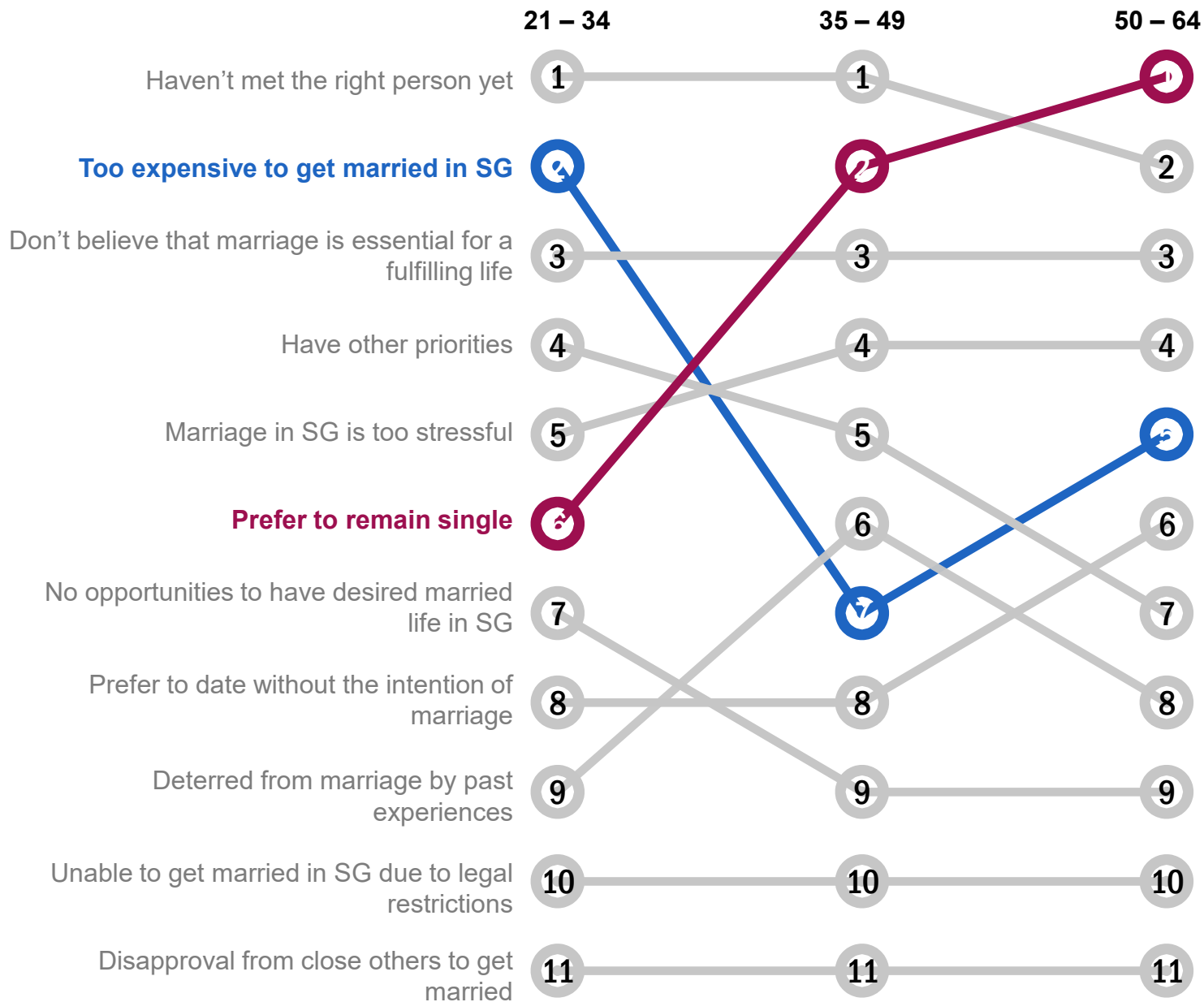
Notes

Reasons have been paraphrased for brevity.

Excludes "Others" responses.

Asked to respondents who were not in a relationship at the time of the poll (n = 633).

Why are you currently not in a romantic relationship? Please select all that apply.



Younger respondents are more likely to be deterred by the **cost of getting married in Singapore.**

Older respondents are again more likely to indicate a **preference to remain single** as their reason for not wanting to get married.

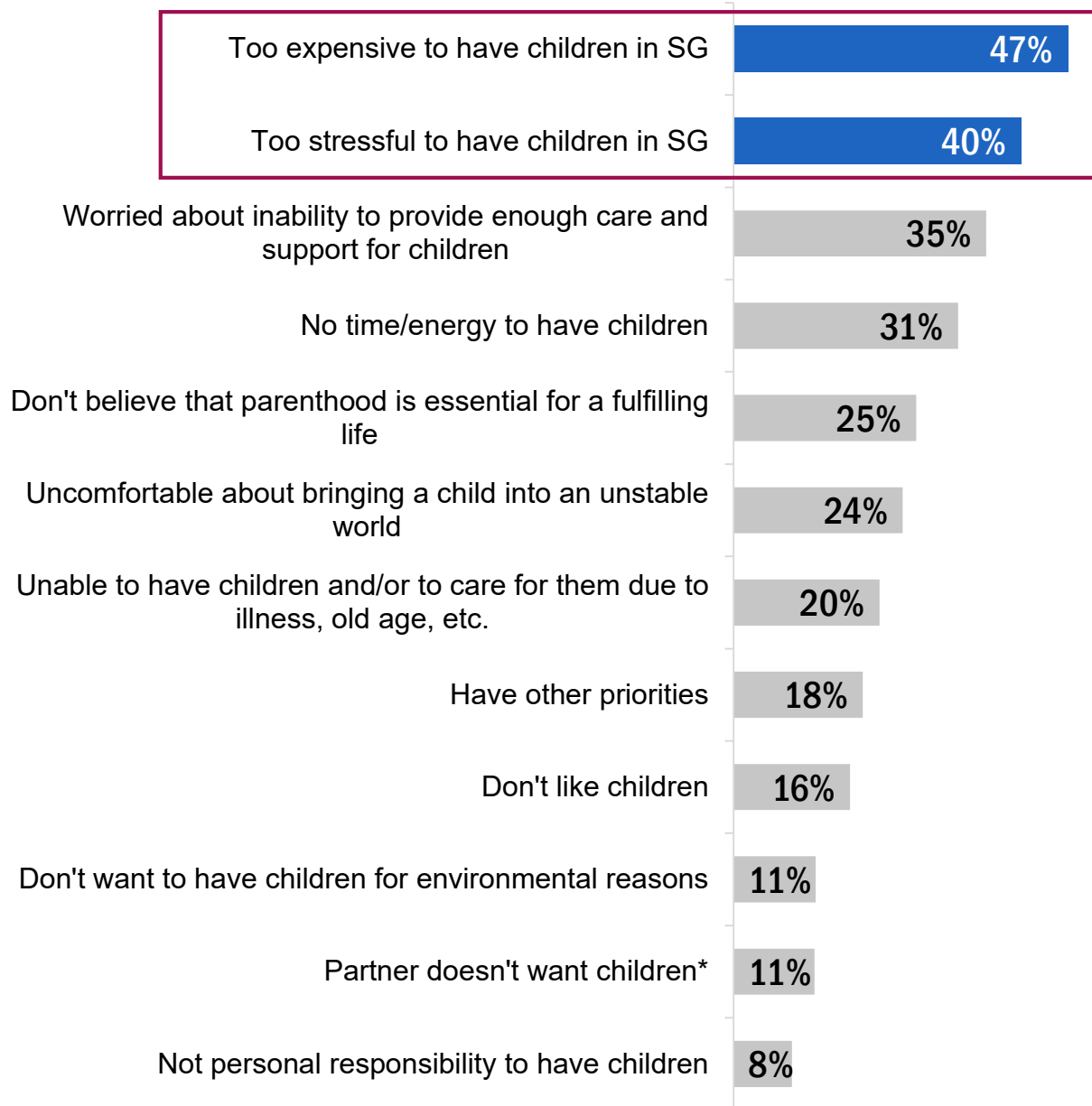
Notes

Reasons have been paraphrased for brevity.

Excludes "Others" responses.

Asked to unmarried respondents who did not foresee themselves getting married in Singapore in the future (n = 488).

Why do you not foresee yourself getting married in Singapore in the future? Please select all that apply.



High cost and stress emerged as the top reasons for not wanting to have children across all age groups.

Notes

Reasons have been paraphrased for brevity.

Excludes "Others" responses.

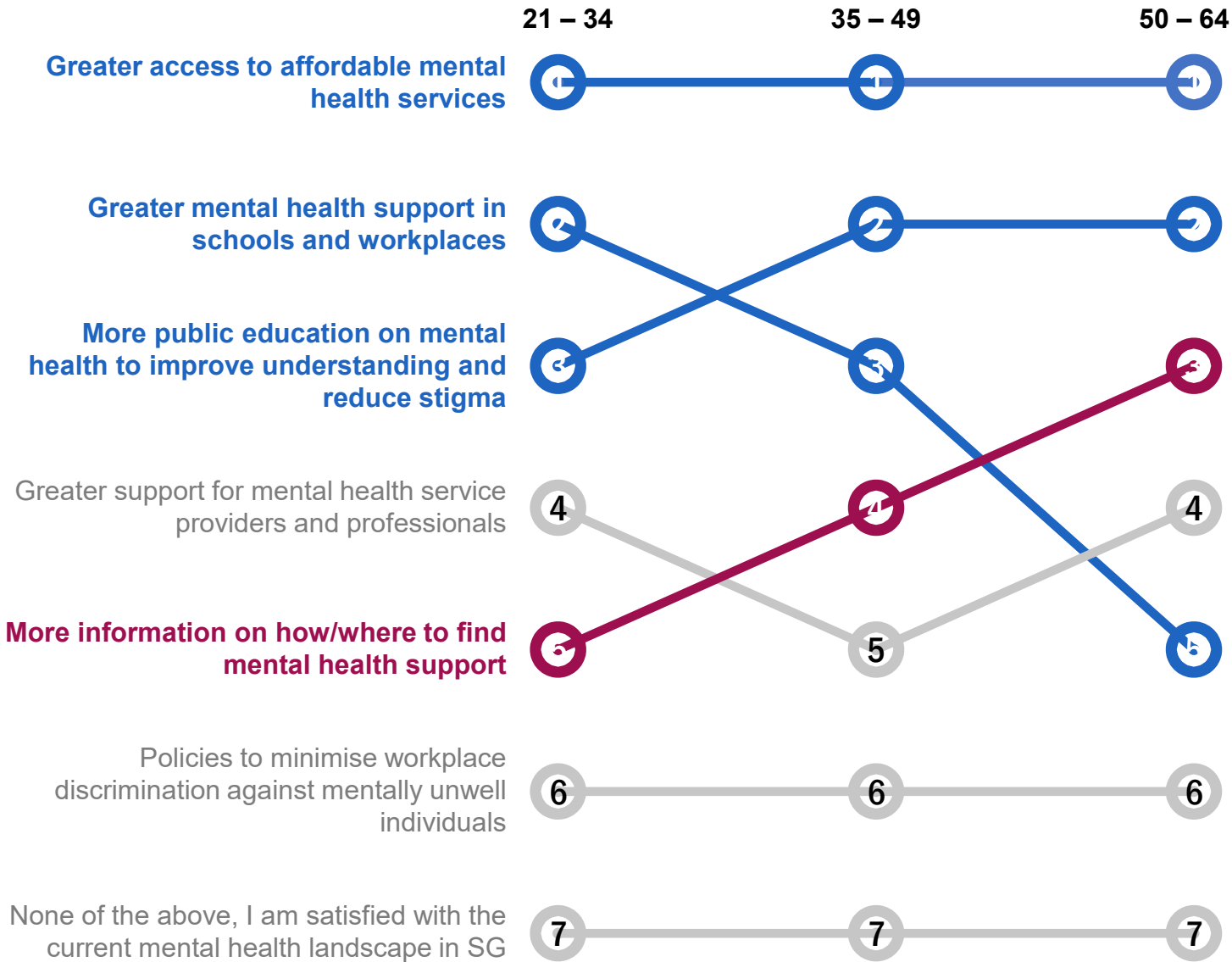
Question asked to respondents who indicated not hoping to have children in the future, at the time of the poll (n = 570).

*Item shown only to respondents who were married or in a relationship at the time of the poll (n = 283).

Why do you not hope to have children in the future? Please select all that apply.

Well-Being

How do Singaporeans fare in terms of well-being and social relations?



Younger respondents are more likely to hope to see greater mental health support in schools and workplaces.

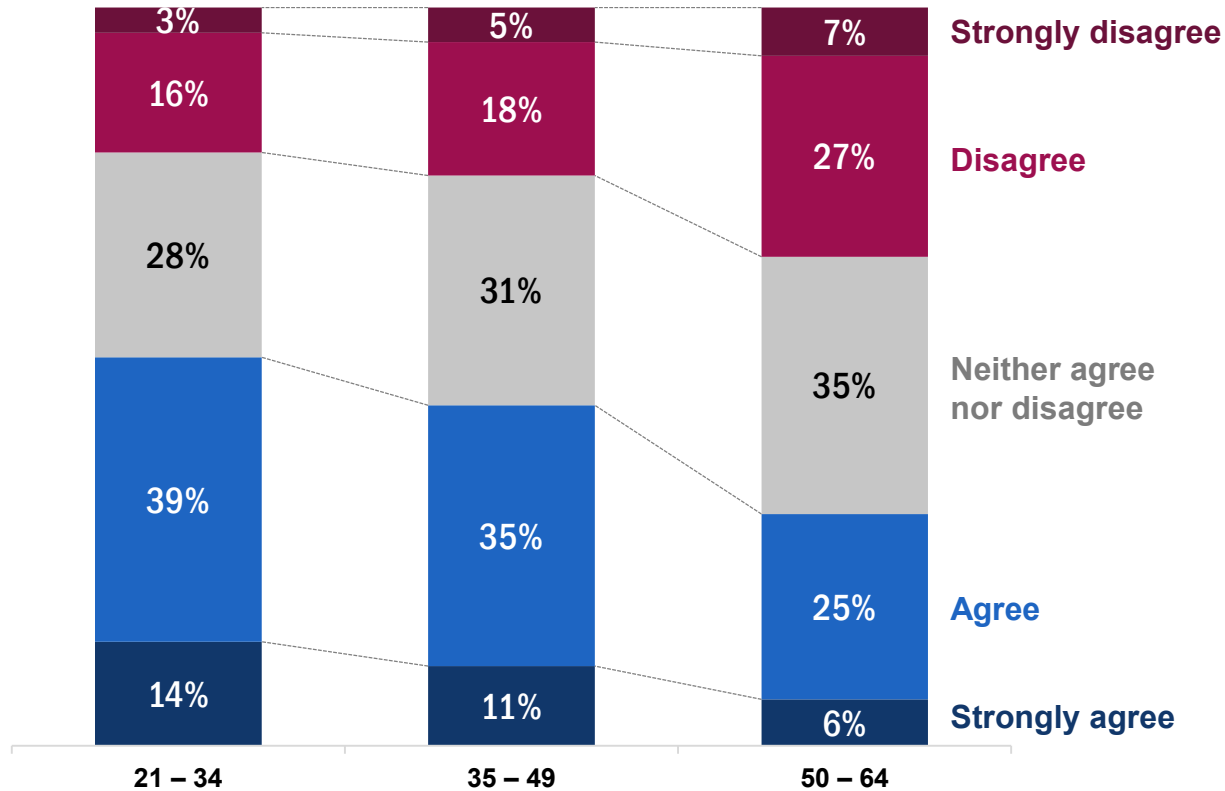
Older respondents aged 50-64 are more likely to hope to see more information about finding mental health support.

What do you hope to see being done to improve the current mental health landscape in Singapore?
Please select up to 3 items.

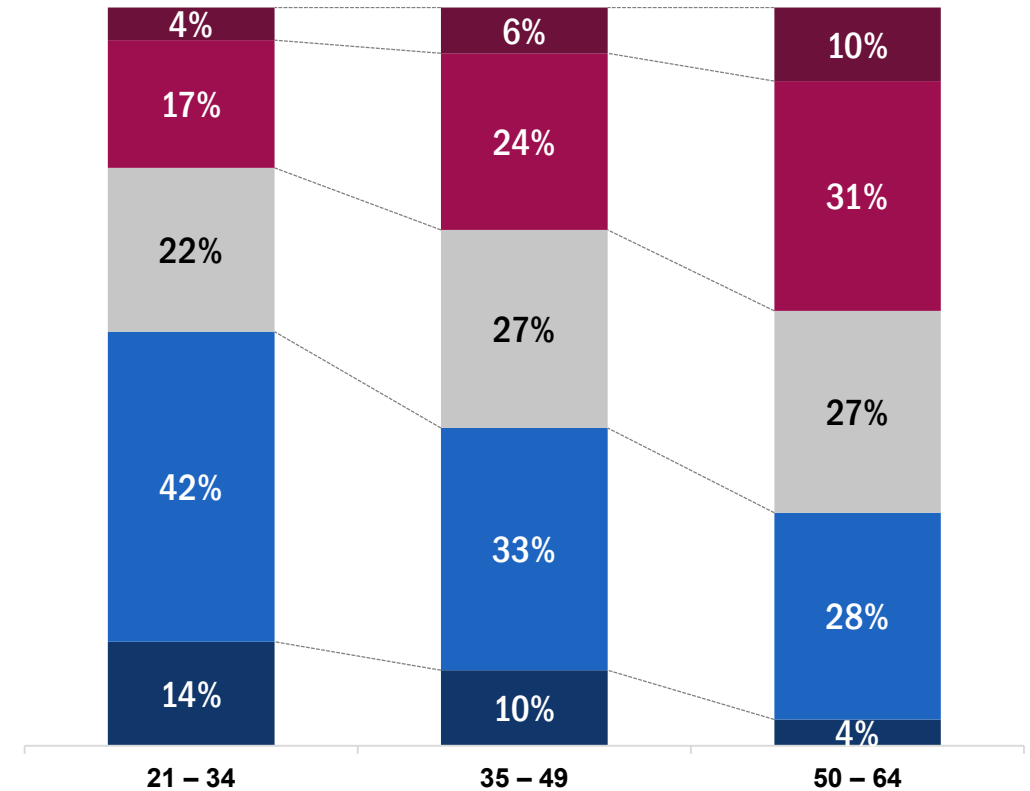
Note
Excludes "Others" responses.

More than half of those aged 21-34 find it easier to talk to people online than offline and feel anxious if they have to interact with others in person. Only 3 in 10 of those aged 50-64 feel the same way:

I find it easier to talk to people online than in person.



Sometimes, I feel anxious if I have to talk to people in person.



Social isolation and loneliness – A growing concern amplified by COVID-19

The Guardian, 16 Nov 2023

WHO declares loneliness a 'global public health concern'

The World Health Organization has launched an international commission on loneliness, which can be as bad for people's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day

TODAY, 8 Nov 2021

TODAY Youth Survey: Majority more fearful, less sociable due to Covid-19 but hopeful of 'better' life a year from now

The Straits Times, 28 Aug 2020

Seniors felt less socially satisfied, more isolated during Covid-19 circuit breaker period: Survey

The Straits Times, 5 Dec 2023

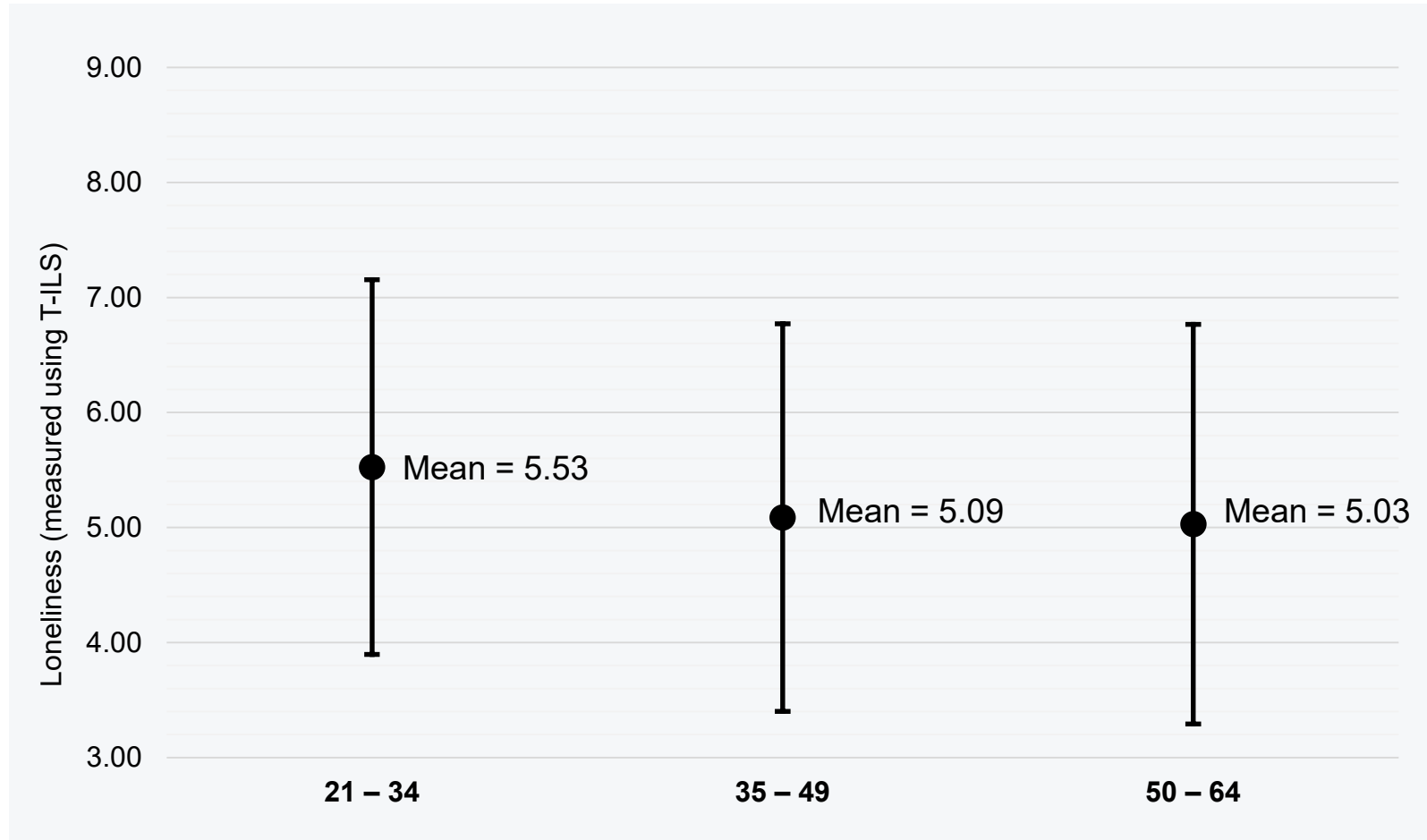
The problem with being alone: Social isolation, loneliness biggest enemy for seniors in S'pore

The Guardian, 19 Jun 2023

'Socially stunted': how Covid pandemic aggravated young people's loneliness

Combination of lockdowns, personal issues and being stuck in 'digital bubbles' has left many feeling isolated and friendless

Younger respondents are more likely to report higher levels of social isolation, with those in the 21-34 age band reporting a higher loneliness score:



Notes

T-ILS refers to the Three-Item Loneliness Scale developed by Hughes et al. (2004).

The scale uses 3 response categories (1: Hardly ever, 2: Some of the time, 3: Often) and comprises the following questions:

1. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
2. How often do you feel left out?
3. How often do you feel isolated from others?

Hughes, M. E., Waite, L. J., Hawkey, L. C., & Cacioppo J. T. (2004). A short scale for measuring loneliness in large surveys: Results from two population-based studies. *Research on Ageing*, 26(6), 655-672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027504268574>

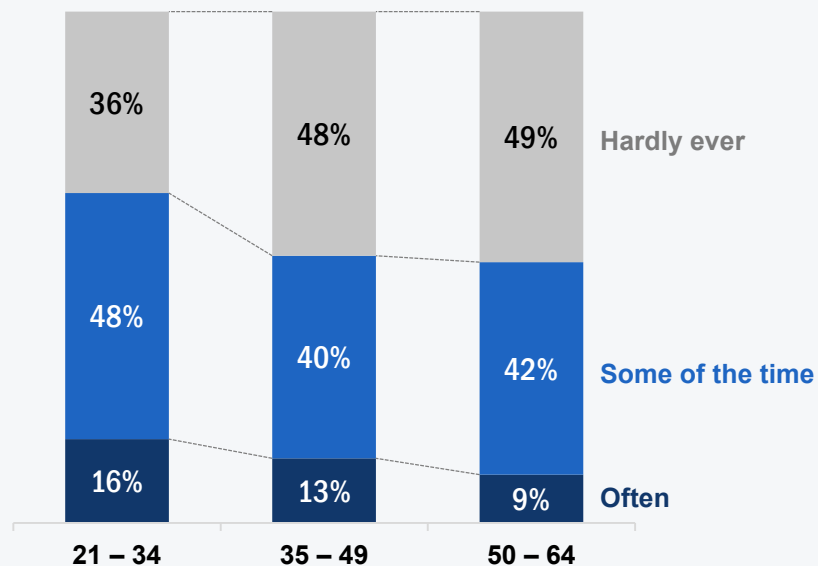
Within-group differences

- Single youth are more likely to report a higher loneliness score, compared to their peers who are in a relationship.
- Among respondents aged 35-49, those who are unmarried are more likely to report a higher loneliness score than those who are married.

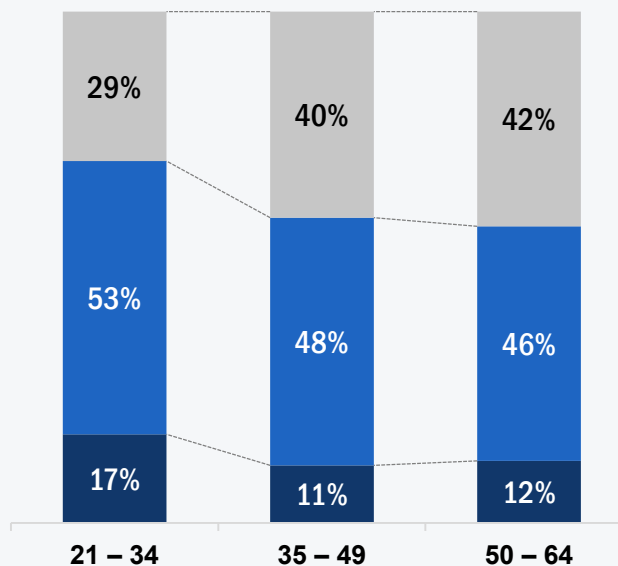
*Differences are statistically significant by age group, relationship status among 21-34 y/o, and marital status among 35-49 y/o

Younger respondents are more likely to report higher levels of social isolation:

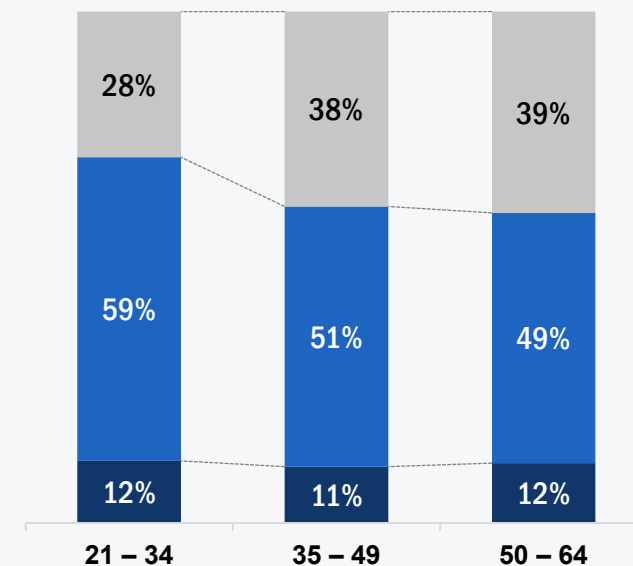
How often do you feel isolated from others?



How often do you feel left out?



How often do you feel that you lack companionship?

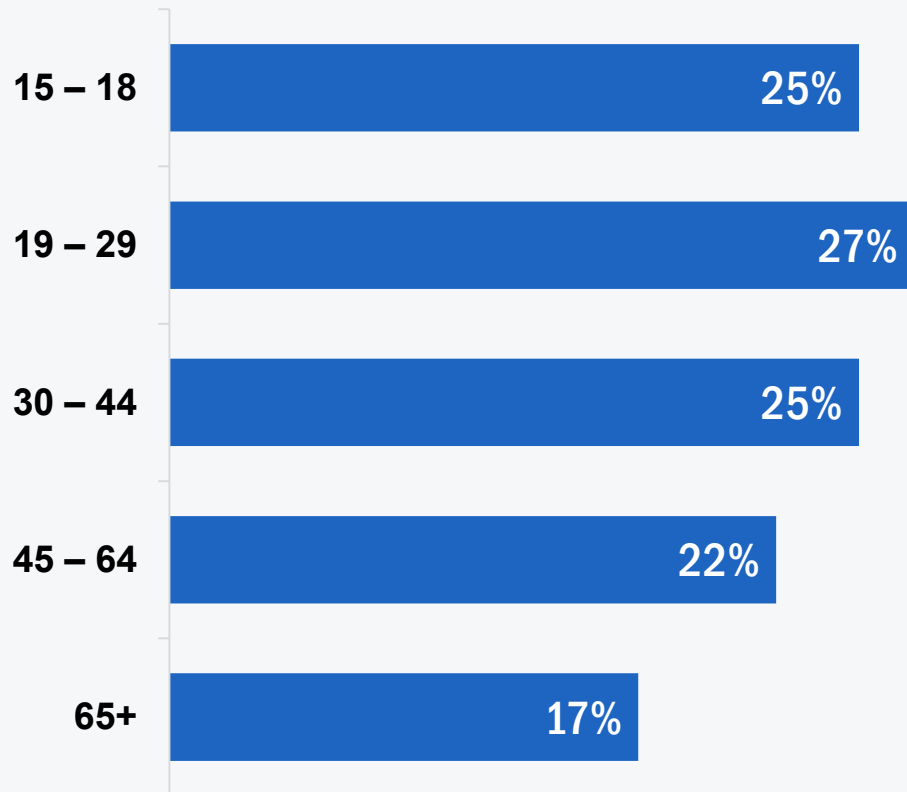


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Loneliness in youth: Observations from outside

% of global population who felt fairly or very lonely, by age group

(Source: Gallup & Meta, 2023)



- A recent study conducted across 142 countries found that **more young people aged 19-29 reported feeling lonely than any other age groups** (Gallup & Meta, 2023).
- A UK study found that **youth aged 18-30 were more likely to be lonely before and during COVID-19, compared to adults aged 60+** (Bu et al., 2020).
- Another UK study of 6,503 youth aged 16-24 found strong evidence that **social relationships were associated with loneliness** (Marquez et al., 2023):
 - Youth were **less** likely to report feeling lonely if they went out with friends, had more close friends, more friends of a similar age, as well as more friends living in the same area.
 - But the number of hours spent interacting with friends on social media was not associated with loneliness.

Bu, F., Steptoe, A., & Fancourt, D. (2020). Who is lonely in lockdown? Cross-cohort analyses of predictors of loneliness before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Public Health*, 186(2020), 31-34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2020.06.036>

Gallup, & Meta. (2023). *The global state of social connections*. <https://www.gallup.com/analytics/509675/state-of-social-connections.aspx>

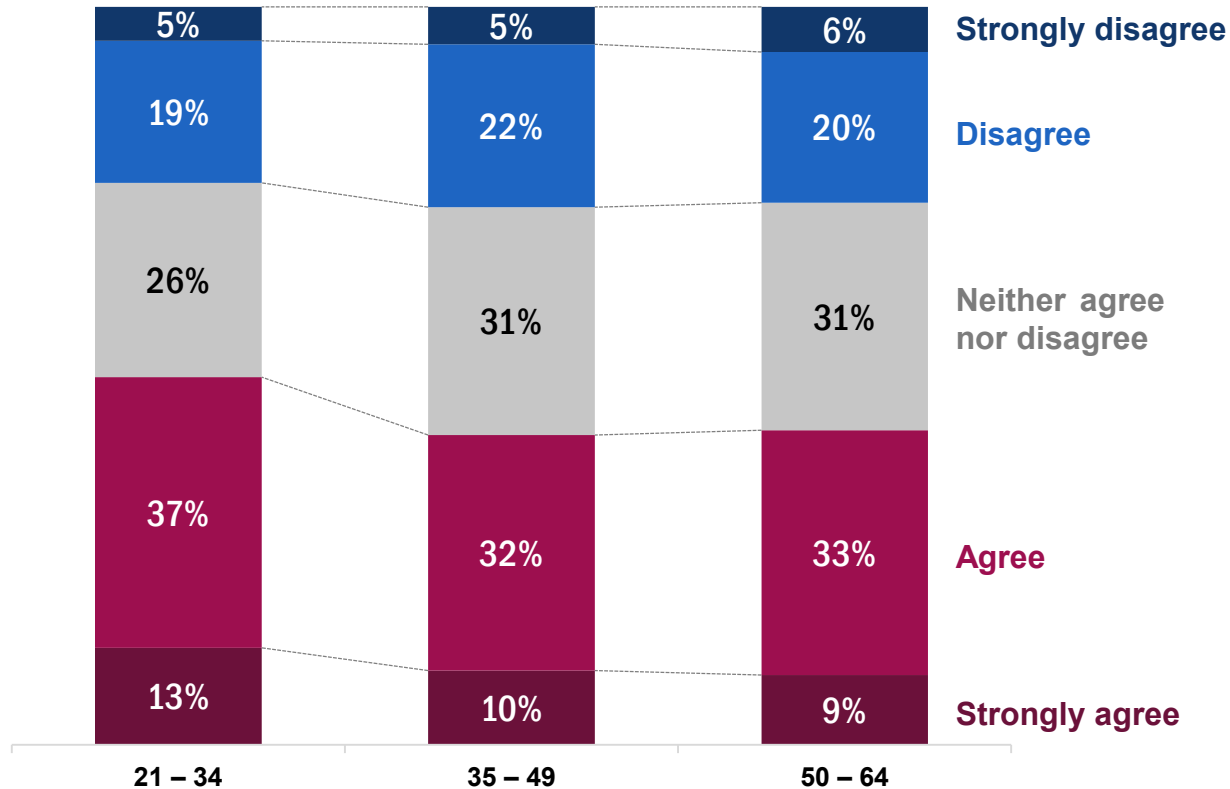
Marquez, J., Goodfellow, C., Hardoon, D., Inchley, J., Leyland, A. H., Qualter, P., Simpson, S. A., & Long, E. (2023). Loneliness in young people: A multilevel exploration of social ecological influences and geographic variation. *Journal of Public Health*, 45(1), 109-117. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdab402>

Work

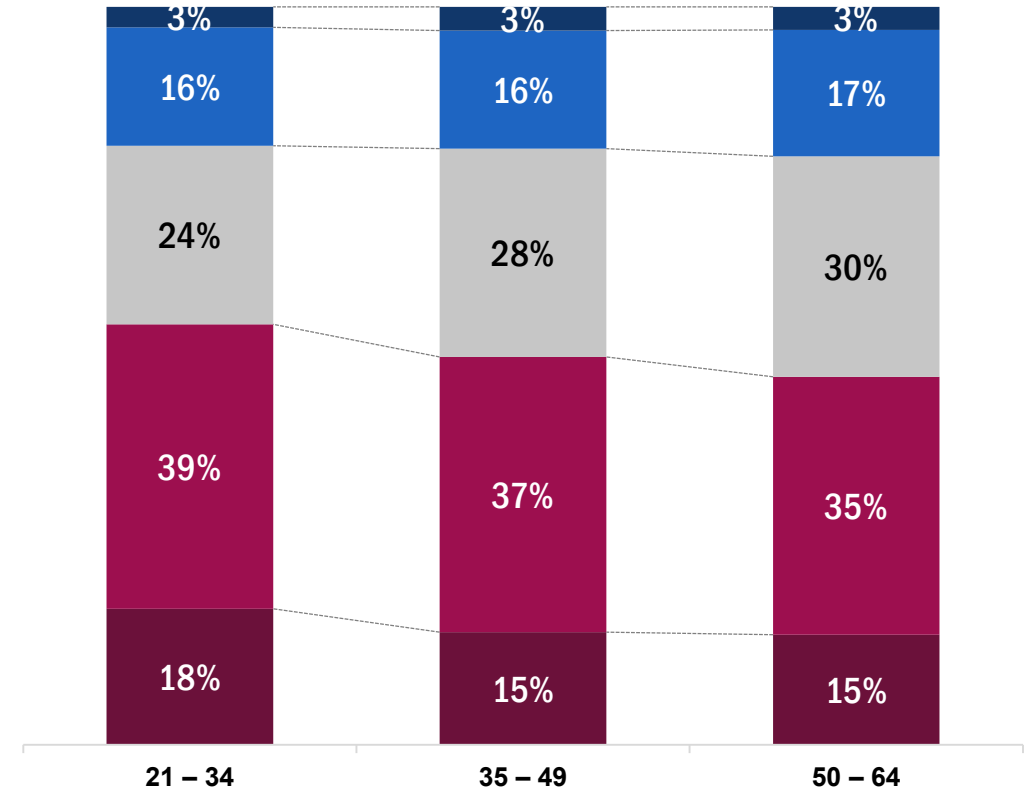
How do Singaporeans perceive their employment and career prospects?

Younger respondents are more likely to feel uncertain about their work prospects and to find it difficult to attain their preferred form of employment in Singapore:

I feel uncertain about my employment and career prospects.

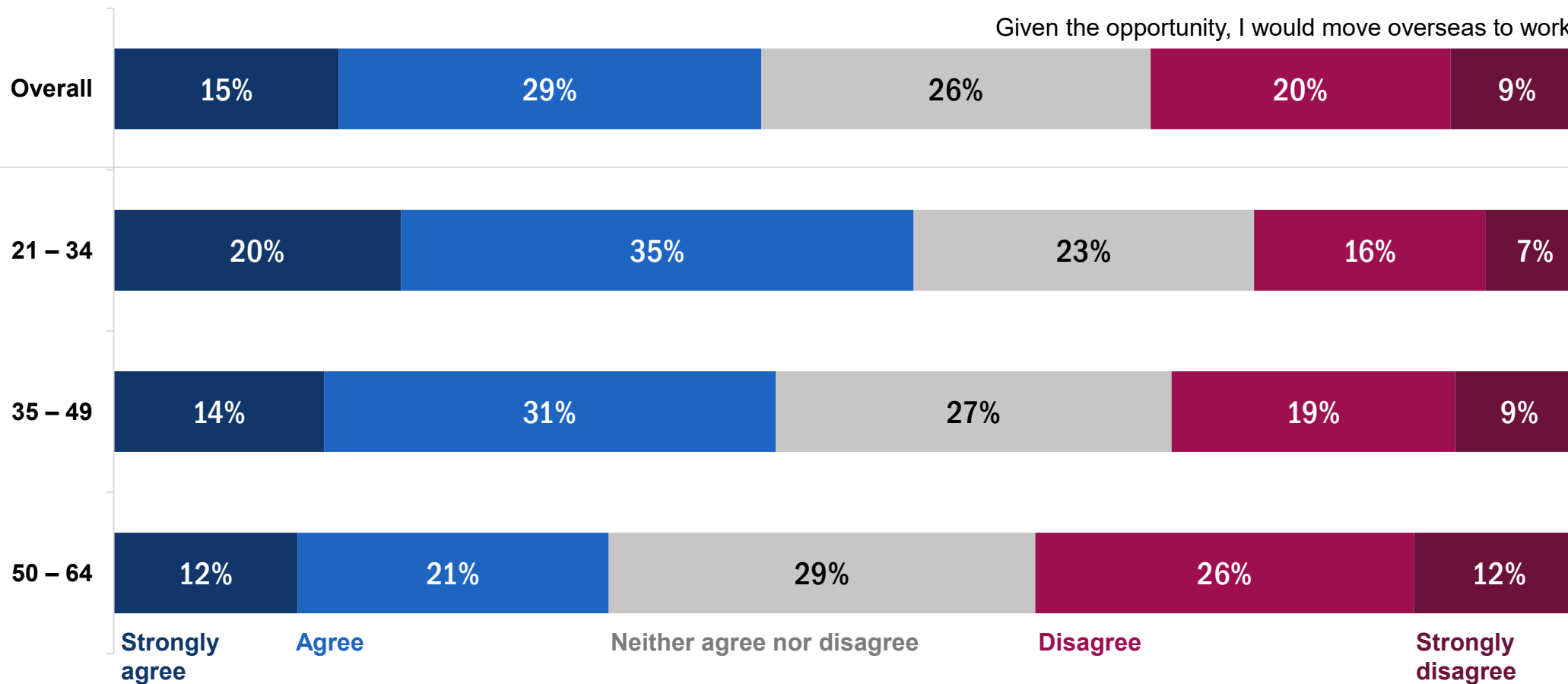


It is difficult to attain my preferred form of employment in Singapore (e.g., in terms of salary, position, benefits, working conditions).



55% of those aged 21-34 would move overseas to work if given the opportunity, compared to 33% of those aged 50-64:

Given the opportunity, I would move overseas to work.

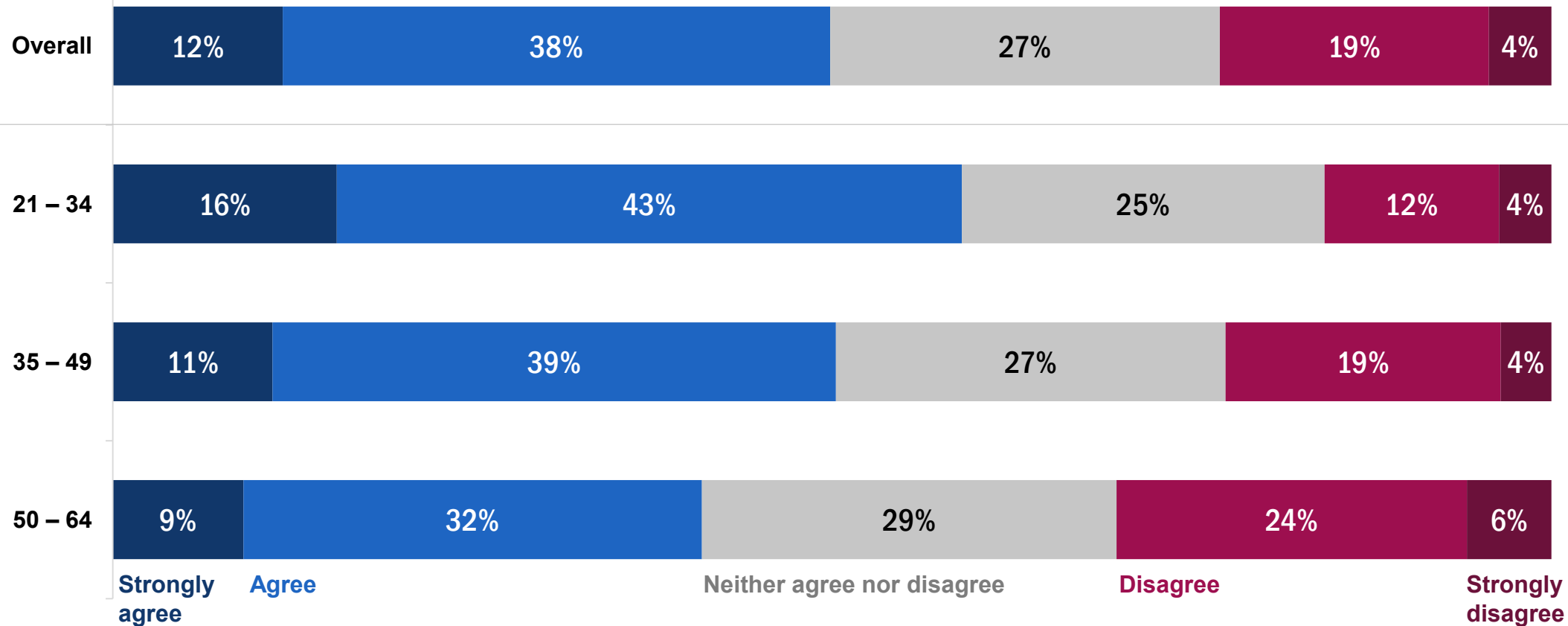


Note

Excludes “Not applicable” responses.

50% of respondents foresee themselves needing or wanting to make multiple career switches over their lifetime. Those aged 21-34 are more likely to think so, with 59% agreeing to the statement:

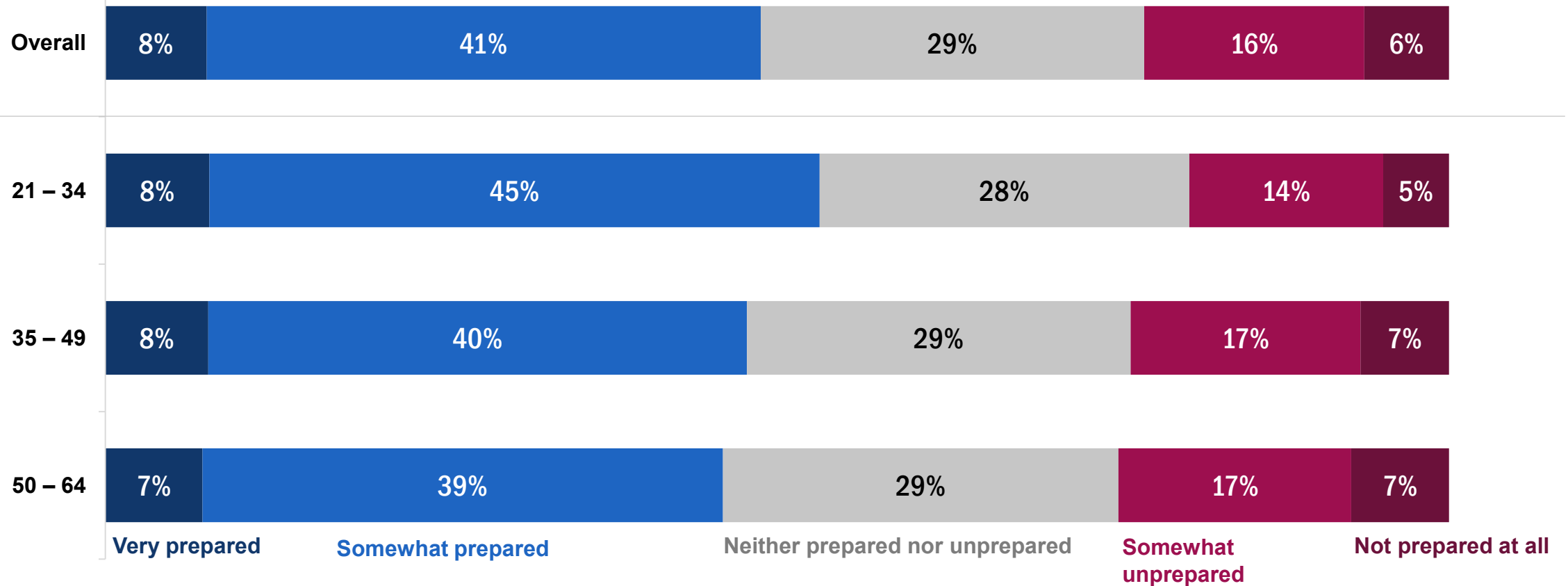
I foresee myself making multiple career switches over my lifetime, whether by choice or by force.



Note
Excludes “Not applicable” responses.

49% of respondents report feeling prepared for incoming tech innovations and disruptions in the workplace. Younger respondents are more likely to feel this way:

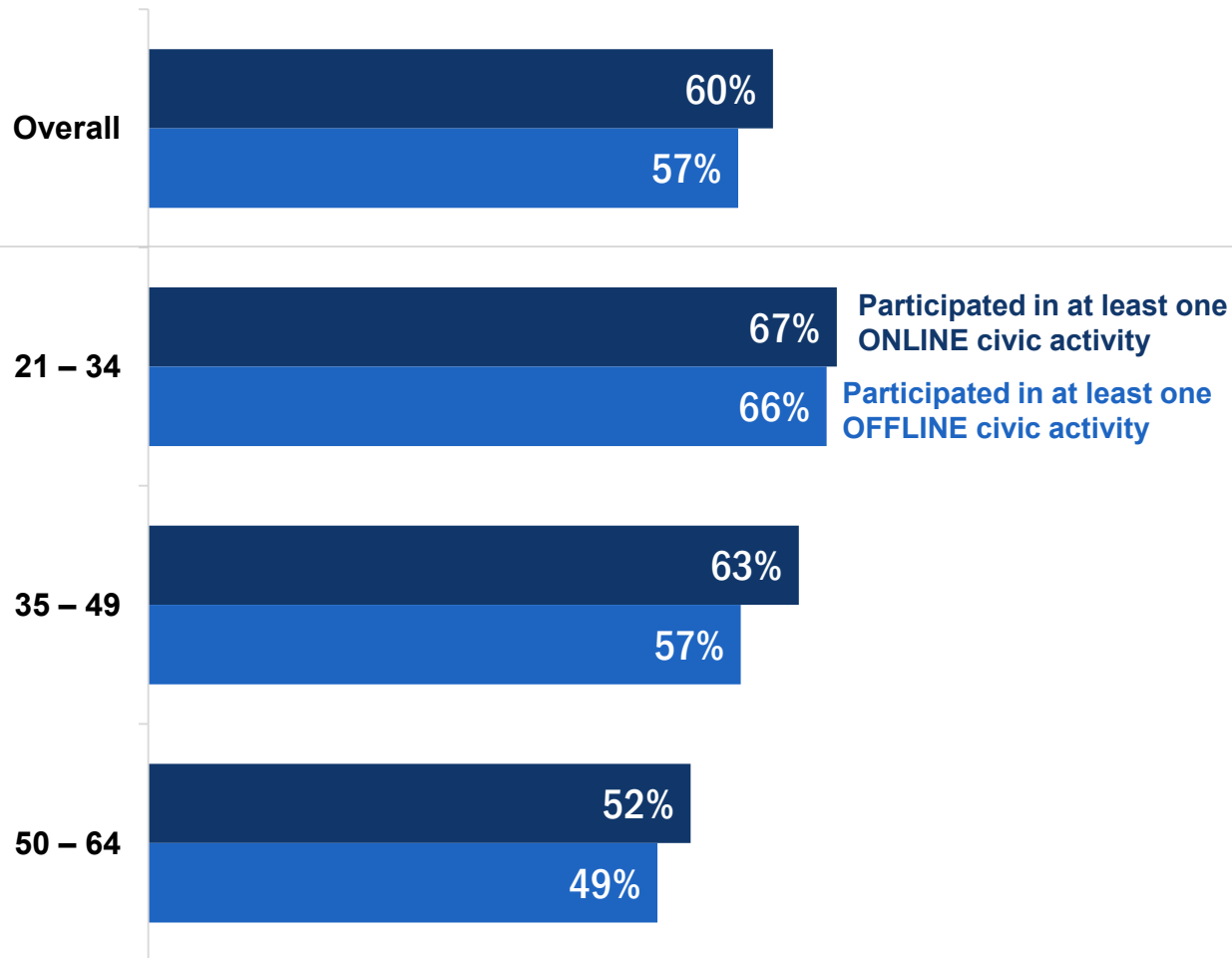
How prepared are you for the eventual adoption of technological innovations and disruptions (e.g., generative artificial intelligence, Web3, blockchain) in the workplace?



Civic Engagement

Are Singaporeans civically engaged, and in what ways?

3 in 5 respondents have participated in at least one online or offline civic activity in the last 12 months, with more youth respondents having done so:



Across all 3 age groups...

Most popular online civic activities

- Staying informed about social and/or political issues online (e.g., reading the news online, following politicians and official government channels online)
- Reposting, sharing, and/or liking online content related to social and/or political issues

Most popular offline civic activities

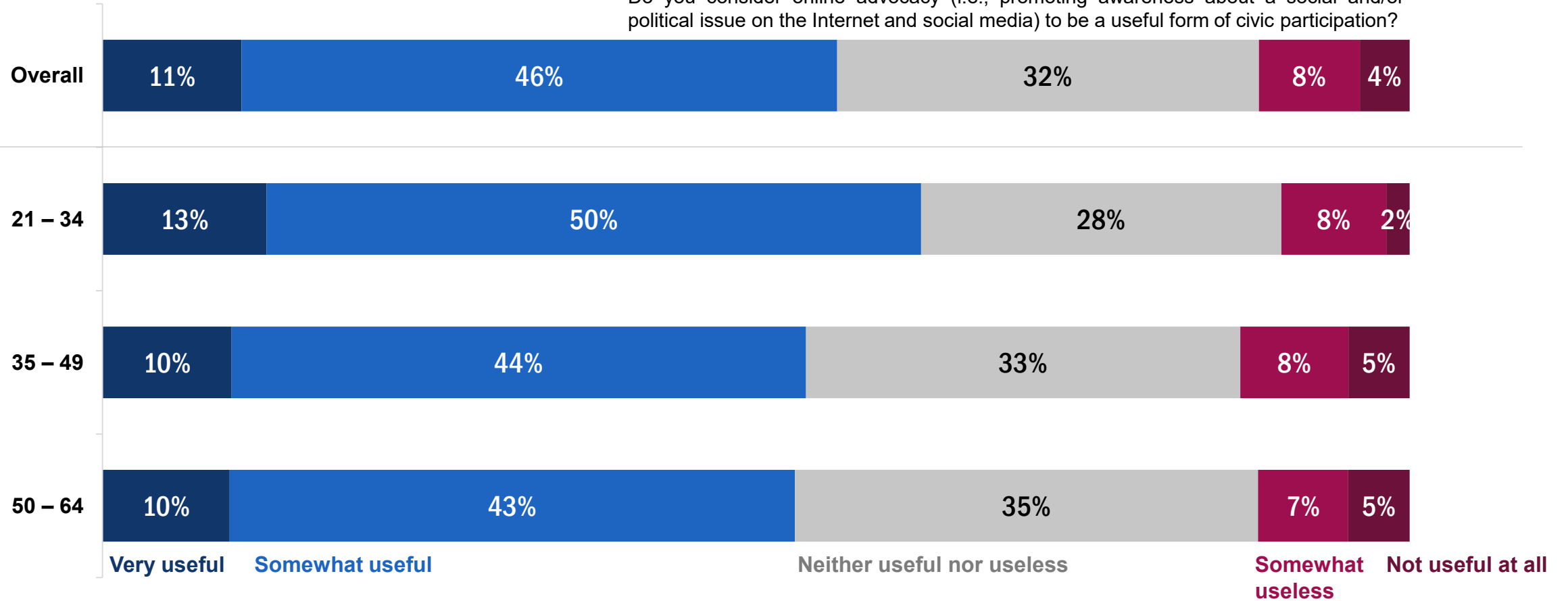
- Participating in environmental conservation efforts (e.g., recycling)
- Discussing social and/or political issues with others in person

Top reasons for non-participation

- Lack of interest in social and/or political issues
- Having other priorities to focus on (e.g., job, studies, self-discovery)

57% of respondents consider online advocacy to be a useful form of civic participation. Younger respondents are more likely to hold this view:

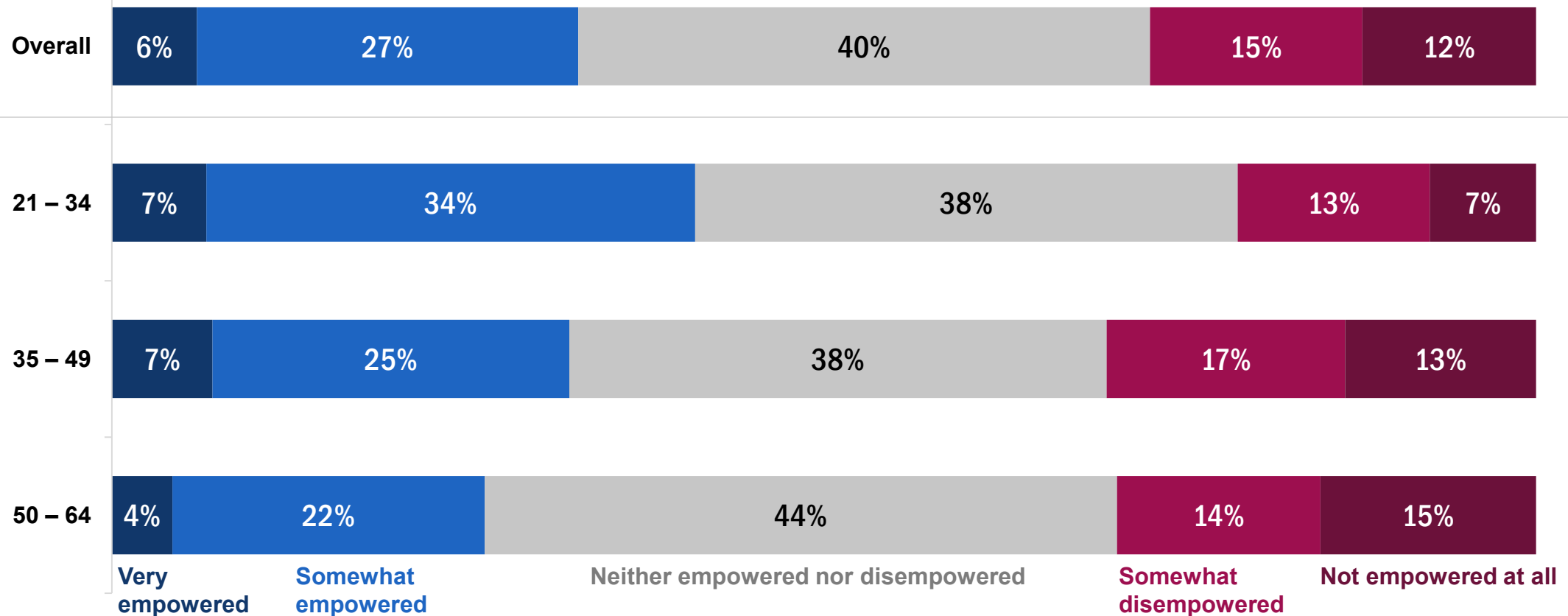
Do you consider online advocacy (i.e., promoting awareness about a social and/or political issue on the Internet and social media) to be a useful form of civic participation?

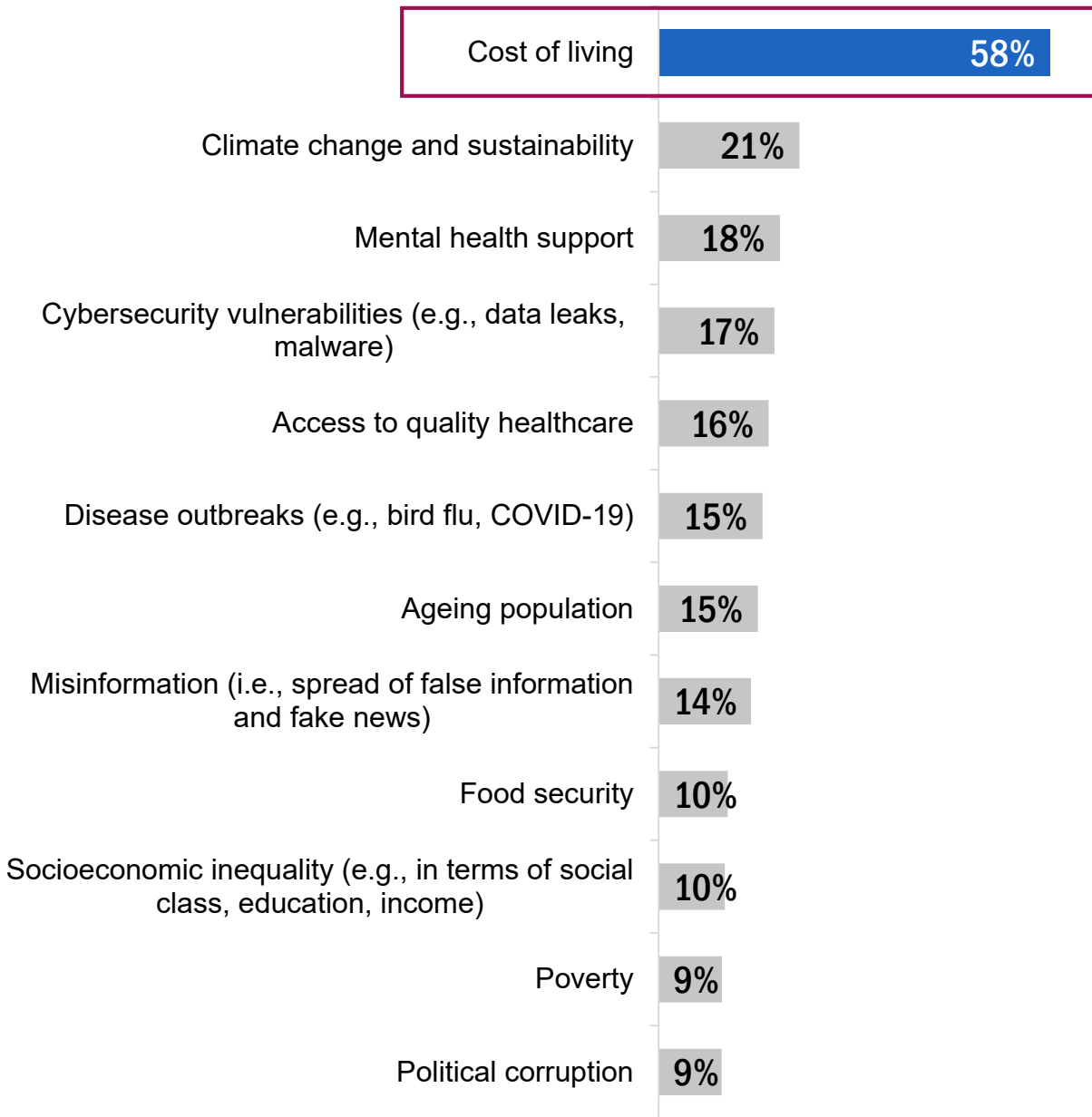


Note
Question has been shortened due to space exigencies.

Younger respondents are more likely to feel empowered about effecting change. 41% of those aged 21-34 feel at least somewhat empowered, compared to 26% of those aged 50-64:

As an individual, how empowered do you feel about addressing social issues in general?





Cost of living emerged as the top issue that Singaporeans are most concerned about.

This is consistent across age groups.

The following is a list of social issues. Which of the following are you most concerned about? You may select up to 3 issues. – Only the top 12 issues are shown due to space exigencies (26 items including “Others” and “None of the above” were shown to respondents)

Top concerns by age group

| Rank | 21 – 34 | 35 – 49 | 50 – 64 |
|------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Cost of living | Cost of living | Cost of living |
| 2 | Climate change and sustainability | Climate change and sustainability | Cybersecurity vulnerabilities |
| 3 | Mental health support | Mental health support | Climate change and sustainability |
| 4 | Access to quality healthcare | Cybersecurity vulnerabilities | Ageing population |
| 5 | Cybersecurity vulnerabilities | Disease outbreaks | Access to quality healthcare |
| 6 | Disease outbreaks | Access to quality healthcare | Disease outbreaks |
| 7 | Poverty | Misinformation | Misinformation |
| 8 | Misinformation | Ageing population | Mental health support |
| 9 | Socioeconomic inequality | Socioeconomic inequality | Political corruption |
| 10 | Racial discrimination | Food security | Food security |
| 11 | Ageing population | Geopolitical conflicts | Racial discrimination |
| 12 | Geopolitical conflicts | Poverty | Poverty |

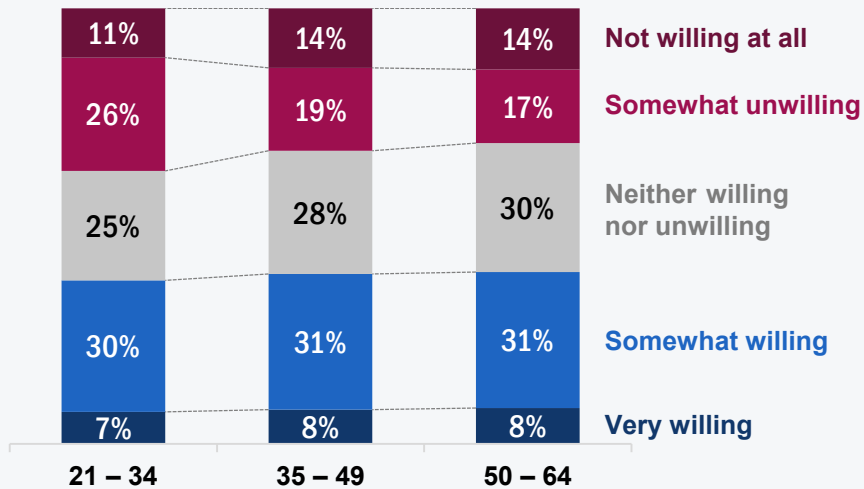
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 – Only the top 12 issues are shown due to space exigencies (26 items including “Others” and “None of the above” were shown to respondents)

2 in 5 respondents are willing to pay more taxes to address issues such as ageing population, social inequality, and environmental sustainability.

Older respondents are less likely to be willing to pay more taxes to address social inequality and sustainability-related issues in Singapore:

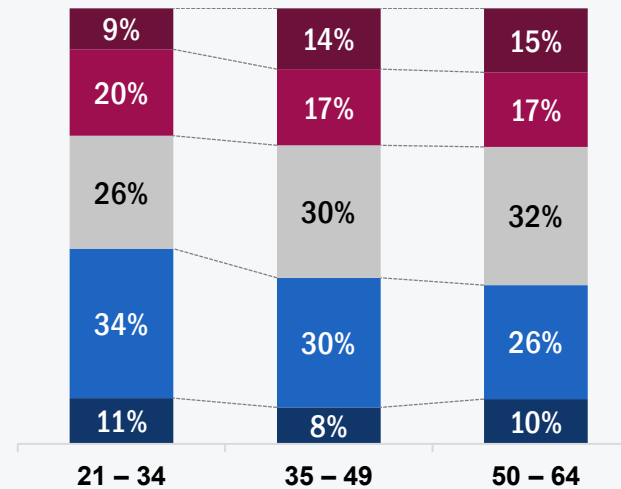
As an individual, how willing are you to pay more taxes to support...

... an ageing population in Singapore?*

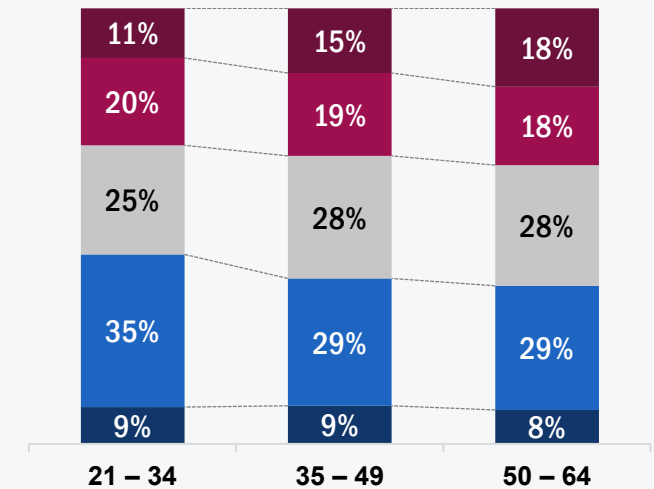


*Differences are statistically non-significant by age group

... efforts to build a more equal society in Singapore?



... sustainability efforts in Singapore?



Note

Questions have been shortened due to space exigencies.

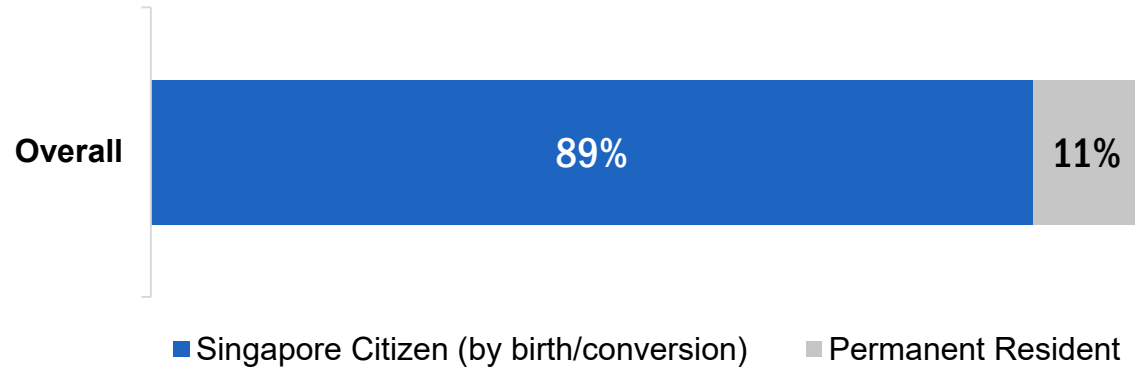
Poll Highlights

1. Younger respondents are less likely to agree on the necessity of marriage and parenthood. Nonetheless, most still desire to settle down eventually but are held back by practical concerns.
2. Younger respondents are more likely to report higher levels of social isolation.
3. Younger respondents are more worried about their work prospects. However, they are more open to and prepared for the future of work, which is expected to be fraught with changes.
4. Cost of living is the top issue that Singaporeans are most concerned about.
5. Younger respondents tend to be more civically engaged, compared to their older counterparts.

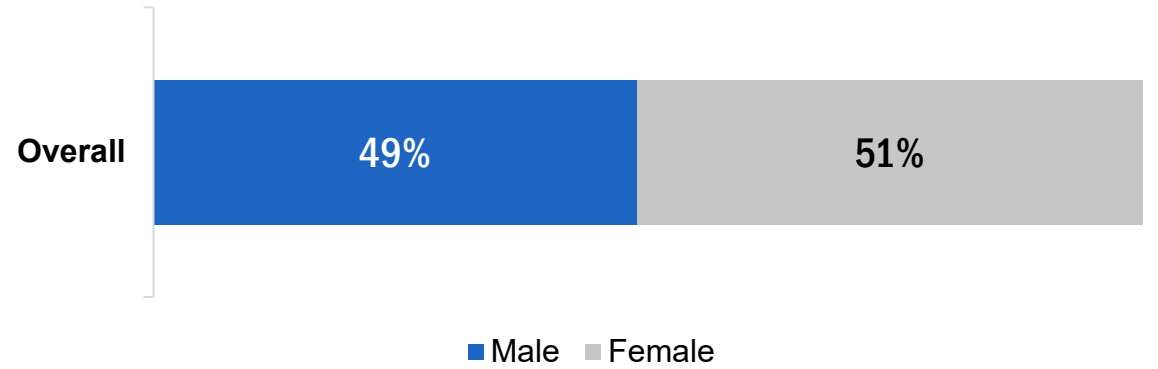
Poll Demographics

Weights were applied for age group, gender, and ethnicity

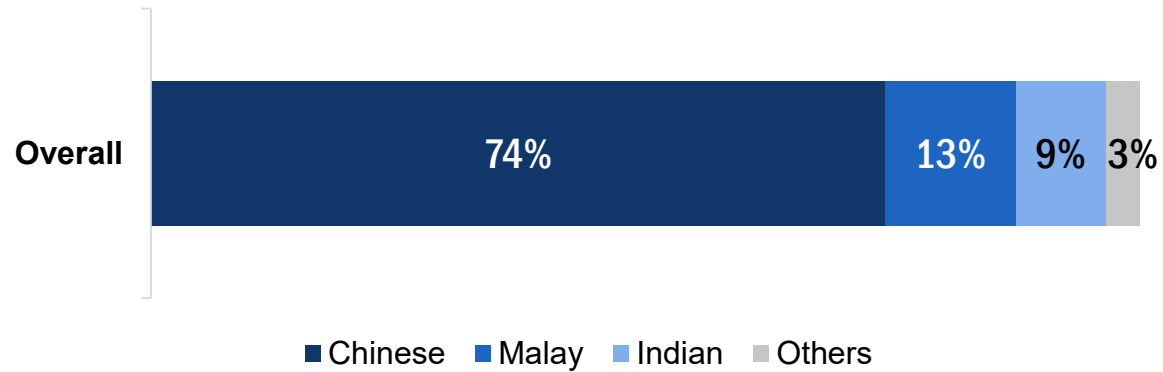
By citizenship



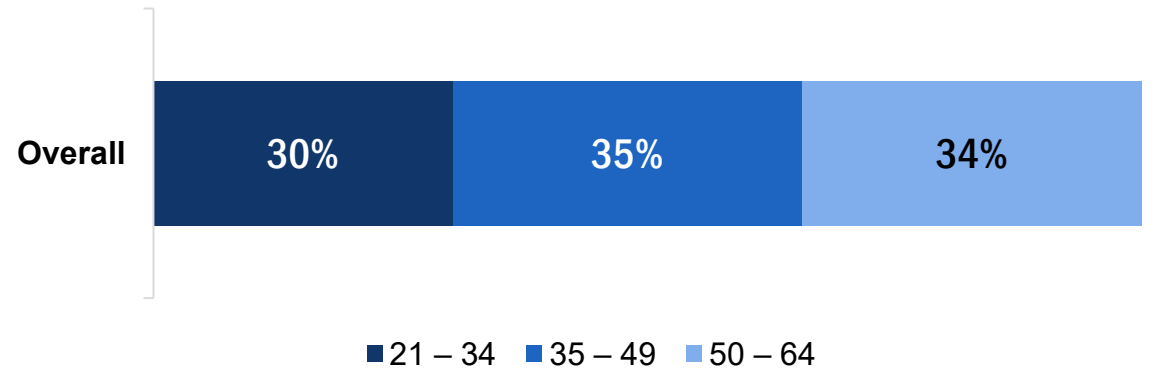
By gender



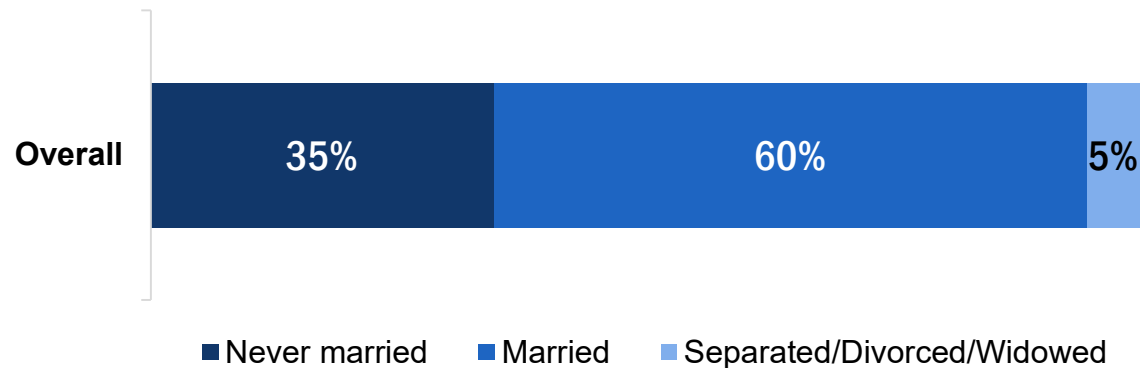
By ethnicity



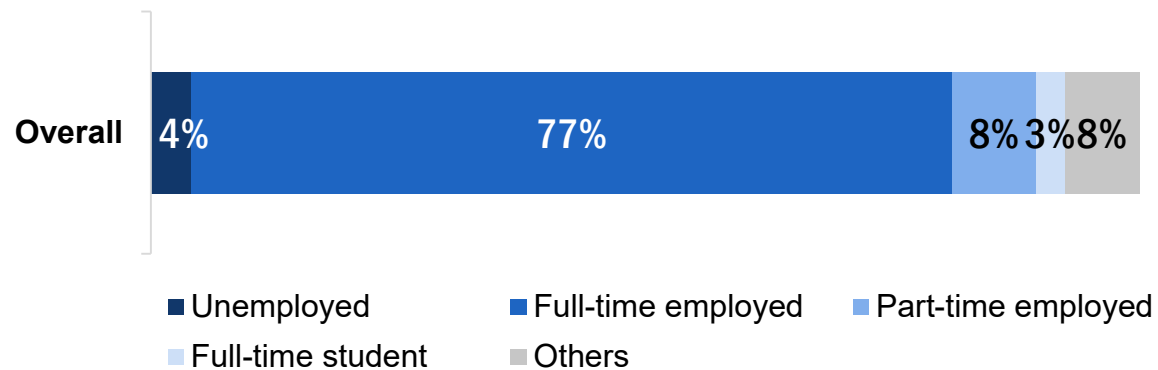
By age group



By marital status



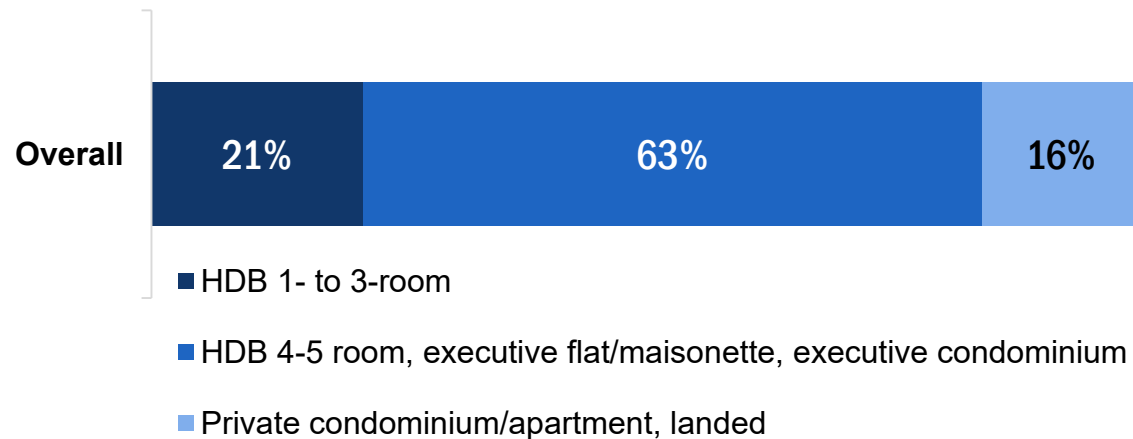
By employment status



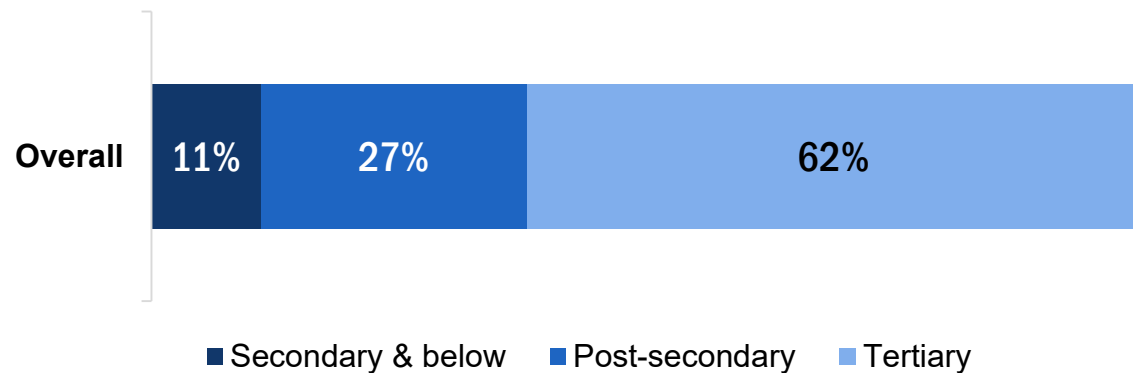
Notes

"Full-time employed" also includes those working full-time and studying part-time.
 "Part-time employed" also includes those working part-time and studying part-time.
 "Full-time student" also includes those studying full-time and working part-time.
 "Others" include NSF's, homemakers, and retirees.

By housing type



By highest qualification attained



Notes

"Post-secondary" refers to GCE 'A' Level/IB programme, ITE (Nitec/Higher Nitec), and diploma.
 "Tertiary" refers to professional qualification, Bachelor's degree and above.