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RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND PRACTICE AMONG SINGAPOREANS

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RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND PRACTICE AMONG SINGAPOREANS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from the 2024 Institute of Policy Studies' Survey on Race, Religion and Language (RRL), which obtained responses from a nationally representative sample of 4,000 Singapore residents, and compares these findings with prior surveys from 2013 and 2018. It examines identity dimensions that are important to Singaporeans, particularly religion, the practice of religion, the level of religiosity in Singapore today and how it has evolved, as well as the different profiles of Singaporeans in terms of how they relate to religion in their daily lives.

What Forms Part of Your Identity?

Respondents were asked about nine different dimensions that would shape their overall sense of identity, including Singapore, most frequently used language, race, religion, official mother tongue, and the country their family originally came from. Across all waves of the survey, nationality was consistently rated as the topmost important part of their identity. Singapore was rated consistently as the most important identity component across waves and most demographic characteristics.

In terms of the importance of religion, 61.1 per cent of the total sample considered it important or very important in 2024. But when only respondents with declared religious affiliation were included, the proportion rose to 73.7 per cent. Muslims were more likely to find that religion was very important to their overall identity (59 per cent) compared to other religious respondents, while older, lower-educated, and less affluent respondents were also more likely to say that they see religion as important or very important to their overall sense of identity.

Religion and Religiosity

A majority of the respondents indicated to varying extents that religion is very important in their lives. For example, over three-quarters indicated that their ideas about religion are one of the most important parts of their philosophy in life and that these ideas have a considerable influence over their views in other areas. These proportions have increased compared to 2018.

The proportion of respondents who tried to find out more about their own religion has increased slightly from 70.6 per cent in 2018 to 73.1 per cent in 2024. There was also a slight increase in having a sense of belonging to one's religion, with agreement rates increasing slightly from 67.9 per cent in 2018 to 70.8 per cent in 2024. Muslims and Christians were more likely to find out more about their own religion and feel a sense of belonging to their group. In addition, older respondents and female respondents were more likely to indicate belongingness to their religion.

In terms of views towards religious traditions, one in three respondents felt that religion should be kept as pure or traditional as possible in 2024, a slight increase compared

to 2018. Meanwhile, one in five in 2024 felt that we should adapt religion and religious customs to changing secular realities, which was a slight decrease compared to 2018. Christians and Muslims were more likely to prefer religion in its pure or traditional form, while there was a significant decline in the proportion of Catholics who felt this way when comparing 2024 to 2018.

When it came to religious practices, around one-third attended religious services, prayed outside of religious settings, read religious literature, or consumed religious media at least once a month. Prayer was the most frequent practice, but there was a decrease in frequency over the waves, from 20.4 per cent saying they do it on most days in 2013, to 16.3 per cent in 2018 and 15.7 per cent in 2024.

Archetypes and Profiles

We derived four different archetypes using cluster analysis based on how important religion is to their lives as well as how frequently they engage in religious practices. Moderates (18.6 per cent) were moderate in both religious orientation and frequency of religious practices. The Seculars (27.5 per cent) scored low in both dimensions in contrast to the Faithfuls (22.4 per cent) who scored high in both. Meanwhile, the Believers (31.5 per cent) had high religious orientation and reported low frequencies of practice.

1 INTRODUCTION

Self-identity refers to both how individuals understand themselves as well as how they are understood by others within society. It is multifaceted and derived from different aspects that individuals hold dear to themselves, including ethnicity, gender, values, life experiences and occupations (Owens, 2006). While Singapore is a non-liberal secular state, religion continues to play a very important part in how individuals self-identify as well as how they live their lives (Neo, 2017). Religion is pervasive in people's lives because it provides what Peter Berger calls a "sacred canopy" — it answers questions about human life such as the meaning of existence and reasons for the world being the way it is (Berger, 1969). Religion provides social structures that give a sense of belonging to both individuals and the community as well as mental models that guide the way the world is perceived and the values people identify with (Stroope, 2011).

Modern society is marked by high levels of differentiation along a range of identities including religious, ethnic and linguistic ones (Vertovec, 2012). Despite the high levels of diversity in Singapore, the city has continued to exhibit high levels of social cohesion relative to other societies (Goh, 2022). This can be attributed to the management of diversity through a range of policies, both since the post-independence days. This is even more pertinent today against the backdrop of culture wars elsewhere in the world (Mathew, 2016; Kong, 2023).

However, diversity management becomes increasingly complicated where religious dynamics are evolving (Tham, 2016). Singapore's religious landscape has long been

characterised by diversity, with significant portions of the main world religions – Buddhism, Taoism, Protestant and Roman Catholic Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, making it to the top of the chart for measures of religious diversity (Pew Research, 2023). But proportions have changed significantly over the years – Christianity and those with no religion have steadily grown, the latter increasing by 3 per cent in the 2020 census compared to 17 per cent of the population in 2010 (Department of Statistics, 2020). This trend is especially pronounced among younger Singaporeans and reflects broader global patterns of secularisation (Casanova, 2013). Christianity continues to grow, particularly among the educated and middle classes (Tong, 2008; Woods & Kong, 2022). In contrast, traditional Chinese religions such as Taoism and Buddhism have seen gradual declines, attributed to urbanisation, modernisation, and changing generational identities (Chew, 2021).

Changing Patterns of Practice and Engagement

Beyond shifts to different religions, religious practice in Singapore is becoming more individualised and less tied to traditional institutions. New religious movements and "buffet-style" religiosity — where individuals selectively engage with practices and beliefs across different traditions — are becoming more common (Zaccheus et al., 2016; Chew, 2021). Social media and digital platforms facilitate new forms of religious community and expression. Researchers have noted that Covid-19 produced substantial impetus for the incorporation of digital platforms for religious life among many different religious communities in Singapore but also an increasing connection of local religious life with overseas religious centres mediated through the Internet (Kong, 2013; Gao et al., 2022; Lorea et al., 2022).

The practice of religion continues to be shaped by how the Singapore state intervenes in the religious space. The Singapore state seeks to balance freedom of religion with social cohesion and continues to leverage on legislation (e.g., Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act) to maintain harmony, though the last few years has also been marked by greater emphasis on interfaith activities (Neo, 2017). Singapore's organising and hosting of the International Conference of Cohesive Societies has resulted it in showcasing the many interventions it uses to prevent and resolve religious tension through dialogue and engagements (ICCS, 2025).

Given the different forces at play, it is important to examine religious beliefs and practice in Singapore but position it first within the broader understanding of individual identities (Chapter 2) where religion is certainly a strong marker of identity, especially for some. Chapter 3 of this paper takes a deep dive into the religious identities and orientations of Singaporeans by looking at the extent to which they live their lives according to religious teachings and values, how much they are interested in finding out about their religious backgrounds and traditions, as well as the frequency at which they practise their religions in daily life. Finally, Chapter 4 consolidates these findings through a cluster analysis based on religious participation and beliefs and seeks to segment the population into various profiles based on these dimensions.

1.1 Survey Methodology

The findings presented in this paper are primarily derived from an approximately 45-minute Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) administered from April 2024 to August 2024. Called the IPS Survey on Race, Religion and Language, it comprised approximately 350 question items examining a range of topics, including

- Identity markers pertaining to self;
- Interactions;
- Daily experiences in a multiracial society;
- Prejudice and discrimination; and
- Various policy issues and public opinion

Fieldwork and data collection was conducted by IPS Social Lab. In total, the full survey sample comprises 4,000 unique respondents after quality checks. At the outset, a sampling frame comprising a list of 6,000 randomly generated residential household addresses was obtained from the Department of Statistics (DoS). Invitation letters with details of the RRL survey were sent to the residential addresses in the sampling frames, two weeks prior to surveyors from IPS Social Lab physically visiting the addresses.

Surveyors would then brief potential respondents about the study using a pre-set Participant Information Sheet, invite the individuals to participate in the study and obtain their consent. A booster sample of approximately 1,000 Malay and Indian minority-race respondents (obtained to ensure representation and enable fine-grain comparisons across responses) was also apportioned within the target of 4,000 respondents. This booster sample was obtained by surveyors knocking on the doors of Malay and Indian households, following a prescribed process where surveyors

would search for such households after locating a pre-assigned address provided from the sampling frame.

Surveyors then administrated the survey via CAPI, whereby the respondent was provided with a tablet (e.g., iPad, Galaxy Tab) on which to answer or self-complete the survey questions. If the respondent was uncomfortable using the tablet or had difficulty reading, the option for surveyors to read out the questions and record their answers was made available. The survey was conducted in all four official languages: English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay, and Tamil.

If respondents had difficulty reading or writing, the option for surveyors to read out the questions and record their answers was made available. If participants were uncomfortable using the tablet, the surveyor handed them a paper copy of the survey for completion instead. Respondents were given $20 (via PayNow or cash) as a token of participation upon survey completion.

Responses were then weighted to mirror the prevailing demographics of Singapore's resident population. As such, the findings are generally representative of the Singapore adult resident population. However, the RRL survey data is not exempt from the typical biases prevalent in face-to-face survey methods. This includes underrepresentation of certain profiles who have less opportunity to respond to the survey at the door during survey administration hours (e.g., individuals with certain occupations or with extenuating circumstances). This was partly dealt with by fieldworkers visiting an address at different time slots and on weekdays and weekends, so that such respondents can be included in the study. Another potential

bias is social desirability bias arising from respondents answering the survey in a manner ostensibly viewed more favourably as compared to more “impersonal” or “removed” methods such as an online survey; this is, however, partially resolved with a CAPI method with surveyors according respondents’ privacy to answer the questions.

1.2 Demographics and Representation

The overall responses for survey questions reported in the ensuing chapters were weighted across age, race and gender with reference to prevailing Singapore resident demographics, which include citizens and permanent residents, and this enabled the IPS Social Lab to effectively peruse results and provide a robust gauge of the overall Singapore resident population's perceptions and views. In the following subsections, we explore some key demographic breakdowns of the samples in relation to the Singapore resident population.

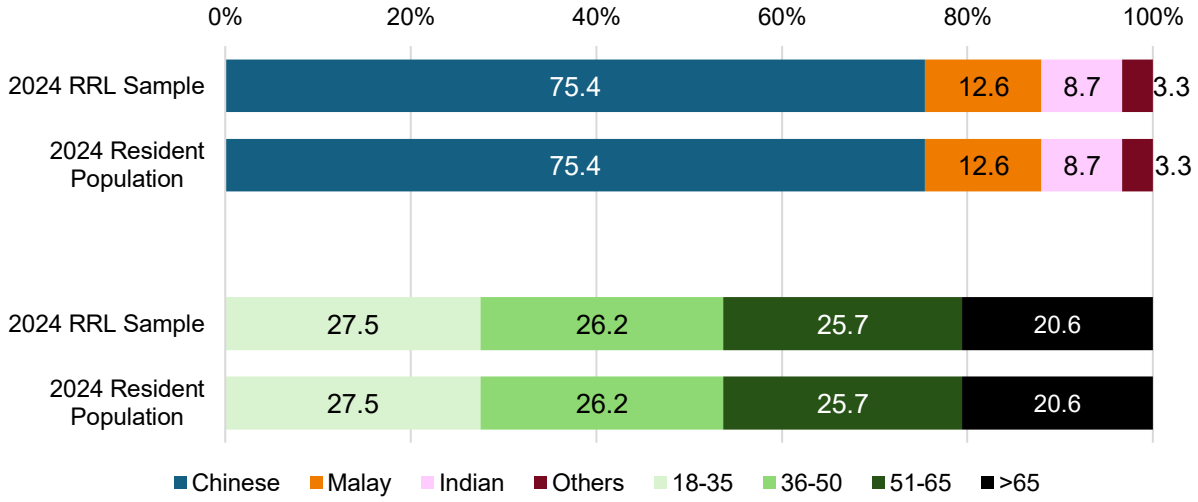
1.2.1 Race and age profiles in the 2024 RRL sample mirrored the Singapore resident population after weighting

The proportions of respondents in the 2024 RRL sample were identical to the prevailing Singapore resident population[1] in terms of race and age cohorts after

[1] Using publicly available information from Singapore Department of Statistics (DoS); accurate as of 2024 End-June (M810011 - Singapore Residents by Age Group, Ethnic Group And Sex, End June, Annual).

weighting. Only respondents 18 years old and above at the time of administration were eligible to complete the survey (see Figure 1.2.1).

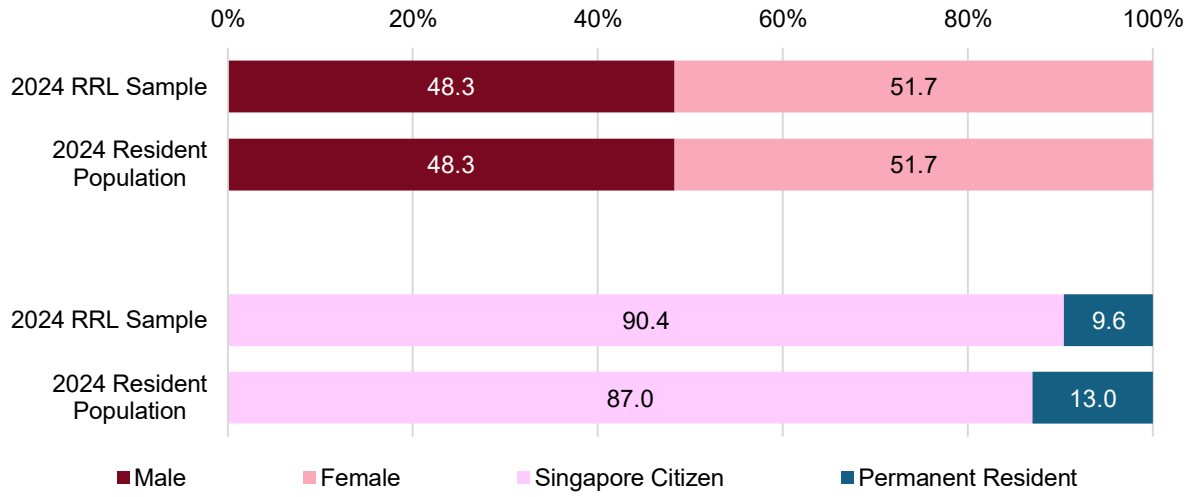
Figure 1.2.1: Survey Sample vs Resident Population by Race / Age



1.2.2 Gender breakdowns for the 2024 RRL sample were also identical to the resident population after weighting; there was a slightly higher proportion of Singapore Citizens surveyed relative to prevailing demographics

The proportions of respondents in the 2024 RRL sample by gender were also identical with the prevailing Singapore resident population after weighting. There was a slightly higher representation of Singapore Citizens compared to Permanent Residents (see Figure 1.2.2).

Figure 1.2.2: Survey Sample vs Resident Population by Gender / Citizenship Status



1.2.3 The RRL sample was underweight on individuals with secondary and below qualifications, and overweight on individuals with ITE, polytechnic, and professional qualifications relative to the resident population; it was overweight on HDB 1-3 room dwellers relative to the resident population

There was an underrepresentation of individuals with secondary and lower educational qualifications, and a corresponding overrepresentation of individuals with ITE, polytechnic and professional qualifications in the 2024 RRL sample relative to the resident population[2]. In this regard, cross-tabulations to ascertain whether education was a factor impacting responses were applied to all question items at the outset. Where statistically significant, cross-tabulations of responses by education levels are presented in this report, alongside other variables. To capture broader trends, analyses presented aggregate reported highest educational qualifications into three broad ordinal categories: 1) secondary and lower education, 2) ITE, polytechnic

[2] Numbers are for Residents aged 25 years and over, latest available 2020 from Singapore Department of Statistics (DoS) (M850581).

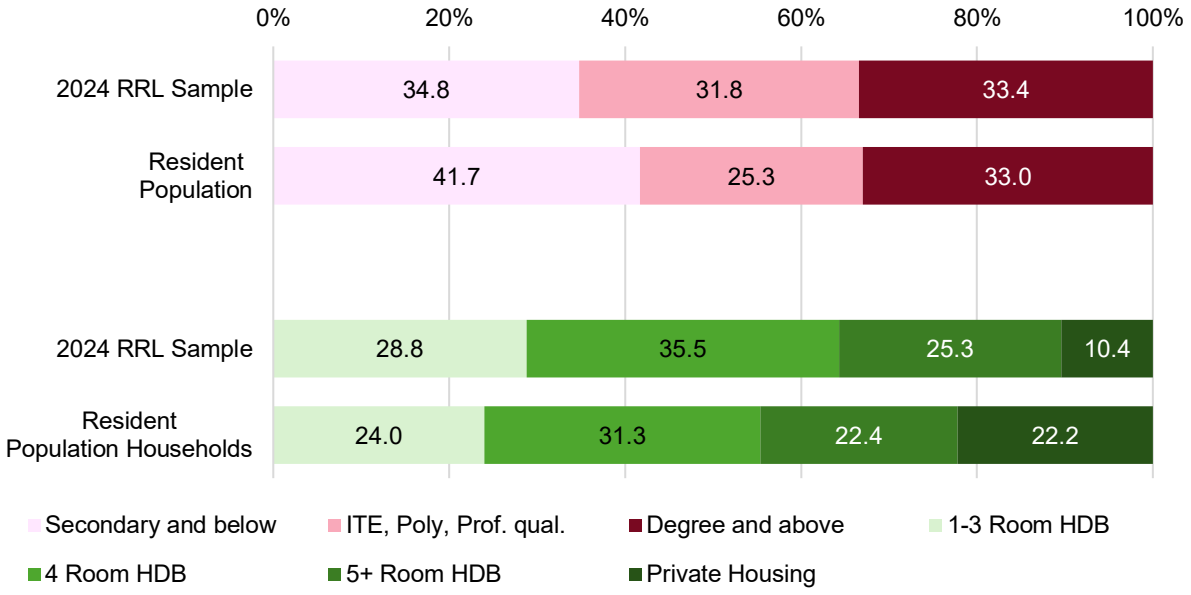
diplomas and professional qualifications not amounting to a degree, and 3) bachelor's degree or higher qualifications (see Figure 1.2.3).

1.2.4 The 2024 RRL sample was overweight on public housing dwellers and underweight on private property dwellers relative to the resident population

The 2024 RRL sample also has a higher proportion of HDB dwellers relative to the resident population[3]; this was in line with the increased possibilities of surveyors being able to come into contact with this population owing to the ease of access to their houses. Meanwhile, the corresponding response rates for private property dwellers were also much lower, due to additional difficulties with securing access especially in condominiums and cluster housing where surveyors are generally not allowed access. In the same vein as the education variable, housing types were aggregated into four broad ordinal categories to better capture broad trends: 1) 1–3 room HDB flats; 2) 4-room HDB flats; 3) 5+ room HDB flats including 5-room, executive, maisonette and HUDC units; and 4) private housing, comprising condominiums, landed property, or other types of private accommodation such as shophouse units (see Figure 1.2.3).

[3] Numbers are for Resident Households by Type of Dwelling, latest available 2023 from Singapore Department of Statistics (DoS) (M810351).

Figure 1.2.3: Survey Sample vs Resident Population by Highest Educational Qualifications Attained / Housing Type



1.2.5 The 2024 RRL sample was proportionally representative of Buddhists, Taoists, Catholics, Muslims and Hindus; Christians were overrepresented while those with no religion were underrepresented relative to the resident population

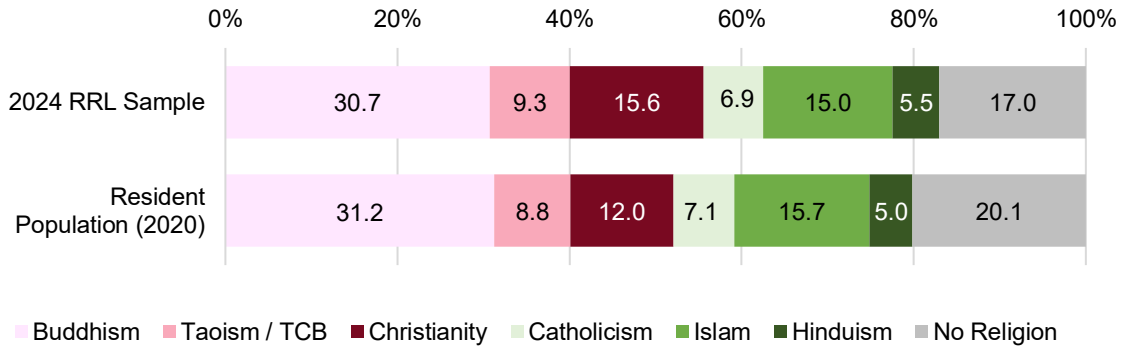
There was some variance in the religion distribution for the 2024 RRL sample relative to the Singapore resident population[4]. While the proportions of Buddhists, Taoists, Catholics, Muslims and Hindus were relatively similar to the resident population, there was an overrepresentation of Christian Protestants and an underrepresentation of those with no religion[5]. Hence, cross-tabulations to ascertain whether religion was a

[4] Singapore Department of Statistics (DoS)'s General Household Survey 2020; retrieved from https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/publications/cop2020/sr1/excel/t51-57.xlsx. Other religions omitted from full proportions for brevity.

[5] While Roman Catholics and Protestant Christians are normally categorised as Christians, in this study we have separated their responses as their views sometimes differ. While it would be most appropriate for us to categorize and present the two groups as Protestant Christians and Roman Catholic Christians, it is difficult for stylistic and

factor impacting responses were applied to all question items at the outset; this was also in line with the prevailing theoretical hypotheses guiding respondents' perceptions and views of issues associated with religion. Where statistically significant and relevant, cross-tabulations of responses by religion are presented in this report, alongside other variables (see Figure 1.2.5).

Figure 1.2.5: Survey Sample vs Resident Population by Religion



1.3 Analysis Strategy

While there was a confluence of factors impacting responses to the question items, we have condensed the myriad findings across results using a two-step approach to augment the relative accessibility of the content and ease of understanding for a non-academic, general audience:

presentation reasons to do so. As such we have separated the two groups as Christians and Catholics. In no way are we alleging that Roman Catholics are not Christians.

- Running ordinal logistic or ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions[6] with demographic responses and other salient responses as independent variables as a 'filter' to identify significant findings;
- Presenting single or dual cross-tabulations based on 1) for the most salient and significant results.

Step 1 was omitted from the report for brevity, and the cross-tabulations in Step 2 are featured in subsequent chapters.

[6] Ordinal logistic regressions are used to predict an ordinal dependent variable (which comprise the bulk of the survey responses), given one or more independent variables. This enables the determination of which of the independent variables (if any) have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable.

2 WHAT FORMS PART OF YOUR IDENTITY?

In this chapter, we sought to find out the importance of six dimensions to respondents' overall sense of identity. The dimensions examined were race, religion, official mother tongue, language spoken most frequently, Singapore as a nation, and country of origin (ancestry). In this process we were able to distil where religion stands within this multifaceted mix and what may be more important identity markers for those from different religious backgrounds

2.1 Importance of Different Aspects to Overall Sense of Identity

In 2024, over seven in 10 respondents considered their nationality (Singapore), most frequently used language, and race to be important parts of their identity. These dimensions were the three most important part of respondents' identities across all waves of the survey. Religion has remained consistently at the fifth place or lower across the three survey waves, though only if we consider the total population which includes nearly 20 per cent who indicate that they have no religion. When only those who indicate a religion are included in the analysis, the overall importance of religion increases considerably. The proportion of respondents indicating each identity component as both important and very important has mostly varied for each wave (see Table 2.1 below).

Table 2.1: Ranking of identity components by importance ("important" + "very important"), overall responses by wave

Rank	Component of Identity		
	2013	**2018-19**	**2024**
1	Singapore (79.3%)	Singapore (83.8%)	Singapore (86.7%)
2	Language used most frequently (72.4%)	Language used most frequently (70.5%)	Language used most frequently (79.8%)
3	Race (71.0%)	Religion* (**69.0%** / 56.7%)	Religion* (**73.7%** / 61.1%)
4	Religion* (**68.7%** / 56.5%)	Race (67.1%)	Race (70.8%)
5	Official mother tongue (66.4%)	Official mother tongue (62.8%)	Official mother tongue (70.5%)
6	Country your family came from originally (54.5%)	Country your family came from originally (53.1%)	Country where your family came from (63.0%)

** For purposes of ranking by importance, the proportion used for religion as an identity component included only respondents with declared religious affiliations, presented in bold. The second proportion (unbolded) is the overall weighted proportion when non-religious respondents were included.*

2.1.1 Singapore consistently rated as the most important identity component across waves and most demographic characteristics

When perceptions of identity components were compared across the three waves for various demographic characteristics, namely age, gender, education, housing, income, race and religion, the proportion of those who considered Singapore to be important or very important to their sense of identity was highest compared to other identity components across age, education, housing, income and gender. Meanwhile, across most waves and demographics, the country where respondents' family came from was consistently ranked as the lowest in terms of the proportion of respondents considering it to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity. In general, no major differences were observed over the waves when these proportions were compared across gender, income, and housing. Hence, only the tables for age and education comparisons are shown for brevity.

2.1.2 Changes in perceptions over time towards most frequently used language and official mother tongue for respondents older than 35

For the youngest cohort, the order of how important the various identity components were did not change much over time, with Singapore and most frequently used language as the top two components. Changes were observed over time for the other age cohorts. Race was the identity component with the second-highest proportion for those aged 36 to 50 years old in 2013, but it dropped to fifth place for the respondents within this age bracket in 2018 and then fourth place in 2024, with most frequently used language and official mother tongue moving upwards instead. For respondents aged 51 to 65 years old, most-frequently used language became more important in 2024 both in terms of the proportion indicating it as important or very important, as well as when compared to the other identity components. For those aged above 65 years old, Singapore and most frequently used language were consistently in first and second place over all waves, while official mother tongue and religion increased in importance over the next two waves (see Table 2.1.2 below).

2.1.3 Importance of language increased for respondents without university education

In terms of relative importance of the identity components, there were not a lot of changes observed across the waves for respondents with university education. For the other two groups, language used most frequently and official mother tongue gained importance across the waves. Meanwhile, race dropped in both relative importance and the proportions indicating it as at least an important component of their identity for

those with ITE, polytechnic or professional qualifications over the three survey waves (see Table 2.1.3 below).

Table 2.1.2: Ranking of identity components by importance across waves, by age

Rank	18–35 years old			36–50 years old			51–65 years old			> 65 years old		
	2013	**2018–19**	**2024**	**2013**	**2018–19**	**2024**	**2013**	**2018–19**	**2024**	**2013**	**2018–19**	**2024**
1	Singapore (75.4%)	Singapore (81.8%)	Singapore (82.0%)	Singapore (83.7%)	Singapore (83.1%)	Singapore (87.0%)	Singapore (84.2%)	Singapore (87.4%)	Singapore (90.9%)	Singapore (84.1%)	Singapore (91.9%)	Singapore (94.0%)
2	Language used most frequently (71.9%)	Language used most frequently (72.5%)	Language used most frequently (77.6%)	Race (75.7%)	Language used most frequently (71.2%)	Language used most frequently (78.2%)	Language used most frequently (74.9%)	Religion (**74.2%** / 69.0%)	Language used most frequently (82.2%)	Language used most frequently (79.5%)	Language used most frequently (76.7%)	Language used most frequently (89.8%)
3	Race (69.7%)	Religion (**67.0%** / 60.2%)	Religion (**72.4%** / 63.7%)	Language used most frequently (75.4%)	Official mother tongue (66.9%)	Official mother tongue (71.8%)	Race (74.1%)	Race (73.1%)	Official mother tongue (75.9%) Religion (**75.9%** / 69.0%)	Race (74.3%)	Race (72.9%)	Religion (**82.3%** / 74.7%)
4	Religion (**64.7%** / 57.6%)	Race (66.3%)	Race (70.2%)	Official mother tongue (72.5%)	Religion (**66.1%** / 61.2%)	Race (69.5%)	Religion (**70.7%** / 65.4%)	Language used most frequently (72.3%)		Official mother tongue (69.4%)	Religion (**70.8%** / 63.1%)	Official mother tongue (80.1%)
5	Official mother tongue (64.5%)	Official mother tongue (66.2%)	Official mother tongue (67.2%)	Religion (**71.6%** / 66.8%)	Race (65.9%)	Religion (**67.6%** / 61.9%)	Official mother tongue (70.5%)	Official mother tongue (66.9%)	Race (74.8%)	Religion (**67.9%** / 62.8%)	Official mother tongue (67.4%)	Race (80.0%)
6	Country where your family came from (56.6%)	Country where your family came from (56.6%)	Country where your family came from (61.3%)	Country where your family came from (59.6%)	Country where your family came from (58.7%)	Country where your family came from (66.0%)	Country where your family came from (57.2%)	Country where your family came from (53.8%)	Country where your family came from (67.2%)	Country where your family came from (61.0%)	Country where your family came from (55.8%)	Country where your family came from (72.6%)

** For purposes of ranking by importance, the proportion used for religion as an identity component included only respondents with declared religious affiliations, presented in bold. The second proportion (unbolded) is the overall weighted proportion when non-religious respondents were included.*

Table 2.1.3: Ranking of identity components by importance across waves, by education level

Rank	Secondary and below			ITE / Poly / Prof. qual.			Degree and above		
	2013	**2018–19**	**2024**	**2013**	**2018–19**	**2024**	**2013**	**2018–19**	**2024**
1	Singapore (84.4%)	Singapore (88.0%)	Singapore (91.7%)	Singapore (79.0%)	Singapore (83.0%)	Singapore (86.5%)	Singapore (77.5%)	Singapore (82.7%)	Singapore (84.5%)
2	Language used most frequently (77.1%)	Religion (**73.9%** / 68.9%)	Language used most frequently (87.4%)	Race (75.1%)	Language used most frequently (74.9%)	Language used most frequently (79.8%)	Language used most frequently (69.9%)	Language used most frequently (70.3%)	Language used most frequently (75.2%)
3	Race (76.8%)	Race (73.2%)	Religion (**82.3%** / 77.4%)	Language used most frequently (74.4%)	Religion (**71.2%** / 66.4%)	Religion (**74.6%** / 67.7%)	Race (64.8%)	Race (63.7%)	Race (66.2%)
4	Official mother tongue (74.9%)	Language used most frequently (71.7%)	Official mother tongue (82.0%)	Religion (**70.2%** / 64.2%)	Race (68.6%)	Official mother tongue (72.5%)	Official mother tongue (60.9%)	Religion (**59.4%** / 53.1%)	Religion (**61.8%** / 53.0%)
5	Religion (**73.1%** / 68.6%)	Official mother tongue (71.5%)	Race (80.1%)	Official mother tongue (68.2%)	Official mother tongue (65.9%)	Race (71.6%)	Religion (**58.6%** / 51.6%)	Official mother tongue (57.7%)	Official mother tongue (63.3%)
6	Country where your family came from (62.4%)	Country where your family came from (61.5%)	Country where your family came from (76.0%)	Country where your family came from (57.1%)	Country where your family came from (57.0%)	Country where your family came from (~~52.5~~65.4%)	Country where your family came from (52.5%)	Country where your family came from (48.8%)	Country where your family came from (55.6%)

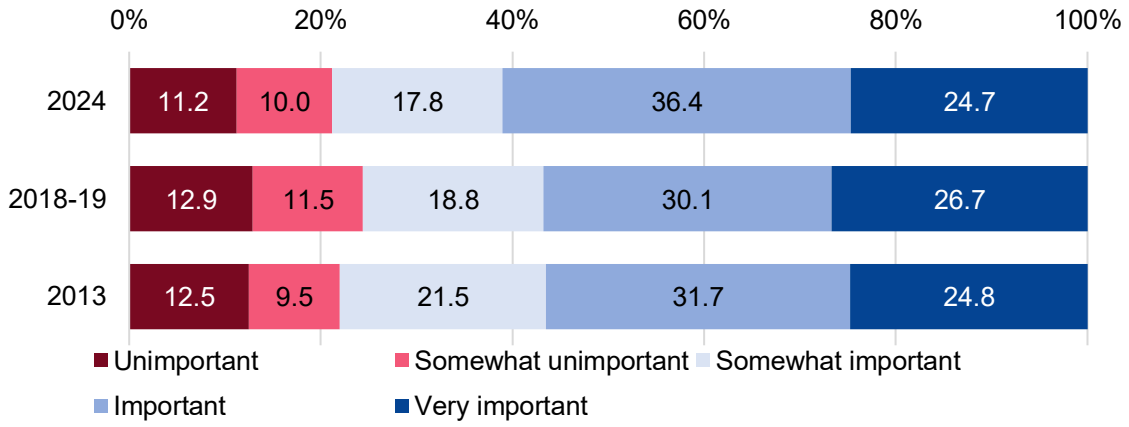
** For purposes of ranking by importance, the proportion used for religion as an identity component included only respondents with declared religious affiliations, presented in bold. The second proportion (unbolded) is the overall weighted proportion when non-religious respondents were included.*

2.2 Prioritising of Different Aspects Across Demographic Groups

2.2.1 About six in 10 respondents in 2024 considered their religion to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity; this proportion has slightly increased from a decade ago

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate the importance of their religion to their sense of identity. The proportion of respondents who considered their religion to be important or very important to their sense of identity has increased slightly over the three waves, from 56.5 per cent in 2013, to 56.8 per cent in 2018, and to 61.1 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 2.2.1).

Figure 2.2.1: Importance of respondents' religion to their overall sense of identity, responses by wave

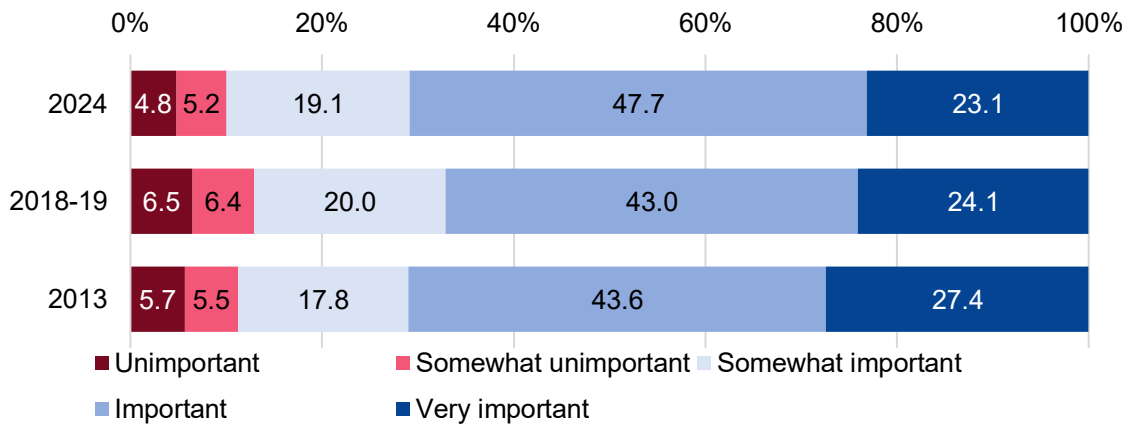


2.2.2 *About seven in 10 respondents in 2024 considered their race to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity; the proportion indicating race is very important to identity has gradually decreased*

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the importance of their race to their sense of identity. The proportion of respondents who considered their race to be unimportant to their sense of identity has remained relatively constant at around one in 10 across the three waves.

Meanwhile, around seven in 10 respondents indicated that their race was very important or important to their sense of identity in both 2013 and 2024, after a slight dip to 67.1 per cent in 2018. It is also noteworthy that there has been a gradual decrease of the proportion indicating that their race is very important to their identity, from 27.4 per cent in 2013 to 24.1 per cent in 2018, and then 23.1 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 2.2.2).

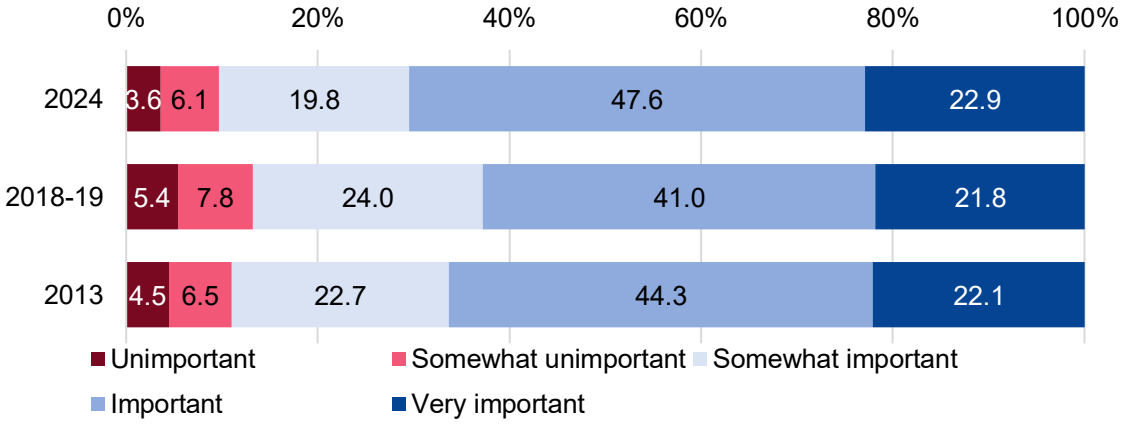
Figure 2.2.2: Importance of respondents' race to their overall sense of identity, responses by wave



2.2.3 Just under five in 10 respondents in 2024 considered their official mother tongue to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity

The importance of their official mother tongue to their overall sense of identity was also asked to survey respondents. The proportion of respondents who considered their official mother tongue to be important to their sense of identity has varied over the three waves, from 44.3 per cent in 2013, to 41 per cent in 2018, and to its highest at 47.6 per cent in 2024, while the proportion of those who view their mother tongues as very important have remained relatively constant at just over 20 per cent. The proportion of respondents who considered their official mother tongue to be at least somewhat unimportant to their sense of identity has also varied over the three waves, from 11 per cent in 2013, to 13.2 per cent in 2018, to 9.7 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 2.2.3).

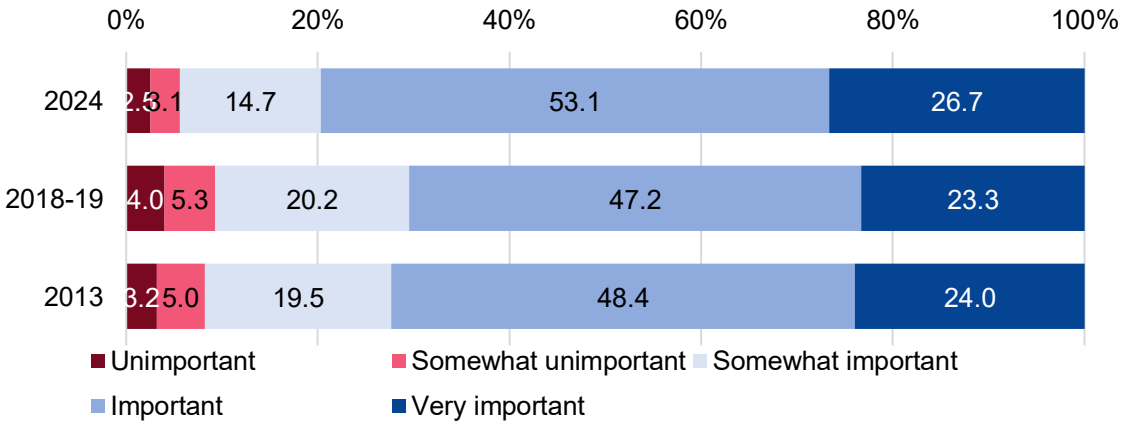
Figure 2.2.3: Importance of respondents' official mother tongue to their overall sense of identity, responses by wave



2.2.4 *Over five in 10 respondents in 2024 considered their most frequently used language to be at important or very important to their overall sense of identity; this proportion has also slightly increased from five years ago*

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate the importance of their most frequently used language to their overall sense of identity. The proportion of respondents who considered their most frequently used language to be important to their sense of identity has also varied over the three waves, from 48.4 per cent in 2013, to 47.2 per cent in 2018, and to its highest at 53.1 per cent in 2024. The proportion of respondents who considered their most frequently used language to be very important to their overall sense of identity has also fluctuated over the three waves, from 24 per cent in 2013, to 23.3 per cent in 2018, to 26.7 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 2.2.4).

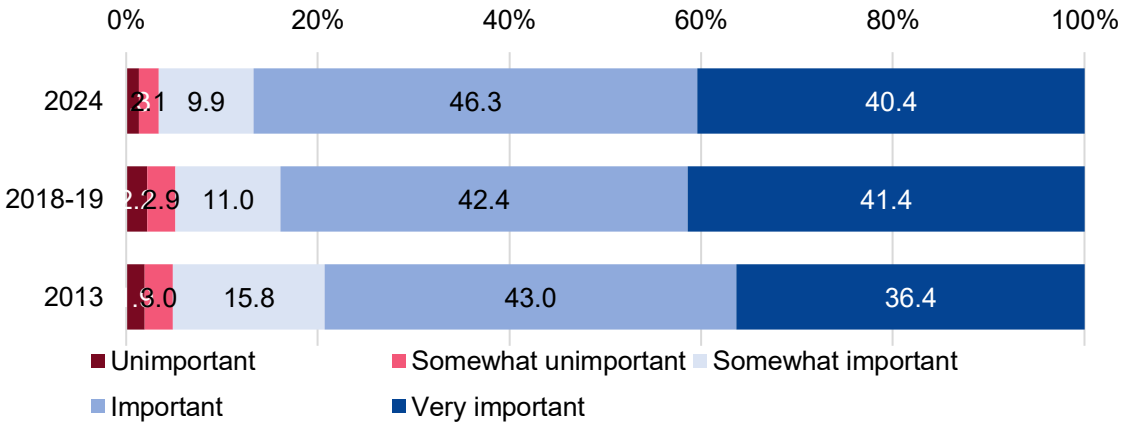
Figure 2.2.4: Importance of respondents' language most used frequently to their overall sense of identity, responses by wave



2.2.5 *Proportion of respondents indicating Singapore to be important to their overall sense of identity has increased compared to 2018 and 2013*

The importance of Singapore to their overall sense of identity was also asked to survey respondents. The proportion of respondents who considered Singapore to be important or very important to their sense of identity has increased in 2024, with 86.7 per cent of respondents considering Singapore to be important to their overall sense of identity compared to 83.8 per cent in 2018 and 79.4 per cent in 2013 (see Figure 2.2.5).

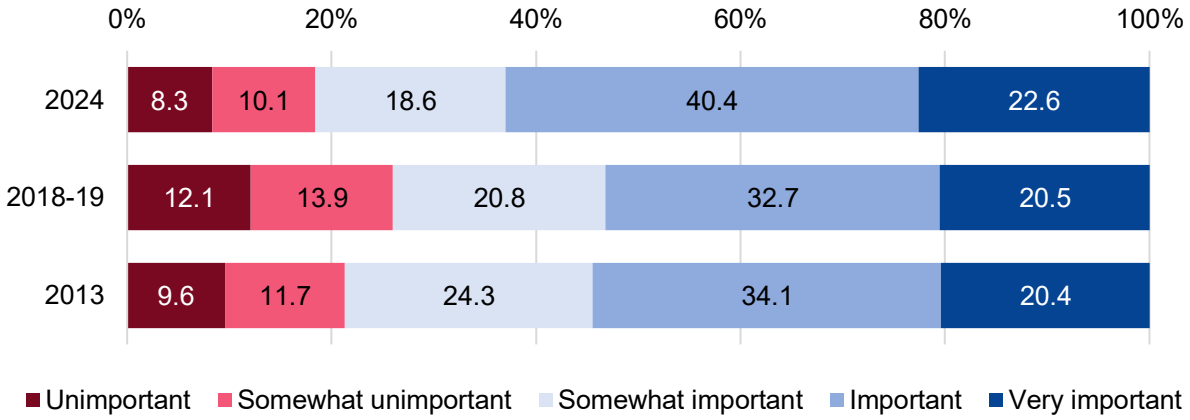
Figure 2.2.5: Importance of Singapore to respondents' overall sense of identity, responses by wave



2.2.6 Proportion of respondents considering the country where their family came from originally as important to their overall sense of identity has increased compared to 2018

The importance of respondents considering the country where their family came from originally as important to their overall sense of identity was also asked, with the proportion in 2024 having increased to 40.4 per cent compared to 32.7 per cent in 2018. Meanwhile, in 2013, the figure of respondents considering the country where their family came from originally as important was 34.1 per cent (see Figure 2.2.6).

Figure 2.2.6: Importance of the country where respondents' family originally came from to their overall sense of identity, responses by wave



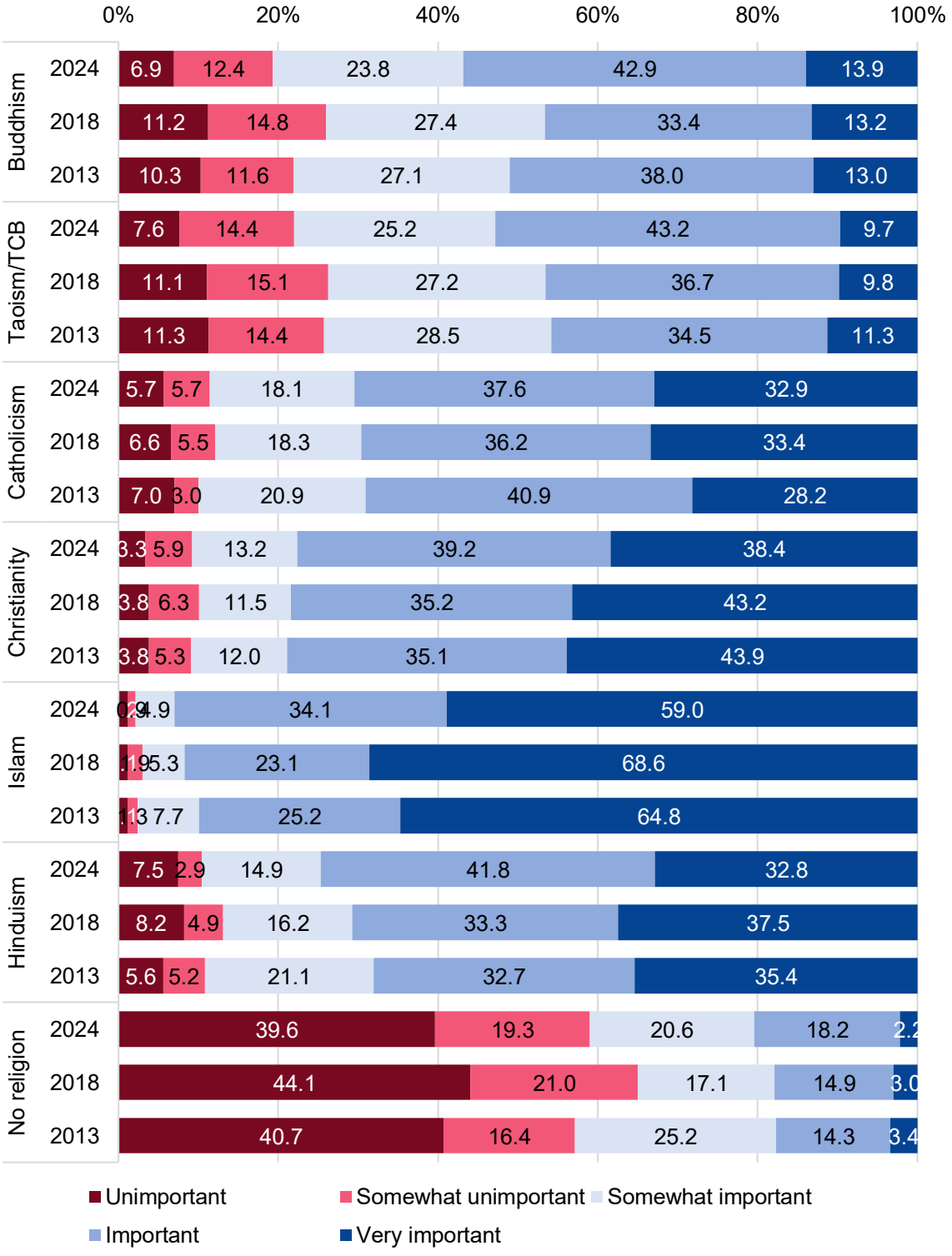
2.3 Demographic Differences in Importance of Identity Components

2.3.1 Muslims were more likely to consider their religion to be very important to their overall sense of identity

In terms of religion, there were also pertinent differences between different religions in terms of the proportion of those who were more likely to consider their religion to be very important to their overall sense of identity. The proportion of Muslims who considered their religion to be very important to their overall sense of identity was 59 per cent compared to 38.4 per cent of Christian respondents, 32.9 per cent of Catholic respondents, 32.8 per cent of Hindu respondents, 13.9 per cent of Buddhist respondents, and 9.7 per cent of Taoist/TCB respondents. Respondents' perceptions of how important their religion was to their identity did not change very much over time for most religious groups. The exceptions were the Buddhists and Taoists, both of which had increased proportions indicating that their religion was at least somewhat

important to their overall sense of identity in 2024, especially when compared to 2013 (see Figure 2.3.1).

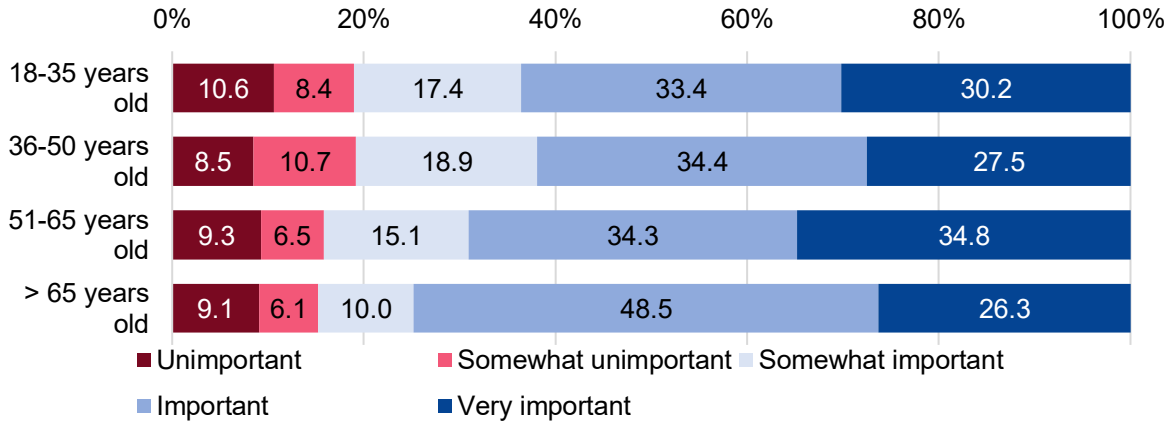
Figure 2.3.1: Importance of respondents' religion to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by religion



2.3.2 *Older respondents were more likely to consider their religion, race, official mother tongue, most frequently used language, Singapore, and the country their family originally came from to be important to their overall sense of identity*

We noted that respondents above the age of 65 were generally more likely to consider their religion to be important to their sense of identity. Compared to 63.6 per cent of those aged 18 to 35 years, 61.9 per cent of those aged 36 to 50 years, and 69.1 per cent of those aged 51 to 65 years old, 73.8 per cent of those older than 65 years old considered religion to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity (see Figure 2.3.2a).

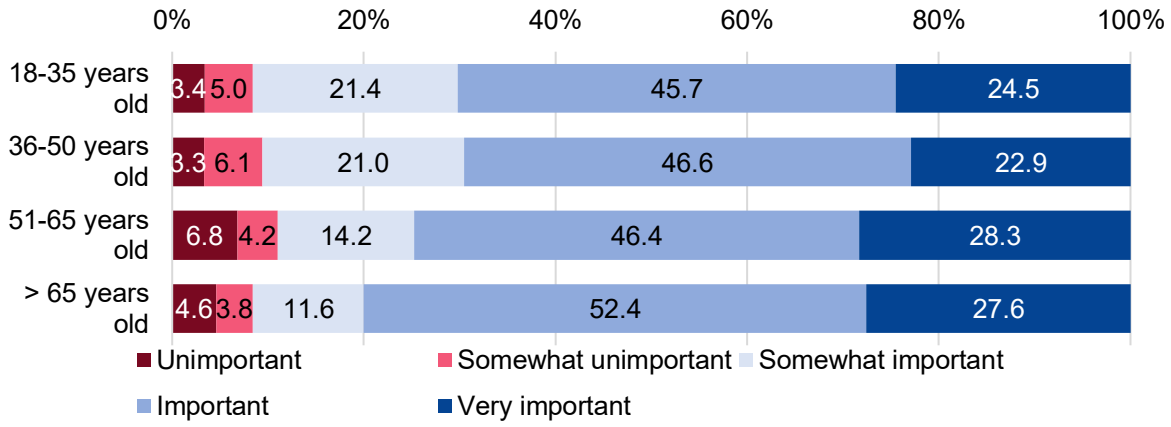
Figure 2.3.2a: Importance of respondents' religion to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by age



Older respondents were also more likely to consider their race to be important to their sense of identity. Specifically, 80 per cent of respondents aged above 65 years old considered their race to be important or very important to their sense of identity compared to 74.7 per cent of respondents aged 51 to 65, 69.5 per cent of respondents

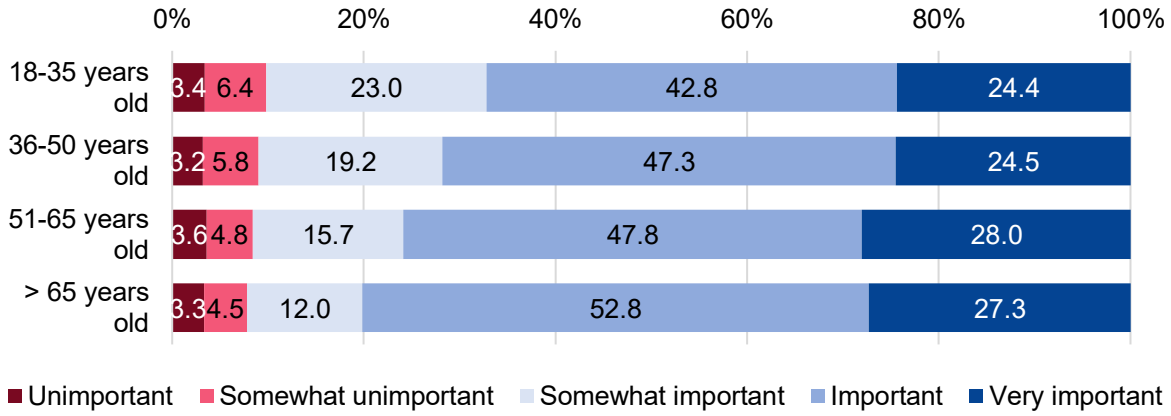
aged 36 to 50 years old, and 70.2 per cent of respondents aged 18 to 35 years old (see Figure 2.3.2b).

Figure 2.3.2b: Importance of respondents' race to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by age



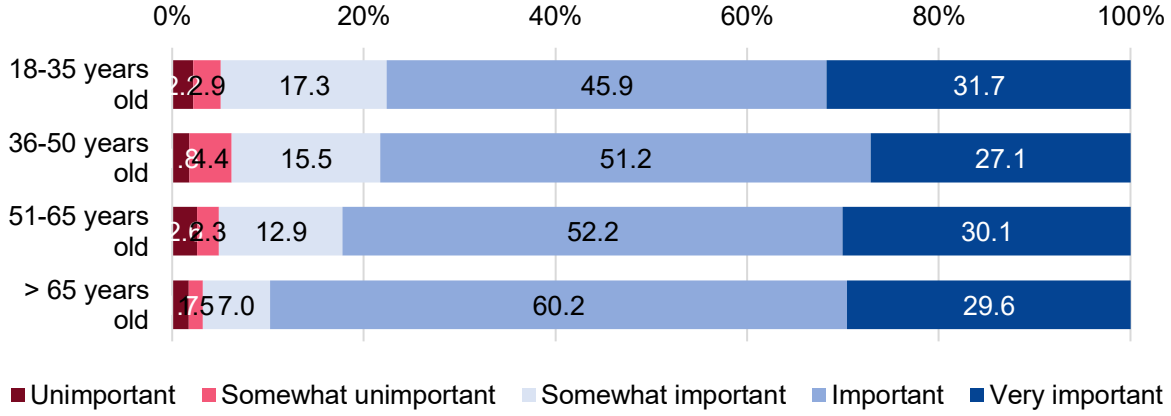
When data from 2024 was analysed by age groups, respondents who are older were more likely to consider their official mother tongue to be very important or important to their overall sense of identity, with 80.1 per cent of respondents aged above the age of 65 indicating as such compared to 75.8 per cent of respondents aged 51 to 65 years old, 71.8 per cent of respondents aged 36 to 50 years old, and 67.2 per cent of respondents aged 18 to 35 years old (see Figure 2.3.2c).

Figure 2.3.2c: Importance of respondents' official mother tongue to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by age



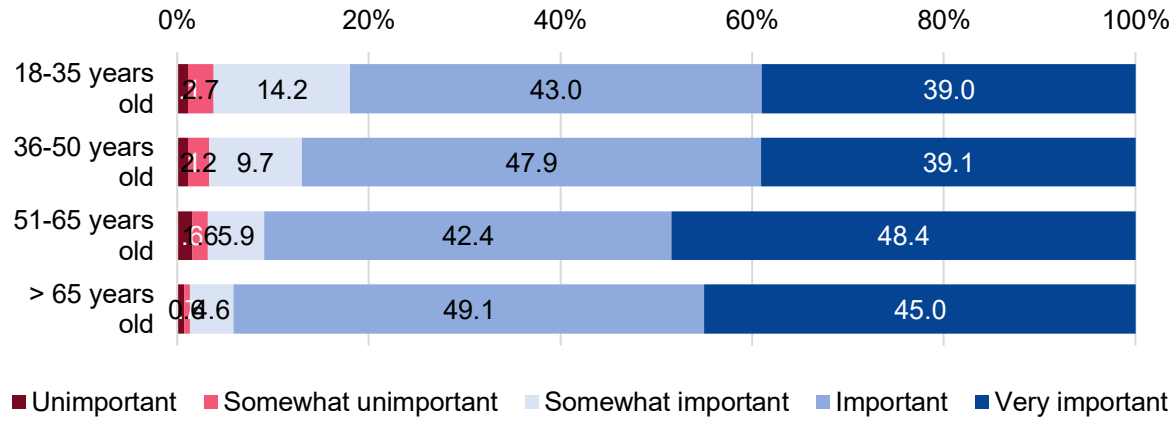
Respondents who are older were more likely to consider their most frequently used language to be very important or important to their overall sense of identity, with 89.8 per cent of respondents aged above the age of 65 indicating such sentiments compared to 82.3 per cent of respondents aged 51 to 65 years old, 78.3 per cent of respondents aged 36 to 50 years old, and 77.6 per cent of respondents aged 18 to 35 years old (see Figure 2.3.2d).

Figure 2.3.2d: Importance of respondents' language most used frequently to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by age



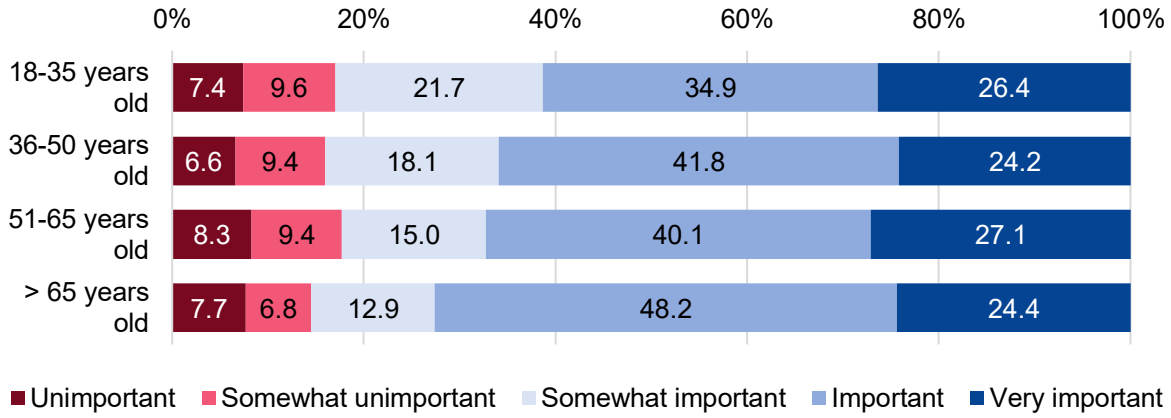
Furthermore, respondents who are older were more likely to consider Singapore to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity, with 94.1 per cent of respondents aged above the age of 65 indicating such sentiments compared to 90.8 per cent of respondents aged 51 to 65 years old, 87 per cent of respondents aged 36 to 50 years old, and 82 per cent of respondents aged 18 to 35 years old (see Figure 2.3.2e).

Figure 2.3.2e: Importance of Singapore to respondents' overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by age



In terms of the country where their family came from originally, older respondents were generally more likely to consider it as important or very important to their overall sense of identity, with 72.6 per cent of those who are older than 65 years old compared to 67.2 per cent of those aged between 51 and 65 years old, 66 per cent of those aged between 36 and 50 years old, and 61.3 per cent of those aged between 18 and 35 years old (see Figure 2.3.2f).

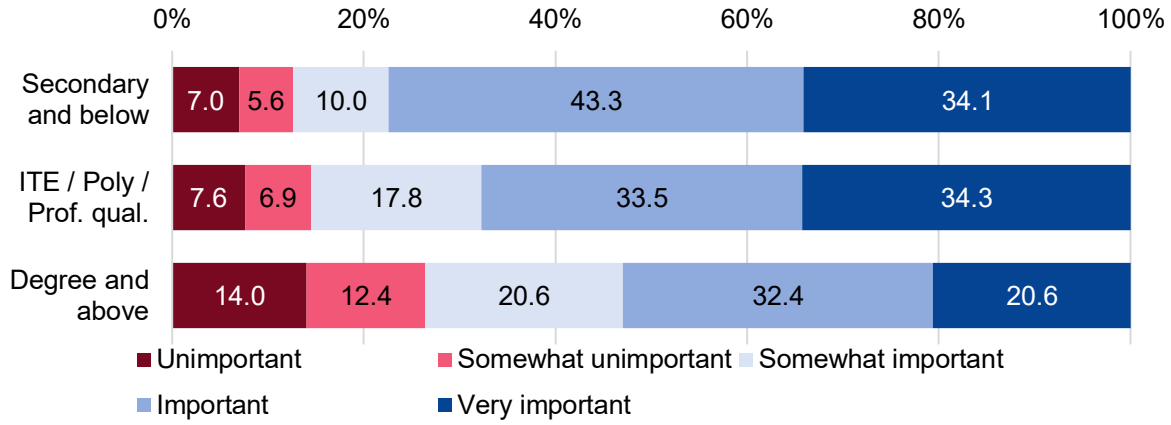
Figure 2.3.2f: Importance of the country where respondents' family originally came from to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by age



2.3.3 Respondents with higher educational qualifications were generally less likely than their peers of lesser education to consider the six markers important to their overall sense of identity

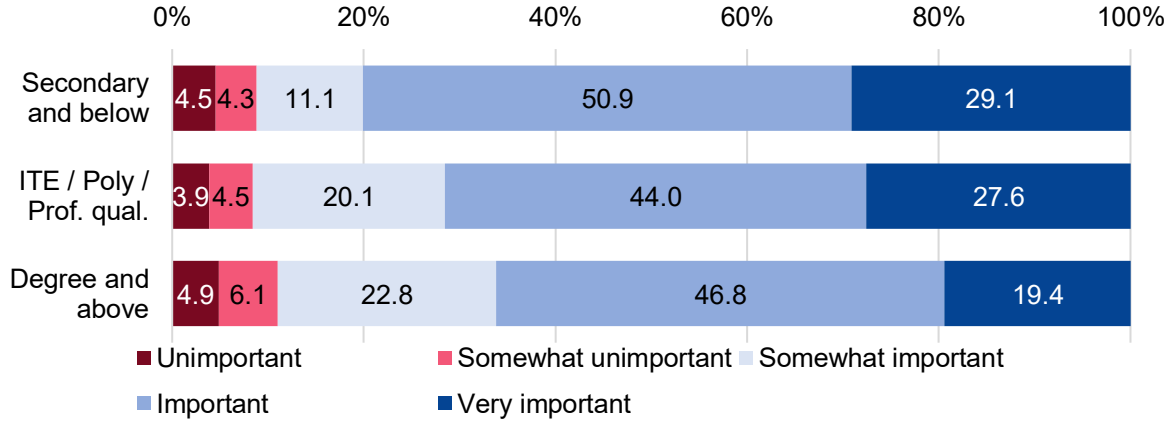
When perusing the 2024 results by education level, higher-educated respondents were generally less likely to indicate that their religion was important to their overall sense of identity. The proportion of those with degrees and above who considered their religion to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity was 53.1 per cent compared to 67.8 per cent for those with ITE, polytechnic and professional qualifications and 77.4 per cent for those with secondary or lower qualifications. (see Figure 2.3.3a).

Figure 2.3.3a: Importance of respondents' religion to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by education level



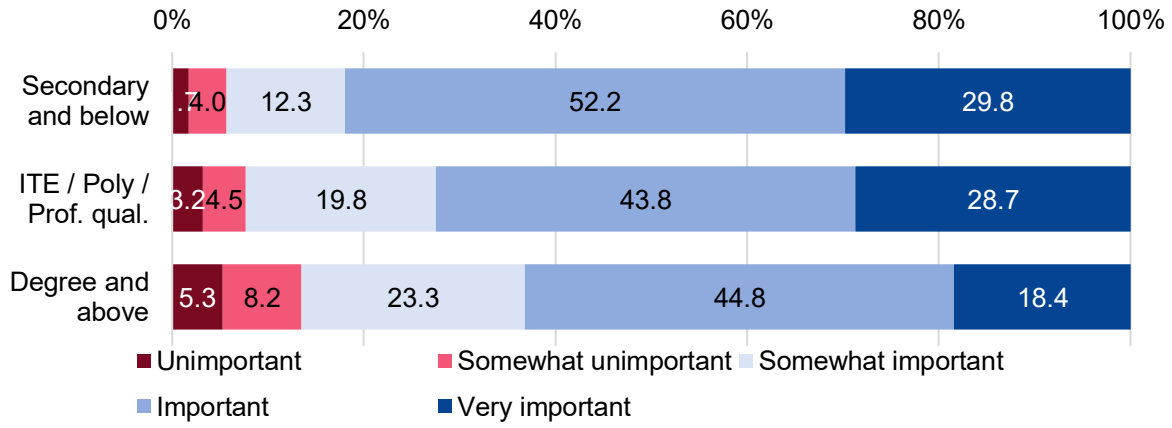
Higher-educated respondents were also less likely to indicate that their race was very important to their overall sense of identity. Looking at overall trends, eight in 10 respondents with secondary or lower qualifications felt that their race was important or very important to their overall sense of identity compared to 71.6 per cent of respondents with ITE, polytechnic and professional qualifications and 66.2 per cent of respondents with degrees and above (see Figure 2.3.3b).

Figure 2.3.3b: Importance of respondents' race to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by education level



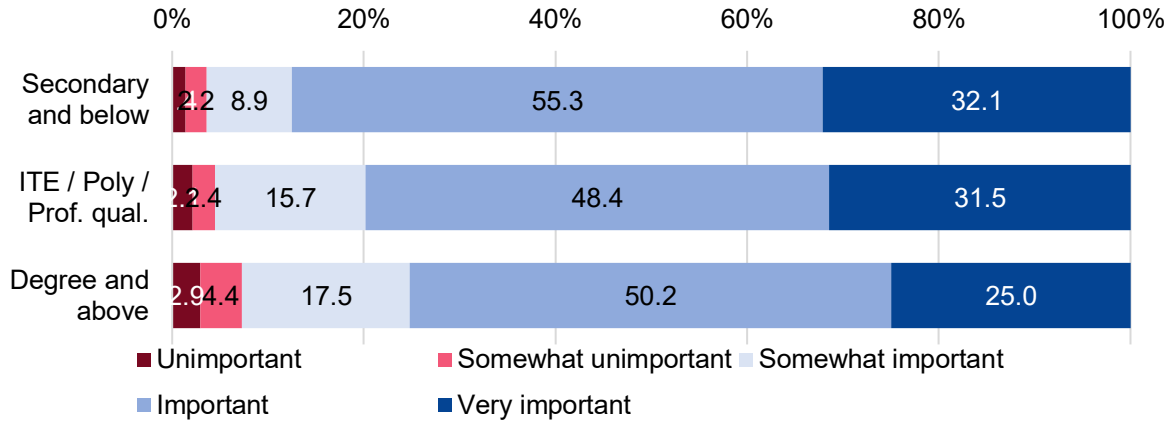
Higher-educated respondents were also less likely to indicate their official mother tongue as important to their overall sense of identity. The proportion of those with degrees and above who considered their official mother tongue to be very important or important to their overall sense of identity was 63.2 per cent compared to 72.5 per cent for those with ITE, polytechnic and professional qualifications and ~~85~~ 82 per cent for those with secondary or lower qualifications (see Figure 2.3.3c).

Figure 2.3.3c: Importance of respondents' official mother tongue to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by education level



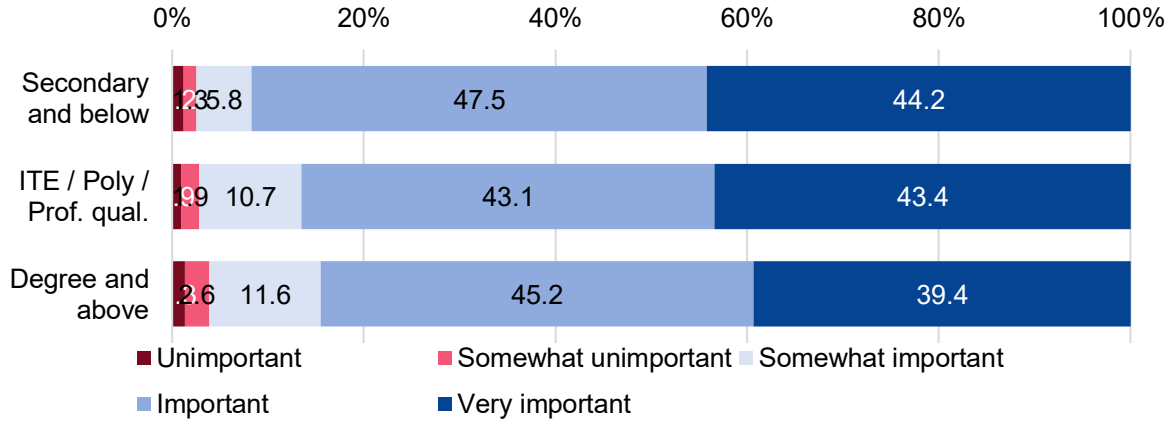
In addition, the proportion of those with degrees and above who considered their most frequently used language to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity was 75.2 per cent compared to 79.9 per cent for those with ITE, polytechnic and professional qualifications and 87.4 per cent for those with secondary or lower qualifications (see Figure 2.3.3d).

Figure 2.3.3d: Importance of respondents' language most used frequently to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by education level



In addition, respondents who have degrees and above were less likely to consider Singapore to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity (84.6 per cent) compared to 86.5 per cent of respondents who have ITE, polytechnic or professional qualifications and 91.7 per cent of respondents with secondary or lower qualifications (see Figure 2.3.3e).

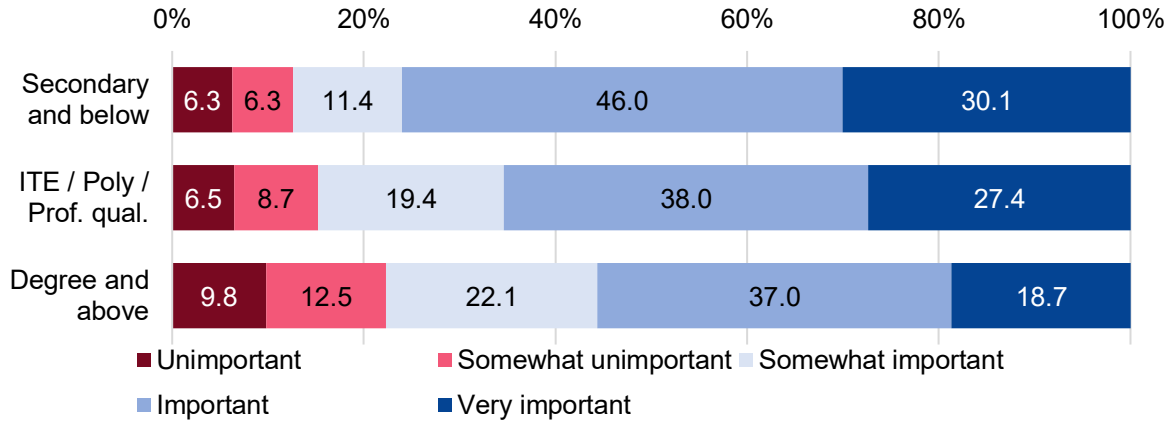
Figure 2.3.3e: Importance of Singapore to respondents' overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by education level



Finally, higher-educated respondents were less likely to indicate that the country where their family came from originally as important to their overall sense of identity.

The proportion of those with degrees and above who considered it to be important or very important to their overall sense of identity was 55.7 per cent compared to 65.4 per cent for those with ITE, polytechnic and professional qualifications and 76.1 per cent for those with secondary or lower qualifications (see Figure 2.3.3f).

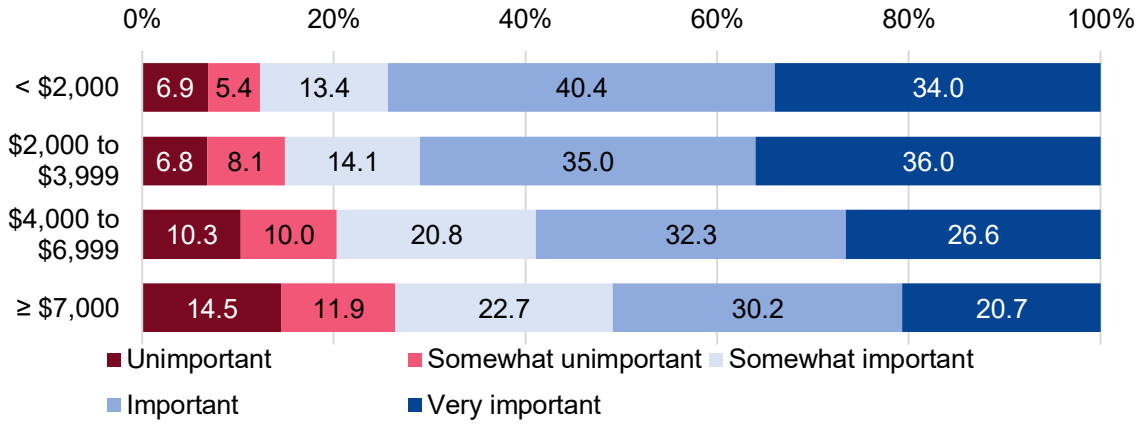
Figure 2.3.3f: Importance of the country where respondents' family originally came from to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by education level



2.3.4 More affluent respondents were generally less likely to consider their religion, race, official mother tongue, and the country their family originally came from to be important to their overall sense of identity

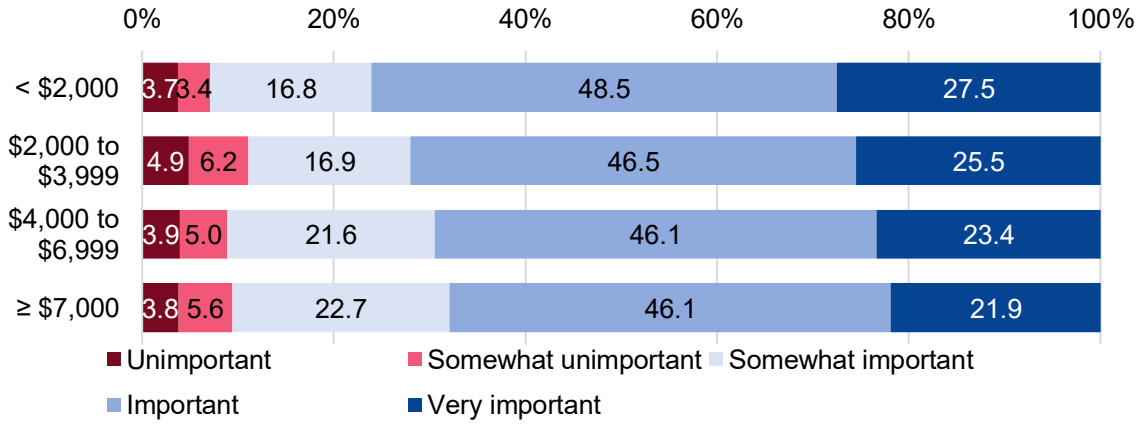
Respondents who have higher incomes were less likely to consider their religion to be important to their overall sense of identity, with 50.9 per cent of those earning $7,000 or more a month indicating that their religion was important or very important to their overall sense of identity compared to 58.9 per cent for those earning between $4,000 and $6,999 a month, 71 per cent for those earning $2,000 and $3,999 a month, and 74.4 per cent for those earning less than $2,000 a month (see Figure 2.3.4a).

Figure 2.3.4a: Importance of respondents' religion to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by income



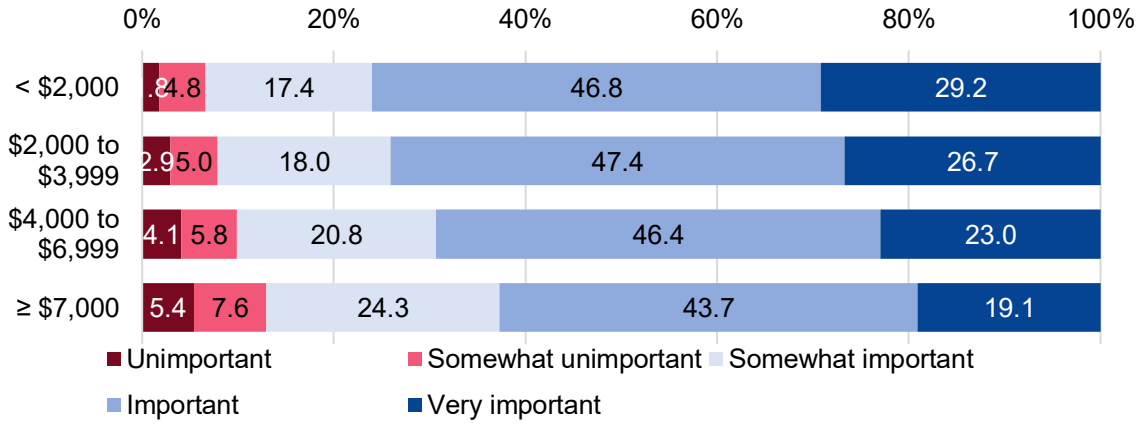
In addition, respondents with higher levels of income were less likely to indicate that their race was very important or important to their overall sense of identity, with 68 per cent of those earning at least $7,000 or more indicating that their race was very important or important to their sense of identity compared to 69.5 per cent for those earning between $4,000 and $6,999, 72 per cent for those earning between $2,000 and $3,999, and 76 per cent for those earning less than $2,000 (see Figure 2.3.4b).

Figure 2.3.4b: Importance of respondents' race to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by income



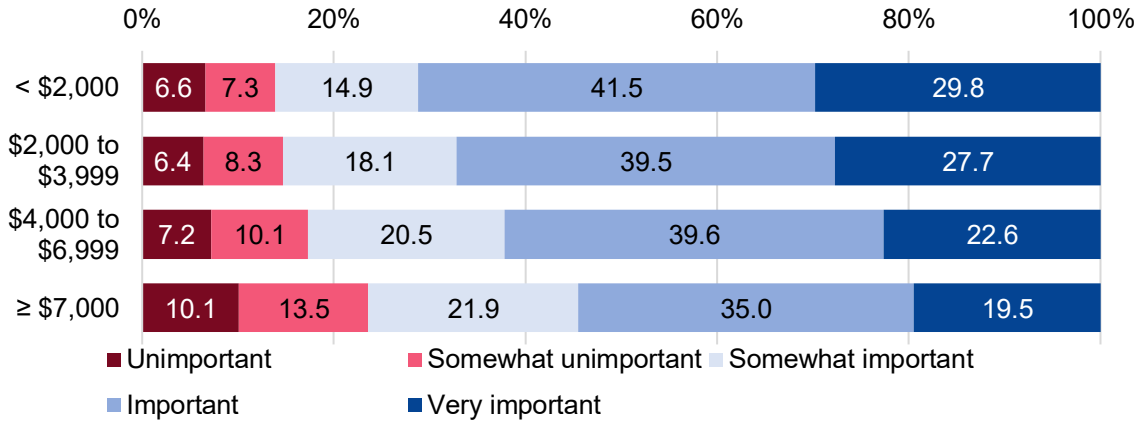
Respondents who had higher incomes were also less likely to consider their official mother tongue to be very important to their overall sense of identity, with only 19.1 per cent of those earning $7,000 or more stating so compared to 23 per cent of those earning between $4,000 and $6,999, to 26.7 per cent of those earning between $2,000 and $3,999, and to 29.2 per cent of those earning less than $2,000 (see Figure 2.3.4c).

Figure 2.3.4c: Importance of respondents' official mother tongue to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by income



Respondents who had higher incomes were also less likely to see the country where their family came from originally as important or very important to their sense of identity, with 54.5 per cent of those earning $7,000 or more stating as such compared to 62.2 per cent of those earning between $4,000 and $6,999, 67.2 per cent of those earning between $2,000 and $3,999, and 71.3 per cent of those earning less than $2,000 (see Figure 2.3.4d).

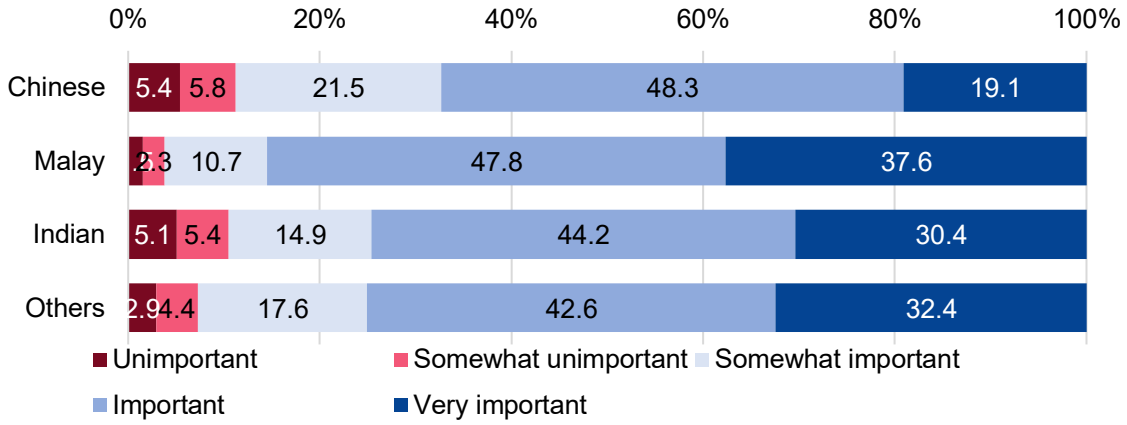
Figure 2.3.4d: Importance of the country where respondents' family originally came from to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by income



2.3.5 Minority respondents were more likely to consider their race, official mother tongue, most frequently used language, and Singapore to be very important to their overall sense of identity

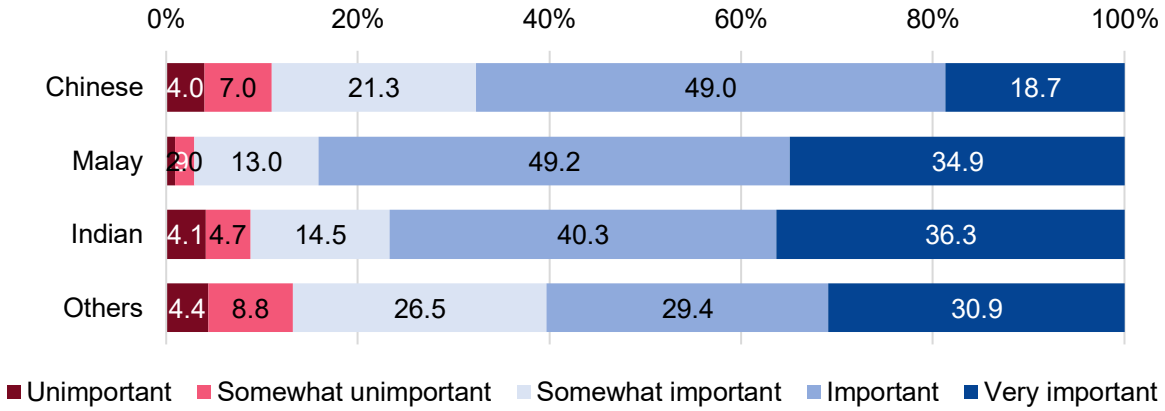
In terms of race, there was a pertinent difference between the proportion of Chinese and minority respondents who considered their race to be very important to their overall sense of identity, with only 19.1 per cent of Chinese respondents stating that their race was very important to their sense of identity compared to 37.6 per cent of Malays, 30.4 per cent of Indians, and 32.4 per cent of those who identified themselves as Others (see Figure 2.3.5a).

Figure 2.3.5a: Importance of respondents' race to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by race



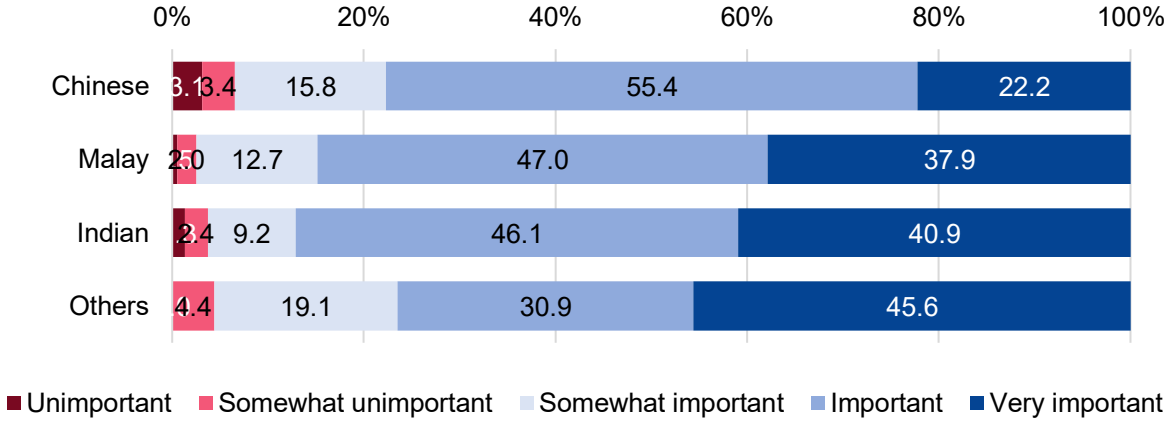
There were also pertinent differences between different races in terms of the proportion of those who were more likely to consider their official mother tongues to be very important to their overall sense of identity. The proportion of Indian respondents who considered their official mother tongue to be very important to their overall sense of identity was 36.3 per cent, followed closely by Malay respondents with 34.9 per cent of them indicating as such, and Others at 30.9 per cent. In contrast, only 18.7 per cent of Chinese respondents indicated that their official mother tongue was very important to their overall sense of identity (see Figure 2.3.5b).

Figure 2.3.5b: Importance of respondents' official mother tongue to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by race



Meanwhile, the proportion of Chinese respondents who considered their most frequently used language to be very important to their overall sense of identity stood at only 22.2 per cent compared to 37.9 per cent for Malays, 40.9 per cent for Indians, and 45.6 per cent for Others (see Figure 2.3.5c).

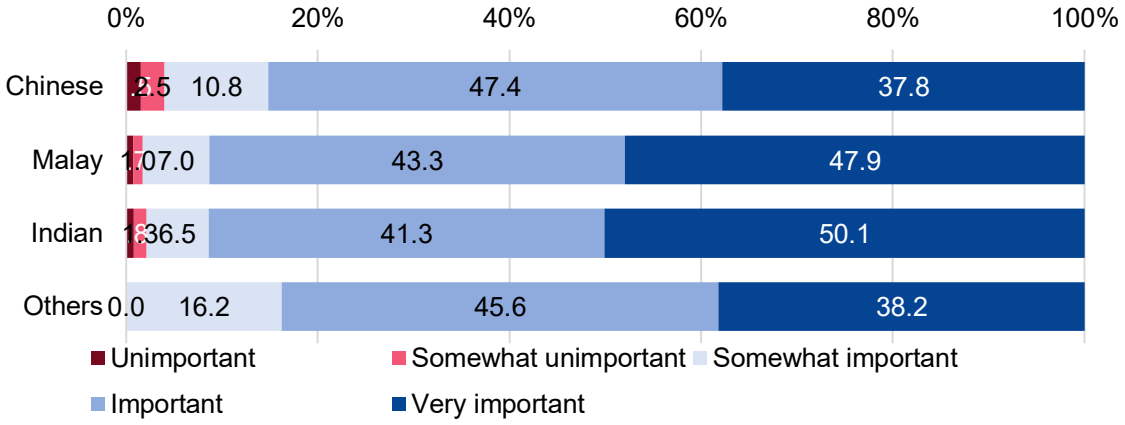
Figure 2.3.5c: Importance of respondents' language most frequently used to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by race



Indians and Malays are more likely than other races to consider Singapore to be very important to their overall sense of identity (50.1 per cent and 47.9 per cent

respectively) compared to Chinese and Others respondents (37.8 per cent and 38.2 per cent respectively) (see Figure 2.3.5d).

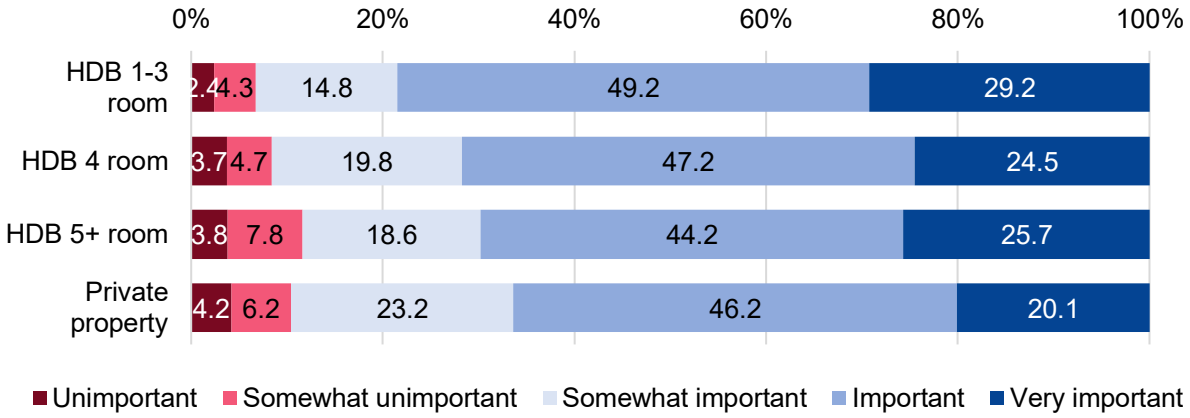
Figure 2.3.5d: Importance of Singapore to respondents' overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by race



2.3.6 Private property dwellers were less likely to consider their official mother tongue, most frequently used language, and the country their family originally came from to be important to their overall sense of identity

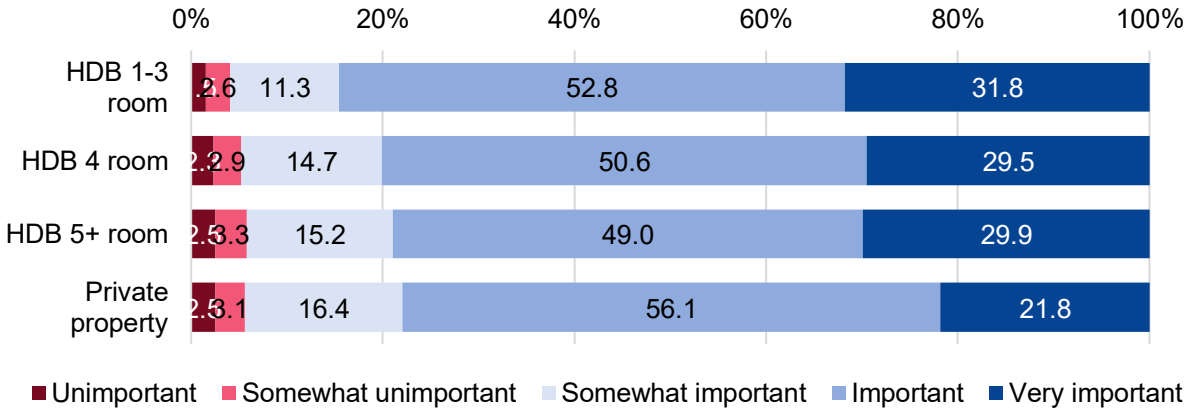
In terms of housing type, respondents living in private property and larger HDB flats were less likely to consider their official mother tongue to be very important or important to their overall sense of identity, with 66.3 per cent of private property dwellers indicating as such compared to 69.9 per cent of HDB 5-room flat or bigger, 71.7 per cent of HDB 4-room flat dwellers and 78.4 per cent of HDB 1-to 3-room flat dwellers (see Figure 2.3.6a).

Figure 2.3.6a: Importance of respondents' official mother tongue to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by housing type



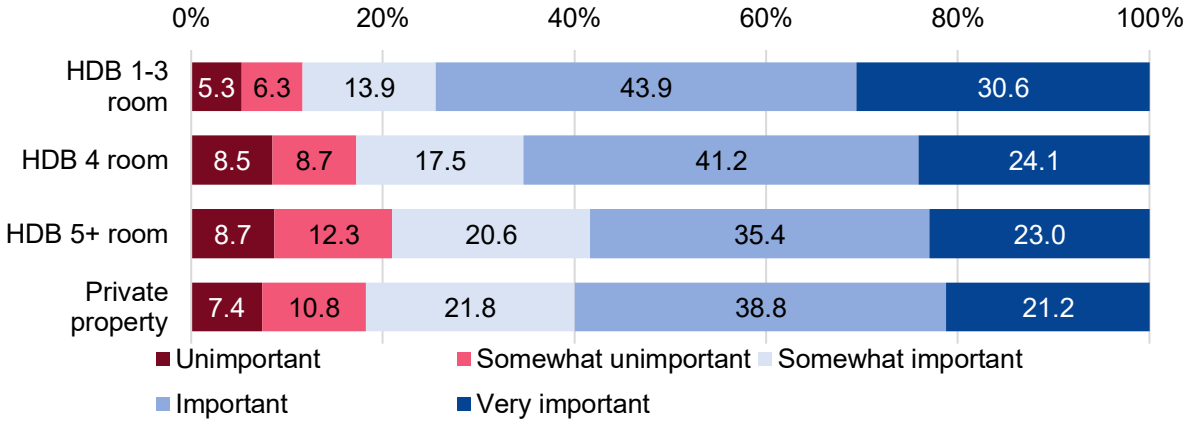
Respondents who live in private property were also less likely to consider their most frequently used language as important or very important to their overall sense of identity with 77.9 per cent of them indicating as such compared to 78.9 per cent of those living in HDB 5-room flats and bigger, 80.1 per cent of those living in HDB 4-room flats, and 84.6 per cent of those living in HDB 1- to 3-room flats (see Figure 2.3.6b).

Figure 2.3.6b: Importance of respondents' language most used frequently to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by housing type



Furthermore, respondents who resided in private property were least likely to indicate that the country where their family came from originally as very important to their overall sense of identity (21.2 per cent) compared to those residing in HDB 5-room and bigger flats (23 per cent), HDB 4-room flats (24.1 per cent) and HDB 1- to 3- room flats (30.6 per cent). Additionally, those living in bigger HDB flats were also less likely to indicate that the country where their family came from originally as important to their sense of identity, with 35.4 per cent of HDB 5-room and bigger flat dwellers indicating as such compared to 41.2 per cent of HDB 4-room flat dwellers and 43.9 per cent of HDB 1- to 3- room flat dwellers (see Figure 2.3.6c).

Figure 2.3.6c: Importance of the country where respondents' family originally came from to their overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by housing type

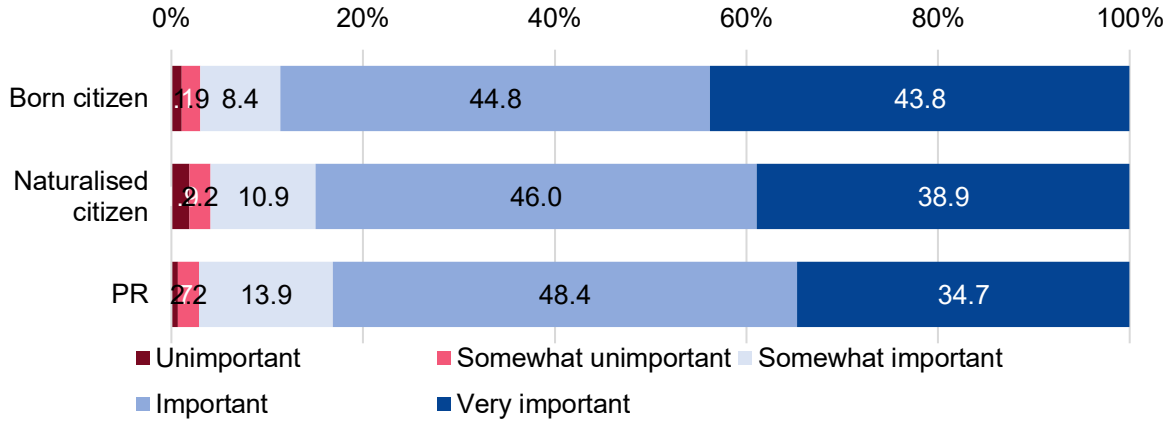


2.3.7 Citizens born in Singapore were more likely to consider Singapore to be very important to their overall sense of identity; PRs were more likely to see the country where their family originally came from as important

In terms of citizenship status, respondents who are born citizens were more likely to consider Singapore to be very important to their overall sense of identity, with 43.8 per

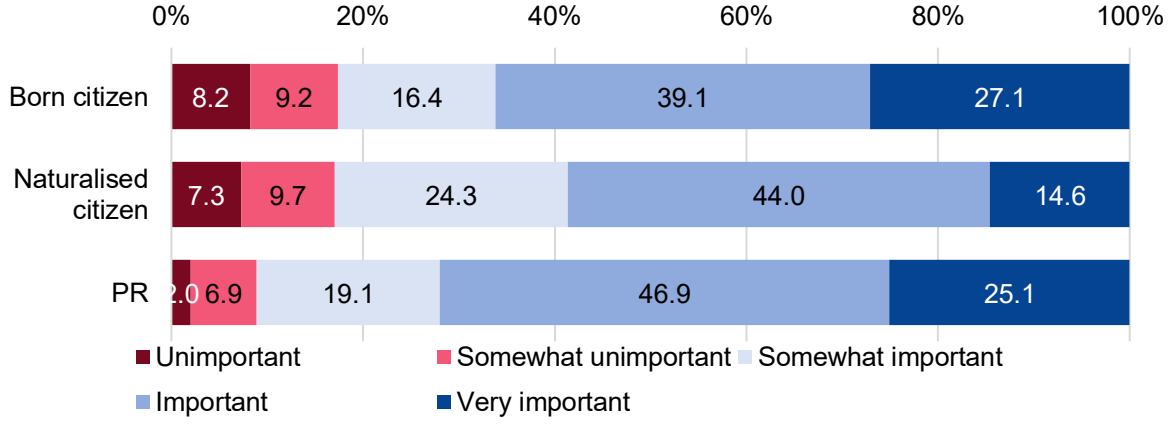
cent of them indicating such sentiments compared to 38.9 per cent of naturalised citizens and 34.7 per cent of permanent residents (see Figure 2.3.7a).

Figure 2.3.7a: Importance of Singapore to respondents' overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by citizenship status



Meanwhile, PRs were more likely to consider the country where their family came from to be very important or important to their overall sense of identity, with 72 per cent of them indicating such sentiments compared to 66.2 per cent of born citizens and 58.6 per cent of naturalised citizens (see Figure 2.3.7b).

Figure 2.3.7b: Importance of country where respondents' family originally came from to respondents' overall sense of identity, 2024 responses by citizenship status

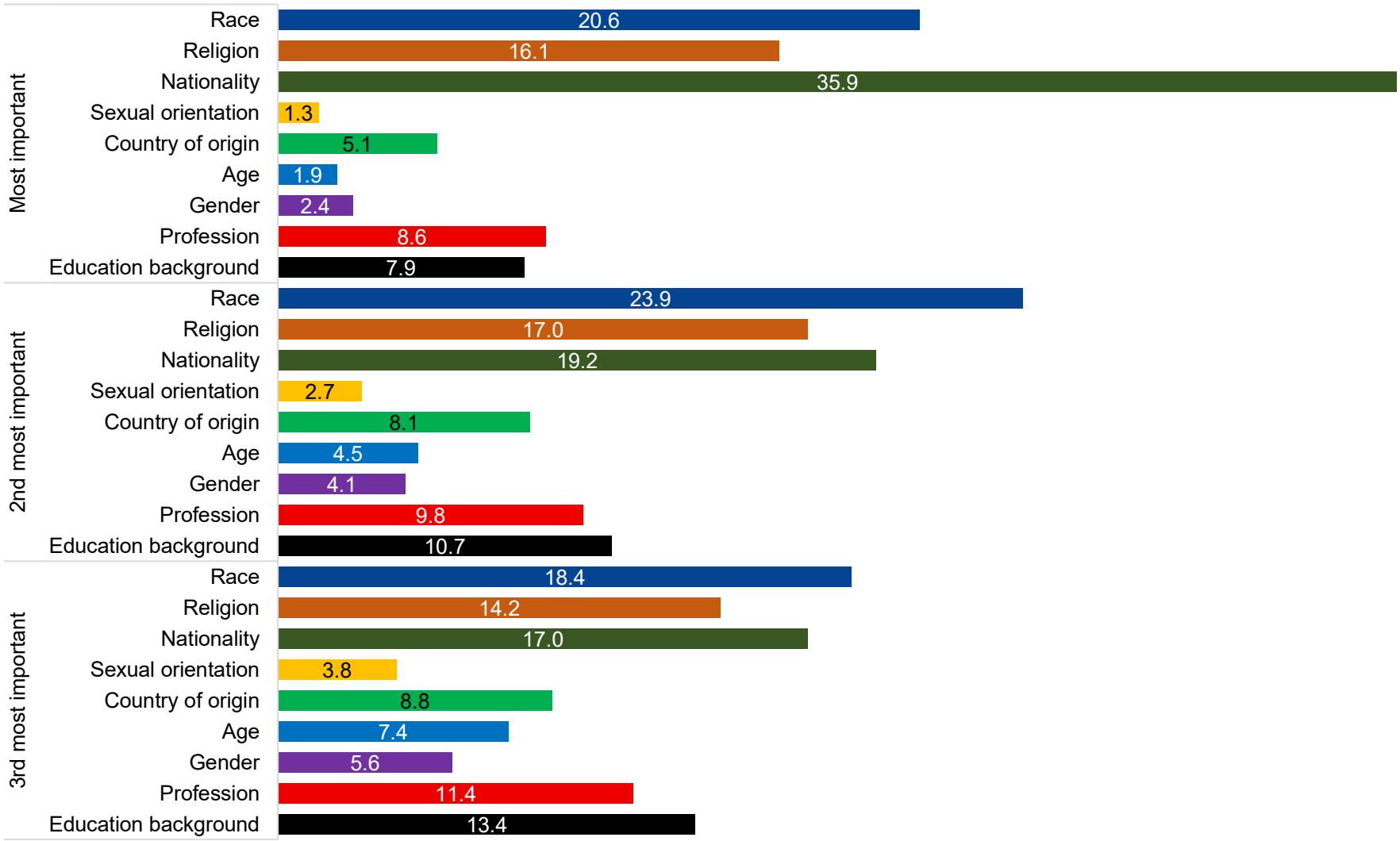


2.4 Ranking the Most Important Part of One's Identity

2.4.1 Nationality was the most popular choice when respondents were asked to choose the most important part of their identity

A separate set of questions asked respondents to choose, out of a set of nine items, the three most important parts of their identity and rank them based on order of importance. These nine items include race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, country of origin, age, gender, profession, and education background. For this question, nationality was the most popular option (35.9 per cent), followed by race (20.6 per cent), and then religion (16.1 per cent). When it came to respondents ranking the 2nd most important part of their identities, nationality was the most popular option (23.9 per cent), followed by nationality (19.2 per cent) and religion (17 per cent). When it came to respondents ranking the 3rd most important part of their identities, race was the most popular option (18.4 per cent), followed by nationality (17per cent) and religion (14.2 per cent) (see Figure 2.4.1).

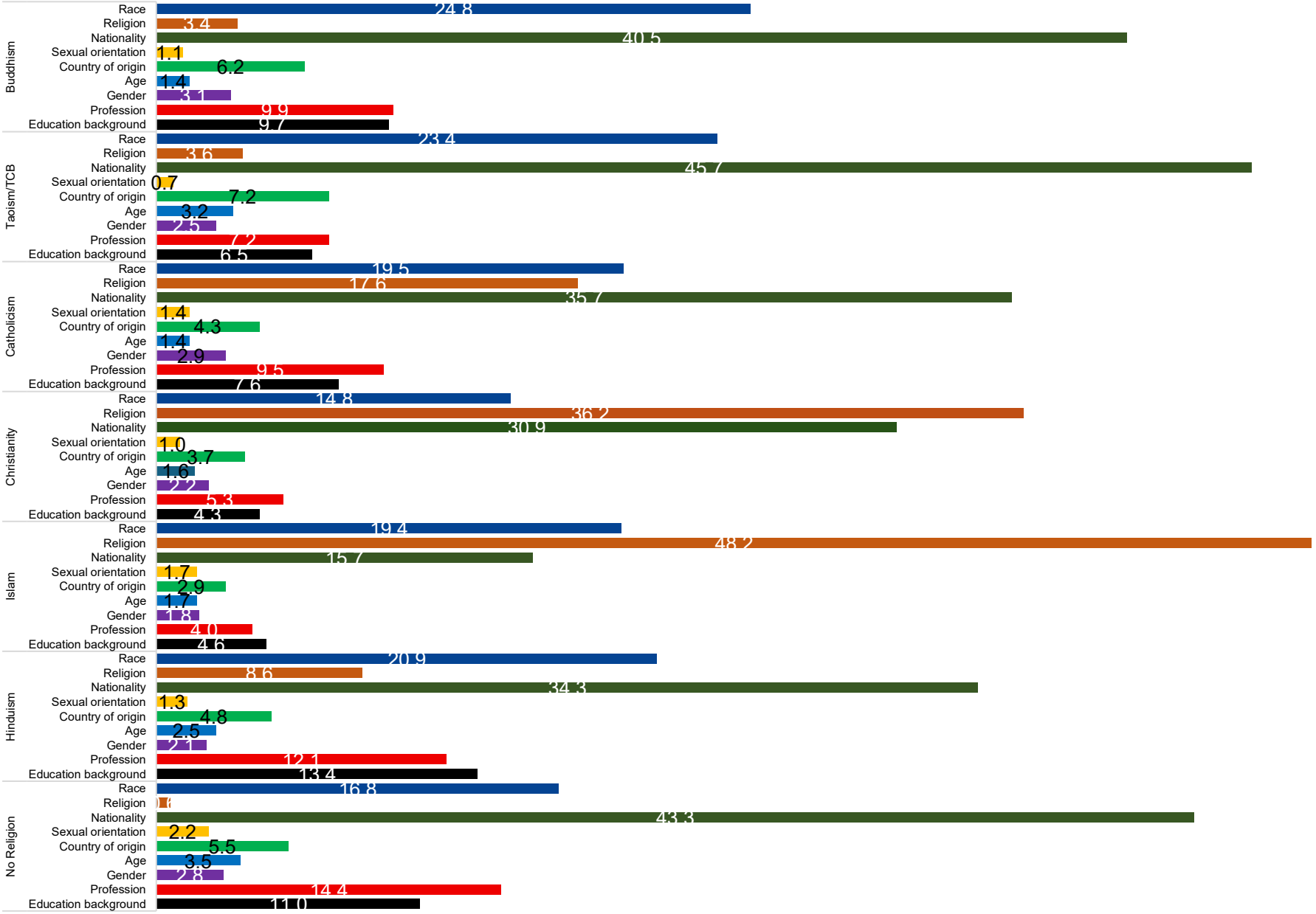
Figure 2.4.1: Which of the following would you say is the most important part of your identity? Choose the most important, the second most important, and the third most important, 2024 responses by importance



2.4.2 Muslims and Christians were more likely to rank their religion as the most important part of their identity while Buddhists, Taoists, Catholics, Hindus and those with no religion were more likely to rank their nationality as the most important part of their identity

In terms of religion, Muslims and Christians are far more likely to indicate their religion as the most important part of their identity, with 48.2 per cent of Muslims and 36.2 per cent of Christians indicating as such compared to 17.6 per cent for Catholics, 8.6 per cent for Hindus, 3.6 per cent for Taoists, 3.4 per cent for Buddhists, and 0.6 per cent for those with no religion. In parallel, Taoists are most likely to indicate their nationality as the most important part of their identity with 45.7 per cent of them indicating as such compared to 43.3 per cent for those with no religion, 40.5 per cent of Buddhists, 35.7 per cent of Catholics, 34.3 per cent of Hindus, 30.9 per cent of Christians, and 15.7 per cent of Muslims (see Figure 2.4.2).

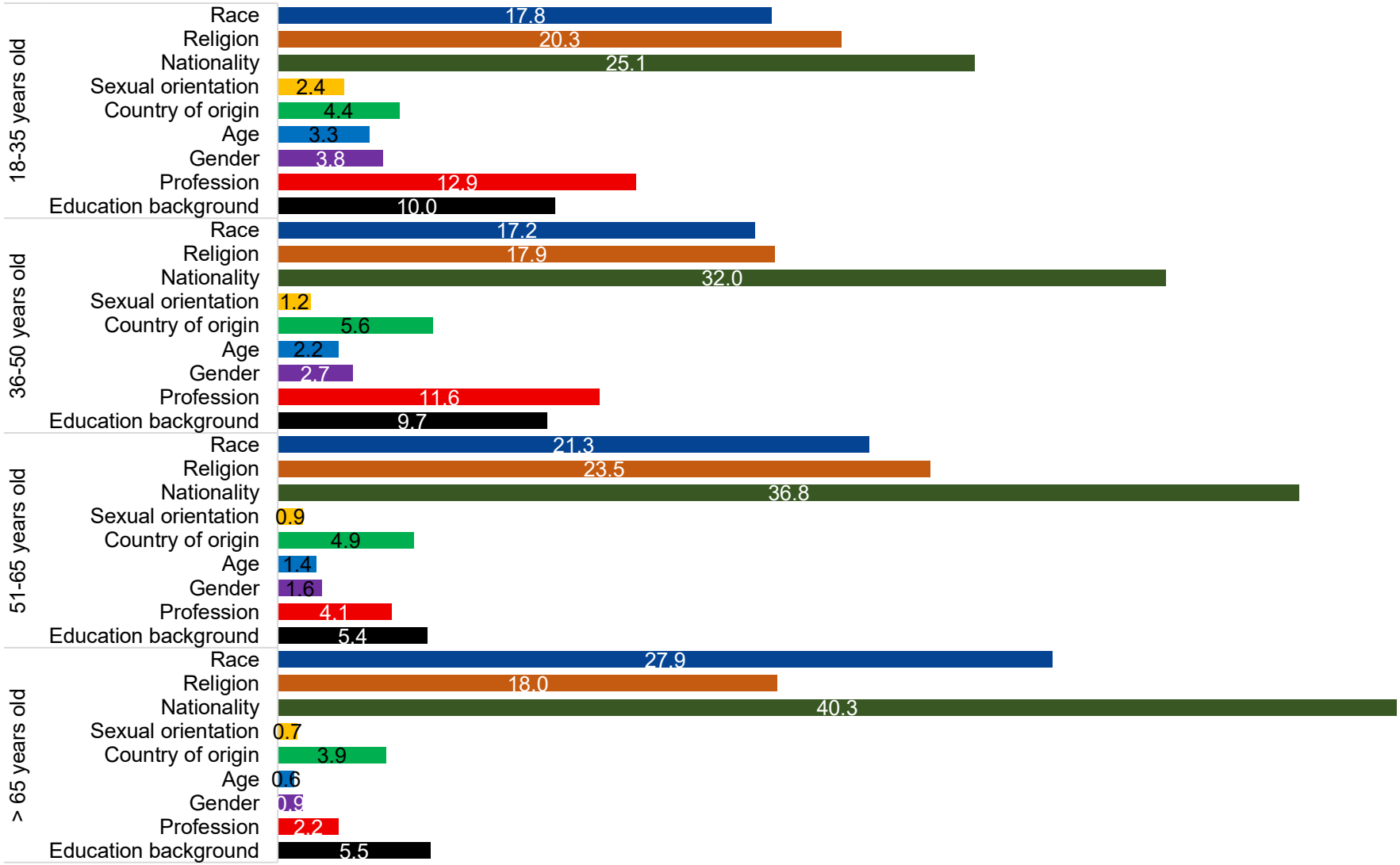
Figure 2.4.2: Most important part of respondents' identity, 2024 responses by religion



2.4.3 Older respondents were generally more likely to rank their nationality as the most important part of their identity

While nationality remains the most important part of respondents' identities after analysed by age, it is apparent that a larger proportion of respondents older than 65 years old considered their nationality to be the most important part of their identity (40.3 per cent) compared to 36.8 per cent of respondents aged between 51 and 65 years old, 32 per cent of respondents aged between 36 and 50 years old, and 25.1 per cent of respondents aged between 18 and 35 years old. The second most popular choice for those older than 65 years old was race, while it was religion for those younger than 65 (see Figure 2.4.3).

Figure 2.4.3: Most important part of respondents' identity, 2024 responses by age



2.4.4 Degree holders, those living in private property and bigger HDB flats, and those earning more were more likely to rank their nationality as the most important part of their identity

In terms of education level, a larger proportion of degree holders and above considered their nationality to be the most important part of their identity (34 per cent) compared to 31.3 per cent of those with ITE, polytechnic and professional qualifications, and 32.4 per cent of those with secondary or lower qualifications. Profession was also more likely to be chosen by those with university degrees compared to the rest of the sample (see Figure 2.4.4a).

When it comes to housing type, a larger proportion of respondents living in private property considered their nationality to be the most important part of their identity (38.8 per cent) compared to 33.5 per cent of those living in HDB 5-room and bigger flats, 31.8 per cent of those living in HDB 4-room flats, and 30.9 per cent of those living in HDB 1—3 room flats (see Figure 2.4.4b).

When perused by income, a larger proportion of respondents earning $7,000 or more considered their nationality to be the most important part of their identity (35.4 per cent) compared to 33.6 per cent of those earning between $4,000 and $6,999, 28.8 per cent of those earning between $2,000 and $3,999, and 25.1 per cent of those earning less than $2,000. It is also noteworthy that a larger proportion of those earning less than $2,000 had indicated that their race was the most important part of their identity as compared to those who had indicated that their nationality was the most

important part of their identity, with the former figure being 27.8 per cent compared to the latter figure being 25.1 per cent (see Figure 2.4.4c).

Figure 2.4.4a: Most important part of respondents' identity, 2024 responses by education level

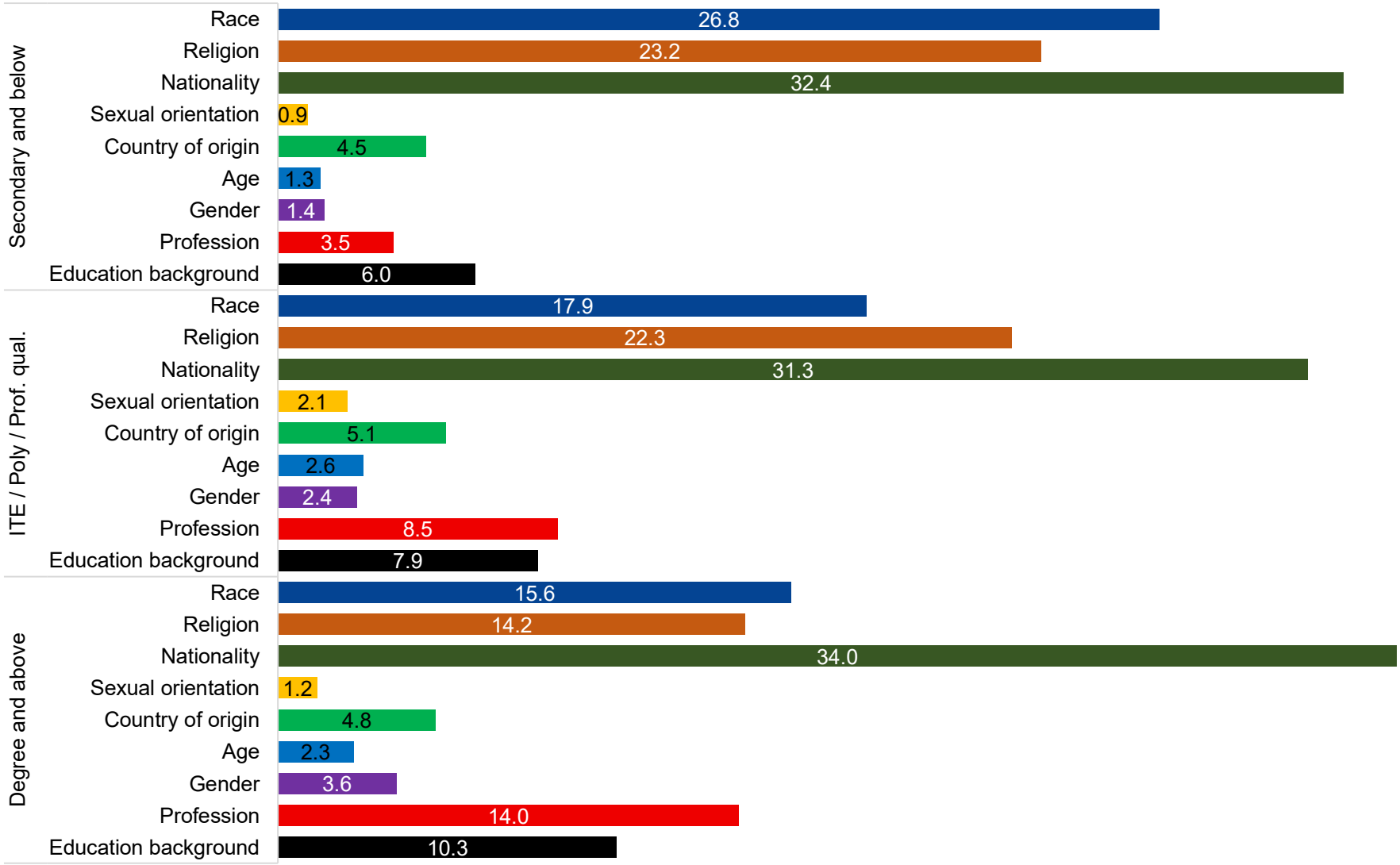


Figure 2.4.4b: Most important part of respondents' identity, 2024 responses by housing type

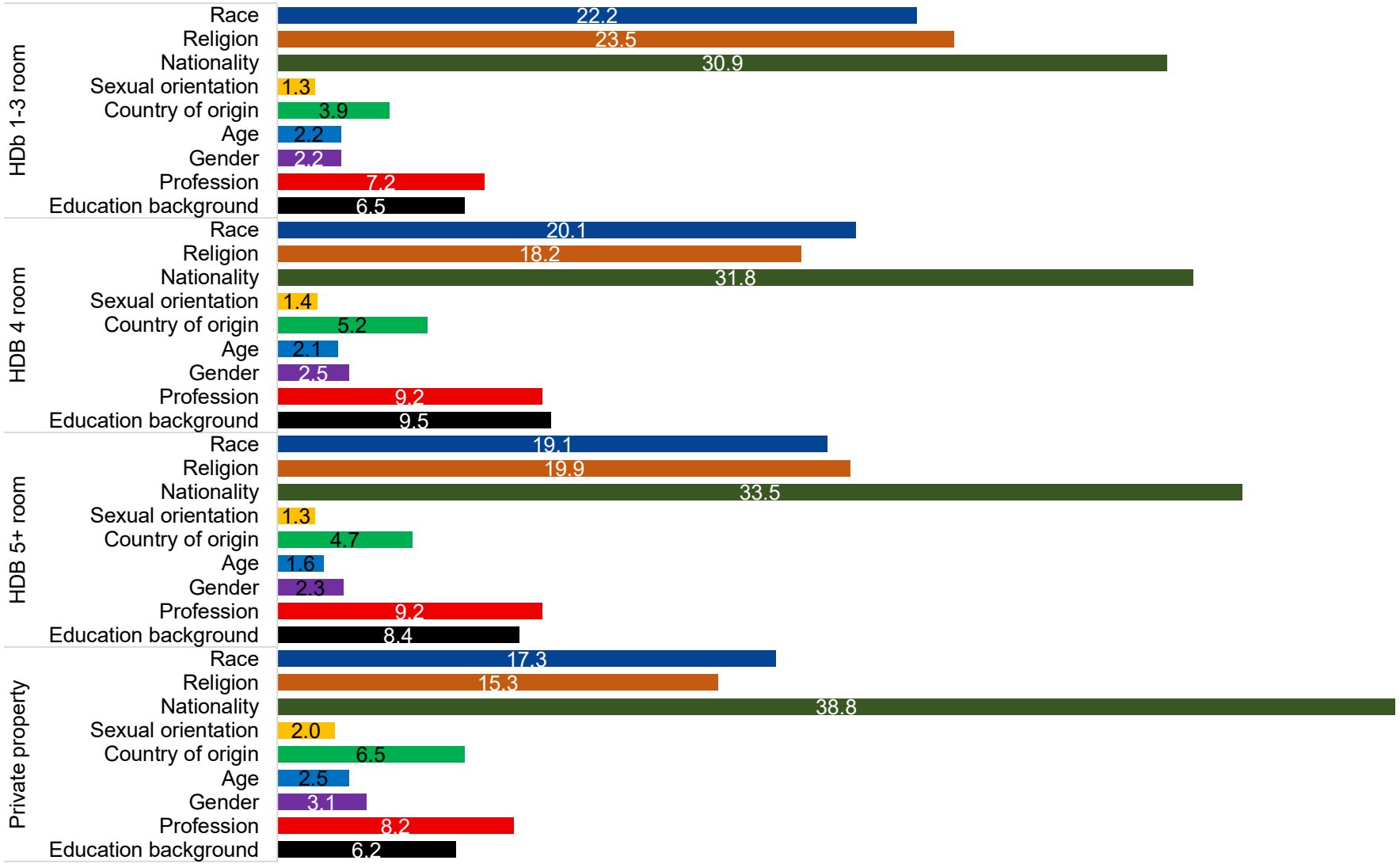
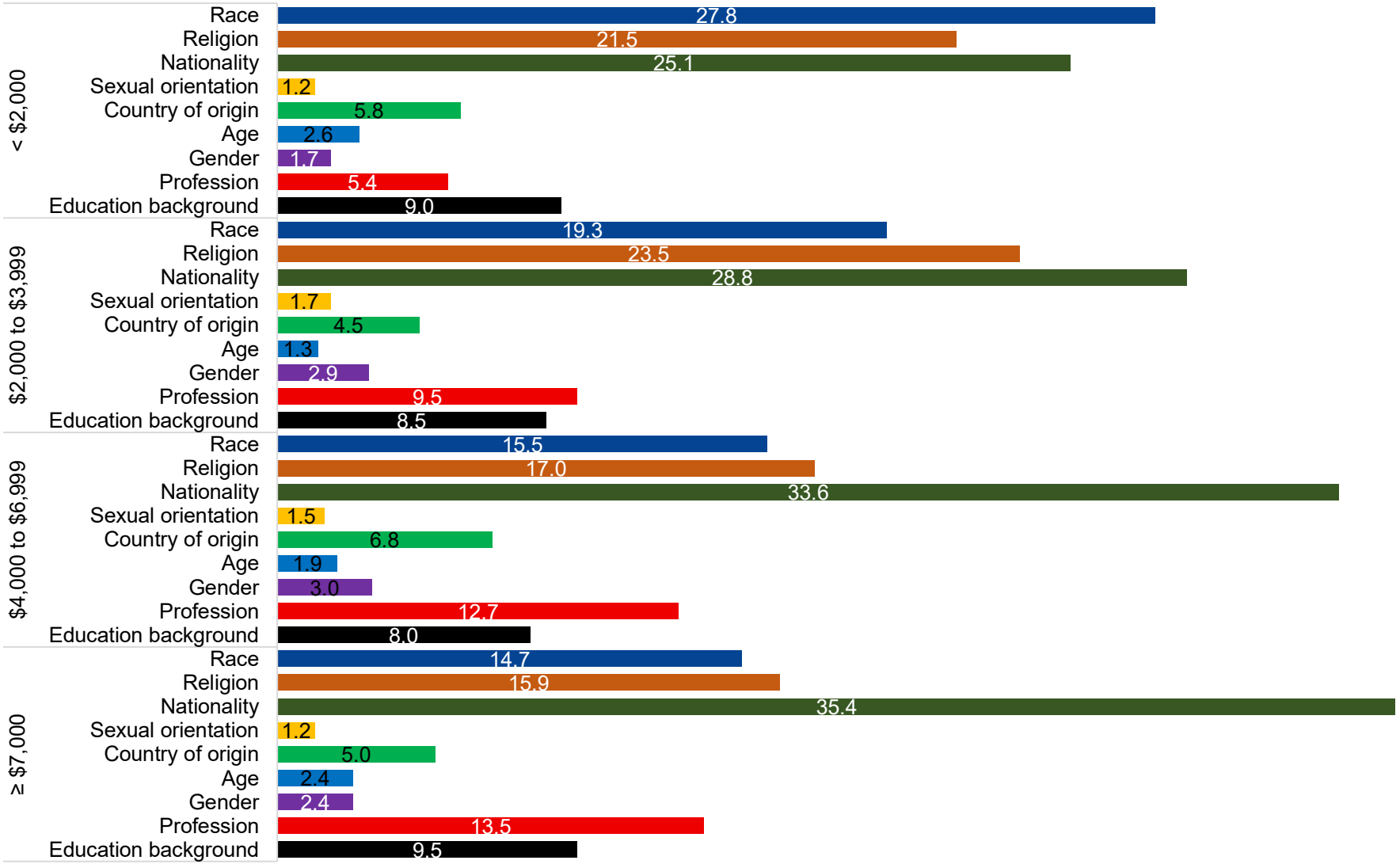


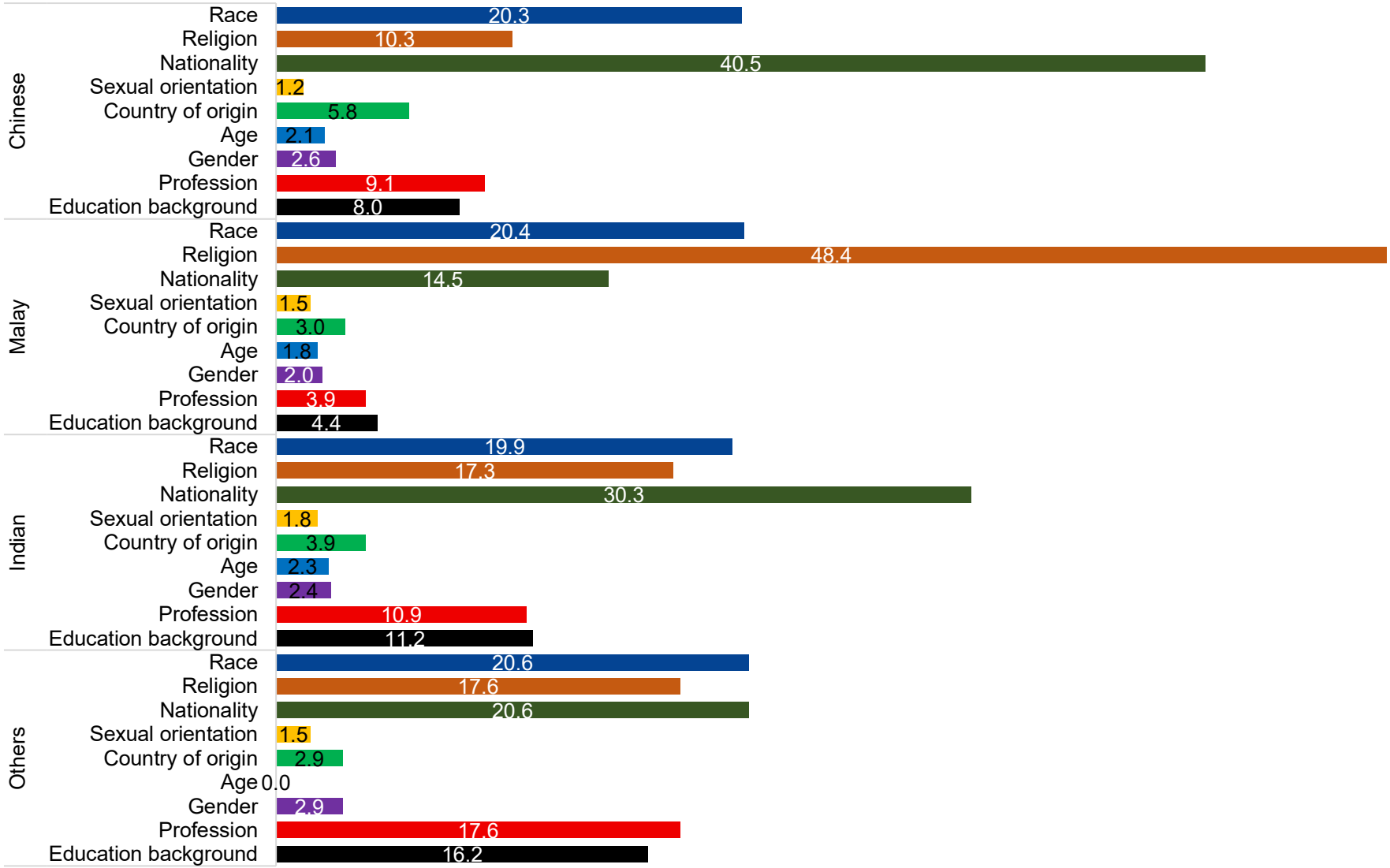
Figure 2.4.4c: Most important part of respondents' identity, 2024 responses by income



2.4.5 Most popular choice of most important part of one's identity differed across racial groups

When it comes to race, Malays are far more likely to indicate their religion as the most important part of their identity, with 48.4 per cent of Malays indicating as such compared to 10.3 per cent for the Chinese, 17.3 per cent for Indians, and 17.6 per cent for Others. Nationality was by far the most popular choice for the Chinese, with 40.5 per cent selecting this aspect as the most important of their identity. While it was also the most popular choice for Indian respondents, the difference between this item (30.3 per cent) and the next popular choice (race, with 19.9 per cent), was not as marked (see Figure 2.4.5).

Figure 2.4.5: Most important part of respondents' identity, 2024 responses by race



3 RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY

Having established that religion is an important identity component, at least to some groups of respondents, this chapter takes a further look at how religion might shape the way people live their lives or view the world. It examines how much respondents' faiths influence aspects of their everyday lives, the degree to which they want to learn about their religions, their thoughts about how religion should adapt to the modern world, as well as the frequency of religious practice.

For respondents with a declared religious affiliation, we find that religion is an important feature that provides a grounding for respondents in their daily lives, when making major decisions, or when they think about other aspects of their lives. They are also more likely to want to learn more about their religions and faith traditions. In general, those from monotheistic faiths were more likely to acknowledge the salience of religion in the different areas of their lives. They were more likely to want to learn more about their faith, and to want to preserve their religious traditions.

Meanwhile, the frequency of religious practices — attending services, praying outside of religious settings, reading religious literature, consuming religious media, and meditating on religious themes and ideas — was quite varied depending on the type of practice and the religion of the respondent. Prayer was the most frequent religious practice by respondents. In general, respondents from monotheistic faiths engaged in any of these practices more regularly, likely because of the way these practices are integrated into religious life for these faiths.

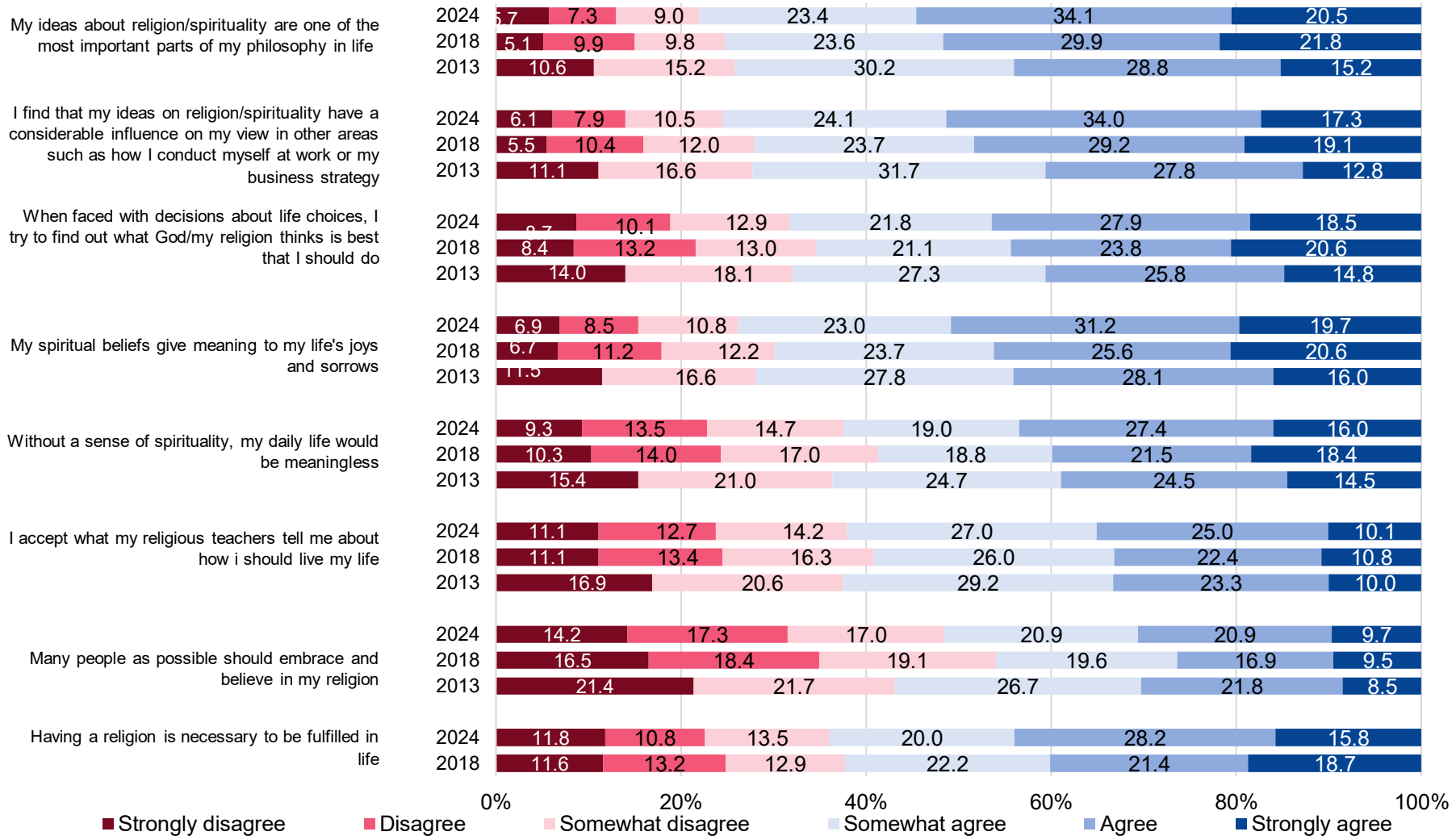
3.1 Influence of Religion on Everyday Life

3.1.1 Majority feel that their sense of spirituality influences different aspects of their lives; proportions increase from 2018

In 2024, over three-quarters of respondents agreed to varying extents that their ideas about religion or spirituality are one of the most important parts of their lives, and that these ideas have a considerable influence over their views in other areas. Just under three-quarters, or 73.9 per cent, agreed that their spiritual beliefs give meaning to their lives' joys and sorrows, while 68.3 per cent said that they try to find out what their God or religion thinks is the best course of action when faced with life choices. Just over six in 10 agreed that their daily life would be meaningless without a sense of spirituality; that they accept what their religious teachers tell them about how they should live their lives, and that having a religion is necessary to be fulfilled in life. Just over half, or 51.4 per cent, agreed that as many people as possible should embrace their religion.

When compared over time, the general rate of agreement regarding the influence of religion on respondents' lives increased in 2024 compared to 2018 for all the statements presented to respondents (see Figure 3.1.1).

Figure 3.1.1: How much do you agree with the following statements?, responses by wave*



**Items asked in 2013 wave had differing Likert-scale options proffered to respondents, and hence not directly comparable to 2018 and 2024 waves, but included for completeness*

To have a better understanding of the overall level of religiosity among respondents, the mean score of the questions presented above except the statement “Many people as possible should embrace and believe in my religion” was computed. The excluded item was not equally prioritised by the different religions practised by Singaporeans. Given the different scale used in the 2013 wave, scores were computed for just 2018 and 2024. There was little change in the mean scores in these two waves — it was 3.99 out of a maximum score of 6 in 2018, and increased slightly to 4.05 in 2024, and this change was not statistically significant (see Table 3.1.1a).

Table 3.1.1a: Religiosity scores, overall mean scores by wave

Survey wave	Mean score	Standard deviation
2024	4.05	1.33
2018–19	3.99	1.35

For better understanding, mean scores were also compared across respondents of different religious affiliations. The scores of those with no religion are also presented for completion and comparison, but they will not be included in subsequent discussions. Muslims had the highest mean scores in both waves of the survey, followed by Christians. Mean scores for religiosity in 2024 increased for Buddhists, Taoists, and Hindus when compared to 2018, though most of the increases were marginal. Meanwhile, mean scores for Catholics, Christians and Muslims dropped slightly in 2024 when compared to 2018. Only the increase in mean score for Buddhists over the two waves was statistically significant (see Table 3.1.1b).

Table 3.1.1b: Religiosity scores, overall mean scores by wave

Religion	Mean score	
	2024	**2018**
Buddhism* **	3.92	3.62
Taoism/TCB	3.68	3.60
Catholicism	4.53	4.64
Christianity	4.87	4.93
Islam	5.10	5.15
Hinduism	4.25	4.20
No religion	2.53	2.56

In general, older respondents tended to be more religious regardless of affiliation. The only exception was Muslim respondents, where those aged 51 to 65 years old reported the highest religiosity scores in both survey waves when compared across all the age groups. Trends over time for the various age groups tend to reflect the general pattern for the religion they subscribe to, with only the trends for Buddhists being statistically significant. In terms of general patterns, we note that Catholics older than 65 years old reported higher mean scores in 2024 while the rest of the age groups reported decreases, and Christians older than 50 years old had relatively consistent mean scores over the two waves even as the younger Christians reported slight drops in religiosity compared to 2018 (see Table 3.1.1c).

Table 3.1.1c: Religiosity scores, overall mean scores by wave

Religion	Age	Mean score	
		2024	2018
Buddhism	**21–35***	3.60	3.42
	36–50**	3.90	3.65
	51–65**	4.03	3.75
	> 65***	4.26	3.80
Taoism/TCB	**21–35**	3.22	3.39
	36–50	3.60	3.57
	51–65	3.75	3.75
	> 65	4.13	3.80
Catholicism	**21–35**	3.76	4.03
	36–50	4.51	4.76
	51–65	4.82	4.92
	> 65	4.97	4.63
Christianity	**21–35**	4.56	4.70
	36–50	4.87	4.90
	51–65	5.03	5.09
	> 65	5.01	5.09
Islam	**21–35**	4.92	5.00
	36–50	5.12	5.18
	51–65	5.36	5.31
	> 65	5.09	5.27
Hinduism	**21–35**	4.01	3.98
	36–50	4.14	4.06
	51–65	4.43	4.53
	> 65	4.63	4.46
No religion	**21–35**	2.23	2.36
	36–50*	2.87	2.59
	51–65	2.47	2.71
	> 65	2.69	2.83

Respondents with lower education qualifications tended to be more religious. This trend was consistent across both waves for most religions. The only exceptions were Christian and Catholic respondents in 2018, who reported relatively similar scores across educational qualifications. The changes over time for Buddhists with secondary and below qualifications as well as university education, and Muslims with university education were statistically significant (see Table 3.1.1d below).

Table 3.1.1d: Religiosity scores, overall mean scores by wave

Religion	Education	Mean score	
		2024	2018
Buddhism	Secondary and below***	4.18	3.73
	ITE / Poly / Prof. Qual.	3.74	3.60
	Degree and above***	3.79	3.55
Taoism/TCB	Secondary and below	4.07	3.82
	ITE / Poly / Prof. Qual.	3.52	3.71
	Degree and above	3.37	3.17
Catholicism	Secondary and below	4.79	4.63
	ITE / Poly / Prof. Qual.	4.44	4.60
	Degree and above	4.42	4.66
Christianity	Secondary and below	4.93	4.98
	ITE / Poly / Prof. Qual.	4.94	4.97
	Degree and above	4.79	4.89
Islam	Secondary and below	5.21	5.20
	ITE / Poly / Prof. Qual.	5.07	5.12
	Degree and above**	4.82	5.15
Hinduism	Secondary and below	4.57	4.54
	ITE / Poly / Prof. Qual.	4.27	4.13
	Degree and above	4.25	3.99
No religion	Secondary and below	2.68	2.81
	ITE / Poly / Prof. Qual.	2.62	2.63
	Degree and above	2.38	2.30

In 2018, religiosity scores for Buddhists and Muslims were relatively similar across respondents of different housing types, while U-shaped trends were observed for the other religious groups. However, patterns shifted in the 2024 wave. Buddhist, Taoist, and Hindu respondents staying in smaller housing types tended to be more religious. Muslim respondents across different housing types reported relatively similar scores, with those staying in 4-room flats reporting a slightly lower score. Catholic respondents who stay in private properties were the most religious, while Christian respondents staying in 5-room flats or private properties reported similarly high religiosity scores. In terms of changes over time, only the trends for Buddhists living in 4-room or smaller

flats as well as Christians living in 1- to 3-room flats were statistically significant (see Table 3.1.1e below).

Table 3.1.1e: Religiosity scores, overall mean scores by wave

Religion	Housing	Mean score	
		2024	2018
Buddhism	HDB 1-3 room***	4.01	3.59
	HDB 4-room***	3.93	3.66
	HDB 5+-room	3.84	3.61
	Private property	3.86	3.62
Taoism/TCB	HDB 1-3 room	3.99	3.74
	HDB 4-room	3.59	3.52
	HDB 5+-room	3.59	3.65
	Private property	3.51	3.51
Catholicism	HDB 1-3 room	4.68	4.61
	HDB 4-room	4.39	4.57
	HDB 5+-room	4.34	4.31
	Private property	4.86	4.97
Christianity	HDB 1-3 room*	4.78	5.06
	HDB 4-room	4.80	4.81
	HDB 5+-room	4.99	4.88
	Private property	4.94	5.06
Islam	HDB 1-3 room	5.12	5.10
	HDB 4-room	5.05	5.16
	HDB 5+-room	5.12	5.20
	Private property	5.18	5.26
Hinduism	HDB 1-3 room	4.45	4.31
	HDB 4-room	4.26	4.20
	HDB 5+-room	4.00	4.10
	Private property	4.18	4.15
No religion	HDB 1-3 room	2.63	2.82
	HDB 4-room	2.59	2.57
	HDB 5+-room	2.39	2.49
	Private property	2.45	2.28

There were no clear income trends for each religious group. Respondents with lower income reported higher religiosity scores among the Buddhists and Hindus in 2024, as well as Taoists Muslims and Hindus in 2018. Meanwhile, Taoists and Christians

earning between $2,000 and $4,000 and Catholics earning $7,000 or higher reported were the most religious within their respective faiths in 2024. Meanwhile, Muslims in 2024 reported similar scores regardless of income levels. In terms of trends over time, the changes for Buddhists earning below $4,000 as well as Catholics earning between $4,000 and $7,000 were statistically significant (see Table 3.1.1f below).

Table 3.1.1f: Religiosity scores, overall mean scores by wave

Religion	Income	Mean score	
		2024	2018
Buddhism	< $2,000*	3.91	3.63
	$2,000 to $3,999***	3.96	3.45
	$4,000 to $6,999	3.81	3.73
	≥ $7,000	3.74	3.48
Taoism/TCB	< $2,000	3.74	3.91
	$2,000 to $3,999	3.94	3.72
	$4,000 to $6,999	3.38	3.44
	≥ $7,000	3.16	3.33
Catholicism	< $2,000	4.45	4.66
	$2,000 to $3,999	4.13	4.40
	$4,000 to $6,999*	4.34	4.83
	≥ $7,000	4.61	4.63
Christianity	< $2,000	4.78	4.68
	$2,000 to $3,999	5.03	4.94
	$4,000 to $6,999	4.87	4.94
	≥ $7,000	4.66	4.94
Islam	< $2,000	5.12	5.11
	$2,000 to $3,999	5.09	5.15
	$4,000 to $6,999	5.12	5.13
	≥ $7,000	5.01	4.88
Hinduism	< $2,000	4.43	4.42
	$2,000 to $3,999	4.37	4.32
	$4,000 to $6,999	4.10	4.08
	≥ $7,000	3.75	3.85
No religion	< $2,000	2.49	2.86
	$2,000 to $3,999	2.70	2.47
	$4,000 to $6,999	2.42	2.47
	≥ $7,000	2.46	2.18

3.1.2 Respondents with monotheistic faiths more likely to lead lives strongly influenced by their faiths

Seven in 10 respondents with a declared religion agreed that their ideas about religion or spirituality are one of the most important parts of their philosophy in life, and that these ideas have a considerable influence on their views in other areas like at work. In particular, respondents from monotheistic faiths were more likely to agree to these statements. Over nine in 10 Muslims (97.3 per cent) and Christians (93.9 per cent), as well as 85.3 per cent of Catholics felt that their ideas about religion are one of the most important parts of their philosophy in life.

The proportions of Buddhist and Taoist respondents agreeing with this statement saw an increase in 2024 compared to 2018, while there was a decrease for Catholics and Christians, and proportions remained largely constant for Muslims and Hindus (see Figure 3.1.2a). Similarly, 93.9 per cent of Muslims, 93.1 per cent of Christians, and 83.3 per cent of Catholics agreed that their ideas on religion considerably influence other aspects of their lives. Buddhists, Taoists, and Hindus were more likely to agree in 2024 when compared to 2018, while agreement rates remained relatively constant for Catholics, Christians, and Muslims (see Figure 3.1.2b).

Figure 3.1.2a: My ideas about religion/spirituality are one of the most important parts of my philosophy in life, 2024 responses by religion

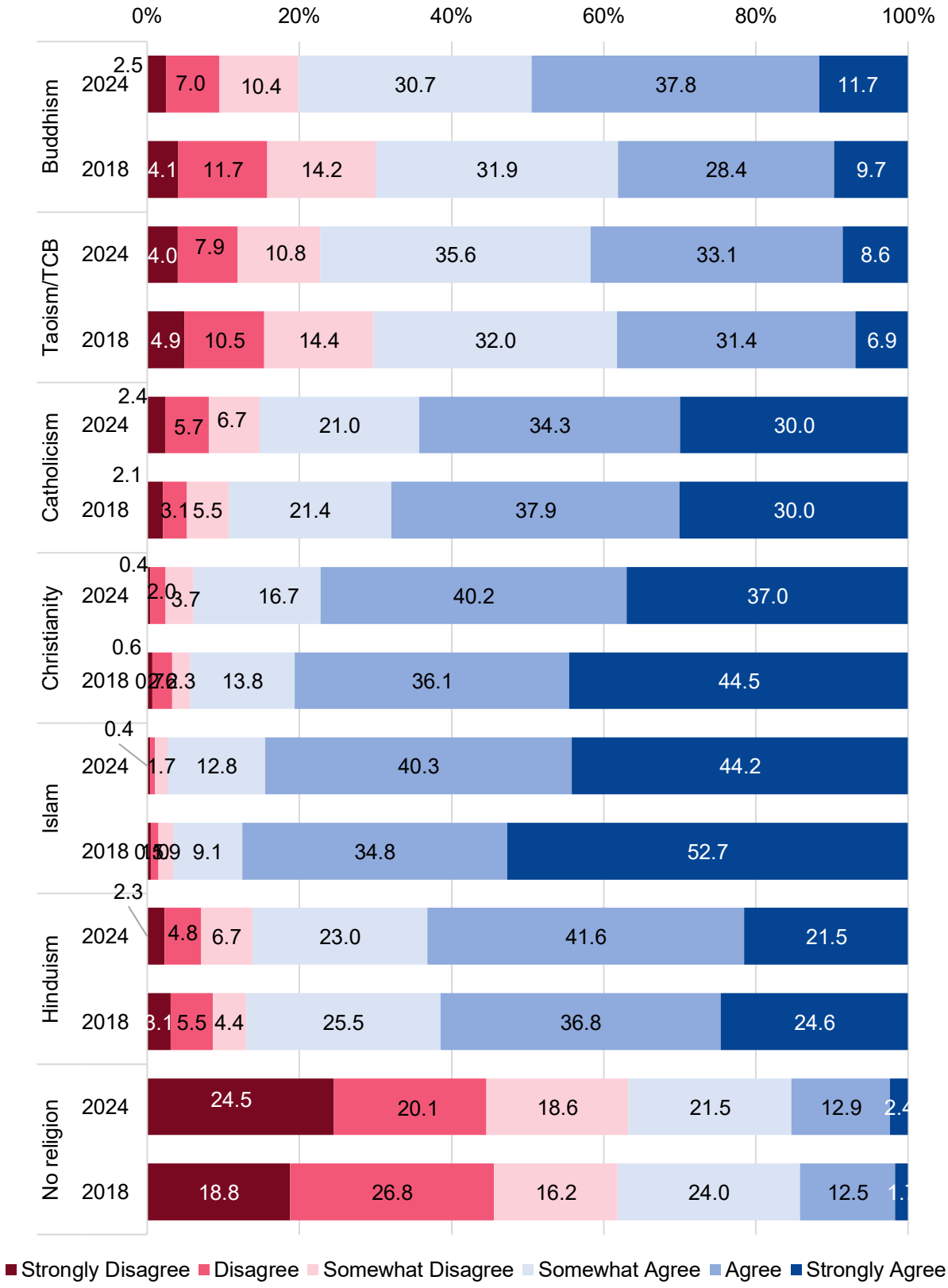
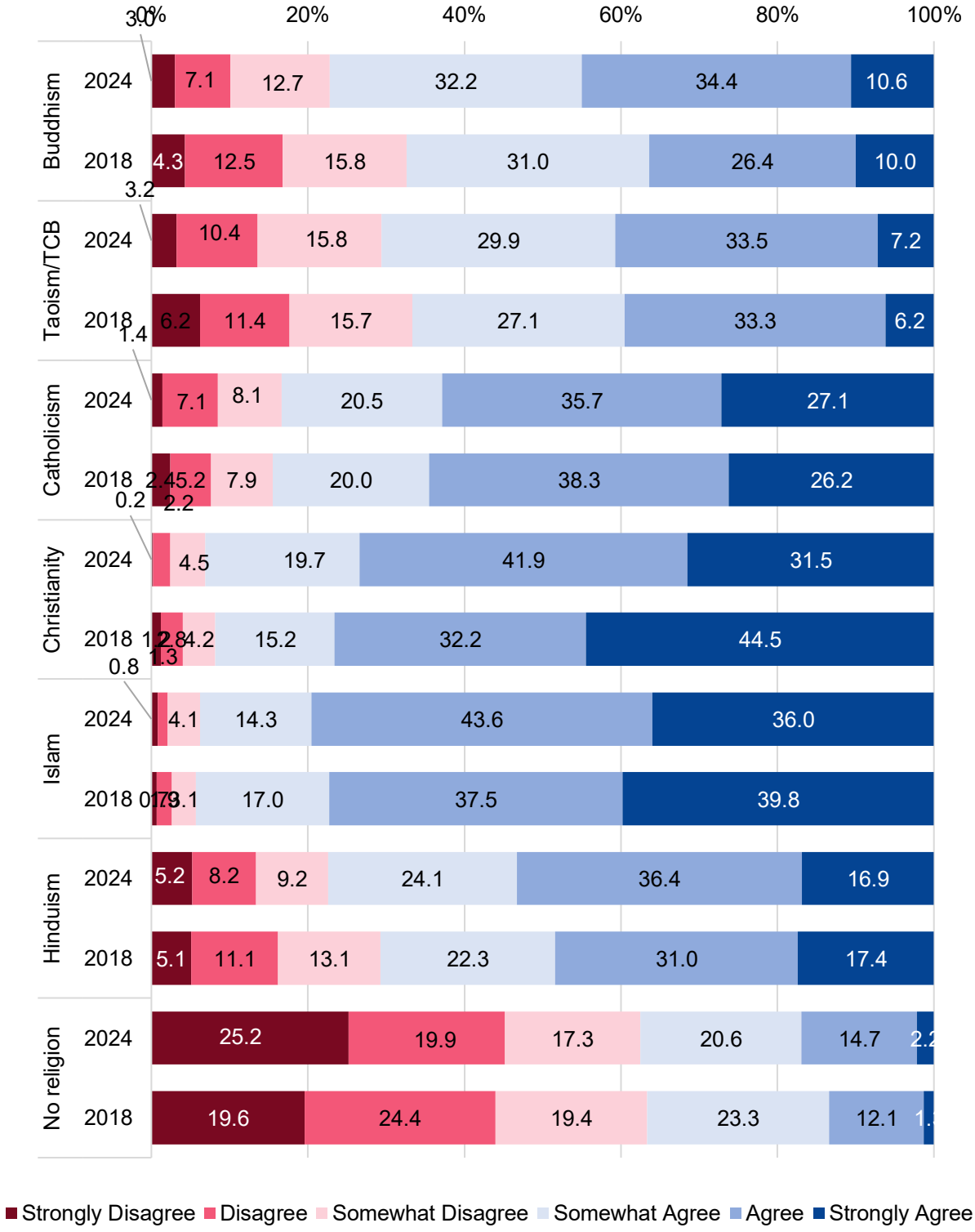


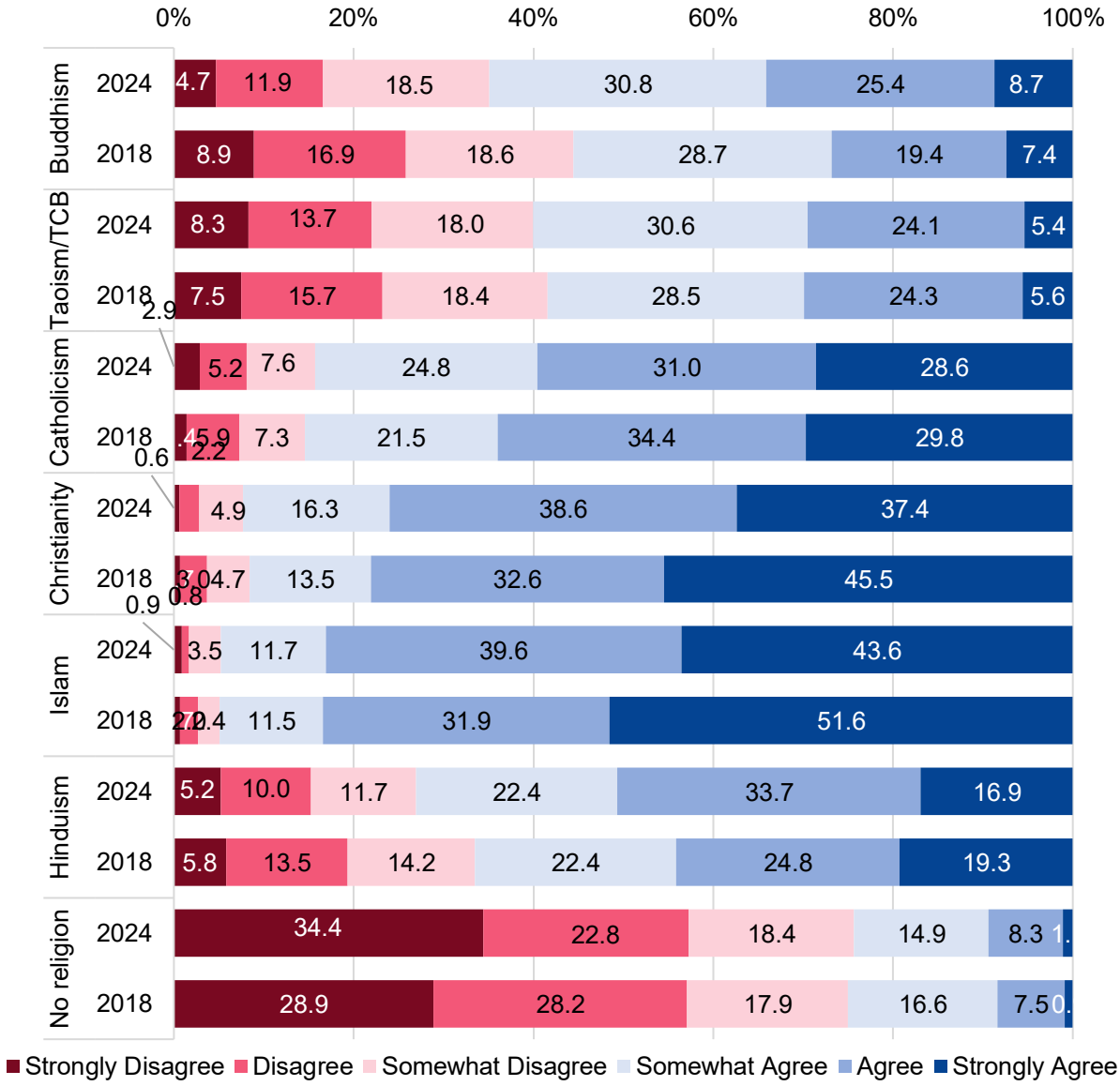
Figure 3.1.2b: I find that my ideas on religion/spirituality have a considerable influence on my view in other areas such as how I conduct myself at work or my business strategy, 2024 responses by religion



3.1.3 Respondents who belong to monotheistic faiths or are older are more likely to turn to faith for advice on life choices

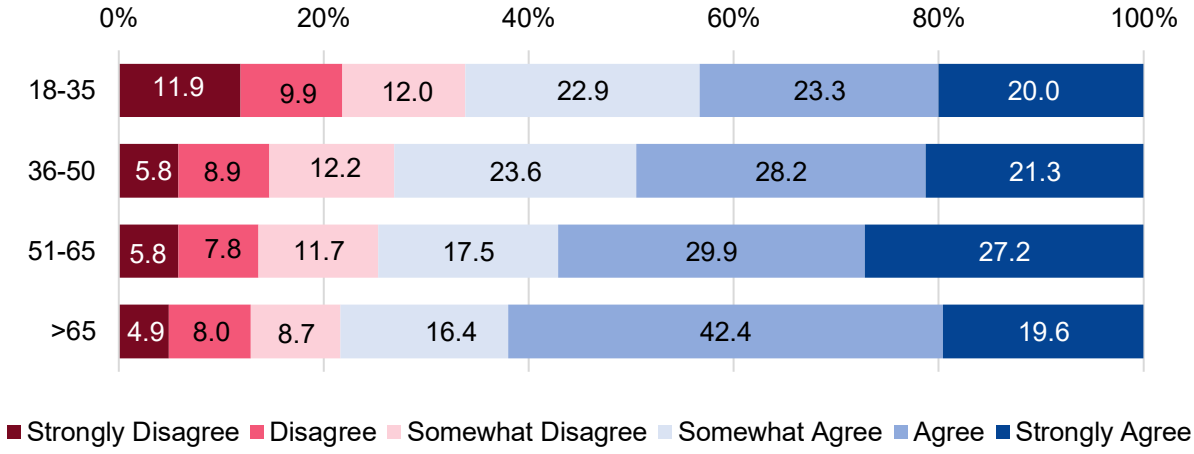
When divided by religious affiliations, respondents from monotheistic faiths were most likely to say that they turn to religion when faced with life choices. Compared to 73 per cent of Hindus, 64.9 per cent of Buddhists, and 60.1 per cent of Taoists, over nine in 10 Muslims and Christians, as well as 84.4 per cent of Catholics said that they would try to find out what God or their religion thinks is best they should do when faced with decisions about life choices. When tracked over the two survey waves with comparable data, larger proportions of Buddhist, Taoist, and Hindu respondents agreed to the statement in 2024, a slight drop was observed for Catholic respondents, while the sentiments of Christian and Muslim respondents remained relatively constant (see Figure 3.1.3a).

Figure 3.1.3a: When faced with decisions about life choices, I try to find out what God/my religion thinks is best that I should do, 2024 responses by religion



Meanwhile, older respondents were more likely to turn to religion for guidance on life choices, with 78.4 per cent of those older than 65 years old saying so, compared to 66.2 per cent of the youngest cohort (see Figure 3.1.3b).

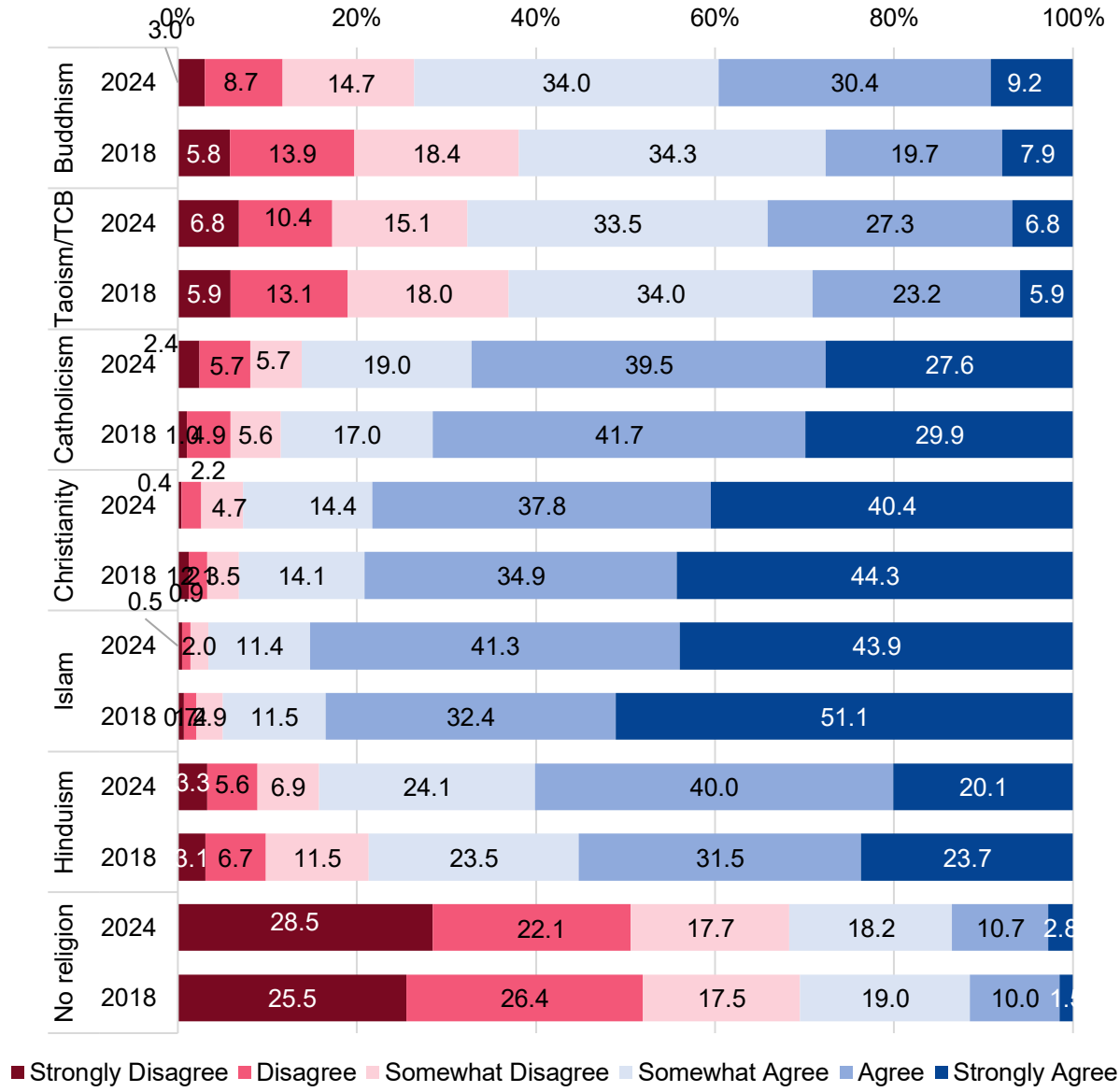
Figure 3.1.3b: When faced with decisions about life choices, I try to find out what God/my religion thinks is best that I should do, 2024 responses by age



3.1.4 At least two-thirds of respondents with religious affiliation and eight in 10 respondents 36 years and older find that their spiritual beliefs give meaning to their joys and sorrows

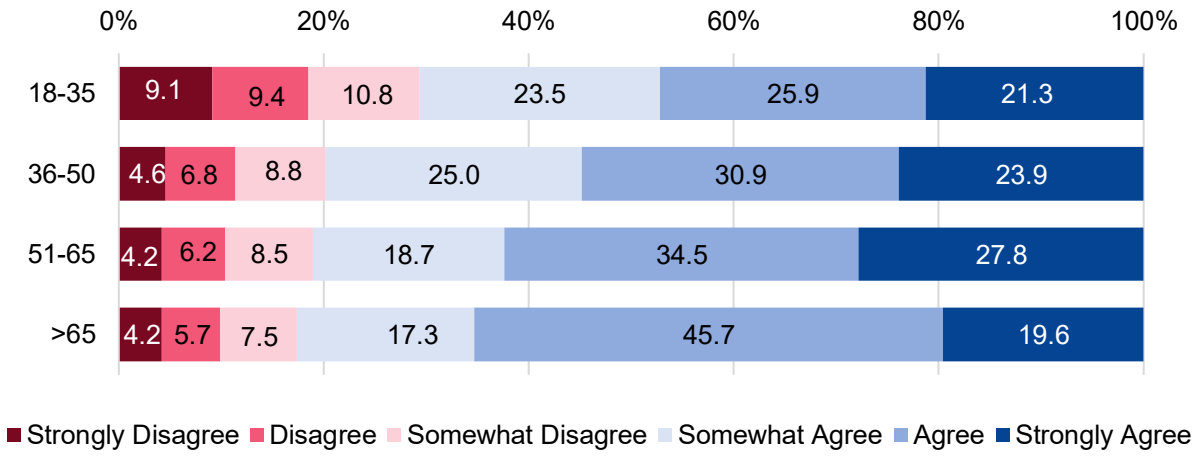
When it comes to life's joys and sorrows, respondents who were Muslim were most likely to say their spiritual beliefs helped to provide meaning for these experiences, followed closely by Christian respondents. Over nine in 10 respondents belonging to these two faiths agreed to varying extents that their spiritual beliefs give meaning to their life's joys and sorrows. In comparison, 86.1 per cent of Catholics, 84.2 per cent of Hindus, 73.6 per cent of Buddhists, and 67.6 per cent of Buddhists said the same. Agreement rates increased for Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, and Hindus when comparing 2024 to 2018, and decreased for Christians and Catholics (see Figure 3.1.4a).

Figure 3.1.4a: My spiritual beliefs give meaning to my life's joys and sorrows, 2024 responses by religion



Compared across age groups, the youngest cohort aged 18 to 35 were less likely compared to the other respondents to say that their spiritual beliefs gave meaning to their life's joys and sorrows. While around or over eight in 10 respondents aged 36 and older expressed this sentiment, 70.7 per cent of those aged 18 to 35 said the same (see Figure 3.1.4b).

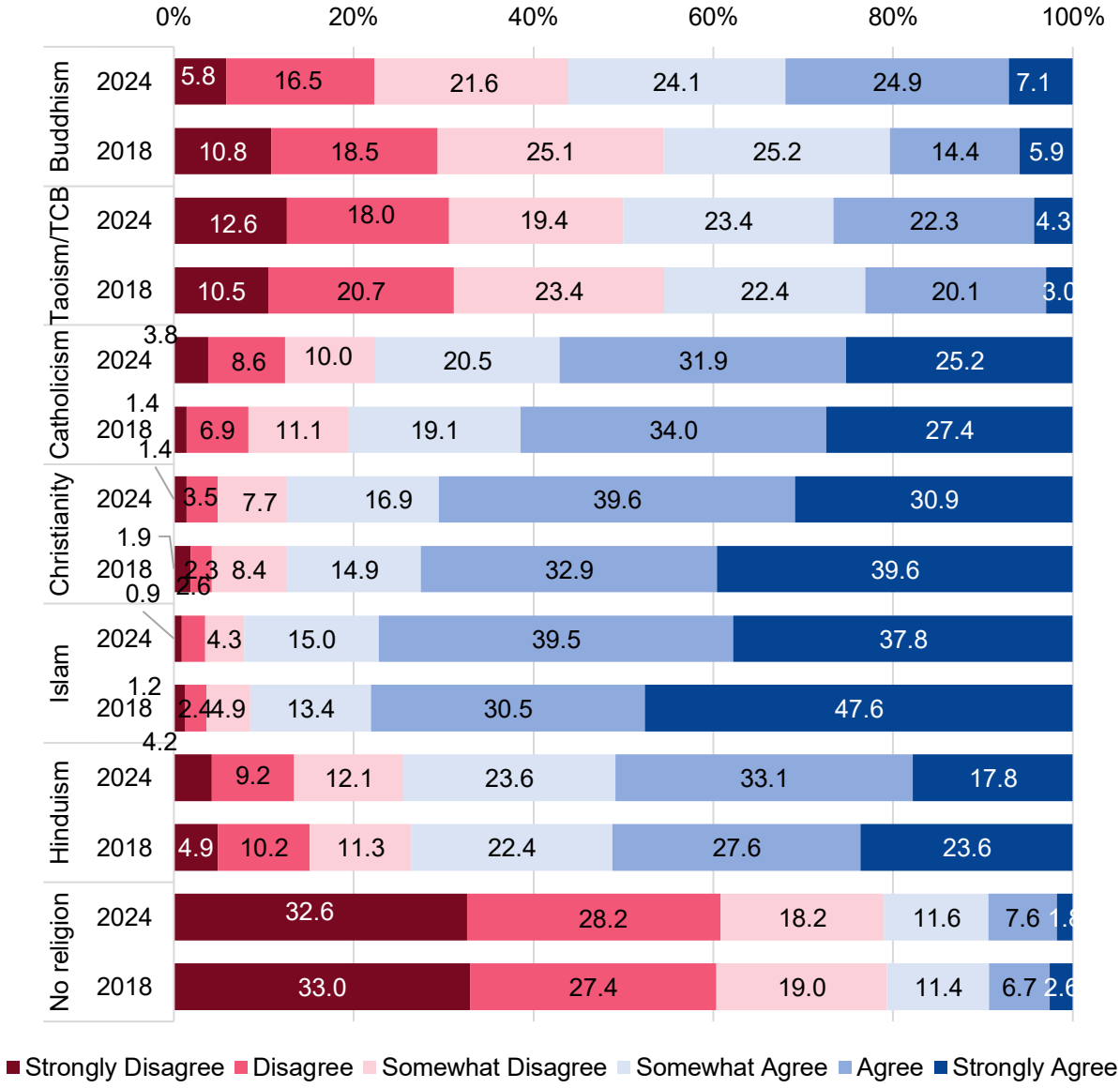
Figure 3.1.4b: My spiritual beliefs give meaning to my life's joys and sorrows, 2024 responses by age



3.1.5 Spirituality is more essential to daily life for respondents who are Muslim or Christian, or older

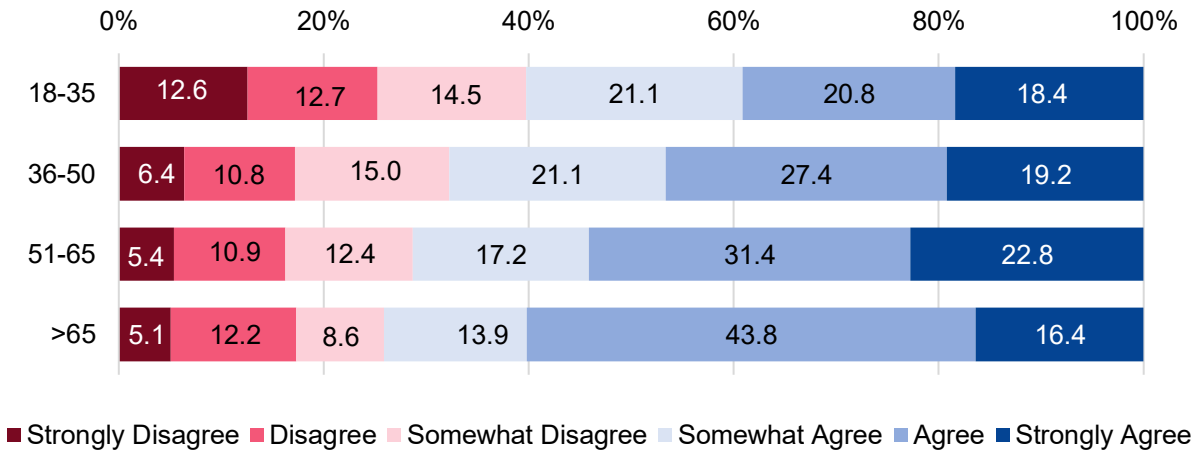
Respondents with different religious affiliations were less in agreement when it came to whether spirituality was essential to their daily lives. While 92.3 per cent of Muslims and 87.4 per cent of Christians felt that their daily lives would be meaningless without a sense of spirituality, the proportions dropped to around three-quarters for Catholics and Hindus, 56.1 per cent for Buddhists, and 50 per cent for Taoists. While the overall proportion of Muslims, Hindus, and Christians who saw spirituality as important did not change much over time, there was a drop in the proportion of these respondents who strongly agreed to the statement. Meanwhile, the proportion of Catholics who agreed with the statement to at least some extent dropped from 80.5 per cent in 2018 to 77.6 per cent in 2024. In comparison, overall proportions of Buddhists and Taoists who agreed to the statement increased in 2024 compared with 2018, though these proportions were still lower compared to other respondents with religious affiliations (see Figure 3.1.5a).

Figure 3.1.5a: Without a sense of spirituality, my daily life would be meaningless, 2024 and 2018 responses by religion



Proportions of respondents feeling that their daily lives would be meaningless without a sense of spirituality increased across age groups. While just over six in 10 respondents aged 18 to 35 felt this way, 74.1 per cent of those older than 65 said the same (see Figure 3.1.5b).

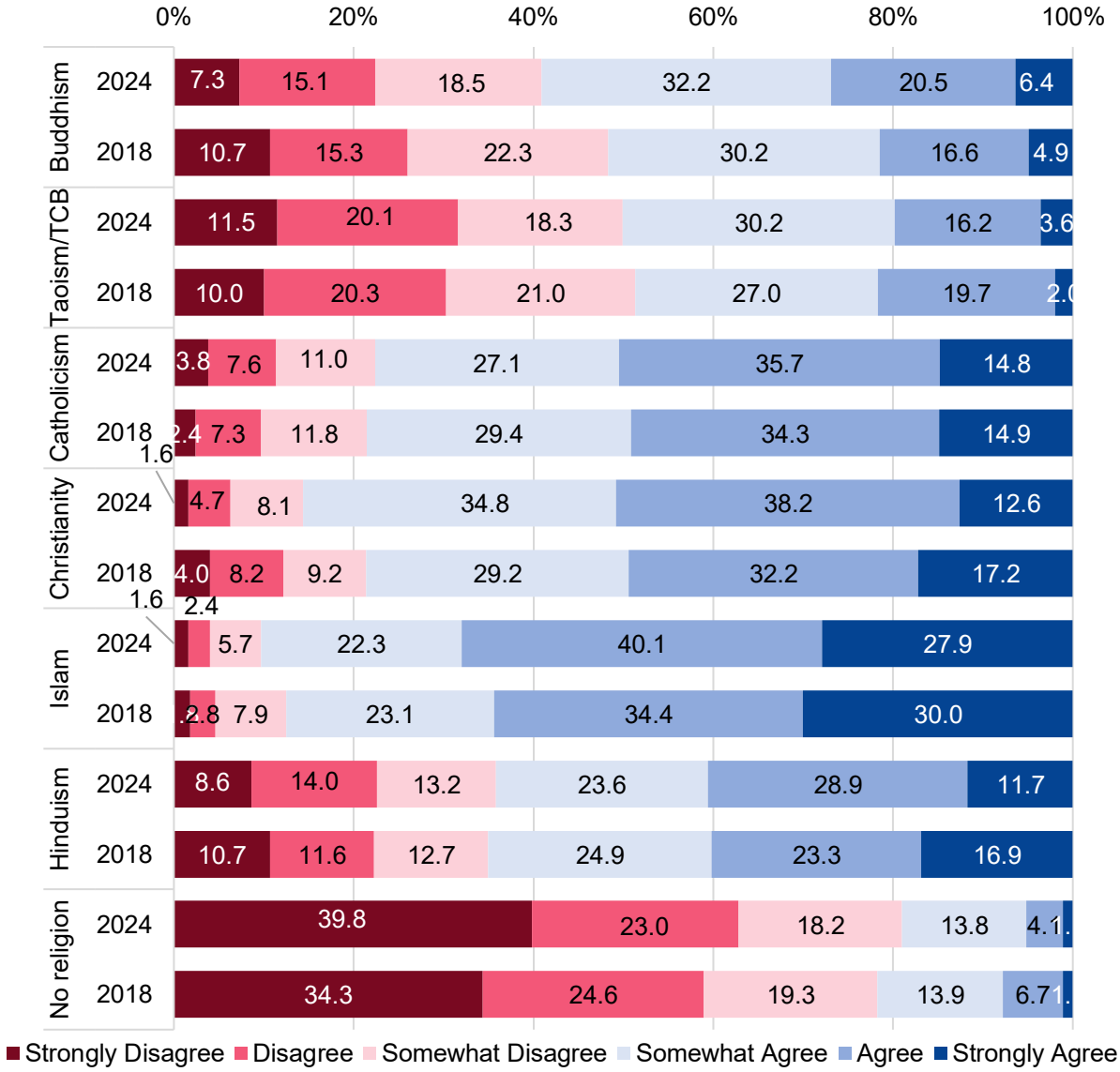
Figure 3.1.5b: Without a sense of spirituality, my daily life would be meaningless, 2024 responses by age



3.1.6 Respondents who are Taoists or younger less likely to say they accept religious teachers' teaching about how they should live their lives

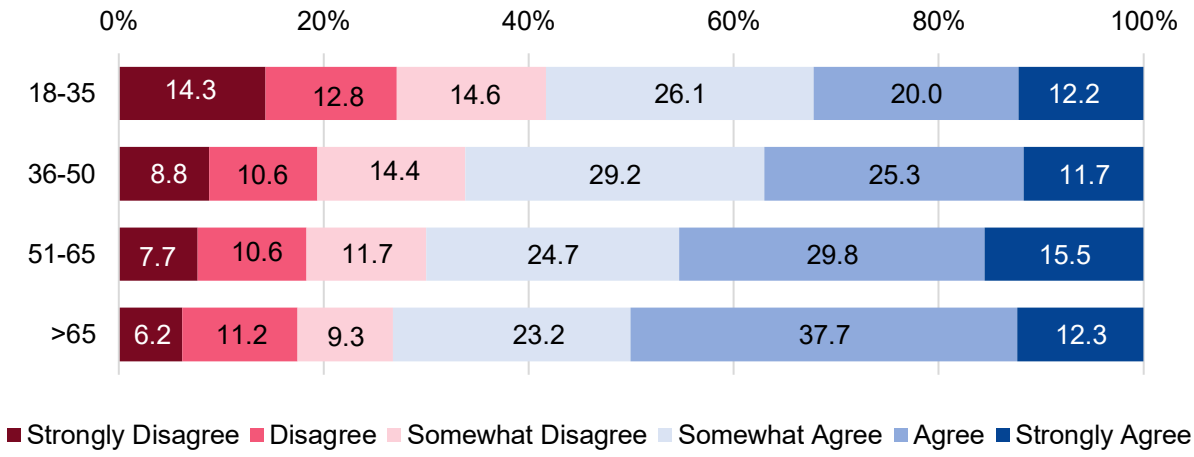
Respondents with different religious affiliations expressed varying opinions about following religious teachers' advice. Compared to 90.3 per cent of Muslims and 85.6 per cent of Christians, 77.6 per cent of Catholics, 64.2 per cent of Hindus, 59.1 per cent of Buddhists, and 50 per cent of Taoists said that they accept what their religious teachers tell them about how they should live their lives. Compared with the 2018 wave, larger proportions of respondents who were Buddhist, Taoist, Christian, and Muslim agreed with the statement, while Catholic and Hindu respondents were slightly less likely to agree with the statement (see Figure 3.1.6a).

Figure 3.1.6a: I accept what my religious teachers tell me about how i should live my life, 2024 responses by religion



Older respondents were more likely to take the advice of religious teachers. While 58.3 per cent of those aged 18 to 35 years old said they accept what their religious teachers tell them about how they should live their lives, 73.2 per cent of those older than 65 years old expressed similar sentiments (see Figure 3.1.6b).

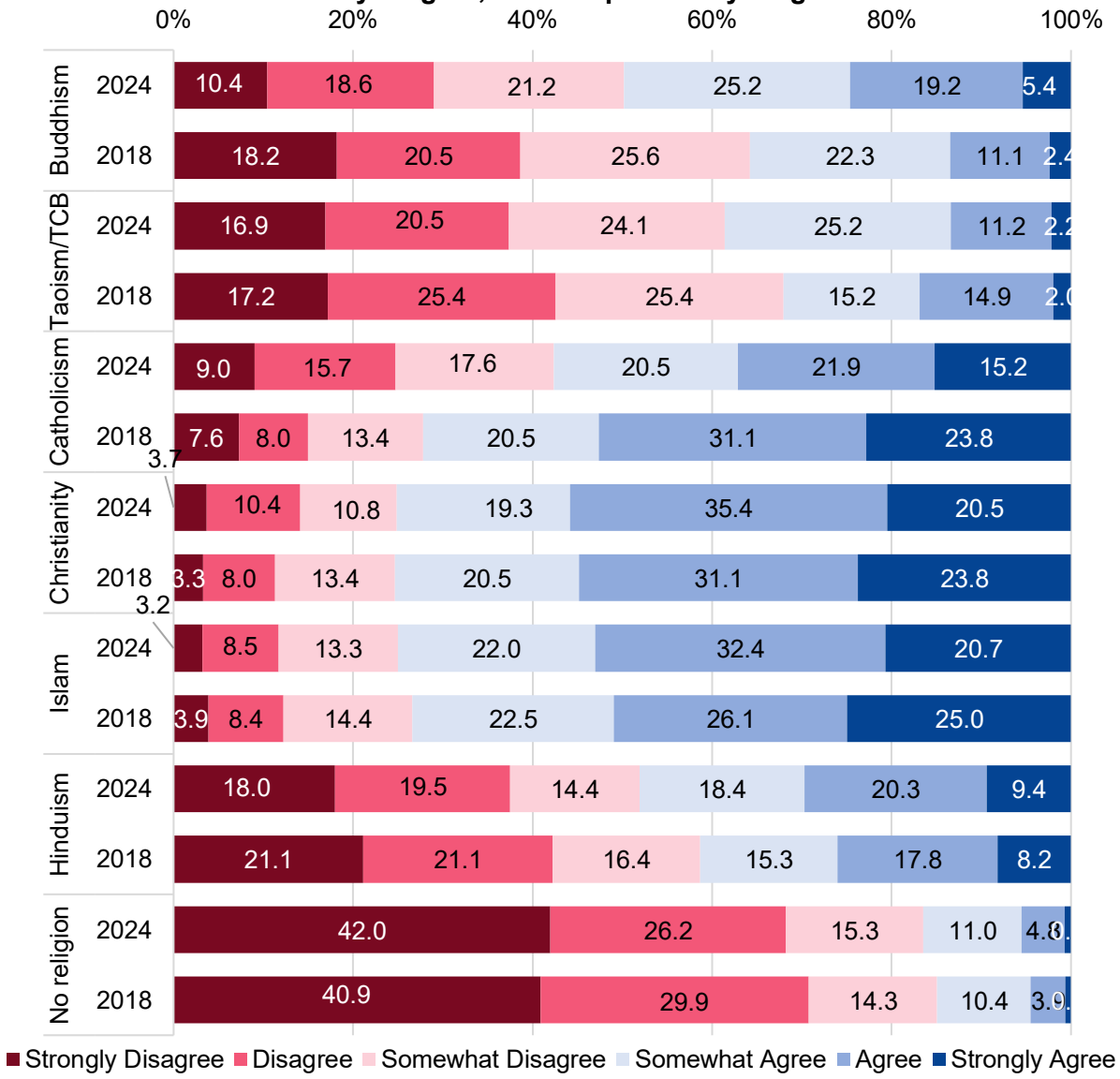
Figure 3.1.6b: I accept what my religious teachers tell me about how i should live my life, 2024 responses by age



3.1.7 Buddhists are less likely to say as many people as possible should embrace and believe in their religion

Around three-quarters of respondents who identify as Muslims or Christians felt that as many people as possible should embrace and believe in their religion. This is compared to 57.6 per cent of Catholics, 49.8 per cent of Buddhists, 48.1 per cent of Hindus, and 38.6 per cent of Taoists. Overall, these proportions were higher compared to those reported in 2018, though to different extents. The group that saw the largest growth in agreement rates were the Buddhists, with an increase of 14 percentage points across the two waves. In contrast, the agreement rate for Catholics went down from 75.4 per cent in 2018 to 57.6 per cent, while overall proportion of Christians who agreed to the statement to at least some extent remained relatively constant (see Figure 3.1.7a).

Figure 3.1.7a: Many people as possible should embrace and believe in my religion, 2024 responses by religion

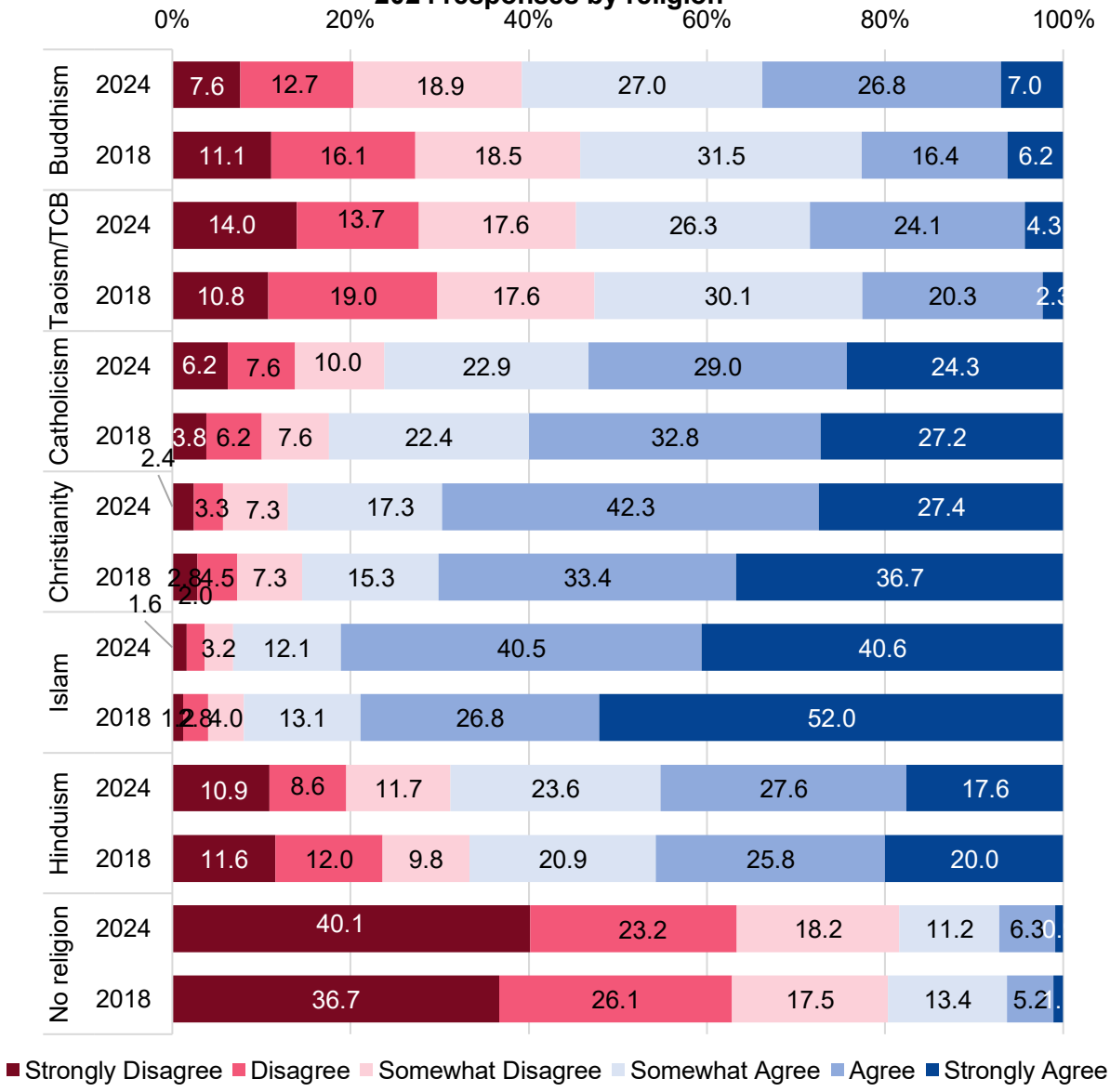


3.1.8 Respondents who are Muslims or older more likely to believe in the necessity of religion for life fulfilment

Comparing different groups of respondents with religious affiliations, sentiments regarding the necessity of having a religion were varied. While 93.2 per cent of Muslim respondents and 87 per cent of Christian respondents felt that having a religion is

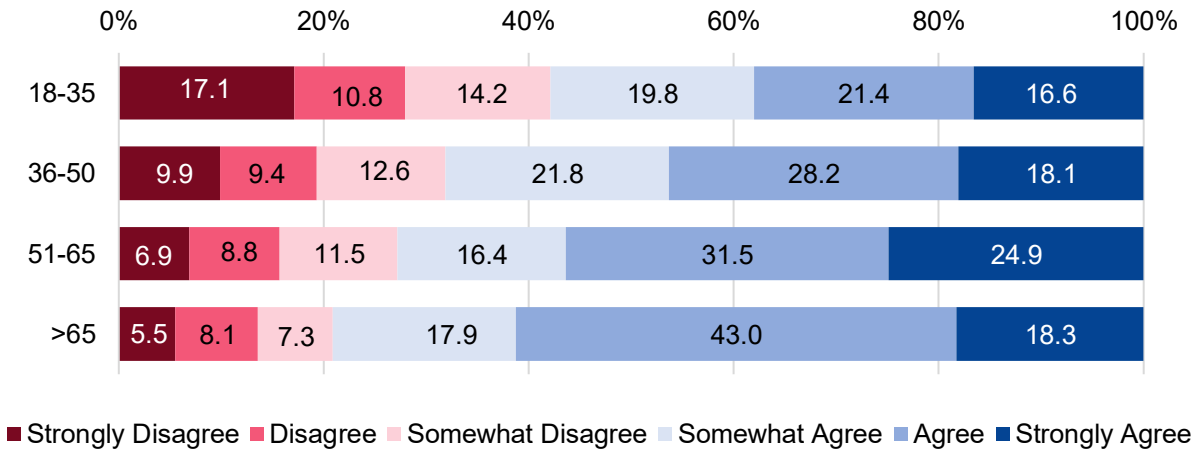
necessary to be fulfilled in life, the proportions dropped to 76.2 per cent for Catholics, 68.8 per cent for Hindus, 60.8 per cent for Buddhists, and 54.7 per cent for Taoists. Unsurprisingly, 81.5 per cent of those with no religious affiliations disagreed with the statement. Compared to 2018, agreement rates in 2024 increased for Buddhists, Taoists, Christians, Muslims, and Hindus, and decreased for Catholics (see Figure 3.1.8a).

Figure 3.1.8a: Having a religion is necessary to be fulfilled in life, 2024 responses by religion



Older respondents were more likely to feel that having a religion is necessary to be fulfilled in life. Compared to 57.8 per cent of respondents aged 18 to 35 years old, 79.2 per cent of those older than 65 years old expressed this sentiment (see Figure 3.1.8b).

Figure 3.1.8b: Having a religion is necessary to be fulfilled in life, 2024 responses by age

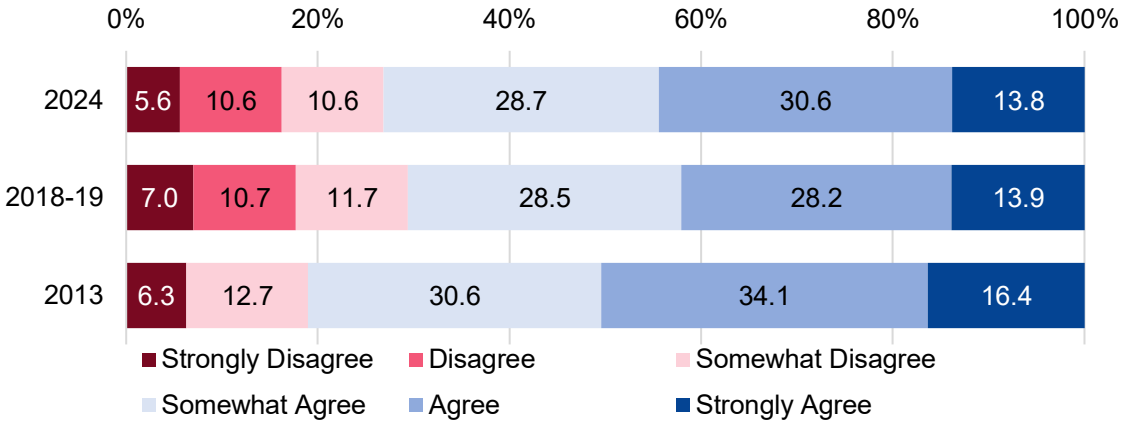


3.2 Knowledge and Belonging to Religion

3.2.1 Over seven in 10 respondents in 2024 tried to find out more about their own religion and feel a sense of belonging; proportions have increased since 2018

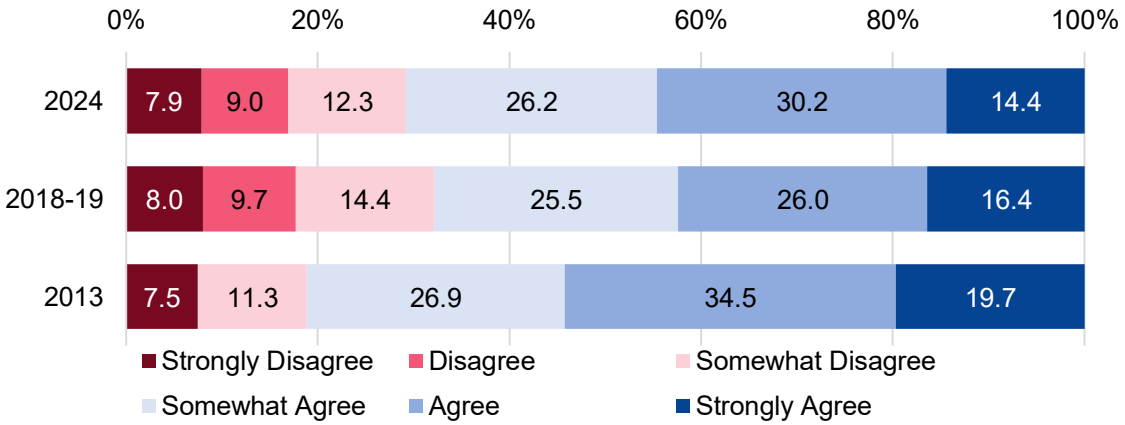
Survey respondents were also asked to indicate if they had tried to find out more about their own religion. The proportion of respondents who had done so has increased slightly from 70.6 per cent in 2018 to 73.1 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 3.2.1a).

Figure 3.2.1a: I have tried to find out more about my own religion, such as its history, traditions and customs, responses by wave



Survey respondents were also asked to indicate if they had a strong sense of belonging to their own religious group. The proportion of respondents who indicated that they at least somewhat agreed with the statement has increased slightly from 67.9 per cent in 2018 to 70.8 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 3.2.1b).

Figure 3.2.1b: I have a strong sense of belonging to my own religious group, responses by wave

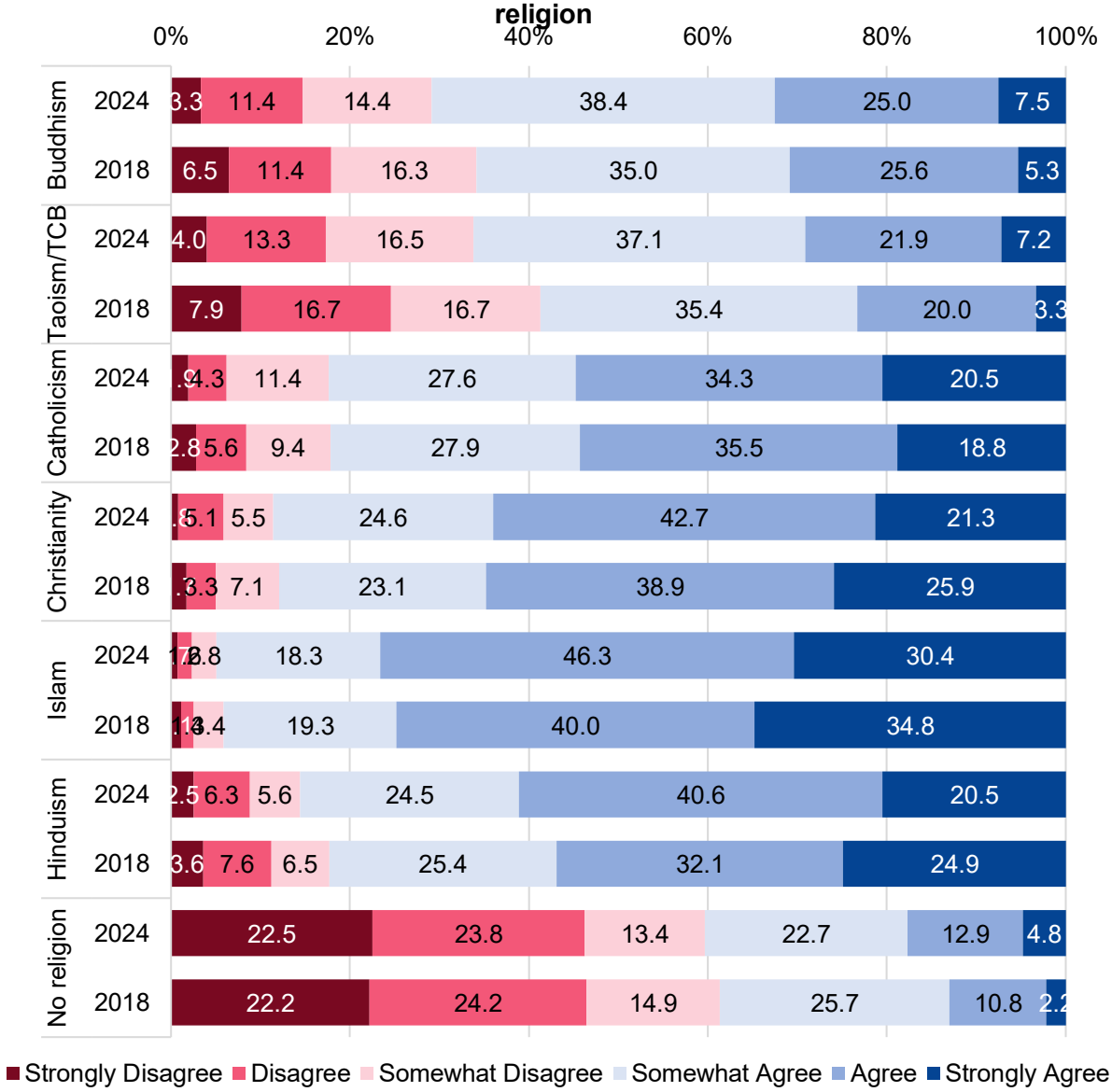


**Items asked in 2013 wave had differing Likert-scale options proffered to respondents, and are hence not directly comparable to the 2018 and 2024 waves but included for completeness.*

3.2.2 Muslims and Christians more likely to have tried to find out more about their own religion and feel a sense of belonging to their group

When it comes to religion, a much bigger proportion of Muslim respondents indicating that they strongly agree with the statement asking them if they have tried to find out more about their own religion (30.4 per cent) compared to 21.3 per cent for Christians, 20.5 per cent for both Catholics and Hindus, 7.5 per cent for Buddhists and 7.2 per cent for Taoists. While these proportions remain relatively steady over two waves for the monotheistic religions, there was an uptick of interest in 2024 amongst Buddhists, Taoists, and Hindus when comparing against the results for 2018 (see Figure 3.2.2a).

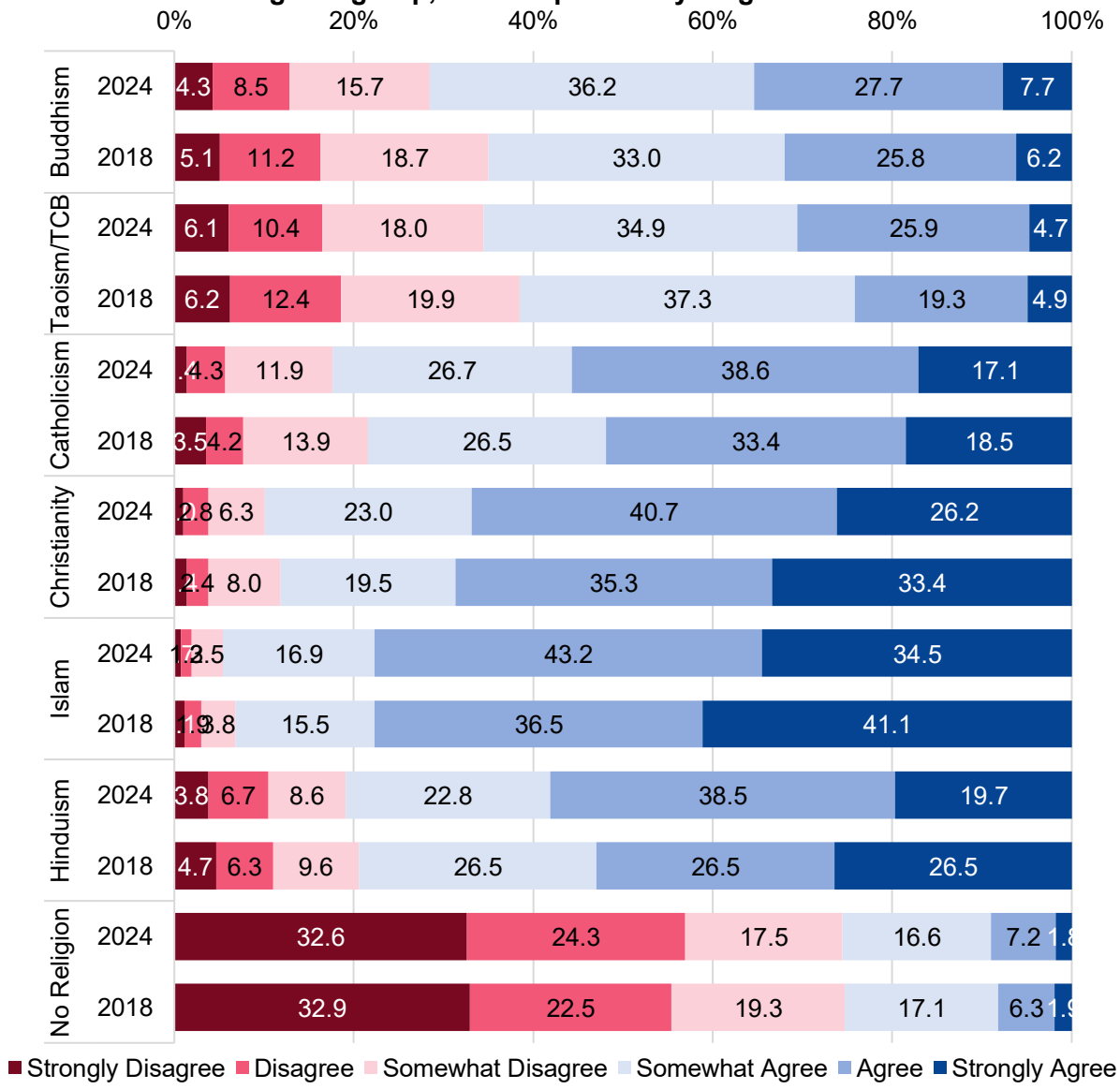
Figure 3.2.2a: I have tried to find out more about my own religion, such as its history, traditions and customs, 2024 responses by religion



When it comes to religion, a bigger proportion of Muslim and Christian respondents indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement asking them if they had a strong sense of belonging to their own religious group (34.5 per cent for Muslims and 26.2 per cent for Christians) compared to 19.7 per cent for Hindus, 17.1 per cent for Catholics, 7.7 per cent for Buddhists, and 4.7 per cent for Taoists. Across the board,

respondents with religious affiliations were more likely to agree with the statement in 2024 compared to 2018 (see Figure 3.2.2b).

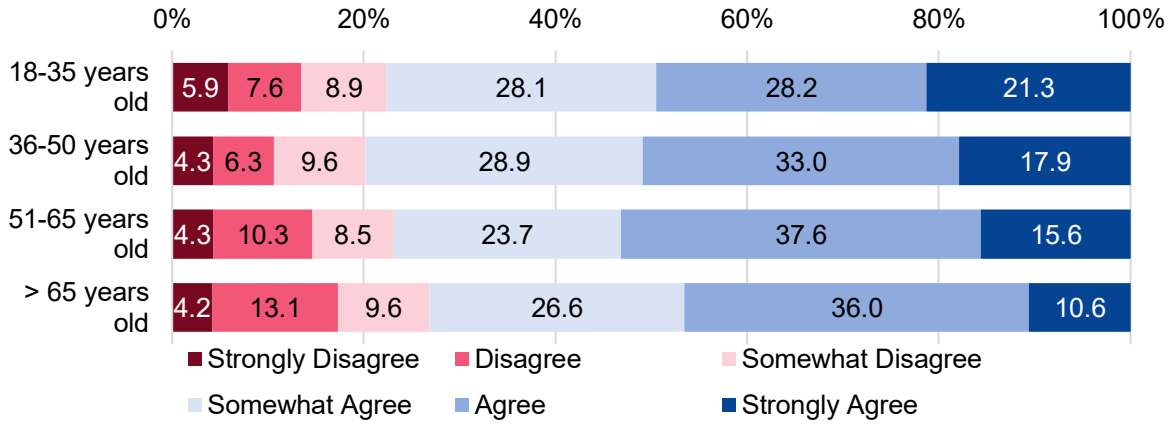
Figure 3.2.2b: I have a strong sense of belonging to my own religious group, 2024 responses by religion



3.2.3 Older respondents were generally less likely to have tried to find out more about their own religion, but indicate a stronger sense of belonging

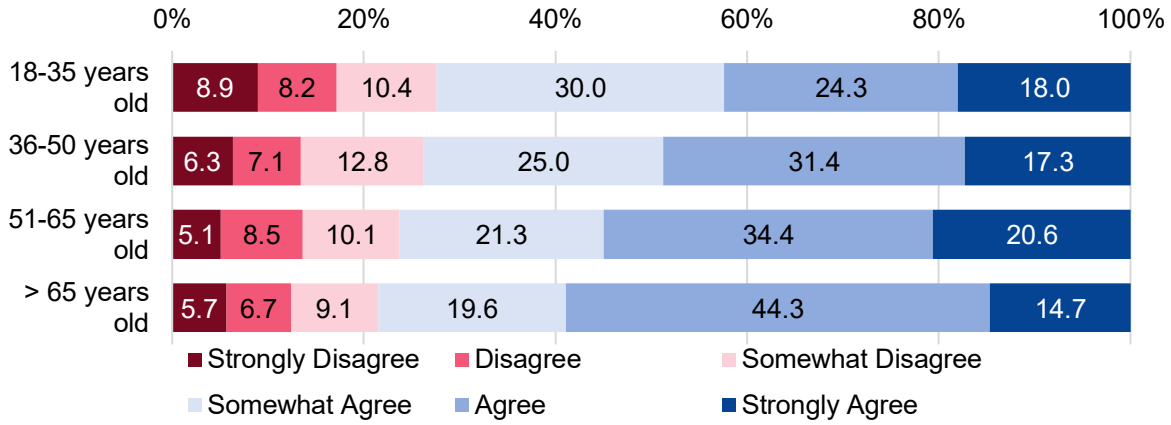
When perused by age, older respondents were generally less likely to try finding out more about their own religion, with only 10.6 per cent of those older than 65 years old strongly agreeing with the statement compared to 15.6 per cent for those aged between 51 and 65 years old, 17.9 per cent for those aged between 36 and 50 years old, and 21.3 per cent for those aged between 18 and 35 years old (see Figure 3.2.3a).

Figure 3.2.3a: I have tried to find out more about my own religion, such as its history, traditions and customs, 2024 responses by age



However, older respondents are generally more likely to have a strong sense of belonging to their religious group, with 59 per cent of those older than 65 years old agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that was put to them, compared to 55 per cent for those aged between 51 and 65 years old, 48.7 per cent for those aged between 36 and 50 years old, and 42.3 per cent for those aged between 18 and 35 years old (see Figure 3.2.3b).

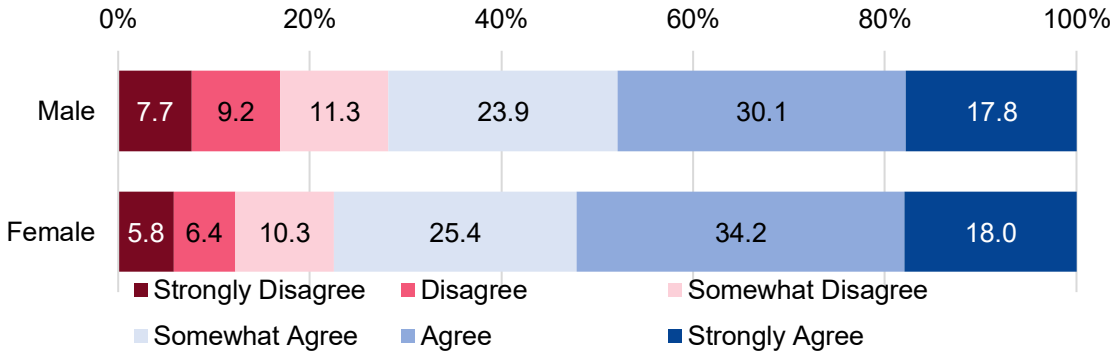
Figure 3.2.3b: I have a strong sense of belonging to my own religious group, 2024 responses by age



3.2.4 Females generally more likely to have a stronger sense of belonging to their religious group

Females were generally more likely to have a stronger sense of belonging to their religious group, with 77.6 per cent of females indicating that they at least somewhat agreed with the statement that was put to them, compared to 71.8 per cent for males (see Figure 3.2.4).

Figure 3.2.4: I have a strong sense of belonging to my own religious group, 2024 responses by gender

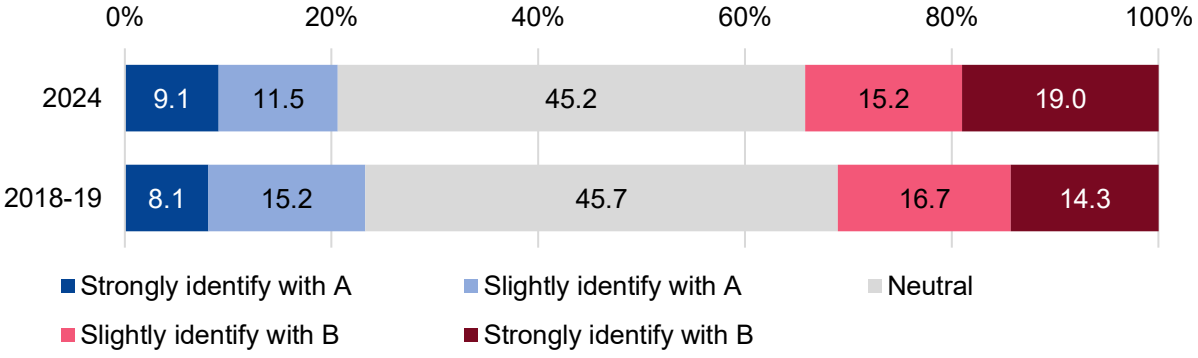


3.3 Religious Traditions Versus Adaptation

3.3.1 In 2024, one in three respondents felt that religion should be kept as pure or traditional as possible, as compared to one in five indicating that we should adapt religion and religious customs to changing secular realities

Under half of all respondents did not have an opinion about whether religion should adapt to changing secular realities, or kept as pure or traditional as possible (45.2 per cent). Nonetheless, there was a slight increase in the proportion of respondents who felt that religion should be kept as pure or traditional as possible, from 31 per cent in 2018 to 34.2 per cent in 2024. Correspondingly, the proportion of respondents who strongly or slightly identified with the notion of adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities declined from 23.3 per cent to 20.6 per cent (see Figure 3.3.1).

Figure 3.3.1: A - Adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities OR B - Keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible, responses by wave*

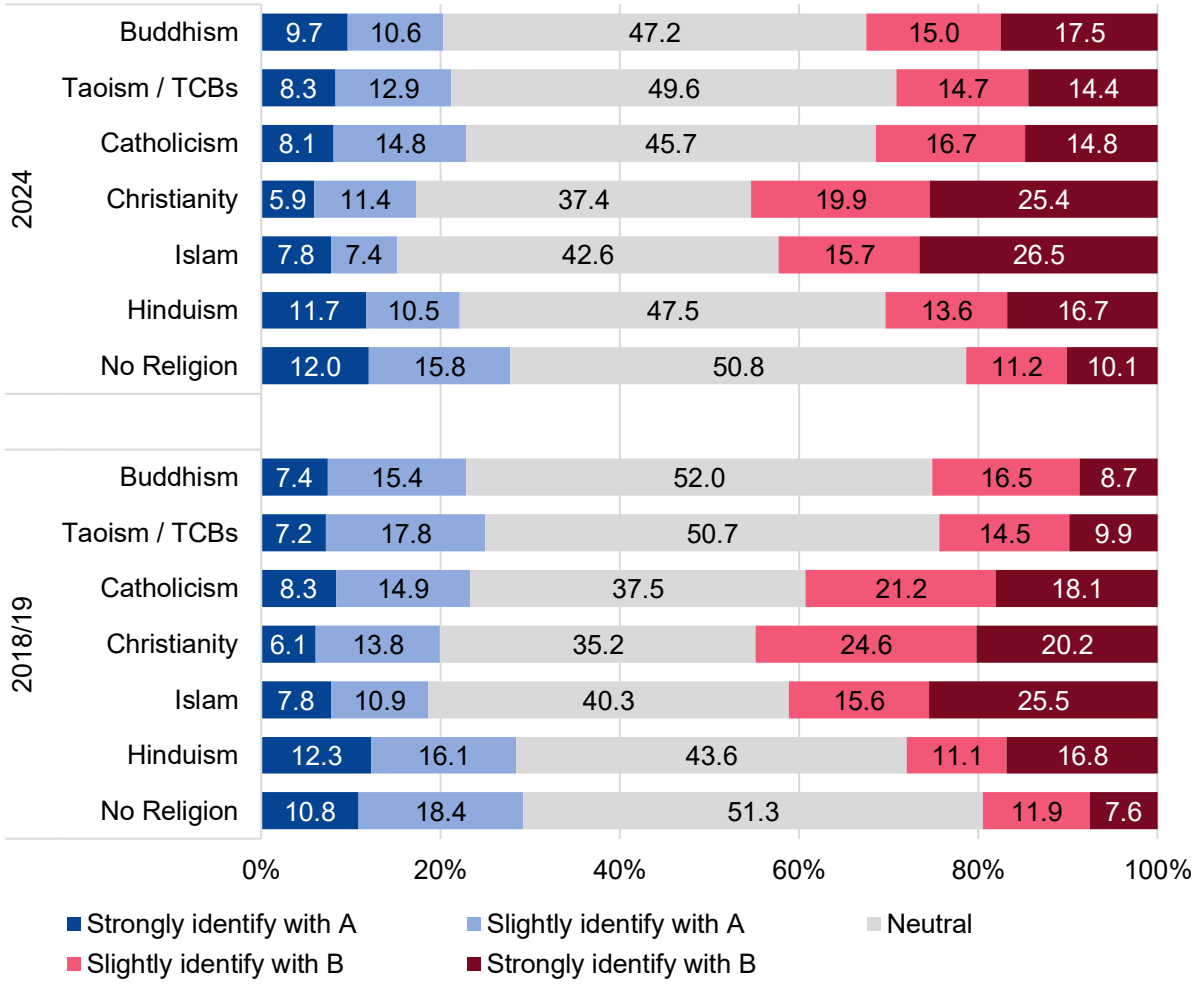


**Item not asked in 2013.*

3.3.2 Compared to other religions, Christian and Muslim respondents were more likely to prefer preserving religion in its pure or traditional form, with over four in 10 indicating as such; Catholics were significantly less likely to indicate as such in 2024 as compared to 2018

Slightly more than four in 10 Christian (45.3 per cent) and Muslim (42.2 per cent) respondents strongly or slightly identified with the view that religion should be kept as pure or traditional as possible, which was higher than all other religions. The non-religious were least likely (21.3 per cent) to think that religion should remain true to its pure and traditional roots. When comparing responses by religious affiliation across the 2024 and 2018 waves, we noted similar trends, with the exception of Catholics who were significantly less likely in 2024 to indicate identifying with keeping their religion as pure or traditional as possible (31.5 per cent) as compared to 2018 (39.3 per cent) (see Figure 3.3.2).

Figure 3.3.2: A - Adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities OR B - Keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible, 2024 and 2018 responses by religion



3.3.3 In general, older respondents were more likely to indicate that religion and its traditions should adhered to as compared to younger peers; within younger age cohorts, Catholics and the non-religious were more likely to identify with religious adaptation, while Christians and Muslims were more likely to identify with adhering to traditions

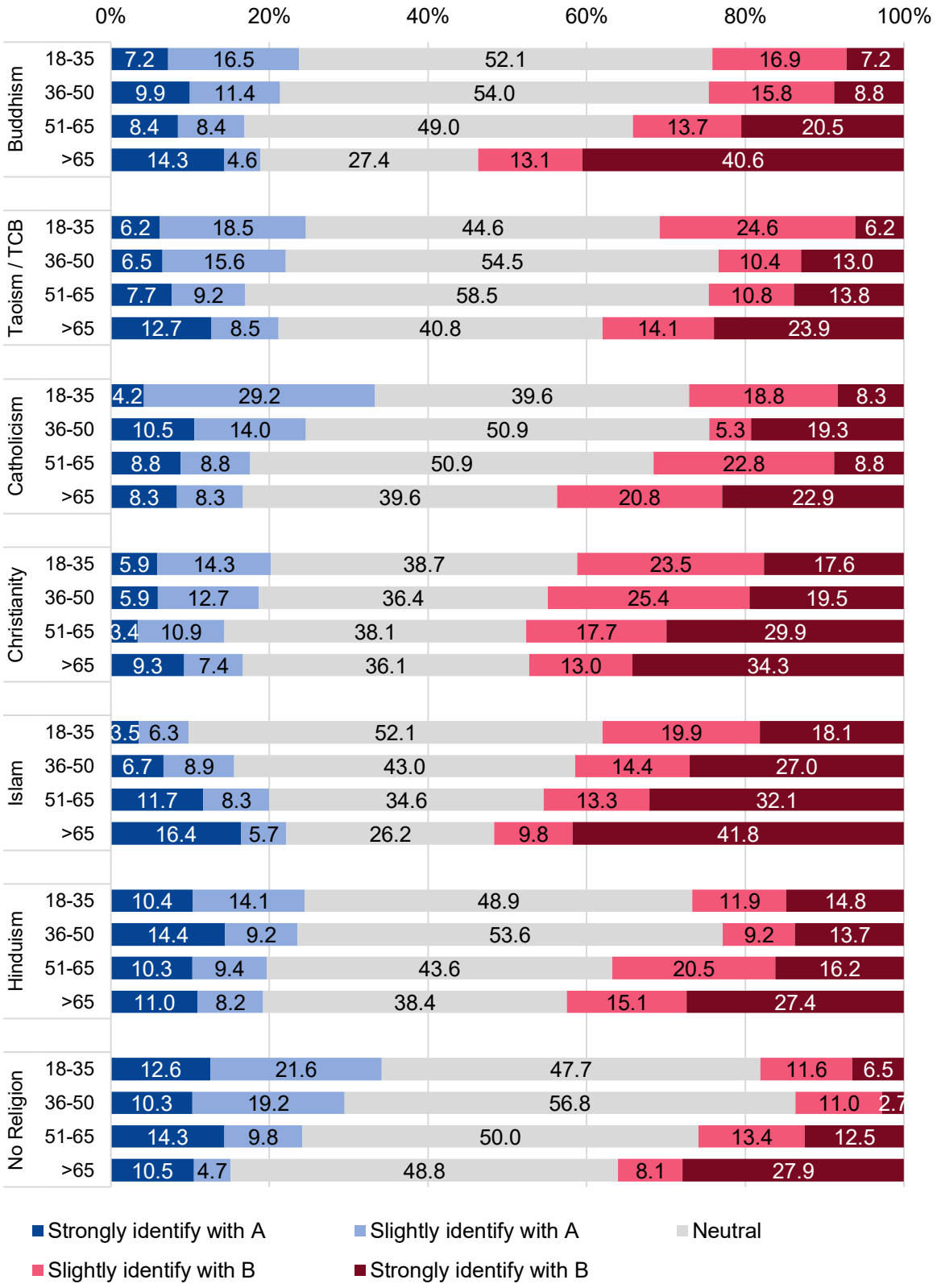
Overall, as compared to younger respondents, older respondents aged 51 to 65 (37.4 per cent) and above 65 (46.6 per cent) were more likely to strongly or slightly identify with the idea that religion should be kept as pure or traditional as possible. This trend is seen across all religious groups as well as the non-religious (see Figure 3.3.3). This could be because older generations may associate traditional religious practices with a sense of nostalgia and cultural heritage, and may see preserving these traditions as a way of safeguarding their culture and values for future generations.

When examining results from both religion and age cohorts, some further trends of interest are observed. First, while younger cohorts across most religious groups were more likely to indicate being aligned with the first stance that religion and its customs should be adapted to changing secular realities, the converse was the case for Muslims. Instead, younger Muslims were more likely to select the middle or neutral option between the two stances presented.

Second, while the proportions of religious adherents in younger age cohorts identifying either with religious adaption or adhering to traditions were comparable for Buddhists, Taoists and Hindus (e.g., 23.7 per cent vs. 24.1 per cent of Buddhists 18 to 35 years old respectively; 24.5 per cent vs. 26.7 per cent of Hindus 18 to 35 years old respectively), responses from Catholics, the non-religious, Christians and Muslims were dissimilar. Catholics in the youngest age cohort (33.4 per cent), and younger non-religious respondents (34.2 per cent) were more likely to identify with the stance on religious adaptation as compared to adhering to religious traditions (27.1 per cent of Catholics 18 to 35 years old and 18.1 per cent of non-religious 18 to 35 years old). Conversely, Muslims and Christians 18 to 35 years old were significantly more likely

to identify with the stance on adhering to religious traditions (38 per cent and 41.1 per cent respectively) as compared to religious adaptation (9.8 per cent and 20.2 per cent, respectively).

Figure 3.3.3: A - Adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities OR B - Keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible, 2024 responses by age and religion

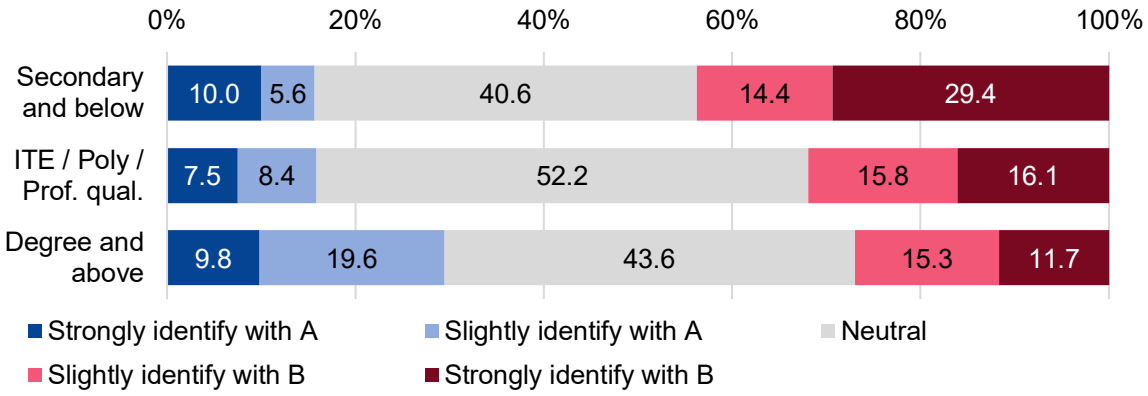


3.3.4 Degree holders more likely to feel that religion should be adapted, with three in 10 indicating as such; respondents with secondary or lower education more likely to support adherence to religious traditions, with over four in 10 identifying with this stance

When the data was analysed by education levels, a marked difference between degree holders and non-degree holders was observed. Close to three in 10 (29.4 per cent) of respondents who possessed a degree and above strongly or slightly identified with the idea of modifying religion and its practices to suit the prevailing secular context. In comparison, respondents who had secondary education and below (43.8 per cent) mostly felt that religion should be kept as pure or traditional as possible (see Figure 3.3.4).

Further comparisons by education levels were also made between the 2024 and 2018 responses; the trends above were also similarly noted in 2018, though to a more muted extent. For brevity, only the 2024 responses are presented in the figure below. A possible reason for this trend might be that higher education often involves exposure to a wide range of ideas, cultures, and belief systems. Such exposure can engender critical thinking and openness to adapting traditions to align with current realities.

Figure 3.3.4: A - Adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities OR B - Keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible, 2024 responses by education level



3.4 Religious Practices

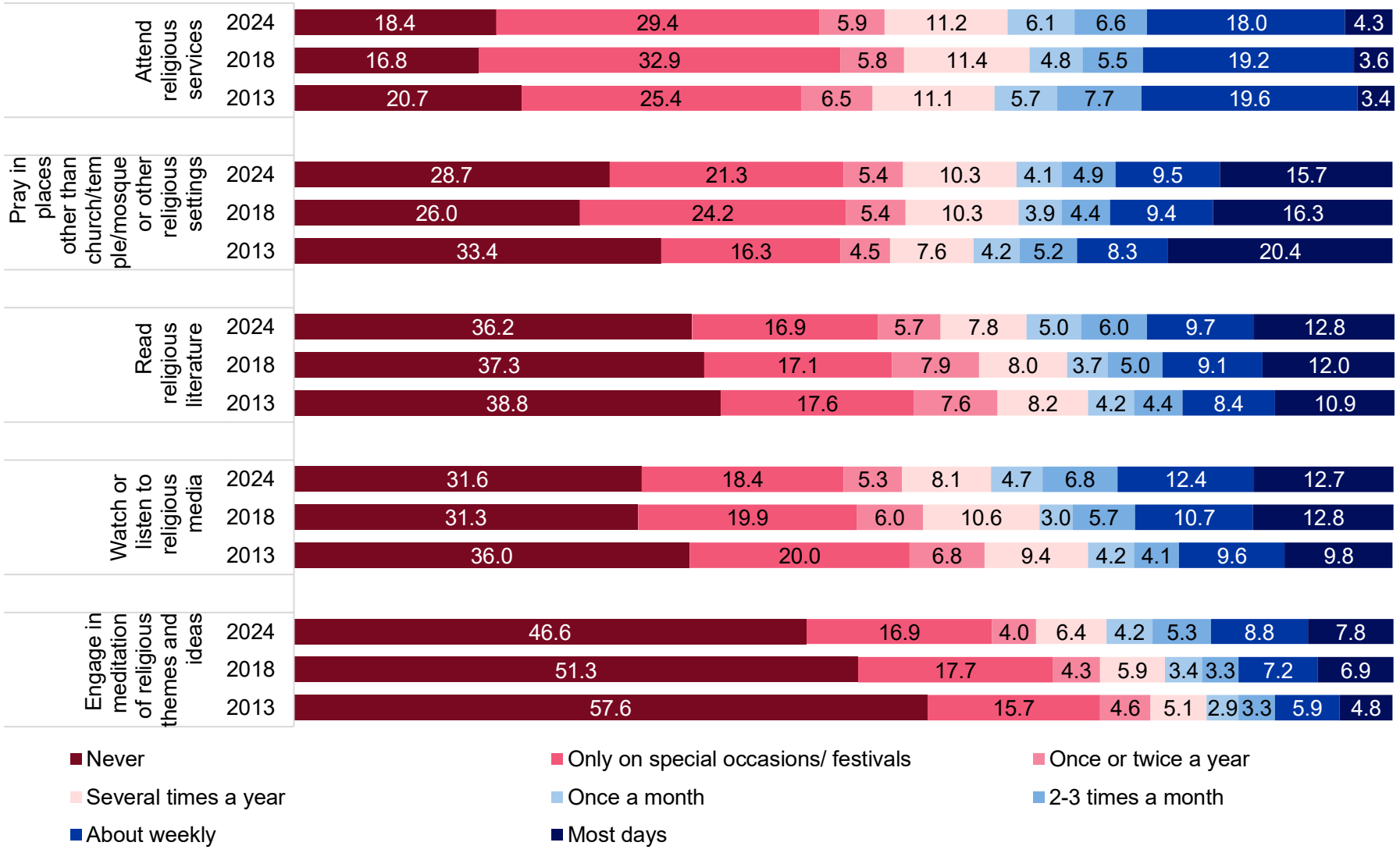
3.4.1 Around one-third attended religious services, prayed outside of religious settings, read religious literature, or consumed religious media at least once a month

Around one-third of respondents said they would attend religious services, pray in places other than religious places of worship, read religious literature, or watch or listen to religious media at least once a month. While there was a slight drop in proportions reporting such frequencies for exception of praying in places other than religious places of worship when comparing 2013 and the other two survey waves, proportions of respondents reporting frequencies for the other three activities increased to some extent compared to 2018 and 2013. Prayer was the most frequent practice, with 15.7 per cent in 2024 saying that they do it on most days. However, this

was also a decrease in frequency compared to 2013 (20.4 per cent on most days) and 2018 (16.3 per cent on most days).

Meditation of religious themes and ideas, meanwhile, saw an increase in frequency over the three waves, from 16.9 per cent reporting in 2013 that they do so at least once a month, to 20.8 per cent in 2018 and then 26.1 per cent in 2024. In contrast, the proportions of respondents saying that they have never done so decreased from 57.6 per cent in 2013 to 51.3 per cent in 2018 and then 46.6 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 3.4.1).

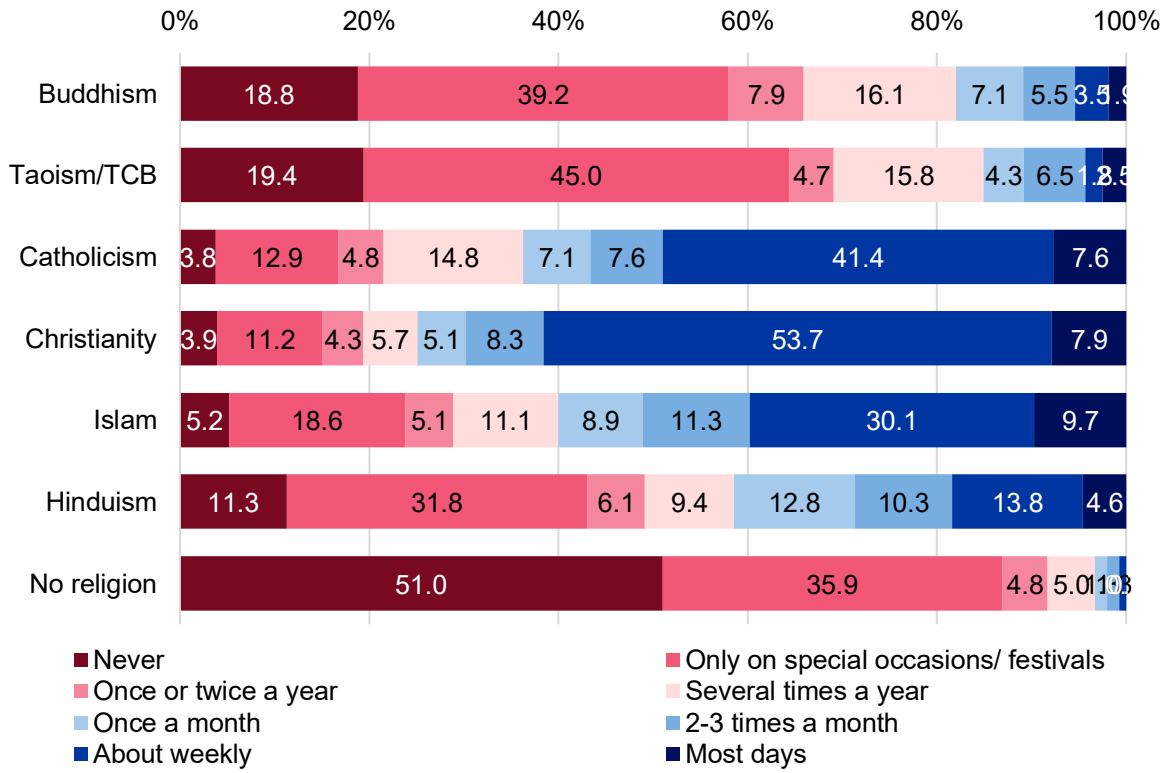
Figure 3.4.1: Please indicate how often you do the following activities, responses by wave



3.4.2 Attendance of religious services varied across religious affiliations; older respondents reported more frequent attendance for religious services

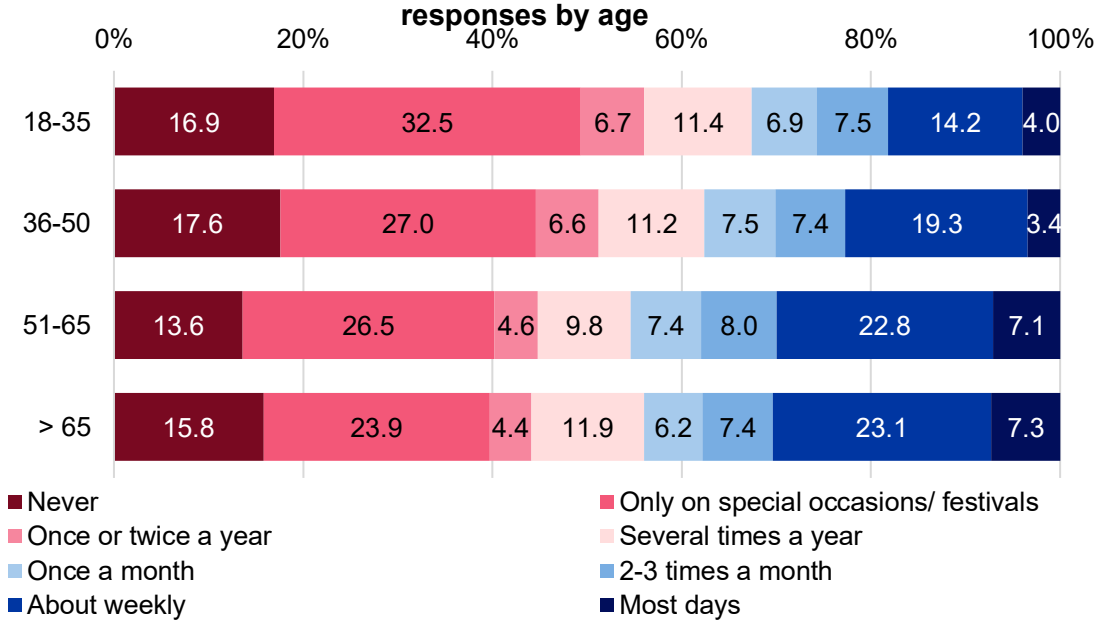
Given that there are different norms and frequencies for religious services across different faiths, it was within expectations to see quite a lot of variations in reported frequencies for attending religious services. Respondents belonging to the Christian faith were most likely to report attending services at least weekly, with 53.7 per cent attending about weekly and 7.9 per cent attending most days. Catholic respondents also reported regular attendance, with 41.4 per cent saying they attended services about weekly and another 7.6 per cent attending on most days (see Figure 3.4.2a).

Figure 3.4.2a: How often do you: Attend religious services?, 2024 responses by religion



Compared across age, older respondents were more likely to report frequent attendance of religious services compared to younger respondents. While ~~41.3~~30.4 per cent of respondents older than 65 years old attended religious services at least weekly, the proportion drops to 18.2 per cent for those aged 18 to 35 years old (see Figure 3.4.2b).

Figure 3.4.2b: How often do you: Attend religious services?, 2024 responses by age

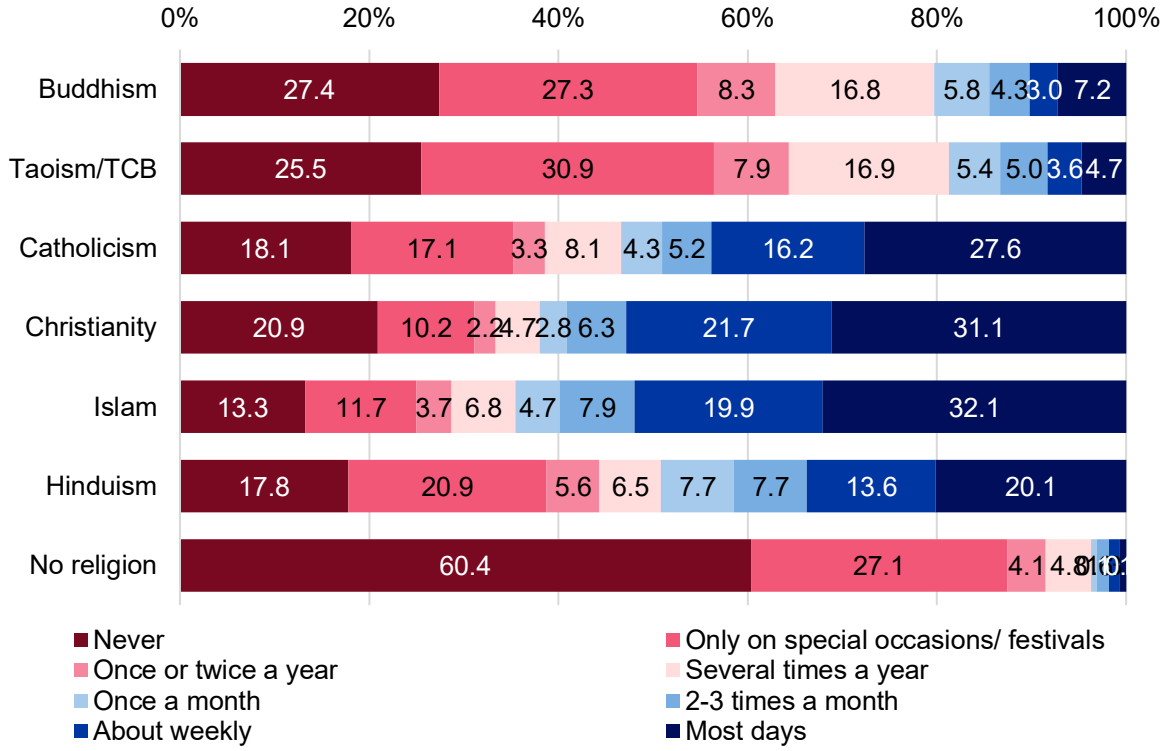


3.4.3 Respondents who were Christian, Muslim or aged 51–65 report higher frequency of prayer outside religious settings

Slightly over half of respondents who were Christian or Muslim reported praying at least weekly in places other than their places of worship or other religious settings. In comparison, respondents affiliated with other faiths reported lower frequencies of prayer — 43.8 per cent of Catholics, 33.7 per cent of Hindus, 10.2 per cent of

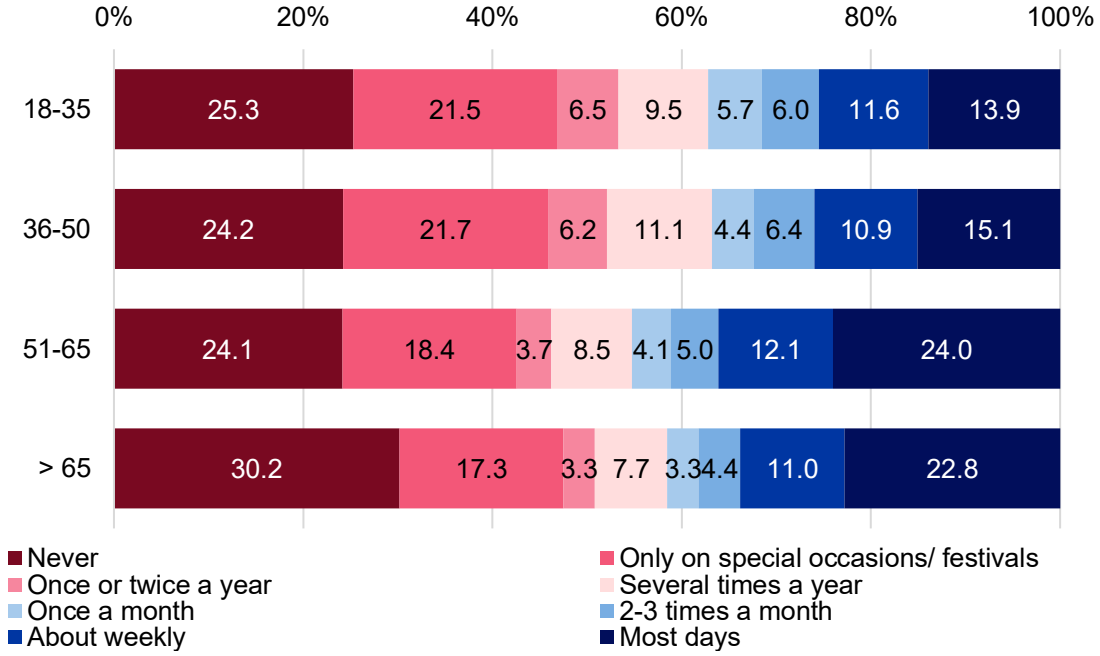
Buddhists, and 8.3 per cent of Taoists report praying outside of their places of worship at least weekly (see Figure 3.4.3a).

Figure 3.4.3a: How often do you: Pray in places other than church/ temple/ mosque or other religious settings?, 2024 responses by religion



Respondents aged 51 to 65 years old were most likely to say that they prayed at least about weekly outside of places of worship, with 36.1 per cent reporting these frequencies. In contrast, just over one-quarter of those aged 50 years and below said the same (see Figure 3.4.3b).

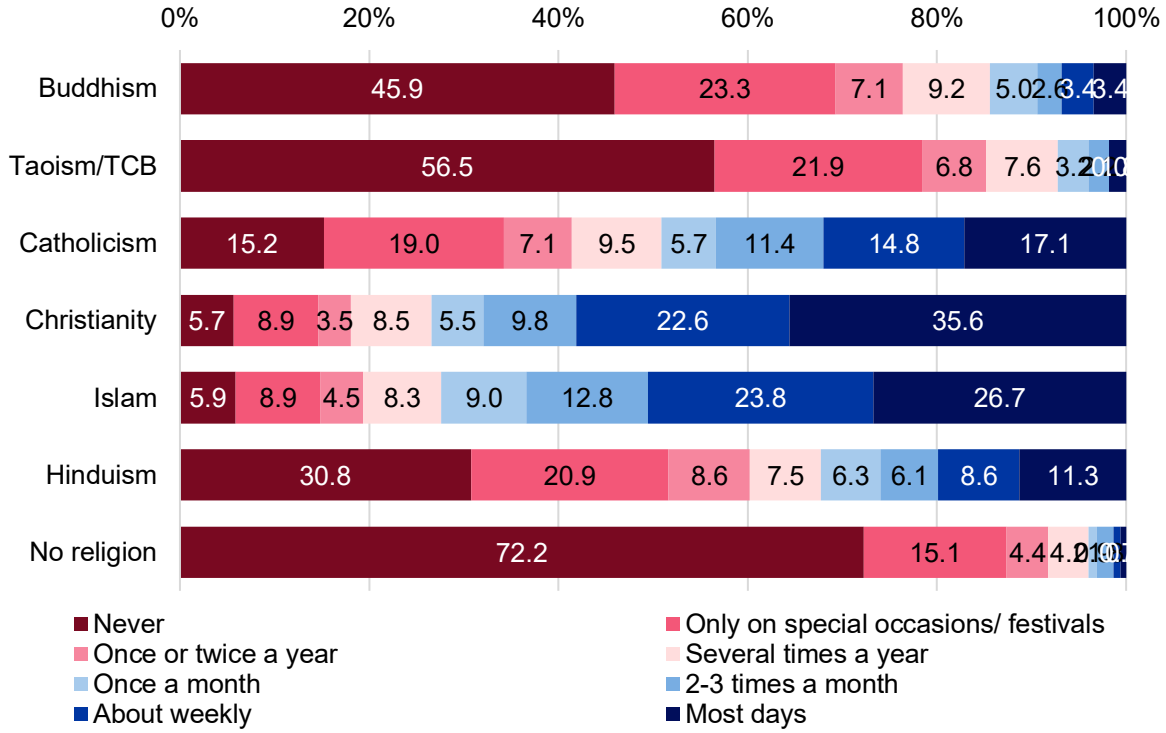
Figure 3.4.3b: How often do you: Pray in places other than church/ temple/ mosque or other religious settings?, 2024 responses by age



3.4.4 Respondents who were Christian or aged 51–65 report higher frequencies of reading religious literature

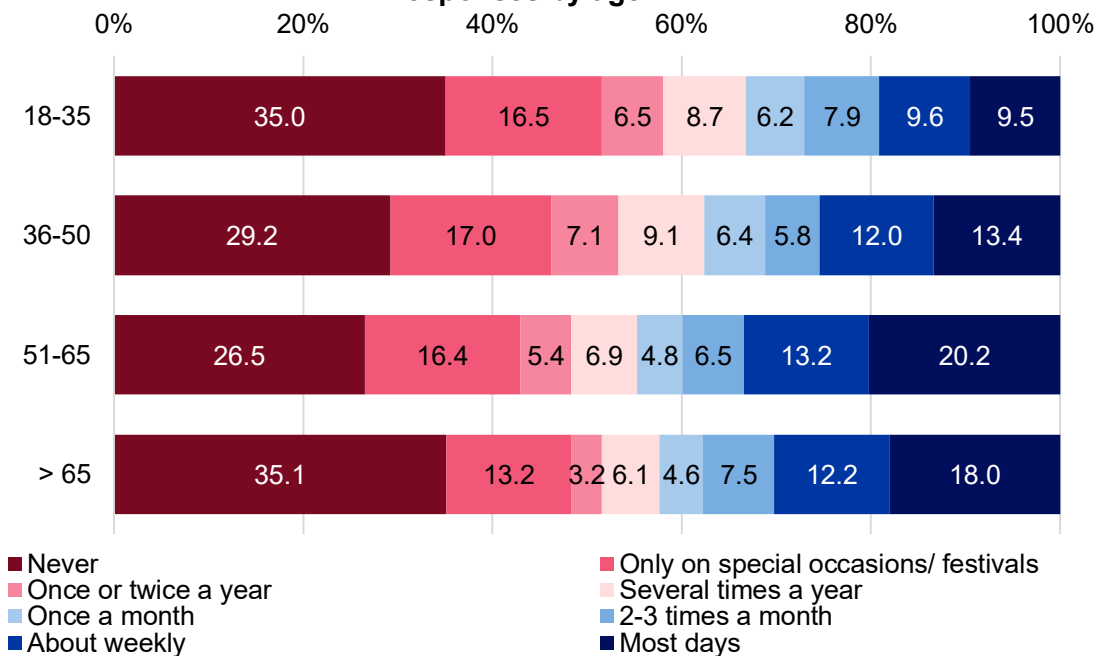
When it comes to religious literature, Christian respondents were most likely to report higher frequencies (35.6 per cent read on most days), followed by Muslim respondents (26.7 per cent read on most days). In contrast, Buddhist (3.4 per cent read on most days) and Taoist respondents (1.8 per cent read on most days) were least likely to read religious literature frequently (see Figure 3.4.4a).

Figure 3.4.4a: How often do you: Read religious literature?, 2024 responses by religion



The youngest cohort were least likely to report reading religious literature frequently. While 33.4 per cent of those aged 51 to 65 years old say they read religious literature at least weekly, just 19.1 per cent of those aged 18 to 35 years old report the same frequencies (see Figure 3.4.4b).

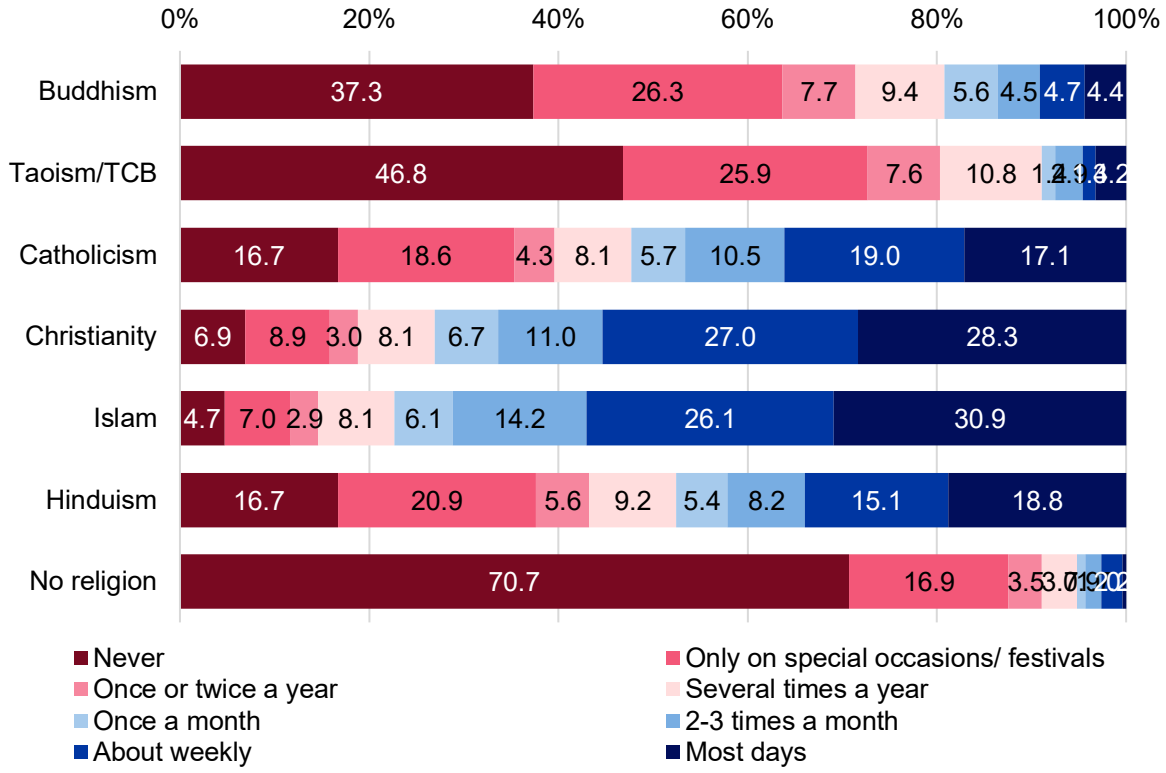
Figure 3.4.4b: How often do you: Read religious literature?, 2024 responses by age



3.4.5 Respondents who were Christian or Muslim reported higher frequencies of watching or listening to religious media

When it comes to watching or listening to religious media, frequencies were also quite varied for respondents from different religious backgrounds. While over half of those who belong to the Christian and Muslim faiths said they watched or listened to religious media at least weekly, 46.8 per cent of Taoist respondents and 37.3 per cent of Buddhist respondents reported that they never did so. It is likely a result of how these faiths are practiced differently and the frequency at which they come in contact with religious media (see Figure 3.4.5a).

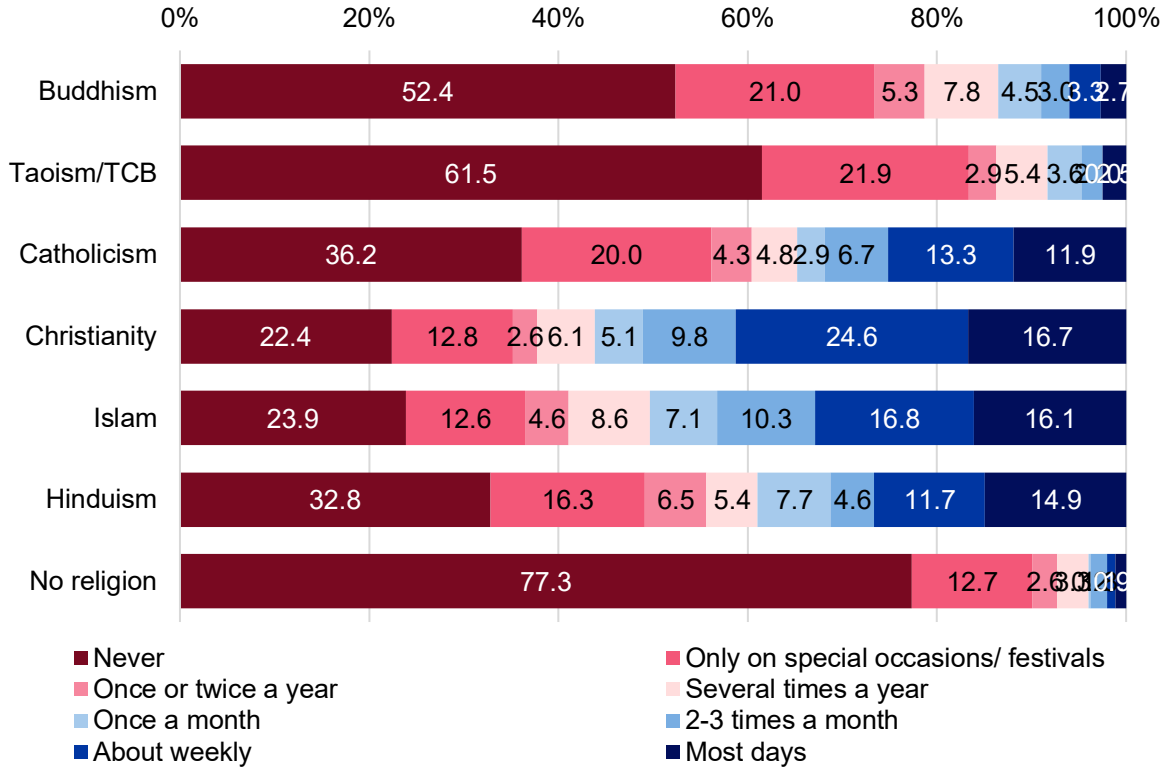
Figure 3.4.5a: How often do you: Watch or listen to religious media?, 2024 responses by religion



3.4.6 Christian respondents reported highest frequencies of meditating over religious themes and ideas

More than half of the respondents who are Buddhist, Taoist, or had no religion never engaged in meditation of religious themes and ideas. In comparison, the proportions reporting “never” dropped to over three in 10 for Catholics (36.3 per cent) and Hindus (32.8 per cent), and over two in 10 for Muslims (23.9 per cent) and Christians (22.4 per cent). Meanwhile, around 16 per cent of Christians and Muslims said they meditated on most days, with just slightly lower proportions of Hindus (14.9 per cent) and Catholics (11.9 per cent) reporting the same frequencies. Overall, Christians reported the highest frequencies of meditating of religious themes and ideas, with 41.3 per cent saying they meditated at least weekly (see Figure 3.4.6).

Figure 3.4.6: How often do you: Engage in meditation of religious themes and ideas?, 2024 responses by religion



3.4.7 Religious practices evolved over the three waves in varying ways for different faiths

Some changes were observed across the waves for each of the religious groups. For Buddhists and Taoists (or those who practice Traditional Chinese Beliefs (TCB), the proportions reporting that they had never engaged in any of the religious practices decreased over the three waves, so did the proportions indicating that they did so on most days (see Figure 3.4.7a and Figure 3.4.7b). Hence, on the whole there seems to be a declining trend in religious observance for these two groups.

The reported frequency of attending religious services decreased over the waves for Catholics, but this group reported higher frequencies of consuming religious media and engaging in religious meditation. However, the frequency of praying outside of religious settings and reading religious literature remained quite consistent across the waves (see Figure 3.4.7c).

Meanwhile, Christians reported lower frequencies of attending religious services and praying outside of religious settings over the waves but increasing frequencies of consuming religious media and engaging in religious meditation over the waves, but with more or less consistent frequencies of reading religious literature (see Figure 3.4.7d).

Meanwhile, reported frequencies of all religious practices surveyed increased over the waves for Muslims (see Figure 3.4.7e). Similar trends were observed for Hindus when it came to reading religious literature, consuming religious media, and engaging in religious meditation. Hindus' reported frequencies for attending religious services and praying outside religious settings, meanwhile, dropped between 2013 and 2018, and then increased in 2024 (see Figure 3.4.7f).

Figure 3.4.7a: Please indicate how often you do the following activities, responses by wave (Buddhism)

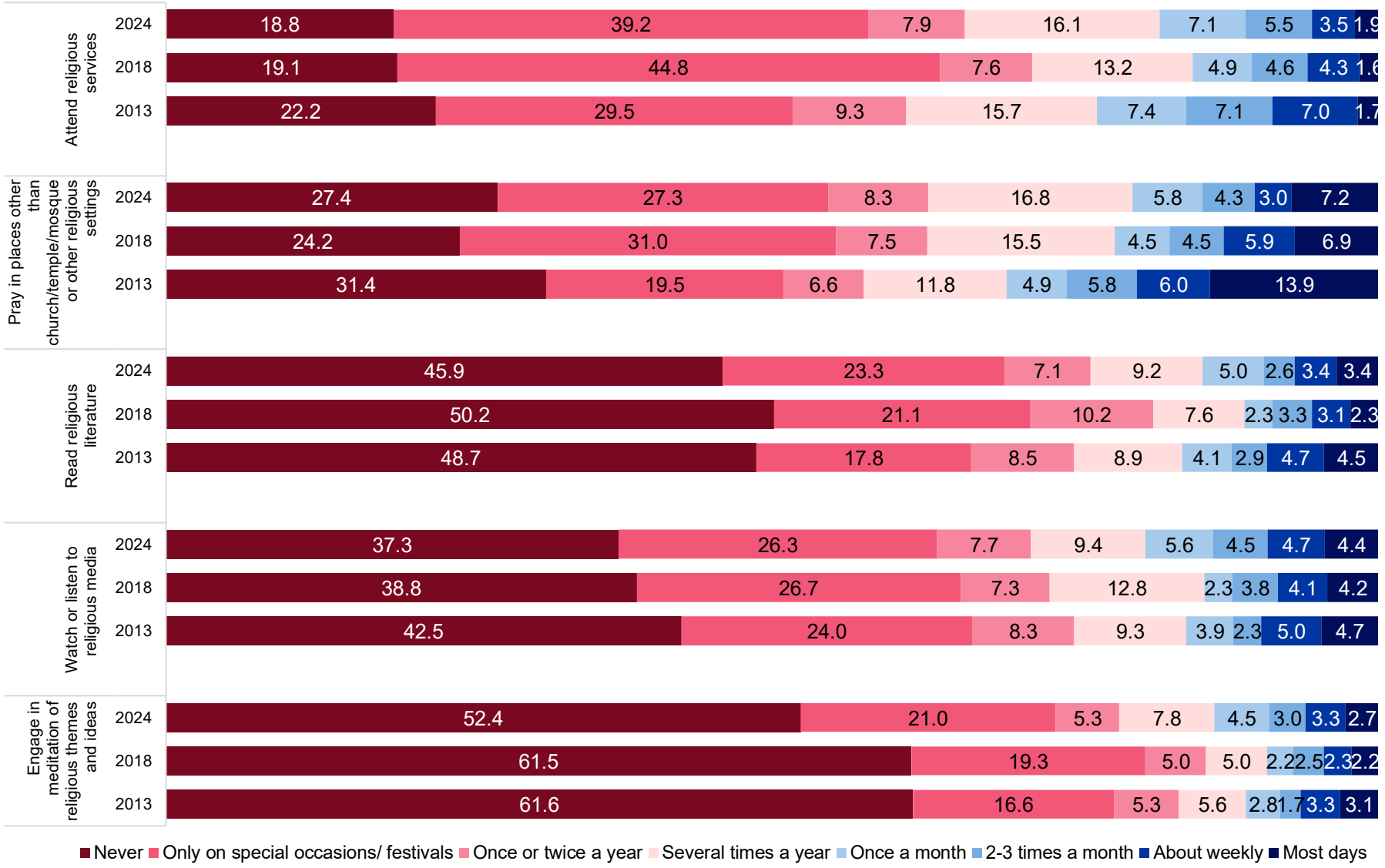


Figure 3.4.7b: Please indicate how often you do the following activities, responses by wave (Taoism/TCB)

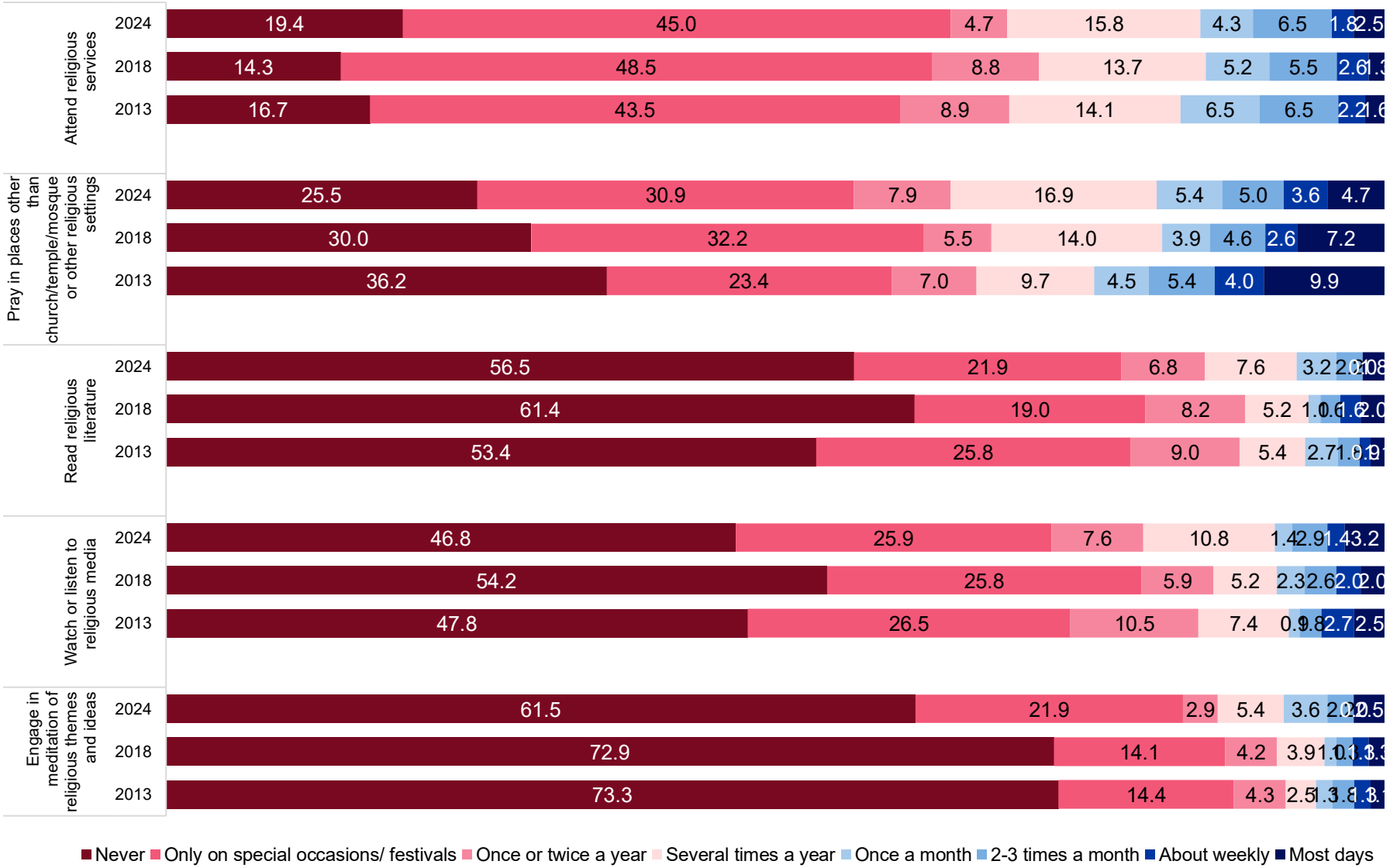


Figure 3.4.7c: Please indicate how often you do the following activities, responses by wave (Catholicism)

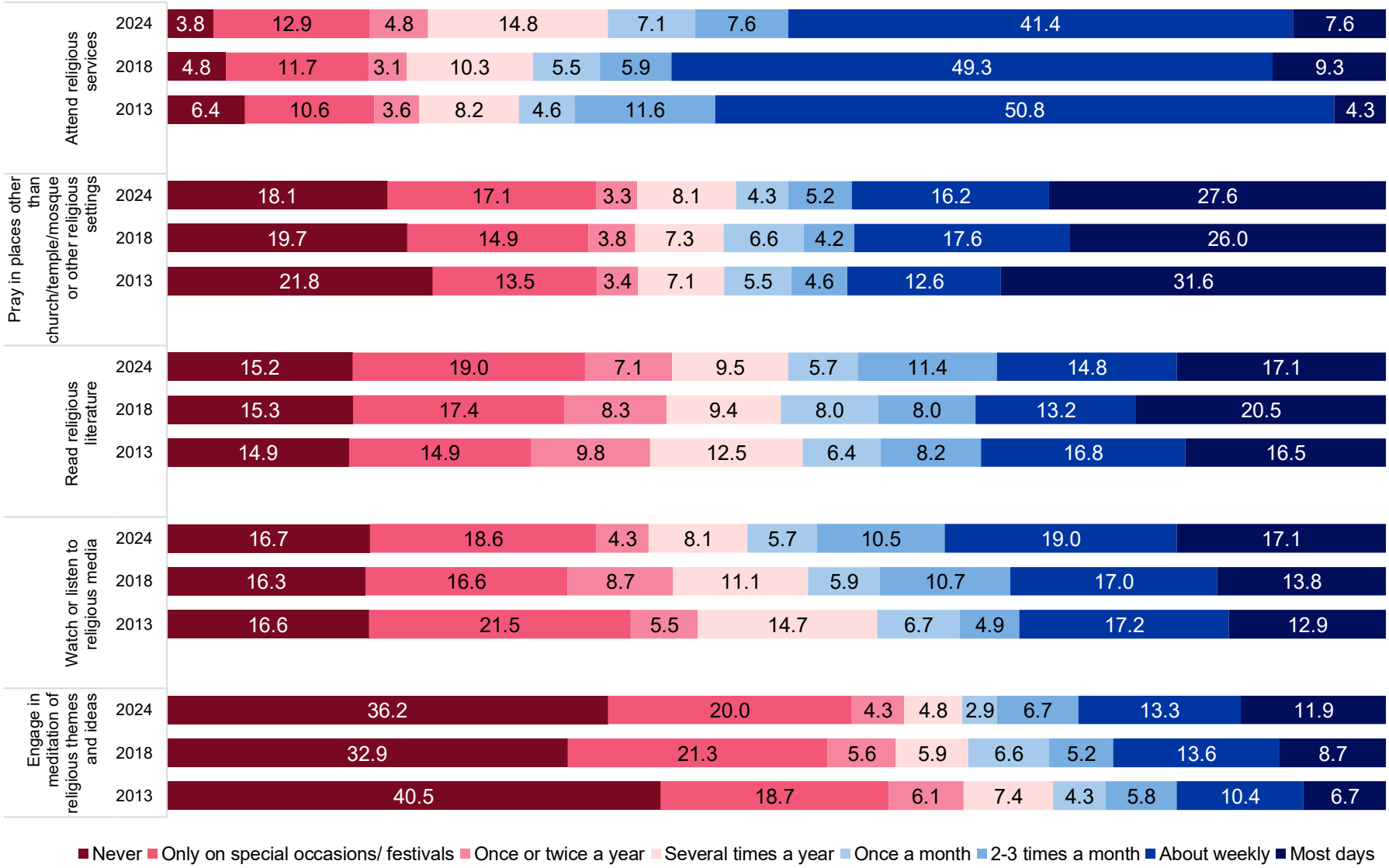


Figure 3.4.7d: Please indicate how often you do the following activities, responses by wave (Christianity)

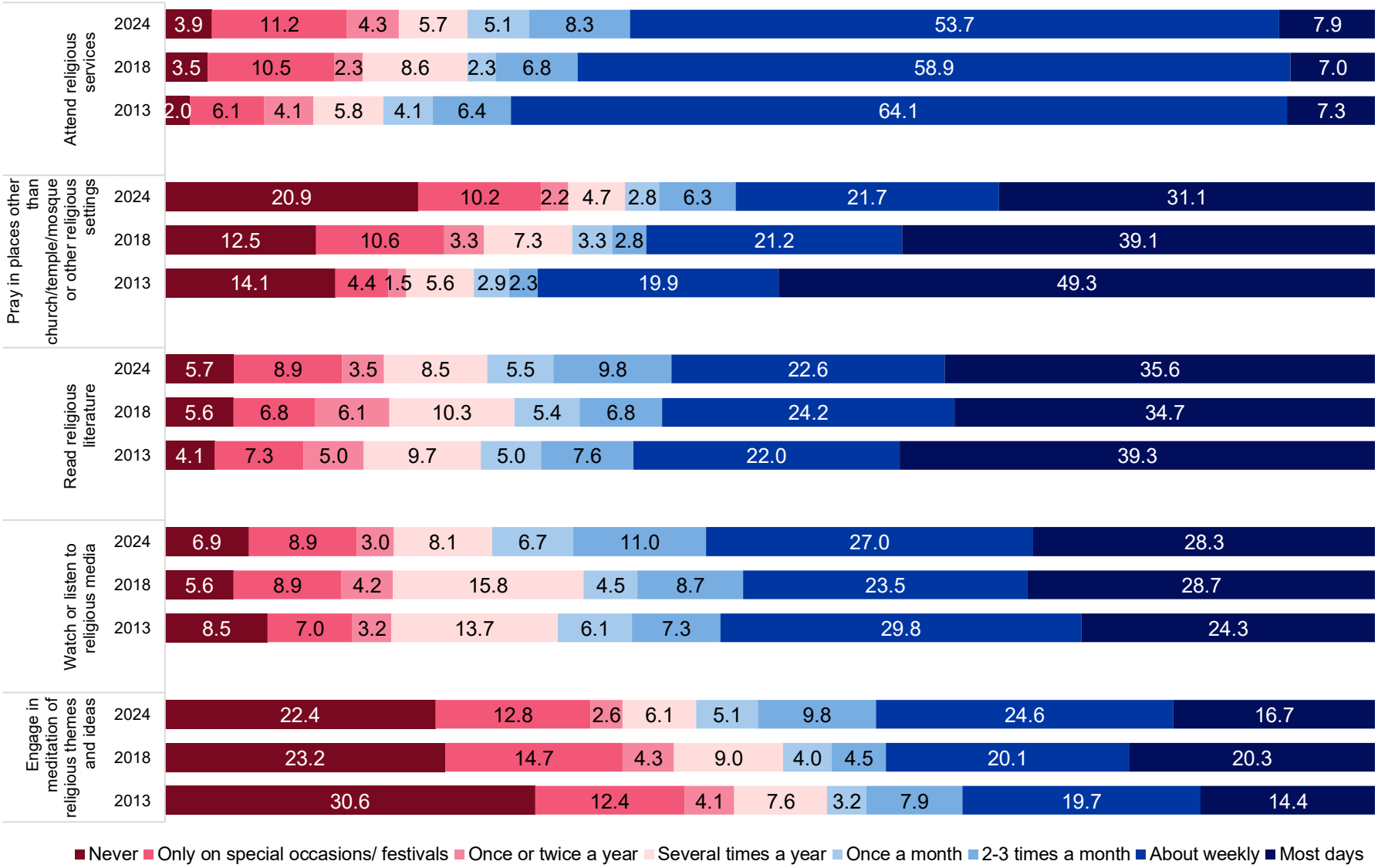


Figure 3.4.7e: Please indicate how often you do the following activities, responses by wave (Islam)

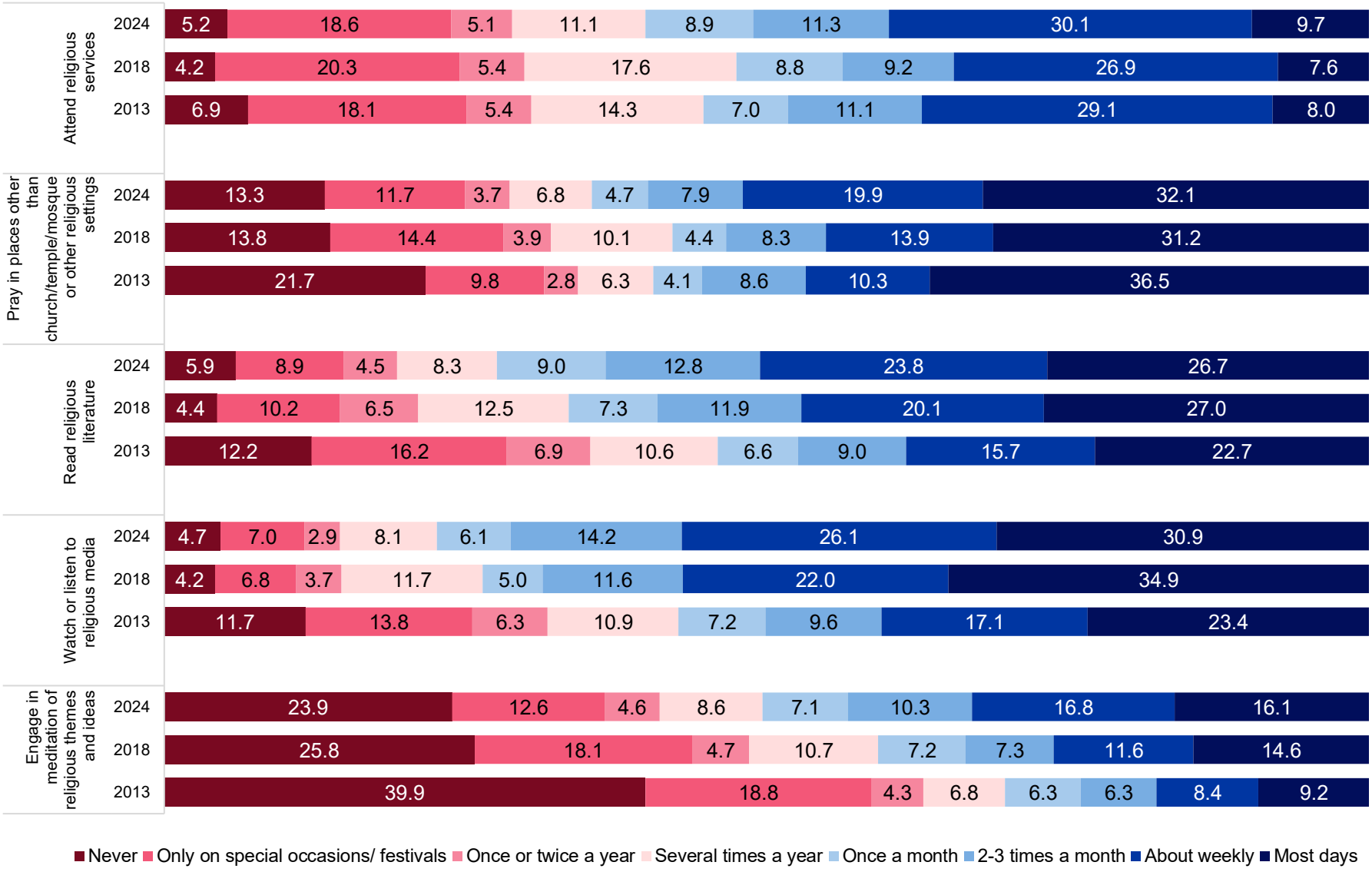
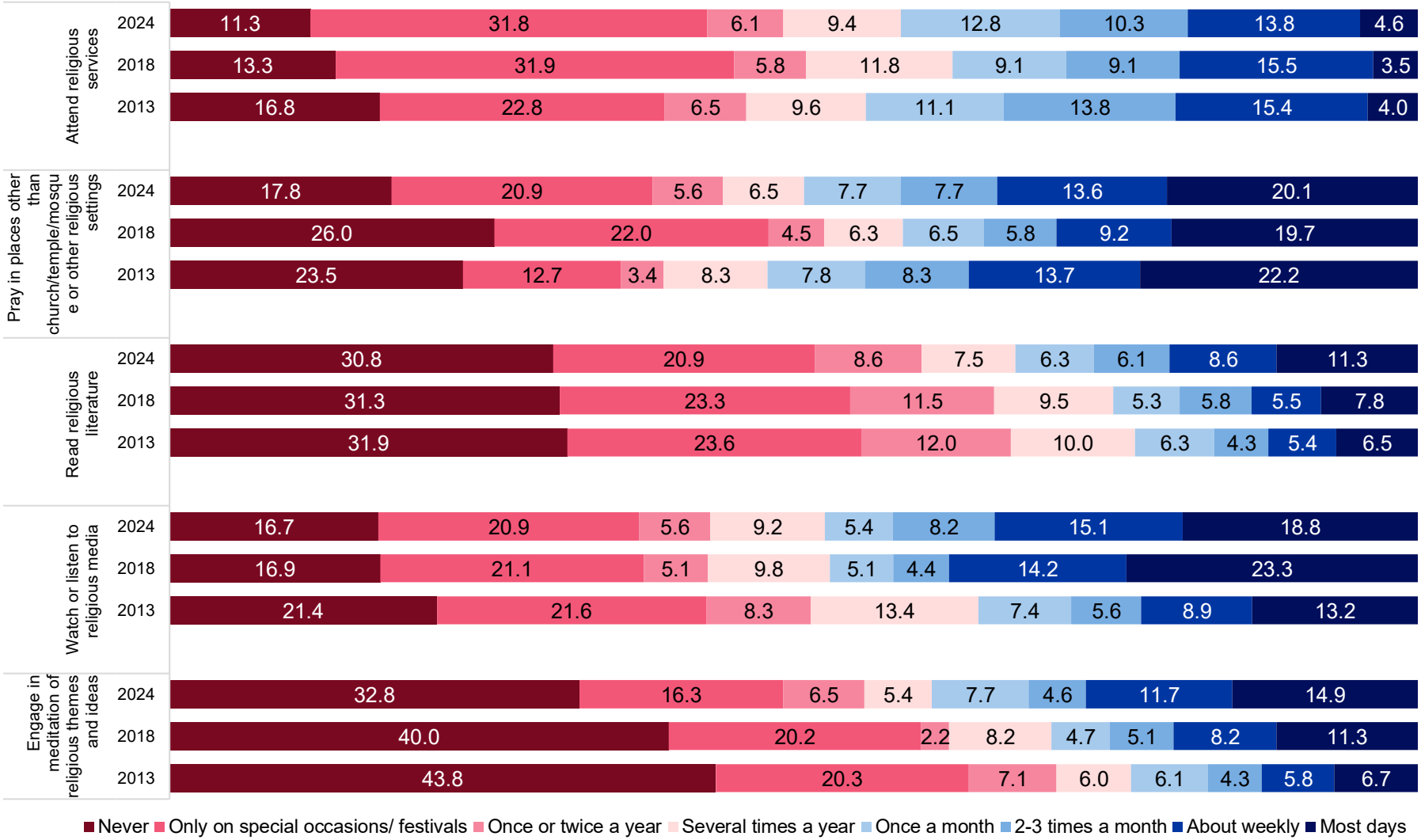


Figure 3.4.7f: Please indicate how often you do the following activities, responses by wave (Hinduism)



3.4.8 Observations of faith across age groups have evolved differently over time for monotheistic religions

We also observed some differences over the waves for respondents of different ages within their respective religious affiliations. However, due to smaller group sizes, trends for the oldest age group (above 65 years old) will not be discussed.

Overall, proportions of Christians of all ages reporting that they attend religious services and pray outside of religious settings decreased over the three waves (see Figure 3.4.8a and Figure 3.4.8b). When compared by specific age groups, Christians aged 18 to 35 were less likely to report that they attend religious services or pray in places outside of religious settings at least once a month in 2024 compared to those of the same age group in 2018 and 2013. Meanwhile, there was a slight increase in the proportion of respondents aged 36 to 50 years old saying they attend services at least once a month in 2024 when compared to 2018, after a dip was observed going from 2013 to 2018. But when it came to praying outside of religious settings, the proportions reporting that they do so at least once a month dropped steadily from 79.3 per cent in 2013 to 64.1 per cent in 2018 and then to 55.9 per cent in 2024. Across all three waves, respondents aged 51 to 65 were most likely to report attending religious services and praying outside of religious settings at least once a month.

Catholics also reported lower frequencies of attendance for religious services and prayer over the waves. The most marked changes over time were observed for the youngest group (18 to 35 years old). Compared to 2013, respondents belonging to the 18 to 35 group in 2024 were less likely to say that they attended religious services or

prayed outside of religious settings at least once a month (see Figure 3.4.dc and Figure 3.4.8e).

Increases in frequency were observed for Muslims particularly for praying outside of religious settings, reading of religious literature, and consumption of religious media. For respondents aged 50 and below, proportions reporting that they pray outside of religious settings at least once a month increased in 2024 compared to previous waves (see Figure 3.4.8g). In particular, the proportions of those aged 36 to 50 years old reporting such frequencies increased from 57.7 per cent in 2013 and 57.1 per cent in 2018 to 64.8 per cent in 2024. Marked increases in frequency were also observed for consumption of religious literature and media across the board when comparing across waves. Those aged 51 to 65 years old reported larger increases in frequency for both practices across the waves. While 55.7 per cent of this age group reported reading religious literature in 2013, the proportion increased to 75.6 per cent in 2018 and then 81.3 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 3.4.8h). Similarly, the proportion of this age group reporting consuming religious media at least once a month increased from 57.6 per cent in 2013 to 77 per cent in 2018, and then 78.8 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 3.4.8i). in comparison, the trends over time for the other two monotheistic groups (Christians and Catholics) for consuming religious media were less clear, though general drops in frequencies were observed for Christians aged 36 to 65 (see Figure 3.4.8c) and Catholics aged 50 and younger (see Figure 3.4.8f).

Figure 3.4.8a: How often do you: Attend religious services?, responses by age group and wave (Christianity)

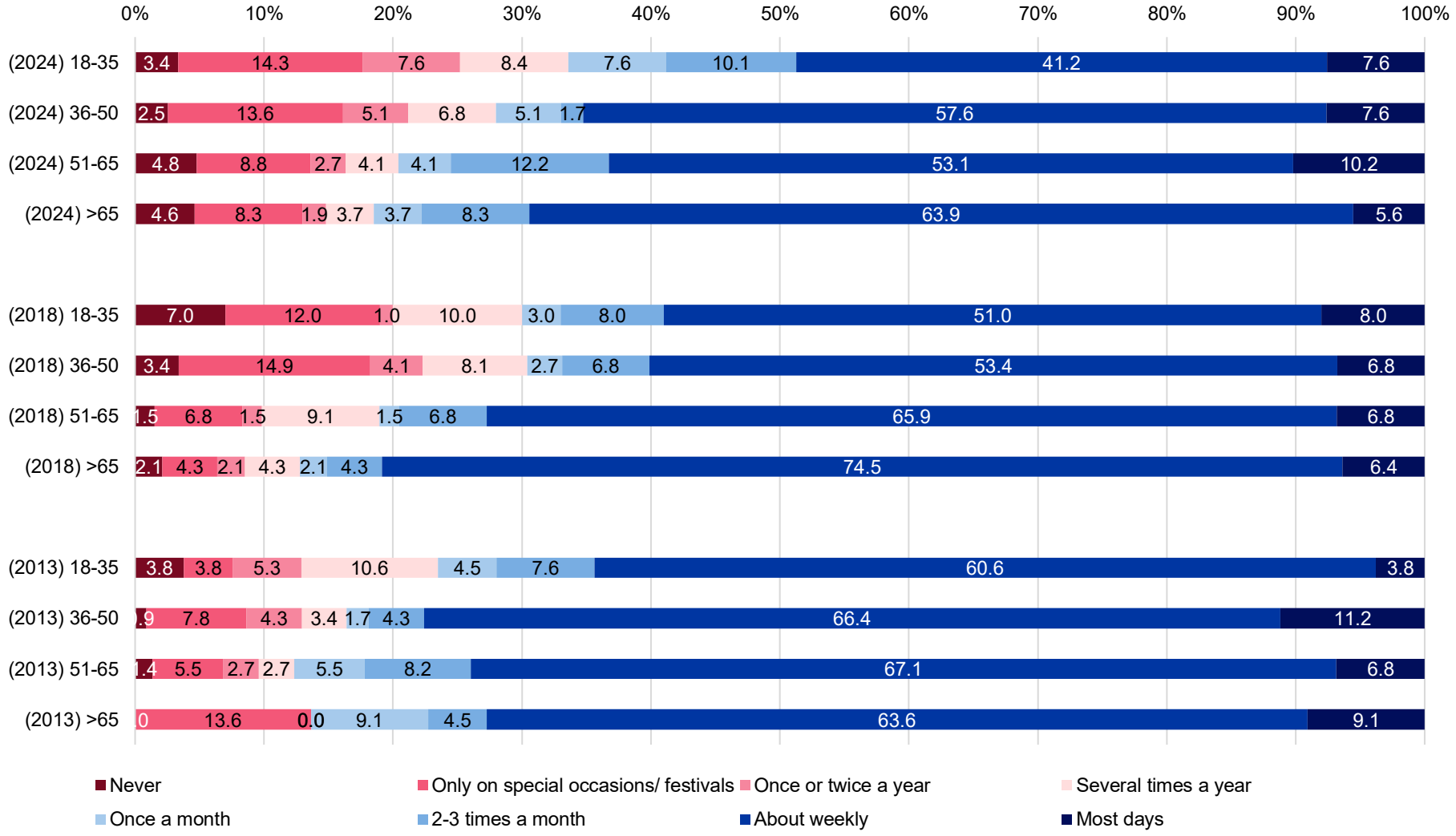


Figure 3.4.8b: How often do you: Do you pray in places other than church/temple/mosque or other religious settings?, responses by age group and wave (Christianity)

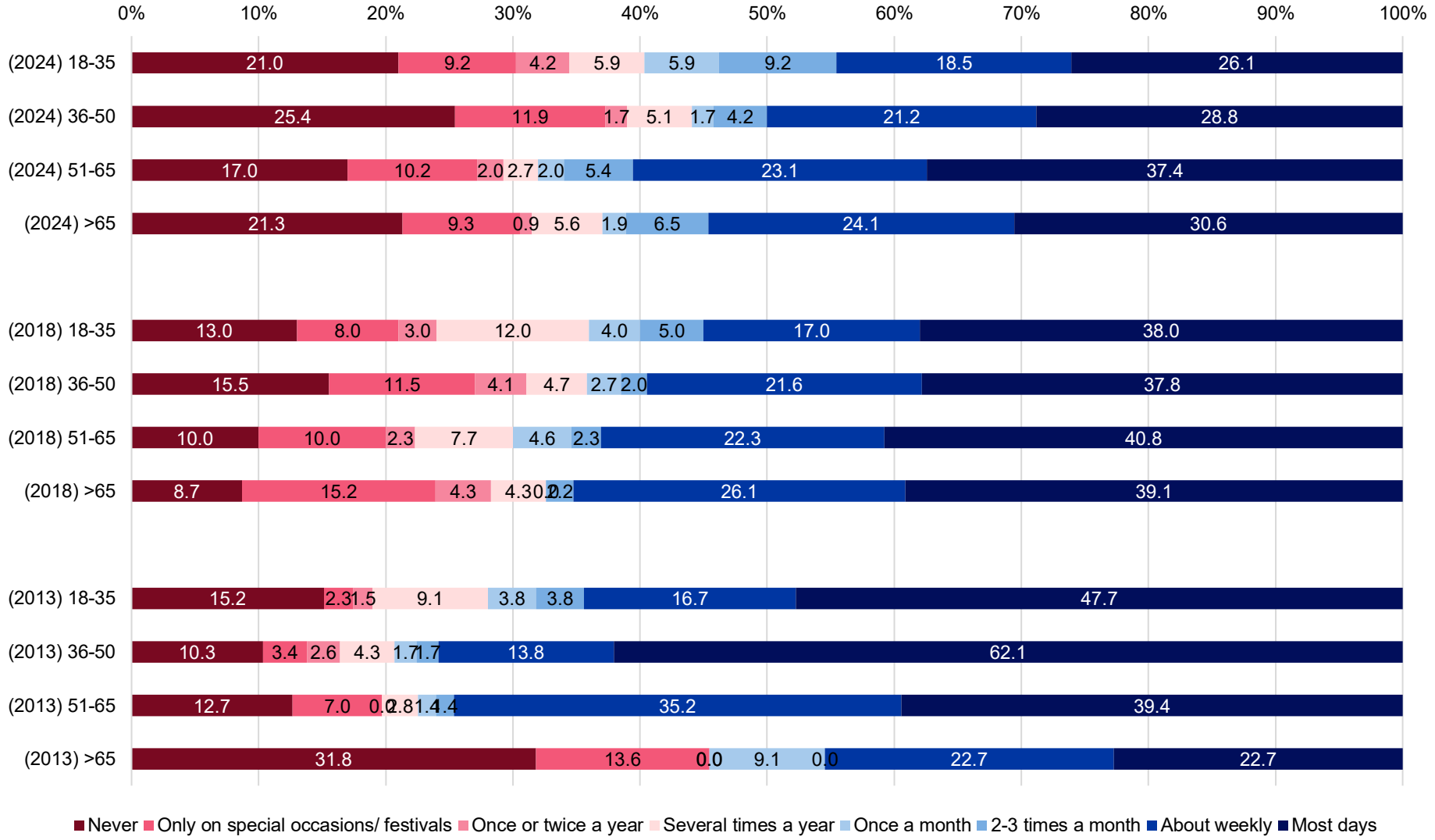


Figure 3.4.8c: How often do you: Watch or listen to religious media (e.g. songs, videos or any kind of media)?, responses by age group and wave (Christianity)

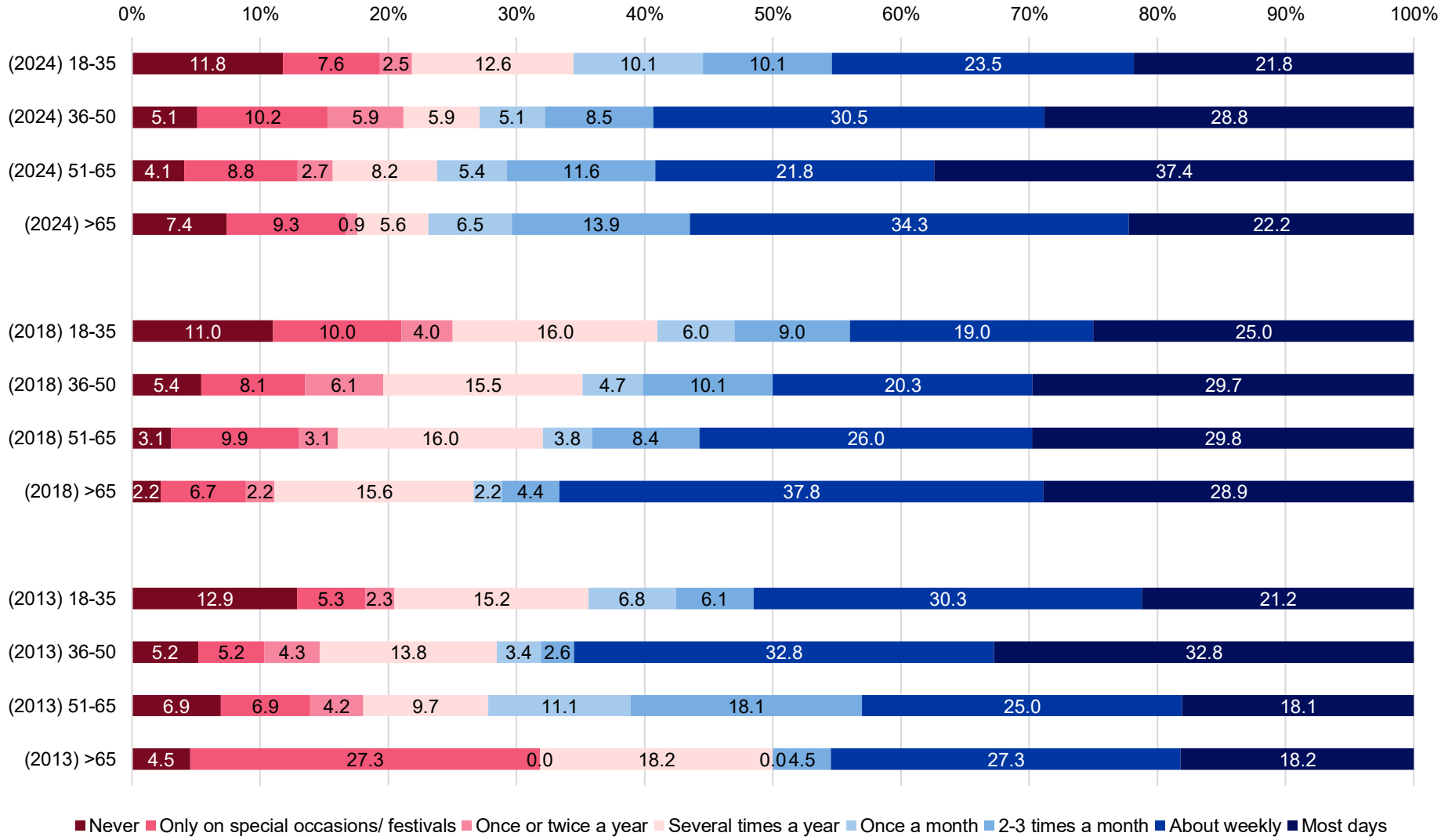


Figure 3.4.8d: How often do you: Attend religious services?, responses by age group and wave (Catholicism)

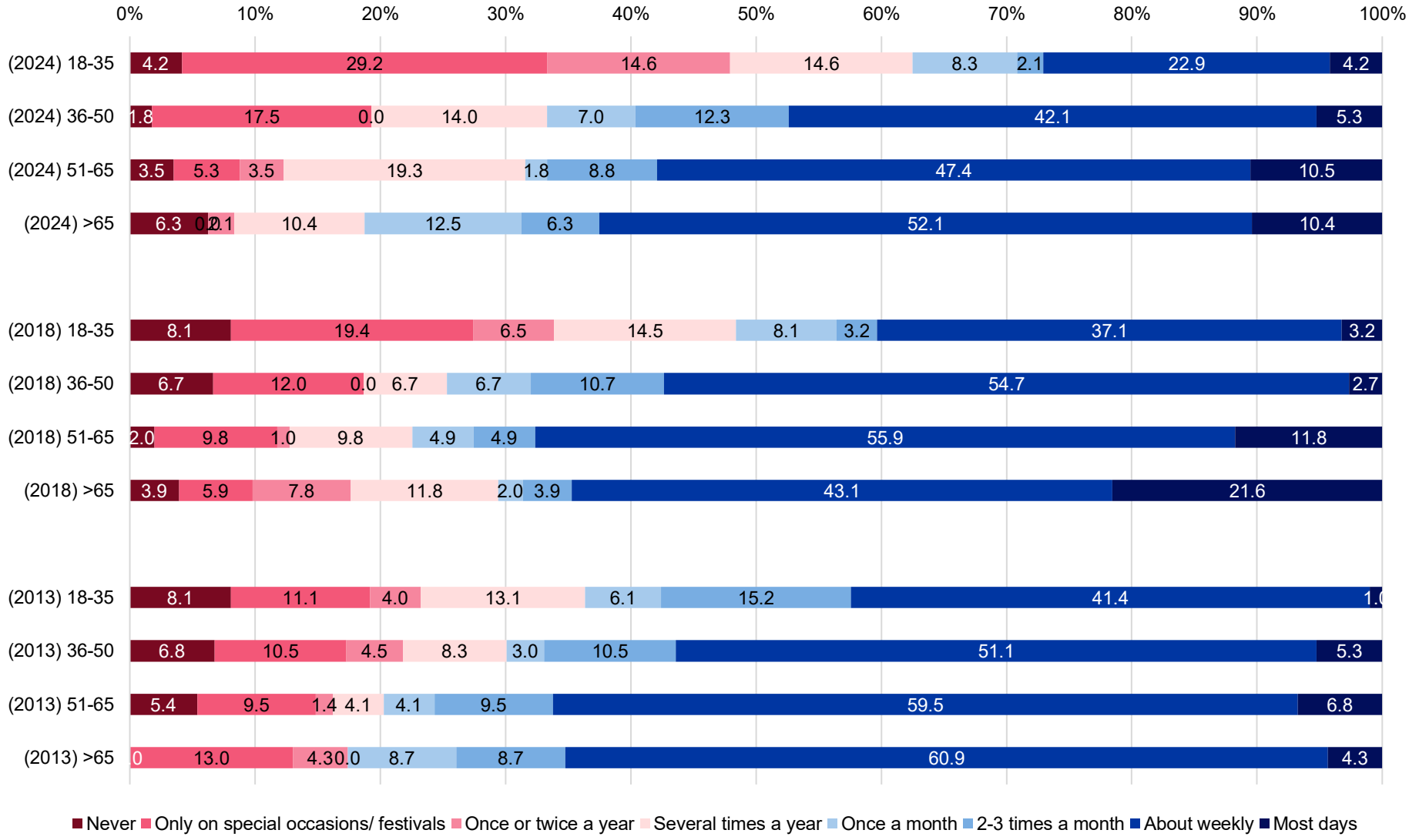


Figure 3.4.8e: How often do you: Do you pray in places other than church/temple/mosque or other religious settings?, responses by age group and wave (Catholicism)

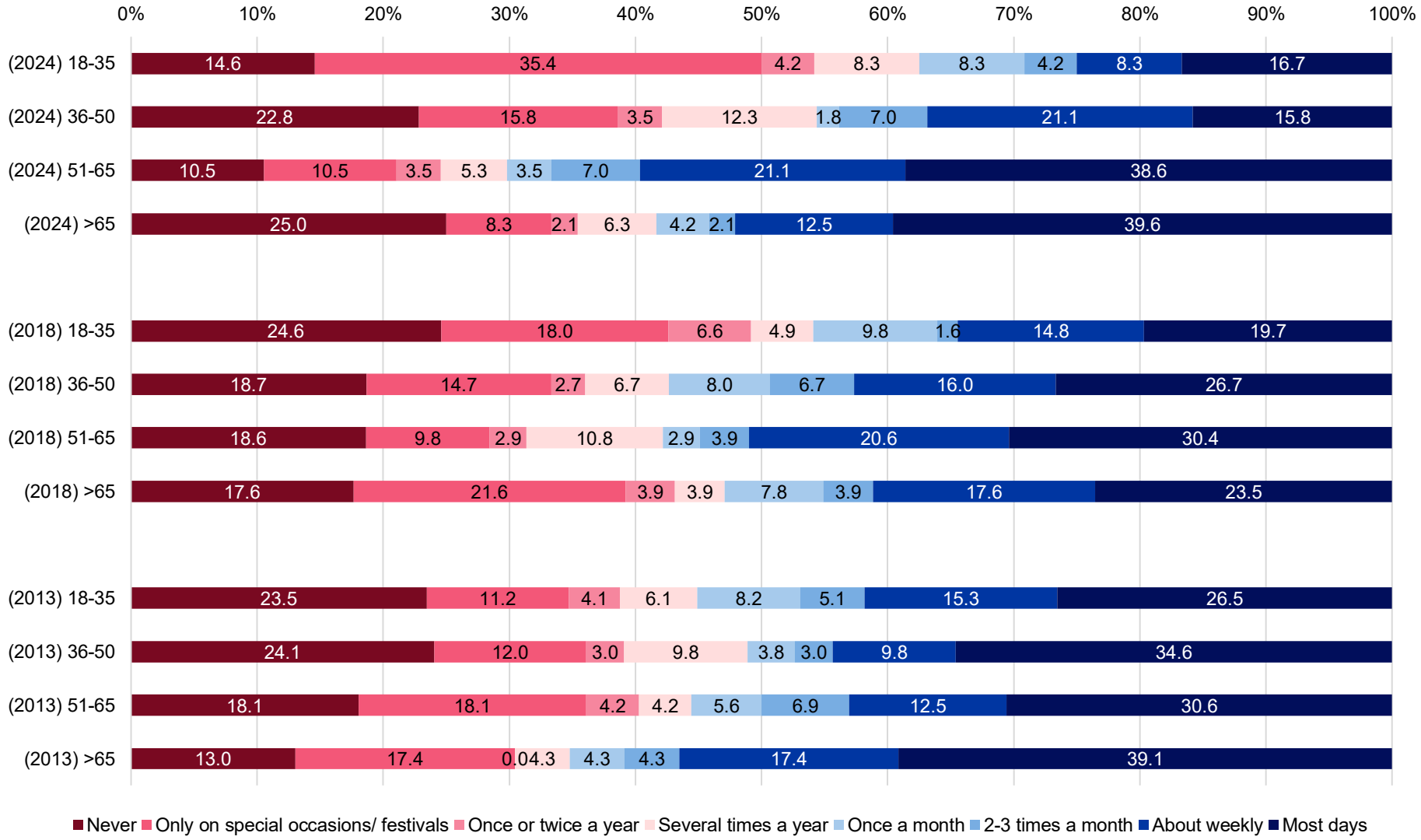


Figure 3.4.8f: How often do you: Watch or listen to religious media (e.g. songs, videos or any kind of media)?, responses by age group and wave (Catholicism)

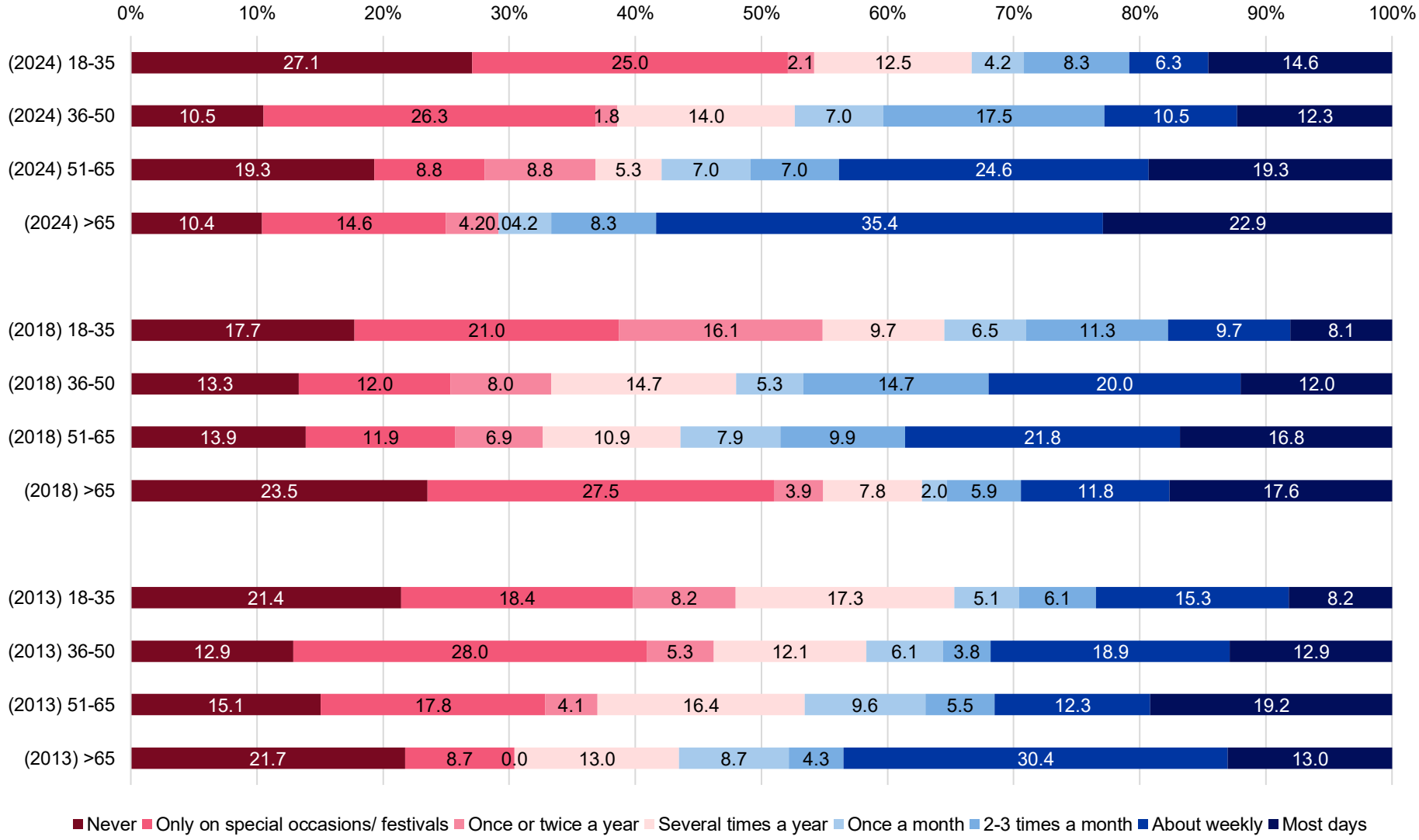


Figure 3.4.8g: How often do you: Do you pray in places other than church/temple/mosque or other religious settings?, responses by age group and wave (Islam)

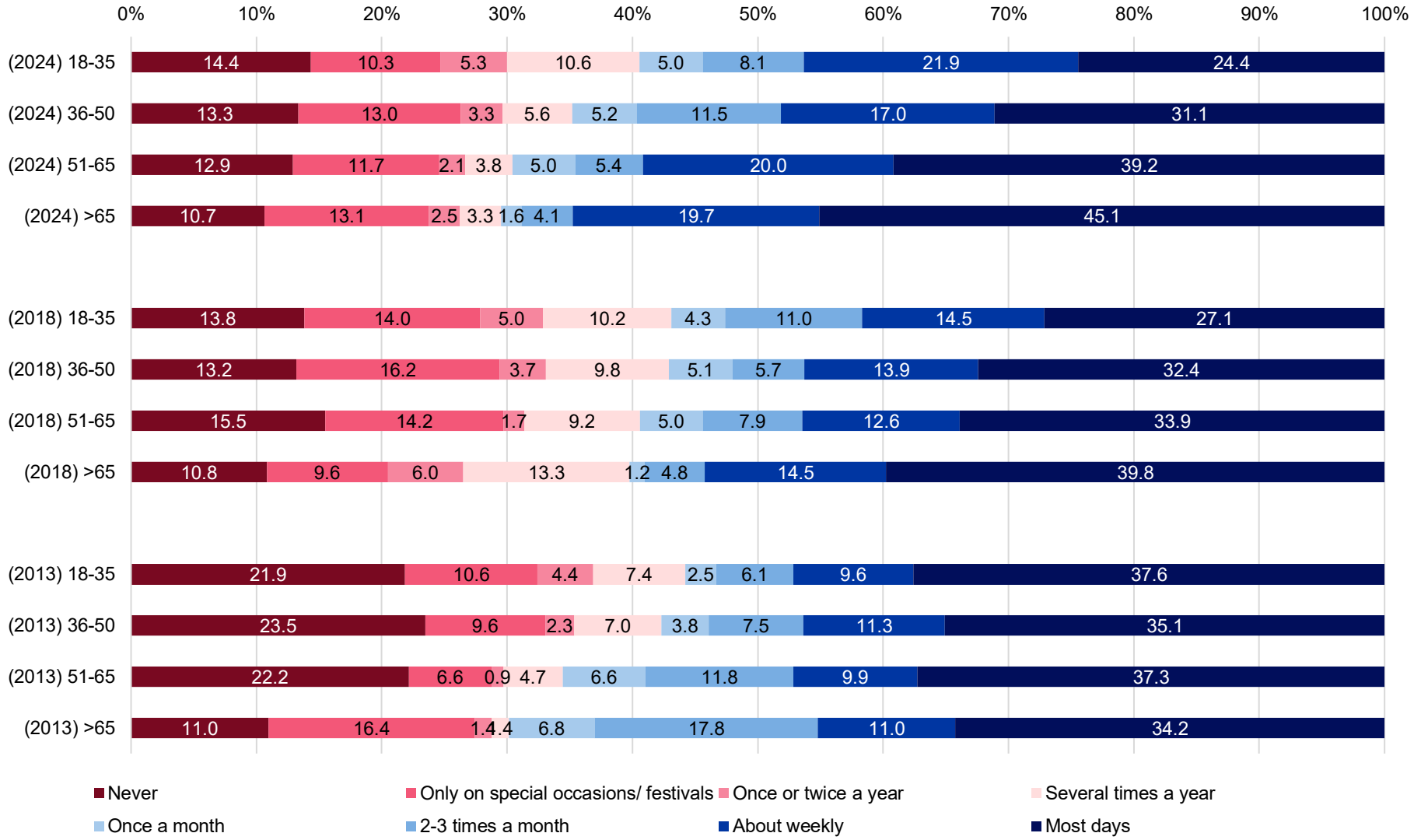


Figure 3.4.8h: How often do you: Read religious literature (including a holy book or literature which deals with religion)?, responses by age group and wave (Islam)

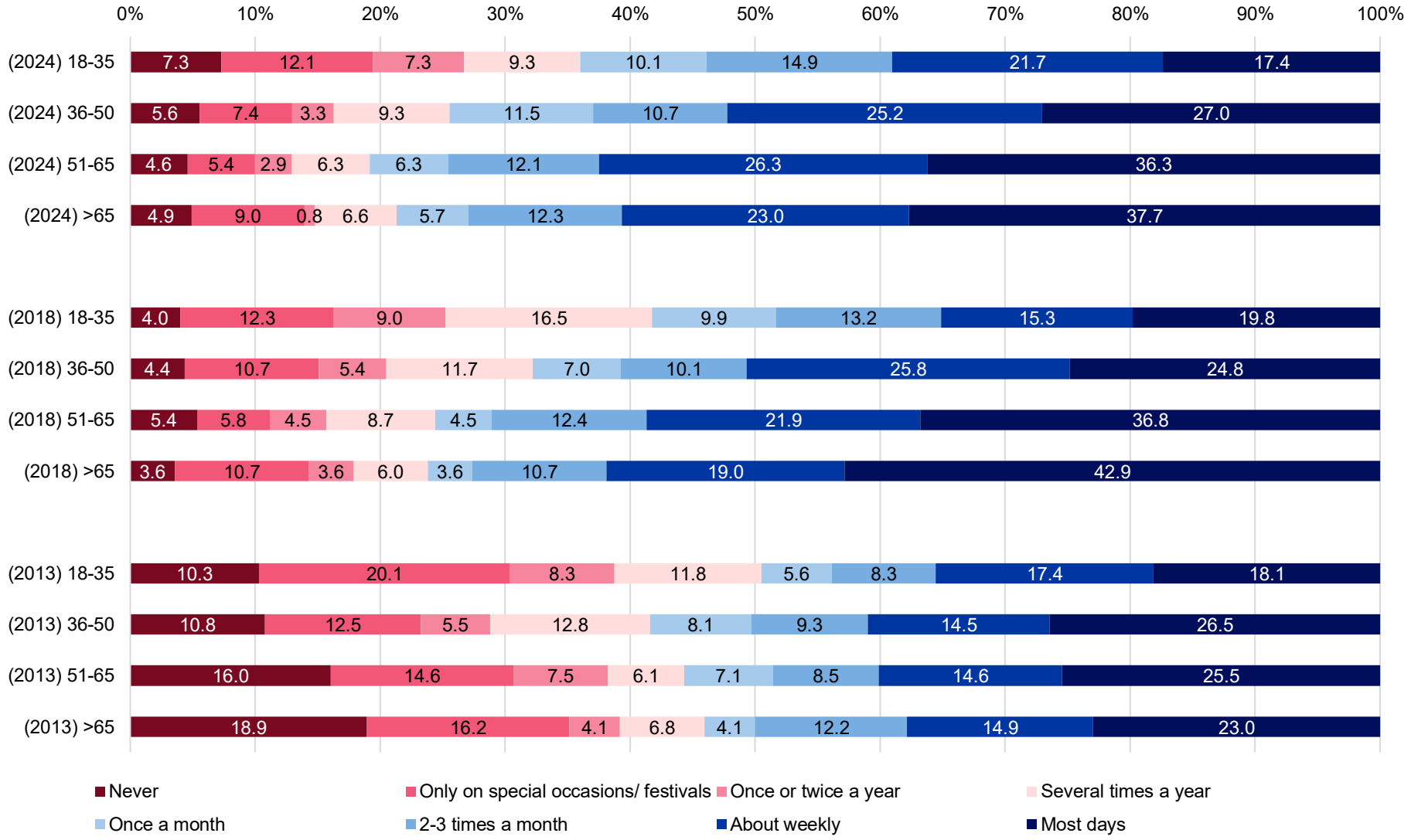
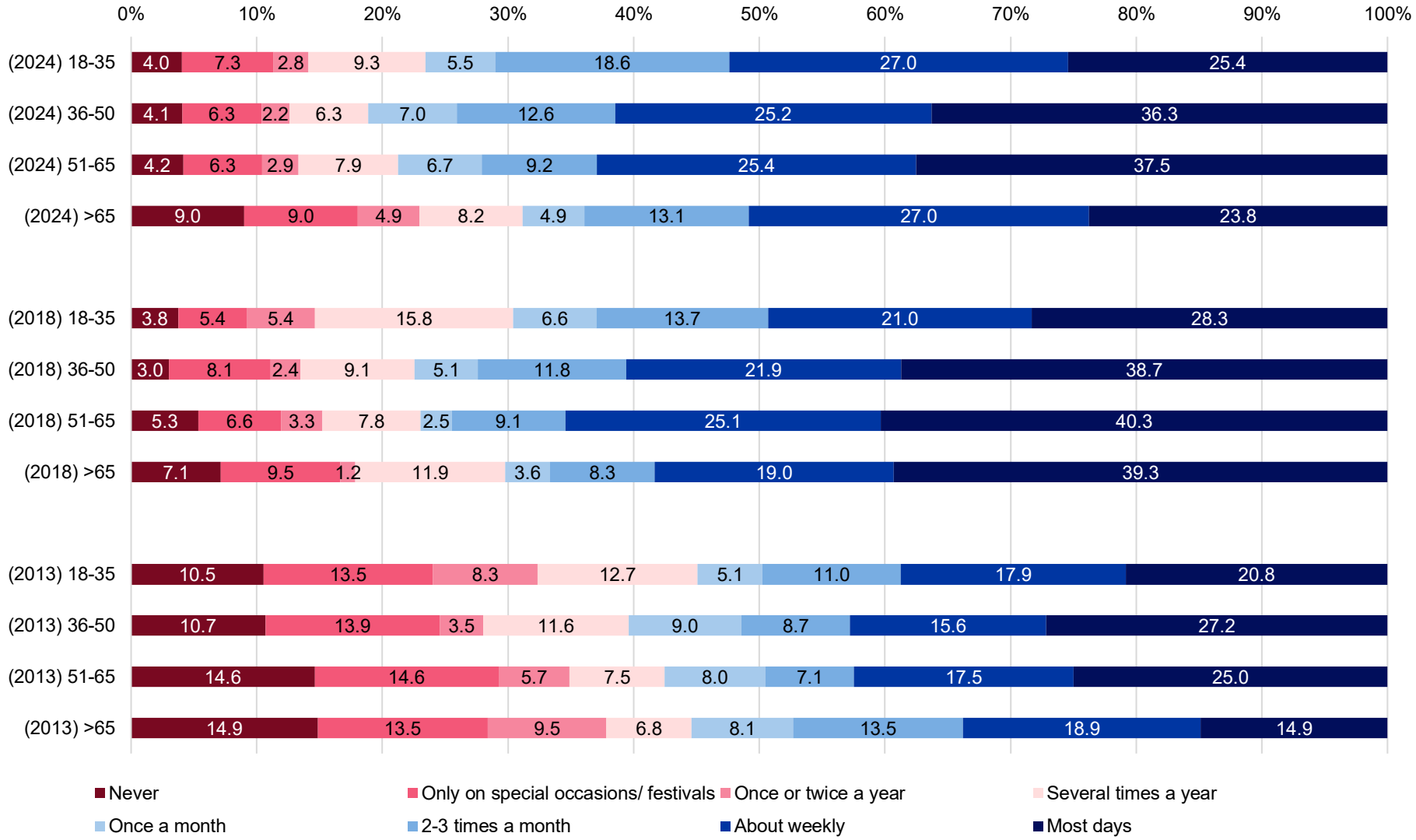


Figure 3.4.8i: How often do you: Watch or listen to religious media (e.g. songs, videos or any kind of media)?, responses by age group and wave (Islam)



4 ARCHETYPES AND PROFILES

In this chapter, we used the available data to derive different profiles of religiosity and practice. We derived four different archetypes of respondents based on religious profiles, namely Moderates, Seculars, Faithfuls, and Believers, based on how important religion is to their lives as well as how frequently they engage in religious practices.

4.1 Archetypes of Religiousness

We made use of K-means cluster analysis, a data reduction statistical technique commonly used to "group similar observations within a dataset" (Mailman School of Public Health, 2025). This technique allowed us to separate respondents into different groups with similar perspectives along two dimensions: their religious orientation, which is the extent to which they found religion important to them and incorporated religion into various facets of their lives, as well as the frequency at which they practised their religion (see Table 4.1). These two variables had a Pearson's correlation of .533, significant at the 0.001 level.

Table 4.1: Cluster dimensions

Dimension	Included components
Religious orientation	When faced with decisions about life choices, I try to find out what God/my religion thinks is the best I should do
	My spiritual beliefs give meaning to my life's joys and sorrows
	Without a sense of spirituality, my daily life would be meaningless
	I accept what my religious teachers tell me about how I should live my life
	Having a religion is necessary to be fulfilled in life
	Importance of religion to overall sense of identity
	I have tried to find out more about my own religion, such as its history, traditions and customs
	I have a strong sense of belonging to my own religious group
	My ideas of religion/spirituality are one of the most important parts of my philosophy in life
	I find that my ideas on religion/spirituality have a considerable influence on my view in other areas.
Frequency of religious practice*	Frequency of prayer
	Frequency of service attendance
	Frequency of one other practice (read religious literature, watch religious media, or meditate)

* Aspects of religious practice were modified for Muslim females, given different requirements and expectations. For this group, the included components were 1) frequency of prayer, 2) most frequent other practice (which was watching religious media), and 3) second-most frequent other practice (which was reading religious literature).

4.1.1 Four distinct clusters to profile respondents by religious orientation and practice

Based on the two dimensions listed above, we derived four clusters of respondents. The characteristics of each cluster are presented in Tables 4.1.1a and 4.1.1b. Overall, it appears that religion plays a significant role in the lives of many respondents, with 72.5 per cent of the weighted sample belonging to clusters that have at least moderately high degree of religious orientation. However, not all practise their religions to the same degree, suggesting that for a portion of the population, the attachment to

religious values and beliefs is less observable through activity but more internal, i.e., spiritual.

The Moderates are those who scored moderately high in both religious orientation and the frequency of their religious practices. Religion was relatively important to them, and they also practised their religion fairly often. They make up the smallest cluster within the sample, taking up 18.6 per cent of the total weighted sample. Meanwhile, the Seculars scored low in both dimensions and comprise 27.5 per cent of the weighted sample. Religion did not take up a large part of their lives, and, expectedly, neither did they engage in religious practice very often.

The group that is most religious in their orientation and practice are classified as the Faithfuls (22.4 per cent). Religion has helped to shape and guide different aspects of their lives. They were also the most consistent in engaging in various religious practices. In comparison, the Believers, which constitute the largest proportion of the sample at 31.5 per cent, had high religious orientation but reported low frequencies of religious practice. While religion was fairly important to them and they did take guidance from their beliefs, they were less likely to engage in religious practices frequently.

Table 4.1.1a: Cluster characteristics, by dimension

Dimension	Clusters			
	Moderates	**Seculars**	**Faithfuls**	**Believers**
	18.6%	**27.5%**	**22.4%**	**31.5%**
Religious orientation	0.78	0.42	0.84	0.76
Frequency of practice	0.67	0.03	1.00	0.17

The demographic profiles of these clusters also differed to some extent. There were more Muslims, those older than 65 years, females and those with secondary and lower education amongst the Moderates. For the Seculars, respondents with no religion were most likely to fall in this group, together with the youngest cohort, males, university-educated respondents, as well as those who earned above $4,000 a month.

Amongst the Faithfuls, there were more Christians, Muslims, and Hindus, those aged 51 to 65 years old, those with secondary and lower education, those who earned below $4,000 a month, as well as those who either stay in 1- to 3-room HDB flats or private properties. Meanwhile, Buddhists, Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus were more likely to fall within the Believers cluster. The detailed breakdown of demographic characteristics can be found in Table 4.1.1c below.

Table 4.1.1b: Summary demographic characteristics of clusters

Demographic variable	Clusters			
	Moderates	**Seculars**	**Faithfuls**	**Believers**
	18.6%	**27.5%**	**22.4%**	**31.5%**
Religion	More Muslims	More respondents with no religion	More Christians, Muslims, and Hindus	More Buddhists, Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus
Age	More people older than 65	More people aged 18–35	More people aged 51–65	-
Gender	More females	More males	-	-
Education	More secondary or lower	More university education	More secondary or lower	-
Income	-	More people who earn above $4,000 per month	More people who earn below $4,000 per month	-
Housing	-	-	More 1- to 3-room HDB flat dwellers; private property dwellers	-

Table 4.1.1c: Detailed demographic characteristics of clusters

Demographic variable	Clusters			
	Moderates 18.6%	**Seculars 27.5%**	**Faithfuls 22.4%**	**Believers 31.5%**
Buddhism	18.4%	24.9%	22.0%	34.9%
Taoism	18.7%	33.1%	14.7%	33.5%
Catholicism	21.0%	16.7%	24.8%	37.6%
Christianity	20.3%	8.9%	39.4%	31.3%
Islam	27.7%	3.4%	30.2%	38.7%
Hinduism	17.8%	16.7%	26.4%	39.1%
No religion	6.6%	76.1%	3.9%	13.4%
18–35 years old	16.7%	30.7%	18.8%	33.9%
36–50 years old	19.5%	23.0%	24.0%	33.6%
51–65 years old	20.2%	19.1%	29.3%	31.4%
> 65 years old	23.4%	18.0%	25.5%	33.1%
Male	17.4%	26.2%	23.7%	32.6%
Female	21.4%	20.9%	24.2%	33.4%
Secondary and below	23.1%	14.9%	27.5%	34.5%
ITE/ Poly/ Prof. Qual.	18.7%	23.4%	24.0%	34.0%
Degree and above	16.3%	33.1%	20.1%	30.5%
< $2,000	21.8%	17.6%	26.9%	33.8%
$2,000–$3,999	20.3%	19.0%	25.6%	35.0%
$4,000–$6,999	17.3%	31.4%	21.6%	29.6%
≥ $7,000	15.1%	35.1%	19.8%	30.0%
HDB 1–3 room	21.3%	17.5%	26.8%	34.5%
HDB 4-room	19.7%	24.7%	21.9%	33.6%
HDB 5+-room	17.7%	28.6%	22.5%	31.2%
Private property	17.1%	25.6%	26.5%	30.8%

5 CONCLUSION

Our report has drawn on selected findings from the 2024 wave of the IPS Race, Religion, and Language survey, and where relevant, compared them with the two earlier waves in 2013 and 2018 to show how Singaporean residents identify with and practice religion. In the process, we also highlighted the dominant identities that are salient to most Singaporeans; chief among them being national identity.

The results of the survey show that religiosity in Singapore society has evolved over the past decade or so. For respondents who are religiously affiliated, a group which currently constitute an overwhelming majority of society, religion has over the years become more important as a component of their overall identity. Together with the other trends on religiosity and the influence of religion on respondents' lives, it seems clear that there is a growth in religious identity and orientation among this group of Singaporeans.

On the surface, the growth in religious identity and orientation may seem surprising given that there are some downward trends in religious practices over time. However, this actually reflects shifting practices of religion on people's everyday lives. While fewer respondents indicated that they are praying daily or going for religious gatherings, religious practices have actually not waned; rather, they are taking different forms. More are accessing religion through media more frequently, or turning to individualised religious practice, as seen by the increase in frequency of

respondents engaging in meditation and reading religious literature. These trends clearly mirror changes in the social and religious landscape. The growth of religious media online accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic, as limited access to physical religious spaces led many religious groups to develop digital methods to engage their adherents. Meditation, which has roots in many religious traditions has become popularised in various secular settings (e.g., mindfulness training) and also among religious groups finding ways to tout the practice as beneficial both in connecting one to the supernatural but also to provide relief of various "this-worldly" concerns. Religious literature has become more accessible and more in demand by an increasingly literate population who can easily access and share such literature through social media. In effect, with changes in the religious landscape, pattern of religious practice in Singapore has evolved.

Given the diversity of Singapore's religious landscape, it is not surprising to see varying levels of religiosity and practice. But while Christians and Muslims have always displayed high levels of religious orientation and practice, we also note significant shifts among Buddhists and Hindus who increasingly indicate that they are feeling more connected to their religions. Besides a possible revitalisation of religion among these religious traditions, it is also possible that there has been a change over time in how respondents self-categorise their religious affiliations. Perhaps those who used to nominally call themselves Buddhists and Hindus, but had very little connection to these religious traditions apart from it being the religion of their forebears, are now more likely to consider themselves as having no religion. Thus, those who do declare a religious affiliation might be more likely to have some connection to their faith; or at least a stronger religious orientation, even if low on religious practice.

There are some implications from the results of this study for the understanding of Singapore society and policy. Given the greater salience of a religious identity among those who are affiliated there is a possibility of religious groups pushing more for their beliefs to be considered in policy making. Religious individuals may also feel that their traditions should be given greater public attention and space. Currently, Singapore has managed to strike a balance between allowing for religious practices in the public space in relation to secularism. For example, Muslim female nurses can now wear their *tudung* – if they so wish – while at work, a result of multiple discussions and conversations throughout the years between relevant agencies and the community. From time to time, there are also calls for the recognition of religious festivals not currently accorded public holiday status to be officially recognised, such as Thaipusam (CNA, 2025).

While this stronger sense of identity and community amongst religious affiliates can help provide comfort and support, especially through difficult times, there may be implications to religious harmony, if these growing ties also lead to more jostling for space and influence between the various religious groups. While more research is certainly needed to determine if there is a tendency for greater inter-group friction with a rise in religiosity, we expect that such tendencies will be mitigated with Singapore's framework to maintain religious harmony. However, refinements will always be needed to manage and maintain this delicate balance of our social fabric as society evolves.

Given the increasing frequency with which individuals turn to religious media, online content should be a matter for careful consideration, especially when the great

proportion of originators of such content reside overseas under differing contexts. Such contexts may allow for the articulation and advocacy of religious ideas and practices, that run counter to Singapore's long-established social compact and the realities of practicing faith in a multicultural society. This is particularly important in the context of Singapore's aspiration to be a "we-first" society, where religious expression is respected but balanced against the need for mutual accommodation and harmony. If left unchecked, exposure to overseas religious content could foster forms of religiosity that are misaligned with local norms. At the most extreme, these influences risk feeding into religious radicalisation, as highlighted in and exemplified by the Ministry of Home Affairs' recent *Singapore Terrorism Threat Assessment Report* (2025).

These evolving dynamics necessitate that religious stakeholders continue to be in the conversation as Singapore charts its way forward in uncertain times. Not only is it important that religious stakeholders be engaged on matters of social cohesion; they also represent important channels for the dissemination and support of various national priorities, ranging from vaping, online harms, or other public health and societal concerns. As illustrated by the survey results, a substantial number of respondents look to religion for guidance on a range of issues. Religious leaders and organisations, by virtue of their community reach and moral authority, can serve as critical partners in reinforcing positive norms and complementing state efforts. Beyond risk mitigation, there are also opportunities for synergy: religious groups already contribute to pro-social initiatives and can be further engaged to support national efforts, for instance those promoting mental health and overall well-being.

Second, in the context of an ageing society, religion is likely to take on even greater importance given that the survey results show that older Singaporeans tend to be more religious. Community programme design should therefore take into account provisions that respect and accommodate religious needs, including dietary requirements, caregiving practices, and worship opportunities. In addition, religious stakeholders can play a constructive role in end-of-life considerations, offering both spiritual comfort and structured guidance that complements secular healthcare and social support systems. Thoughtful collaboration in this space will help ensure dignity, community support, and holistic care for elderly Singaporeans, while strengthening social cohesion more broadly.

Ultimately, the findings of this study underscore the importance of nurturing a Singapore where religion continues to be a source of meaning, resilience, and community, while never undermining our shared sense of national unity. As we look ahead, the challenge is not merely to manage diversity but to harness it as a strength: to ensure that religious traditions and secular governance complement rather than compete with one another. This requires vigilance, dialogue, and above all, a commitment to the “we-first” ethos that Prime Minister Lawrence Wong described in his 2025 National Day Rally; an ethos rooted in caring for one another, contributing to the common good, and building a society where every individual looks out for their fellow Singaporean (Wong, 2025). When practiced in this spirit, religion can reinforce rather than divide: offering moral guidance, fostering solidarity, and strengthening the social bonds that hold Singapore together. If this balance is sustained, Singapore can continue to stand as a global example of how a diverse, multi-religious society can thrive in unity without demanding uniformity.

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