

**LIVING WITH COVID-19 IN SINGAPORE:
ATTITUDES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY AHEAD**

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**LIVING WITH COVID-19 IN SINGAPORE: ATTITUDES,
CHALLENGES AND THE WAY AHEAD¹**

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LIVING WITH COVID-19 IN SINGAPORE: ATTITUDES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY AHEAD

Executive summary

Data and methodology

- Data used in this report was taken from Wave 31 (W31, 14 July 2021 to 25 July 2021) to Wave 42 (W42, 19 November 2021 to 23 November 2021) of Toluna's online consumer panel. The wave dates cover the period from the second Phase 2 (Heightened Alert) (P2HA) to the start of the Transition Phase (see Table A)

Table A: List of wave start and end dates

Wave	Start date	End date	Remarks
31	14 July 2021	25 July 2021	- 22 Jul: Start of second P2HA
32	26 July 2021	7 August 2021	- 6 Aug: Relaxation of P2HA rules announced
33	7 August 2021	19 August 2021	
34	20 August 2021	30 August 2021	- 22 Aug: Lowest number of community cases reported since mid-July
35	2 September 2021	10 September 2021	- 10 Sept: Sharp spike in cases to be expected in the community
36	15 September 2021	21 September 2021	- 15 Sept: Singapore reported more than 800 daily cases - 20 Sept: More than 1,000 cases reported, higher than the daily count in April 2020
37	22 September 2021	29 September 2021	- 24 Sept: Stabilisation Phase announced - 27 Sept: Start of Stabilisation Phase
38	1 October 2021	11 October 2021	- 8 Oct: PM Lee's address to the nation on living with COVID-19
39	15 October 2021	27 October 2021	- 20 Oct: Extension of Stabilisation Phase announced - 25 Oct: Start of extended Stabilisation Phase

40	28 October 2021	1 November 2021	
41	10 November 2021	17 November 2021	- 10 Nov: Calibrated adjustments to Stabilisation Phase
42	19 November 2021	23 November 2021	- 20 Nov: Transition Phase announced - 22 Nov: Start of Transition Phase

COVID-19 governance

- Attitudes and perceptions towards the way the government was managing the COVID-19 pandemic fell to its lowest levels as the number of daily case numbers rose rapidly from September to October 2021
 - The fluctuations in attitudes and perceptions towards the government's COVID-19 management appeared to move in tandem with the daily case numbers
 - Satisfaction levels stabilised and remained relatively high since the gradual improvement of daily case numbers
- Satisfaction with the way the government has implemented policies in handling the COVID-19 pandemic
 - While satisfaction levels fell slightly for most of the policies as the number of community cases shot up in later waves, satisfaction levels have stabilised and remained relatively high. This is especially the case for satisfaction in keeping the healthcare system running where around 80 per cent of respondents indicated satisfaction. Around seven in 10 were satisfied with the way the government has supported livelihoods and welfare needs during the pandemic, ensured that safe management measures were adhered to and communicated to the public on policies and plans related to the pandemic and re-opening.

- Satisfaction with the way the government was reducing the number of daily infections
 - The proportion of those who were satisfied dropped from 74 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to 69 per cent in W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021); this increased to 78 per cent in W33 (7 -19 August 2021) but was on a downward trend until 44 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) before increasing to 57 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
 - Satisfaction levels appeared to move in tandem with case numbers – as cases rise, proportion of those who were satisfied decreased; while as case numbers stabilised, so too did satisfaction levels
- Satisfaction with overall governance of COVID-19
 - Increased from 77 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to 82 per cent in W33 (7 -19 August 2021), but declined steadily to 59 per cent in W38 (1 -11 October 2021) before bouncing back to 64 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
 - Lowest proportion recorded since the survey started in April 2020 was in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) at 59 per cent
 - Decline in satisfaction with overall governance of COVID-19 could in part be a reaction towards the rapidly unfolding COVID-19 situation in Singapore
- Sentiments towards how the government was listening to the concerns of Singaporeans
 - Proportion of those who felt positive (happy, reassured or pleasantly surprised) increased from 58 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to 62 per cent in W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021)
 - It hovered at around 61 to 64 per cent from W33 (7 – 19 August 2021) to W35 (2 – 10 September 2021) before dropping to 56 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and continued the decline to 46 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and 48 per cent in W39 (15 – 27

October 2021), before increasing to 56 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)

- Trust in the government's ability to navigate and lead Singapore in a post-pandemic world
 - Around two-thirds of respondents in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021) felt that they trust that the government knew how to lead Singapore; this increased slightly to 69 per cent in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021) but went on a steady decline, reaching its lowest of 54 per cent in W38 (1 -11 October 2021) and W39 (15 – 27 October 2021). It then increased to 57 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
- Belief in the government's political leadership in managing the COVID-19 virus
 - Seven in 10 in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) believed that the authorities displayed good political leadership, but this dropped to 63 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and further dropped to 54 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021), 53 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) and 58 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
 - Older Singaporeans were somewhat more likely to think that the authorities have not displayed good political leadership in managing the virus

Living with COVID-19

- Belief in Singapore's ability to overcome COVID-19 remained high despite only slightly more than half of Singaporeans feel that Singapore has been on the right track to reopening in later waves of this study
 - Singaporeans are cautious lest it opens too fast to its own detriment, and slightly more than half felt positive about differentiated measures for the vaccinated and unvaccinated
- Winning the fight against COVID-19
 - Around seven in 10 Singaporeans believed that Singapore would win the fight against COVID-19
 - Sentiments on treating COVID-19 as an endemic virus
 - Around four in 10 respondents from W31(14 – 25 July 2021) to W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) said they felt positive (happy, reassured, pleasantly surprised) about this strategy; it hit a low of 32 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and increased to 51 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
 - Those who felt negative (angry, anxious, sad) grew from 34 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to 42 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021); this continued increasing to 49 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and dropped to about 30 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
 - Older respondents were less likely to feel positive about how COVID-19 was treated as an endemic virus
 - Recovering from COVID-19 virus
 - At least two-thirds of respondents said they preferred recovering from COVID-19 at home instead of a Community Care Facility (CCF)
 - Around four in 10 of respondents aged 60 and above prefer recovering in a CCF as opposed to around three in 10 respondents from the other age groups

- Perceptions on being on the “right track” to re-opening
 - At least seven in 10 in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) felt that Singapore has been on the right track to reopening safely and successfully
 - This dropped to 60 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021), as the COVID-19 situation intensified and continued its decline to 52 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021), the lowest proportion, but recovered to 57 per cent in W38 (1-11 October 2021). It fell to 54 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) before increasing to 56 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
 - Singaporeans aged 30 to 49 and those with higher monthly income were more likely to believe that Singapore has been on the right track to reopening
- Attitudes towards vaccinations and differentiated measures for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons
 - Close to 70 per cent felt that the government should make vaccination compulsory to all Singaporeans and long-term residents, while more than 80 per cent who have been vaccinated planned on taking the booster shot when it is made available to them
 - Slightly more than half feel positive (happy, reassured, pleasantly surprised) about having differentiated measures for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons
 - Older Singaporeans were more likely to feel negative about the vaccine-differentiated measures
- Choosing the best approach to reopening
 - Respondents were presented two options based on what experts say - a slow opening if Singapore wishes to keep the COVID-19 death rate to about two per day; a faster opening would mean the daily death rate would likely rise to about six or seven cases daily

- At least 80 per cent of respondents believed that Singapore should have a slower reopening with fewer deaths, as opposed to opening quickly but with a higher death count

Attitudes towards Safe Management Measures (SMMs)

- Singaporeans continue to believe in the efficacy of SMMs; around one-quarter of Singaporeans find SMMs inconvenient, with a slight increase in proportion in later waves
- Younger and more affluent Singaporeans were more likely to feel confident of dining out, among other social activities; they were also more likely to support relaxing SMMs
- Sentiments towards Safe Management Measures
 - At least 80 to 90 per cent of Singaporeans believed that observing Safe Management Measures' (SMMs), like taking regular COVID-19 tests, reducing social meetings and taking annual booster vaccine shots would reduce chances of COVID-19 infection
 - Many Singaporeans took their health advice from the authorities: after the authorities announced that temperature screening measures were no longer needed, belief in its efficacy fell sharply
 - Similarly, belief in the efficacy of mask wearing and reducing social meetings increased as authorities doubled down on the messaging during the days up to the Stabilisation Phase
- Perceived inconvenience of Safe Management Measures
 - Roughly one-quarter of Singaporeans said that the SMMs were totally inconvenient/inconvenient across W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W39 (15 – 27 October 2021); this proportion increased slightly in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)

- Changes to SMMs
 - Between 50 to 60 per cent were agreeable with the new policy measures such as making home recovery the default method of recovery for those who have been infected by COVID-19, no longer giving out a Quarantine Order to those who have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case, and allowing those who have been in close contact with a positive case to go about their normal routine as long as they test negative for their antigen rapid test (ART). Disagreement to these measures accounted for approximately 20 to 30 per cent while around 20 per cent were neutral on these measures.
 - Close to six in 10 said they support a mask mandate only when indoors or when crowded, while close to half supported allowing people to unmask when outdoors or in uncrowded spaces
 - Around half supported increasing social gathering limits; around four in ten supported unmasking at the workplace if with regular colleagues
 - Higher income and younger respondents were more likely to support relaxing SMMs:
 - This could be indicative of “Generation COVID”, youth who have missed out on key life opportunities just as they approach adulthood. Opening up could represent a chance to get their lives back
- Confidence in taking up social activities in the new normal
 - Close to half in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) said they were confident of dining out; this was an increase from 38 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021); 44 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) said they felt confident taking public transport after lowest of 37 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021)
 - At least six in 10 in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) to W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) were not confident of attending large live

events; this dropped to 55 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021), similar to pre-Stabilisation Period levels

- Slightly higher proportions of respondents feel more confident of taking up their social activities again, despite the high number of cases
 - This could suggest an attitudinal shift among the population and that Singaporeans are recovering from their initial fear of this more recent wave of infections, as they are fully vaccinated
- Younger and wealthier Singaporeans were more confident of taking up social activities than older, less wealthy Singaporeans; this could be indicative of different risk appetites, confidence in recovering from infections, as well as better financial capabilities in handling the economic impact of being infected
- Likelihood of using COVID-19 self-test kits
 - Around half the respondents in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) indicated that they were likely to use COVID-19 self-test kits; this proportion grew to 67 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
 - Rise in likelihood of using the self-test kits can be attributed to various reasons, like the compulsory testing routine for employees returning to work at the office, and increased exposure to the virus
 - Higher income respondents were more likely to use the COVID-19 self-test kits
- Reasons for using COVID-19 self-test kits
 - More than 80 per cent of Singaporeans were most likely to self-test when community cases are on the rise
 - More than 70 per cent said they would self-test when they show flu symptoms or before visiting vulnerable persons; around seven in 10 said they would self-test before going to work

- Reimposing Circuit Breaker and duration of Safe Management Measures
 - Around 68 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) to W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) felt that Singapore should return to a heightened alert phase or CB now to curb the sharp rise in cases
 - This fell to 55 per cent after Prime Minister's address ruled out any returns to a hard lockdown, and continued falling to 48 per cent in W42
 - Around four in 10 in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) were worried that Singapore would enter a second CB, but this dropped to 36 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) after PM Lee's address. A slight rise of 40 per cent was recorded in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) before falling to 31 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021)
 - At least 59 per cent of respondents in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) felt that SMMs should continue for another one to six more months

LIVING WITH COVID-19 IN SINGAPORE: ATTITUDES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY AHEAD

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents findings on Singaporeans' attitudes on living with COVID-19 as an endemic disease in Singapore. The data used in this report was drawn from an online survey panel of the marketing research firm, Toluna.

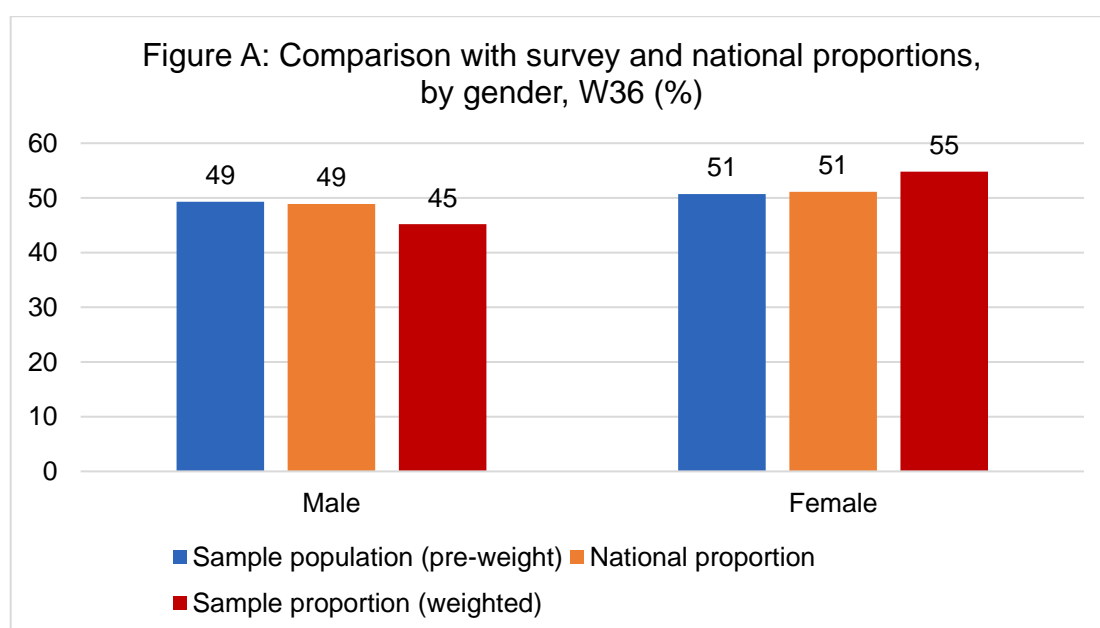
The survey panel started in April 2020 (i.e., Wave 1) and is still ongoing. The data here was taken from 14 July 2021 (Wave 31) to 23 November 2021 (Wave 42), covering the period from the second Phase 2 (Heightened Alert) (P2HA) to the last week of November 2021. The sample size in each of the 12 waves averaged 500 respondents, representative of the national population's gender and race profile. Table 1.1 below shows the time period during which each wave was conducted.

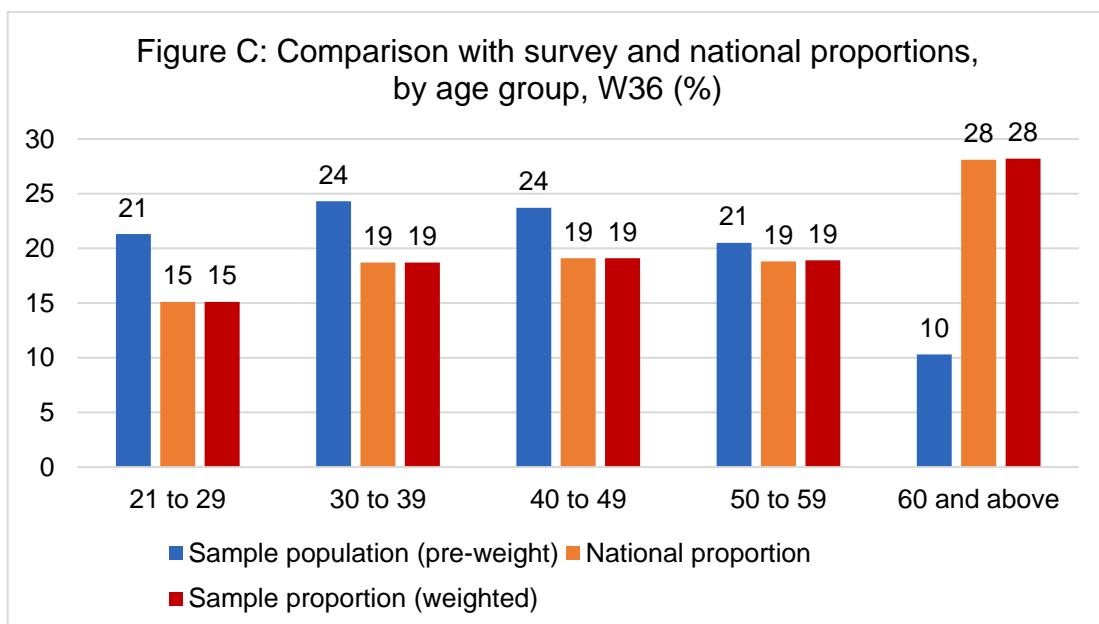
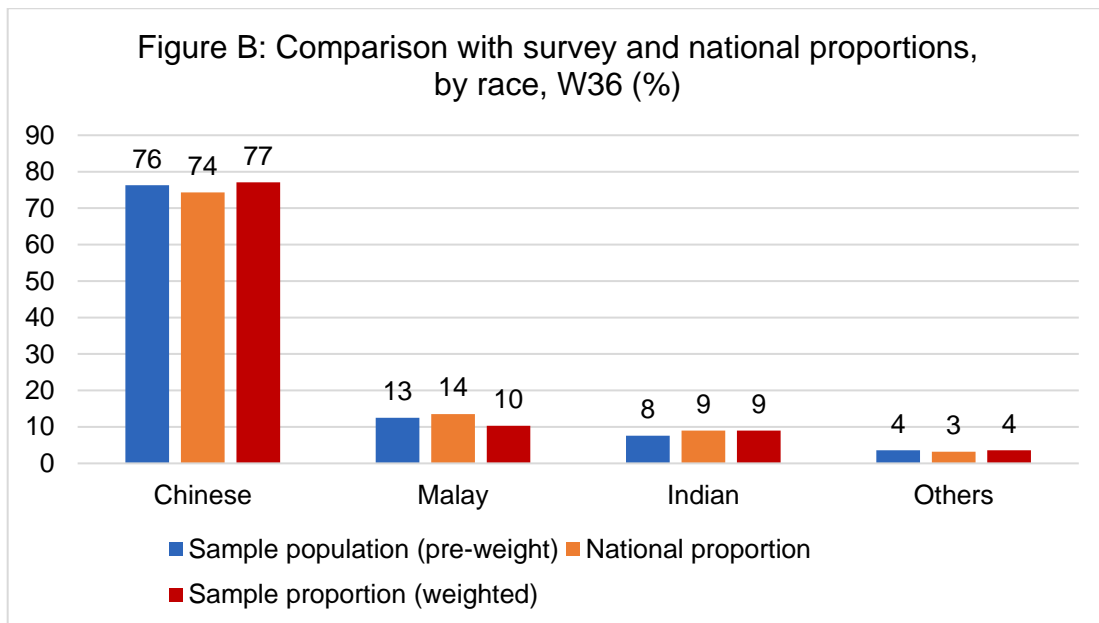
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41	10 November 2021	17 November 2021	- 10 Nov: Calibrated adjustments to Stabilisation Phase
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As the study was polled using a consumer panel, there were lower sampled proportions of older persons and those from lower income households, thus limiting the generalisability of our study. To correct such a limitation, age was weighted in each wave according to national proportions. Attempts to correct other variables, like education or housing, resulted in over-magnification of these populations instead and were thus not used. Figures A to C provide graphical comparisons of the representativeness of the gender, race, and age profile of the sample in Wave 36 with Singapore's resident population.





Nevertheless, the data here captures useful insights on the attitudes and behaviours of Singaporeans as Singapore begins to shift its COVID-19 strategy from that of eliminating the virus to living with an endemic disease. Further, when compared with our previous report (released April 2021, see Mathew, Suhaini, Hou and Tan, 2020), which covered the Circuit Breaker to Phase 3 periods, this report provides some indication of how Singaporeans are adapting

to new norms and social practices in a new, uncertain, and fast-changing environment.

Finally, data from W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) were aggregated into a single block to represent the views of Singaporeans during the extended Stabilisation Phase and start of the Transition Phase. Regressions were carried out to determine the influence and effect of demographic variables over various dependent variables reported here. The regression results are illustrated as cross tabs², where appropriate. We also provide some implications of these trends and how they might influence behaviours concerning attitudes and ways of living in the new normal, where possible.

² The regression model and relationships presented in this paper are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

1. COVID-19 GOVERNANCE

1.1 Attitudes towards the way the government has implemented policies in handling the COVID-19 pandemic

Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the way the government has implemented policies in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. While satisfaction levels fell slightly for most of the policies³ as the number of community cases shot up in later waves, it has since stabilised at relatively high proportions.

Around seven in 10 respondents were satisfied with the way the government has supported livelihoods and welfare needs during the pandemic (Figure 1.1.1), ensured safe management measures were adhered to (Figure 1.1.2) and communicated policies and plans related to the pandemic and re-opening (Figure 1.1.3).

While around nine in 10 respondents were satisfied with the way the government has kept the healthcare system running in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W34 (20 – 30 August 2021), the proportion fell to around eight in 10 from W35 (2 – 10 September 2021) onwards as sharp spike in cases were recorded in September (Figure 1.1.4). It dipped to 75 per cent in W40 but steadily increased to 80 per cent in W42. Despite concerns on how the healthcare system was under strain from the sudden increase in cases, the public was generally still satisfied with how the healthcare system has been kept running. The satisfaction level associated with the government's management of the healthcare system remained the highest among all the different policy areas.

³ Questions regarding how the government communicated government's plans and measures for re-opening, ensured SMMs are adhered at public places and opened VTLs with other countries were asked only during later waves of the study.

While at least seven in 10 respondents were satisfied with the way the government has managed travel bans and border control in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W36 (15 – 21 September 2021), the proportion fell to around six in 10 in subsequent waves, reaching 64 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) (Figure 1.1.5). Less than 20 per cent across all waves felt neutral about the way the government has managed travel bans and border control, with around 17 per cent who felt neutral in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).

Respondents were however least satisfied with the opening of Vaccinated Travel Lanes (VTLs) with other countries, with only half saying they were satisfied in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) (Figure 1.1.5). Around 26 per cent in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021) and 22 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) felt neutral about the opening of VTLs with other countries.

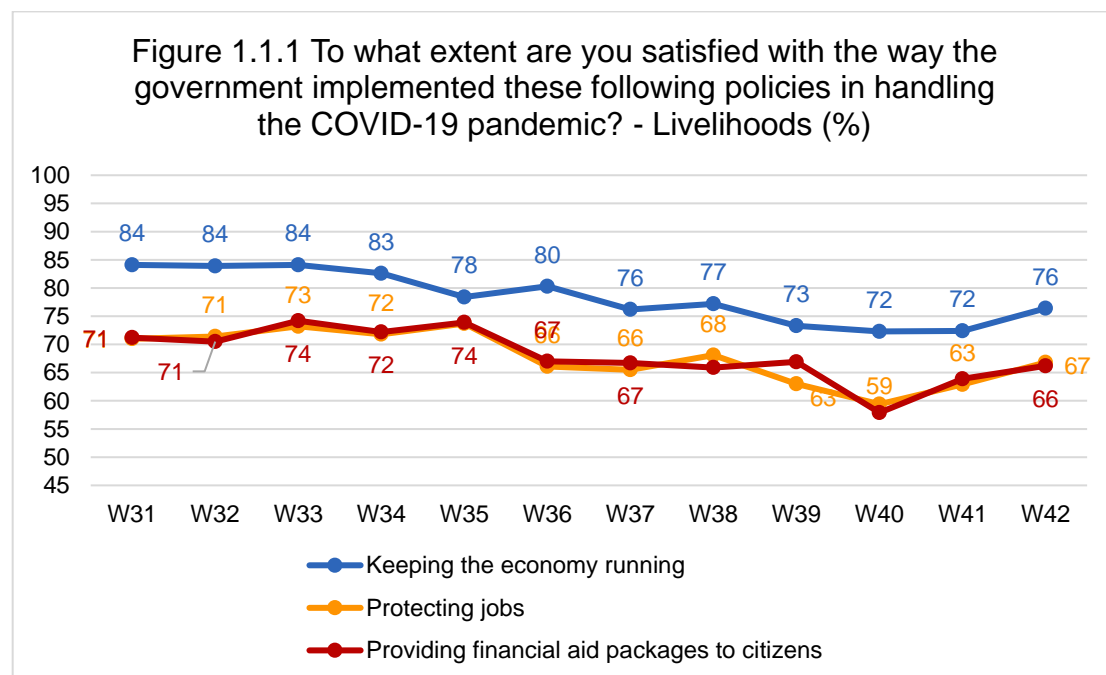


Figure 1.1.2 To what extent are you satisfied with the way the government implemented these following policies in handling the COVID-19 pandemic? - Safe Management (%)

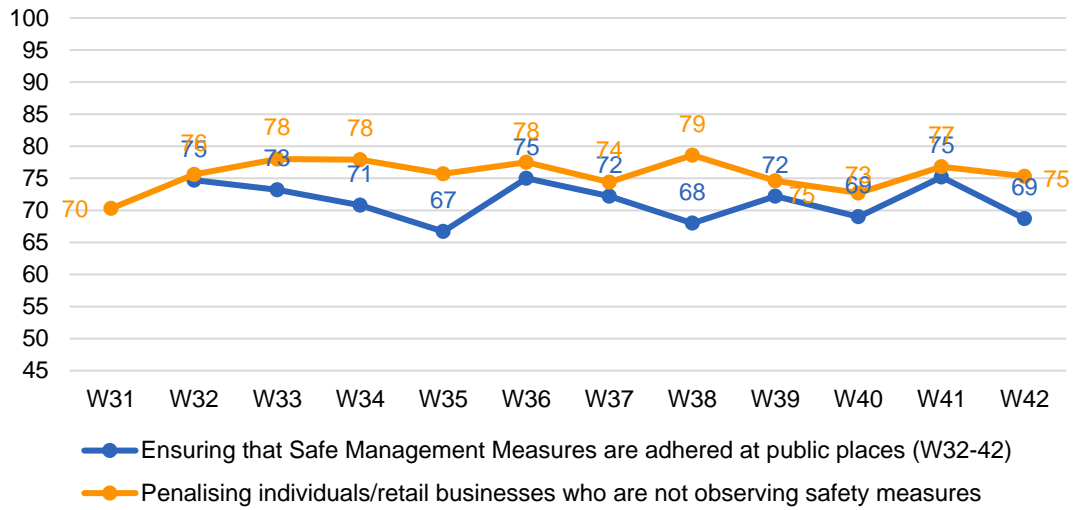
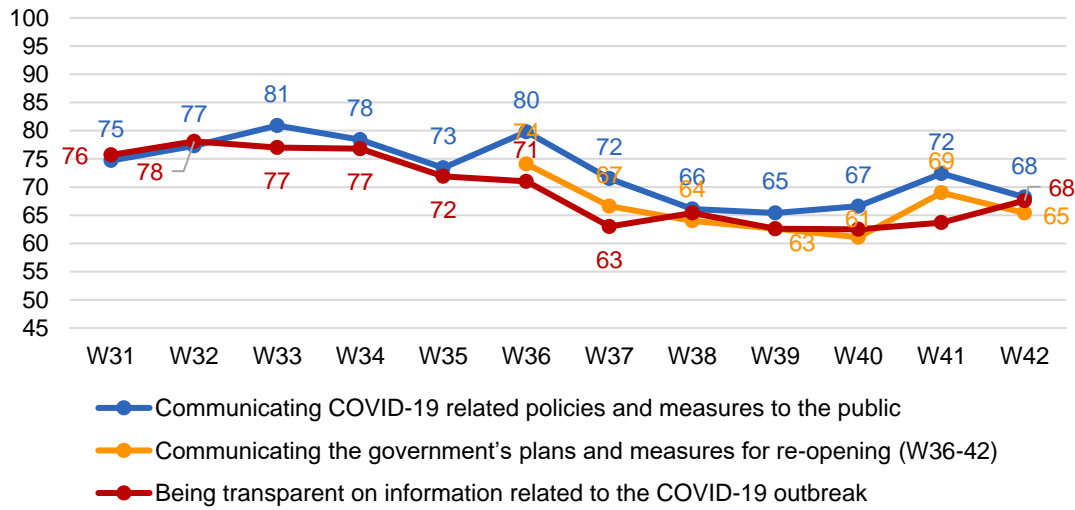
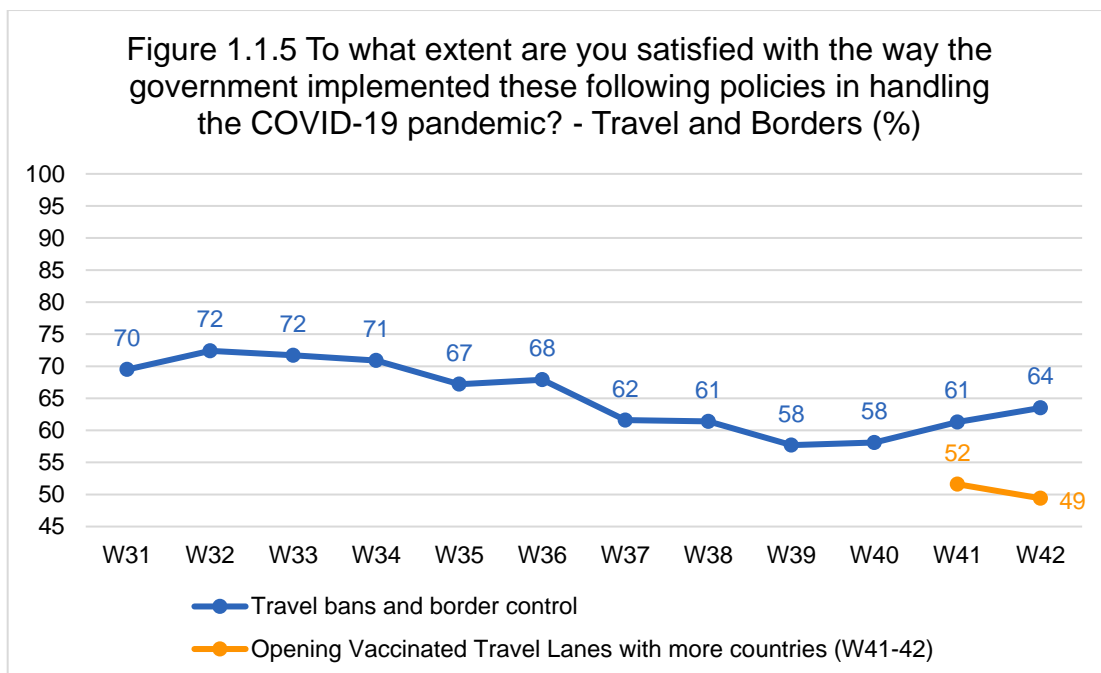
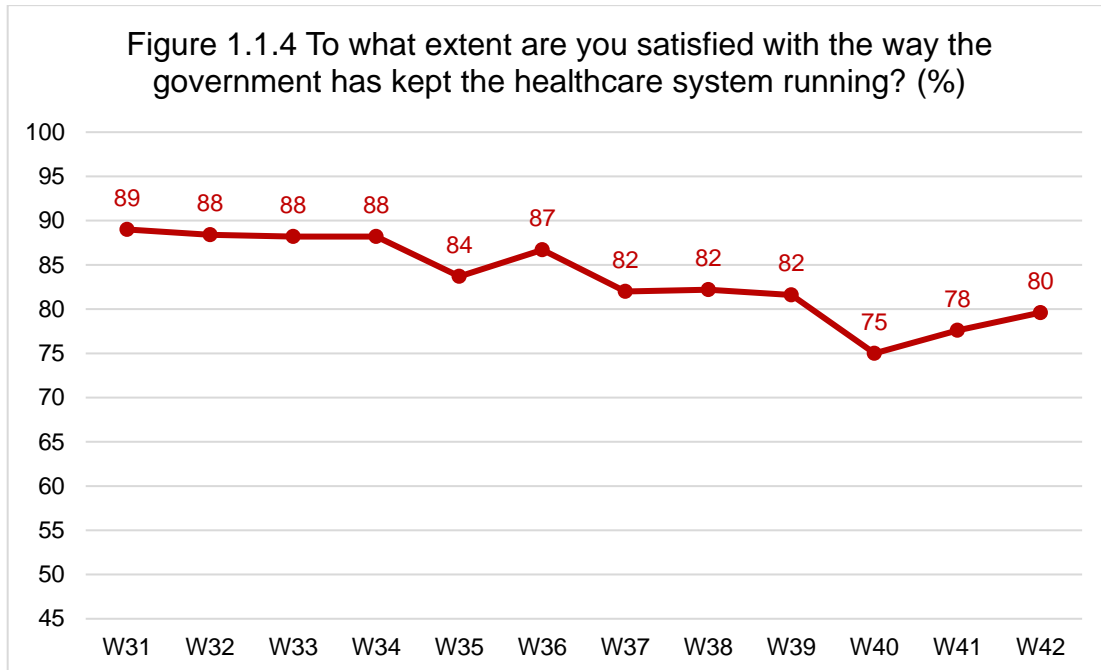


Figure 1.1.3 To what extent are you satisfied with the way the government implemented these following policies in handling the COVID-19 pandemic? - Communication (%)

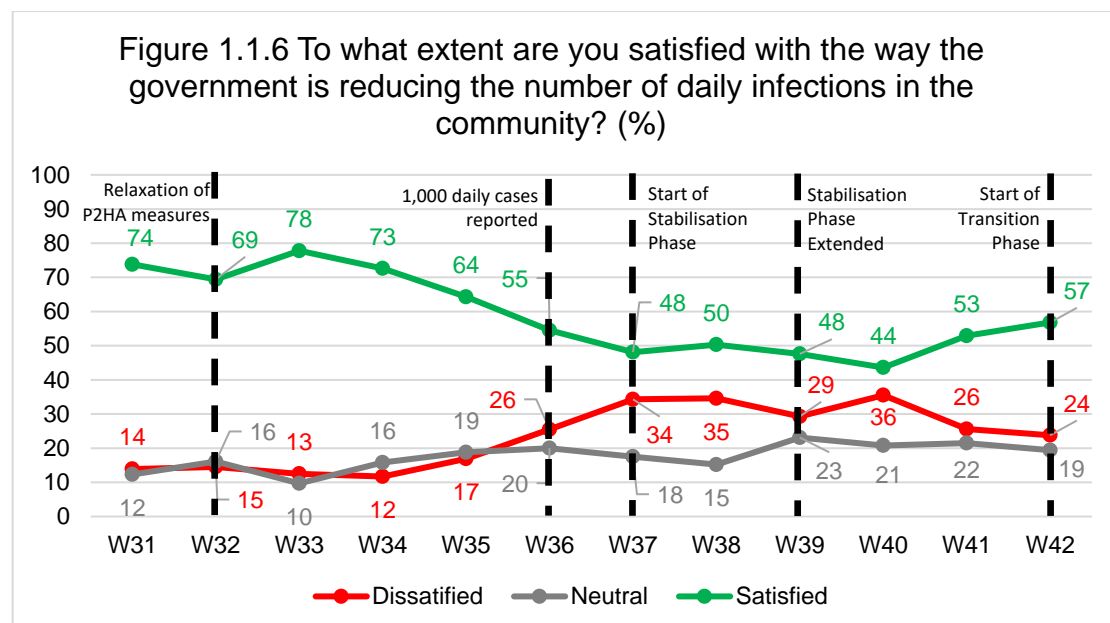




Respondents were also asked if they were satisfied with the way the government was reducing the number of daily infections in the community (Figure 1.1.6). The slight dip in W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021) was likely a reaction to the sudden jump in cases two weeks after the first P2HA was

relaxed, which triggered another round of tightened safety measures. The proportion of those who were satisfied increased as the situation was brought under control in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021). A downward trend was then observed from W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) to W37 (22 – 29 September 2021). As the authorities warned of the incoming wave of COVID-19 cases, Singaporeans felt less satisfied with the way the government was reducing the number of daily infections in the community.

The proportion of those who were satisfied decreased as reported cases continued to rise throughout September (W35-37). This decline showed signs of stabilising as reported cases started to drop, albeit still in the thousands. As the weekly infection growth rate stabilised and safe management measures were relaxed, the proportion of those who were satisfied increased to 53 per cent in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021) and 57 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021). Currently 24 per cent were dissatisfied with the government's performance in this area while 19 per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



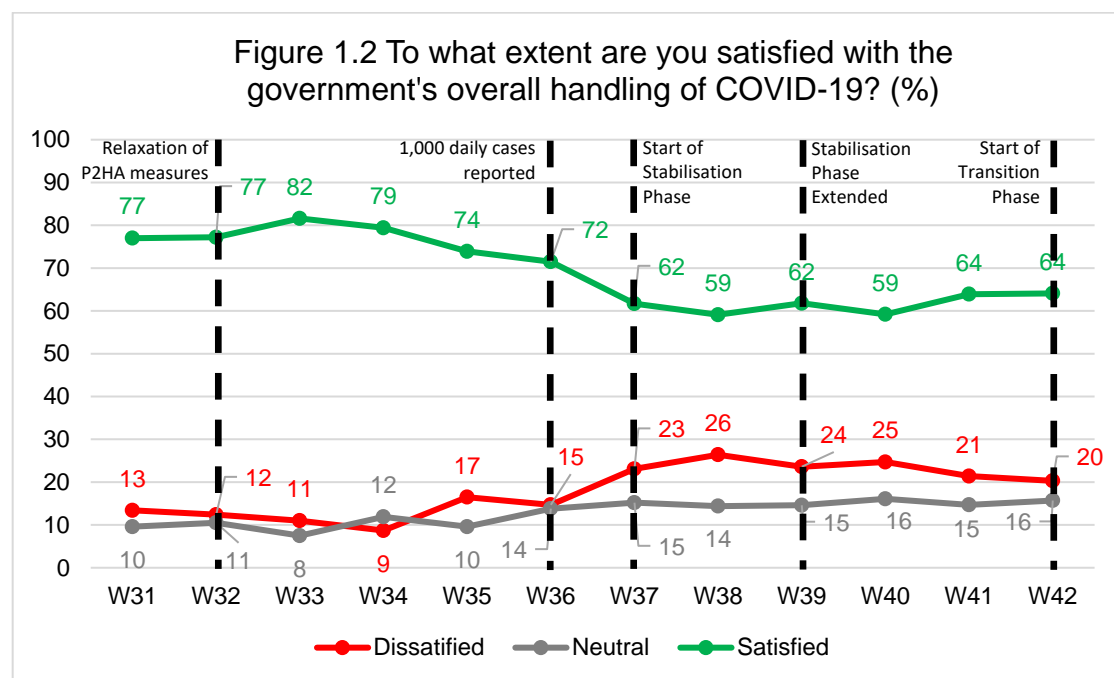
1.2 Attitudes towards overall management of the COVID-19 pandemic

Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the government's overall handling of COVID-19. The proportion of those who were satisfied with the government's overall handling of COVID-19 increased from around 77 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to 82 per cent in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021) but went on a gradual decline to 59 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021), the lowest ever proportion recorded since the survey started in April 2020. It then recovered to about 64 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) with 20 per cent dissatisfied and 16 per cent neutral. Respondents' overall assessment was, at least to some extent, perhaps influenced by the decreasing number of daily cases and the relaxation of measures, which were announced during that period.

The slight increase in satisfaction levels in the earlier waves may have been a reaction towards two phenomena: first, the decrease in the number of daily community cases, from about a hundred daily cases in late July (W32) to about 30 cases in mid-August (W33), and second, the relaxation of P2HA measures. Most Singaporeans were satisfied with the way the government had managed the surge in daily cases during the second P2HA and were satisfied that the stricter safety measures imposed by authorities worked in lowering the number of community infections.

On the other hand, the decline in the proportion of those who were satisfied happened as the authorities warned of a sharp increase in community cases in early September (W35). The increasing daily case numbers in the thousands and the re-tightening of safety measures later most likely negatively influenced a portion of Singaporeans' satisfaction on the government's management of the virus. The decline was slightly reversed in mid-October (W39), perhaps as a reaction to the Prime Minister's address in early October (W38).

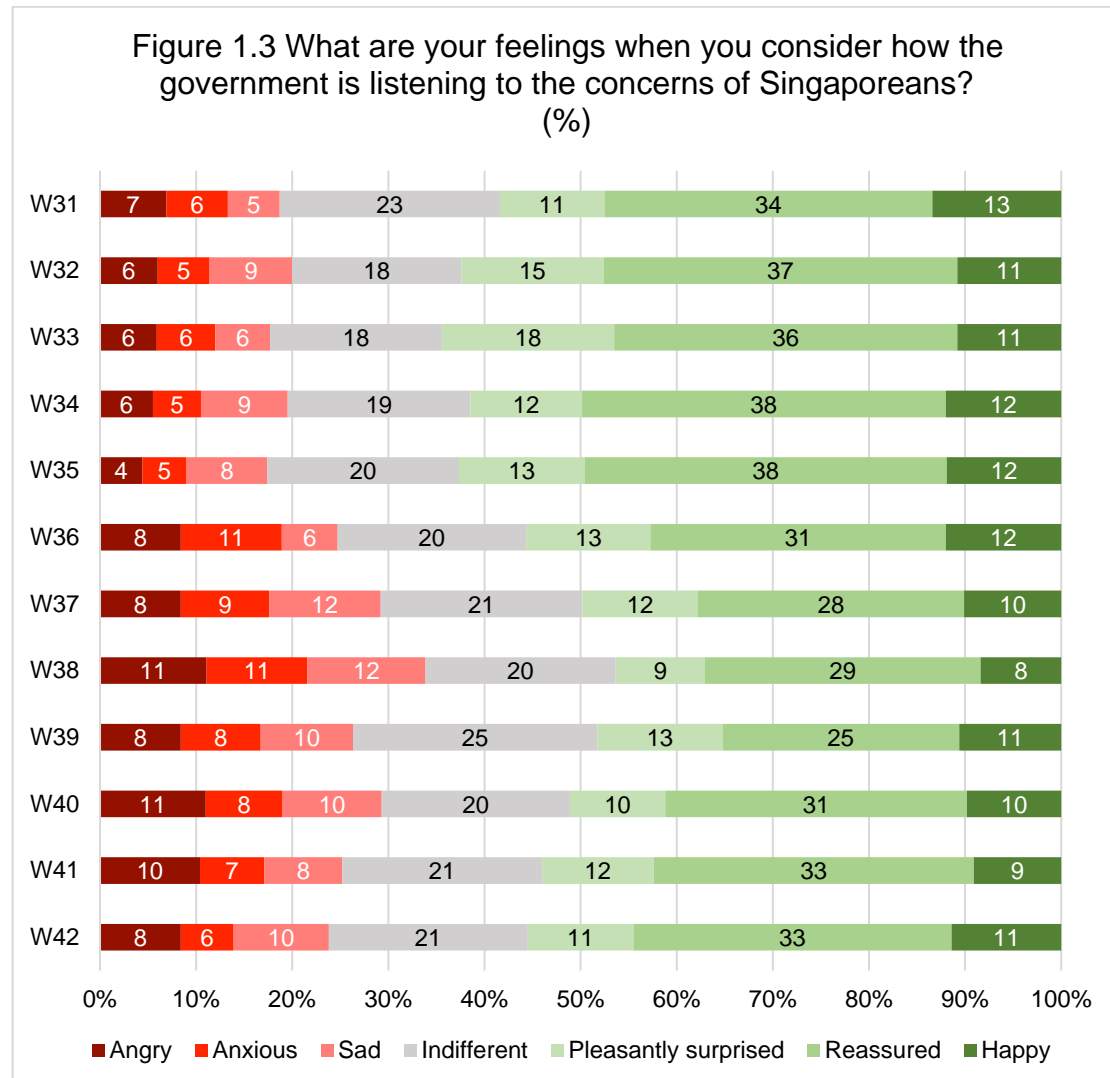
A slight decrease to 59 per cent was subsequently recorded in end-October (W40), possibly due to the extension of the Stabilisation Phase around the end of W39. The proportion of those who were satisfied then gradually rose to 64 per cent mid-November (W41 and W42) as safe management measures were relaxed near the end of the Stabilisation Phase and the start of the Transition Phase.



1.3 Sentiments on how the government was listening to the concerns of Singaporeans

Respondents were asked what they felt when they considered how the government was listening to the concerns of Singaporeans (Figure 1.3). The proportion of those who felt positive (happy, reassured or pleasantly surprised) increased from 58 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to 62 per cent in W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021) and 64 per cent in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021). The proportion of those who felt positive then gradually declined to about 46 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021), before gradually trending upwards to 56 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021). Around 24 per cent of respondents

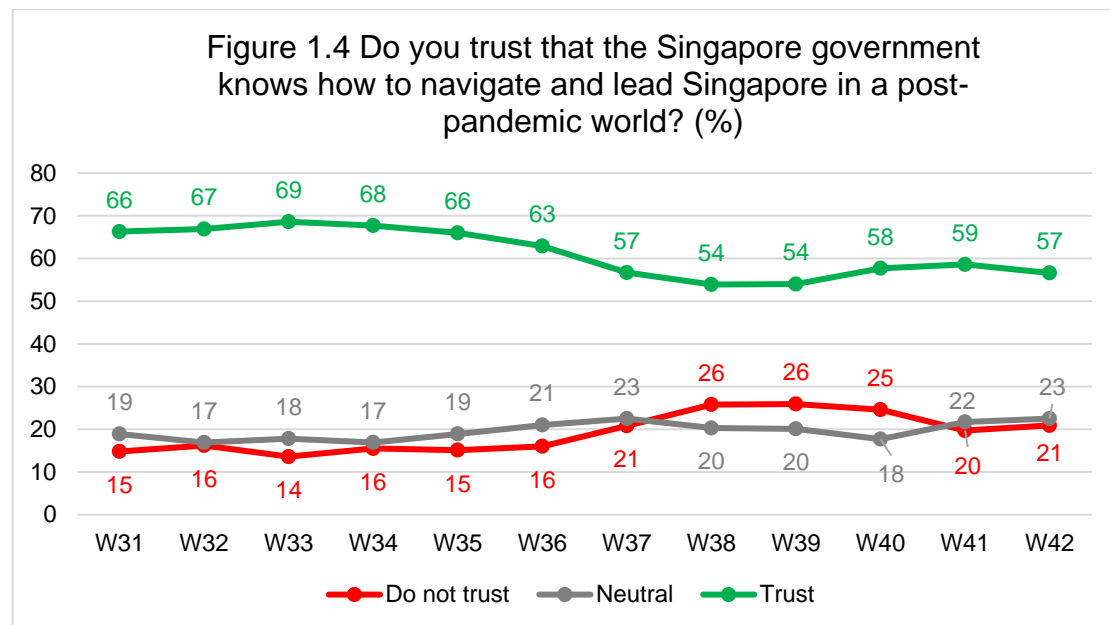
in the most recent wave had negative sentiments while 21 per cent indicated that they were indifferent.



1.4 Trust in the government's leadership capabilities

Respondents were asked if they trust that the Singapore government knew how to navigate and lead Singapore in a post-pandemic world (Figure 1.4). The proportion of those who said that they trust the government knows how to lead Singapore fluctuated around 66 to 69 per cent from W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W35 (2 – 10 September 2021). It slowly declined to about 63 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and continued declining until 54 per cent in W38 (1

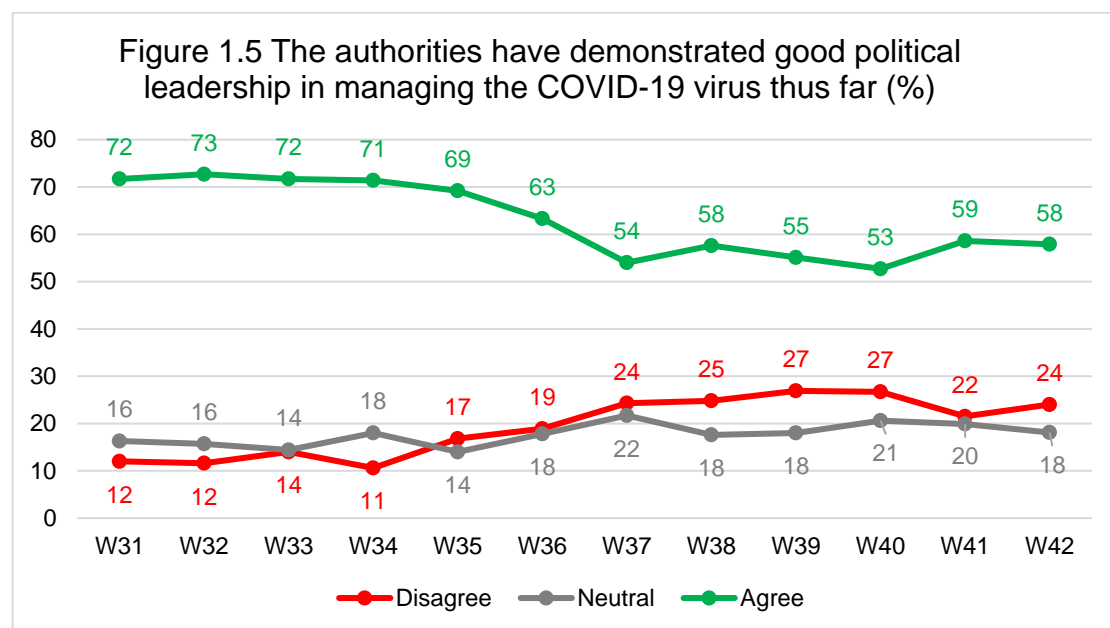
– 11 October 2021). The proportion then continued increasing from 54 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) to 57 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021). In the most recent wave (W42), 21 per cent indicated that they do not trust the government on this matter while 23 per cent were neutral.



1.5 Belief in political leadership

On the question of whether respondents they believed that the authorities have demonstrated good political leadership in managing the COVID-19 virus, around seven in 10 in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W35 (2 – 10 September 2021) believed that the authorities displayed good political leadership in managing the virus. This proportion declined to about 63 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and fell further to 54 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021). It recovered slightly to 58 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) before gradually falling to 53 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) during the extended Stabilisation Phase. As calibrated adjustments to the safe management measures were made in the Stabilisation Phase in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021) and Singapore entered the Transition Phase in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021), the proportion of those who believed the authorities displayed good political leadership increased to nearly 60 per cent.

Public discontent with the sudden rise in the community cases, among other worries related to COVID-19, was reflected by the steep decline from W36 to W37. While almost six in 10 in W41 to W42 felt that the authorities have demonstrated good political leadership, this proportion was still lower than pre-Stabilisation Phase proportions. The proportion of those who did not agree on this matter was 24 per cent while 18 per cent were neutral in W42.



A regression analysis was performed to determine the predictors of respondents' belief in the authorities' political leadership in managing the COVID-19 virus. The outcome variable and the list of predictor variables used for this analysis can be found in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: List of predictor variables

Outcome variable: To what extent do you agree that the authorities have demonstrated good political leadership in managing the COVID-19 virus thus far?	
Demographic predictor variables	Description
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 to 29 • 30 to 39 • 40 to 49 • 50 to 59 • 60 and above

Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O-Level and below • Post-secondary • Degree and above
Monthly income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below \$3,000 • \$3,000 to \$5,999 • \$5,999 and above
Household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not living with vulnerable persons • Living with vulnerable persons

The results (Table 1.2) showed that older respondents were more likely to believe that the authorities have not demonstrated good political leadership in managing the COVID-19 virus, while higher income earners were more likely to believe that the authorities have demonstrated good political leadership. More specifically, about 25 per cent of respondents aged 50-59 and around 31 per cent those aged 60 and above disagreed that the authorities have demonstrated good political leadership (Figure 1.6).

On the other hand, nearly two-thirds of respondents earning \$6,000 or more a month agreed that the authorities have demonstrated good political leadership (Figure 1.7). Singaporeans with higher monthly income were less likely to be affected by the pandemic, at least in their personal finances and job security. For this group of Singaporeans, assessment of the government's leadership capabilities may likely be based on public health strategies.

Table 1.2: Regression analysis results for "To what extent do you agree that the authorities have demonstrated good political leadership in managing the COVID-19 virus thus far?"

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value
Age	-.127	.041	.002
Education level	-.093	.080	.241
Monthly income	.294	.066	<.001
Household members	.072	.095	.454

Figure 1.6 The authorities have demonstrated good political leadership in managing the COVID-19 virus so far, by age, W40-W42 (%)

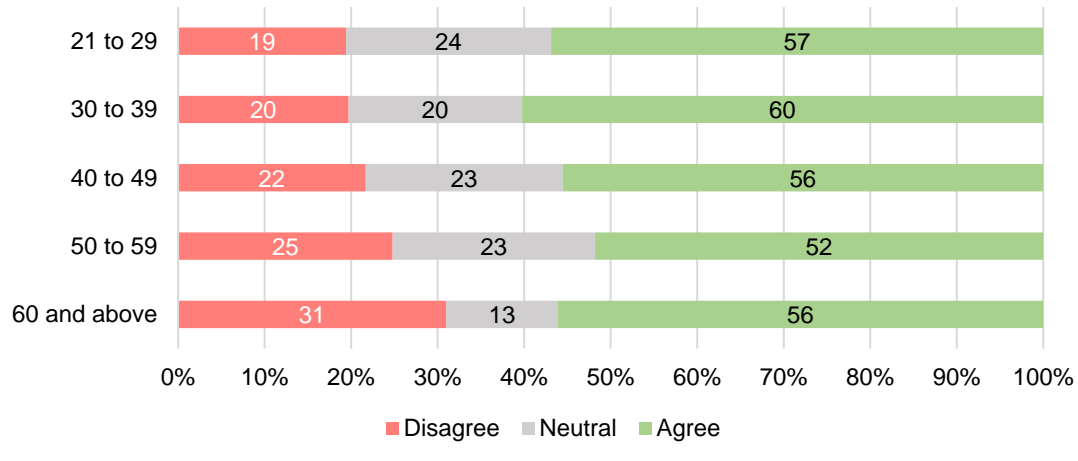
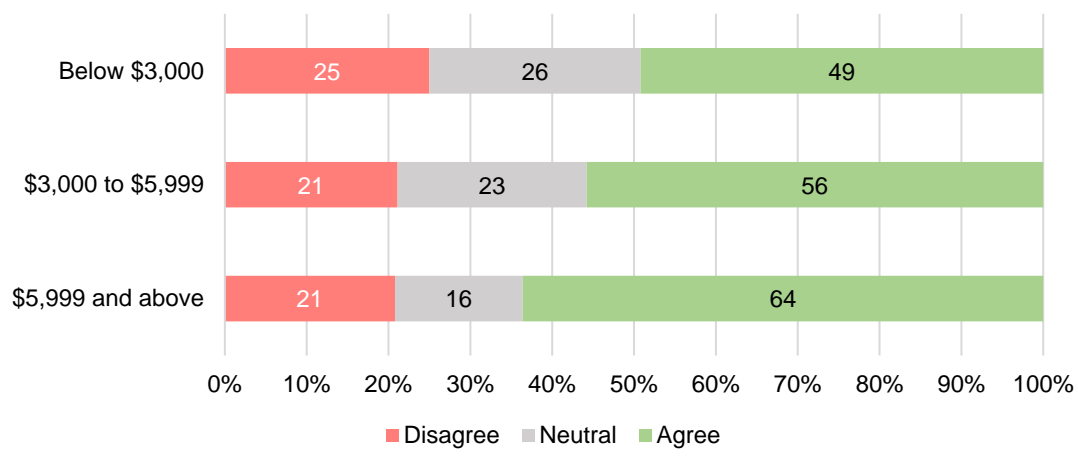


Figure 1.7 The authorities have demonstrated good political leadership in managing the COVID-19 virus so far, by monthly income, W40-W42 (%)



The results provide interesting insight into the way different age groups perceive political leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. While youth are, in general, more likely to be critical of government and the elderly more likely to be supportive of the state (Mathews et al., 2021) the COVID-19 pandemic has seen an apparent reversal of that trend.

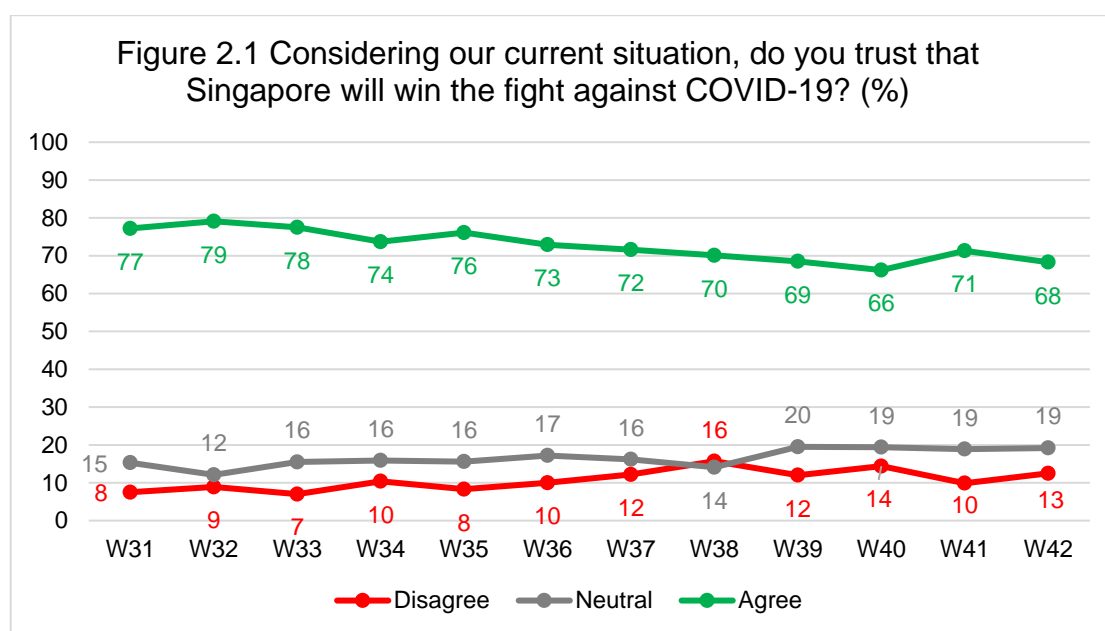
The slightly greater proportion of elderly Singaporeans showing dissatisfaction with the government's political leadership in managing the COVID-19 pandemic could be indicative of their discontent towards how they feel the elderly are being treated in the pandemic. The emphasis on keeping the elderly safe from the virus, the constant reminder to vaccinate and the discouragement of seniors attending social gatherings has led some elderly to feel alone (Woon & Yeo, 2021), shut out from, and becoming less satisfied with daily life (Tan et. al., 2021) as they see their younger counterparts slowly taking up their social activities once again.

As Singapore carefully plans its next moves and learns to live with the virus, it must also balance the diverse needs of different groups with the overall needs of society. In other words, Singapore needs to ensure its seniors can continue to stay safe from the virus without sacrificing the greater need for economic and social well-being. If the latter needs are neglected, it can have negative implications for everyone in society.

2. LIVING WITH COVID-19

2.1 Winning the fight against COVID-19

We asked respondents if they trust that Singapore would win the fight against COVID-19 (Figure 2.1). Around 77 per cent of respondents in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) believed that Singapore would win the fight against COVID-19. This proportion hovered at 79 per cent in W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021) and 78 per cent in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021), before slightly decreasing to 74 per cent in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021). It increased slightly to 76 per cent in W35 (2 – 10 September 2021) but fell again to 73 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and continued the slow downward trend to 66 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021). This proportion then increased to 71 per cent and 68 per cent in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021) and W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) respectively.

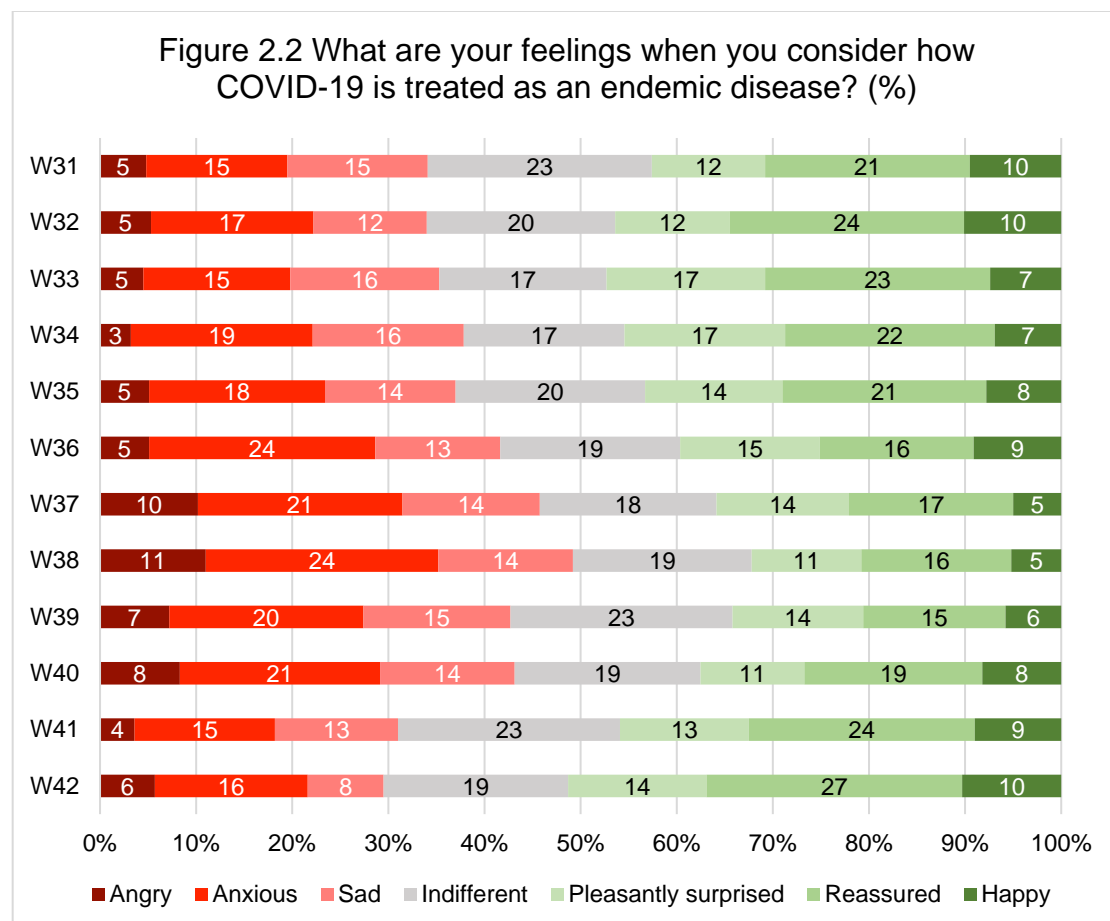


2.2 Sentiments on treating COVID-19 as an endemic virus

Respondents were asked what they felt when they considered how the COVID-19 virus would be treated as an endemic disease (Figure 2.2). The proportion of those who felt positive when they considered how COVID-19 would be treated as an endemic disease increased from 43 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July

2021) to 46 per cent in W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021), where it continued increasing to 47 per cent in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021). However, this declined to 45 per cent in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) and continued its downward trend until it hit a low of 32 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021). It then increased from 34 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) to 51 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).

Conversely, the proportion of those who felt negative about how COVID-19 would be treated as an endemic disease increased steadily from 34 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to 49 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021). The proportion then continued dropping from 43 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) to 30 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).



A regression analysis was carried out to determine the variables that significantly predicted respondents' sentiments towards treating COVID-19 as an endemic disease. The outcome variable and the list of predictor variables used for this analysis can be found in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: List of predictor variables

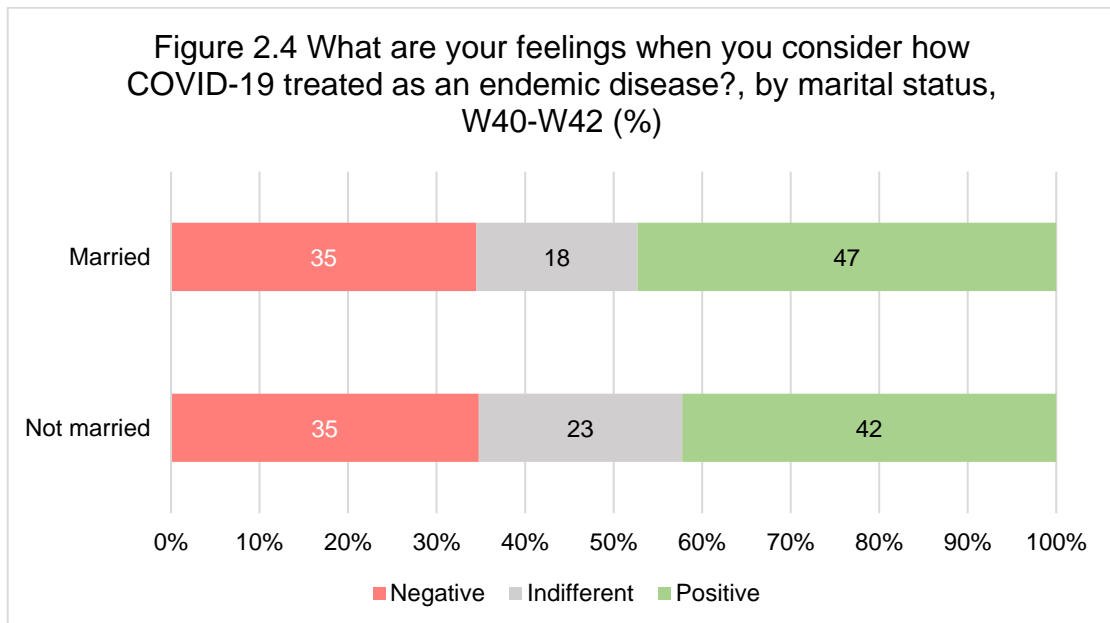
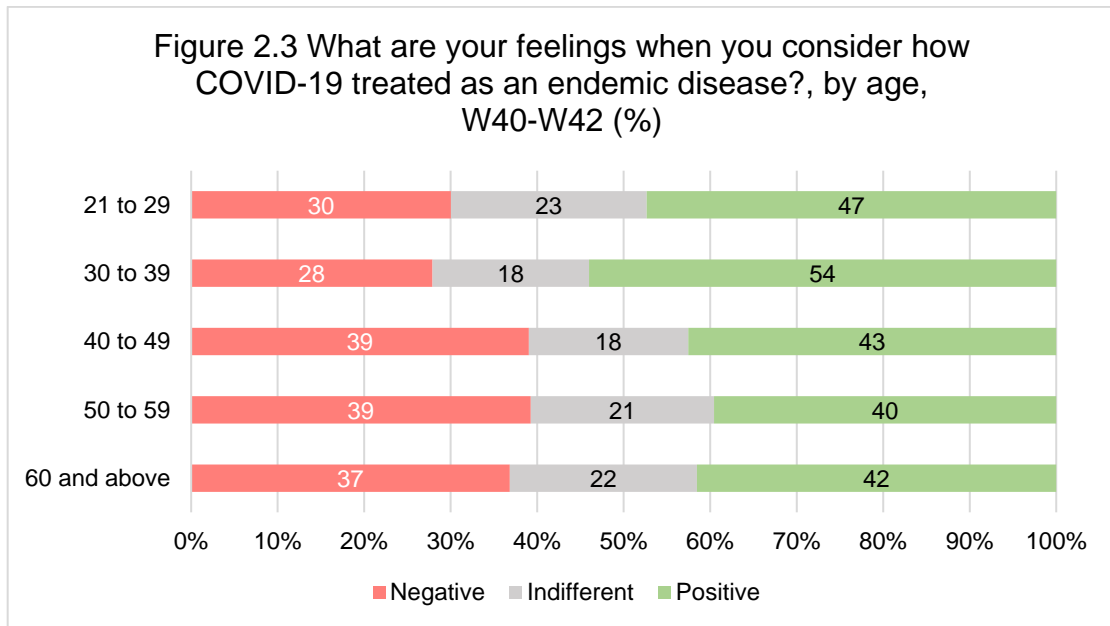
Outcome variable: What are your feelings when you consider how COVID-19 is treated as an endemic disease?	
Demographic predictor variables	Description
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 to 29 • 30 to 39 • 40 to 49 • 50 to 59 • 60 and above
Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O-Level and below • Post-secondary • Degree and above
Monthly income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below \$3,000 • \$3,000 to \$5,999 • \$5,999 and above
Marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not married • Married
Household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not living with vulnerable persons • Living with vulnerable persons

The results (Table 2.2) showed that older respondents (Figure 2.3) and respondents who were not married (Figure 2.4) tend to feel less positive about how COVID-19 was treated as an endemic disease. More specifically, only around 40 per cent of respondents aged 50-59 and 42 per cent of respondents aged 60 and above felt positive, as compared to 47 per cent of those aged 21-29 and 54 per cent of those aged 30-39. In addition, 42 per cent of respondents who were not married felt positive, as compared to 47 per cent of married respondents.

Table 2.2: Regression analysis results for “What are your feelings when you consider how COVID-19 is treated as an endemic disease?”

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value
Age	.204	.047	<.001
Education level	.007	.087	.935
Monthly income	-.099	.074	.184

Marital status	-.398	.111	<.001
Household members	-.110	.105	.295

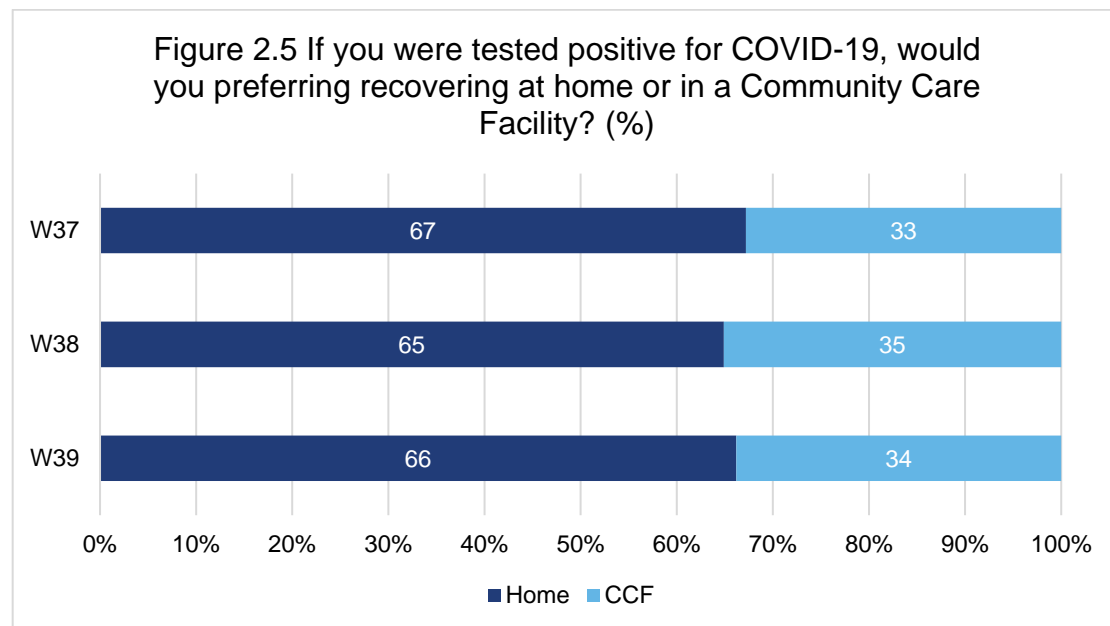


Older respondents tended to feel less positive about COVID-19 being treated as endemic possibly due to perceptions of how the virus might be allowed to spread in society, albeit in a controlled and supervised manner. This could be fatal for some elderly Singaporeans, as the fatality rate is higher in older

patients than younger ones. Treating the virus as endemic might be a sign that the country is reopening and relaxing safety measures, but it could also be interpreted as less protection for elderly Singaporeans who are more susceptible to be infected by the virus.

2.3 Recovering from the COVID-19

Respondents were asked in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021 to W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) if they preferred recovering from a COVID-19 infection at home or in a Community Care Facility (CCF). Around two-thirds of the population said they preferred recovering at home (Figure 2.5); this proportion remained consistent from W37 to W39.



A regression analysis was carried out to determine the variables that significantly predicted the respondents' choice of location to recover from COVID-19. The outcome variable and the list of predictor variables used for this analysis can be found in Table 2.3.

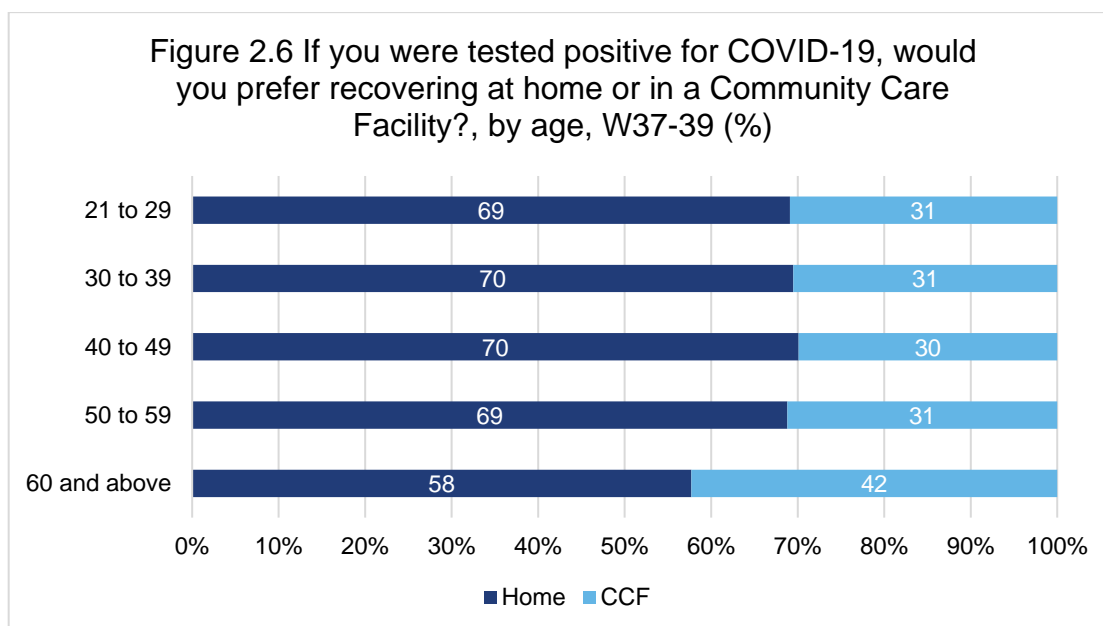
Table 2.3: List of predictor variables

Outcome variable: If you were tested positive for COVID-19, would you prefer recovering at home or in a Community Care Facility?	
Demographic predictor variables	Description
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 to 29 • 30 to 39 • 40 to 49 • 50 to 59 • 60 and above
Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O-Level and below • Post-secondary • Degree and above
Monthly income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below \$3,000 • \$3,000 to \$5,999 • \$5,999 and above
Household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not living with vulnerable persons • Living with vulnerable persons

The results (Table 2.4) showed that older respondents were more likely to prefer recovering in a CCF as compared to recovering at home (Figure 2.6). More specifically, at least four in 10 Singaporeans aged 60 and above preferred recovering in a CCF as compared to three in 10 from each of the other age groups.

Table 2.4: Regression analysis results for “If you were tested positive for COVID-19, would you prefer recovering at home or in a Community Care Facility?”

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value
Age	.028	.012	.016
Education level	-.007	.023	.777
Monthly income	-.022	.019	.245
Household members	.018	.027	.508



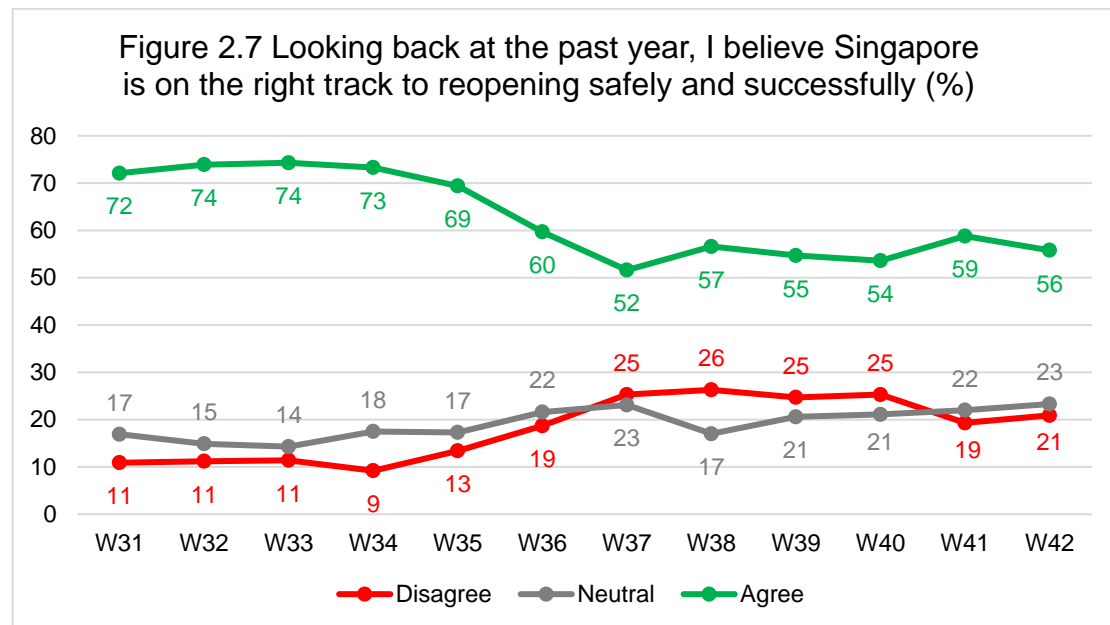
As a COVID-19 infection can complicate several co-existing health issues in older patients, elderly Singaporeans might prefer, and feel more assured of recovering in a facility where they have relatively easier access to professional care.

2.4 Perceptions on being on the right track to reopening

We asked respondents their thoughts on the fight against the COVID-19 virus thus far. Close to three-quarters of the respondents in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) believed that Singapore was on the right track to re-opening safely and successfully (Figure 2.7). This decreased to 69 per cent in W35 (2 – 10 September 2021) and further slipped to 60 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021), possibly in reaction to the COVID-19 situation in Singapore. It continued the downward trend to 52 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021).

However, this trend was reversed in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) as the proportion increased slightly to 57 per cent and stabilised at 55 per cent and 54 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) and W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) respectively. The proportion slightly increased again in W41 (10 – 17

November 2021) and W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) at 59 per cent and 56 per cent respectively.



A regression analysis was carried out to determine the variables that significantly predicted the respondents' belief on whether Singapore had been on the right track to reopening safely and successfully. The outcome variable and the list of predictor variables used for this analysis can be found in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: List of predictor variables

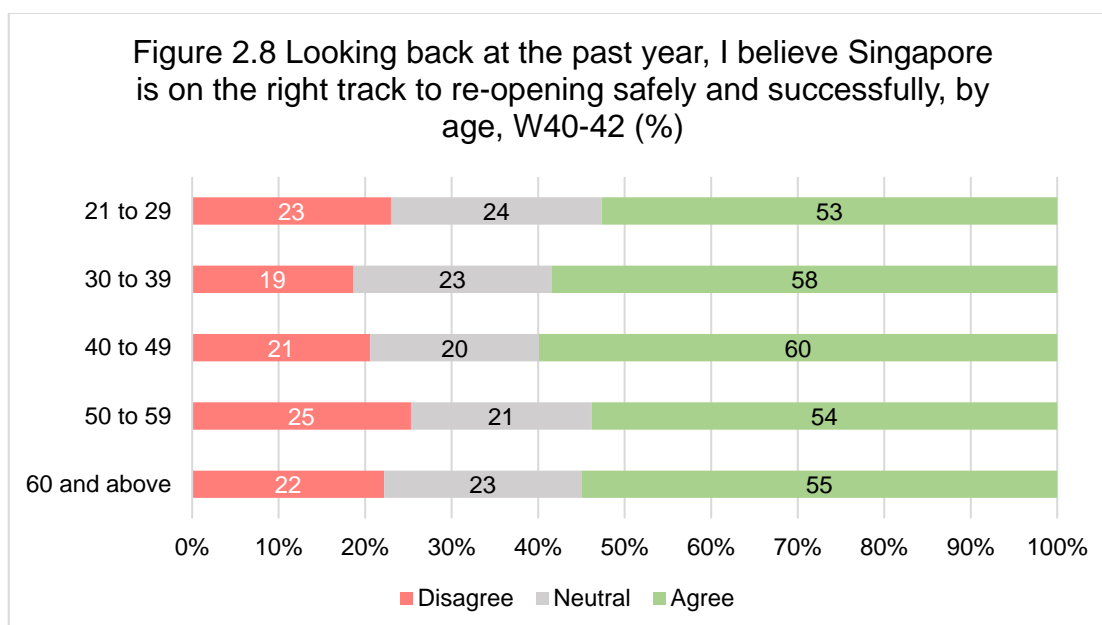
Outcome variable: (To what extent do you agree with the following statement?) Looking back at the past year, I believe Singapore is on the right track to reopening safely and successfully	
Demographic predictor variables	Description
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 to 29 • 30 to 39 • 40 to 49 • 50 to 59 • 60 and above
Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O-Level and below • Post-secondary • Degree and above
Monthly income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below \$3,000 • \$3,000 to \$5,999

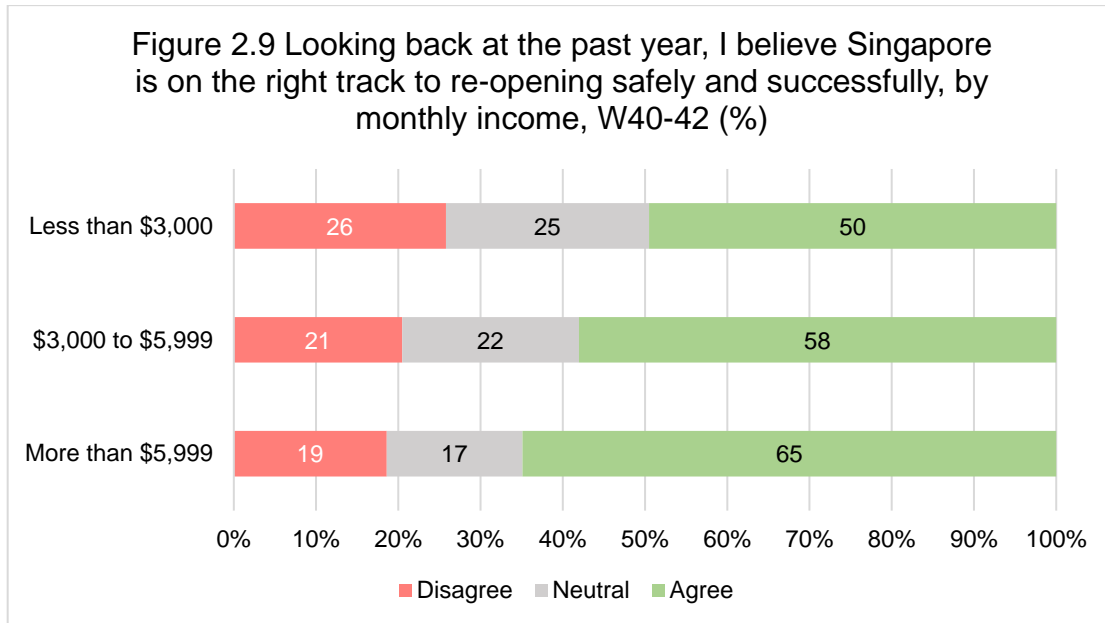
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5,999 and above
Household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not living with vulnerable persons • Living with vulnerable persons

The results (Table 2.6) showed that respondents aged 30 to 49, and those with a higher monthly income were more likely to believe that Singapore has been on the right track to reopening safely and successfully. More specifically, 58 per cent of respondents aged 30-39 and 60 per cent of respondents aged 40-49 agreed that Singapore has been on the right track, as compared to 54 per cent of those aged 50-59 and 55 per cent of those aged 60 and above (Figure 2.8). In addition, 65 per cent of respondents earning \$6,000 or more monthly agreed that Singapore has been on the right track to re-opening safely and successfully (Figure 2.9).

Table 2.6: Regression analysis results for “Looking back at the past year, I believe that Singapore is on the right track to reopening safely and successfully”

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value
Age	-.083	.038	.030
Education level	.012	.075	.875
Monthly income	.284	.062	<.001
Household members	.064	.090	.475



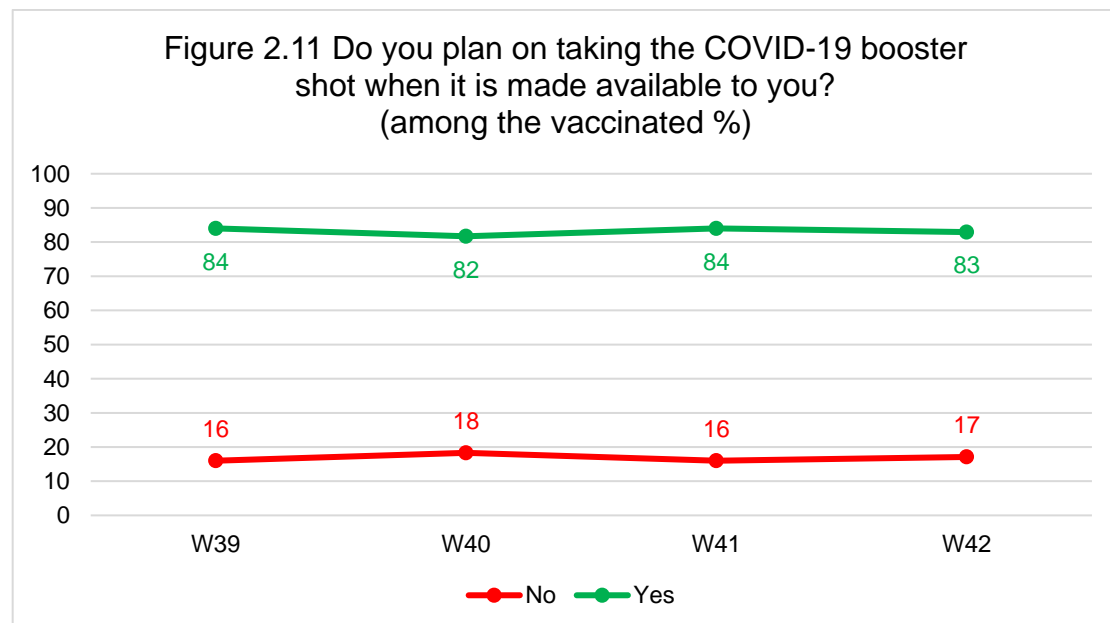
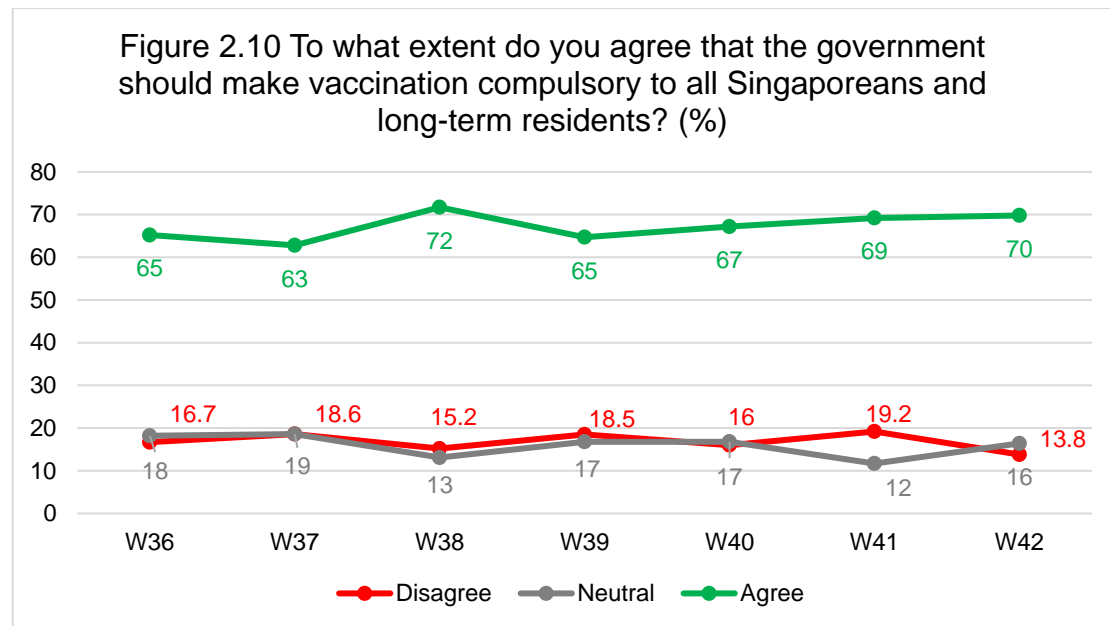


The vast differences in the way the people from different income classes experience the pandemic, dubbed the ‘inequality virus’ has perhaps widened the rich-poor gap in Singapore (Ng & Meah, 2021a) and elsewhere (Goldin & Muggah, 2020). In general, those with higher incomes tend to cope more positively with the demands of the pandemic as compared to the other classes, giving rise to a belief that the pandemic has not been too harsh on their lives. This could explain how those with higher incomes might possess more favourable attitudes with the way the virus is being managed from a public health perspective.

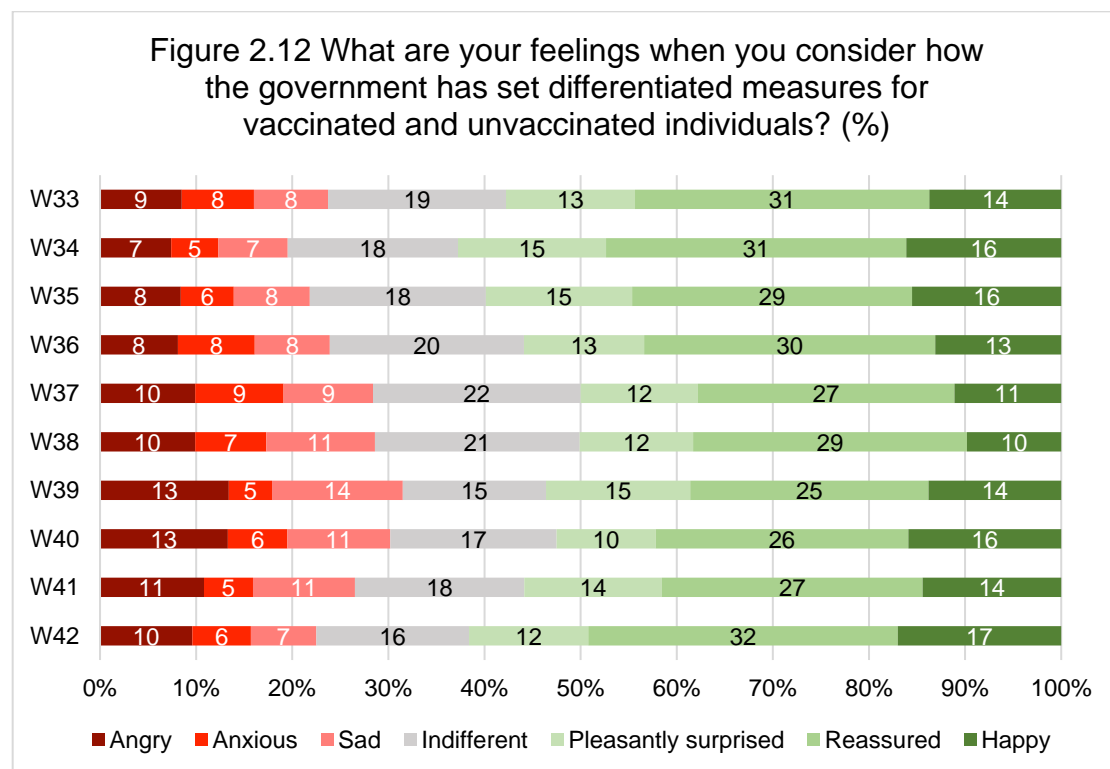
2.5 Sentiments towards vaccinations and differentiated measures for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals

Respondents were asked in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) if they agreed that the government should make vaccination compulsory to all Singaporeans and long-term residents. The proportion of those who agreed increased from 65 per cent in W36 to 70 per cent in W42 (Figure 2.10).

In addition, respondents who have been vaccinated were asked in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) if they planned on taking their COVID-19 booster shot when it was made available to them. More than 80 per cent planned on doing so (Figure 2.11). This suggests that majority of the population recognise the importance of taking vaccinations.



Respondents were asked what they felt when they considered how there were differentiated measures for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals (Figure 2.12). About 58 per cent in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021) said that they felt positive (happy, reassured or pleasantly surprised) about these measures; this proportion increased to 63 per cent in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) but fell to 60 per cent in W35 (2 – 10 September 2021) and 56 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021). It stabilised at 50 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021) and W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and then continued upward to 62 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).



A regression analysis was carried out to determine the variables that significantly predicted the respondents' sentiments on the differentiated measures for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. The outcome variable and the list of predictor variables used for this analysis can be found in Table 2.7.

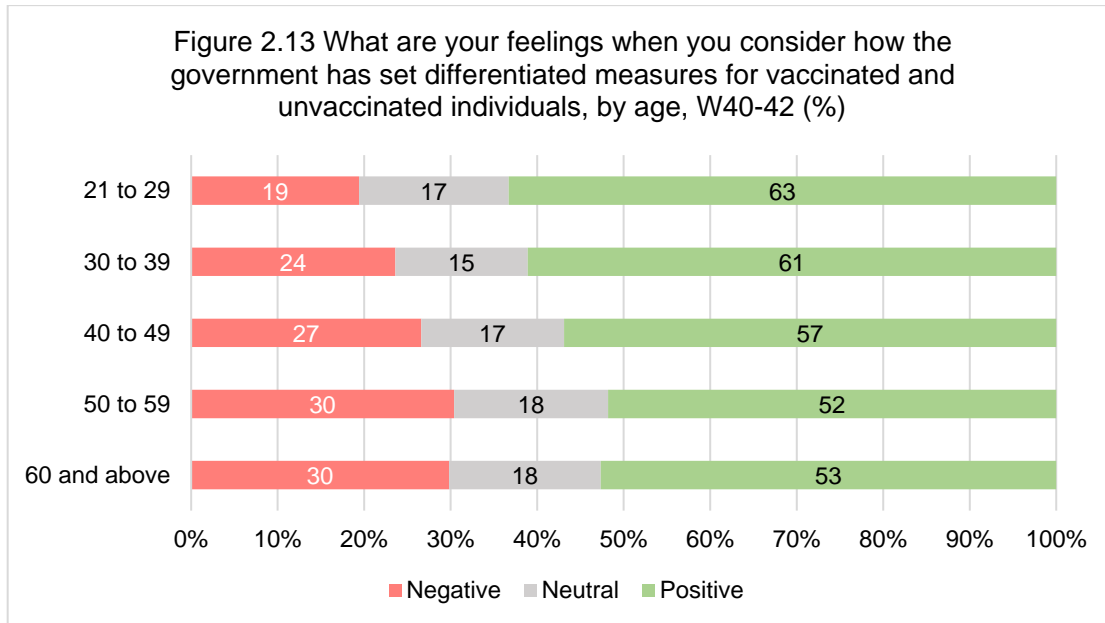
Table 2.7: List of predictor variables

Outcome variable: What are your feelings when you consider how the government has set differentiated measures for the vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals?	
Demographic predictor variables	Description
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 to 29 • 30 to 39 • 40 to 49 • 50 to 59 • 60 and above
Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O-Level and below • Post-secondary • Degree and above
Monthly income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below \$3,000 • \$3,000 to \$5,999 • \$5,999 and above
Marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not married • Married
Household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not living with vulnerable persons • Living with vulnerable persons

The results (Table 2.8) showed that older Singaporeans were more likely to feel negative about the differentiated measures for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. More specifically, 30 per cent of respondents aged 60 and above (Figure 2.13) felt negative about the differentiated measures, as compared to 19 per cent of those aged 21-29.

Table 2.8: Regression analysis results for “What are your feelings when you consider how the government has set differentiated measures for the vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals?”

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value
Age	.207	.050	<.001
Education level	.075	.092	.415
Monthly income	-.106	.079	.178
Marital status	-.227	.118	.054
Household members	.007	.111	.949



The differentiated measures for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals would likely affect those Singaporeans who choose to remain unvaccinated because of non-medical reasons⁴, of which senior citizens likely make up a sizeable proportion. This could possibly explain the higher proportions of negative sentiments from elderly respondents.

2.6 Choosing the best approach to reopening

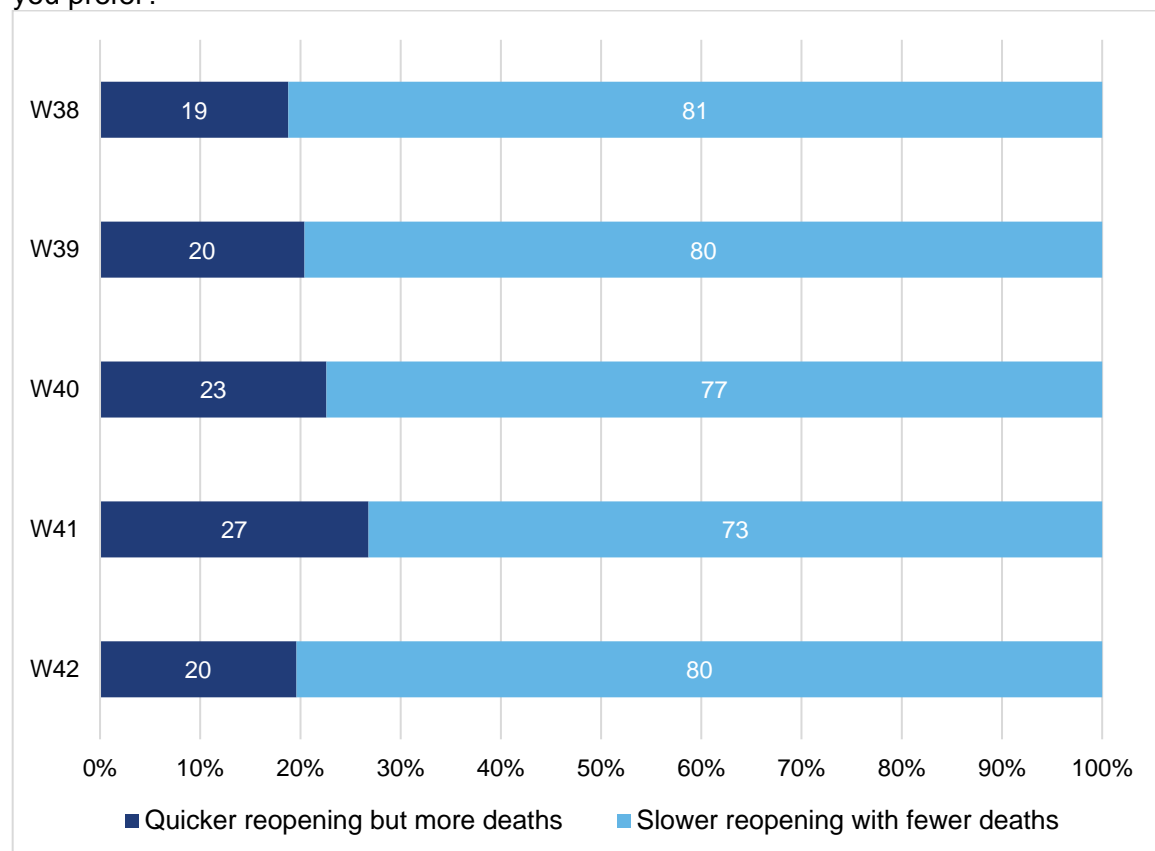
In a Straits Times panel discussion on living with COVID-19 (Khalik, 2021), experts opined the implications of reopening the country while living with the COVID-19 virus in our midst. Experts warned that while turning up the pace on exit measures might bring about a faster reopening, it could also result in a daily average of around six or seven patients dying from COVID-19. The experts suggested that the influenza death rate of about two a day would be an appropriate benchmark in our efforts to reopen the country with COVID-19 in

⁴ Based on news reports, many do not take up vaccination citing that they have health concerns and do not know if vaccination will result in adverse effects. However, in many of these situations, current medical guidelines state that the benefits of vaccinations outweigh the risks. A medical excuse for vaccination requires a medical practitioner's recommendation.

our midst, implying that a slower reopening might be a more considerate option vis-a-vis the human cost (Khalik, 2021).

Respondents were presented with a summarised version of this discussion and were presented with two options: a quicker reopening with more deaths or a slower reopening with fewer deaths. They were then asked to indicate their preferred reopening strategy. Around 81 per cent of respondents in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) said they preferred a slower reopening with fewer deaths; this proportion continued downward to 73 per cent in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021), before increasing to 80 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) (Figure 2.14).

Fig. 2.14. According to experts, if Singapore wants to keep the number of daily COVID-19 deaths to about 2 a day, like the seasonal flu death rate, we will have to take our time to reopen the country. Speeding up the reopening process would result in about 6 to 7 daily COVID-19 deaths. In your opinion, which approach to re-opening would you prefer?



3. ATTITUDES TOWARDS SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES

3.1 Sentiments towards Safe Management Measures⁵

Respondents were asked if they believed that observing the following SMMs in the new normal would reduce their chances of being infected and infecting others with COVID-19:

- a. Continuing to always wear a mask
- b. Working from home more often
- c. Observing social distancing measures
- d. Taking COVID-19 tests regularly
- e. Taking annual booster shots
- f. Reducing the number of people one meets for social activities
- g. Temperature screening before entering public places

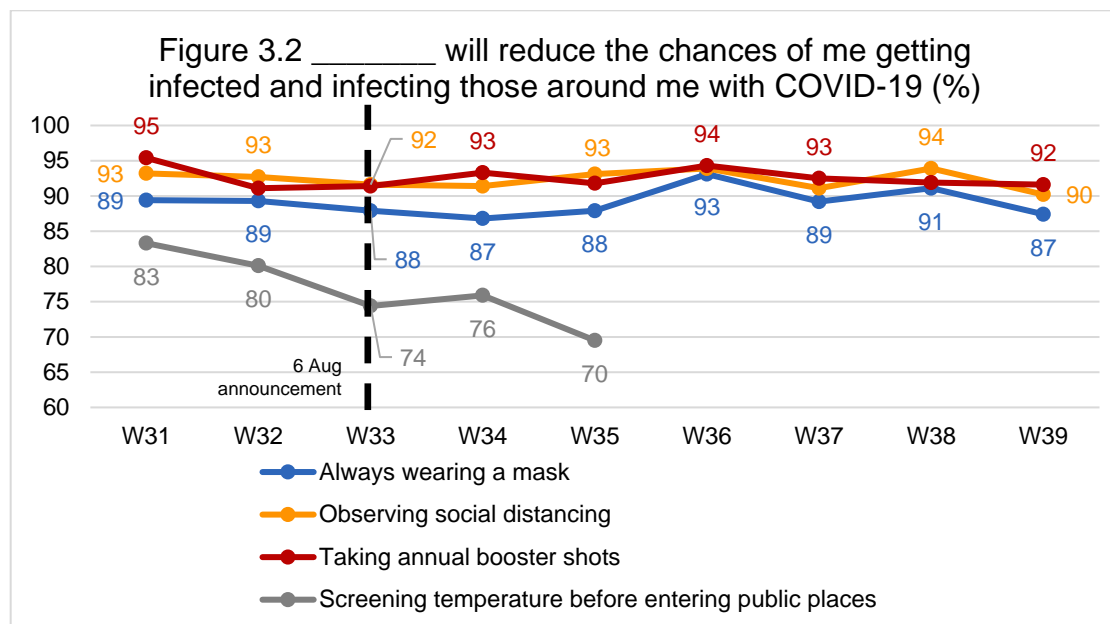
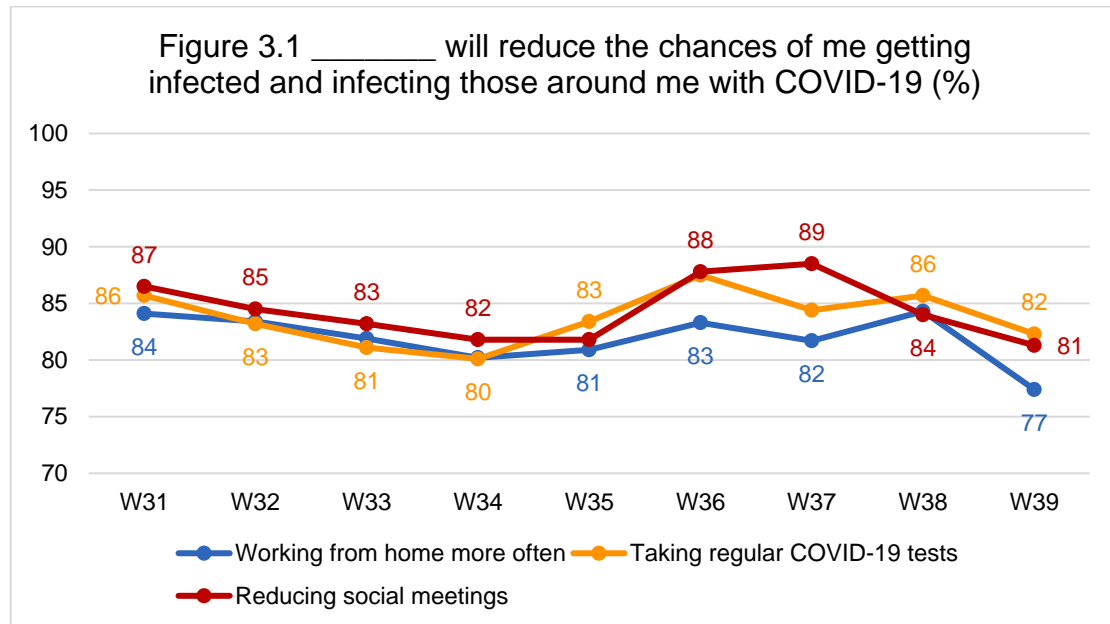
The results (Figure 3.1 and 3.2) showed that most Singaporeans continue to believe in the efficacy of SMMs in preventing COVID-19 infections. Except for temperature screening in public places, the proportions for those who believe in the SMMs' efficacy in preventing infections remained consistently high across all nine waves.

Around eight in 10 respondents felt that working from home more often, taking regular COVID-19 tests, and reducing the number of people one meets for social activities reduced their chances of being infected and infecting others (Figure 3.1), while around nine in 10 believed that wearing a mask, observing social distancing, and taking annual booster shots helped reduced chances of being infected and infecting others (Figure 3.2).

On the other hand, the proportion of respondents who felt that screening one's temperature before entering public places helps reduce the chances of being infected and infecting others with COVID-19 fell steadily from 83 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to around 70 per cent in W35 (2 – 10 September 2021)

⁵ Data presented is only up till W39 as question was discontinued from W40 onwards.
IPS Working Paper No. 43 (December 2021):
Living with COVID-19 in Singapore: Attitudes, challenges and the way ahead
by Mathew, M., Suhaini, S., Hou, M. & Phoa, F.

(Figure 3.2). This comes as health authorities declared on 6 August (i.e. during W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021); see Figure 3.2 below) that temperature screening was no longer needed given the high vaccination rate in Singapore, subsequently leading to decrease in the belief in the efficacy of temperature screening from W33 (7 – 19 August 2021).



The sharp decline in the proportion of those who believe in the efficacy of temperature screening suggests that Singaporeans' ideas on the efficacy of a SMM could be highly influenced by health authorities. As soon as the authorities announced temperature screening as no longer compulsory, belief in its efficacy fell. Similarly, the proportion of those who believed in the efficacy of mask-wearing and reducing social meetings increased in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and W37 (22 – 29 September 2021) respectively. This came as authorities tightened safety measures and restricted social gatherings to only two people, in expectation of the incoming onslaught of a thousand daily cases in that period.

3.2 Perceived inconvenience of Safe Management Measures

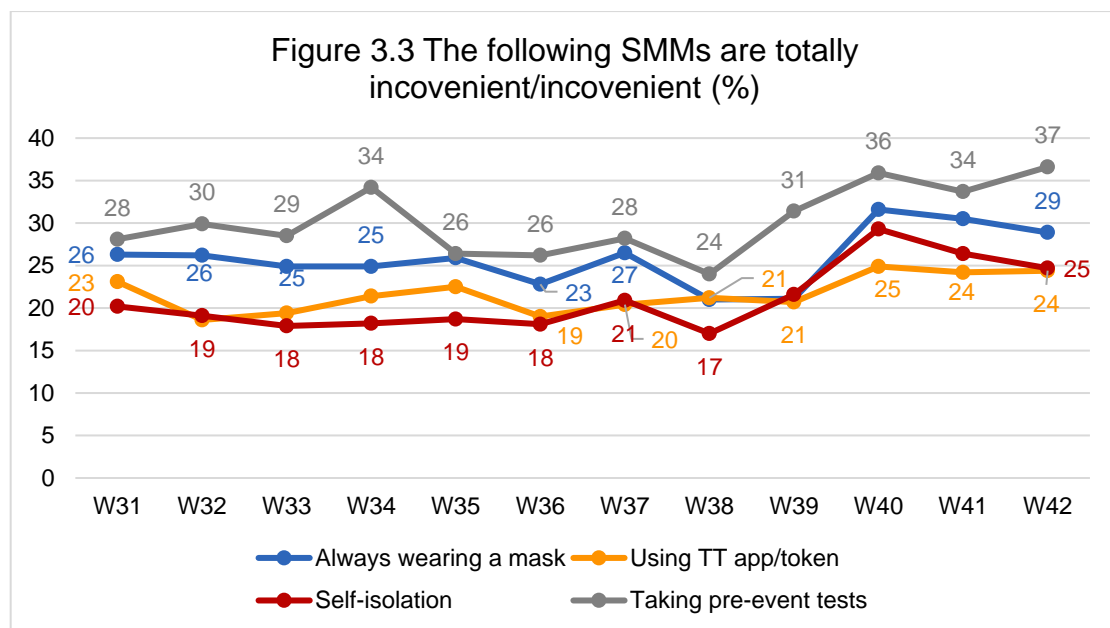
Respondents were asked if they felt inconvenienced by various SMMs in the new normal. For each item on the list below, respondents were asked to rank each of them from 1 (“totally inconvenient”) to 5 (“not inconvenient at all”):

- a. Always wearing a mask
- b. Using the TraceTogether app/token
- c. Taking COVID-19 tests before large events
- d. Isolating oneself in the event of mild flu symptoms

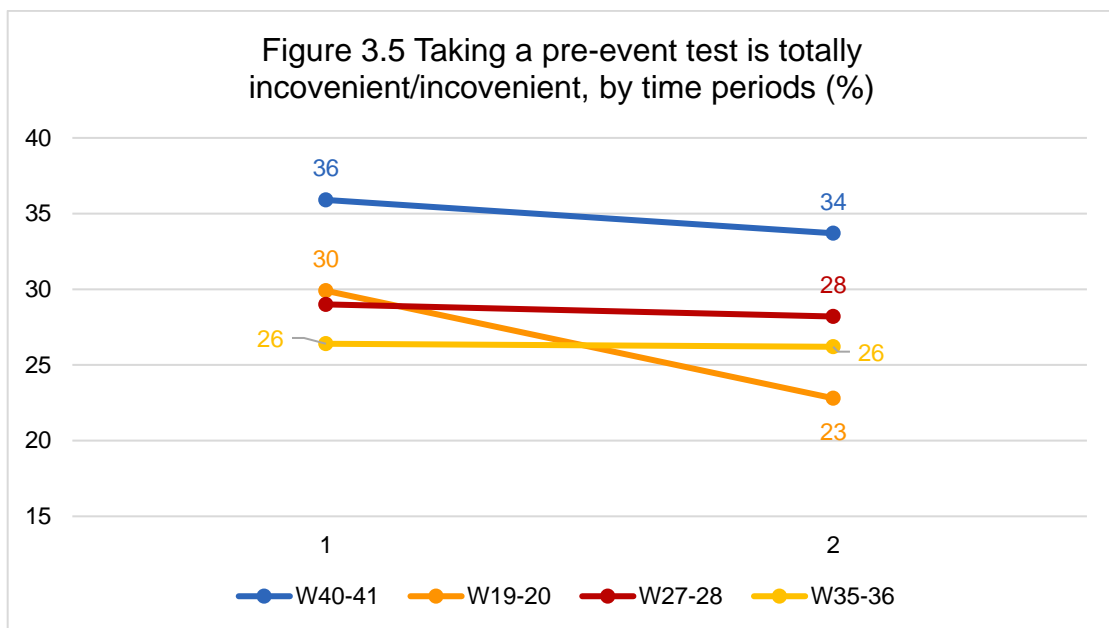
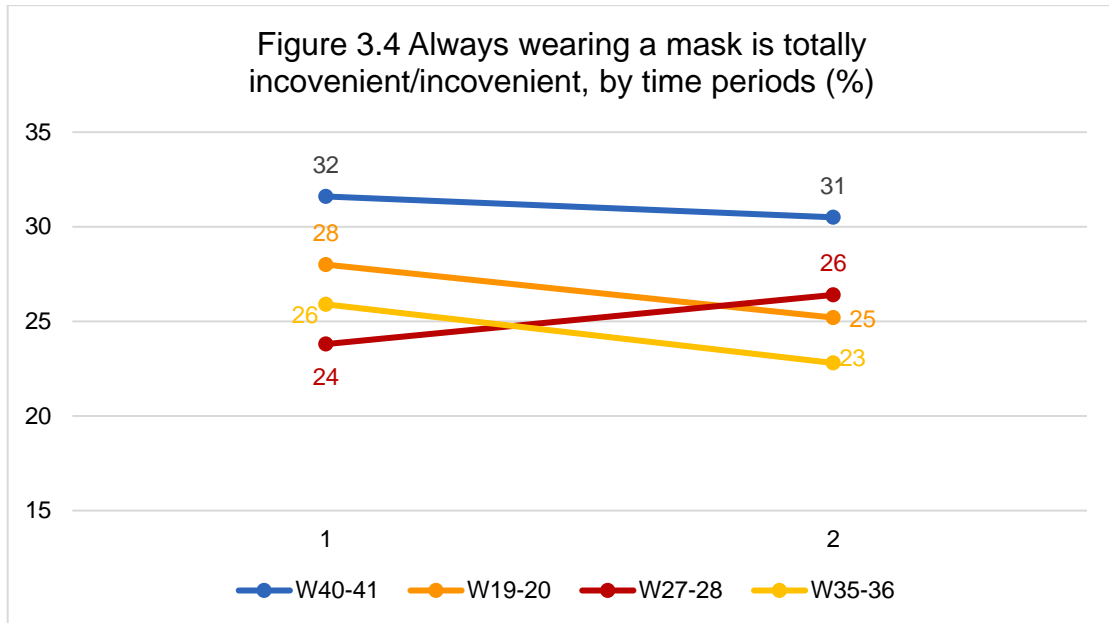
The proportion of those who found these SMMs as totally inconvenient/inconvenient remained somewhat consistent over the six waves. Roughly one-quarter of respondents felt that always wearing a mask was totally inconvenient/inconvenient in the earlier waves. The proportion then fell to 21 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) before rising to 32 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021). The proportion then fell to 29 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021). At least one in five felt that it was totally inconvenient/inconvenient to use the TraceTogether app/token in the new normal; around one in five felt totally inconvenient/inconvenient to isolate themselves in the event of mild flu symptoms, before an uptick in W40 (28

October – 1 November 2021) at 29 per cent before a decline to 25 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) (Figure 3.3).

On the other hand, there were slight jumps in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021; 34 per cent), W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021; 36 per cent) and W42 (19 – 23 November 2021; 37 per cent) in the proportion of those who felt that taking pre-event tests were totally inconvenient/inconvenient; the jump in W34 stabilised to around 26 per cent in the following wave.



We then compared the proportions of mask wearing (Figure 3.4) and taking pre-event tests (Figure 3.5) (i.e., the two items with the highest proportions in this question) with two other time periods to find out if people’s perception of SMMs varied according to the severity of the COVID-19 situation and to examine if the sudden jump in W40 is consistent with other waves. The time periods chosen were: W19 to W20, covering February 2021 when there were little to no daily community cases; W27 to W28, covering the first P2HA from May to June 2021; and W35 to W36, covering the period when there was a sharp spike in cases in September 2021.



Before W40, there were minimal differences across time periods. There was neither a decrease in the perception of inconvenience during severe periods of COVID-19, which could indicate an increased commitment to the observance of SMMs, nor was there an increase in perceived inconvenience during periods of low COVID-19 cases, which could indicate a desire for relaxed measures in a time of relative ease.

This therefore suggests that most Singaporeans have adopted SMMs as part of their social and daily routine. However, the increase in proportion of respondents who perceived the SMMs to be inconvenient in W40 might possibly be due to announcements near the end of W39 about the extension of the Stabilisation Phase with the need to continue to undergo SMMs. Some respondents may also have reacted to the announcement on the relaxation of SMMs for the participants of the Bloomberg New Economy Forum near the end of W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) and had been expecting similar relaxation in SMMs for the general public.

3.3 Changes to Safe Management Measures

New measures have been recently implemented as Singapore transits to living with an endemic COVID-19. Between 50 to 60 per cent of respondents were agreeable with the new measures such as making home recovery the default method of recovery (62 per cent in W42:19 – 23 November 2021) for those who have been infected by COVID-19, no longer giving out a Quarantine Order to those who have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case (50 per cent in W42), and allowing those who have been in close contact with a positive case to go about their normal routine as long as they test negative for their antigen rapid test (ART) (57 per cent in W42)⁶.

Disagreement to these measures accounted for approximately 20 to 30 per cent. Around 20 per cent were neutral on these measures, with 19 per cent neutral on making home recovery the default method of recovery for those who have been infected by COVID-19, 20 per cent neutral on no longer giving out a Quarantine Order to those who have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case, and 18 per cent neutral on allowing those who have been in close contact with a positive case to go about their normal routine as long as they test negative for their ART in W42.

⁶ Please refer to Annex A

IPS Working Paper No. 43 (December 2021):
Living with COVID-19 in Singapore: Attitudes, challenges and the way ahead
by Mathew, M., Suhaini, S., Hou, M. & Phoa, F.

Respondents were also asked if they felt that a number of changes should be implemented to better reflect the transition to living with an endemic COVID-19 (Figure 3.6):

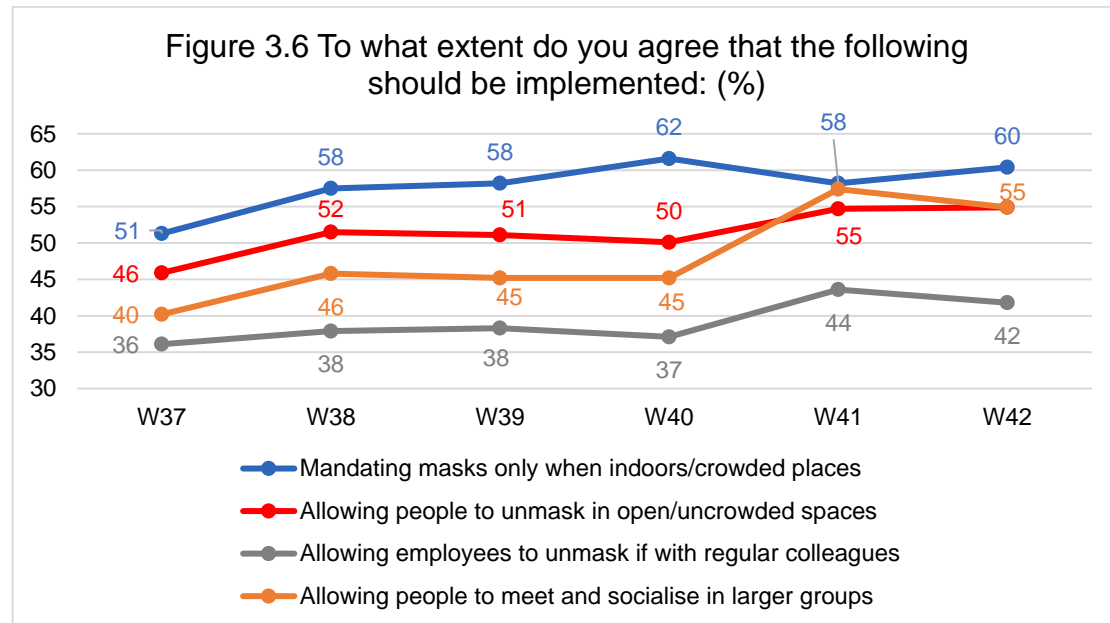
- a. Mandating masks only when indoors or in crowded places
- b. Allowing people to be unmasked in open spaces if it is not crowded
- c. Allowing employees to be unmasked if they are at the workplace with their regular colleagues
- d. Allowing people to meet and socialise in larger groups

These changes have been made in other societies which have moved towards living with Covid-19.

Slightly more than half of respondents in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021) agreed that an indoor-only mask mandate should be implemented; this increased to around 60 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021). Around 46 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021) agreed that people should be allowed to be unmasked in open/uncrowded spaces; this grew to around more than half in W38 to W42.

Further, around 36 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021) agreed that employees should be allowed to be unmasked when working with their regular colleagues. This inched to 37-38 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) to W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021), before increasing to more than 40 per cent in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021). Finally, around 40 per cent of respondents in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021) said that people should be allowed to meet and socialise in larger groups; this increased to about 46 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and 45 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) to W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021). This further increased to more than 50 per cent in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021), possibly in response to the further relaxations to the number of persons allowed for dine in activities in these waves.

These findings suggest that more Singaporeans are looking towards fewer restrictions as they learn to live with COVID-19.



A regression analysis was carried out to determine the variables that significantly predicted the respondents' willingness to support an easing of SMMs. The outcome variable, *Change*, was measured as a composite scale based on items 3.3.a – 3.3.d in the list below. Further details on the outcome variable and the list of predictor variables used for this analysis can be found in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: Outcome variable used in this regression analysis

Outcome variable	Description
Outcome variable: Change, a composite variable ($\alpha = .774$) based on the following items: (To what extent do you agree with the following?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandating masks only when indoors/in crowded spaces • Allowing people to unmask in open/uncrowded spaces • Allowing employees to unmask if with regular colleagues • Allowing people to meet and socialise in larger groups 	A scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = Strongly disagree and 7 = Strongly agree

Table 3.2: List of predictor variables used in this regression analysis

Demographic predictor variables	Description
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 to 29 • 30 to 39 • 40 to 49 • 50 to 59 • 60 and above
Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O-Level and below • Post-secondary • Degree and above
Monthly income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below \$3,000 • \$3,000 to \$5,999 • \$5,999 and above

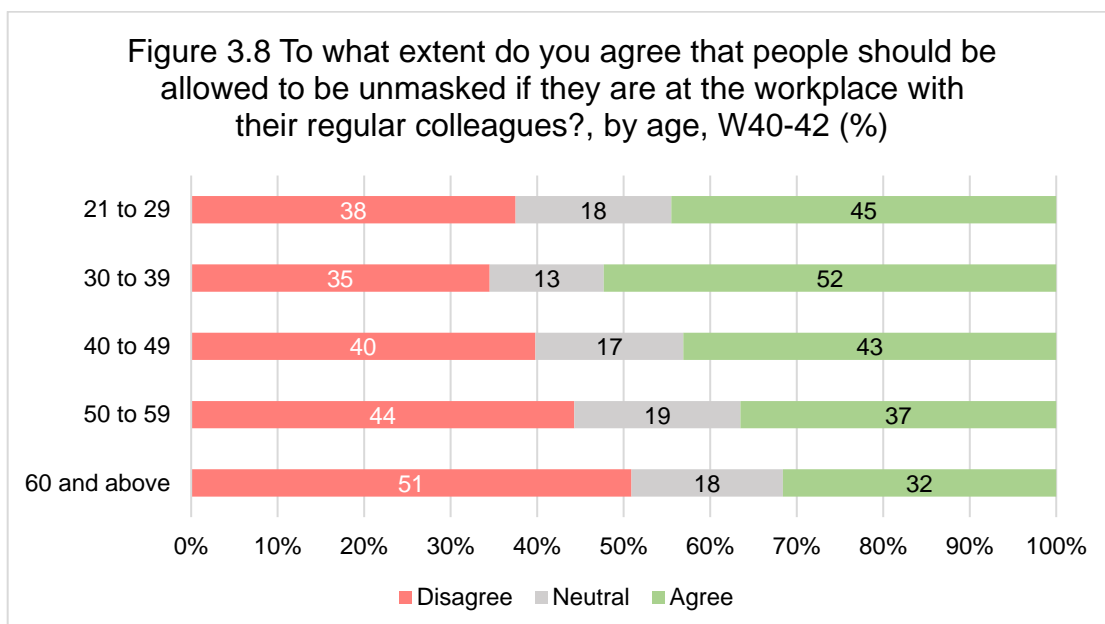
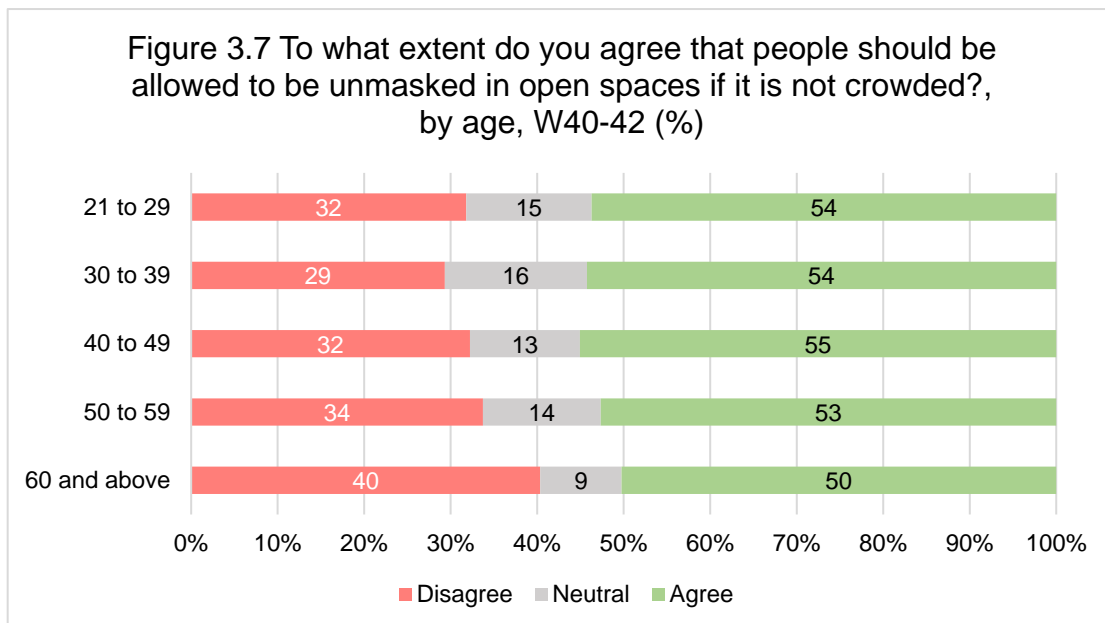
The results (Table 3.3) showed that age and monthly income significantly influenced respondents' willingness to support an easing of SMMs. More specifically, younger respondents and respondents with a higher monthly income were likely to support an easing of SMMs.

Table 3.3: Regression analysis results for Change

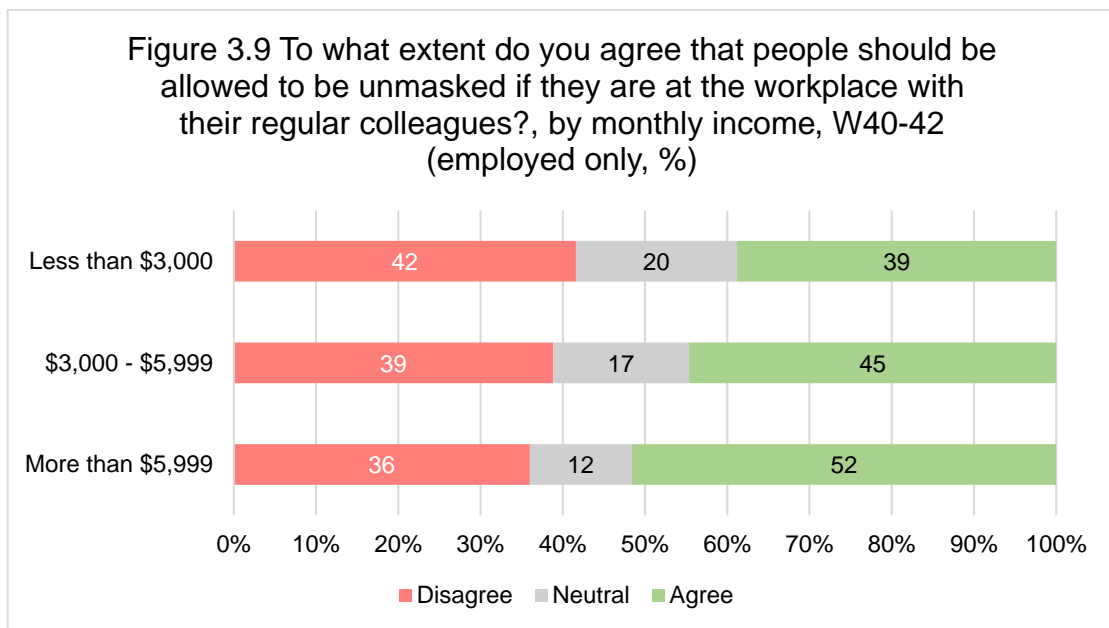
Predictor	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value
Age	-.077	.033	.020
Education level	.107	.068	.117
Monthly income	.149	.056	.008

We illustrate how age and monthly income relate to willingness to support an easing of SMMs by cross-tabulating these variables with some of the items in the 3.3.a – 3.3.d:

- Age: Around 54 per cent of respondents aged 21 to 29 years old supported allowing people to be unmasked in open spaces if it is not crowded, as compared to around 50 per cent of those aged 60 and above (Figure 3.7). Around 45 per cent of those aged 21-29 agreed that people should be allowed to be unmasked if they are at the workplace with their regular colleagues, as compared to 32 per cent of those aged 60 and above (Figure 3.8).



- Monthly income: At least 52 per cent of respondents earning a monthly income of \$6,000 or more said they supported allowing employees to go unmasked at the workplace with their regular colleagues, as compared to around 39 per cent of those earning less than \$3,000 monthly (Figure 3.9).



Younger individuals' willingness to support the easing of SMMs are characteristic of a demographic group known as Generation COVID: young individuals whose life plans have been scuttled by the pandemic.

Generation COVID are more digitally literate and consume more information than the other age groups (Gerosa, Gui, Hargittai, & Nguyen, 2021). They gather information from multiple online sources. In doing so, they might have come across news articles or read opinions shared on online forums and comment boards on COVID-19 measures in other countries and compare it with Singapore's current measures. This might have influenced their opinions on what they feel is the best way forward for Singapore.

Further, studies (Ng & Meah, 2021) have shown how social restrictions during the pandemic have affected Generation COVID's mental and social wellbeing. Supporting the easing of SMMs might be symbolic of their need for a more open Singapore — so that they can slowly recover from their social isolation and regain control of their lives. This is especially important for young adults who are just entering the workforce; physical socialisation plays an important role in acclimatising the individual to the workplace's culture and people as they transition from student to adult life.

While younger respondents had a greater appetite for the easing of various measures, the reality has been that various countries have had to re-impose measures with rising infections and the possibility of new strains such as Omicron. Dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic has created required patience.

3.4 Confidence in taking up social activities in the new normal

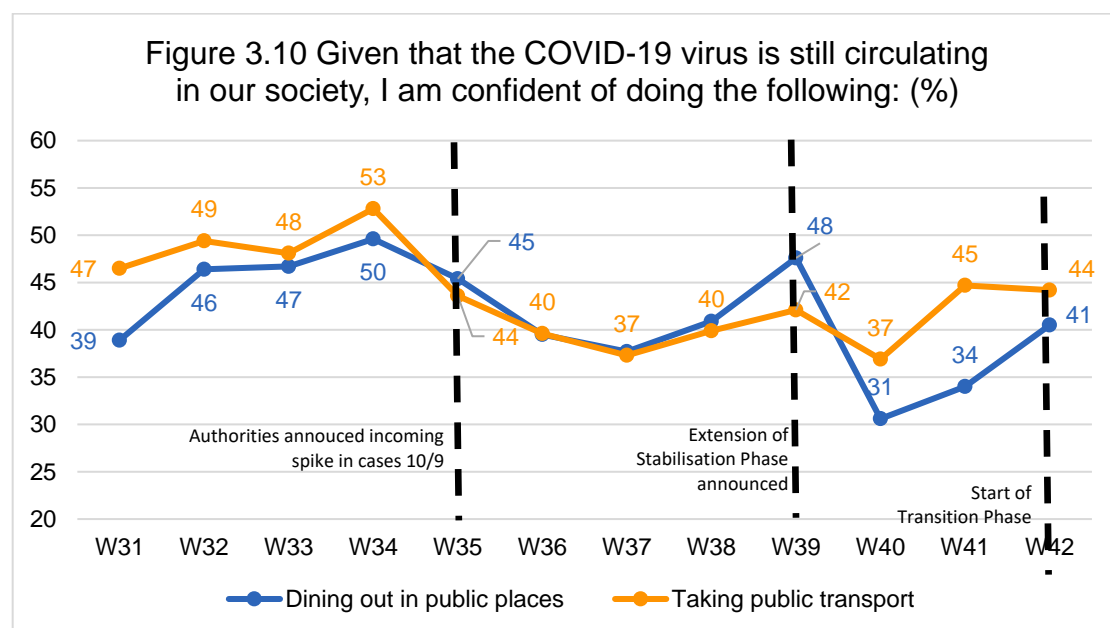
Respondents were asked if they felt confident in carrying out the following social activities in the new normal:

- a. Dining out in public places, like hawker centres, restaurants, or bars
- b. Attending a live event with a large number of spectators
- c. Leisure travel to countries with relatively low cases of COVID-19
- d. Taking public transport
- e. Having close personal contact (e.g. handshakes, hugs, standing together in a group)

The proportion of respondents who were confident of dining out in public places increased from 39 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to slightly under 50 per cent in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) (Figure 3.10). As the number of COVID-19 cases increased in W35 (2 – 10 September 2021), the proportion of those confident dropped to 45 per cent in W35 and continued decreasing to 40 per

cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and 37 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021). It recovered to 41 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and increased to 48 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021). However, the proportion fell to 31 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) before increasing to 41 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).

Similarly, the proportion of respondents who were confident of taking public transport started out stronger at 47 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) and grew to 53 per cent in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021). This, however, dipped to 44 per cent in W35 (2 – 10 September 2021), 40 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and to its lowest of 37 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021) (Figure 3.10). The proportion recovered to 40 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and 42 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021). The proportion fell to 37 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) before rising to 44 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).

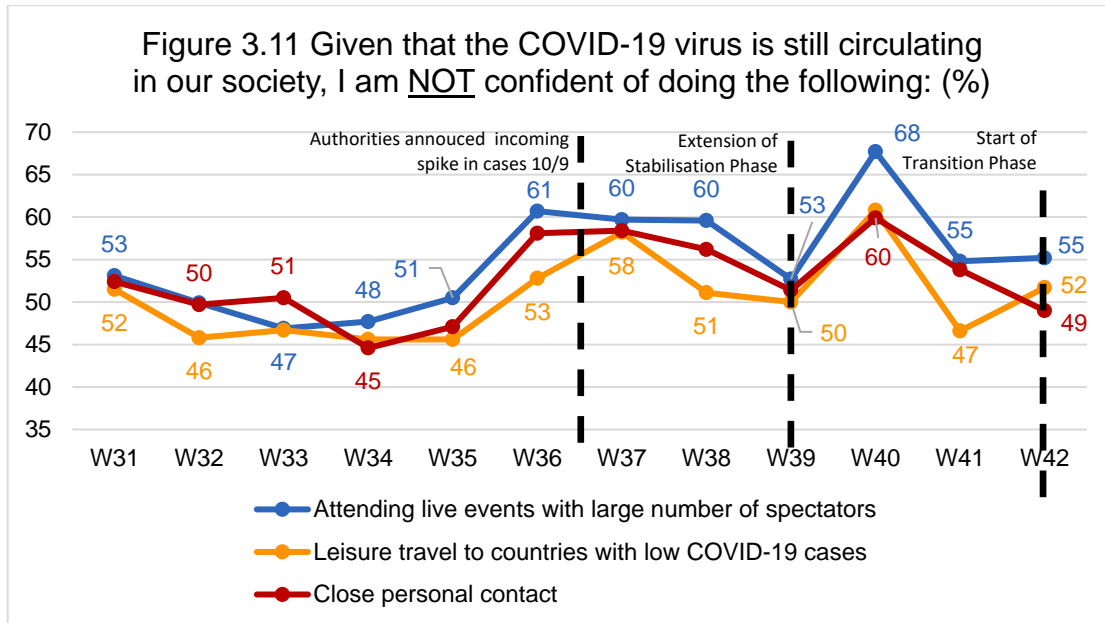


Further, around half of respondents from W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W35 (2 – 10 September 2021) said they were not confident of attending live events with a large number of spectators (Figure 3.11). This increased to around 60-61 per

cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) to W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) following the spike in cases but dropped to 53 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021). Another spike was recorded at 68 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021), before falling to 55 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).

The proportion of those who were not confident of having close personal contact stayed at around 50-52 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to W33 (7 – 19 August 2021) (Figure 3.11). After a slight drop to 45 per cent in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) and 47 per cent in W35 (2 – 10 September 2021), it rose to 58 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and maintained at 58 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021). It then declined to around 56 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and 51 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021). The proportion increased to 60 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) before falling to 49 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).

Finally, slightly more than half of respondents in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) said that they were not confident of leisure travel to countries with low COVID-19 cases (Figure 3.11). However, this declined to about 45-47 per cent in W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021) to W35 (2 – 10 September 2021). The proportion increased to 53 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) and 58 per cent in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021). This decreased to 51 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and 50 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021). The proportion increased to 61 per cent in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) before falling to 52 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).



Confidence in taking up social activities generally increased as the situation temporarily lightened after the end of the second P2HA (W32-33). However, as the COVID-19 situation turned serious in early September (W35), confidence in taking up social activities understandably decreased, as Singaporeans became conscious of limiting their social interactions, following the advisories from health authorities.

We suggest two reasons for the slightly higher proportions of Singaporeans who were confident of carrying out social activities in W38 and W39. First, there could have been an attitudinal shift among the population as the messaging from the government has consistently emphasised on treating COVID-19 as an endemic disease. Further, PM Lee's address to the nation in early October 2021 may have reinforced this message especially with changes in quarantine measures and a stronger push to home recovery

Secondly, Singaporeans are slowly recovering from the initial fear of the rise in cases as health authorities stressed that catching the virus will not be fatal to vaccinated individuals. Personal anecdotes from vaccinated friends and family members who have recently caught the virus and have safely recovered might

boost confidence in the authorities' narrative. Hence, while Singaporeans continue to be cautious about being infected and observe safety measures, they are learning to slowly adapt and be confident in taking up their social activities once again.

However, confidence fell in W40 possibly due to the extension of the Stabilisation Phase announced near the end of W39, which signaled that the COVID-19 situation was still not stable. Confidence may have regained with the announcement of the relaxation of SMMs, and confidence in W41-42 rose back to similar levels observed in W38-39.

A regression analysis was carried out to determine the variables that significantly predicted the respondents' confidence levels in taking part in social activities in the new normal. The outcome variable, *Confidence*, was measured as a composite scale based on items 3.4.a – 3.4.e. The outcome variable and the list of predictor variables used for this analysis can be found in Table 3.4 and Table 3.5.

Table 3.4: Outcome variable used in this regression analysis

Outcome variable	Description
Outcome variable: Confidence, a composite variable ($\alpha = .885$) based on the following items: (How confident are you in carrying out the following activities?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dining out in public places, like hawker centres, restaurants, or bars • Attending a live event with a large number of spectators • Leisure travel to countries with relatively low cases of COVID-19 • Taking public transport • Having close personal contact (e.g. handshakes, hugs, standing together in a group) 	A scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = Strongly disagree and 7 = Strongly agree

Table 3.5: List of predictor variables used in this regression analysis

Demographic predictor variables	Description
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 to 29 • 30 to 39 • 40 to 49 • 50 to 59

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 and above
Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O-Level and below • Post-secondary • Degree and above
Monthly income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below \$3,000 • \$3,000 to \$5,999 • \$5,999 and above
Household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not living with vulnerable persons • Living with vulnerable persons

The results (Table 3.6) showed that age and monthly income significantly influenced respondents' confidence levels in taking part in social activities in the new normal. More specifically, younger respondents and respondents with a higher monthly income were more likely to have greater confidence in taking part in social activities in the new normal.

Table 3.6: Regression analysis results for Confidence

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value
Age	-.180	.024	<.001
Education level	.071	.047	.131
Monthly income	.179	.039	<.001
Household members	-.001	.057	.990

We illustrate how age and monthly income relate to confidence levels in taking part in social activities in the new normal by cross-tabulating these variables with some of the items in the 3.4.a – 3.4.e:

- Age: Around 41 per cent of respondents aged 21-29 years old felt confident of dining out, as compared to around 28 per cent of those aged 60 and above (Figure 3.12). Around 50 per cent of those aged 21-29 were confident of taking public transport, as compared to 39 per cent of those aged 60 and above (Figure 3.13). Around 28 per cent of those aged 21-29 were also confident of having close personal contact, as compared to 11 per cent of those aged 60 and above (Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.12 To what extent are you confident of dining out, given that COVID-19 is still circulating in our society?, by age, W40-42 (%)

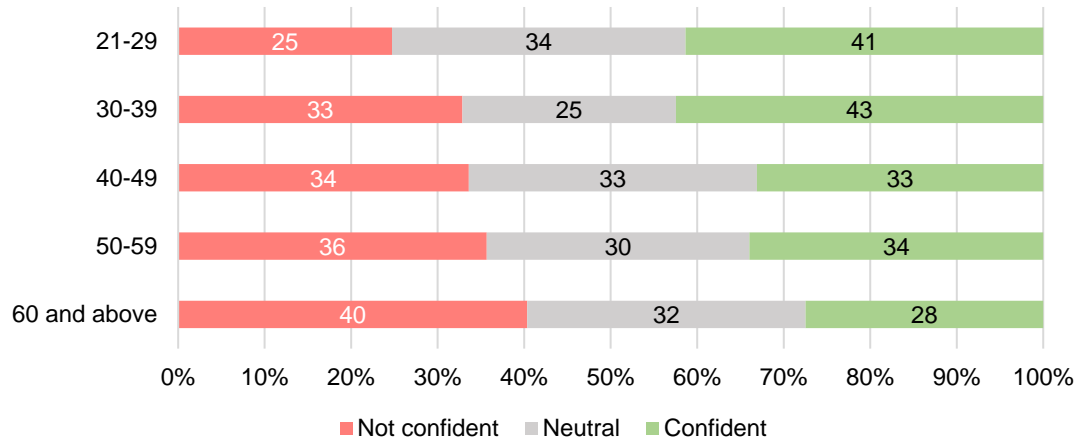


Figure 3.13 To what extent are you confident of taking public transport, given that COVID-19 is still circulating in our society?, by age, W40-42 (%)

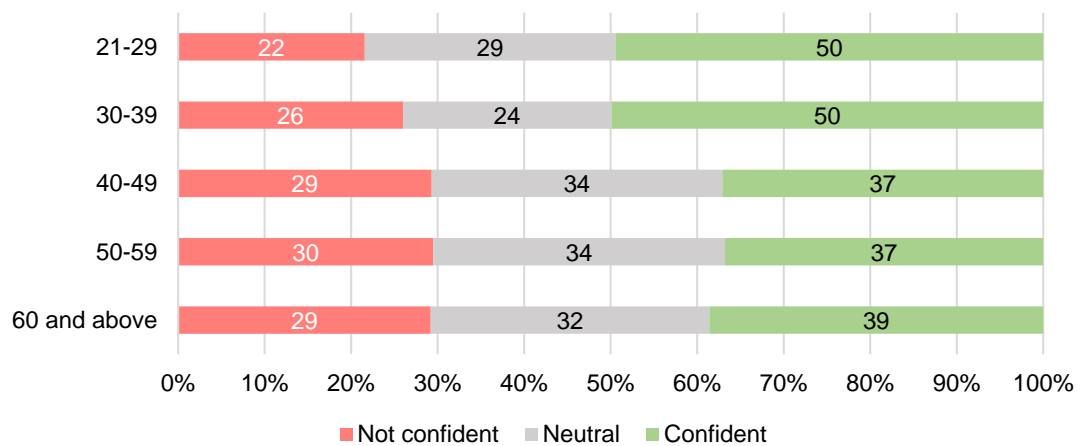
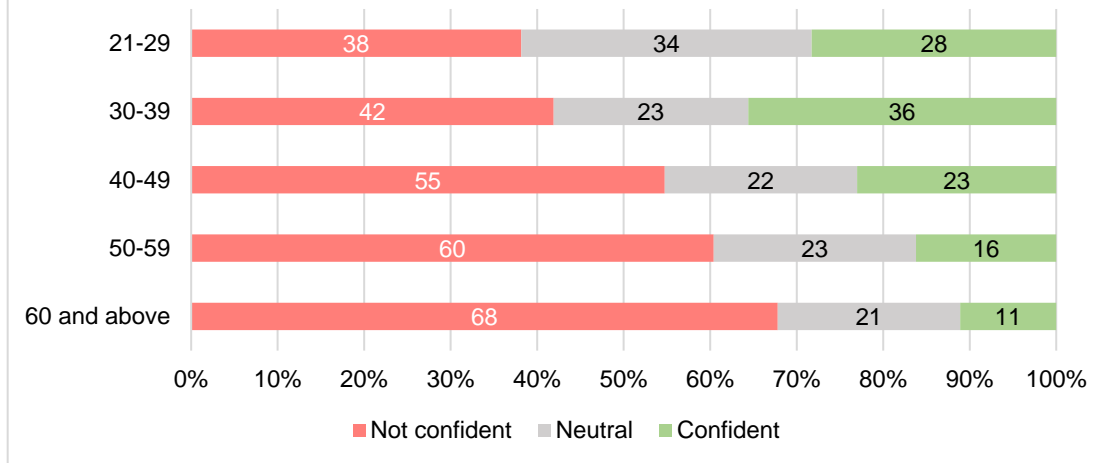


Figure 3.14 To what extent are you confident of having close personal contact, given that COVID-19 is still circulating in our society?, by age, W40-42 (%)



- Monthly income: At least 44 per cent of respondents earning a monthly income of \$6,000 or more said they were confident of dining out, as compared to around 33 per cent of those earning less than \$3,000 monthly (Figure 3.15). At least 29 per cent of respondents earning a monthly income of \$6,000 or more said they were confident of attending live events with large amounts of spectators, as compared to around 17 per cent of those earning less than \$3,000 monthly (Figure 3.16). Around 35 per cent of respondents earning a monthly income of \$6,000 or more said they were confident of leisure travel to countries with low COVID-19 cases, as compared to around 20 per cent of those earning less than \$3,000 monthly (Figure 3.17).

Figure 3.15 To what extent are you confident of dining out, given that COVID-19 is still circulating in our society?, by monthly income, W40-42 (%)

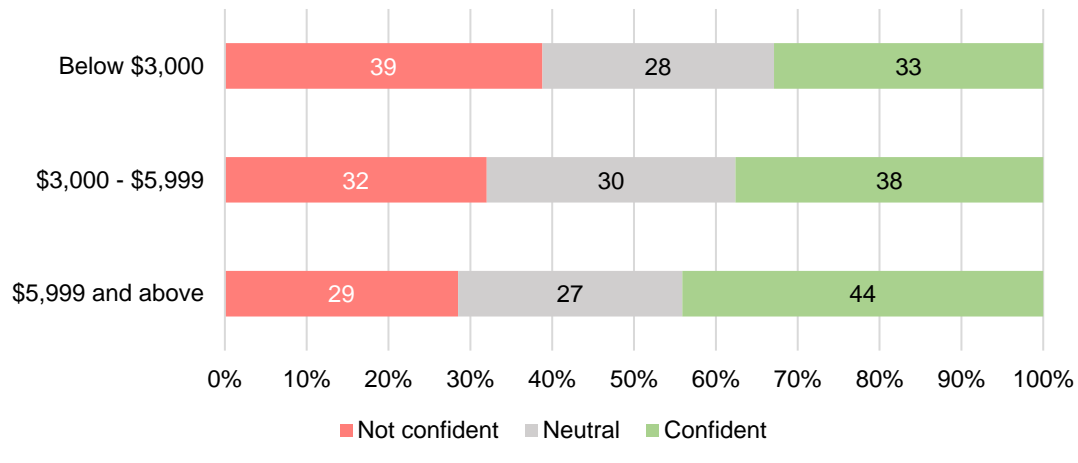
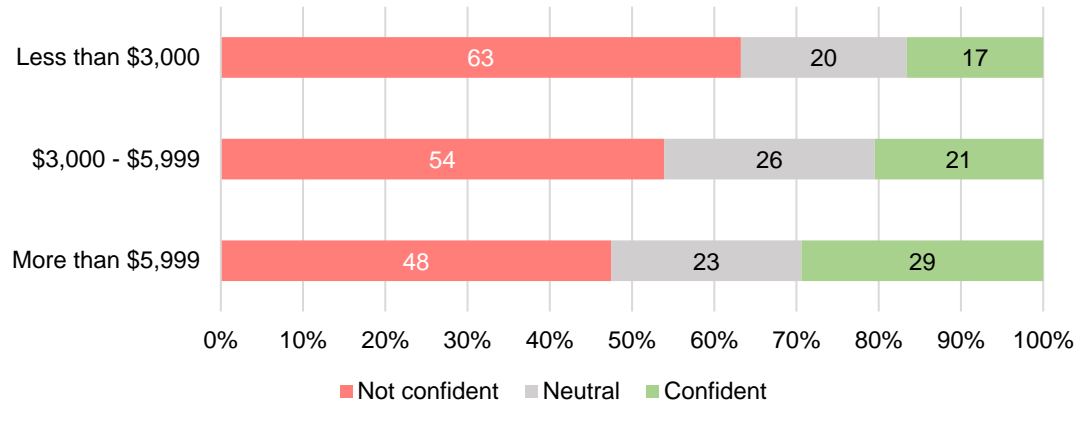
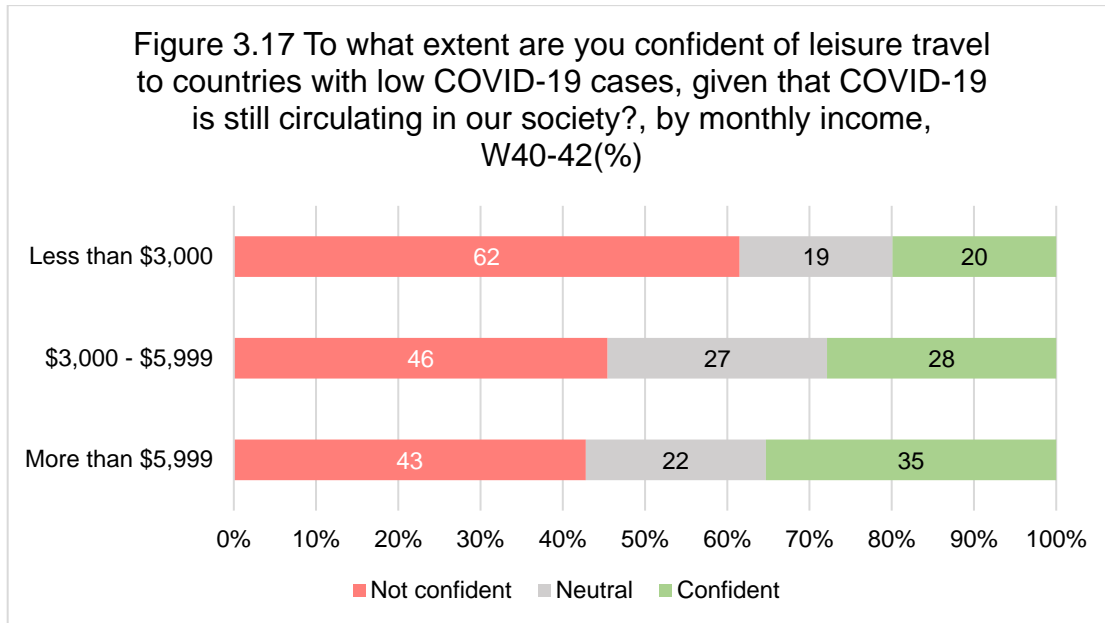


Figure 3.16 To what extent are you confident of attending live events with large amounts of spectators given that COVID-19 is still circulating in our society?, by monthly income, W40-42(%)





The results show that, in general, elderly Singaporeans were less confident of taking up social activities as compared to their younger counterparts.

Authorities have emphasised COVID-19 as a virus that is particularly dangerous to the elderly. Public health advisories, in all four national languages and across all mediums, have encouraged and praised the seniors who have chosen to reduce their social activities and stayed home instead. Given the strong push from the authorities, elderly Singaporeans might have considered the possibility that they might be infected and thus chose to curtail their activities to stay safe.

However, the focus on COVID-19 virus as a disease of the elderly might result in unintended consequences for the younger population. Thinking that there might be lesser chances for infection or serious illness from COVID-19, younger individuals might become less stringent in observing health measures as they take up their social activities once again.

Reports in countries like the United States (Stone, 2020) and South Korea (Aziz, 2020) have shown significantly higher infection rates in younger

populations than older ones, because of increased socialising in night spots, restaurants and other joints frequented by younger individuals. Similar trends have also been observed in Singapore (Chua, 2021).

Further, the consideration of monthly income towards being confident of leisure travel adds a socio-economic dimension to the decision-making process: individuals in the higher income group would most likely have the means to afford the multiple COVID-19 tests needed throughout their travel period, bear high travel fees and health costs, and pay for a quarantine and possibly overseas hospitalisation fees if they are infected, as compared to those from other income groups.

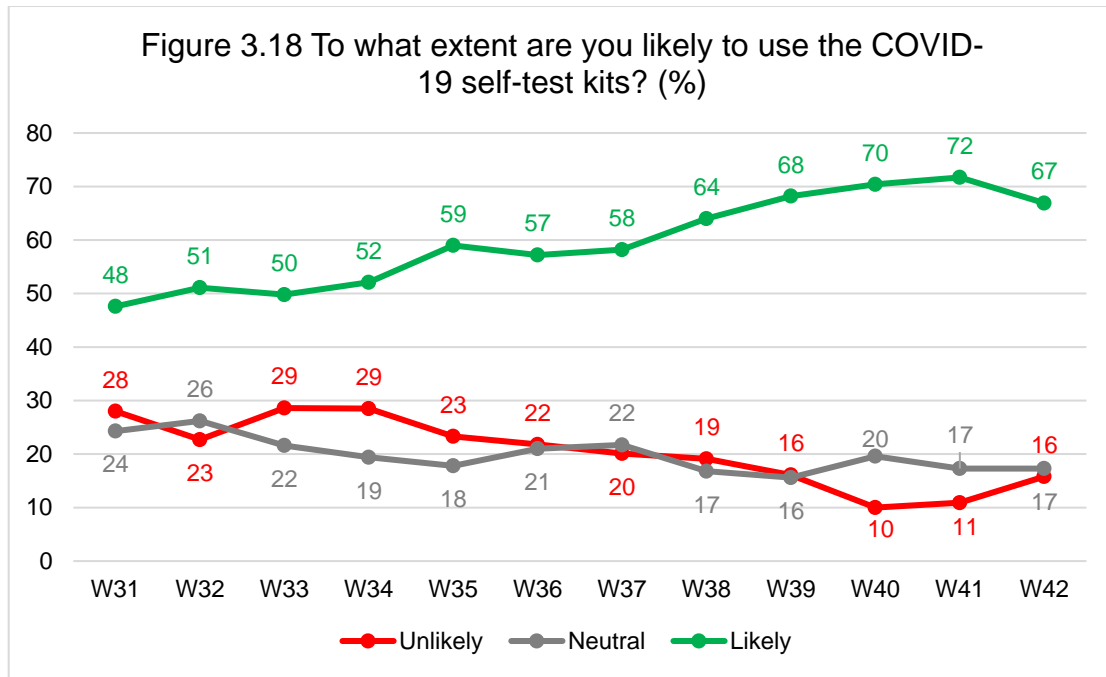
3.5 Sentiments on COVID-19 Self-testing

Given the wide availability of COVID-19 self-test kits and its importance in the new strategy against COVID-19, we asked respondents on the likelihood of them using these kits to test themselves (Figure 3.18). The proportion of those who indicated that they were likely to use the self-test kits steadily increased from 48 per cent in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) to 67 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).

There are a few possible reasons that can explain the rise in likelihood of using the self-test kits:

- a) The enforcement of the rostered routine testing scheme in early September (W35), which required employees who have returned to their workplaces to self-test at determined time periods
- b) Health authorities have encouraged those who have been exposed to the virus to self-test to quickly close the gap between exposure and transmission; those who have been exposed to the virus must also self-test until they get a negative result

- c) With the increasing number of daily cases, there might be an increase in the consciousness of one's health status, so that in the case of a positive result, early preventive action might be taken



A regression analysis was carried out to determine the variables that significantly predicted the respondents' likelihood in using the COVID-19 self-test kits. The outcome variable and the list of predictor variables used for this analysis can be found in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: List of predictor variables

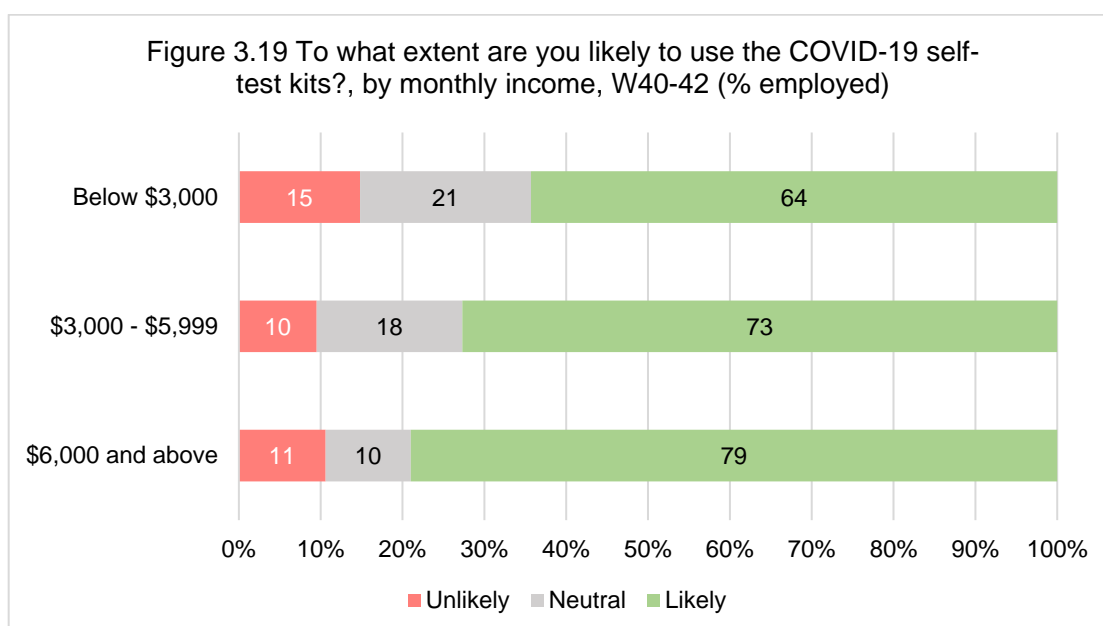
Outcome variable: To what extent are you likely to use the COVID-19 self-test kits?	
Demographic predictor variables	Description
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 to 29 • 30 to 39 • 40 to 49 • 50 to 59 • 60 and above
Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O-Level and below • Post-secondary • Degree and above
Monthly income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below \$3,000

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3,000 to \$5,999 • \$5,999 and above
Household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not living with vulnerable persons • Living with vulnerable persons

The results (Table 3.8) showed that higher income Singaporeans were more likely to use the COVID-19 self-test kits. More specifically, 79 per cent of respondents with a monthly income of \$6,000 and above (Figure 3.19) were likely to use COVID-19 self-test kits, as compared to 64 per cent of those earning below \$3,000.

Table 3.8: Regression analysis results for “To what extent are you likely to use the COVID-19 self-test kits?”

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value
Age	-.067	.038	.079
Education level	.015	.075	.837
Monthly income	.211	.062	<.001
Household members	.029	.089	.746



Respondents who said that they would self-test were presented with various situations that might generate the motivation to use a self-test kit. Respondents were then asked to indicate the likelihood of them using the test kits in that situation (Figure 3.20). At least eight in 10 said that they were likely to self-test

when community cases were on the rise. Around three-quarters said that they were likely to self-test when they had mild flu symptoms.

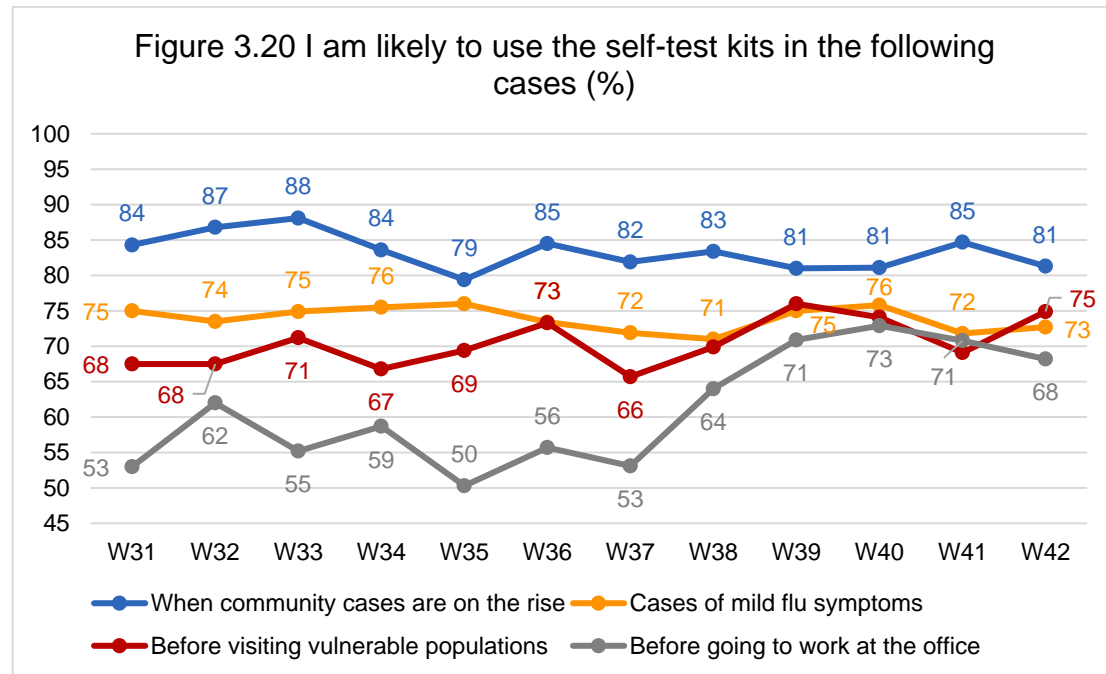
In the earlier waves, slightly more than two-thirds said they would self-test before visiting seniors or those who were immunocompromised; this rose to about 75 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021). Finally, a little more than half said that they were likely to use the self-test kits before going to work at the workplace in earlier waves. This increased to around seven in 10 in W42.

The increase in the latter two situations can be attributed to the public health authorities' pronouncements on the respective matters, which were made in light of the exponential rise in the COVID-19 cases that started in September 2021 (W35). During this period, government messaging and public health strategies emphasised the need to protect the elderly, such as preventing visitors to elderly care homes and issuing advisories that encouraged the elderly to stay home and stay safe. This might have influenced Singaporeans' opinions on the need for self-testing before visiting vulnerable populations.

Further, in mid-September (W36), authorities mandated self-testing routines for employees who have returned or wish to return to their workplaces. This might have influenced Singaporeans' opinions on the need for self-testing before returning to the workplace.

For the other two situations mentioned in this question (self-testing when community cases are on the rise and when one experiences mild flu symptoms), the proportion of those who indicated that they would self-test did not report any significant increase from W37 (22 – 29 September 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021). This means that the exponential rise in cases reported in early September alone could not have influenced Singaporeans to change their opinions on self-testing; hence, we suggest that the authorities'

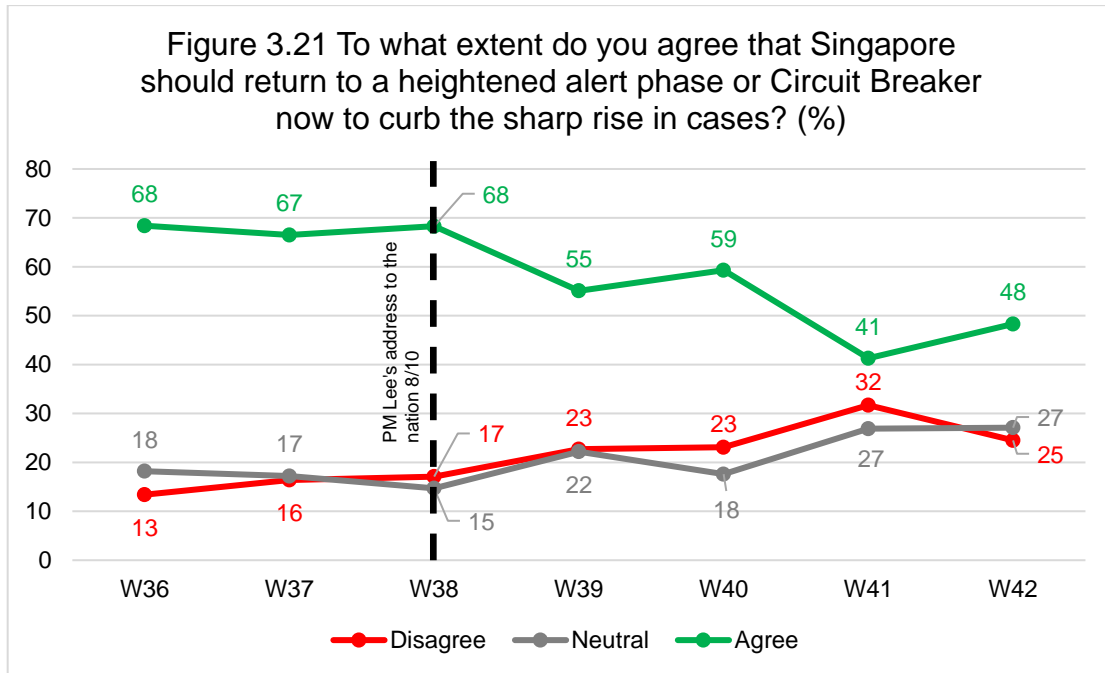
pronouncements was one of the factors that shaped public opinion on the issue. However, more research is needed to determine the nature of this relationship.



3.6 Reimposing Circuit Breaker

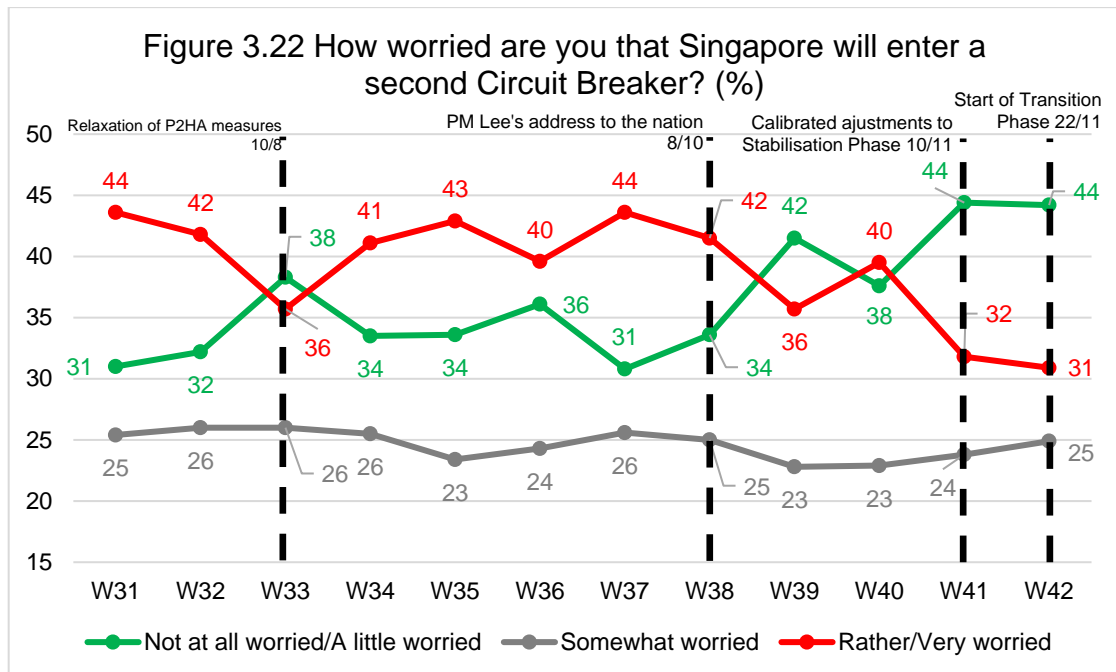
Respondents were asked if a CB or a heightened alert phase should be implemented to curb the sharp rise in cases. Slightly more than two-thirds of respondents in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021) to W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) believed that a CB or a heightened alert phase should be implemented. However, in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021), this dropped to about 55 per cent and dropped further to 48 per cent in W42 (19 – 23 November 2021).

This comes as the Prime Minister definitively ruled out any future lockdowns in the government's COVID-19 strategy in his address to the nation in early October 2021 (W38). The substantial decline in W39, following the Prime Minister's address, shows how Singaporeans' opinions on COVID-19 issues are actively shaped by health authorities. Further relaxation of SMMs and stabilisation of the COVID-19 situation in Singapore may have resulted in the proportion falling further during mid-November (W41 to W42).



Respondents were asked if they were worried that Singapore would enter a second CB. Around 44 per cent of respondents in W31 (14 – 25 July 2021) and 42 per cent of respondents W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021) said they were rather or very worried. This dropped to 36 per cent in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021), as the stricter safety measures in the second P2HA were relaxed, following a drop in COVID-19 cases. However, when COVID-19 cases started to rise in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) to W35 (2 – 10 September 2021), the proportion of those who were rather or very worried returned to around four in 10. This continued until W39 (15 – 27 October 2021), where the proportion of those rather or very worried dropped to 36 per cent, presumably after the PM’s speech in early October 2021.

A slight increase was recorded in W40 (28 October – 1 November 2021) after the announcement near the end of W39 (15 – 27 October 2021) of the extension of the Stabilisation Phase. The proportion fell to around 30 per cent in W41 (10 – 17 November 2021) to W42 (19 – 23 November 2021) as SMMs were relaxed and Singapore entered the Transition Phase.



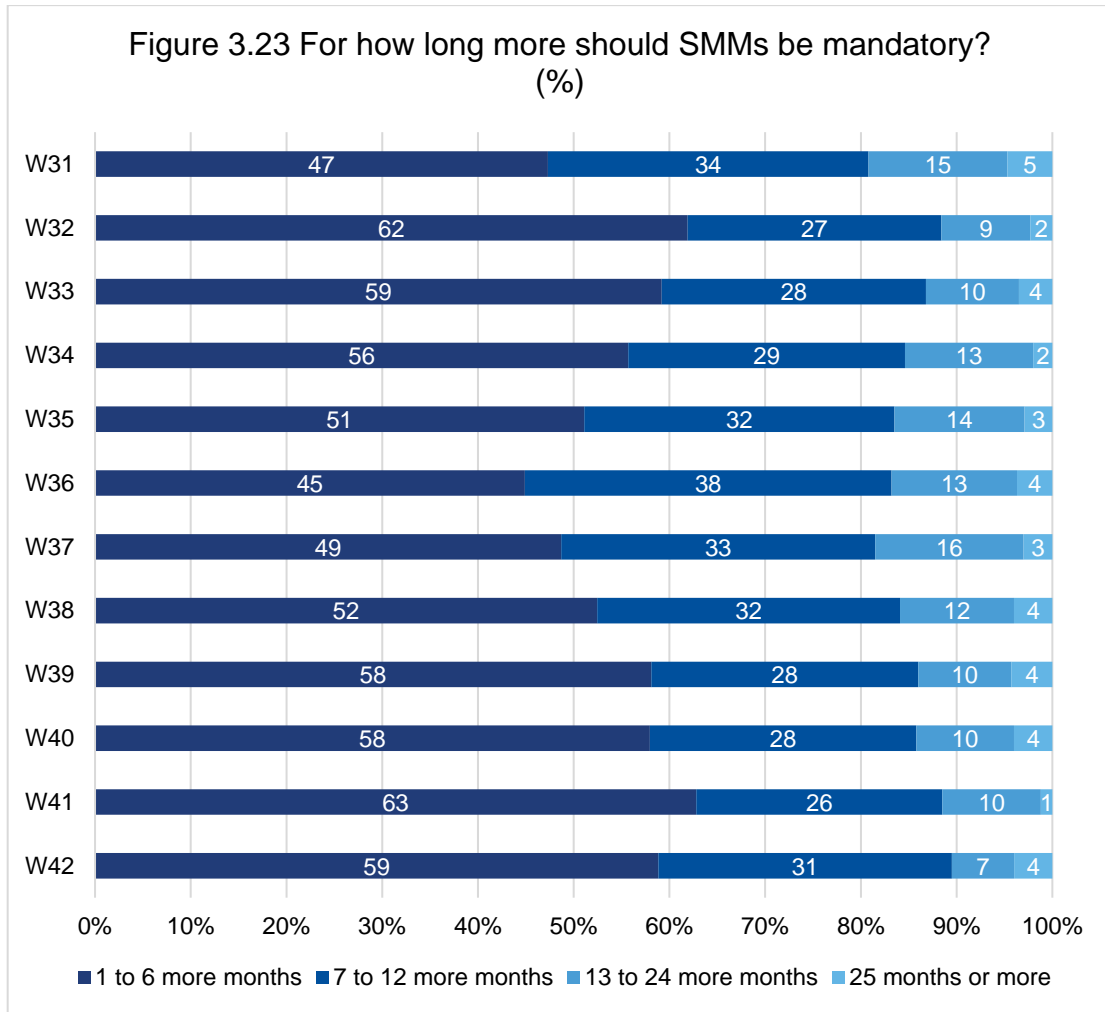
3.7 Perceived Duration of Safe Management Measures

Respondents were also asked to provide a duration for which SMMs should continue to be mandatory (Figure 3.23). In W31 (14 – 25 July 2021), 47 per cent of respondents said that SMMs should continue to be mandatory for another one to six months; this jumped to 62 per cent in W32 (26 July – 7 August 2021) but declined slightly to 59 per cent in W33 (7 – 19 August 2021). The decline continued and the proportion dropped to its lowest of 45 per cent in W36 (15 – 21 September 2021), as the COVID-19 situation in Singapore became urgent.

However, decline was reversed in W37 (22 – 29 September 2021), which saw the proportion of those who believed that SMMs should be mandatory for another one to six months increase to 49 per cent. This continued to increase to 52 per cent in W38 (1 – 11 October 2021) and 58 per cent in W39 (15 – 27 October 2021), recovering close to P2HA levels. The proportion further increased to 59 per cent in W42 (19 - 23 November 2021).

The declining number of cases during the W32 period (in which the moving average number of cases fell from 133 on 26 July 2021 to around 82 on 7 August 2021), coupled with the 6 August 2021 announcement on the relaxation of the second P2HA SMMs, perhaps gave Singaporeans a sense of optimism for the near future and felt that the situation was getting better. This explains the large increase in W32 in the proportion of those who feel that SMMs should be mandatory for another six months at most.

However, as daily community cases begin increasing, our data suggests that a growing number of Singaporeans are beginning to reconsider letting their guards down, but instead opting to continue being cautious and observe these strict health measures. This explains the increase in the proportion of respondents who felt that SMMs should be mandatory for at least another seven to 12 months in W34 (20 – 30 August 2021) to W36 (15 – 21 September 2021). The announcement of the Stabilisation Phase during W37 and the increased discussion of living with Covid-19 may have subsequently resulted in an increasing proportion of respondents in subsequent waves opting for the SMMs to last for another one to six months rather than longer. More respondents are perhaps anticipating that SMMs will be further relaxed in subsequent months.



CONCLUSION

Overall, our findings from the present waves of analyses provide us with a better understanding of how the Singapore population evaluates governance and living with a prolonged health crisis. First, while satisfaction levels towards the government across a range of domains have generally been high, it is not a given. A positive appraisal of the government on its management of the pandemic is subject to a population perceiving that the government had met its expectations. In the September to October period, when infection cases and deaths were at an unprecedented high, as compared to earlier periods of the pandemic, satisfaction levels dipped. Nevertheless, we also observed that in late October to November, satisfaction levels have experienced some stabilisation and indeed, upward rebound.

These trends demonstrate to us that Singaporeans' evaluation of the government's handling of the pandemic as well as perceived efficacy of its political leadership appear to be guided by the logic of pragmatism. The population expects that the number of deaths and infections from the pandemic are kept low. Insofar as these tacit criteria are met, evaluations and attitudes towards the government's performance improve, and people gradually recover from the acute upsetness that they initially experienced.

While Singaporeans are increasingly able to adjust to living with more infections in their midst, they clearly prioritise life (i.e., minimal deaths). This has implications to the pace of re-opening. The population is becoming more aware that infections from COVID-19 may never be at the near zero levels we observed prior to Singapore's strategic switch to living with COVID-19. While the population considers it acceptable to re-open and for there to be higher numbers of infections than pre-endemic phases, it is unacceptable to have more than a few deaths. This then indicates a preference for a slower and

calibrated reopening, a willingness to adhere to safe management measures for a longer period, and a confidence in vaccinations, boosters and testing.

Second, we observed clear distinctions in attitudes towards endemic living based on age and socio-economic status. Those who were younger, as well as those who were more affluent, were consistently observed to be more enthusiastic about and psychologically ready for endemic living, as compared to those who were older and less affluent. Many factors may underpin these differential perceptions, such as one's risk appetite, perceived missed opportunities, confidence in one's physical health, and better financial capabilities in handling the economic impact of being infected.

Moreover, it is also important to note the sometimes dilemmatic considerations especially when it comes to ensuring the safety of our elderly population – while isolation may help prevent infections and deaths amongst the elderly, it must be carefully balanced with the elderly's needs for social interactions, emotional and physical connections. After all, different demographic groups possess different motivations and readiness towards reopening which, while being the desired end-state for all, must be approached in a manner that leaves no one behind.

Third, despite the fluctuations in government appraisals and differences in attitudes towards endemic living that we have observed, a common and indeed, encouraging finding was that Singaporeans across all walks of life possessed a strong and healthy level of trust that we will get out of this crisis together. Across the waves of polling, trust and confidence in Singapore's ability to emerge from this crisis remained high and did not suffer a drastic dip despite the exponential increase in case numbers. This perhaps amplifies the cohesive national identity that Singaporeans possess and the solidarity that is displayed in the face of national threats.

Indeed, regardless of the challenges thrown at us in this crisis, this sense of trust and solidarity – in our leadership and in our people – may be the most crucial conviction in tiding us through together. It will therefore be crucial for the government and our leaders to continue to safeguard this hard-earned trust that the population has in them. Specifically, this entails the continued provision of clear rationales for policy decisions in order to convince people of the need for these policies; effective policy communication to ensure that all segments of the society are able to comprehend the rapidly evolving situation and the corresponding need for shifting measures; and to strive for mutual consensus and understanding across population segments given potentially diverse and polarising views.

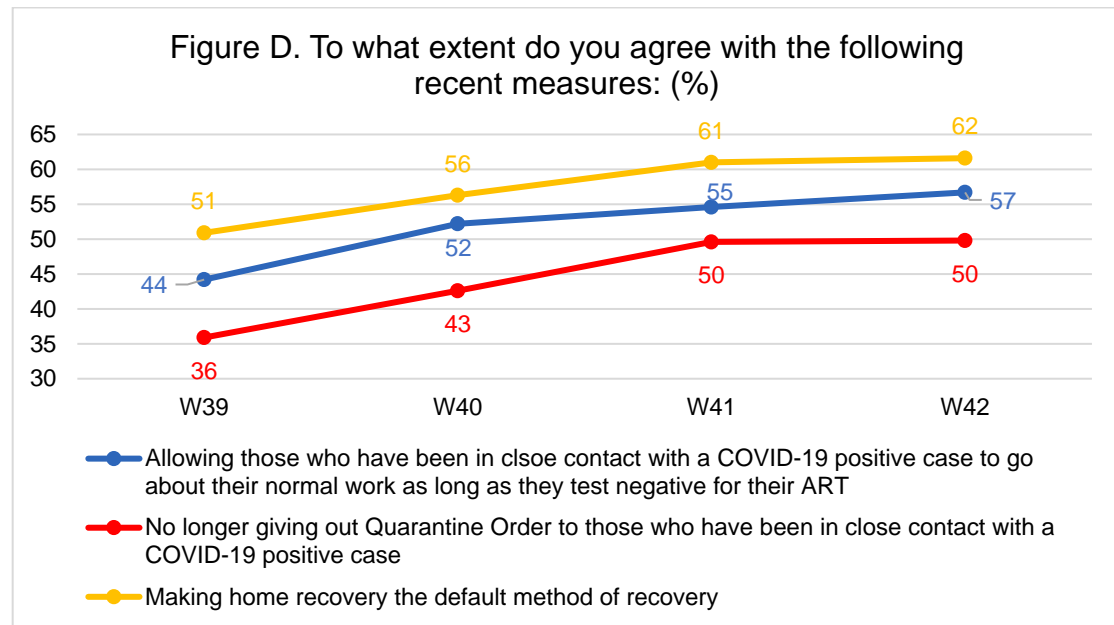
The COVID-19 situation, along with emerging variants, will continue to disrupt Singaporeans' lives and well-being as we learn how to live effectively with the virus. The psychological, social, and economic resilience of our society are and will be consistently tested during this crisis of a generation. Yet, if anything, we believe that Singapore and Singaporeans possess the wherewithal – founded on a strong basis of societal trust – to eventually emerge from this crisis as one united people.

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ANNEX A



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