

ASEAN Consumer
Sentiment Study
(ACSS)

2025

Malaysia Report





Our objective

ASEAN Consumer Sentiment Study (ACSS) is UOB's regional flagship study analysing consumer trends and sentiments in five countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam).

Now in its 6th year, the 2025 survey was conducted in June and captures the responses of 5000 consumers across different demographic groups in this dynamic ASEAN region.

Research Design at a glance

WHAT



25 mins online survey
Fieldwork: May – Jun 2025

Total of **1000** interviews

WHO



Male/ females aged 18-65 years

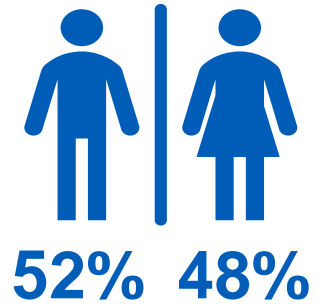
WHERE



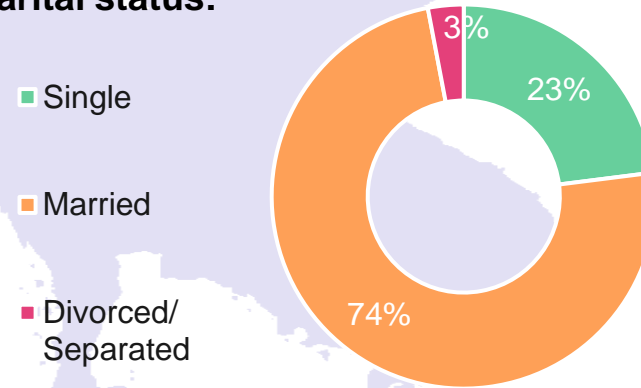
Malaysia

Detailed look at who we spoke to

Gender:



Marital status:



Age group:

- Gen Z 18-26 years
- Gen Y 27-42 years
- Gen X 43-58 years
- Baby Boomers 59-65 years

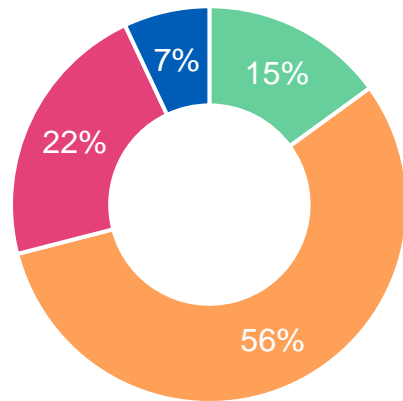


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- 2 Shifts in Spending and Financial Behaviour
- 3 Digital Payment Methods
- 4 Financial Preparedness



1. Consumer Sentiments and Outlook

The UOB ASEAN Consumer Sentiment Index is designed to capture the pulse of consumer confidence across key ASEAN markets

It is **derived from 6 questions** and reflects consumer perceptions of both current and future economic conditions, alongside personal financial concerns and expectations that together encompass a macro and micro view.

Current

- Perception of current economic environment (Very/somewhat positive)
- Your household's increased expenses (Not worried at all/a little worried)
- The possibility of having your pay cut/income declining (Not worried at all/a little worried)

Future

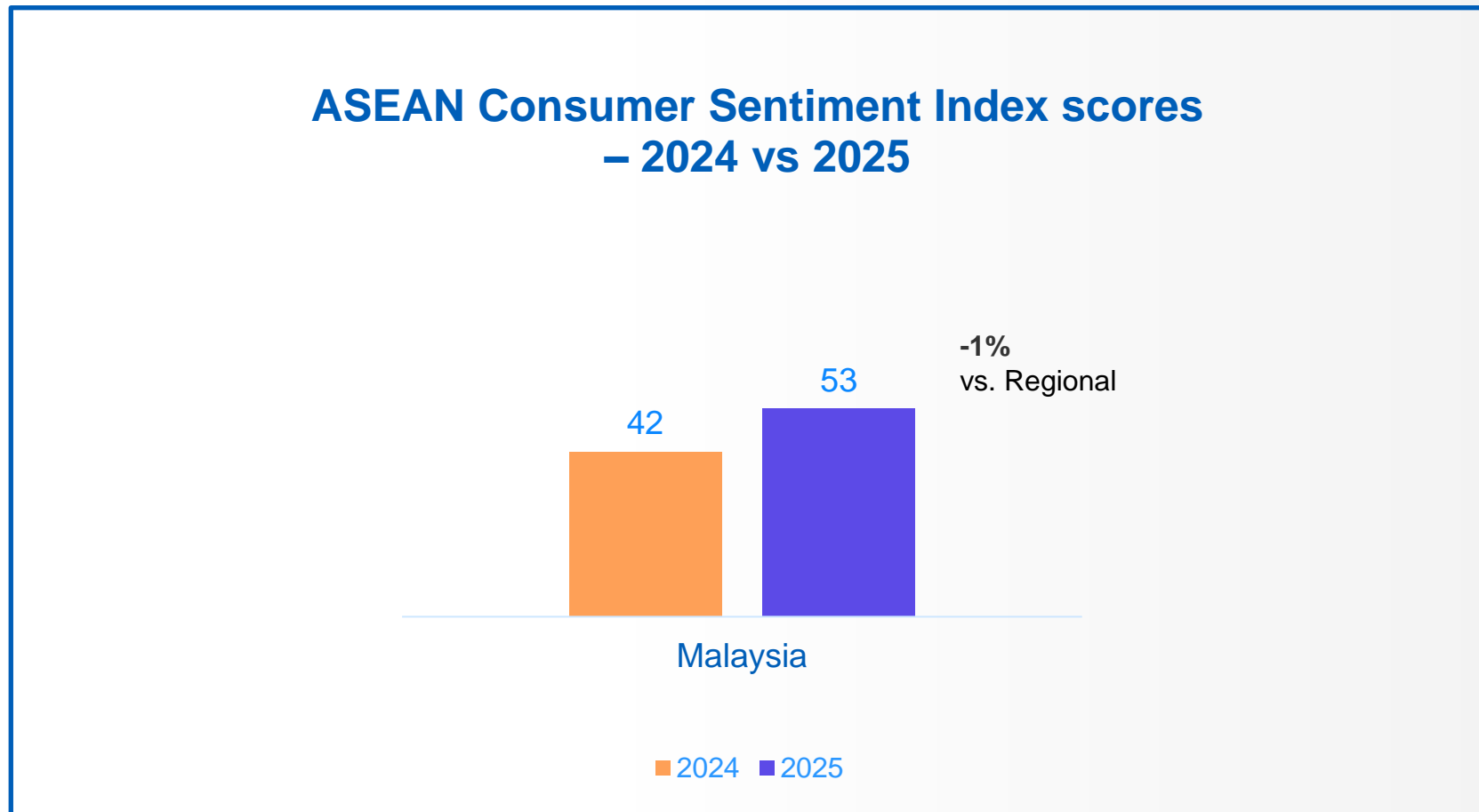
- Perception of economic performance over the next 6-12 months (Very/somewhat positive)
- Your long-term financial commitments (Not worried at all/a little worried)
- Where do you expect to be financially this time next year (Much better off/little better off)

Macro

Micro

Malaysia ACSI score has improved by 11 points compared to last year

Consumer Sentiment Index



Significantly higher vs. 2024
Significantly lower vs. 2024



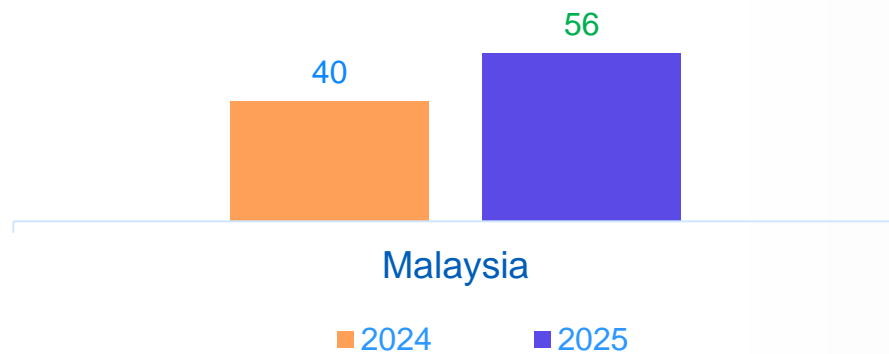
On a macro level, optimism about the current and future economic environment improved strongly

Consumer Sentiment Index – Macro perspective

Macro score 56 (+15)

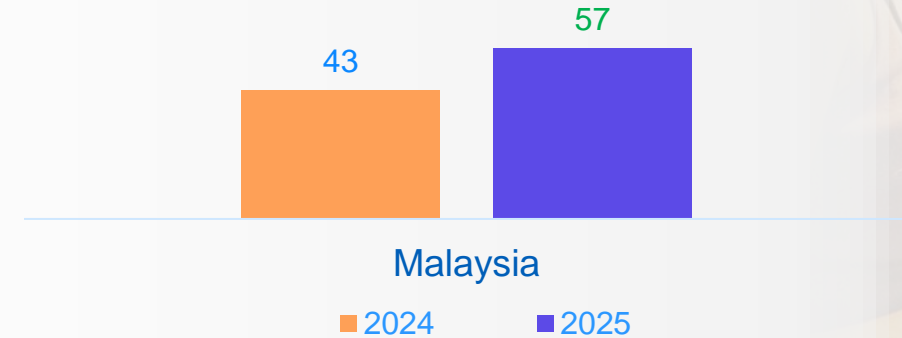
Current

Optimism about current economic environment



Future

Optimism about future economic environment



A2. How do you perceive the current economic environment in [insert relevant country]?
A7. Looking forward, how do you see the economy of [insert relevant country] performing over the next 6-12 months?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. 2024
Significantly lower vs. 2024

At a micro level, MY consumers are less worried about their household expenses, income, future financial commitments, and more expect the future situation to be better next year

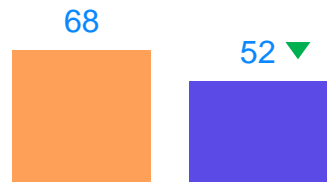
Consumer Sentiment Index – Micro perspective

Micro score 52 (+9)

Current

Worried about increased household expenses

“I feel relieved to be able to meet all my household commitments every month.”
(Gen X, Male)



Malaysia

Worried about possibility of pay cut / income declining

“During these two years, people's income has slowly increased, they are also more daring to buy the things they want to buy in life.”
(Gen Z, Female)

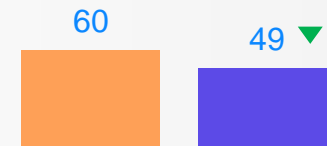


Malaysia

Future

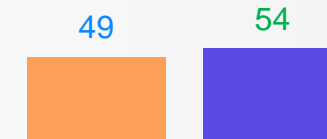
Worried about long-term financial commitments

“Some of the things will affect the economics now, but long-term situation will improve slowly.”
(Gen X, Female)



Malaysia

Expect future financial situation to be better off



Malaysia

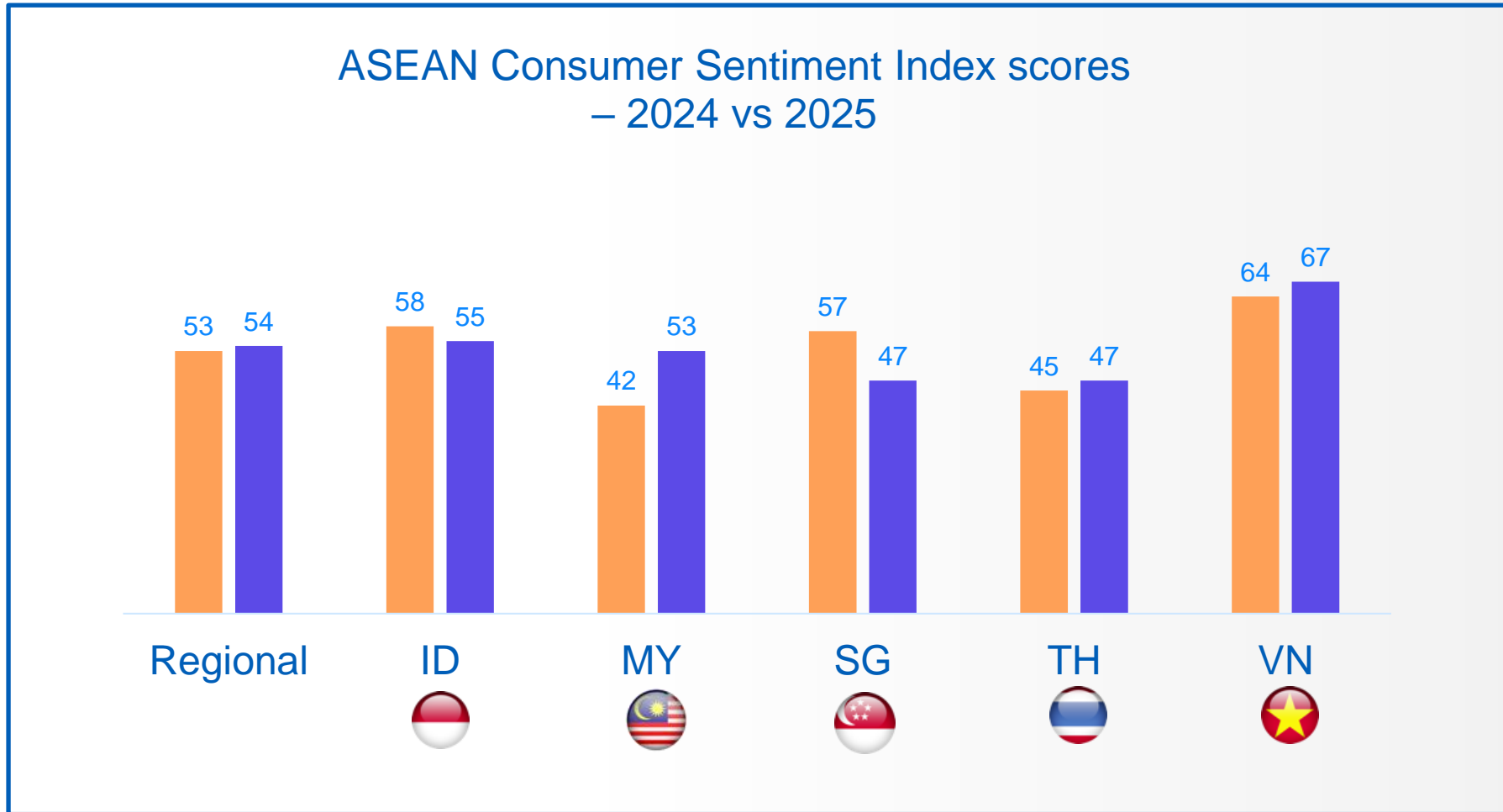
■ 2024 ■ 2025

B1. Listed below are some key areas that people talk about. Please indicate how worried you are at the moment about each of them.
BF2. Looking ahead to this time next year, where do you expect to be financially compared to today?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

▲ Significantly higher concern vs. 2024 Significantly higher vs. 2024
▼ Significantly lower concern vs. 2024 Significantly lower vs. 2024

Malaysia ACSI score is at par with the region

Consumer Sentiment Index – by markets



2024 2025

Significantly higher vs. 2024

Significantly lower vs. 2024

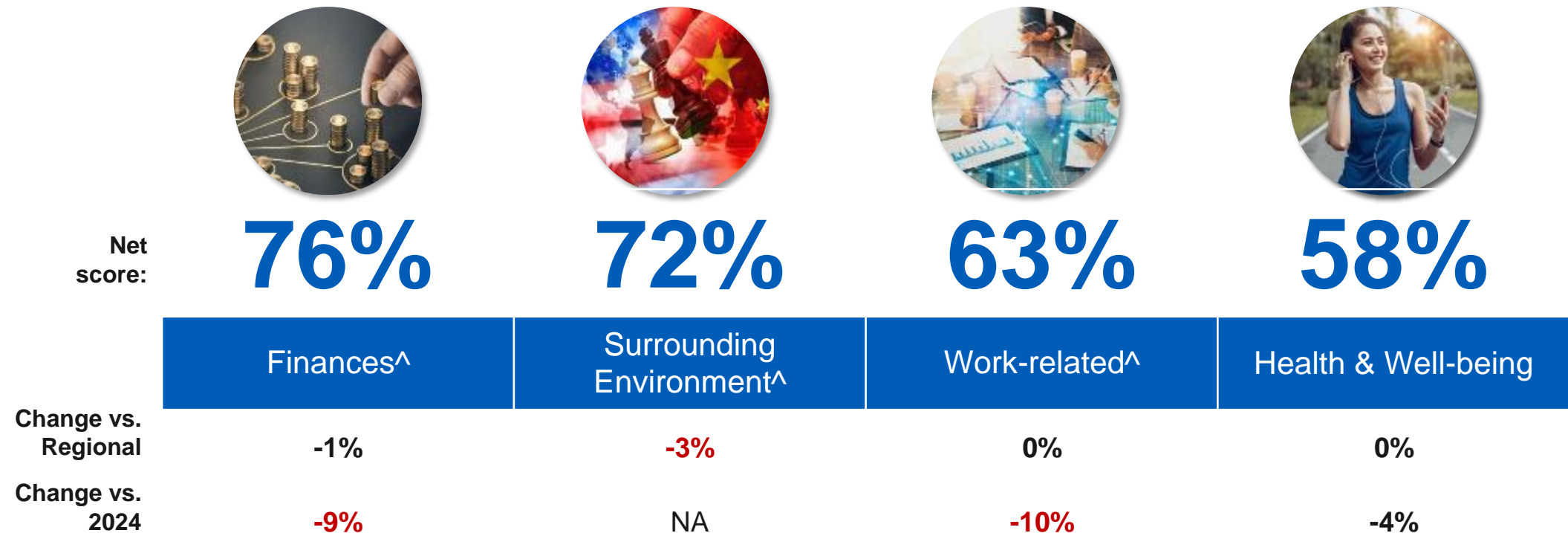


Daily Concerns & Expectations



Finance and environmental concerns are more worrying to Malaysians than work, health and well-being concerns

Current aspects that are worrying (T2B)














B1. Listed below are some key areas that people talk about. Please indicate how worried you are at the moment about each of them.
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

*T2B: Very/Somewhat worried
Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

MY consumers are now less worried about their cost of living, household expenses, and long-term financial obligations

Top current aspects that are worrying (T2B) – by market

	Regional	Malaysia 	Change vs. 2024:
Top concern	Increased cost of living due to inflation  59%	Increased cost of living due to inflation  58%	-14%
2 nd	Climate change, natural disasters and pollution  56%	US/Trump tariffs  53%	NA
3 rd	US/Trump tariffs  55%	Climate change, natural disasters and pollution  53%	NA
4 th	Your household's increased expenses  54%	Your household's increased expenses  52%	-15%
5 th	The global geo-political environment  55%	Your long-term financial commitments  49%	-11%

B1. Listed below are some key areas that people talk about. Please indicate how worried you are at the moment about each of them.
Base: Total sample, n=1,000

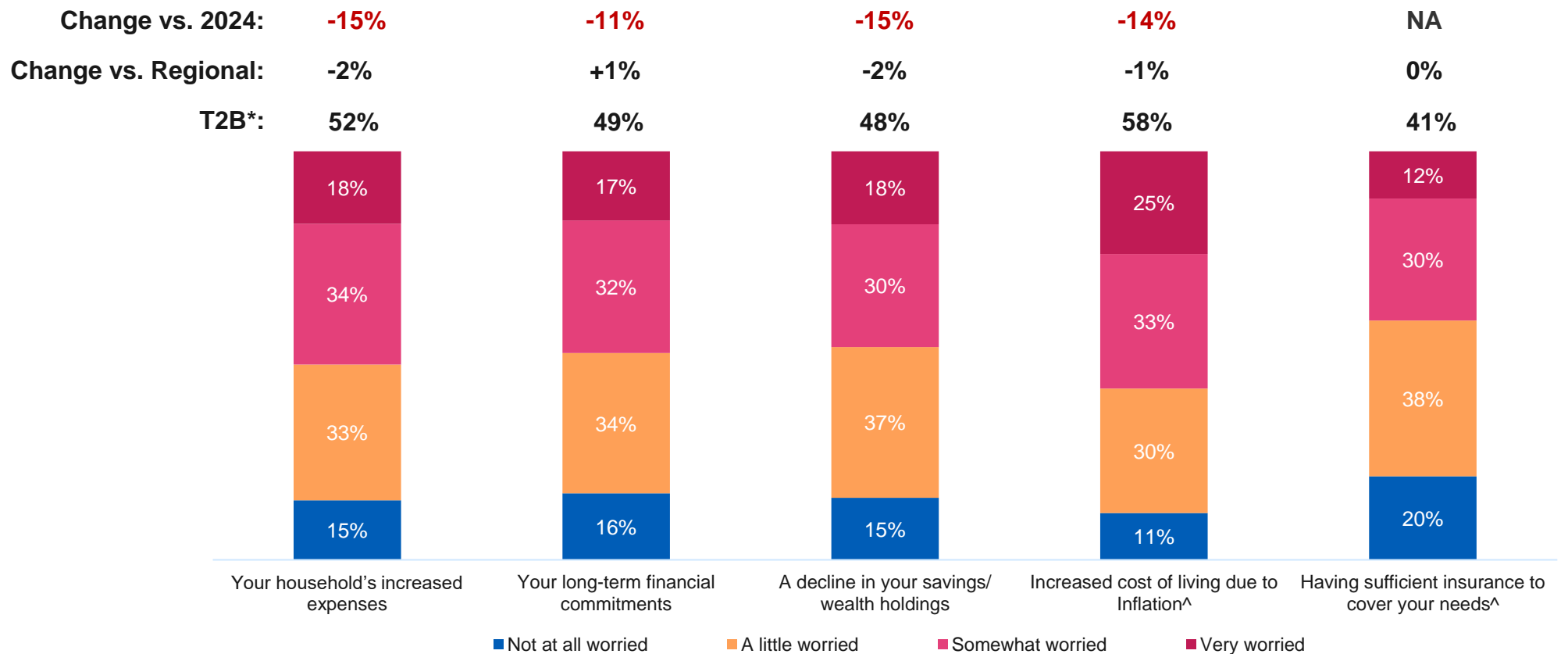
Common themes are colour-coded for easy reference

*T2B: Very/Somewhat worried
Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

Fewer consumers are now concerned about increased household expenses, long-term financial commitments and declining savings than a year ago

Current aspects that are worrying – Finances

Finances



[^]New statement added/statement tweaked in 2025
 *T2B: Very/Somewhat worried
Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

B1. Listed below are some key areas that people talk about. Please indicate how worried you are at the moment about each of them.
 Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

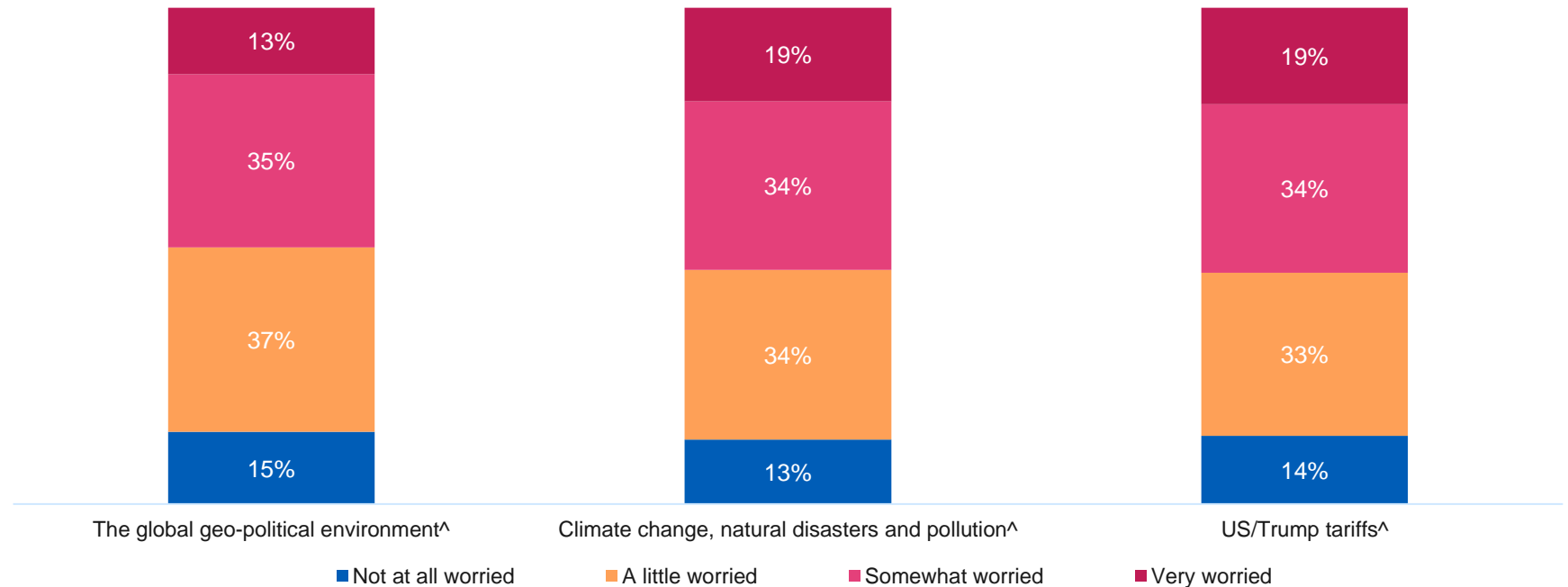
Concerns among MY consumers about the global geo-political environment have reduced since last year

Current aspects that are worrying – Surrounding Environment

Surrounding Environment



Change vs. 2024:	-7%	NA	NA
Change vs. Regional:	-2%	-3%	-2%
T2B*:	48%	53%	53%



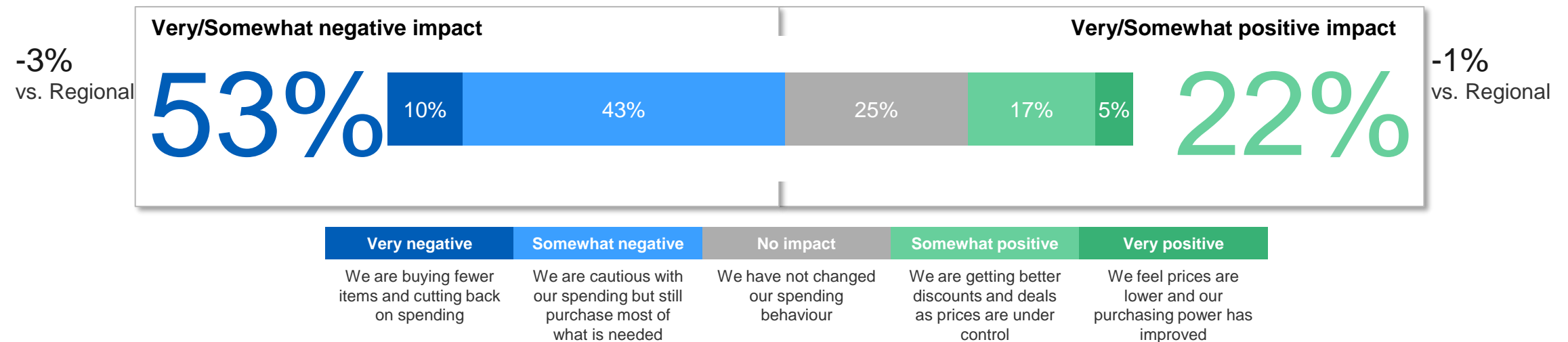
^New statement added/statement tweaked in 2025 *T2B: Very/Somewhat worried

B1. Listed below are some key areas that people talk about. Please indicate how worried you are at the moment about each of them.
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

Household's purchasing power continues to be under pressure and consumer are being cautious with spending

Impact of inflation on household's purchasing power



Malaysian consumers are more concerned than the region about funding their children's education and paying off mortgage / loans

Most worrying financial situations to be in

Top 2 most worrying financial situations to be in:

34%

32%

Ability to put money aside for saving

Ability to afford essential items for me and my family

Change vs. Regional 0%

+3%

Change vs. 2024 -4%

-5%

Other financial situations that are worrying:



BF1. Given the inflation in the country today, which of the following financial situations, if any, worry you more?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

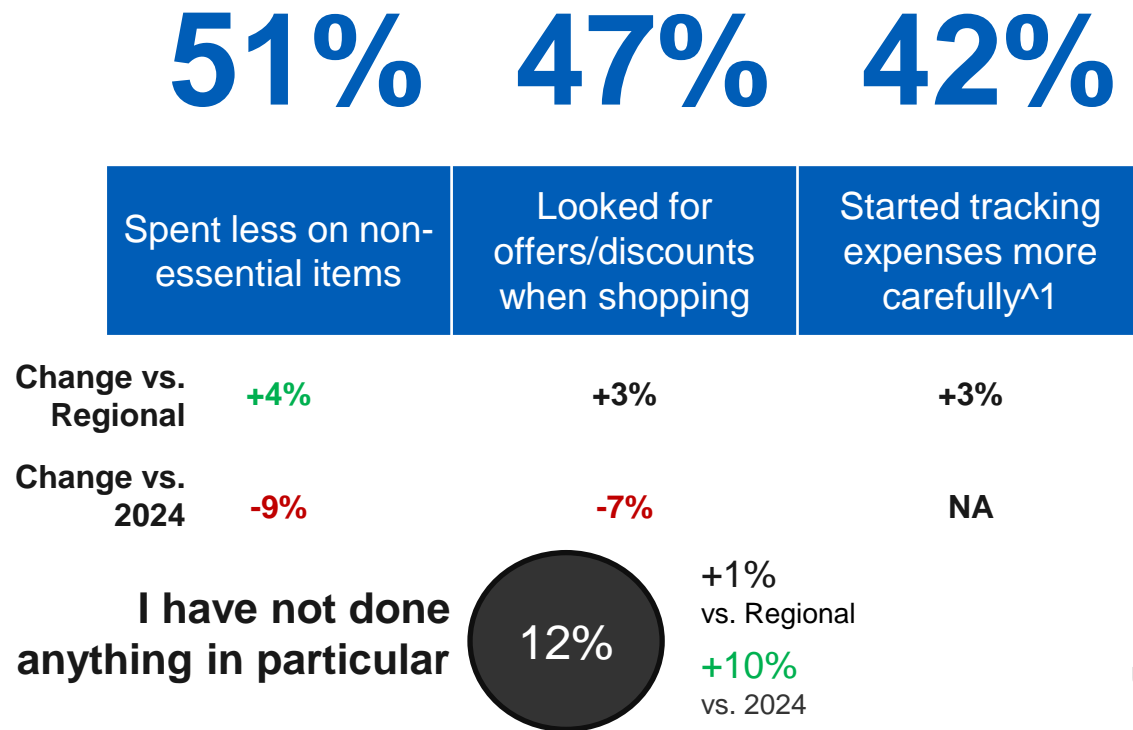
^New statement added in 2025

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

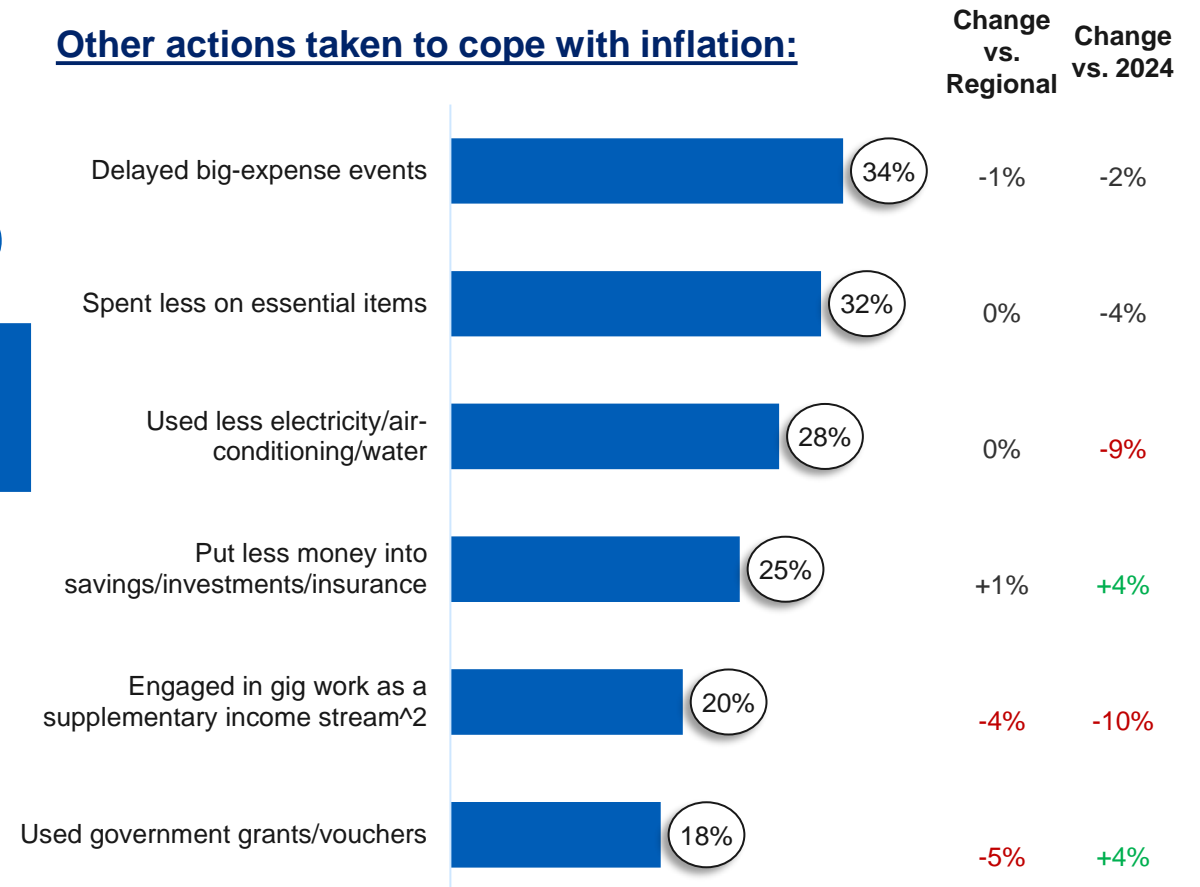
To manage inflation, 1 in 2 consumers seek discounts and have cut back on non-essentials, while 2 in 5 are tracking expenses more

Efforts in coping with inflation

Top 3 efforts in coping with inflation:



Other actions taken to cope with inflation:



BF3. What have you done in the past 6-12 months to cope with inflation?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

^{^1} New statement added/statement tweaked in 2025

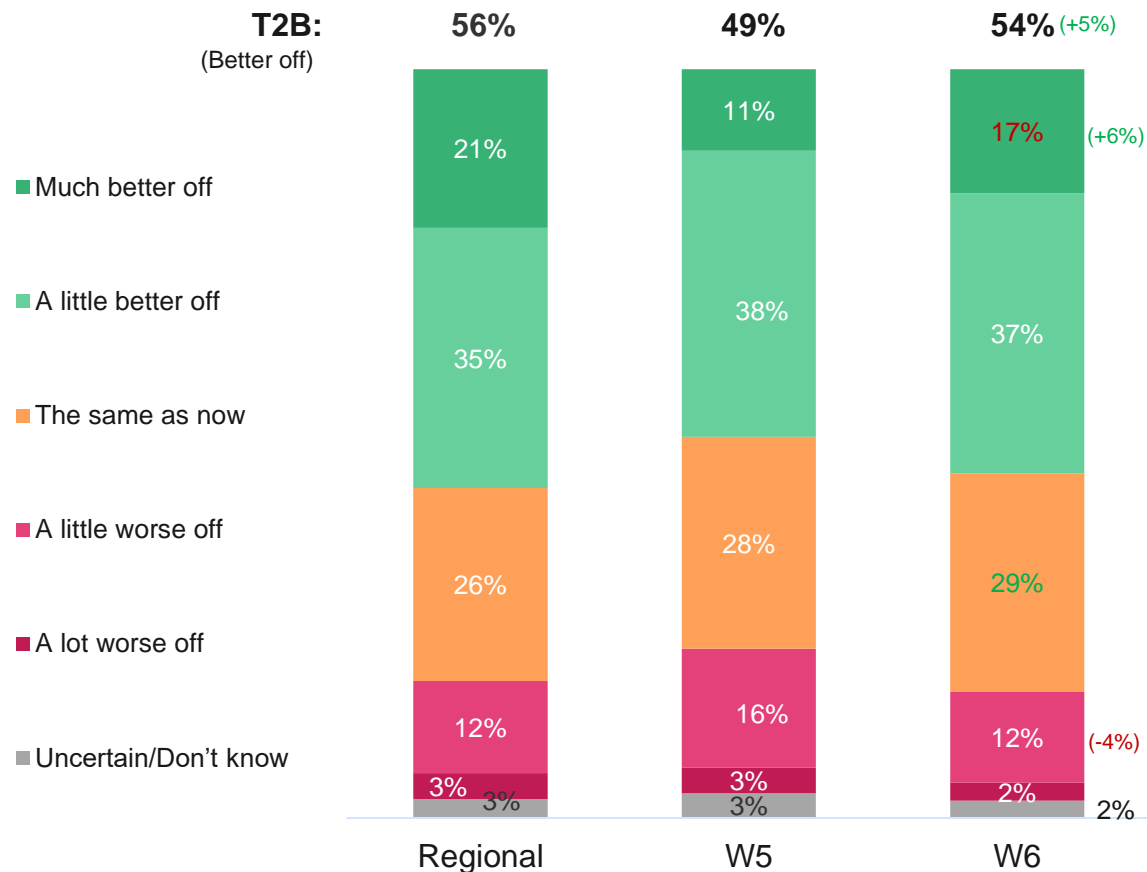
^{^2} 2024 statement: Started a secondary source of income

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024

Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

Financial situation expectation in the coming year

Optimism about future financial improvement among MY consumers is now higher than it was a year ago



*T2B: Better off
 () Significantly higher vs. 2024
 () Significantly lower vs. 2024
 Significantly higher vs. Regional
 Significantly lower vs. Regional

BF2. Looking ahead to this time next year, where do you expect to be financially compared to today?
 Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000



2. Shifts in Spending and Financial Behaviour

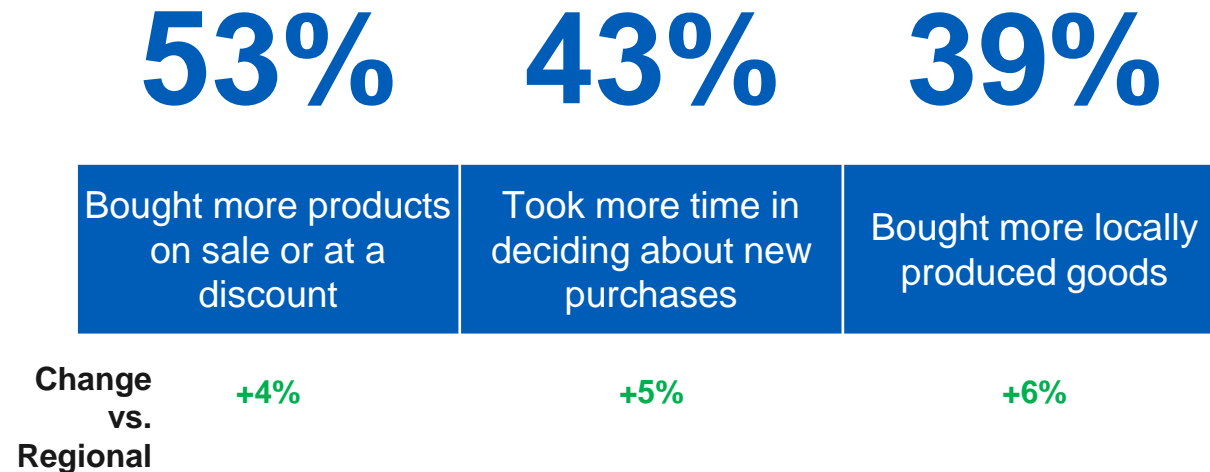
Shifts in spending habits



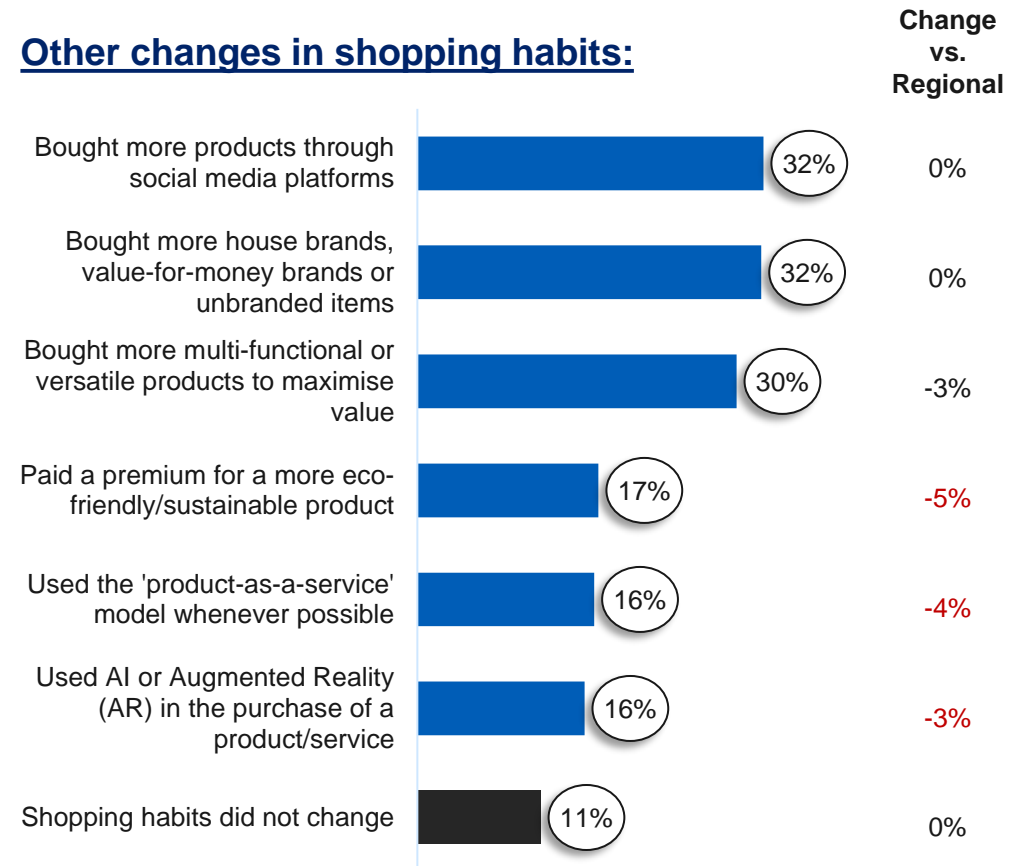
MY consumers prefer discounted and local products and claim to take more time than their regional counterparts

Change in shopping habits in the past 12 months

Top 3 changes in shopping habits:



Other changes in shopping habits:

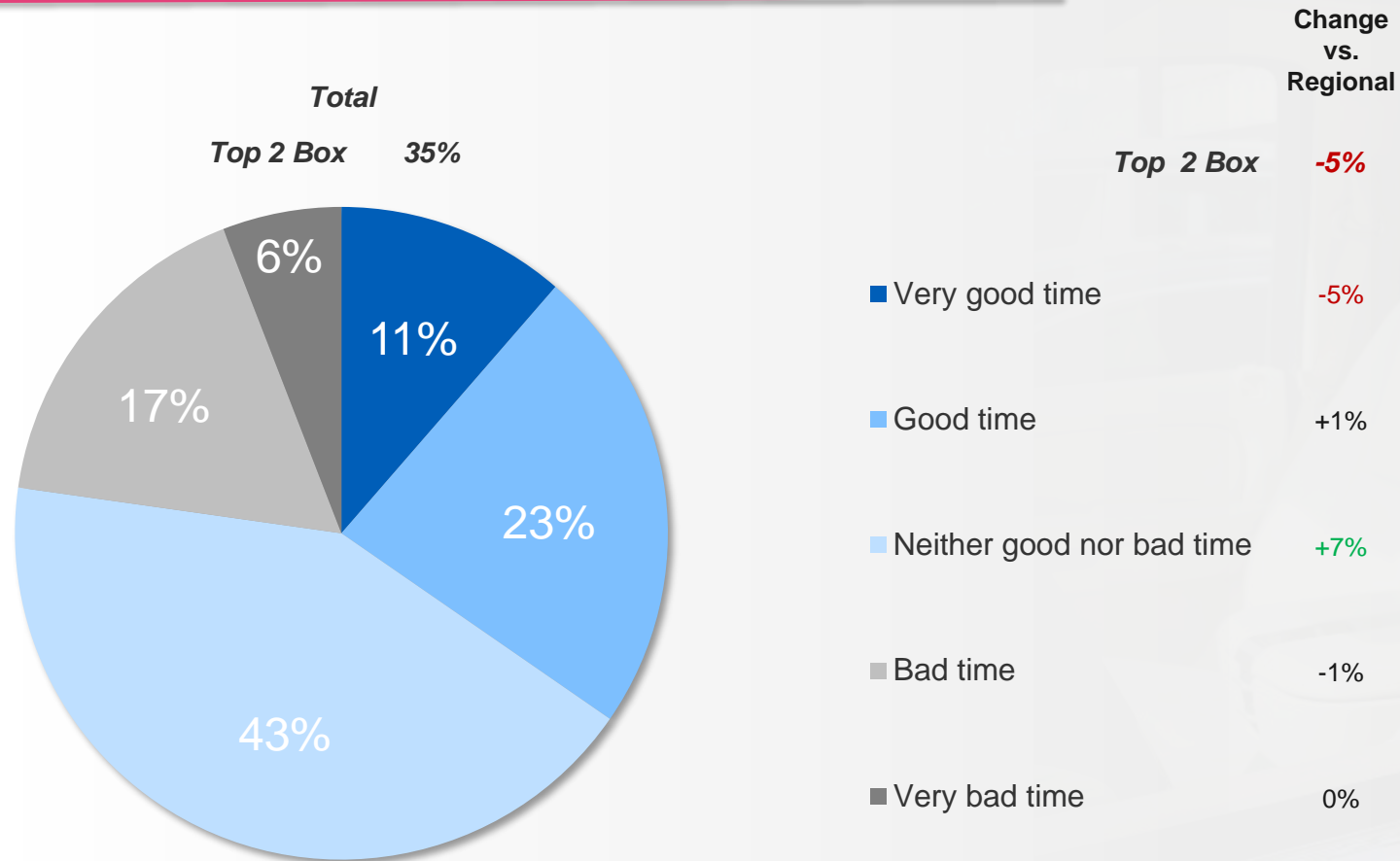


C1. How did your shopping habits change, if at all, over the past 12 months?
Base: Total sample, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

1 in 3 believe it is a good time for major purchases, while 2 in 5 remain more cautious (neither good time nor bad time)

Assessing the timing for major purchases



C2d. Generally speaking, do you think now is a good or bad time for consumers to buy major items (e.g. furniture, refrigerator, television, car, house etc..)
Base: Total sample, n=1,000

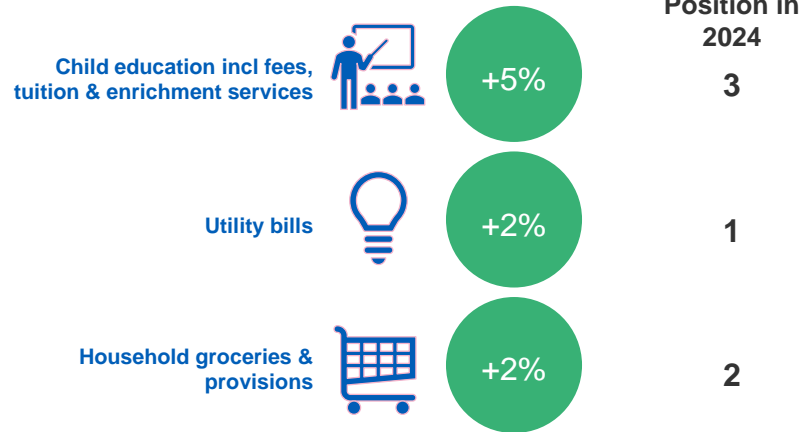
Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

Spending is up on education, utilities and groceries while discretionary categories like games, luxury goods, gadgets have decreased

Top 3 categories where spending increased (sorted by Net increase)

Note: Numbers here represent net change (spend more – spend less)

Top 3 categories where spending increased

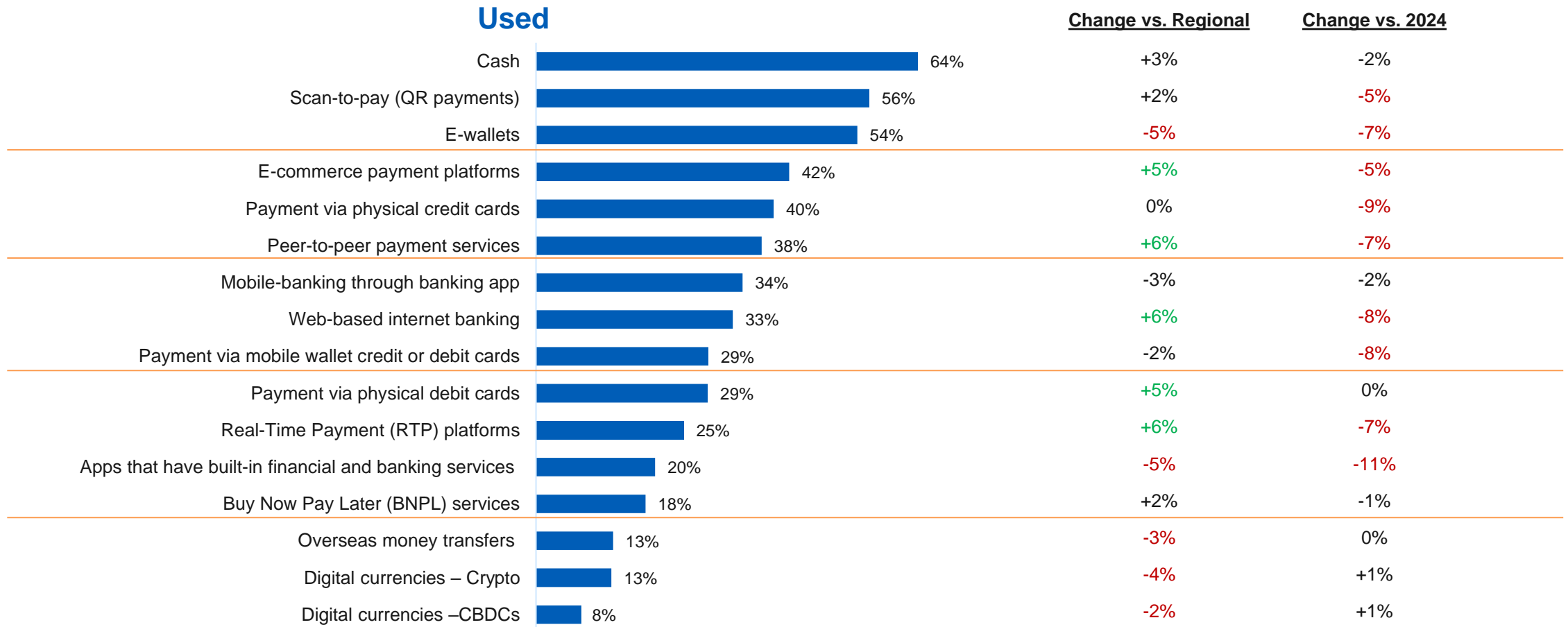




3. Digital Payment Methods

Scan-to-pay and e-wallets continue to be popular payment choices among consumers

Products/Services used in the past year



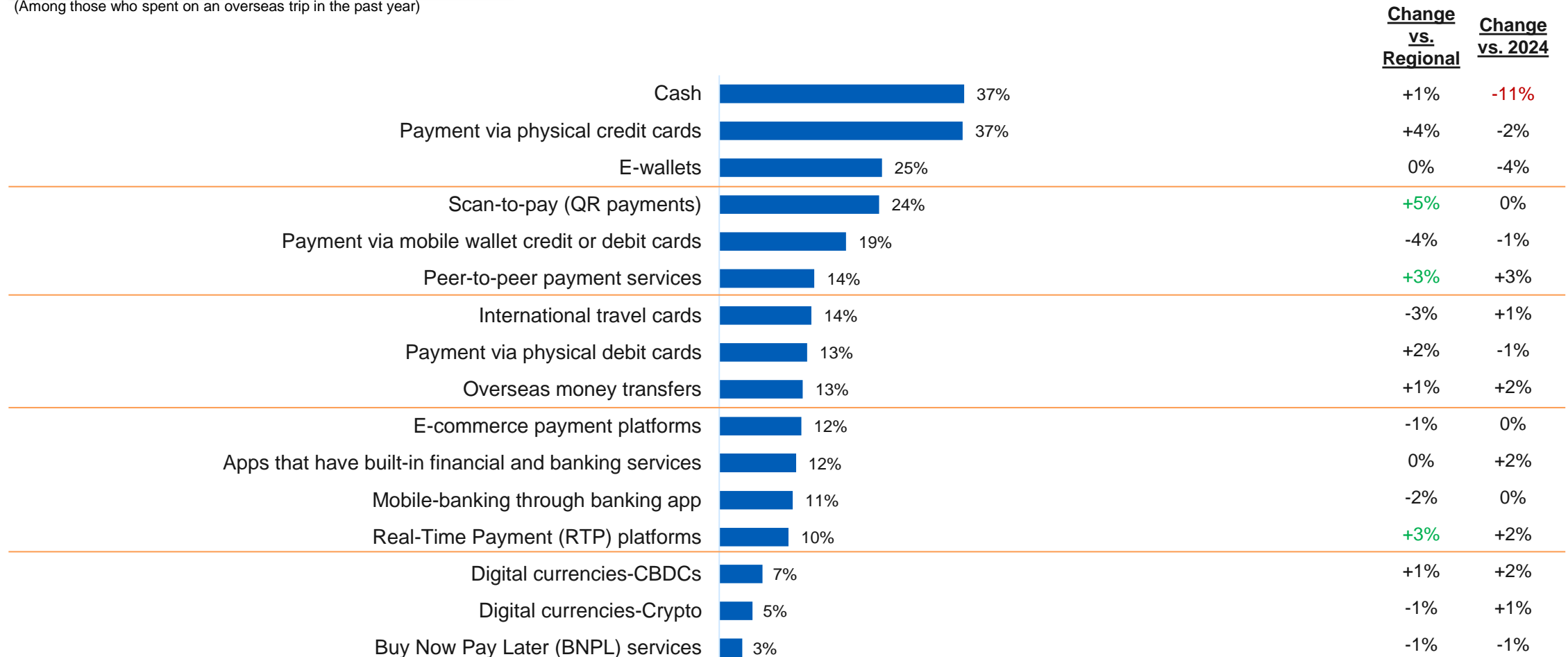
11. Have you used any of these products or services in the last 6-12 months?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

Cash, physical credit cards, and e-wallets are the most preferred among Malaysians during overseas trips

Preferred payment method during overseas trip

(Among those who spent on an overseas trip in the past year)



C5. What were your preferred modes of payment during your overseas trip? Please select only those payment modes that you have used when you were overseas. Exclude payments (e.g., online tickets, hotels) that were made from your home country, before travelling to your overseas destination)
 Base: Those who have spent on an overseas trip in the past year, 2025, n=461

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
 Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

Cash is preferred for its convenience with small vendors and as a backup option

Reasons for preferring cash payments when overseas

(Among those who prefer cash when overseas)

56% For ease of buying at small vendors

-6%
vs. Regional

54% As a backup in case of card failure or no internet connectivity for digital payments

+9%
vs. Regional

C5a. You selected "cash" as one of your preferred modes of payment during your overseas trip. Why do you prefer cash over other payment options? Base: Those who preferred cash payments overseas 2025, n= 170

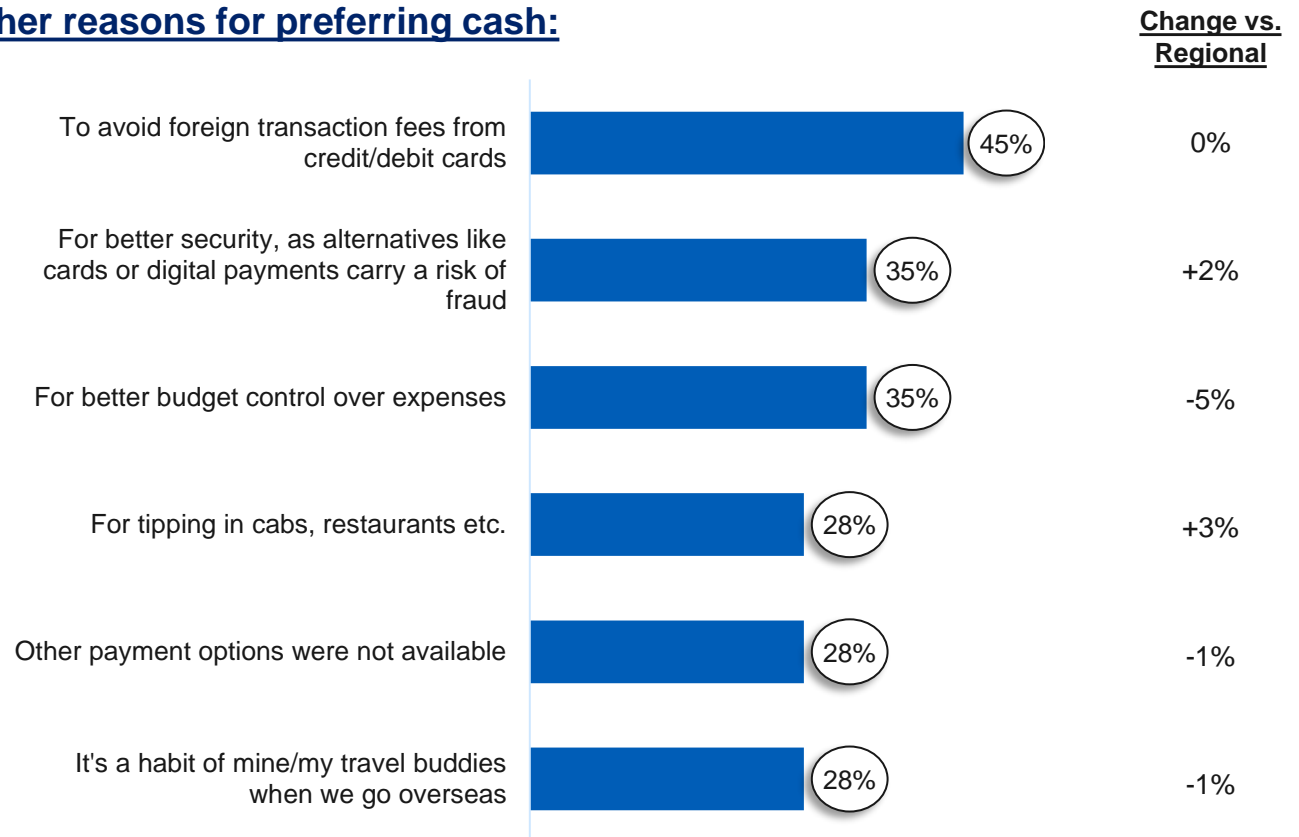


Transaction fee avoidance is the third important reason for preferring cash

Reasons for preferring cash payments when overseas

(Among those who prefer cash when overseas)

Other reasons for preferring cash:



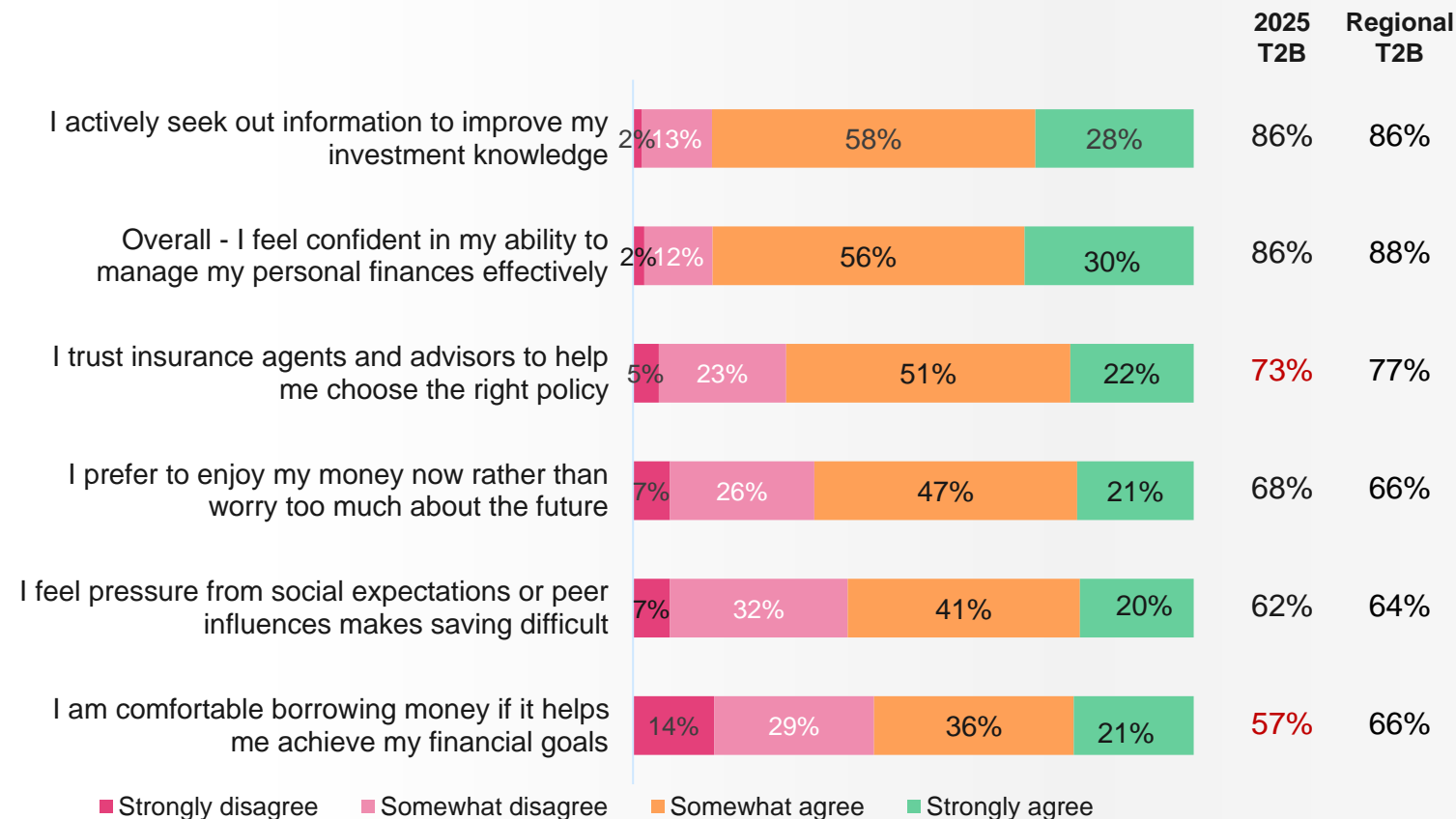
C5a. You selected "cash" as one of your preferred modes of payment during your overseas trip. Why do you prefer cash over other payment options? Base: Those who preferred cash payments overseas 2025, n= 170



4. Financial Preparedness

Malaysians are confident about managing personal finances and actively seek to improve investment knowledge

Attitudes to financial planning



FL12. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional
 Significantly lower vs. Regional

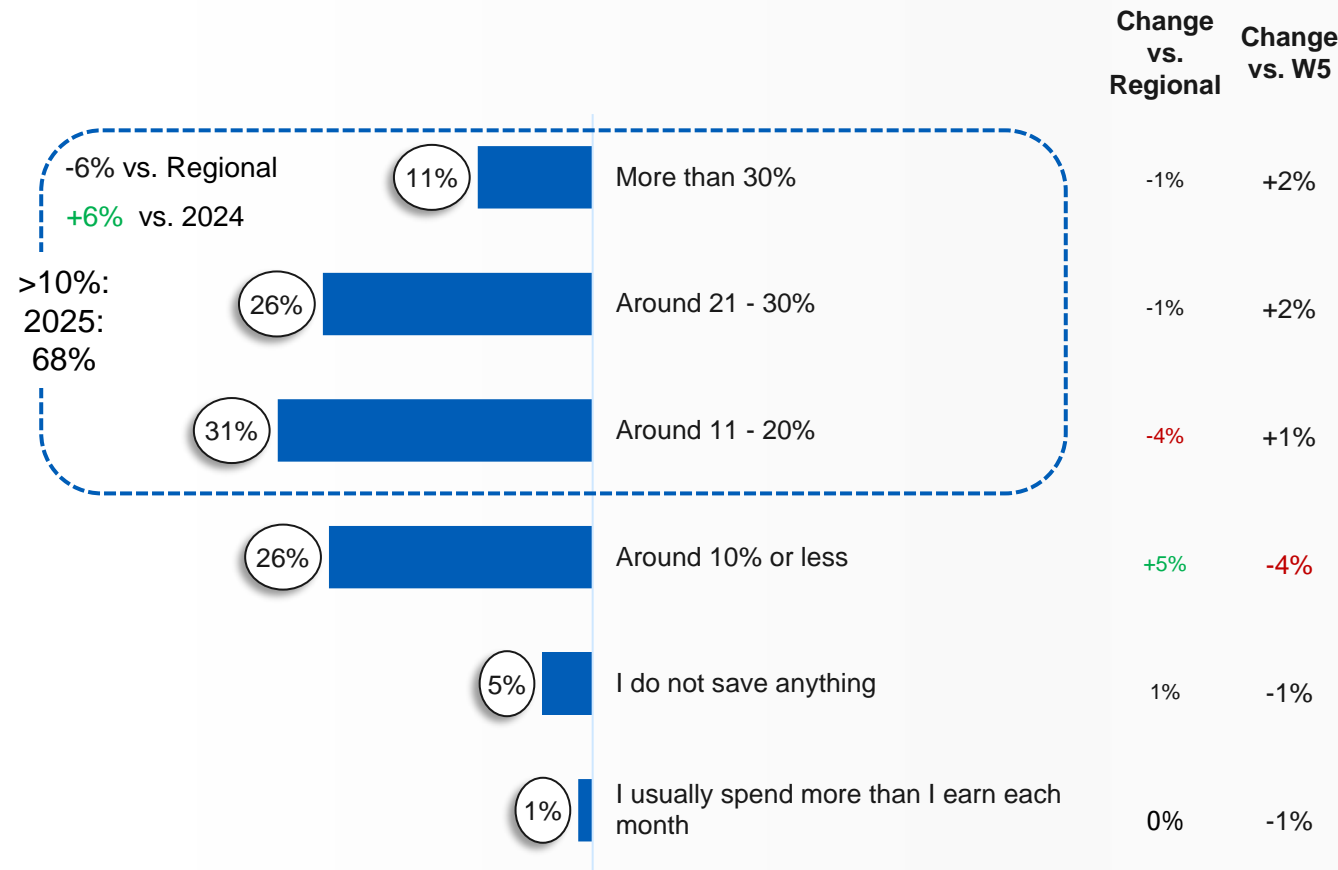
Savings



Malaysians are now saving more than they did last year

- 7 in 10 save over 10% of their monthly income

Proportion of income saved each month



FL1. What percentage of your personal income do you usually save each month?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024



+0%
vs. Regional

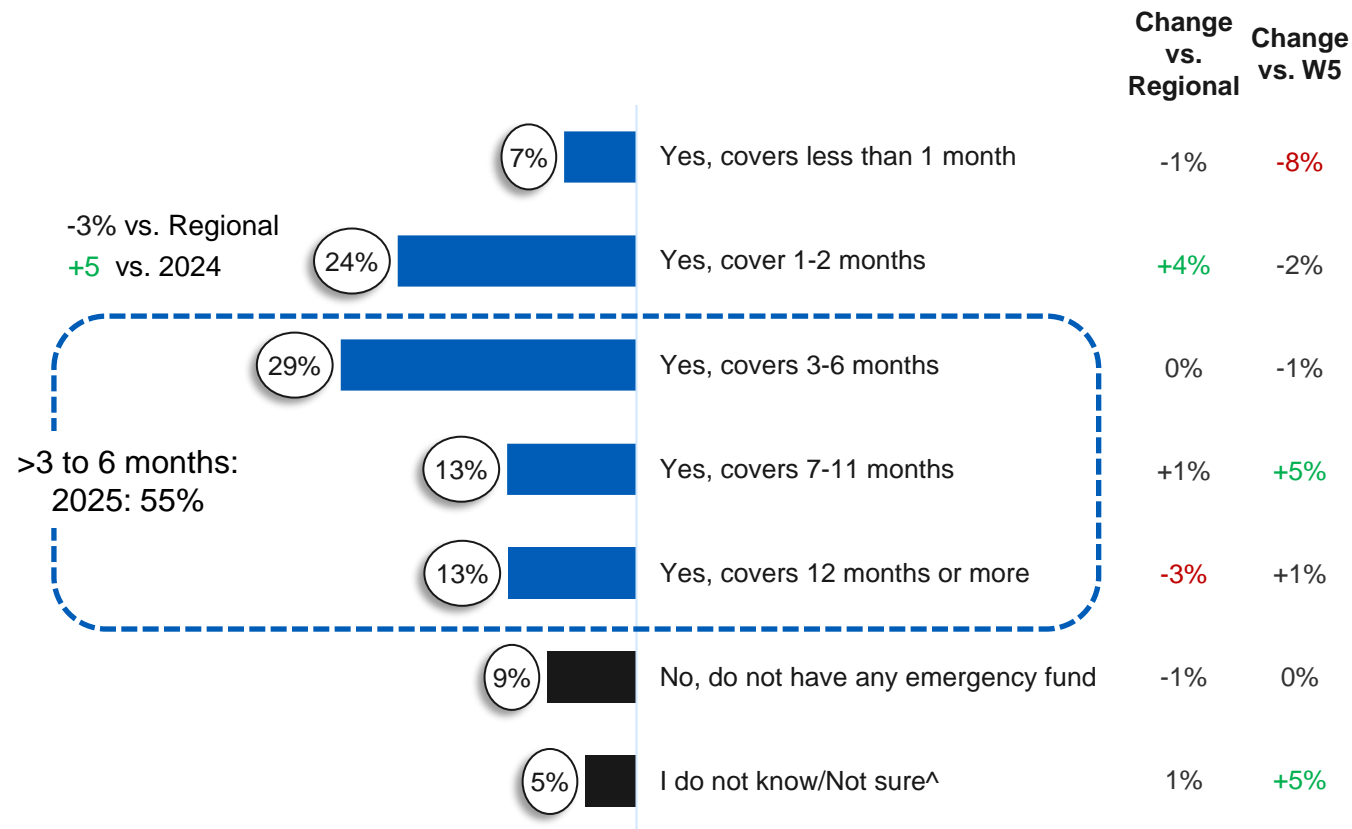
-5%
vs. 2024

86%

Have an
emergency fund

More now have at least 3-6 months worth of emergency funds, compared to last year

Availability of emergency funds



FL2. Do you have any emergency funds (e.g., losing job, hospital bills)? If so, how many months of your regular expenses can it cover? Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

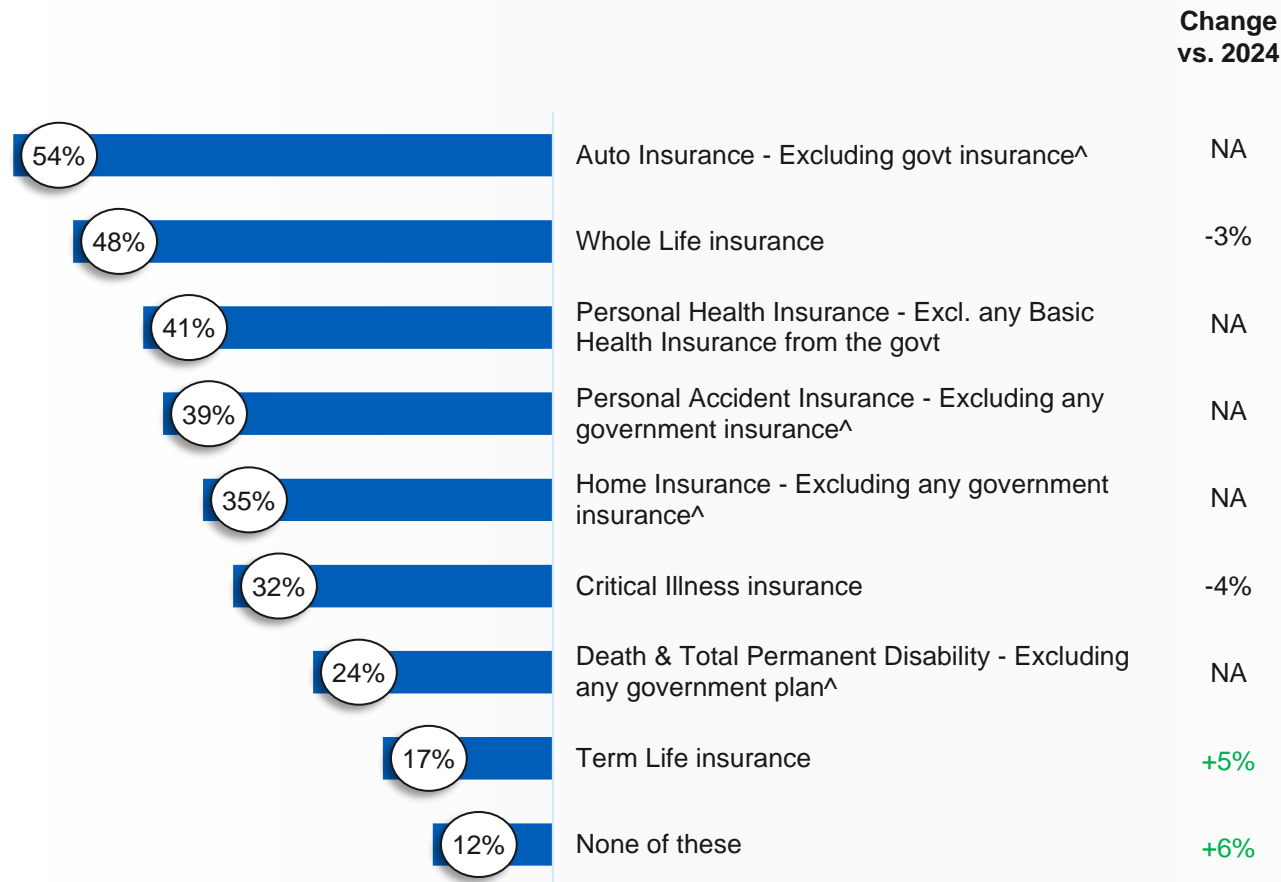
^New statement added in 2025
Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

Protection



About 1 in 2 Malaysians have auto and whole life insurance, increased uptake seen for term life compared to last year

Insurance currently owned



FL5. Do you currently have any insurance? If so, which of these types?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

^New statement added/statement tweaked in 2025



Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

Those opting for Death & TPD and Critical Illness are mostly covered for between 1 to 3 times annual income

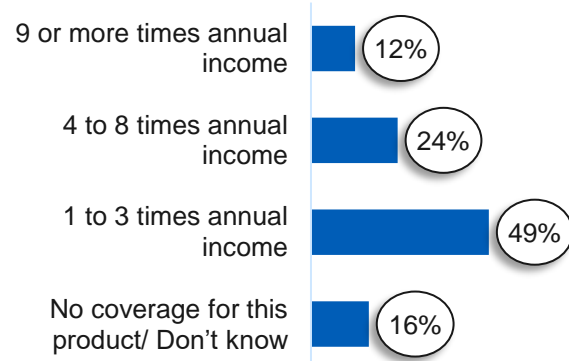
Insurance coverage x annual income

(Among those currently owning Death & Total Permanent Disability insurance)

Obtain insurance for:

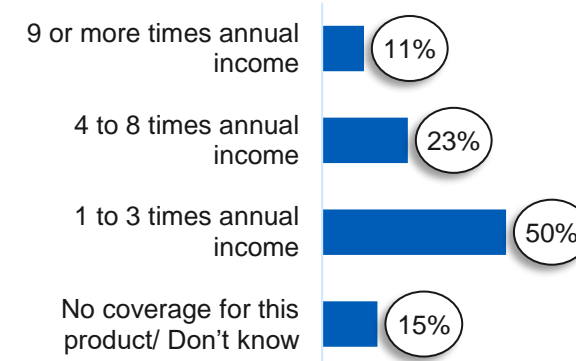
Death & Total Permanent Disability (Excl. any govt. plan)

Base n=241



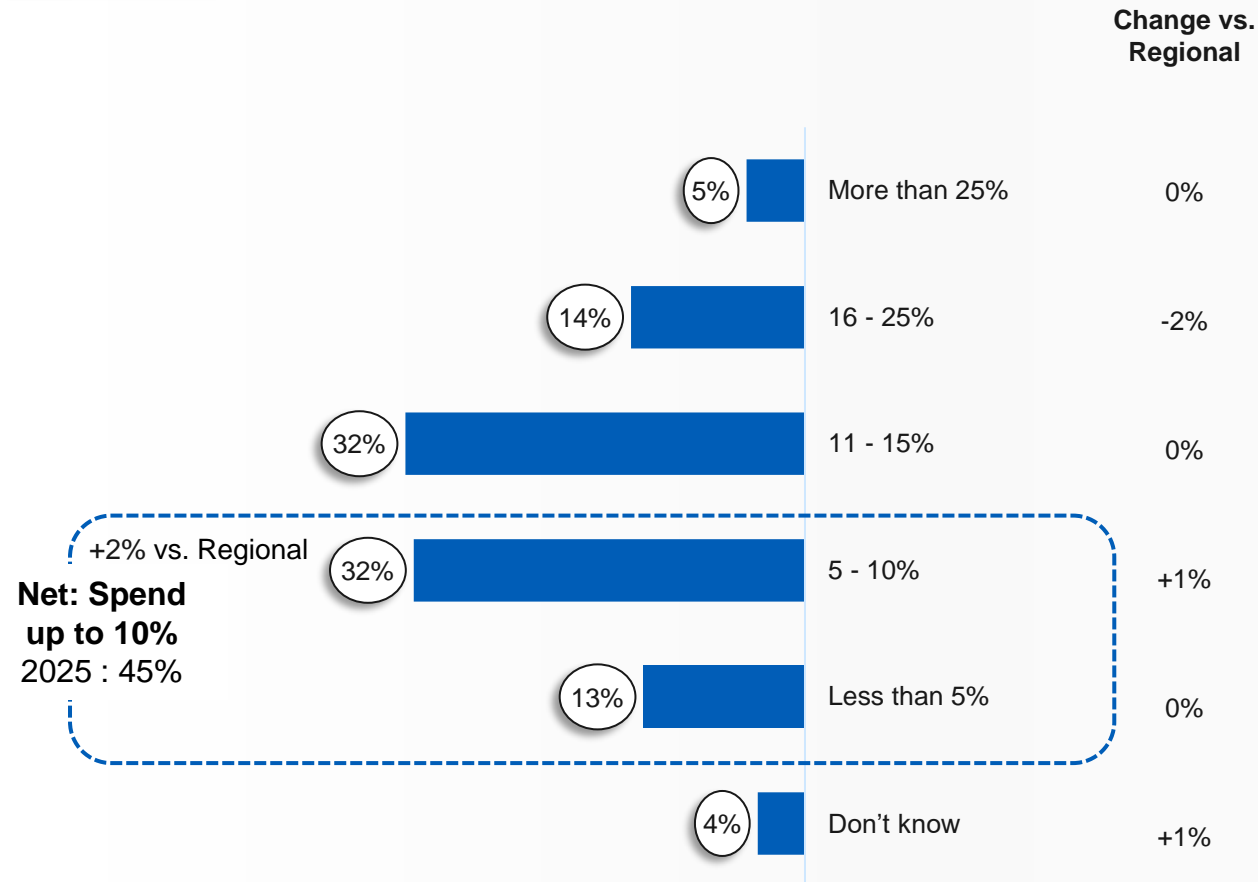
Critical Illness

Base n=325



Almost half of consumers spend up to 10% of their annual salary on insurance premiums

Percentage of income spent on insurance annually

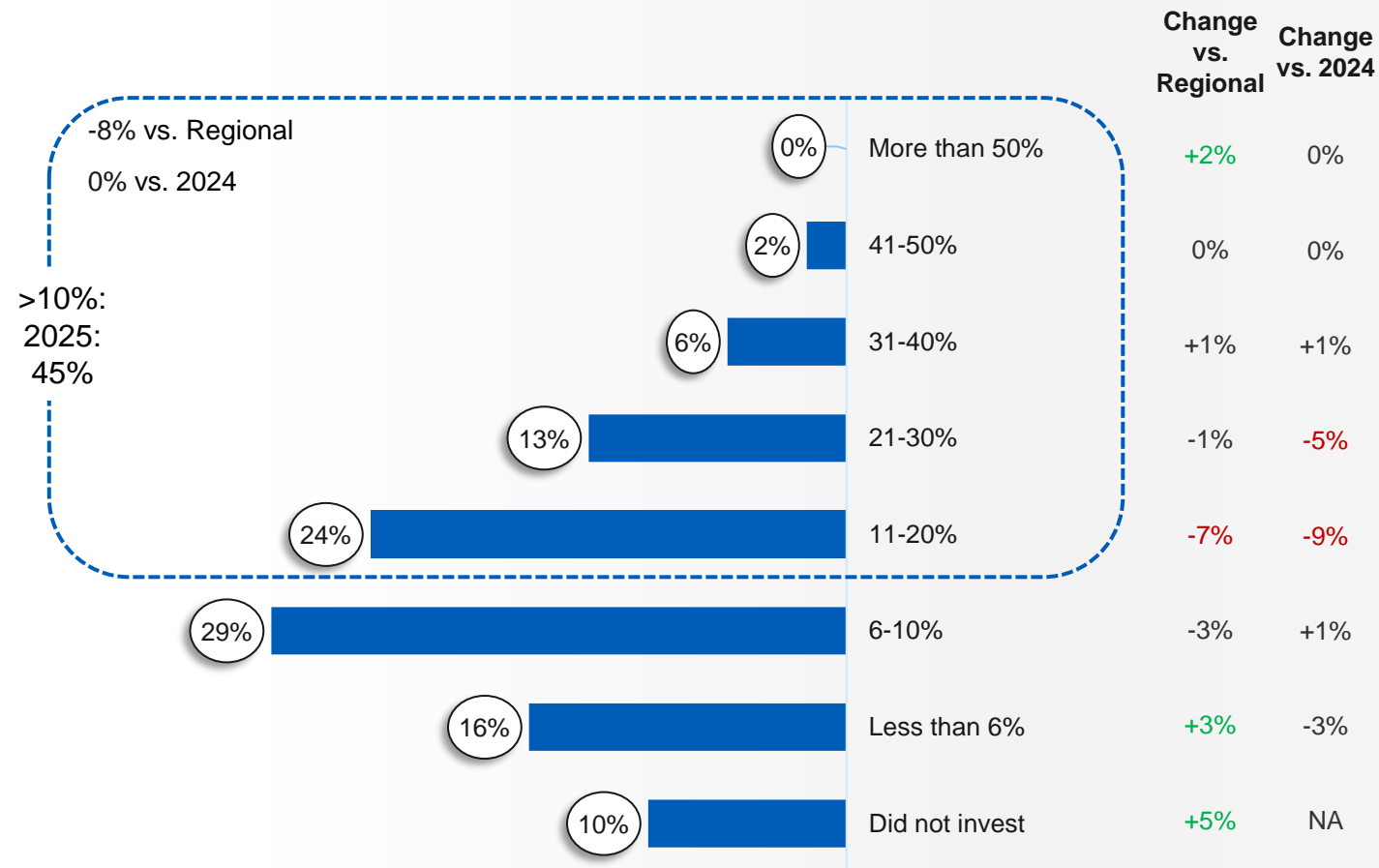


Investments



Nearly 1 in 2 continue to invest over 10% of their annual income in various financial instruments

Proportion of annual income invested in the past year



E4a_1. You mentioned that you have invested in these financial instruments in the past 12 months:

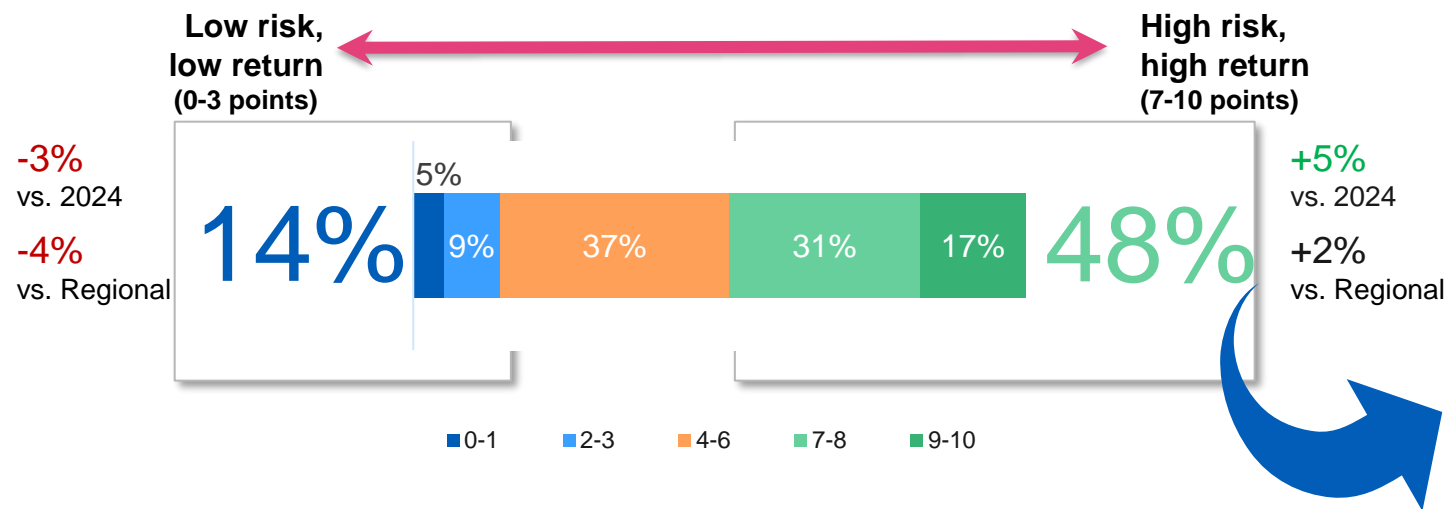
What proportion of your annual income did you invest across all these various financial instruments taken together, in the past 12 months? Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024

Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

Risk appetite of Malaysian consumers has increased from the last wave, in line with their more positive mood and economic sentiments

Attitude towards investment vs. Financial instruments where more money was put in



	Total	High risk attitude
Base:	1,000	485
Stocks (shares)^	16%	21%
Property for investment/rental income	14%	21%
Units of managed funds (unit trust)	13%	19%
Physical assets, e.g. property, jewellery, gold etc.	11%	15%
Bonds (fixed income)^	11%	16%
Sustainable investments e.g. green bonds etc.	10%	13%
Digital currencies and assets, e.g., crypto and NFTs	10%	15%
Bank fixed deposits	10%	9%
Digital currencies and assets e.g. CBDCs	9%	13%

E4a. How have you adjusted your holding in each of the following financial instruments in the last 6-12 months? Base: Total sample

G5. Which of these statements best reflects your attitude towards taking risks and getting returns on investment decisions you make? Base: Total sample

*Financial instrument only shown to those who are bank customers, Base, 2025, n=999

^New statement added/tweaked in 2025

Significantly higher vs. total sample

Significantly lower vs. total sample

Planning – Retirement & Legacy

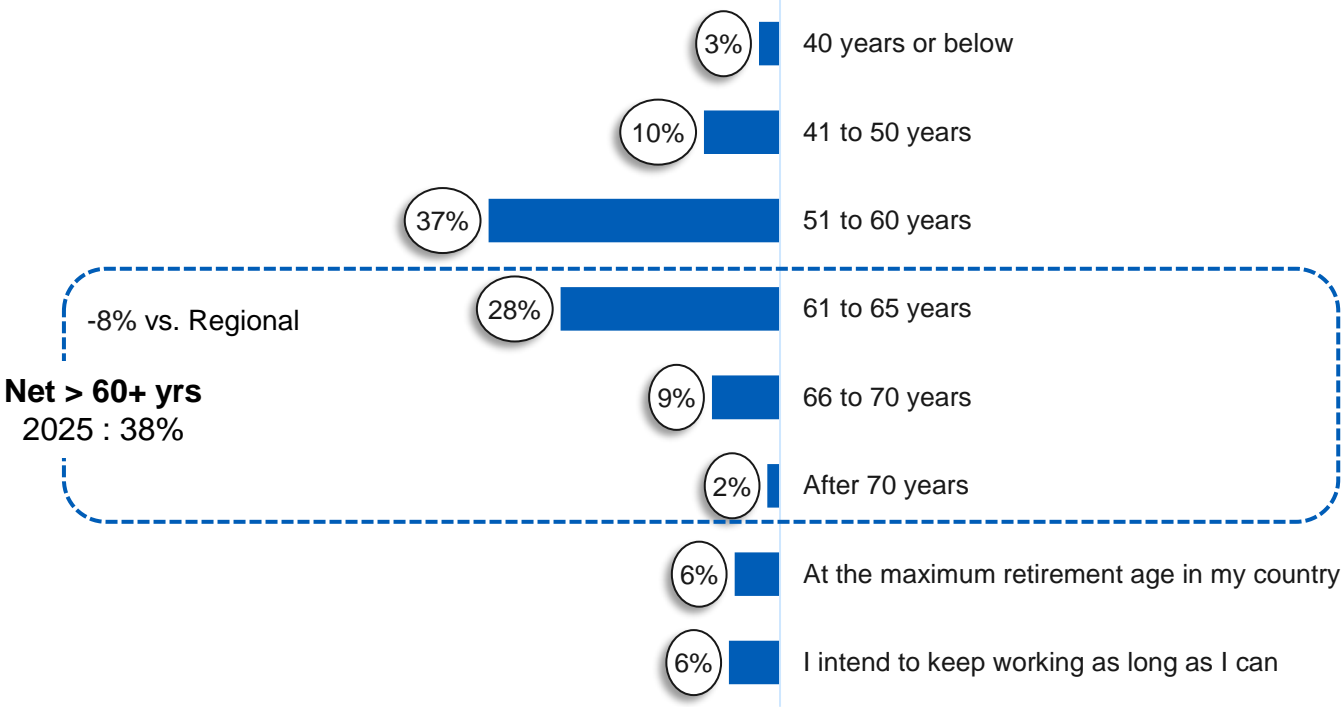




Nearly 2 in 5 Malaysians expect to retire after 60 years, lower than the region

Expected retirement age

Expected retirement age:



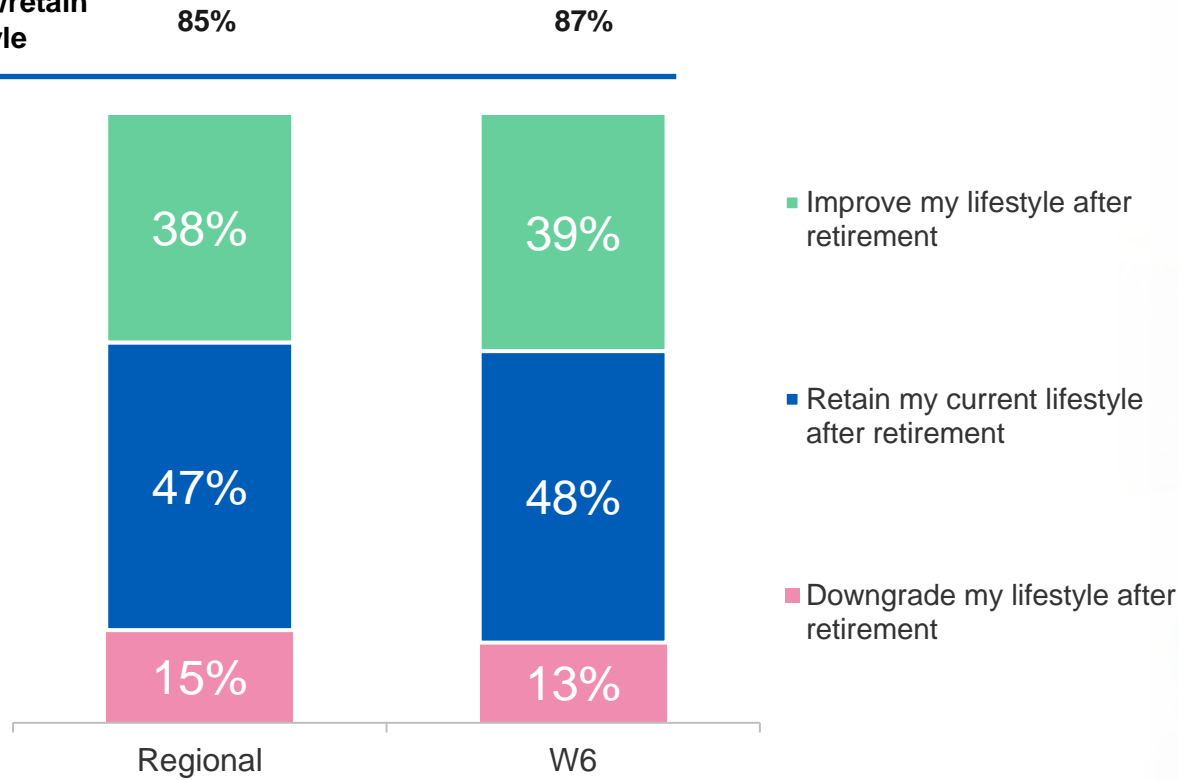
FL10A. Thinking of your retirement, at what age do you expect to retire (in the sense that you no longer need to work)? Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

Most Malaysians also seek to retain or improve their current lifestyle post retirement

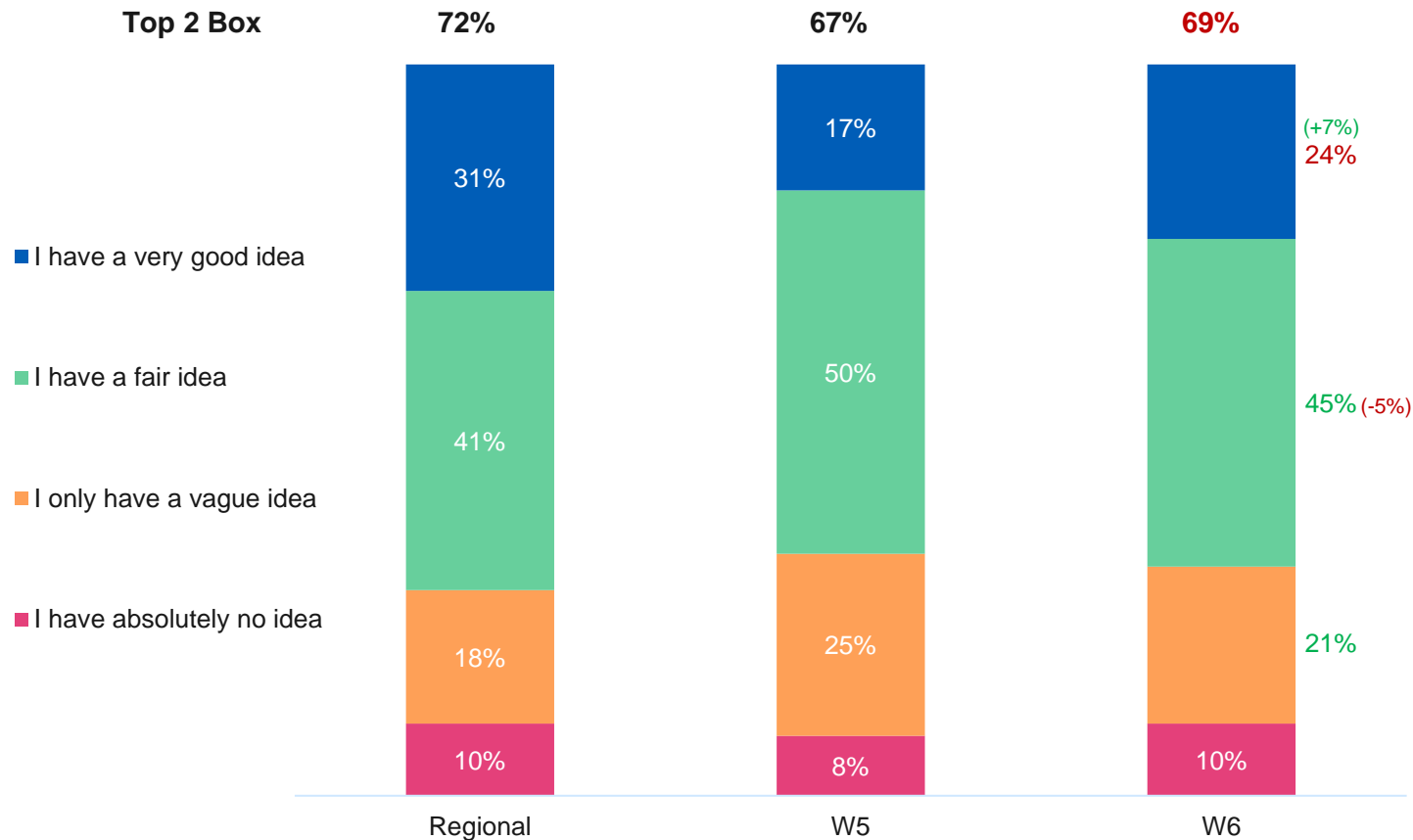
Expected lifestyle for a comfortable retirement

NET: Improve/retain current lifestyle



Majority of Malaysians have a fairly good understanding of how much money they need for a comfortable retirement

Idea on how much is needed to retire comfortably



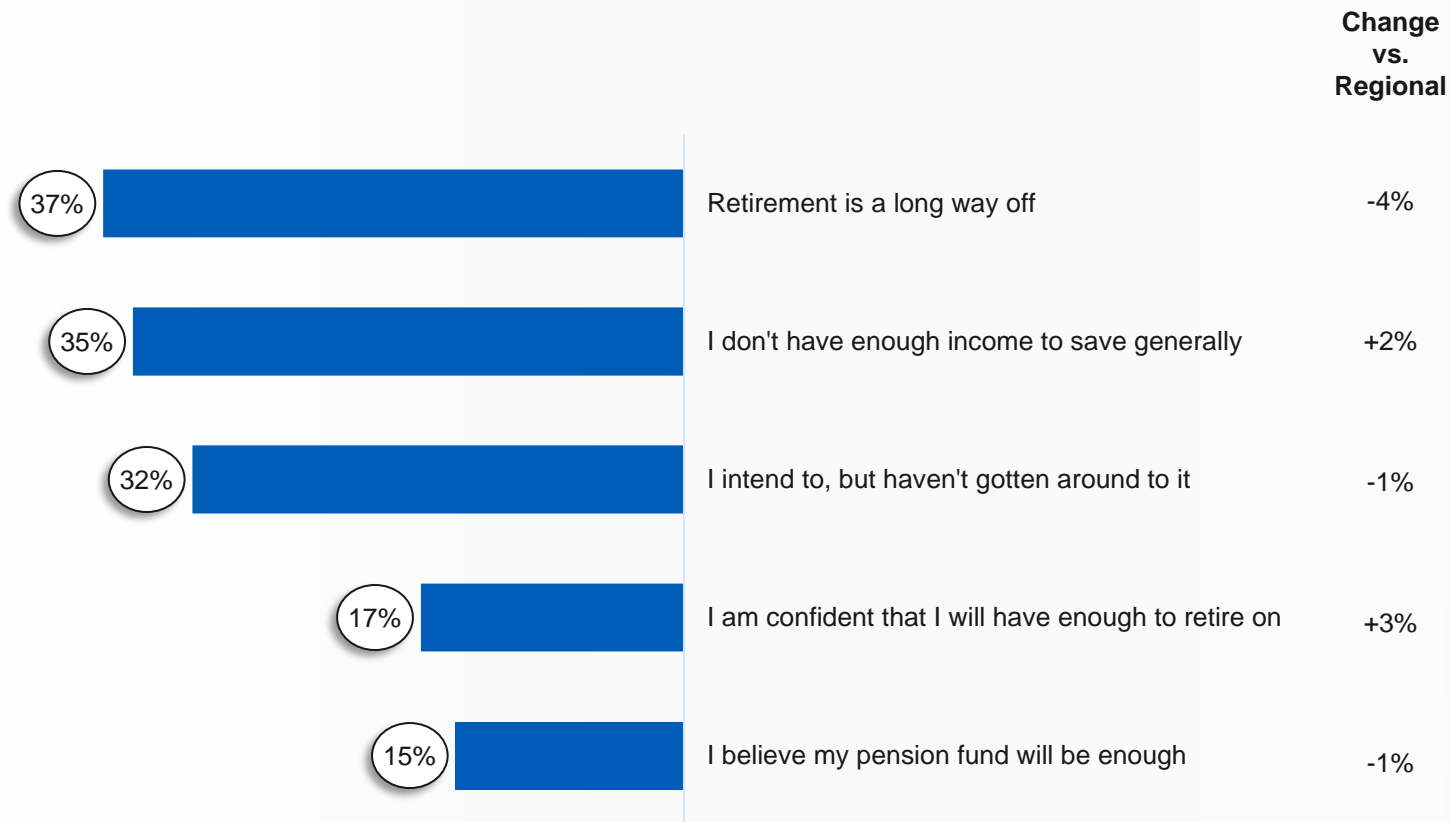
FL6. Do you know how much money you will need to retire comfortably?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

(+) Significantly higher vs. 2024 Significantly higher vs. Regional
(-) Significantly lower vs. 2024 Significantly lower vs. Regional

Uncertainty around retirement finances is linked to perceptions of it being far off, procrastination, or inadequate savings

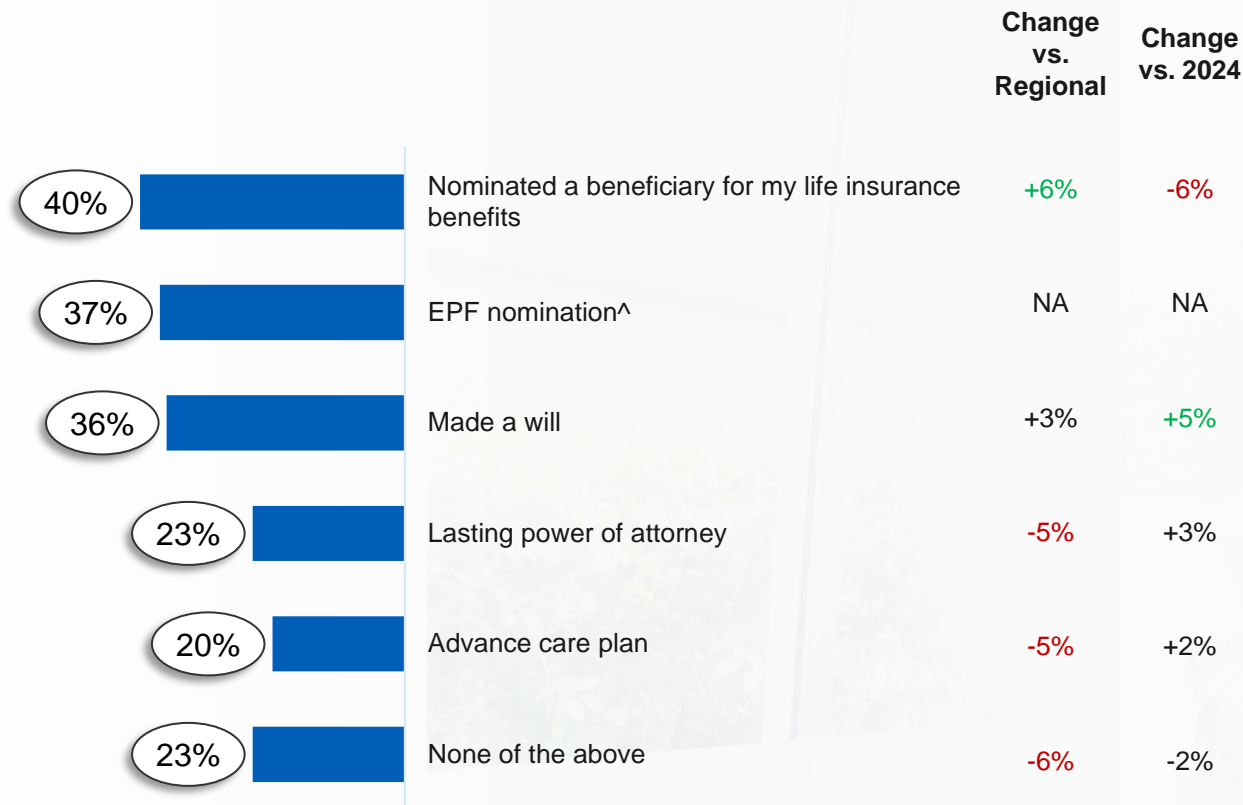
Reasons for not having an idea on how much is needed to retire comfortably

(Among those who with vague or no idea how much they need to retire comfortably)



Around 2 in 5 have nominated beneficiaries, while a third have made a will, an increase from a year ago

Legacy planning



FL8. Which of these have you done as part of your legacy planning?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024
Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024



For more details on ACSS:

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Right By You