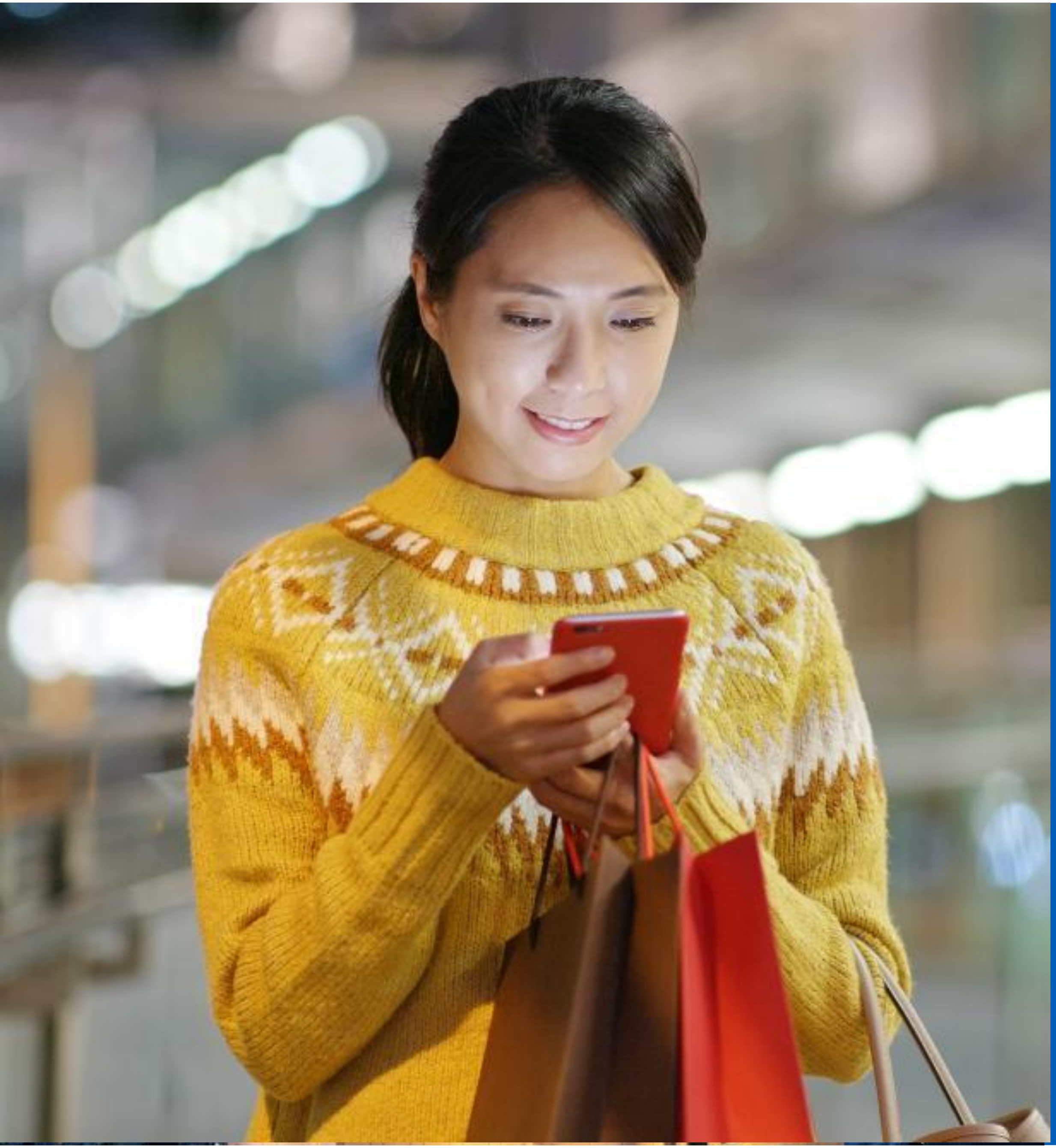
ASEAN Consumer Sentiment Study (ACSS)

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

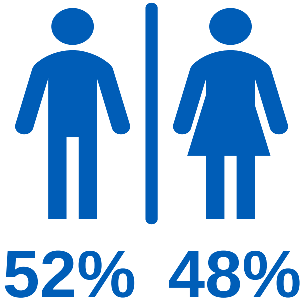
Male/ females aged 18-65 years

WHERE

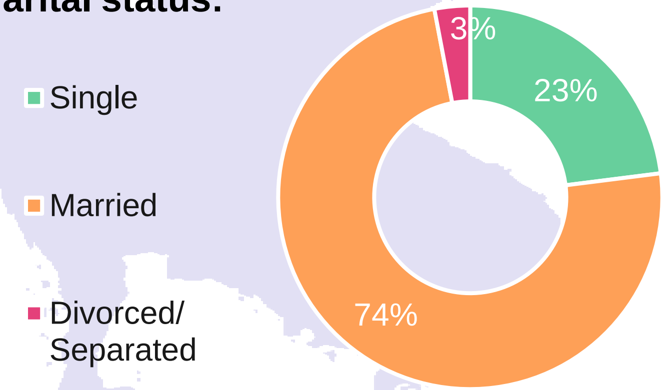
Malaysia

Detailed look at who we spoke to

Gender:



Marital status:



Age group:

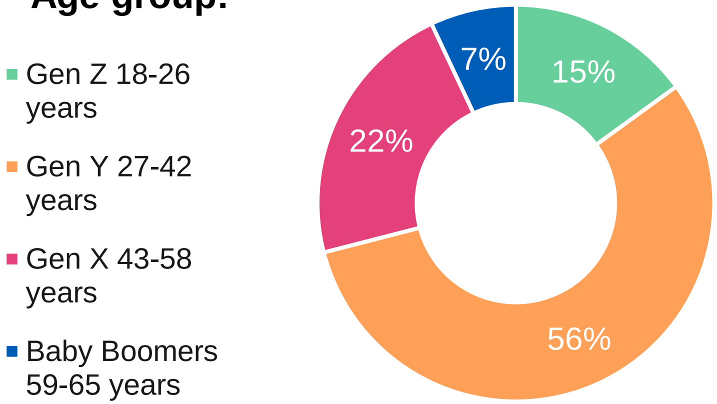


Table of content

1. Consumer Sentiments and Outlook

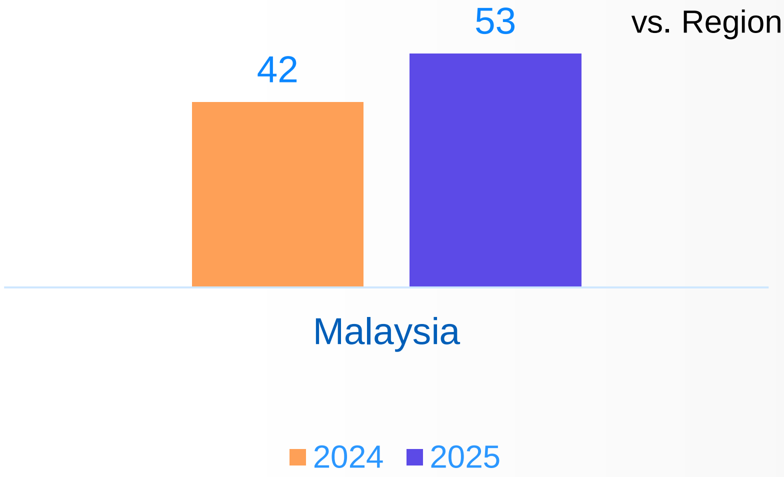
The UOB ASEAN Consumer Sentiment Index is designed to capture the pulse of consumer confidence across key ASEAN markets

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	Future	
• Perception of current economic environment (Very/somewhat positive)	• Perception of economic performance over the next 6-12 months (Very/somewhat positive)	**Macro**
• 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)	• 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)	**Micro**

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

ASEAN Consumer Sentiment Index scores – 2024 vs 2025



-1%
vs. Regional

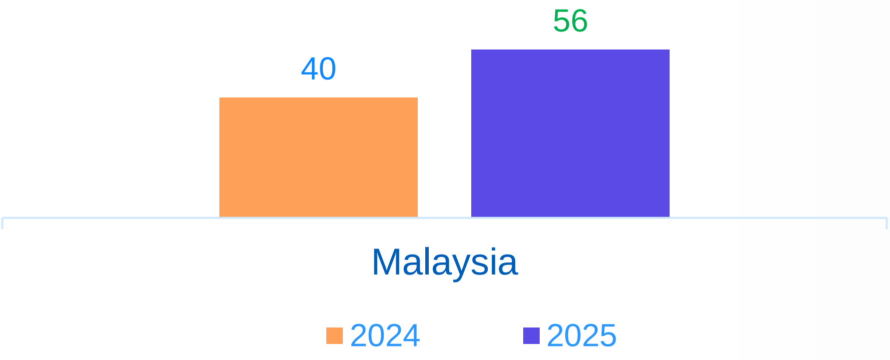
Significantly higher vs. 2024
Significantly lower vs. 2024

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

Macro score	56 (+15)

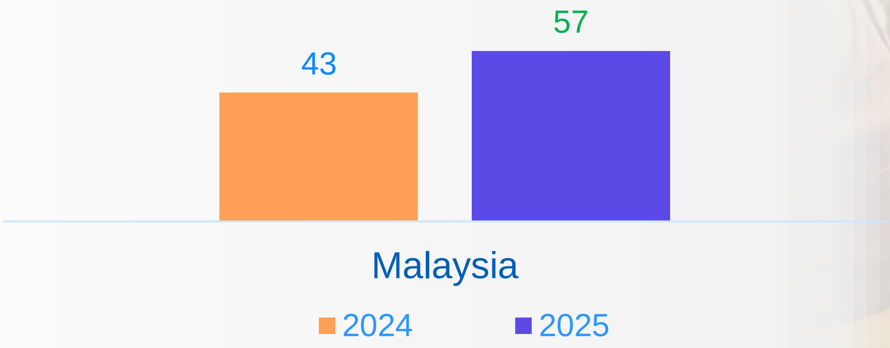
Current

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

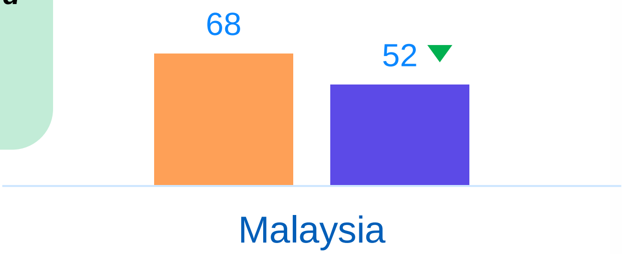
At a micro level, MY consumers are less worried about their household expenses, income, future financial commitments, and more expect the future situation to be better next year

Micro score	52 (+9)

Current

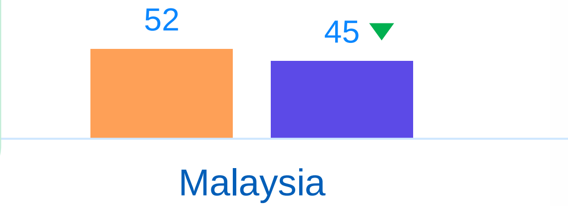
> *"I feel relieved to be able to **meet all my household commitments every month**."*
> *(Gen X, Male)*

Worried about increased household expenses



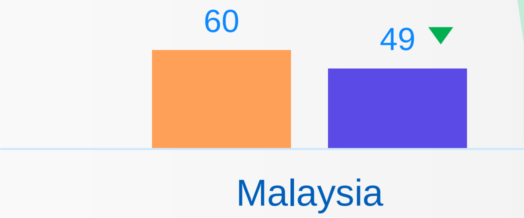
> *"During these two years, people's **income has slowly increased**, they are also more daring to buy the things they want to buy in life."*
> *(Gen Z, Female)*

Worried about possibility of pay cut / income declining



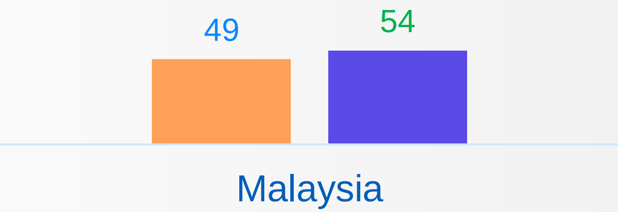
Future

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)*

Expect future financial situation to be better off

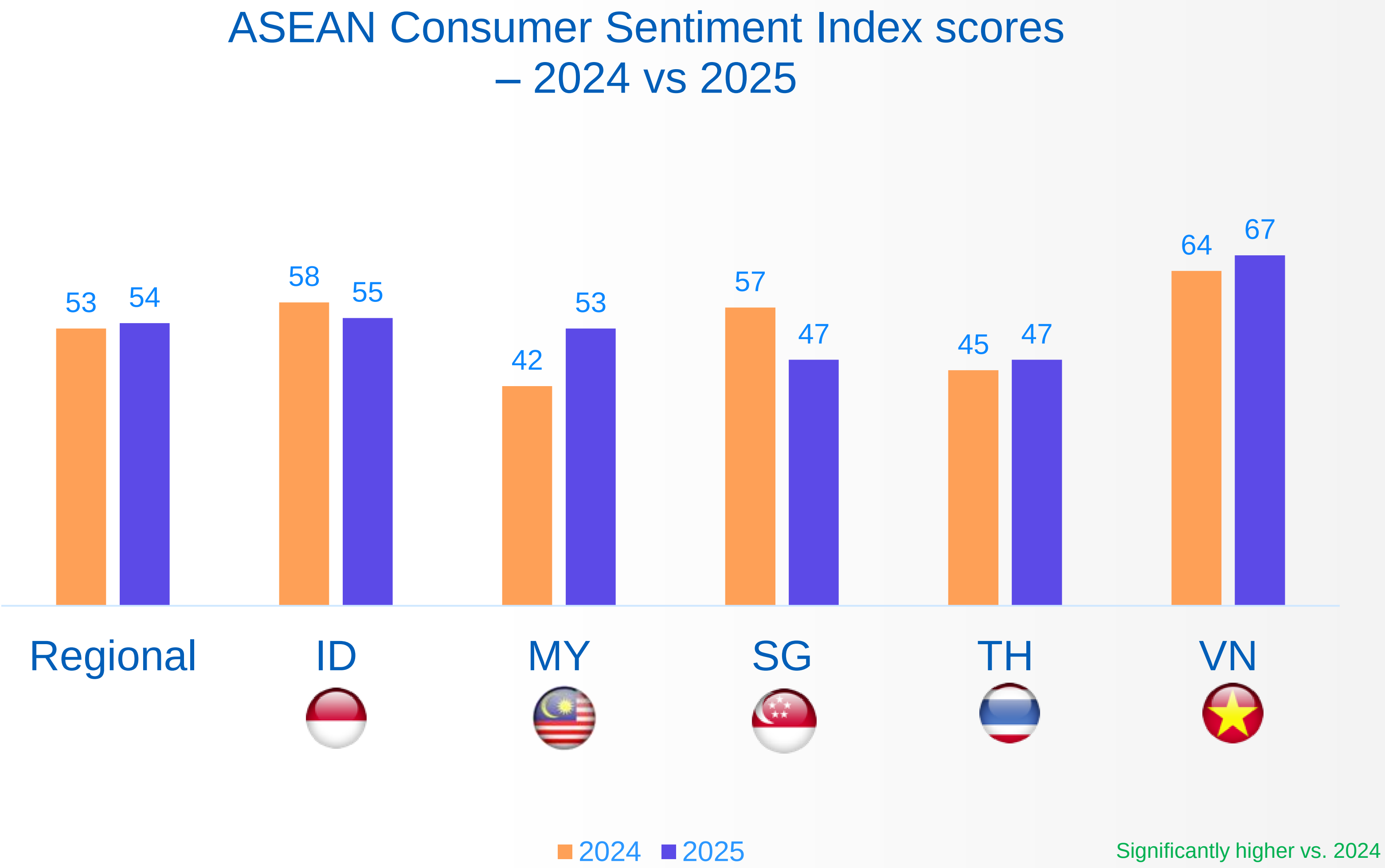


🟧 2024 🟪 2025

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



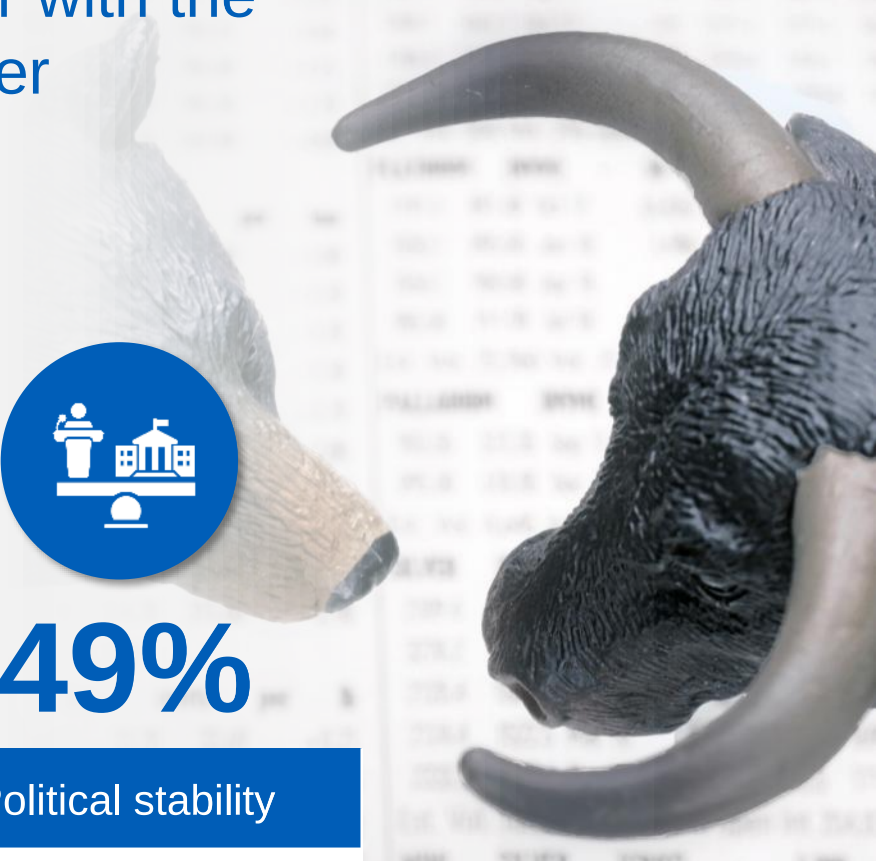
	2024	2025
Regional	53	54
ID	58	55
MY	42	53
SG	57	47
TH	45	47
VN	64	67

Significantly higher vs. 2024

Significantly lower vs. 2024

Economic and social conditions in Malaysia are on par with the region, however political stability is significantly weaker

Feelings on current economic, political, and social stability (T2B)



	Social stability	Economic stability	Political stability
T2B:	60%	57%	49%
Change vs. Regional	**-1%**	**-2%**	**-9%**

A2a. How do you feel about the current economic, political, and social stability in [insert relevant country]?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

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

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)




	Finances^	Surrounding Environment^	Work-related^	Health & Well-being
Net score:	76%	72%	63%	58%
Change vs. Regional	-1%	-3%	0%	0%
Change vs. 2024	-9%	NA	-10%	-4%

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%
2nd	Climate change, natural disasters and pollution 56%	US/Trump tariffs 53%	NA
3rd	US/Trump tariffs 55%	Climate change, natural disasters and pollution 53%	NA
4th	Your household's increased expenses 54%	Your household's increased expenses 52%	-15%
5th	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

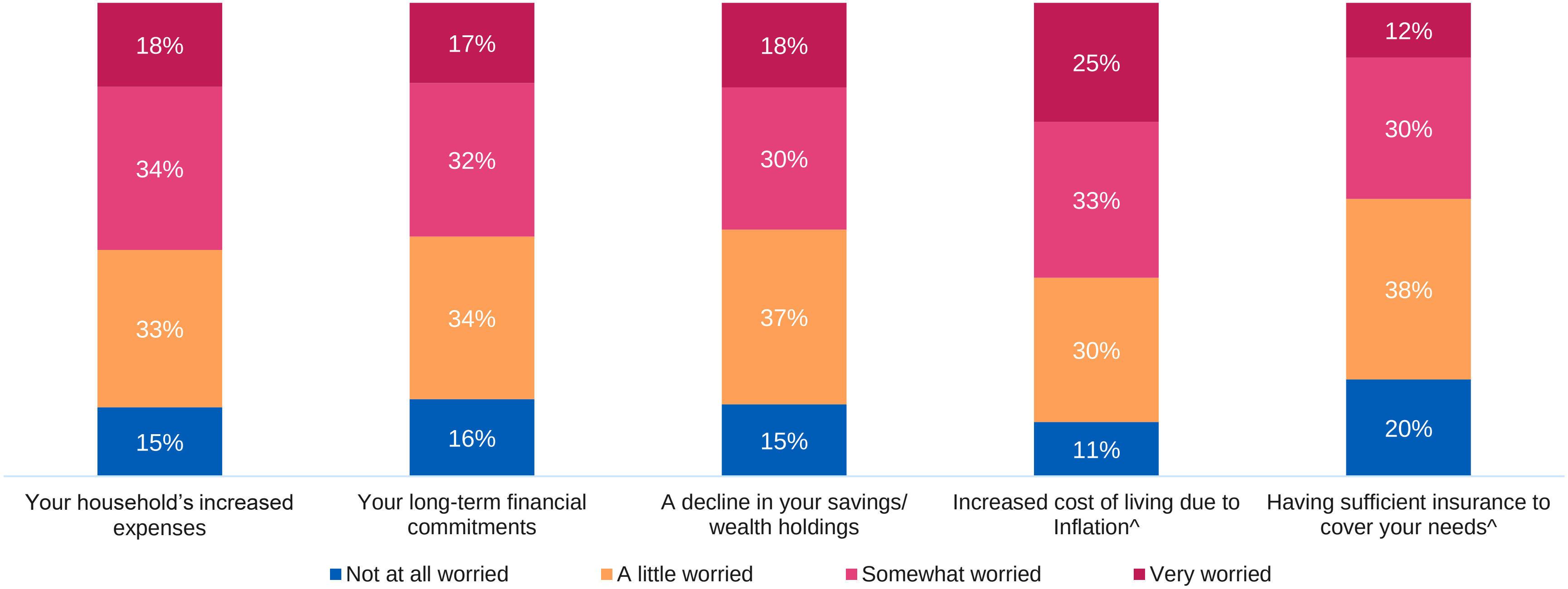
*T2B: Very/Somewhat worried
Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

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

Current aspects that are worrying – Finances

Finances

Change vs. 2024:	**-15%**	**-11%**	**-15%**	**-14%**	**NA**
Change vs. Regional:	**-2%**	**+1%**	**-2%**	**-1%**	**0%**
T2B*:	**52%**	**49%**	**48%**	**58%**	**41%**



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

Significantly higher vs. Regional/2024

Significantly lower vs. Regional/2024

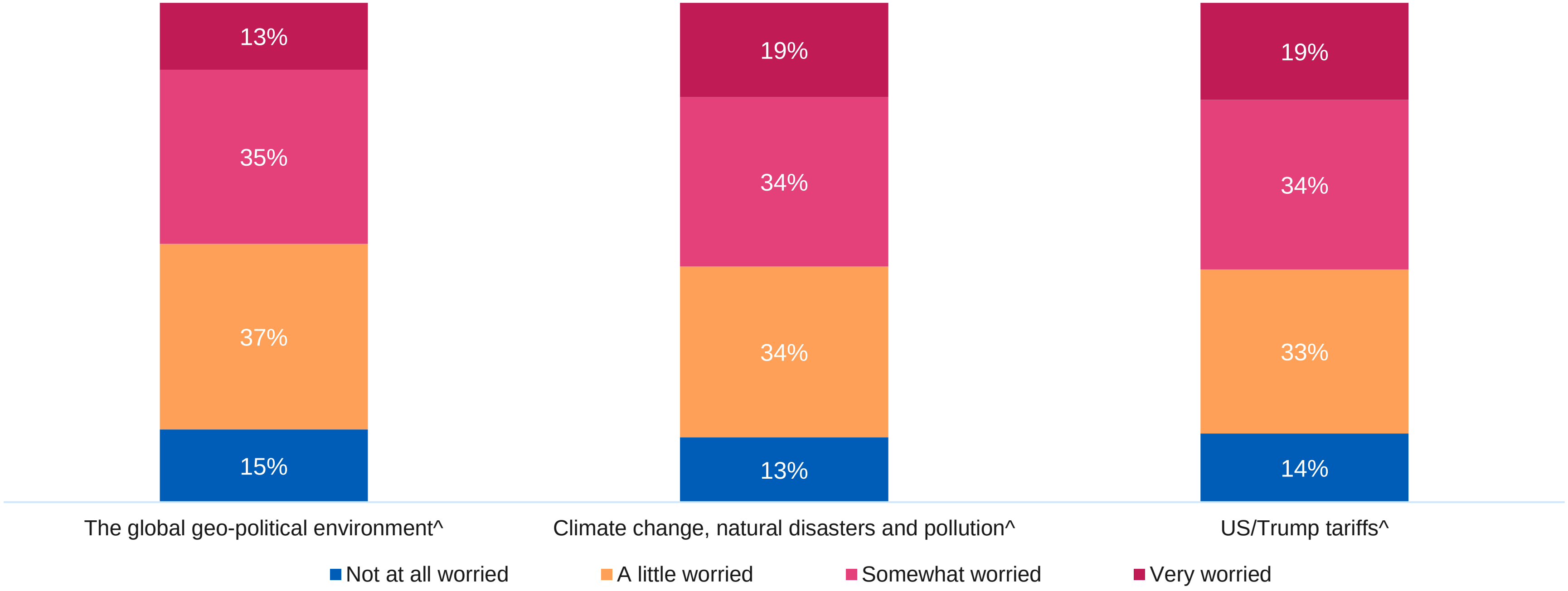
B1. Listed below are some key areas that people talk about. Please indicate how worried you are at the moment about each of them.
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

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

Current aspects that are worrying – Surrounding Environment

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

Surrounding Environment



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

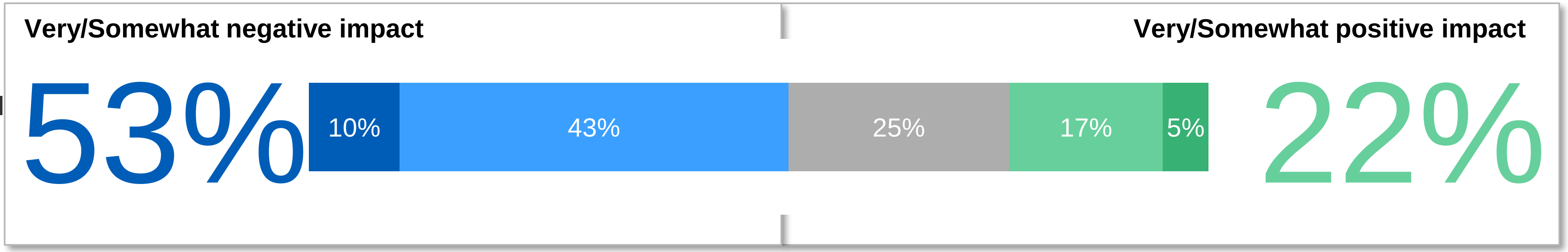
B1. Listed below are some key areas that people talk about. Please indicate how worried you are at the moment about each of them.
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

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

-3%
vs. Regional



-1%
vs. Regional

Very negative	Somewhat negative	No impact	Somewhat positive	Very positive
We are buying fewer items and cutting back on spending	We are cautious with our spending but still purchase most of what is needed	We have not changed our spending behaviour	We are getting better discounts and deals as prices are under control	We feel prices are lower and our purchasing power has improved

BF1a. How would you rate the current impact of inflation on your household's purchasing power?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

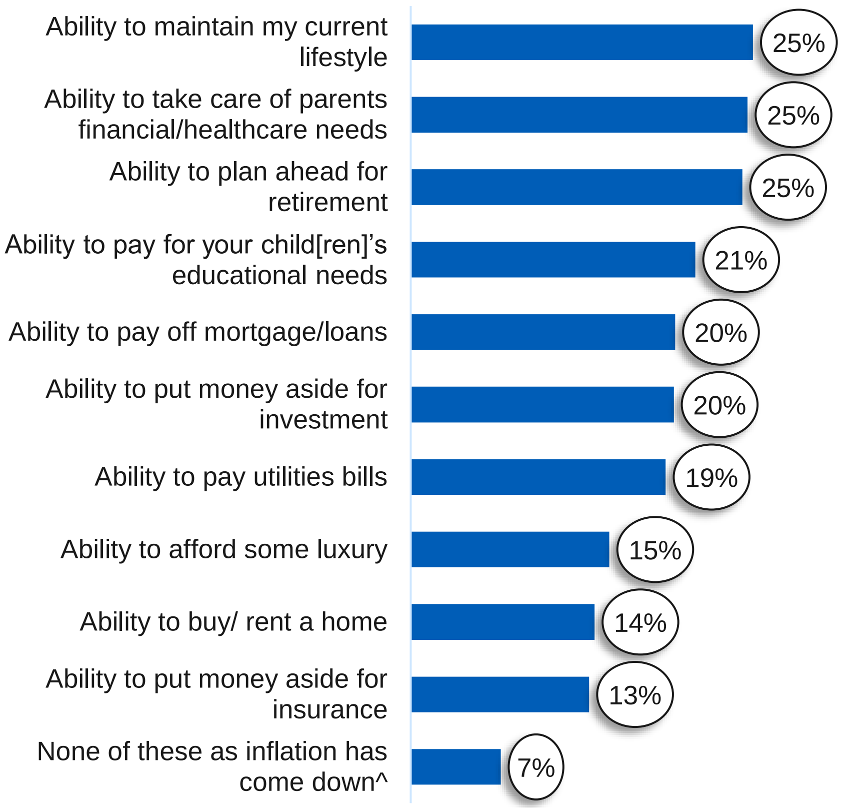
Malaysian consumers are more concerned than the region about funding their children's education and paying off mortgage/loans

Most worrying financial situations to be in

Top 2 most worrying financial situations to be in:

	Ability to put money aside for saving	Ability to afford essential items for me and my family
	34%	**32%**
Change vs. Regional	**0%**	**+3%**
Change vs. 2024	**-4%**	**-5%**

Other financial situations that are worrying:



		Change vs. Regional	Change vs. 2024
Ability to maintain my current lifestyle	25%	0%	-3%
Ability to take care of parents financial/healthcare needs	25%	+3%	+1%
Ability to plan ahead for retirement	25%	+1%	-4%
Ability to pay for your child[ren]'s educational needs	21%	+4%	0%
Ability to pay off mortgage/loans	20%	+5%	-4%
Ability to put money aside for investment	20%	-3%	0%
Ability to pay utilities bills	19%	-2%	-4%
Ability to afford some luxury	15%	-1%	+1%
Ability to buy/ rent a home	14%	0%	-3%
Ability to put money aside for insurance	13%	-1%	+2%
None of these as inflation has come down^	7%	-3%	NA

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

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

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:

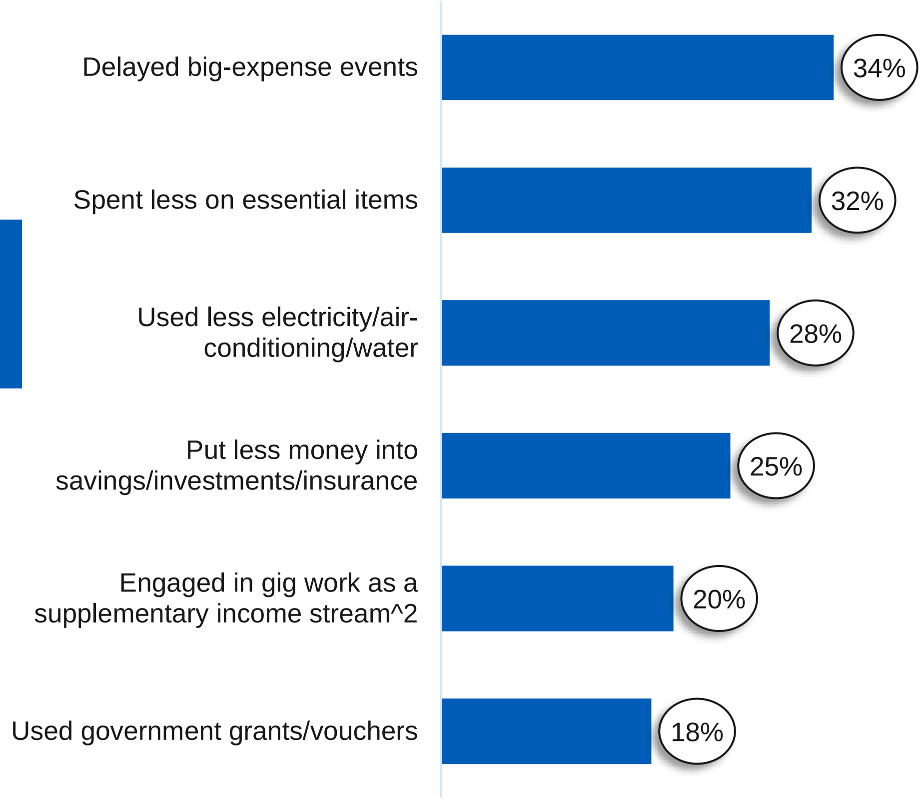
	Spent less on non-essential items	Looked for offers/discounts when shopping	Started tracking expenses more carefully^1
	51%	47%	42%
Change vs. Regional	+4%	+3%	+3%
Change vs. 2024	-9%	-7%	NA

I have not done anything in particular 12%

+1% vs. Regional

+10% vs. 2024

Other actions taken to cope with inflation:

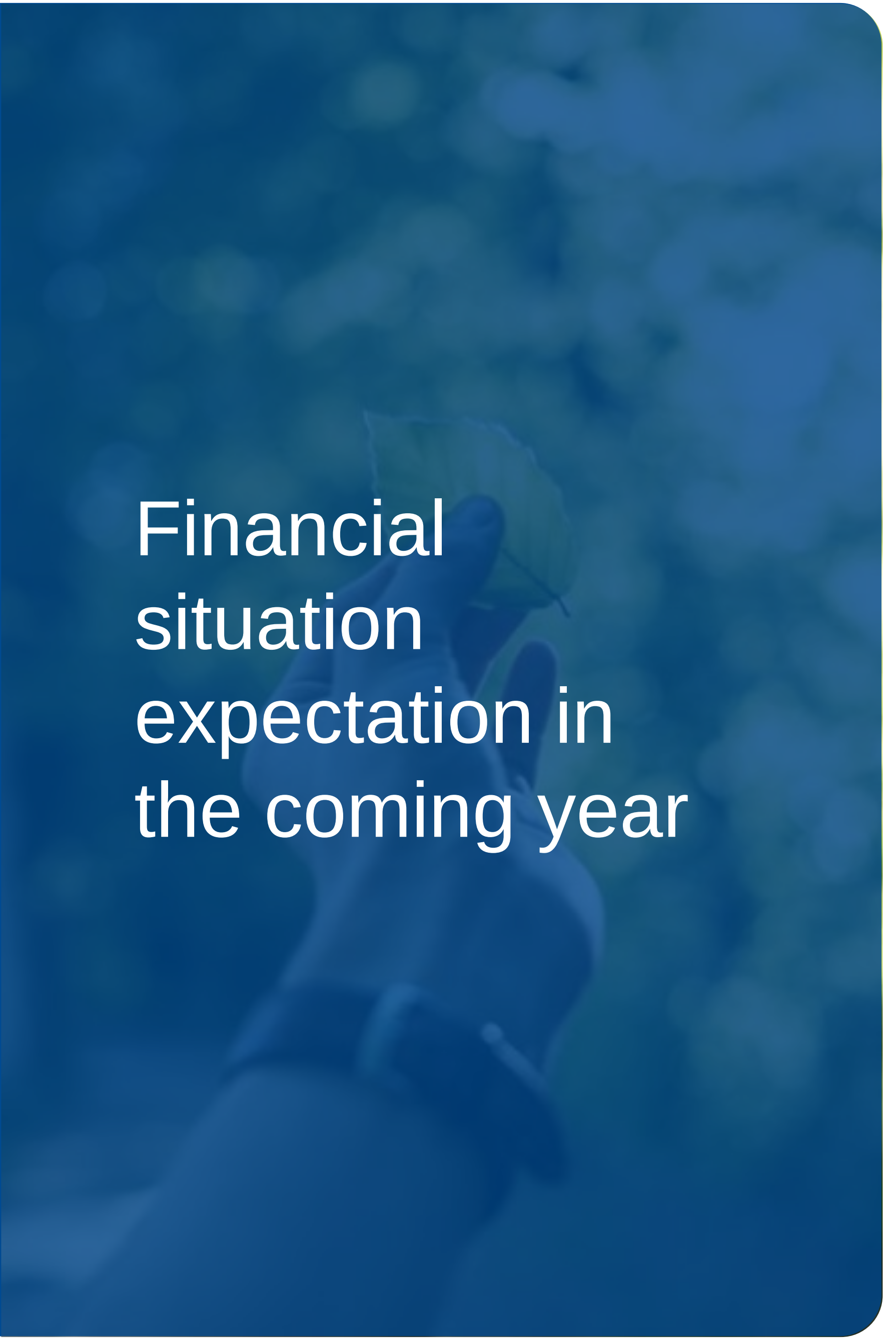


		Change vs. Regional	Change vs. 2024
Delayed big-expense events	34%	-1%	-2%
Spent less on essential items	32%	0%	-4%
Used less electricity/air-conditioning/water	28%	0%	-9%
Put less money into savings/investments/insurance	25%	+1%	+4%
Engaged in gig work as a supplementary income stream^2	20%	-4%	-10%
Used government grants/vouchers	18%	-5%	+4%

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

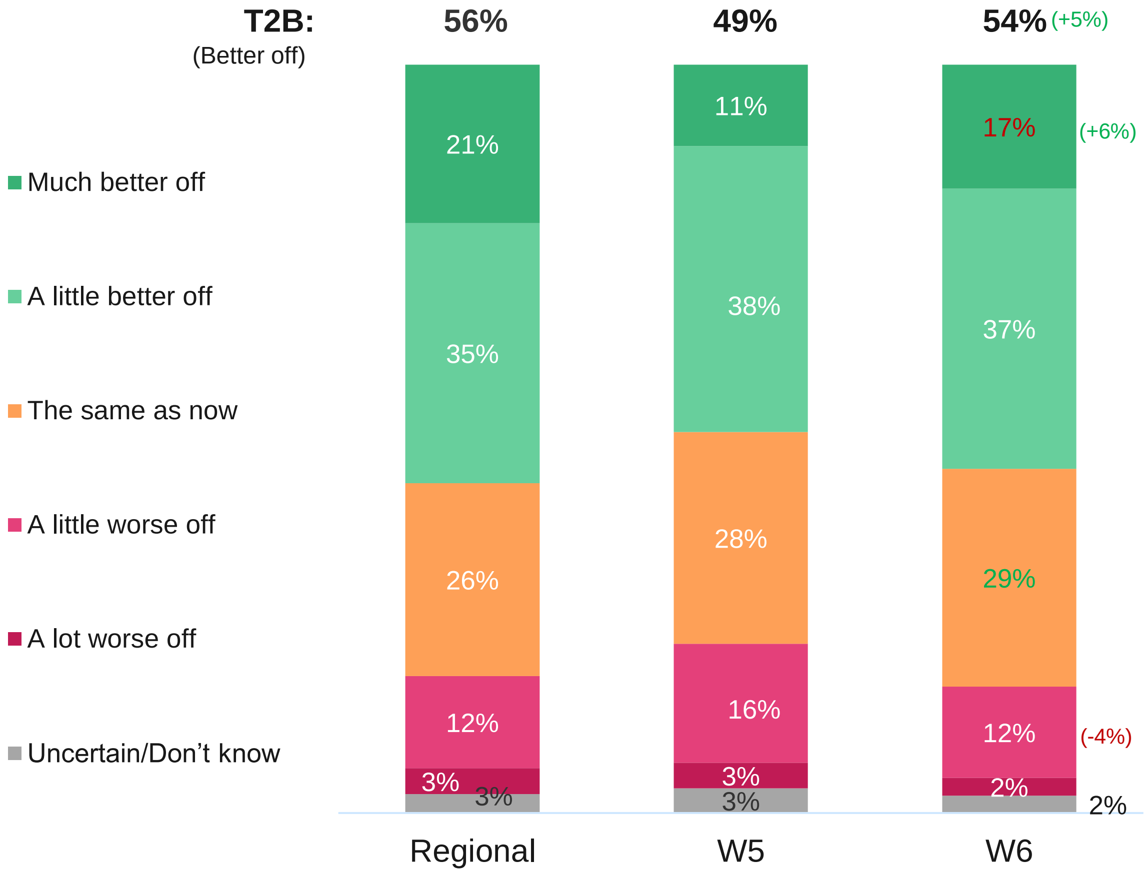
^1 New statement added/statement tweaked in 2025
^2 2024 statement: Started a secondary source of income

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

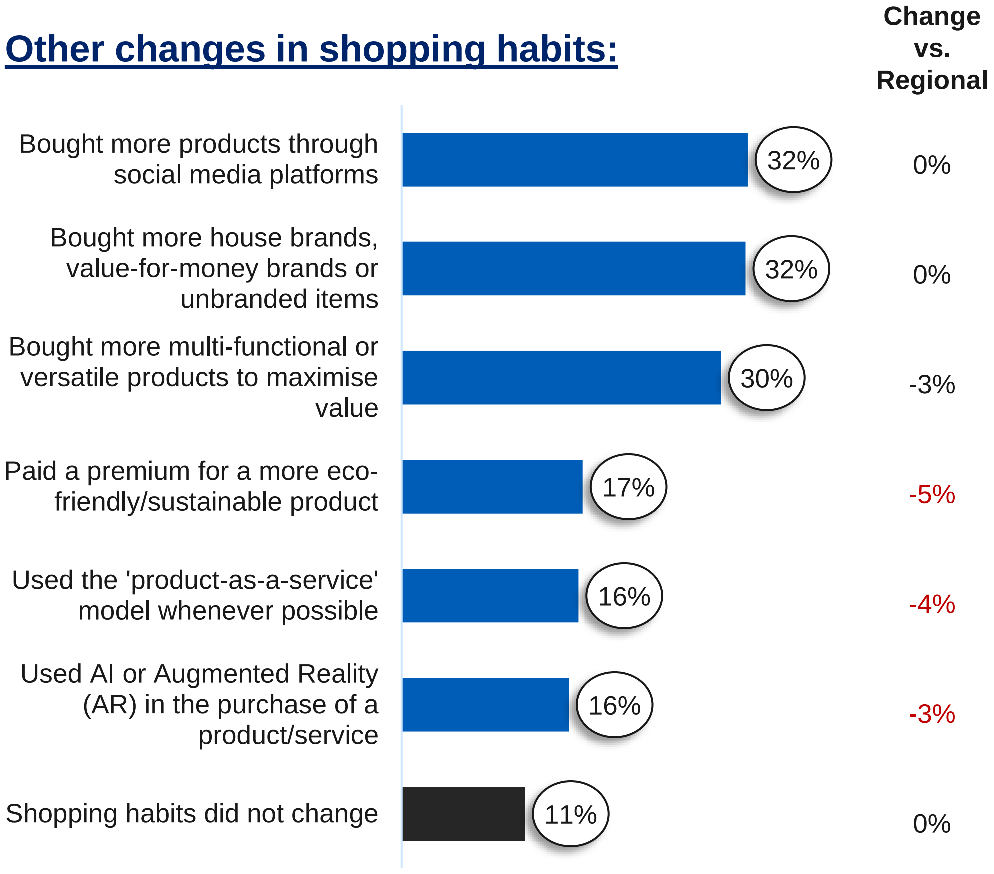
MY consumers prefer discounted and local products and claim to take more time than their regional counterparts

Change in shopping habits in the past 12 months

Top 3 changes in shopping habits:

	53%	**43%**	**39%**
	Bought more products on sale or at a discount	Took more time in deciding about new purchases	Bought more locally produced goods
Change vs. Regional	+4%	+5%	+6%

Other changes in shopping habits:

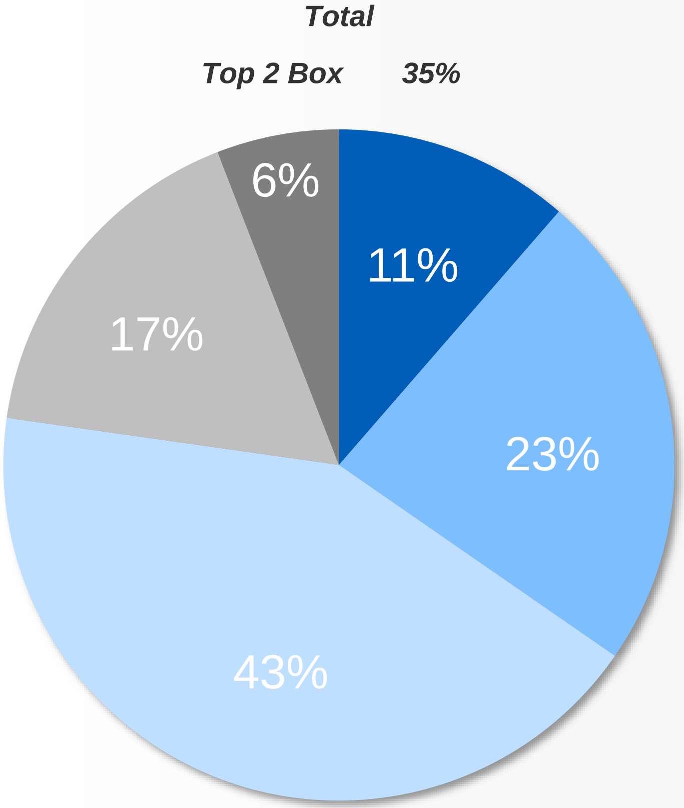


C1. How did your shopping habits change, if at all, over the past 12 months?
Base: Total sample, n=1,000

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



	Change vs. Regional
Top 2 Box	***-5%***
■ Very good time	-5%
■ Good time	+1%
■ Neither good nor bad time	+7%
■ Bad time	-1%
■ Very bad time	0%

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

		Position in 2024
Child education incl fees, tuition & enrichment services	+5%	3
Utility bills	+2%	1
Household groceries & provisions	+2%	2

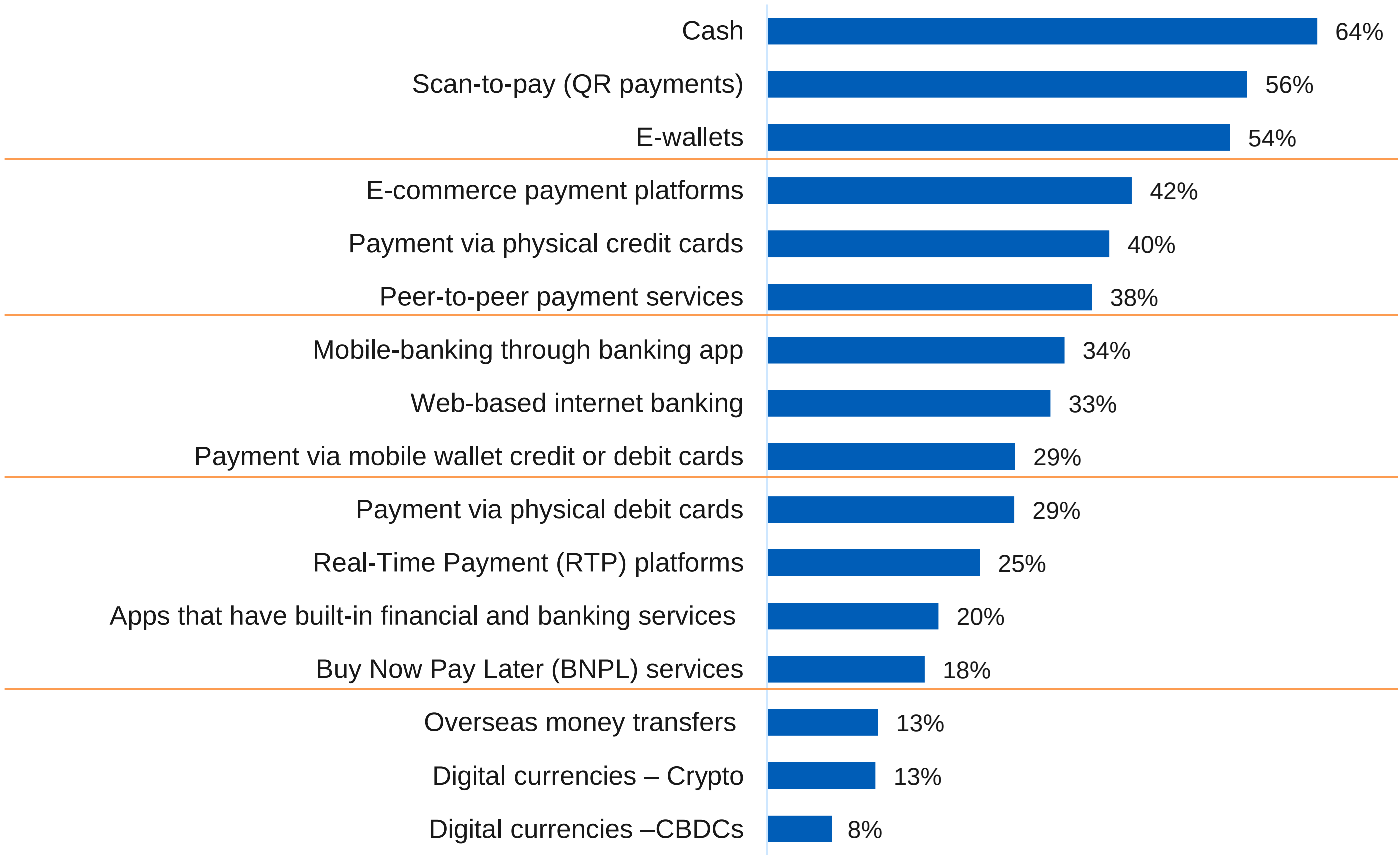
C2. Based on the following list, are you currently spending more, the same, or less on these items now compared to the last 6-12 months?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

^Statement tweaked in 2025

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



	Used	Change vs. Regional	Change vs. 2024
Cash	64%	+3%	-2%
Scan-to-pay (QR payments)	56%	+2%	-5%
E-wallets	54%	-5%	-7%
E-commerce payment platforms	42%	+5%	-5%
Payment via physical credit cards	40%	0%	-9%
Peer-to-peer payment services	38%	+6%	-7%
Mobile-banking through banking app	34%	-3%	-2%
Web-based internet banking	33%	+6%	-8%
Payment via mobile wallet credit or debit cards	29%	-2%	-8%
Payment via physical debit cards	29%	+5%	0%
Real-Time Payment (RTP) platforms	25%	+6%	-7%
Apps that have built-in financial and banking services	20%	-5%	-11%
Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services	18%	+2%	-1%
Overseas money transfers	13%	-3%	0%
Digital currencies – Crypto	13%	-4%	+1%
Digital currencies –CBDCs	8%	-2%	+1%

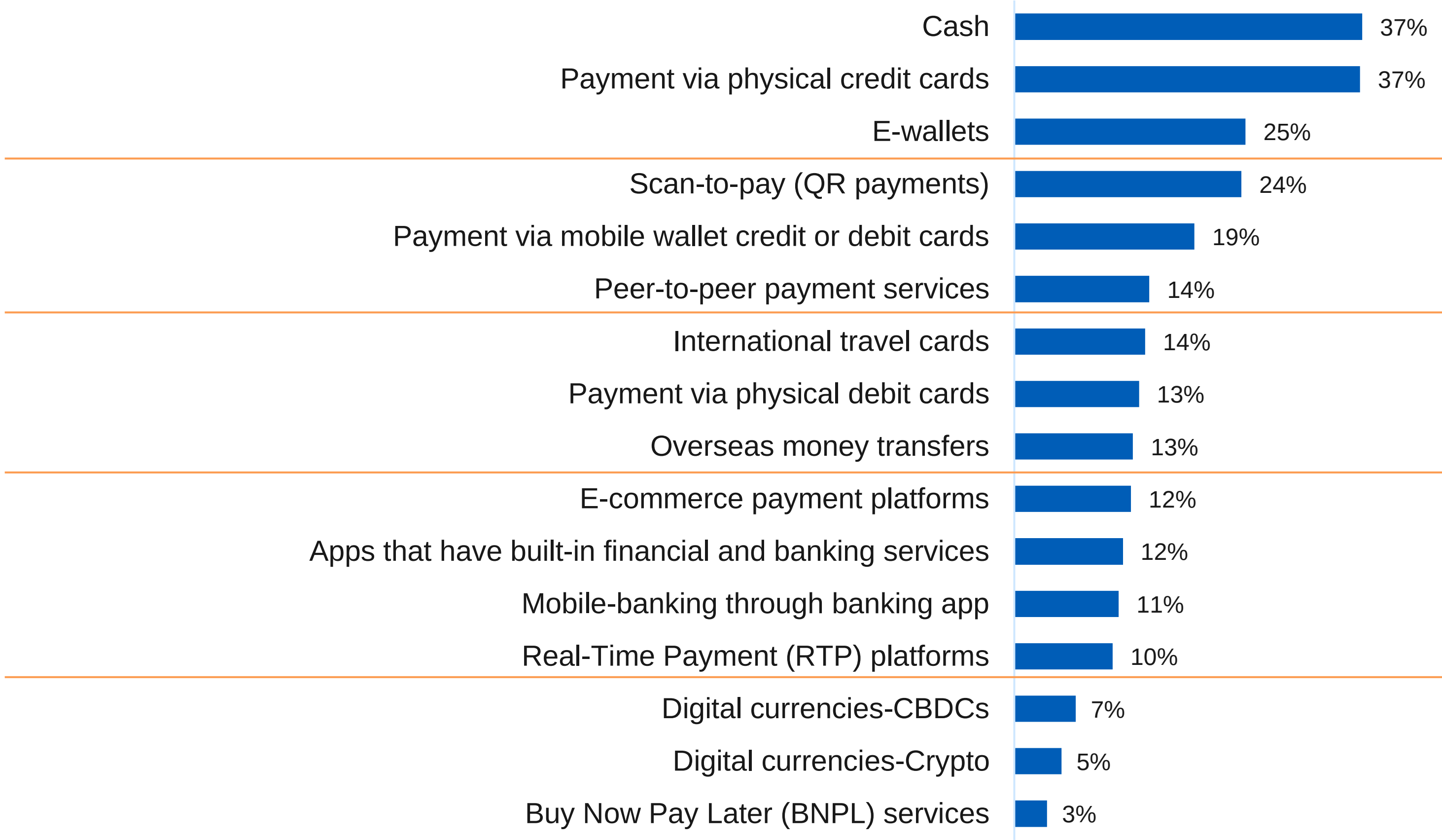
I1. Have you used any of these products or services in the last 6-12 months?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

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

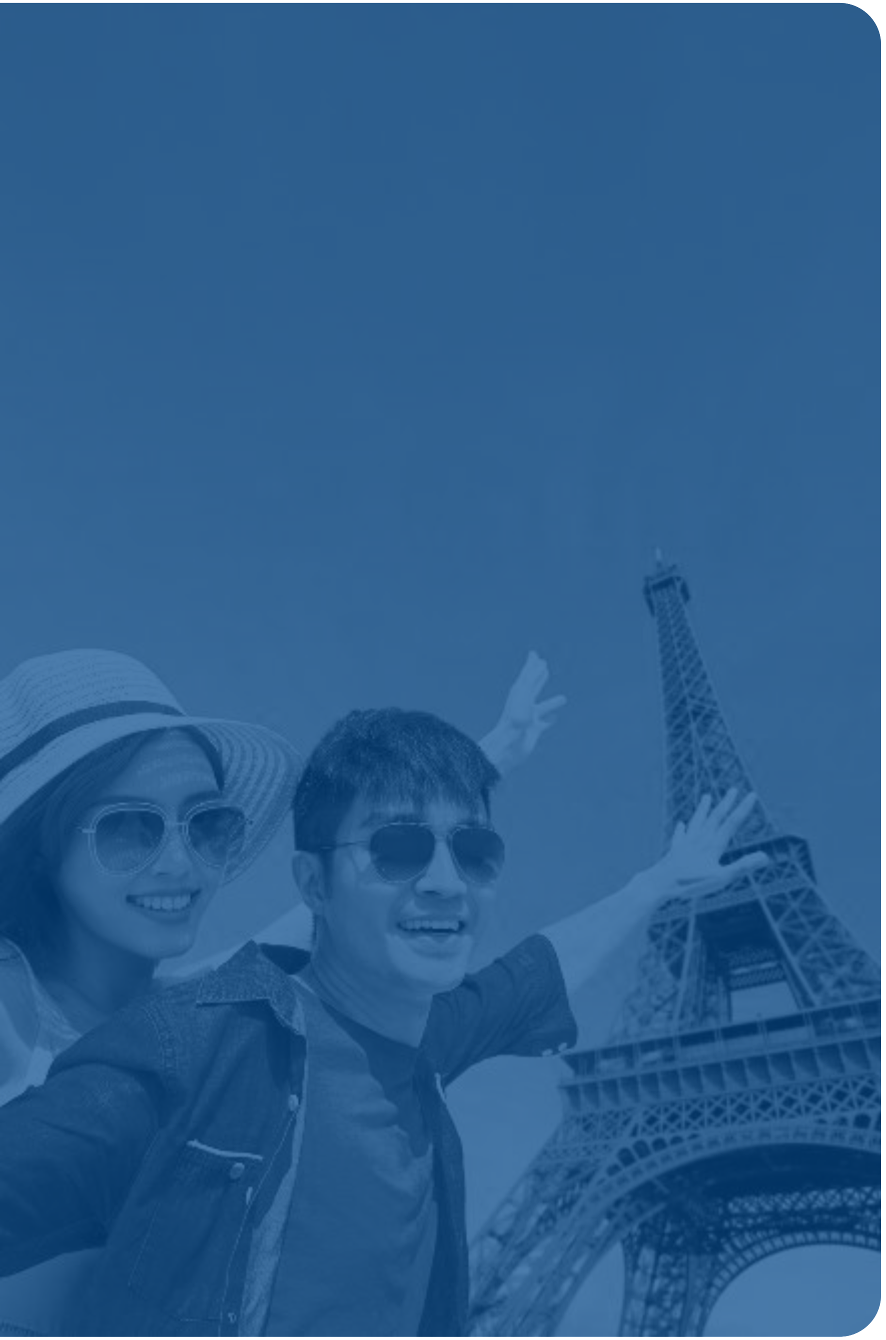
(Among those who spent on an overseas trip in the past year)



		Change vs. Regional	Change vs. 2024
Cash	37%	+1%	-11%
Payment via physical credit cards	37%	+4%	-2%
E-wallets	25%	0%	-4%
Scan-to-pay (QR payments)	24%	+5%	0%
Payment via mobile wallet credit or debit cards	19%	-4%	-1%
Peer-to-peer payment services	14%	+3%	+3%
International travel cards	14%	-3%	+1%
Payment via physical debit cards	13%	+2%	-1%
Overseas money transfers	13%	+1%	+2%
E-commerce payment platforms	12%	-1%	0%
Apps that have built-in financial and banking services	12%	0%	+2%
Mobile-banking through banking app	11%	-2%	0%
Real-Time Payment (RTP) platforms	10%	+3%	+2%
Digital currencies-CBDCs	7%	+1%	+2%
Digital currencies-Crypto	5%	-1%	+1%
Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services	3%	-1%	-1%

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

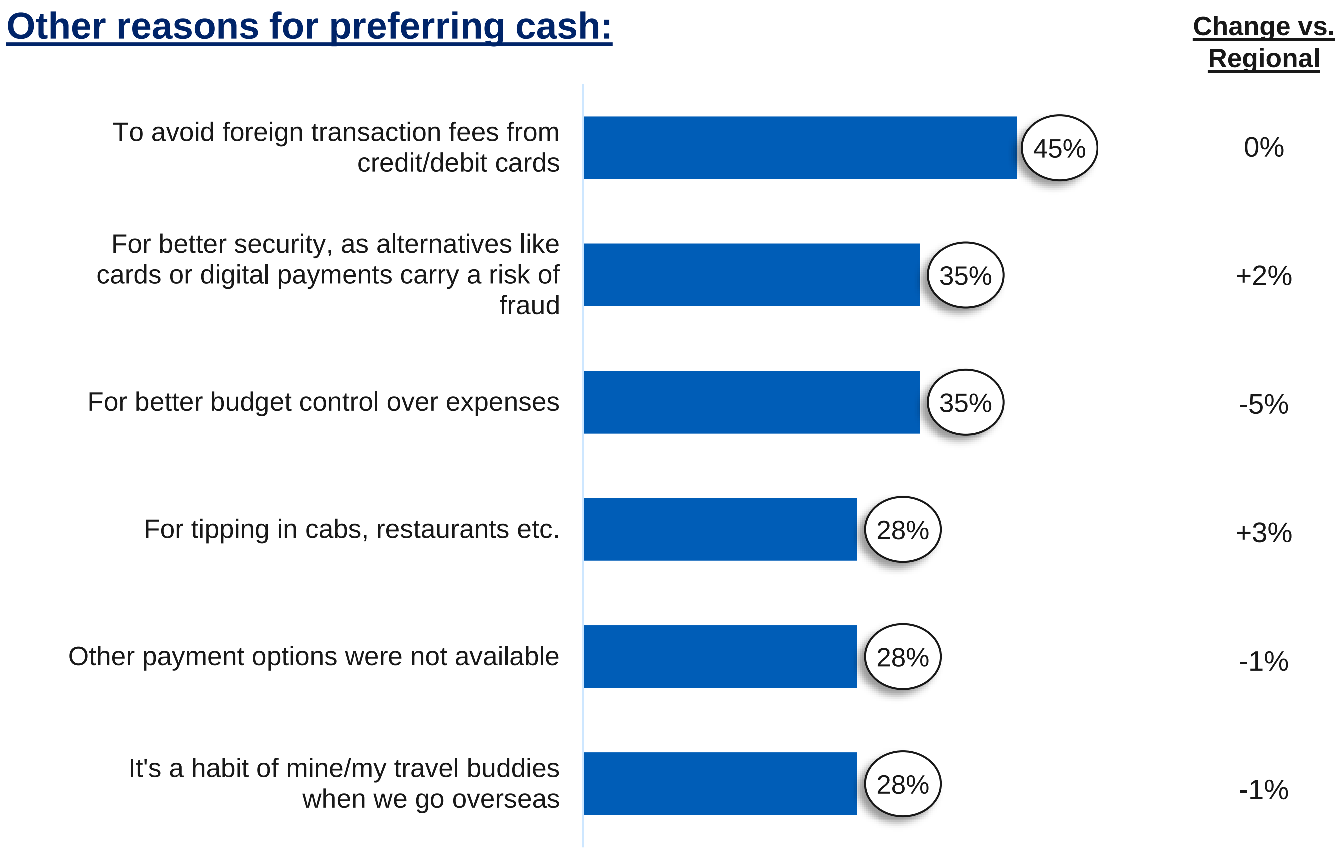
+9%
vs. Regional

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)

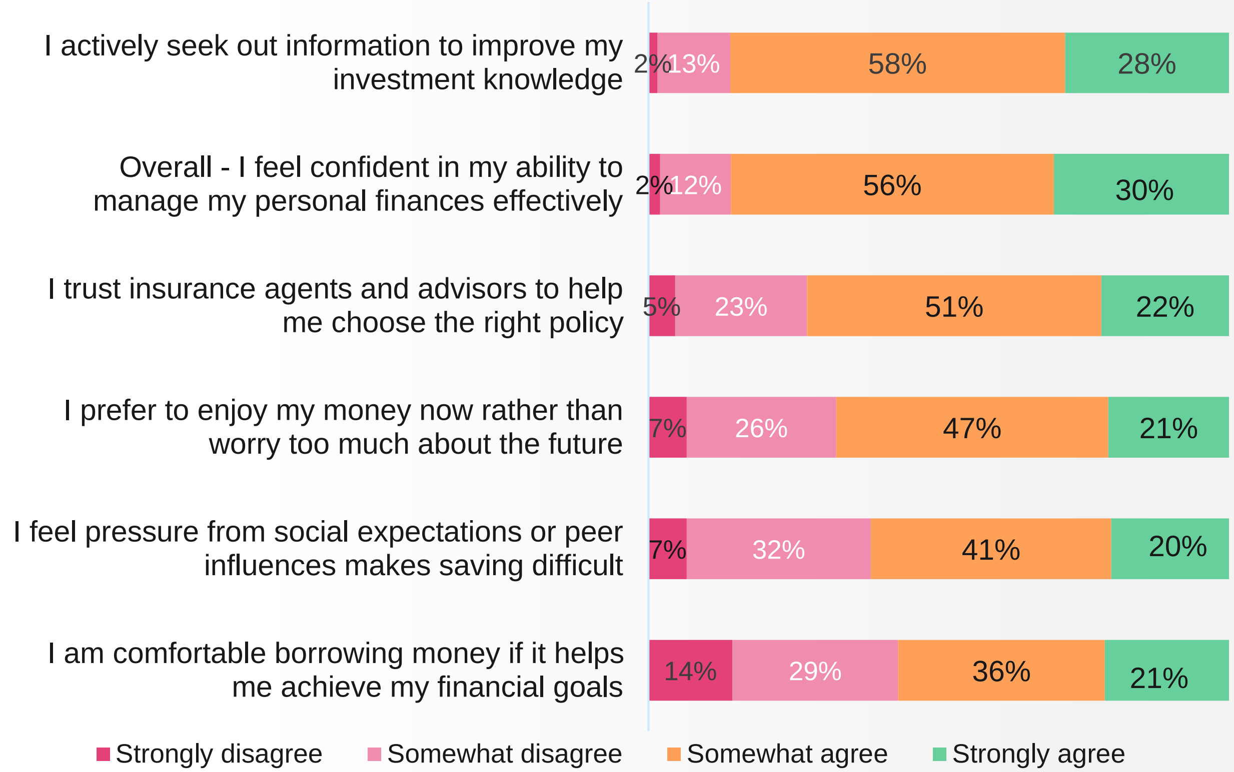


C5a. You selected "cash" as one of your preferred modes of payment during your overseas trip. Why do you prefer cash over other payment options? Base: Those who preferred cash payments overseas 2025, n= 170

4. Financial Preparedness

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

Attitudes to financial planning

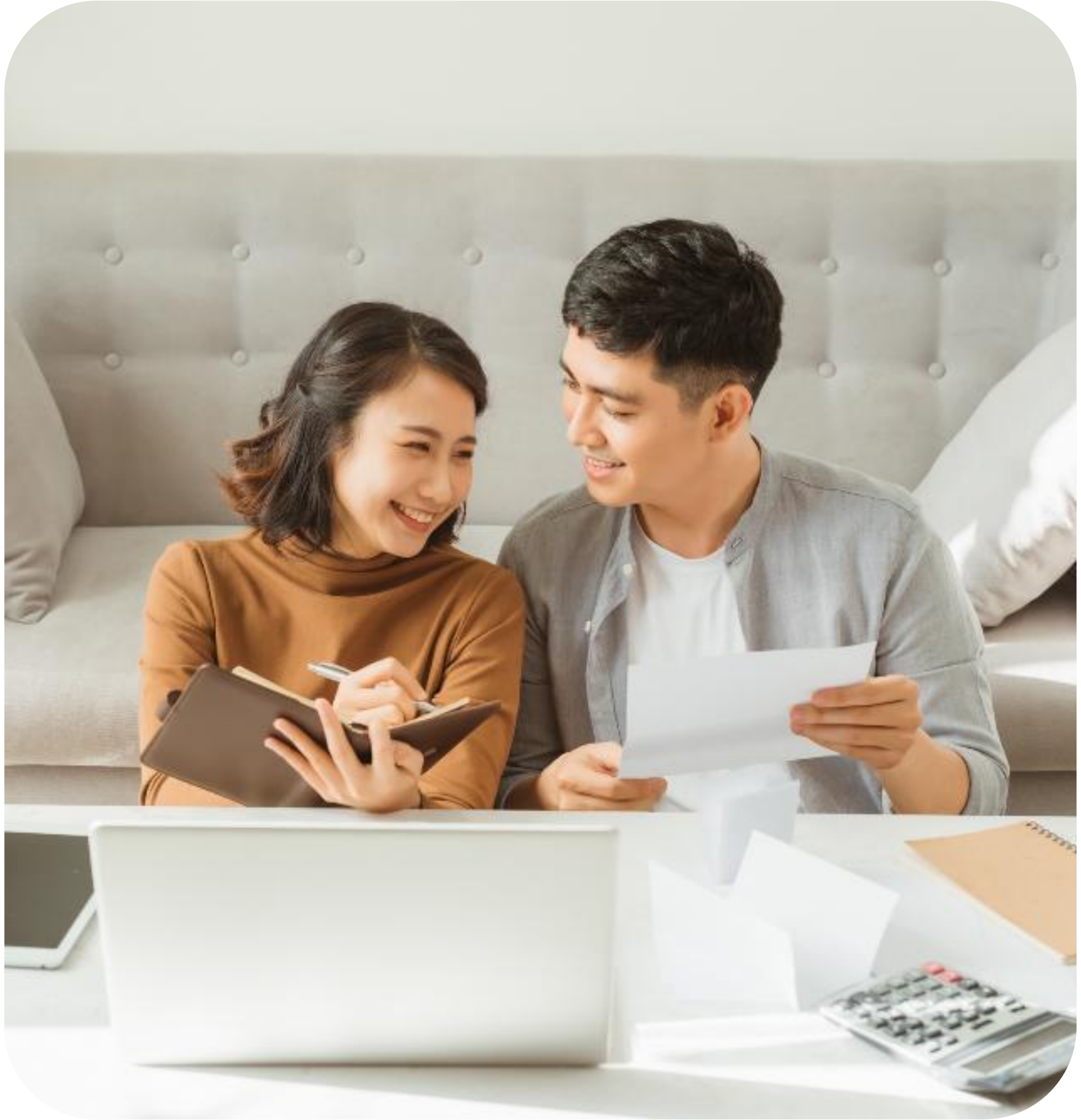


2025 T2B	Regional T2B
86%	86%
86%	88%
73%	77%
68%	66%
62%	64%
57%	66%

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

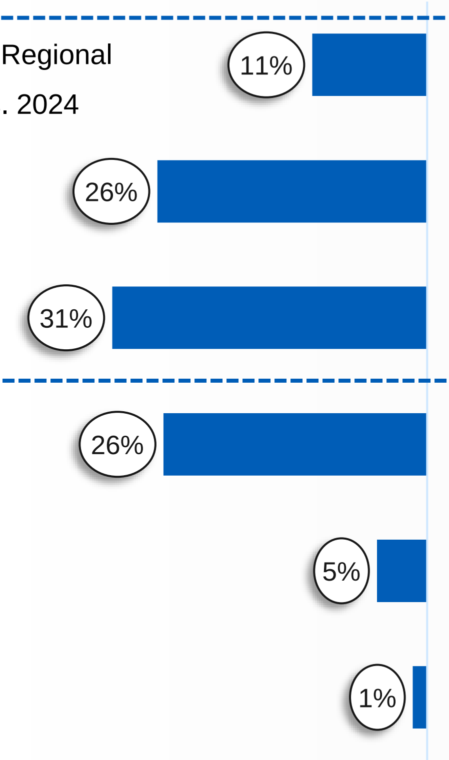


Malaysians are now saving more than they did last year - 7 in 10 save over 10% of their monthly income

Proportion of income saved each month

Significantly higher among:

Gen Y	75%



-6% vs. Regional

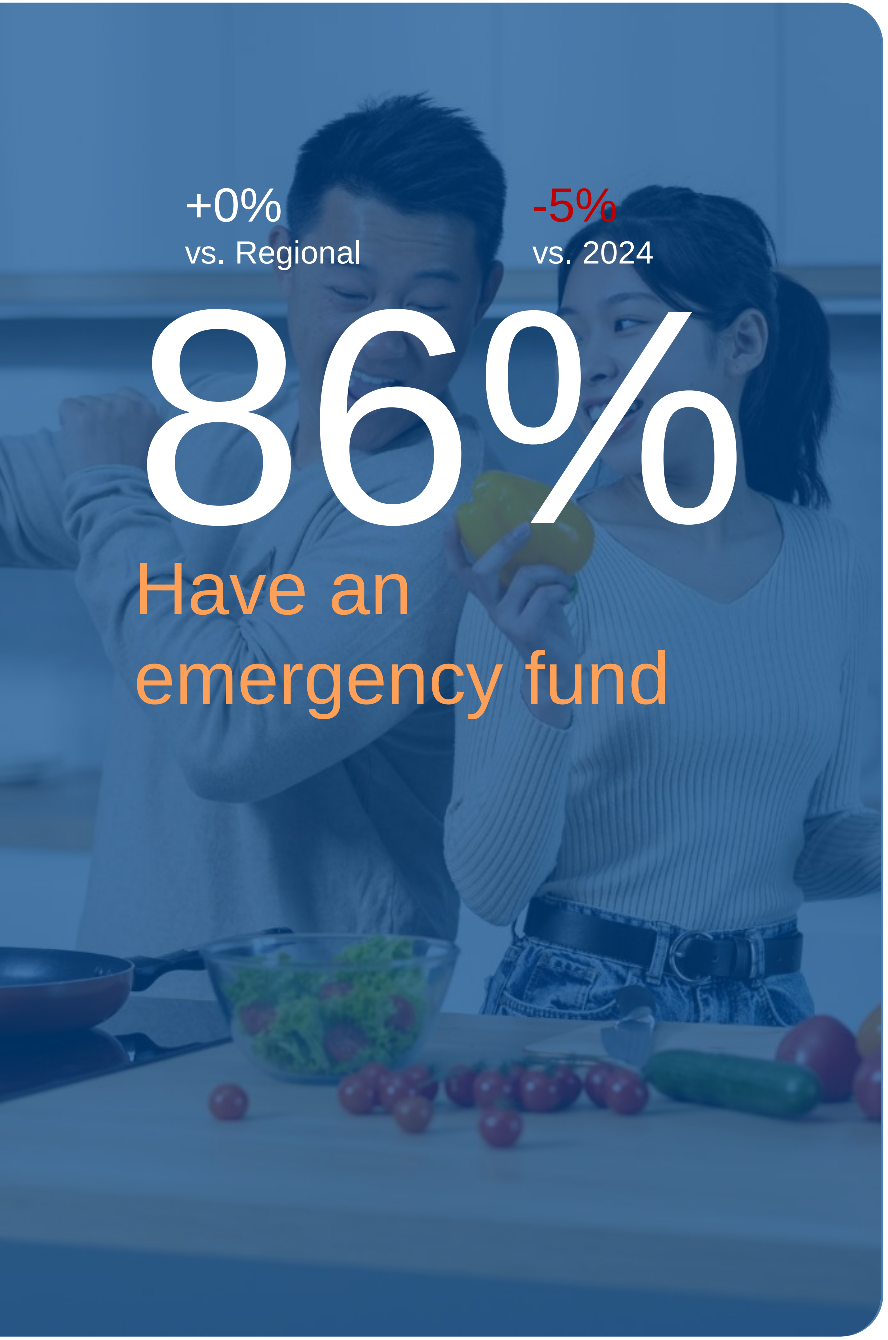
+6% vs. 2024

>10%:
2025:
68%

		Change vs. Regional	Change vs. W5
More than 30%	11%	-1%	+2%
Around 21 - 30%	26%	-1%	+2%
Around 11 - 20%	31%	-4%	+1%
Around 10% or less	26%	+5%	-4%
I do not save anything	5%	1%	-1%
I usually spend more than I earn each month	1%	0%	-1%

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

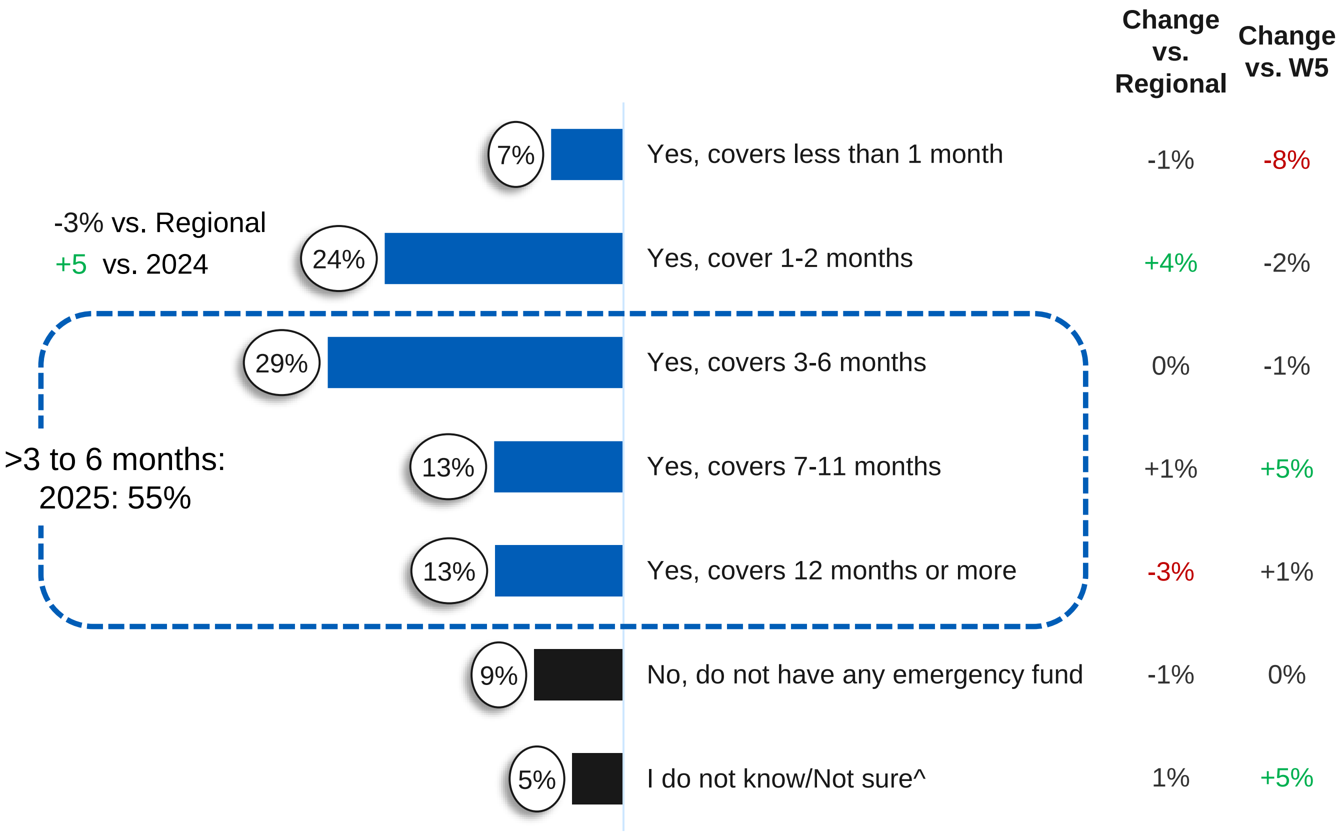
-5%
vs. 2024

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



-3% vs. Regional
+5 vs. 2024

>3 to 6 months:
2025: 55%

		Change vs. Regional	Change vs. W5
Yes, covers less than 1 month	7%	-1%	-8%
Yes, cover 1-2 months	24%	+4%	-2%
Yes, covers 3-6 months	29%	0%	-1%
Yes, covers 7-11 months	13%	+1%	+5%
Yes, covers 12 months or more	13%	-3%	+1%
No, do not have any emergency fund	9%	-1%	0%
I do not know/Not sure^	5%	1%	+5%

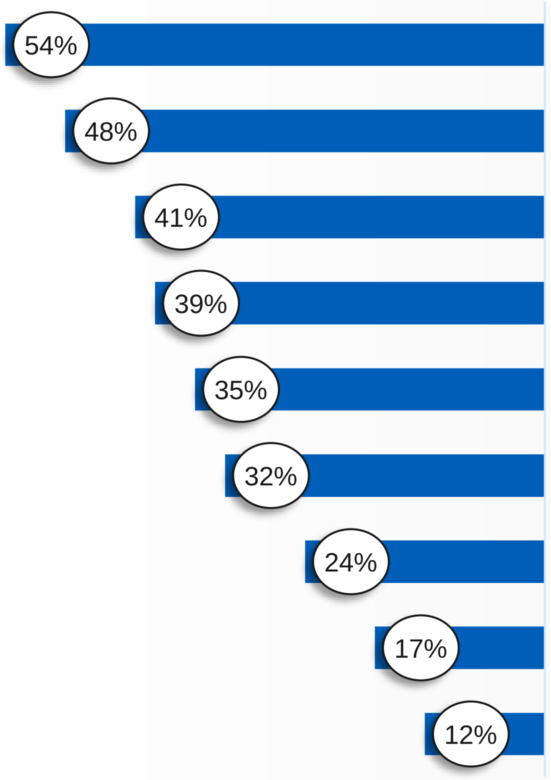
FL2. Do you have any emergency funds (e.g., losing job, hospital bills)? If so, how many months of your regular expenses can it cover? Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

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

Protection

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

Insurance currently owned



		Change vs. 2024
54%	Auto insurance - Excluding govt insurance^	NA
48%	Life insurance	-3%
41%	Personal Health Insurance - Excl. any Basic Health Insurance from the govt	NA
39%	Personal Accident Insurance - Excluding any government insurance^	NA
35%	Home Insurance - Excluding any government insurance^	NA
32%	Critical illness	-4%
24%	Death & Total Permanent Disability - Excluding any government plan^	NA
17%	Term life insurance	+5%
12%	None of these	+6%

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 covered for around 4 times of their annual income

Insurance coverage x annual income

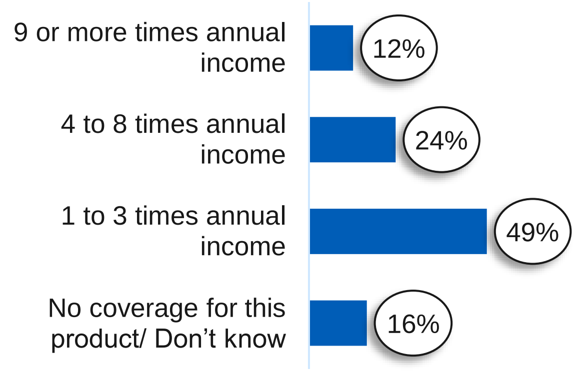
(Among those currently owning Death & Total Permanent Disability insurance)

Obtain insurance for:

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

Base n=241

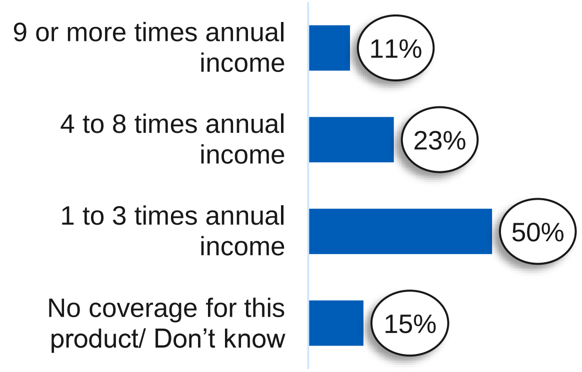
4.0 x annual income



Critical Illness

Base n=325

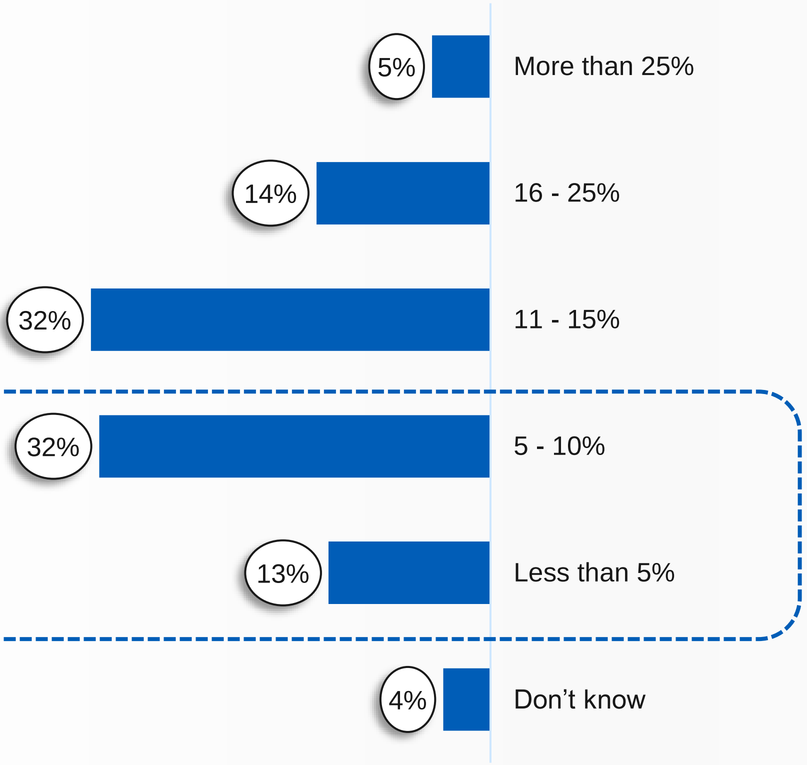
3.9 x annual income



FL5A. How many times of annual income does your insurance cover for _____(Insert each product item)?
Base: Those currently owning Death & Total Permanent Disability and critical illness insurance: 2025, n=1,000

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

Percentage of income spent on insurance annually



	Change vs. Regional
More than 25%	0%
16 - 25%	-2%
11 - 15%	0%
5 - 10%	+1%
Less than 5%	0%
Don't know	+1%

+2% vs. Regional

Net: Spend up to 10%
2025 : 45%

Significantly higher among:

Gen X	55%

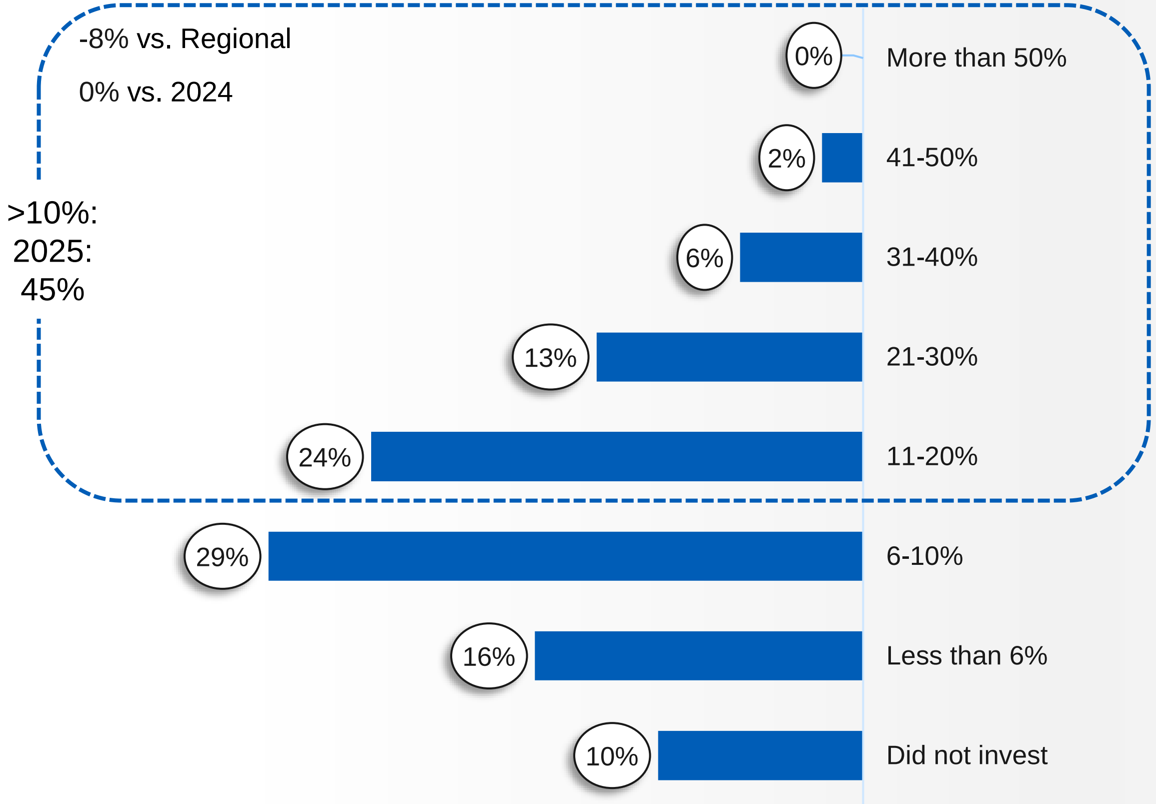
FL5B. What proportion of your annual salary is spent on insurance premiums for yourself annually?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=885

Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

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



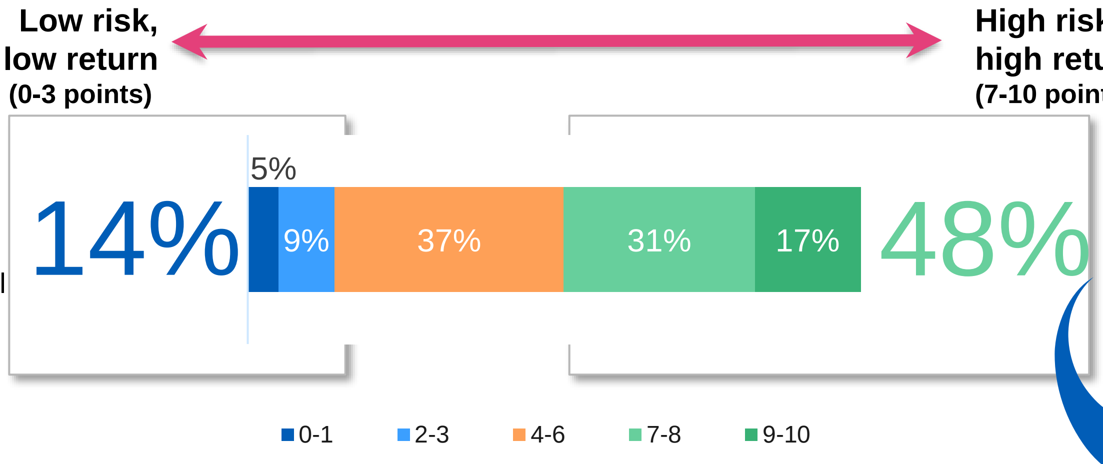
	Change vs. Regional	Change vs. 2024
More than 50%	+2%	0%
41-50%	0%	0%
31-40%	+1%	+1%
21-30%	-1%	-5%
11-20%	-7%	-9%
6-10%	-3%	+1%
Less than 6%	+3%	-3%
Did not invest	+5%	NA

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



-3% vs. 2024

-4% vs. Regional

+5% vs. 2024

+2% vs. Regional

	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

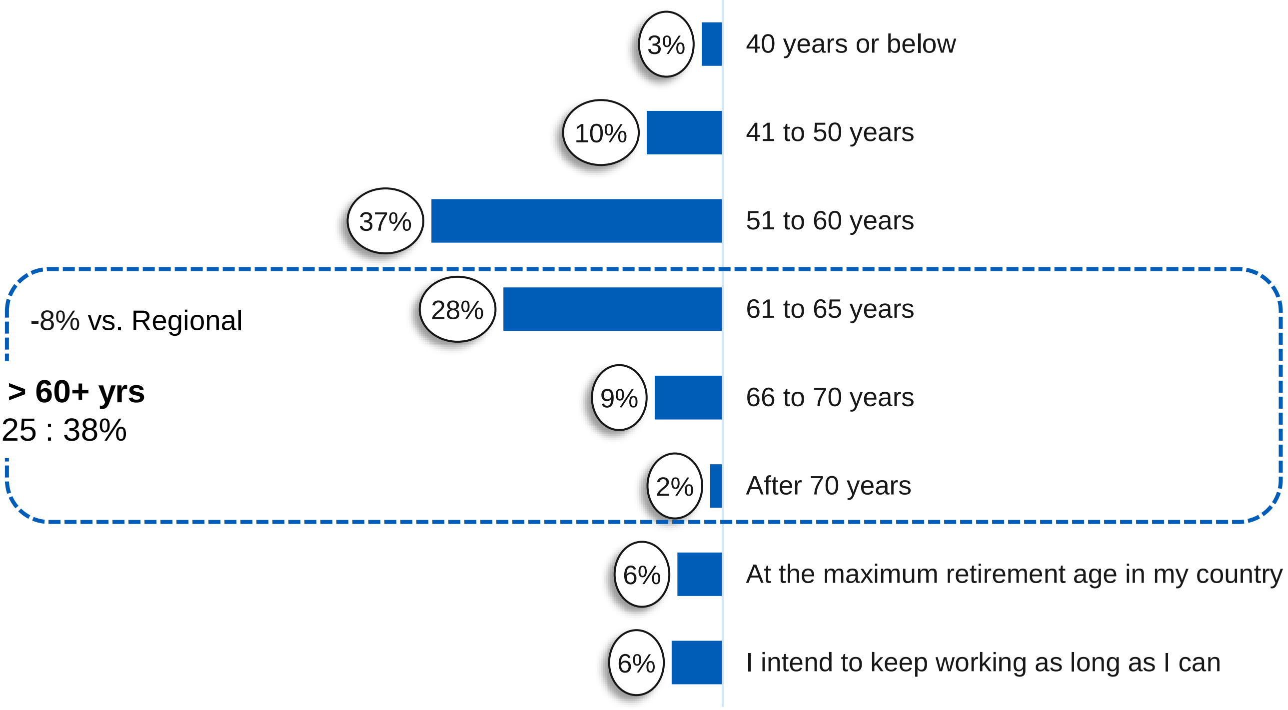
Significantly higher vs. total sample
Significantly lower vs. total sample

Planning –
Retirement & Legacy

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

Expected retirement age

Expected retirement age:



-8% vs. Regional

Net > 60+ yrs
2025 : 38%

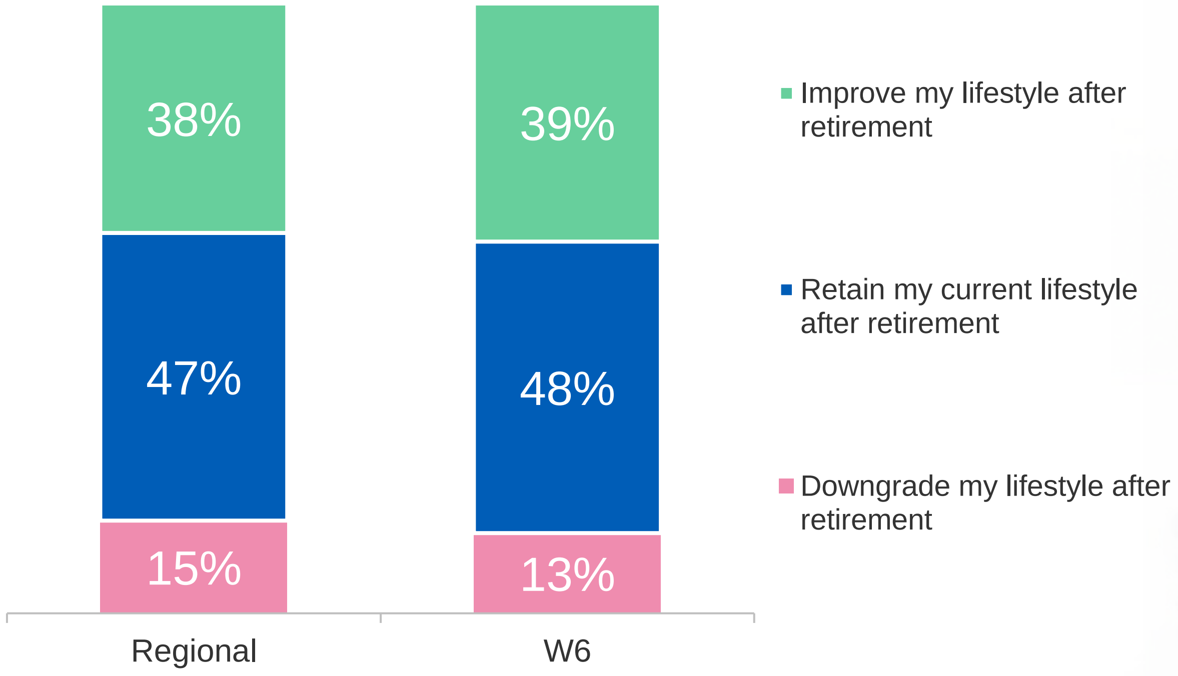
FL10A. Thinking of your retirement, at what age do you expect to retire (in the sense that you no longer need to work)? Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

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

	Regional	W6
NET: Improve/retain current lifestyle	**85%**	**87%**



Significantly higher among:

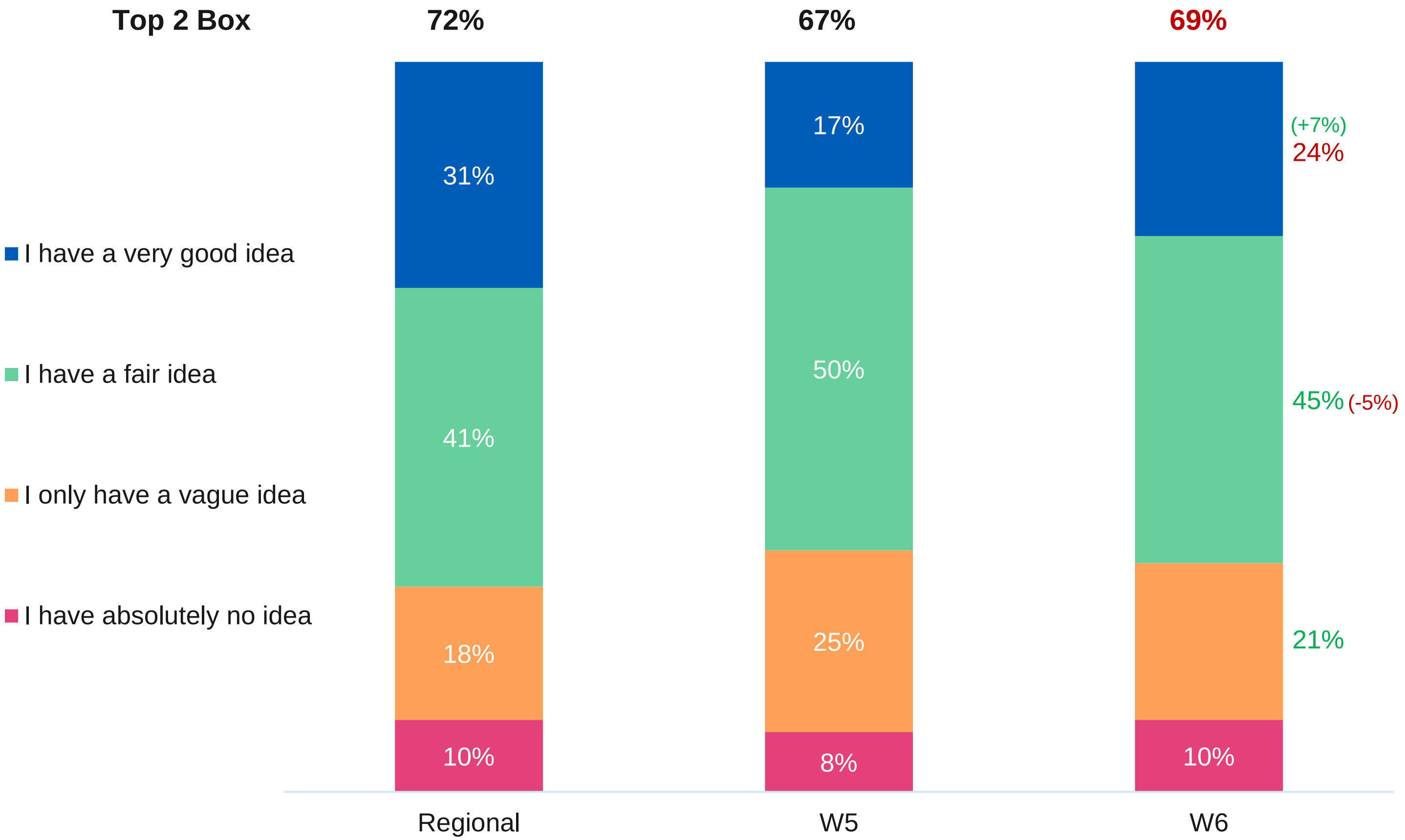
Retain/Improve	
Gen Z	94%
Gen Y	91%
Downgrade	
Boomers	27%
Gen X	24%

FL6A_2. What do you hope to achieve with the amount of money you put aside for a comfortable retirement?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

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



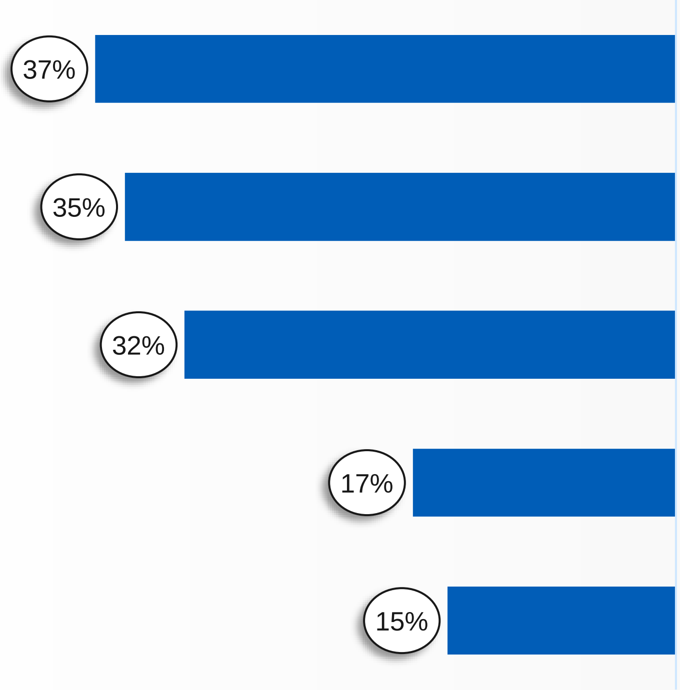
FL6. Do you know how much money you will need to retire comfortably?
Base: Total sample, 2025, n=1,000

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



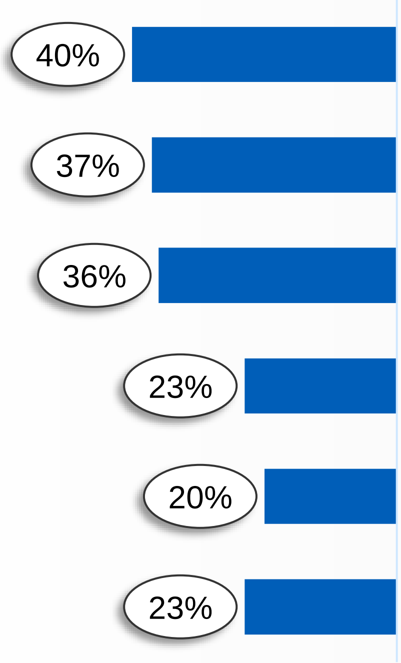
		Change vs. Regional
37%	Retirement is a long way off	-4%
35%	I don't have enough income to save generally	+2%
32%	I intend to, but haven't gotten around to it	-1%
17%	I am confident that I will have enough to retire on	+3%
15%	I believe my pension fund will be enough	-1%

FL6B. Why haven't you worked out how much money you will need to retire comfortably?
Base: Those with vague or no idea how much they need to retire comfortably: Base: Total sample, 2025, n=314

Significantly higher vs. Regional
Significantly lower vs. Regional

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

Legacy planning



	Change vs. Regional	Change vs. 2024
Nominated a beneficiary for my life insurance benefits	+6%	-6%
EPF nomination^	NA	NA
Made a will	+3%	+5%
Lasting power of attorney	-5%	+3%
Advance care plan	-5%	+2%
None of the above	-6%	-2%

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:

Jasmine.yeo@uobgroup.com

Right By You