



News Release

16th June 2022

Muslim youth outlook increasingly pessimistic amidst strong retention of Islamic idealism

PETALING JAYA – Muslim youth in Malaysia are having difficulties in dealing with post-pandemic economic and political challenges facing the country as discovered in the Malaysian Muslim Youth survey conducted between 30 October 2021 to 25 January 2022 by Merdeka Center.

At the same time, they continue to retain strong Islamic consciousness in their outlook on personal aspirations and expectations on public life. This recent survey carried over some questions from an earlier study conducted in 2010. Some of the highlights include:

Things that have changed:

1. Muslim youth have a more pessimistic national outlook with 52% saying the country was on the wrong track (compared to 45% on the right track). In 2010, 66% believed Malaysia was on the right track (33% saying it was on the wrong track).
2. More Muslim youth today at 66% say that all Malaysians should be treated equally regardless of race and religion compared to 39% in 2010.
3. Being a good parent/family member (25%) is now the main ambition compared to being an entrepreneur (24%) in 2010.
4. Personal optimism (measured as how happy they are with their life) has declined from 92% in 2010 to 77% in 2021.

What has stayed the same:

1. Most Muslim youth (93%) continue to disagree that Muslims in the country be allowed to change their religion (2010: 98%)
2. The importance of Islam remains high in their families at 92% compared to 88% in 2010.
3. Interest in politics has remained low: in 2010, only 25% reported that they were interested. In 2021, that figure rose slightly to 33%.

“The opinions expressed by Muslim youth in the recent survey was marked by the experiences and challenges encountered during the past several years which included the pandemic, economic hardship and political volatility. This had an impact on the young people’s optimism of the future and their views about where the country is headed. Many remain skeptical of the political process and harbor the view that politicians are transactional and somewhat disconnected with the lives of ordinary Malaysians,” said Ibrahim Suffian, Director of Programs, Merdeka Center.

General Findings of the Survey

The survey found that the most important concern of the youth is about their job security, with 48% are concern of losing their job or could not find one. Other key concerns shared by the youths are related to the environment (43%), corruption (40%), immigrants/refugees in the country (35%) and mental health (30%).

On their life aspiration, 69% say they aspire to be better Muslims. Other main life aspirations shared by the youths, include enjoying life to the fullest (36%), to have a good professional life (35%), and to become rich with lots of money (30%). In visualizing their future, 90% of the youth are rather optimistic that their future will improve.

The survey also found that religion as to be the most important marker of their identity (87%), followed by the citizenship (56%), gender (56%), occupation (39%), while ethnicity was last at 18%.

On the economic condition of the Muslim youth, less than a third reported a comfortable economic situation (29%), and more than half said “making ends meet was a struggle” (58%). 56% are quite optimistic thinking their economic condition will get better in one years’ time.

Cultural-Political Values

In general, the Muslim youth held mixed cultural-political values, without simply being inclined towards particular ideological leanings. 93% agreed that the people should have the right to free speech and 63% agreed that they should be free to choose on matters related to their own life preferences, but at the same time nearly one-half believed that a strong leader was needed to bring order and stability (47%).

Two-thirds (66%) agreed that all Malaysians should be treated equally and given equal rights regardless of race and religion, while only 44% agree that everyone have the right to choose their own religion.

On matters related to Islam, only 17% agree that Islam and matters of public life should be kept separate, and 43% agree that the Shariah court should be empowered to be of equal status with the civil court.

This particular survey was carried out from 30 October 2021 to 25 January 2022 focused on the Muslim youth in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak in terms of their needs and aspirations, perceptions of the country, youth development and on matters related to Islam. A total of 1,216 respondents were taken as samples, reflective of the young Malaysian Muslim population profile of those aged 15-25 years old. They were interviewed through a face to face in person survey. Respondents were selected on the basis of random stratified sampling along age group, gender and state.

About Merdeka Center

Merdeka Center was formally established in 2001 as an independent organization focused on public opinion research and socio-economic analysis. Merdeka Center’s mission is to act as a bridge between ordinary Malaysians and other stakeholders with the leading members of the nation – by collecting public opinion studies and expressing them through survey results, analysis and position papers. For details, visit: www.merdeka.org

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MUSLIM YOUTH SURVEY JUNE 2022

30 October 2021 – 25 January 2022

16 June 2022



Survey Methodology

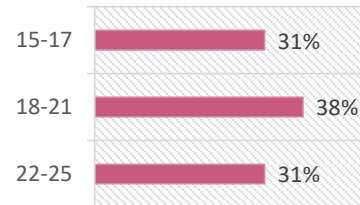
- **1,216** respondents between 15 - 25 years old were surveyed via face-to-face interviews.
- The survey respondents were from all states across the Peninsular includes Sabah and Sarawak.
- Respondents were selected through random stratified sampling method, by ethnicity, gender, age and state
- All of the constituencies (169 parliamentary constituencies across 14 states) were surveyed, and the selection of the respondents was proportional with respect to the population in each parliament constituency.
- Respondents were interviewed in their preferred language.
- The survey margin of error is estimated at **± 2.81%**.
- The survey was conducted from **30 October 2021 – 25 January 2022**.

Respondent Profile

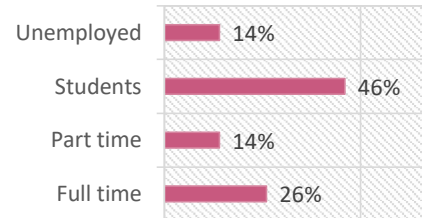
Gender



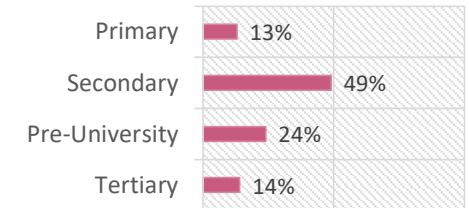
Age Group



Employment Status

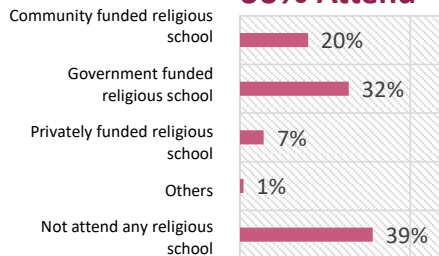


Education

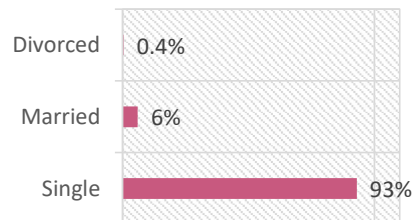


Religious School

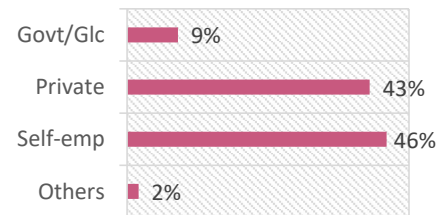
60% Attend



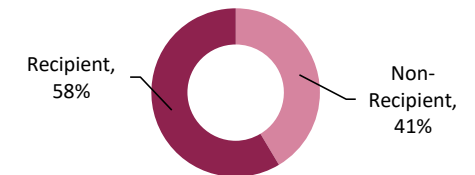
Marital Status



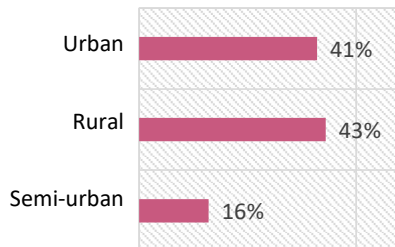
Occupation Sector (For working respondents only)



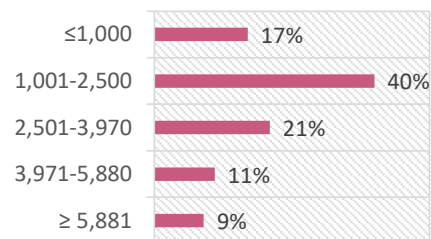
Government Recipient BSH/PRIHATIN



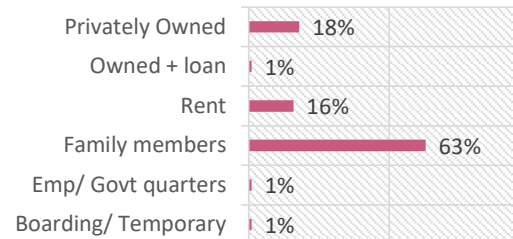
Settlement



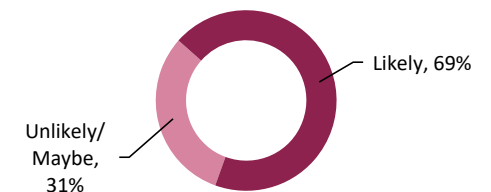
Household Income



Residency Status



Voting Turnout



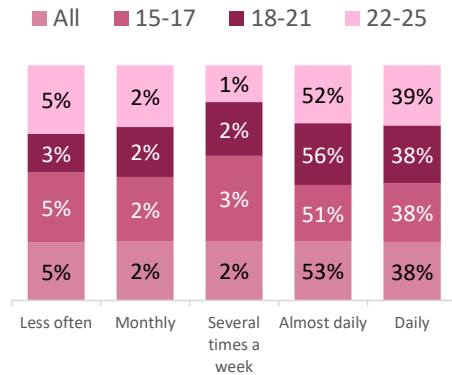
Internet Access & Usage

99.9%
access internet

96%
access internet
through personal device

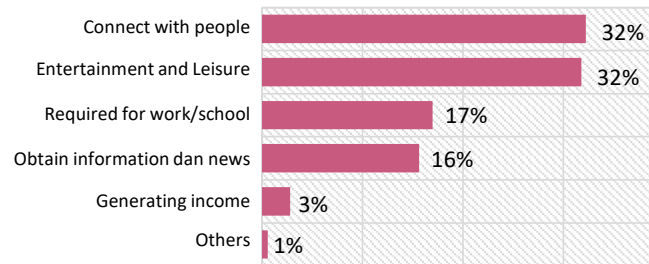
USE OF INTERNET

Q: How often do you use the internet?



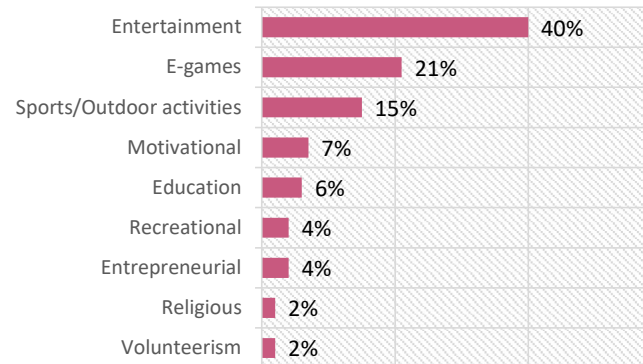
REASON USE OF INTERNET

Q: What is your main reasons for your Internet usage / Why do you go on-line?



INTEREST WHEN ONLINE

Q: What is your main interest that you usually do the most when you online?

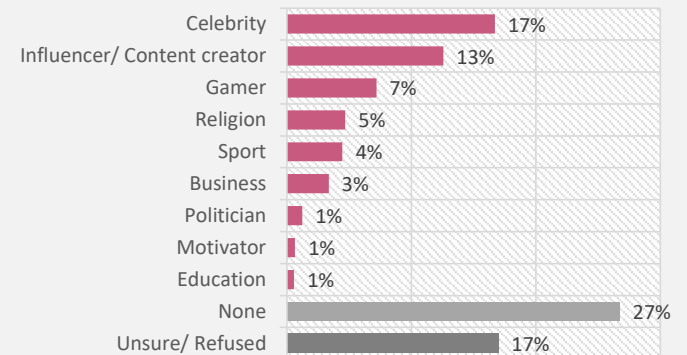


SOCIAL MEDIA

Q: Please state up to 3 main social media platforms that you use?

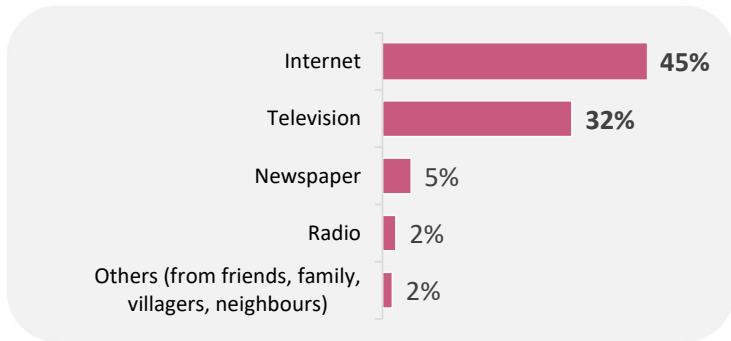
	TOTAL	First	Second	Third
Instagram	83%	35%	32%	17%
WhatsApp	63%	23%	18%	22%
Facebook	56%	20%	20%	16%
Tik Tok	38%	11%	13%	14%
Twitter	19%	6%	6%	7%
YouTube	14%	3%	5%	6%
Telegram	7%	-	3%	4%

Q: Please state main social media icons/ influencers that you follow (and favor) most?

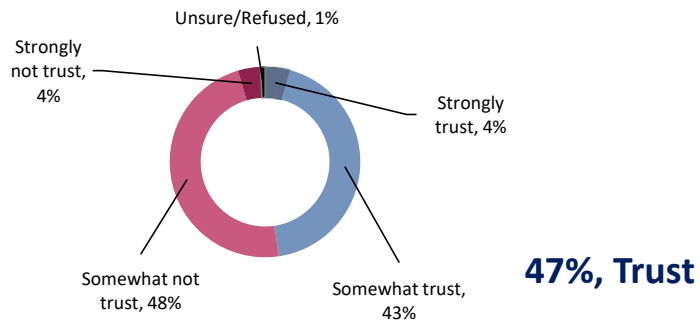


Sources of Information

Q: Please tell me TWO (2) sources/ channels you consider to be your main source of information about the country's politic and current affairs?

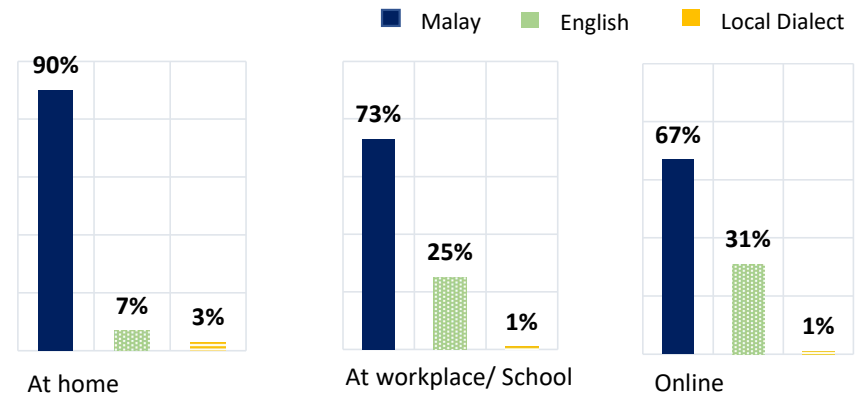


Q: How far do you trust the socio-political information available on online sources?



Language Used & Proficiency

Q: What languages or dialects do you usually use (can be more than one)?



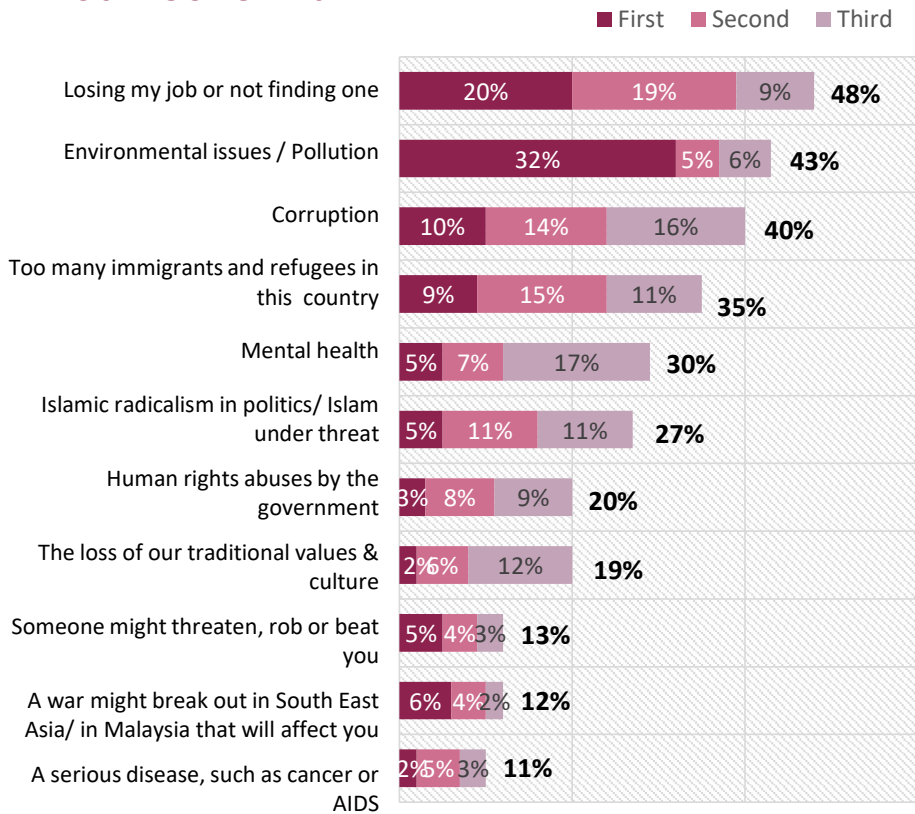
Q: How fluent are you in each of the following languages? (read, write or speak)

	Fluent	Moderate	No knowledge
English	12%	82%	6%
Malay	97%	3%	-
Arabic	2%	32%	66%
Others	4%	9%	85%

National Muslim Youth Outlook

PART I: MUSLIM YOUTH OUTLOOK

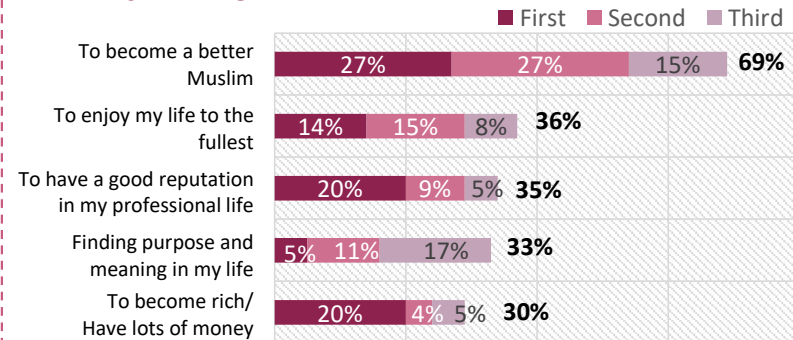
YOUTH CONCERNS



Q: I am going to read you a list of issues, please select 3 issues of concern and rank the 3 based on priority of concern?

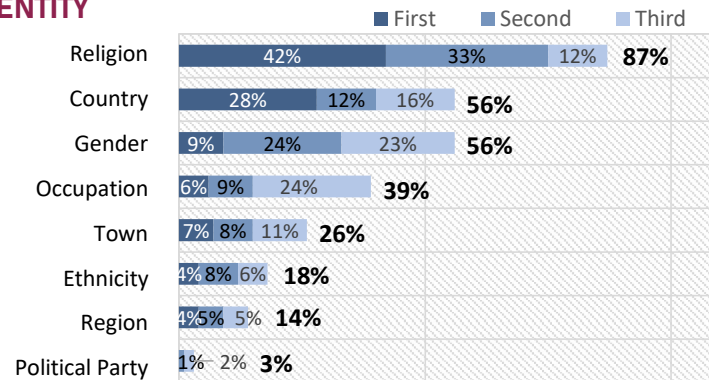
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LIFE ASPIRATION



Q: I am going to read you a list of issues, please select 3 issues of importance and rank the 3 based on priority of importance?

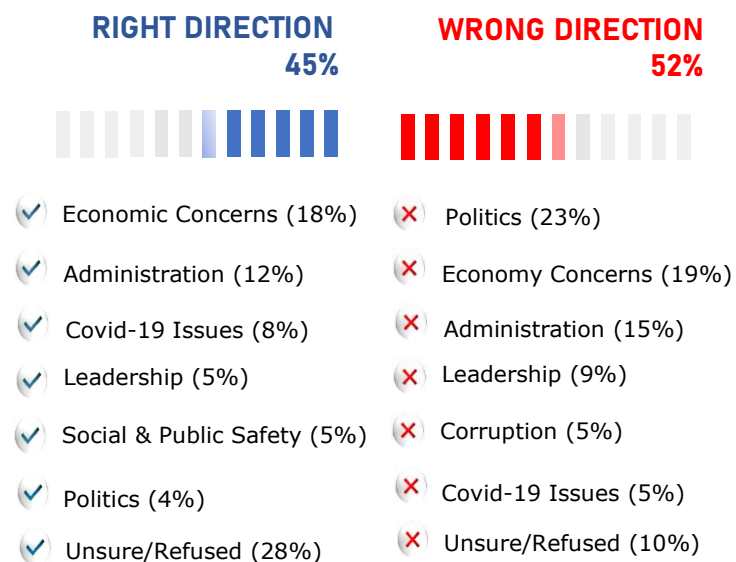
IDENTITY



Q: Based on the list below, what are the things you mainly identify yourself? Can choose up to 3 answer.

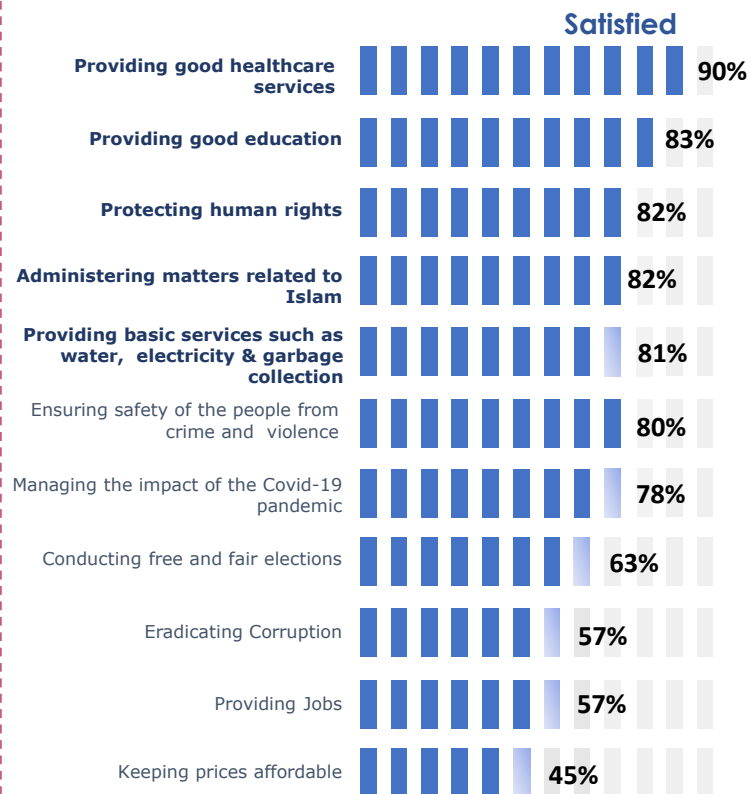
PART II: NATIONAL OUTLOOK

Direction of Country



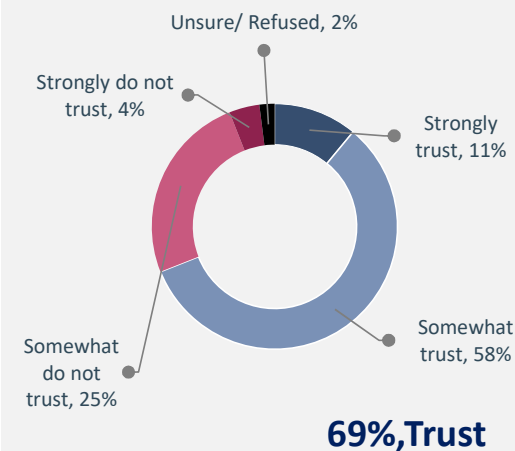
Q: Do you feel things in this country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten on the wrong direction? What is the reason for you to say so?

Performance of Federal Government



Q: Please state whether favourable or unfavourable in terms of your feelings about how the federal government is handling the following issues.

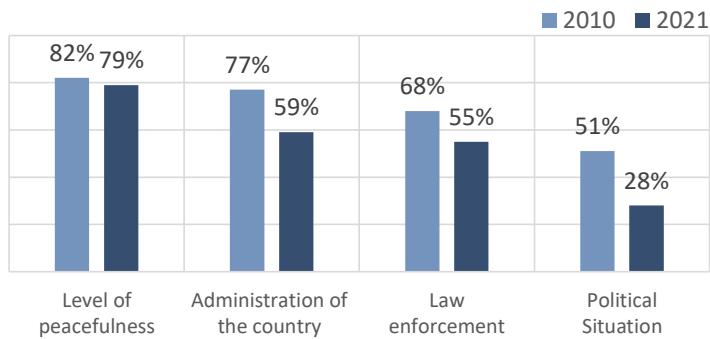
Trust Towards Federal Government



Q: In terms of the level of trust towards National Institutions/Agencies, please state how far do you trust or distrust the Federal Government?

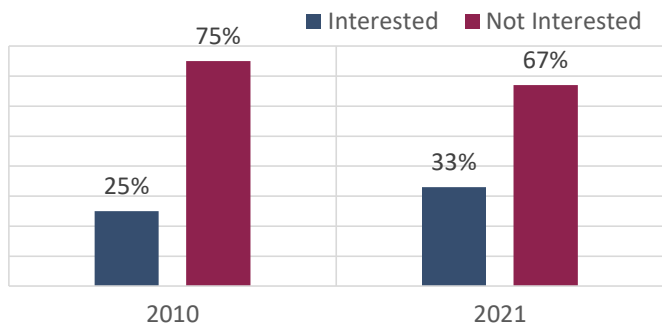
PART II: NATIONAL OUTLOOK

Views on Public Conditions



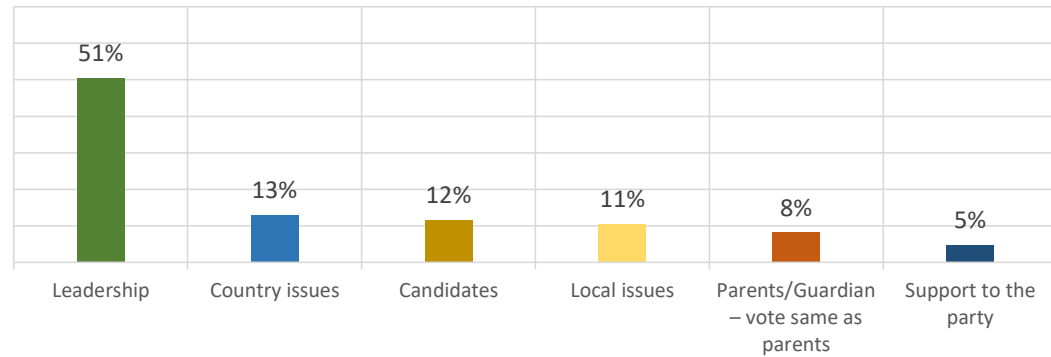
Q: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with these public conditions so far?

Interest in Politics



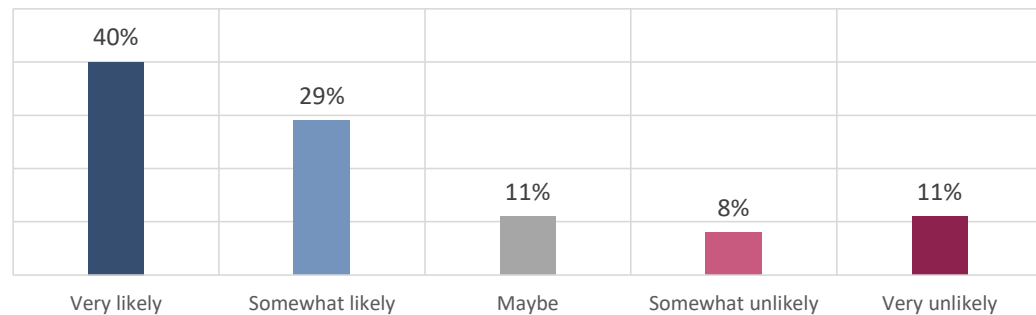
Q: How interested would you say you are in politics?

Voting Inclination



Q: From the factors below, which of the following is important in determining your vote in the next general election?

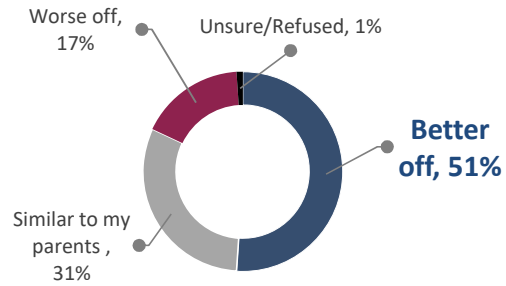
Voting Turnout



Q: If elections were held now, how likely are you going to vote?

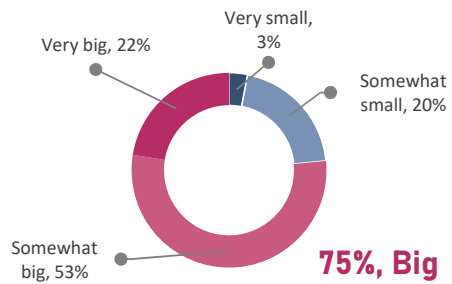
PART III: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Social Mobility



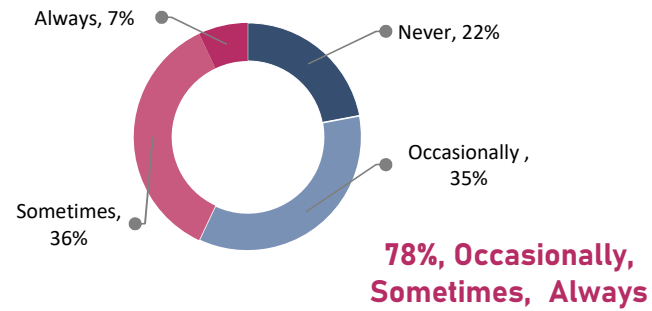
Q: Looking at where you are today, would you say that you are better off or worse off compared to your parents when they were the same age?

Social Class Gap



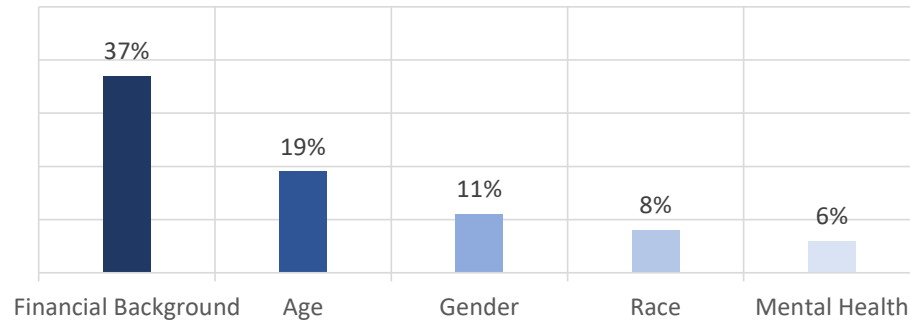
Q: How large or small do you think the gap is between different social classes in Malaysia today?

Discrimination



Q: How frequent do you feel been treated unfairly?

Causes of Unfair Treatment

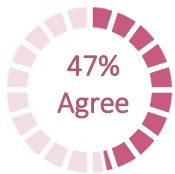


Q: Reasons for being treated unfairly?

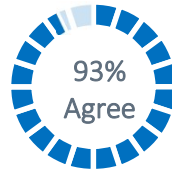
Political-Cultural, Islam in Politics and Public Life

Democracy

A Strong Authoritarian Leader Should Bring Order & Stability to Our Country

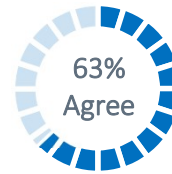


People should be free to speak up and to demonstrate their convictions without fear

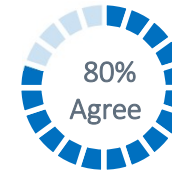


Freedom

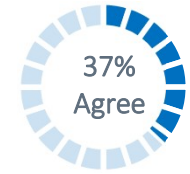
Freely choose how I want to live my life (my dress-up, my sexuality are my private matters)



My freedom should only be limited by my responsibility to not physically harm others



I accept and respect the way others live their lives (LGBT, atheists and other minorities)

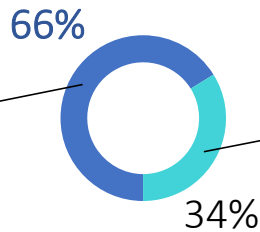


Political Values

Equality

Equal rights VS Special rights

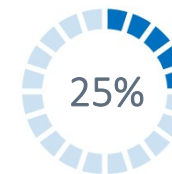
All Malaysians should be treated equally and given equal rights regardless of race and religion



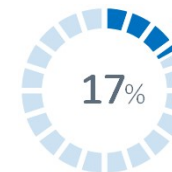
As the indigenous people of this country, the Malays/Bumiputera should continue to be given special rights

Secularism

Islam & Politics



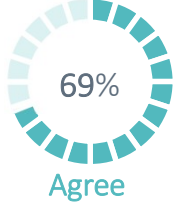
Islam & Matters of Public Life



Should be kept separate

Diversity

People in Malaysia Learn about Other Religions

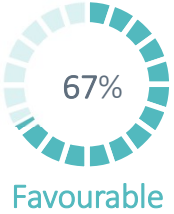


Friends From a Different Religion



Tolerance

View on People of Different Religious Belief

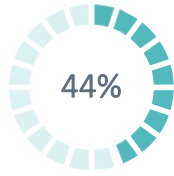


Muslims Participate in non-Muslims' Celebratory Events

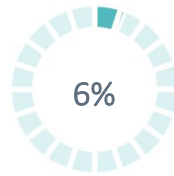


Religious Freedom

All people of Malaysia should be Allowed to Choose their Religion

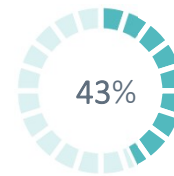


Muslims should be Allowed to Change their Religion

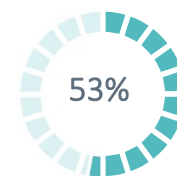


Gender Equality

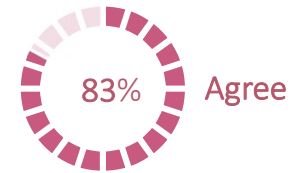
A woman can be the Prime Minister of Malaysia



Women should have equal power as men on decision making within the family



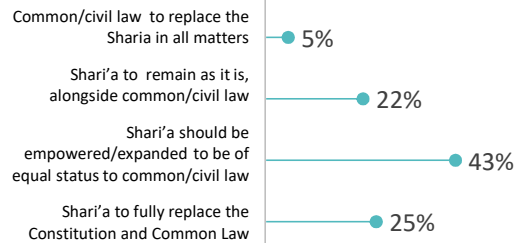
Gender segregation between men and women in public areas is necessary to protect public morality



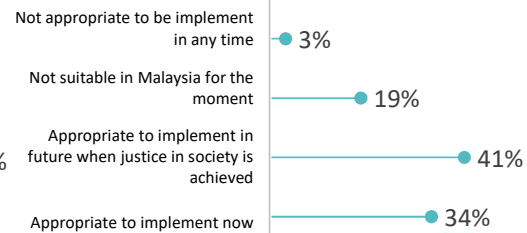
Cultural Values

Shariah (Legal)

Sharia'a in Malaysia



Implementation of Hudud Laws



THANK YOU



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