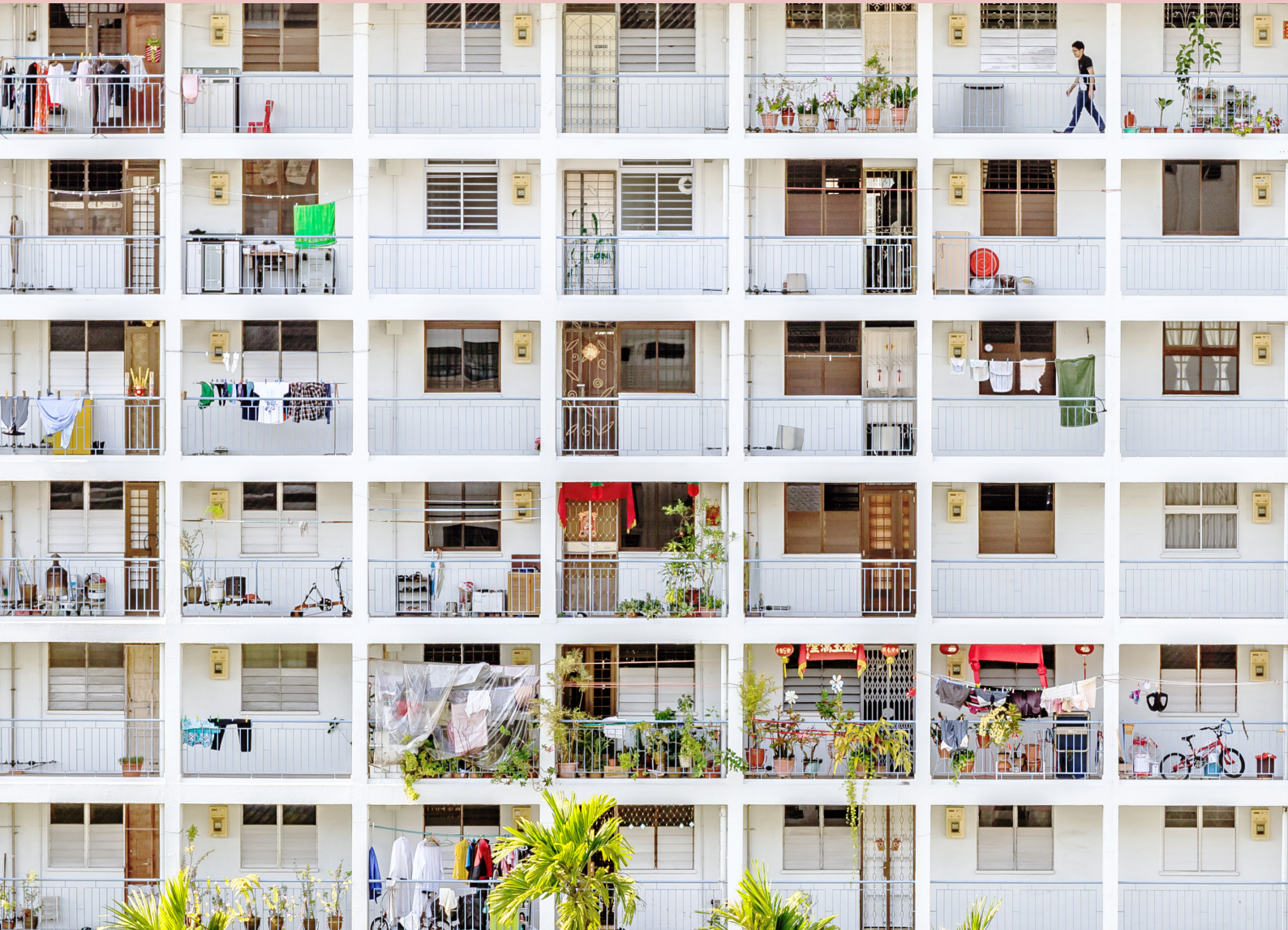
Cultivate

November 2025

Marriage, Parenthood & Success

Survey 2025



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Introduction

The latest Family Trends report from the Ministry of Social and Family Development showed that the number of marriages registered in 2024 was 7% lower than in 2023,[1] and total fertility rate stagnated at a historic low of 0.97.[2] These developments are despite the national roadmap "A Singapore Made for Families 2025" which seeks to build a family-friendly Singapore society. It seems that the impact of the current incentives and aid given on marriage and parenthood has yet to materialise.

This may suggest that, while material incentives may move the needle for those who are materially strapped but want children, they may be less effective to encourage those who are materially able but do not wish to have children.

This Marriage, Parenthood and Success (MPS) survey seeks to further explore the attitudes and concepts Singaporeans have towards marriage, parenthood and success. Specifically, we looked into how marriage and parenthood feature as a success marker in the minds of Singaporeans age 21-45, to what extent do they carry an orientation towards marriage and parenthood, and how such an orientation or lack of it might impact attitudes and beliefs about marriage and parenthood.

[1] Ministry of Social and Family Development, "Family Trends Report 2025" (July 2025): https://www.msf.gov.sg/docs/default-source/research-data/family-trends-report-2025.pdf.
[2] Ministry of Social and Family Development, "Family Trends Report 2025" (July 2025): https://www.msf.gov.sg/docs/default-source/research-data/family-trends-report-2025.pdf.s

Key Findings

Introduction: Concept of Marriage and Parenthood Orientation (MPO)

Our survey developed the concept of "marriage and parenthood orientation" (MPO), based on whether respondents have a positive view of, and aspire towards, marriage and parenthood. Respondents were then classified in three categories according to degree of intensity of views and aspirations: High-MPO, Moderate-MPO and Non-MPO.

Based on the classifications:

- About one in three (33%) respondents are High-MPO, having a positive view of marriage and parenthood, and expressing aspirations for both
- Slightly more than one in ten (13%) are Non-MPO, who do not have positive views of marriage and parenthood, and neither do they aspire for marriage nor parenthood
- More than half (54%) of the respondents fall under "Moderate-MPO" respondents are in-between the earlier two classifications.

Generally, our findings strongly suggest that values and worldviews, including attitudes towards success, play a significant role in shaping people's attitudes towards marriage and parenthood.

1. **People with positive views and aspirations towards marriage and parenthood are less likely to delay marriage**

Marriage

Among those who have or are neutral on their aspirations for marriage, almost 1 in 2 (45%) say that they are delaying or, for those who are married, had chosen to delay getting married. Unmarried women (71%) are more likely than unmarried men (66%) to delay getting married.

Almost 1 in 2 (49%) Moderate-MPO respondents choose or have chosen to delay marriage, which is significantly higher than the High-MPO respondents (40%). This suggests that when people are lacking in desire for marriage and parenthood, they are more inclined to delay marriage. This pattern exists across both sexes.

Parenthood

Among married respondents who are neutral or positive about their aspirations for parenthood 1 in 4 married respondents (25%) say they are choosing or, if they are parents, have chosen, to delay parenthood. More married women (27%) choose to delay it than married men (23%).

While the difference between the Moderate-MPO and High-MPO is small (56% for Moderate-MPO vs. 65% for High-MPO who choose not to delay parenthood), those with High-MPO are more likely to set out for parenthood without delays and be less neutral about delaying parenthood. This suggests that people with a strong positive view of marriage, parenthood and aspirations for them are more inclined to work towards parenthood without delay.

2. Conceptions of marriage: Commitment, moral values and relationality are widely seen as essential to marriage, but people who strongly value marriage and parenthood are more likely to also see having children as essential

Commitment, moral values and relationality rank top in respondent's conceptions of marriage.

However, there are also differences in conceptions of marriage between men and women, and across different MPO levels.

Men prioritise intimacy, fulfilment, and having children, while women place greater emphasis on faithfulness, shared moral values, and financial stability.

Compared with Non-MPO individuals, High-MPO individuals consider these to be more essential to marriage: "Having children"; "Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage"; "Intimacy"; "Having someone to grow old with"; and "Sharing of material goods/resources". This suggests that High-MPO individuals value marriage more as an institution for having children, drawing a sense of identity and companionship from it.

3. Conceptions of parenting: Safety, stability and parental involvement are essential to an "excellent parent"; fathers and mothers are generally aligned in their attitudes

There is a clear priority for safety, stability and parental involvement, in respondents' overall conceptions of an "excellent parent".

While men and women do not differ drastically in how they rank the elements of excellent parenting, there are some differences. Women tend to prioritise relational connection with their spouse or children, while men look at material or achievement-related matters as markers of excellence in parenting.

By contrast, fathers and mothers (i.e. men and women who are parents) are mostly aligned in the way they conceptualise "excellent parenting", with the exception of just two areas. Mothers consider "Having a close relationship with the children" to be more important, relative to fathers' consideration of its importance. To a smaller extent, mothers also value "Having a stable marriage" more than fathers do, as a factor in "excellent parenting".

Compared with High-MPO respondents, Non-MPO individuals place much lower significance on the following elements: "Have children achieving high levels of education"; "Having a stable marriage"; "Providing financially for the children"; "Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs"; and "Keeping the children safe".

4. Financial considerations are strong factors discouraging parenthood, but have less impact on people who highly value marriage and parenthood

On the overall level, the top three considerations that discourage parenthood are all related to finance.

Men and women have different sensitivities towards the list of considerations. Specifically, women are more concerned than men with "High cost of raising children" and "Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent", while men are more concerned than women with "Disruptions to career" and "Disruptions to travel plans".

High-MPO respondents are least impacted by all the considerations which discourage parenthood, while Non-MPO respondents rate these factors higher in impact. Compared with High-MPO, the top five differences in impact felt by Non-MPO respondents are: "I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering"; "Lack of energy to take care of children"; "High cost of raising children"; "Lack of time to take care of children"; and "Concern that I will not be a good parent".

5. Around half of women say that women sacrifice more in marriage and parenthood, while men are much less likely to say so

Who will sacrifice more in marriage or parenthood – husband or wife, mother or father?

There is a gap in the opinions between men and women as to whom sacrifices more, though this is moderated somewhat by marital status and MPO.

Marriage

On the overall, half the respondents (50%) did not identify either the husband or wife as the one who sacrifices more in marriage, while almost 4 in 10 (38%) think that wives will sacrifice more in marriage.

Women (nearly half, at 49%) are more likely than men (26%) to say that the wife will sacrifice more in marriage.

While married men (57%) and single men (58%) similarly feel that neither party sacrifices more in marriage, married men (30%) are more likely than unmarried men (23%) to say that wives sacrifice more.

Married women are likewise more likely to say that neither party sacrifices more (46%), compared to single women (42%). They are also less likely to say that women sacrifice more (47% for married women, compared to 50% for unmarried women).

On the other hand, High-MPO respondents are most likely to say that neither party sacrifices more (56%). Moderate-MPO respondents are more likely to say wives will sacrifice more (42%), whereas High-MPO respondents are least likely to say so (33%).

Parenthood

On the overall, close to half the respondents (46%) identified neither the father nor the mother as the one who sacrifices more in parenthood. A similar number (45%) thinks that mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood, while less than 1 in 10 (9%) said that fathers will sacrifice more in parenthood.

Similar to trends in relation to marriage, women (more than half, at 57%) are more likely than men (33%) to say that mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood.

These attitudes are likewise moderated by marital status. Unmarried men (28%) are less likely than married men (38%) to say that the mother sacrifices more in parenthood. They are also more likely to think that fathers sacrifice more (14% for unmarried men, compared to 10% for married men), or that neither party sacrifices more (58% for unmarried men, compared to 52% for married men).

Married women (54%) are less likely than unmarried women (60%) to say that mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood, and more likely to say that neither party sacrifices more (39% for married women, compared to 36% for unmarried women).

Across MPO profiles, Moderate-MPO respondents are the most likely to say that the mother sacrifices more in parenthood (50%), while High-MPO respondents are the least likely to say so (39%). More than half of High-MPO respondents (53%) say that neither party sacrifices more in parenthood, while Non-MPO are the most likely to say so (54%).

6. "Being an upright person" is the top marker of success overall, but High-MPO respondents tend to also greater value "being married" and "having children" as markers of success

Generally, respondents considered "being an upright person", "having work-life balance", "being contented" and "being close to family" as the top markers of success.

By contrast, being married and having children rank low (12th and 14th respectively).

Across the sexes, men tend to link success to achievement, being married, and having children more than women. On the other hand, women marginally value moral uprightness and emotional well-being as success markers more than men.

High-MPO respondents tended to value family relationships, being faithful in personal religion, being married and having children more significantly as markers of success in life. They are also significantly more likely to value moral uprightness and social contribution.

On the contrary, valuing monetary wealth and travelling experiences are consistent markers of Non-MPO.

(Note: This "Key Findings" section draws from various parts of the report, and does not necessarily follow the same structure or order of presentation of findings as the report.)

Concept: Marriage and Parenthood Orientation (MPO)

Analysis Through Profile: Level of Marriage and Parenthood Orientation (MPO)

Our survey collected responses from respondents in terms of their attitudes and aspirations towards marriage and parenthood respectively.

Using responses to these four areas, we constructed a profile of the respondents, classifying them into those who have "marriage and parenthood orientation" (MPO) – and further separated them into High-MPO and Moderate-MPO – and those who are not (Non-MPO), according to their degree of intensity of views and aspirations.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Non-MPO</th><th>Moderate-MPO</th><th>High-MPO</th></tr>
<tr><td>Positive view of Marriage</td><td rowspan="4">Answered "Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Somewhat Disagree / Neutral" to ALL statements</td><td rowspan="4">Did not fit "Non-MPO" or "High-MPO"

(e.g. Neutral views on marriage and parenthood but somewhat aspiring for them)</td><td rowspan="4">Answered "Strongly Agree / Agree" to ALL statements</td></tr>
<tr><td>Positive view of Parenthood</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aspire/Aspired for Marriage</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aspire/Aspired for Parenthood</td></tr>
</table>

High-MPO respondents have positive views of marriage and parenthood. They also express aspirations (existing or, for those already married and/or parents, retrospectively) for marriage and parenthood. They answered "Agree / Strongly Agree" to all of the four following statements: "On the overall, I have a positive view of marriage"; "On the overall, I have a positive view of parenthood"; "I want/wanted to be married" and "I want/wanted to become a parent".

Non-MPOs on the other hand are respondents who do not have positive views of marriage and parenthood, and neither do they aspire for marriage nor parenthood. They answered "Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Neutral" to all four statements.

Moderate-MPO respondents are those who are neither High-MPO nor Non-MPO. They are not opposed or indifferent to marriage and parenthood, but are not enthusiastic about them either.

Overall, about 1 in 3 (33%) of our respondents qualified as High-MPO, a majority (54%) Moderate-MPO, and slightly more than 1 in 10 (13%) Non-MPO (see Fig. 1).

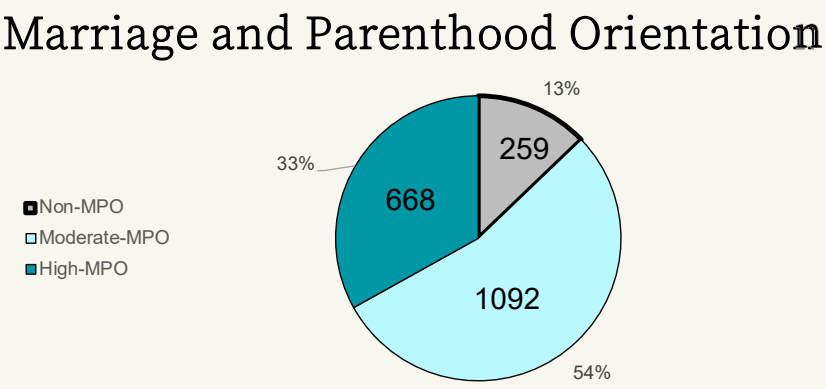


Fig. 1 – Overall respondents by MPO

Men (36%) are more likely to have High-MPO than women (30%). Women are more likely (57%) to have Moderate-MPO than men (52%) (see Fig. 2). Women are marginally more (+2%) Non-MPO than men.

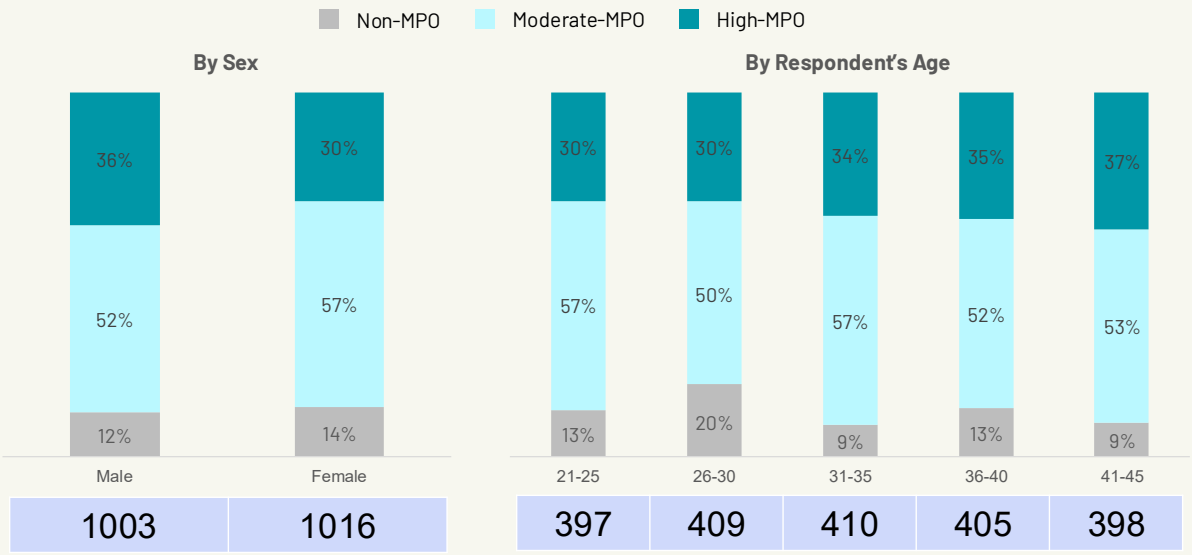


Fig. 2 – MPO profiles, by sex and by age groups respectively

Unsurprisingly, a larger proportion of married respondents are of Moderate- and High-MPO (see Fig. 3). The spread between Non-MPO and High-MPO among the unmarried is quite even. There are slightly more unmarried men (26%) who are High-MPO than unmarried women (22%). The difference across the sexes is even more pronounced among the married. Almost 1 in 2 (47%) married men being High-MPO and 4 in 10 married women belonging to the same MPO category.

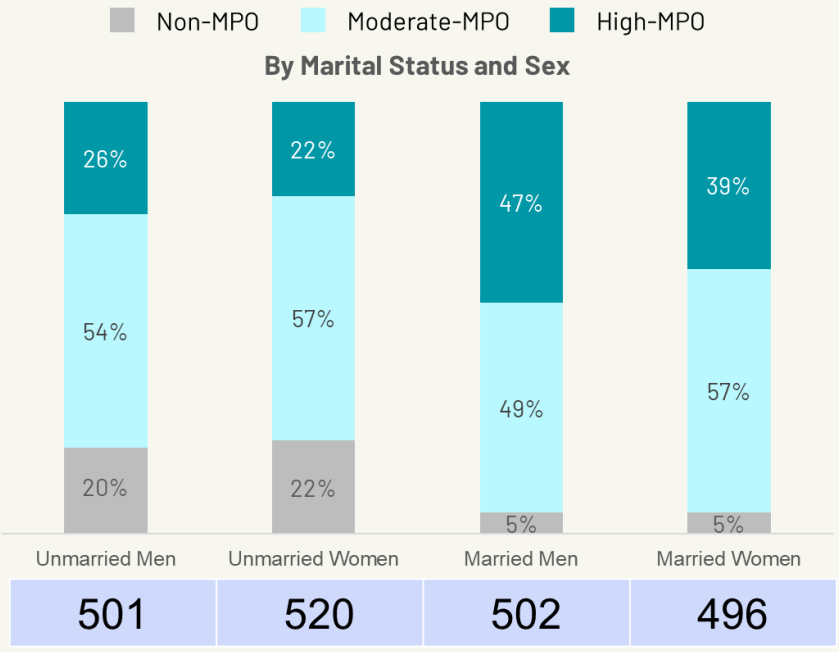


Fig. 3 – MPO profiles, by marital status and sex

Respondents who got married younger tend to be more oriented towards marriage and parenthood (see Fig. 4). Results suggest that a higher MPO will result in a higher likelihood to get married earlier, while Non-MPO respondents would be more likely to get married later (if at all).

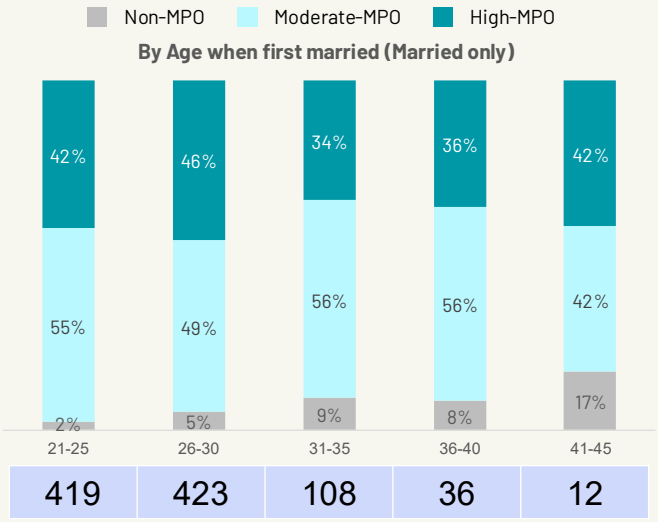


Fig. 4 – MPO profiles when respondent first married, by age

However, the trend is not shared concerning parenthood (see Fig. 5). There is an even spread of people with High-MPO across the different age groups for when the respondents first became parents. This suggests that while they may be getting married earlier, there are other factors affecting how quickly they become parents after marriage.

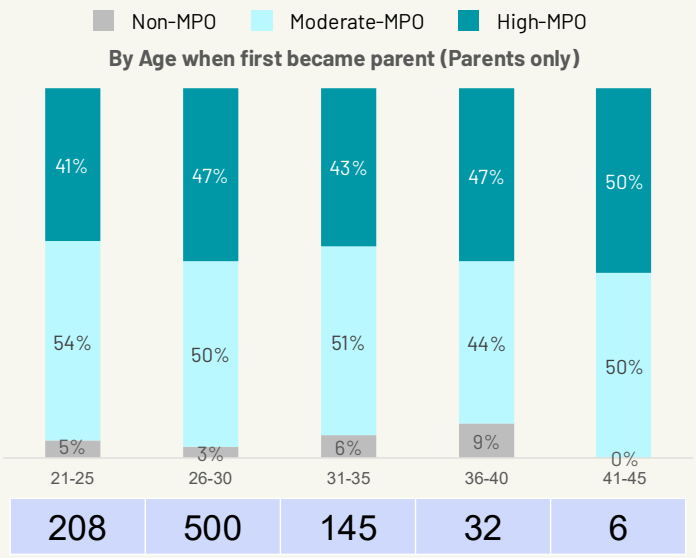


Fig. 5 – MPO profiles when respondent first became parent, by age

On the overall, minority ethnic groups – Malay, Indian and Others – are more oriented towards marriage and parenthood (see Fig. 6). Chinese respondents are least likely (29%) to have a High-MPO, and most likely to have Moderate-MPO.

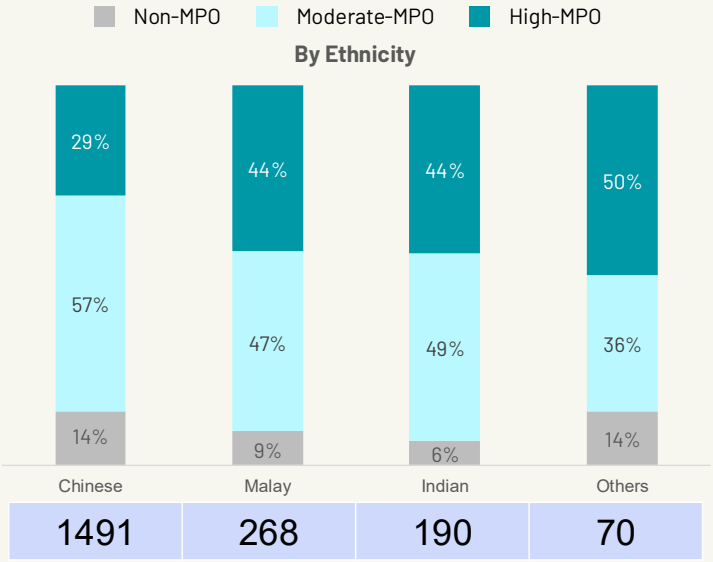


Fig. 6 - MPO profiles by Ethnicity

Religious worldviews or values also impact a person's MPO level (see Fig. 7). Non-MPO is most common among respondents with no religion. The non-religious are also least likely to be of High-MPO. By contrast, Muslims and Hindus have the highest proportions of High-MPO (44% and 43% respectively).

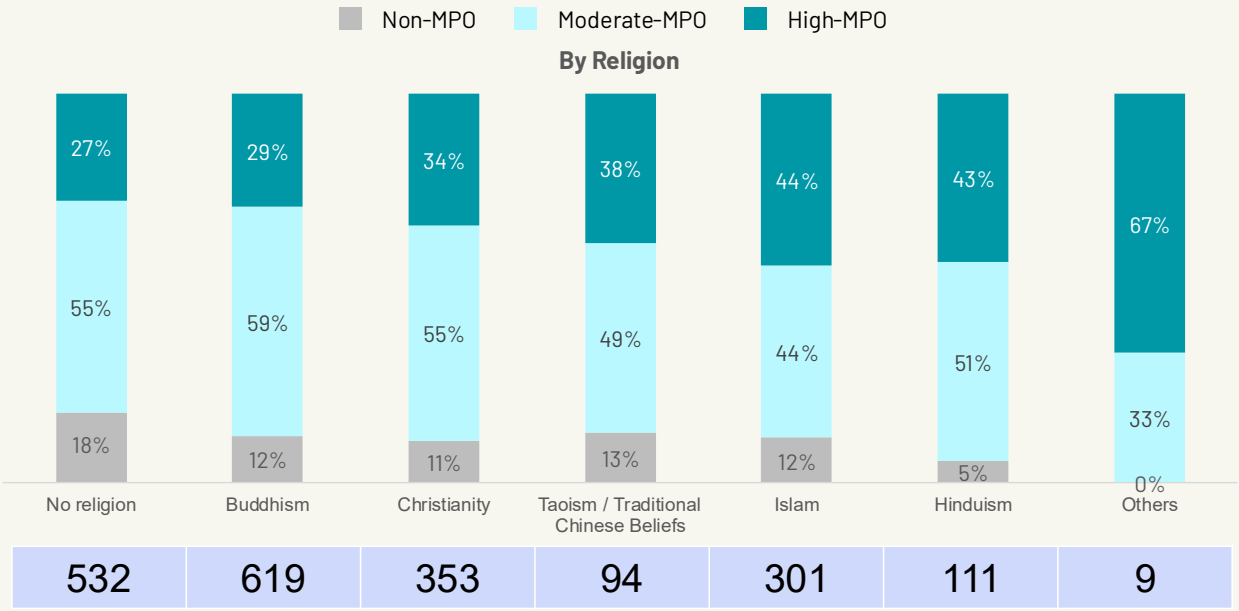


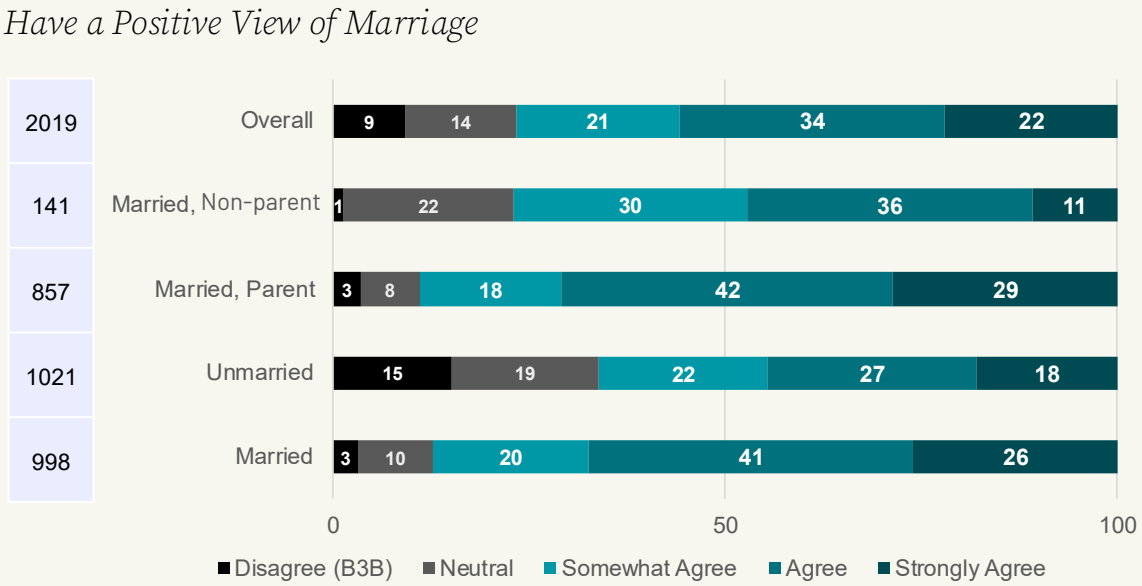
Fig. 7 - MPO profiles by Religion

The rest of this report will focus on the differences in views based on MPO, marital and parenthood status and sex.

Views, Attitudes and Aspirations Regarding Marriage

Positivity and Aspirations towards Marriage

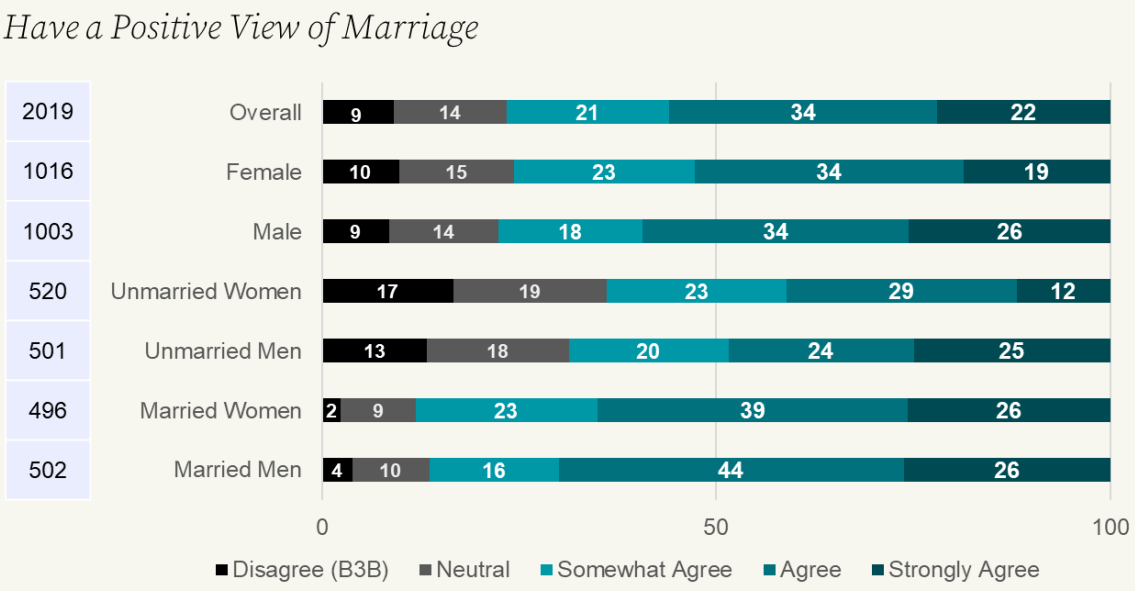
On the overall, 77% of the respondents have a positive view of marriage (see Fig. 8). Respondents who are both married and parents are more likely (89%) to have a positive view of marriage, while sentiments among the unmarried are less positive (67%).



Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: On the overall, I have a positive view of marriage

Fig. 8 – Having a positive view of marriage, by marital and parenthood status

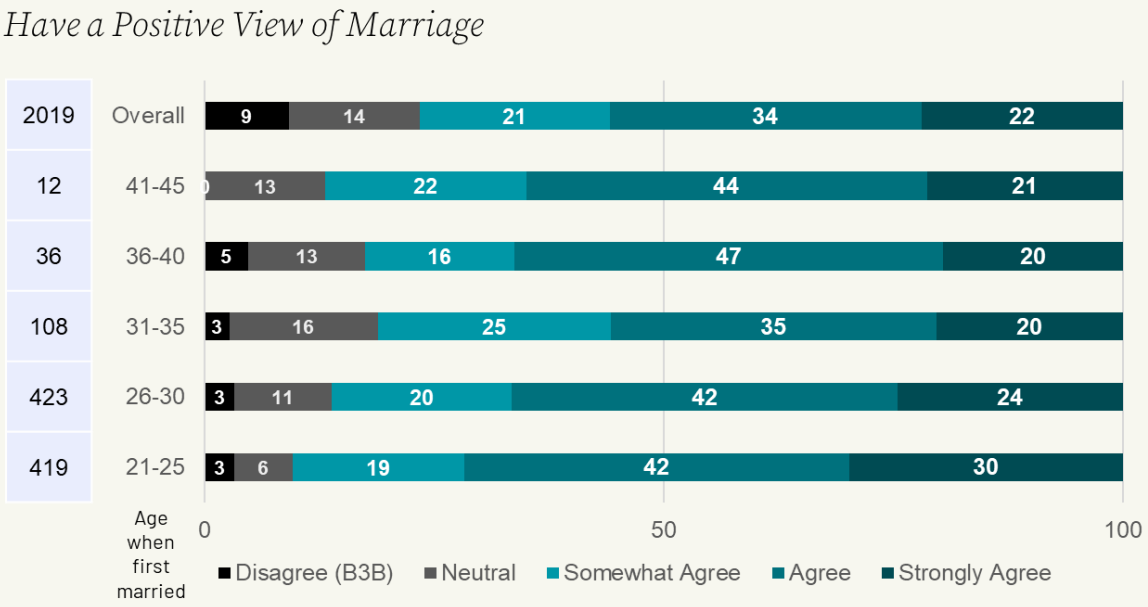
There is no notable difference (+/- 2%) in having a positive view of marriage between men and women at the overall level (see Fig. 9). However, more unmarried men (69%) than unmarried women (64%) have a positive view of marriage. The situation is reversed for the married respondents, with slightly more married women (88%) having a positive view of marriage than married men (86%).



Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: On the overall, I have a positive view of marriage

Fig. 9 – Having a positive view of marriage, by sex and respective marital status

Among those who are married, those who got married earlier tend to have a more positive view towards marriage (see Fig. 10). About 9 in 10 (91%) of those who first got married between ages 21-25 hold a positive view towards marriage. Sentiments are similarly strong for those married between ages 26-30 (86%), while the figure dipped slightly to 80% for those who got married at ages 31-35 and ages 36-40 (83%).

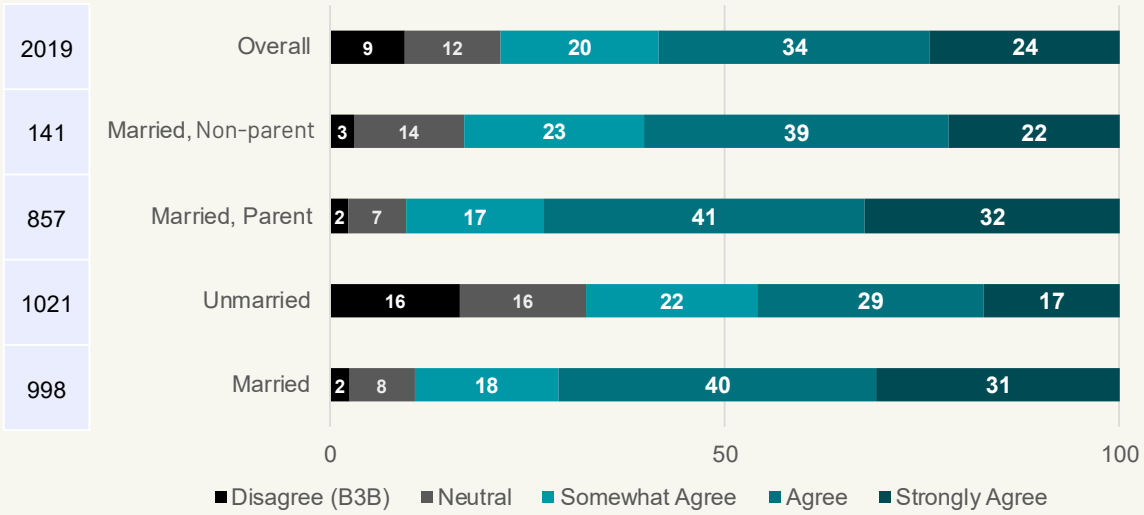


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: On the overall, I have a positive view of marriage

Fig. 10 – Having a positive view of marriage when respondent first got married, by age

Respondents' aspirations (current or, for those who are married, retrospectively) for marriage are strong, with 78% indicating that they want or wanted to be married (see Fig. 11). Close to 7 in 10 unmarried (68%) express aspirations for marriage. Among respondents, married parents are more likely than other groups to have had aspirations for marriage in the first place (89%).

Aspiration for Marriage (Currently and retrospectively)

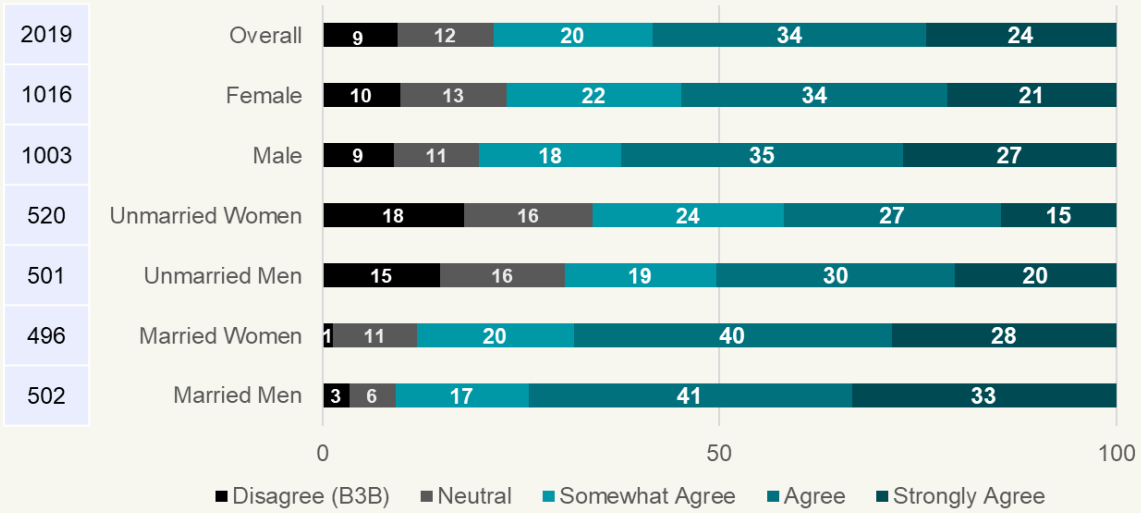


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: I want to be married/wanted to be married

Fig. 11 – Have or had aspiration for marriage, by marital and parenthood status

On the overall, men (80%) are slightly more interested in getting married than women (77%). More unmarried men (69%) having such aspirations than unmarried women (66%) (see Fig. 12). Among the married, the difference in retrospective aspiration for marriage between men (91%) and women (88%) is slightly smaller.

Aspiration for Marriage (Currently and retrospectively)

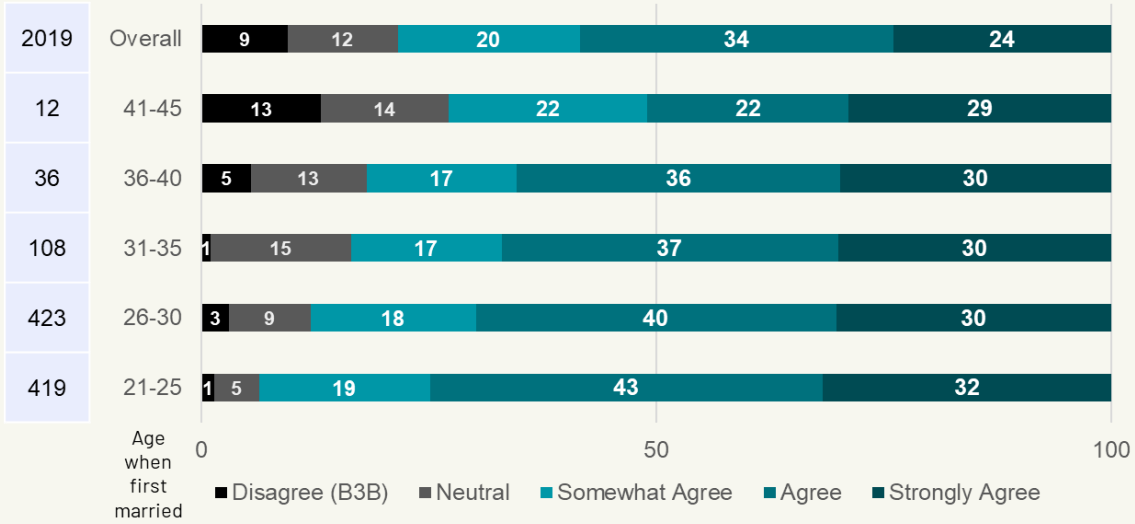


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: I want to be married/wanted to be married

Fig. 12 – Have or had aspiration for marriage, by sex and respective marital status

Retrospectively reported aspirations for marriage decreases with the age that people first got married (see Fig. 13). More than 9 in 10 (94%) of those who first got married between ages 21-25 expressed such aspiration, followed by those married between ages 26-30 (88%). Figures dipped notably for those who got married at ages 31-35 (84%) and ages 36-40 (83%).

Aspiration for Marriage (Retrospectively)



Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: I wanted to be married

Fig. 13 – Have or had aspiration for marriage, by age when respondent first got married

Conceptions of Marriage

When asked about what makes a marriage and how important specific elements are to a marriage, commitment, moral values and relationality emerged as the top elements (see Tables 1 and 2). "Faithfulness" (4.18) and "Shared moral values" (3.99) are the two most important elements, followed by three relational elements: "Having someone to grow old with" (3.95), "Having someone to rely on" (3.83) and "Intimacy" (3.81).

On the overall, men and women do not differ significantly in how they rate the elements. Five areas of statistically significant differences were however observed. Men rate "Having children" (3.54) significantly higher than women (3.12), and it sits on a higher priority for men (8th) than women (11th) relative to other elements. Men also rate "Intimacy" (3.89) and "Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage" (3.80) higher than women (3.74; 3.69). Conversely, women rate "Faithfulness" (4.25) and "Having someone to financially provide for me" (3.41) more importantly as compared to men (4.11; 3.29).

Table 1 – Essential elements of Marriage (ranked), by sex		Means Ranked	
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Men	Women
1	Faithfulness	1	1
2	Shared moral values	3	2
3	Having someone to grow old with	2	3
4	Having someone to rely on	5	4
5	Intimacy	4	5
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	6	6
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	7	7
8	Shared religious views	9	8
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	10	9
10	Having children	8	11
11	Shared political views	11	10
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	12	12

Table 2 - Essential elements of Marriage (mean scores), by sex		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from counterpart		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Men	Women
1	Faithfulness	4.18	**4.11**	**4.25**
2	Shared moral values	3.99	3.95 (3)	4.03
3	Having someone to grow old with	3.95	3.96 (2)	3.94
4	Having someone to rely on	3.83	3.84 (5)	3.83
5	Intimacy	3.81	**3.89 (4)**	**3.74**
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	3.74	**3.80**	**3.69**
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	3.53	3.56	3.51
8	Shared religious views	3.44	3.38 (9)	3.49
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	3.35	**3.29 (10)**	**3.41**
10	Having children	3.32	**3.54 (8)**	**3.12 (11)**
11	Shared political views	3.11	3.10	3.13 (10)
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	2.72	2.78	2.67
	Average Importance Ratings	3.58	3.60	3.57
	Total Rating	42.99	43.21	42.80

Among the singles (never married), the overall importance ratings dipped, suggesting lower attention or importance placed on marriage in general (see Table 4). A wider gap in importance placed on "Having children" is observed between unmarried men (3.31) and unmarried women (2.79). Unmarried men also rate "Intimacy" (3.82) more important than their female counterparts (3.64). Apart from rating "Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage" (3.75) higher than the women (3.54), they also rate "Gaining a higher social status from marriage" (2.70) higher than women (2.44). Conversely, women rate "faithfulness" (4.28) more important than men (4.11) did.

Meanwhile, married men and women generally showed less divergence in what they consider to be important elements to a marriage (see Tables 3 and 4). However, some differences are still observed. "Having children" remained a significant gap between married men (3.76) and women (3.48), as well as "Intimacy" (3.96 for men v. 3.85 for women; borderline significant difference). Married women (3.48) regarded "Having someone to financially provide for me" as more important than the men (3.31).

When comparing results across marital status for men and women respectively, new trends emerged (see Tables 3 and 4).

Married men rate the following elements more importantly than their single counterparts (in descending order): "Having children"; "Sharing of material goods / resources"; "Intimacy"; and "Having someone to rely on". These differences suggest that married men conceptualise marriage as a partnership where there is sharing of resources, companionship and a context to have children.

Married women differ significantly from single women in their conceptions of marriage. Compared to single women, married women rate the following elements higher in importance (in descending order): "Having children"; "Gaining a higher social status from marriage"; "Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage"; "Sharing of material goods/resources"; "Intimacy"; "Shared religious views"; "Having someone to grow old with"; and "Having someone to financially provide for me". These differences suggest that married women tend to see marriage as a source of provision and identity, at greater levels than single women.

Table 3 - Essential elements of Marriage (ranked), by sex		Mean Ranked			
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Single Men	Married Men	Single Women	Married Women
1	Faithfulness	1	1	1	1
2	Shared moral values	2	3	2	2
3	Having someone to grow old with	3	2	3	3
4	Having someone to rely on	5	5	4	4
5	Intimacy	4	4	5	5
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	6	6	6	6
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	7	8	8	7
8	Shared religious views	9	9	7	8
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	10	10	9	9
10	Having children	8	**7**	11	10
11	Shared political views	11	11	10	11
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	12	12	12	12

Table 4 - Essential elements of Marriage (mean scores), by marital status and sex		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from counterpart			
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Single Men	Married Men	Single Women	Married Women
1	Faithfulness	4.11	4.12	4.28	4.22
2	Shared moral values	3.94	3.96 (3)	4.02	4.04
3	Having someone to grow old with	3.93	4.00 (2)	**3.86**	**4.02**
4	Having someone to rely on	**3.78 (5)**	**3.90 (5)**	3.79	3.86
5	Intimacy	**3.82 (4)**	**3.96 (4)**	**3.64**	**3.85**
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	3.75	3.86	**3.54**	**3.85**
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	**3.42**	**3.69 (8)**	**3.38 (8)**	**3.64**
8	Shared religious views	3.31 (9)	3.46 (9)	**3.39 (7)**	**3.59**
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	3.27 (10)	3.31 (10)	**3.33**	**3.48**
10	Having children	**3.31 (8)**	**3.76 (7)**	**2.79 (11)**	**3.48**
11	Shared political views	3.08	3.12	3.07 (10)	3.19
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	2.70	2.85	**2.44**	**2.91**
	Average Importance Ratings	3.53	3.67	3.46	3.68
	Total Rating	42.41	43.98	41.53	44.13

When we compare the respondents according to their level of marriage and parenthood orientation (MPO), results show that Non-MPO and High-MPO individuals have completely different attitudes towards marriage (see Table 5). Non-MPOs have a lower total importance rating, suggesting lower attention or importance placed on marriage in general. They also differed with those High-MPO significantly on every given element.

The top five differences between Non-MPO and High-MPO are on the elements: "Having children"; "Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage"; "Intimacy"; "Having someone to grow old with"; and "Sharing of material goods/resources". This suggests that High-MPO individuals value marriage more as an institution for having children, drawing a sense of identity and companionship from it.

Table 5 - Essential elements of Marriage (ranked), by MPO		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Non-MPO	Moderate-MPO	High-MPO
1	Faithfulness	1	1	1
2	Shared moral values	2	3	3
3	Having someone to grow old with	4	2	2
4	Having someone to rely on	3	4	6
5	Intimacy	5	5	5
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	7	6	4
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	8	7	8
8	Shared religious views	6	8	9
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	10	9	10
10	Having children	12	10	**7**
11	Shared political views	9	11	11
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	11	12	12

Table 6- Essential elements of Marriage (mean scores), by MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Non-MPO	Moderate-MPO	High-MPO
1	Faithfulness	4.18	**3.89**	**4.08**	**4.46**
2	Shared moral values	3.99	**3.70**	**3.88 (3)**	**4.28 (3)**
3	Having someone to grow old with	3.95	**3.13 (4)**	**3.92 (2)**	**4.31 (2)**
4	Having someone to rely on	3.83	**3.29 (3)**	**3.79**	**4.18 (6)**
5	Intimacy	3.81	**3.12**	**3.75**	**4.18**
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	3.74	**2.91 (7)**	**3.66**	**4.11 (4)**
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	3.53	**2.91 (8)**	**3.50**	**4.04 (8)**
8	Shared religious views	3.44	**3.08 (6)**	**3.38**	**3.81 (9)**
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	3.35	**2.79 (10)**	**3.32**	**3.66 (10)**
10	Having children	3.32	**1.95 (12)**	**3.20**	**3.61 (7)**
11	Shared political views	3.11	**2.86 (9)**	3.14	**3.16**
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	2.72	**2.12 (11)**	2.80	**2.82**
	Average Importance Ratings	3.58	2.98	3.54	3.88
	Total Rating	42.99	35.74	42.42	46.62

Men differ significantly in their concept of marriage according to their MPO profiles (see Tables 7 and 8). Non-MPO men have a lower total importance rating of the various elements, suggesting lower attention or importance placed on marriage in general. With the exception of "Shared political views", they also differed with the High-MPO men significantly on every given element. Moderate-MPO men differed with High-MPO men on the intensity of every given element.

The top five differences between High-MPO and Non-MPO men on the elements (in descending order) are: "Having children"; "Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage"; "Having someone to grow old with"; "Intimacy"; and "Sharing of material goods/resources". High-MPO men are more likely to consider these to be essential to marriage.

Table 7 – Essential elements of Marriage (ranked), by men's MPO		Mean-Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Non-MPO Men	Moderate-MPO Men	High-MPO Men
1	Faithfulness	1	1	1
2	Shared moral values	2	3	3
3	Having someone to grow old with	5	2	2
4	Having someone to rely on	3	5	7
5	Intimacy	4	4	5
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	7	6	4
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	9	7	8
8	Shared religious views	6	9	9
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	10	10	10
10	Having children	11	8	6
11	Shared political views	8	11	11
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	12	12	12

Table 8 – Essential elements of Marriage (mean scores), by men's MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Non-MPO Men	Moderate-MPO Men	High-MPO Men
1	Faithfulness	4.18	**3.67**	**3.97**	4.45
2	Shared moral values	3.99	**3.52**	**3.81 (3)**	4.29 (3)
3	Having someone to grow old with	3.95	**3.12 (5)**	**3.89 (2)**	4.33 (2)
4	Having someone to rely on	3.83	**3.25 (3)**	**3.78 (5)**	4.11 (7)
5	Intimacy	3.81	**3.21 (4)**	**3.81 (4)**	4.21
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	3.74	**2.91 (7)**	**3.70**	4.22 (4)
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	3.53	**2.76 (9)**	**3.55**	3.82 (8)
8	Shared religious views	3.44	**2.98 (6)**	**3.35 (9)**	3.56 (9)
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	3.35	**2.69 (10)**	**3.28 (10)**	3.50 (10)
10	Having children	3.32	**2.19 (11)**	**3.41 (8)**	4.14 (6)
11	Shared political views	3.11	2.78 (8)	**3.24**	3.01
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	2.72	**2.17**	**2.95**	2.73
	Average Importance Ratings	3.58	2.94	3.56	3.86
	Total Rating	42.99	35.26	42.73	46.37

Women differ even more significantly in their concept of marriage according to their MPO profile (see Table 9 and 10). Non-MPO women have a lower total importance rating (similar levels with Non-MPO men), suggesting lower attention or importance placed on marriage in general. They differed with the High-MPO women significantly on every given element. Moderate-MPO women also differ with High-MPO women on every given element.

The top five differences between Non-MPO and High-MPO women on the elements (in descending order) are: "Having children"; "Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage"; "Intimacy"; "Having someone to grow old with"; and "Having someone to financially provide for me". High-MPO women rank these elements more importantly than their Non-MPO counterparts. Their differences show that across MPO, High-MPO women are more inclined to value marriage as an institution for having children, and to draw a sense of identity and provision from marriage.

Table 9 – Essential elements of Marriage (ranked), by women's MPO

		Mean-Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Non-MPO Women	Moderate-MPO Women	High-MPO Women
1	Faithfulness	1	1	1
2	Shared moral values	2	2	3
3	Having someone to grow old with	4	3	2
4	Having someone to rely on	3	5	6
5	Intimacy	5	4	4
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	6	6	5
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	7	8	8
8	Shared religious views	8	7	9
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	9	9	10
10	Having children	12	10	**7**
11	Shared political views	10	11	11
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	11	12	12

Table 10 – Essential elements of Marriage (mean scores), by women's MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Non-MPO Women	Moderate-MPO Women	High-MPO Women
1	Faithfulness	4.18	**4.07**	**4.17**	4.47
2	Shared moral values	3.99	**3.85**	**3.94**	4.27 (3)
3	Having someone to grow old with	3.95	**3.14 (5)**	**3.93**	4.30 (2)
4	Having someone to rely on	3.83	**3.33 (3)**	**3.79**	4.11 (6)
5	Intimacy	3.81	**3.05 (6)**	**3.69**	4.13 (4)
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	3.74	**2.91 (9)**	**3.63**	4.13 (5)
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	3.53	**3.02**	**3.47**	3.79 (8)
8	Shared religious views	3.44	**3.16 (4)**	**3.41**	3.78 (9)
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	3.35	**2.87 (10)**	**3.36**	3.74 (10)
10	Having children	3.32	**1.74 (12)**	**3.02 (11)**	3.92 (7)
11	Shared political views	3.11	**2.92 (8)**	**3.06 (10)**	3.34
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	2.72	**2.08 (11)**	**2.68**	2.91
	Average Importance Ratings	3.58	3.01	3.51	3.91
	Total Rating	42.99	36.15	42.16	46.91

Among married respondents, married non-parents differ from married parents in how they conceptualise marriage (Table 8). The only commonalities they share concerning their idea of marriage are their importance placed on morality and companionship.

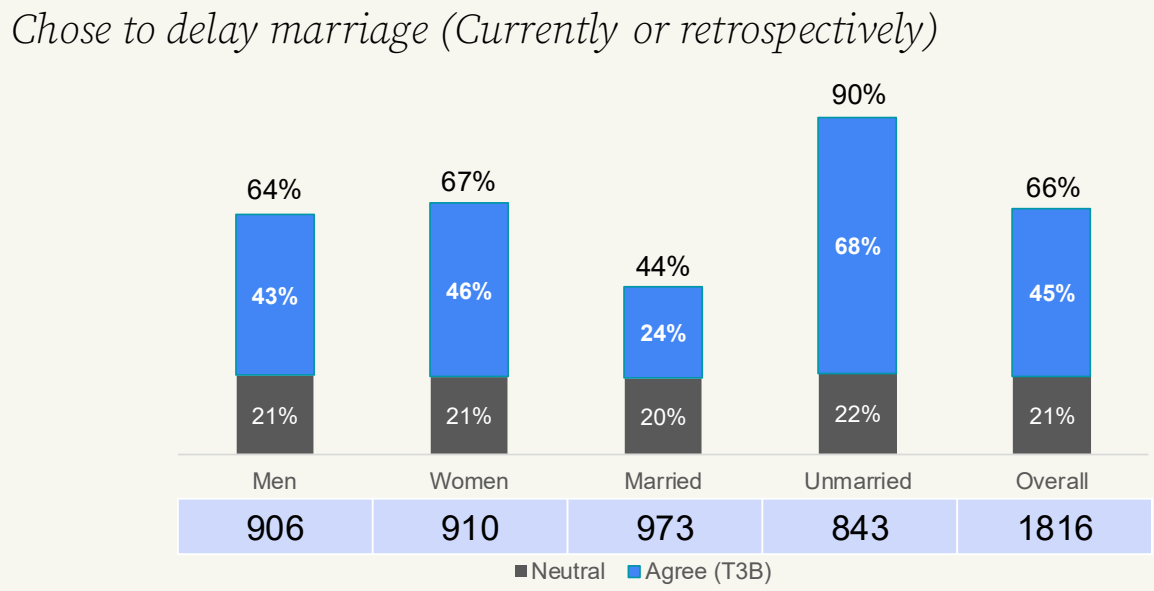
They differed the greatest when it comes to "Having children"; "Shared political views"; "Having someone to financially provide for me"; and "Sharing of material goods/resources". Married parents rank these elements more importantly than married non-parents. These differences suggest that married parents view marriage as an institution for having children, and a place where there is relative political alignment as well as sharing of provision and resources.

Table 11 – Essential elements of Marriage (ranked), by parenthood status in marriage		Means Ranked	
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Married, non-parent	Married, parent
1	Faithfulness	1	1
2	Shared moral values	3	2
3	Having someone to grow old with	2	3
4	Having someone to rely on	4	5
5	Intimacy	6	4
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	5	6
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	7	8
8	Shared religious views	8	9
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	9	10
10	Having children	10	**7**
11	Shared political views	11	11
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	12	12

Table 12 – Essential elements of Marriage (mean scores), by parenthood status in marriage		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from counterpart		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Married, non-parent	Married, parent
1	Faithfulness	4.18	4.18	4.17
2	Shared moral values	3.99	3.97 (3)	4.01
3	Having someone to grow old with	3.95	4.04 (2)	4.01
4	Having someone to rely on	3.83	**3.79**	**3.90 (5)**
5	Intimacy	3.81	**3.69 (6)**	**3.94 (4)**
6	Gaining a sense of fulfilment from marriage	3.74	**3.69 (5)**	**3.88**
7	Sharing of material goods / resources	3.53	**3.40**	**3.71 (8)**
8	Shared religious views	3.44	**3.38**	**3.55 (9)**
9	Having someone to financially provide for me	3.35	**3.07**	**3.45 (10)**
10	Having children	3.32	**2.86**	**3.74 (7)**
11	Shared political views	3.11	**2.82**	**3.21**
12	Gaining a higher social status from marriage	2.72	**2.65**	**2.92**
	Average Importance Ratings	3.58	**3.46**	**3.71**
	Total Rating	42.99	**41.54**	**44.49**

Delaying Marriage

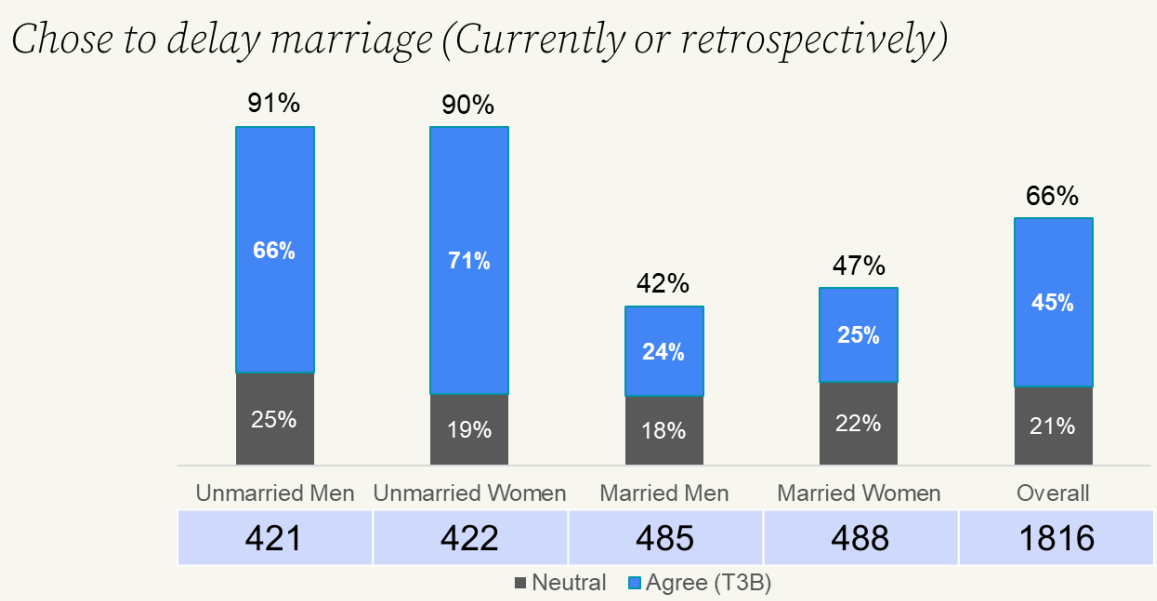
Among those who have or are neutral on their aspirations for marriage, almost 1 in 2 (45%) say that they are delaying or, for those who are married, had chosen to delay getting married (see Fig. 14). About 1 in 4 (24%) married respondents say they had chosen to delay getting married. Almost 7 in 10 (68%) of the single respondents say they are currently choosing to delay getting married. The choice to delay is similar across the sexes on the overall level, but women are more likely to choose to delay getting married.



Q: I am choosing not to be married now, but I would like to be in the future / I chose to get married later

Fig. 14 – Chose to delay marriage, by sex and marital status respectively

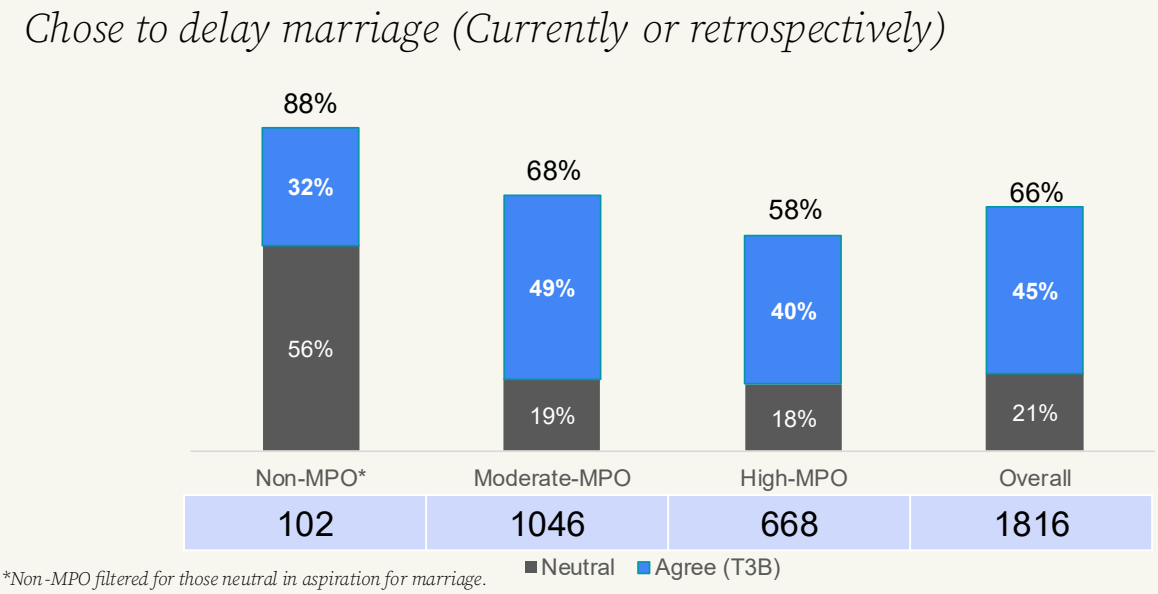
Among the unmarried, men and women are similarly less interested in tying the knot (see Fig. 15). Unmarried women (71%) are more likely than unmarried men (66%) to delay getting married. The difference is much smaller between married men and women (+/- 1%), and only about 1 in 4 had chosen to delay marriage.



Q: I am choosing not to be married now, but I would like to be in the future / I chose to get married later

Fig. 15 – Chose to delay marriage, by sex and marital status

Almost 1 in 2 (49%) Moderate-MPO respondents choose or have chosen to delay marriage (see Fig. 16). This is significantly higher than the High-MPO respondents (40%). This suggests that when people are lacking in desire for marriage and parenthood, they are more inclined to delay marriage. This pattern exists across both sexes (see Fig. 17 and 18).

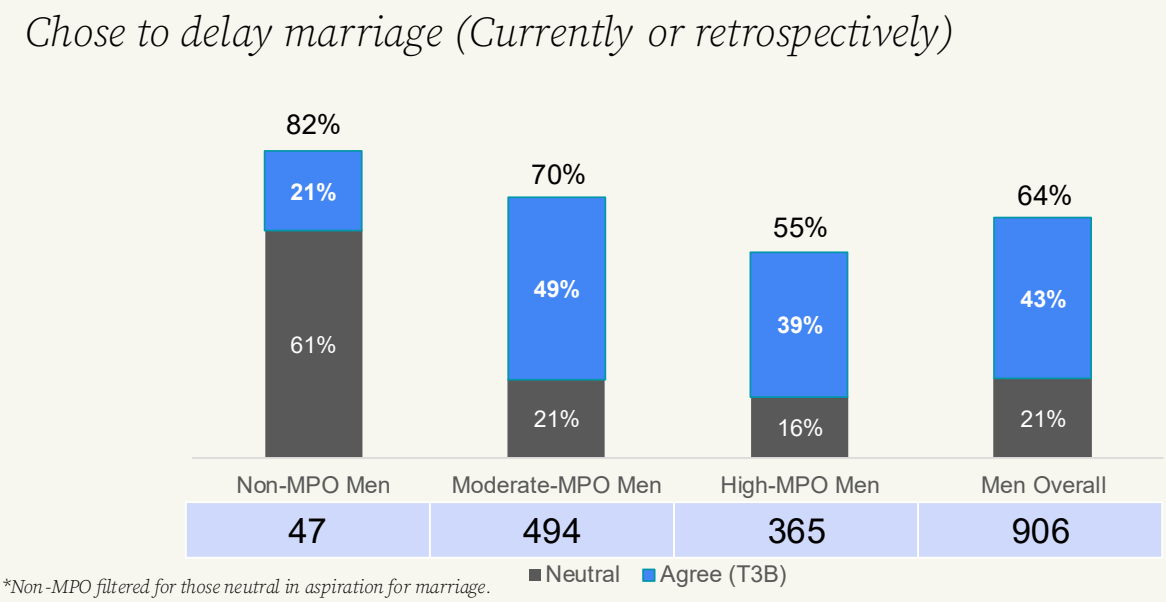


**Non-MPO filtered for those neutral in aspiration for marriage.*

Q: I am choosing not to be married now, but I would like to be in the future/ I chose to get married later

Fig. 16 - Chose to delay marriage, by MPO

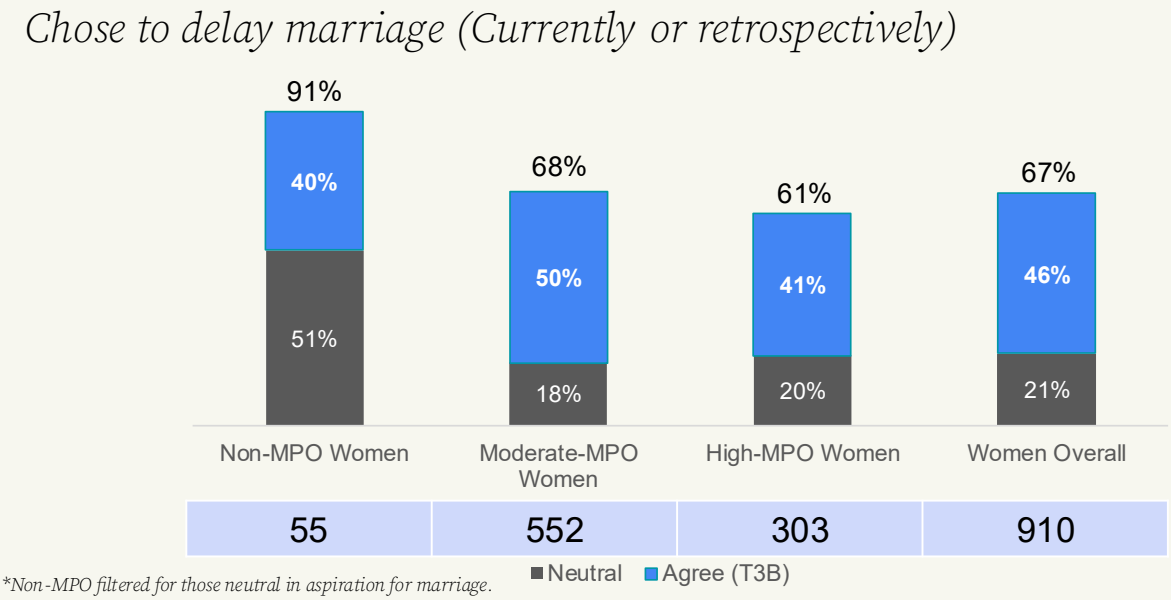
The gap between Moderate-MPO and High-MPO across the sexes is similar. Almost 1 in 10 (9%) more among the moderate women than High-MPO women say they have chosen to delay marriage, and 1 in 10 Moderate-MPO men differ from High-MPO men in this regard. Comparing the High-MPO men and women, slightly more women (41%) than men (39%) choose to delay marriage. Fewer High-MPO men either choose to delay marriage or are neutral about delaying.



*Non-MPO filtered for those neutral in aspiration for marriage.

Q: I am choosing not to be married now, but I would like to be in the future/ I chose to get married later

Fig. 17 - Chose to delay marriage, by men's MPO



*Non-MPO filtered for those neutral in aspiration for marriage.

Q: I am choosing not to be married now, but I would like to be in the future/ I chose to get married later

Fig. 18 - Chose to delay marriage, by women's MPO

Who Sacrifices More in Marriage?

Our survey asked respondents their views as to whom – the husband or the wife – sacrifices more in marriage.

On the overall, half the respondents (50%) did not identify either the husband or wife as the one who sacrifices more, while almost 4 in 10 (38%) think that wives will sacrifice more in marriage (see Fig. 19). No significant difference in sentiment is observed when comparing married and single respondents. Significant differences are however observed across the sexes, with significantly fewer men (26%) than women (49%) considering the wife as having to sacrifice more in marriage.

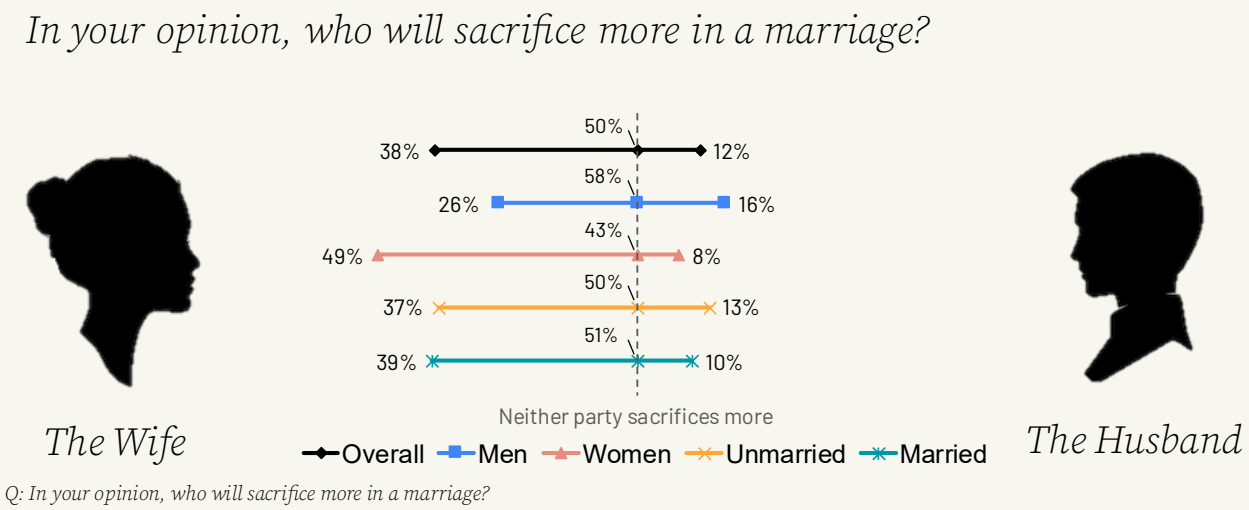


Fig. 19 – Who will sacrifice more in a marriage?
(By sex and marital status respectively)

Across MPO levels, the pattern is similar: at least 3 in 10 (between 33% and 42%) think that the wife will sacrifice more in a marriage, while about 1 in 10 (between 11% and 15%) thinks the husband does so (see Fig. 20). The Moderate-MPO respondents are more likely to say wives will sacrifice more (42%), whereas High-MPO respondents are least likely to say so (33%). High-MPO respondents are also most likely to say that neither party sacrifices more (56%).

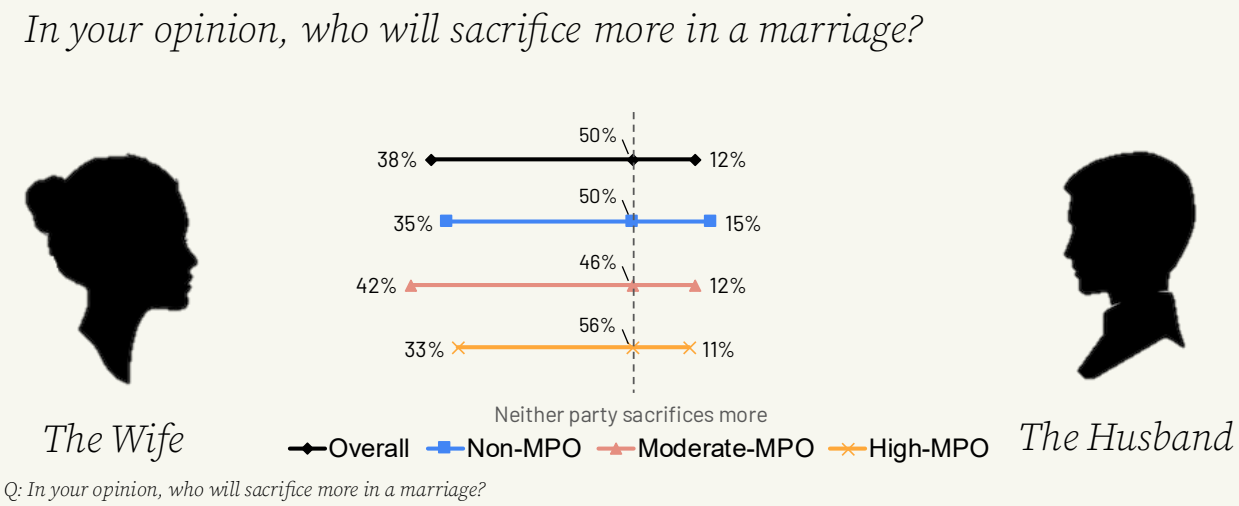


Fig. 20 - Who will sacrifice more in a marriage?

(By MPO)

Across marital statuses and MPO levels, fewer men (less than 3 in 10) consider wives to be the ones sacrificing more in marriage (see Fig. 21). While married men (57%) and single men (58%) similarly feel that that neither party sacrifices more, married men (30%) are more likely than unmarried men (23%) to say that wives sacrifice more. Almost 1 in 5 of those who are single (19%) or Non-MPO (26%) say that husbands are the ones sacrificing more in marriage.

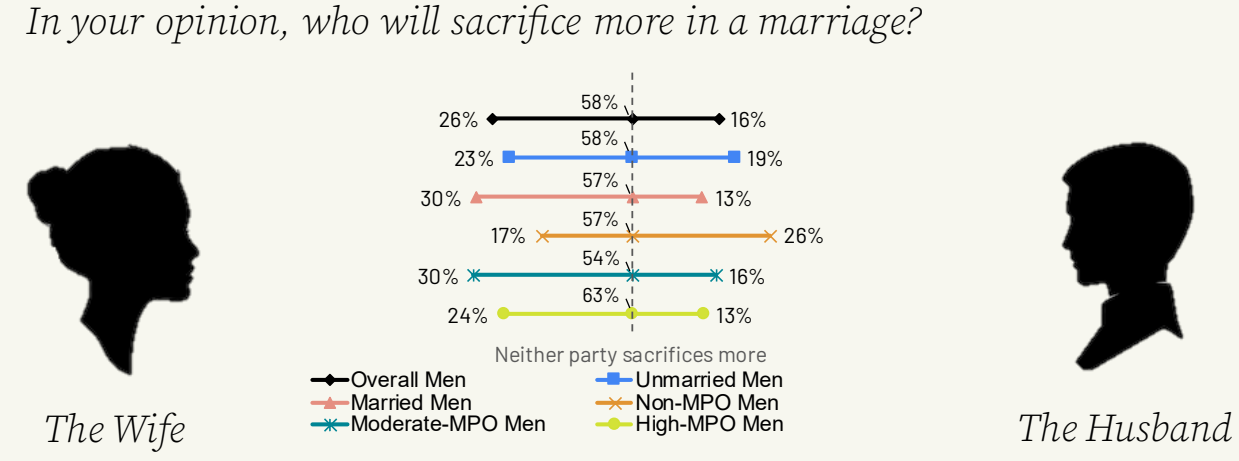
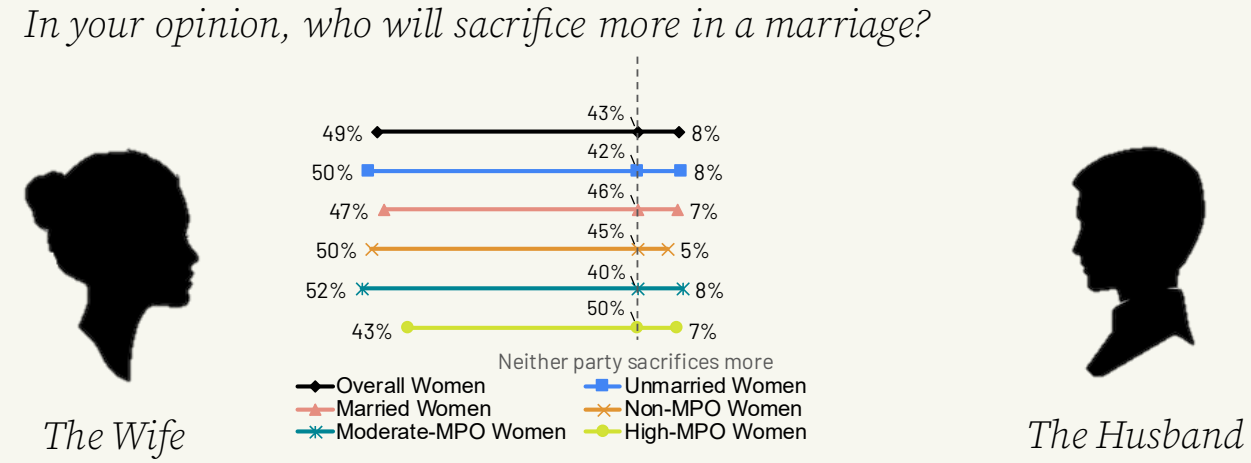


Fig. 21 – Who will sacrifice more in a marriage?

(Male respondents only, by marital status and MPO)

On the other hand, nearly half of all women across marital statuses and MPO levels (between 43% and 52%) consider wives to be the ones sacrificing more in marriage (see Fig. 22). Married women are more likely to say that neither party sacrifices more (46%), compared to single women (42%). They are also less likely to say that women sacrifice more (47% for married women, compared to 50% for unmarried women).

Compared to other groups, Moderate-MPO women are the most likely to consider that wives sacrifice more in marriage (52%), while High-MPO women are the least likely to say so (43%). High-MPO women are the most likely to say that neither party sacrifices more in marriage (50%). Less than 1 in 10 (between 5% and 8%) across all groups say that husbands are the ones sacrificing more in marriage.



Q: In your opinion, who will sacrifice more in a marriage?

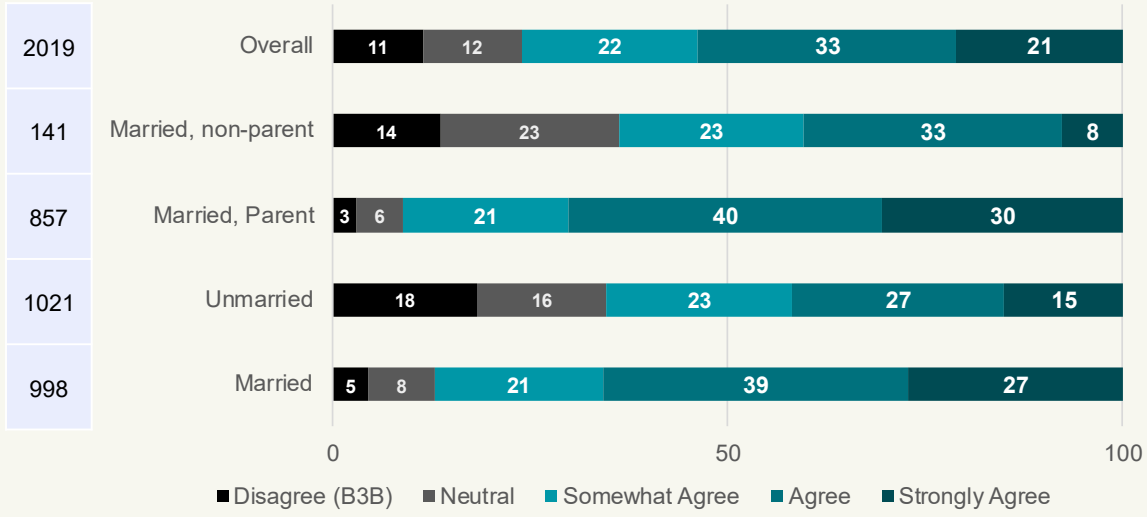
Fig. 22 – Who will sacrifice more in a marriage?
(Female respondents only, by marital status and MPO)

Views, Attitudes and Aspirations Regarding Parenthood

Positivity and Aspirations towards Parenthood

On the overall, more than 3 in 4 respondents (76%) have a positive view of parenthood (see Fig. 23). Respondents who are both married and parents are again more likely (91%) to have a positive view of parenthood, while sentiments among the unmarried are less positive (65%).

Have a Positive View of Parenthood



Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: On the overall, I have a positive view of parenthood

Fig. 23 - Having a positive view of parenthood, by marital and parenthood status

On the overall, men are more likely (79%) to have a positive view of parenthood than women (74%) (see Fig. 24). This difference holds similar across marital status. More unmarried men (69%) than unmarried women (63%) hold such a view. A similar pattern is observed among the married men (89%) and married women (85%).

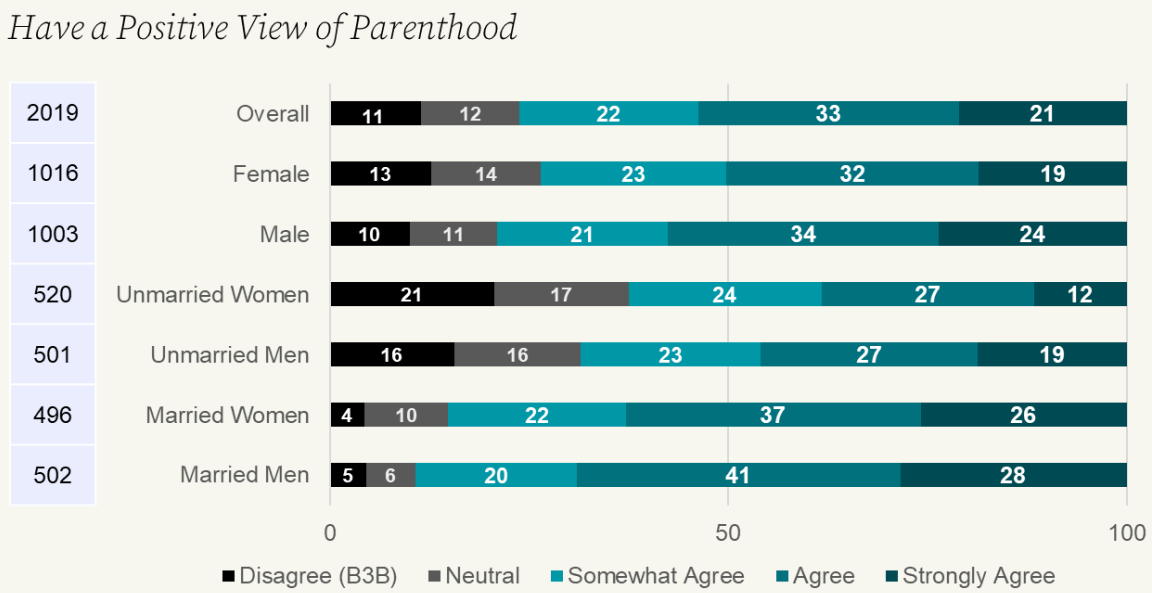


Fig. 24 - Having a positive view of parenthood, by sex and marital status respectively

Again, those who got married earlier tend to have a more positive view towards parenthood (see Fig. 25). More than 9 in 10 (93%) of those who first got married between ages 21-25 hold such a view, followed by those married between ages 26-30 (85%). Figures remain high despite notable dips for those who got married at ages 31-35 (77%) and ages 36-40 (75%).

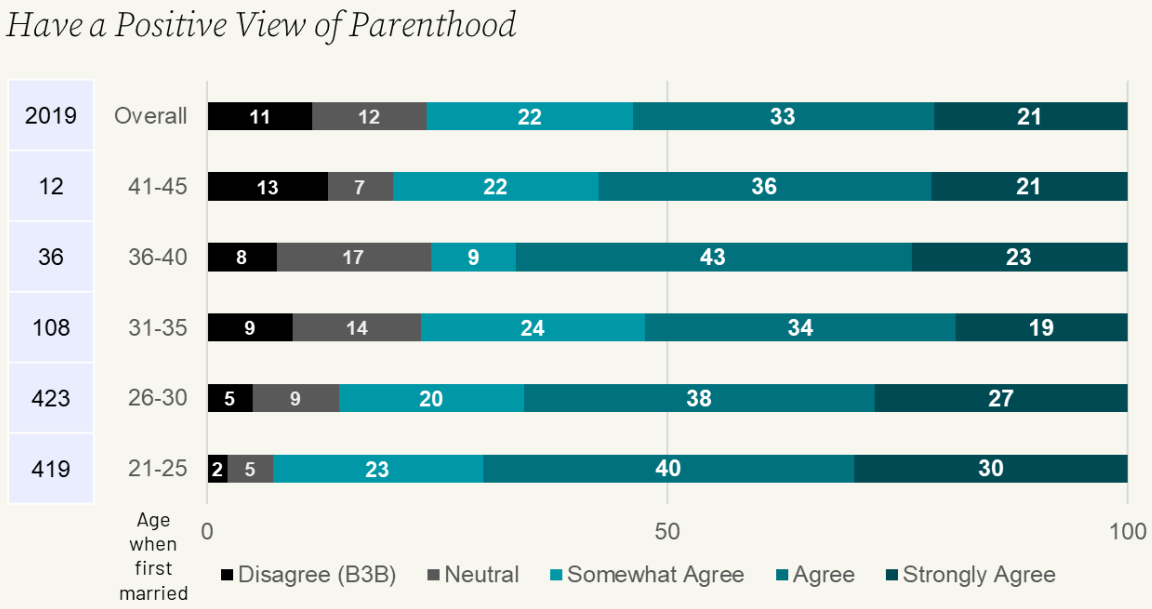
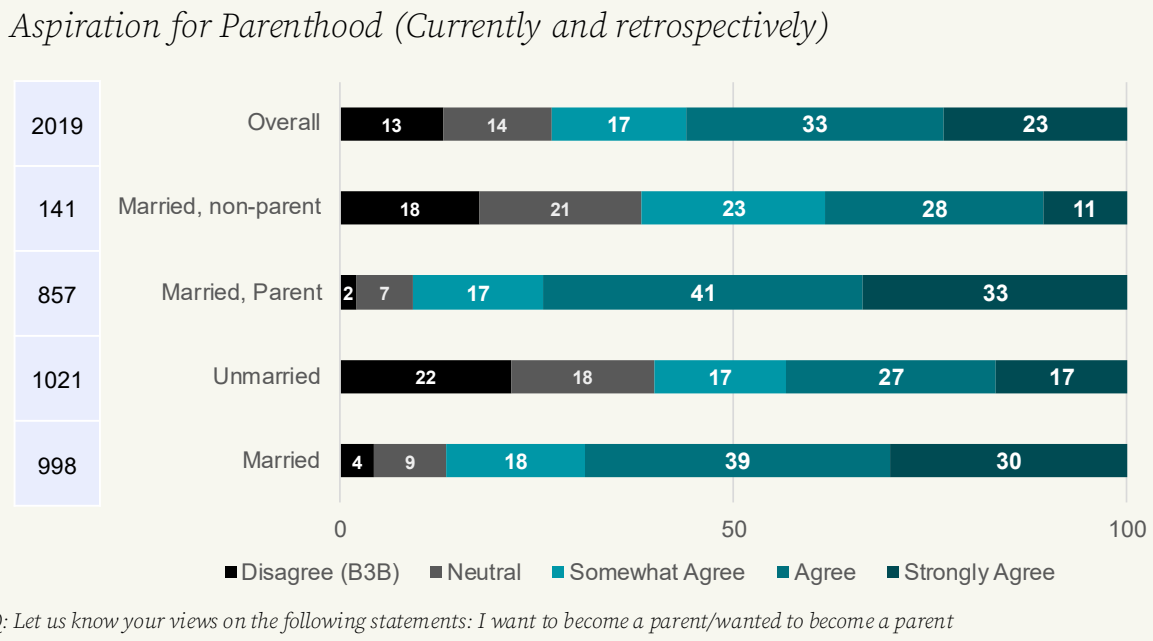


Fig. 25 - Having a positive view of parenthood, by age when respondent first got married

While aspiration for parenthood (current or retrospectively for those who are parents) is strong on the overall (73%), there is a large difference between those married and those unmarried (see Fig. 26). Only about 6 in 10 unmarried (61%) expressed aspirations for parenthood, paling in comparison to almost 9 in 10 (87%) of those currently married. Among the married, married parents are much more likely (91%) to have aspired for parenthood than married non-parents (62%), who are similar to unmarried respondents in this aspect.



Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: I want to become a parent/wanted to become a parent

Fig. 26 - Have or had aspiration for parenthood, by marital and parenthood status

There is a significant difference in aspirations for parenthood between unmarried men (64%) and unmarried women (57%) (see Fig. 27). Among the married, this gap narrows even though more married men (88%) than married women (85%) aspire or aspired for parenthood.

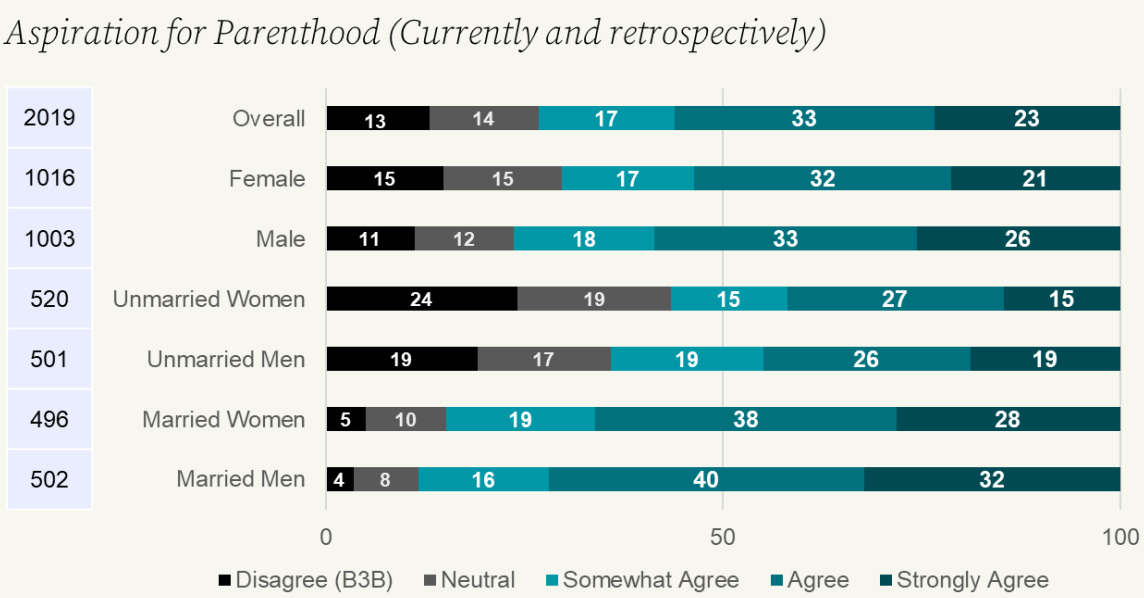


Fig. 27 - Have or had aspiration for parenthood, by sex and marital status

Aspirations for parenthood also decrease with the age that people first got married (see Fig. 28). More than 9 in 10 (93%) of those who first got married between ages 21-25 expressed such aspiration, followed by those married between ages 26-30 (85%). Figures dipped by about 10% for those who got married at ages 31-35 (75%) and ages 36-40 (72%).

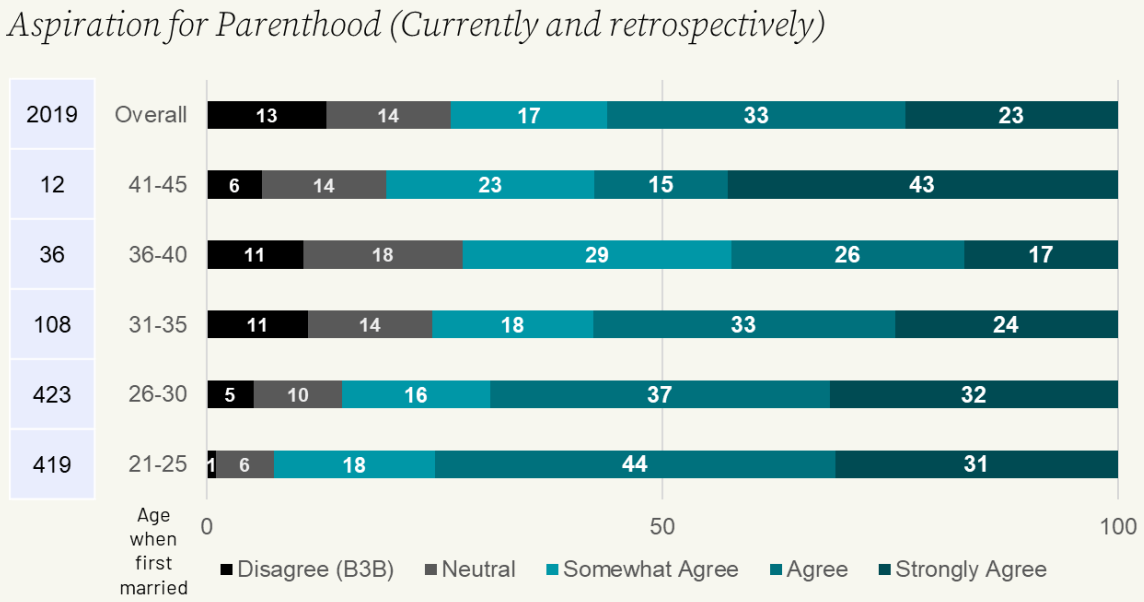


Fig. 28 - Have or had aspiration for parenthood, by age when respondent first got married

Conceptions of Excellent Parenting

Our survey examined what respondents defined as an "excellent parent" by asking them to indicate from among eleven elements what they felt were important aspects of an "excellent parent".

Overall, "Keeping the children safe" (4.25), "Having a stable marriage" (4.18), "Being there for the children while they are growing up" (4.16) and "Having a close relationship with the children" (4.14) are top markers of an "excellent parent" (see Tables 13 and 14). There is a clear priority for safety, stability and parental involvement overall.

Table 13 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (ranked), by sex		Means Ranked	
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Men	Women
1	Keeping the children safe	1	1
2	Having a stable marriage	3	2
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	2	4
4	Having a close relationship with the children	4	3
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	5	5
6	Providing financially for the children	6	6
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	7	7
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	8	8
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	9	10
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	10	9
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	11	11

Men and women do not differ drastically in how they rate the elements. Four areas of statistically significant differences were however observed. Women rate "Having a stable marriage" (4.24) significantly higher than men (4.12), and it sits on a higher priority for women (2nd) than men (3rd) relative to other markers. Women also rate "Having a close relationship with the children" (4.20) higher than men (4.08). Men seemed to prioritise material markers more than women, rating "Having children achieving high levels of education" (3.88) and "Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year" (3.20) more important than women (3.67; 3.05). These results suggest that women tend to prioritise relational connection, while men look at material or achievement-related matters as markers of excellence in parenting.

Table 14 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (mean scores), by sex		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from counterpart		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Men	Women
1	Keeping the children safe	4.25	4.22	4.28
2	Having a stable marriage	4.18	**4.12 (3)**	**4.24**
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	4.16	4.17 (2)	4.14 (4)
4	Having a close relationship with the children	4.14	**4.08**	**4.20 (3)**
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	4.09	4.06	4.12
6	Providing financially for the children	4.06	4.06	4.06
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	4.05	4.04	4.05
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	3.77	**3.88**	**3.67**
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	3.46	3.49	3.42 (10)
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	3.44	3.43	3.45 (9)
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	3.12	**3.20**	**3.05**
	Average Importance Ratings	3.88	3.89	3.88
	Total Rating	42.72	42.74	42.69

Among parents, the difference between fathers and mothers' conceptualisation of an "excellent parent" is smaller and in fewer areas (see Tables 15 and 16). In other words, they did not differ along the lines of priority for relational connection among mothers, and material-related matters for fathers, unlike the overall difference between men and women mentioned above. Fathers and mothers are mostly aligned in the way they conceptualise "excellent parenting", with the exception of just two areas.

Mothers consider "Having a close relationship with the children" (4.24, 3rd priority) more to be important, relative to fathers' consideration of its importance (4.10, 5th priority). To a smaller degree of significance (p=0.046), mothers also value "Having a stable marriage" (4.27) more than fathers do (4.16).

Table 15 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (ranked), by parent		Means Ranked	
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Father	Mother
1	Keeping the children safe	1	1
2	Having a stable marriage	2	2
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	3	5
4	Having a close relationship with the children	5	3
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	6	4
6	Providing financially for the children	4	6
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	7	7
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	8	8
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	10	10
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	9	9
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	11	11

Table 16 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (mean scores), by parent		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from counterpart		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Father	Mother
1	Keeping the children safe	4.25	4.30	4.37
2	Having a stable marriage	4.18	**4.16**	**4.27**
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	4.16	4.16	4.18 (5)
4	Having a close relationship with the children	4.14	**4.10 (5)**	**4.24 (3)**
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	4.09	4.10 (6)	4.20 (4)
6	Providing financially for the children	4.06	4.12 (4)	4.13
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	4.05	4.04	4.07
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	3.77	3.92	3.85
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	3.46	3.44 (10)	3.49 (10)
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	3.44	3.52 (9)	3.63 (9)
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	3.12	3.23	3.28
	Average Importance Ratings	3.88	3.92	3.97
	Total Rating	42.72	43.08	43.71

Respondents differ significantly in their concept of an "excellent parent" according to their MPO profile (see Tables 17 and 18). Non-MPO have a lower total importance rating, in line with their lower interest in parenthood.

Table 17 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (ranked), by MPO		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Non-MPO	Moderate-MPO	High-MPO
1	Keeping the children safe	1	1	1
2	Having a stable marriage	**6**	2	2
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	3	3	3
4	Having a close relationship with the children	5	4	4
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	4	5	5
6	Providing financially for the children	7	6	6
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	**2**	7	7
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	8	8	8
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	9	10	9
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	10	9	10
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	11	11	11

They also differed with the High-MPO significantly on every given element (see Table 18). The top five differences are observed in the following elements (in descending order): "Have children achieving high levels of education"; "Having a stable marriage"; "Providing financially for the children"; "Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs"; and "Keeping the children safe". Compared with High-MPO, Non-MPO respondents place much lower significance on all these elements.

Table 18 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (mean scores), by MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Non-MPO	Moderate-MPO	High-MPO
1	Keeping the children safe	4.25	**3.80**	**4.18**	4.53
2	Having a stable marriage	4.18	**3.60 (6)**	**4.15**	4.44
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	4.16	**3.73**	**4.08**	4.43
4	Having a close relationship with the children	4.14	**3.69 (5)**	**4.08**	4.42
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	4.09	**3.71 (4)**	**4.00**	4.38
6	Providing financially for the children	4.06	**3.60 (7)**	**3.99**	4.36
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	4.05	**3.78 (2)**	**3.95**	4.30
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	3.77	**3.26**	**3.68**	4.12
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	3.46	**3.16**	**3.39 (10)**	3.68
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	3.44	**2.91**	**3.41 (9)**	3.67
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	3.12	**2.66**	**3.13**	3.28
	Average Importance Ratings	3.88	3.45	3.82	4.15
	Total Rating	42.72	37.90	42.04	45.61

Among the men, Non-MPO men differ with High-MPO men significantly in how they conceptualise an "excellent parent" (see Tables 19 and 20). Non-MPO have a lower total importance rating, in line with their lower interest in parenthood.

They also differ with the High-MPO men significantly on every given element (see Table 20). The top five differences are seen in the following elements (in descending order): "Have children achieving high levels of education"; "Having a close relationship with the children"; "Having a stable marriage"; "Providing financially for the children"; and "Being there for the children while they are growing up". Compared with High-MPO men, Non-MPO men place much lower significance on all these elements.

Moderate-MPO men have fewer differences from the High-MPO men, but they still rate each element less intensively than the High-MPO men. Except for "Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year", they differ significantly in rating on every element, placing lower significance on them.

Table 19 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (ranked), by men's MPO

		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Non-MPO Men	Moderate-MPO Men	High-MPO Men
1	Keeping the children safe	2	1	1
2	Having a stable marriage	**6**	3	3
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	3	2	2
4	Having a close relationship with the children	7	4	4
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	4	6	5
6	Providing financially for the children	5	5	6
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	**1**	7	7
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	8	8	8
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	9	10	9
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	10	9	10
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	11	11	11

Table 20 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (mean scores), by men's MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Non-MPO Men	Moderate-MPO Men	High-MPO Men
1	Keeping the children safe	4.25	**3.63 (2)**	**4.13**	4.52
2	Having a stable marriage	4.18	**3.40 (6)**	**4.04 (3)**	4.44 (3)
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	4.16	**3.55**	**4.11 (2)**	4.45 (2)
4	Having a close relationship with the children	4.14	**3.36 (7)**	**4.01**	4.41
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	4.09	**3.55 (4)**	**3.97 (6)**	4.36
6	Providing financially for the children	4.06	**3.41 (5)**	**3.99 (5)**	4.36
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	4.05	**3.65 (1)**	**3.91**	4.34
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	3.77	**3.13**	**3.80**	4.23
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	3.46	**2.99**	**3.42 (10)**	3.74
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	3.44	**2.80**	**3.43 (9)**	3.62
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	3.12	**2.60**	3.25	3.31
	Average Importance Ratings	3.88	3.28	3.82	4.16
	Total Rating	42.72	36.05	42.06	45.80

Non-MPO women also differ with High-MPO women significantly in how they conceptualise an "excellent parent" (see Tables 21 and 22). Non-MPO have a lower total importance rating, in line with their lower interest in parenthood.

They also differ with the High-MPO significantly on every given element (see Table 22). The top five differences are on the elements (in descending order): "Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs"; "Having a stable marriage"; "Have children achieving high levels of education"; "Keeping the children safe"; and "Providing financially for the children". Compared with High-MPO women, Non-MPO women place much lower significance on all these elements.

While Moderate-MPO women also have significant difference in the score they gave to each element in comparison with the High-MPO women, their priorities are very similar.

Table 21 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (ranked), by women's MPO

		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Non-MPO Women	Moderate-MPO Women	High-MPO Women
1	Keeping the children safe	2	2	1
2	Having a stable marriage	**6**	1	2
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	4	4	4
4	Having a close relationship with the children	**1**	3	3
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	5	5	5
6	Providing financially for the children	7	6	6
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	**3**	7	7
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	8	8	8
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	9	10	10
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	10	9	9
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	11	11	11

Table 22 – Elements that make an "excellent parent" (mean scores), by women's MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Elements	Overall	Non-MPO Women	Moderate-MPO Women	High-MPO Women
1	Keeping the children safe	4.25	**3.95 (2)**	**4.23 (2)**	4.54
2	Having a stable marriage	4.18	**3.77 (6)**	**4.24 (1)**	4.44
3	Being there for the children while they are growing up	4.16	**3.88 (4)**	**4.06 (4)**	4.41 (4)
4	Having a close relationship with the children	4.14	**3.98 (1)**	**4.13 (3)**	4.44 (3)
5	Imparting life lessons to the children	4.09	**3.85**	**4.04**	4.41
6	Providing financially for the children	4.06	**3.76 (7)**	**3.99**	4.35
7	Providing clear boundaries and discipline	4.05	**3.88 (3)**	**3.98**	4.26
8	Have children achieving high levels of education	3.77	**3.37**	**3.58**	3.98
9	Cultivating the children's talents by sending them for enrichment (e.g. music, arts, sports etc.)	3.46	**3.30**	**3.36 (10)**	3.61 (10)
10	Raising children in the same faith / religious beliefs	3.44	**3.01**	**3.40 (9)**	3.72 (9)
11	Taking the children on an overseas trip at least once a year	3.12	**2.71**	**3.03**	3.23
	Average Importance Ratings	3.88	3.59	3.82	4.13
	Total Rating	42.72	39.45	42.02	45.39

Delaying Parenthood

Focusing only on married respondents who are neutral or positive about their aspirations for parenthood in this subsection, 1 in 4 married respondents (25%) say they are choosing or, if they are parents, have chosen, to delay parenthood (see Fig. 29). More married women (27%) who are neutral or aspiring for parenthood choose to delay it than married men (23%).

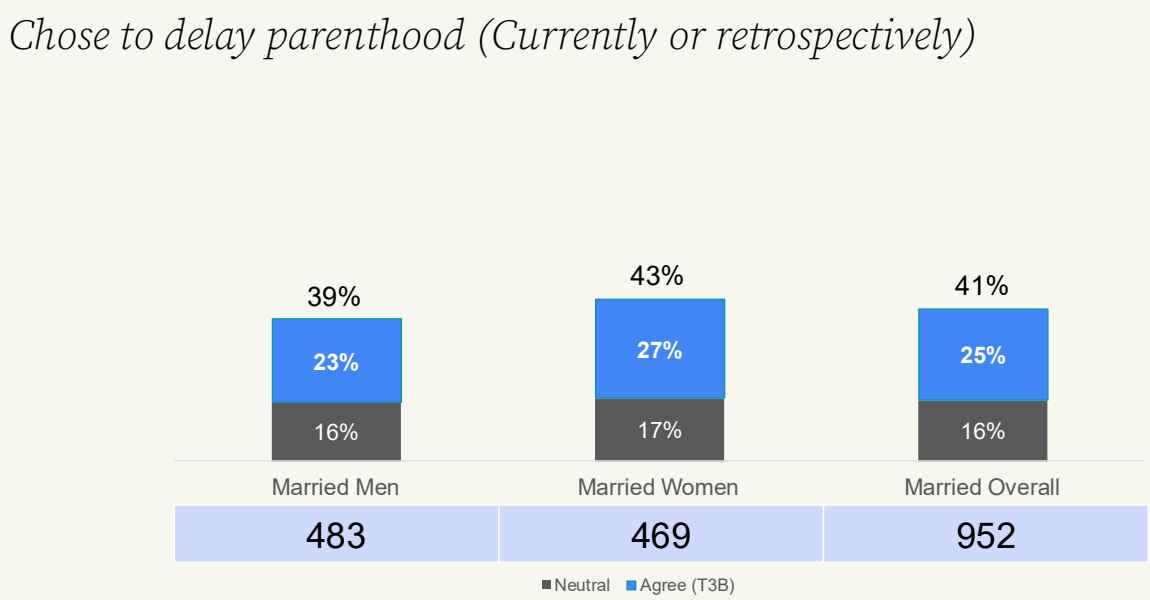


Fig. 29 – Chose to delay parenthood, by sex (married respondents only)

While the difference between the Moderate-MPO and High-MPO is small (56% for Moderate-MPO vs. 65% for High-MPO who choose not to delay parenthood), those with High-MPO are more likely to set out for parenthood without delays and be less neutral about delaying parenthood (see Fig. 30). This suggests that people with a strong positive view of marriage, parenthood and aspirations for them are more inclined to work towards parenthood without delay.

(As there were only a few respondents with Non-MPO who had at least a neutral outlook towards parenthood or aspiration towards parenthood, their figures will not be shown here.)

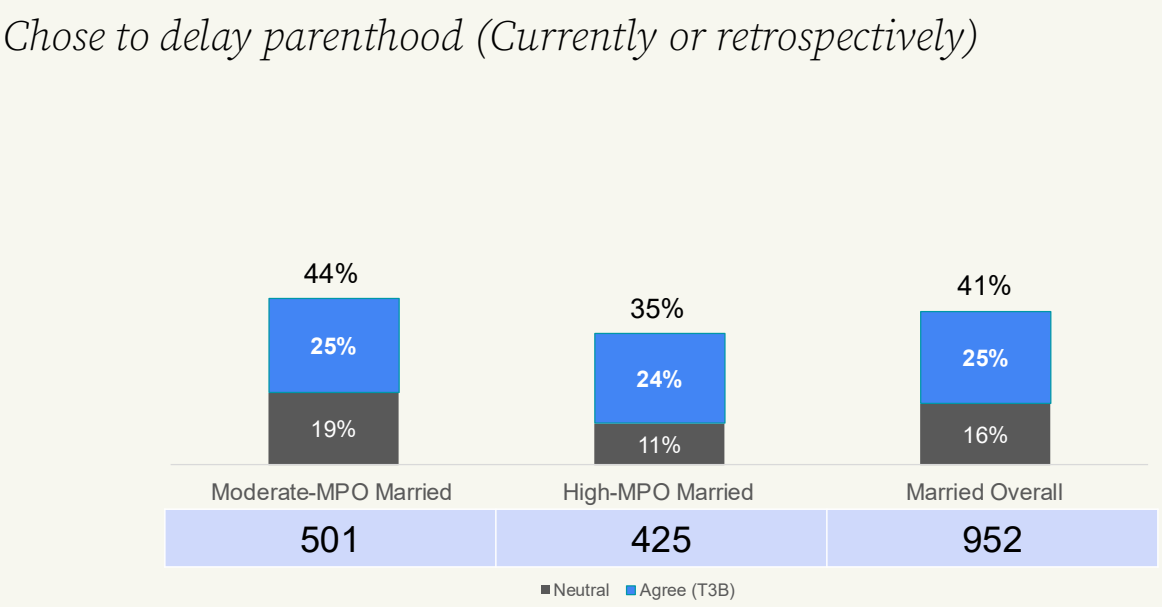


Fig. 30 - Chose to delay parenthood, by MPO (married respondents only)

This trend holds true among the married men (see Fig. 31). High-MPO husbands (18%) are less likely to delay parenthood than those with Moderate-MPO (26%). They are also less neutral towards a delay, about 3 in 4 High-MPO husbands (73%) choose to have children without delay.

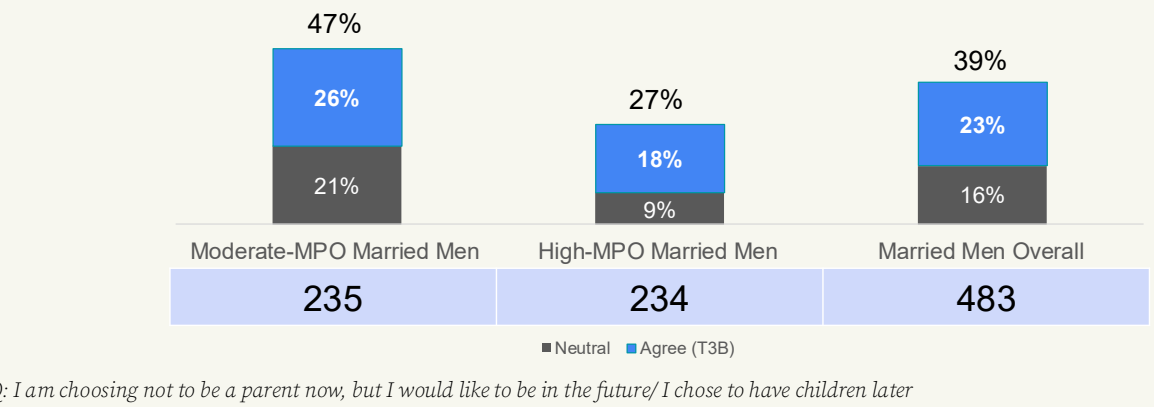
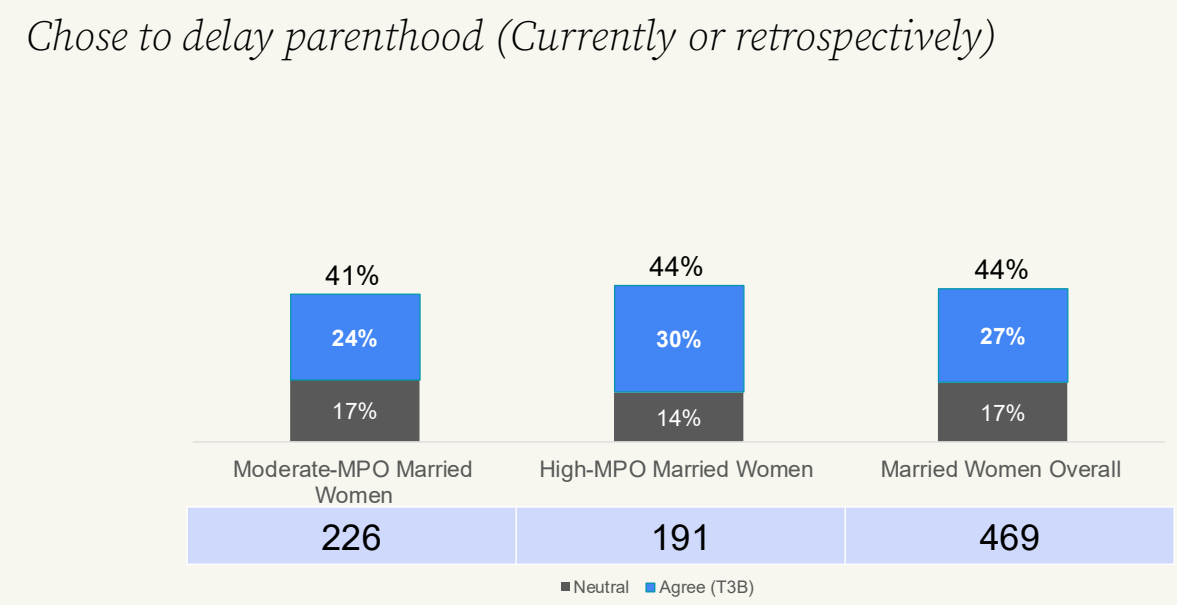


Fig. 31 - Chose to delay parenthood, by men's MPO (married respondents only)

Among wives however, the trend is somewhat reversed (see Fig. 32). High-MPO wives (30%) are more likely to choose delaying parenthood than those with Moderate-MPO (24%). This said, more than half (56%) still choose to have children without delay, similar to those with Moderate-MPO.



Q: I am choosing not to be a parent now, but I would like to be in thefuture / I chose to have children later

Fig. 32 - Chose to delay parenthood, by women's MPO (married respondents only)

Who Sacrifices more in Parenthood?

Similar to our question on whether the husband or wife sacrifices more in marriage, our survey asked respondents their views as to whom – the father or the mother – sacrifices more in parenthood.

On the overall, close to half the respondents (46%) identified neither the father nor the mother as the one who sacrifices more in parenthood. A similar number (45%) thinks that mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood, while less than 1 in 10 (9%) said that fathers will sacrifice more in parenthood (see Fig. 33).

No significant difference in sentiment is observed when comparing married and single respondents. Significant differences are once again observed across the sexes, with significantly fewer men (33%) than women (57%) saying that mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood.

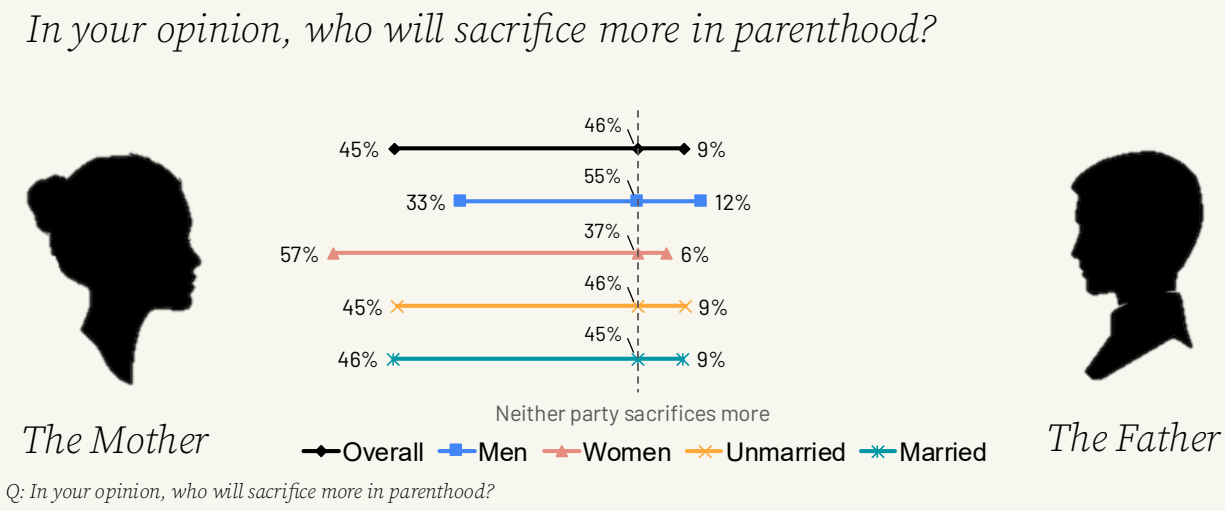


Fig. 33 – Who will sacrifice more in parenthood?
(By sex and marital status respectively)

Moderate-MPO respondents are the most likely to say that the mother sacrifices more in parenthood (50%), while High-MPO respondents are the least likely to say so (39%) (see Fig. 34). More than half of High-MPO respondents (53%) say that neither party sacrifices more in parenthood. Non-MPO are the most likely to say that neither party sacrifices more in parenthood (54%), and they are the least likely to say that fathers sacrifice more in parenthood (4%).

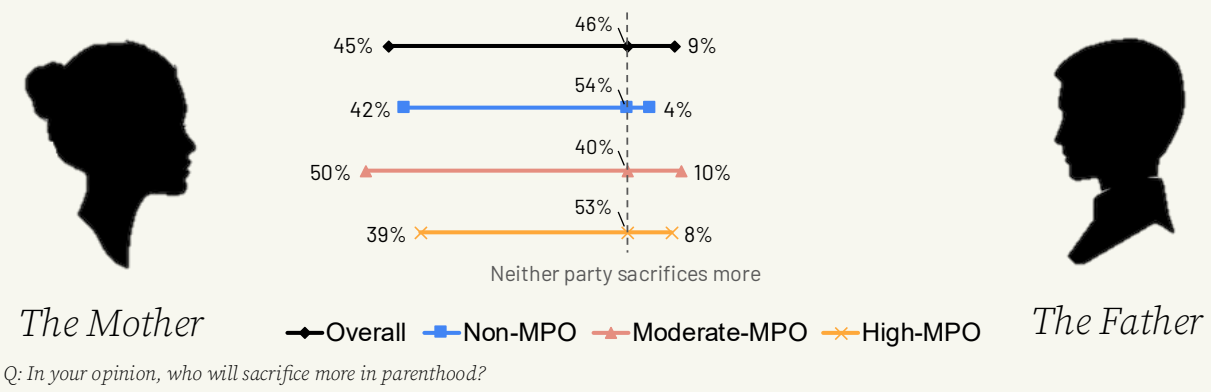


Fig. 34 – Who will sacrifice more in parenthood?

(By MPO)

Across marital status and MPO levels, there are variations in how men think about who sacrifices more in parenthood (see Fig. 34). Unmarried men (28%) are less likely than married men (38%) to say that the mother sacrifices more in parenthood. They are also more likely to think that fathers sacrifice more (14% for unmarried men, compared to 10% for married men), or that neither party sacrifices more (58% for unmarried men, compared to 52% for married men).

Among MPO profiles, High-MPO men (27%) are the least likely to say that mothers will sacrifice more, while Moderate-MPO men (38%) are more likely to say so. High-MPO and Non-MPO men (both 62%) are more likely than Moderate-MPO men (48%) to say that neither party sacrifices more.

Across marital status and MPO, about 1 in 10 men (between 8% and 14%) say that fathers are the ones sacrificing more in parenthood.

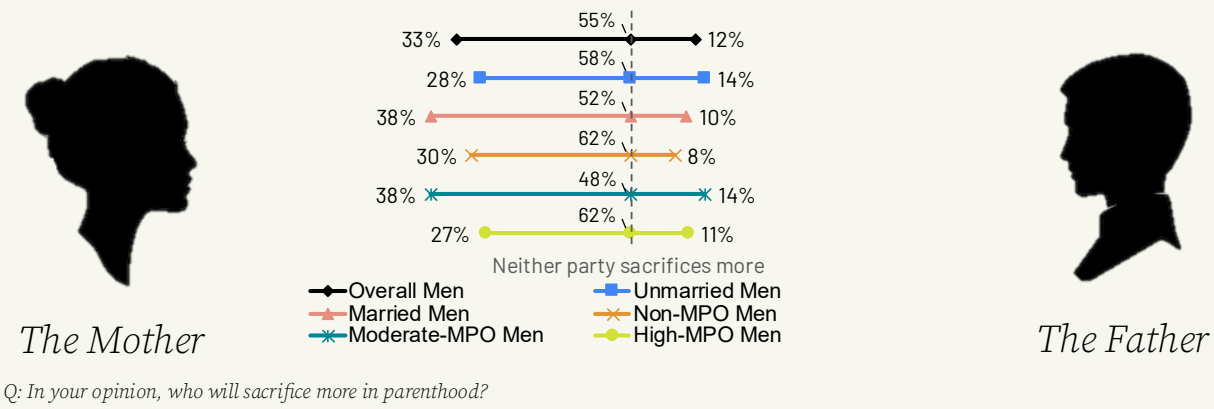


Fig. 35 - Who will sacrifice more in parenthood?

(Male respondents only, by marital status and MPO)

On the other hand, many more women (at least 5 in 10; ranging from 53% to 60%) across marital status and MPO levels say mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood (see Fig. 36).

Married women (54%) are less likely than unmarried women (60%) to say that mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood, and more likely to say that neither party sacrifices more (39% for married women, compared to 36% for unmarried women).

Among MPO profiles, Moderate-MPO women are most likely to say that mothers will sacrifice more (60%), compared to High-MPO women and Non-MPO women (53% for both). Moderate-MPO women are also the least likely to say that neither party sacrifices more (33%), followed by High-MPO women (42%) and Non-MPO women (46%).

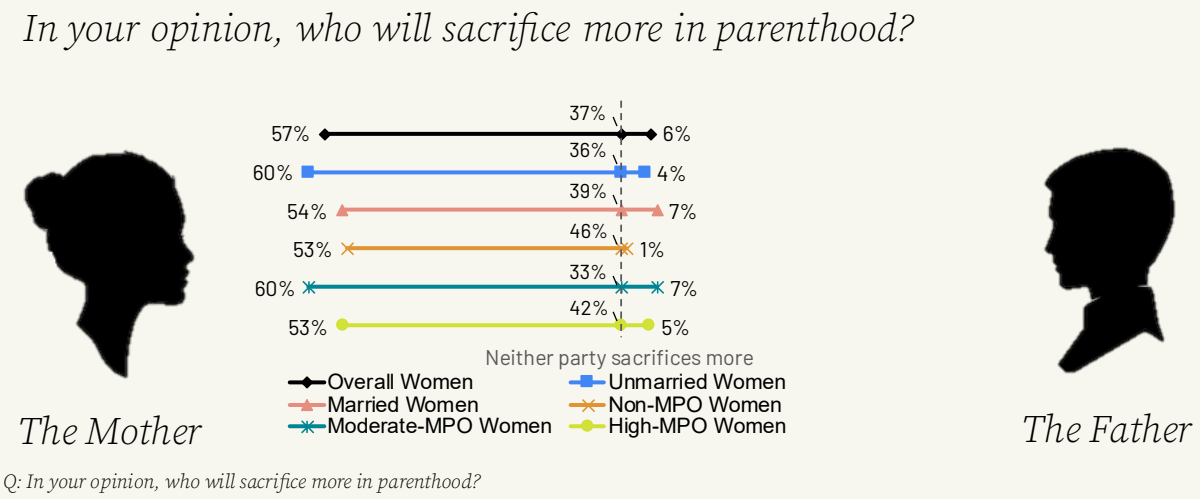


Fig. 36 - Who will sacrifice more in a marriage?

(Female respondents only, by marital status and MPO)

When comparing the married parents and married non-parents, the differences across the sexes are clear (see Fig. 37). Once again, married women are more likely to say that mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood (52% of married mothers; 62% of married non-parent females).

Married women are also less likely than married men to say that neither party sacrifices more. Slightly more than half of married men say that neither party sacrifices more (51% of married fathers; 55% of married non-parent males). On the other hand, 41% of married mothers say so, and the figure is the lowest for married non-parent females (34%).

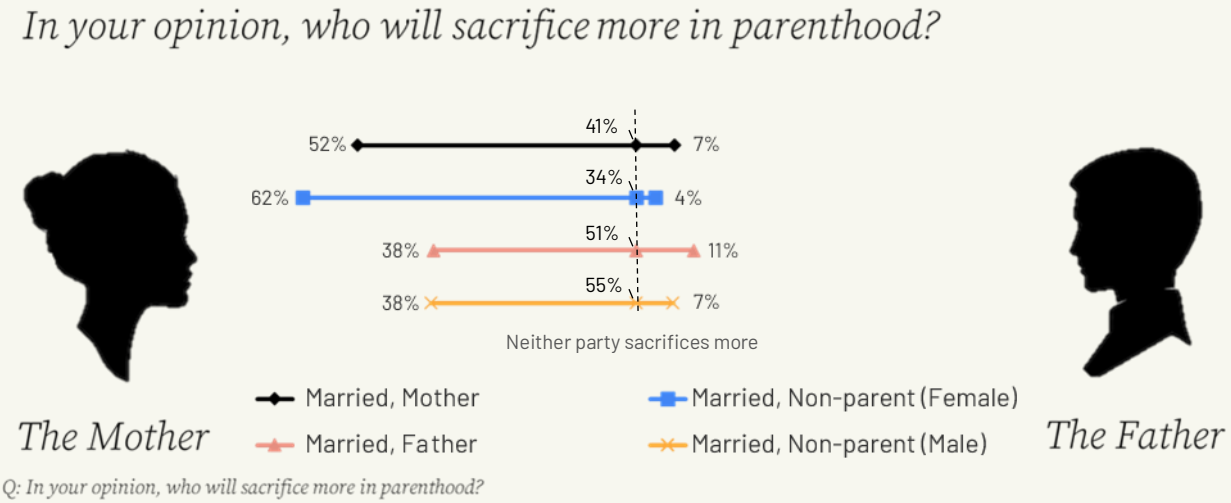


Fig. 37 - Who will sacrifice more in parenthood?

(Married respondents only, by sex and parenthood status)

Considerations which will Discourage Parenthood

On the overall, the top three considerations that discourage parenthood are all related to finances. But even with finances at the top of mind, respondents mostly do not consider disruptions to career as a major discouragement for parenthood.

Men and women have different sensitivities towards the list of considerations. Specifically, women are more concerned than men with "High cost of raising children" and "Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent", while men are more concerned than women with "Disruptions to career" and "Disruptions to travel plans" (see Tables 23 and 24).

Table 23 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (ranked), by sex		Means Ranked	
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Men	Women
1	High cost of raising children	1	1
2	Uncertainty about future income	2	2
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	3	3
4	Lack of time to take care of children	5	4
5	Fear that children will have health issues	4	6
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	6	5
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	7	7
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	10	8
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	9	9
10	Disruptions to career	8	12
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	11	11
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	12	10
13	Disruptions to travel plans	13	13

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to: "Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"*

Table 24 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (mean scores), by sex		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from counterpart		
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Overall	Men	Women
1	High cost of raising children	3.51	**3.45**	**3.56**
2	Uncertainty about future income	3.38	3.34	3.42
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	3.31	3.32	3.31
4	Lack of time to take care of children	3.29	3.27 (5)	3.31
5	Fear that children will have health issues	3.26	3.27 (4)	3.25 (6)
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	3.24	3.21	3.26 (5)
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	3.20	3.19	3.21
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	3.08	3.07 (10)	3.09
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	3.07	3.11	3.03
10	Disruptions to career	3.04	**3.12 (8)**	**2.97 (12)**
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	3.03	3.07	2.99
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	2.93	**2.85**	**3.00 (10)**
13	Disruptions to travel plans	2.66	**2.72**	**2.61**
	Average impact	3.15	3.15	3.15
	Total impact	40.99	40.99	41.00

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to:*
"Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"

The level of MPO significantly correlates with how these much these factors discourage parenthood (see Tables 25 and 26). High-MPO respondents are least impacted by all the considerations which discourage parenthood, while Non-MPO respondents rate these factors higher in impact.

Every consideration had a statistically significant difference in how they impact the High-MPO and Non-MPO (see Table 26). The top five differences in impact felt by the Non-MPO and High-MPO are (in descending order): "I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering"; "Lack of energy to take care of children"; "High cost of raising children"; "Lack of time to take care of children"; and "Concern that I will not be a good parent". Each has almost a 0.9-point difference, with Non-MPO respondents most strongly impacted by these considerations.

Table 25 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (ranked), by MPO		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Non-MPO	Moderate-MPO	High-MPO
1	High cost of raising children	1	1	1
2	Uncertainty about future income	3	2	2
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	2	5	4
4	Lack of time to take care of children	5	3	5
5	Fear that children will have health issues	**10**	6	3
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	6	4	6
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	**4**	7	7
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	7	8	10
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	9	9	9
10	Disruptions to career	8	11	8
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	11	10	11
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	12	12	12
13	Disruptions to travel plans	13	13	13

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to:*
"Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"

Table 26 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (mean scores), by MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Overall	Non-MPO	Moderate-MPO	High-MPO
1	High cost of raising children	3.51	**4.09**	**3.60**	3.14
2	Uncertainty about future income	3.38	**3.92 (3)**	**3.44**	3.10
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	3.31	**3.94 (2)**	**3.33 (5)**	3.06 (4)
4	Lack of time to take care of children	3.29	**3.84 (5)**	**3.37 (3)**	2.94 (5)
5	Fear that children will have health issues	3.26	**3.56 (10)**	**3.30 (6)**	3.07 (3)
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	3.24	**3.84**	**3.34 (4)**	2.85
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	3.20	**3.85 (4)**	**3.27**	2.85
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	3.08	**3.67 (7)**	**3.13**	2.78 (10)
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	3.07	**3.59**	**3.11**	2.81
10	Disruptions to career	3.04	**3.59 (8)**	**3.05 (11)**	2.83 (8)
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	3.03	**3.56**	**3.09 (10)**	2.74
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	2.93	**3.50**	**2.96**	2.66
13	Disruptions to travel plans	2.66	**3.16**	**2.76**	2.32
	Average impact	3.15	3.70	3.21	2.86
	Total impact	40.99	48.11	41.73	37.14

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to:*
"Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"

Depending on their level of MPO, men feel the impact of each factor differently (see Tables 27 and 28). Similar to the overall level, the lower the MPO level, the higher the impact each factor has as a discouragement for parenthood (see Table 28).

Across the Non-MPO and High-MPO men, the top five differences are (in descending order): "Lack energy to take care of children"; "High cost of raising children"; "I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering"; "Lack of time to take care of children"; and "Disruptions to travel plans". Non-MPO men are more significantly discouraged by these considerations.

Across the Moderate-MPO and High-MPO men, the top five differences are (in descending order): "Disruptions to travel plans"; "Lack of time to take care of children"; "Lack energy to take care of children"; "High cost of raising children"; and "I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering". Moderate-MPO men indicate stronger levels of impact than High-MPO men.

The top factors discouraging parenthood are similar to Non-MPO and High-MPO men, except that they register at different ranks.

Table 27 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (ranked), by men's MPO		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Non-MPO Men	Moderate-MPO Men	High-MPO Men
1	High cost of raising children	1	1	4
2	Uncertainty about future income	3	3	1
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	2	4	2
4	Lack of time to take care of children	4	2	**7**
5	Fear that children will have health issues	8	6	3
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	6	5	9
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	5	7	8
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	11	9	11
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	9	8	**6**
10	Disruptions to career	7	10	**5**
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	10	11	10
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	12	12	12
13	Disruptions to travel plans	13	13	13

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to: "Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"*

Table 28 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (mean scores), by men's MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Overall	Non-MPO Men	Moderate-MPO Men	High-MPO Men
1	High cost of raising children	3.51	**4.01**	**3.59**	3.07 (4)
2	Uncertainty about future income	3.38	**3.83 (3)**	**3.40 (3)**	3.12 (1)
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	3.31	**3.90 (2)**	**3.36 (4)**	3.08 (2)
4	Lack of time to take care of children	3.29	**3.80**	**3.42 (2)**	2.88 (7)
5	Fear that children will have health issues	3.26	**3.55 (8)**	**3.34 (6)**	3.07 (3)
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	3.24	**3.77**	**3.36**	2.82 (9)
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	3.20	**3.80 (5)**	**3.28**	2.87 (8)
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	3.08	**3.49 (11)**	**3.17 (9)**	2.80 (11)
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	3.07	**3.50**	**3.18 (8)**	2.88 (6)
10	Disruptions to career	3.04	**3.61 (7)**	**3.17**	2.89 (5)
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	3.03	**3.50 (10)**	**3.16**	2.81 (10)
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	2.93	**3.22**	**2.92**	2.63
13	Disruptions to travel plans	2.66	**3.21**	**2.92**	2.29
	Average impact	3.15	3.63	3.25	2.86
	Total impact	40.99	47.20	42.28	37.23

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to:*
"Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"

Women are also impacted by each factor differently depending on their MPO level (see Tables 29 and 30).

Similar to the overall level, the lower the MPO level, the higher the impact each of the factors have as discouragements for parenthood (see Table 30).

Across the Non-MPO and High-MPO women, the top five differences are (in descending order): "I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering"; "Concern that I will not be a good parent", "Concern that my (future) spouse / partner will not be a good parent"; "Lack of energy to take care of children" ; and "Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children". Non-MPO women are more significantly discouraged by these considerations.

Across the Moderate-MPO and High-MPO women, the top five differences are (in descending order): "I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering"; "Lack of energy to take care of children", "High cost of raising children"; "Uncertainty about future income"; and "Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children". Moderate-MPO women indicate stronger levels of impact than High-MPO men.

Based on the results, it seems Non-MPO women are more concerned with the ability to be a good parent, whether it is the (future) spouse or partner or oneself. Moderate-MPO women, on the other hand, are more concerned with the lack of time to take care of children.

Table 29 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (ranked), by women's MPO		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Non-MPO Women	Moderate-MPO Women	High-MPO Women
1	High cost of raising children	1	1	1
2	Uncertainty about future income	2	2	2
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	3	5	4
4	Lack of time to take care of children	6	3	5
5	Fear that children will have health issues	**12**	6	3
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	4	4	6
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	5	7	7
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	7	8	8
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	9	9	10
10	Disruptions to career	11	12	9
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	10	10	12
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	**8**	11	11
13	Disruptions to travel plans	13	13	13

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to:*
"Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"

Table 30 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (mean scores), by women's MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Overall	Non-MPO Women	Moderate-MPO Women	High-MPO Women
1	High cost of raising children	3.51	**4.16**	**3.61**	3.21
2	Uncertainty about future income	3.38	**3.99**	**3.47**	3.08
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	3.31	**3.96**	**3.30 (5)**	3.04 (4)
4	Lack of time to take care of children	3.29	**3.87 (6)**	**3.33 (3)**	3.02 (5)
5	Fear that children will have health issues	3.26	**3.57 (12)**	**3.27 (6)**	3.07 (3)
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	3.24	**3.90 (4)**	**3.31 (4)**	2.88
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	3.20	**3.89 (5)**	**3.26**	2.82
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	3.08	**3.83 (7)**	**3.10**	2.75
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	3.07	**3.66**	**3.04**	2.72 (10)
10	Disruptions to career	3.04	**3.58 (11)**	**2.94 (12)**	2.75 (9)
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	3.03	**3.61 (10)**	**3.02 (10)**	2.65 (12)
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	2.93	**3.74 (8)**	**2.99 (11)**	2.71 (11)
13	Disruptions to travel plans	2.66	**3.11**	**2.63**	2.34
	Average impact	3.15	3.76	3.18	2.85
	Total impact	40.99	48.87	41.28	37.04

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to:*
"Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"

Lower income respondents registered a higher total impact on their sense of discouragement for parenthood (see Tables 31 and 32). Cost of raising children remains the top discouragement across all income bands, but those earning above $6,000 a month reported lower levels of discouragement.

While total impact is similar across the other income groups, the priority of concerns differs. The lowest income band (less than $2,001 per month; see footnote below)[3] has "I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering" as the third most impactful discouragement, much higher in priority than every other group (6th–8th).

Career disruption concerns are higher in priority for those earning above $6,000 while their concerns about being unable to provide financially for children falls in priority. Those earning between $8,001-$10,000 are also significantly more concerned with disruptions to travel plans than the overall, while those earning between $2,001-$4,000 and those with no income are least concerned with this.

[3] "No income" is not taken as the lowest income band as this category may include people who are currently students or homemakers, which suggest that they have a significant financial source or support elsewhere.

Table 31 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (ranked), by income group		Mean Ranked						
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	No income	Less than $2,001 per month	$2,001-$4,000	$4,001-$6,000	$6,001-$8,000	$8,001-$10,000	Above $10,000
1	High cost of raising children	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	Uncertainty about future income	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	3	4	3	3	**6**	5	5
4	Lack of time to take care of children	4	6	4	4	4	2	3
5	Fear that children will have health issues	7	**9**	6	5	3	6	4
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	5	7	5	6	5	4	7
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	6	**3**	7	7	7	8	6
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	8	8	8	8	10	9	9
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	9	**5**	9	9	9	11	11
10	Disruptions to career	11	12	10	11	8	**7**	8
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	12	10	11	10	11	10	10
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	10	11	12	12	12	12	12
13	Disruptions to travel plans	13	13	13	13	13	13	13

**For those who are parents, the question is modified to:*
"Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"

Table 32 – Considerations which will discourage Parenthood (mean scores), by income group	Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant, lower than overall **Bolded** = statistically significant, higher than overall								
Rank (Overall)	Considerations	Overall	No income	Less than $2,001 per month	$2,001-$4,000	$4,001-$6,000	$6,001-$8,000	$8,001-$10,000	Above $10,000
1	High cost of raising children	3.51	3.61	**3.97**	3.61	3.51	**3.38**	3.43	3.47
2	Uncertainty about future income	3.38	3.58	**3.79**	3.41	3.40	3.28	3.26 (3)	3.41
3	Unsure of ability to provide financially for children	3.31	3.44	**3.70 (4)**	3.39	3.37	**3.15 (6)**	3.24 (5)	3.24 (5)
4	Lack of time to take care of children	3.29	3.31	3.49 (6)	3.32	3.30	3.18	3.27 (2)	3.37 (3)
5	Fear that children will have health issues	3.26	3.18 (7)	3.42 (9)	3.27 (6)	3.30	3.19 (3)	3.24 (6)	3.31 (4)
6	Lack of energy to take care of children	3.24	3.23 (5)	3.49 (7)	3.28 (5)	3.25	3.17 (5)	3.25 (4)	3.16 (7)
7	I do not want to bring children into a world full of suffering	3.20	3.22 (6)	**3.78 (3)**	3.21	3.21	3.11	3.11 (8)	3.21 (6)
8	Concern that I will not be a good parent*	3.08	3.09	**3.43**	3.09	3.13	2.99 (10)	3.09 (9)	2.98 (9)
9	Unsure of ability to raise children with good moral values	3.07	3.09	**3.54 (5)**	3.08	3.08	3.00	3.04 (11)	2.97 (11)
10	Disruptions to career	3.04	2.98 (11)	3.13 (12)	3.04	3.03 (11)	3.01 (8)	3.14 (7)	3.00 (8)
11	Unsure of ability to build meaningful relationship with children	3.03	2.94 (12)	3.29 (10)	3.03	3.07 (10)	2.97	3.06 (10)	2.97 (10)
12	Concern that my future spouse / partner will not be a good parent	2.93	3.05 (10)	**3.21 (11)**	2.92	2.93	2.83	3.04	2.85
13	Disruptions to travel plans	2.66	**2.43**	2.72	**2.47**	2.65	2.68	**3.00**	2.70
	Average impact	3.15	3.17	3.46	3.16	3.17	3.07	3.17	3.13
	Total impact	40.99	41.15	44.94	41.10	41.22	39.94	41.16	40.65

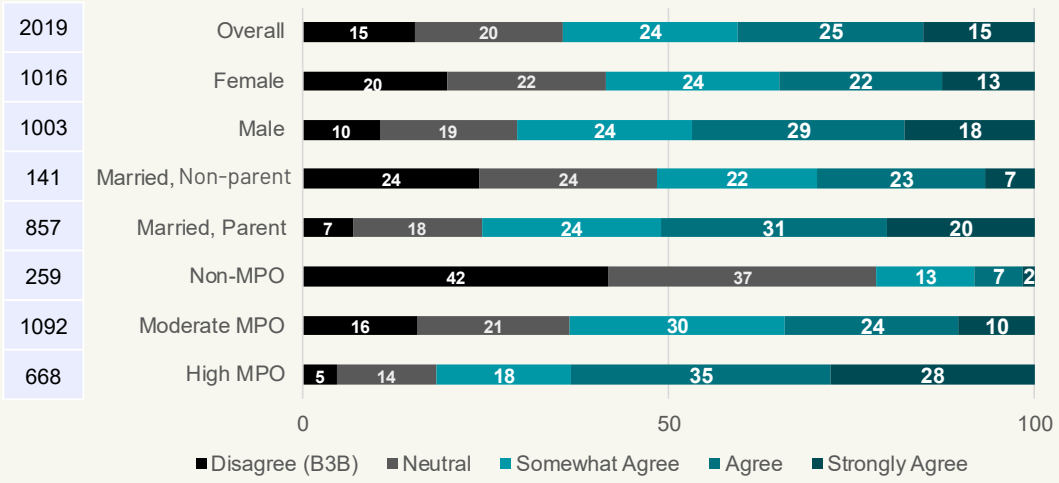
**For those who are parents, the question is modified to:*
"Concern that I will not be a good parent to more children"

Parenthood in Marriage

On the overall, 6 in 10 (64%) respondents believe that parenthood is a natural next step in marriage (see Fig. 38). About 1 in 8 (15%) disagree with this sentiment. More than 8 in 10 (81%) High-MPO consider parenthood a natural next step in marriage.

Disagreement with this statement is largest among the Non-MPO (42%) followed by the married non-parents (24%). 1 in 5 (20%) women disagree with this sentiment while only 1 in 10 (10%) men do.

Unless a couple is infertile, having children is a natural next step in marriage

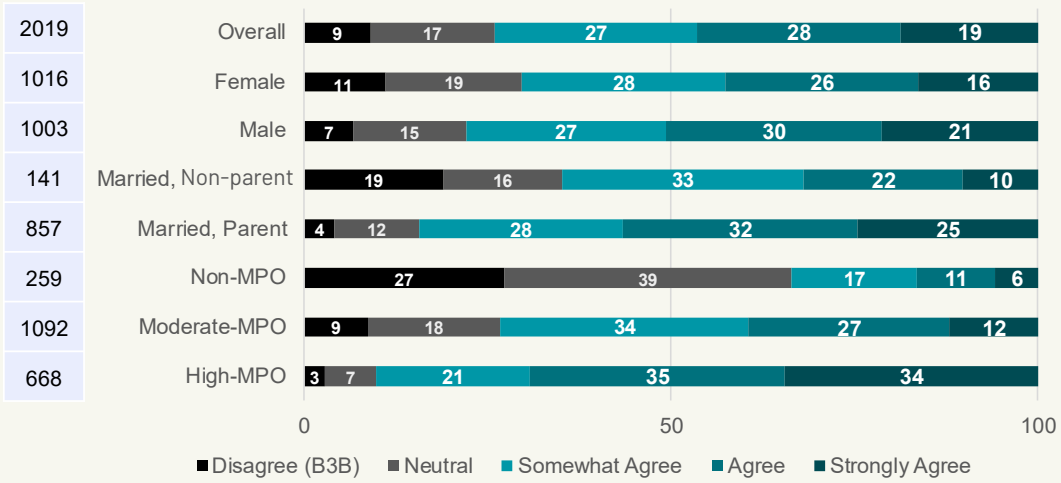


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Unless a couple is infertile, having children is a natural next step in marriage

Fig. 38 – Is having children a natural next step in marriage?

Almost 3 in 4 (74%) respondents believe that parenthood will take a marriage to a higher level. This sentiment resonates strongly with those of the High-MPO profile (90%), and lowest among those Non-MPO (34%)(see Fig. 39). About 1 in 5 (19%) married non-parents and about 1 in 4 (27%) Non-MPO disagree with this statement.

Becoming parents in a marriage takes the marriage to a higher level



Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Becoming parents in a marriage takes the marriage to a higher level

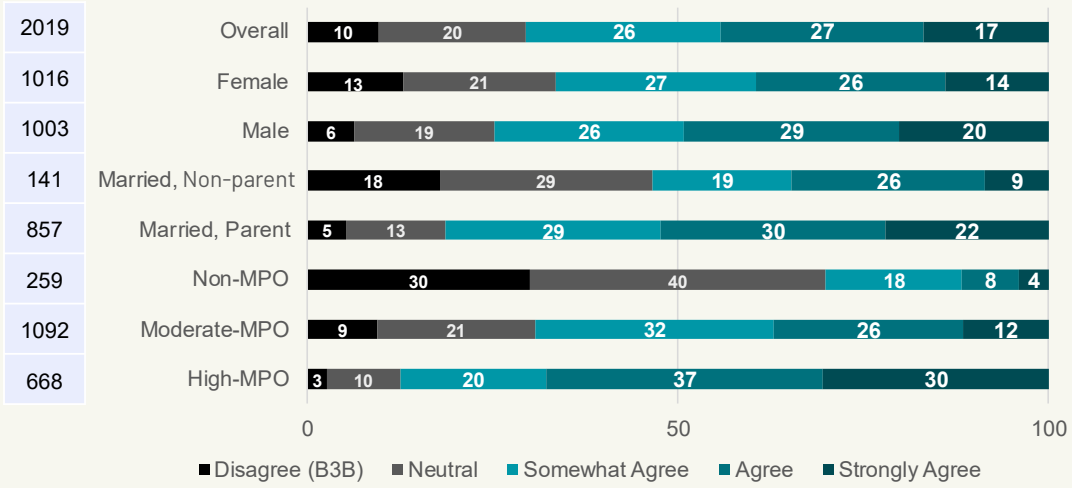
Fig. 39 – Does parenthood in marriage take the marriage to a higher level?

7 in 10 (70%) believe that parenthood in a marriage will strengthen the relationship between spouses (see Fig. 40). Almost 9 in 10 (87%) High-MPO respondents agree with this statement, while less than a third (30%) of the Non-MPO share this view. Non-MPO respondents are the most likely to disagree (30%) or be neutral (40%) about this statement.

About 1 in 8 (13%) women disagree with this sentiment while only about 1 in 20 (6%) men do.

About 1 in 5 married non-parents (18%) disagree with it.

Becoming parents in a marriage will strengthen the relationship between spouses

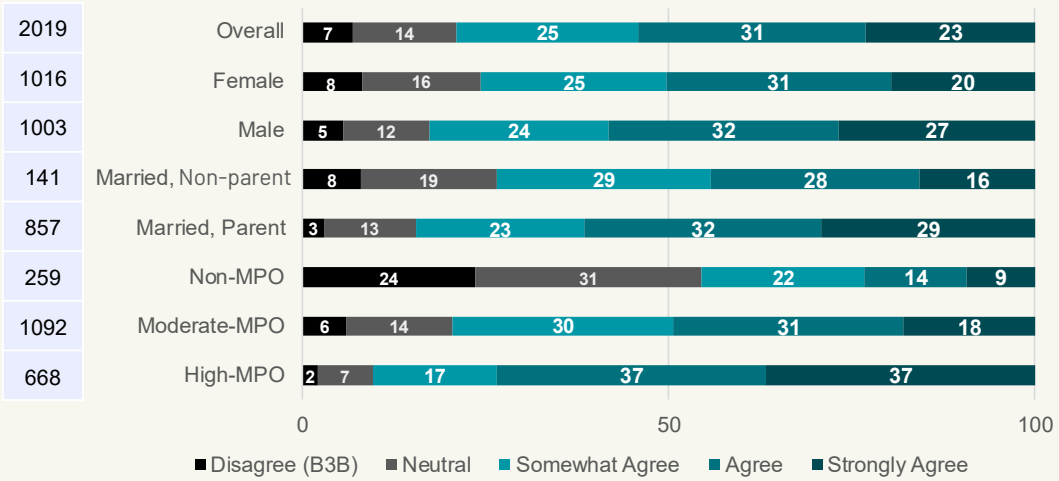


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Becoming parents in a marriage will strengthen the relationship between spouses

Fig. 40 – Does parenthood in marriage strengthen the marriage?

About 8 in 10 (79%) believe that it is ideal for children to be raised within a marriage (see Fig. 41). Despite lower levels of agreement with earlier statements about parenthood in marriage, at least 7 in 10 married non-parents (73%) agree with this statement, affirming the benefit of marriage for children. Non-MPO respondents however continue to maintain a lower view of the value of marriage as the ideal setting for children to be raised (24% disagree; 31% neutral).

It is ideal for children to be raised within a marriage



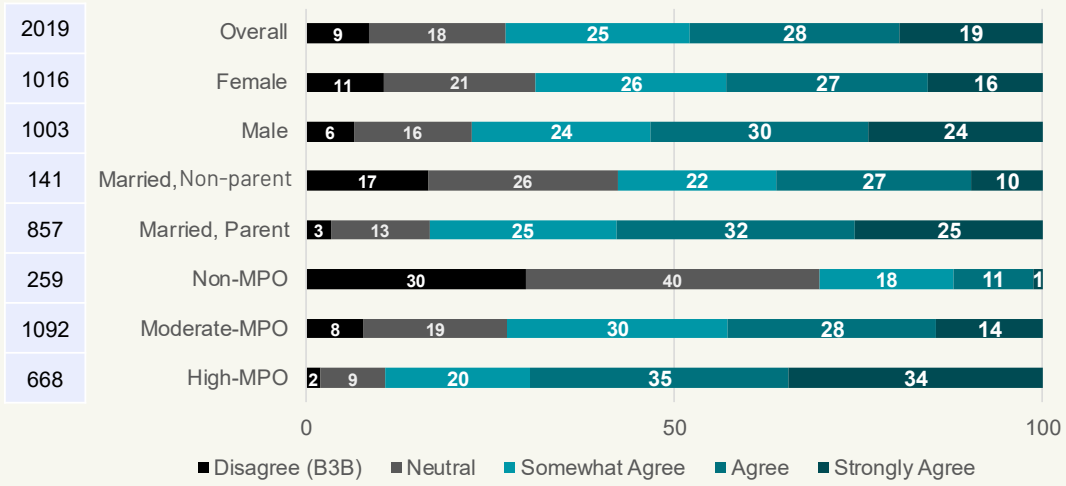
Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: It is ideal for children to be raised within a marriage

Fig. 41 – Is it ideal for children to be raised within a marriage?

Transformative Impact of Parenthood on Individuals

On the overall, close to 3 in 4 (72%) believe that parenthood will make them a better person (see Fig. 42). The High-MPO respondents (89%) are most optimistic about this, while less than a third of Non-MPO respondents (33%) share this view. Men (78%) are also significantly more optimistic about this effect of fatherhood on them than women (69%) are concerning motherhood.

Being a parent will make me a better person

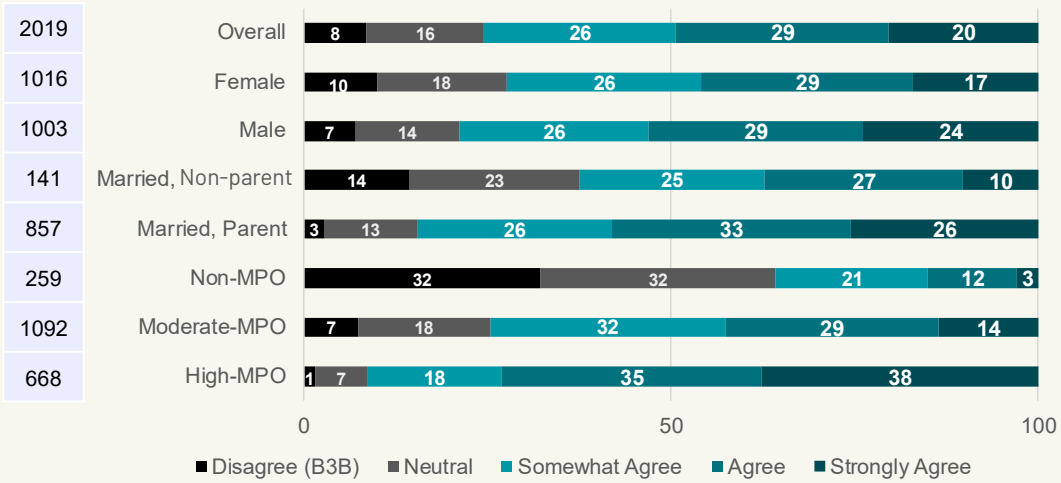


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Being a parent will make me a better person

Fig. 42 – Being a parent will make me a better person

About 3 in 4 (75%) say that parenthood will give or gives them a sense of purpose in life (see Fig. 43). Married parents (85%) are significantly more likely to agree than their married non-parent peers (62%). The difference is also large among the Non-MPO (36%) and High-MPO respondents (91%).

Being a parent gives me a sense of purpose in life

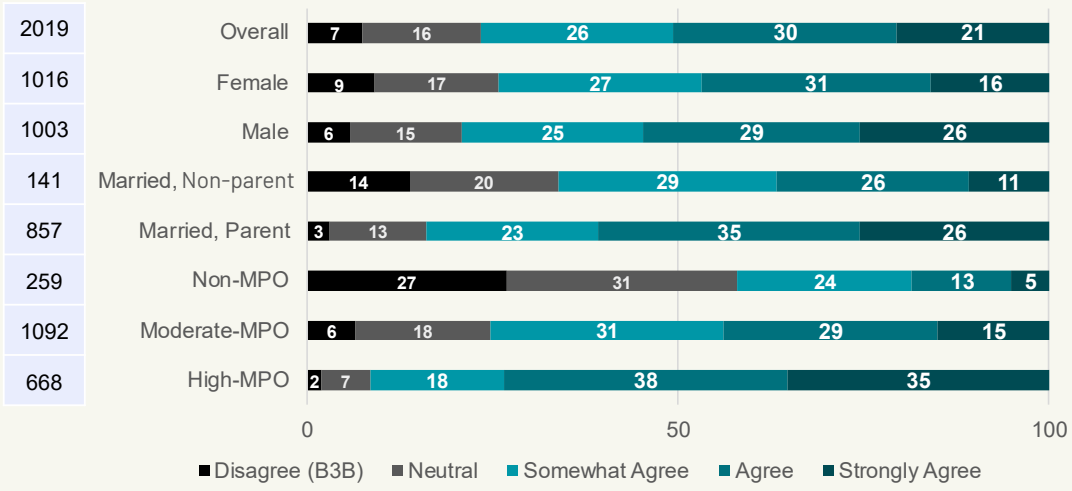


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Being a parent gives me a sense of purpose in life

Fig. 43 – Being a parent gives me a sense of purpose in life

About 3 in 4 (77%) believe that parenthood will motivate them to become more hardworking at their jobs (see Fig. 44). More than 8 in 10 (84%) married parents agreed while only about 2 in 3 of their married non-parent peers (66%) agree.

Being a parent will motivate me to work harder at my job

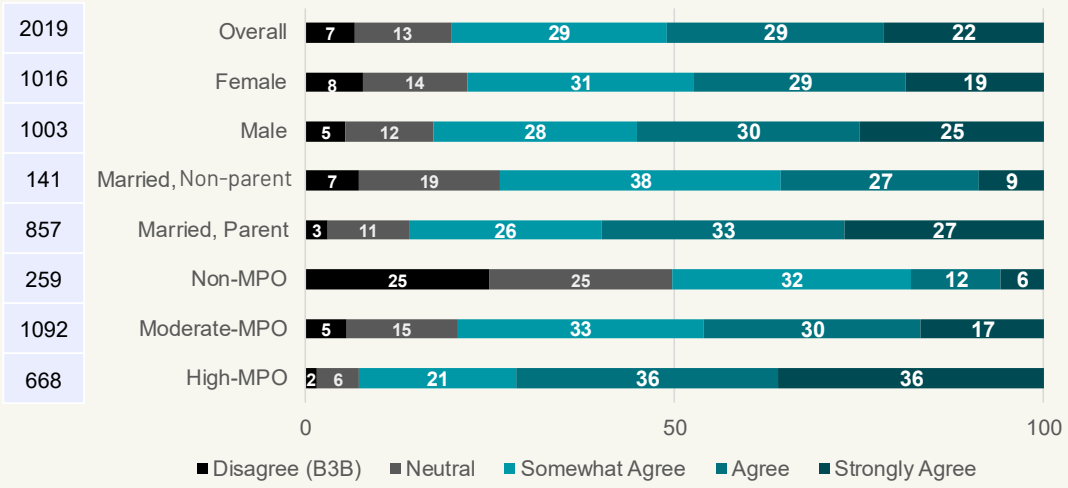


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Being a parent will motivate me to work harder at my job

Fig. 44 – Being a parent will motivate me to work harder at my job

About 8 in 10 (80%) believe that parenthood will motivate them to spend more wisely (see Fig. 45). While more than 9 in 10 (93%) of the High-MPO agree, only 1 in 2 Non-MPO respondents (50%) share this sentiment. About 1 in 4 (25%) of Non-MPO respondents disagree.

Being a parent will motivate me to spend money more wisely

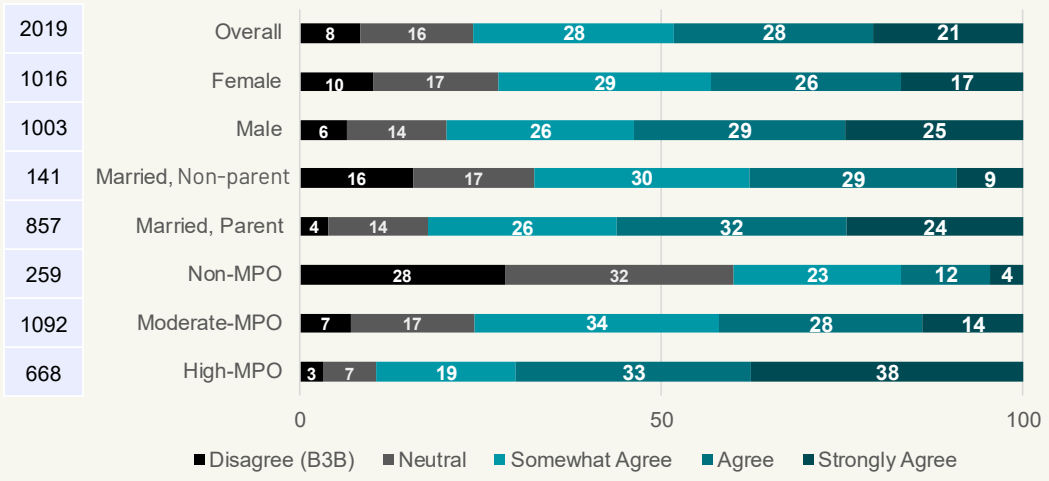


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Being a parent will motivate me to spend money more wisely

Fig. 45 – Being a parent will motivate me to spend more wisely

About 3 in 4 (77%) respondents believe that parenthood will motivate them to quit their bad habits (see Fig. 46). Again, such a sentiment is least shared by the married non-parents (68%) and Non-MPO respondents (39%). Men (80%) are more optimistic about the transformative influence of fatherhood than women (72%) are about motherhood in this aspect.

Being a parent will motivate me to quit my bad habits



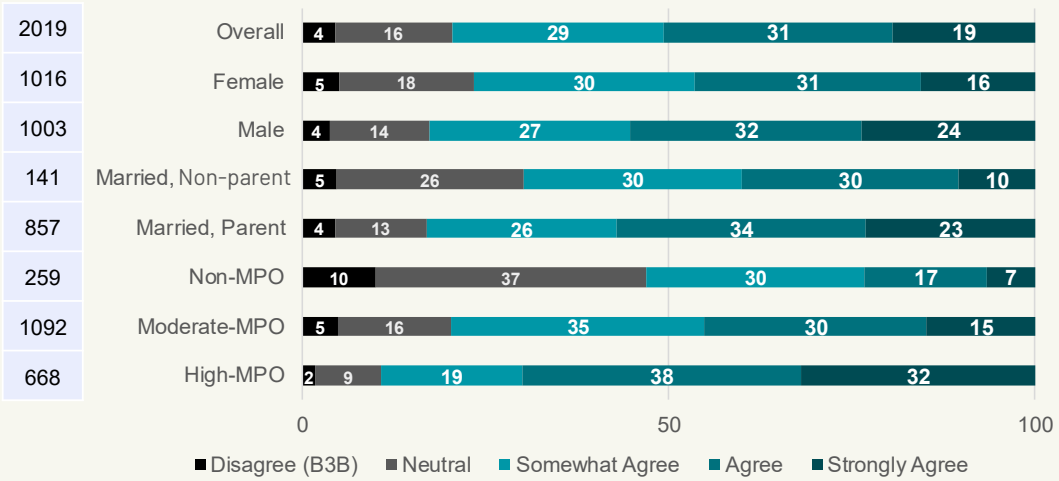
Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Being a parent will motivate me to quit my bad habits

Fig. 46 – Being a parent will motivate me to quit my bad habits

On having more than one child

About 8 in 10 (79%) believe that it is good for children to have siblings (see Fig. 47). Across the different profiles, few disagree with this sentiment, although nearly 4 in 10 (37%) Non-MPO respondents are neutral. Married parents (83%) and High-MPO (89%) respondents are most positive about children having siblings.

It is good for children to have siblings



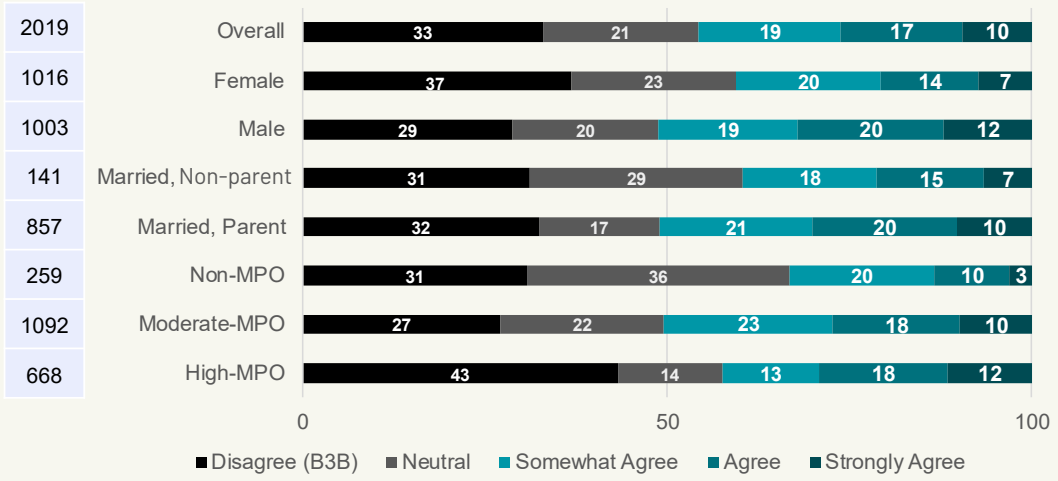
Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: It is good for children to have siblings

Fig. 47 – It is good for children to have siblings

Despite the high level of agreement that it is good for children to have siblings, respondents are less positive about parenting more than one child (see Fig. 48).

About half (46%) the respondents believe that having more than one child will negatively impact the parent's ability to parent each child. More men (51%) than women (41%) expressed this sentiment. Married parents (51%) are much more likely to agree with this sentiment than their married non-parent peers (40%). High-MPO respondents are most optimistic about such a situation, with more than 4 in 10 (43%) disagreeing with this sentiment.

Having more than one child will negatively impact ability to parent each child

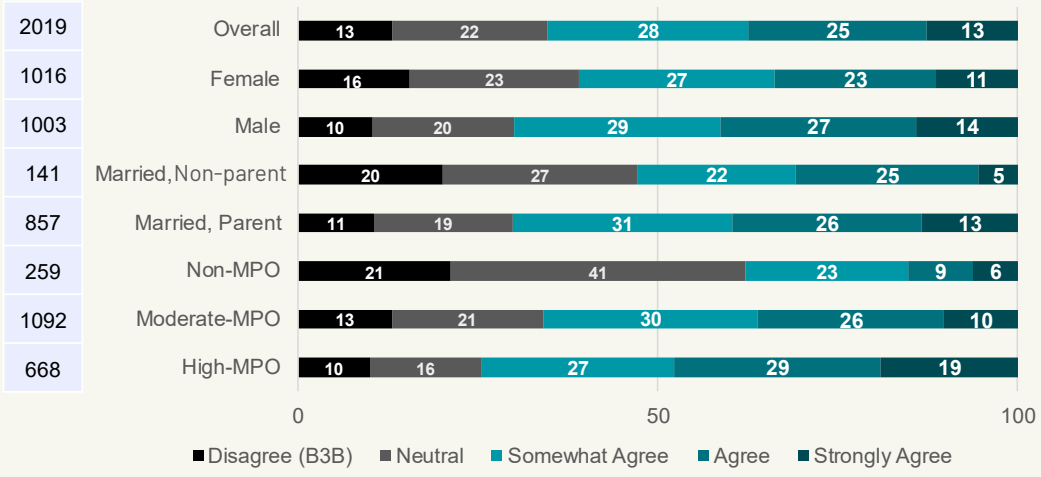


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Having more than one child will negatively impact ability to parent each child

Fig. 48 – Having more than one child will negatively impact ability to parent each child

About 2 in 3 (66%) believe that with siblings, each child will feel less pressure from parents (see Fig. 49). This sentiment resonates strongly with men (70%), married parents (70%) and the High-MPO (75%) respondents, while women (61%), married non-parents (52%) and Non-MPO (38%) are less in agreement.

With siblings, each child will feel less pressure from parents

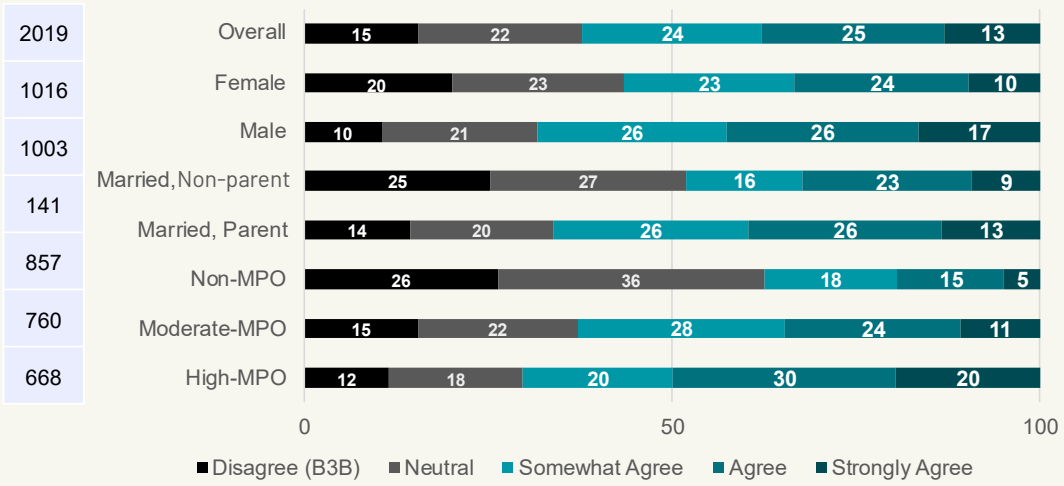


Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: With siblings, each child will feel less pressure from parents

Fig. 49 – With siblings, each child will feel less pressure from parents

Respondents are less positive about siblings sharing the burden of caregiving for their parents in later years (see Fig. 50). Only about 6 in 10 (62%) believe that having more children will share the burden of caregiving in time to come. Less than half of married non-parents (48%) and Non-MPO (38%) are optimistic about this situation materialising, while most High-MPO peers (71%) remain optimistic.

Having more children will share the burden of caregiving for parents in later years



Q: Let us know your views on the following statements: Having more children will share the burden of caregiving for parents in later years

Fig. 50 – Having more children will share the burden of caregiving for parents in later years

Views on Success in Life

Marriage and Parenthood a Low Priority for Success

Our survey gave respondents a list of fourteen markers of success and asked to rate each of them for their importance in rendering someone a successful person in life.

Generally, respondents considered "Being an upright person" (4.04), "Having work-life balance" (3.99), "Being contented" (3.96) and "Being close to family" (3.93) as the top markers of success (see Tables 33 and 34). Marriage and parenthood are low in priority, occupying the 12th and last position in this list.

On the overall, men and women do not differ drastically in how they rate the elements (see Table 34). Men seemed to rate on the higher end of the scale across the elements.

In eight areas, a significant difference between men and women's concept of a successful life emerged. In descending order of difference, men rate "Being married", "Having children", "Contributing to society", "Travelled the world", "Having close friends", "Having lots of money", "Having a successful career" and "Being highly educated" higher than women, suggesting that these areas of life mean more to men than to women.

Table 33 – Markers of success (ranked), by sex		Means Ranked	
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Men	Women
1	Being an upright person	1	1
2	Having work-life balance	2	2
3	Being contented	4	3
4	Being close to family	3	4
5	Owning a house	**8**	5
6	Contributing to society	5	7
7	Having a successful career	6	6
8	Having close friends	7	8
9	Being highly educated	9	9
10	Being faithful in personal religion	10	10
11	Having lots of money	11	11
12	Being married	12	13
13	Travelled the world	14	12
14	Having children	13	14

Table 34 – Markers of success (mean scored), by sex		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from counterpart		
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Overall	Men	Women
1	Being an upright person	4.04	4.03	4.05
2	Having work-life balance	3.99	3.99	3.99
3	Being contented	3.96	3.93 (4)	3.98
4	Being close to family	3.93	3.94 (3)	3.91
5	Owning a house	3.72	3.73 (8)	3.70
6	Contributing to society	3.71	**3.79 (5)**	**3.63 (7)**
7	Having a successful career	3.71	**3.77 (6)**	**3.65 (6)**
8	Having close friends	3.68	**3.76 (7)**	**3.61**
9	Being highly educated	3.59	**3.65**	**3.53**
10	Being faithful in personal religion	3.54	3.55	3.52
11	Having lots of money	3.45	**3.52**	**3.39**
12	Being married	3.27	**3.48**	**3.08 (13)**
13	Travelled the world	3.22	**3.30 (14)**	**3.15 (12)**
14	Having children	3.21	**3.39 (13)**	**3.05**
	Average Importance Ratings	3.64	3.70	3.59
	Total Rating	51.01	51.83	50.25

When comparing across marital status, single men favour material-related markers more than married men (see Tables 35 and 36). On the other hand, married men rate marriage and parenthood more significantly than single men as markers of success.

While married women also share the same difference with single women, giving more importance to marriage and parenthood as markers of success, they also more strongly consider "Being faithful in personal religion" and "Owning a house" as markers of success.

Among married respondents, wives consider "Owning a house" and "Being contented" more significant markers of success than husbands. Husbands see "Being married", "Having children" and "Having close friends" as more significant markers than wives.

There are more differences between single men and women than married respondents (male or female) (see Table 36). It could be due to a generally lower rating across all markers given by single women. The top five markers that have significant differences in the way they rate them are, in decreasing order of difference, "Being married"; "Having children"; "Travelled the world";

"Having a successful career"; and "Having lots of money". Single men tended to rate these higher than single women, as markers of success.

Table 35 – Markers of success (ranked), by marital status and sex		Means Ranked			
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Single Men	Married Men	Single Women	Married Women
1	Being an upright person	1	2	1	1
2	Having work-life balance	2	1	2	2
3	Being contented	4	4	3	3
4	Being close to family	3	3	4	4
5	Owning a house	5	8	6	5
6	Contributing to society	8	5	7	8
7	Having a successful career	6	7	8	6
8	Having close friends	7	6	**5**	10
9	Being highly educated	9	9	9	9
10	Being faithful in personal religion	11	11	11	**7**
11	Having lots of money	10	13	10	11
12	Being married	13	10	13	13
13	Travelled the world	12	14	12	14
14	Having children	14	12	14	12

Table 36 – Markers of success (mean scores), by marital status and sex		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from counterpart			
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Single Men	Married Men	Single Women	Married Women
1	Being an upright person	4.06	4.00 (2)	4.03	4.07
2	Having work-life balance	3.99	4.00 (1)	3.96	4.02
3	Being contented	3.98 (4)	3.89 (4)	3.94	4.02
4	Being close to family	3.99 (3)	3.89 (3)	3.89	3.94
5	Owning a house	**3.83**	**3.64 (8)**	**3.62 (6)**	**3.78**
6	Contributing to society	3.74 (8)	3.84 (5)	3.61 (7)	3.65 (8)
7	Having a successful career	3.83 (6)	3.72	3.60 (8)	3.69 (6)
8	Having close friends	3.79 (7)	3.73 (6)	3.64 (5)	3.58 (10)
9	Being highly educated	3.66	3.64	3.48	3.59
10	Being faithful in personal religion	3.49 (11)	3.61 (11)	**3.38 (11)**	**3.68 (7)**
11	Having lots of money	**3.63 (10)**	**3.41 (13)**	3.41 (10)	3.37
12	Being married	**3.34 (13)**	**3.62 (10)**	**2.83 (13)**	**3.34 (13)**
13	Travelled the world	**3.41 (12)**	**3.20 (14)**	3.16 (12)	3.14 (14)
14	Having children	**3.21**	**3.56 (12)**	**2.75**	**3.37 (12)**
	Average Importance Ratings	3.71	3.69	3.52	3.66
	Total Rating	51.95	51.71	49.29	51.25

Respondents with different MPOs have significantly different evaluations of every item as a marker of success (see Tables 37 and 38). It could also be due to the generally lower rating across all markers by those who are Non-MPO. The top five markers that have significant differences in the way they rate them are, in decreasing order of difference: "Having children"; "Being married"; "Being faithful in personal religion"; "Being close to family"; and "Contributing to society". Non-MPO tended to rate these lower than High-MPO or Moderate-MPO respondents, as markers of success.

The way High-MPO respondents prioritised these markers of success is also notably different from the overall sample. Compared to Moderate-MPO and Non-MPO respondents, High-MPO respondents value family relationships, being faithful in personal religion, being married and having children more significantly as markers of success in life.

Table 37 – Markers of success (ranked), by MPO		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Non-MPO	Moderate-MPO	High-MPO
1	Being an upright person	2	1	2
2	Having work-life balance	1	2	3
3	Being contented	3	3	4
4	Being close to family	4	4	**1**
5	Owning a house	6	5	**10**
6	Contributing to society	8	6	5
7	Having a successful career	7	7	6
8	Having close friends	9	8	7
9	Being highly educated	10	9	**12**
10	Being faithful in personal religion	12	10	8
11	Having lots of money	**5**	11	13
12	Being married	13	13	**9**
13	Travelled the world	11	12	14
14	Having children	14	14	**11**

Table 38 – Markers of success (mean scores), by MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Overall	Non-MPO	Moderate-MPO	High-MPO
1	Being an upright person	4.04	**3.73 (2)**	**3.96**	4.28 (2)
2	Having work-life balance	3.99	**3.75 (1)**	**3.91**	4.22 (3)
3	Being contented	3.96	**3.73**	**3.88**	4.17 (4)
4	Being close to family	3.93	**3.53**	**3.80**	4.28 (1)
5	Owning a house	3.72	**3.42 (6)**	**3.70**	3.86 (10)
6	Contributing to society	3.71	**3.34 (8)**	**3.61**	3.99 (5)
7	Having a successful career	3.71	**3.38**	**3.61**	3.98 (6)
8	Having close friends	3.68	**3.34 (9)**	**3.61**	3.93 (7)
9	Being highly educated	3.59	**3.26 (10)**	**3.51**	3.83 (12)
10	Being faithful in personal religion	3.54	**2.99 (12)**	**3.44**	3.89 (8)
11	Having lots of money	3.45	3.42 (5)	**3.39**	3.56 (13)
12	Being married	3.27	**2.02 (13)**	**3.19 (13)**	3.88 (9)
13	Travelled the world	3.22	**3.06 (11)**	3.23 (12)	3.28 (14)
14	Having children	3.21	**1.91**	**3.12**	3.86 (11)
	Average Importance Ratings	3.64	3.20	3.57	3.93
	Total Rating	51.01	44.87	49.96	55.02

Within each sex, a similar difference across Non-MPO and High-MPO is observed (see Tables 39 to 42). Non-MPO men rate "Being married" and "Having children" higher than Non-MPO women, but the women rate "Having work-life balance" and "Being an upright person" more significantly than men.

As for the High-MPO pool, in addition to rating "Being married", "Having children" higher than the High-MPO women, the High-MPO men also rate "Having close friends", "Having a successful career" and "Contributing to society" significantly higher than High-MPO women (see Tables 40 and 42).

Table 39 – Markers of success (ranked), by men's MPO		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Non-MPO Men	Moderate-MPO Men	High-MPO Men
1	Being an upright person	1	2	1
2	Having work-life balance	3	1	3
3	Being contented	2	3	4
4	Being close to family	4	4	2
5	Owning a house	**8**	5	**12**
6	Contributing to society	9	6	6
7	Having a successful career	7	7	5
8	Having close friends	6	8	7
9	Being highly educated	10	9	11
10	Being faithful in personal religion	12	11	10
11	Having lots of money	**5**	10	13
12	Being married	13	12	**8**
13	Travelled the world	11	13	14
14	Having children	14	14	**9**

Table 40 – Markers of success (mean scores), by men's MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Overall	Non-MPO Men	Moderate-MPO Men	High-MPO Men
1	Being an upright person	4.04	**3.66**	**3.90 (2)**	4.32
2	Having work-life balance	3.99	**3.61 (3)**	**3.91 (1)**	4.22 (3)
3	Being contented	3.96	**3.64 (2)**	**3.86**	4.13 (4)
4	Being close to family	3.93	**3.40**	**3.81**	4.28 (2)
5	Owning a house	3.72	**3.25 (8)**	3.78	3.82 (12)
6	Contributing to society	3.71	**3.23 (9)**	**3.72**	4.06
7	Having a successful career	3.71	**3.35**	**3.65**	4.07 (5)
8	Having close friends	3.68	**3.36 (6)**	**3.65**	4.03 (7)
9	Being highly educated	3.59	**3.18 (10)**	**3.59**	3.88 (11)
10	Being faithful in personal religion	3.54	**2.87 (12)**	**3.45 (11)**	3.90
11	Having lots of money	3.45	**3.38 (5)**	**3.46 (10)**	3.63 (13)
12	Being married	3.27	**2.28 (13)**	**3.36**	4.03 (8)
13	Travelled the world	3.22	**3.08 (11)**	3.34	3.32 (14)
14	Having children	3.21	**2.10**	**3.27**	3.96 (9)
	Average Importance Ratings	3.64	3.17	3.63	3.98
	Total Rating	51.01	44.38	50.77	55.66

Differences between Non-MPO women and High-MPO women are significant (see Tables 41 and 42). Both prioritised success markers differently from the Moderate-MPO women whose priorities are closer to the overall sample's.

High-MPO women are more likely to place "Being faithful in personal religion" as an important marker for success in life. They are also more inclined towards considering "Having children" a marker of success, even though it remains low in priority compared to the other given factors. "Work-life balance" is deprioritised (rank 4) by the High-MPO women, while it is the top marker for Non-MPO women. While there is less difference in the position "Having a successful career" held among all three MPO levels, Non-MPO women are more likely to hold "Having lots of money" as a relatively high priority marker of success (rank 6) as compared to the rest of the sample and the other two MPO levels among women (i.e. High-MPO and Moderate-MPO women).

Table 41 – Markers of success (ranked), by women's MPO		Means Ranked		
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Non-MPO Women	Moderate-MPO Women	High-MPO Women
1	Being an upright person	3	1	2
2	Having work-life balance	1	2	4
3	Being contented	2	3	3
4	Being close to family	4	4	**1**
5	Owning a house	5	5	6
6	Contributing to society	7	8	5
7	Having a successful career	8	6	8
8	Having close friends	10	7	9
9	Being highly educated	9	9	10
10	Being faithful in personal religion	11	10	**7**
11	Having lots of money	**6**	11	13
12	Being married	13	13	12
13	Travelled the world	12	12	14
14	Having children	14	14	**11**

Table 42 – Markers of success (mean scores), by women's MPO		Mean Score [/5] ( ) = rank for category different from overall **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Non-MPO and High-MPO** **Bolded** = statistically significant difference from between **Moderate-MPO and High-MPO**			
Rank (Overall)	Markers of Success	Overall	Non-MPO Women	Moderate-MPO Women	High-MPO Women
1	Being an upright person	4.04	**3.80 (3)**	**4.01**	4.24 (2)
2	Having work-life balance	3.99	**3.86 (1)**	**3.91**	4.22 (4)
3	Being contented	3.96	**3.80 (2)**	**3.89**	4.22
4	Being close to family	3.93	**3.65**	**3.78**	4.29 (1)
5	Owning a house	3.72	**3.56**	**3.63**	3.91 (6)
6	Contributing to society	3.71	**3.44 (7)**	**3.52 (8)**	3.92 (5)
7	Having a successful career	3.71	**3.40 (8)**	**3.58 (6)**	3.88 (8)
8	Having close friends	3.68	**3.32 (10)**	**3.57 (7)**	3.81 (9)
9	Being highly educated	3.59	**3.33**	**3.45**	3.77 (10)
10	Being faithful in personal religion	3.54	**3.08 (11)**	**3.44**	3.88 (7)
11	Having lots of money	3.45	3.45 (6)	3.33	3.48 (13)
12	Being married	3.27	**1.80 (13)**	**3.05 (13)**	3.70
13	Travelled the world	3.22	3.05 (12)	3.14 (12)	3.22 (14)
14	Having children	3.21	**1.74**	**2.99**	3.74 (11)
	Average Importance Ratings	3.64	3.23	3.52	3.88
	Total Rating	51.01	45.27	49.28	54.28

How Life Success Priorities Shape Views on Marriage and Parenthood

Logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine how success markers predict respondents' MPO (see Tables 43 and 44).

A multinomial model was first conducted to assess how the 14 success markers jointly predicted categorical differences across the three MPO levels. Results showed that the model fitted well (Pearson χ^2 p = .705) and explained 34% of variance (Nagelkerke R^2 = .34). The most significant markers differentiating the MPO levels are "Being married"; "Having children"; and "Being an upright person" being related to moderate/High-MPO, while material success markers (money, travel) are inversely related. The model correctly classified 63% on the overall, best classification accuracy for the Moderate-MPO group (81%).

Table 43 – Multinomial logistic regression: Effects of Success Markers on Probability of Belonging to Moderate- or High-MPO Groups (vs Non-MPO)		
Success Marker	**Moderate-MPO vs Non-MPO (direction + % change in likelihood per 1-point increase)**	**High-MPO vs Non-MPO (direction + % change in likelihood per 1-point increase)**
Having a successful career	**11% more likely to be Moderate-MPO**	**25% more likely to be High-MPO**
Having lots of money	**23% more likely to be Non-MPO**	**27% more likely to be Non-MPO**
Travelled the world	**16% more likely to be Non-MPO**	**35% more likely to be Non-MPO**
Owning a house	**8% more likely Moderate-MPO**	No meaningful effect
Being highly educated	**12% more likely to be Non-MPO**	**17% more likely to be Non-MPO**
Being married	**73% more likely to be Moderate-MPO**	**132% more likely to be High-MPO**
Having children	**96% more likely to be Moderate-MPO**	**172% more likely to be High-MPO**
Having work-life balance	4% more likely Moderate-MPO *(Not Statistically Significant)*	16% more likely High-MPO *(Not Statistically Significant)*
Having close friends	5% more likely Non-MPO *(Not Statistically Significant)*	12% more likely Non-MPO *(Not Statistically Significant)*
Being close to family	No meaningful effect	**31% more likely High-MPO**
Being contented	12% more likely Moderate-MPO *(Not Statistically Significant)*	24% more likely High-MPO (marginal significance)
Being an upright person	**32% more likely Moderate-MPO**	**62% more likely High-MPO**
Being faithful in religion	Slight tendency toward Non-MPO *(Not Statistically Significant)*	No meaningful effect
Contributing to society	No meaningful effect	18% more likely High-MPO *(Not Statistically Significant)*

To further investigate the distinction between each of the MPO groups three binary logistic regression models were conducted to examine pairwise contrasts across MPO levels. Results indicate that concepts of "life success" shifts across MPO levels.

Across all three comparisons, the models were statistically significant ($p < .001$), confirming that people's definitions of success are strongly linked to their outlook on family formation or MPO levels. However, the strength of prediction varied according to how far apart the compared groups were.

The Non-MPO vs High-MPO model achieved the highest explanatory power (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .62$, 86.6% accuracy), reflecting a clear, pronounced attitudinal divide between those least and most oriented toward marriage and parenthood. The Non- vs Moderate model followed ($R^2 = .30$, 84.1% accuracy), while the Moderate- vs High-MPO model ($R^2 = .21$, 69.7% accuracy) captured subtler differences between those already inclined toward family ideals, suggesting that it is less easy to differentiate between the two based on the markers we have used.

Dimension	Non-MPO vs Moderate-MPO	Moderate-MPO vs High-MPO	Non-MPO vs High-MPO
Model Fit	$\chi^2(14) = 271.3$, $p < .001$	$\chi^2(14) = 295.2$, $p < .001$	$\chi^2(14) = 514.9$, $p < .001$
Explained Variance	Cox & Snell $R^2 = .18$ Nagelkerke $R^2 = .30$	Cox & Snell $R^2 = .15$ Nagelkerke $R^2 = .21$	Cox & Snell $R^2 = .43$ Nagelkerke $R^2 = .62$
Overall Accuracy	84.1 %	69.7 %	86.6 %
Accuracy by Group*	Non-MPO = 29 % Moderate = 97 %	Moderate = 85 % High-MPO = 46 %	Non-MPO = 68 % Very = 93 %
Top Positive Predictors for the comparatively stronger MPO (with each 1-point shift for respective marker)	• Having children (97% more likely) • Being married (75% more likely) • Moral uprightness (33% more likely)	• Having children (38% more likely) • Being married (36% more likely) • Family closeness (32% more likely) • Moral uprightness (22% more likely) • Contributing to society (18% more)	• Having children (173% more likely) • Being married (116% more likely) • Moral uprightness (71% more likely) • Contributing to society (34% more likely) • Career success (38% more likely)
Negative Predictors (with each 1-point shift for respective marker, inclination to the lower MPO group)	• Having lots of money (24% more likely Non-MPO) • Travelled the world (16% more likely Non-MPO)	• Travelled the world (22% more likely Moderate-MPO)	• Travelled the world (34% more likely Non-MPO) • Having lots of money (31% more likely Non-MPO)
Non-Significant Predictors	Owning a house, education, friends, contentment, religion, work-life balance	Owning a house, education, friends, contentment, money, religion	Owning a house, education, friends, contentment, religion

**Note: The lower classification rate for Non-MPO respondents is attributable to unequal group sizes and shared attitudinal characteristics with the Moderate-MPO group, not to deficiencies in model fit.*

Table 44 - Life-Success Values across MPO Levels (Binary Logistic Regressions)

The progression from Non- to Moderate-MPO (Non-MPO vs Moderate-MPO)

Respondents who began to place greater emphasis on having children, being married, and living uprightly were much more likely to hold a Moderate-MPO. Conversely, those who valued wealth or world travel as part of a successful life were more likely to fall under Non-MPO.

This pattern suggests that the earliest move toward a pro-family mindset involves a rejection of material and experiential measures of success, and embracing an attitude that values marriage and parenthood in life.

The transition from Moderate to High-MPO (Moderate-MPO vs High-MPO)

The difference between Moderate and High-MPO respondents lies not in the emergence of new ideals but in the strengthening of already held preferences for marriage and parenthood as success markers in life. The same family-related ideals remain central, but their intensity increases.

High-MPO respondents attach stronger importance to marriage, parenthood, and family closeness. They also place higher value on moral uprightness and contributing to society. Those who comparatively prioritised leisure or travel remain less likely to reach the highest level of MPO.

The MPO worldview (Non-MPO vs High-MPO)

Differences across the Non-MPO and High-MPO groups are the most striking. High-MPOs are almost three times as likely as those Non-MPO to hold marriage and parenthood as markers that define life success. They are also significantly more likely to value moral uprightness and social contribution. On the contrary, valuing monetary wealth and travelling experiences are consistent markers of Non-MPO. This comparison reinforces the idea that "MPO" is not simply a preference for family life but a worldview.

Taken together, the results indicate that a family- and virtue-based definition of life success is the strongest attitudinal mark of High-MPO, whereas materialistic or self-focused ideals are associated with weaker MPO orientation. The three binary models outline a progressively moral-familial inclination in how individuals define success. As MPO orientation increases, success becomes less about achievement, status, or experience, and increasingly about integrity, responsibility, marriage and parenthood.

Comments and Recommendations

Generally, our findings strongly suggest that values and worldviews, including attitudes towards success, play a significant role in shaping people's attitudes towards marriage and parenthood.

We make the following key observations:

1. On marriage and parenthood, values matter

Our findings indicate that positive views of and aspirations towards marriage and parenthood – which we have termed "marriage and parenthood orientation" (MPO) – strongly correlate with a range of other attitudes, reflecting differences in conceptions, values and attitudes towards marriage and parenting.

People with High-MPO are less likely to choose to delay marriage and parenthood. They are slightly more inclined to see marriage as a union where neither party sacrifices more.

Singaporean respondents generally view markers of personal success similarly across both sexes and across a range of marital parenthood status and MPO. However, there are some distinct differences among those with High-MPO, who are more likely to consider family relationships, being faithful in personal religion, being married and having children as markers of success.

Highly positive views of and aspirations towards marriage and parenthood (i.e. High-MPO) appear to also moderate the impact of factors which may discourage parenthood – such as cost of raising children and other financial considerations. People with High-MPO are least discouraged by factors that may discourage parenthood, while it is the reverse for those who are Non-MPO.

Thus, it would appear that the desire for marriage and children depends more on worldview than wealth.

2. Deeper attitudes may underlie perceived financial cost of raising children

Although the "high cost of raising children" has consistently ranked as the top consideration that will discourage respondents from parenthood, our findings hint at deeper attitudes underlying these perceived costs.

When examined according to income levels (see Tables 27 and 28), respondents earning less than $2,001 per month tended to indicate the "high cost of raising children" at greatest intensity.

However, the intensity progressively decreases for those with higher income levels, with the lowest levels of discouragement reported by those earning $6,001-$8,000 per month. The intensity then increases for those with higher income levels.

This suggests that, beyond a certain income level, individuals may be assessing the cost of parenthood through the lens of maintaining a certain quality of life instead of meeting the needs of children.

3. Gaps in attitudes between men and women

Generally, our survey found that women are more likely than men to say that women sacrifice more in marriage and parenthood.

Significantly fewer men (26%) than women (49%) say that the wife will sacrifice more in marriage. The figures are likewise for parenthood, with significantly fewer men (33%) than women (57%) say that mothers will sacrifice more in parenthood.

In our "Marriage, Family and Social Discourse" survey 2024, we had made some similar findings about gaps in attitudes between men and women towards marriage and family.[4]

These perceptions suggest a significant mismatch of expectations between men and women regarding marriage and parenthood, which merits greater attention.

[4] Cultivate SG, "Marriage, Family and Social Discourse Survey 2024" (15 November 2024): https://cultivate.sg/research-recommend/marriage-family-and-social-discourse-survey-2024/.

Recommendations:

1. Worldviews, values and attitudes towards marriage and parenthood matter. Thus, on top of various forms of practical and financial support to help Singaporeans achieve their marriage and parenthood aspirations, more attention should be placed on value-forming, relational strategies and the cultural ecosystem. These may include public or community-based education campaigns, mentoring programmes, and community role models that normalise marriage and parenthood as aspirational life milestones.

2. Even as attitudes towards success are changing in Singapore, it is important to emphasise more holistic visions of success on an individual, familial and societal level. Such a vision of success may include having and fulfilling personal aspirations for marriage and parenthood, and building a thriving family life.

3. While there are frequent career-related talks and workshops for young people in schools and institutions of higher learning, it is important to broaden the scope of such talks to cover whole life planning. This includes incorporating family life into career-related talks and actively addressing the topic of family life (e.g. work-life balance, caregiving of children and elderly, etc.), so that family is wired in as an important consideration in one's life journey and pursuit of success.

4. It is important to bridge the differences between men and women in attitudes towards marriage and parenthood. Policies should recognise the unique and complementary contributions of both men and women not only in public life, but in domestic life also. These may include making greater effort to normalise caregiving roles and expand flexible work for both sexes, and encourage mutual partnership in marriage.

Recommendations:

5. It is strongly recommended that the Government make more effort in reaching out to both men and women aged 18-44 to hear their concerns and hopes for marriage and family life. It is also important for more effort to be invested to reach Singaporeans who already are parents but at a relatively young age. These Singaporeans may currently be busy trying to balance work and family life and thus have little ability to find time to participate in feedback exercises. The Government can consider pursuing their views more intentionally, creating more opportunities that suit their availabilities in order to collect valuable feedback.

Annex: About this survey

Methodology

Pureprofile was commissioned to conduct the fieldwork from 22 Aug 2025 to 9 Sep 2025, reaching 2,019 Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents aged 21-45. The survey was a self-administered online questionnaire available only in English. We have chosen to only survey people between ages 21-45 as that is the mainstream age range for marriage and parenthood.

To ensure that the demographic proportions closely approximate the national 21-45 population, overall responses for each question covered in this report are weighted in terms of age cohort, sex, race and religion with reference to prevailing Singapore resident demographics.

All figures in this report are rounded off for readability. As a result, percentages may not sum to exactly 100% due to rounding differences.

Limitations

As the survey was purely self-administered online, respondents tend to be from the demography that is more "connected" and technologically savvy. It may therefore not have reached respondents who are more offline and beyond the typical ready-reach for online market research panels.

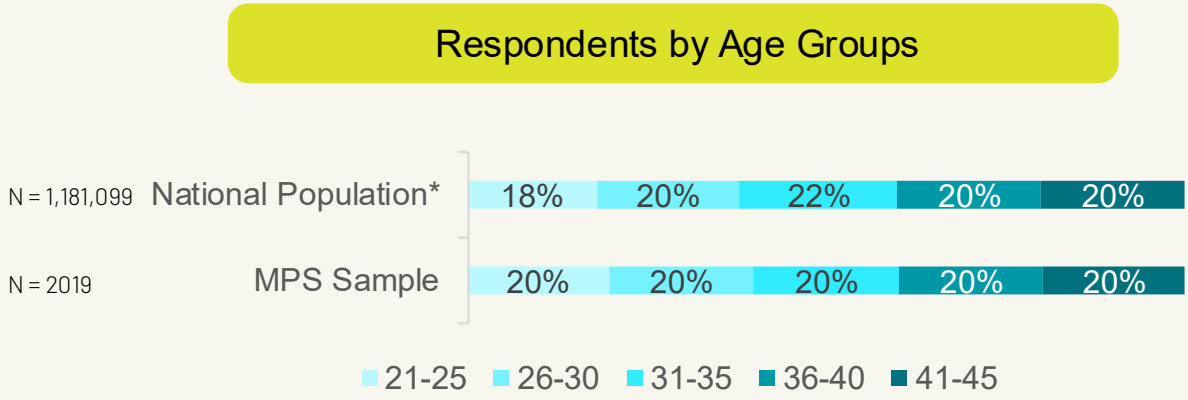
As the questionnaire was only in English, participation in this survey is limited to only English speakers. There may also be some difficulty understanding and responding to the survey if a respondent's command of the language is weaker.

Most of our 998 married respondents were married before the age of 30. This suggests that the proportion of Moderate and High-MPO individuals in our sample may be somewhat higher than in the broader population, given that earlier marriage tends to correlate with stronger family orientation. Nevertheless, the findings remain valuable as they shed light on how differing levels of MPO relate to one's worldview, sense of success, and attitudes toward marriage and parenthood.

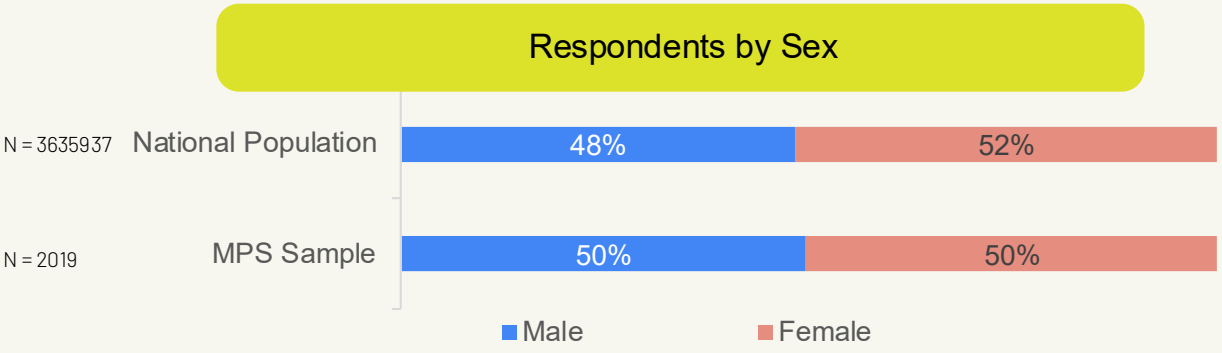
Despite these limitations, the survey offers important insights into the perspectives and attitudes of a nationally representative sample of Singaporeans aged 21–45. As with all surveys, caution should be exercised when generalising the results to the wider population, given the constraints inherent in the survey's sampling and self-reported design.

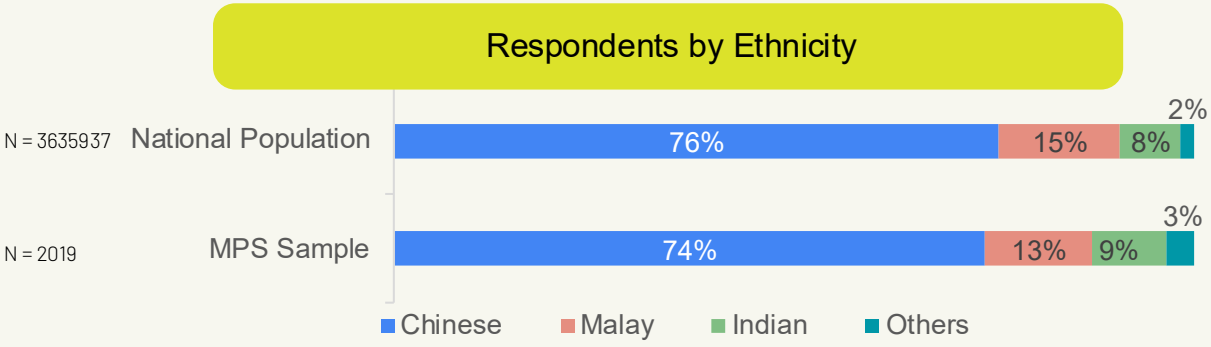
Demographics

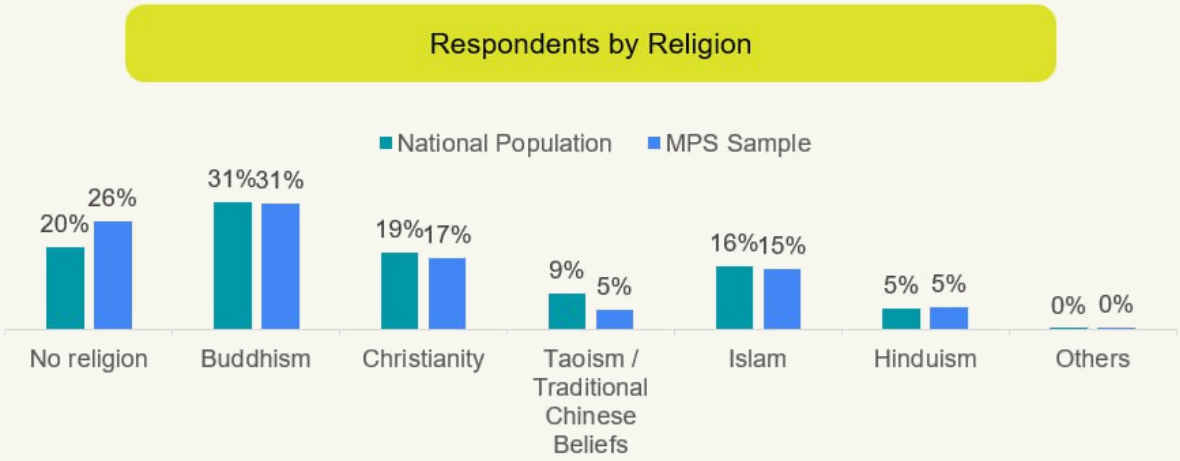
The following charts provide a breakdown of our respondents in our Marriage, Parenthood and Success (MPS) survey, as compared to the national population sample.



*National population base (ages 21–45) was derived using Singapore census 5-year age bands. Counts for ages 21–24 and 45–45 were estimated by allocating 80% of the 20–24 group and 20% of the 45–49 group respectively, using linear interpolation. The combined estimated population aged 21–45 is approximately 1.18 million.
Chart shows normalized proportions that were used as weighting targets.



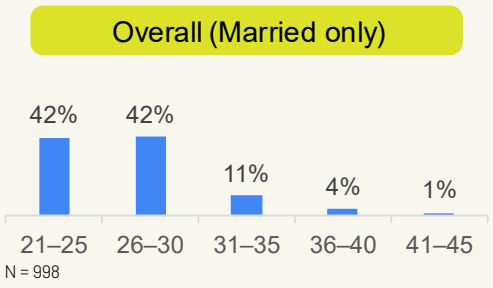


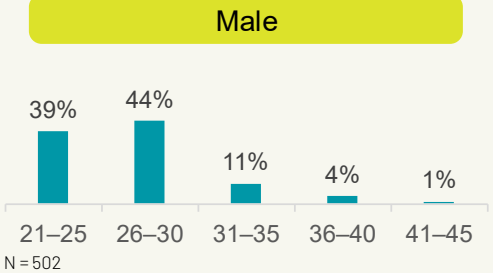


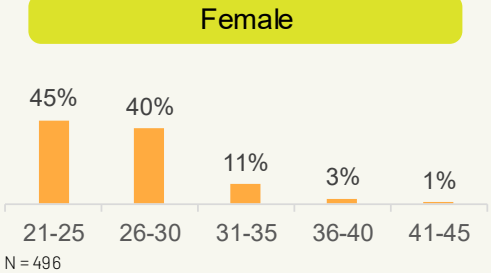
National Population N = 3459093*;
Sample N = 2019
*Figures for Religion taken from SingStat, Census of Population 2020
Q: What is your religious faith?

The following charts provide a breakdown of our respondents in their marital age, monthly income and housing type.

Age (First Married)

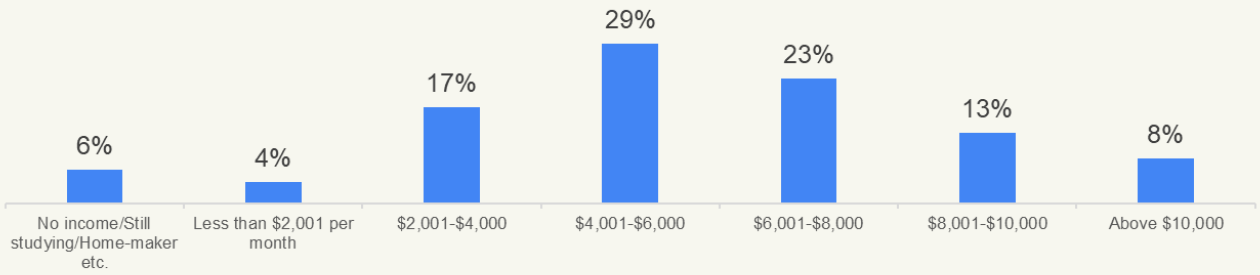






Q: At what age did you first get married?

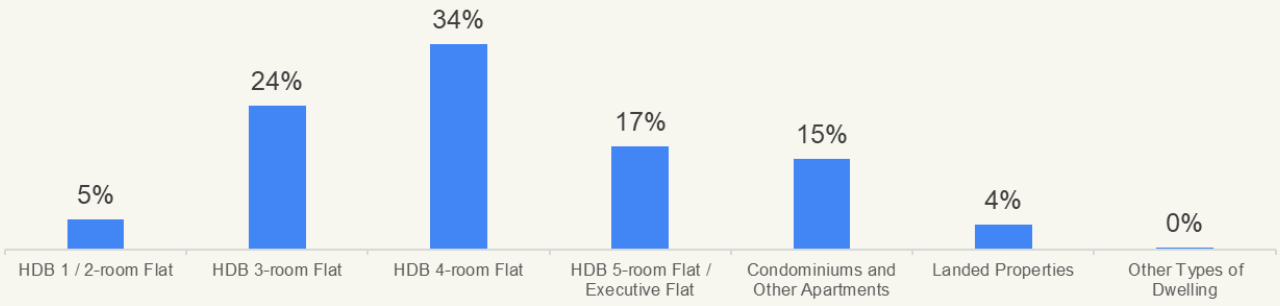
Respondents by Income Group



N = 2019

Q: What is your gross monthly income level?

Respondents by Housing Type



N = 2019

Q: What type of house do you live in?