

UNPAID WORK

A study on the behaviours and attitudes towards household and domestic caring responsibilities in Singapore

A collaborative study by Ipsos and United Women Singapore



GAME CHANGERS

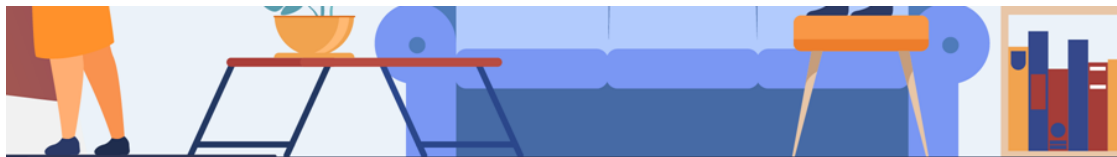


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY I

More on the shoulders of women which limits their well-being and career growth

- Despite close to 9 in 10 agreeing that household chores can be equally shared by husband and wife, gender defined roles still exist in the Singapore household. In general, cleaning, cooking and childcaring are taken on more by the women. Whereas responsibilities that perhaps need more physical strength or technical knowledge such as repairs, and management of tech devices are taken on more by the men.
- The main responsibilities that the women look after are ones that require daily attention, and which have a larger ongoing impact or can potentially disrupt the regular functioning or rhythm of the household. While the men's responsibilities are likely less frequent in nature such as paying bills or household repairs.
- With more responsibilities sitting on the shoulders of women, fewer women (54%) than men (75%) say they are happy about their household and caring responsibilities. This gap is wider between mothers (47%) and fathers (78%).

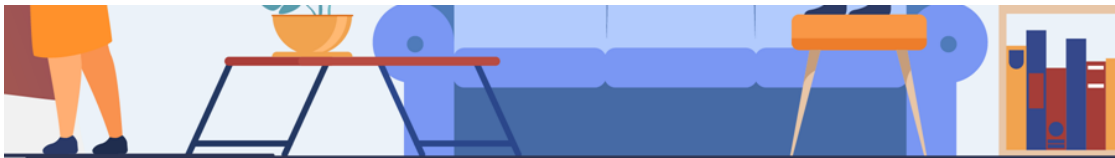


- Only about 1 in 2 women say they have enough personal time to look after their physical, mental and emotional well-being. This contrasts with 68% of men who say this of themselves. This disparity is more pronounced between mothers (45%) and fathers (67%).
- Close to 2 in 3 parents also agree that they are limited in the career that they can build or the jobs they can take because of child caring responsibilities. Again, slightly more so among mothers (64%) than fathers (58%).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY II

A gradual shift in attitudes between generations but more support can be given

- When asked to what extent they agreed that between husband and wife, the husband's primary responsibility is to earn enough income for the family and the wife's primary responsibility is to look after the needs of the household, 32% of women and 41% of men in Singapore agreed.
- Sharing of household responsibilities is more balanced between married couples below 34 years old. For example, when it comes to House cleaning, 38% of married women below 34 years old say that this is a task fairly shared between her and her spouse. In contrast with just 28% of married women between 35 – 44 years of age who say the task is shared. The contrast is greater on a task such as paying of bills, with 55% of women below 34 years old say that this is a shared responsibility, versus 27% of women between 35 – 44 years old who say the task is shared.



- More flexible work arrangements such as working from home, especially for mothers prove to be very helpful for women in balancing of responsibilities at work and at home. Happiness levels tend to improve significantly among women who are able to work from home. 25% of women who were working from home say they were very happy to be doing their domestic responsibilities, compared to only 8% of women who are not working from home.
- Only about 1 in 2 agree that men and women who stay home to take care of children or elderly are recognized for the value they bring to society. Hence more recognition can be accorded to the value of unpaid care work that Singaporean women bring to society.

METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

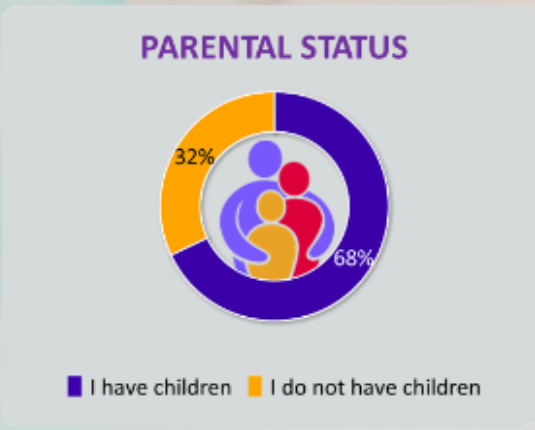
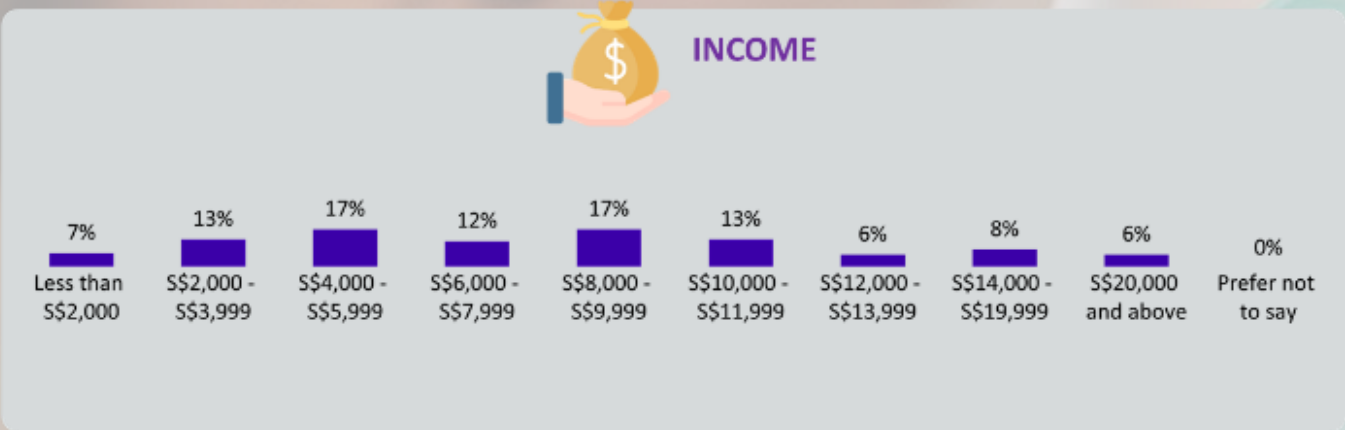
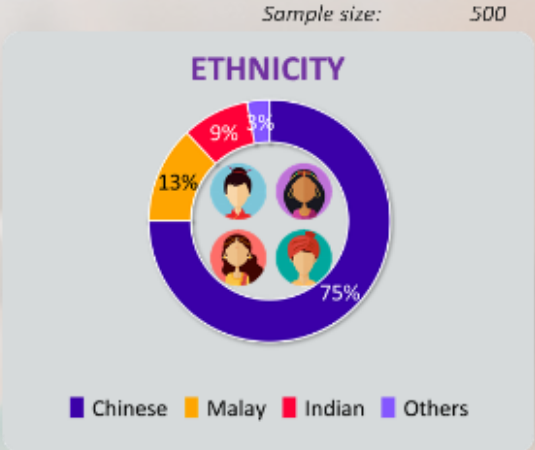
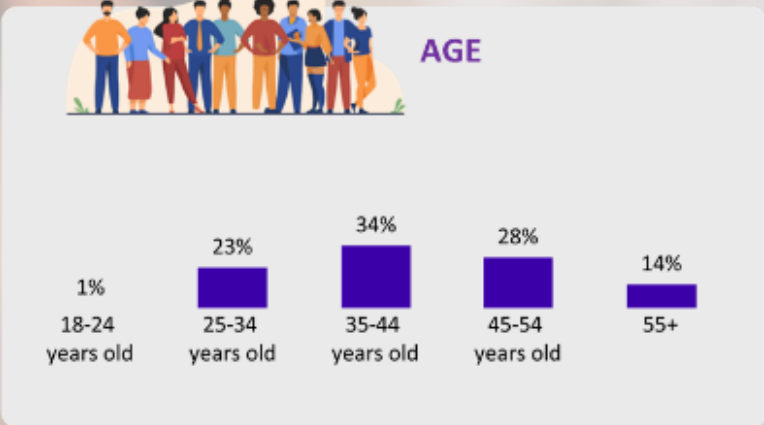
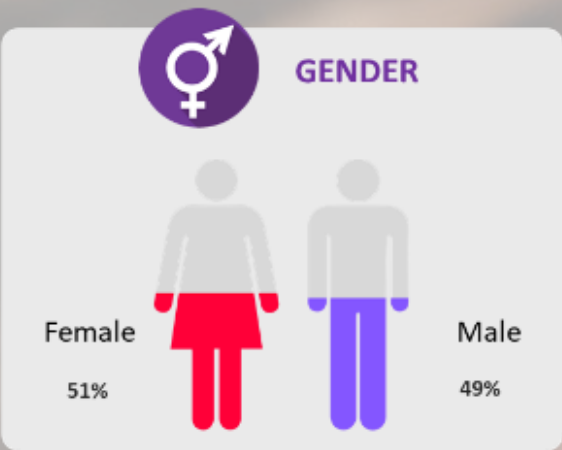
The **quantitative** study was conducted via Ipsos' online panel from **12th to 25th Nov 2020**.

A sample of **n=500 Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents** were surveyed.

The sample consists of **those married with no children or with children where the youngest child is < 19 years old**. This includes fostered, adopted, or other young relatives in the household where there is a significant caregiving role.

Quotas were placed on race and gender to match the general population, while maintaining a fair spread of income levels.

This study is supplemented with **qualitative** research which was conducted via an online Focus Group Discussion with 5 women on **17th Nov 2020**.



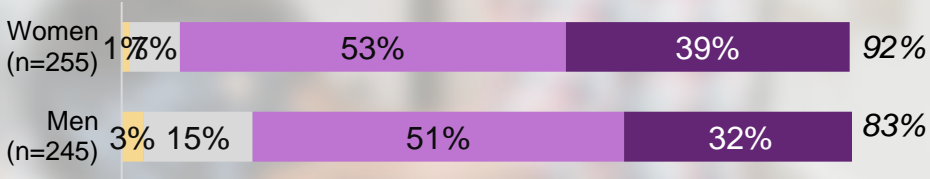
Profile		No. of respondents
Married women age 20 years old and above, working full time	Women without children	2
	Women with a young child (below 10 years old)	1
	Women with older/grownup children (above 10 years old)	2

Close to 9 in 10 agree that household chores can be equally shared by husband and wife. However, a significant proportion agree that roles are gender specific.

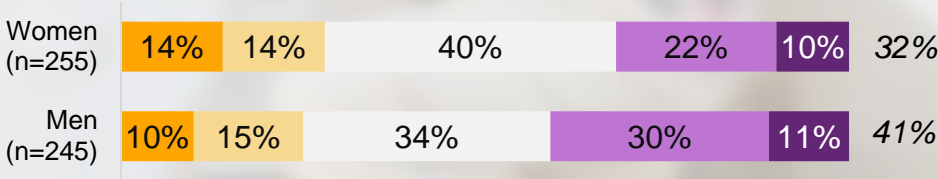
ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOUSEHOLD & CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly Agree

I believe household chores can be **equally shared by husband and wife**

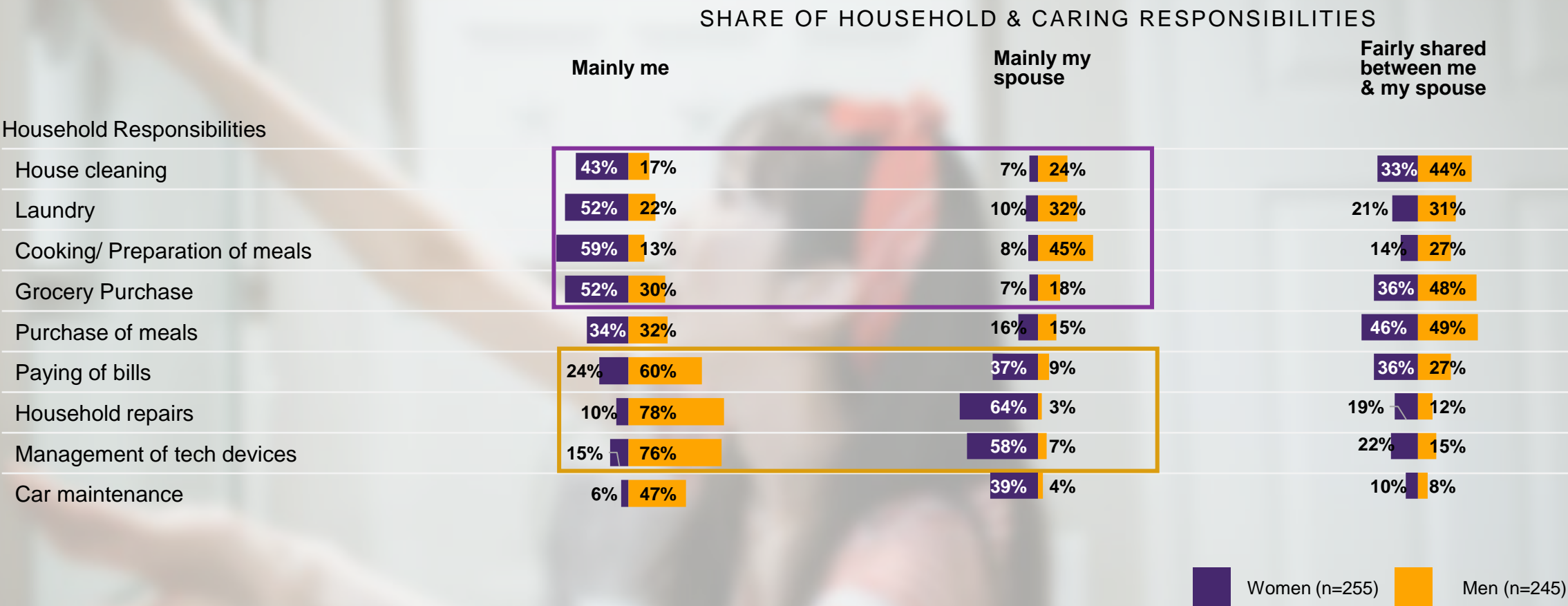


Between husband and wife, the **husband's** primary responsibility is **to earn enough income** for the family and the **wife's** primary responsibility is **to look after the needs of the household**



Agreement is higher among older respondents

More women take on the daily household responsibilities of cleaning and laundry, while men take on lower frequency tasks such as household repairs and management of tech devices.



Gender roles may persist due to pressure from the extended family

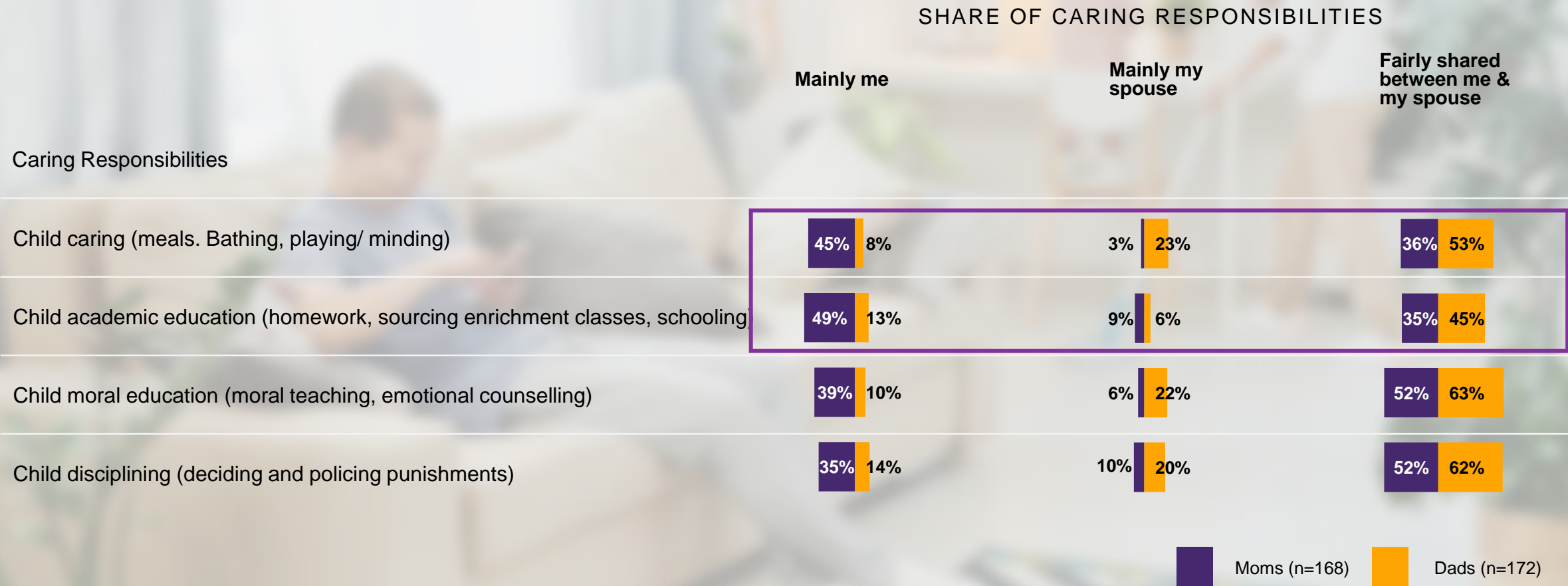


... When my in-laws used to come and visit me, it was not considered very good. They did not like their son pitching in with the household chores.. Even when my parents visited me, they did not see it in a positive light.

Perceiving this, I used to refuse to let him help me and the workload on me used to increase by 2-3 times. I had to be in the driver's seat when it comes to home responsibilities.

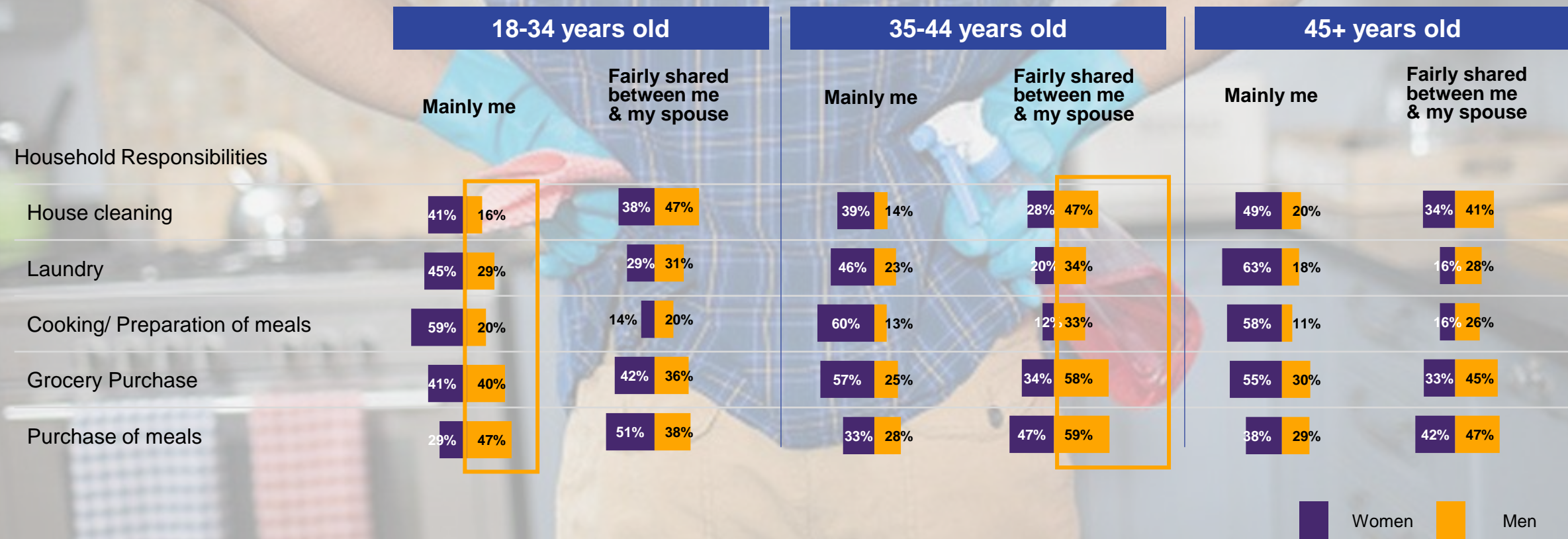
FGD Resp #3

Almost 1 in 2 moms say the responsibility of childcaring and academic education lies mainly with them.

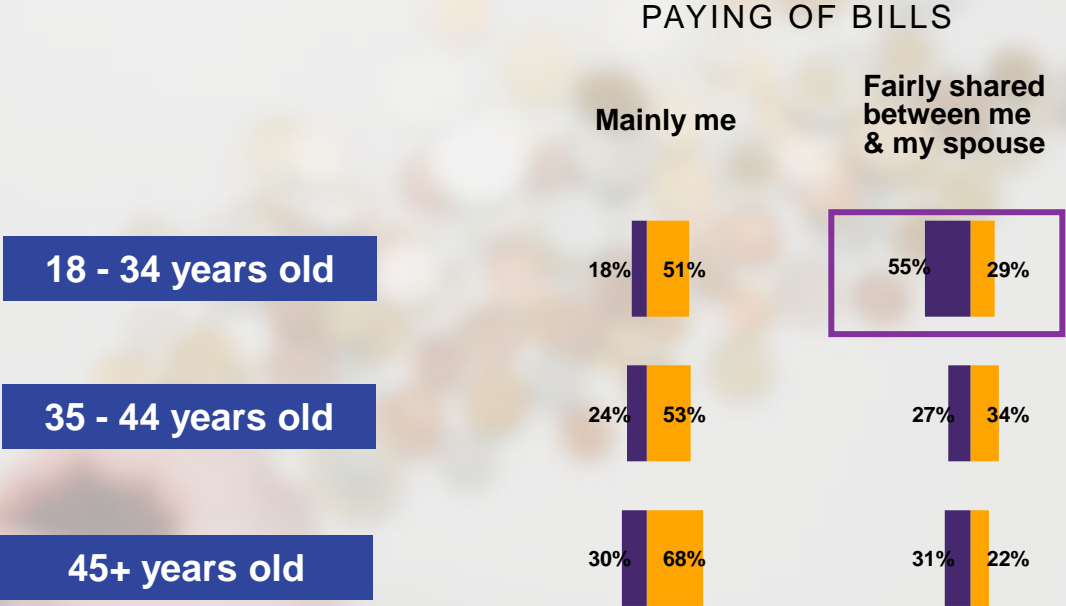


A gradual shift as more young husbands are sharing tasks like household cleaning, laundry and some even taking lead in grocery and meal purchases

SHARE OF HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES



Nearly twice the number of young women than men claimed that they are sharing the task of paying bills



Women Men

While a task may be carried out by the man, the woman may likely still be responsible for the decisions around that task. This contributes to an overall sense of pressure felt by the woman.



Even with a helper, the duty of guiding the helper, planning the meals is all mine so it is still not an equitable distribution of responsibilities even after outsourcing the work (....) so yeah, the running of the house is squarely in my court.”

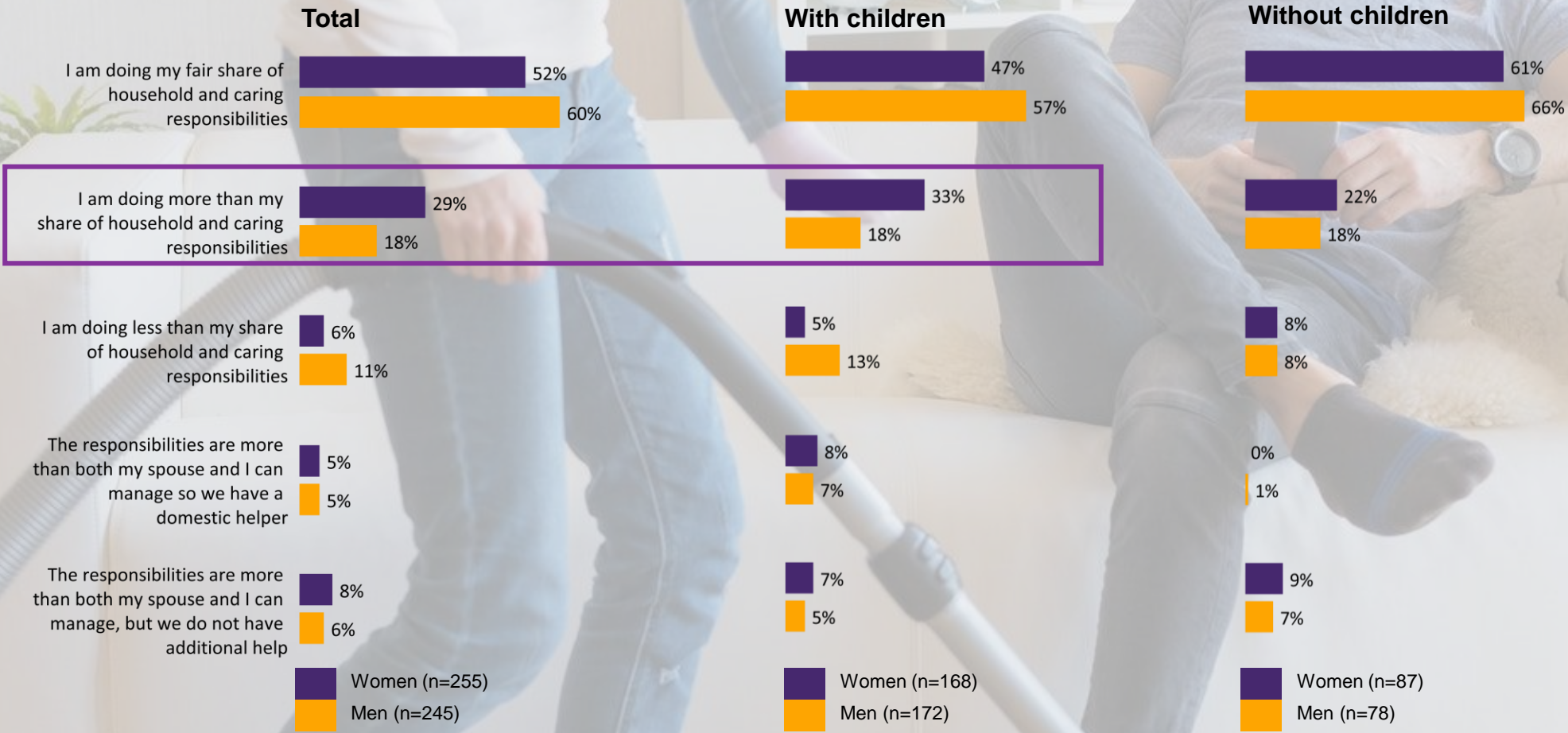
FGD Resp #1



.. Even though I had a very demanding job, a lot of travel (...) despite a lot of home help and house help, the entire responsibility of making it go through, to see it through was on my shoulders.

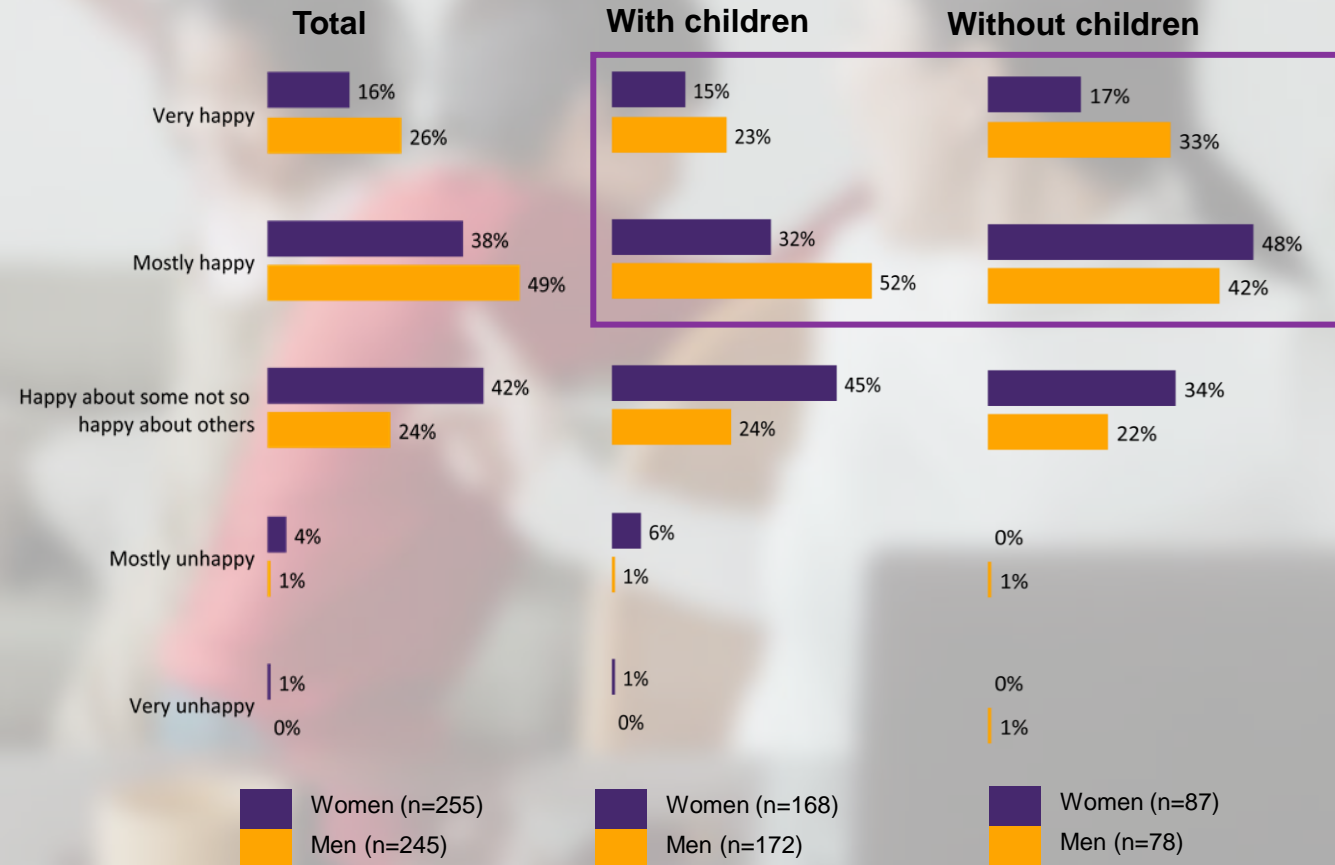
FGD Resp #2

Hence almost 3 in 10 women feel that they are doing more than their fair share, especially those with children.



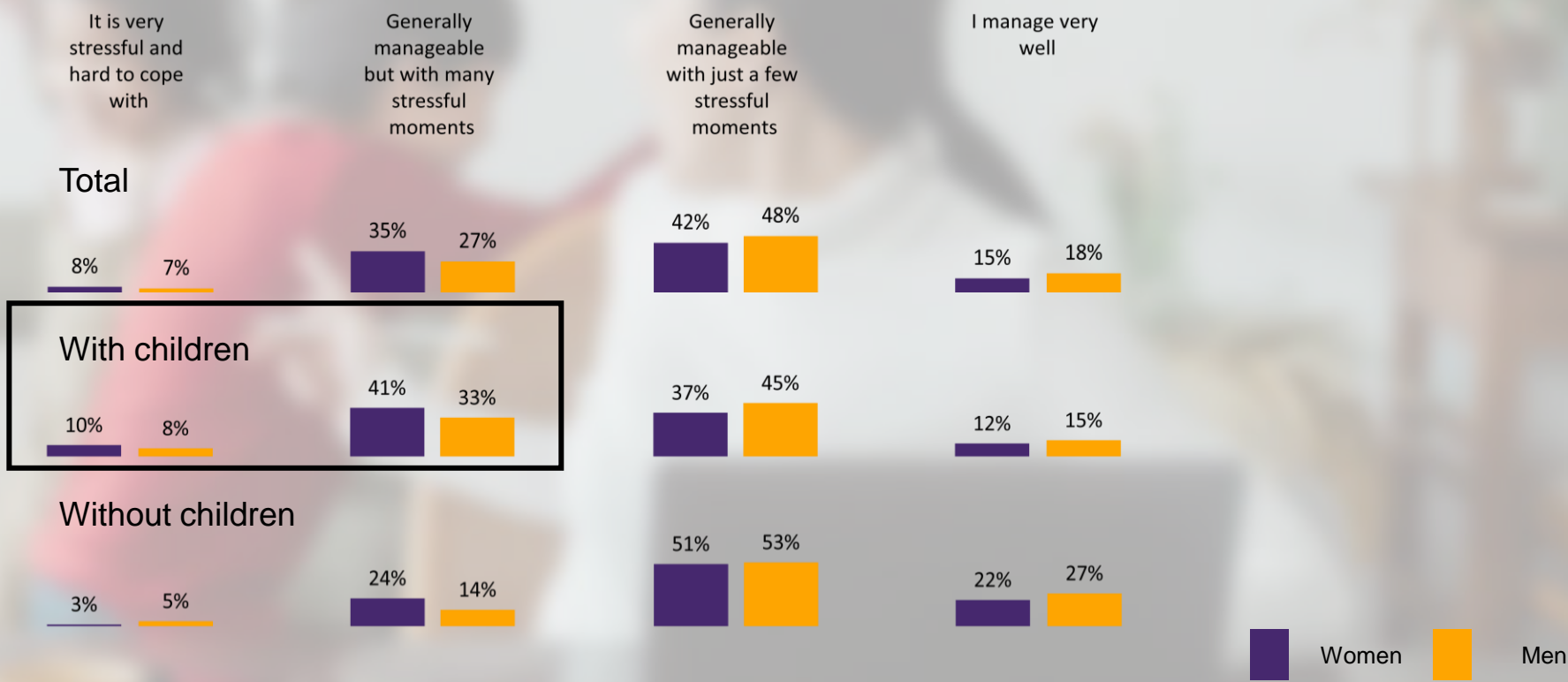
**Happiness level is the same for men with or without children but not the case for women;
The gap is wider between women with children (47%) and women without children (64%)**

SATISFACTION VS STRESS OF CARRYING OUT RESPONSIBILITIES

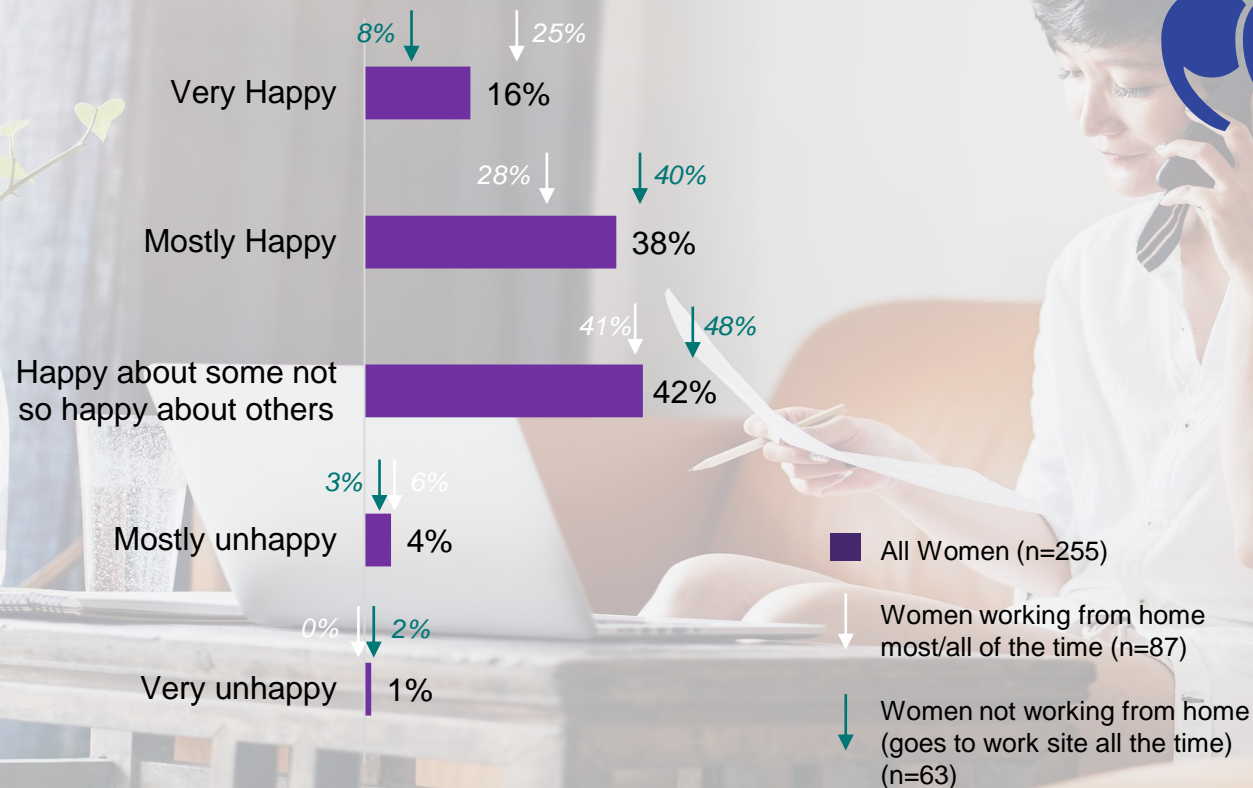


1 in 2 mothers report having many stressful moments managing their household and caring responsibilities.

SATISFACTION VS STRESS OF CARRYING OUT RESPONSIBILITIES



More women who are working from home say they are very happy as it gives them the flexibility of balancing their work and home responsibilities better.



Childcare, spending time with my toddler gives me the most satisfaction.

For me it has been a real conflict of mommy guilt - making it home on time for bedtime, making time to do a drop off or leaving work early to hang out for an afternoon. In these years it still matters and comes at a great opportunity cost for me. Because it means I am always the first rushing out of the office at work and I miss all the office socials, I have had to be really vocal, and fight quite hard (...) it was not an easy conversation with my boss.

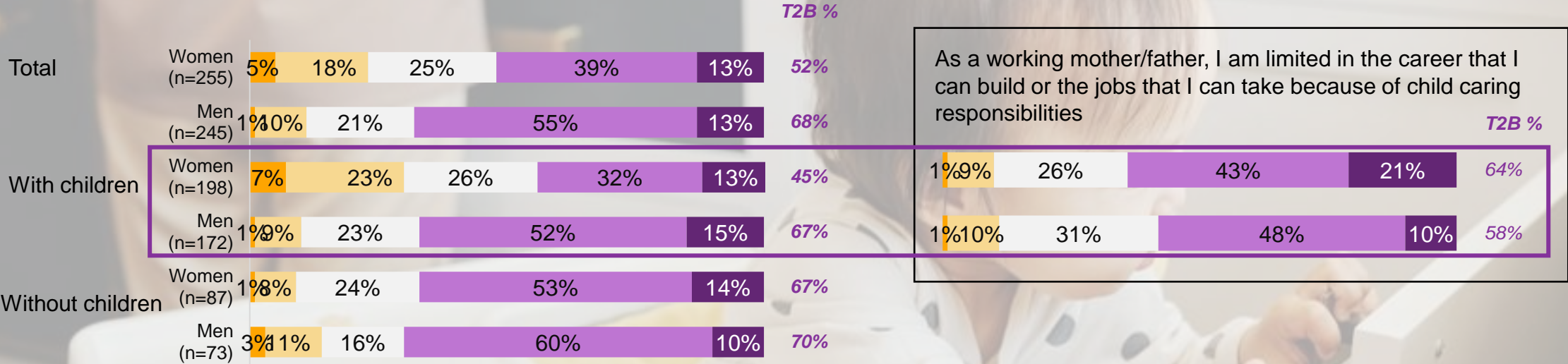
Thankfully, because of COVID I don't have to do the school runs. In the past I would have had to get myself organised, get breakfast ready, and then go wake him up, get him ready for school and get myself on time for work. And folks wonder why I show up flustered at 9 am in the morning.

FGD Resp #2

Fewer women (52%) have enough personal time to look after their well-being, compared to men (68%). The disparity is greater for parents. In addition, close to 2 in 3 moms agree that their career/job is limited due to child caring responsibilities.

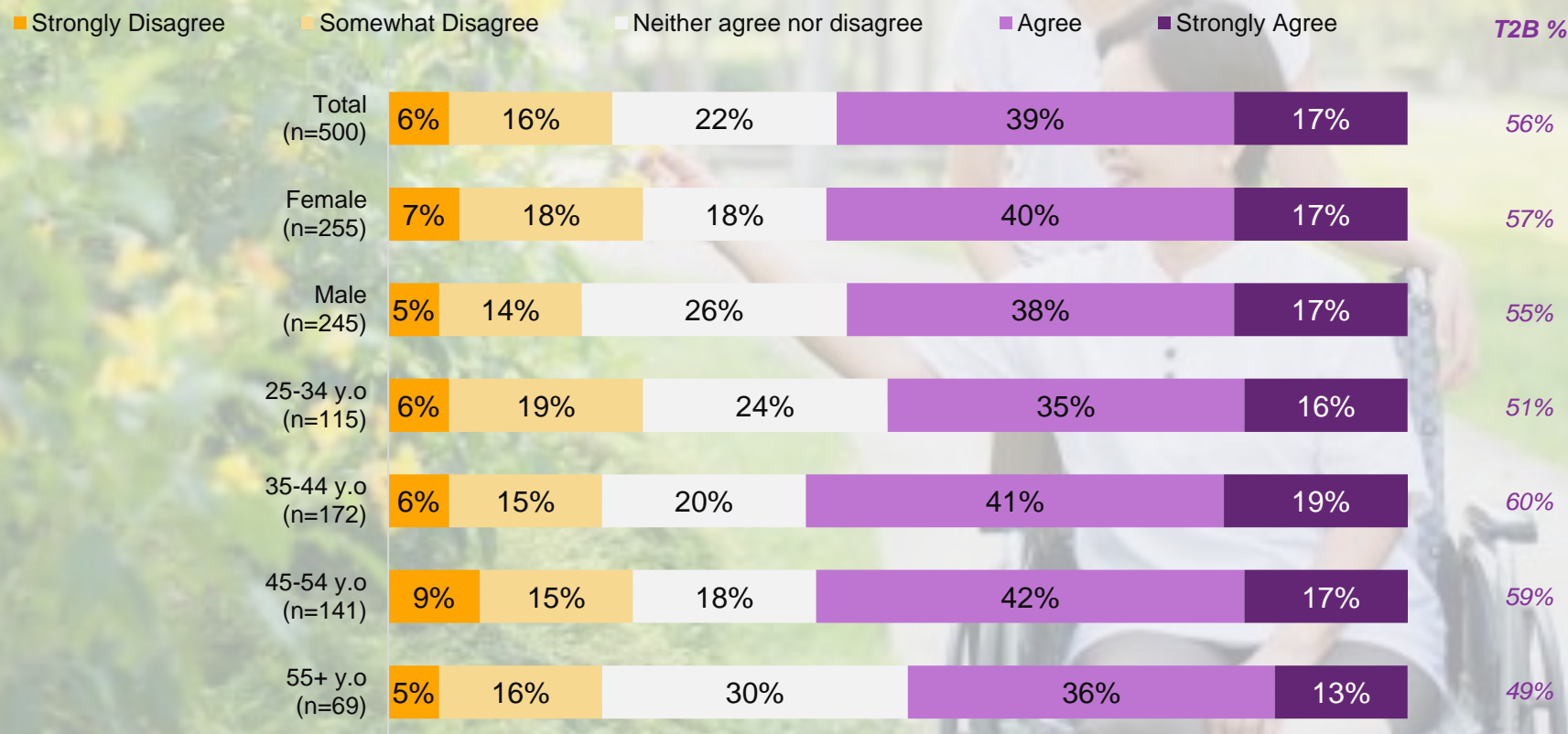
I get enough personal time to look after my well-being (physical, mental and emotional)

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly Agree



There is insufficient recognition accorded to caregivers for the value they bring to society.

Men and women who stay home to take care of children or elderly needs are recognized for the value they bring to society



RECOMMENDATIONS

Educate and advocate for mindset changes towards gender roles and 'de-feminise' the caregiving and household responsibilities

Education needs to start at an early age for boys and girls to highlight the existence of traditional gender norms and to affect a positive mindset change

Better communication between partners to align on the roles and responsibilities within the family

Highlight the differing opinions in main and shared responsibilities, to call for a more open discussion and transparent alignment on the roles & responsibilities within the family

Organisations and employers can provide better support

Educate and encourage more organisations to normalise availing of flexible work arrangements (i.e. work from home, core working hours, time off Fridays or no meetings beyond a specific time, etc), especially by their male employees to enable them to share domestic responsibilities more evenly

Celebrate and/or have greater recognition accorded to those who stay home with caring responsibilities

Amplify the great contribution of the unpaid work done through campaigns (i.e. Caregivers' Appreciation Day), enable more social support through support groups etc.

THANK YOU

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GAME CHANGERS



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United Women Singapore (UWS) is a local non-profit organisation that advances women's empowerment and gender equality, and builds a pipeline of women leaders and influencers in Singapore. The organisation works towards narrowing the gender equality gap through education and raising awareness and advocacy on issues such as anti-violence and women's empowerment, with the support of key stakeholders including corporate partners, government agencies, academia, the diplomatic community, non-profits and community groups and the wider community.

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