

IPSOS EDUCATION MONITOR 2026

Public attitudes to education
and young people

August 2026



Foreword

Are today's young people likely to have more opportunities than the generations before them? The answer increasingly depends on where in the world you ask.

This year's *Ipsos Education Monitor* reveals a generation growing up amid profound technological, economic and social change and societies that differ in how confident they are about what that change will mean.

Mental health remains the defining concern facing young people globally while anxieties around social media and Artificial Intelligence continue to grow. But attitudes towards technology are becoming more nuanced rather than simply more negative.

Support for restricting children's access to social media has strengthened in many countries. At the same time, there is growing openness to the use of AI in education. People appear increasingly

willing to distinguish between technologies they see as a potential threat to young people's wellbeing and those they believe could enhance learning and expand opportunity.

Education itself remains central to how people think about success. Higher education continues to be seen by many as an important route to career progression but there is much less consensus about whether a degree is necessary or whether it represents the same value everywhere. These differences reflect not only education systems but changing labour markets and expectations about what it now takes to succeed.

Perhaps the most striking finding is the divide in optimism about the next generation. In many emerging economies there is a strong belief that today's young people will have greater opportunities than

their parents. In several wealthier countries, that confidence is much weaker.

This raises an important question. If greater prosperity does not necessarily bring greater confidence in the future, what does?

The findings suggest that progress cannot simply be measured by what societies have achieved. It also matters whether the next generation believes there is still progress to be made and that they will have the opportunity to be part of it.

Confidence in the future cannot be taken for granted. It has to be earned through education systems, labour markets and societies that give young people credible reasons to believe they can progress.

This document contains headline data from our study. For the full question set and country-level data, please get in touch.



Christine Tresignie,

Global Head of Public Affairs,
Ipsos

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Key Findings

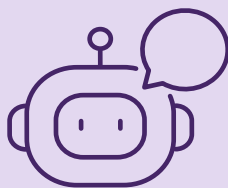
73%



support for
banning children
from social
media...

... but only

39%



think AI should be
banned in schools.

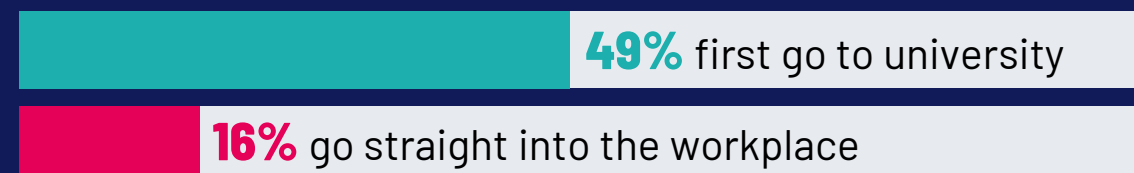
67%

say **online spaces**
are unsafe for
young people.



Mental health
challenges are
the most commonly
cited issue facing
young people.

29 of 31 countries are more **likely to recommend**
university before entering the workplace.



53%



on average think
university degrees
are **good value for**
money.

62%



believe young people
would have **better**
opportunities by
moving abroad.

Summary

People are drawing a line between social media and AI

Public attitudes towards technology are becoming more nuanced. Support for banning social media for children under 14 has increased in almost every country since 2024, with large majorities now backing restrictions. At the same time, we see more openness to the use of AI in schools, particularly in Asia.

Rather than rejecting technology outright, people appear to be developing clearer expectations about where digital tools belong, drawing distinctions between technologies perceived as harmful and those seen as useful.

The implication is a growth in expectations for more active governance, with greater pressure on governments, educators and platforms to separate innovation from harm.

University remains the default route to opportunity

Despite debates about student debt, skills shortages and alternative career pathways, university continues to be viewed as the safest route to success. Across most countries, people believe a degree helps individuals progress further in their careers, and majorities would still advise young people to attend university before entering the workforce.

Attitudes vary by age and educational background, with graduates themselves the strongest advocates for higher education. Regional differences are also evident, with Latin America particularly supportive of university, while scepticism is widespread across much of Europe.

An optimism gap is emerging between emerging and mature economies

In many emerging economies, particularly across Asia and in parts of Latin America, there is strong confidence that today's young people will enjoy a bright future and better lives than previous generations. In contrast, attitudes in many mature Western economies are considerably more pessimistic, reflecting concerns about inflation, housing affordability and declining living standards.

Whether this lack of confidence translates into a belief that young people would be better off seeking better opportunities abroad frequently depends on how strongly people view their country's economy as a challenge facing young people today.

Biggest challenge facing young people by country

Mental health challenges

- Chile (42%)
- New Zealand (40%)
- United States (38%)
- Malaysia (37%)
- Poland (36%)
- South Korea (36%)

My country's economy

- Thailand (51%)
- Argentina (49%)
- Türkiye (48%)
- Indonesia (47%)
- Romania (40%)
- Japan (40%)
- Italy (36%)



Poverty & social inequality

- Colombia (47%)
- Peru (44%)
- Brazil (43%)
- South Africa (43%)
- Mexico (37%)

Gangs & youth violence

- Sweden (49%)

Education and training systems not matching labour market demands

- India (36%)

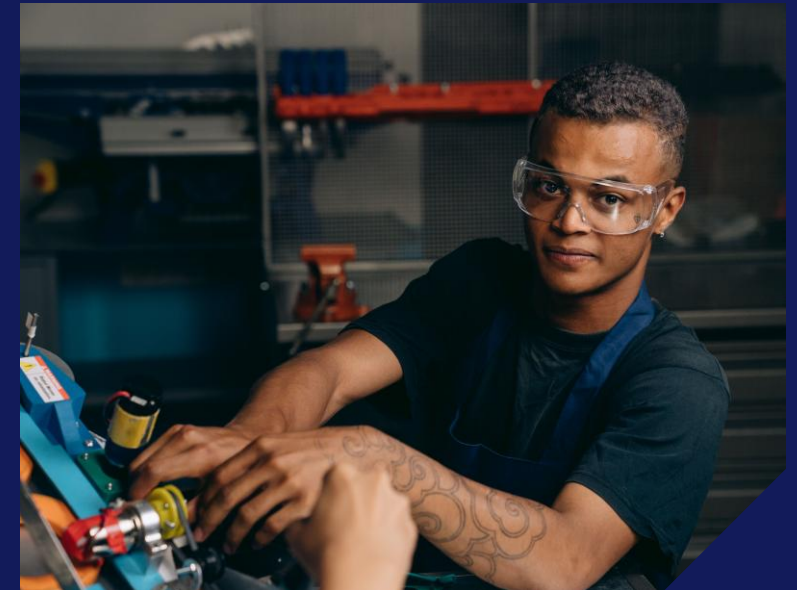


The effects of social media & technology such as AI

- Belgium (39%)
- Great Britain (37%)
- France (34%)
- Germany (30%)

Affordability & availability of housing

- Netherlands (63%)
- Spain (55%)
- Ireland (52%)
- Canada (47%)
- Hungary (45%)
- Singapore (44%)
- Australia (43%)



Is tech affecting how children grow up?

Support is growing worldwide

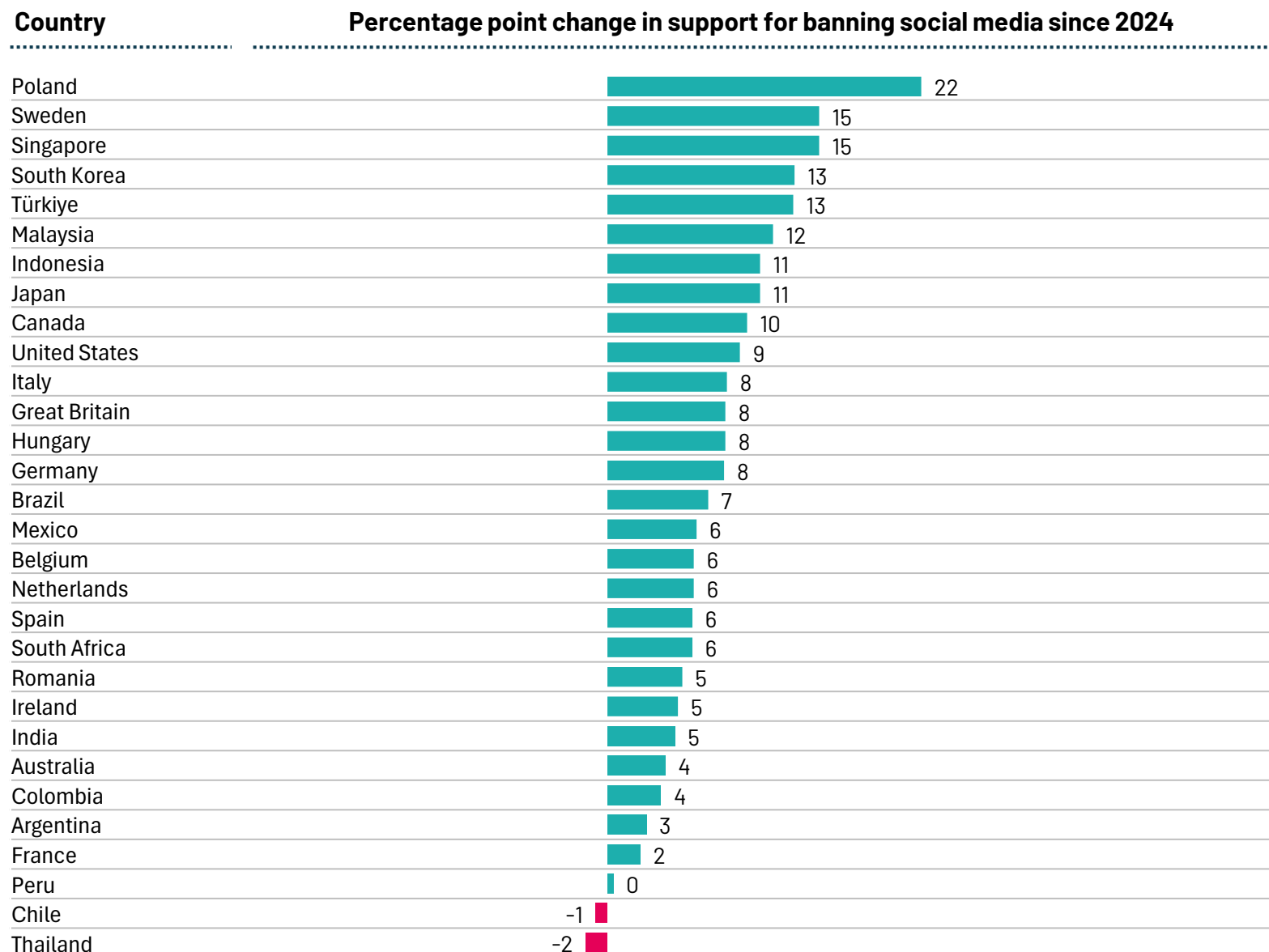
Since we first asked this question in 2024, support for a ban on social media for children has grown in all but two countries, with a number of them showing double-digit increases.

In 30 of 31 countries, a majority support banning social media. Germany (48%) is the only exception.

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- **Children under 14 should be banned from using social media both inside and outside of school**

Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.

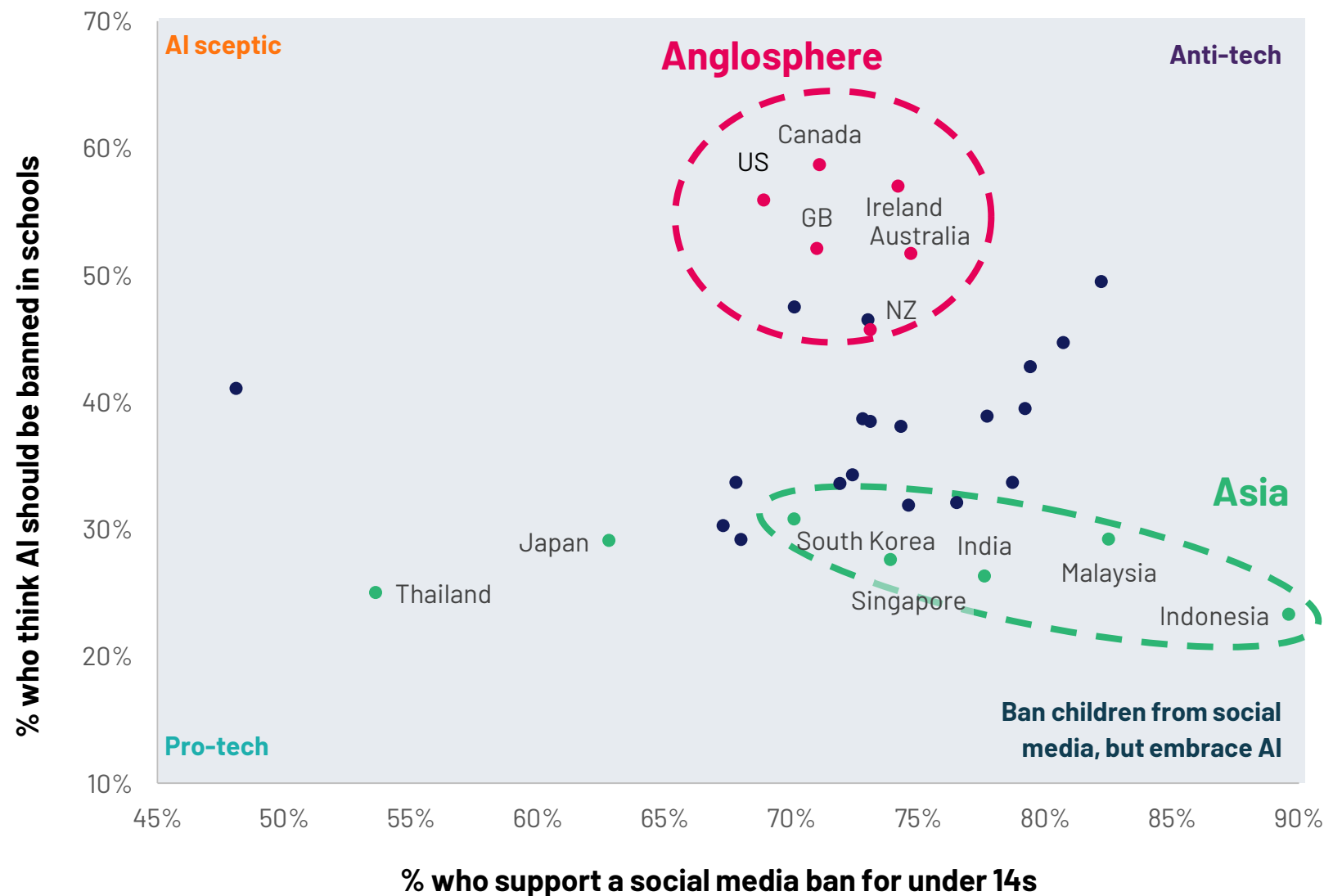


While most oppose social media for kids, many are open to AI in schools

The debate is not just tech vs no tech, but *which technologies* should young people be using.

While English-speaking countries and some of Europe are more 'tech sceptical', people in Asia are also supportive of a social media ban but feel like AI has a role in the classroom.

Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.

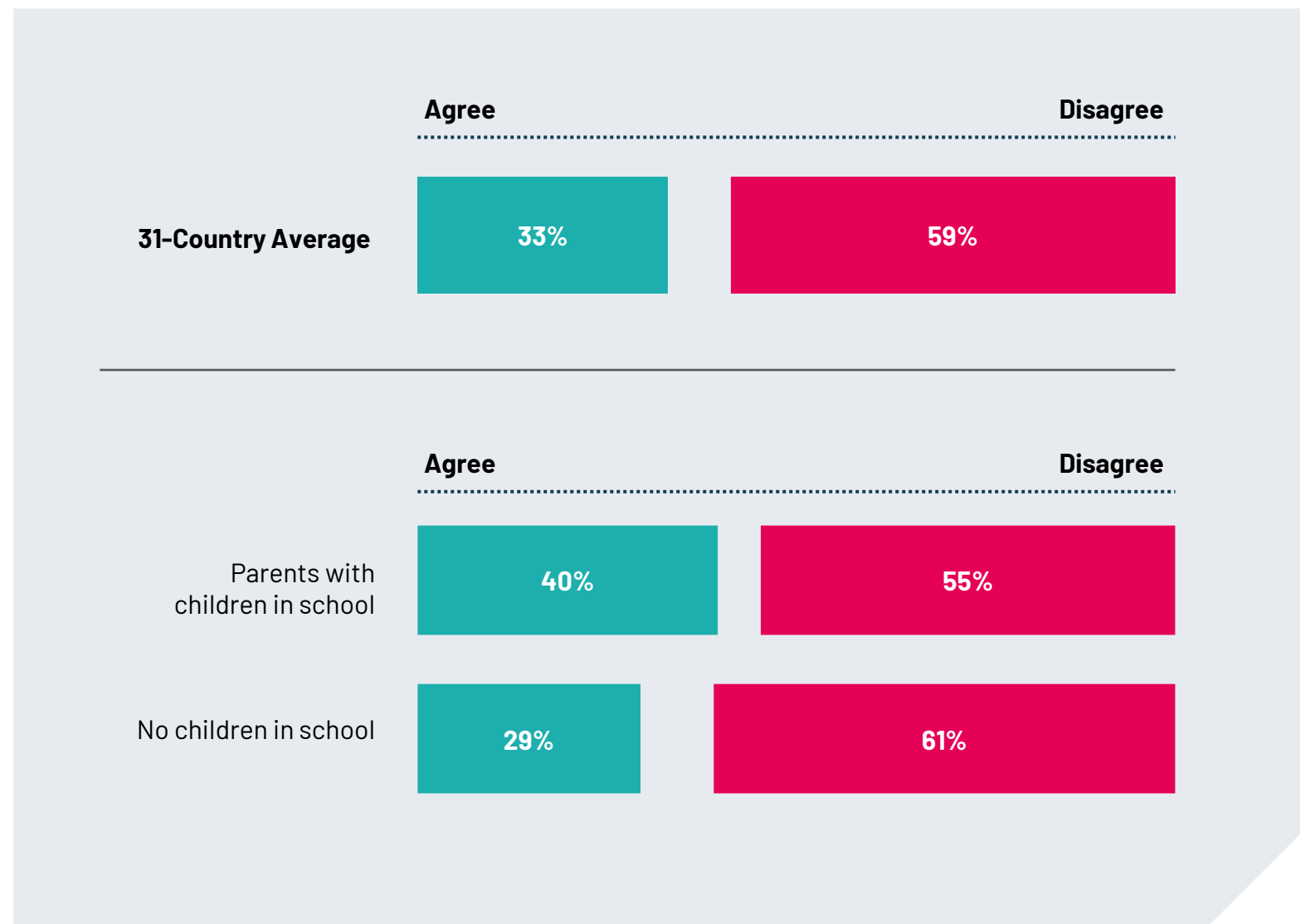


Most people disagree that online spaces are safe for young people, though parents of children in school show more confidence

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- **Online spaces in my country are safe for young people**

Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.



Mental health remains the defining challenge facing young people

Despite growing support for banning children from social media and concern about the safety of online spaces, mental health challenges remain the most cited issue facing young people today (33%).

While issues like the economy, poverty and housing show a strong degree of variance between countries, mental health concerns are consistently high everywhere.

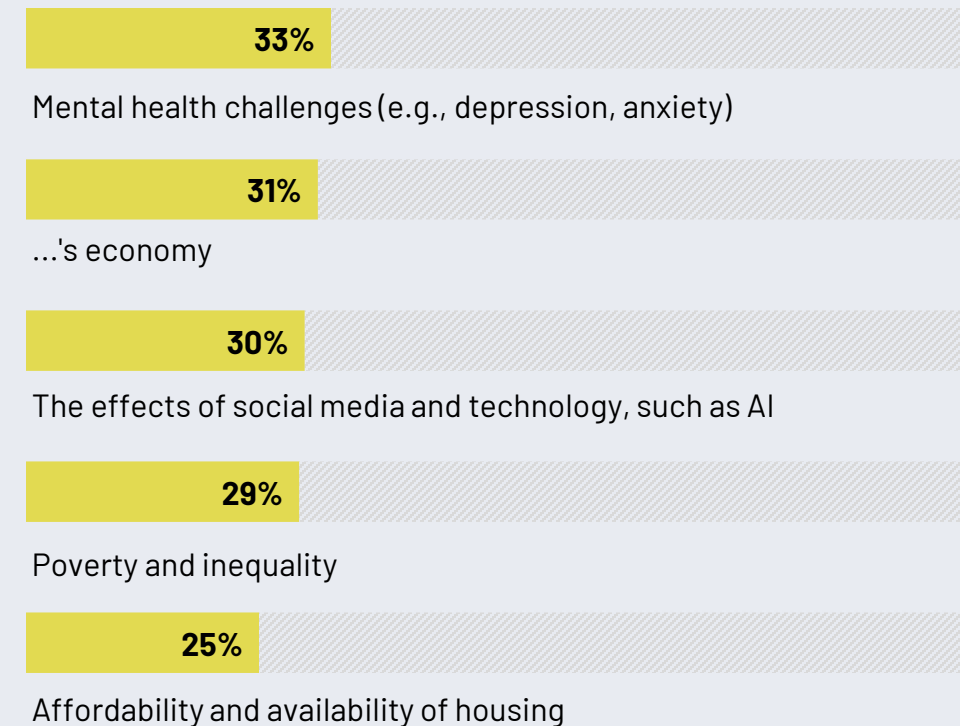
One in two people across 31 countries (48%) say young people in their country have poor mental health, peaking at 68% in Chile.

The proportion of people considering their country's economy as a key challenge for young people has rocketed since last year, up 7 percentage points (pp), largely led by an increase in Argentina (+25pp), and Indonesia (+18pp), though all countries – except Hungary – have seen increases.

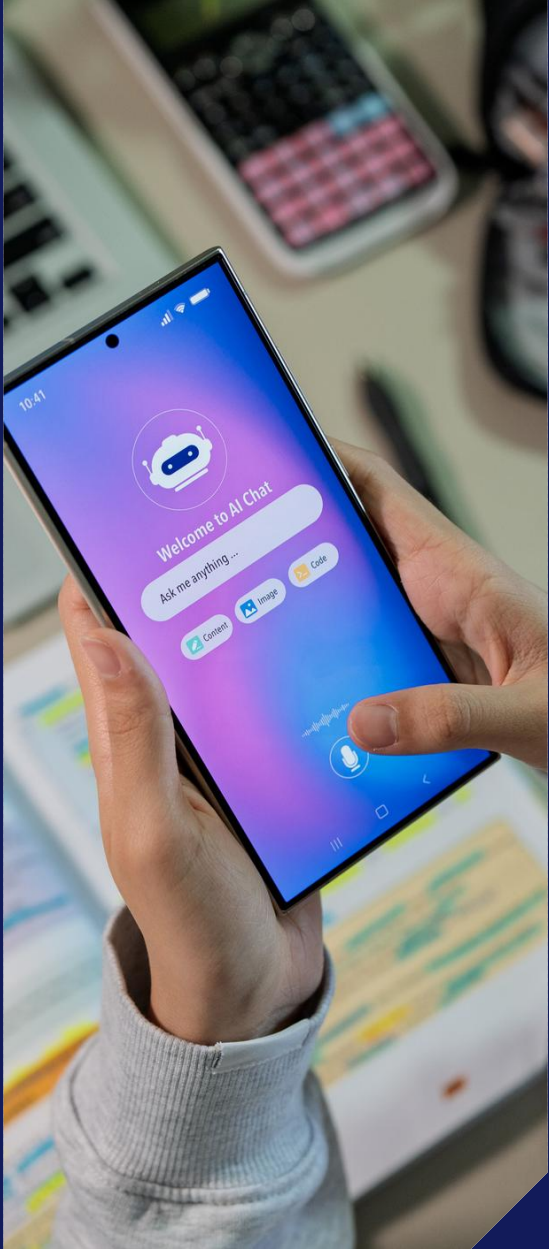
Housing (+6pp) and the effects of social media (+5pp) have also risen significantly in the eyes of the global public as top challenges facing young people today.

Top 5 challenges facing young people today

Q: In your opinion, what do you believe are the greatest challenges facing young people in your country today?



Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.



SPOTLIGHT: INDONESIA

Indonesia is a leading example of a "Protect and Prepare" approach to technology. Indonesia's perspective on technology is increasingly pragmatic rather than ideological. The strong support for limiting social media access among young children reflects concerns about online safety, mental health, and healthy childhood development.

At the same time, Indonesians are open to embracing AI as a tool to improve education and build digital skills. They see AI as essential in helping prepare the next generation for the world of the future. Across government initiatives

and school communities, we are seeing efforts to strengthen digital literacy, while exploring how AI can enhance learning outcomes, creativity, and future-readiness.

The priority is not less technology, but better technology, applied in ways that protect young people while expanding their opportunities to learn and succeed.



Hansal Savia,
Managing Director,
Ipsos in Indonesia

Is university a competitive advantage?



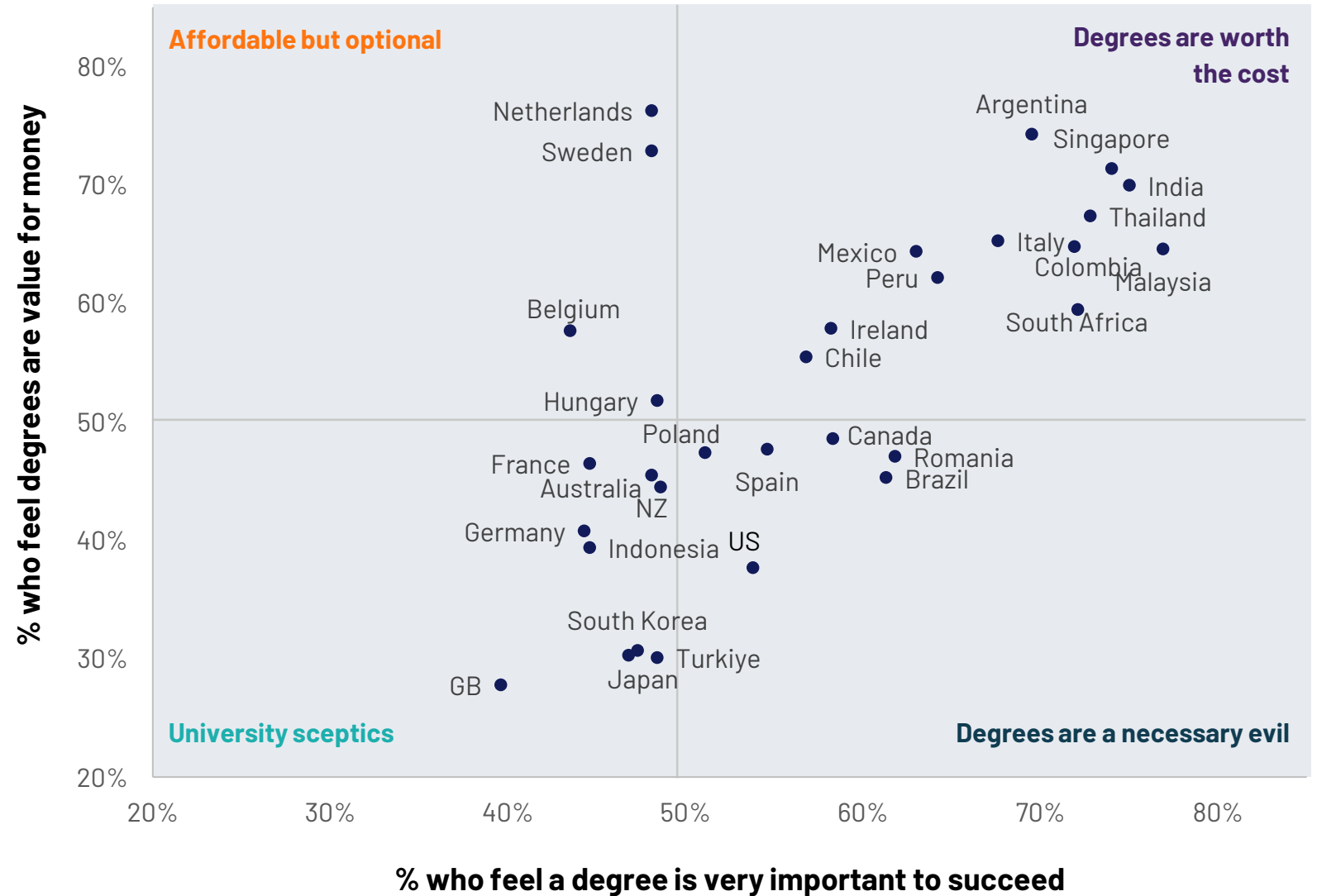
Most see university degrees as essential for success

In countries such as Argentina, degrees are seen as both important and worthwhile.

In the Netherlands, university is viewed as good value, but not essential for success.

The US reflects a more transactional perspective, where degrees are often seen as necessary despite concerns about value for money, while Great Britain stands out for its scepticism on both measures.

Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.



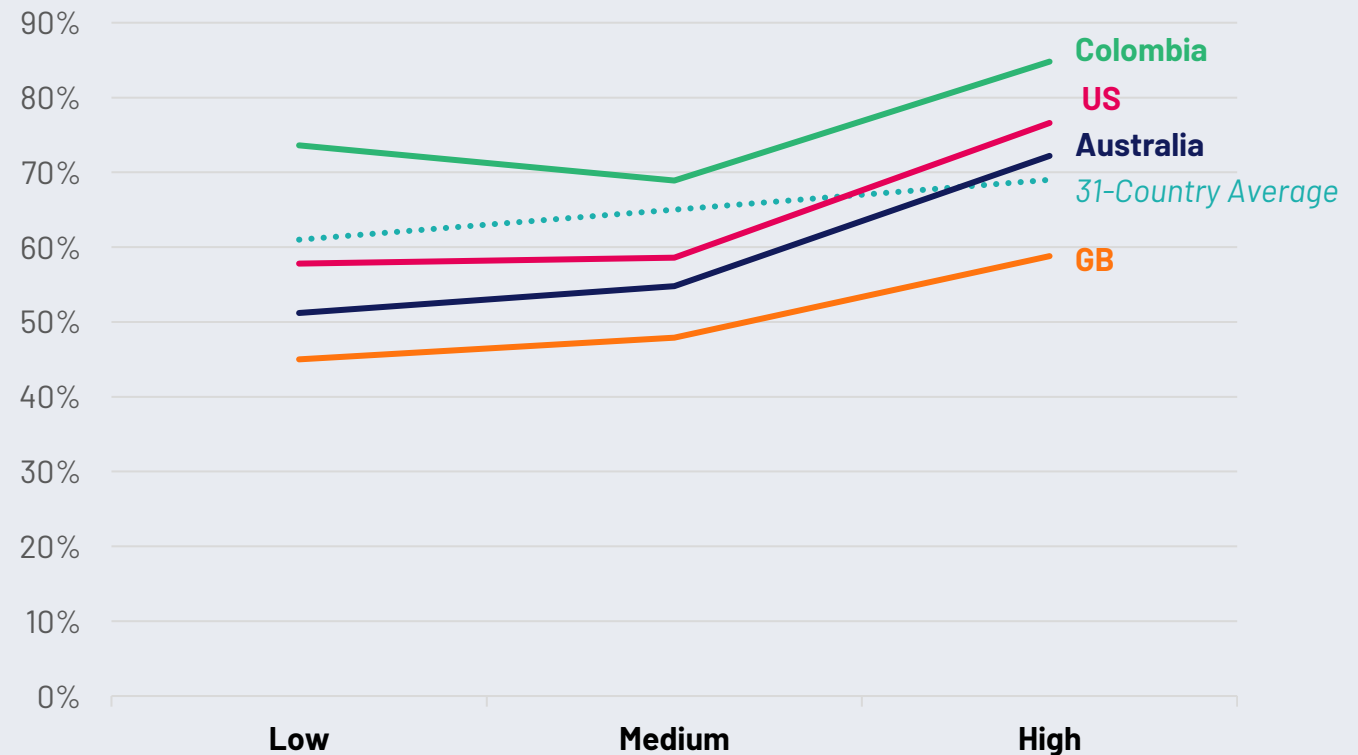
University graduates are the strongest advocates for higher education

For many people, belief in the value of university appears to be shaped by their own educational experience. Across 31 countries, those with higher levels of education are consistently more likely to say that a university degree helps people progress in their careers.

In Australia, for example, 72% of highly educated respondents agree that a degree helps people get ahead, compared with 51% among those with lower levels of education. Similar patterns are visible in the US (77% vs 58%), Great Britain (59% vs 45%) and Colombia (85% vs 74%).

Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.

Q: Having a college or university degree helps people in my country go further in their career.
% agree. **By education level.**



University remains dominant nearly everywhere

Great Britain and Germany are the only two of 31 countries where people are more likely to say young people should go straight into work than first go to university.

Q: Generally speaking, what would you advise young people today?

- To go to university first before entering the workplace
- To go straight into the workplace without going to university
- Neither

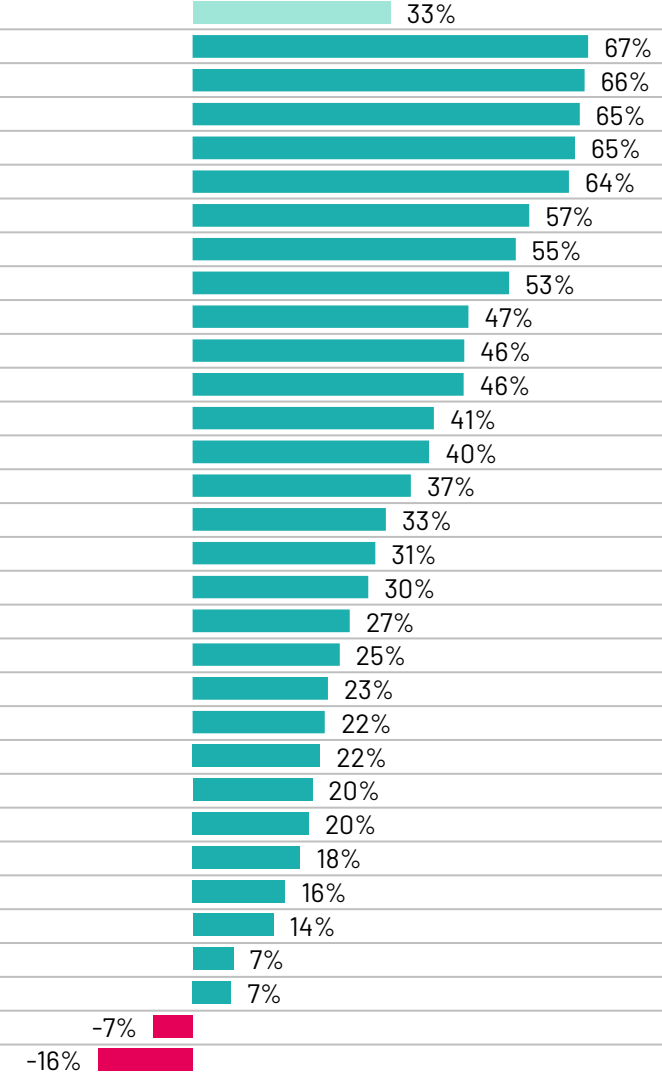
Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.

Country

31-Country Average

Mexico
Colombia
Peru
Malaysia
Argentina
Chile
South Africa
Thailand
India
Singapore
Romania
Italy
Brazil
Hungary
Indonesia
Ireland
Spain
Belgium
South Korea
France
Canada
Netherlands
Sweden
United States
Japan
Türkiye
New Zealand
Poland
Australia
Germany
Great Britain

NET advice (university first – straight to work)



SPOTLIGHT: GREAT BRITAIN

Britain stands apart from many other countries in the way it thinks about university. While people still recognise the opportunities a degree can create, many are questioning whether the costs are worth it. With tuition fees and student debt remaining prominent public concerns, only a minority see degrees as good value for money, and Britain is the least likely country surveyed to view a degree as important for success in life.

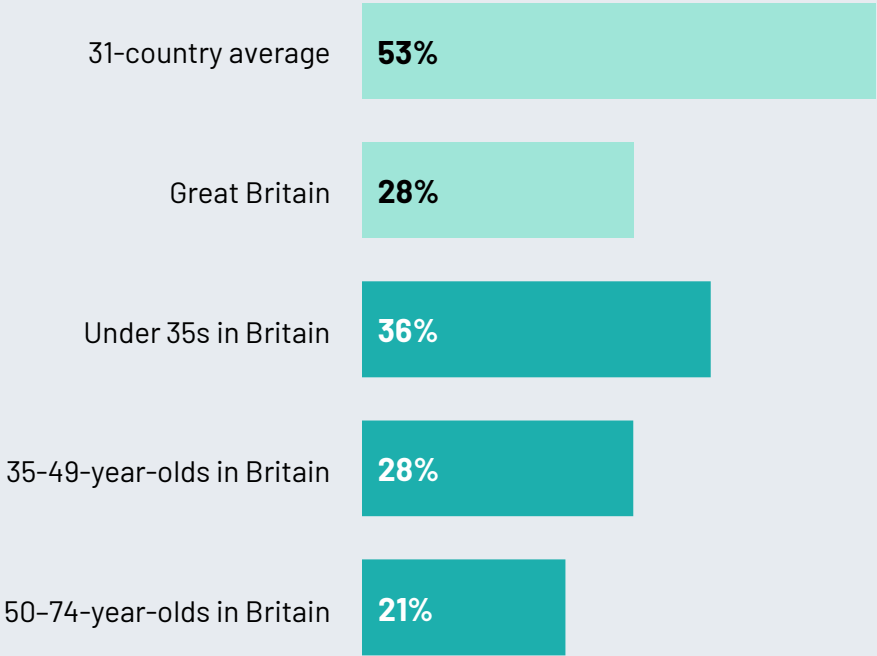
Interestingly, younger Britons remain more positive about university than older generations, despite being the group most directly affected by the financial costs. Taken together, the findings suggest the debate in Britain

is no longer about whether higher education matters, but about whether the benefits of a degree justify the cost.



Trinh Tu,
Managing Director, Public Affairs,
Ipsos in the UK

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
“College / university degrees in my country are good value for money”
% agree



Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.

Where will today's young people end up?



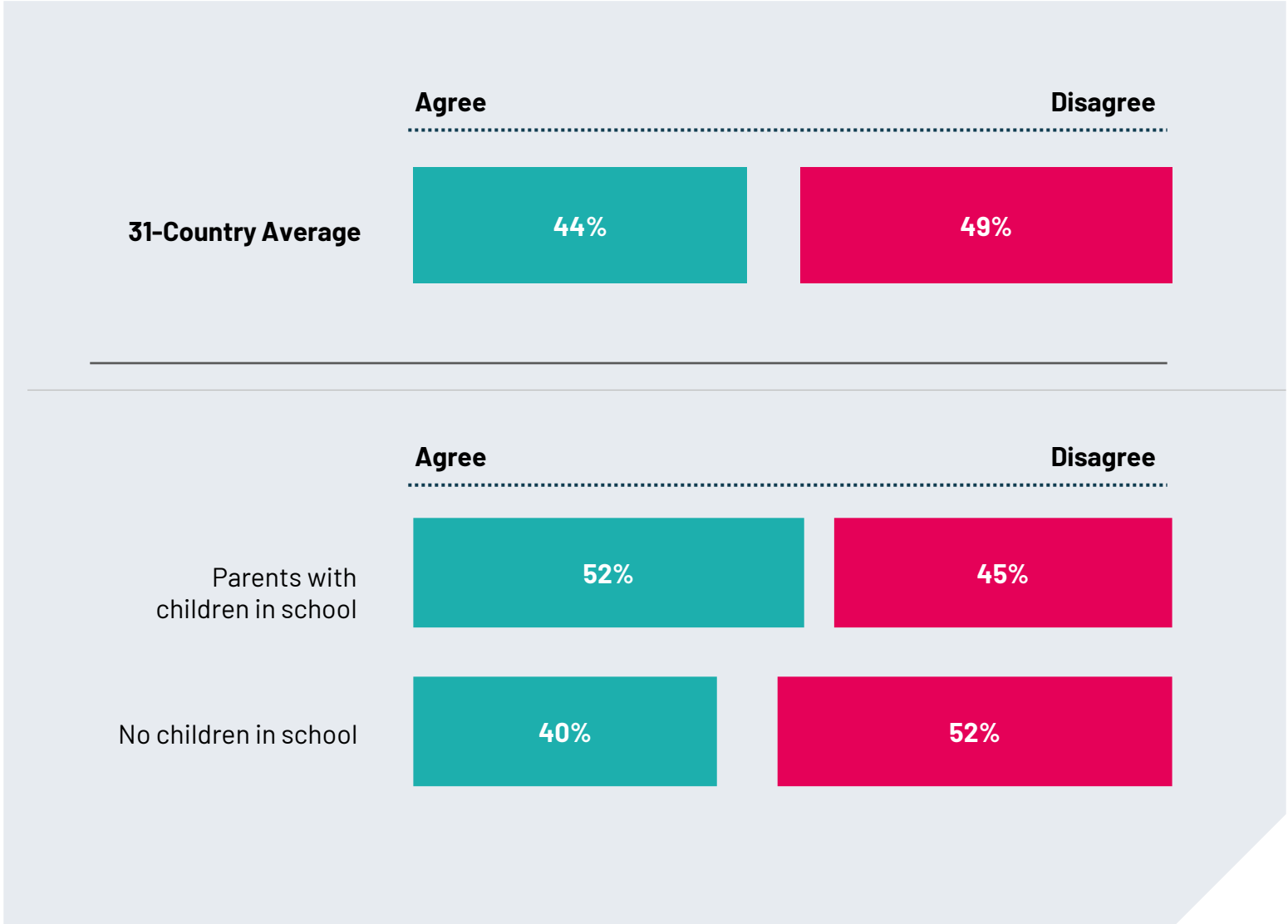
Public confidence in future-readiness remains mixed

But those closest to the education system are its strongest advocates.

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- **The school curriculum in ... adequately prepares students for future careers**

Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.



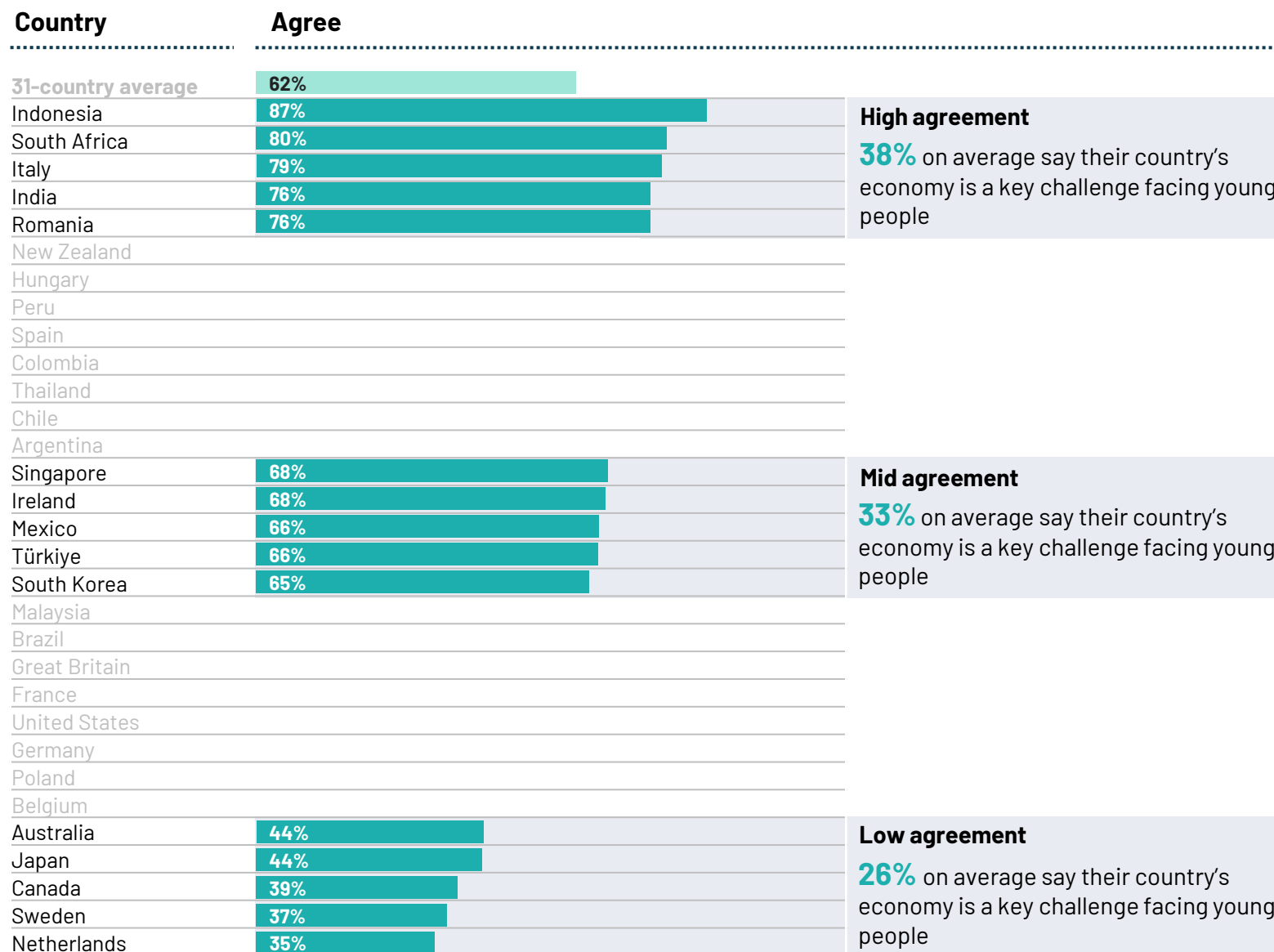
Countries worried about the economy are more likely to believe opportunities lie abroad

Countries most likely to see better opportunities abroad are also more likely to cite the economy as a key challenge facing their country.

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

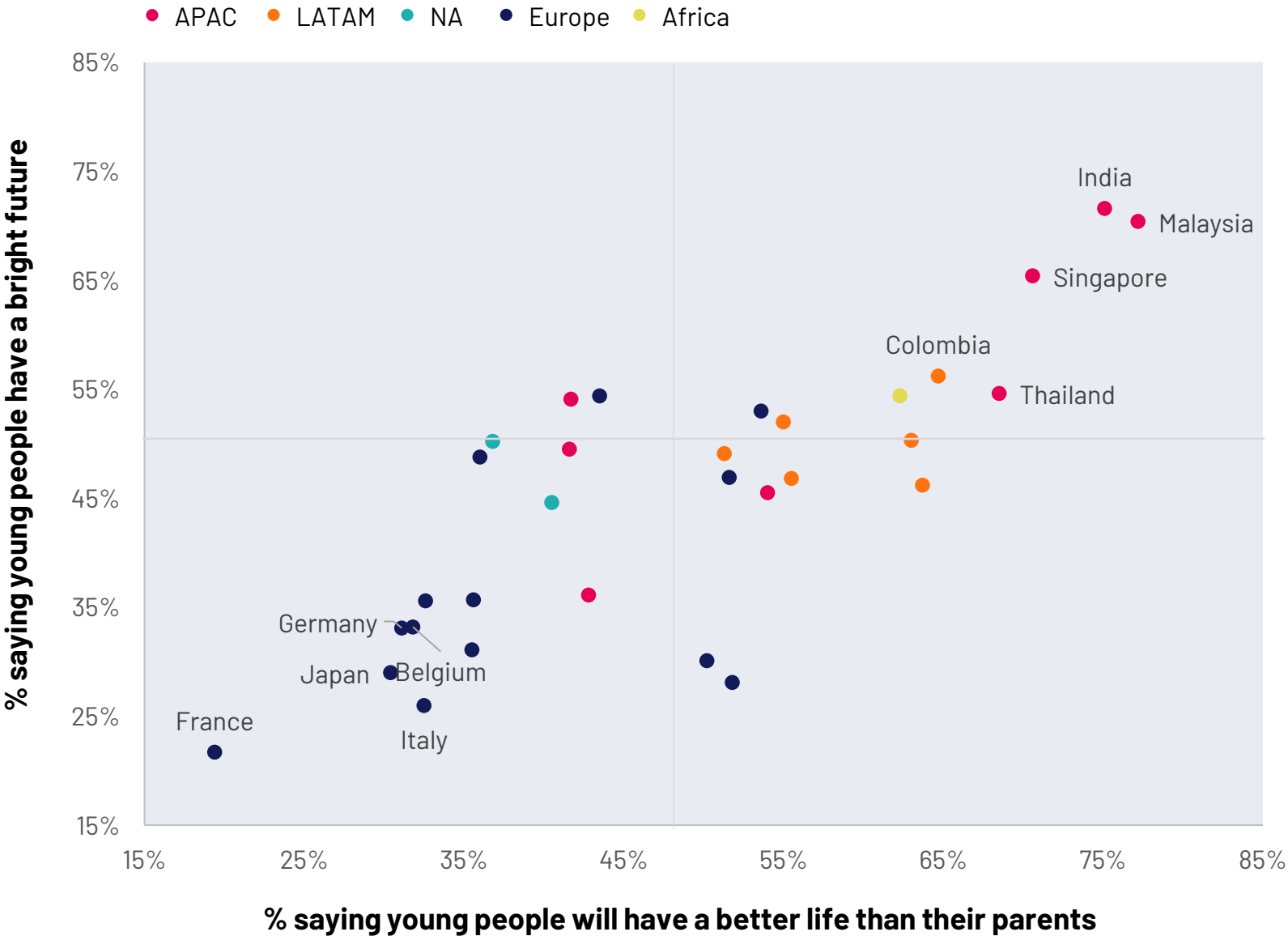
- **Young people in my country today would have better opportunities by moving abroad**

Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June – 3 July 2026.



The future looks bright for emerging economies, but for mature Western economies, there's a feeling that the best days may be behind them

Base: 23,537 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 19 June - 3 July 2026.



SPOTLIGHT: FRANCE

France is the least likely, of all countries surveyed, to see its young people having a bright future or a better life than their parents.

These findings reflect a long-standing pattern of French pessimism that extends well beyond education. France tends to rank among the most pessimistic countries when it comes to views about the future, the economy, living standards, or the country's overall direction.

This sentiment is not new, but it has intensified in recent years. The inflationary pressures that followed the war in Ukraine have weighed on household perceptions, while political

uncertainty, the succession of several Prime Ministers in a short period of time, and the difficulty of building stable parliamentary majorities have reinforced a sense of instability.

There is also a cultural dimension to this. French people tend to express criticism of public affairs quite freely and often focus on what could be improved. More generally, many feel that future generations may face a more uncertain economic and social environment than their parents did, while a growing share look back nostalgically on what France once was.



Salomé Quetier Parent,

Research Director,
Ipsos in France

Methodology



METHODOLOGY

These are the results of a 31-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform, between Friday, June 19, and Friday, July 3, 2026. For this survey, Ipsos interviewed a total of 23,537 adults aged 18 years and older in India, 18-74 in Canada, Republic of Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Türkiye, and the United States, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Indonesia and Singapore, and 16-74 in all other countries.

The sample consists of approximately 2,000 in Japan, 1,000 individuals each in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, and the U.S., and 500 individuals each in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand, and Türkiye.

Samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. can be considered representative of their general adult populations under the age of 75. Samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Türkiye are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of their population.

The data is weighted so that the composition of each country's sample best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data. "The Global Country Average" reflects the average result for all the countries and

markets in which the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country or market and is not intended to suggest a total result.

When percentages do not sum up to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 percentage point more/less than the actual result, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of "don't know" or not stated responses.

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll where N=1,000 being accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of where N=500 being accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos' use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website. The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.

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