



YOUNG

INDIA

AND WORK

A SURVEY OF YOUTH ASPIRATIONS

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OCTOBER 2018

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Attribution: Vidisha Mishra, Terri Chapman, Rakesh Sinha, Suchi Kedia and Sriram Gutta, "Young India and Work: A Survey of Youth Aspirations," The Observer Research Foundation and The World Economic Forum, 2018.

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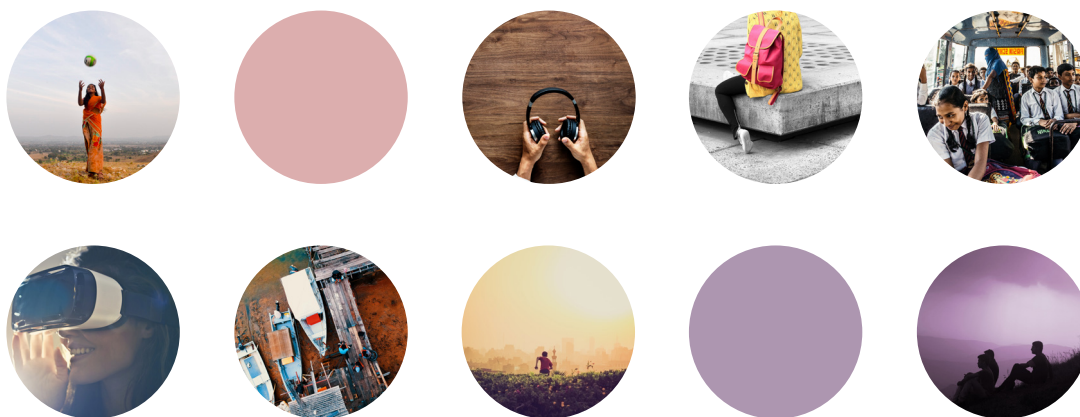
Design and layout: Anuj Malhotra (www.fantomas.in) and Rahil Shaikh

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ISBN: 978-93-88262-39-2 **ISBN Digital:** 978-93-88262-40-8





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Advanced technological developments are reshaping production processes, global value chains, employment relations, and the nature of work itself.

In this rapidly evolving context, 1.3 million people enter the working age population in India every month.¹ As half of the country's population of 1.3 billion is below the age of 25,² there is a demographic advantage to be realised. While it is clear that this will be realised in the context of technological disruption and in the wake of dramatic changes in the economy and labour market, managing these transformations and truly leveraging the possibilities they present, will require an understanding of the expectations and aspirations of India's youth.

In this report we look to India's young population to define a desirable future and outline the key findings from the *Youth Aspirations in India Survey*. The central questions explored in the survey and in this report include:

1. What are the career aspirations and job preferences of India's youth?
2. What are the perceptions of India's youth around the adequacy and relevance of their education, skill sets, and preparedness for the labour market?
3. How do youth perceive employment and work transformations as well as the availability of adequate and relevant opportunities for them in view of these transformations?
4. What are the barriers faced by youth in meeting their education, skilling, and employment aspirations?
5. What strategies and policies are needed to bridge misalignments and information asymmetries in the labour market?
6. And how can capabilities be best enhanced to ensure youth in India are able to meet their career aspirations?

Below is a summary of key insights from the report.

Youth are making independent choices: 37 percent of respondents report that an interest in their field of study was the main reason for pursuing it. In comparison, 14 percent cited family and peer influence as the main reason for pursuing their respective fields of study.

Higher education degrees are highly valued, but youth also want new skills: 96 percent of respondents hope to achieve a bachelor's degree or higher. 2 percent of respondents hope to attain a vocational or college diploma as their highest form of education. 84 percent of respondents consider a university degree or post-graduate degree as a requirement for their ideal job. In addition to seeking tertiary education, youth see high value in skills development. 76 percent of respondents reported being very interested in pursuing skills development training.

While youth prefer public sector jobs, there is discernible interest in entrepreneurship: 49 percent of youth prefer a job in the public sector. On the other hand, 38 percent of youth selected self-employment as an entrepreneur as their ideal type of job. Good salaries, ample opportunities for promotion and career development, and job security are the significant factors that youth consider when looking for a job, which is in line with their preference for public sector jobs, but makes the interest in entrepreneurship surprising.

The IT Industry is the largest employer of youth: 17 percent of employed respondents in this survey report working in information technology, communications and telecommunications making the IT industry the largest employer of surveyed youth. At the same time, when asked what their ideal job would be, 20 percent of all respondents chose research and development. 17 percent selected art, design and creative; 14 percent chose training

and development; and 14 percent preferred human resources and recruitment.

More than a third of surveyed youth are neither employed nor in education: 34 percent of all surveyed youth are neither employed, nor in education. The majority of respondents in the 15-20 age bracket are in education. However, over 30 percent of 21 to 25 year olds reported being neither employed nor in education. Fifty percent of female respondents in the 26-30 age bracket reported being neither employed nor in education.

Women prefer full-time careers, have less paid work experience, and feel less prepared: 82 percent of female youth prefer full-time employment as their ideal time commitment for work. The survey also reveals that men have more paid work experience than women, with 28 percent of male respondents between the ages of 26-30 years having four or more years of paid work experience compared to 18 percent of female respondents. Overall, men also report feeling more prepared for their ideal job than women. Further, while 96 percent of female respondents report being very or moderately interested in pursuing skills development training, only 19 percent have ever enrolled in one. In comparison, 26 percent male respondents have enrolled in one.

Job searches have gone digital but employers and recruiters have not: 81 percent of respondents report relying on media and internet sources for information and updates on available employment opportunities. On the other hand, according to the Future of Work, Education and Skills Survey, 14 percent of companies are using online sources for recruitment.³

Information asymmetry, lack of guidance and work experience are impeding Indian youth from meeting their career aspirations: 51 percent of youth report that the lack of guidance in identifying jobs that match their skill sets is the main barrier they face

when looking for a desirable job. 41 percent of youth view their lack of work experience as the main barrier. Further, 49 percent of youth feel that interaction with industry professionals is the most valuable form of guidance. This is closely followed by interaction with professional career counsellors. 81 percent of youth view internships or apprenticeships as important for getting hired.

Youth are cautiously optimistic about the gig economy: 63 percent of respondents report being very or moderately interested in pursuing gig work to supplement their main source of income, while 26 percent report being not interested. Similarly, 59 percent are very or moderately interested in participating in the gig economy as their main source of income, compared to 30 percent who report being uninterested. While 30 percent of respondents were interested in working remotely, 60 percent of respondents preferred working in an employer-based workspace or office. In addition, 50 percent of respondents reported that a lack of career progression is the main reason they are not interested in working in the gig economy.

Youth are eager for skills development; prefer short-term, certified, government-run programmes: 76 percent of respondents report being very interested in pursuing skills development training. 19 percent report being

moderately interested. The characteristics of attractive skills programmes, as identified by respondents, include moderate time commitment, some form of monetary compensation, certification, and a blend of online and classroom content. Youth consider the public sector followed by public-private partnerships, as ideal providers of skills development opportunities.

Youth see high value in human-centric and soft skills: 49 percent of respondents see basic and soft skills as highly valued by employers. More specifically, 68 percent of youth view clear communication skills as a core competency for someone in their ideal job. Over half of the respondents also consider analytical thinking, teamwork, creativity, originality, and initiative as necessary core skills for their ideal job, which is strikingly in line with predicted core competencies required in the future.

Youth recognise existing limitations but have solutions in mind: 60 percent of youth believe government action and favourable economic policies will help address gaps between their aspirations and job market realities. 44 percent of respondents think more career counselling and mentoring opportunities are needed, and 41 percent consider more investment in new hires by the private sector important.

**76 PERCENT OF THE
RESPONDENTS REPORT BEING
VERY INTERESTED IN PURSUING
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**



INTRODUCTION



The concurrent trends of technological advancements, digitisation, globalisation and demographic shifts are transforming the employment context in India. Disruptive changes are recasting business models, production processes, employment relations, and the nature of work itself. Simultaneously, India faces the challenge of creating decent jobs as its young population enters the workforce by the millions each year.

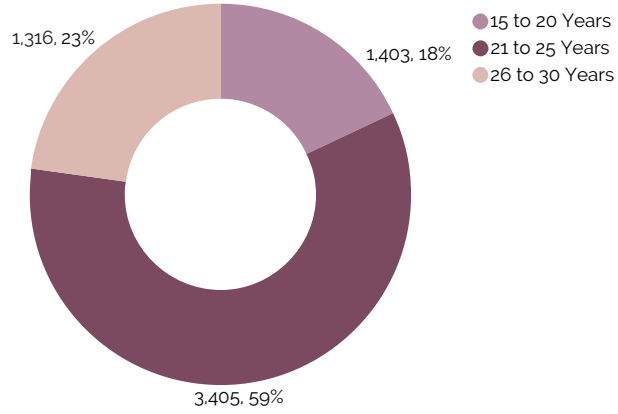
India has an opportunity to leverage emerging technologies and digitisation to create a desirable and productive future of work for its youth. In order to realise this opportunity, and the economic

growth potential presented by the country's demographic advantage, it is necessary to identify possible misalignments between the career and educational ambitions of India's youth, and the available opportunities. Meaningful strategies for managing technological transformations cannot evolve in isolation; the expectations and aspirations of youth must be built into solutions for them to be successful. Equally, India has to find innovative strategies for enhancing the capabilities of its workforce for jobs that best meet their expectations.

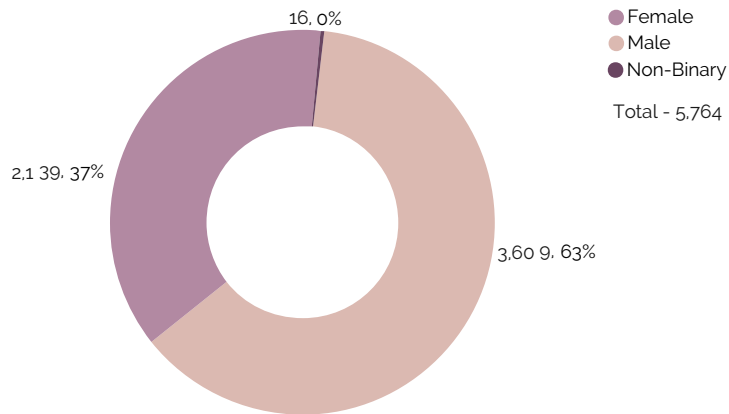
This report presents findings from the *Youth Aspirations in India Survey* in which 5,764 youth between the ages of 15 and 30 were asked about their employment, education and skilling aspirations. Data was collected from seven states in India, including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, as well as Delhi.

RESPONDENT DATA (NUMBER, %)

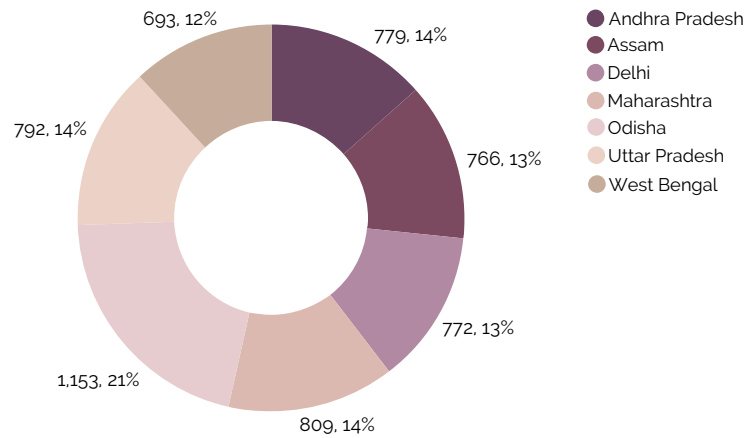
I. NUMBER AND SHARE OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE-GROUPS



II. NUMBER AND SHARE OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER



III. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY STATE



METHODOLOGY

Due to the vast geographic diversity in India, the sample states were selected in order to capture respondents across the nation's major regions. In addition, the sampling strategy accounts for the urbanisation of states such that we target respondents in states that closely match the overall urbanisation rate of India at 29 percent—including Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal at 30 and 29 percent respectively—as well as states and territories at the extremes—such as Delhi and Assam at 97 and 11 percent urbanisation respectively.⁴

In addition, we considered the overall population of states, with Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh being among the ten most populous states in India. The states in which we collected data together account for approximately 41 percent of India's population. Finally, we considered the economic development of the sample states, and used GDP per capita and the poverty rate by state as indicators. In this way, we were able to capture Delhi, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh each of which have a GDP per capita above the national average; as well as Assam, West Bengal, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh that are below the national average.

The sample states also capture variation in poverty, with states performing above and below the national poverty rate. The survey data was collected online. While ownership of internet-connected devices is rising rapidly in India, internet penetration still stands at 25 percent.⁵ This highlights the constraints in adequately capturing respondents that do not have access to the internet. The data reveals some contradictions, which is representative of the heterogeneity of the sample. This report, therefore, does not seek to be a final word on what youth in India want, but rather presents our findings on youth perceptions, aspirations, and constraints with regard to the future of work.

The objective of the *Youth Aspirations in India* Survey is to launch an enquiry into the nature and determinants of youth employment aspirations

and perceptions in India and to generate empirical evidence on the possible misalignments between youth aspirations and the existing and future job scenario. The central questions of the survey and this report include:

1. What are the career aspirations and job preferences of India's youth?
2. What are the perceptions of India's youth around the adequacy and relevance of their education, skill sets, and preparedness for the labour market?
3. How do youth perceive employment and work transformations as well as the availability of adequate and relevant opportunities for them in view of these transformations?
4. What are the barriers faced by youth in meeting their education, skilling and employment aspirations?
5. What strategies and policies are needed to bridge misalignments and information asymmetries in the labour market?
6. How can capabilities be best enhanced to ensure youth in India are able to meet their career aspirations?

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the survey point to a high level of optimism and ambition among Indian youth regarding the future. While more young people report making independent educational and career decisions, they also seek guidance on these decisions outside of the family, and find a deficit of accurate information and support. Contrary to perception, only 14 percent of respondents report that family influence was the main reason for pursuing their respective fields of study. In comparison, 37 percent of respondents report that an interest in their field of study was the main reason for pursuing it.

However, those looking for external career guidance report inadequate access. 51 percent of youth perceive the lack of professional guidance in

WHILE MORE FEMALE RESPONDENTS REPORT BEING VERY INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES, **19 PERCENT OF FEMALES** HAVE ENROLLED IN A PROGRAMME, COMPARED TO **26 PERCENT OF MALES**

identifying jobs that match their skills to be the main barrier in finding a desirable job. 34 percent of youth reported being neither employed, nor in education. Further, the fact that 85 percent of respondents prefer full-time jobs corroborates the existence of barriers between aspirations and access to jobs, education, and skilling programmes.

Respondents have a strong preference for attaining higher education degrees. At the same time, there is an awareness of changing skills requirements and an interest in augmenting their skills. 76 percent of youth report being very interested in pursuing a skills development programme. 70 percent of youth identified more employment opportunities as the main motivation for wanting to pursue skills development training.

A strong desire for job security and opportunities for career advancement is evident in the fact that 49 percent of youth prefer a job in the public sector, followed by 23 percent in the private sector. Interestingly, 17 percent of respondents report having a preference for entrepreneurship as a career.

In the context of technological adoption and digitisation, jobs and tasks, along with the competencies required to execute them, are changing. 86 percent of youth feel very or moderately up to date with changes in skills requirements. Yet, 39 percent of youth feel very prepared or prepared for their ideal job, while 16 percent of youth feel either not prepared or very unprepared for their ideal job.

Female respondents' education and employment aspirations match, if not exceed, those of male respondents'. Yet, female respondents face discriminatory biases in hiring, have less paid work experience than their male counterparts, and face greater barriers in pursuing skills development opportunities. 60 percent of female respondents, for example, report having no paid work experience, compared to 54 percent of male respondents. In addition, 15 percent of female respondents report personal biases such as marital status, gender, age, or family background as a main barrier to employment compared to 9 percent of male respondents. While more female respondents report being very interested in participating in a skills development programme, only 19 percent have enrolled in a programme, compared to 26 percent of male respondents.

The survey also reveals possible misalignments between youth aspirations and industry demands when viewed alongside the findings from ORF and WEF's *Future of Work, Education and Skills Enterprise Survey* (henceforth, Enterprise survey).⁶

20 percent of youth chose research and development as their ideal job area while arts, design and creative; training and development; and human resources and recruitment were other attractive jobs areas for youth. On the other hand, the Enterprise Survey finds that companies expect less growth in jobs related to human resources and recruitment, training and development, and social media. Jobs that are expected to see the greatest increase in hiring in the next five years are in

A strong desire for job security and opportunities for career advancement is evident as 49 percent of youth prefer a job in the public sector; while 23 percent prefer the private sector.

customer service, sales, information technology support, accounting and auditing, and marketing and public relations.⁷ Further, youth demonstrate a keen interest in moving to new countries, states, and cities for employment purposes while on the contrary, enterprises are more interested in hiring locally.⁸

When it comes to employment contracts, 71 percent of youth would prefer to have a contract directly with their employer while 27 percent of youth would prefer to work without an employment contract.

Ideally, only 1 percent of youth would choose to be employed as contract workers through a third-party. This points to another misalignment in existing and future recruitment strategies of Indian companies as companies plan to replace some or many permanent workers with contract workers in the next five years.⁹

Further, while 41 percent of youth consider flexible work arrangements, such as flexibility in scheduling and location important—only 17 percent of companies provide flexible arrangements to permanent workers, and 10 percent to contractual workers.¹⁰

Lastly, 81 percent of youth report relying on media and internet sources for information and updates on available employment opportunities. On the contrary, 14 percent of companies are using online sources for recruitment indicating a clear information gap.¹¹

The remainder of this report proceeds in seven parts: exploring the present employment and education context; identifying respondents' perception of ideal jobs for the future; addressing the future of non-standard forms of employment; exploring respondents' interest in entrepreneurship as a career; gauging perceptions around the gig economy; outlining youth's awareness of skills for the future, and their ideal skills development programme. The report ends with a conclusion.



Youth are making independent choices

37 percent of respondents report selecting their field of study based on an interest in the field. Only 14 percent of respondents reported that they chose it because it was suggested by family and friends.

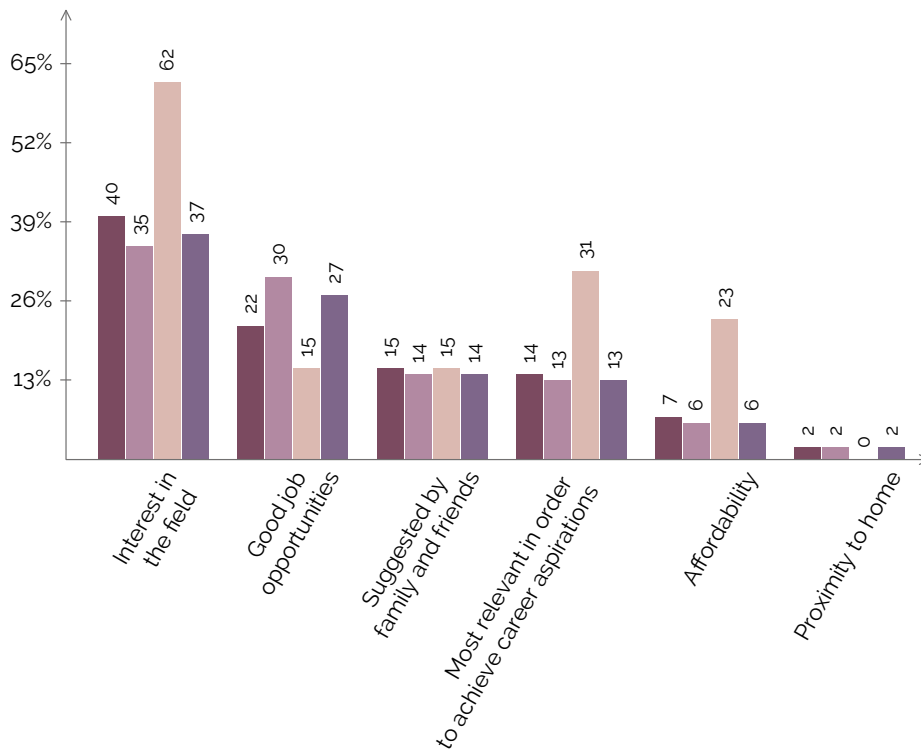


FIGURE 1 WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON FOR YOU TO HAVE CHOSEN YOUR FIELD OF STUDY?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Indian youth value higher education

50 percent of respondents aspire to attain a post-graduate degree, 24 percent a PhD, and 21 percent a bachelor's degree. Only 2 percent of respondents hope to attain a college or vocational diploma as their highest form of education.

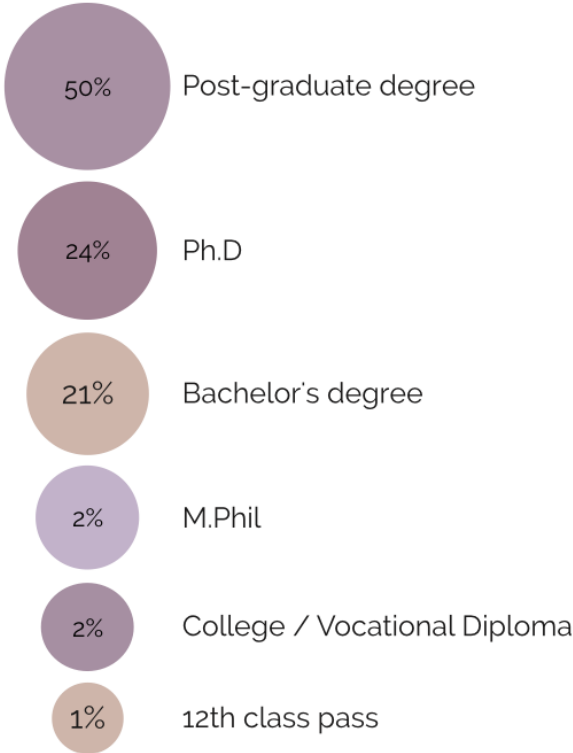


FIGURE 2 WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION THAT YOU HOPE TO ATTAIN?



Half of first-time job seekers found jobs in their field of study

51 percent of youth report that their first job was related to their field of study. 28 percent of respondents said that they took up their first job as a transition job which was unrelated to their field of study until they found a more desirable opportunity.

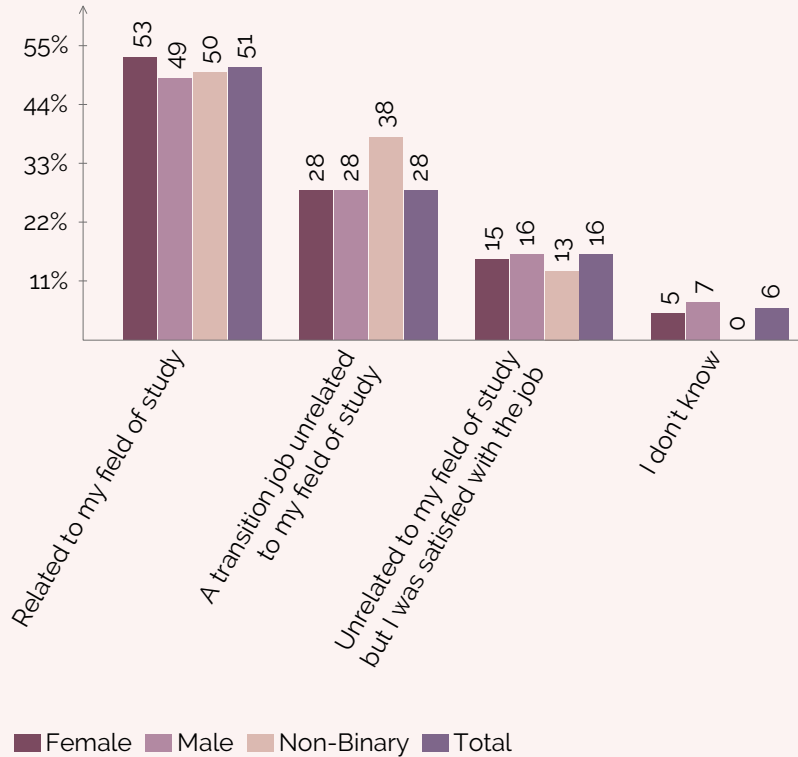


FIGURE 3 WAS YOUR FIRST JOB IN YOUR FIELD OF STUDY?



Over a third of youth are neither employed nor in education

34 percent of all surveyed youth are neither employed, nor in education. The majority of respondents in the 15-20 age bracket are in education, however over 30 percent of 21-25 year olds reported being neither employed nor in education. 50 percent of female respondents in the 26-30 age bracket were neither employed nor in education.

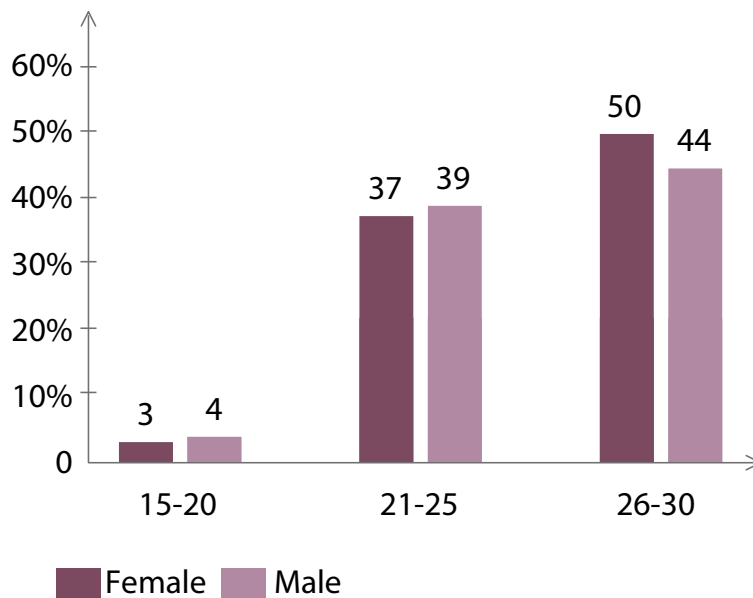


FIGURE 4 SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE TO 'ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED?', 'ARE YOU CURRENTLY A STUDENT?'



The IT industry is the largest employer of surveyed youth

17 percent of respondents that are currently employed report working in the information technology, communications, and telecommunications industry. 12 percent of respondents report working in finance, banking and insurance. 10 percent work in education and training, and 9 percent in engineering.

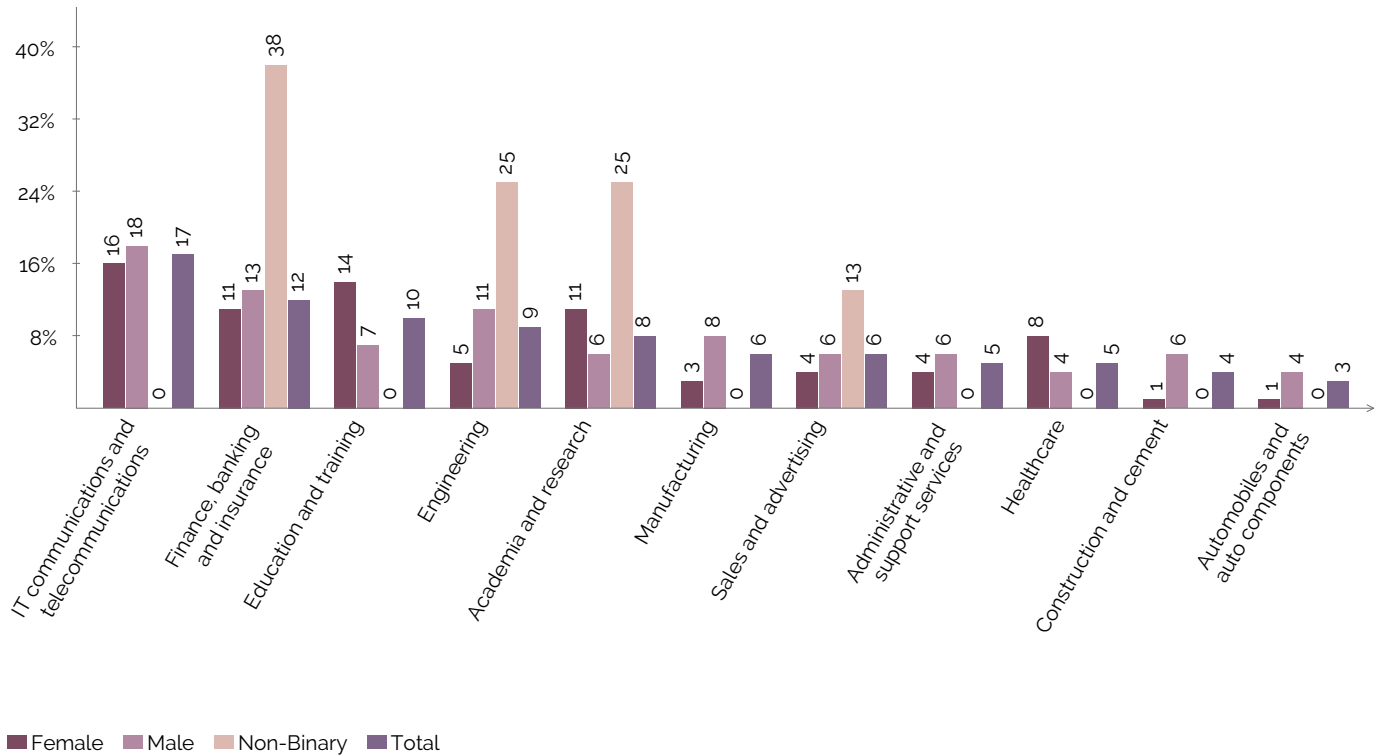


FIGURE 5 IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED, IN WHICH INDUSTRY ARE YOU WORKING?



Youth are looking online for job opportunities

81 percent of respondents report relying on media and internet sources for obtaining information about employment opportunities. This finding is particularly insightful in light of the fact that just 14 percent of surveyed firms in the *Enterprise Survey*²² report using online recruitment.

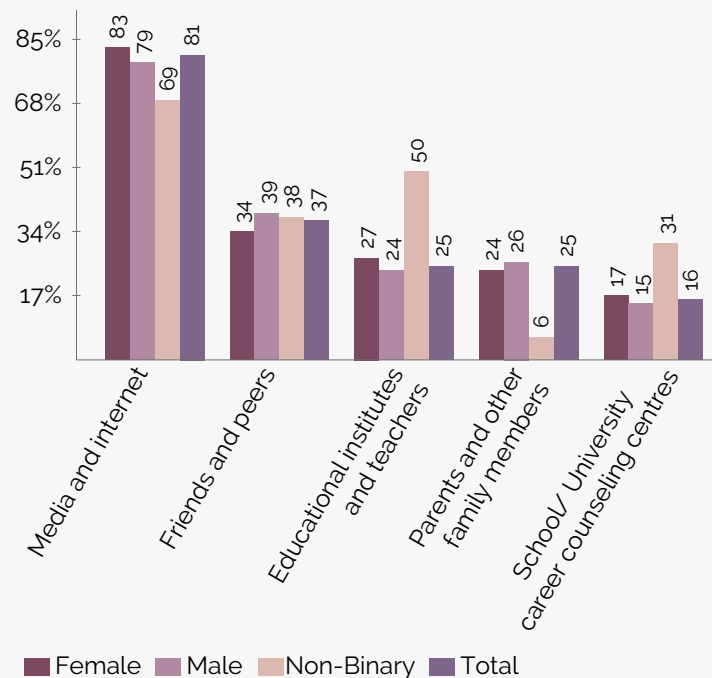


FIGURE 6 WHAT ARE YOUR KEY SOURCES OF INFORMATION WHEN LOOKING FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Room for improvement in job satisfaction

63 percent of employed respondents find their jobs to be very or moderately satisfying. 30 percent report being unsatisfied with their jobs. The highest number of respondents working in the information technology, communications, industry and telecommunications—which is the largest employer of the surveyed youth—report being 'moderately satisfied' with their jobs. However, more than twice the number of respondents report being 'not satisfied' with their jobs than those who reported being 'very satisfied'.

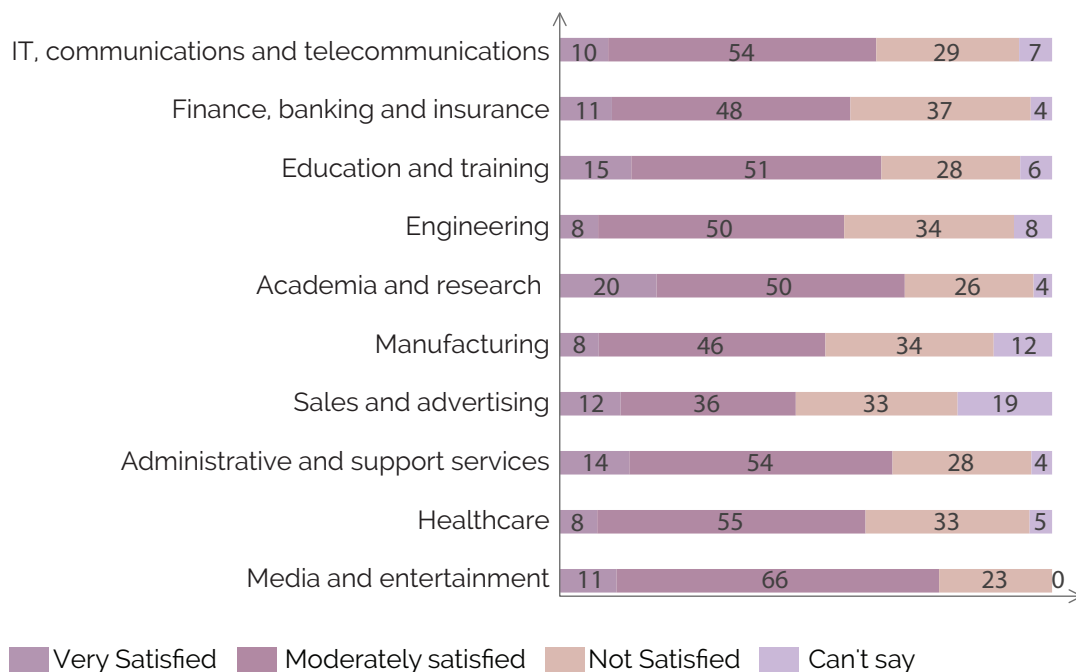


FIGURE 7 HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION?



More females are working without an employment contract than males

56 percent of respondents have an employment contract directly with their employer. 8 percent have a contract through a third-party. 36 percent of employed respondents have no contract at all, of which 42 percent are females and 33 percent are males. Those between the ages of 15 and 20 are the least likely to have a contract.

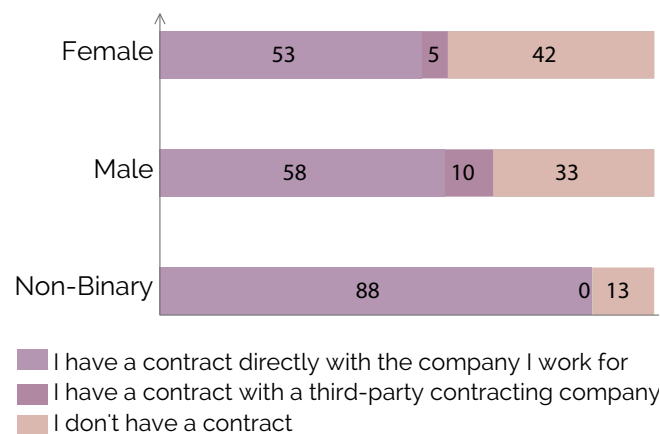


FIGURE 8 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT FOR YOUR MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME?



Future workers don't want third party contracts

In the future, 69 percent of women and 72 percent of men, would prefer to have an employment contract directly with their employer. 30 percent of women and 26 percent of men would prefer to work without an employment contract. Overall, only 1 percent of respondents would prefer to have a third party contract.

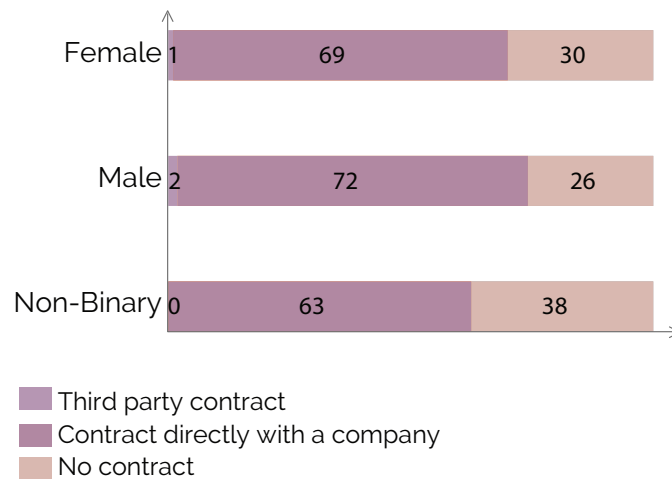


FIGURE 9 FOR YOUR IDEAL JOB, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERRED TYPE OF CONTRACT?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING



Males have more paid work experience than females

Of all surveyed youth, 60 percent of females have no paid work experience, compared to 54 percent of males, and 31 percent of non-binary respondents. While 82 percent of female respondents between the ages of 26 and 30 have between 0-3 years of paid work experience, 72 percent of males in the same age bracket have 0-3 years of experience. At the same time, 28 percent of males and 18 percent of females in this age bracket have 4 or more years of work experience.

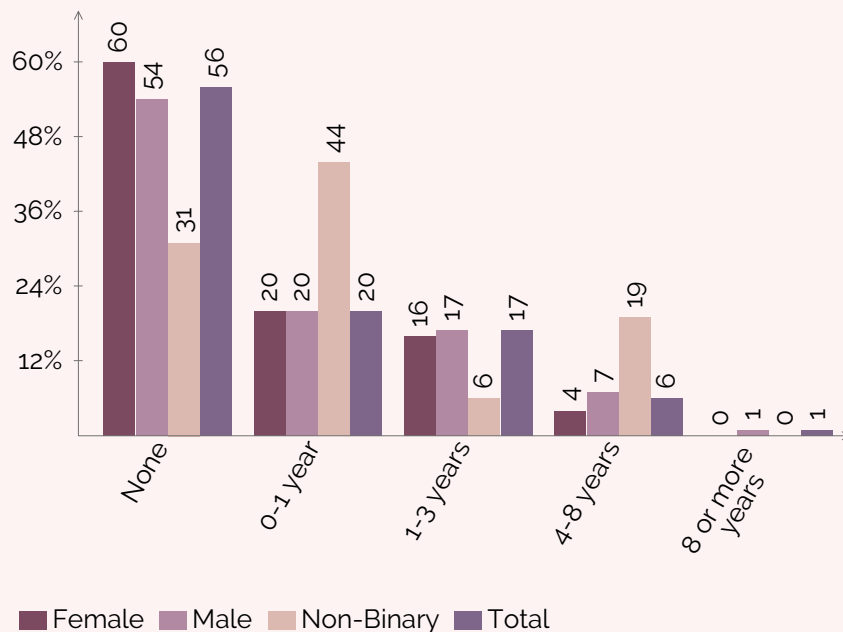
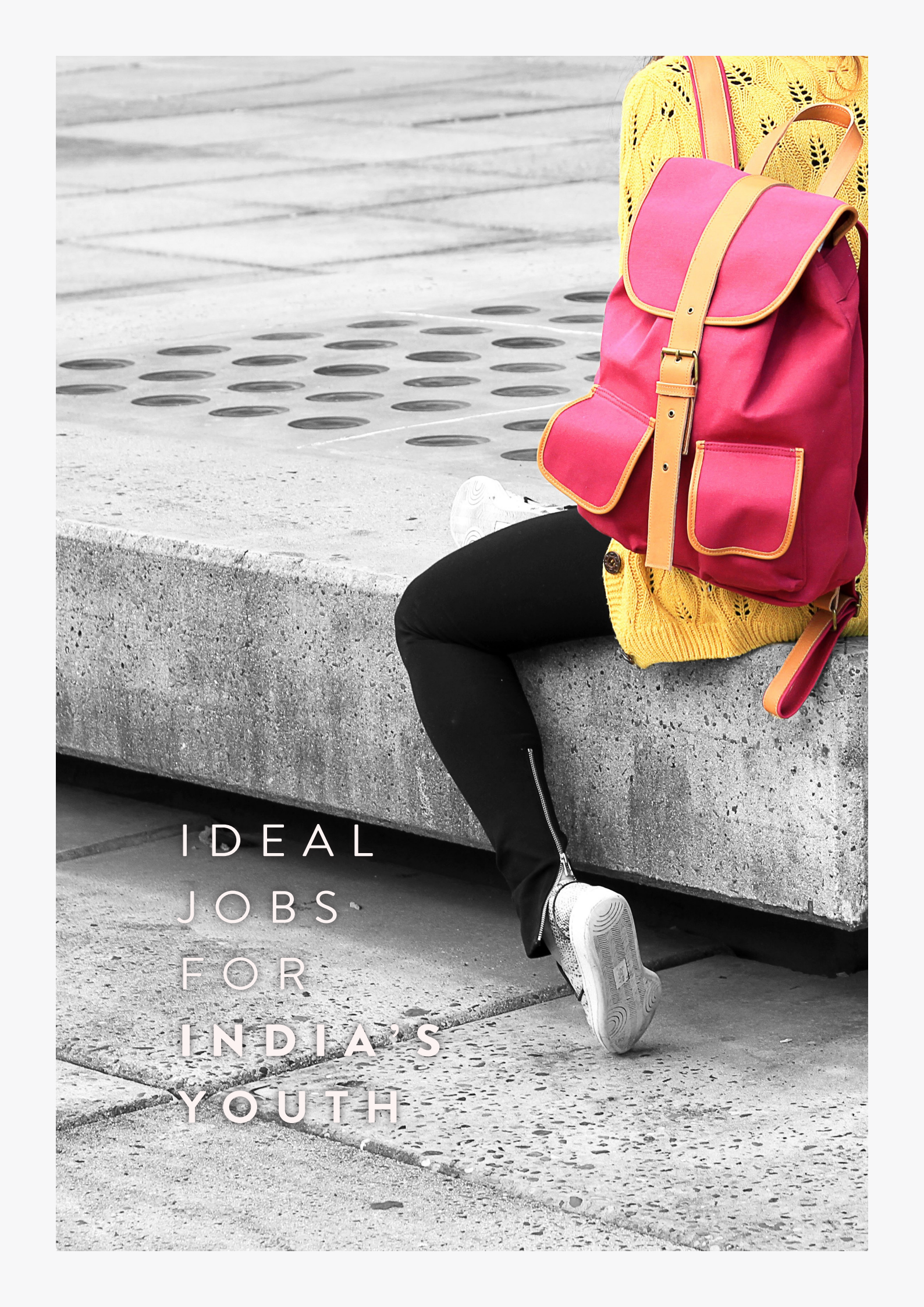


FIGURE 10 HOW MANY YEARS OF PAID WORK EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE?

A person is sitting on a concrete ledge, wearing a bright yellow sweater and black leggings. A large red backpack with yellow straps is slung over their shoulder. The person is wearing white sneakers. The background shows a concrete surface with a circular drainage grate.

IDEAL
JOBS
FOR
INDIA'S
YOUTH



Indian youth have a strong preference for government jobs

49 percent of respondents chose the public sector as the most desirable sector to work in, while 23 percent selected the private sector. 17 percent of respondents chose entrepreneurship as their ideal type of work. Highest among them were 15 to 20 year olds, pointing to a more entrepreneurial young population. In this age bracket, for instance, more males were interested in starting their own business than joining the private sector.

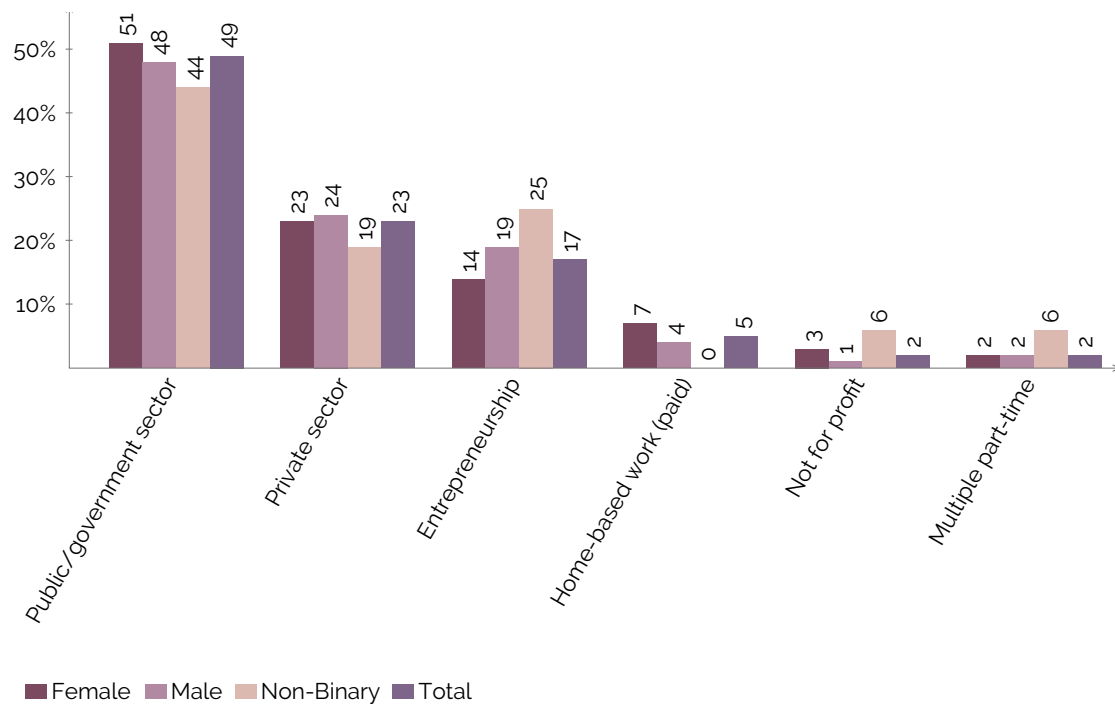


FIGURE 11 EVEN IF YOU ARE ALREADY EMPLOYED, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SECTORS WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO WORK IN?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING



The most attractive industries for Indian youth

When asked what industry they would most like to work in even if they are already employed, 23 percent of respondents selected administrative and support service jobs. This was followed by banking, finance and insurance, education and training, and academia and research, which were each preferred by 20 percent of respondents.

Interestingly, those currently employed in information technology, communications and telecommunications also chose it as the industry they would most like to work in, followed by administrative and support services, and academia and research.

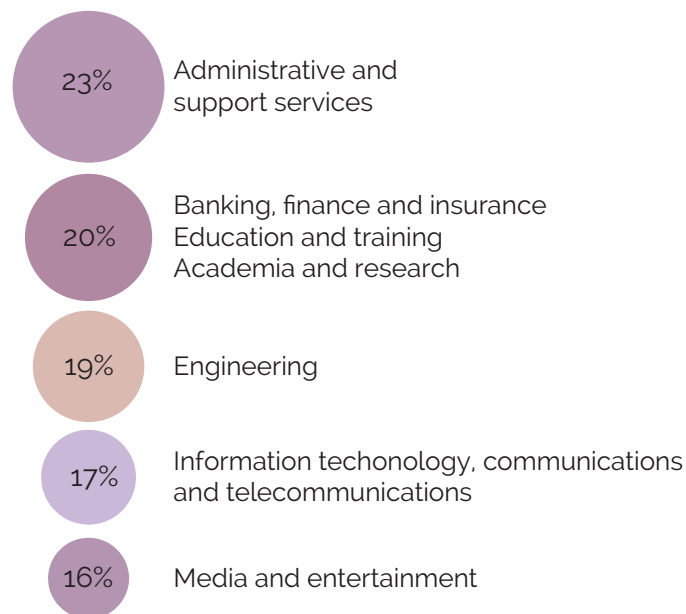


FIGURE 12 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO WORK IN?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



The most attractive jobs for Indian youth

When respondents were further asked what kind of job they would most like to have within that industry, 23 percent of respondents chose administrative and support services, and 20 percent chose research and development as their ideal job role. 17 percent of the respondents selected arts, design, and creative, 14 percent chose training and development, and 14 percent preferred human resources and recruitment. When asked about their ideal job, over half of respondents working in information technology, communications and telecommunications jobs chose it as their ideal job. However, a low proportion of all respondents working in sales jobs chose it as their ideal job.

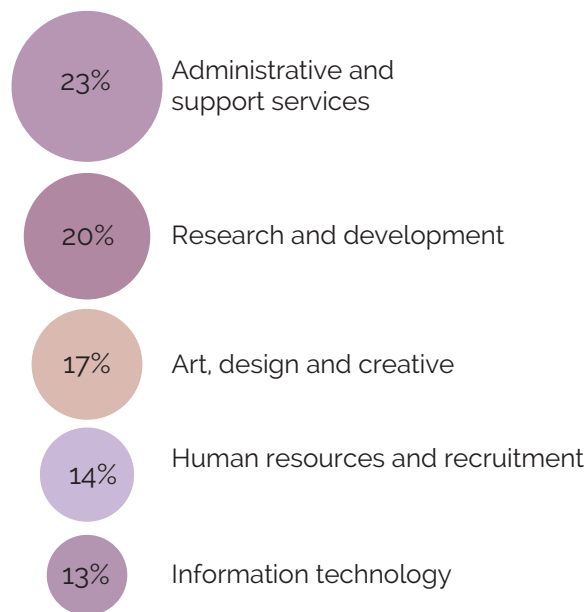


FIGURE 13 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR IDEAL JOB?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Youth are split in their assessment of the availability of suitable job opportunities

49 percent of youth perceive the availability of appropriate employment opportunities to be not good or very bad. Meanwhile, 18 percent of youth responded that the availability was very good or good, and an additional 29 percent deemed it to be average.

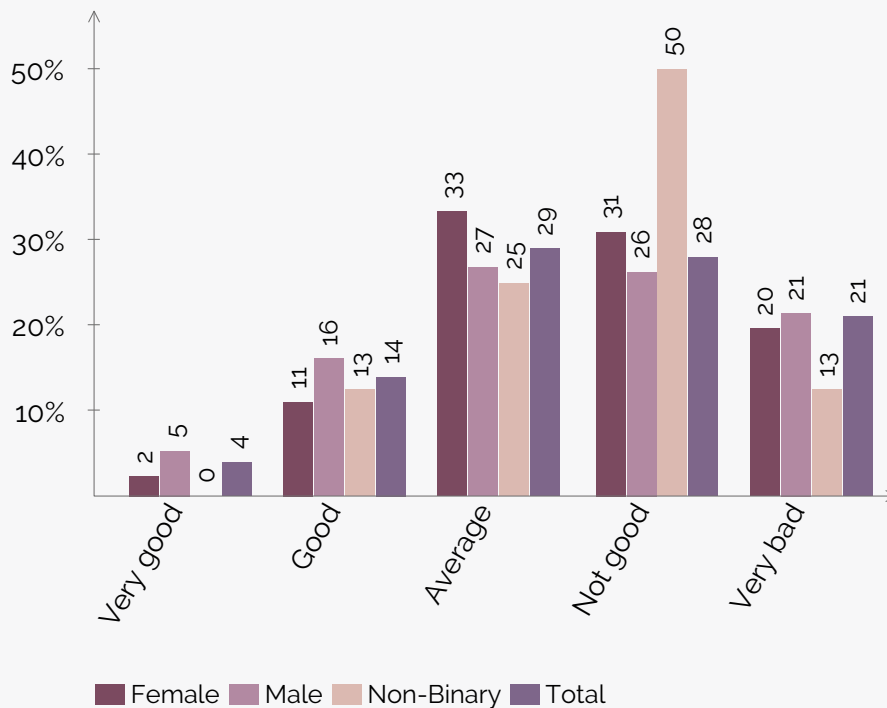


FIGURE 14 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING



Youth feel prepared for their ideal jobs

39 percent of respondents reported feeling prepared or very prepared for their ideal jobs while 38 percent reported feeling moderately prepared. In comparison, just 4 percent of respondents reported feeling not prepared at all. In general, males reported feeling prepared and very prepared more than females.

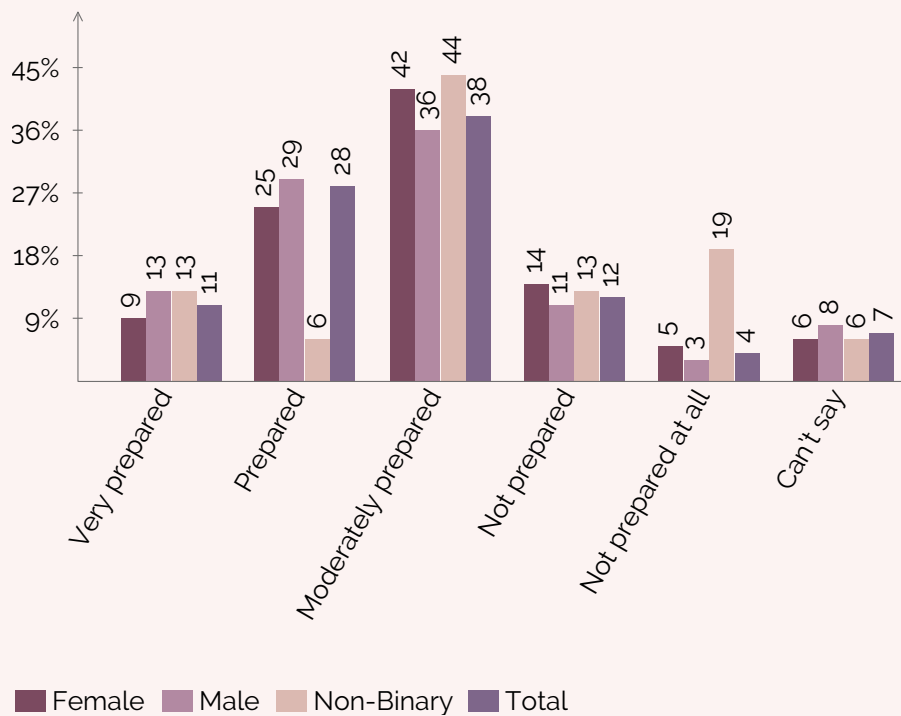


FIGURE 15 HOW PREPARED DO YOU FEEL FOR YOUR IDEAL JOB?



Lack of guidance and work experience are the main barriers in finding desirable jobs

51 percent of respondents identified the lack of guidance in identifying jobs that match their skill sets as the main barrier when looking for a desirable job. 44 percent cited lack of work experience as another significant barrier. 34 percent of youth report that discriminatory biases and personal biases related to their marital status, gender, age or family background are barriers that they face when looking for a desirable job. The share of female respondents who reported this was significantly higher than male respondents. 32 percent reported that a lack of occupational and job-seeking information is the main barrier that they face in finding a suitable job.

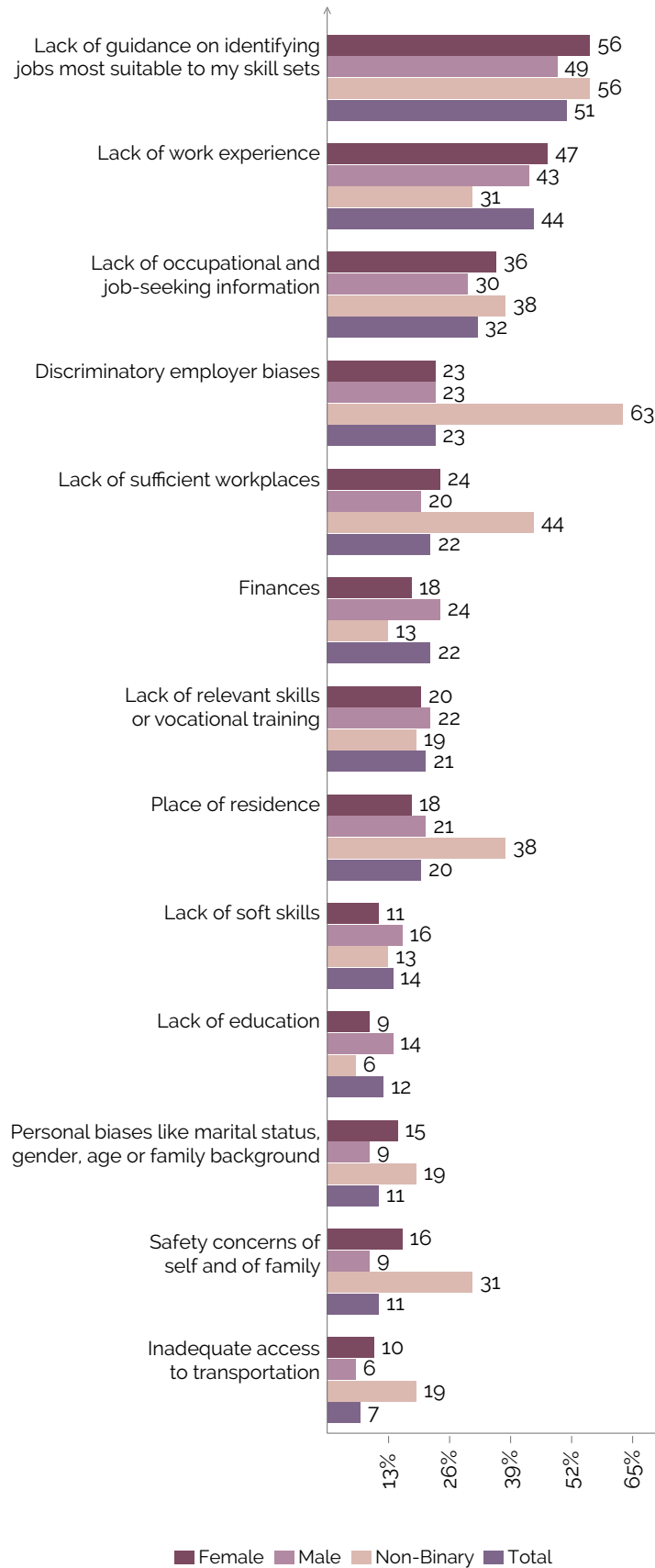


FIGURE 16 WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS THAT YOU FACE WHEN TRYING TO FIND A DESIRABLE JOB?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Good salaries, upward career mobility, and job security motivate youth

63 percent of youth reported that salary is one of the most important factors when considering a job. 62 percent of youth selected opportunities for promotion and career development, and job security as crucial factors. Further, 41 percent of youth selected flexible work arrangements, such as flexibility in scheduling and work location, as significant work considerations.

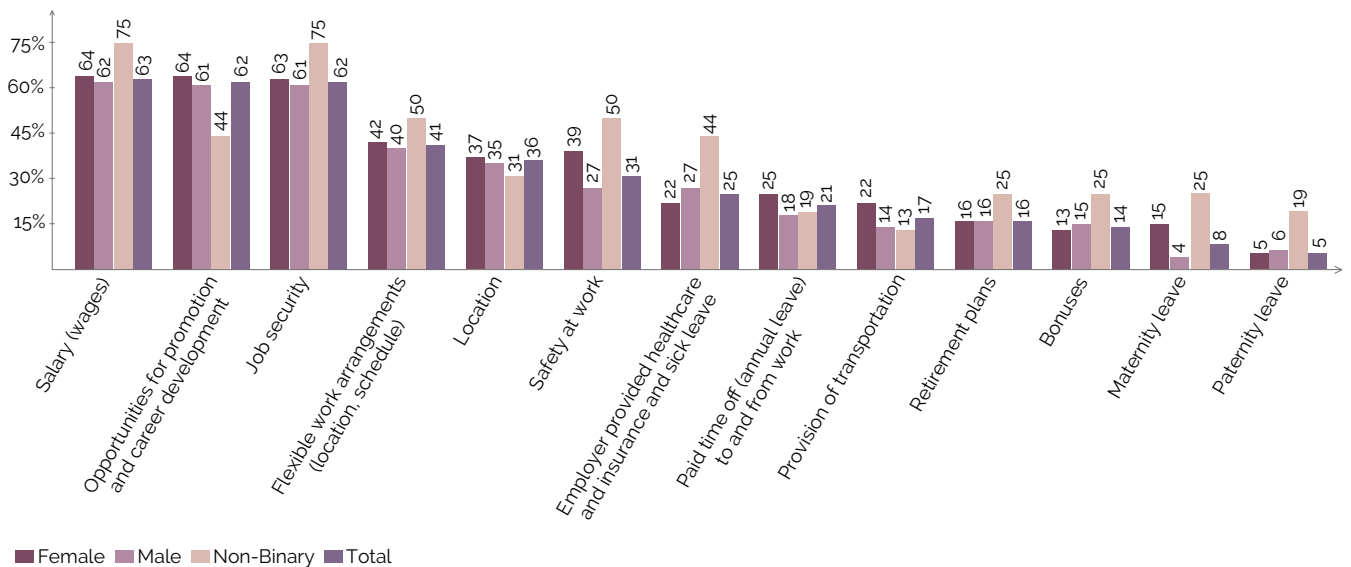


FIGURE 17 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE IMPORTANT WHEN APPRAISING A JOB?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Youth are willing to move, but companies are recruiting locally

For employment purposes, 47 percent of youth are willing to move to another state in India, 41 percent are willing to move to another country, and 39 percent are willing to move to another location within the same state. 23 percent of youth would not like to move for a job. This points to a potential opportunity for companies to source qualified workers from outside of their localities, also presenting an opportunity for youth to find suitable jobs. However, according to the *Enterprise Survey*⁴³, very few companies are looking for workers outside of their locality.

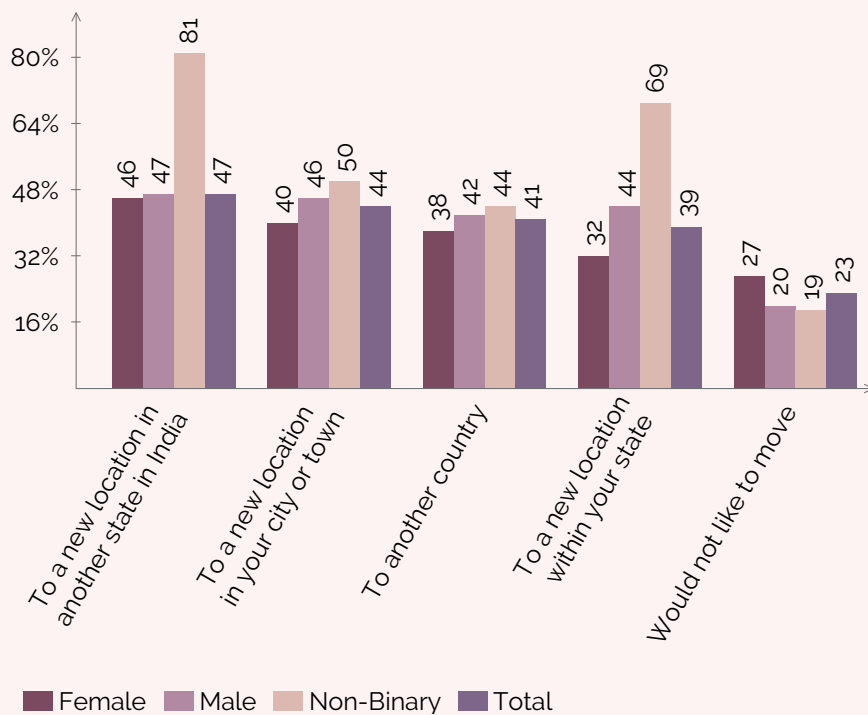


FIGURE 18 WOULD YOU CONSIDER MOVING TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FOR A JOB?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS.



THE FUTURE OF NON-STANDARD
FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT





Youth prefer traditional workplaces

Despite the increasing availability of technology-enabled remote working options, the survey reveals youth preference for traditional brick and mortar workplaces. 60 percent of respondents favoured working in an employer-based workspace or office in comparison to 30 percent of respondents who preferred working remotely. Respondents in the 15-20 years age bracket were most interested in working remotely.

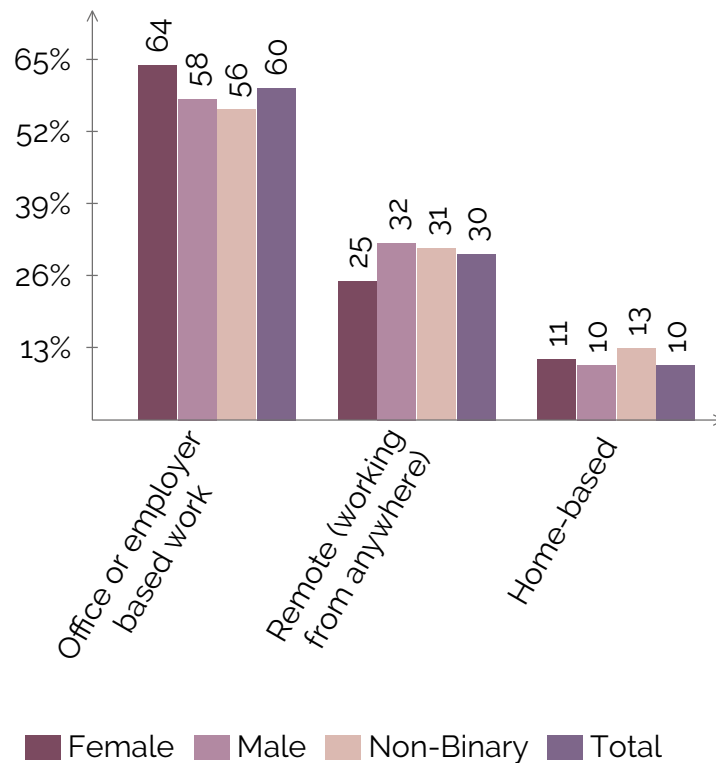
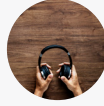


FIGURE 19 WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERRED LOCATION FOR YOUR IDEAL JOB?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING



Youth are working full-time

68 percent of female respondents and 78 percent of male respondents describe their current employment status as full-time (30+ hours per week). 8 percent of female respondents and 3 percent of male respondents report they are working as interns or apprentices. 7 percent of all employed respondents report being self-employed.

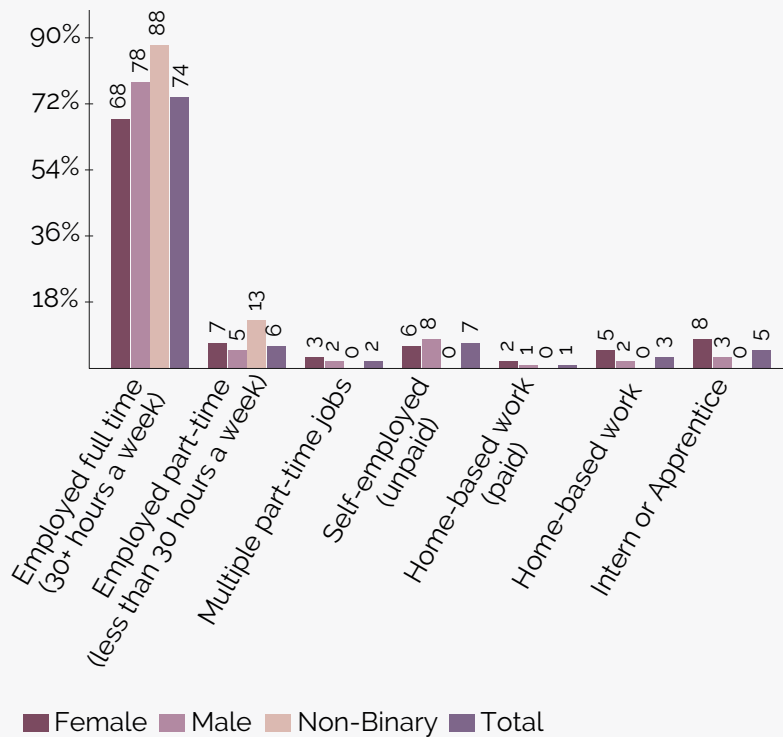


FIGURE 20 IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



India's women want full-time careers, not part-time jobs

82 percent of females chose full-time employment as their ideal time commitment (30+ hours per week) for a job. Overall, 85 percent of youth preferred full-time jobs over other employment options. 9 percent of youth preferred to have multiple part-time jobs, and 6 percent of youth preferred part-time work (less than 30 hours per week).

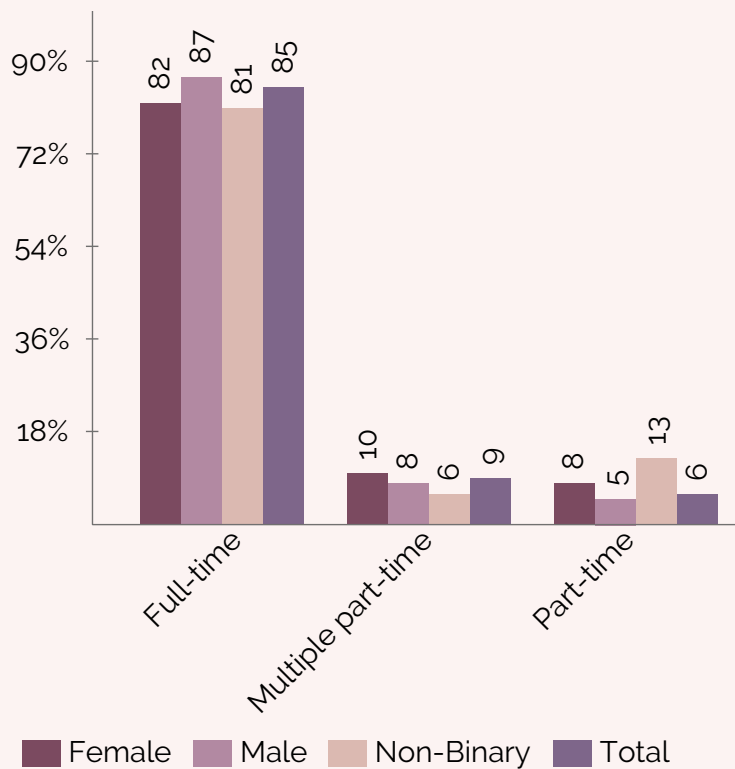
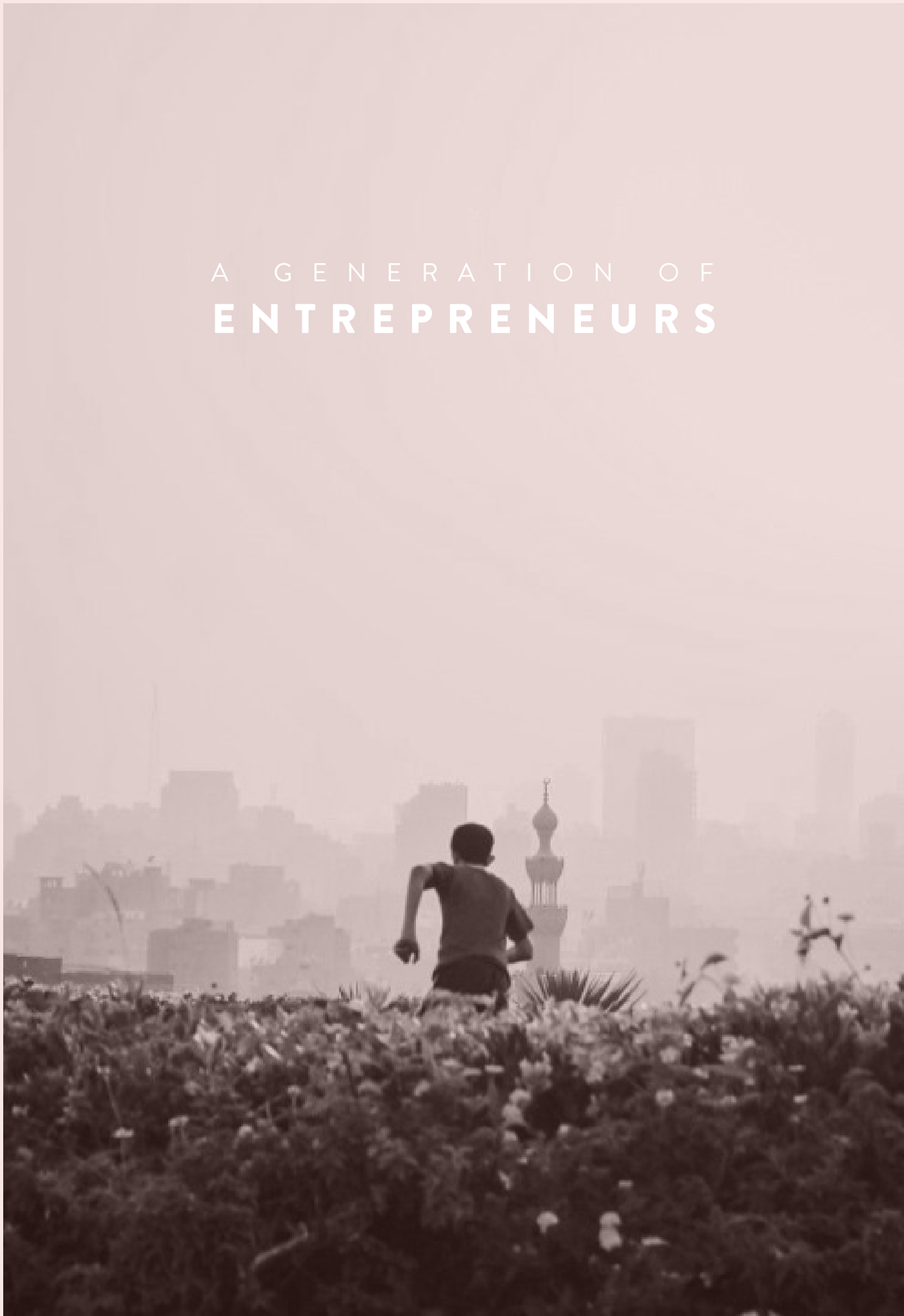


FIGURE 21 WHAT WOULD YOUR PREFERRED TIME COMMITMENT FOR YOUR WORK BE?

A GENERATION OF
ENTREPRENEURS





Youth want to be entrepreneurs

When asked which type of work arrangement youth prefer, at 58 percent, the majority opted for being employees of a company. However, 38 percent selected self-employment as an entrepreneur as the ideal type of job.

When asked more directly, 67 percent of female respondents and 75 percent of male respondents said they would be interested in running their own business.

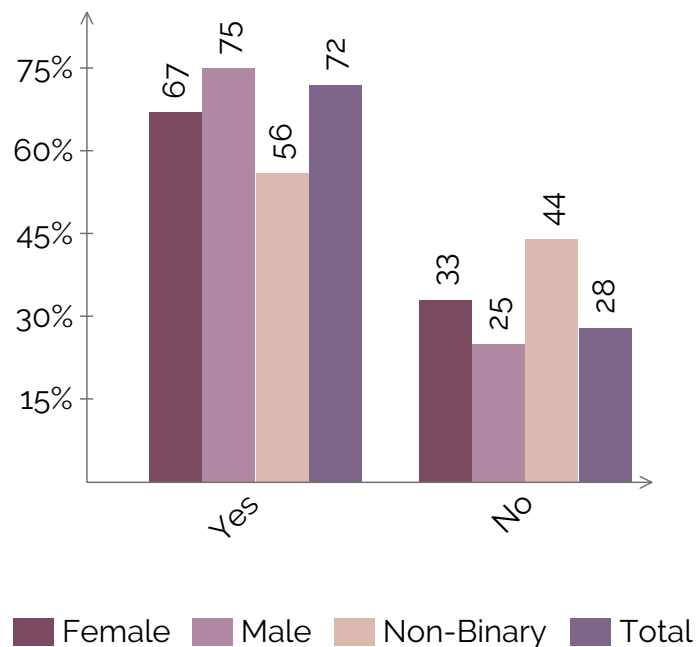
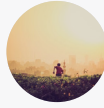


FIGURE 22 WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?



Education and training as well as academia and research are preferred industries for starting a business

Among youth respondents that are reportedly interested in starting their own business, most are keen on working in the areas of education and training, academia and research, social work, and media and entertainment. The top three preferences for industries for males are manufacturing, preferred by 21 percent; education and training, preferred by 24 percent; and academia and research, preferred by 19 percent of all male respondents. For female respondents, the preferred industries are education and training, preferred by 28 percent; social work, preferred by 25 percent; and academia and research, preferred by 22 percent of all female respondents.

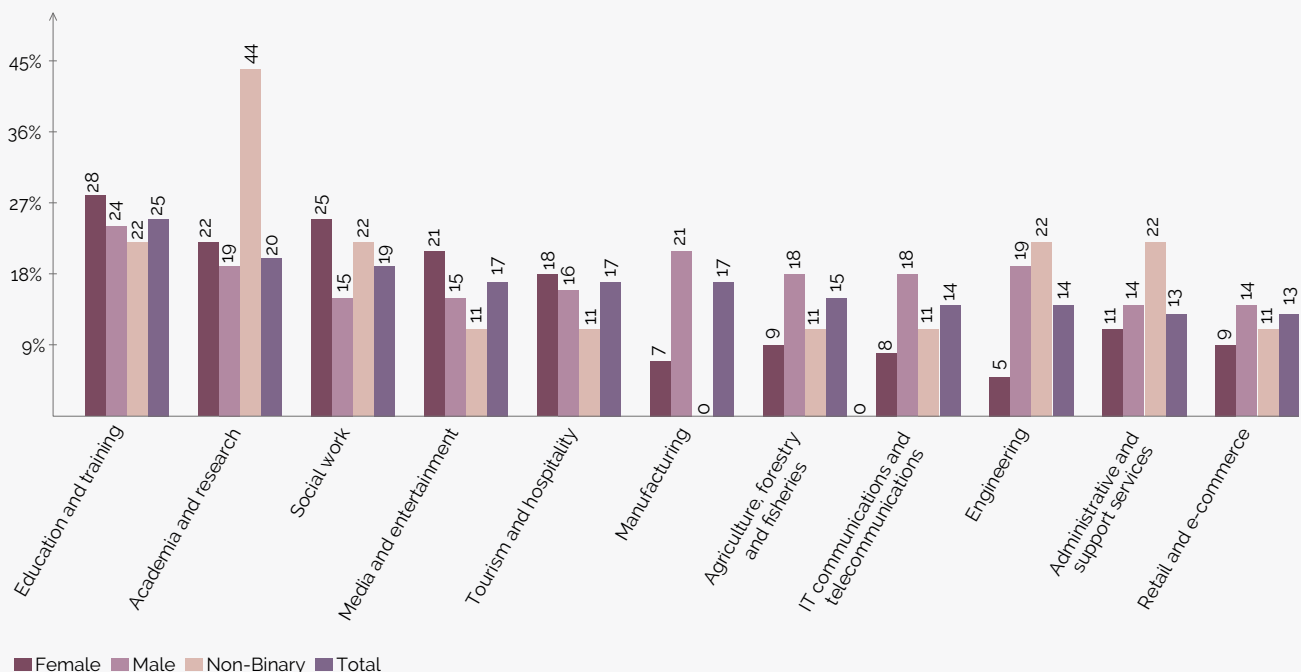


FIGURE 23 IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS, WHICH INDUSTRY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SET IT UP IN?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Youth feel moderately prepared to start a business

Of those interested in starting their own business, 44 percent of the respondents report feeling moderately prepared with the requisite entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, while 33 percent report feeling not prepared or not prepared at all.

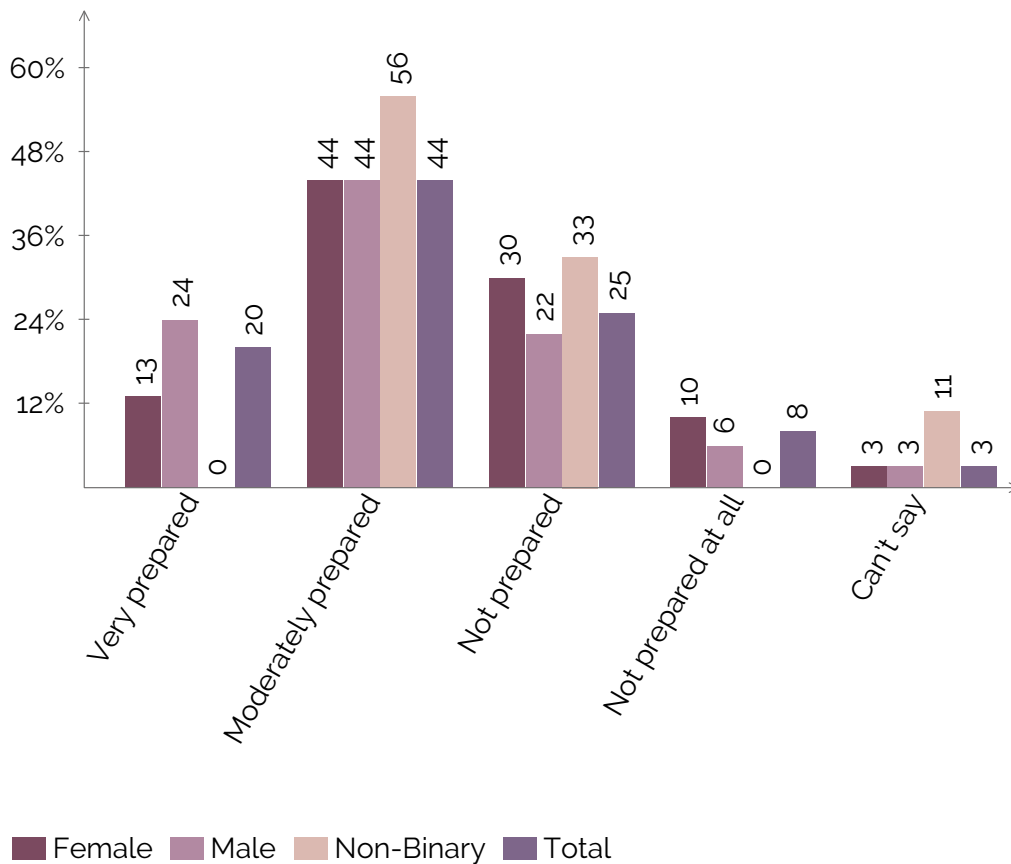


FIGURE 24 IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP, HOW PREPARED DO YOU FEEL WITH THE REQUISITE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING

An aerial photograph of a wooden pier or dock extending into a body of water. The pier is made of weathered wooden planks. Several people are sitting on the pier, some looking at their phones. There are blue and white boats docked at the pier. The water is a deep blue-green color. The overall scene suggests a coastal or fishing community.

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF THE
G I G E C O N O M Y



Youth are open to the gig economy as an additional source of income

When asked how interested they would be in pursuing gig-based work to supplement their income, in comparison to male respondents, more female and non-binary respondents said they would not be interested. 20 percent of female respondents and 29 percent of male respondents answered, 'very interested'. At the same time, 31 percent of female respondents and 23 percent of male respondents also answered 'not interested'. Overall, 63 percent reported being very or moderately interested.

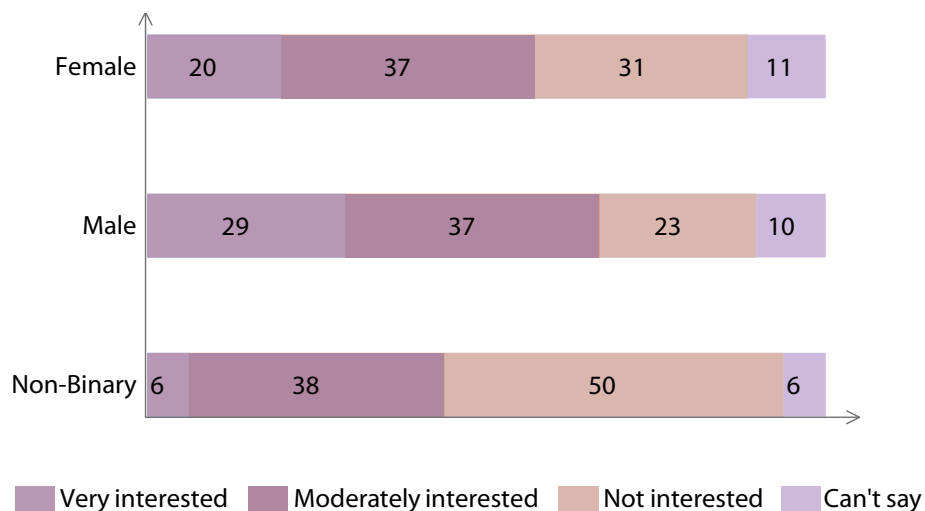


FIGURE 25 HOW INTERESTED WOULD YOU BE IN PARTICIPATING IN THE GIG ECONOMY TO SUPPLEMENT YOUR MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING



Youth are cautiously optimistic about the gig economy for their main source of income

The majority of respondents reported being moderately interested in working in the gig economy for their main source of income. At the same time, 35 percent of female respondents and 50 percent of non-binary respondents reported being not interested in comparison to 26 percent of male respondents who reported being not interested in gig work for their livelihood.

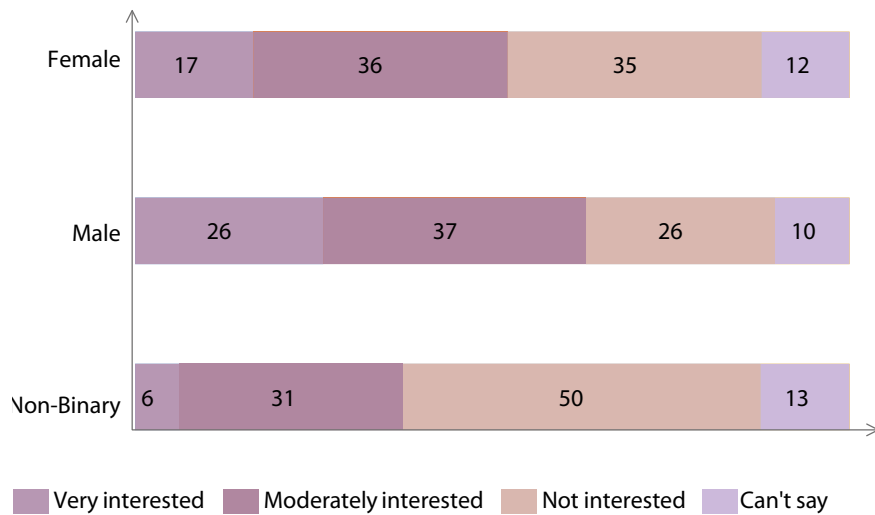


FIGURE 26 HOW INTERESTED WOULD YOU BE IN PARTICIPATING IN THE GIG-ECONOMY FOR YOUR MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING



Flexibility, autonomy, and variety are the pull factors for the gig-economy

32 percent of the respondents who reported being very interested or moderately interested in working in the gig economy cited flexibility in hours and schedule as the main reasons. 27 percent of respondents reported that greater autonomy and decision-making powers are the major pull factors for them. For 19 percent of respondents, the variety of work is most compelling.

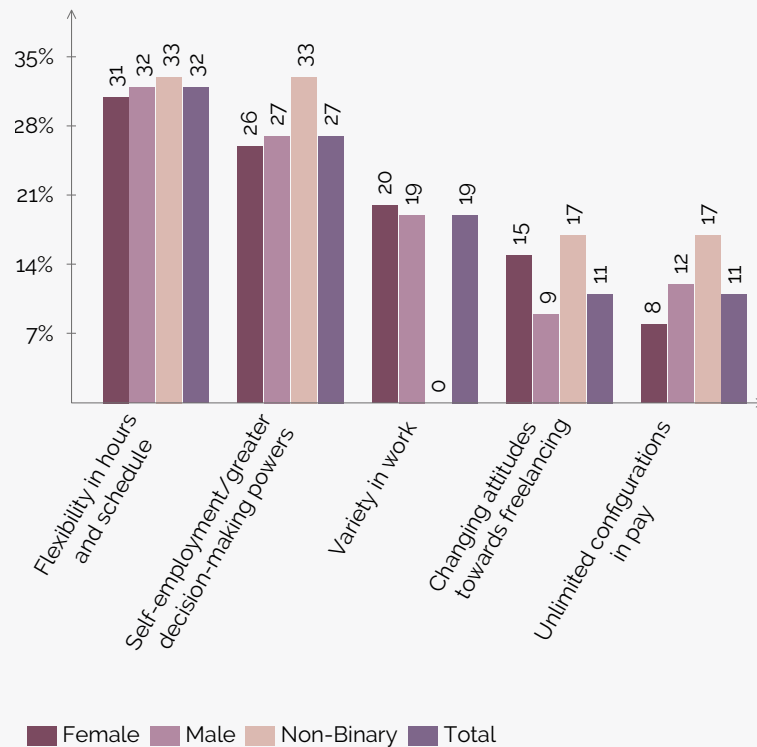


FIGURE 27 WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A PART OF THE GIG ECONOMY?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



The perceived lack of career progression in the gig economy is a deterrent for youth

50 percent of respondents reported the perceived lack of a career progression is the main reason they are not interested in working in the gig economy. 48 percent cited lack of opportunities for personal growth while 48 percent held job insecurity to be the main deterrent.

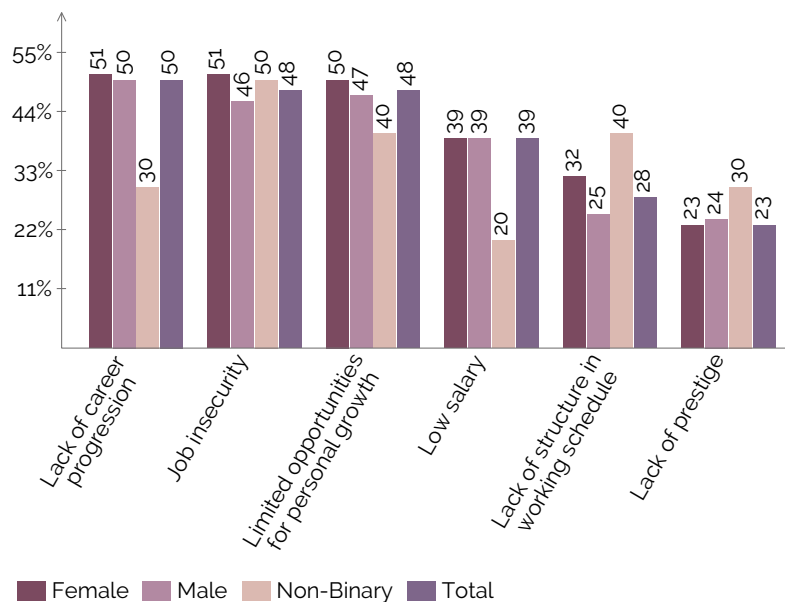


FIGURE 28 WHY DO YOU NOT WANT TO BE A PART OF THE GIG ECONOMY?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



A close-up, low-angle shot of a person wearing a white VR headset. The person's face is partially visible, looking downwards. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and green light, suggesting a virtual environment. The overall mood is futuristic and immersive.

SKILLS
FOR
THE
FUTURE



Human-centric skills are perceived to be most important for employability

68 percent of respondents believe clear communication to be one of the most important general skills required for someone in their ideal job. 57 percent report analytical thinking, 51 percent report teamwork, and 50 percent report creativity, originality, and initiative as important general skills. These are strikingly in line with expected changes in skills requirements resulting from technological adoption and digitisation.

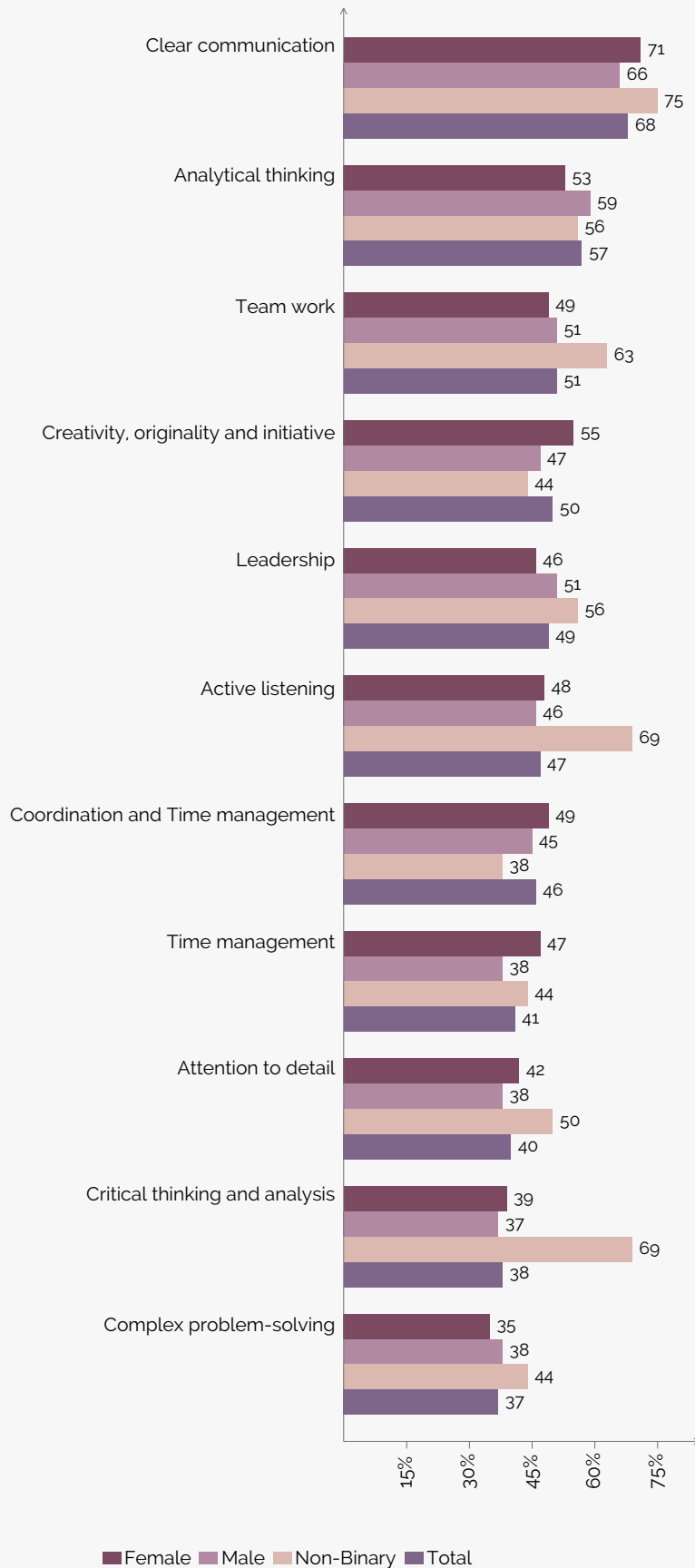


FIGURE 29 WHAT GENERAL SKILLS DO YOU THINK ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR SOMEONE IN YOUR IDEAL JOB?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Youth see high value in soft skills

56 percent of respondents stated that employers evaluate new hires based on their performance in the interview and hence, find this to be a crucial skill set. It is insightful that 51 percent of the respondents believe that the level of applicants' education is a critical consideration for potential employers. 49 percent of respondents also view basic and soft skills as highly valued by employers. 44 percent believe that technical and hard skills are highly valued by employers, along with years of work experience. 18 percent of respondents reported that employers value the quality of references and 17 percent thought that a cultural fit in the company is highly valued.

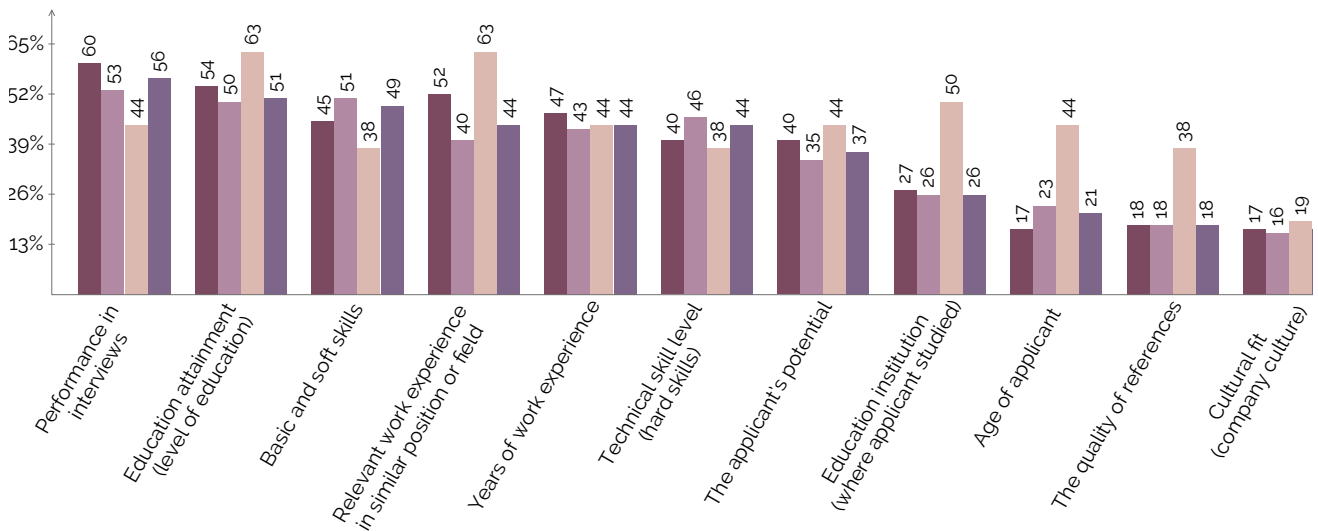
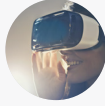


FIGURE 30 WHAT DO YOU THINK EMPLOYERS VALUE MOST IN NEW HIRES?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Youth are very interested in pursuing skills development opportunities

76 percent respondents are very interested in pursuing skills development training, while an additional 19 percent are moderately interested. 3 percent of respondents report being uninterested in pursuing skills development.

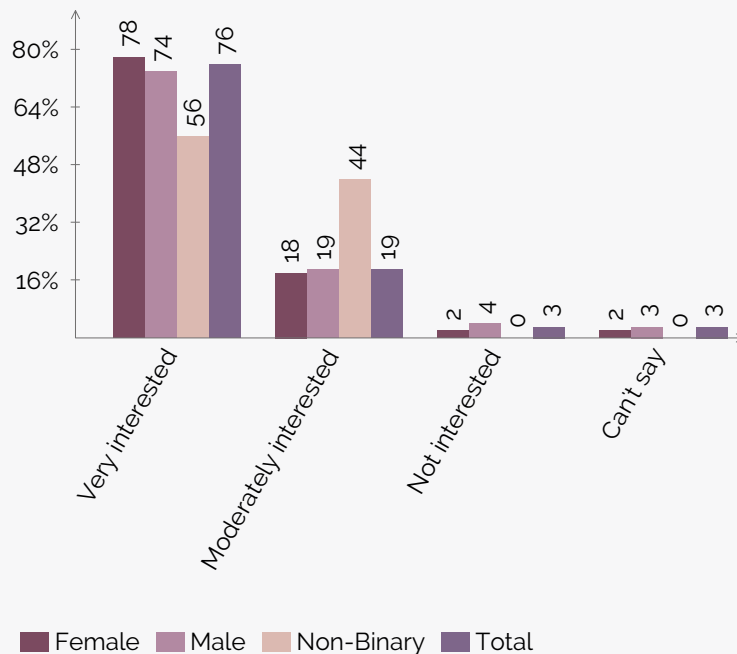


FIGURE 31 HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN PURSUING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING?



Youth believe skills training will improve their employability

70 percent of those who reported being very or moderately interested in skills development training stated that this would be to increase their choices in employment opportunities. 48 percent cited increased pay and 44 percent cited enhanced skills related to their field of study as the main reasons for their interest.

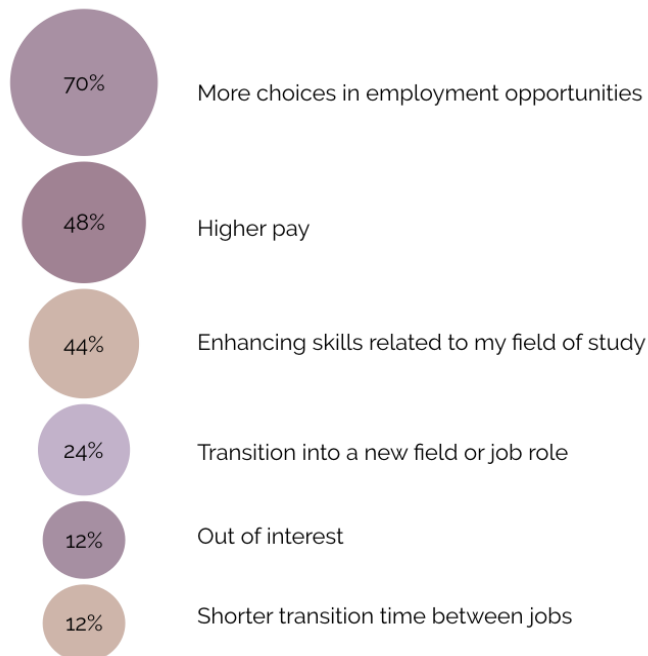


FIGURE 32 WHY DO YOU WANT TO PURSUE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



THE IDEAL SKILLS
PROGRAMME



A moderate time commitment is preferred

42 percent of respondents would prefer to participate in skills programmes that last up to 4 weeks while 35 percent would be keen to participate in programmes that last up to 6 months. 8 percent felt their ideal skills programme would last longer than one year, and 8 percent of respondents reported that their ideal skills training would be one day long.

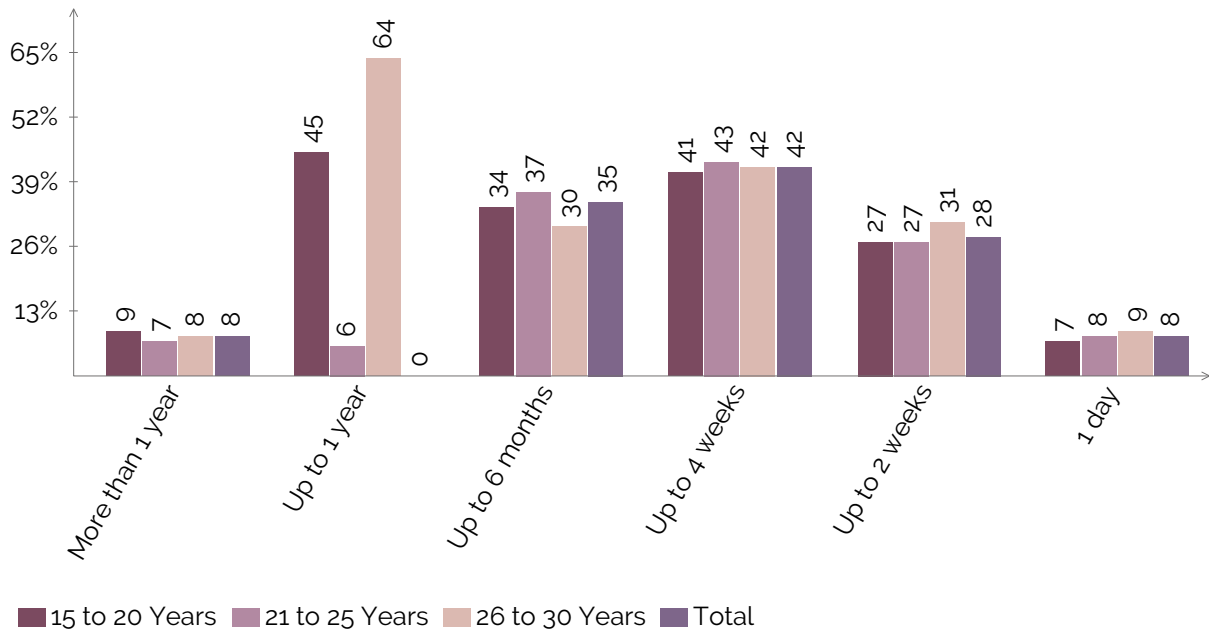


FIGURE 33 IF YOU WERE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERENCE REGARDING THE DURATION?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Money matters

80 percent of youth would prefer skills training programmes that provide some form of monetary compensation, such as a stipend. Only 16 percent would prefer unpaid programmes.

In addition, when asked more directly, 47 percent of respondents reported that payment would be a decisive factor in their decision to participate in a programme.

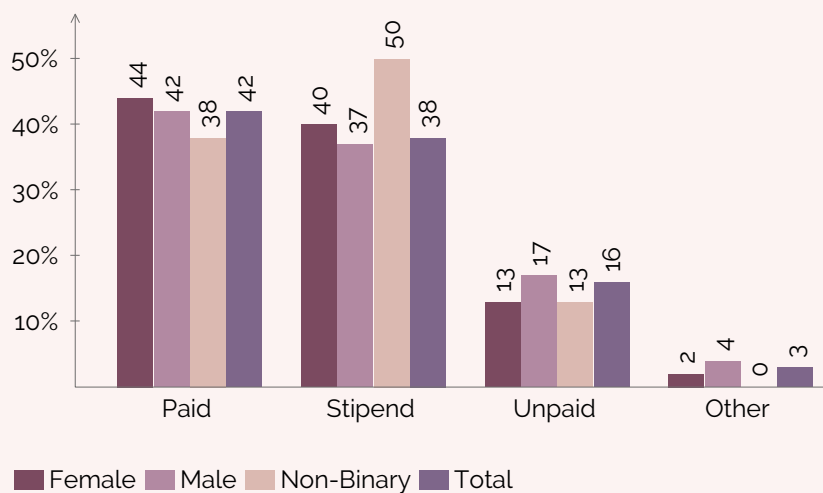


FIGURE 34 IF YOU WERE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERENCE REGARDING COMPENSATION?



Certification is important

71 percent of youth reported that their ideal skills programme would result in certification. While certification appears to be important to youth, a surprisingly small number of respondents reported an interest in internationally recognised certification. 14 percent were interested in post-exam certifications. In addition, when asked about their preferred provider, 62 percent of respondents chose government-affiliated skills-training programmes, compared to 33 percent who chose opportunities delivered by the private sector.

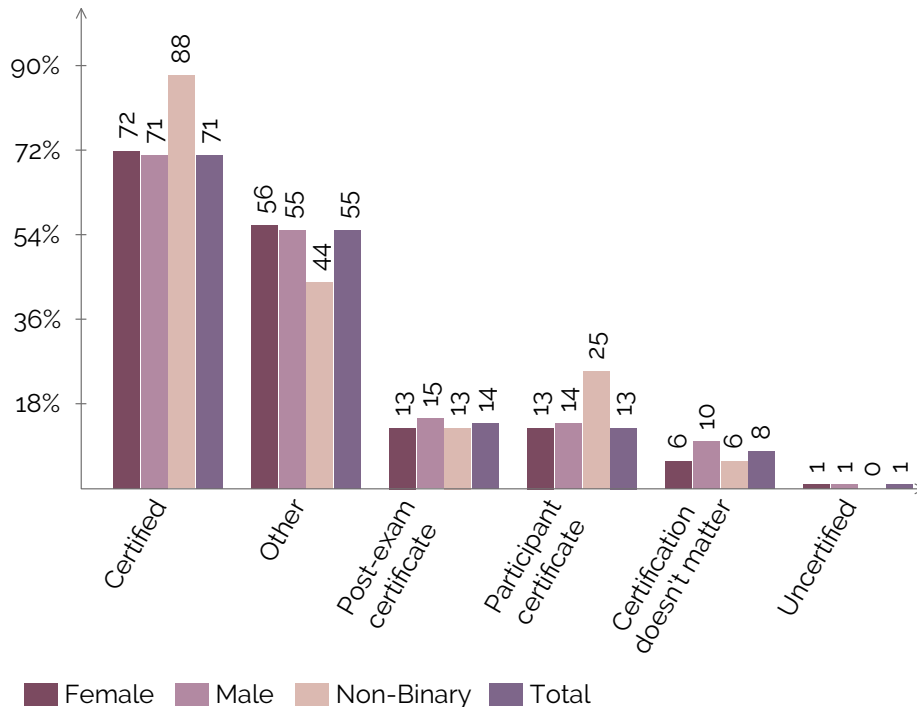


FIGURE 35 IF YOU WERE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERENCE REGARDING CERTIFICATION?



Blended learning is optimal

57 percent of youth preferred a combination of online and offline teaching, 37 percent of youth preferred online classes, and 34 percent chose classroom-based courses. The ideal format for respondents is a combination of workplace visits, mock interviews, and classroom-style theoretical learning.

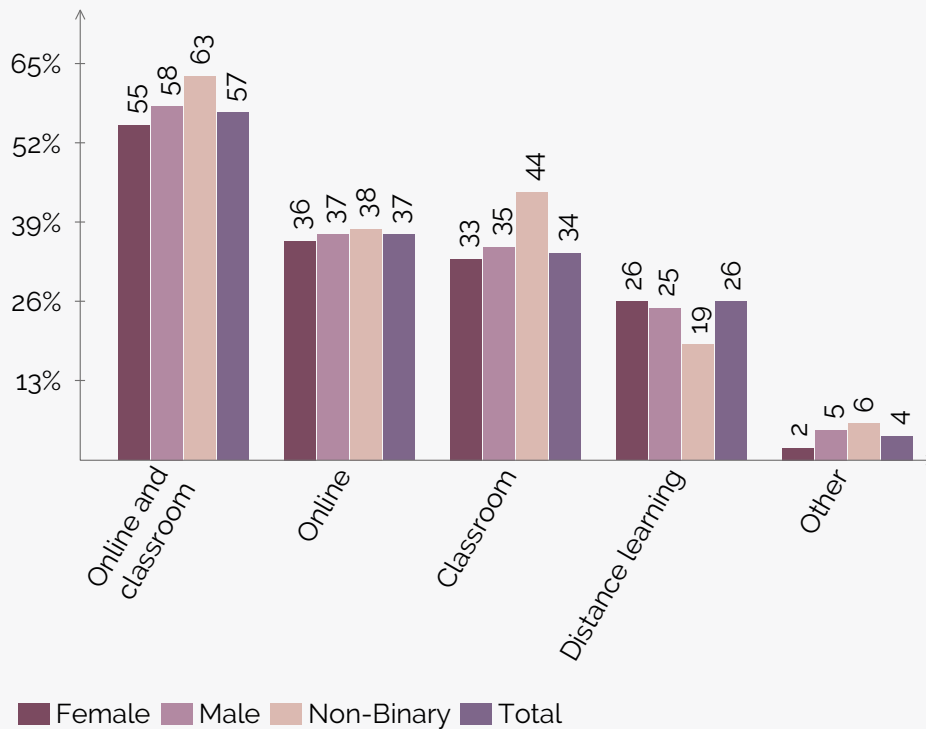


FIGURE 36 IF YOU WERE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERENCE REGARDING LOCATION?



Skills training should support employability

74 percent of youth said that support in finding a job would be important for them. 63 percent reported that development of job-specific skills would be important, and 53 percent felt that the trainings should be linked to internships or more work experience.

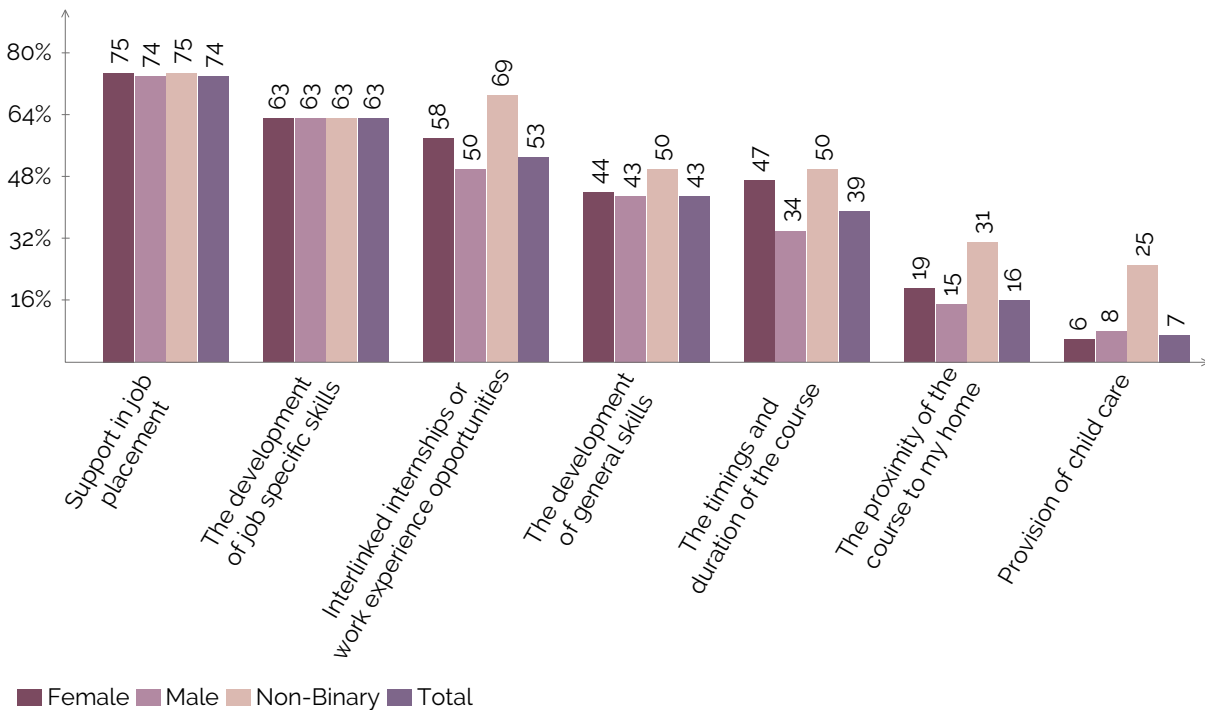


FIGURE 37 IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PURSUING A SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Youth want more mentorship and career counselling services

62 percent of youth reported that career counselling and other mentoring opportunities are very or moderately accessible. 30 percent of respondents reported that counselling and mentoring opportunities are not available to them.

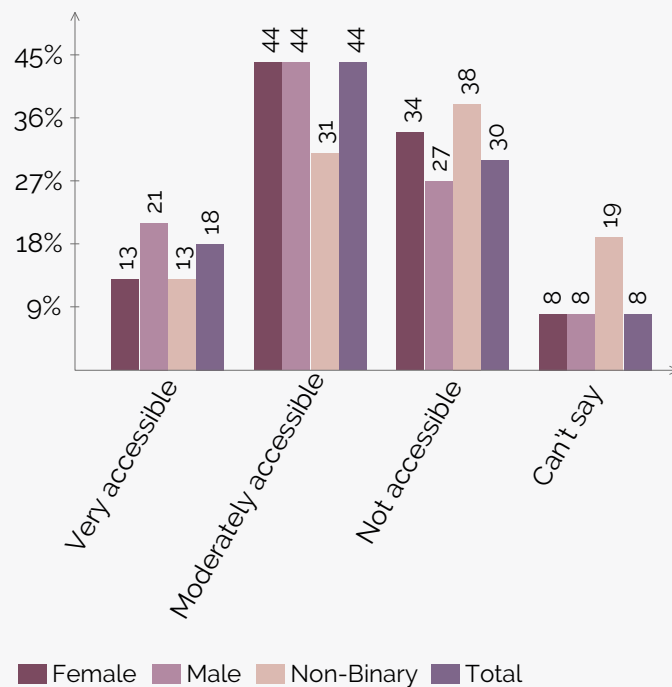


FIGURE 38 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE ACCESSIBILITY TO CAREER COUNSELLING SERVICES?



Existing career counselling mechanisms focus on job application

Among those who currently have access to career counselling and mentorship opportunities, 42 percent of respondents reported that this was primarily in the form of information on relevant vacancies. Further, 39 percent reported having received guidance on how to apply for jobs, and 34 percent reported having received guidance on available training and educational programmes.

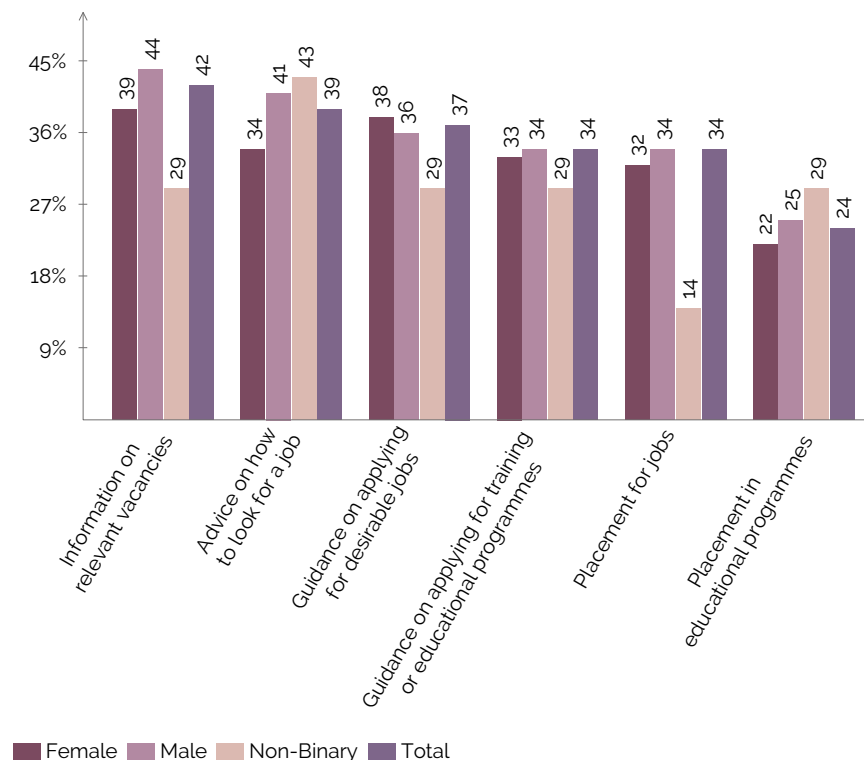


FIGURE 39 IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO CAREER COUNSELLING MECHANISMS, WHAT HAS BEEN THE NATURE OF GUIDANCE RECEIVED?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Interaction with industry professionals is considered useful

In terms of the usefulness of the guidance received, 49 percent of those with access to career counselling mechanisms identified talks and seminars with industry professionals as most beneficial and 46 percent believed interactions with counselling professionals to be most useful, and 43 percent reported workplace visits to be useful.

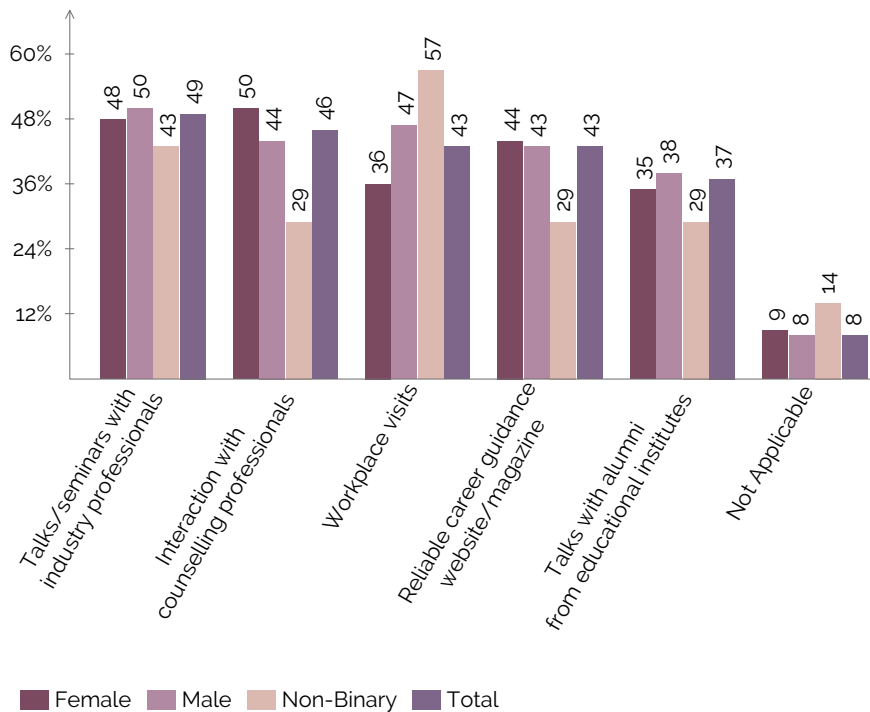


FIGURE 40 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE AND ACTIVITIES DO YOU FIND MOST USEFUL FOR YOUR CAREER DECISIONS?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Barriers to participation

34 percent of those who reported not being interested in pursuing a skills development programme cited a lack of financial resources as the main reason. 31 percent reported time constraints as the main reason, while 20 percent said that the possible delay between skills training and finding an appropriate job was the reason. Importantly, 39 percent of women and 28 percent of men reported time constraints as the main barrier to their participation. This was particularly relevant among females in the 26-30 years age group where 55 percent of respondents said that lack of time would dissuade them from embarking on a programme.

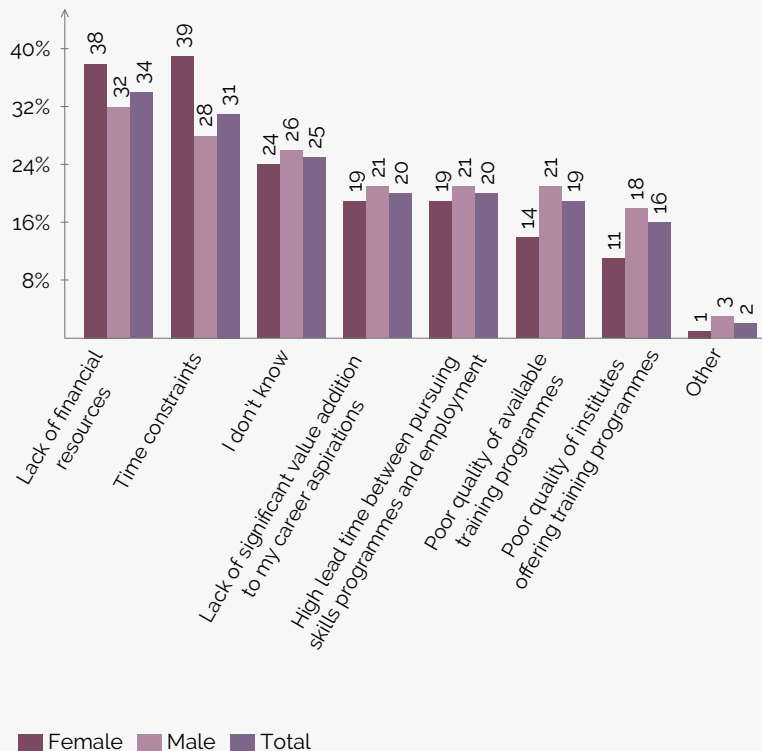


FIGURE 41 IF YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED IN PURSUING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES, WHY NOT?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



Youth are unaware of existing programmes

81 percent of females and 74 percent of males reported never having enrolled in a skills development programme, despite the high interest reported by 76 percent of the respondents. Lack of awareness could be the reason behind this as 66 percent of male respondents and 79 percent of female respondents reported being unaware of government-run skills development programmes in their area.

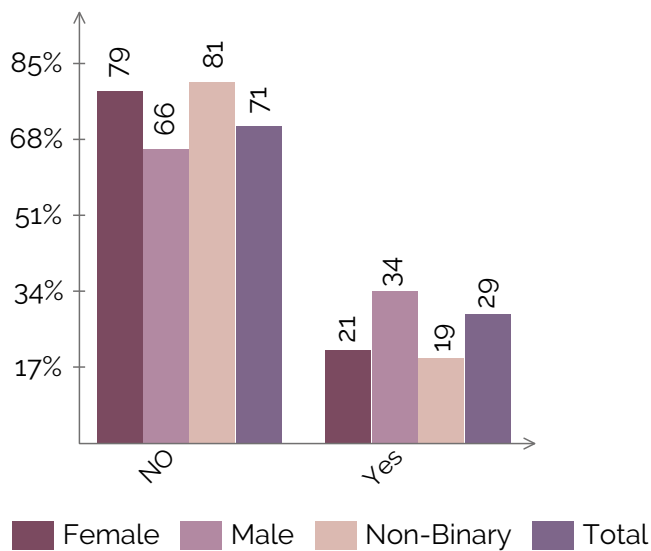


FIGURE 42 ARE YOU AWARE OF GOVERNMENT-RUN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN YOUR AREA?



Youth offer solutions

60 percent of youth feel that government action and favourable economic policies could help address the mismatch between their aspirations and job market realities. 44 percent of youth feel that more career counselling and mentoring opportunities would be useful. 41 percent feel that greater investment in new hires by the private sector would help bridge the gaps between their aspirations and available opportunities.

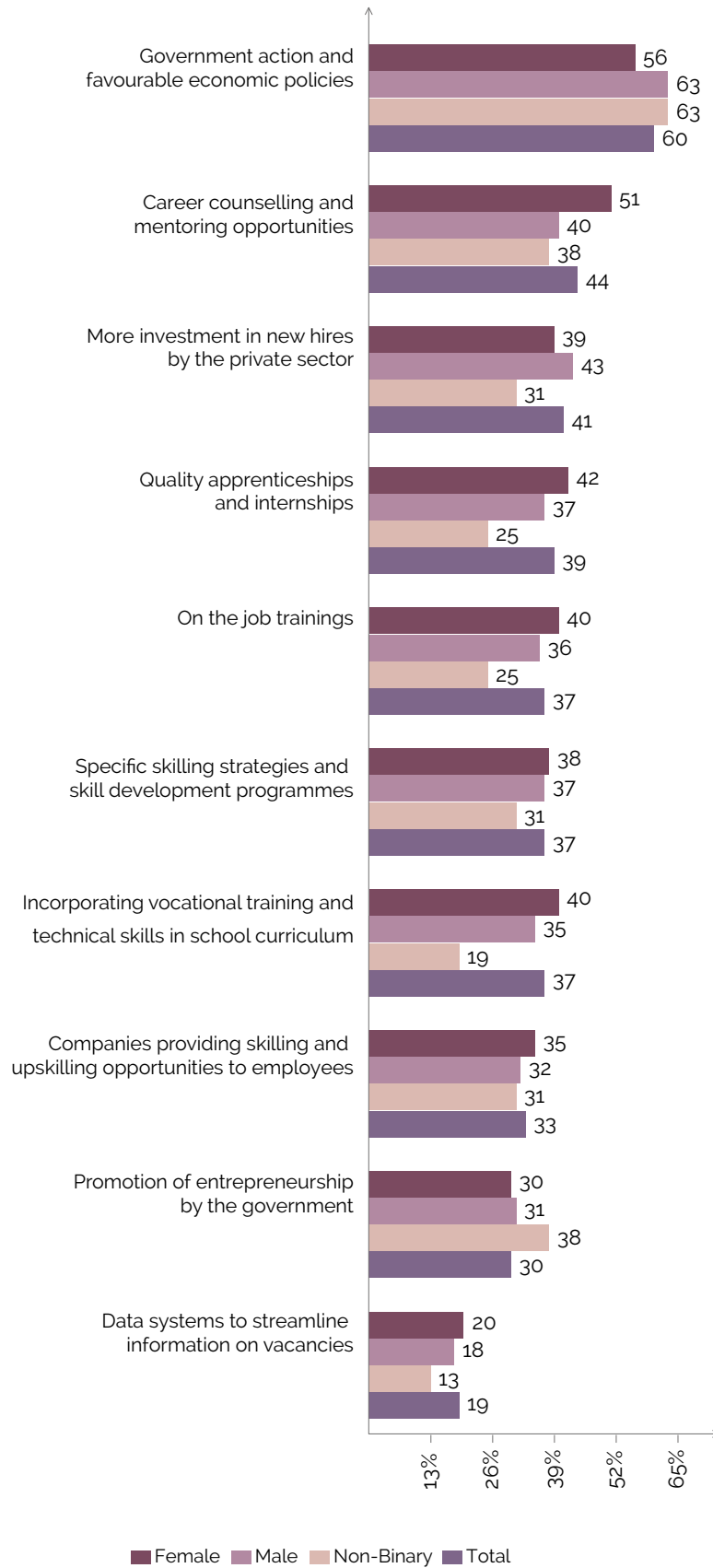


FIGURE 43 WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAIN STEPS THAT CAN HELP ADDRESS THE MISMATCH BETWEEN YOUTH ASPIRATIONS AND JOB MARKET REALITIES?

NOTE: MAY NOT ADD UP TO ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AS RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS



CONCLUSION

India's youth are ambitious. They are also optimistic about future employment opportunities and cognisant of the implications of the dramatically changing employment landscape on their career aspirations and their preparedness to realise them.

This report reveals that youth idealise academic qualifications as a medium for entering socially well-regarded professions that meet their desire for good salaries, upward career mobility, and job security. Their willingness to pursue additional skills development programmes to enhance employability—despite time and monetary constraints—points to their awareness of the changing skill requirements as technology becomes ubiquitous across labour markets.

Equally, there are significant information gaps between job seekers, service providers,

and employers. The lack of guidance in identifying jobs that match their interests and skills, and the lack of personalised career counselling services with tangible learning outcomes are significant barriers for young job aspirants. While youth actively seek skills development programmes—particularly those designed and delivered by the public sector—they are not aware of existing government-run programmes. Moreover, private sector intervention with respect to the provision of innovative skills development programmes is currently perceived as insufficient.

The survey reveals that young people are very interested in entrepreneurship as a career. Existing data corroborates this fact, as India has witnessed a startup boom in the last few years. But to channel the entrepreneurial spirit among India's youth towards substantive economic growth, the mentorship deficit, as revealed in the report, must be addressed. Interestingly, youth show cautious optimism regarding the gig economy. While they are open to taking on gig work as a way to

The key findings of the survey point to a high level of optimism among Indian youth. Meaningful strategies for managing technological transformations must take the expectations and aspirations of young India into account.

supplement their income; they highlight concerns in pursuing it as their main source of income. There is a strong preference for full-time employment across genders, and the perceived lack of career progression in the gig economy is a deterrent.

The survey also reveals misalignments between youth's career aspirations and industry demands. While enterprises expect the greatest increase in hiring in the next five years in sectors such as customer services, sales, information technology support, accounting and auditing, youth demonstrate more interest in pursuing sectors that companies expect less growth in. Youth also demonstrate a strong interest in moving across countries, states, and cities for employment purposes while companies are hiring locally. Further, while companies plan on hiring more contract works in the future, it is clear that youth would prefer to have employment contracts directly with companies.

Finally, education and training choices as well as professional aspirations of youth are influenced by a complex set of social factors. While female respondents' education and employment aspirations are at par with those of male respondents' they face discriminatory biases in hiring and pursuing skills development opportunities, have less paid work experience than their male counterparts, and report feeling less prepared for their ideal jobs. Further, women predominantly report time constraints as the reason for not being able to take up additional skilling programmes. These factors, driven by socio-cultural norms, must be taken into consideration in the design and delivery future programmes.

The key findings of the survey point to a high level of optimism and ambition among Indian youth with regard to their future. India has the opportunity to build a productive and inclusive future of work in the wake of technological disruption. However, meaningful strategies for managing these transformations cannot evolve in isolation; the expectations and aspirations of young India must be built into solutions for them to be successful.

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