

GLOBAL RELIGION 2023

Religious Beliefs Across the World

A 26-country Global Advisor survey

May 2023

Learn more: <https://www.ipsos.com/en/two-global-religious-divides-geographic-and-generational>

GAME CHANGERS



Summary findings

Belief in God or a higher power

On average across 26 countries surveyed, 40% say they believe in God as described in holy scriptures, 20% believe in a higher spirit but not as described in holy scriptures, another 21% believe in neither God nor any higher spirit, while 19% are not sure or will not say.

Majorities in 11 countries believe in God as described in holy scriptures – most notably Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, and India.

In Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and eight of the 10 European countries, no more than half believe in God or a higher power.

Related and other beliefs

Belief in heaven averages at 52% and belief in supernatural spirits (angels, demons, fairies, ghosts, etc.) averages at 49%.

Belief in hell and in the devil both average about 10 points lower than belief in heaven.

The percentage of believers in each of heaven, spirits, hell, and the devil is lowest in Belgium and tends to be 50-60 points higher in Turkey, Brazil, and South Africa.

Religious practice

Regular attendance at a place of worship and prayer are most prevalent in countries where majorities believe in God or a higher spirit.

The percentage who say that people with religious faith are happier tends to mirror the percentage who say they regularly attend a place of worship.

Role of God or a higher power

About three in four believers in God or a higher power say it helps them to overcome crises, gives meaning to their life, and makes them happier than average.

The higher the proportion of believers in a country, the more likely believers are to feel they benefit from their faith.

Religious tolerance

Comfort with being around people of different religious beliefs averages 76%. It is highest in South Africa, Singapore, and the Anglosphere, and lowest in Germany, Japan, and South Korea (where religiosity is lowest).

Nearly half (47%) say religion does more harm in the world than good. After India, this view is most common in Western Europe and in Japan where it has grown widely since 2017; it is least common in Latin America, South Africa, Turkey, and Southeast Asia.

Religion and identity

On average, 42% say their religion defines them as a person. All three countries where more than three in four agree are predominantly non-Christian; all six countries where less than one in three agree are in Europe.

Religion and morality

On average, 54% agree that religious practices are an important factor in the moral life of citizens, 37% agree that people with religious faith are better citizens, and 20% say they lose respect for people when they find out they are not religious.

In all three cases, the percentages vary by as much as 50 or 60 points between countries with high and low levels of religiosity.

Wide generation gaps

In most countries surveyed, younger people are less likely to identify as Christian (especially Catholic) and more likely to identify as Muslim or of some other faith compared to older people in their country. In each one the 16 most Catholic countries surveyed, the percentage of Gen Zers who identify as Catholic is lower than the percentage of Boomers who do so – by an average of 16 points. A similar generation gap exists in nearly every country where a large proportion of all adults identify as Protestant, Evangelical or just “Christian”. Conversely, wherever at least 2% of all adults identify as Muslim, Gen Zers are more likely than Boomers to do so – by an average of 7 points. These demographic shifts likely account for generational differences in beliefs, practice, and attitudes toward religion, which vary depending on the country’s religiosity and immigration patterns.

In nearly all countries where at least one-third of all adults believe in God as described in holy scriptures, Gen Zers are less likely than Boomers to hold such beliefs, whereas the trend is reversed in less religious countries. Similarly, in countries where religious practice is high, older adults tend to engage in it more than the young, while in countries where religious practice is low, young people tend to have higher engagement.

In countries where young people are more likely than older adults to identify as Muslim, they are also more likely to be religious, to view their religion as a marker of their identity, and to associate religion with morality.

Also, the younger people are, the more likely they are to believe in heaven, hell, the Devil and supernatural spirits.

DENOMINATION, PRAYER AND WORSHIP FREQUENCY

1

Religion identification: 26-country average

Q. What is your religion?

% Selecting

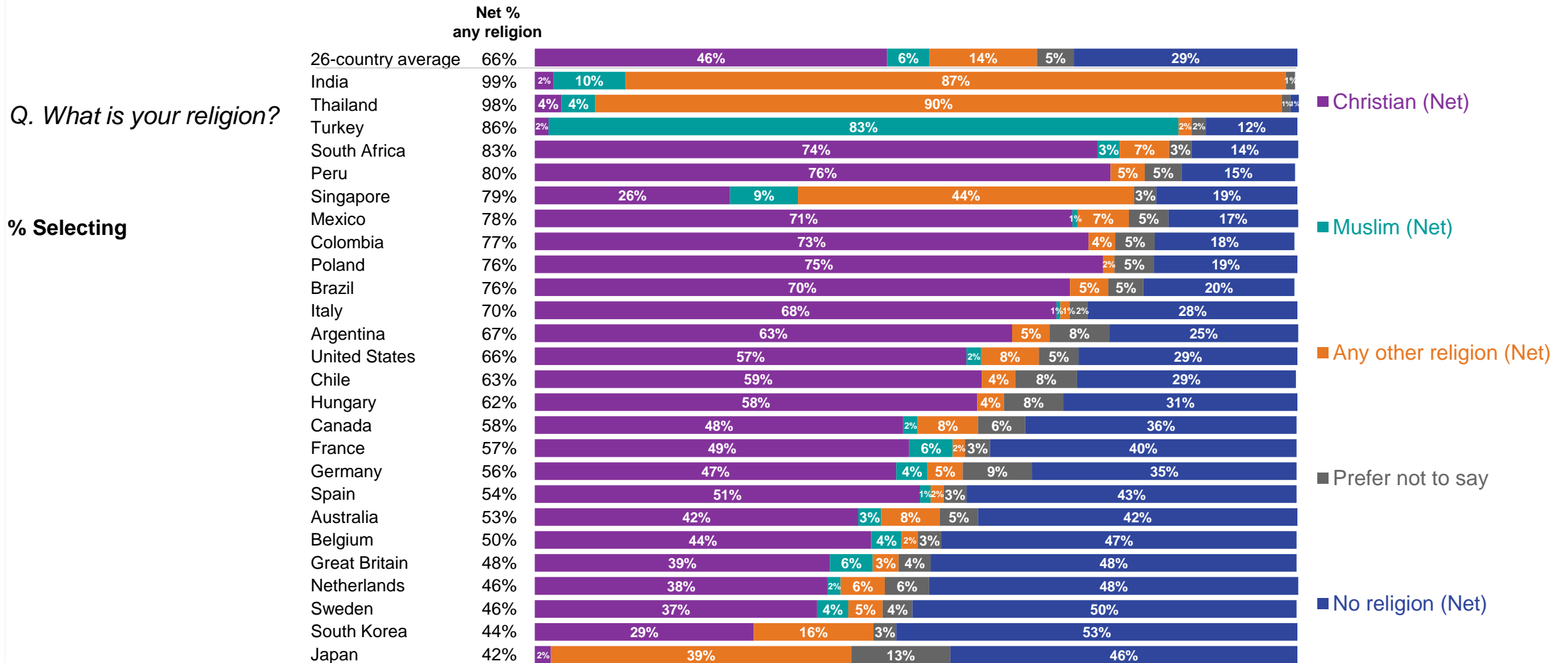
	26-country average	
Christian - Catholic	29%	
Christian - Protestant or Evangelical (e.g., Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Reformed, Pentecostal, etc.)	11%	
Christian - Orthodox	2%	46%
Mormon	<1%	
Jehovah's Witness	1%	
Christian - Other or unspecified	4%	
Jewish	<1%	
Muslim – Sunni	4%	
Muslim - Shi'a	<1%	6%
Muslim - Other or unspecified	1%	
Hindu	4%	
Sikh	<1%	
Buddhist	7%	
Confucianist or Taoist	<1%	
Chinese folk/popular religion practitioner	<1%	
Shinto	<1%	
Other	2%	
Spiritual but not religious	7%	29%
No religion - agnostic	6%	
No religion - atheist	16%	
Prefer not to say	5%	

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The "26-country average" reflects the average result for all the countries where 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.

The samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey are more urban, educated, and/or more affluent than the general population.

Religion identification by country

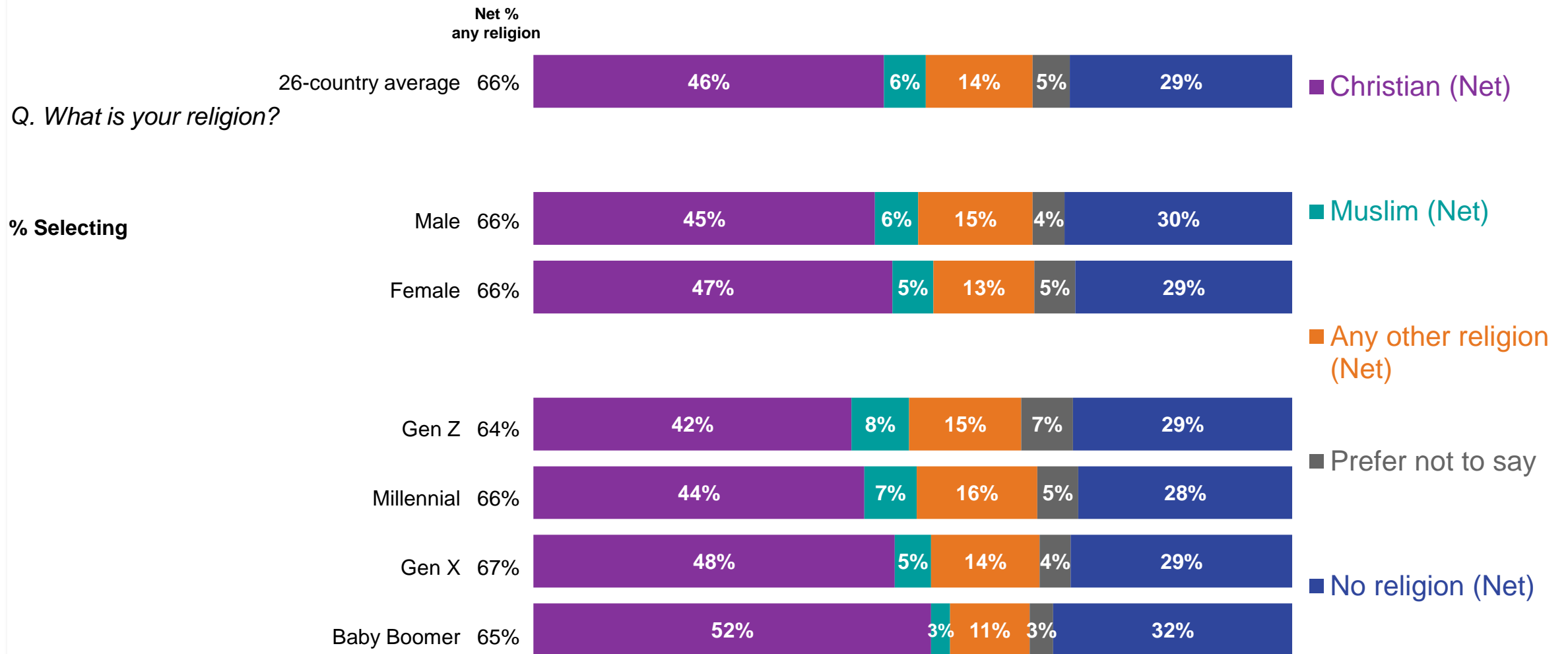


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Religion identification: 26-country average by gender and generation



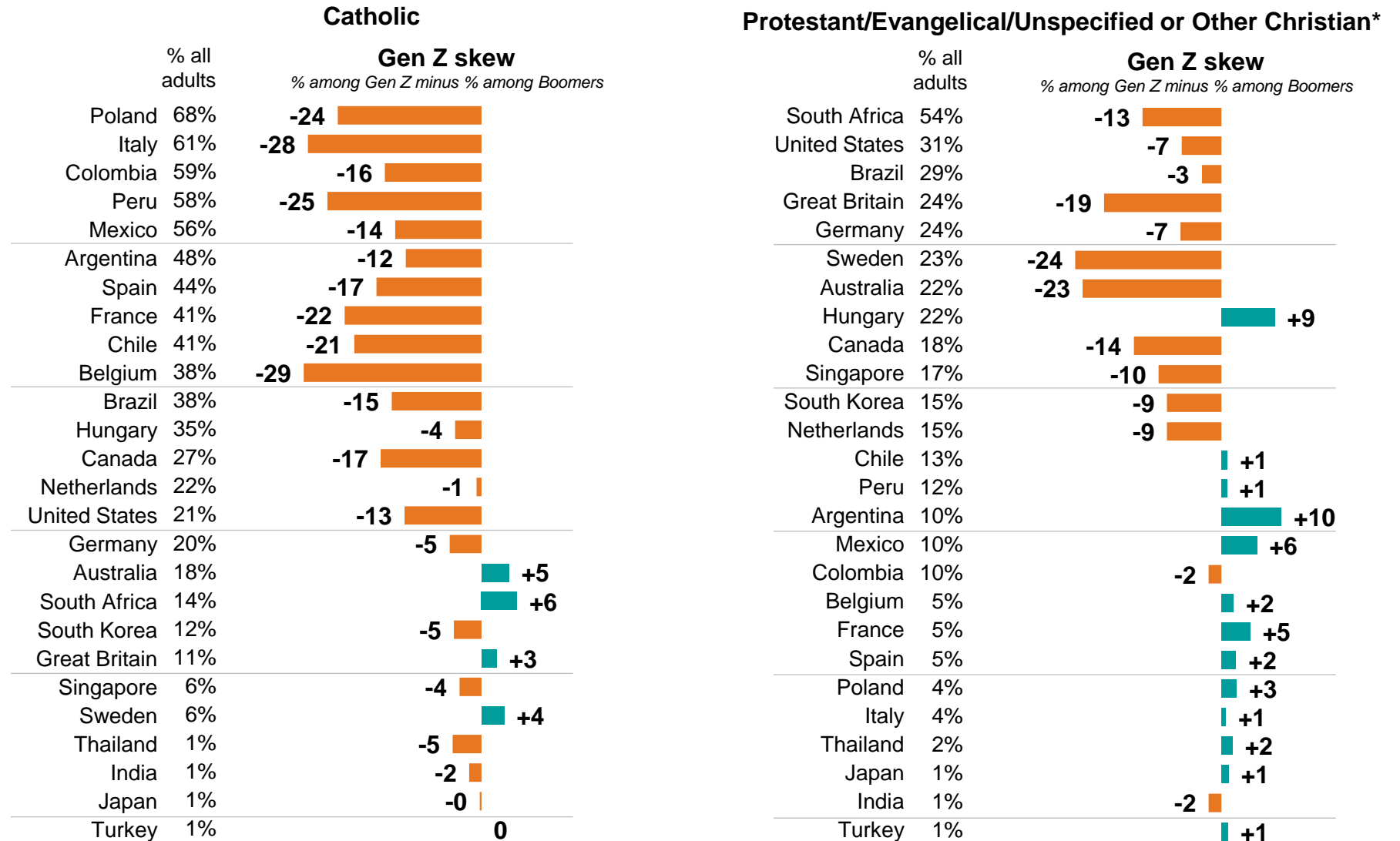
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Religious identification: Generation gap by country (Catholic and Protestant/Evangelical+)

Q. What is your religion?



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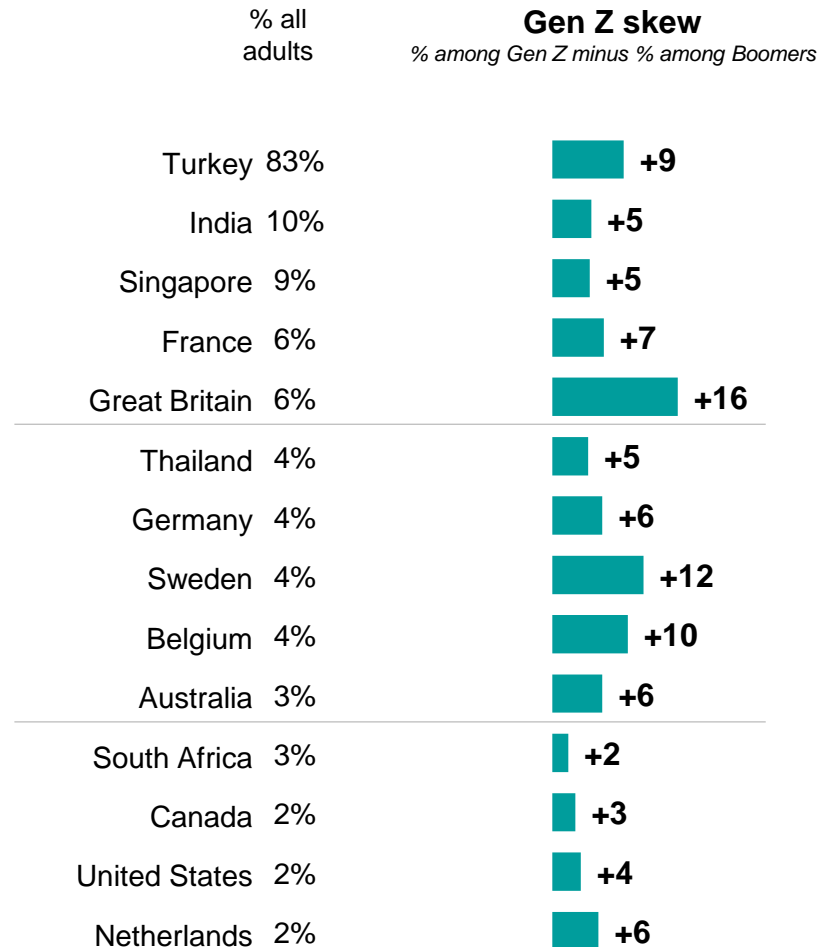
* Excludes Catholic, Orthodox, Mormon and Jehovah's Witness



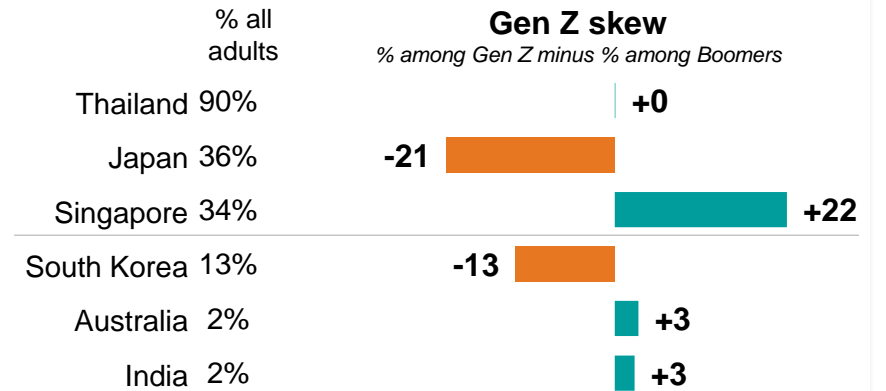
Religious identification: Generation gap by country (Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu)

Q. What is your religion?

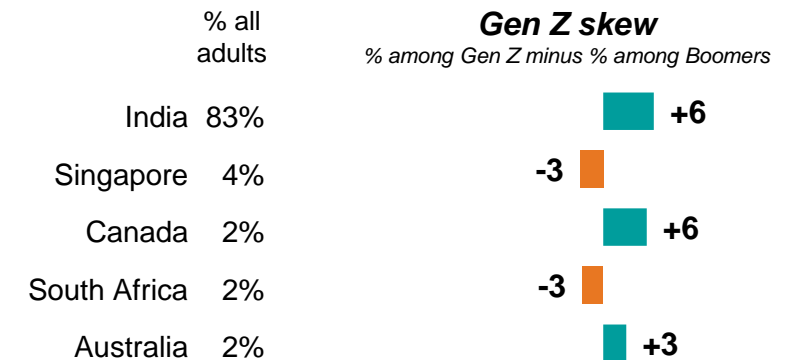
Muslim (Top 14 countries surveyed)



Buddhist (Top 6 countries surveyed)



Hindu (Top 5 countries surveyed)



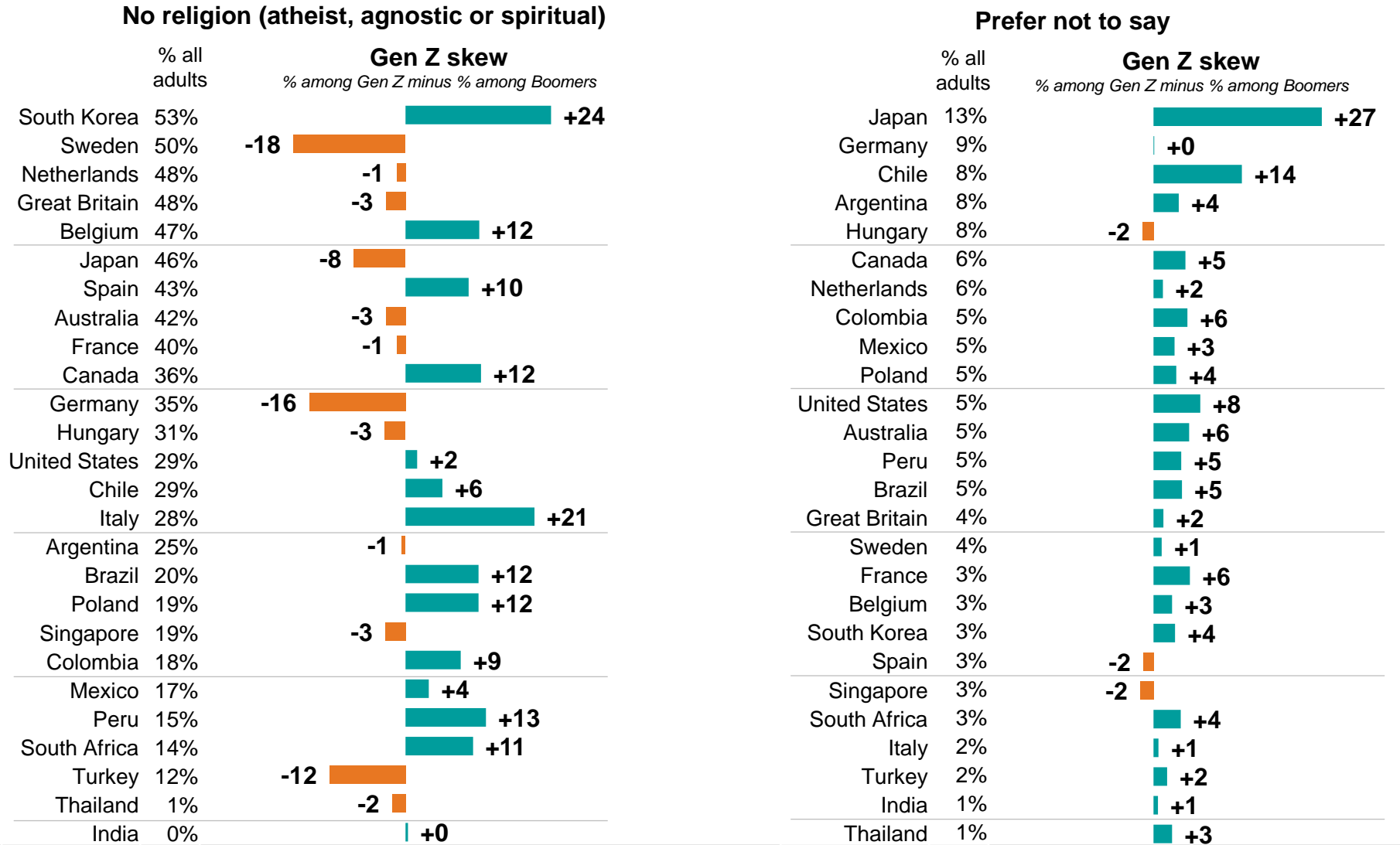
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Religious identification: Generation gap by country (No religion and Prefer not to say)

Q. What is your religion?



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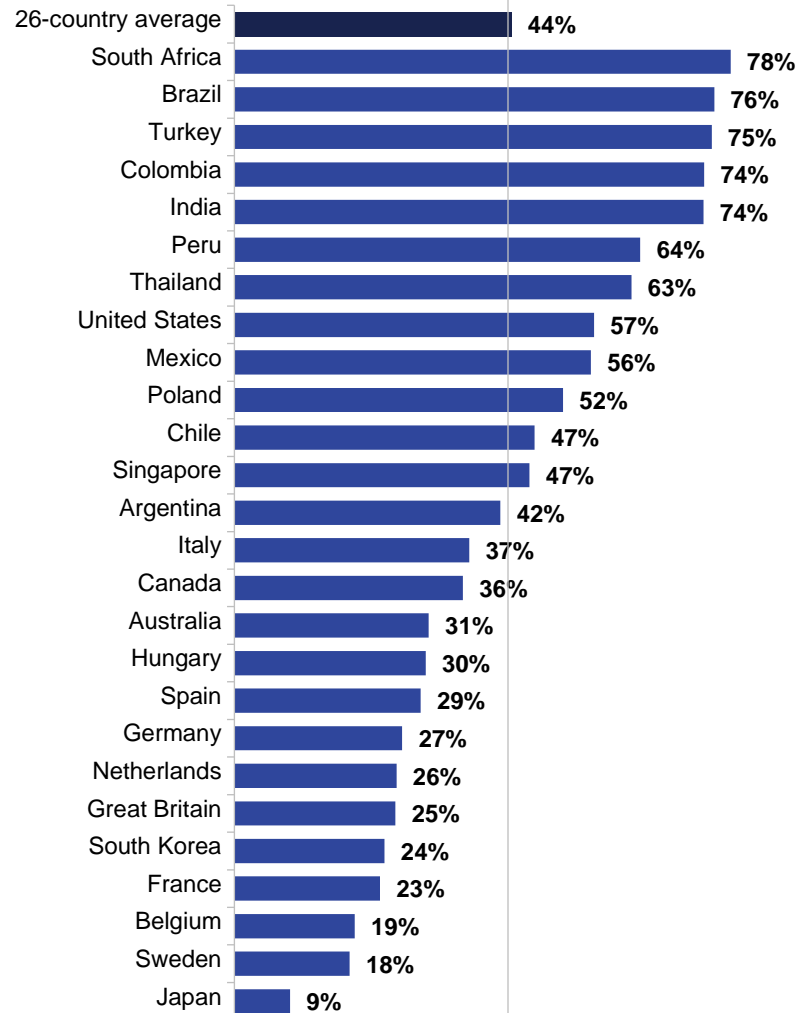
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Religious practice by country

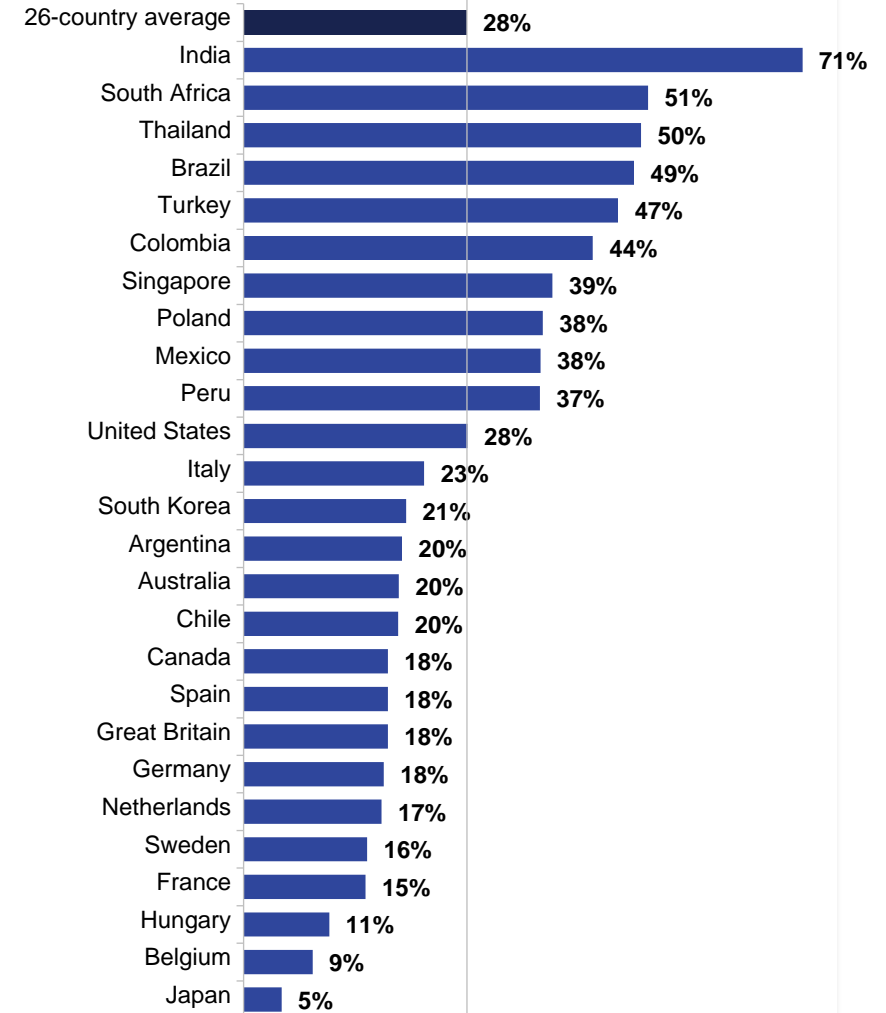
Q. On average, how often do you do the following?

% Once a month or more often

“Pray outside a place of worship (e.g., at home)”



“Go to a place of worship (e.g., a church, temple, or mosque)”



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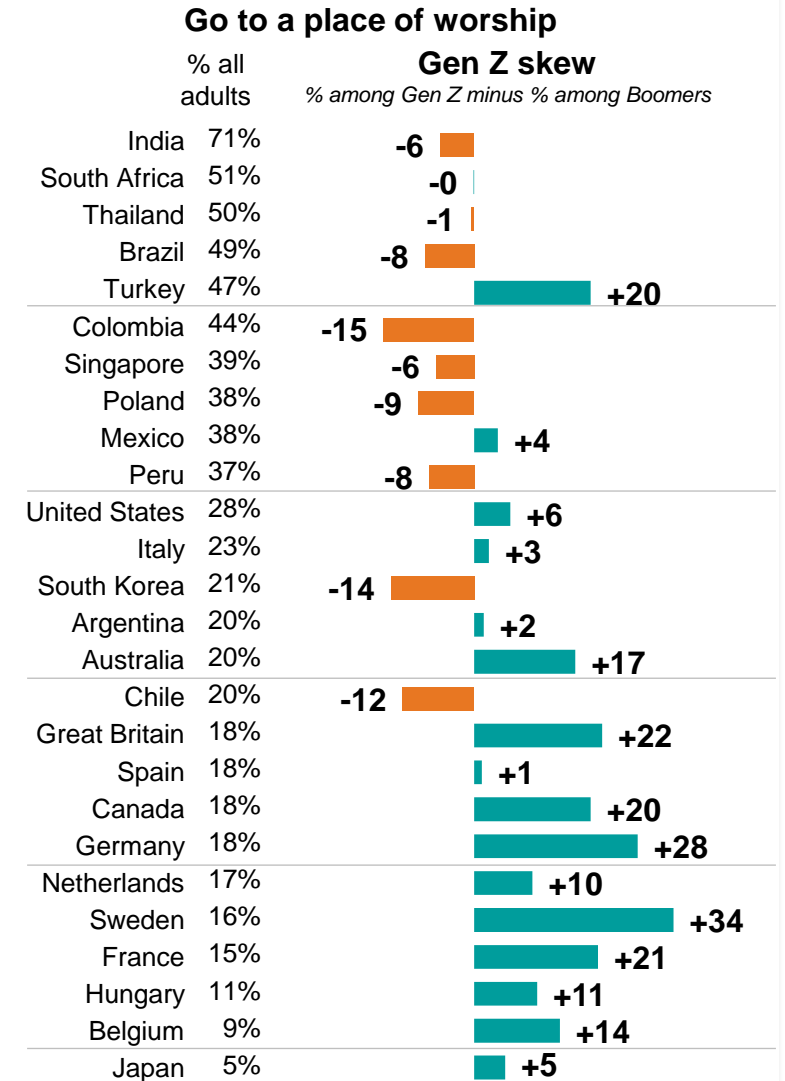
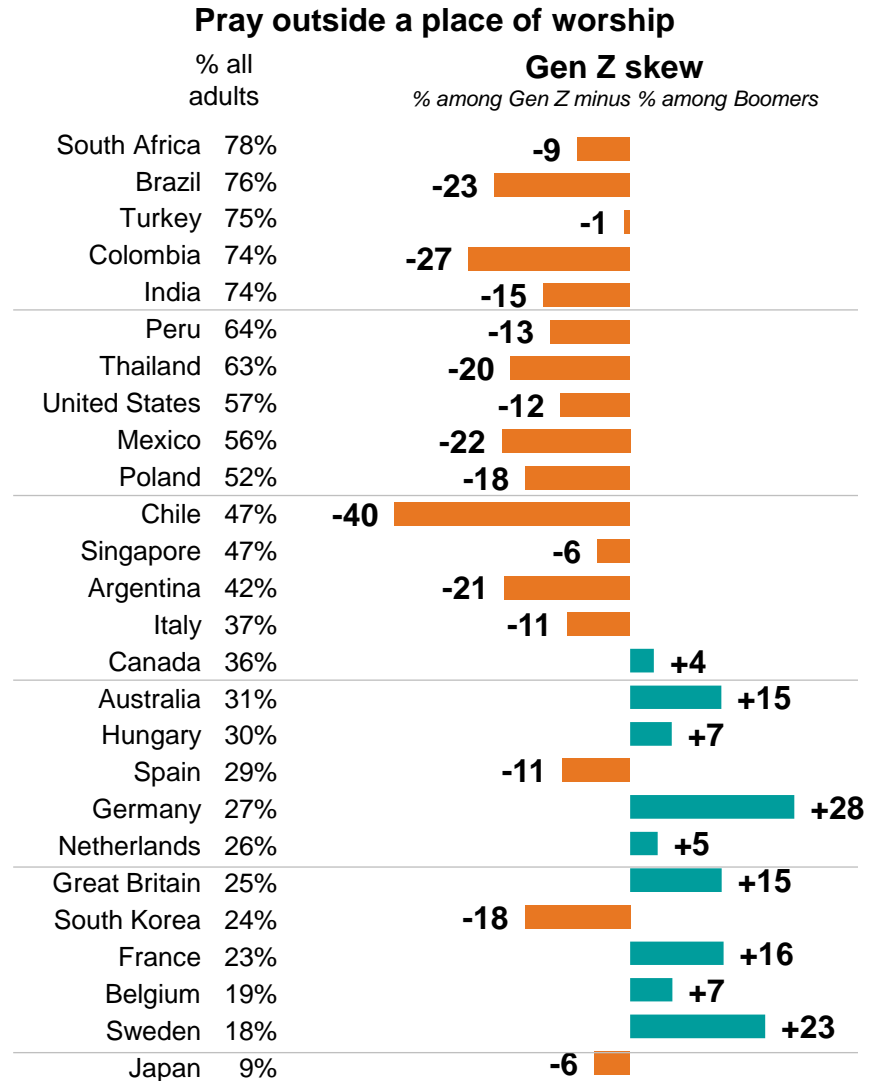
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Religious practice by country: Generation gap by country

Q. On average, how often do you do the following?

% once a month or more often



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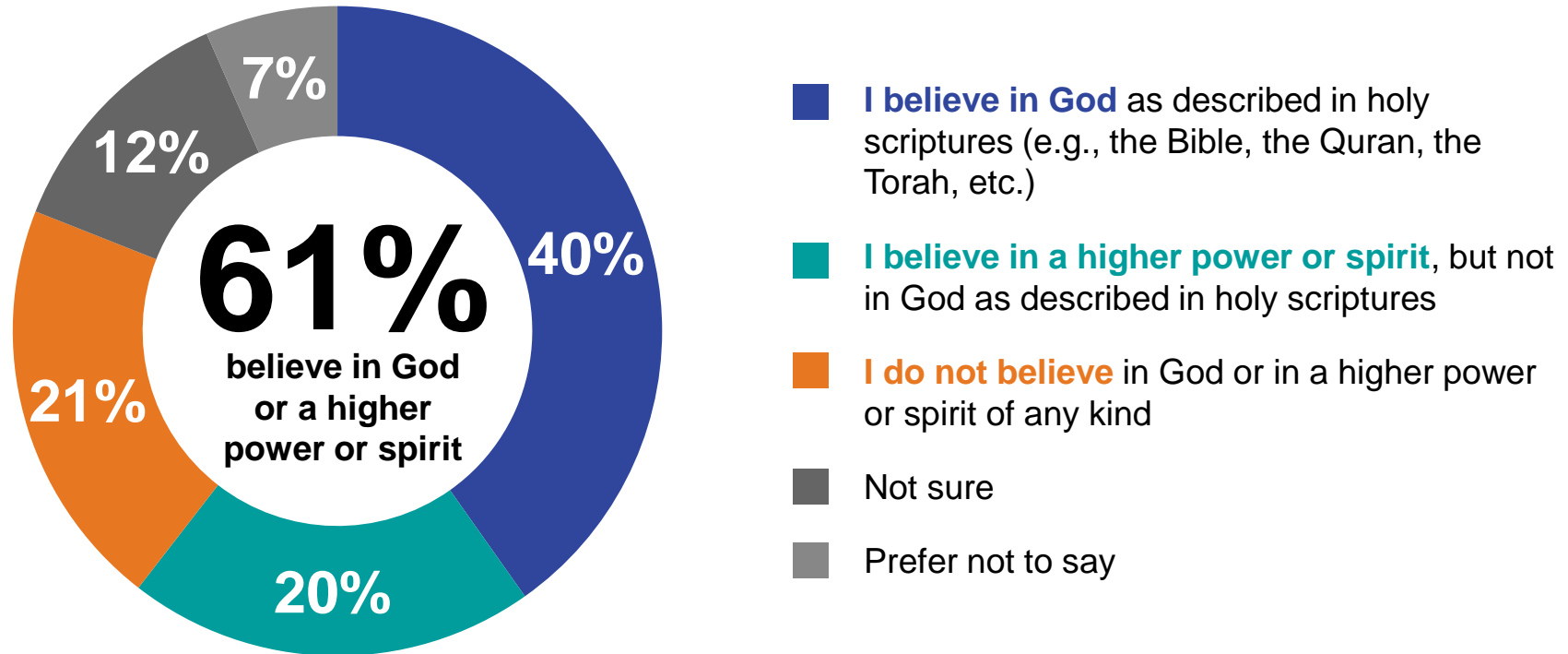
BELIEFS

2

Belief in God or a higher power: 26-country average

Q. Which of these statements is closest to your beliefs?

% Selecting



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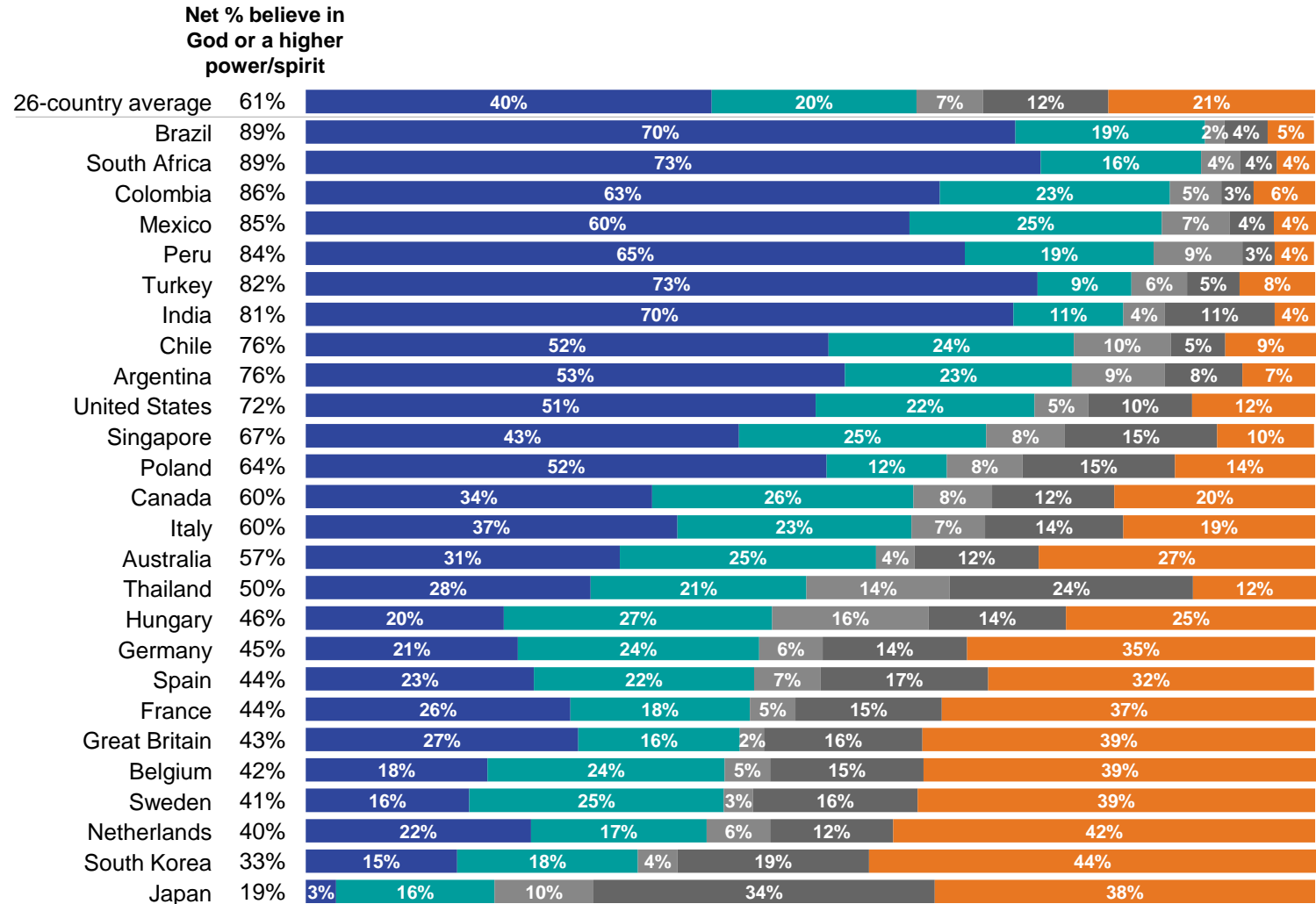
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Belief in God or a higher power by country

Q. Which of these statements is closest to your beliefs?

% Selecting



I believe in God as described in holy scriptures (e.g., the Bible, the Quran, the Torah, etc.)

I believe in a higher power or spirit, but not in God as described in holy scriptures

Prefer not to say

Not sure

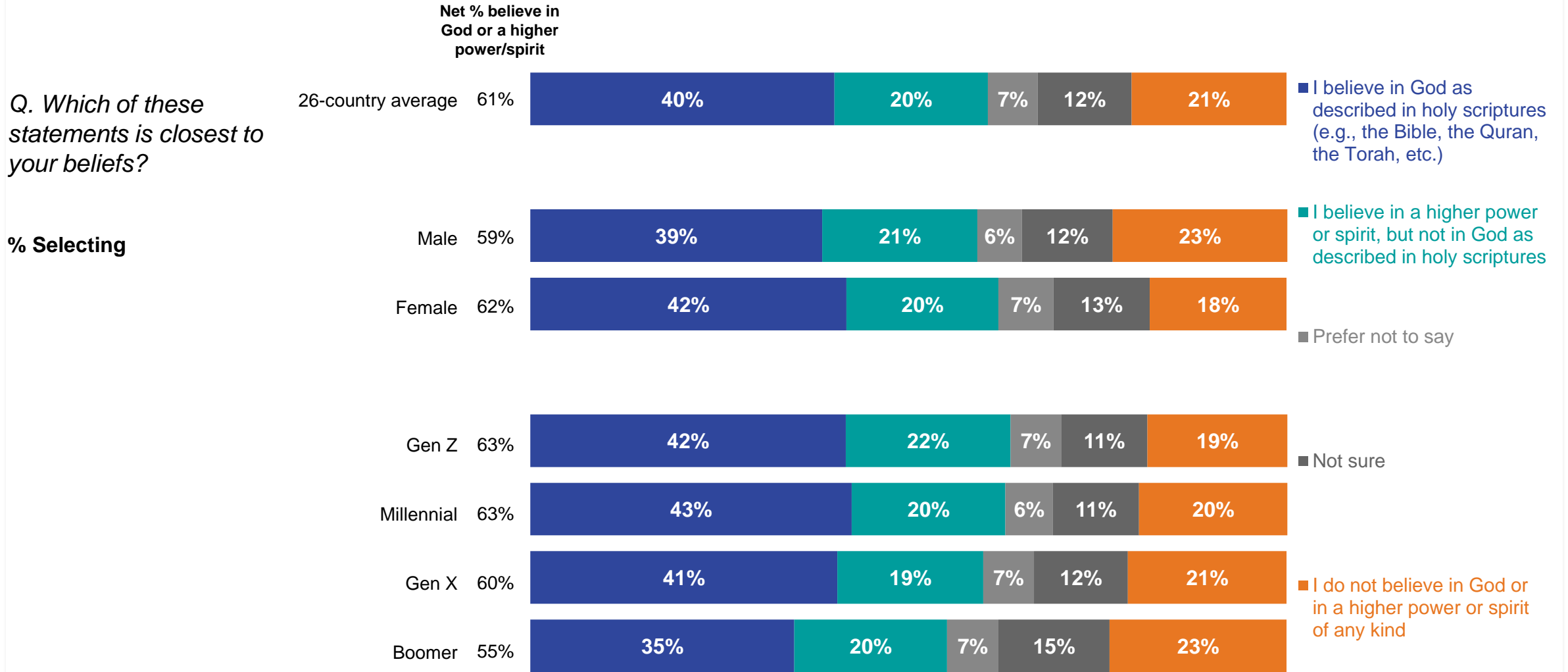
I do not believe in God or in a higher power or spirit of any kind

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Belief in God or a higher power by demographics (global average)



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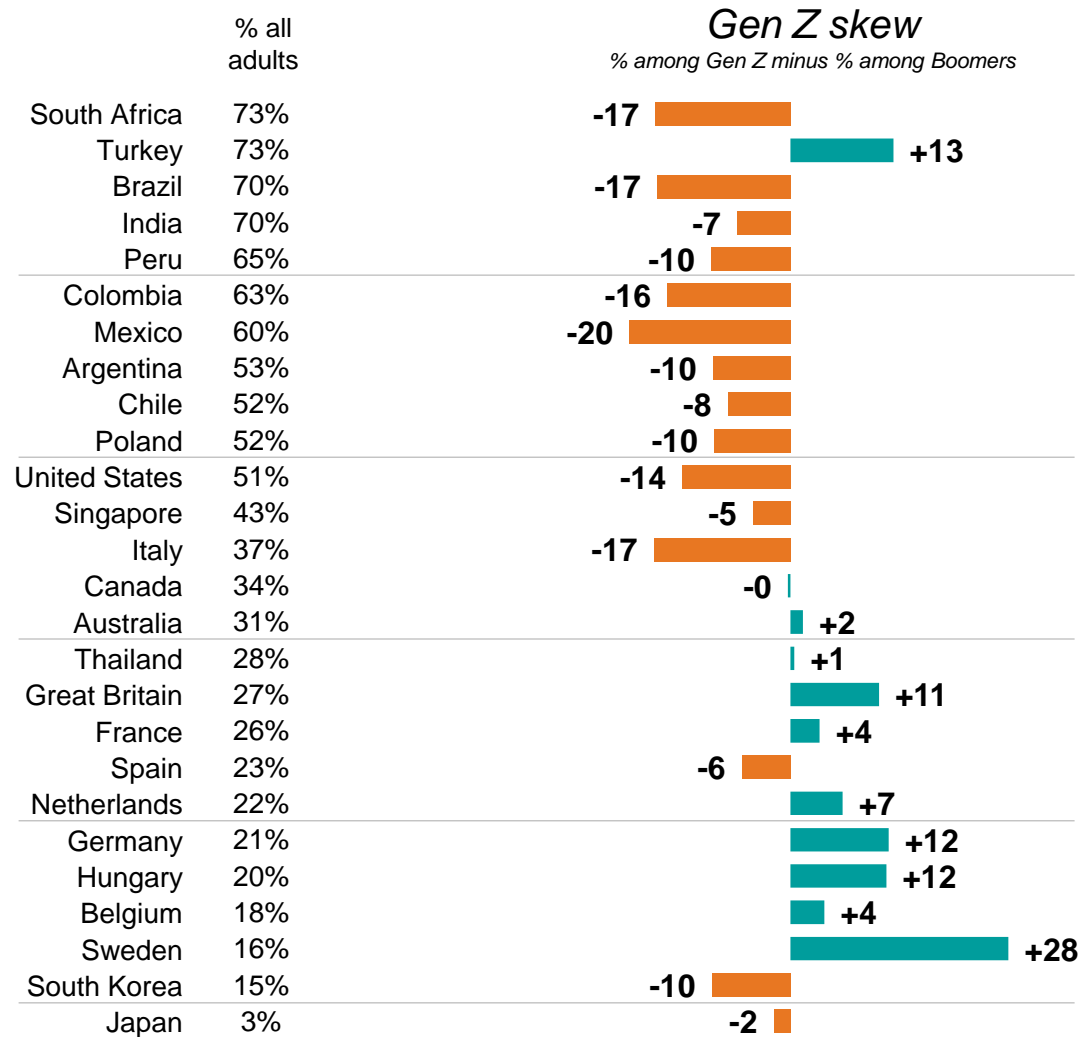
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Belief in God or a higher power by demographics (global average)

Q. Which of these statements is closest to your beliefs?

% Believe in God as described in holy scriptures (e.g., the Bible, the Quran, the Torah, etc.)



Average across 14 countries where more than 1/3 of all adults believe in God: -10

Average across 12 countries where less than 1/3 of all adults believe in God: +5

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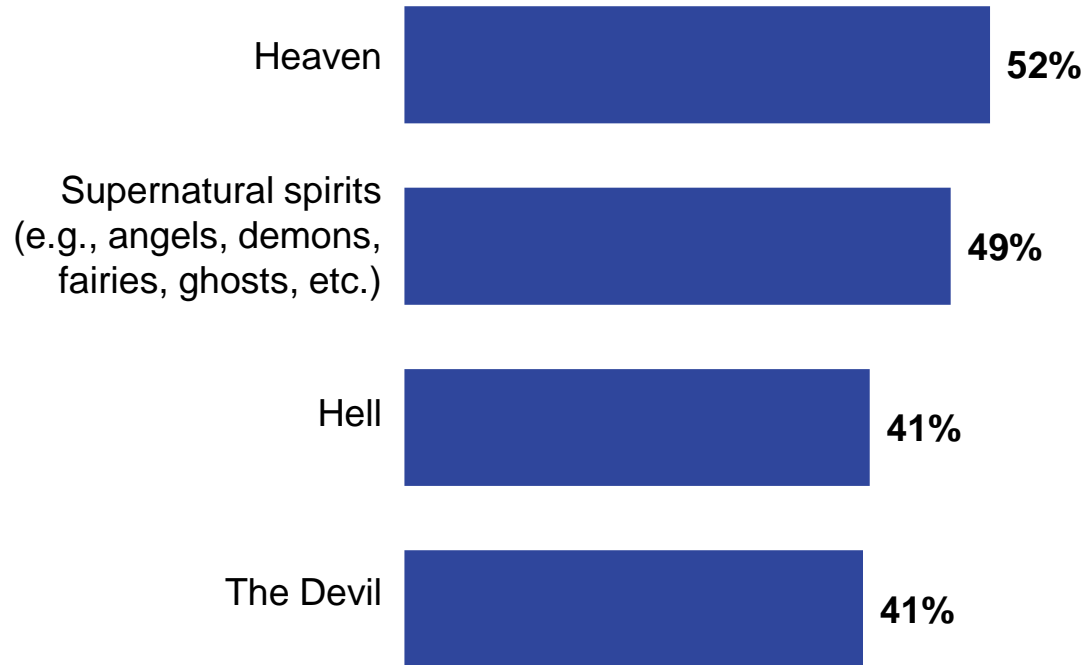
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Religious beliefs: 26-country average

Q. Do you believe each of the following exist(s)?

% Selecting



Highest	Lowest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brazil/Peru 79% • Colombia/South Africa/Turkey 78% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium 22% • Japan 28% • France 31%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa 75% • Turkey 72% • Colombia 68% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium 26% • Spain 27% • Netherlands 31%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turkey 76% • Brazil 66% • Thailand 63% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium 16% • Sweden 21% • Spain 22%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turkey 76% • South Africa 71% • Brazil 67% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium 18% • Japan 20% • Spain/Sweden 22%

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Religious beliefs: Generation gap (Gen Z vs. Boomers)

Q. Do you believe each of the following exist?

% Selecting

% all adults
(global average)

Gen Z skew
% among Gen Z minus
% among Boomers
(global average)

% Gen Z > % Boomers
by 20+ pts

% Boomers > % Gen Z
by 10+ pts

Heaven

52%

+19

Sweden, Hungary, France, Great Britain,
Japan, Turkey, Belgium, Germany

South Africa

Supernatural spirits

(e.g., angels, demons, fairies, ghosts, etc.)

49%

+21

Sweden, Argentina, Mexico, Turkey,
Australia, Germany, Canada, Japan, Great
Britain

India

Hell

41%

+21

Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Turkey,
Belgium, France, Great Britain, Thailand,
Singapore, Netherlands

South Africa

The Devil

41%

+19

Sweden, Germany, Turkey, Great Britain,
Hungary, Canada, Netherlands, France

India

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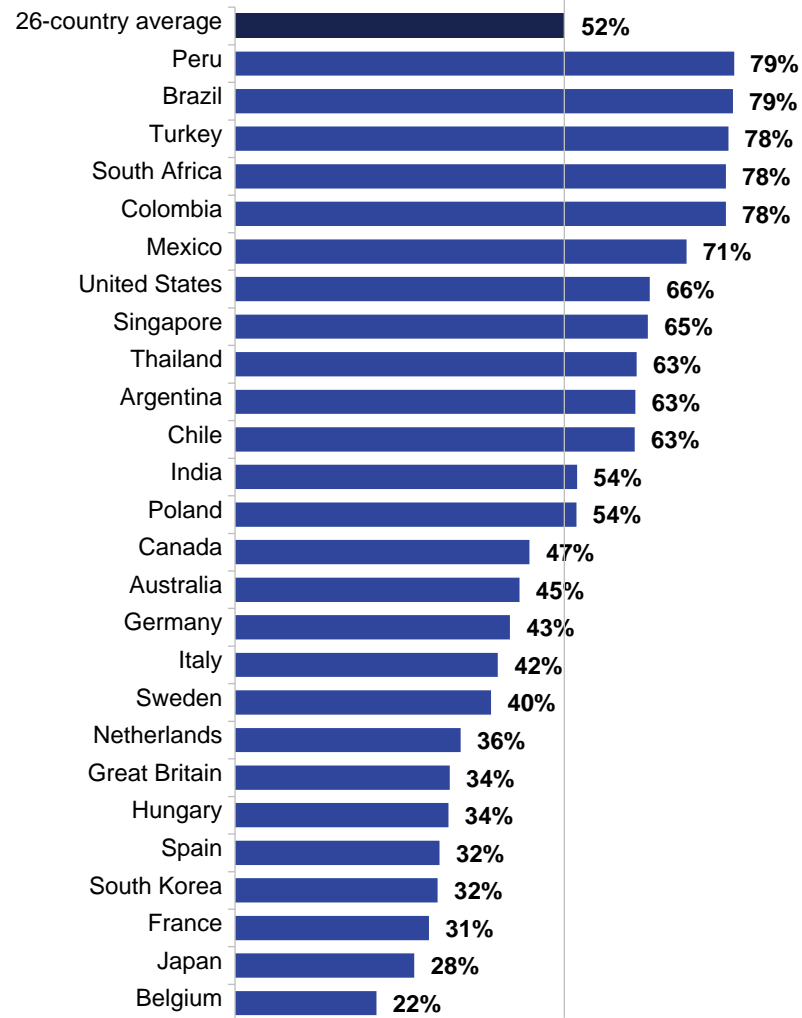
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Religious beliefs by country

Q. Do you believe each of the following exist(s)?

“Heaven”

% Yes



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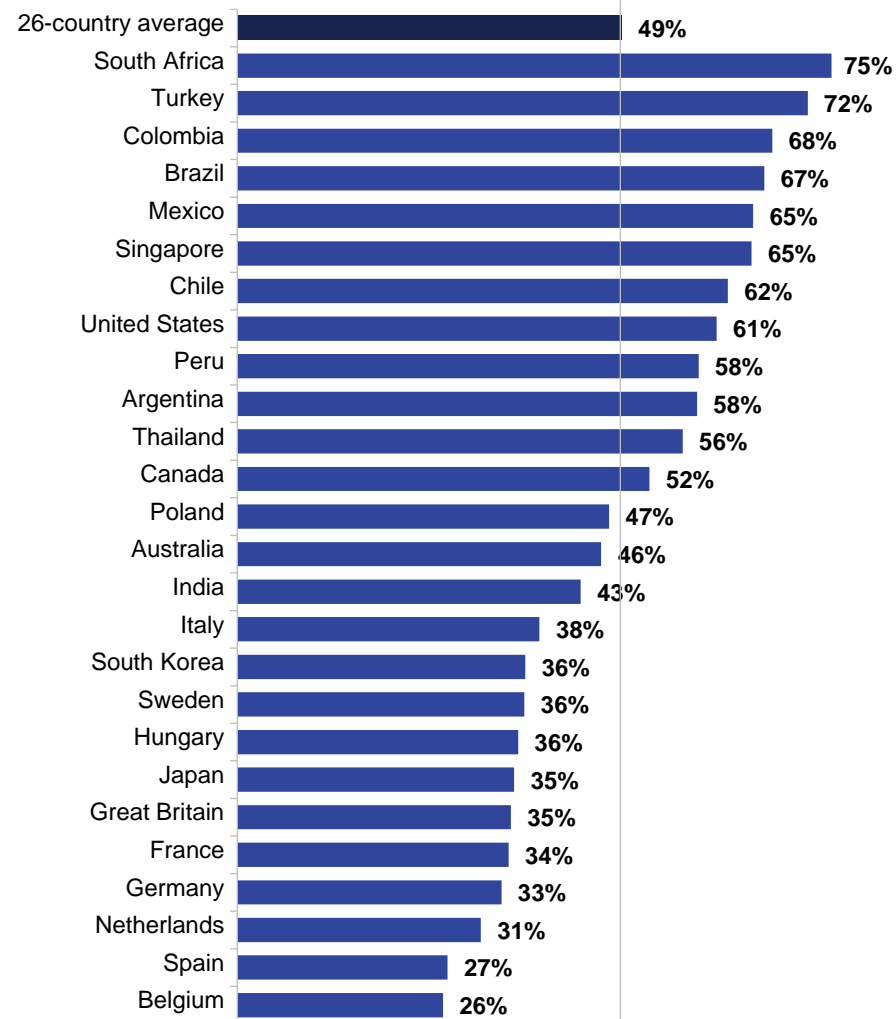
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Religious beliefs by country

Q. Do you believe each of the following exist(s)?

“Supernatural spirits (e.g., angels, demons, fairies, ghosts, etc.)”

% Yes



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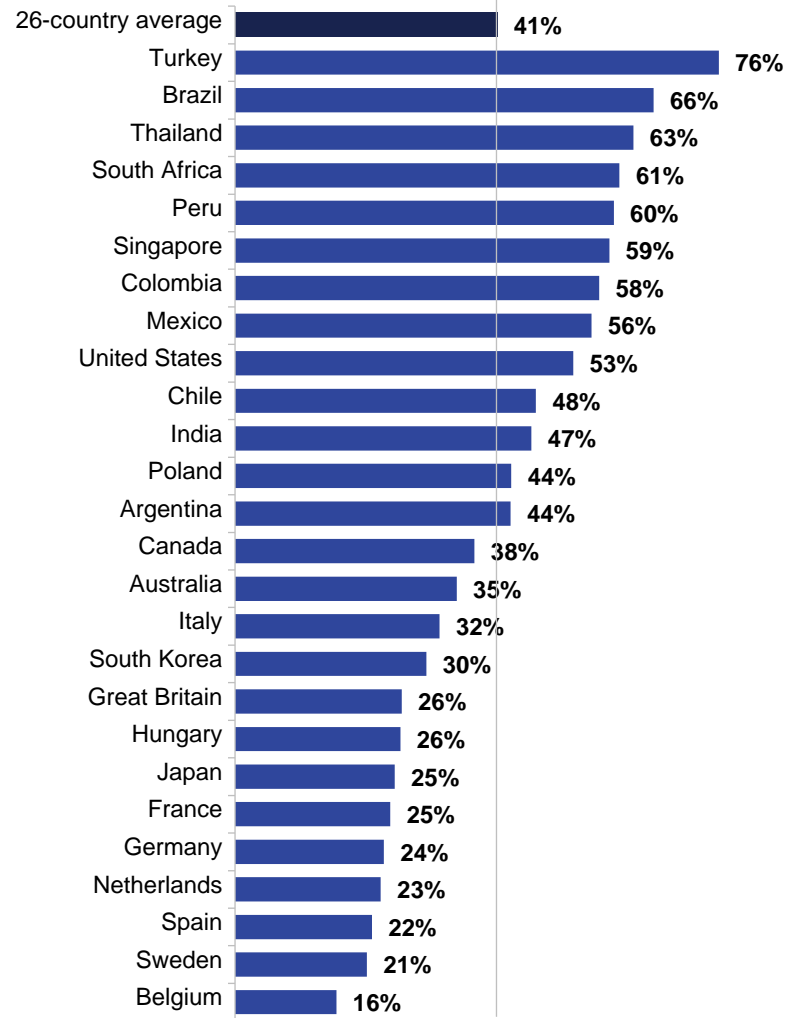
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Religious beliefs by country

Q. Do you believe each of the following exist(s)?

“Hell”

% Yes



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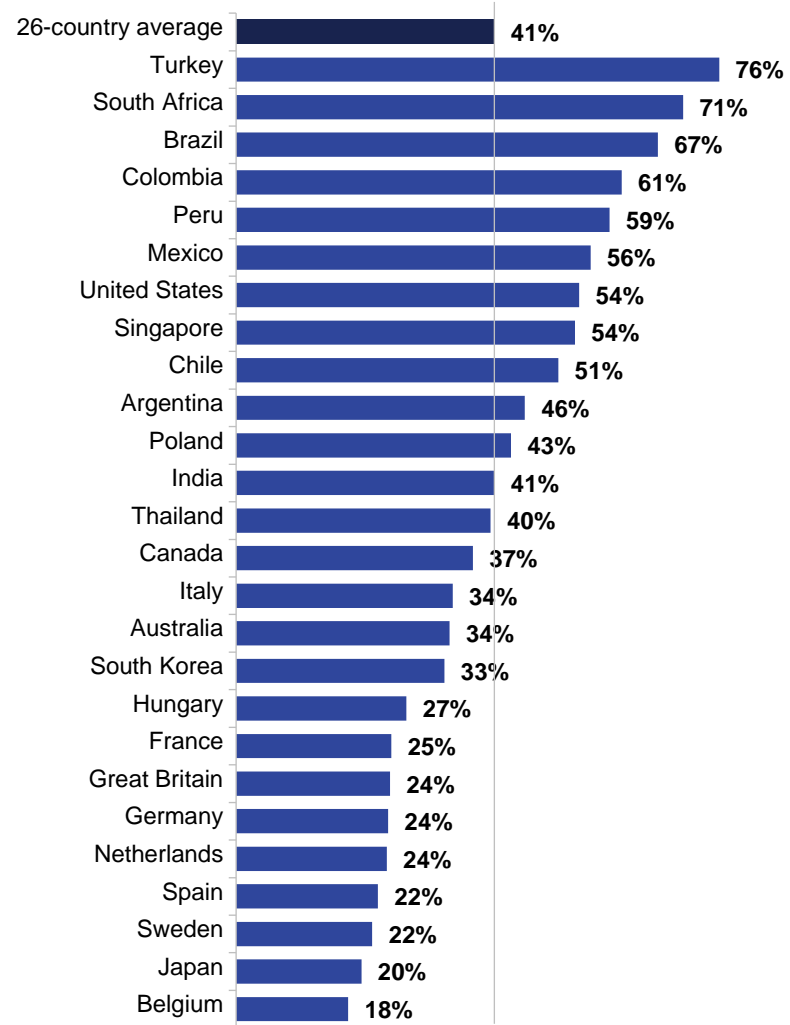
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Religious beliefs by country

Q. Do you believe each of the following exist(s)?

“The Devil”

% Yes



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ROLE OF BELIEF IN GOD OR A HIGHER POWER

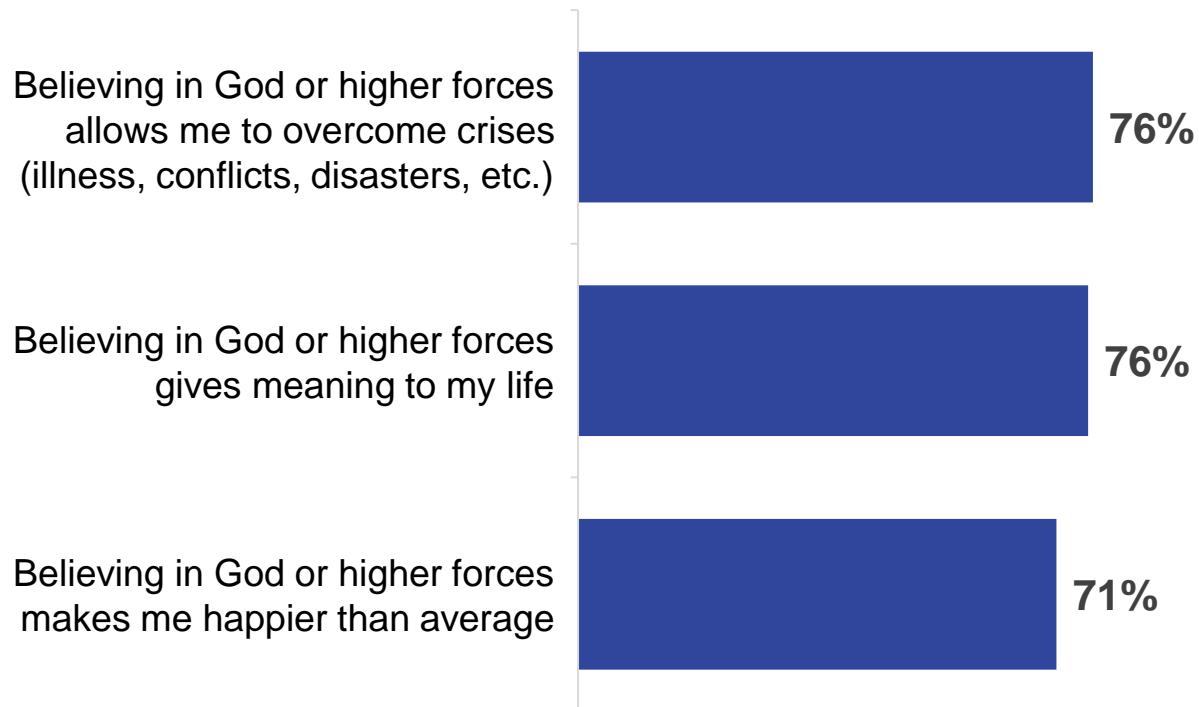
3

Role of belief in God or a higher power: 26-country average

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

Base: Believe in God or a higher power/spirit

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



Highest	Lowest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brazil 90% • Colombia/South Africa 89% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan 37% • South Korea 50% • Sweden 56%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa 93% • Brazil 89% • Turkey 88% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungary 46% • Japan 47% • Belgium 59%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa 89% • Brazil/Thailand 88% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan 37% • Sweden 48% • Hungary 49%

Base: 12,066 online adults who believe in God or a higher power under the age of 75 across 26 countries, interviewed Jan. 20, 2023 – Feb. 3, 2023.

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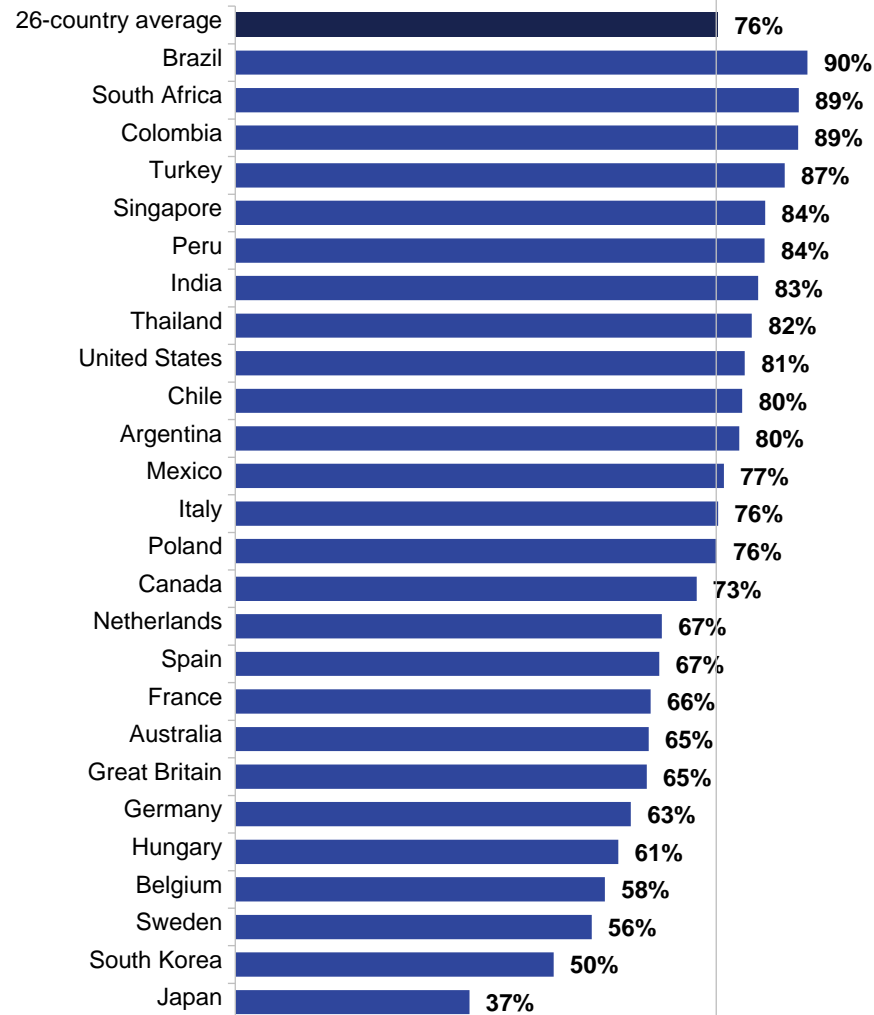
Role of belief in God or a higher power by country: Helps overcoming crises

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

“Believing in God or higher forces allows me to overcome crises (illness, conflicts, disasters, etc.)”

Base: Believe in God or a higher power/spirit

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



Base: 12,066 online adults who believe in God or a higher power under the age of 75 across 26 countries, interviewed Jan. 20, 2023 – Feb. 3, 2023.

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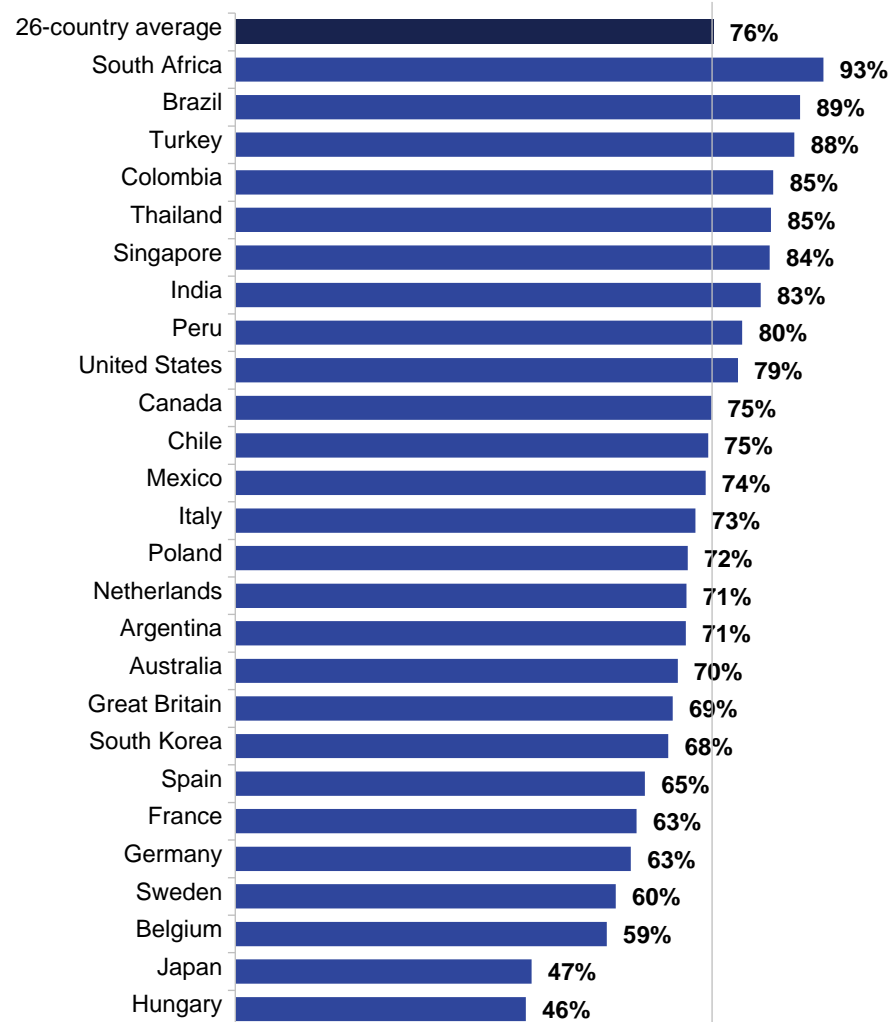
Role of belief in God or a higher power by country: Gives life meaning

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

“Believing in God or higher forces gives meaning to my life”

Base: Believe in God or a higher power/spirit

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



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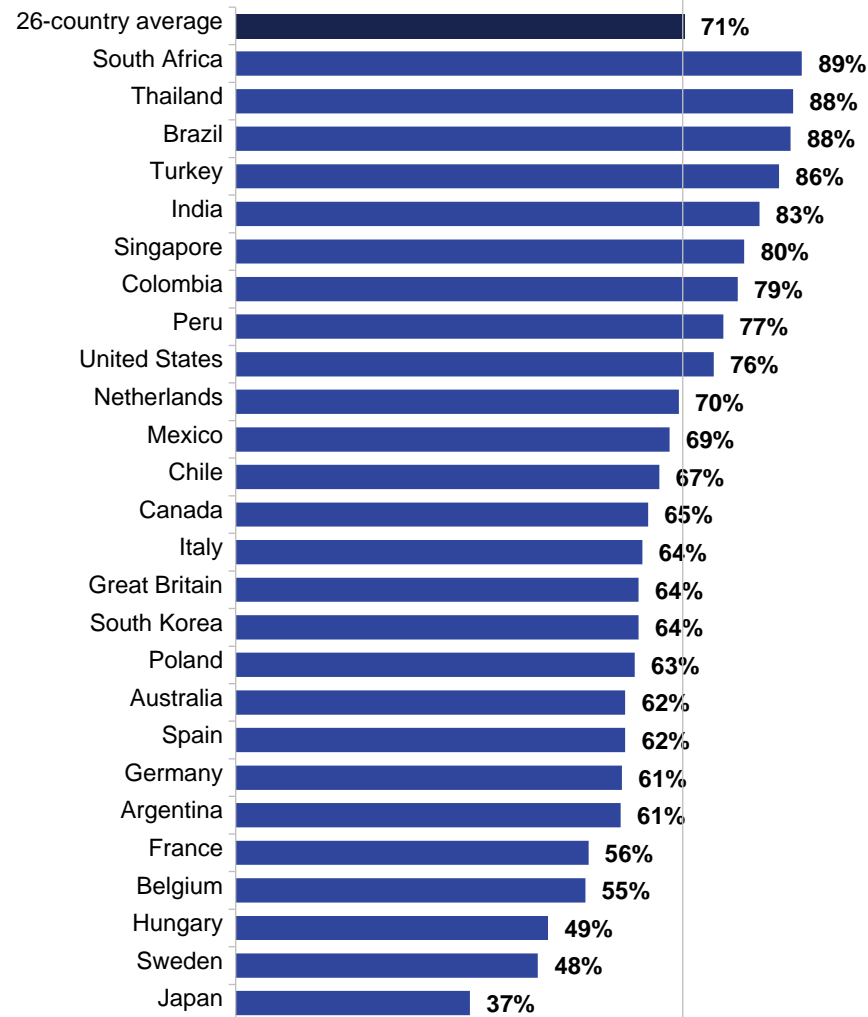
Role of belief in God or a higher power by country: Gives happiness

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

“Believing in God or higher forces makes me happier than average”

Base: Believe in God or a higher power/spirit

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



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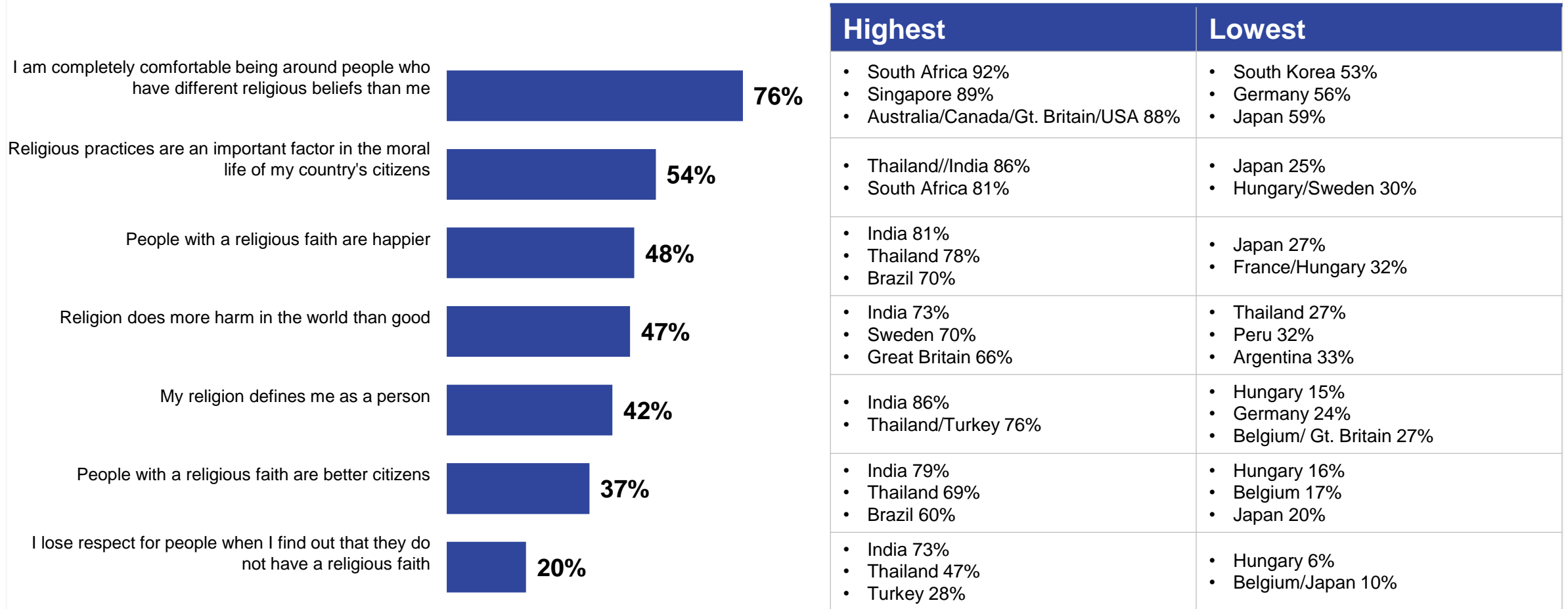
PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGION

4

Perspectives on religion: 26-country average

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



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Perspectives on religion: Generation gap

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)

Gen Z skew
% among Gen Z minus
% among Boomers (global average)

I am completely comfortable being around people who have different religious beliefs than me

-1

Religious practices are an important factor in the moral life of my country's citizens

+9

People with a religious faith are happier

+7

Religion does more harm in the world than good

-4

My religion defines me as a person

+3

People with a religious faith are better citizens

+9

I lose respect for people when I find out that they do not have a religious faith

+13

% Gen Z > % Boomers by 15+ pts	% Boomers > %Gen Z by 15+ pts
Germany	Mexico, South Korea
France, Sweden, Hungary, Great Britain, Germany	Thailand, Colombia
Sweden, Great Britain, Hungary, Germany, France	Colombia, Thailand, South Africa, Italy
Mexico, Thailand, South Africa, Italy	Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Turkey, Sweden
Sweden, Great Britain, Hungary, Germany, France	Italy, Chile, Colombia, Singapore, South Korea, Poland
Sweden, Great Britain, Germany, France, Turkey, Netherlands	Colombia, South Africa
Sweden, Singapore, Germany, Australia, Canada, Spain, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Great Britain	

Base: 19,731 online adults under the age of 75 across 26 countries, interviewed Jan. 20, 2023 – Feb. 3, 2023.

The "26-country average" reflects the average result for all the countries where 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.

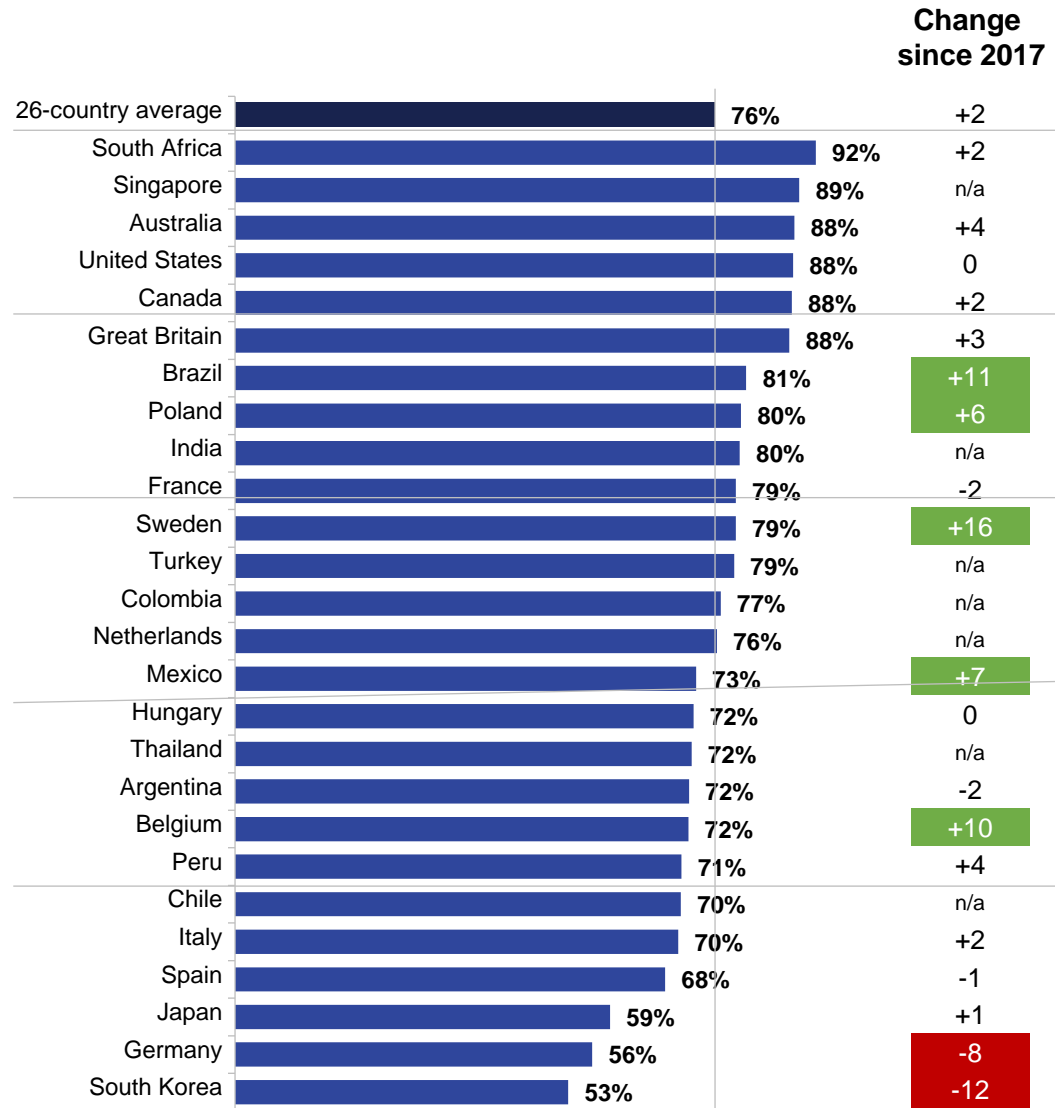
The samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey are more urban, educated, and/or more affluent than the general population.

Perspectives on religion by country

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“I am completely comfortable being around people who have different religious beliefs than me”

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



Base: 19,731 online adults under the age of 75 across 26 countries, interviewed Jan. 20, 2023 – Feb. 3, 2023.

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Green indicates an increase of 5 or more percentage points.

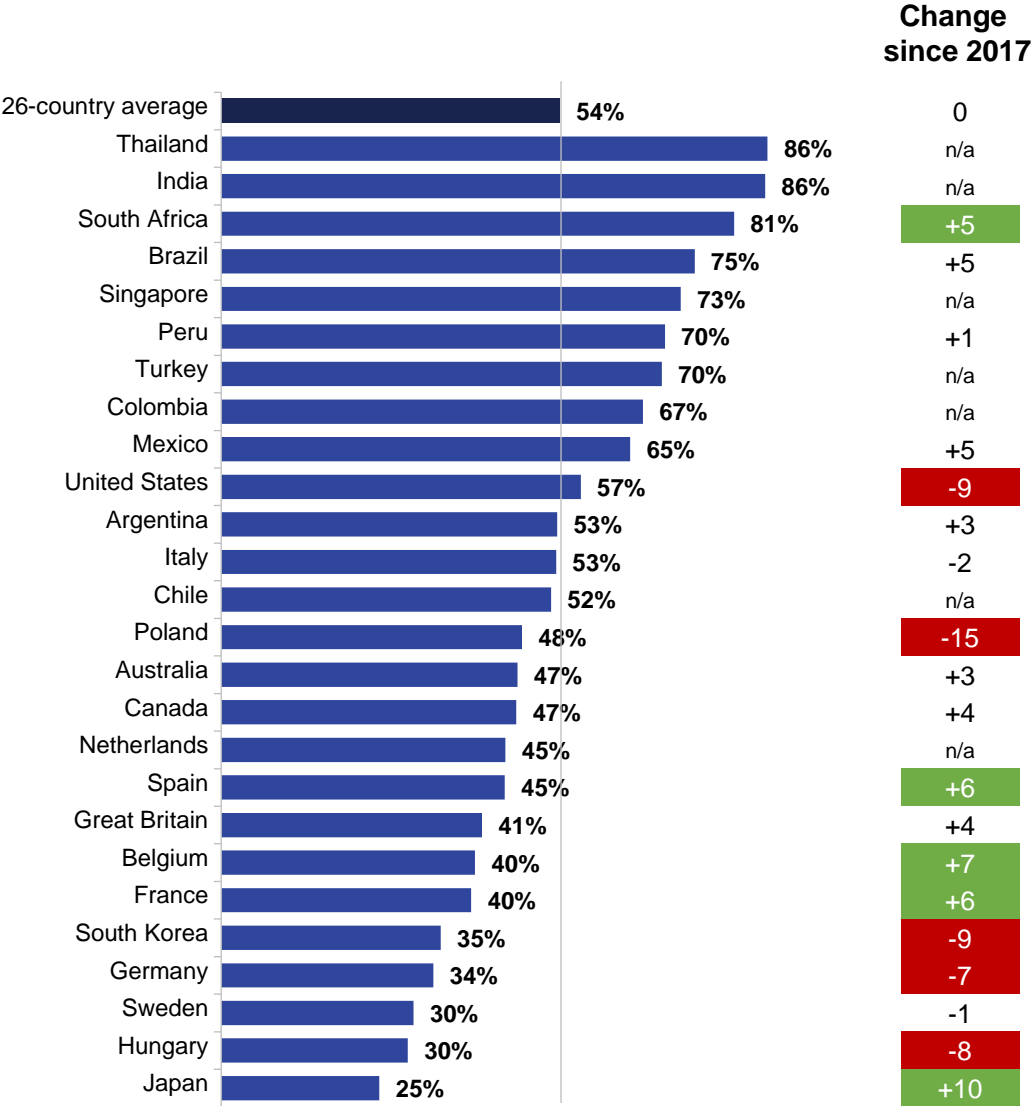
Red indicates a decrease of 5 or more percentage points.

Perspectives on religion by country

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“Religious practices are an important factor in the moral life of my country’s citizens”

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



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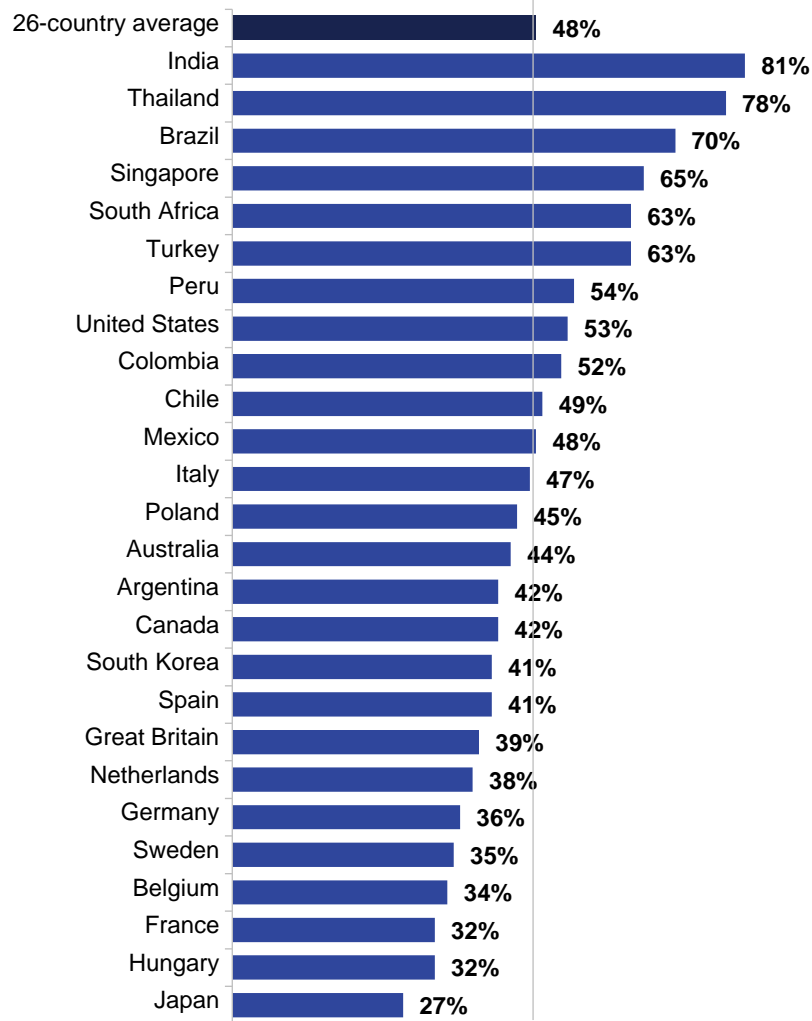


Perspectives on religion by country

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“People with a religious faith are happier”

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



Base: 19,731 online adults under the age of 75 across 26 countries, interviewed Jan. 20, 2023 – Feb. 3, 2023.

The “26-country average” reflects the average result for all the countries where 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.

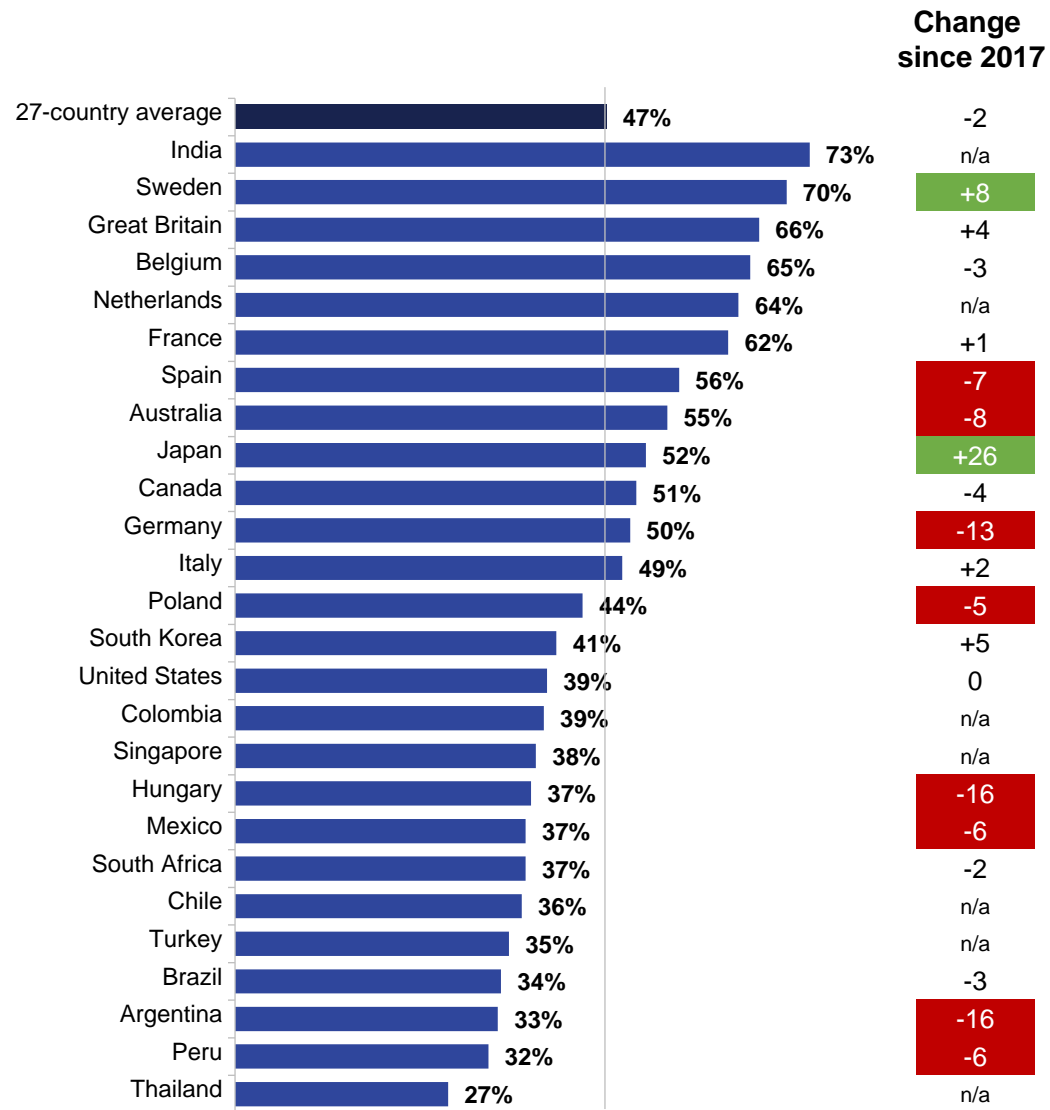
The samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey are more urban, educated, and/or more affluent than the general population.

Perspectives on religion by country

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“Religion does more harm in the world than good”

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



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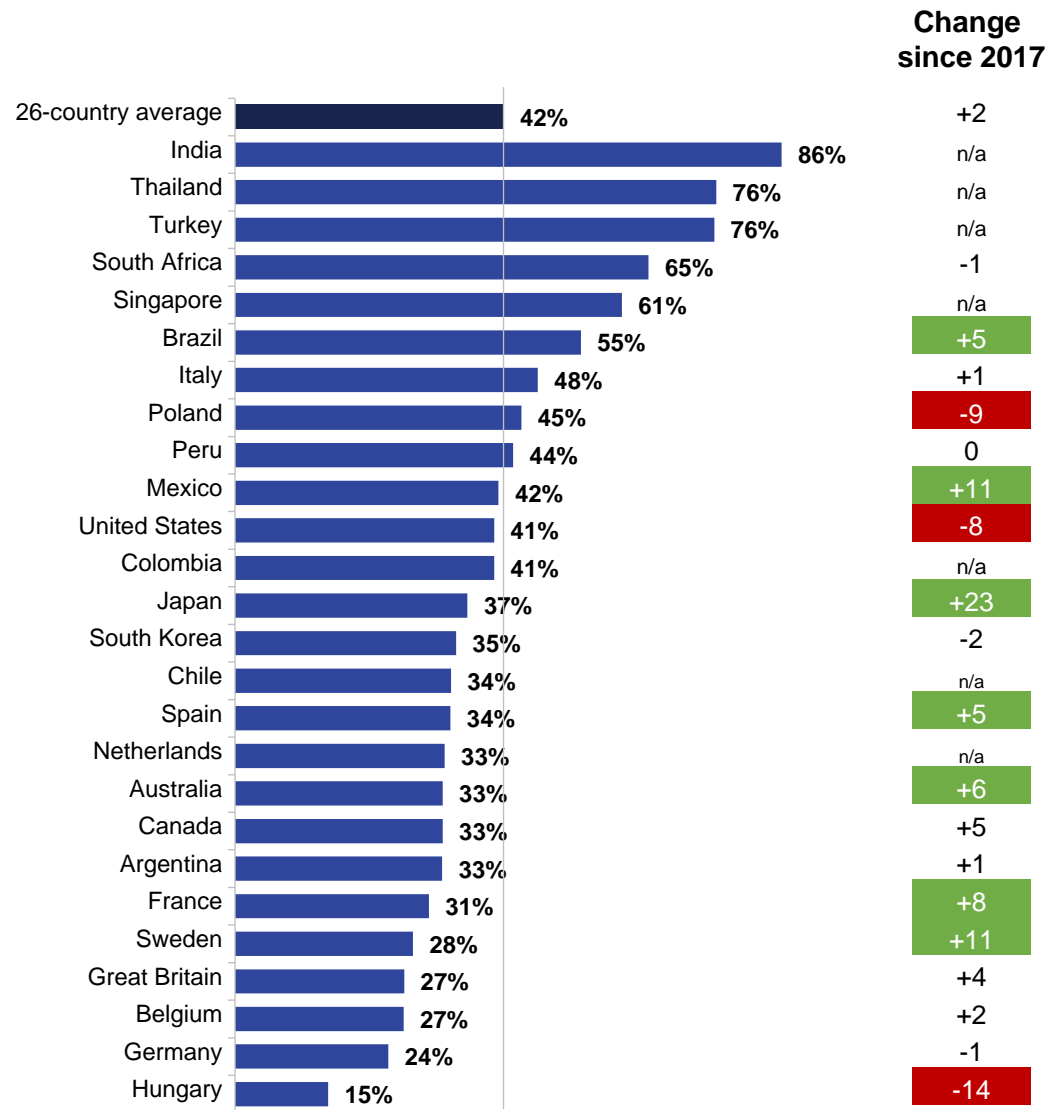
Red indicates a decrease of 5 or more percentage points.

Perspectives on religion by country

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“My religion defines me as a person”

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



Base: 19,731 online adults under the age of 75 across 26 countries, interviewed Jan. 20, 2023 – Feb. 3, 2023.

The “26-country average” reflects the average result for all the countries where 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.

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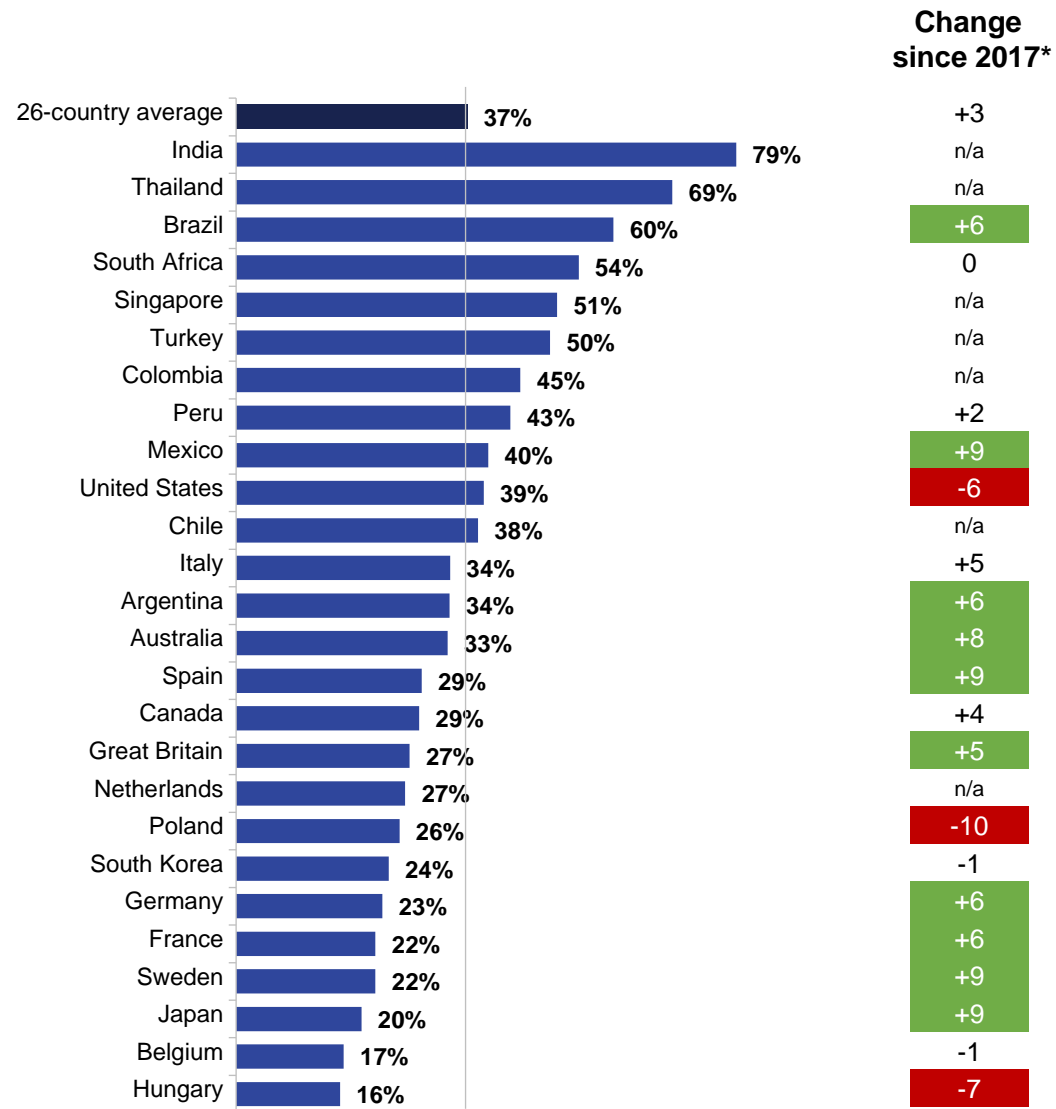
Red indicates a decrease of 5 or more percentage points.

Perspectives on religion by country

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“People with a religious faith are better citizens”

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)



*Note: In 2017, this statement was worded as, “Religious people are better citizens.”

Base: 19,731 online adults under the age of 75 across 26 countries, interviewed Jan. 20, 2023 – Feb. 3, 2023.

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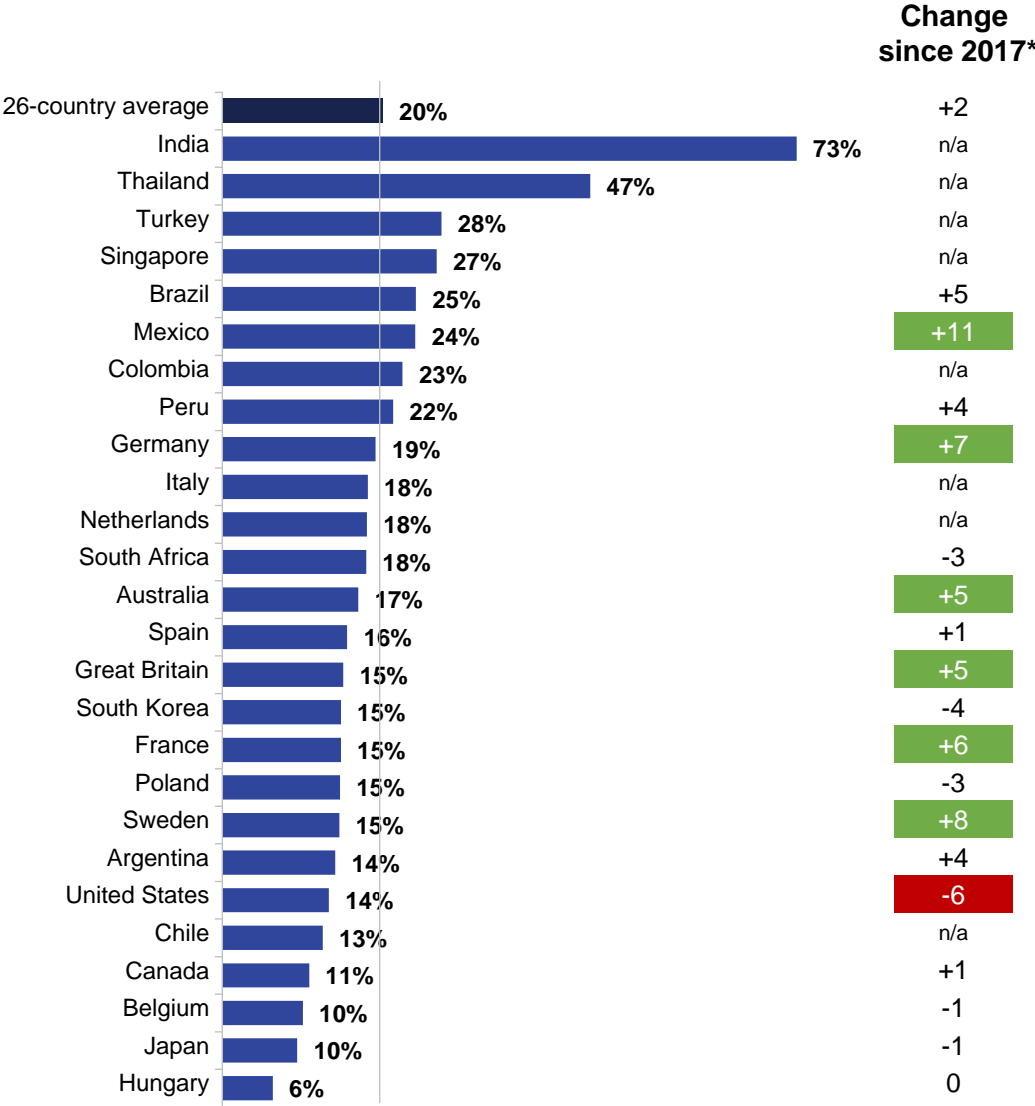
Perspectives on religion by country

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“I lose respect for people when I find out that they do not have a religious faith”

% Agree (strongly/somewhat)

**Note: In 2017, this statement was worded as, “I lose respect for people when I find out that they are not religious.”*



Base: 19,731 online adults under the age of 75 across 26 countries, interviewed Jan. 20, 2023 – Feb. 3, 2023.
 The “26-country average” reflects the average result for all the countries where 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.
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 Red indicates a decrease of 5 or more percentage points.



Methodology

- These are the results of a 26-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online survey platform and, in India, on its IndiaBus platform, between January 20 and February 3, 2023. For this survey, Ipsos interviewed a total of 19,731 adults aged 18 and older in India, 18-74 in Canada, South Africa, Turkey, and the United States, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Singapore, and 16-74 in all other countries,
- The sample consists of approximately 1,000 individuals each in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the U.S., and 500+ individuals in each of Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand, and Turkey. The sample in India consists of approximately 2,200 individuals of whom 1,800 were interviewed face-to-face and 400 were interviewed online.
- Samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, 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, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey 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. India’s sample represents a large subset of its urban population — social economic classes A, B and C in metros and tier 1-3 town classes across all four zones.
- 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 “26-country average” reflects the average result for all the countries where 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.
- Where results do not sum 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/not sure” or not stated responses.
- The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos’s use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.
- The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.

About Ipsos

Ipsos is the third largest market research company in the world, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. Our 75 business solutions are based on primary data coming from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

“Game Changers” – our tagline – summarises our ambition to help our 5,000 clients to navigate more easily our deeply changing world.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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Game Changers

In our world of rapid change, the need for reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater.

At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People.

To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do.

So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder.

Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth:

You act better when you are sure.

Contact for more information



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