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OCBC CLIMATE INDEX 2022 FINDS THAT SINGAPOREANS HAVE NOT IMPROVED IN MANY SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOURS DESPITE GOVERNMENTAL PUSH AND HEIGHTENED ATTENTION

Health, cost and convenience are key drivers of change across four main generations with baby boomers leading the pack in embracing climate actions

Singapore, 16 August 2022 – Despite the launch of the Singapore Green Plan in 2021, a rise in green activism and increased conversations on climate change at the national and global level, the majority of Singaporeans are still not embracing many sustainable behaviours. If they do, the motivations are primarily driven by personal practical benefits and not for the environment, the second OCBC Climate Index has found.

Despite 47% of the respondents saying they desire to live a sustainable life for a greener future, more in 2022, compared to 2021, are travelling by air (55% vs 44%); using air-conditioning as the main mode of cooling their homes (21% vs 17%); those who eat red meat are consuming it more frequently, once a week or more (78% vs 72%); and more are buying new, non-essential items more frequently than once a month (57% vs 47%).

Those who do not engage in such carbon-intensive behaviours are not necessarily embracing climate action for environmental reasons. Rather, the reasons for their choices are personal and include wanting to have better health, save money and personal comfort.

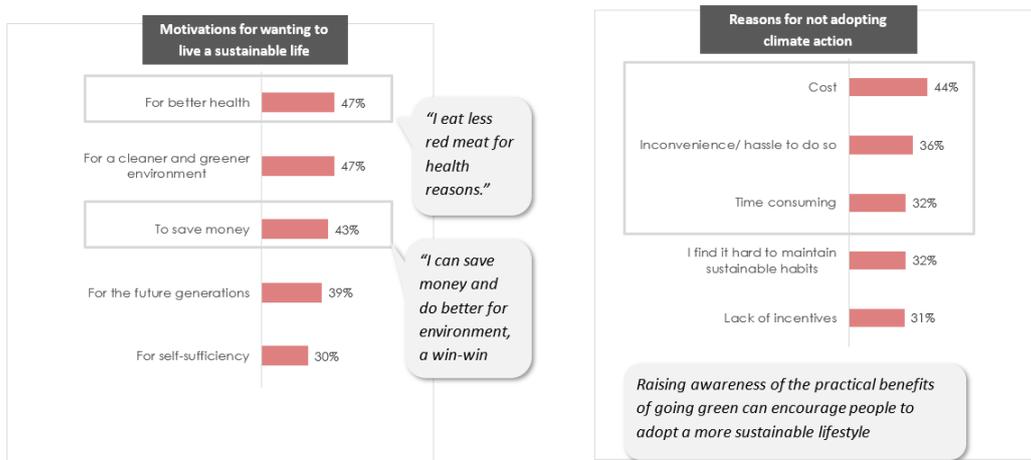
These same motivations are pushing more Singaporeans to walk or cycle, or take public transport, rather than travel by car (71% in 2022, vs 68% in 2021), choose second-hand furniture instead of buying new (77% vs 71%), participate in 'urban farming' initiatives (42% vs 39%) and buy second-hand clothing instead of new (77% vs 71%).

This is why the national average for the Climate Index score – which surveyed over 2,100 Singaporeans from 4 to 16 June 2022 – is unchanged from last year (2021). The score remained at 6.7 on a scale of 0 to 10.

This year, having better health (47%) is as important as having a cleaner and greener environment (47%) for wanting to live a sustainable life. However, Singaporeans cited cost (44%) and inconvenience (36%) as obstacles to living a sustainable life.

Thus, the desires to want a more sustainable world have not tilted the Index score this year as personal practical reasons continue to drive real actions.

Singaporeans do not necessarily embrace climate action for environmental reasons alone



The Index found that Singaporeans are doing more in top emissions-heavy activities, compared to 2021, even though some improvements have been made.

- **TRANSPORT:** More are adopting greener modes of transport for a car-lite society. There was a rise of 3% from 2021 in those choosing public transport or traveling by foot or bicycle, over driving. But flights have picked up to all parts of the world as borders have re-opened. This has negated the overall

improvements Singaporeans have made.

- **HOME:** There has been a rise in the use of air conditioners – 21% are using air conditioners as their main mode of cooling their homes, as opposed to 17% in 2021. However, the majority of Singaporeans surveyed (76%) do set their air con temperatures to the recommended 24 degrees C or higher. Most of them also (42%) keep the number of hours of use to 3 to 6 hours, on average – the same as in 2021.
- **FOOD:** Although there has been a drop in awareness of the carbon impact of food choices (82% vs 88%), fewer in this group of Singaporeans (77% vs 81%) now include red meat in their diets. But those who consume red meat are doing so more frequently, with 78% of respondents eating red meat once a week or more, as opposed to 72% in 2021. 35% of red meat eaters who are aware that their choice of food has an impact on the environment say that they love meat and do not want to change.
- **GOODS:** As COVID-19 restrictions relaxed, consumerism rose. A total of 57% of respondents bought new, non-essential items more frequently than once a month (including every 2 weeks, every week and every day) – a 10% increase from last year.

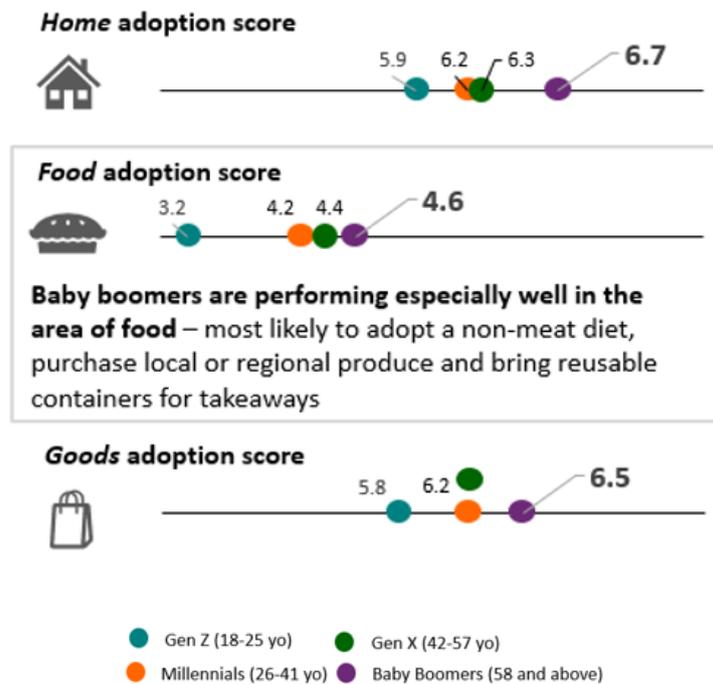
BABY BOOMERS ARE ROLE MODELS. GEN Zs NOT FARING AS WELL

The most mature respondents, baby boomers (respondents aged 58 to 65), had the highest scores in Awareness and Adoption in 2021. This year, they had the highest scores in all of the Index's three main pillars of Awareness, Adoption and Advocacy, with a sharp rise in their Advocacy score, which went from 4.7 (the lowest amongst the generations in 2021) to 6.1.

We did a follow-up study to understand their motivations and behaviours. The focus group delved into the Advocacy behaviours of baby boomers. It found that they gained confidence in using digital tools – including social channels ranging from WhatsApp to TikTok – during COVID-19. Of the Internet users surveyed for the Index, 9 out of 10 are now social media

users. More have seen or heard of more environmental news in the past year and have increased their frequency of sharing about the topic.

BABY BOOMERS



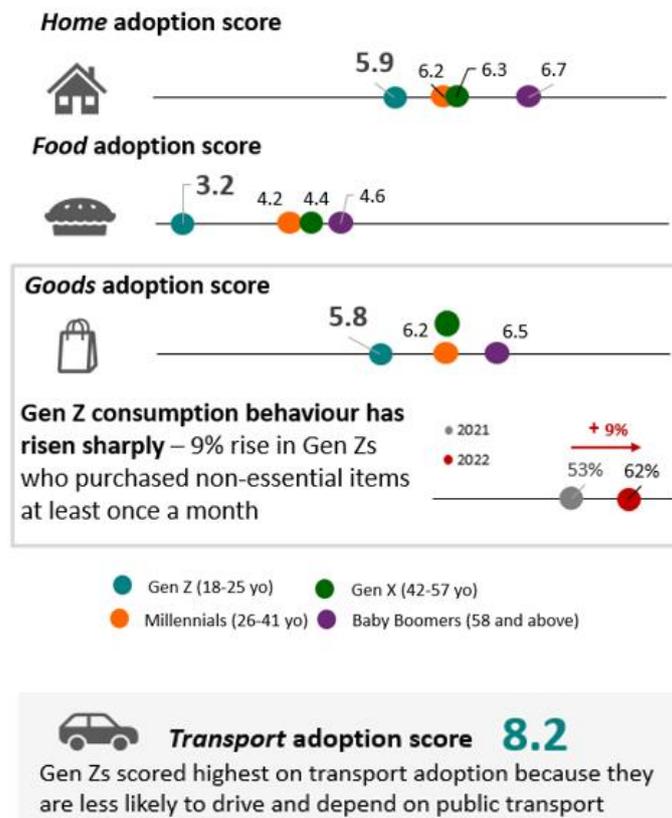
Baby boomers are doing well overall. They had the highest scores in Home, Food and Goods categories. Their overall adoption score was 6.9.

Similar to other generations, baby boomers' main motivations to live sustainably are for better health (51%), for a cleaner and greener environment (45%) and to save money (39%). They have adopted good habits since young and have accumulated awareness and knowledge of climate change over time. Some remember initiatives that existed when they were young – the first-ever Keep Singapore Clean Campaign was launched on 1 October 1968 – and have experienced first-hand weather shifts caused by climate change.

Green habits suit their life stage – they said they are less busy and can take the time to walk, cycle or take public transport, instead of opting to drive. Such actions lead to better health and help them save costs as well, another motivating factor in their adoption of greener behaviours.

Conversely, the youngest generation surveyed, Gen Zs (aged 18 to 25), scored the lowest in Home, Food and Goods. While they had an overall adoption score of 6.5, their score was only pulled up as they would have travelled overseas by plane less, and take public transport the most as they are not likely to own cars and are less likely to drive.

GEN Zs



The Index found that when it comes to adopting ‘greener’ behaviours, younger Singaporeans would be motivated most by better health (56%). Barriers to adoption are cost (53%) and inconvenience (53%).

UNDERSTANDING MOTIVATIONS IS KEY TO SHIFTING BEHAVIOUR

Although the overall score for Singaporeans has remained the same as in 2021, this year’s Index has provided valuable insights, said Ms Koh Ching Ching, Head of Group Brand and Communications, OCBC Bank. “We see from this year’s survey results that more Singaporeans want to create a

more sustainable world but find it difficult to make the real change when it is expensive or not convenient. Climate actions must therefore be deliberate with sacrifices to be made. We hope that the findings from this year's OCBC Climate Index can help nudge behaviour and influence policy-making."

While the OCBC Climate Index findings might be discouraging at first glance, there are bright spots in the results that indicate improvements, such as in transport choice or in embracing re-commerce, noted Ms Jessica Cheam, founder and managing director of Eco-Business.

"Mainstreaming sustainability-driven consumer behaviour takes time, and many factors such as cost, convenience and infrastructure heavily impact personal decisions," she said.

"The findings from the Climate Index suggest that policymakers, businesses and civic society have to work harder at understanding basic human behaviour and how to improve sustainability outcomes by providing the right environment for consumers to make the right choices."

HOW THE INDEX IS CALCULATED

The Index, now in its second year, was developed in partnership with Eco-Business. It is a measurement of the current levels of environmental sustainability awareness and climate action among Singaporeans.

The OCBC Climate Index national average was 6.7 – with Singaporeans scoring an average of 8.1 in the 'Awareness' pillar, 6.5 in 'Adoption' and 5.6 in 'Advocacy'. About 52% of respondents had scores of between 6 and 7.9. This means that the average Singaporean is highly aware of environmental issues, adopts many green practices some of the time and advocates some of these issues and practices to their families and friends. The Index is derived from a survey sent to a nationally representative demographic sample of Singaporeans. From 4 June to 16 June 2022, 2,169 Singaporeans aged between 18 and 65 were surveyed online on 106 questions relating to the three key pillars across the four themes.

The Index is based on three pillars – knowledge of environmental issues (Awareness), how much and how often one adopts green practices (Adoption), and how often one encourages others to adopt green practices (Advocacy). To derive the national average score, the Index weighs takes into consideration four lifestyle themes that represent the main aspects of urban living: Transport, Home, Food and Goods. These were weighted based on how they impact an individual’s carbon footprint – Transport (45%), Home (25%), Food (15%) and Goods (15%).

SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

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Keywords:

OCBC Climate Index 2022 finds that Singaporeans have not improved in many sustainable behaviours despite governmental push and heightened attention



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For media queries, please contact:

Heng Yishi
Manager
Group Brand and Communications
OCBC Bank

yishiheng@ocbc.com
8101 8939

Isabella Chia
Vice President
Group Brand and Communications
OCBC Bank

ChiaGN@ocbc.com
9878 6298