

2025

Digital Lives Decoded Malaysia

Building Trust in Malaysia's AI Future

 telenor asia | **GWI.**



Foreword

Malaysia stands at a pivotal moment in its digital journey, with ambitions to become a regional hub for artificial intelligence (AI). As Chair of ASEAN this year, Malaysia has also signalled its commitment to advancing responsible AI development through regional solidarity and action.*

I am pleased to present **Digital Lives Decoded 2025** report which offers a timely look into how people in Malaysia are embracing AI, where they see its greatest potential, and where caution and concern remain.

The findings reveal a nation that is optimistic about AI's role in education, health, and economic growth, yet deeply aware of the risks around privacy, fairness and trust. Malaysians are navigating this transformation with both optimism and discernment – they are active participants, demanding transparency, ethical safeguards, and shared responsibility from governments, businesses and themselves.

* [Malaysia to Host Inaugural ASEAN AI Malaysia Summit 2025.](#)

At Telenor Asia, we believe that transparency, upholding ethical standards and ensuring human oversight must be at the heart of AI adoption. Additionally, with AI readily available in everyone's pocket, the systems behind it must be built on strong, secure, and scalable infrastructure. Trust and security are increasingly the bedrock of any digital society.

As Malaysia positions itself to be a global leader in responsible AI innovation,** this report offers valuable insights for policy-makers, educators, businesses and individuals alike. The impact of this rapidly evolving technology needs to be evaluated – in terms of awareness, skills, opportunities, and risks – to understand how Malaysian society can harness AI responsibly, securely and prepare people to navigate an AI-driven future.

Together, let's build a digital Malaysia where everyone has the tools and confidence to thrive in the age of AI.

** [Malaysia aims to be a global leader in responsible AI innovation.](#)



Jon Omund Revhaug
Head of Telenor Asia

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Methodology

This report is based on a survey that Telenor Asia commissioned GWI to undertake in May-June 2025 across three of its key markets: Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh. Survey respondents were granted anonymity and Telenor's involvement was not disclosed.

GWI has a panel of **over 22 million internet users** globally. To ensure its research is reflective of the online population in each market, GWI sets appropriate quotas on age, gender, and education.

GWI's recontact methodology enables respondents who have completed its core survey within the last year to be recontacted to take additional surveys. This data can then be synchronised with the core data, which consists of over 57,000 data points.

All figures in this report are among the online population aged 16-64 in Malaysia, and drawn from the following study:

- **Telenor's custom research**
- General population survey
- Using GWI's recontact methodology on the GWI core audience
- Field surveys done May 30th to June 10th 2025, N=1,004 in Malaysia

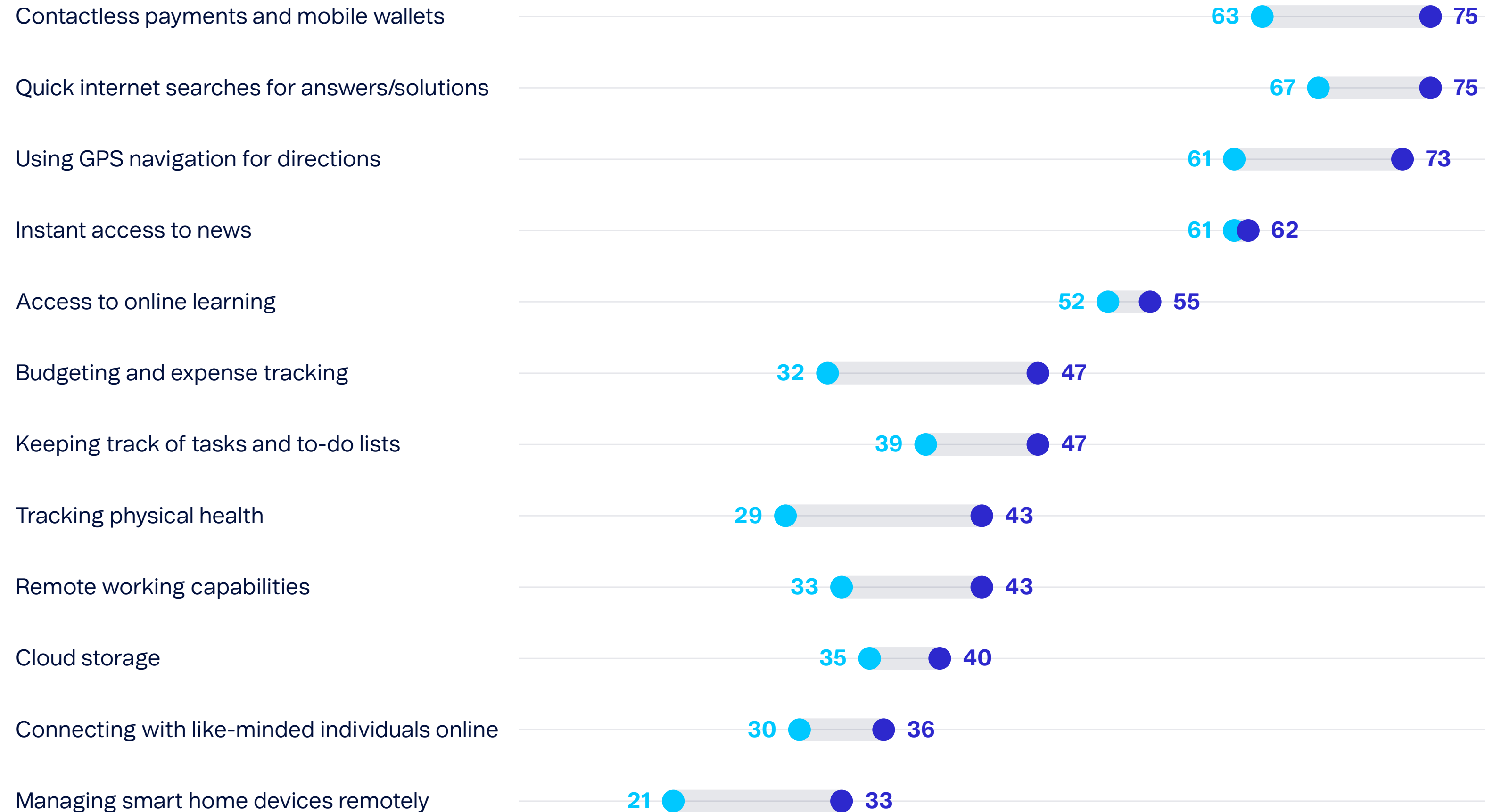


Malaysia's evolving relationship with AI

Mobiles helping to live a smarter life

% who say mobiles have helped them to live a smarter life in the following ways

● 2024 ● 2025



Source: Telenor Study 2024 & 2025 • Audience: 1,004 in 2024 and 1,004 in 2025 internet users aged 16-64

AI is an invisible force powering Malaysians' digital lives

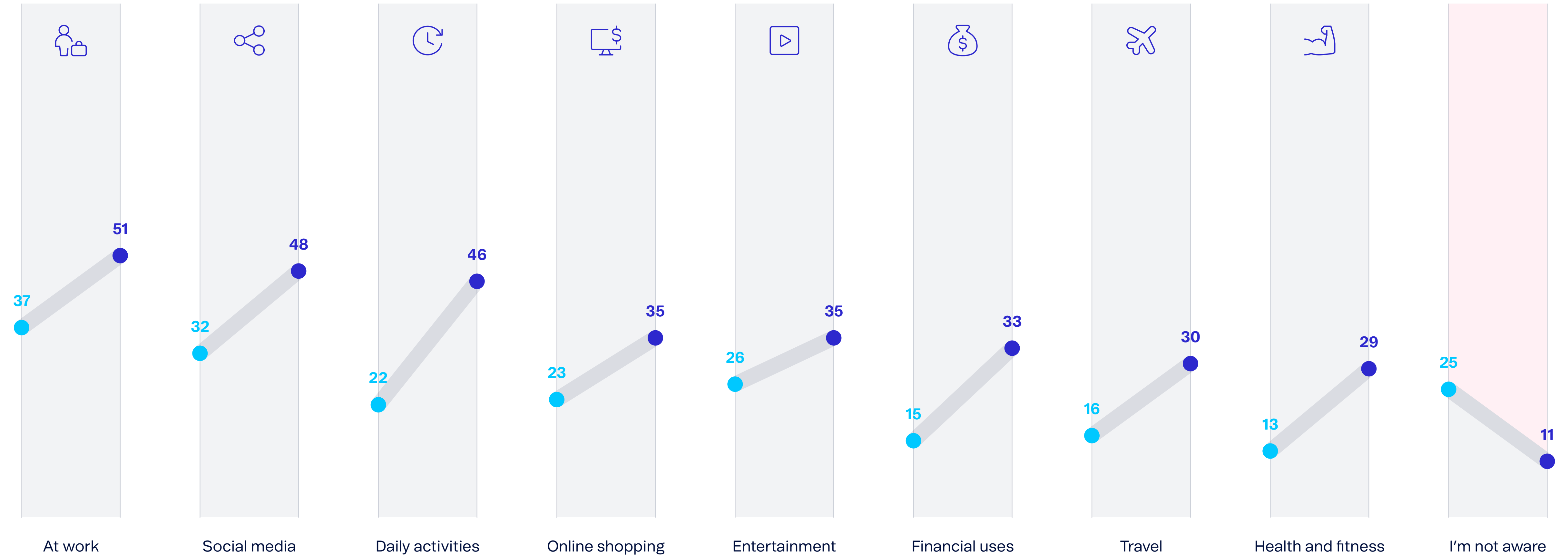
Smartphones have helped Malaysians to live smarter lives. From contactless payments and mobile wallets to quick internet searches, they have become essential tools that elevate daily life in Malaysia.

Internet users in Malaysia are also increasingly tapping into the smart features on their mobile phones to manage smart home devices and track physical health. These smart features often rely on built-in AIs, demonstrating that artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept for Malaysian internet users – it is an invisible force powering many of their daily digital conveniences, deeply woven into how people connect, entertain themselves and access information.

AI usage trends

% who use AI in the following situations

● 2024 ● 2025

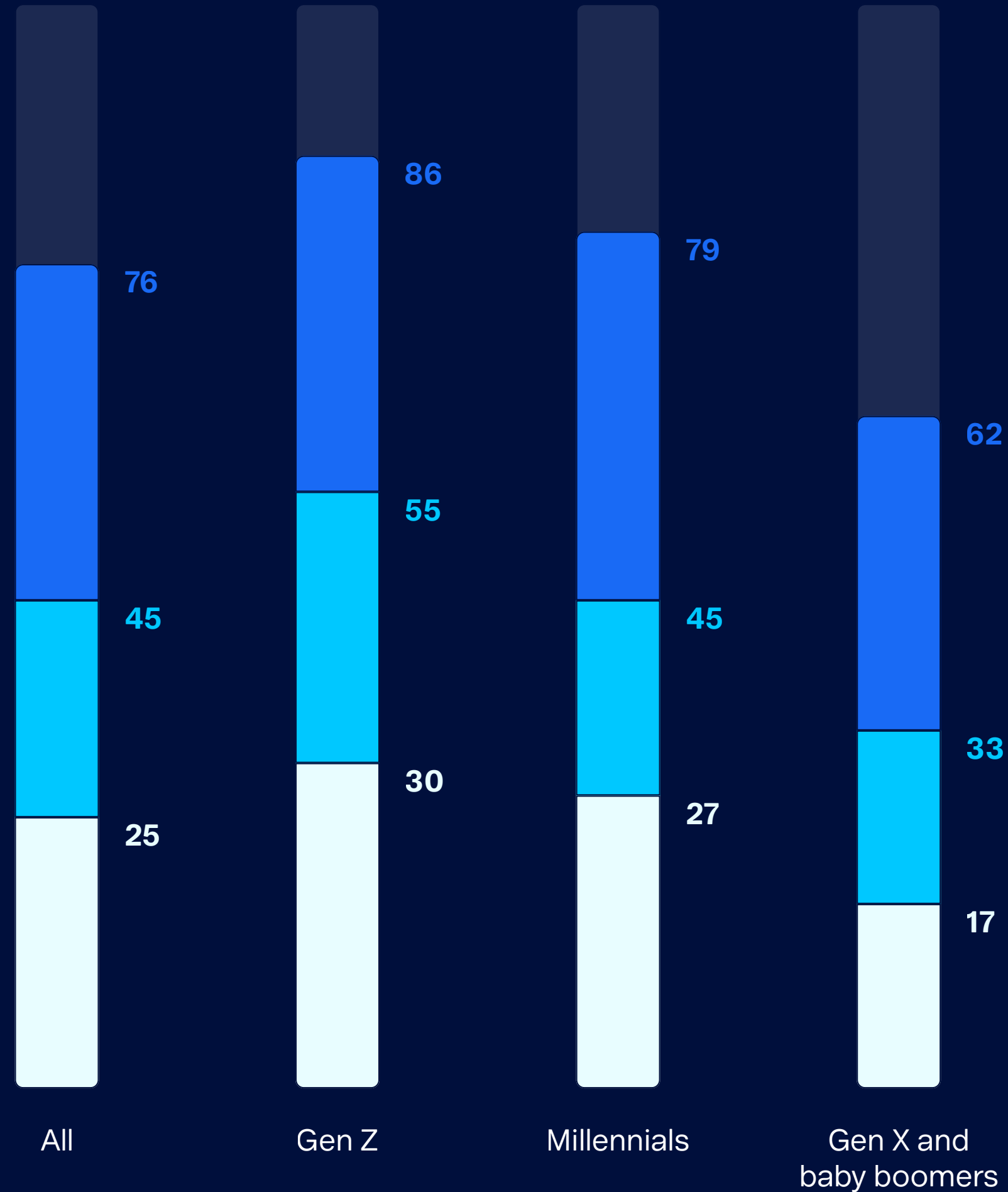


Source: Telenor Study 2024 & 2025 • Audience: 1,004 in 2024 and 1,004 in 2025 internet users aged 16-64

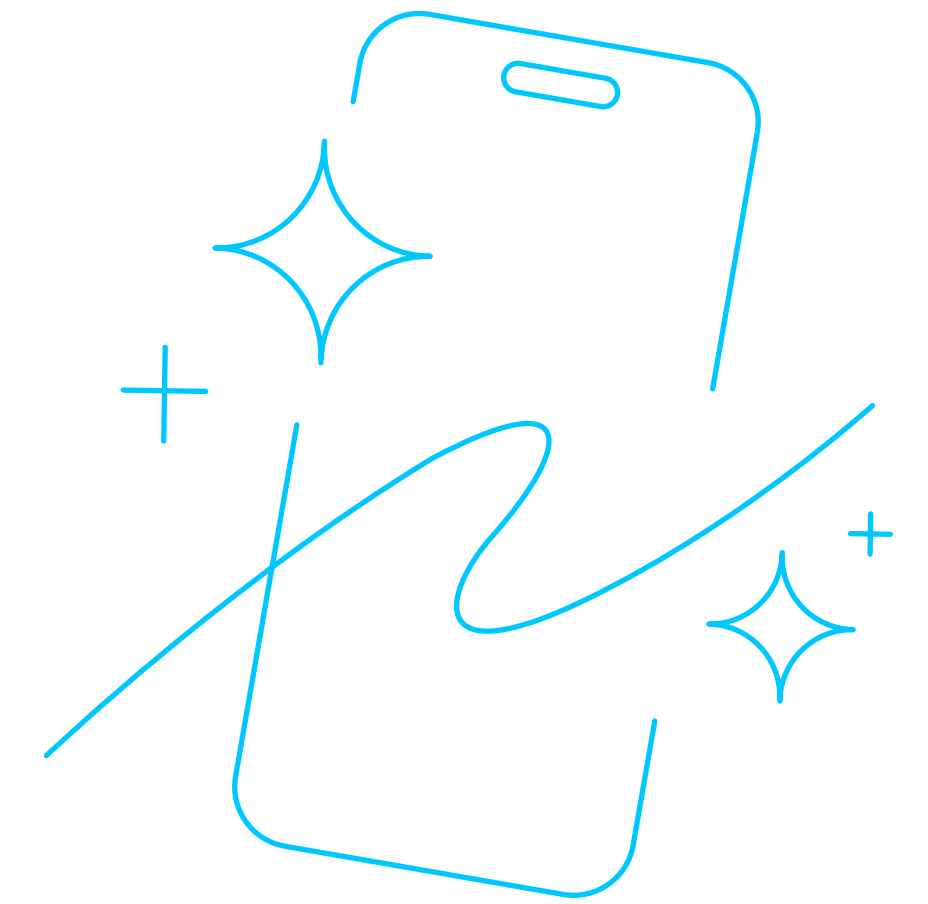
Frequency of AI use

% who intentionally use AI tools...

- At least weekly
- At least daily
- Multiple times a day



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64



AI as a productivity partner

89% of Malaysian internet users say they use AI today, up from 75% in 2024. Notably, the number of internet users who use AI for financial purposes or health and fitness has more than doubled. Today, a quarter of Malaysian internet users intentionally use AI tools multiple times a day, indicating a significant behavioural shift.

Over 4 in 10 Malaysians say AI has helped to enhance productivity. The most common uses include creating content and improving productivity at work. Gen Z leads the way in using AI to power their productivity: almost half use AI to enhance productivity at work, and 4 in 10 at school.

AI is also starting to take on the role of a personal assistant, helping users create content for personal use or to plan personalised experiences, such as travel and shopping. Along with AI's growth in daily activities and work, this indicates a push towards more integrated and assistive technologies, showing that AI is here to stay.

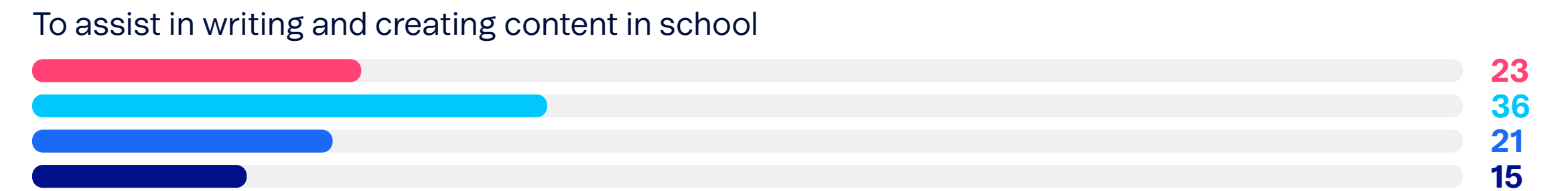
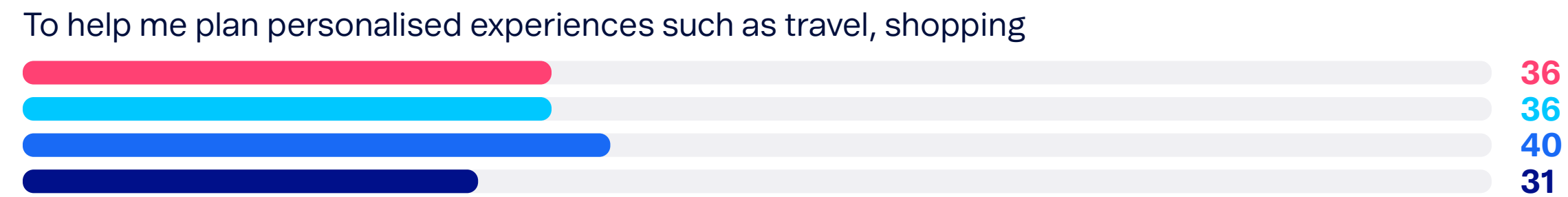
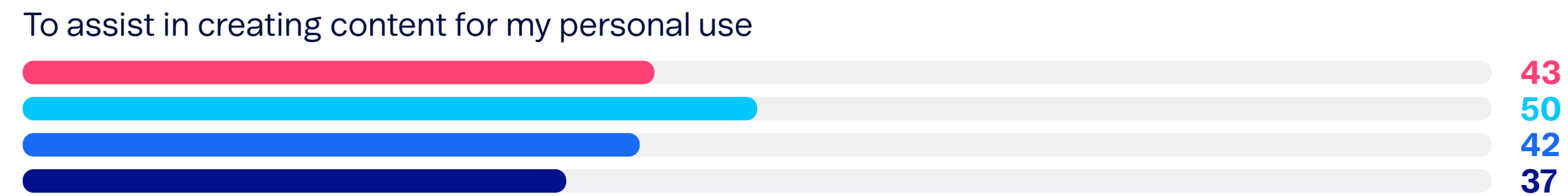
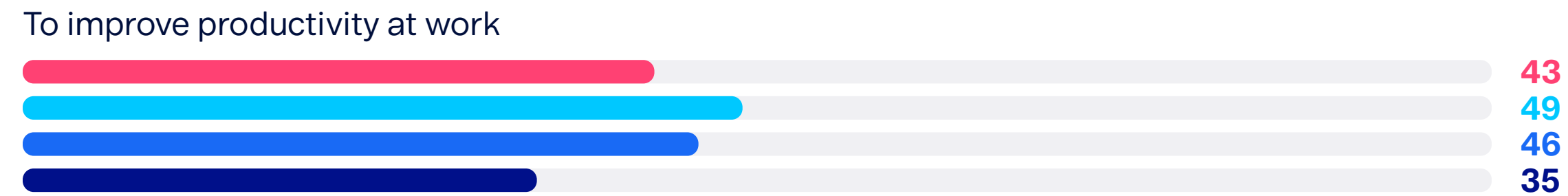
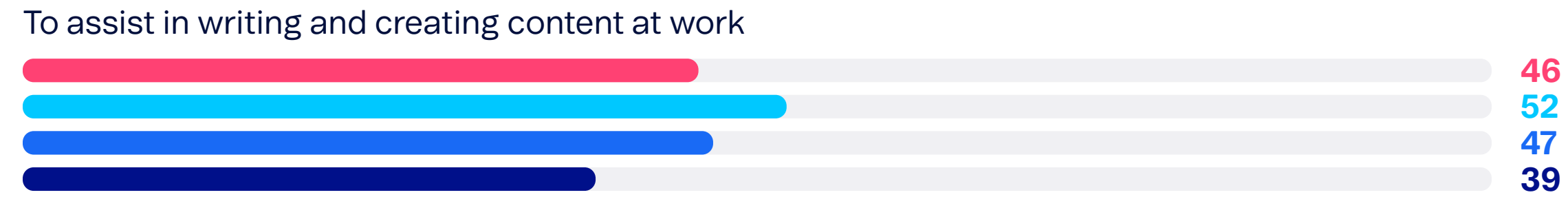
Nearly 1 in 2 use AI daily, with 1 in 4 using it multiple times a day



Uses of AI

Among AI users, the % who typically use AI tools for the following

● All ● Gen Z ● Millennials ● Gen X and baby boomers



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 887 internet users aged 16-64 who use AI

The emergence of the AI-powered professional

AI is profoundly reshaping the Malaysian workplace, with younger, higher-income professionals leading adoption. Adoption rates are higher among certain demographics: 55% of men and Gen Z use AI at work, and 2 in 3 from the top 10% income segment are leading the charge. The use of AI is most prevalent among people working in IT, telecoms, and engineering, as well as law and government services.

AI-powered analytics, content development tools and chatbots for customer service are key uses of AI at work. For those who are already using AI at work, the outlook is optimistic. They are 17% more likely than average to believe that AI will have a very positive impact on their job security and 13% more likely to believe the same for the country's economy.

With just over 1 in 2 Malaysians using AI at work, there is untapped opportunity for greater adoption. Among those who use AI at work, 1 in 3 say they are not aware of an AI plan or strategy in place.

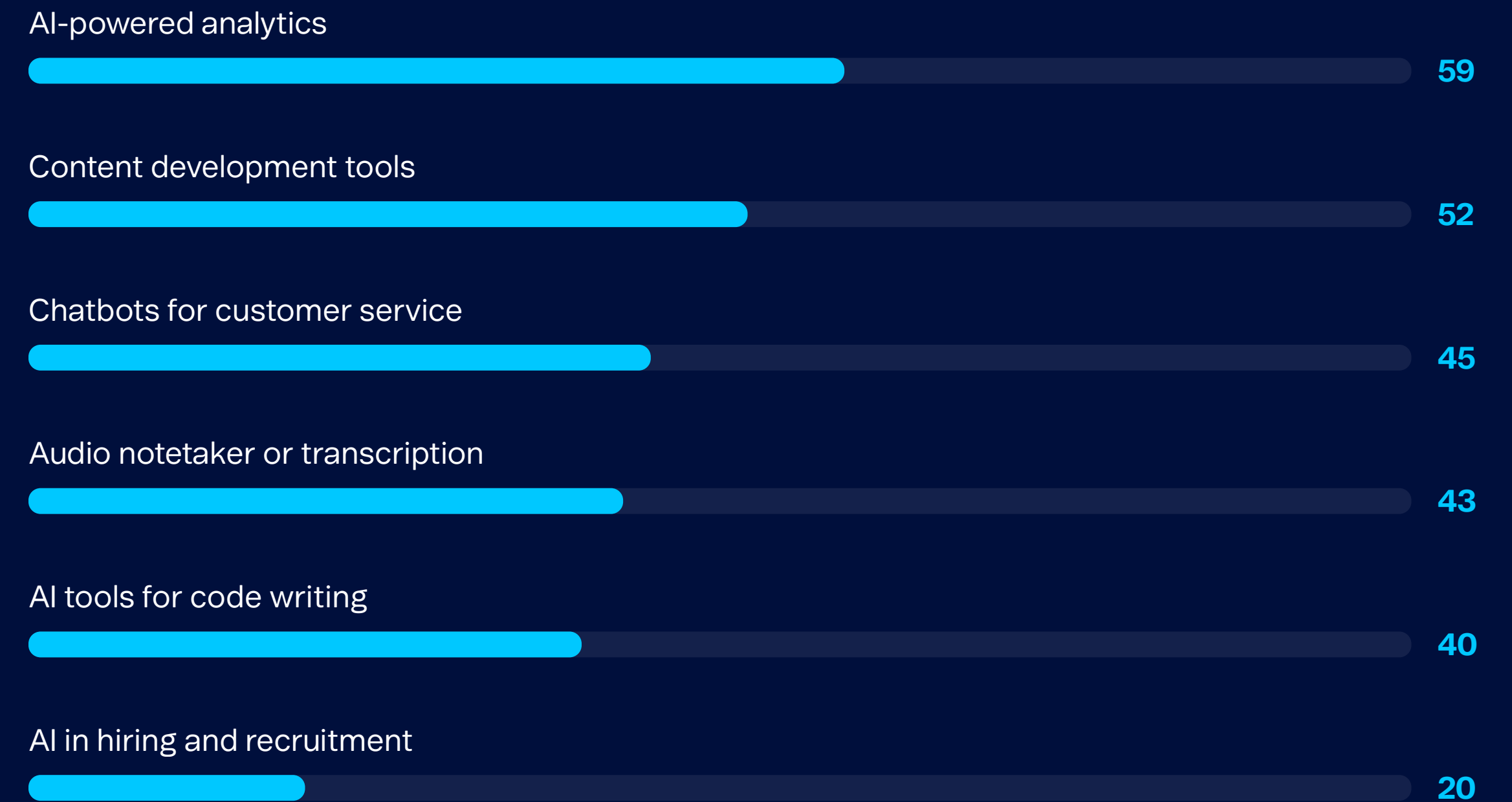
4 in 10 Malaysian internet users also feel that employers should take responsibility for training and upskilling them in AI.

This suggests a need for clearer organisational direction and support to fully harness the benefits of AI. Companies have a role to play and can support sustainable and responsible adoption of AI through clear planning and articulating these plans to employees.



AI tools in the workplace

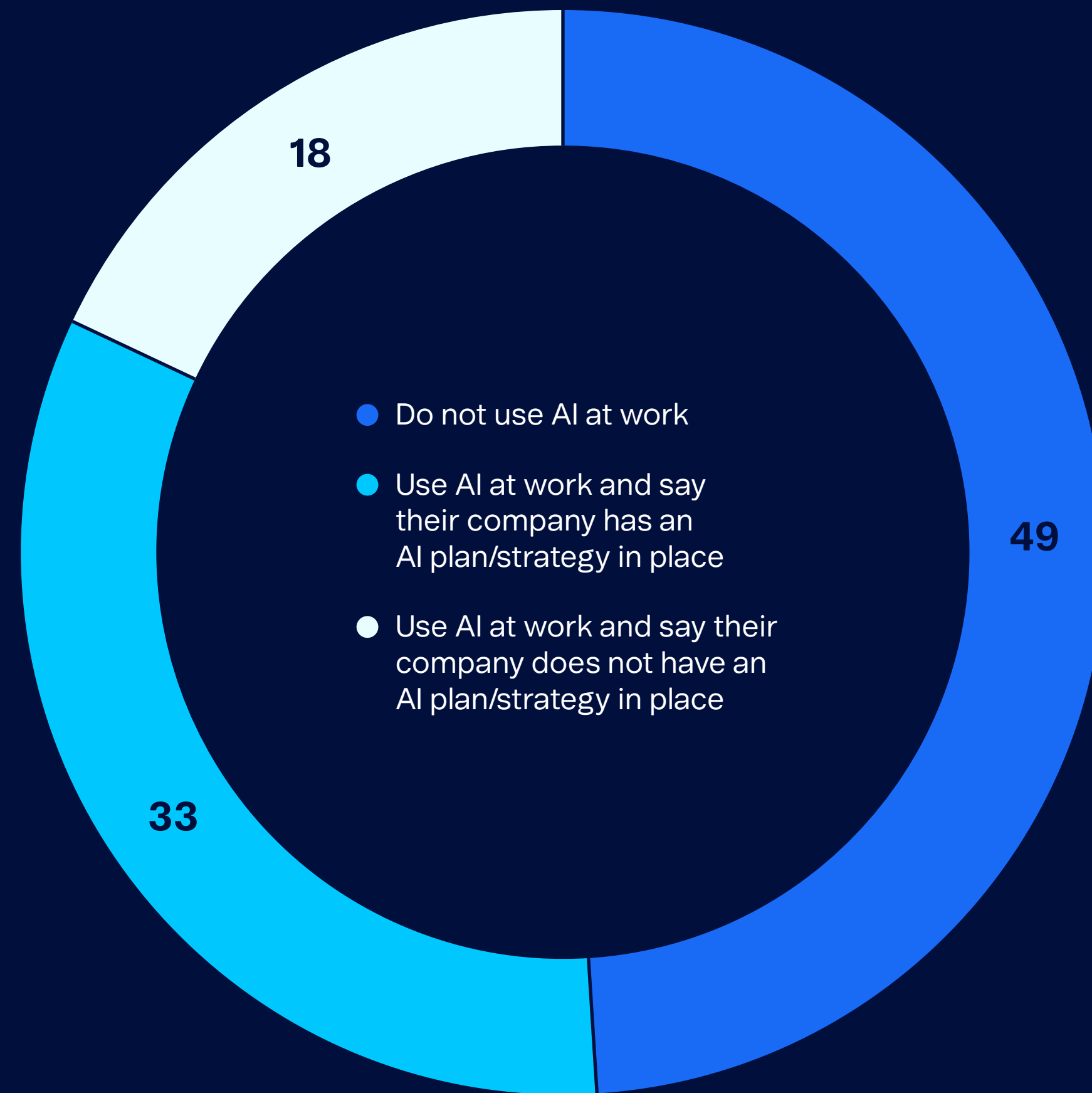
Among those who use AI at work, the % who use the following AI tools at their workplace



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • 516 internet users aged 16-64 who use AI at work

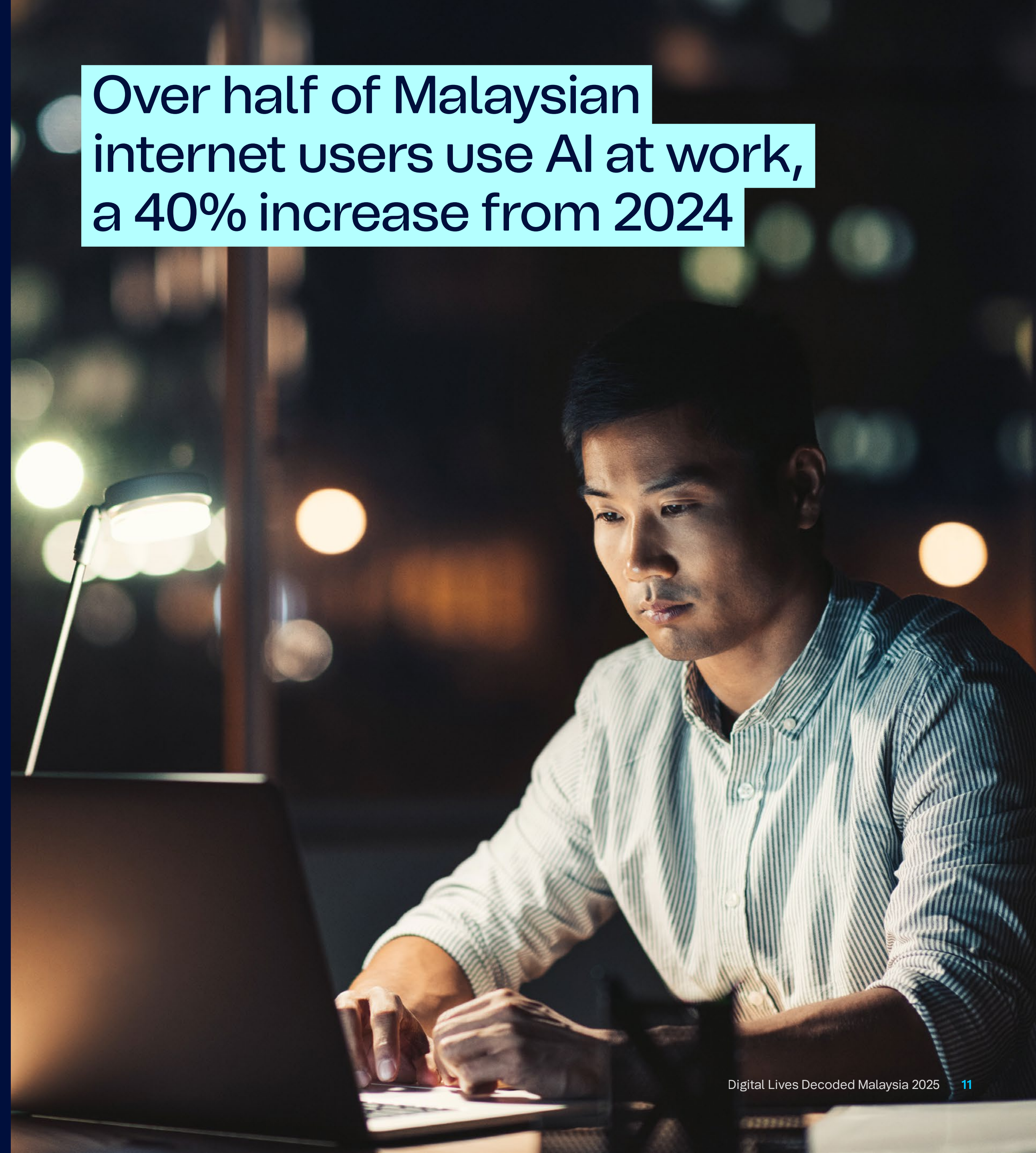
AI plan in the workplace

% who...



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64

Over half of Malaysian internet users use AI at work, a 40% increase from 2024



Expert view



Ieva Martinkenaite
Senior Vice President,
Head of AI at Telenor

Since 2024, AI-powered applications have seen their usage double, particularly in smart home and health tracking applications. Over half (58%) of Malaysian internet users employ AI tools at work, marking a 40% increase from 2024. Gen Z leads the daily use of AI, demonstrating both the biggest enthusiasm and the highest expectations for ethical guardrails in AI development.

It is exciting to see that Malaysian internet users exhibit such strong optimism regarding AI's benefits for society and economy. Half the internet users trust AI-generated content in educational services, chatbots and virtual assistants, and financial advisory. However, this optimism is tempered by concerns over the misuse of AI and the lack of online safety and security guardrails. Despite productivity and convenience gains brought by generative AI tools such as Co-Pilot or ChatGPT, people are aware of AI risks such as misinformation, data leakage, and biased decision-making. Nearly 1 in 5 active AI users highlights the absence of clear AI strategies within their companies, signaling a pressing need for organizations to develop responsible AI frameworks by design.

Responsible AI as a competitive differentiator

For companies, the findings signal that a surge in AI adoption requires businesses to take an active role in not only driving the use of AI but also setting clear ethical standards. Malaysian-based

companies must develop transparent AI strategies, set responsible AI frameworks, and invest in employee education to foster trust and harness the full potential of AI. Responsible AI is not just a compliance measure; it is a competitive differentiator and a core element for sustainable and inclusive growth.

How can companies get started?

1. Set a clear vision for responsible AI use as part of AI-powered business transformation agenda or AI action plan;
2. Assess business opportunities, and most salient AI risks;
3. Develop responsible AI principles;
4. Create internal policies and/or guidelines for lawful and ethical use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT);
5. Develop roles and responsibilities alongside AI risk management frameworks as part of current or new privacy/security/compliance structures;
6. Invest in robust data governance tools;
7. Build ethical AI frameworks for third party vendors;
8. Conduct responsible AI literacy courses for employees.

At Telenor, responsible AI is the cornerstone of everything we do – be it to drive customer excellence, modernize our networks or augment work practices with AI tools for our employees. That is

why we are curious to learn about how our customers and partners develop responsible AI, and share best practices across the regions we operate.

We are committed to balancing AI adoption with unwavering attention to transparency, fairness, and human oversight. Our approach empowers employees with cutting-edge tools while embedding responsible AI training into our culture. This gives us reassurance that AI-powered business transformation does not come at the expense of integrity, security and trust, enabling Telenor to build the backbone of modern digital societies.

Clear call to action

For the Malaysian government, there is a clear call for action in this year's report to build a robust regulatory framework and public-private partnerships in AI that protect public interests, uphold data privacy, and reduce risks of algorithmic bias or misuse will be key. Policies must support both technological innovation and safe, inclusive, and transparent use of AI across strategic industry sectors.

As AI becomes deeply embedded in the daily lives of the Malaysians, societal awareness of its opportunities and risks must grow in tandem. Digital literacy, critical thinking, and a culture of shared responsibility are essential to fully realize AI's benefits while safeguarding against unintended consequences.

Optimism meets concerns over online safety

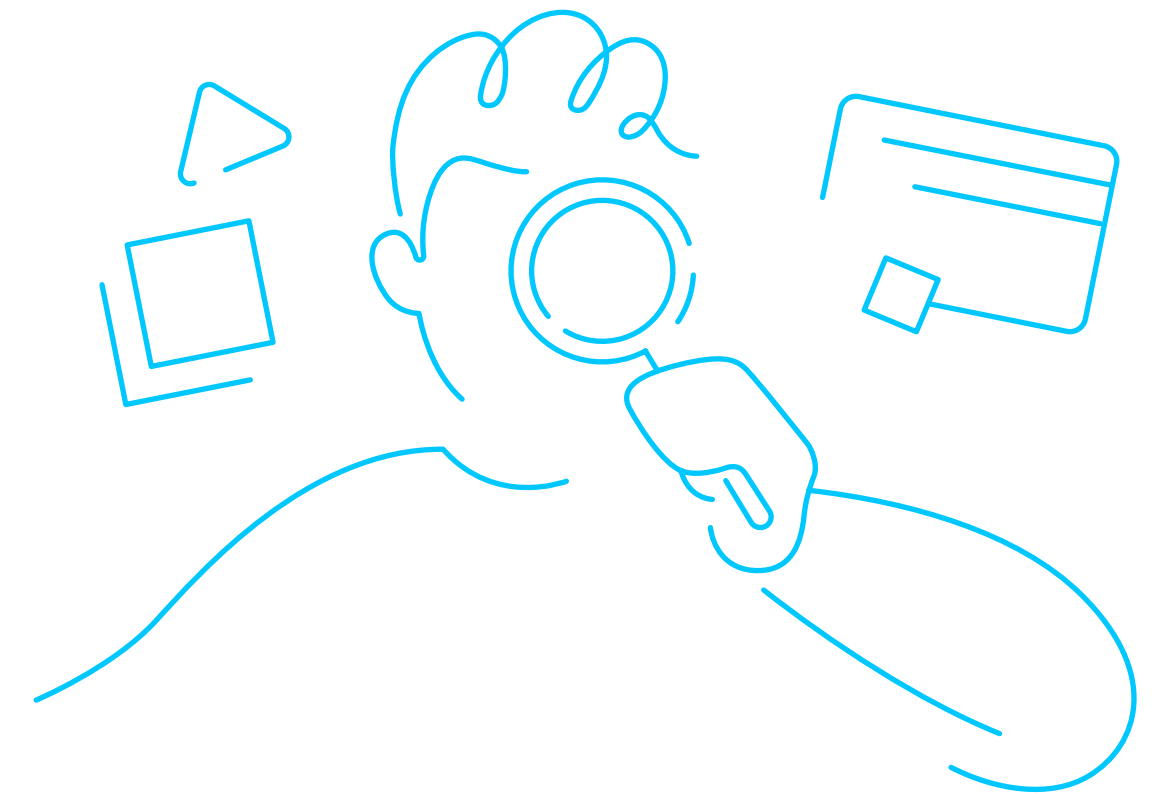


High hopes for the future impact of AI

Malaysian internet users remain optimistic about the impact that AI can have on society, especially on the education front. Since 2024, there is greater optimism about how AI can aid crime prediction and

analysis (+8%), climate change mitigation (+6%) and transportation (+6%). Men also tend to be more optimistic about AI's future impact on society than women, especially concerning transportation (84% vs

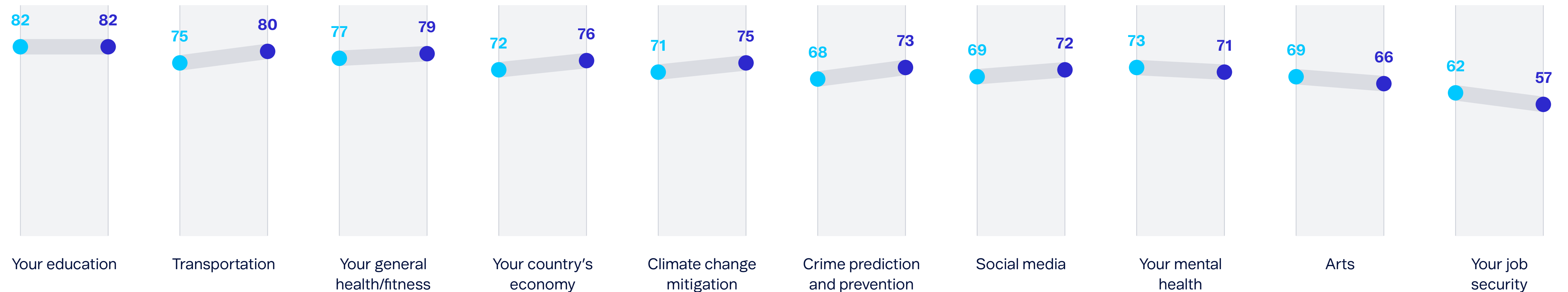
75%), mental health (75% vs 68%), and climate change mitigation (79% vs 71%). That said, concern around AI's impact on job security has also seen a slight increase from 38% to 43%.



Future impact of AI on society

% who say they think AI will have a positive impact on the following aspects of society

● 2024 ● 2025



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64



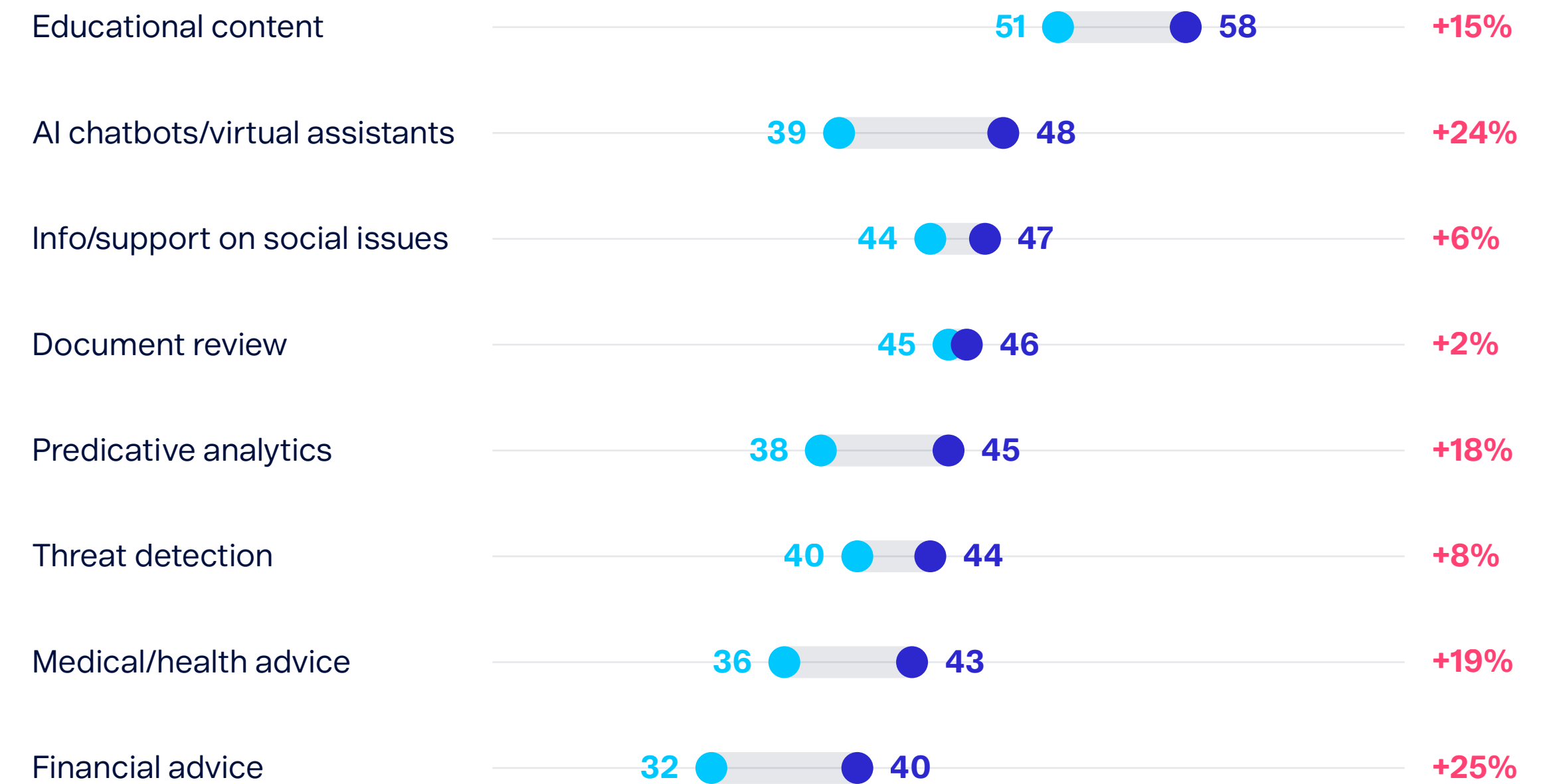
Malaysian internet users are more trusting of AI-generated information. Similar to 2024, they trust AI-generated educational content most at 58%, growing 15% year-on-year. The AI-generated

content types which have seen the biggest growth in trust are financial advice (+25%), AI chatbots/virtual assistants (+24%) and medical/health advice (+19%).

Trust in AI-generated information

% who trust AI-generated information related to the following a lot or completely

● 2024 ● 2025



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64

Role of AI in online safety and security

However, optimism is balanced by a strong awareness of risk. Across the board, Malaysian internet users exhibit a cautious approach to online safety, demonstrating lower trust in digital security measures and a greater concern for privacy implications.

The level of trust in website security has dipped from 75% to 69%, while those who worry about the security of their online accounts has risen from 75% to 81% in the last year. They also exhibit a more cautious approach when it comes to sharing personal information online.

Concern about online safety and security is also more prevalent among the older generations (Gen X and Baby boomers). Across the board, though, 58% Malaysian internet users believe that AI helps to keep them safe online, reflecting a moderate level of cynicism towards AI.

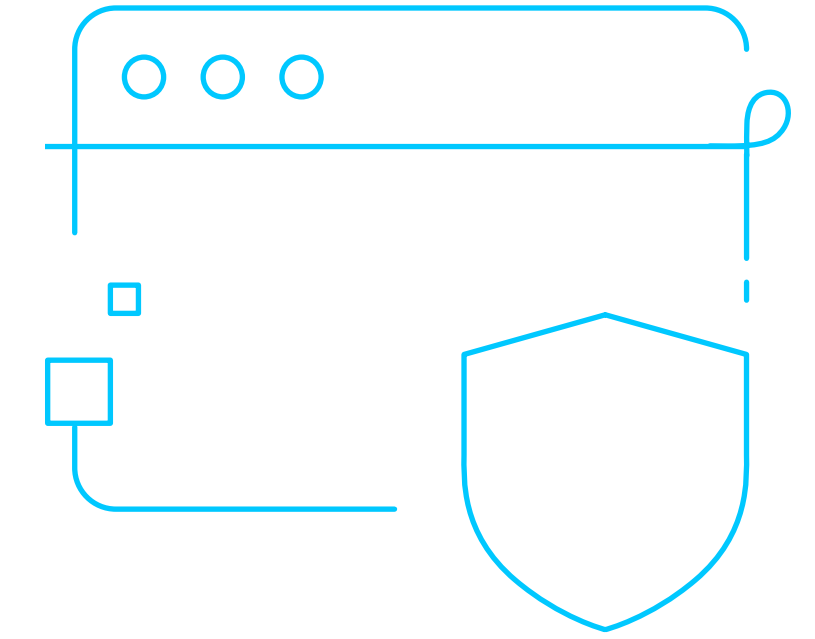
Malaysians are more likely than those in Thailand and Bangladesh to express worry about AI across the aspects listed in the "Concern over AI" chart. Privacy is the top concern, followed by a personal over-reliance on AI and an inability to identify plagiarised information.

Interestingly, although most Malaysian internet users say they are confident in distinguishing between AI-driven and human-driven interactions online, only 13% feel very confident, 49% are just somewhat confident and 3 in 10 are unsure – highlighting a gap between perceived and actual certainty.

Only 58% of Malaysians say that AI helps to keep them safe online



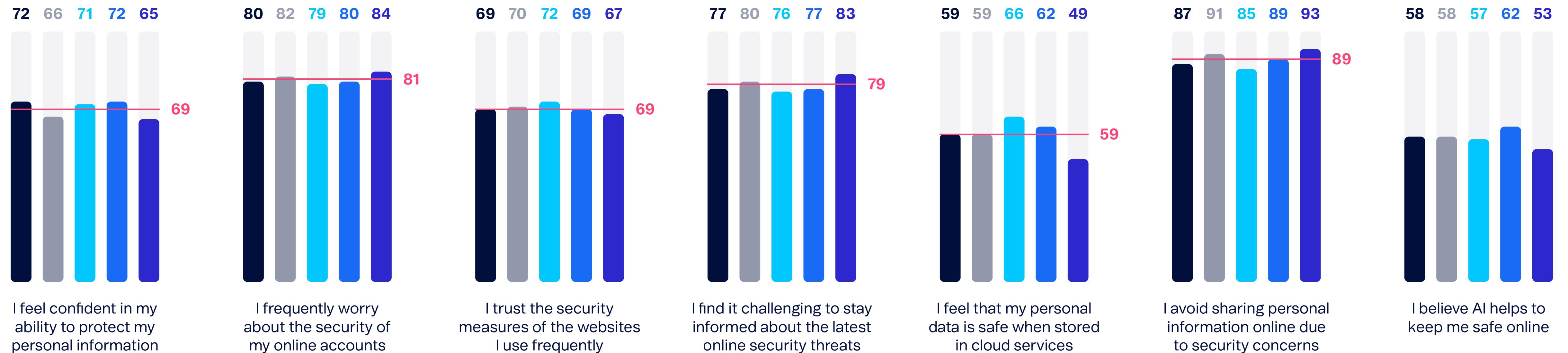
Over half (51%) of Malaysian internet users say they are highly aware of the potential risks or biases that can come from using AI



Online safety

% who agree with the following statements

● All ● Male ● Female ● Gen Z ● Millennials ● Gen X and baby boomers



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64



Concern over AI

% who say they're very or extremely concerned over the following aspects of AI




AI and human interactions

% who are confident in their ability to distinguish between AI-driven and human-driven interactions

● Not at all ● Not very ● Unsure ● Somewhat ● Very confident



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64



Among AI users, Gen Z are more likely to use AI tools to seek relationship advice or companionship

AI and empathy: a nuanced relationship

Outside of more practical concerns, AI's perceived lack of empathy, when applied in sensitive contexts such as personal advice, reveals a clear trust gap.

While Gen Z stand out for saying AI has helped their empathy skills or improved their relationships (+19%), they do not quite fully trust it. Relationship advice is the least trusted AI-generated information, with a third of Gen Z saying they don't trust it at all or only trust it a little.

Among those who feel AI usage is unfair, 6 in 10 attribute this to the fact that AI "doesn't understand people or situations properly". This underscores a fundamental scepticism about AI's capacity for true human understanding and empathy.

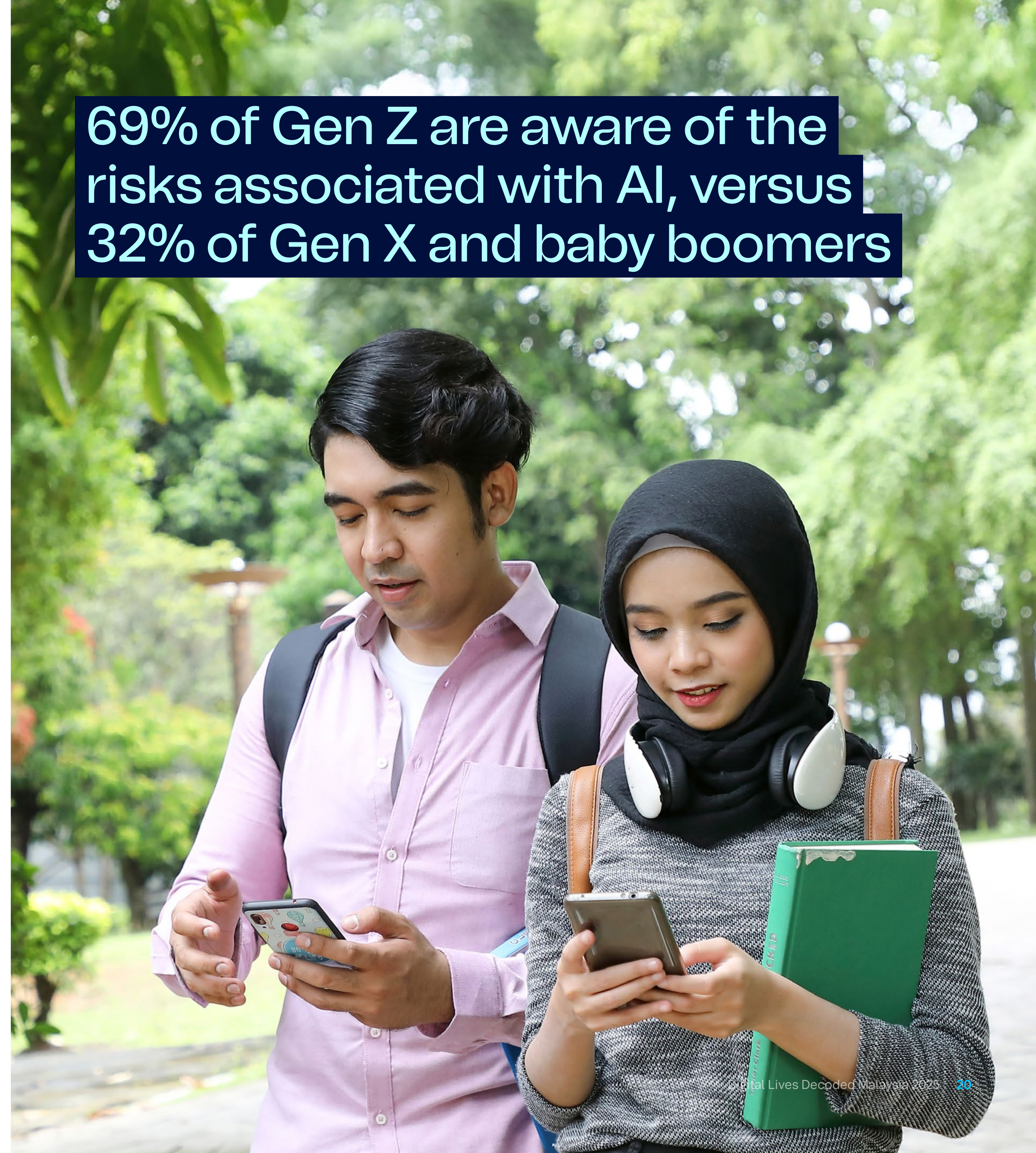
69% of Gen Z are aware of the risks associated with AI, versus 32% of Gen X and baby boomers

Gen Z as ethical power users *and* its biggest critics

Malaysia's Gen Z leads AI adoption across various domains: 57% use it in their daily activities, and 71% say they are at least "comfortable" with how AI technology works, compared to half of millennials and just a quarter of Gen X.

Yet, this generation simultaneously voices strong concerns about AI's rapid development and demands clear ethical safeguards. Gen Z is also the most likely generation to view a company's use of AI in its processes as unfair. They exhibit a lack of trust when it comes to organisations using AI for facial recognition for security (+35%), drafting contracts (+18%), choosing who to hire (+15%), and image generation (+14%).

This translates into greater emphasis placed on the ethical dimensions of AI, with over a third (35%) of Gen Z identifying ethics and bias awareness as essential skills for the future, highlighting a growing awareness of responsible AI use among these digital natives.

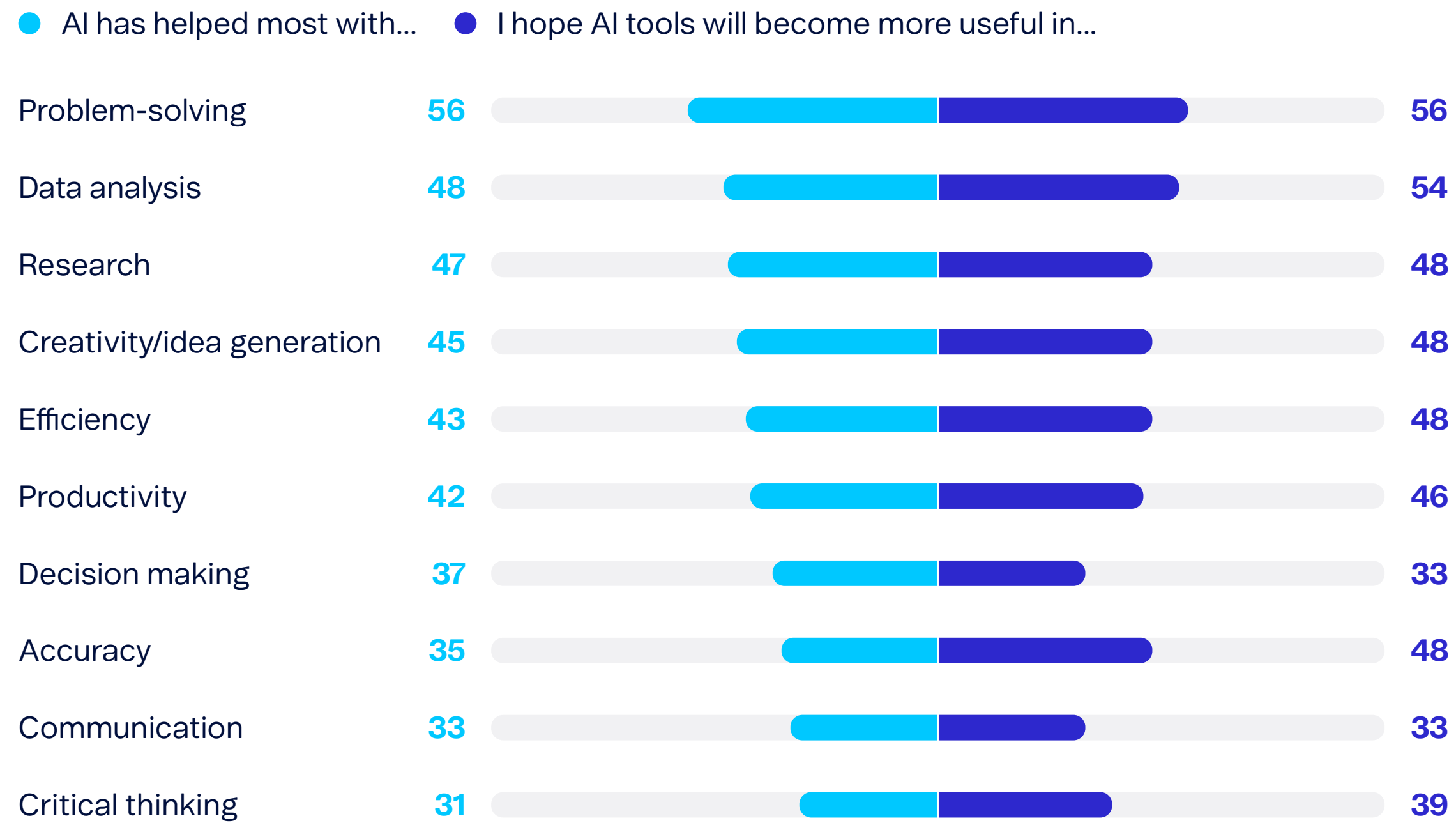


AI in the future: skills, trust and responsibility



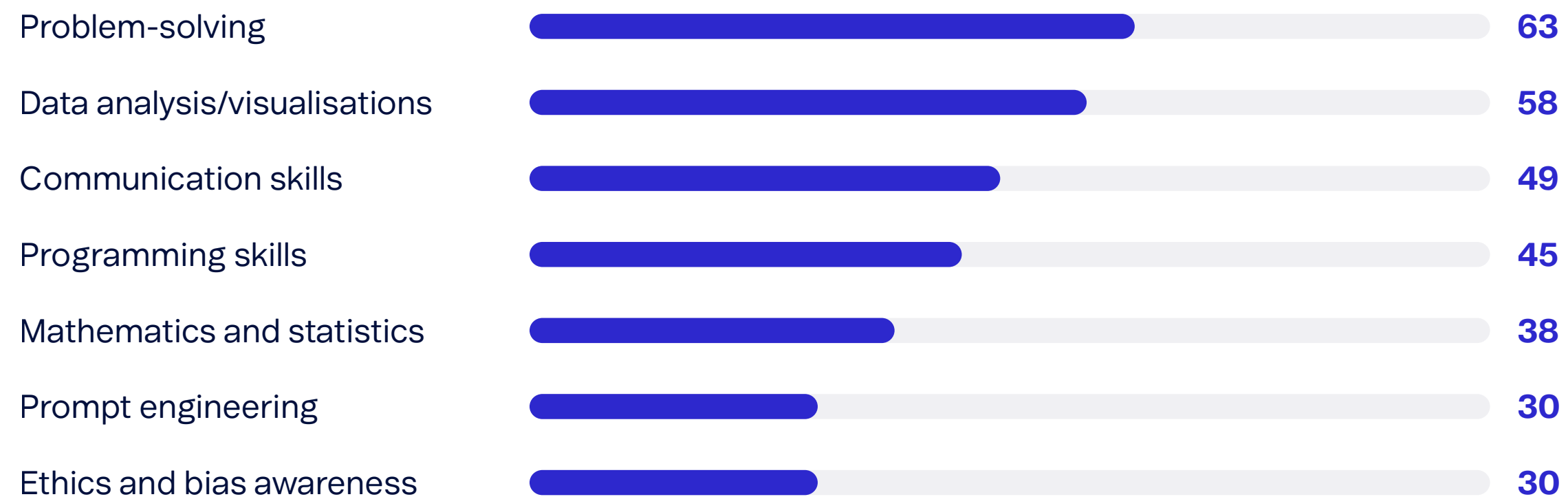
AI skills have helped/will help

% who say AI tools have helped them most in the following skills/hope AI tools will become more useful in the following in the future



Skills needed for AI

% who think the following skills are needed to get the most out of AI



Source: Telenor Study 2025

Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64

Evolving skillsets needed to thrive in the AI age

Malaysian internet users increasingly recognise that maximising the benefits of AI requires both technical proficiency and more human-centric skills.

They are actively leveraging AI to augment their own skills and capabilities. Among the various competencies, AI has contributed most to problem solving and data analysis. Those who use AI at work are more likely to report that AI has improved their leadership (+34%) and empathy (+30%) skills, while those who believe AI helps to keep them safe online are 30% more likely to say it has improved their confidence on the whole. On the flip side, those who think that AI will have a negative impact on their job security are less likely to have seen any skills improvement with the help of AI

Moving forward, to get the most out of AI, problem solving and data analysis also emerge as the most critical competencies, closely followed by effective communication and programming skills. These skills are seen as essential not only for interacting with AI tools, but also for interpreting their outputs and applying them meaningfully in everyday contexts.



Navigating AI integration into businesses

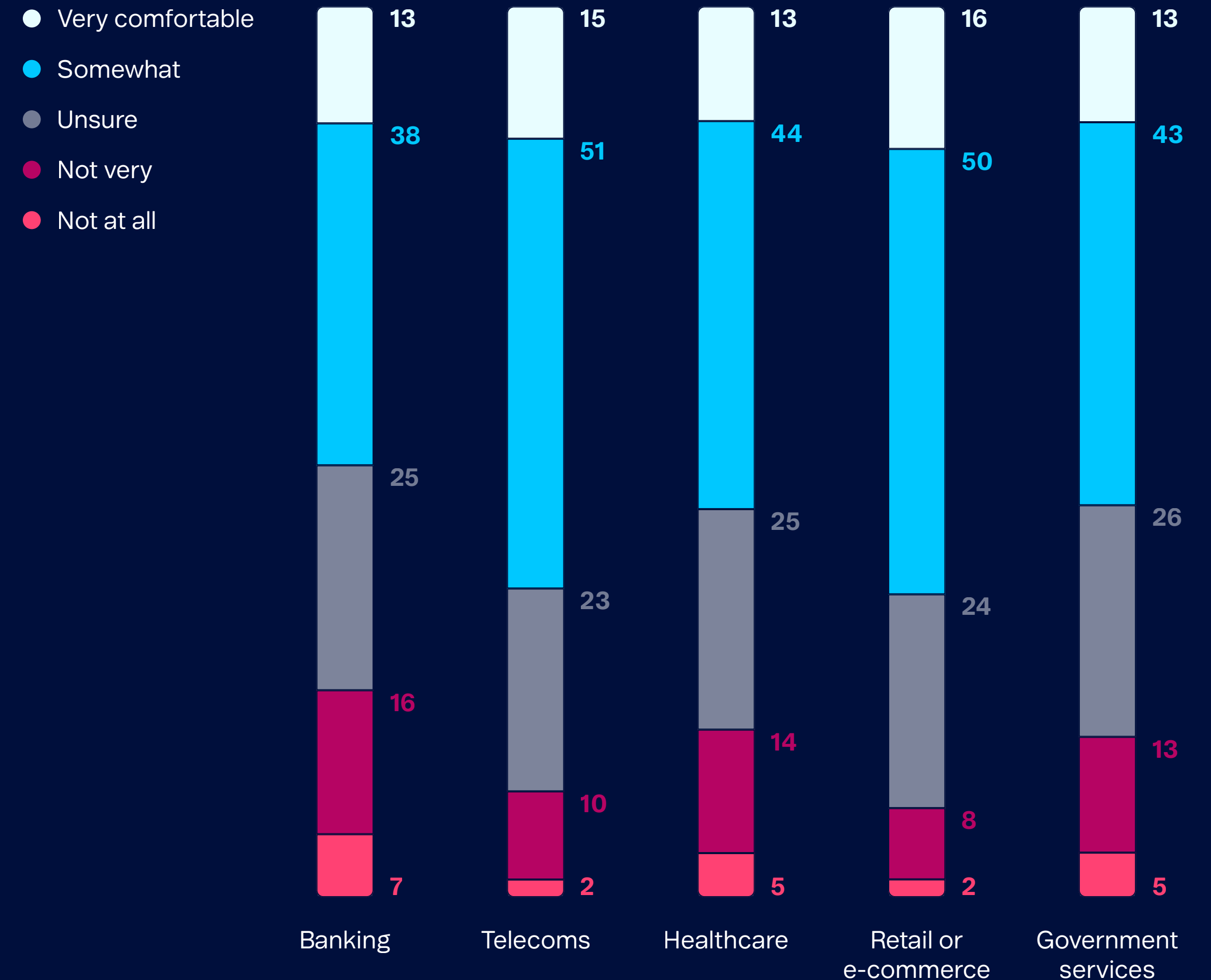
When it comes to the use and integration of AI by companies, Malaysian internet users have a moderate level of acceptance and some scepticism around sensitive use cases such as choosing who to hire.

Over a third of Malaysian internet users say they would be more inclined to use retail/e-commerce (38%) or telecoms (34%) services that utilise user data to train AI models for better service, reflecting a pragmatic acceptance of data exchange for perceived value among this group.

In addition, they are generally comfortable with usage perceived to have lower risks, such as image generation, using facial recognition for security as well as customer service.

Industry comfortability with AI usage

% who feel comfortable with AI being used in the following industries



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64

Trust and fairness in AI

% who would trust an organisation or institution to be fair if using AI in the following situations

● Not at all ● Not a lot ● Unsure ● Somewhat ● Very much

Image generation



Using facial recognition for security



Customer service



In education/grading student work



Assessing eligibility for financial products



Drafting contracts



Choosing who to hire



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64



Two-thirds of Malaysian internet users are comfortable with AI being used in retail/e-commerce and in telecoms

7 in 10 Malaysian internet users think ethical considerations should come first, even if this slows the pace of innovation

Human oversight and ethical considerations are key

Malaysian internet users demand high ethical standards, strongly advocating for human oversight and transparency, especially in sensitive applications. Fewer than half (46%) agree that companies should be allowed to experiment with AI freely, even if it involves some risk.

This concern becomes especially clear when it comes to AI's role in critical, human-centric decisions such as hiring. They are more likely than internet users in Thailand and Bangladesh to say they would not trust an organisation using AI to choose who to hire to be fair. This underscores the importance of maintaining human judgment in decisions that significantly impact lives.

Additionally, among those who feel it is unfair for companies to use AI, 6 in 10 said a company using AI would prompt them to feel this wasn't fair

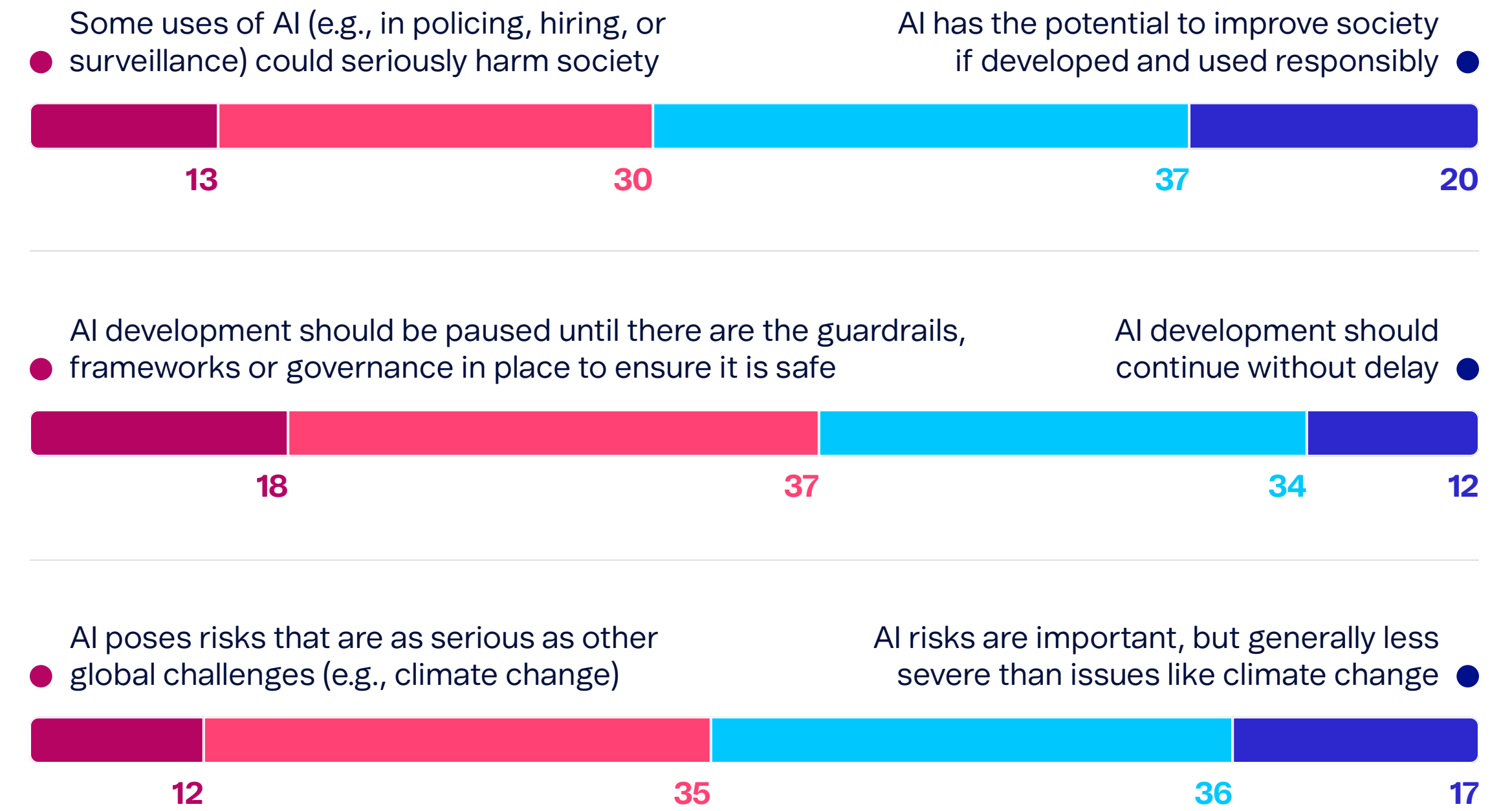
because they don't think AI understands people or situations properly, a figure notably higher than in Thailand and Bangladesh (46%).

Other major concerns include AI's inability to fully understand people or complex situations, and a strong belief that real people – not machines – should remain in charge. These views highlight a broader demand for human oversight and transparency, especially in sensitive or high-stakes applications. It also reflects a proactive stance toward informed decision-making, creating an opportunity for organisations to build trust through clear communication.

This sentiment is further reinforced by the fact that nearly 7 in 10 Malaysian internet users agree that companies should prioritise ethical considerations – even if it means slowing down innovation.

Attitudes towards AI

% who agree with the following statements



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64

Reasons why AI is unfair

Among those who say a company using AI would prompt them to feel this wasn't fair, the % who gave the following reasons



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • **Audience:** 442 internet users aged 16-64 who say a company using AI would prompt them to feel this wasn't fair



Balancing trust, control and responsibility

Malaysian internet users demonstrate a nuanced approach to data sharing, centred around transparency and shared responsibility.

Less than half (47%) of internet users in Malaysia said they are willing to share their personal data for better or free services. This is significantly fewer than in Thailand (77%) and Bangladesh (67%), however willingness is higher among men (53%) and Gen Z (52%).

Yet they are willing to share where there are clear conditions. Transparency on how the data is used and the trustworthiness of the company are critical factors for many users – they want to be informed, empowered, and in charge of how their data is used.

Women care more than men about being clearly informed (46%) and about transparency/trustworthiness (44%). By comparison, men are more likely to share for convenience, such as enabling voice assistants to better understand them (26%) and to get faster customer service (29%). In a

similar vein, Gen Z stands out for willingness to share data for tailored financial advice (+21%) and targeted discounts (+20%).

When it comes to governance of AI use, Malaysian internet users believe in a shared and almost equal responsibility between the individual, technology companies and the government.

This is an interesting contrast to 2024's study, where those polled looked to institutions like the government (66%) and service providers (59%) to ensure their digital safety, rather than the individual (47%).

However, they tend to take on personal responsibility to upskill in AI. 6 in 10 believe they should take charge of educating themselves, while 4 in 10 think that their government, schools and employers should do so. Ultimately, this indicates a desire for shared oversight in the AI landscape, while emphasising personal agency in adapting to its evolving demands.

Sharing data

% who would be willing to share their data with AI systems in the following situations



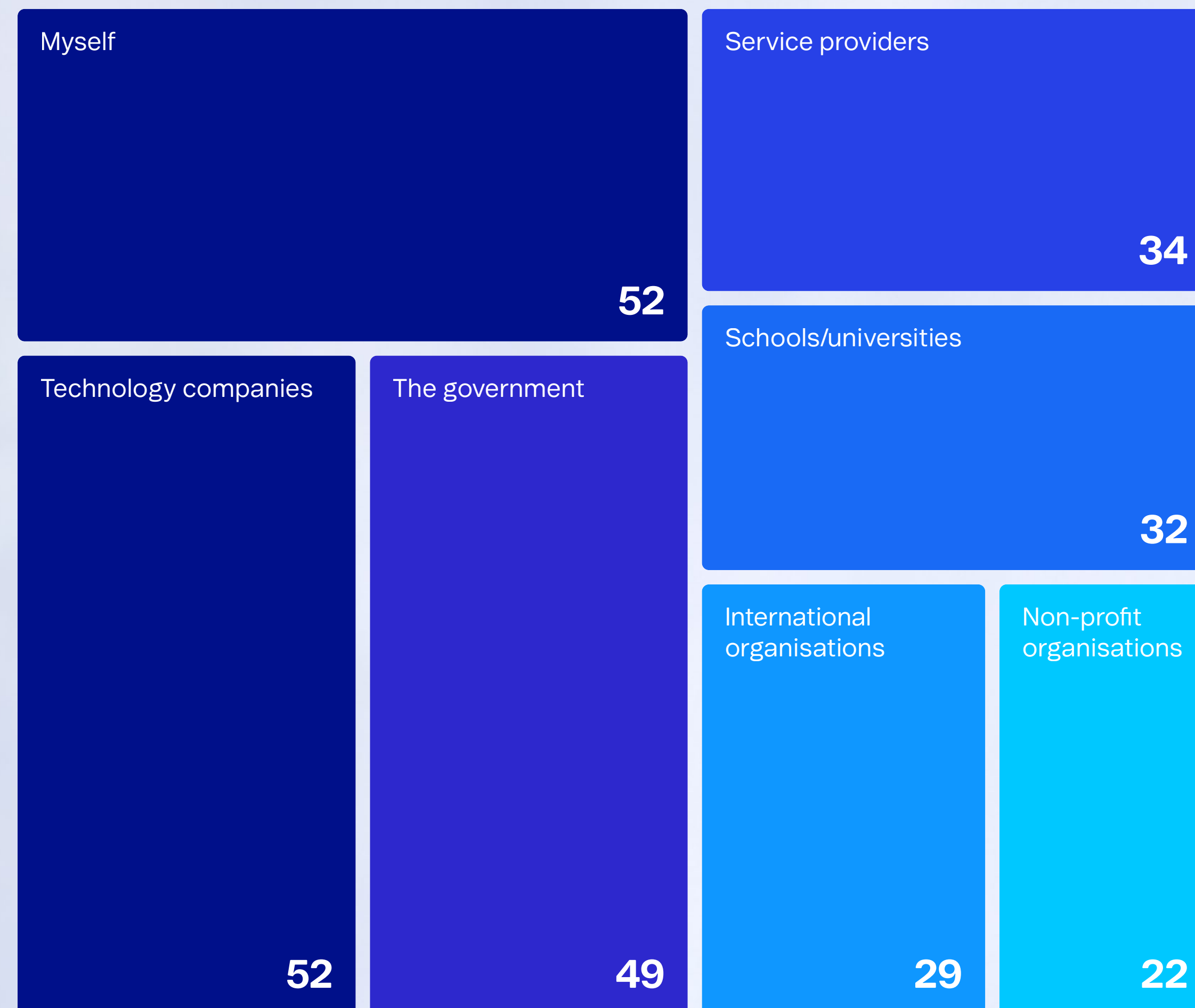
Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64

Less than half (47%) of internet users in Malaysia said they are willing to share their personal data for better or free services



Responsibility for AI governance

% who trust the following to govern the use of AI



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 1,004 internet users aged 16-64

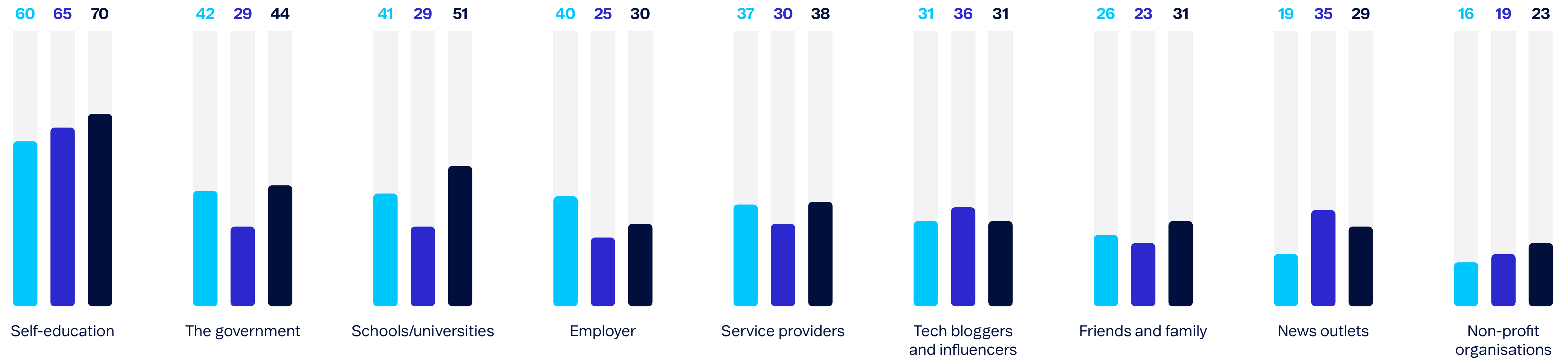
Malaysian internet users rely more on self for upskilling, but believe in a shared responsibility when it comes to governance of AI



Responsibility for AI upskilling

% who think the following should take responsibility for training and upskilling them to be able to better harness and apply AI in their daily life

● Thailand ● Malaysia ● Bangladesh



Source: Telenor Study 2025 • Audience: 3,047 internet users aged 16-64 (1,004 in Malaysia, 1,017 in Thailand and 1,026 in Bangladesh)

Conclusion

As AI becomes more deeply woven into the digital lives of Malaysians, our study reveals a society that is both forward-looking and thoughtful: eager to embrace technological advances, yet cautious and clear-eyed about the responsibilities that come with it.

Malaysian internet users are increasingly aware of AI's presence in their daily lives. From productivity tools and personalised services to financial advice and health tracking, AI is already shaping how people live, work and connect. Yet this growing familiarity is accompanied by a strong desire for transparency, fairness, and ethical safeguards.

Responsibility stands out as a defining theme. Malaysians are not waiting passively for change; they are actively upskilling, questioning, and shaping how AI should be used. At the same time, they expect institutions – governments, companies, and service providers – to lead with integrity, ensuring that AI is deployed with human oversight, clear governance, and a commitment to inclusivity. This dual approach of personal agency paired with institutional accountability reflects a digitally discerning society. It also highlights the importance of equipping all users, especially younger generations and vulnerable groups, with the tools to navigate an AI-powered future confidently and critically.

As Malaysia advances its ambition to become a regional AI hub, the path forward must be guided by a shared commitment to responsible innovation. Balancing opportunity with caution, and automation with empathy, will be key to ensuring that AI enhances, and not undermines, the digital lives of Malaysians.

Our commitment remains clear: to support a digital future that is not only smarter, but also safer, more inclusive, and deeply human-centric.

 telenor asia | **GW.**