

**YouGov**<sup>®</sup>

September 2021

# **Global Tech Support Scam Research: Singapore**



## The global landscape of Tech Support Scams

- Each month, Microsoft receives about 6,500 complaints from people across the globe who report that they have been the victim of a tech support scam
- Fraudsters have adapted to evolving technology by using more sophisticated tactics or ploys to victimize users online
- Globally, those who fell victim paid at least US\$200 on average, and many victims faced repeat scam interactions
- Some victims even lost thousands of dollars for fake tech support to fix non-existent computer issues
- Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit is an international team of technical, legal and business experts that has been fighting cybercrime to protect victims since 2008, and represents Microsoft's differentiated approach to cybersecurity

## Study overview

- Examines the incidence and consequences of tech support scams worldwide
- Web based survey of 16,254 adult internet users in 16 countries worldwide (~1,000 per country)
  - 12 countries are consistent with 2018 Study
  - Colombia, Finland, Netherlands, and Spain are new in 2021
- Sampled consumers 18 and older, proportional to internet user population
- Comparisons made throughout this report to 2018 study

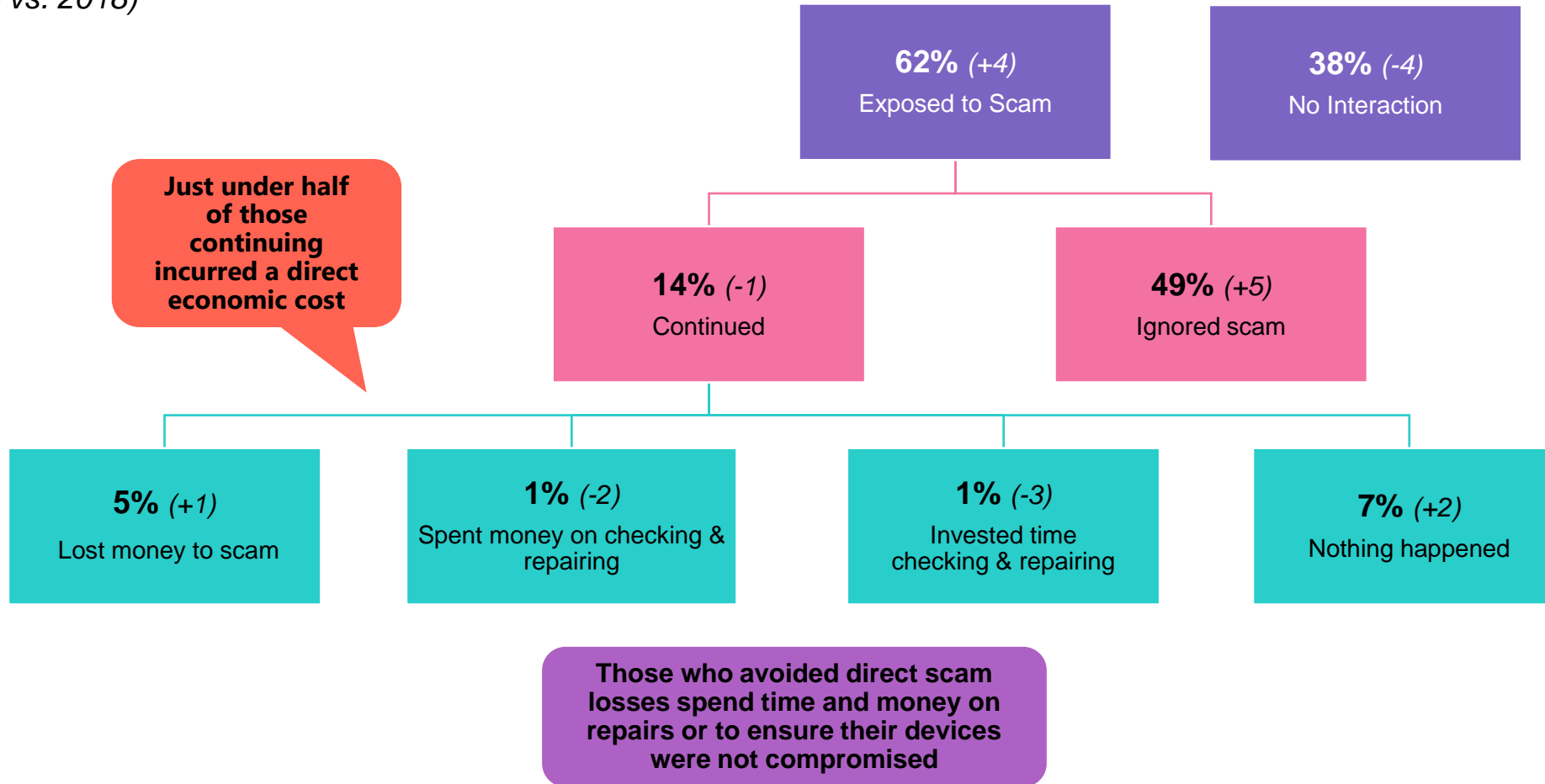
2021 Countries	2018
Australia	<i>included</i>
Brazil	<i>included</i>
Canada	<i>included</i>
Colombia	<i>NEW</i>
Finland	<i>NEW</i>
France	<i>Included</i>
Germany	<i>Included</i>
India	<i>Included</i>
Japan	<i>Included</i>
Mexico	<i>Included</i>
Netherlands	<i>NEW</i>
Singapore	<i>Included</i>
Spain	<i>NEW</i>
Switzerland	<i>included</i>
United Kingdom	<i>included</i>
United States	<i>included</i>

*Four markets from 2018 survey (China, Denmark, South Africa, New Zealand) were not included in 2021)*

# Anatomy of tech support scams

## Scam exposure had costs beyond the initial loss of money

(+/- vs. 2018)



Base: Total Note: Boxes may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (January 2020 to present).

Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took. If you experienced more than one interaction of each type, think of the most recent one you can recall.

Q8. As a result of this most recent interaction, have you lost any money? If so, how much?

Q12. To date, how much money, if any, has it cost you to fix or investigate further as to whether your computer had been compromised after this interaction

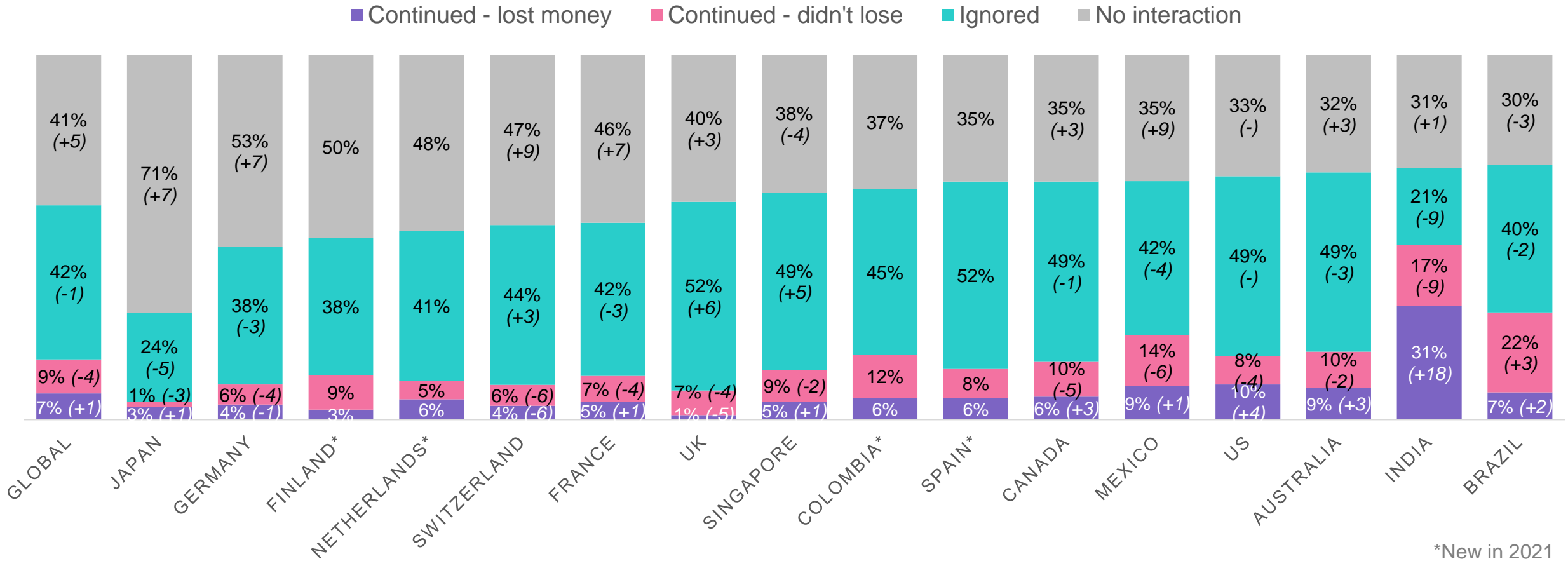
Q12A. To date, how much time has it taken to fix or investigate further as to whether your computer had been compromised after this most recent interaction?

# The state of tech support scams in 2021 – Singapore

- More consumers in Singapore were targeted by tech support scams in the last 12 months, higher than the global average
- Singaporeans encountered almost twice as many unsolicited calls, an alarming increase from 2018
- There is a correlation between scams and certain demographics, with Millennials, Gen Xers and males most likely to fall victims to scams
- Singaporean youths are the most exposed to computer-related scam interactions and this is likely due to them actively engaging in risky online behaviours, such as using torrent sites. However, they remain vigilant and are one of the least likely age groups to continue with a scam
- Singaporeans who fell victims to scams remain unlikely to take steps and better protect themselves from other cyber risks, such as malware – they are less likely to spend time checking or repairing their computers following a computer-related scam, as compared to the global average

# At the global level, tech support scams were less prevalent, but Singapore saw an increase in such scams

Impact of tech support scams by country (+/- vs. 2018)

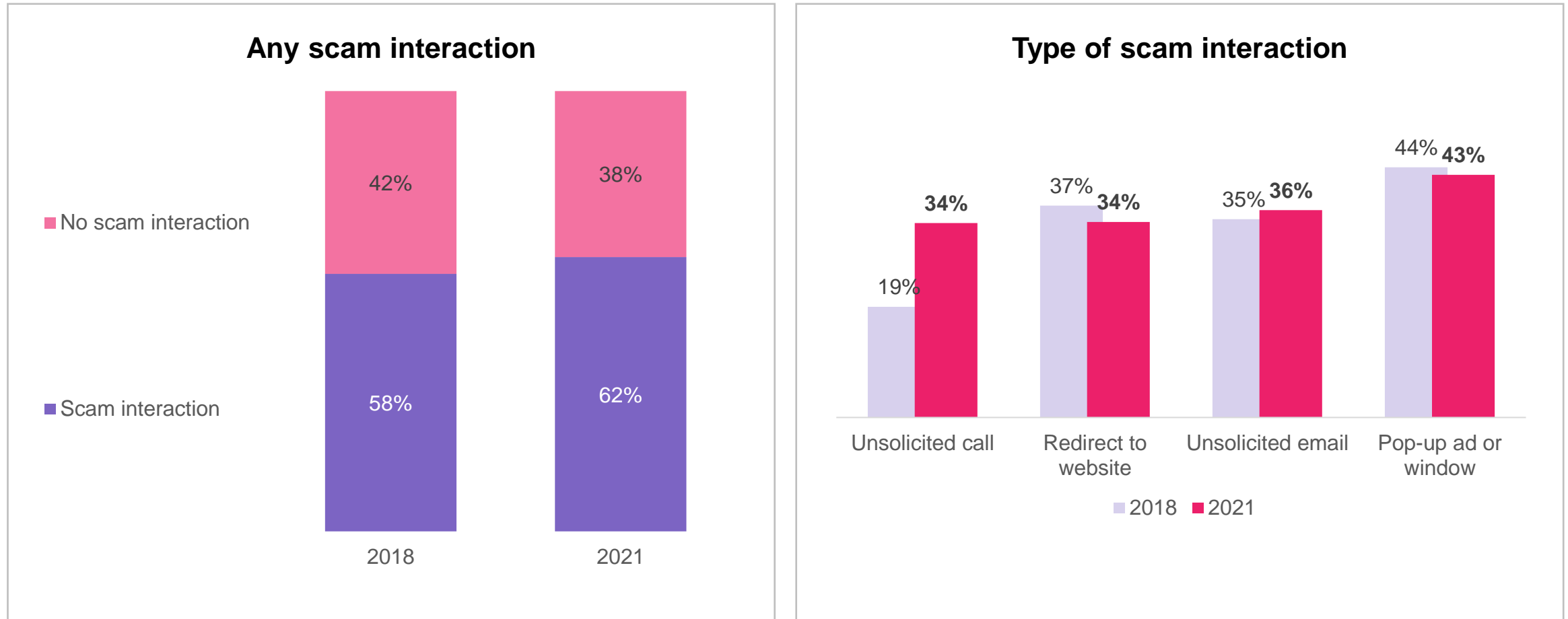


\*New in 2021



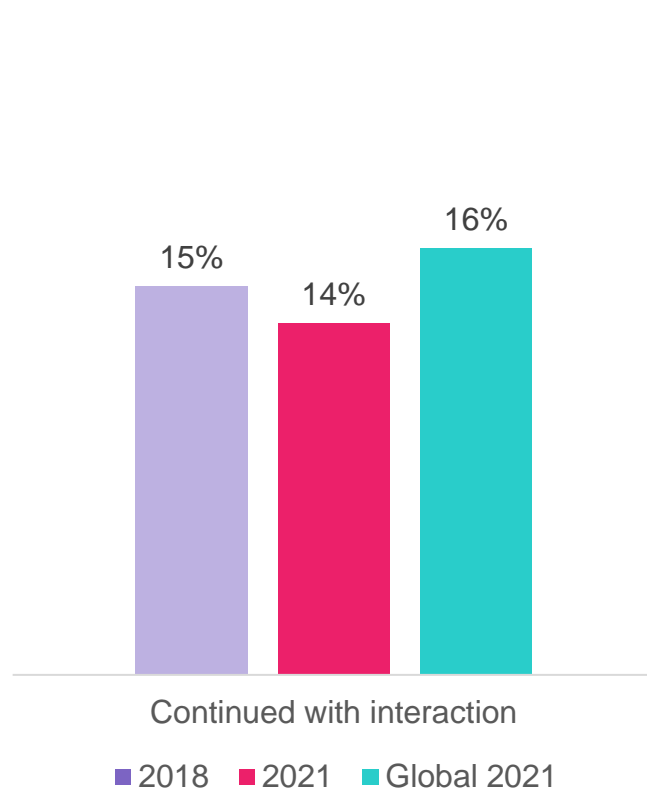
Base: Total Note: Country percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding Q1a. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following in the last year or so (January 2020 to present). Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took. If you experienced more than one interaction of each type, think of the most recent one you can recall. Q8. As a result of this most recent interaction, have you lost any money? If so, how much?

# More consumers in Singapore were exposed to tech support scams, largely due to an increase in unsolicited calls

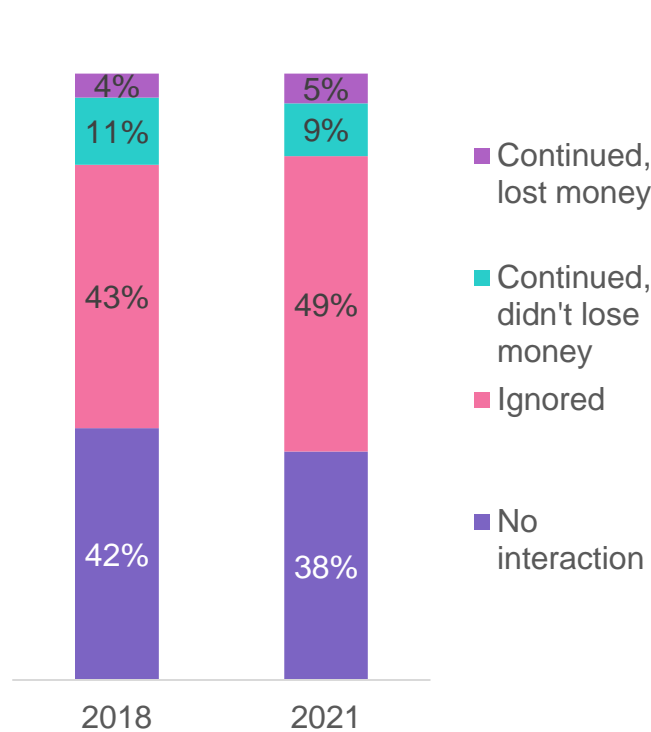


# Despite increased exposure, there was little change in the number of people continuing and losing money in Singapore

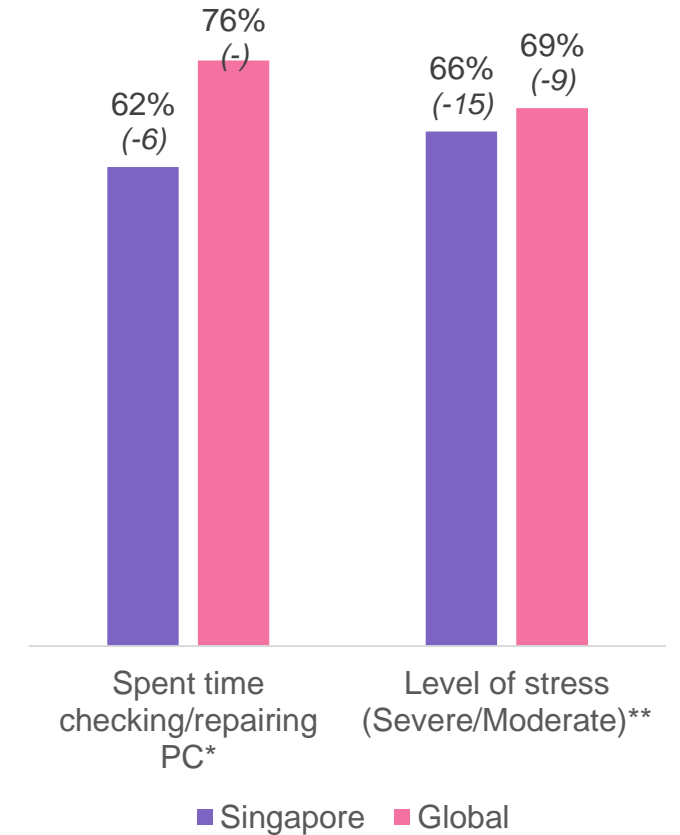
## Scam interaction



## Impact of tech scam



## Non-monetary impact (+/- vs. 2018)



Average amount lost by those that continued with an interaction in 2021: S\$114



\* Base: Those who continued with computer related scam

\*\* Base: Those who continued with any scam interaction

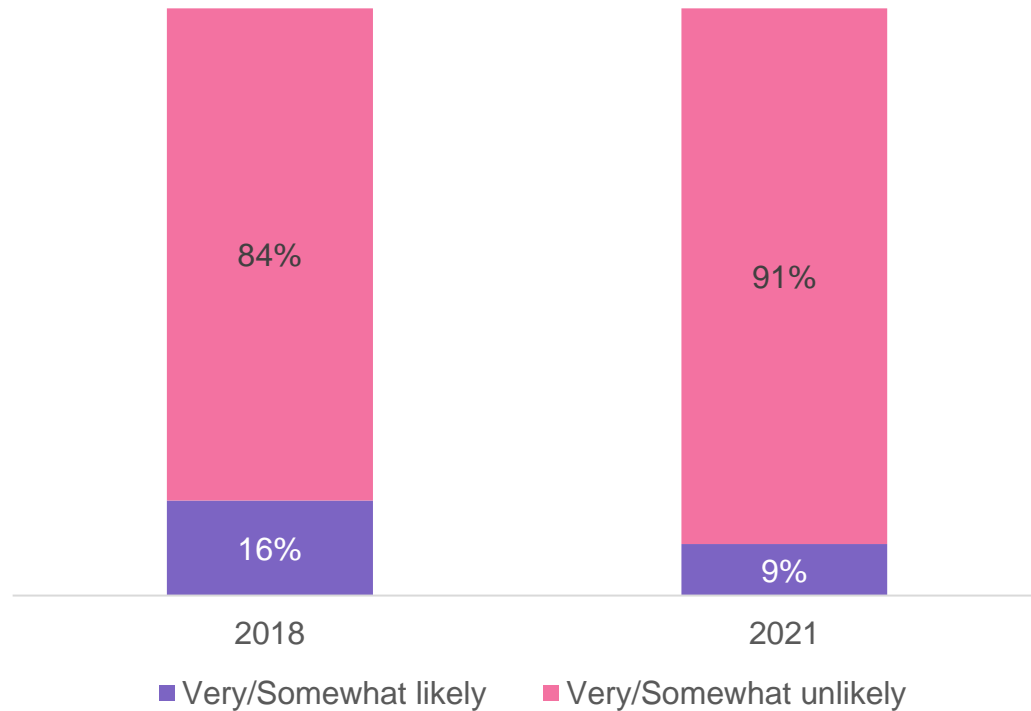
Q2. For each of the interactions you experienced, please indicate which actions you took. Q8. As a result of this most recent interaction, have you lost any money? If so, how much? Q12a. To date, how much time has it taken to fix or investigate further as to whether your computer had been compromised after this most recent interaction? (among those who experienced a computer related scam) Q13. Thinking back across the interaction, how much stress did you suffer? If you had multiple interactions, think how you felt about the most stressful one. The most stressful interaction caused me...



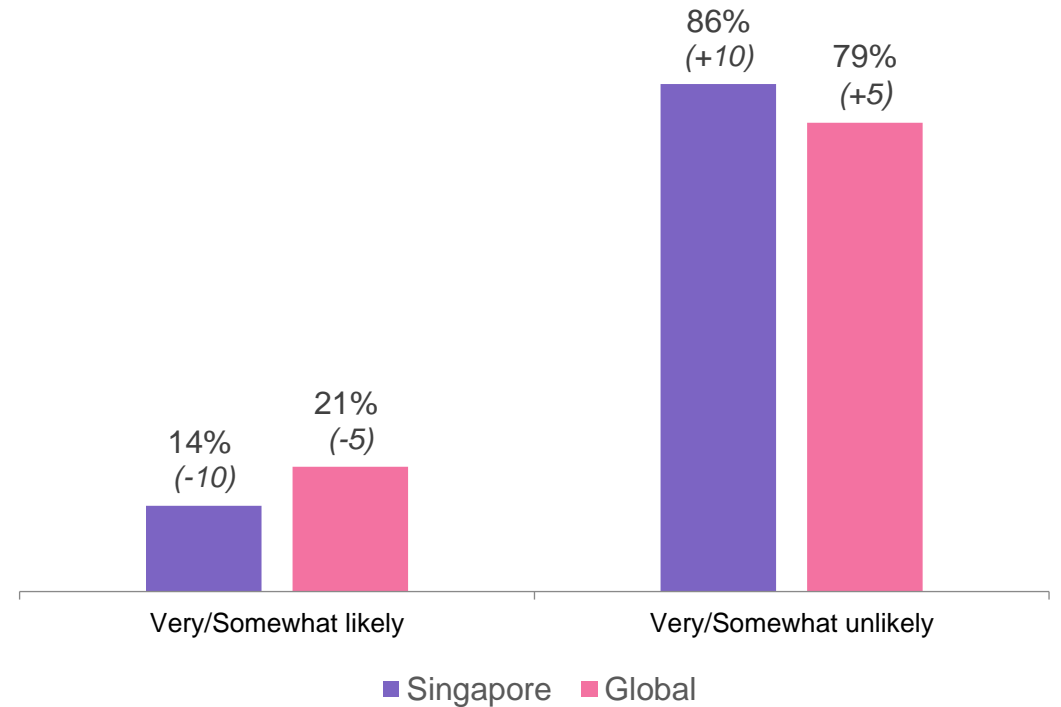
# Consumers thought it less likely that companies would initiate contact

## Distrust in unsolicited contact remains high

Likelihood of future trust



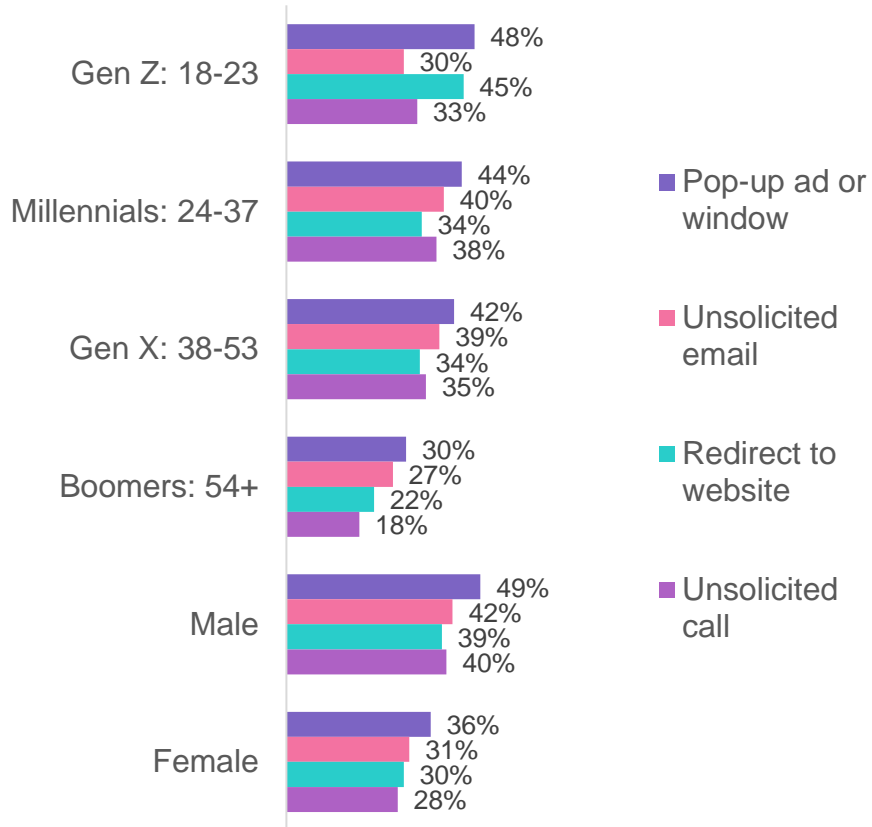
Likelihood of companies contacting customers (+/- vs. 2018)



# Gen X, Millennials, and males, are most likely to continue with an interaction

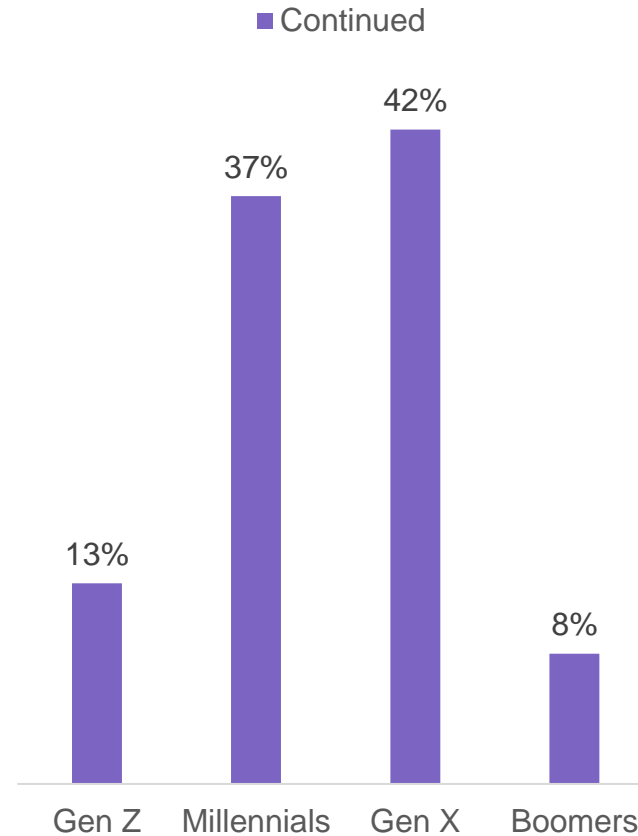
## Type of interaction

Base: Total



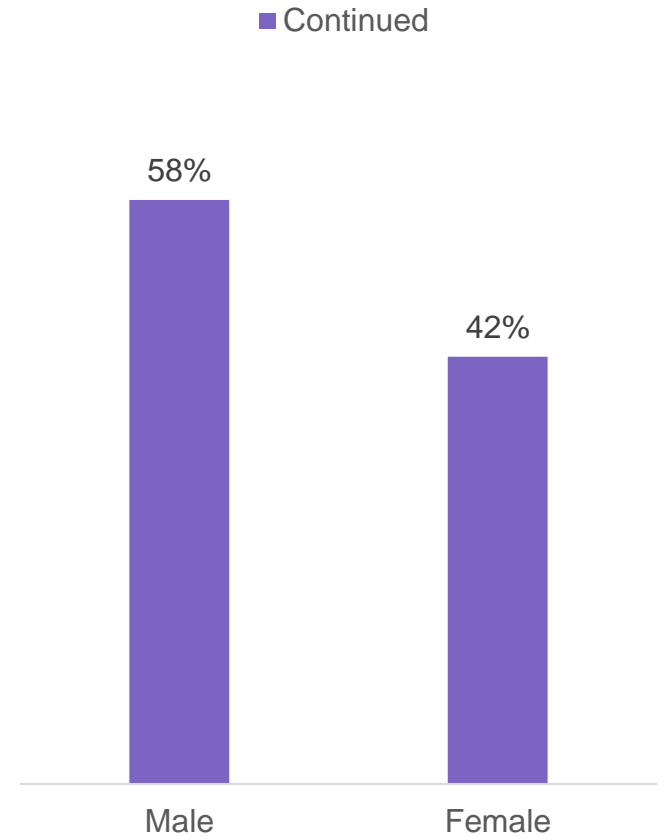
## Impact of tech scam by age

Base: Those who continued



## Impact of tech scam by gender

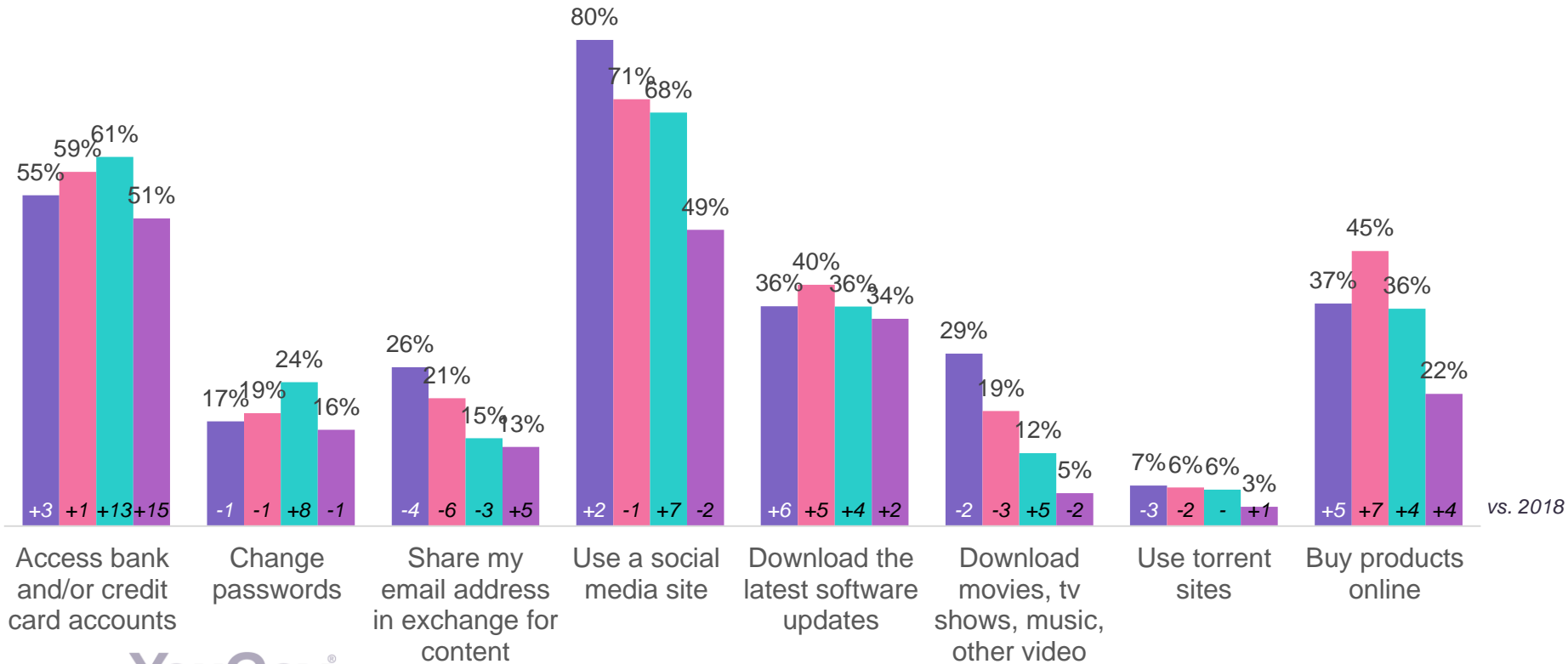
Base: Those who continued



# Gen Z were most likely to engage in online activities

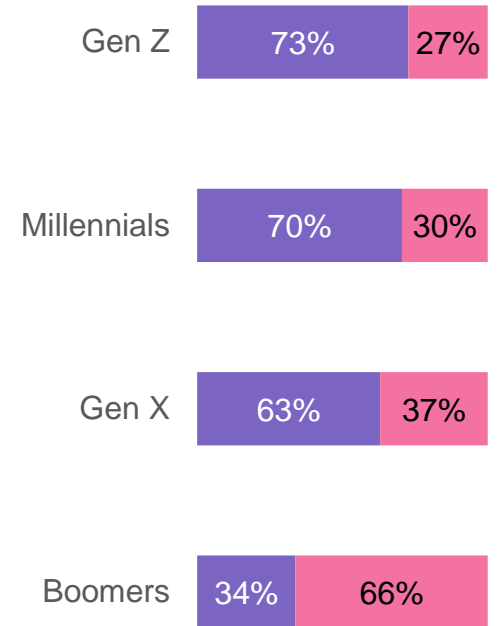
## Online activities (always/often)

■ Gen Z ■ Millennials ■ Gen X ■ Boomers



## Computer literacy

■ Expert/Advanced ■ Intermediate/Beginner



YouGov®

Base: Total  
 Q21A: Please check how often you do the following activities when you are online?  
 Q21b: Which best describes your experience with computers and how to use the Internet?

## Consumers should learn about scams and be vigilant

- Be suspicious of unsolicited contact
- Do not click or call numbers on pop-up messages
- Only download official software, not modified ones from third-party sites
- Use a trusted internet browser that can help block and/or identify scams
- Turn on antivirus protection
- Do not pay in the form of cryptocurrency or gift cards
- Report your experiences to Microsoft or local law enforcement