Healthier Product Reformulation in Malaysia
Detailed Consumer Findings

Background

IGD has a long heritage of working in partnership with the food and drink industry on the health agenda. Reformulation has been an industry hot topic for many years and one in which the IGD are very active.

With the support of IGD, FIA sought to understand the reformulation landscape in Malaysia. The aim of the research was to explore the consumer attitudes towards healthier product reformulation, the progress within the industry and the areas for support businesses are seeking to further their efforts.

The research results confirm that healthy eating is particularly important to consumers in Malaysia. There is strong interest in a desire to want to eat more healthily. However, at the same time many would also welcome help from companies. This comes at a time when many companies (both local and multinationals) are working on product reformulation.

This presentation summaries the research IGD conducted with consumers in Malaysia.

Key Summary

1. Although nearly all people are seeking to improve their diets in some way and take responsibility for their own diets they would like more help. Very few believe there is no need for change.
2. Eating more fruit and vegetables is the top dietary priority for people but reducing sugar also features highly with four in ten consumers checking products for sugar content.
3. A very high proportion claim to check the label for some form of nutrition information with more looking out for the Nutrition Information Panel or Guidelines Daily Amount than the Healthier Choice logo. Clarity of nutrition information is an important factor when people choose food and drink.
4. Around three quarters of people are receptive to healthier product reformulation and this is even higher amongst those who recognise their diet is not always healthy.
5. Food manufacturers can gain recognition for improving the nutritional profile of their products as the high recognition for changes made to cereals and dairy products demonstrates. However, there is also a widespread perception that many products have become less healthy over time.
6. A perceived lack of consistency in nutrition advice, between different sources and over time, is causing confusion about what constitutes a healthy diet.

Headline Statistics

81% believe “it’s up to me to follow a healthy balanced diet”

99% are trying to improve their diet in some way

89% check for nutrition information on pack

57% check for the amount of sugar in products

69% say the clarity of nutrition information is important when buying food

76% are happy for products to be reformulated provided they remain as tasty

Only 3% feel there’s no need to change because there are enough healthy products available in the market

62% believe cereals have become healthier over the last five years

52% believe sweet snacks have become less healthy in that same period

55% are not fully confident about nutrition advice

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018

Research Objectives & Methodology

Objectives And Methodology

KEY OBJECTIVES

- To understand the product reformulation landscape in Malaysia, the support businesses are seeking and assessing consumer attitudes towards healthier product reformulation.
- To inform broader discussion of the topic in Malaysia enabling the industry and government bodies to assess progress and recognise the areas for support to advance the public health agenda.

METHODOLOGY

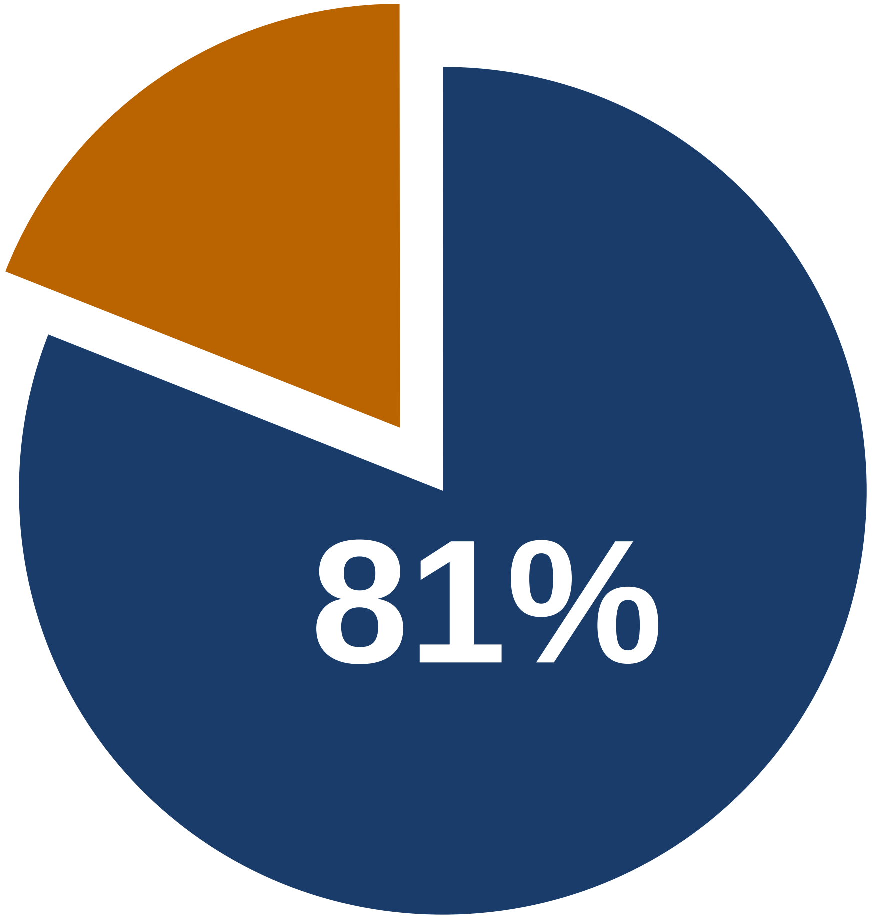
Online Consumer Survey (Quantitative)

- Nationally representative sample of adults aged 18+
- 1,037 **online interviews** conducted in Malaysia
- Interviews conducted 5th-10th December 2018

Consumer Attitudes to Health

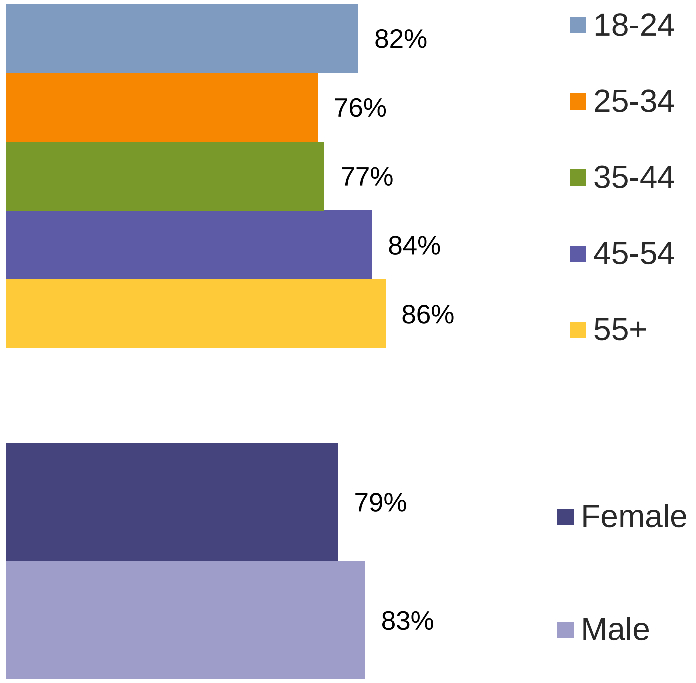
Interest to Maintaining Good Health is High among Consumers

"It's up to me to follow a healthy balanced diet"



The vast majority of consumers take responsibility for their own diet.

This is significantly higher among those aged 55+ (86%)



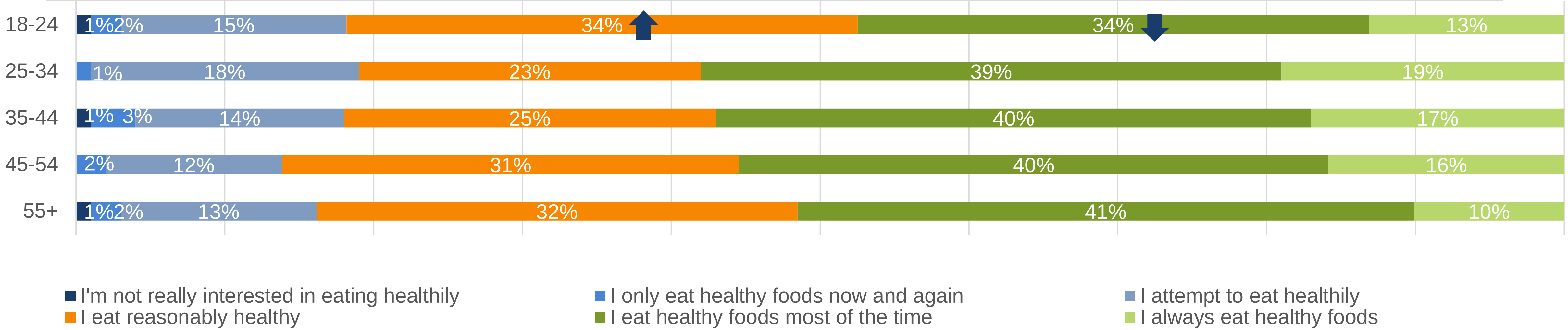
Consumer Attitudes to Healthy Eating

The majority (54%) are always or mostly healthy, however, many are having less healthy food on a regular basis

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. Which of the following statements most closely reflects your attitudes to eating?

Consumer Attitudes to Healthy Eating by Age and Gender

Those aged between 25 and 34 (58%) are likely to eat healthily most/all the time while 28% (taken on average across all age groups) eat reasonably healthily.



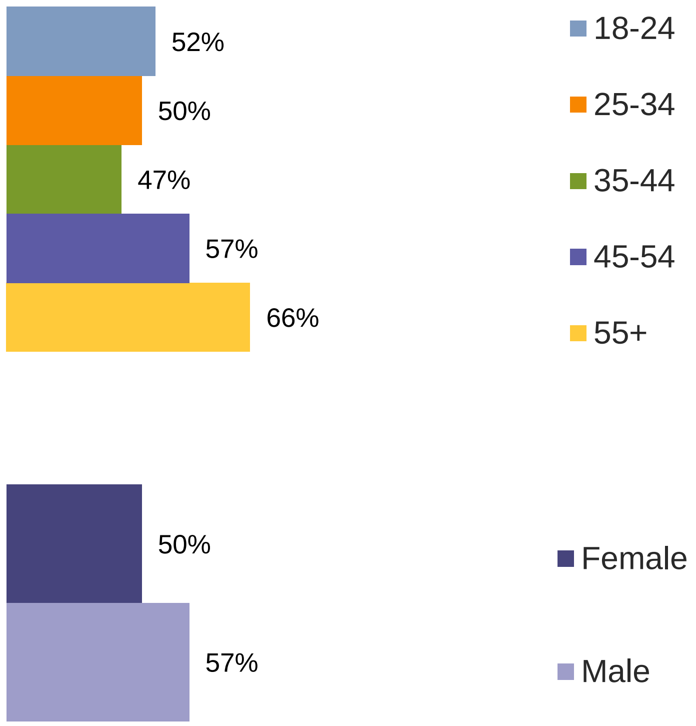
Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. Which of the following statements most closely reflects your attitudes to eating?

Consumers’ Motivation to Change

Although consumers accept responsibility for their own diets, only a small percentage claim to follow a truly healthy diet

Most lack a desire to change – 54% recognise their diets aren’t as healthy as they should be but think they are fine as they are. This increases to 66% of those aged 55+.

“My diet isn’t as healthy as it could be but it’s healthy enough”

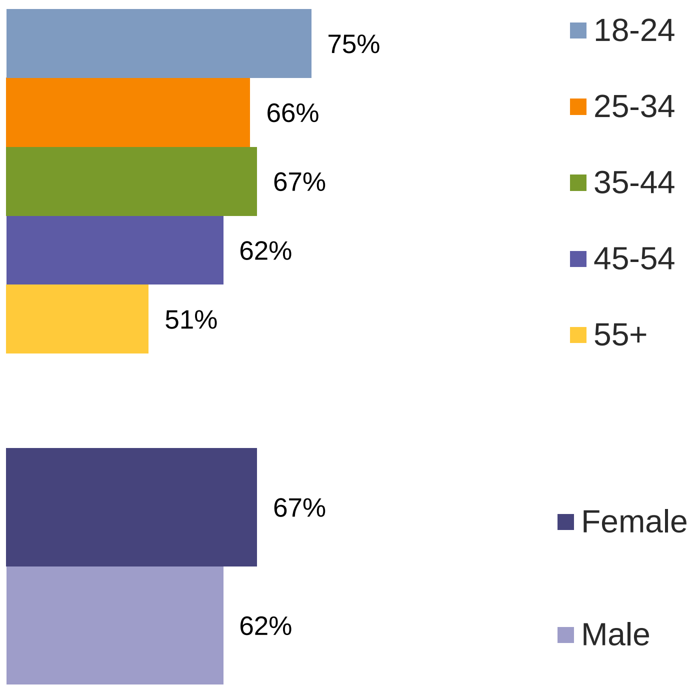


Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Consumers’ Motivation to Change

Almost two-thirds admit to treating themselves regularly (according to their own definition of ‘often’), rising to three quarters of 18-24s. More females are seen to be treating themselves regularly as opposed to their male counterparts.

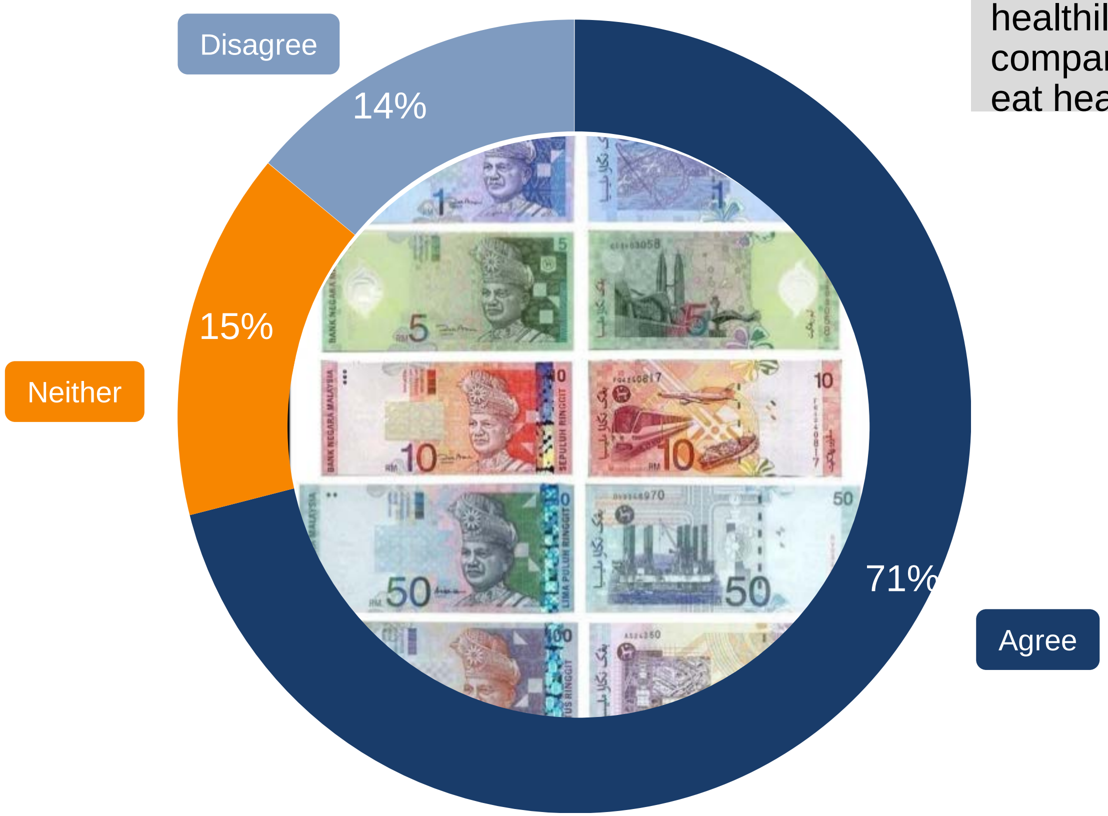
“I often buy food and drinks to treat myself”

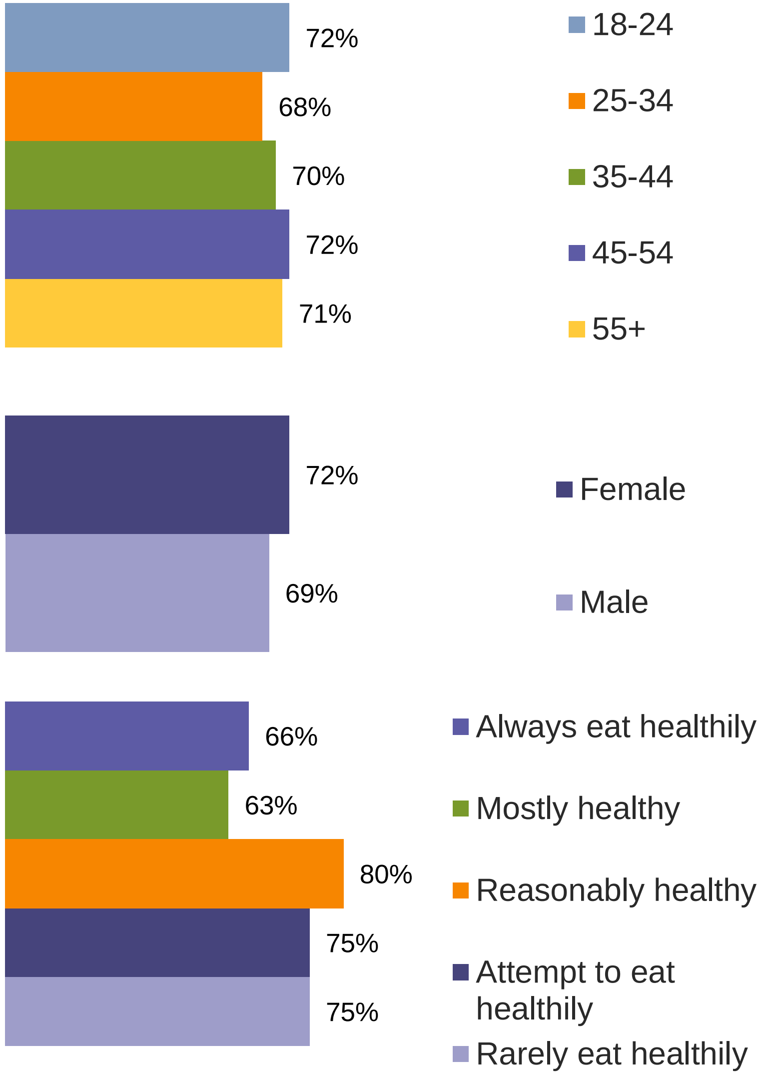


Affordability is viewed as a key barrier to a healthy diet

Eating healthily is more expensive than eating unhealthily

80% of those who eat reasonably healthily complain about the cost compared to 66% of those who always eat healthily.

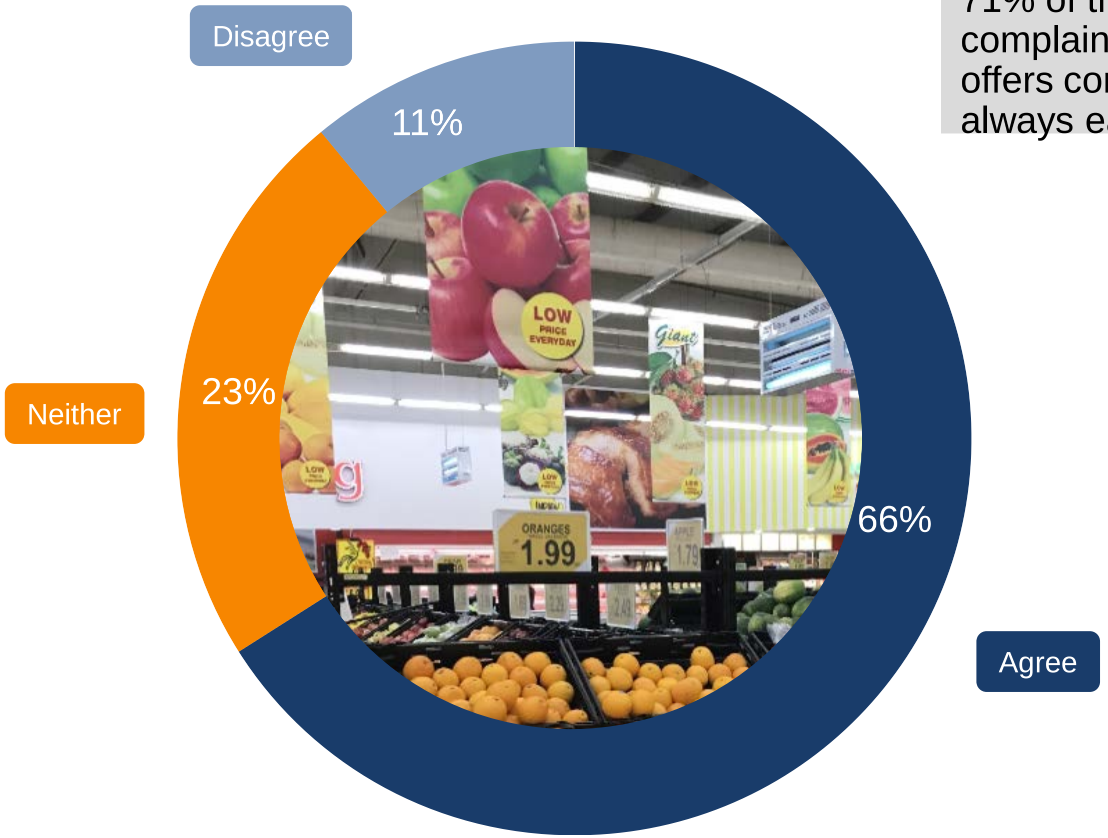




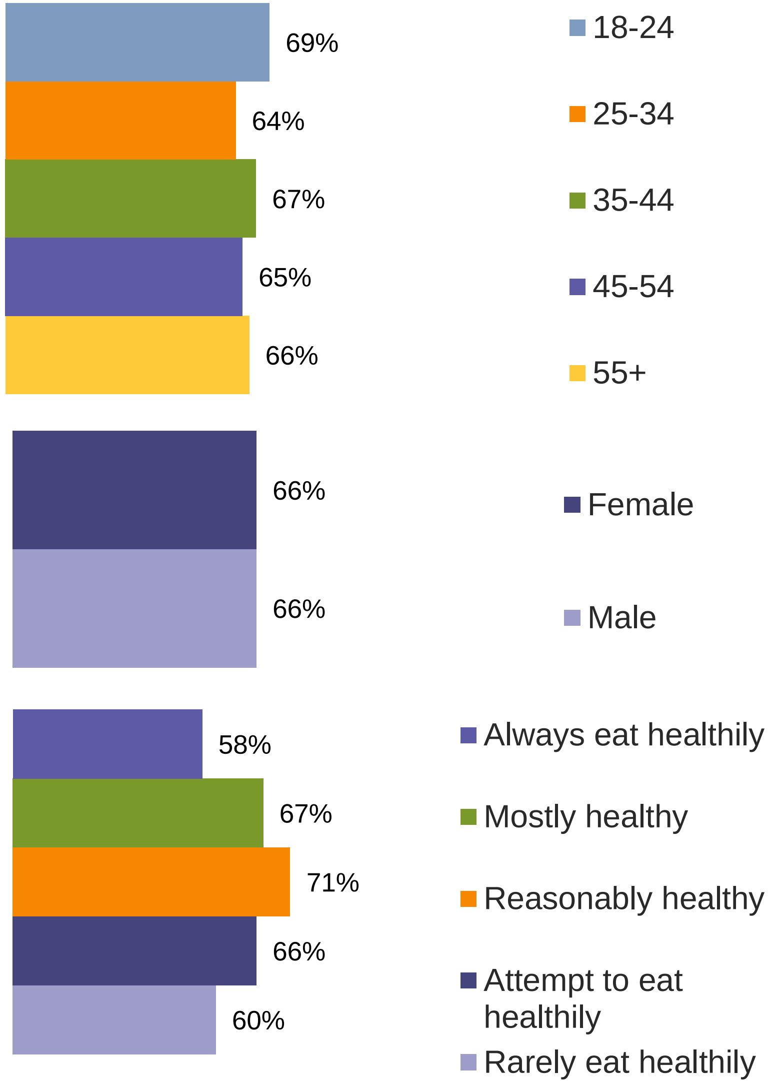
Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Most are looking for more special offers on healthy foods

There aren't enough special offers on healthy foods



71% of those eat reasonably healthily complain about the lack of special offers compared to 58% of those who always eat healthily.



Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Ways to Improve Diets among Malaysian Consumers

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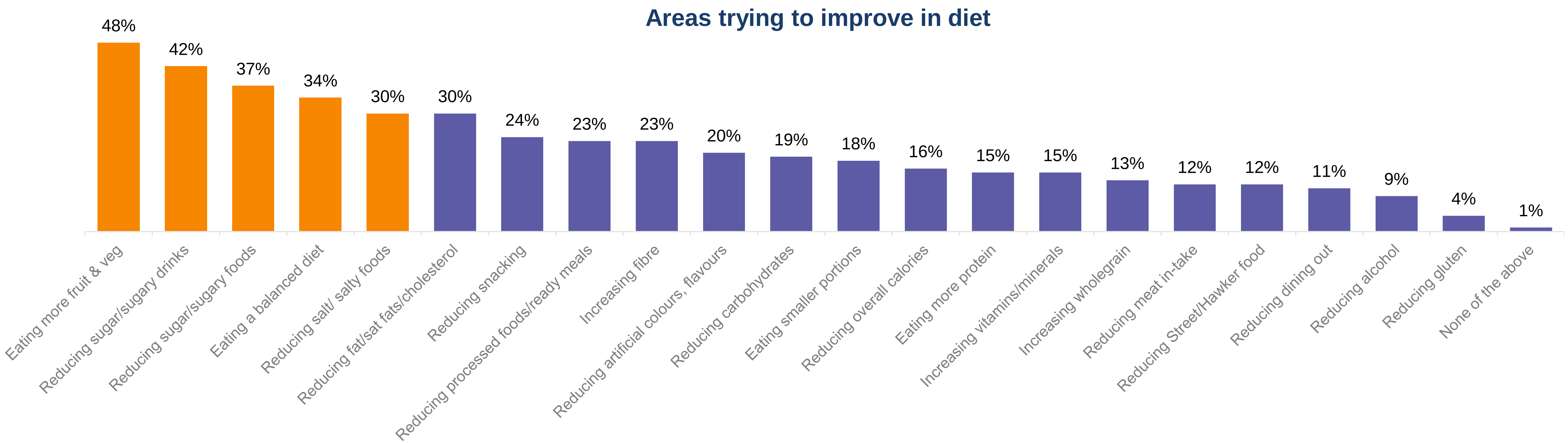
Focus Areas to Improve Diets

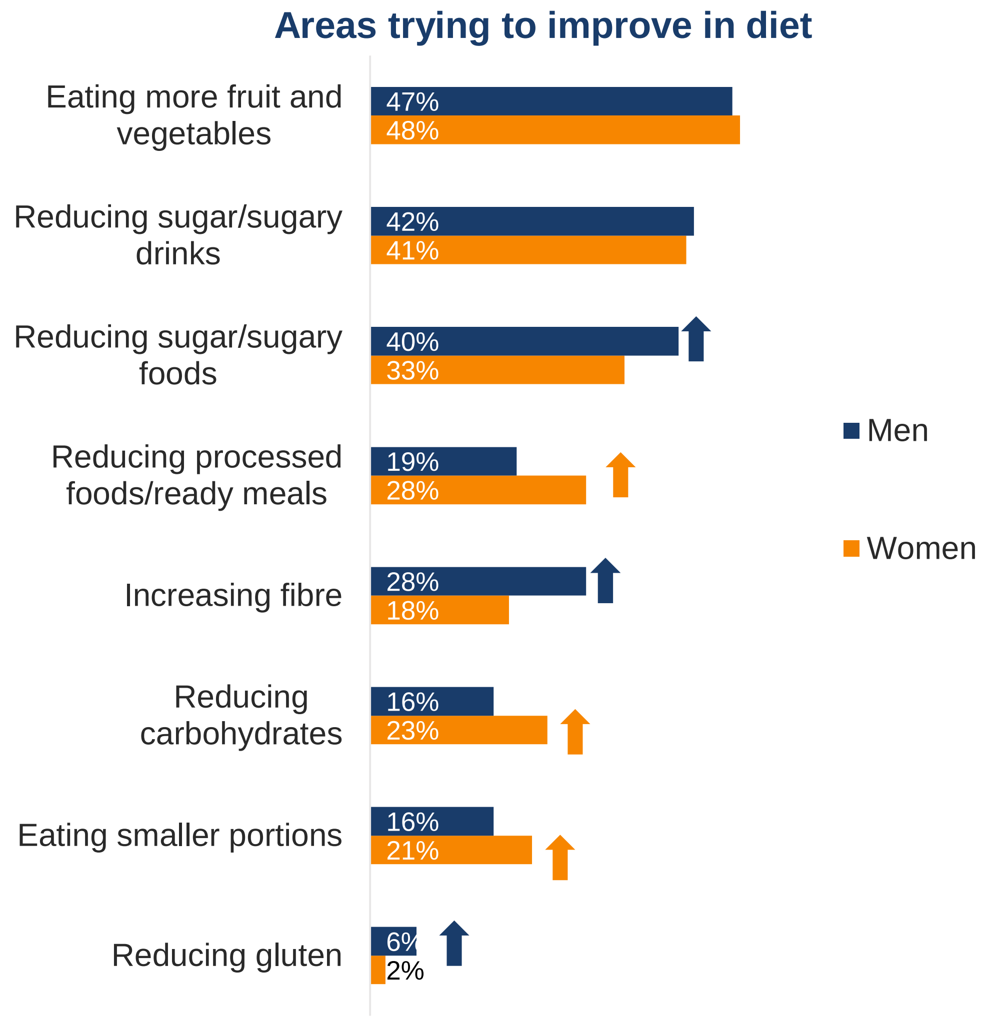
99% of consumers in Malaysia are trying to improve their diet. There are many different ways in which Malaysians seek to improve their diets, including increasing some nutrients and reducing others.

Opportunities exist for products which help support consumers desire to eat more fruit and vegetables, reducing sugar and salt intake and which support shoppers' focus to eat a balanced diet.



Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. Which of these areas are you actively trying to improve in your diet, if at all?

Areas to Improve Diets- Gender Differences



Women are more focused on reducing processed foods, reducing carbohydrates and smaller portions.

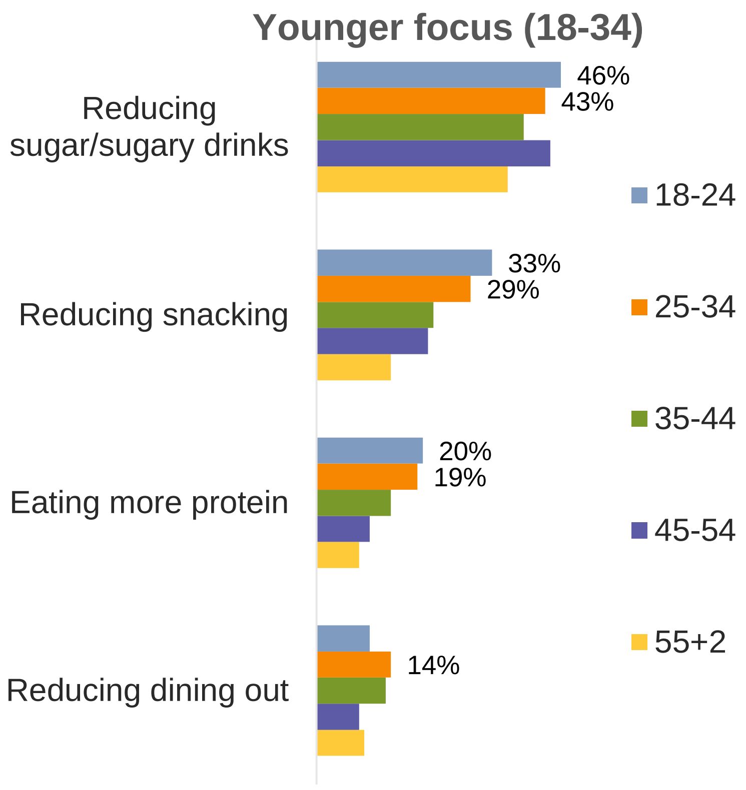
Men are more focused on increasing fibre, reducing sugary foods and reducing gluten.

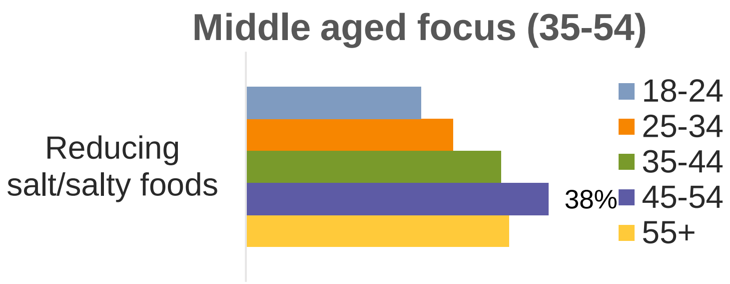
Areas to Improve Diets- Age Differences

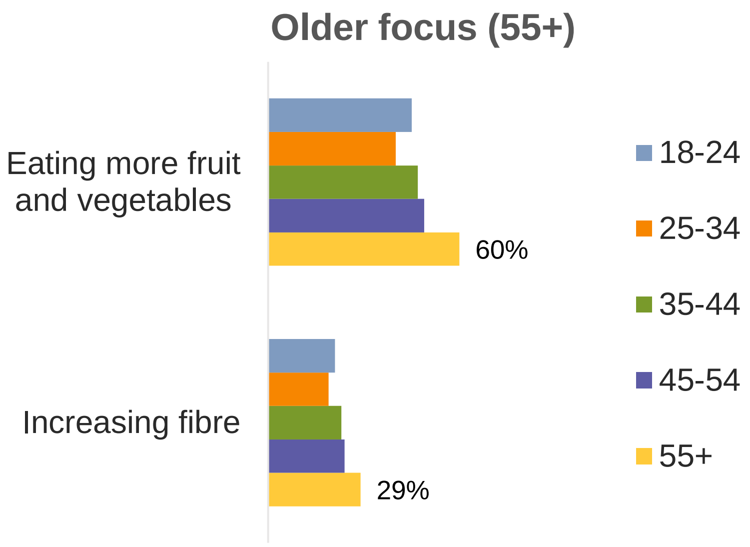
Younger consumers aged 18-34 are more likely to reduce sugary drinks, snacking and dining out and eat more protein.

Those aged 45-54 are most focused on reducing salt.

Older consumers aged 55+ are more focused on having more fruit and vegetables and increasing fibre in their diets.



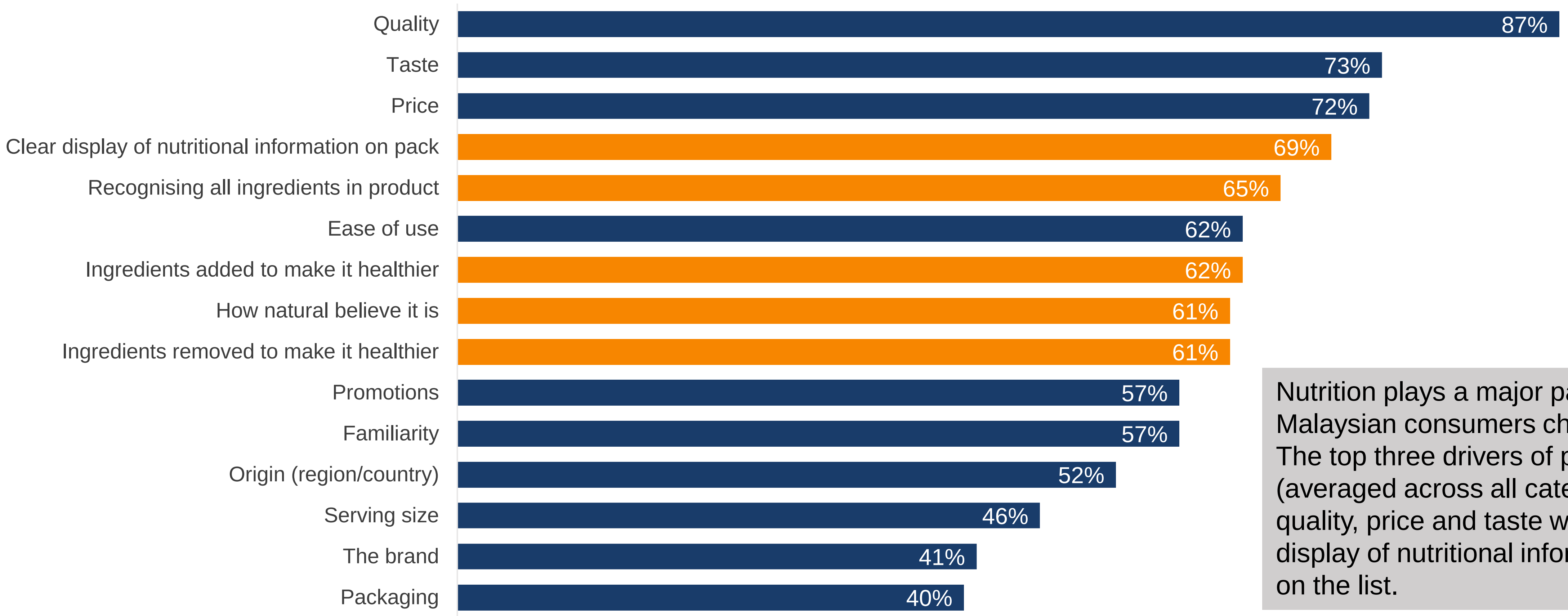




Consumer Attitudes to Nutrition Labels

Nutrition is one of the Key Drivers of Product Choice

% stating each of the following is important (extremely or very) when choosing food and groceries

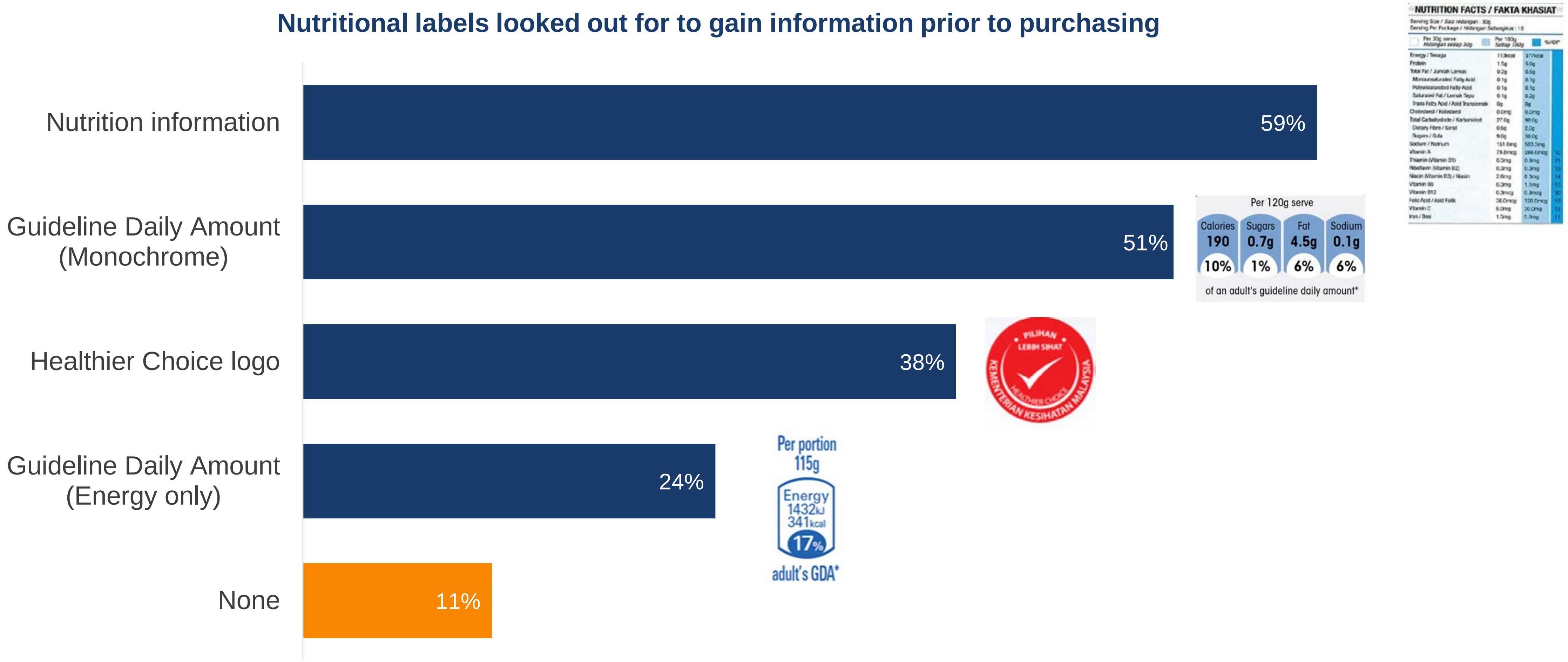


Nutrition plays a major part in how Malaysian consumers choose products. The top three drivers of product choice (averaged across all categories) are quality, price and taste with the clear display of nutritional information next on the list.

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December Q. When choosing a product in a supermarket, how important are each of the following to you?

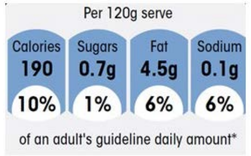
9 in 10 Claim to Look Out for Nutritional Labels

Nutritional labels looked out for to gain information prior to purchasing

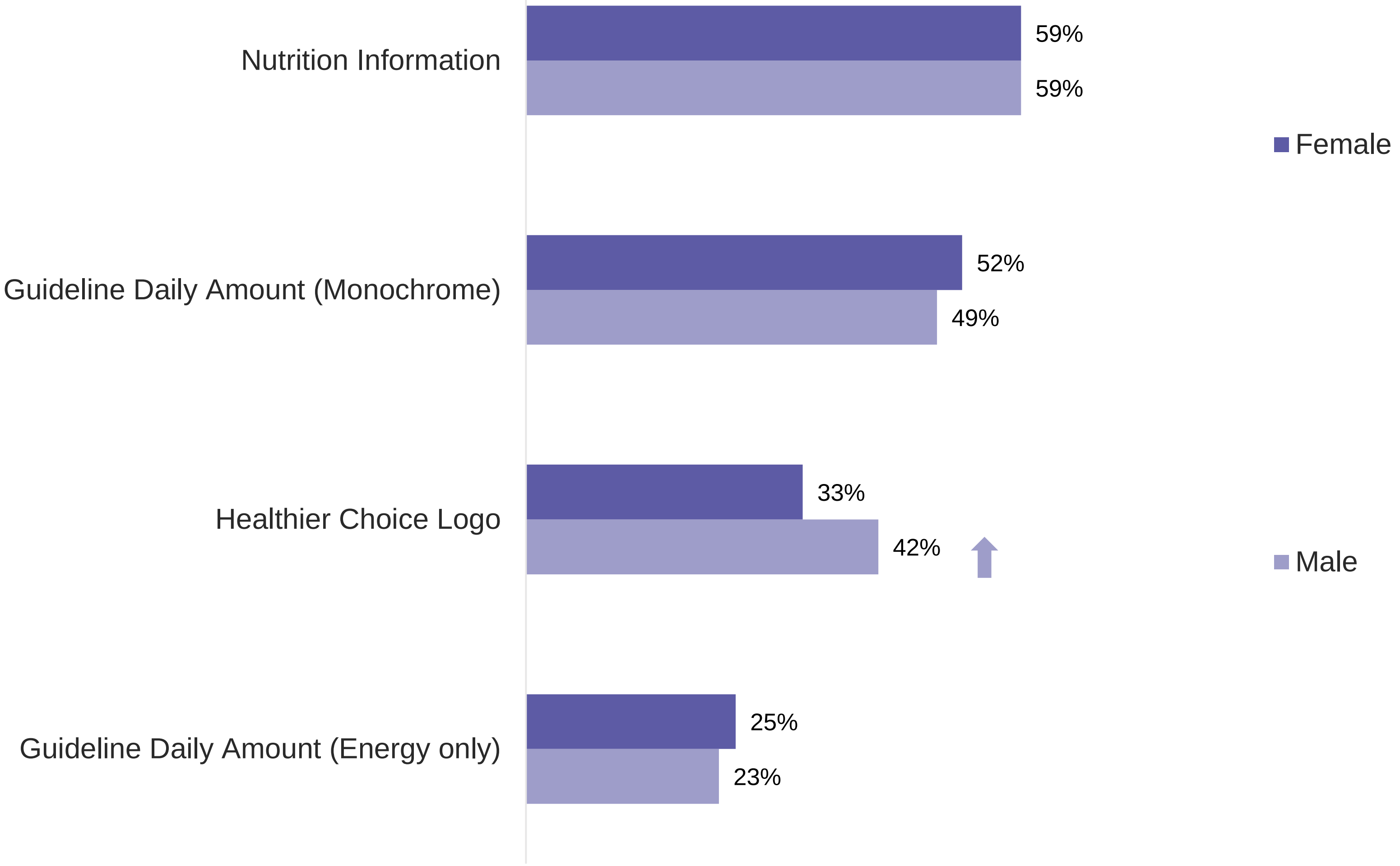


Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December Q. Which of the following nutritional labels do you look out for, if any, to gain information prior to purchasing any food or drink product?

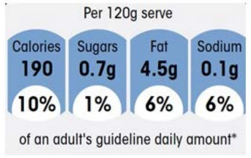
Men are more likely to look out for the Healthier Choice Logo



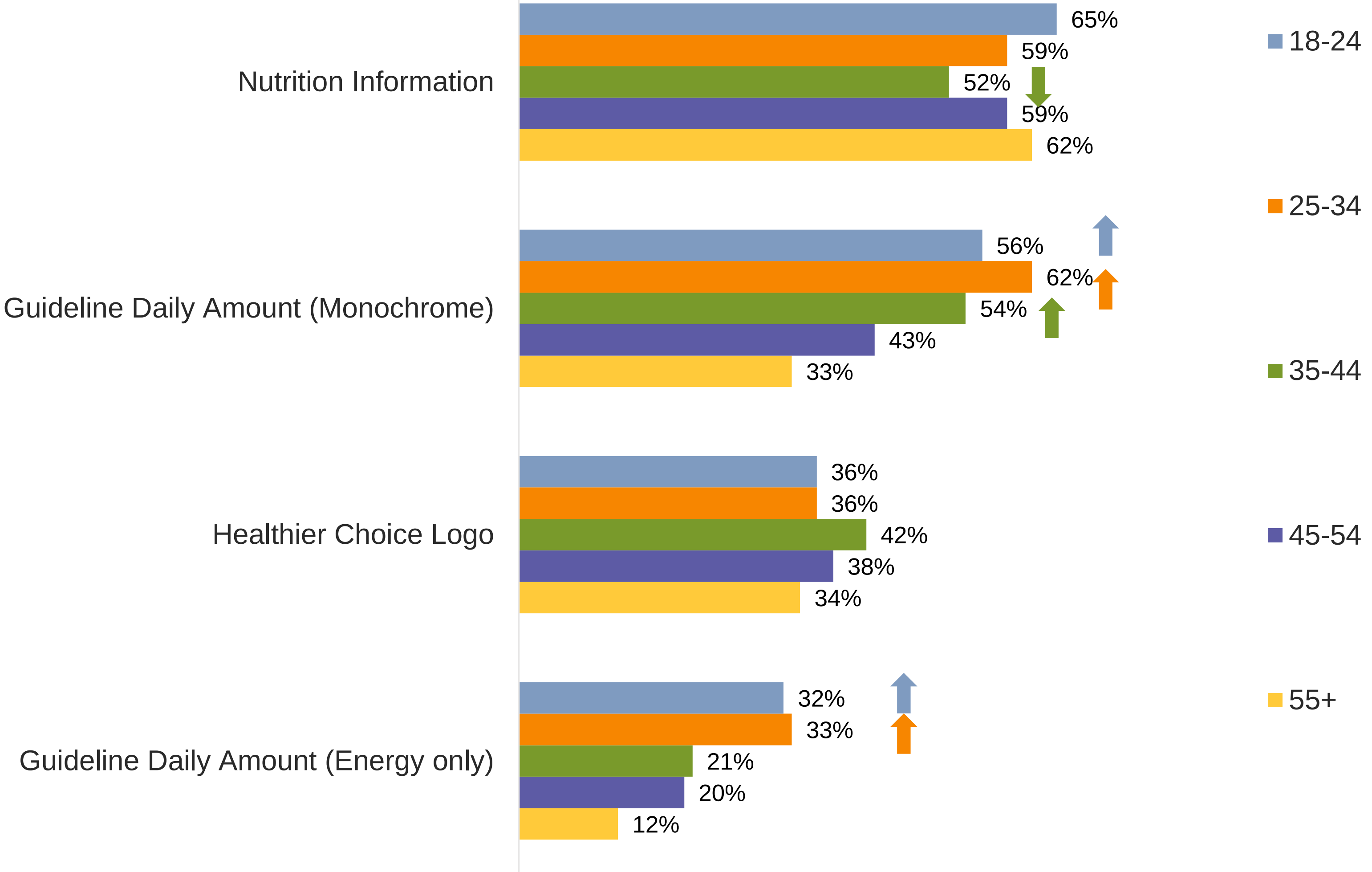
Nutritional labels looked out for to gain information prior to purchasing



Younger consumers are more likely to look for Guideline Daily Amount



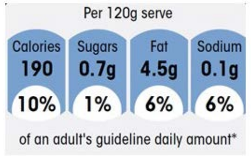
Nutritional labels looked out for to gain information prior to purchasing

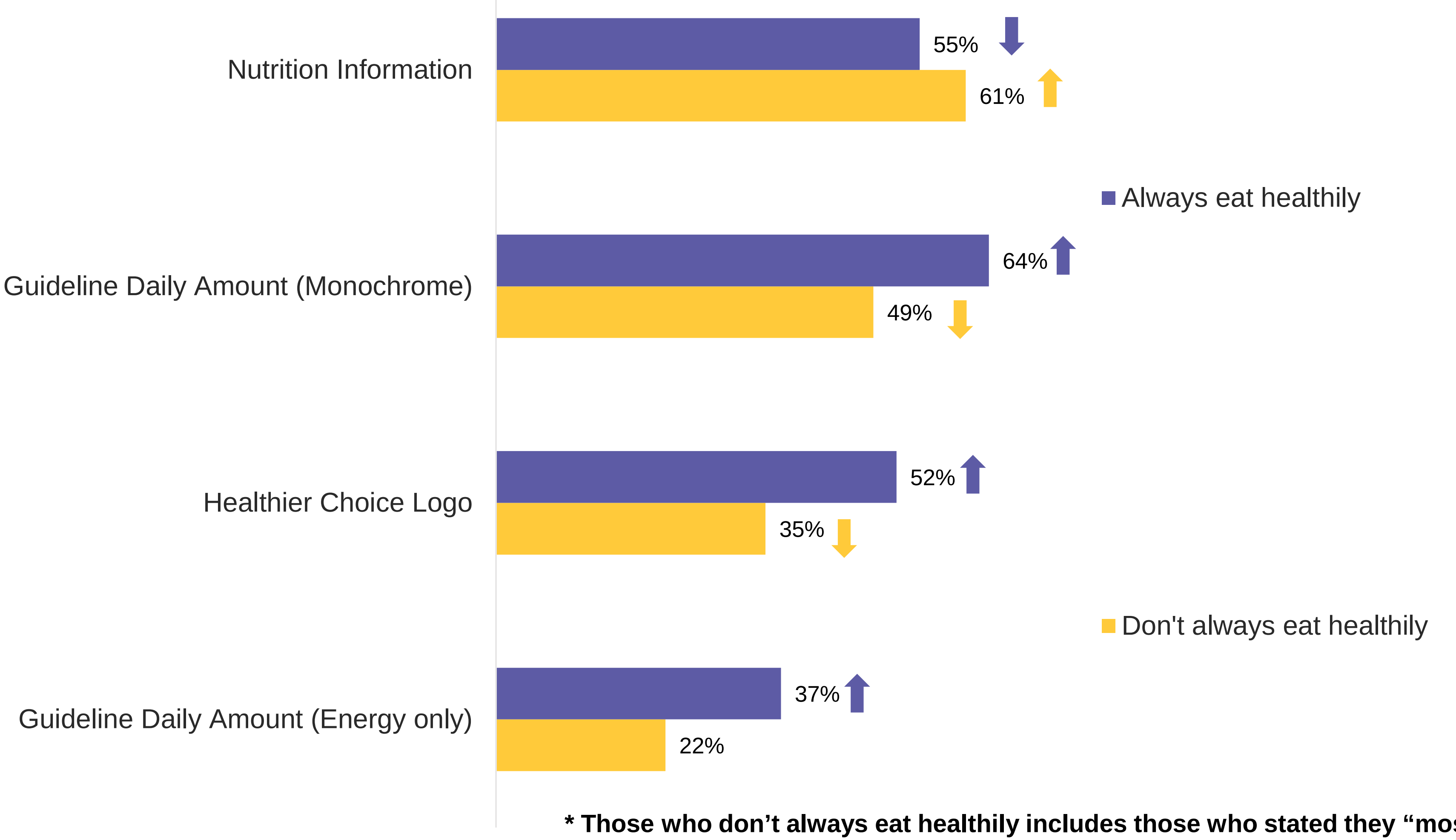


Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December Q. Which of the following nutritional labels do you look out for, if any, to gain information prior to purchasing any food or drink product?

Those who don’t always eat healthily* are less likely to look for Guideline Daily Amount and Healthier Choice logo

Nutritional labels looked out for to gain information prior to purchasing



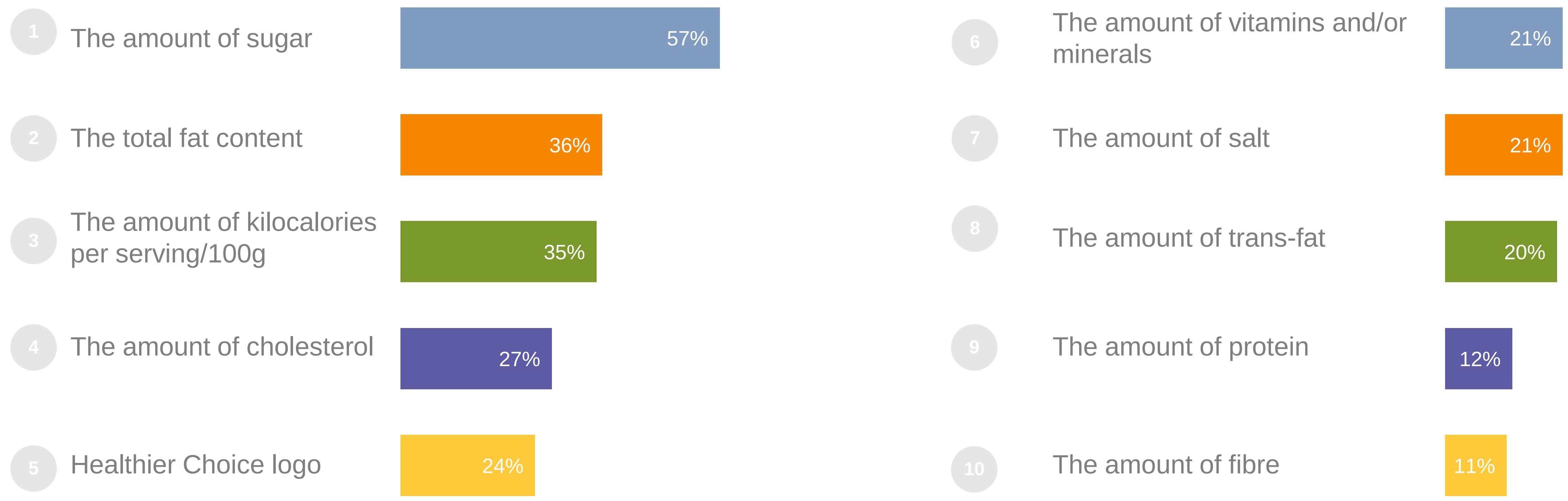


*** Those who don’t always eat healthily includes those who stated they “mostly eat healthily, eat reasonably healthily or attempt to eat healthily”**

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December Q. Which of the following nutritional labels do you look out for, if any, to gain information prior to purchasing any food or drink product?

Most Consumers look out for Sugar Content in a Product

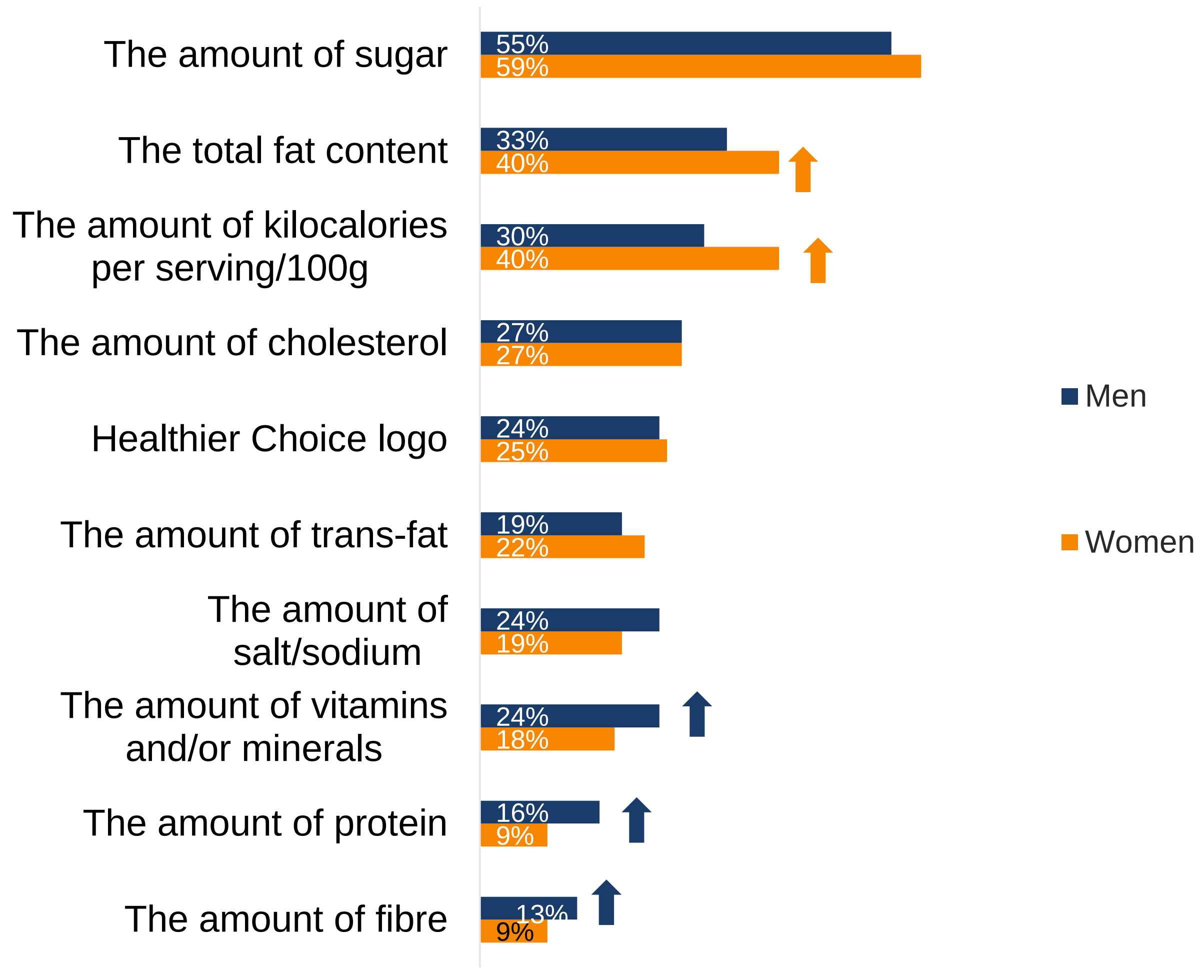
Types of information looked out for on food and drink packages prior to purchase



Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. What types of information do you look out for on food and drink packages prior to purchase?

Types of Nutrition Information Consumers Look out for- Gender Differences

Types of information looked out for on food and drink packages prior to purchase



Women are more likely to look out for the fat content and the amount of kilocalories per serving.

Men are more likely to look out for the amount of protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q . What types of information do you look out for on food and drink packages prior to purchase?

Types of Nutrition Information Consumers Look out for- Age Differences

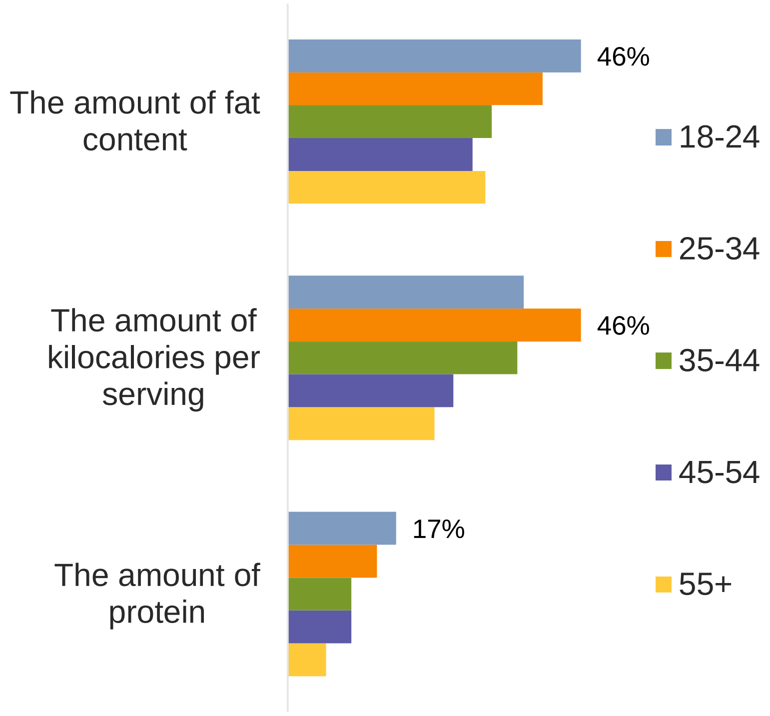
Younger consumers aged 18-34 are more likely to look for the amount of fat, protein and kilocalories per serving on food and drink packages prior to purchase.

Those aged 35-44 are most focused on looking out for the Healthier Choice logo. Consumers aged 45-54 are most focused on looking for the amount of vitamins and minerals present in a product.

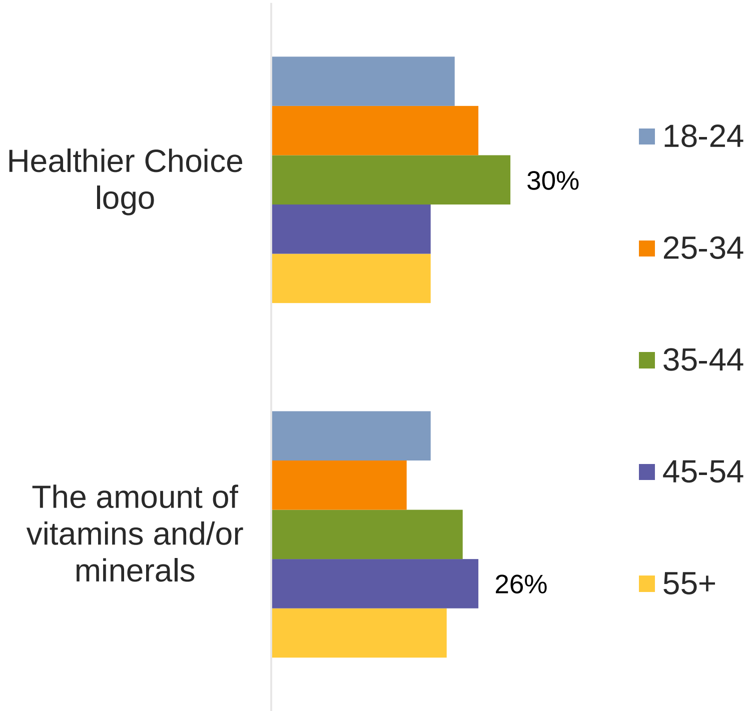
Those aged 45+ are more focused on looking for the amount of sugar and salt. Those aged 55+ in particular are most focused on looking for the amount of fibre.

Types of information looked out for on food and drink packages prior to purchase

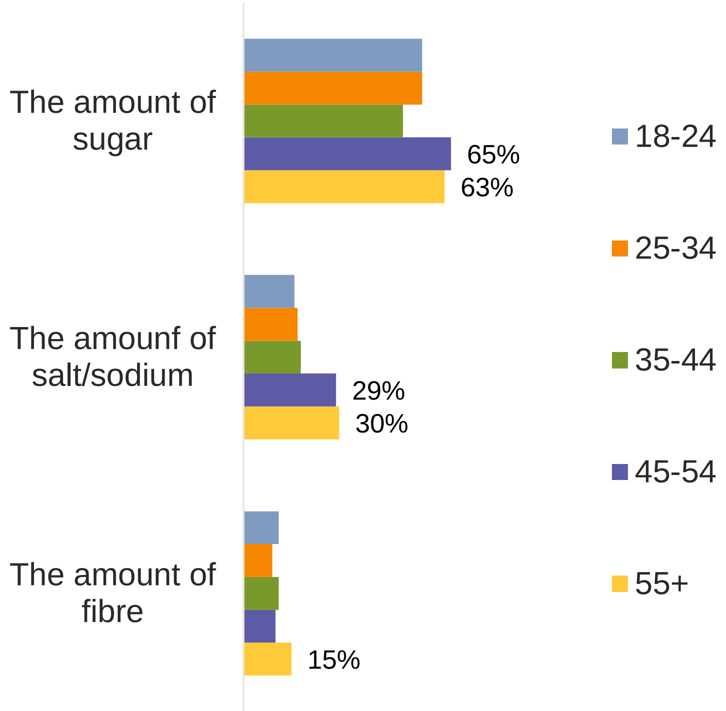
Younger focus (18-34)



Middle aged focus (35-54)



Older focus (55+)



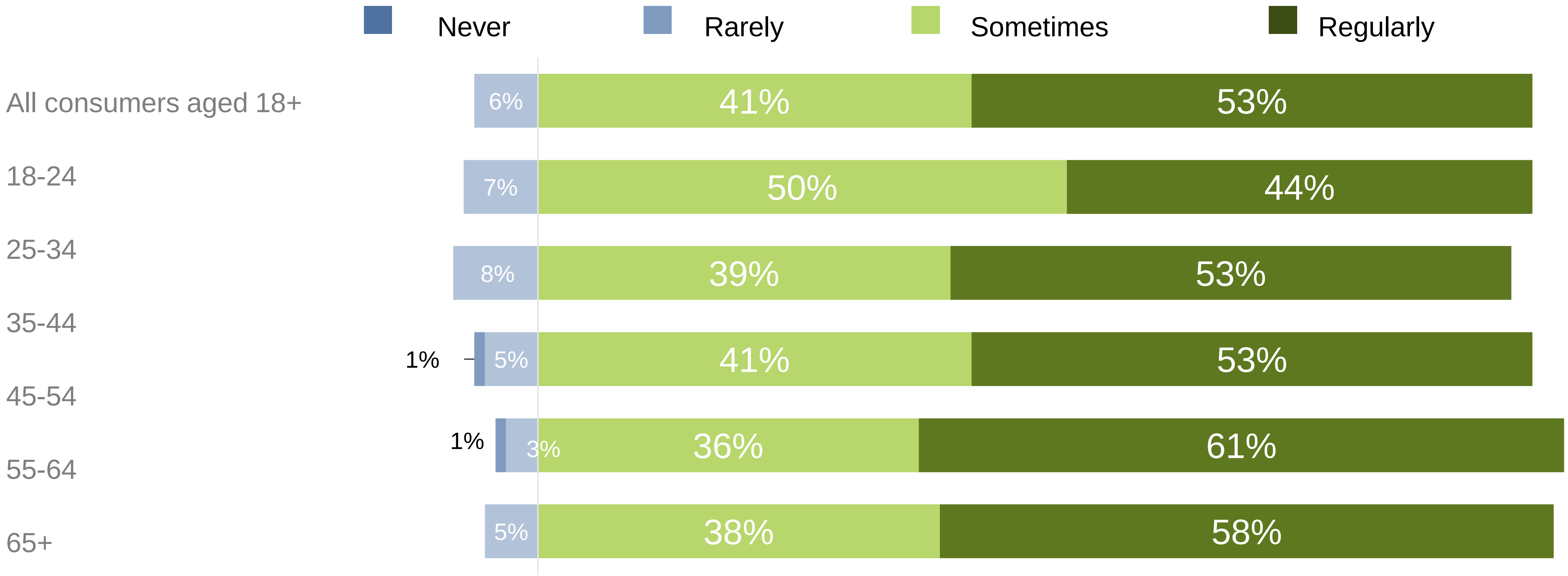
Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. What types of information do you look out for on food and drink packages prior to purchase?

Older Consumers (55+) look out for Information more Regularly

Similar to the results in Singapore, older consumers in Malaysia look out for information more regularly.

Malaysian consumers look out for nutrition information on food and drink packages more often than consumers in Singapore (see Country Comparisons section for more details)

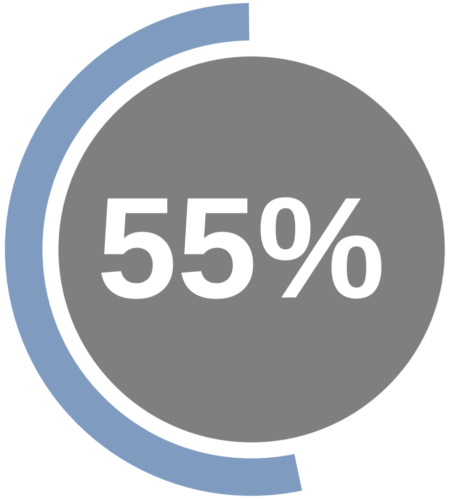
Frequency of looking out for information on food and drink packages



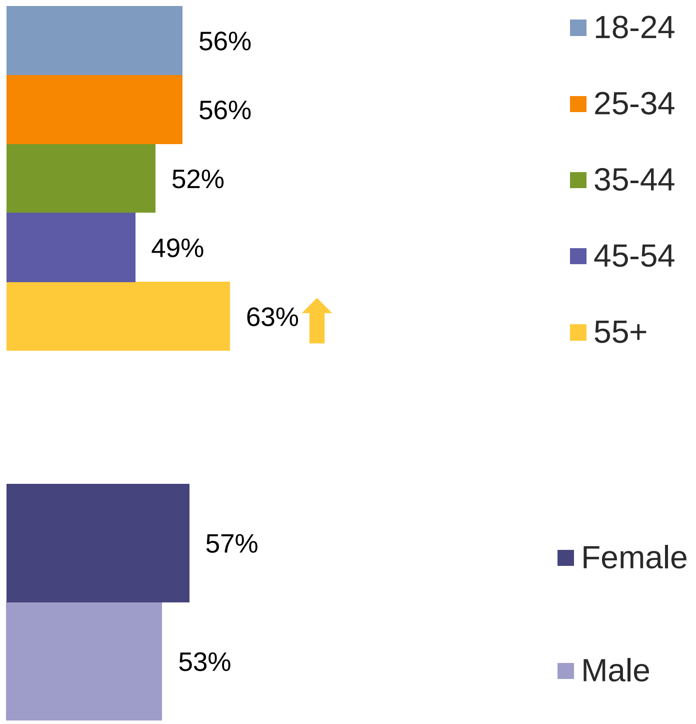
Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. How often do you look out for or read information on food and drink packages?

Lack of Consistency in Nutrition Advice

A majority of consumers (55%) feel confused about nutritional advice they come across as they feel it varies often. Only 11% disagree. Confusion is highest among those aged 55+. There is no significant difference by gender.



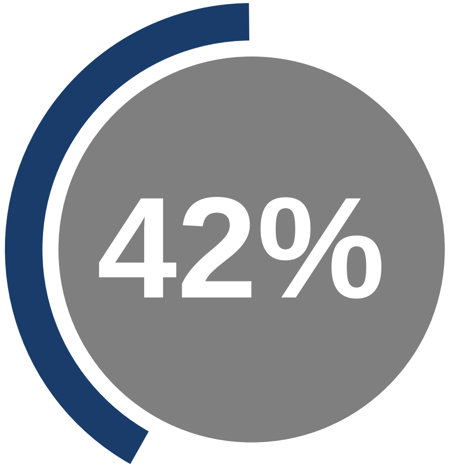
As nutrition advice is constantly changing and different in various outlets, I'm not confident which is true



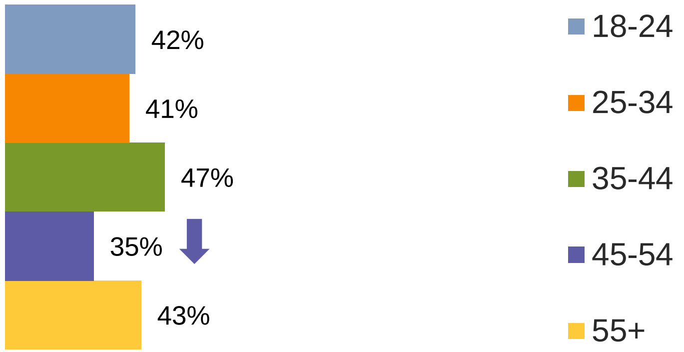
Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Lower levels of trust

Only 4 in 10 trust food companies to provide all the products they require to follow a healthy balanced diet. A quarter (25%) of consumers disagree with this statement. The rest are undecided.



I trust food companies to provide all the products I require to follow a healthy balanced diet



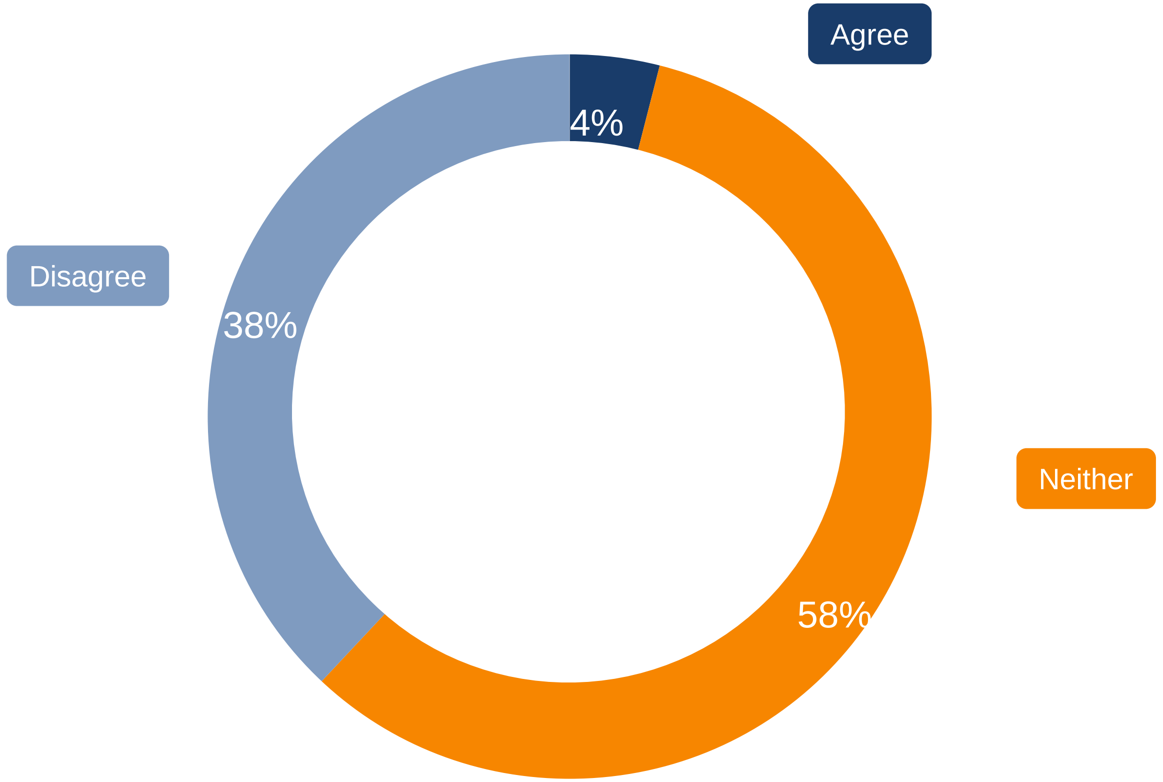
Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Consumer Attitudes to Healthier Product Reformulation

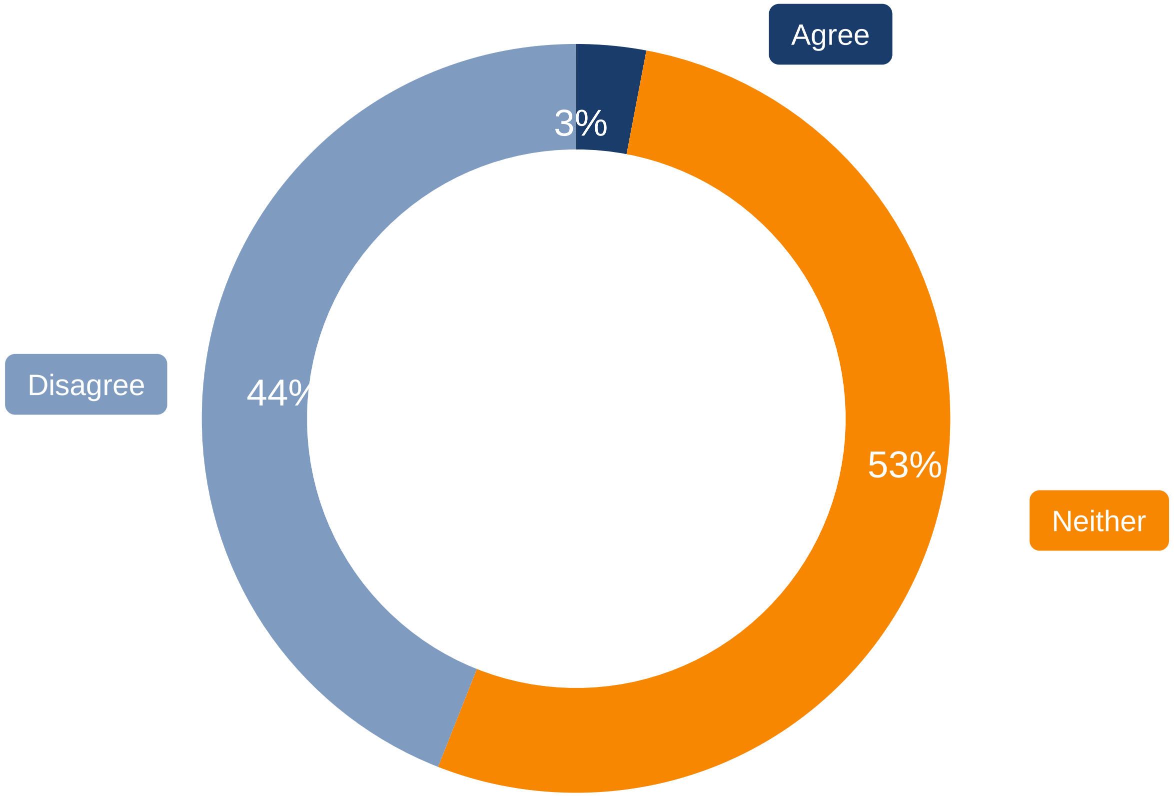
Consumers' Perception on Reformulation Activity

Very few consumers agree with these statements that might be used by some to argue for why reformulation might be unnecessary. A majority would like more help in their quest for healthier eating.

My diet is my responsibility and food companies should not interfere by changing their product formulations/recipes

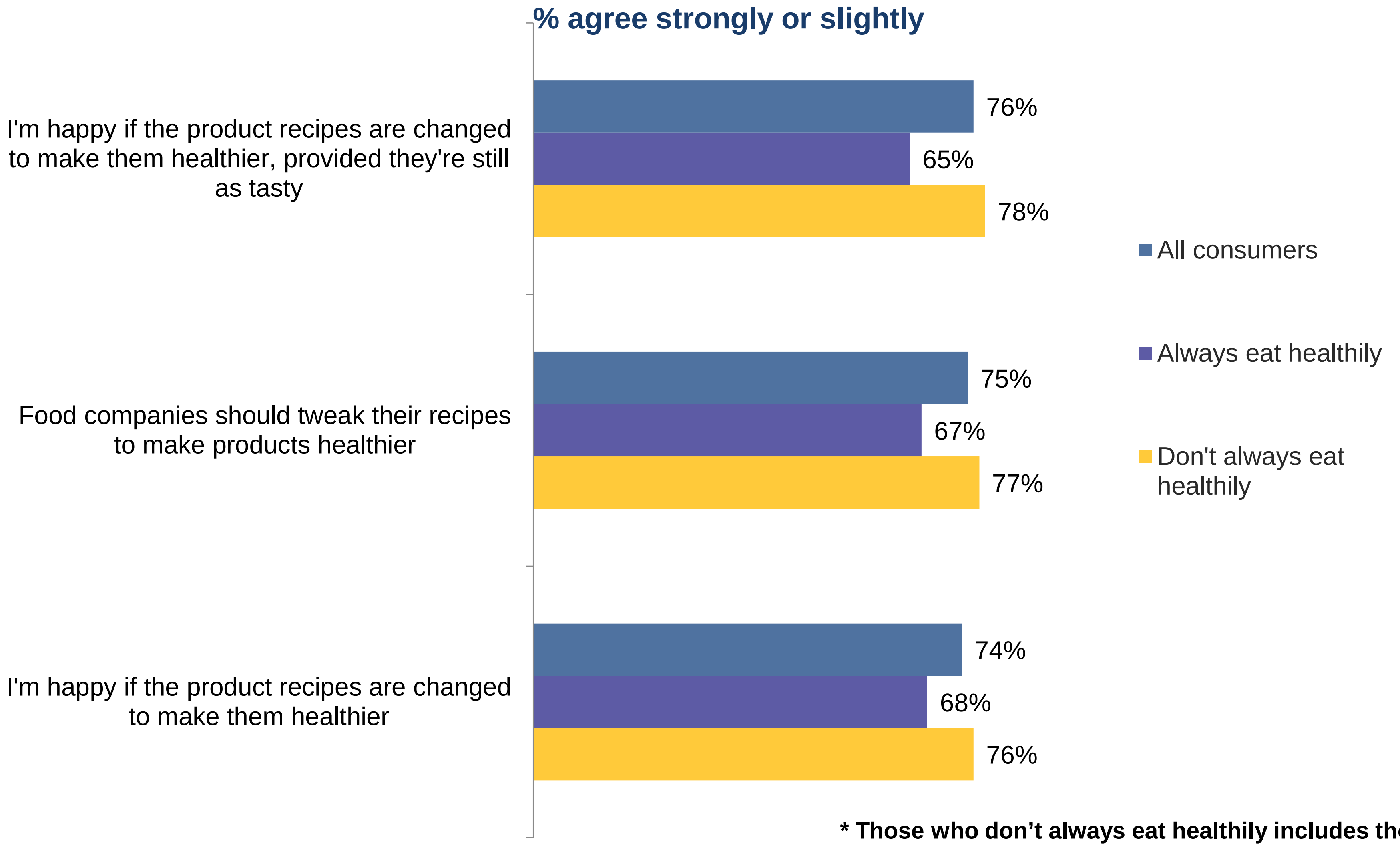


Food companies already offer enough healthy products and so there is no need for any change



Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Consumers’ Perception on Reformulation Activity

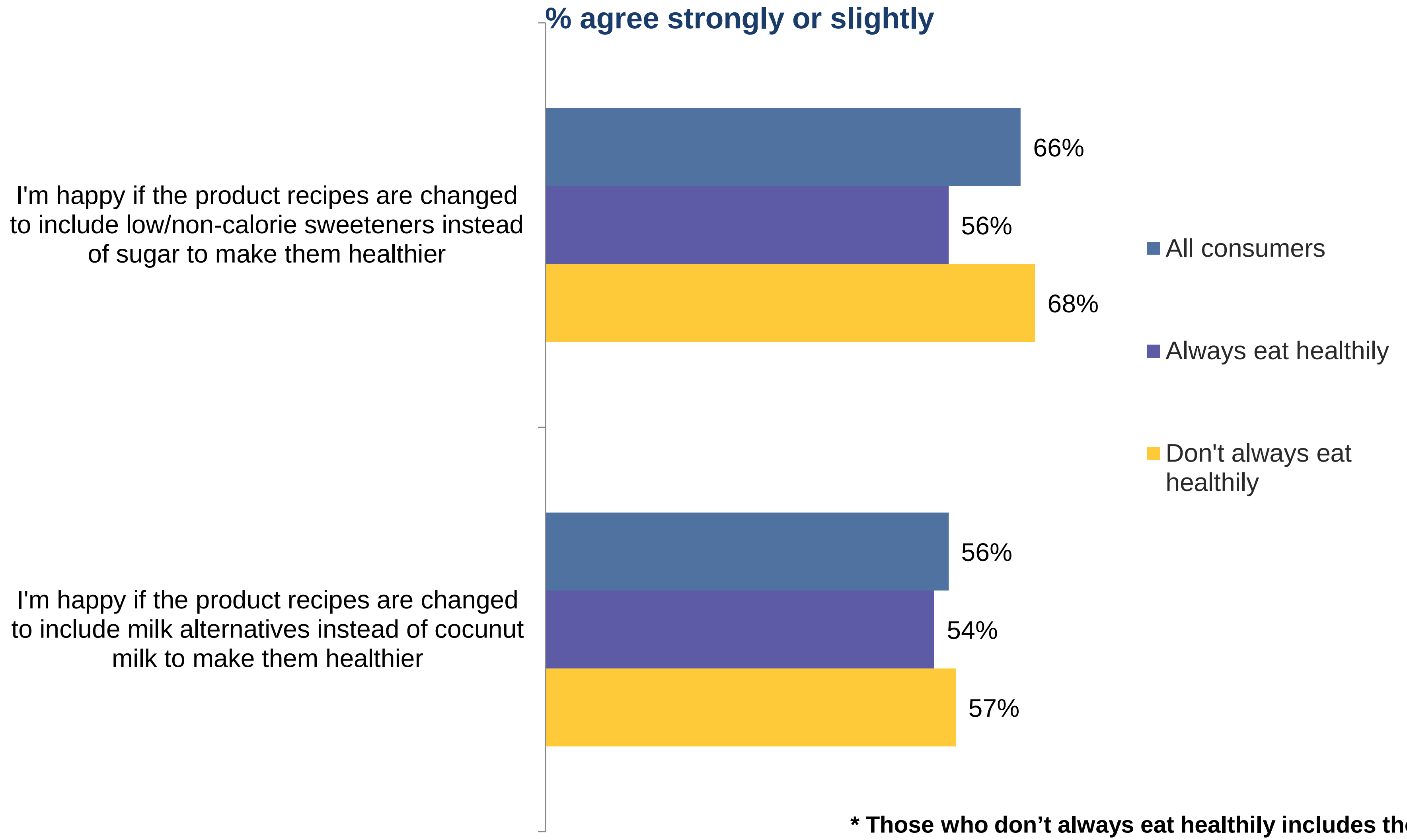


Those who don’t always eat healthily are generally quite happy if products are reformulated to become healthier.

*** Those who don’t always eat healthily includes those who stated they “mostly eat healthily, eat reasonably healthily or attempt to eat healthily”**

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Consumers' Perception on Reformulation Activity



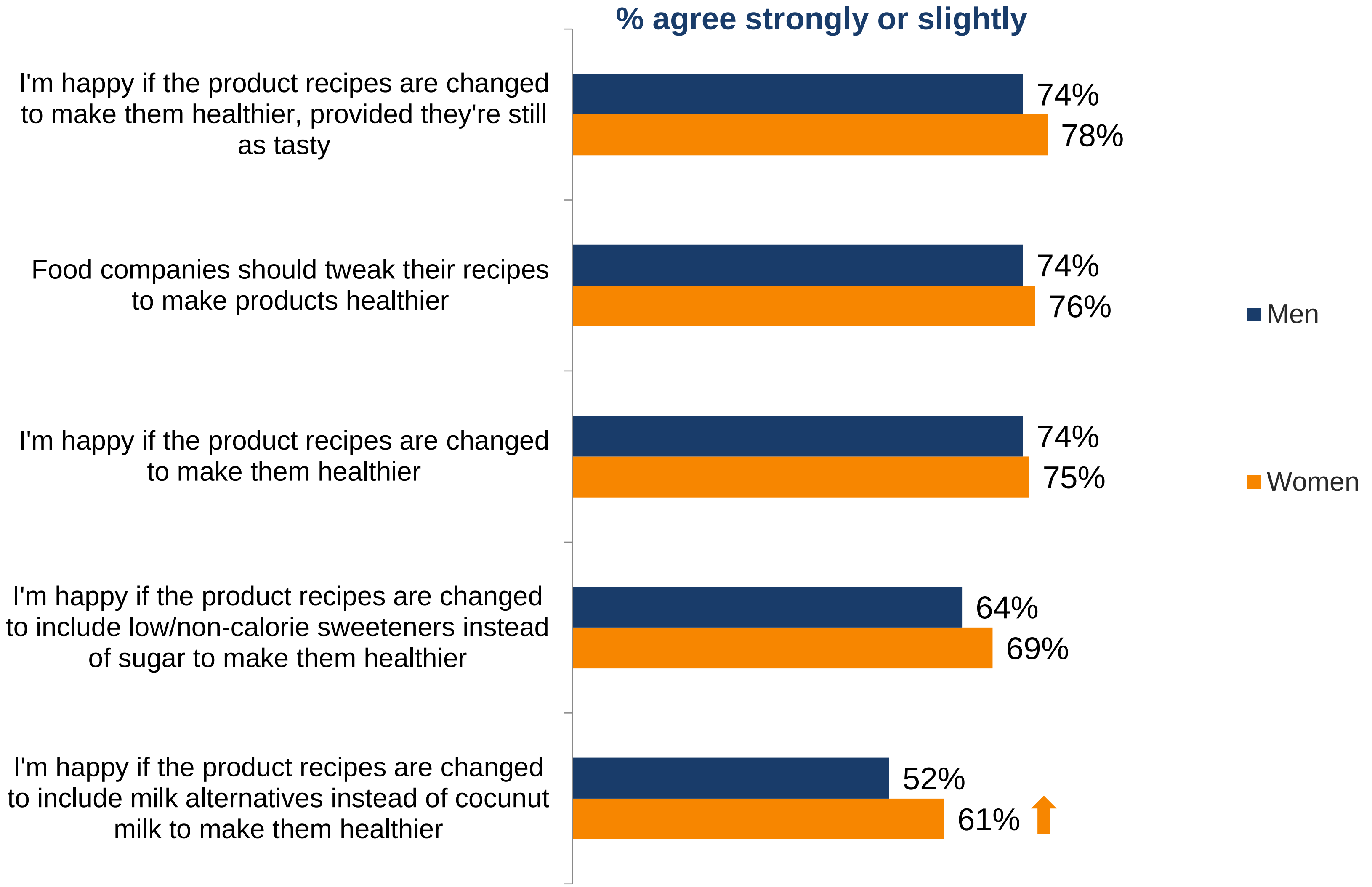
In general, consumers are receptive to the use of low/non-calorie sweeteners to make a product healthier.

Those who don't always eat healthily are generally quite open to the use of low/non-calorie sweeteners to make a product healthier.

*** Those who don't always eat healthily includes those who stated they "mostly eat healthily, eat reasonably healthily or attempt to eat healthily"**

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

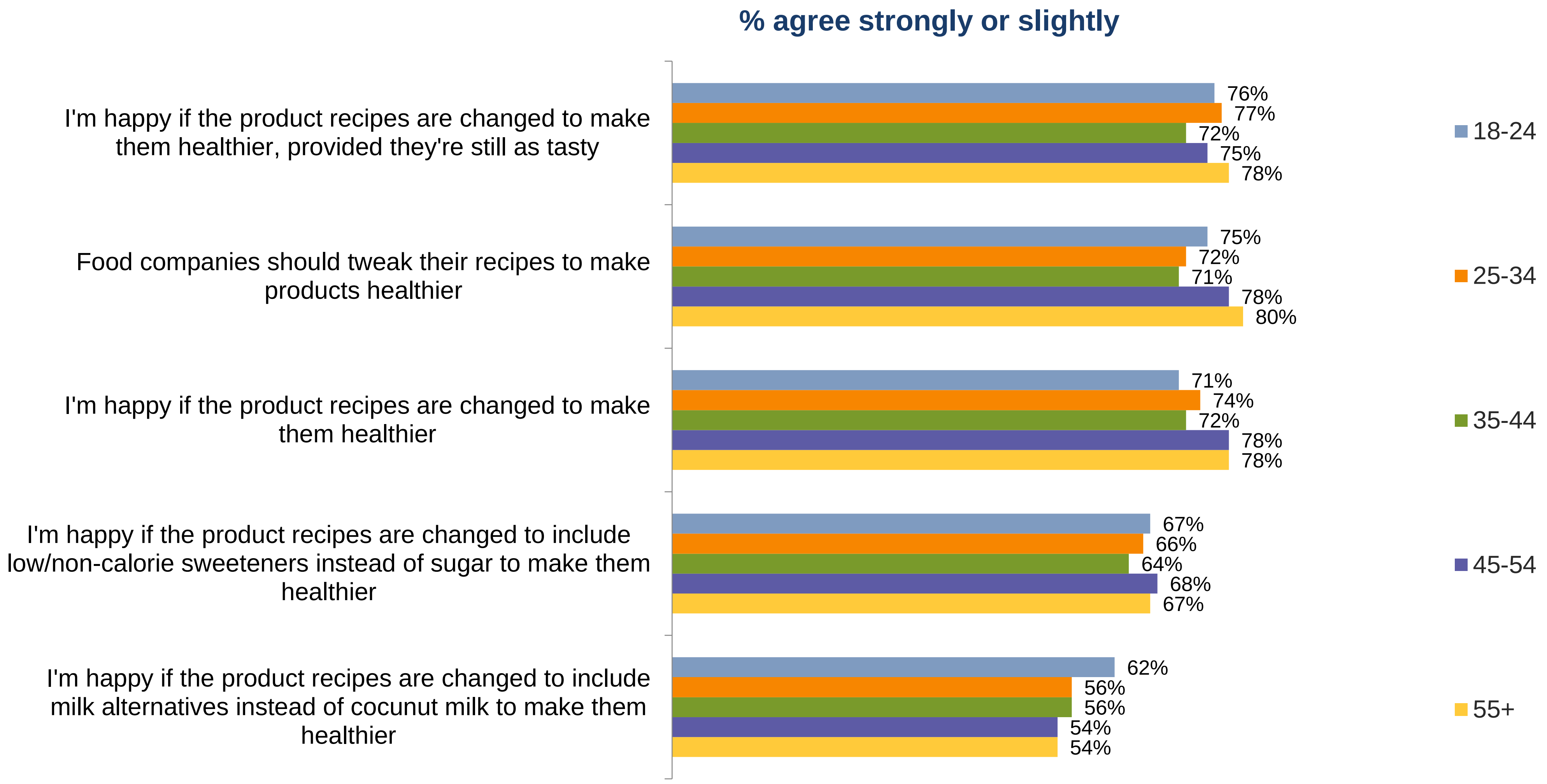
Consumers' Perception on Reformulation Activity- Gender Differences



Women are slightly more open to the idea of reformulation and more receptive to reformulation that includes milk alternatives as opposed to coconut milk to make it healthier.

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Consumers' Perception on Reformulation Activity- Age Differences



Consumers aged 18-24 are slightly more likely to be open to reformulation to include milk alternatives instead of coconut milk.

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Consumer Perceptions on Reformulated Products

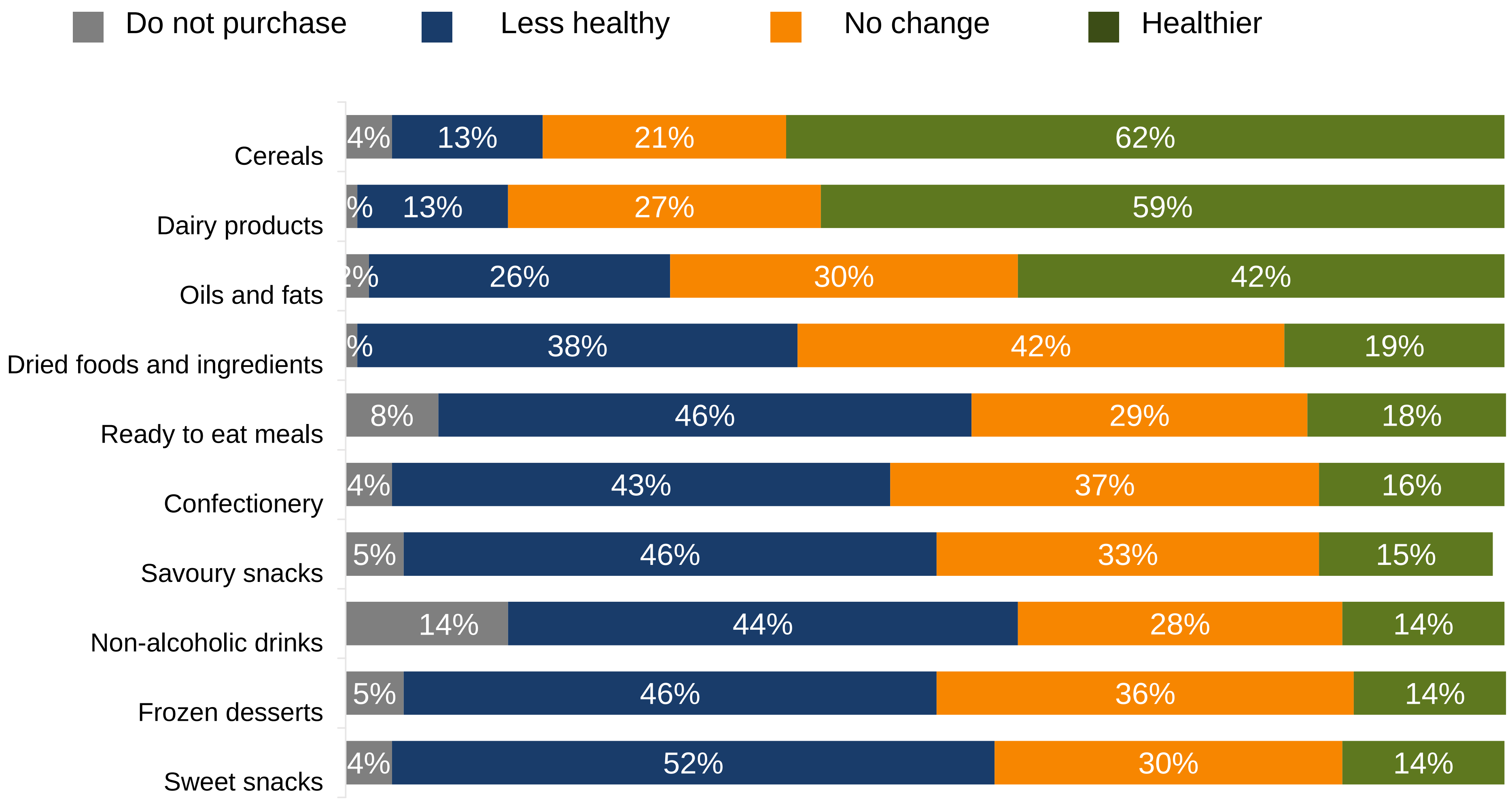
Consumer Perception of Changes

Perception on whether products have become healthier, unhealthier or haven’t changed in last 5 years

Consumers recognise reformulation has taken place mostly for cereals, dairy and oils and fats.

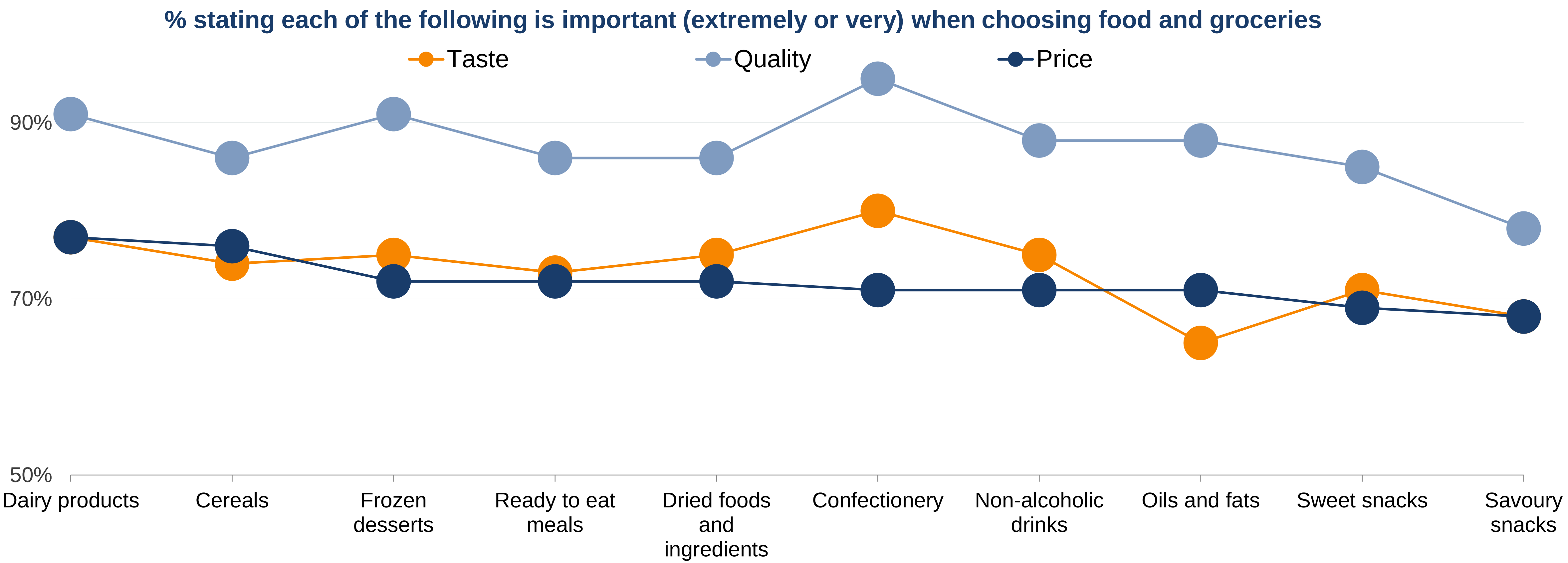
However, products that have not noticeably become healthier to consumers (e.g. sweet snacks, RTE meals, savoury snacks, confectionery) may be perceived as becoming less healthy, even if, in reality, they might have stayed the same or improved.

From a marketing standpoint, it would be relevant to promote the changes made to a product to update consumer views on product categories that have undergone a substantial amount of reformulation activity.



Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December 2018 Q. For each of the following products please tell us whether you feel they have become healthier, unhealthier or haven’t changed in the last 5 years?

Factors Influencing Product Choice within Category



Taste, quality and price are the most important factors that influence product choice among consumers, regardless of the product category. The results also suggest that price sensitivity is higher in some categories than others. However, in all instances, price is important and it would not be easy to convince consumers to pay a premium for healthier recipes unless there are other benefits too. A similar trend was also observed in Singapore.

Factors Influencing Product Choice within Category

% stating each of the following is important (extremely or very) when choosing food and groceries

Confectionery	
Quality	95%
Taste	80%
Price	71%
Ease of use	63%
Familiarity	61%
Special offers	55%
The brand	52%
Serving size	50%
Origin (region/country)	48%
Packaging	42%

Sweet snacks (e.g. biscuits, cakes, and pastries)	
Quality	85%
Taste	71%
Price	69%
Ease of use	58%
Familiarity	54%
Special offers	52%
Serving size	50%
Origin (region/country)	46%
Packaging	37%
The brand	34%

Savoury snacks (e.g. chips, rice crackers, sandwiches)	
Quality	78%
Taste	68%
Price	68%
Ease of use	60%
Special offers	59%
Familiarity	54%
Origin (region/country)	52%
Serving size	45%
Packaging	41%
The brand	39%

Cereals	
Quality	86%
Price	76%
Taste	74%
Ease of use	63%
Special offers	57%
Familiarity	53%
Origin (region/country)	53%
Serving size	47%
Packaging	41%
The brand	35%

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December (100 for each category), Q. When choosing a product in a supermarket, how important are each of the following to you?

Factors Influencing Product Choice within Category

% stating each of the following is important (extremely or very) when choosing food and groceries

Ready to eat meals	
Quality	86%
Taste	73%
Price	72%
Special offers	61%
Ease of use	60%
Origin (region/country)	53%
Familiarity with the	52%
Serving size	40%
The brand	39%
Packaging	38%

Non-alcoholic drinks (including carbonated drinks)	
Quality	88%
Ease of use	76%
Taste	75%
Price	71%
Familiarity with the	62%
Special offers	60%
Origin (region/country)	53%
Serving size	52%
The brand	41%
Packaging	38%

Dairy products (e.g. milk, eggs, cheese)	
Quality	91%
Taste	77%
Price	77%
Ease of use	69%
Origin (region/country)	63%
Familiarity with the	60%
Special offers	59%
Serving size	46%
Packaging	46%
The brand	42%

Frozen desserts (e.g. ice cream)	
Quality	91%
Taste	75%
Price	72%
Special offers	57%
Familiarity with the	55%
Ease of use	54%
Origin (region/country)	51%
The brand	47%
Serving size	43%
Packaging	38%

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December (100 for each category), Q. When choosing a product in a supermarket, how important are each of the following to you?

Factors Influencing Product Choice within Category

% stating each of the following is important (extremely or very) when choosing food and groceries

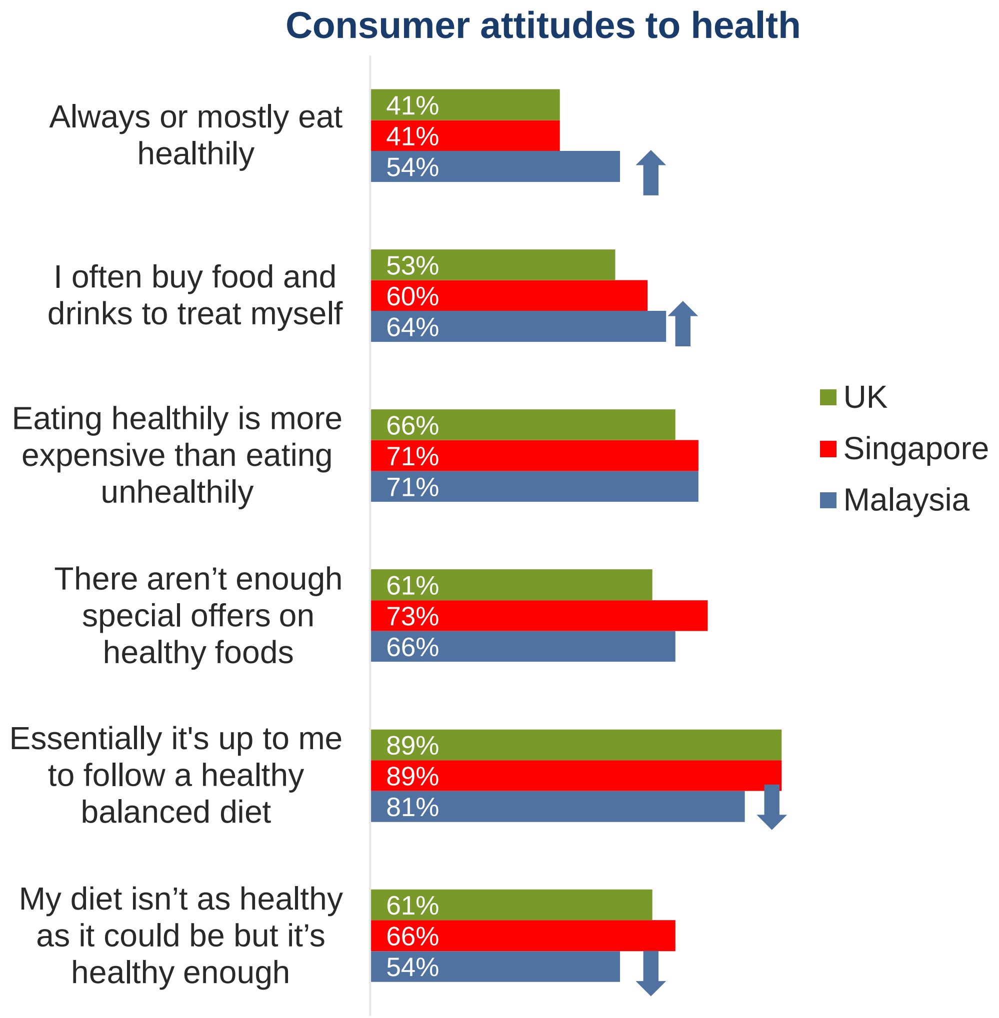
'Oils and fats (e.g. vegetable oil, sunflower oil, olive oil, butter, margarine)	
Quality	88%
Price	71%
Taste	65%
Special offers	60%
Familiarity with the	60%
Ease of use	57%
Origin (region/country)	57%
Serving size	49%
The brand	40%
Packaging	33%

Dried foods and ingredients (e.g. sauces, rice)	
Quality	86%
Taste	75%
Price	72%
Ease of use	62%
Special offers	55%
Familiarity with the	55%
Origin (region/country)	46%
Serving size	43%
Packaging	41%
The brand	36%

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December (100 for each category), Q. When choosing a product in a supermarket, how important are each of the following to you?

Country comparisons

Country Comparison: Consumer Attitudes to Health



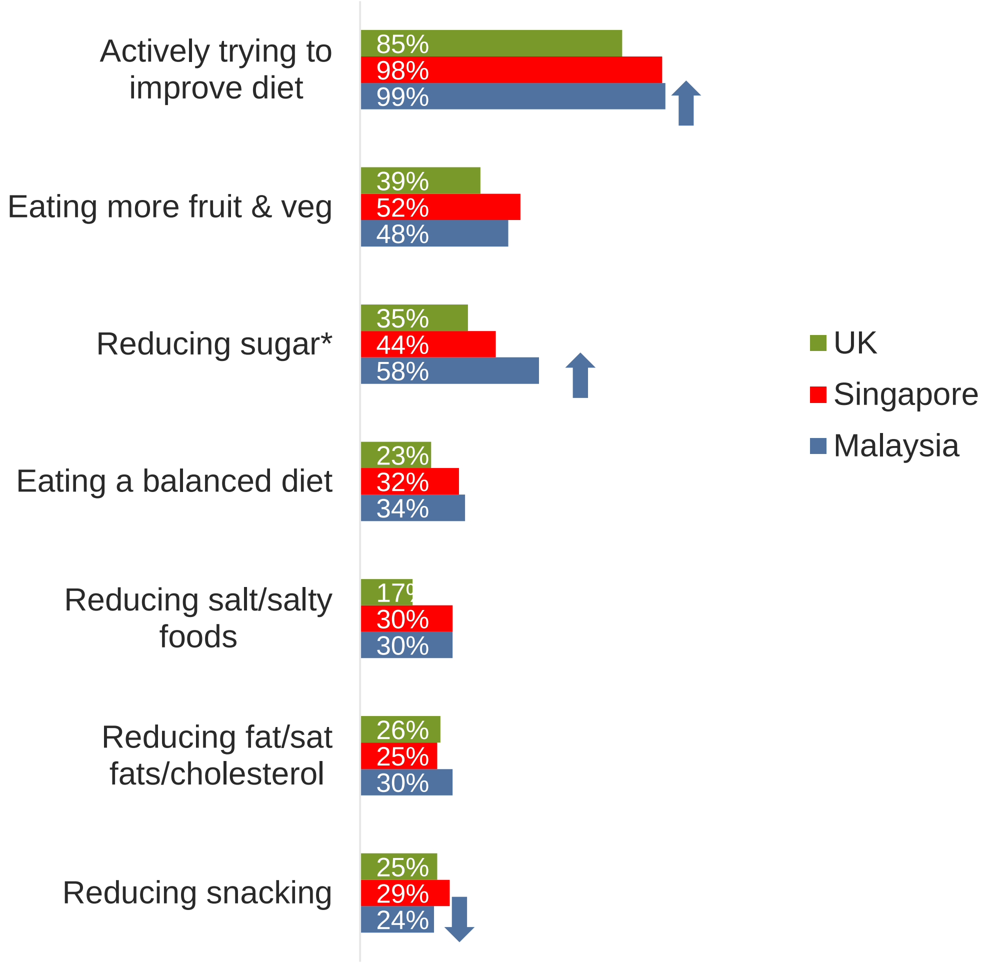
Consumers in Malaysia are less likely to agree that their diet isn't healthy or to agree that it's their own responsibility to follow a healthy diet

More Malaysian adults buy food and drink to treat themselves

Malaysian and Singaporean adults feel that eating healthily is more expensive than in the UK

Country Comparison: Areas to Improve Diet

Areas to improve in diet



Even though Malaysian consumers are less likely to concede that their diet is unhealthy, data shows that they are the most trying to improve their diet, particularly with regards to eating a balanced diet and reducing the consumption of limiting nutrients.

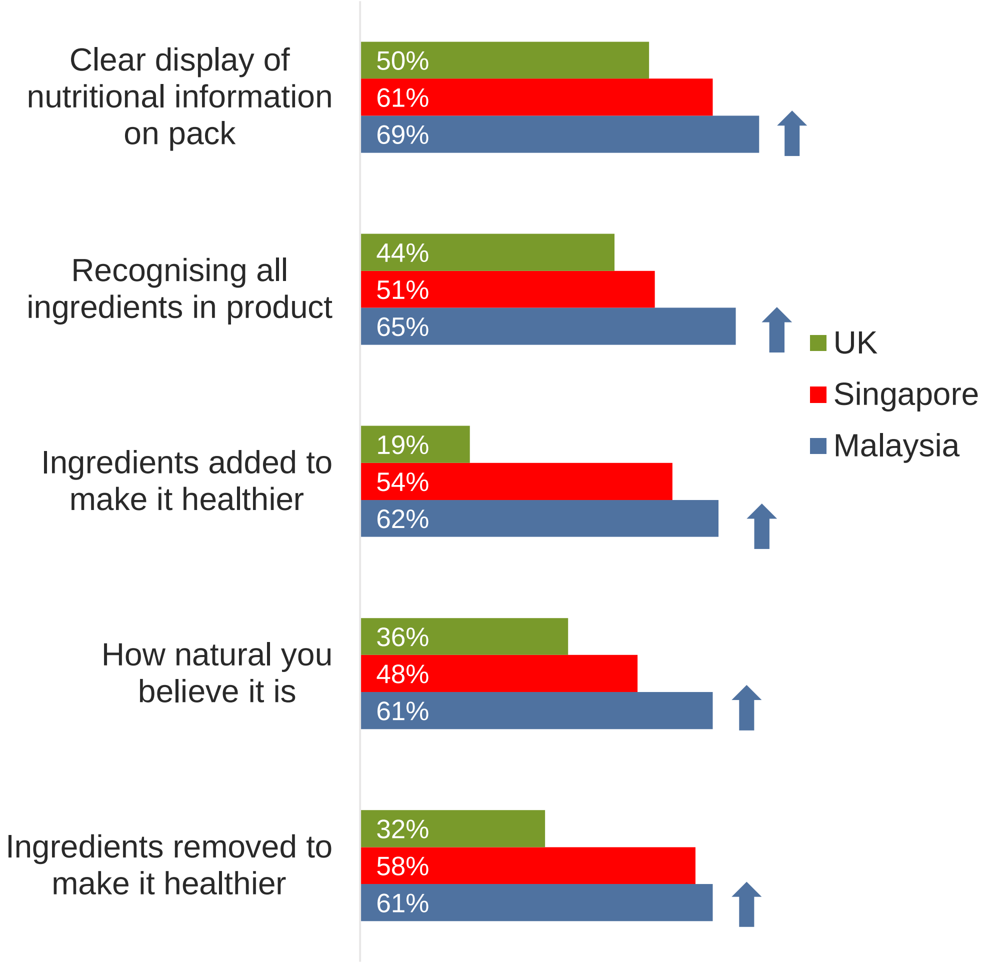
Malaysia consumers are less likely to focus on reducing snacking than those in Singapore.

*** "Reducing Sugar" in Malaysia includes either "Reducing sugar/sugary drinks" and/or "Reducing sugar/sugary foods"**

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December. Arrows denote significant difference

Country Comparison: Consumer Attitudes to Nutrition Labels

Attitudes to nutrition information (drivers of product choice % extremely or very important)

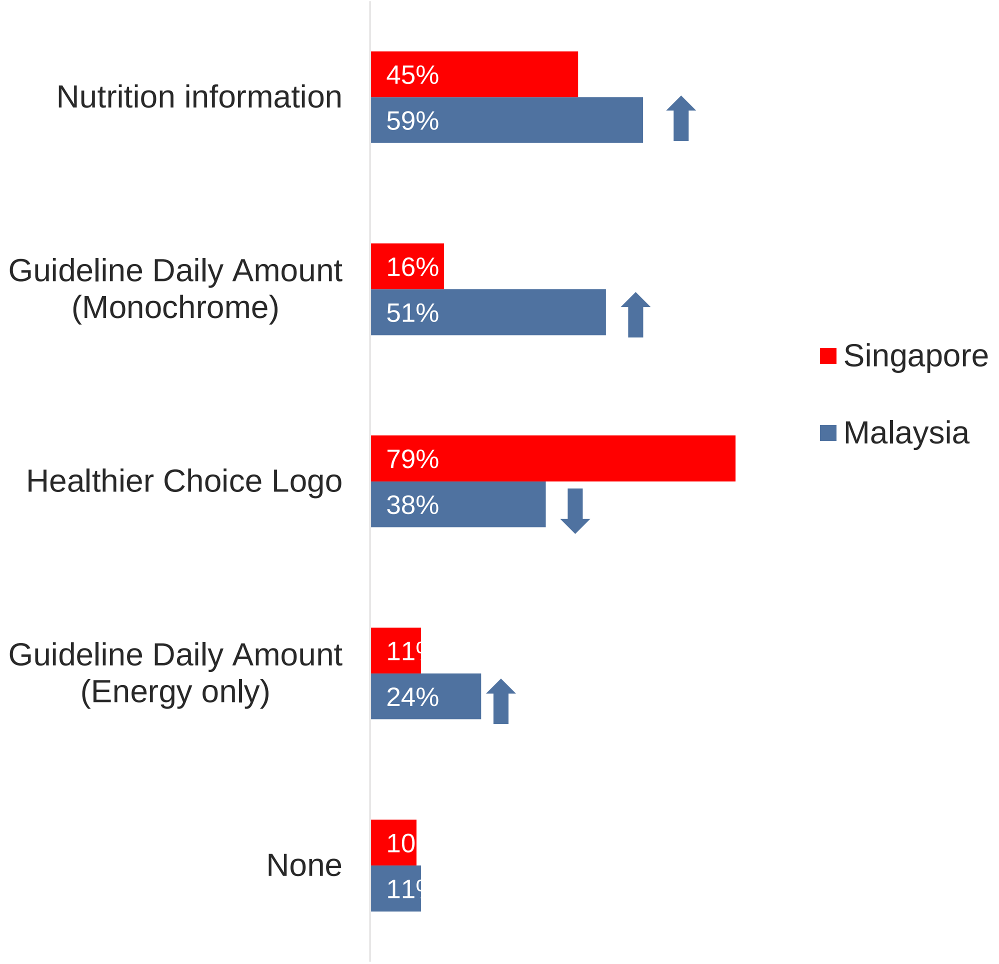


Nutrition is a particularly important factor for Malaysian consumers when purchasing products compared to the UK and Singapore.

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December. Arrows denote significant difference

Country Comparison: Consumer Attitudes to Nutrition Labels

Nutritional labels looked out for to gain information prior to purchasing



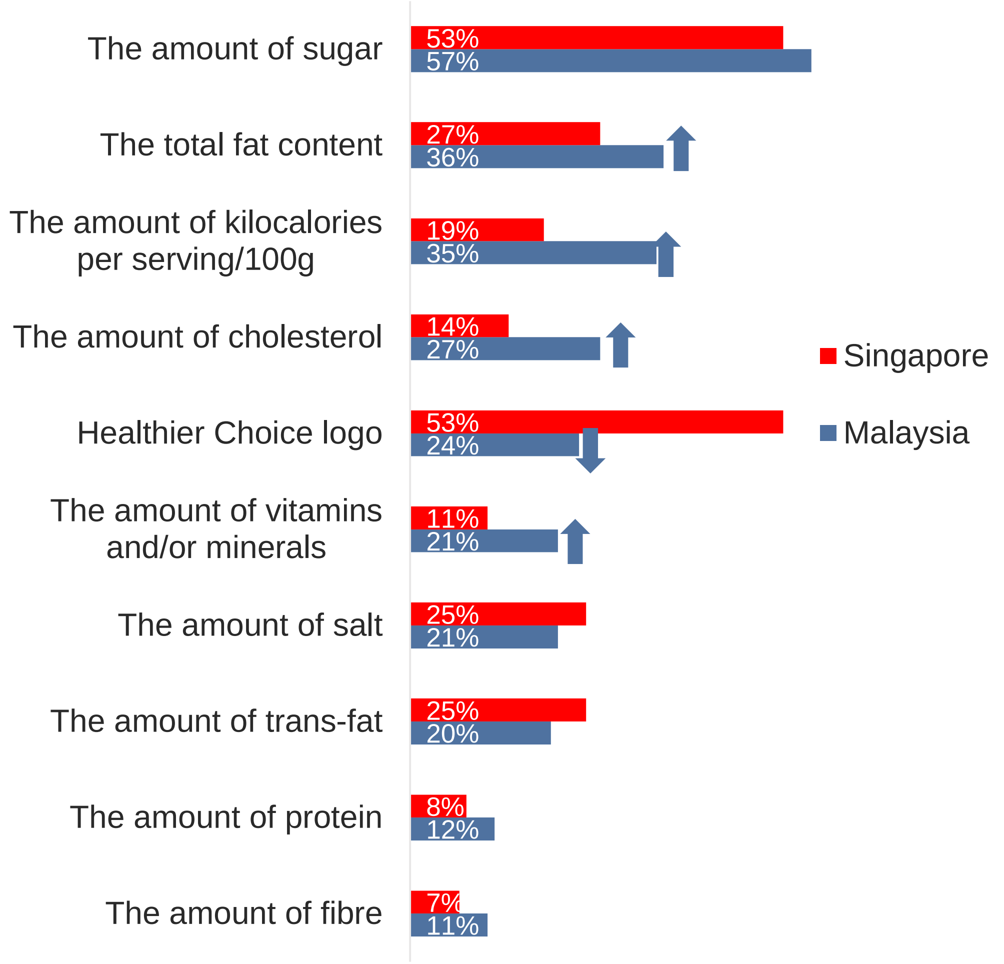
Malaysian consumers look out for nutrition information more than those in Singapore with consumers getting their information from the Nutrition Information Panel and Guideline Daily Amount label.

However, they are much less likely to look out for the Healthier Choice Logo. This is largely because the HCL scheme was launched in 2017.

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December. Arrows denote significant difference

Country Comparison: Type of Information Reviewed

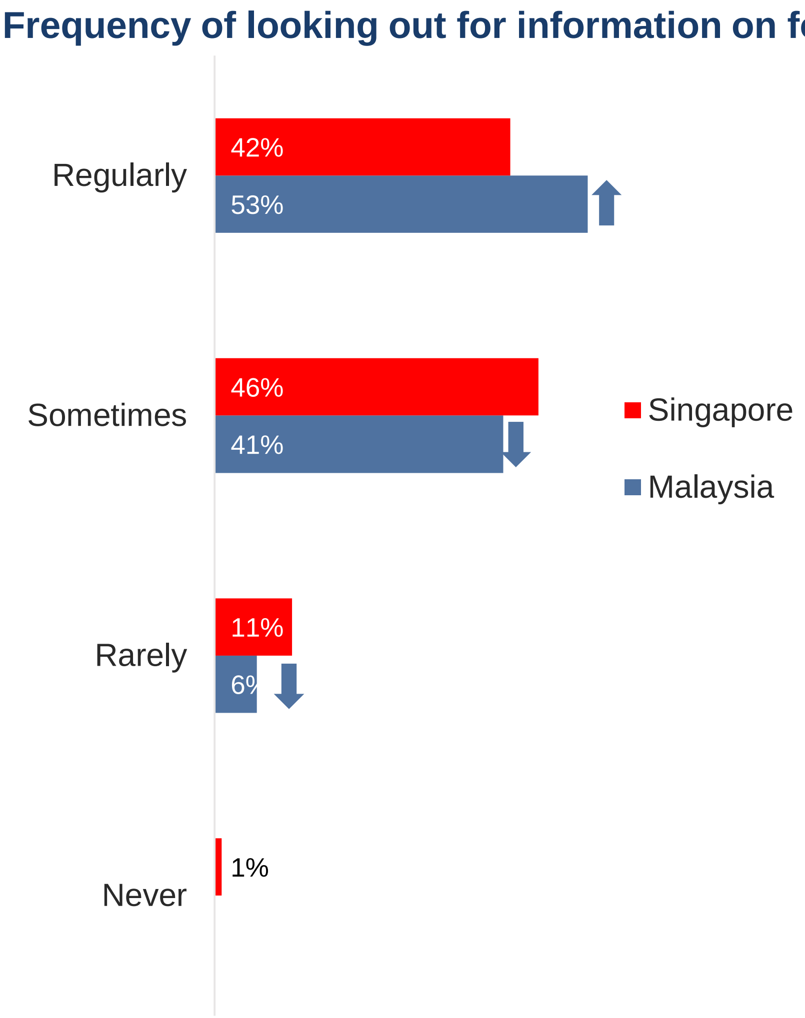
Types of information looked out for on food and drink packages prior to purchase



Malaysian consumers actively look out for information on fat content, the amount of kilocalories, cholesterol, vitamins and minerals as opposed to Singapore consumers. However, they are less likely to look out for the Healthier Choice Logo compared to their Singaporean counterparts.

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December. Arrows denote significant difference

Country Comparison: Frequency at which Consumers look out for Information

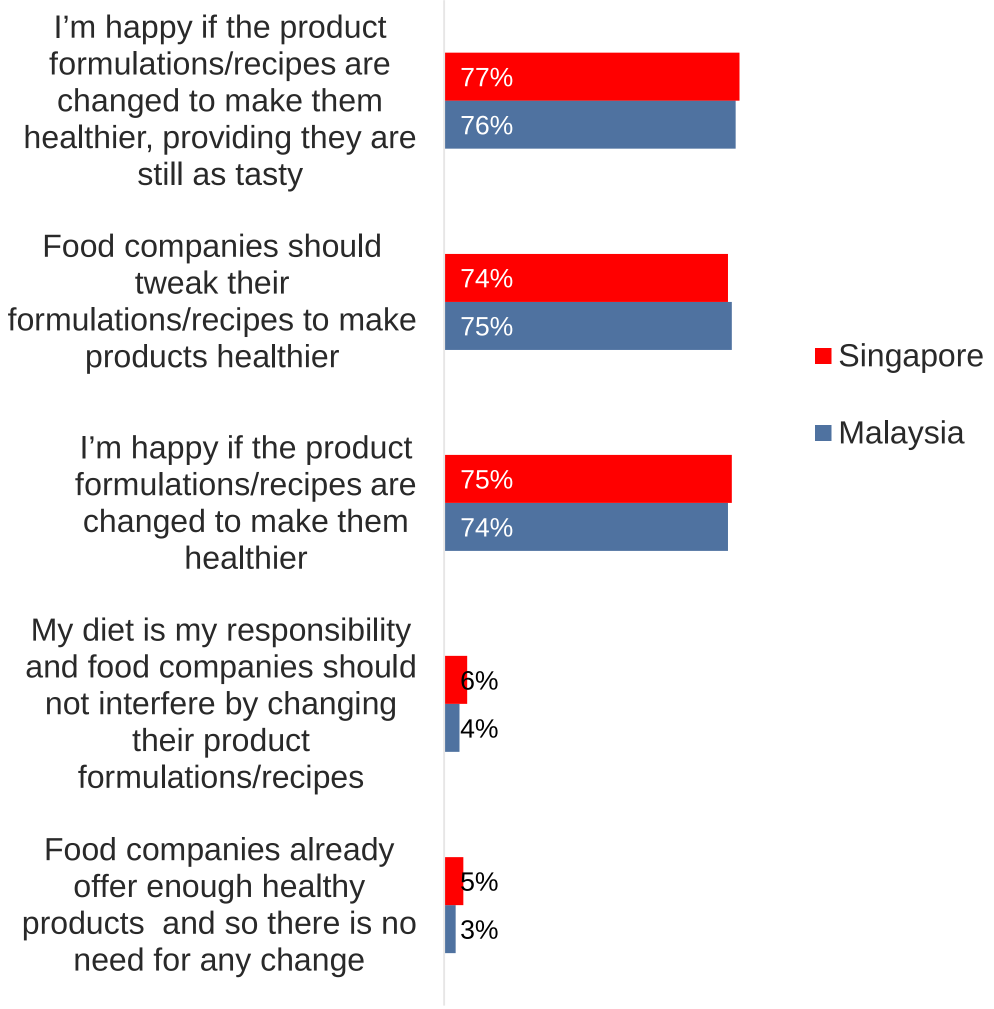


Malaysian consumers look out for nutrition information on food and drink packages more often than consumers in Singapore.

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December. Arrows denote significant difference

Country Comparison: Consumer Attitudes to Reformulation

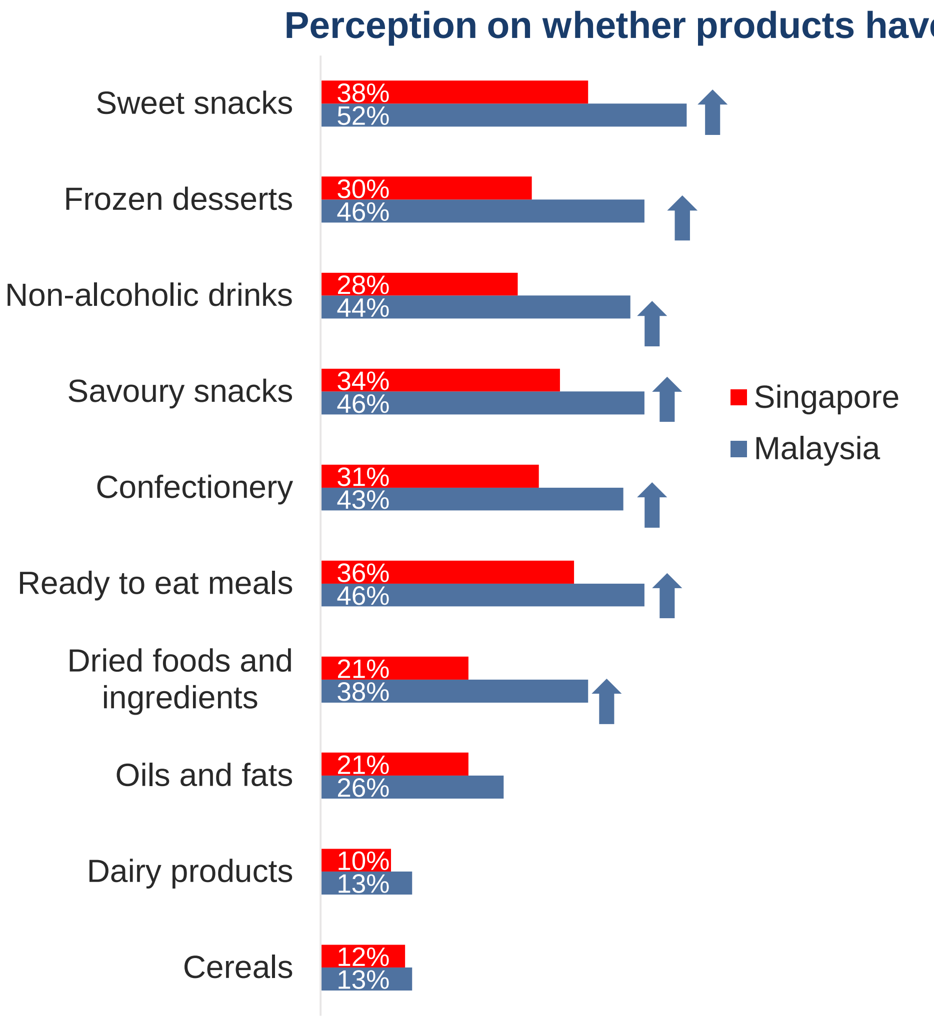
Attitudes to reformulation



There is no significant difference in attitudes to reformulation across markets.

Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December. Arrows denote significant difference

Country Comparison: Consumer Perceptions on Reformulated Products



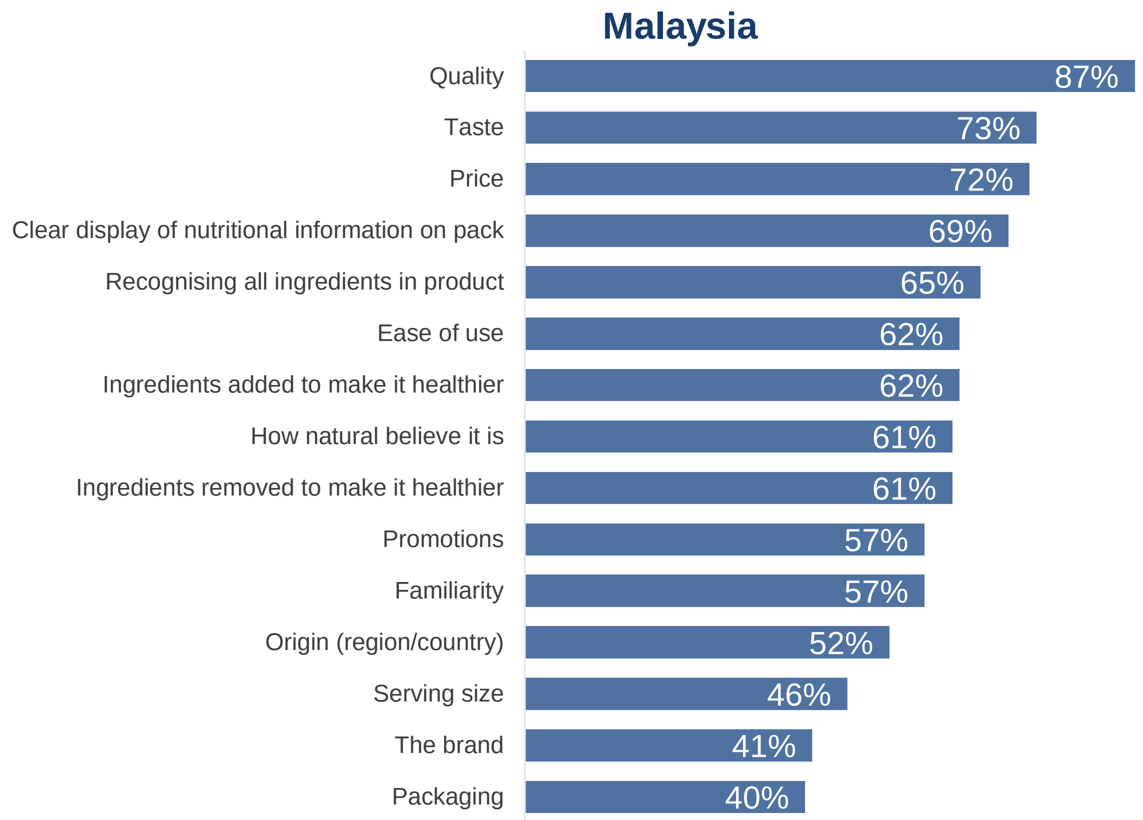
Consumers in Malaysia are more likely than consumers in Singapore to believe most food and grocery products have become less healthy in the last five years.

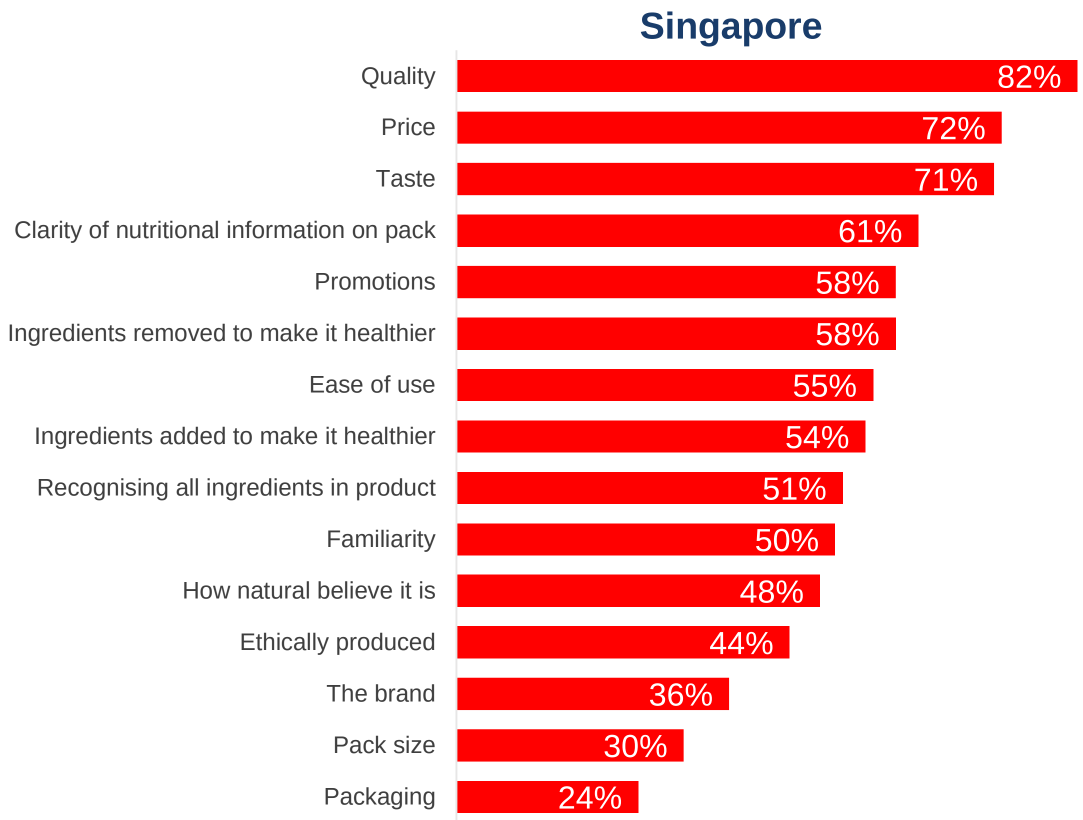
Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December. Arrows denote significant difference

Country Comparison: Drivers of Product Choice

In both Malaysia and Singapore, quality, taste, price and clarity of nutritional information on pack are the top four drivers of product choice. More consumers in Malaysia than in Singapore state that each of the following is important in choosing products: Recognising all ingredients in a product (65% vs 51%), Ingredients added to make it healthier 62% vs 54%) and how natural it is (61% vs 48%)

% stating each of the following is important (extremely or very) when choosing food and groceries

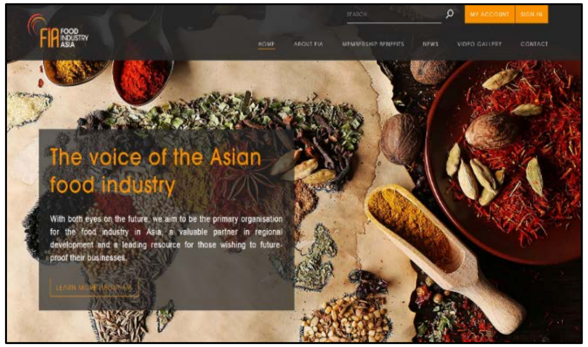




Base: 1,037 adults aged 18+ in Malaysia, 5-10 December Q. When choosing a product in a supermarket, how important are each of the following to you?

Additional Resources

Other resources



Food Industry Asia

Food Industry Asia - Reformulation

IGD

IGD Healthy Eating- Reformulation

Healthier Product Reformulation in Malaysia Report

Detailed Industry Findings

Detailed Consumer Findings

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