



The Changing Path to Purchase in Sri Lanka

How consumers discover, select and transact today

October 2026

Collaborative partner





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Through strategic public-sector alliances and strong relationships with trade-related organizations and chambers worldwide, the Chamber represents Sri Lanka's private-sector interests nationally and internationally. It leverages its voice, network, and expertise to support a stable and enabling environment for business and economic progress. True to its founding purpose, the Chamber continues to champion the interests of the private sector while placing Sri Lanka's broader national interest first.

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Foreword

Sri Lanka has come through the sharpest economic contraction in its post-independence history, and household consumption has recovered to a record level. However, the crisis redrew where spending power sits, how families allocate their spends, and prompted shifts in consumer behavior, some of which have persisted even as conditions have eased. Alongside this, connectivity, digital and financial infrastructure around the consumer widened considerably, redefining how consumers discover what they want, select what they buy, and transact at point of purchase.

Six years on from BCG's first study of the Sri Lankan consumer in 2020, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and BCG set out to establish where that consumer now stands. We conducted a nationally representative quantitative survey of 2,272 consumers across all nine provinces, complemented by focus group discussions. **This report intends to capture what the shape of demand looks like today, how consumer behavior has evolved through the crisis, and what this means for the companies serving them.**

We are grateful to the consumers who gave us their time, and to those across the business community whose questions shaped this work.



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Consumption is recovering, but economic pressures & wider digital access are reshaping the path to purchase

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- | Affluence is concentrating in Urban-West, while Rural continues to anchor middle-class scale.
- | The middle-class drives ~70% of national spending, while affluents spend ~3x their household share.
- | Essentials now absorb more of the wallet, while discretionary headroom opens up as income rises.
- | At the same time, near-universal connectivity, broader internet access, and emerging GenAI adoption are reshaping how consumers engage with the market.



02 How Sri Lanka discovers

Discovery remains human-led, but the shortlist is rapidly digitizing

18 – 22

- | Word of mouth remains the strongest source of influence at 66%.
- | However, digital influence has risen to 51% from 32% in 2020.
- | Within digital, YouTube and social media lead discovery, running ~2x ahead of search platforms.
- | GenAI is emerging as the next discovery frontier, with 18% using it already, of which ~1 in 3 users research brands and products.



03 How Sri Lanka selects

Choices across categories, brands & channels are now more deliberate & selective

23 – 38

- Consumers will adjust their basket to navigate rising prices: protect essentials, hold semi-discretionary and impulse, cut back or defer discretionary categories.
- More brands enter the shortlist, but single-brand preference has fallen across most categories.
- Healthy habits are mainstream, and health is emerging as a key purchase criterion, especially among higher income cohorts.
- Consumers default to a single, habitual channel but incumbent channels lag on some key choice drivers, giving challenger formats a right to win.

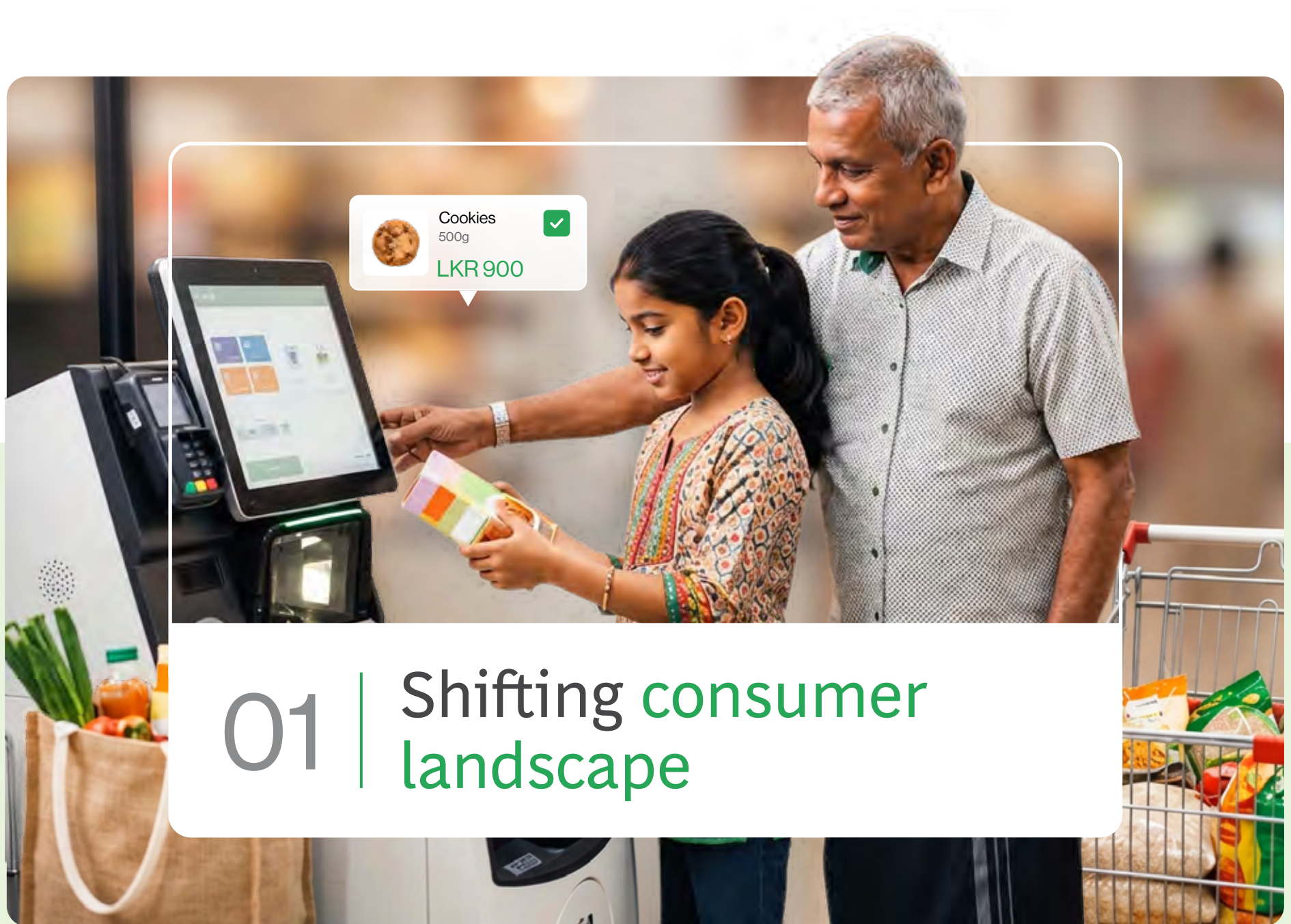


04 How Sri Lanka transacts

Cash remains the default, credit stays top-heavy, while digital banking runs deep where adopted

39 – 45

- Branches and ATMs remain the dominant banking touchpoints, used by 88% and 72% of consumers.
- Credit remains narrow and top-heavy: credit cards reach 19% overall vs 33% among higher-income consumers; loans show a similar skew.
- Digital banking reaches only ~25% of account holders, held back by structural and experiential barriers. However, usage runs deep among those who adopt.



01 | Shifting consumer landscape

The economy has recovered, with the *consumer remaining its largest demand engine*

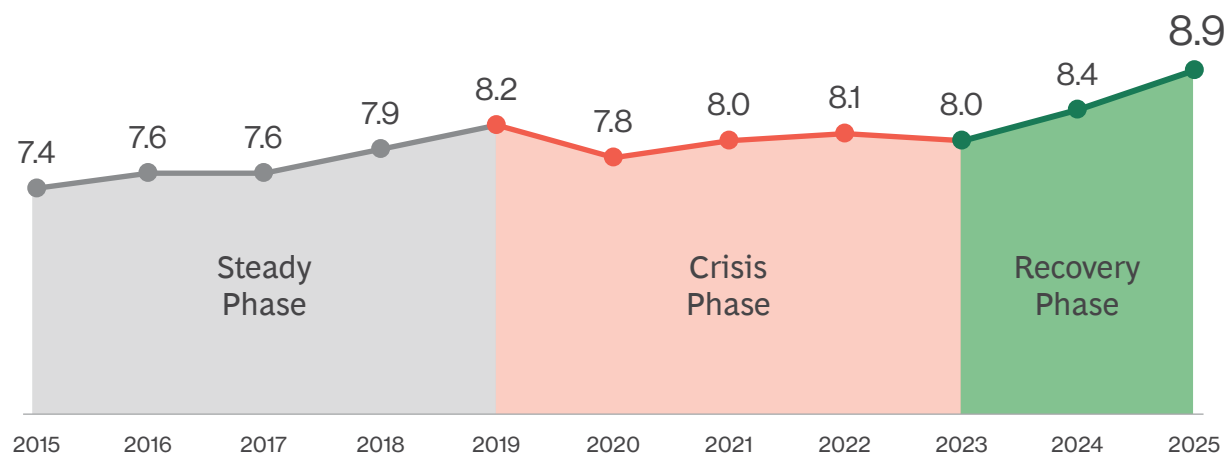
Sri Lanka is a consumption economy. Household consumption has consistently accounted for 60–70% of GDP across periods of economic stability, crisis and recovery.

Following a sharp contraction between 2019 and 2023, consumption rebounded strongly. In 2025, household spending reached a record LKR ~9 trillion, reaffirming the resilience of domestic demand.

As the economy strengthens further, the consumer remains Sri Lanka's largest demand engine, central to the country's growth equation.



Real household consumption (LKR Tn, 2015 prices)



Average annual real growth (%)

+2.7%

2015–19

-0.8%

2019–23

+5.5%

2023–25

Household consumption as share of real GDP (%)

61%

2015–19

63%

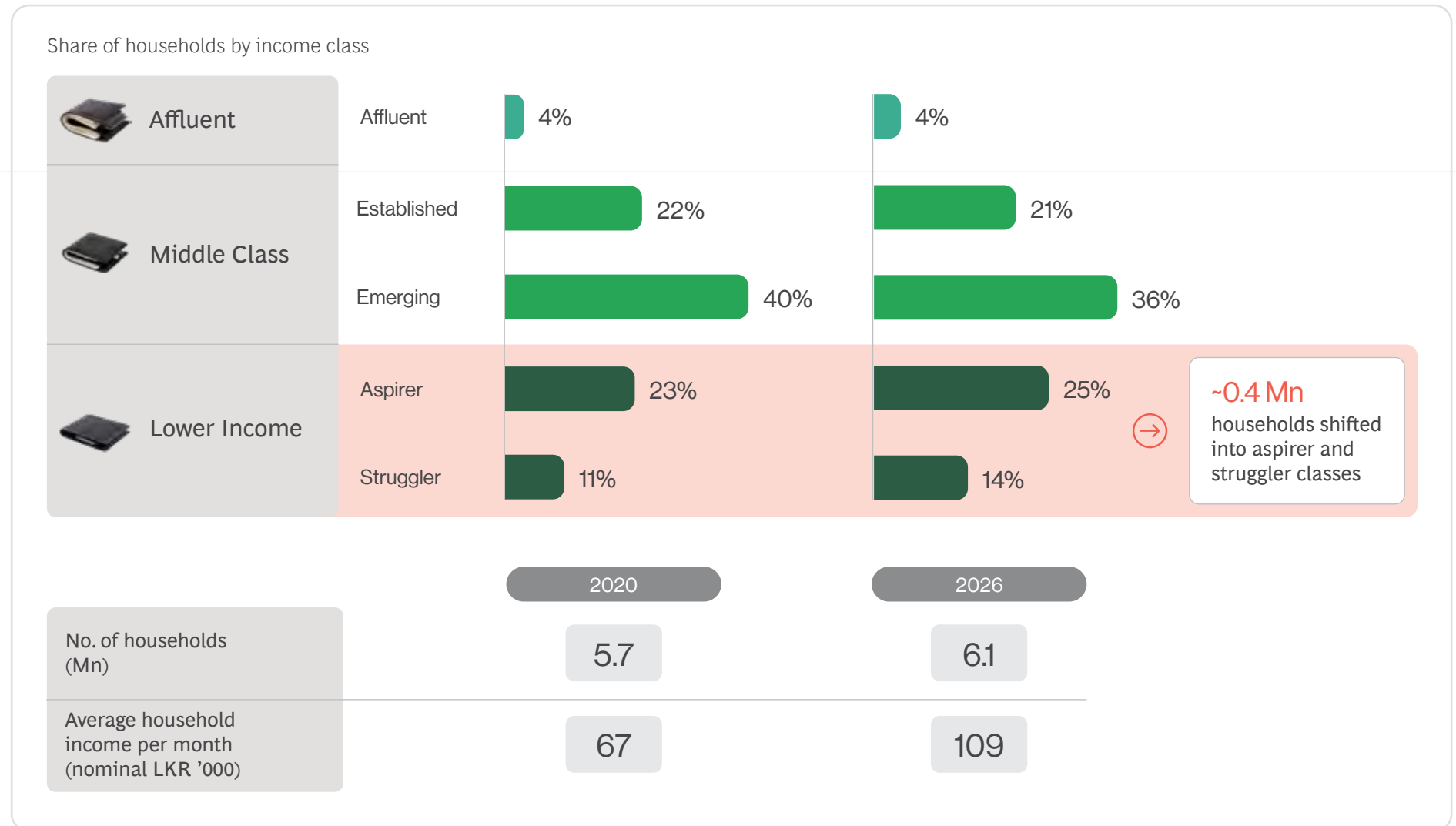
2019–23

67%

2023–25

Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Annual Economic Review 2025, Key Economic Indicators, published April 2026; Department of Census and Statistics, National Accounts of Sri Lanka
Note: 2015–25 figures represent Household Final Consumption Expenditure; figures for household consumption as share of real GDP (%) represent GDP-weighted phase average

However, the recovery masks an *uneven improvement* in household incomes



Source: 1. BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272), 2020 (n=1,200); 2. NCPI Monthly Indices, Department of Census and Statistics, 2020 (Jan–Dec), 2025–2026 (July’25– June’26) 3. Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2019; 4. Census of Population and Housing, 2024. Question: “What is your total household monthly income before tax?”

Note: Income thresholds are adjusted for inflation to ensure comparability in real terms; 2020 thresholds (LKR/month): Struggler <20k; Aspirer 20–35k; Emerging 35–75k; Established 75–200k; Affluent >200k. 2026 thresholds (LKR/month): Struggler <40k; Aspirer 40–75k; Emerging 75–150k; Established 150–400k; Affluent >400k

The consumer emerging from the crisis *looks different*



A New *Consumer Reality*

The consumer emerging from the crisis *looks different*



Economic pressures have
Reshaped Demand

Where does *demand* now sit?

- 1 **Affluence** sits in Urban-West, Rural anchors the **middle class**.
- 2 Middle class carries **scale**, affluents hold **room to spend**.
- 3 **Essentials take a larger share** of wallet.



Broader connectivity and new technologies have created a more
Digitally Enabled Consumer

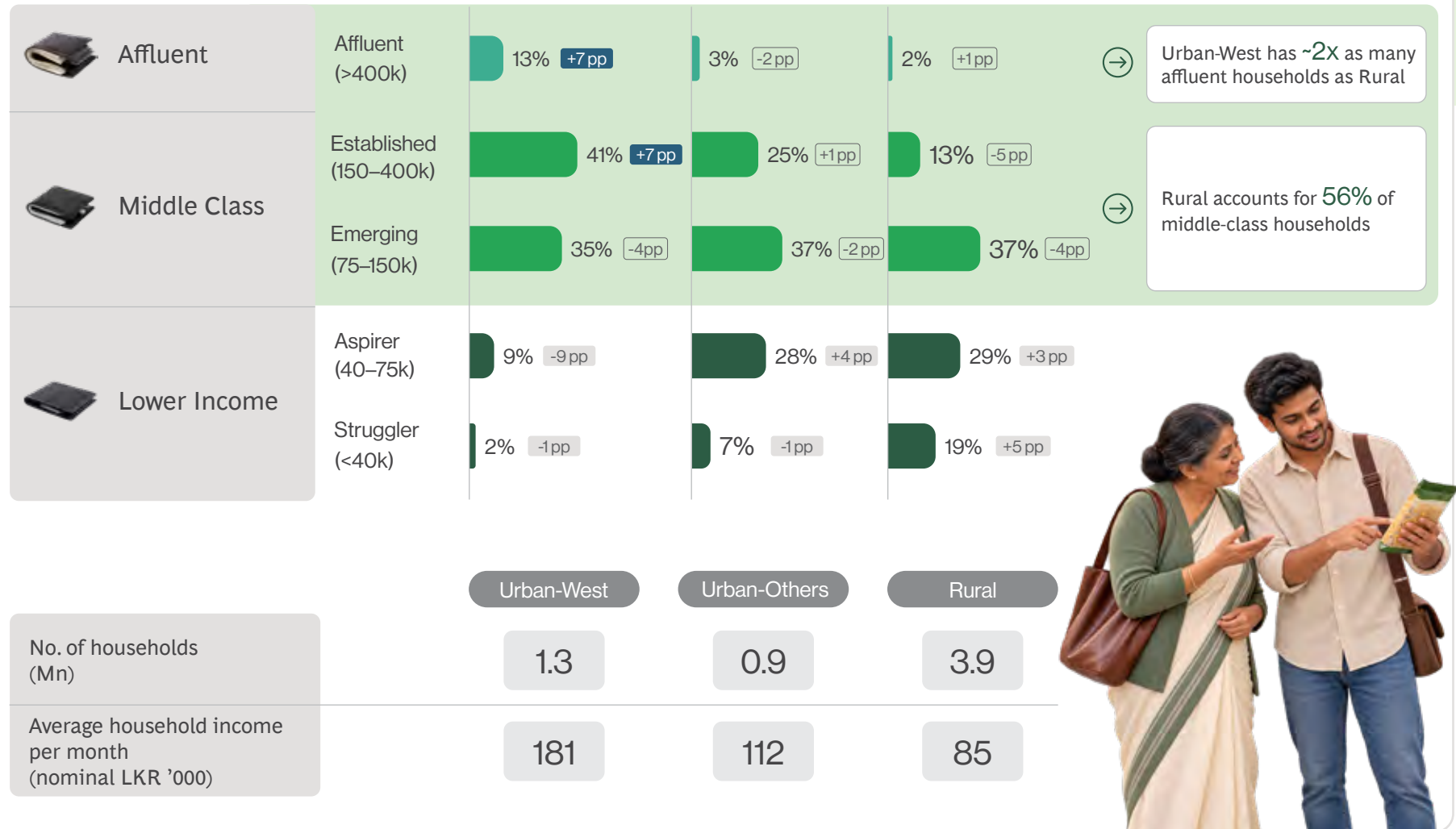
What has *broadened* consumer access?

- 4 **Connectivity is near-universal** and upgrading.
- 5 **Internet access** is broadening across regions and income groups.
- 6 **GenAI adoption** has begun, led by young, urban affluent.

Together, these forces are redefining *how Sri Lanka discovers, selects and transacts*

1 Affluence is concentrating in *Urban-West*, while *Rural* continues to anchor middle-class scale

Share of households by income class

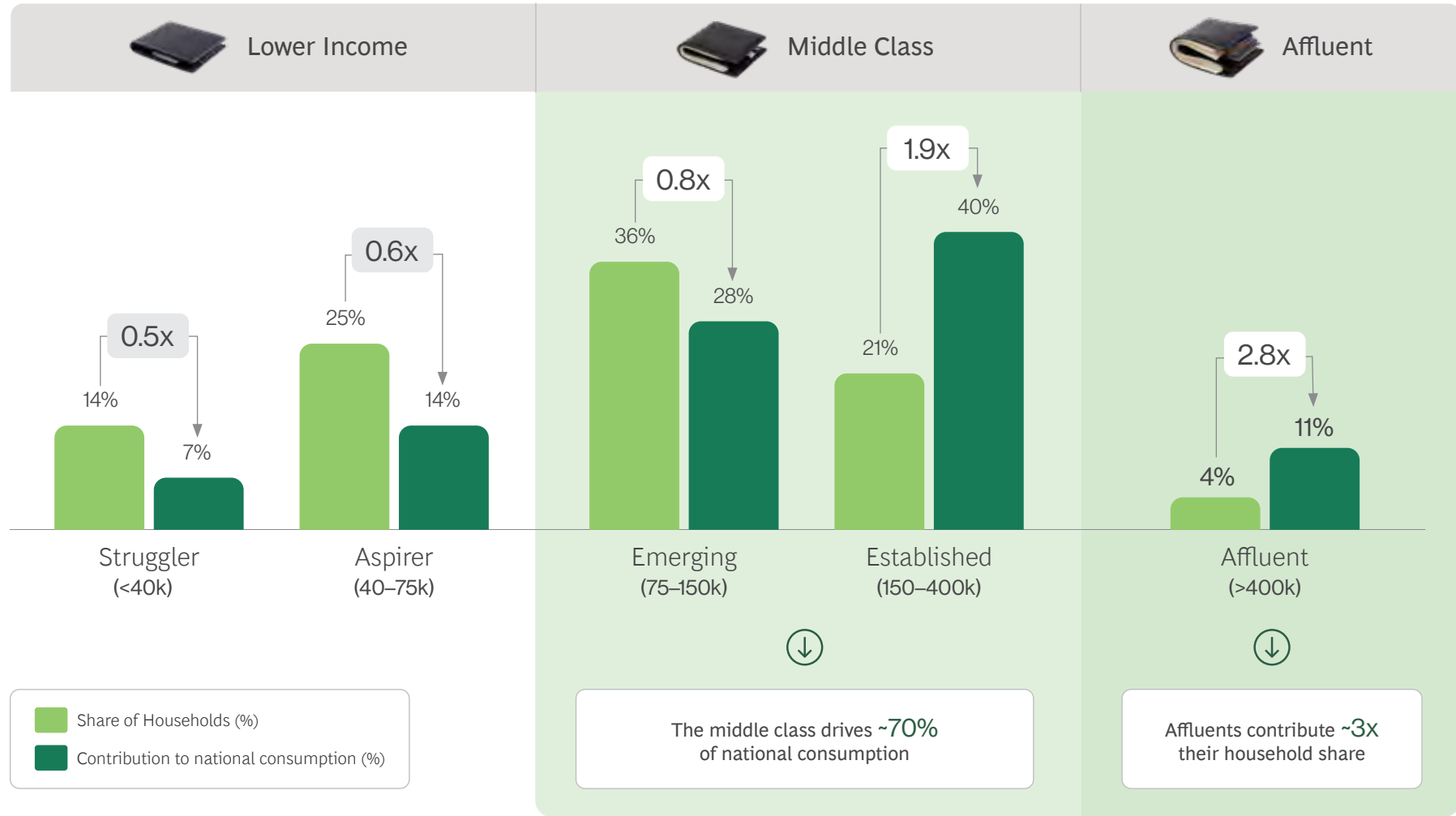


Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "What is your total household monthly income before tax?"

Note: +/- xx pp represents change compared to 2020; Urban-West: Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara; Urban-Others: Galle, Kandy, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Rathnapura, Badulla, Jaffna, Vavuniya, Ampara, Trincomalee and Batticaloa; Rural: rural areas across the same surveyed districts

2 Middle class drives national spending, while Affluents contribute disproportionately

Share of households and contribution to national consumption by income class

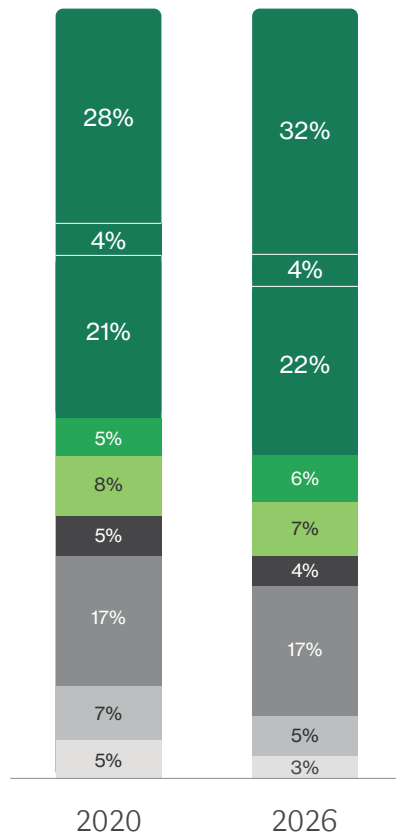


Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Approximately how much does your household spend on [category] in a typical month / over the past year?"

Note: Contribution to national consumption is derived from reported household spend aggregated across 32 categories

3 *Essentials* now take a larger share of the household wallet compared to 2020

Share of household consumption expenditure



Essentials

- ↑ Food & Beverage
- ~ Healthcare
- ↑ Housing: Rentals, Maintenance, Real Estate
- ↑ Home & Personal Care
- ↓ Education

Discretionary

- ↓ Clothing, Footwear and Jewelry
- ~ Loans & Insurance
- ↓ Household durables and vehicles
- ↓ Leisure



I have two kids, and taking care of them comes first. Groceries, rent and school fees take up most of what I earn, so there's very little left for anything else.

– 46 year old shopper



Petrol used to cost around LKR 140 a litre. Now it's around LKR 400, and I still have to manage travelling to work every day on what I earn.

– 35 year old shopper

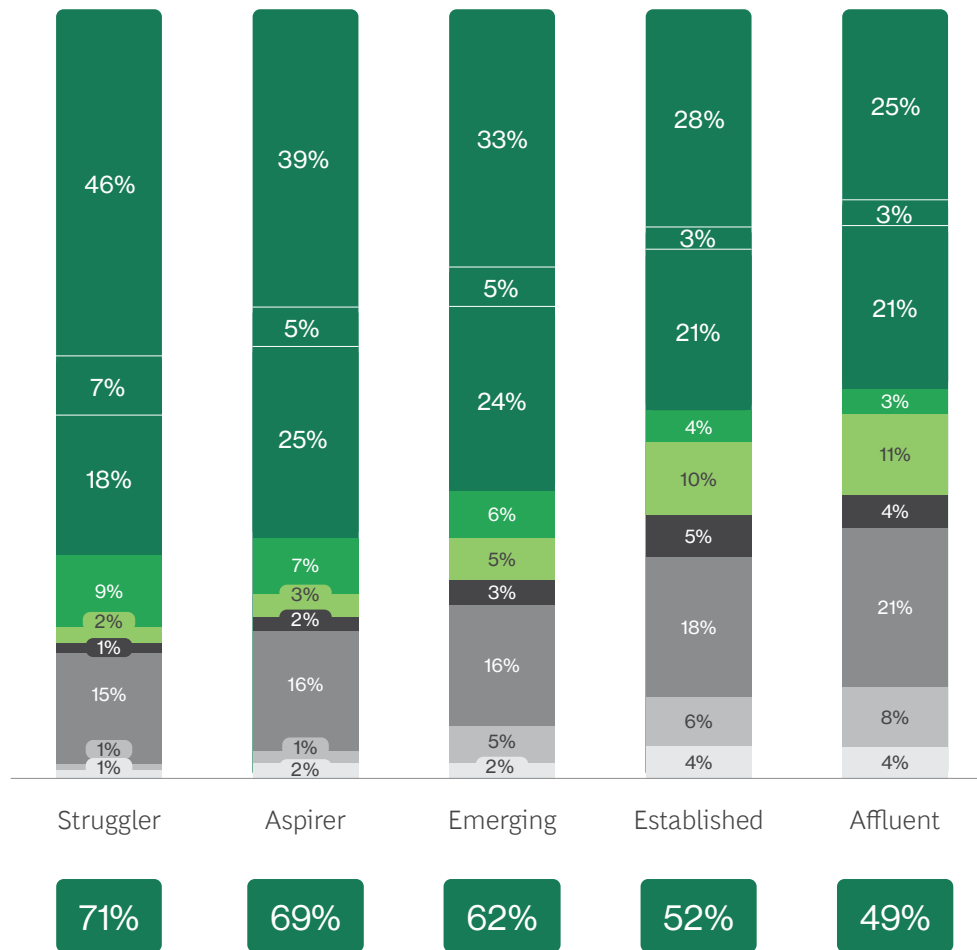


Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272), 2020 (n=1,200); Question: "Approximately how much does your household spend on [category] in a typical month / over the past year?"
Note: Healthcare includes OPD, hospital services, medical products, Housing: Rentals, maintenance & real estate includes home rentals, home services, local commute, utility expenses and connectivity; leisure includes eating out, entertainment, commute and accommodation for leisure

3.1 However, *discretionary headroom* opens up progressively as income rises

Share of household consumption expenditure

2026, by income



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272), 2020 (n=1,200); Question: "Approximately how much does your household spend on [category] in a typical month / over the past year?"
Note: Healthcare includes OPD, hospital services, medical products, Housing: Rentals, maintenance & real estate includes home rentals, home services, local commute, utility expenses and connectivity; leisure includes eating out, entertainment, commute and accommodation for leisure

4 *Connectivity* is near universal, with the *shift to 5G* underway

95%

Own a SIM

90%+ *penetration* across
income classes and regions

69%

Are willing to pay for 5G

Would pay the same or
more than today, with 27%
willing to pay a premium

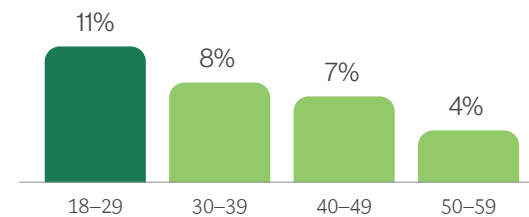
9%

Have already
adopted 5G

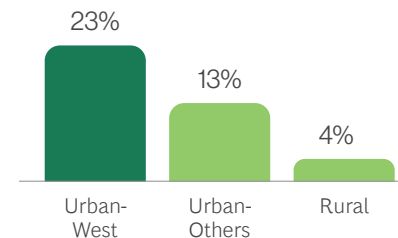
within the *first 6 months*
of launch

5G Adoption is led by:

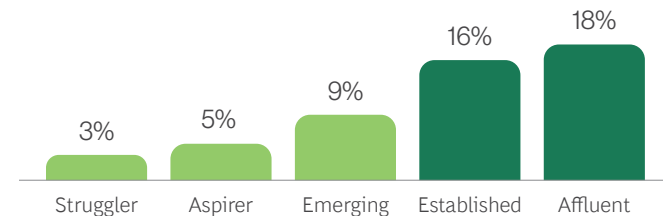
Younger consumers



Urban-West residents



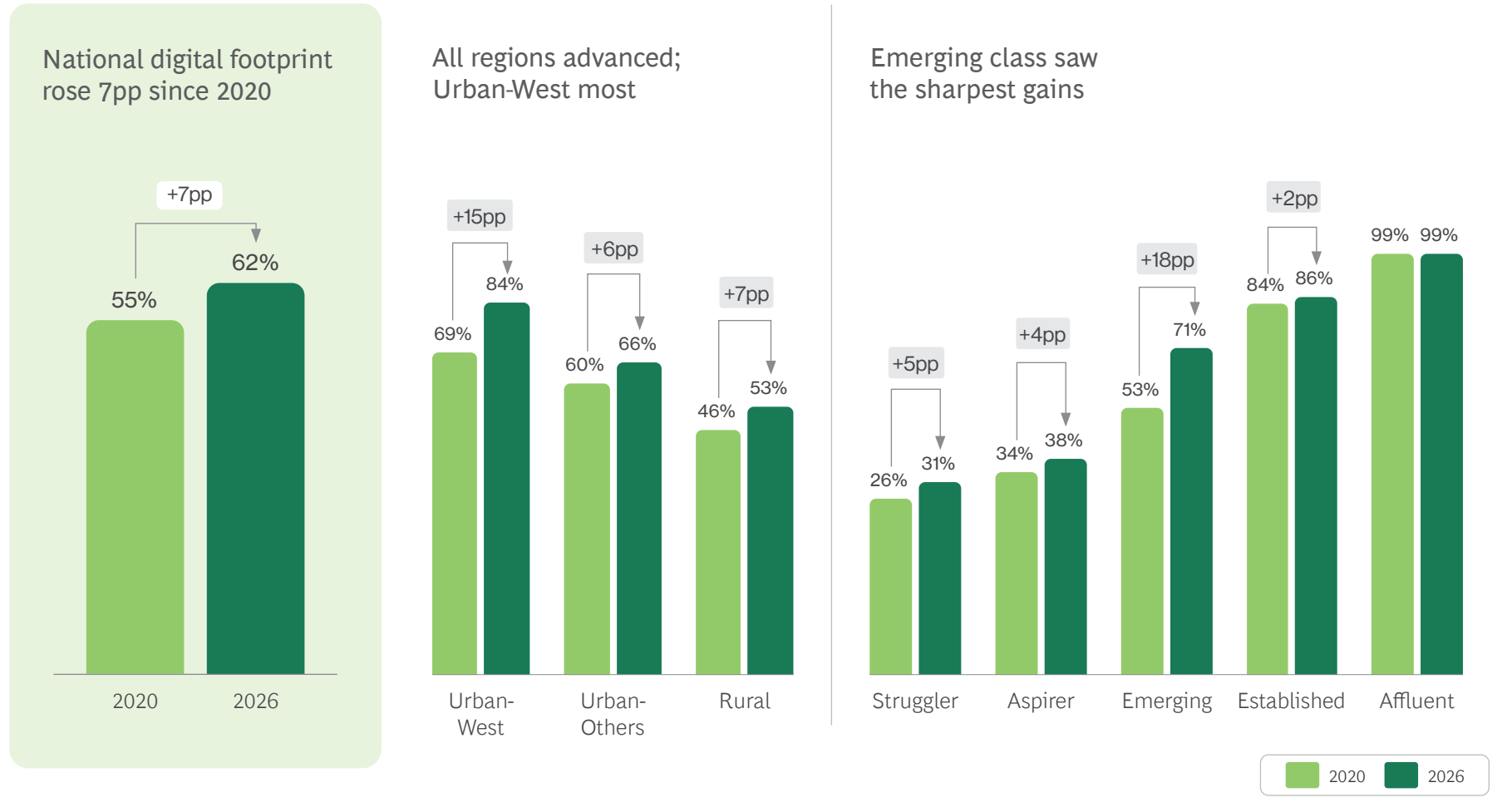
Higher-income consumers



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Questions: “Do you personally use a mobile SIM card?”, “Which data connection do you currently use?”, “How much more, if anything, would you be willing to pay for a 5G plan?”

5 *Digital footprint* is broadening, with access improving across all regions and income groups

Share of consumers using internet



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272), 2020 (n=1,200); Question: “Do you have access to the internet (mobile data, wifi or broadband)?”

Note: Urban-West: Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara; Urban-Others: Galle, Kandy, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Rathnapura, Badulla, Jaffna, Vavuniya, Ampara, Trincomalee and Batticaloa; Rural: rural areas across the same surveyed districts

6 GenAI adoption has begun, led by the young, Urban-West, affluents

Share of consumers

55% of consumers are aware

18% have already adopted GenAI



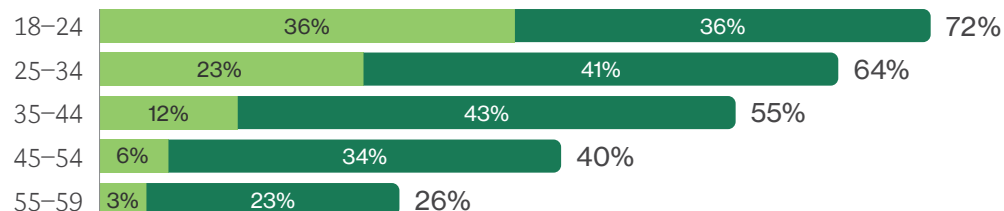
If I need to search for something, I just ask ChatGPT. It gives me everything quickly, without me having to go through different websites.

– 21 year old shopper

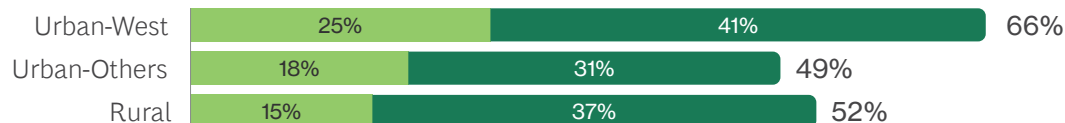


Share of consumers in Sri Lanka

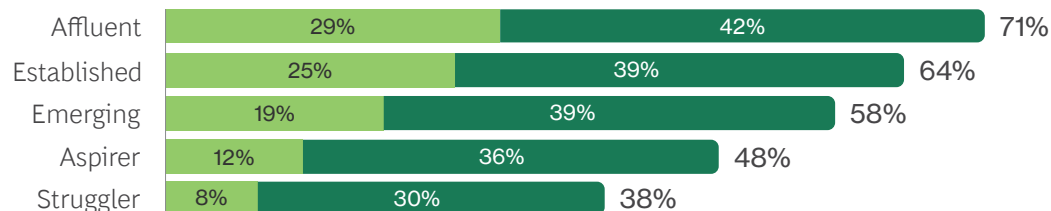
Age is the sharpest adoption divide



Region gives Urban-West an early lead



Income accelerates early adoption



Adopted Aware but not adopted

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: “Which of the following statements apply to you regarding GenAI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini)?”

Note: Urban-West: Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara; Urban-Others: Galle, Kandy, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Rathnapura, Badulla, Jaffna, Vavuniya, Ampara, Trincomalee and Batticaloa; Rural: rural areas across the same surveyed districts



02 | How Sri Lanka discovers

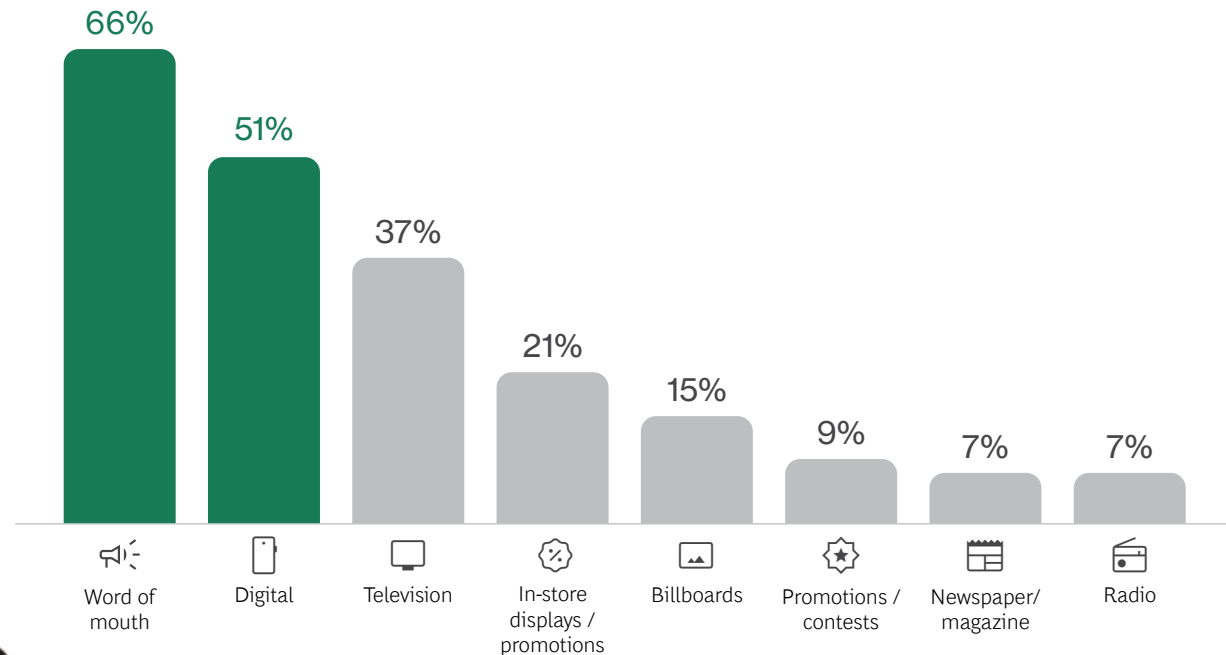
Word of mouth still leads, while *digital is now mainstream*

Discovery is shaped by two key influences: word of mouth that builds trust, and digital channels that introduce consumers to a broader range of brands and products.

Digital influence, or the use of an online source that shapes a purchase decision, has risen by ~20 pp since 2020.

For brands, winning consideration requires both: advocacy that builds credibility and digital reach that expands the shortlist.

Share of consumers citing source among top 3 influences



Digital influence has *grown significantly* since 2020

32%

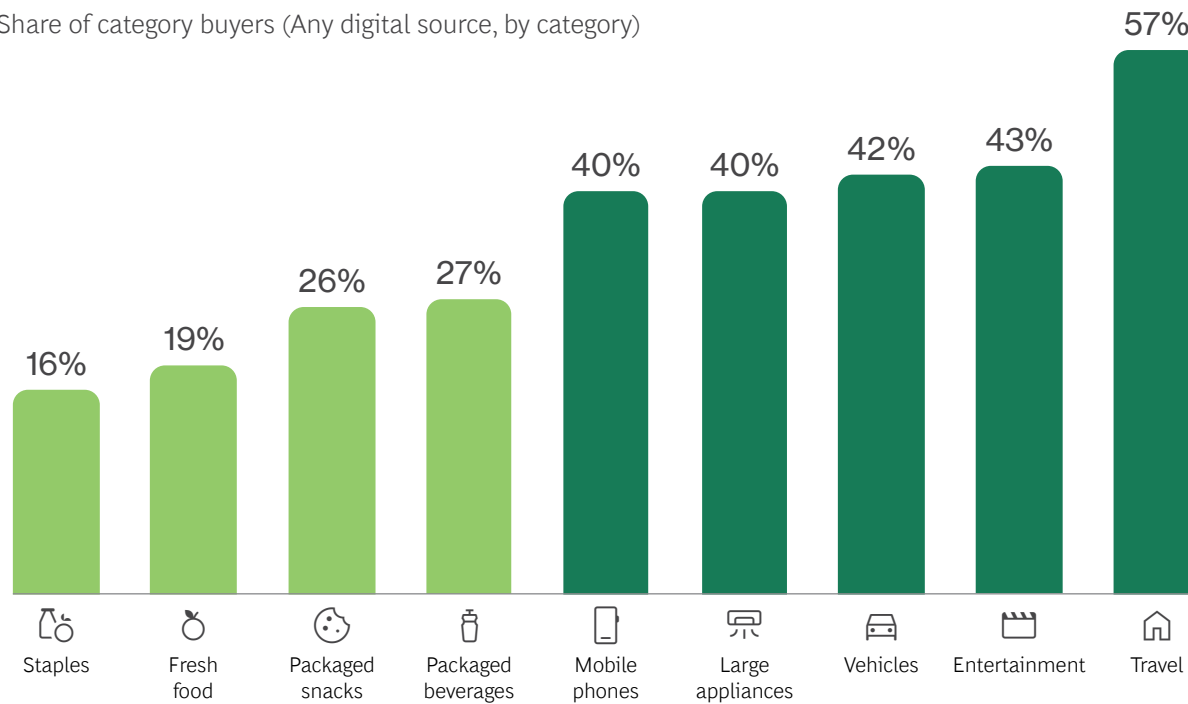


51%

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272), 2020 (n=1,200); Question: "Which are the top sources which influence your decision when buying [category]? Number reported for each source is a weighted average across categories"

Digital influence runs higher in leisure & high-value purchases

Share of category buyers (Any digital source, by category)



Low digital influence



High digital influence



Everyday Purchases (10–30%)



Leisure & high-value purchases (40–60%)



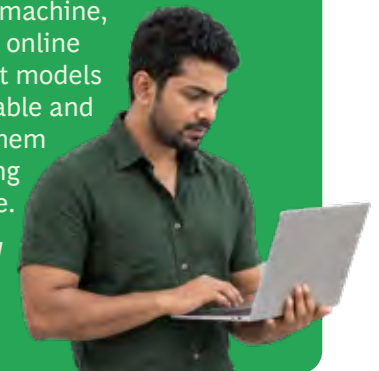
Before booking a hotel, I always read the reviews. The photos may look good, but you don't really know what the guests experienced.

– 28 year old shopper



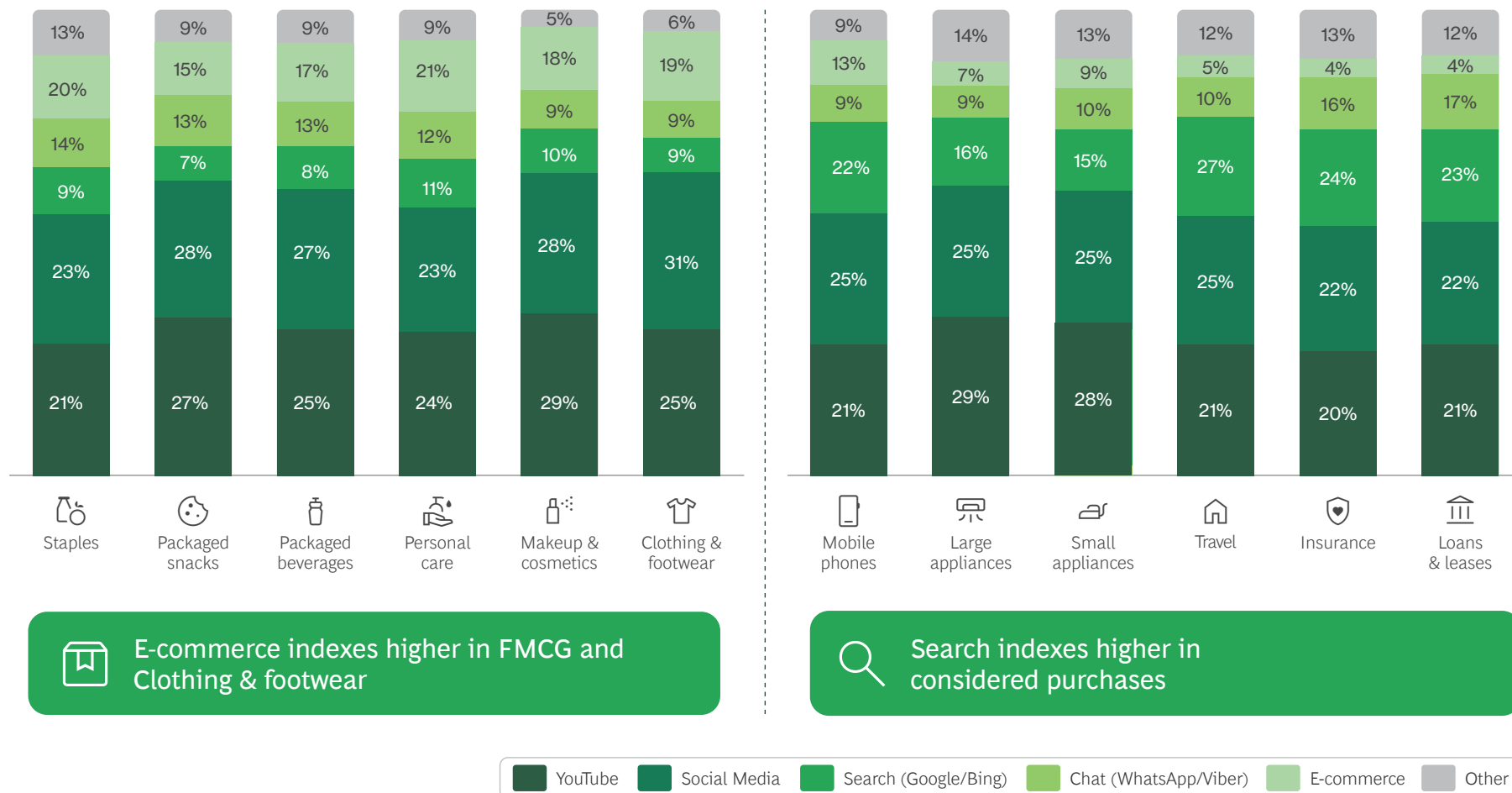
When I was buying a washing machine, I first went online to see what models were available and compare them before going to the store.

– 35 year old shopper



Within digital, *video and social media* lead discovery

Share of digitally influenced buyers (Top rank, by category)

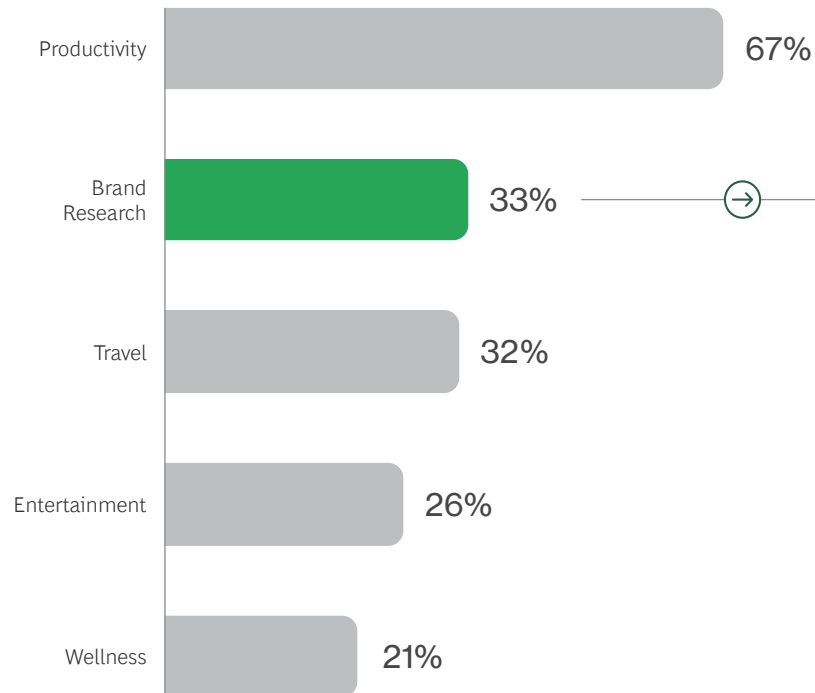


Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Which are the top digital sources which influence your decision when buying [category]?"

GenAI is emerging as the *next discovery frontier*

GenAI is extending beyond productivity into discovery

Share of GenAI users



Young, urban, Established+ over index on brand research

39%
Gen Z

43%
Urban

46%
Established+

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "How have you personally used GenAI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini)?"

Note: Established+ includes consumers with average nominal monthly household income above LKR 150K; Productivity includes research, translation, writing, work/personal tasks and coding; Brand research includes product research and recommendations; Travel includes itinerary planning and accommodation search; Entertainment includes gaming and recreational use; Wellness includes healthcare and mental health support.



Spend expectations run well ahead of income expectations

Over the next six months, nearly twice as many consumers expect household spending to increase as expect income to rise.

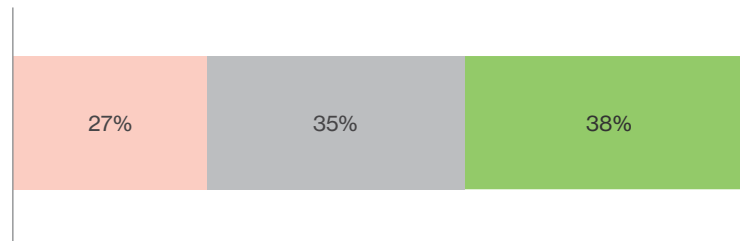
Near-term consumer sentiment remains cautious as consumers appear to be bracing, rather than choosing, to spend more.

For brands, it becomes critical to determine where effort will have greater impact: strengthening loyalty or creating incremental demand.



Change in income (% of consumers)

Next 6 months
(Expected)

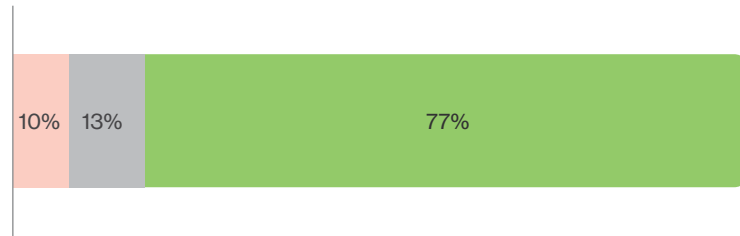


Net sentiment
(%more – %less)

+11%

Change in spends (% of consumers)

Next 6 months
(Expected)



+67%

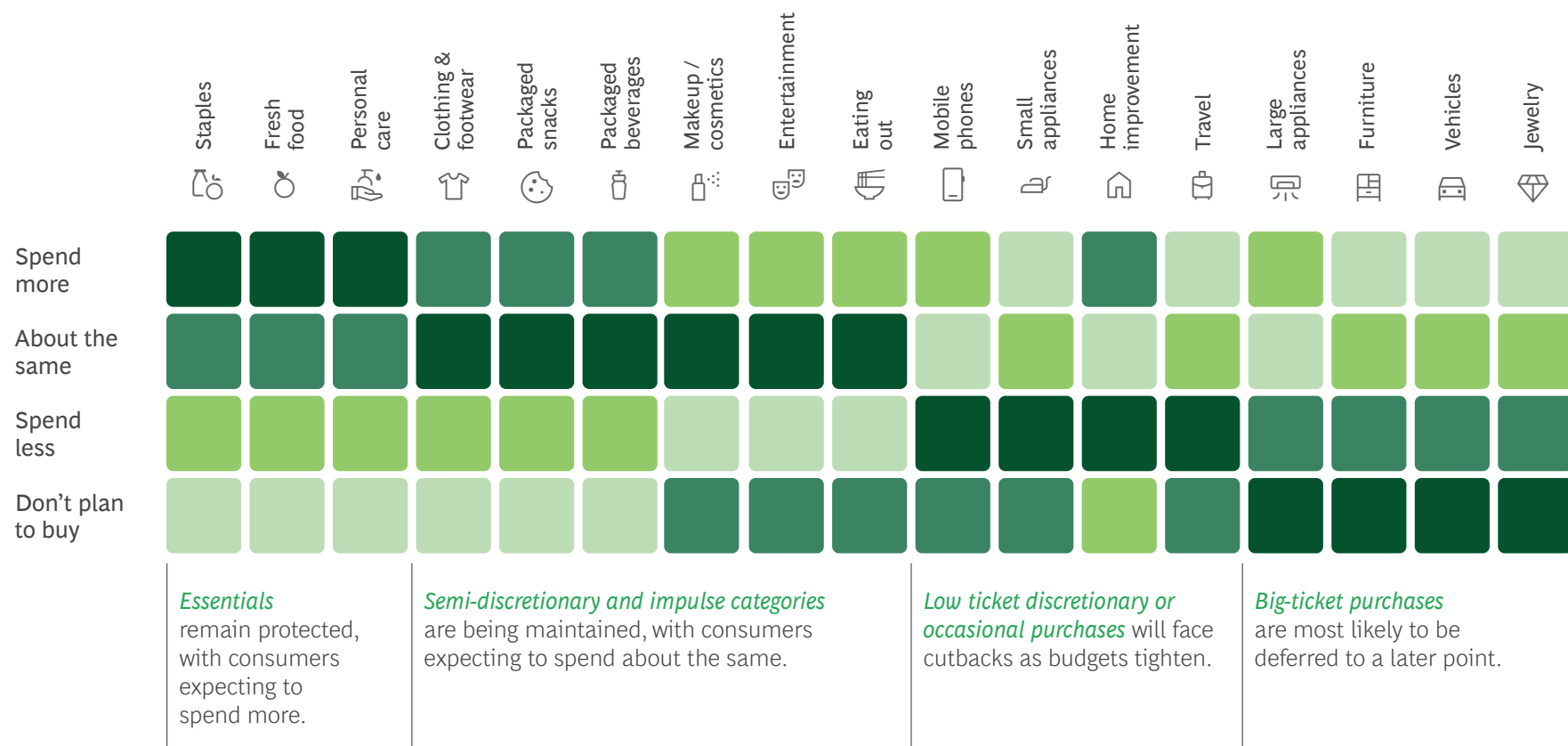
Uniform results across all income groups

Less About the same More

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272), Question: “How do you expect your household income to change over the next 6 months?” and “How do you expect your overall household spending to change over the next 6 months?”

Consumers plan to *rationalize their spends* based on the nature of the category

Share of consumers expecting change in spend in the next 6 months, by category

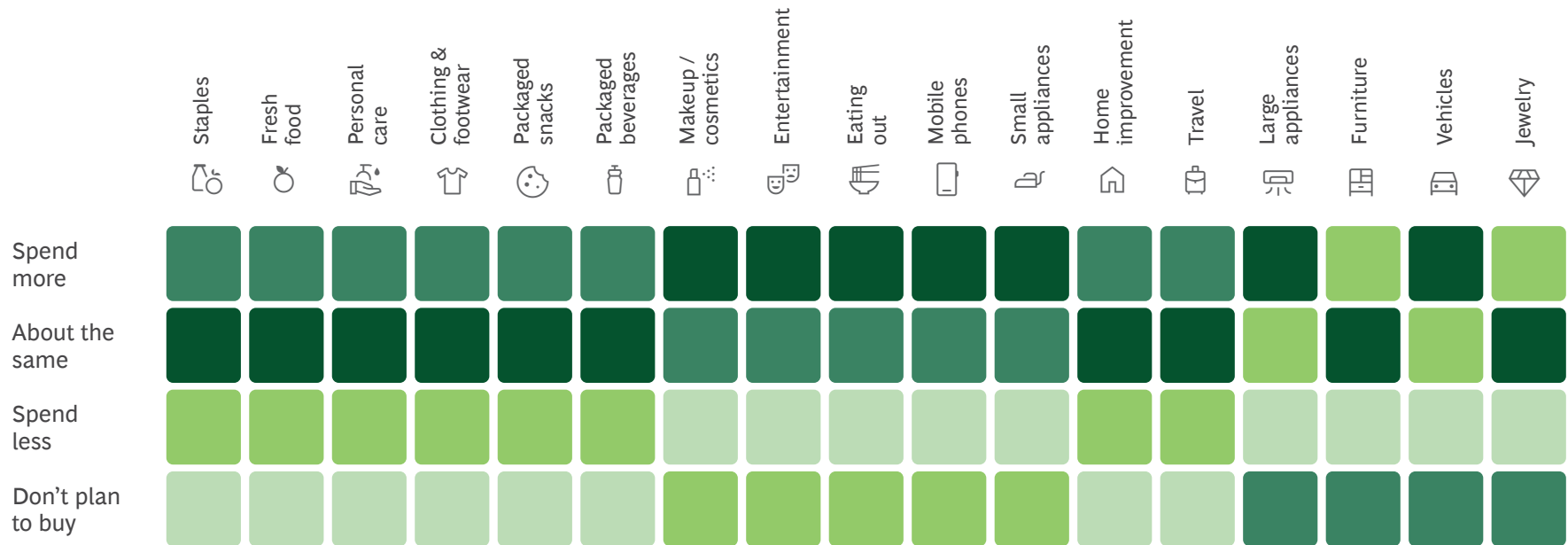


Highest proportion Lowest proportion

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: “Over the next 6 months, do you expect to spend more, about the same, or less on [category]?”

However, Established+ households show *greater spending resilience*

Share of consumers expecting change in spend in the next 6 months, by category



Intent to cut or defer drops ~40% among Established+, *in discretionary categories.*



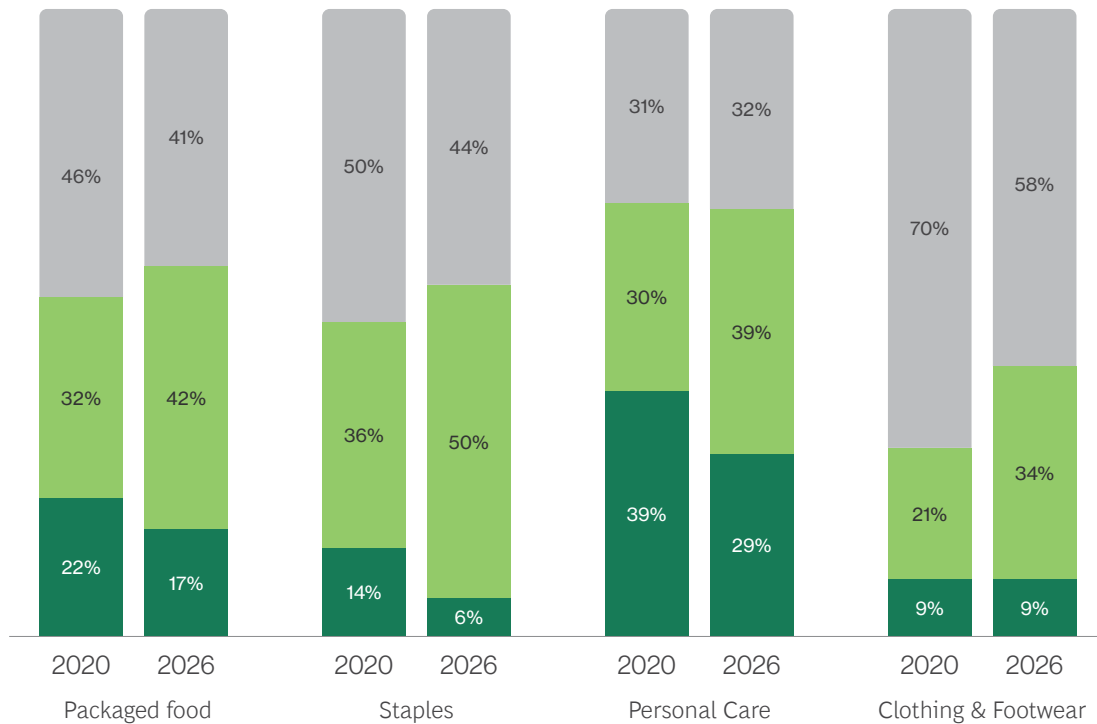
Highest proportion Lowest proportion

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Over the next 6 months, do you expect to spend more, about the same, or less on [category]?"

Note: Established+ includes consumers with average nominal monthly household income above LKR 150K

Brand consideration is rising, but single brand preference has fallen

Share of category buyers



Change in single brand preference (%)

22% → 17%
-5 pp

14% → 6%
-8 pp

39% → 29%
-10 pp

9% → 9%
0 pp

Open to any / unbranded 2-3 brands One specific brand



I keep seeing so many new brands on social media nowadays, so I end up trying different ones. There's just a lot more to choose from now.

- 23 year old shopper



When I'm buying groceries, I usually have two or three brands in mind. I don't have one fixed brand that I always buy.

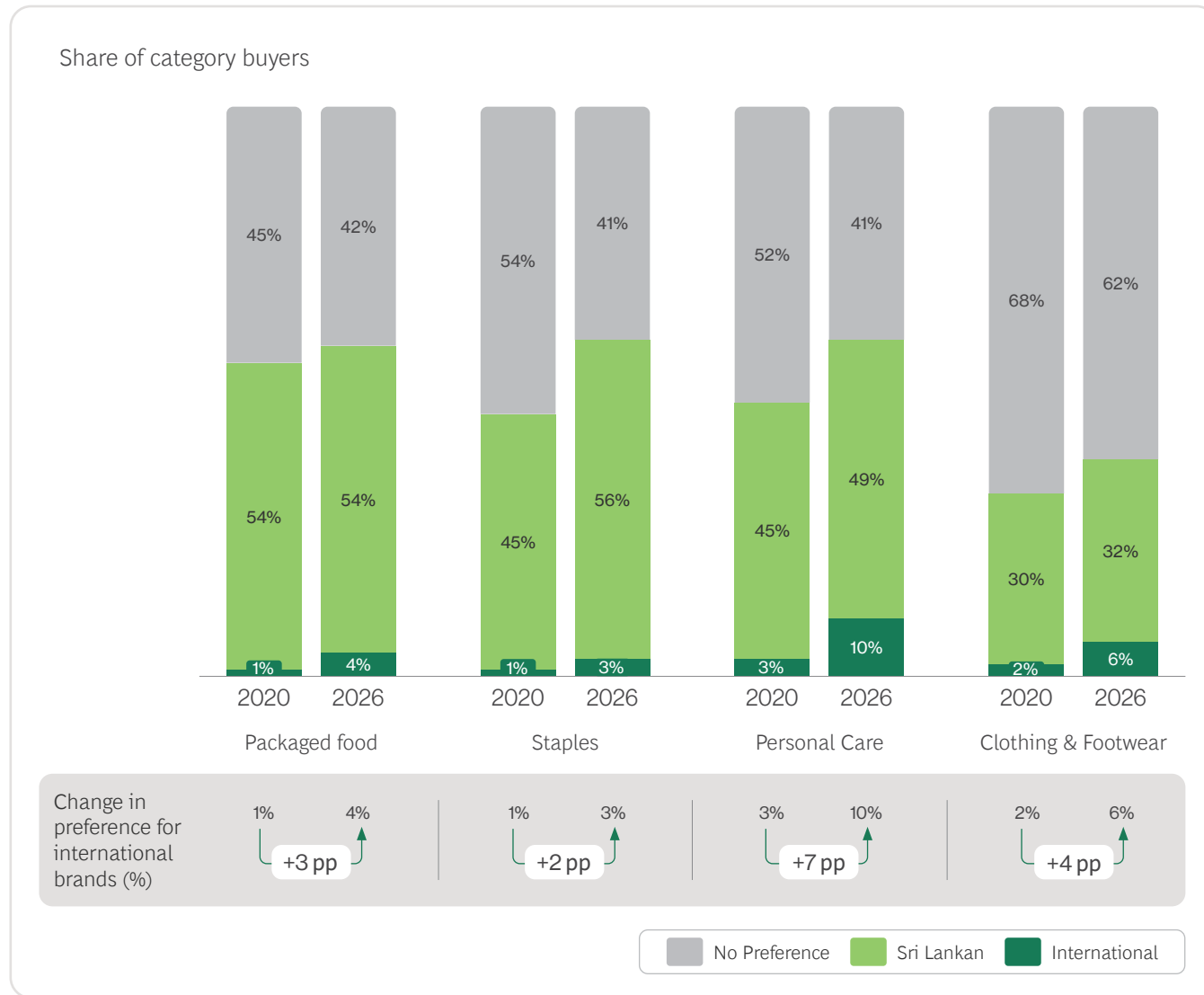
- 37 year old shopper



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272), 2020 (n=1,200); Question: "When buying [category], do you have one specific brand in mind, 2-3 brands in mind, or are you open to any brand?"

Note: Packaged food includes packaged snacks and beverages

Preference for *international brands* is rising from a small base



We've been having these Sri Lankan biscuits at home since I was a child. My whole family loves the taste, so we keep buying them.

- 56 year old shopper



For work shoes, I'd rather buy a good international brand. I feel it makes me look more sophisticated when I'm meeting clients.

- 37 year old shopper

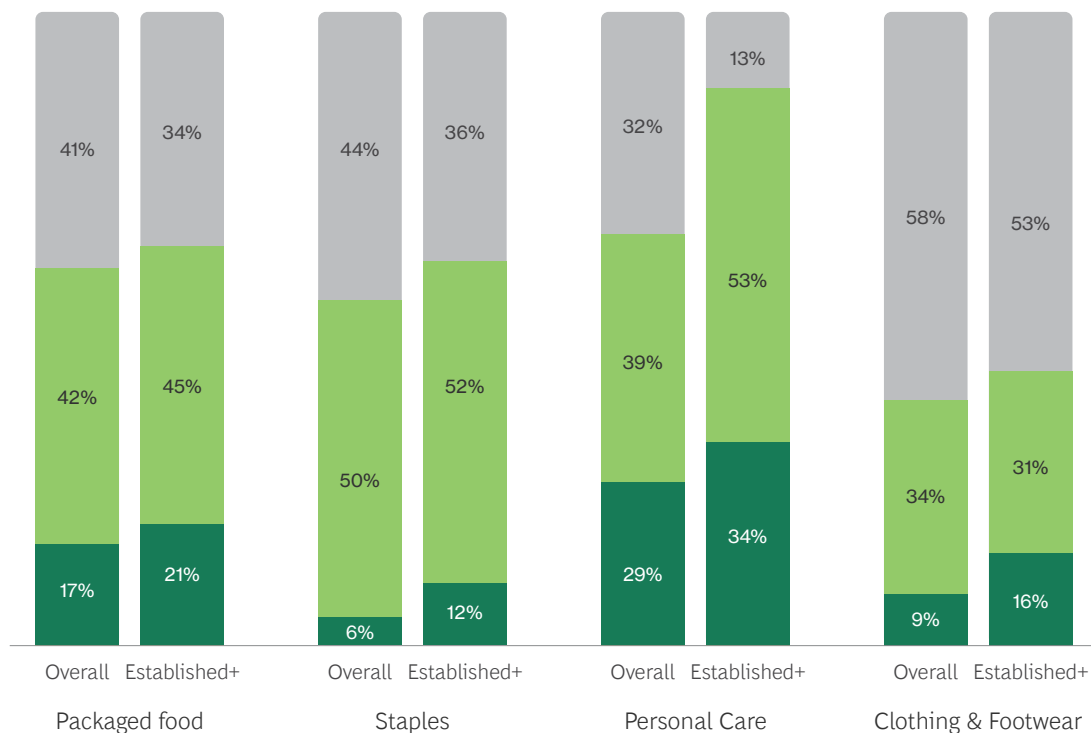


Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272), 2020 (n=1,200); Question: "When buying [category], do you generally prefer Sri Lankan brands, international/imported brands, or have no preference?"

Note: Packaged food includes packaged snacks and beverages

Established+ households are more *brand-led*...

Share of category buyers



Change in single brand preference (%)

17% → 21%
+4 pp

6% → 12%
+6 pp

29% → 34%
+5 pp

9% → 16%
+7 pp

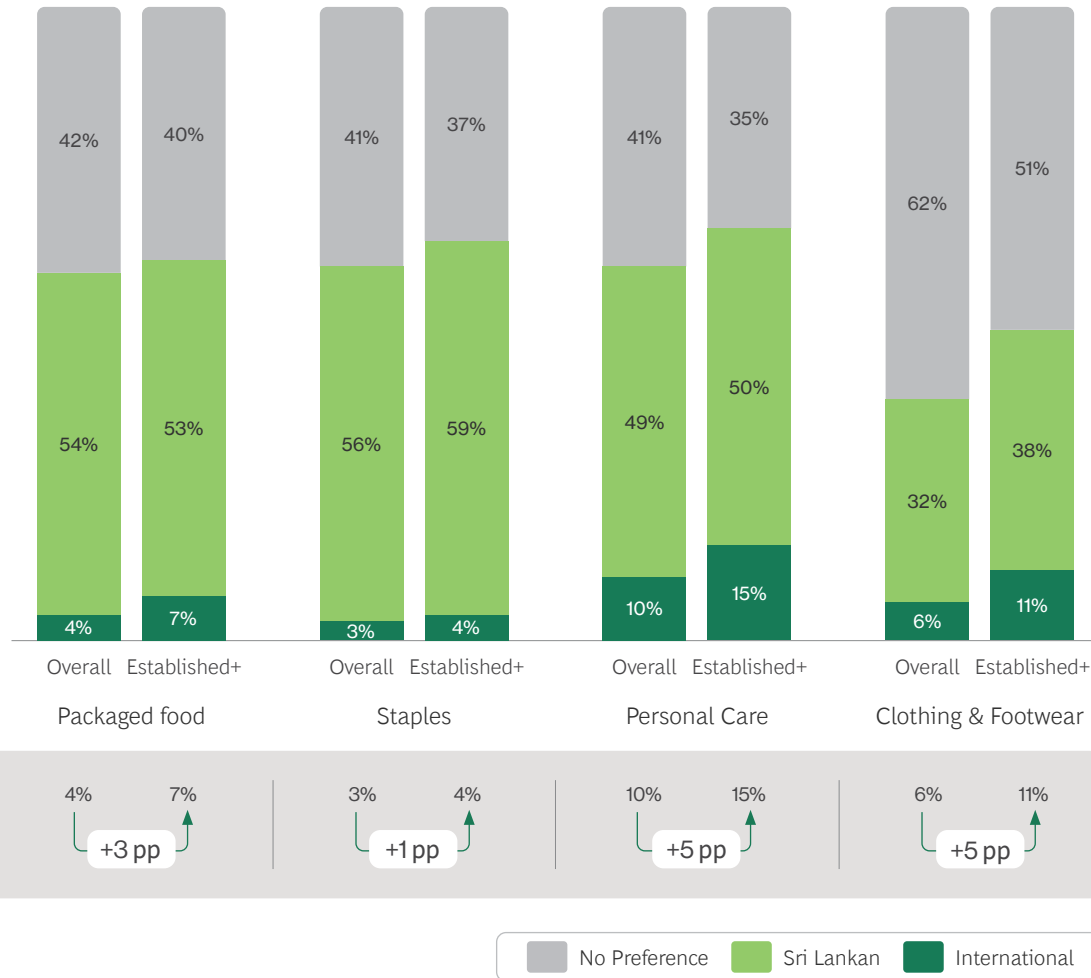
Open to any / unbranded 2-3 brands One specific brand



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "When buying [category], do you have one specific brand in mind, 2–3 brands in mind, or are you open to any brand?"
Note: Packaged food includes packaged snacks and beverages; Established+ includes consumers with average nominal monthly household income above LKR 150K

...and display stronger *preference for international brands*

Share of category buyers



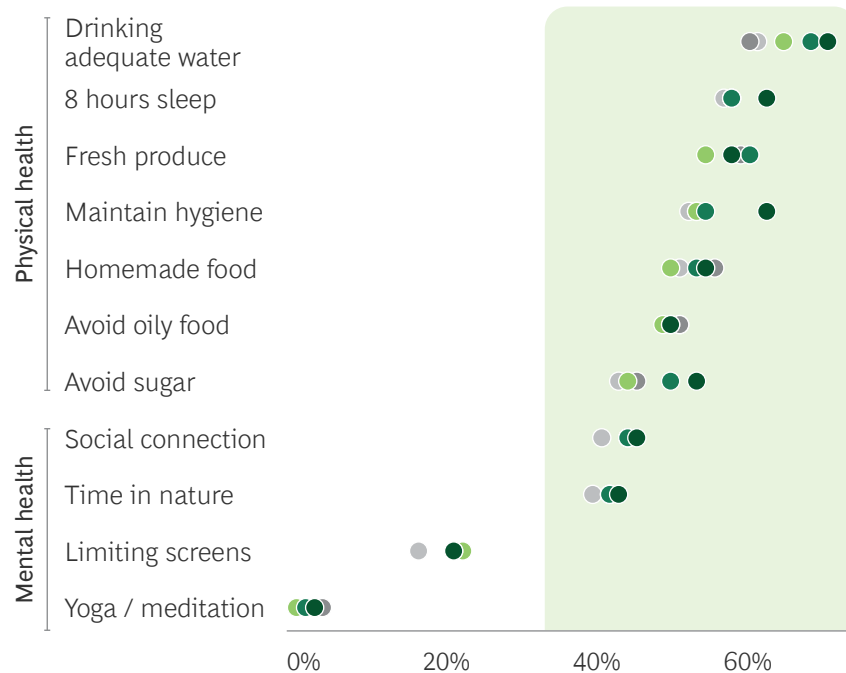
Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "When buying [category], do you generally prefer Sri Lankan brands, international/imported brands, or have no preference?"

Note: Packaged food includes packaged snacks and beverages; Established+ includes consumers with average nominal monthly household income above LKR 150K

Healthy habits are mainstream, but *paid participation* is gated

97% of consumers practice at least one healthy behavior...

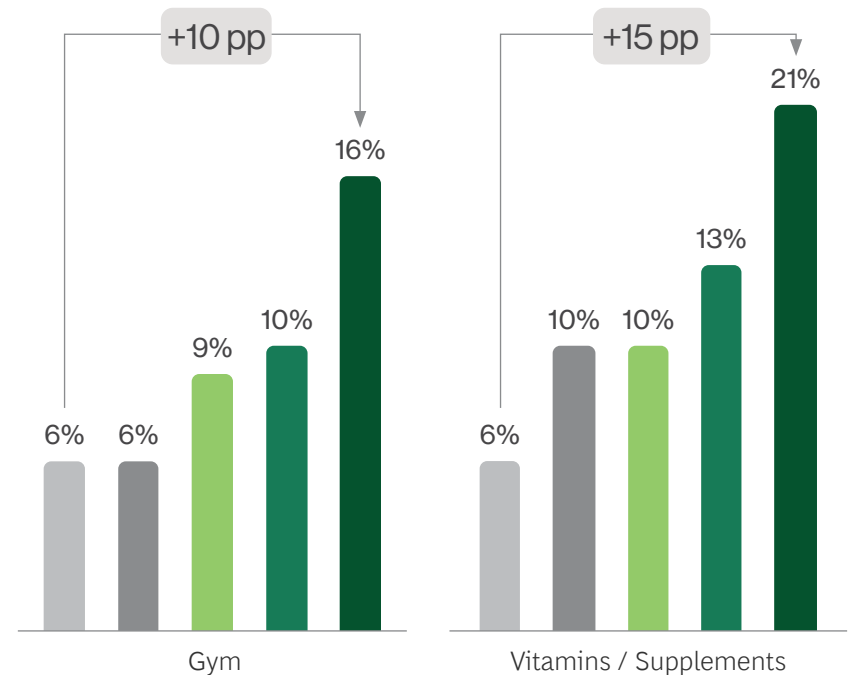
Share of consumers



● Struggler ● Aspirer ● Emerging ● Established ● Affluent

...but paid participation concentrates among affluents

Share of consumers practicing behavior



■ Struggler ■ Aspirer ■ Emerging ■ Established ■ Affluent

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Which of these activities do you regularly do to stay healthy?"

Health is emerging as a *purchase criterion*, especially among Established+

Share of consumers ranking health attribute in top 5

Health-related choice driver	Overall	Established+
 Natural ingredients (Personal Care)	42%	51%
 No artificial additives (Packaged Snacks)	28%	37%
 Organic options (Staples)	17%	33%
 Purity certification (Staples)	16%	38%
 Low sugar / low fat (Packaged Snacks)	16%	23%



For things I use on my skin every day, I don't want anything with parabens or artificial fragrances. I've heard they can cause cancer.

- 34 year old shopper



Nowadays, you keep seeing things on social media about cutting down on sugar, so I try to choose lower-sugar options whenever I can.

- 28 year old shopper

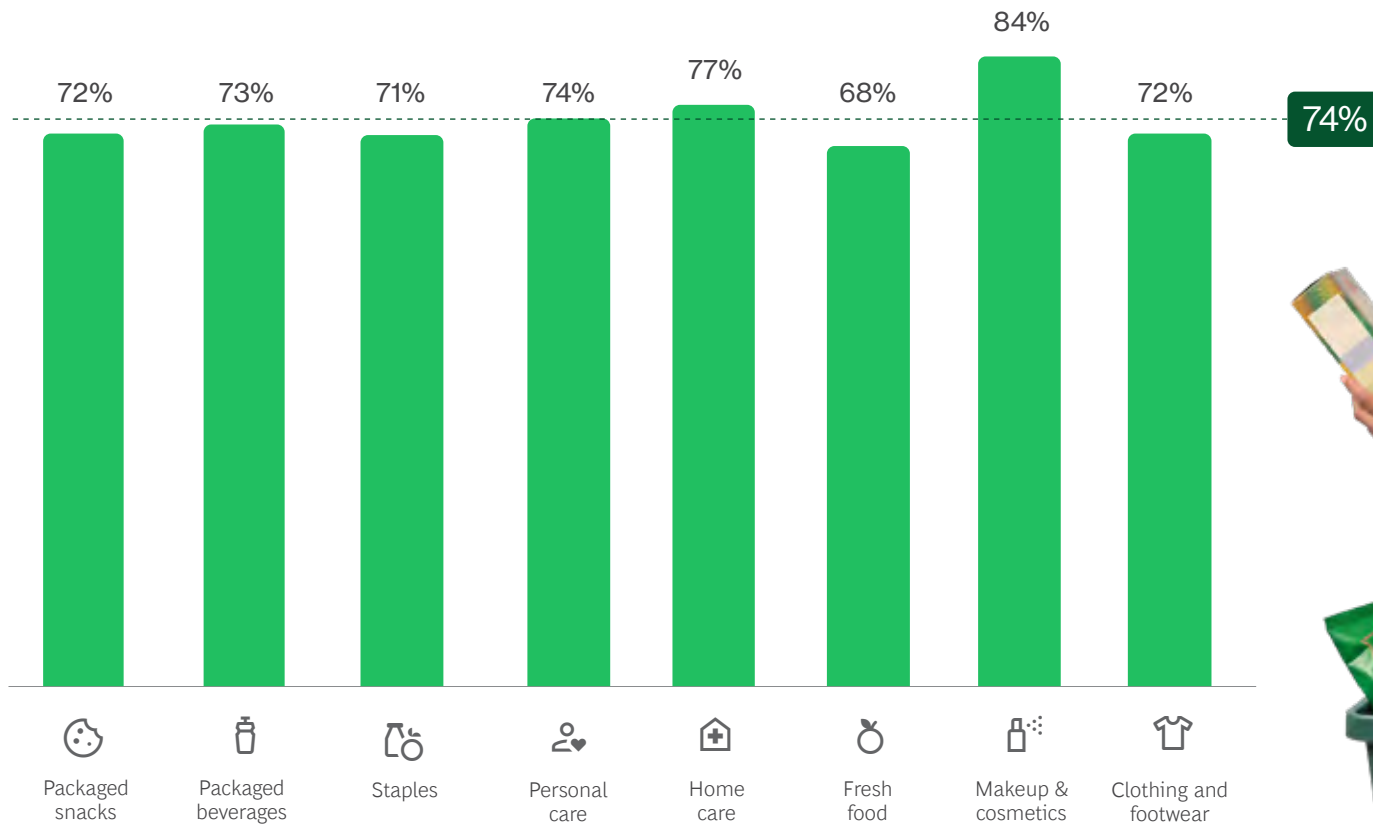


Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Which are the top factors which influence your decision when buying [category]?"

Note: Established+ includes consumers with average nominal monthly household income above LKR 150K

Consumers default to a *single, habitual channel*

Share of consumers using only one channel for all purchases in the category



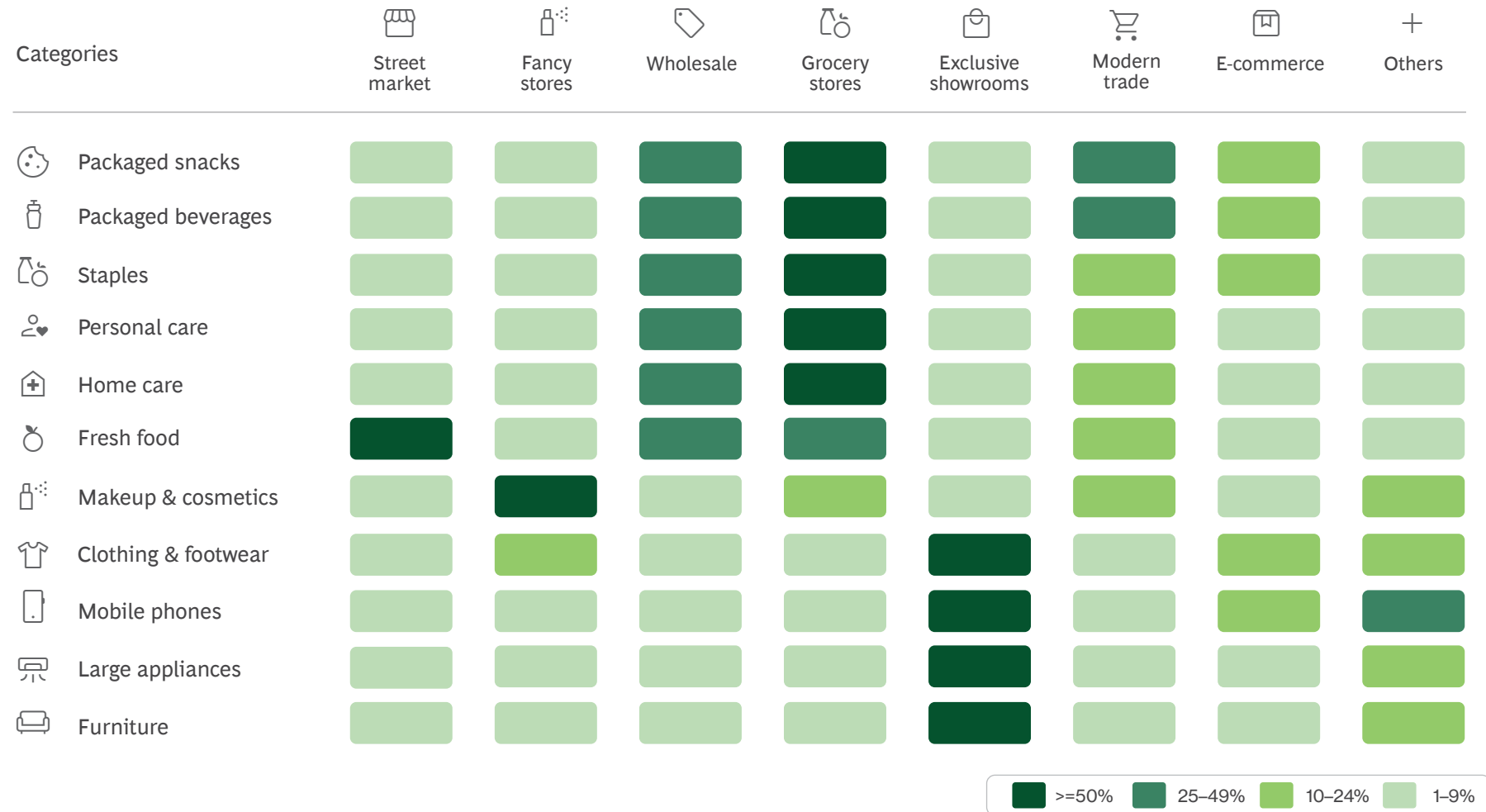
Usage uniform by income classes



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Derived from Question: "Which of these channels have you used in the last one year to purchase [category]?"

Each category retains a *clear channel home*

Share of category buyers purchasing via channel (last 12 months)

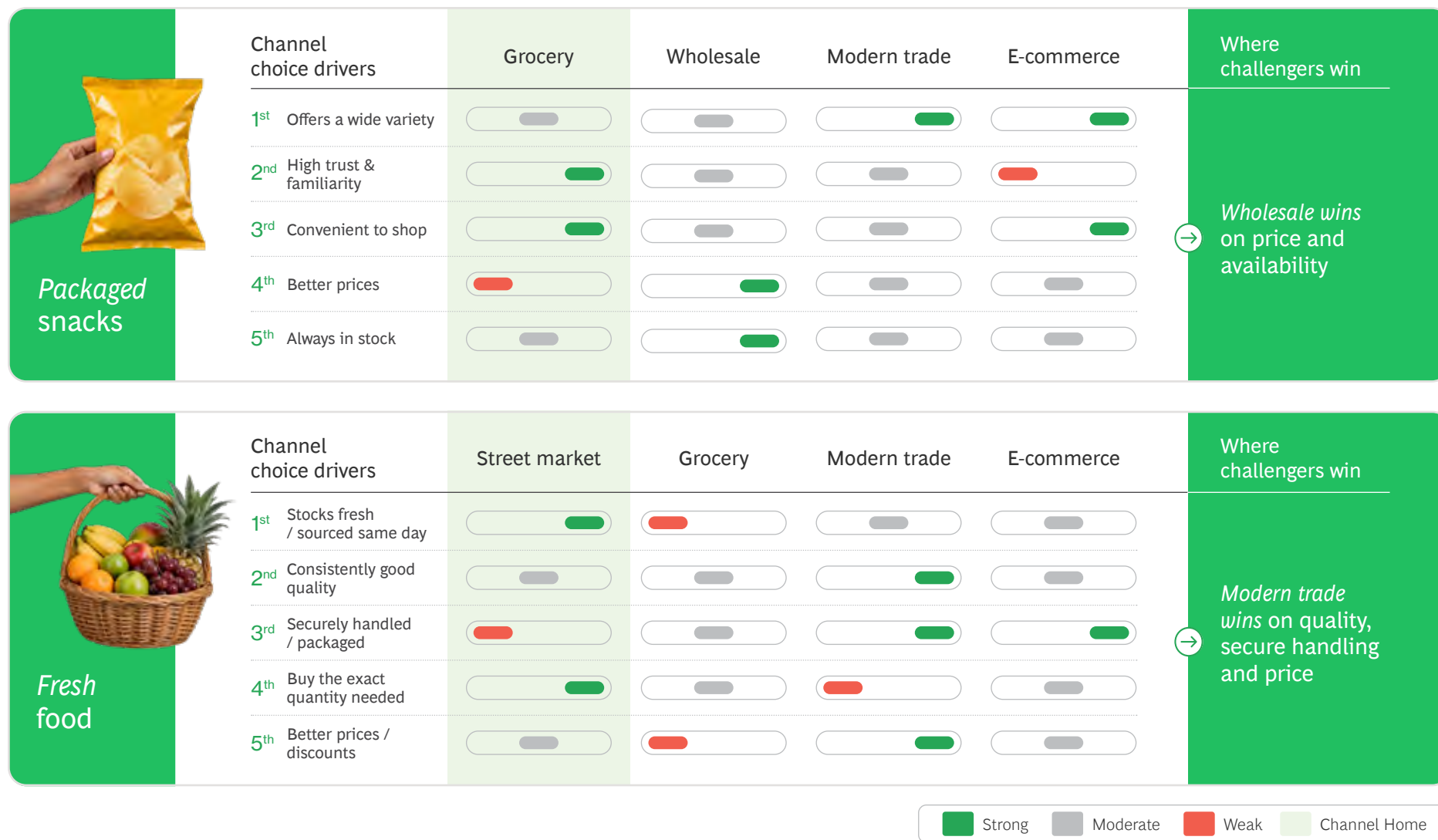


Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Which of these channels have you used in the last one year to purchase [category]?"

Note: E-commerce channel includes delivery platforms, marketplaces, single-brand sites and C2C platforms

Incumbent channels lag on some *key choice drivers*...

Channel perception against Top 5 channel choice drivers



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Thinking of your purchase of [category], which channels would you associate with each of the following statements?"

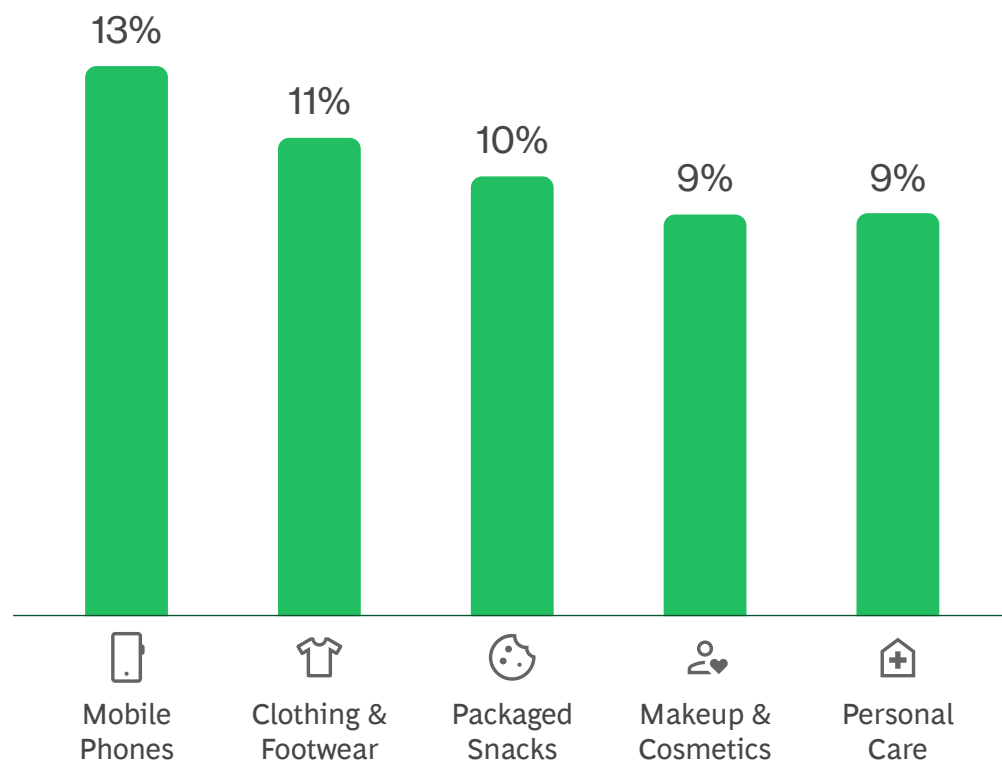
...giving *challenger formats* a right to win



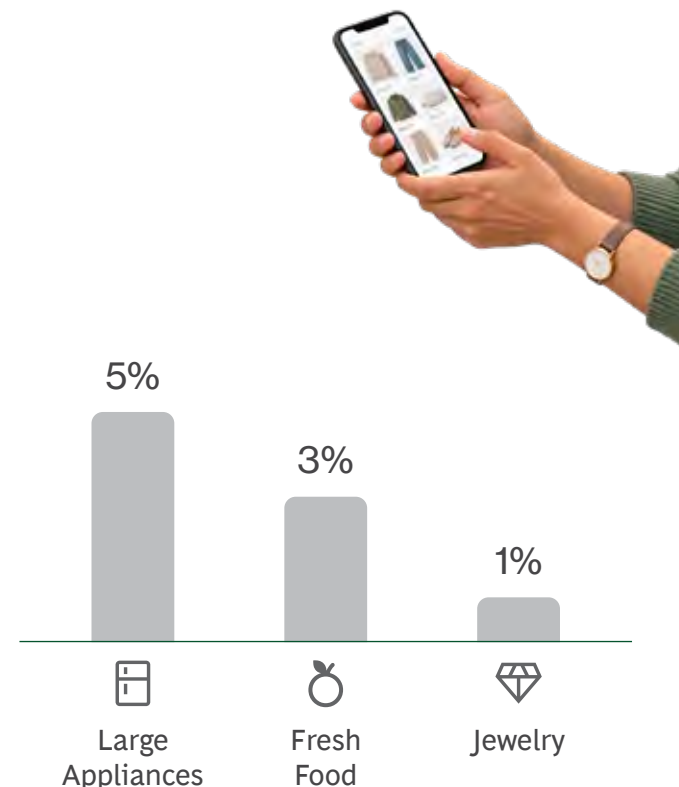
Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Thinking of your purchase of [category], which channels would you associate with each of the following statements?"

E-commerce has gained relevance in select categories

Share of category buyers using E-commerce channel



E-commerce now has a meaningful share of category buyers in *mobile, FMCG and fashion*



But stays marginal in *fresh & high-value goods*

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Questions: "Which of these channels have you used in the last one year to purchase [category]?"

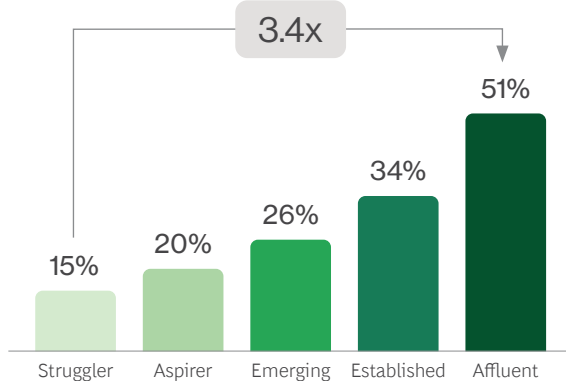
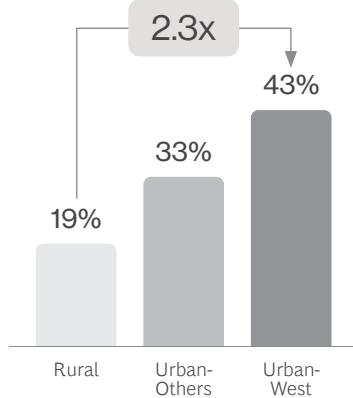
Note: E-commerce channel includes delivery platforms, marketplaces, single-brand sites and C2C platforms

Modern trade usage is highest in Urban-West, among affluent consumers

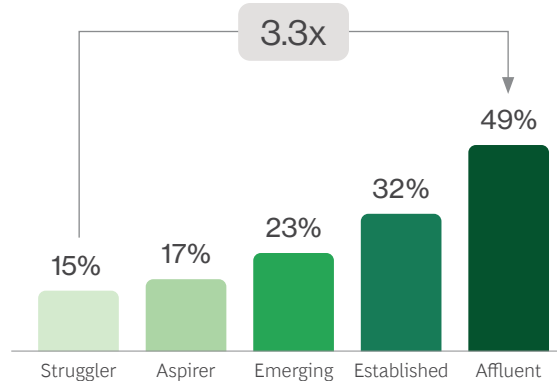
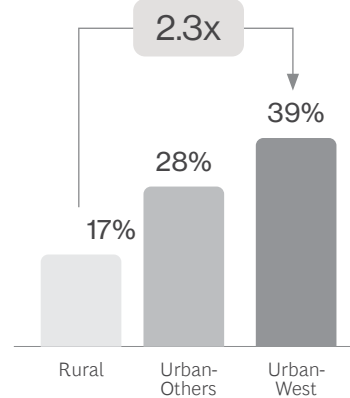
Share of category buyers using modern trade channel

Illustrative

Packaged Snacks



Personal Care



Modern trade is more prevalent in Urban-West...

...and usage rises sharply with affluence

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Questions: "Which of these channels have you used in the last one year to purchase [category]?"

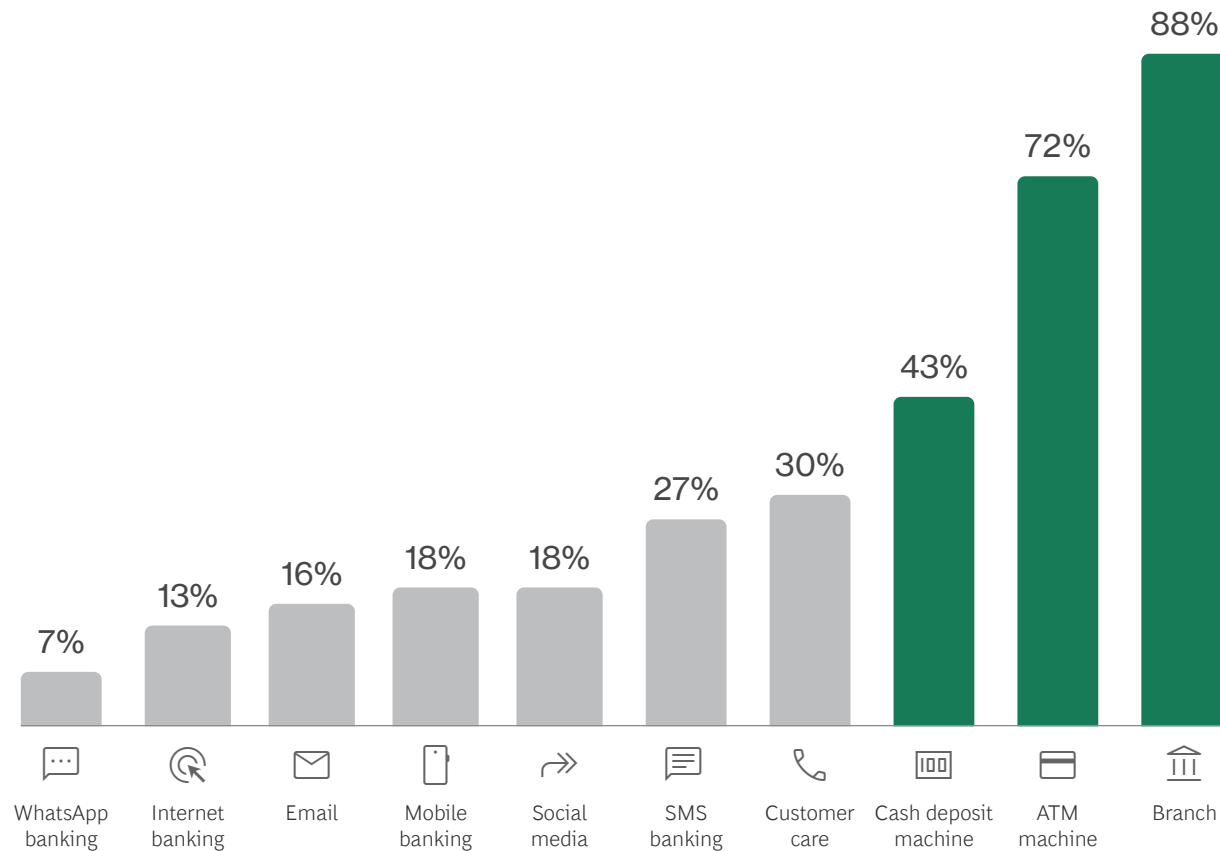


04 | How Sri Lanka transacts

Cash still anchors how consumers bank and pay

Physical channels are the most widely used banking touchpoints

Share of banked consumers using channel



I buy things online quite often, but I still prefer cash on delivery. I feel more comfortable paying once the product is in my hands.

– 55 year old shopper

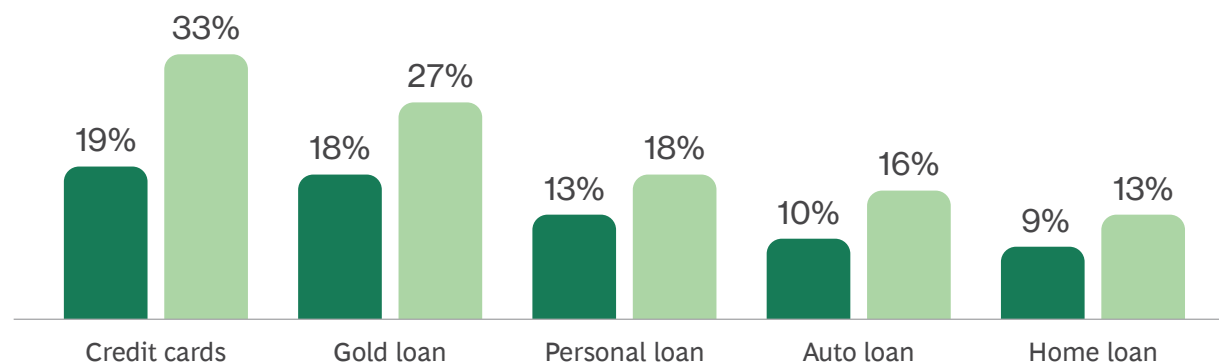


Source: 1. BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: “Which of these banking channels do you use?”

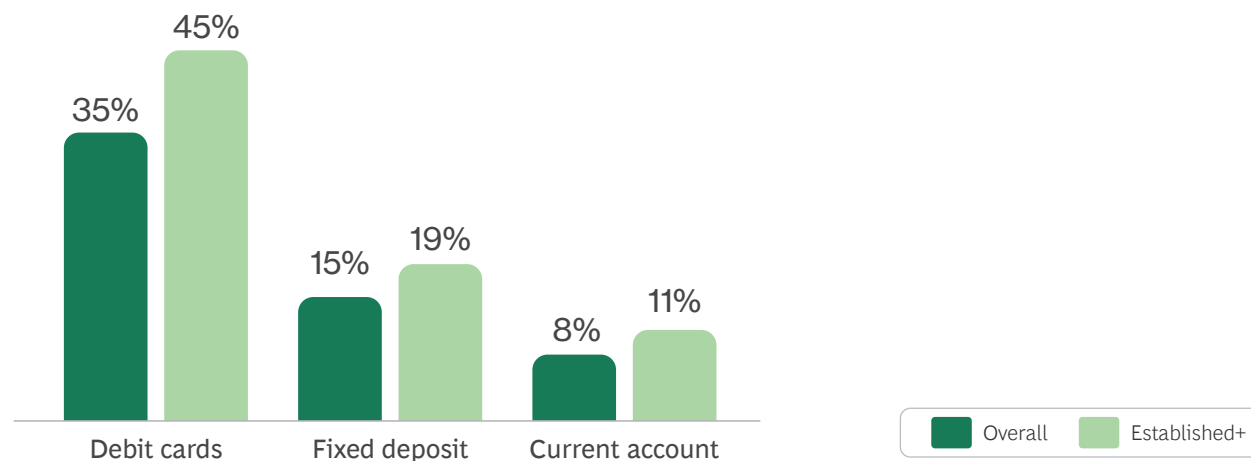
Credit remains narrow and top-heavy

Credit remains skewed towards Established+

Share of consumers holding product



Deposit-side products skew less sharply



For any big purchase, I prefer putting it on my credit card. I'd rather keep my savings aside in case I need them for an emergency.

– 49 year old shopper

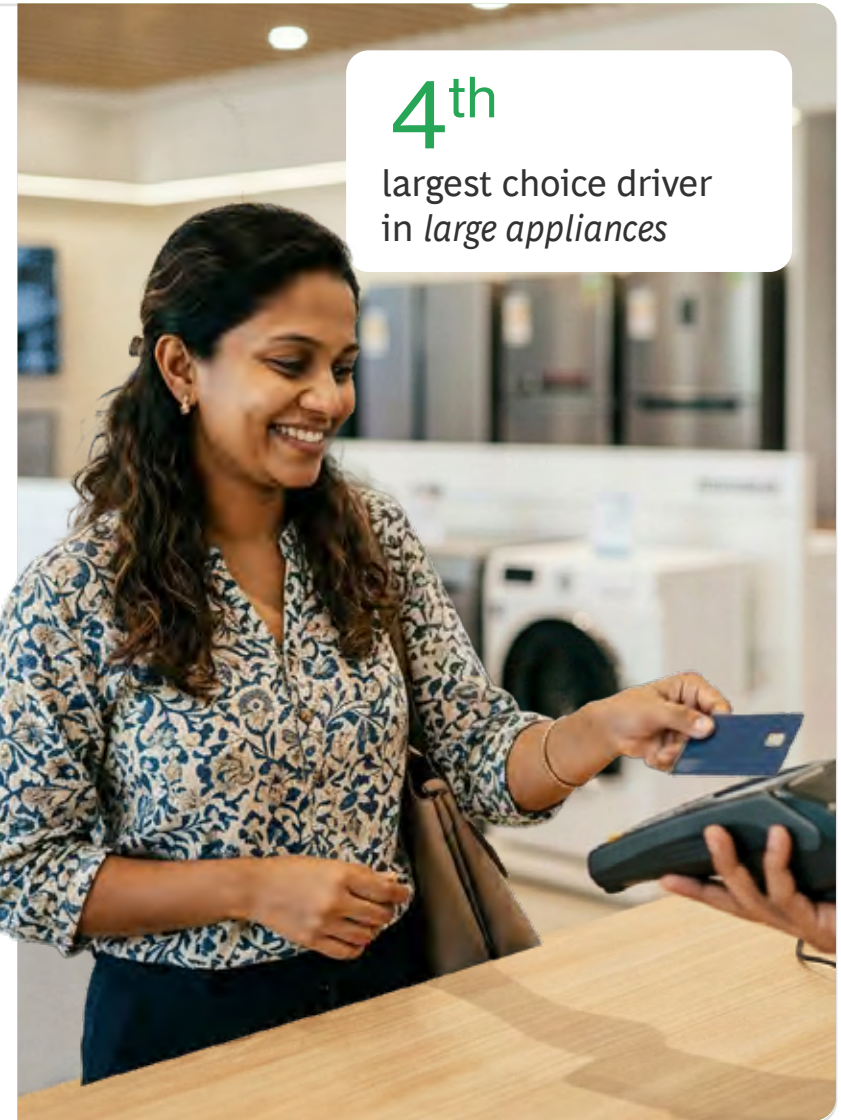
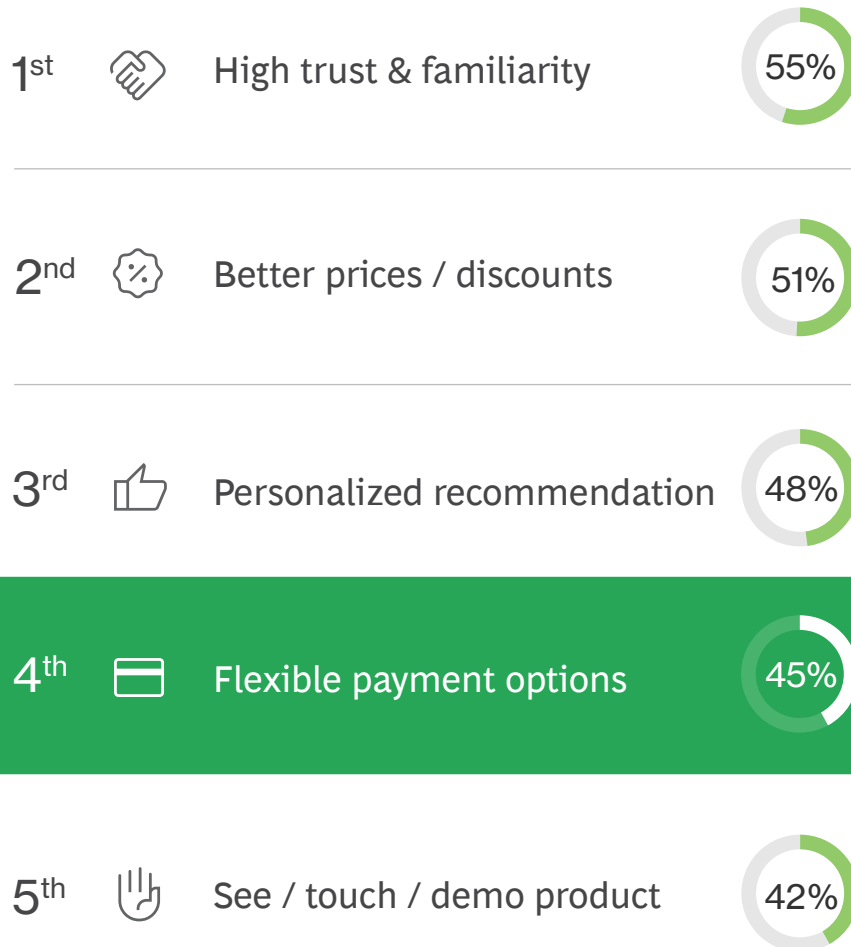


Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: “Which of these banking products or services do you hold/use?”

Note: Established+ includes consumers with average nominal monthly household income above LKR 150K

Flexible payment is a key choice driver for big-ticket items

Share of large-appliance buyers citing factor among top choice drivers



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Which are the top factors which influence your decision when buying [category]?"

Digital banking is yet to become mainstream

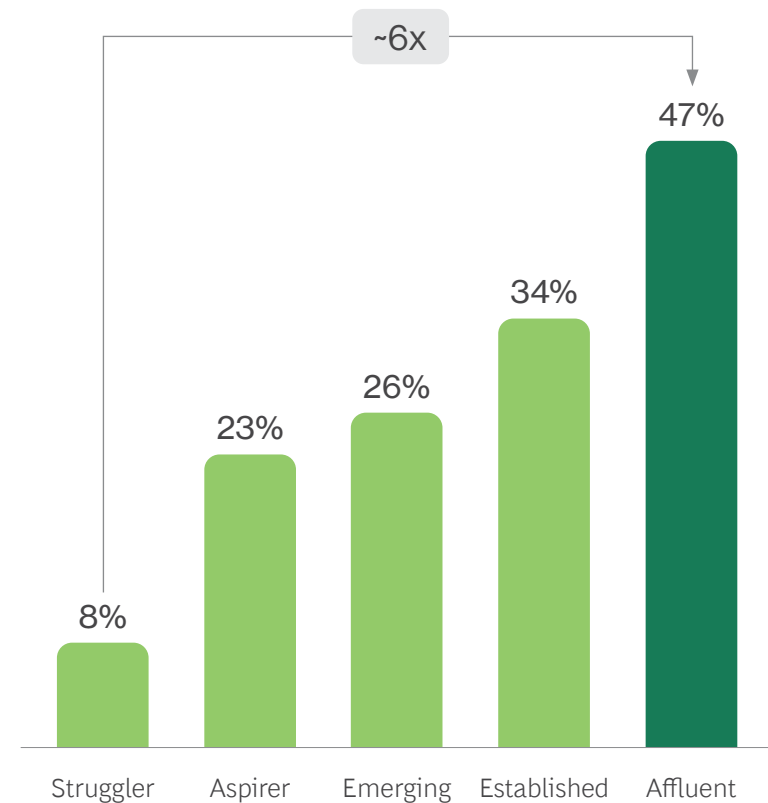
25%

of account holders
bank digitally



Adoption skews sharply to affluents

Account holders availing digital banking
(mobile / internet) services



Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Questions: "Which of these banking channels do you use?"

Adoption barriers shift from *structural at the bottom* to *experiential at the top*

Share of digital-banking non-users citing reason among top 3

Top concerns for lower-income groups

Capability hinders lower-income groups...

1st Unfamiliarity

2nd Limited access to internet

3rd Device incompatibility



I've never really used banking on my phone, and no one around me uses it either. There's no one to show me what to do, so I'd rather just go to the branch.

– 61 year old shopper



Top concerns for Established+ consumers

...while Established+ are held back by safety & usability concerns

1st Poor usability

2nd Safety concerns

3rd Technical glitches



I'm quite comfortable with technology, but I still get nervous about making payments digitally. You keep hearing about scams or transactions getting stuck, so I'm a bit hesitant.

– 43 year old shopper



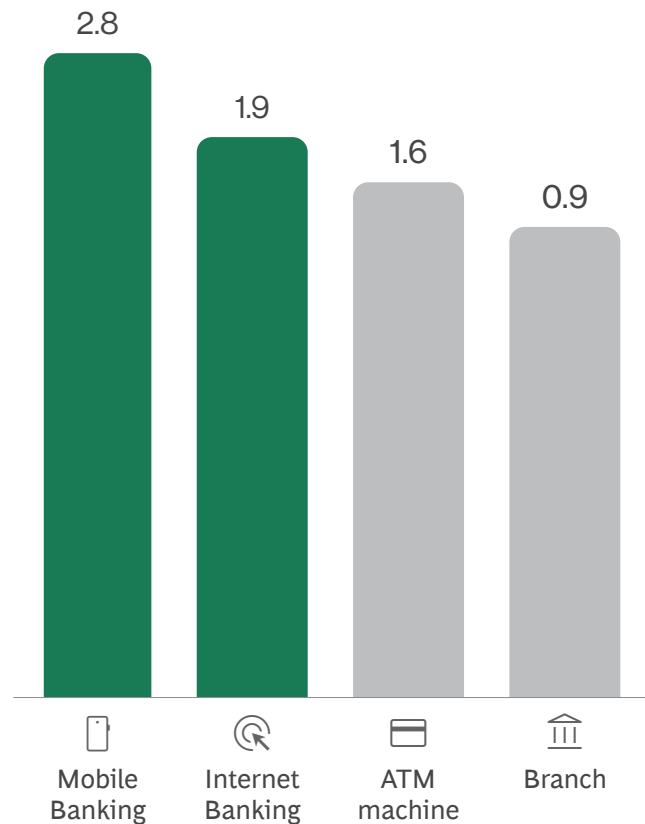
Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Question: "Which are the top reasons for not using mobile or internet banking?"

Note: Established+ includes consumers with average nominal monthly household income above LKR 150K

Once adopted, *digital banking runs deep*

Digital channels are used more frequently than physical channels...

Average monthly interactions per channel among users of digital banking



...and are preferred more for routine transactions

Activities by preferred channel

Digital channel-led



Checking account balance



Making bill payments



Making money transfers

Physical channel-led



Availing new investment products



Opening new accounts / products



Getting information on products and services

Source: BCG Center for Customer Insight Survey 2026 (n=2,272); Questions: “How frequently do you interact with these banking channels? Which channel do you prefer using for the following activities?”

Pre-crisis purchase pathways have given way to a new consumer reality, with clear implications for customer strategy

Pre-crisis Consumer Norms

 **Discovery was predominantly offline**
Word of mouth, television and in store touchpoints anchored the shortlist, while digital remained secondary.

 **Preference was concentrated around familiar brands**
Consideration sets were narrower while single-brand preference was stronger; local brands anchored choice.

 **Channel choice was highly habitual**
Consumers defaulted to a single, habitual channel within each category, while E-commerce was negligible.

 **Transactions were largely cash-led**
Branches and ATMs dominated banking, while digital channels and formal credit remained limited.

New Consumer Reality

 **Digital now shapes the shortlist**
Digital channels influence 1 in 2 consumers, with YouTube and social media leading & a wider mix of sources including GenAI playing distinct roles.

 **Consideration has widened; preference is more contested**
Brand consideration has increased, while single-brand preference has fallen; local advantage cannot be assumed as international brands gain ground.

 **Newer channels have earned clear rights to win**
Challenger formats like E-commerce, modern trade are gaining share where they outperform incumbents on key choice drivers.

 **Digital banking sees strong tailwinds; credit is gaining traction**
Digital most frequently used channel among adopters, while credit card penetration has strengthened among higher income groups.

What does it mean for leaders in *Consumer Goods*?

01 Architect the portfolio around wallet headroom

Defend mass consumption through accessible price-pack architecture, while building clear premium ladders as discretionary capacity rises.

02 Shift marketing from reach to consideration

Combine advocacy with social and video to shape choice, while building readiness for AI-mediated discovery.

03 Enable discretionary spending

Create incremental demand through new occasions, formats and propositions that make the purchase worthwhile, even as consumers become more deliberate.

04 Invest to continuously earn brand preference

As consumers consider more brands and loyalty softens, stay distinctive on key choice drivers, while reinforcing local brand equity as international brands gain ground.

05 Make health an innovation lens

Embed health into the core product proposition, while extending into service-led wellness offerings as consumers increasingly spend on health beyond products.

06 Turn route-to-market into a competitive moat

Win availability, visibility and price-pack execution in traditional trade, while selectively scaling modern trade and digital where they better meet evolving shopper needs.



What does it mean for leaders in *Retail*?

01 Extend influence beyond the store

As discovery increasingly happens before the shopping trip, use digital, mass media and direct customer touchpoints to shape consideration before consumers reach the shelf.

02 Design the format & assortment around the catchment

Tailor footprint, format, assortment and price architecture to local spending power rather than scaling one standardized proposition.

03 Broaden choice, make value visible

Expand relevant brand and price-point choice as consideration sets widen, while using clear value cues to help consumers navigate trade-offs.

04 Leverage payment flexibility where basket economics justify it

Use card offers, instalments and financing where ticket size creates friction, converting demand that might otherwise be deferred.

05 Build a clear omnichannel strategy

Keep stores as the conversion anchor while using digital selectively for convenience, discovery and expanded assortment.



What does it mean for leaders in *Banking*?

01 Broaden credit access to unlock demand

Flexible payment option already a key choice driver for higher ticket purchases; opportunity to democratize credit through digital channels, which today remains concentrated among higher-income groups.

02 Differentiate through digital experience

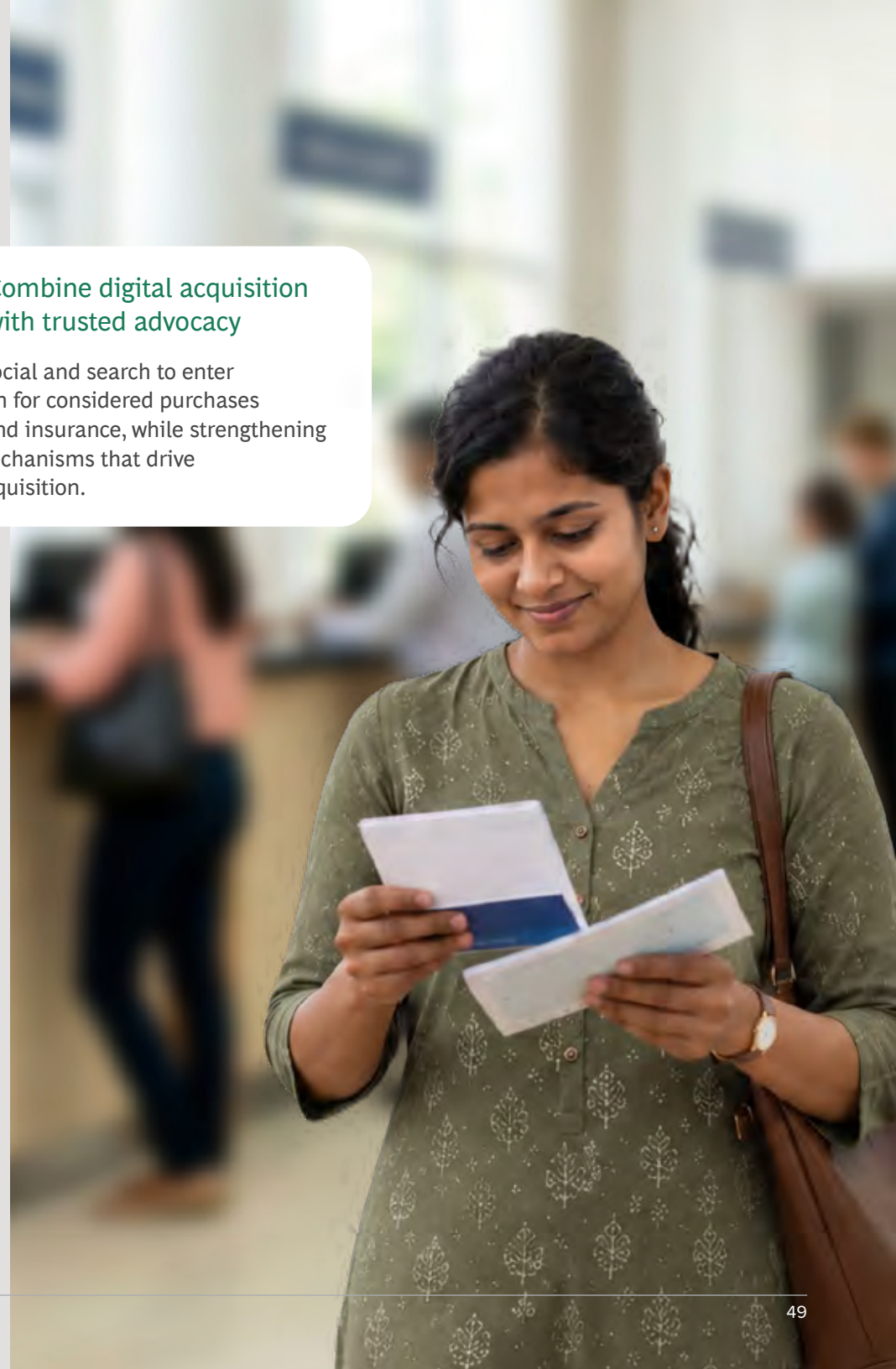
Among affluents, needs from a primary bank have evolved beyond trust and interest rates to personalization, mobile app usability and efficiency, mandating a seamless, differentiated digital experience.

03 Convert digital access to banking usage

Remove access, familiarity & trust barriers to migrate routine transactions to digital, freeing branches to focus on higher-value and more complex transactions.

04 Combine digital acquisition with trusted advocacy

Use video, social and search to enter consideration for considered purchases like leases and insurance, while strengthening advocacy mechanisms that drive customer acquisition.



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About the research

CENTER FOR Customer Insight

The findings in this report are based on a consumer survey conducted by BCG's Center for Customer Insight (CCI).

CCI turns understanding into real impact, drawing on a comprehensive spectrum of customer intelligence. CCI's experts work closely with the full range of BCG's practices to uncover the deep "why" of human behavior, integrating quantitative and qualitative consumer, customer, and citizen insights with a deep understanding of business strategy, competitive dynamics, and public policy context to drive action plans across both private and public sectors.

Building on its longstanding customer-centric DNA, CCI combines deep expertise and human insights with cutting-edge AI-powered capabilities to deliver deeper, more actionable recommendations that power growth, innovation, and new opportunities. By integrating advanced analytics, proprietary data assets, and AI-enabled approaches, the center helps organizations better understand what drives customer demand and influence; identify growth potential; and make more confident, real-time decisions to maximize value in an increasingly complex environment.

In the course of its work, the center has amassed a rich set of proprietary data on consumers and citizens in both emerging and developed markets around the world. CCI is sponsored by BCG's Marketing, Sales & Pricing practice and Global Advantage practice.

For more information, please visit bcg.com/capabilities/customer-insights/overview

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The background of the image is a dark teal or forest green color. It features a blurred motion effect of people walking. On the left, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and light blue jeans, is walking towards the right. On the right side, another person is partially visible, carrying a brown suitcase or bag. The overall effect is one of a busy, moving environment captured in a still frame.

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