



RESILIENCE & RESOURCEFULNESS

A report on the coping strategies used by Nigerians to manage the rising costs of living.

Foreword

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Founder



“EVEN IN HARDSHIPS, THE NIGERIAN CHARACTER IS NOT BROKEN.”

At Growthly, we help individuals and organisations make informed decisions using relevant data. Nigeria’s youthful demography positions it as a major influencer of the world’s future. However, this potential remains largely untapped.

To unlock this potential, collective effort is essential. Governments must invest in human capital development, while companies and businesses must solve real problems while enhancing productivity.

The Growthly team compiled this report to shed light on the strength of the Nigerian spirit. Despite many changes in the economic landscape, the resilience of the Nigerian character remains unbroken. From the outset, we had several questions, with the most pressing being: **How are Nigerians coping?** Here is the Resilience and Resourcefulness report as a foundational step toward answering this question.

We hope that governments and policymakers will find this report valuable in crafting effective interventions for the Nigerian people.

Executive Summary

This report by Growthly presents findings from a study conducted in Kaduna metropolis, Nigeria, from May to July 2024. It explores how residents cope with rising costs of living. The study surveyed 533 participants across three local government areas and identified key coping strategies such as reducing non-essential expenses, engaging in additional income sources, and taking loans.

The outcomes of this study are supported by several other studies that show that inflation has significant effect on poverty in developing countries (Talukdar, 2012), that demographic characteristics predict inflation-induced lifestyle changes (Furnham, 1988), that households typically seek additional employment and higher paying jobs, and that daily-wage and low-income individuals are disproportionately affected and must make adjustments in consumption, income generation, and living arrangements (Ghosh, 2024).

Among other things, the study found that almost half of Kaduna citizens say they have experienced significant spikes in transportation costs, one-third of the populations have coped by cutting down their expenses, and people working in organised labour (such as the organised private sector and the civil service) are able to use a combination of more coping strategies than those not in organised labour.

This study and its outcomes did not cover other large towns in the state. An improved approach may be to collect data from one location per senatorial district. Also, the study does not cover possible behavioural coping strategies like cryptocurrency, betting, and underhanded measures like scams.



This study paves the way for more targeted & effective interventions to support the resilience of Kaduna's diverse population.

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INTRODUCTION



Kaduna

GDP (IN NAIRA)

3.37 Trillion

2021 Estimate

GDP PER CAPITA

686,400

2021 Estimate

POPULATION

10.1 Million

2022 Estimate

ADULT POPULATION

2.7 Million

2022 Estimate

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

F: 44% || M: 56%

2022 Estimate

METRO POPULATION

1.3 Million

2022 Estimate

AREA

45,061 km²

2020 Estimate

POPULATION DENSITY

200/km²

2020 Estimate

ANNUAL POP CHANGE

2.5%

2020 Estimate

WORKING POP.

70%

2020 Estimate

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

10%

2020 Estimate

LITERACY RATE

29%

2023 Estimate

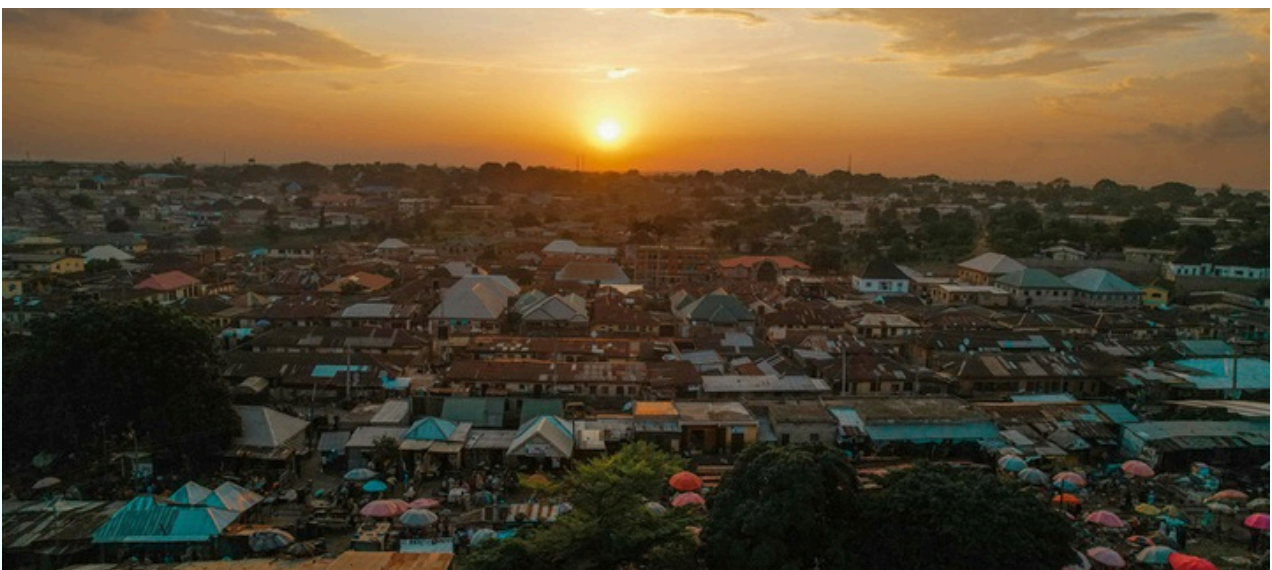
Sources:

Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS)
Kaduna Bureau of Statistics (KBS)
UNESCO
Macrotrends
Kingmakers



Kaduna State is nestled in the heart of northern Nigeria and in its heart is the pulse of a metropolis that is the third-largest city in the nation. Kaduna metropolis is a vibrant canvas where culture and commerce mix. The streets of Kaduna are a living exhibition of the resilience of a people who navigate the complexities of rapid urbanisation and economic ebbs and flows.

The 533 participants of this study are residents of Kaduna North, Kaduna South, and Chikun local governments. From the outset, we aimed to understand the various ingenious ways they are coping with the spiking costs of living and give as true a representation of their responses as possible. We believe we have achieved this.





“Musa and I took over our father's business when he passed away in 2013. The business supported his family and now supports our families. We hope to fulfill his dream of expanding to several shops and leaving wealth behind for our children.”

Abubakar, Business Owner

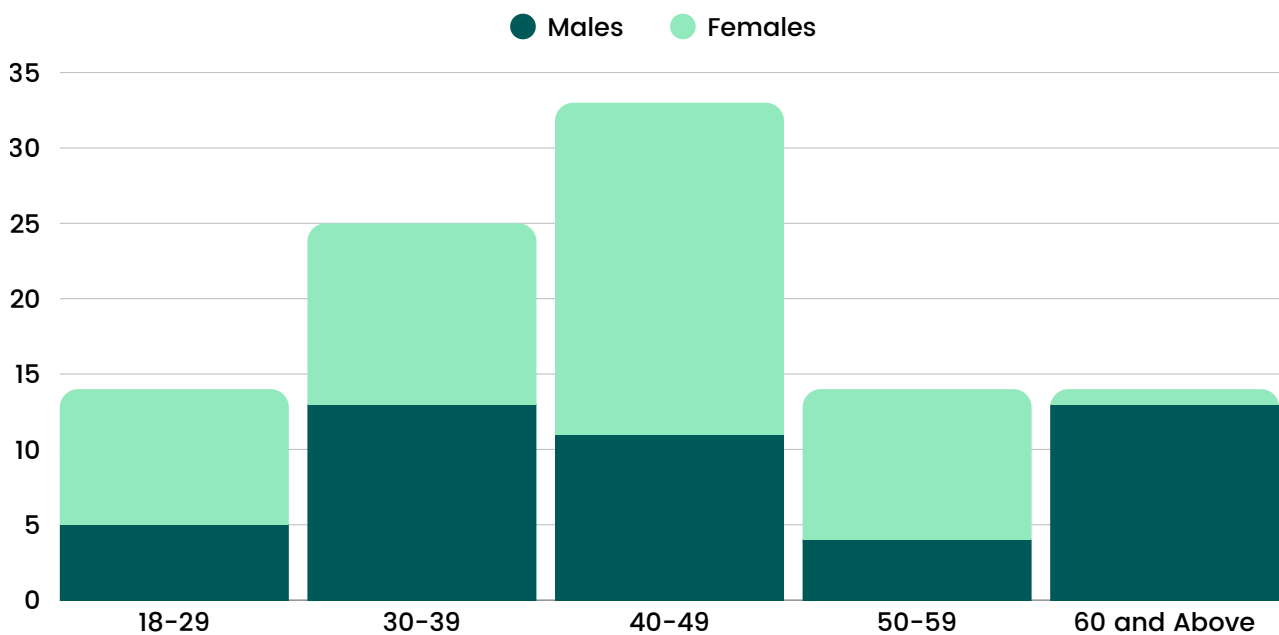
DEMOGRAPHY OF RESPONDENTS



Gender distribution

We actively sought gender parity among our participants. 54% of our participants were females, while males were 46%.

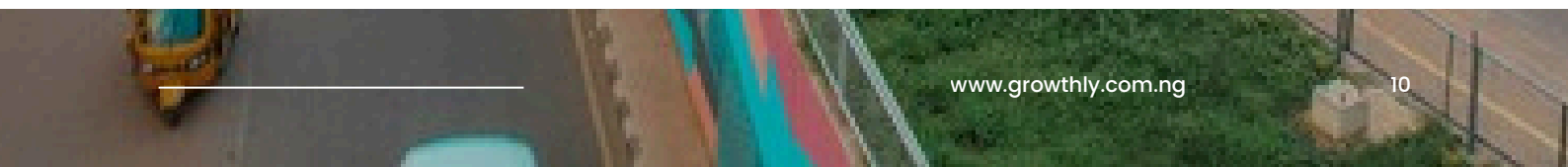
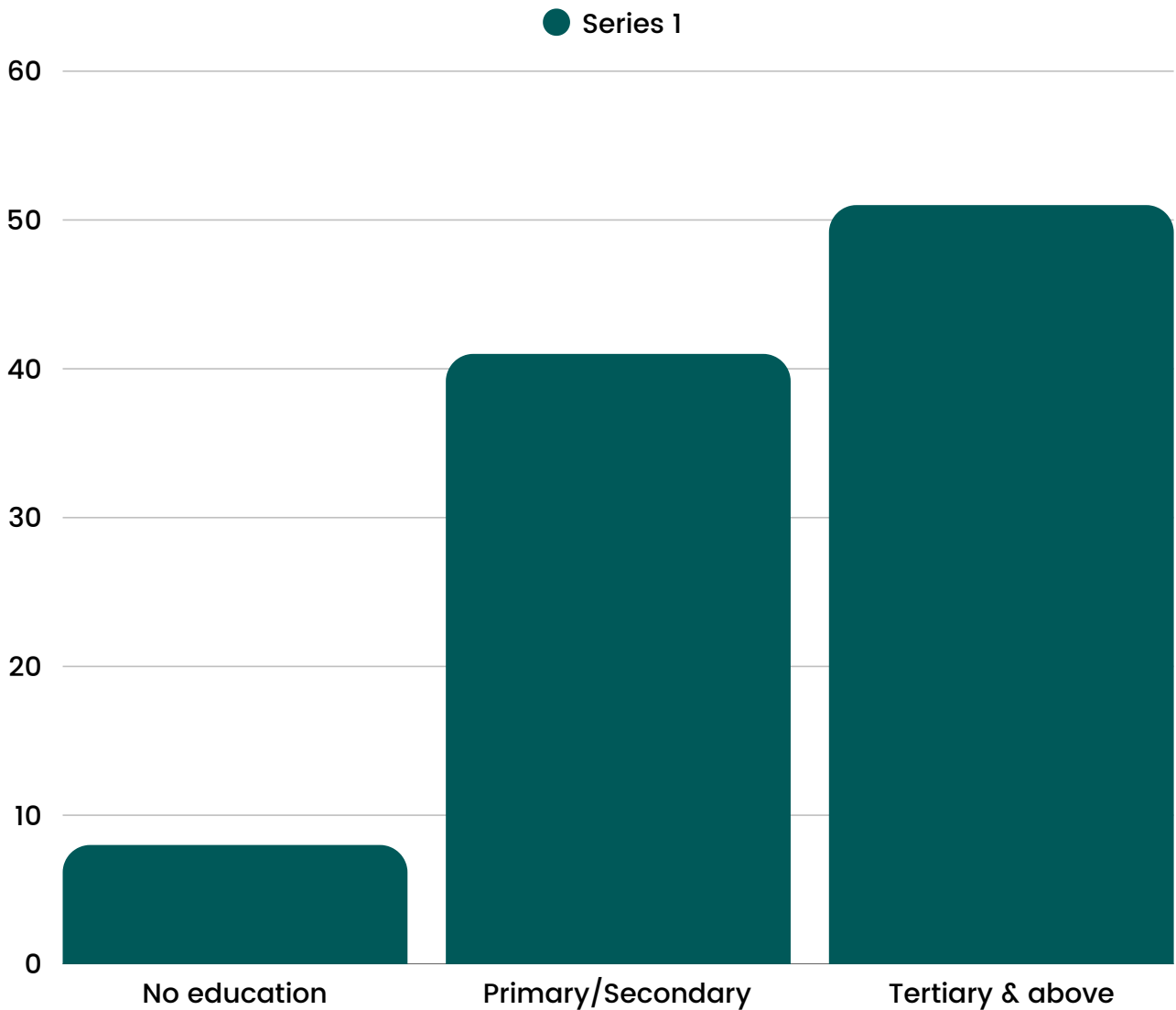
We found more gender disparity within age groups than among the total number of participants. This was unintentional but may point to subtle societal nuances. For example, only one percent of female participants were sixty years and above, which suggests that most women of that age group remain engaged in some form of employment.



Education levels

We found that most working-class people in the metropolis had some level of education.

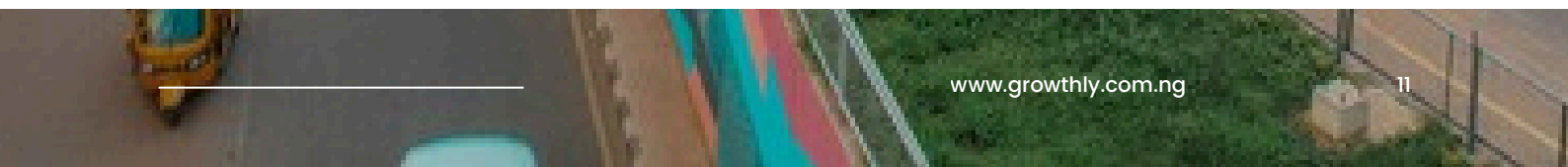
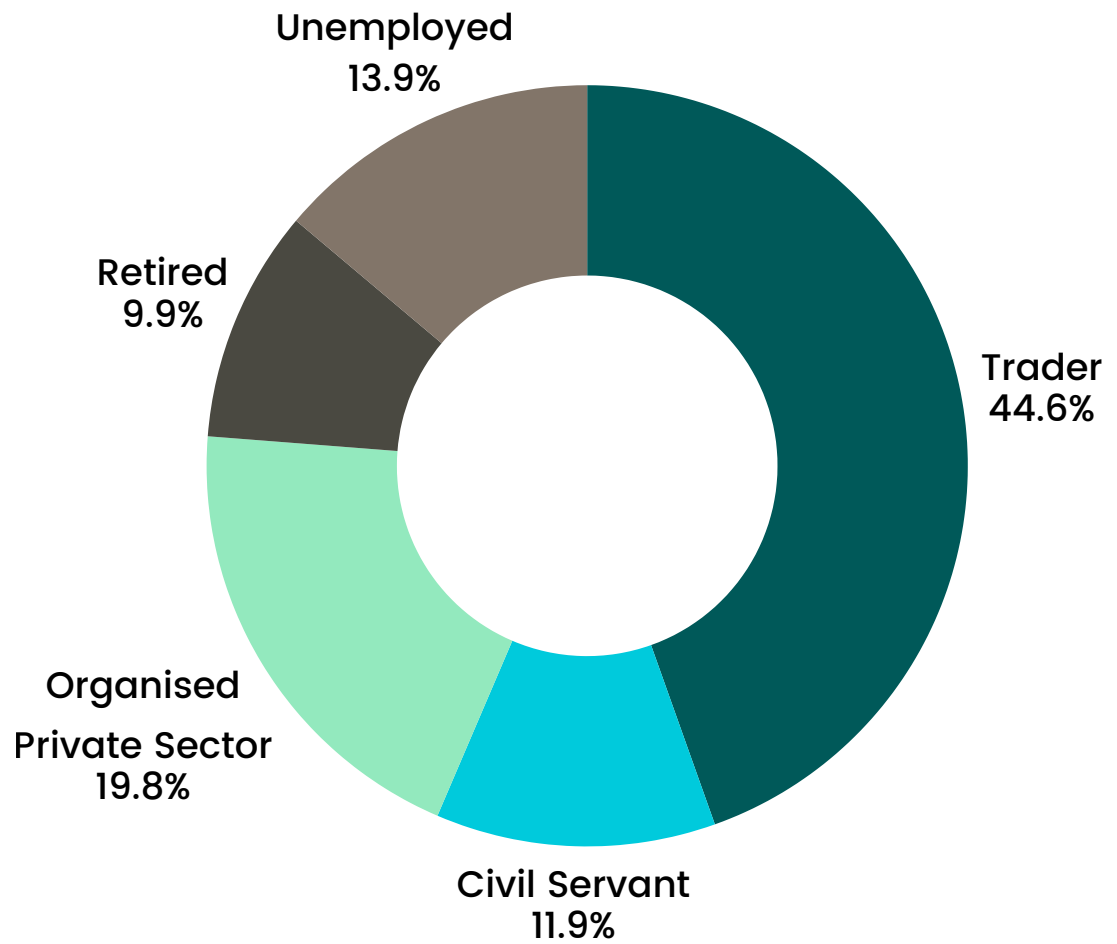
We categorised our sample into three educational levels and found a decent spread from respondents. Only 8% had no formal education. We defined 'education' as "Enlightenment (or knowledge) gotten through institutionalised public organisations or recognised private bodies."



Job distribution

We found that most working-class people in the metropolis described themselves as traders.

This encapsulates activities like street vending, microservices, and online retailing of various products and services. This class of people essentially created their employment for themselves. The pattern cuts across all education levels.



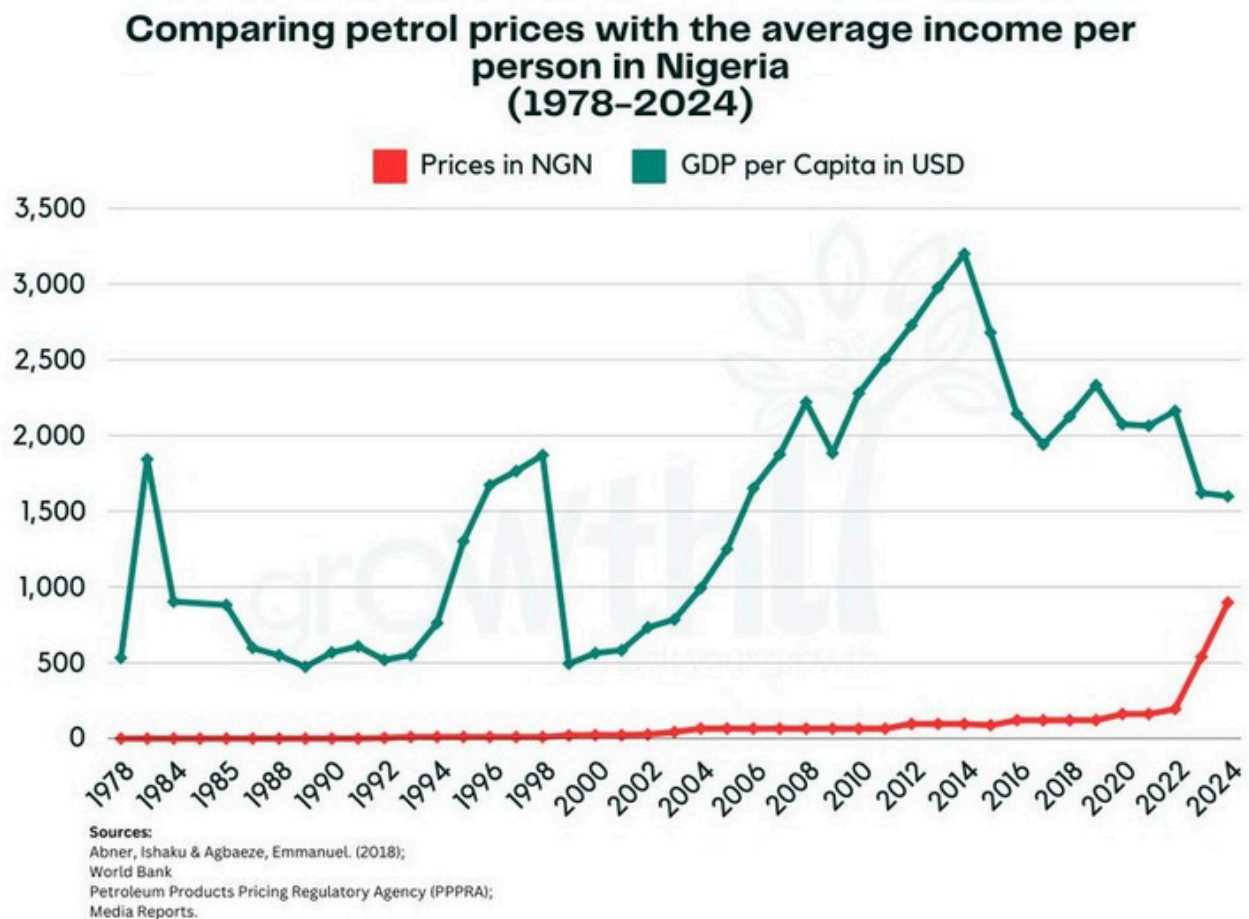


“My expenses have skyrocketed in the last year. I take care of myself and two younger brothers. We rarely have enough to spare from my internet data sales business to see us through the month.”

Patience, Student.

Petrol pump prices significantly impact Nigeria’s micro-economy by increasing transportation and operating costs for small businesses. Historically, pump prices have always led to higher inflation and reduced consumer spending.

Many Nigerians rely on affordable fuel for their livelihoods. Petrol price hikes disproportionately affect low-income households, in addition to widening income inequality and straining the informal economy.

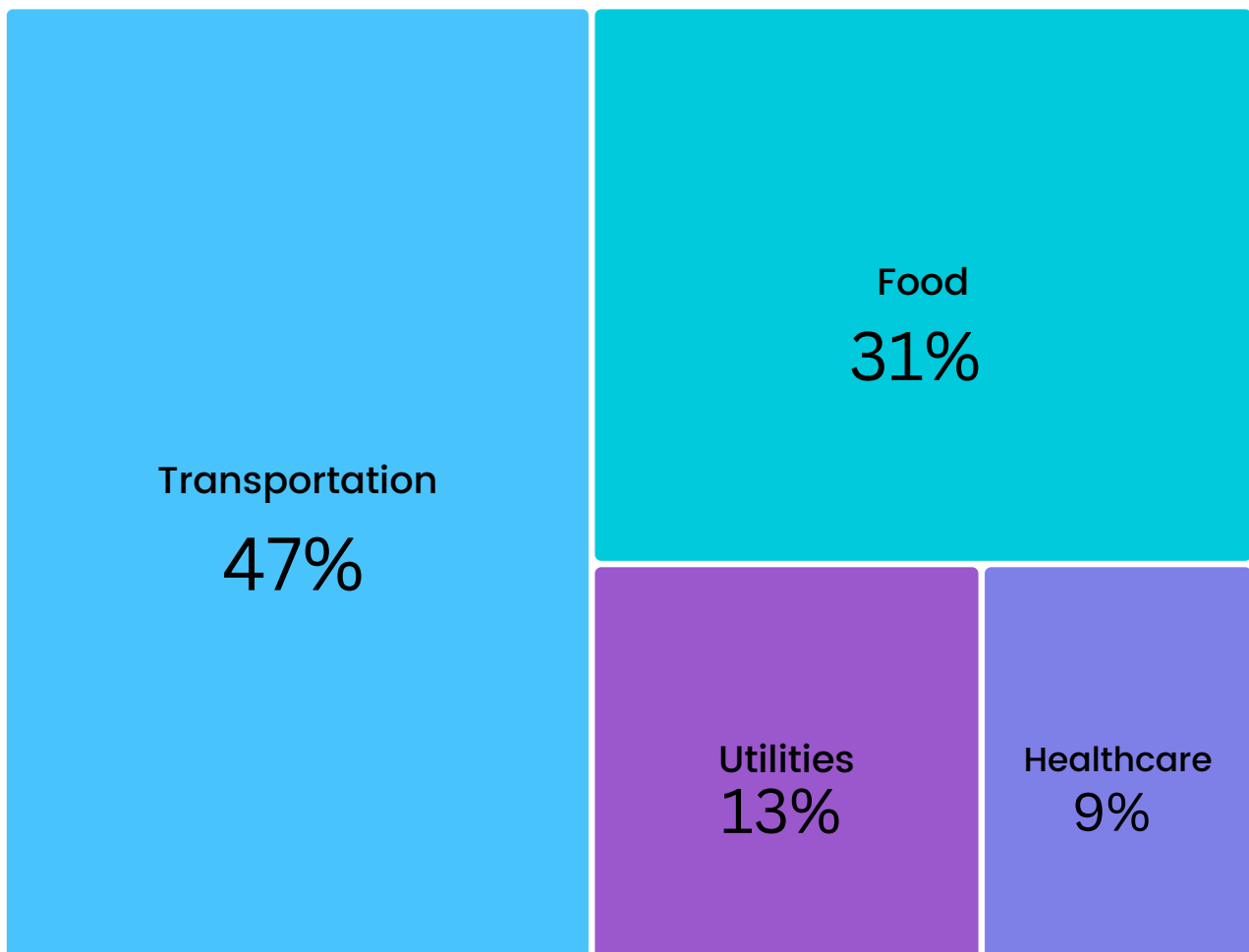


The rise in costs can also trigger social unrest, further disrupting economic activities, making petrol prices a critical factor in Nigeria’s economic stability and social welfare.

In what areas did you experience the most spikes?

Approximately half of Kaduna citizens have experienced the most spikes in transportation costs.

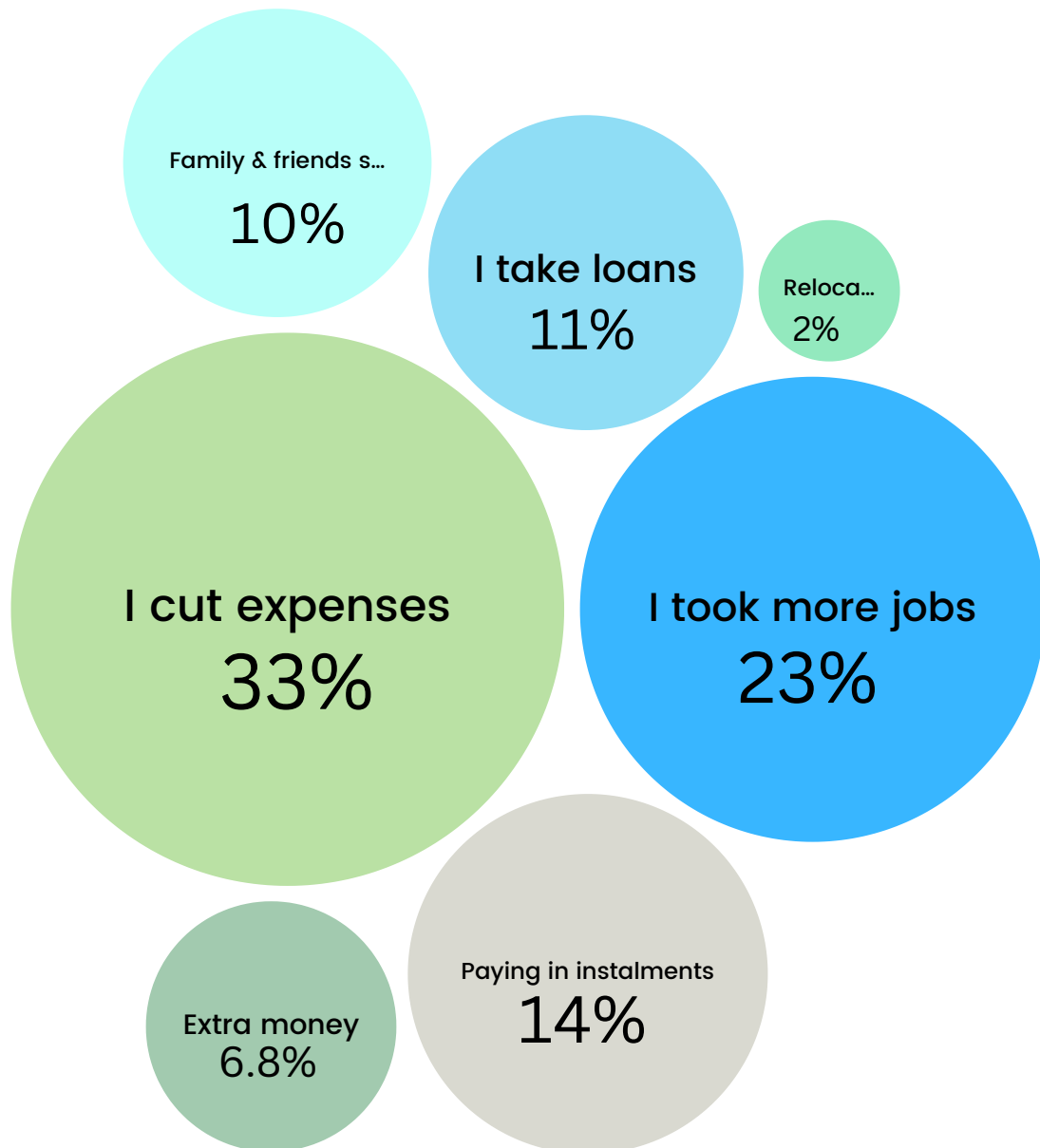
This should not be confused with the highest expense area, which other studies have shown to be food. Food costs came in second, with 31% of participants identifying it as a significant increase. Only 7% of participants chose healthcare as an area with notable cost spikes.



How do you cope with the rising costs of living?

One-third of Kaduna citizens cut down their expenses to cope with the rising costs of living.

The trend of reducing expenses was observed across all demographic groups. However, individuals with a tertiary education or higher were more likely to pursue additional employment to increase their earnings.



FUN FACT

7% of the sample reported that they supplemented their income by getting “extra money” from undisclosed sources at their workplaces.

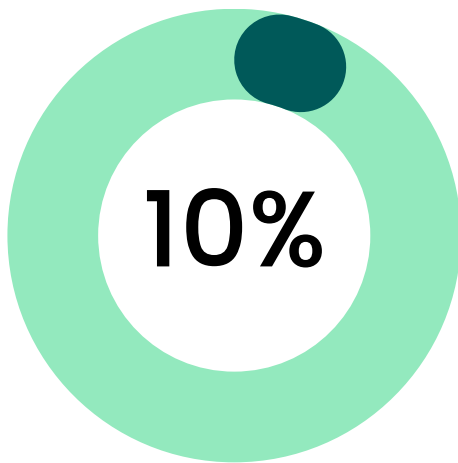
VARIABLES VS COPING STRATEGIES



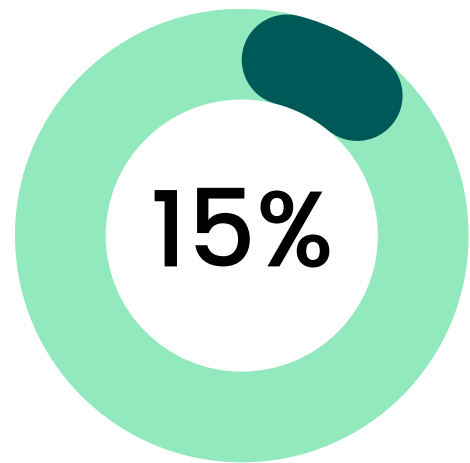
How do jobs affect number of coping strategies adopted?

The ability of citizens to take advantage of all the enlisted coping strategies differed based on their job descriptions.

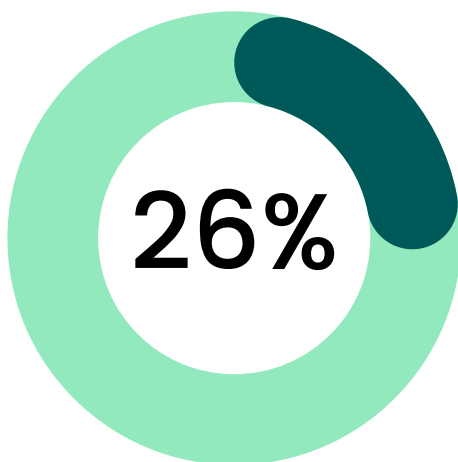
Still, none of the categories identified recorded more than 50% of citizens saying they are able to utilise all the coping strategies.



Unemployed



Traders



Retired

We found a direct correlation between job categories and coping strategies. The more structured a job is, the larger the combination of coping strategies.

Better jobs, more coping strategies

45%

of civil servants are
able to use all
coping strategies

48%

About half of organised
private sector workers say
they are able to take
advantage of all the
enlisted coping strategies.

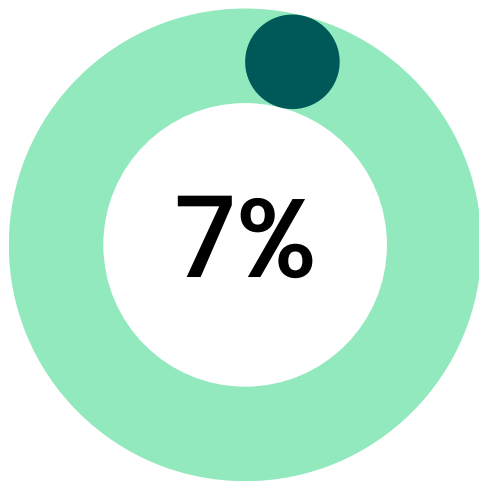


These variations can guide targeted interventions by policymakers, mental health professionals, and community organizations to better support vulnerable groups. Addressing disparities in coping strategy use can help reduce social and economic inequalities, ensuring everyone has the tools to manage stress and challenges, regardless of employment status.

How does education level affect the number of coping strategies adopted?

Only 7% of uneducated citizens are able to utilise all the enlisted coping strategies.

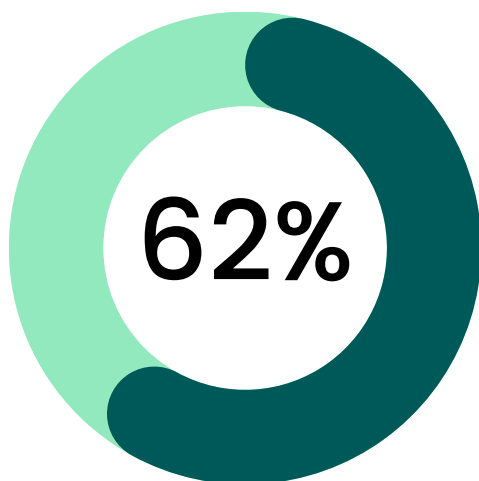
There is a clear positive correlation between education level and the ability to use coping strategies.



No Education



Primary/Secondary



Tertiary & Above

The government and society should focus on expanding access to quality education, promoting mental health awareness, and integrating coping strategies into school curriculums. Community support systems should also be encouraged to alleviate socioeconomic pressures on less educated citizens.

Why the disparity?

Possible explanatory reasons for the observed direct proportionality between higher education status and coping strategies scores can be explained by the following:



Higher education often provides individuals with greater access to information and resources related to mental health and coping mechanisms.



Those with higher education levels are more likely to have access to better jobs, healthcare, and social networks to help them cope better.

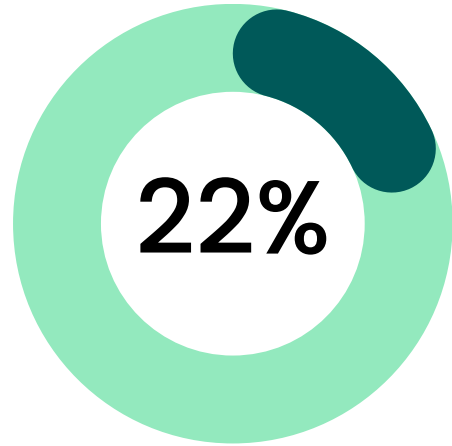


Education often correlates with higher social and cultural capital, which can influence one's ability to seek and receive support, engage in self-care practices, and adopt coping strategies.

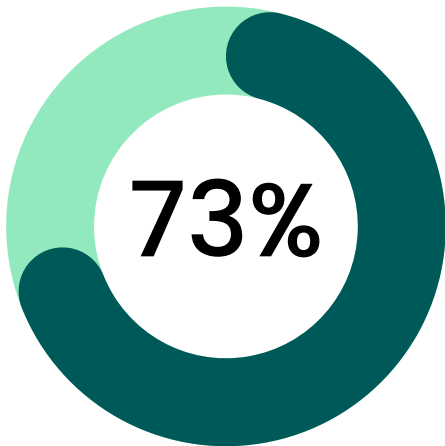
How does age affect the number coping strategies adopted?

Coping strategies sharply rises and falls with age.

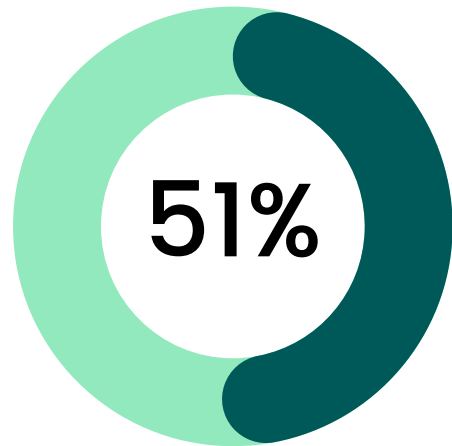
Coping ability is not uniform across age groups, with a notable peak in the 30- to 39-year-olds age range.



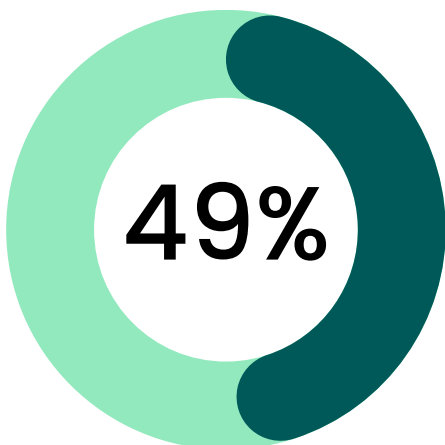
18- to 29-year-olds



30- to 39-year-olds



40- to 49-year-olds



50- to 59-year-olds



60+

When age is not just a number.

The disparity in the ability to utilize coping strategies across age groups can be attributed to varying life experiences, developmental stages, and external pressures.



18- to 29-year-olds

Limited life experience, the stress of transitioning from education to the workforce, financial instability, and the ongoing process of identity formation might have

40- to 49-year-olds

Many individuals in this age group are juggling demanding careers, raising children, and caring for aging parents, which can strain their coping resources.

30- to 39-year-olds

Accumulated life experience, better work ethics, limited family pressures, and a clearer sense of identity might have enabled them to handle stress more effectively.

60+

Health challenges, social isolation, significant life transitions like retirement, and decreased adaptability to change can make it harder for older adults to adopt new coping methods.

FUN FACT

9 out of 10 people in the Kaduna metropolis are unaware of any social interventions designed by the federal or state governments to help them cope with the rising costs of living.

Conclusion, Recommendations, and Future Research

This report underscores the resilience of Nigerians, particularly in Kaduna, as they adapt to rising living costs through various strategies such as cutting expenses, taking on additional work, and relying on loans. Key demographic factors—like education, employment status, and age—significantly affect the ability to cope, with those in more structured jobs and higher education levels better positioned to utilize a range of strategies.

While this study offers critical insights, it also highlights the need for further research, particularly in other regions and on alternative coping mechanisms. Governments and businesses must act to support these adaptive efforts with targeted interventions. Ultimately, the strength and adaptability of Nigerians remain evident, but proactive measures are needed to ease economic pressures.

Recommendations

- The government should implement more **visible** and **accessible** social support programs to alleviate the burden of rising living costs. Nearly 90% of participants are unaware of any government-led social interventions. This highlights a major communication and engagement gap.
- Targeted subsidies for essential commodities like fuel and food should be prioritised, particularly for vulnerable populations such as low-income earners and informal workers.
- There is a clear link between education and the ability to cope with economic challenges. Incorporating life skills and financial literacy in educational curriculums can help individuals adapt to financial challenges more effectively.

- Policies that encourage formal employment opportunities could enhance the ability of individuals to utilise a broader set of coping strategies, as formal employment offers more stability and access to resources.
- Businesses can play a role by offering flexible work arrangements or financial support programs for employees to help them manage economic stresses. This is particularly important for informal workers, who make up a large portion of the population.
- Community organisations and mental health professionals should focus on supporting populations that struggle with adopting coping strategies, particularly the elderly and uneducated. Mental health awareness campaigns and support groups could enhance resilience at the community level.

Future Research

1. Expand the geographical scope of the study by including more towns and regions across the state to gather a more representative sample.
2. Investigate alternative coping strategies that were not covered in this report, such as the role of digital economies, betting, and other informal or underhanded measures that Nigerians may be adopting to cope with economic challenges.

FUN FACT

Most of the participants who opted for online data collection methods were young individuals, primarily students from higher education institutions.

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