



Architects
of Diversity

STATE OF DISCRIMINATION SURVEY MALAYSIA 2023

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



Architects of Diversity (Persatuan Pendidikan Diversiti) is a youth-led non-profit organisation that bridges communities and identity groups among youth in Malaysia for justice, peace and a sustainable future. Since 2018, AOD has worked towards the promotion of diversity and inclusion in Malaysia by empowering young leaders as champions of inclusivity, pioneering ideas and processes for social cohesion, and building an enabling environment for legislative change towards equity and inclusion.

Published by:
Persatuan Pendidikan Diversiti
C-13-07, The Hub SS2
Jalan 17/47
46400 Petaling Jaya
Selangor

Supported by:



democracy discourse series

September 2023

Introduction

This survey aims to **provide a baseline study on the quantitative nature of discrimination** in Malaysia relating to various identities, including religion and race.

At the very heart of human rights law, lies the trite provision that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Article 2 of the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) codifies protected grounds in which discrimination is prohibited. They include “race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” Article 7 of the UDHR further affirms that “all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.”

UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, with Target 16.b aiming to promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Malaysia (2021 to 2025)’s Strategic Priority 4: Peace outlines its outcome aspiration as: “By 2025, Malaysia has strengthened democratic governance, and all people living in Malaysia benefit from a more cohesive society, strengthened governance and participation.” SDG Indicator 16.b.1 highlights Indicator 16.b.1, “Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law.

In Malaysia, the Federal Constitution expressly provides under Article 8 that all citizens will be afforded equal protection under the law and that discrimination is prohibited based on religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender. However, weak to non-existent laws and institutions for non-discrimination have allowed for the proliferation of discrimination in various dimensions of social and political life. Equal Rights Trusts notes that “Some non-discrimination provisions are found in legislation governing other legal fields: criminal law, family law, and law related to domestic violence. However, this protection is rarely rights-based, and is very limited, patchy, and inconsistent.”

Survey Methodology

Questionnaire Development

Questions were adapted from various international and regional questionnaires, including the SDG16 Survey Initiative (Q1-5) and Pew Research Center's Survey on Religion and Social Life (Q6) in India, as well as developed internally by Architects of Diversity using research on racial discrimination and religious freedoms.

Deployment & Technicalities

The survey was administered from 4 to 23 August, 2023 to adults ages 18 and above. Respondents were able to answer the survey in English or Bahasa Melayu. Q5 was redeployed due to technical errors and recapture rate was 73%. 3,241 responses were collected while 3,238 responses were included in the final sample after exclusion of responses with invalid demographic data and non-Malaysians.

The survey was administered to Vase.ai's online representative panel using an active quota sampling method, where only people contacted were allowed to participate. Respondents ages 18 and above were quota sampled according to the 2020 census statistics by race, gender, age and state. Vase.ai's online panel ensures duplicate entries are prevented by the use of unique survey links and the limitation of one entry per link. Identifying demographic information was cross-validated with Vase.ai's existing information on the survey respondent. Speed and straight line checking were also performed to exclude low quality responses.

Non-random online panel samples may have lower and non-equal probabilities of sampling rural populations with lower Internet connectivity.

Weights were constructed to improve the representativeness of the survey sample. Four demographic characteristics were used to ensure consistency with the actual population based on Census 2020 and reduce bias from non-random sampling: race, gender, age and state. Iterative proportional fitting (raking) - one of the most standard weighting methods - was used. The maximum weight value used was lowered to 3 due to the ease of sample convergence, indicating that the sample did not require much correction. Additionally, the general design effect (1.2) of the weighted sample suggests minimal increase in variance.



Access detailed survey results by demographic, respondent and representative statistics and open data at:

www.aodmalaysia.org/sods

Main Findings

1. The majority of Malaysians (64%) reported having experienced some form of discrimination in the past 12 months.
 - a. Malaysians primarily reported having experienced discrimination in the past 12 months related to socio-economic status (38%), age (33%) and ethnicity (32%).
 - b. Gen Z (18-24) were more likely to report having experienced ethnicity-related discrimination (43%) than their older peers (22% for 60+ and 23% for 40-59).
 - c. Hindus were more likely to report having experienced religious-based discrimination in the past 12 months (40%), compared to their Muslim (20%), Christian (26%) and Buddhist (22%) peers.
 - d. Both men and women reported having experienced gender-related discrimination in the past 12 months at similar rates - 21% and 27% respectively.
2. Discrimination was primarily experienced on social media (32%), and at the workplace while looking for jobs (30%) and at work (29%).
 - a. Indians reported having experienced higher levels of discrimination than their peers when applying for jobs (51%), when looking for housing (35%) and when dealing with the police (21%).
3. Among those who reported having experienced discrimination at work, work conditions (62%) and pay (53%) were the related domains.
 - a. East Malaysians were more likely to experience discrimination related to work conditions (72%).
 - b. Malay (56%) and Indians (60%) were more likely to report having experience pay-related discrimination than Chinese (41%) and Other Bumiputera (51%) peers.
4. Among those who reported having experienced discrimination, the majority (55%) did not report it.
 - a. Among those who did report their experience, employers (14%) or law enforcement (11%) were the most popular reporting lines.
 - b. Among those who did not report their experience, respondents said they chose not to report mainly due to having no evidence or difficulty producing evidence (32%) and high barriers in terms of time or money (32%).
5. Among major religious groups - Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Hindus - each felt that members of their own groups experienced the most amount of discrimination.
 - a. 59% of Muslim respondents felt members of their own religious group experienced a lot or some discrimination, with that figure being 63% among Buddhist respondents, 76% among Christian respondents, and 81% among Hindu respondents.
 - b. Most were unaware about discrimination relating to animists (beliefs of many indigenous groups), with 44% opting to respond with "don't know".
6. Discrimination literacy and agreement is generally low.
 - a. For instance, less than half (49%) of respondents felt that being forced to not wear religious clothing at work is considered discrimination, while 37% felt it was not considered discrimination.
 - b. Forms of behaviour with the highest rating in being considered discrimination were being called a racial slur online or physically (63%) and being unable to apply for a job due to specific language preferences (63%).
7. Malaysians were generally split when asked about their satisfaction with the current government's initiatives to solve discrimination. 45% said they were very satisfied or slightly satisfied, while 40% said they were slightly dissatisfied or not satisfied at all.
 - a. When asked what the government should do to solve discrimination, answers included creating a law for discrimination and raising awareness on discrimination.

Survey Results

Q1

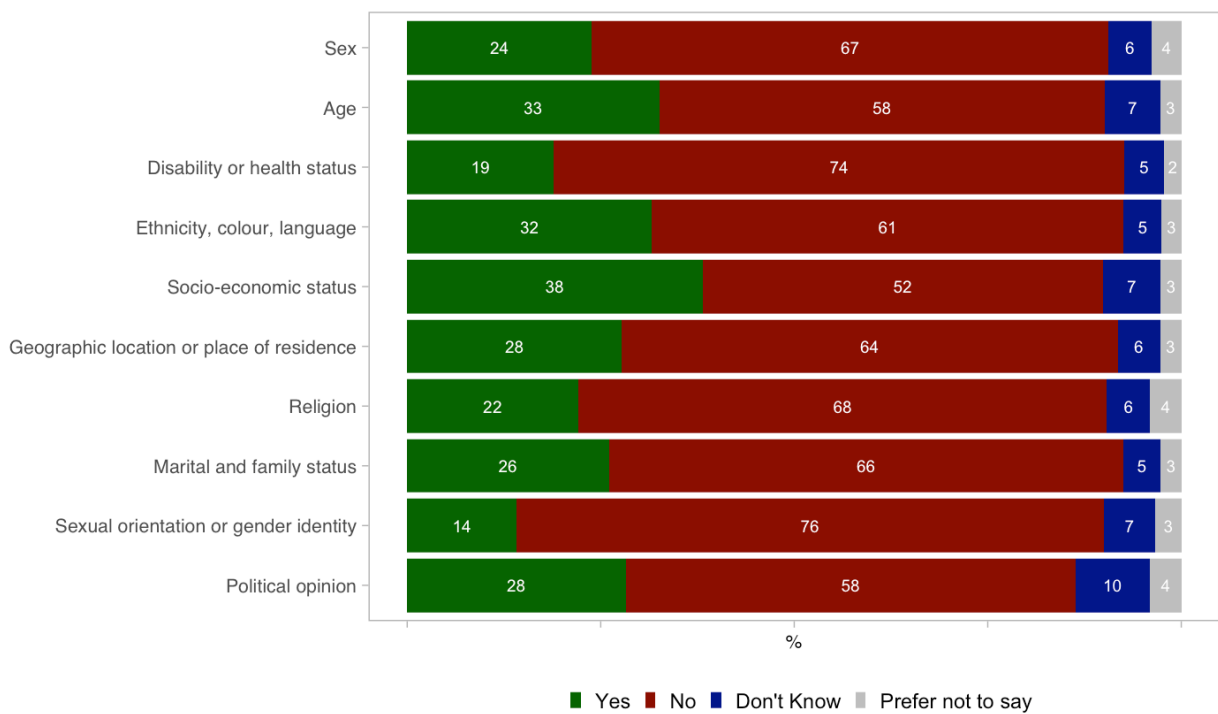
Vignette Provided:

Discrimination happens when you are treated less favourably compared to others or harassed because of the way you look, where you come from, what you believe or for other reasons.

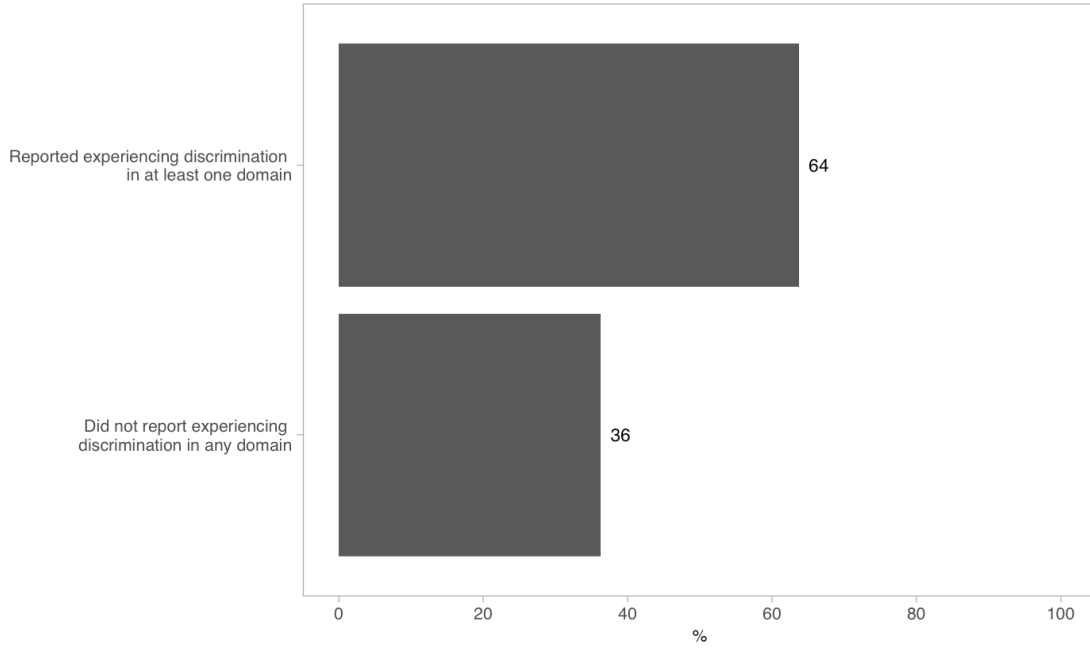
You may be refused equal access to work, housing, healthcare, education, marriage or family life, the police or justice system, shops, restaurants, or any other services or opportunities.

You may also encounter comments, gestures or other behaviours that make you feel offended, threatened or insulted, or have to stay away from places or activities to avoid such behaviours.

In the past 12 months, do you feel that you personally experienced any form of discrimination or harassment based on your



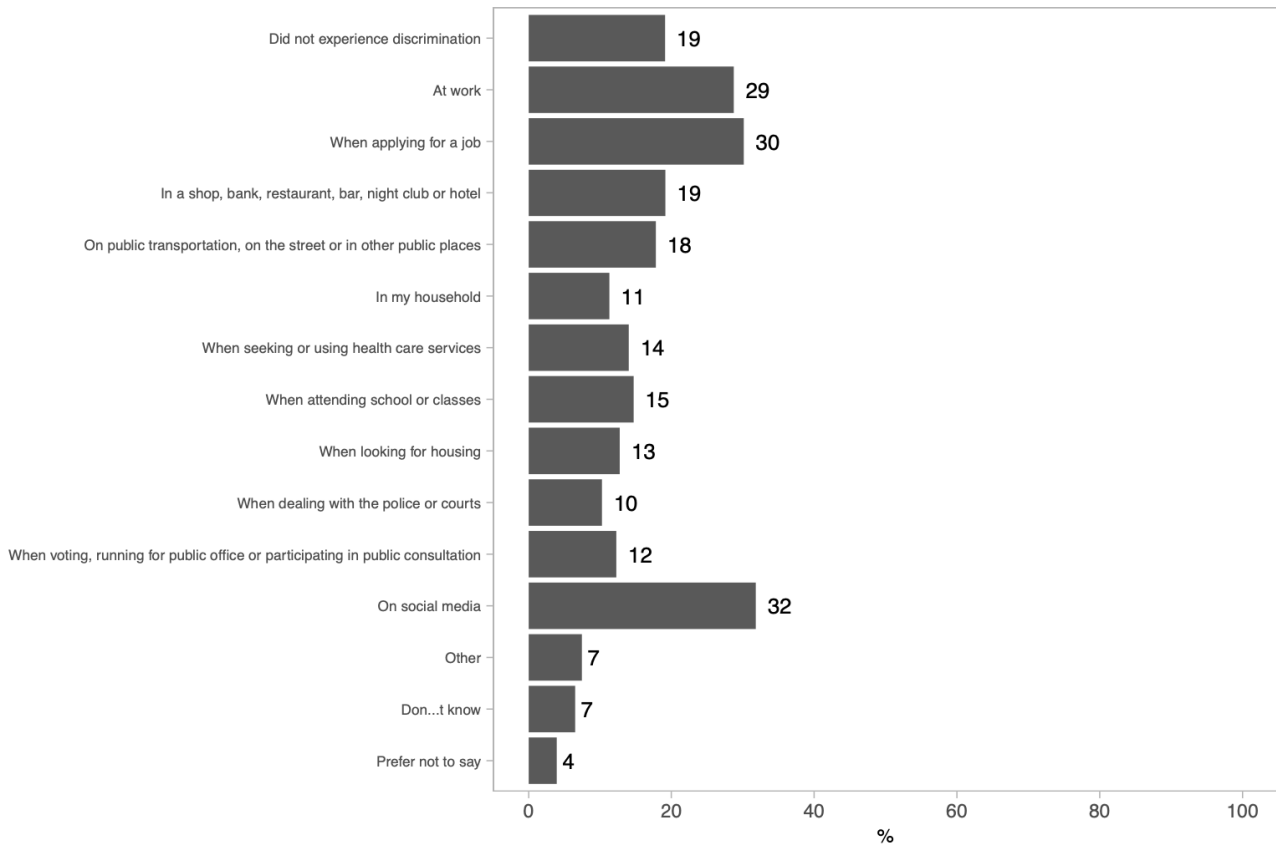
Note: Weighted estimates. State of Discrimination Survey 2023 (n=3,238)



Note: Weighted estimates. State of Discrimination Survey 2023 (n=3,238)

Q2

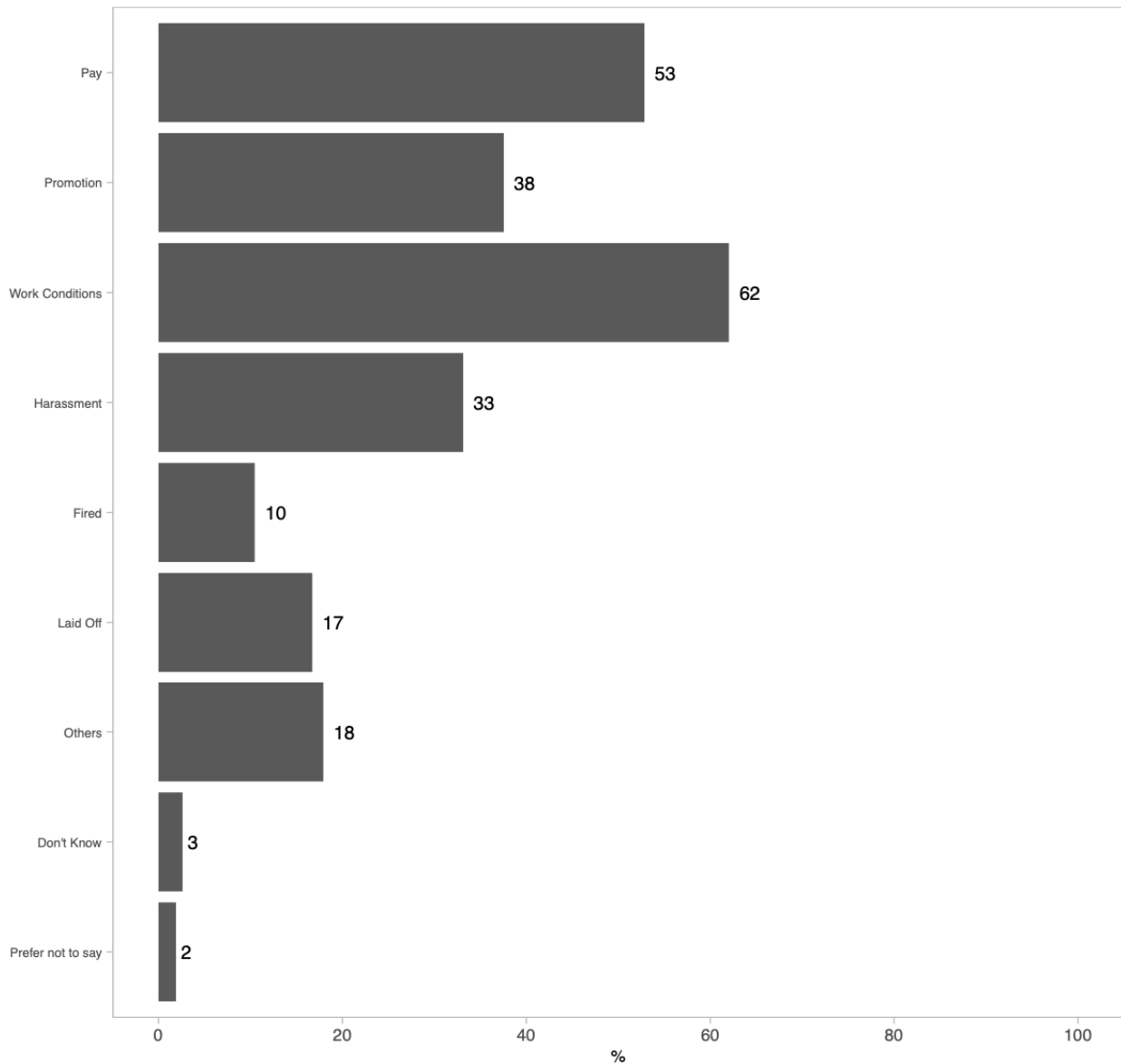
In what types of situations have you experienced these incidents?



Note: Weighted estimates. State of Discrimination Survey 2023 (n=3,238)

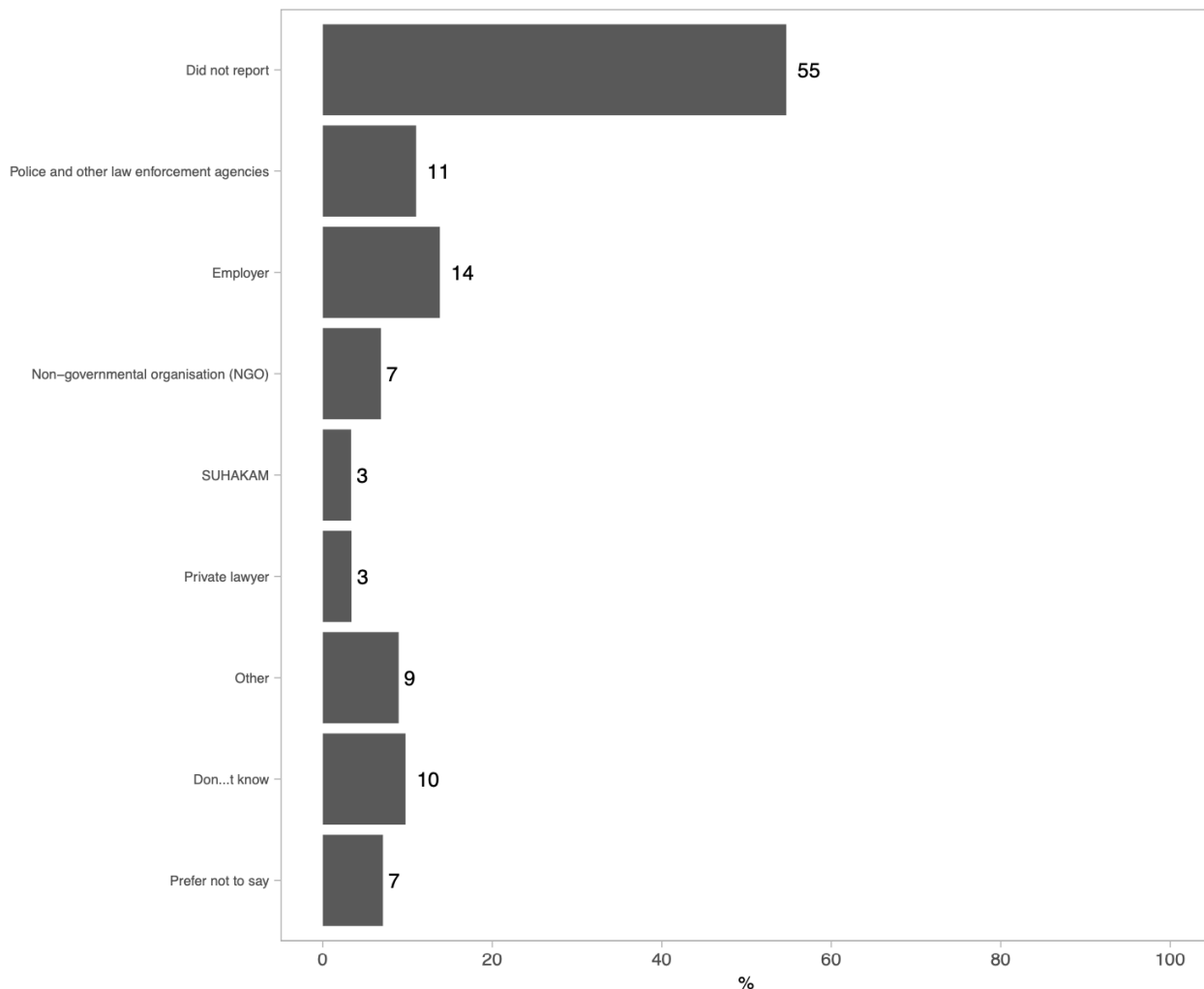
Q3

Which of the following best describes the focus of the discrimination you experienced at work?
(n=982, Q2 = "At work")



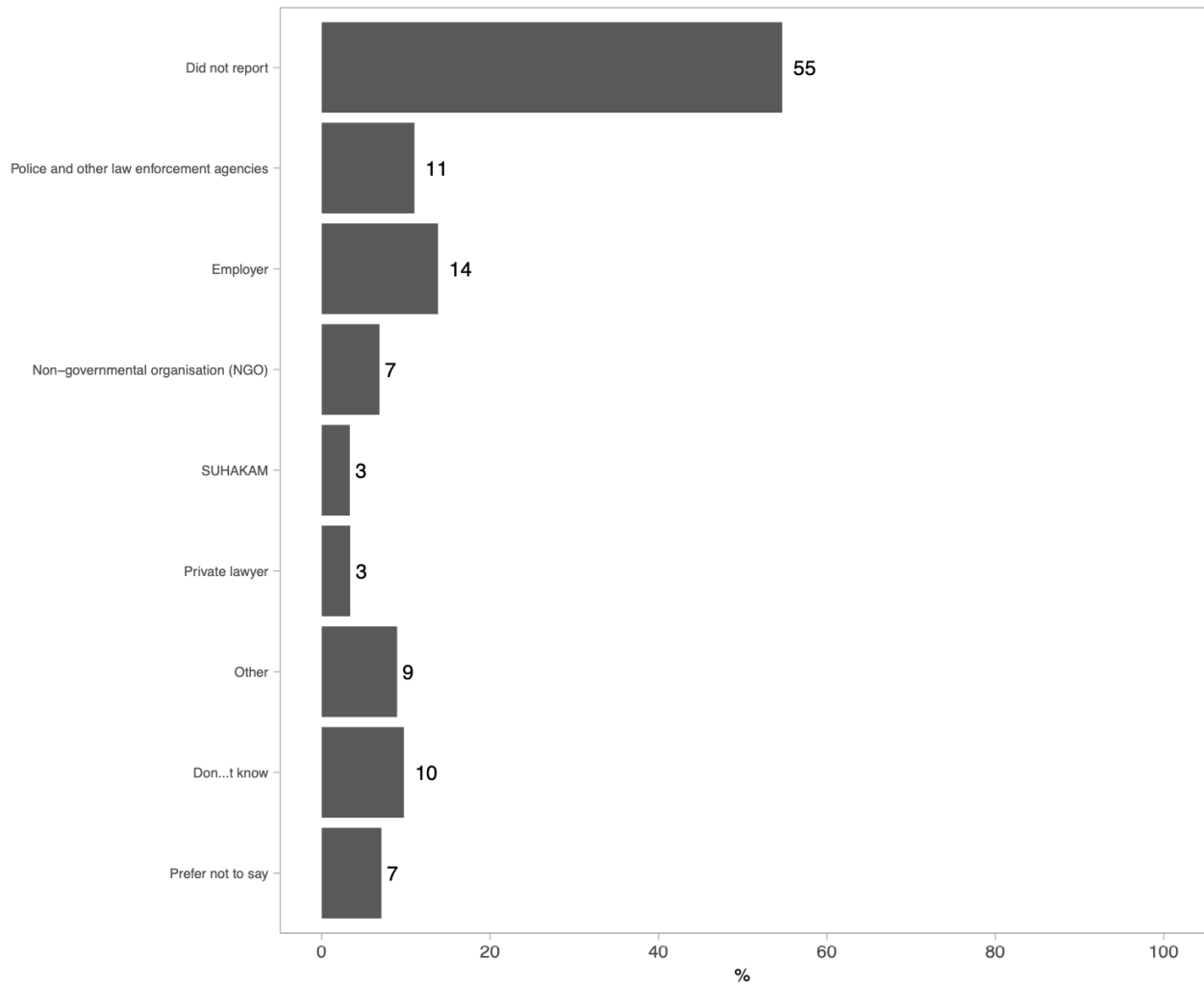
Q4

**Who did you report the incident or make the complaint to?
(n=2,683, Q2 != "Did not experience discrimination")**



Note: Weighted estimates. State of Discrimination Survey 2023 (n=3,238)

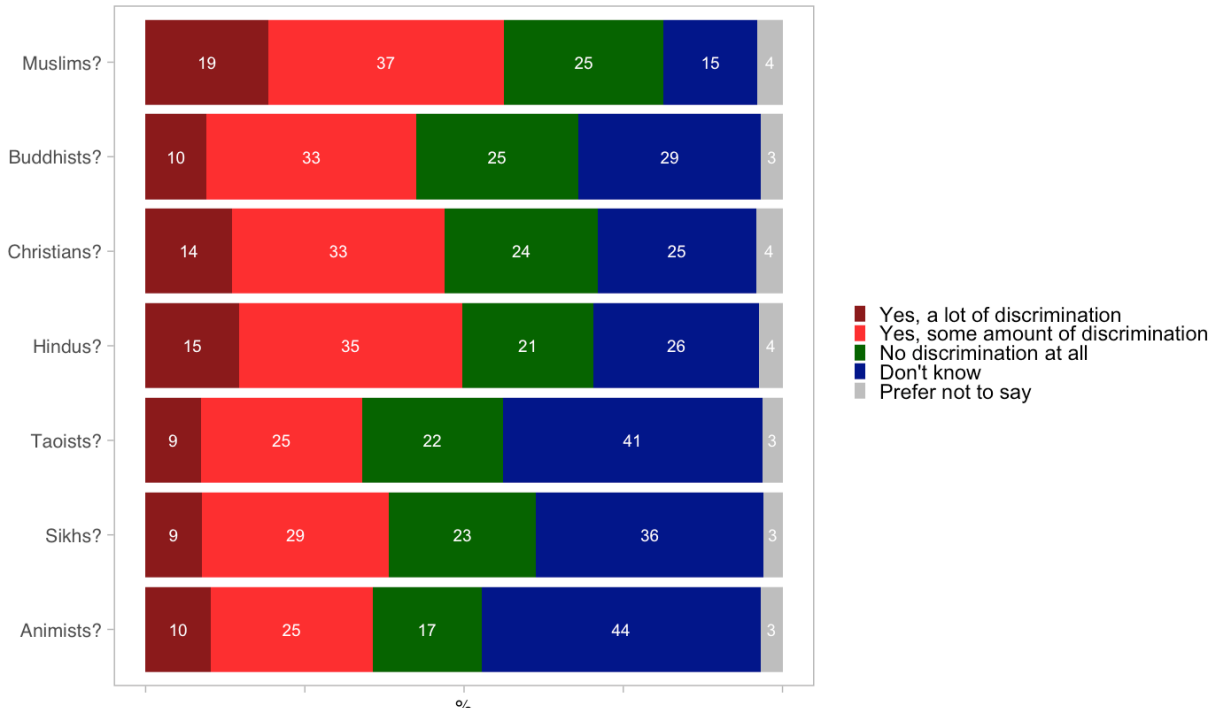
Q5

**Why did you not report the incident or make a complaint?
(n=1,492, Q4 = "Did not report")**

Note: Weighted estimates. State of Discrimination Survey 2023 (n=3,238)

Q6

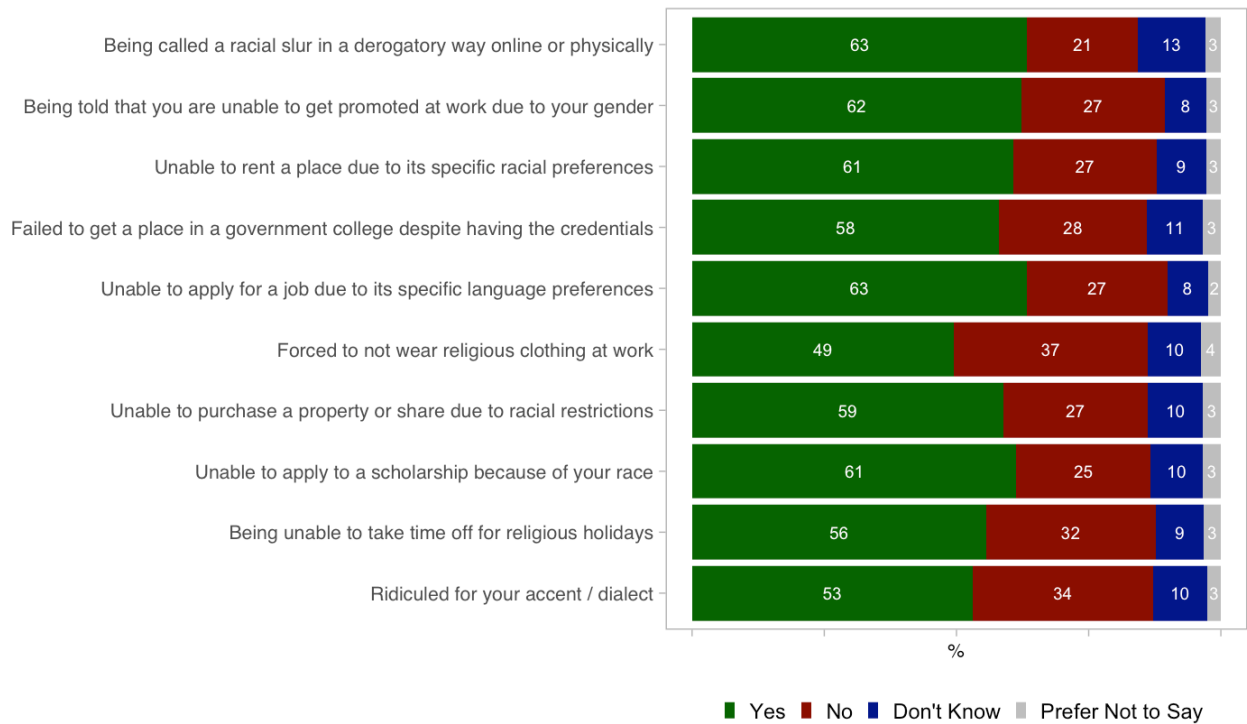
Just your impression, in Malaysia today, is there a lot of discrimination against..



Note: Weighted estimates. State of Discrimination Survey 2023 (n=3,238)

Q7

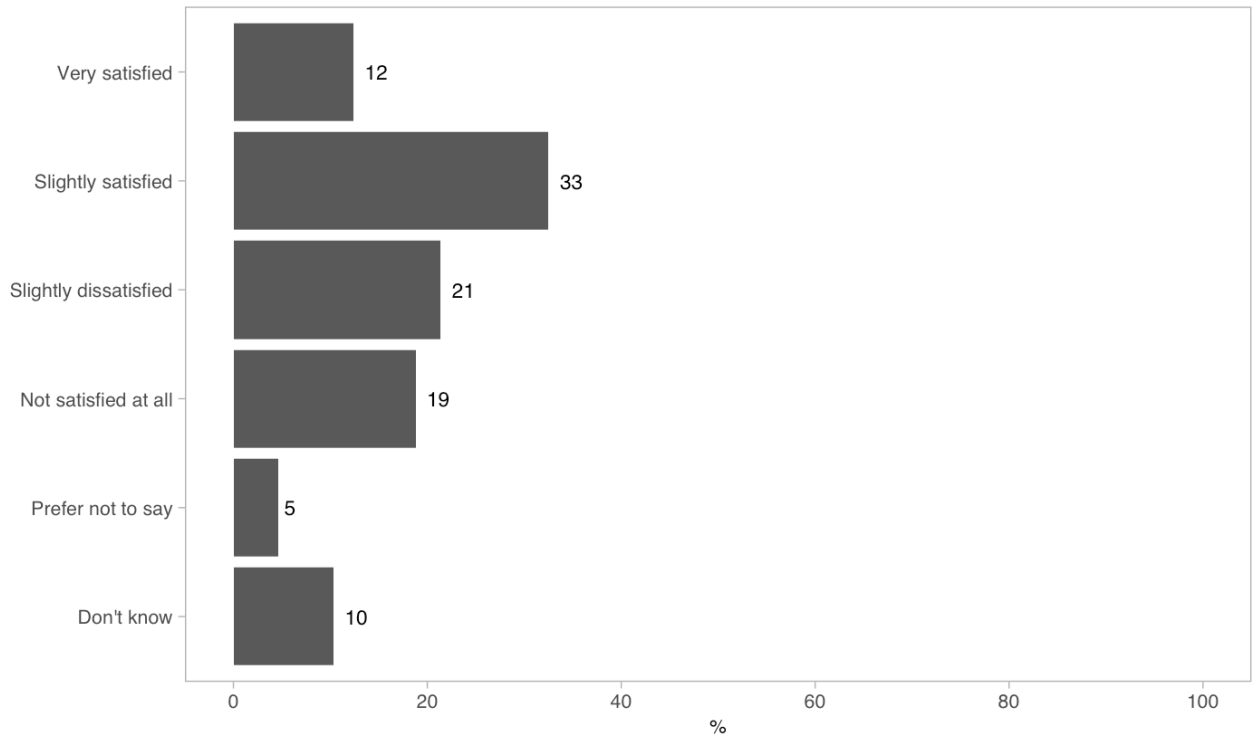
Do you think this is considered discrimination?



Note: Weighted estimates. State of Discrimination Survey 2023 (n=3,238)

Q8

How satisfied are you with the current government's initiatives on solving discrimination within the country?



Note: Weighted estimates. State of Discrimination Survey 2023 (n=3,238)

Q9

What do you think the government should do to solve discrimination within the country?*Selected sample of responses:*

Kem kesedaran. Kerajaan membuat kempen kesedaran kepada rakyat.khususnya pelajar dan ibu bapa.hal ini kerana dapat menghilangkan semangat rasisme

rakyat perlu selalu diingatkan tentang kuota bumiputera hak mutlak yang tidak boleh dipertikaikan dari dulu lagi sampai lah bila-bila. jadi mereka yang bukan bumiputera akan faham & ingat bahawa tiada diskriminasi di situ.

Apply a stricted law to agaist discrimination whether they are Muslim, Hindus, Buddhist and others.

Apply a stricted law to agaist discrimination whether they are Muslim, Hindus, Buddhist and others.

The government provides municipal antidiscrimination services, which are usually existing antidiscrimination bureaus. As well as registering and processing discrimination complaints, these services can perform other tasks, such as providing information on discrimination in schools and businesses. In addition, they cooperate with the Public Prosecution Service and the police at local level to prevent and combat discrimination.

Buat satu sekolah,tak ada sekolah tamil sekolah cina,belajar dalam 1 sekolah sahaja untuk semua kaum

Mengikuti apa yang ada dalam perlembagaan negara dan setiap kaum harus menghormatinya. Perlembagaan adalah simbol kedaulatan negara kita.

Hapuskan system quota di Malaysia Selain itu juga kerajaan harus memupukan semangat perpaduan dalam kalagan remaja sekarang

Melaksanakan akta untuk membendung masalah diskriminasi kaum dan agama dalam segala hal..serta melaksanakan semua program dan aktiviti tanpa menhira kaum dan agama..

Remove quota to enrol local university. Provide more working opportunity to women and OKU. attire free

Introduce and implement some sort of Anti-Discrimination or Anti-Hate law which encompass protection on issues of sex, gender, religion & beliefs, racial, disability, income/class, and others.

Revoke Mandarin speaking when apply for job. This is the most discrimination in Malaysia. We're Malaysian

The governments are the one that should stop putting in people's mindset to be a RACIST. Despite the Malays, Chinese and Indians in the parliaments. They're the one that putting provocations, putting rage and hatred in our peoples, that makes alot of discrimination happened. Just my two cents. 🍷

implement anti retaliation program, educate workers about discrimination, ensuring equal access to all opportunities for citizens

have no idea, seems like no solution at all can be done because of the politicians attitude towards socials

Establish support mechanisms for victims of discrimination, including access to legal assistance, counseling, and other resources. Empower individuals to report incidents of discrimination without fear of retaliation.

Utamakan agama Islam kerana negara Malaysia adalah negara yang menegakkan agama Islam. Agama lain juga dibolehkan dalam apa-apa jua perkara, tetapi tidak boleh berada di atas.. mestilah yang beragama islam yang berada diatas.. agama lain mesti berada dibawah..

Equal opportunities or reduce the gap difference. More housing, loans and work privileges. Be considerate towards other race appeals.

jangan sentuh hak keistimewaan org asal. bantu orang susah jangan kaya kan orang yang dah memang kaya

A more study is needed. Government may do survey and gather more feedbacks from the public so that government knows about the actual situation and looking for correct solution.

www.aodmalaysia.org

For justice, peace, and a sustainable future

 [@aodmalaysia](https://www.instagram.com/aodmalaysia)  [@aod_malaysia](https://twitter.com/aod_malaysia)  contact@aodmalaysia.org