

Z!KOKO

THE STATE OF LOVE REPORT

2026



Introduction



Love in Nigeria has never followed a single script.

It lives somewhere between '*God abeg*' and '*God when*', with people hoping for the best, bracing for the worst, and showing up anyway.

But what does love actually look like for Nigerians right now? Are people still meeting the traditional way, or has dating moved entirely online? Do gender roles still hold, or are they being reconsidered? Is marriage still the goal, or are more people opting out? And what about sex; are Nigerians as conservative as we assume, or is that changing too?

The State of Love Report was created to answer these questions. We surveyed over 10,000 Nigerians across different age groups, gender identities, sexual orientations, relationship statuses and locations about how they experience love today.

**Across the data, one thing is clear:
Nigerians have not stopped
believing in love.**

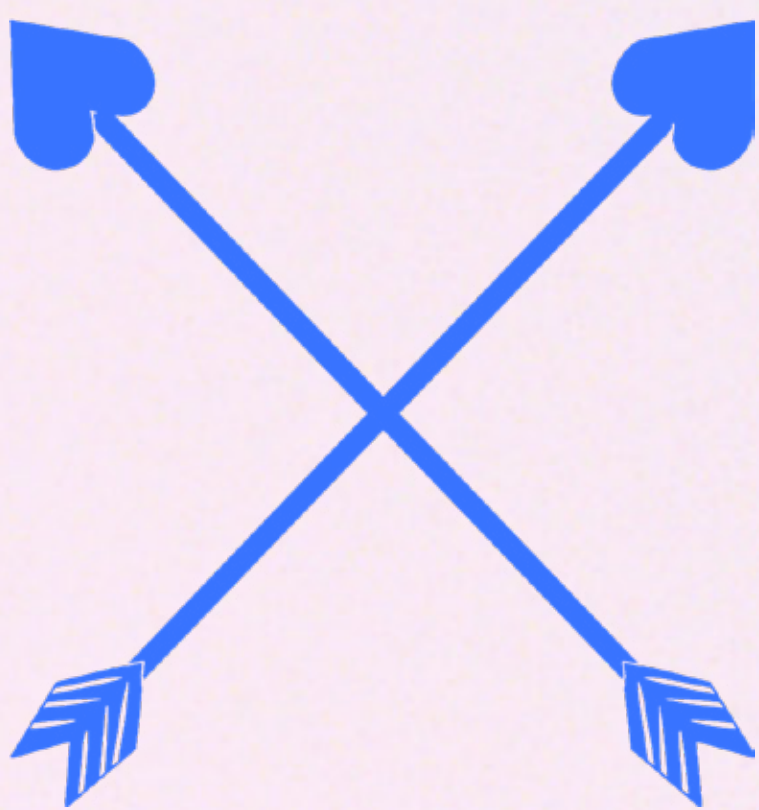
**What has changed is how they
approach it, how much they question
it, and how real-life pressures now
shape romantic decisions.**

**This report tells the bigger story
behind these patterns, using the
experiences of real Nigerians.**

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Executive Summary



Love in Nigeria is still taken seriously, but the way people experience it has changed.

Based on responses from **over 10,000 Nigerians**, the inaugural State of Love Report looks at how dating, sex, and marriage play out today.

The data shows that romantic relationships are becoming harder to define.

62%

of respondents describe their current or most recent relationship as **casual**, **undefined**, or **open**, with situationships now a common dating experience, especially among younger Nigerians.

Clear labels exist, but they are no longer the default.

Breakups are shaped by everyday pressures rather than big, dramatic moments. Incompatibility and communication issues rank among the top reasons relationships end, yet cheating remains widespread.

50%

of Nigerians admit to
having cheated



While the other half reported being cheated on, exposing a quiet crisis of trust beneath the surface of many relationships.

Marriage still holds cultural weight, but it is approached with more caution. Love is the most cited reason for getting married, mentioned by about 42% of respondents.

At the same time:

41%

of married Nigerians say they have felt **regret** at some point, even as a majority say they have never regretted getting married and remain resistant to divorce.



Taken together, the findings show Nigerians are navigating love with clearer eyes, **prioritising compatibility and communication** amid life's challenges, grappling with widespread trust gaps stemming from cheating, and approaching marriage with increased caution despite its enduring appeal.

Key Insights



Nearly 2 in 3 Nigerian daters are in relationships without clear labels.

Casual dating, situationships and open relationships now make up most dating experiences.



Social media is now the third most common way Nigerians meet their partners

Events and introductions among friends take the lead.



Dating apps account for just 1 in 10 relationships.

Real-life spaces still matter more than algorithms.



Nearly 30% of Nigerians prioritise kindness over ambition, financial stability and intelligence in a partner.

They also look out for shared values and religious compatibility.



50% of Nigerians admit they've cheated on a partner.

Yet a staggering 59% say they have been cheated on.



Men and women are horny at nearly the same frequency.

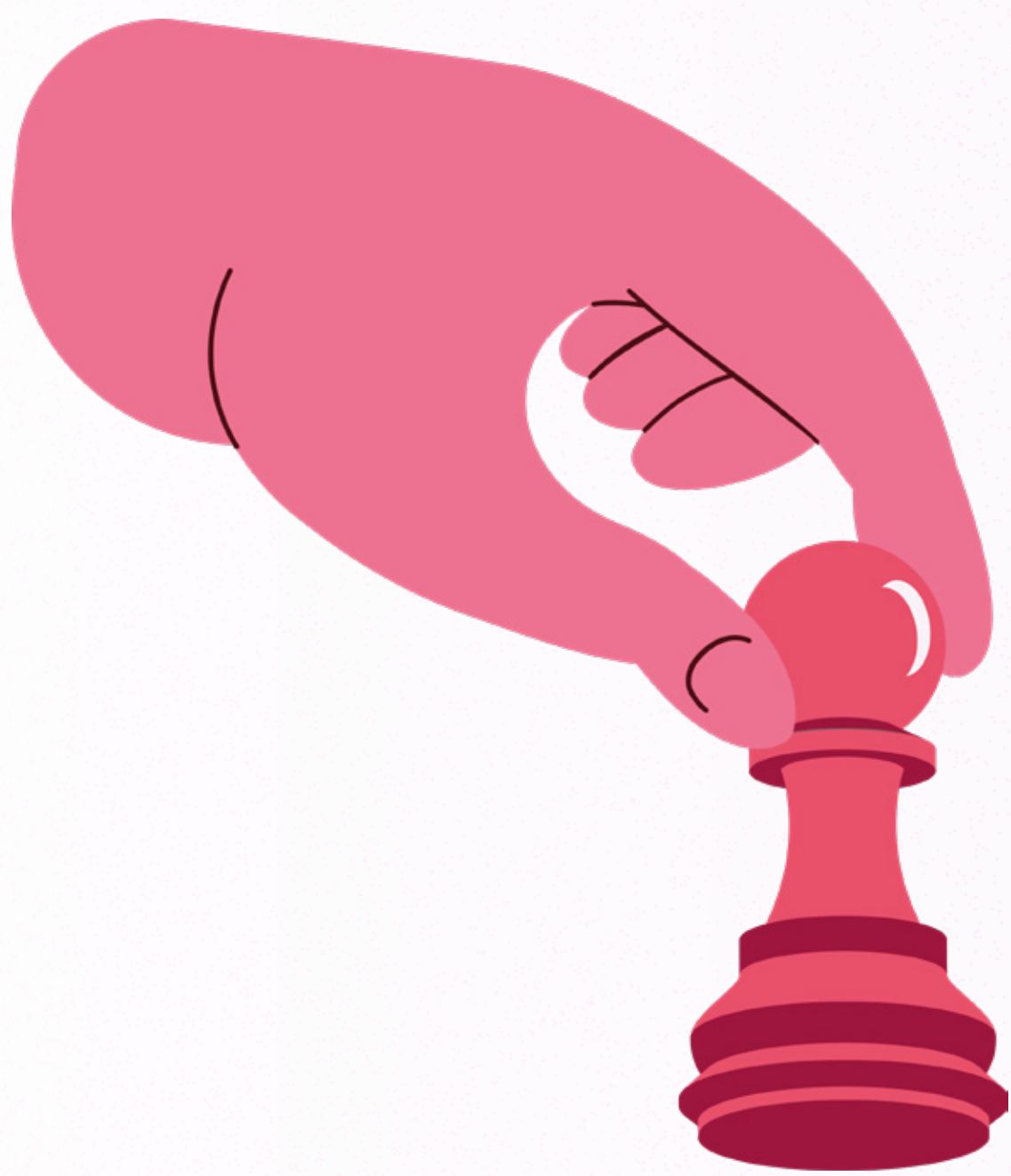
Sexual desire is less gendered than cultural assumptions suggest.

Chapter 1

How Does Love Start?



When it comes to the start of a relationship in Nigeria, traditional dating rules still seem to apply, but they're clearly loosening.



For decades, Nigerian dating culture has been built around a simple rule: **Men do the approaching while women wait.**

But that rule is no longer holding as firmly as it once did.

Nigerians on who should make the first move

56%

27% women
29% men

The man should make the first move

40%

18% women
22% men

Whoever is interested (no gender expectation)

4%

2% women
2% men

The woman should make the first move

4 in 10 Nigerians say gender shouldn't decide who makes the first move



If I like you, I'll say it. I'm not waiting for someone to read my mind,

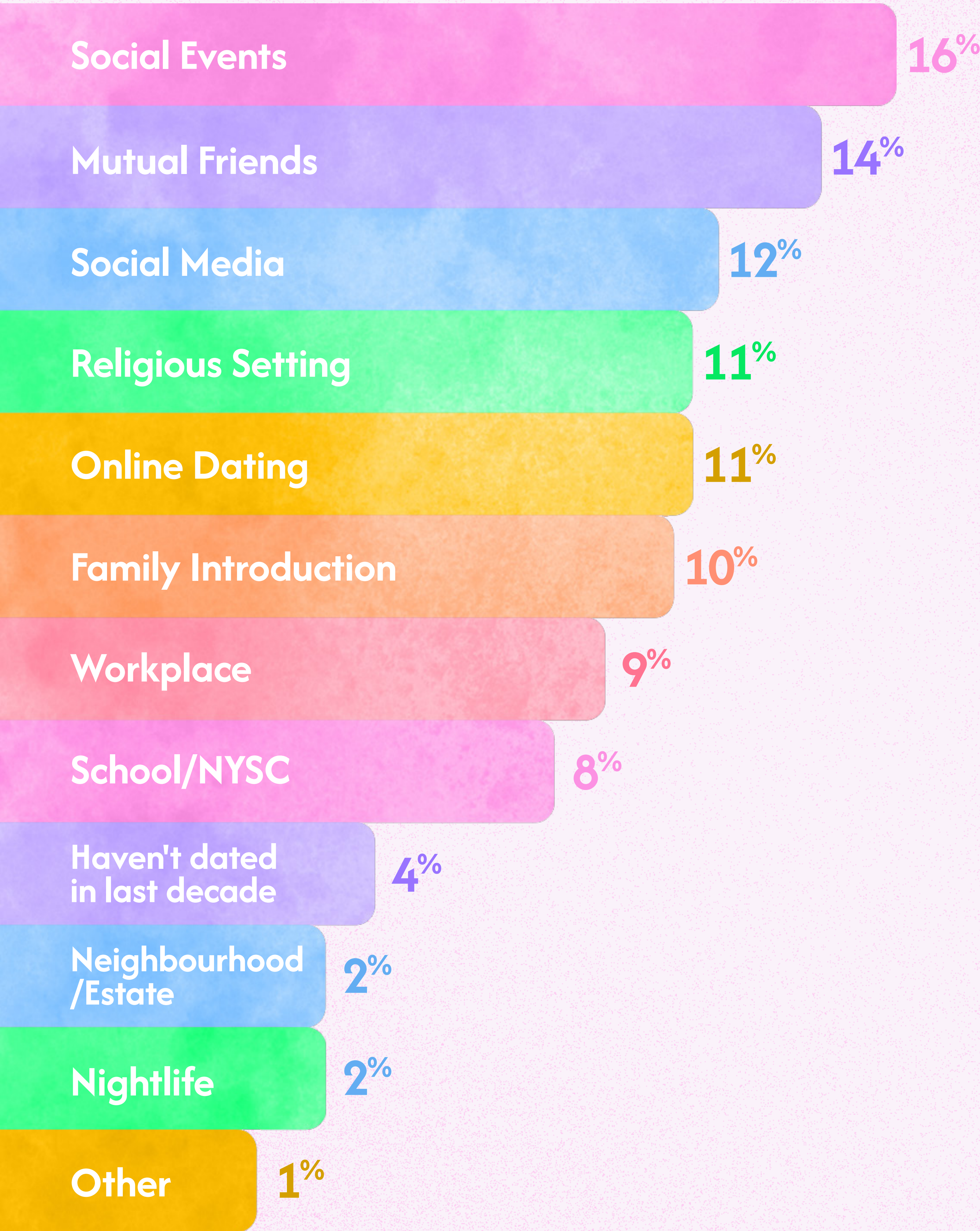
Kehinde, a 31-year-old social media strategist in Lagos.

Even with all the talk about shooting your shot, traditional expectations still remain dominant. A clear majority of dating Nigerians, 56%, believe the man should make the first move.

This view cuts across gender. About 29% of women and 27% of men agree that men should always initiate romantic interest, with women slightly more invested in this idea than men. Very few respondents think women should make the first move outright, barely 2% across both genders.

The data suggests that while many Nigerians say they are open to flexible dating roles, most still feel more comfortable when men take the lead.

Nigerians on where they met their partners in the past 10 years



Despite the raves about dating apps and digital romance, most Nigerian relationships still begin the old-fashioned way. Through people, social spaces, and chance encounters that feel ordinary until they are not.

About **4** in **10** Nigerians met their partners through events or friend introductions



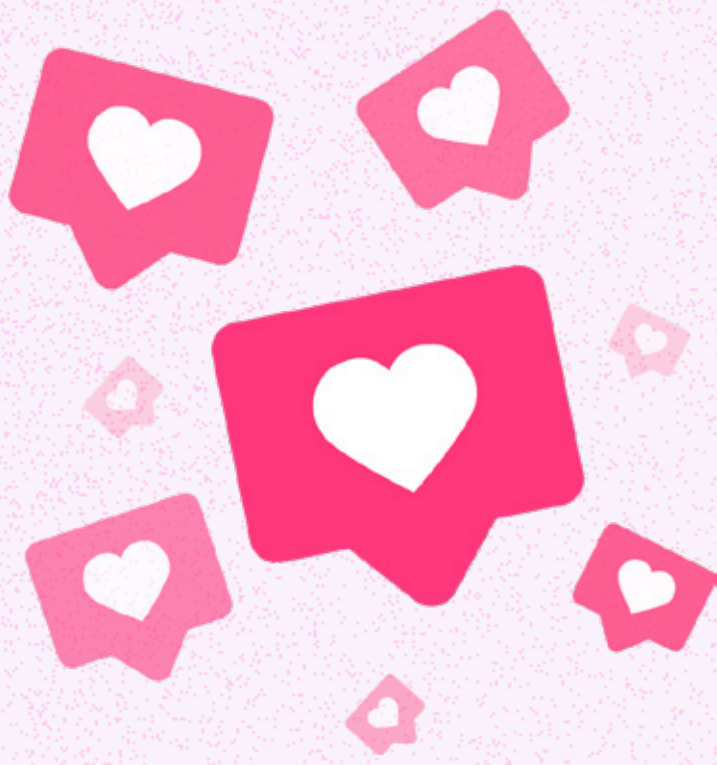
Social spaces still play a major role in how relationships are formed. From weddings and birthday parties to house hangouts and casual link-ups, social gatherings remain the most common entry point into romantic relationships. 16% of respondents met partners at events, while another 14% met through friends’ introductions.

These spaces matter because they come with built-in familiarity. Someone knows someone. There is shared context. The interaction does not begin from scratch. And it's not just friends doing the matchmaking: More Nigerians than you think are letting their family introduce them to partners; a route many still consider trustworthy.

Chiamaka, a 26-year-old content creator based in Lagos, explains how that familiarity often carries beyond the event itself:



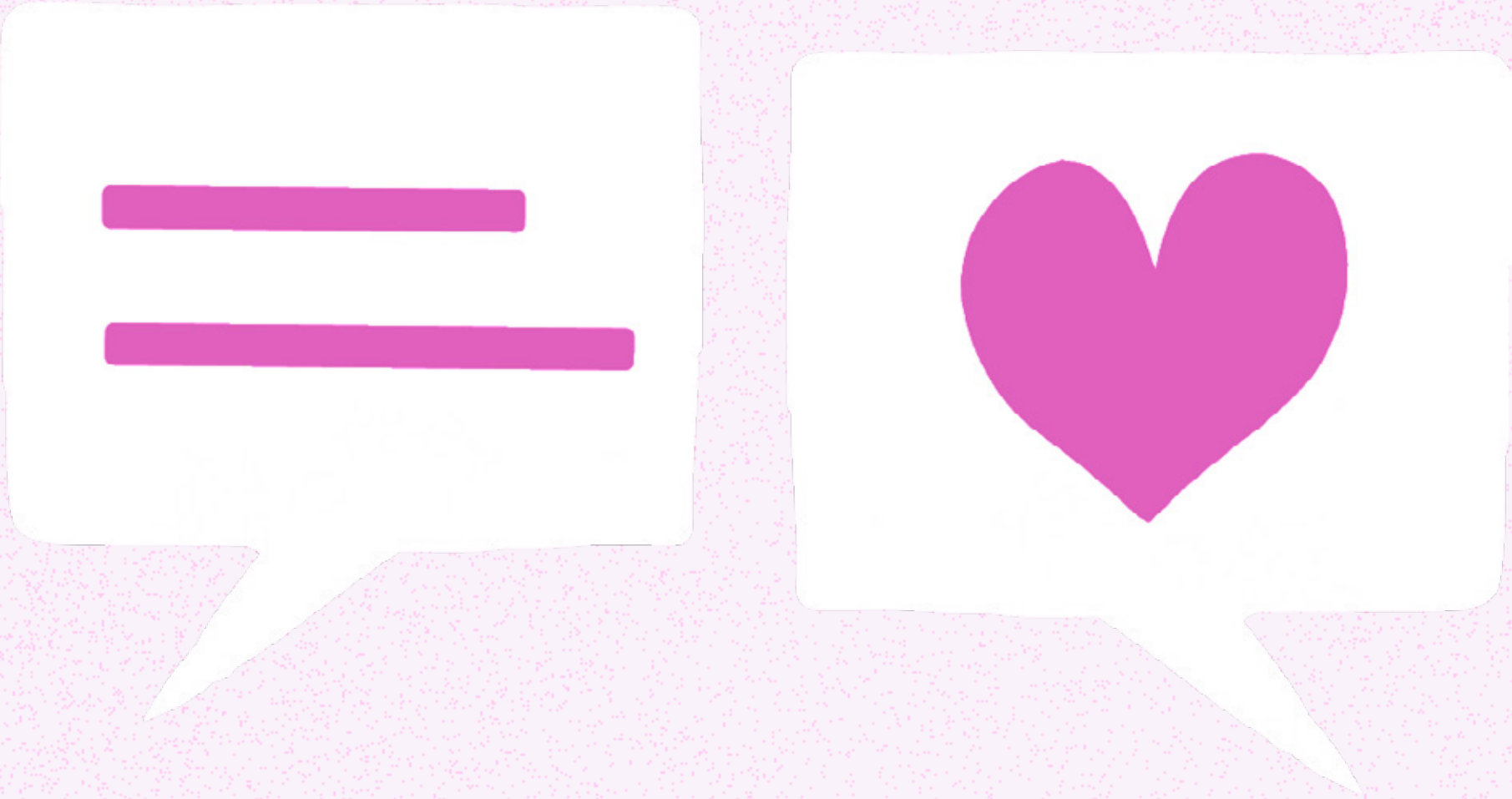
I met my boyfriend at a friend's party, but we only started talking after he sent me a DM three weeks later. The party was just the excuse.



Social media is now the third most common way Nigerians meet their partners

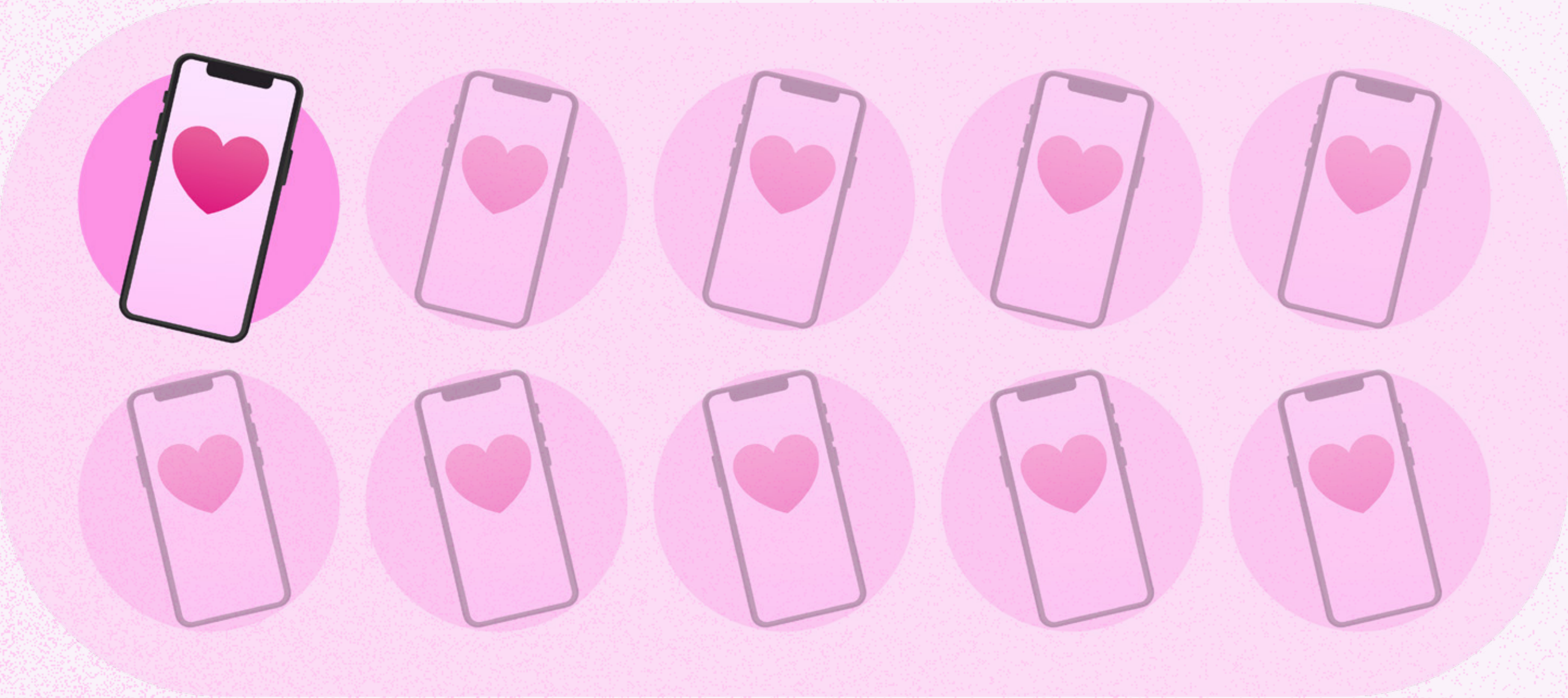
While traditional methods lead, social media now closely follows behind. This explains why dating in Nigeria today feels both digital and physical at the same time. People meet at parties, follow each other online, start talking casually, and only later decide whether something romantic is happening.

Together, offline spaces and social media now account for over 40% of how Nigerians form romantic relationships.



Despite their visibility, dating apps play a smaller role than expected.

Only about **1** in **10** Nigerians
Nigerians met a partner through
a dating app



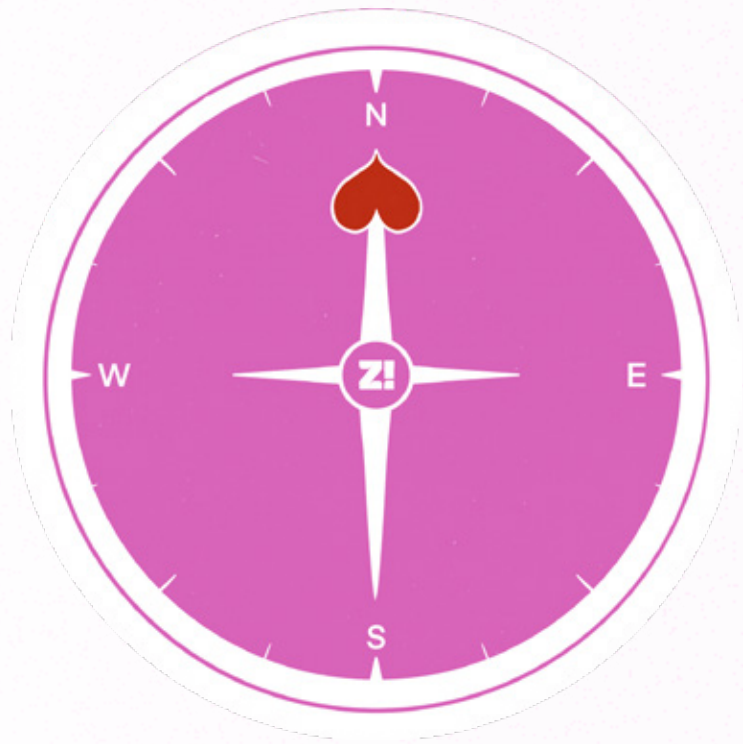
While dating apps are widely known and discussed, they are not the dominant way Nigerians form romantic connections. For many respondents, apps exist on the margins of their dating lives rather than at the centre.



Last year, I decided to try dating apps, but all I found were people looking for hookups or casual relationships. I wanted something more substantial.

Remi, a 27-year-old in Lagos, shares with Zikoko.

Nigerians on what matters when choosing a romantic partner



**Kindness,
attractiveness,
and financial
stability top
Nigerians' partner
preferences.**

Once contact is made, Nigerian lovers are super clear about what matters next. When they choose partners, kindness stands out above the rest. It accounts for nearly 30% of preferences, placing ahead of factors like financial stability, ambition, intelligence and attractiveness combined. People also look for shared values and religious compatibility.

**This pattern holds across gender,
with slight difference.**

Kindness



Financial Stability



Attractiveness



Shared Values



Religious Compatibility



Lifestyle Match



Honesty

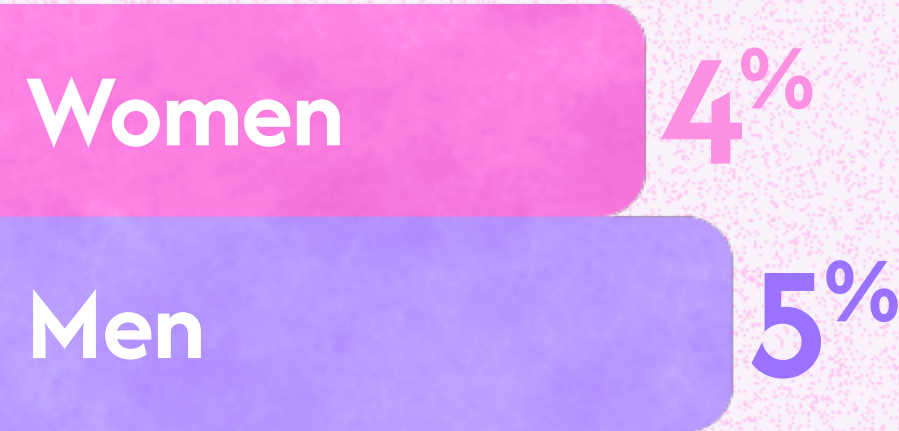
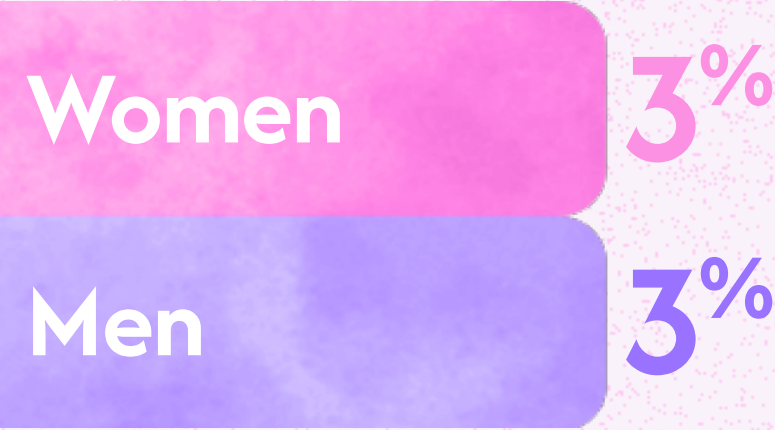
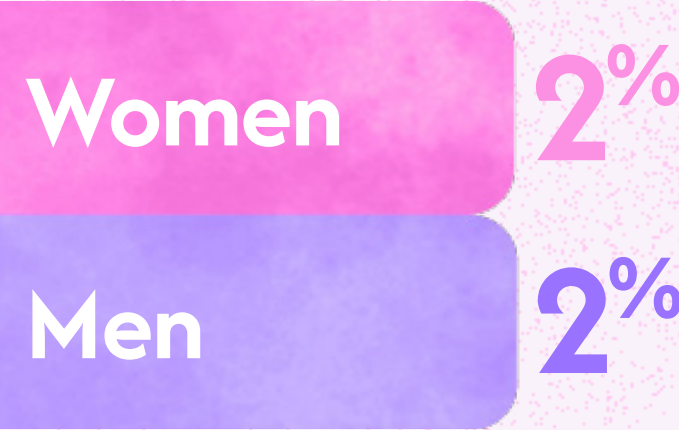


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Ambition



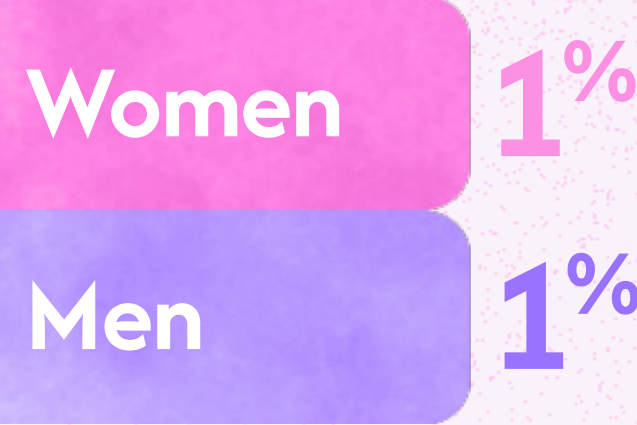
Communication



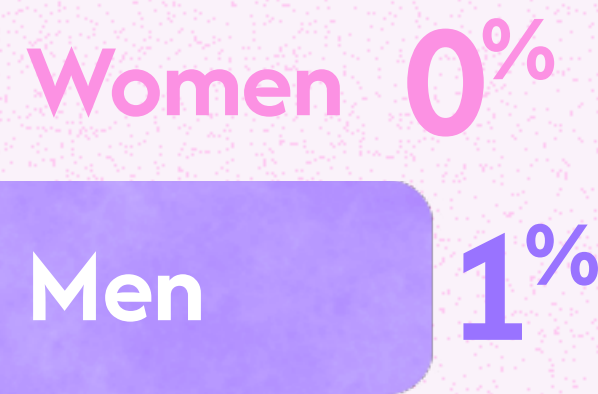
Intelligence



Family Background



Sexual Compatibility



Men are more likely than women to prioritise attractiveness in a partner.

For men, attractiveness ranks higher than financial stability when choosing a partner. About 17% of men prioritise attractiveness, compared to 12% who place financial stability first.

For women, the order takes a turn. Financial stability comes second only to kindness, with 18% ranking it as a top priority, while attractiveness follows closely behind at 17%.

This does not suggest wildly different values. Both men and women care about kindness, shared values, and long-term compatibility. The difference is what they look for first.

Men are more likely to start with physical attraction.

Women are more likely to start with stability.

In practical terms, this shows up in everyday dating decisions. Who feels comfortable committing early. Who wants to see signs of a steady job before taking things seriously. Who is willing to overlook financial uncertainty if the attraction is strong. The priorities are close, but what comes first matters.

Together, these findings show that love in Nigeria often begins with familiarity, moves through intentional communication, and becomes serious only when emotional and practical expectations align.

People are not catching the love bug blindly. They are observing behaviour, testing effort, and paying close attention to how interest is expressed and sustained. They're saying: show your workings.

This is how love starts now.

Chapter 2

Why Has Dating Gotten So Hard?

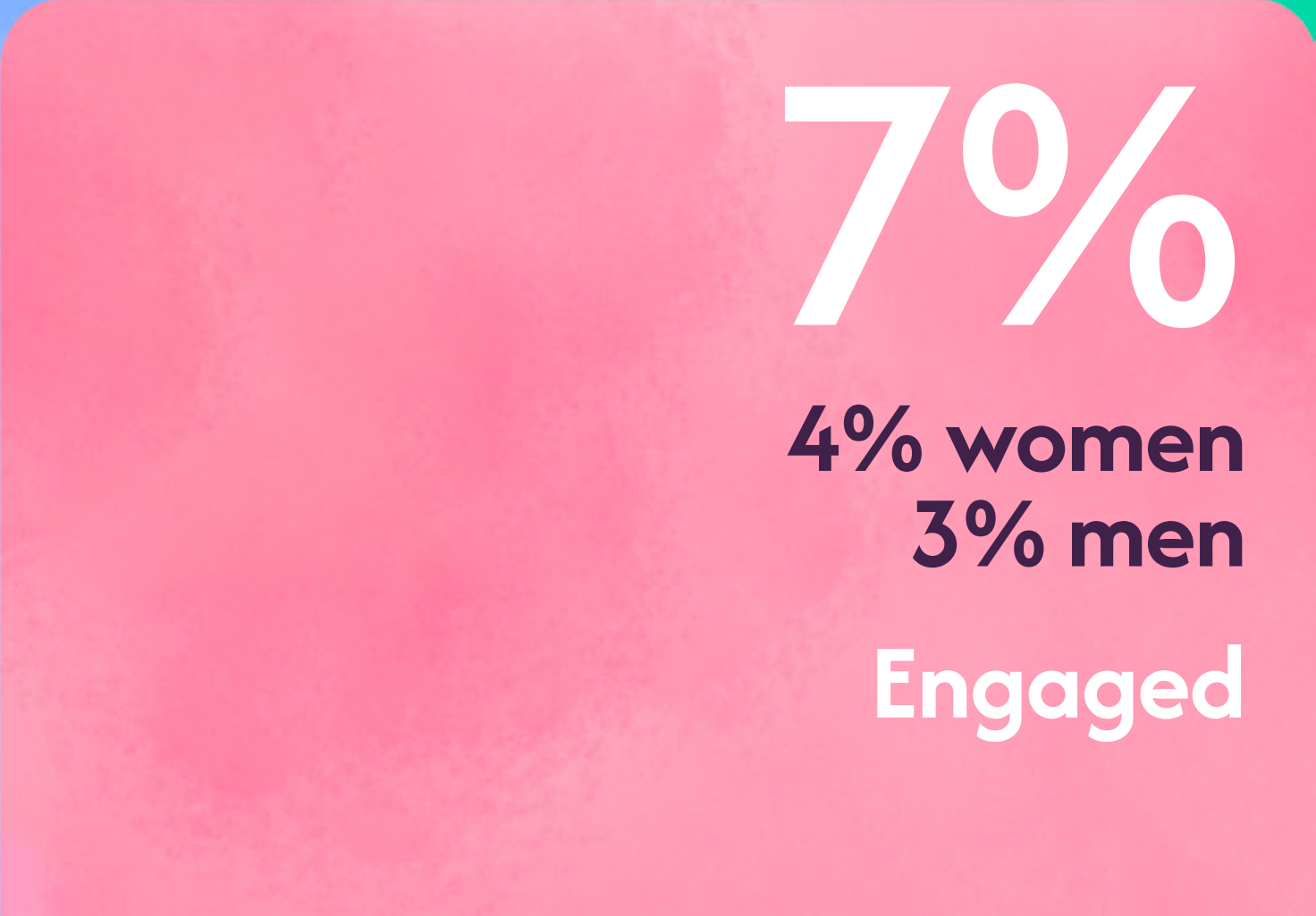
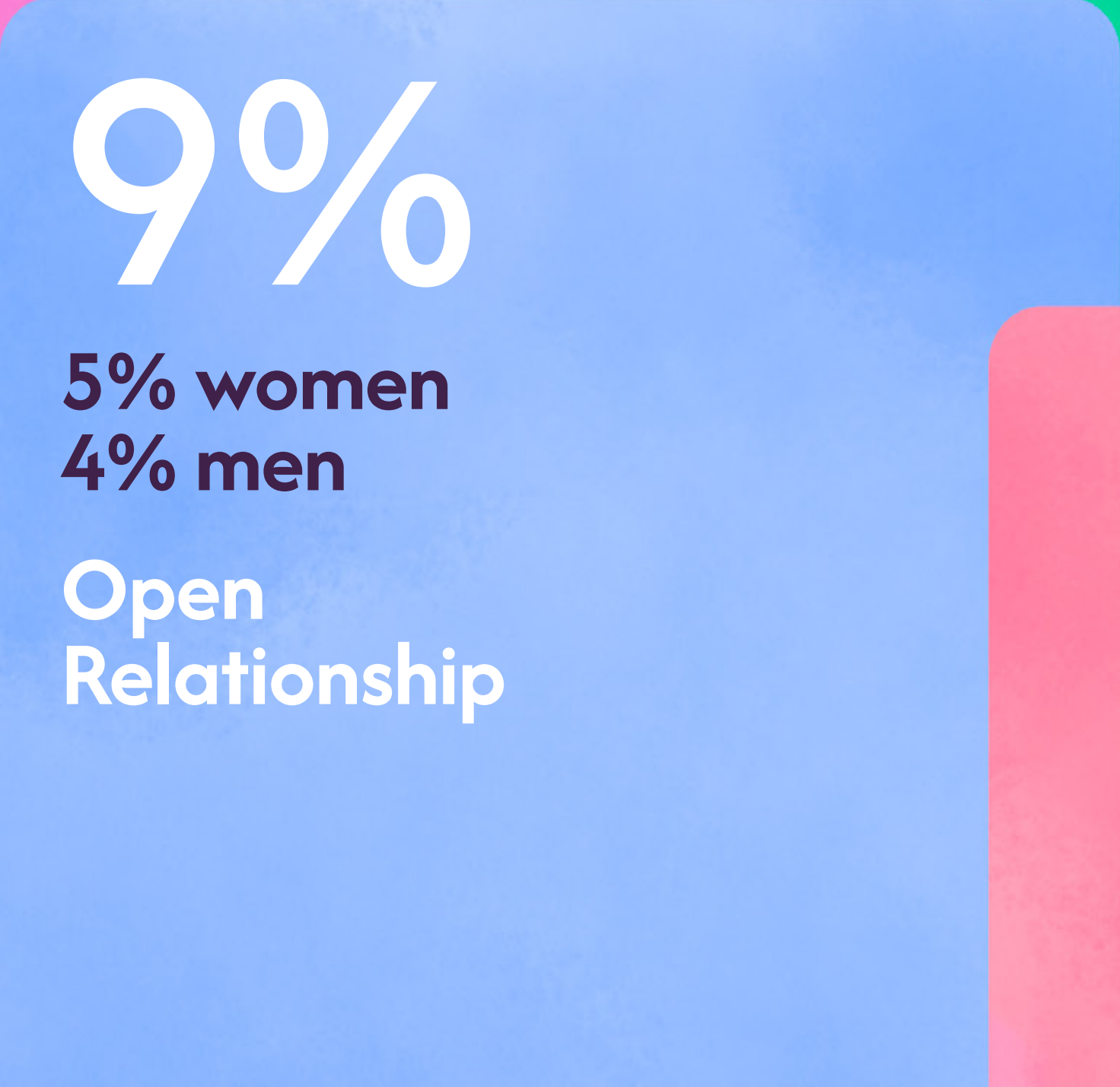
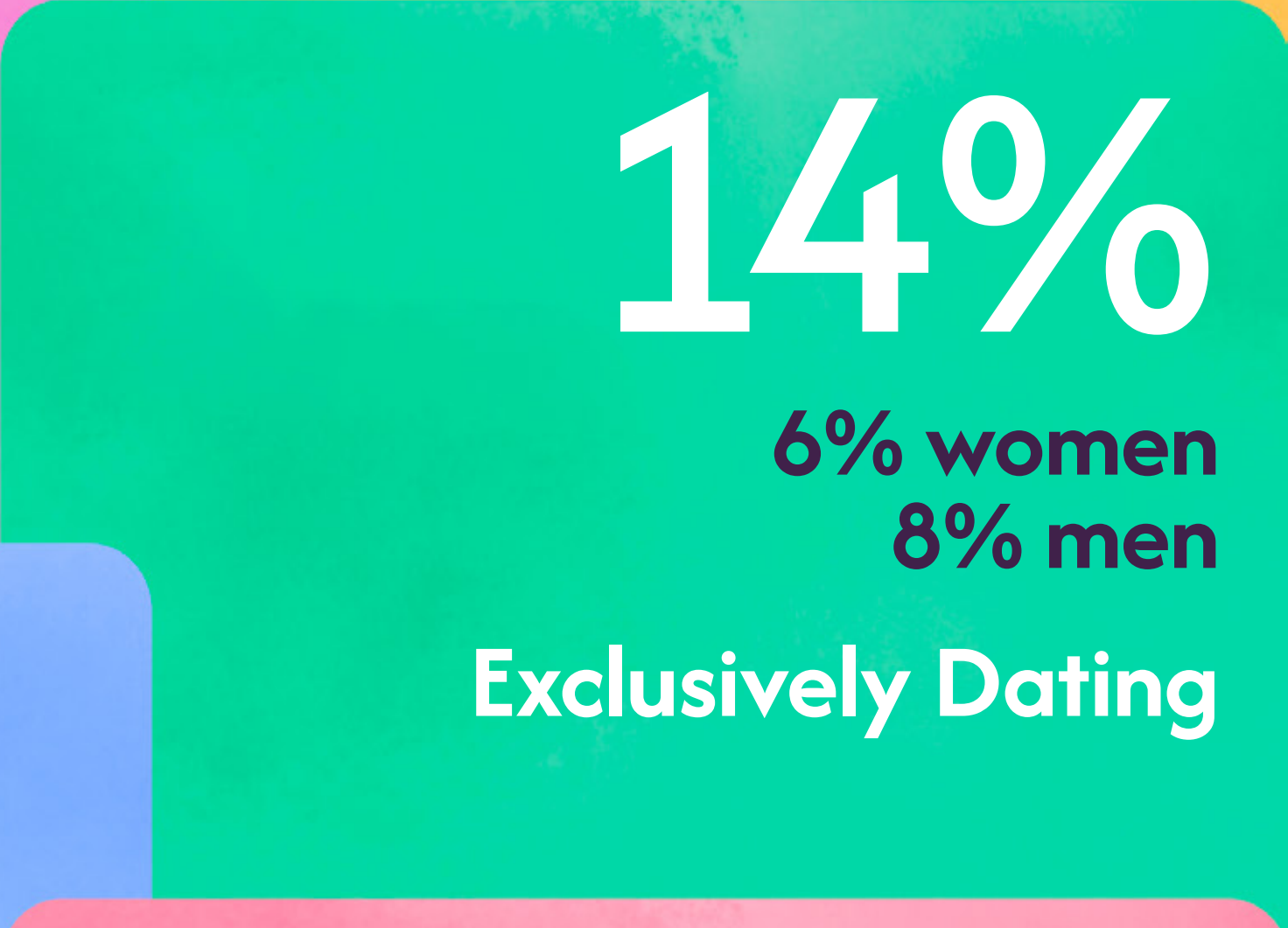
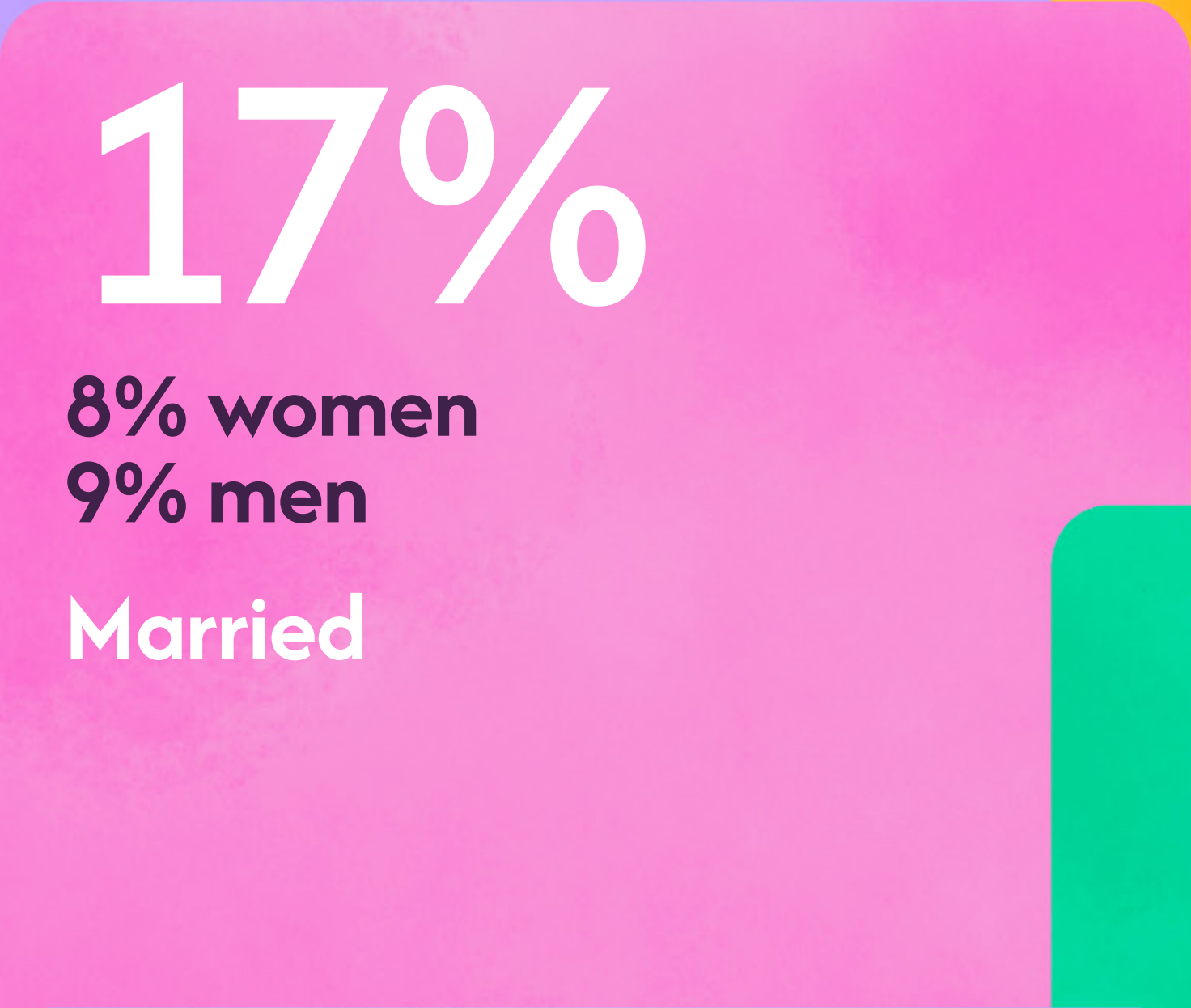
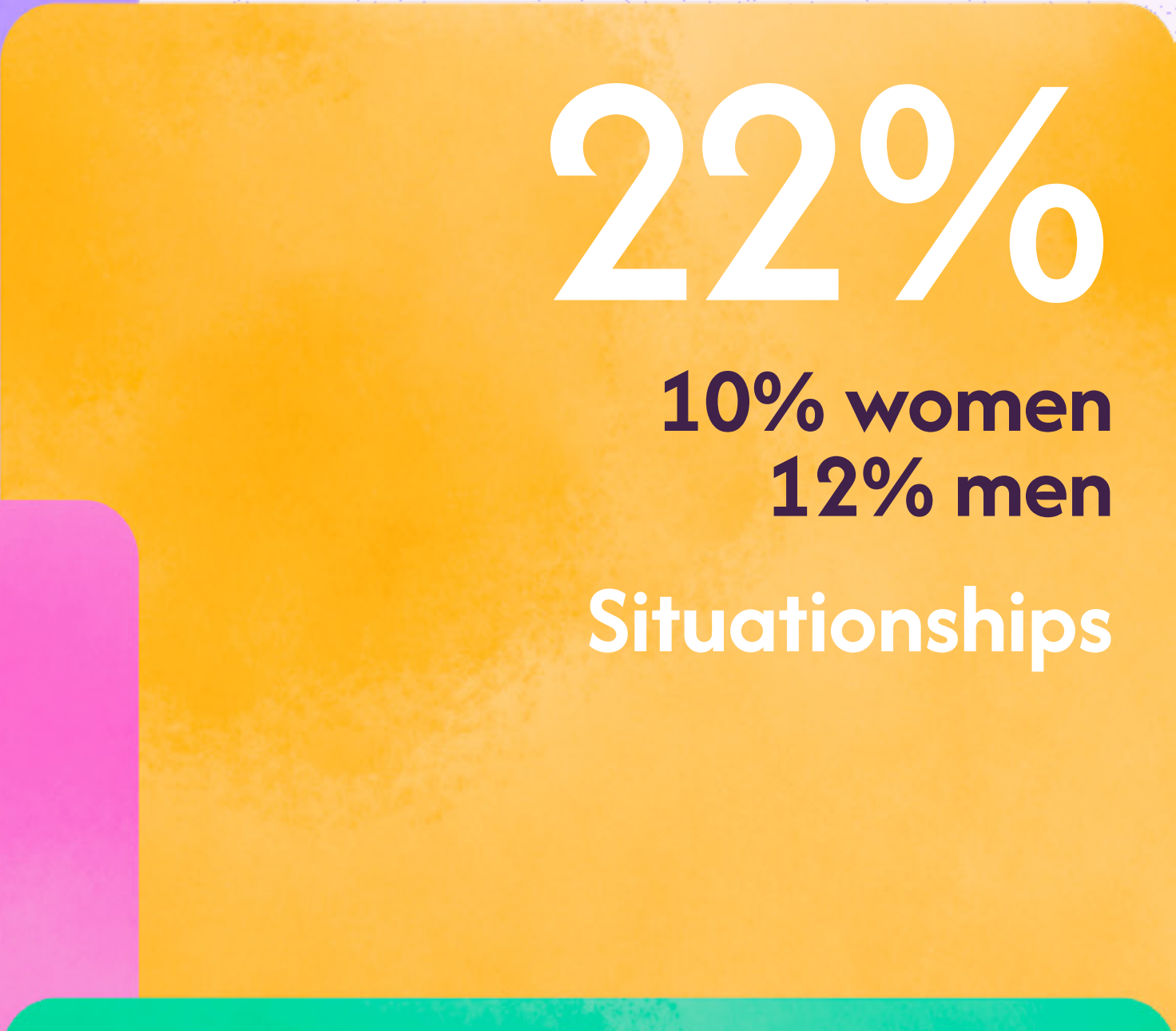
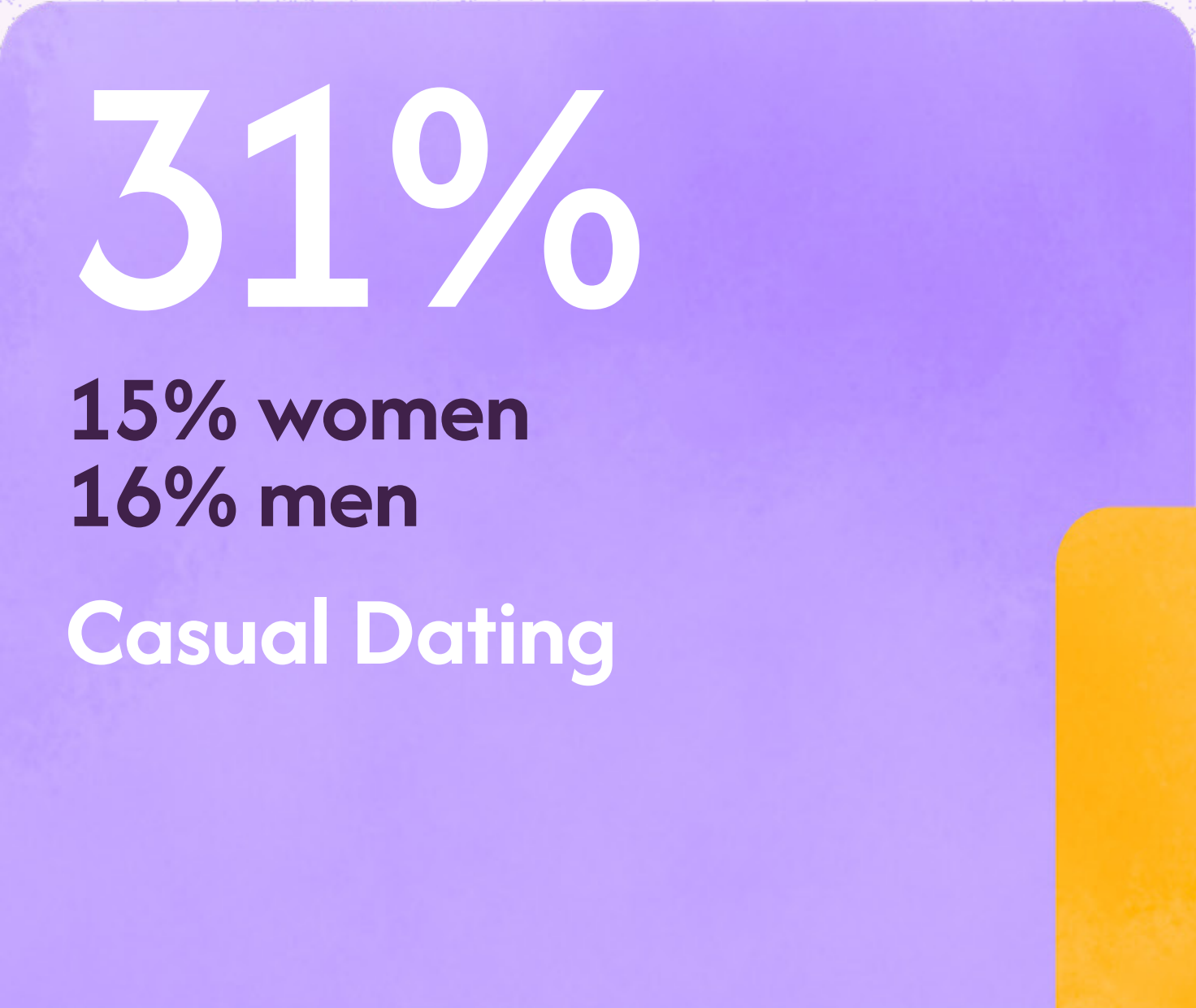


Nigerian daters are still meeting, talking, getting attached, and breaking up. What has changed, however, is how relationships are defined and how long people are willing to stay once things feel difficult.

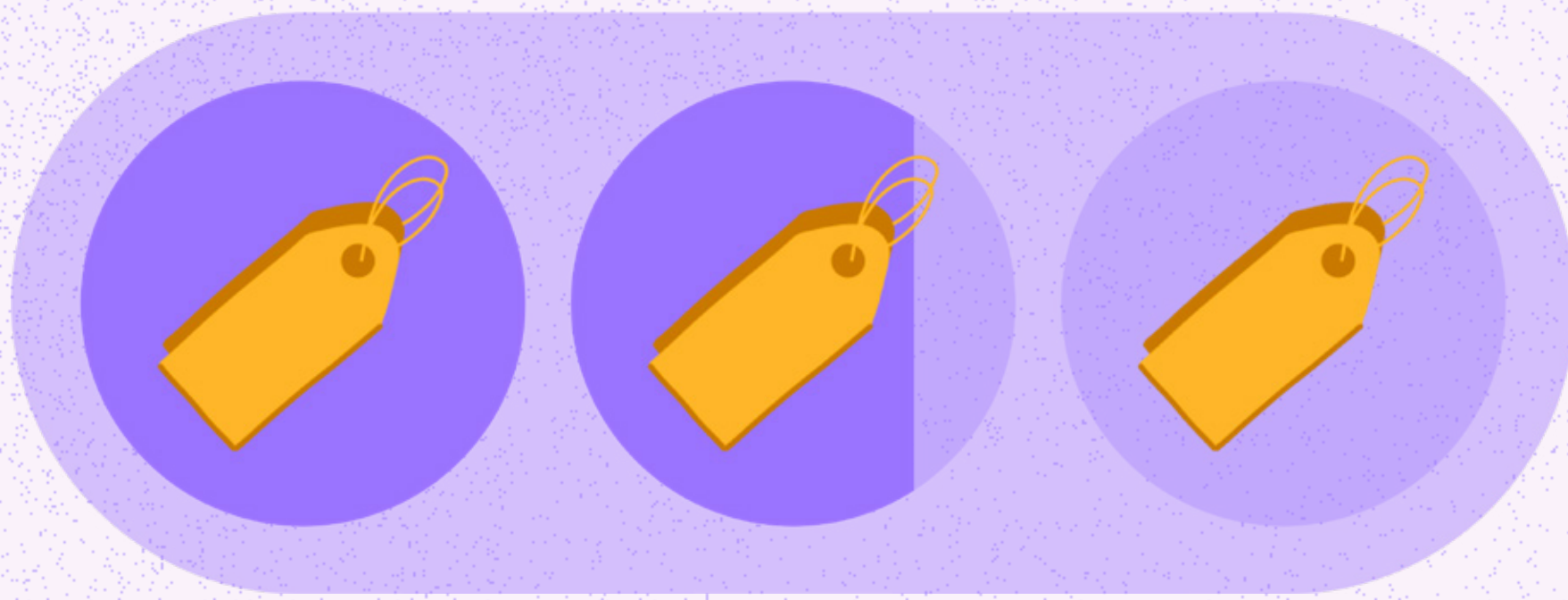
Across the data, one pattern keeps showing up:

Commitment is no longer a given. Many relationships now exist without clear labels, timelines, or expectations, and that ambiguity shapes how people connect and how they leave.

Nigerians on how they would describe their current or most recent relationship



Nearly **2** in **3** Nigerian daters are in relationships without clear labels



When Nigerians talk about their relationships today, most do not reach for traditional labels like “exclusive,” “engaged,” or “married.”

Instead, the most common descriptions are casual dating, situationships, and open relationships.

Casual dating accounts for 31% of responses, situationships follow at 22%, and open relationships make up 9%. Together, these forms of connection account for over 60% of how Nigerians experience romantic relationships.

Only **38%**
describe their relationships
as clearly defined or
traditional.

This suggests that many people are choosing arrangements that allow flexibility. Labels come with expectations around time, money, emotional labour, and the future.

For many Nigerians, especially young adults navigating uncertainty, avoiding labels feels like a way to stay connected without feeling trapped.

Tayo, a 38-year-old private cab driver in Lagos, says:



I've been through hell in past relationships so I'm no longer interested in committing. I need someone who's willing to sacrifice and chase my dreams with me, but no one out there is offering that right now. For now, I'm just going with the flow.

Women are slightly more likely than men to be in open relationships:

5% vs 4%

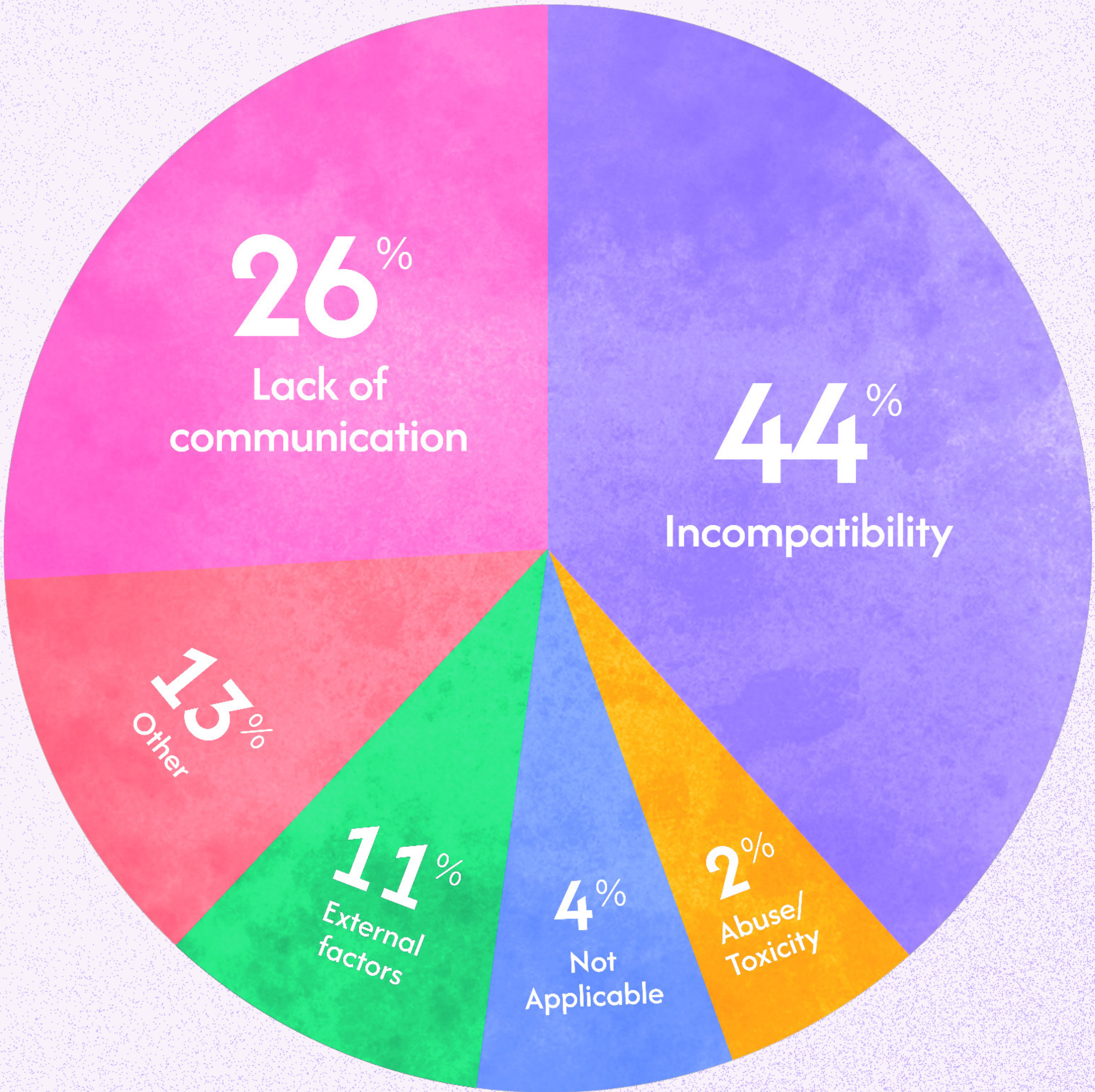
While men slightly dominate casual dating and situationships, women lead in open relationships. This suggests that some women are actively opting into relationship structures that offer autonomy and reduced emotional pressure, rather than simply drifting into undefined arrangements.

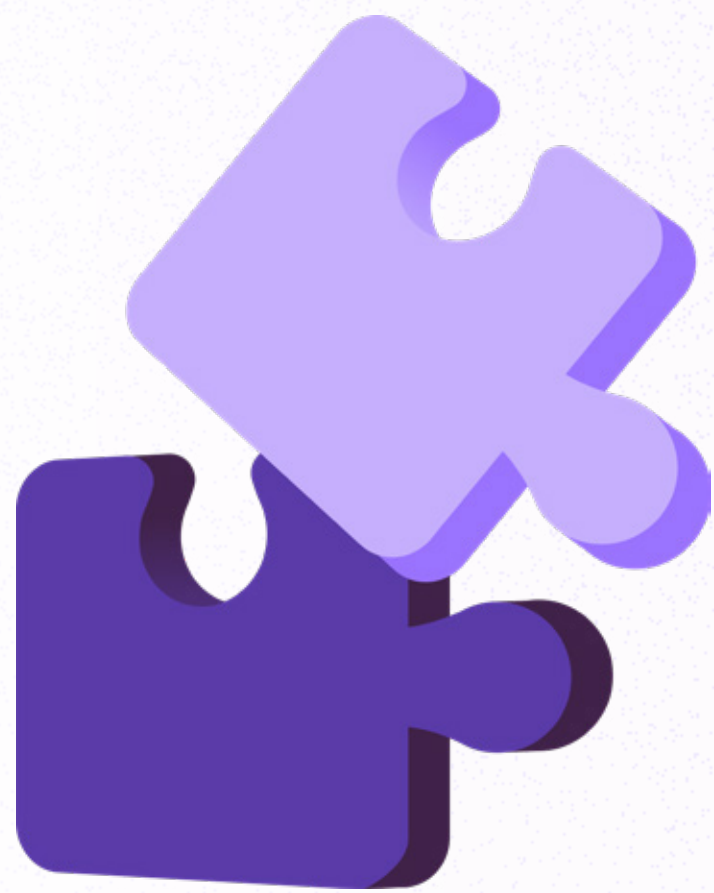
Taken together, the data suggest that, for most Nigerians, dating now often falls into the grey area.

People are opting for ambiguity over labels and flexibility over commitment.

Nigerians on why they have broken up with partners in the past

If relationships feel less defined, the reasons they end also reveal where things tend to fall apart.





**Incompatibility
is the number one
relationship killer
in Nigeria.**

Lack of communication comes in second at 26%, indicating that even when couples are compatible, failure to discuss things can still lead to the death of a relationship.

External pressures also matter.

**Distance, family interference,
and financial stress together
account for**

11% of
breakups

**showing how often forces outside the
relationship itself shape whether it survives.**

Gender differences become clearer when looking at more serious reasons for leaving

Incompatibility



Lack of Communication



Other



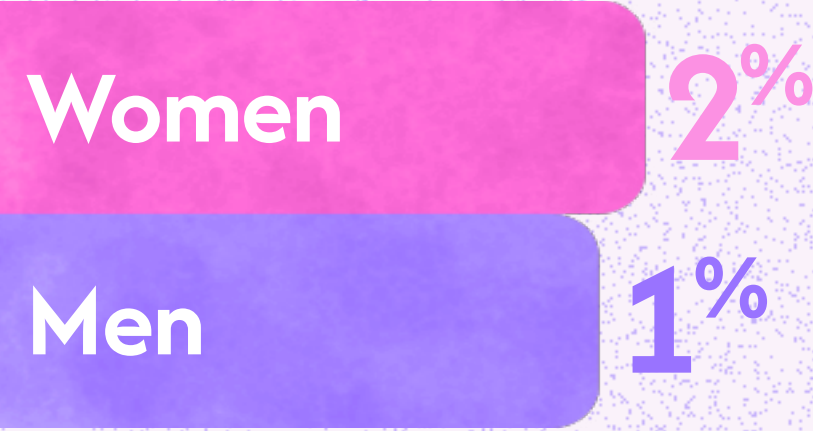
External Factors



Not Applicable



Abuse/Toxicity



Women are twice as likely as men to leave abusive or toxic relationships.

Women report leaving abusive or toxic relationships at 2%, compared to 1% for men. This may reflect differences in lived experience or differences in how comfortable people feel naming abuse as a reason for leaving.

The numbers reflect a shift:

More women are choosing safety over the expectation to stay and endure.

Nigerians on cheating in relationships

42%

22% women
20% men

No, never

27%

12% women
15% men

Yes, once

23%

11% women
12% men

Yes, more than once

8%

4% women
4% men

Prefer not to say

Cheating occupies a strange place in relationships. It is widely condemned, frequently discussed, and yet, according to the numbers, remarkably common.

For Priscilla, a 29-year-old based in Abuja, it happened during NYSC camp.

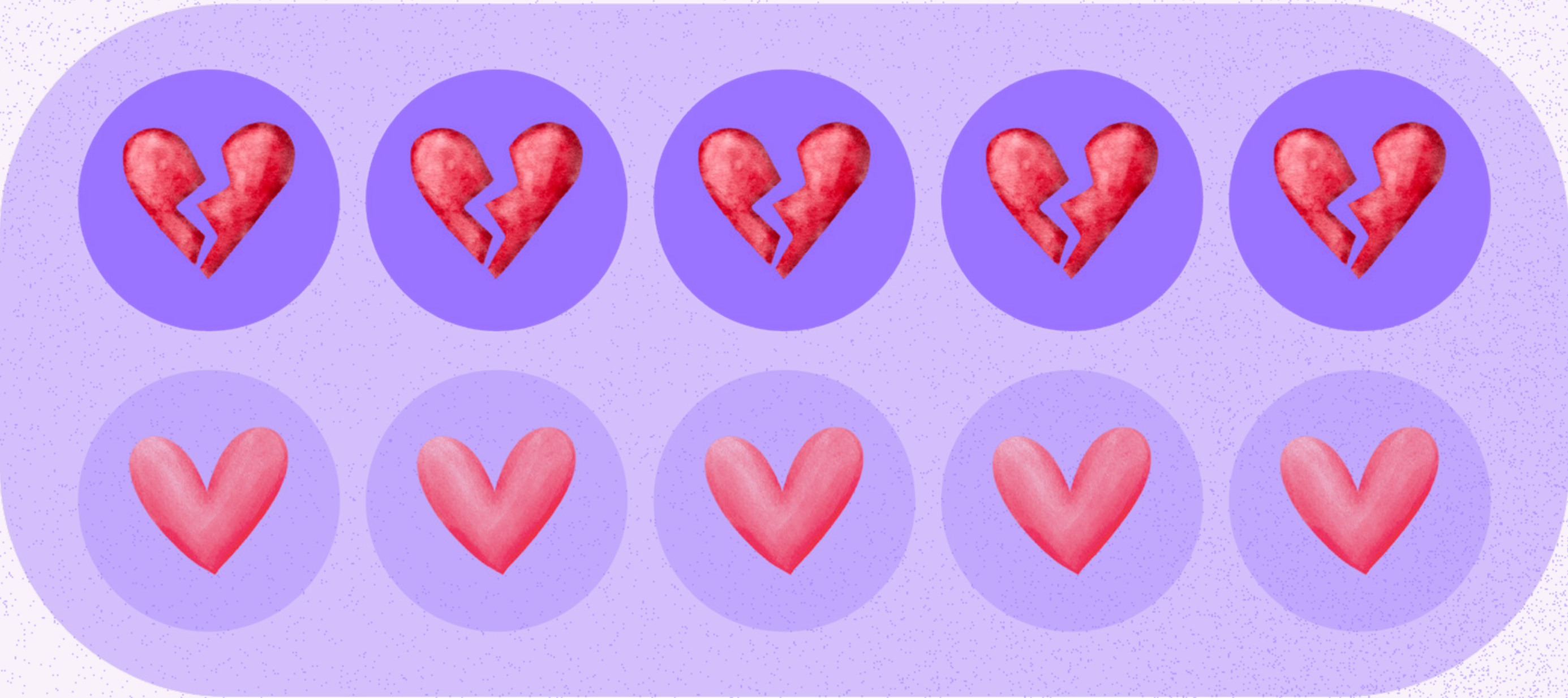


I got carried away and had sex with someone during NYSC camp. I immediately felt bad and was going to tell my boyfriend. Then I found out he'd also been keeping himself busy with a 'friend' while I was away.

Her experience captures how cheating often shows up in relationships. It is not always about one person deliberately betraying another. Sometimes, both partners drift at the same time, without knowing what the other is doing.

Stories like this appear frequently in the data.

50% of Nigerians
say they have cheated on
a partner at least once



At the same time, 59% say they have been cheated on.

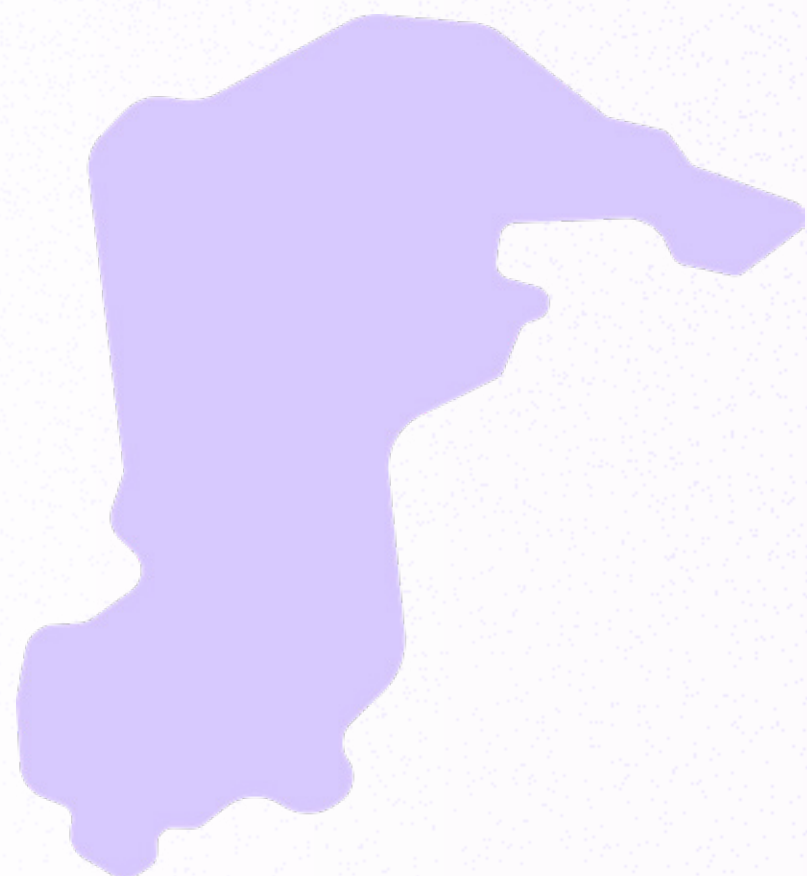
This overlap suggests that cheating is widespread, yet often under-admitted by those involved.

Nigerian men cheat more than women, But the difference is small.

When broken down by gender, men lead the cheating stats, but women are not far behind.

Men are slightly more likely than women to admit to cheating, both once (15% vs 12%) and repeatedly (12% vs 11%).

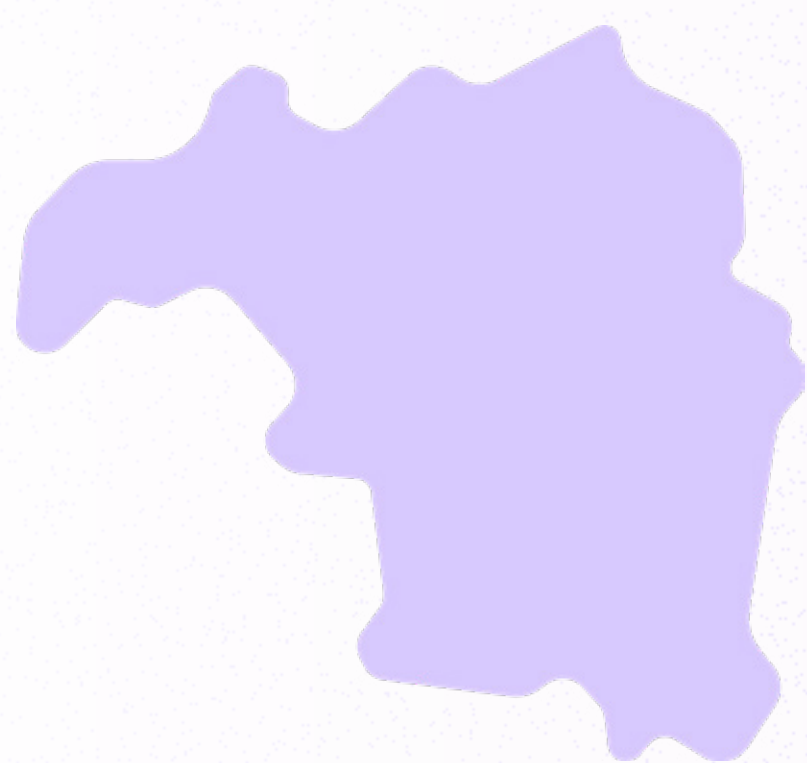
The numbers also shift depending on location



Katsina has the highest rate of infidelity in Nigeria

with **9** out of **10** respondents

saying they have cheated at least once



in Kaduna, **8** in **10** respondents

say they have never cheated, the highest share in the country

States like Benue (89%), Jigawa (85%) and Gombe (82%) also report high levels of infidelity.

What stands out is how often cheating is discussed alongside undefined relationships. Many respondents frame it as something that happens when relationships lack clarity, emotional safety, or honest communication.

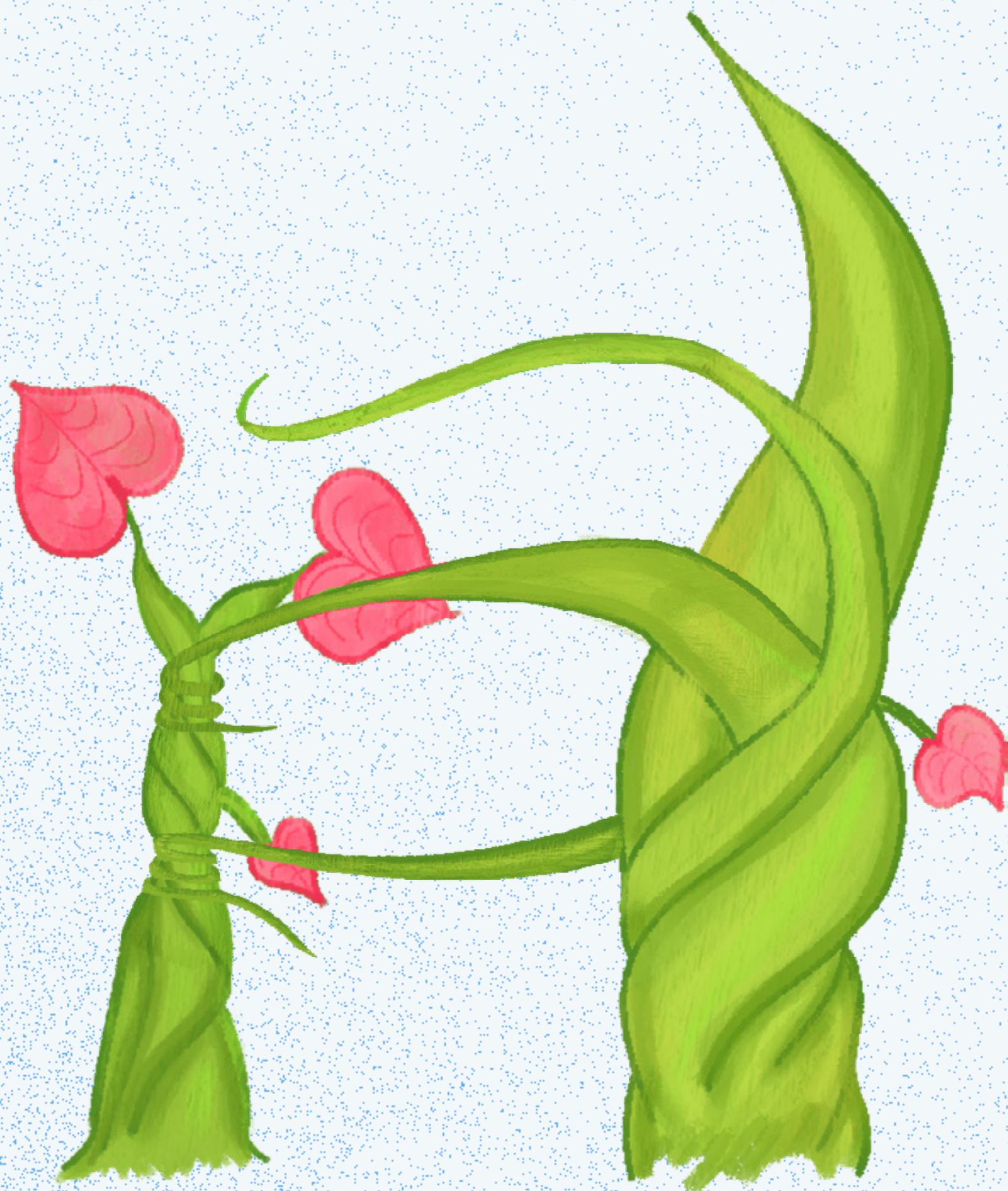
In a dating culture where labels are loose and expectations are often unspoken, cheating becomes easier to excuse, explain away, or repeat.

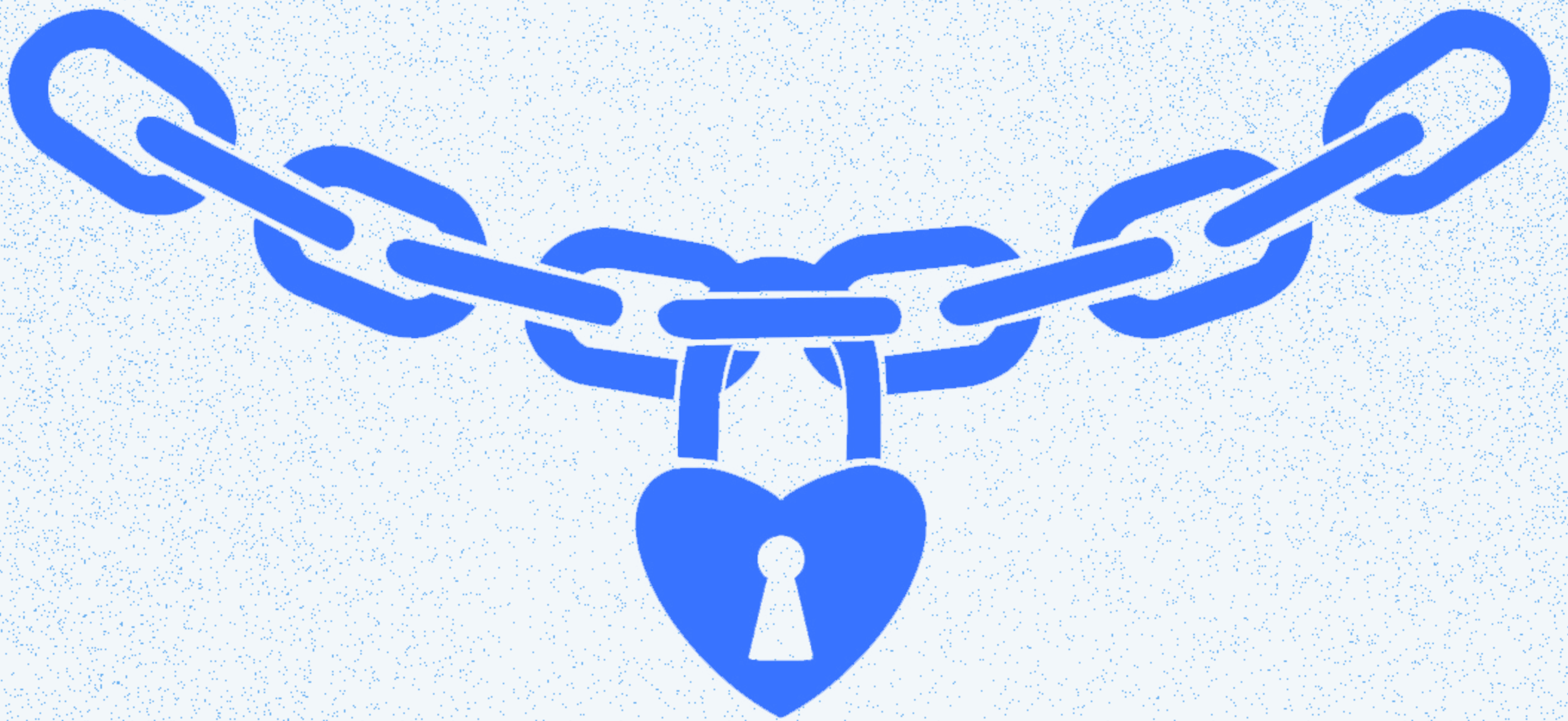
In the end, our findings reveal that infidelity is an equal-opportunity problem in modern Nigerian dating.

And people rarely feel accountable for it.

Chapter 3

Who Holds The Power In Relationships?





Despite shifting conversations around equality, traditional ideas continue to shape Nigerian relationships.

When we asked about gender roles, finances, and the economy, the answers revealed a mix of caution, tradition, and unresolved tension.

Nigerians on their views on gender roles in relationships

41%

Prefer not to say

25%

The man should be the primary provider and decision maker

18%

Both partners should share responsibilities

9%

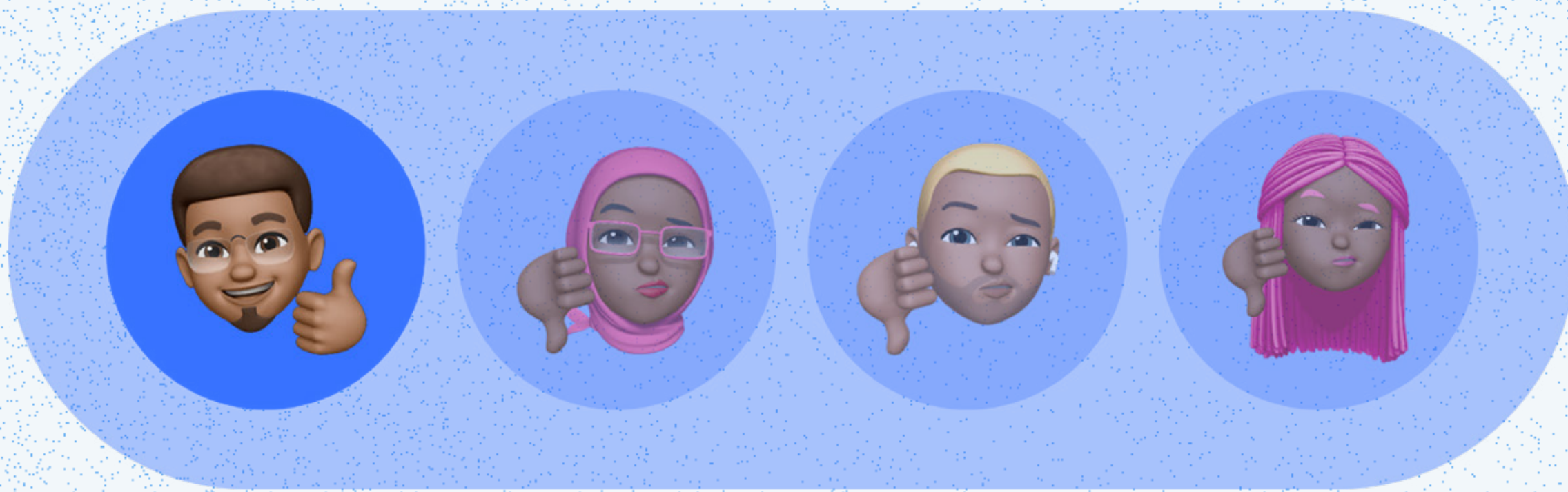
Depends on the couple

8%

Depends on who earns more

1 in 4 Nigerians

believe in traditional gender roles, and even more refuse to say what they believe



When asked about their opinion on gender roles in relationships, 41% of Nigerians chose “prefer not to say,” making silence the most common response.

For a question that touches everyday life, this hesitation suggests that ideas about gender roles have become highly contested, and many Nigerians appear uncomfortable publicly aligning with any single stance.

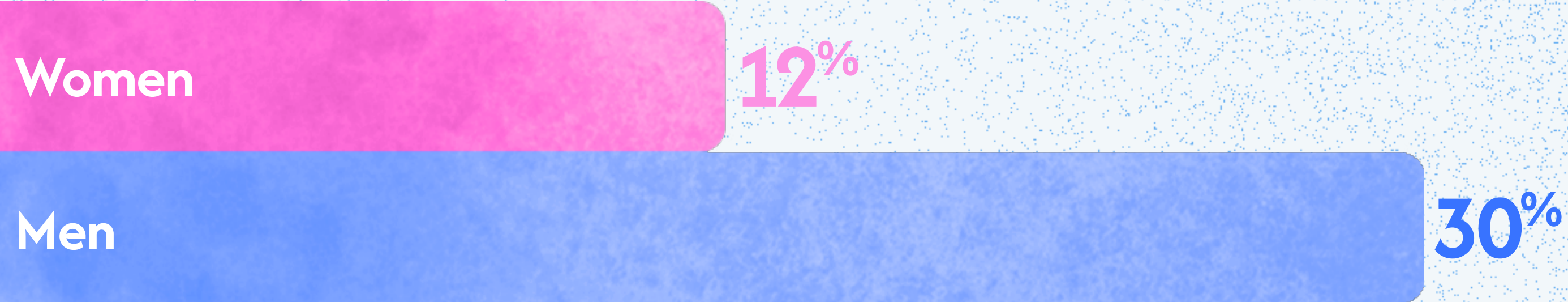
Among those who did share their views, traditional thinking still leads. About 24% believe the man should be the primary provider and decision-maker in a relationship, compared to 18% who believe in fully equal roles.

This gap suggests that while conversations about equality have gotten louder, traditional expectations still shape how many Nigerians think about relationships.

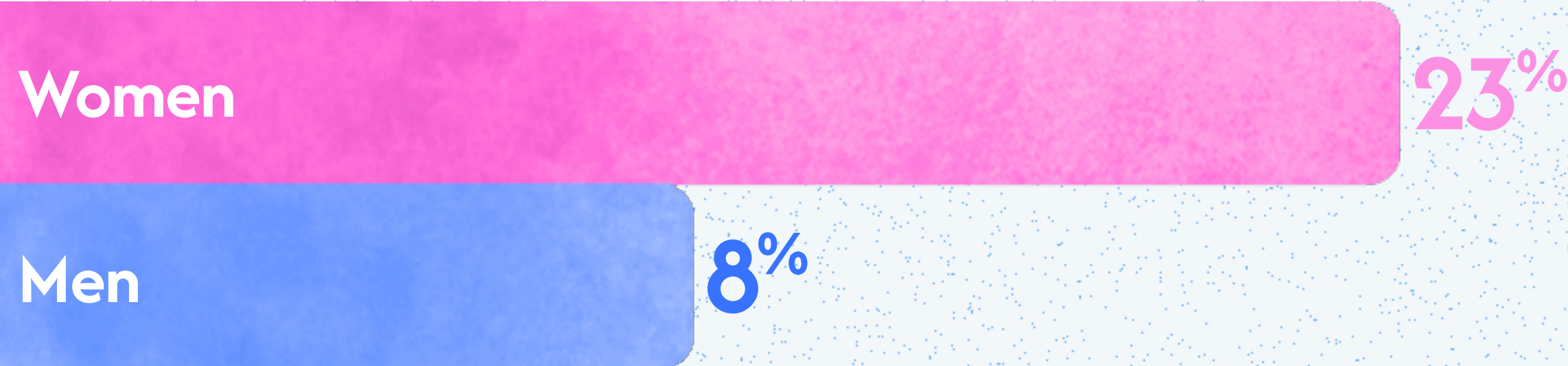
The large group that declined to answer suggests how contentious the topic has become. For many people, stating a clear position now comes with social judgment from one side or the other.

Nigerians on Who Handles Most of the Expenses

I pay most of the bills



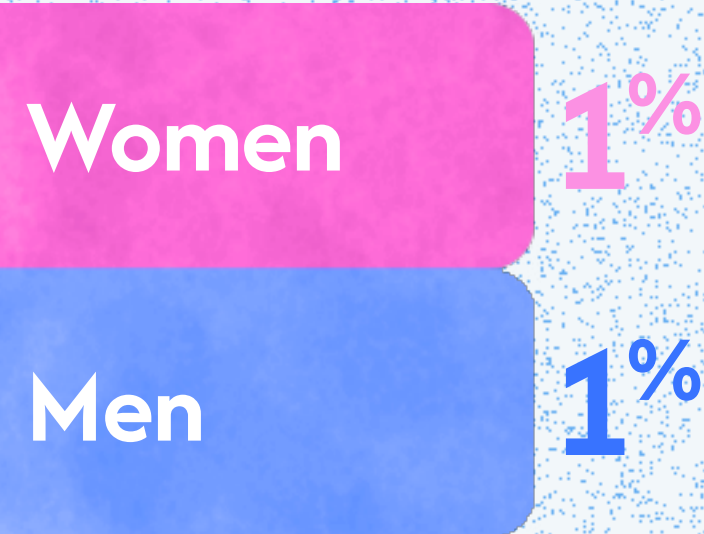
My partner pays most of the bills



Prefer not to say



Someone else supports us (eg. family member)



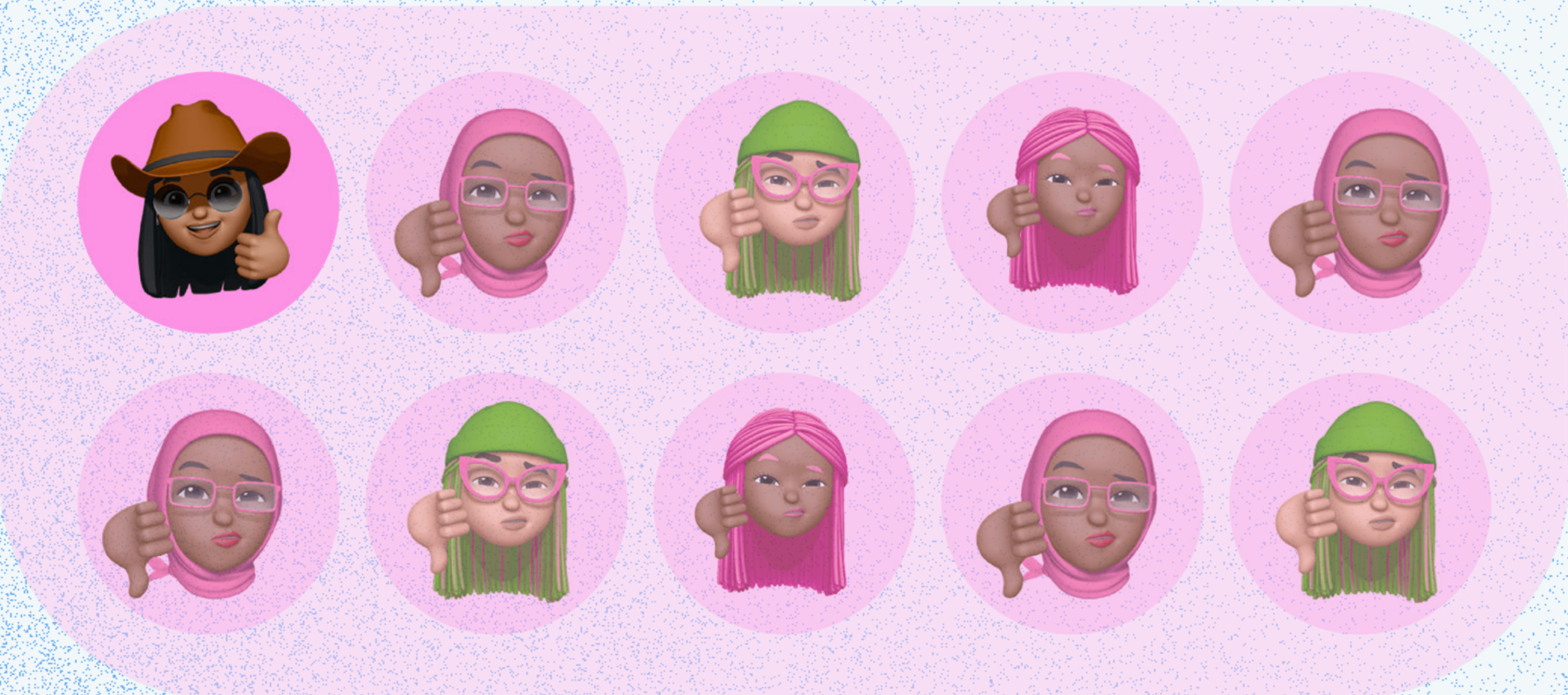
We take turns or contribute based on income



3 in 10 Nigerian men
say they handle most of the
expenses in their relationships



Only 1 in 10 women
say the same



Money remains one of the clearest places where power shows up. Nearly 30% of men say they handle most of the expenses in their relationships, compared to just under 12% of women.

On the flip side, women are far more likely to say their partners cover the bills for most things. About 23% of women report this arrangement, compared to just 8% of men.

What is striking is how rare true financial equality is.

Only

17%

of Nigerian couples split expenses equally.

While “let’s go 50-50” gets plenty of airtime on the internet, very few couples are actually doing it. Fewer than 2 in 10 couples say they share financial responsibility evenly. Most relationships still operate with a clear financial lead, usually the man.

Nigerians on whether they are happy with this arrangement

Very satisfied



Very dissatisfied



Satisfied



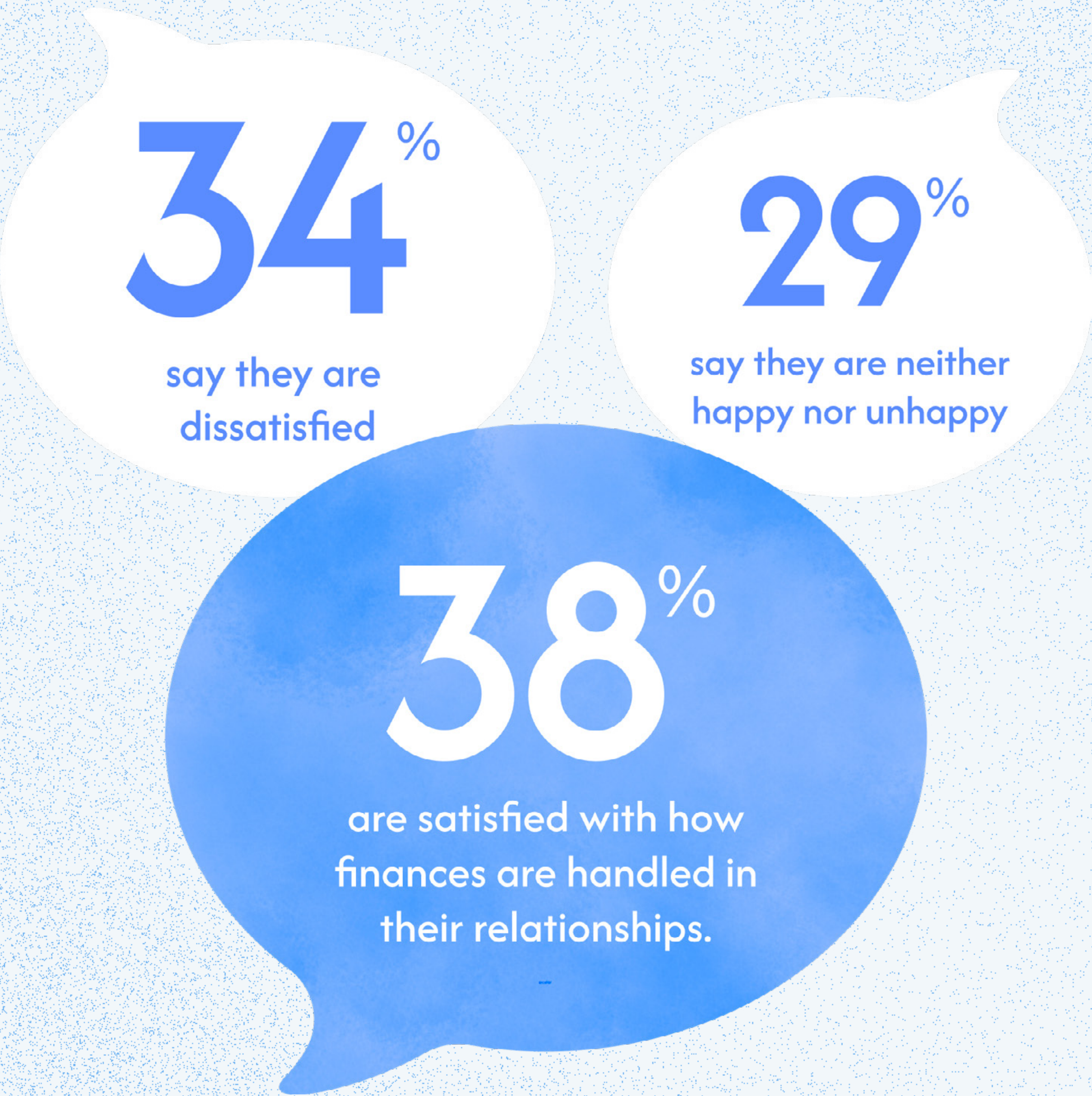
Neutral



Dissatisfied



While traditional financial roles are common, satisfaction is not.

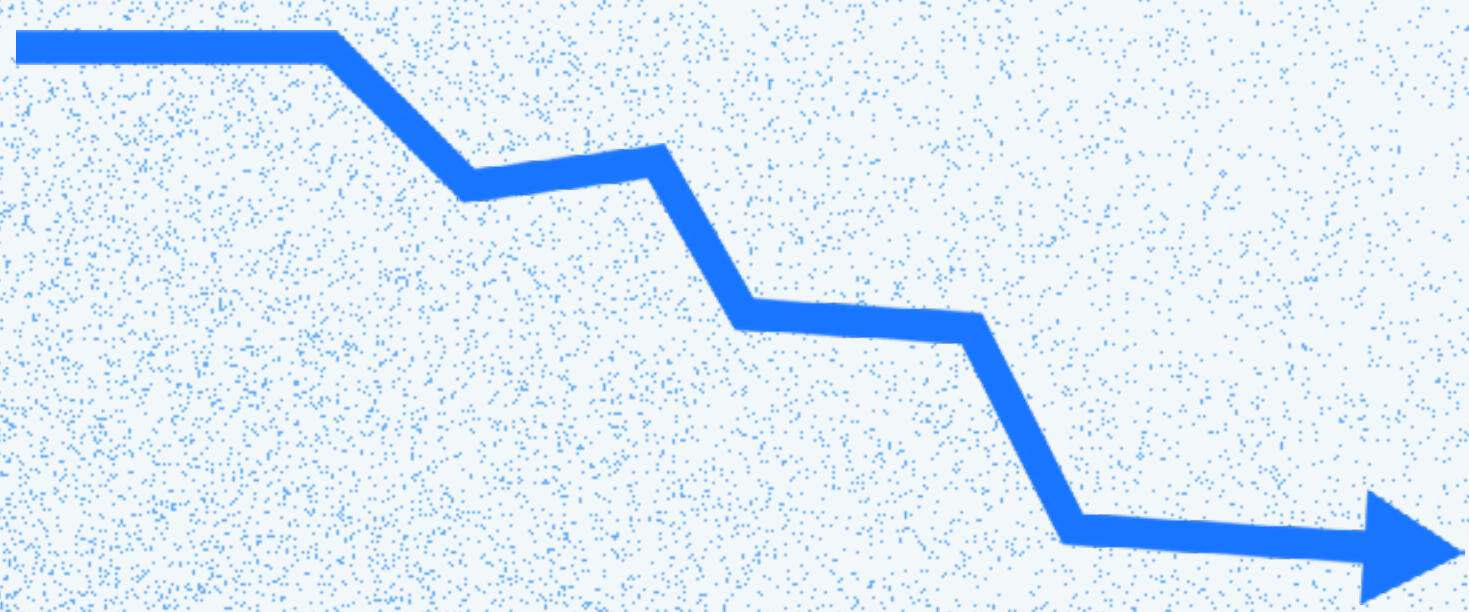


For many Nigerians, these arrangements were never carefully discussed or agreed on. They formed early in the relationship and stayed that way. Sometimes, because one partner earns more, or one person offers to pay first. And at other times, because that was simply what felt normal.

Over time, those small, everyday decisions start to feel like routine. Bills are handled by the same person, and expectations become set in stone without the opportunity to question them. That is where dissatisfaction often creeps in. Not from one big fight about money, but from repeated moments of strain.

Who pays when everyone is broke? Who feels stretched or taken for granted? These things add up, even when couples never sit down to talk about them.

Nigerians on how the economy has affected their love life



8 in 10 Nigerians
say the economy has affected
their love lives.

If money already causes tension in Nigerian relationships, the economy has only made things worse. Only 19% of Nigerians say their relationships or dating lives have not been unaffected by the economy. Everyone else reports some level of impact, from dating less often to delaying major commitments.

24%

Yes, I've delayed marriage because of financial stress

23%

Yes, I date less often because of financial stress

19%

Yes, financial stress has affected my current marriage or long-term relationship

18%

No, it hasn't affected me

16%

Yes, I've avoided serious relationship due to financial pressure

For many people, the change shows up in small, telling ways. Fewer fancy dates or spontaneous plans, and more conversations about transport, fuel, rent, and whether seeing each other physically even makes sense. For others, the impact is bigger.

Nearly

25%

of young Nigerians say they have postponed marriage plans because they simply cannot afford what starting a shared life now requires.

Another 23% say they are dating less frequently.

When choosing between visiting a partner and saving money for emergencies, romance takes a back seat. Over time, these decisions reshape how relationships look and how far they are allowed to go.

Ojonugwa, a 31-year-old entertainment journalist based in Lagos, puts it plainly:



I can no longer go on as many dates or expect very extravagant gifts from my partner. On the upside, I've learned to see romance in things that don't involve money and appreciate these gestures greatly.

This economic pressure helps explain why situationships feel safer for many people, why financial stability matters so much when choosing a partner, and why equal financial arrangements are rare.

The data makes one thing clear: rising costs are not just changing spending habits; they are actively influencing emotional and romantic decisions.

Chapter 4

Why Did I Get Married?



Marriage still sits at the centre of how many Nigerians imagine adulthood. It shapes how families relate to you, how seriously people take your relationship, and how much pressure you feel to have your life “sorted.” But beneath the weddings, introductions, and anniversary posts, the data shows that people are asking harder questions about what marriage is for, why they enter it, and what happens when it no longer sparks joy.

Nigerians on the necessity of marriage

Not necessary



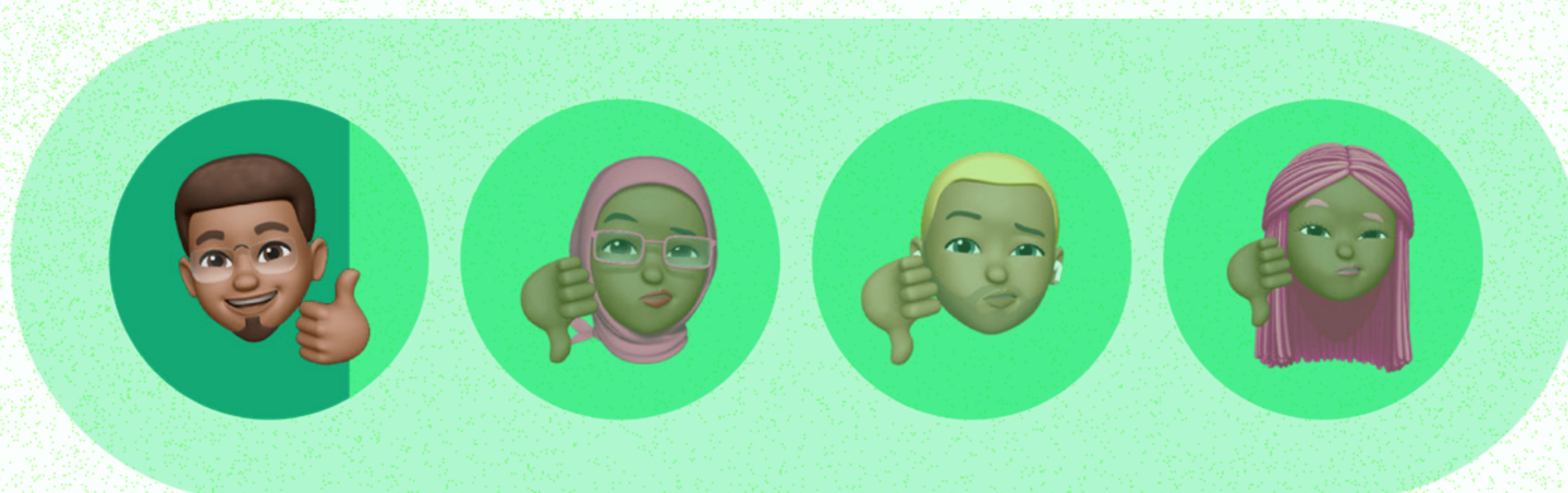
Unsure



Necessary



Nearly **1** in **4** young Nigerians
no longer believe marriage is
necessary for fulfilment



In a country where marriage has historically been non-negotiable socially, culturally, and religiously, this shift is significant.

While **64%** still believe marriage is necessary, the growing minority willing to say “no” suggests changing attitudes.

This shift does not mean Nigerians have suddenly rejected marriage. Instead, it reflects fatigue with the expectations tied to it. Many respondents still want love, companionship, and family.

They are just less convinced that those things must come through marriage itself.

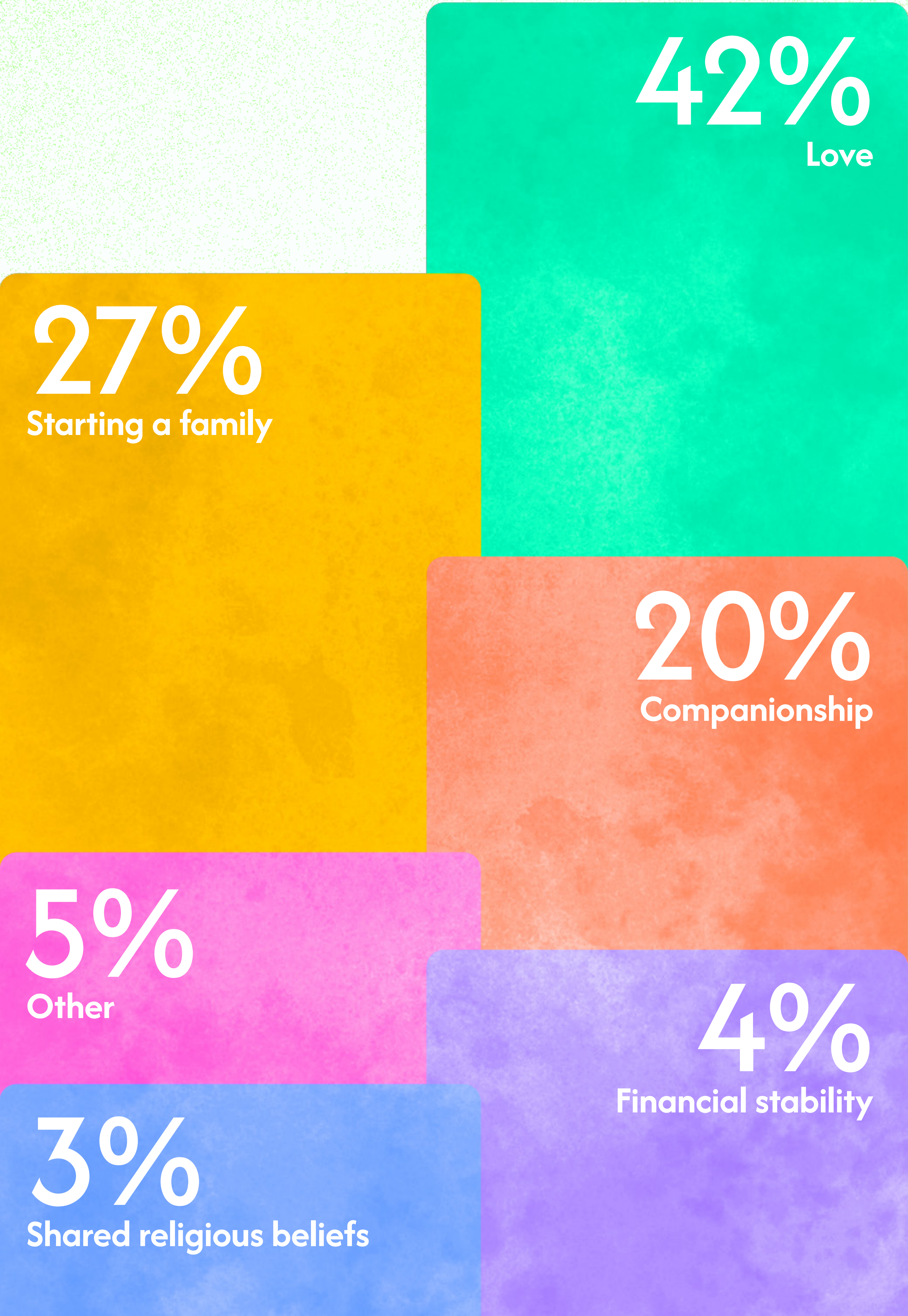
Abibat, a 31-year-old entrepreneur based in Ibadan, says:



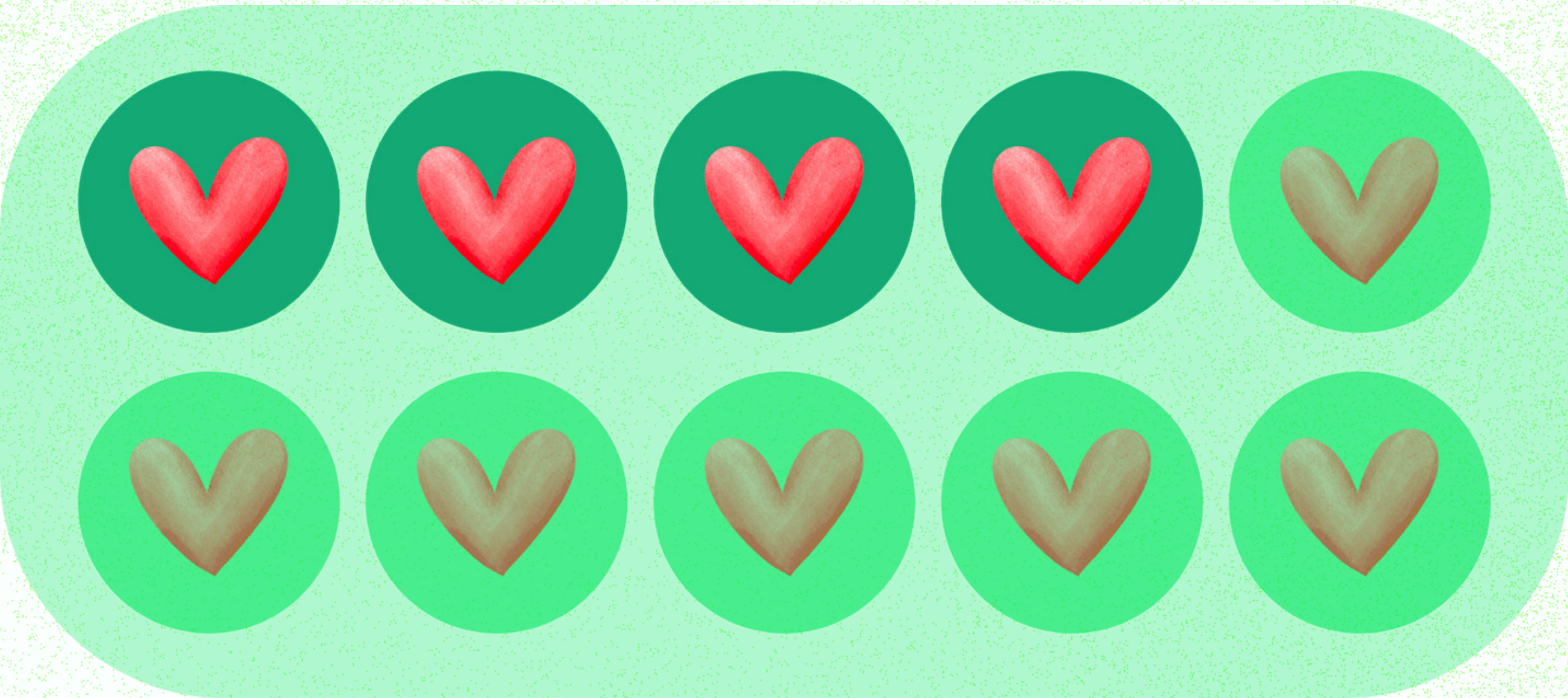
I don't think I need to be married to be happy, but society makes you feel incomplete if you're not. It's exhausting.

Our findings suggest that belief in marriage remains strong, but fewer people see it as essential.

Nigerians on Why They Got Married



Only **4** in **10** Nigerians
married primarily for love



Nearly **3** in **10** Nigerians say they got
married primarily to start a family

Another **1** in **5** points to
companionship

Practical considerations, timing, and social expectations quietly shape many marriage decisions, even when love is in the mix.

What stands out is how little gender changes this picture

Love



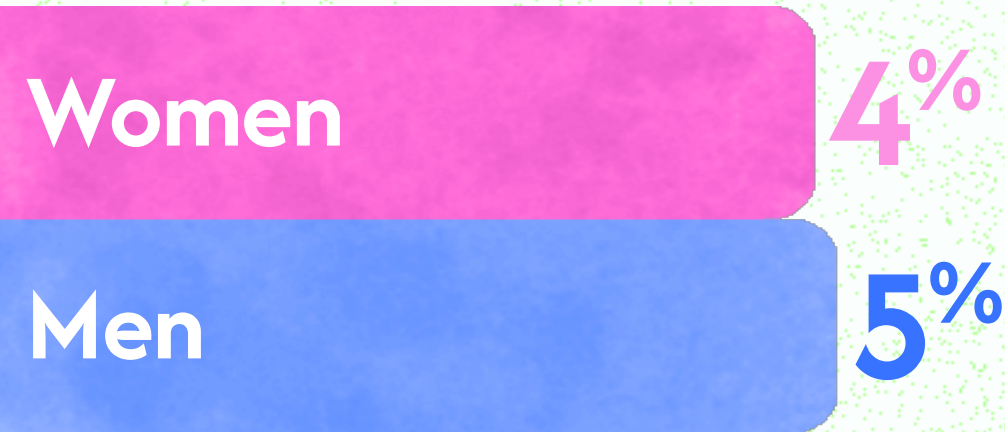
Starting a family



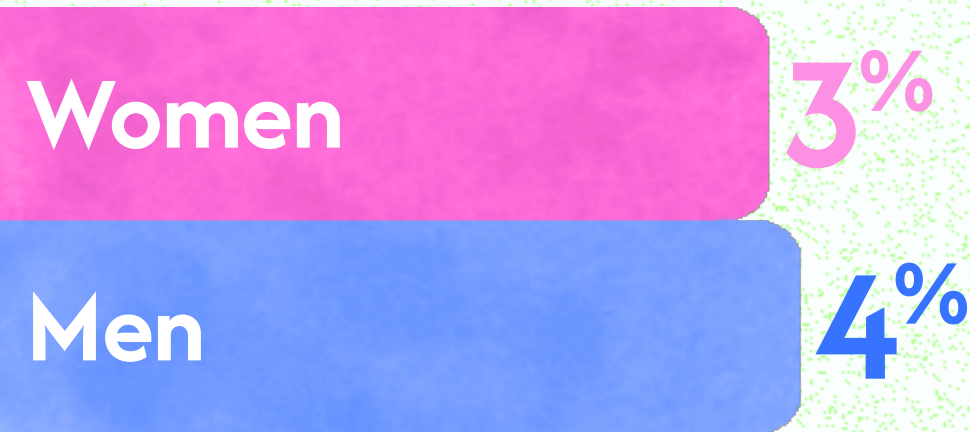
Companionship



Other



Financial Stability



Shared religious beliefs



Men and women report marrying for love, family, and companionship in almost identical proportions. The reasons differ less by gender and more by circumstance.

This explains why many marriages begin with mixed motivations.

Love may be there, but other things like pressure, readiness, age, finances, or family approval also matter.



For many Nigerians, marriage is a choice shaped by both dreams and reality.

Nigerians on whether they regret getting married

4 in 10

married Nigerians say they've felt regret at some point.

Regret does not always mean people wish they had never married. While some say it's occasional, a smaller group experiences it more regularly. At the same time, most married Nigerians say regret isn't part of their marital experience at all.

27%

say they sometimes regret it,

while 13%

say they often regret it.

This is not about not loving your spouse. Many people who regret getting married still love their partners. The regret is often about timing (married too young), circumstances (societal pressure), or the reality of marriage not matching expectations.

Across genders, men sit at both ends of the spectrum

No, never regret it



Prefer not to say



Yes, often regret it



Sometimes regret it



They are more likely to say marriage has never disappointed them, but they're also more likely to admit that it has, sometimes.

Women, on the other hand, are slightly more likely to say they often regret marriage.

These patterns suggest that regret is not rare or dramatic. It is part of how many Nigerians exist within their unions.

People stay, adapt, and carry their doubts quietly, especially when leaving feels complicated or unacceptable.

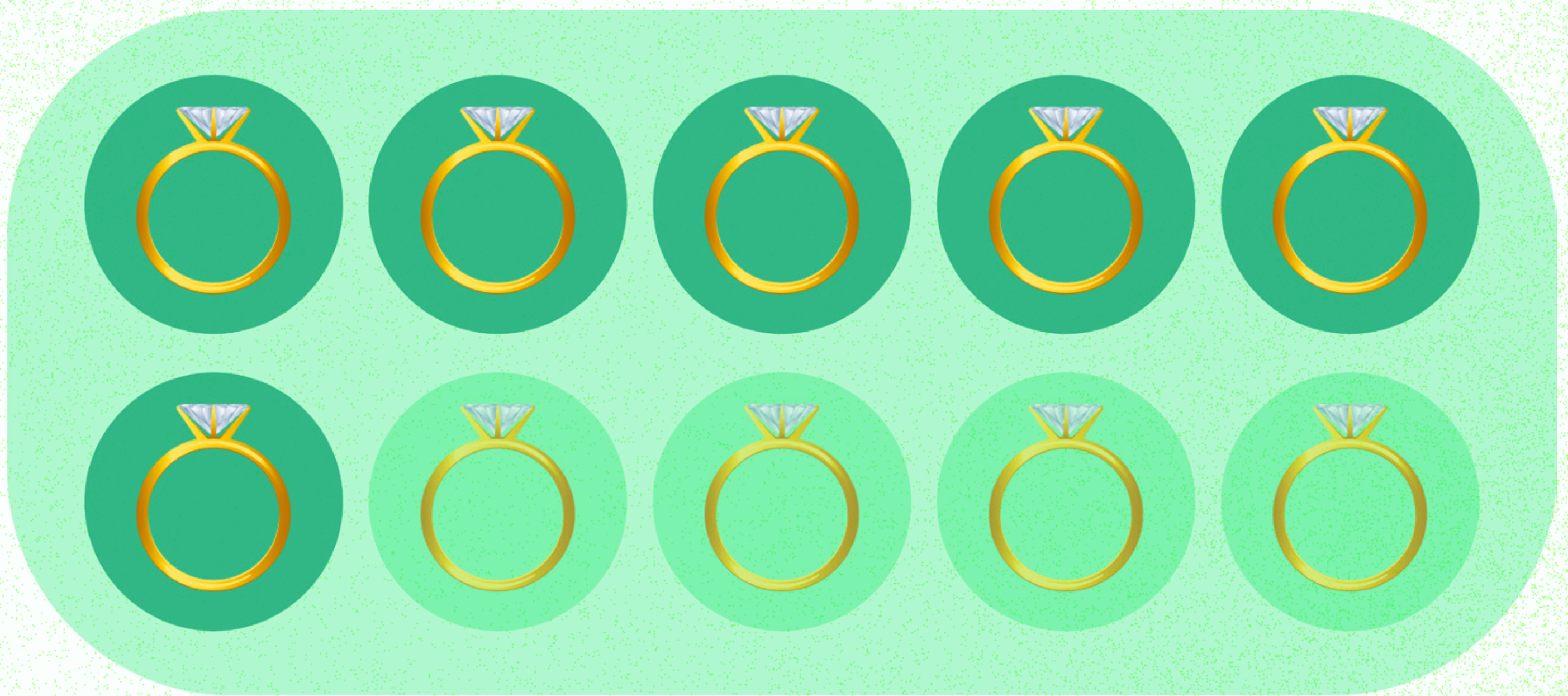
Love and regret can coexist.

Nigerians on how they feel about divorce or separation



6 in 10 Nigerians

are resistant to ending a marriage, even when things aren't working



When asked about divorce, 42% say it should be a last resort only. Another 17% say it is never acceptable. Together, this means nearly 6 in 10 Nigerians remain resistant to ending a marriage, even when it is unhappy.

Only 33% view divorce as sometimes necessary. For this group, divorce is less about failure and more about recognising when something is no longer working. They accept it as an option to consider in cases of ongoing conflict, unhappiness, or unmet expectations.

Oluwaseun, a 36-year-old, Lagos-based entrepreneur who’s been married for five years, says:



I believe in divorce if things are really bad, but you have to try everything first. It's not something you just do because you're bored.

This reluctance cuts across gender

I don't have an opinion



It should only be a last resort



It's never an acceptable



It's sometimes necessary



Men are slightly more open to divorce in practice, while women lean more toward “last resort” thinking. But both men and women are almost equally likely to reject divorce outright.

Taken together, the data show a clear tension.

Many Nigerians experience regret in marriage, but most still believe marriage should be endured.

Divorce is still seen as a big deal, even when staying feels hard.



Marriage, in today's Nigeria, is no longer blindly idealised. But people are not ditching it either. They are figuring it out, dealing with pressures, and trying to balance old expectations with new realities.

Chapter 5

How Important Is The Other Room?





Sex has always been a part of the package in most relationships.

What has changed is how openly people are willing to admit it and how much importance they now place on it when deciding whether a relationship is worth pursuing.

Nigerians on sex before marriage

I don't have a strong opinion



It's acceptable if you're in a serious relationship



It's acceptable only if you're engaged or planning to marry



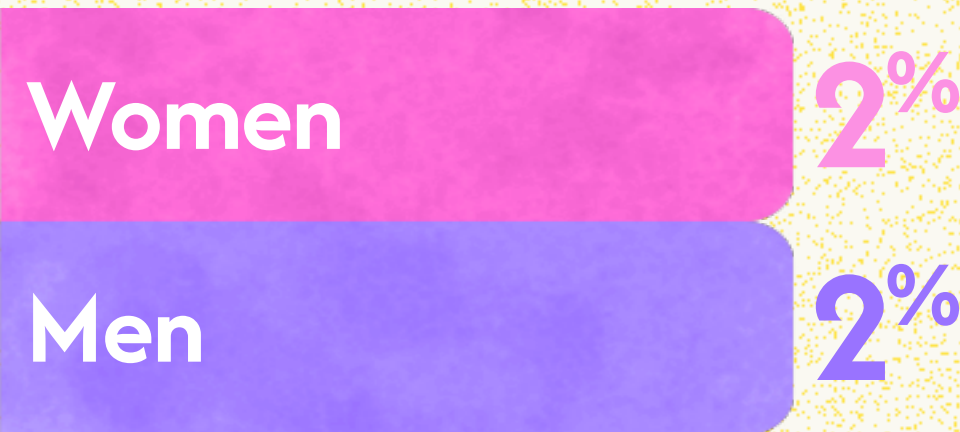
It's completely acceptable



It's not acceptable under any circumstances



Prefer not to say



Nearly 7 in 10 Nigerians believe in sex before marriage



For a long time, sex before marriage was traditionally frowned upon. However, the data suggests that the gap is closing.

Opeyemi Olutan, Campus Pastor, Harvesters Church, argues otherwise:



It is worthy of mention that God’s concern is not just about rules but about our hearts. This means that premarital sex can leave emotional and spiritual wounds that many young people are not prepared for. This is why the Bible lovingly urges us to flee sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18).

Across different relationship stages, 1 in 6 Nigerians say sex before marriage is acceptable in some form. That acceptance is not limited to casual encounters. Some respondents are comfortable with sex only within a serious relationship or engagement, while others place no conditions on it at all.

Even among the deeply religious, the numbers hold.

6 in 10
Christians
and Muslims

**are fine with getting down
before marriage.**

**Among agnostics, nearly
everyone is on board.**

What stands out is who is driving this shift.

Women are slightly more accepting of sex before marriage than men.

This challenges the assumption that women are more conservative or reluctant around premarital sex. Men, however, are more likely to approve of sex without any commitment.

Only

17%

of Nigerians say sex before marriage should never happen.

That group now sits firmly in the minority.

Our findings suggest that sex is not a moral issue tied to marriage anymore. It is about comfort, trust, and timing within a relationship.

Nigerians on how often they would like sex in a relationship



4 in 10 Nigerians want sex every day or a few times a week



Our findings suggest that when it comes to relationships, many Nigerians have clear expectations around sex, even if they don’t always talk about it openly.

The most common preference for both genders is a few times a week (31%). When combined with those who prefer daily sex, over four in ten Nigerians want sex frequently in a relationship. Sexual desire is nearly equal across genders, completely contradicting stereotypes.

Nigerian men and women want to get laid almost equally.

A few times a month



A few times a week



About once a week



Every day



No preference



Once a month or less



Prefer not to say



Despite popular assumptions, men and women actually want sex at nearly the same rate. Still, couples rarely talk about it directly.

At the other end of the spectrum, just 7% of respondents say they prefer sex once a month or less, suggesting low libido is far less common than often assumed. A small share of respondents skipped the question entirely. Women were slightly more likely not to answer (5% vs 4%), pointing to lingering discomfort around openly discussing sexual desire.

Overall, the data points to a decisive generational shift.



Younger Nigerians, especially those aged 25–29, are the most accepting of sex outside marriage, with 72% saying it is acceptable in some form.

Acceptance is similarly high among those aged 18–24 (65%) and 30–34 (72%). But this openness declines steadily with age. Older Nigerians, particularly those aged 50 and above, are far more likely to say sex is not acceptable under any circumstances.

Nigerians on sexual chemistry in a relationship

Sex is one of those things people assume should just work. If two people like each other, sexual attraction should flow naturally. But in real relationships, it's rarely that simple. People want sex at different times, get tired or are busy. At other times, one partner feels rejected or pressured.

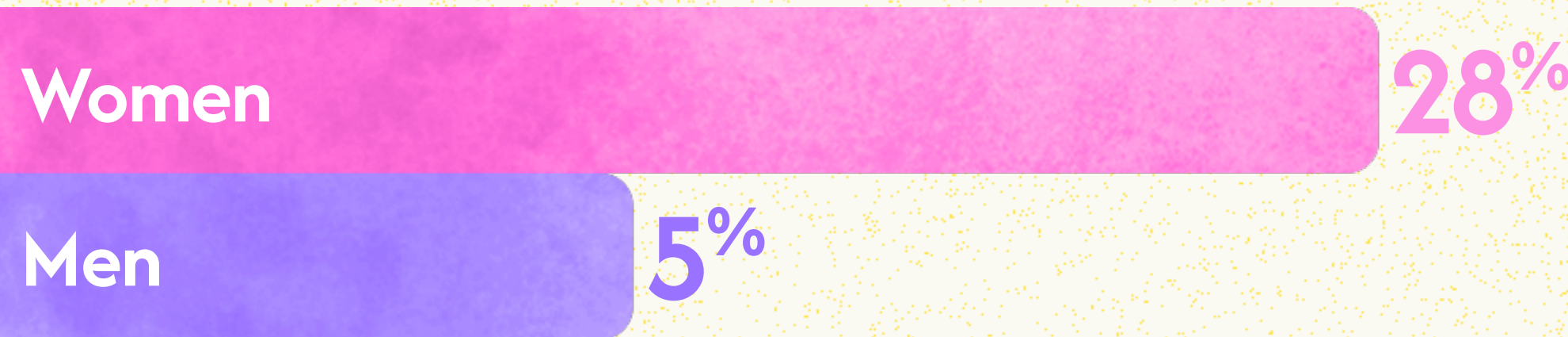
Fikayo, a 28-year-old housewife based in Abuja, shares:



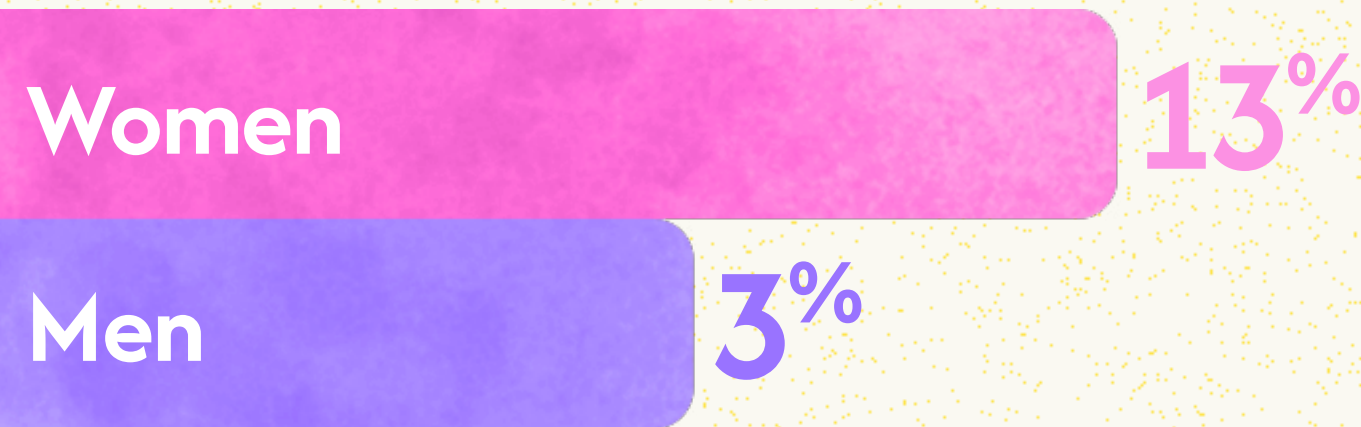
One of the hardest things to navigate in marriage has been intimacy. My husband isn't a very physical or romantic person. He can go months without intimacy and be completely fine. Meanwhile, I'm the opposite. I crave closeness and affection, not just sex, but touch, laughter, and shared moments.

Sexual chemistry matters to Nigerians, but it matters much more to young women than men

Extremely important



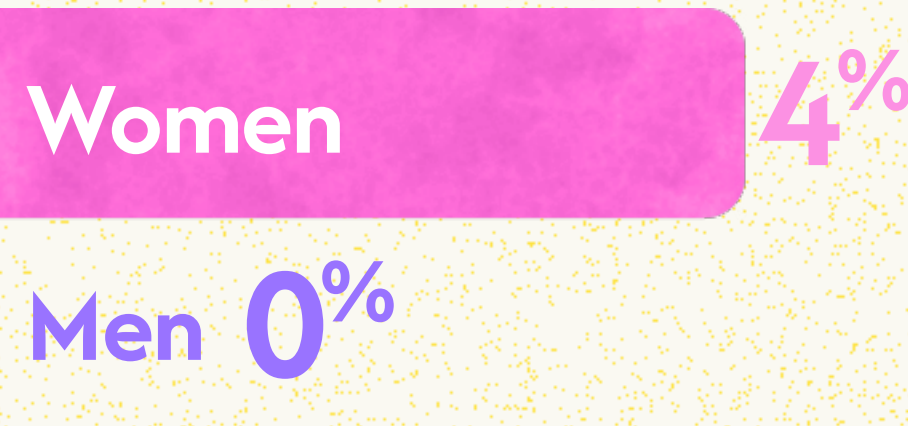
Moderately important



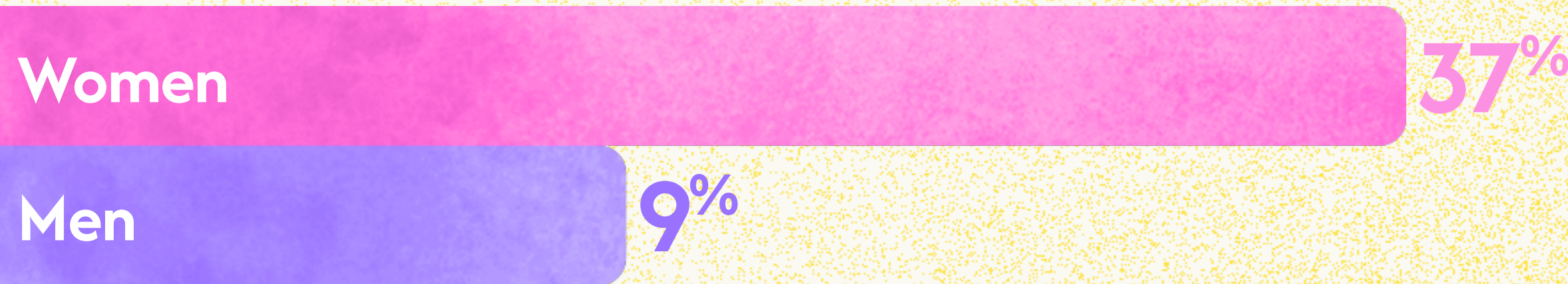
Not important at all



Slightly important



Very important



Our findings suggest that women prioritise sexual chemistry. 1 in 3 say it is very important, and another 28% of women say it is extremely important. For many, sexual compatibility isn't just a "nice to have," it's a must-have.

Men, on the other hand, feel differently. Only 5% say it's extremely important, and 9% rate it as very important. They care about it less intensely than women.

While most Nigerians value sexual chemistry, less than 2% of women and under 1% of men say it's not important at all. That said, the intensity is what differs. Women often see sexual chemistry as a key part of a relationship that needs effort. Men tend to expect it to fall into place naturally.

Unlike physical attraction, chemistry is more complex.

Only

5%

prioritised
appearance

But chemistry's about connection and satisfaction too. You can find someone attractive but lack sexual chemistry, and that chemistry matters more.

Conclusion

Where Does Love Stand in Nigeria Today?



After surveying over 10,000 Nigerians and following their answers across dating, money, sex, power, and marriage, one thing is clear:

The way Nigerians navigate love has fundamentally shifted.



People are still meeting partners at weddings, birthdays, and through friends. They are still falling in love, getting into relationships, and seeking companionship. But the path from liking someone to building something stable now comes with more hesitation, calculation, and pressure than before.



Dating sits in a grey area for many Nigerians. Situationships, casual dating, and undefined relationships now make up the majority of romantic experiences. This is not because people hate commitment, but because commitment feels expensive, emotionally risky, and harder to sustain. Walking away often feels easier than staying and trying to fix things.



Money also sits at the centre of many of these shifts. Traditional financial roles still shape relationships, but they no longer guarantee comfort or satisfaction. Only a minority of couples feel good about how money is handled in their relationships. At the same time, the Nigerian economy has forced people to date less, delay marriage plans, and rethink what partnership even looks like.



Marriage remains important to many Nigerians, but it is no longer unquestioned. A growing number of people do not see it as the only route to fulfilment. Even among those who are married, regret is not absent, and divorce remains heavily resisted, often seen as a last resort rather than a realistic option. People stay, try, endure, and manage, sometimes more out of obligation than happiness.



Sex and intimacy tell a similar story. Nigerians want sex, often frequently, and men and women want it at almost the same rate. Sexual chemistry matters deeply, especially to women. Yet talking openly about intimate desires still feels uncomfortable for many people.

Taken together, the data show a generation trying to balance old scripts with new realities. People want love, stability, and connection. They also want independence, safety, and financial breathing room. But they're struggling to make it all work.

Methodology

The State of Love Report adopts a mixed-methods research approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive, data-driven understanding of the romantic lives of Nigerians.

Research Design

This study was designed as a cross-sectional digital survey, capturing self-reported attitudes, behaviors, and experiences related to love, relationships, and emotional well-being at a specific point in time. The approach enables both statistical analysis at scale and thematic exploration of nuanced personal experiences.

Data Collection

Data was collected from October to November 2025 through an online survey administered via Zikoko's digital ecosystem, including its social media platforms, newsletters, and selected partner distribution channels. This multi-channel dissemination strategy ensured broad reach and accessibility across diverse audience segments.

Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, with respondents opting in without any form of incentive. To encourage candid responses and reduce social desirability bias, no personally identifiable information (PII) was collected at any stage of the process.

Sample and Coverage

The survey received over 10,000 valid responses from individuals aged 18 years and above. Respondents were drawn from all 36 states of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), ensuring nationwide representation and geographic diversity.

While the sample reflects a wide demographic spread, it is important to note that, as a digitally distributed survey, participation was limited to individuals with internet access and familiarity with online platforms.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Key techniques included frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, and comparative analysis across demographic variables such as age, gender, and location. These methods enabled the identification of patterns, trends, and correlations within the dataset.

Qualitative Analysis

In addition to structured survey questions, respondents provided open-ended responses that offered deeper insight into personal experiences and perspectives. These qualitative inputs were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring themes, sentiments, and narratives that complement the quantitative findings.

Data Integrity and Limitations

Data cleaning procedures were conducted to remove incomplete or inconsistent responses, ensuring the reliability of the final dataset. However, as with all self-reported and online surveys, the findings may be subject to response bias and may not fully capture populations with limited digital access.

Despite these limitations, the scale, geographic coverage, and mixed-methods approach of the study provide a robust and credible foundation for understanding contemporary relationship dynamics in Nigeria.

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