

**MINISTRY FOR FAMILY, CHILDREN'S RIGHTS  
& SOCIAL SOLIDARITY**

**A STUDY ON  
SPENDING HABITS: THE CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE  
(Christmas 2019 vs. Christmas 2018)**

***A Synopsis of Research Findings***

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# Agenda

**A**

***Research Objectives***

**B**

***Research Methodology***

**C**

***Conclusions & Key Learnings***

# Research Objectives

## Salient Research Objectives

*(Both Christmas 2019 and Christmas 2018 Studies)*

- Setting a Christmas shopping budget
- Most used methods of payment
- Hosting family/friends on Christmas day/New Year's Day
- Use of well-being services and purchase of new clothes
- Christmas spending (presents, parties, clothes).

# Research Methodology

## The Research Plan

- **Two research studies were conducted:** one for Christmas period 2019 and one for Christmas period 2018
- Both studies were carried out by **CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviews)**
- **The same structured research instrument** (English and Maltese) was used for both studies
- CATI fieldwork was carried out in **Jan – Feb 2020 (Christmas 2019) and Feb – March 2019 (Christmas 2018).**

# Research Methodology

## Sample Frame

**501 (Christmas 2018) and 503 (Christmas 2019) completed interviews** were conducted with Maltese residents:

- Aged 18 – 79 years old
- Hailing from Malta's 6 geographical regions (NSO, 2019)
- Quota sample obtained a proportionate representation of the population of Malta and Gozo, by age, gender and hometown
- Only Maltese residents who **purchased Christmas presents during the Christmas period** were asked to participate in both studies
- The findings of both studies ensured a statistical significance of a **+/- 4.37 confidence interval (margin of error) at a 95% confidence level.**

# *Comparative Findings - with Financial Literacy Study 2018*

**An analysis of some comparative findings will be made between Christmas Spending Habits (2019 & 2018 studies) and Financial Literacy in Malta.**

- A 1000-count national study on financial literacy was carried out with Maltese residents in Q3-2018, also commissioned by MFCS.
- This study formed part of an OECD/INFE\* international study, carried out across 30 countries. The OECD/INFE research instrument was used for this study, which was tweaked to reflect the realities of Malta's financial literacy situation.

**\*OECD/INFE:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ International Network on Financial Education

# Comparative Findings - with Financial Literacy Study 2018

- OECD defines **'financial literacy'** as:  
"A combination of awareness, knowledge, skill, attitude and behaviour necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve individual financial wellbeing."  
Source: <https://www.oecd.org/finance/financial-education/49319977.pdf>

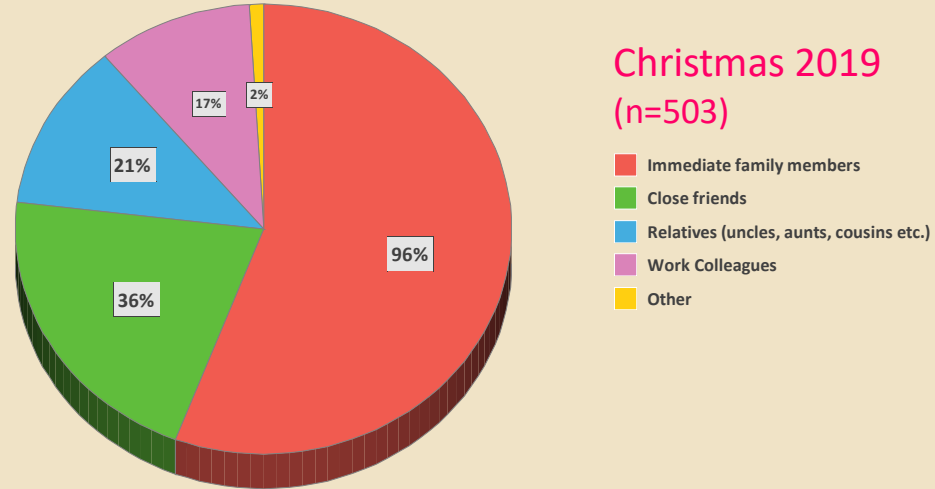
# Conclusions & Key Learnings - I

## ***Setting a Christmas Shopping Budget (Christmas 2019 vs. Christmas 2018)***

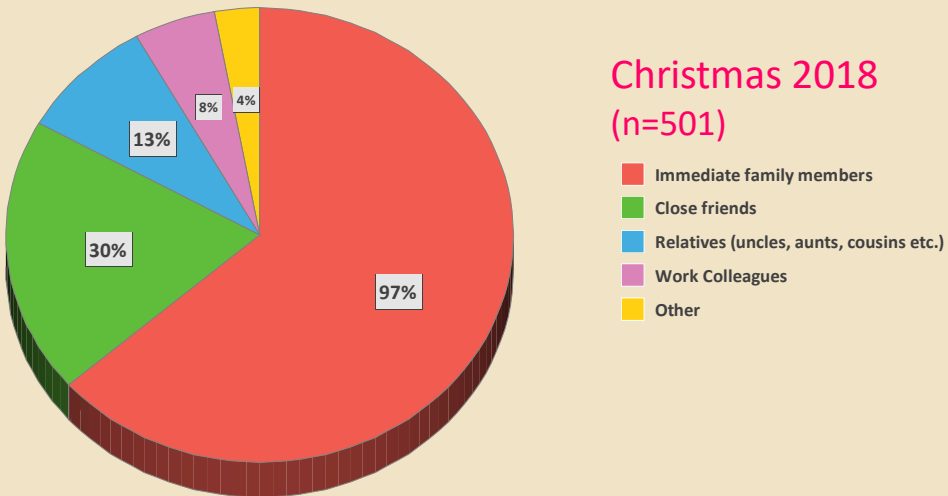


# Christmas Presents

*The persons for whom Christmas presents were purchased (Q8)  
(Prompted replies) (Multiple-response Q) (No of Respondents, not responses)*



- Most Christmas presents are purchased for immediate family members. This finding prevails across all ages and gender.
- 1 in 3 purchase presents for their close friends. This finding largely emerged among young adults and adults, across both genders.



## Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

### 2019 (n=503)

Immediate family members: 96% (-1%)

Close friends: 36% (+6%)

Relatives: 21% (+8%)

Work colleagues: 17% (+9%)

### 2018 (n=501)

Immediate family members: 97%

Close friends: 30%

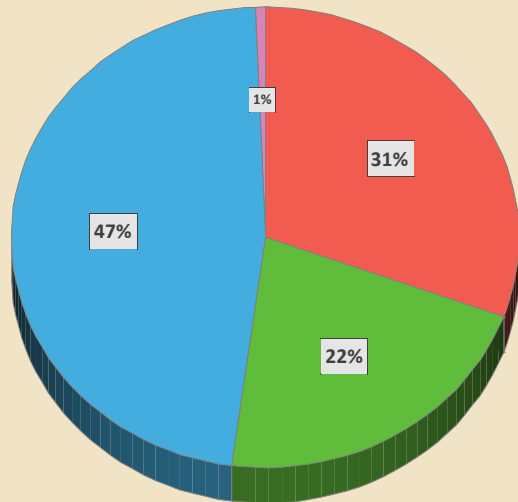
Relatives: 13%

Work colleagues: 8%

# Setting a Budget

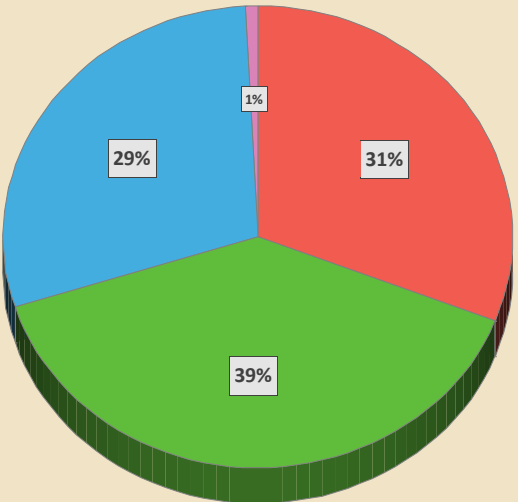
## Setting a specific budget prior to shopping for presents (Q9) (Prompted replies)

### Christmas 2019 (n=503)



Yes – I set a specific budget for each present  
Yes – I set an overall budget for all presents  
No - I did not set a specific budget  
Refused/Don't remember

### Christmas 2018 (n=501)



Yes – I set a specific budget for each present  
Yes – I set an overall budget for all presents  
No - I did not set a specific budget  
Refused/Don't remember

### Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

#### 2019 (n=503)

Yes – I set a specific budget for each present: 31% (=)  
Yes – I set a specific budget for all presents: 22% (-17%)  
No, I did not set a specific budget: 47% (+18%)

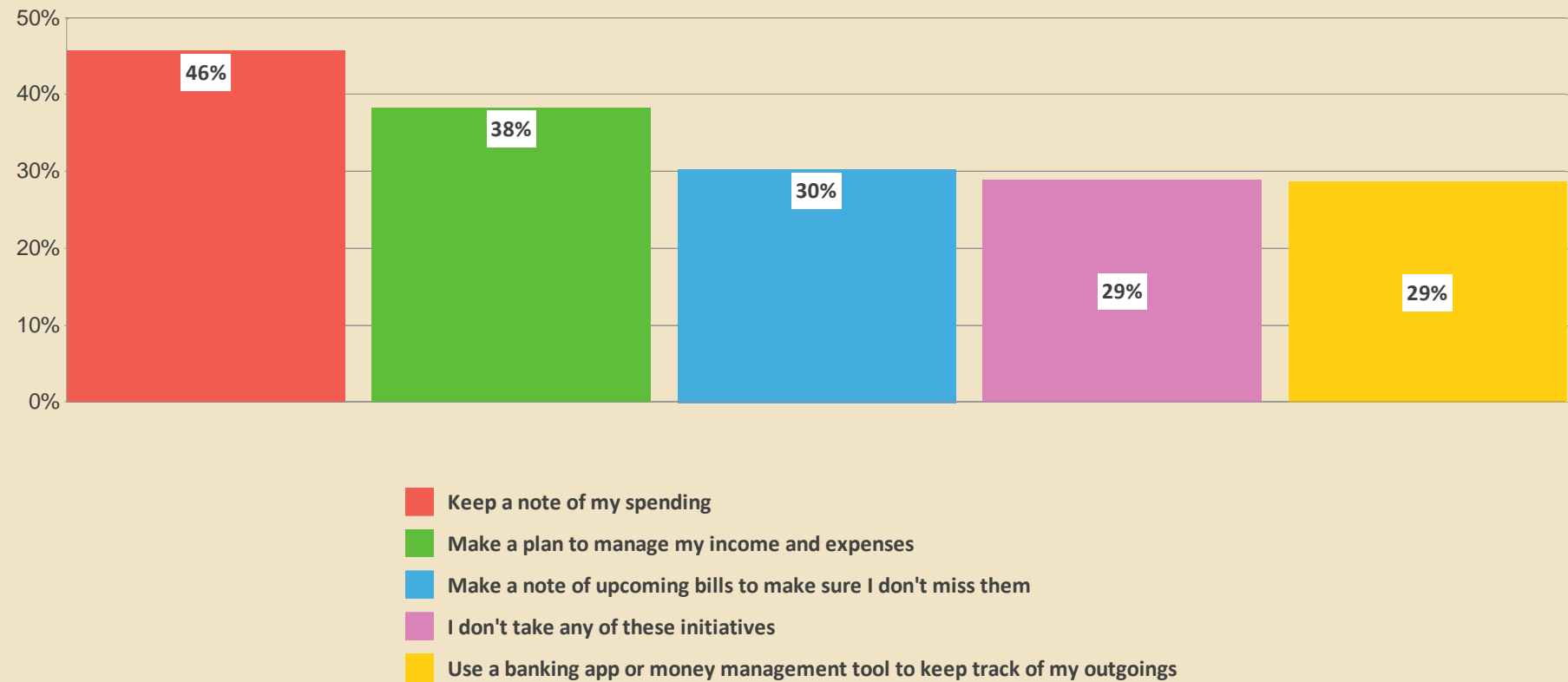
#### 2018 (n=501)

Yes – I set a specific budget for each present: 31%  
Yes – I set a specific budget for all presents: 39%  
No, I did not set a specific budget: 29%

- Across gender, females budget better than males: In 2019, only 36% of females, against 58% of males, did not set a specific budget.
- Individuals aged 60–79 yrs also budgeted better than individuals aged 18–59 yrs.

# Initiatives Taken to Track Finances (Financial Literacy Study 2018)

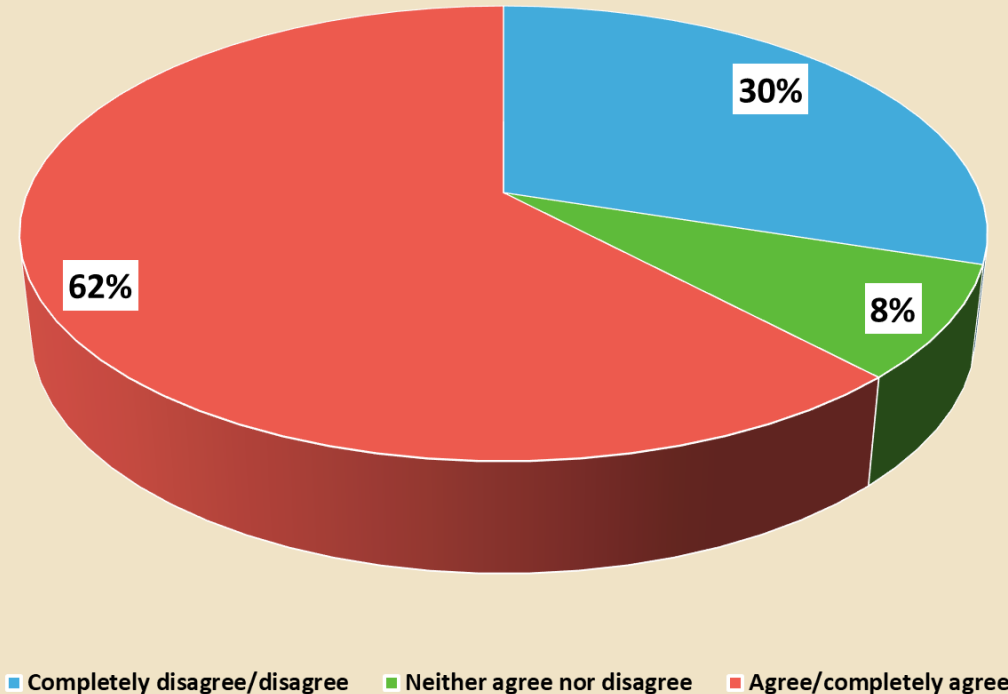
*Initiatives taken by adults to keep track of their own and household's finances (QF2)  
(Multiple Response Q)*



1 in 3 (29%) do not take any initiatives to manage their finances

# Financial Attitudes (Financial Literacy Study 2018)

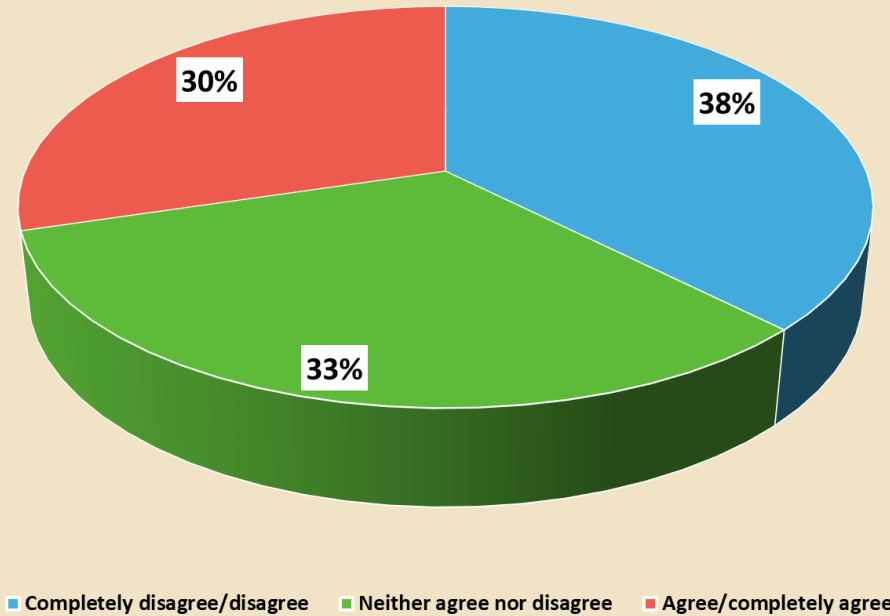
***Financial Attitude: “I keep a close personal watch on my financial affairs” (QS1.2)***



1 in 3 do not keep a close personal watch on their financial affairs

# Financial Attitudes (Financial Literacy Study 2018)

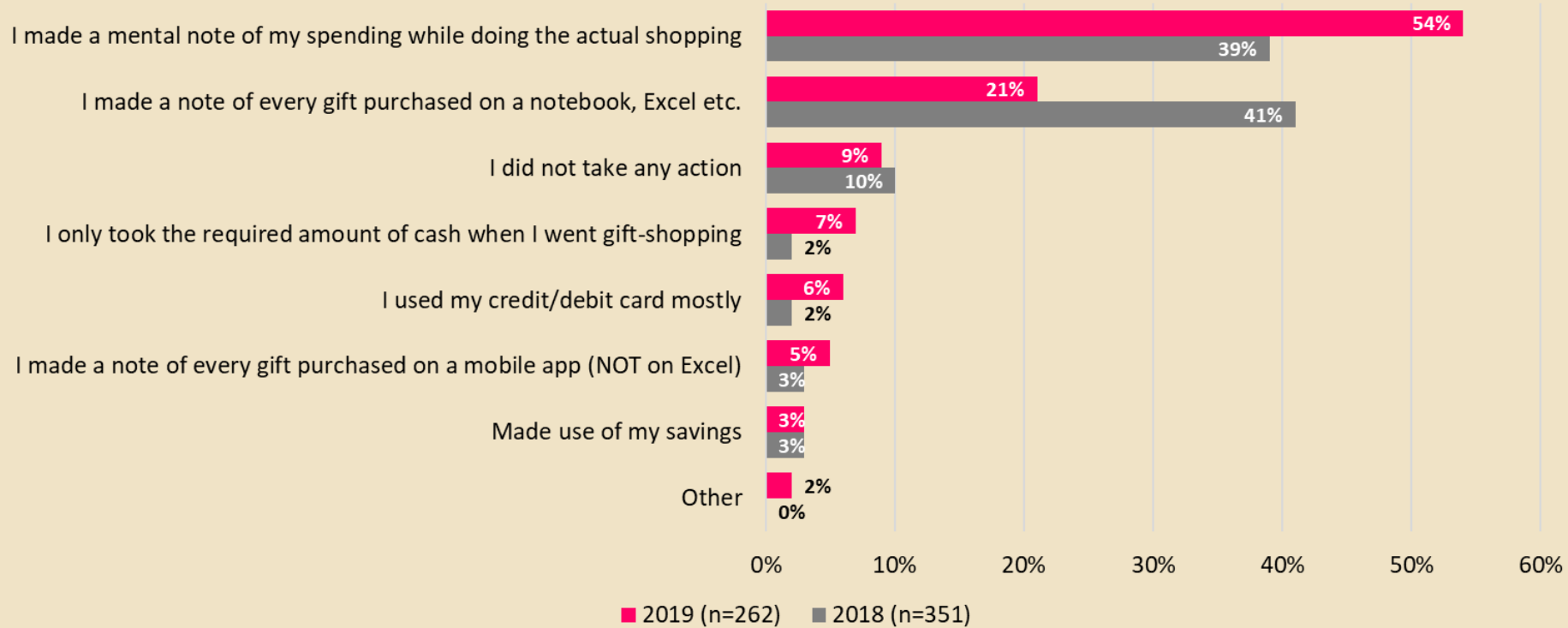
***Financial Attitude: “I find it more satisfying to spend money than to save it for the long term” (QS1.4)***



1 in 3 find it more satisfying to spend money than to save it for the long term

# Setting a Budget

## *Action/s taken to keep to the set budget (Q10) (Multiple-response Q)*



Most individuals who kept to a set budget....

- ...in Christmas 2019 managed to do so by making a mental note of their spending while doing the actual shopping (1 in 2).
- ...in Christmas 2018 managed to do so by making a note of every gift purchased (2 in 5).
- 1 in 10 individuals did not take any action.

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# Setting a Budget

## *Having purchased an expensive gift which exceeded the budget (Q11a)*

Christmas 2019 (n=503)

Counts Break % Respondents	Total	Age							Gender	
		18-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	Male	Female
Total	503	16	89	86	79	92	88	53	250	253
No	373 74.2%	13 81.3%	52 58.4%	52 60.5%	62 78.5%	64 69.6%	78 88.6%	52 98.1%	186 74.4%	187 73.9%
Yes	129 25.6%	3 18.8%	37 41.6%	34 39.5%	17 21.5%	28 30.4%	9 10.2%	1 1.9%	63 25.2%	66 26.1%
Refused	1 0.2%	-	-	-	-	-	1 1.1%	-	1 0.4%	-

### Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

**2019 (n=503)**

No: 74% (+2%)

Yes: 26% (-3%)

**2018 (n=501)**

No: 72%

Yes: 29%

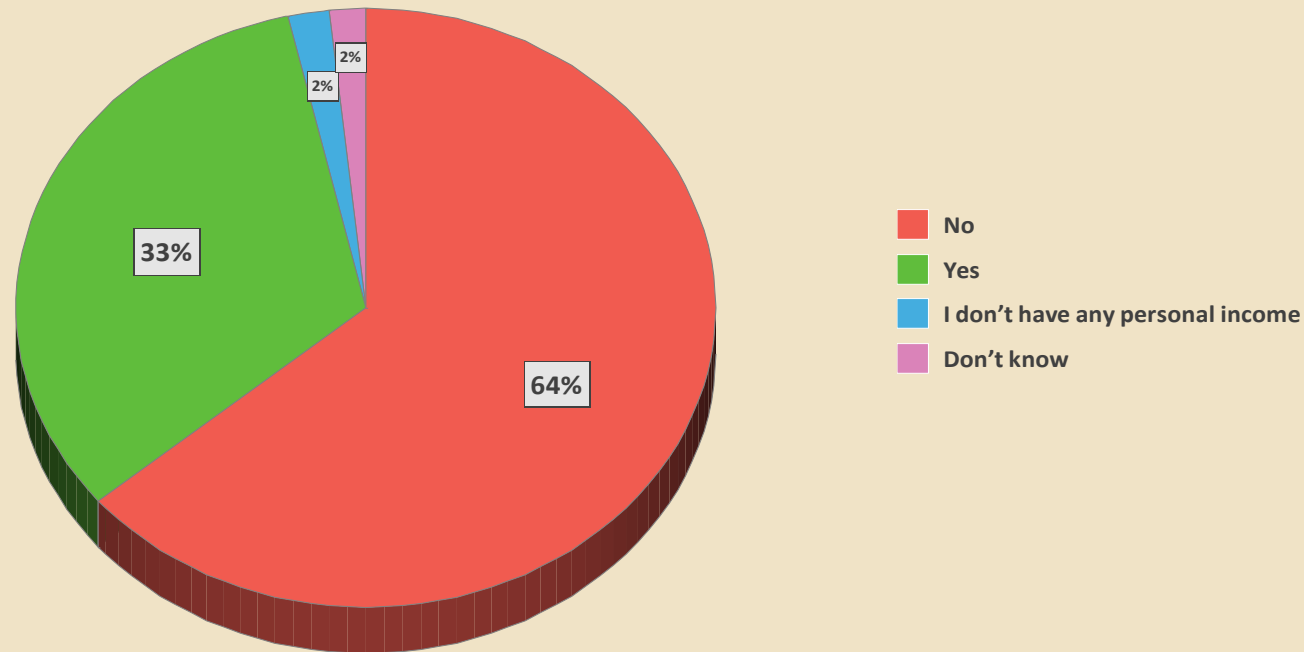
Christmas 2018 (n=501)

Counts Break % Respondents	Total	Age							Gender	
		18-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	Male	Female
Total	501	22	92	91	81	84	82	49	247	254
No	358 71.5%	13 59.1%	50 54.3%	55 60.4%	53 65.4%	68 81.0%	74 90.2%	45 91.8%	186 75.3%	172 67.7%
Yes	143 28.5%	9 40.9%	42 45.7%	36 39.6%	28 34.6%	16 19.0%	8 9.8%	4 8.2%	61 24.7%	82 32.3%

When asked on what action was taken to obtain the difference after exceeding their budget, more than 80% said that they had to increase their budget.

# Expenses exceeding income (Financial Literacy Study 2018)

*Adults experiencing situations where their income did not cover their expenses in the last 12 months (QF11)*



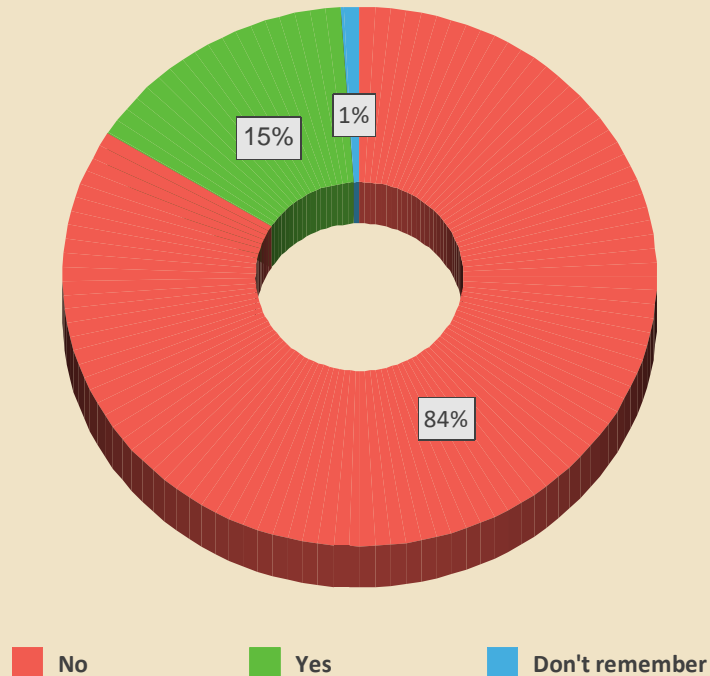
1 in 3 experience situations where their income does not cover their expenses



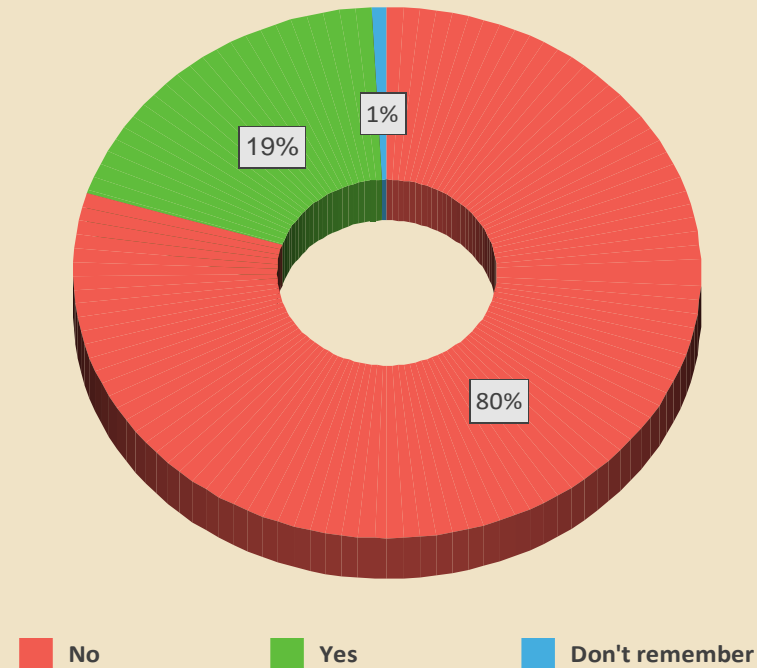
# Black Friday Sale

## Taking advantage of the Black Friday sale for purchasing Christmas presents (Q12)

Christmas 2019 (n=503)



Christmas 2018 (n=501)



### Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

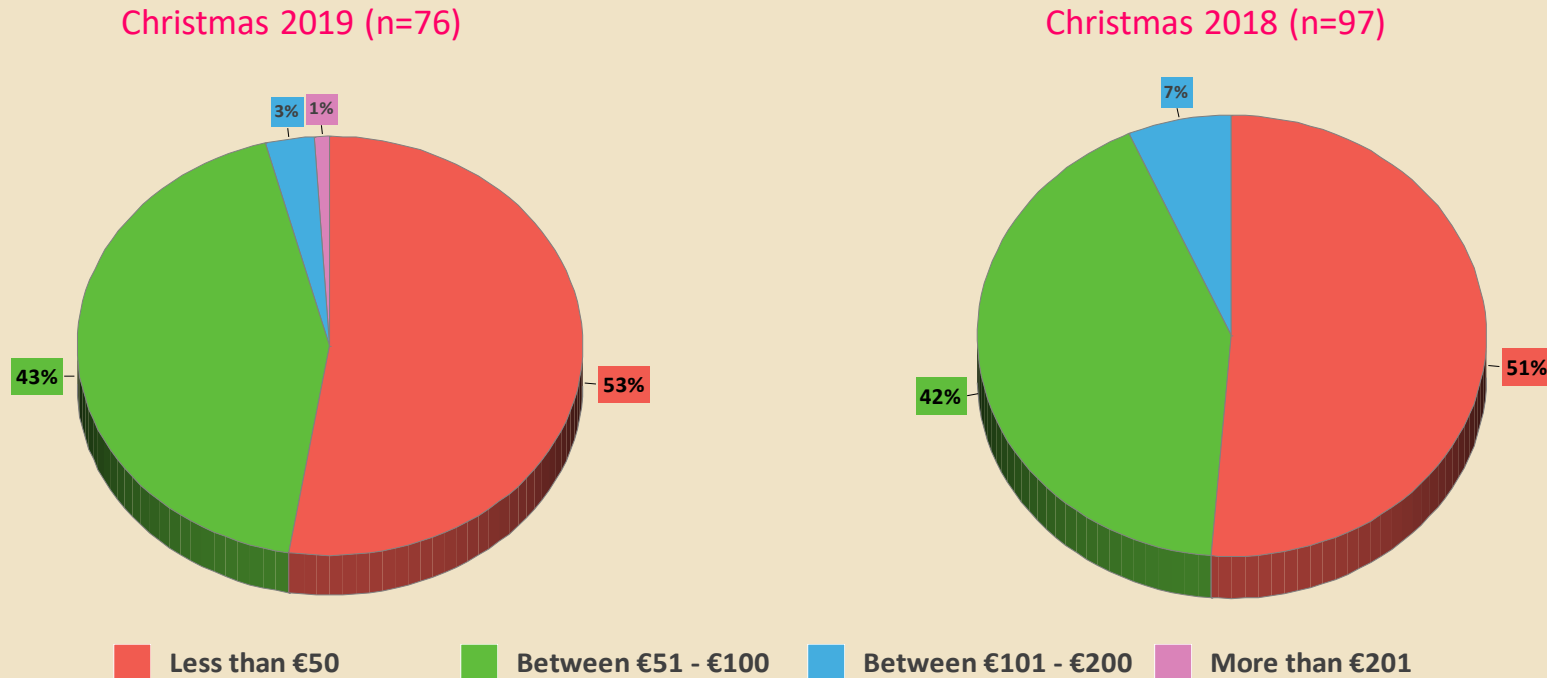
**2019 (n=503)**  
No: 84% (+4%)  
Yes: 15% (-4%)

**2018 (n=501)**  
No: 80%  
Yes: 19%

- Overall, some 1 in 6 took advantage of the Black Friday sales to purchase Christmas presents.
- The young adult cohort took most advantage of these sales – in 2018, 59% of individuals who took advantage of these sales were aged 18 – 39 yrs; while in 2019, 43% were aged 18 – 39 yrs.
- Females also took more advantage of these sales than males – in 2019, 65% were female and 34% were male.

# Black Friday Sale

*The estimated amount of money saved on Christmas presents from the Black Friday sale (Q13)*



## Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

### 2019 (n=76)

Less than €50: 53% (+2%)  
€50 - €100: 43% (-1%)  
€101 - €200: 3% (-4%)

### 2018 (n=97)

Less than €50: 51%  
€50 - €100: 42%  
€101 - €200: 7%

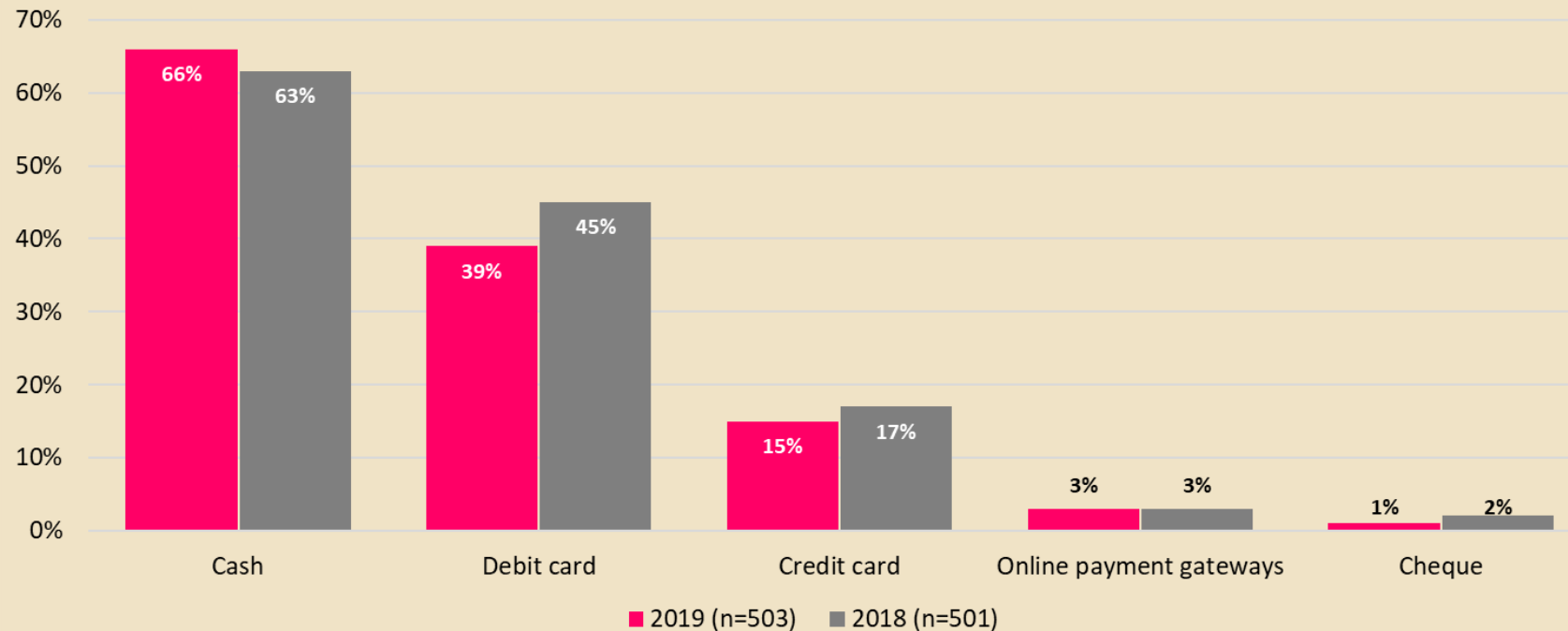
Some half of the individuals who took advantage of the Black Friday sales managed to save up to €50, whilst 43% saved between €51-€100 on their Christmas purchases.

# Conclusions & Key Learnings - II

## ***Paying Methods*** ***(Christmas 2019 vs. Christmas 2018)***

# Paying Methods

*Most used payment method/s while doing Christmas shopping (Q14)  
(Multiple-response Q) (No of Respondents, not responses)*



## Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

### 2019 (n=503)

Cash : 66% (+3%)

Debit Card : 39% (-6%)

Credit Card: 15% (+2%)

### 2018 (n=501)

Cash : 63%

Debit Card : 45%

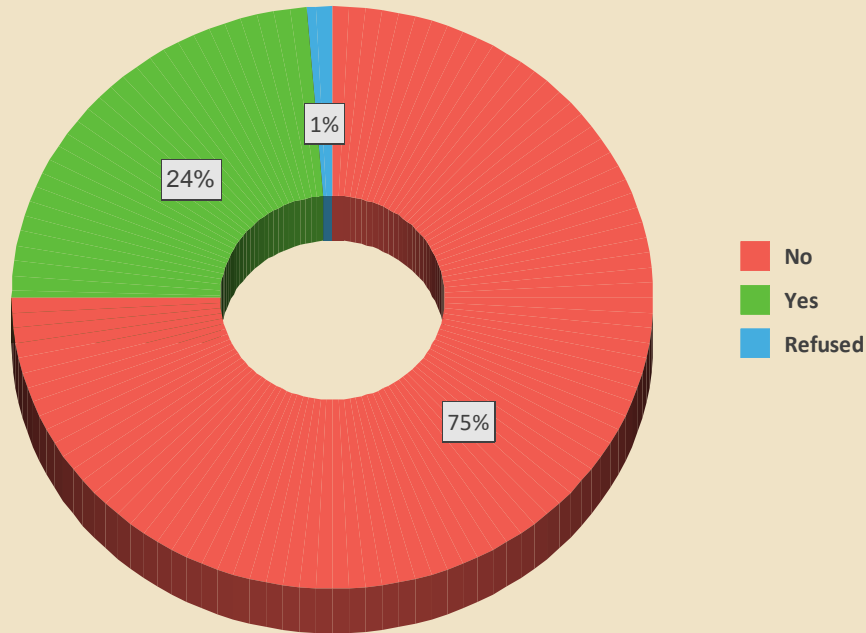
Credit Card: 17%

- Most individuals use cash and debit cards when doing their Christmas shopping.
- The highest credit card users are:
  - '30-49 year old' cohort
  - Of 'tertiary education'
  - 'employed' cohort.

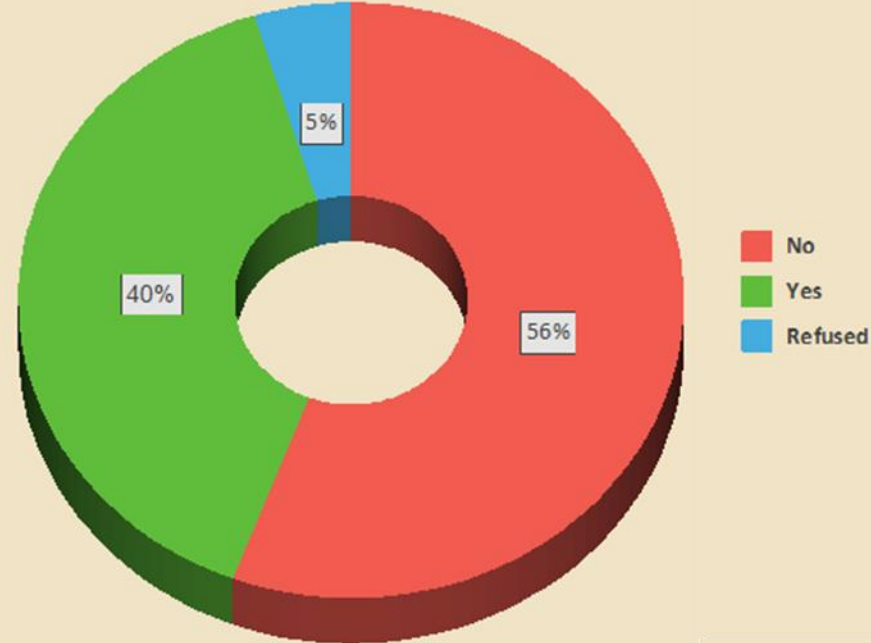
# Paying Method

*Individuals' consideration of the applicable credit card interest rates  
in the event of being unable to pay their January credit card bill on time (Q15c)*

Christmas 2019 (n=76)



Christmas 2018 (n=86)



## Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

### 2019 (n=76)

No : 75% (+19%)

Yes: 24% (-16%)

### 2018 (n=86)

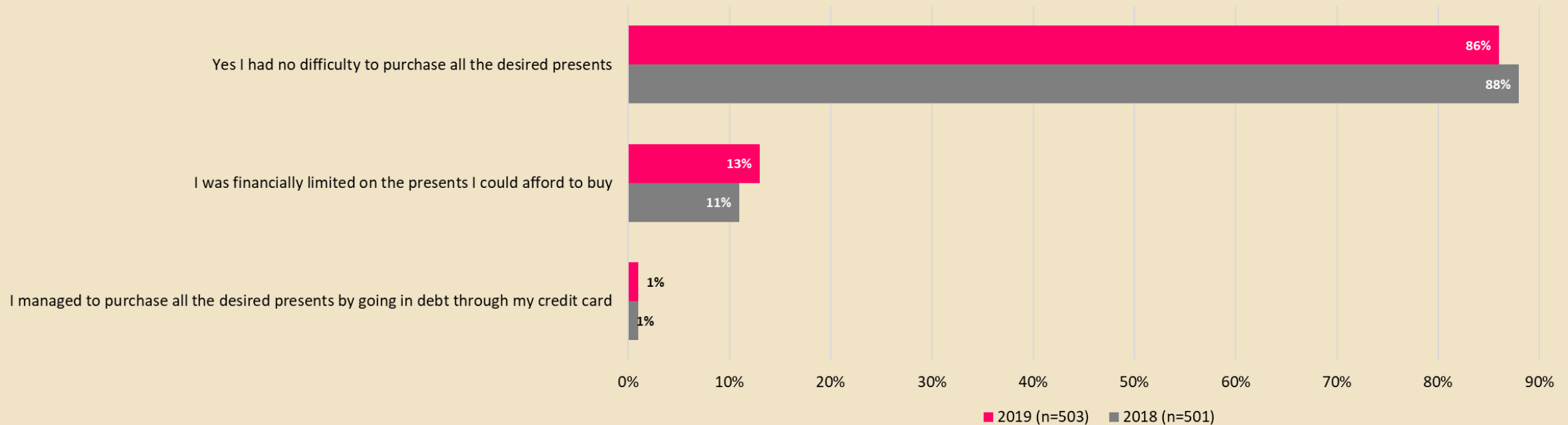
No : 56%

Yes: 40%

- In Christmas 2019, 3 in 4 of credit card users did not consider the applicable interest rates if they are unable to pay their January credit card bill on time.
- In Christmas 2018, almost 3 in 5 of credit card users did not consider the applicable interest rates.

# Christmas Presents

## *Individuals' having enough money to purchase all the desired Christmas presents (Q16)*



- Almost 9 in 10 individuals did not encounter difficulties to purchase all the desired presents.
- 1 in 10 did encounter difficulties.
- Individuals aged 18 – 19 years encountered most difficulties to purchase all the desired presents.

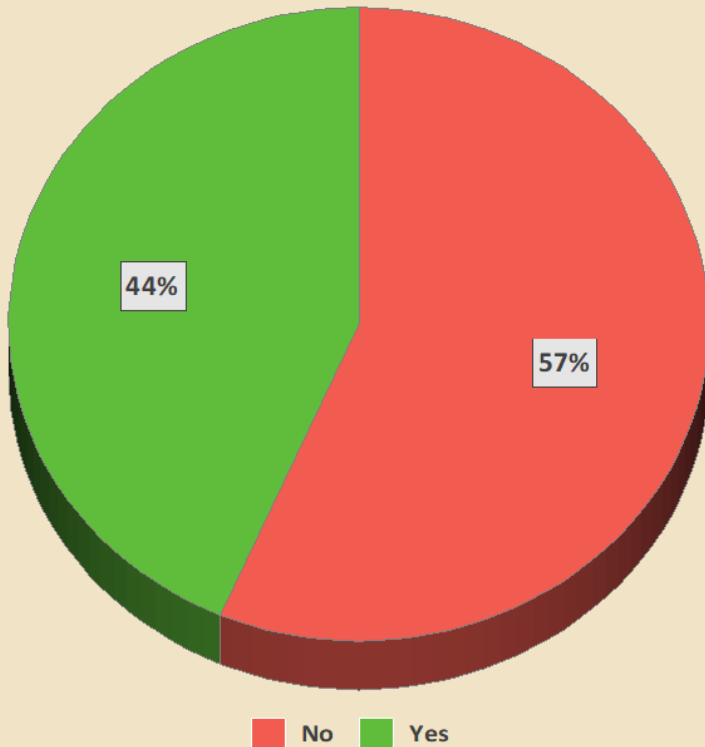
# Conclusions & Key Learnings - III

## ***Hosting Family/Friends on Christmas day/New Year's Day (Christmas 2019 vs. Christmas 2018)***

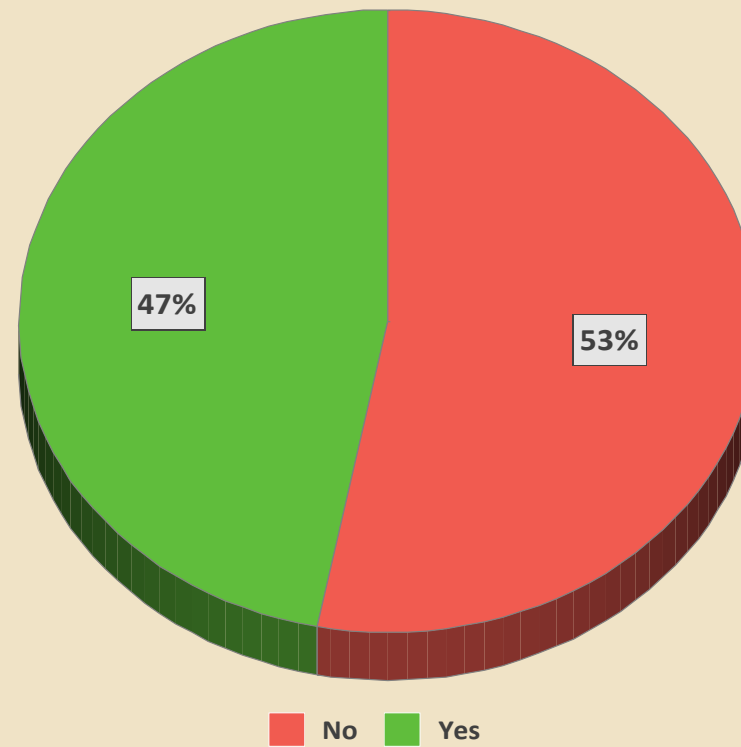
# Entertaining in Christmas

*Individuals' having hosted family/friends on Christmas Day/New Year's Day (Q17)*

Christmas 2019 (n=503)



Christmas 2018 (n=501)



## Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

### 2019 (n=503)

No : 57% (+4%)

Yes: 44% (-3%)

### 2018 (n=501)

No : 53%

Yes: 47%

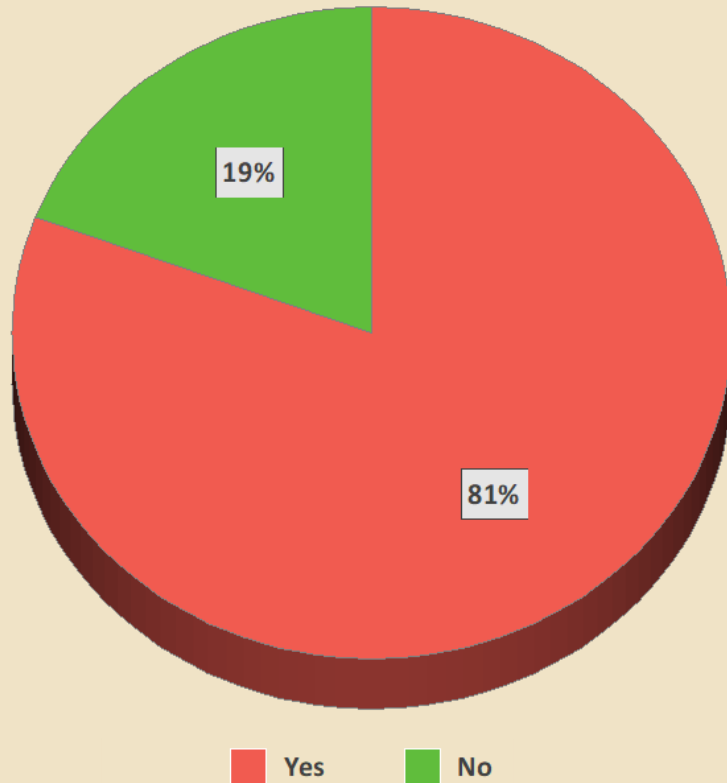
- Almost 1 in 2 host family/ friends on Christmas Day/NYD.
- The younger age cohorts (18-29 yrs) are the least who host family/friends.



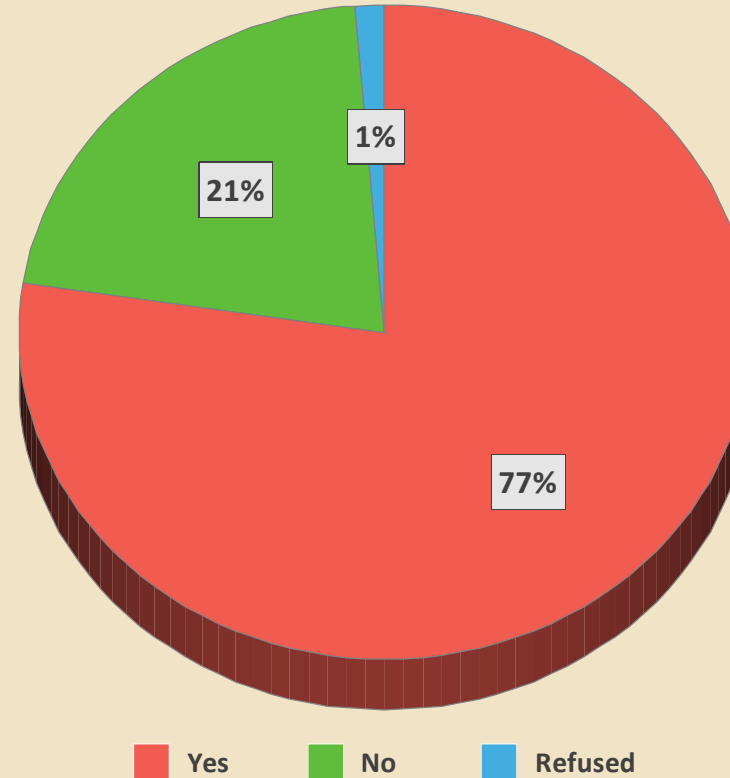
# Entertaining in Christmas

## *Having any leftover food/items from hosting guests (Q18)*

Christmas 2019 (n=219)



Christmas 2018 (n=235)



### Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

#### 2019 (n=219)

Yes : 81% (+4%)

No: 19% (-2%)

#### 2018 (n=235)

Yes : 77%

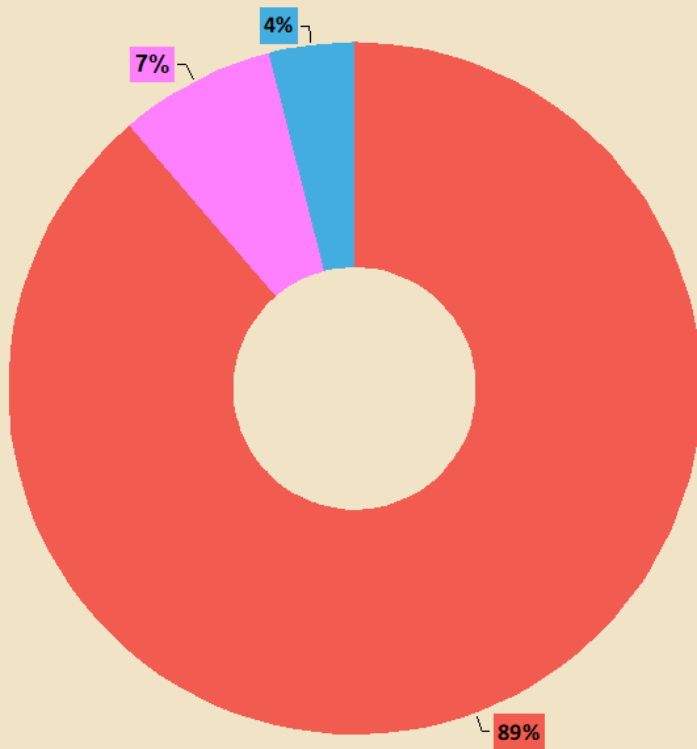
No: 21%

Most individuals (8 in 10) **do have** leftover food/items from hosting guests

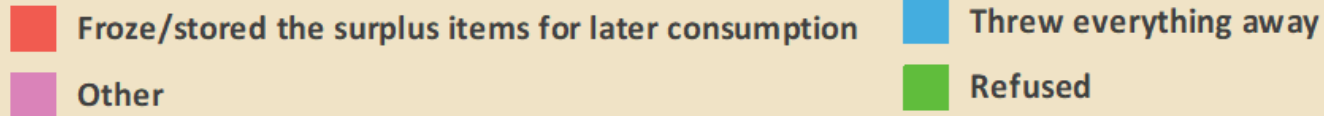
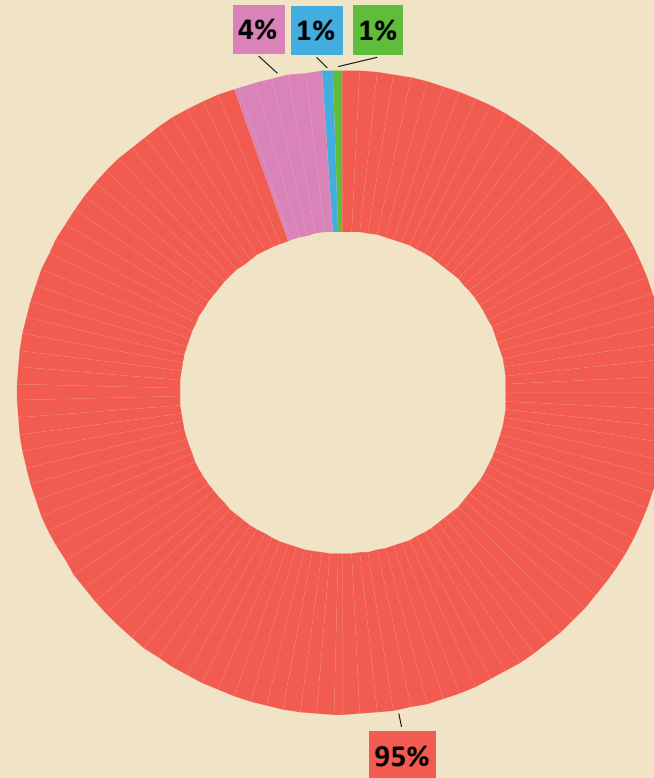
# Entertaining in Christmas

*The action taken with the leftover food/items (Q19) (Prompted replies)*

Christmas 2019 (n=177)



Christmas 2018 (n=182)



## Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

### 2019 (n=177)

Froze/stored items : 89% (-6%)  
Threw everything away: 4% (+3%)

### 2018 (n=182)

Froze/stored items : 95%  
Threw everything away: 1%

- Most individuals freeze/ store surplus items for later consumption.
- This finding emerged across all ages and gender.

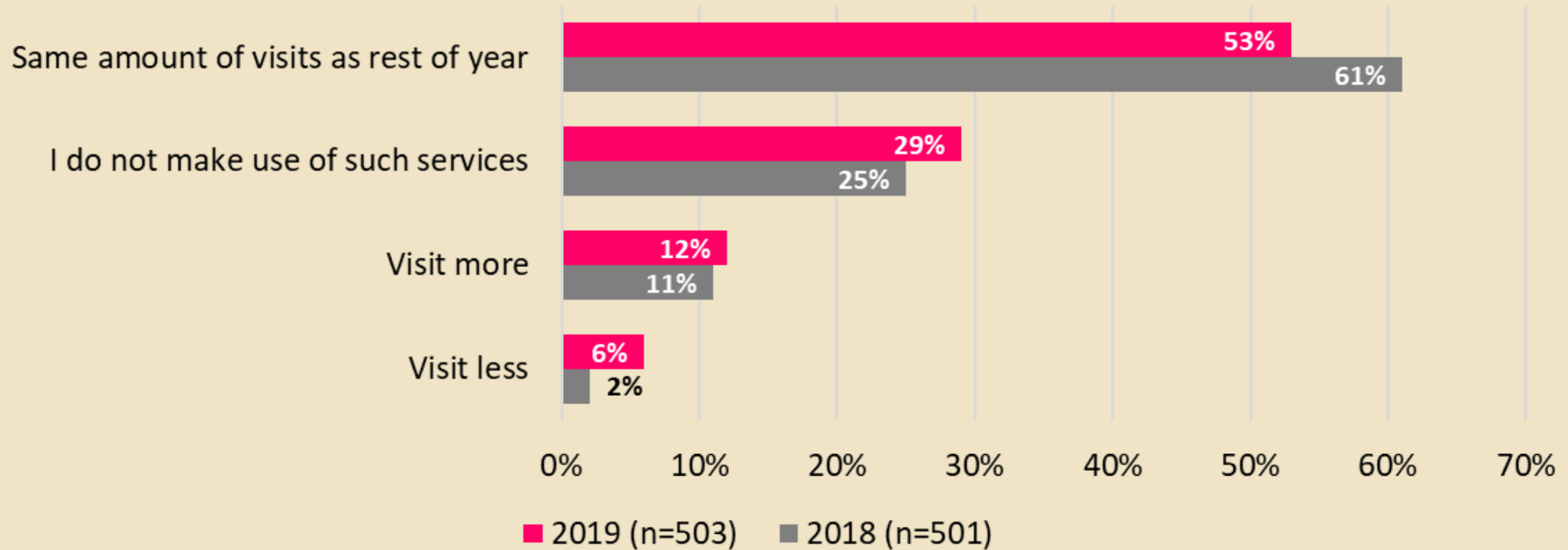
# Conclusions & Key Learnings - IV

## ***Use of Well-Being Services & Purchase of New Clothes during Christmas (Christmas 2019 vs. Christmas 2018)***

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# Use of Well-Being Services

*Use of well-being services during Christmas period (Q20) (Prompted replies)*



- Only 1 in 10 make more use of well-being services in Christmas.
- This is more notable among the younger age cohorts (18-29 yrs).

# Purchase of new clothes

## *Purchasing of new clothes for social events/parties (Q21) (Prompted replies)*



### Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

#### 2019 (n=503)

Purchased new clothes : 53% (+5%)  
Did not purchase new clothes: 36% (-4%)  
Did not attend any events : 12% (+1%)

#### 2018 (n=501)

Purchased new clothes : 48%  
Did not purchase new clothes: 40%  
Did not attend any events : 11%

Young adults (18 – 29 years) were the most to purchase new clothes for social events/parties

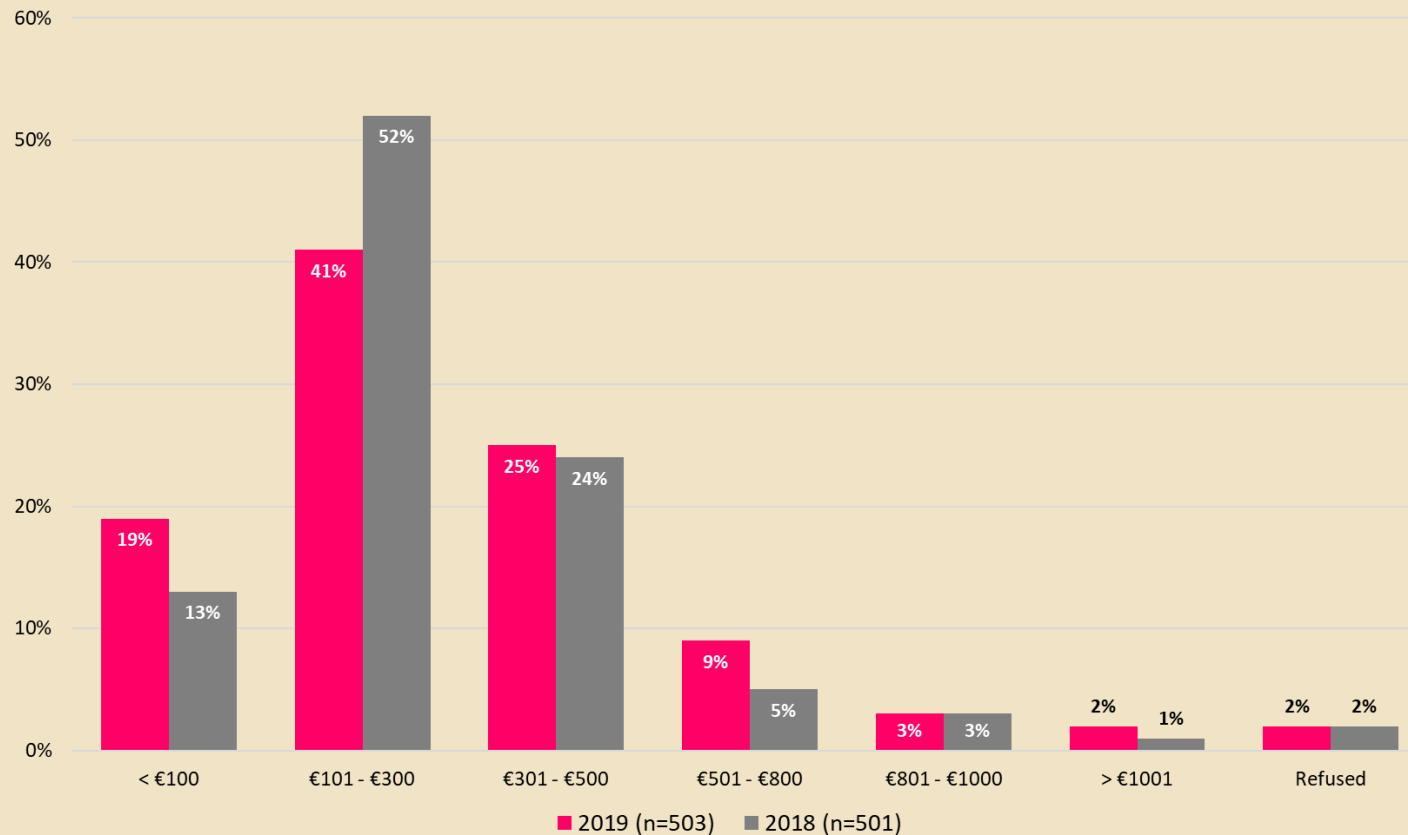
# Conclusions & Key Learnings - V

## ***Christmas Spending*** ***(Christmas 2019 vs. Christmas 2018)***

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# Presents Spend

## Average spend on Christmas presents (Q22)



### Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

#### 2019 (n=503)

<€100 : 19% (+6%)  
€101-€300 : 41% (-11%)  
€301-€500 : 25% (+1%)  
€501-€800 : 9% (+4%)

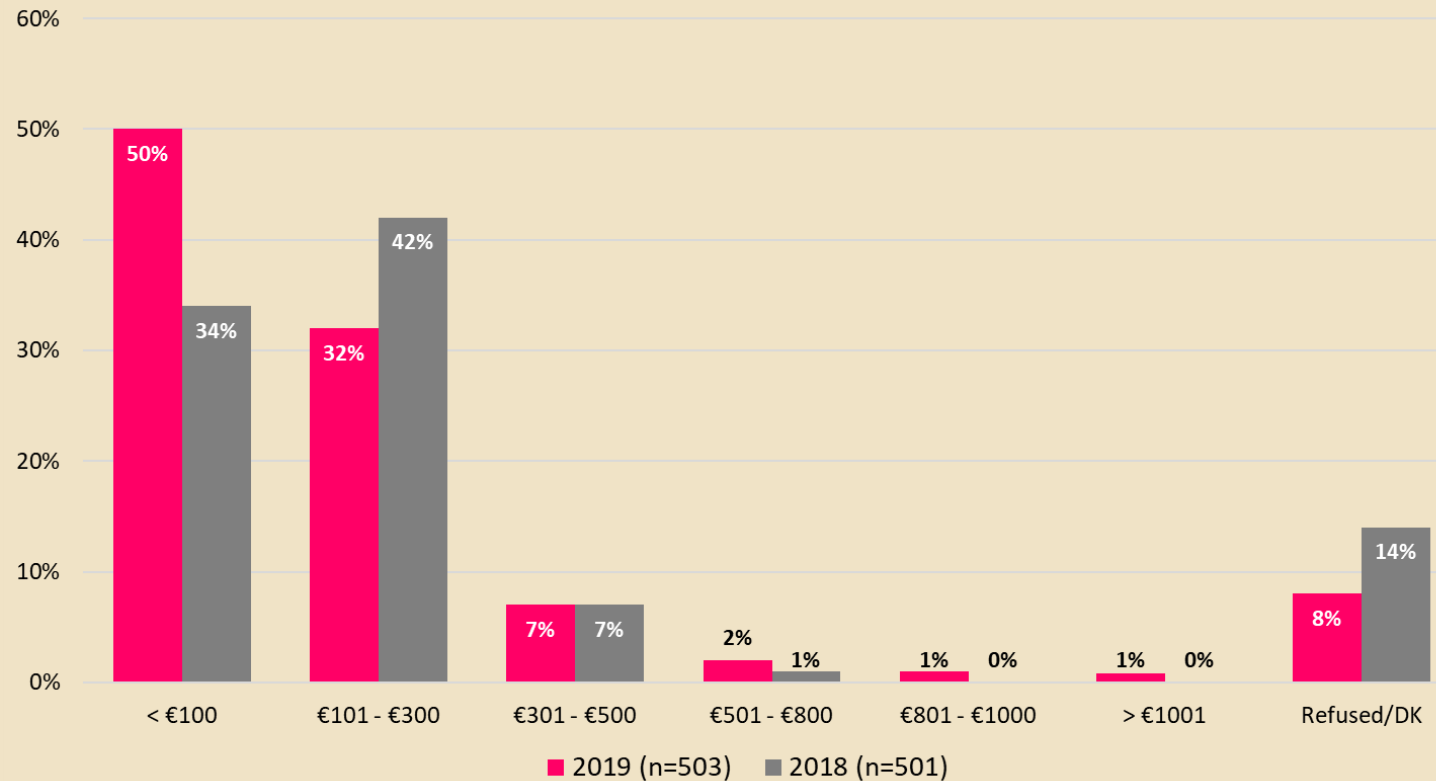
#### 2018 (n=501)

<€100 : 13%  
€101-€300 : 52%  
€301-€500 : 24%  
€501-€800 : 5%

- Some 1 in 2 spend €101-€300 on Christmas presents.
- 1 in 4 spend €301- €500.
- These findings emerge across all age cohorts, household income and gender.

# Entertainment Spend

## Average spend on entertainment during Christmas (Q23)



### Comparison: 2019 vs. 2018

#### 2019 (n=503)

<€100 : 50% (+16%)  
€101-€300 : 32% (+10%)  
€301-€500 : 7% (=)

#### 2018 (n=501)

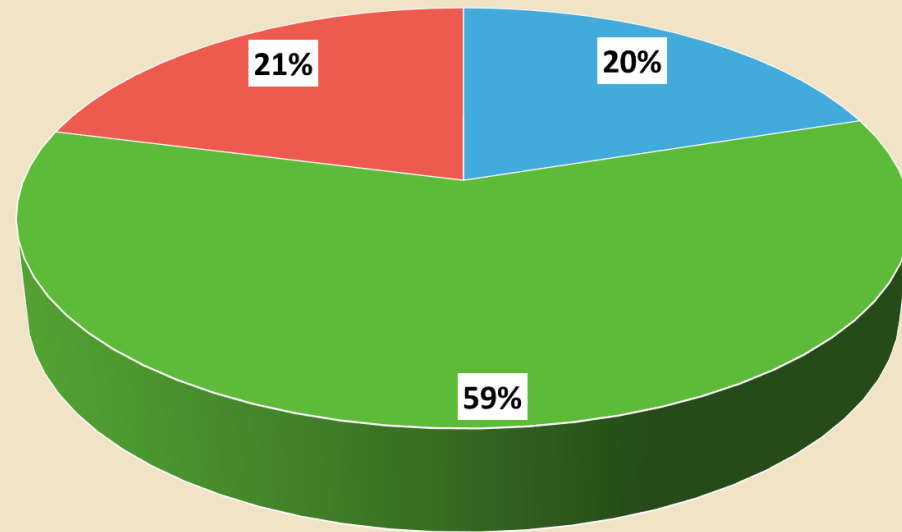
<€100 : 34%  
€101-€300: 42%  
€301-€500 : 7%

- Individuals aged 18 – 19 yrs & 60 – 79 yrs spent the least money on entertainment.
- Those earning 26k-50k spent the most money on entertainment: 1 in 2 spent between €101 -€300.



# Financial Attitudes (Financial Literacy Study 2018)

***Financial Attitude: “Money is there to be spent” (QS1.6)***



■ Completely disagree/disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree/completely agree

- 21% (1 in 5) believe that money is there to be spent.
- Whilst some 60% do not have an opinion on this financial attitude.

# Spending Habits: The Christmas Experience

***Thank you for your attention!***