STUDY ON CYBER-VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTIQ++ INDIVIDUALS

BY: ASMA DYLAN OUERGHI
Data scientist, Digital Security handler and LGBTIQ++ rights defender

By:

موجودين
MAWJOUDIN

دمج
damj
دمج الجمعية التونسية للعدالة و المساواة
Damj, l'association tunisienne pour la justice et l'égalité

With the partnership of:

مساحات
Mesahat

أمان
AMAN

حلم
HELEM

موزاييك
لخدمات المناصرة والإندماج الإجتماعي وتنمية القدرات في الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا

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MAWJOUDIN, is an officially registered not-for-profit NGO that is based in Tunisia, and works towards achieving equality, human rights, bodily rights and sexual rghts for the LGBTIQ++ community and other marginalized groups and individuals through advocacy, documentation, capacity building, awarness raising, safe spaces and lobbying.

DAMJ, the Tunisian organization for Justice and Equality, that aims to defend and promote the human rights of LGBTIQ ++ people in Tunisia. The organization also sets up social, psychological, judicial and digital support mechanisms for the entire community.

With the partnership of :
HELEM is LGBTIQ++ rights organisation officially established in Beirut, Lebanon in 2004. Its mission is to lead a non-violent struggle for the liberation of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Intersex, Transgendered, Queer (LGBTIQ++) and other persons with non-conforming sexualities and/or gender identities in Lebanon and the MENA region from all sorts of violations of their individual and collective civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

MOSAIC, the MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration and Capacity building, is a holistic program committed to improve the health and wellness of marginalized groups in Lebanon and beyond. Founded by activists, legal and health experts, MOSAIC provides comprehensive social, legal and mental health services for the marginalized groups, research and advocate for policy reform, knowledge and capacity building on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity issues, and engage the societies in the fight against human rights violations.

AMAN is an art space located in Amman, Jordan, that forms itself organically through interaction, participation and containment.

It aims to be a safe space as well as a hub for feminist and queer artists/activists, in a way, working on decreasing the gap between the non-conforming bodies and the concept of spaces and claiming them; through consolidating the concept of consent, stripping the stigma of their authority, and disintegrating gender in an interactive manner.

MESAHAT Foundation for Sexual and Gender Diversity; established in 2015, works to identify and reduce security risks, and eliminate social and cultural obstacles faced by sexual and gender minorities in Egypt and Sudan. Mesahat also works to create and provide appropriate means and tools for LGBTIQ++ activists to do and continue their work safely, and contribute to creating nourished and effective queer communities in the Nile Valley Area.
Mesahat works on three main programs; holistic safety and security, documentation of violations based on SOGIESC and oral histories of queer communities, and capacity building of LGBTIQ++ activists in Egypt and Sudan.

SUMMARY

7 Introduction

8 Statistical overview:

9 Introduction questions

16 Digital security questions

22 Cyber-violations questions

39 Data Analysis

46 Conclusions

Introduction

The data collection was conducted in March and April 2020 from 238 individuals who are part of sexual and/or gender minorities, aged between -18 and 54 years old and residing in 4 countries: Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon.

The data collection was made via an online survey on Jotform plateform. After dropping the duplicated responses, the number of held inputs was updated to 235 entries. All the different distributions presented in the following report as well as the data analysis were held on the updated entries.

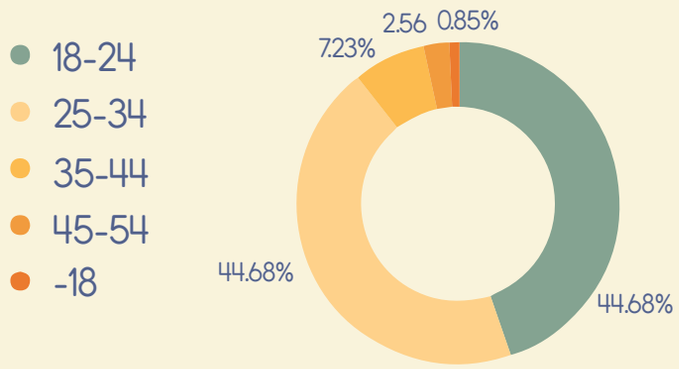
The gathered data covered 28 questions subdivised into 3 modules: Introduction questions, Digital Security questions and Cyber violations questions. Among the questions, there are single choice ones, multiple choices ones and an open response question.

Statistical Overview

In this part the different distributions of the answered questions are presented using the appropriate graphs. For multiple choice question, the percantage of a choice is calculated by dviding its number of occurrence on the total number of particpants.

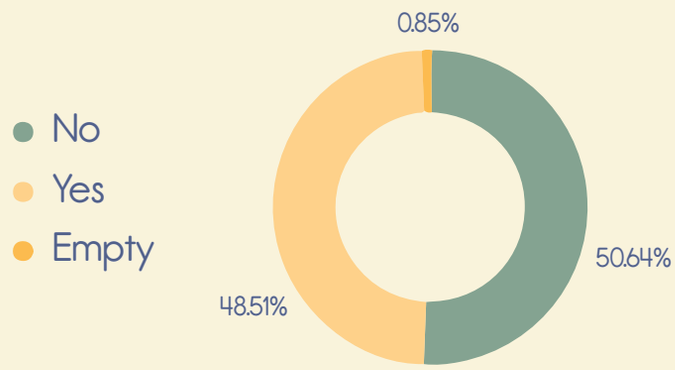
INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS

Age distribution



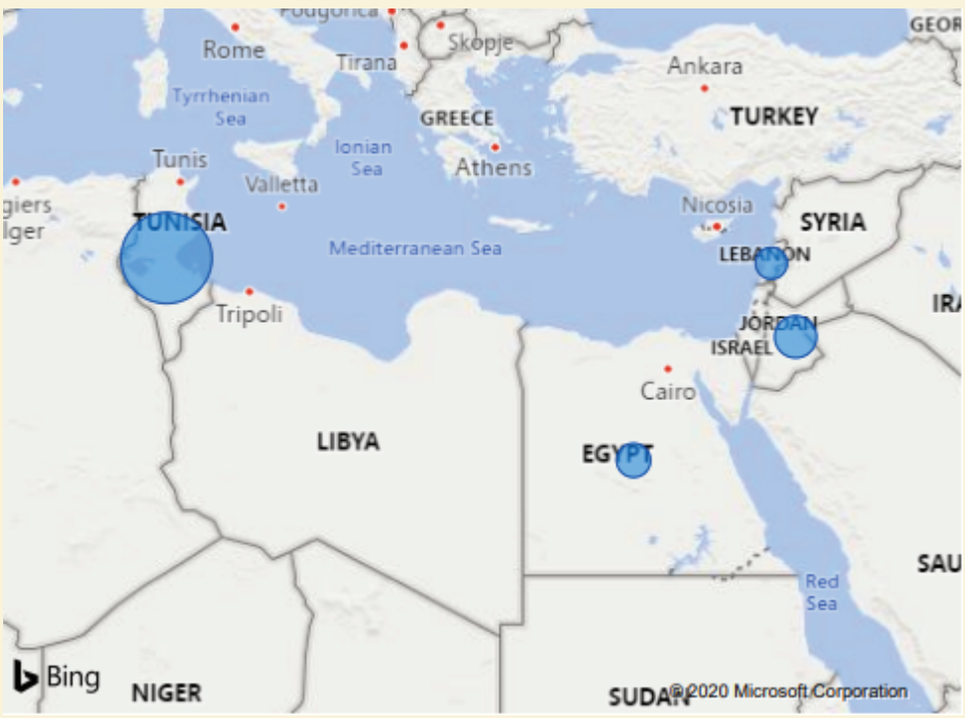
The majority of the survey participants (nearly 90%) are younger than 35 years old

Do you consider yourself to be part of an ethnic or racial minority group in your country?



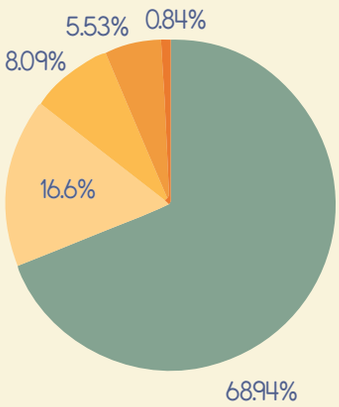
Almost half of the participants (48.51% consider themseves belongig to an ethnical or racial minority.)

Participants countries distribution map



Which country do you live in currently?

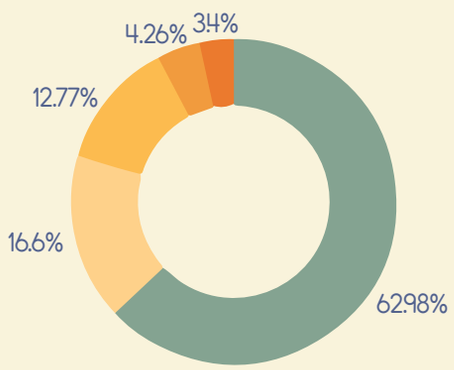
- Tunisia
- Jordan
- Egypt
- Lebanon
- Empty



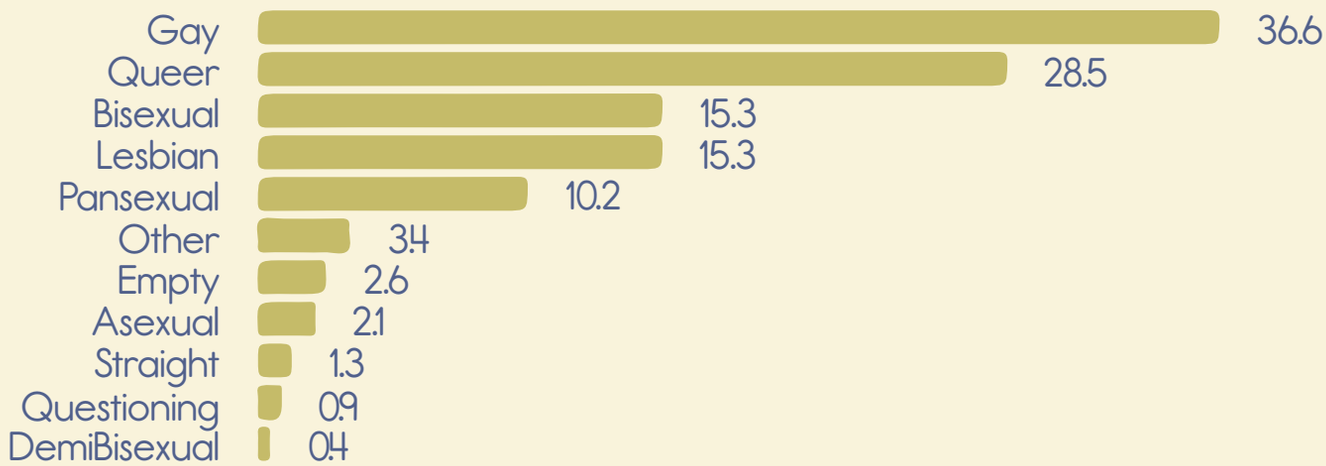
The majority of the participants with a purcentage of 68.94% are from Tunisia. The second percentage is from Jordan with 16.6% followed by Egypt with 8.09% and Lebonon with 5.53%. The majority of the particpants are not living in small cities or rural areas since 62.98% are living in a capital city, 12.77% in a large city.

Which of the following best describes the place where you now live ?

- A capital city
- A small city or town
- A large city
- A suburb near a large city
- A rural area or village



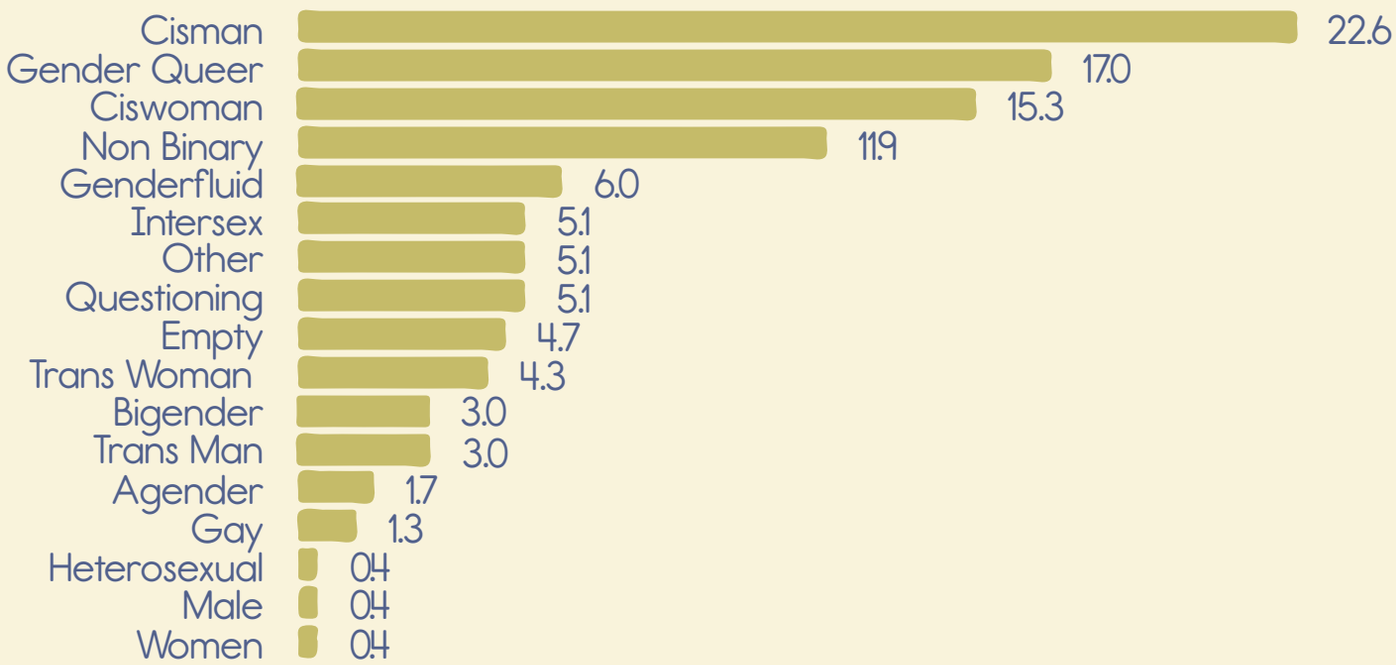
Sexual Orientation Distribution (%)



In this question, multiple choices and open response options were enabled. Among the participants, 36.6% describe their sexual orientation as gay, while 28.5% describe it as queer.

Bisexual and lesbian sexual orientations are both 15.3% while 2.6% of the participants preferred to leave an empty response for this question.

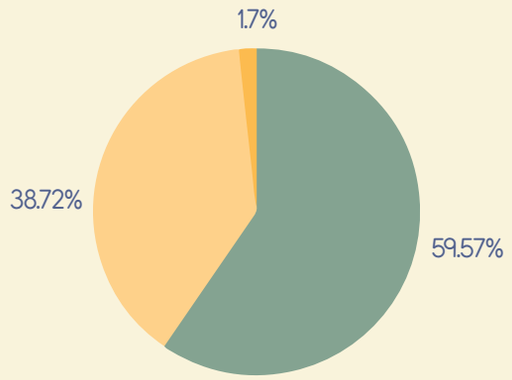
Gender Identity and Variations in Sex Charechteristics Distribution (%)



In this question, multiple choices and open response options were enabled. Cis-gendered individuals are the majoritary with 22.6% of the participants identifying as cis-man and 15.32% identifying as ciswoman. 17.02% of the participants identify as gender-queers while 11.91% are non-binary.

Internet Access distribution

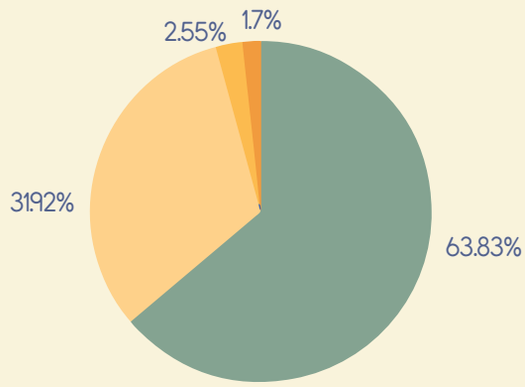
- At home and work
- At home
- None



The majority of the participants (98.3%) have access to the internet at home or at home and work.

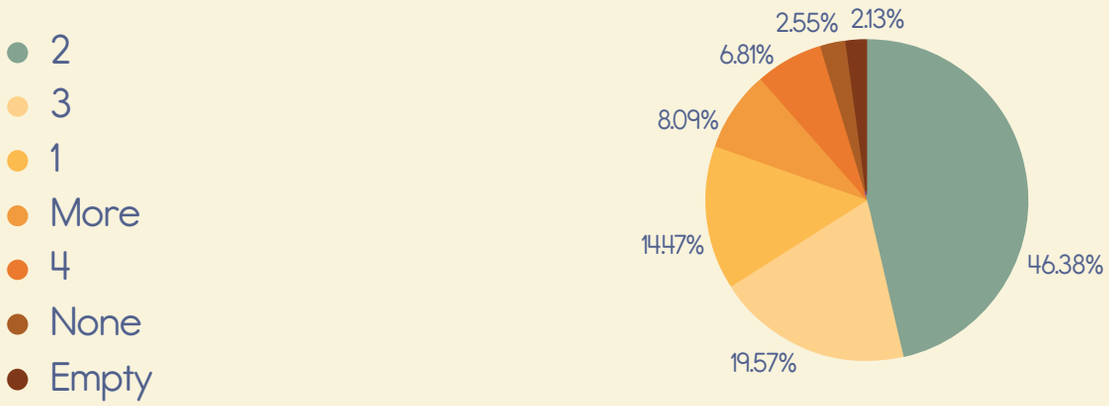
Hours spent on the internet per day

- More than 5 hours
- Betwen 2 and 5 hours
- Empty
- Less than 2 hours



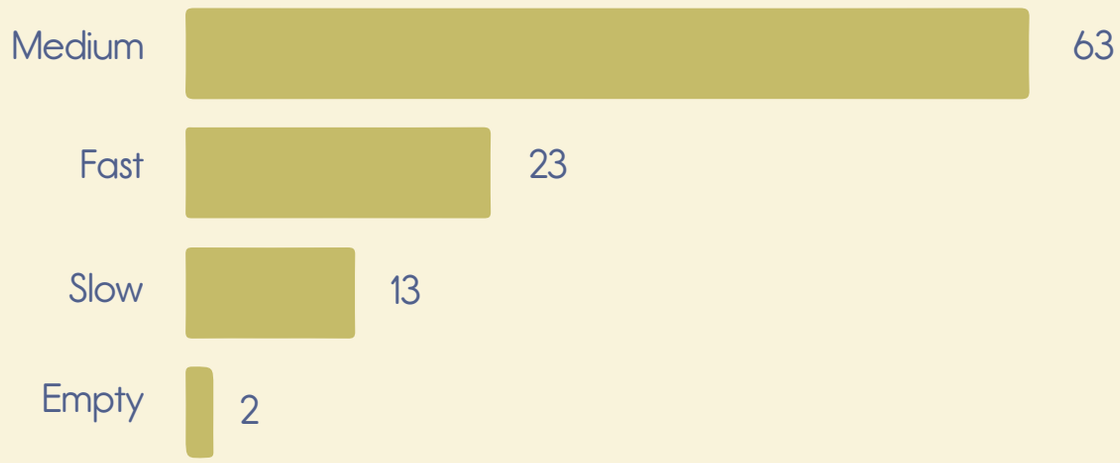
95.74% of the particpants spend at least 2 hours or more on the internet per day.

Connected devices to the internet at home/work



95.32% of the participants have at least one device connected to the internet wether at work and/or home.

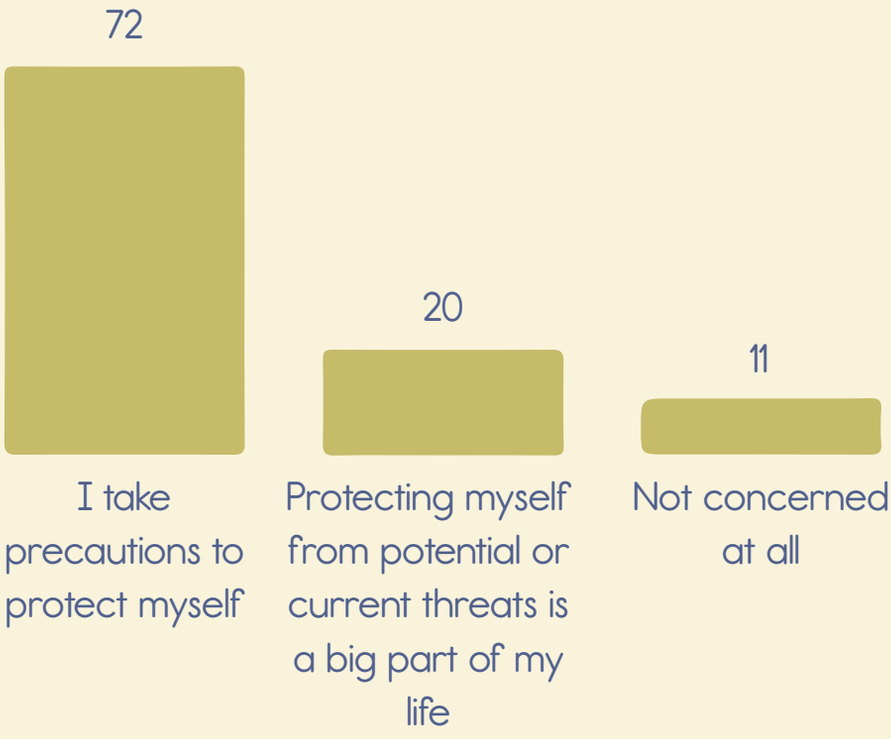
Internet Access distribution



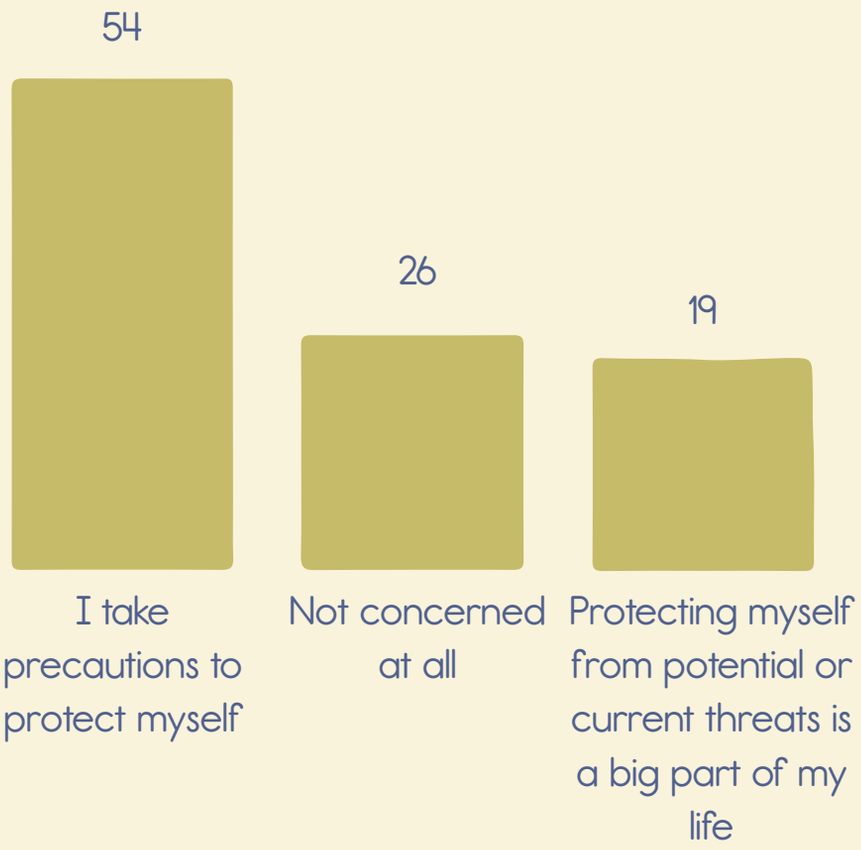
In this question, multiple choice option was enabled.
63% of the participants find that the internet speed medium while 23% consider it fast. Only 13% consider their interet speed low.

DIGITAL SECURITY QUESTIONS

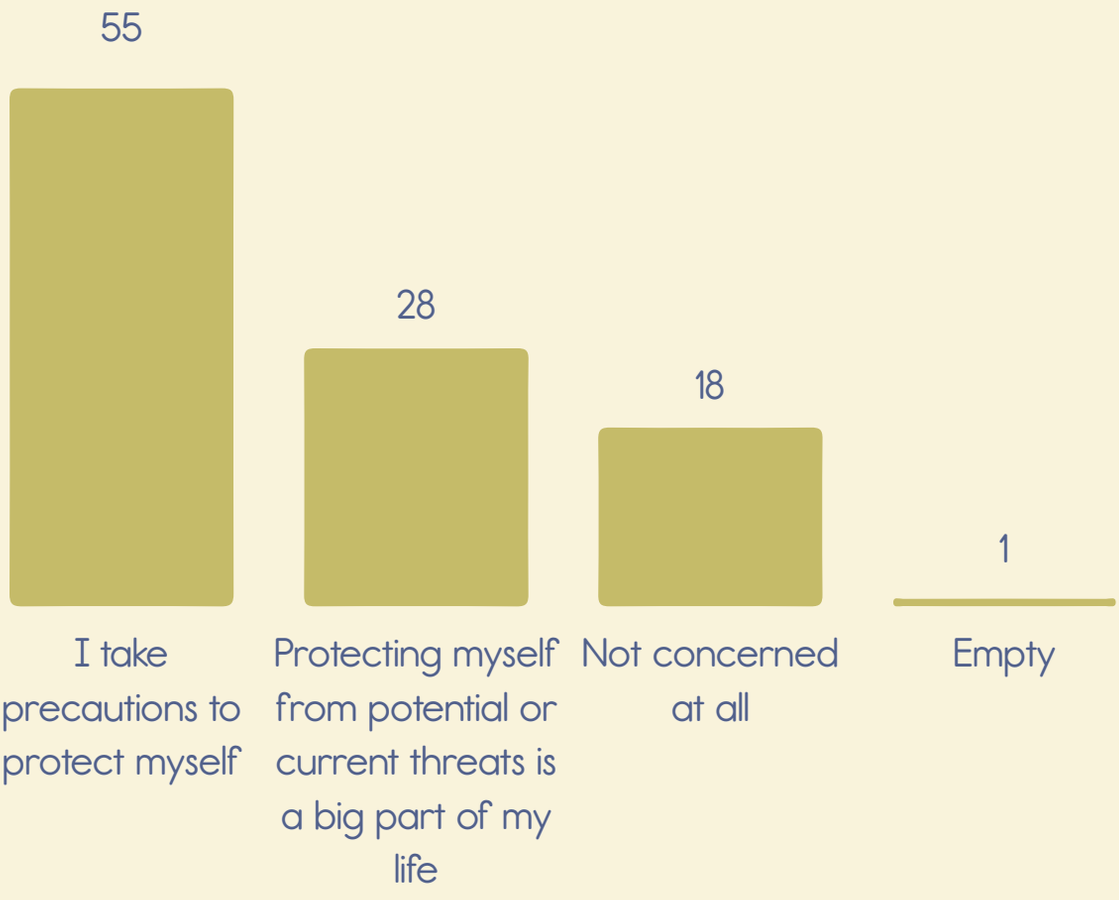
Concern about their digital security (%)



Concern about identity theft (%)



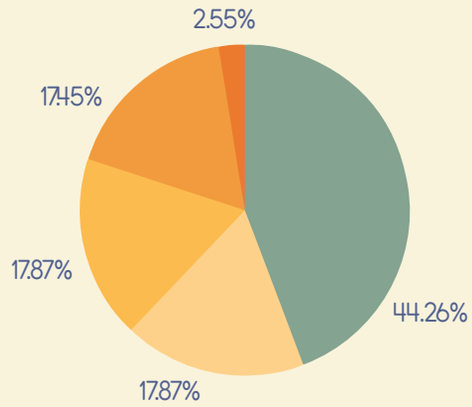
Concern about physical security (%)



In theses questions the multiple choice option was enabled.
The majority of the participants are concerned about their digital and physical security, and their identity theft.
72% of the particpiants take precautions to protect themselves digitally, while 55% and 54% take precautions to protect themselves against physical attacks and identity theft respectively.

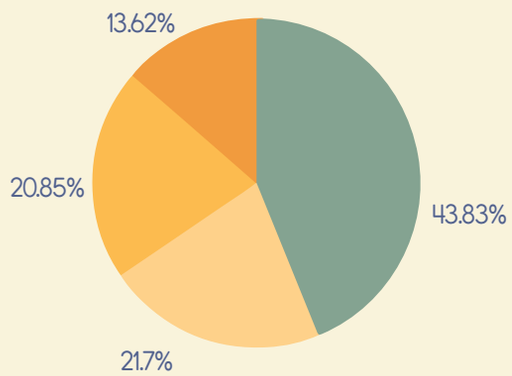
Do you feel safe online?

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree



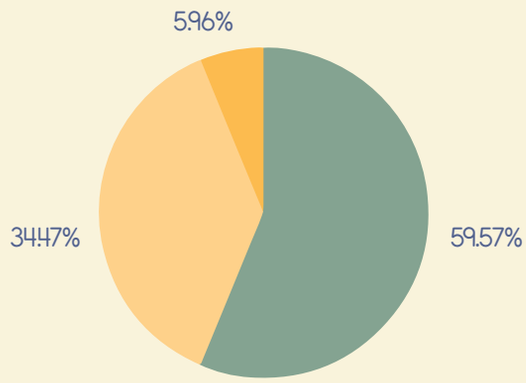
Usage of password manager

- No
- Yes, but only for some accounts
- What is a password manager?
- For all my accounts



Usage of public Wifi or Personal

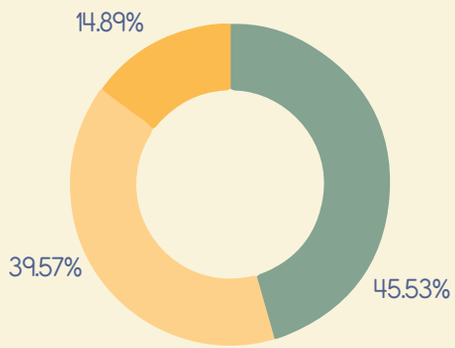
- Both
- Personal
- Public



Only 20.42% of the participants agree or strongly agree that they feel safe online while the majority feel that they are threatened.
The majority of the particpants do not use a password manager with 43.83% negative response when asked and 20.85% asking about what a password manager is.

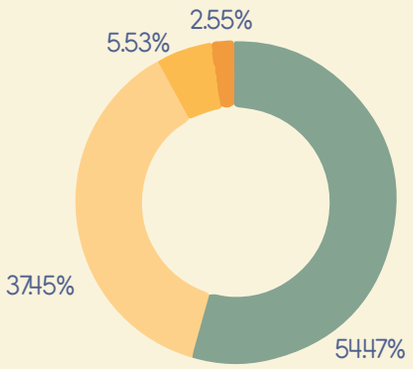
Did you read an article about digital security?

- Yes
- No
- I can't remember

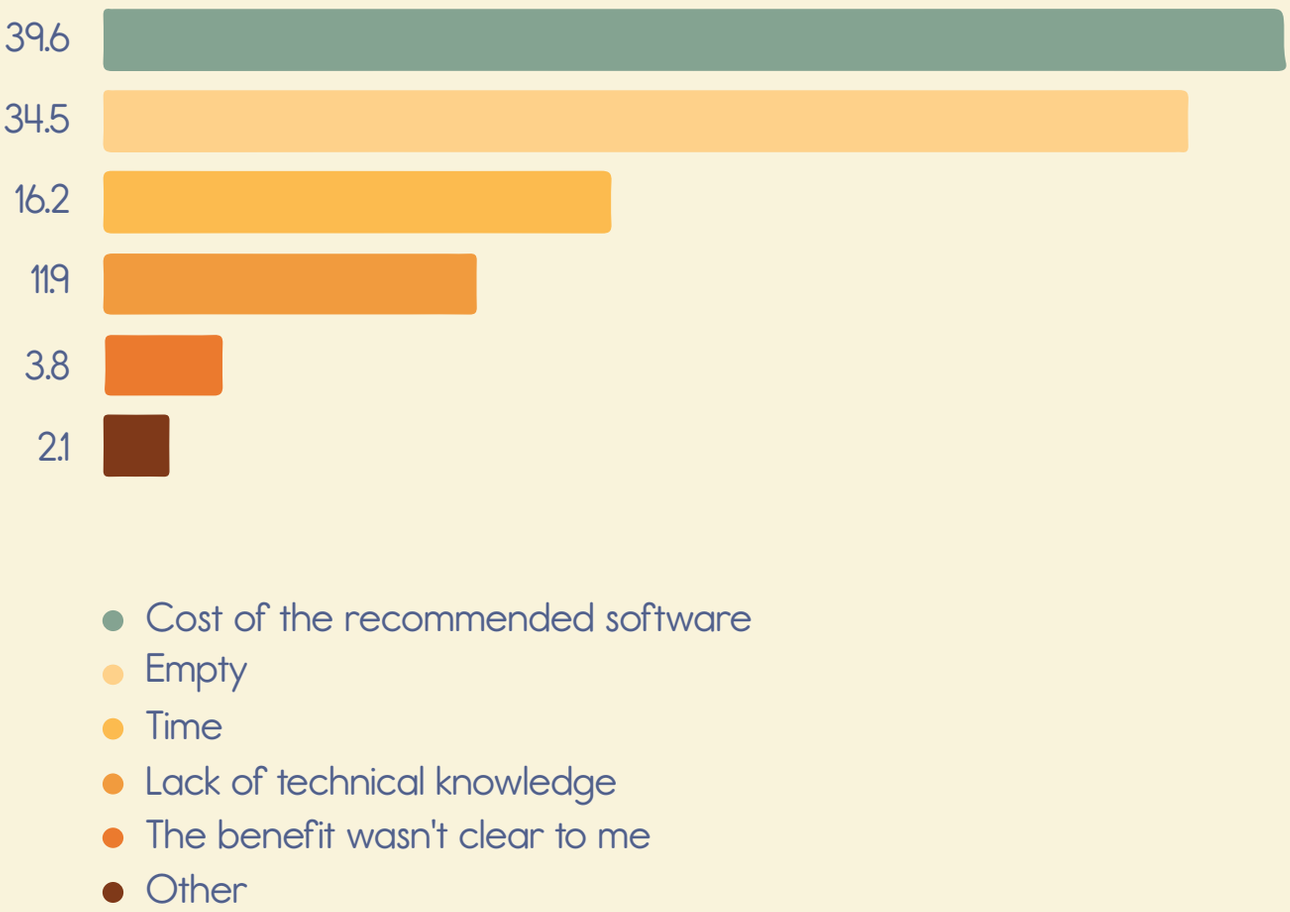


Did you follow the article suggestions?

- Empty
- Some of them
- No
- All of them



Obstructions to follow the read suggestions (%)



39.57% of the particiants never read an article about digital security while 45.54% answered by yes to the question. When it comes to applying the read suggestions, more than half of the participants didn't answer the question while 40% applied at least some of the recommendations.

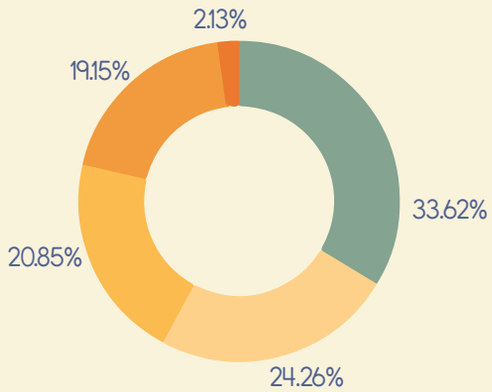
In this question the multiple choice option was enabled. The cost of the recomemnded software on the read articles is the first obstructions keeping the participants from applying the read suggestions with nearly 40%.

The lack of time and technical knowledge are also among the obstructions with 14.2% and 10.9% of the participants population.

CYBER VIOLATIONS QUESTIONS

Do you trust your internet provider?

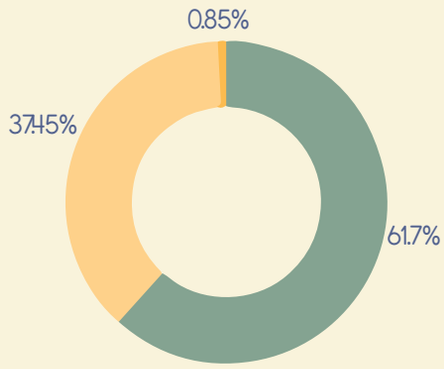
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree



Only 21.28% of the participants trust their internet provider.

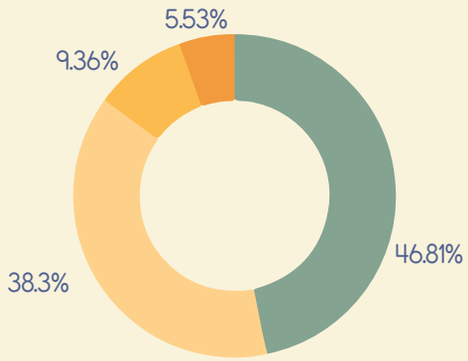
Have you ever been a victim of cyber attack or cyberbullying?

- Yes
- No
- Empty



Was this cyber attack based on your SOGIESCs?

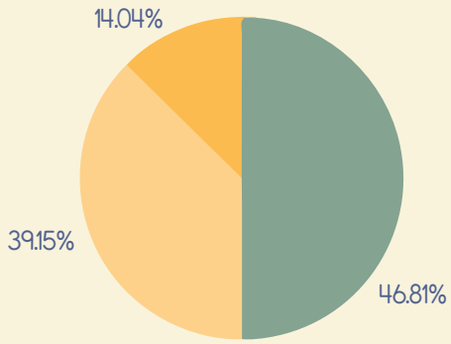
- Yes
- Empty
- I'm not sure
- No



61.7% of the particpants have been victim of cyber attacks /cyberbullying such as (hacking, online harassment , online hate speech , stealing your information , forced outing ...) while only 14.89% didn't relate the attacks to their SOGIESCs.

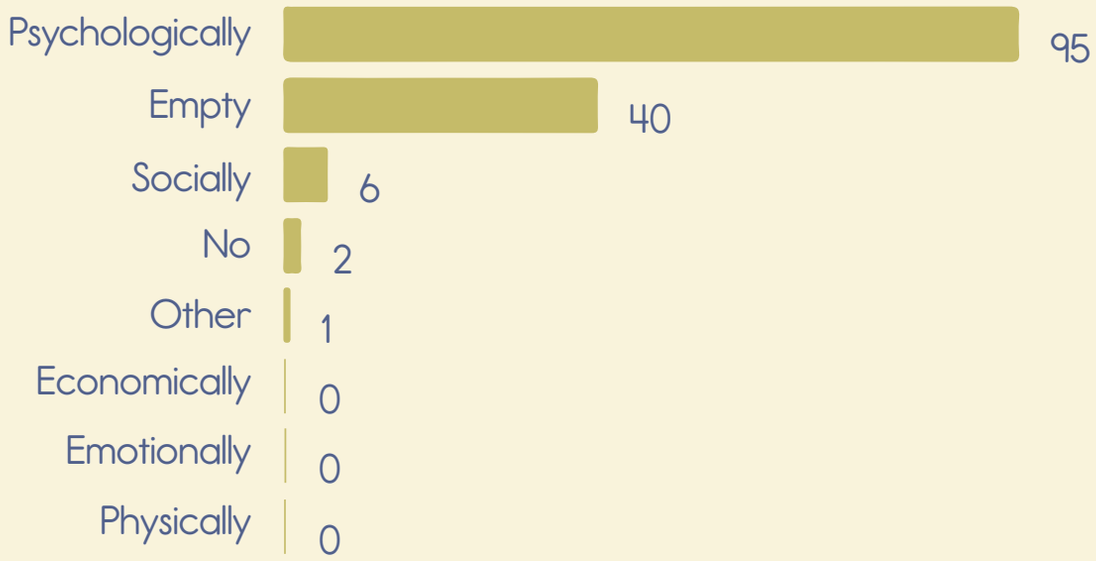
Did the cyber attack turn into a physical violence?

- No
- Empty
- Yes



almost 40% of the participants chose not to reply to this question,
while 14.04% confirm that the cyber attacks turned into physical attacks.

Effects of the attack (%)

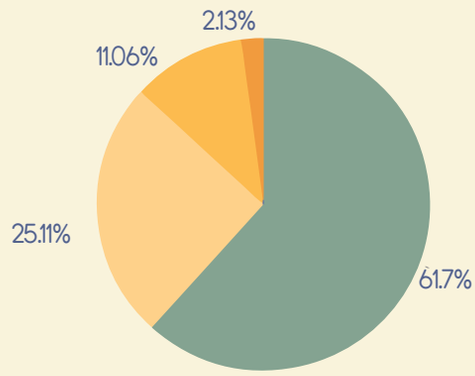


How did you recover from the attack? (%)

In the questions about the effects of the cyber attack and how the individuals recovered from the attack, the multiple choice option was enabled.

In case of a cybercrime incident, do you go to report it to the police?

- No
- I'm not sure
- Yes
- Empty

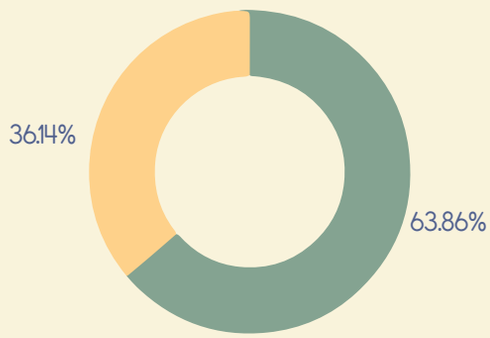


More than half of the particpants didn't report the cybercrime to the police.
Among the main common reasons for opting not to report the incident are:
- The fear of being detained because of the laws criminalizing homosexuality and non normative gender identit.
- The lack of trust in the police.
- Fear of being outed.
- The police won't take the incident seriously.

CYBER VIOLATIONS ON INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFYING / DESCRIBING THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION AS GAY

Have you ever been a victim of cyber attack or cyberbullying?

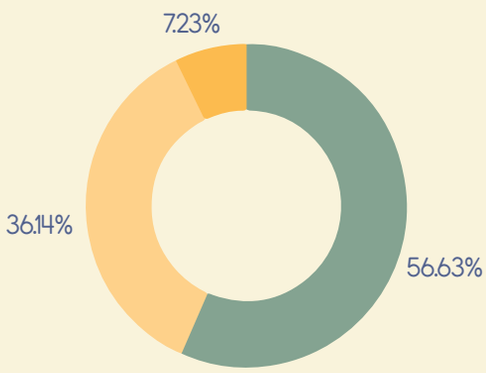
- Yes
- No



63.86% of individuals describing/identifying their sexuality as gay, have been victim of cyber attacks or cyber bullying, which is only 2% higher than the general percentage of all the participans.

Was this cyber attack based on your SOGIESCs?

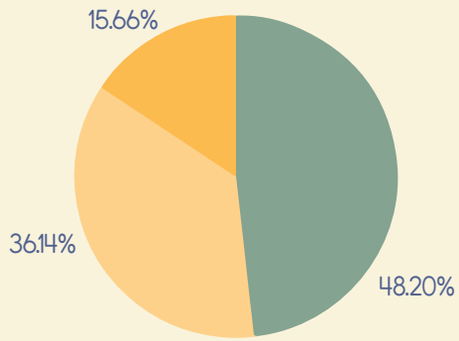
- Yes
- Empty
- I'm not sure



The percentage of gay individuals who believe that the cyber attacks were based on their SOGIESCs is 10% higher than the overall percentage.

Did the cyber attack turn into a physical violence?

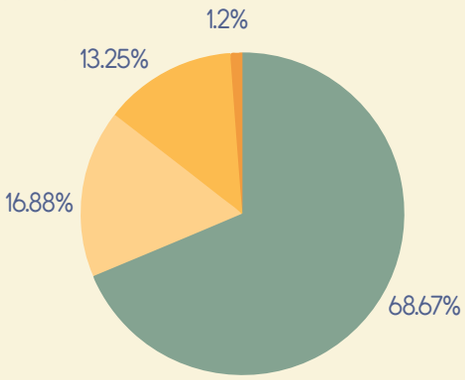
- No
- Empty
- Yes



15.66% of gay individuals have faced a cyber attack which turned to physical violence while the overall percentage is 14.04%.

In case of a cybercrime incident, do you go to report it to the police?

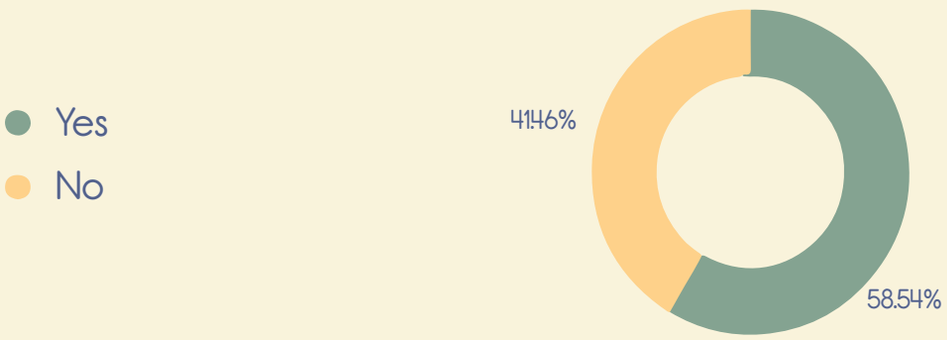
- Empty
- I'm not sure
- No
- Yes



68.67% of gay individuals prefer not reporting the cybercrime incidents to the police.

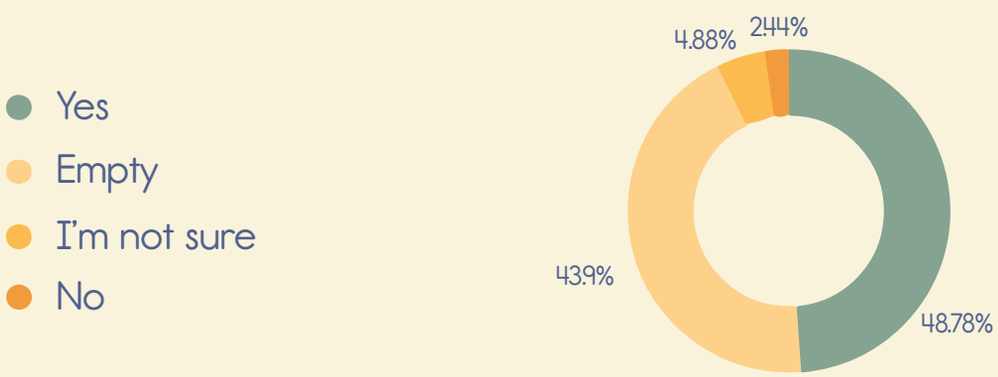
CYBER VIOLATIONS ON INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFYING / DESCRIBING THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION AS QUEER

Have you ever been a victim of cyber attack or cyberbullying?



58.54% of individuals describing/identifying their sexuality as queer have been victim of cyber attacks or cyber bullying, which is 3% lower than the overall percentage of all the participans.

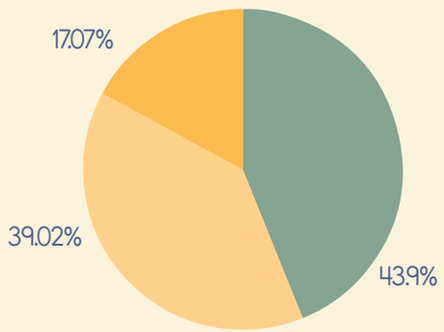
Was this cyber attack based on your SOGIESCs?



The percentage of queer individuals who believe that the cyber attacks were based on their SOGIESCs is 2% higher than the overall percentage.

Did the cyber attack turn into a physical violence?

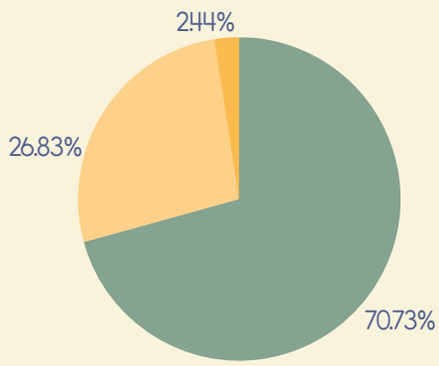
- Empty
- No
- Yes



17.07% of queer individuals have faced a cyber attack which turned to a physical violence while the overall percentage is 14.04%.

In case of a cybercrime incident, do you go to report it to the police?

- No
- I'm not sure
- Yes

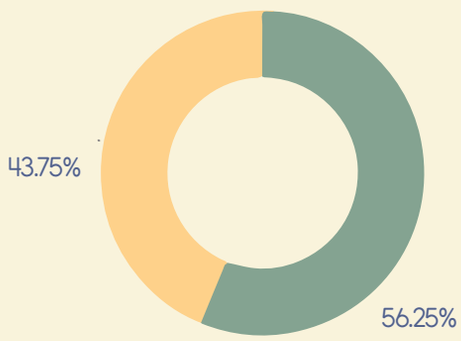


70.73% of queer individuals prefer not reporting the cybercrime incidents to the police compared to 61.7% as the overall percentage.

CYBER VIOLATIONS ON INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFYING / DESCRIBING THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION AS LESBIAN

Have you ever been a victim of cyber attack or cyberbullying?

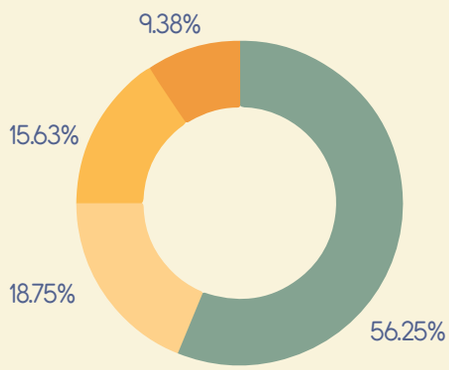
- Yes
- No



56.25% of individuals describing/identifying their sexuality as lesbian, have been victim of cyber attacks or cyber bullying, which is 5% lower than the overall percentage of all the participans.

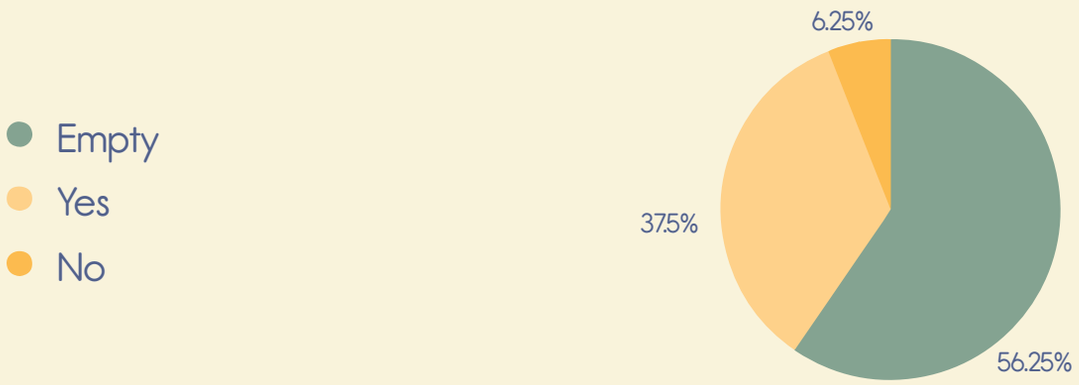
Was this cyber attack based on your SOGIESCs?

- Empty
- Yes
- I'm not sure
- No



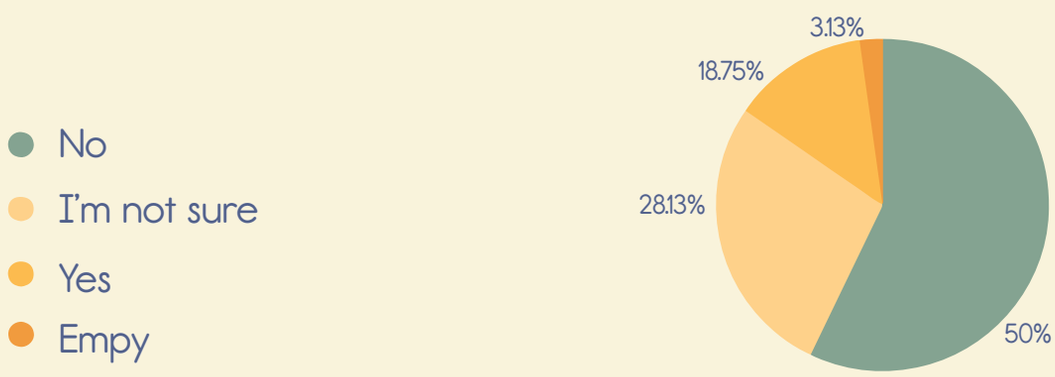
The percentage of lesbian individuals who believe that the cyber attacks were based on their SOGIESCs is 28% lower than the overall percentage.

Did the cyber attack turn into a physical violence?



Only 6.25% of lesbian individuals have faced a cyber attack which turned to a physical violence while the overall percentage is 14.04%.

In case of a cybercrime incident, do you go to report it to the police?

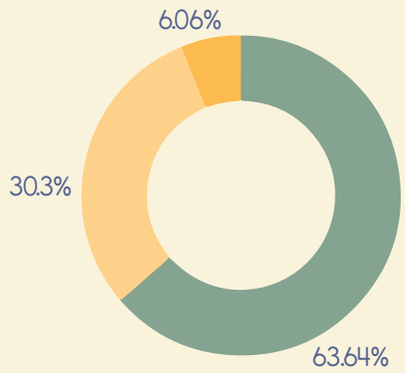


50% of lesbian individuals prefer not reporting the cybercrime incidents to the police compared to 61.7% as the overall percentage.

CYBER VIOLATIONS ON INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFYING / DESCRIBING THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION AS BISEXUAL

Have you ever been a victim of cyber attack or cyberbullying?

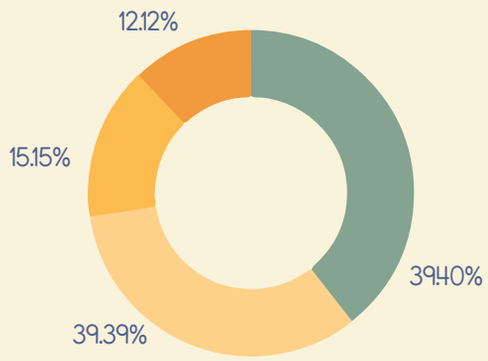
- Yes
- No
- Empty



63.64% of individuals describing/identifying their sexuality as bisexual, have been victim of cyber attacks or cyber bullying, which is 2% higher than the overall percentage of all the participans.

Was this cyber attack based on your SOGIESCs?

- Yes
- Empy
- No
- I'm not sure

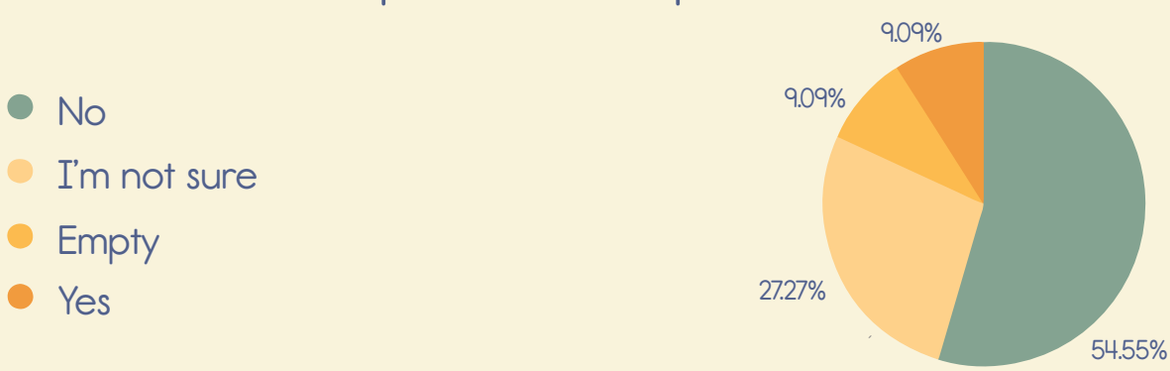


The percentage of bisexual individuals who believe that the cyber attacks were based on their SOGIESCs is 7% lower than the overall percentage.

Did the cyber attack turn into a physical violence?

Only 3.03% of bisexual individuals have faced a cyber attack which turned to a physical violence while the overall percentage is 14.04%.

In case of a cybercrime incident, do you go to report it to the police?

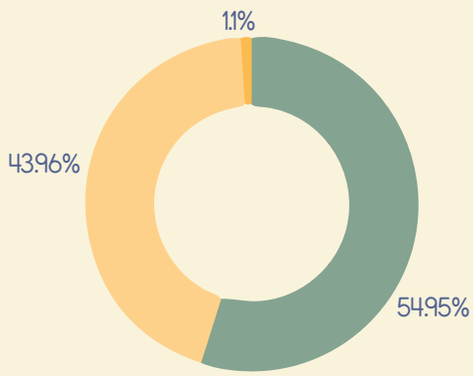


54.55% of bisexual individuals prefer not reporting the cybercrime incidents to the police compared to 61.7% as the overall percentage.

CYBER VIOLATIONS ON CISGENDER INDIVIDUALS

Have you ever been a victim of cyber attack or cyberbullying?

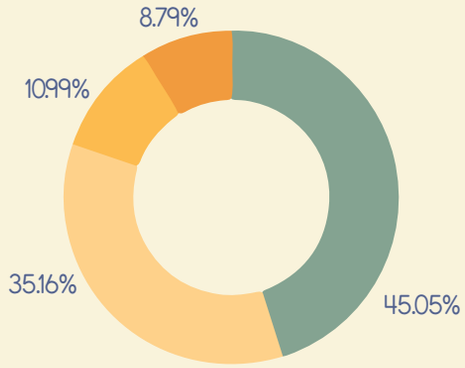
- Yes
- No
- Empty



54.95% of individuals identifying as cisgender, have been victim of cyber attacks or cyber bullying, which is 7% lower than the overall percentage of all the participans.

Was this cyber attack based on your SOGIESCs?

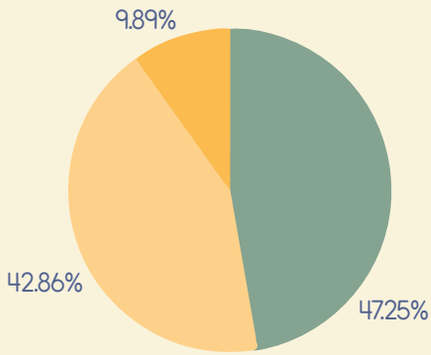
- Empty
- Yes
- I'm not sure
- No



The percentage of cisgender individuals who believe that the cyber attacks were based on their SOGIESCs is 10% lower than the overall percentage.

Did the cyber attack turn into a physical violence?

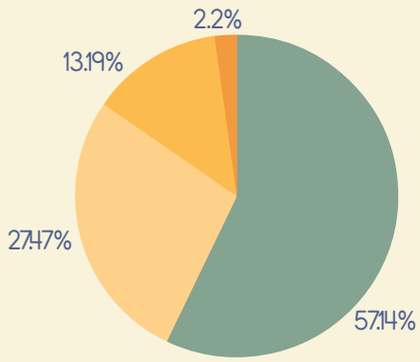
- Empty
- No
- Yes



Only 9.89% of cisgender individuals have faced a cyber attack which turned to a physical violence while the overall percentage is 14.04%

In case of a cybercrime incident, do you go to report it to the police?

- No
- I'm not sure
- Yes
- Empty



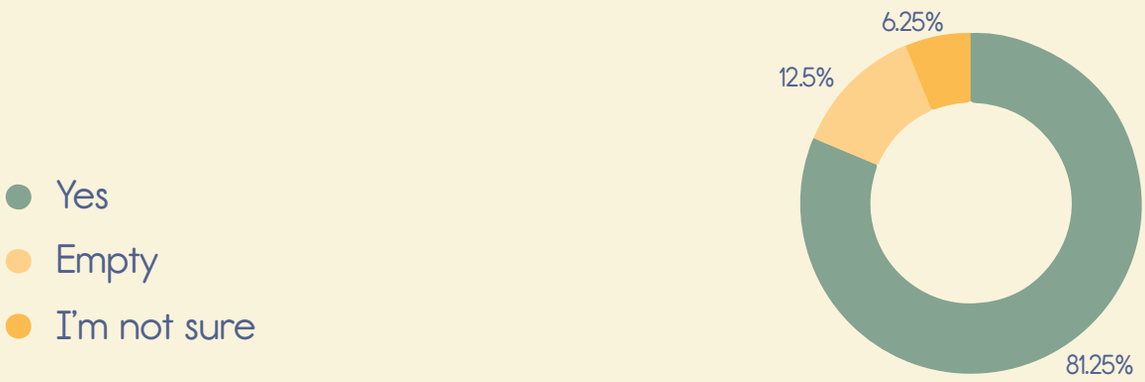
57.14% of cisgender individuals prefer not reporting the cybercrime incidents to the police compared to 61.7% as the overall percentage.

CYBER VIOLATIONS ON TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

Have you ever been a victim of cyber attack or cyberbullying?

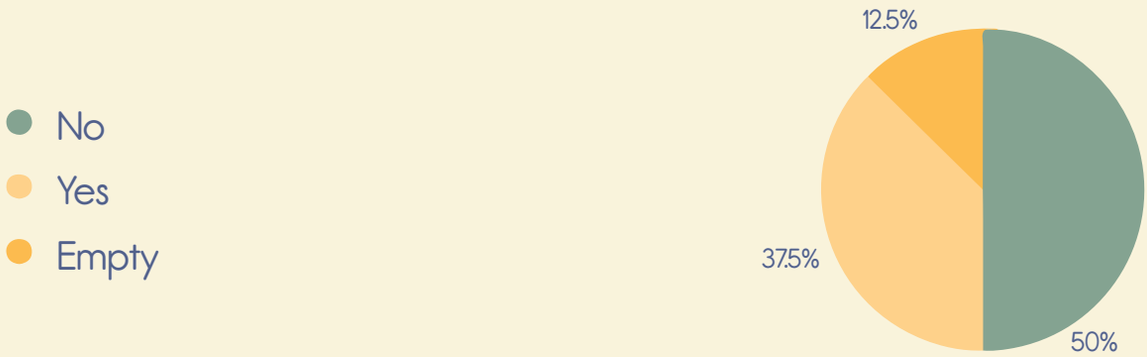
The majority of trans individuals with 87.5%, have been victim of cyber attacks or cyber bullying, which is 26% higher than the overall percentage of all the participans, and 32% higher than the cisgendered individuals percentage.

Was this cyber attack based on your SOGIESCs?



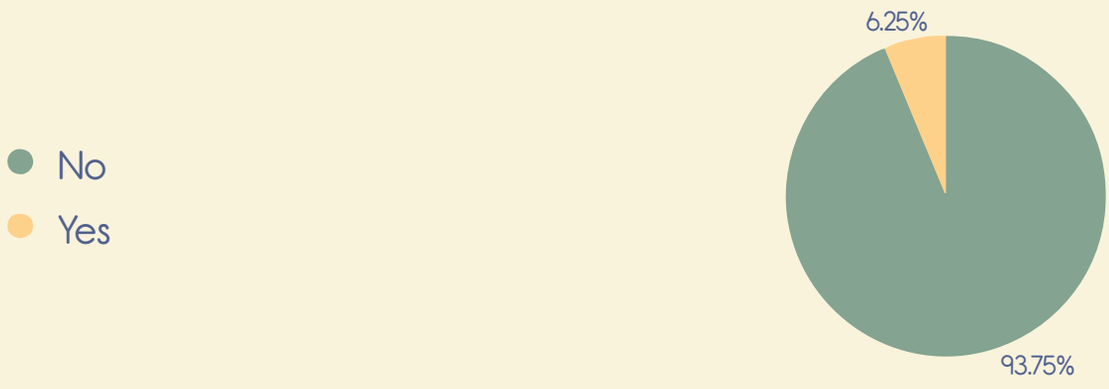
The percentage of transgender individuals who believe that the cyber attacks were based on their SOGIESCs is 34.44% lower than the overall percentage, and 46% higher than the cisgender individuals percentage.

Did the cyber attack turn into a physical violence?



37.5% of transgender individuals have faced a cyber attack which turned to a physical violence while the overall percentage is 14.04% and 9.89% for cisgender indviduals.

In case of a cybercrime incident, do you go to report it to the police?



Nearly all the trans individuals, 93.75% prefer not reporting the cybercrime incidents to the police compared to 61.7% as the overall percentage and 57.14% as the cisgender individuals percentage.

DATA ANALYSIS

Methodology

In this part, we are analysing if there are some hidden relations and patterns between the different responses of the participants.

Every question is considered as a feature; for multiple choice questions we opted for keeping the first choice of the particpant. We dropped the last question as it is an open question.

The new dataset counts 235 entries and 27 features (question).

All the features can be considered as categorical features. A categorical feature is a feature that can take on one of a limited, and usually fixed, number of possible values, assigning each individual or other unit of observation to a particular group or nominal category on the basis of some qualitative property.

In order to calculate the correlation coefficient between the features, Cramer's V statistic was used as it allows to understand the correlation (relationship) between two categorical features in one data set.

Data insights

After looking through the results in order to retrace the different relations existing between the different features, the following conclusions/deductions can be deduced..

- The individuals who suffered from cyber attacks which turned into a physical one, which consist 14.04% of the participants, are more likely to be affected on multiple levels, which is predictable given the deep impacts of such attacks especially on a psychological level: 95% of the participants confirmed that the attacks affected them psychologically.
- There is a strong correlation between being a victim of a cyber attack turning into a physical one, and considering that the attacks were firstly based on the SOGIESCs of the individuals. Usually the individuals who have faced such attacks are targeted by the attackers because of their SOGIESCs.
- There is strong relation between being a victim of a cyber attack/cyberbullying such as (hacking, online harassment, online hate speech, stealing your information, forced outing..) which consists 61.7% of the participants, and considering that the cyber attacks were firstly based on the victims SOGIESCs.
- Mostly individuals who are more concerned about their sensitive data are the ones who have faced a cyber attack which turned into a physical one before.
- Mostly individuals who have read an article about digital security in the last 6 months tend to follow at least one of the suggestions in the article(s) they read.

- 87.85 of the individuals who have read at least an article about digital security in the last 6 months, have at least followed one of the read suggestions.
- 39.39% of the individuals who suffered from a cyber attack which turned into a physical attack, didn't recover from such incident.
- The same percentage of individuals have figured out what to on their own.
- 15.15% have sought help from a friend while only 6% reached out to an organisation for help.
- 87.87% of the individuals who have faced a cyber attack turning into a physical violence, believe that the cyber attack was based on their SOGIESCs.
- 46.80% of the individuals who haven't faced a cyber attack which turned into a physical one have confirmed that the cyber attacks have been affected them on multiple levels.
- 99.96% of the individuals who have faced a cyber attack which turned into a physical one have been affected them on multiple levels.

Data Analysis Focused on Gender Identity

In this part we have calculated the correlation coefficients on the diferent data subsets grouped by the individual's Gender Identity and Sex Charechteristics Variations.
- The correlations discussed in the overall analysis were more accentuated among the queer, genderfluid, Trans man, Trans woman and non-binary subgroups.
- Insights from the Genderfluid sub-group:
1) There is a strong relation between the country of current residence and considering oneself to be part of an ethnic or racial minority group.
100% of the genderfluid individuals residing in Lebenon do not consider themselves to be part of an ethnic or racial minority group in their country.
75% of the genderfluid individuals residing in Tunisia do consider themselves to be part of an ethnic or racial minority group in their country.
2) There is a strong relation between the usage of a password manager and the description of the place they live in.
87.50% of the individuals among the genderfluid group who use a password manager for at least are living in capital or a large city.
- Insights from the Trans man sub-group:
1) 100% of the trans man individuals did not report to the police when they have faced a cybercrime.
2) 100% have been targeted from a cyber attack/cyberbullying.
3) 100% spend more than 5 hours on the internet per day.
4) 83.33% of the trans man indviduals consider that the cyber attack was based on their SOGIESCs.
5) 100% don't feel safe online.
6) Only 16.66% trust their internet provider
All of the above mentioned are highly correlated with the concerns about the identity theft and considering that
the cyber attacks are based on the individual's SOGIESCs.

- Insights from the Trans women sub-group:

1) 100% of the Trans women who have read an article about digital security in the last 6 months are aged between 24 and 35.

2) 100% of the Trans women who have read an article about digital security in the last 6 months have followed the suggestions in the articles they read.

3) 100% are concerned about their digital security which is highly correlated to their concern about their physical security.

4) 100% of the trans women who did not recover from the cyber attack which turned into a physical one are currently residing in Tunisia.

5) Only 10% of the trans women reported the cybercrime to the police.

Data Analysis Focused on Sexual Orientation

In this part we have calculated the correlation coefficients on the diferent data subsets grouped by the individual's sexual orientation.
- The correlations discussed in the overall analysis were more accentuated among the Queer, Pansexual, Gay and Lesbian sub-groups unlike the Bisexual individuals sub-group which has a more random relations between the different features.
- Among the Pansexual sub-group, 90% of the individuals have read an article about digital security in the last 6 months have followed the suggestions in the articles they read.
- Among the pansexual sub-group, 100% of the individuals who did not or are not sure they reported a cybercrime to the police are aged above 18.
- Among the gay sub-group 95.15% of the individuals spend ore than 2 hours online per day which is highly correlated to having access to internet at least at home or at work since 98.79% of the gay sub-group do have access to internet at home or work.

CONCLUSION

Cyber-attacks and cyber-crimes are one of the most impactful issues currently, especially with the high rates of internet accessibility, and the LGBTQI++ individuals are not aloof from such incidents.

More than half of the survey participants were victims of cyber-bullying and/or cyber attacks which was in most of the cases, was an attack based on their Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics. Although that only some of the attacks have turned into physical ones, almost all of them left different psychological effects on the victims.

Such incidents are even more aggravated, since nearly the majority of the victims preferred not to report to the Police mainly because of the fear of being detained based on the laws criminalizing homosexuality qnd non normative gender identities.

The survey has highlighted that the Trans individuals are facing much more cyber-attacks and cyber-bullying than Cis-gender individuals which are nearly always based on their SOGIESCs. The trans individuals are the most susceptible group to face a physical attack after a cyber one and in all the cases, no-one of the individuals have reported that.

The LGBTQI++ individuals have usually taken the proper actions by their own to recover from the different digital attacks and only a very small minority have sought help from organizations specialists. In this regard, the visibility and reachability of organizations providing digital security assistance in the region should be reconsidered especially with the lack of cooperation from authorities represented by the police.

The level of precautions taken by the LGBTQI++ individuals to ensure their online security seems to be lower than it should be especially that they are a targeted group, which was highlighted by the low percentages of individuals using password managers and reading/ following digital security recommendations.

Therefore, a preventative work is the pillar for reducing the impact of the attacks that the LGBTQI++ individuals might face.

More extensive further studies, where certain minorities among the LGBTQ++ community are more represented, could be conducted in order to compare the results.