New Youth Future-Readiness Index Reveals Optimism About Future Among Singapore Youth But Digital Financial Literacy Still Lacking

Findings by Republic Polytechnic and CGS International Securities Singapore show nearly two-thirds of young Singaporeans could benefit from enhanced digital financial education

- *Singapore youth have a digital financial literacy of 56.7, below the benchmark score of 70*
- *Respondents rely on close acquaintances and social media influencers for financial advice, risking the spread of misconceptions*
- *Young people aged 18 to 25 show the highest interest in cryptocurrency despite having the lowest digital financial literacy scores*

SINGAPORE, 25 November 2025 – Republic Polytechnic and CGS International Securities Singapore Pte Ltd ("CGS SG") today shared findings from Singapore's first **Youth Future-Readiness Index ("YFRI")**, revealing a perception gap between Singapore youth's optimism for their financial future and their actual level of preparedness. Despite general confidence that they are equipped with the financial skills to succeed in the future, most lack essential digital financial literacy, highlighting a critical blind spot that could undermine their financial aspirations.

Singapore youths score below global average in digital financial literacy

The YFRI, based on a survey of 1,729 individuals between August and December 2024, assesses how well-equipped Singapore's youth aged 18 to 35 are for tomorrow's challenges. The YFRI is a composite measure that combines established research literature and policy-relevant indicators across three critical areas for a comprehensive assessment of youth readiness: Future Preparedness, Sustainability Literacy, and Digital Financial Literacy. The index score ranged from 0 to 100, where a higher number indicates better performance.

Singaporean youth currently have a digital financial literacy score of **56.7**, which is significantly lower than the targeted benchmark of **70[1].**

The YFRI also revealed gaps in digital financial literacy that would expose youth to heightened risks of fraud, scams, and poor investment decisions. Over half admit they did not verify whether online financial service providers are properly regulated (53%) even though 4 in 5 youth reporting at least an average level of knowledge about financial matters. Password hygiene for financial services such as online banking is also inconsistent; around 80% reported they did not share their passwords or personal finances online. However, around 1 in 6 (17%) would share their passwords and PINS with close friends.

In addition, young people tend to turn to peers who may lack proper financial knowledge for guidance. The index found that more than half of respondents (53%) relied on recommendations from friends, family, or acquaintances for financial decisions. In fact, 1 in 5 would even consider advice from social media influencers who may lack the required licenses and certifications to offer professional guidance. These findings indicate financial

[1] According to the OECD, a score of 70 is the minimum benchmark for digital financial literacy which reflects the ability to assess online financial products, manage risks, and make sound financial decisions.

misconceptions or misinformation can potentially spread through social networks, heightening the risk of individuals making poor financial decisions.

Big gap revealed between knowledge and interest in alternative investments such as crytocurrency

The index also revealed an interesting observation that young people most interested in cryptocurrency ("crypto") had the lowest digital financial literacy scores. This was most pronounced among those aged 18 to 25, who showed the highest interest in crypto investments but lack a comprehensive understanding of digital financial risks and regulations. As new and complex financial instruments emerge, there is an urgent need to ensure young investors are equipped with the knowledge to navigate these opportunities safely and make informed decisions that safeguard their financial well-being.

Mr. Malcolm Koo, CEO of CGS SG, said: "The strong interest in cryptocurrency, despite the low levels of digital financial literacy, highlights the urgency of turning awareness to practical understanding. We aim to bridge this gap with initiatives including our flagship ASEAN Investment Challenge, partnerships with institutes of higher learning, and other targeted financial education efforts. This index serves as a timely reminder that education must be actionable and forward-looking. We look forward to deepening our engagement with Republic Polytechnic and other educational institutions to empower our youth for a more sustainable future."

Young women outperform men in digital financial literacy but are more risk-adverse

There was a significant gender divide in financial attitudes and behaviours among Singapore youth. Despite females scoring higher overall in both digital financial literacy **(F: 57.86; M: 55.45)** and sustainability literacy **(F: 67.42; M: 64.01)**, males reported higher confidence levels that they have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the future **(M: 68.71; F: 66.00)** (refer to Fig.1).

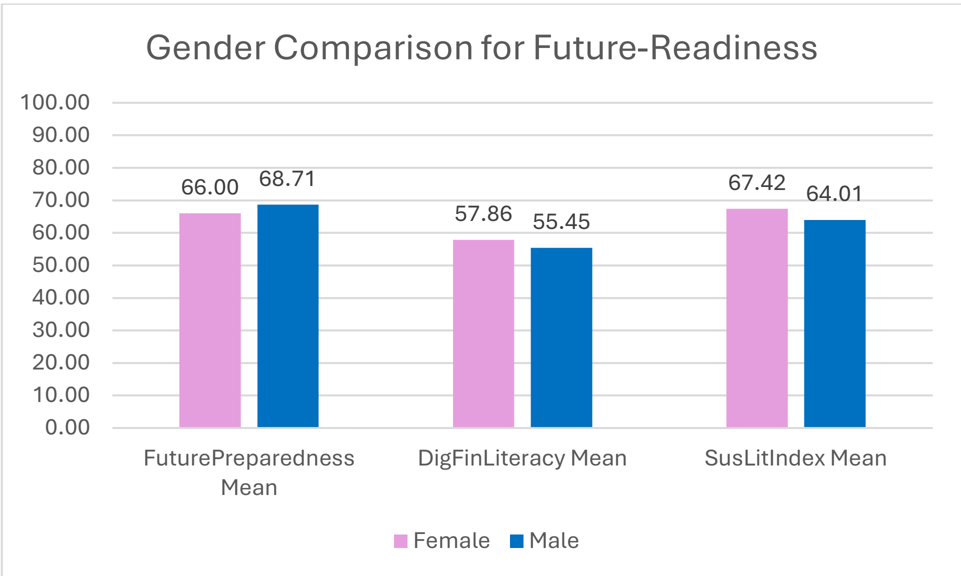

Fig. 1 Gender comparison across three critical indicators of youth future readiness: Future Preparedness, Digital Financial Literacy, and Sustainability Literacy

Males generally showed a higher risk appetite when it comes to financial products, while females tend to favour safer and more traditional approaches to managing money. Common strategies among females include saving cash at home or in their wallet, entrusting funds to family members to save on their behalf, and depositing money into savings or deposit accounts. In contrast, males are more inclined toward investment-driven methods. These include buying bonds or time deposits, purchasing insurance savings plans, investing in stocks and shares, commodities, and exchange-traded funds or mutual funds. This contrast reveals distinct financial mindsets shaping how Singapore youth are building their financial futures: one anchored in security and accessibility, and the other driven by growth and diversification.

Sustainability awareness does not drive investment behaviour

The survey also uncovered a disconnect between what Singapore youth believe and how they act regarding sustainable investments. Singapore youth did relatively well in understanding basic environmental sustainability concepts, scoring **65.82** on the Sustainability Literacy Index. However, despite the desire to prioritise social and environmental responsibility, the data suggests that actual follow-through to align their financial choices with their values is still lacking. Although at least 3 in 5 youth had basic sustainability awareness, only 13.5% invested in Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) products. This wide gap between knowledge and action suggested the need for more education to align their investments with environmental concerns.

Despite the knowledge gaps in digital financial and sustainability literacy, young Singaporeans remain remarkably optimistic about their futures. Nearly two-thirds (62%) believe they have the skills needed for tomorrow's economy, while 65% feel confident they have what it takes to succeed – with mean values showing improvement from the National Youth Council's youth insights in 2022.

On the importance of equipping youth with the right tools to turn this confidence into capability, **Mr. Tui Jurn Mun, Director of School of Business, Republic Polytechnic** said: "The YFRI reminds us that many of our youth still struggle with digital financial literacy despite their aspirations about future. Financial literacy is not optional, but essential for every youth. Through embedding financial education in our curriculum and building strong partnership with industry, we broaden our outreach and impact. By doing so, we can empower the next generation to take charge of their financial future and embrace greater possibilities."

Key findings of the YFRI 2025 results are accessible at https://for.edu.sg/yfri.

About CGS International Securities

CGS International Securities Pte. Ltd. ("CGS International") is an award-winning and market leading integrated financial services provider, ranked among the top securities houses in Asia.

CGS International taps on our wealth of global and ASEAN insights to offer equities trading, leveraged products, wealth management, investment banking, equities research, Shariah-compliant financing, fixed income, currency and commodities, structured products and prime brokerage services in over 15 countries and regions.

Along with its parent organisation China Galaxy Securities, a leading securities house in China, CGS International is trusted by close to 18 million customers globally.

Find out more at www.cgsi.com.

About Republic Polytechnic

Established in 2002, Republic Polytechnic (RP) is Singapore's youngest polytechnic. RP offers over 40 full-time courses across diverse fields, including Applied Science, Business, Engineering, Hospitality, Infocomm, Sports and Health, and Technology for Arts, Media and Design. Through its "Becoming Greater Me" framework, RP endeavours to spark joy in learning by helping students discover their purpose and aligning their goals and passions with both academic and life pursuits.

RP adopts effective learner-centred pedagogies to equip students with a wide range of skills needed to thrive in an ever-evolving world. The polytechnic envisions its graduates as Articulate Self-Starters, Passionate Community Builders, and Purposeful Game-Changers. Additionally, RP's Academy for Continuing Education offers a comprehensive suite of lifelong learning programmes, providing graduates and adult learners with upskilling opportunities.

For more information, visit www.rp.edu.sg and follow RP on LinkedIn.

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