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ASEAN Consumer Empowerment Index in Cambodia

Prepared for

Stakeholder Dialogue on Consumer Protection
“Towards Collective Consumer Action in Cambodia”

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ACEI Study Objective

- The primary objective of the ACEI is the periodic assessment of the levels of awareness and assertiveness of consumers across ASEAN:
 - consumer perceptions on several issues, such as basic consumer rights and critical concerns vis-a-vis key sectors or products;
 - To form the evidence base for the formulation of appropriate consumer protection policies;
 - It is therefore a useful endeavor to kickstart the planning and priority-setting of CCF for the implementation of the new Law on Consumer Protection.
 - The gaps identified in the ACEI national survey and report can help to guide CCF and other relevant government authorities and stakeholders in developing focused and needs-oriented advocacy and capacity-building activities.
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Methodology

(Study conducted by CIRD and CAMCONTROL in late 2019 to early 2020)

The survey focuses on three areas:

- **Consumer Awareness / Knowledge,**
- **Consumer Skills / Competences, and**
- **Consumer Behaviors / Assertiveness.**

Samples:

- **Urban consumers:**
 - Phnom Penh City: 40 respondents
 - Siem Reap City: 20 respondents
 - Battambang City: 20 respondents
 - Kampong Cham: 20 respondents
- **Rural consumers:**
 - Siem Reap, rural area: 40 respondents
 - Battambang, rural area: 40 respondents
 - Kampong Cham: 20 respondents



Total: 200 consumers



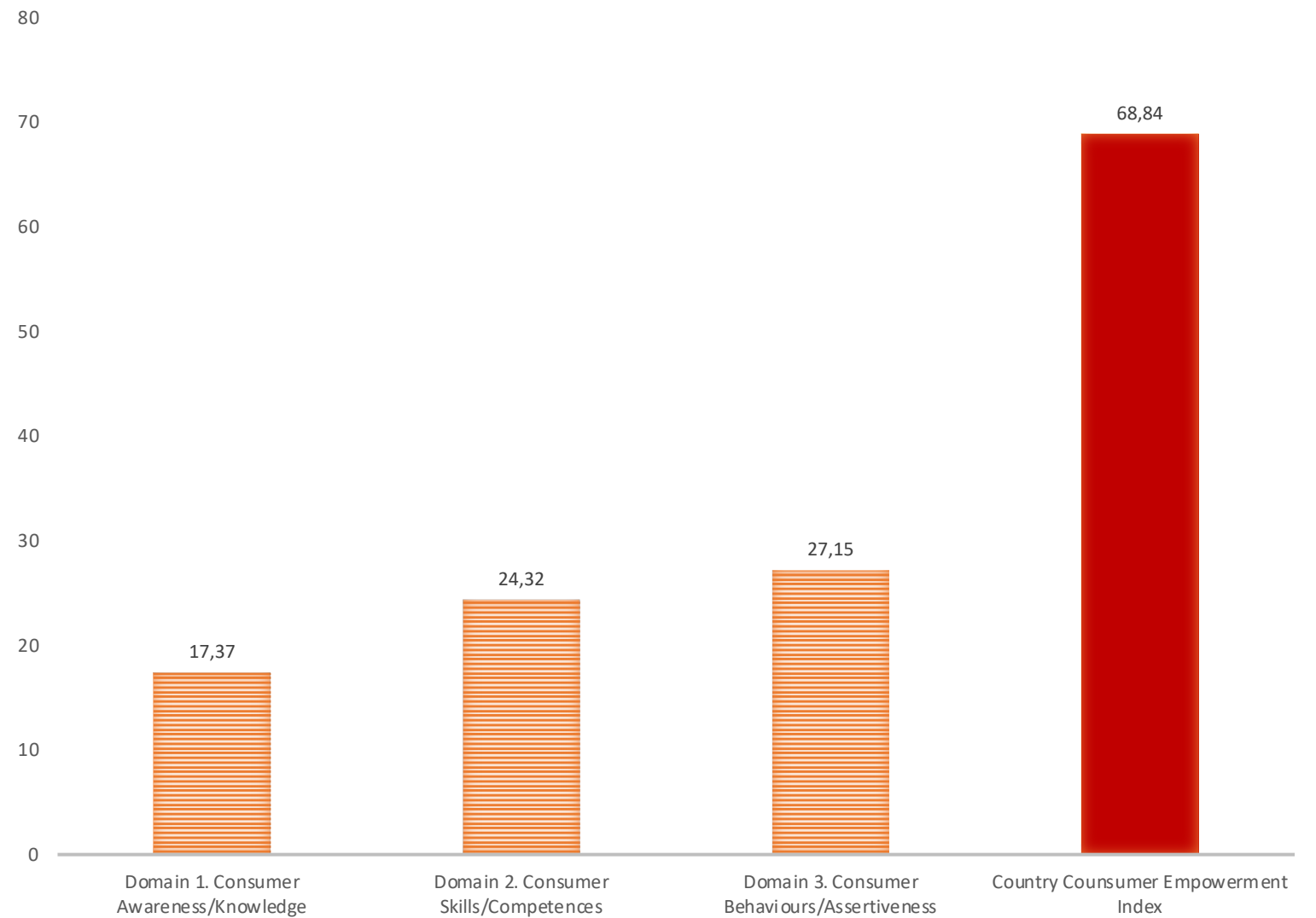
- The ACEI is calculated from the scores of three domains:
 - i. Consumer Awareness or Knowledge – 8 indicators;
 - ii. Consumer Skills or Competences – 9 indicators; and
 - iii. Consumer Behaviors or Assertiveness – 9 indicators,
 - altogether 26 indicators.
- A score is assigned to each possible answer to each question and the scores vary on a 1-3-5 scale (from the lowest to the moderate and then highest level of knowledge / competence / assertiveness).
- The maximum score is 130 points (equivalent to 5 times 26 indicators)
- The highest scores for the three domains are: 40, 45 and 45 respectively.
- 104 – 130 points (4-5 points per indicator) = **Empowered**
- 78 – 103 points (3 - <4 points per indicator) = **Moderately Empowered**
- < 78 points (< 3 points per indicator) = **Least Empowered**.

Overall results of ACEI in Cambodia

- Overall Country Empowerment Index of Cambodia is **68.84 = Least Empowered**;
- The scores of different demographic groups (urban vs. rural, male vs. female, 4 age groups and 4 education levels) range from 56.80 to 81.72
- Except for the score in the group with college / university or higher education which scored 81.72. This means that well-educated people are more empowered and hence categorized as “Moderately Empowered”.

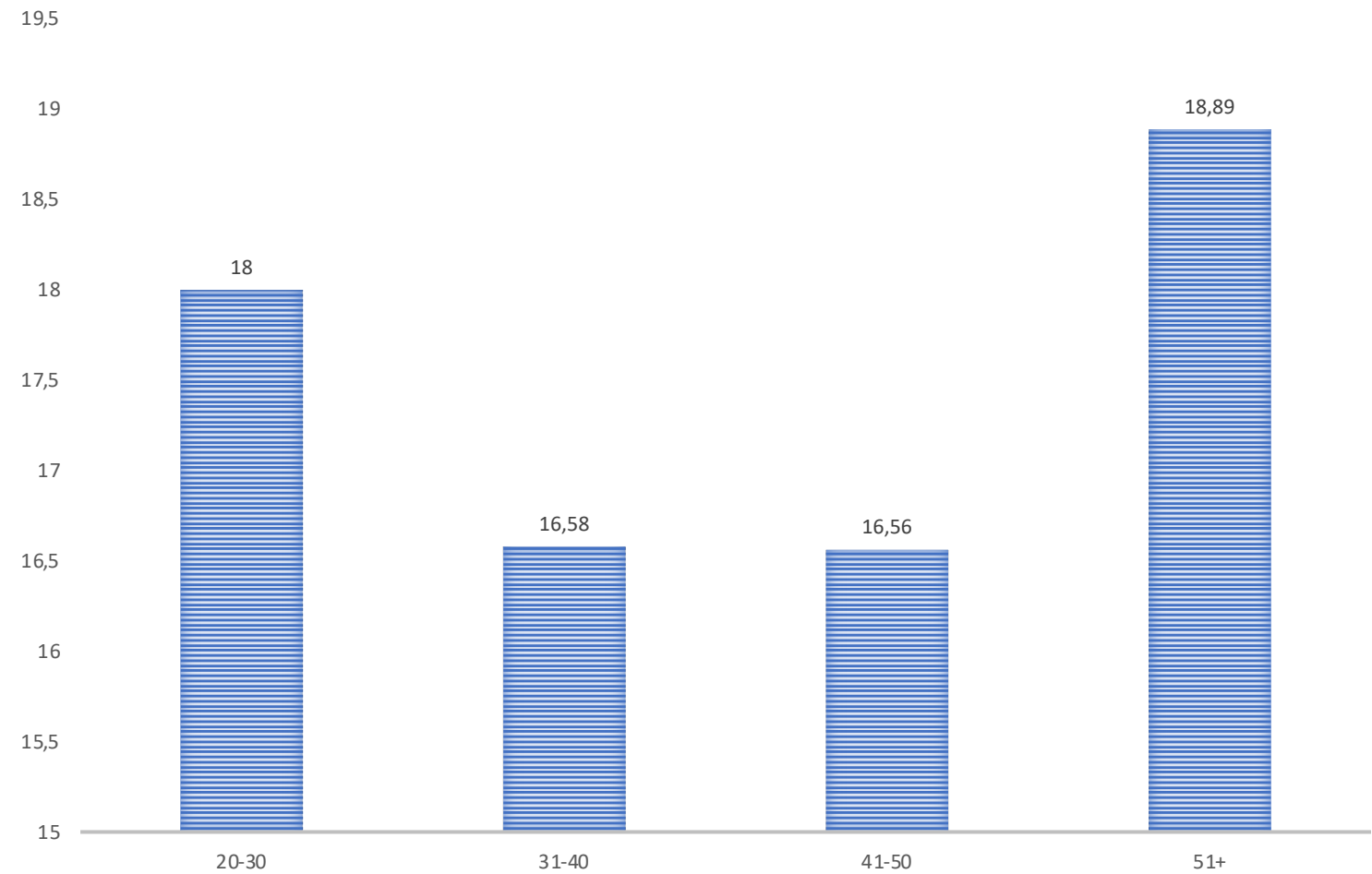
Scores of each domain

FIGURE 1: THE TOTAL COUNTRY SCORE AND SCORE BY DOMAIN



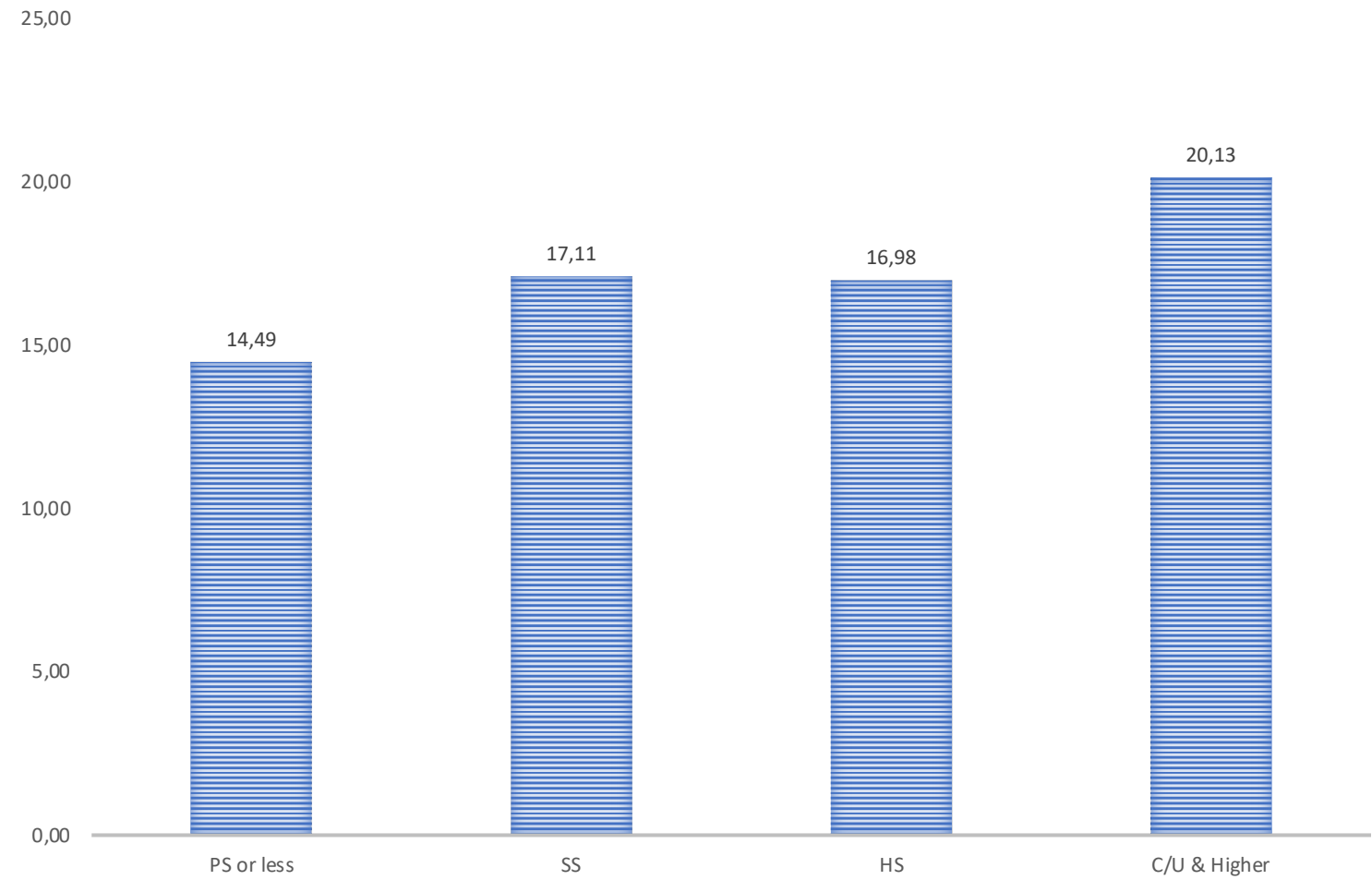
Score by group
of age within
Domain 1
(max. score =
40)

FIGURE 2: DIFFERENT SCORE BY AGE GROUP



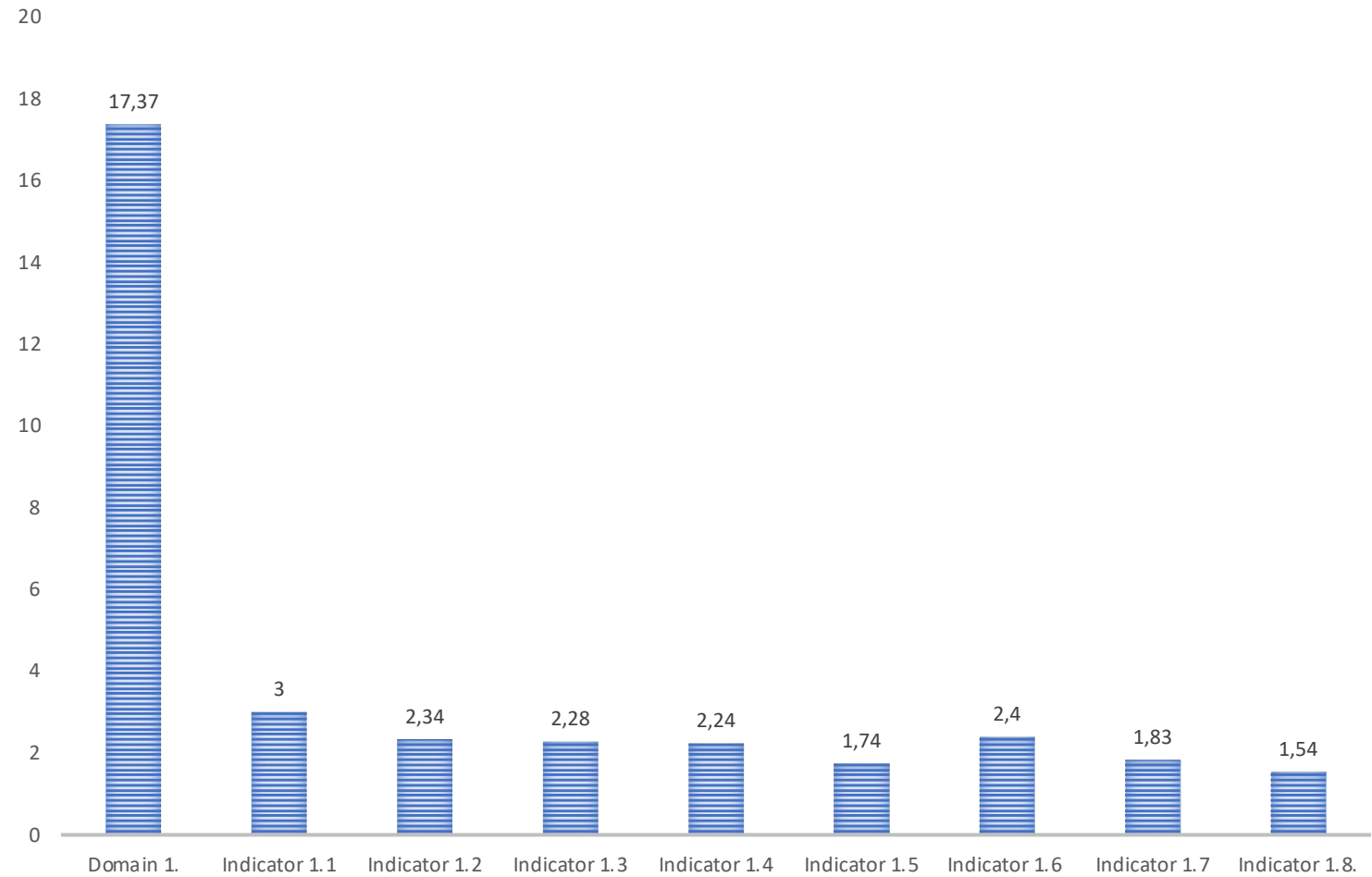
Score by
education
within
Domain 1

FIGURE 3: DIFFERENT SCORE BY EDUCATION



Score of Domain 1 and its indicators

FIGURE 4: SCORE OF DOMAIN 1 AND ITS INDICATORS



Domain 2 (Consumer Skill/Competences): Score of domain 2 and its indicators

FIGURE 5: SCORE OF DOMAIN 2 AND ITS INDICATORS

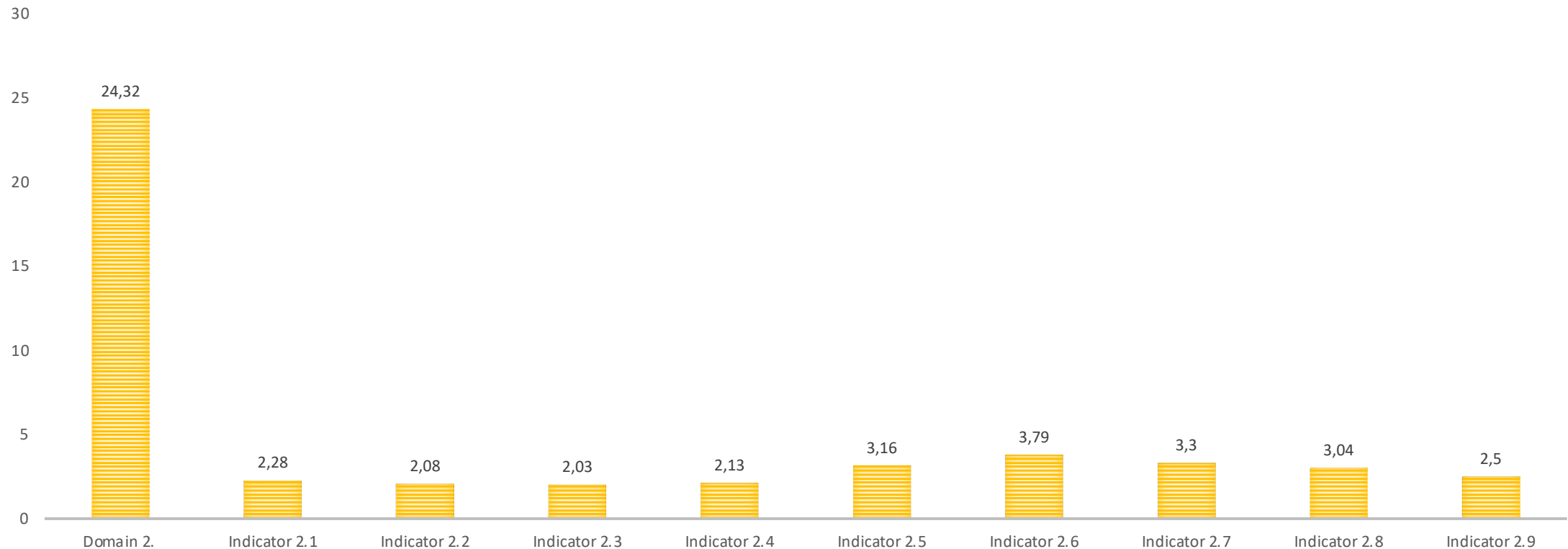
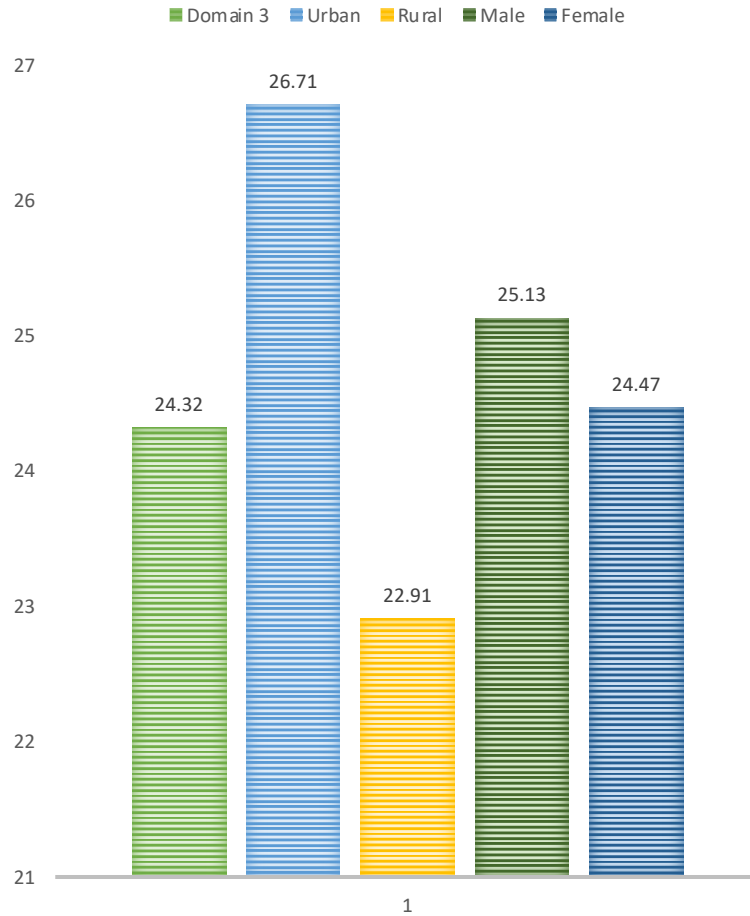


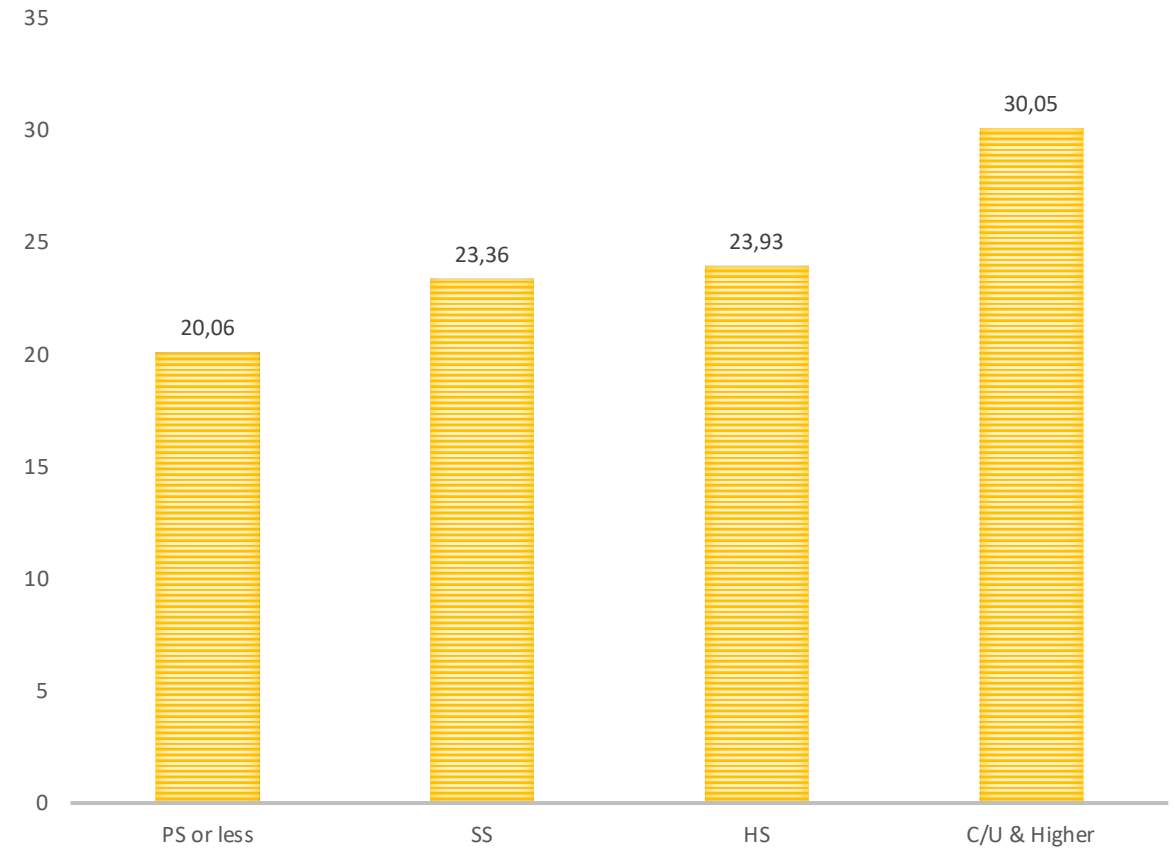
FIGURE 6: COMPARISON SCORE BETWEEN
URBAN VS RURAL AND MALE VS FEMALE



Comparison
between urban vs
Rural and male vs
female on Domain 2

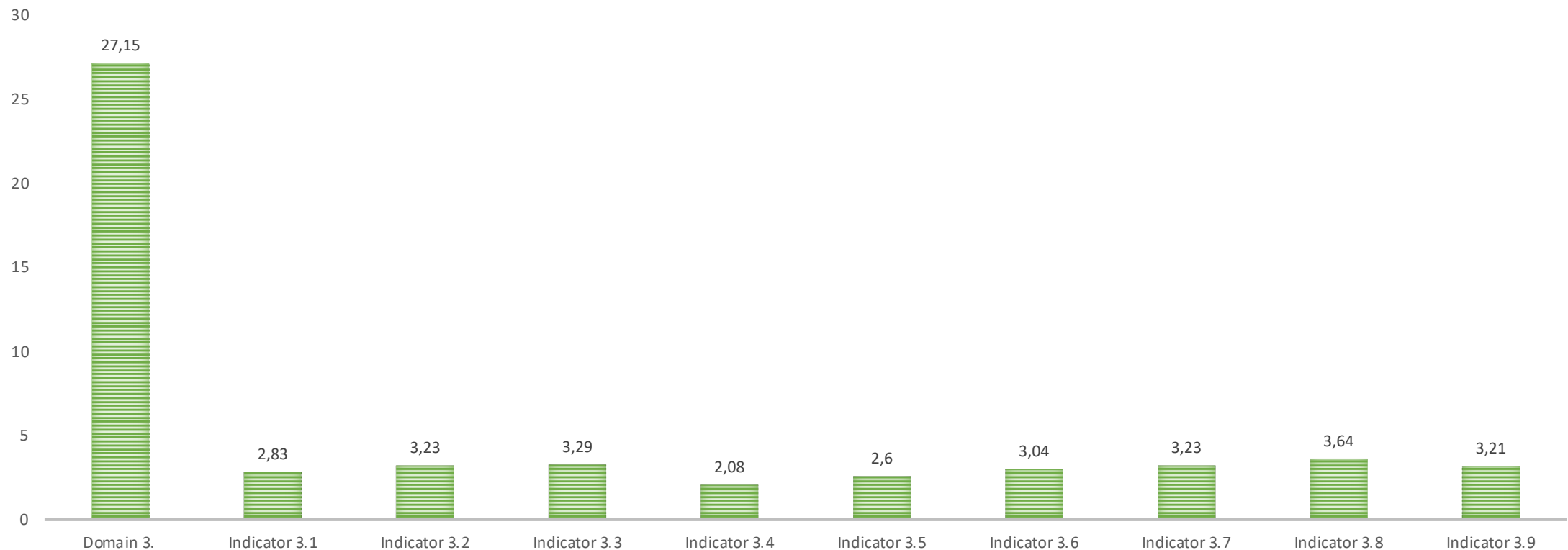
Different score by
education level on
Domain 2

FIGURE 8: DIFFERENT SCORE BY EDUCATION LEVEL



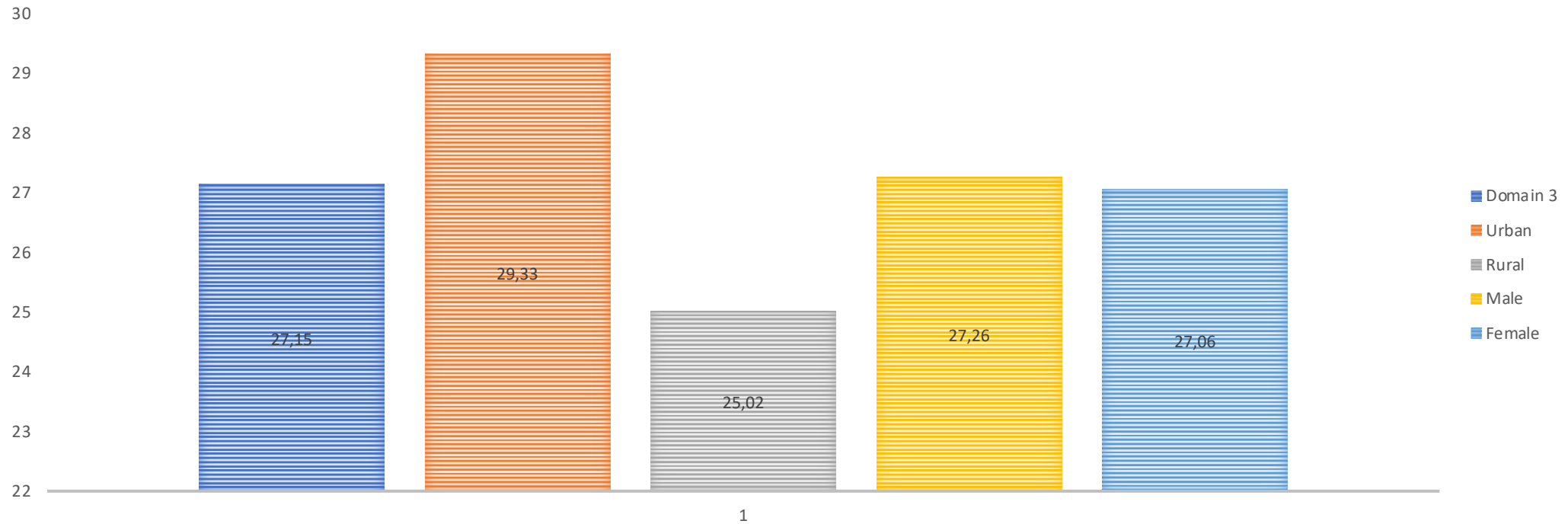
Domain 3 (Consumer Behaviors / Assertiveness): Score of domain 3 and its indicators

FIGURE 9: SCORE OF DOMAIN 3 AND ITS INDICATORS



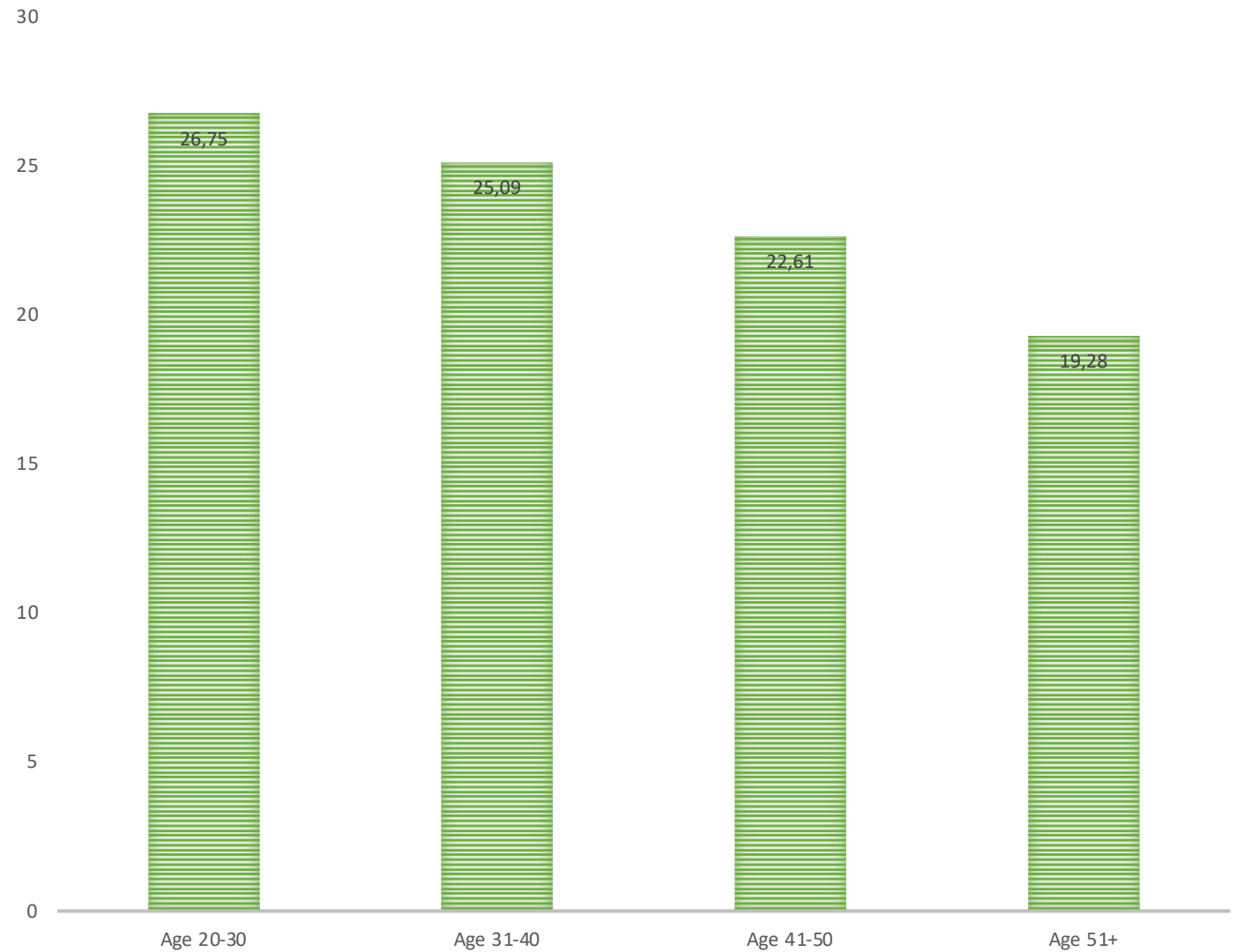
COMPARISON BETWEEN URBAN VS RURAL AND MALE VS FEMALE ON DOMAIN 3

FIGURE 10: COMPARISON SCORE BETWEEN URBAN VS RURAL AND MALE VS FEMALE



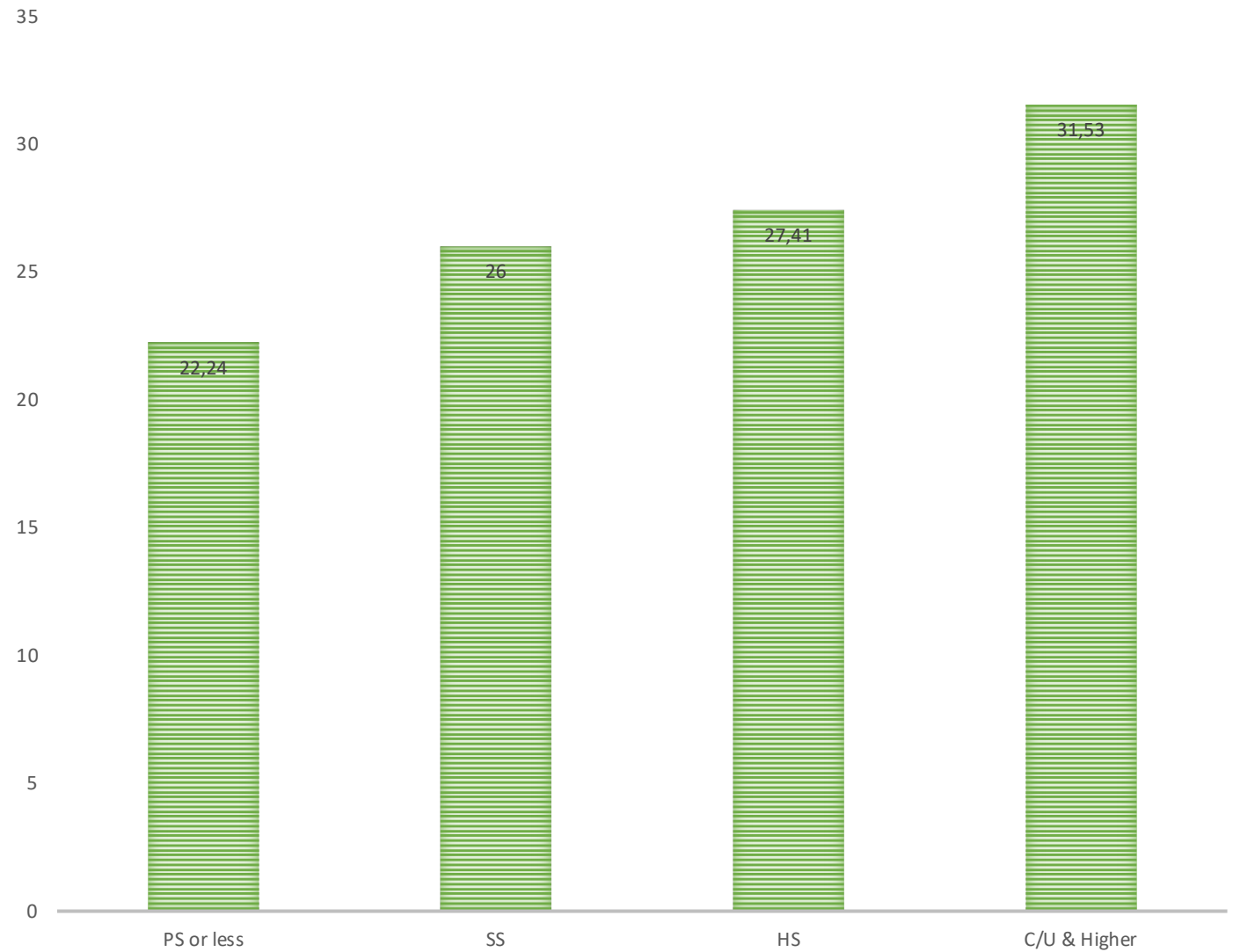
Different
score by age
group on
domain 3

FIGURE 11: DIFFERENT SCORE BY AGE GROUP



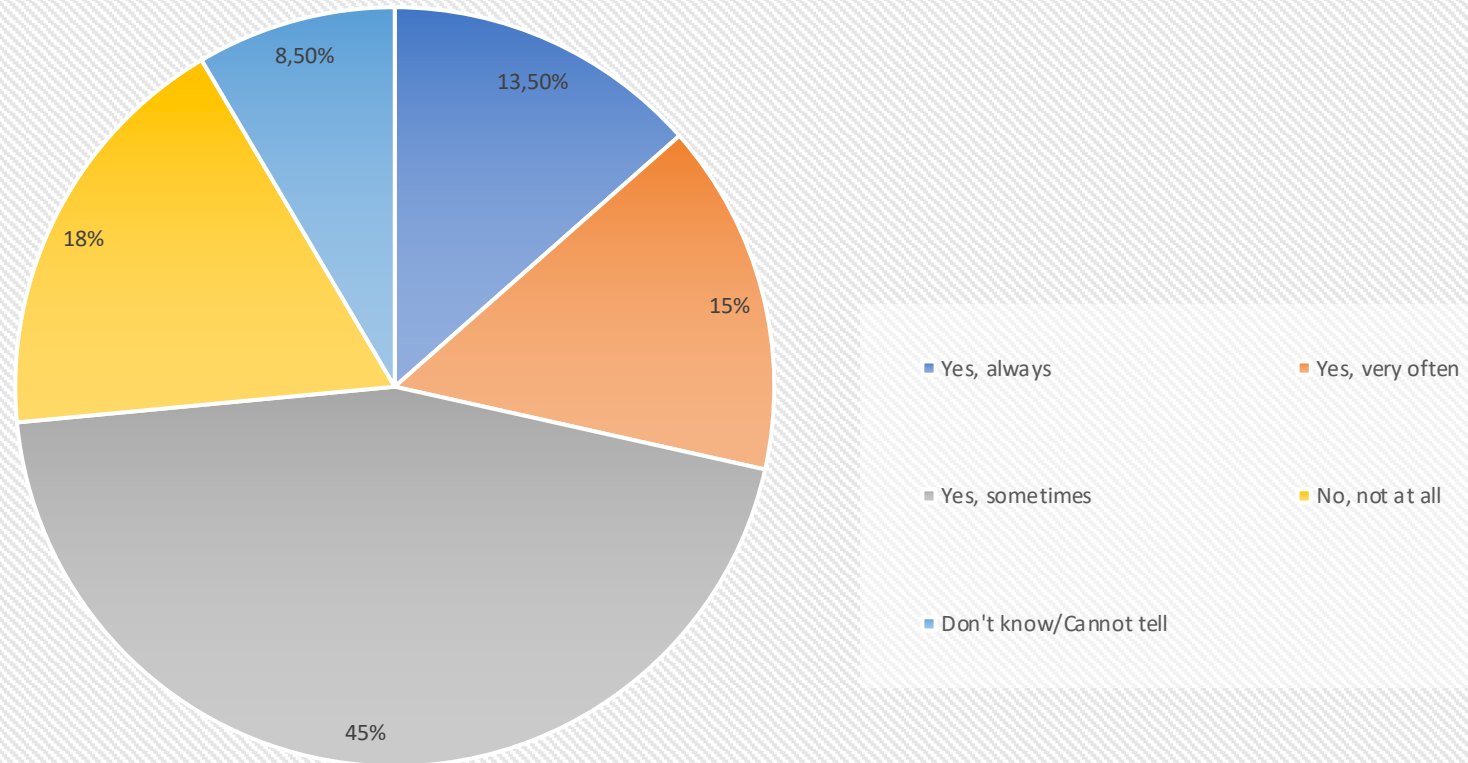
Different
score by
education
level on
domain 3

FIGURE 12: DIFFERENT SCORE BY EDUCATION LEVEL

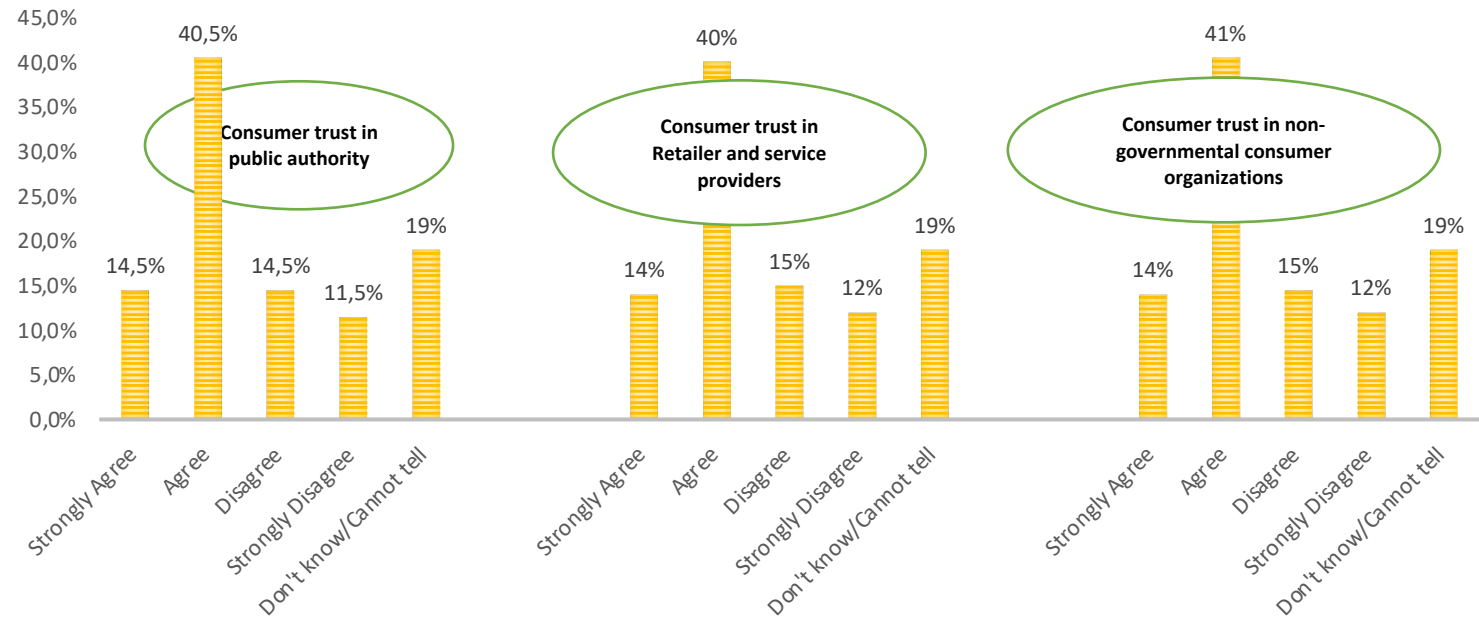


Consumer Empowerment, Protection and Receiving Information:

“Do you feel informed, protected and empowered as a consumer when participating in transactions in the market?”

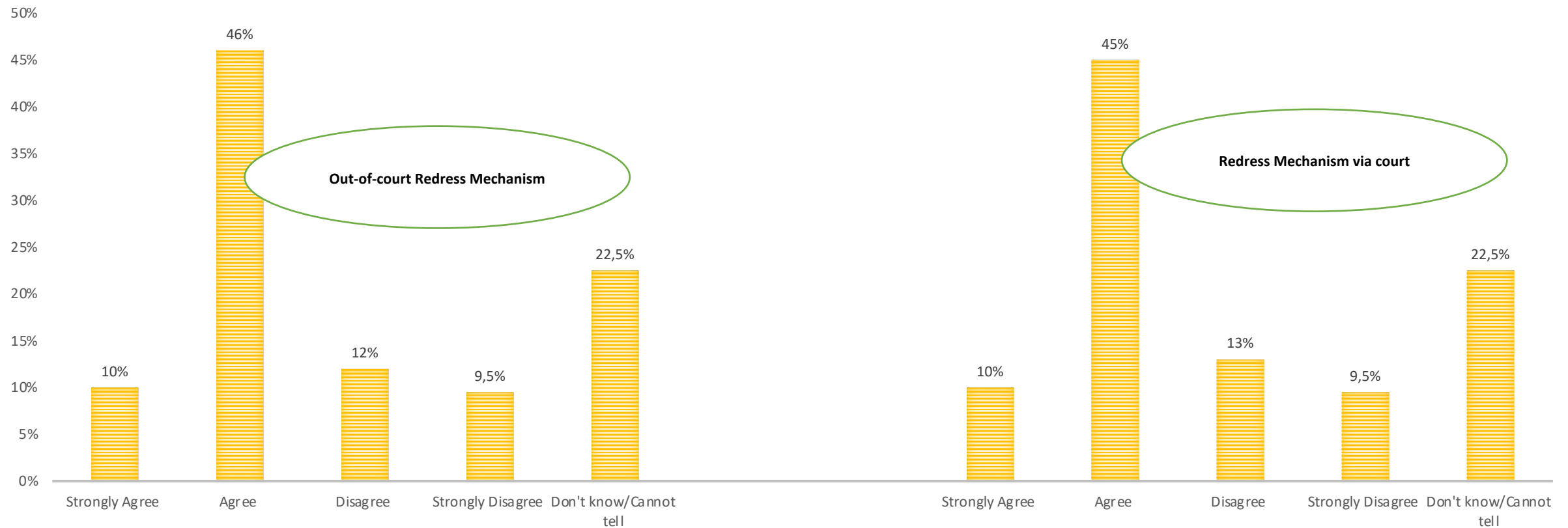


Consumer Trust on The Consumer Protection Agencies, Consumer Organizations / Associations and Business



- first question is about the perception of consumer trust in the public authority (government),
- second question is about their trust in retailers and service providers, and
- last question is about their trust in NGOs.

The Consumers Perception on the Redress Mechanisms (via Courts and out-of-Court)



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Cambodia is categorized a young consumer protection regime since the law on Consumer Protection was just adopted in late 2019, and only a few NGOs have been working in the area so far.
- The mandate received by CCF is fairly recent as well, following an internal restructuring process at the Ministry of Commerce.
- It is understandable that the overall score of the national ACEI in Cambodia is 68.84 which indicates “Least Empowered”.
- Across all categories, consumers with a higher educational background score highest and thus are more empowered in all domains.
- This correlates with lowest scores for older consumers and those living in rural areas, considering that these groups of consumers typically have a low level of educational attainment.
- More specifically, domain 1 on Consumer Awareness / Knowledge received the lowest score (17.37).

Within Domain 1, efforts should be directed towards improving the following indicators:

1. Indicator 1.1. Awareness of basic consumer rights
2. Indicator 1.2. Awareness of consumer responsibilities, including sustainable consumption (individuals' role and how it affects society)
3. Indicator 1.3. Awareness of consumer legislations and their main provisions/prohibitions (incl. the consumer law and other relevant bodies of law, sectoral laws)
4. Indicator 1.4. Awareness of consumer protection agencies
5. Indicator 1.5. Awareness of consumer organizations/associations
6. Indicator 1.7. Awareness of redress mechanisms, including customer enquiry points maintained by business
7. Indicator 1.8. Awareness of various consumer advocacy / education programs / tools

In Domain 2,
the second
priority, the
following
improvements
should be
prioritized:

1. Indicator 2.1. Basic numerical skills (to perform calculations during market transactions)
2. Indicator 2.2. Basic financial skills (to understand common financial concepts/products)
3. Indicator 2.3. Ability to understand the meaning of standards, labels and logos
4. Indicator 2.4. Ability to understand usage and other product information
5. Indicator 2.8. Ability to effectively pursue their claims/seek redress (incl. taking timely actions, seeking counsel, etc.)
6. Indicator 2.9. Ability to engage in/exercise sustainable consumption

Lastly, in Domain 3, the focus should lie on the following:

1. Indicator 3.1. Tendency to gather information about/compare amongst products/services
2. Indicator 3.4. Tendency to report on hazardous/defective products and unfair commercial practices
3. Indicator 3.5. Tendency to seek information (about products, consumer risks, consumer rights, etc).

Key recommendations

- Promotion of consumer protection issues should be implemented countrywide through various channels, such as trainings, advertising or video on TV;
- Education of citizens on how to recognize unsafe product and quality standards of products shall be introduced and later improved;
- Awareness of public on how to read useful information indicated in logos and labels should also be improved;
- Khmer label should be available on all products sold in Cambodia;
- Accessible documents and resources related to consumer protection knowledge and skills should be available in various sources;
- Creation of an accessible platform for consumers to report any issues occurring during transactions or when they want to voice the consumer protection matters is essential in establishing a good culture of consumer protection; and
- Raising awareness for Cambodians regarding the substance of the consumer protection law in order to know and exercise their basic consumer rights.