

The Rise of DINKs in America

Meet the New 5%

November 2024 • The Harris Poll Thought Leadership Practice





Methodology

This report is based on a custom survey that was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll between July 18th to July 27th, among 4,270 adults aged 18 and over.

This research is broken down by parental and marital status, comprising of 2,463 parents and 1,746 non-parents, 2,338 married/living with partner, and 220 DINKs. The research is also broken down by generation, comprising of 564 Gen Z, 1,288 Millennials, 1,174 Gen X, and 1,244 Boomers; and gender, comprising of 2,004 men and 2,232 women.





Executive Summary

DINKs — about 5% of the American population — are armed with discretionary income and a desire to invest in themselves and their partners.

- Societal wide anxiety around personal finances, has encouraged couples to move in together to reap the financial benefits.
 - 60% of single young Americans have considered finding and/or moving in with a romantic partner just so they can split expenses.
 - 79% of young Americans married/living with their partner agree, “My finances have significantly improved since I began living with my partner.”
- DINKs — people who live with their partner, in a dual income household without children — make up about 5% of the American population.
- This segment outearns the general population, 61% of DINKs have a household income of over \$100k, compared to 41% of all Americans.
- 88% of DINKs agree, “Without [having] children, I have more disposable income to invest in myself and my partner.”

The DINK life is temporary for most, but they are living it to the fullest by being spontaneous and pursuing their interests

- 65% of Gen Z & Millennial DINKs imagine having children, 37% plan to have children within the next five years
- The DINK lifestyle is spontaneous and full of time to pursue what interests them
 - 76% of DINKs say that not having children allows them to travel frequently and spontaneously.
 - “As a DINK, I have more time and resources to pursue hobbies and personal interests.”

The new 1% are the 5% of DINKS. These happy spenders are freely purchasing and eager to upgrade their products, services, and experiences.

- While the average American uses their money to merely survive, DINKs are able to use money to build financial stability and enjoy life.
- DINKs typically spend 4x more per month than the average American on dining out/ordering take out (\$816 vs \$215 monthly).
- DINKs are willing to purchase a luxury vacation package for ~\$2,000; spending almost \$1,000 more than the average American (\$1,223).

The Rise of DINKs

How the economic climate has pushed young couples to move in together, creating a movement of 'double income, no kids'



For young Americans money brings up anxiety and barriers of personal happiness

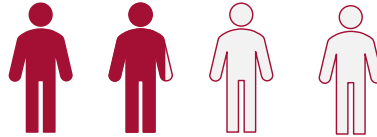
70%

of young Americans agree,

“I get **anxious** thinking about my **personal finances**.”

49% DINKs
61% Non-DINKs

55% Men
65% Women



Less than half (44%)
of young Americans frequently
get to do the things that make
them happy.¹

48% Men
40% Women

54% Dads
42% Moms

What's stopping young Americans?

1.

Not financially able
(63%)

2.

Lack of time
(46%)

3.

The state of the world
(e.g., economy, political, cultural landscape)
(34%)



Being young and single is hard; half of single young people have considered moving in with a romantic partner just to split expenses

69%

of **single** Gen Z + Millennials agree,

“The **cost of living hits harder** when you’re single.”

64% Gen Z
74% Millennials
72% Gen X
65% Boomers

65% Men
73% Women

60%

of **single** Gen Z + Millennials agree,

“I’ve considered finding and/or moving in with a romantic partner **just so I can split expenses with somebody.**”

34% all singles
49% single Gen Z
46% single Millennials
26% single Gen X + Boomers



Young Americans reap financial benefits when moving in with their partner — three in four say their finances have significantly improved since doing so

79%

of Gen Z + Millennials **married or living with partner** agree,

“My finances have **significantly improved** since I began living with my partner.”

74% all Americans married/living with partner



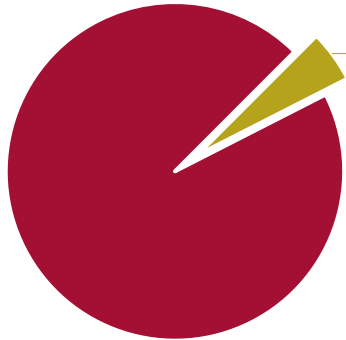
60%

of Gen Z + Millennials **married or living with partner** agree,

“I **don't know how they would financially survive** if I didn't live with my partner.”



Introducing the rise of the DINKs; Double income, no kids—a small but spending population who report higher household income and more financial preparedness than the average American



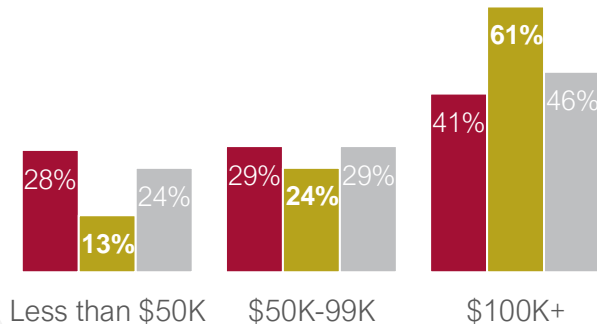
5% of Americans are **DINKs**

DINKs: “double income, no kids.”

(i.e., a household where both partners earn income and neither have children)

Household income

■ All Americans ■ DINKs ■ Parents



63%

of DINKs agree,

“I am financially prepared for the future.”

56% All Americans
59% Parents

The DINK Lifestyle

The benefits of being a DINK



The DINK life is temporary for most young couples, in the meantime, they are using the extra lifestyle resources to invest in themselves and their partners

**WHEN / IF GEN Z & MILLENNIAL DINKs
WILL HAVE CHILDREN**



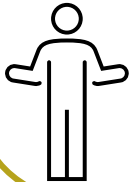
65%

imagine having children in the future.

37% less than five years

19% 5 – 9 years

9% more than 10 years



35%

never imagine having children in the future.

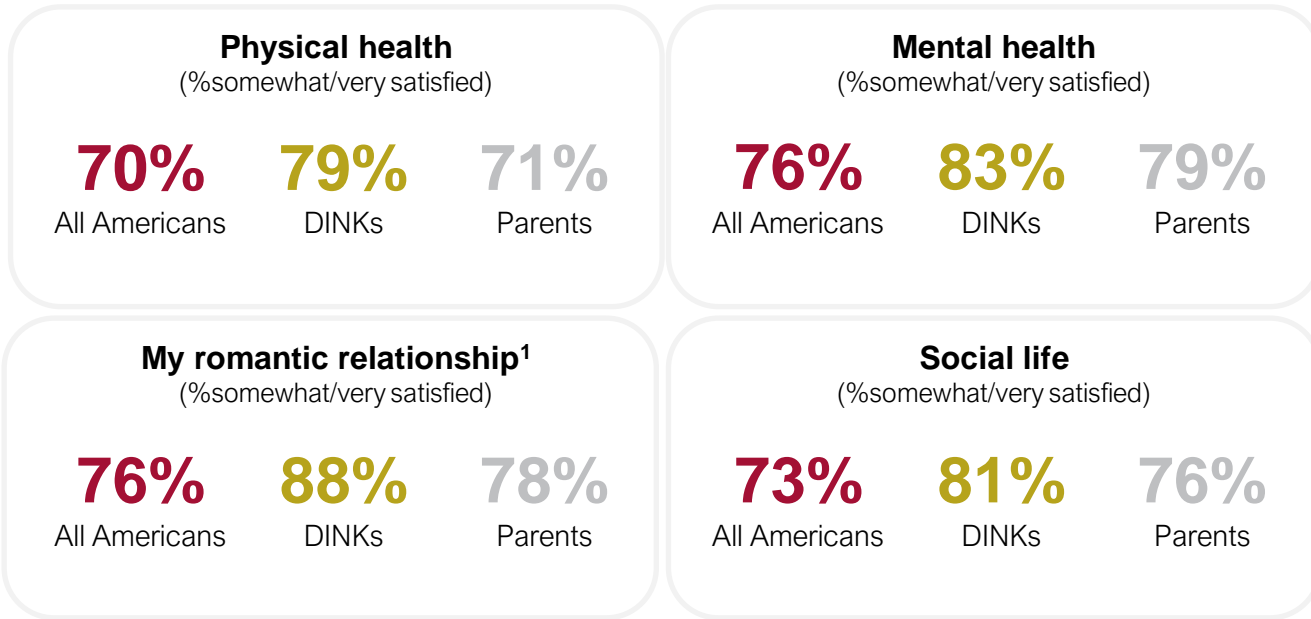
91%

of Gen Z & Millennial DINKs agree,

“Without children, I have **more disposable income to invest** in myself and my partner.”



Compared to the average American, DINKs are generally more satisfied with their lives — from physical and mental health to their relationships with others



DINK05 Generally, how satisfied are you with the following areas of your life? (all respondents = 4,270) (DINKs; n = 220)
 1=among married/living with partner (n = 3,075)



A childless lifestyle gives DINKs the discretionary income and flexibility to be spontaneous and the time to pursue their passions

83%

of DINKs agree,

“I appreciate the **freedom and flexibility** not having children gives me.”

76%

of DINKs agree,

“Not having children allows me to **travel frequently and spontaneously.**”

76%

of DINKs agree,

“As a DINK, I have **more time and resources** to pursue hobbies and personal interests.”



DINKs see the advantages of not having children as the ability to focus resources (time and money) on personal growth and aspirations

84%

of DINKs agree,

“Not having children allows me to focus on **personal growth and development.**”

79%

of DINKs agree,

“Not having children allows me to focus more on **my own aspirations** (e.g., lifestyle, career, etc.)”



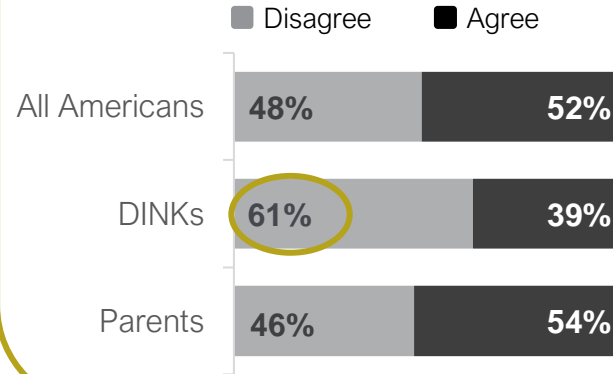
DINKs worry that having children would significantly impact their financial stability, and right now they face fewer financial barriers than Americans and parents

74%

of DINKs agree,

“I believe having children would **significantly impact my financial stability.**”

“My personal **finances are prohibiting me** from achieving my goals and aspirations.”



The Happy Spenders

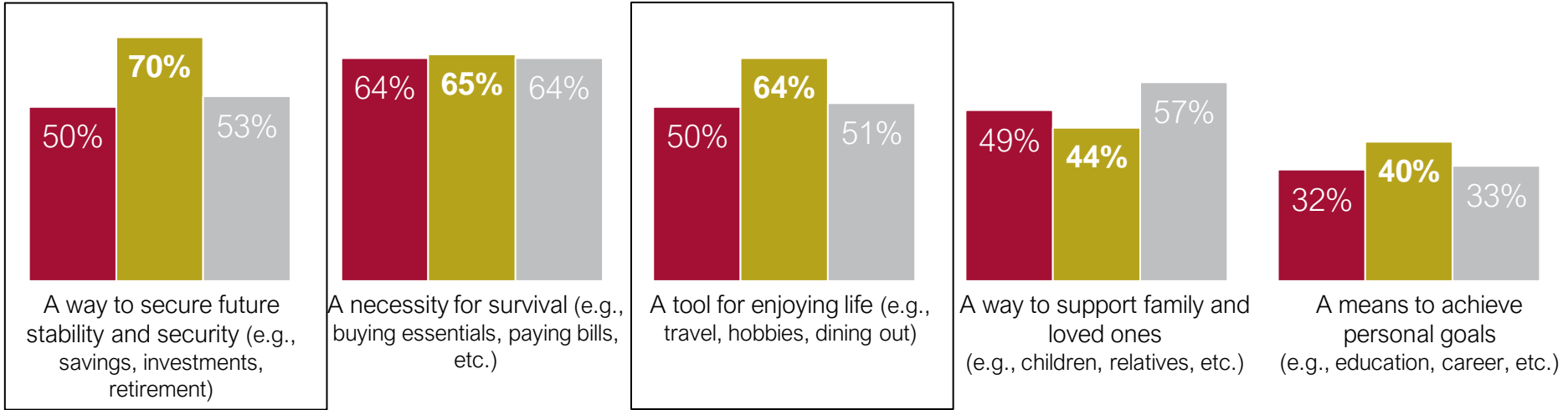
The discretionary spending habits of DINKs



DINKs use money to build financial stability and enjoy life, vs. merely survive or support loved ones

The role of money in their lives

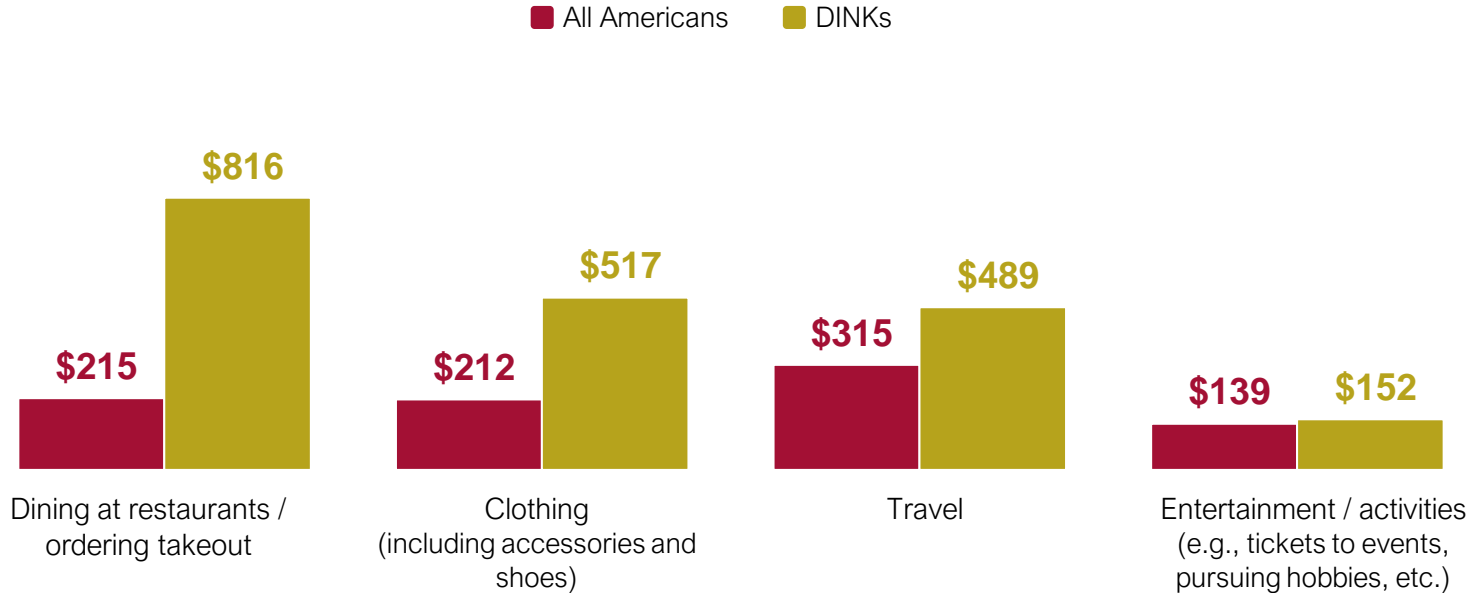
■ All Americans ■ DINKs ■ Parents





They spend far greater on discretionary purchases.

Typical monthly spend on category





The willingness to premiumize: the price threshold to upgrade products, services, and experiences is much higher for DINKs vs. the typical American

Dollar amount willing to spend on experiences

A seat upgrade on your next flight
(from economy to first class)

\$186 ^{+\$345} **\$531**
All Americans DINKs

A front row ticket to your favorite music
artists concert

\$212 ^{+\$351} **\$563**
All Americans DINKs

A membership at an exclusive club
(e.g., country club, private gym)

\$258 ^{+\$526} **\$784**
All Americans DINKs

A luxury vacation package
(e.g., all-inclusive resort, private villa)

\$1,223 ^{+\$950} **\$2,173**
All Americans DINKs



In the zeitgeist, 'we're DINKs' trend emphasizes the happy spending included with the lifestyle

WHAT IS IT

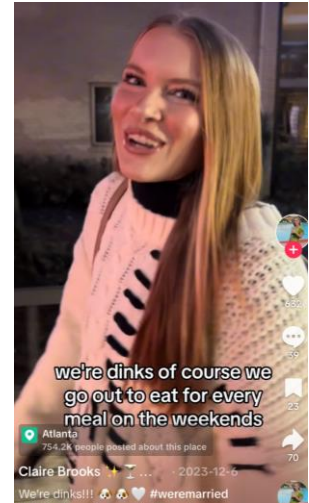
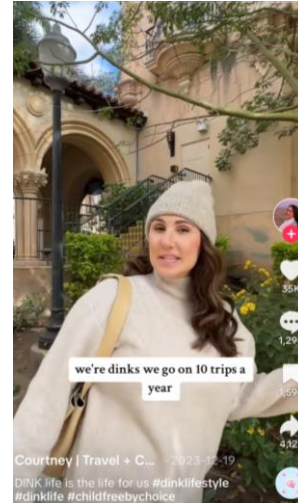
The "We're DINKs" trend, signified by #dink with over 14.7K posts on TikTok to date, took off in late 2023. The trend starts with the saying "We're DINKs, of course..." and features child-free couples celebrating the perks their childfree gives them, emphasizing the freedom to spend on luxury experiences, travel, and hobbies without the expenses associated with raising children.



'We're Dinks,' a Weird Sign of Our Hyper-Consumerist Times

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

We're DINKs, of course...



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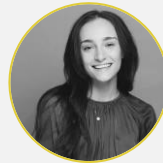
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