

Visualizing Global Economic Perceptions (2019–2024)

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Abstract—This report examines global economic perceptions from 2019 to 2024 using Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Surveys (Pew Research Center, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2024). The analysis focuses on identifying shifts in attitudes toward economic issues across 43 countries, highlighting regional trends and data limitations. The findings aim to inform students, researchers, and policymakers about evolving global economic sentiment.

Index Terms—economics, data visualization, global economic perception, data analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

Economic perceptions influence policy, investment, and public confidence. Understanding these attitudes over time provides insight into global economic stability and priorities. This project visualizes changes in economic sentiment between 2019 and 2024, presenting accessible insights to a broad audience [1,2]. The period between 2019 and 2024 is especially consequential: it encompasses the COVID-19 pandemic, supply-chain disruptions, inflation spikes, energy crises, and geopolitical instability. All of these factors have the potential to shape public sentiment toward economic conditions.

Using data from Pew’s global surveys, this project aims to distill and visualize how economic sentiment evolved during this turbulent period in a diverse set of nations. The goal is to provide a clear, accessible, and comparative view of global economic confidence and generational expectations.

II. DATA ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

A. Data Source

We used data from the Pew Research Center Global Attitude Surveys of 2019 and 2024. The 2019 survey excludes Russia and several South American countries, and the 2024 survey excludes the United States. Together, the datasets cover 43 unique countries.

B. Data Characteristics

We focus on two main survey questions: “How would you describe the current economic situation in (survey country) – is it very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad?” and “How satisfied are you with the way democracy is working in (survey country) – very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied?” These two questions were asked and answered in the same way across both datasets, which lends itself nicely to analysis. In addition to those questions, we also included demographic information such as country of residence, age, sex, and number of people in the household.

C. Data Cleaning and filtering

We used R and Excel to consolidate the data from both datasets into a single table and then to clean and filter the data. This involved decoding each selected column from numerical to categorical (e.g. 4 to “very good”) and adding a categorical column called Age Group that puts each survey response into the groups: 18-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65+, and N/A if they did not know their age or refused to answer.

In addition to cleaning the data, we created a second dataset that looked at the percentage of respondents from each country and year who selected each response category. We limited this data set to only the countries that were surveyed in 2019 and 2024. This left us with 26 unique countries.

III. FINDINGS

A. Regional Representation

The first observation we ran into was a disconnect in the countries that were surveyed and appeared in the data set. For example, the Questionnaire provided by the Pew Research Center in 2024 states that the United States was surveyed. However, that data is not available in the dataset. This means that we were more limited on which countries we could use

when comparing survey responses, which can be seen in Fig. 1 [4].

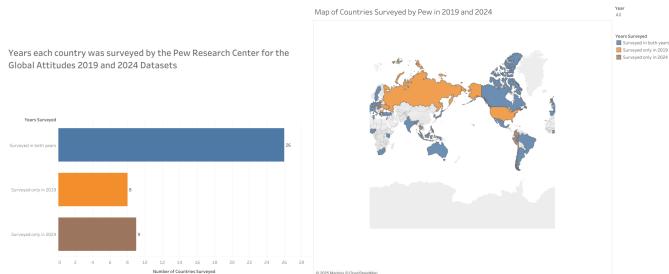


Fig. 1. Map of Surveyed Countries

B. Economic Sentiment Trends

Once we had limited ourselves to just the countries surveyed in both years, we looked at the change in how economic and democratic perceptions had changed between 2019 and 2024. Comparing changes in economic and democratic satisfaction seen in Fig. 2 [5], we observe a much larger shift in economic satisfaction, with an average 11.41% decrease in the share of respondents giving positive answers in the Pew survey. The greatest decrease is 42.8% in Germany, with Canada not far behind at 36.8%. Overall, only five countries showed any improvement in economic perceptions; the rest experienced declines.

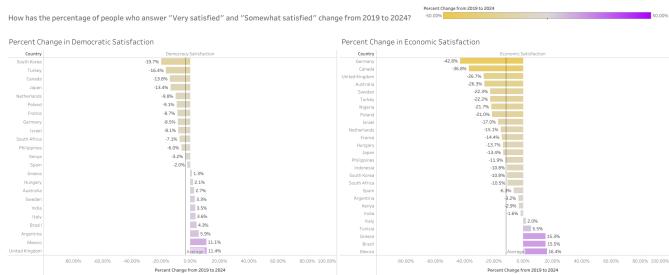


Fig. 2. Perception Dashboard

For the five countries reporting a positive change in economic situation between the 2019 and 2024 surveys, four of the five countries still have a majority reporting the economic situation as bad or very bad. Three of these countries, the percentage of people with a very good or somewhat good view of the economic situation, still represents less than 30% of the surveyed population. The sole exception to this is Mexico, where most of the surveyed population now believes in 2024, the economic situation is positive compared to 2019. Among the 21 countries reporting a decline in a good economic situation, only 6 countries still have a majority of respondents reporting the economic situation as good, compared to 11 in 2019 as shown in Fig. 3 [12].

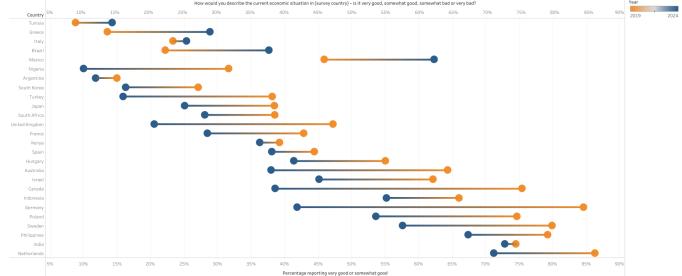


Fig. 3. Economic Situation Responses Over Time

Only five countries surveyed in 2024 have a majority who believe children today will be better off financially than their parents, shown in Fig. 4 [11]. Nine countries trended in a positive direction since 2019, of those 9 were 3 of the 5 countries with an improved economic outlook (Greece, Tunisia, Mexico) also showed an increase, Brazil reported a less than 1% decrease (within the margin of error), and Italy reported a 5% decrease. This shows a correlation between economic sentiment and future financial outlook for children, but this is not the primary driver for changes.

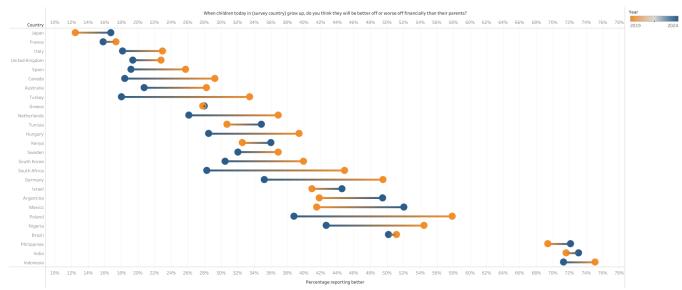


Fig. 4. Children's Financial Outlook Responses

Looking at economic satisfaction polling by gender and age group, additional trends are displayed. For each age group, female respondents are less likely to rate the current economic situation as good. There is a consistent 4-5% gap between the genders throughout each group, with no major variations seen in Fig. 5 [14]. Between the age groups, the 18-34 group reports the best economic outlook, followed by the 65+ age group. This is different from the trend seen in the next section outlining opinions on children's future economic outlook.

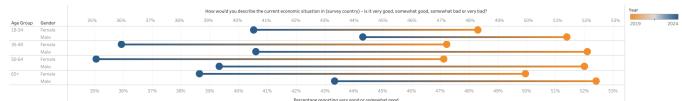


Fig. 5. Current Economic Outlook Responses by Age Group and Gender

Comparing these same variables against children's future economic outlook polling, some different trends appear. Across all gender and age groups, there has been a decrease in respondents reporting that the children will be better off financially than their parents. The downward trend is clear among all age groups, where the youngest (18-34) have the

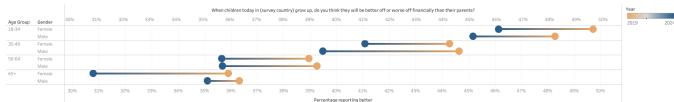


Fig. 6. Children’s Outlook by Age Group and Gender

highest percentage, and the next oldest age groups show a decreasing percentage.

Between the genders, some interesting changes are shown. Men and women 18 to 34 show a consistent 3-4% decrease between 2019 and 2024. In the 35–49 age group, men show a 5% drop while women show a 3.25% drop. In 2019, men in this age group were more likely than women to believe children would be better off, but by 2024 this pattern reversed, with women now 1.5% more likely than men to hold that belief. For the 50-64 group, both genders report a roughly 3% drop with no significant variance. The 65+ age group shows the largest shift: men report only a 1.25% drop from 2019 to 2024, while women show a 5% drop seen in Fig. 6 [13]. This creates a 4% gender gap not seen in any other age group.

IV. DATA LIMITATIONS

While the Pew Global Attitudes Surveys (2019; 2024) provide valuable insights into economic and democratic perceptions across multiple countries, several limitations constrain the interpretation and generalization of findings:

A. Incomplete Country Coverage

The datasets do not include all countries surveyed in the respective years. For example, the 2019 dataset excludes Russia and some South American countries, while the 2024 dataset omits the United States despite its inclusion in the questionnaire. These gaps limit the ability to draw truly global conclusions and may introduce regional bias [1,2].

B. Temporal and Contextual Factors

Economic perceptions are highly sensitive to global and local events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, inflationary pressures, and geopolitical conflicts (e.g., the Russia–Ukraine war). These factors can disproportionately influence responses in certain countries, making year-over-year comparisons complex [6].

C. Demographic Constraints

Although demographic variables such as age and gender are included, other critical factors such as income level, education, and urban versus rural residence are absent. This missing data restricts the depth of analysis and decreases the ability to identify socioeconomic drivers of economic sentiment.

D. Survey Design and Self-Reporting Bias

Responses rely on self-reported perceptions. These can be influenced by cultural norms, political climate, and respondent’s interpretation of survey questions. Social desirability bias and differences in translation across languages can further affect data reliability [7].

E. Comparability Across Years

While the core questions remained consistent, deviations in country samples and potential changes in the way the survey was administered could impact comparability. For instance, differences in sampling frames or response rates between 2019 and 2024 may introduce systematic bias.

F. Margin of Error and Statistical Uncertainty

The report does not account for sampling error or confidence intervals in visualizations. Without these measures, even the smallest observed changes can fall within the margin of error and should be interpreted cautiously.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Global economic perceptions have evolved significantly between 2019 and 2024. Regional differences underscore the need for localized policy responses. Future research should address data gaps and incorporate more demographic variables. The combined evidence from your analysis and Pew’s 2024 survey data suggests several important conclusions with implications for research and policy. Global economic pessimism is widespread. The 2024 data show that in most surveyed countries, most adults view their national economy as “bad.” This is not limited to low or middle-income countries; it includes many advanced economies [8]. Hope for the next generation is limited. Over half of respondents globally believe that children growing up today will be financially worse off than their parents. That inter-generational pessimism is especially pronounced in high-income countries [9]. Economic inequality and dissatisfaction with existing economic systems are widespread concerns. Many respondents view inequality, especially the political influence of the wealthy, as a major challenge, and there is substantial support for reforms [10]. Public perceptions often diverge from objective economic indicators. According to Pew, there is only a weak or inconsistent correlation between public economic ratings and traditional macroeconomic indicators in many countries [8].

This suggests that subjective sentiment, shaped by lived experience, media, expectations, and social context, plays a large role. Economic sentiment may shape trust in institutions and support for political change. Pew finds that people who view their economy negatively are more likely to favor systemic economic reforms [10]. Implication: Because global economic sentiment is now more negative than positive, and expectations for the future remain grim, policy responses must consider not only macroeconomic stabilization but also public confidence, inequality, and generational equity.

For researchers, these findings underscore the urgent need for deeper, more fine-grained data: country-level analyses of which demographic groups are most pessimistic; longitudinal tracking to see whether 2024 represents a trough or a new baseline; and integration with economic indicators to better understand drivers of sentiment.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Expand survey coverage to include missing countries for comprehensive analysis.
- 2) Conduct deeper demographic segmentation to understand drivers of economic sentiment.

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