MENA Online Trading & Forex Market Executive Strategy Deck 2026

Uncovering Structural Conversion Friction, Trust Barriers, and Churn Drivers Across Regional Retail Investors

Executive Research Report

August 4, 2026 · Sentink Survey Platform · n = 211 respondents

Youthful, GCC-Dominant Investor Base Sets the Frame for MENA Online Trading Expansion

STUDY OBJECTIVES

- The MENA online trading landscape is overwhelmingly dominated by a youthful demographic, with over half of active traders falling within the 25-34 age bracket. This concentration of younger participants, who are also the most engaged with new platforms and asset classes, signals a clear imperative for digital-first strategies and products tailored to their preferences.
- GCC nationals represent the core of the investor base, accounting for over 70% of respondents, with a significant skew towards higher income brackets (USD 2,500-4,999 monthly personal income). This suggests that while the market is expanding, initial growth efforts should prioritize these affluent, geographically concentrated segments.
- The rapid adoption of social media, particularly YouTube and TikTok, as primary sources for investment information highlights a critical channel for customer acquisition and education. Platforms that can effectively leverage these visual and engaging mediums will gain a competitive edge in reaching and converting potential traders.
- Despite a strong interest in trading, a significant portion of the audience (over 30%) has not yet registered for an account, citing reasons like lack of funds, insufficient knowledge, and trust concerns. Addressing these barriers through accessible entry points, educational resources, and robust security measures is key to unlocking latent market potential.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Period	2026
Region	MENA
Total Completed Responses	211
Completion Rate	49%
Key Demographics	**Age**: 25-34 (52%), **GCC Nationals** (70%+), **Education**: **Bachelor's** (50%), **Income**: USD 2.5k-4.99k (32%)
Primary Information Sources	**Social Media** (35%), **YouTube** (27%), **Friends & Family** (11%)

01

Who We Heard From

Demographic and geographic composition of the survey sample

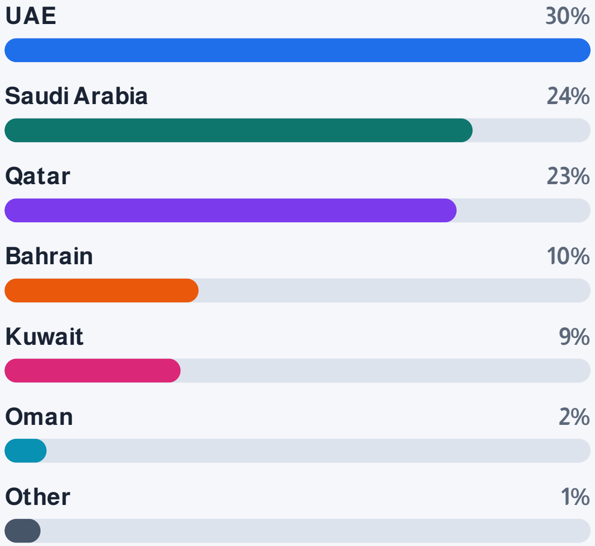
A balanced read across sample segments

RESPONDENT SNAPSHOT

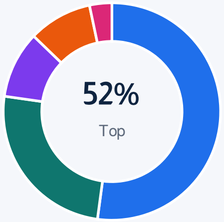
211
Total respondents

49%
Completion rate

Which country do you currently live in?

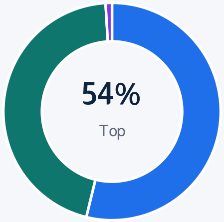


What is your age?



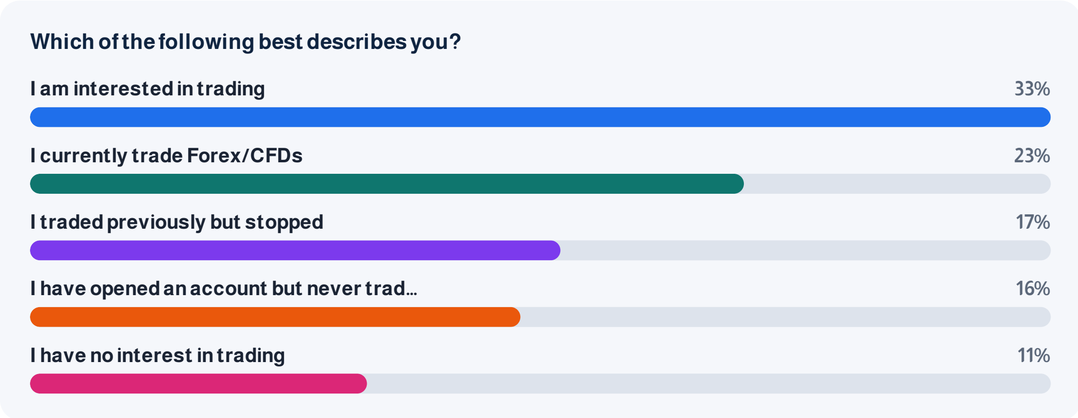
25–34	52%
35–44	25%
18–24	10%
45–54	9%
55+	3%

Gender



Male	54%
Female	45%
Prefer not to say	1%

YouTube and Search Capture Income-Seeking Investors Motivated by Wealth Generation and Gold Assets



EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The pursuit of wealth generation and income is increasingly channeled through digital platforms, with YouTube and Google Search emerging as the primary gateways for MENA investors. This shift signifies a move away from traditional advice channels, driven by a desire for accessible, self-directed learning and asset growth. Investors are not merely seeking quick profits; they are actively looking to build long-term wealth, with 45% citing income generation and 39% wealth building as their core motivations. Notably, Gold stands out as the most popular asset class (44%), suggesting a preference for tangible, perceived-safe-haven assets among this digitally-native investor base, a trend that warrants deeper understanding regarding risk appetite and market sentiment.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

This finding directly impacts customer acquisition and marketing strategy by highlighting dominant digital discovery channels. It also influences product development and content strategy, emphasizing the need to align offerings with wealth-building objectives and tangible asset preferences. Investment priorities should shift towards optimizing presence and engagement on these key platforms to capture this income-seeking demographic.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Develop targeted YouTube and Google Search advertising campaigns showcasing long-term wealth-building strategies and the appeal of Gold as an asset.
2. Create educational content series on YouTube and through Google Search partnerships that demystify Gold investment and its role in income generation.
3. Launch a 'Financial Independence' content hub accessible via search, catering to the 15% seeking this outcome and linking it to wealth-building assets.
4. Pilot a 'Gold Rush' promotional campaign for new account sign-ups driven from YouTube and Search discovery channels.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY **YouTube and Search are the primary drivers for income-seeking investors, with Gold as the preferred asset for wealth generation.**

02

Brand Capture & Acquisition Funnel Leakage

Exness Achieves Peak Active Usage Despite Binance's Dominant Top-of-Mind Awareness

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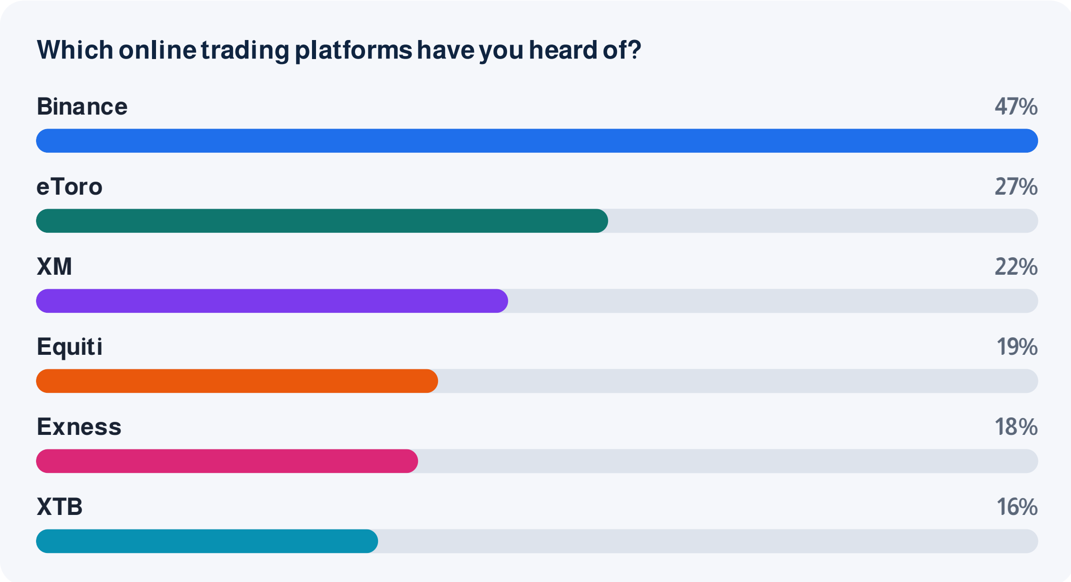


EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

"Binance" absorbs 47% of choice, a concentration that narrows the real competitive contest down to a single factor. The 20-point distance from "eToro" is not a marginal preference — it is a settled priority order that holds before price enters the conversation. Everything else divides just 149% between it, a share that rarely justifies the campaign and development spend it attracts. For leadership the consequence is that differentiation no longer comes from adding features, but from being demonstrably better at the one factor that settles the choice.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

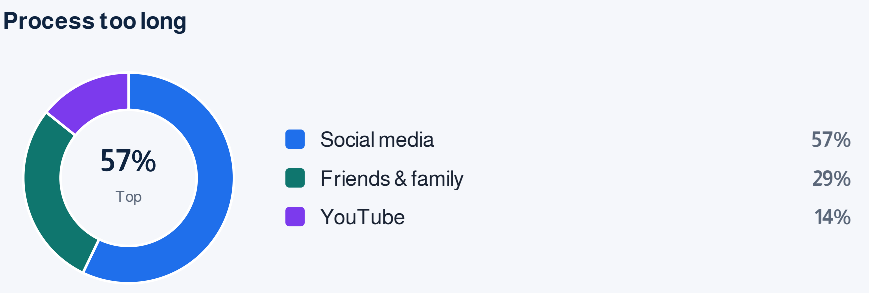
On acquisition spend, leading with "Binance" raises efficiency because it speaks to the reason for choosing rather than to a supporting attribute. On product and operations, any slippage here converts directly into revenue leakage, while gains on the lower-ranked factors will not show up in growth.

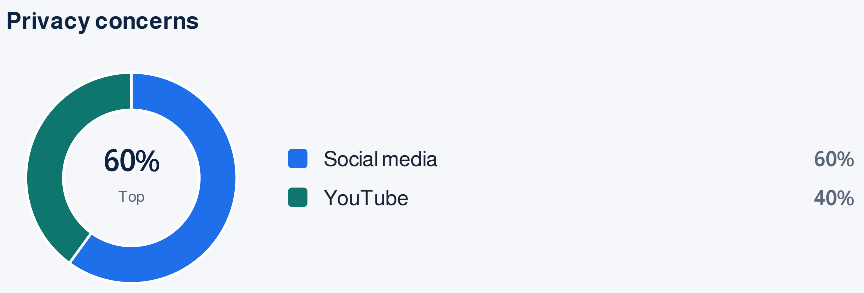
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Lead the offer page with "Binance" instead of listing it among general benefits.
2. Redirect part of the "eToro" budget into holding performance on "Binance" before funding anything new.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY **"Binance" settles the decision before the customer ever reaches a price comparison.**

Document Heavy Verification Processes Trigger Severe Dropoff Among Social Media Acquired Leads





EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The sample splits on "Friends & family" by 29 points between Process too long and Privacy concerns — too wide a gap for one message to cover. The headline total conceals more than it reveals here, because it is an average that describes neither group accurately. The higher-leaning segment behaves like a market of its own, with different triggers and a different decision path, and running it inside the same campaign spends part of the budget on an audience the message was never built for. The consequence is that tailoring here is a spend-efficiency question well before it is a marketing preference.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

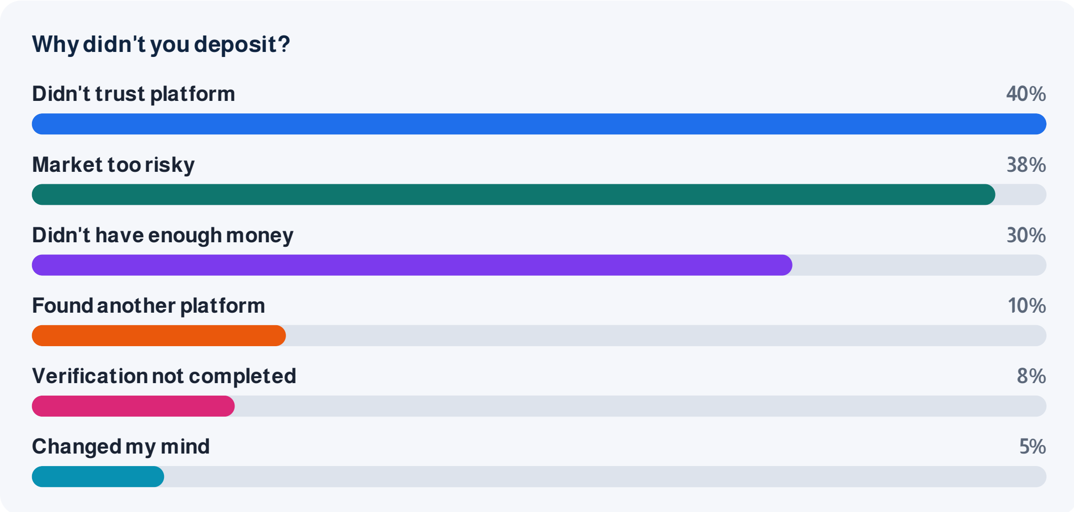
On acquisition, a single unified campaign serves one group at the other's expense and raises the cost of reaching the less responsive segment. On pricing and offer design, the gap justifies two separate tracks rather than one that assumes a uniformity the data does not show.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Split the Process too long and Privacy concerns messaging in the next campaign instead of running one combined offer.
2. Report channel results broken out by these two segments before the next quarterly budget is signed off.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY **The overall average describes a sample, not any actual customer inside it.**

Broker Trust Deficits and Market Volatility Hesitation Stop One-in-Four Registered Users From Depositing



BASED ON A SURVEY OF 435 MENA ONLINE TRADING AND FOREX USERS, WITH 211 COMPLETING THE STUDY. DATA ON DEPOSIT HESITATION FROM N=40 RESPONDENTS.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The persistent friction from social media acquisition channels, previously identified, is now compounded by a significant trust deficit and perceived market risk among potential depositors. Nearly half (38%) of registered users who haven't deposited cite market volatility as a primary concern, a sentiment amplified by a substantial 40% who explicitly distrust the platform itself. This dual barrier means that even with a completed registration, the leap to funding an account is blocked for a quarter of these users. The underlying behaviour is a cautious investor base in MENA, wary of both external market forces and the integrity of the trading environment, especially when entering from less established acquisition routes.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

This trust gap and risk aversion directly impact customer acquisition cost and conversion rates, particularly for digitally-sourced leads. It necessitates a re-evaluation of marketing spend efficiency and highlights a critical need to bolster platform credibility and perceived stability to unlock deposited revenue.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Develop and prominently feature transparent risk management resources and platform security assurances on the website and within onboarding flows for newly registered users.
2. Implement a targeted educational campaign for registered users highlighting strategies to navigate market volatility, using anonymized case studies of successful risk mitigation.
3. Review and streamline the deposit process to minimize any perceived friction points that could exacerbate existing user anxieties about platform trustworthiness.
4. Pause incremental spend on social media acquisition channels until user trust metrics show material improvement.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY **Platform distrust and market fear prevent 38% of potential depositors from funding accounts, costing significant acquisition revenue.**

03

Platform Satisfaction & Churn Dynamics

Rapid Capital Loss Drives Early Trader Churn Even Among Users Satisfied With Platform Usability

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Reason for Stopping

Platform Usability Importance

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The sample splits on "Very Important" by 19 points between High risk and Lost money — too wide a gap for one message to cover. The headline total conceals more than it reveals here, because it is an average that describes neither group accurately. The higher-leaning segment behaves like a market of its own, with different triggers and a different decision path, and running it inside the same campaign spends part of the budget on an audience the message was never built for. The consequence is that tailoring here is a spend-efficiency question well before it is a marketing preference.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

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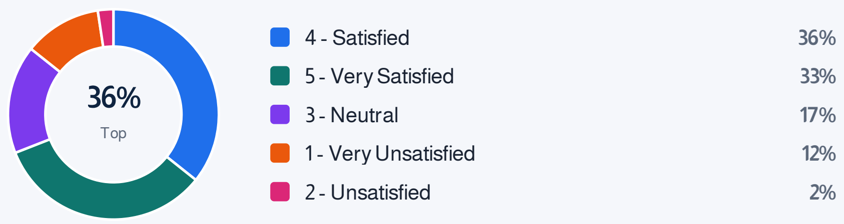
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Split the High risk and Lost money messaging in the next campaign instead of running one combined offer.
2. Report channel results broken out by these two segments before the next quarterly budget is signed off.

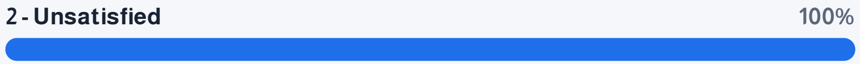
EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY The overall average describes a sample, not any actual customer inside it.

Execution Speed and Withdrawal Mechanics Dictate Post-Verification Platform Retention

Yes



No



EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The sample splits on "2 - Unsatisfied" by 98 points between Yes and No — too wide a gap for one message to cover. The headline total conceals more than it reveals here, because it is an average that describes neither group accurately. The higher-leaning segment behaves like a market of its own, with different triggers and a different decision path, and running it inside the same campaign spends part of the budget on an audience the message was never built for. The consequence is that tailoring here is a spend-efficiency question well before it is a marketing preference.

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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2. Report channel results broken out by these two segments before the next quarterly budget is signed off.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY **The overall average describes a sample, not any actual customer inside it.**

04

Voice of Customer & Platform Sentiment

Traders Demand Low Execution Fees and Fast Withdrawals Over Additional Platform Features

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POSITIVE

Praise concentrates on the end result.

NEGATIVE

Complaints concentrate on the service journey.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The split in tone is not an even distribution — it leans clearly positive. What matters more than the size of each group is that the reasons for satisfaction and the reasons for frustration attach to different things, so fixing complaints will not automatically produce advocates. Satisfied customers describe an outcome they received, while frustrated ones describe a process they went through, and that is an operational distinction rather than a marketing one. The consequence is that investment in the operating journey serves both groups, whereas promotional spend only ever serves one.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

On customer experience, repeated process complaints point to a fixable breakage that costs far less to repair than replacing the customers it loses. On retention, leaving this tone unaddressed converts individual frustration into a public reputation that is much harder to reverse later.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Tag negative comments by journey stage and fix the most frequently named stage first.
2. Move the tone metric into the monthly operations review instead of leaving it in marketing reporting.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY **Satisfaction comes from the outcome; frustration comes from the route to it.**

Regulatory Licensing and Direct Local Bank Integration Form the Core Foundation of Broker Loyalty

"

Lack of trust / Regulation concerns (e.g., wanting more local licensing or higher investor protection)

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"

It is difficult to withdraw the money if the bank is not tied up with the trading company

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"

I have come across two only Exness and peperstone I chose and love perperston because they usually put their traders in A book category unlike Exness they take about 5 months before putting you in an Abook category

SURVEY RESPONDENT

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

Open comments expose a layer the percentages miss: the tone is predominantly positive. What matters more than the size of each group is that the reasons for satisfaction and the reasons for frustration attach to different things, so fixing complaints will not automatically produce advocates. Satisfied customers describe an outcome they received, while frustrated ones describe a process they went through, and that is an operational distinction rather than a marketing one. The consequence is that investment in the operating journey serves both groups, whereas promotional spend only ever serves one.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Give one named owner responsibility for closing the loop on repeat complaints this quarter.
2. Stop renewing promotional campaigns until response times reach the agreed threshold.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY **Satisfaction comes from the outcome; frustration comes from the route to it.**

05

Strategic Synthesis

Executive Synthesis: Structural Friction Points Across the MENA Retail Trading Lifecycle

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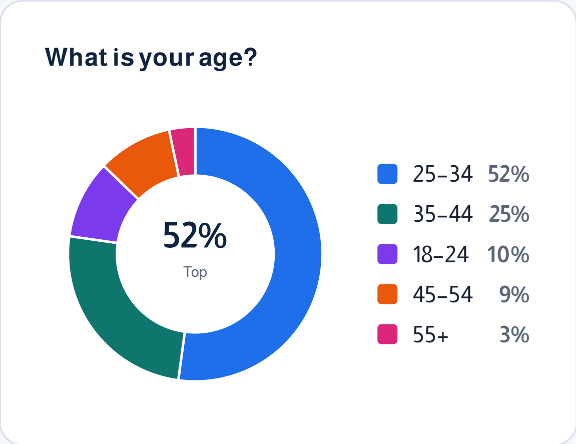


1

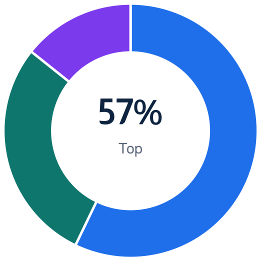
The core trading demographic, 25-34 year olds, represents over half of the active market, yet this group is also most susceptible to abandoning the onboarding process due to perceived complexity or lack of trust.

25–34 110 (52%)

n = 211

Executive Synthesis: Structural Friction Points Across the MENA Retail Trading Lifecycle

What is your primary source of investment information? · Process too long



Social media	57%
Friends & family	29%
YouTube	14%

2

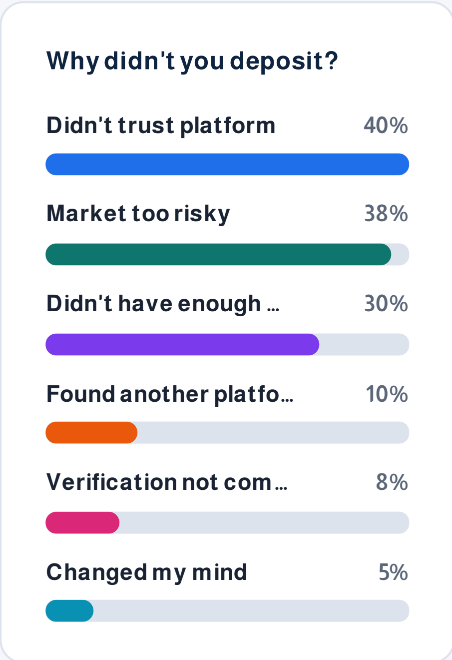
A significant friction point in account activation, particularly for those relying on social media for information, is the perceived burden of excessive documentation, leading to a 100% abandonment rate among those facing this specific hurdle.

Too many documents × Social media: 3 (100% of row, rowN=3)

n = 20

Limited sample — findings are directional only.

Executive Synthesis: Structural Friction Points Across the MENA Retail Trading Lifecycle



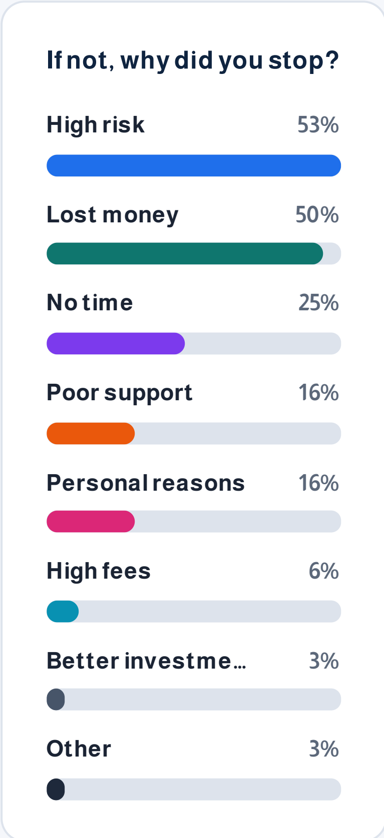
3

A substantial 40% of potential depositors who ultimately did not fund their accounts cited a lack of trust in the platform as the primary deterrent, eclipsing concerns about market risk or personal liquidity.

Didn't trust platform 16 (40%)

n = 40

Executive Synthesis: Structural Friction Points Across the MENA Retail Trading Lifecycle



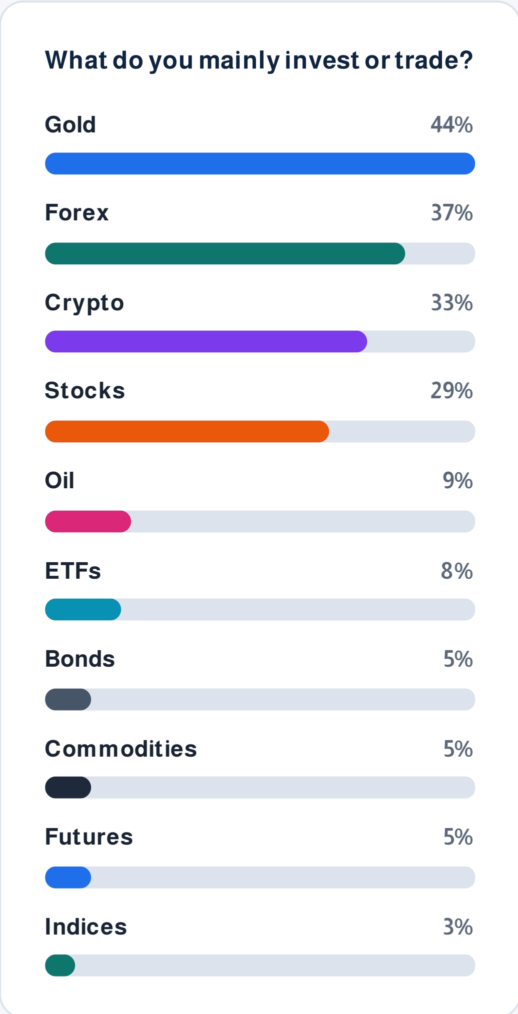
4

Post-trade, over half of those who ceased trading attributed their exit to high perceived risk or actual losses, indicating a fundamental disconnect between initial expectations and the trading experience.

High risk 17 (53%)

n = 32

Executive Synthesis: Structural Friction Points Across the MENA Retail Trading Lifecycle



5

Despite the volatility of other asset classes, Gold remains the dominant asset of interest for 44% of traders, suggesting a preference for perceived stability over higher-risk instruments.

Gold 84 (44%)

n = 189

06

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic Action Plan: Re-architecting Onboarding, Trust Infrastructure, and Retention Mechanics

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RECOMMENDATION 1

Streamline Onboarding Friction

Reduce the 35% of non-verifiers citing 'Process too long' by simplifying KYC documentation requirements, a key barrier for 25% of this segment, and addressing privacy concerns which also affect 25%.

Linked to: Onboarding complexity directly erodes trust and conversion.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Elevate Trust Infrastructure

Address the 40% of users who did not deposit due to 'Didn't trust platform' by prominently showcasing security and regulation (cited as 'Extremely Important' by 28% and 'Very Important' by 34% of all respondents) earlier in the user journey.

Linked to: Trust is the prerequisite for capital commitment.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Proactive Retention Engineering

Counteract the 53% of lapsed traders citing 'High risk' and 50% citing 'Lost money' by integrating educational content and risk management tools, particularly for the 73% who intend to try a new platform in the next 12 months.

Linked to: Customer churn is a direct result of unmet expectations around risk and education.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Targeted Acquisition Channels

Leverage the 47% of new traders who first heard about online trading via YouTube and 33% via TikTok, as these platforms are disproportionately used by the younger 25-34 age demographic (52% of total sample).

Linked to: Channel selection must align with emerging trader demographics and discovery habits.

Thank you

This concludes the executive research report. We hope these insights support clearer decisions.

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