



T.C.

YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MEDIA STUDIES DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

**TRANSFORMATION OF STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE CONTEXT OF
CULTURE INDUSTRY: MICROSTOCK INDUSTRY AND CONTENT
PRODUCTION IN DIGITAL ERA**

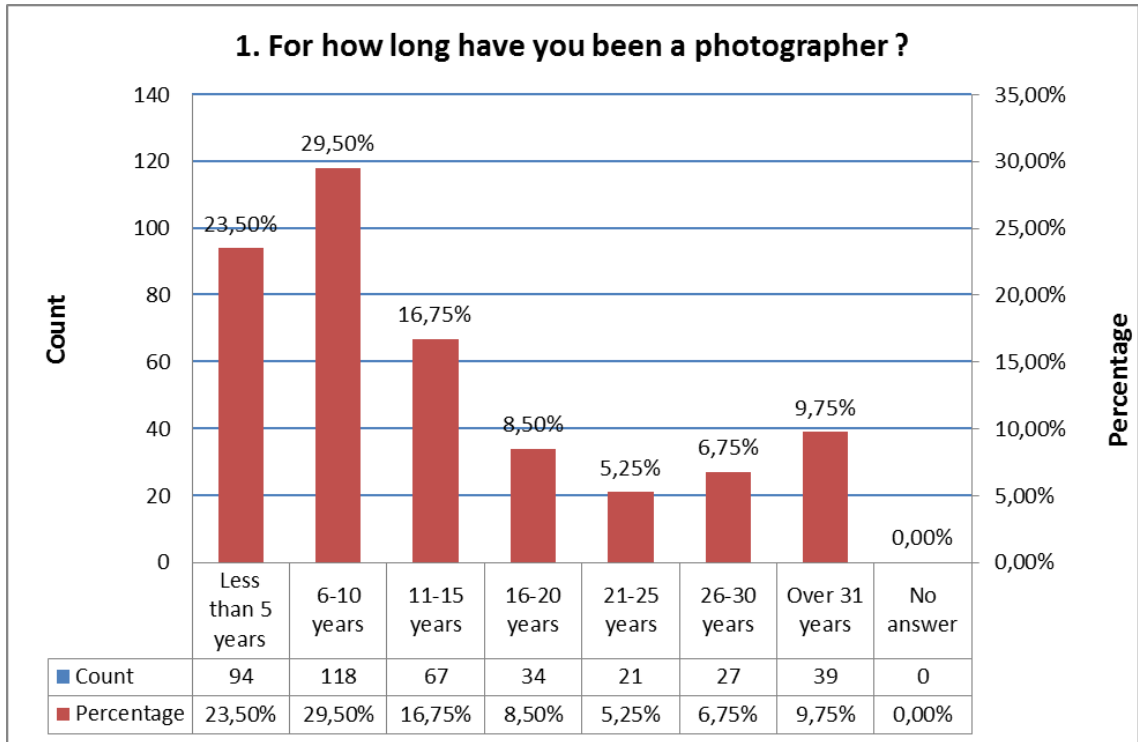
DOCTORAL THESIS

Başar Hatırmaz

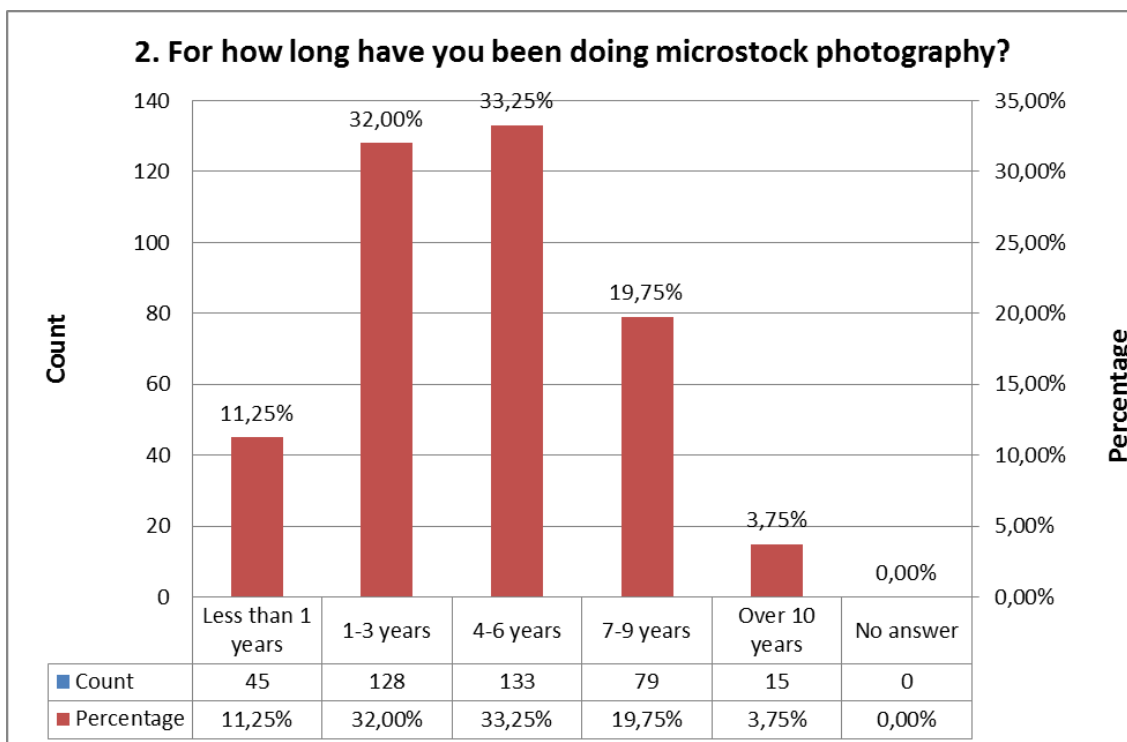
Thesis Advisor: Assoc. Prof. B. Aykut ARIKAN

Istanbul 2014

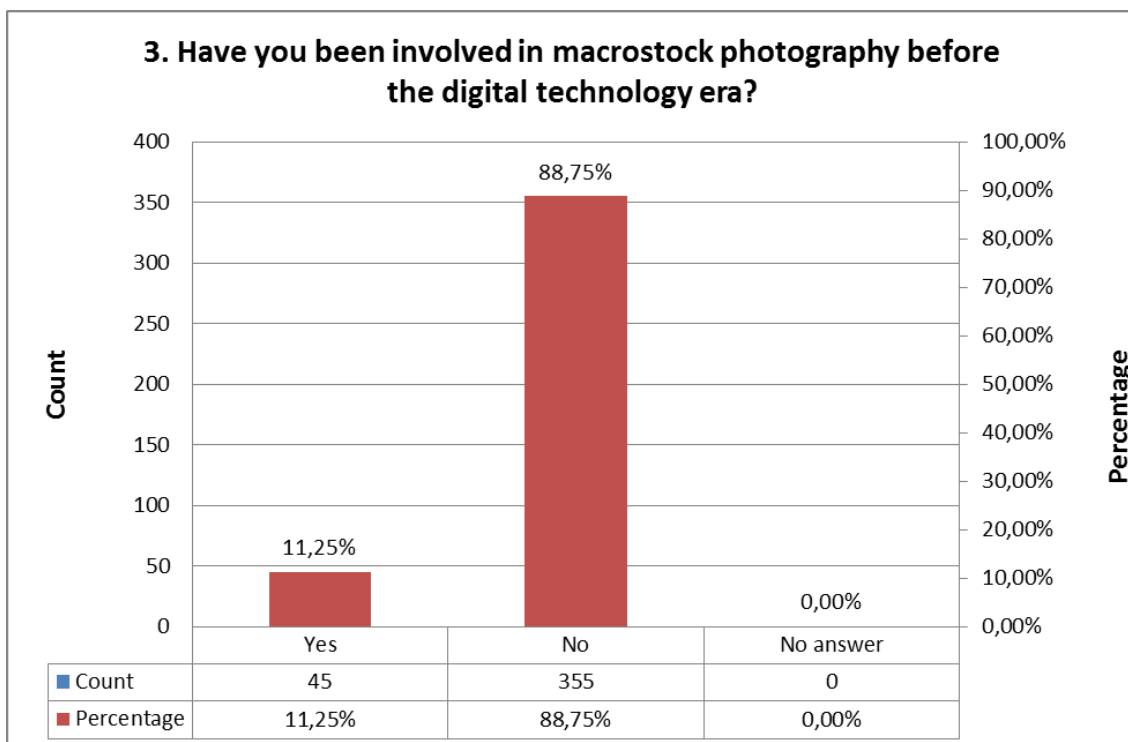
TRANSFORMATION OF STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURE INDUSTRY: A RESEARCH ABOUT MICROSTOCK INDUSTRY AND CONTENT PRODUCTION IN DIGITAL ERA



As seen in the Chart 1 that shows the practice duration of photography profession of 400 participants working with microstock photography; %23.5 of them claimed their practice as less than 5 years (94 persons), %29.5 as between 6 and 10 years (118 persons), %16.75 as between 11 and 15 years (67 persons), %5.25 as between 16 and 20 years (21 persons), %6.75 as between 26 and 30 years (27 persons), and %9.75 as more than 31 years (39 persons).



Analysing the microstock photography practice duration of these 400 participants we see that the major part is for between 4 and 6 years (%33,25, 133 persons), followed by 1 to 3 years (%32,00, 128 persons), 7 to 9 years (%19,75, 79 persons) and less than 1 year (%11,25, 45 persons) and finally 10 years and more (%3,75, 15 persons).



As shown by Chart 3, only %11,25 of participants (45 persons) practiced macrostock photography before digital technology. %88.75 (355 persons) claimed not having done stock photography before digital technology.

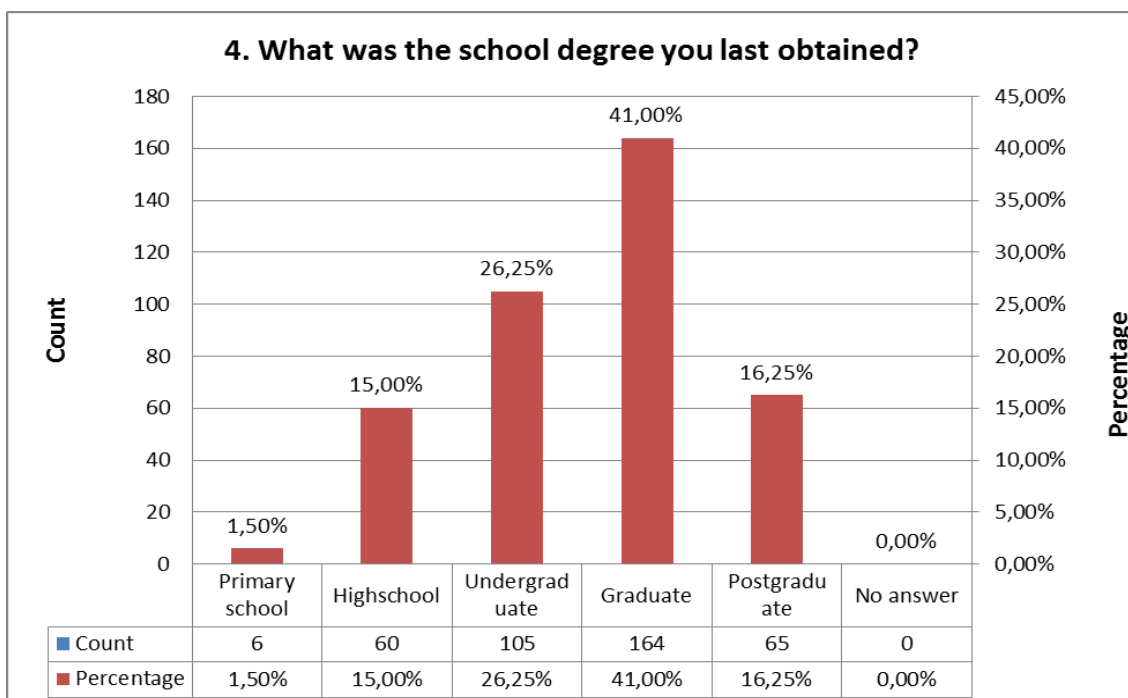
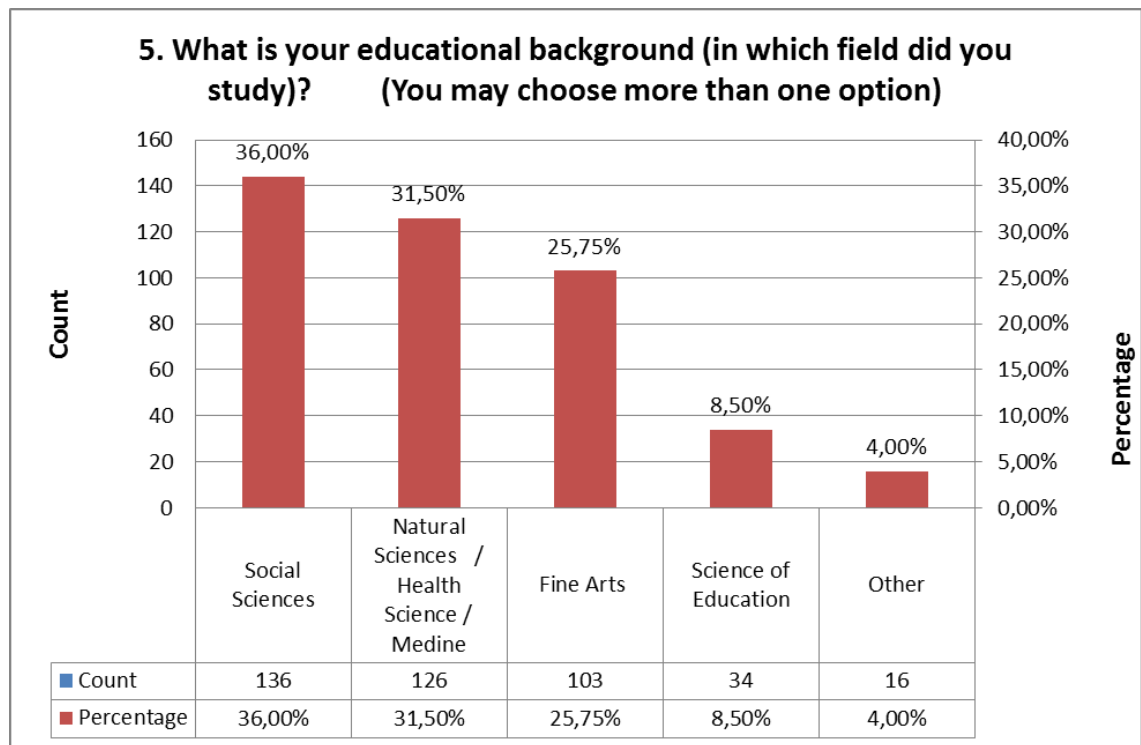


Chart 4 that shows educational profile of microstock photographers reveals that %1.50 (6 persons) of 400 participants is graduated from elementary school, %15.0 from high school (60 persons), %26.25 from undergraduate education (105 persons), %41.00 from graduate education (164 persons) and %16.25 from doctorate (65 persons).



The proportions of educational specialisations of 400 microstock photographers on the project are as following: Humanities %36.00 (136 persons), Science / Medical Science %31.50 (126 persons), Fine Arts %25.75 (103 persons), Educational Sciences %8.50 (34 persons) and other domains %4.00 (16 persons).

Analyzing the proportions of professional and scientific domains we see that with social, medical and technical sciences, the fine arts have proportion which is superior to %90.

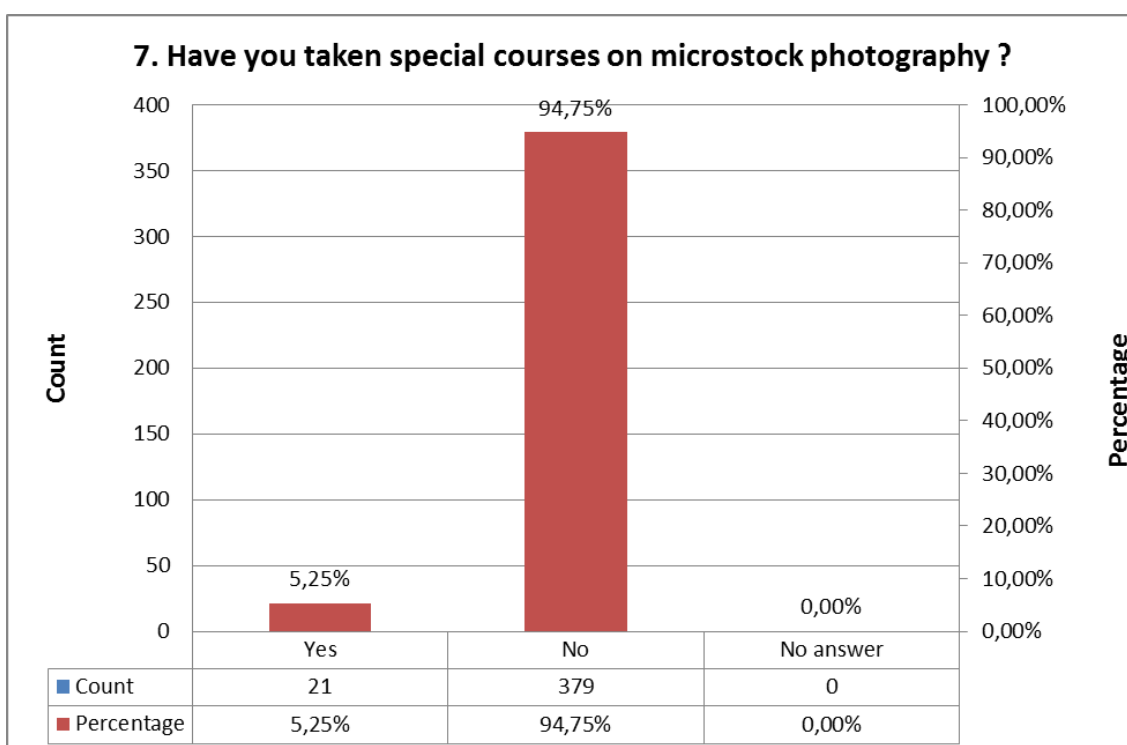
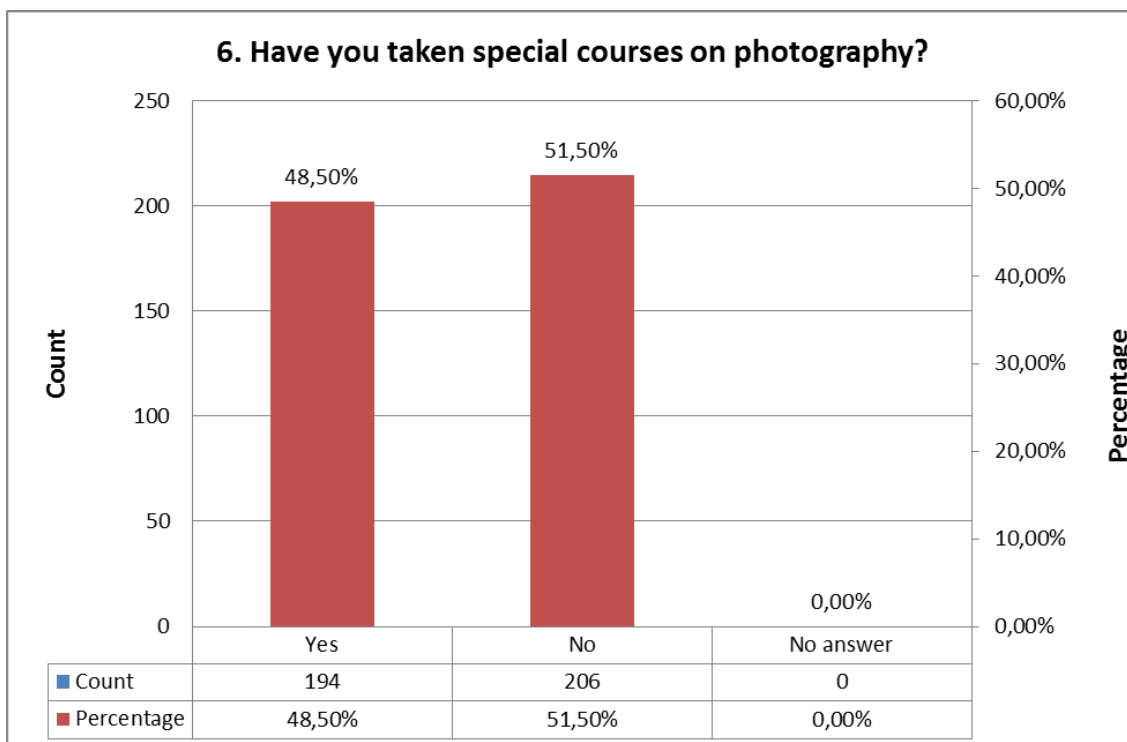


Chart 6 shows that %48,50 (194 persons) of microstock photographers received a training on photography and %51.50 of them (206 persons) are practicing this profession without having received a training on photography.

Chart 7 reveals that %94.75 (379 persons) of microstock photographers don't have any training on microstock photography and only %5.25 (21 persons) started this profession after receiving such a training.

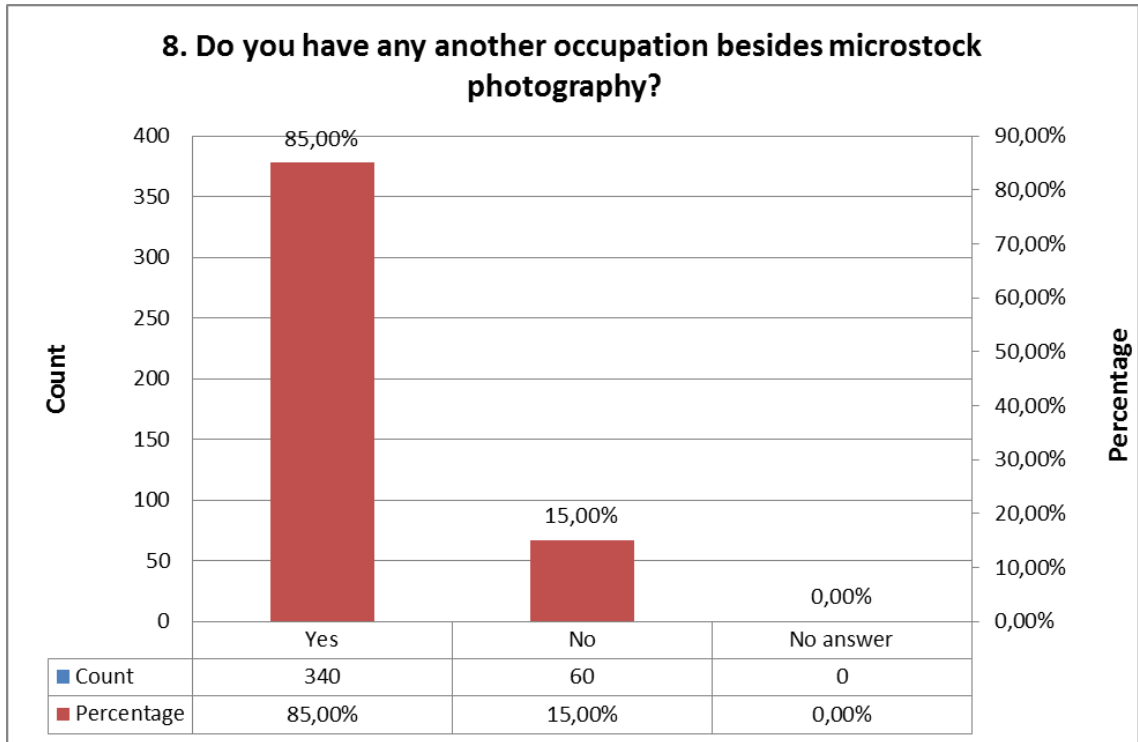
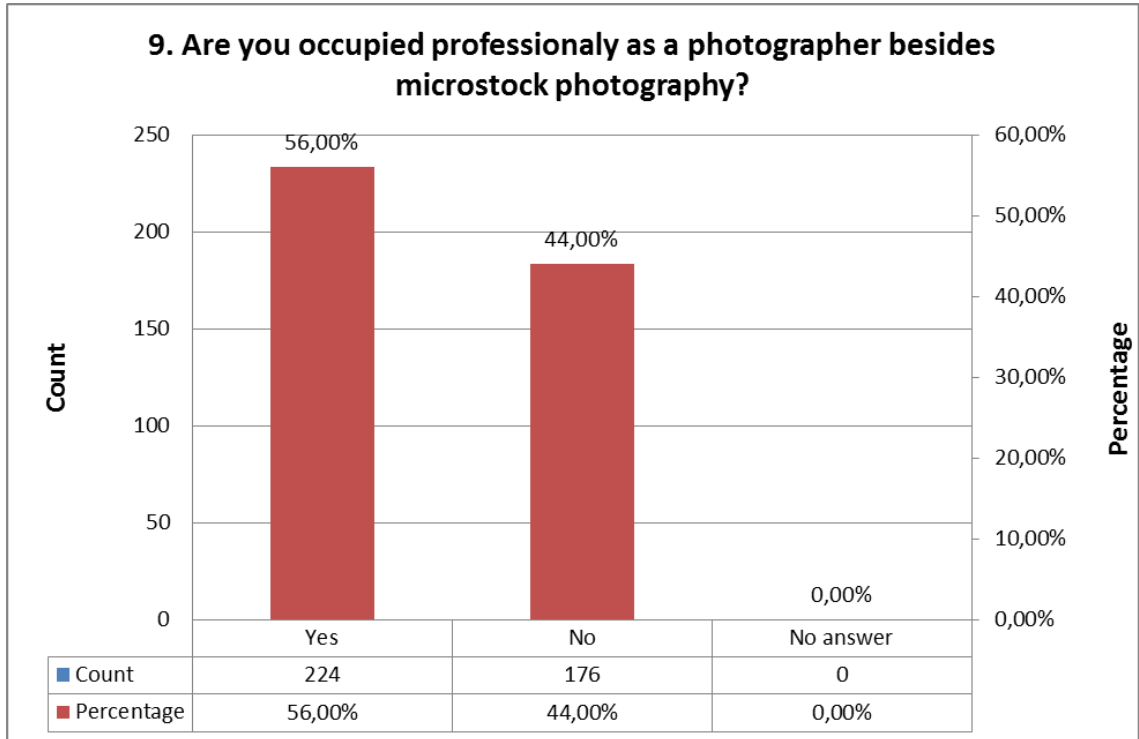
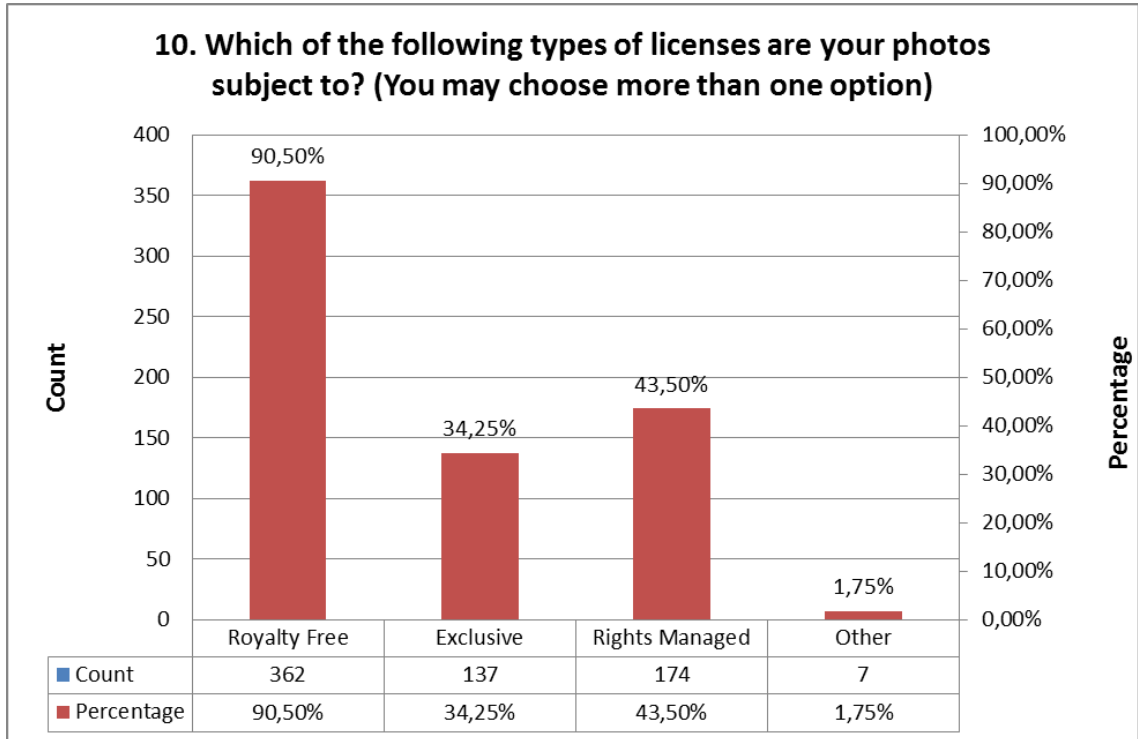


Chart 8 informs us about whether the microstock photographers have another job or not: %85.00 of participants (340 persons) have another professional revenue and %15.00 of them (60 persons) earn money only with microstock photography.



%56.00 of the participants of the survey (224 persons) are doing professional photography in addition to microstock photography and %44.00 of them (176 persons) aren't. As seen on the previous chart (Chart 8), considering that the proportion of participants practicing only microstock photography is %15.00, it can be presumed that %39.00 of them have a job other than photography.



In Chart 10 the proportions of license choices of microstock photographers can be found.¹ According to this chart %90.50 of them (362 persons) prefer “*Royalty Free*”, %43.50 of them prefer (174 persons) “*Right Managed*” and %34.25 of them prefer (137 persons) “*Exclusive*” while %1.75 (7 persons) work with other licence types.

¹ Since microstock photographers participated to the research work with more than one licence type, they have been given the possibility to make multiple choices.

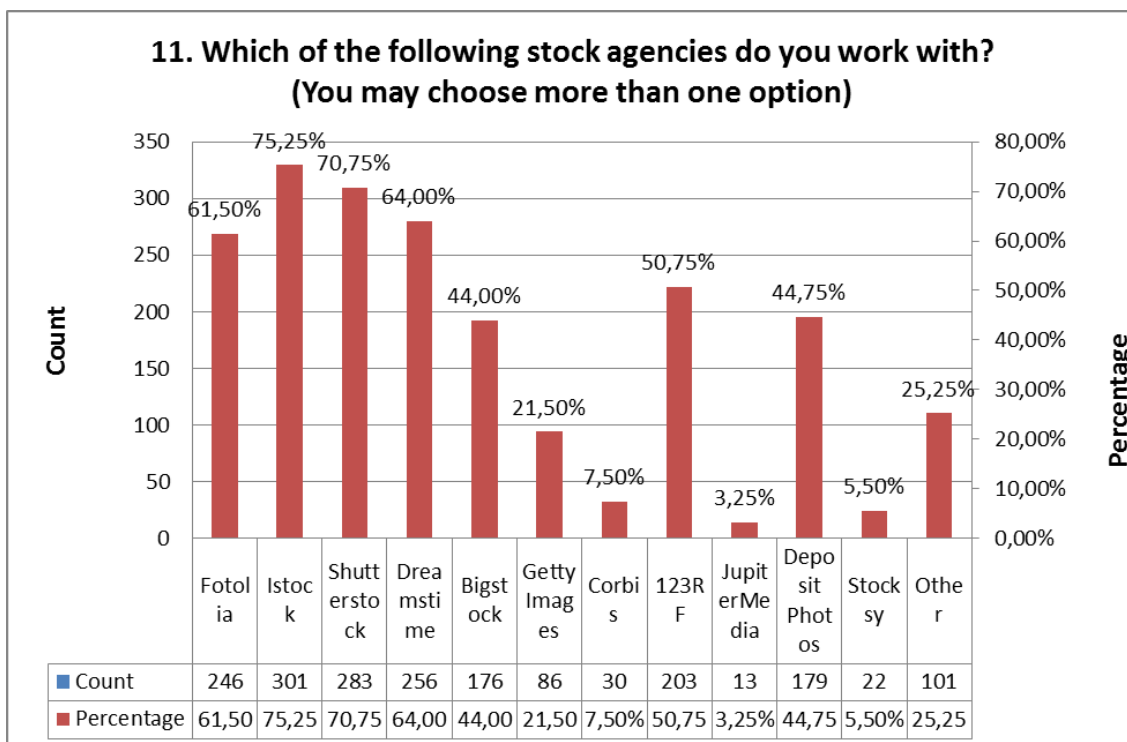
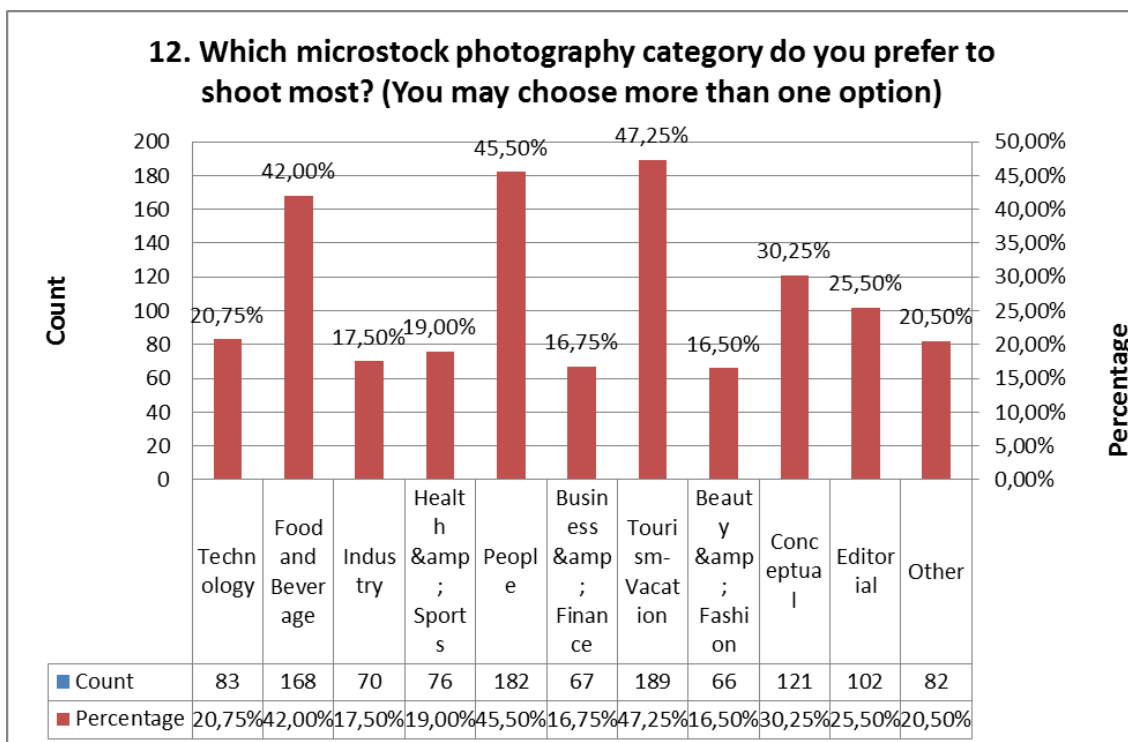


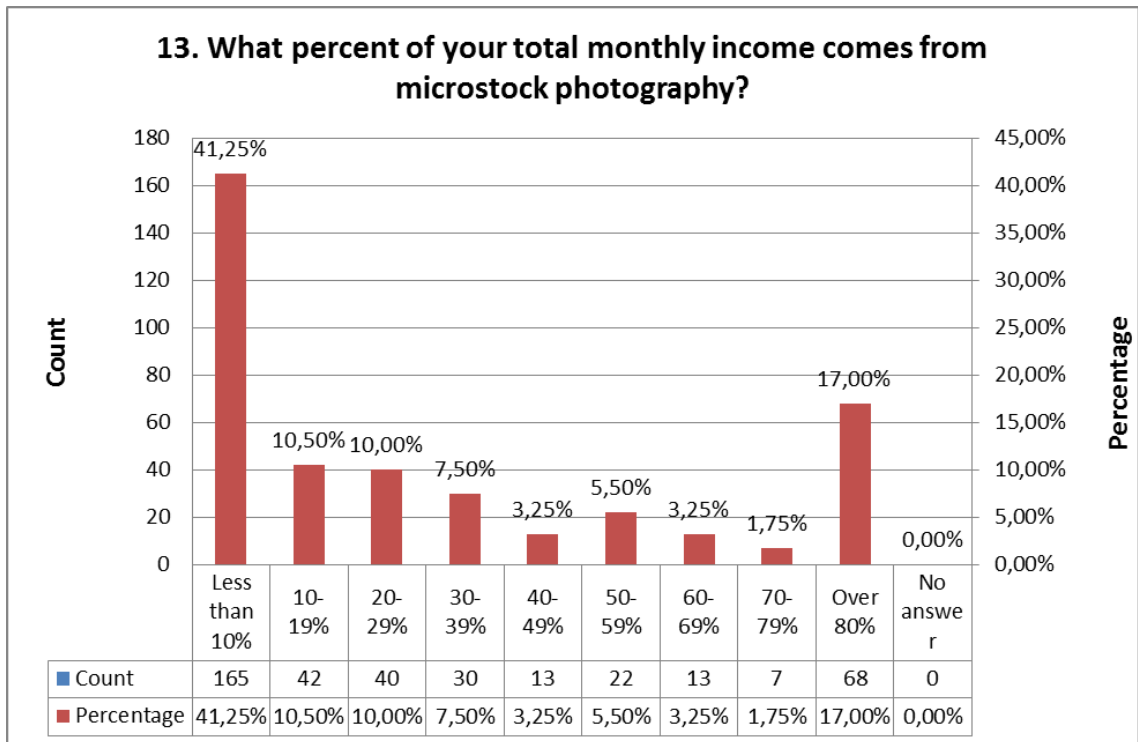
Chart 11 indicates the agencies microstock photographers work with.² %75.25 of the participants (301 persons) prefer Istockphoto, %70.75 (283 persons) Shutterstock, %64.00 (256 persons) Dreamstime, %61.50 (246 persons) Folia, %50.75 (203 persons) 123RF, %44.75 (179 persons) Deposit Photos, %44.00 (176 persons) Bigstock, %21.50 (86 persons) Getty Images, %7.50 (30 persons) Corbis, %5.50 (22 persons) Stocksy and %3.25 (13 persons) JupiterMedia.

² Since microstock photographers participated to the research may work with more than one agency, they have been given the possibility to make multiple choices.

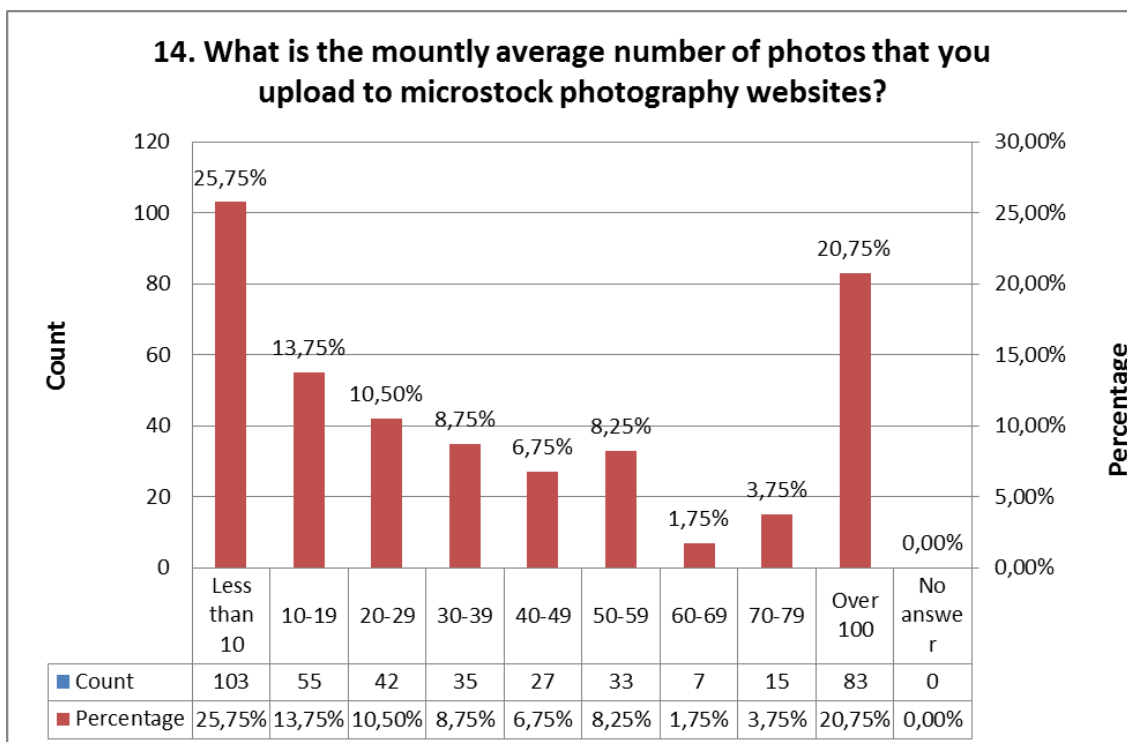


The proportions of categories 400 microstock photographers contributed to the project prefer to work on are as following:³ %47.25 (189 persons) Tourism and Holiday, %45.5 (182 persons) People, %42.00 (168 persons) Food and Beverage, %30.25 (121 persons) Concept, %25.50 (102 persons) Editorial, %20.75 (83 persons) Technology, %19.00 (76 persons) Health and Sports, %17.50 (70 persons) Industry, %16.75 (67 persons) Business and Finance, %16.50 (66 persons) Beauty and Fashion. And %20.50 of participants (82 persons) claim to work on another category.

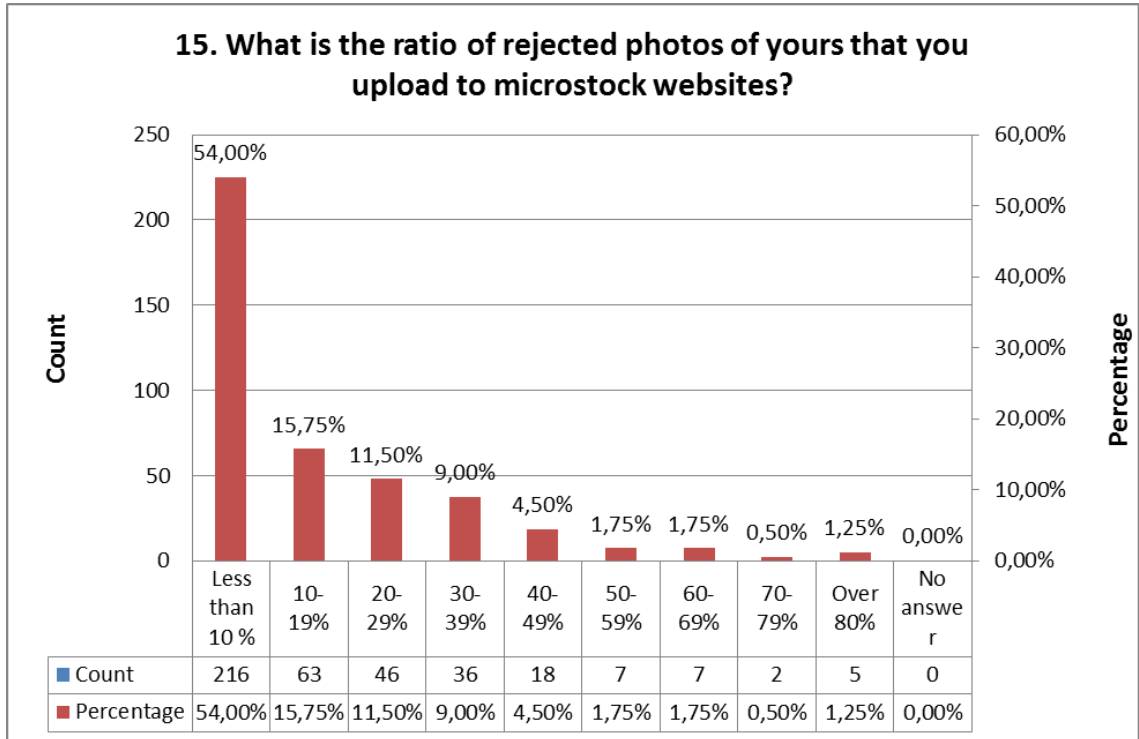
³ Since microstock photographers participated to the research may work with more than one photography type, they have been given the possibility to make multiple choices.



On Chart 13 which shows the proportion of microstock photography revenues to the monthly income of the participant we see that %41.25 (165 persons) claim it to be inferior to %10, %10.50 (42 Persons) to be between %10 and %19, %10.00 (40 persons) to be between %20 and %29, %7.50 (30 persons) to be between %30 and %39, %3.25 (13 persons) to be between %40 and %49, %5.50 (22 persons) to be between %50 and %59, %3.25 (13 persons) to be between %60 and %69, %1.75 (7 persons) to be between %70 and %79 and %17.00 (68 persons) to be superior to %80. According to table the microstock income of %72.5 in less than %50 of their monthly income.



The proportions of monthly picture uploads of the participants of the survey are as following: %25.75 (103 persons) say it to be less than 10, %13.75 (55 persons) between 10 and 19, %10.50 (42 persons) between 20 and 29, %8.75 (35 persons) between 30 and 39, %6.75 (27 persons) between 40 and 49, %8.25 (33 persons) between 50 and 59, %1.75 (7 persons) between 60 and 69, %3.75 (15 persons) between 70 and 79 and %20.75 (83 persons) more than 100. According to chart %79.25 of the participants upload less than 100 photographs per month to microstock websites.



On chart 15 showing the frequency of the agencies to refuse the pictures uploaded to microstock websites %54.00 (216 persons) declare it to be less than %10, %15.75 (63 persons) to be between %10 and %19, %11.50 (46 persons) to be between %20 and %29, %9.00 (36 persons) to be between %30 and %39, %4.50 (18 persons) to be between %40 and %49, %1.75 (7 persons) to be between %50 and %59, %1.75 (7 persons) to be between %60 and %69, diyenler, %0.50 (2 persons) to be between %70 and %79 and %1.25 (5 persons) to be higher than %80.

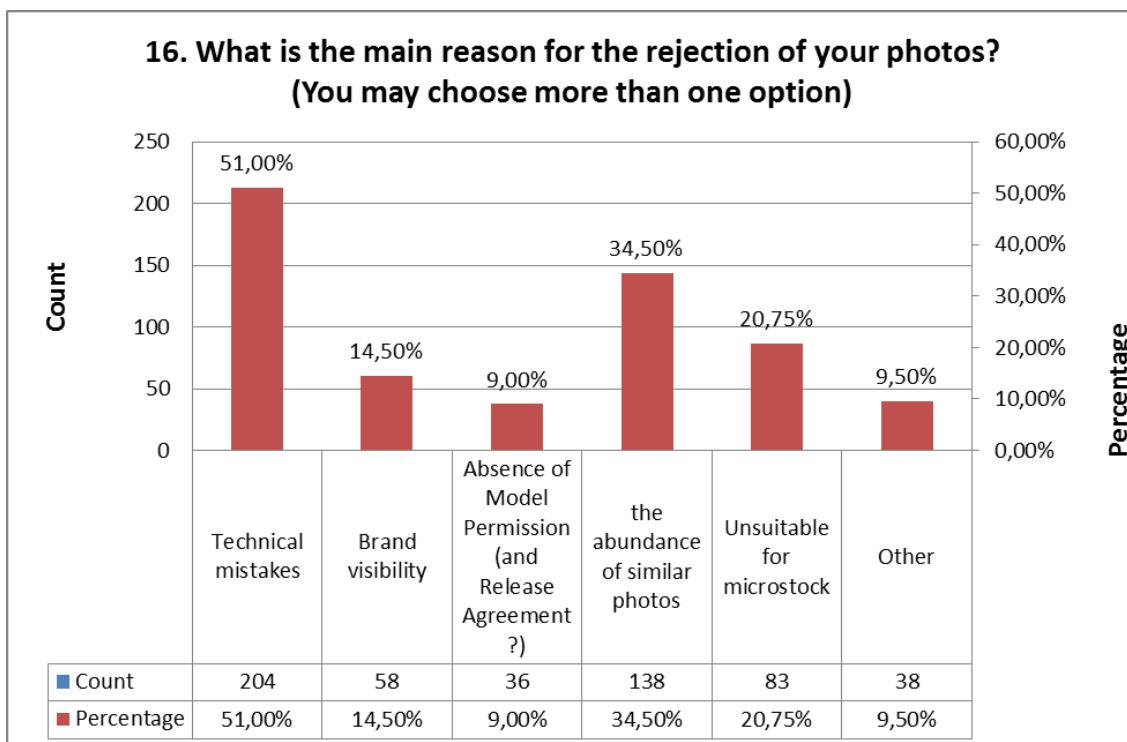
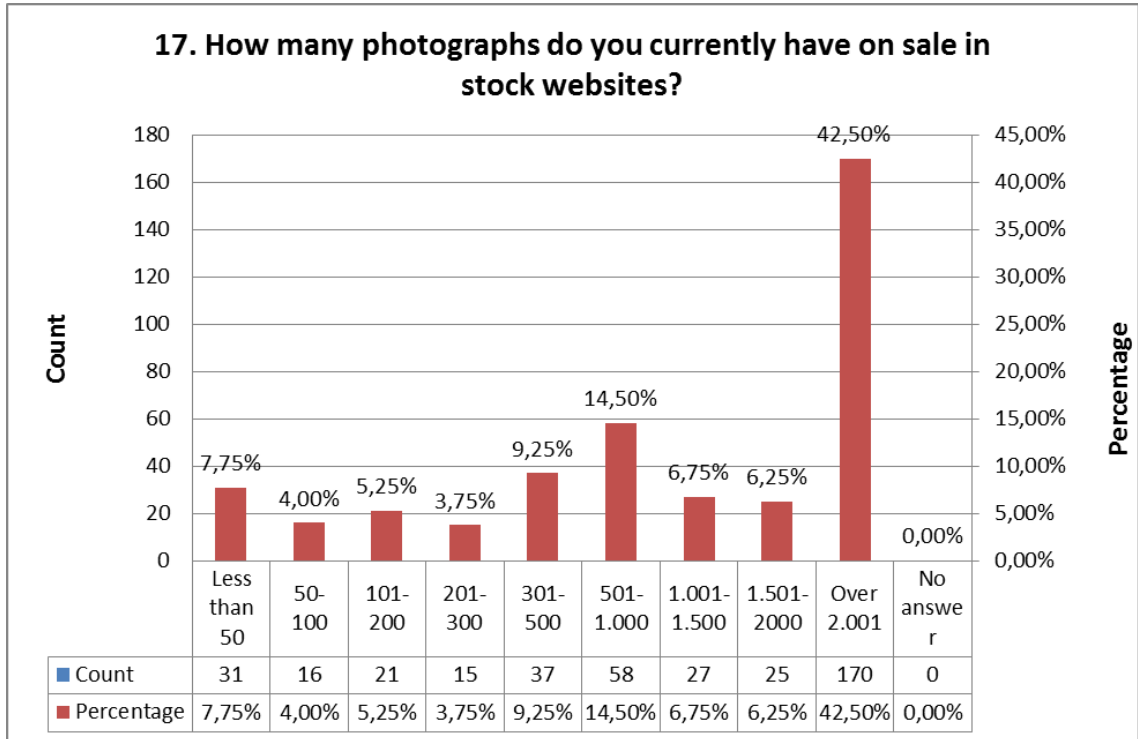
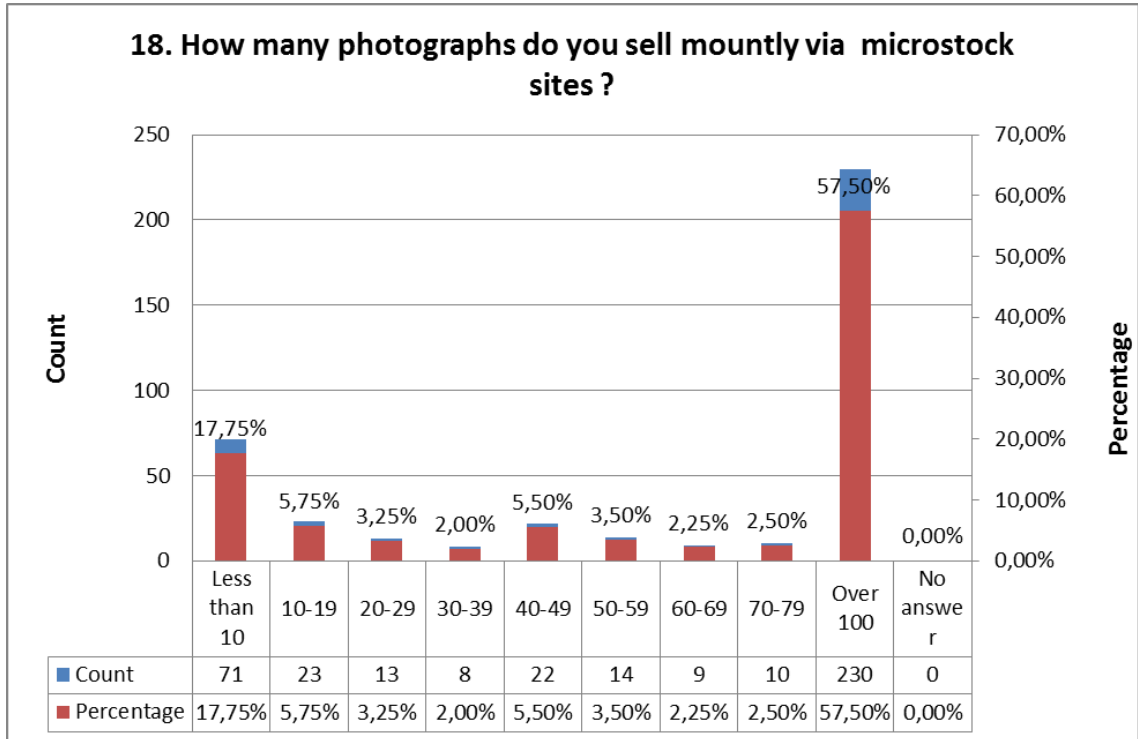


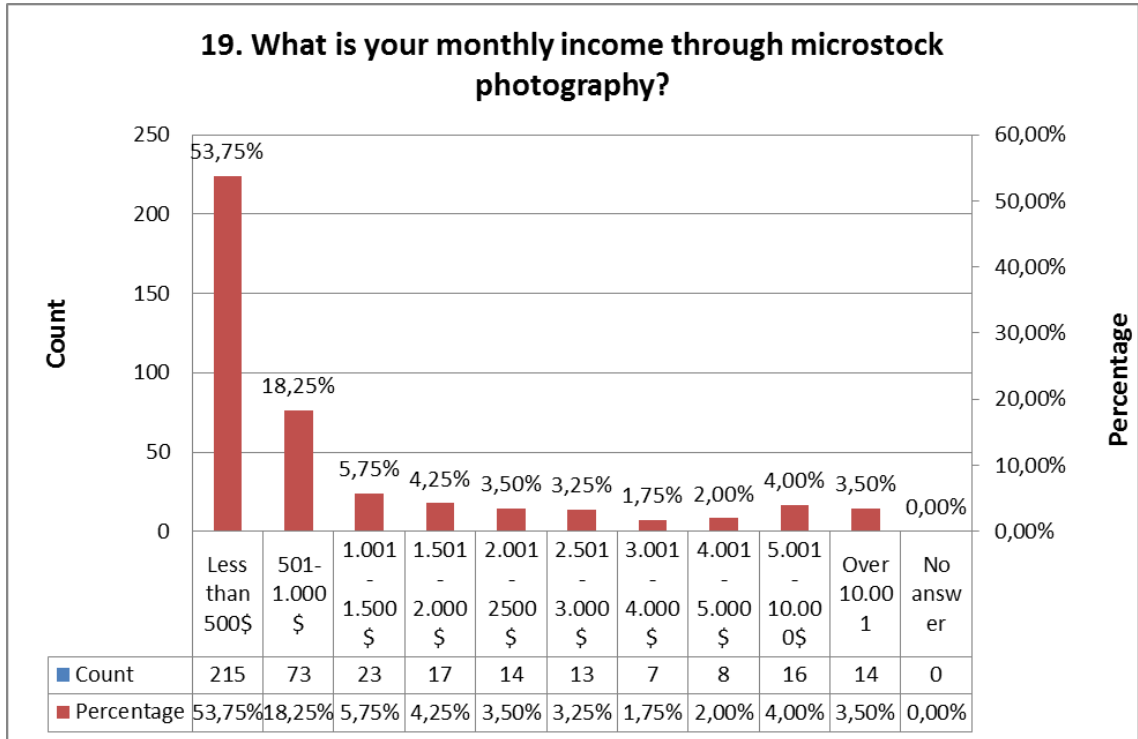
Chart 16 shows the reasons of refusals of pictures uploaded by microstock photographers. %51.00 (204 persons) choose technical mistakes, %14.50 (58 persons) brand visibility, %9.00 (36 persons) absence of model permission, %34.50 (138 persons) the multitude of similar pictures and %20.75 (83 persons) the inconvenience to the stock. %9.50 (38 persons) choose reasons different than previously given ones declaring mostly that these refusals are due to the insufficiency of the selection committee.



The total numbers of pictures the participants have on microstock websites are as following: %7.75 (31 persons) have less than 50 pictures, %4.00 (16 Persons) between 50 and 100, %5.25 (21 persons) between 101 and 200, %3.75 (15 persons) 201 and 300, %9.25 (37 persons) between 301 and 500, %14.50 (58 persons) between 501 and 1.000, %6.75 (27 persons) between 1.001 and 1.500, %6.25 (25 persons) between 1.501 and 2.000 and %42.50 (170 persons) more than 2.001 pictures.



The monthly average of pictures sold per participant is: %17.75 (71 persons) less than 10, %5.75 (23 Persons) 10 to 19, %3.25 (13 persons) 20 to 29, %2.00 (8 persons) 30 to 39, %5.50 (22 persons) 40 to 49, %3.50 (14 persons) 50 to 59, %2.25 (9 persons) 60 to 69, %2.50 (10 persons) 70 to 79 and %57.50 (230 persons) more than 100 pictures per month.



The monthly average income earned with microstock photography per participant is: %53.75 (215 persons) less than 500\$, %18.25 (73 persons) 501-1.000\$, %5.75 (23 persons), 1.001-1.500\$, %4.25 (17 persons) 1.501-2.000\$, %3.50 (14 persons) 2.001-2500\$, %3.25 (13 persons) 2.501-3.000\$, %1.75 (7 persons) 3.001-4.000\$, %2.00 (8 persons) 4.001-5.000\$, %4.00 (16 persons) 5.001-10.000\$, %3.5 (14 persons) higher than 10.001\$.

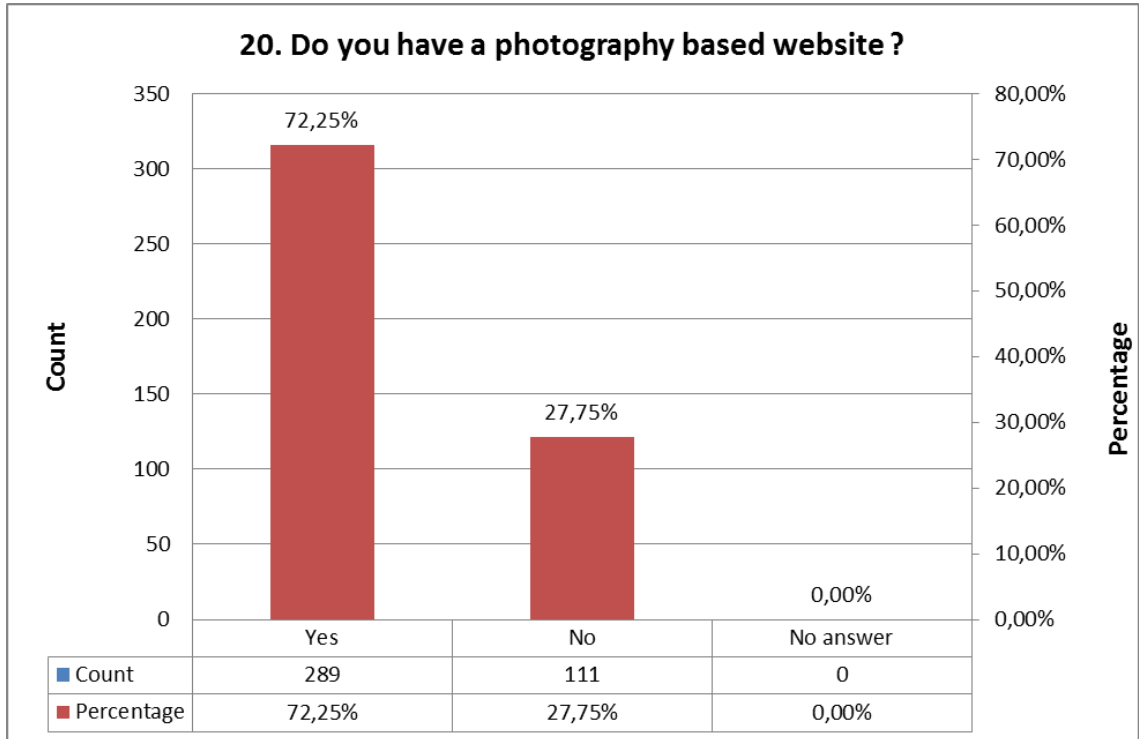
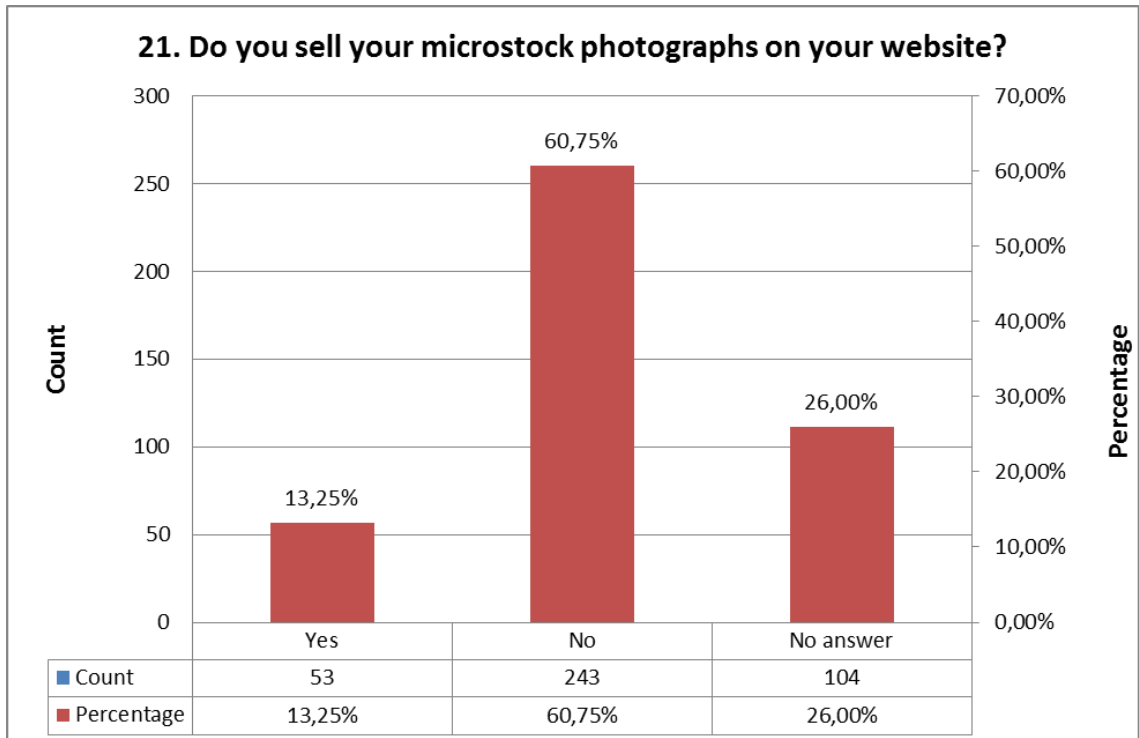
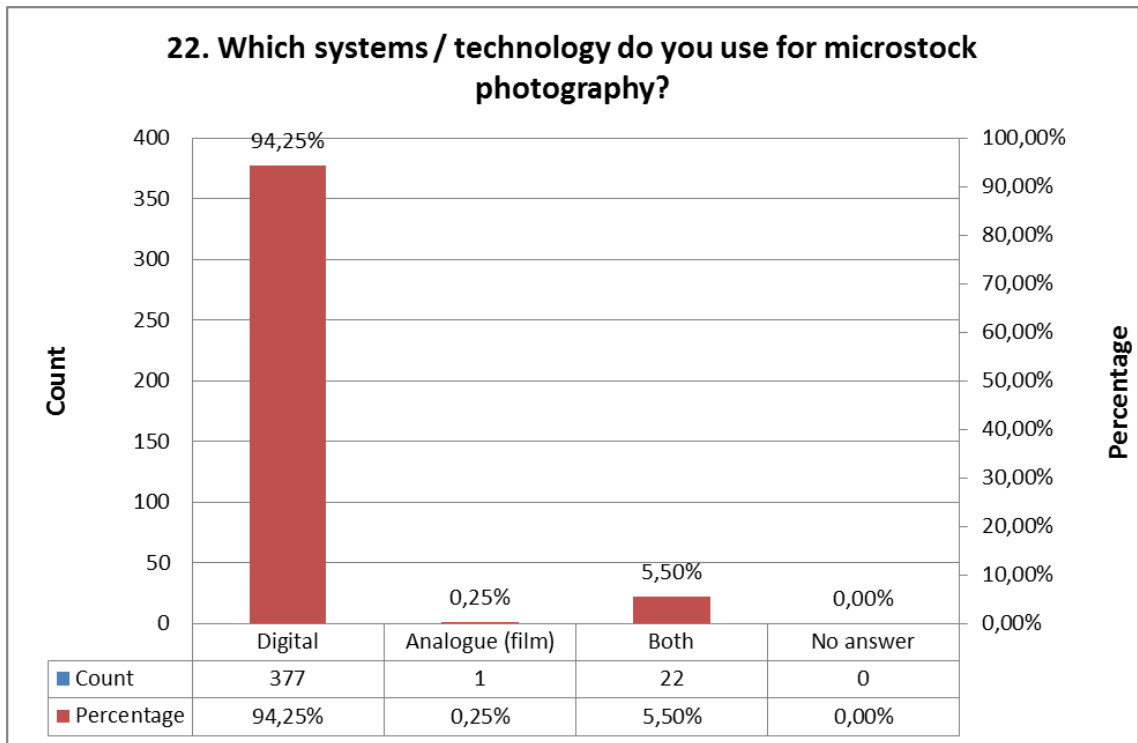


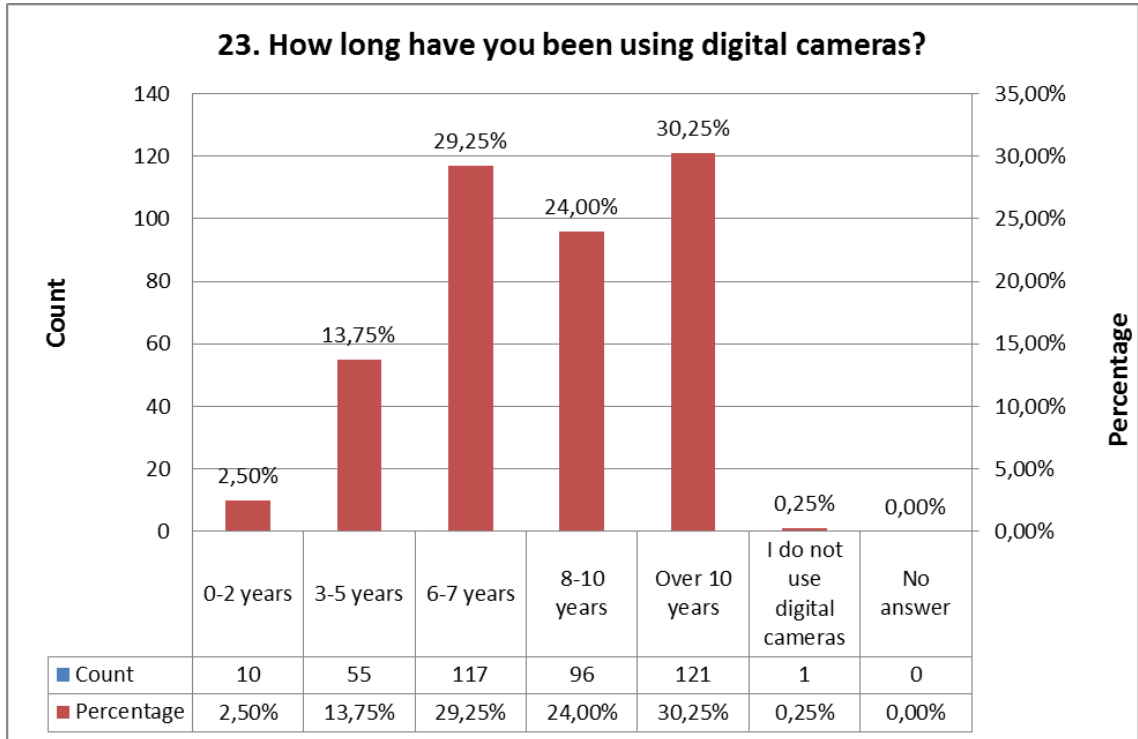
Chart 20 shows website possession of participants. %72.25 (289 persons) owns their own website while %27.75 (111 persons) don't.



Only %13.25 of participants (53 persons) make stock photography sellings on their own website and %60.75 of them (243 persons) don't. Participants who don't have personal websites weren't obliged to answer the 21th Question, but some of them have still chosen "No".



%94.25 of 400 microstock photographers (377 persons) use only digital cameras, only %0.25 of them (1 person) prefers analogue cameras and %5.50 (22 persons) use the both systemes.



As seen on Chart 23, %30.25 of participants (121 persons) have been using digital cameras for more than 10 years. The other proportions are: %29.25 (117 persons) for 6-7 years, %24.00 (96 persons) for 8-10 years, %13.75 (55 persons) for 3-5 years, %2.50 (10 persons) 0-2 years. As seen before 1 person prefers using analogue cameras.

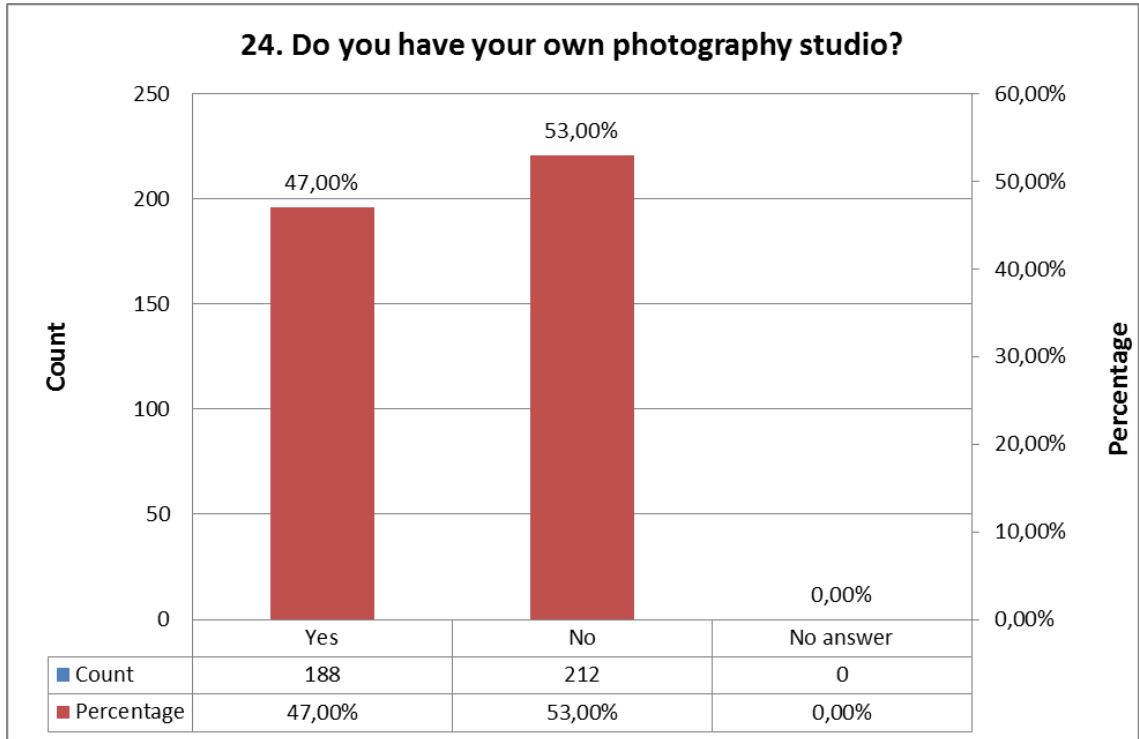
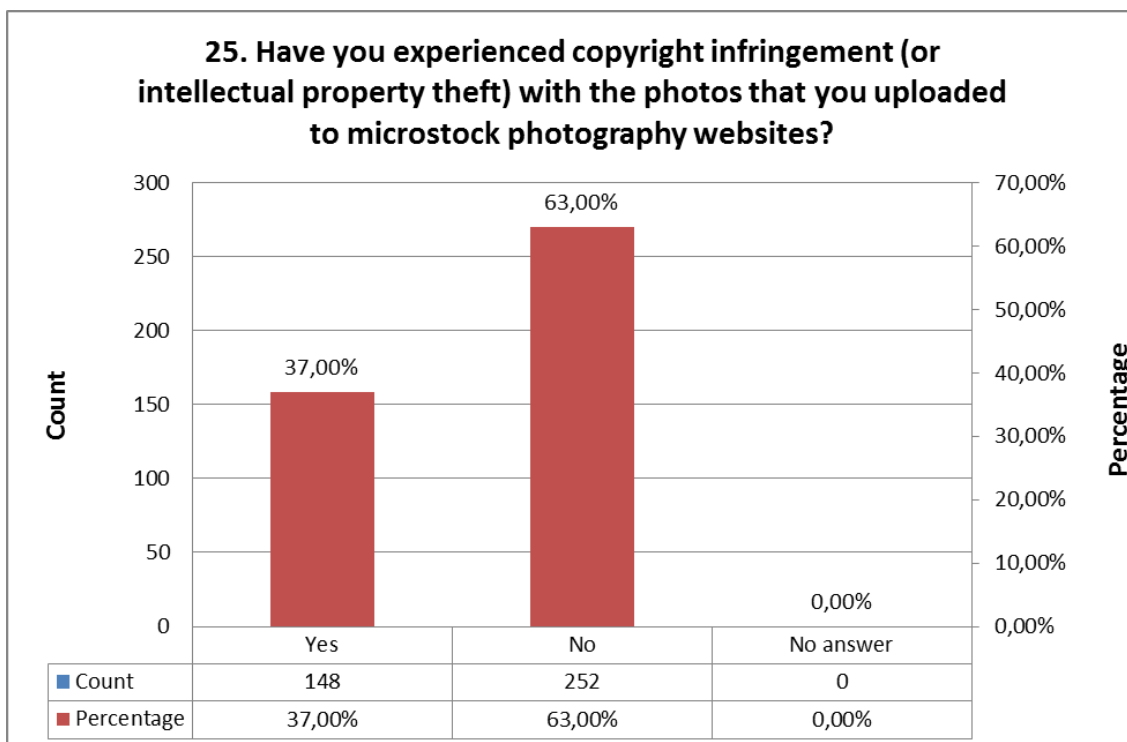
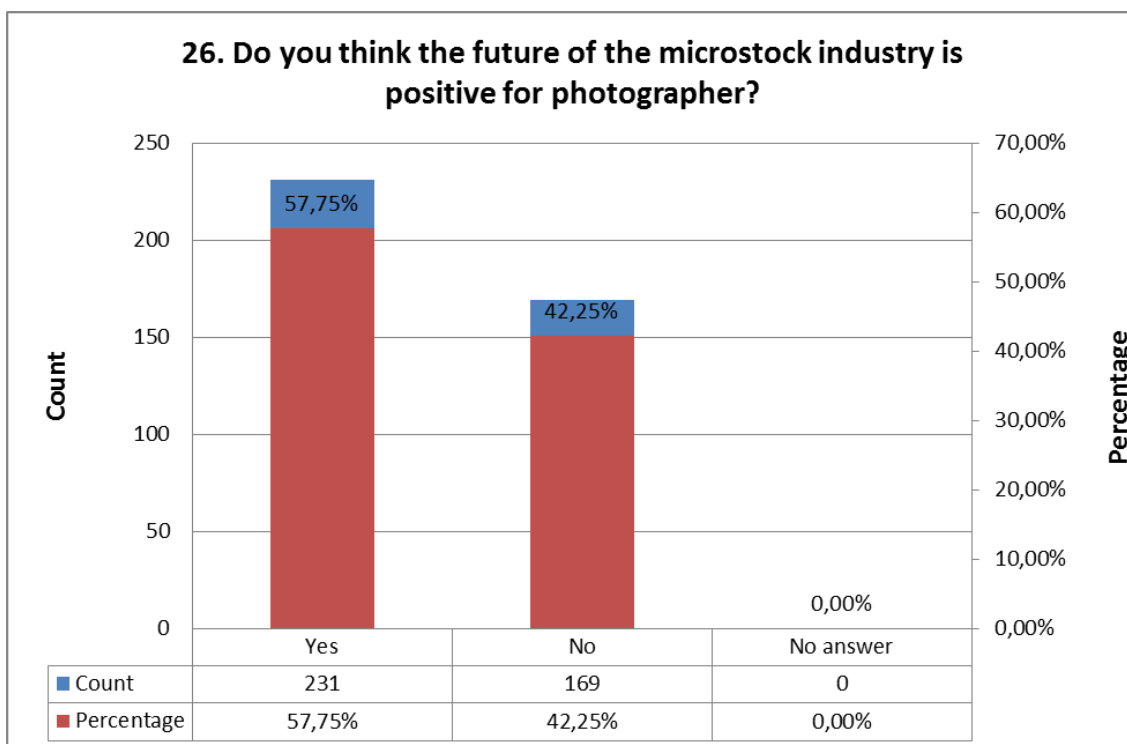


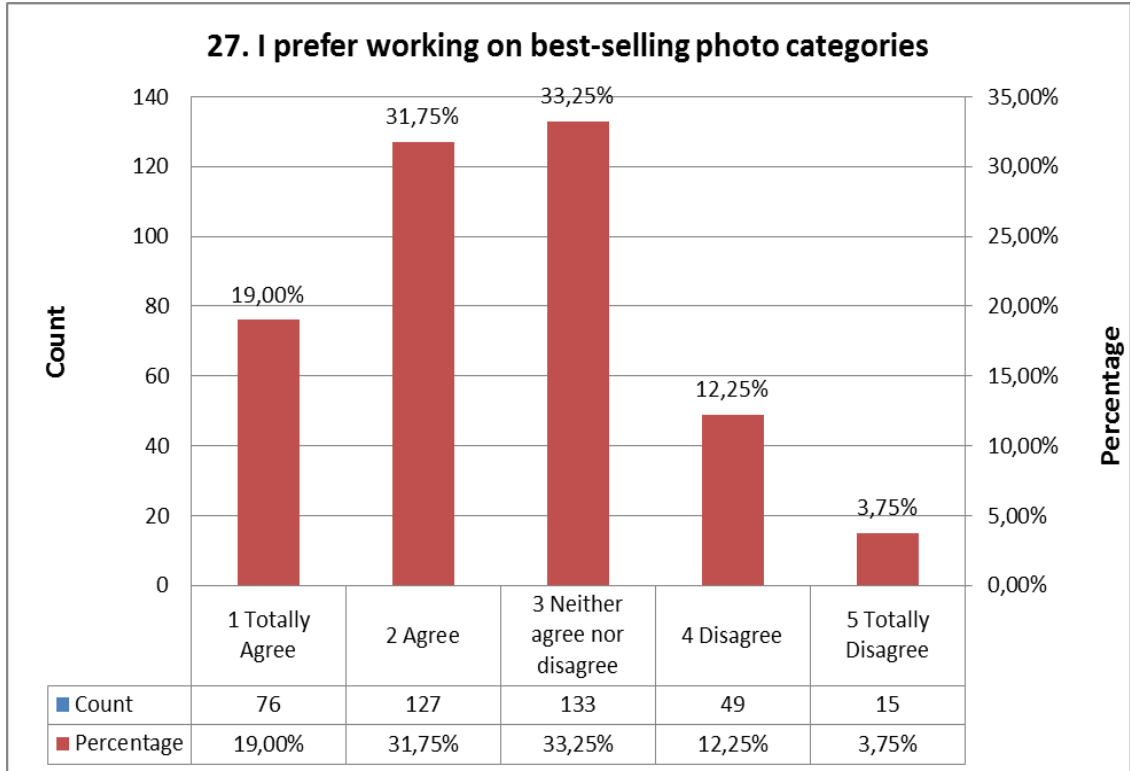
Chart 24 reveals the possession of personal studio numbers. %47.00 of participants (188 persons) own their own studio while %53.00 of them (212 persons) don't. These statistics show the importance of personal websites and intense marketing websites on the sector.



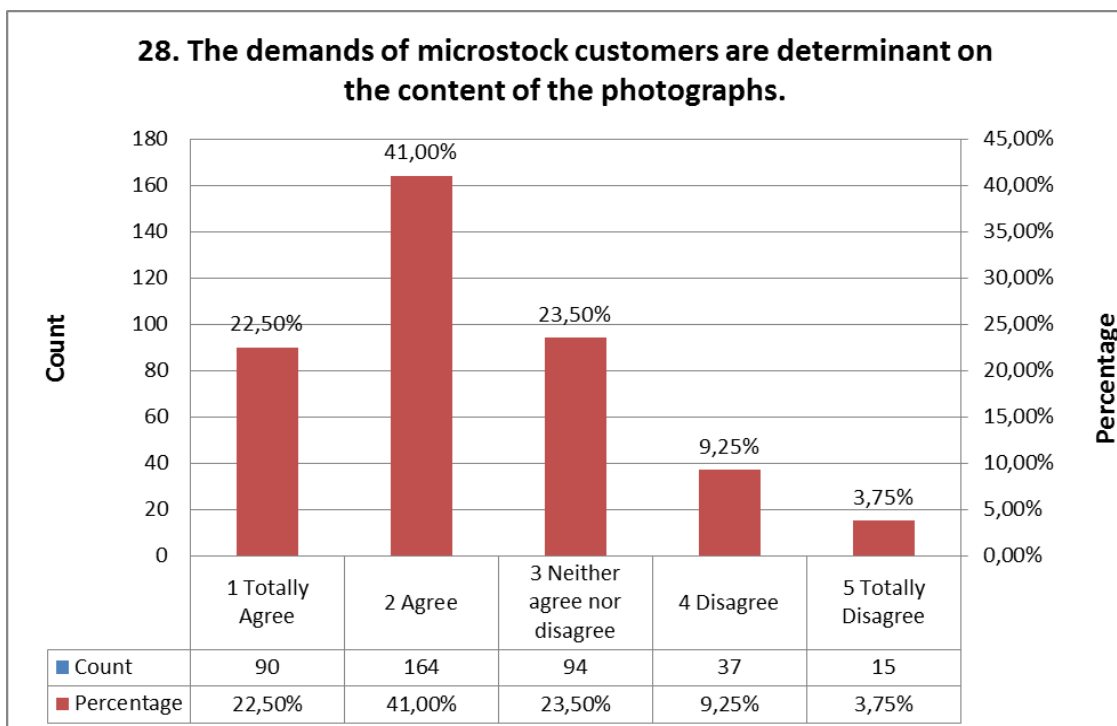
%63.00 of participants (252 persons) don't have any copyright problems with pictures they uploaded to microstock websites while %37.00 of them (148 persons) declare having experienced problems about copyrights.



%57.75 of microstock photographers (231 persons) think that microstock photography will have a positive development for photographers while %42.25 of participants (169 persons) don't agree with them.

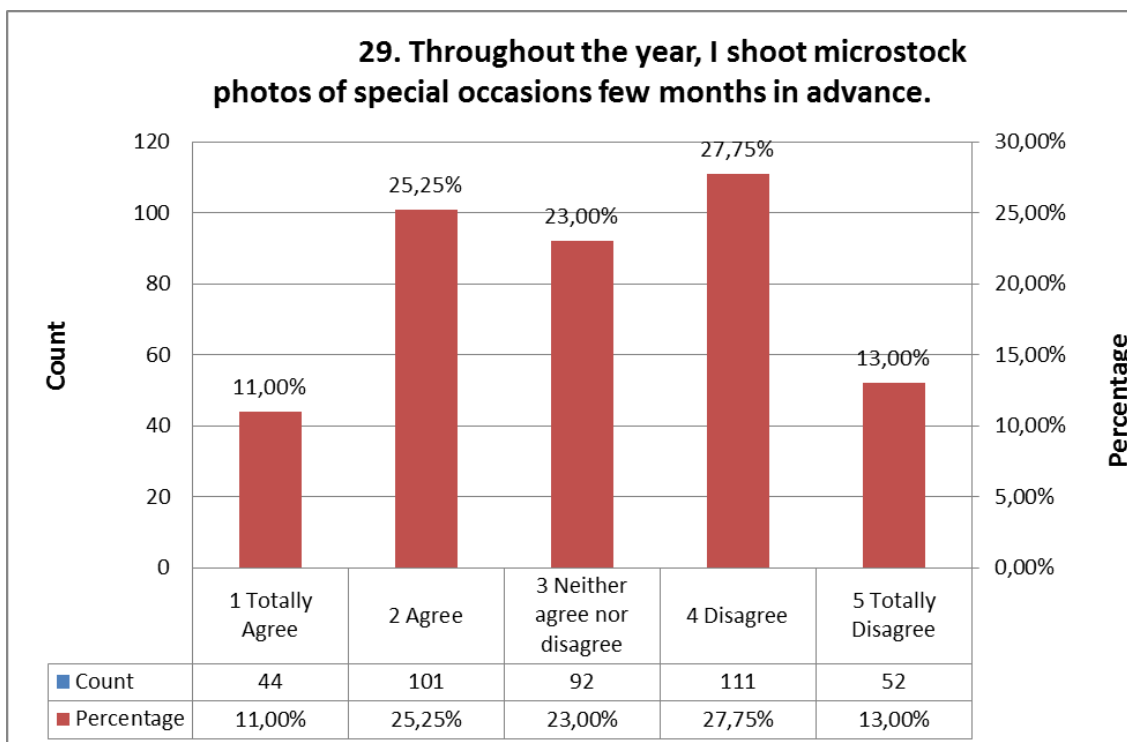


%50.75 of photographers (203 persons) agree with and %16.00 (64 persons) don't agree with the following proposition: *“I prefer working on bestselling picture categories.”*

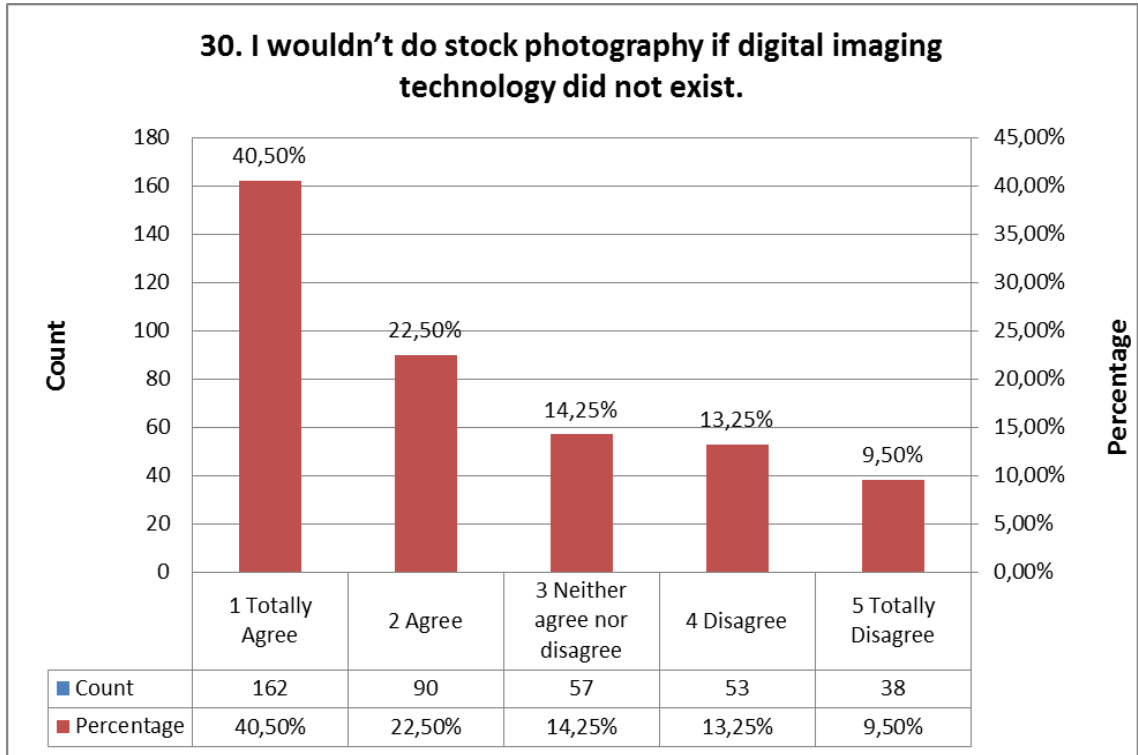


%63.50 of photographers (254 persons) say “*The demands of microstock photography clients are important to me while deciding the content of the works.*” and %13.00 of them (52 persons) don't think as the others.

It can be said that the proportions on Chart 27 and 28 are normal as expected.



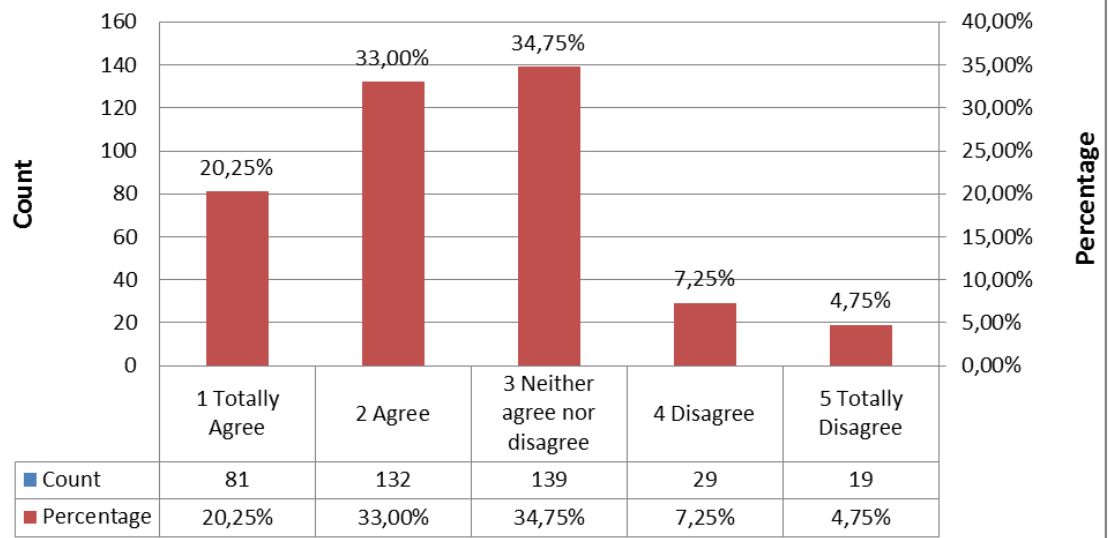
“During the year I realize microstock photo shootings a few month prior to the usage date.” corresponds to %36.25 (145 persons) but not to %40.75 (163 persons).



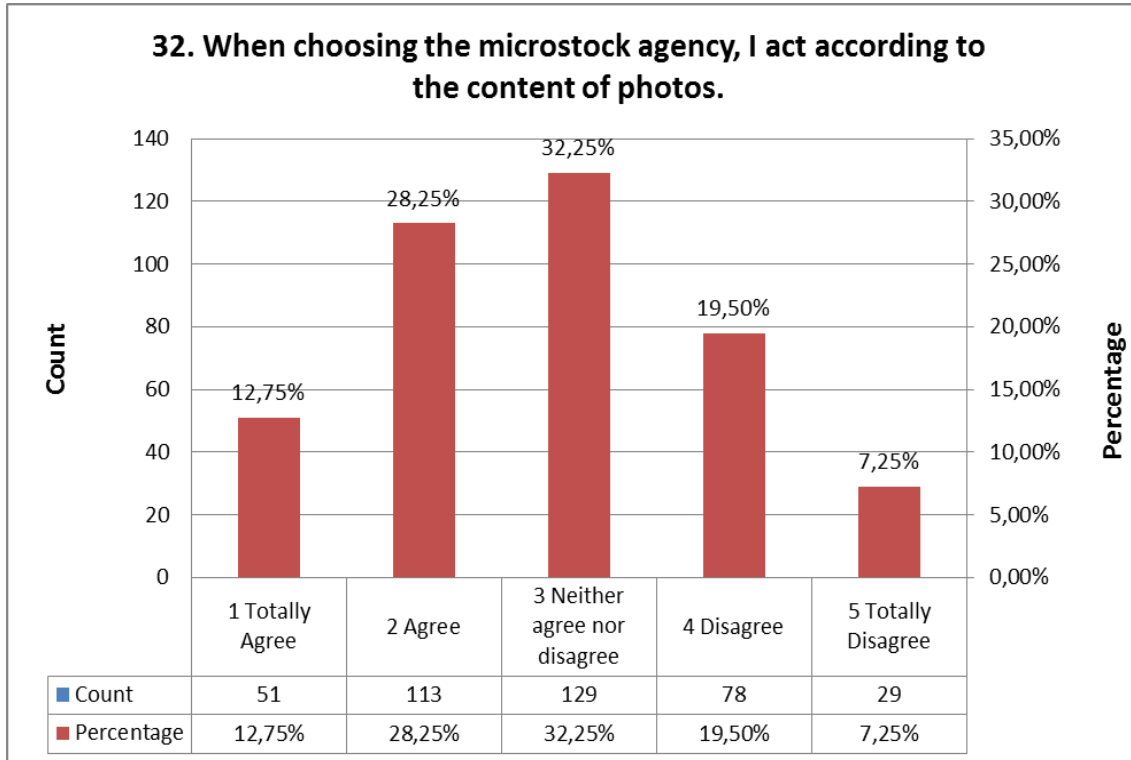
“Without digital photography, I wouldn't be able to make microstock photography.” is accepted by %63.00 (252 persons) and %22.75 (91 persons) don't agree with this statement.

The results on this chart inform us again about the relation between technological development and microstock photography.

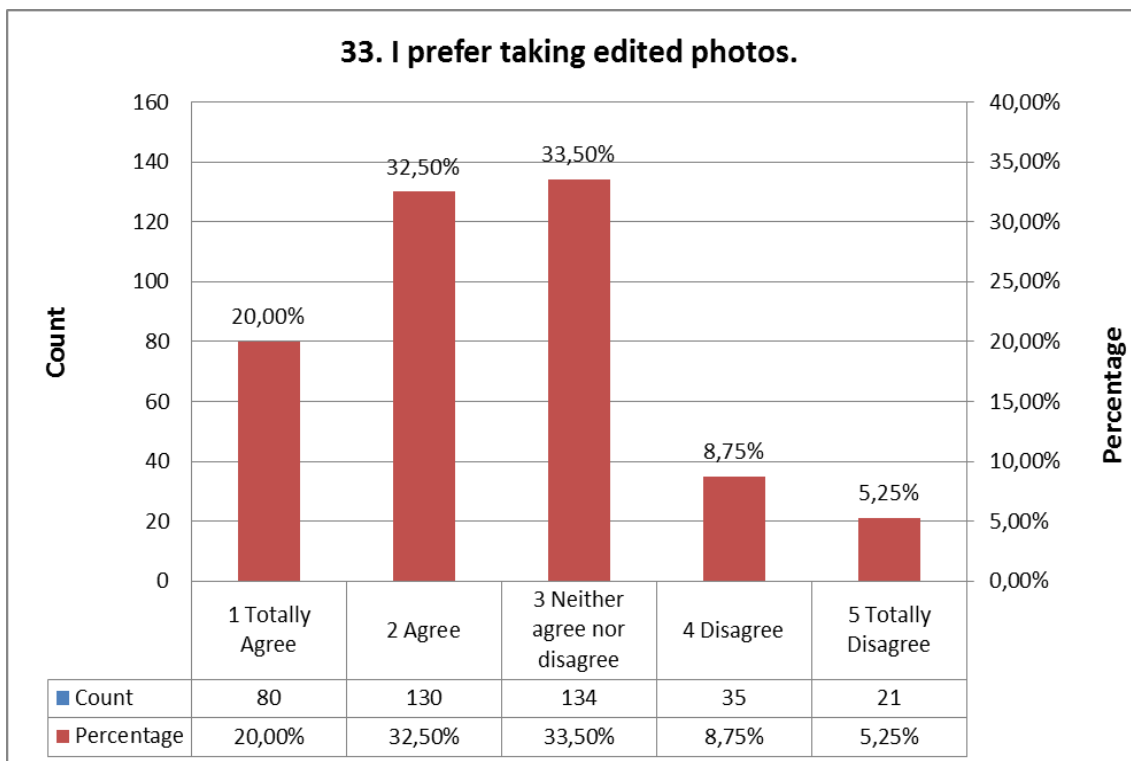
31. When selecting the model, I pay importance to the suitability of the physical and cultural characteristics of the model to the content of the photo rather than beauty of the model.



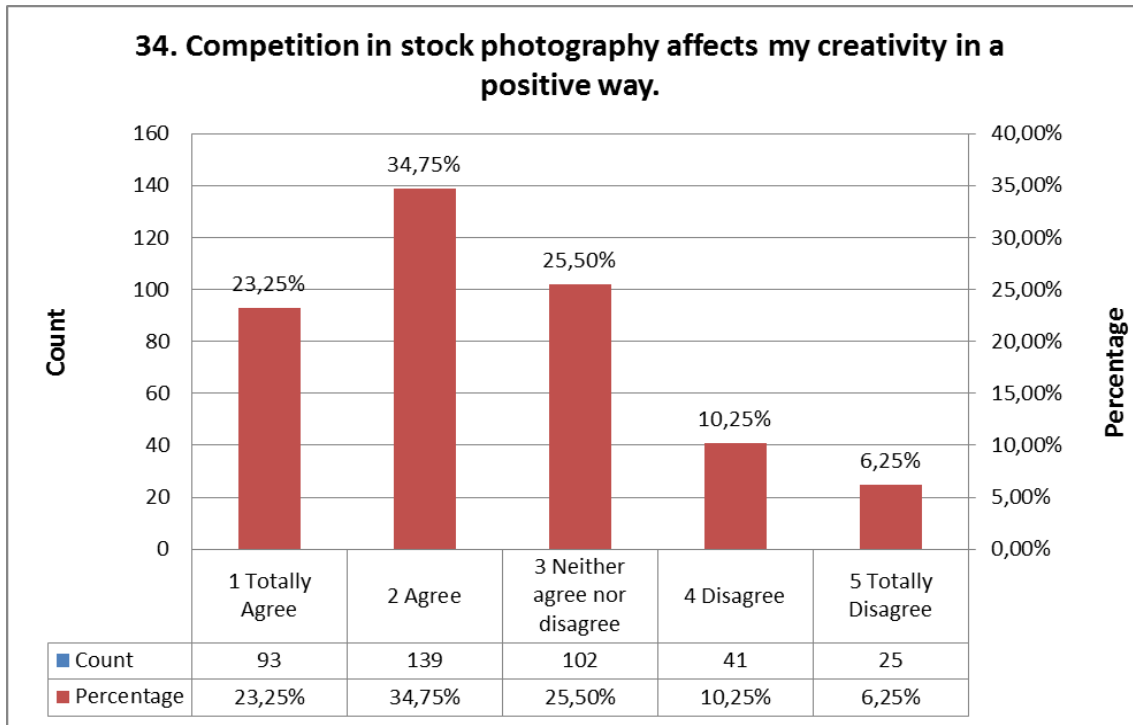
%53.25 (213 persons) agree with and %12.00 (48 persons) don't agree with the following statement: *“While choosing my models I give priority not to their beauty but to their physical and cultural characters that conform to the content of the photo.”*



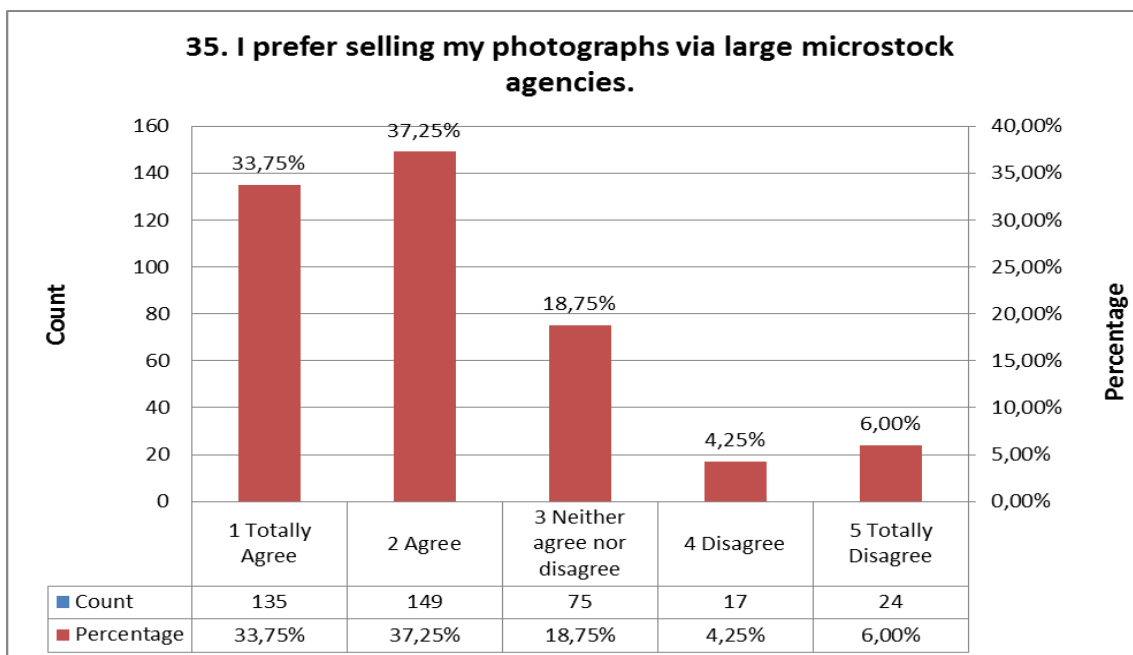
%41.00 (164 persons) agree with and %26.75 (107 persons) don't agree with the following statement: *“While choosing my microstock agency I give priority to the content of the photo.”*



“I prefer taking fictionalized photos” say %52.50 (210 persons) and %14.00 (56 persons) don't agree on this statement.

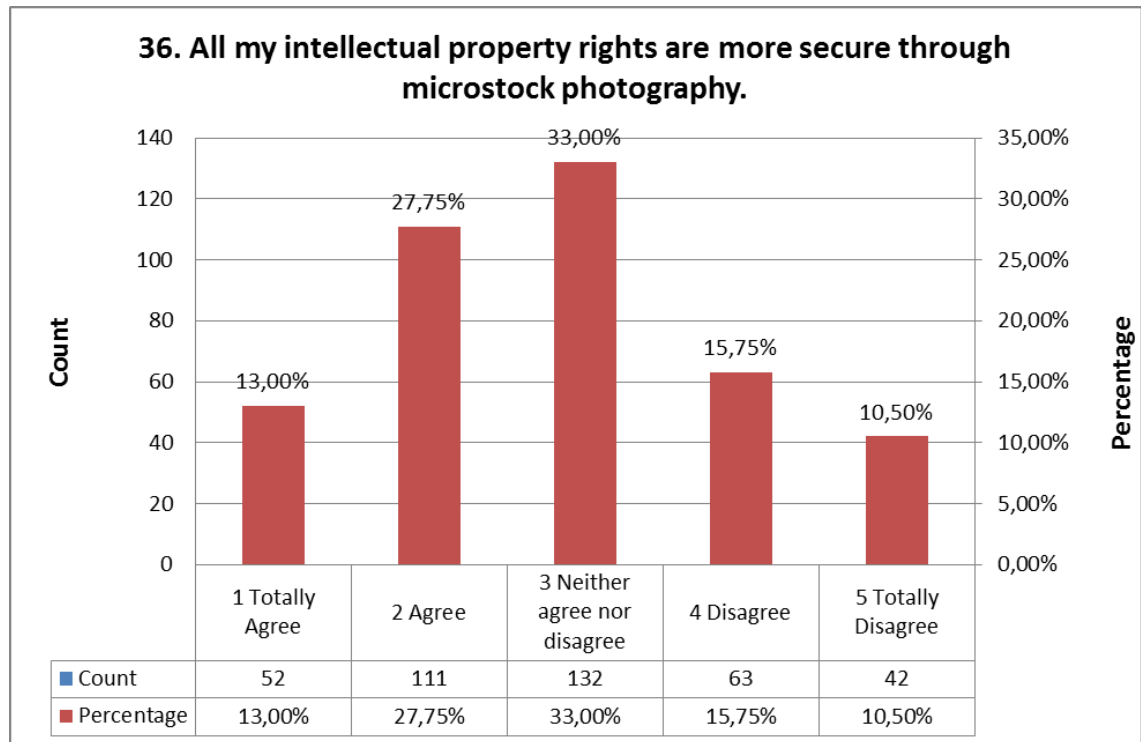


%58.00 (232 persons) say *“The rivalry on microstock photography sector has a positive effect on my creativity.”* and %16.50 (66 persons) thin the opposite way.

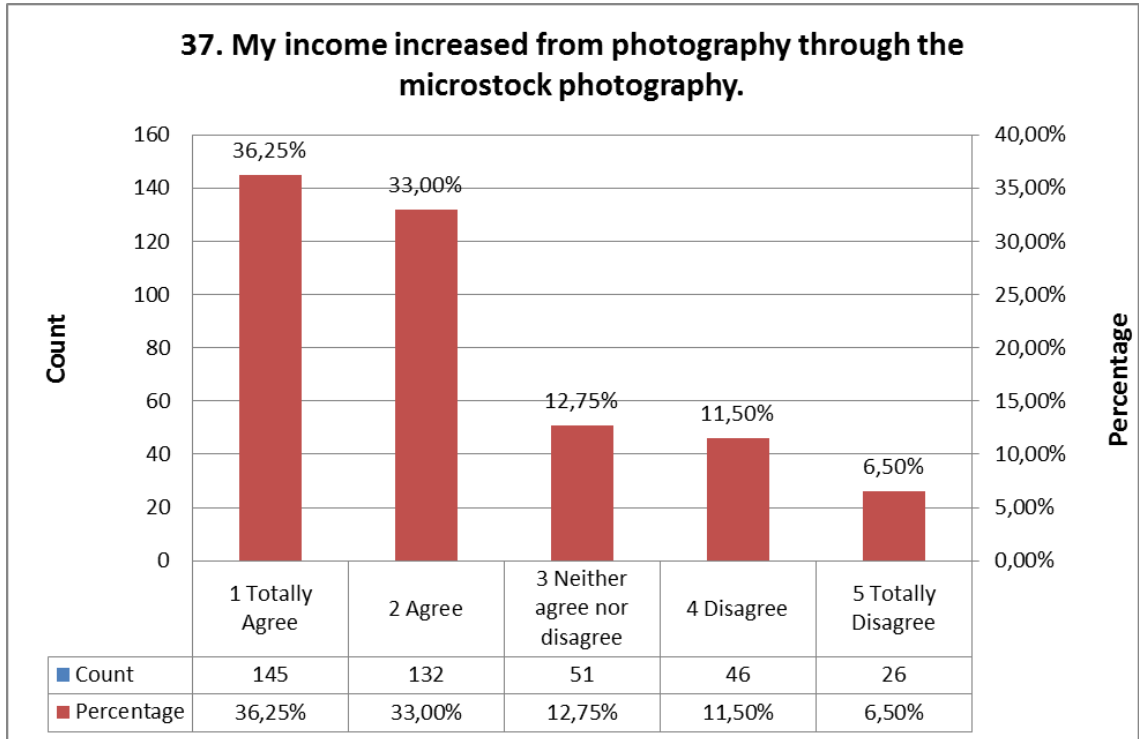


“I prefer selling my photos via great microstock agencies” say %71.00 (284 persons) and %10.25 (41 persons) don't agree on this statement.

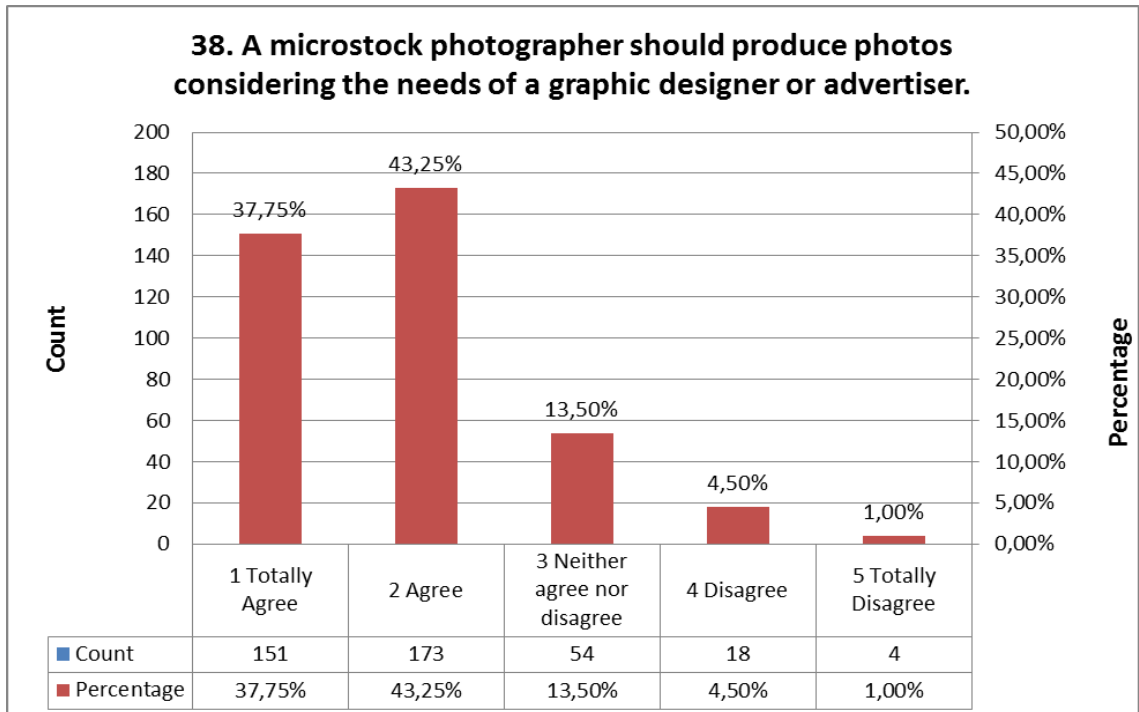
These results show that marketing techniques have an "intensed" importance on the sector.



“With microstock photography my copyright are better protected.” say %40.75 of participants (163 persons), while %26.25 (105 persons) don't agree with them.

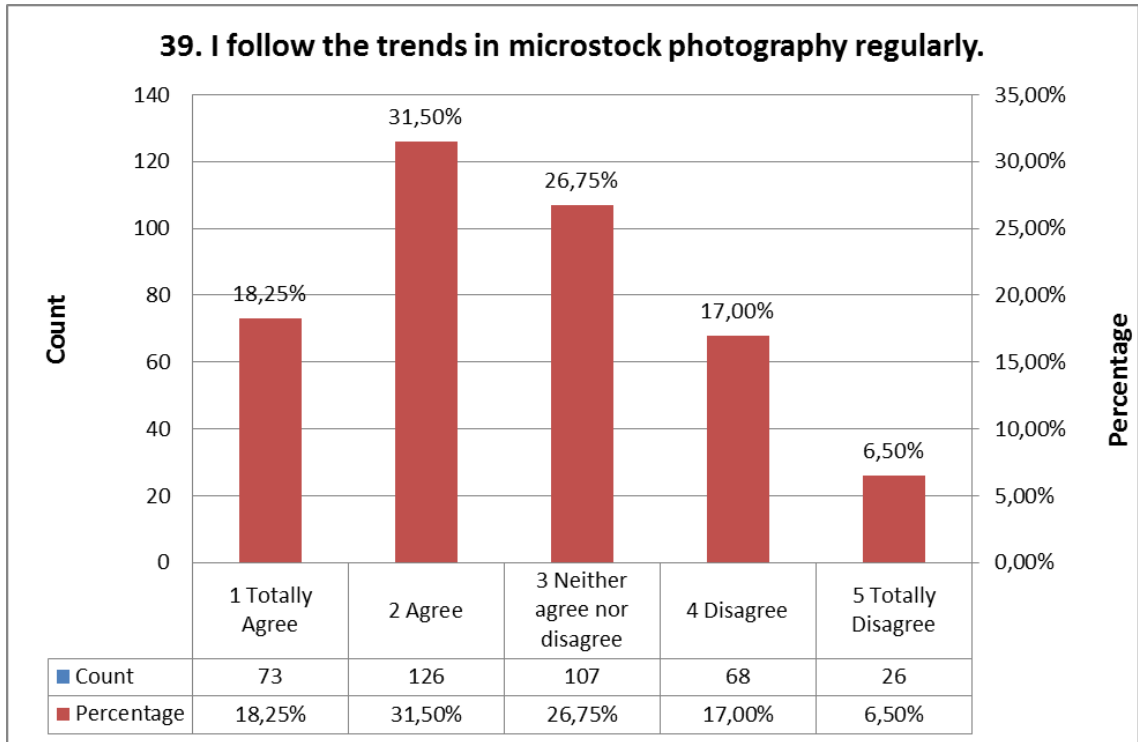


“With microstock system, I earn more from photography.” say %69.25 of participants (277 persons), while %18.00 (72 persons) don't agree with them.

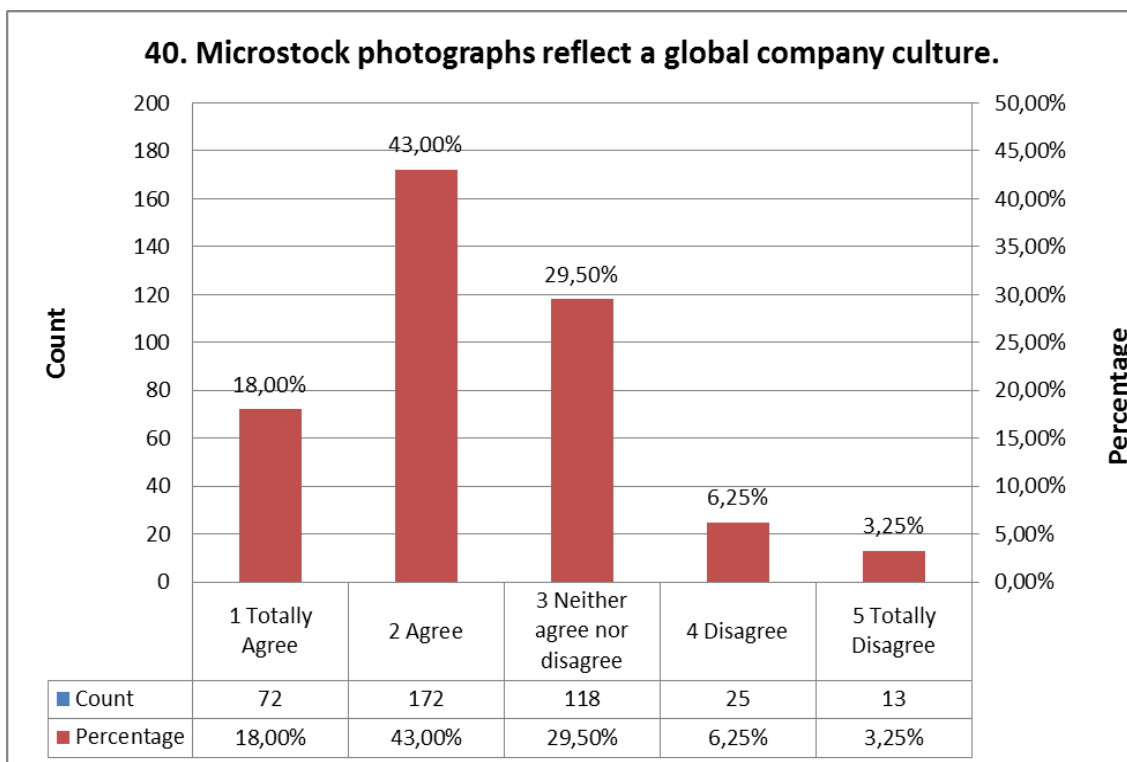


%81.00 (324 persons) think as following: “A microstock photographer should consider the needs of a graphic designer or a publisher while producing photos.” and %5.50 (22

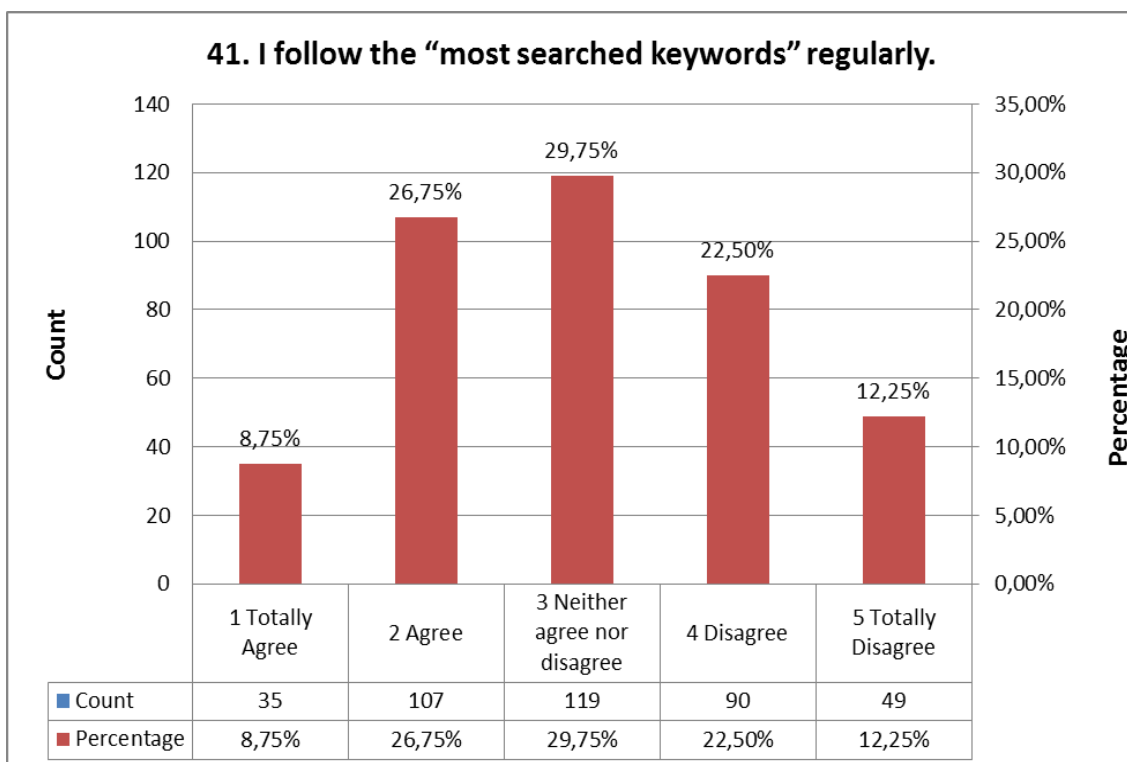
persons) don't agree with this statement.



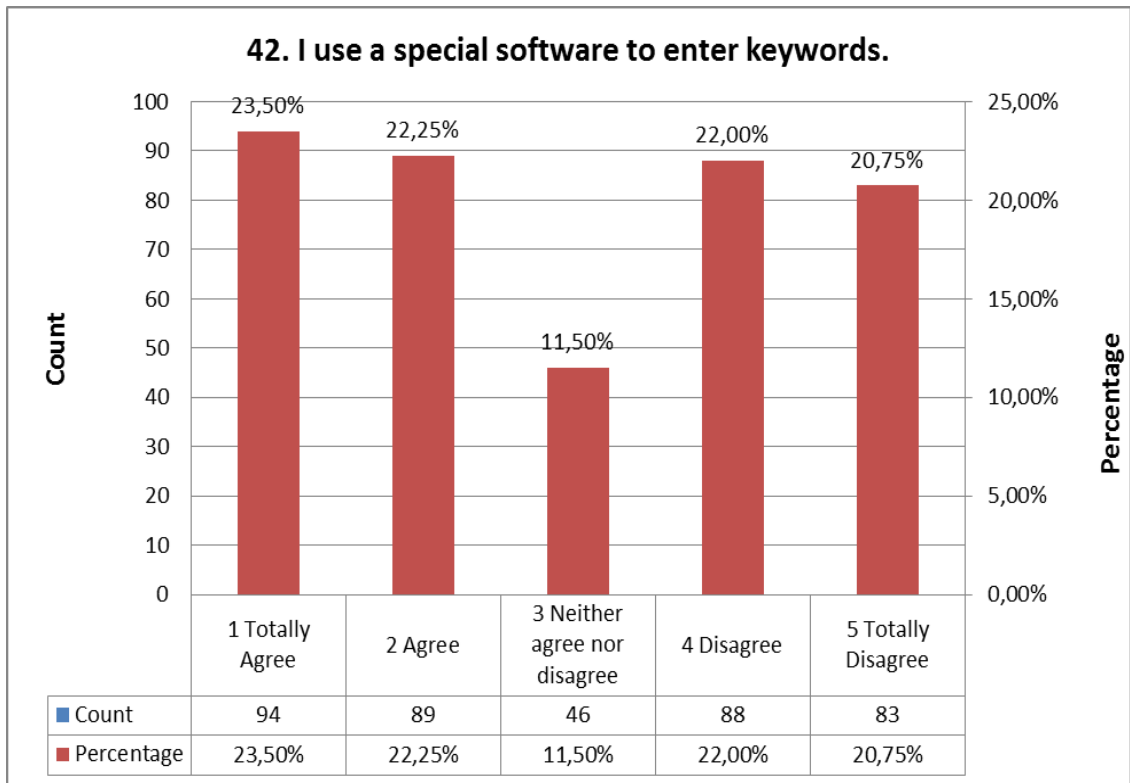
%49.75 (199 persons) agree with and %23.50 (94 persons) don't agree with the following statement: *“I follow regularly microstock photography trends.”*



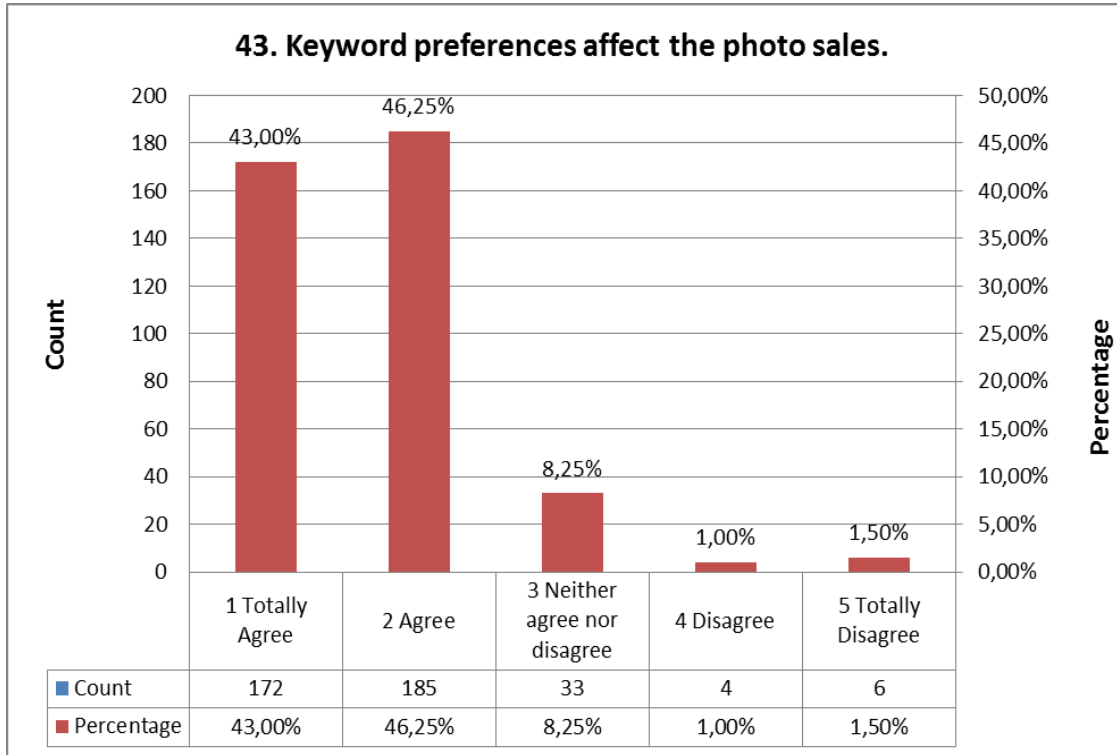
%61.00 (244 persons) think as following: “Microstock pictures reveal a global enterprise culture.” and %9.50 (38 persons) don't agree with this statement.



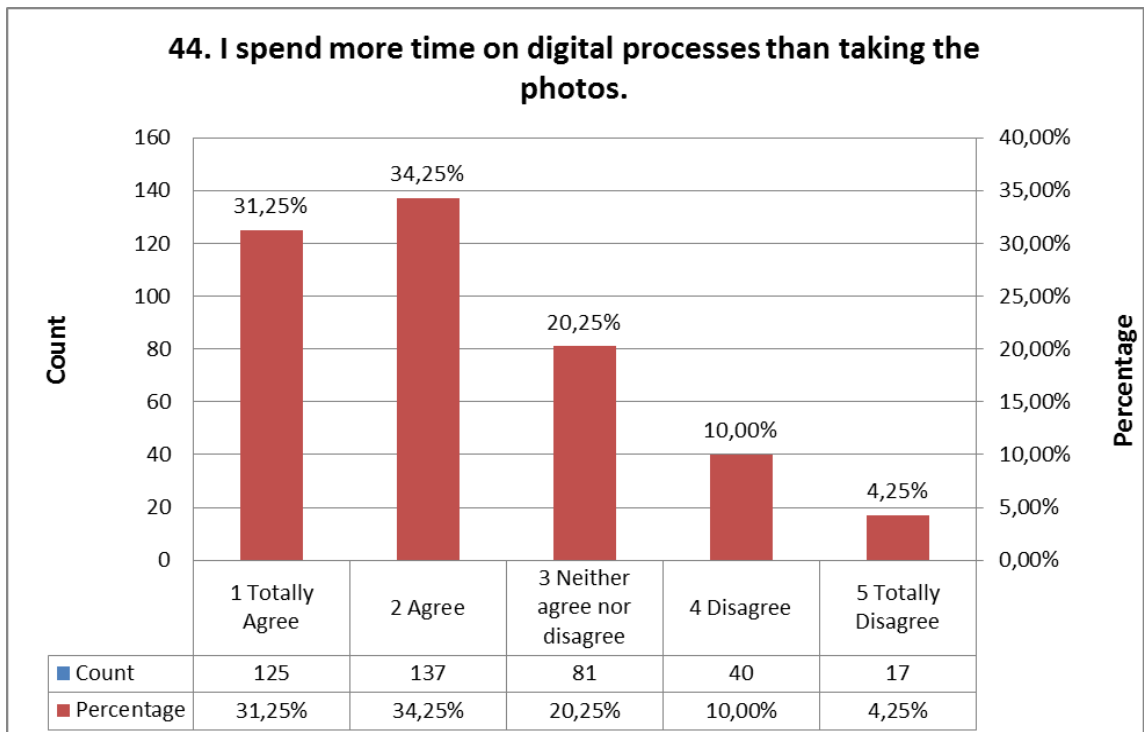
%35.50 (142 persons) agree with and %34.75 (139 persons) don't agree with the following statement: *“I follow regularly the most searched keywords.”*



“I use a special software to enter the keywords.” say %45.75 (183 persons), while %42.75 (171 persons) don't agree with this proposition.

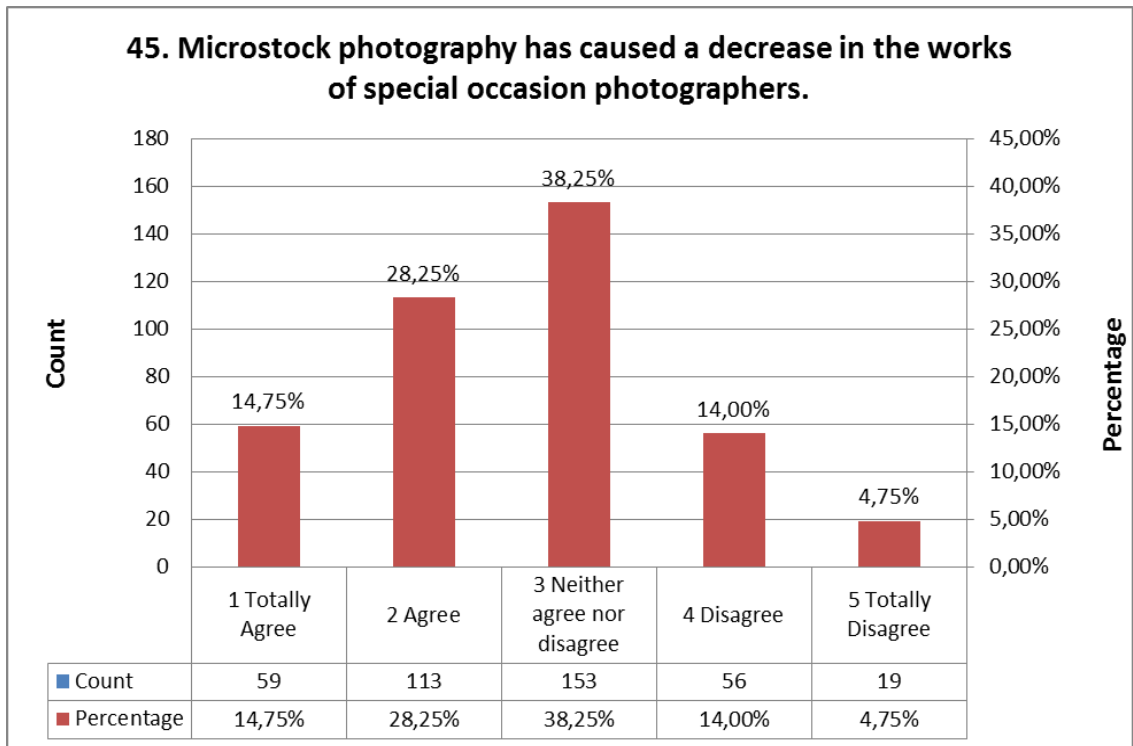


“Keyword preferences have an effect on photo selling.” say %89.25 (357 persons), while %2.50 (10 persons) don't agree with them.

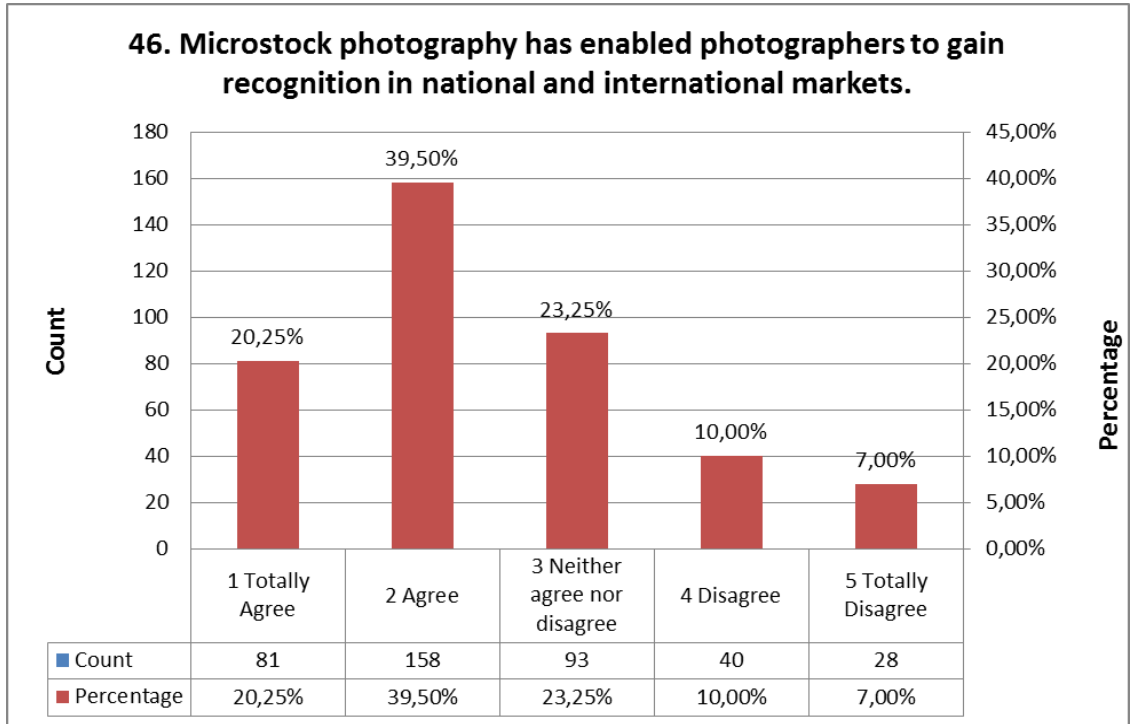


%65.50 (262 persons) think as following: “I spend more time on digital operations than

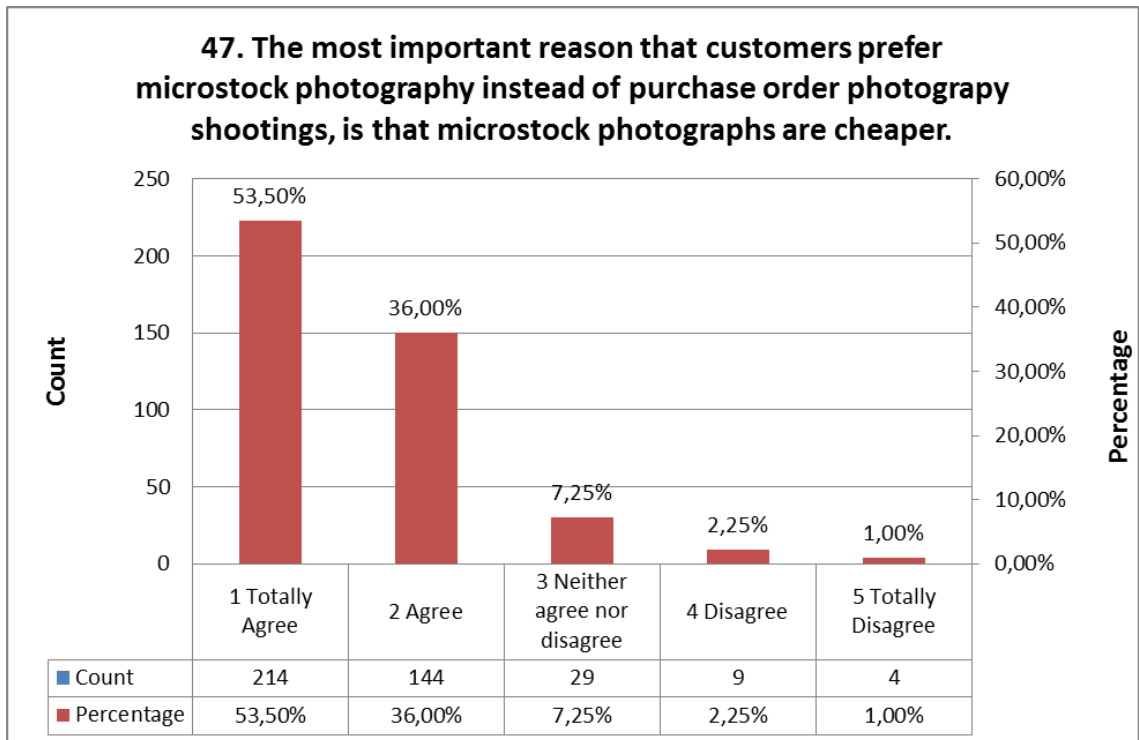
on taking photos” and %14.25 (57 persons) don't agree with this statement.



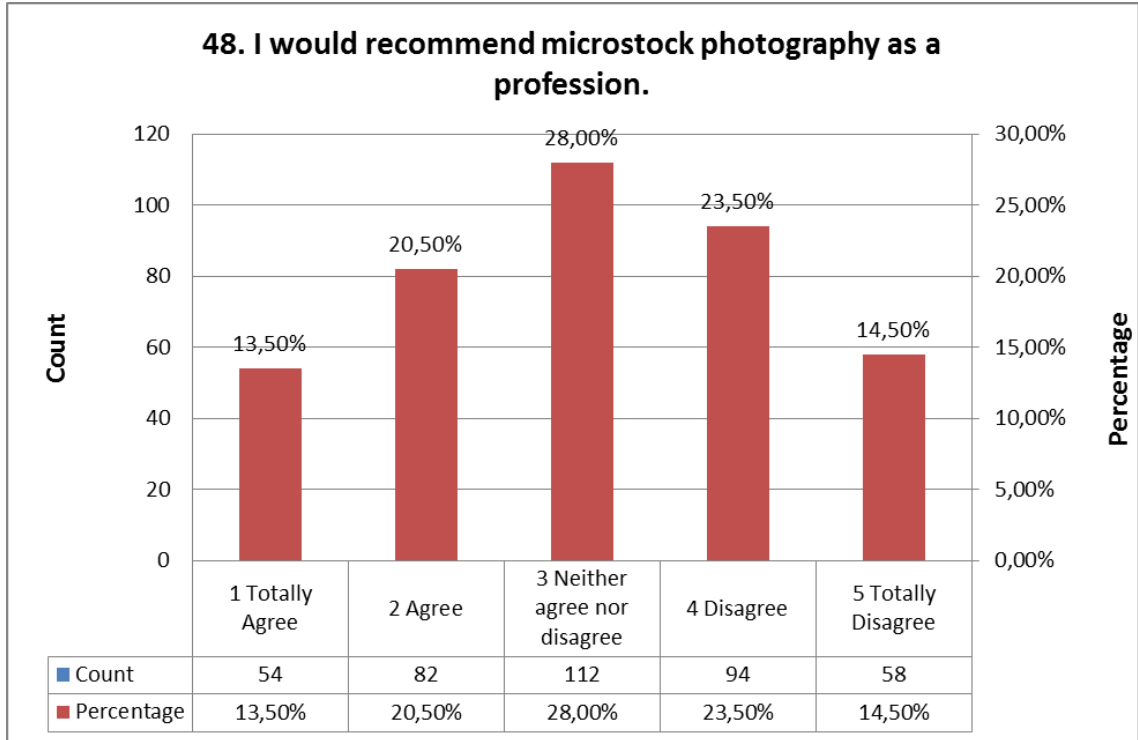
%43.00 (172 persons) agree with and %18.75 (75 persons) don't agree with the following statement: “Microstock photography diminished the works of photographers making special photo shootings.”



“Microstock photography provided the chance of being known on international area to the photographers” say %59.75 of participants (239 persons) and %17.00 (68 persons) think the opposite way.

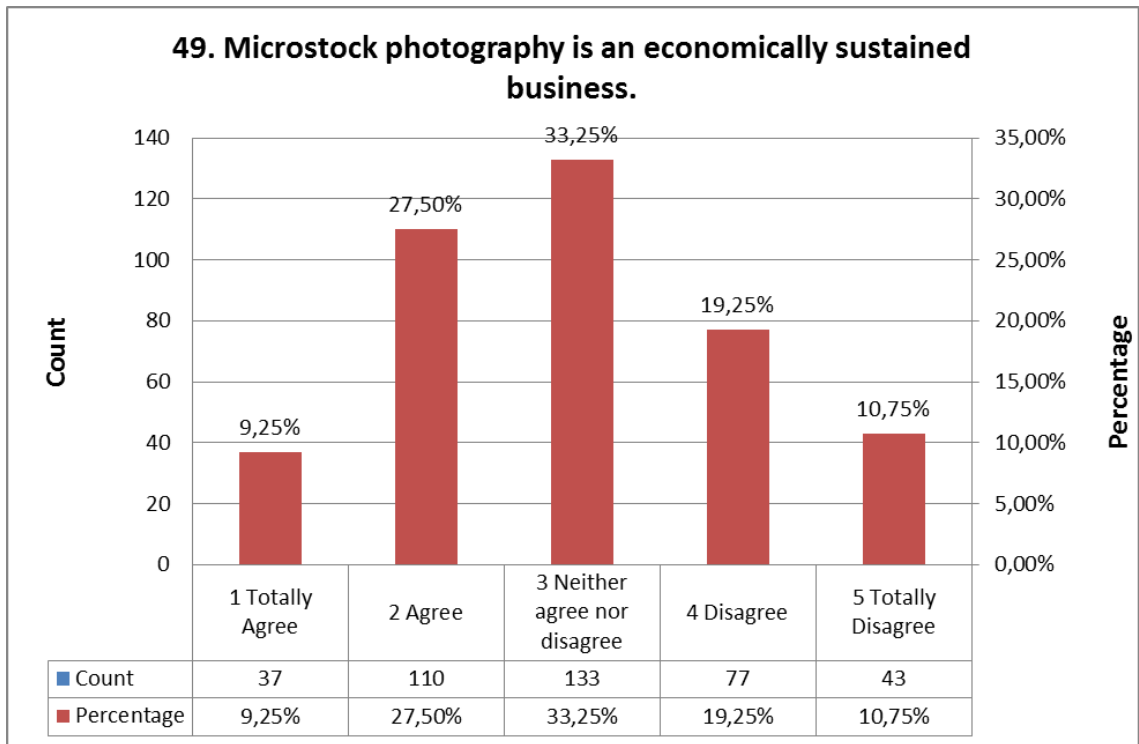


“The reason why the clients prefer microstock photos instead of on demand system is that microstock photography offers better prices.” say %89.50 (358 persons) and %3.25 (13 persons) don't agree.



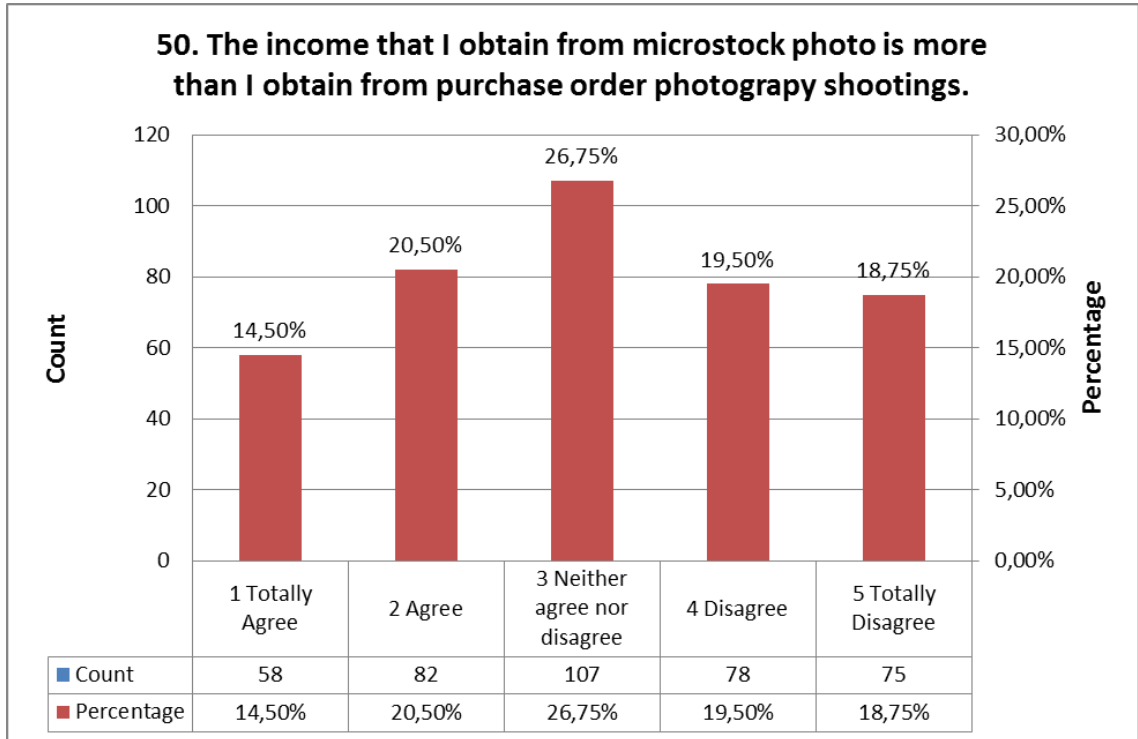
%34.00 of photographers (136 persons) agree with and % 38.00 (152 persons) don't agree with the following statement: “I recommend microstock photography as a profession.”

The statistics reveal that there is still more to do to make microstock photography a real professional sector.

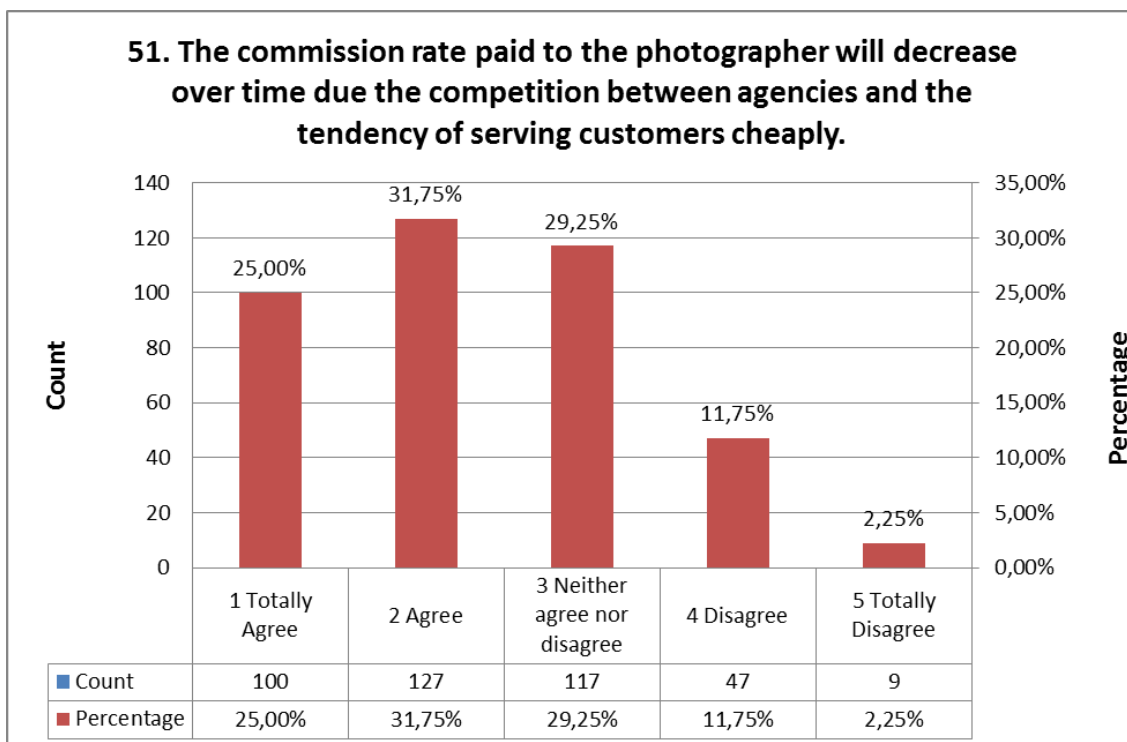


%36,75 of photographers (147 persons) say “*Microstock photography is a permanent economic activity.*” and %30.00 of them (120 persons) don't think as the others.

As in Chart 8, it's clear that microstock photography still needs work and time in order to become a real economic activity.

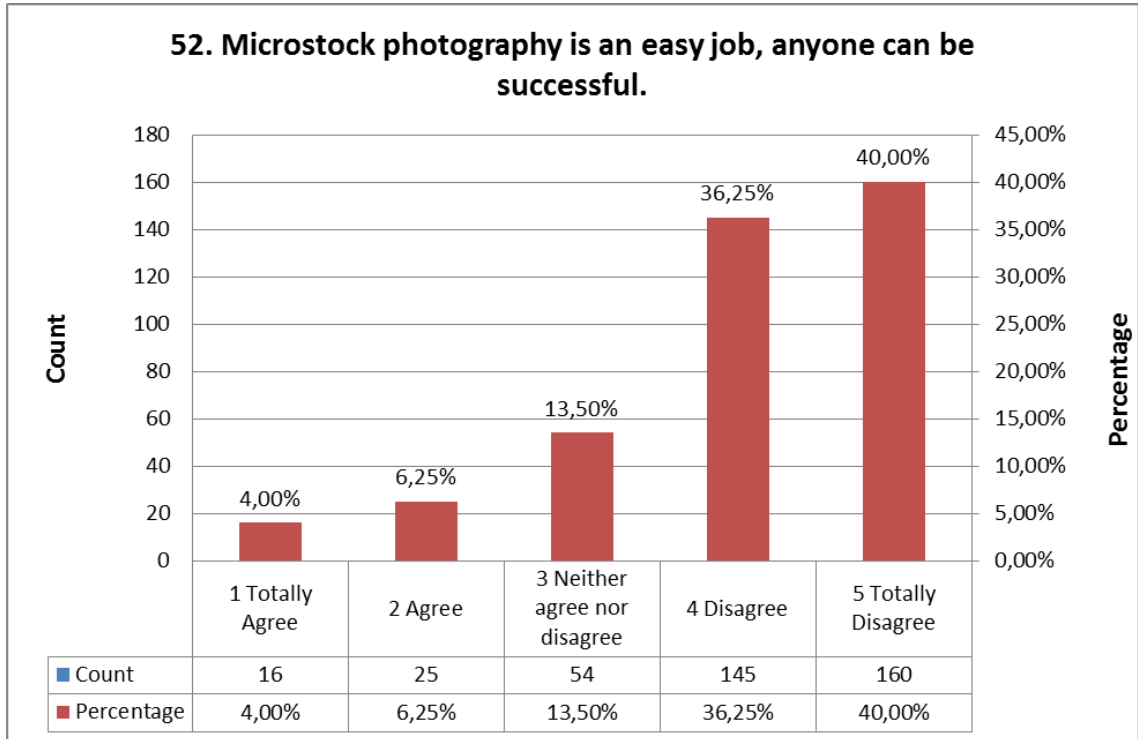


“My revenue from microstock photography is higher than other types of photo takings.” corresponds to %35.00 (140 persons) but not to %38.25 (153 persons).

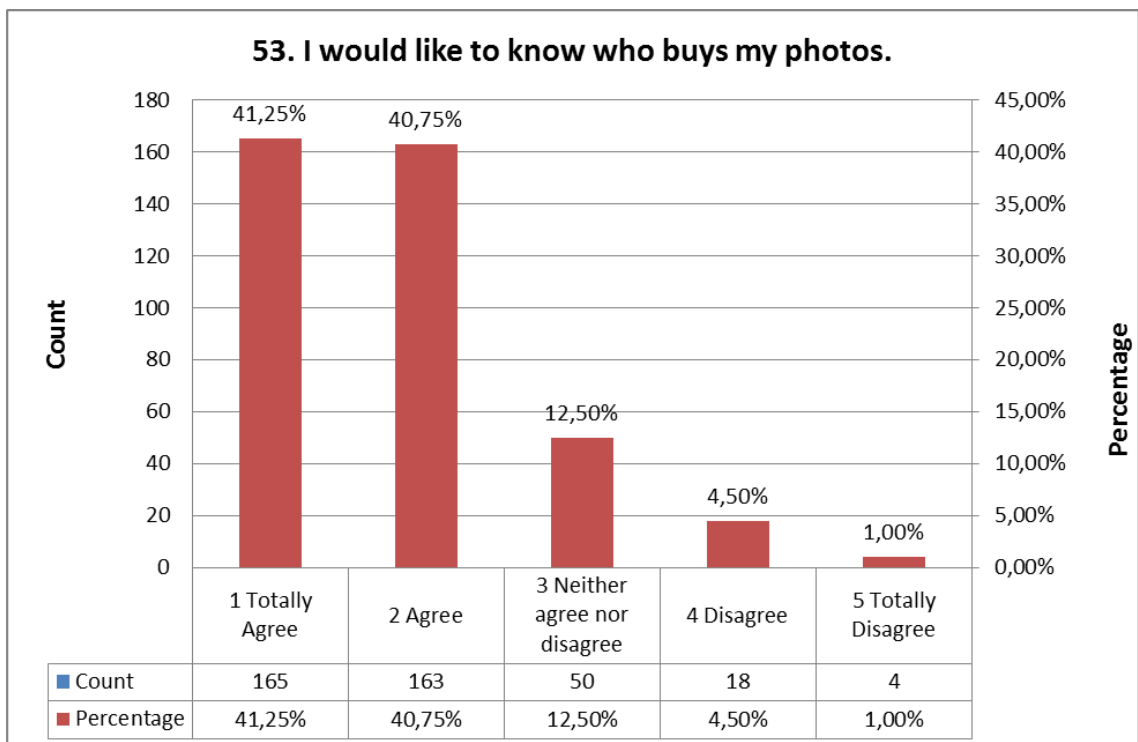


“Because of the competition between agencies and the tendency to offer cheaper service to the customers, the commission paid to the photographers will diminish in the future.” is accepted by %56,75 (227 persons) and %14.00 (56 persons) don't agree with this statement.

This information is important to predict the future of microstock photography.

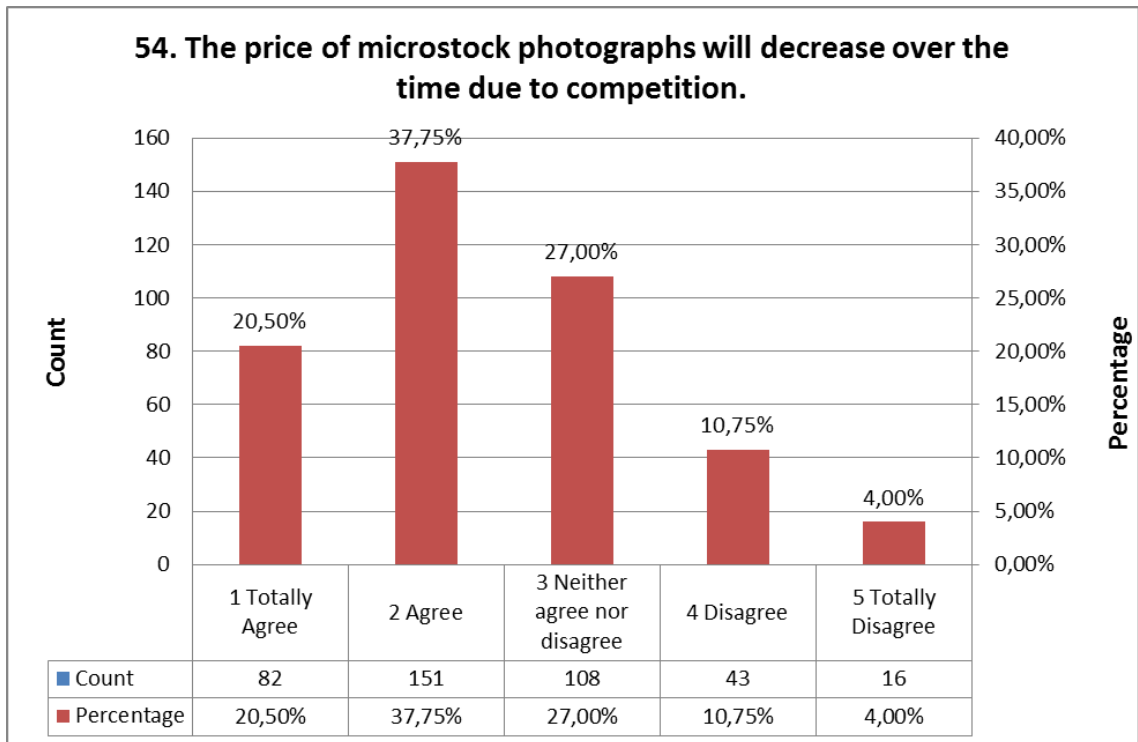


%10.25 (41 persons) agree with and % 76.25 (305 persons) don't agree with the following statement: “Microstock photography is an easy job, everybody could succeed on this sector.”

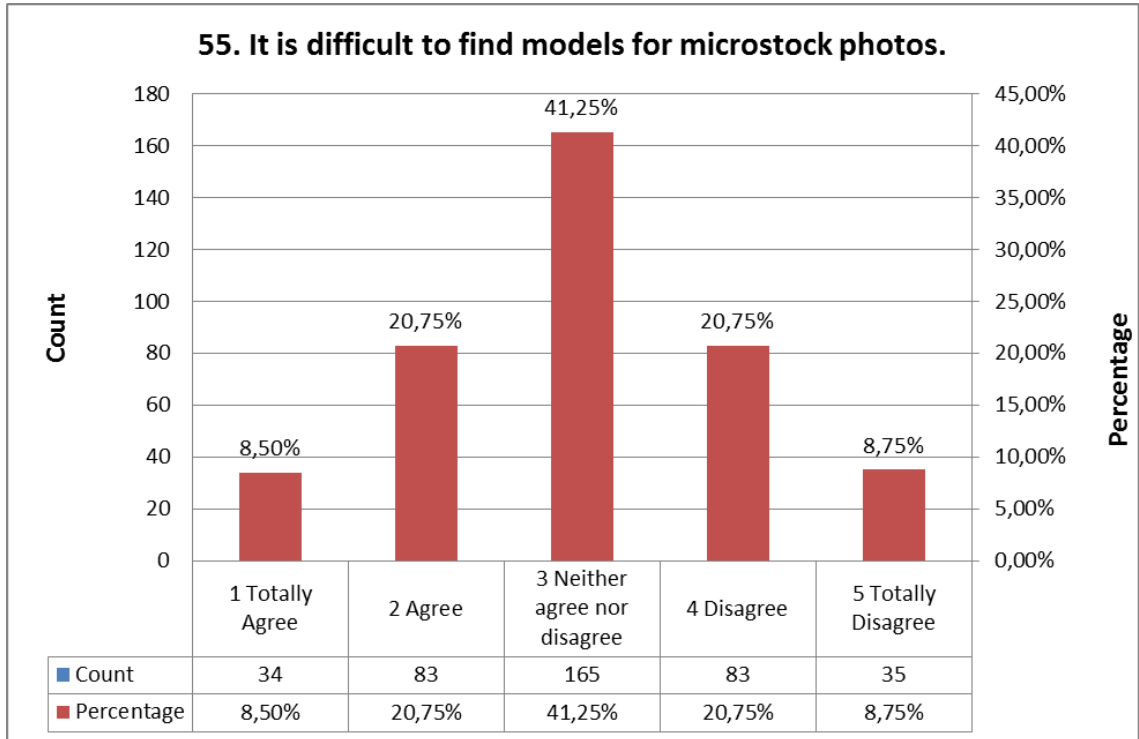


%82.00 (328 persons) agree with and %5.50 (22 persons) don't agree with the following statement: *“I would like to know the buyers of my photographs.”*

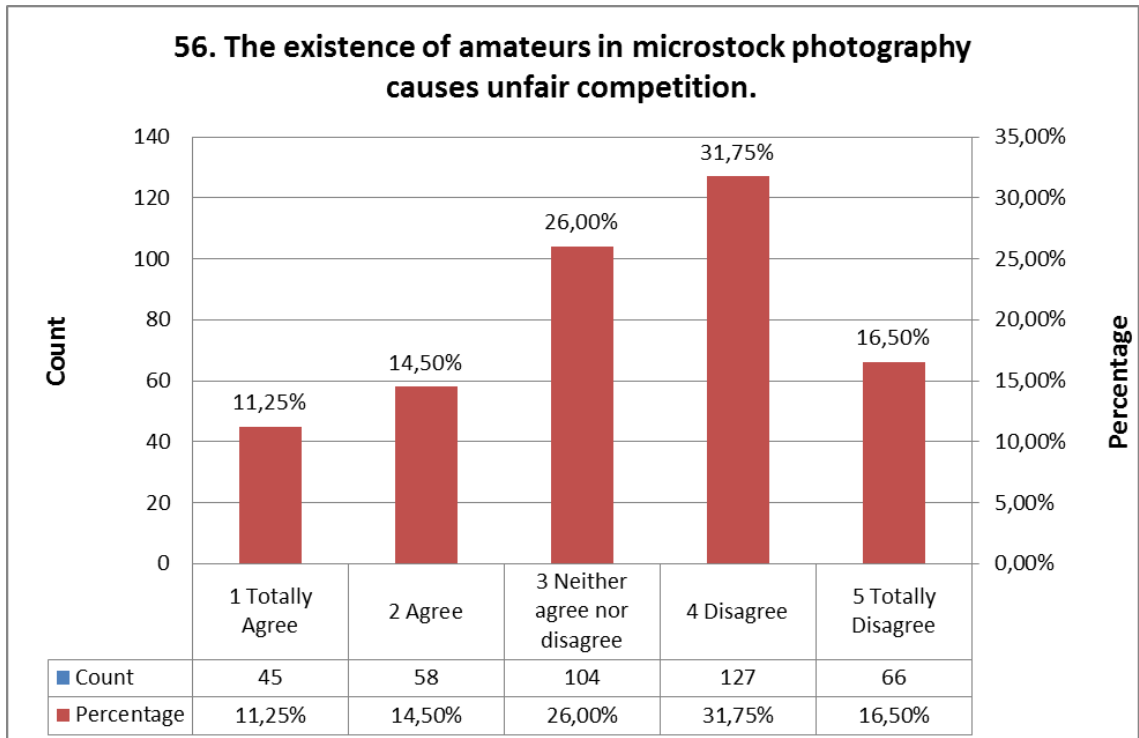
Chart 52 shows that the method contains a difficult process and Chart 53 that people making offer and demand should know each other as in classical systems.



“The price of microstock photos will be reduced because of the competition” say %58.25 (233 persons) and % 14.75 (59 persons) don't agree on this statement.

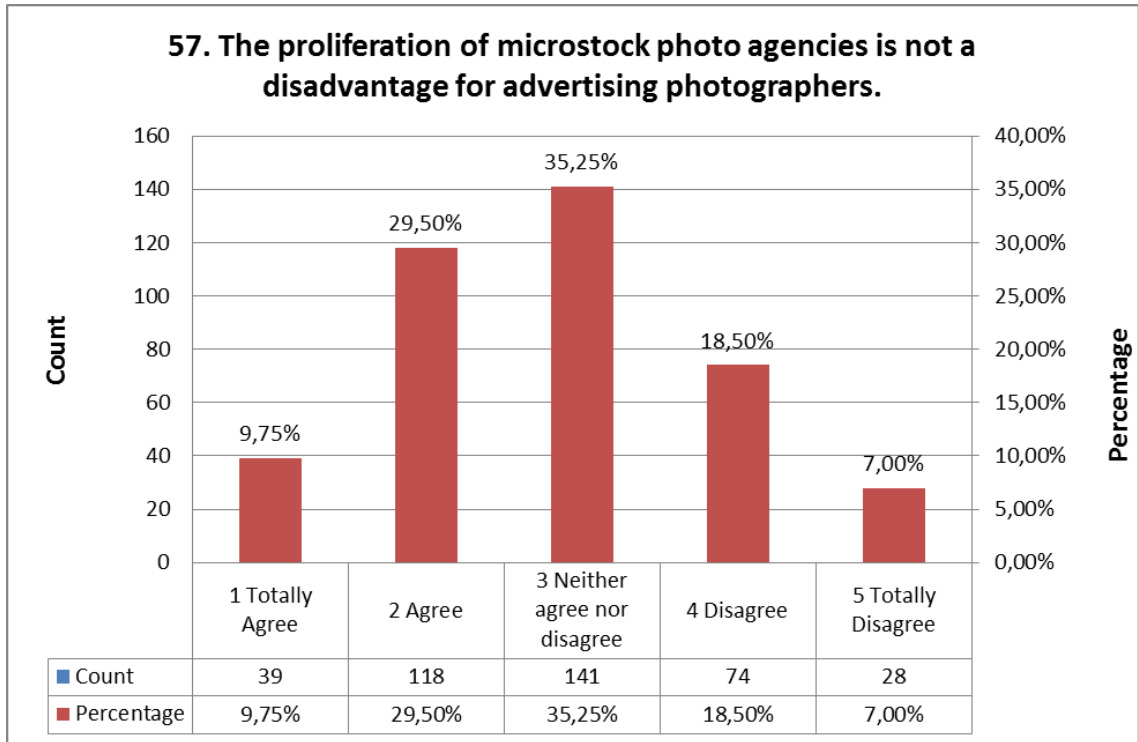


%29.25 (117 persons) say “*It is hard to find models for microstock photos*” and % 29.50 (118 persons) think the opposite way.

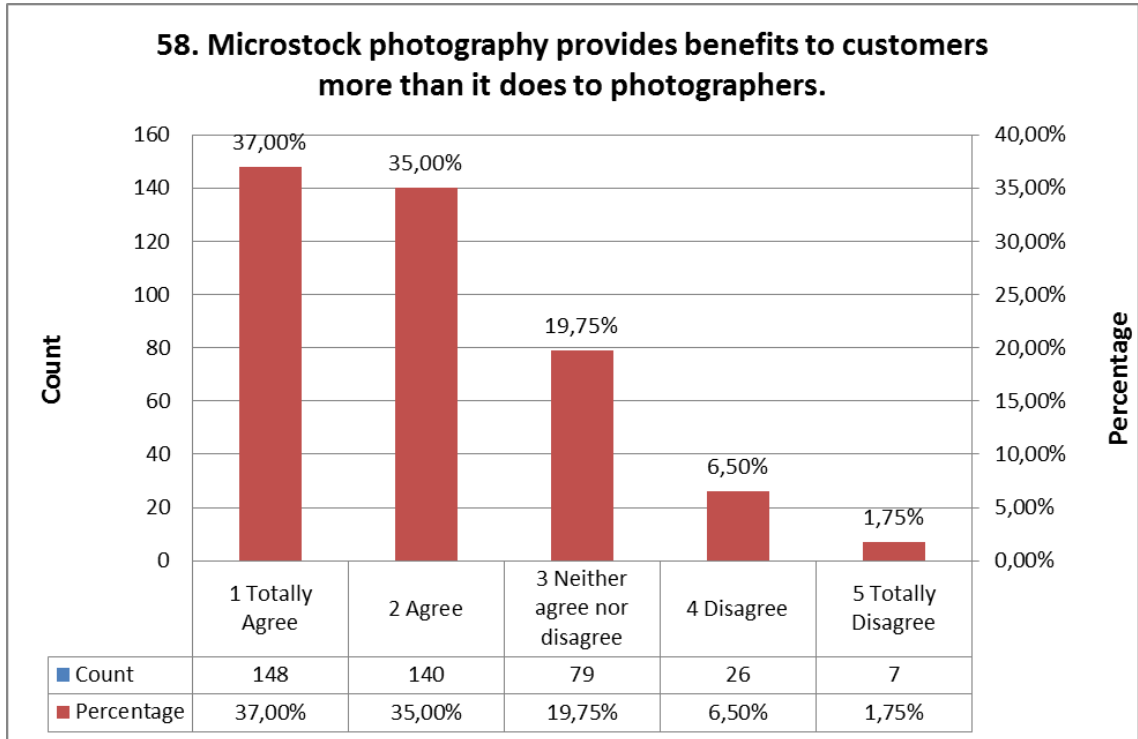


“*The presence of amateurs on the sector harms the equal rivalry*” say %25.75 (103

persons) and %48.25 (193 persons) don't agree on this statement.



“The multiplication of microstock photography agencies has no negative effect on advertising photographers.” say %39.25 (157 persons) while % 25.50 (102 persons) don't agree.



%72.00 (288 persons) agree and % 8.25 (33 persons) don't agree with the following proposition: “*Microstock photography provides more money to the client than it does to the photographer*”.