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engage
Business Network

age UK
Improving later life

Ageing consumers

Lifestyle and preferences in the current marketplace 2012

Contents

About us

The Engage Business Network at Age UK is helping companies to develop an understanding of the older consumer marketplace and the business opportunities it presents. Engage promotes the use of inclusivity through products, services and good business practice. Membership of the Engage Business Network allows companies to access research and business insight, attend seminars and events, benefit from bespoke consultancy services and apply for the 'Trusted by Engage' accreditation – a quality mark for inclusively designed products and services.

This report is a part of the findings from the Knowledge Transfer Partnership between the Engage Business Network at Age UK and Brunel University. We appreciate the support of Age UK, the Technology Strategy Board and the Economic and Social Research Council in funding this research as well as Brunel University for their role in this partnership. The data collection for this survey has been conducted by TNS International.

The knowledge Transfer Partnership started in 2010 for the duration of four years. The research is multidisciplinary and explores issues related to marketing, design and usability for people in later life.

We also acknowledge the support of the Engagement team in Age UK, the Age Sector Development team at Age NI, the Engagement team at Age Cymru, Age Concern Cupar, Croydon Voluntary Action, North Kesteven Seniors Forum and Age UK Hillingdon in arranging the recruitment of participants for the focus groups.

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1 Introduction

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The key objective of this report is to underpin the main characteristics of ageing consumers and to highlight the existing shortcomings and opportunities in the marketplace. These findings would help a large range of consumer-facing companies in the UK to understand how the population shift could affect their business. In 2012, Engage Business Network at Age UK conducted a survey with 1,500 older consumers to assist businesses to recognise the implications of serving an older marketplace. This section of the report provides a background to this research and the report structure, and highlights the findings.

1.1 Background

The Office for National Statistics (Office for National Statistics, 2011) and the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing report (Age UK and International Longevity Centre, 2010) record that the population in the UK is ageing. At the same time, disposable income and the lifestyle and needs of the ageing population are changing.

Currently, over 30 per cent of the UK population are above the age of 50 and they hold 80 per cent of the wealth in the country (Office for National Statistics, 2011; Social Issues Research Centre, 2007). Another survey revealed that 71 per cent of people above the age of 50 mentioned that they never or rarely have little money to spend on their needs (Age UK and International Longevity Centre, 2010). Such changes in consumers' demographics require faster and more proactive engagement from businesses.

At the same time, age is an identity measure that varies in time for each person, unlike gender or race. While all individuals experience the ageing process (Howard, 2000), ageing is also very personal (Schewe, 1988). It would be wrong to assume that people would share the same needs and characteristics solely based on their age group (Iyer and Reisenwitz, 2010). Social role changes, physical and mental abilities, and occupational changes amplify the diversity of older people in many different ways (Phillips, 1957).

This research aims to capture a clear picture of the lives of older people and it specifically focuses on understanding their behaviour as consumers. This report is descriptive in nature and it stays as close as possible to the data collected, including as many graphs and tables as are useful to articulate the richness of the information collected.

The report structure is as follows. After a brief description of the research background and the highlights of the findings, we will present the detailed findings on different aspects of the life of an older person (an individual who is 50 years old or over). We will then report on the detailed results of their experiences and expectations in three industry sectors, including technology and communication, retail and supermarket, and leisure and travel. The report will conclude with a brief summary and the details of the methodology and the sample.

This research aims to capture a clear picture of the lives of older people and it specifically focuses on understanding their behaviour as consumers.

1.2 Highlights of the findings

Below are some of the key findings of this report.

1.2.1 Life of an older person

- Older people feel on average ten years younger than their actual age.
- 44 per cent of participants think that they look younger than the age group they belong to.
- 62 per cent of respondents think that the world is now experiencing a decline in the quality of life.
- 37 per cent believe that they are active members of their community.
- 86 per cent of participants enjoy spending time in their home.
- Over 50 per cent believe that technology has made their life easier.
- Nearly 70 per cent think that their viewpoints have changed a lot since they were younger.
- One in three respondents mention that they buy many things with credit cards.
- Two-thirds of respondents indicate that they are very careful about what they eat.
- Half of the sample buy environmentally friendly products whenever they can.
- Three in four participants like visiting places that they have never seen before.
- Over 60 per cent of respondents would visit their high street more often if it presented more opportunities for social interactions.
- Nearly half of the sample indicate that there are new skills that they would like to learn.
- Under 40 per cent believe that they shop a lot for special offers.
- Over 60 per cent of the sample tend to think a lot before making a purchase decision.
- 54 per cent prefer to buy products/services the design and delivery of which have been approved by a trusted body.

1.2.2 Technology and communication

- 72 per cent of the sample buy their technology products on their own.
- Nearly 40 per cent like to learn more about new technologies.
- 85 per cent of participants own a mobile phone and 75 per cent prefer to buy their mobile phone on their own.
- Over 40 per cent of respondents would never open and read a text message on their mobile phone.
- 40 per cent of participants do not mind using extra features on their mobile phone as long as someone takes the time to teach them.
- Nearly 70 per cent of participants have done online shopping at least once.
- Half of the respondents find it difficult to understand the full functionality of their technology products.
- Over 50 per cent of participants like to feel and try a technology product before making a purchase.
- Only 15 per cent of participants own a smartphone.
- Ease of use, suitability for immediate needs, and quality are the main decision-making criteria when choosing a technology product.
- In-store advice, family and friends' recommendations, and the internet are the three sources of information they use before buying a mobile phone.
- 38 per cent of respondents use in-store offers when buying technology.

1.2.3 Retail and supermarket

- One in three respondents would buy from a store if they deliver their shopping for free.
- Nearly one in three find the information labels on packaging unclear.
- Half of the respondents think that stores change their layout too often.
- Trolleys and baskets are problematic for over 30 per cent of respondents.
- 62 per cent of the sample would not buy from a store if they do not provide good customer service.
- Going shopping is a leisure activity for one in three participants.
- 54 per cent of participants' shopping trips last one to two hours.
- Suitability for immediate needs, customer service and quality are three of the most important decision-making criteria when shopping for food or clothes.
- 41 per cent of respondents use loyalty cards for food shopping.

1.2.4 Leisure and travel

- 51 per cent of participants travel abroad at least once a year; 23 per cent of participants mention that they wish to travel abroad more often; and 15 per cent wish to travel more in the UK.
- One in three respondents use the internet when booking their leisure activities.
- 66 per cent of participants plan their holidays on their own.
- 30 per cent of the sample prefer to go on holiday with family and 10 per cent prefer to go with friends.
- 43 per cent of the participants would choose a two-to-three-week holiday, if they were to go on holiday.
- Price and opportunities to socialise are important decision-making criteria when choosing a holiday destination.
- The internet is the most-used source of information prior to their last holiday booking.

2 Life of an older person

2 Life of an older person

All survey respondents were asked a series of lifestyle questions. This section explains these lifestyle traits and behaviour, including:

- the perception of self and age
- nostalgia
- community and voluntary work
- the meaning of home
- feelings towards technology
- their life in retrospect
- attitudes towards money and credit
- health and the environment
- daily activities
- travelling
- traditionalism
- social interaction
- attitudes towards opportunities and change
- general consumer behaviour.

This section explains findings from the above themes and whether or not any demographic attribute affects a respondent's answer to the survey questions.

Respondents were asked questions regarding how they feel, look, act, and what they like in comparison to their reference age group.

2.1 Self-perception of age

Respondents were asked questions regarding how they feel, look, act, and what they like in comparison to their reference age group. Their responses were then compared to their chronological age group. Age groups are in brackets of ten years (e.g. 50–59, 60–69, 70–79, 80–89 and 90+). Our data shows that people feel on average nearly one age group (ten years) younger than their real age.

- 56 per cent of participants feel younger than their actual age group, 39 per cent feel that they belong to the same age group as they are and 4 per cent feel older.
- 20 per cent of people feel at least two age groups (nearly 20 years) younger than their actual age.
- 44 per cent of participants think that they look younger than their age group, 52 per cent think that they look the same as the age group they are in and 4 per cent think that they look older than their age group.
- 59 per cent of participants think that their interests are similar to people who are younger than their age group, 38 per cent think that they have interests similar to other people their age and 3 per cent think that their interests are similar to people in older age groups.
- 56 per cent of people mentioned that they do everyday things as a person in a younger age group would, 40 per cent think that their way of doing everyday things is similar to people of their age group and 4 per cent think that they act like people in older age groups.

2.2 Nostalgia

Respondents were asked about their feelings towards the world as it is now. Questions were asked in a way that made them compare their life experience with what it was when they were younger. This was to assess the nostalgic aspect of getting older.

Some 62 per cent of respondents believe that the world is now experiencing a decline in the quality of life. Nearly half of the respondents think that things used to be better in 'days gone by'. There is a similar result in assessing today's music (see Figure 2.1).

Social grading seems to have an effect on the respondents' answer to the first question. Middle-class respondents have a higher disagreement rate compared to working-class groups. Similarly, the agreement rate on this question was higher among working-class people (see Figure 2.2).

2.3 Community

Community involvement and voluntary work was another aspect of older people's life included in the survey.

Nearly 25 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they like to work on community projects, and 37 per cent believe that they are active members of their community. The percentage drops to 20 for those who have participated in a political or social campaign. Regular voluntary work is done by over 21 per cent of the respondents (see Figure 2.3).

As suggested by Figures 2.4 and 2.5, age group and social class affect respondents' activity in their community. Compared to other groups, older age groups and people in lower social grading tend not to play an active part in community activities and projects.

2.4 Home

Respondents told us how they feel about their home: 86 per cent of respondents mention that they enjoy spending time in their own home. Similarly, 70 per cent of the sample say that their home is the place where they always want to be (see Figure 2.6).

Positive attitude towards their home seems to be unconnected to demographic characteristics.

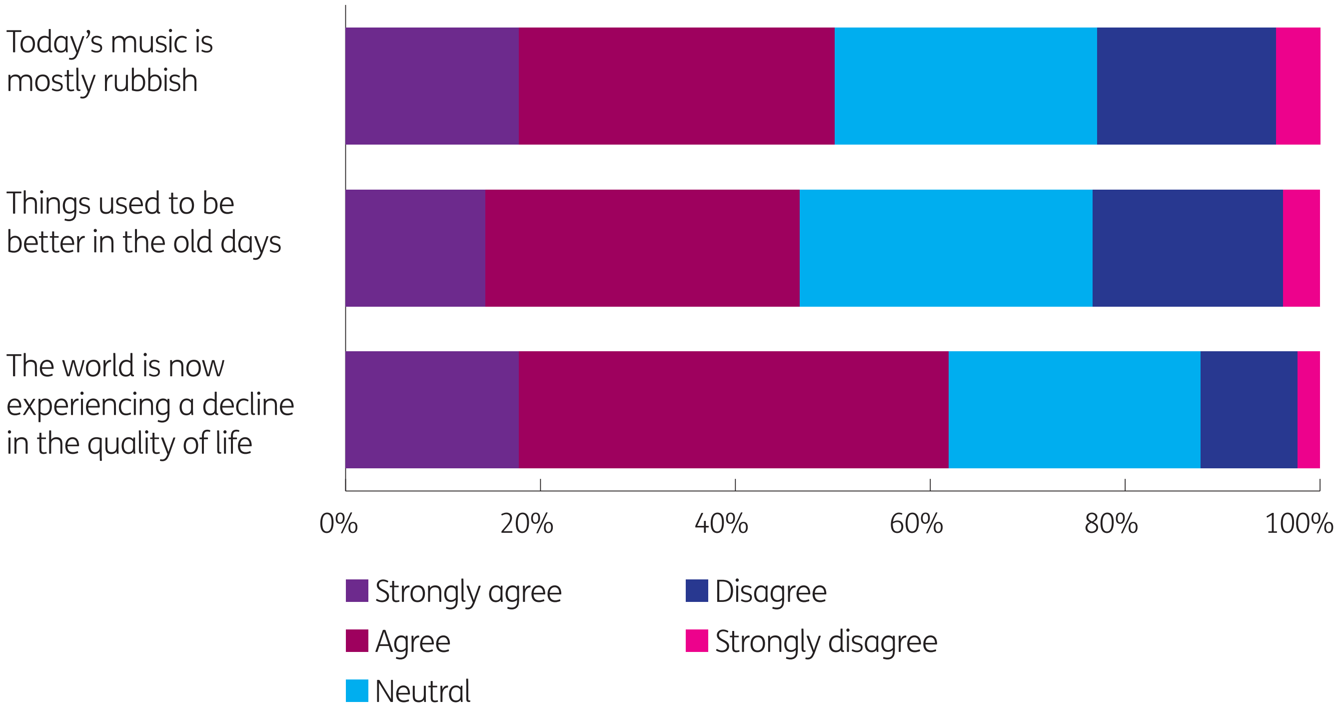
2.5 Technology

Although over half of the respondents stated that technology makes their life easier, only 25 per cent have indicated that technology makes them feel empowered. Also, 57 per cent of the sample mentioned that they need help when it comes to buying technology products. These statistics can explain why technology has not made older people feel empowered (see Figure 2.7).

Relationships with technology seem to be a factor that can be hugely affected by one's gender or age, as well as social class. As Figure 2.8 shows, people in social grade A, compared to any other social grade, are clearly more positive towards technology and think that technology makes them feel empowered.

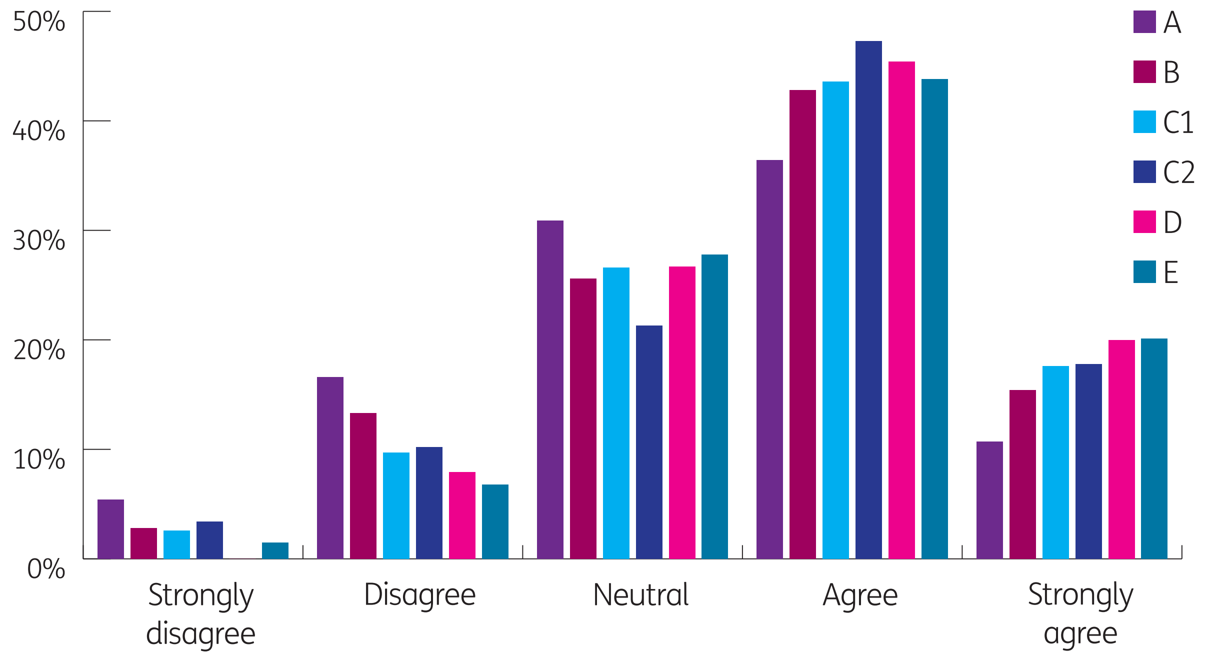
Figures 2.9 and 2.10 show how gender and age group affect independence when it comes to buying technology products. Male participants form the majority of those who do not want help when it comes to buying technology. On the contrary, women want more help when it comes to buying technology. As might be expected, younger age groups do not want help compared to people in older age groups.

Figure 2.1 Nostalgia



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.2 Social class and subjective assessment of quality of life in general



The world is now experiencing a decline in the quality of life

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Figure 2.3 Community involvement

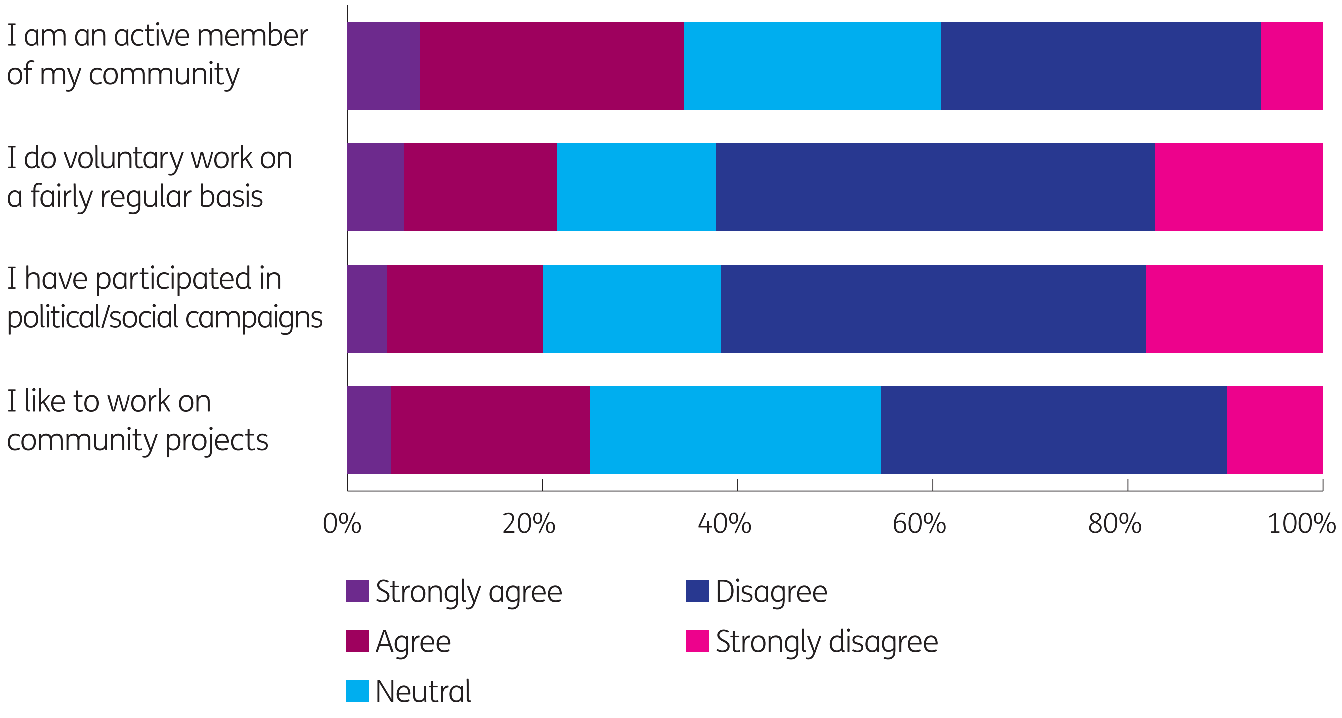

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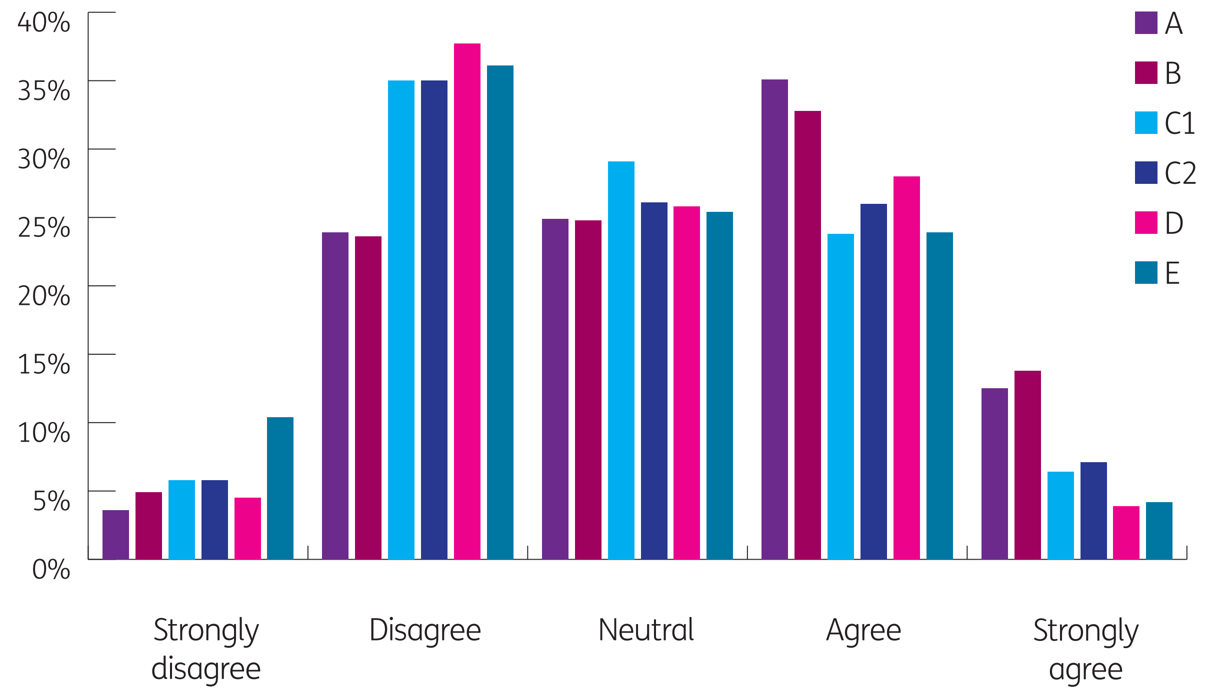
Figure 2.4 Community involvement and social class



I am an active member of my community

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Figure 2.5 Community involvement and age groups

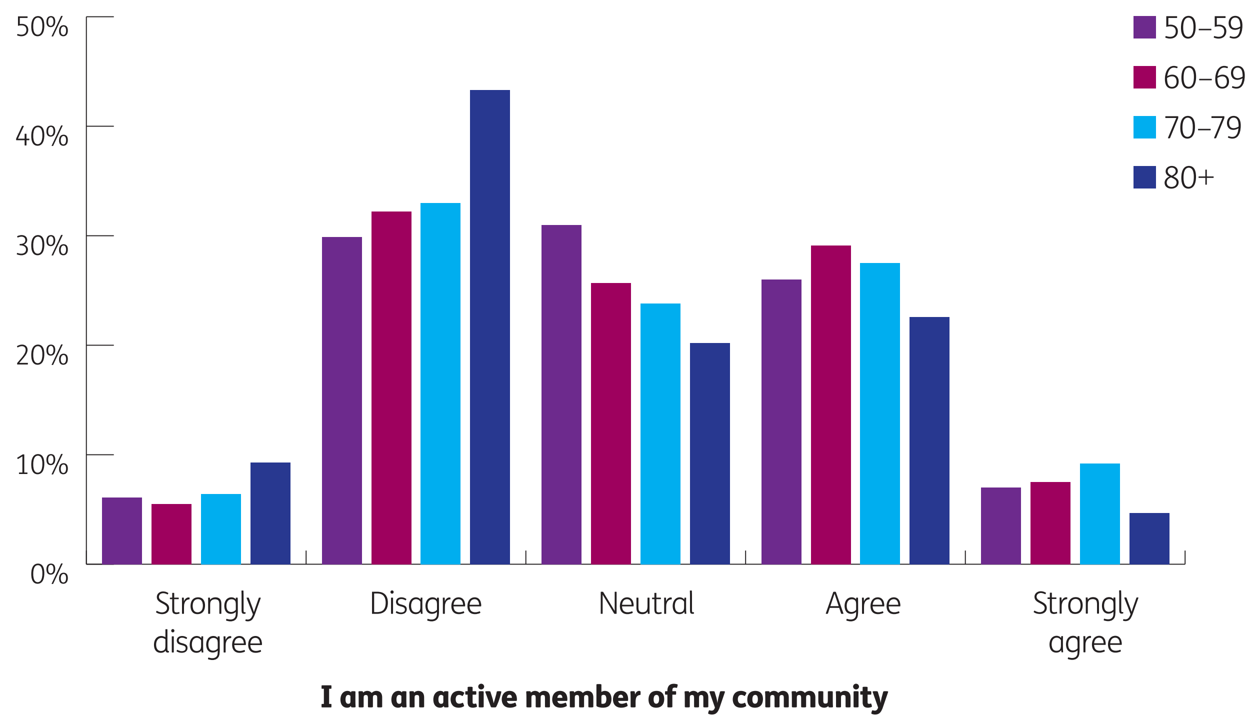

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Figure 2.6 Feelings towards home environment

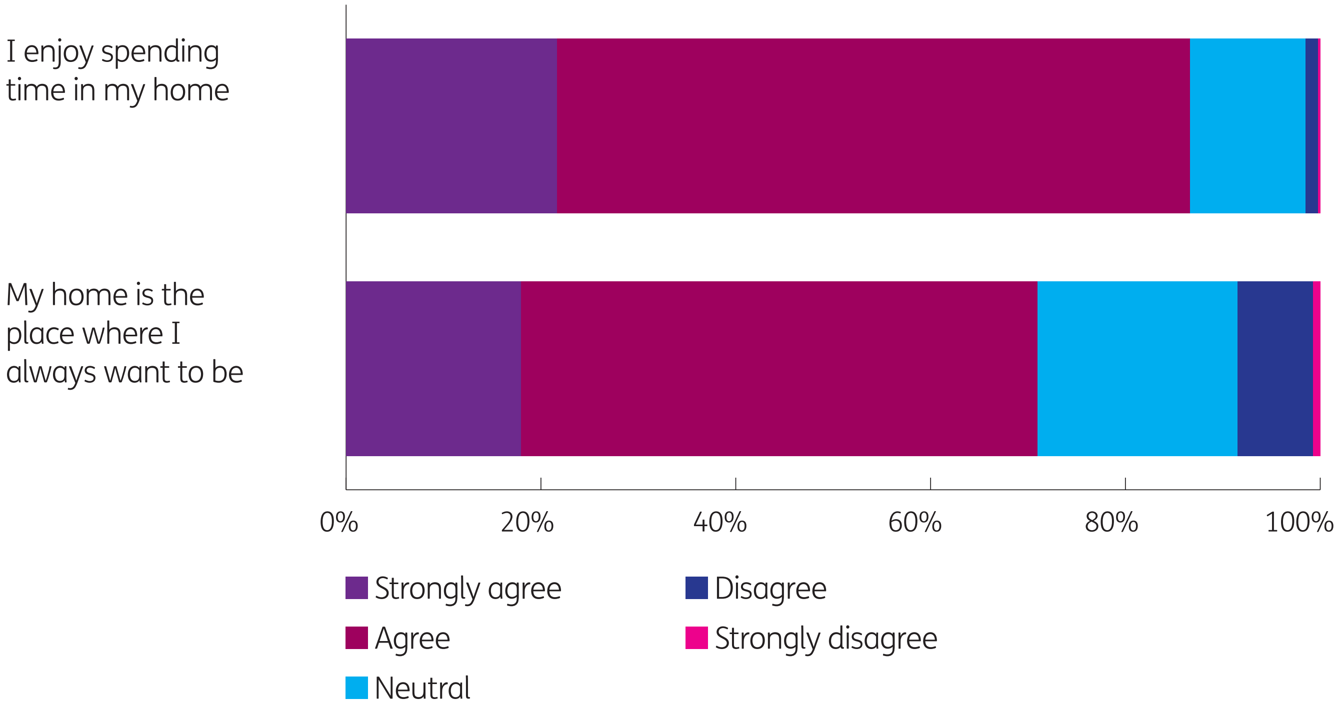

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Figure 2.7 Relationship with technology

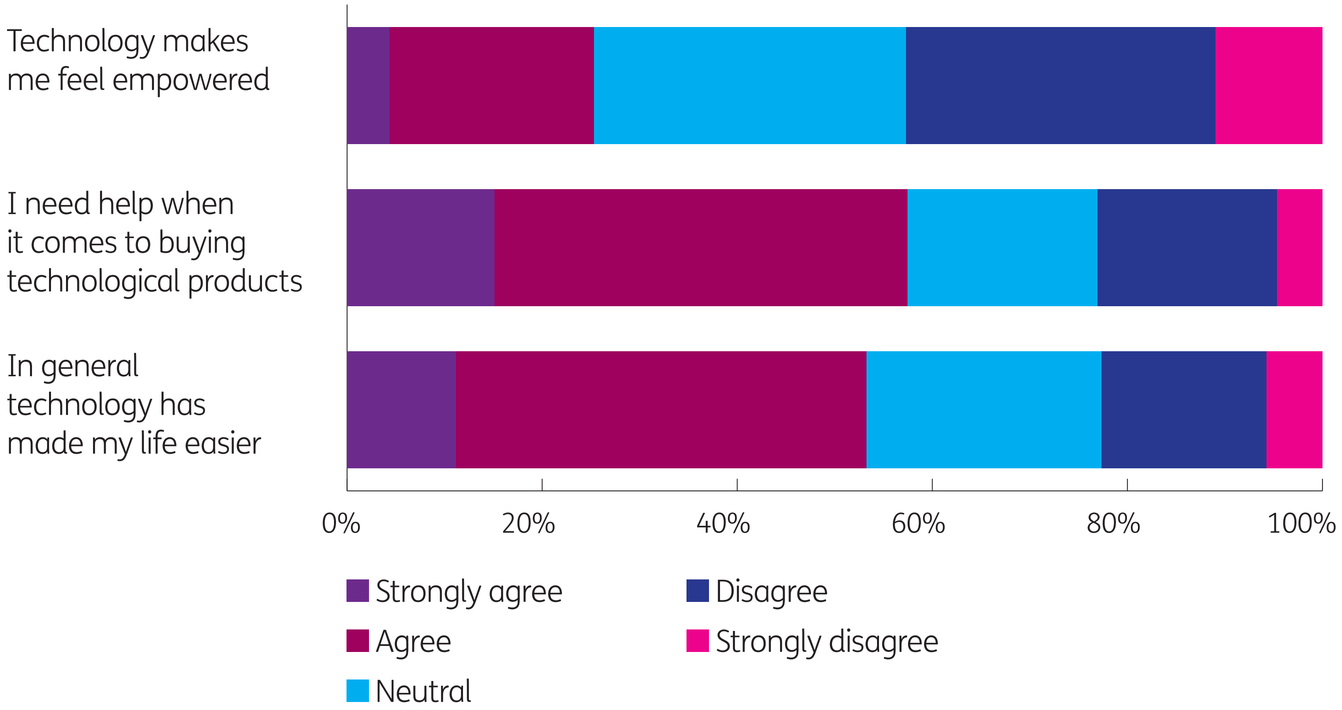

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Figure 2.8 Technology and social class

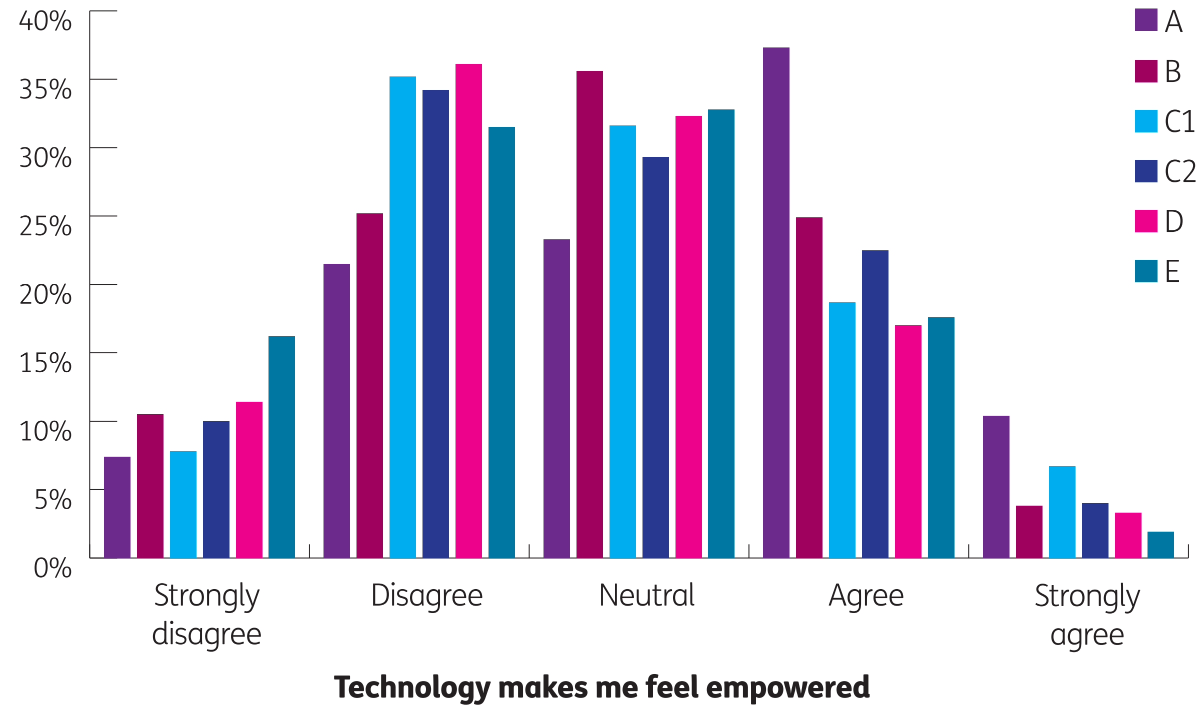

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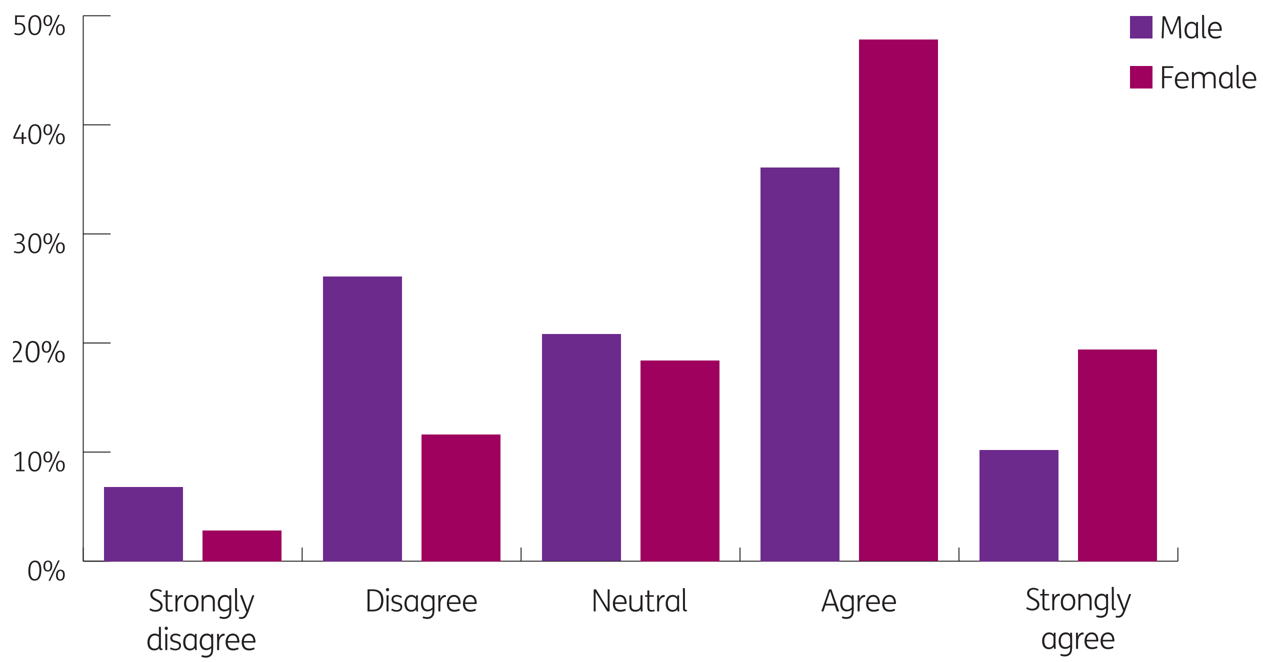
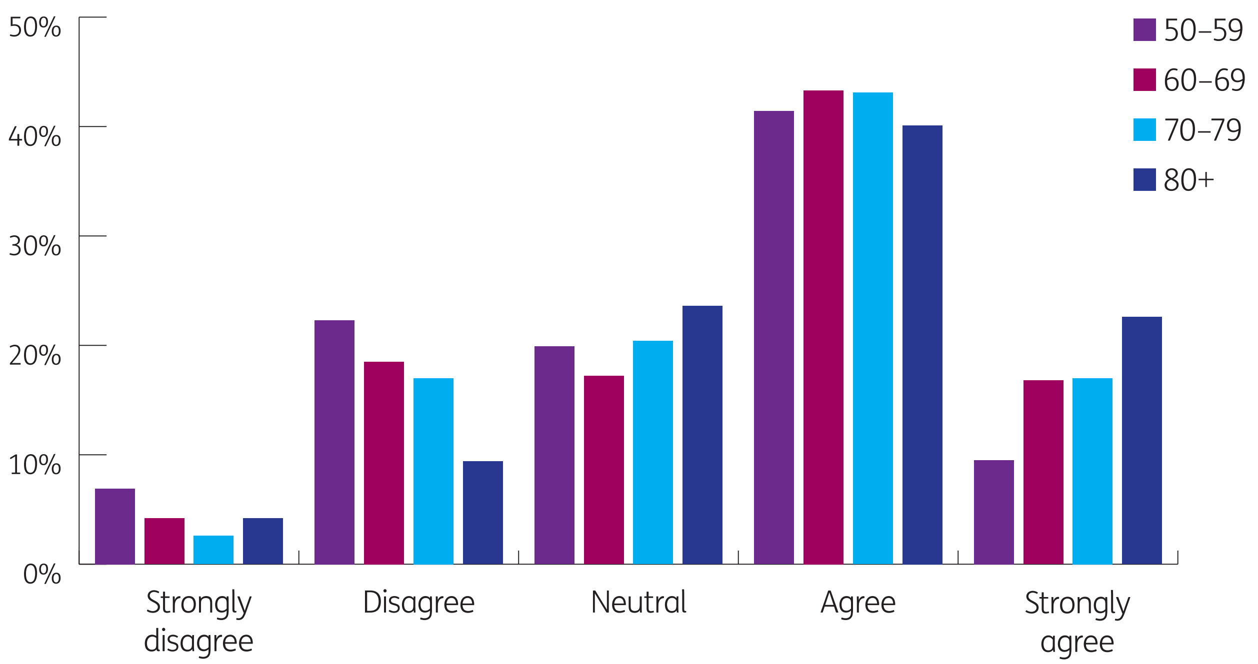
Figure 2.9 Buying technology and gender differences



I need help when it comes to buying technological products

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.10 Buying technology and age group differences



I need help when it comes to buying technological products

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

2.6 In retrospect

How people compare themselves to the person they used to be, and how they have progressed through life, is an important aspect of one's personal characteristics. We asked six questions that invited respondents to compare their life now to when they were younger. Questions covered both positive and negative changes to avoid any bias in the findings (see Figure 2.11).

In general, people agreed that they have changed in a more positive way as they have got older. Over 60 per cent of participants believe that they have become more broad-minded and feel freer as they have aged. Also, 40 per cent of respondents disagreed that they were happier when they were younger.

Seven out of ten respondents thought that their viewpoints have changed as they have got older. Understandably, a smaller percentage of people agreed that they feel able to do all the things they used to do when they were younger.

We also asked people whether there was a time in their life when they started feeling older. While 60 per cent of respondents agreed with this statement, nearly 20 per cent disagreed. This shows that not all people feel a clear transition from young to old age.

2.7 Credit

Respondents were asked whether they prefer to use cash or credit when buying. Sixty per cent of respondents mentioned that they use cash to pay for everything they buy. In a different question, 60 per cent stated that they do not buy many things using a credit card (see Figure 2.12).

Social class seems to be decisive in respondents' answers to the question on use of credit cards. An enormous difference can be seen between those in class A and other classes, especially in the 'strongly disagree' or 'strongly agree' responses (see Figure 2.13).

Different age groups are also different in their response to this question. This is especially evident in the oldest group of respondents, 80 years and over, where nearly 40 per cent of them strongly disagreed with the statement 'I buy many things with a credit card' (see Figure 2.14).

2.8 Money

Three questions were asked to determine how older people think about their finances. 60 per cent of respondents mentioned that their family income is high enough to satisfy all their important needs. However, the same percentage of people wished that they had a lot more money. In another question, 73 per cent of respondents mentioned that they are very careful with money. These responses indicate that, in general, people are happy about their finances but at the same time they are being careful with money (see Figure 2.15).

2.9 Health and environment

Nearly 65 per cent of respondents felt good about their health. Only 35 per cent agree that they exercise a lot and nearly 40 per cent disagree with this statement. In terms of their eating habits, 60 per cent believe that they are very careful with what they eat. However, it is worth noting that the question is not directly asking them whether or not they eat healthily (see Figure 2.16).

Exercise is less popular among older age groups, where nearly 55 per cent of them mentioned that they do not exercise a lot (see Figure 2.17).

We also asked respondents whether or not they purchase environmentally friendly products. Nearly 50 per cent of respondents mentioned that they do so whenever they can (see Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.11 Life in retrospect

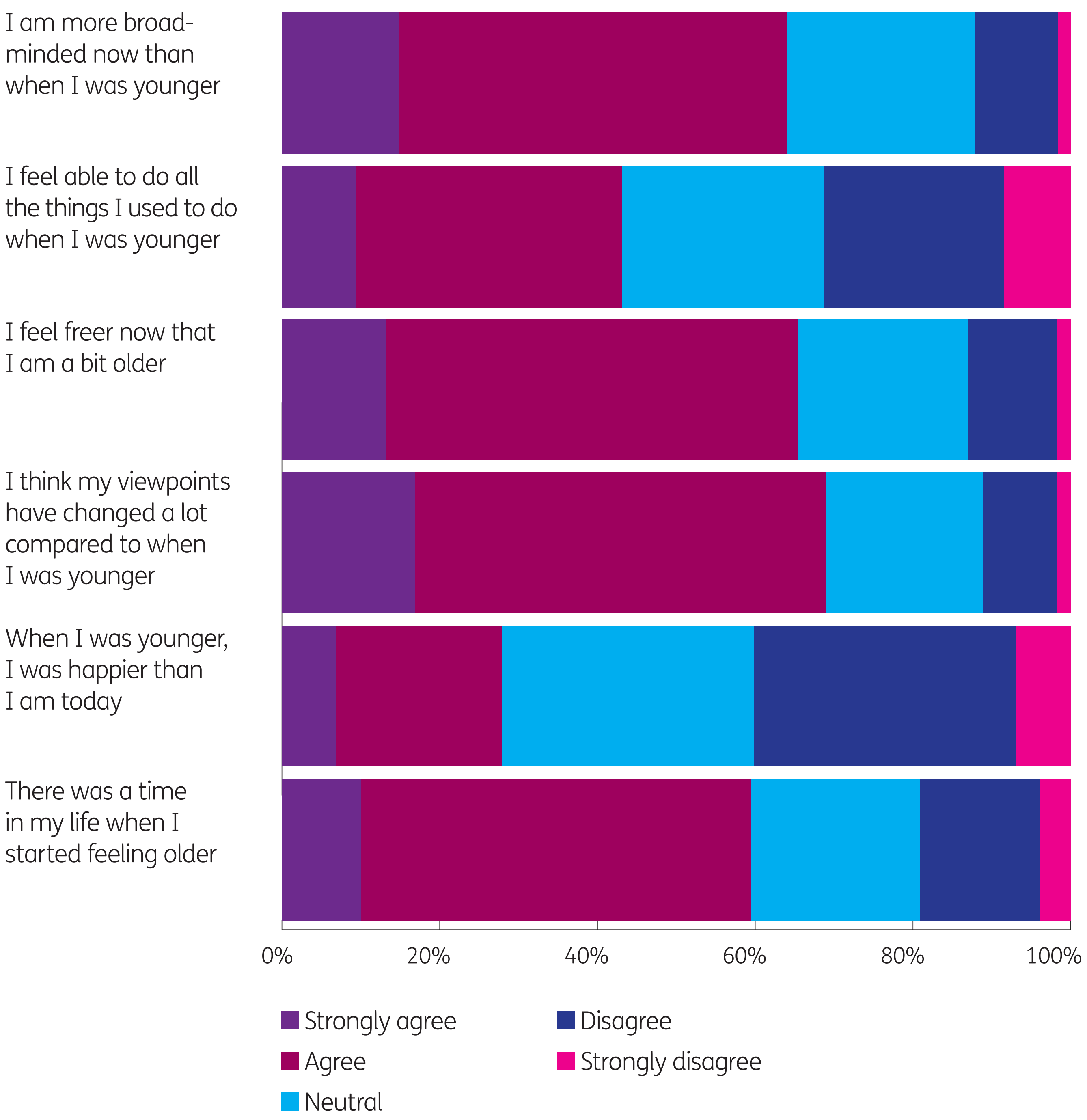


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Figure 2.12 Use of credit

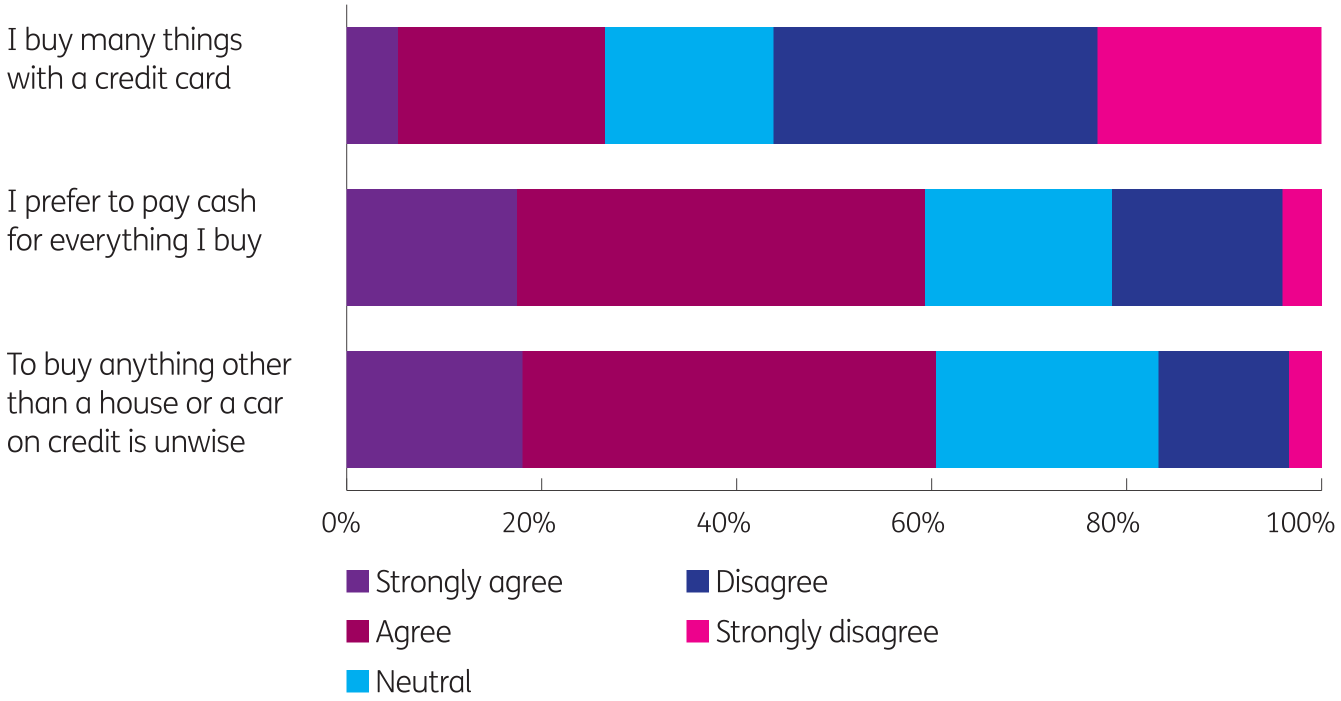

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Figure 2.13 Credit cards and social class differences

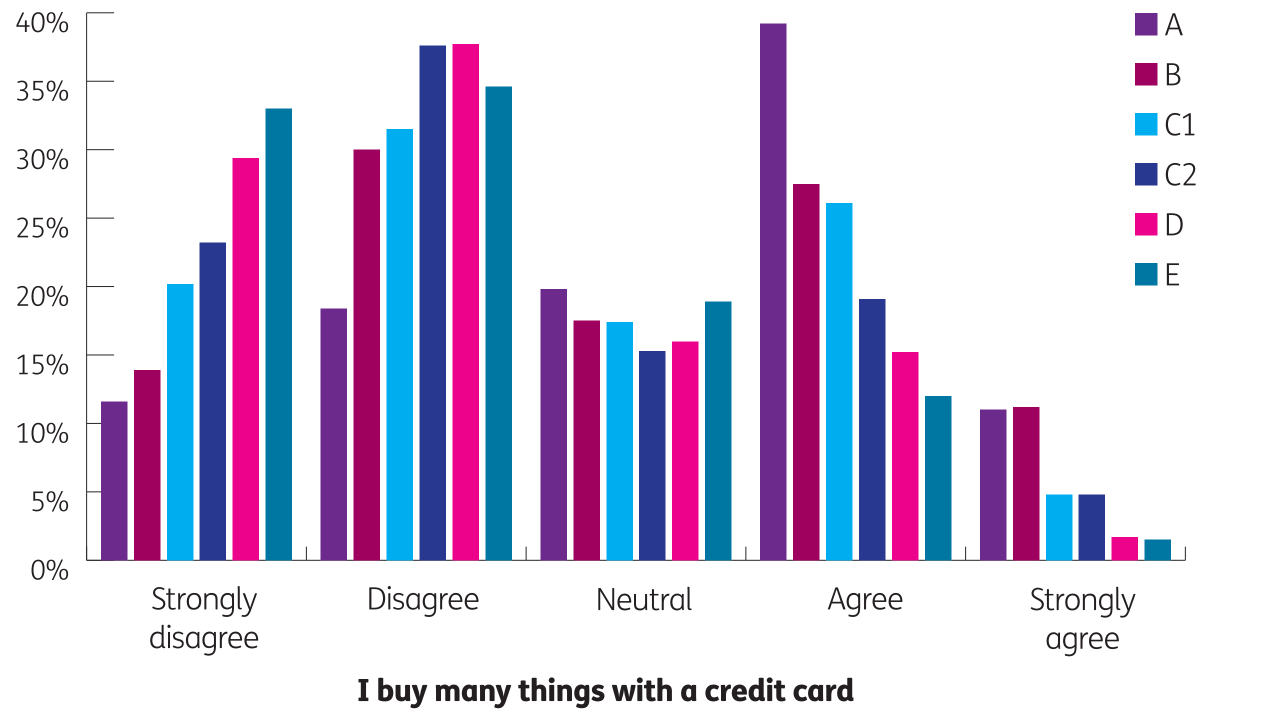

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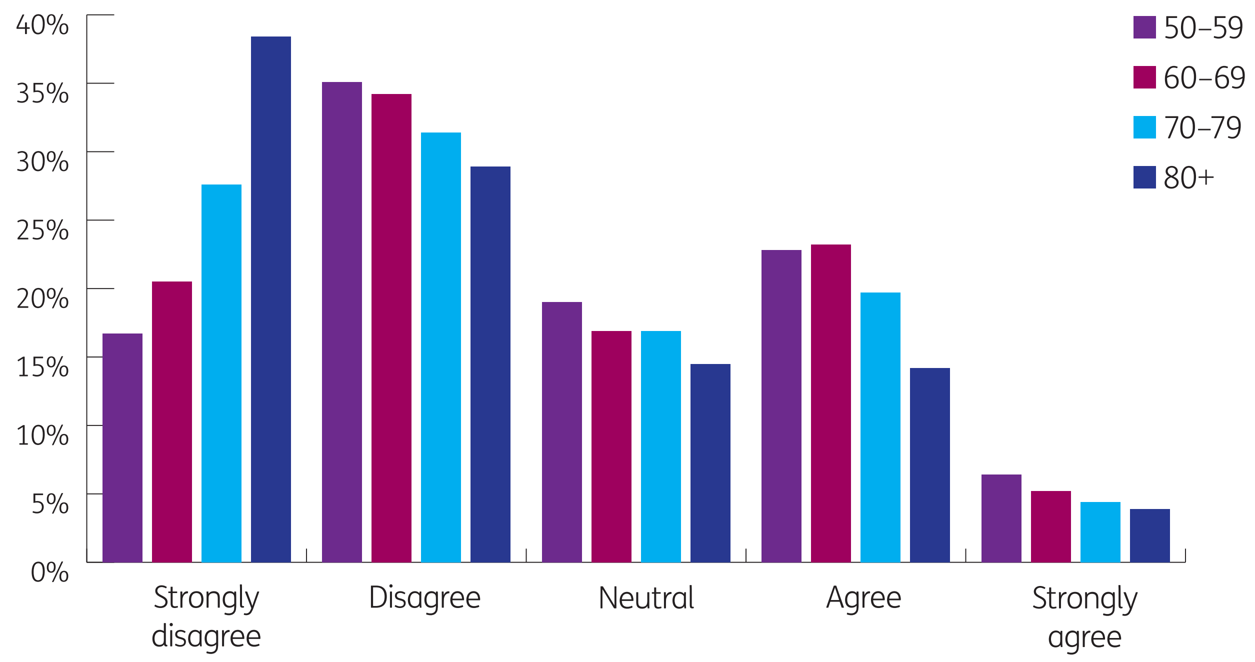
Figure 2.14 Credit cards and age groups



I buy many things with a credit card

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.15 Self-assessment of wealth and spending

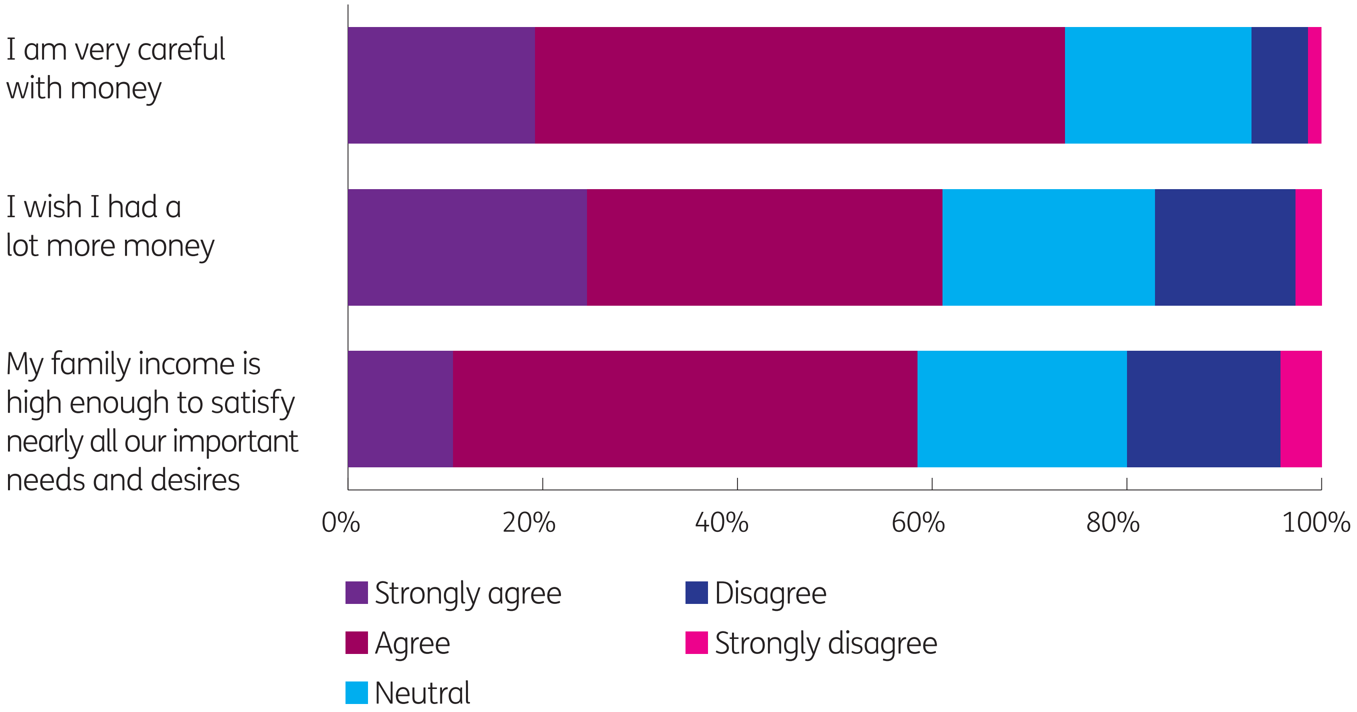


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Figure 2.16 Health consciousness

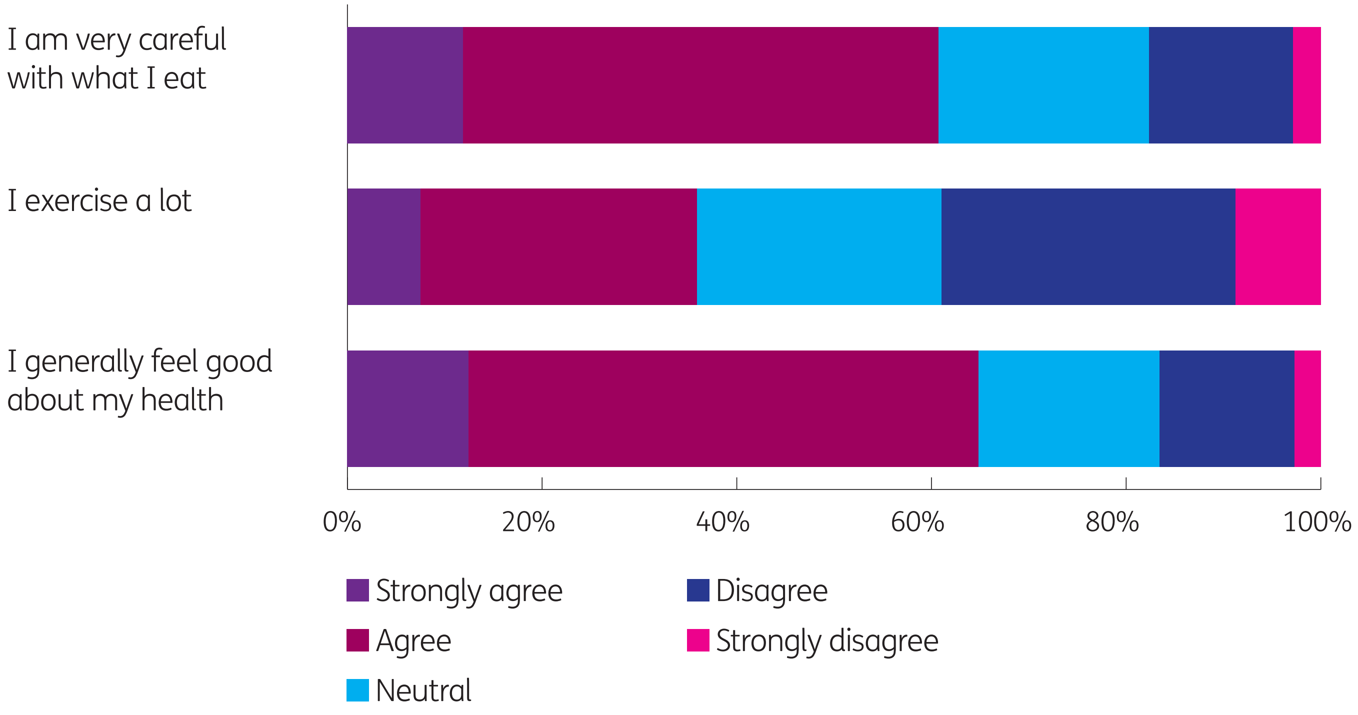

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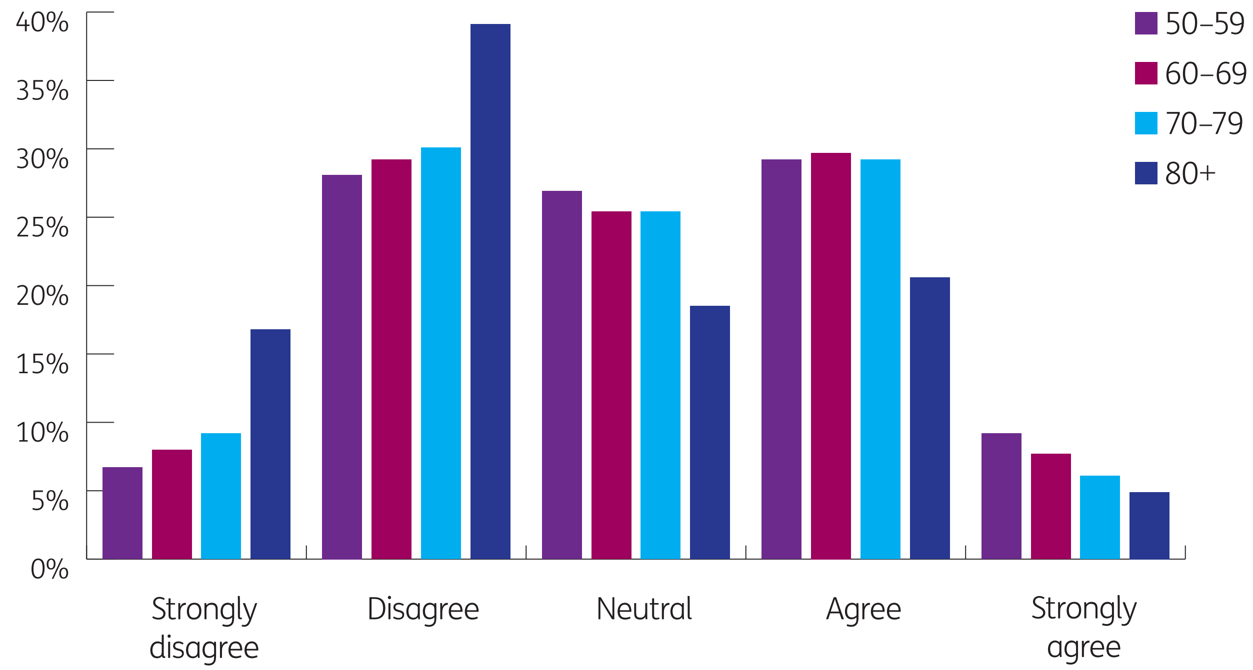
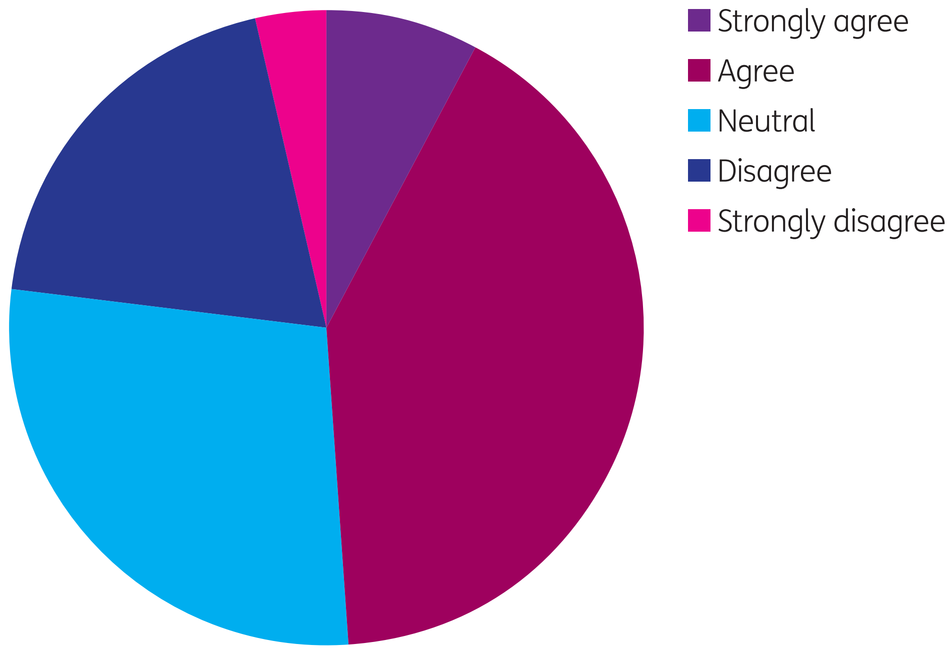
Figure 2.17 Exercising in different age groups



I exercise a lot

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.18 Environment friendliness



I buy environmental friendly products whenever I can

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

2.10 Daily activities

Respondents answered seven different questions on their daily activities and how they spend their time (see Figure 2.19).

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents mentioned that they like having a lot of leisure time. Relaxing for a few hours every day is something that is appreciated by over 80 per cent of the sample. As another relaxing activity, 58 per cent of respondents would rather spend a quiet evening at home than go out.

Spending a lot of time on the phone is not very popular, as only 20 per cent of people agreed that they do it.

People were also asked about their preference for forms of entertainment such as television, radio and reading. Forty-five per cent of respondents mentioned that television is their favourite form of entertainment. Over 50 per cent of respondents read books and also listen to the radio.

2.11 Travelling

Travelling is a popular activity among older people. Nearly 70 per cent of respondents like travelling. Their interest in travelling goes even further, in that nearly 75 per cent of people mentioned that they like visiting places that they have never seen before. Interestingly, half of the sample mentioned that they would like to take a trip around the world (see Figure 2.20).

There is a difference between the responses given by the 80+ and other age groups as to whether or not they like visiting places that they have never seen before. There is a visibly higher rate of disagreement and lower rate of agreement (see Figure 2.21).

2.12 Traditionalism

Traditionalism is another aspect of older people's lives that was included in the survey. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents agreed that they like living by traditional values. A few other questions clarified some aspects of the rules that they follow in their lives. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents mentioned that they have a familiar routine for getting things done (see Figure 2.22).

Over 40 per cent of the sample eat their meal at the same time and around 30 per cent buy their clothes from the same shop.

2.13 Social interaction

There were six questions in the survey that aimed to understand older people's preferences in social interaction (see Figure 2.23).

Seventy per cent of participants mentioned that they often see their family and 65 per cent said that they often see their friends. A similar percentage of the sample (67 per cent) agreed that they like meeting new people and 47 per cent of respondents like being with others even though they do not know them. On the other hand, 43 per cent of respondents like to have company most of the time.

Respondents also were asked whether or not they would visit their high street more often if it offered more opportunity for social interaction. Over 60 per cent agree with the statement.

Figure 2.19 Lifestyle and day-to-day activities

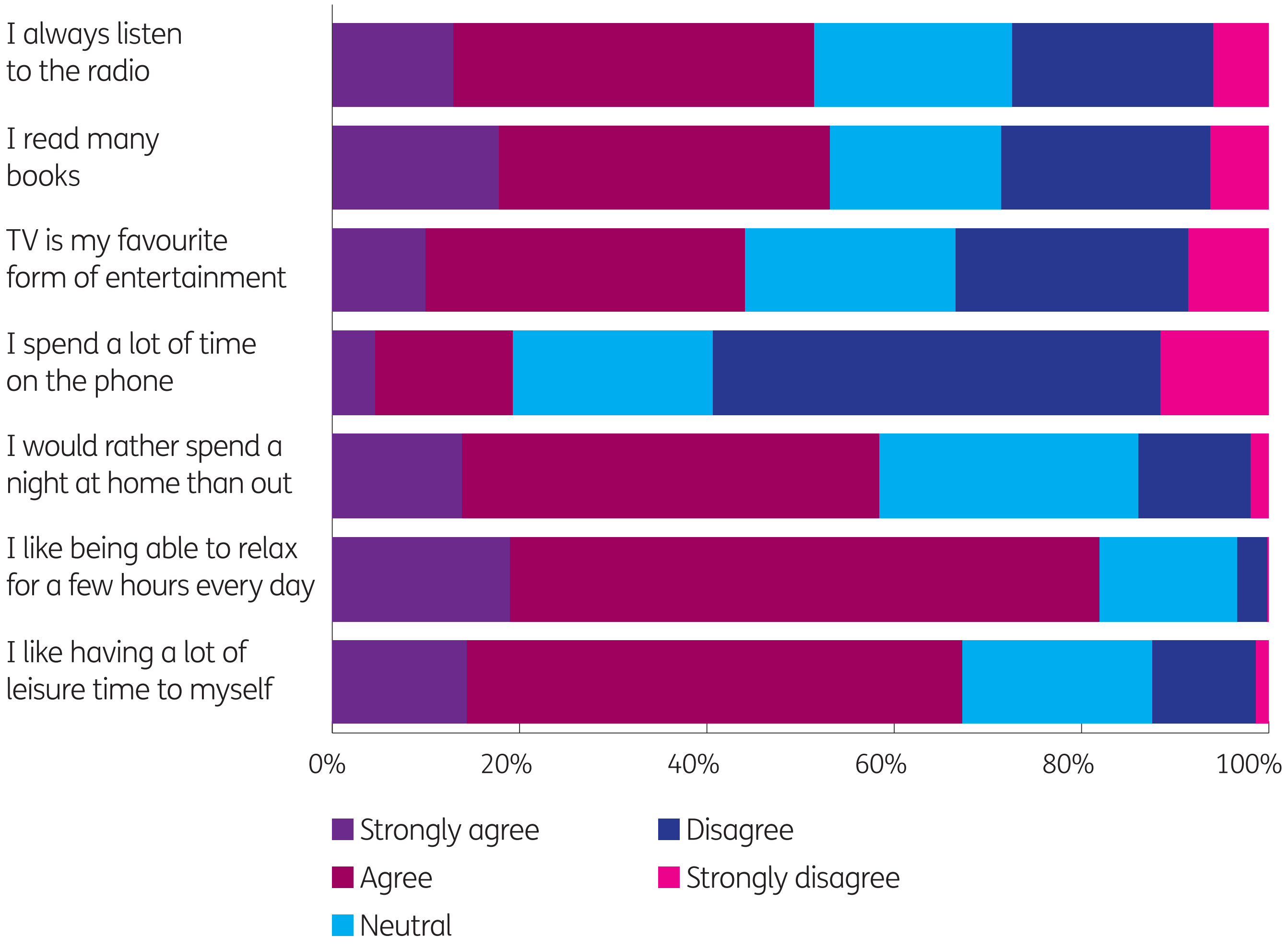


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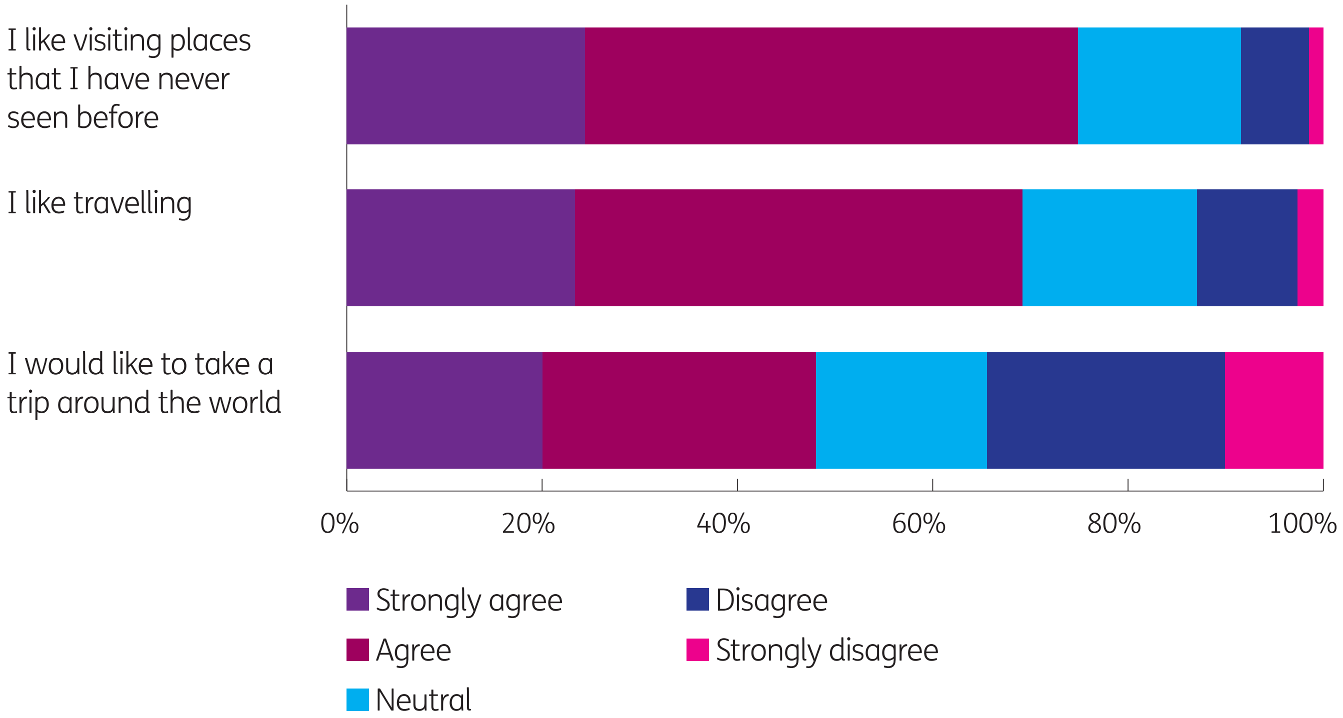
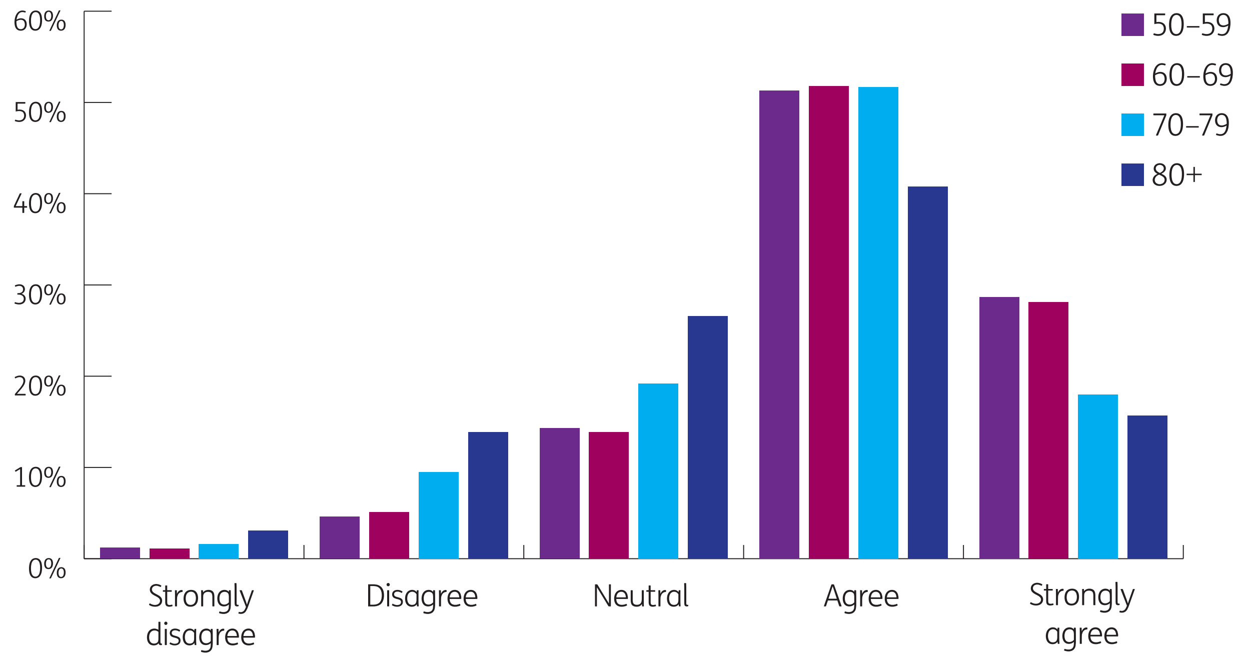
Figure 2.20 Relationship with travelling



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.21 Travelling and age group differences



I like visiting places that I have never seen before

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.22 Traditionalism

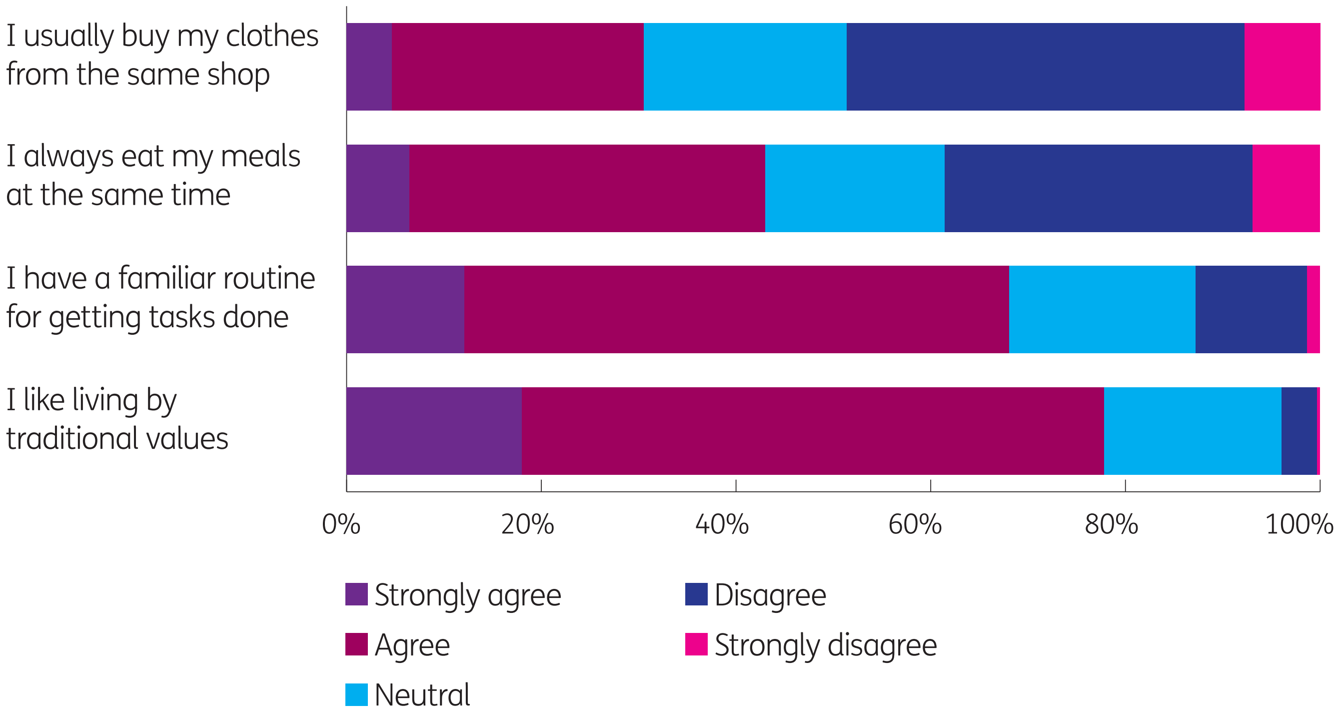


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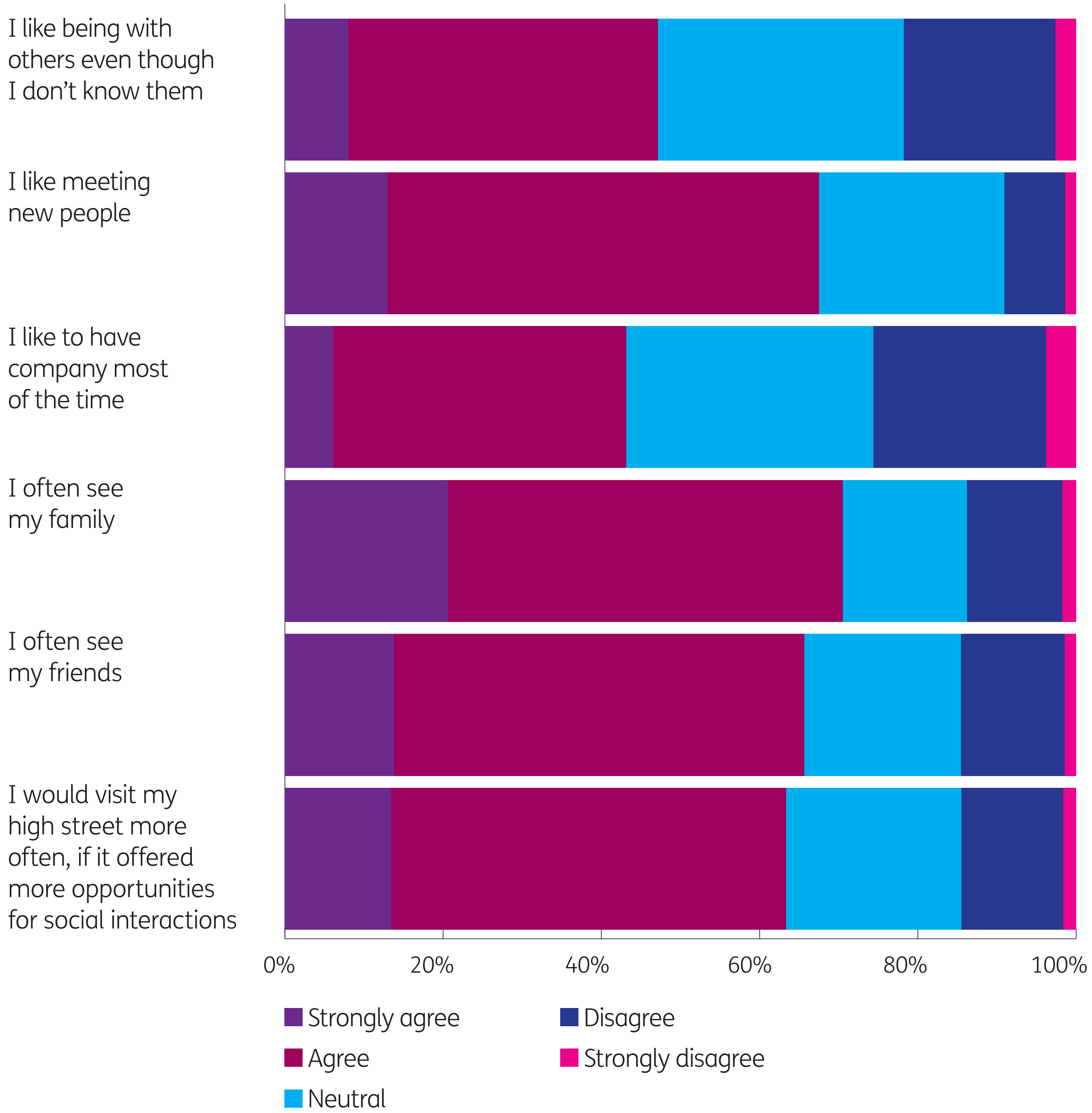
Figure 2.23 Social interaction



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

2.14 Attitudes towards opportunities and change

Respondents were asked to give their views on welcoming opportunities and change. Attitudes towards change and opportunities are positive on average (see Figure 2.24).

Sixty per cent of respondents agreed that they like trying new things. Two-thirds of respondents mentioned that they always welcome new opportunities in life. An even bigger proportion of the sample agreed that they do not hesitate to change the things that they do not like and also they admire people who are able to make radical changes in their life (70 per cent). Moreover, 47 per cent of the sample agreed that there are new skills that they would like to learn.

However, there are differences in attitudes towards learning new skills. Older age groups and people from social class groups D and E are less likely to agree that they are interested in learning new skills (see Figures 2.25 and 2.26).

2.15 General consumer behaviour

Preferences and behaviours of older people as consumers are discussed in this section. The different aspects of consumer behaviour that were included in the survey are price consciousness, innovativeness, advice and information seeking, attitudes towards complaints, accreditations and quality marks, payment methods, and also feelings towards shopping.

Over 60 per cent of the sample agreed that they will buy a new brand on the shelf just to see what it is like.

2.15.1 Price consciousness

Over half of the sample mentioned that they check the prices in store for special offers, even for small items, and nearly 45 per cent of the respondents agreed that they save a lot of money by shopping around for bargains (see Figure 2.27).

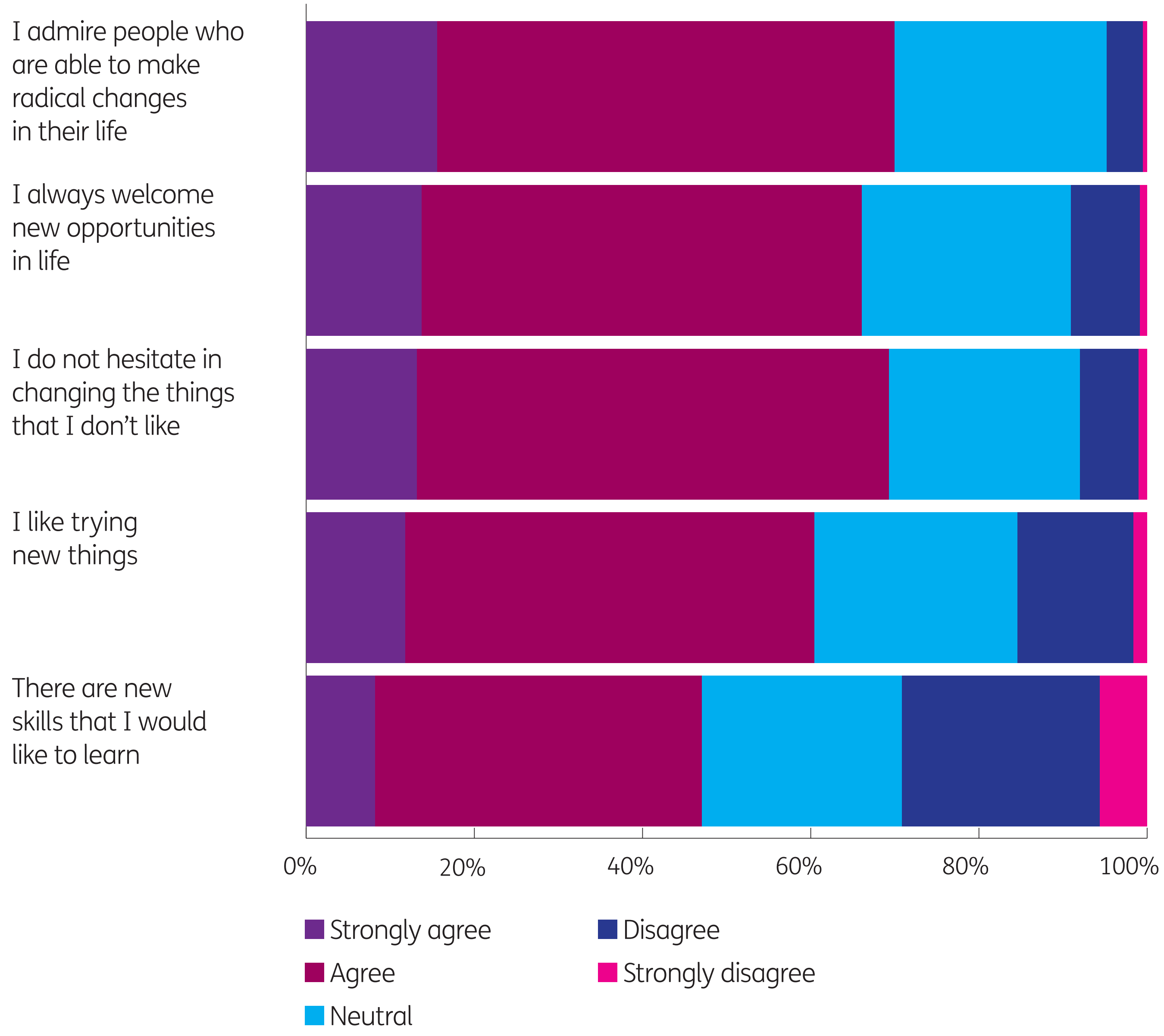
However, under 40 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they shop a lot for special offers. This may be due to the fact that special offers are not designed to suit older households (e.g. discount on bulk volume).

2.15.2 Innovation

Over 60 per cent of the sample agreed that they will buy a new brand on the shelf just to see what it is like. This finding suggests that, contrary to common belief, older people are seeking new brands. However, 60 per cent of people disagreed that they often buy products that they have never heard of before. Another response shows that 44 per cent of the sample will buy a substitute product if they cannot find what they are looking for (see Figure 2.28).

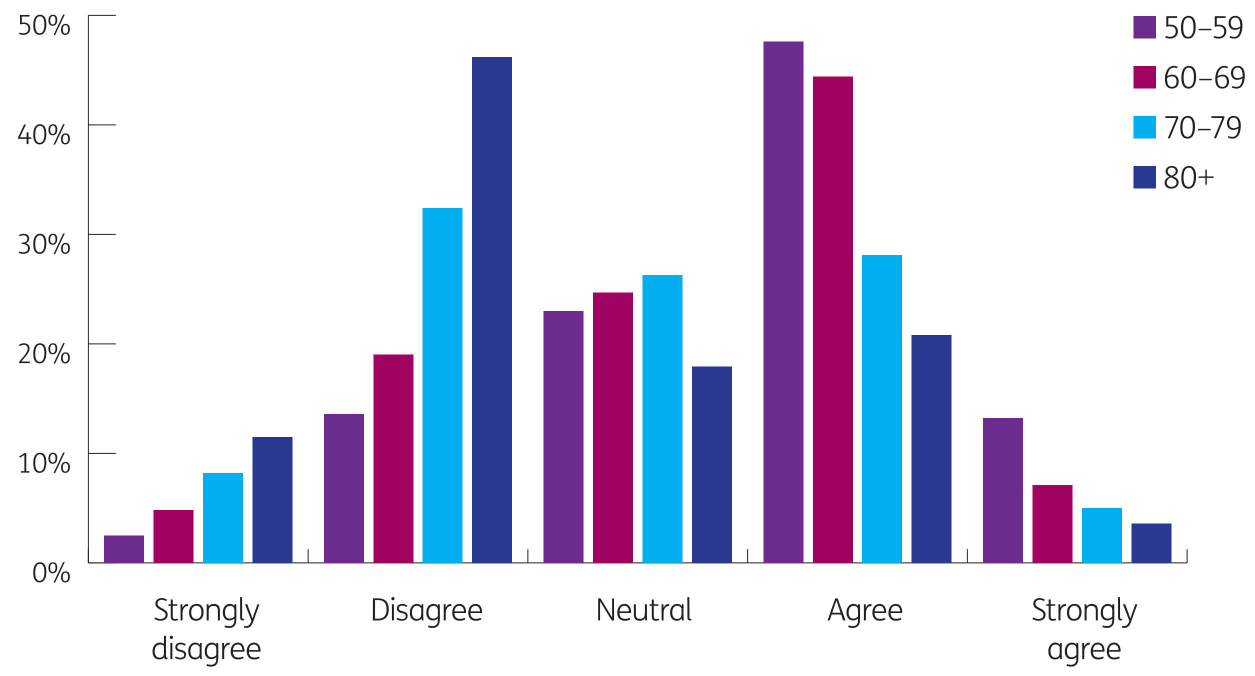
Only one in four participants feels that they are buying things that they do not really need, which shows that unnecessary shopping is not prevalent among older age groups. The difference between the responses of different social classes is very evident, especially between higher and lower classes (see Figure 2.29).

Figure 2.24 Attitudes towards opportunities and change



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

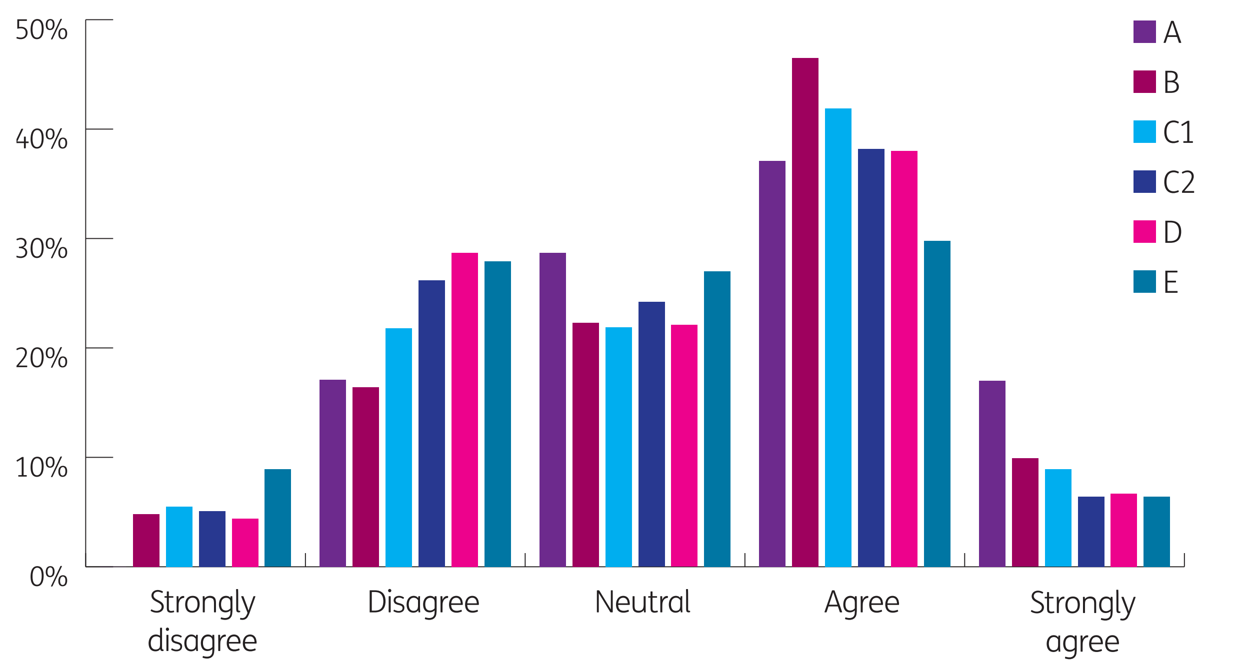
Figure 2.25 Learning new skills in different age groups



There are new skills that I would like to learn

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

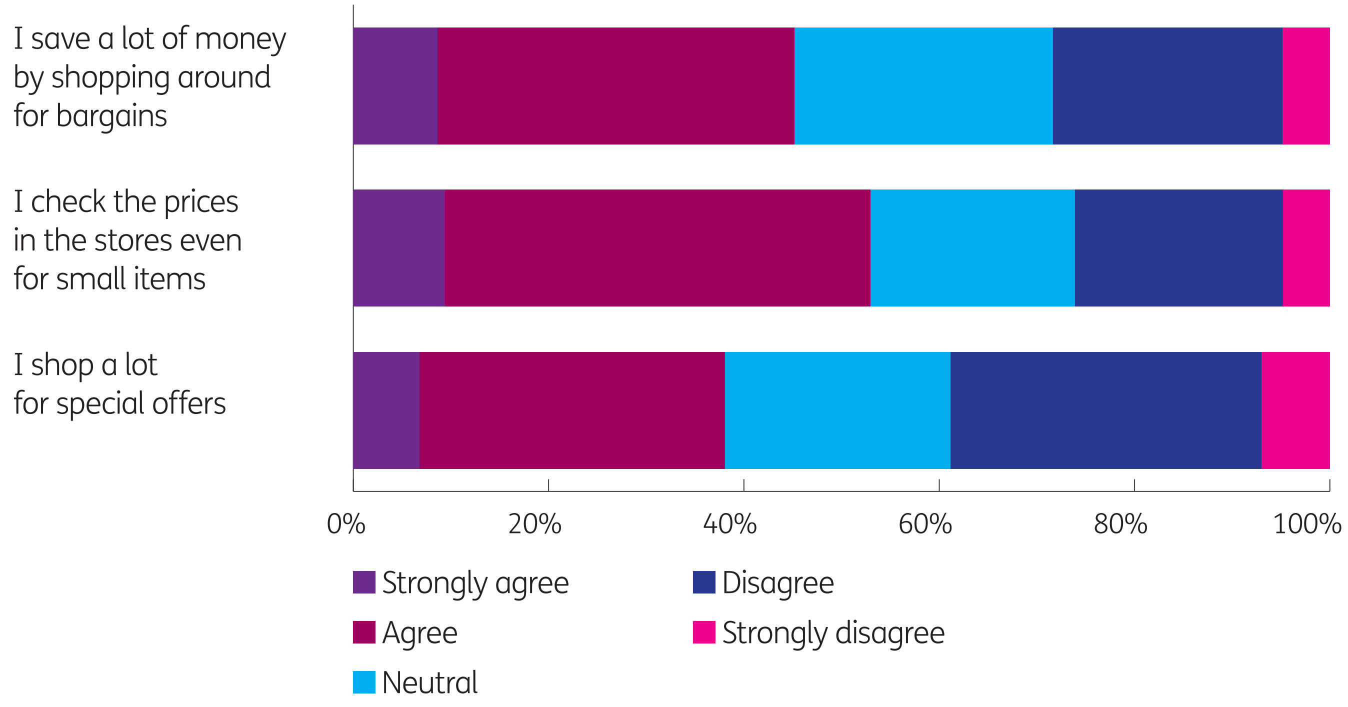
Figure 2.26 Learning new skills and social classes



There are new skills that I would like to learn

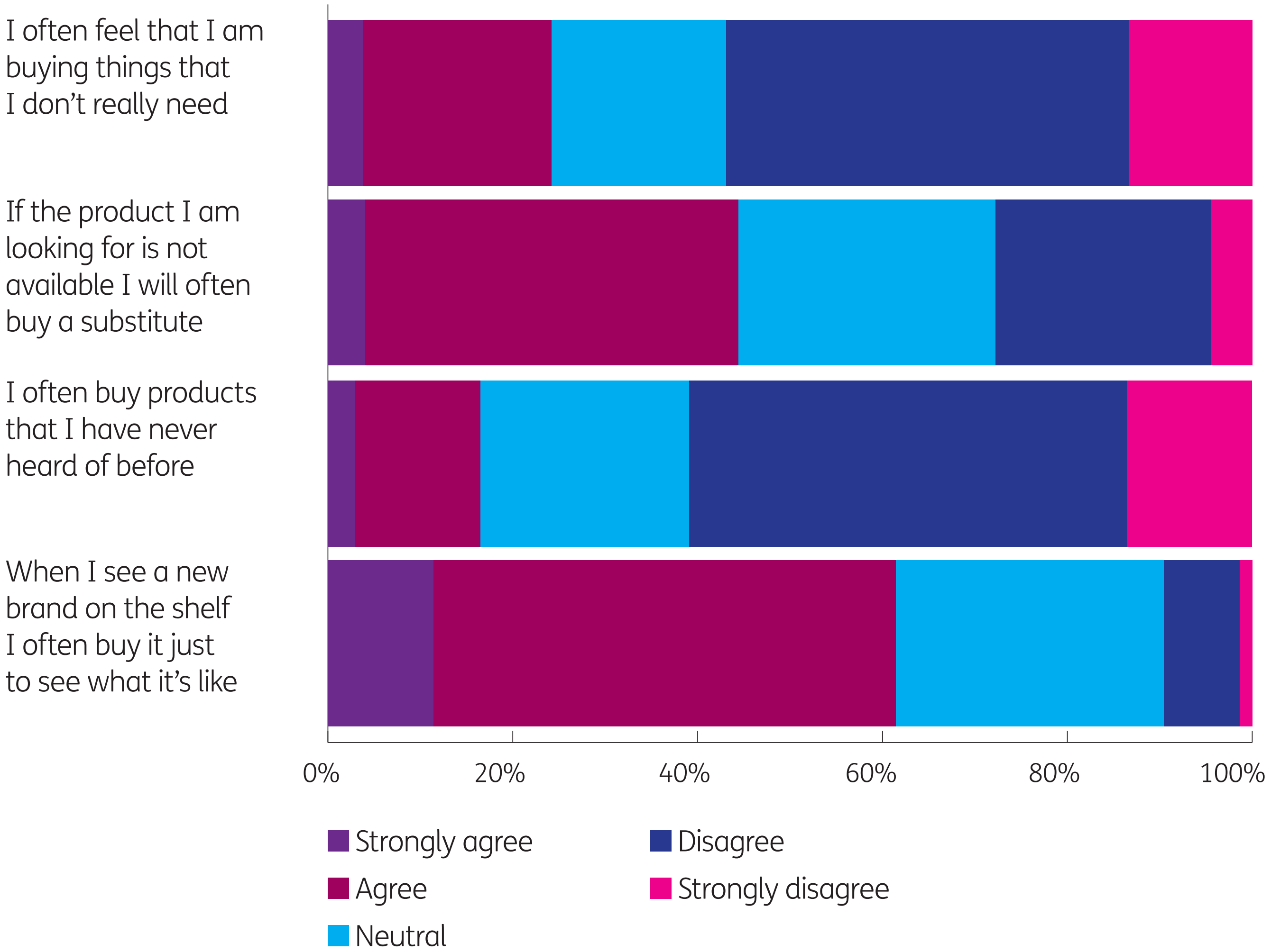
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.27 Price consciousness



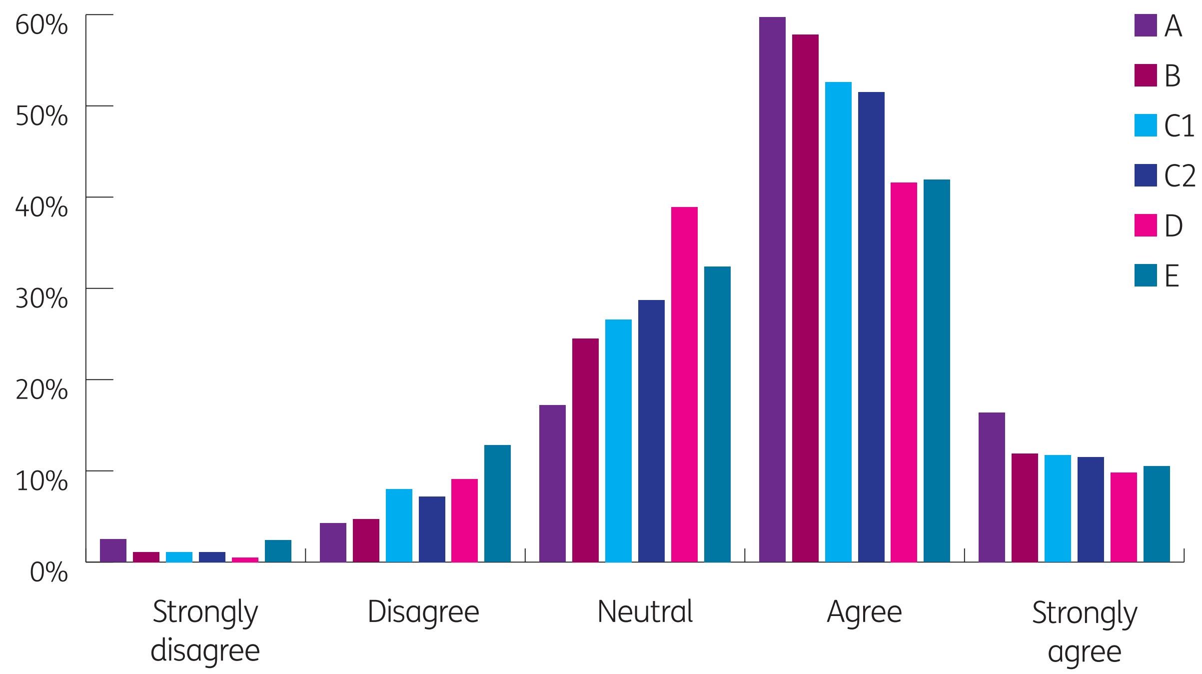
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.28 Innovativeness in shopping



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.29 Buying new brands and differences in social classes



When I see a new brand on the shelf I often buy it just to see what it's like

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

2.15.3 Advice-giving and advice-seeking in purchase decisions

Sixty-five per cent of respondents believed that they think a lot before deciding to buy (see Figure 2.30).

Most respondents did not agree that they spend a lot of time discussing with their friends what to buy (60 per cent disagreement). Similarly, they did not agree that they influence what their friends buy or think (over 50 per cent disagreement). However, 40 per cent of respondents thought that people around them give them good advice on what to buy. A smaller percentage (26 per cent) said that they seek the advice of others regarding what to buy.

One-third of the sample believed that people go to them more often than they go to others for information about products and services. These statistics suggest that older people do exchange information regarding their purchases.

2.15.4 Complaints

Attitudes towards complaints when business practices do not comply with expectations is another aspect of consumer behaviour. Seven out of ten respondents were positive about the handling of consumer complaints and agreed that consumers' complaints are important in changing business practices (see Figure 2.31).

There is an evident gender difference in the responses to the statement 'I like to go shopping with friends', where over 50 per cent of female participants agreed with the statement.

2.15.5 Accreditations and marks

Respondents were asked whether they value accreditations and quality marks when it comes to choosing a product or service. Fifty-four per cent of respondents mentioned that they prefer to buy products and services that have been approved by a trusted body (see Figure 2.32).

Similar to some of the other behaviours and feelings considered in this report, responses to this question were different between different social classes. Social class A is visibly more positive about accreditations than any other class (see Figure 2.33).

2.15.6 Payment methods

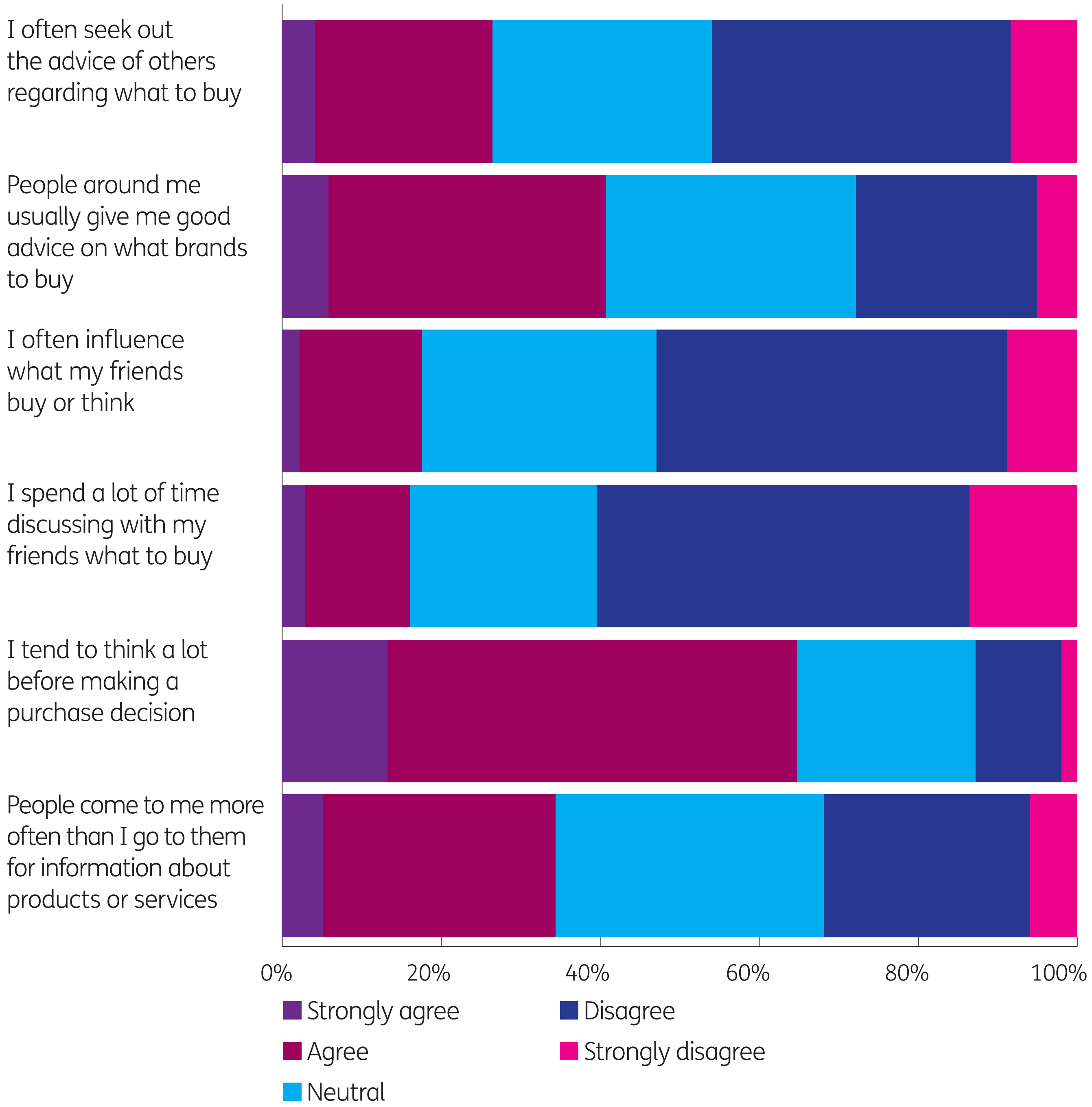
Respondents were asked which payment methods they prefer to use. Cash payment is the most prevalent method, with 55 per cent of respondents using it. Debit cards in store are also widely used (51 per cent). Credit cards are the third most popular payment method, with 23 per cent of respondents using it. Cheques are used by 10 per cent of participants, which is slightly higher than the percentage using online payment method (9 per cent) (see Table 2.1).

2.15.7 Feelings towards shopping

Enjoyment and the social aspect of shopping were also covered in the survey. Nearly 35 per cent of respondents agreed that they like to go shopping with their friends. A very similar proportion of the sample mentioned that they enjoy shopping (see Figure 2.34).

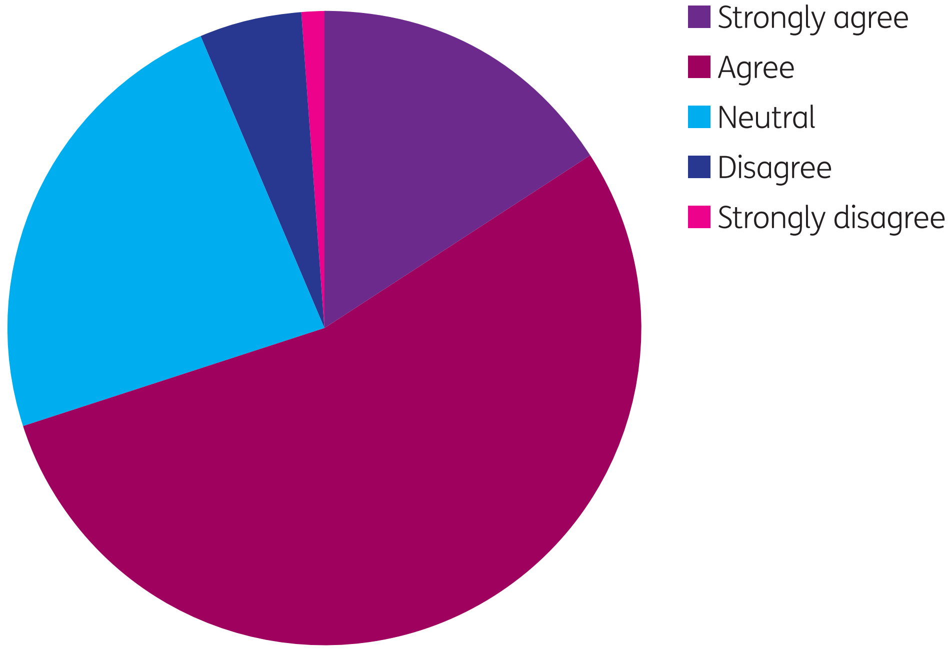
There is an evident gender difference in the responses to the statement 'I like to go shopping with friends'. Over 50 per cent of female participants agreed with the statement and nearly 30 per cent disagreed. Fifty-five per cent of male respondents disagreed with the statement (see Figure 2.35).

Figure 2.30 Advice-giving and advice-seeking before making a purchase



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

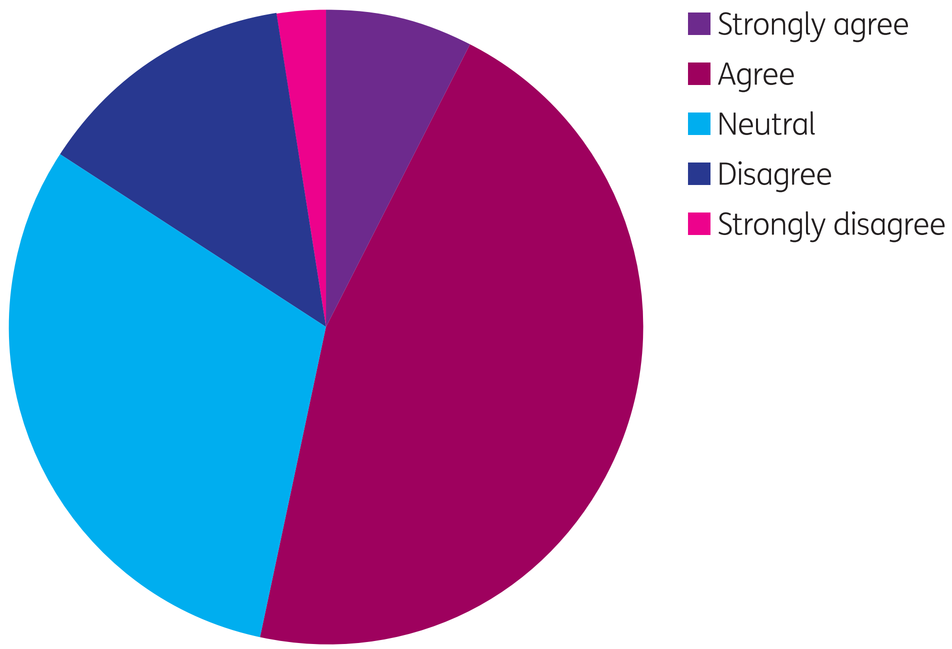
Figure 2.31 Consumer complaints



Consumers' complaints are important in changing business practices

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

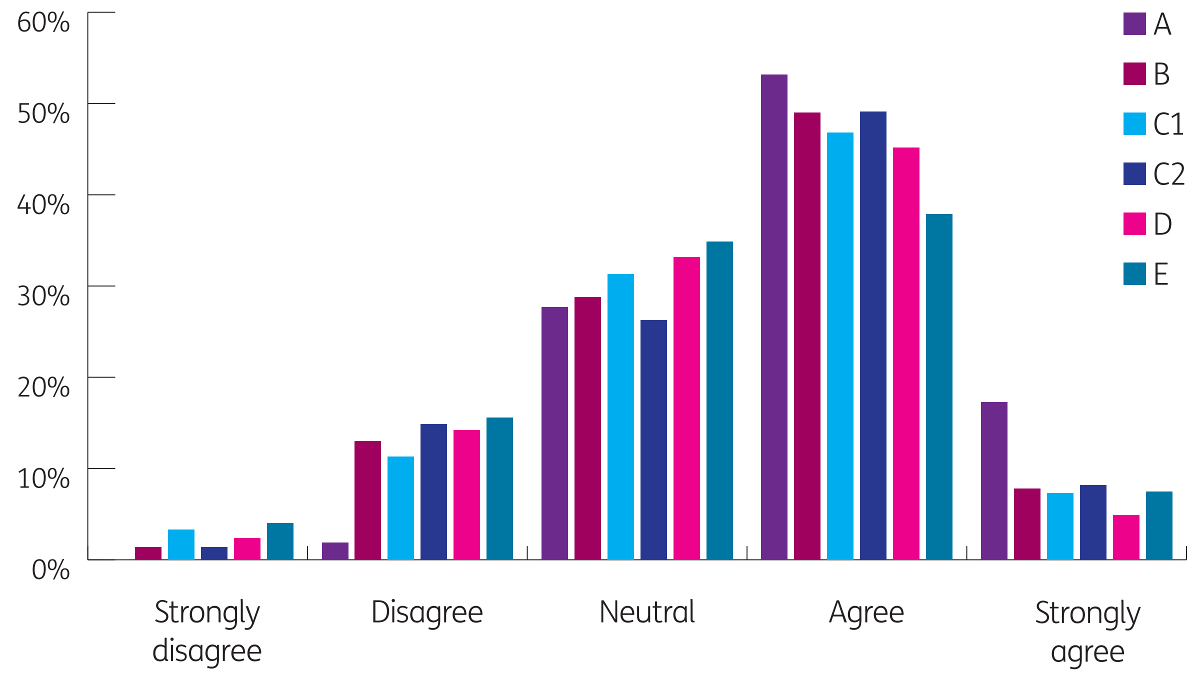
Figure 2.32 Importance of accreditations and quality marks



I prefer to buy products/services the design and delivery of which have been approved by a trusted body

Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.33 Accreditations and social classes



I prefer to buy products/services the design and delivery of which have been approved by a trusted body

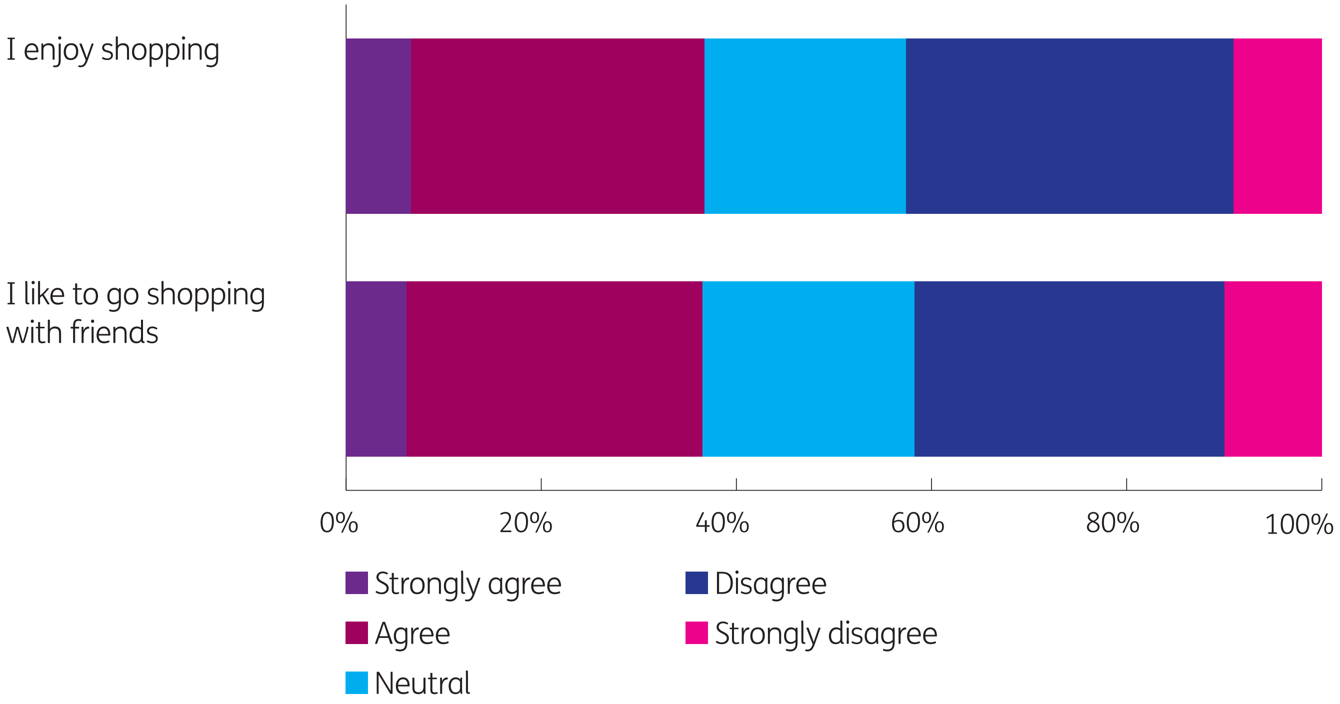
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Table 2.1 Preferred payment methods

Payment method	Per cent*
Credit card in store	**23**
Debit card in store	**51**
Cash	**55**
Cheque	**10**
Online payments	**9**
Vouchers	**2**

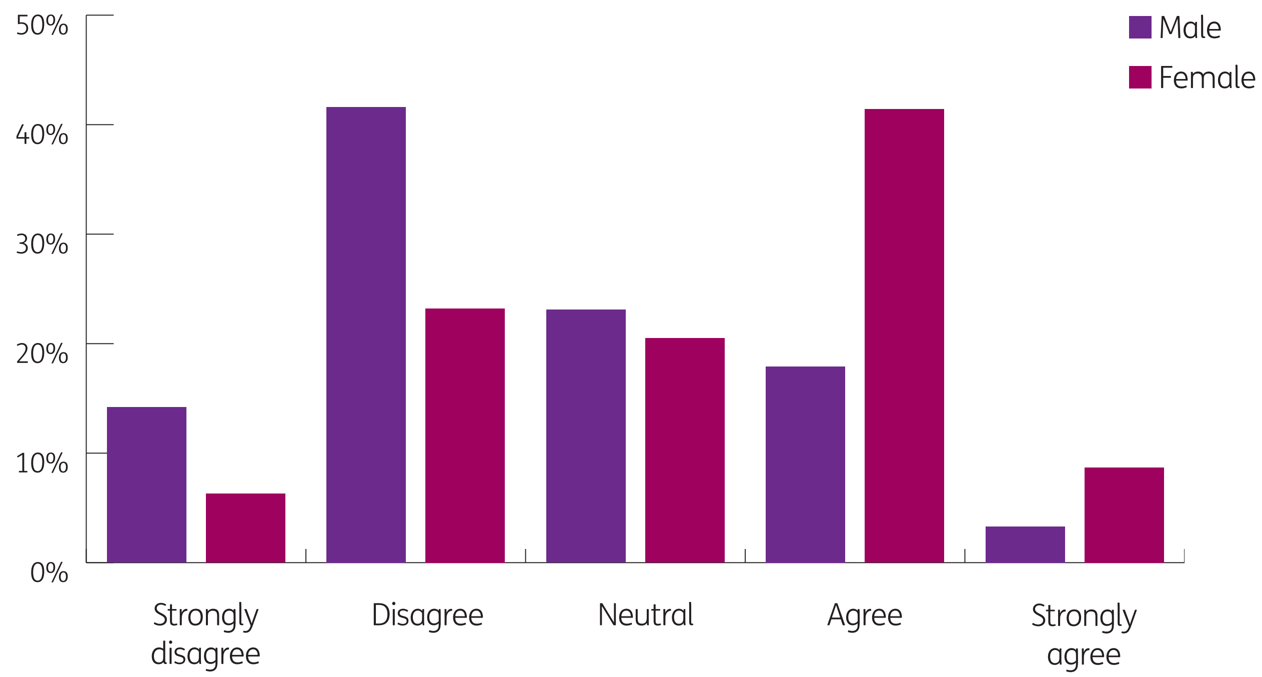
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)
*Respondents could select more than one option

Figure 2.34 Feelings towards shopping



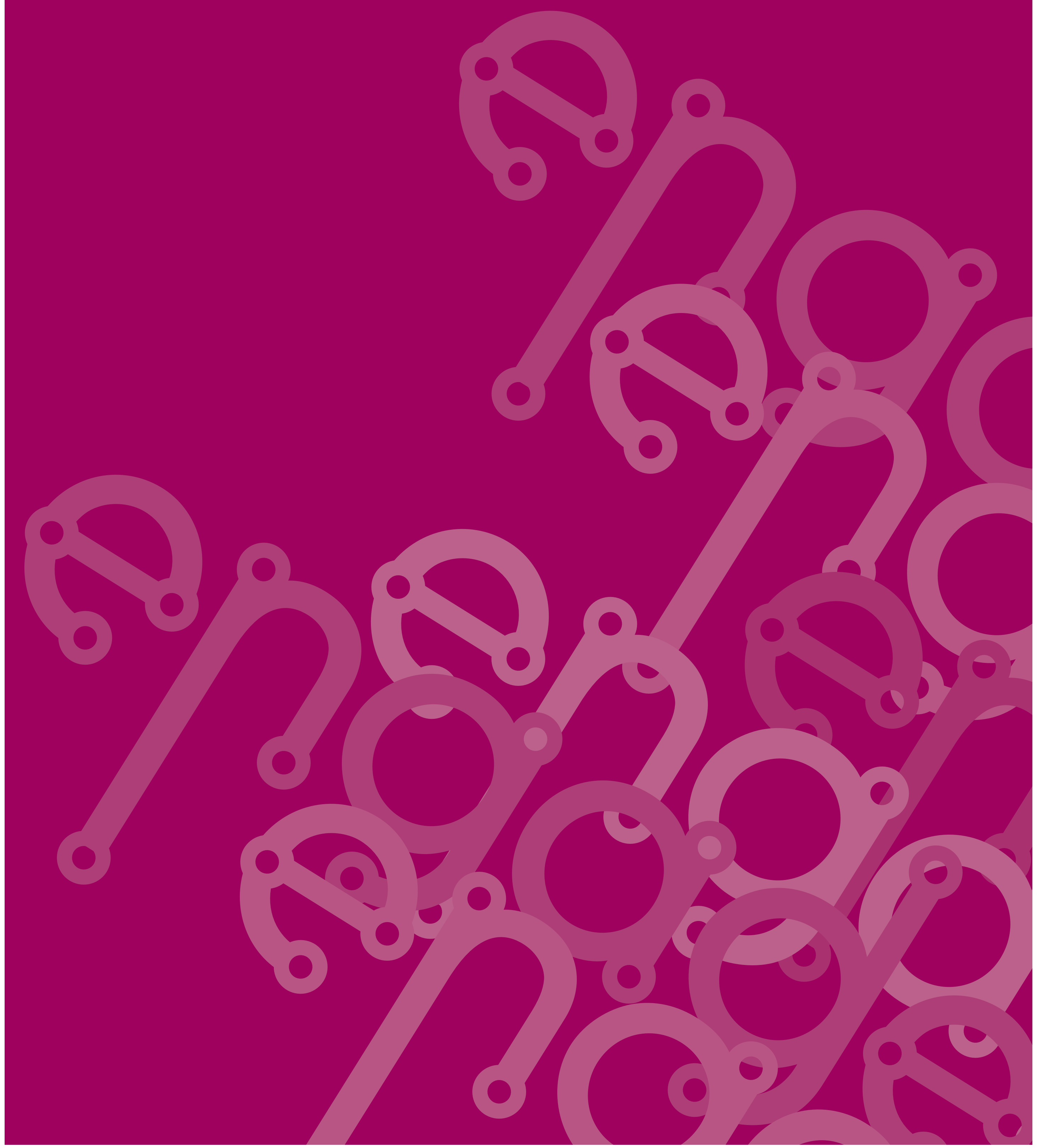
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 2.35 Shopping with friends and gender differences



I like to go shopping with friends
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused/not applicable)

3 Technology and communication



3 Technology and communication

In order to obtain more detailed information regarding older people's experience and expectations in each industry sector, 485 respondents were asked questions about the technology and communication sector. To ensure they were representative of the older population, the respondents were divided into sub-samples based on age, gender, social class and where they lived.

The technology survey asked respondents about their mobile phone(s), decision-making criteria and information sources when buying technology products, use of special offers, technology products they own, internet usage and, finally, problems with technology in general.

Gender and age group are important in the preference of older people for learning more about new technology.

3.1 Independence in buying technology

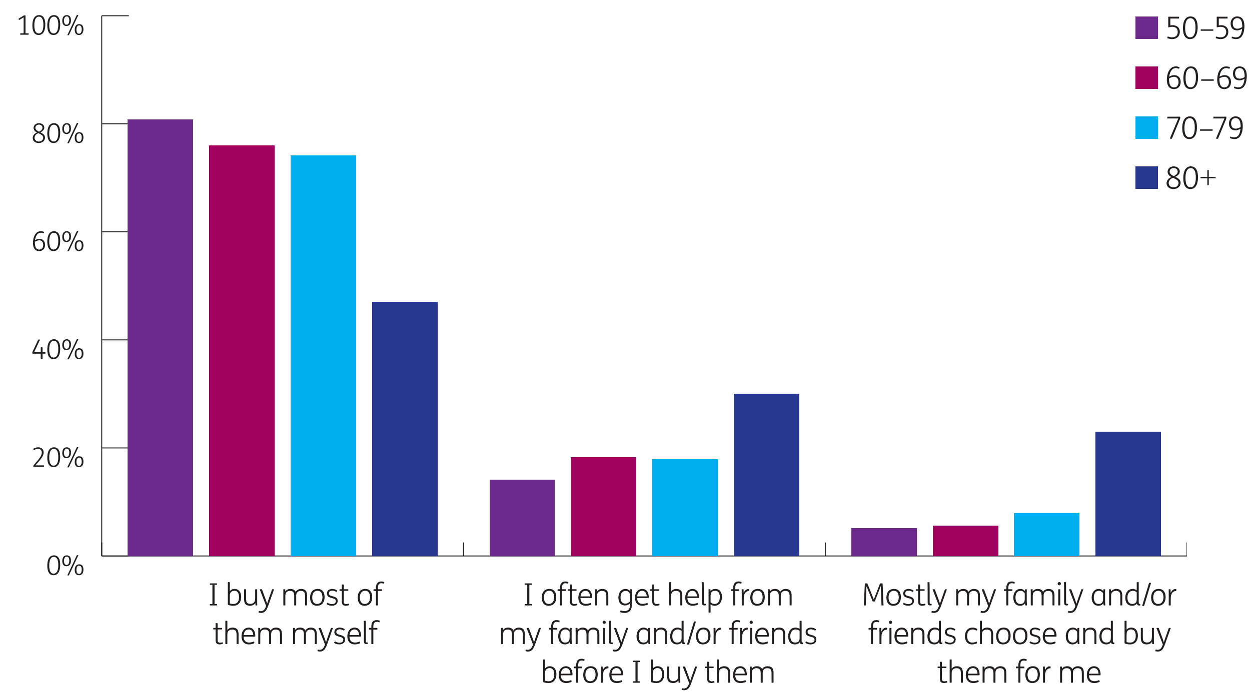
We asked respondents to tell us how they would best describe themselves when it comes to choosing and buying technology products. Seventy-two per cent of respondents reported that they buy most of their technology products themselves. Eighteen per cent state that they get help from friends and family. Eight per cent report that their family and friends choose and buy for them.

Age group seems to be an important factor in independence when it comes to buying and choosing technology products. This is specifically true for the oldest age group in the sample, as they tend to be much more dependent when buying and choosing technology (see Figure 3.1).

We also asked three more questions to gain a better understanding of their feelings towards learning and using technology. Nearly 60 per cent of participants mentioned that their family and friends help them with technology questions. Fewer than 40 per cent like to learn more about new technology and nearly 35 per cent want to become more confident in buying and using technology (see Figure 3.2).

Gender and age group are important in the preference of older people for learning more about new technology. Older participants and female participants are less willing to learn more about new technology (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4).

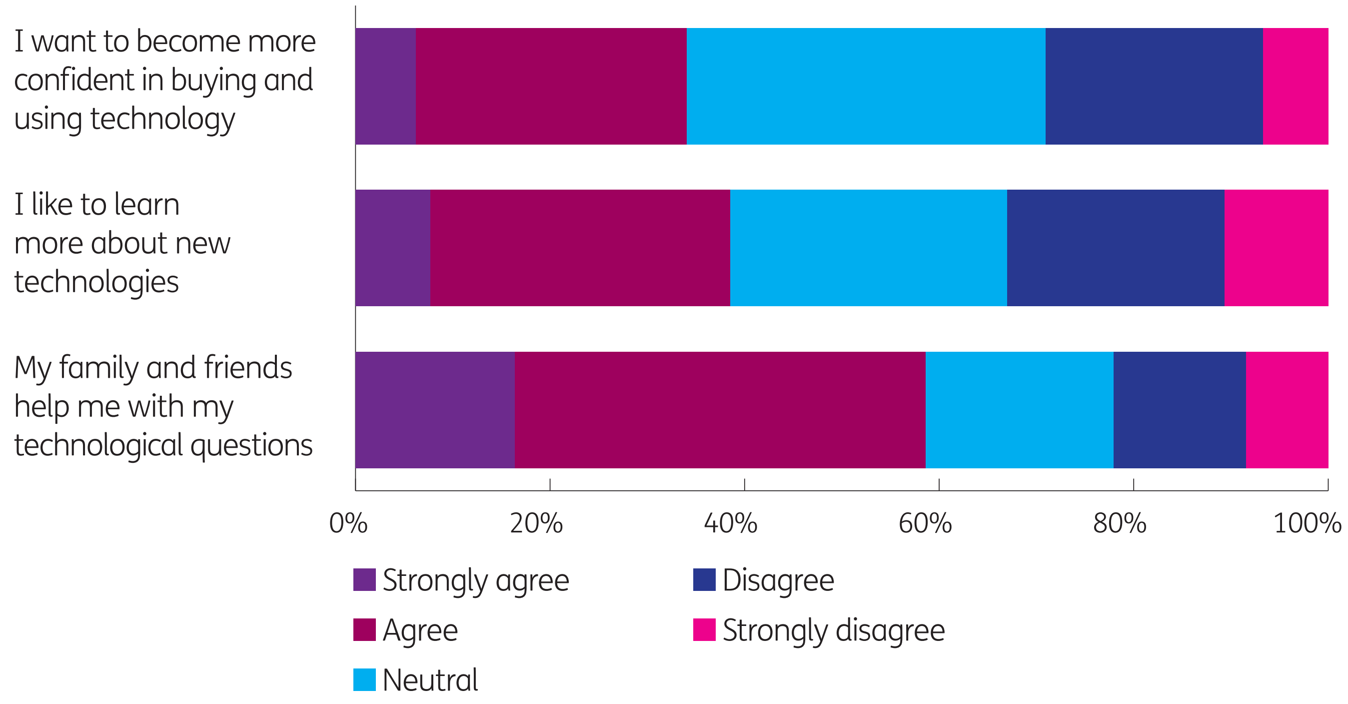
Figure 3.1 Buying technology and age group differences



When thinking about the technological products or services you own – such as TV, phone service, washing machines etc., which statement best describes you?

Weighted Base: 485 (excludes don't know)

Figure 3.2: Attitudes towards technology



Weighted Base: 485

Figure 3.3 Learning about new technology and gender effect

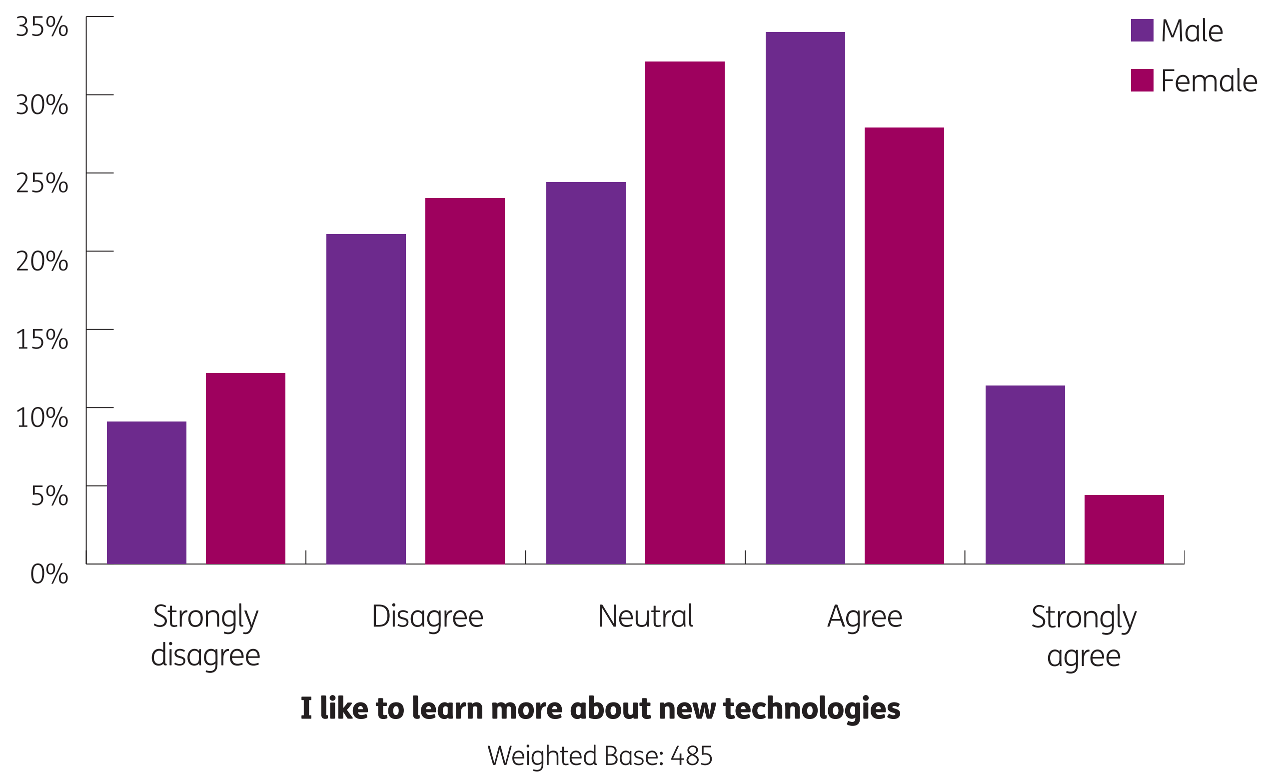
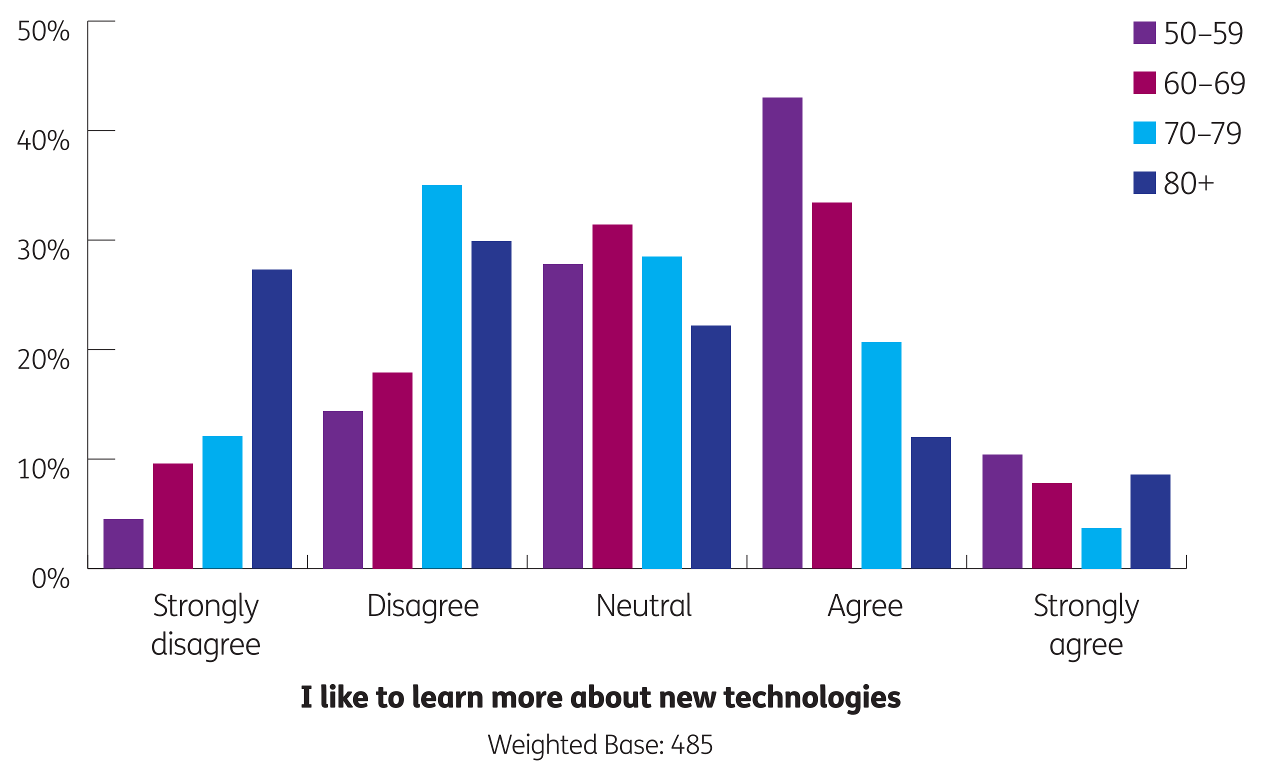


Figure 3.4 Learning about new technology and age groups



3.2 Mobile phone ownership, purchase and usage

Respondents were surveyed on mobile phone ownership, brands, buying preference, usage, and their feelings towards mobile phones and their features. Eighty-five per cent of respondents mentioned that they own a mobile phone (see Table 3.1).

Social class and age group are important in mobile phone ownership. The oldest age group and the social class group E have the lowest percentage of mobile phone ownership (see Figures 3.5 and 3.6).

We then asked respondents how they prefer to buy their mobile phone. Seventy five per cent mentioned that they prefer to buy their phone themselves, while 21 per cent prefer to ask someone else to do it for them (see Table 3.2).

There are clear age group and gender differences in mobile phone buying. Female participants as well as those who are in the oldest age group prefer to ask someone else to buy their phone more than any other group (see Figures 3.7 and 3.8).

The majority of participants prefer to buy their mobile phone from a phone shop or supermarket (80 per cent). Only a small proportion of the sample prefer to buy their mobile phone online or over the phone (see Table 3.3).

Some 413 participants, equivalent to 85 per cent of the sample, mentioned that they have a mobile phone. We also asked them about the brand of their current mobile phone. Nearly 40 per cent of mobile phone holders own a Nokia. Samsung, Apple and Sony Ericsson are the next top three brands. Among the top four brands, Apple is the only one that only produces smartphones (see Figure 3.9).

Respondents also told us how frequently they use their mobile phones for different activities. As expected, making a phone call, answering a phone call, sending a text message and opening and reading a text message are the main daily activities conducted by mobile phone users. Any other application on a mobile phone is rarely used by the majority of mobile phone owners in this age group. Taking a picture or a video is the only application that is used by 40 per cent of people, and the majority of those use it very rarely. Looking at the number of mobile phone owners who never do certain activities, over 40 per cent mention that they never open and read a text message. The figure is over 30 per cent for sending a text message (see Figure 3.10).

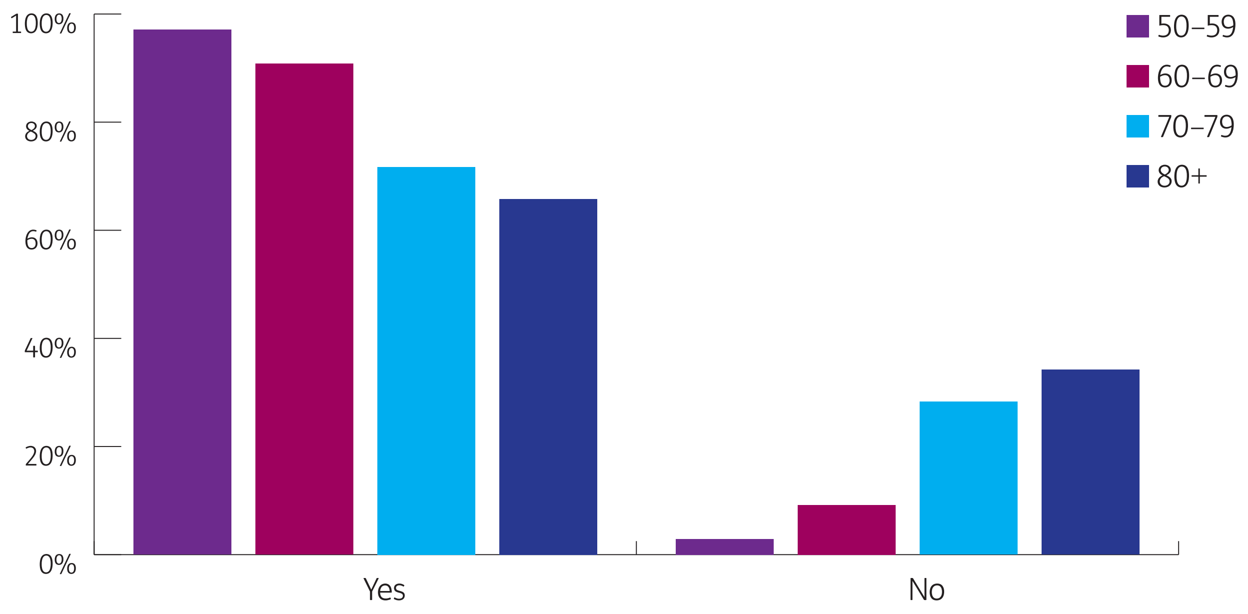
We also asked respondents three additional questions to understand their preference and experience in using mobile phones. Nearly one in three respondents think that mobile phones are difficult to use and over 20 per cent do not like mobile phones with features that they do not use. However, nearly 40 per cent of respondents mentioned that they do not mind using extra features on their phone as long as someone takes time to teach them how to use them (see Figure 3.11).

Gender and age group prove to be decisive factors in respondents' answers as to whether or not they would use extra features on their phone if someone explained the use of them. Younger age groups and women tend to agree more with this statement (see Figures 3.12 and 3.13).

Table 3.1 Mobile phone ownership

Do you own a mobile phone?	Per cent
Yes	**85**
No	**15**
Weighted Base: 485	

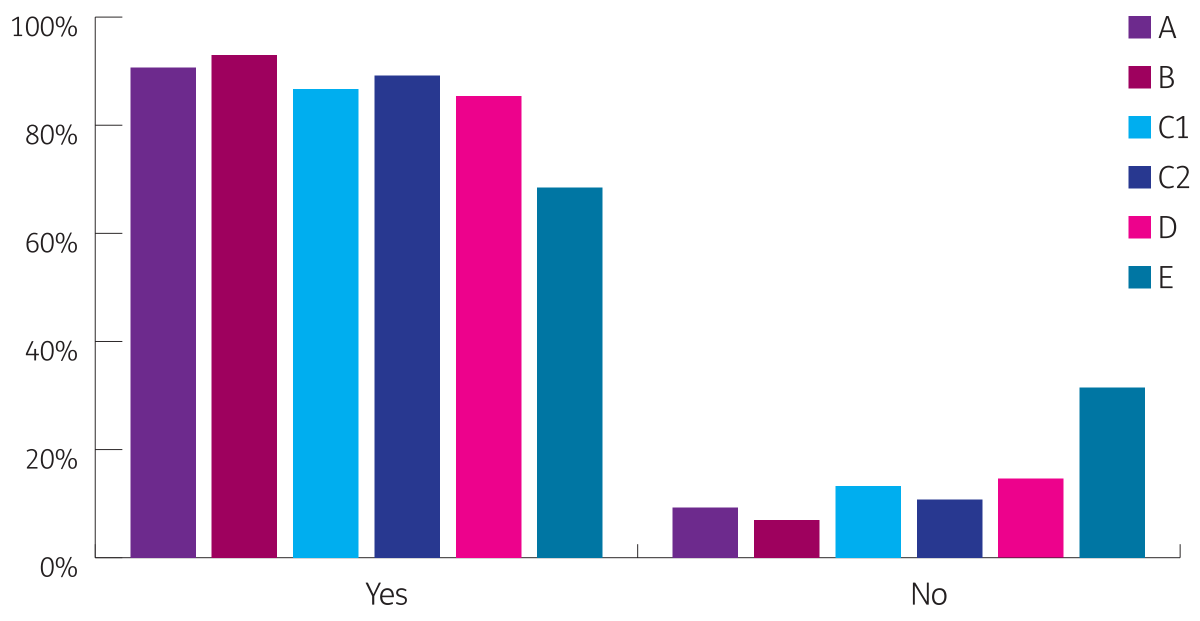
Figure 3.5 Mobile phone ownership across age groups



Do you own a mobile phone?

Weighted Base: 485

Figure 3.6 Mobile phone ownership across social classes



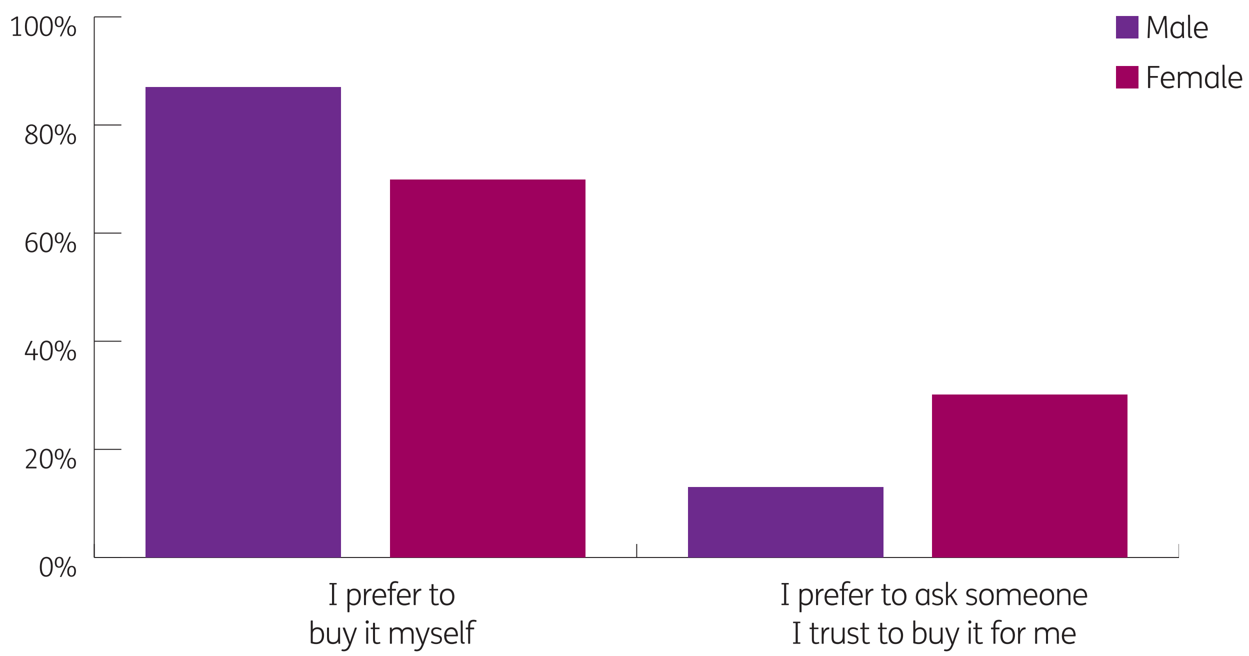
Do you own a mobile phone?

Weighted Base: 485

Table 3.2 Mobile phone buying

When buying your mobile phone, which do you prefer?	Per cent
I prefer to buy it myself	**75**
I prefer to ask someone I trust to buy it for me	**21**
Don't know	**4**
Weighted Base: 485 (excludes non-users/don't know)	

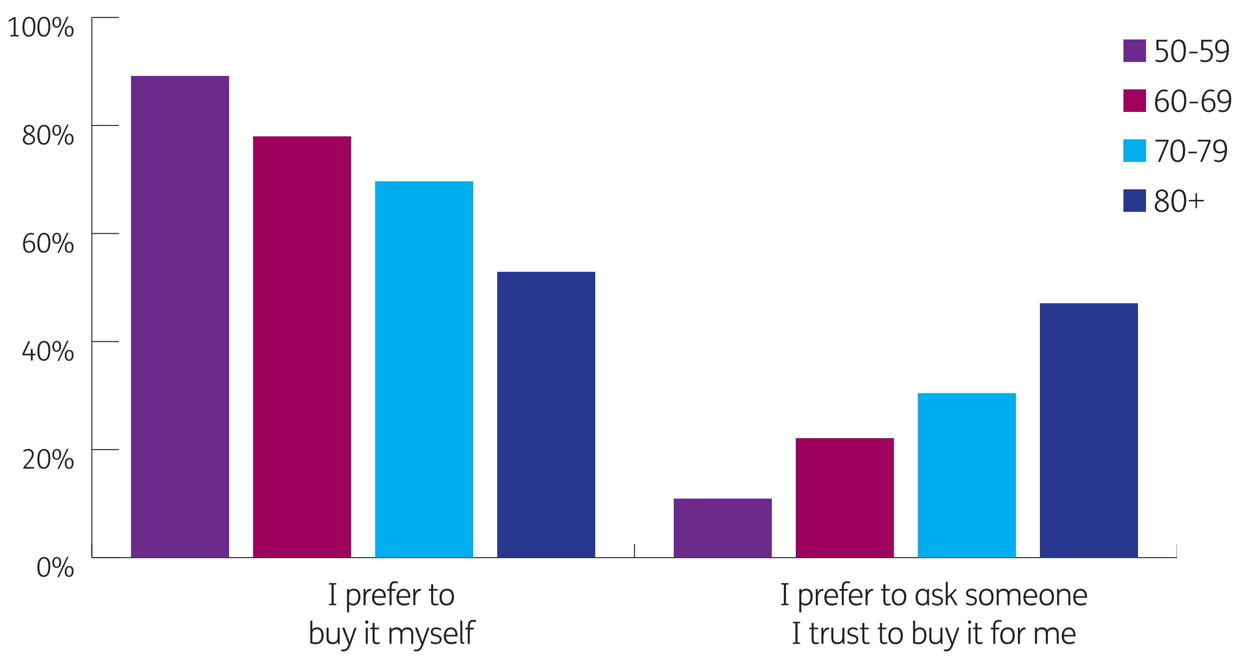
Figure 3.7 Mobile phone buying and gender preferences



When buying your mobile phone, which do you prefer?

Weighted Base: 485 (excludes non-users/don't know)

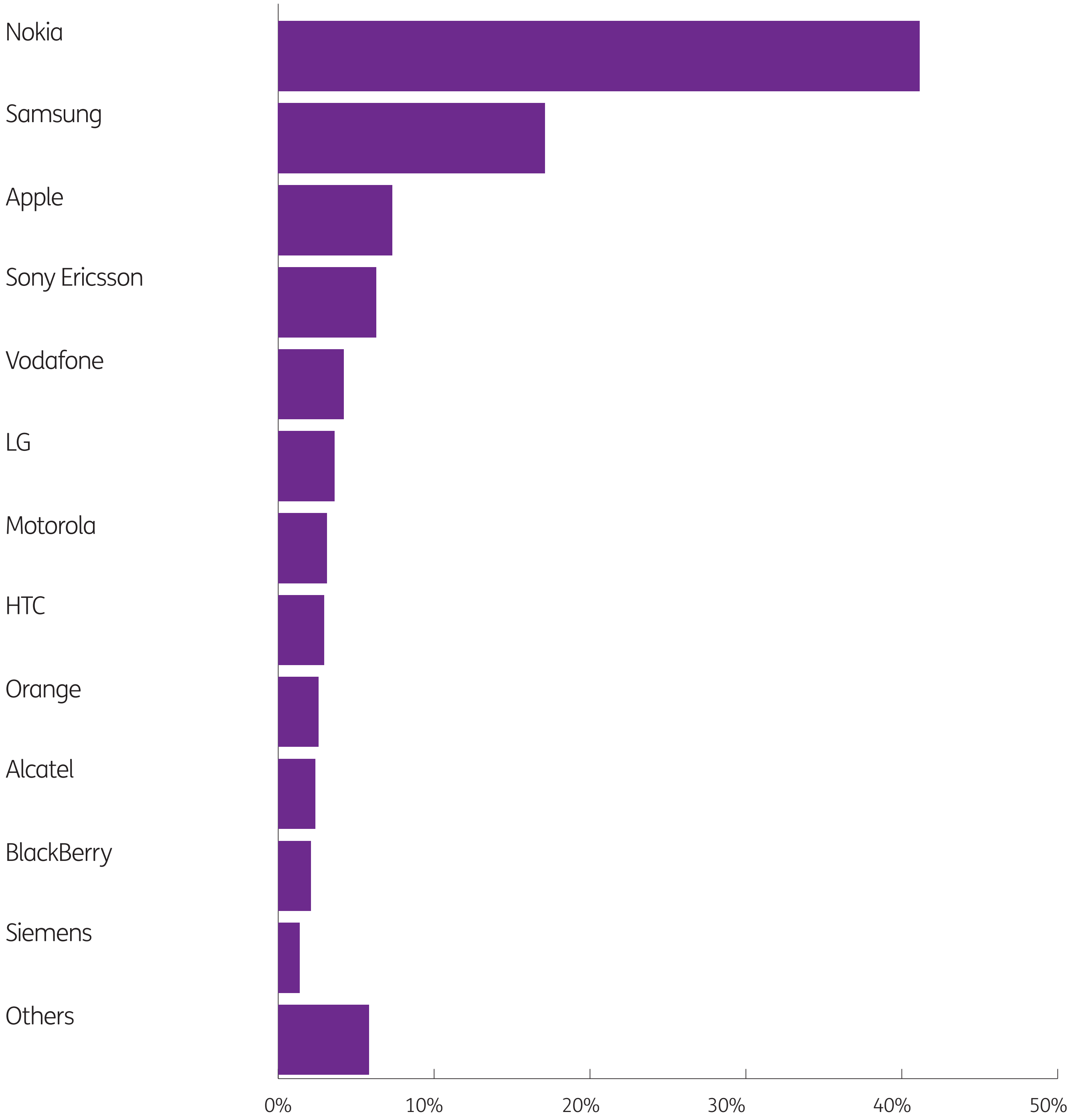
Figure 3.8 Mobile phone buying and age group differences



When buying your mobile phone, which do you prefer?

Weighted Base: 485 (excludes non-users/don't know)

Figure 3.9 Mobile phone brands



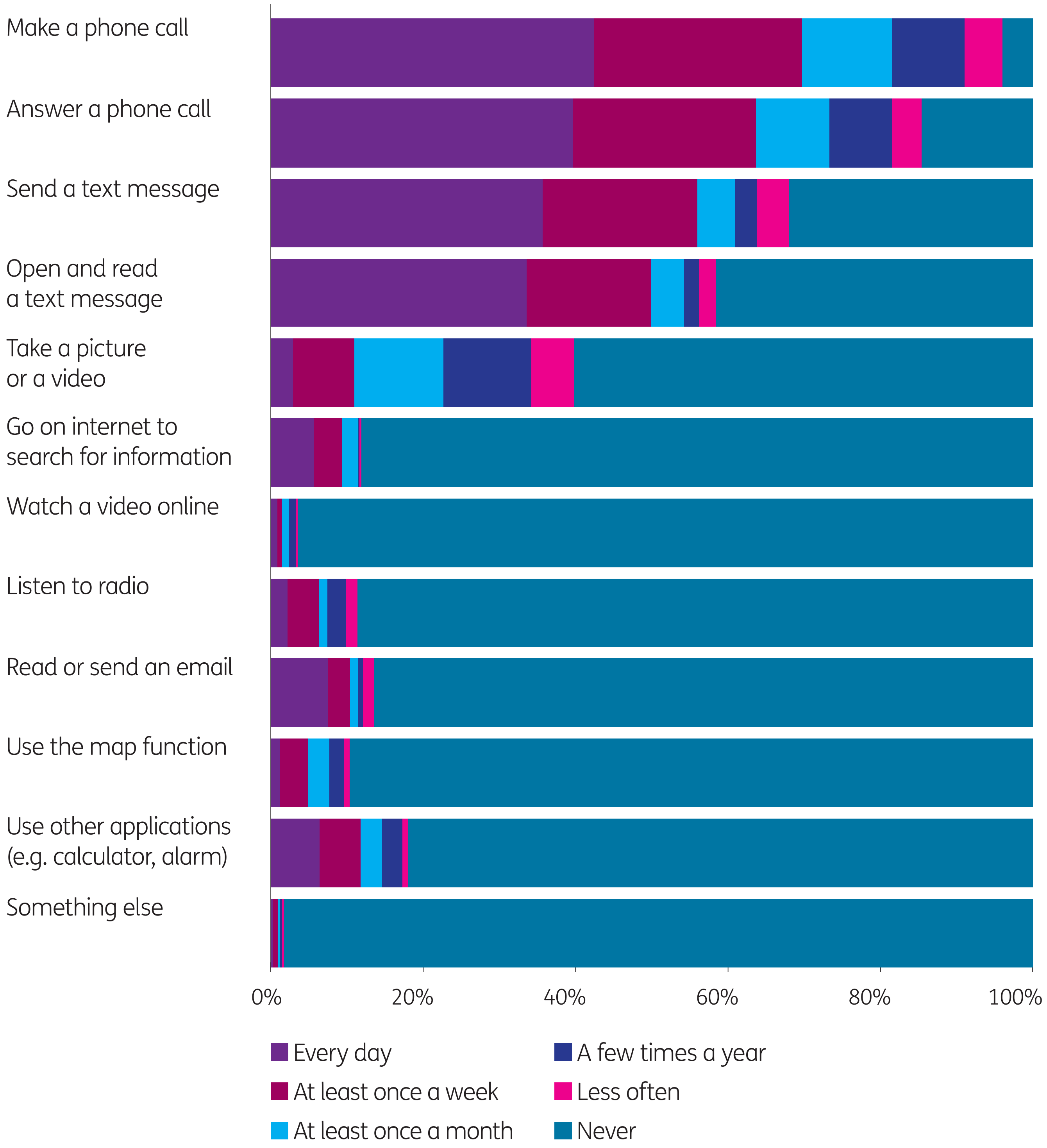
Mobile phone brand

Weighted Base: 485 (excludes non-users/don't know)

Table 3.3 Where to buy a mobile phone

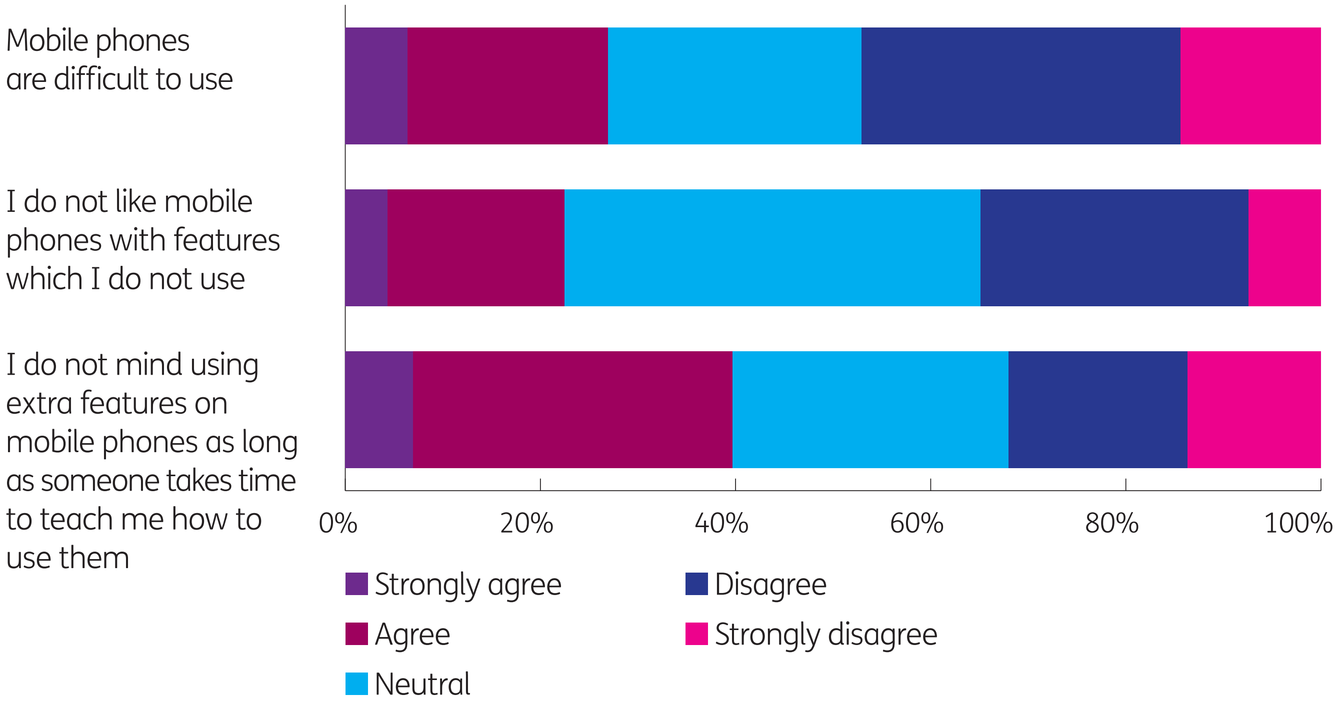
How do you prefer to buy your mobile phone?	Per cent
From phone shops in store	**69.1**
Over the phone	**5.2**
From a supermarket	**11.7**
Online	**7.5**
Another way	**2.6**
Don't know	**3.9**
Weighted Base: 485 (excludes non-users)	

Figure 3.10 Mobile phone usage



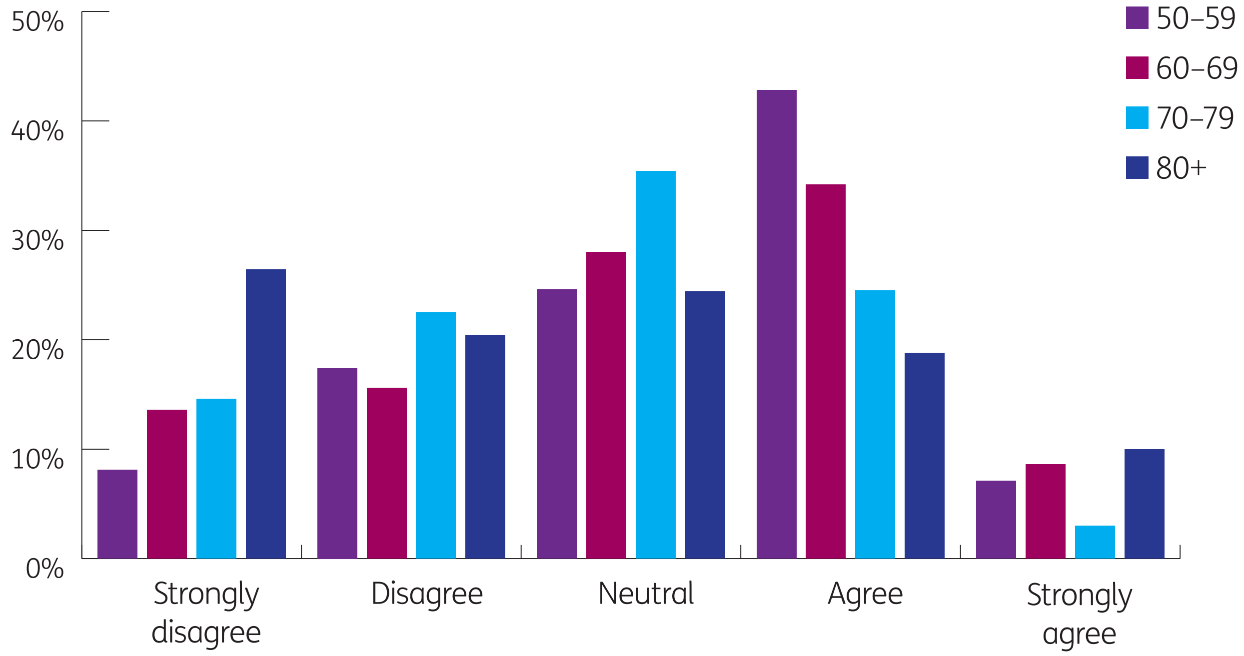
Weighted Base: 485 (excludes non-users)

Figure 3.11 Preferences in using a mobile phone



Weighted Base: 485

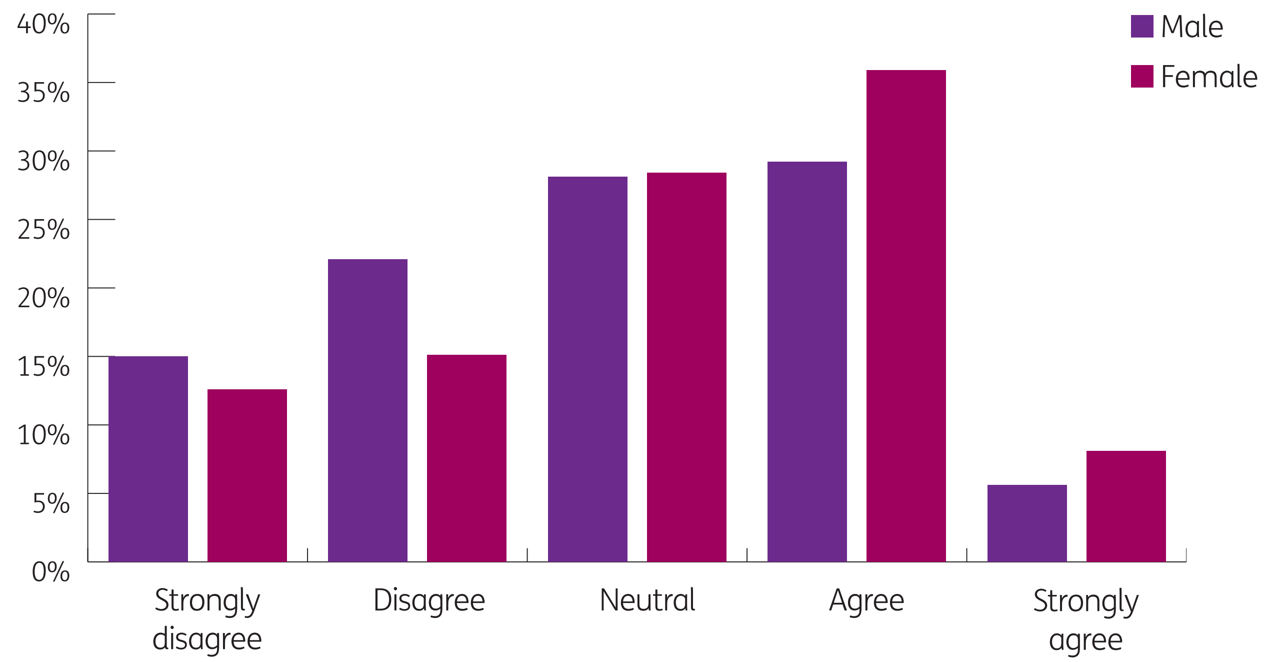
Figure 3.12 Use of mobile phone features and age groups



I do not mind using extra features on mobile phones as long as someone takes time to teach me how to use them

Weighted Base: 485 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 3.13 Use of mobile phone features and gender differences



I do not mind using extra features on mobile phones as long as someone takes time to teach me how to use them

Weighted Base: 485 (excludes not applicable)

3.3 The internet

Of the 485 respondents to the technology questionnaire, 276 said that they use the internet (57 per cent). Figure 3.14 shows the frequency of using the internet for different purposes by participants.

The most prominent use of the internet among older people is for sending and receiving an email more than once a week (60 per cent of internet users). Searching for information and news is the second most popular activity. Communicating with friends and family is another popular use of the internet. Respondents might have potentially considered a combination of the use of emails, online video calling services or even social networks in their answers to this question. Watching videos, use of social networks, and online banking or paying bills are the three least popular online activities (see Figure 3.14).

We also asked participants whether or not they feel that using the internet saves them time and money. Forty-one per cent of the sample agreed that the internet saves them time and money, whereas almost 30 per cent of the sample disagreed (see Figure 3.15).

There is a significant difference between men and women in how they respond to the statement that using the internet saves them time and money, with men tending to agree more with the statement (see Figure 3.16). The same happens with the different age groups, where older age groups tend to disagree more and agree less with the statement (see Figure 3.17).

3.4 Problems with technology

We asked participants to give their opinion on some of the common problems with the design and delivery of a technology product.

3.4.1 The product

Half of the sample mentioned that it is difficult for them to read and understand the instruction manuals. The same proportion of the sample reported that it is difficult for them to understand the full functionality of the product. Setting up the technology product is seen as problematic by 40 per cent of respondents. Less than 20 per cent agreed that they often end up with a product that is suitable in terms of functionality but does not look nice (see Figure 3.18).

3.4.2 The service

Fifty-five per cent of the sample mentioned that they like to feel and try the product in full before purchasing. Forty per cent felt that they do not get the after-sales service that they need. Forty per cent of respondents reported that it is difficult for them to compare the available technology products and make a choice. However, respondents felt that they are handling their purchases well financially. Only 20 per cent felt that they usually pay more than they have planned when buying a technology product (see Figure 3.19).

3.5 Ownership of and aspirations for technology products

The survey asked participants whether or not they own any of the technology products listed in Figure 3.20; if so, whether they want to upgrade them; and, if not, whether they would ever want to have them. Mobile phones, digital television and broadband are the top three technology products or services owned by the respondents. Over 85 per cent do not have a smartphone. The product that the highest percentage of people want but do not have is a tablet (e.g. iPad), while a mobile phone is the product that the highest percentage of people have but want to upgrade.

3.6 Decision-making criteria when buying technology

Respondents were given a list of decision-making criteria and were asked to tell us how important or unimportant each criterion is when buying a technology product. Being easy to use, suitable for their immediate needs and high in quality are the top three criteria when buying technology products. Popularity among people their age, having multiple features, and being offered in a shop close to where they live, are among the criteria that are rated as not being important (see Figure 3.21).

3.7 Information sources when buying technology

Participants were given a list of information sources and were asked which ones they used prior to purchasing their mobile phone (see Table 3.4).

In-store advice, recommendations from friends and family, followed by the internet, are the top three sources of information used by older people prior to their mobile phone purchase. Obtaining in-store advice is used by nearly half of the sample. Television, radio, newspapers, magazines and catalogues are the least used sources of information.

Mobile phones, digital television and broadband are the top three technology products or services owned by the respondents.

3.8 Use of special offers and vouchers when buying technology

From a list of possible special offers and vouchers, we asked participants to tell us which ones they normally use when buying technology products. Similar to the information sources results, in-store offers are the most popular special offers used when buying technology. Loyalty cards are also used by 11 per cent of participants when buying technology. Interestingly, 36 per cent of the sample do not use any of the special offers listed in Table 3.5 when buying technology.

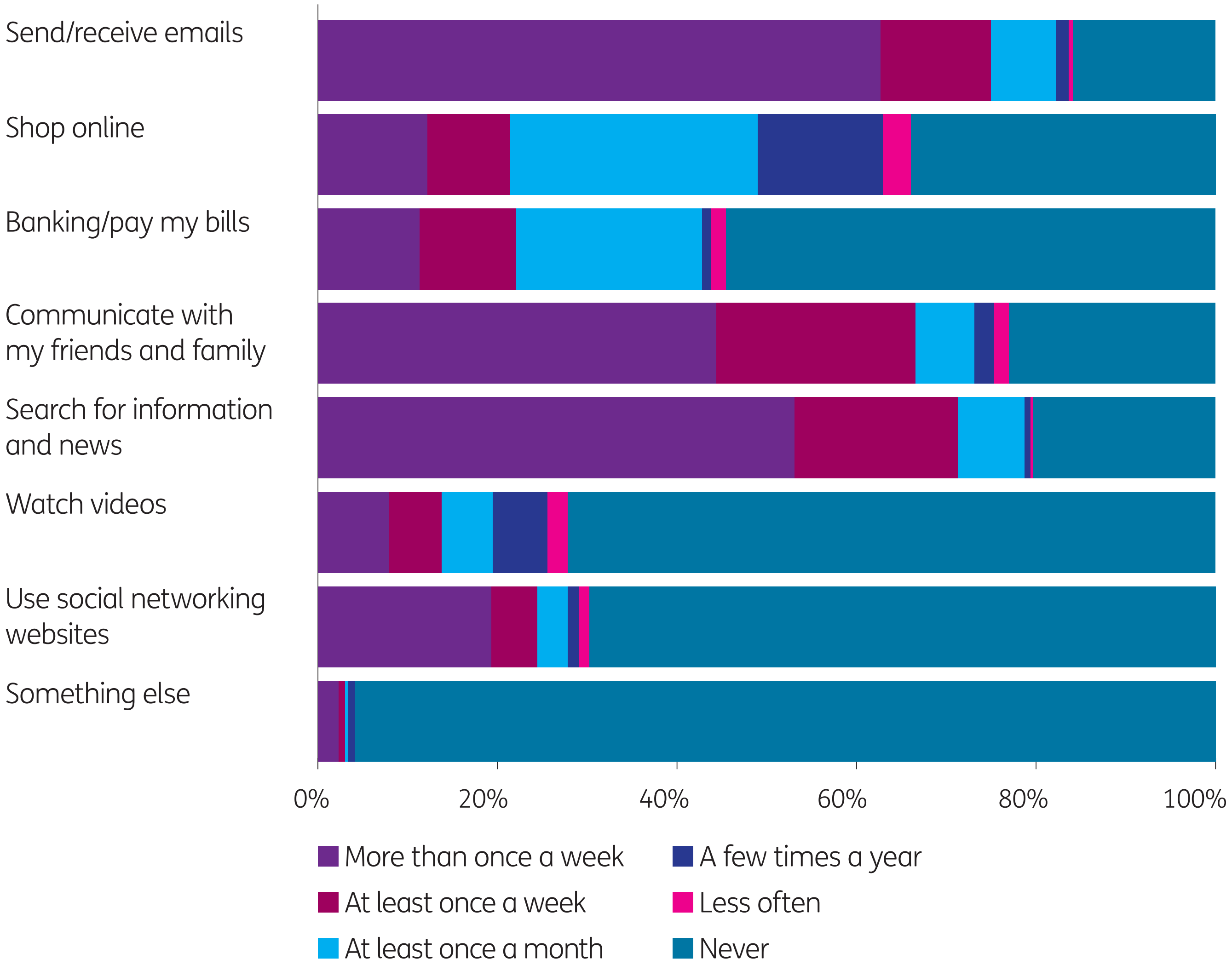
3.9 Communication preferences

The sample were asked about their communication preferences in contacting friends and family as well as others such as customer service centres or work colleagues (see Figures 3.22 and 3.23).

Face-to-face communication is, by far, the most preferred communication method when it comes to friends and family. Using a landline phone or a mobile phone are the second and third most popular methods. Using online communication (social media) is the least popular method, which means that it is less popular than writing letters.

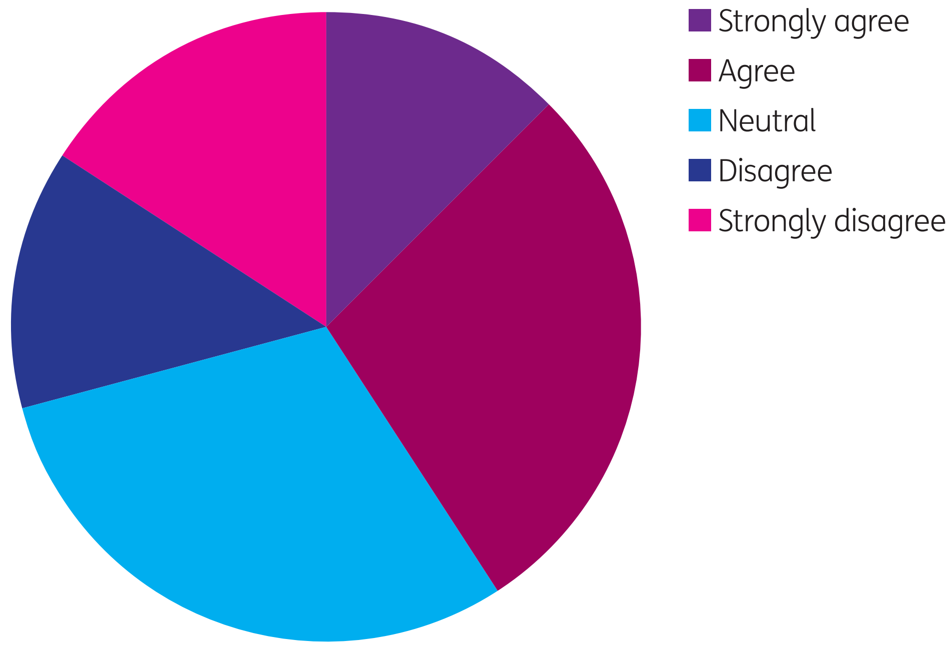
When contacting other people such as work colleagues and customer service departments, face-to-face communication is again the most popular means. Using a landline phone is the second most popular. Compared to communication preferences with friends and family, emails are preferable when contacting work colleagues or customer services. Online tools such as Skype or Facebook are again the least popular means of communication.

Figure 3.14 Frequency of internet use for different activities



Weighted Base: 485 (excludes non-users)

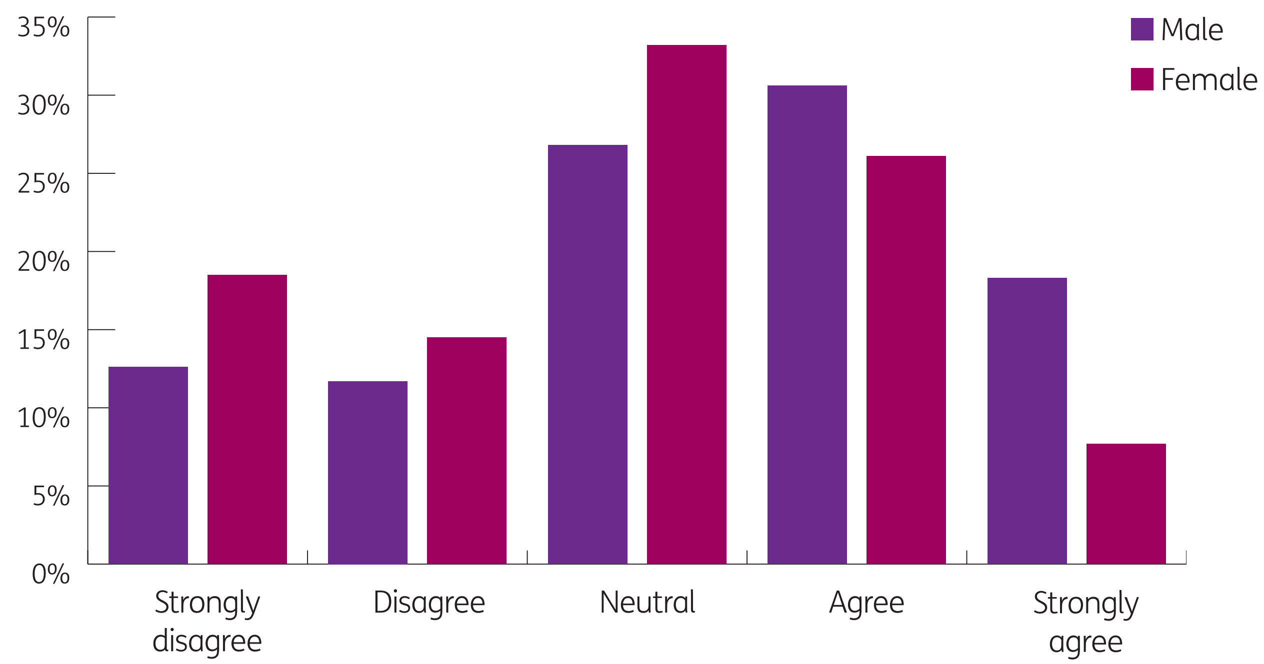
Figure 3.15 Saving time and money with the internet



Using the internet saves me time and money

Weighted Base: 485

Figure 3.16 Benefits of internet and gender differences



Using the internet saves me time and money

Weighted Base: 485

Figure 3.17 Benefits of the internet and age differences

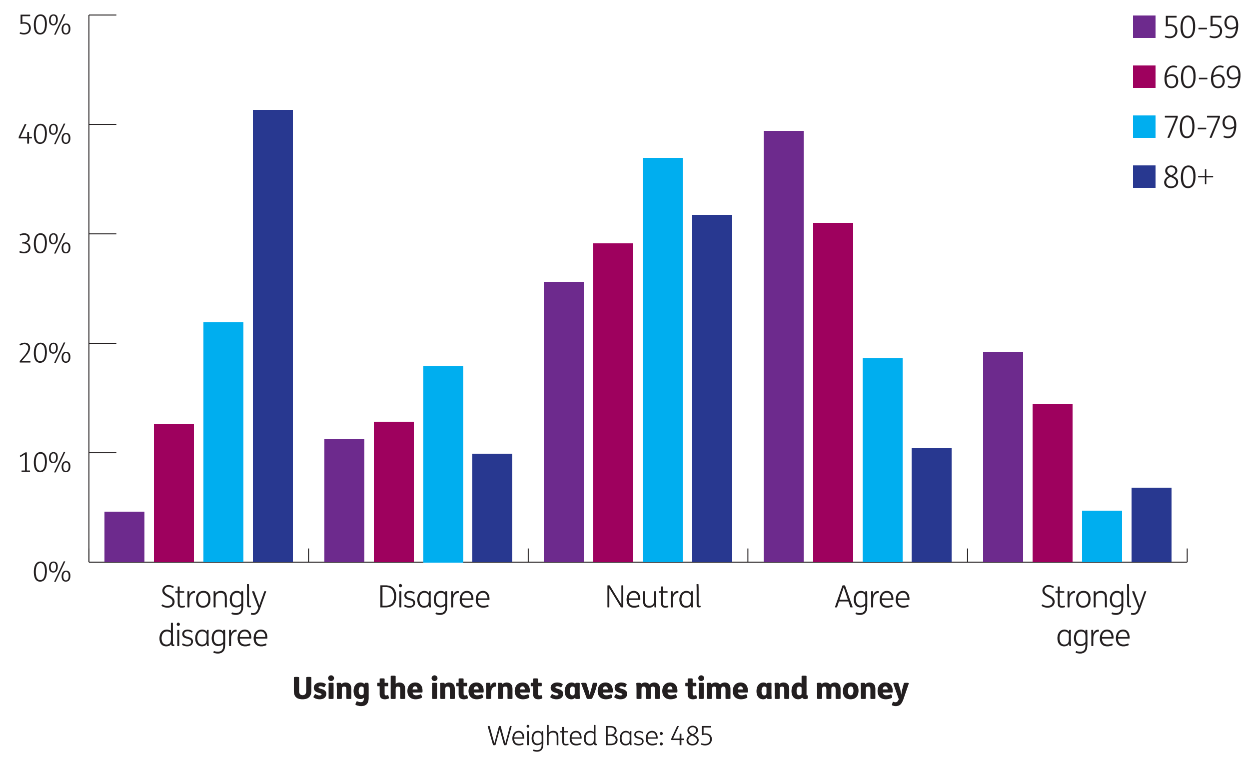


Figure 3.18 Problems with technology products

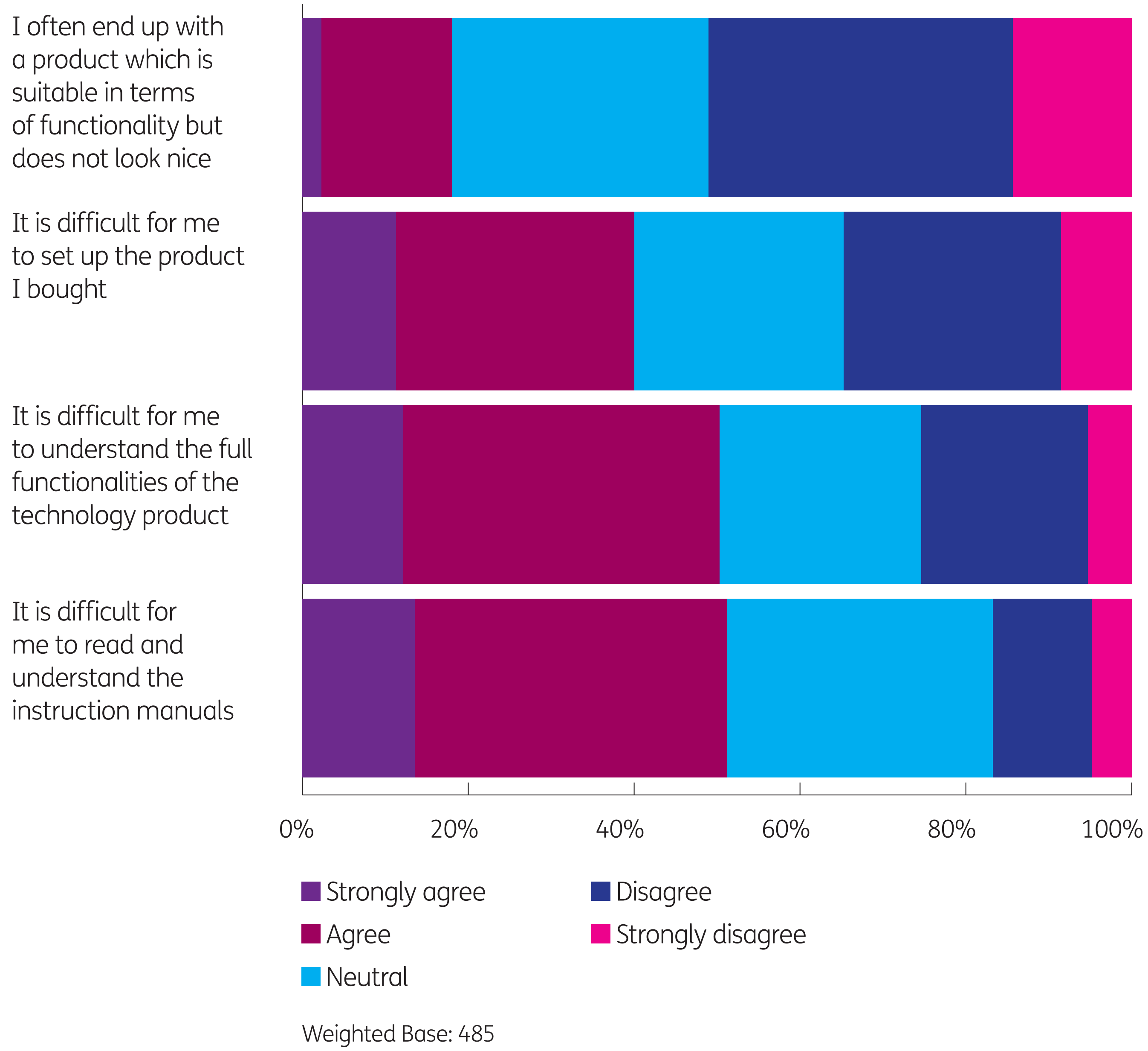
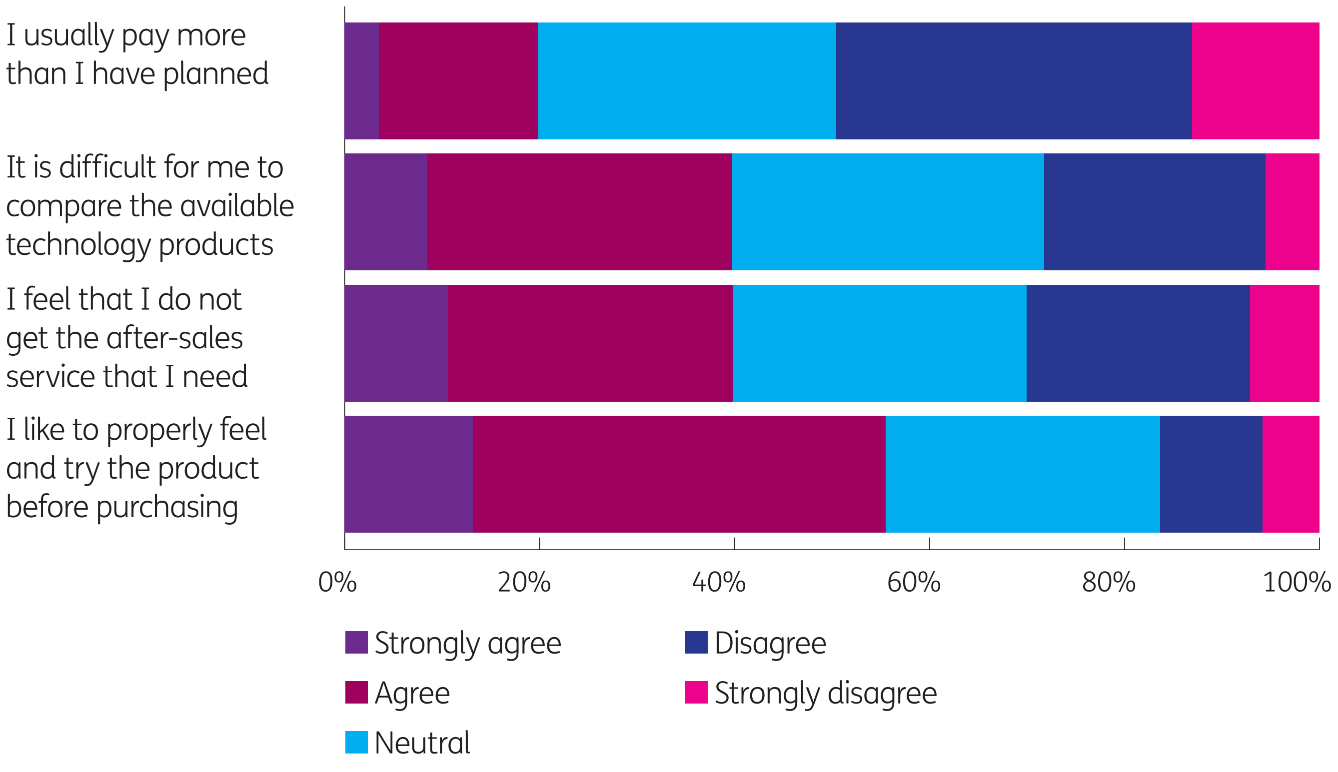
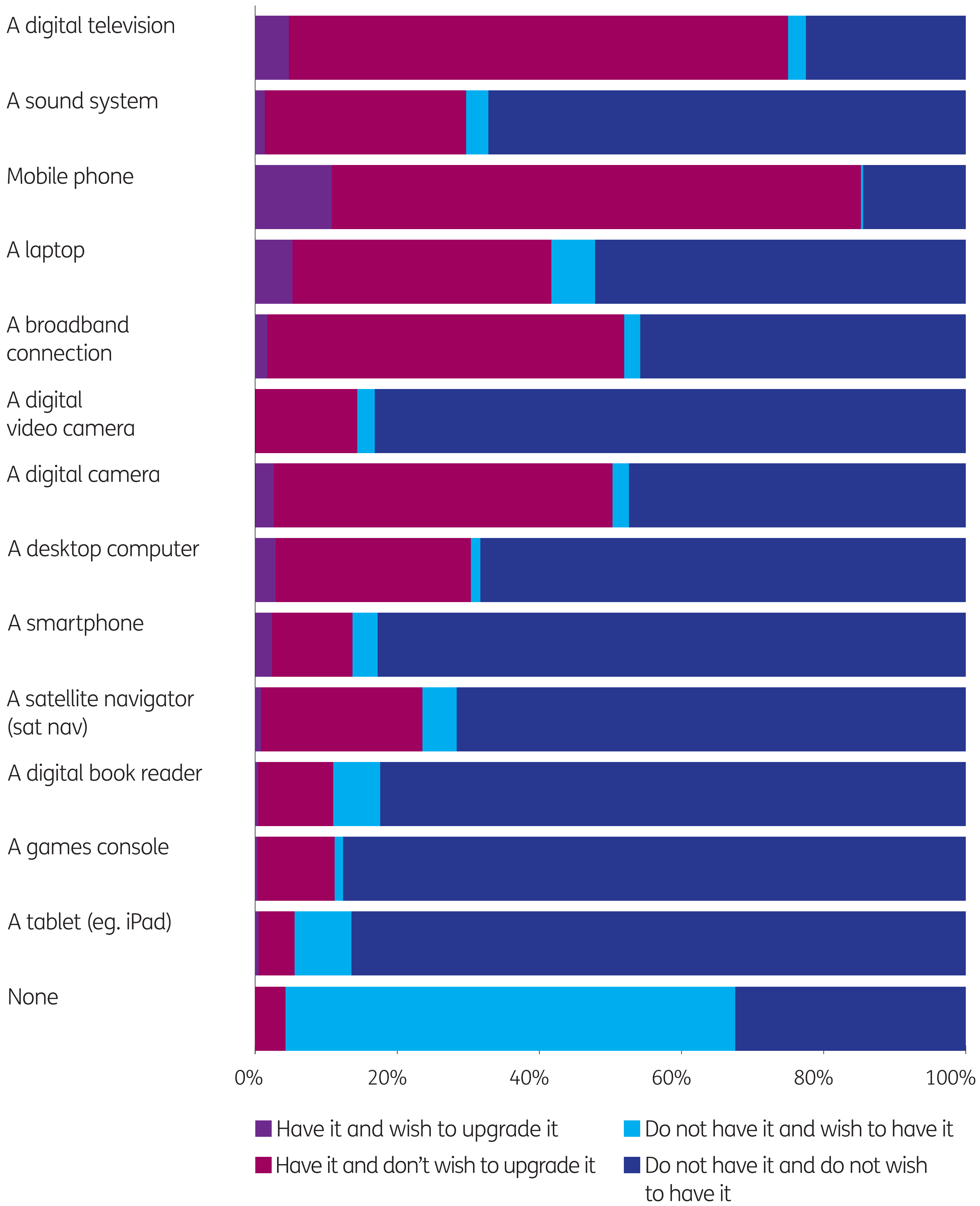


Figure 3.19 Problems with the services for technology products



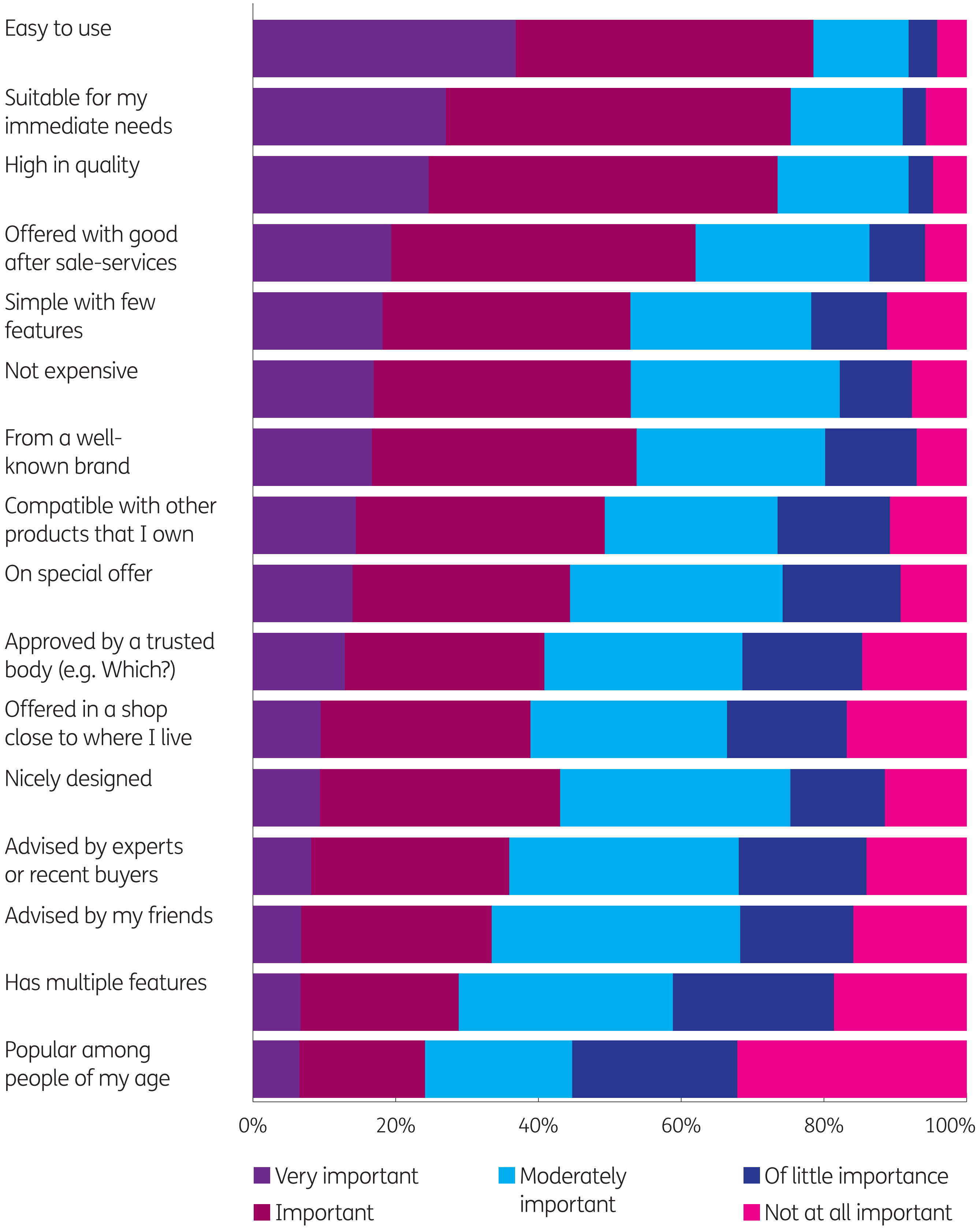
Weighted Base: 485

Figure 3.20 Ownership of and aspirations for technology products



Weighted Base: 485

Figure 3.21 Decision-making criteria when buying technology products



Weighted Base: 485

Table 3.4 Information sources when buying technology

Sources of information	Per cent*
TV and radio	**0.9**
Catalogues	**1.2**
Sales promotions	**3.4**
The internet	**11.9**
Magazines	**1.1**
Newspapers	**0.5**
Friends and family recommendation	**20.4**
Previous personal experience	**5.7**
In store	**48.4**
Somewhere else	**2.2**
Don't know	**15.8**

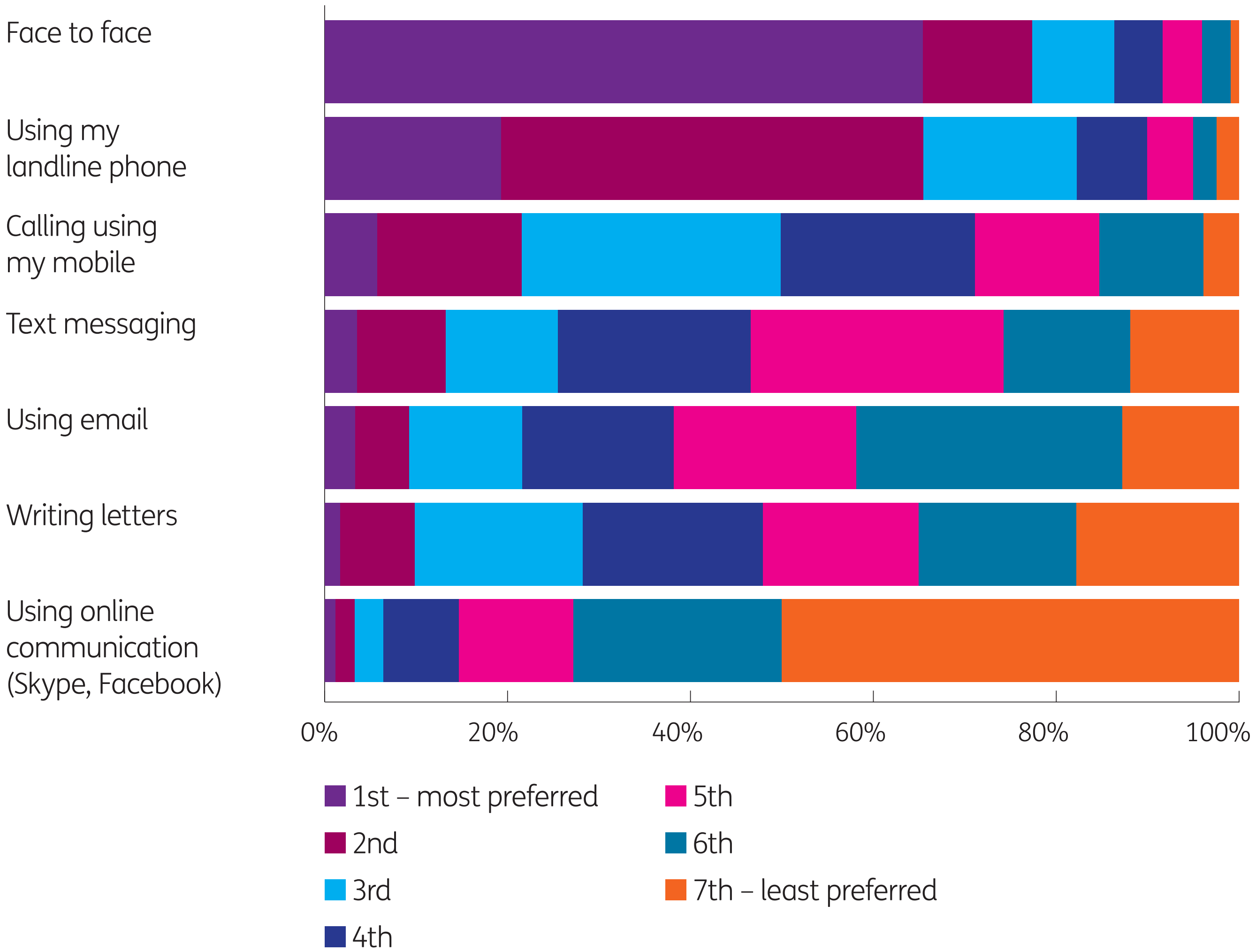
Weighted Base: 485
*Respondents could select more than one option

Table 3.5 Use of special offers when buying technology

Special offers	Per cent*
Vouchers from newspapers or magazines	**5.1**
Vouchers from the internet	**3.0**
Vouchers received through the post	**4.2**
Vouchers sent to my mobile phone	**0.7**
In-store offers	**38.0**
Offers advertised on TV	**9.4**
Loyalty cards	**11.2**
Special offers through cold calls to my landline	**1.3**
None	**46.8**
Don't know	**4.3**

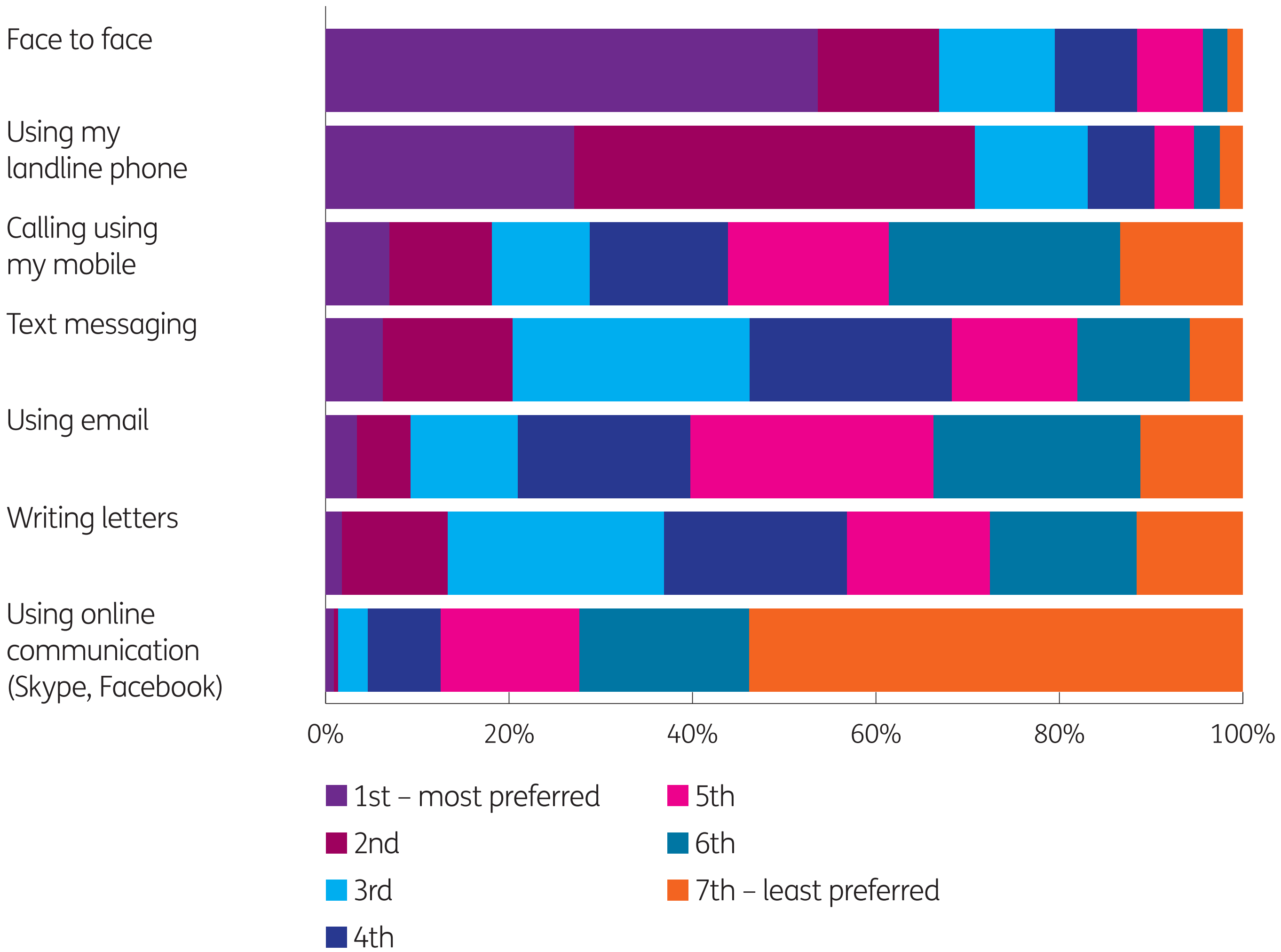
Weighted Base: 485
*Respondents could select more than one option

Figure 3.22 Communication preferences with friends and family



Weighted Base: 485

Figure 3.23 Communication preferences with other people (work, customer service)



Weighted Base: 485

4 Retail and supermarket

4 Retail and supermarket

A total of 530 respondents answered specific questions on supermarkets and general retail experiences. These questions asked respondents about their shopping experience and some of the problems that older shoppers might face. We also enquired about their shopping frequency for different product categories, information sources prior to purchase, duration of shopping trips, decision-making criteria when choosing a food or clothing item, who they go shopping with, preferred shopping time, and use of special offers.

4.1 Shopping experience

Participants told us about the different aspects of their shopping experience, including: their experiences when travelling to the shops as well as the delivery of shopping items; the design and other characteristics of the products; the retail environment; the variety of items available and making a choice; price sensitivity; problems in doing their shopping; use of the internet; shopping as a leisure activity; and local shops.

Nearly 40 per cent of respondents said that they usually only shop for their immediate needs to avoid carrying big bags.

4.1.1 Transport , carrying shopping and delivery

Only 13 per cent of the respondents find it difficult to travel to the shops. However, a higher proportion of respondents (over 20 per cent) mentioned that they would rather have someone else do their shopping for them (see Figure 4.1).

Nearly 50 per cent of the respondents prefer to buy as much as they can to avoid several trips to the shops. This means that although the respondents do not find it difficult to travel to the shops they prefer to reduce the frequency of their shopping trips.

Nearly 40 per cent of respondents said that they usually only shop for their immediate needs to avoid carrying big bags.

At the same time, 30 per cent of the participants would buy from a store if they deliver the shopping for free. Older respondents (age group 80+) tend to agree more that free delivery would affect their store choice (see Figure 4.2).

4.1.2 Products

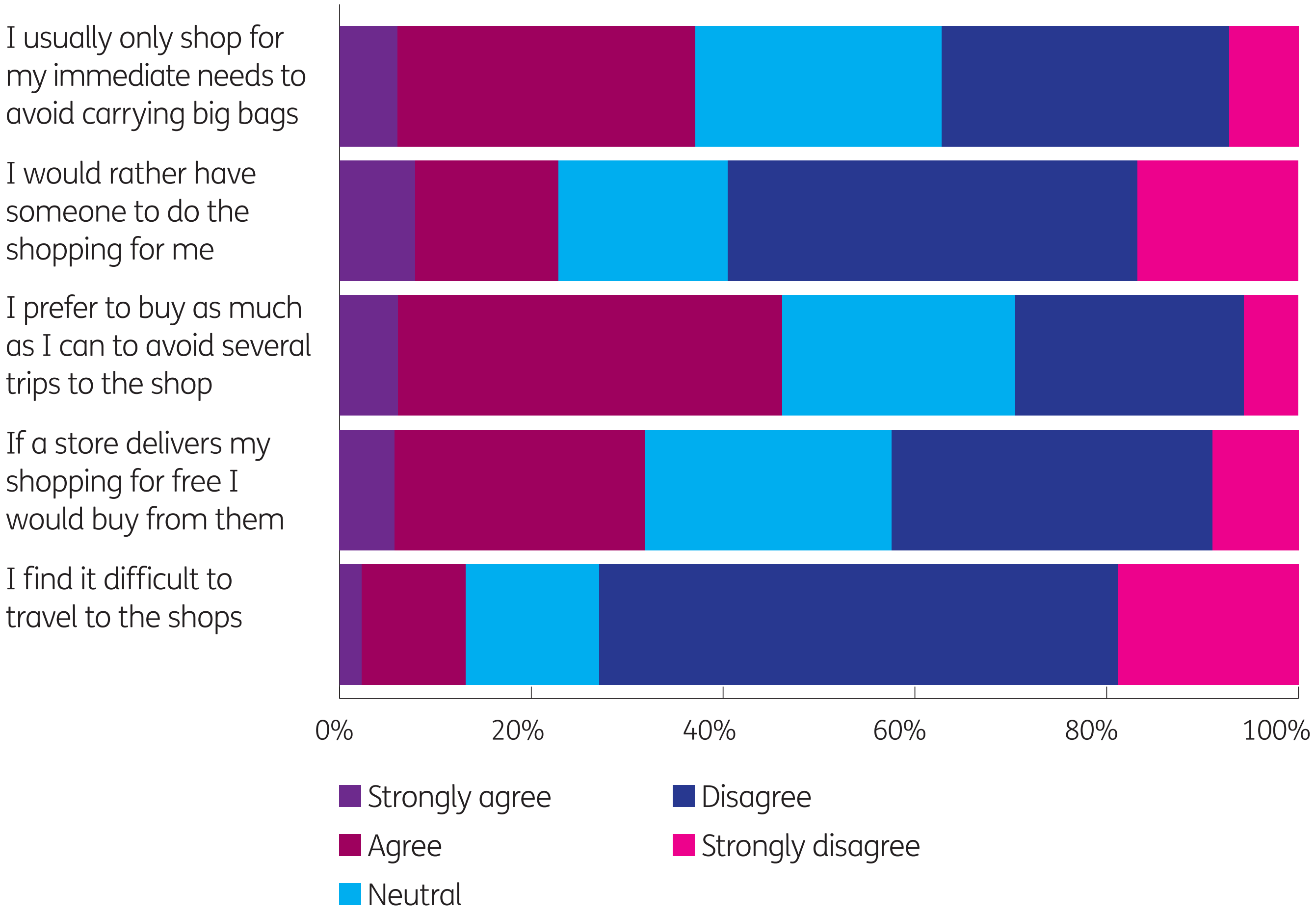
We asked respondents to tell us how they feel about the design of the clothes they buy, setting up their appliances, information labels and instruction manuals (see Figure 4.3).

Just over 10 per cent of respondents agreed that they end up buying clothes that are good for their needs but do not look nice.

Twenty-six per cent of respondents thought that information labels on the packaging are unclear. Over 30 per cent of participants mentioned that they find it difficult to set up some appliances that they buy.

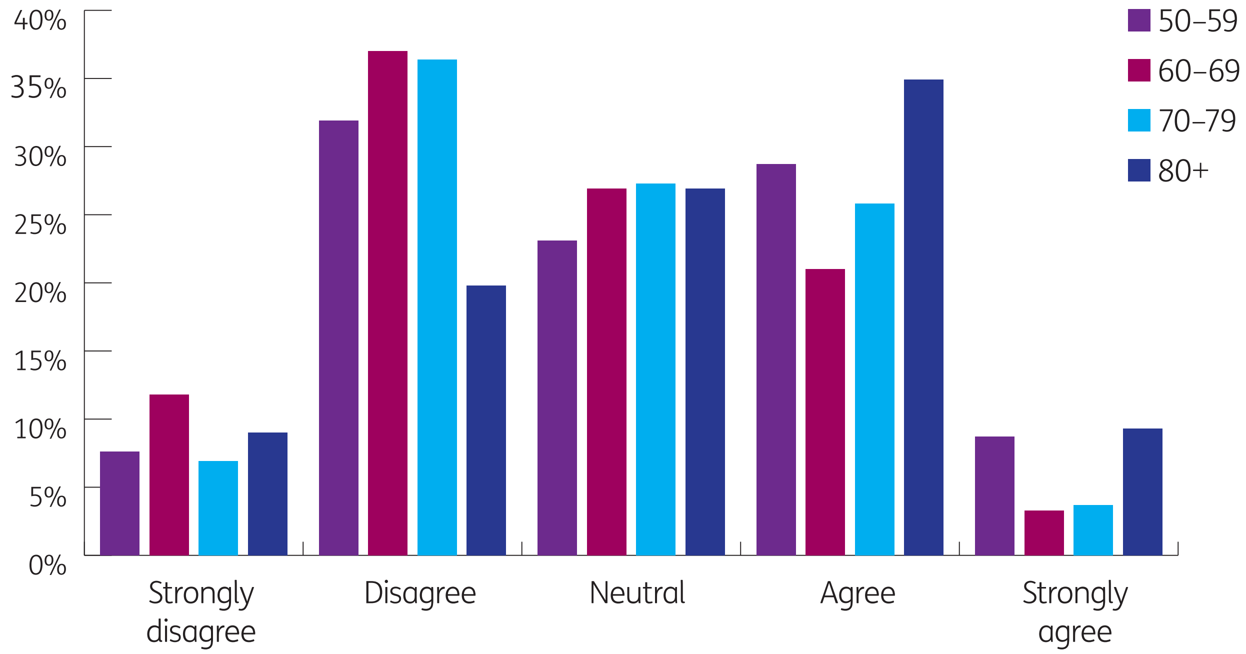
Similarly, 35 per cent of respondents found it difficult to read and understand the instruction manuals of some appliances.

Figure 4.1 Transport and delivery when shopping



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

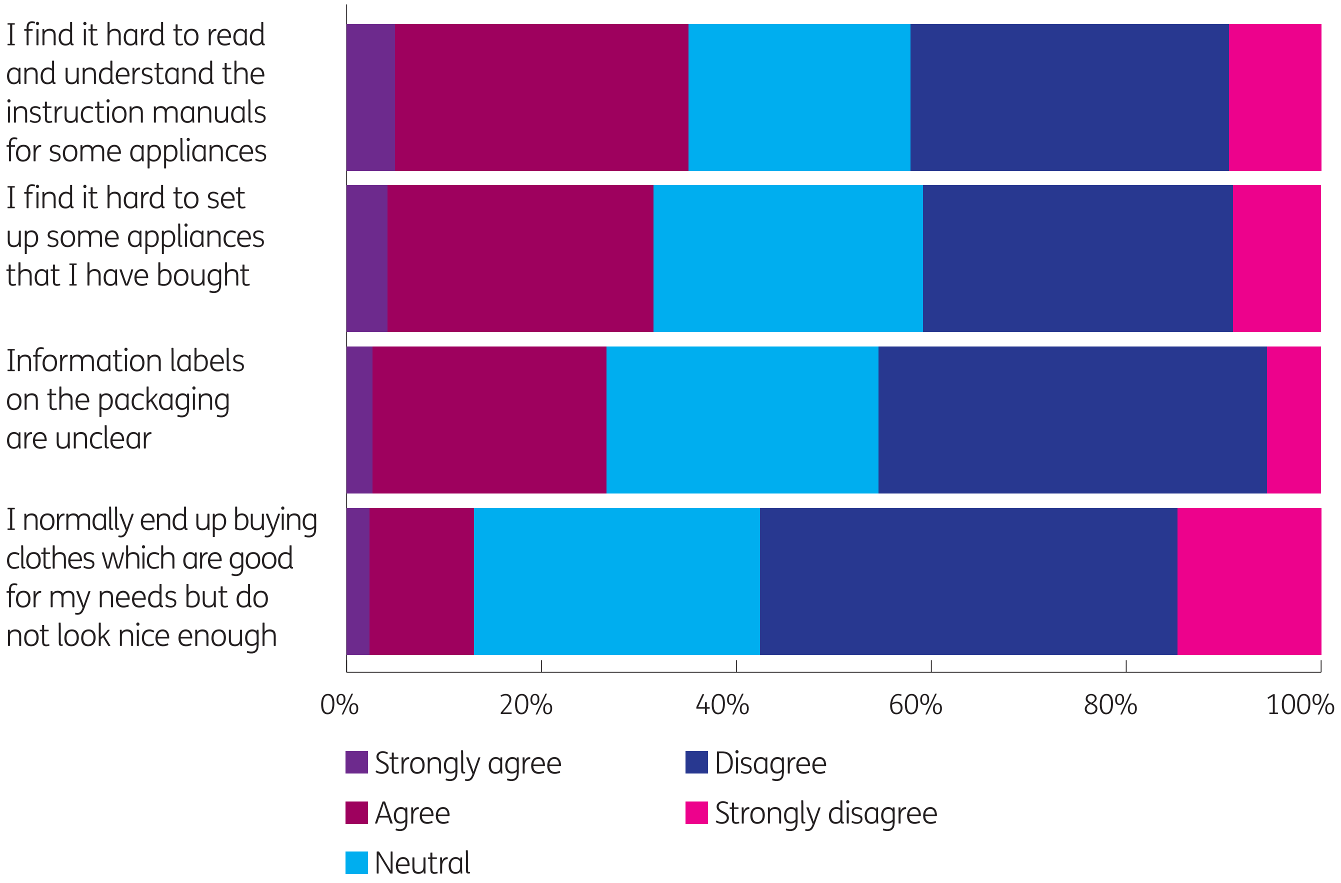
Figure 4.2 Delivery and age group differences



If a store delivers my shopping for free I would buy from them

Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 4.3 Problems with purchased products



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

4.1.3 The retail environment

Participants told us what they think about the retail environment (see Figure 4.4).

Only one in ten respondents believed that supermarkets are generally too cold.

Nearly 15 per cent of respondents believed that clothes shops rush them into buying and leaving the premises.

Seventeen per cent of participants thought that signs and directions in the stores are unclear. Over 20 per cent believed that shops are too crammed for them to move about. Half of the participants believed that stores change their layout too often. Pushing trolleys and carrying baskets are problematic tasks for over 30 per cent of the participants. Forty per cent of women mentioned that they have problems with trolleys and they seem to find it more problematic to use shopping baskets than men.

Over 30 per cent of respondents thought that there are not enough toilet facilities in the shops. Over 40 per cent thought that the seating facilities in shops are not sufficient. This is more prevalent among the 70–79 age group than any other group, with one in two people in this age group agreeing with the statement about insufficient seating facilities in shops.

For 30 per cent of respondents it is difficult to reach items because of the height and location of the shelves. This figure is over 40 per cent for women and under 20 per cent for men.

4.1.4 Variety

One in five respondents have problems with the variety of products available in the shops and they believe that making a choice is difficult. In a more specific question about supermarkets and the available products, a similar percentage of participants agreed that comparison and decision-making is difficult for them (see Figure 4.5).

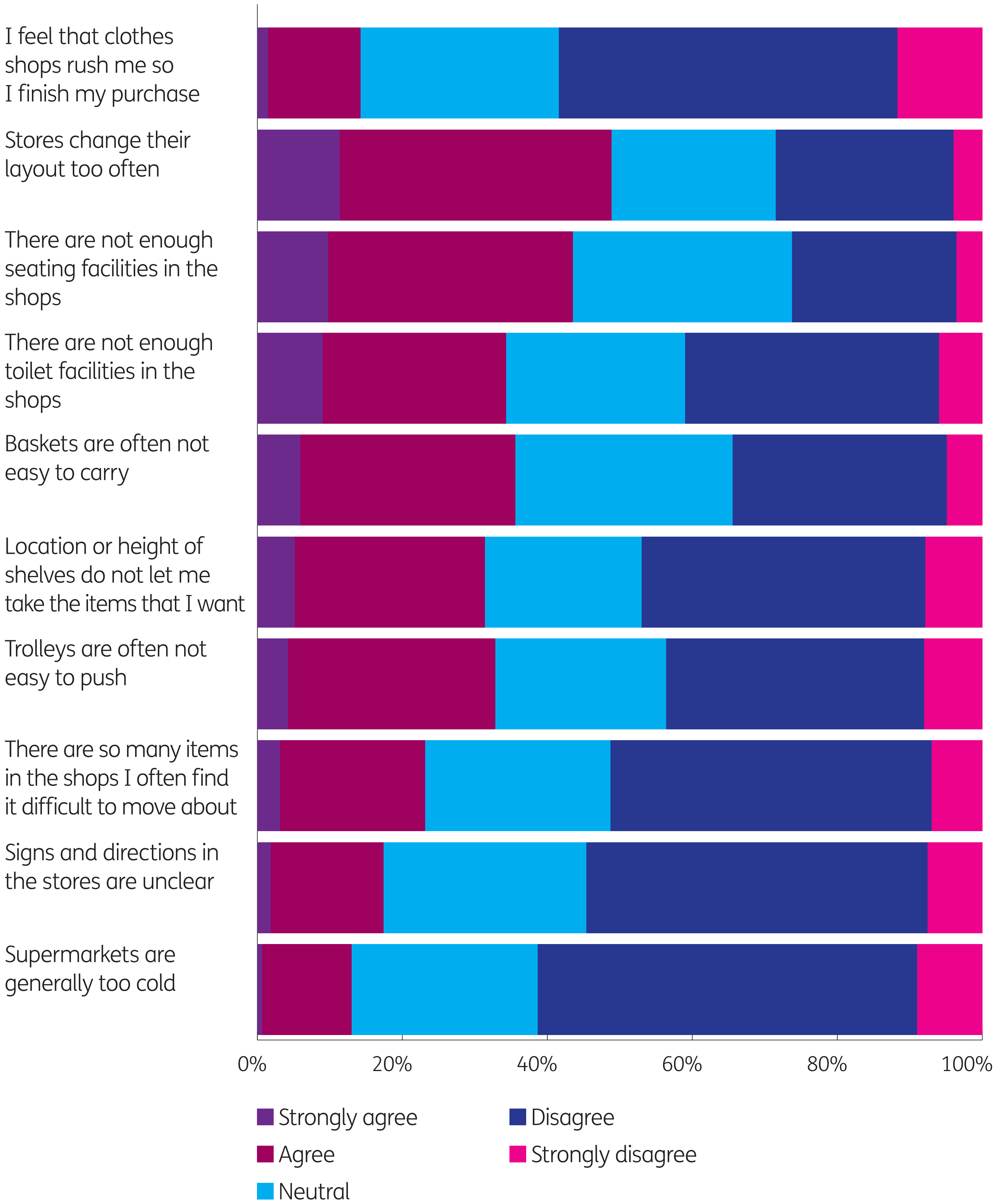
The problem with choosing and finalising a purchase decision is more prevalent for the older age groups, with nearly one in three in the 80+ age group experiencing this issue (see Figure 4.6).

4.1.5 Price sensitivity

Twenty-five per cent of the respondents mentioned that they would not change the stores where they shop even if the prices were increased. At the same time, 40 per cent of participants disagreed with this statement. Thirty per cent of the participants agreed that the price of the products they want to buy is usually higher than their budget (see Figure 4.7).

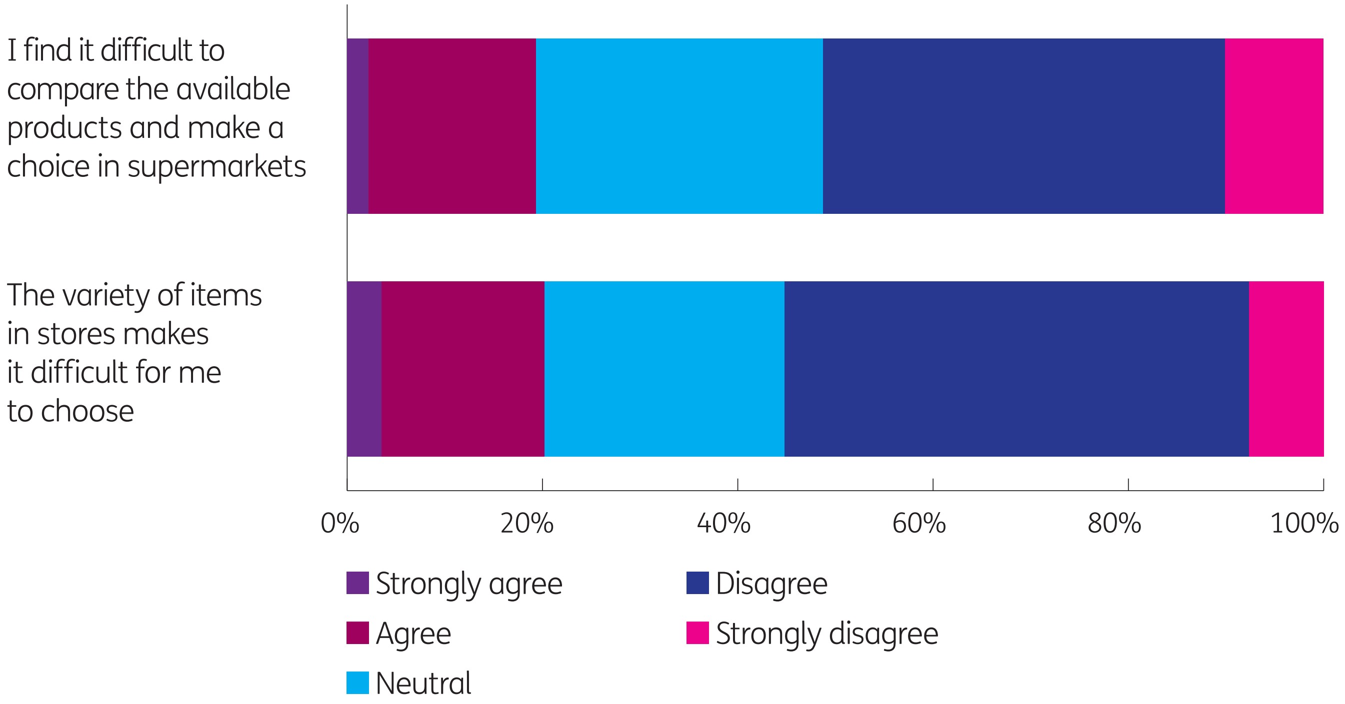
The oldest age groups are more sensitive to price increases than other groups and almost 26 per cent of them would change their store if it increased its prices (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.4 The retail environment



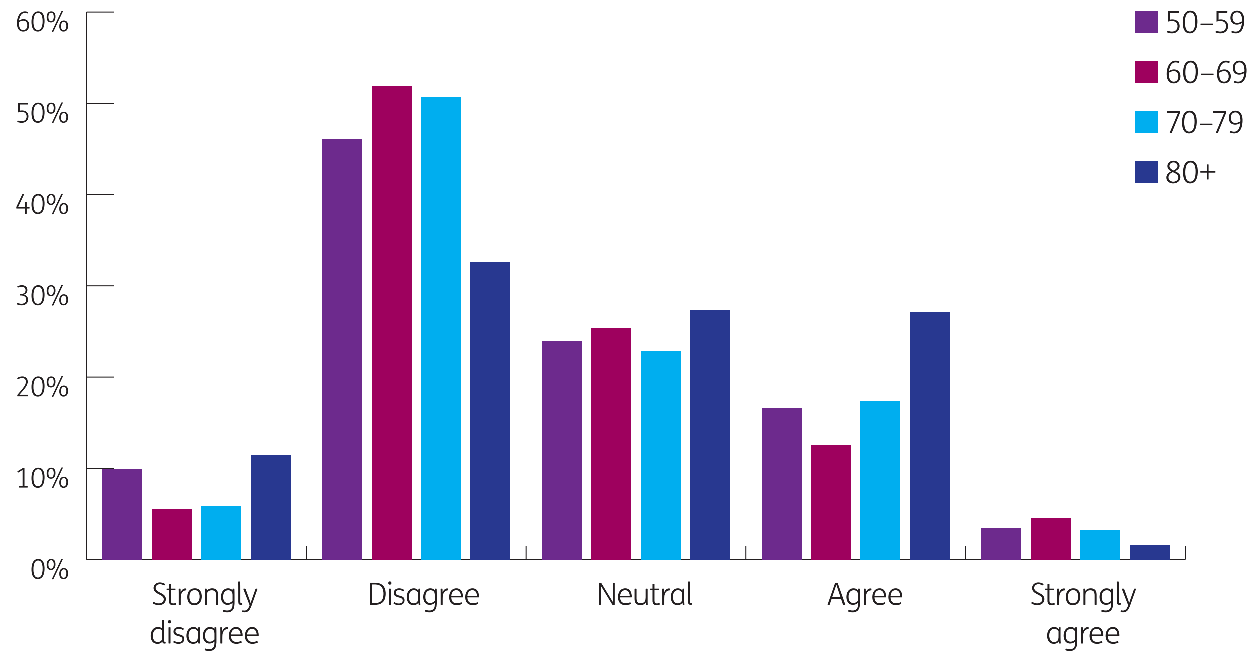
Weighted Base: 530 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 4.5 Choices and variations in the shops



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes refused/not applicable)

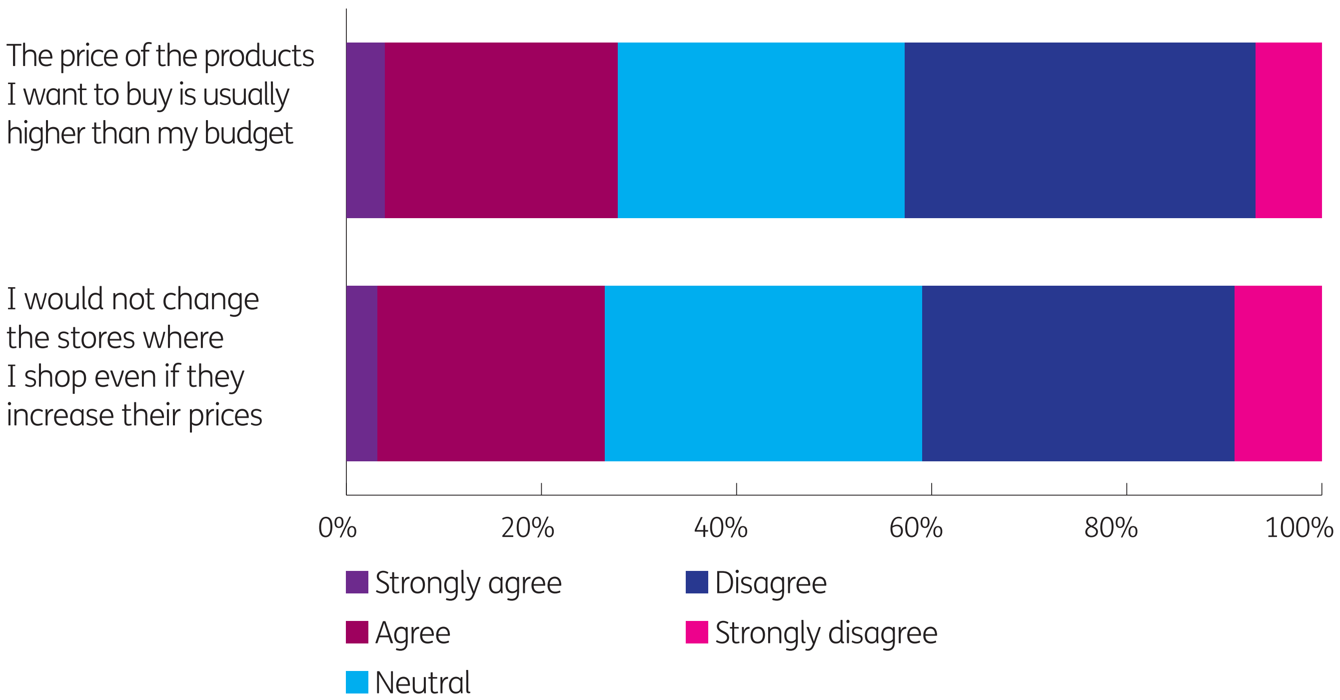
Figure 4.6 Problems with variety of choice and age group differences



The variety of items in stores makes it difficult for me to choose

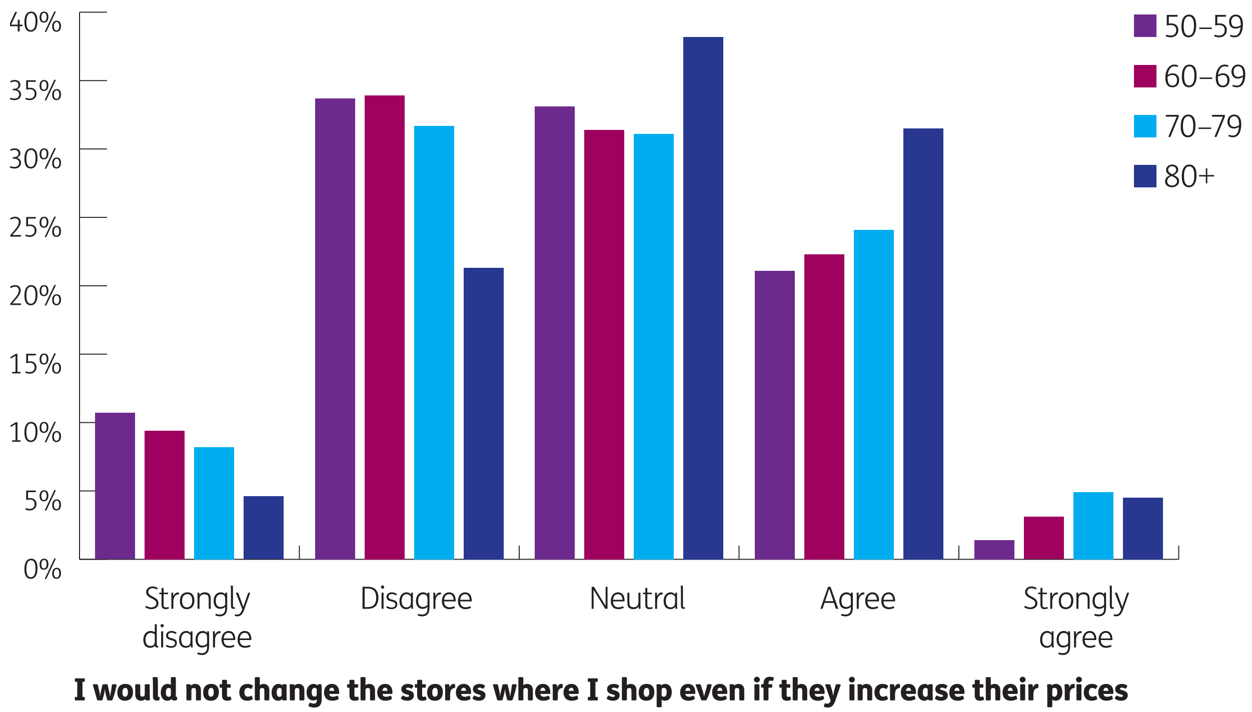
Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 4.7 Price sensitivity and shopping



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 4.8 Price sensitivity and age groups



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

4.1.6 Problems in shopping

There are two prominent themes in customer service for older customers. First, 62 per cent of participants agreed that if a store does not provide good customer service they will not buy from them again. Second, over 60 per cent of participants in the retail and supermarket survey agreed that they would like to try and feel a product before buying it. The 60–79 age groups are especially keen to try and feel a product before they buy it compared to older or younger respondents. Also, one in four participants agreed that they often find it difficult to get someone in store to help them when they need it (see Figure 4.9).

Thirty per cent of those aged 70+ agreed with the statement 'Getting help from staff in packing my shopping is very important to me' compared to under 20 per cent in the 50–69 age groups (see Figure 4.10).

4.1.7 The internet

We also asked participants whether or not they prefer shopping on the internet. Only 10 per cent of participants agreed with this statement. Seventy per cent of participants mentioned that they do not prefer shopping on the internet (see Figure 4.11).

4.1.8 Shopping as a leisure activity

Participants told us whether or not shopping has an element of leisure for them or whether it is a task that needs to be done. Fifty-four per cent of respondents mentioned that they only go shopping if they have to. One in three respondents, however, mentioned that going shopping is a leisure activity for them (see Figure 4.12).

Age groups differ on whether or not people see shopping as a leisure activity. The findings show that shopping is seen as less of a leisure activity for younger groups in the survey (see Figure 4.13).

4.1.9 Local shops

Twenty-eight per cent of participants do the majority of their shopping at their local independent shops. This is something that half of the participants are not doing (see Figure 4.14).

Social classes A and E are very different in their response to this question. Social class A has the highest percentage of people not doing their shopping at local independent shops. The social class E group is more likely to use local independent shops (see Figure 4.15).

4.2 Frequency of shopping

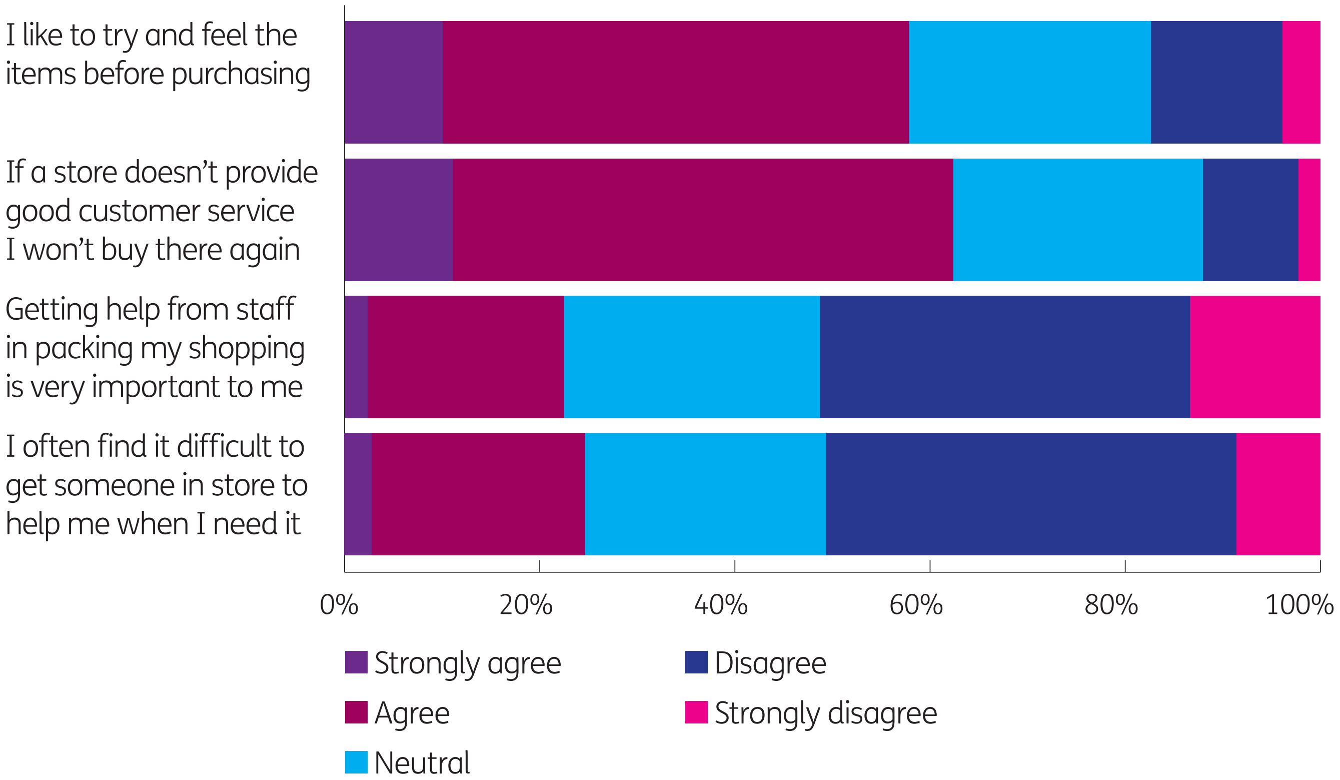
Respondents were asked about their frequency of shopping for six main categories of products. These were groceries, personal care and toiletry, detergents and household items, clothing and footwear, gardening items, and home furniture and appliances (see Figure 4.16).

Nearly one in three people do grocery shopping more than once a week. However, the majority (52 per cent) shop for groceries about once a week. Over 50 per cent of the sample buy clothing and footwear a few times a year.

One in five people do not buy any gardening items, but over 50 per cent buy them at least a few times a year. Nearly 60 per cent of respondents buy home furniture and appliances less than once a year, with 23 per cent buying them a few times a year.

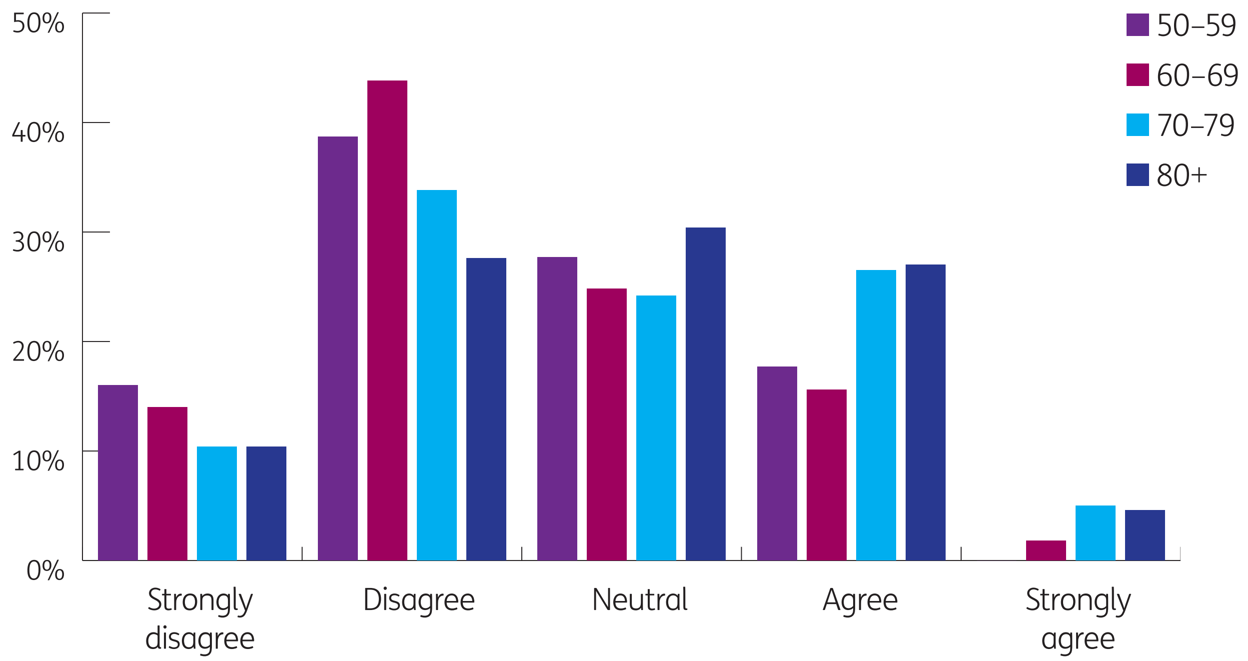
Twenty-eight per cent of participants do the majority of their shopping at their local independent shops.

Figure 4.9 General shopping problems



Weighted Base: 485

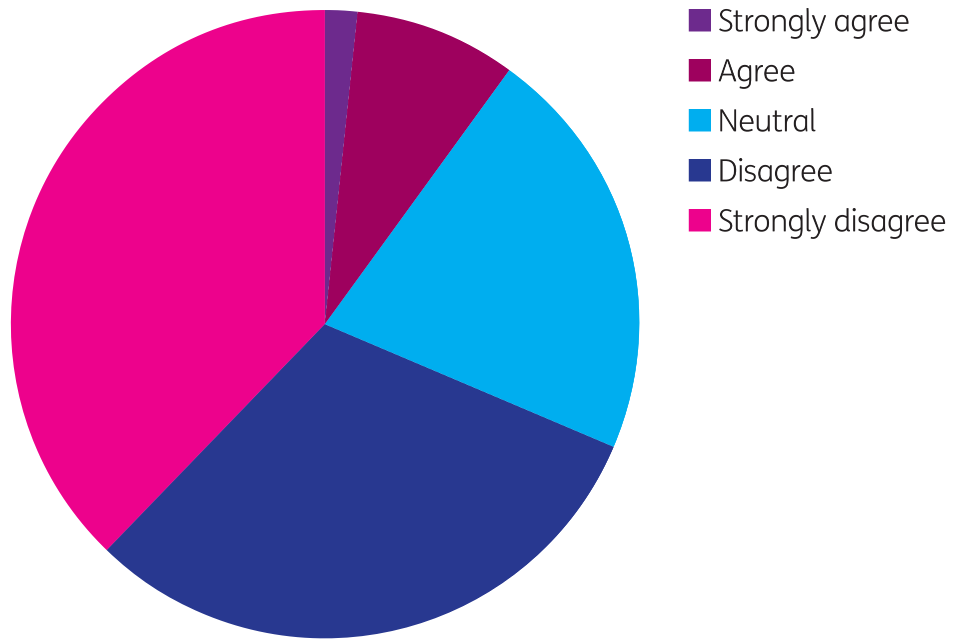
Figure 4.10 Packing shopping and age groups



Getting help from staff in packing my shopping is very important to me

Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

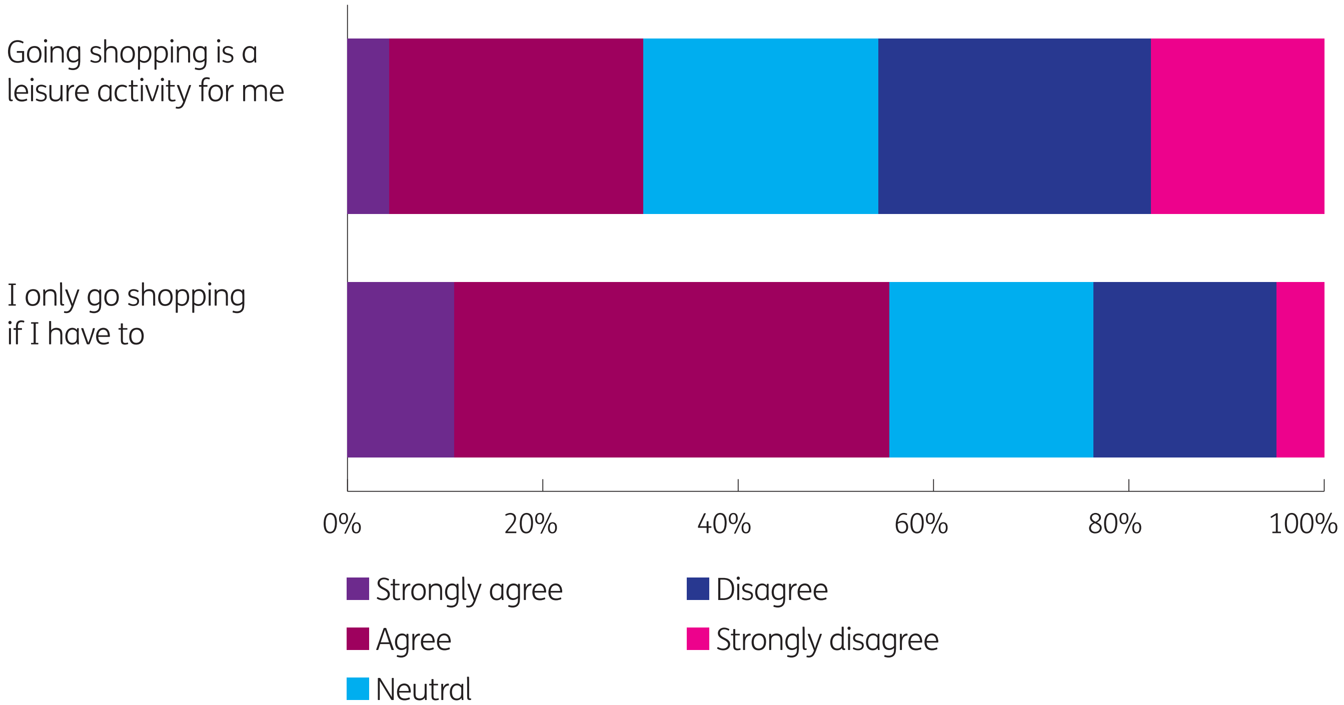
Figure 4.11 Use of the internet when shopping



I prefer shopping on the internet

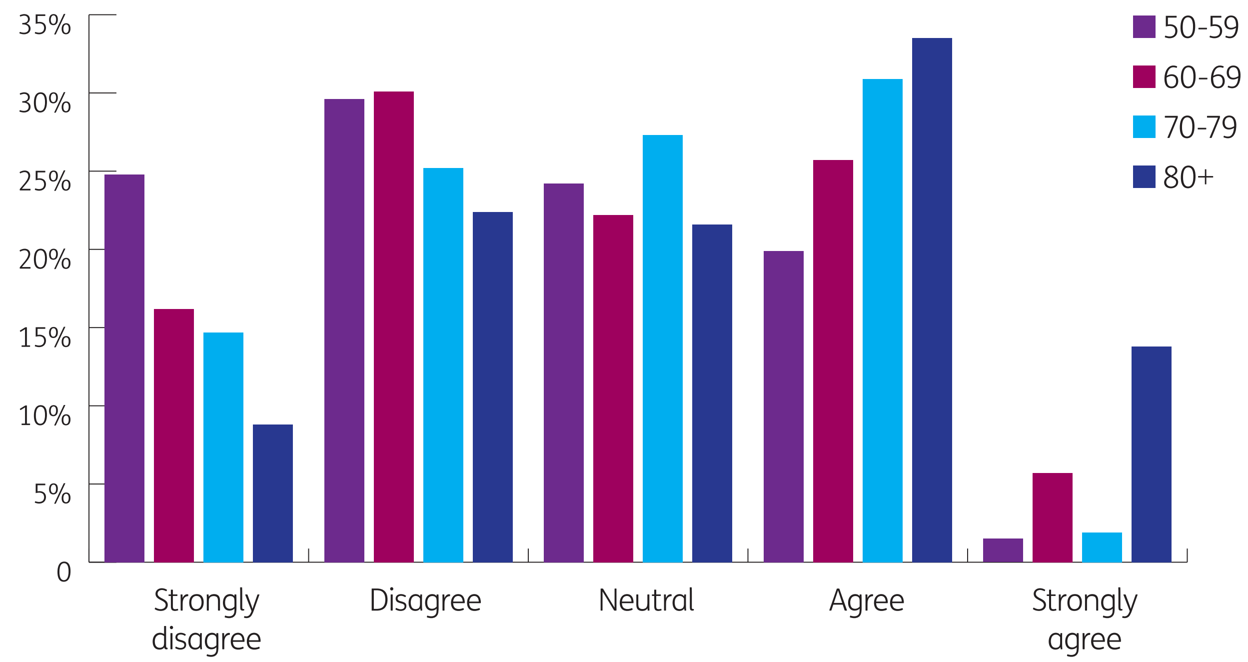
Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 4.12 Shopping as a leisure activity



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes refused/not applicable)

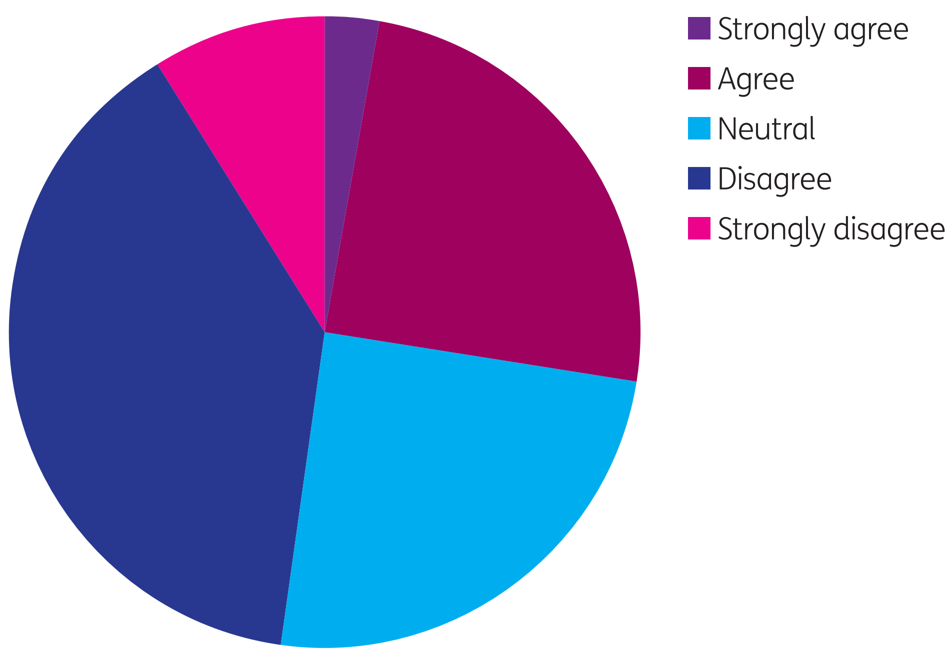
Figure 4.13 Shopping as a leisure activity and age group differences



Going shopping is a leisure activity for me

Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

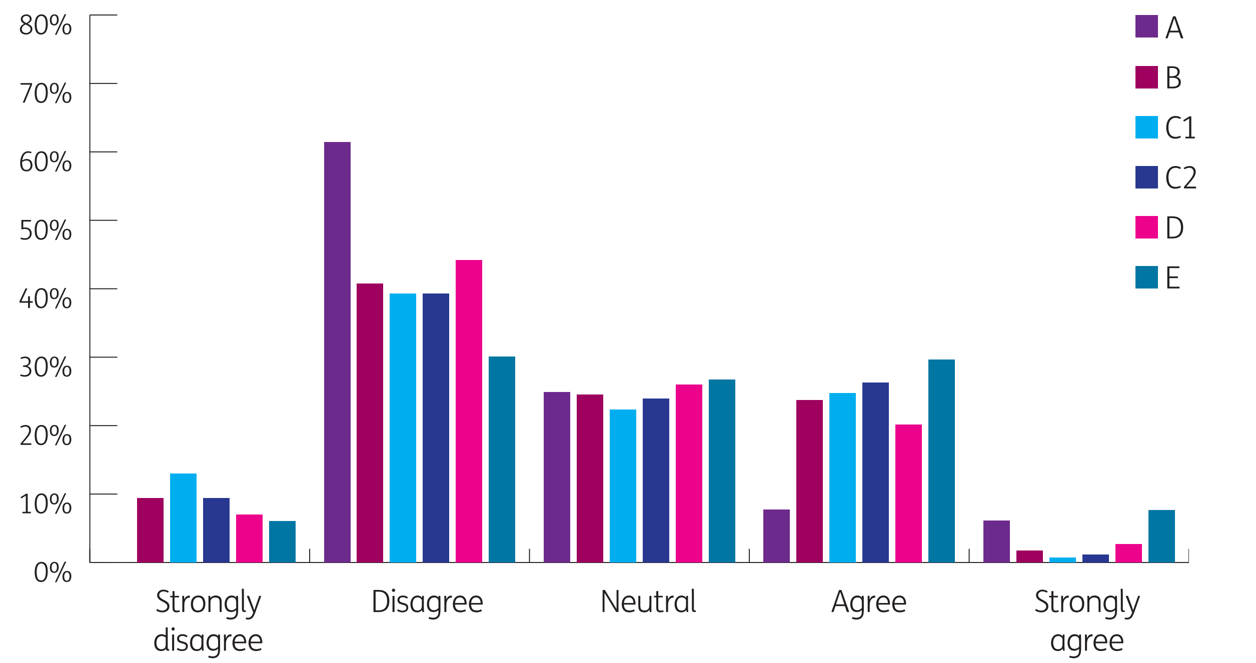
Figure 4.14 Preferences for local shops



I do the majority of my shopping from local independent shops

Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

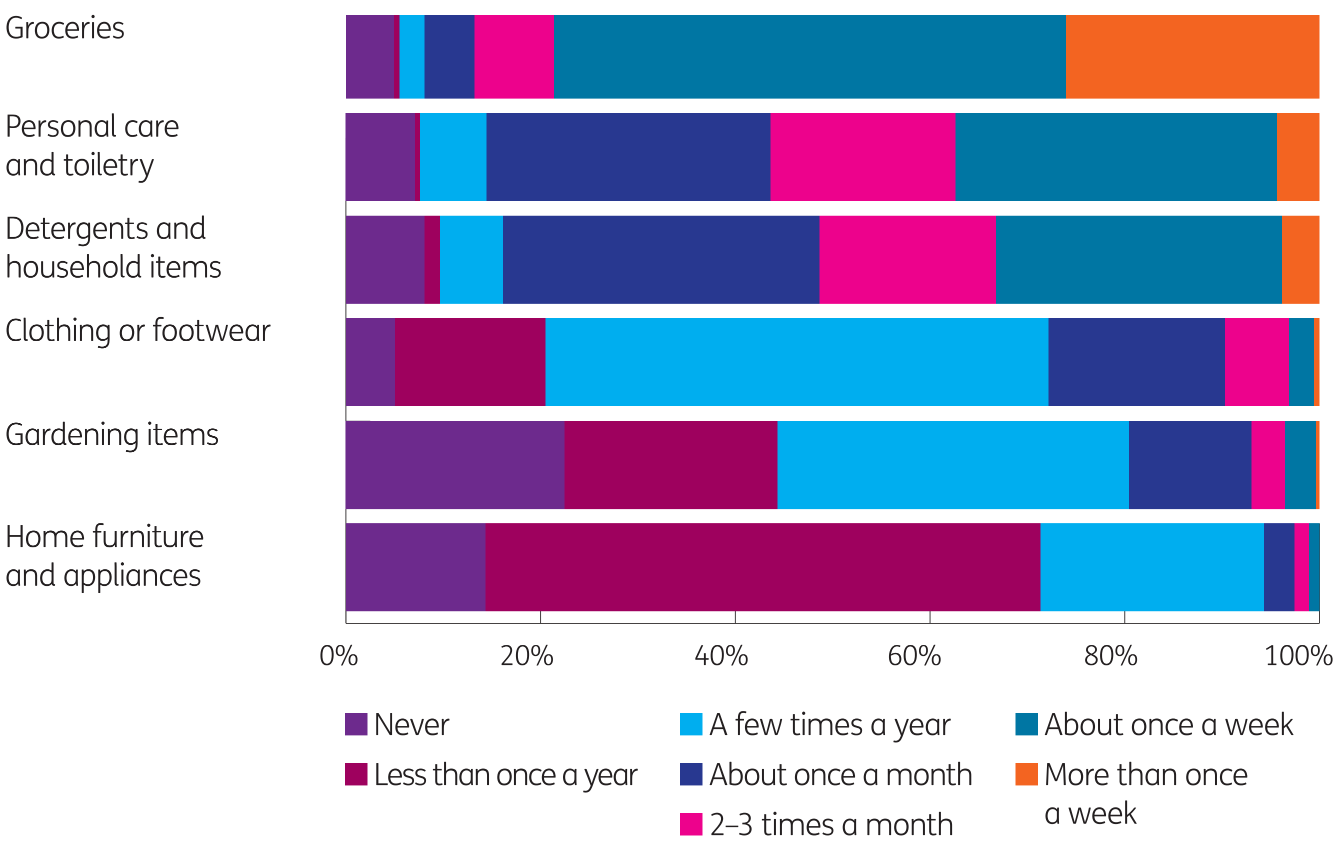
Figure 4.15 Preference for local shops among social classes



I do the majority of my shopping from local independent shops

Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 4.16 Shopping frequency for different items



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes refused/not applicable)

4.3 Information sources when shopping

From a list of possible sources of information, participants chose the ones they use when looking for information prior to shopping (see Table 4.1)

Information provided in-store, online and from friends and family are the top three sources they use prior to making a purchase. Similar to information sources used prior to purchasing technology products, use of television, radio, newspapers, magazines and catalogues is not so common among older people.

4.4 Length of shopping trips

Participants also told us how long their average food shopping trip lasts. Fifty-four per cent of respondents mentioned that their food shopping trips last one to two hours. Thirty-six per cent of respondents mentioned that their shopping trips last less than an hour (see Figure 4.17).

4.5 Decision-making criteria when shopping for a food or clothing item

The main decision-making criteria when buying a food or clothing item were rated by participants (see Figure 4.18).

Suitability for their immediate use, quality, and being offered with good customer service are the top three most important criteria in their purchase decision. Popularity among people their age, being advised by experts and recent buyers, and also by friends, are among the least important criteria in decision-making.

4.6 How they do their shopping

For three categories of products (food, clothing and appliances), respondents mentioned how they normally shop. As Table 4.2 suggests, 52 per cent of respondents do their food shopping on their own. This figure is nearly halved when it comes to appliance shopping. Interestingly, half of the participants mentioned that they do their shopping for big household items with their family. This is the only type of product that has more people purchasing them with their family than on their own.

Clothing and footwear is also the only one out of the three categories that has shopping with friends as one of the top three forms of shopping.

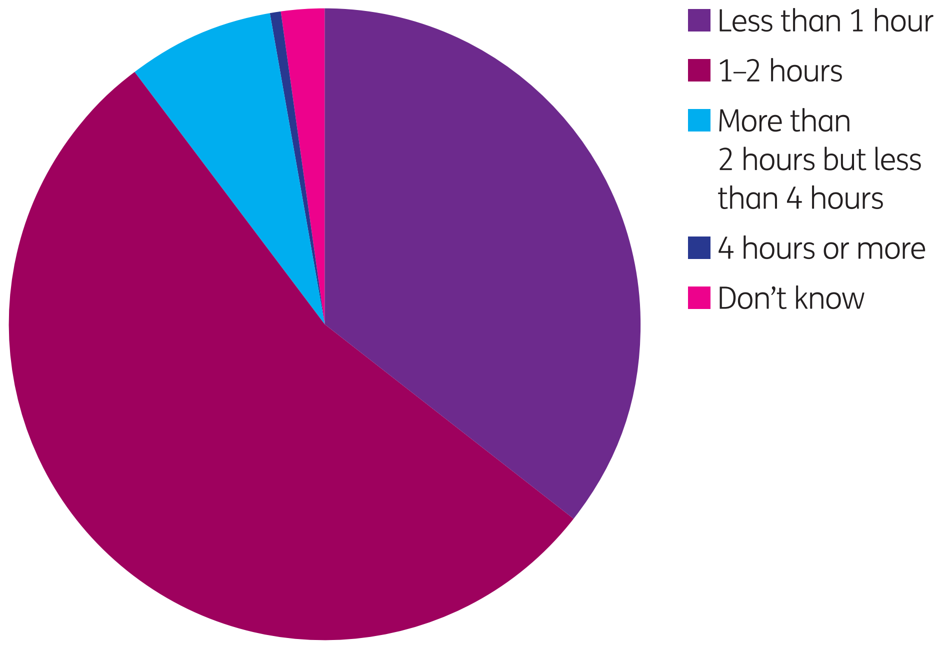
4.7 Preferred shopping time for different items

For all three product categories, the most selected option is that the respondents do not have a preferred shopping time. However, weekday mornings are one of the most popular shopping times for older people. Weekend afternoons are popular for big household items, and mornings are a popular choice for food and small household items (see Table 4.3)

4.8 Use of special offers when shopping for food

In-store offers and loyalty cards are the most chosen form of special offers used by participants. One in three participants mentioned that they do not use any form of the special offers listed in Table 4.4 when shopping for food.

Figure 4.17 Length of shopping trips



How long do your food shopping trips normally last?

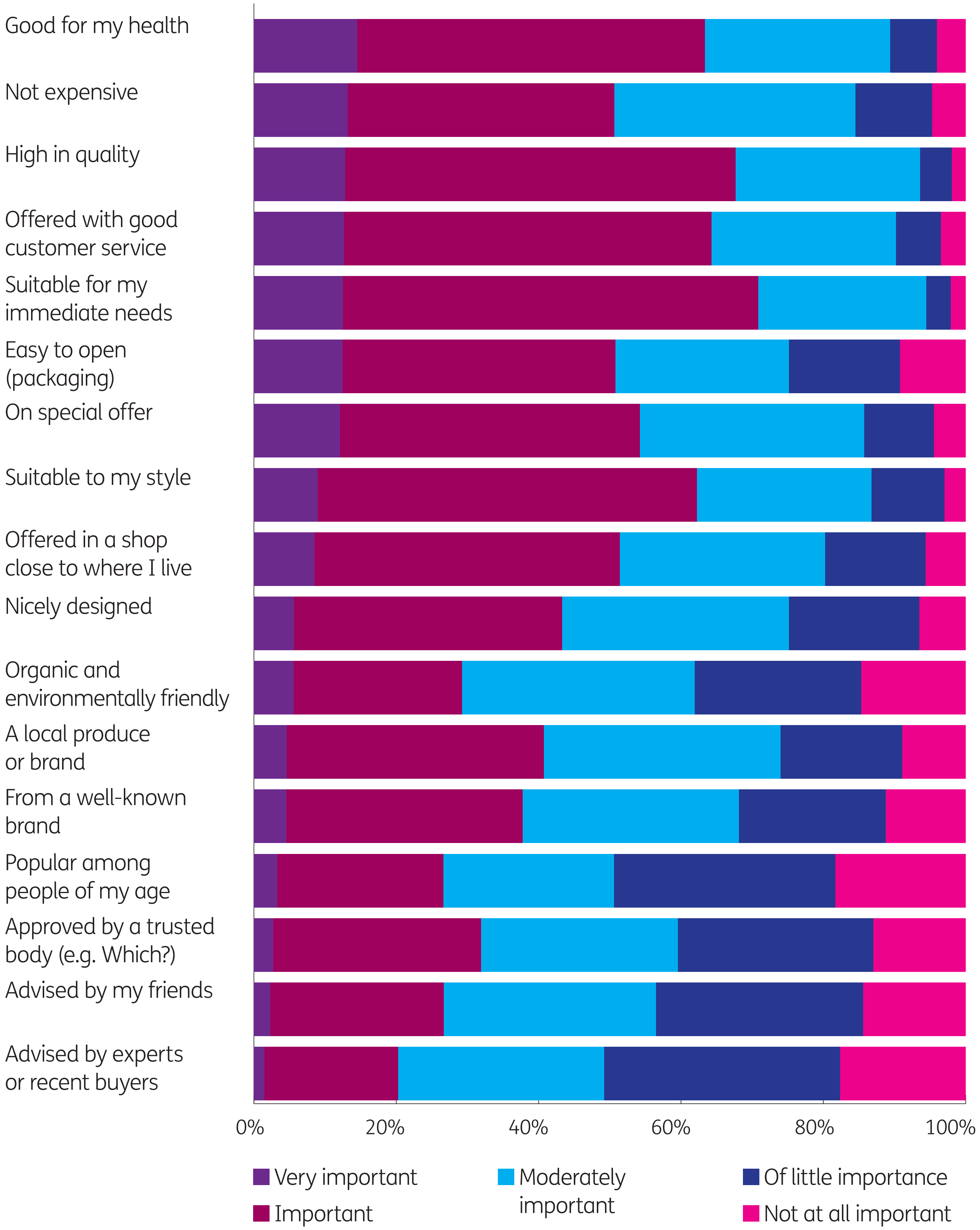
Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

Table 4.1 Information sources prior to shopping

Sources of information	Per cent*
TV and radio	**5.5**
Catalogues	**9.7**
Sales promotions	**5.7**
The internet	**36.7**
Magazines	**10.4**
Newspapers	**7.7**
Friends and family recommendation	**22.8**
Previous personal experience	**20.4**
In store	**42.1**
Somewhere else	**1.3**
Don't know	**6.1**

Weighted Base: 485
*Respondents could select more than one option

Figure 4.18 Decision-making criteria when choosing a food or clothing item



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes refused/ not applicable)

Table 4.2 'Who to shop with?' for different items

	Food, personal care and small household items* (%)	Clothing and footwear (%)	Big household items (%)
I go shopping on my own	**52.5**	**47.1**	**26.4**
I go shopping with my friends	**3.6**	**6.9**	**5.1**
I go shopping with my family	**39.1**	**39.3**	**50.7**
I stay in and do my shopping online to be delivered	**1.8**	**2.7**	**3.2**
I do my shopping online and pick it up in store	**1.1**	**1.3**	**2.6**
I stay in and ask someone else to do my shopping for me	**1.3**	**1.0**	**0.7**
I go shopping with my carer	**1.1**	**0.6**	**0.6**
I do my shopping over the phone	**0.0**	**1.9**	**0.3**
I get in-store help	**2.8**	**5.7**	**6.3**
None of these	**1.8**	**2.7**	**4.0**
Never shop for these	**4.9**	**5.0**	**11.4**

Weighted Base: 530
*Respondents could select more than one option in each category of items

Table 4.3 Preferred shopping time for different items

	Food, personal care and small household items* (%)	Clothing and footwear (%)	Big household items (%)
Weekends – morning – before 12pm	**15.2**	**12.4**	**12.2**
Weekends – afternoon – 12–5pm	**7.8**	**12.4**	**13.8**
Weekends – evening – after 5pm	**1.6**	**1.7**	**1.4**
Weekdays – morning – before 12pm	**27.4**	**20.4**	**13.5**
Weekdays – afternoon – 12–5pm	**14.0**	**13.0**	**9.9**
Weekdays – evening – after 5pm	**7.2**	**1.9**	**1.4**
No preferred time	**31.3**	**38.8**	**42.0**
Never shop for these	**4.9**	**5.0**	**11.4**

Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)
*Respondents could select more than one option

Table 4.4 Use of special offers when buying food items

Special offers	Per cent*
Vouchers from newspapers or magazines	**16.2**
Vouchers from the internet	**5.3**
Vouchers received through the post	**25.0**
Vouchers sent to my mobile phone	**0.5**
In-store offers	**44.6**
Offers advertised on TV	**3.6**
Loyalty cards	**41.4**
None	**31.3**
Don't know	**1.7**

Weighted Base: 485
*Respondents could select more than one option

5 Leisure and travel

5 Leisure and travel

A total of 490 participants completed the survey on leisure and travel activities. This section reports on the frequency of different leisure activities, the use of the internet when booking a holiday, planning holidays, holiday companions, preferred holiday length, decision-making criteria when choosing a holiday, information sources, worries when travelling, general preferences in travelling, reasons for travelling, and use of special offers when booking holidays.

5.1 Frequency of leisure activities

Respondents were asked about the frequency of doing different activities. Sixty per cent of respondents meet friends, go to restaurants and cafes, and travel in the UK at least once a year. Fifty-one per cent of respondents travel abroad at least once a year. Activities that proved popular but are done less frequently include going to the cinema, going to the theatre, opera and ballet, and going on day trips (see Figure 5.1).

Twenty per cent of participants try learning a new skill at least a few times a year. Nearly 70 per cent of participants never attend training courses or sports events.

We also asked about activities that people do on a more regular basis. Everyday activities such as watching television, listening to the radio and reading newspapers are the most popular ones. The most frequent weekly activity is shopping. For monthly activities, shopping and reading magazines are equally popular. Playing computer games and taking part in physical activities are among the least frequent activities (see Figure 5.2).

We also asked participants to tell us about the activities that they wish to do more often. Nearly one in three respondents mentioned that there is no activity on the list that they wish to do more frequently (see Table 5.1).

Twenty-three per cent of the participants mentioned that they wish to travel abroad more often and 15 per cent wish to travel more in the UK. Going to the theatre/opera/ballet, taking part in physical activities, and meeting friends are the next activities that at least one in ten respondents want to do more often.

5.2 Use of the internet when booking

One in three respondents use the internet to book or pay for their leisure activities. This means that well over half of those who have access to the internet (62.7 per cent) actually use it for booking and planning. However, the highest proportion of respondents (37.3 per cent) does not even have access to the internet (see Table 5.2).

5.3 Planning holidays

Most participants plan their holidays themselves. However, 44 per cent have planning involvement from a spouse or partner (see Table 5.3).

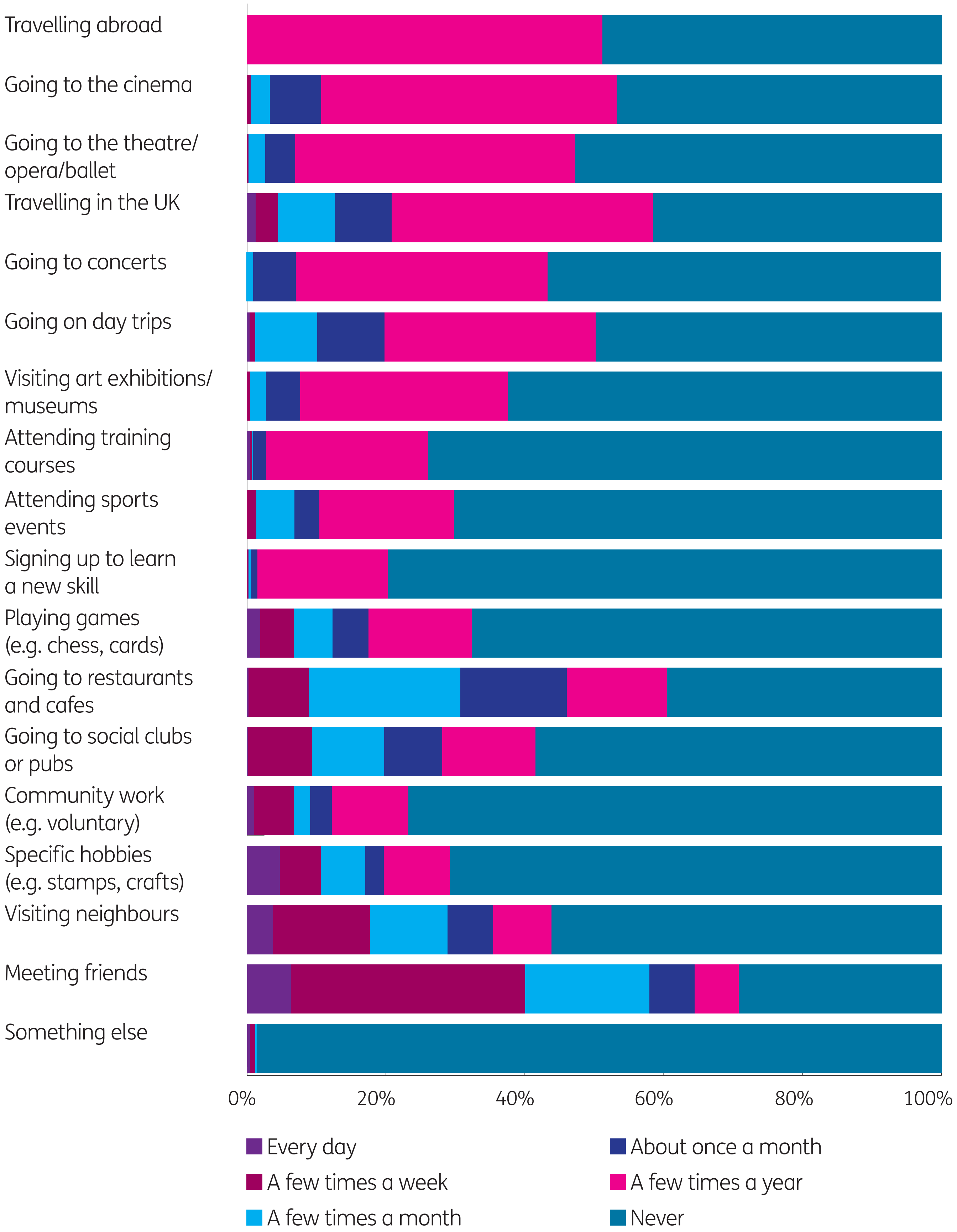
5.4 Preference: who to go with

When people were asked how they normally prefer to go on holidays, they mostly choose to be on their own or to go with their spouse or partner. Almost one in three respondents also mentioned that they like to travel with members of their family. Less than 10 per cent prefer to travel with their friends (see Table 5.4).

'Who to go with' is a question that is answered differently by different age groups. Those in the oldest age groups prefer to go with members of their family rather than go on their own or with their partner. Younger groups in the survey have a higher than average preference to go on their own or with their partner than to go with their family (see Figure 5.3).

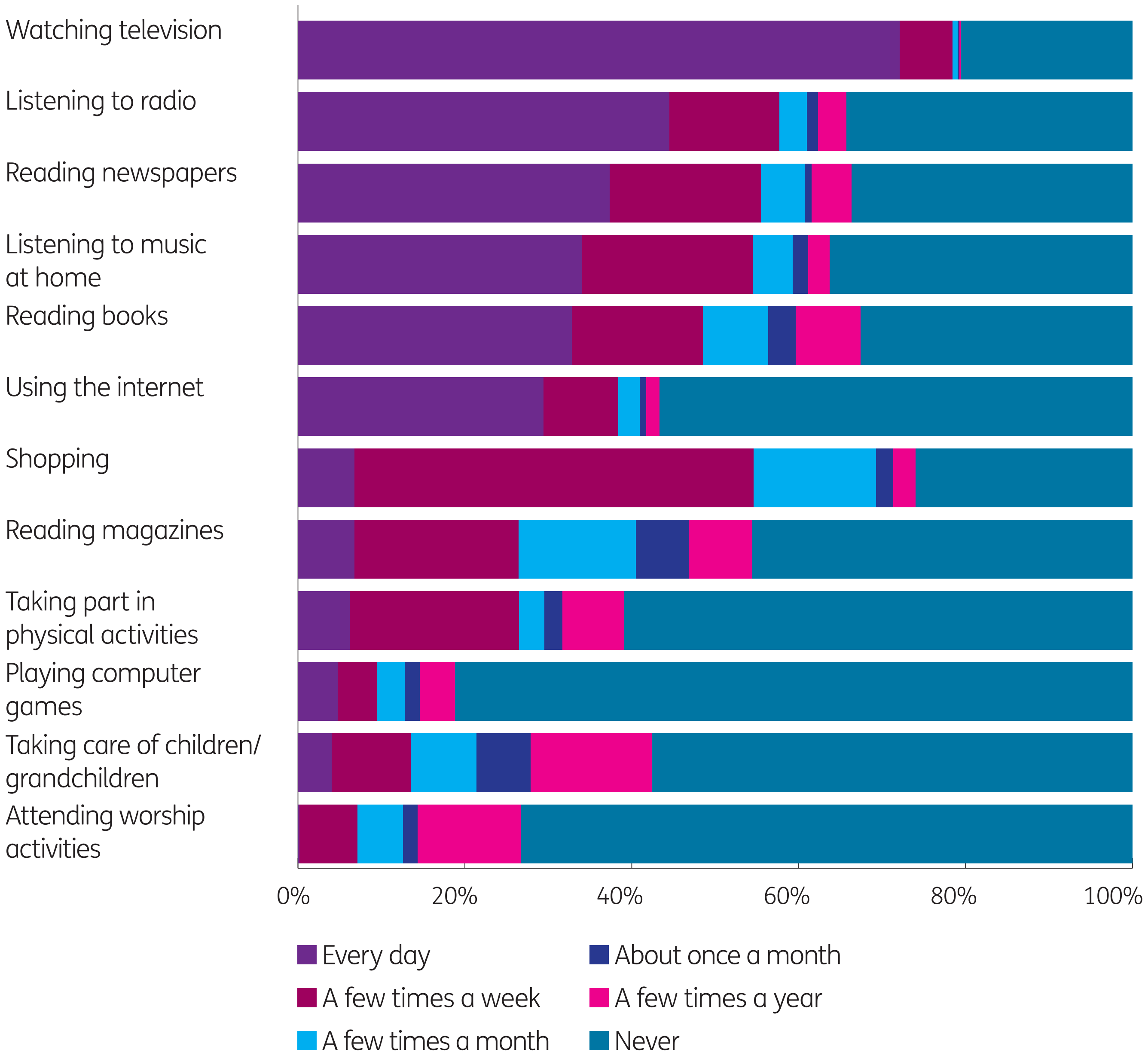
Travelling with friends is extremely unpopular among the oldest age groups. Not travelling at all is a response that is given much more as people get older.

Figure 5.1 Frequency of different leisure activities



Weighted Base: 490 (excludes don't know/not applicable)

Figure 5.2 Frequency of day-to-day leisure activities



Weighted Base: 490 (excludes don't know/not applicable)

Table 5.1 Leisure activities to be done more often

Leisure activities	Per cent*	Leisure activities	Per cent*
Going to the theatre/opera/ballet	**12.9**	Going on day trips	**9.5**
Going to cinema	**6.2**	Taking part in physical activities	**12.1**
Visiting Art exhibitions/museums	**5.3**	Playing computer games	**1.0**
Going to concerts	**9.1**	Using the internet	**1.6**
Going to restaurants and cafes	**7.1**	Attending sports events	**3.4**
Signing up to learn a new skill	**3.5**	Meeting friends	**11.1**
Reading books	**7.7**	Going to social clubs or pubs	**3.0**
Attending training courses	**1.8**	Listening to music at home	**3.6**
Travelling abroad	**23.1**	Visiting neighbours	**2.0**
Watching television	**2.7**	Community work (e.g. voluntary)	**1.6**
Attending worship activities	**1.2**	Travelling in the UK	**15.2**
Listening to the radio	**2.3**	Playing games (e.g. chess, cards)	**2.0**
Taking care of children/grandchildren	**4.7**	Specific hobbies (e.g. Collecting stamps, crafts)	**6.1**
Reading newspapers	**2.6**	Something else	**0.6**
Shopping	**5.4**	None	**35.2**
Reading magazines	**1.4**		
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused) *Respondents could select more than one activity			

Table 5.2 Use of the internet when booking different leisure activities

Do you use the internet to book or pay for any of the activities we have just talked about?	Per cent
Yes	**33.7**
No	**29.0**
No access to the internet	**37.3**
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)	

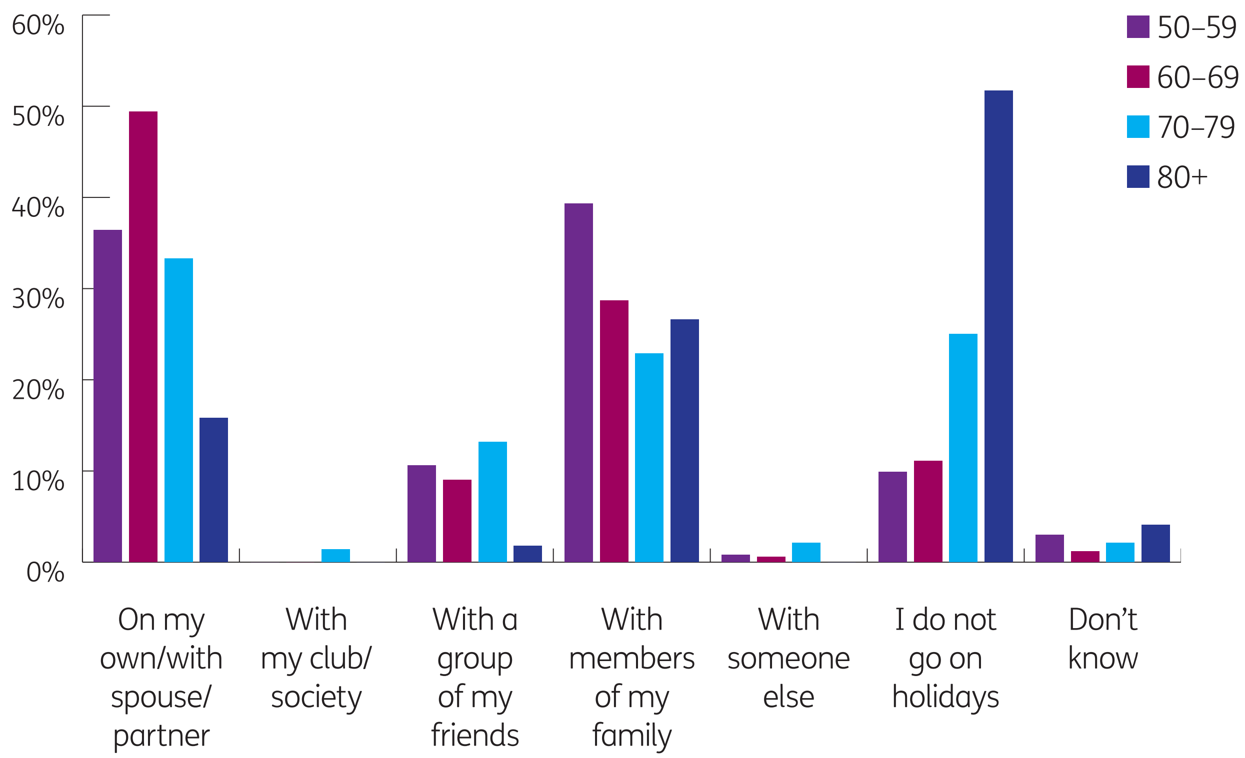
Table 5.3 'Who plans your holiday?'

Who normally plans your holidays?	Per cent*
Myself	**65.8**
My spouse/partner	**44.1**
Other members of my family	**13.8**
My friends	**6.8**
Club or society	**1.3**
Other	**0.2**
Don't know	**2.6**
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable) *Respondents could select more than one option	

Table 5.4 'Who do you prefer to travel with?'

Who do you normally prefer to go on holidays?	Per cent
On my own/with spouse/partner	**37.6**
With my club/society	**0.4**
With a group of my friends	**9.8**
With members of my family	**30.5**
With someone else	**1.0**
I do not go on holidays	**18.5**
Don't know	**2.3**
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)	

Figure 5.3 Travel companions and differences in age groups



Who do you normally prefer to go on holidays?

Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

5.5 Length of holidays

Holidays of two to three weeks are the most popular among the sample. Forty-three per cent of participants mentioned that they prefer such a holiday. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents prefer a one-week holiday and just 11 per cent prefer longer holidays (a month or more) (see Figure 5.4).

5.6 Decision-making criteria when choosing a holiday destination

A list of possible decision-making criteria for choosing a holiday destination was given to the participants and they told us how important each criterion is (see Figure 5.5).

Considerations such as the price and the suitability of the destination for the group travelling are the most important decision-making criteria when choosing a destination.

5.7 Information sources when choosing last holiday

Participants were asked about the information sources they used the last time they booked a holiday (see Table 5.5).

The internet is a highly used source of information. Over one-third of the sample mentioned that they used it when booking their last holiday. Travel agents are the second most popular source of information, followed by recommendations from friends and family.

Television, radio, magazines, newspapers and catalogues are rarely used by older people as an information source to book a holiday.

5.8 Worries when going on holiday

The main worries that older people might have when booking or going on holiday are reported below. These are presented in five main categories: concerns with arrangements, value for money, health, security and enjoyment.

5.8.1 Arrangements

Comparing the available travel options and making a choice is a problem faced by more than one in three respondents. The troubling nature of organising a trip on their own is experienced by fewer than 20 per cent of participants. Only 10 per cent of respondents are worried about possible problems with their travel arrangements (see Figure 5.6).

Data shows that older age groups seem to have fewer problems in comparing the available travel options and making a decision. This may be due to having fewer available options compared to the younger age groups in the survey (see Figure 5.7).

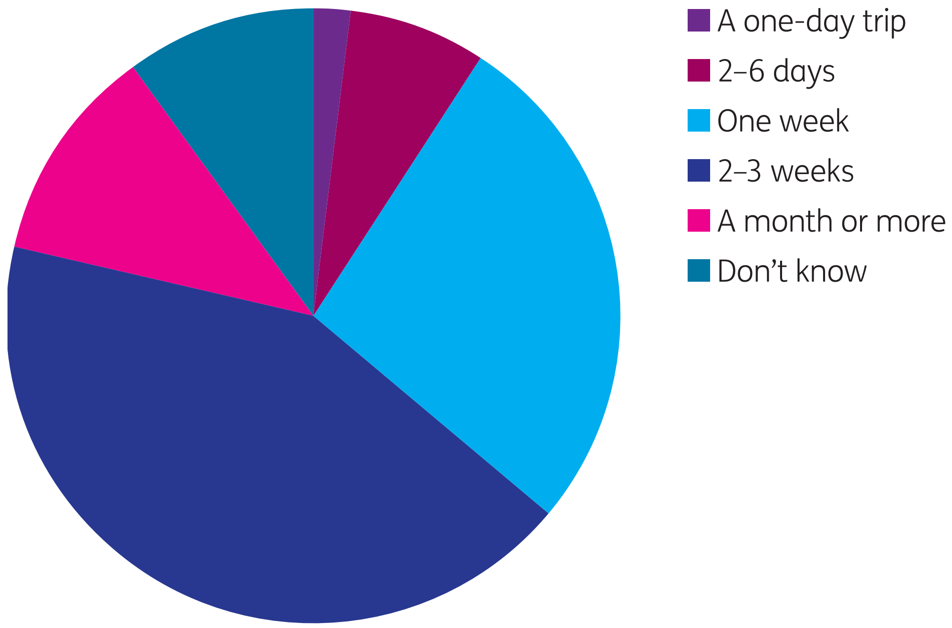
5.8.2 Value for money

Whether or not the holidays they get are 'value for money' seems to be a problem for only 10 per cent of participants. Problems in matching budget and holiday expectations only exist for fewer than one in five participants (see Figure 5.8).

5.8.3 Health

Becoming ill while on holiday is a thought that worries over 10 per cent of participants. A similar percentage of the sample is also worried that their physical condition could worsen while away and they might not get the help they need (see Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.4 Preferred length for a holiday



If you were to go on ONE holiday this year, how long would you prefer to go for?

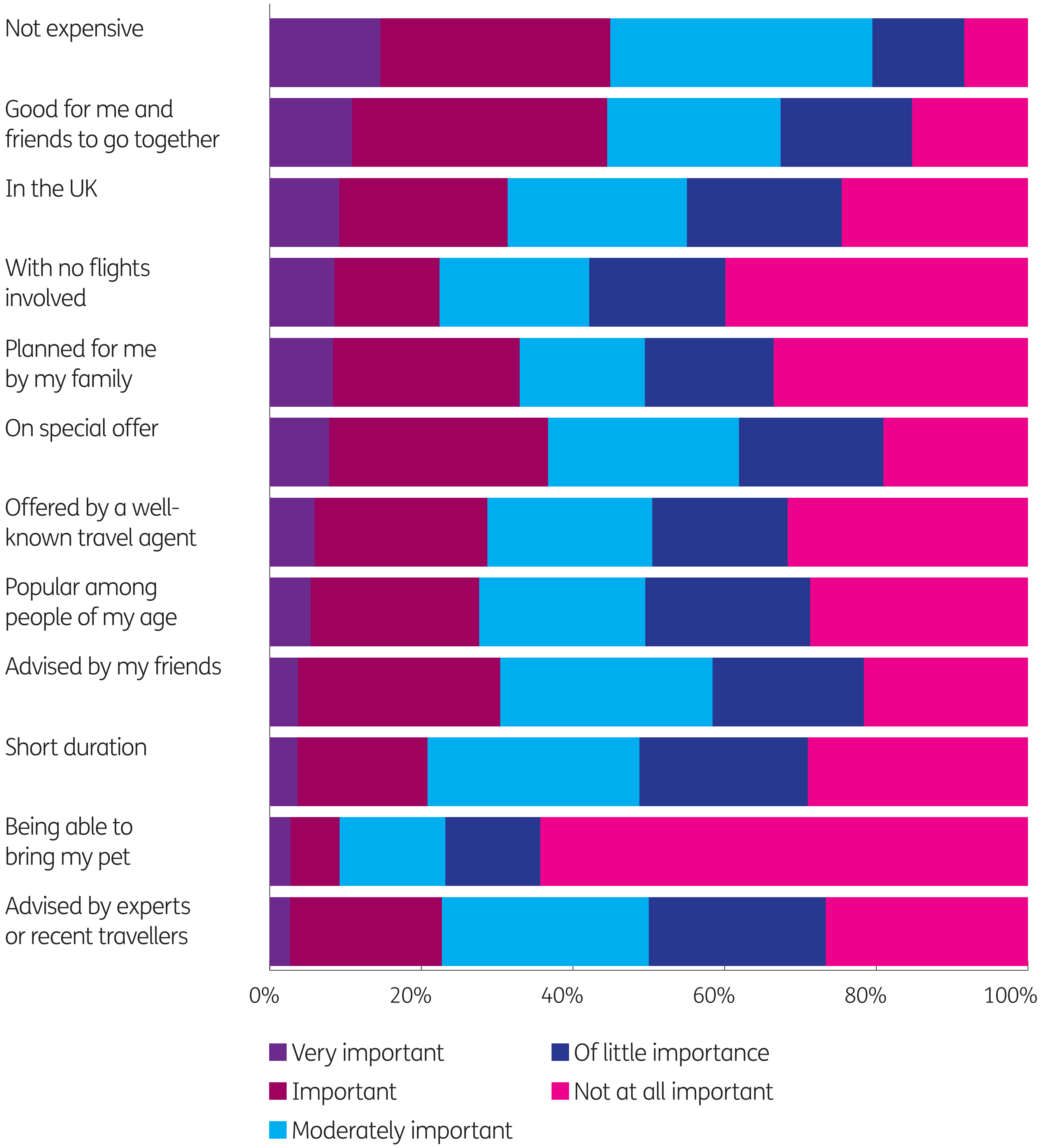
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Table 5.5 Information sources prior to holiday bookings

Sources of information	Per cent*
TV and radio	**3.1**
Catalogues	**5.0**
Sales promotions	**1.2**
The internet	**36.4**
Magazines	**2.2**
Newspapers	**5.5**
Friends and family recommendation	**19.3**
Previous personal experience	**16.0**
My social/religious/community centre	**1.9**
Travel agent	**28.1**
Somewhere else	**2.1**
Don't know	**7.2**

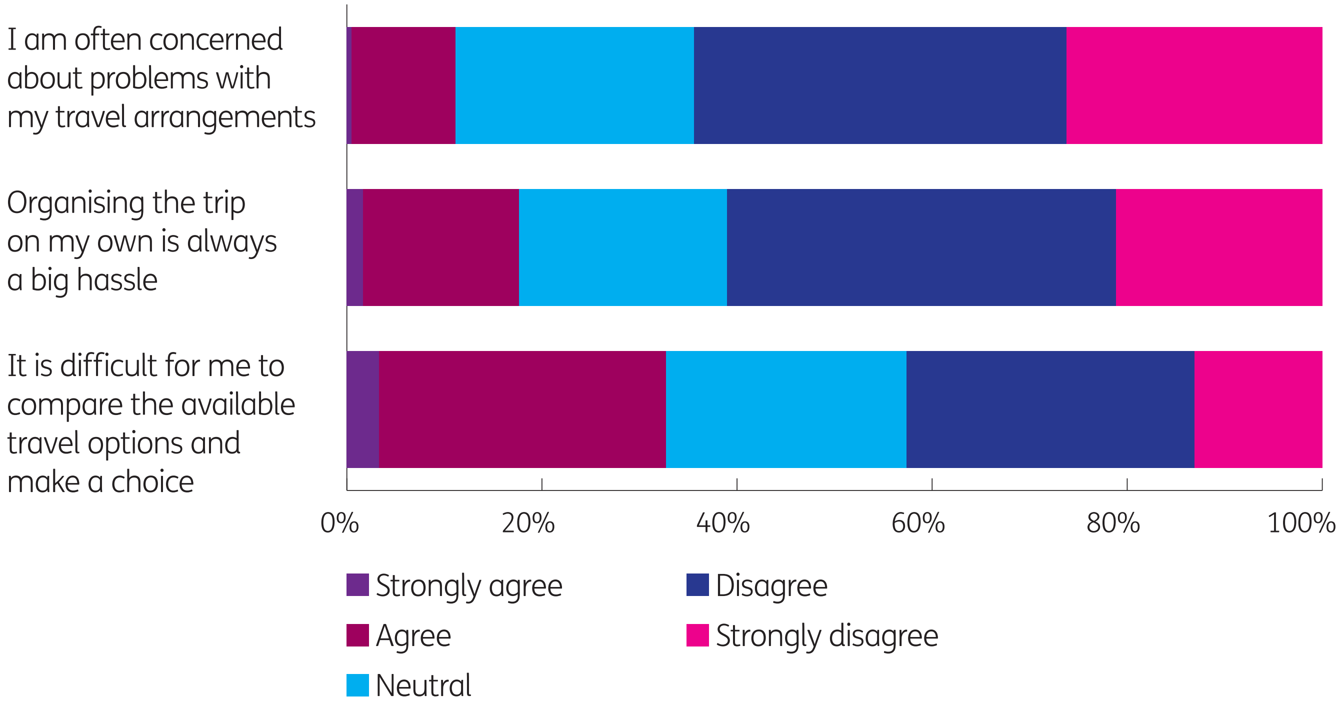
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)
*Respondents could select more than one option

Figure 5.5 Decision-making criteria when choosing a holiday destination



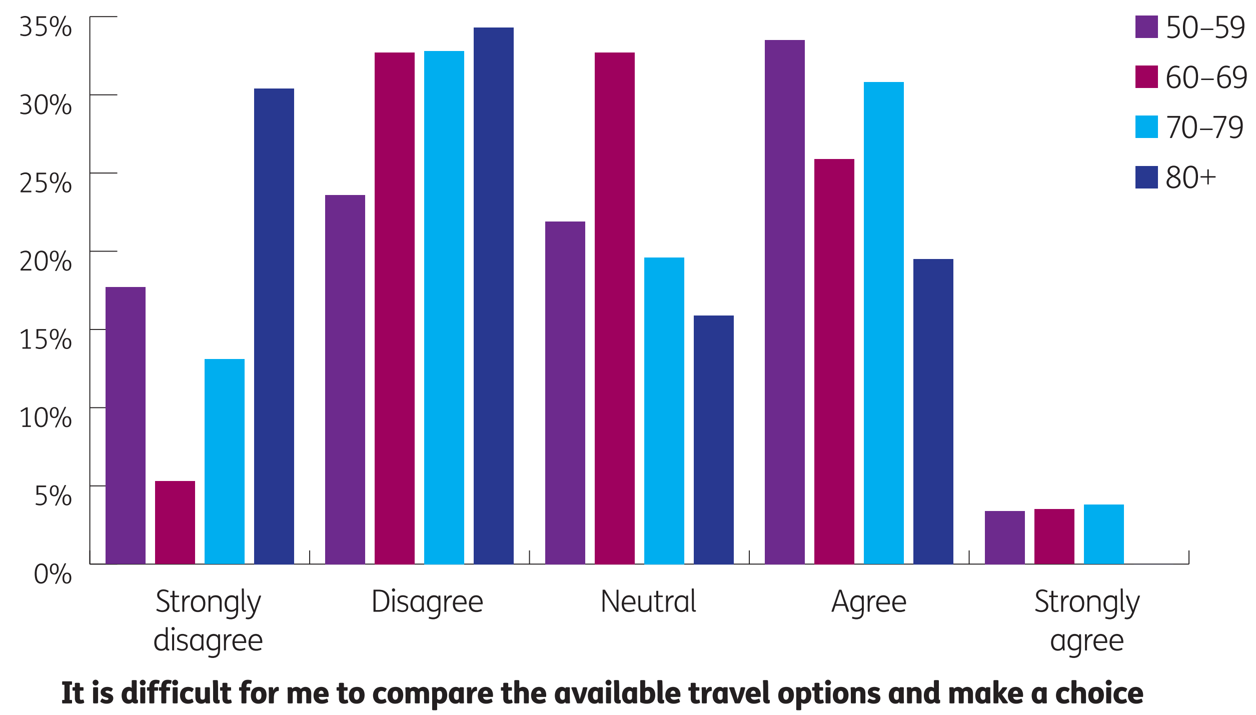
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.6 Problems with holiday arrangements and choices



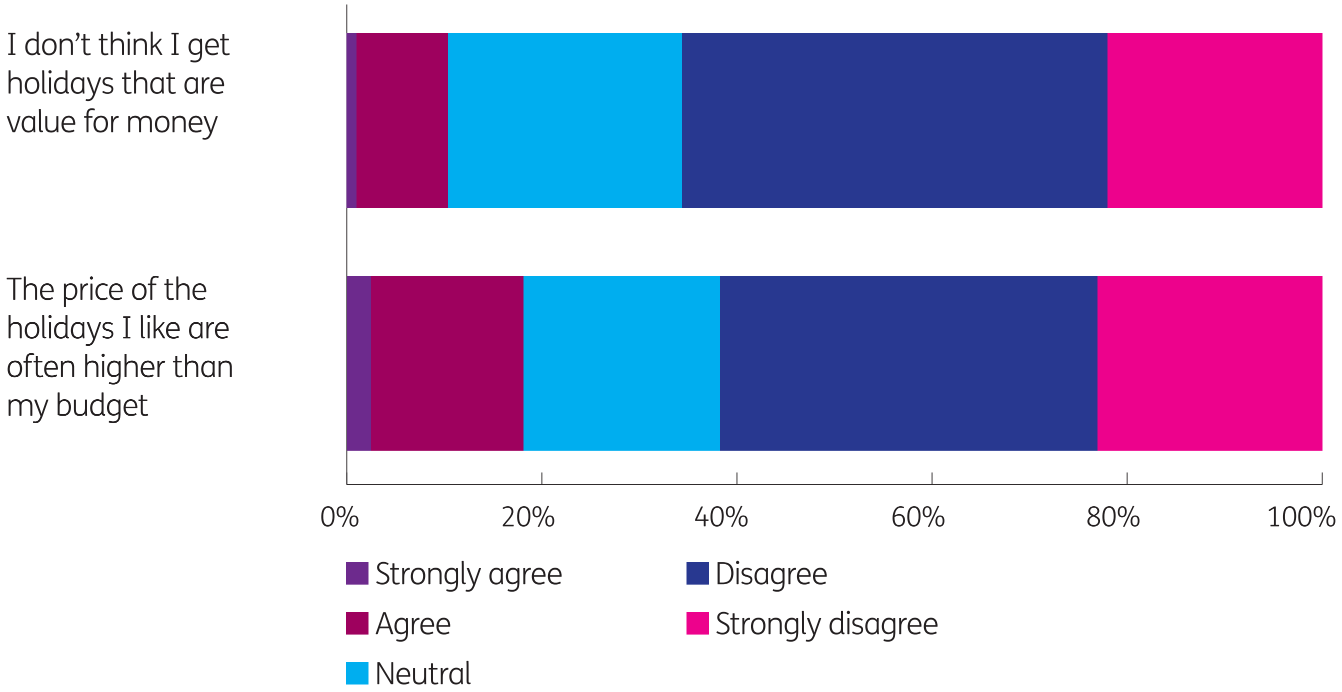
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.7 Comparing the available holidays and age groups



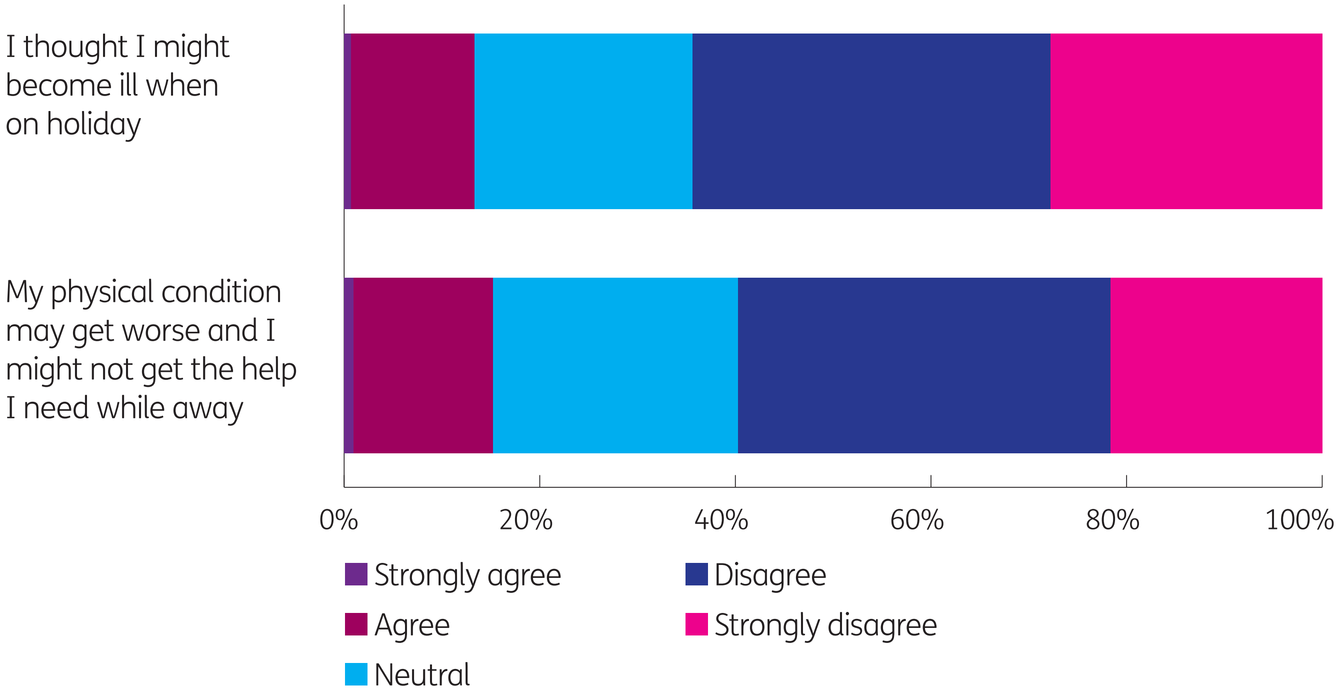
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.8 Holidays and money



Weighted Base: 490 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 5.9 Holidays and health risks



Weighted Base: 490 (excludes refused/not applicable)

5.8.4 Safety and security

Loss of personal possessions is a worry experienced by nearly one in five respondents. Around 15 per cent of participants mentioned that they often worry about unpredicted problems that might occur while on holiday (see Figure 5.10).

Getting hurt, being in danger or being unsafe is a feeling experienced by around 13 per cent of respondents.

5.8.5 Enjoyment

Only 10 per cent of participants mentioned that the holidays offered to them match their lifestyle. A very small percentage of participants (nearly 5 per cent) mentioned that they worry people might think of them differently if they go on certain holidays (see Figure 5.11).

5.9 General travelling and leisure preferences

Respondents told us about their preferences for going on holidays and spending leisure time. We covered whether or not they like travelling, how they feel about the baggage and transport, details of their preferences when travelling, sport activities, and how they see their leisure.

5.9.1 Love or hate travelling

Nearly 60 per cent of respondents mentioned that they have always loved travelling as much as they do now. A smaller proportion (over 40 per cent) tended to travel more when they were younger. One in five participants do not feel the need to travel (see Figure 5.12).

The percentage of those who agreed that they do not feel the need to travel is much higher among the oldest age group as well as social class group E. The younger age group in the survey and those from middle class backgrounds disagreed that they do not need to travel (see Figures 5.13 and 5.14).

5.9.2 Transport

Participants told us how airports affect the way they travel. Around one in five respondents agreed that the fuss of airports is the main reason why they do not use air travel. A similar percentage said that if they had to carry luggage on their own they would not travel (see Figure 5.15).

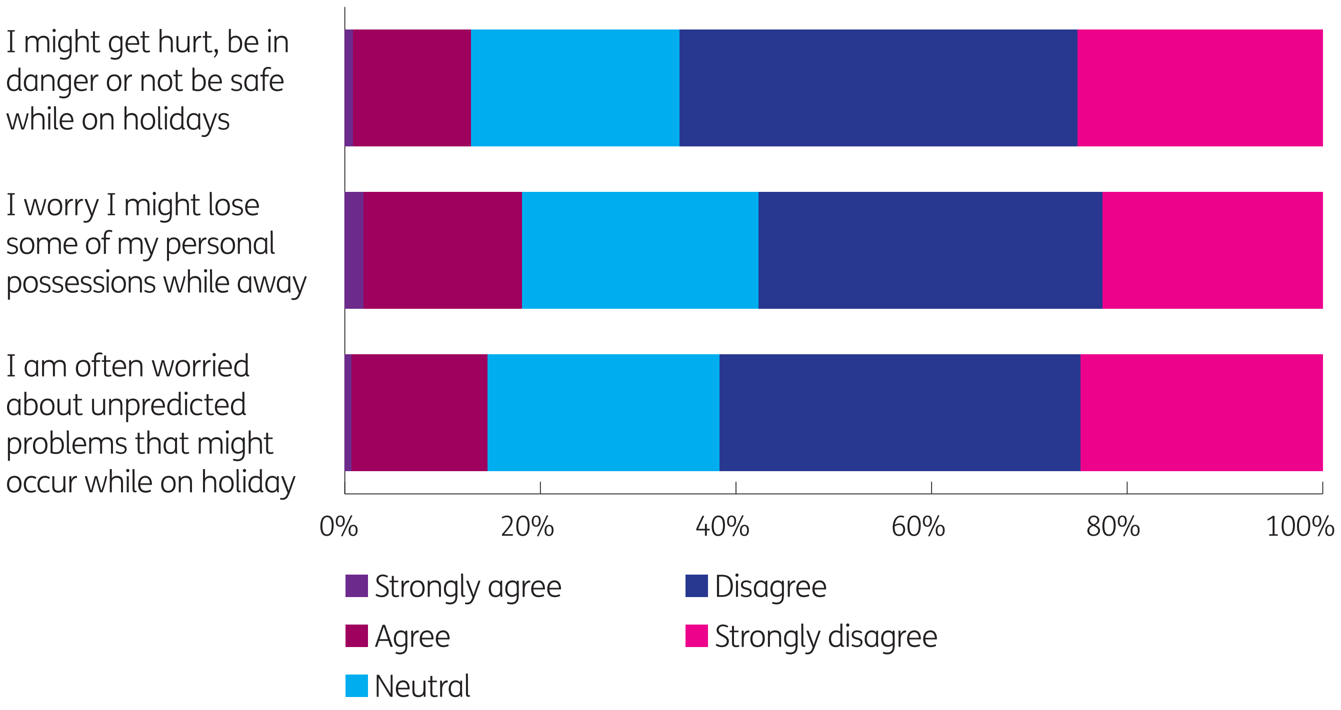
People in the 70+ age group are least likely to travel if they do not have any support in carrying their luggage (see Figure 5.16).

5.9.3 Preferences in travelling

Loyalty to a holiday destination, privacy, planning and cost are other aspects that we considered within the survey. Sixty-five per cent of participants mentioned that they would go to a holiday destination again if they have had a good experience there (see Figure 5.17). Sixteen per cent of participants agreed that they prefer to watch holiday destinations on TV rather than travel to the destination itself. Privacy when travelling is very important to over 40 per cent of respondents. Over 20 per cent of respondents said that they do not travel if it is not carefully planned for them by another person. Cost of travelling alone is another issue identified by nearly one in three participants as a reason why they do not travel much.

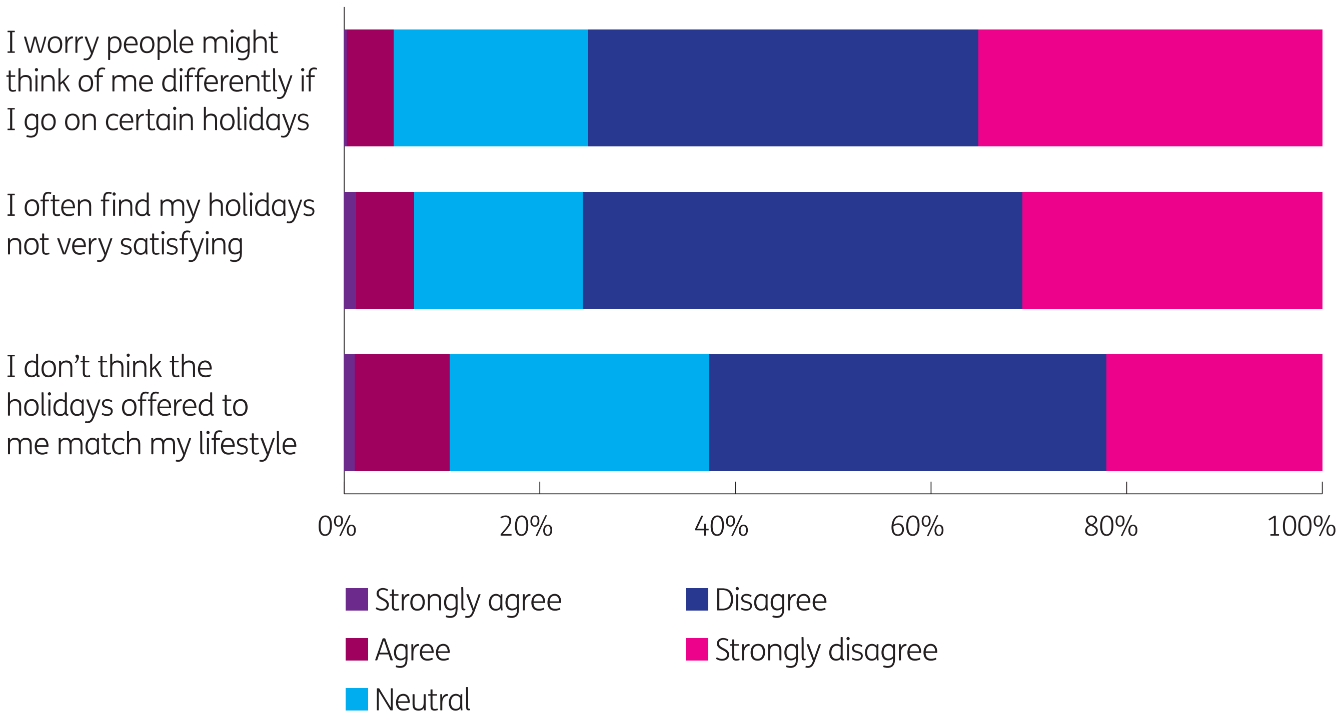
Age is a decisive factor in loyalty to a holiday destination when people have a good experience. The oldest age group seems to be more neutral in their responses compared to the younger groups in the survey, who agreed with the statement more (see Figure 5.18).

Figure 5.10 Safety and security while on holiday



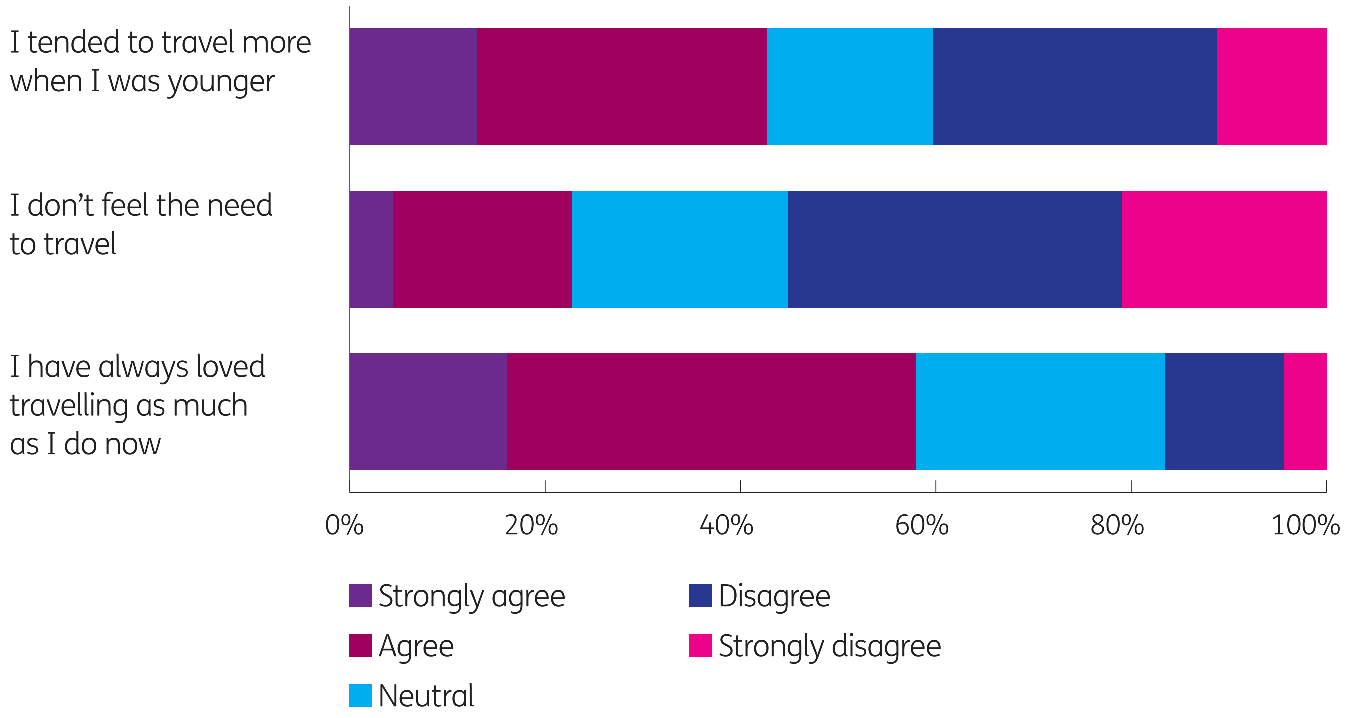
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.11 Satisfaction and enjoyment from a holiday



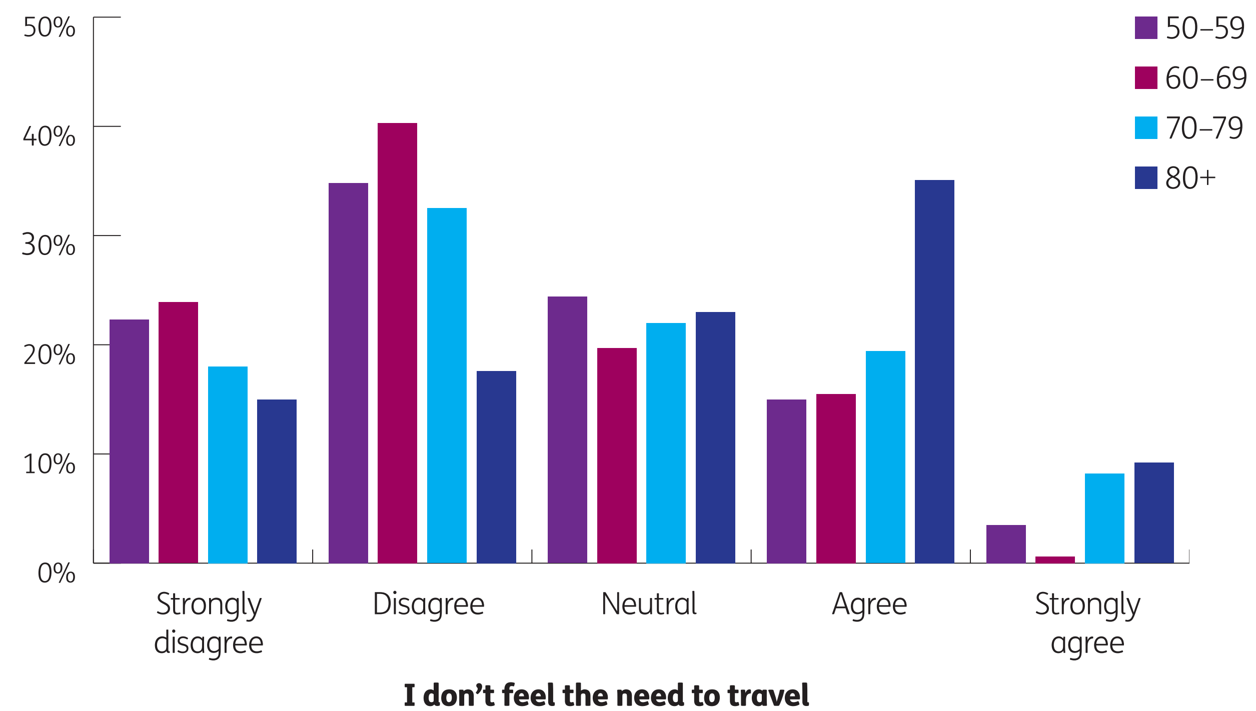
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.12 Loving or hating travelling



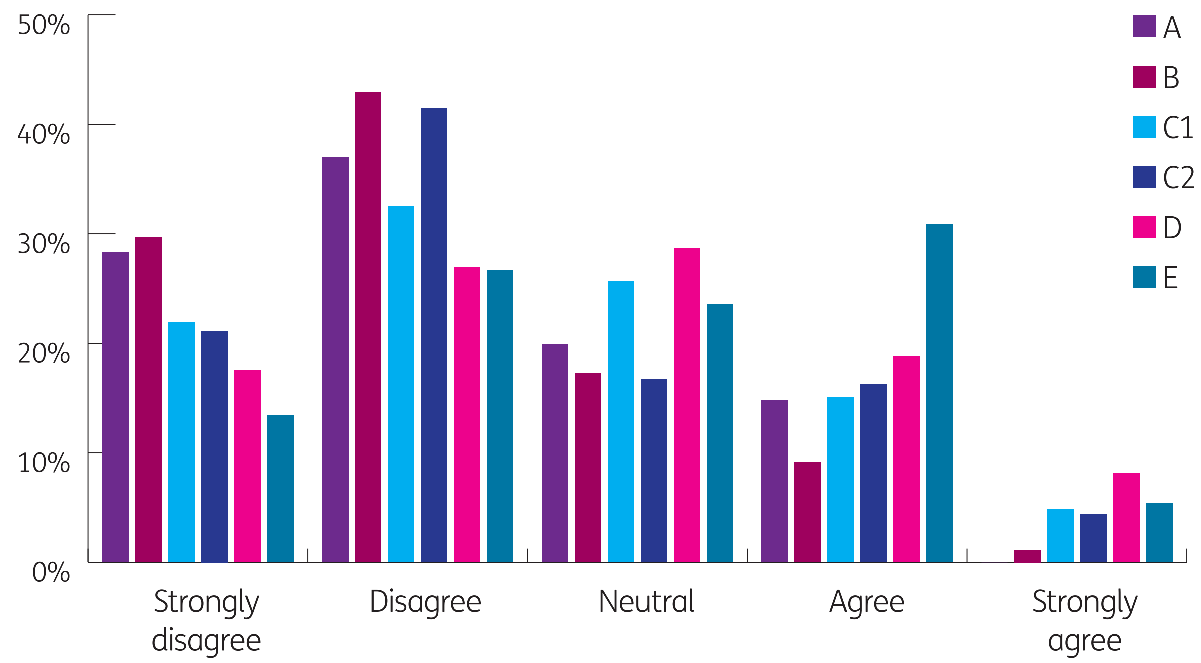
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.13 Travelling among different age groups



Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

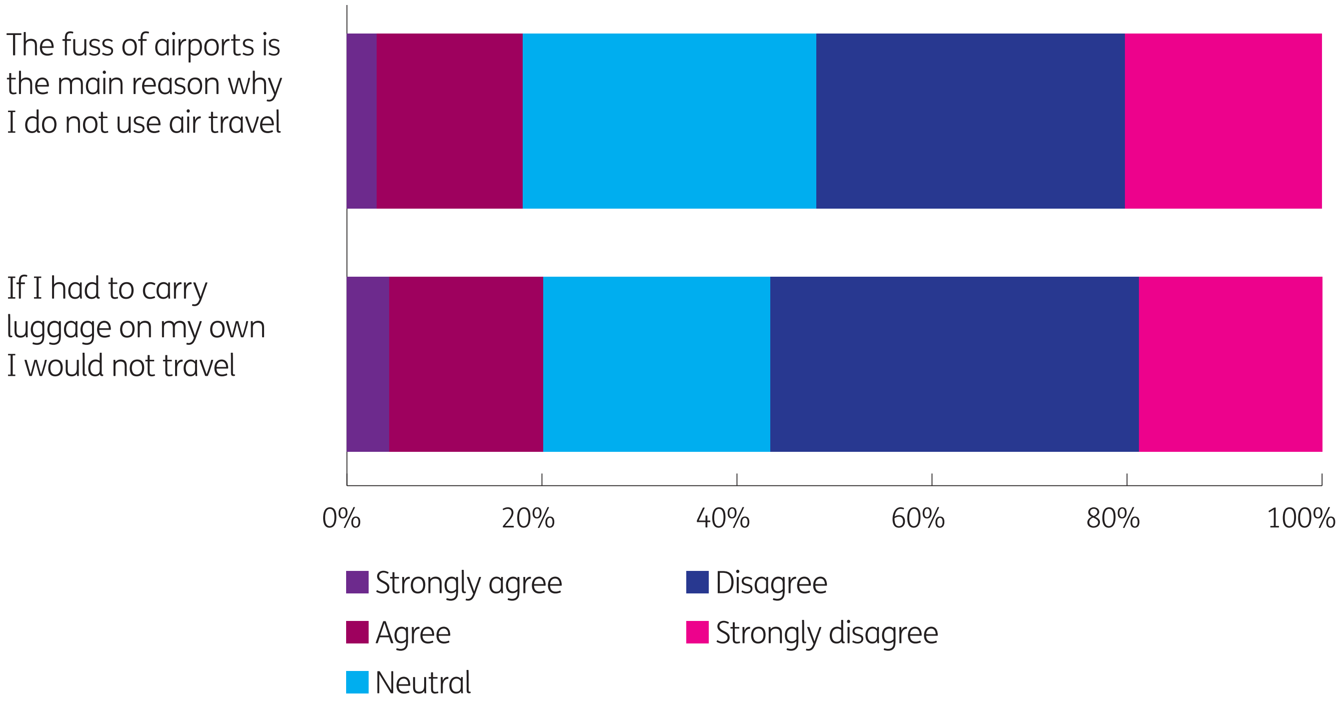
Figure 5.14: Travelling and social class effect



I don't feel the need to travel

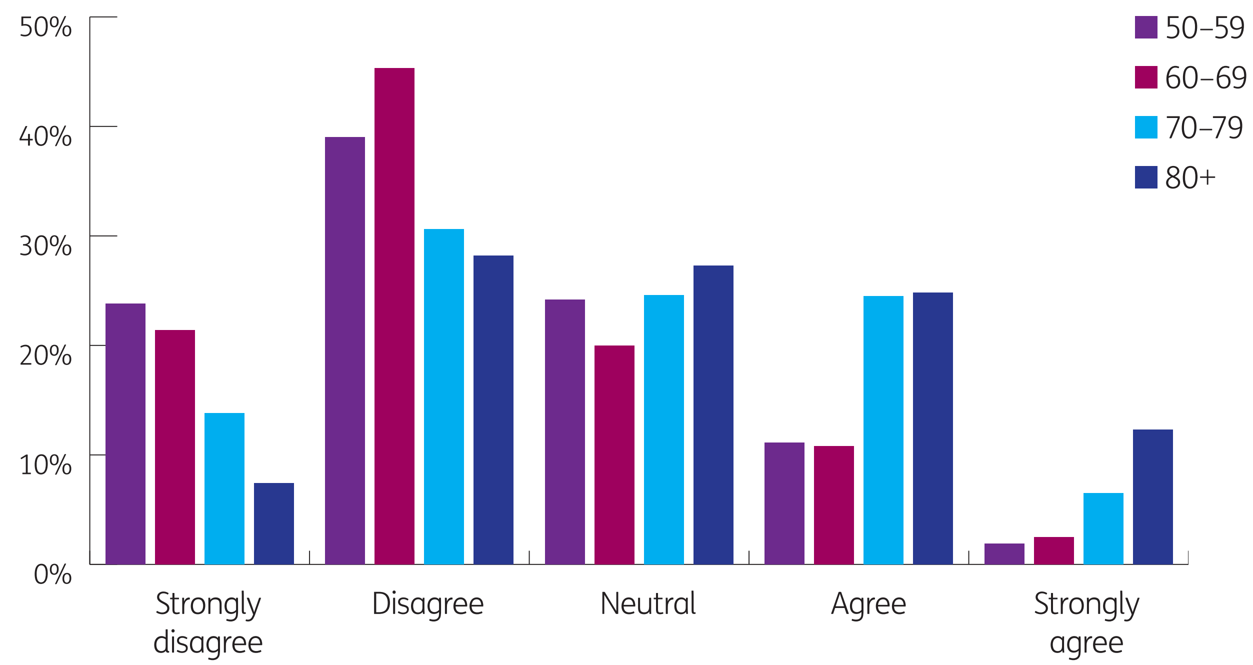
Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.15 Airports and luggage problems on holidays



Weighted Base: 490 (excludes refused/not applicable)

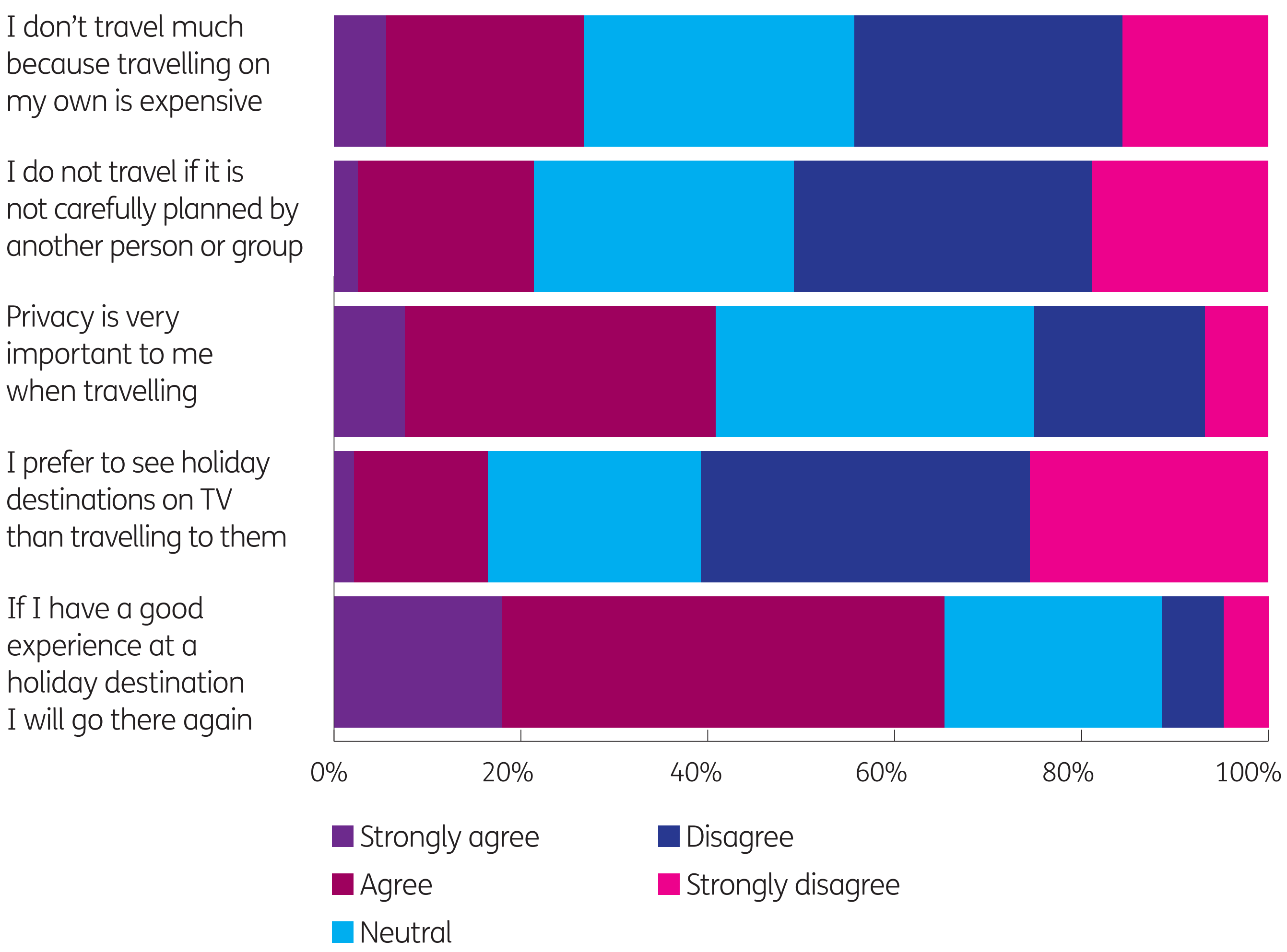
Figure 5.16 Carrying luggage and age group differences



If I had to carry luggage on my own I would not travel

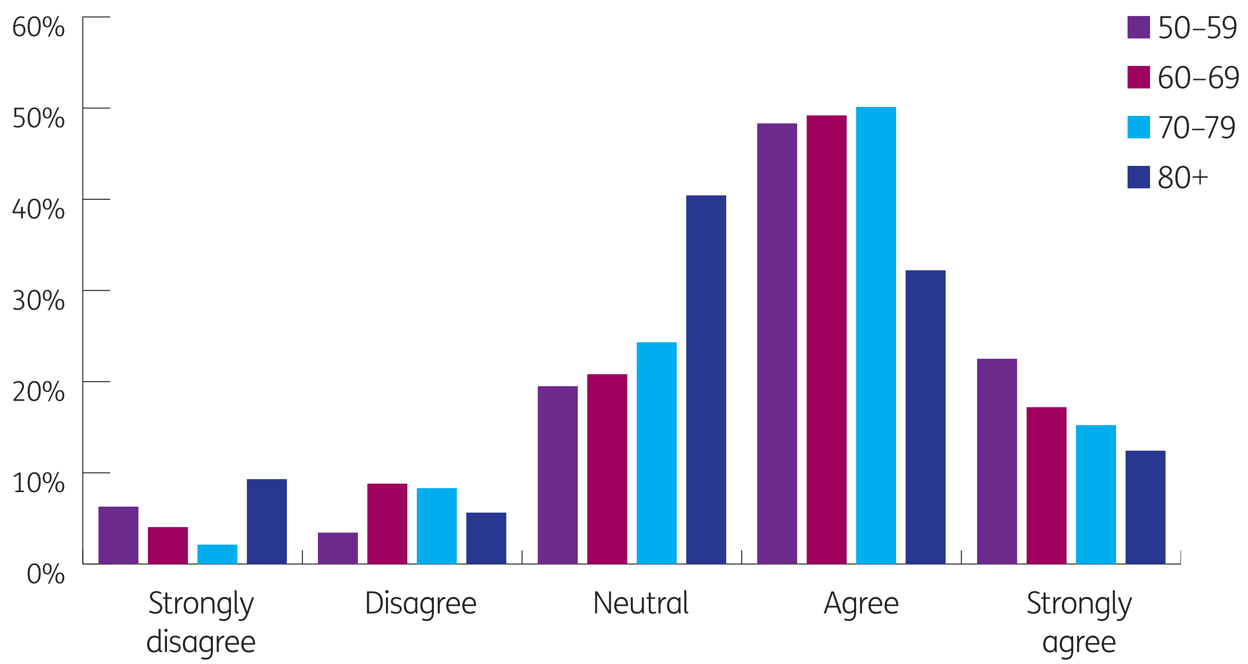
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.17 General holiday preferences



Weighted Base: 530 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.18 Loyalty to a holiday destination and age group differences



If I have a good experience at a holiday destination I will go there again

Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

5.9.4 Sports

Over 40 per cent of respondents mentioned that going to a sports centre is too much hassle. At the same time, one in three participants would like to do more physical exercise (see Figure 5.19).

5.9.5 Leisure time

Two-thirds of participants mentioned that they have changed their leisure activities quite a lot since they were younger. Over half of the sample agreed that they consider most of their time as leisure time. Respondents who said that they prefer spending their free time doing relaxing and quiet activities represent two-thirds of the sample (see Figure 5.20).

'Getting a new and different experience', 'enjoying nature' and 'visiting a friend or a relative' are the top reasons for travelling.

5.10 Reasons for travelling

A list of the main reasons for travelling was given to the participants and they told us how much they agree or disagree with each of them (see Figure 5.21).

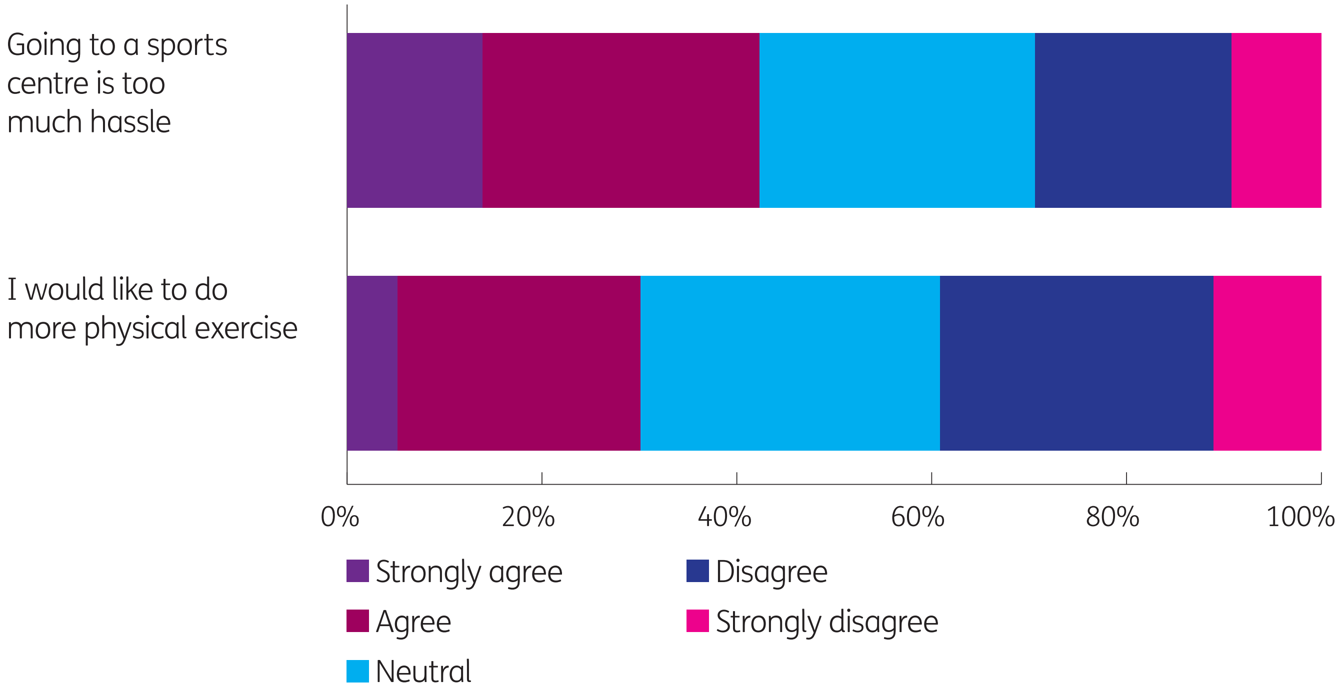
'Getting a new and different experience', 'enjoying nature' and 'visiting a friend or a relative' are the top reasons for travelling. 'Enjoying the company of friends' and 'learning new things and enriching my life' are the fourth and fifth most popular reasons for travelling among the sample. The least prevalent reasons for travelling include 'keeping up with the travelling that others do', 'doing a sport I enjoy' and 'helping me to understand who I am and what life means'.

Reasons for travelling are quite diverse among participants, as ten of the reasons on the list were agreed by at least 60 per cent of the respondents.

5.11 Use of special offers when booking holidays

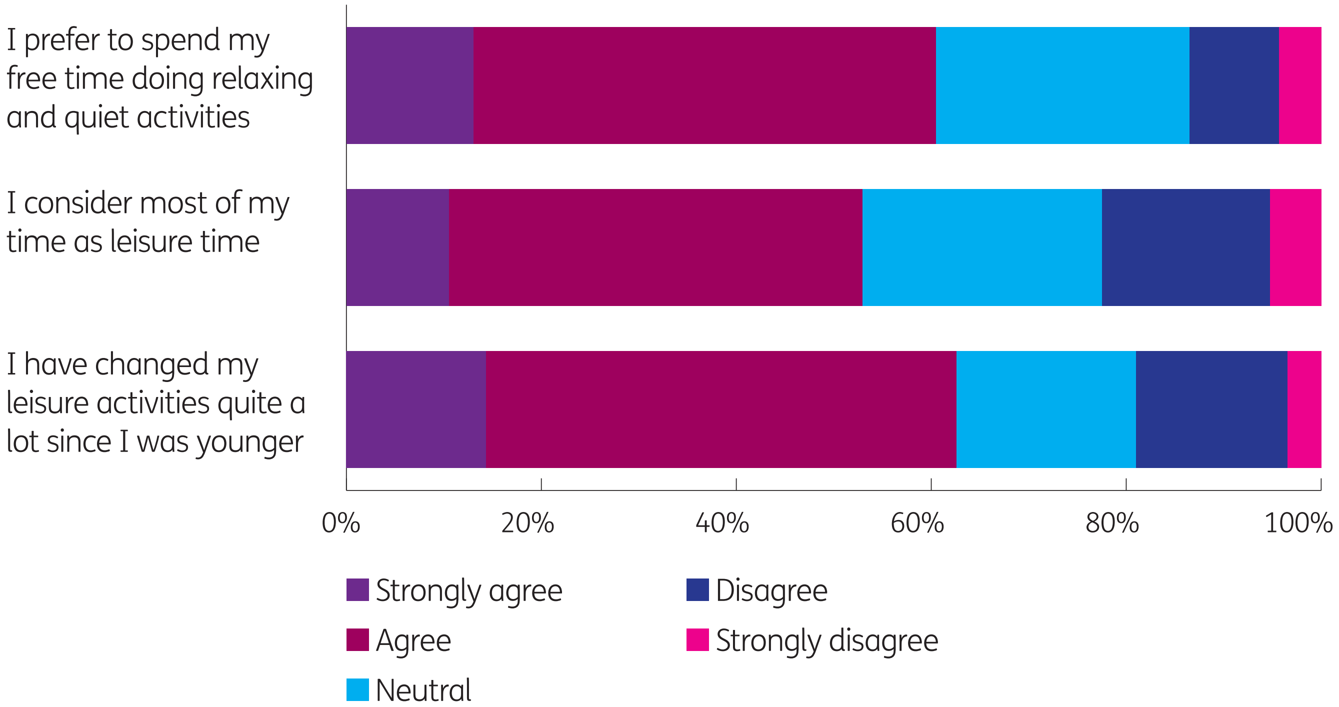
From a list of possible special offers to be used when booking a holiday, 75 per cent of participants mentioned that they do not use any of them. From the offers used, in-store offers are used by over 7 per cent of respondents. The least popular are the offers though cold calls to their landline and mobile phones (see Table 5.6).

Figure 5.19 Physical exercise and gyms



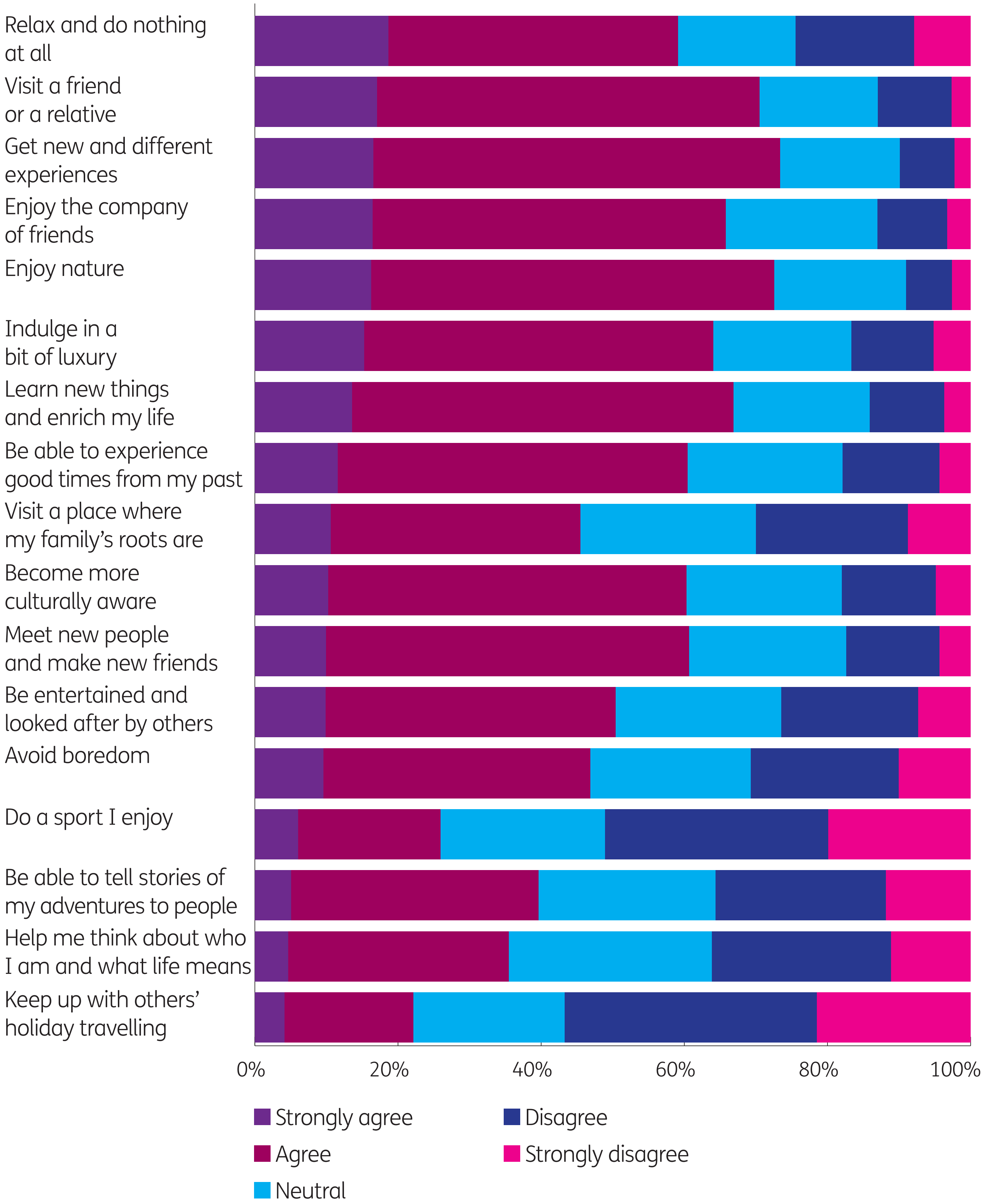
Weighted Base: 490 (excludes refused/not applicable)

Figure 5.20 Preferences for leisure time



Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Figure 5.21: 'I travel to...'



Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)

Table 5.6 Use of special offers when booking holidays

Special offers	Per cent*
Vouchers from newspapers or magazines	**5.7**
Vouchers from the internet	**3.8**
Vouchers received through the post	**3.0**
Vouchers sent to my mobile phone	**0.3**
In-store offers	**7.7**
Offers advertised on TV	**2.7**
Loyalty cards	**5.1**
Special offers through cold calls to my landline	**0.3**
None – I don't use any of these	**75.6**
Don't know	**5.6**

Weighted Base: 490 (excludes not applicable)
*Respondents could select more than one option

6 Conclusions

6 Conclusions

This report depicts the life and preferences of ageing consumers in the UK. While some conclusions are offered below, the data is so rich that attempting to reach final and conclusive insights on all the areas that this survey covered is impractical. So we summarise below the top-level observations with the intent to further develop sector-specific insights in collaboration with other interested partners.

6.1 Significant demographic attributes

Across the findings, some of the demographic attributes show an effect on survey responses. Social class, for instance, has been one of the most important demographic attributes to diversify the responses. It affects responses such as mobile phone ownership, attitudes towards opportunities, use of credit cards or being active in the community.

Age group, specifically being in the oldest group, affects some of their behaviours and preferences, such as independence in buying and using technology products, price sensitivity, and problems with choice and variety or even loyalty. Gender appears to be influential in respondents' answers in a number of items such as independence, relationships with technology and attitudes towards shopping.

6.2 Service attributes

Across product categories, certain aspects of customer service proved to be very important. Touching and feeling the products prior to purchase, the availability of staff to help and demonstrate the use of a product, free delivery, after-sales service, and facilities such as seating and toilets in the retail environment are all important to older shoppers.

6.3 Product attributes

Certain characteristics of the product itself can affect ageing consumers' purchase decisions. A product having an appropriate number of features (especially in technology), labelling and information on packs, the packaging design and instruction manuals can be very influential in their decision and also in their experience with the product.

6.4 Consumer loyalty

Loyalty among ageing consumers can be affected for several different reasons. For instance a good experience at a holiday destination can increase loyalty dramatically. At the same time, extra services such as getting free delivery from a store would influence customers to switch stores.

Price seems still to be a strong element when considering repeat purchases. Poor customer service is a very influential motive for them to switch the store they are shopping from.

6.5 Information sources prior to purchase

Across product categories, ageing consumers seek information by finding out more about products and services in store, browsing the internet and through the recommendations of friends and family.

6.6 Media fruition and advertisement

The majority of the participants mentioned that they watch TV every day. A slightly lower yet considerable proportion of the sample listens to the radio on a regular basis. However, the data regarding the information sources used prior to purchase reveals that product advertisement on the television or radio is one of the least considered sources of product information.

6.7 Shopping and social interaction

The importance of the social aspect of shopping is highlighted in the report. The majority of participants would visit their high street more often if it offered more opportunities for social interaction. With the current state of the high street, shopping is enjoyable for a considerably smaller proportion of the sample and half of the respondents would go shopping only if they have to.

6.8 Use of technology

While the majority of the sample owns a mobile phone, their usage is limited to the two basic functions: phone calls and texts. From all other applications that are available on most handsets, taking a photo is the only extra function that is occasionally used. However, extra features could potentially be used by 40 per cent of the sample if they are taught how to use them. Use of the internet is also very focused on emails as a regular activity. Although it is also used for searching for information, this is a less frequent activity. The fact that fewer than half of the participants believe that the internet saves them time and money could be one of the reasons.

The majority of participants would visit their high street more often if it offered more opportunities for social interaction.

7 Methodology and sample

7 Methodology and sample

This section describes the methodology used to undertake the research and gives a detailed description of the studied sample.

7.1 Methodology

The methodology applied in this research consisted of three phases.

First, the review of the gerontology and marketing literature, followed by the review of the expenditure and spending statistics, led us to identify the most important lifestyle and behavioural characteristics of older consumers. The spending and lifestyle statistics (Age UK and International Longitudinal Centre, 2010; Ofcom, 2010) revealed the industry sectors across which older consumers spend the most or have most concerns. The industry sectors covered technology and communication, shopping and general retail, and leisure and travel. In the interest of brevity, only few key references have been reported. Readers are invited to to get in touch with Engage Business Network for more details.

The second phase included the collection of qualitative data through focus groups. Nine focus groups were conducted in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This qualitative phase was designed to get a first-hand view of older consumers' experience and expectation of the three industry sectors. This qualitative research stage also aimed to inform the design of the third phase of the survey, ensuring that it used the correct terminology and language. The focus groups consulted a total of 73 participants aged 50 and above.

Groups comprised an average of eight participants and the sessions lasted for approximately 90 minutes. With the participants' consent, all discussions were voice recorded and transcribed. The analyses of the transcripts allowed the identification of themes that, when cross-checked with the literature, led to the generation of the survey questions, specifically in the industry sector-specific part.

The third phase involved doing a survey. The questionnaire was split into two sections: (1) the lifestyle and psychographics and (2) industry sector-specific consumer behaviour in the three identified sectors (technology and communication, retail and supermarket, travel and leisure). The wording and structure of the survey were assessed and confirmed with Age UK. The survey was then administered in a pilot to four participants aged 50 and over. This provided useful feedback on the suitability of the questions, wording and length of the survey. The amendments made following the pilot feedback included the identification of missing response options, changes of wording or tone of questions, and elimination of duplicates. Subsequently, the survey was distributed by TNS International's professional market researchers visiting the participants in their homes and completing the survey with their responses.

The survey was distributed through three waves to ensure as representative a sample as possible and fulfilment of the quotas. As Table 7.1 shows, each of the three sector-specific sections of the survey was completed by approximately one-third of the overall sample, with the exception of one section, the life of an older person, which was completed by all respondents.

7.2 Sample

This section describes the sample characteristics on the weighted and unweighted data. Weighting has been applied in order to meet the full representation of the population in terms of age group, gender, geographic location and socio-economic class within each sub-sample. The analyses and the data presented in this report are based on the weighted data.

The sample for this research includes 1,505 individuals above the age of 50. The sample was chosen to approximately represent the ageing population in the UK. The distribution of the weighted and unweighted sample in terms of age group and gender, working status, socio-economic class, education, government regions and marital status is discussed below.

7.2.1 Age group and gender

The gender and age distribution of the survey respondents is presented in Figures 7.1 and 7.2 respectively. The number of female respondents was slightly higher than male respondents. Younger participants also made up a bigger proportion of the sample.

7.2.2 Working status

Respondents have a variety of working status. As expected, the majority are retired. Nearly 20 per cent of the sample are in full-time employment. (In Figure 7.3, F/T and P/T refer to full-time and part-time employment respectively.)

7.2.3 Socio-economic class

Social grading is determined by the chief income earner's occupation and has six categories. For a retired individual, the social grade is determined by their last occupation (see Figure 7.4).

The six grades are:

- A – Professionals such as doctors, solicitors, fully qualified people with a high degree of responsibility
- B – Very responsible jobs such as lecturers, qualified scientists, police inspectors, bank managers, etc.
- C1 – All other occupations that are non-manual, nurses, salespersons, technicians
- C2 – Skilled manual workers and craftspeople
- D – Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers such as labourers, postal workers
- E – People on the lowest subsistence, including pensioners. This includes pensioners who have no other source of income.

In another classification, A, B and C1 are categorised as 'middle class' and C2, D and E are grouped as 'working class'.

7.2.4 Education

Respondents were also asked about their highest education level (see Figure 7.5). Over 30 per cent of the sample have GCSEs or equivalent, with over 10 per cent having no formal education. Nearly 20 per cent of the sample have a degree or higher education qualification.

7.2.5 Region

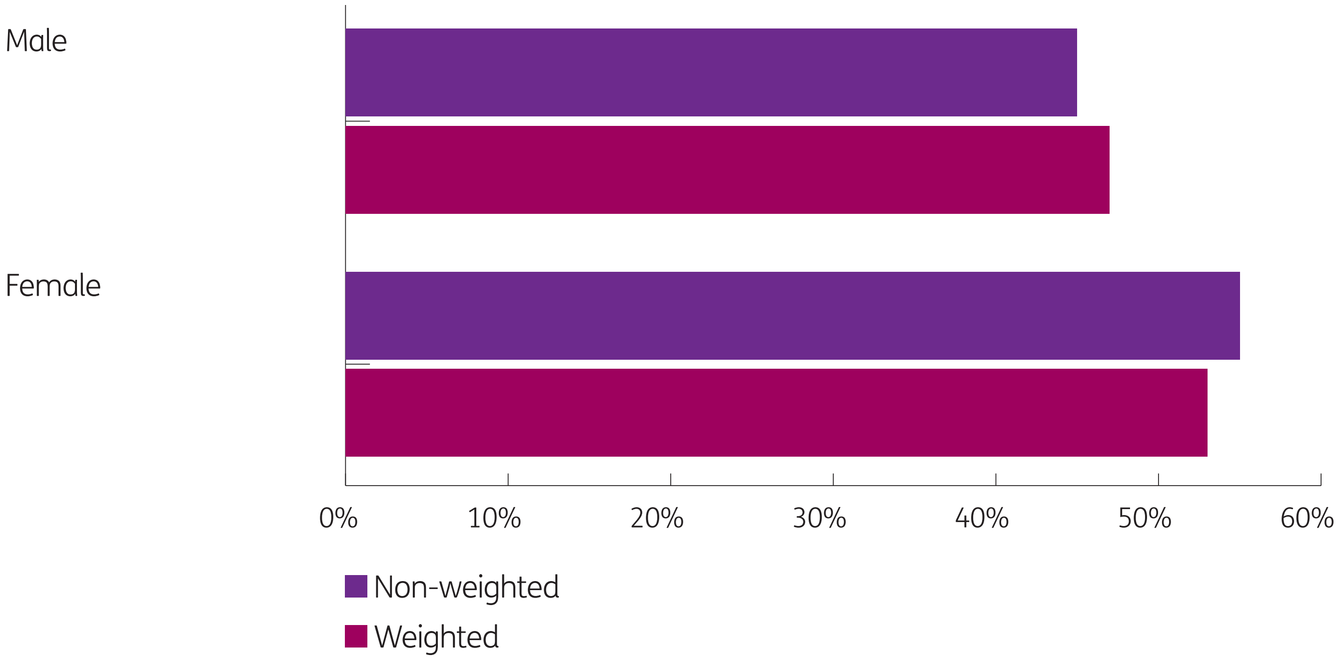
Geographic locations of the participants indicate the distribution of the ageing population in the UK. Over 70 per cent of respondents reside in urban areas (see Figures 7.6 and 7.7).

7.2.6 Marital status and number of people in the household

Over 55 per cent of the respondents were married, over 10 per cent were single and nearly 35 per cent were separated, widowed or divorced (see Figure 7.8).

The majority of our sample formed a two-person household. At the same time, one-third of the sample under study are living alone (see Table 7.2).

Figure 7.1 Weighted and unweighted gender profiles

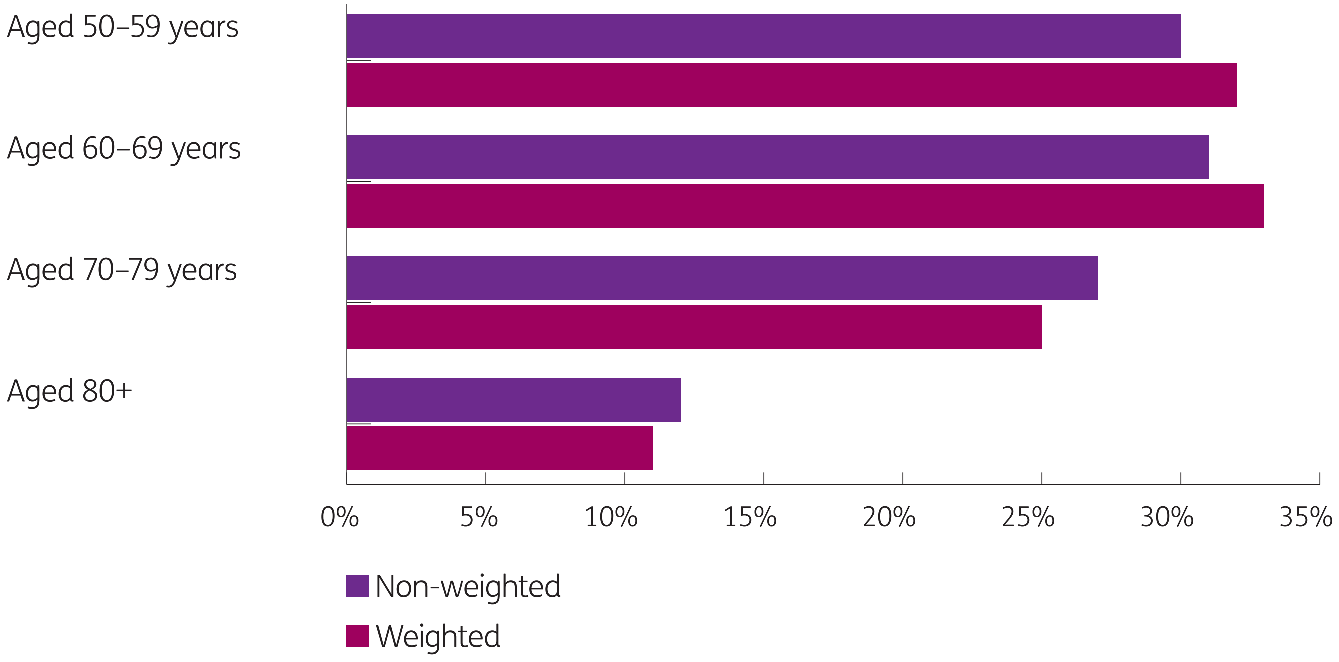


Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)

Table 7.1 Survey sections and sample size

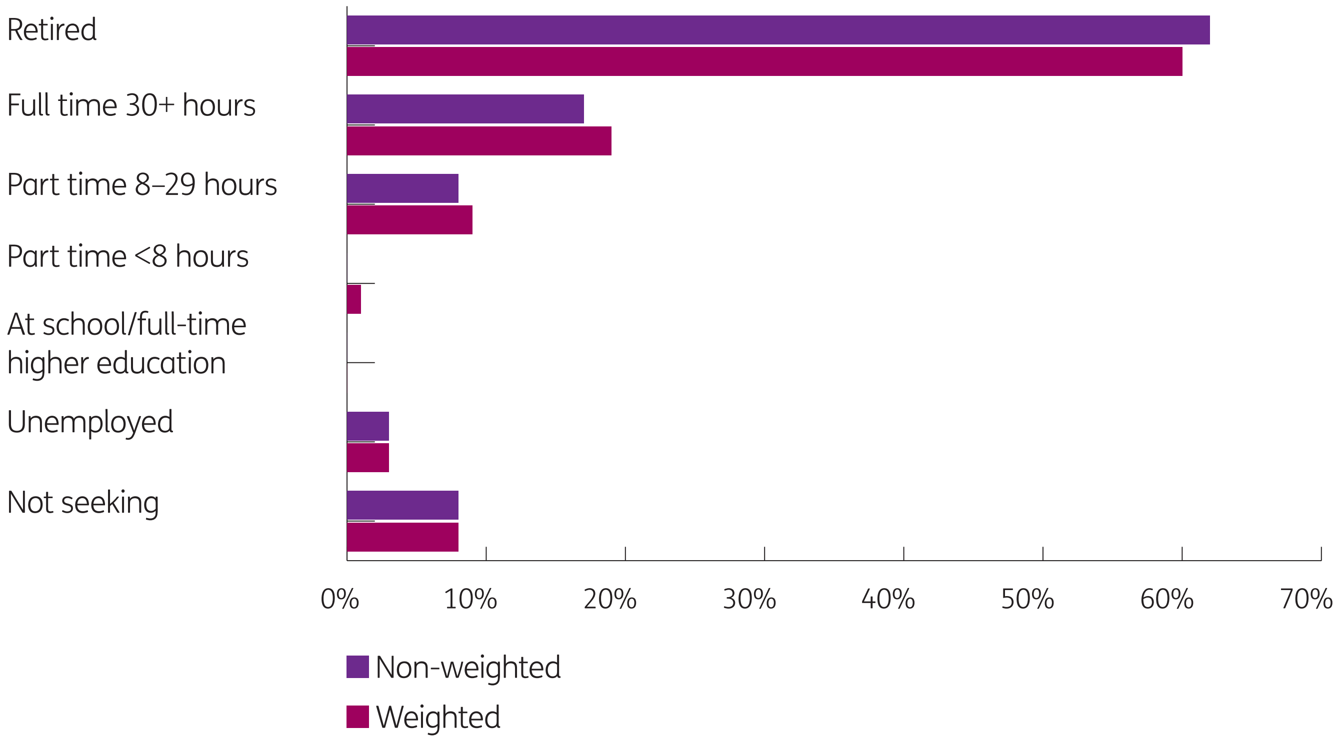
Survey sections	Number of respondents
1 Life as an older person	**1505**
2 Technology and communication sector	**485**
3 General retail and supermarket sector	**530**
4 Leisure and travel sector	**490**
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)	

Figure 7.2 Weighted and unweighted age profiles



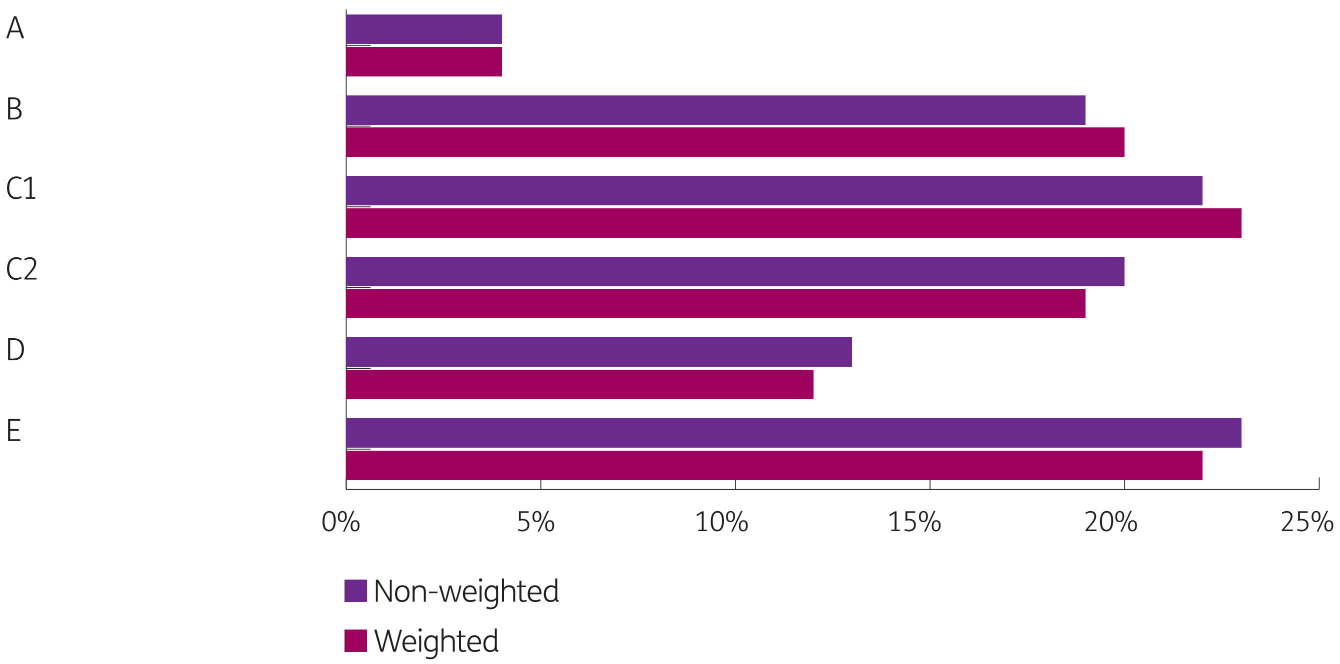
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)

Figure 7.3 Weighted and unweighted working status profile



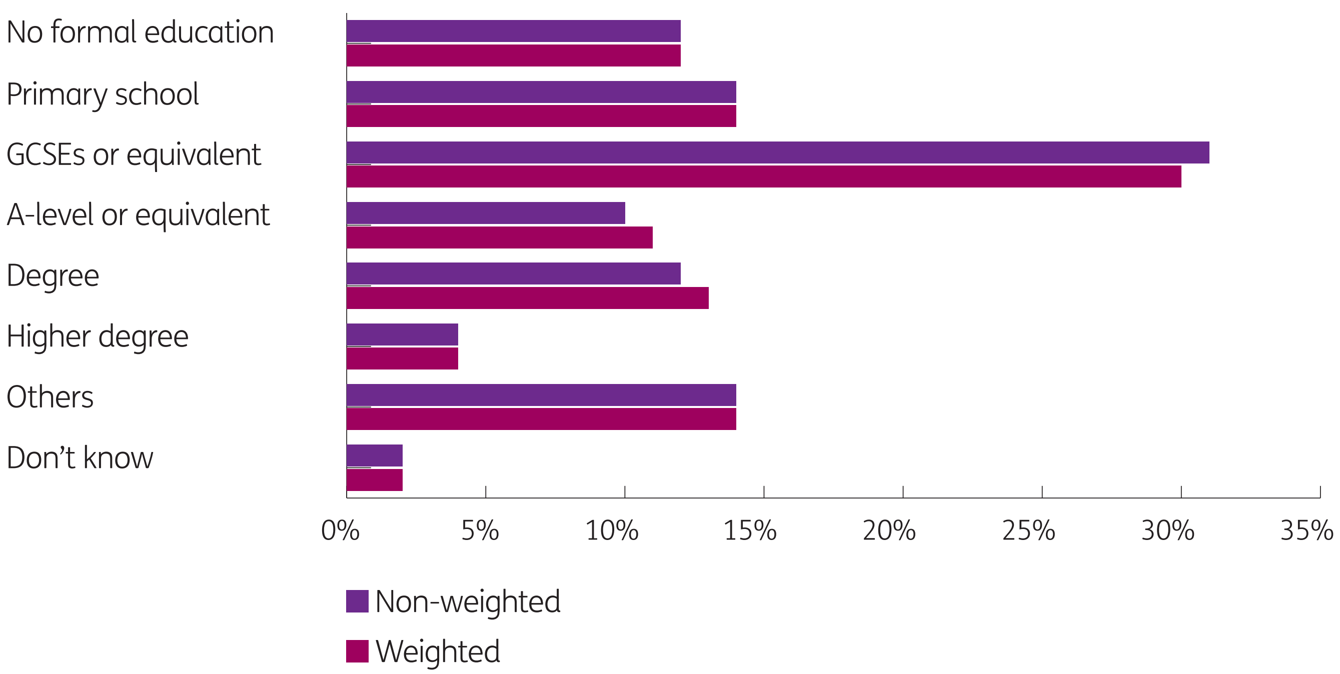
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)

Figure 7.4 Weighted and unweighted socio-economic class profile



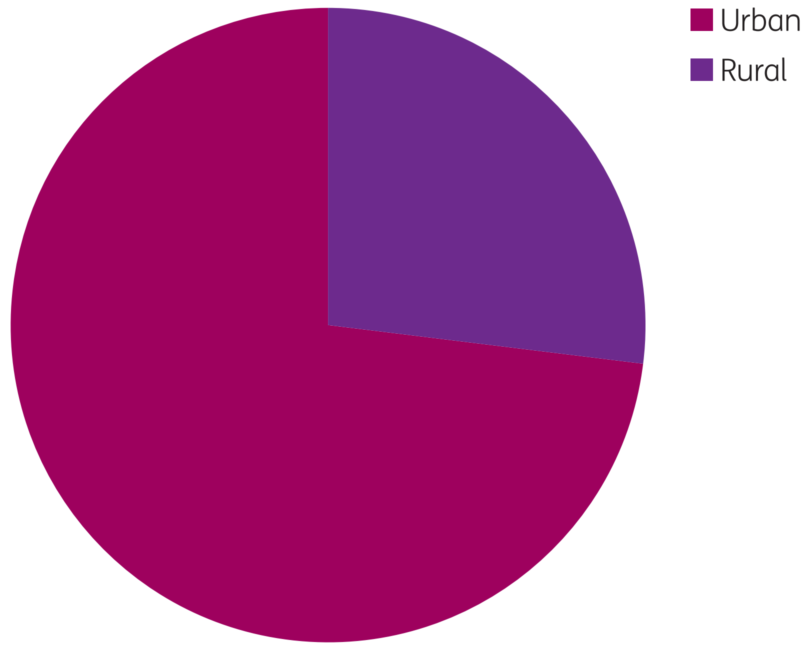
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)

Figure 7.5 Weighted and unweighted education profile



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)

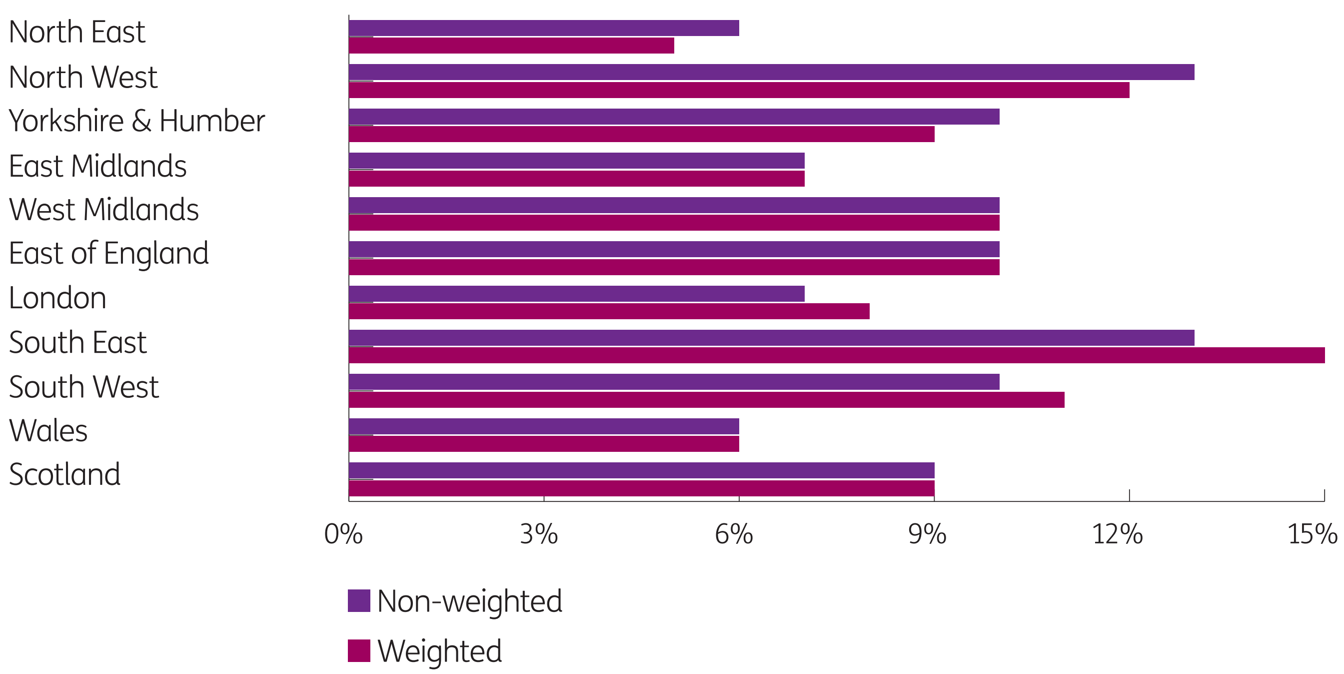
Figure 7.6 Distribution of urban and rural residence of the sample



Type of area

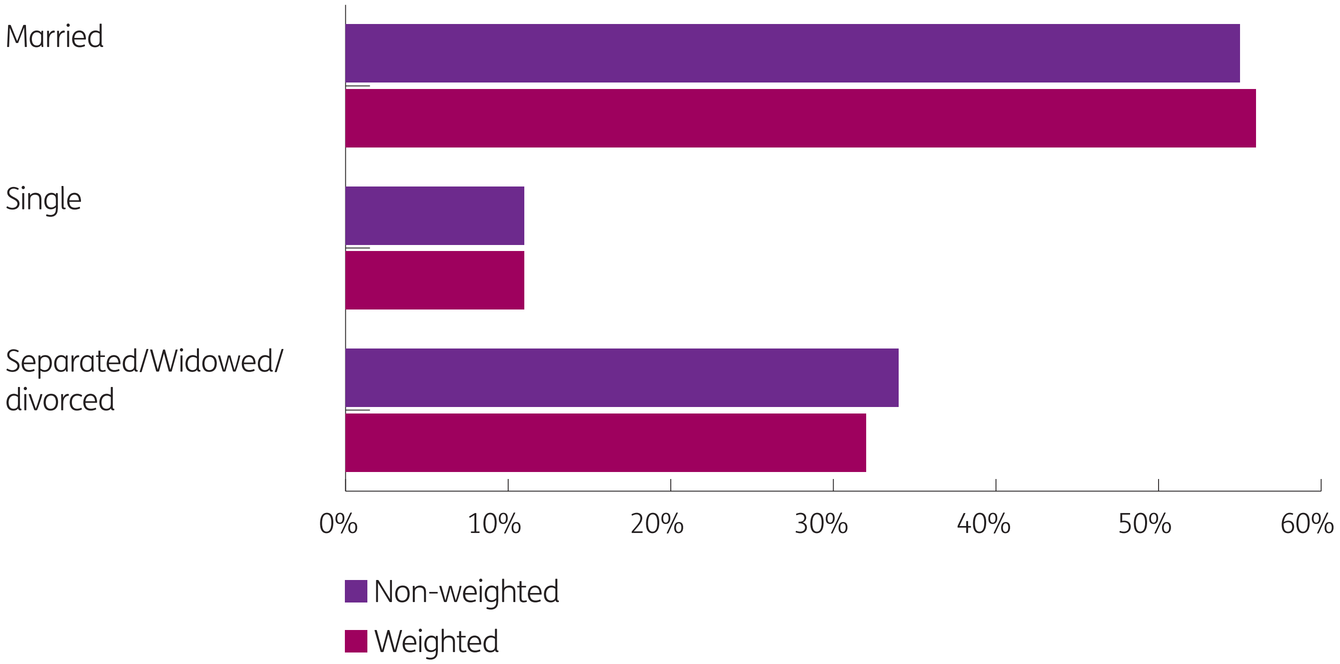
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)

Figure 7.7 Weighted and unweighted geographic location profile



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)

Figure 7.8 Weighted and unweighted marital status profile



Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)

Table 7.2 Number of people in the household profiles

Number of people in the household	Per cent
1	**35.90**
2	**46.50**
3	**10.0**
4	**5.30**
5	**1.50**
6	**0.60**
7	**0.20**
8	**0.10**
Weighted Base: 1505 (excludes refused)	

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