



# Boomers, Retirees, and the Mature Adult Learner

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## **Boomers, Retirees, and the Mature Adult Learner**

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## Executive Summary

This research highlights the reality that mature adult learners are not a homogeneous cohort. Instead, these learners have unique motivations, goals, and delivery preferences for continuing their education. To underscore this reality, UPCEA developed four unique personas to help illustrate the distinctive qualities of these learners. Institutions that wish to attract these learners will need to adapt their programming and procedures to the preferences of these populations. Overall key findings are listed below.

- The **main motivation** for continuing education among all mature adult learners is **personal growth/enjoyment** (23%), followed by **keeping the mind active** (21%), **increasing knowledge** (17%), and **career/job** (16%).
- Respondents are **more interested in non-career skills** (personal enrichment, technology training, life skills), **than career skills** (job upskilling and career reskilling).
- Among different credentials and offerings, respondents have the **greatest interest in short courses or modules** (84% interested or extremely interested), followed by a **single day seminar** (78%), and **professional certifications** (58%).
- The **most appealing method for the delivery of continuing education is an online format**. Nearly a third (32%) of respondents were extremely interested in a fully online format, compared to face-to-face (11% extremely interested) and hybrid learning (10%).
- Respondents agree that the **cost of a program is the most important factor** (54% extremely important) when considering continuing their education.
- Overall, **mature adult learners** who wish to continue their education tend to prefer **short, flexible, and low-cost** offerings that are engaging and useful in practical settings.

## Overview

### Why Explore the Educational Interests of Boomers, Retirees, and Mature Adult Learners?

A lot of research has been conducted over the last few years to help illustrate the reality that adult learners are far from a homogeneous group. While a significant portion of the research has focused on younger generations, specifically Gen Z and Millennials, less has been conducted on professionals that are in the 50+ age group. Additionally, the Great Resignation has largely been driven by this group that can afford to retire but may not prefer to. Understanding their learning and content needs, content delivery preferences, motivations and unique qualities could help institutions of higher education further refine their portfolio of offerings and marketing strategies.

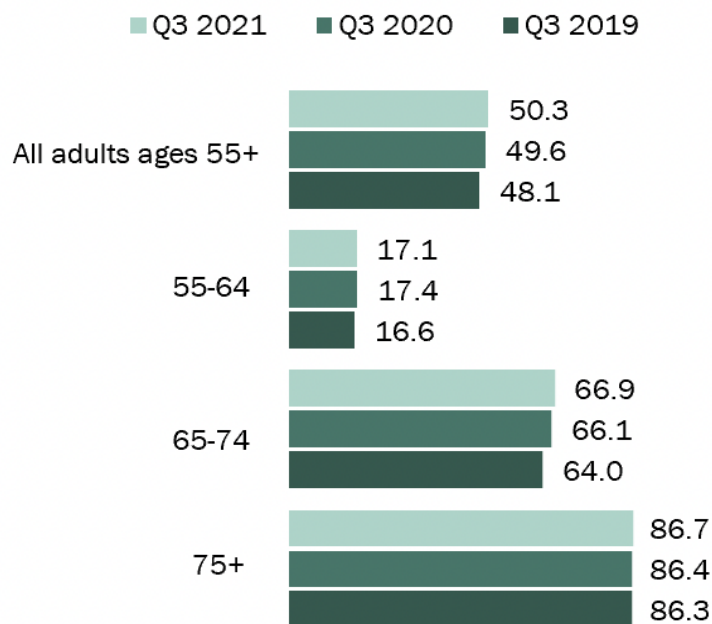
## The Great Resignation

The Great Resignation has been a pivotal moment for many workers, in which over 45 million Americans quit their jobs in 2021 alone, to reconsider their future career paths.<sup>1</sup> Among them, Boomers accounted for a large proportion, many of whom pursued an early retirement. In 2021, Pew Research Center estimated that 50% of all adults aged 55+ were retired, a slight increase from previous years. Seventeen percent of adults aged 55 to 64 were retired, over a third (67%) of 65 to 75-year-olds, and 87% of individuals over 75. Additionally, Pew Research Center data highlights “in the past two years, the ranks of retirees 55 and older have grown by 3.5 million.”<sup>2</sup> It is evident that retirement among the Boomer generation has become increasingly popular, with many retirees leaving the workforce and reconsidering a new life path.

**Figure 1: Retirement Among Boomer Generation, Pew Research Center, 2021**

### Half of older U.S. adults are now retired

*% of older adults who are retired*



Note: “Retired” refers to those not in the labor force due to retirement.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of July, August and September Current Population Survey monthly files (IPUMS).

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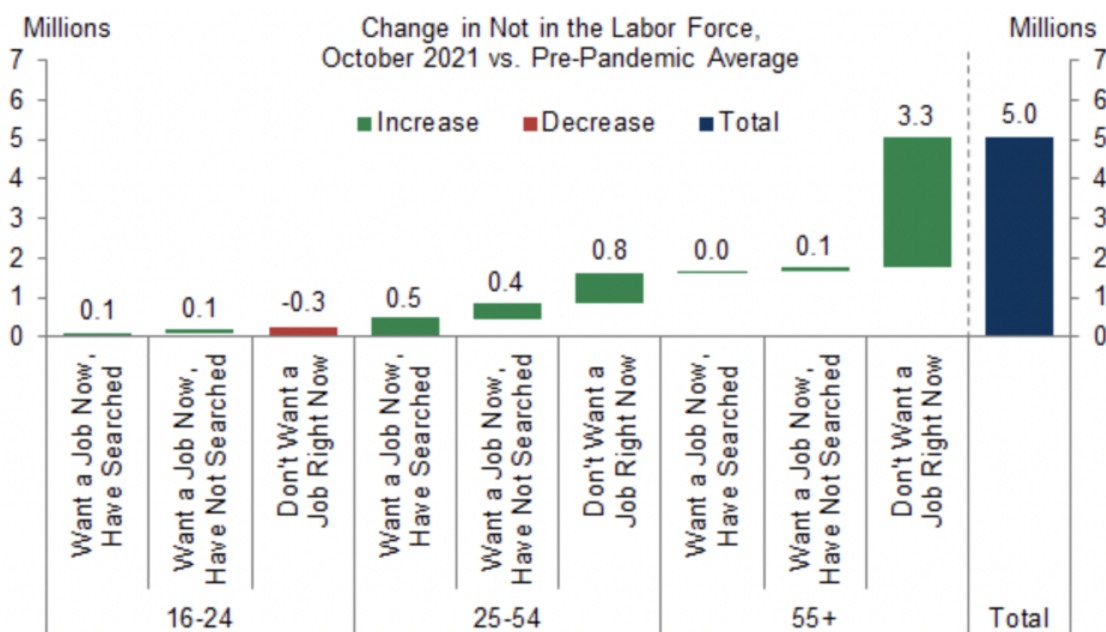
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/11/04/amid-the-pandemic-a-rising-share-of-older-u-s-adults-are-now-retired/#:~:text=In%20regard%20to%20specific%20age,claim%20Social%20Security\)%20in%202008](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/11/04/amid-the-pandemic-a-rising-share-of-older-u-s-adults-are-now-retired/#:~:text=In%20regard%20to%20specific%20age,claim%20Social%20Security)%20in%202008)

## Boomers Exiting the Workforce

Although retirement rates are increasing across the U.S., with more people retiring earlier in life, many Boomer retirees are still interested in dedicating their time to something purposeful, whether that be learning new skills, continuing their education, or pursuing other endeavors. Leaving the workforce does not equate with stagnation, but rather, it allows retirees to allocate more time to new endeavors. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), individuals aged 55+ who don't want a job account for a large majority of the people who have exited the workforce since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Among the 5 million individuals who quit their jobs in October 2021, 3.3 million are older workers who don't want to work.

**Figure 2: Labor Force Exits Since the Start of the Pandemic, BLS, 2021**



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

In a survey conducted by the Harris Poll for Express Employment Professionals, results indicated “a vast majority of respondents expressed interest in semi retirement, where they could either work a flexible schedule or reduced hours or consult- but only one in five of their employers offered such an option.”<sup>4</sup> Evidently, it's not that Boomers are losing their tenacity for professional development, but rather, are seeking work-life balance. In fact, survey results from UPCEA's BoomerLearners, Retirees, and the Mature Adult Learner study indicated that for respondents over 65, 38% disagree or strongly disagree that they would prefer retirement if they could fiscally afford it.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gspublishing.com/content/research/en/reports/2021/11/12/4f72d573-c573-4c4b-8812-1d32ce3b973e.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/18/great-resignation-is-also-great-retirement-baby-boomers-thats-problem/>

## **Boomer, Retiree, and the Mature Adult Learner Education Preferences**

While some Boomers are choosing to reenter the workforce after retirement, many are seeking alternative forms of personal and professional development. In UPCEA's BoomerLearners, Retirees, and the Mature Adult Learners survey, participants were asked in which categories they had an interest when given a list of skills, training, and educational topics. Over half (56%) said personal enrichment, 46% technology training, and 39% life skills. For the most part, respondents were more interested in non-career skills (personal enrichment and life skills), than career skills (job upskilling and career upskilling). In fact, in an article published by Central Connecticut State University in 2016, it was revealed that "few Baby Boomers go back to college in the traditional sense- to earn a degree- most are taking continuing education courses on a more informal basis. Turns out, Baby Boomers aren't interested in letting their brains stagnate... they have a great deal of curiosity about the world and everything in it."<sup>5</sup>

## **BoomerLearners, Retirees, and the Mature Adult Learner Study, 2022**

### **Study Purpose**

UPCEA conducted research to understand Boomer, retiree, and mature adult learners' content needs, content delivery preferences, motivations, and unique qualities to help institutions of higher education further refine their portfolio of offerings and marketing strategies.

### **Survey Methodology**

UPCEA and MindEdge partnered to identify the preferences and motivations in continuing education among boomers, retirees, and mature adult learners. The results of this study focus on their content delivery preferences, motivations, and unique qualities to help institutions of higher education further refine their portfolio of offerings and marketing strategies. An internet panel was used for the study and targeted individuals 50 years or older that were at least somewhat interested in continuing their education. In total, 997 individuals participated in the study, of which 546 completed the entire survey. The survey took place February 23 and February 24, 2022. The research was underwritten by MindEdge, a global education and training content provider.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ce.ccsu.edu/why-so-many-baby-boomers-are-heading-back-to-the-classroom/>

## Qualifying Questions and Demographics

Figure 1 illustrates the age demographic of respondents who participated in the survey. Of the initial 997 respondents, 98% are at least 50 years or older. Those under 50 were terminated from the study.

**Figure 1: Age Group (n=997)**

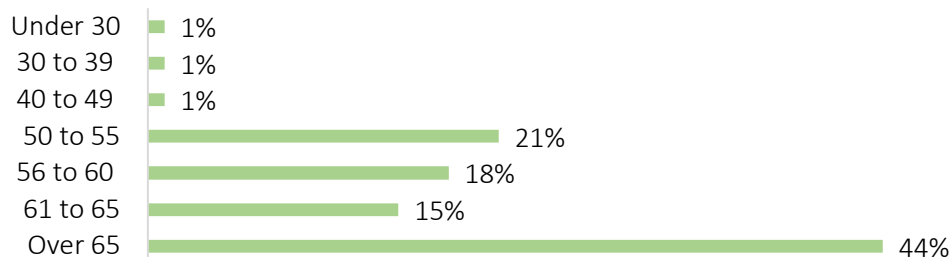


Figure 2 depicts the highest level of education respondents have completed to date. Over a quarter (26%) have completed a bachelor's degree, 15% an associate's or technical degree, 20% completed some college, but no degree, and 23% a high school diploma or GED.

**Figure 2: Highest Level of Education Completed (n=966)**

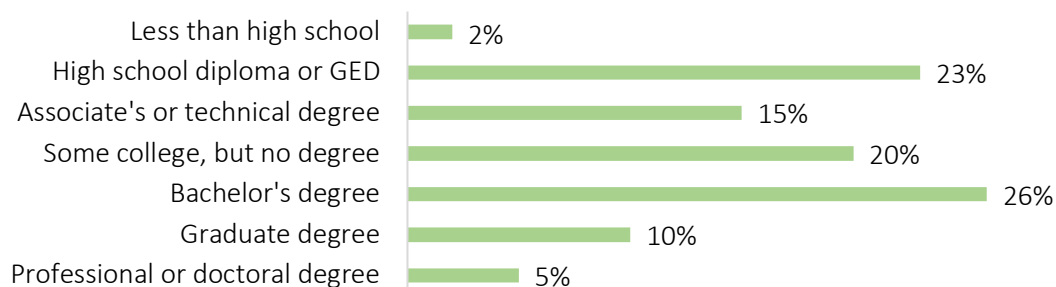


Figure 3 shows respondents' current employment status. Over half (53%) of respondents are retired, 22% are employed full-time, 10% employed part-time and 11% unemployed and not seeking employment.

**Figure 3: Employment Status (n=966)**

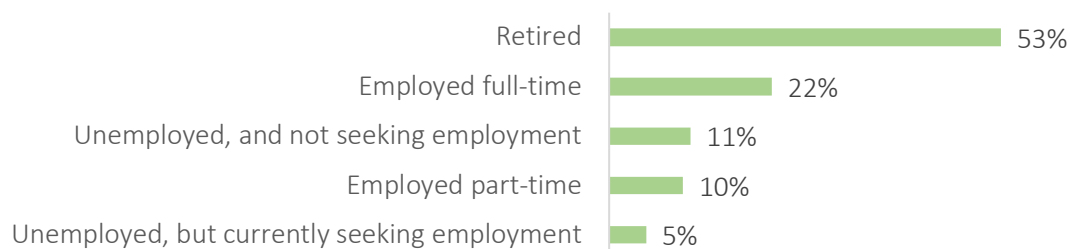


Figure 4 illustrates the year of retirement among retired respondents. In total, 46% retired before 2013 and 14% have retired since the start of the pandemic.

**Figure 4: Year of Retirement (n=506)**

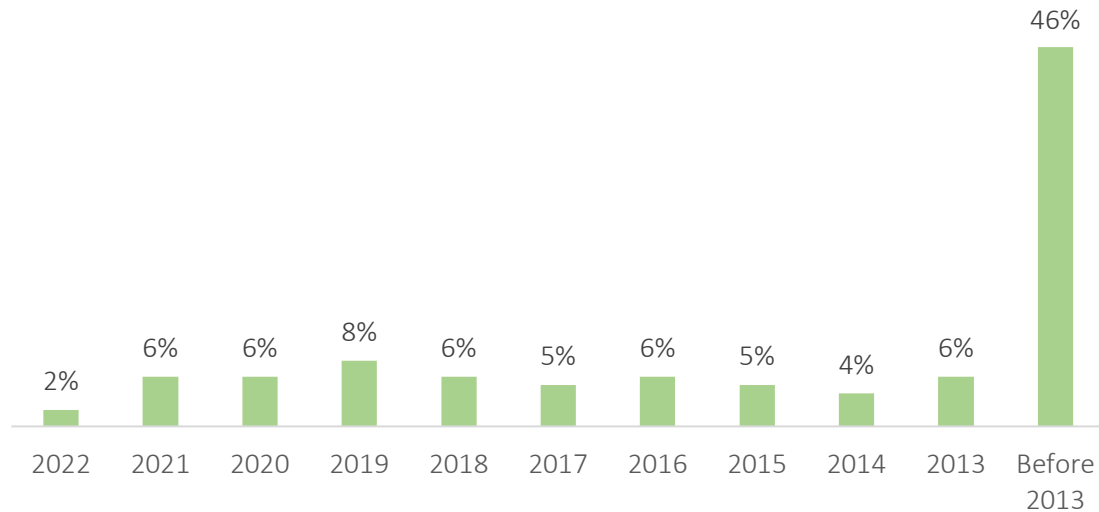


Figure 5 highlights respondents' year of retirement by their age group. Among respondents who retired before 2013, 80% are over 65 years old. Among those who retired in 2022, 83% are between 61 to 65. In 2021, 48% of respondents who retired were over 65 and 36% 61 to 65.

**Figure 5: Year of Retirement by Age Group**

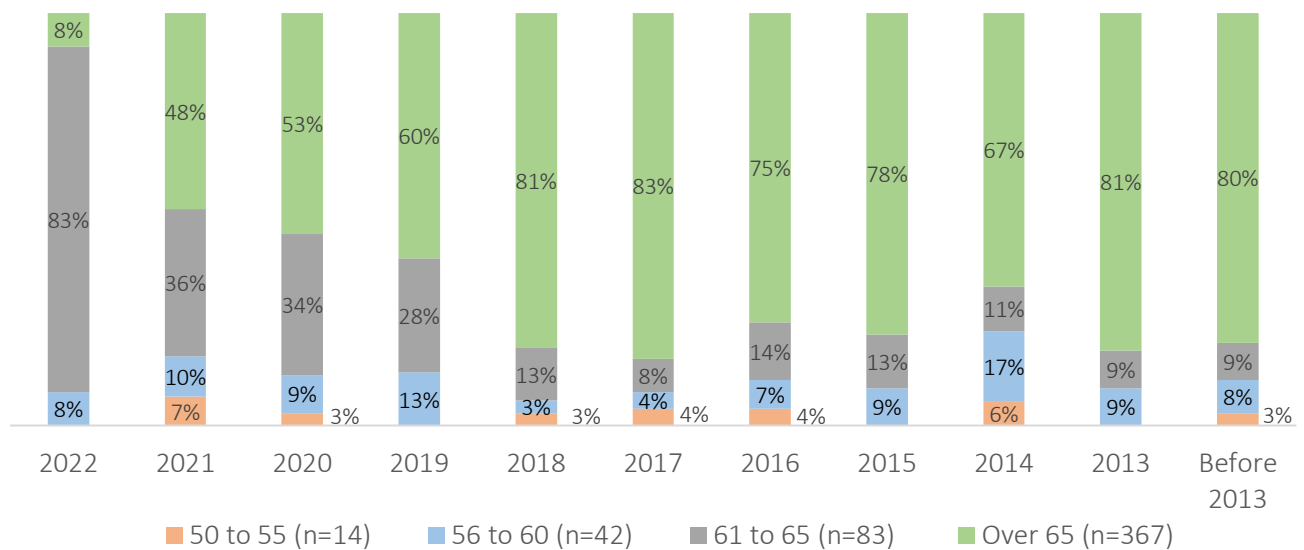




Figure 6 shows respondents' industries of employment. Retail & consumer durables (16%) is the most common industry of employment for respondents, followed by education (13%), healthcare & pharmaceuticals and manufacturing, both 9%.

**Figure 6: Industry of Employment (n=296)**

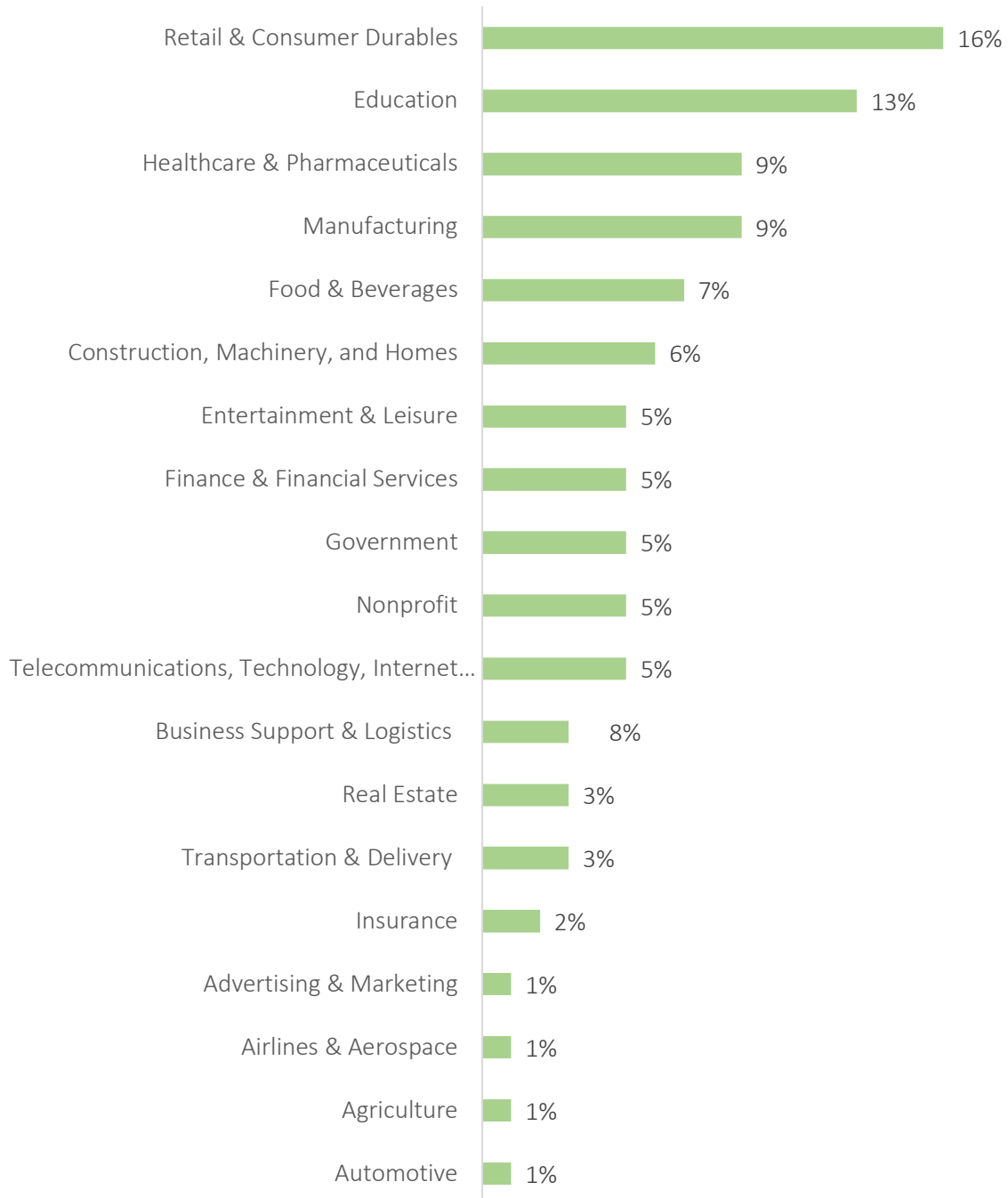


Figure 7 shows respondents' current job titles. The most common job titles of employed respondents are manager/supervisor (10%), teacher/professor (6%), owner (6%), and IT/software developer (6%). Job titles that were mentioned less than five times were included in the "Other" category and included pharmacy technician, physician, nurse, and legal assistant, among others.

**Figure 7: Job Title (n=296)**

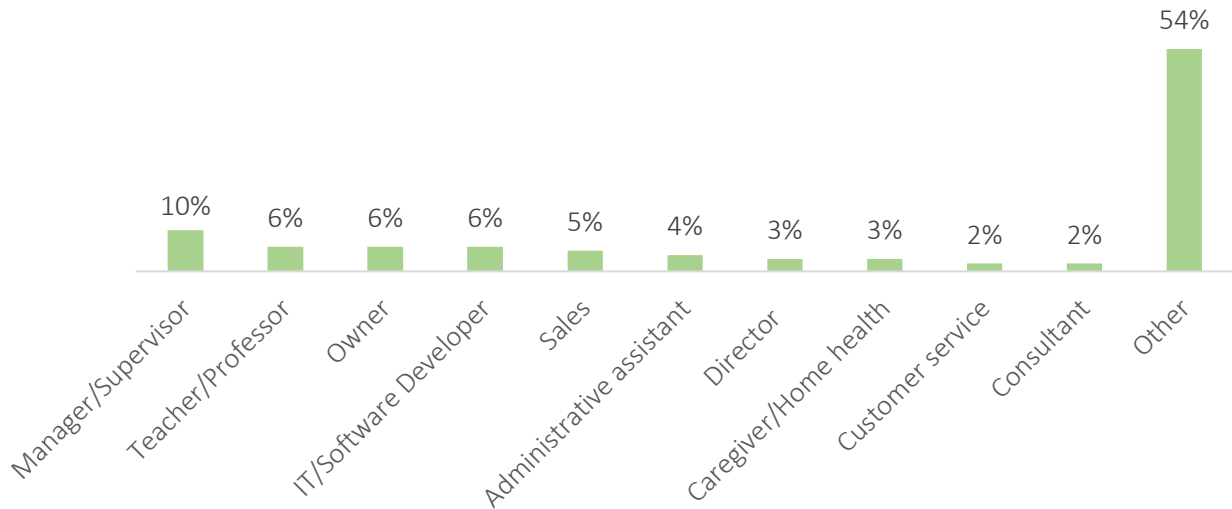
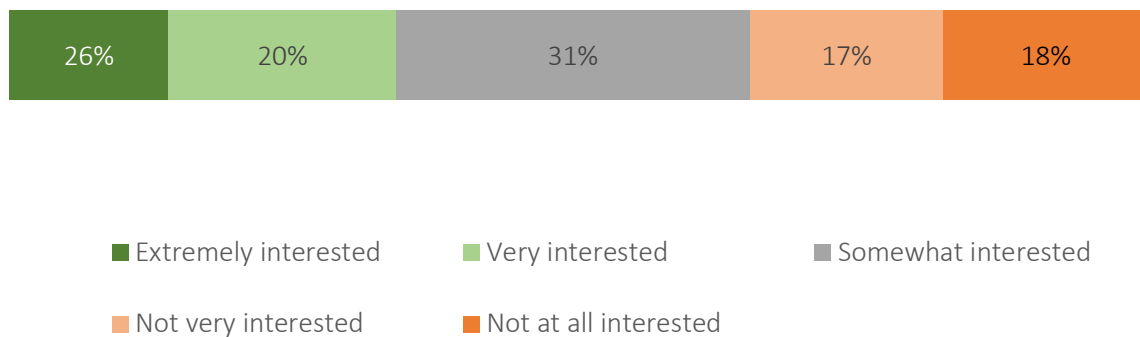


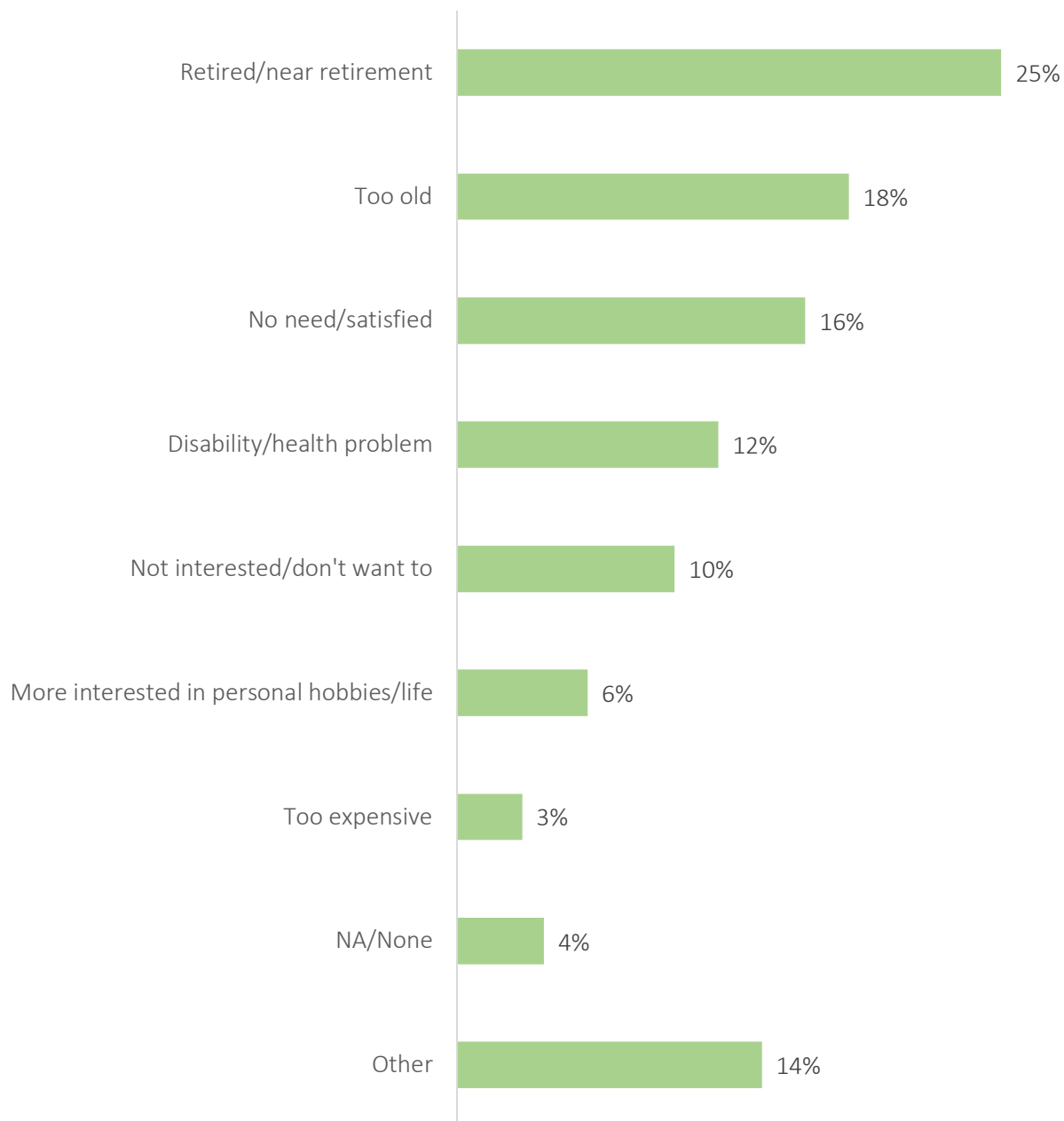
Figure 8 highlights respondents interest levels in continuing education. Over three-quarters (77%) were at least somewhat interested in continuing their education (learning new skills, learning about new subjects, receiving additional training).

**Figure 8: Interest in Continuing Education (n=956)**



Respondents who were not very or not at all interested in continuing their education were asked why they did not want to. A quarter said they are retired or near retirement, 18% said too old, and 16% said no need/satisfied. Responses mentioned less than five times were grouped in the “Other” category and included no time, family commitments, and work commitments, among others.

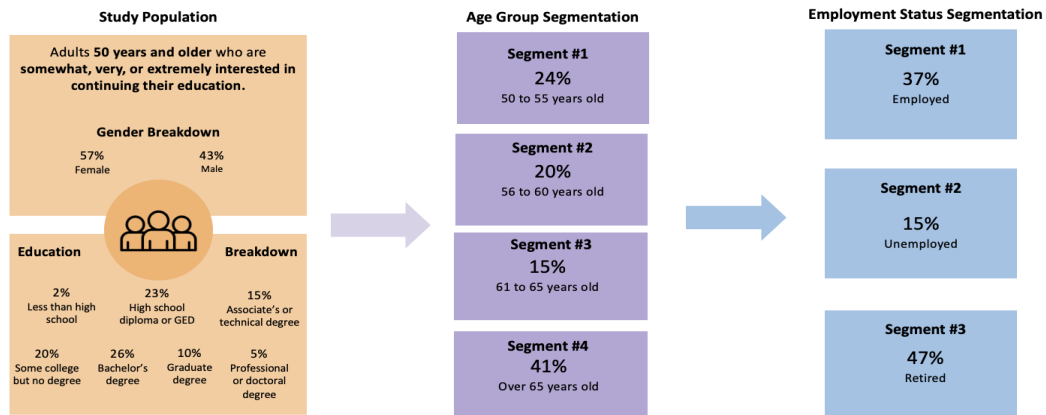
**Figure 9: Reasons for Disinterest in Continuing Education (n=334)**



# Qualified Respondents Survey Results

## Who Are Our Respondents?

Figure 10: Study Population and Persona Segments



## Who Are Our Mature Adult Learners?

To best represent and understand the generational and demographic differences of survey respondents, four personas were created and tracked to present four segments. These were utilized to demonstrate how age and employment status markers influence the behaviors, motivations, and preferences of mature adult learners.

Figure 11: Mature Adult Learner Personas

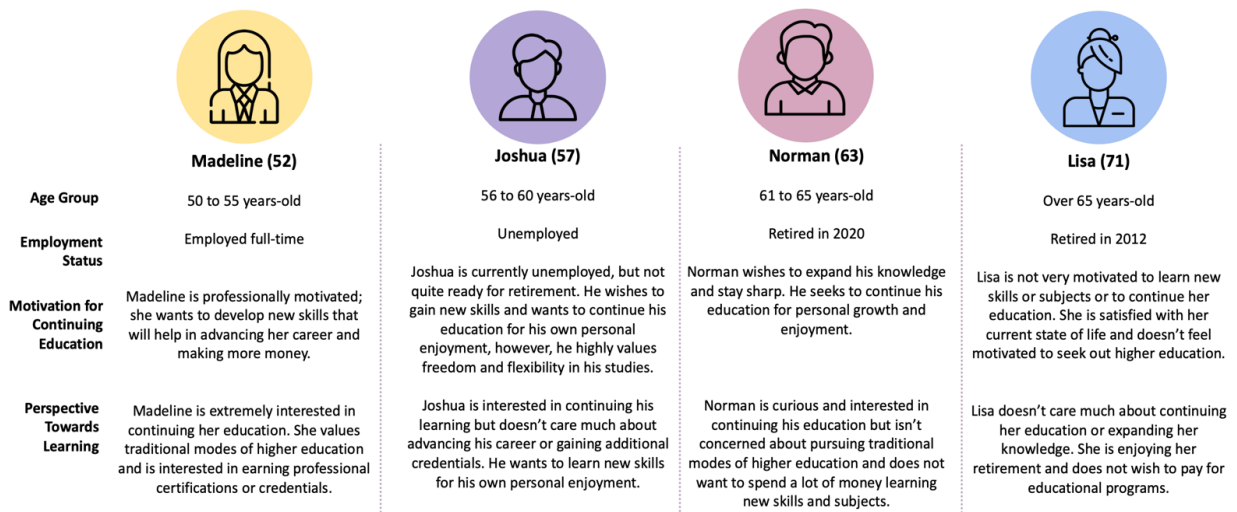
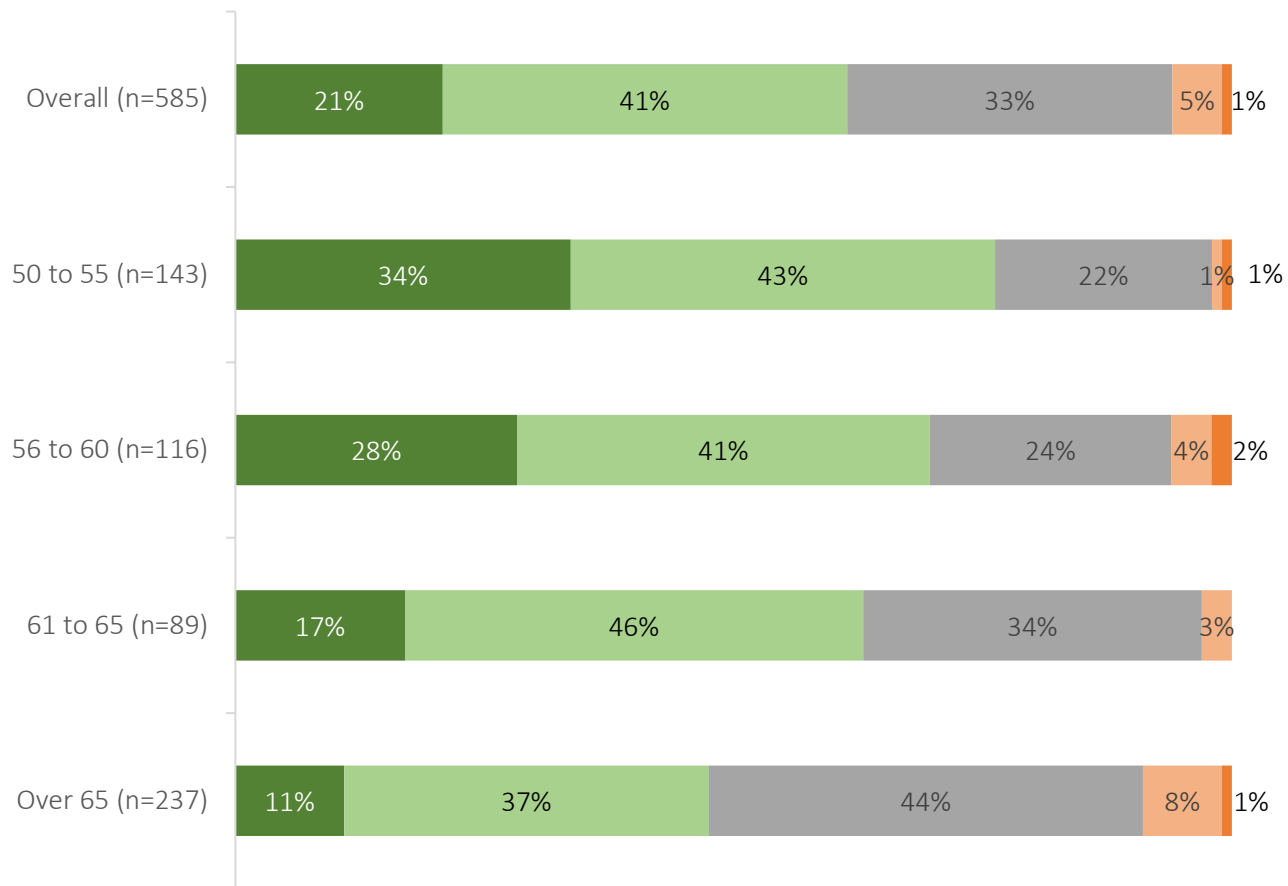


Figure 12 depicts respondents' perspectives toward learning and continuing education as they've grown older. Overall, 41% of respondents stated they have become more interested and 21% much more interested in continuing their education, while a third stated their interest level has not changed. As age increases, the percentage of respondents who have become more interested in education decreases.

**Figure 12: Perspective Toward Continuing Education by Age Group**



- I've grown much more interested in learning about new subjects, additional training, or continuing my education
- I've become more interested in learning about new subjects, additional training, or continuing my education
- No change in my interest in learning about new subjects, additional training, or continuing my education
- I've become less interested in learning about new subjects, additional training, or continuing my education
- I've become much less interested in learning about new subjects, additional training, or continuing my education

Madeline has become most interested in learning new skills and continuing education as she's gotten older while Lisa has become the least interested.

**Figure 13: Perspective Toward Continuing Education by Persona**

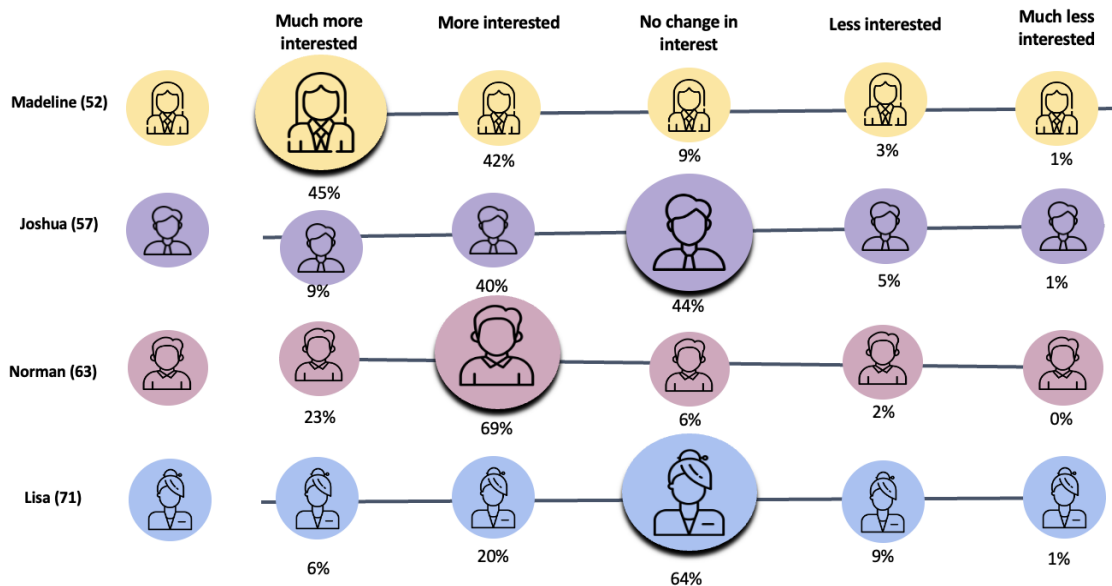
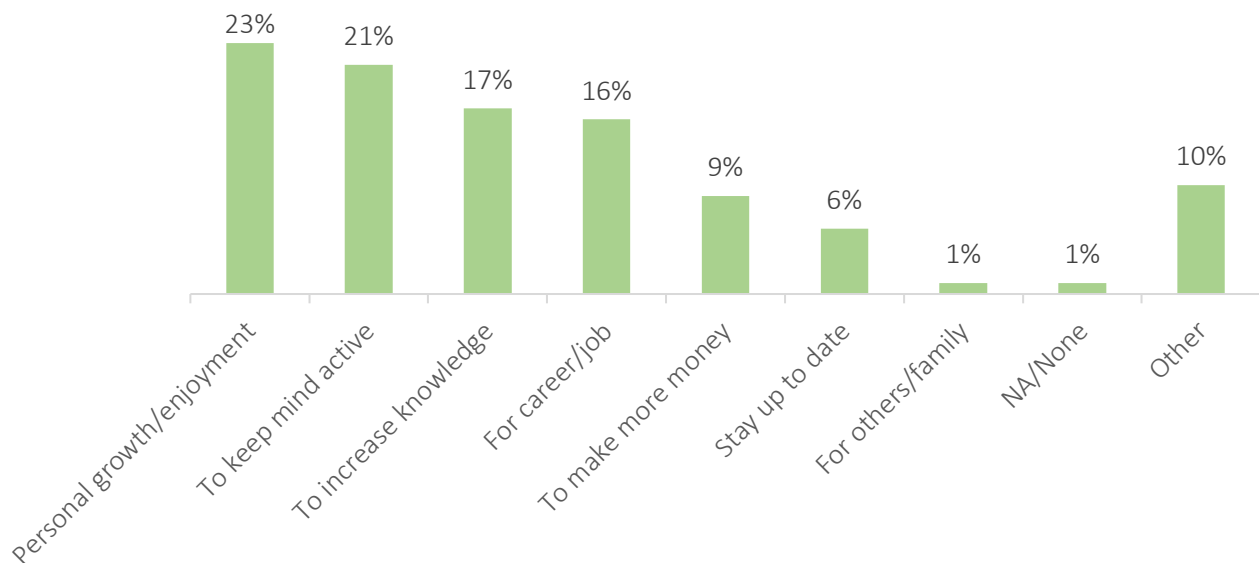


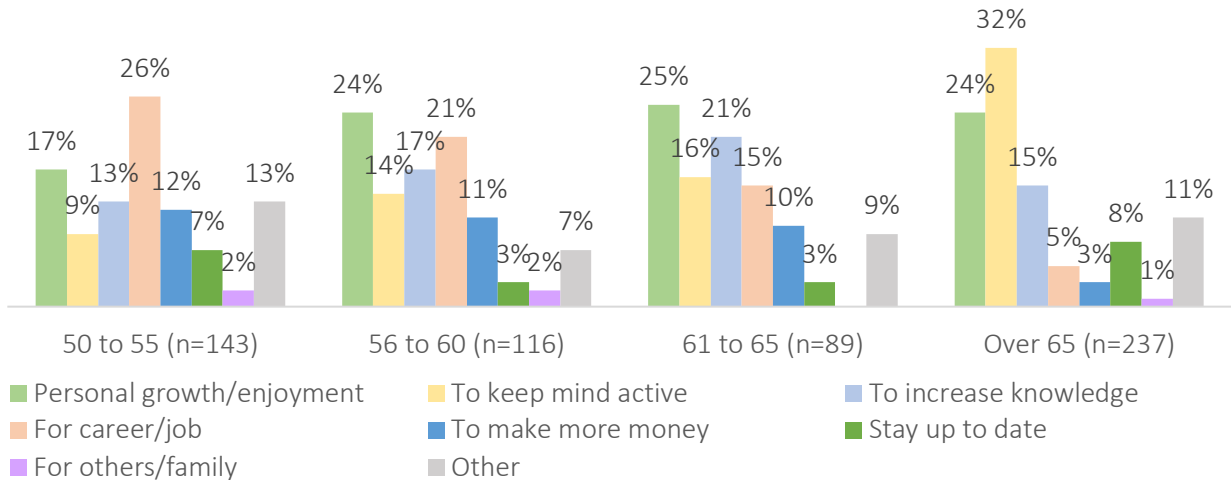
Figure 14 illustrates respondents' motivations for learning. The main motivation for continuing education was personal growth/enjoyment (23%), followed by keeping the mind active (21%), increasing knowledge (17%) and career/job (16%). Responses mentioned less than five times were included in the "Other" category and included curiosity, to make life better, and to learn a new craft, among others.

**Figure 14: Main Motivations for Learning (n=585)**



When it comes to learning new skills and subjects, younger age groups are more motivated by money and career/job advancement, while older age groups are more motivated by their own personal growth/enjoyment and keeping their mind active.

**Figure 15: Main Motivations for Learning by Age Group (n=585)**



Madeline’s main motivation for learning is her career/job, Joshua’s main motivation for learning is personal growth/enjoyment, and both Norman and Lisa’s main motivations for learning is to keep their mind active.

**Figure 16: Main Motivations for Learning by Persona**

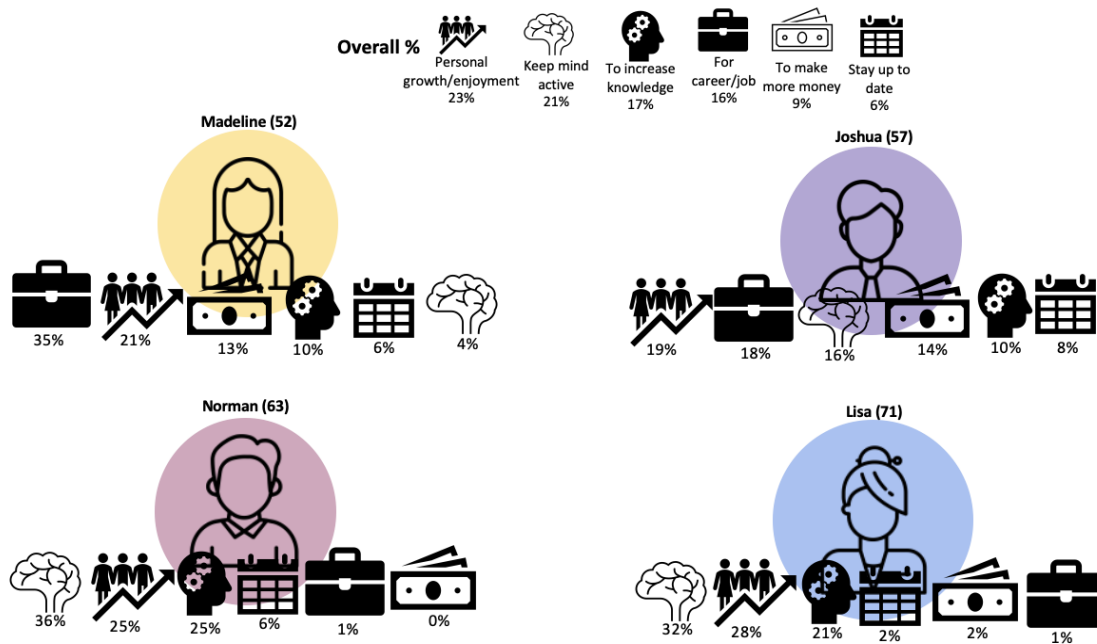
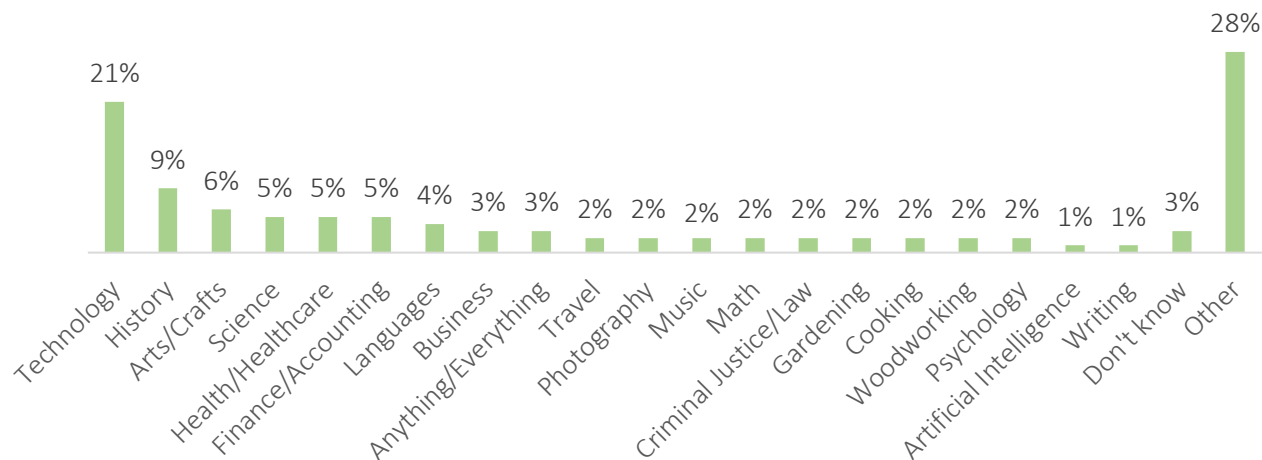


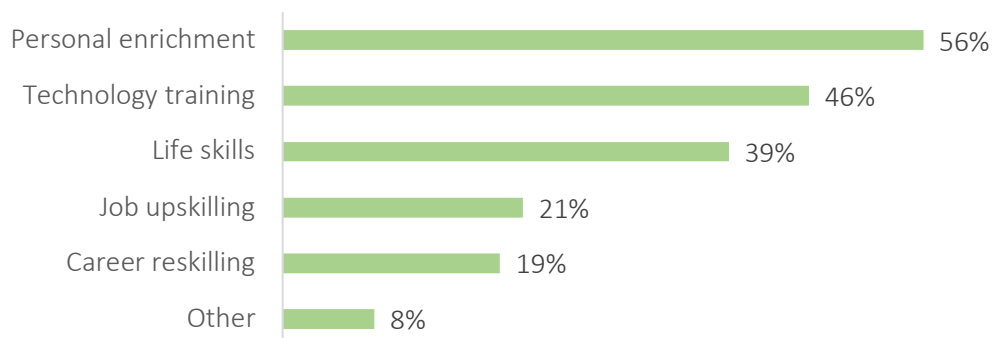
Figure 17 shows the subject areas respondents are most interested in learning about. Respondents are most interested in learning about technology (21%), which includes topics like computer science, IT, coding, web design, and computer literacy, among others, followed by history (9%), and arts/crafts (6%). “Other” subject areas include theology, political science, and marketing, among others.

**Figure 17: Subject Areas of Interest (Open-Ended) (n=585)**



Participants were asked in which categories they had an interest when given a list of skills, trainings, and educational topics. Over half (56%) said personal enrichment, 46% technology training, and 39% life skills. For the most part, respondents were more interested in non-career skills (personal enrichment and life skills), than career skills (job upskilling and career upskilling). Younger respondents may be interested in technology training for the purposes of career advancement while older respondents may only want to learn basic computer skills.

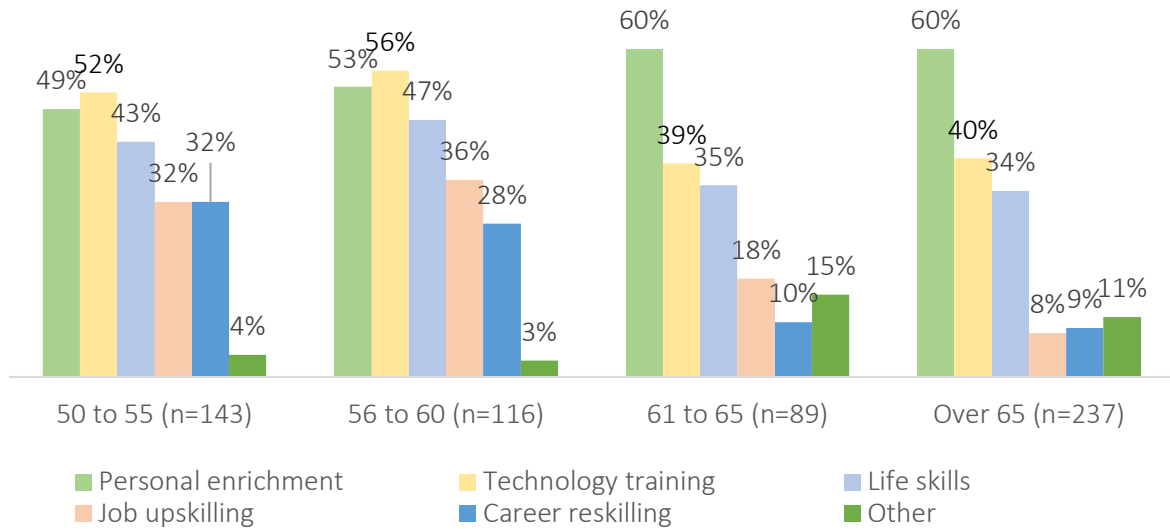
**Figure 18: Educational Topics of Interest (Categorical) (n=585)**





Older age groups are more interested in personal enrichment, technology training, and life skills, while younger age groups are more interested in job upskilling and career upskilling.

**Figure 19: Educational Topics of Interest by Age Group (n=585)**



Madeline and Joshua’s top educational topic of interest is technology training while Norman and Lisa’s top educational topic of interest is personal enrichment.

**Figure 20: Educational Topics of Interest by Persona**

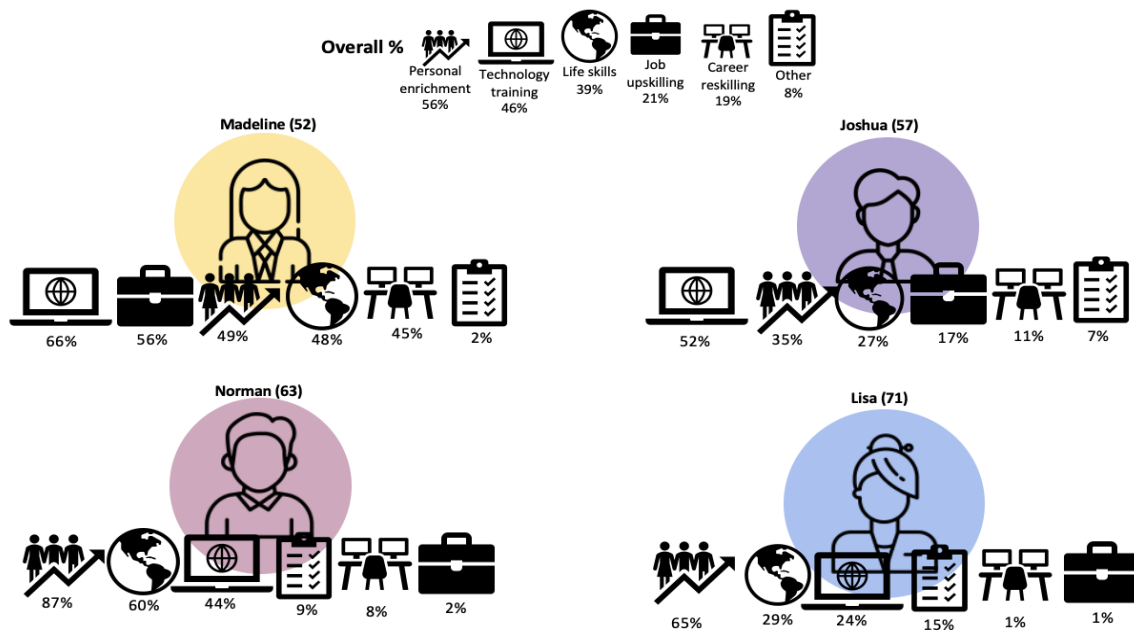
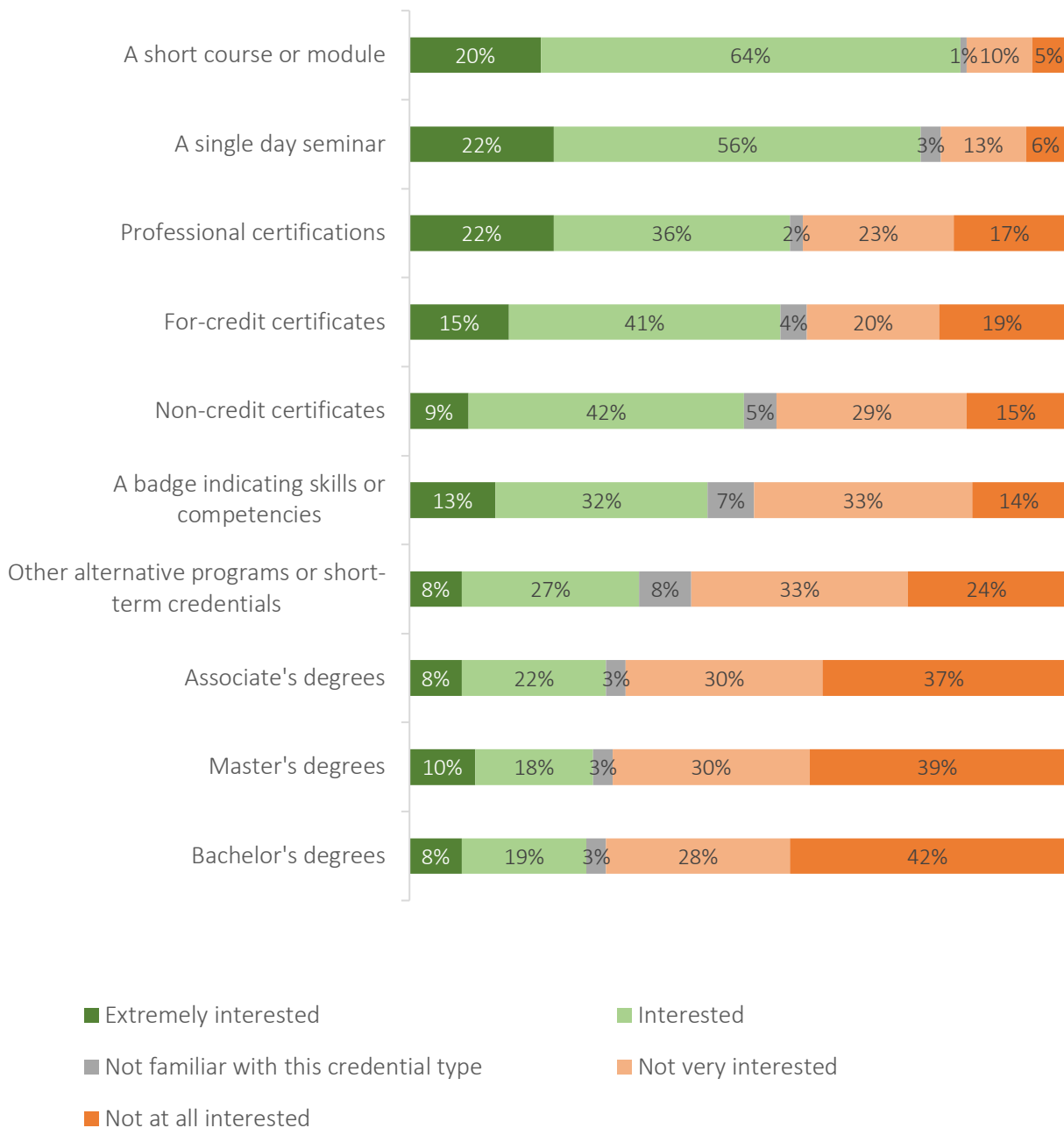


Figure 21 highlights respondents interest levels in different credentials and offerings. Respondents had the greatest interest in a short course or module (84% interested or extremely interested), followed by a single-day seminar (78%), and professional certifications (58%). Respondents are least interested in bachelor's degrees (42% not at all interested) and associate degrees (37% not at all interested).

**Figure 21: Interest in Credentials and Offerings (n=582)**



Madeline, Joshua, Norman, and Lisa are all most interested in pursuing a short course or module if it were focused on a subject area they had interest in. Overall, Madeline is the most interested in all credentials and offerings while Lisa is the least interested. Madeline is least interested in pursuing a bachelor’s degree, Joshua a master’s degree, and Norman and Lisa are least interested in an associate degree.

Figure 22: Interest in Credentials and Offerings by Persona

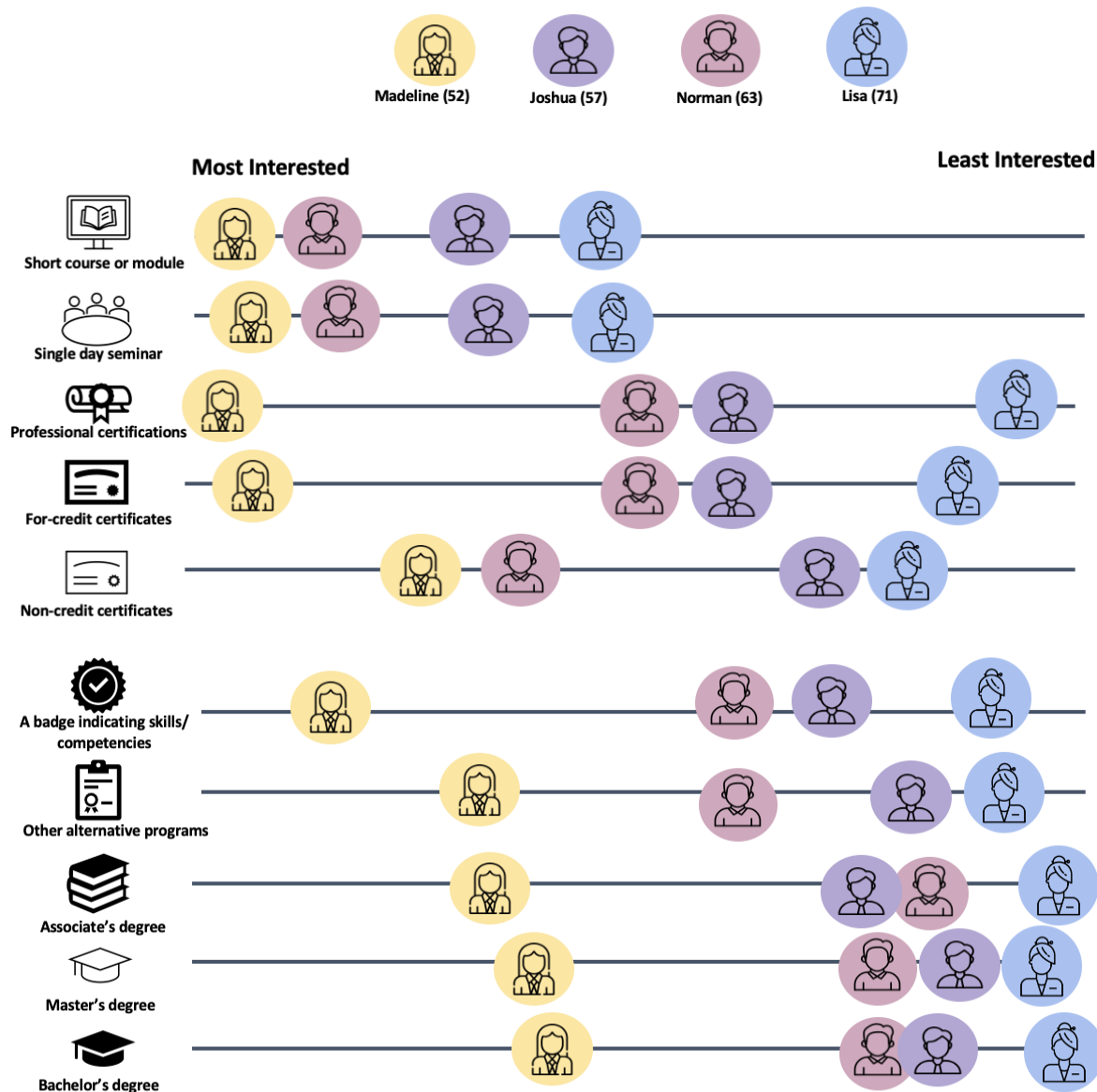
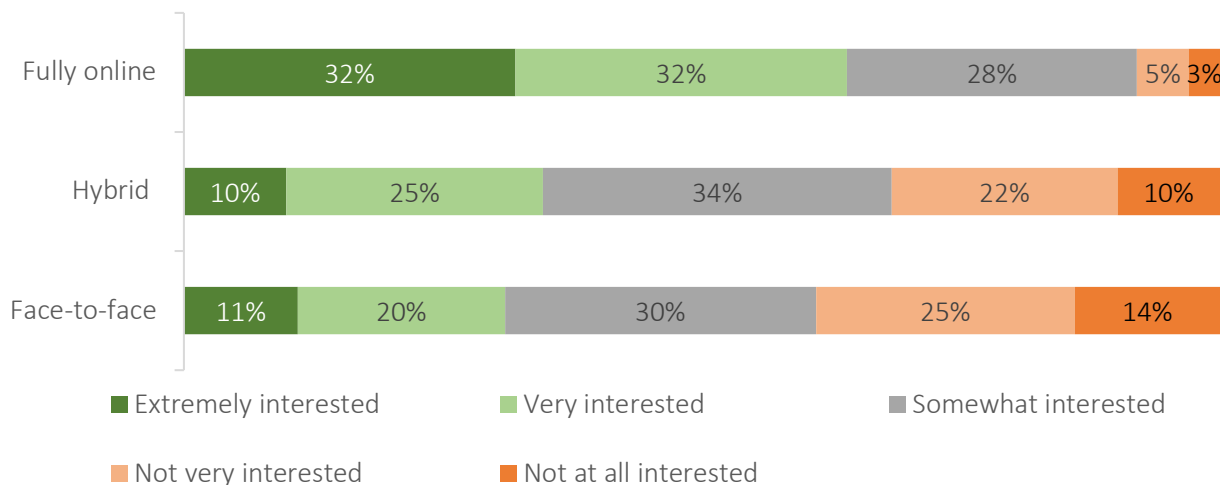


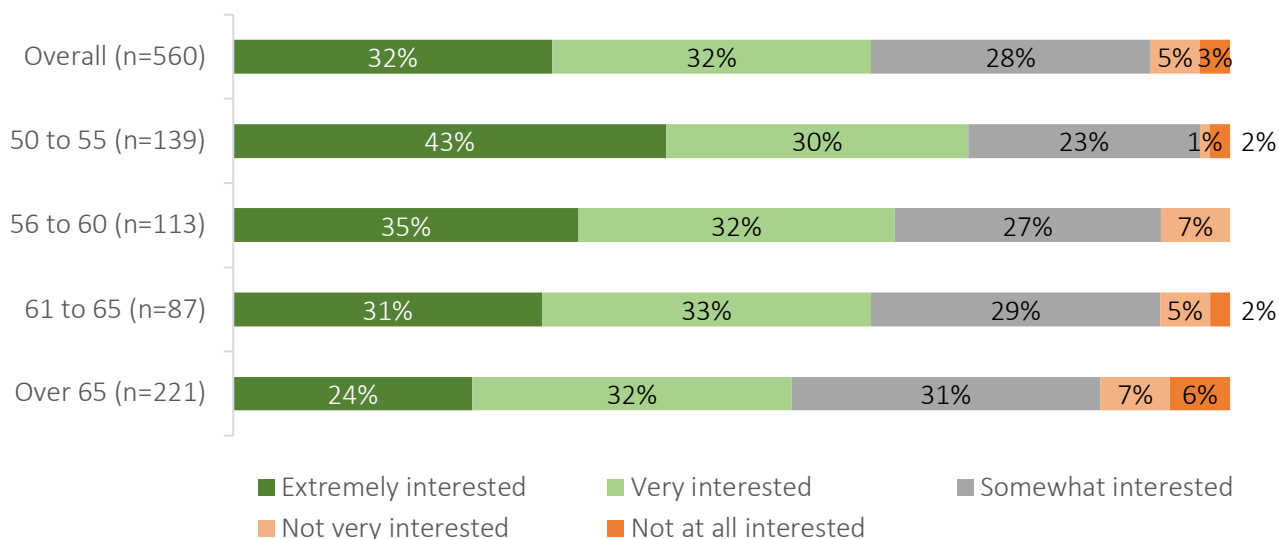
Figure 23 illustrates respondents interest levels in different delivery formats for learning and continuing education. The most appealing method for the delivery of continuing education is an online format. Nearly a third (32%) of respondents are extremely interested in a fully online format, compared to face-to-face (11% extremely interested) and hybrid learning (10%).

**Figure 23: Interest in Delivery Formats (n=560)**



Among all age groups, a majority of respondents are very or extremely interested in an online delivery format. Interest in an online delivery format slightly decreases with age, as younger age groups are more interested in an online educational format than older age groups.

**Figure 24: Interest in Online Delivery Format by Age Group**



Madeline is the most interested in an online delivery format for continuing education while Lisa is the least interested. Thirty-nine percent of individuals among the Joshua persona are somewhat interested in an online delivery format while 44% of Norman personas are very interested.

**Figure 25: Interest in Online Delivery Format by Persona**

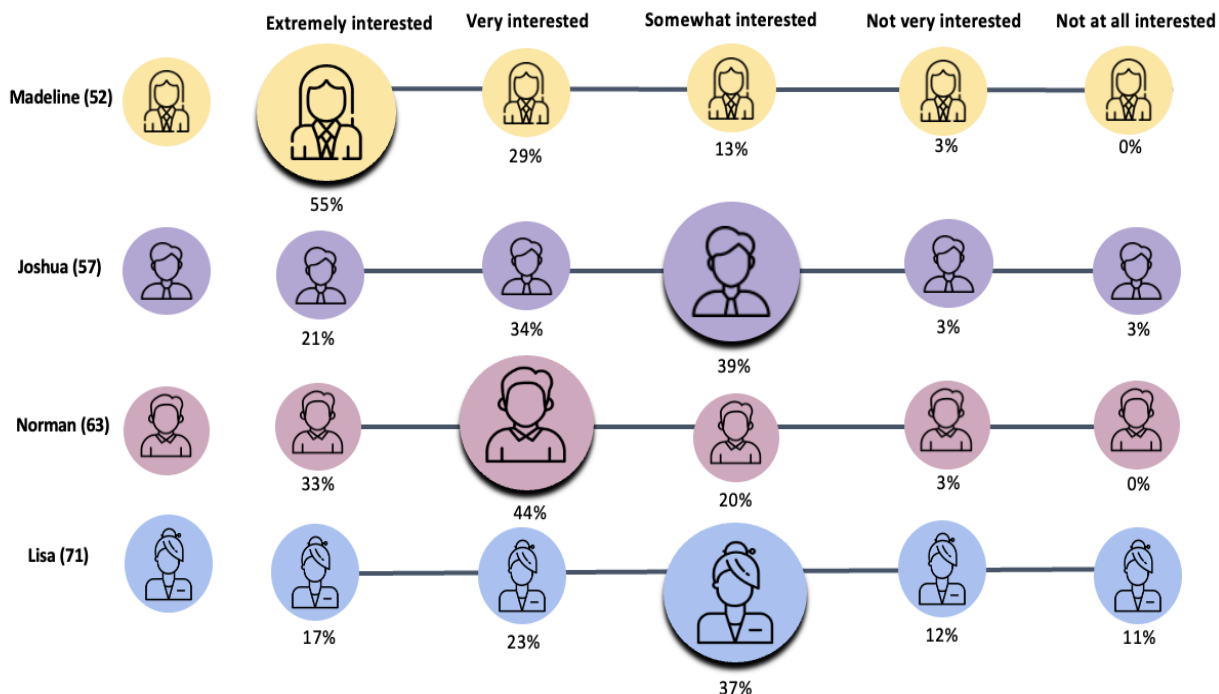
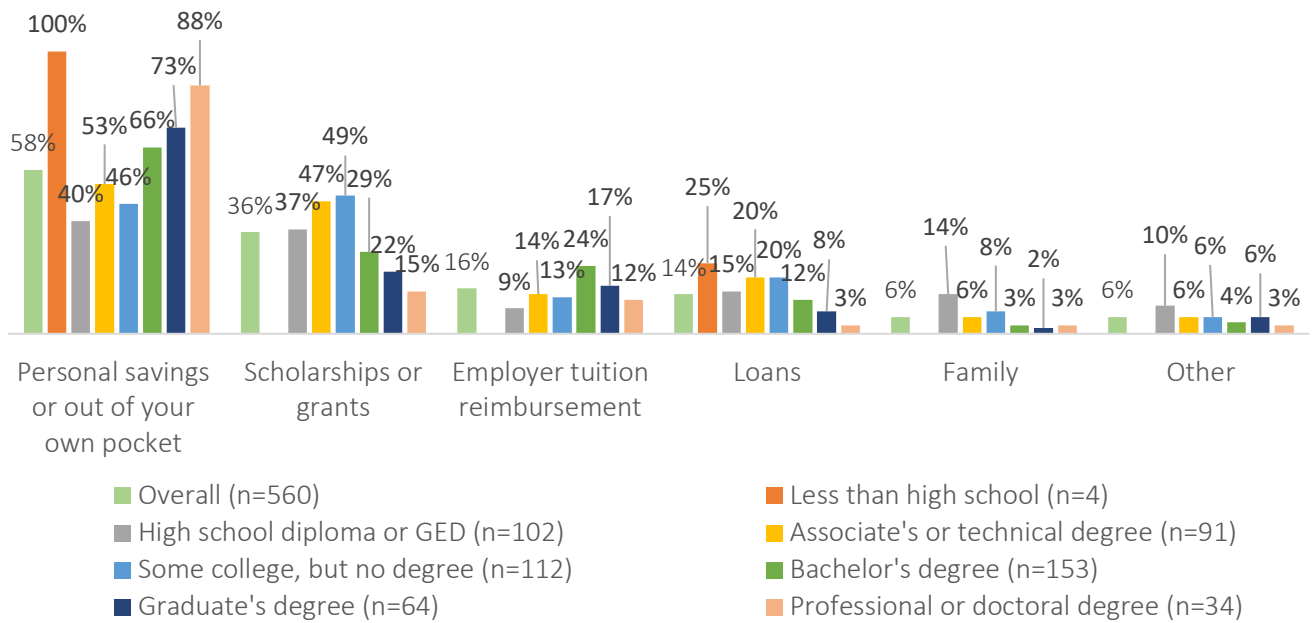


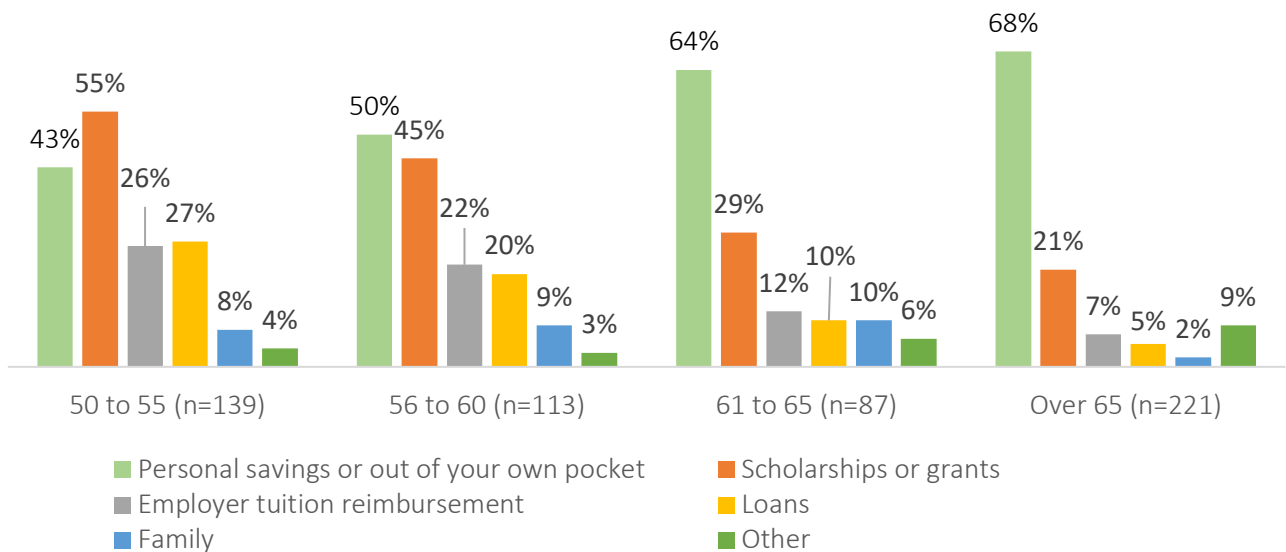
Figure 26 highlights the ways in which respondents would pay for their education if they were to continue. Over half (58%) would finance future learning or education through personal savings or out of their own pocket, while 36% would seek out scholarships or grants, and 16% would utilize employer tuition reimbursement. Respondents who have completed higher levels of education are generally more likely to pay for educational training themselves than those with lower levels of education.

**Figure 26: Paying for Continuing Education by Education Level**



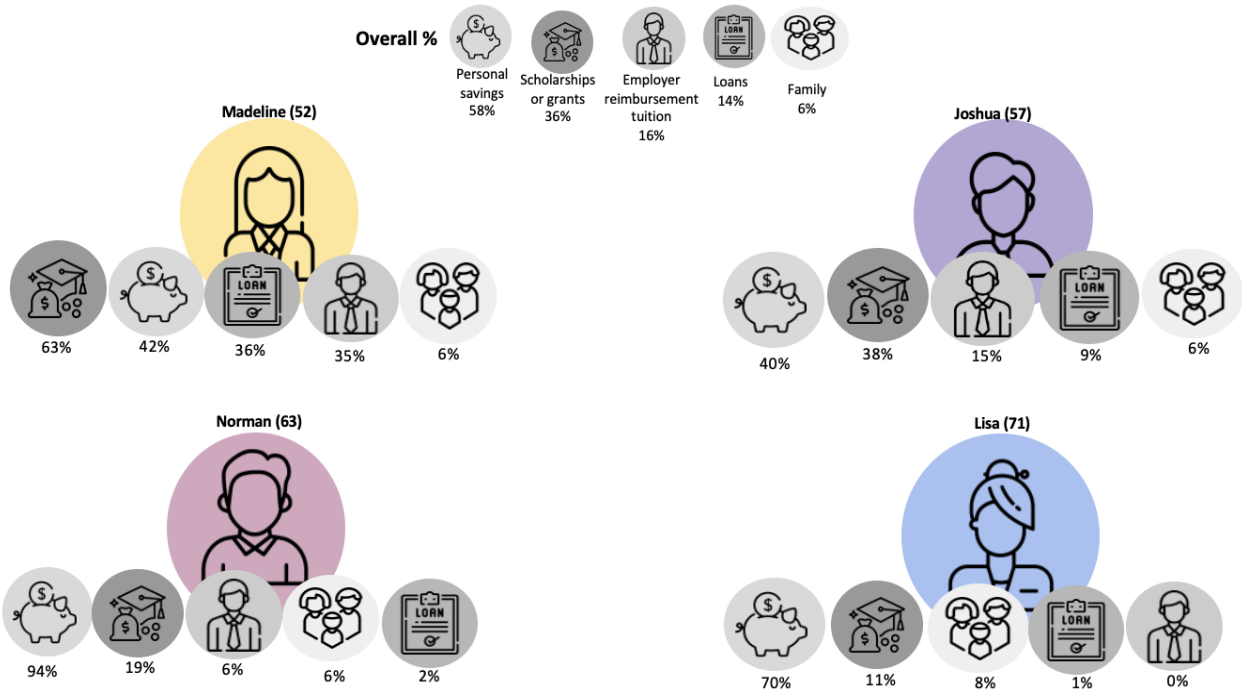
Older age groups are more likely to finance their education through personal savings or out of their own pocket compared to younger age groups, while younger age groups are more likely to finance through scholarships/grants, loans, or employer reimbursement tuition compared to older age groups.

**Figure 27: Paying for Continuing Education by Age Group**



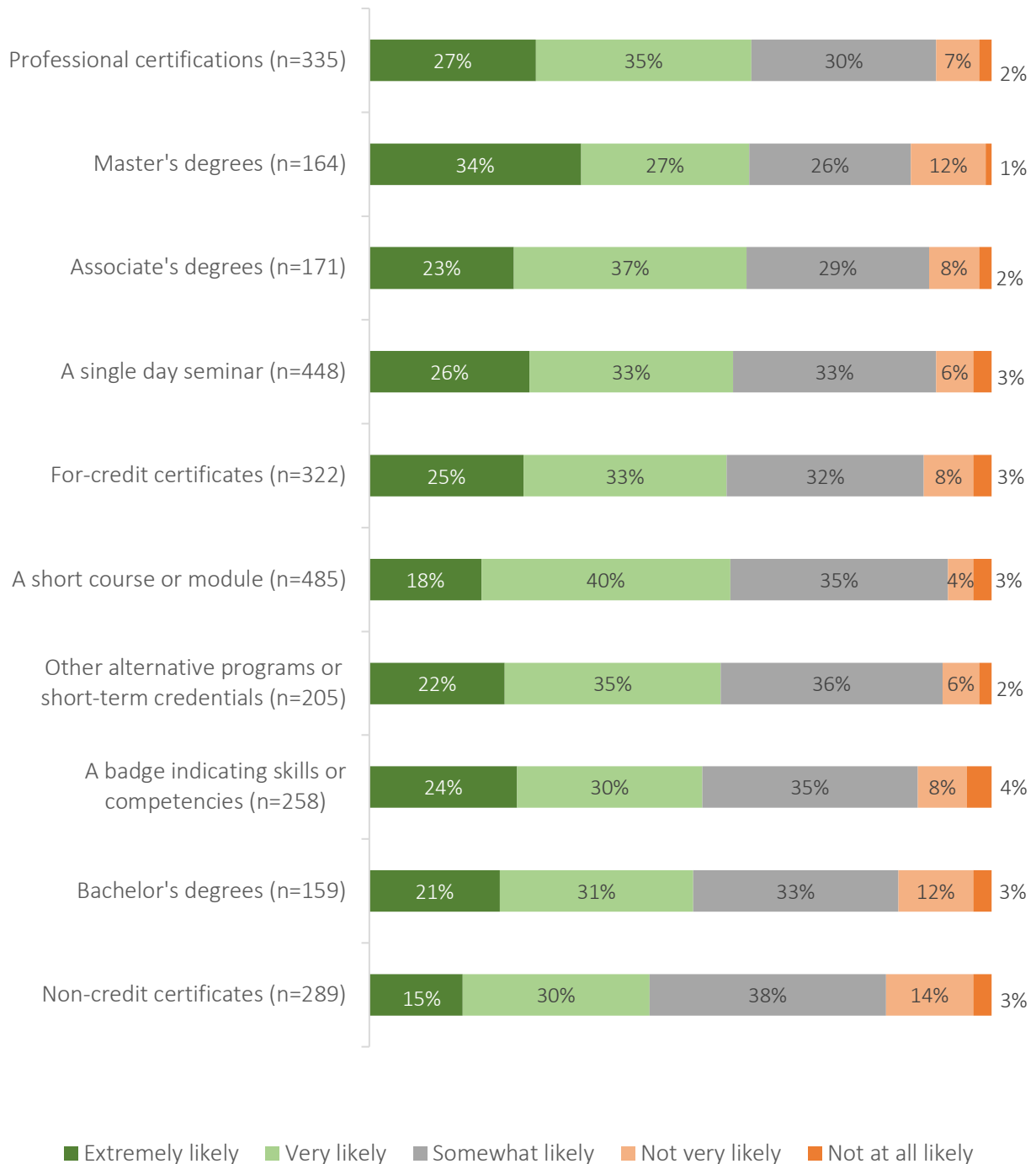
Madeline is most likely to pay for her studies through scholarships or grants (63%), while Joshua (40%), Norman (94%), and Lisa (70%) are most likely to pay through personal savings.

**Figure 28: Paying for Continuing Education by Persona**



When given a list of credentials and offerings, participants were asked how likely they would be to purchase each one if they were in a subject area of interest and delivered via their preferred method. Sixty-two percent would be very likely or extremely likely to purchase professional certifications, 61% a master’s degree, and 60% an associate’s degree.

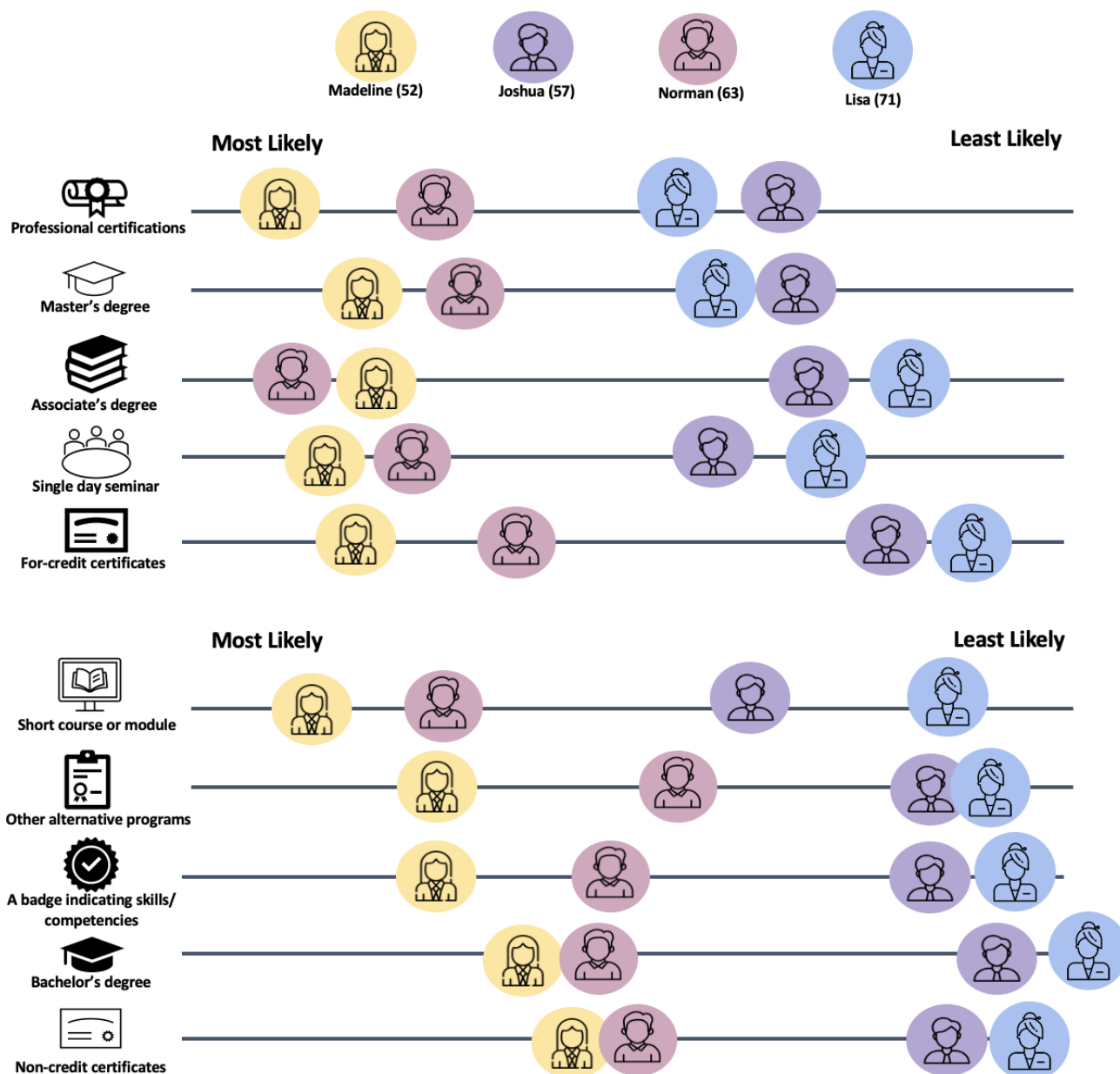
**Figure 29: Likelihood of Purchasing Credentials or Offerings**





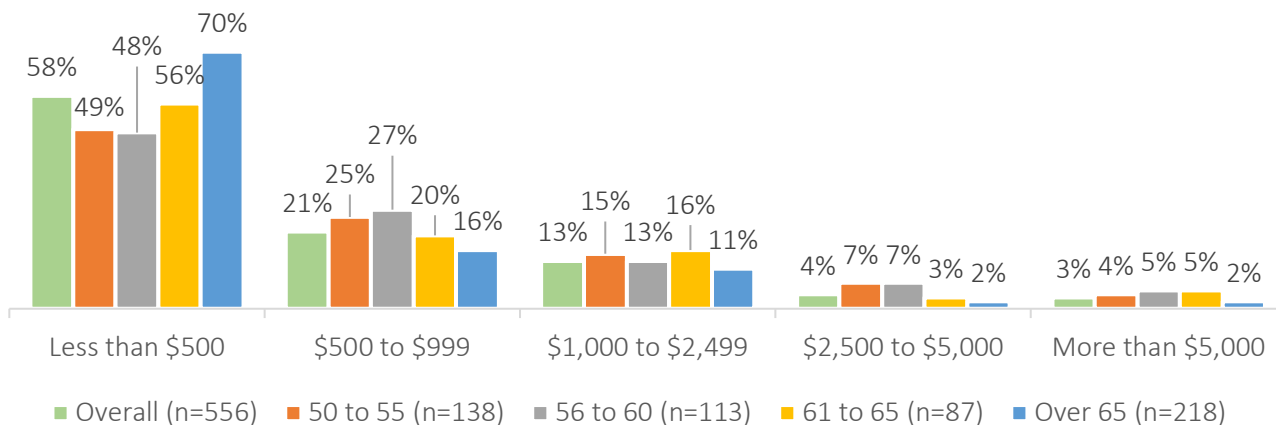
Madeline is most likely to purchase a professional certification, Joshua a single day seminar, Norman an associate degree, and Lisa a professional certification. Madeline is least likely to purchase a non-credit certificate, Joshua and Lisa a bachelor's degree, and Norman is least likely to purchase other alternative programs.

Figure 30: Likelihood of Purchasing Credentials or Offerings by Persona



Respondents were asked what is the most amount of money they would be willing to pay for a program in which they learn new skills, learn about new subjects, receive additional training, or continue their education. Over half (58%) would be willing to pay less than \$500, 21% \$500 to \$999, and 13% \$1,000 to \$2,499. The oldest age group (over 65) would be willing to pay the least amount compared to younger age groups, suggesting that as age increases, individuals prefer to spend less money on educational programs.

**Figure 31: Maximum Budget for Education Programs by Age Group**



Among those who are willing to pay more than \$5,000 for continuing education, 68% fall into the Madeline persona. Madeline is willing to pay the most amount of money for continuing education while Lisa is willing to pay the least.

**Figure 32: Maximum Budget for Education Programs by Persona**

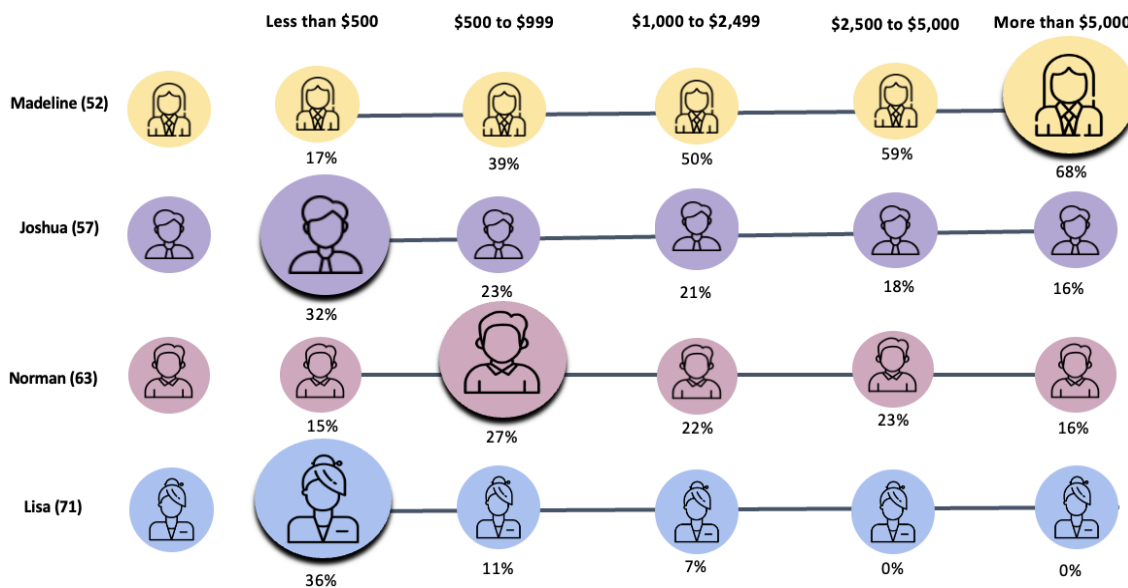
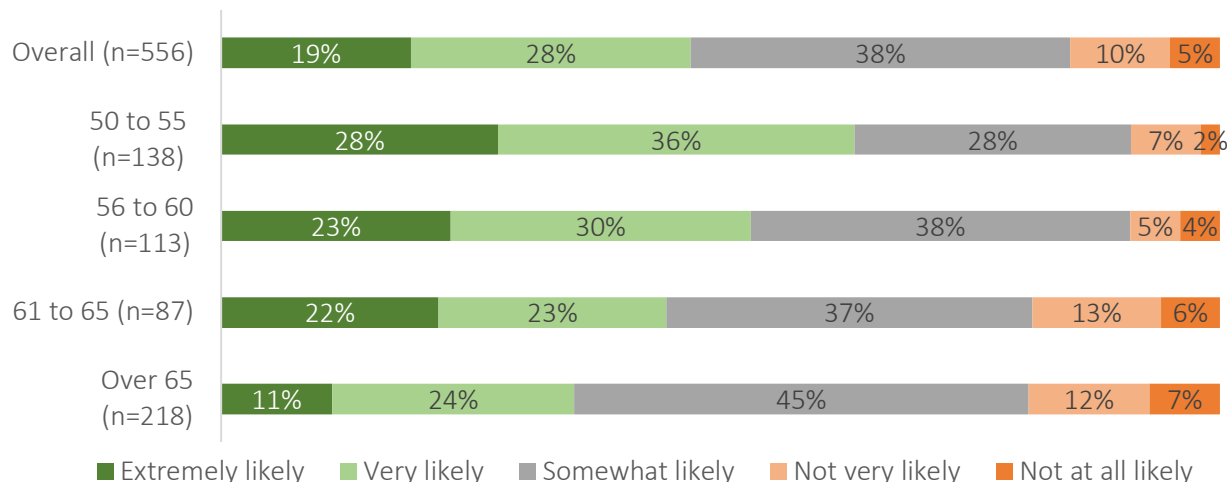


Figure 33 shows how likely respondents would be to purchase low-cost education programs from colleges and universities. Thirty-eight percent would be somewhat likely to buy low-cost options to continue their education, while over a quarter (28%) would be very likely, and 19% extremely likely. Younger age groups are more likely to buy low-cost options than older age groups.

**Figure 33: Paying for Low-Cost Programs by Age Group**



Forty-four percent of respondents among the Madeline persona are extremely likely to pay for low-cost programs. Madeline is the most likely to pay for low-cost programs while Lisa is the least likely.

**Figure 34: Paying for Low-Cost Programs by Persona**

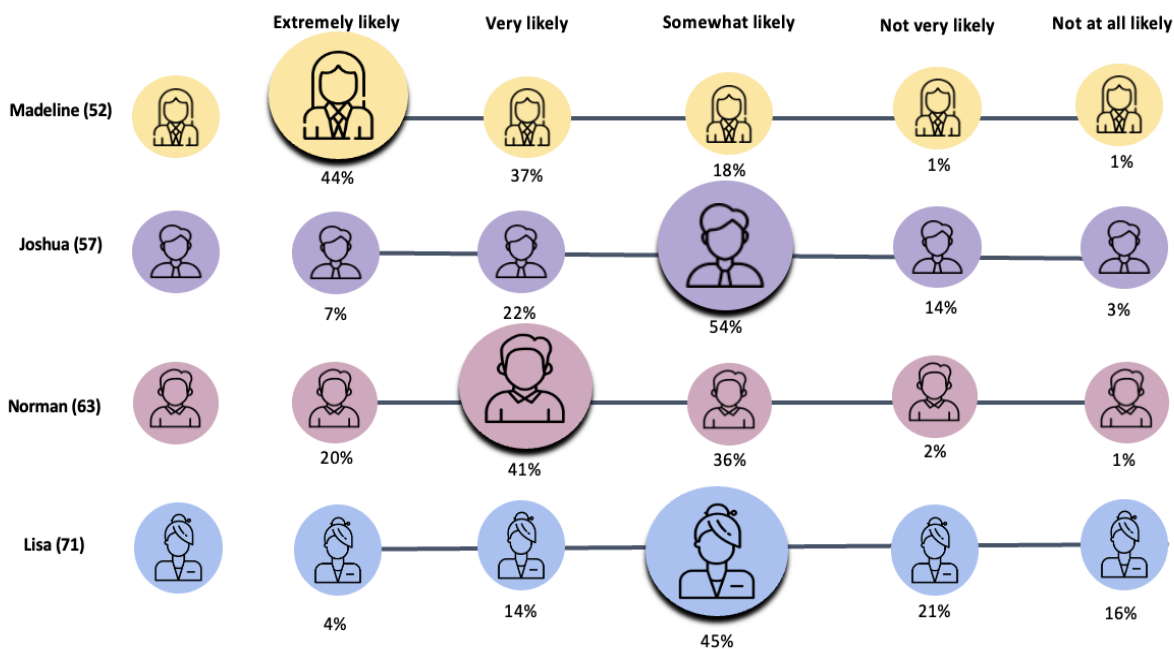
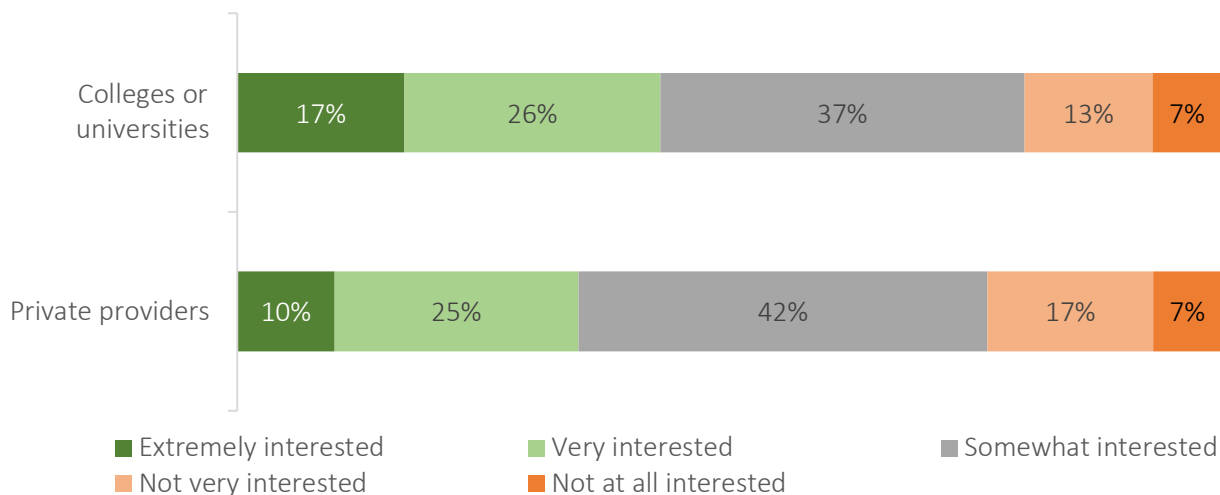


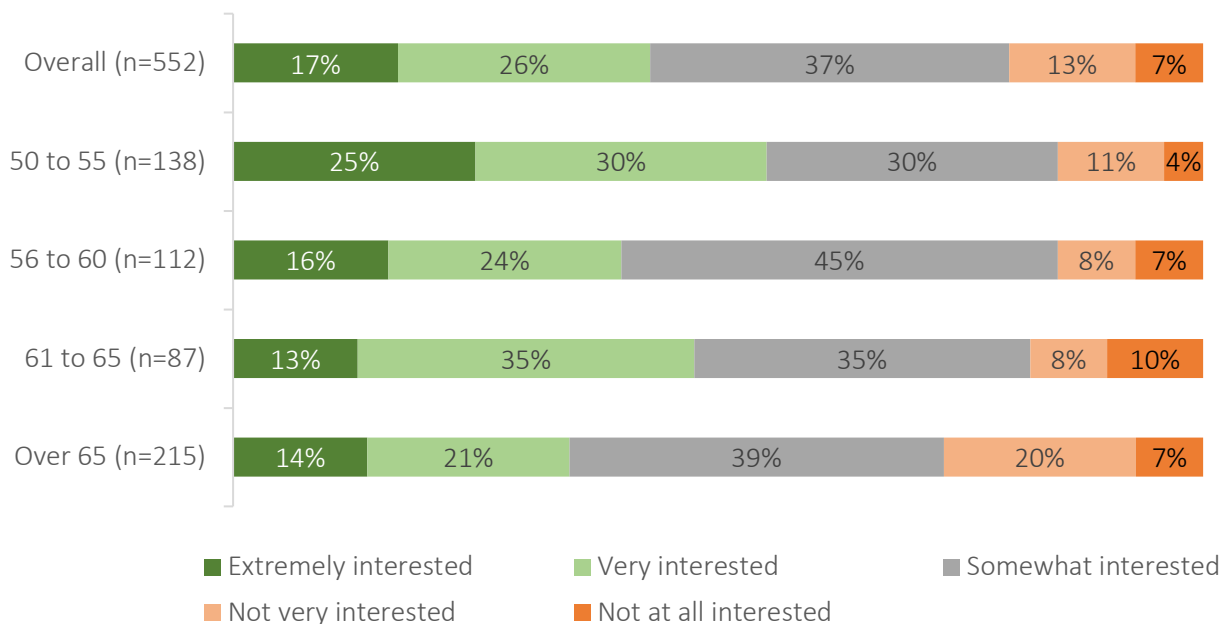
Figure 35 highlights respondents preferred education provider. When thinking about pursuing shorter or small bursts of learning, 43% of respondents are very interested or extremely interested in colleges and universities and 35% in private providers.

**Figure 35: Interest in Education or Training Providers (n=552)**



The youngest age group is the most interested in colleges and universities while the oldest age group is the least interested.

**Figure 36: Interest in Colleges or Universities by Age Group**



The youngest age group is the most interested in private providers while the oldest age group is the least interested.

**Figure 37: Interest in Private Providers by Age Group**

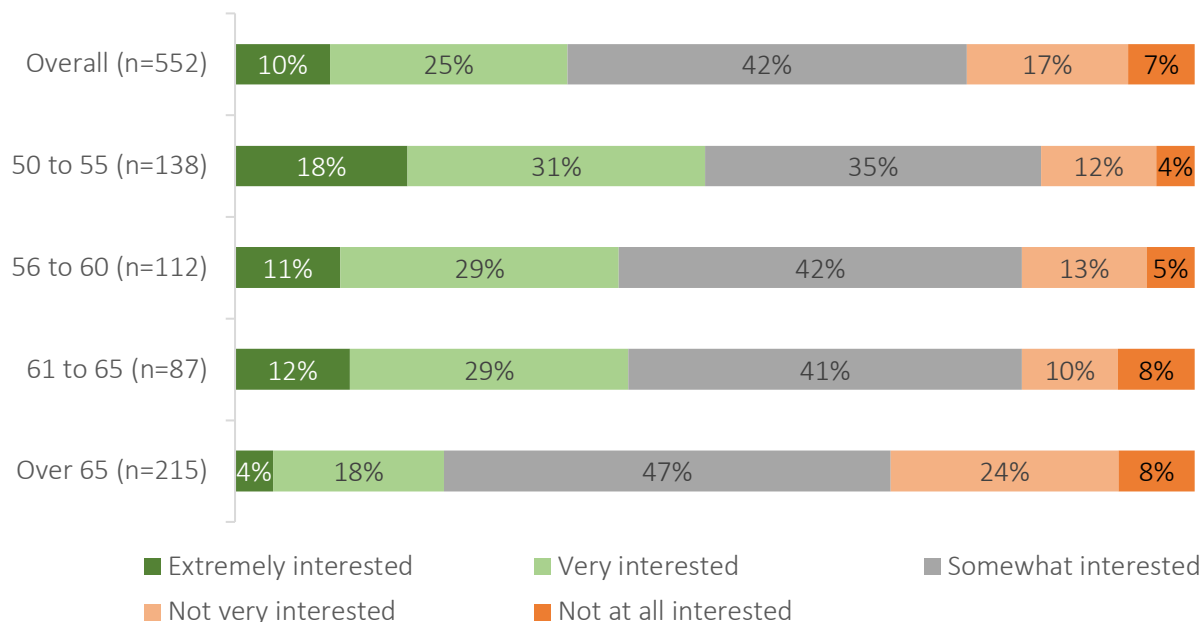
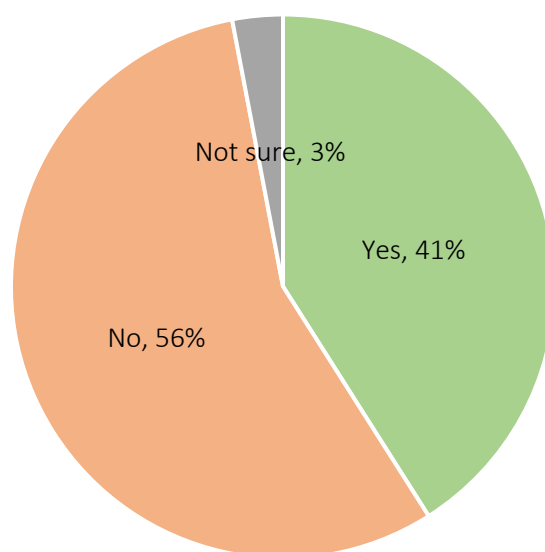


Figure 38 illustrates the proportion of respondents who have continued their education in the past 10 years. Over half (56%) state they have not taken any courses, certificates, or other programs to continue their education, while 41% state that they have.

**Figure 38: History of Continuing Education (n=552)**



Among those who have continued their education, 12% took programs in /software/IT, 9% in health/healthcare, and 9% a certification. Responses mentioned less than three times were included in the “Other” category which include writing and literature, social work, real estate, and religion, among others.

**Figure 39: Type of Course, Certificate, or Program Pursued (n=224)**

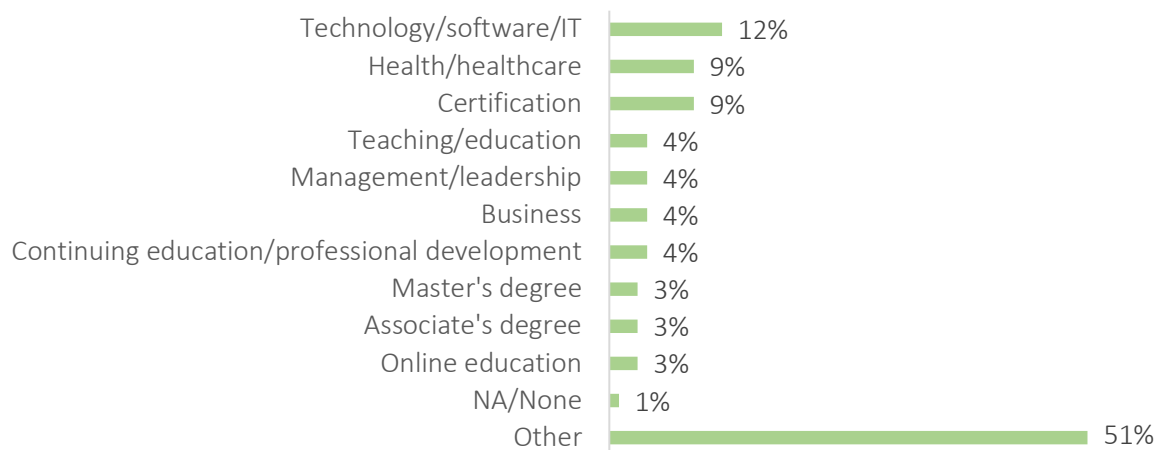


Figure 40 depicts the reasons respondents chose to continue their education. Twenty-one percent of respondents said they chose to pursue their program for their career/job, 19% cited personal growth/enjoyment, and 14% said to increase their knowledge/skills. Responses mentioned less than three times were included in the “Other” category which include to help people, to keep the mind active, and religious reasons, among others.

**Figure 40: Reason(s) for Continuing Education (n=224)**

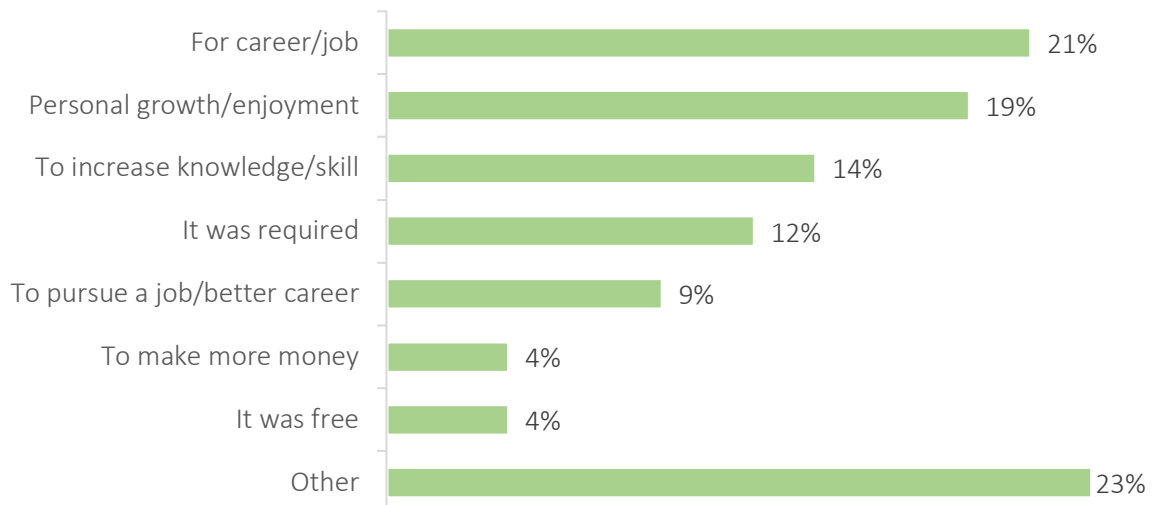
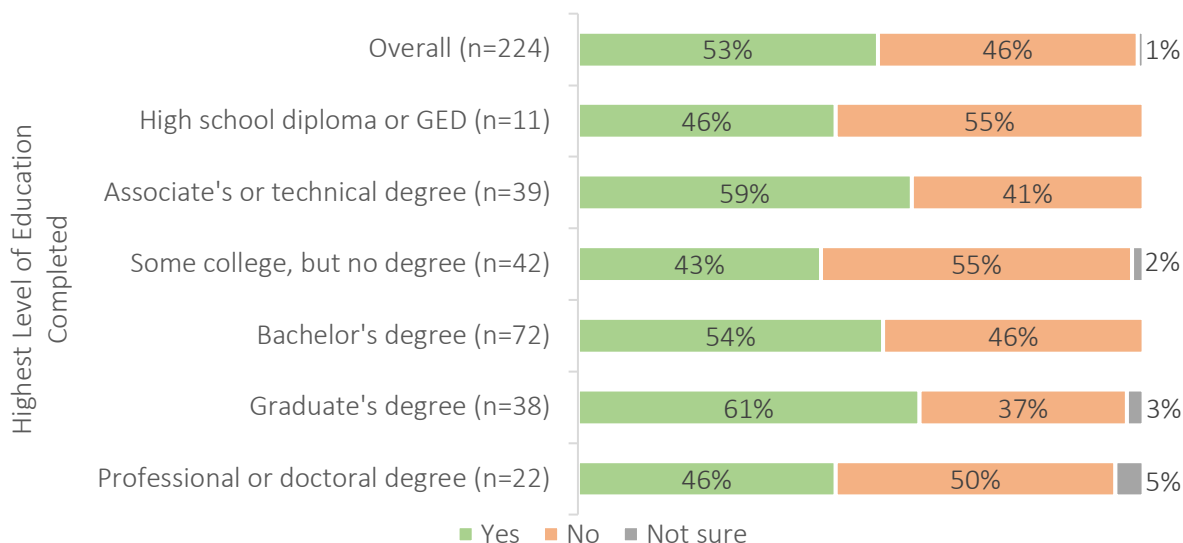


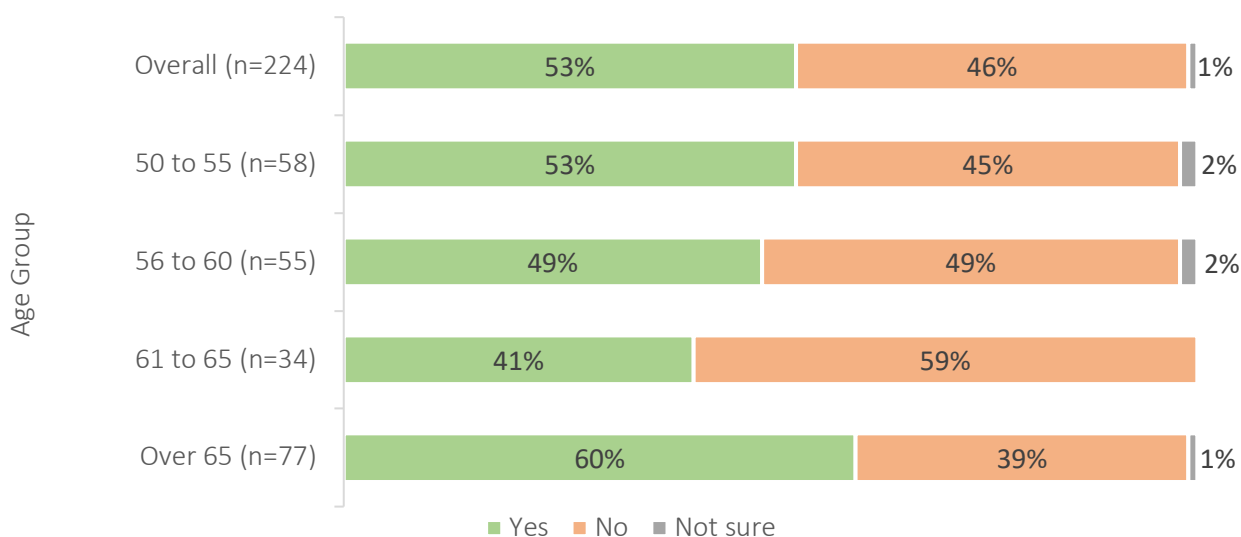
Figure 41 shows the proportion of respondents who personally paid to continue their education. Over half (53%) who have continued their education over the past 10 years paid for the program themselves, while 46% did not. Respondents with a graduate degree were the most likely to pay for the program themselves (61%) compared to all other education level groups.

**Figure 41: Paying for Continuing Education by Education Level**



Respondents over 65-years-old were more likely to pay for the program themselves than younger age groups.

**Figure 42: Paying for Continuing Education by Age Group**



The youngest age group most often chose to pursue their specific program to pursue a job/better career (17%), while the oldest age group most often pursued their program due to personal growth/enjoyment (23%).

**Figure 43: Reason(s) for Pursuing Program by Age Group (n=224)**

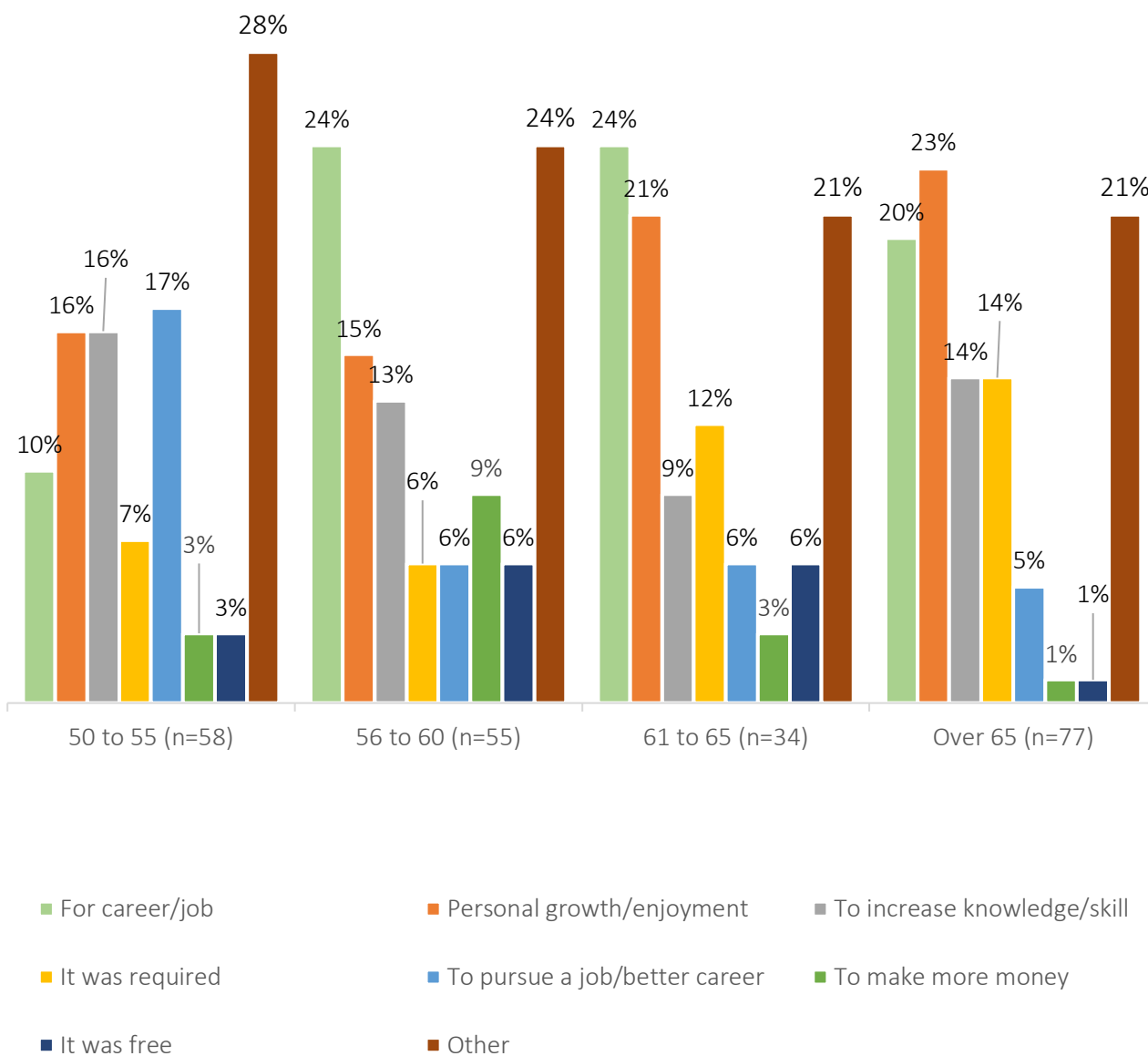
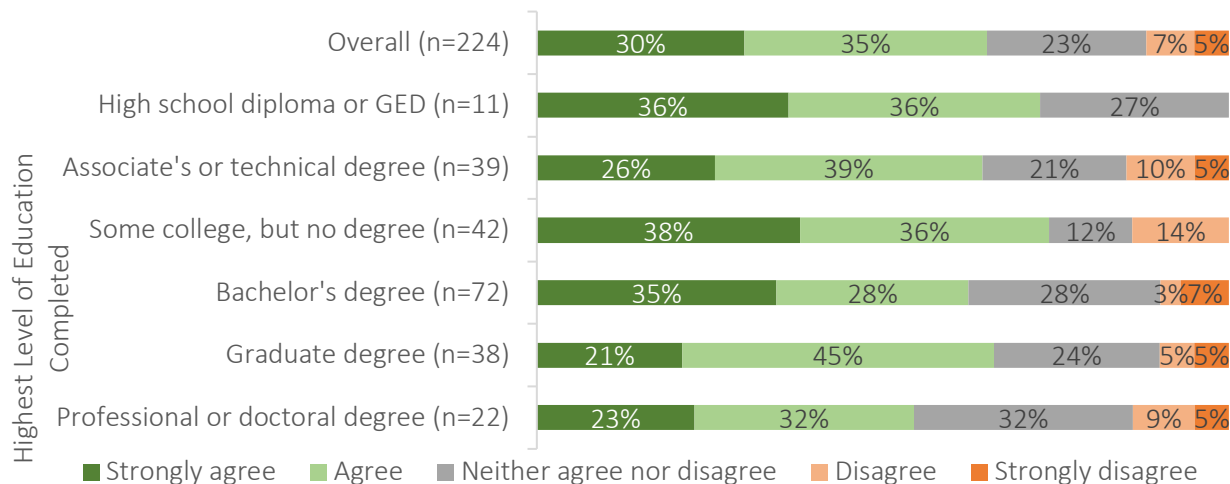




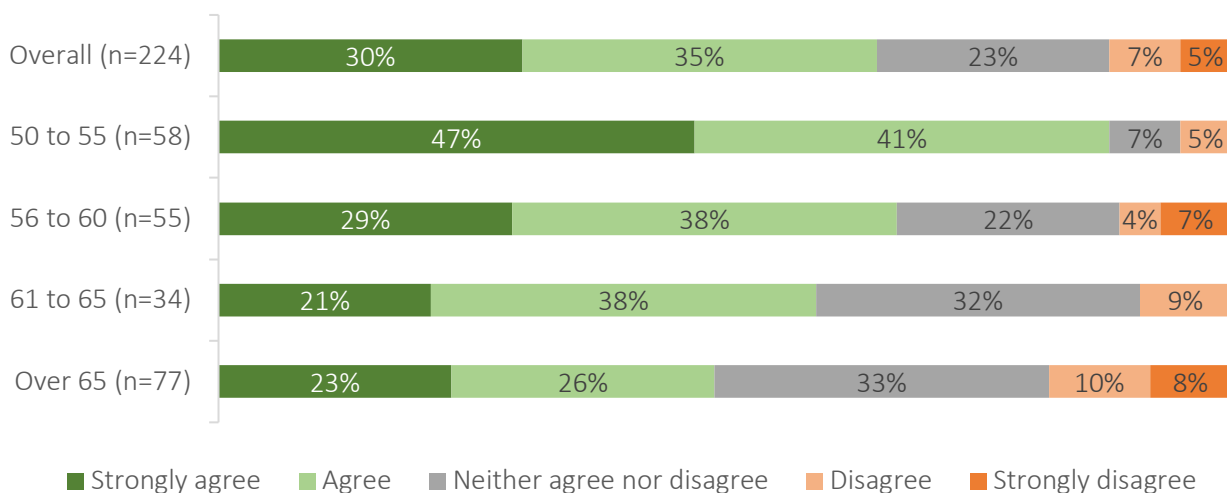
Figure 44 highlights how strongly respondents agree or disagree that continuing their education helped with career development and advancement. Two-thirds (65%) agree or strongly agree that continuing their education helped their career development and advancement. Respondents with a professional or doctoral degree are the least likely to agree or strongly agree that it had.

**Figure 44: Career Advancement after Continuing Education by Education Level**



Younger age groups are more likely to agree or strongly agree that continuing their education helped with career development and advancement. Eighty-eight percent of 50 to 55-year-olds agree or strongly agree.

**Figure 45: Career Advancement after Continuing Education by Age Group**



Madeline is the most likely to strongly agree that continuing education helped with career development while Lisa is the least likely to strongly agree. Forty-five percent of individuals among the Joshua persona agree that continuing education helped with career development and advancement.

**Figure 46: Career Advancement after Continuing Education by Persona**

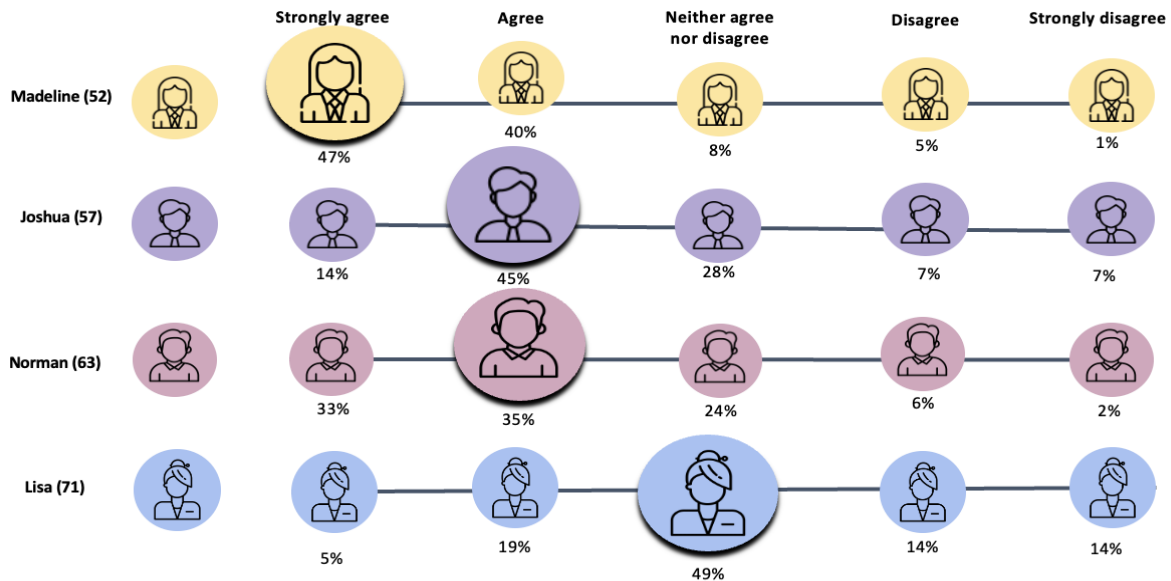


Figure 47 depicts the proportion of respondents who report continuing their education led to a promotion or new role. Sixty-three percent said that continuing their education did not lead to a promotion or new role while a third (33%) stated that it did. Overall, as age increases, respondents are less likely to say continuing their education led to a promotion.

**Figure 47: Promotion Received after Continuing Education by Age Group**

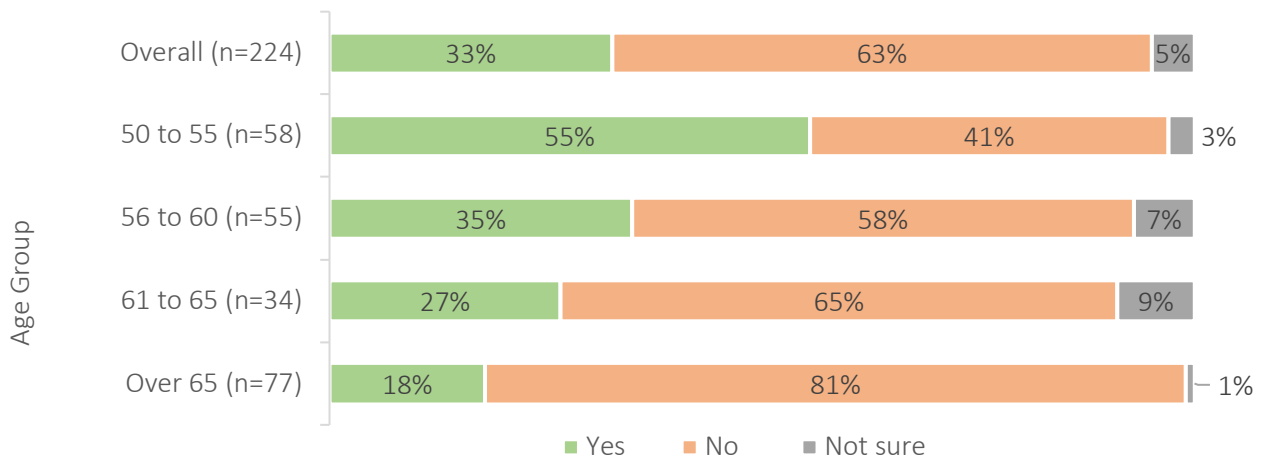


Figure 48 also depicts the proportion of respondents who report continuing their education led to a promotion or new role by their highest level of education completed. Respondents with graduate degrees were the least likely (18%) to report that it did.

**Figure 48: Promotion Received after Continuing Education by Education Level**

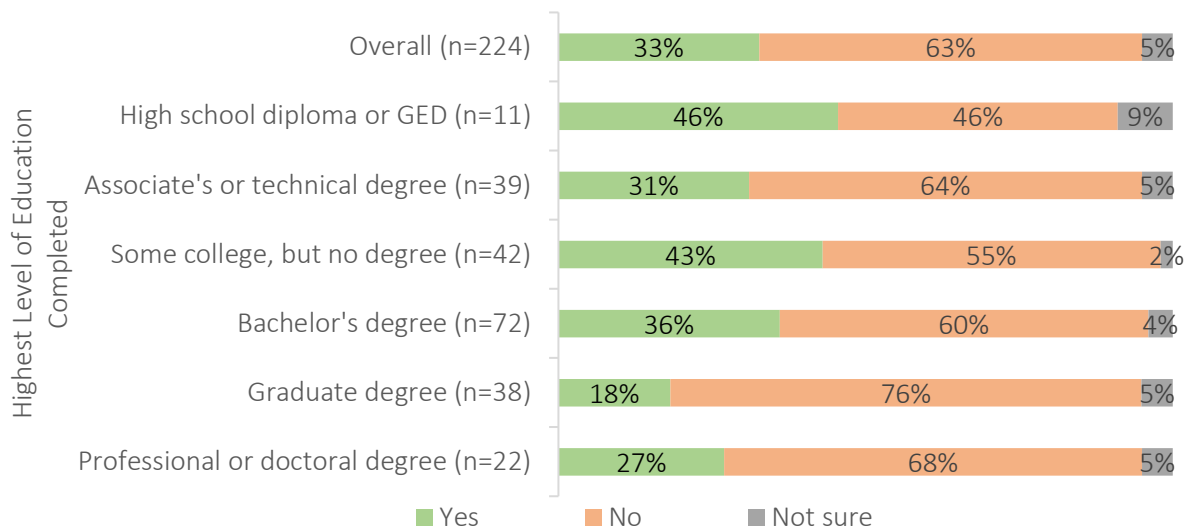
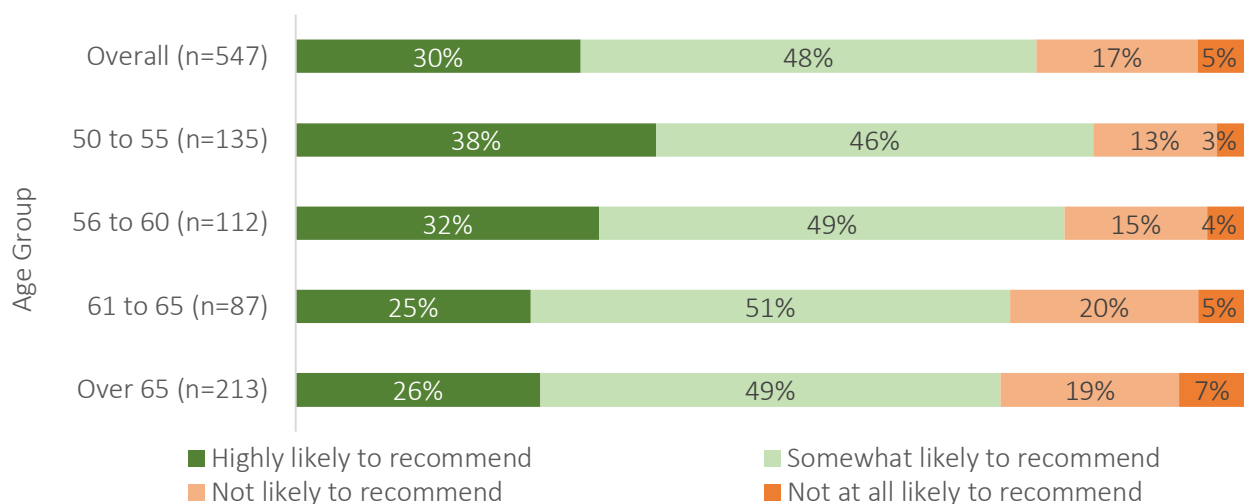


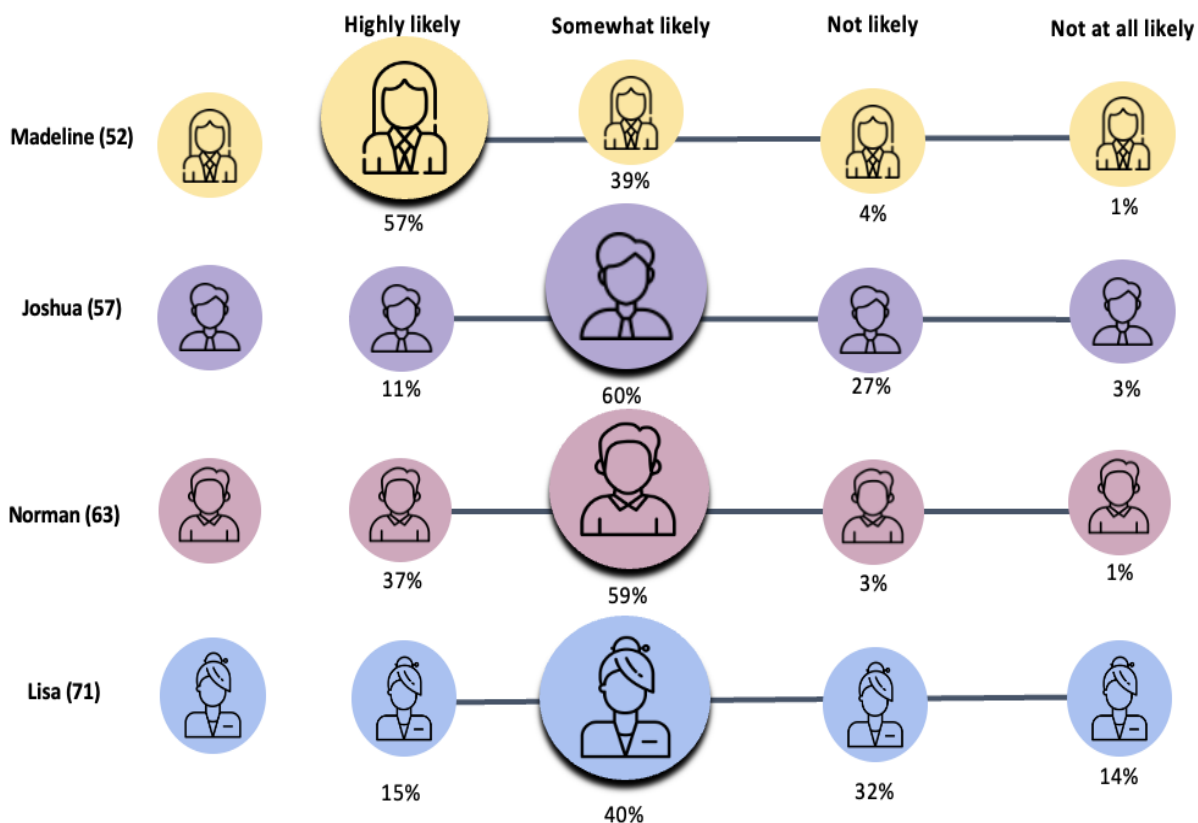
Figure 49 shows how likely respondents would be to recommend pursuing additional education to a colleague or friend that is their age. Over three-quarters (78%) are highly likely or somewhat likely to recommend pursuing additional education. Younger age groups (50 to 55 and 56 to 60) are more likely to highly recommend (38%, 32% respectively) pursuing additional education to someone their age than older age groups, 61 to 65, 25% highly likely, and over 65, 26% highly likely.

**Figure 49: Recommending Continuing Education by Age Group**



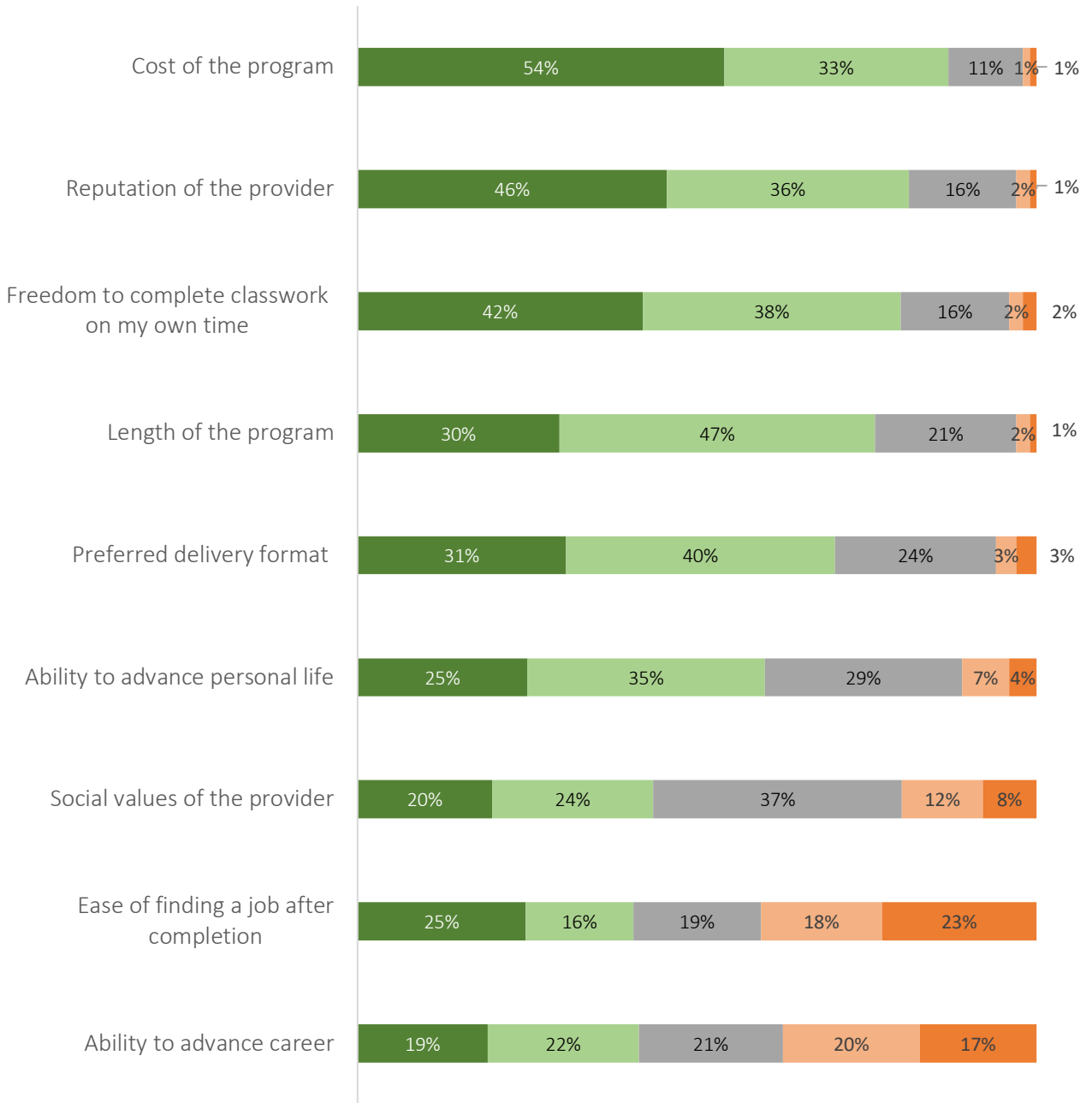
Madeline is the most likely to recommend additional education to a friend her age while Lisa is the least likely. Sixty percent of individuals among the Joshua persona and 59% among the Norman persona are somewhat likely to recommend additional education to a friend their age.

**Figure 50: Recommending Continuing Education by Persona**



Respondents were asked how important different factors are when selecting an educational program. Respondents agreed that the cost of a program is the most important factor (54% extremely important) when considering continuing education. Other extremely important factors include the reputation of the provider (46%), freedom to complete classwork on their own time (42%), and preferred delivery format (31%). The least important factor is the ability to advance their careers, with 17% agreeing it is not at all important.

**Figure 51: Importance of Factors in Continuing Education (n=547)**



■ Extremely important ■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not very important ■ Not at all important

Madeline’s most important factor when deciding whether to continue her education is the cost of the program while the least important factor is the social values of the provider. Joshua and Lisa’s most important factor is also the cost of the program, while their least important factor is the ability to advance their careers. Norman’s most important factor is the reputation of the provider, and the least is the ease of finding a job after completion.

**Figure 52: Importance of Factors in Continuing Education by Persona**

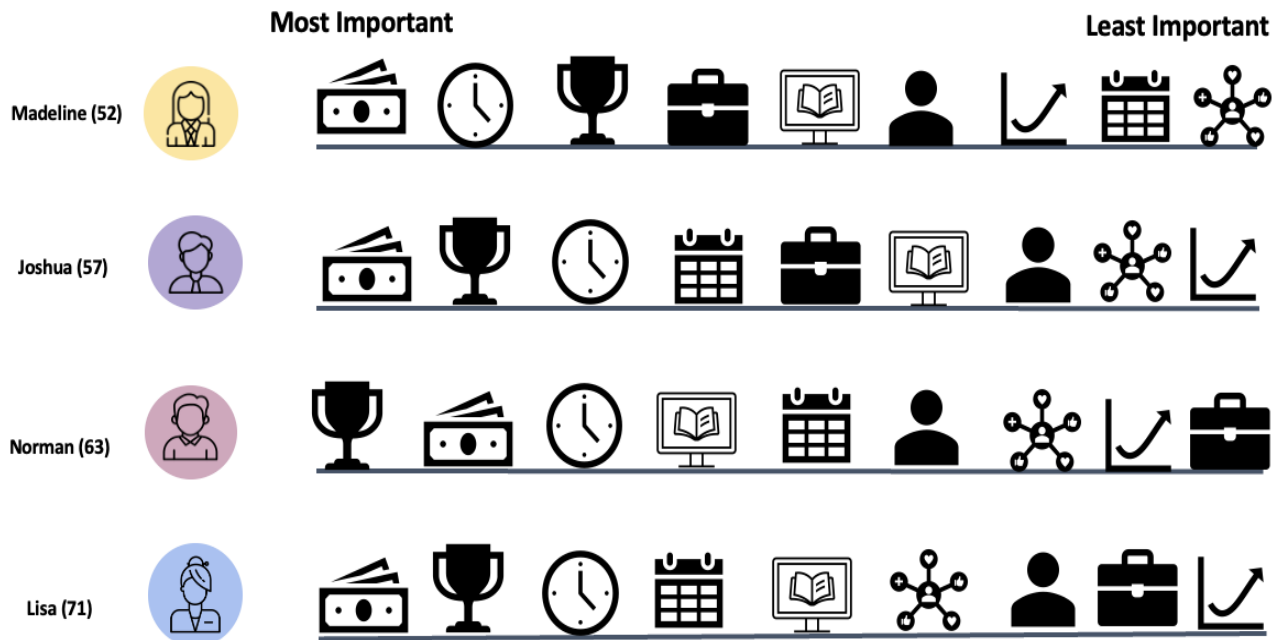
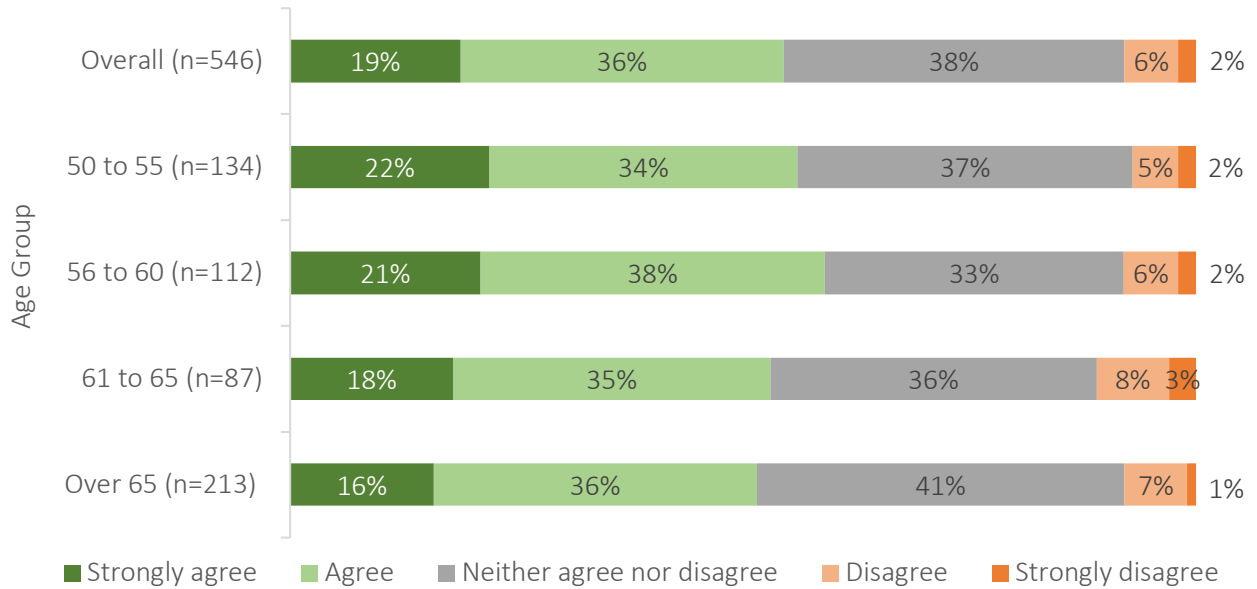


Figure 53 shows how strongly respondents agree or disagree that higher education providers such as colleges and universities offer the best programs. Over half (55%) agree or strongly agree that higher education providers offer the best programs for learning new skills, continuing education, or receiving additional training. Younger age groups are slightly more likely to strongly agree than older age groups. Across all age groups, a very small percentage (1% to 3%) of respondents strongly disagree that higher education providers offer the best programs.

**Figure 53: Quality of Programs from Higher Education Providers by Age Group**



Madeline is most likely to strongly agree that colleges and universities offer the best programs for continuing education while Joshua is the least likely to strongly agree.

**Figure 54: Quality of Programs from Higher Education Providers by Persona**

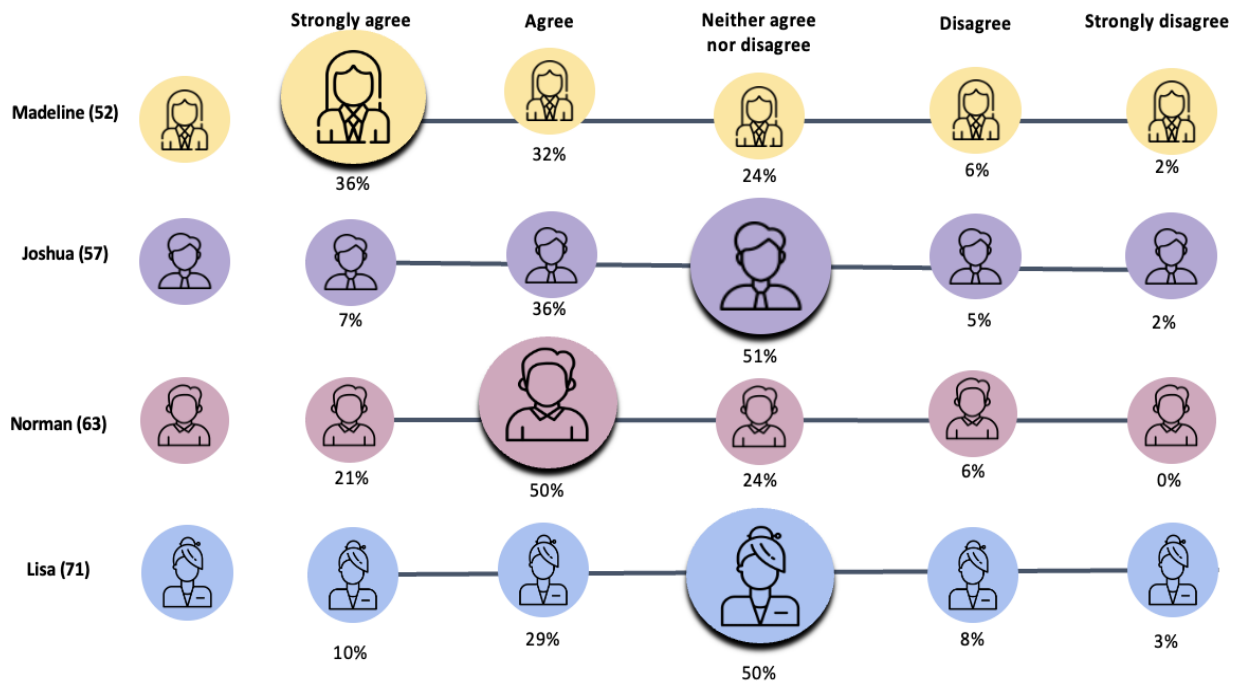
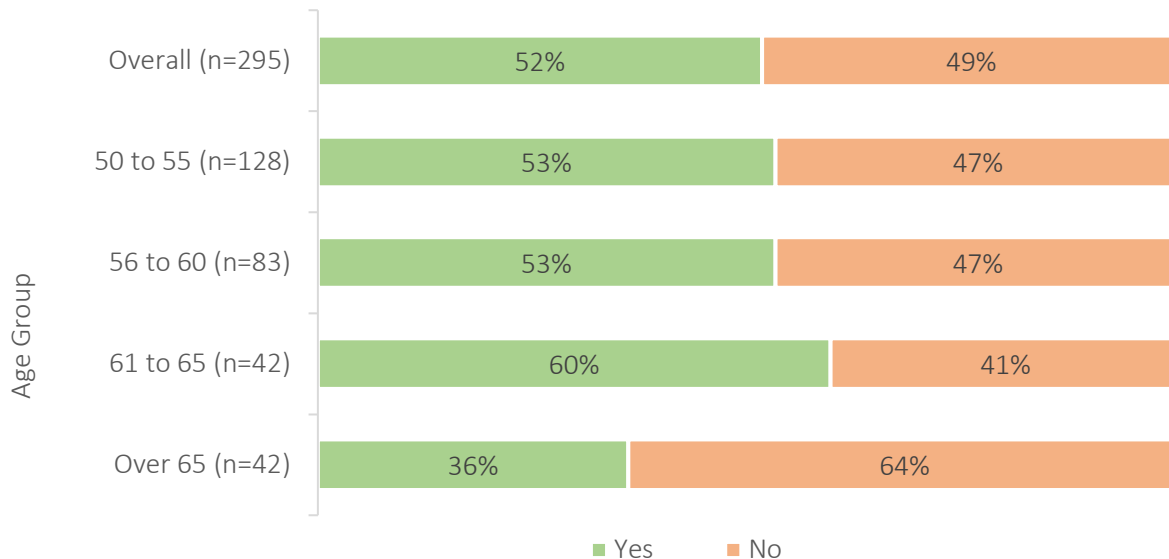


Figure 55 illustrates whether or not respondents have considered retiring or changing jobs in the last two years. Over half (52%) said yes and 49% said no.

**Figure 55: Considering Retirement or Job Changes by Age Group**



Among those who have considered changing jobs in the last two years, two-thirds (66%) have not actually changed jobs or employers, while 34% have. Respondents who are 61 to 65 were the most likely (60%), more than any other age group. Respondents over 65 were the least likely (27%).

**Figure 56: Changing Jobs or Employers by Age Group**

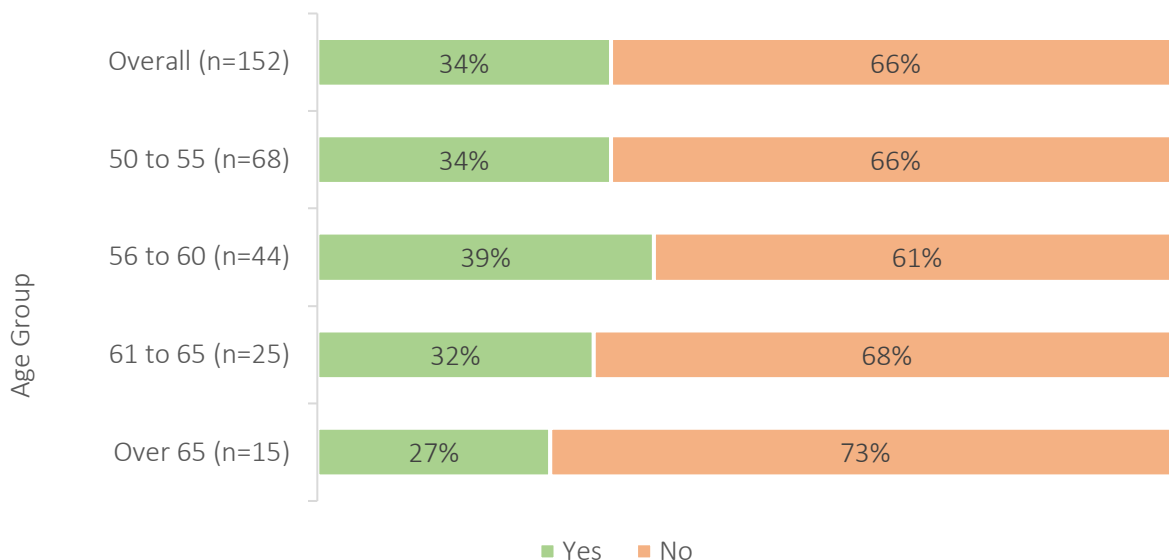
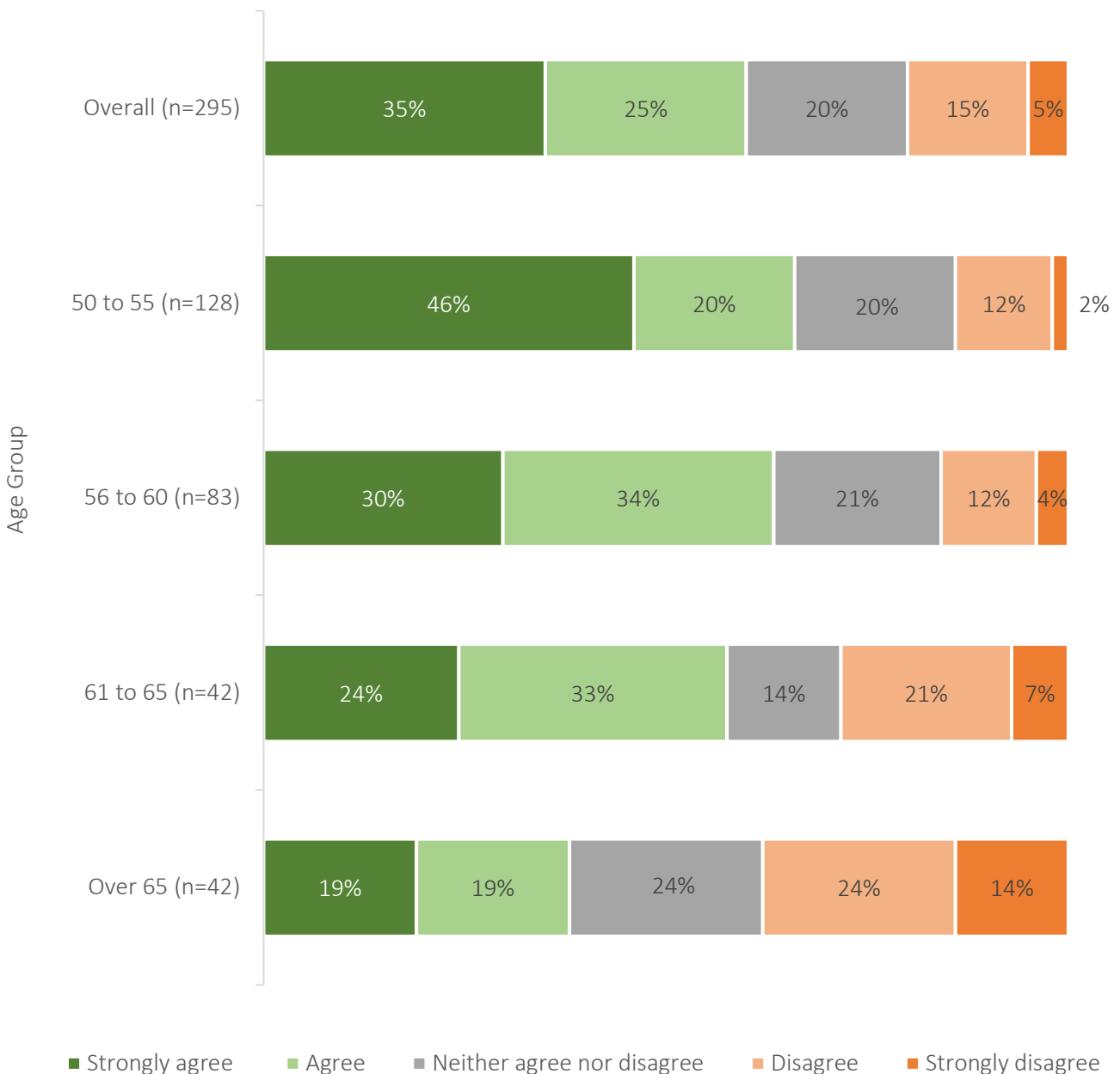




Figure 57 depicts how strongly respondents agree or disagree that they would prefer to be retired right now if they could fiscally afford it, while a quarter agree, and 20% neither agree nor disagree. Fifteen percent either disagree or strongly disagree that they would prefer retirement if they had the financial capacity to do so. Younger age groups are significantly more likely to strongly agree than older age groups, and older age groups are significantly more likely to strongly disagree.

**Figure 57: Retirement Preferences by Age Group**



## Demographics

Figure 58 illustrates respondents' household income group. Twenty-nine percent have a household income of under \$35,000, 19% in the \$50,000 to \$75,000 range, and 17% in the \$35,000 to \$50,000 range.

**Figure 58: Income Category (n=546)**

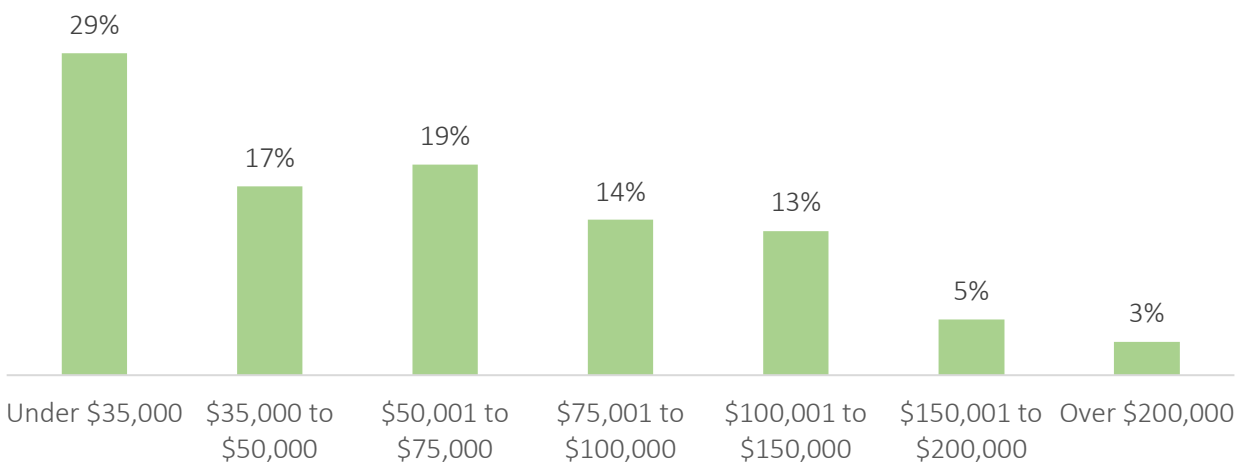


Figure 59 shows respondent gender identification. Over half (57%) identify as female.

**Figure 59: Gender (n=546)**

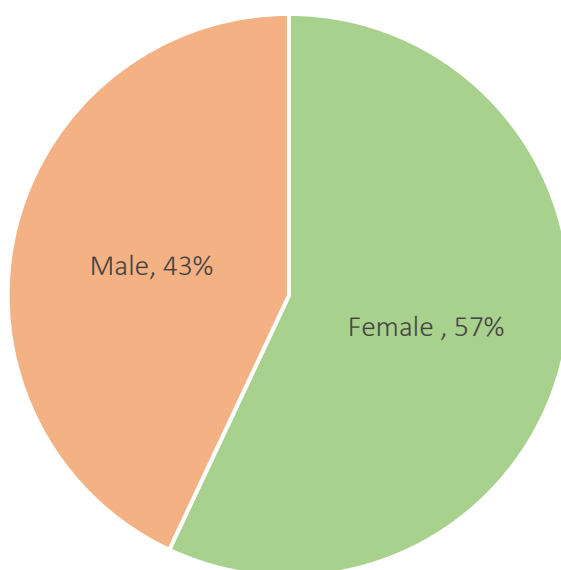
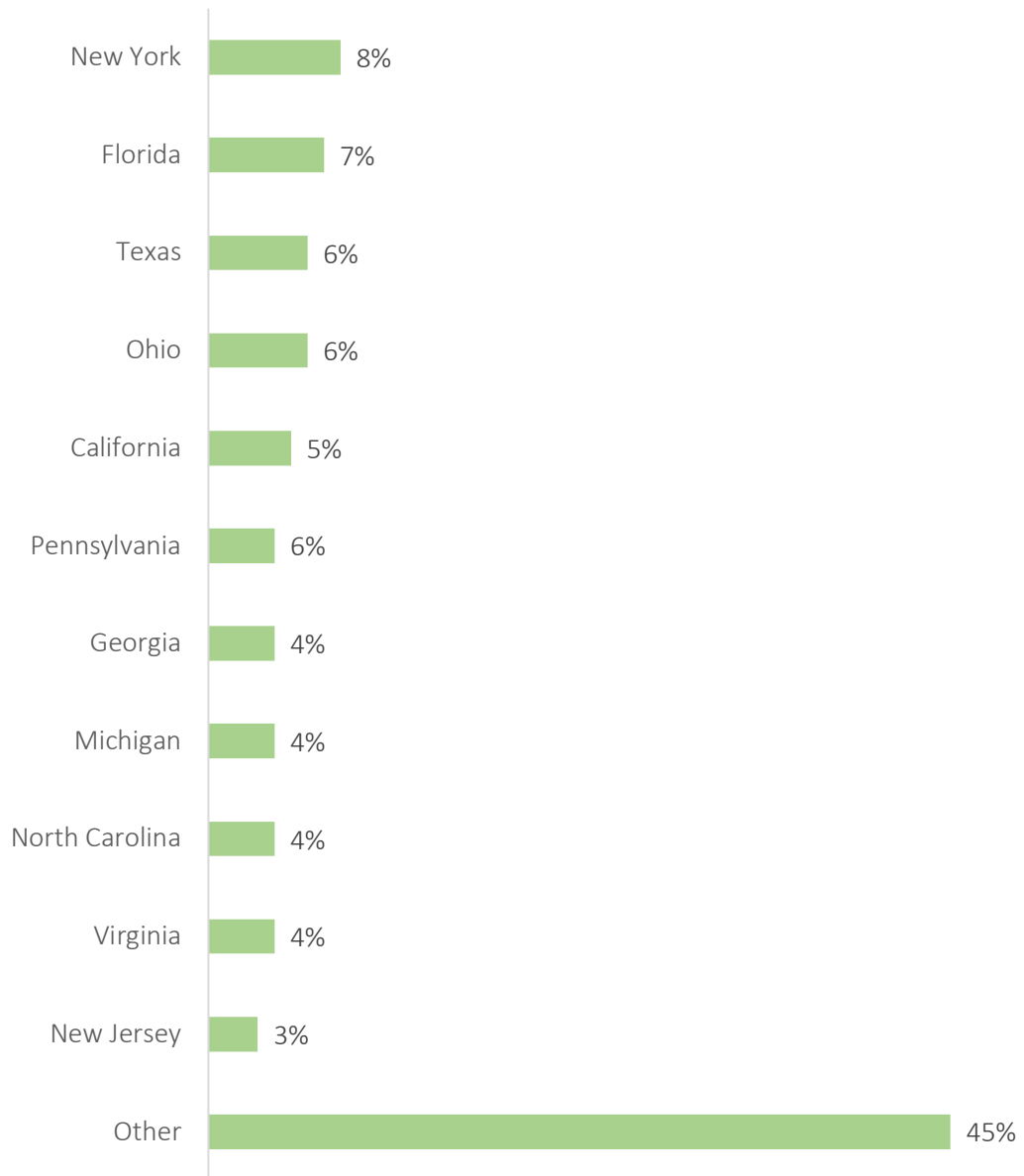


Figure 60 depicts respondents' current state of residence. Among all respondents, 8% currently live in New York, 7% in Florida, and 6% each in Texas and Ohio. States that had less than 3% residency were included in the "Other" category.

**Figure 60: State of Residence (n=546)**



## Impact on Higher Education

The Boomer generation is swiftly coming into retirement and higher education institutions must adapt accordingly. While retirees have less interest in gaining skills for career advancement, many are still interested in continuing their education. Institutions must offer flexible, supportive, and skills-based programs in order to match the needs of this particular audience of mature adult learners.

Higher education institutions have a unique opportunity to attract an untraditional audience of mature adult learners- Boomers and retirees. While younger generations, particularly Zoomers, are opting for non-traditional routes of continuing education, Boomers still believe in the utility of higher education institutions, with a majority agreeing that colleges and universities offer the best programs. However, this audience is not looking to pursue traditional degrees or credentials, but rather, wants flexible, affordable, and succinct educational programs. Boomers are retiring at unprecedented rates because they no longer want to work but wish to enjoy life with little time commitments or stress. Retirees who opt for continuing education are doing it for pleasure, rather than business. Therefore, higher education must tailor its programs to this particular audience, creating opportunities for skill-building, personal enrichment, and creative endeavors.

For Boomers who have continued their education over the past 10 years, 12% took courses in technology/software/IT, the most of any other category. In fact, when respondents were asked about their subjects of interest pertaining to future continuing education, 21% said technology, the most common response among all participants. There is no denying the value of technical skills in today's society, as it not only is a staple in the workforce but has become an essential life skill. Boomers want to keep their educational palette fresh and up to date, they want to stay sharp by building skills that are useful and leverageable in today's society. Institutions of higher education have an opportunity to attract this audience of mature adult learners by offering short courses, modules, or programs that help Boomers build their technical skills and stay up to date with new software and computer programs.

In addition to technical training, Boomers are interested in pursuing education that will enrich their lives and bring fulfillment. Among all participants in the survey, Boomers' top three motivations for learning were personal growth/enjoyment, keeping the mind active, and increasing knowledge. When considering continuing education, the least important factor for Boomers was the ability to advance their career. Many Boomers are retired, they're no longer interested in professional development or advancing their careers, they want to learn about topics they enjoy with minimum pressure or time constraints. Institutions must offer programs that match Boomers' curiosity and fulfill their desire for creativity and personal enrichment.

## Roles that Organizations like MindEdge Can Play

With the emerging generation of mature adult learners and the continuation of the Great Resignation, more and more Boomers are finding themselves either retired or nearing retirement with deep hunger for learning. However, the mature adult learner landscape is one of great diversity and variety, with a range of education preferences and needs. It is crucial that higher education institutions position themselves with the right credentials, opportunities, and offerings in order to attract this particular generation of adult learners.

Organizations like MindEdge can help institutions grow profitable revenue streams by successfully marketing the right courses to their target audiences. MindEdge does this by figuring out what an institution's audience wants, and helps to market to their preferences with precision, thus, increasing sales and impressing learners so they will want to come back for more. In addition to marketing services, institutions can offer any combination of MindEdge courses and certificates to their audiences. For this specific group of mature adult learners, MindEdge can offer inexpensive and time-efficient personal enrichment courses along with career-related professional development courses. And learners can access courses with self-paced or blended learning formats. The 50-plus age group is growing and is diverse. MindEdge courses that may interest Boomers include personal enrichment, web design, online learning, emerging technologies, computer applications, and data analytics, among others. Organizations like MindEdge can help higher education institutions better position themselves to match the unique educational preferences of mature adult learners.