Survey on the use of digital technologies

among members of Vrienden (Friends) of Senioren Academie Groningen – Friesland – Drenthe (The Netherlands)

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A sample of UTA-students in Groningen as magnifying glass for the 'Results' of the Selid project

Early in 2020, in the same period that the Selid fieldwork took place, Peter Hug executed a test case among senior students in Groningen on the use of digital technologies by means of the Selid-questionnaire. 40 samples were duly returned, which, compared to the much larger samples in other cities (ranging from 100 to 220), has little statistical significance. But it provides an interesting tool for a broad overview of the 'Results' until now collected in Alicante, Bratislava, Dresden, Uppsala and Wroclaw. Following the chapters A to H of the questionnaire this resulted in some preliminary observations:

A). Respondent profile
The respondents in Groningen are an even split by gender, like in Alicante and Dresden; in Bratislava, Uppsala and Wroclaw females form a majority (70-80%). By age the Groningen sample peaks in the category 71-80; Alicante and Bratislava in 61-70. In the other cities age is more evenly spread. The educational level is high everywhere with Uppsala leading the score with 90% university graduates; in the sector of work we see an overrepresentation of 'health' in Uppsala and of 'education' in Groningen (both over 40%).

B). Technological resources available
In all cities respondents rate their computer literacy mostly 'acceptable to good' (60-70%), Bratislava peaks here with 62 % 'good to very good'. All use principally the smartphone and the pc, closely followed by the printer. The internet connection is found at home.

C). Learning modes of the use of the digital technologies
Clear preference everywhere for the options 'Self-assessment' and 'Support by friends/relatives'

D). Cases of more frequent use of digital technologies
In general, the smartphone leads in the use of personal communication and social networks, whereas the PC remains reserved for information search, E-commerce, E-banking and Office automation. Concerning photographs, videos,G.I.S. we see a mixture: more smartphone in Groningen, Bratislava and Uppsala, more PC in Wroclaw. Voice input is rarely used in Uppsala and Wroclaw, a bit more in Alicante, Bratislava and Dresden (20-30%) and in Groningen we found no users of voice input at all.

E). The smartphone
A wide range of reasons for not using a smartphone was given, in which the possibility ´no interest, no need´ deserves special attention: less than 10% of the respondents mentioned it in Uppsala and Bratislava, 35% in Alicante, over 40% in Dresden and Wroclaw. In Groningen this possibility was almost unanimously mentioned. Making calls, sending messages and Whatsapp is everywhere the most frequent use of the smartphone(daily); several times a week it is used for making/sending photographs and videos

F). The internet of things
The penetration of electronic devices in the household of senior students is modest, traditional control is mainly preferred since less complicated. A cautious beginning is seen in the field of health sensors, home security systems, watch, car and telephone. Suspicion of misuse in digital applications is most frequently mentioned concerning online-shopping, administrative or banking formalities and information search.
H). Perception and attitude toward digital technologies
The marked over-all winner of the 4 statements that respondents could select was `Thanks to new technologies I have improved the communication with friends and family`.
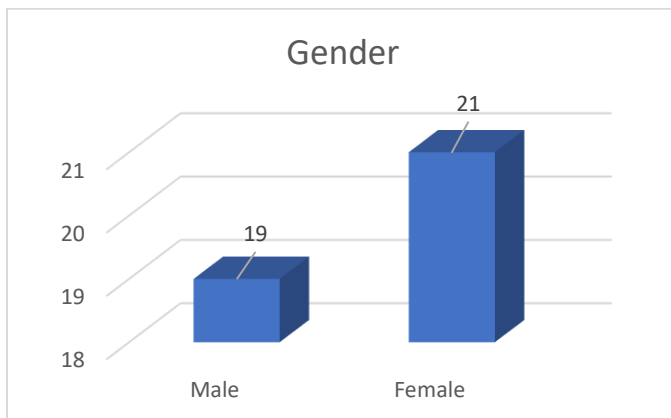
Also, much unanimity on the appreciation of the use of ICT applications: highest scores from all cities on the qualifications practical, efficient, and…entertaining!

This overview shows that senior students in Europe do have a lot in common. The next step in the analysis would be to focus on the differences that are also found between the cities. Here the cultural and economical differences among the countries involved provide an obvious starting point. Equally the respondent profiles (voir A) contain useful clues. As conclusive remark we want to emphasize that the research took place before the Corona pandemic in 2020. It would be of great interest to repeat it once the pandemic is over.
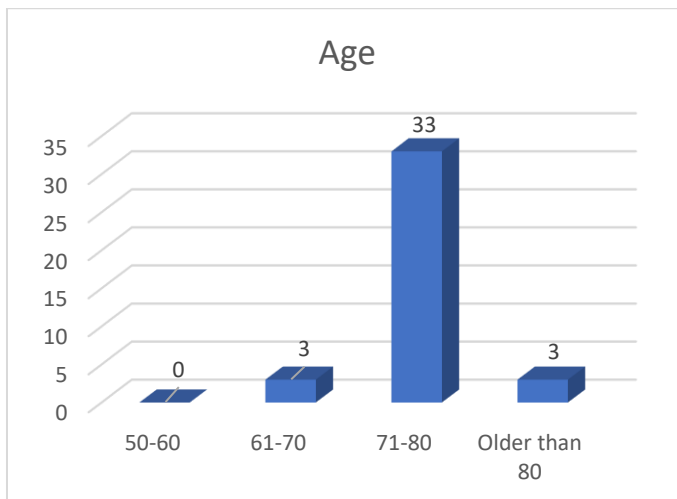
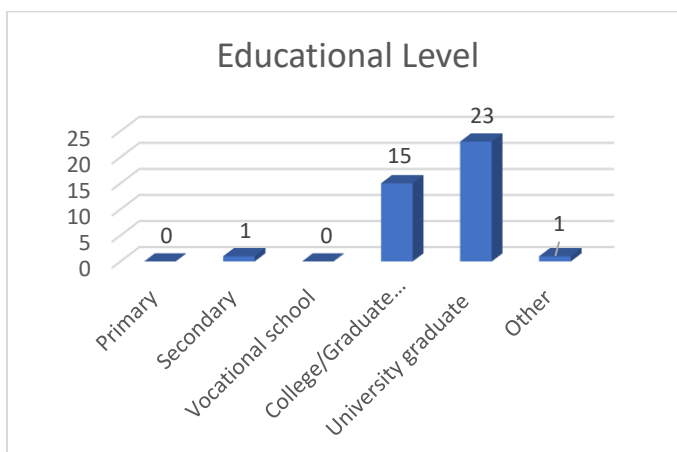IJda Blüm

A. RESPONDENT PROFILE

A.1 Gender

Gender

Male	19
Female	21

(y-axis: 18, 19, 20, 21)

A.2 Age

Age

50-60	0
61-70	3
71-80	33
Older than 80	3

(y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35)

A.3 Country of Residence
All respondents live in The Netherlands.

A.4 Educational Level:

Educational Level

Primary	0
Secondary	1
Vocational school	0
College/Graduate...	15
University graduate	23
Other	1

(y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25)

A. 5 Which sector do you currently work/or did you previously work in if you are not working now?
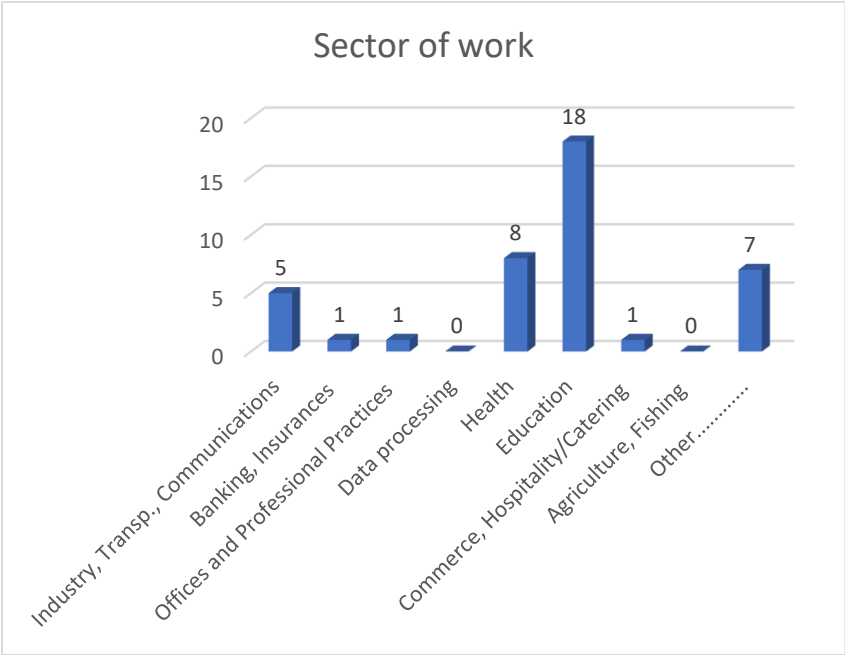
A.6 Marital/Life Status:

A. 7 Where do you live?

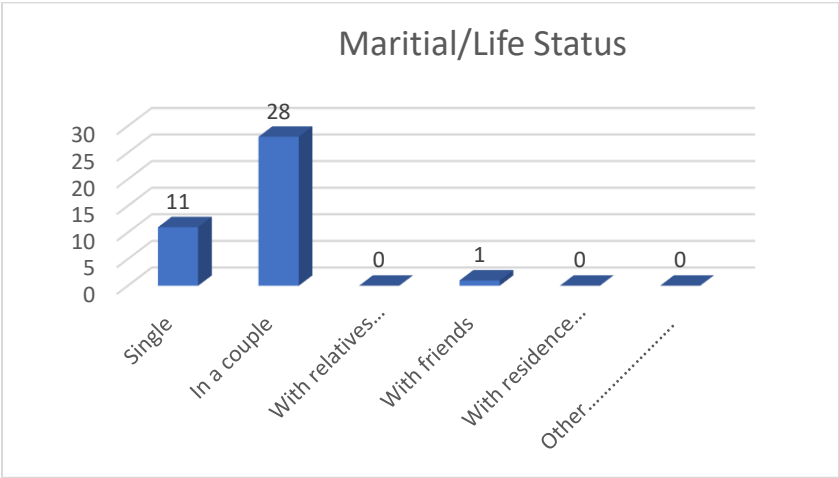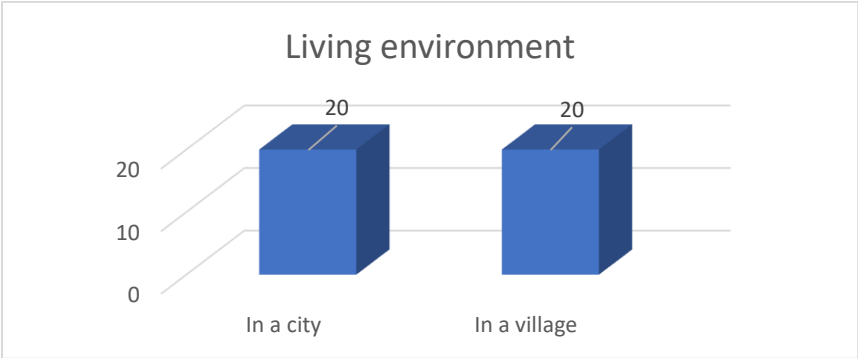## B. TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

B.1. How do you rate your computer literacy (the ability to use the computer)?

Computer literacy

	Very low	Low	Acceptable	Good	Very good
Count	0	1	21	1...	7
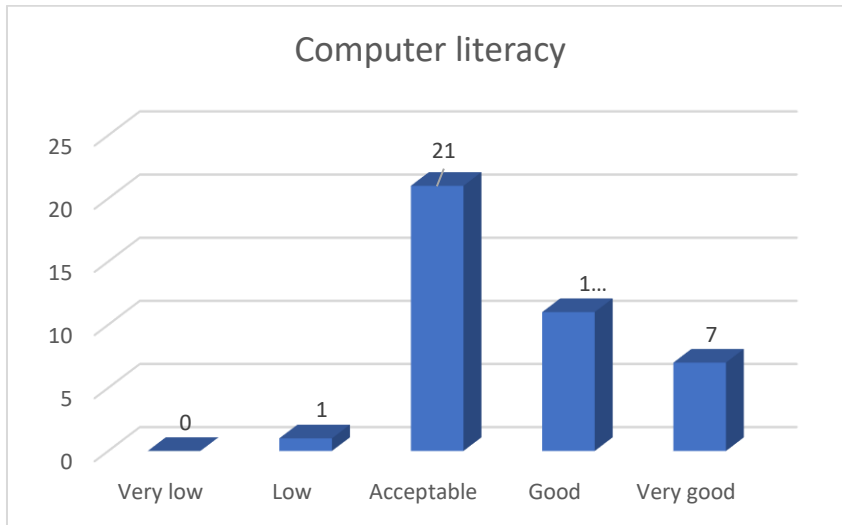
B.2. Which of the following technical devices do you use and to what extent?

Use of technical devices

Devices: Traditional phone/Conventional Mobile, Smartphone, Tablet / e-reader, Personal Computer (PC) / Notebook, Printer / Scanner, Game console /Portable game console, Camera / Camcorder, Other devices (Webcam, Satellite...)

Legend: frequently, rarely, never
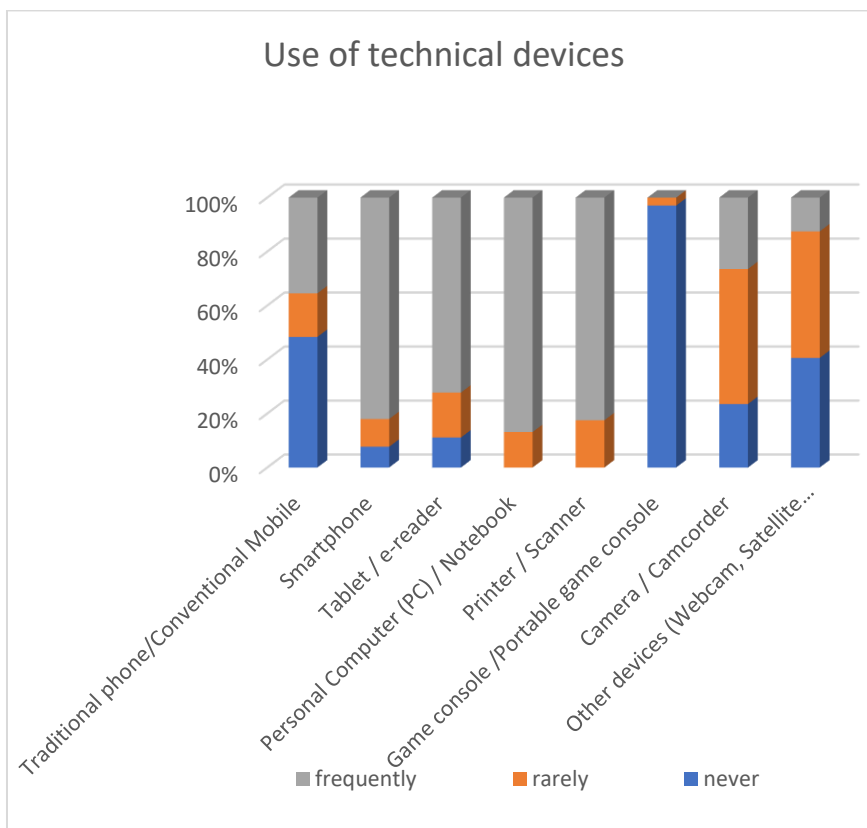
B.3. Where do you use access to the Internet connection (You can choose more than one)

Access to internet

Category	Value
at home	39
at U3A/Senior Academy	0
In the office/at work	2
in library	5
In residential home/ clubs	2
at home of friends and...	17
Other	9
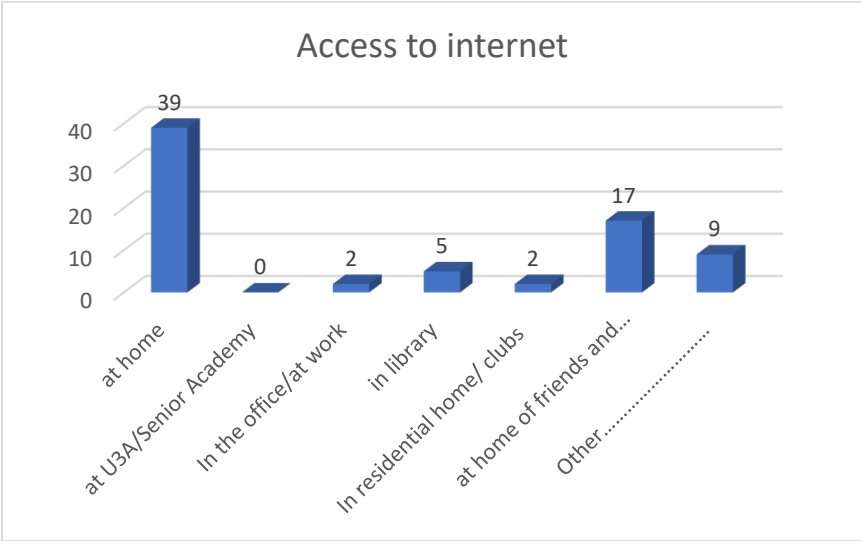
C. LEARNING MODES OF THE USE OF THE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

C.1. When you need to learn the basic use or to deepen your knowledge about the use of an ICT system, which type of training do you prefer? (4 options prioritized)

Prefered type of training

Category	Value
Lectures and...	6
Workshops	22
Computer regulars' table	2
Taster course	11
Distance learning	5
Lessons in the classroom...	10
Self-assessment	22
Support by relatives or...	23
Support by electronic...	5
Support by telecomm...	4
Other...............	2
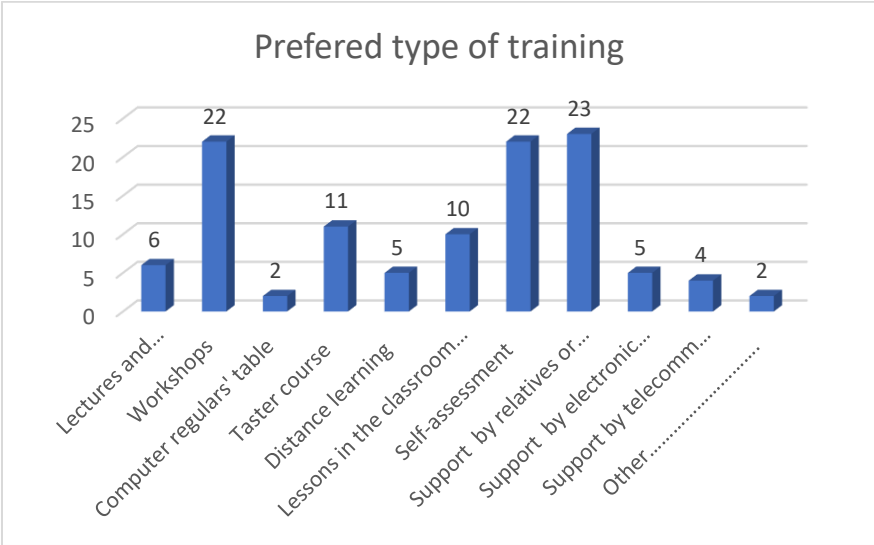
C.2. Do you attend to any offers concerning ICT training organized by University Programmes for Older Adults?

ICT training at UTA

Category	Value
yes	25
no	15
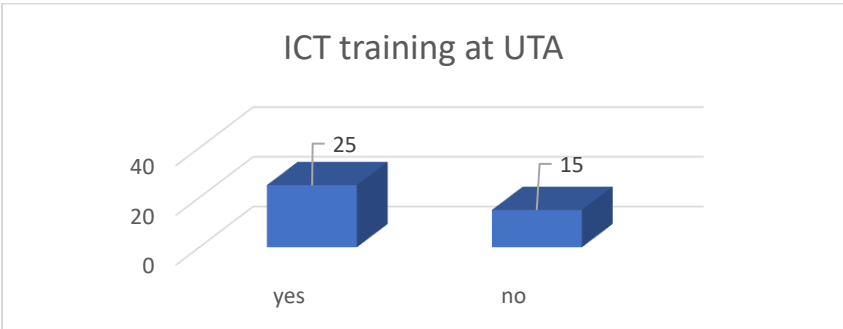
D. CASES OF MORE FREQUENT USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

D.1. Please indicate which devices you use for the possible uses of digital technologies in the left column

Use of technical devices
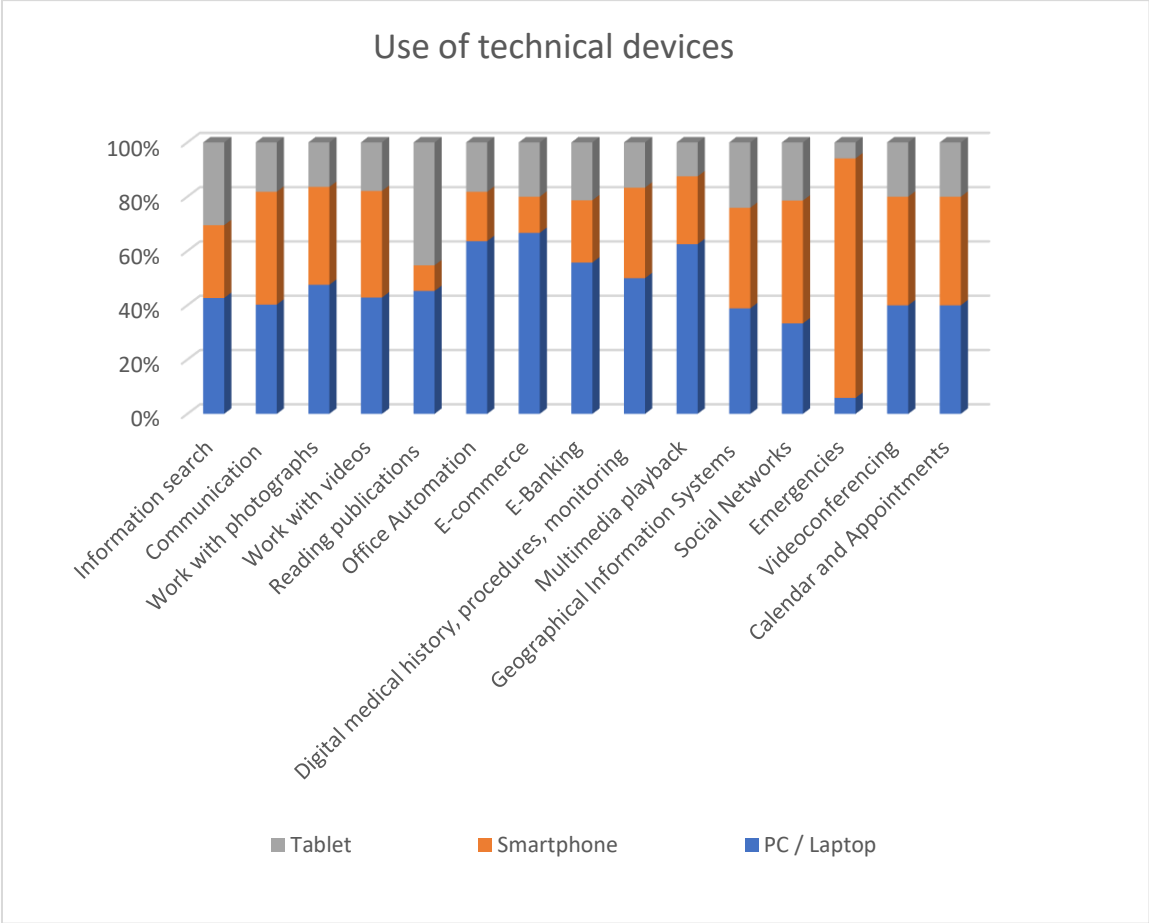
D.2. Do you use voice input?

Voice input

E. THE SMARTPHONE

E.1. What are the reasons for older people for not using/not wanting to use a Smartphone? (Multiple answers possible):

Reasons for not using smartphones

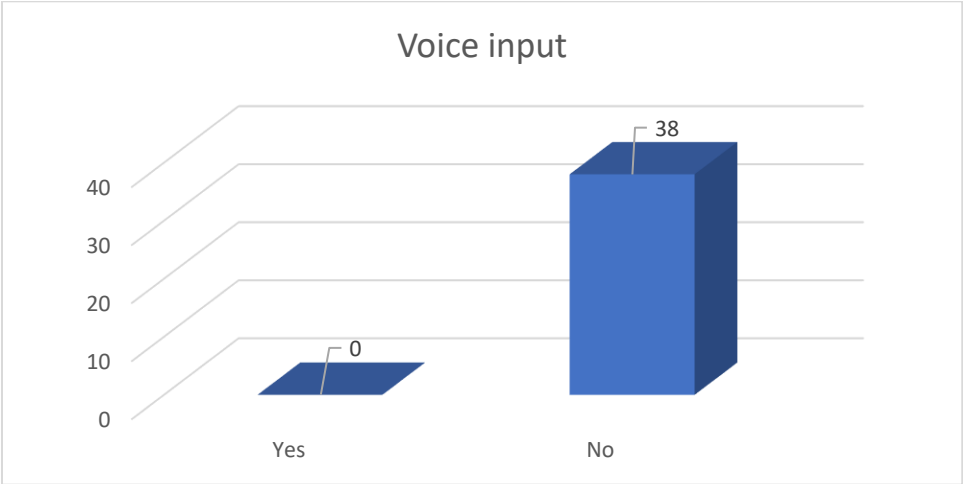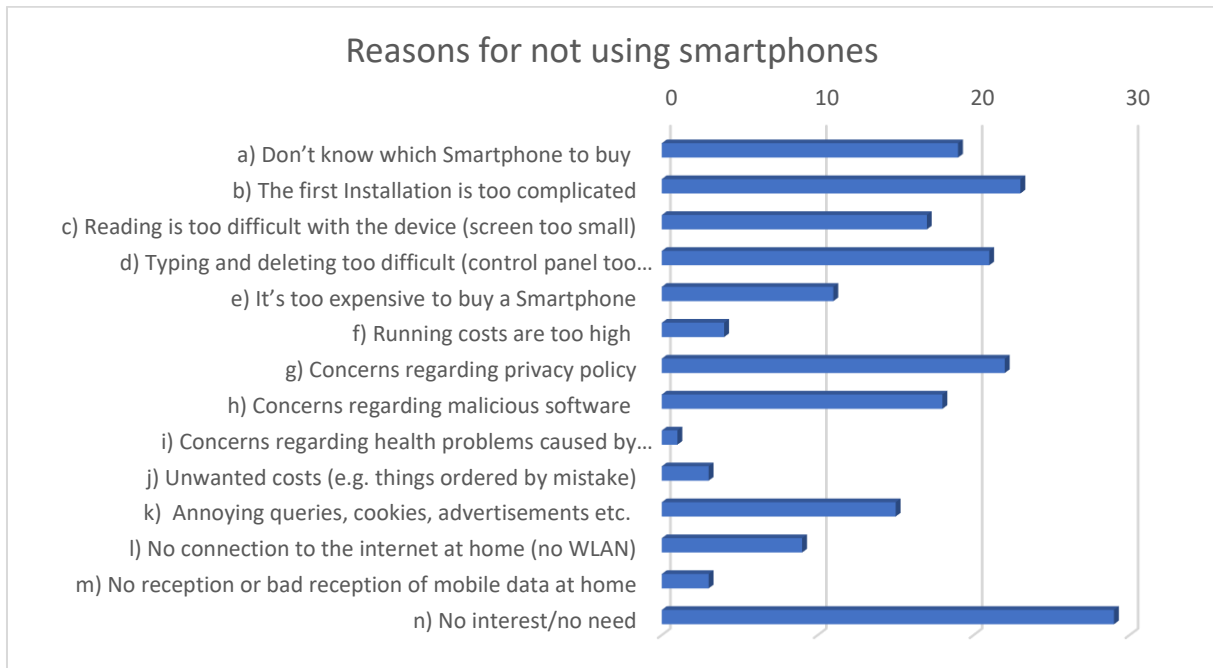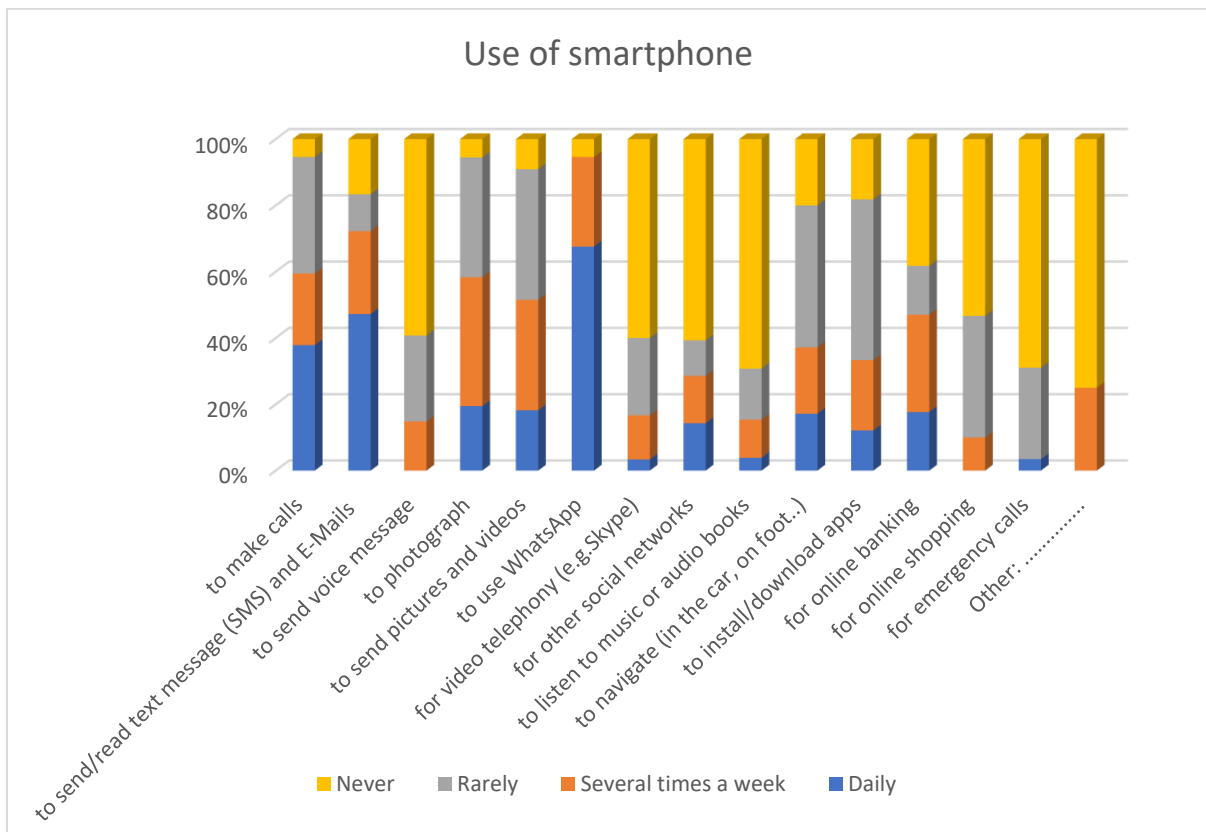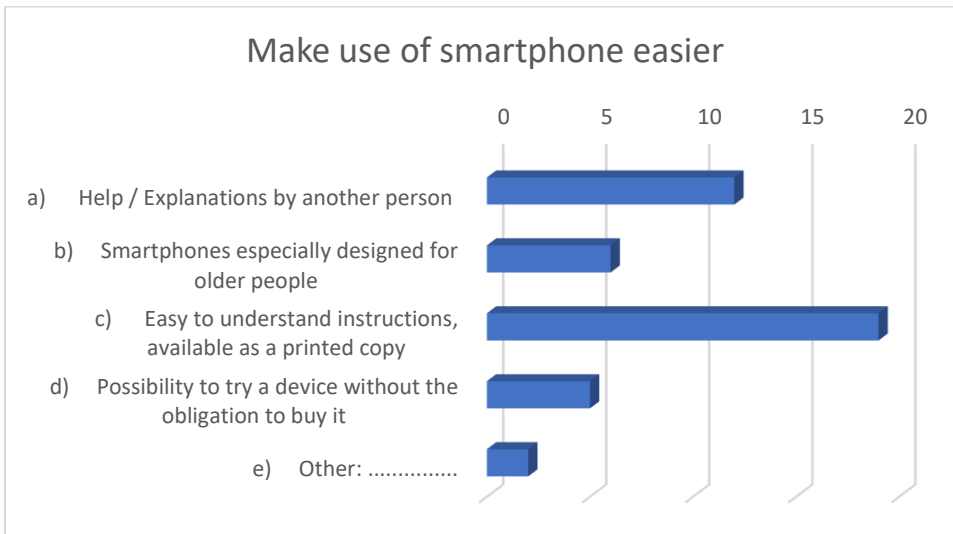- a) Don't know which Smartphone to buy
- b) The first Installation is too complicated
- c) Reading is too difficult with the device (screen too small)
- d) Typing and deleting too difficult (control panel too...
- e) It's too expensive to buy a Smartphone
- f) Running costs are too high
- g) Concerns regarding privacy policy
- h) Concerns regarding malicious software
- i) Concerns regarding health problems caused by...
- j) Unwanted costs (e.g. things ordered by mistake)
- k) Annoying queries, cookies, advertisements etc.
- l) No connection to the internet at home (no WLAN)
- m) No reception or bad reception of mobile data at home
- n) No interest/no need

E.2. I use a Smartphone....

Use of smartphone

Legend: Never, Rarely, Several times a week, Daily

Categories: to make calls; to send/read text message (SMS) and E-Mails; to send voice message; to photograph; to send pictures and videos; to use WhatsApp; for video telephony (e.g.Skype); for other social networks; to listen to music or audio books; to navigate (in the car, on foot..); to install/download apps; for online banking; for online shopping; for emergency calls; Other: ……………

E.3. What would make your use of a Smartphone easier?

Make use of smartphone easier

	0	5	10	15	20

a)   Help / Explanations by another person

b)   Smartphones especially designed for older people

c)   Easy to understand instructions, available as a printed copy

d)   Possibility to try a device without the obligation to buy it
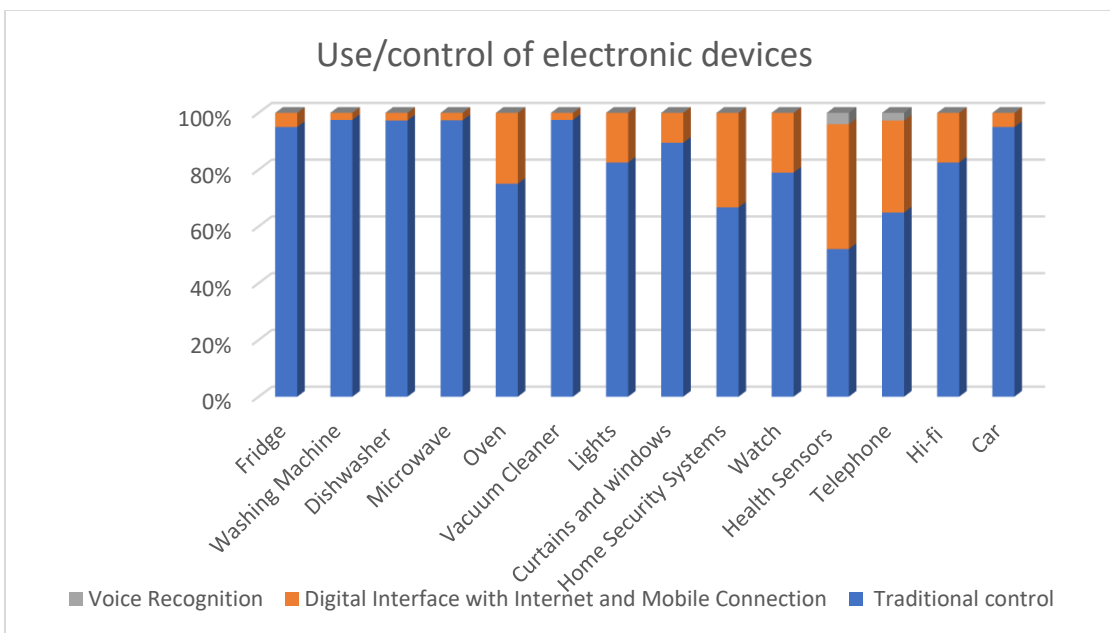
e)   Other: ....

- less smooth surface, due to osteoarthritis in my hands the grip on small objects is difficult.
- Preformed handles on the device.

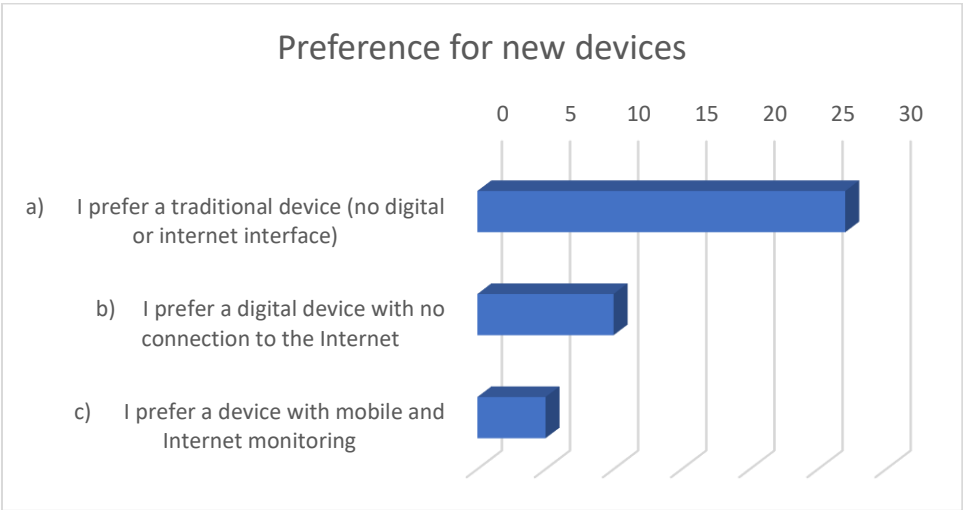**E.4. What kind of new use possibilities you would like to have implemented in the Smartphone?**
- operating appliances at home
- domotica
- reminder of the use of medication (during holidays)
- contacts with doctors

F. THE INTERNET OF THE THINGS

F.1. When you use an electronic device, how do you prefer to use/control it?

Use/control of electronic devices

Categories: Fridge, Washing Machine, Dishwasher, Microwave, Oven, Vacuum Cleaner, Lights, Curtains and windows, Home Security Systems, Watch, Health Sensors, Telephone, Hi-fi, Car

Legend: ■ Voice Recognition ■ Digital Interface with Internet and Mobile Connection ■ Traditional control
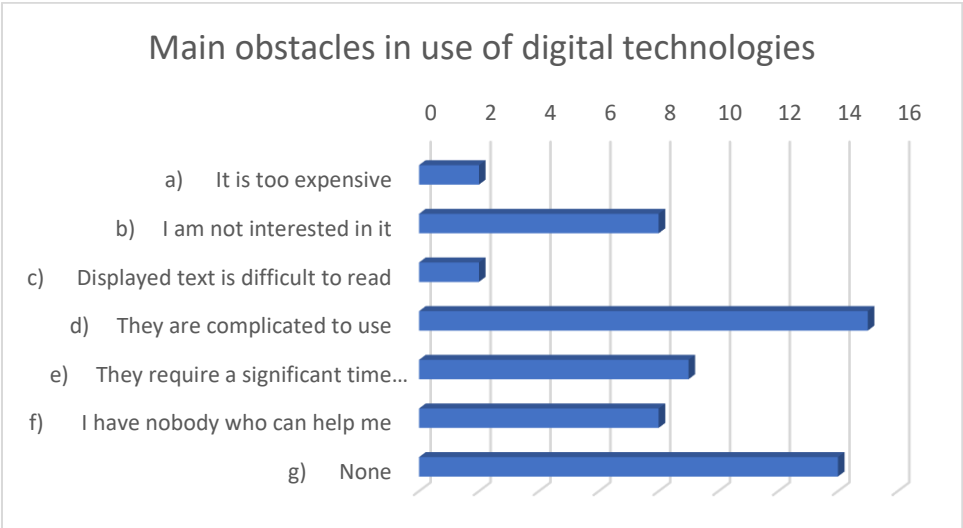
F.2. When you buy a new device, do you take in consideration if they have the possibility of being controlled by mobile or internet connection or do you prefer a traditional device? (You can choose more than one)

Preference for new devices

Option	Value (approx)
a) I prefer a traditional device (no digital or internet interface)	~25
b) I prefer a digital device with no connection to the Internet	~6
c) I prefer a device with mobile and Internet monitoring	~3

G. MAIN DIFFICULTIES IN THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

G.1. Indicate the main obstacles you face when using digital technologies and apps/applications. (You can choose more than one)

Main obstacles in use of digital technologies

| Option	Value (approx)
a) It is too expensive	~1.5
b) I am not interested in it	~8
c) Displayed text is difficult to read	~1.5
d) They are complicated to use	~15
e) They require a significant time…	~9
f) I have nobody who can help me	~11
g) None	~14

G.2. Specify which apps/applications of digital technologies make you most suspicious of/are most afraid in their use for reasons of loss of privacy, risk of theft or fraud, personal data leaks, etc (4 options prioritized)
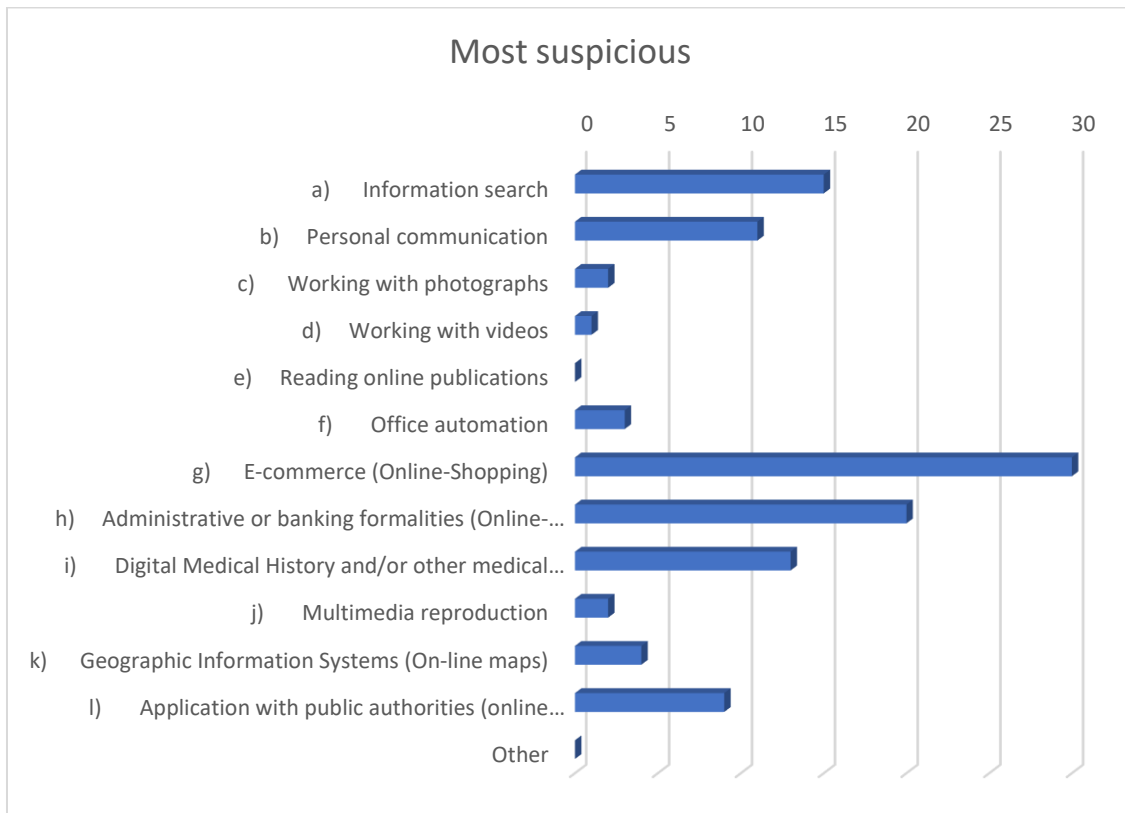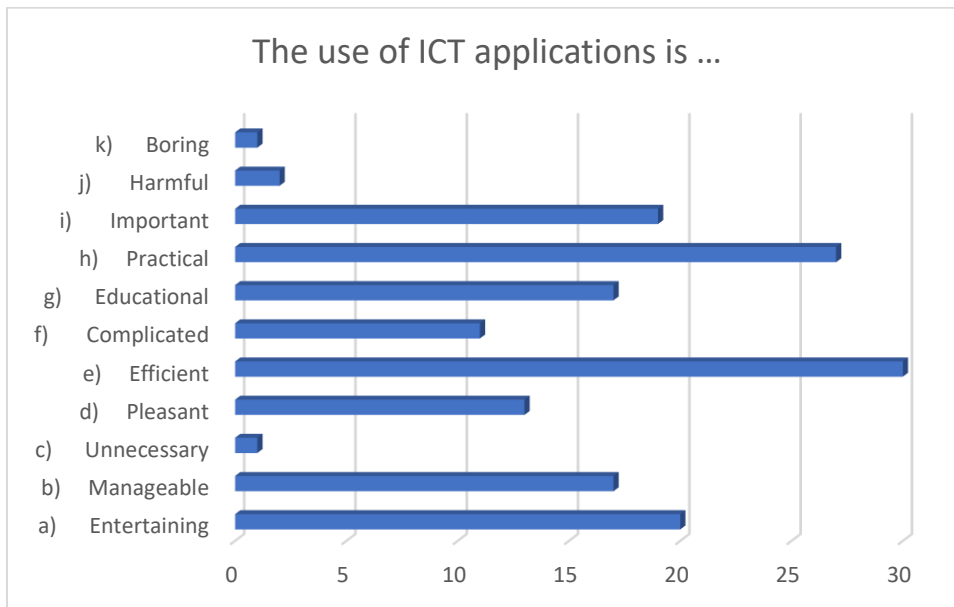

H. PERCEPTION and ATTITUDE TOWARDS DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

H.1. Indicate if you feel identified with the following statements:
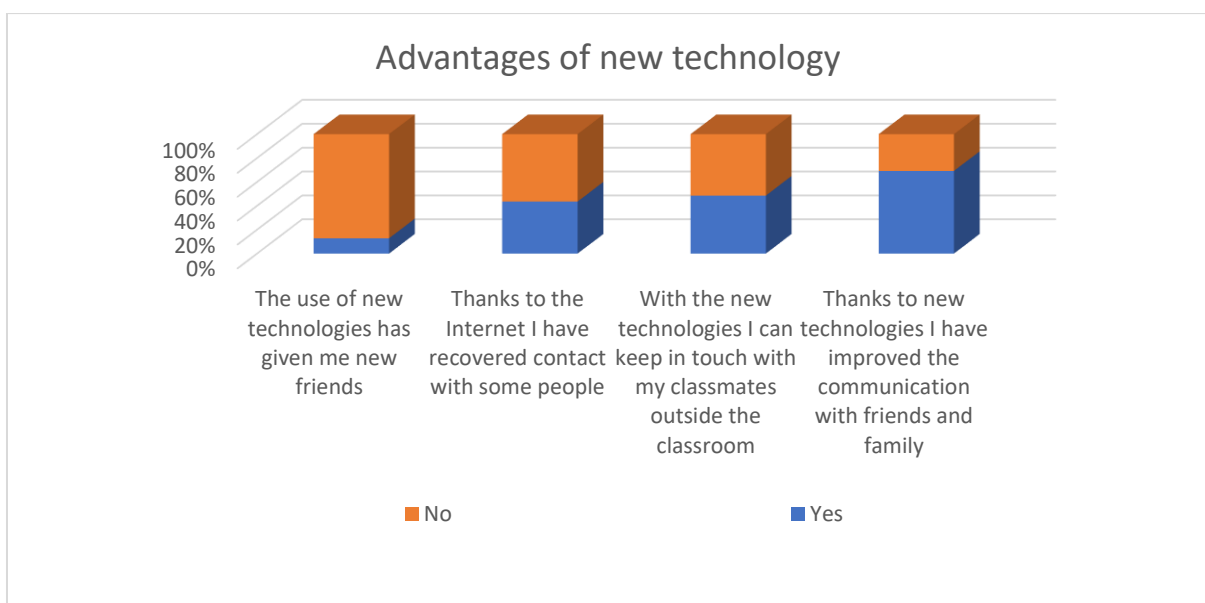
H.2. You consider that the use of ICT application is...:(You can choose more than one)

The use of ICT applications is …

H.3. Please add any further comment related to the use of digital and Internet-connected devices:
- There's often a lack of good manuals. This makes it difficult to take it in use and solve malfunctions and problems.
- More and more service providers are abandoning ordinary services and are forcing users to become digital service users.
- The susceptibility to interference is increasing due to the bad behaviour of others (phishing, hacking) and requires more and more security.
- Little attention is paid to the harmful effects of electro/radio waves on health.
- indispensable, important for everyone to 'keep up to date' with developments in society
- Hobby: composing and managing music on CDs
- Booking travel via internet
- Most important of all: participating in social society, also at an advanced age. understanding and thinking along on a good level
- It has now become a piece of cake to digitally flood a large part of the Netherlands as well as put other essential utilities out of action.
- For my studies at the Open University, use of the Internet is indispensable.
- I notice how difficult it is to make the digital world my own and stay that way and how quickly things change and become dependent on third parties when things don't work/failure. Can't oversee it anymore and gives panic feelings.
- Hesitant to try out things because you can get lost, and afraid of losing your way and then destroying something, or making it unusable.
- Language is often complicated.