

Human Resources in Publishing

A research study for
The Publishing Training Centre
conducted by BML

Summary of findings from book publishing
course students

September 2009

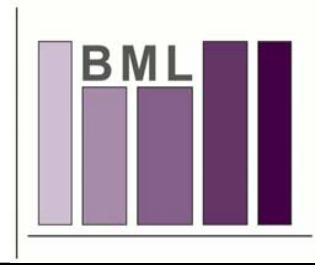


Project background



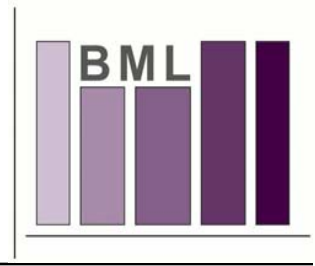
- PTC is funding a research project to examine in detail how book and journal publishers recruit, develop and retain their staff
- backed by the Publishers Association, Independent Publishers Guild and Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers
- working group from consumer and academic publishers to help steer the research on behalf of the wider publishing community
- Stage 1: research with HR directors
- Stage 2: research with publishing and non-publishing students, course directors, recruitment agencies
- full details of project objectives and methodology provided in Stage 1 report
- this report provides the analysis of the study among book publishing students

Methodology



- Online study among students on undergraduate and postgraduate book publishing courses
- Invitations to participate sent through course directors at 14 institutions
- A total of 65 responses received and analysed (from students at 7 institutions)

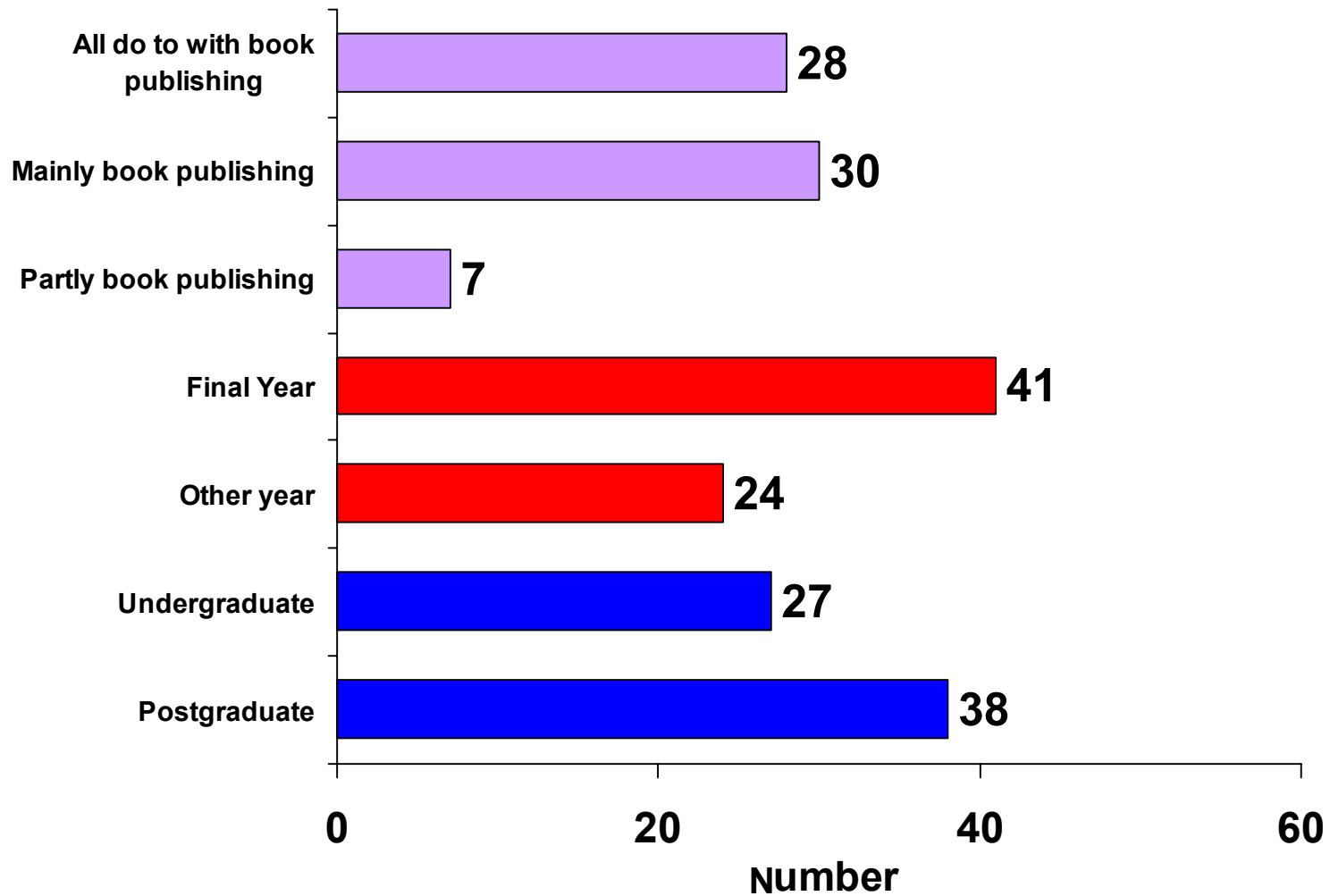
Objectives



- Whether and why they are interested in moving into book publishing
- Reasons for and against a career in the industry
 - what they might consider instead
- Image of book publishing vs other industries
- Whether and why some sectors (eg children's, fiction, academic) have more positive images than others
- Whether and why some functions (eg editorial, digital, marketing) have more positive images than others
- How well equipped they feel their course has made them for book publishing
- Sources used for finding out about jobs
- What would make publishing more attractive as a career

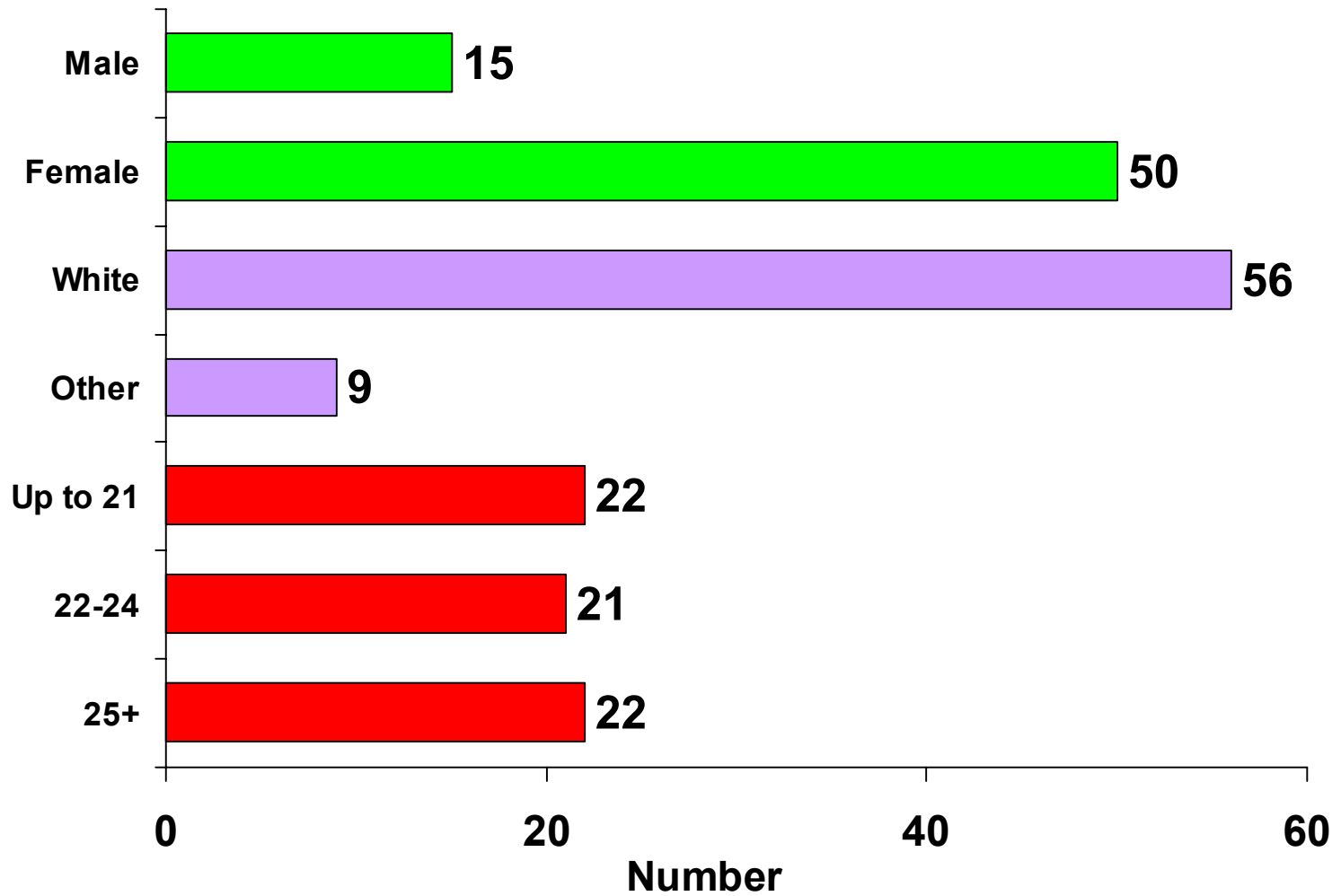
Student sample (1)

Course details



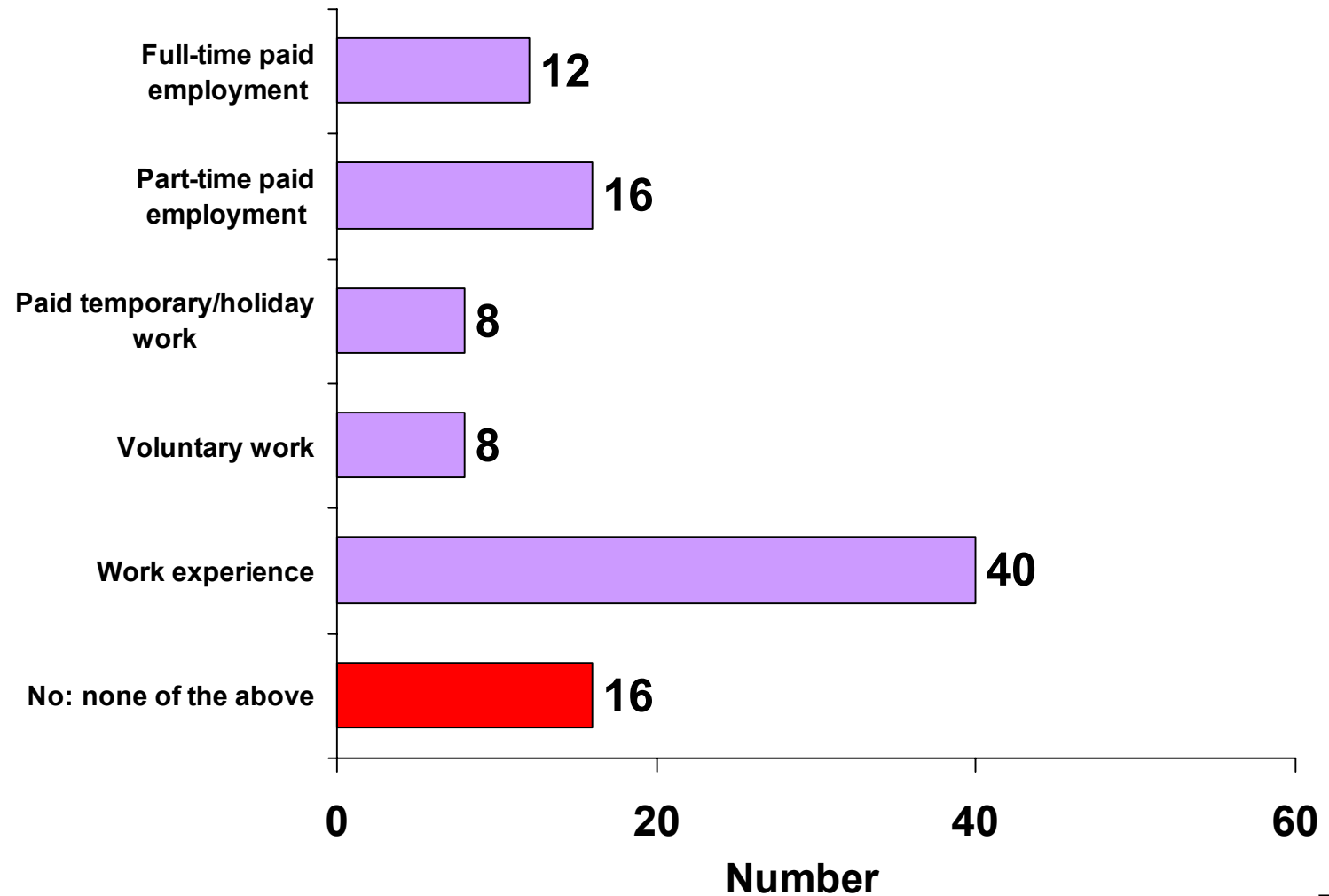
Student sample (2)

Sex/ethnicity/age



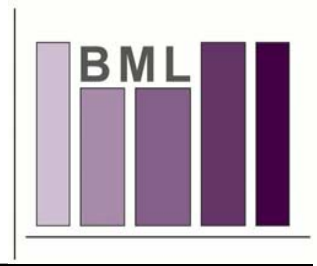
Student sample (3)

Experience of book publishing industry

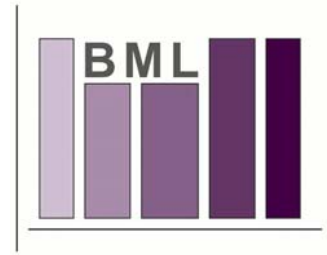




Student sample (4)



- **Postgraduates**
 - all in final year
 - aged 22+
 - mostly studying courses that are wholly book publishing
 - Mostly have work experience in book industry
- **Undergraduates**
 - mostly not in final year
 - mostly aged <22
 - mostly studying courses that are not wholly book publishing
 - Half have work experience in book industry



Interest in the book publishing industry

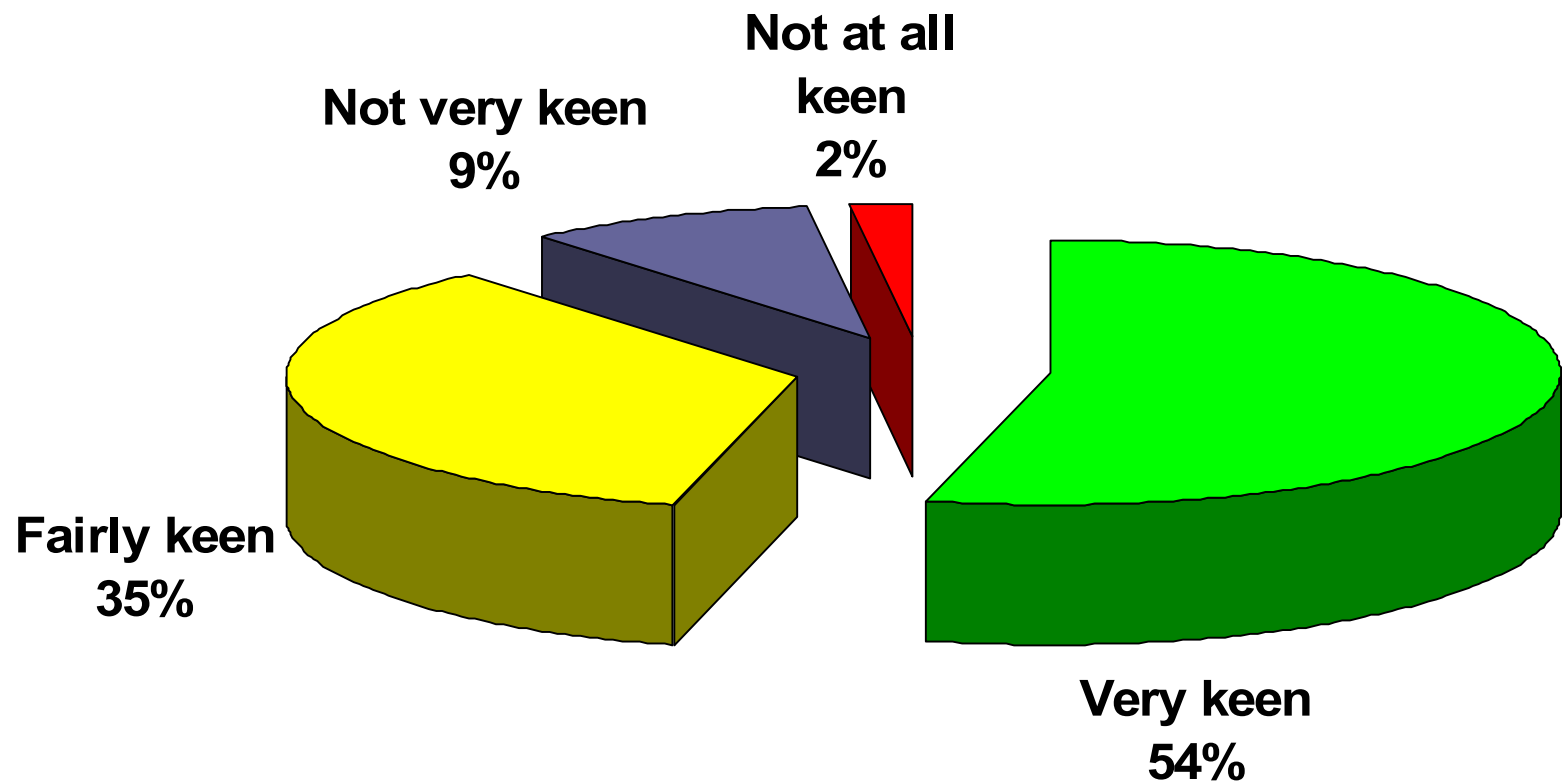
Interest in the book publishing industry



- Among book publishing students, 54% are very keen and 35% fairly keen to work in the book publishing industry
- 40% started the course firmly intending to work in book publishing, with a further 14% assuming they would (but open to other ideas), and 30% looking to work somewhere in publishing (not necessarily books)
 - with the initial interest being prompted by an interest in books/reading more than anything else
- Postgrads are keener than undergrads
- Overall, 42% are keener now than when they started their course
 - just 8% are less interested

Current attitude

Thinking about how you feel now, how keen are you to work in the book publishing industry when you have finished your studies?

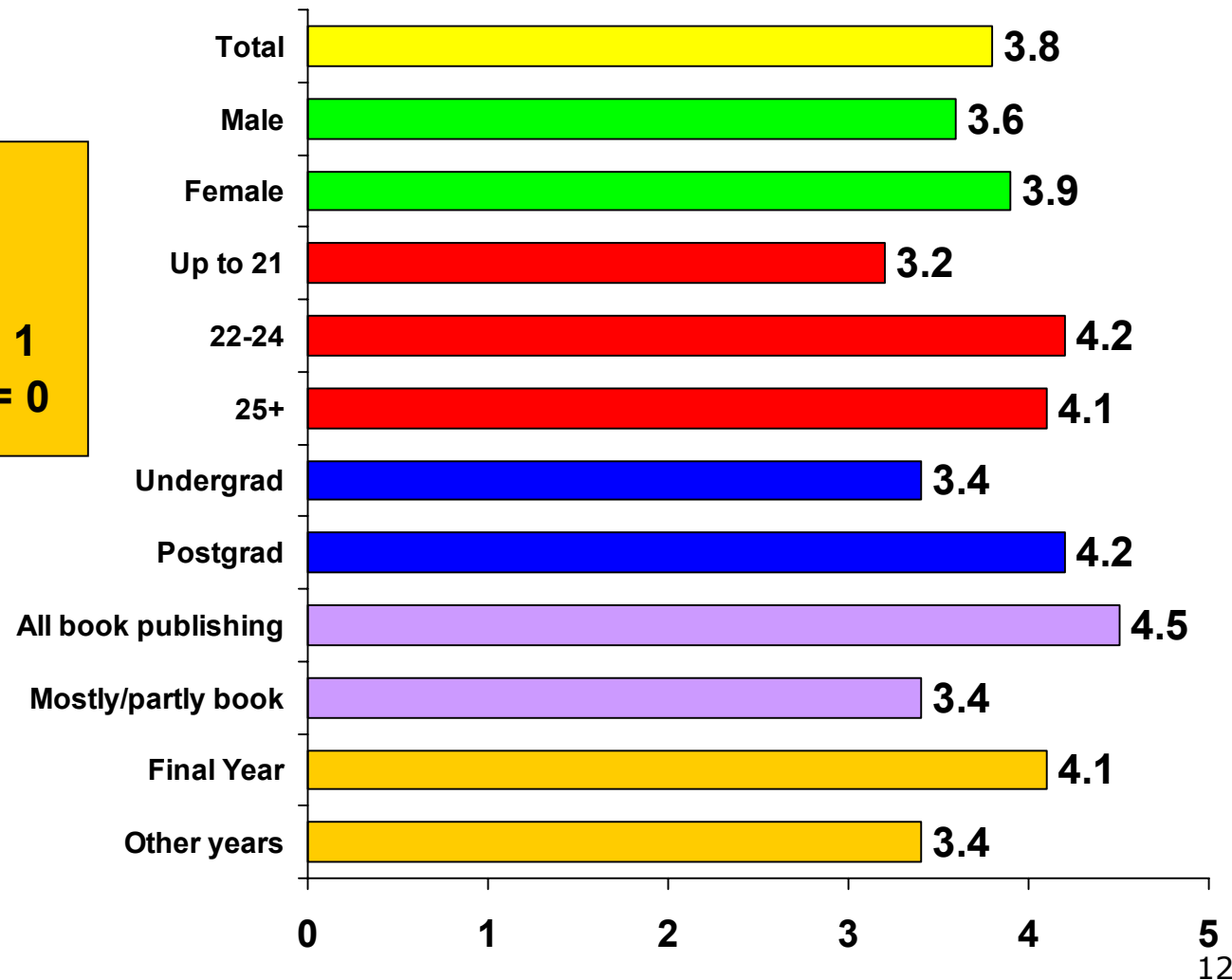


Current attitude

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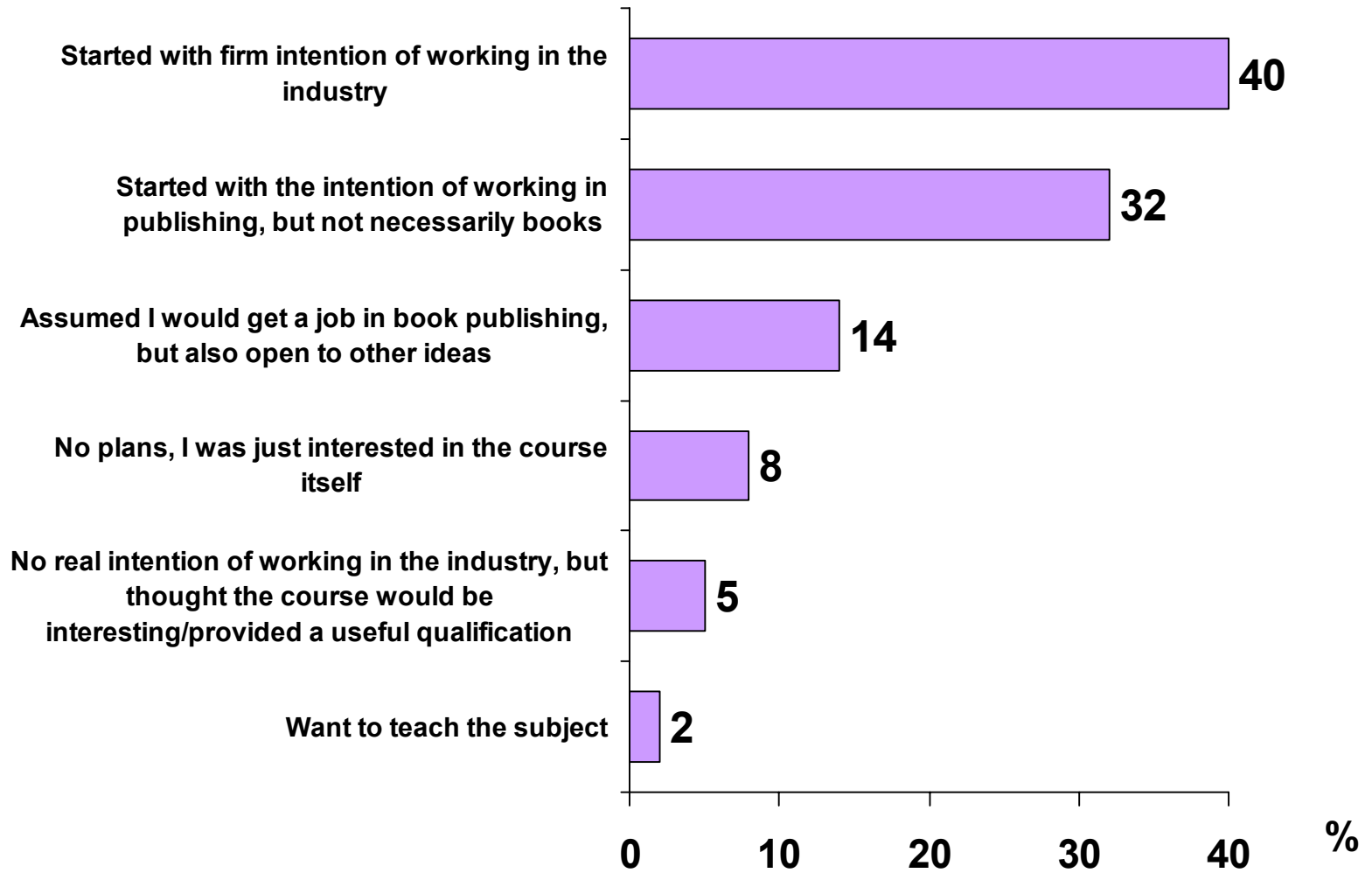


Mean score:
Very keen = 5
Fairly keen = 3
Not very keen = 1
Not at all keen = 0

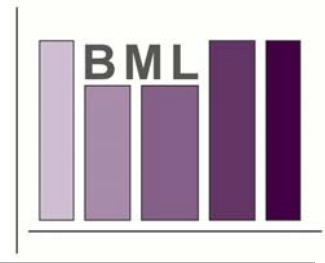


Initial intentions

Thinking back to when you started your publishing course, to what extent were you planning to work in the book publishing industry when you finished your studies?



Initial intentions Variations



- **Started with the firm intention:**
 - over 21=54%; up to 21=14%
 - postgrad=53%; undergrad=22%
 - course fully book-related=64%; other=22%
 - final year=49%; other=25%
- **Publishing, not necessarily books:**
 - mainly the reverse pattern of the above
- No significant differences in other statements

Initial attractions

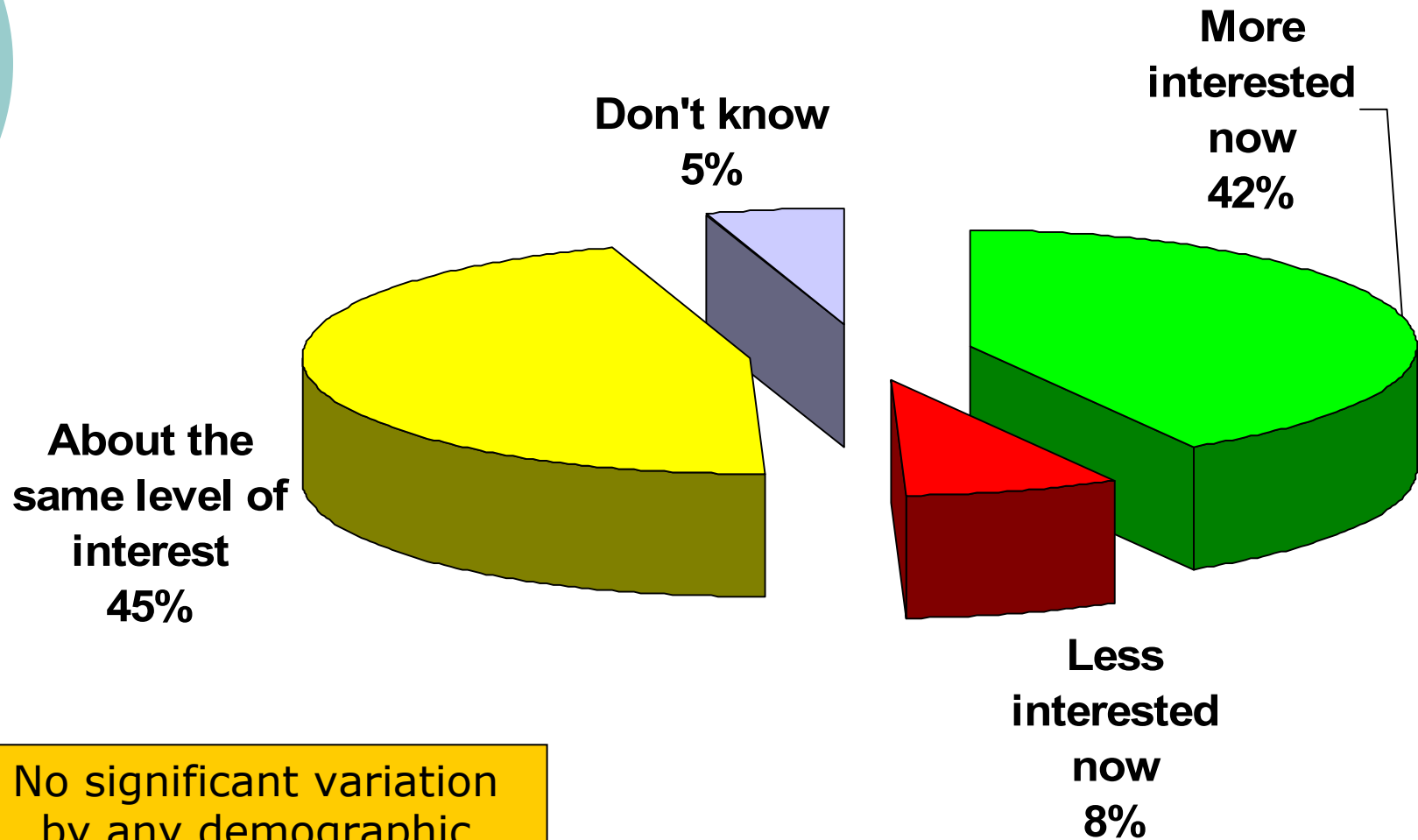
What was it about working in the book publishing industry that attracted you at that time? (UNPROMPTED)



- No single factor outstanding
 - no variations by initial attitude
- Interest in books/reading 23%
 - work surrounded by books 8%
- Natural progression from my degree 18%
- Using my creativity 15%
- Promoting knowledge 12%
- Change from administration to more interesting/creative 8%
- Word-of-mouth 8%
 - interest/diversity of work 6%
- Writer myself 8%
- Various others (1 each)

Comparative attitude

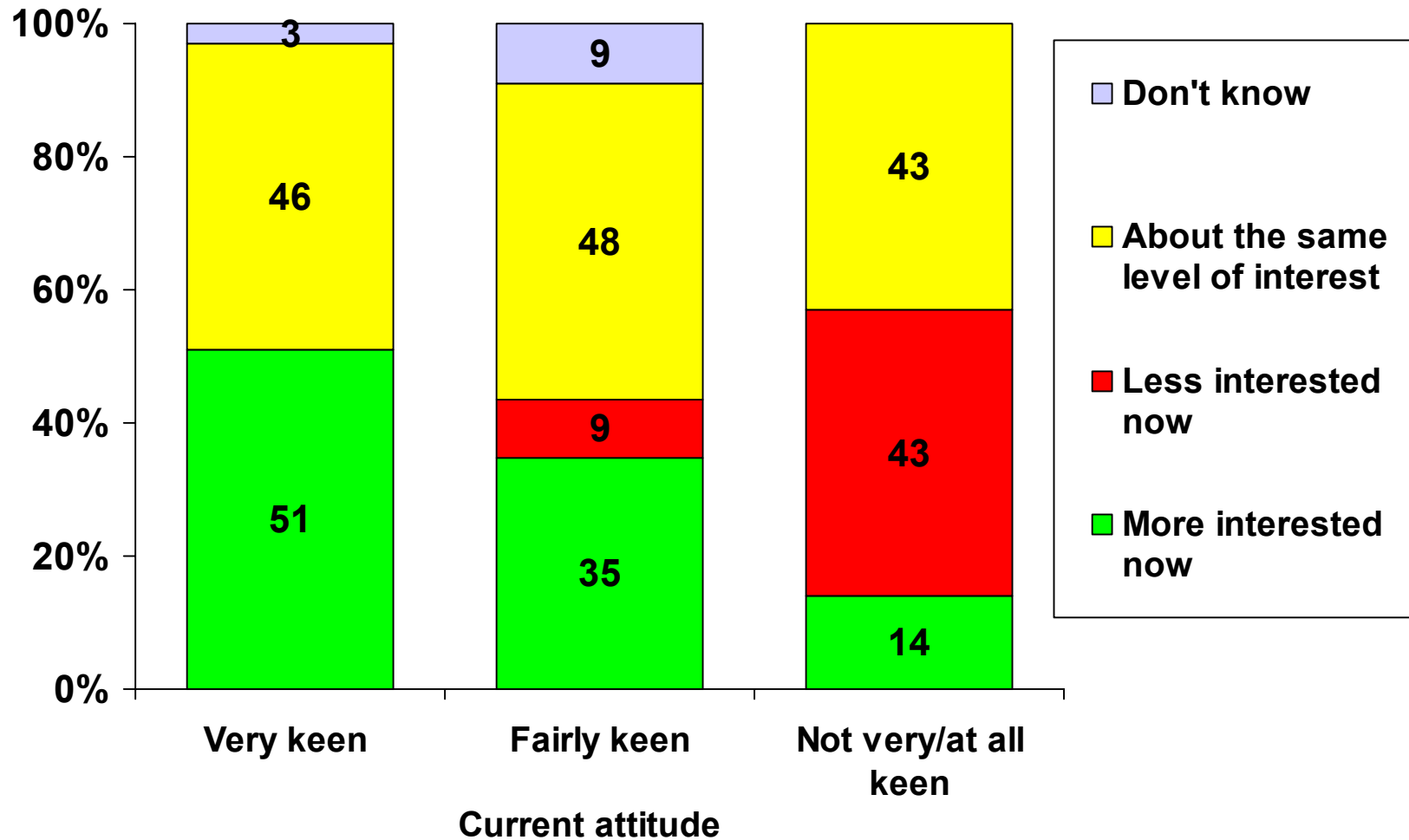
Overall, compared to when you started your publishing course, would you say that you are now more interested, less interested or have about the same level of interest in working in book publishing?

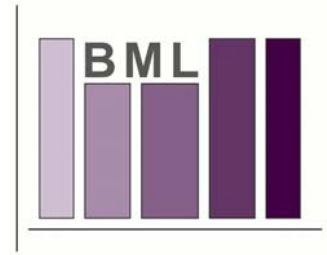
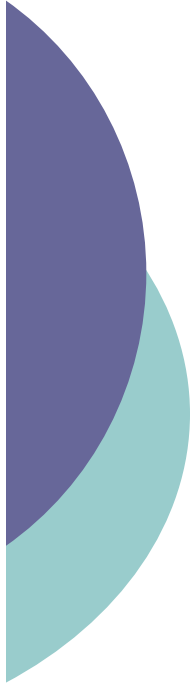


No significant variation by any demographic

Comparative attitude

Overall, compared to when you started your publishing course, would you say that you are now more interested, less interested or have about the same level of interest in working in book publishing?





Attractions/detractions of the book publishing industry

Attractions of book publishing industry



- For book publishing students, the spontaneous aspects that most attract them to the industry are being around books (28%) and being around authors (23%)
- When prompted, 83% mention working creatively
 - 77% can use their skills/knowledge; love books/reading
 - 66% think variety in work; 58% think worthwhile job
- No really significant differences by demographics

Most attractive facet

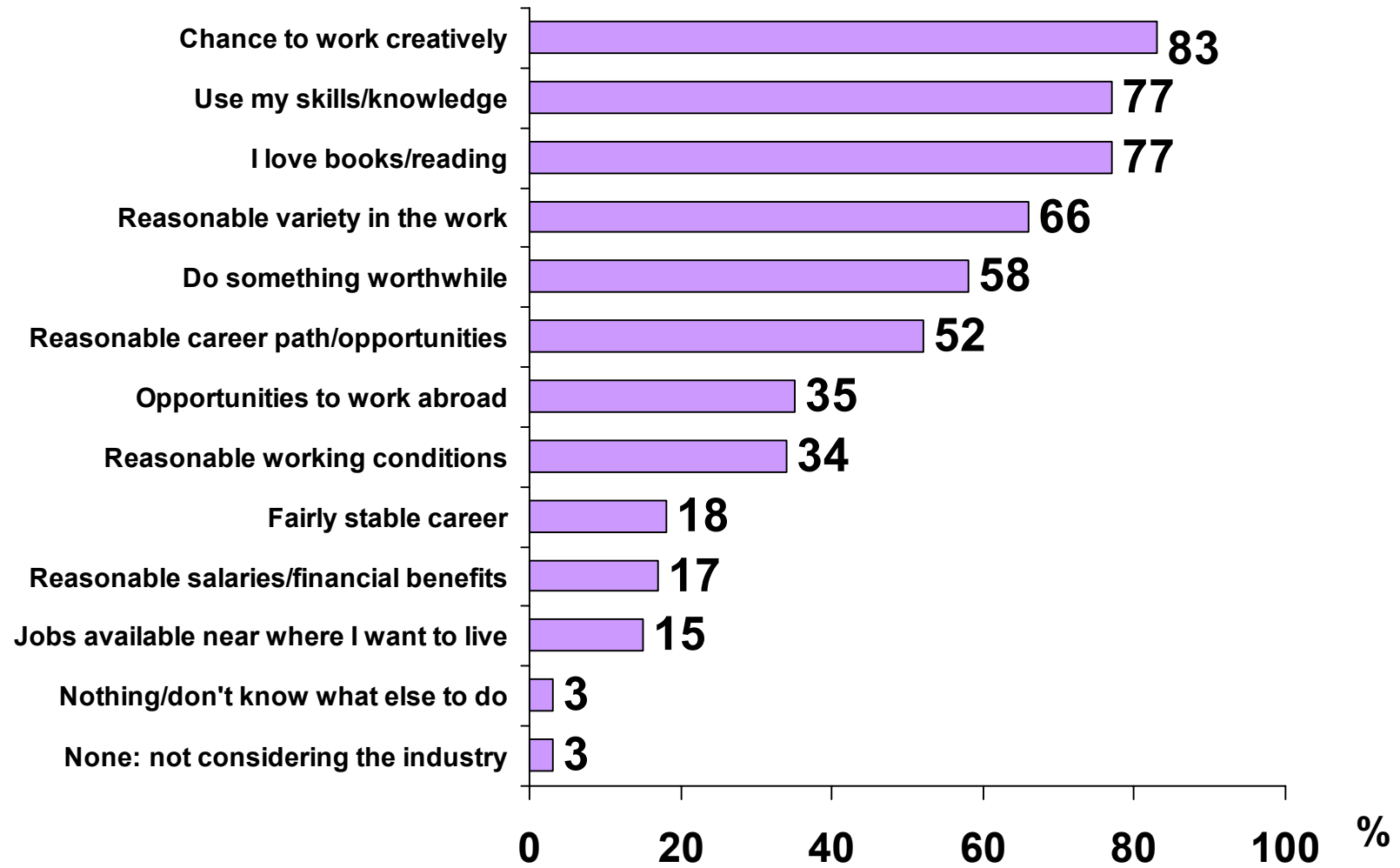
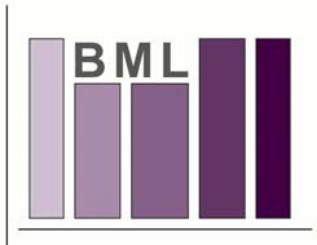
What, if anything, MOST attracts you to working in the book publishing industry? (UNPROMPTED)



- Being around books 28%
- Being around authors 23%
- Working with interesting people 15%
 - sociability of the industry 9%
- Finding a new bestseller 14%
- Diversity of roles 12%
- Creative opportunities 8%
- Educational input 8%

Industry attractions

For which, if any, of the following reasons are you attracted to working in the book publishing industry? (PROMPTED)



Detractions of book publishing industry



- The spontaneous aspects that most put book publishing students off the industry are low pay (45%), too few local jobs (22%) and long hours (20%)
- When prompted, 62% think it might be difficult to find a job
 - 51% mention low pay/benefits
 - 34% mention the lack of jobs where they want to live
 - 23% more interested in other industries
- Undergrads more likely than postgrads to say
 - Don't feel have learned enough/right skills [26% vs 3%]
 - Publishing course boring/disappointing [15% vs 3%]
 - More interested in other industries/sectors [37% vs 13%]
- Those studying mostly/partly book publishing more likely than those wholly book publishing to say
 - More interested in other industries/sectors [35% vs 7%]
 - Don't feel have learned enough/right skills [19% vs 4%]
 - Not enough variety in the work [14% vs 0%]

Least attractive facet

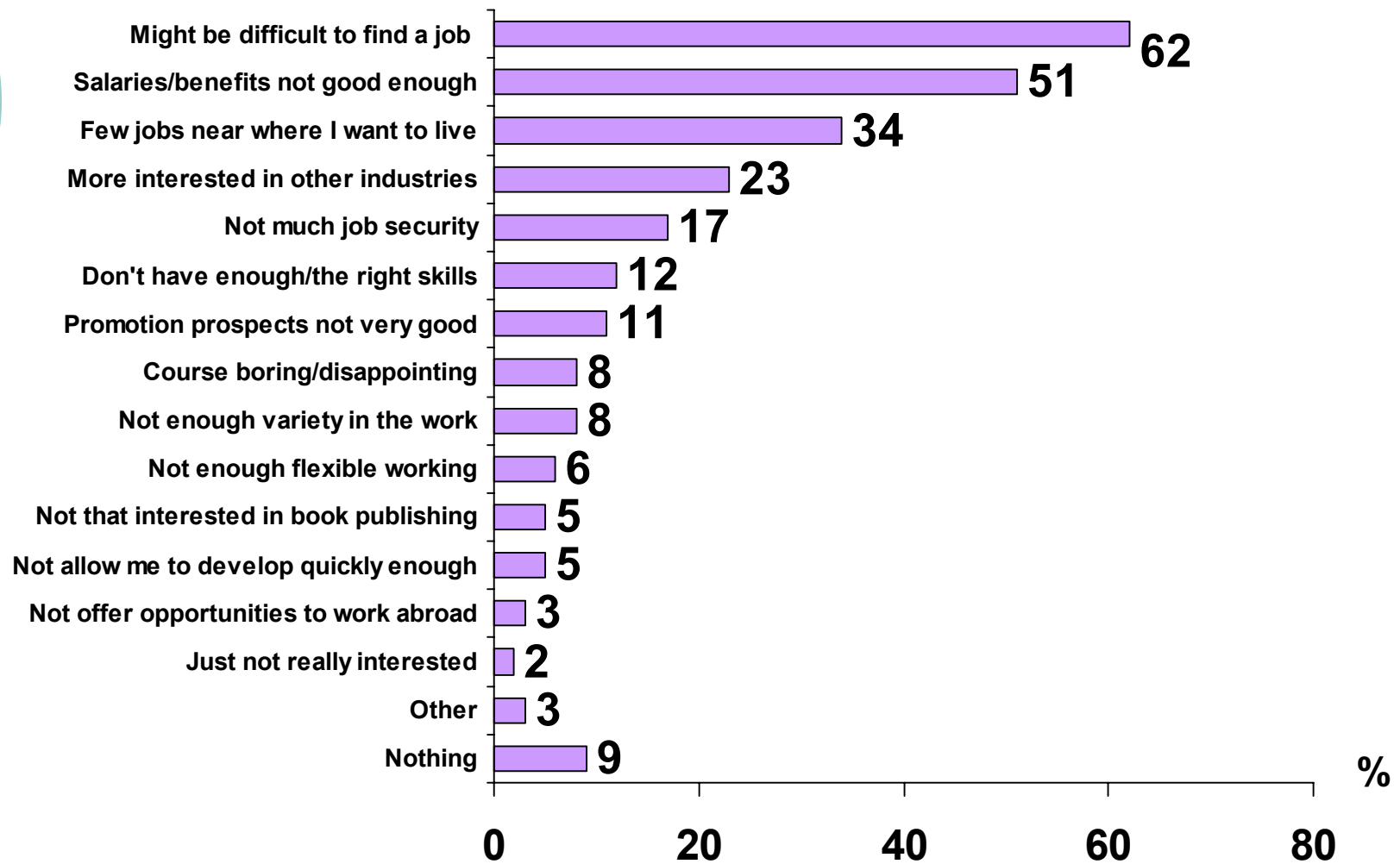
What, if anything, LEAST attracts you to working in the book publishing industry? (UNPROMPTED)



- Low pay 43%
 - poor starting salaries 25%
- Few jobs near me 22%
 - too London-centric 15%
- Long hours 20%
- Problems within the trade 18%
 - low sales 12%
 - low margins 6%
 - job insecurity 6%
- Very competitive/difficult to enter/progress 15%

Industry detractions

Which, if any, of the following have put you off/made you think twice about working in the book publishing industry? (PROMPTED)





Alternatives to working in the book publishing industry

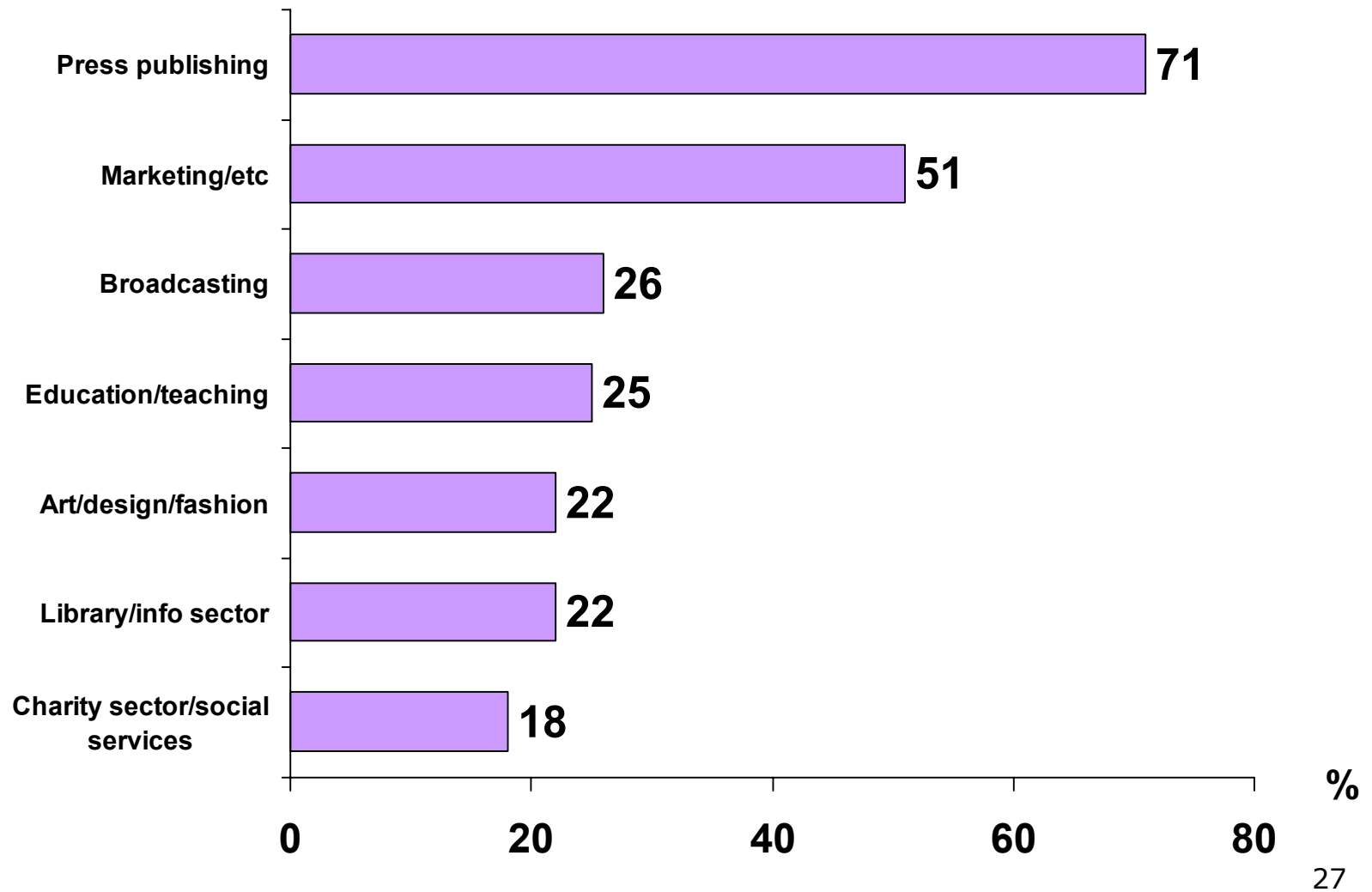
Alternative industries



- When book publishing students are asked about other industries they might consider working in, press publishing (71%) and marketing/PR (51%) are clear leaders
 - broadcasting is 3rd at 26%
- Although many variations, main alternatives the same across all demographics

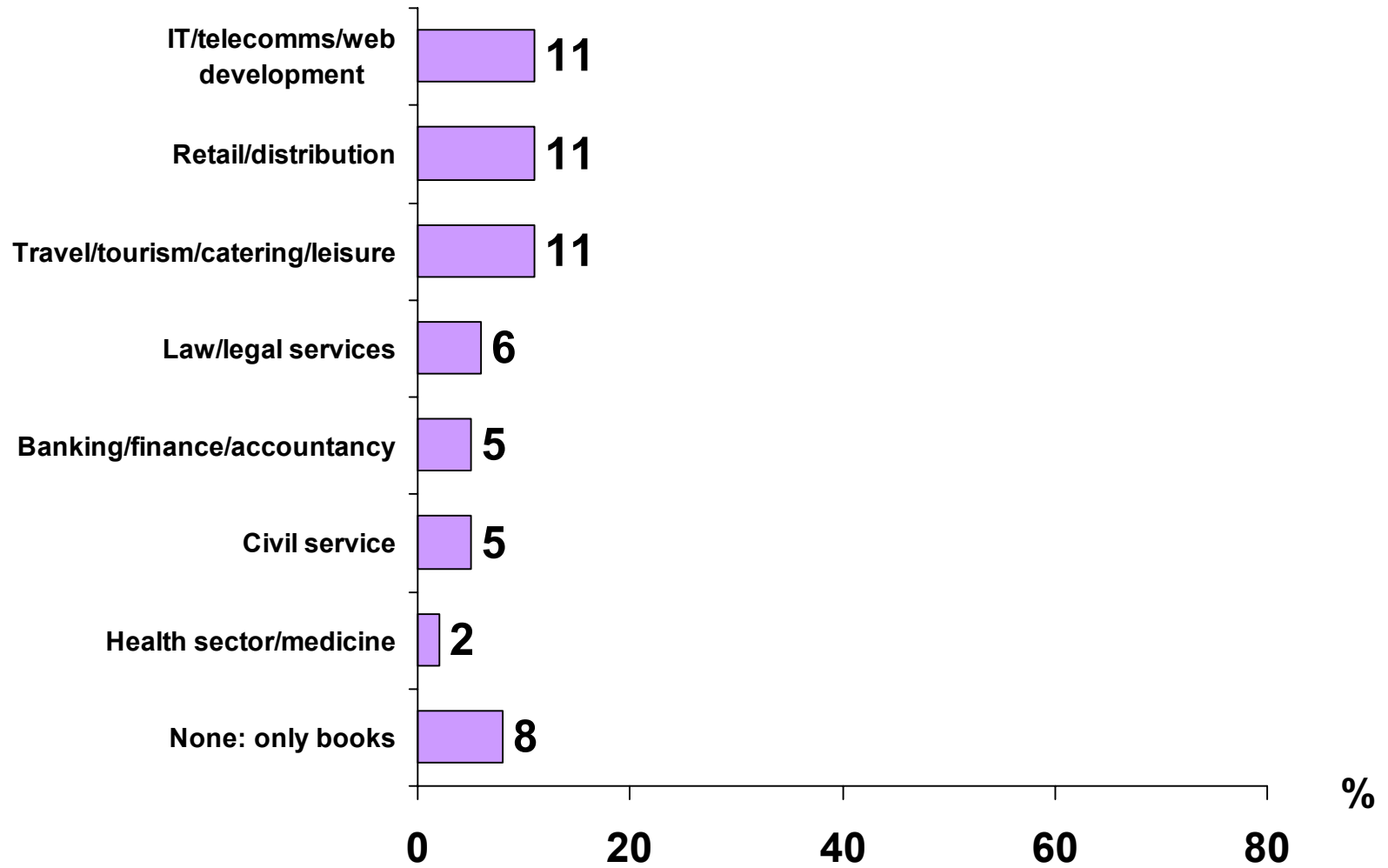
Possible industries (1)

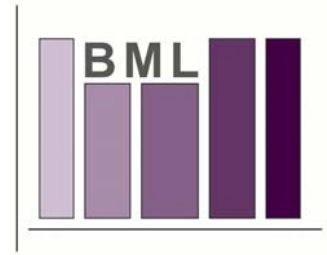
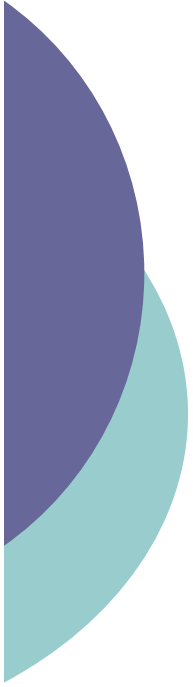
Which, if any, industries/sectors are you considering working in, other than book publishing?



Possible industries (2)

Which, if any, industries/sectors are you considering working in, other than book publishing?





Images/descriptions of industries

Book publishing Image overview



- On the positive side, book publishing is seen as *creative* (71%), *exciting* (70%), *varied* (71%)
- Negatively, it is seen as *poorly paid* (59%), and *white, middle class* (52%)
 - more see it as *old-fashioned* (33%) than *cutting-edge* (22%)
- Variations by demographics are small
 - even the most keen are only more positive in terms of *exciting* (91%)

Industry images

Comparison overview - 1



- Book publishing has a more *exciting* image than any other industry
 - though only just ahead of broadcasting, newspapers/magazines, art/design/fashion
 - contrasts with those seen as *boring*: banking (65%), civil service (62%)
- Only 22% rate book publishing as *cutting edge*, compared to broadcasting (76%), art/design (56%)
 - and only civil service (41%) and banking (35%) more *old-fashioned*
- All industries seen more than book publishing to be *well-paid*, especially banking (88%) and IT (50%)
 - but charity/social work, retail, teaching and newspapers/magazines seen more than book publishing to be *poorly paid*
- Book publishing is ahead of other industries in terms of *varied*
- Broadcasting, art/design and newspapers/magazines a little more likely than book publishing to be thought *difficult to progress in*

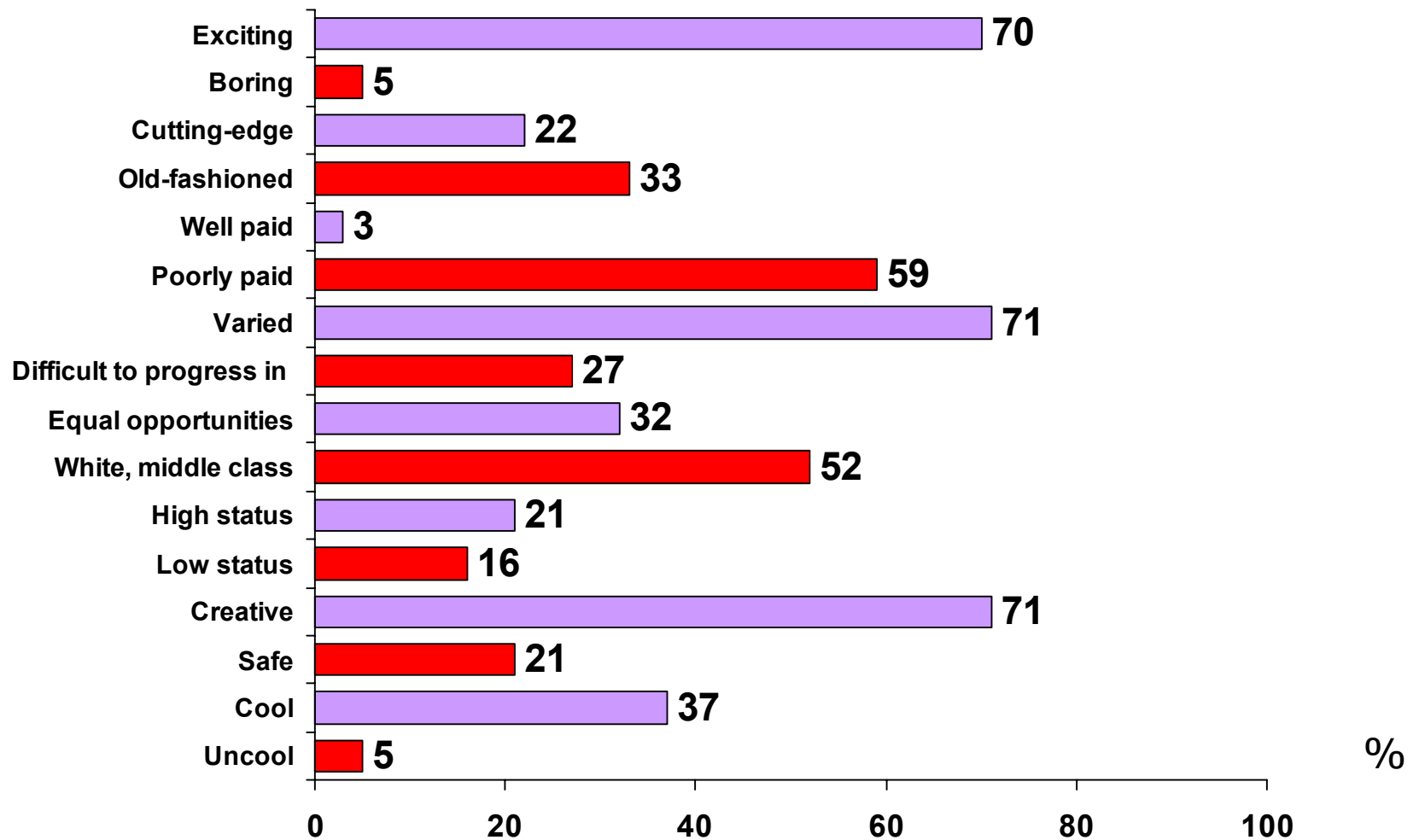
Industry images

Comparison overview - 2



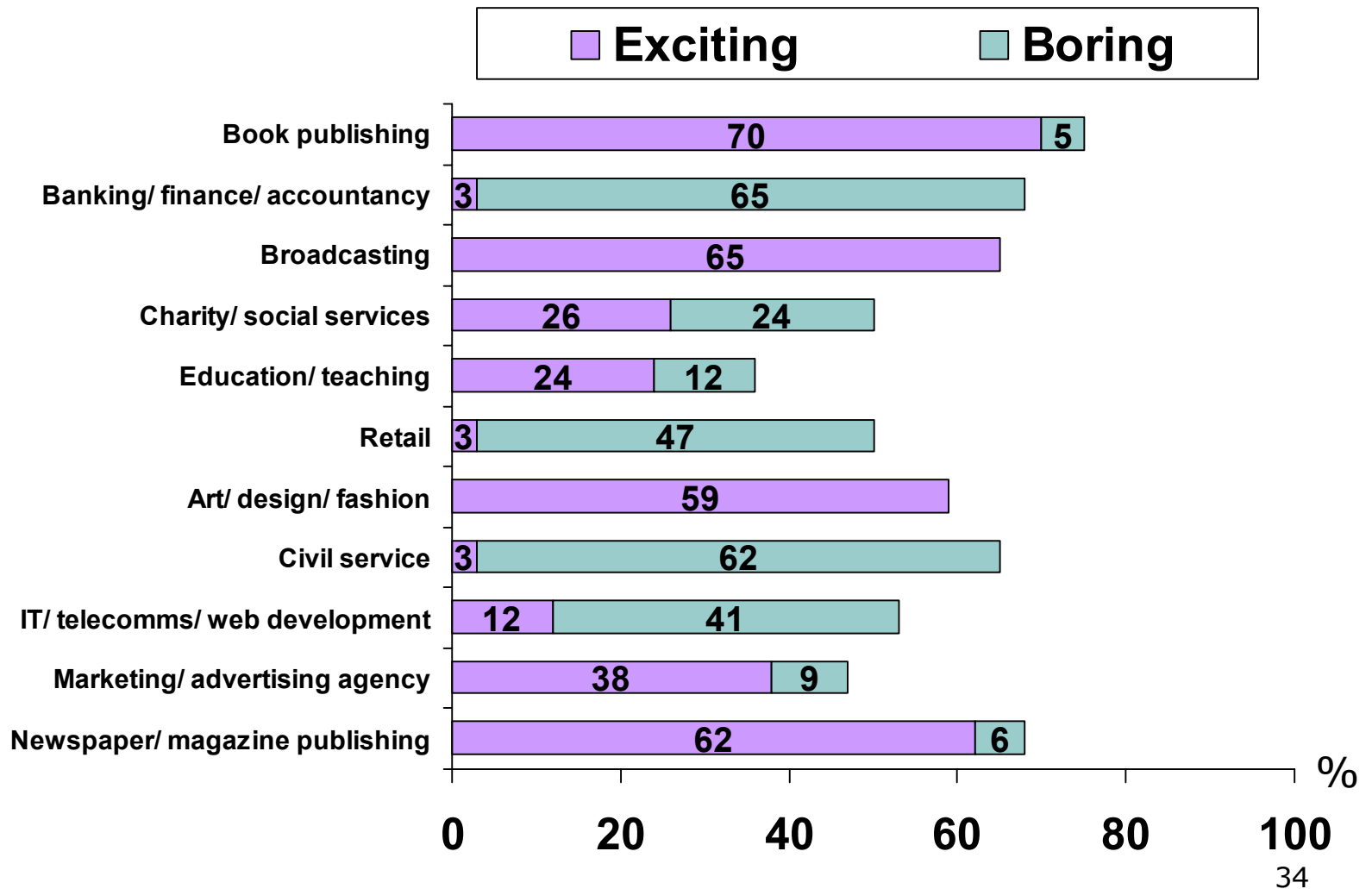
- Only banking seen as more *white, middle class* than book publishing
- Book publishing is well behind charity/social services, education and retail in terms of *equal opportunities*
- Book publishing is not seen as either *high* or *low status*: banking, and to lesser extent marketing/etc, art/design, broadcasting and newspapers/magazines are *high*; retail and charity/social services are *low*
- Book publishing is widely seen as *creative* (71%), not as much as art/design (88%), on a par with broadcasting (74%) and ahead of newspapers/magazines (59%)
- Not many think of book publishing as *safe*, compared to education (68%) and civil service (53%)
- Broadcasting (76%), art/design (71%) and newspapers/magazines (65%) are all more *cool* than book publishing (37%)
- 50% think civil service *uncool* (only 5% say this of book publishing)

Book publishing Summary descriptions



Industry descriptions

Below are a number of descriptions of industries/sectors which some people have given. Please indicate which you think apply to each of the industries/sectors shown.

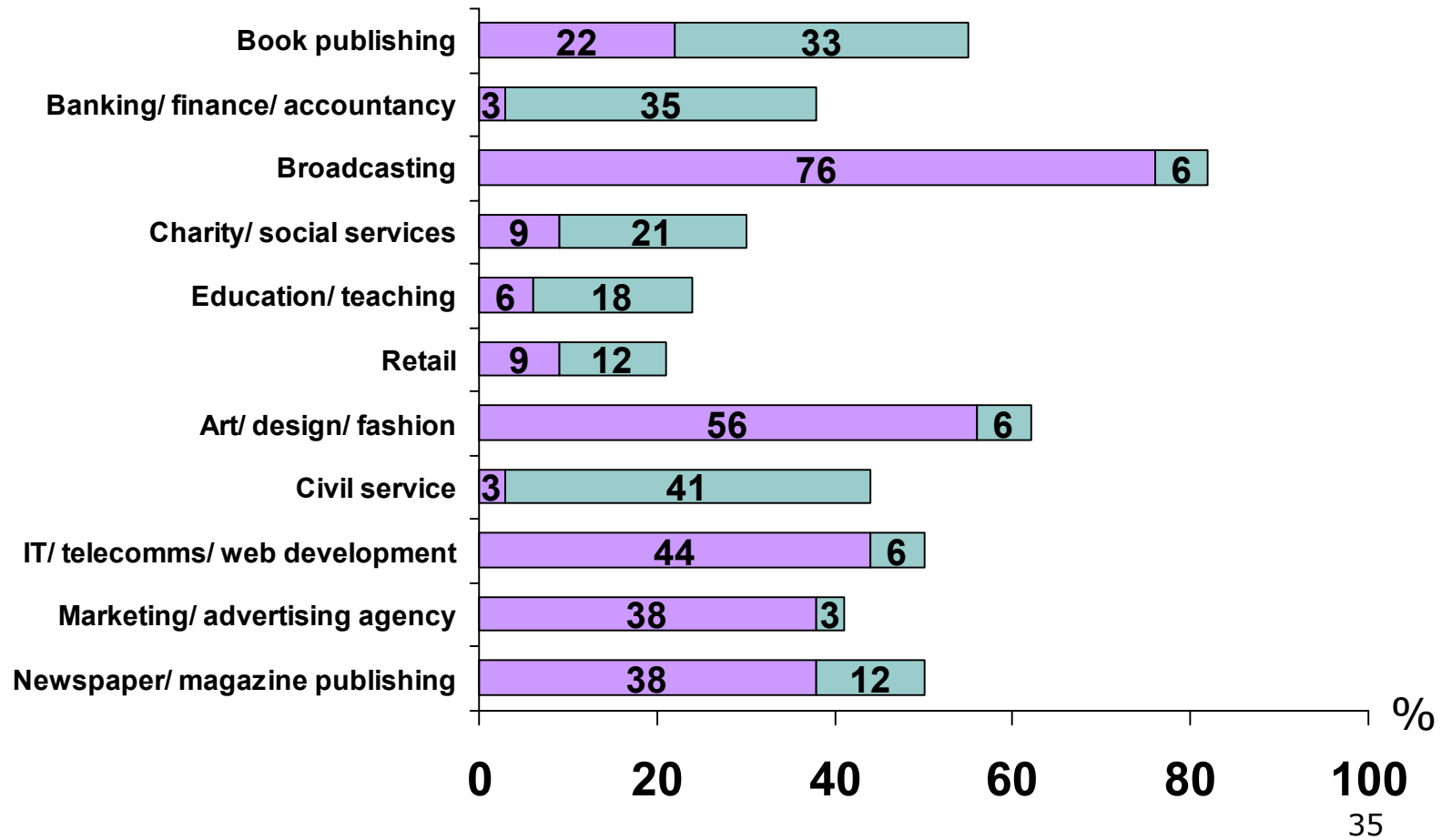


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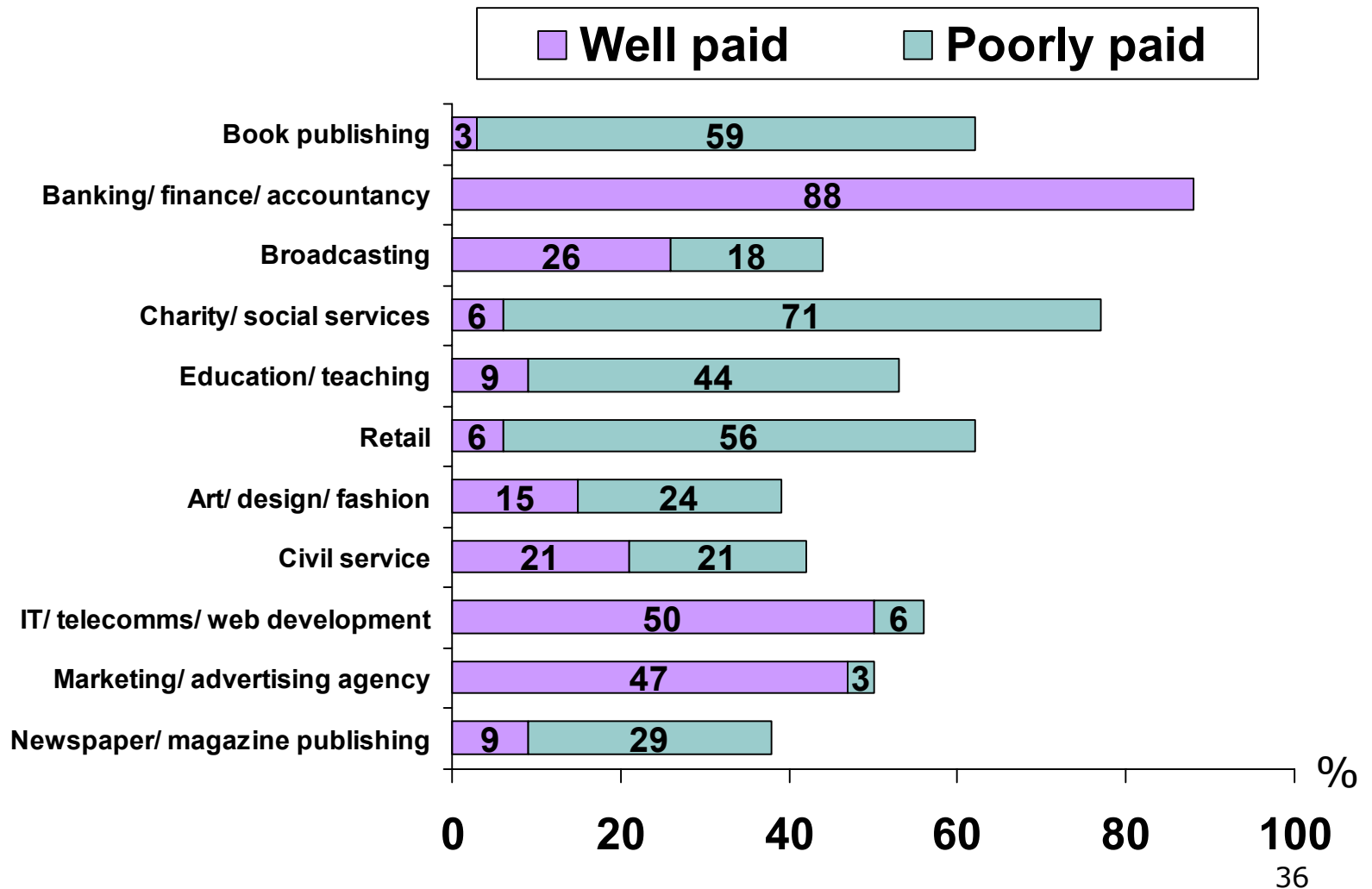


Cutting edge
 Old-fashioned



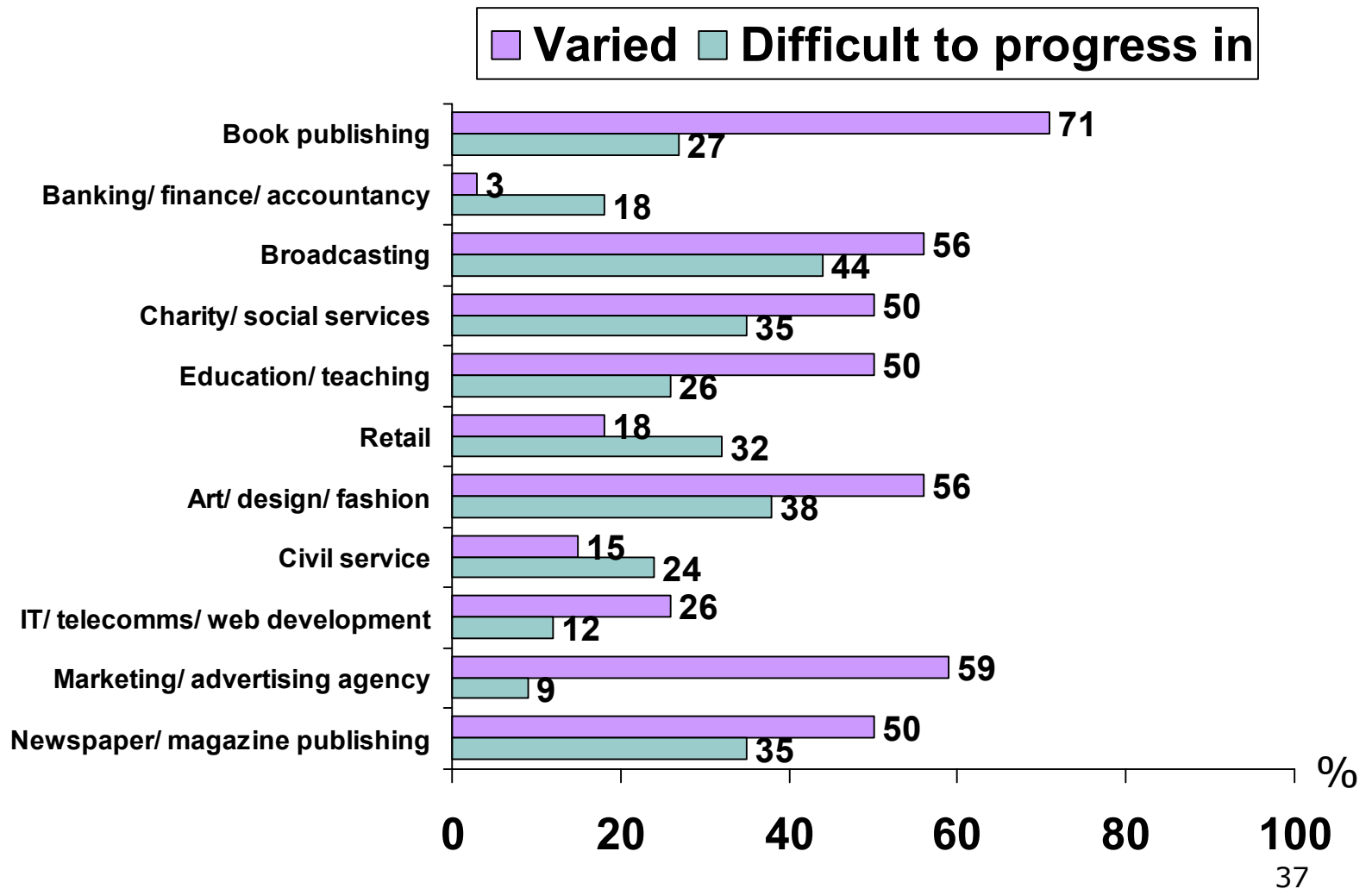
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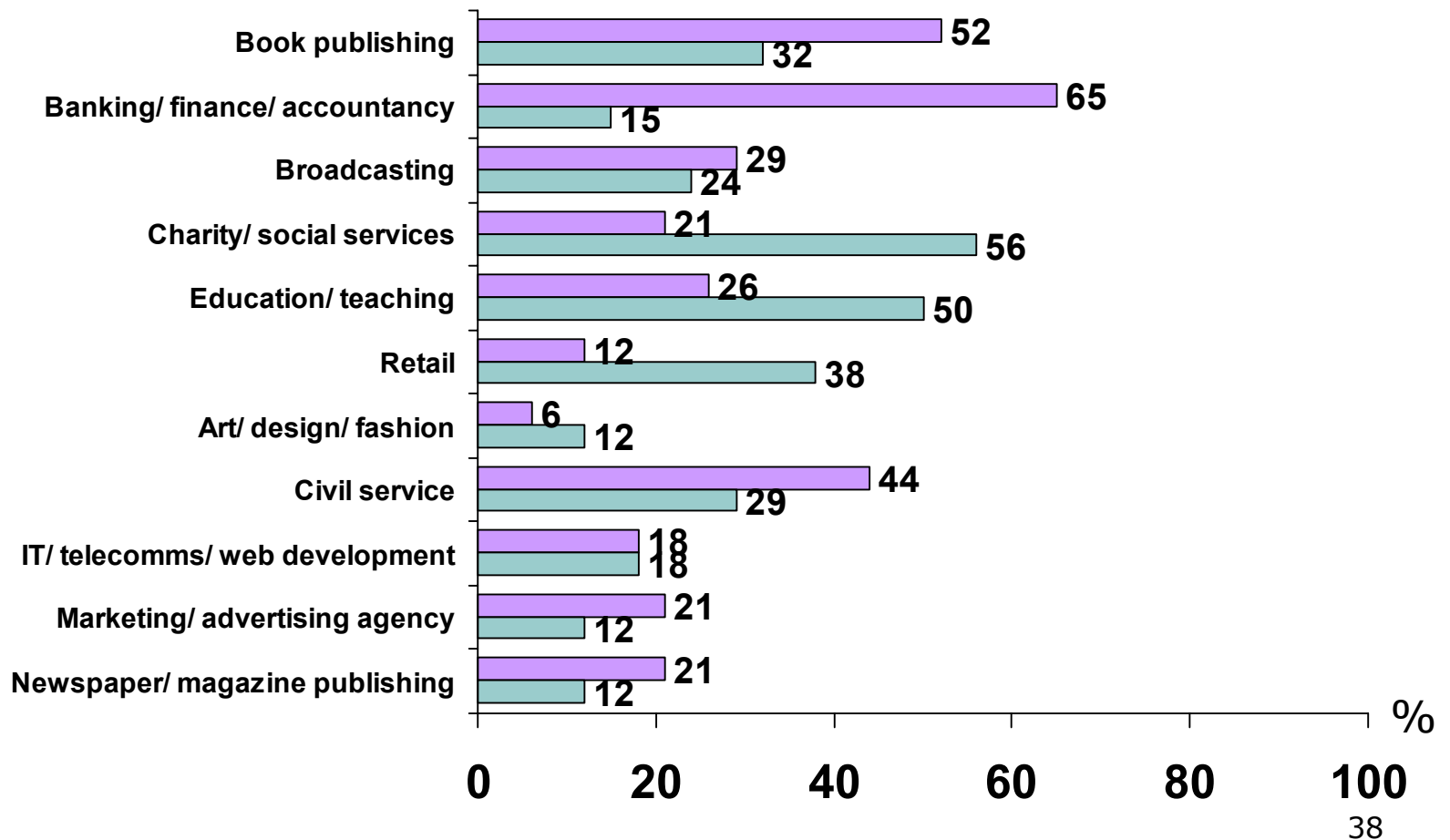


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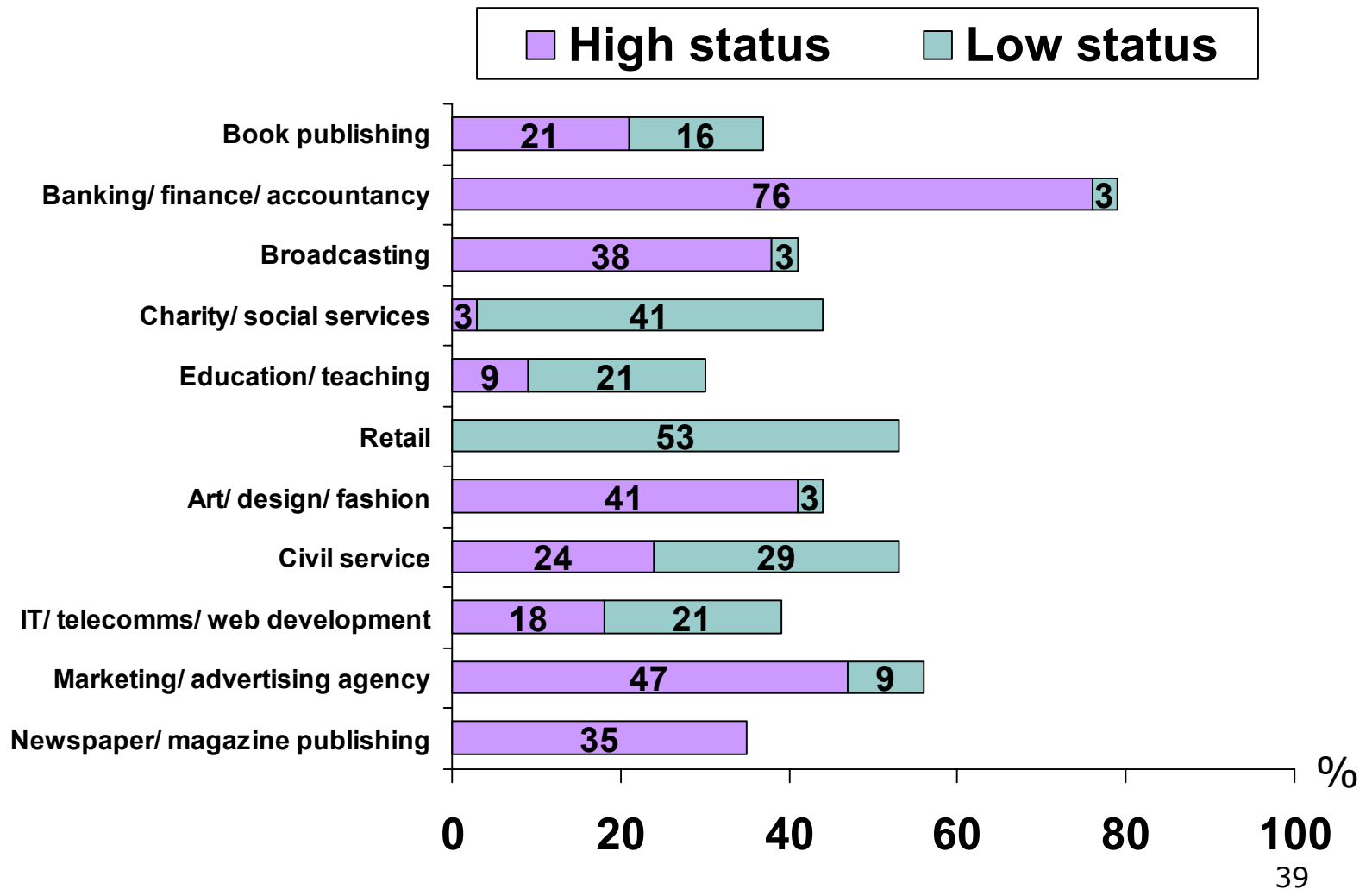


■ **White, middle class**
■ **Equal opportunities**



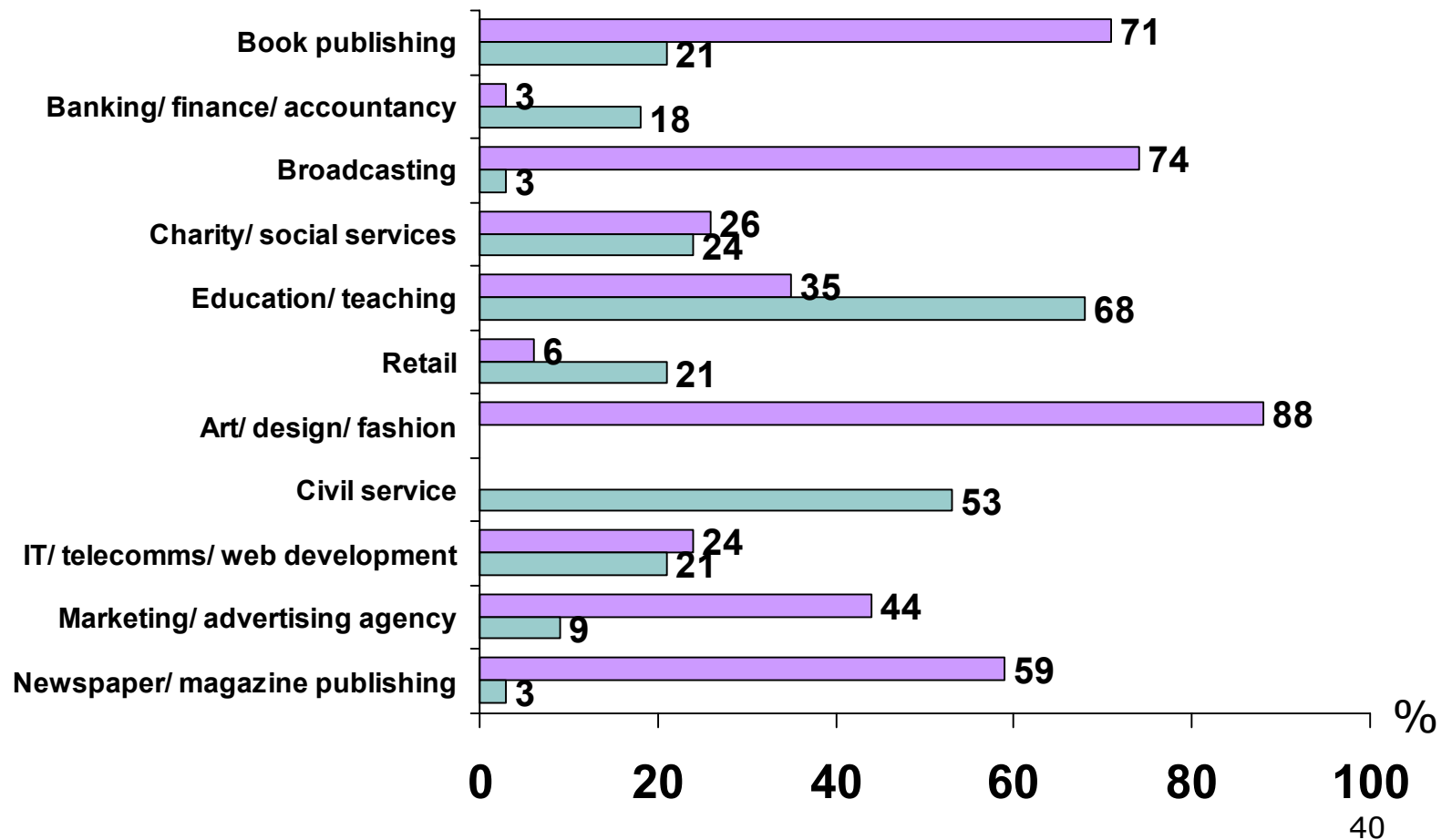
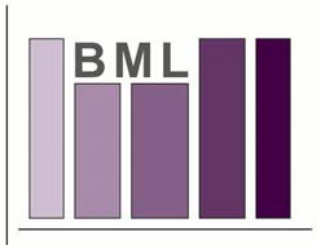
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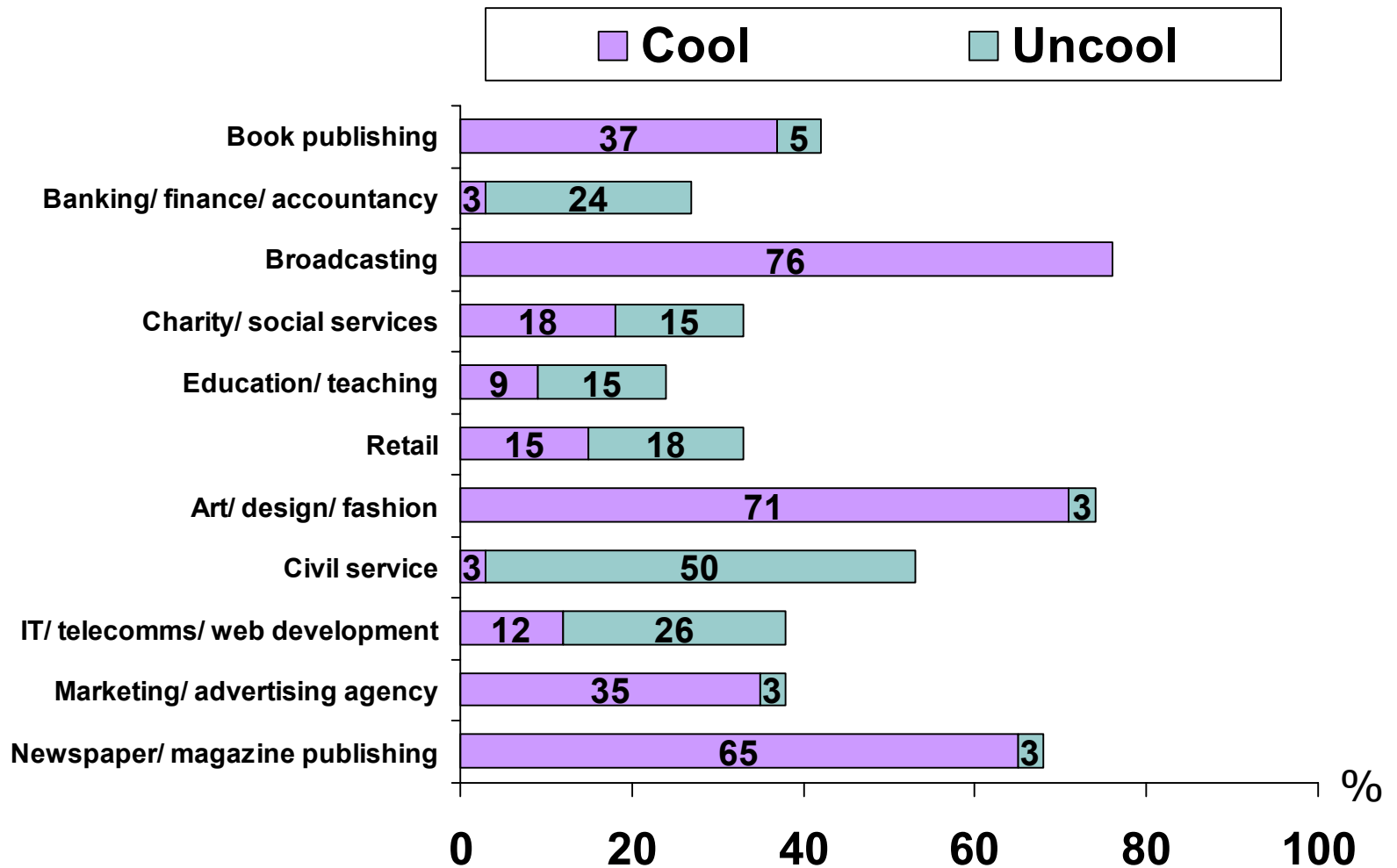
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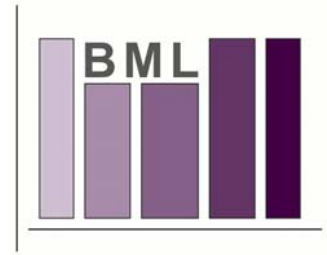
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Industry descriptions

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Book publishing industry sectors

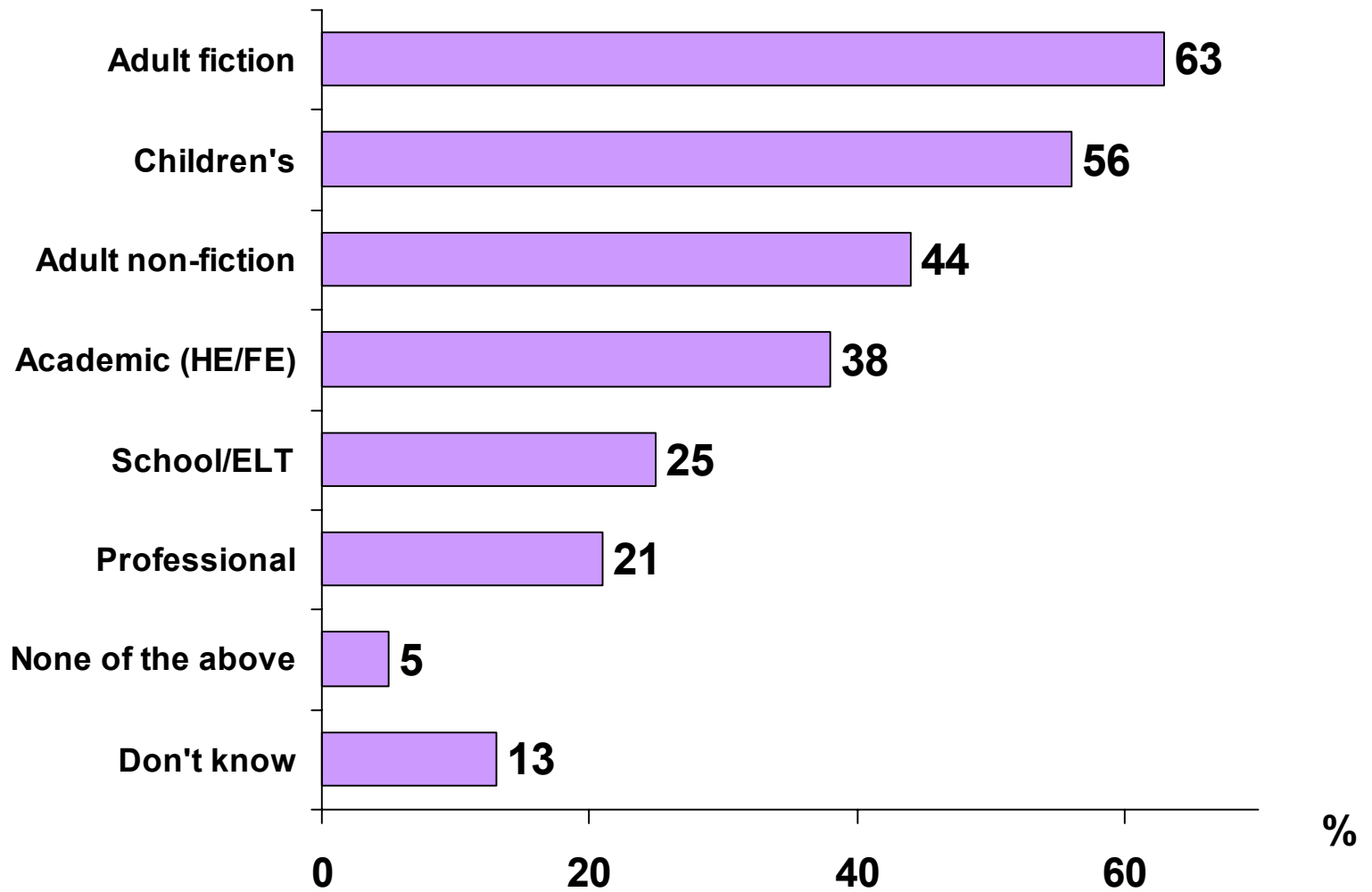
Interest in sectors



- Book publishing students keenest on working in adult fiction (63%) and children's books (56%)
 - adult NF (44%); academic (38%)
- Postgrads are much more interested than undergrads in working in adult NF (55% vs 28%) academic (47% vs 24%) and professional (26% vs 12%)

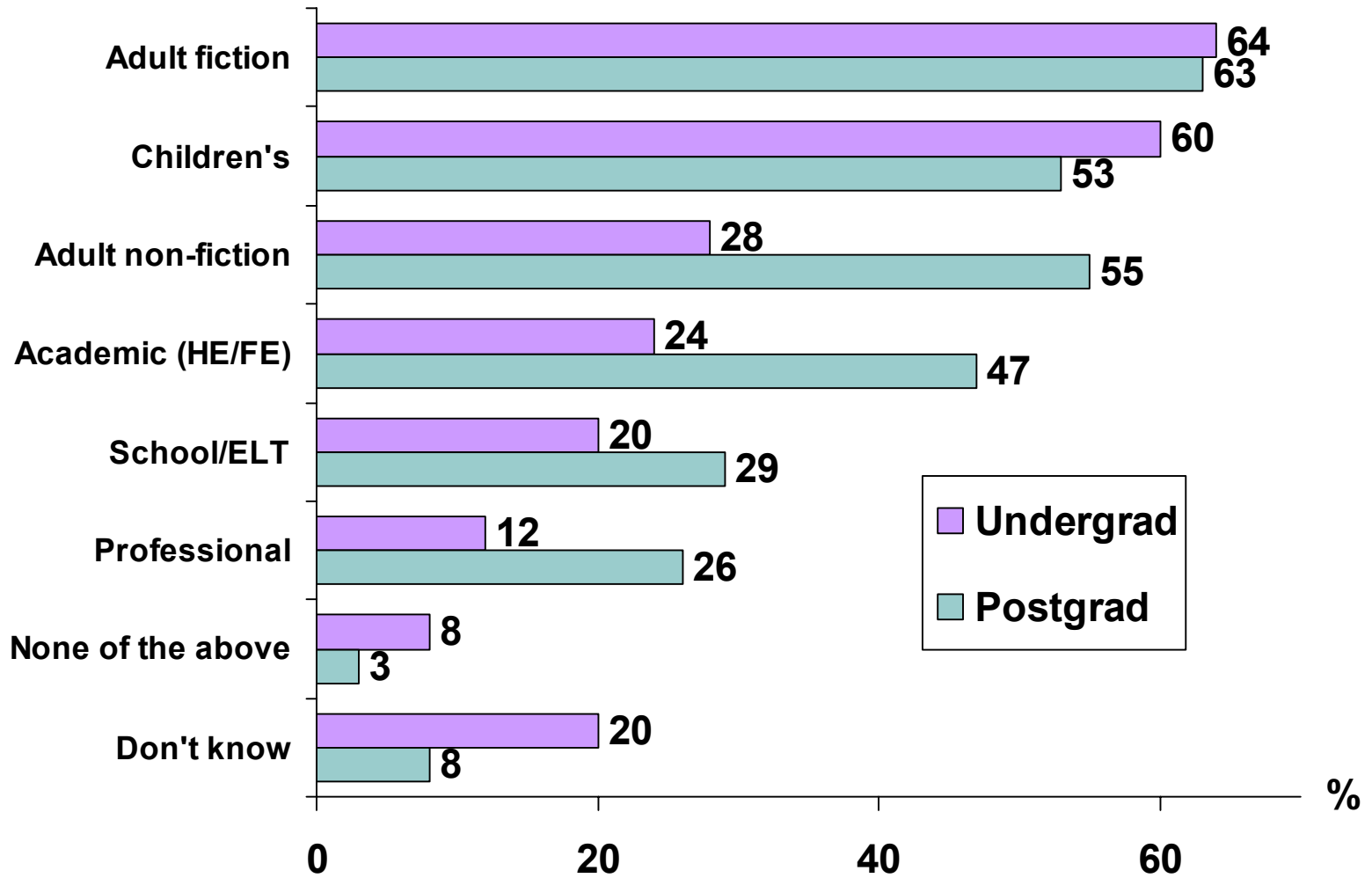
Interest in sectors

In which sectors of the book publishing industry are you considering working?



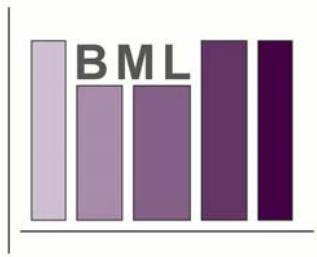
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Sector images

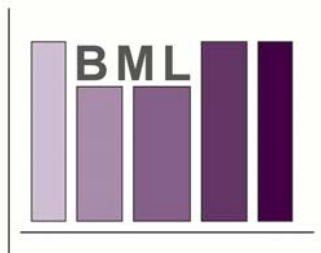
Which, if any, of the book publishing sectors shown have particularly positive images with you? And which, if any, have particularly negative images?



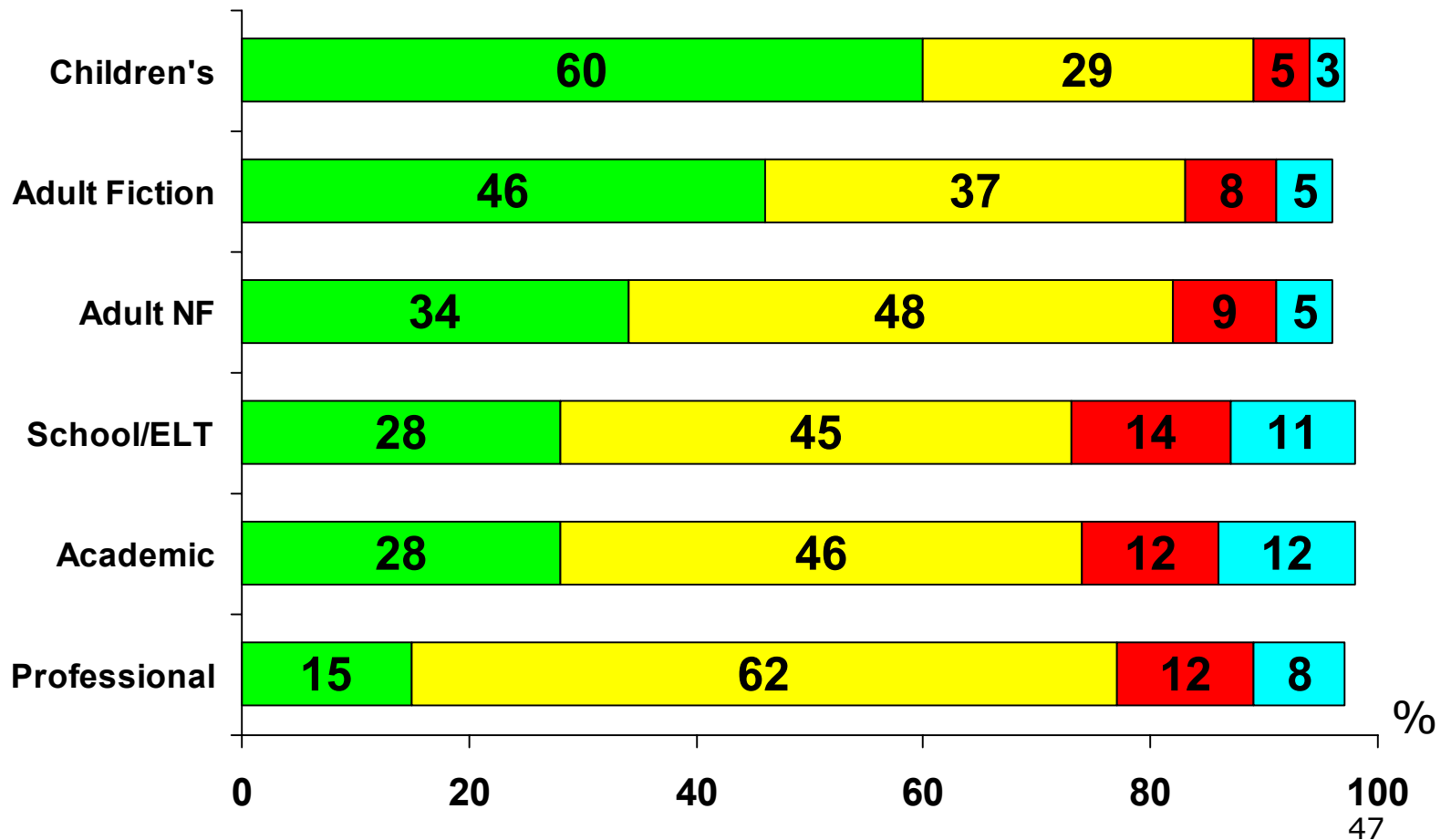
- Children's has most positive image (60%), ahead of adult fiction (46%) and NF (34%)
 - Positive image linked to interest in that sector, plus:
 - Children's = creative, varied formats
 - Fiction = bestselling/profitable, influential
 - NF = stimulating, diverse
- No sectors viewed particularly negatively, but professional publishing has least positive votes (15%)
 - Educational/professional = important vs boring
- Few significant variations by any demographic
 - Those keenest on working in industry tend to be more positive; others more neutral than negative
 - Undergrads tend to be more positive than postgrads on *adult, children's* and *school/ELT*
 - Postgrads more positive than undergrads on *academic* and *professional*

Sector images

Which, if any, of the book publishing sectors shown have particularly positive images with you? And which, if any, have particularly negative images?



■ Particularly positive ■ Neither/nor ■ Particularly negative ■ Don't know



Adult fiction image

What is it about these sectors that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (30 respondents)

- What I read/enjoy myself x8
- The best-selling/most profitable x6
- Reaches/influences the most x5
- Exciting x4
- Forefront of literature x4
- Creativity x4
- Authors x3
- My experience in it x3

Negative (5 respondents)

- Too commercial x3
- Too competitive x2
- More restricted range x2
- Loss of most author/editor contact x2

Adult NF image

What is it about these sectors that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (22 respondents)

- What I read/enjoy myself x12
- Intellectually stimulating x 5
- Very diverse x 4
- Celebrity authors x 3
- Beautiful books (eg art) x 2
- MY experience in it x 2

Negative (6 respondents)

- Too much mediocrity/celebrity x 3
- Restricted range x 2
- Too seasonal/Christmas x 2

Children's image

What is it about these sectors that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (39 respondents)

- Creativity x14
- Format variety x 8
- Love children's books x 7
- Most important sector culturally x 5
- Fun/relaxed x 5
- Varied work x 3
- My experience in it x 2

Negative (3 respondents)

- Too commercial/not enough quality x 2
- Too political (what is 'good' for children) x 1

School/ELT image

What is it about these sectors that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (18 respondents)

- Very necessary/needed x6
- Languages x3
- National/for everyone x3
- Good cause x3
- Good for children x3
- Word-of-mouth x2

Negative (9 respondents)

- Boring/not interesting to me x5
- Don't agree with the content x2
- Nothing – just feel negative x2

Academic image

What is it about these sectors that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (18 respondents)

- Very necessary/needed x5
- Interesting subject matter x5
- Very professional business x4
- Wide-ranging subjects x3
- Help me to learn too x2
- My experience in it x2

Negative (8 respondents)

- Subject specific/boring to me x7
- Too high level/unintelligible x3

Professional image

What is it about these sectors that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?

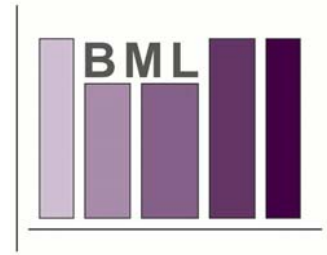
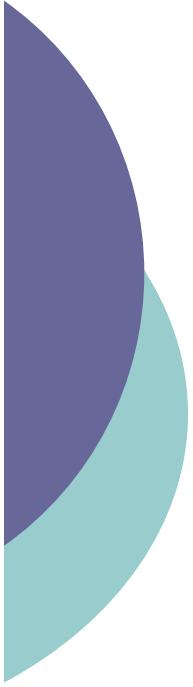


Positive (10 respondents)

- Very necessary/needed x4
- Interesting subject matter x3
- Very professional business x2
- My experience in it x2

Negative (8 respondents)

- Boring content x6
- Too many books on same subject x2
- All about money x2



Book publishing industry functions

Interest in functions

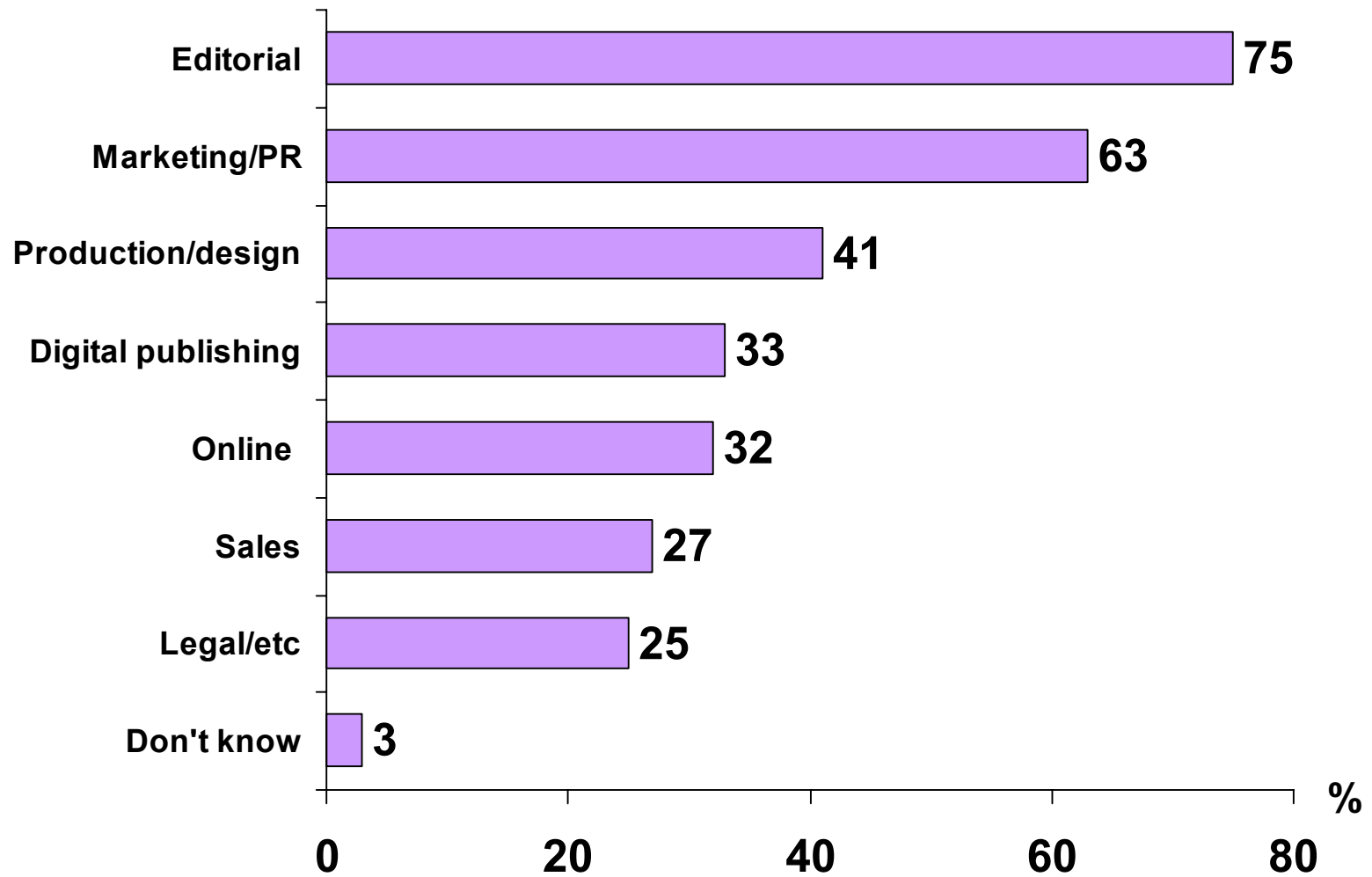
What type of work are you considering within the book publishing industry?



- Book publishing students are keenest on working in editorial (75%) and marketing/PR (63%)
- No other function is mentioned by half, with production/design (41%) the next most popular
- Sales (27%) and legal/etc (25%) are of least interest

Interest in functions

What type of work are you considering within the book publishing industry?



Interest in functions

What type of work are you considering within the book publishing industry?



- Few variations by any demographic
- Undergrads (72%) more likely than postgrads (58%) to mention *marketing/PR*
- Men (57%) more likely than women (27%) to mention *digital publishing*
- *Legal/rights/contracts* somewhat varied:
 - aged 25+ (41%) vs under 25s (17%)
 - postgrads (34%) vs undergrads (12%)
 - course wholly books (43%) vs other (11%)
 - final year (33%) vs other years (13%)

Function images

Which, if any, of the book publishing functions shown have particularly positive images with you? And which, if any, have particularly negative images?



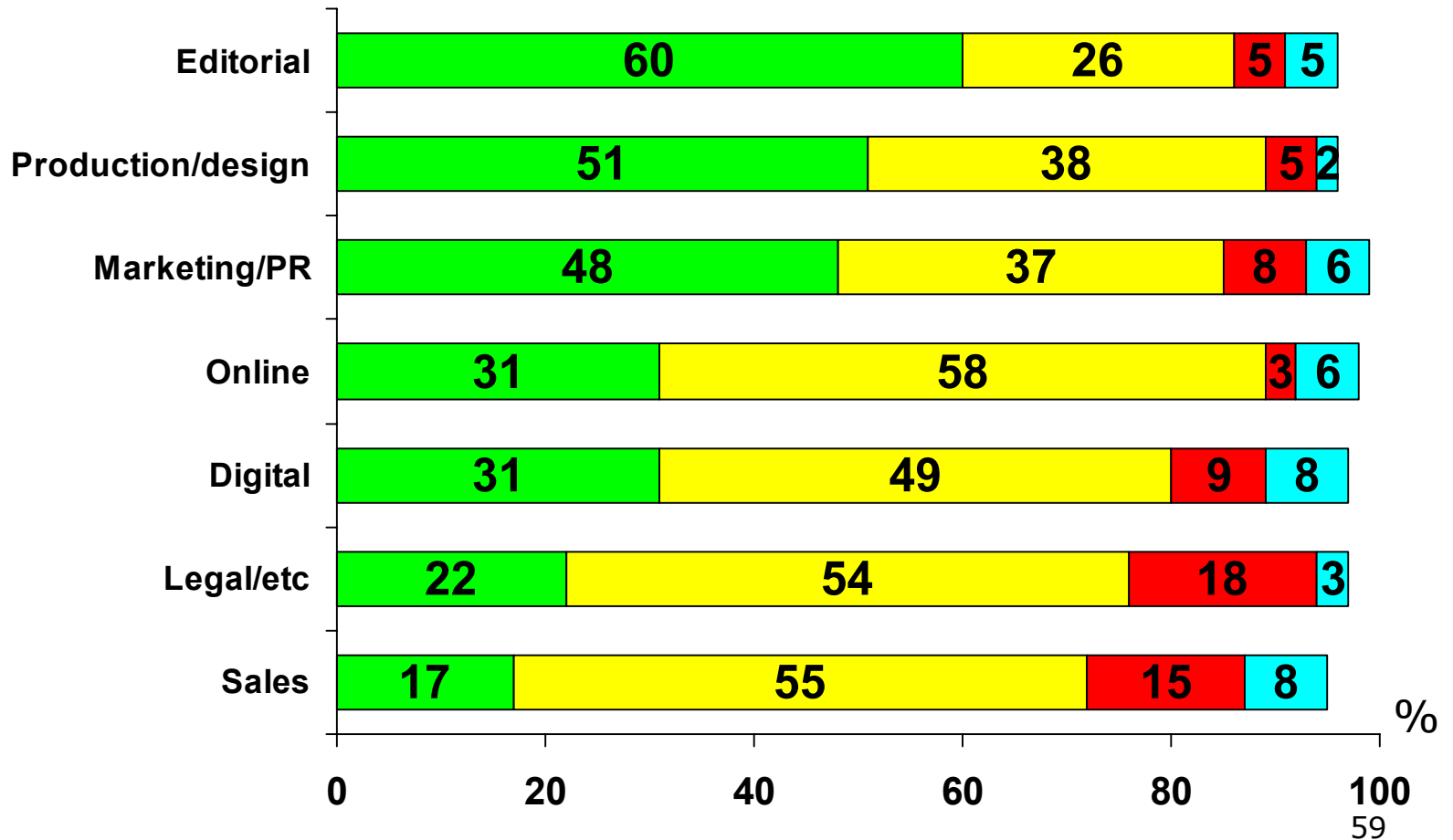
- Editorial has most positive image (60%), ahead of production (51%), marketing (48%)
 - All considered creative, plus:
 - Editorial = heart of industry, work with authors
 - Production = shape the books
 - Marketing = interesting, challenging
- Majority neutral rather than negative for other functions
 - Online = cutting edge, direct contact with readers
 - Digital = future of publishing vs technical/dull
 - Legal/rights/etc = important, challenging vs boring
 - Sales = personal contact vs repetitive
- Few significant variations by any demographic
 - *Digital* more positive among postgrads (42%) than undergrads (15%)
 - *Legal/rights/contracts* more positive among postgrads (32%) than undergrads (7%)

Function images

Which, if any, of the book publishing functions shown have particularly positive images with you? And which, if any, have particularly negative images?



■ Particularly positive
 ■ Neither/nor
 ■ Particularly negative
 ■ Don't know



Editorial image

What is it about these functions that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (39 respondents)

- The heart of the industry x18
 - involved with every aspect x11
- Working with authors x11
- Creativity x 9
- Seems very interesting x 8
- Where you make your name x 5
- My experience x 3

Negative (3 respondents)

- Subservient to marketing x 2
- Too little contact with authors x 1

Production/design image

What is it about these functions that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (33 respondents)

- The creative role x16
- Shaping the book x11
- Love the design side x 9
- Balance with environment x 3
- My experience x 3

Negative (3 respondents)

- Boring/too technical x 2
- Not enough creativity x 1

Marketing/PR image

What is it about these functions that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (31 respondents)

- Creative x13
- Interesting/fascinating x10
- The challenge of promotion x 9
 - making the book stand out x 5
- Varied/lots of aspects x 5

Negative (5 respondents)

- Too commercial x 3
- Not close to book x 2
- Not my interest/strength x 2

Sales image

What is it about these functions that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (11 respondents)

- The personal contact x5
- Fits my skills x4
- The challenge x3

Negative (10 respondents)

- Selling is boring/repetitive x5
- No sales skills x3
- Not creative x3

Online dev't/etc image

What is it about these functions that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (20 respondents)

- The cutting edge/new x12
- Creative challenge x 5
- Direct connect with readers x 4

Negative (2 respondents)

- Boring x 2

Digital publishing image

What is it about these functions that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?



Positive (20 respondents)

- The future of publishing x13
- Exciting x 6
- Suit my IT skills x 4
- Uncertainty/intriguing x 3

Negative (6 respondents)

- Too technical x 4
- Course made it seem dull x 3
- Not what books should be about x 2

Legal/rights/etc image

What is it about these functions that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?

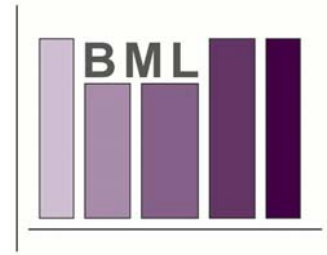


Positive (14 respondents)

- Very important for authors x 7
- Intellectually challenging x 5
- More interesting than expected x 2
- My experience x 2

Negative (12 respondents)

- Boring x10
- Too mechanical x 3



Book publishing industry skills

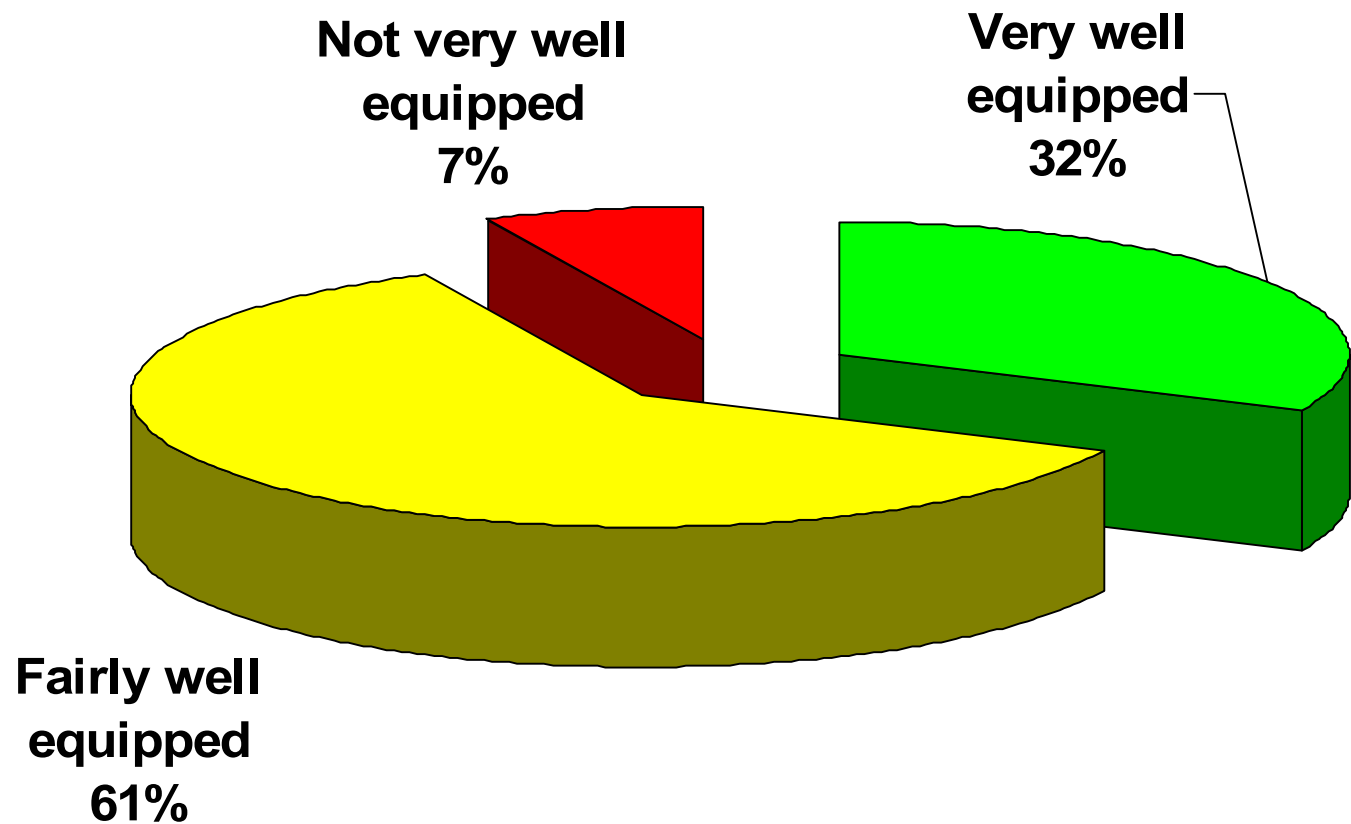
Skill levels



- 32% of final year book publishing students think they are very well, and 61% fairly well, equipped for a career in the industry
- 90% are very/fairly well equipped for editorial, 86% for marketing/PR and 78% for production/design
- 54% not at all/very well equipped for sales; 39% not for online/digital
- No significant variations by demographics

Skill confidence: General

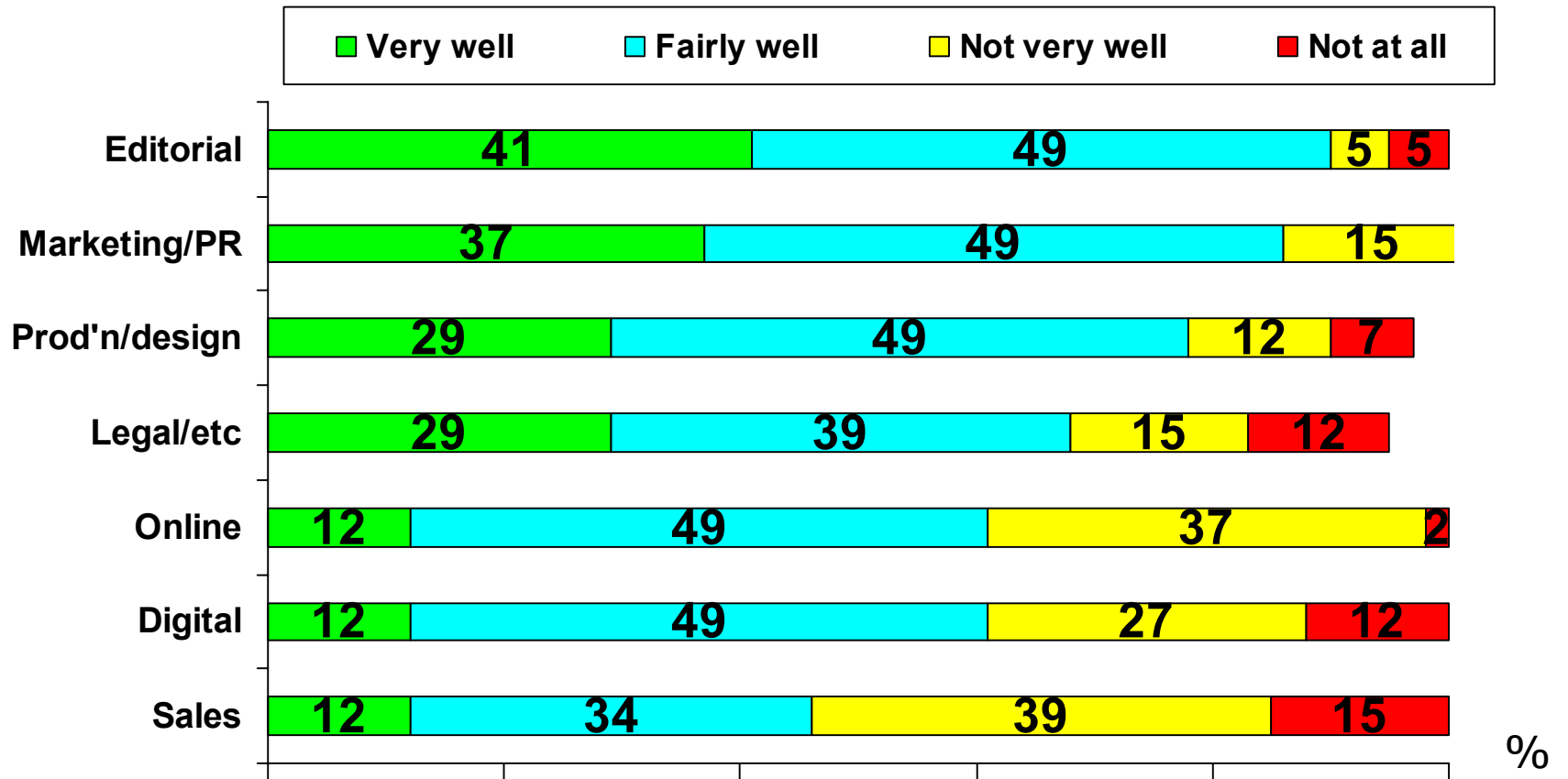
Overall, how well equipped do you feel your course has made you for a job/career in the book publishing industry?



Base: Final year only=41

Skill confidence: Functions

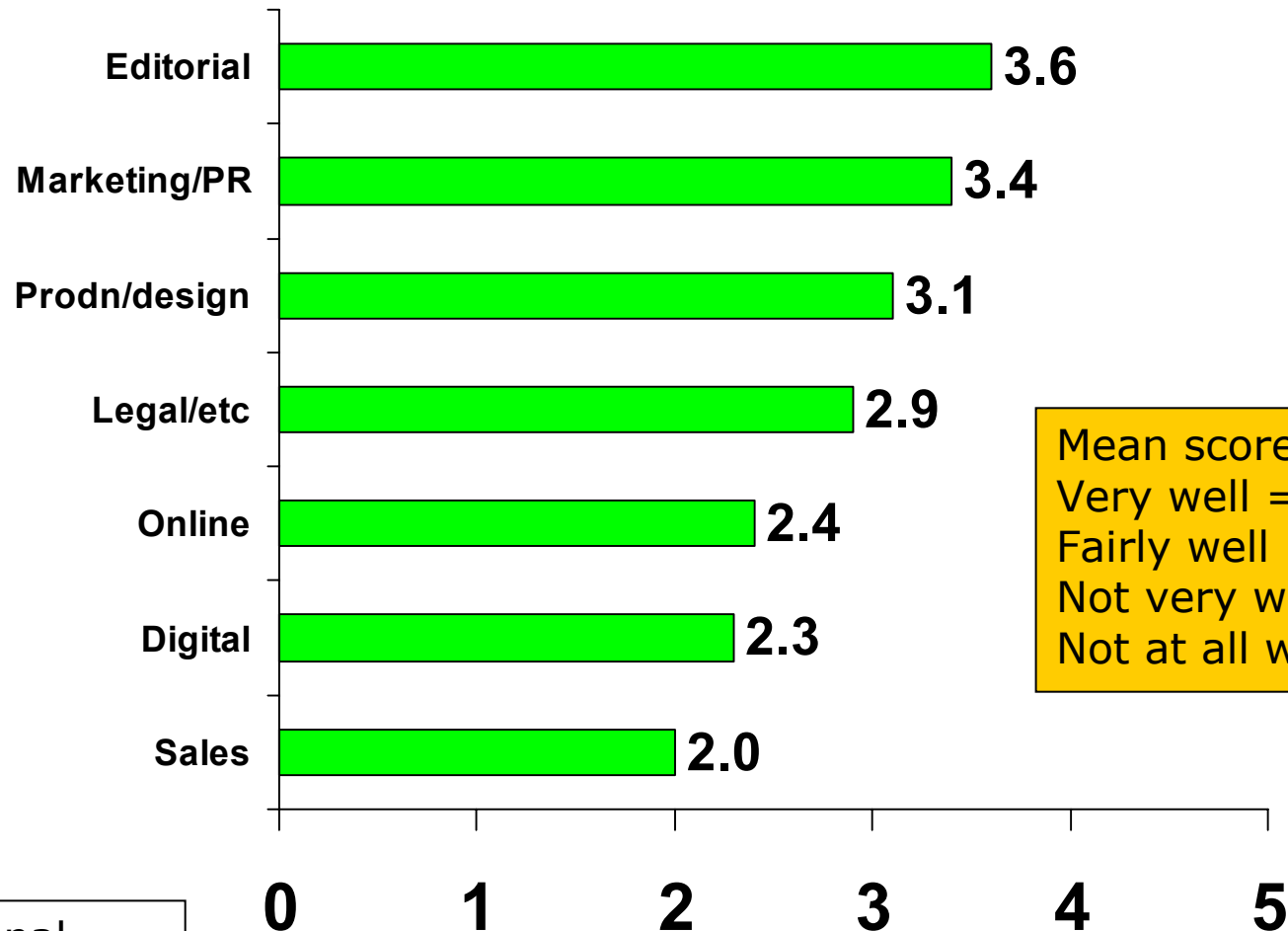
More specifically, how well equipped do you feel your course has made you to work in the following areas/functions within the book publishing industry?



Base: Final year only=41

Skill confidence: Functions

More specifically, how well equipped do you feel your course has made you to work in the following areas/functions within the book publishing industry?



Mean score:
Very well = 5
Fairly well = 3
Not very well = 1
Not at all well = 0

Base: Final year only=41

Missing skills

What, if any, other or particular skills/knowledge do you feel you are lacking in terms of working in the book publishing industry?
(UNPROMPTED)



- No answer was given by more than 5 students
- Nothing especially x3
- Rights x5
- Finances x5
- Contracts x4
- Management skills x4
- Hands-on experience x4
- Digital x3
- E-commerce x3
- Editorial skills x3
- Design skills (Indesign, Quark) x3
- The way the process from manuscript to retail fits/works x2
- Production x2

Base: Final year only=41



Sources for jobs

Sources for jobs

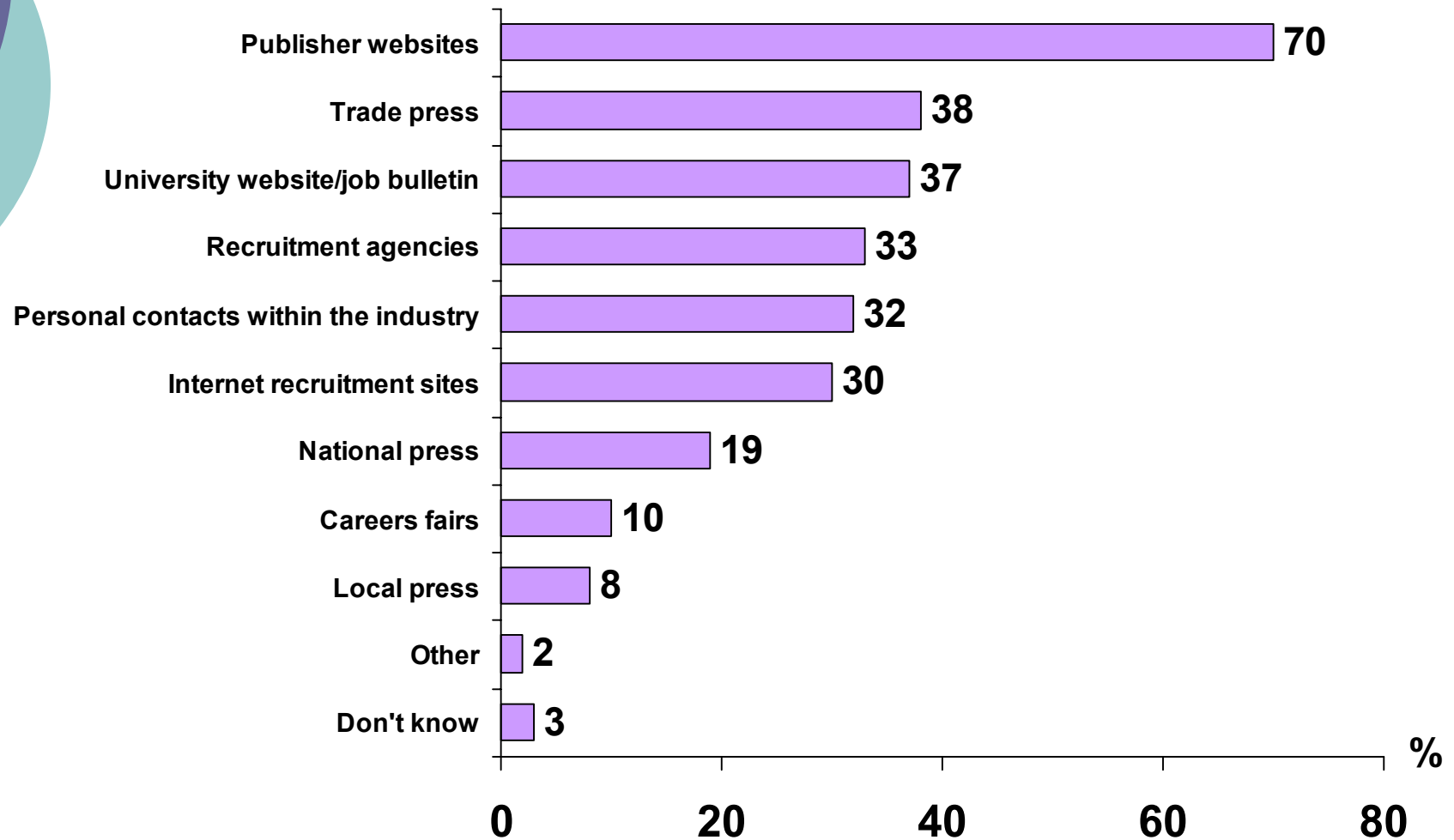
Which of the following do you think you would use most if you were looking for job opportunities in the book publishing industry? [up to 3]

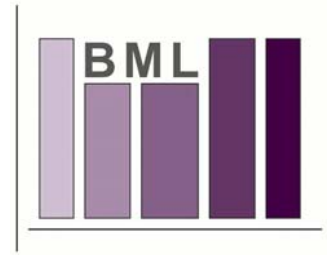
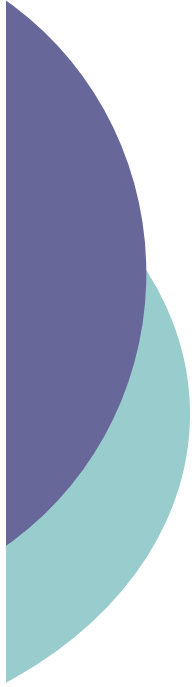


- Publisher websites (70%) are much the most common source, well ahead of trade press (38%) in second place
- There are few variations by any demographic
- The main variation is in use of *recruitment agencies*
 - up to 21 (5%), 22-24 (38%), 25+(55%)
 - undergrads (8%), postgrads (50%)
 - course wholly books (43%), other (26%)
 - final year (48%), other (9%)
 - very keen on book publishing (43%), other (21%)

Sources for jobs

Which of the following do you think you would use most if you were looking for job opportunities in the book publishing industry? [Up to 3]





Making book publishing more attractive as a career

How to attract



- Book publishing students suggest better pay (40%), especially at entry level
- 29% suggest making it easier to get work experience
- 17% want the industry to provide more jobs locally/regionally (ie near where they do/want to live)
- 12% feel the industry needs to clarify career development

How to attract

What could the book publishing industry do to make it a more attractive career option for you? (UNPROMPTED)



- Don't know 5%
- Nothing 3%
- Better pay 40%
 - at entry level 25%
- Easier to get work experience 29%
 - paid internships 14%
- Better geographic spread of jobs 17%
 - less London-centric 11%
- Clarify career development 12%
- Graduate training schemes 9%
- More responsibility early in career 8%
- Offer wider roles early on: mix creative and administrative 6%