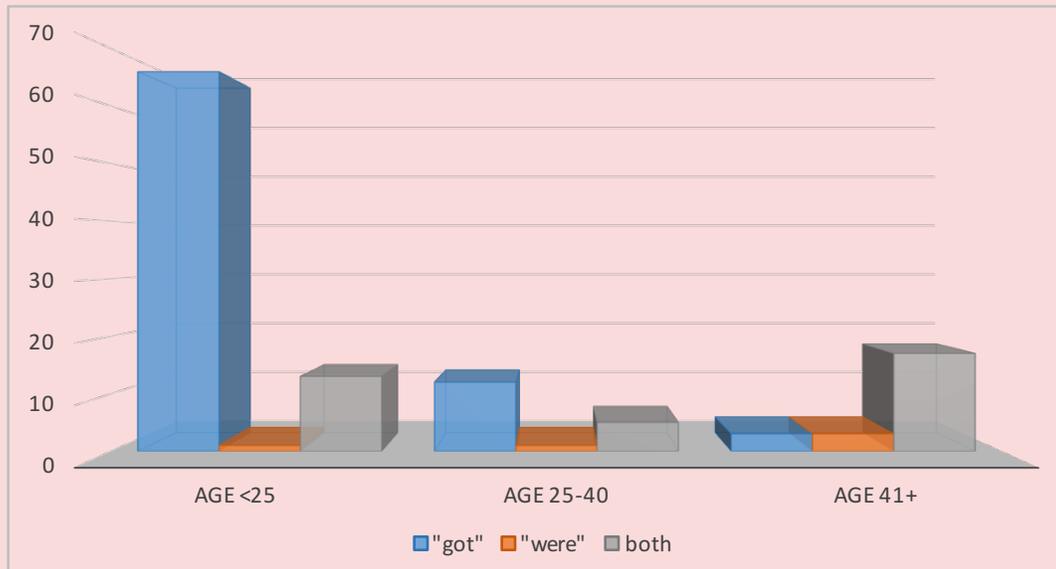


Survey Results

Which one are you more likely to say?

They got married in Cuba last month **OR** They were married in Cuba last month
OR do you say both?



The standard passive construction in English is formed with *to be + -ed*. Another version is formed with *get + -ed*. The two types are often, but not always, interchangeable, with the “get-passive” more likely to be used with active verbs, to describe accidental or unexpected situations, and in informal speech. In our sample sentence, participants in age categories <25 and 25-40 prefer the get-passive, while those in category 41+ are fine with either form. Interestingly, none of the age groups prefer the standard passive in this context. It may be that in the case of the verb *marry*, use of the get-passive has become idiomatic. Here is some additional information on get-passives from *English Grammar*, via the *Cambridge Dictionary* online:

We form the standard passive with *be + -ed* form. We form the *get* passive with *get + -ed* form:

The trees in the garden were damaged in the wind. (standard passive)

The trees in the garden got damaged in the wind. (get passive)

We use the *get* passive especially in informal speaking. When we use the *get* passive, we also place a little more emphasis on the nature of the action itself or on the person involved in the action:

There were blizzards over night and the whole town got snowed in.

I've got good news for you. Jim finally got promoted.

They had only known each other for six months when they got married in Las Vegas.

The *get* passive is commonly used in speaking of events that are negative or not desired:

They've worked there for three years but they still got sacked (lost their jobs).

He feels his paintings are always getting criticised.

Our car got stolen last night.

We sometimes use a reflexive pronoun with the *get* passive. This suggests the subject was at least partly responsible for the event or made it happen:

I got myself locked out the other day. I stupidly left my keys in the bedroom. (or I got locked out ...)