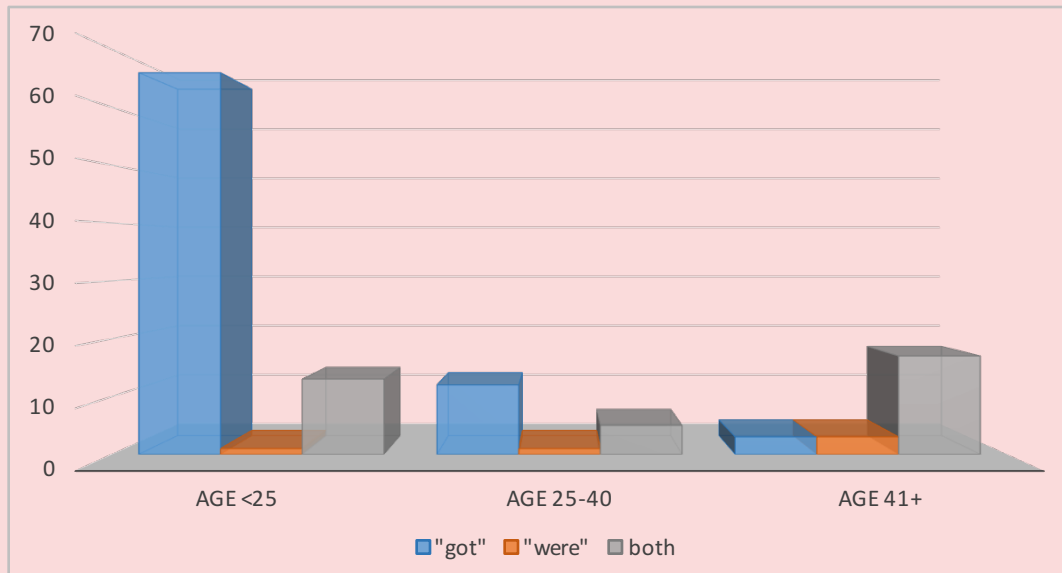


# Survey Results

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 ...)*