



Notes

- The full report is here: <https://foto-psychologie.de/publikation/>. Citations should refer exclusively to this report.
- In this short version, results are presented only in excerpt form. Information on methodology as well as restrictions and limitations can be found in the full report.
- General population sample obtained via a panel survey (Talk Online Panel), quota-controlled to be representative by age and gender. Digital and analog photographers were recruited separately.
- Demographic information on the samples is provided in the full report.
- Differences between groups and subgroups are reported in the full report.
- For the agreement items, a value of 5 indicates the highest level of agreement.

Sample

N = 1347

N = 496 general population*

N = 521 digital photographers**

N = 330 analog photographers** (≥ occasionally photographing analog)

Conducted in * Germany;

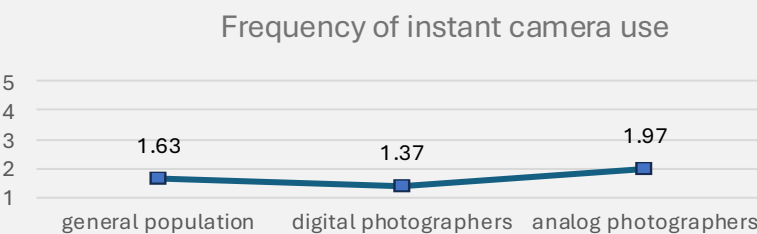
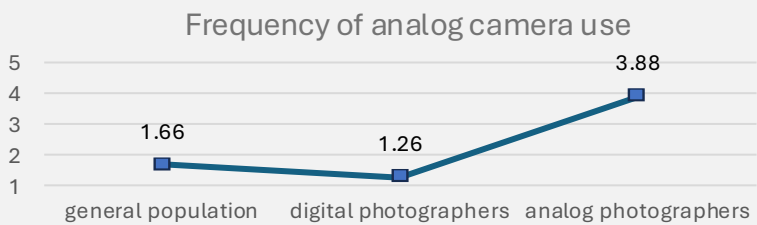
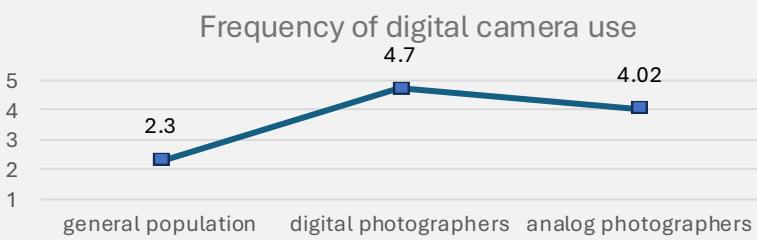
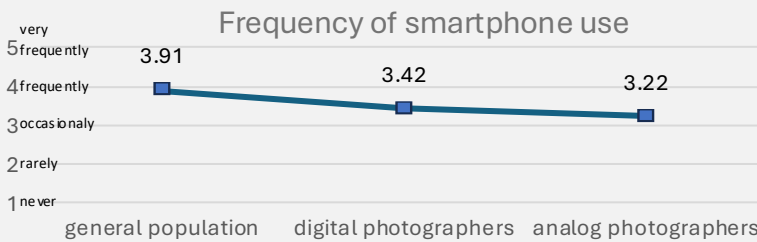
** Germany, Austria, Switzerland, 2025

General population (N = 496): N = 266 (53.6%) “not involved in photography” group; N = 228 (46.0%) hobby/amateur photographers; N = 2 (0.4%) professional photographers.

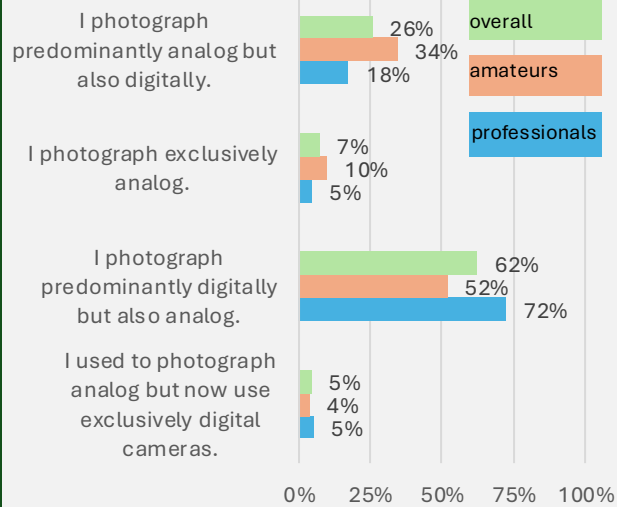
Digital photographers (N = 521): N = 294 (56.4%) professional photographers; N = 227 (43.6%) hobby/amateur photographers.

Analog photographers (N = 330): N = 170 (51.5%) professional photographers; N = 160 (48.5%) hobby/amateur photographers.

Camera Use, Interest, Attitudes, Knowledge

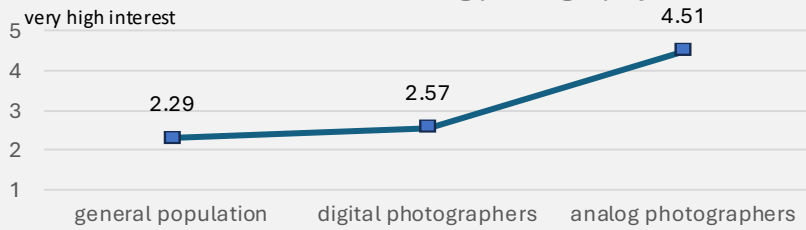


Analog photographers: history of analog photography



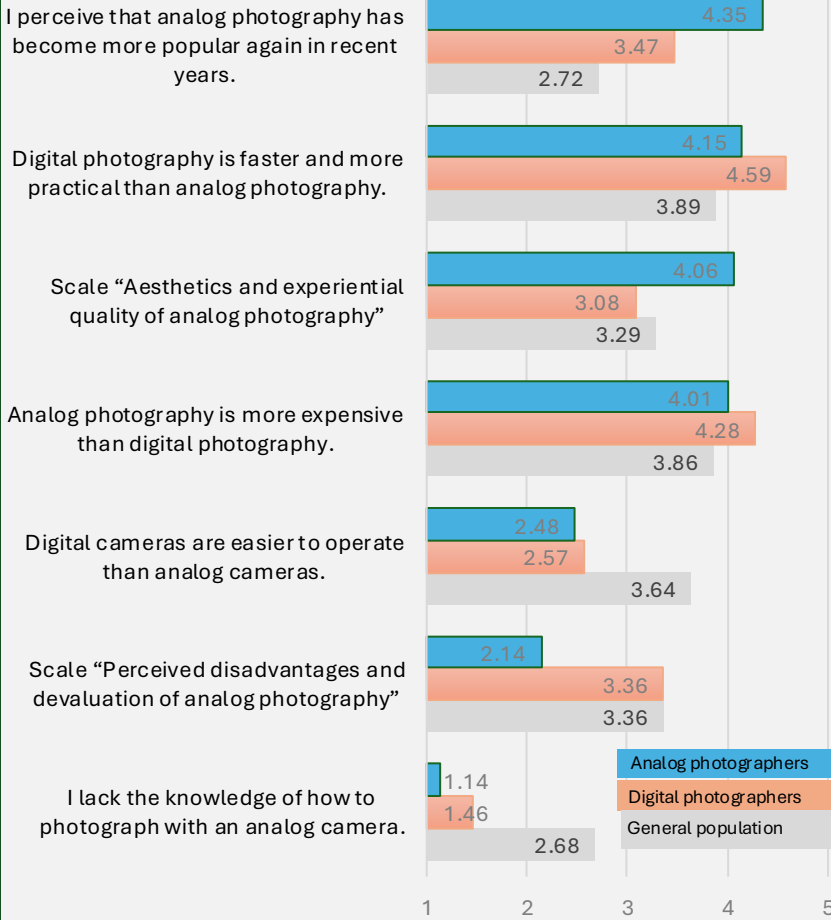
In the general population, photography is most frequently done with a smartphone. Digital photographers most frequently use a digital camera. Analog photographers use digital and analog cameras at nearly the same frequency. Only very few photograph exclusively with an analog camera. Instant cameras are never or only rarely used across all groups, and among analog photographers they are used occasionally in some cases.

Interest in analog photography



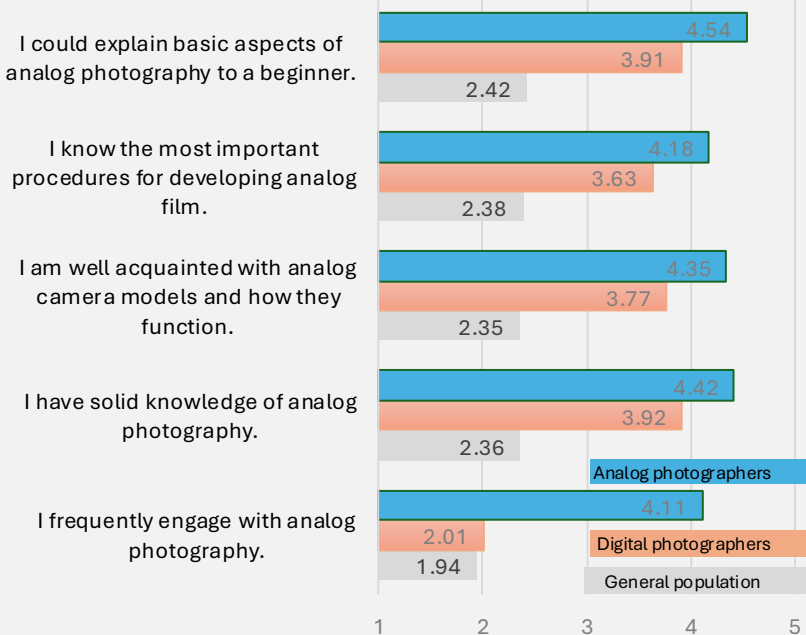
Interest in analog photography differs markedly between the three groups. In the general population, 5% report being very interested in analog photography. Among digital photographers, this proportion is 10%. In contrast, analog photographers show a very high level of interest: 67% select the highest level of agreement.

Attitude toward analog photography



Across evaluations of analog and digital photography, a clear and consistently reflected pattern emerges in the data. Digital photographers show the strongest agreement that digital photography is fast and practical ($M = 4.59$), and they are also most likely to consider analog photography to be expensive ($M = 4.28$). Analog photographers perceive much more strongly that analog photography has become more popular again in recent years ($M = 4.35$), and they also score highest on the scale measuring the aesthetic and experiential quality of analog photography ($M = 4.06$). In the general population, it is particularly notable that digital cameras are comparatively most likely to be perceived as easy to use ($M = 3.64$), while at the same time the strongest sense is reported that knowledge about photographing with an analog camera is lacking ($M = 2.68$). On the scale assessing perceived disadvantages and devaluation of analog photography, the general population and digital photographers show identical mean values (both $M = 3.36$), whereas analog photographers score substantially lower ($M = 2.14$).

Knowledge about analog photography

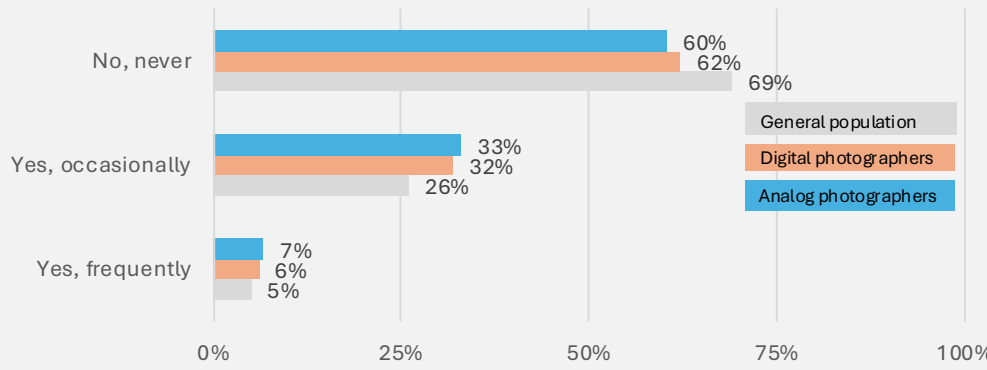


Knowledge about analog photography differs clearly across the three groups. The following results are based on a reduced subsample ($N = 1,287$; general population $n = 448$, digital photographers $n = 509$, analog photographers $n = 330$).

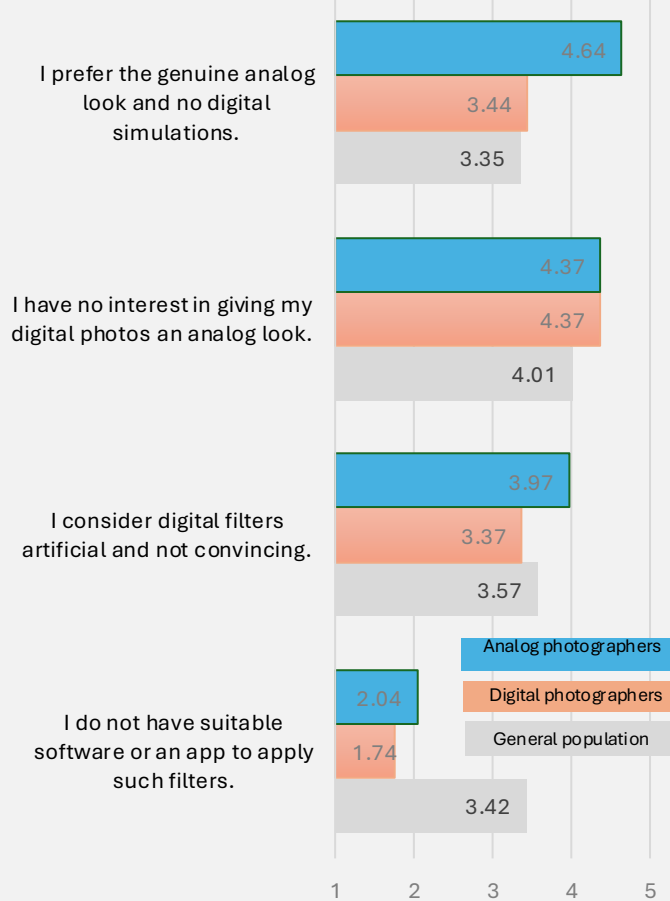
Analog photographers show consistently the highest values. They engage with analog photography more frequently ($M = 4.11$) than digital photographers ($M = 2.01$) and the general population ($M = 1.94$). This is also reflected in the frequencies: In the general population, 49% report not engaging with analog photography frequently at all; among digital photographers, the figure is 43%, whereas among analog photographers, 48% fully agree that they engage with it frequently.

Use of Filters to Make Digital Photos Appear as if they were Photographed Analog

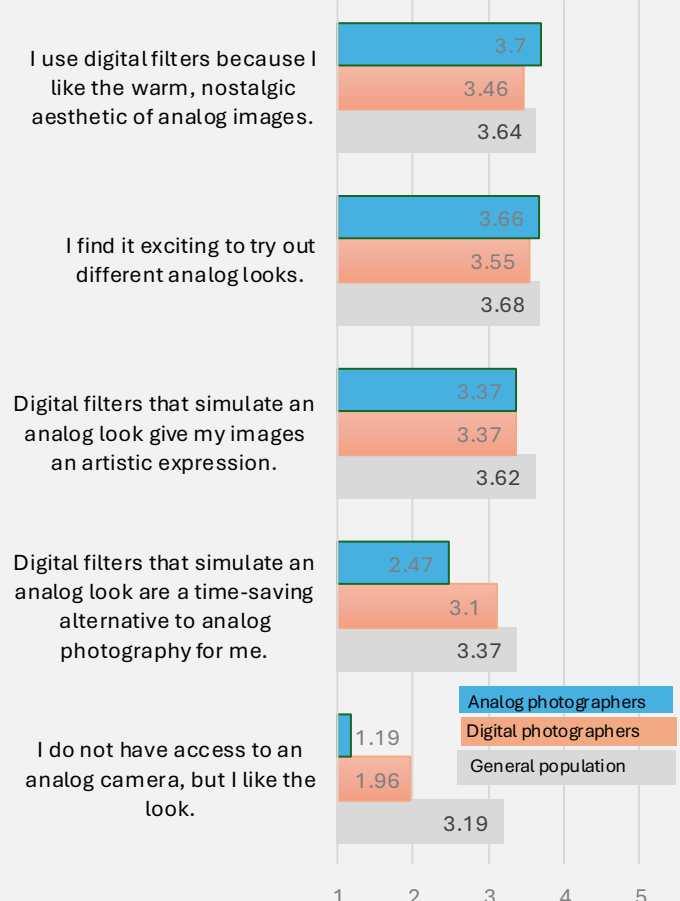
Use of digital filters for an analog look



Reasons why no filters are used



Reasons why filters are used



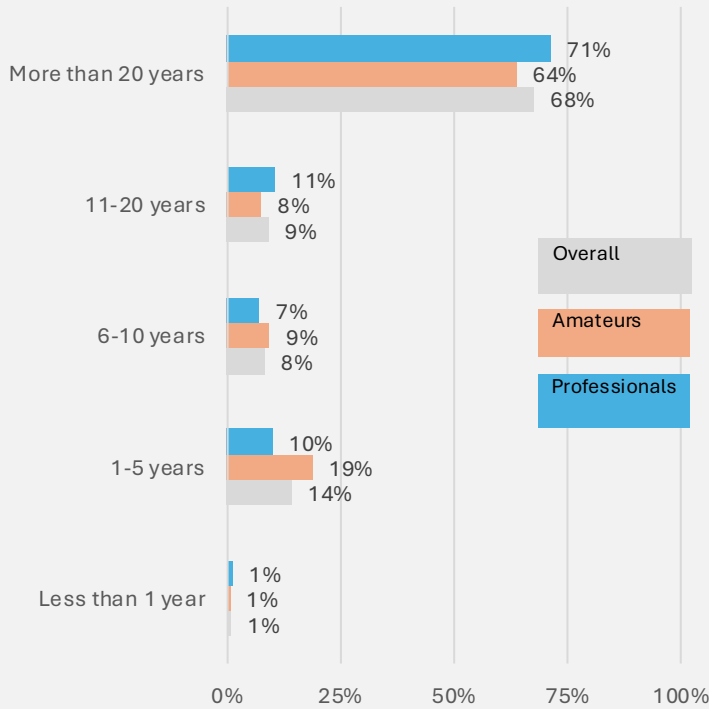
The use of digital filters to make digital photos appear analog is a rather occasional practice across all three groups and is overall more often not used at all.

Among those who never use digital filters, clear differences emerge between the three groups. Digital photographers (M = 4.37) and analog photographers (M = 4.37) agree more strongly that they have no interest in giving their digital photos an analog look than does the general population (M = 4.01). The strongest difference concerns attitudes toward authenticity: Analog photographers (M = 4.64) show a much stronger preference for the genuine analog look and reject digital simulations more clearly than digital photographers (M = 3.44) and the general population (M = 3.35).

Among those who use digital filters frequently or occasionally, motives differ only partly between groups. The general population (M = 3.19) agrees more strongly that they do not have access to an analog camera but like the look, compared with digital photographers (M = 1.96) and analog photographers (M = 1.19). In addition, the general population (M = 3.37) and digital photographers (M = 3.10) are more likely to perceive digital filters as a time-saving alternative to analog photography than analog photographers (M = 2.47).

Specific Results for Analog Photographers: Motives

Years already photographing analog

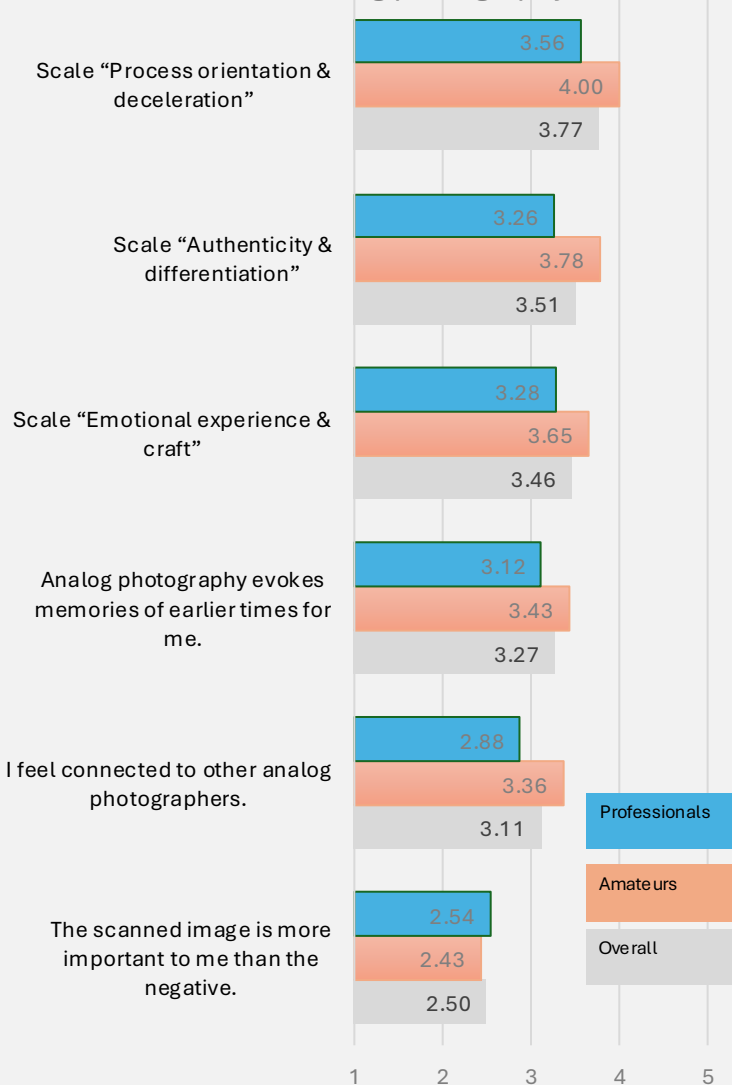


In both groups, a very long experience with analog photography is common. Among professionals, 71% have been photographing analog for more than 20 years; among amateurs, the figure is 64%.

Overall, agreement with the scale measuring process orientation and deceleration is relatively high ($M = 3.77$). Amateurs ($M = 4.00$) agree more strongly that analog photography is experienced as process-oriented and decelerating than professionals ($M = 3.56$).

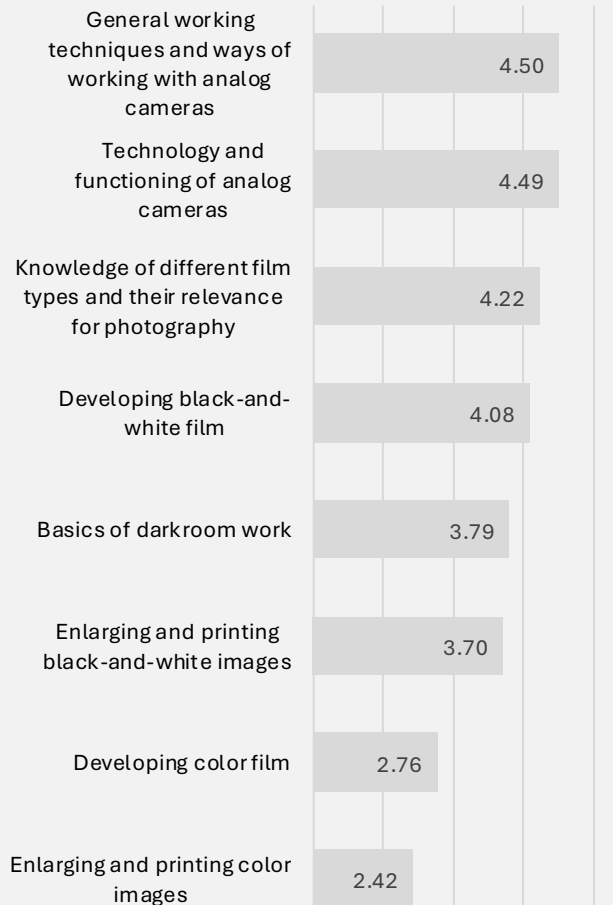
Among analog photographers, a very clear knowledge profile emerges. Knowledge is particularly high in areas directly related to the shooting process and the camera. With regard to the technology and functioning of analog cameras ($M = 4.49$), around 90% report high or very high knowledge, while only about 2% report little to no knowledge. In contrast, knowledge about color darkroom processes is considerably lower.

Motives for analog photography



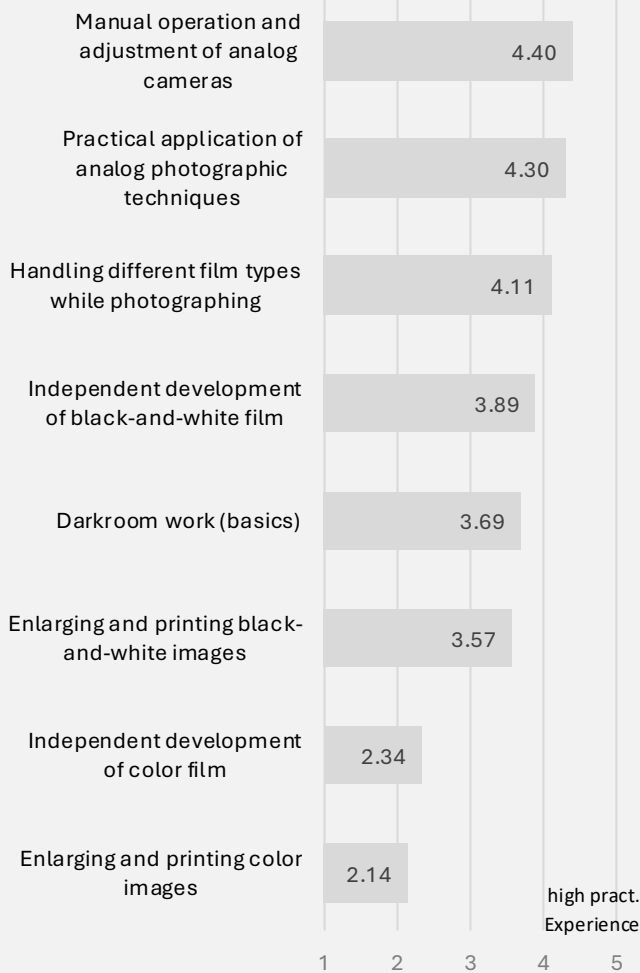
Specific Knowledge of Analog Photography

Knowledge about areas of analog photography



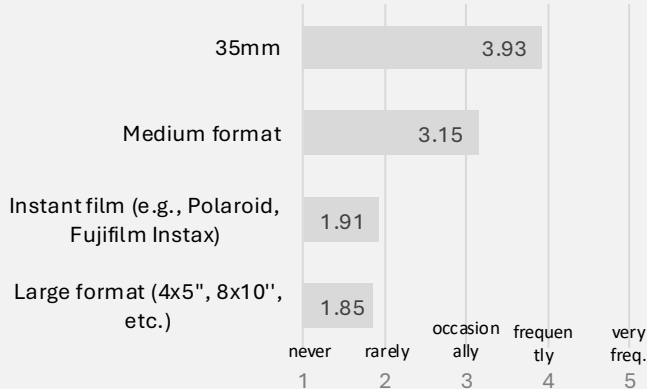
Practical Experience and Cameras

Practical experience in areas of analog photography



Among analog photographers, overall practical experience in key areas of shooting and handling is high. Routine is particularly pronounced in the manual operation and adjustment of analog cameras.

Use of different film formats



A total of 87.6% do not use any additional film formats, while 12.4% do, specifically the following (details in the full report): 1. Pocket / subminiature (110, 16mm), 31.0%; 2. Large format (sheet film), 11.9%; 3. Medium format (special formats), 9.5%; 4. 35mm (special formats), 7.1%; 5. Narrow-gauge film (cinema), 7.1%; 6. Rare roll films, 4.8%; 7. Instant film, 2.4%; 8. Other / experimental, 26.2%.

In response to the question "Which analog camera do you use most frequently?", 316 valid responses were provided (details in the full report):

1. 35mm single-lens reflex (SLR): 102 mentions (32.3%)
2. Medium format: 75 mentions (23.7%)
3. Rangefinder: 43 mentions (13.6%)
4. Large format: 23 mentions (7.3%)
5. Compact cameras (point and shoot): 12 mentions (3.8%)
6. Pinhole cameras: 3 mentions (0.9%)
7. Instant cameras: 1 mention (0.3%)
8. Other / unknown: 57 mentions (18.0%)

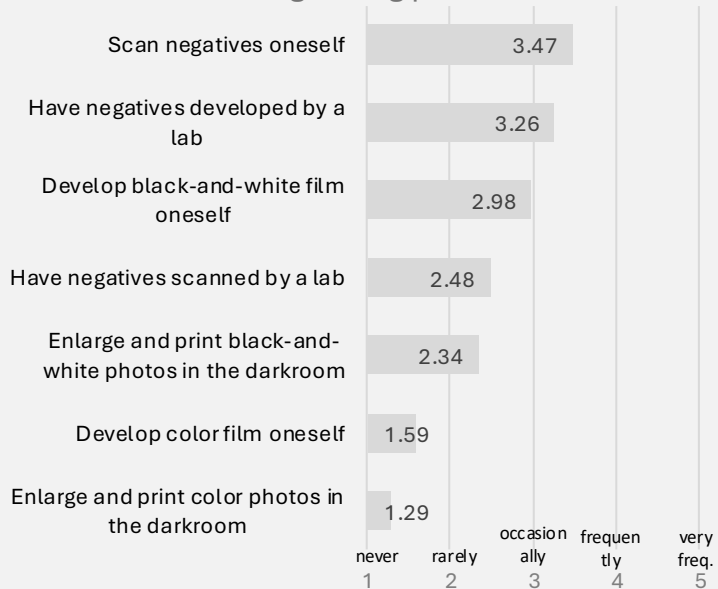
Regarding the filter question of whether additional analog cameras are used beyond this, 76.1% answered yes and 23.9% answered no. Participants who answered yes were able to name the cameras in an open text field. From these responses, 512 valid individual mentions were extracted.

Only clearly identifiable models were assigned to technical categories. The relatively high proportion in the category "other / unknown" (9%) results primarily from unspecific mentions of brands or formats.

1. Medium format: 162 mentions (31.6%)
2. 35mm single-lens reflex (SLR): 134 mentions (26.2%)
3. Large format: 80 mentions (15.6%)
4. Compact cameras (point and shoot): 49 mentions (9.6%)
5. Rangefinder: 41 mentions (8.0%)
6. Other & specialties: 46 mentions (9.0%)

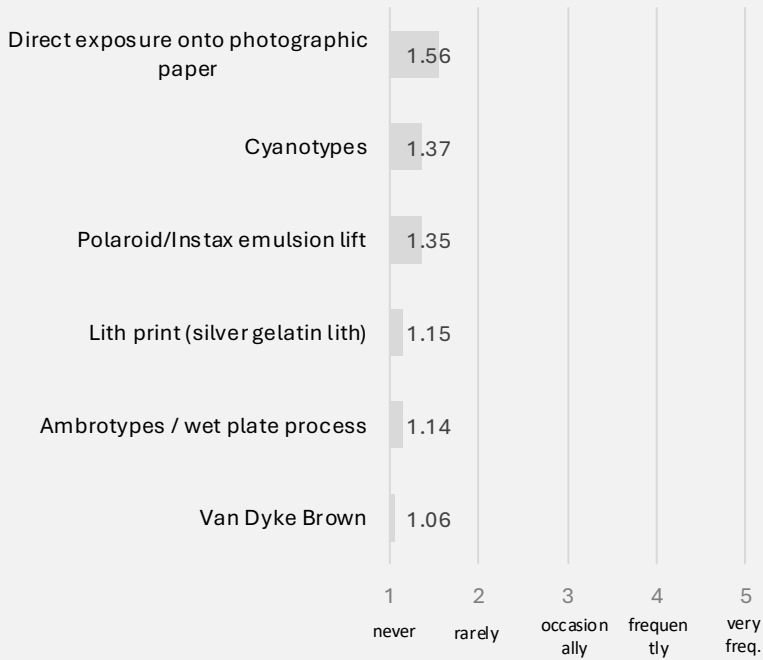
Conducting Analog Processes

Conducting analog processes



Among analog photographers, doing certain processes themselves is common, but overall a mixed pattern emerges. For developing black-and-white film (M = 2.98), two opposing patterns are evident: 28% develop very frequently themselves, while at the same time 29% report never doing so. In contrast, color films are predominantly not developed by the photographers themselves (M = 1.59). The use of laboratory services is also widespread overall.

Use of alternativ photographic processes

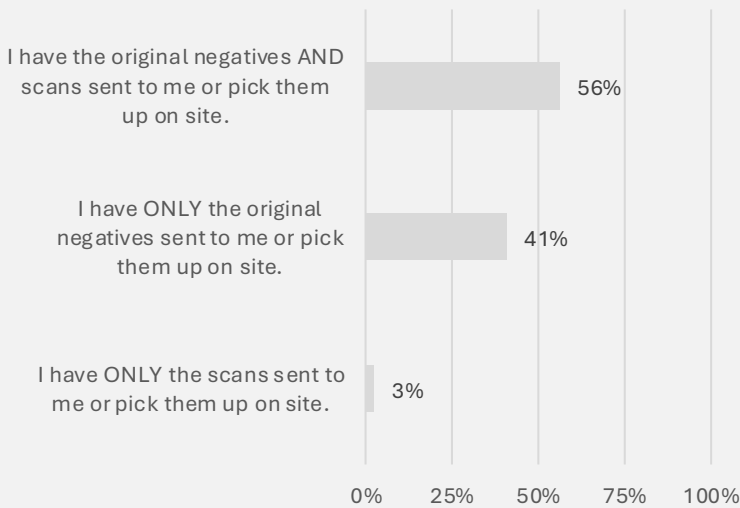


In response to the filter question asking whether additional photographic processes not listed are used, 9.1% answered yes and 90.9% answered no.

Participants who answered yes were able to name these processes in an open text field. The 44 valid individual mentions were categorized as follows (details in the full report):

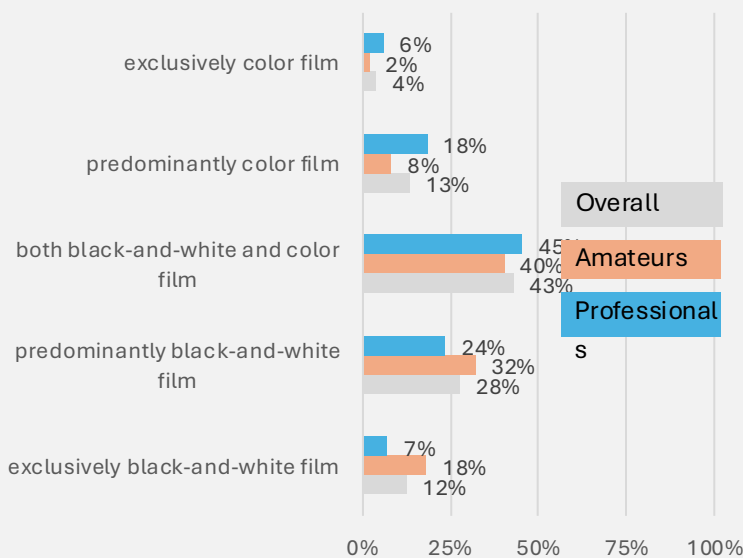
- Historical alternative printing processes: 31.8%
- Hybrid / transfer / printing & emulsion: 27.3%
- Experimental development & darkroom: 25.0%
- Pinhole / camera obscura: 9.1%
- Camera-less processes: 2.3%
- Other: 4.5%

Handling original negatives and scans



When analog photographers have negatives developed in a lab, they usually receive both the original negatives and scans. A total of 56% report that they have the original negatives and scans sent to them or collect them on site. A further 41% receive only the original negatives. Only 3% limit themselves to receiving scans only.

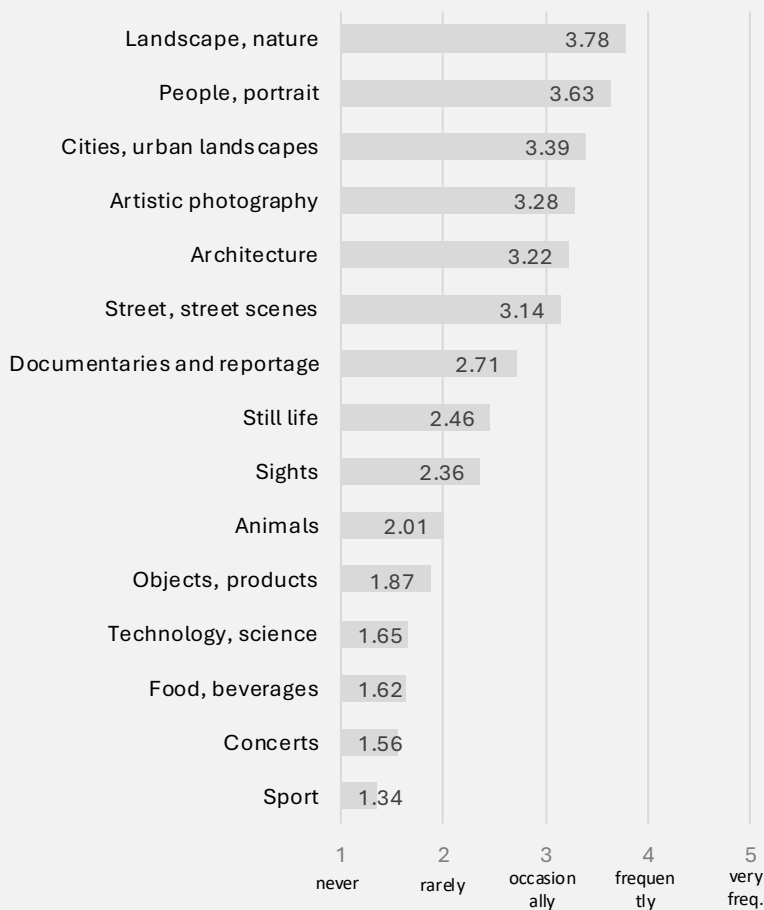
Use of analog color vs. black-and-white film



With regard to film type, amateurs and professionals show different emphases. Among amateurs, black-and-white film is somewhat more prominent: 18% use black-and-white film exclusively and 32% use predominantly black-and-white film; 10% use predominantly or exclusively color film. Professionals, in contrast, are somewhat more color-oriented: 18% use predominantly color film and 6% use color film exclusively; 7% use black-and-white film exclusively and 24% use predominantly black-and-white film. Using both film types is most common in both groups, at 40% among amateurs and 45% among professionals.

Subjects and Motifs Shot on Film and Information Sources

Analog photographed topics and motives



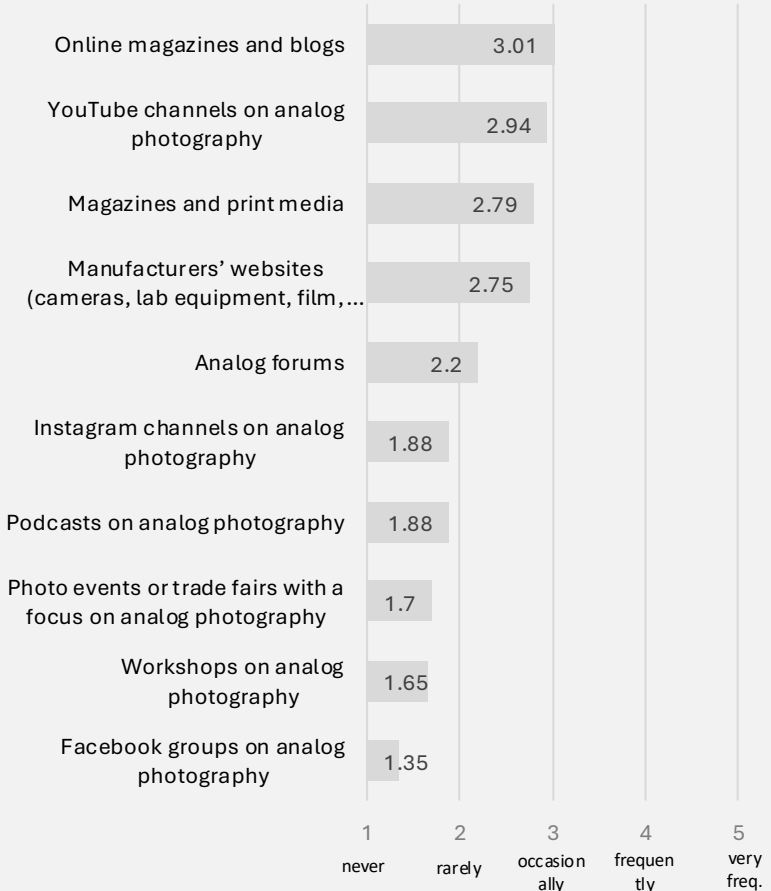
Among the subjects and motifs photographed analog, landscapes and nature dominate (M = 3.78), with 62% reporting frequent or very frequent use. People and portraits are also common (M = 3.63), with 59% photographing this motif frequently or very frequently. Cities and urban landscapes are also regularly photographed analog (M = 3.39), with 49% reporting frequent or very frequent use. A similar level is observed for artistic photography (M = 3.28), with 49% reporting frequent or very frequent use.

Sports and concerts are the least frequently photographed motifs in analog photography. For sports (M = 1.34), 76% report never photographing this motif; only 2% use it frequently. Concerts also play a minor role (M = 1.56): 63% never photograph concerts, and only 4% do so frequently or very frequently.

“Do you know magazines/print media that deal with analog photography?": Yes 50.9%, no 49.1%. If yes (details in the full report):

1. Specialist magazines: Analog & Monochrom: 49.0%
2. General photography magazines & technology: 23.8%
3. Art, culture & brand magazines: 9.7%
4. Other / specialist literature / unspecified: 17.5%

Use of information media on analog photography



Regularly read magazines/print media that deal with analog photography:

1. Specialist magazines: Analog & Monochrom: 60.0%
2. General photography magazines & technology: 24.0%
3. Art, culture & brand magazines: 16.0%

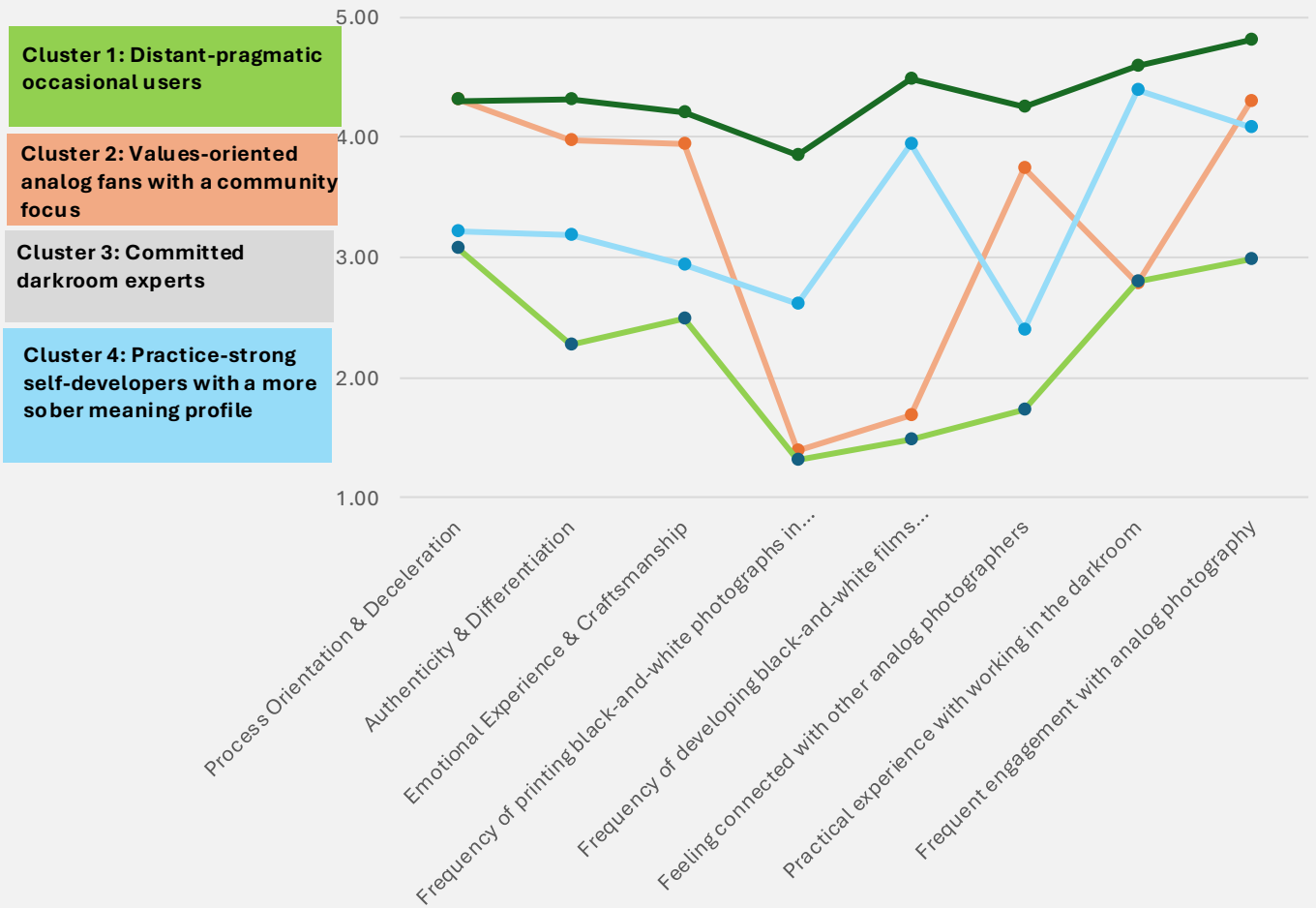
The specialist magazine PhotoKlassik accounts for the highest share among valid datasets, at 37.5% (27 of 72 participants).

“Are there specific topics or questions related to analog photography on which you would like more information?": Yes 23.6%, no 76.4%. If yes:

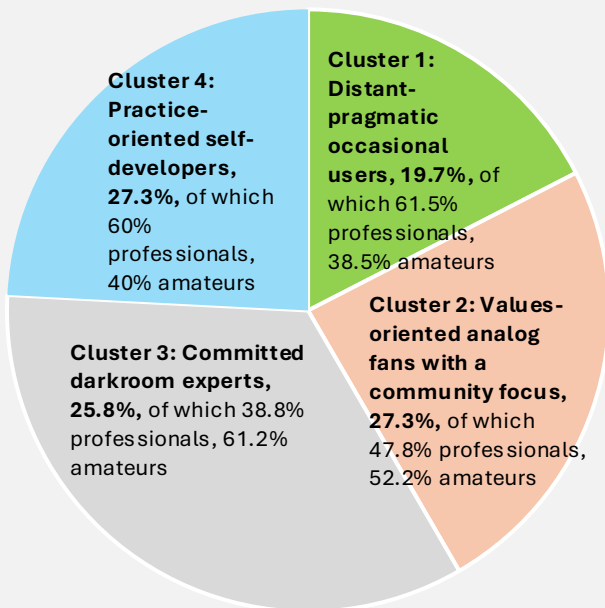
1. Darkroom, development & digitization (total: 35 mentions)
2. Film types & material knowledge (total: 12 mentions)
3. Market, future & availability (total: 8 mentions)
4. Community, history & law (total: 7 mentions)
5. Shooting technique & practical knowledge (total: 6 mentions)
6. Camera technology, repair & maintenance (total: 4 mentions)
7. Other (total: 19 mentions)

Types of Analog Photographers

Cluster analysis: Types of analog photographers



Types of analog photographers



Cluster 1: Distant-pragmatic occasional users

Rather moderate process orientation, but low authenticity and experiential orientation. Rare self-performance in the darkroom and in film development. Low sense of connection with other analog photographers. Moderate engagement with analog photography.

Cluster 2: Value-oriented analog enthusiasts with a community focus

High process orientation and deceleration. High authenticity and experiential orientation. Strong sense of connection with other analog photographers. Rather low to moderate own darkroom practice.

Cluster 3: Highly engaged darkroom experts

Very high process orientation and deceleration. Very high authenticity and experiential orientation. Frequent self-performance (film development, enlarging/printing) and very high darkroom competence. Strong sense of connection and very high engagement with analog photography.

Cluster 4: Practice-oriented self-developers with a more sober meaning profile

High practical orientation (especially film development) and strong darkroom fundamentals. Psychological meaning is rather moderate (process/authenticity/experience). Lower sense of connection with other analog photographers. High engagement with analog photography, more action-oriented than community-oriented.

Summary

The present study examines analog photography in 2025 as a psychologically meaningful practice within a digitally shaped image culture. Building on the theoretical classification, analog photography is understood not only as a technology, but as a specific mode of experience and action, particularly with regard to process binding, limitation, materiality, attention, craft-related self-efficacy, attributions of authenticity, and biographical references. Empirically, the report is based on an online survey with $N = 1,347$ individuals in three groups: general population ($N = 496$), digital photographers ($N = 521$), and analog photographers ($N = 330$). Classification of digital vs. analog photographers in the self-recruited sample was based on the frequency of analog photography in the past three years (never/rarely vs. at least occasionally).

Across the results, a consistent pattern emerges: attitudes, knowledge, and motives depend strongly on one's own practice. Analog photographers understand analog photography much more strongly in terms of process qualities. Limited exposures, deliberate decision situations, and concentrated work are central; the effort is often understood as a consciously chosen condition that changes perception and decision quality. Digital photographers and the general population more often compare in functional terms and place greater weight on practical hurdles such as effort, costs, and lack of everyday suitability. The study thus supports the theoretical assumption that analog photography is often stabilised through process- and experience-related qualities, whereas in digital routines, efficiency, immediate availability, and rapid correction more strongly predominate.

A central finding is the clear dividing line between look and process. Digital analog filters are known as a style option and are used rather situationally, but overall remain only an occasional practice. Especially in the analog group, filters are rarely regarded as an alternative. The analog look thus also functions digitally as an aesthetic code, but psychological added value often emerges only through materiality, limitation, and a comprehensible production pathway. Against the background of AI-based image production, this distinction gains additional relevance: not the look alone, but the attribution of provenance and process can become important for trust, value, and authenticity. With regard to knowledge, a clear hierarchy emerges: analog photographers show the greatest confidence in their knowledge, digital photographers fall in between, and the general population is substantially lower. Camera-related fundamentals can be adopted comparatively easily, whereas lab- and chemistry-related specialist knowledge remains selective and is closely tied to one's own routines. The execution of analog processes corresponds to this pattern and is often organised in a hybrid manner. Development is not infrequently outsourced to labs, whereas scanning, selection, and further processing are often carried out personally. Classical darkroom work appears as a deepening for a subset of analog photographers. Overall, this does not create an either-or between analog and digital, but a pragmatic combination of analog capture and digital infrastructure.

With regard to cameras, formats, and motifs, diversity becomes apparent: 35mm often forms the base, medium format is a widespread extension, and large format is a more specialised variant. Analog-photographed subjects are primarily calm genres such as landscape/nature and people/portrait, complemented by city/architecture, street, and artistic work. Learning and information acquisition often occur via digital sources and community exchange, supplemented by specialised literature.

The typology within the analog photographers makes internal diversity visible and links attitudes, knowledge, and behaviour into four profiles: distant-pragmatic occasional users (20%), value-oriented analog enthusiasts with a sense of community (27%), engaged darkroom experts (26%), and practice-strong self-developers with a more sober profile of meaning (27%).

Overall, the study describes analog photography as a deliberately chosen practice that is often organised in hybrid form and in which different psychological perspectives converge.