



# Institute for Photopsychology

Dr. Joachim Feigl

[www.foto-psychologie.de](http://www.foto-psychologie.de)

[feigl@foto-psychologie.de](mailto:feigl@foto-psychologie.de)

2023 Research Project 1: Summary

# Inventory of Photopsychology and Engaged Photography

## Notes

- Full report: <https://foto-psychologie.de/publikation/>. Citations should be taken only from the full report.
- In this summary, results are presented selectively, with a focus on comparing professionals, amateurs, and the comparison group. Detailed results for amateurs and professionals, including age and gender differences, as well as notes on methodology and limitations, can be found in the full report.
- Legend: \* = significant; P = Professionals, A = Amateurs, C = Comparison group; GM = male, GF= female; Bold: medium or large effect; Value 5 = high level/agreement, Value 1 = low level/disagreement. A four-point scale was used for frequency-related questions.
- Reading Example P+ /A\*: Professionals have a significantly higher mean than amateurs. Small effect.

## Sample

N = 461

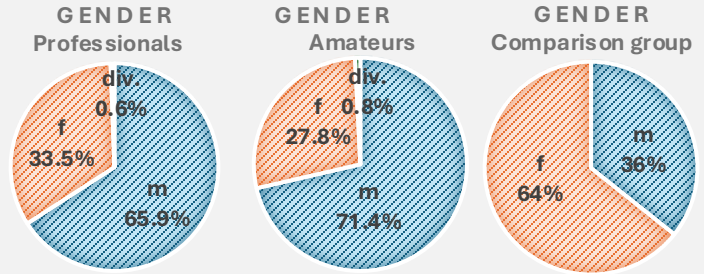
- N = 158 Professionals
  - N = 245 Amateurs
  - N = 56 Comparison group
- The study was conducted in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 2023.

Age groups:

**Professionals:** 50-59 years (33.5%), 60-69 years (20.3%), 30-39 years (19%), 40-49 years (18.4%), 70 years and older (6.3%), 20-29 years (2.5%), 10-19 years (0%).

**Amateurs:** 60-69 years (37.6%), 50-59 years (26.5%), 70 years and older (13.1%), 40-49 years (11.4%), 30-39 years (6.9%), 20-29 years (4.1%), 10-19 years (0.4%).

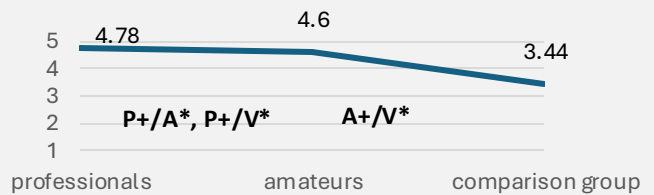
**Comparison group:** 50-59 years (35.7%), 40-49 years (25%), 60-69 years (14.3%), 30-39 years (12.5%), 20-29 years (7.1%), 70 years and older (3.6%), 10-19 years (1.8%).



## The Importance of Photography

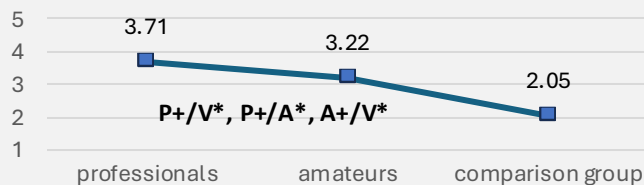
The overall importance of photography is regarded as very high across all groups. The mean score on the "General Importance of Photography" scale is M = 4.64 for professionals, M = 4.46 for amateurs, and M = 4.52 for the comparison group.

### Personal Significance of Photography



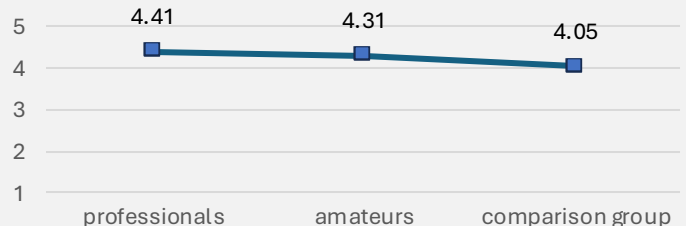
The personal significance of photography is, as expected, very high in two of the groups.

### Knowledge of Photography



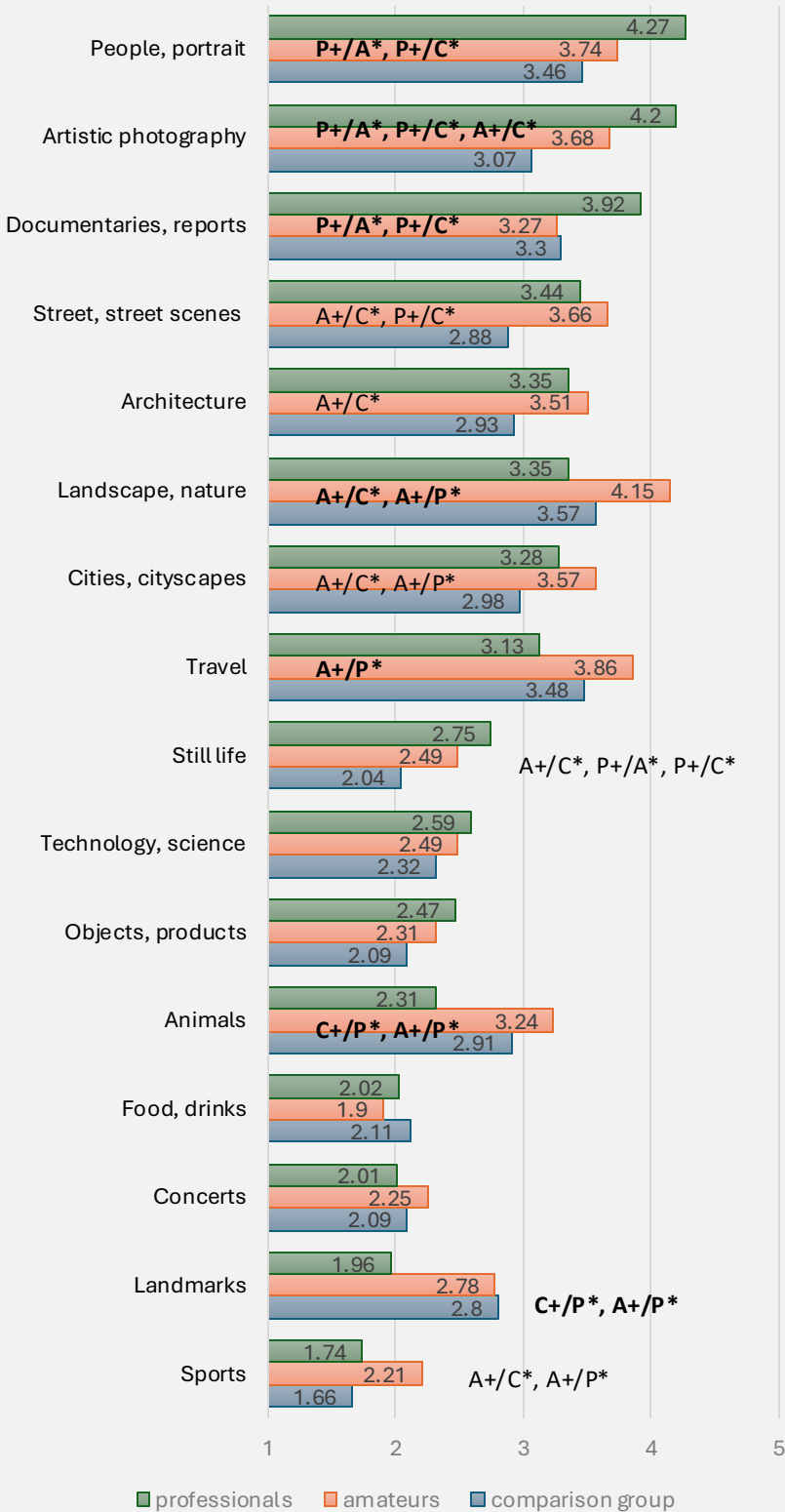
On the "Knowledge of Photography" scale, the three study groups differ significantly. Professionals rate their knowledge the highest.

### Photography is an Artform



Regarding the belief that photography is recognized as an art form in society, there are no significant differences between the three groups. This conviction is consistently high across all groups.

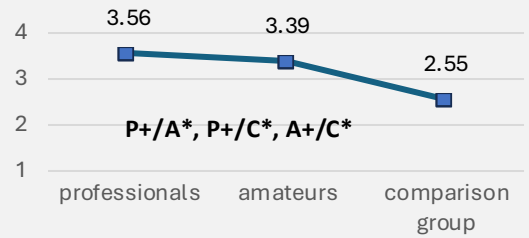
## Interest in areas of photography



The interest in different areas of photography varies between the study groups. Professionals are primarily interested in people/portrait photography, artistic photography, and documentary/reportage, with the least interest in sports photography. Amateurs are mainly interested in landscape/nature, travel, and portrait photography, with the least interest in food photography.

## Photography Behavior

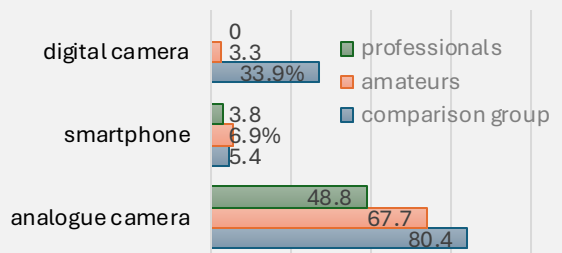
### Frequency of photography



In all groups, there is no one who never takes photos. Professionals photograph the most frequently, followed by amateurs.

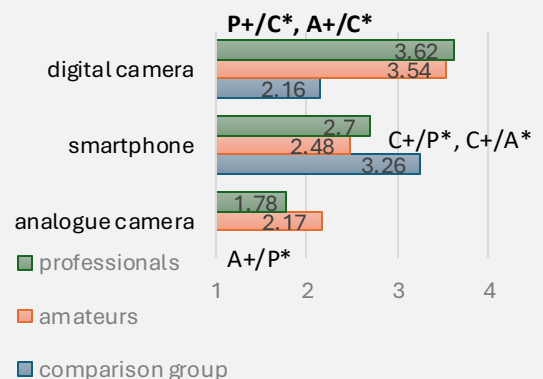
Photos per week	up to 5	6-20	21-50	51-100	101-500	> 500
Professionals	8,2%	12,0%	13,9%	18,4%	19,6%	27,8%
Amateurs	10,6%	24,1%	29,0%	22,0%	13,5%	0,8%
Comparison group	37,5%	32,1%	17,9%	7,1%	5,4%	0%

### Never used camera type



3.3% of amateurs and 33.9% of the comparison group "never" use a digital camera, while none of the professionals fall into this category.

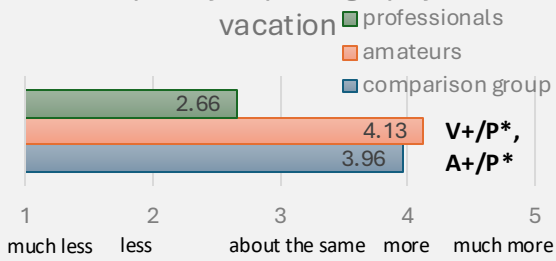
### Frequency of photography per camera type



Professionals and amateurs most frequently use a digital camera for photography, while the comparison group primarily uses smartphones for taking photos.

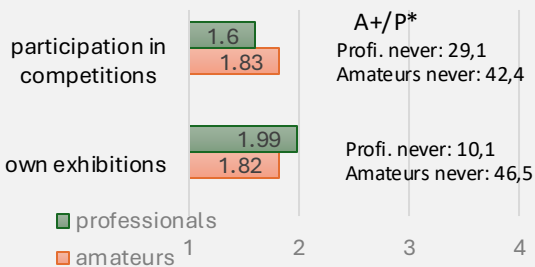
# Photography Behavior

### Frequency of photography on vacation



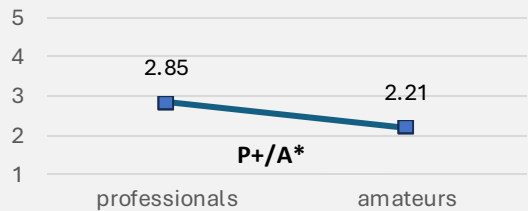
Professionals, on average, take fewer photos while on vacation. This contrasts sharply with amateurs and the comparison group, who photograph more frequently during their vacations.

### Frequency of exhibitions and competitions



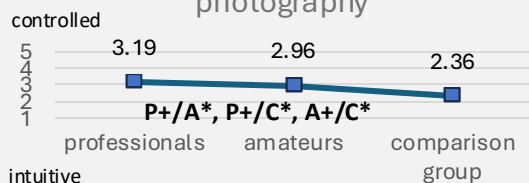
The proportion of amateurs (42.4%) who do not participate in photo competitions at all is significantly higher than that of professionals (29.1%). However, amateurs who participate in photo competitions, even if only rarely, tend to do so more frequently than professionals.

### Frequency of participation in photography events



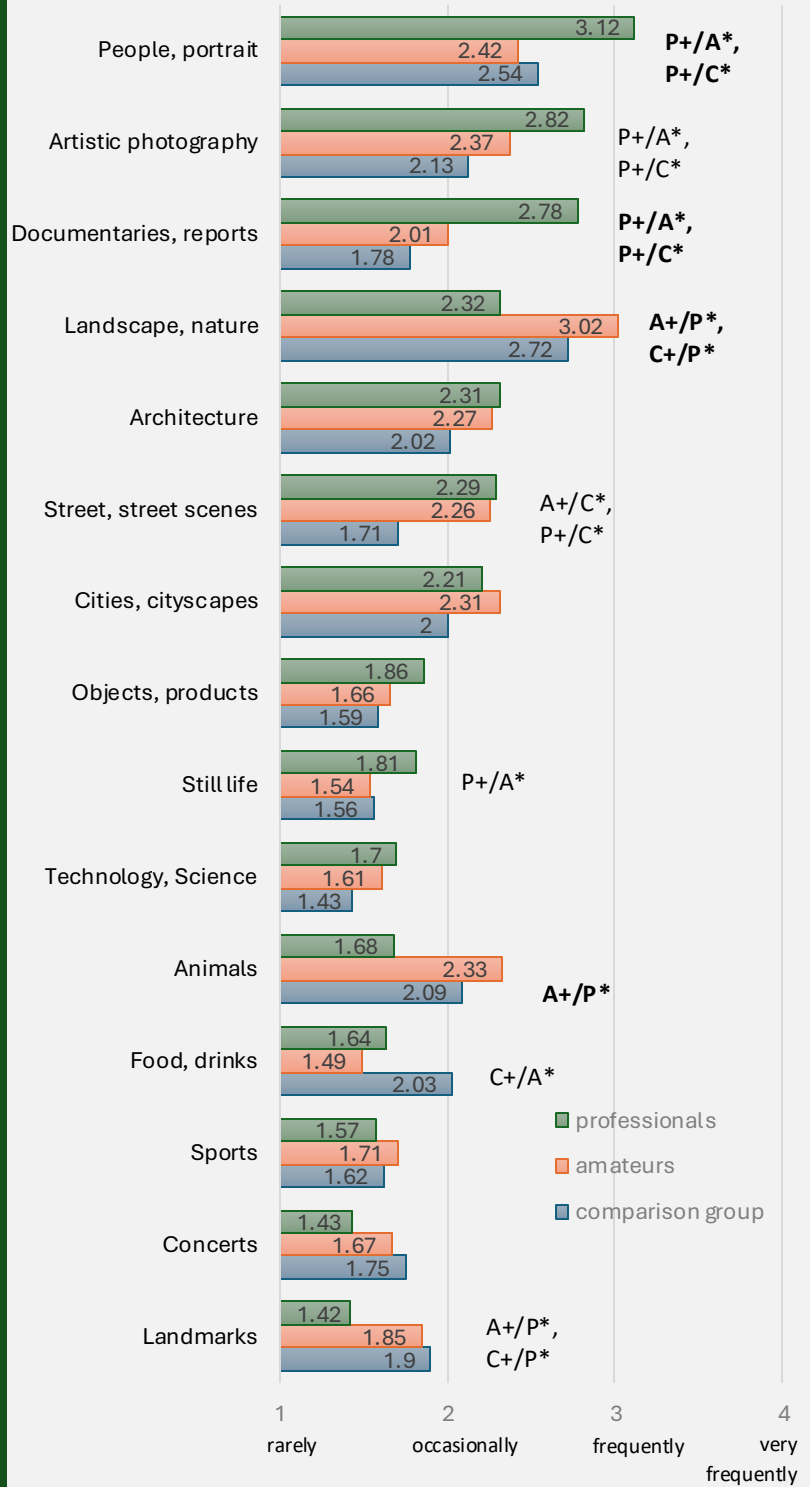
Professionals and amateurs, on average, rarely attend photography events such as conferences and conventions. However, professionals participate in these events significantly more often than amateurs.

### Intuitive vs. controlled photography



On the "Intuitive vs. Controlled Photography" scale, there are clear differences. Individuals in the comparison group photograph most intuitively.

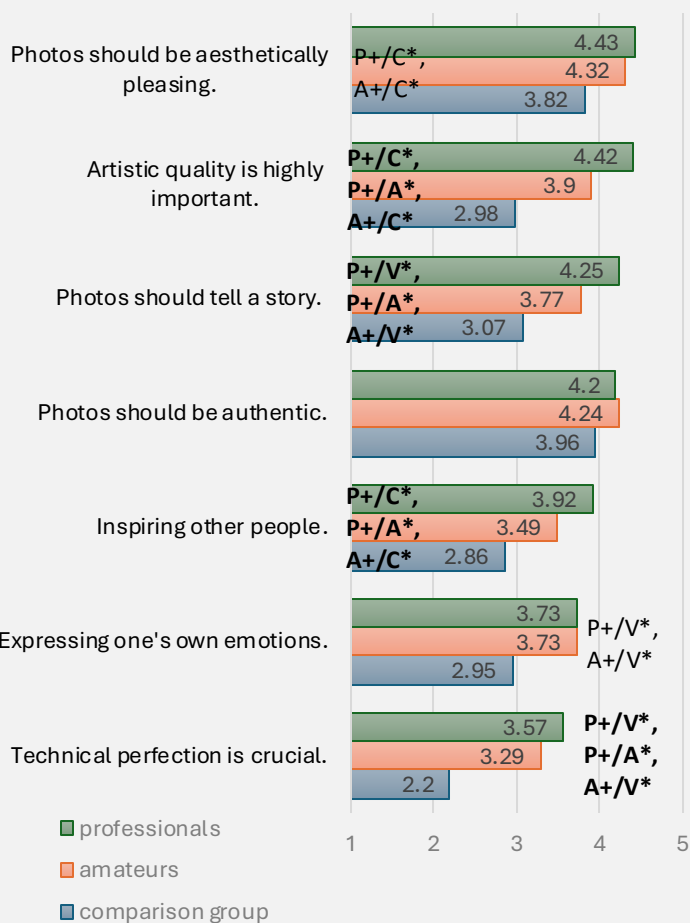
### Frequency of photography in different areas of photography



The groups differ significantly in terms of how frequently they photograph in various areas. Professionals photograph most frequently, and significantly more often than amateurs and those in the comparison group, in areas such as people, portrait, artistic photography, and documentary/reportage. Amateurs most often photograph in the areas of landscape/nature and people/portrait, as does the comparison group.

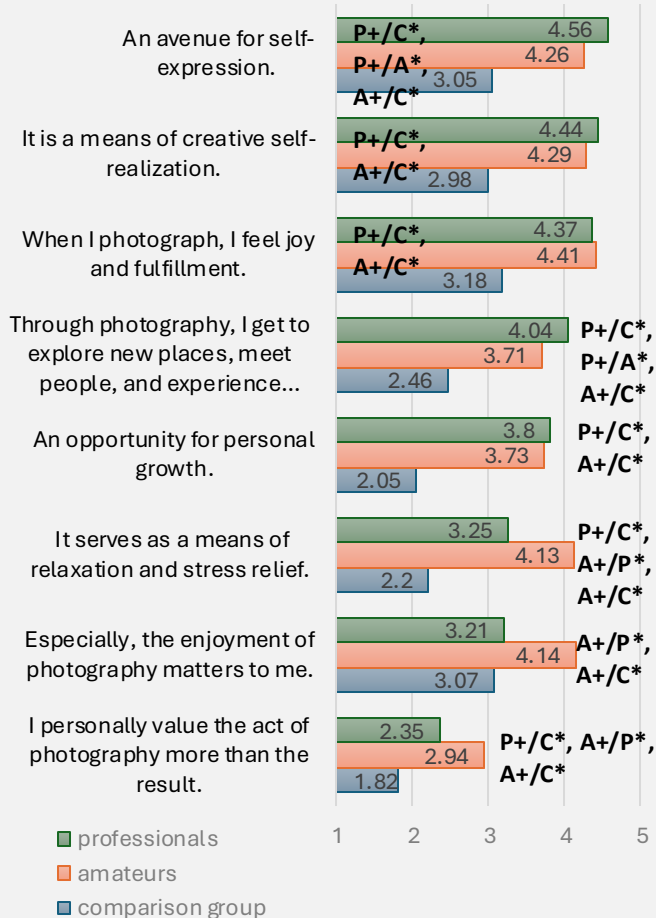
## Photography Motives

### Claim to one's own photos



For professionals, their photos should primarily be aesthetically pleasing, possess artistic quality, tell a story, and be authentic. For amateurs, aesthetic quality is also very important, followed by the desire to inspire others with their photos. In the comparison group, the overall expectations for their own photos are significantly lower.

## Personal significance of photography

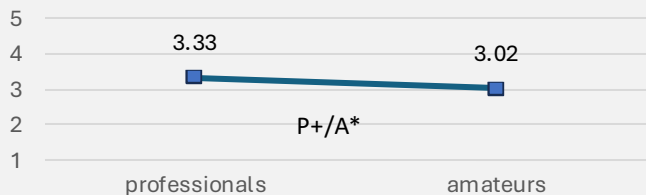


There are also clear differences in the personal significance of photography. For professionals and amateurs, photography is primarily a way to express themselves, achieve creative self-fulfillment, and a source of joy and fulfillment while photographing. For amateurs, it is also a means of relaxation and stress relief. In contrast, the comparison group consistently reports lower values in these areas.

**Importance of Camera Technology** For professionals (M = 3.33) and amateurs (M = 3.29), camera technology is of moderate importance. The mean values on the five-item scale are above the middle range of "neither agree nor disagree."

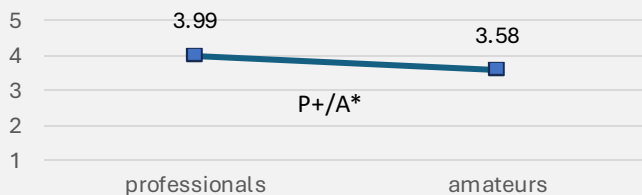
## Professional and Photographic Practices

### Competition among photographers



Professionals experience slightly more competition than amateurs.

### Importance of regular exchange



For professionals, regular interaction with other photographers is more important than it is for amateurs.

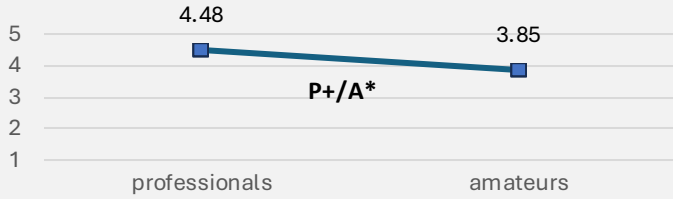
### Concern about others copying their work

Professionals (M = 2.28) and amateurs (M = 2.20) generally do not worry much about others potentially copying their work.

### Comparison with others

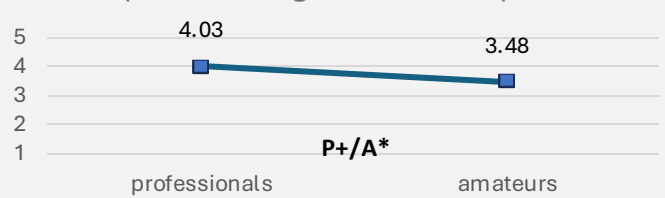
Both professionals (M = 3.28) and amateurs (M = 3.31) compare their work with others only moderately often. The mean values are just slightly above the middle range of the scale.

### Importance of a unique style in photography



For prof., it is significantly more important to develop their own style in photography compared to amateurs.

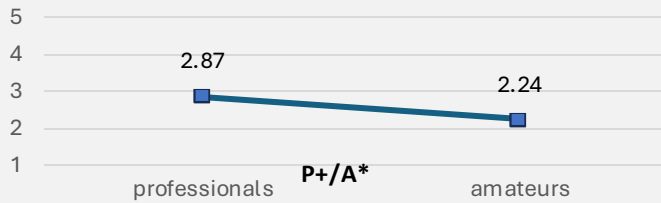
### Import. of recognition for own photos



The "Recognition for Own Photos" scale was formed from three items. Recognition for their own photos is significantly more important to professionals than to amateurs.

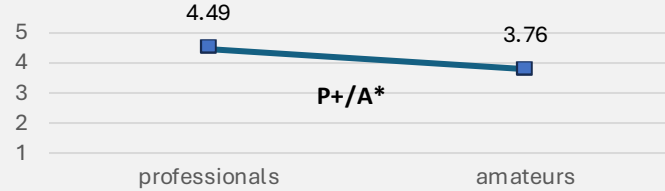
**Importance of inspiration from social media** Regarding the importance of getting inspiration and ideas for their own photography through social media, there is no significant difference between professionals (M = 2.94) and amateurs (M = 3.01). Both mean values are in the middle range of the scale.

### Importance of awards and prizes



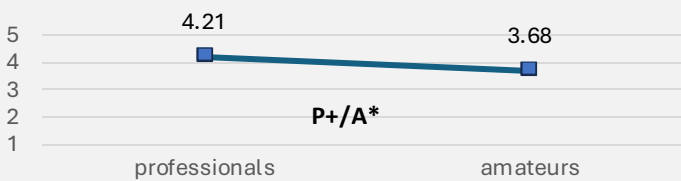
For both professionals and amateurs, receiving awards and prizes in photography is generally of lower importance. However, it is even less important to amateurs than to professionals.

### Willingness to invest a lot of time in own photography projects



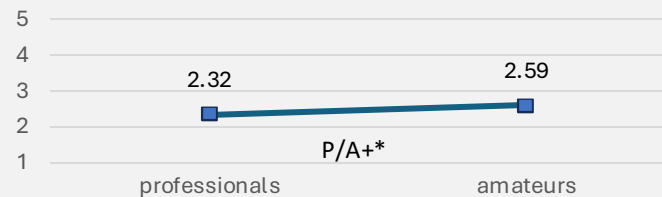
Professionals are willing to invest significantly more time and energy into their own photographic projects compared to amateurs.

### Importance of having artistic expression possibilities through photography



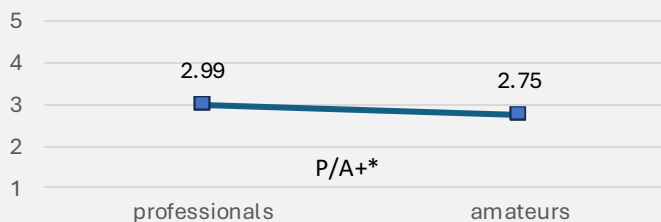
For professionals, having artistic means of expression through photography is more important than it is for amateurs.

### Concerns about photography skills



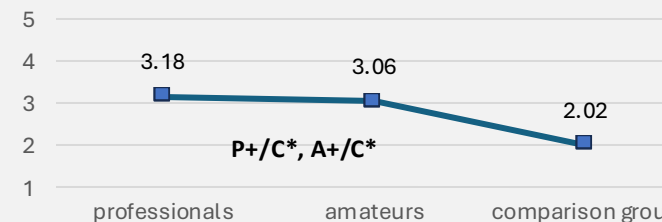
On the "Concerns about Photographic Skills" scale, both professionals and amateurs tend to have relatively low concerns about their photographic abilities on average. However, professionals worry even less about their skills compared to amateurs.

### Disadvantages gender/women



Among amateurs, fewer disadvantages for women in photography are perceived compared to professionals. Both mean values on the "Gender Disadvantage" scale are just below the midpoint, indicating a neutral stance.

### Constraints due to legal situation

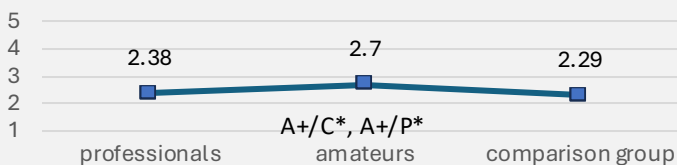


Amateurs and professionals feel only moderately restricted by the legal situation in Germany when it comes to photography. However, the comparison group perceives significantly fewer restrictions on average.

**Membership in a photography association** Both professionals (M = 4.10) and amateurs (M = 3.86) who are members of a photography association find this membership helpful and beneficial (based on the "Advantage of Association Membership" scale, two items). There are no significant differences between the groups.

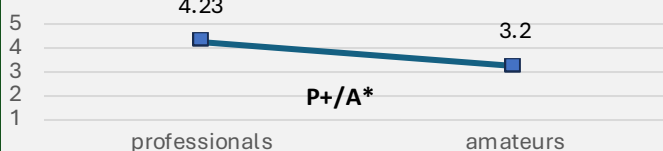
## Professional Identity

### No difference, wheater prof. or amateur



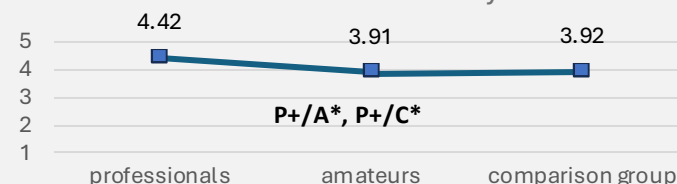
The statement "Today, it no longer makes a difference whether someone is a professional or an amateur photographer" is least agreed with by the comparison group, followed by the professionals.

### Importance of being perceived as a photographer



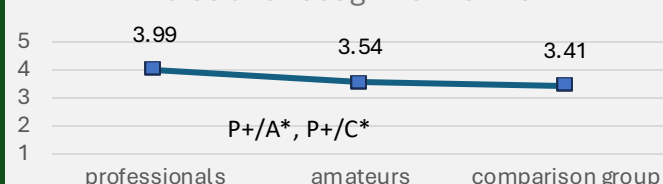
For professionals, it is significantly more important to be perceived as a photographer compared to amateurs.

### Professional identity



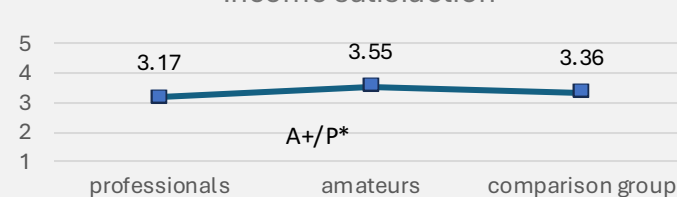
Regarding professional identity (measured by the "Professional Identity" scale, seven items), there are clear differences between professionals and the other two groups. Professionals differ significantly from amateurs and the comparison group, with their professional identification being notably higher.

### Praise and recognition for work



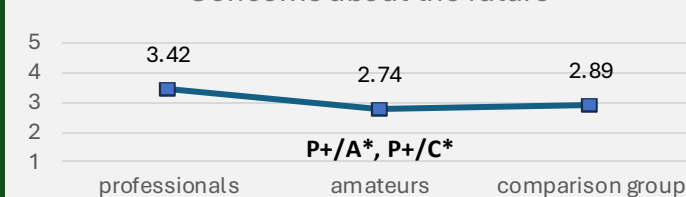
There are also differences in satisfaction with the praise and recognition received for their work between professionals and the other two groups. Professionals differ significantly from amateurs and the comparison group, being more satisfied with the praise and recognition they receive.

### Income satisfaction



There is also a difference in income satisfaction. Professionals are less satisfied with their income compared to amateurs.

### Concerns about the future



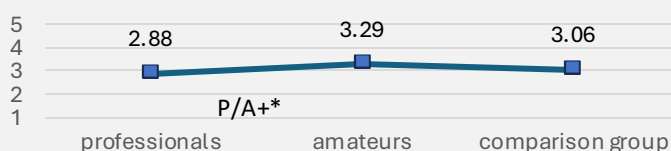
Another difference emerges regarding concerns about the future (measured by the "Future Concerns" scale, consisting of two items). Professionals are more worried about the future compared to amateurs and individuals in the comparison group.

## Photography Exhibition

**Visiting Photography Exhibitions** Only 3.2% of professionals never visit photography exhibitions. Among amateurs, this figure is 7.8%, and in the comparison group, it's 39.3%. Professionals visit photography exhibitions the most frequently (often and very often: 40.5%), followed by amateurs (often and very often: 29.8%) and the comparison group (often and very often: 17.8%).

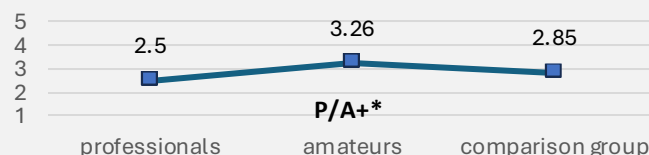
**Evaluation of Photography Exhibitions** There are no significant differences in the perception that photography exhibitions are often "too pretentious." All three groups tend to disagree with this view (Professionals M = 2.32, Amateurs M = 2.57, Comparison Group M = 2.38). Likewise, the exhibition texts are generally not perceived as incomprehensible or too intellectual by any of the groups, with no significant differences (Professionals M = 2.43, Amateurs M = 2.61, Comparison Group M = 2.31).

### Photography exhibitions should appeal to a broad audience



Amateurs place slightly more importance on photography exhibitions being designed to appeal to a broad audience than professionals do.

### Desire for trad. image presentation



Amateurs desire a more traditional image presentation slightly more than prof., and there is a significant difference between the two groups, with prof. being less inclined toward traditional presentations.

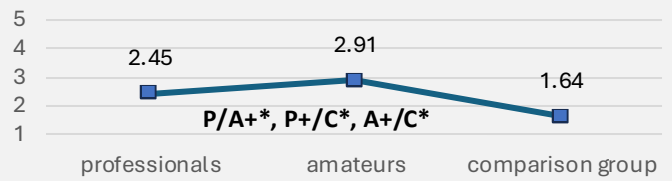
# Photography Exhibition

## Information about Photography Exhibitions

The desire for information/explanations about photography exhibitions is nearly identical across all three groups (on the "Information about Photography Exhibitions" scale): Professionals M = 3.54, Amateurs M = 3.60, and the Comparison Group M = 3.57. The mean values fall between "neutral" and "somewhat agree."

In terms of actively seeking out information about a photography exhibition in advance, all groups show moderate agreement. Amat. (M = 3.17), prof. (M = 2.92), and the comp. group (M = 2.82) show no sign. differences in this regard.

## Importance of understanding technical aspects of photos at exhibitions



All groups consider understanding the technical aspects of photos in exhibitions to be relatively unimportant, with this sentiment being most pronounced among individuals in the comparison group.

# AI und Photography

## Photorealistic AI Images in Art:

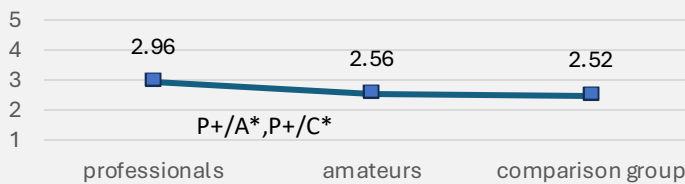
All three groups generally agree, falling between "neutral" and "somewhat agree," that photorealistic AI images will establish themselves in the art world, with no significant differences between them (Professionals M = 3.55, Amateurs M = 3.33, Comparison Group M = 3.18).

The negatively framed statement, "Photos created with the help of artificial intelligence are just a short-lived trend in art," is generally disagreed with by all groups (Professionals M = 2.49, Amateurs M = 2.53, Comparison Group M = 2.55), with mean scores falling between "neutral" and "somewhat disagree."

## Assessment of AI in the Context of Photography

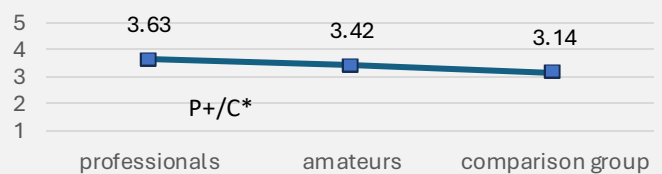
All three groups remain neutral about the idea that most "photos" in the future will be created with the help of artificial intelligence (Professionals M = 2.96, Amateurs M = 3.02, Comparison Group M = 3.27).

## "Photos" generated with AI are just as intriguing



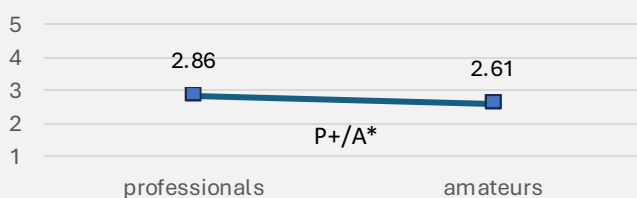
Photorealistic AI images are considered less interesting than real photos. Professionals find these images slightly more interesting than amateurs and individuals in the comparison group.

## Concerns that areas for work for photographers could be eliminated due to AI



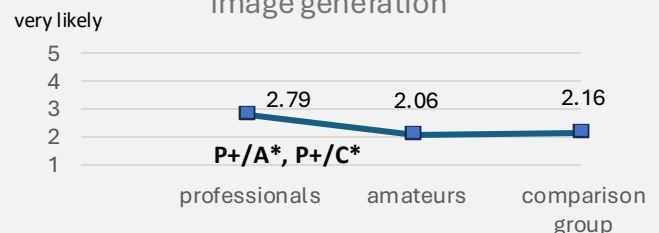
Professionals are more concerned than individuals in the comparison group that AI could lead to the loss of jobs in the field of photography.

## Anticipated personal benefit of AI in photography



Among professionals, the expectation of not seeing any personal advantage or benefit from AI is slightly lower than among amateurs. Both groups, on average, fall below the midpoint of the scale, between "somewhat disagree" and "neutral," meaning they generally do not expect personal benefits or advantages from AI.

## Likely future use of AI software for image generation



In all groups, the likelihood of using AI software for image generation in the future is generally low. Only 14.6% of professionals see a very high likelihood of using it (score of 5). Among amateurs, this figure is 6.9%, and in the comparison group, it is 7.1%.

The present work deals fundamentally with the field of photopsychology and conducts an initial comprehensive empirical inventory of engaged photography.

A comprehensive empirical examination of the field of photopsychology, which investigates the influence of photography on the experiences and behaviors of individuals, has not yet been carried out. Existing findings are only sporadically available or relate to specific aspects that need to be integrated into a broader context. Therefore, a fundamental conceptual framework for photopsychology has been developed.

It has been proposed to differentiate between fundamental, specific, and overarching areas in photopsychology. In fundamental areas, photography is related to core aspects of photography, such as perception and behavior, from the perception of photographs to active photography. In specific areas, specific topics, such as photography and art, group-specific issues, such as professional identity and satisfaction, as well as special topics, such as a psychology of being photographed, can be distinguished. Overarching areas of photopsychology involve the use of photography in research and as a research method, for example. Based on various aspects of photopsychology, a comprehensive literature review has been conducted. It has also been suggested to differentiate three groups in photopsychology, especially in empirical research: firstly, professional photographers, secondly, amateur and hobby photographers, and thirdly, individuals who take photos in their daily lives but do not consider photography as a hobby. Within these groups, further differentiations make sense to comprehensively capture the various photopsychologically relevant characteristics.

In an exploratory study conducted in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, a comprehensive survey of photography was carried out, with a focus on engaged photography in the field of professional and vocational photography as well as amateur and hobby photography.

As expected, differences and similarities were observed both between the examined groups and within the groups. This affirmed the necessity of a fundamental differentiation among different photographers.

Both the theoretical framework and the obtained empirical insights form a solid foundation for further research in the field of photopsychology.