

TEACHING IS AN IMPORTANT, VALUABLE AND VALUED PROFESSION

Nordplus Project: Happy Teacher – Happy Future
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Nordplus



Klaipėdos suaugusiųjų gimnazija

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Introduction

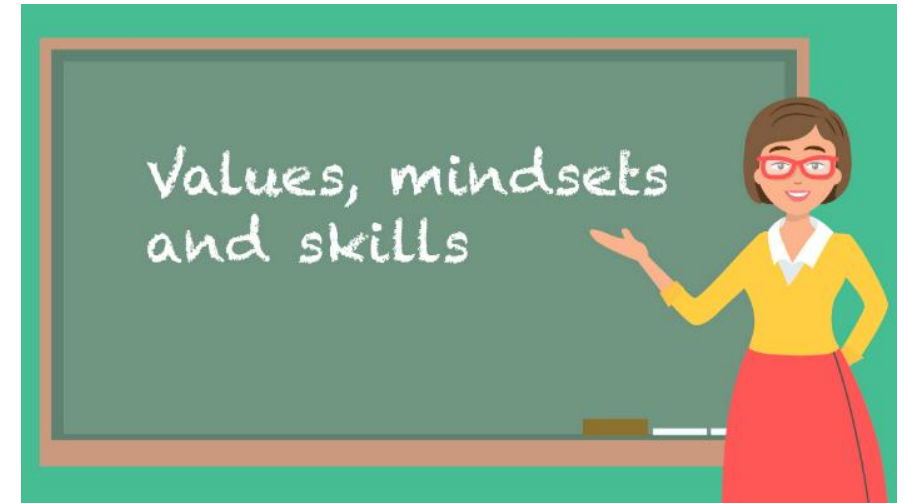
Teaching plays a vital role in Lithuania, as teachers influence future generations by imparting essential knowledge, values, and life skills.

However, the profession faces challenges, particularly in terms of teachers' salaries, social status, and professional development opportunities.



The Valuation of Teachers in Lithuania

- **Recognition vs. Reward:** Teaching is recognized as a crucial profession in Lithuania, but its value is not fully reflected in salaries and social status. While there have been some improvements in teacher pay, salaries remain lower compared to other professions that require less demanding work.
- **Efforts to Enhance Teacher Status:**
 - Initiatives like "The Programme for Enhancing the Prestige of the Teacher's Profession" and "Teacher of the Year" competitions are underway.



Teacher Professional Development in Lithuania

Teacher development is an ongoing process that includes some positive aspects: formal training, self-reflection, and collaboration.

- 1. Formal Training:** Teachers must complete a set number of professional development hours to maintain qualifications, with courses covering topics like teaching methods, innovations in education, and technology.
- 2. Self-Reflection:** Teachers engage in self-assessment to adapt to students' needs and improve their teaching effectiveness.
- 3. Collaboration:** Teachers work together in joint meetings to share best practices, creating an inclusive and innovative learning environment.



Barriers to Teachers' Professional Development

Despite the emphasis on teachers' development, several obstacles exist:

- 1. Financial and Time Constraints:** The cost and time commitment of professional development courses, combined with heavy workloads, limit teachers' ability to participate, especially in smaller towns.
- 2. Resistance to Change:** Some teachers are hesitant to adopt new teaching methods or technologies, preferring traditional approaches due to comfort or fear of change.
- 3. Lack of Motivation and Rewards:** The absence of tangible rewards or career advancement related to professional development can demotivate teachers.



Support from Colleagues and School Administration

- **Support from Colleagues:**
 - Collaboration and experience-sharing help teachers enhance lesson plans and teaching methods.
 - Emotional support from peers helps manage stress and challenges.
- **Support from School Administration:**
 - Professional development opportunities are organized to help teachers improve their skills.
 - Psychological support services are available to address emotional stress.
 - Administrators ensure access to necessary tools and a conducive learning environment.

This support strengthens both the professional and emotional well-being of teachers, contributing to a positive working environment.



Government Support for Teachers

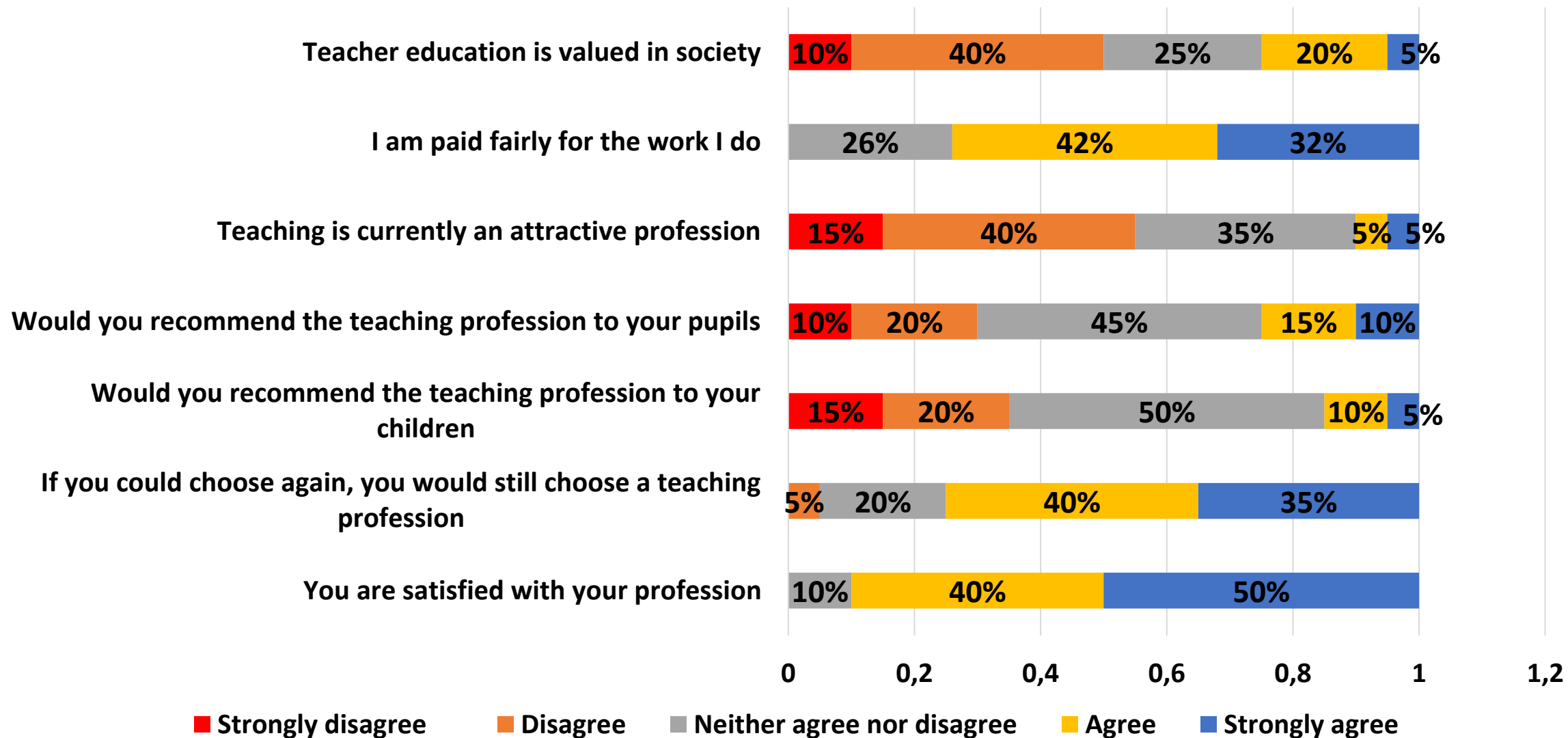
- 1. Financial Support:** Salary increases, such as the 12% boost in 2021, aim to make the profession more attractive.
- 2. Legal Support:** The Lithuanian Law on Education ensures job security, professional development, and social benefits for teachers.
- 3. Professional Support:** The government and EU fund training programs and development initiatives for teachers.
- 4. Psychological Support:** Projects like the 2020 psychological support initiative focus on managing work-related stress.
- 5. Infrastructure Support:** Public funds, including EU grants, help modernize schools and improve classroom technology.
- 6. Social Support:** Teachers benefit from social protections, including maternity leave, sickness benefits, and pension schemes.

The survey: on different aspects:

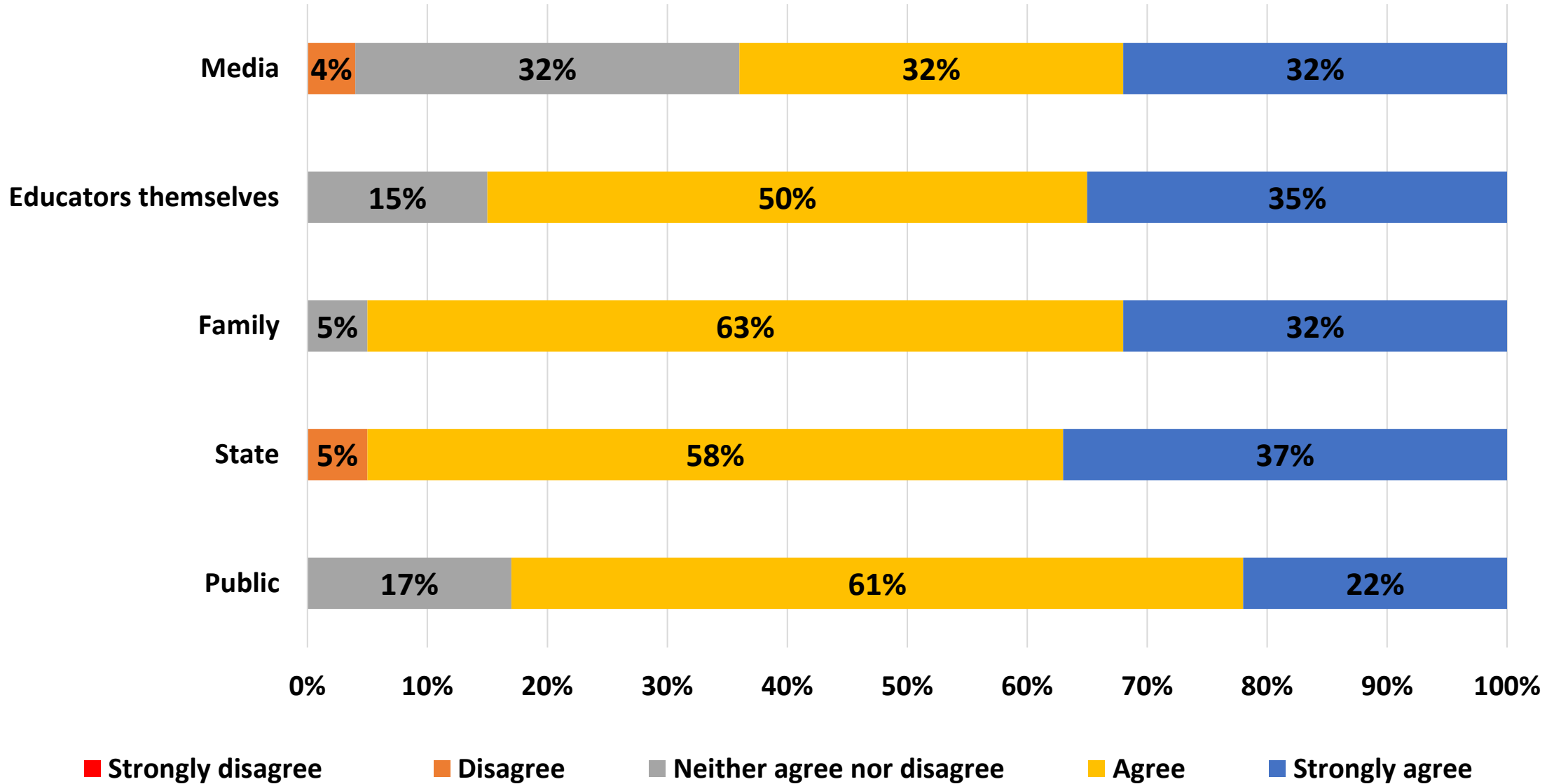
- 1) The value of the teaching profession;
- 2) What shapes the attitude towards the teaching profession?
- 3) What factors could increase the attractiveness of teachers' work?

Participants: 30 teachers from „Klaipėdos suaugusiųjų gimnazija“ („Klaipeda Adult Gymnasium“)

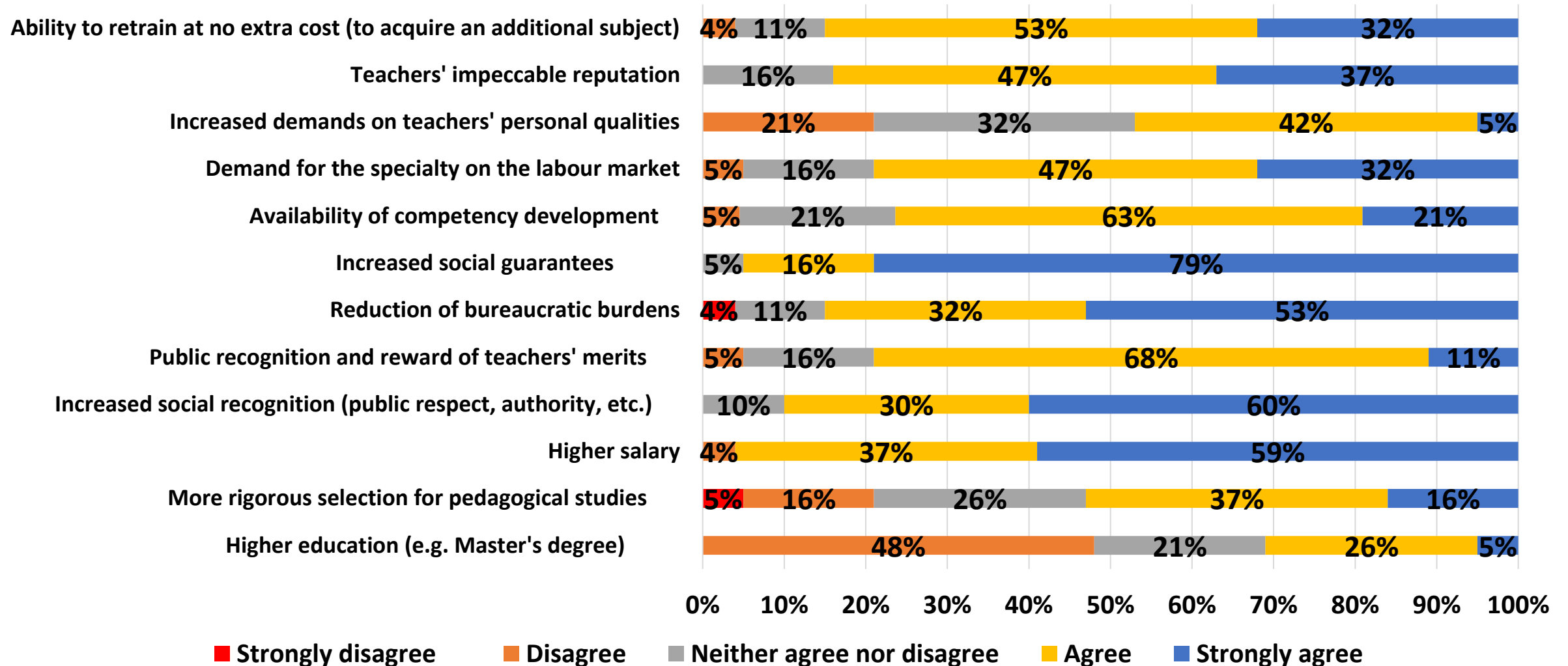
1. Please, indicate how much you agree with each statement:



2. Attitudes towards teachers are mostly shaped by:



3. Factors that you think could increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession:



Recommendations for Improving Teachers' Support

To further enhance the working conditions and professional growth of teachers in Lithuania, the following actions are recommended:

1. Higher Salaries and Financial Support:

- Increase teacher salaries to match those in other European countries, and offer additional financial incentives for exceptional performance.

2. More Professional Development Opportunities:

- Provide continuous training to help teachers stay up-to-date with modern educational practices and technologies.

3. Smaller Class Sizes and Additional Support:

- Reduce class sizes and hire additional support staff like psychologists and social workers to alleviate teacher burnout and enhance student care.

4. Psychological and Emotional Support:

- Expand access to psychological counseling and stress management programs to support teachers' well-being.

5. Greater Teacher Involvement in Decision-Making:

- Include teachers more actively in shaping education policies to ensure that reforms align with classroom realities and address real challenges.

Conclusion

While the teaching profession in Lithuania is crucial to the country's educational system, the full appreciation and value of teachers are still in progress. Continued efforts to improve salaries, professional development opportunities, and overall working conditions are necessary to ensure a healthier work environment and better educational outcomes. With enhanced financial, professional, psychological, and social support, Lithuania can create a more sustainable and effective teaching force for the future.



Thank you for the attention!