



**2015**  
**NATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM SURVEY**  
*Recent College Graduates Report*

<b>Table Of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	3
Research Design	5
Major Findings	7
College To Work Transition	16
Professionalism By Generation	25
Entitlement	32
IT Etiquette	38
Technology	46
Professionalism	52
Appearance/Dress Code	56
Attitudes	63
Background Information	66
Appendix	71

# Introduction

## Project Purpose

Since 2010, York College of Pennsylvania's Center for Professional Excellence has conducted a national study on some aspect of professionalism in recent college graduates. A common theme has been professionalism in the workplace.

Previous research has surveyed human services professionals, managers, college professors, career development personnel at colleges, and students.

This year, recent college graduates were surveyed to see how they perceive professionalism in the workplace.

## Research Objectives

The primary topics researched in the study included:

- College to workplace transition
- Perceptions of professionalism in the workplace
- Differences between generations demonstrating professionalism in the workplace
- Qualities defining professional and unprofessional employees
- Changes in definitions of professionalism over time
- Dress codes in the workplace.

## Report Format

The report contains an executive summary as well as a detailed presentation of the findings. The executive summary consists of the Introduction, Research Design, and Major Findings. Detailed findings are presented as graphs with accompanying narrative.

The data tables from which the report was constructed are in a separate volume.

# Research Design

<b>Sample</b>	<p>A national sample of 519 recent college graduates between 23 and 28 participated in the survey.</p> <p>A sample of this size has a maximum margin of error of +/-4.3% at the 95% confidence level. This means if all recent college graduates in the United States participated in the survey their answers would be within this range of the sample's answers 95% of the time.</p>
<b>Data Collection</b>	<p>The survey was administered to a syndicated online panel. Members of the panel are rewarded for taking the survey.</p>
<b>Research Instrument</b>	<p>The research instrument was developed by Polk-Lepson with input from the Center for Professional Excellence. Prior to its administration, the survey was reviewed and approved by the Center.</p>
<b>Data Analysis</b>	<p>The data was analyzed by the total sample and respondent characteristics.</p> <p>Where appropriate, statistical tests were performed to discover any statistically significant differences between respondents. These differences are described in the text.</p> <p>Much of the value of the research is found in the data tables. The data tables show all the answers given by respondents. Given the diversity of the answers to the open-ended questions, only the predominant responses are included in the report.</p> <p>When possible, comparisons are made to findings from previous professionalism studies.</p>

# Major Findings

**Major Findings**

Presented below are salient research findings.

**College to Employment**

The sample was mixed in its adjustment to the workplace after college. On a five point rating scale, 23.9% indicated having some challenges going from the classroom to the office. This percentage assigned a rating of 4 or 5 on a scale that ranged from 1, not at all difficult, to 5, very difficult. Nearly half of the respondents (49.0%) did not have a problem, as evidenced by ratings of 1 or 2.

However, when asked about the challenges experienced, 472 respondents provided an answer. Of these, 39.6% of the respondents described finding a career in their chosen field as a challenge.

Few respondents (10.8%) felt they were lacking the necessary professional skills to succeed in the work force. A total of 62.2% believed they had the skills needed. The remaining 27.0% was uncertain, as indicated by ratings of 3.

This feeling of being ready is reinforced by only 15.6% believing their college did not prepare them to be professional in the workplace. Those who indicated their college had prepared them totaled 52.6%. The other 31.8% are ambivalent about their college's efforts.

Employees see themselves as being most responsible for developing professionalism. When ranking seven possible entities, the mean ranking given to students was 1.84. The closest to this was faculty at 3.33.



**Lacking Professionalism**

A total of 71.7% think generations differ in the level of professionalism demonstrated in the workplace. In response to an open-ended question, the professionalism qualities seen as most lacking are social/communication skills (16.2%), respect (12.0%), and work ethic (8.4%).

The primary reasons for generational differences are cultural change (15.3%), parenting style changes (13.5%), and technology (12.4%). Reasons for differences show that most of these respondents point to Millennials as most lacking in professionalism.

**Generational Differences**

To get a sense of how younger employees think older workers view them, they were shown this statement and asked how much they agree with it:

In my workplace, coworkers of older generations (i.e. Baby Boomers, Gen X) understand my generation of workers.

About a fifth (21.4%) either agree or strongly agree with it. In the opposite direction, 44.2% disagree or strongly disagree with it. This leaves 34.4% who are undecided.

When asked what percentage of all employees compared to younger employees exhibit professionalism in the workplace, respondents were more likely to think that younger employees are less likely than all employees to demonstrate professionalism.

Respondents generally feel that professionalism in the workforce is about the same as when they entered the workforce.

Increased	Same	Decreased
17.1%	73.6%	9.2%

**Sense of Entitlement**

Respondents were also asked about co-workers their age with college degrees exhibiting a sense of entitlement. Entitlement was defined as expecting rewards without putting in the work or effort to merit the rewards.

Here, responses are more likely to indicate this is increasing. A total of 39.7% of the respondents describes a sense of entitlement as increasing over the past five years.

Increased	Same	Decreased
39.7%	50.7%	9.6%

Reasons given for this increase are most often the way the child was raised (29.1%) and being coddled or privileged (20.7%).

**IT Etiquette**

When asked about changes seen in IT etiquette, almost half of the respondents (49.5%) described IT etiquette as being about the same over the past five years. However, 37.8% has seen an increase in problems with misusing IT.

Increased	Same	Decreased
37.8%	49.5%	12.7%

The challenges which the respondents have with technology are most often:

- Excessive use of social media (49.1%)
- Inappropriate use of Internet (46.6%)
- Excessive usage of cell phones (46.4%)
- Text messaging/e-mailing instead of personal contact (40.3%)
- Text messaging at inappropriate times (40.3%).

Over a fifth (22.2%) report not having any IT challenges in the workplace.

**IT Etiquette** (continued)

The greatest percentage of respondents (37.4%) spend from 1 to 10% of their typical work day on the Internet, social media, e-mail, or the cell phone for personal reasons. The next highest percentage is 28.1% who use 10 to 19% of their work day on personal communications. A total of 9.1% announced they do not spend any of their work day on personal communications.

When asked if a prospective employer should review an individual’s online or digital presence as part of an assessment of their professionalism, respondents were divided in their reactions. A total of 33.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this. A larger percentage, 38.7% agreed or strongly agreed with it. The remaining 27.4% were undecided.

**Unfocused Behavior**

Over the past five years, 36.8% of the respondents think the number of their age co-workers who exhibit unfocused behavior has increased. The largest percentage believe this percentage has remained the same (59.2%).

Increased	Same	Decreased
36.8%	59.2%	4.0%

When asked why some employees are unfocused, the greatest percentage of respondents (74.8%) think technology interrupts one’s focus at work. This is followed by attempts at multitasking (61.0%) and too many disruptions due to an increased work load (49.6%).

**Professionalism**

The five qualities or behaviors most associated with being professional as an employee are:

- Focused (37.2%)
- Punctual/attentive (27.8%)
- Humble (24.5%)
- Diligent (22.7%)
- Communication skills (22.7%).

In the opposite direction, the five qualities most associated with being unprofessional are:

- Disrespectful (59.9%)
- Irresponsible (25.8%)
- Not ambitious (21.2%)
- Late/absent (21.2%)
- Lack of communication skills (16.4%).

Presented with three statements about professionalism changing, the sense was younger employees should try to adopt the standards that their companies have established for professionalism.

**Attire and Appearance**

Shown six factors related to appearance, respondents were asked which ones should have a negative impact on someone being hired. The factors which emerged are:

- Inappropriate footwear (70.9%)
- Attire/dress (70.1%)
- Facial piercings other than ears (47.0%)
- Visible tattoos (38.9%)
- Unnatural hair color (28.7%).

The only one not making this list is tattoos that are invisible (2.3%). Also, 14.1% felt none of these qualities should lead to a negative impact.

### Dress Codes

A total of 62.4% of the respondents believe companies should have dress codes. The remaining are nearly equally divided between no dress code (18.7%) and being uncertain (18.9%). A larger percentage (71.1%) are actually with a company that has a dress code.

Asked what the dress code should apply to, employees most often named the same qualities that should have a negative impact on being hired. These are:

- Attire/dress (71.8%)
- Facial piercings other than ears (41.7%)
- Visible tattoos (34.2%)
- Unnatural hair color (25.5%).

These are the same qualities that their own dress codes regulate. The difference is a larger percentage indicates that their company has these regulations than want them in their own dress code.

### Tattoos

Almost a fourth of the respondents (23.3%) have a tattoo. Of these, 11.6% report that their employer has requested they cover it while performing their job.

Only two respondents (1.7%) have had a tattoo removed. Another five (4.1%) of those with tattoos are thinking about removal.

### Attitudes Toward Work

The survey concluded with four statements about work. Respondents tended to agree with three of them. They are:

- Many times it is as important who you know as how hard you work or what you know (3.97 with 5 being strongly agree).
- Employees should show loyalty to the company for which they work (3.94).
- There is no substitute for hard work for getting ahead in a company (3.85).

**Attitudes Toward Work** (continued)

The ratings of the statements about who you know and no substitute for hard work is interesting. It appears that the work ethic is still valid. However, there is also acknowledgement that who one knows can also make a difference.

The statement that received a lower rating is “college graduates are entitled to a full-time job in there area of study.” This had a mean rating of 2.74.

**Gender**

Statistical analyses found notable differences between respondents. An area with clear differences was gender. Females more than males saw things as being more complex.

A few examples are females:

- Had a more difficult time transitioning to work from college.
- Felt less prepared to succeed using professionalism skills taught at college.
- Are less inclined to believe that older generations understand them.

These differences are great enough that a separate analysis could be done examining men versus women and their outlook on the work place.

**Major**

Interesting findings also exist for one’s major. Here, the findings are more complicated. The alliances change depending upon the subject being examined.

- Technology and business major are the least likely to agree an employee should conform to one’s company.
- Technology majors are least likely to perceive their fellow employees as being entitled. Arts major are the most likely to feel this way.
- Business and education majors are the most likely to agree that one’s online presence should be checked by a company. Technology majors are the most likely to not agree.
- Natural science majors are more likely than education or technology majors to feel their coworkers are unfocused.

**Human Resource Professionals Versus Recent Graduates**

As might be expected, comparisons between the findings from recent college graduates differ from those from human resource professionals. Consistently, human resource professionals are more likely to find these younger workers to be entitled, not exhibiting professionalism, and engaging in IT misuse.

**Conclusions**

In this study, young employees were surveyed to assess how they view professionalism in the work place. This is the one group whose input was missing. We have heard from their professors, career development personnel at their colleges, human resource professionals who are hiring them, and managers who are supervising them.

These employees have a sense that some professionalism may be lacking. However, the extent to which it is wanting is different from what has been seen from other sources. The young employees do not see the state of professionalism to be as absent as other respondents have.

# **College to Work Transition**

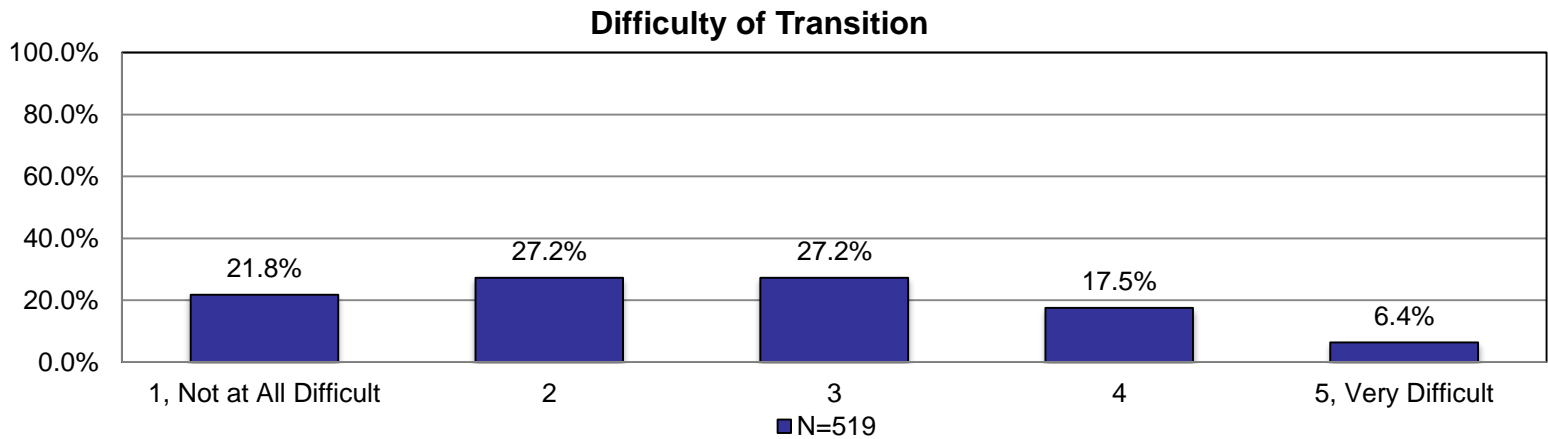


## Difficulty of College to Employment Transition

How difficult did you find the transition going from the college environment to full-time employment?

Using a 5 point rating scale, respondents rated the difficulty of going from college to full-time employment. Nearly a fourth (23.9%) reported some difficulty with the transition, as indicated by ratings of 4 or 5. In the opposite direction, 49.0% had no or little difficulty. This percentage assigned a rating of 1 or 2.

Females (2.74) had more difficulty than males (2.43) with the transition.



## Biggest Challenge

What was the biggest challenge you experienced in this transition?

There were a number of challenges experienced. Below are the ones mentioned by 15 or more respondents.

Biggest Challenge	
Finding career in chosen field	39.6%
More rigid schedule/early mornings	15.5%
Changing geographical location/moving	6.8%
Learning to budget money/financial security	6.8%
Getting used to the corporate/work environment	4.7%
Time management	3.8%
	N=472

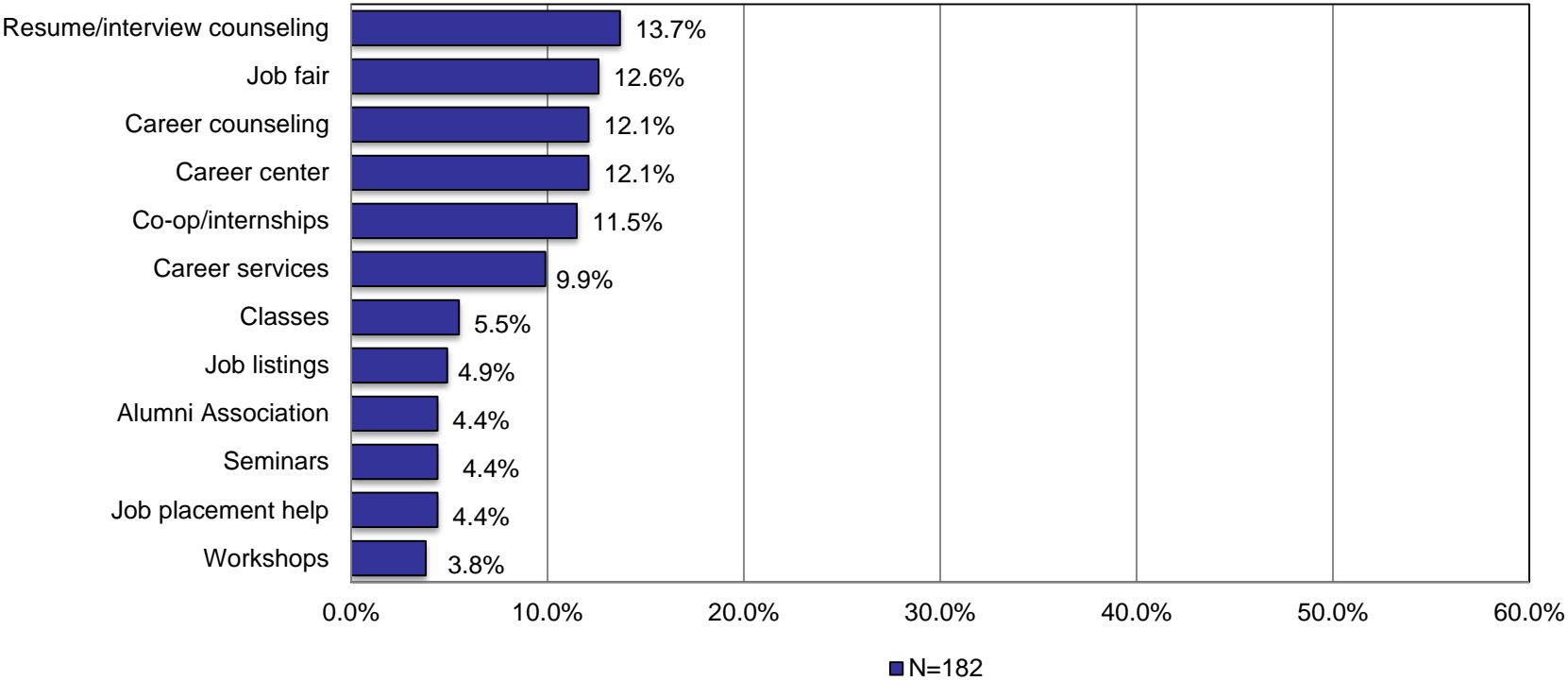
## College Help With Transition

Did your college offer anything to help with this transition?

Respondents stated that 38.5% of colleges offered help with the transition from the college environment to full-time employment.

The most frequent types of assistance from the colleges are shown below. At the top of the list are resume' and interview counseling (13.7%), job fairs (12.6%), career counseling (12.1%), career center (12.1%), and co-op/internships (11.5%).

College Help With Transition



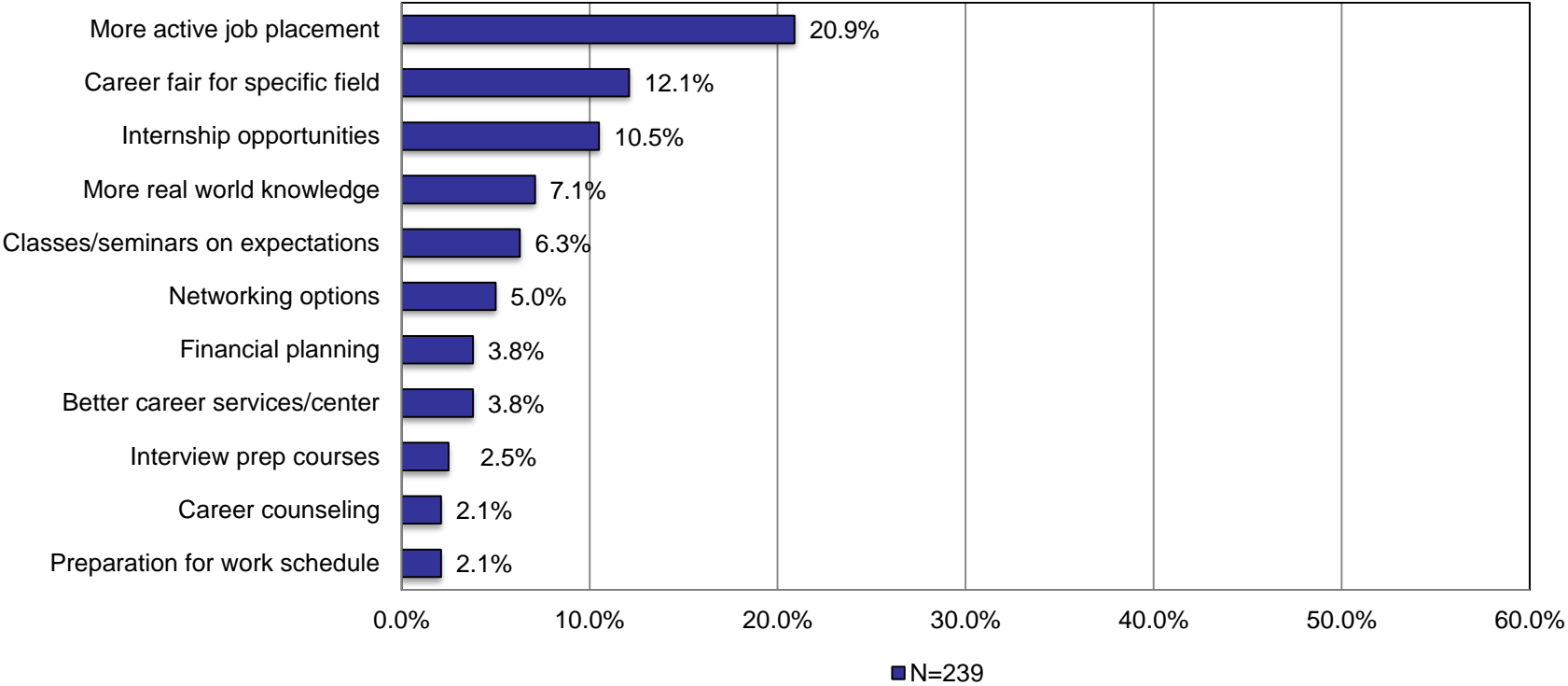
## Suggestions to Colleges to Help With Transition

What do you wish your college/university had offered to help with this transition?

Respondents offered suggestions about what their college could have offered to help with the transition to work.

The suggestions were numerous. Those made by the most respondents are presented below. The most common suggestion was more active assistance with locating a job (20.9%).

**Suggestions for Colleges to Offer**



## Prepared for Work Force

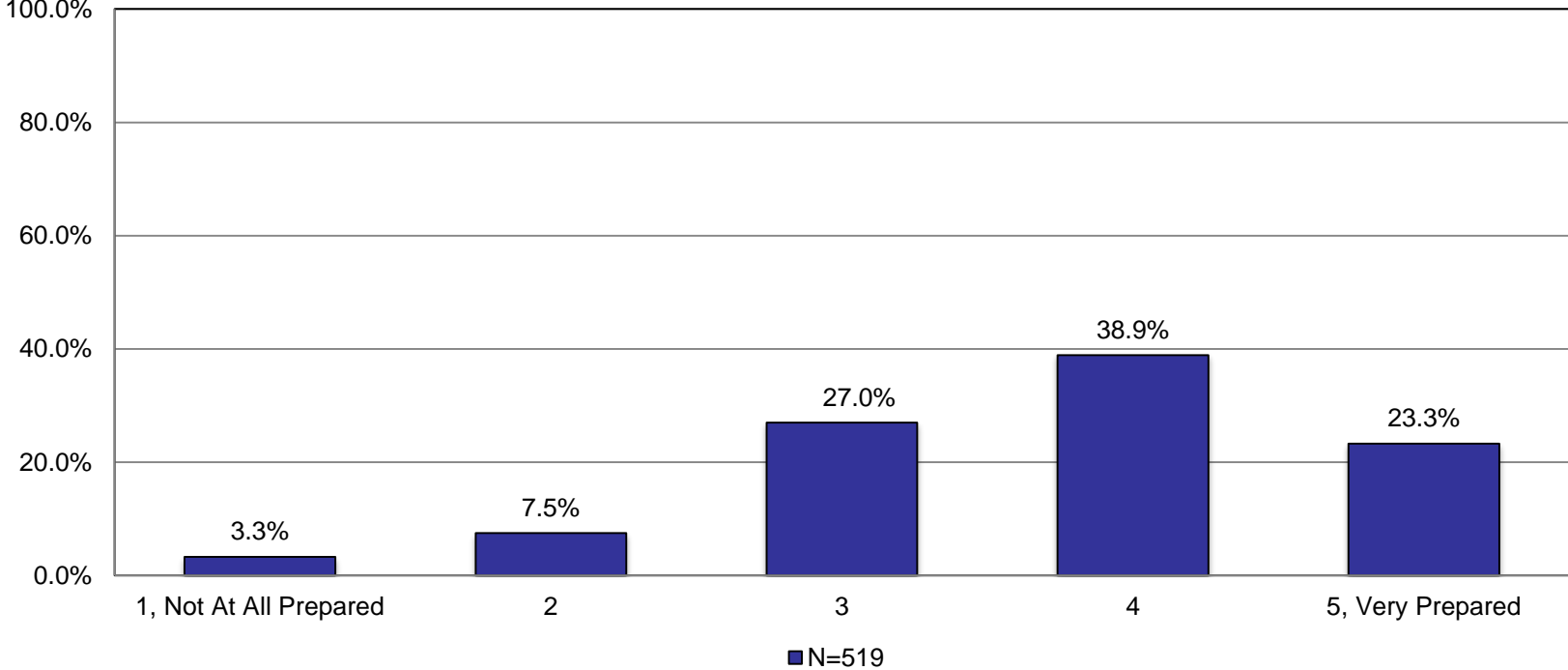
Upon graduation, did you feel you had the necessary professional skills to succeed in the work force?

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (62.2%) feel they were prepared for the work force. This is the percentage giving a rating of 4 (38.9%) or 5 (23.3%) to a question on having the necessary professional skills to succeed in the workforce.

Those not prepared, as indicated by ratings of 1 (3.3%) or 2 (7.5%), totaled 10.8% of the respondents.

Males (3.81) rated themselves as better prepared than did females (3.63).

### Professional Skills to Succeed in Work Force



## Satisfaction With College's Efforts to Prepare for Workplace

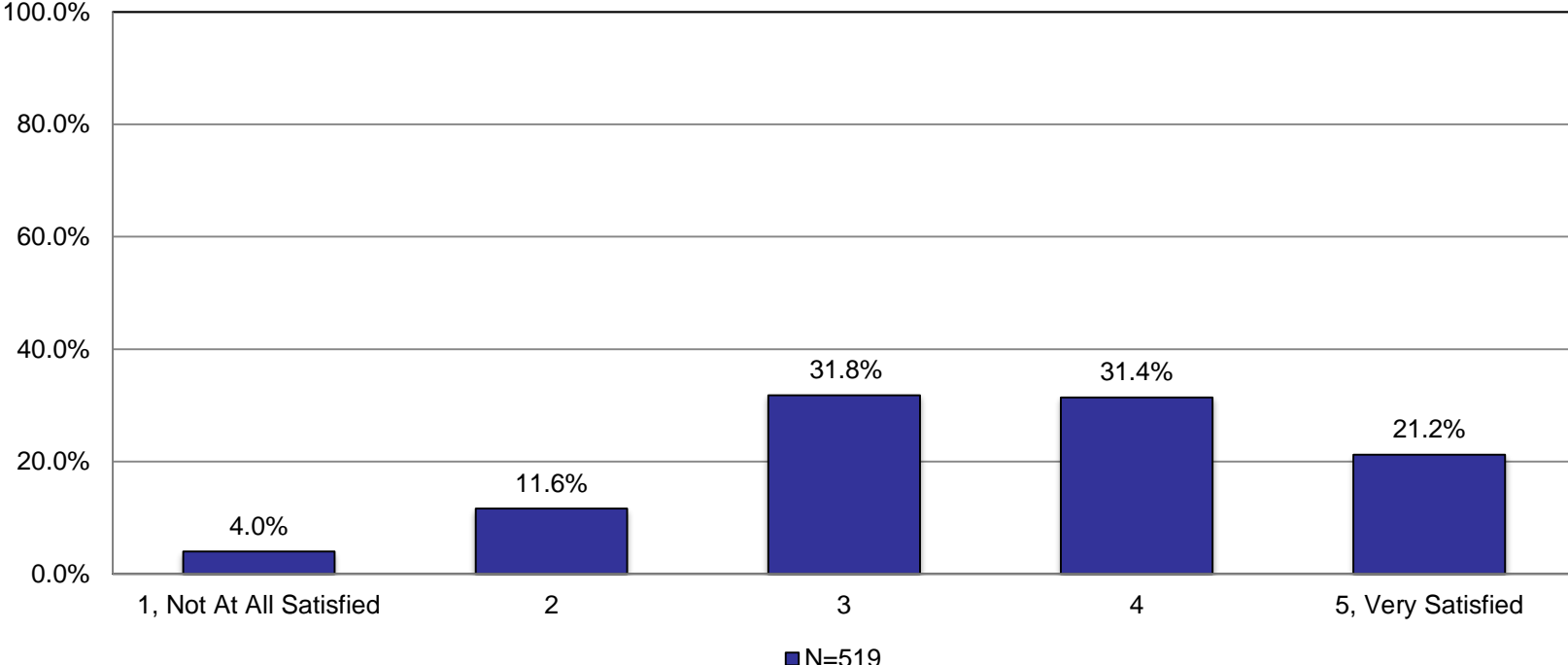
How satisfied are you with your college/university efforts to prepare you to be professional in the workplace?

Slightly more than half of the respondents (52.6%) are satisfied with their college's efforts to prepare them to be professional in the workplace. This is the percentage assigning a rating of 4 (31.4%) or 5 (21.2%).

Almost a third (31.8%) are undecided, as indicated by ratings of 3.

This leaves 15.6% who are not satisfied with their college's efforts.

Satisfaction With College's Efforts to Prepare for Workplace



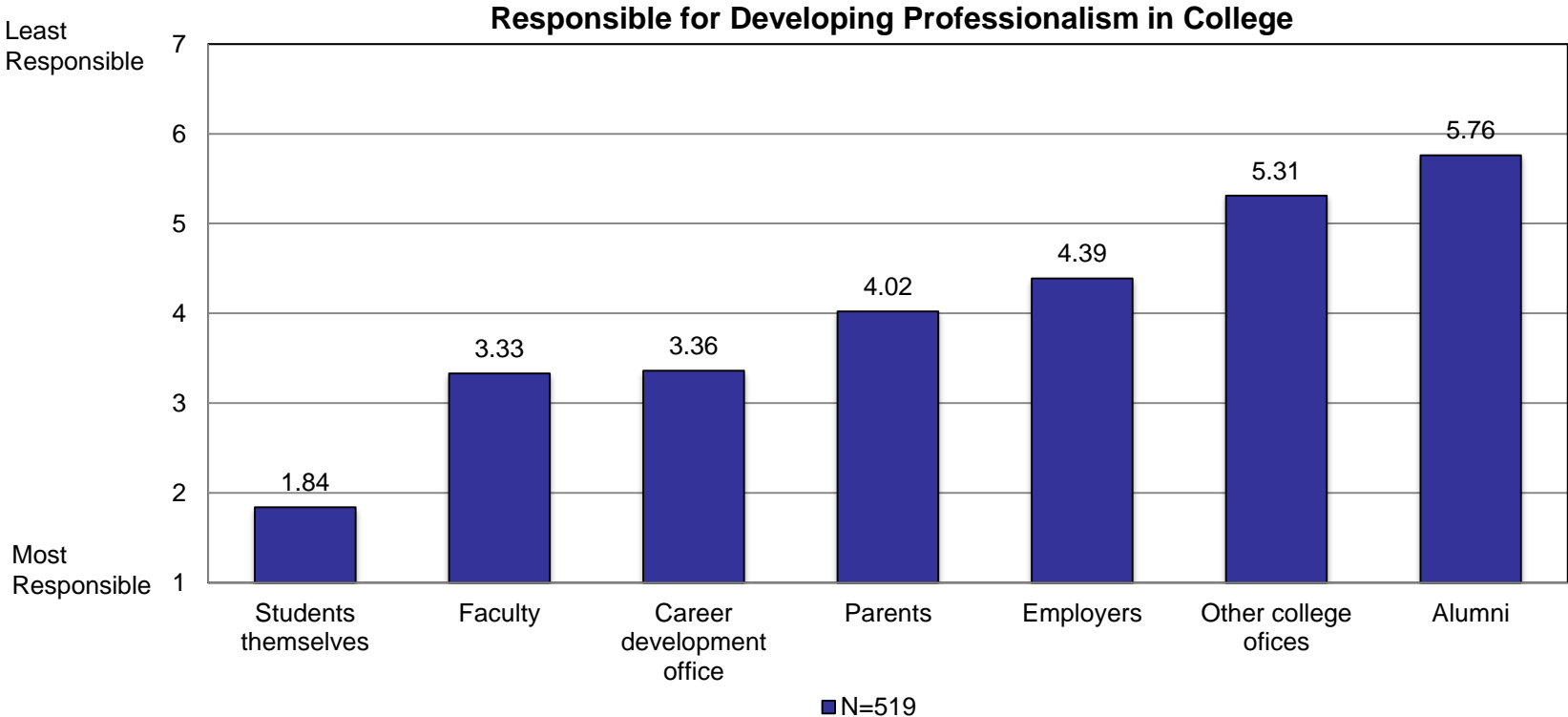
## Responsible for Developing Professionalism

Who do you think should be responsible for developing professionalism in college graduates?

Respondents ranked seven persons according to how responsible they felt each should be in developing professionalism in college graduates. A rank of 1 was assigned to the person who is most responsible.

Students (1.84) are seen as having the most responsibility for developing professionalism. They are followed by faculty (3.33) and career development offices on campuses (3.36).

The order of responsible parties is basically the same as given by career development professionals in the 2014 study of colleges and universities. The difference is career development professionals placed their responsibility as second and made faculty third.



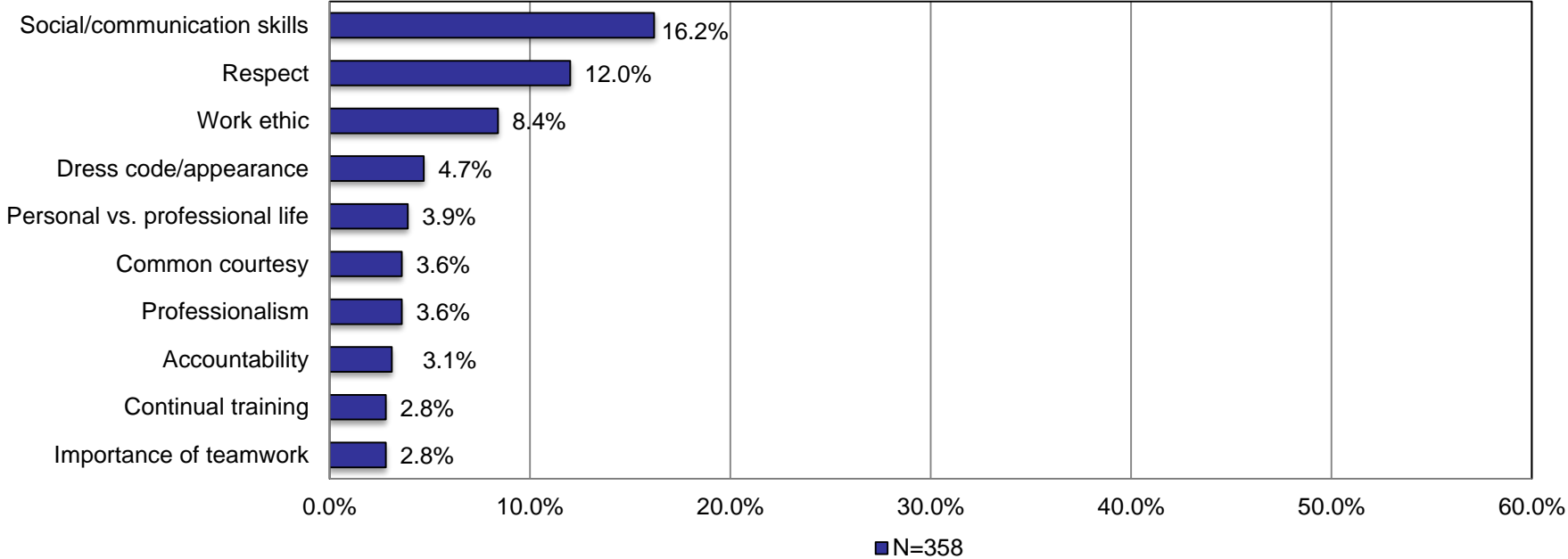
## Most Lacking in the Workplace

When it comes to professionalism in the workplace, what do you think is most lacking?

When talking about professionalism, 69.0% of the respondents were able to name something that is lacking in the workplace. Their answers were numerous. The graph includes all responses given by 10 or more respondents.

Named most often is poor social and communication skills (16.2%). This is followed by a lack of respect (12.0%).

Most Lacking in the Workplace



## Generation to Which Applies

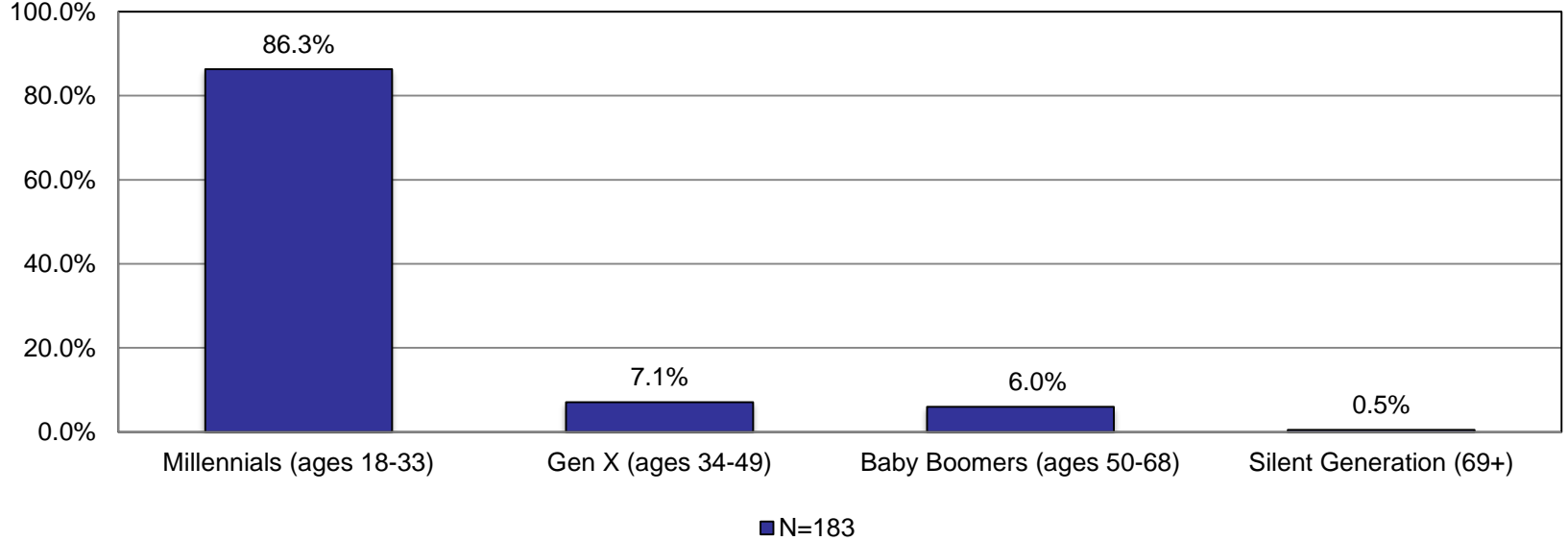
Does this apply to all generations of employees with whom you work?

To what generation does it most apply?

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (64.7%) feel all generations of employees are lacking these professionalism qualities. The 35.3% who do not were asked to what generation this most applies.

The response cited most often is Millennials, ages 18 to 33 (86.3%). In distant second and third places are Gen X (7.1%) and Baby Boomers (6.0%).

### Generation Most Lacking Qualities





# **Professionalism By Generation**

## Differences Between Generations

Have you observed that generations differ in the level of professionalism exhibited in your workplace?

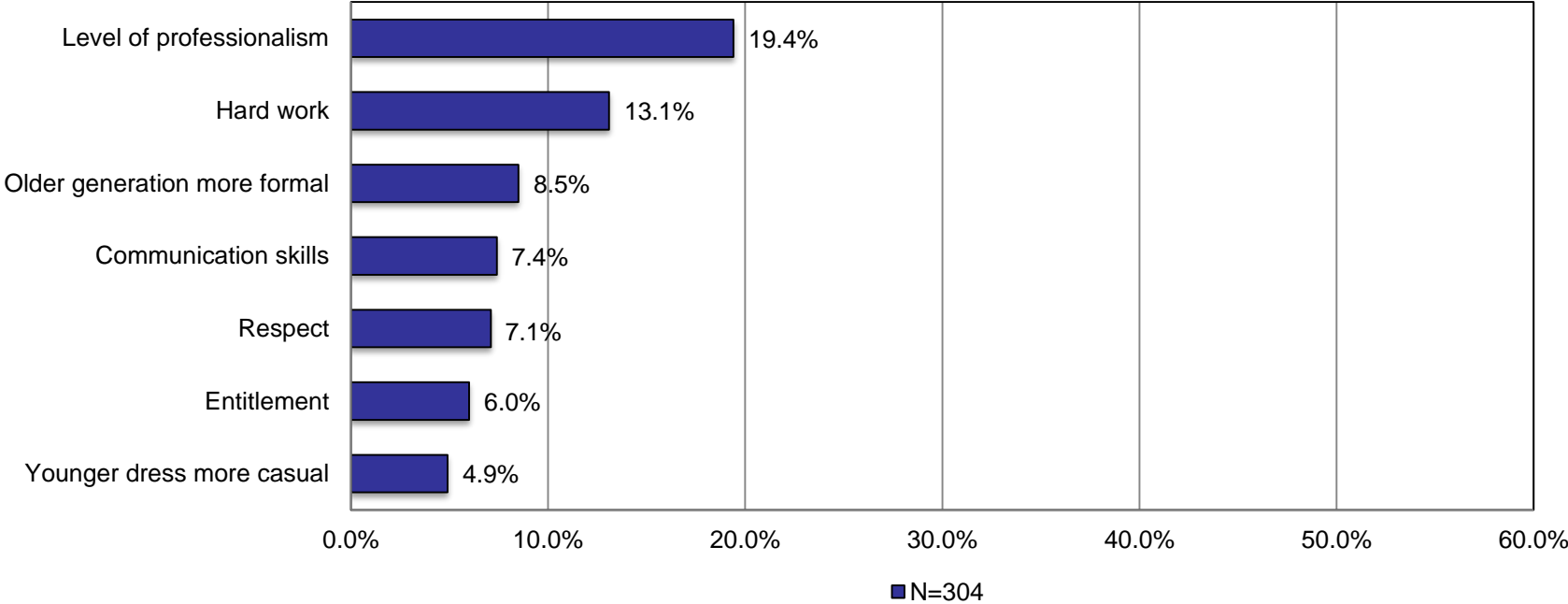
What are the differences between generations' professionalism in the workplace?

A total of 71.7% believe generations differ in the professionalism exhibited in the workplace. The remaining were divided between feeling it is not generation specific (16.4%) or not knowing if generations make a difference (11.9%).

The differences cited by 10 or more respondents are presented in the graph. The two most common differences are level of professionalism (19.4%) and hard work/work ethic (13.1%).

The data table should be examined for a complete list of differences.

Differences Between Generations

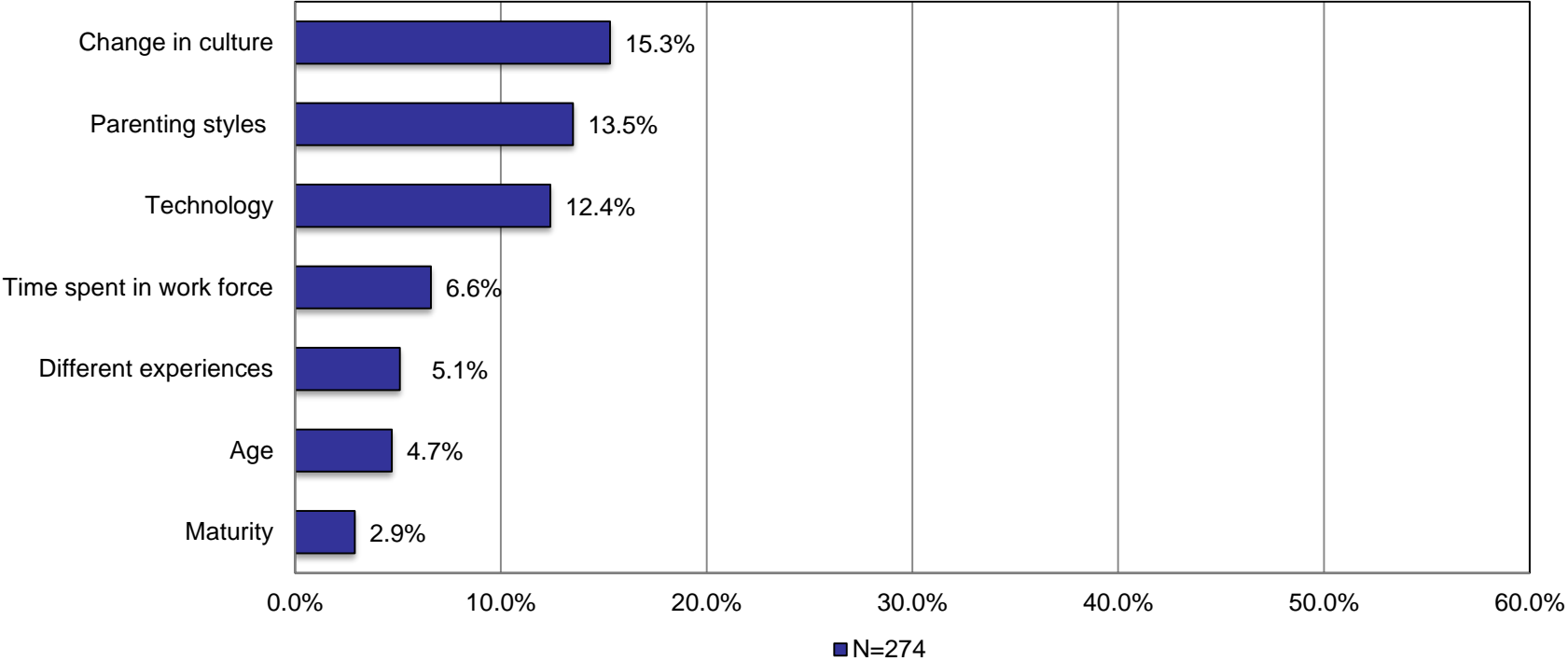


## Reasons Differences Exist

Three reasons were mentioned most often to explain the differences that exist between generations. These are change in culture (15.3%), parenting style changes (13.5%), and technology (12.4%).

Why do think these differences exist?

Reasons Differences Exist



## Coworkers Understand My Generation of Workers

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

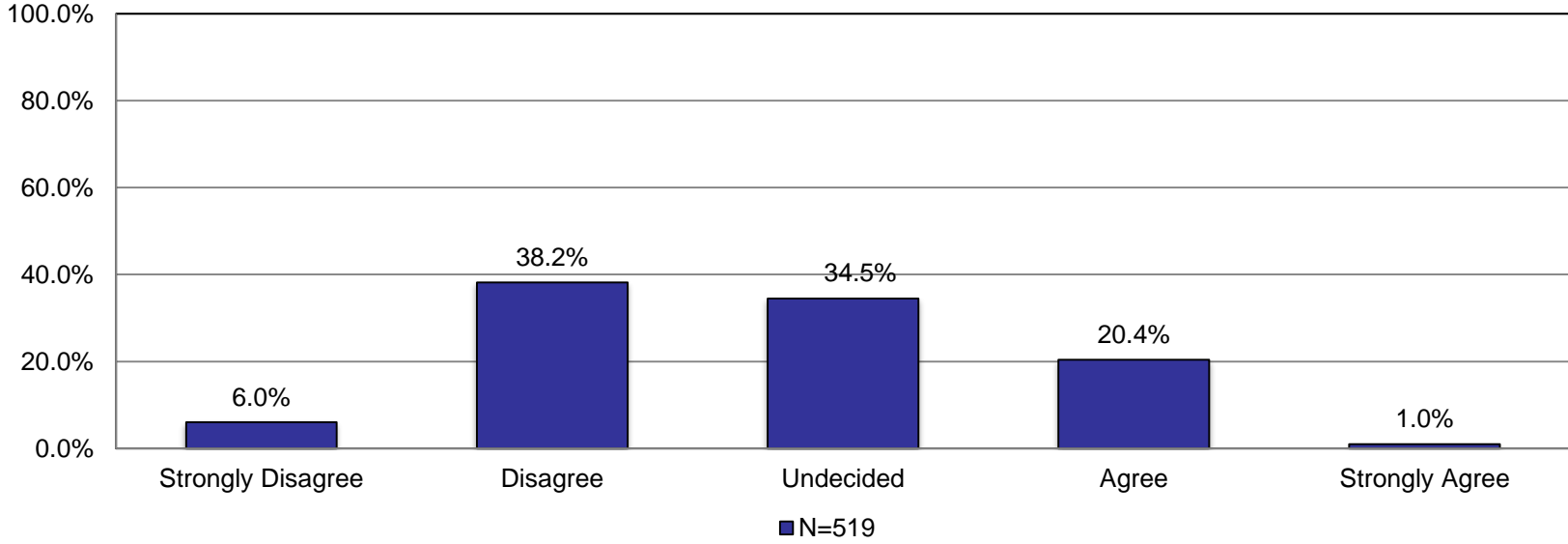
Respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

In my workplace, coworkers of older generations (i.e. Baby Boomers, Gen X) understand my generation of workers.

As seen in the graph, there is a lack of consensus in reaction to this statement. About a fifth (21.4%) either agree or strongly agree with it. In the opposite direction, 44.2% disagree or strongly disagree with it.

Males (2.82) are more likely than females (2.64) to agree that older generations understand them.

### Coworkers of Older Generations Understand My Generation of Workers



## Percentage of New College Graduates Exhibiting Professionalism

At your workplace, approximately what percentage of employees your age with college degrees exhibits professionalism?

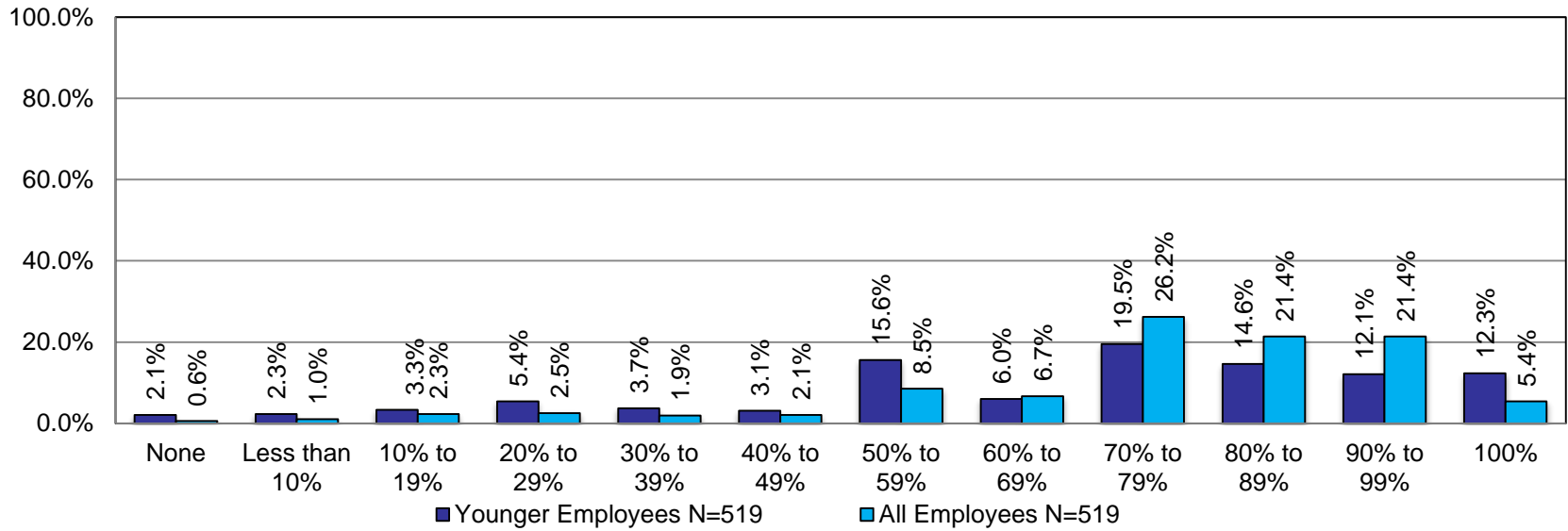
What percentage of all employees exhibit professionalism at work?

Respondents were asked what percentage of employees their age with college degrees exhibit professionalism in the workplace. They were then asked about all employees.

As seen, responses are mixed. Respondents are more likely to feel a greater percentage of all employees demonstrate professionalism than does their generation. For example, 74.4% of the respondents report that 70% or more of all employees exhibit professionalism. In comparison, 58.5% feel the same percentage of employees their age demonstrate professionalism.

It is probably not surprising that human resource professionals were less likely than employees to see professionalism. In the 2012 study of human resource professionals, 28.4% described 70% or more of younger employees exhibiting professionalism. This is less than half of the employees themselves (58.5%) who believe this percentage of workers demonstrates professionalism in the workplace.

**Percentage of Employees Exhibiting Professionalism**



## Changes in Exhibiting Professionalism

Since you entered the workforce after graduating from college, has this percentage...?

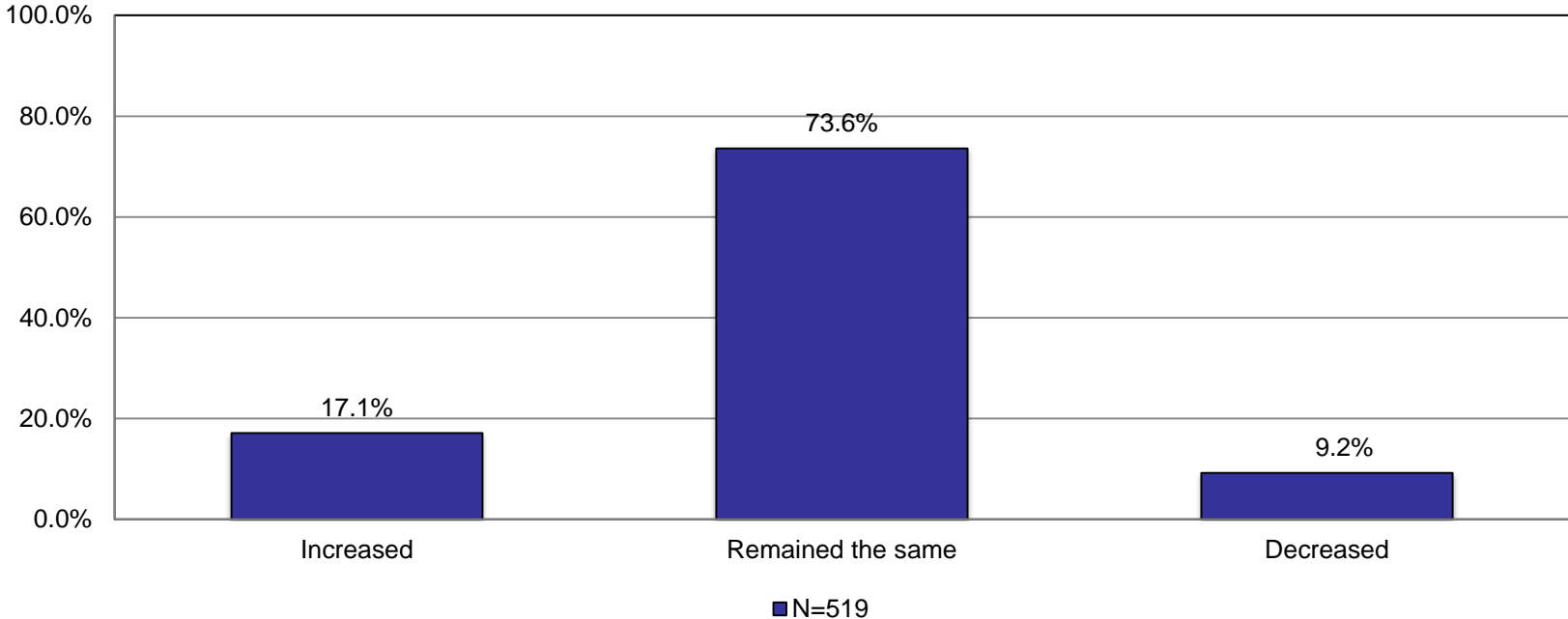
Nearly three-fourths (73.6%) believe that employees their age exhibit professionalism at the same level that was done when they entered the workforce.

A total of 17.1% feel the percentage has increased over the this time period.

The remaining 9.2% report a decrease in the percentage demonstrating professionalism.

As might be expected, human resource professionals do not see this the same way that these respondents do. In the 2012 study, 35.9% of the human resource professionals reported a decrease in the percentage of new college graduates exhibiting professionalism over the past five years. A total of 52.4% felt the percentage is the same and 11.7% believed it has increased.

Changes in Exhibiting Professionalism



## Reasons for Changes in Professionalism

For what reasons do you feel this percentage has changed?

Three reasons dominate why there is increased professionalism in the workplace. The reasons listed below represent the answers given by 68.5% of the respondents. All other reasons were cited by less than 5 respondents each.

Reasons for Increases in Professionalism	
More experienced field to choose from	28.1%
Getting older, more mature candidates	21.1%
Students more professional and focused	19.3%
	N=57

A fourth of the respondents (25.0%) point to a sense of entitlement as the reason for a decrease in the percentage of new employees exhibiting professionalism. This is followed by a lack of social skills/respect (12.5%) and employers having lower expectations (12.5%). This table contains all answers provided by 3 or more respondents.

Similar to reasons for increased professionalism, the data table provides all answers offered. It should be noted that only 32 respondents answered this question.

Reasons for Decreases in Professionalism	
Sense of entitlement	25.0%
Lack of social skills/respect	12.5%
Employers' lowered expectations	12.5%
Decreased maturity/independence	9.4%
Lack of experience/training/fewer internships	9.4%
Less communication skills due to technology	9.4%
	N=32

# Entitlement

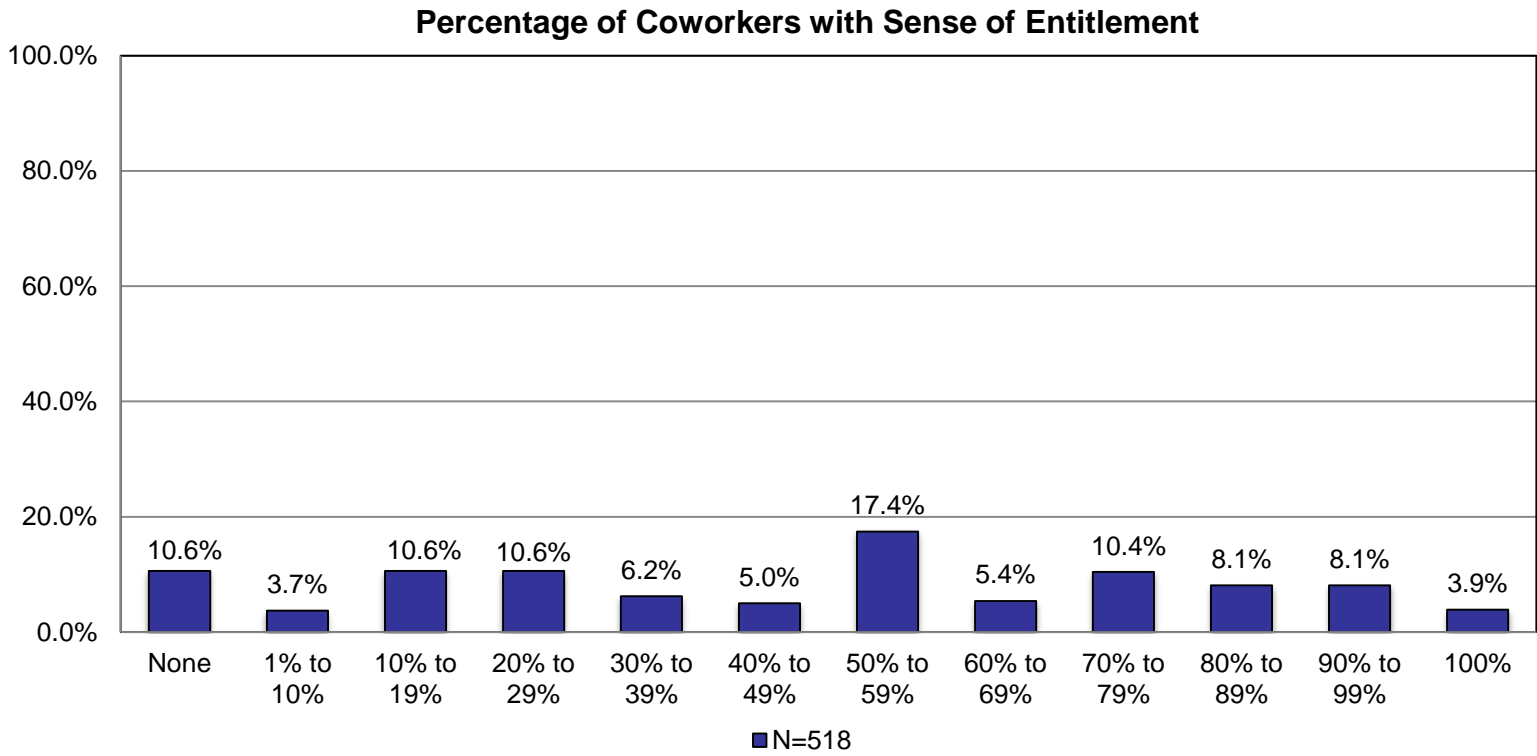


## Percentage of Coworkers with Sense of Entitlement

What percentage of coworkers your age with college degrees exhibits a sense of entitlement?

The percentage of respondents reporting their same age coworkers exhibit a sense of entitlement ranges from 10.6% for none to 3.9% for all. The largest percentage is 17.4% indicating that 50 to 59% act entitled. Entitlement was defined as expecting rewards without putting in the work or effort to merit the rewards.

Statistically significant differences exist for this by type of major. Those who majored in technology were least likely to feel coworkers have a sense of entitlement. While those with an arts major were the most likely to indicate their coworkers have this sense. The mean percentages are 36.3% for technology and 55.4% for arts.



## Changes in Sense of Entitlement

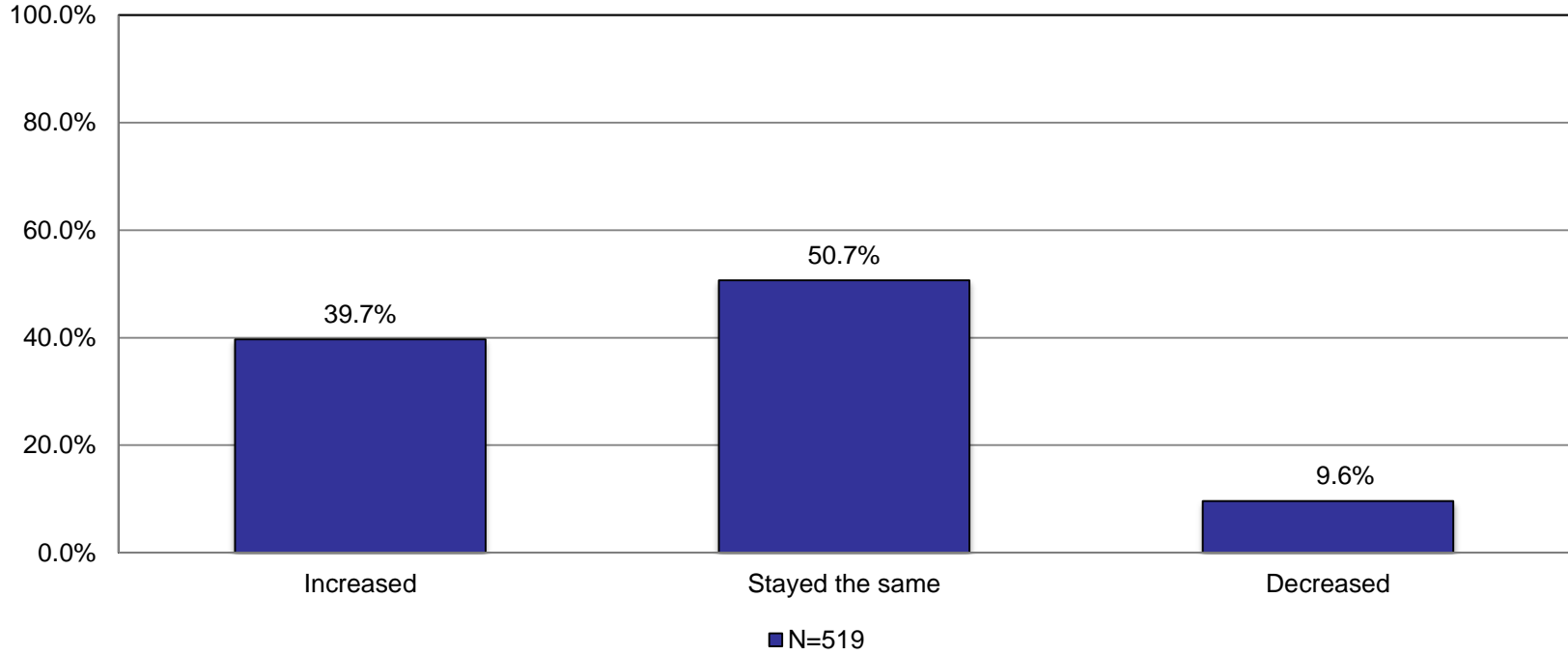
Over the past five years, has the percentage of employees your age with college degrees exhibiting a sense of entitlement increased, remained the same, or decreased?

Over half of the respondents (50.7%) report that the sense of entitlement exhibited by the employees their age with a college degree has remained the same over the past five years.

An increased sense of entitlement exists according to 39.7% of the respondents. The remaining 9.6% feels this sense has decreased.

Human resource professionals in 2012 (52.9%) and college career development professionals in 2014 (53.0%) were more likely to report an increase in young persons having a sense of entitlement.

Changes in Sense of Entitlement



## Factors Contributing to Sense of Entitlement

In your opinion, what is responsible for a sense of entitlement?

Respondents expressed what they thought is responsible for a sense of entitlement.

The upbringing of children is clearly the predominant explanation given. If the upbringing (29.1%) and coddled (20.7%) reasons are combined to represent parent child-raising, there is close to half of the sample (49.8%) giving this one reason for entitlement.

The next answer is they feel they paid their dues by graduating (10.4%). This, too, can be linked back to how the child was raised.

These answers are similar to those given by human resource professionals.

Factors Contributing to Sense of Entitlement	
Generational phenomenon/upbringing	29.1%
Have been coddled/privileged	20.7%
Feel paid dues by graduating/having degree	10.4%
Need for instant gratification/expect reward	5.4%
Economy	4.4%
Individual, not generational	3.3%
Self-centered/arrogant	2.7%
Government/political climate	2.7%
	N=299

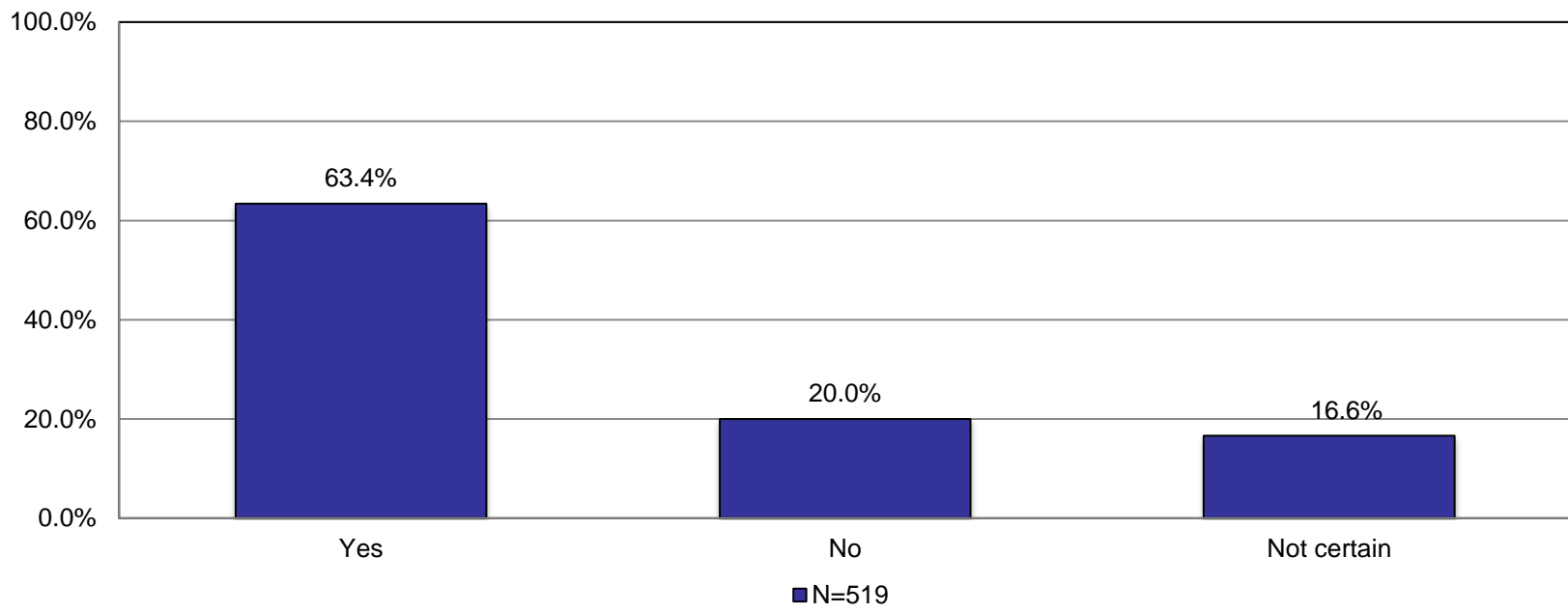
## Sense of Entitlement Differs Between Generations

Do you find that the presence of a sense of entitlement differs between generations?

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (63.4%) believe a sense of entitlement differs between generations of employees.

The remaining percentages are divided between those who are not certain (16.6%) and do not feel it is generational (20.0%).

### Sense of Entitlement Differs Between Generations



## Difference Between Generations and Sense of Entitlement

What is the difference between generations and a sense of entitlement?

Over half of the respondents feel younger employees exhibit a sense of entitlement due to being raised that way. Reasons related to this theme are: younger feel entitled by just participating (30.1%), younger feels more entitled (25.2%), and how they were raised (8.0%).

The third most common reason relates to why older employees feel entitled. They simply feel entitled due to being employed longer (13.8%).

Differences Between Generations	
Younger entitled by participating/older needs earned	30.1%
Younger feels more entitled	25.2%
Older think entitled because employed longer	13.8%
How they were raised	8.0%
Technology made things easier	4.4%
Age/maturity	2.2%
All generations feel entitled on different levels	1.8%
Older-experience & knowledge/younger-degree	1.8%
More people with degrees/harder to get career	1.8%
Older more grateful/take pride	1.3%
	N=226

# IT Etiquette

## Percentage of Coworkers Demonstrating IT Misuse

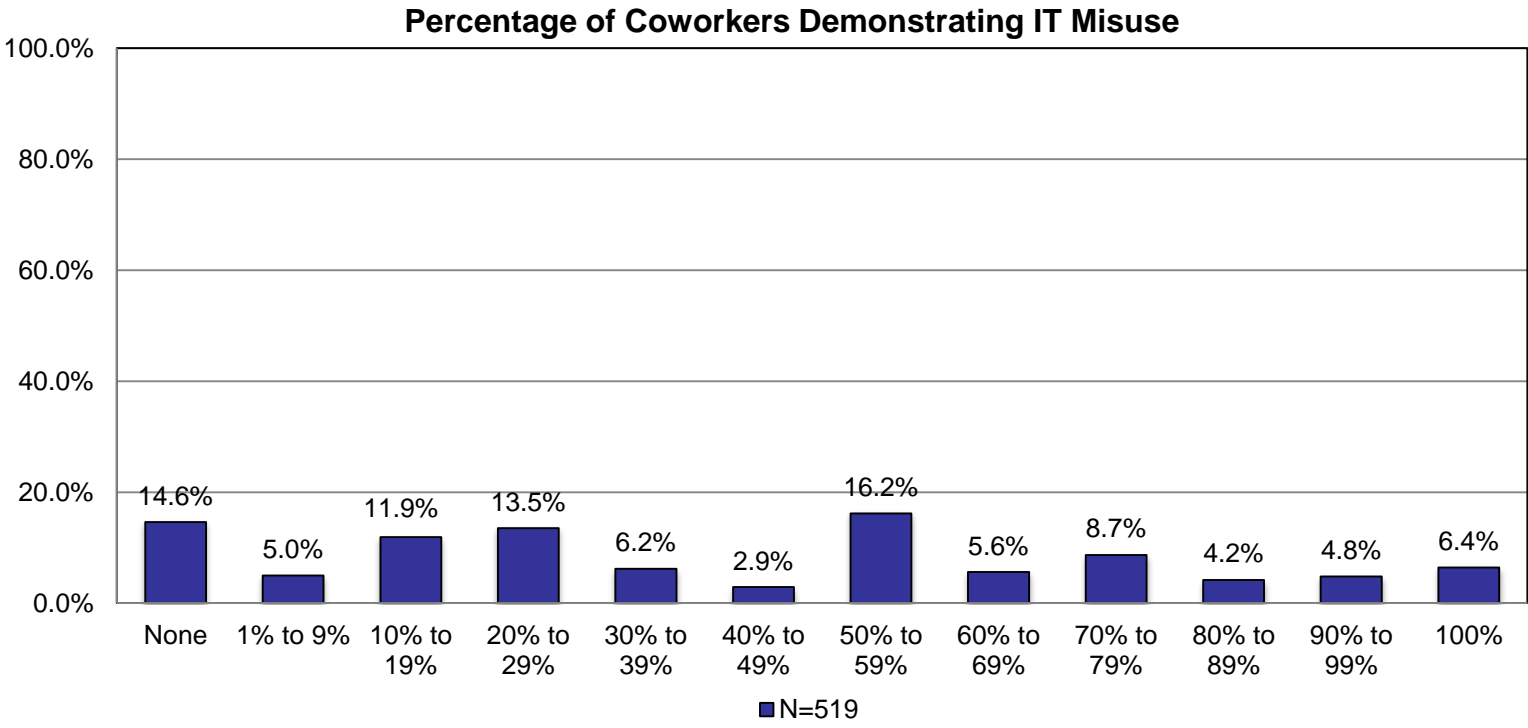
What percentage of coworkers your age with college degrees demonstrates some form of IT misuse?

Respondents are also divided over the percentage of their same age coworkers who demonstrate some form of IT misuse.

Here, 14.6% report none demonstrate it and 6.4% indicate all do. As with entitlement, the largest percentage (16.2%) claim that 50 to 59% engage in some form of IT misuse.

As age increases, the percentage of coworkers demonstrating some form of IT misuse also increases

In 2012, human resources professionals gave similar percentages of employees engaging in IT misuse. As might be expected, the percentage engaging in this misuse was slightly higher than found in this study.



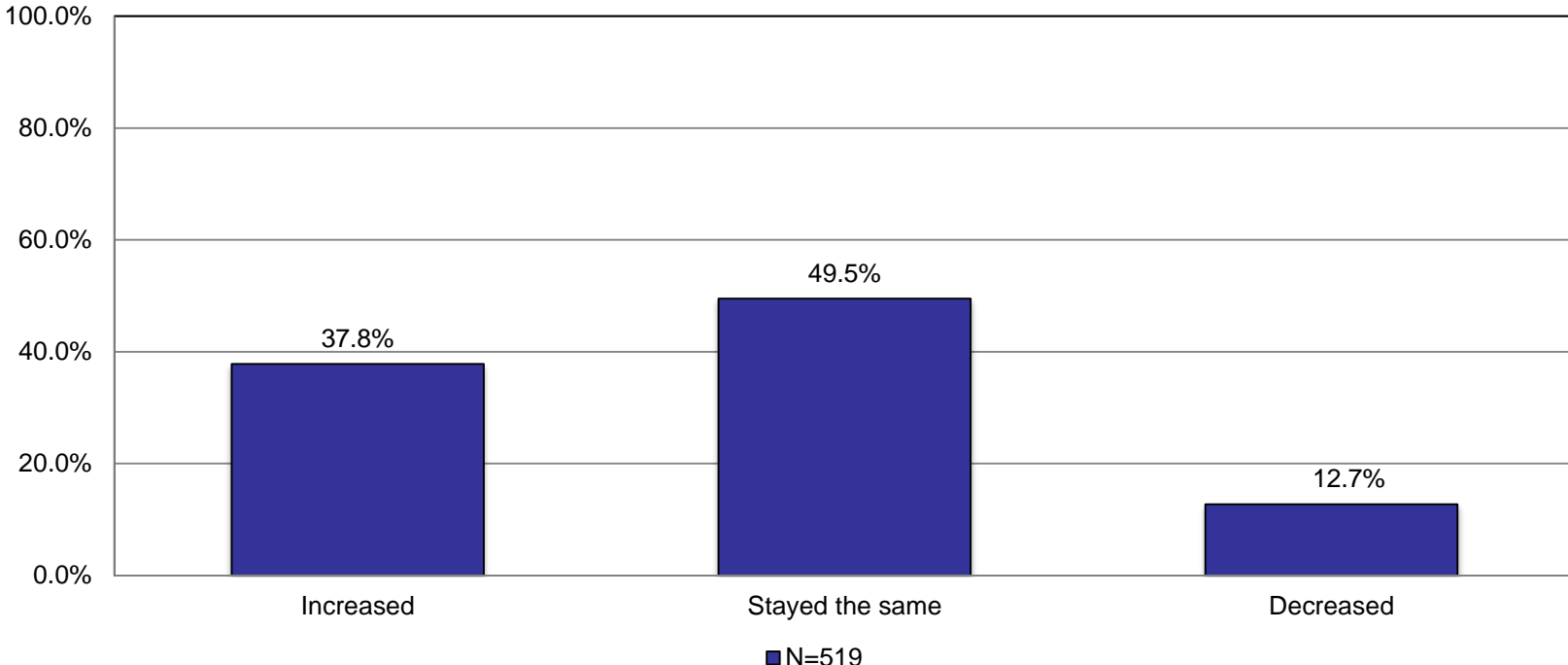
## Problems With IT Etiquette/Abuses

Over the past five years, do you think the problems with IT misuses or etiquette among employees your age increased, remained the same or decreased?

Nearly half of the respondents (49.5%) believe IT misuses are the same as they were five years ago. However, 37.8% report an increase in these problems. This leaves 12.7% who feel these problems have decreased.

Human resource professionals in 2012 were more likely than these respondents to feel IT misuses are increasing. In that study, 50.1% described these misuses as increasing.

**Problems with IT Misuses Over the Past Five Years**





## Key Technology Challenges

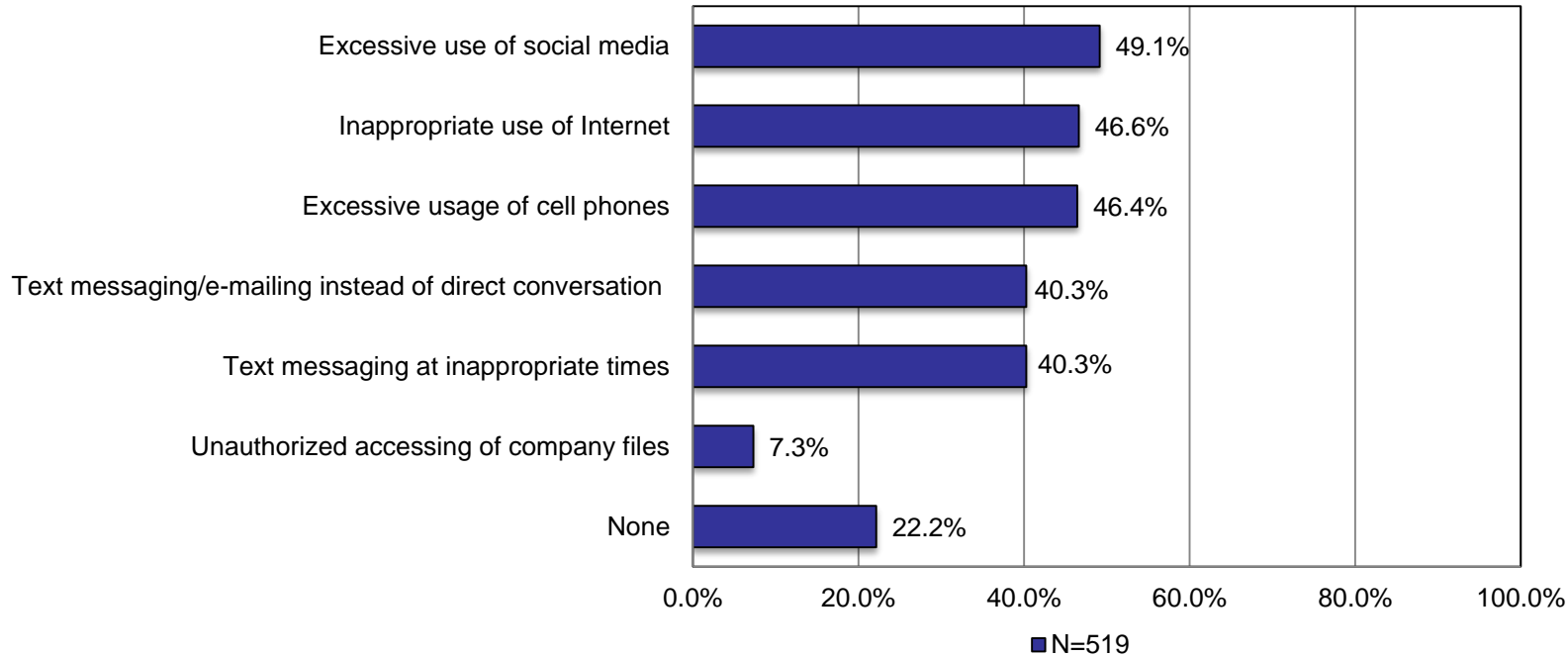
While working for your employer, what are some of the key technology challenges you frequently wrestle with?

The challenges these younger employees have with IT are numerous. Five IT misuses are reported by 40 percent or more of the respondents. The most common one is excessive use of social media (49.1%).

Previous studies with human resources professionals had similar results. Again, their percentages are higher than shown here.

Slightly more than a fifth (22.2%) do not have any issues with IT misuse.

### Key Technology Challenges



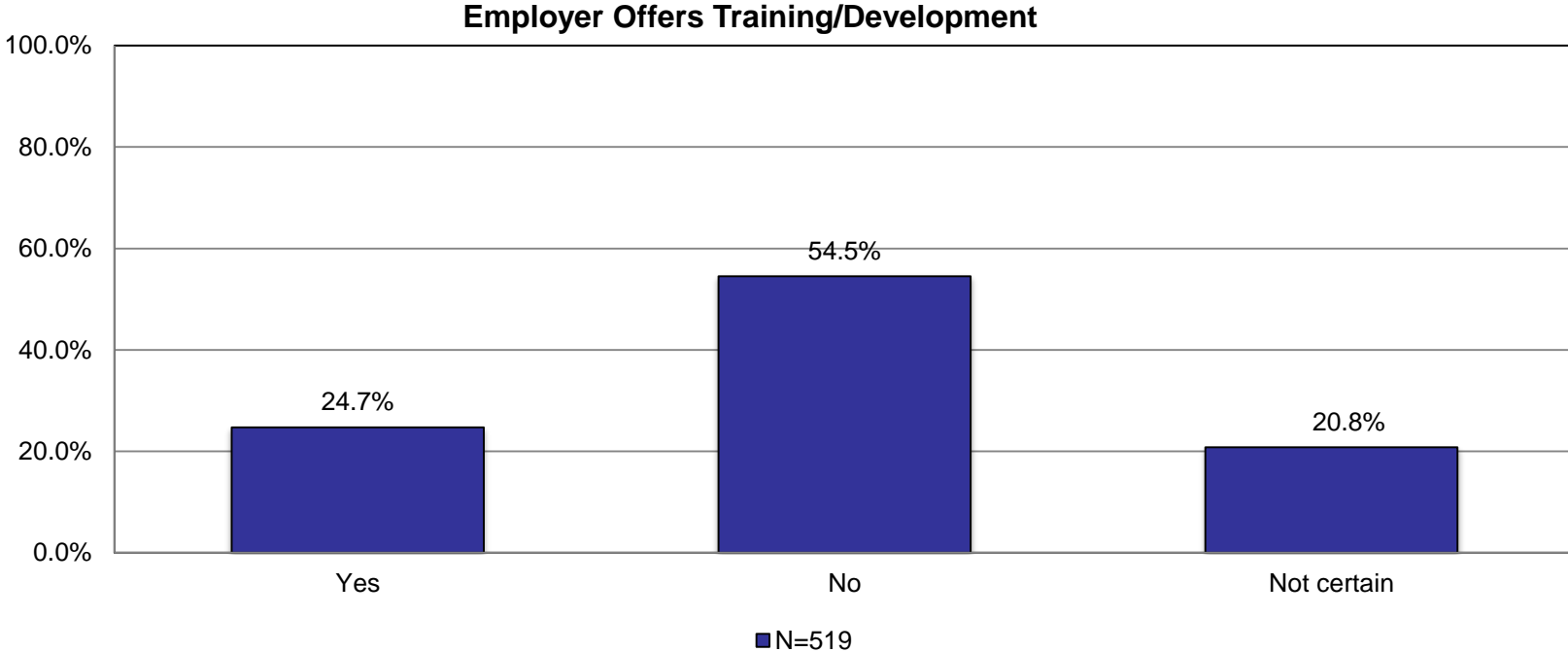
## Employer Offers Training/Development

Does your current employer offer any training/development to help its employees manage technology challenges in the workplace?

About a quarter of the respondents (24.7%) indicate that their employer offers training or development to help employees with IT challenges.

Over half (54.5%) report no employer training or development programs.

The remaining 20.8% are not certain if their employer offers any such programs.



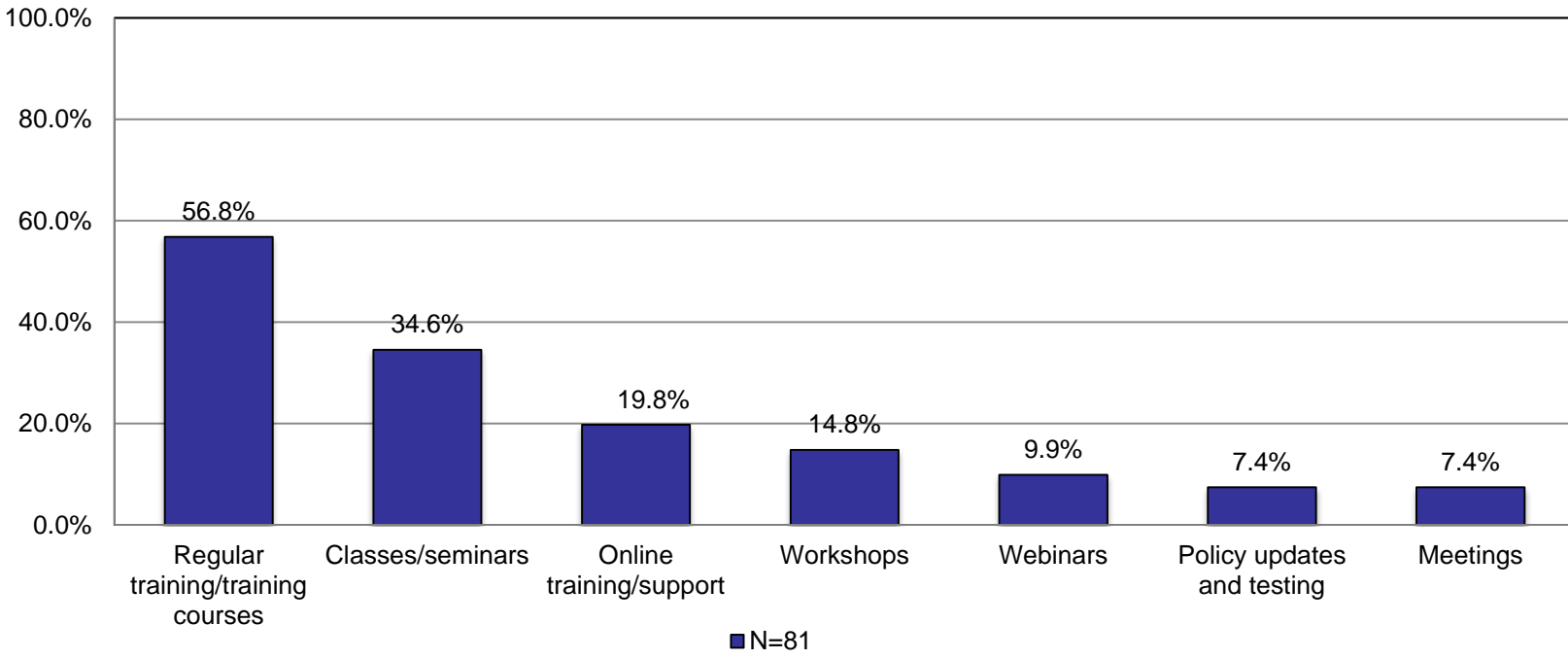
## Training/Development Offered

What is offered to help employees manage these technology challenges in the workplace?

Respondents indicating their employer offers programs to help manage IT misuses were asked what is offered. The graph shows all answers given by six or more respondents.

Nearly all of these respondents (91.4%) mentioned company sponsored training courses (56.8%) or classes/seminars (34.6%).

### Training/Development Offered



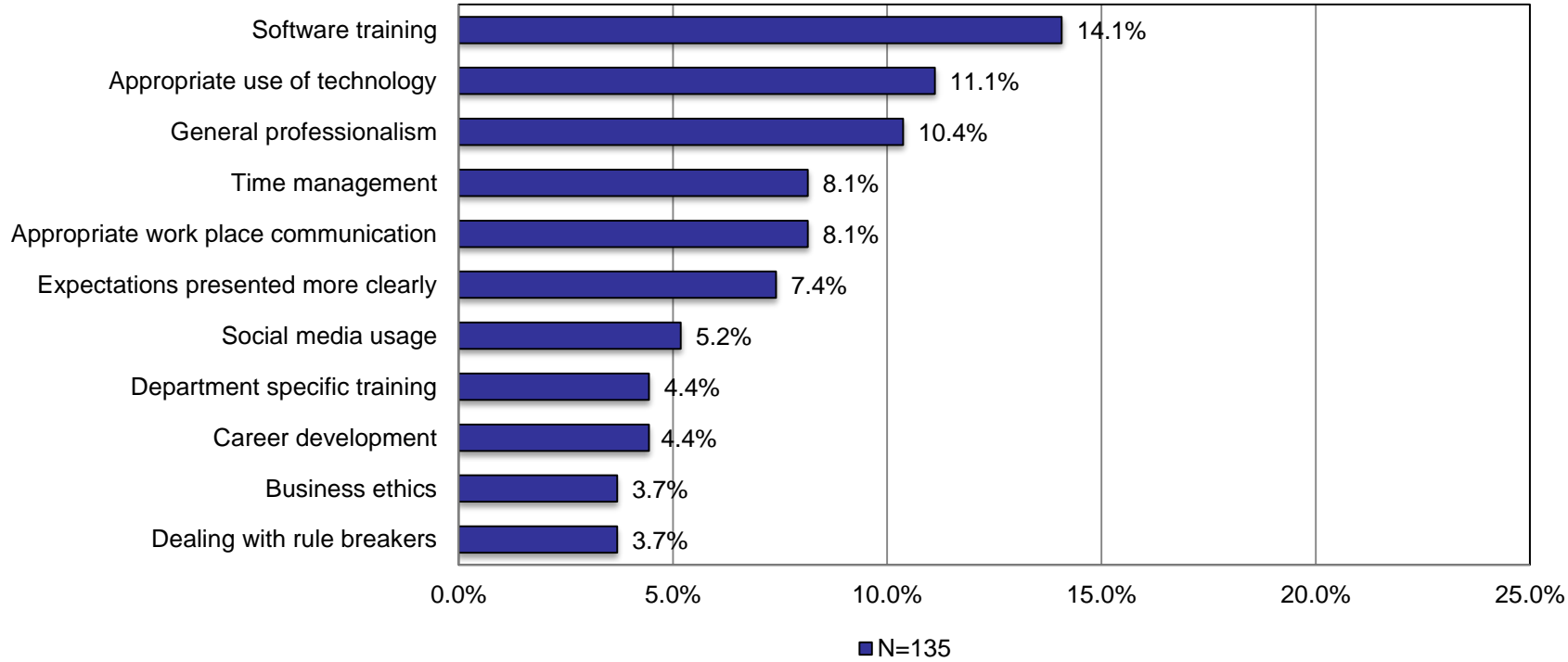
## Topics Would Like Offered

What topics would you like your employer to offer?

Respondents were able to suggest topics for employer sponsored programs. Those doing so named a wide variety of programs. The graph shows those programs mentioned by five or more respondents.

The most requested program is training on software (14.1%). This is followed by the appropriate use of technology (11.1%) and general professionalism (10.4%).

Topics Would Like Offered

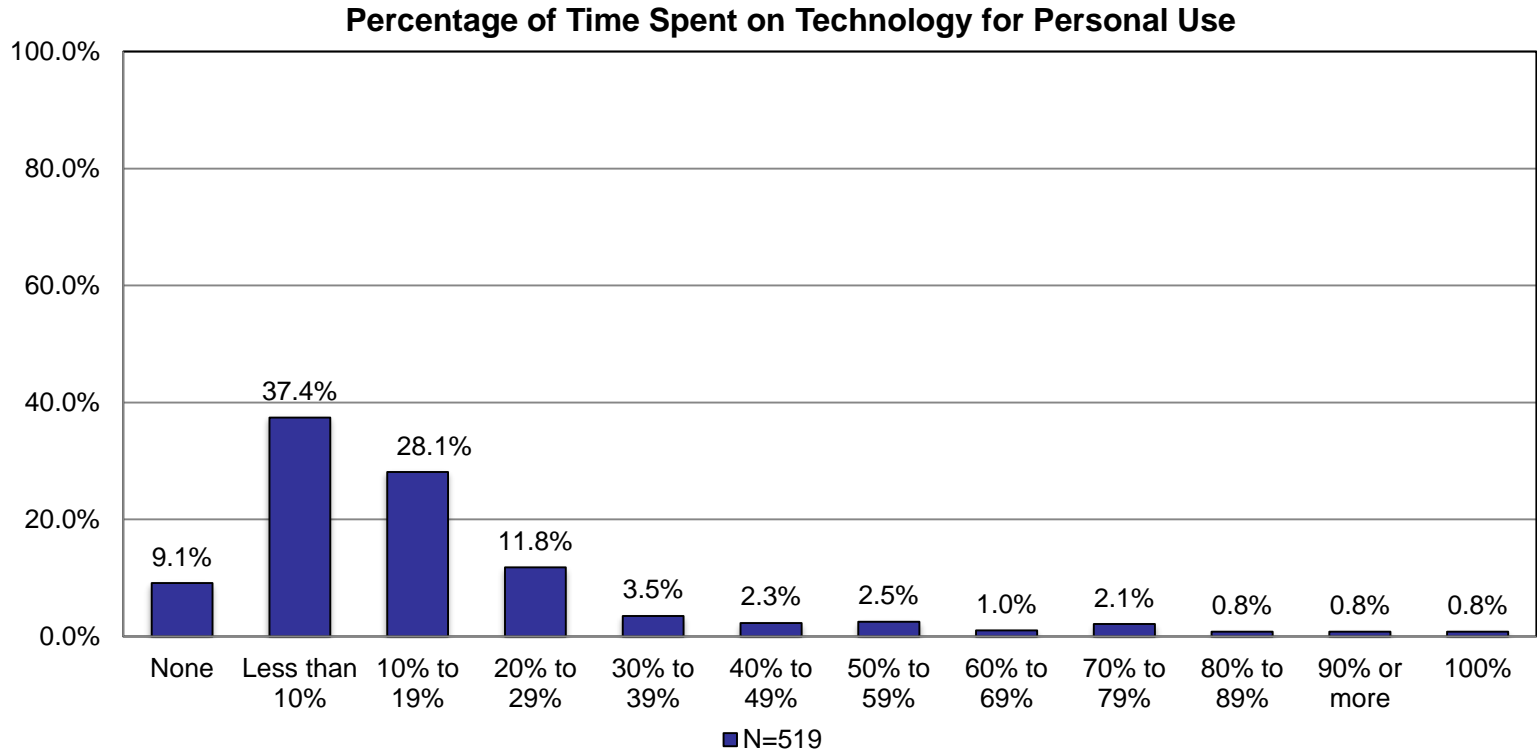


## Percentage Of Time Spent On Technology For Personal Use

In a typical 8 hour work day, what percentage of the time do you spend on the Internet, social media, e-mail or cell phone for personal use?

The greatest percentage of respondents (37.4%) spend from 1 to less than 10% of their typical work day on the Internet, social media, e-mail, or the cell phone for personal reasons. The next highest percentage is 28.1% who use 10 to 19% of their work day on personal communications.

A total of 9.1% do not employ any of their work time carrying on personal communications using technology.



# Technology

## Online Presence

To help assess a job candidate's professionalism, prospective employers should review an individual's online/digital presence.

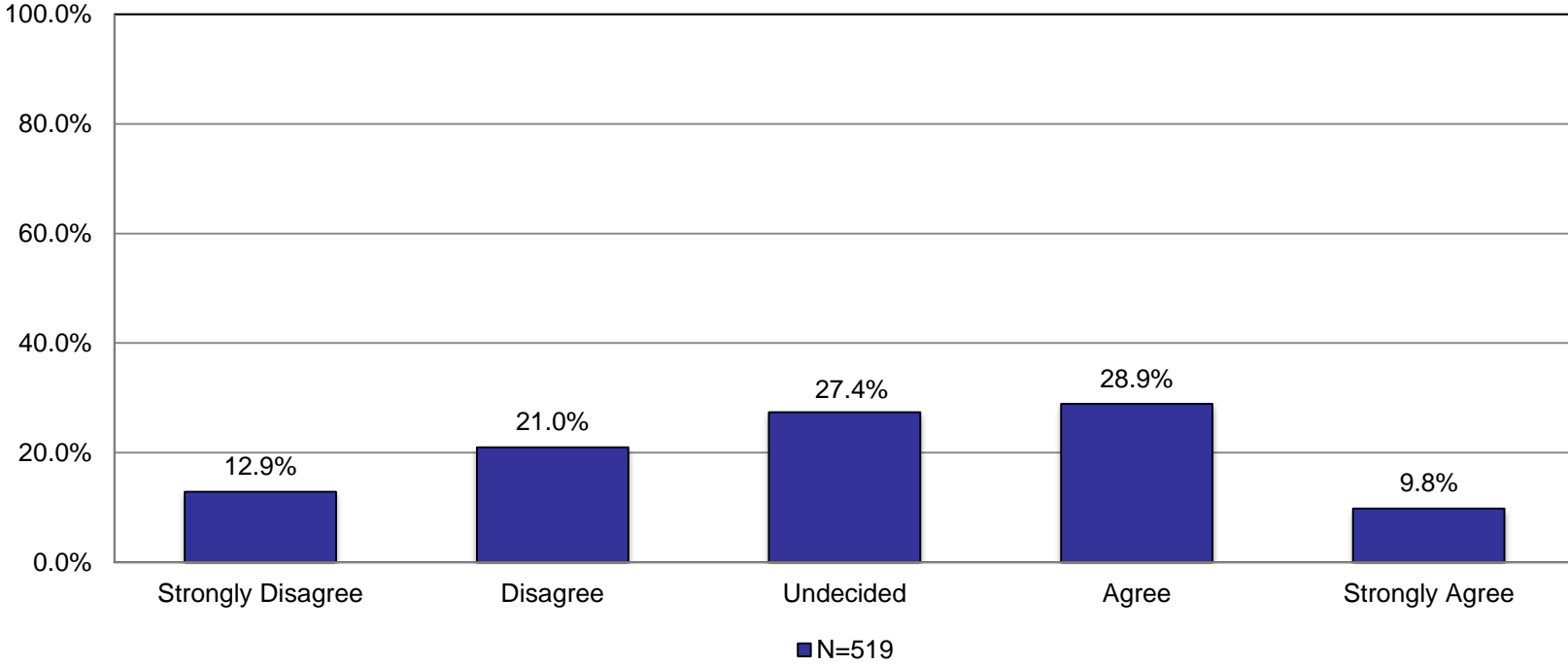
There is a lack of consensus whether a prospective employer should review a candidate's online presence as part of an assessment of their professionalism.

While 38.7% either agree or strongly agree with this, there is 33.9% who disagree or strongly disagree.

Those who studied business (3.23) or education (3.50) are the most likely to agree with this. Those who majored in some form of technology (2.56) were less likely to agree.

Also, those who plan to be in their current positions for 4 years or longer tend to agree more than others.

### Prospective Employer Should Review Online Presence



## Percentage of Coworkers Exhibiting Unfocused Behavior

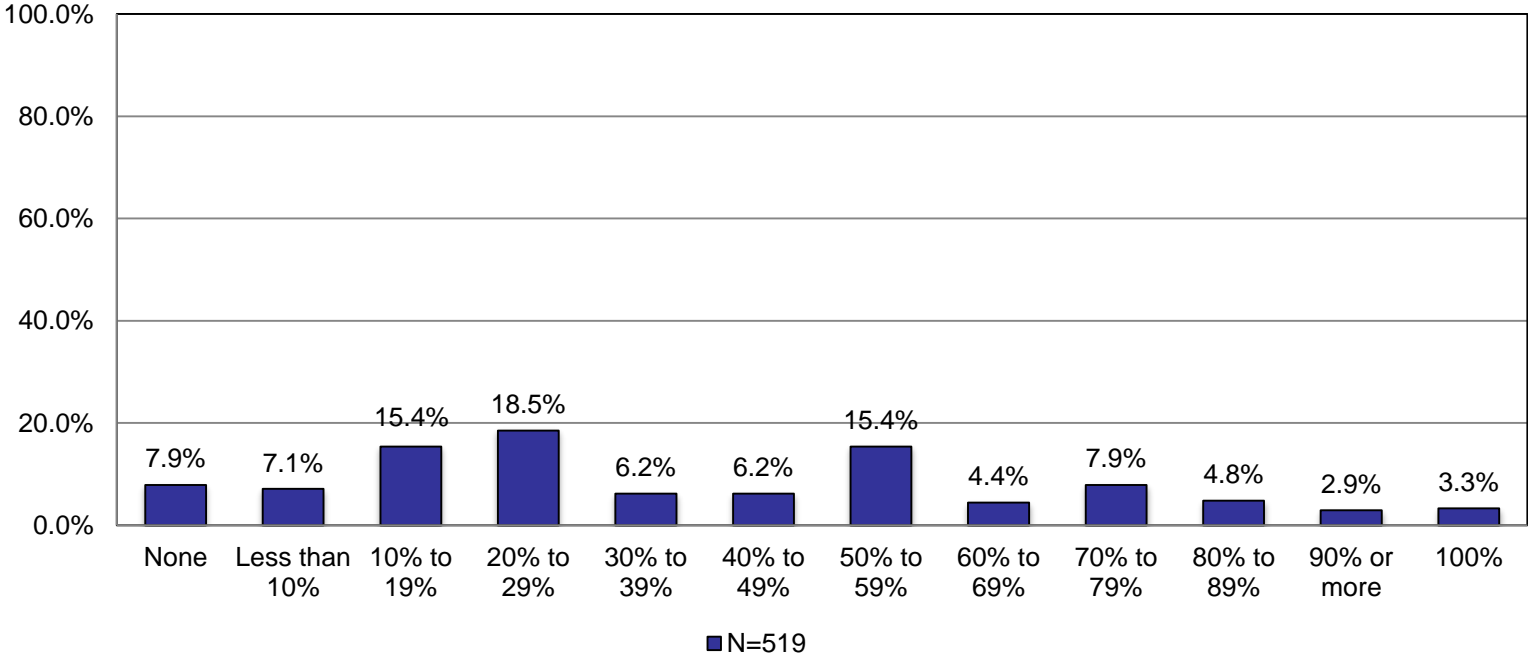
When at work, what percentage of coworkers your age with college degrees exhibits unfocused behavior?

Consistent with earlier findings, the respondents differ in their perceptions of the percentage of coworkers their age who are unfocused.

The greatest percentage is 18.5% who report that 20 to 29% are unfocused. This is followed by 15.4% stating that 10 to 19% are unfocused. The same percentage (15.4%) indicates that 50 to 59% lack focus.

Majors in the natural sciences (40.8%) were more likely than those majoring in education (22.6%) or technology (24.1%) to cite a large percentage of unfocused coworkers.

Percentage of Coworkers Exhibiting Unfocused Behavior





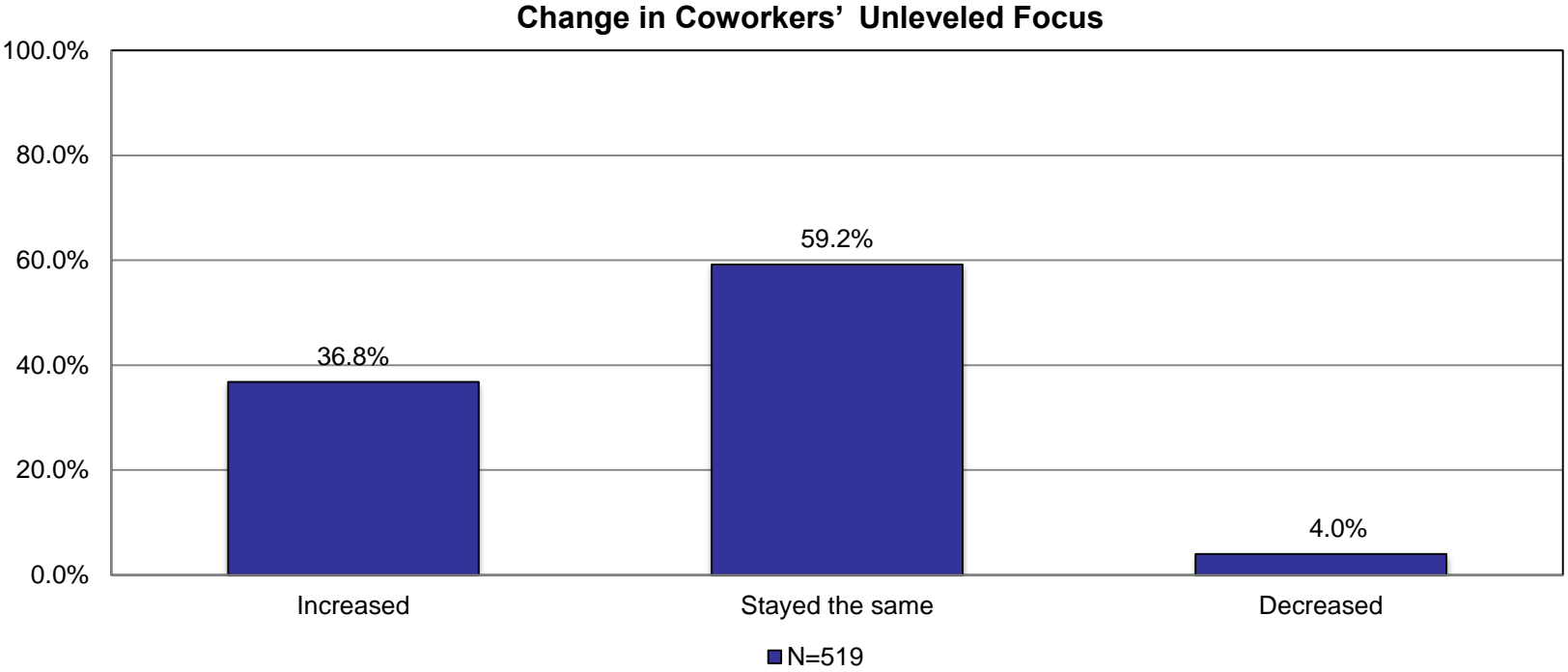
## Change in Coworkers' Level Of Focus

Over the past five years, do you think the number of coworkers your age who are unfocused increased, remained the same, or decreased?

Over the past five years, 59.2% of the respondents feel their coworkers' level of focus has remained the same.

However, there are 36.8% who believe there is an increase in unfocused behavior.

These findings are similar to those discovered in the 2012 human resource professionals study.



## Reasons For Being Unfocused At Work

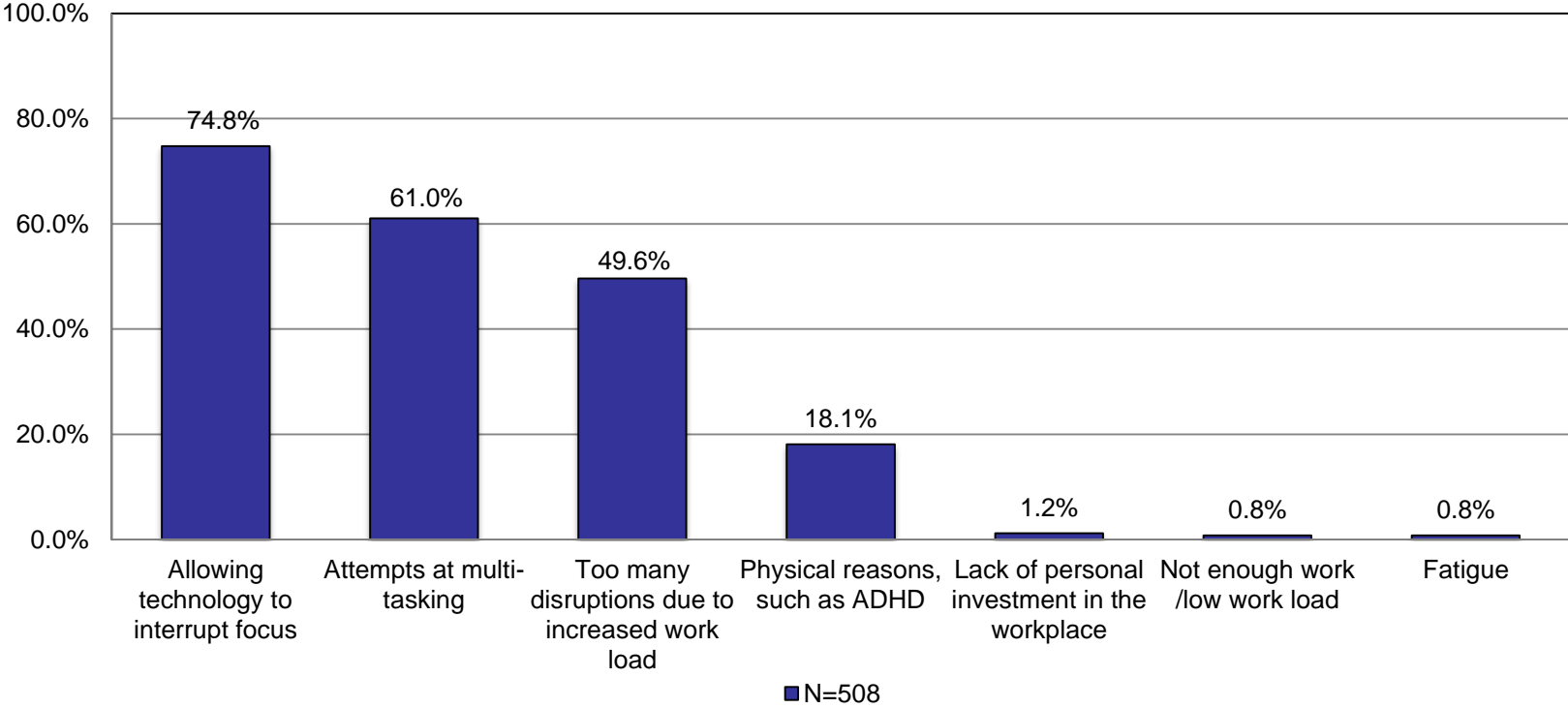
What do you think are the reasons for being unfocused at work?

When asked why employees are unfocused, the greatest percentage of respondents (74.8%) think technology interrupts one's focus at work.

This is followed by attempts at multitasking (61.0%) and too many disruptions due to an increased work load (49.6%).

These are similar to what was discovered in the human resource professional study in 2012. The difference is the respondents are more likely to select multitasking, disruptions due to increased workload, and physical reasons than were the human resource professionals. The percentage choosing technology interruptions was about the same as with the human resource professionals.

Reasons For Being Unfocused



## Agreement With Myth Of Multitasking

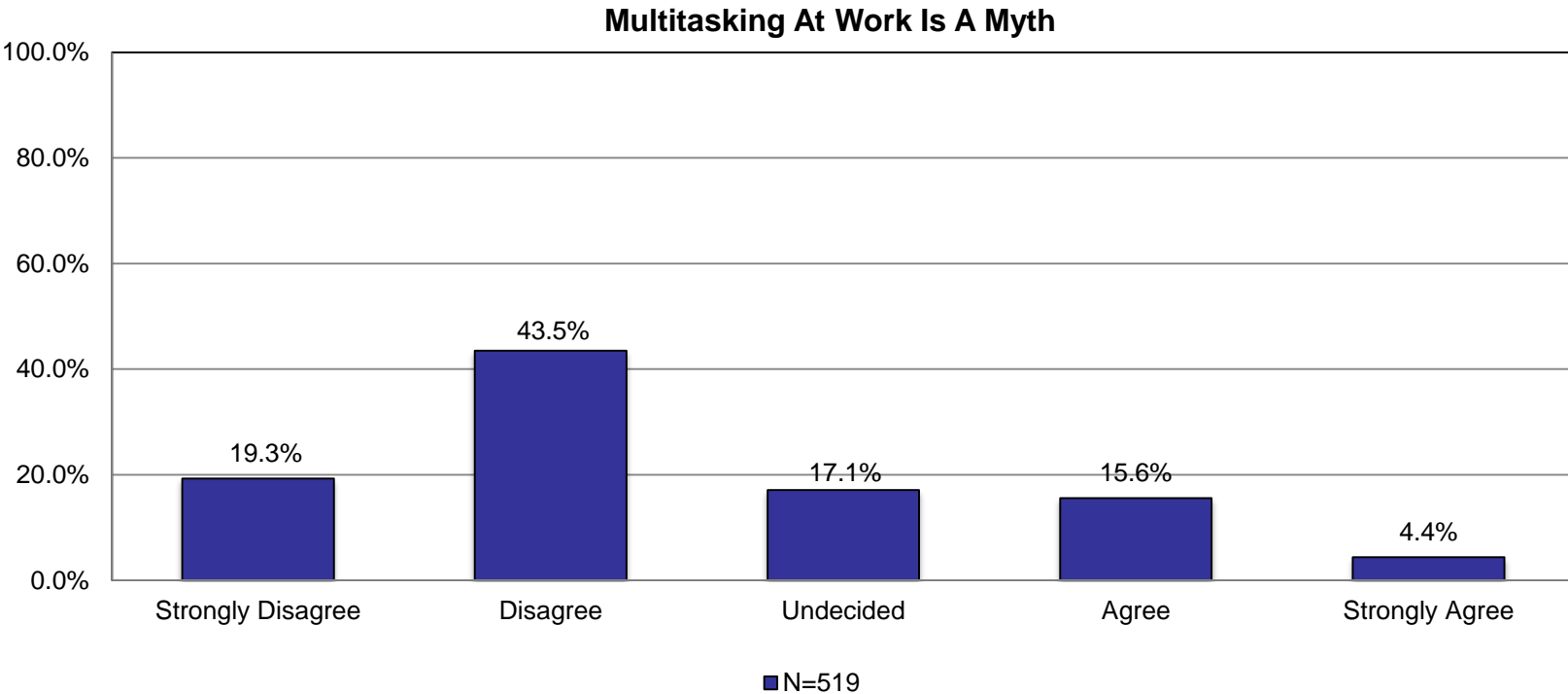
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement. Multitasking at work is a myth. No one can do several things at once competently?

The majority of the respondents (63.8%) disagree with the statement that multitasking at work is a myth.

Only 17.1% are undecided, as indicated by ratings of 3.

This leaves the majority of the respondents agreeing with the statement (20.0%).

Females (2.31) are less likely than males (2.55) to believe multitasking is a myth.



# Professionalism

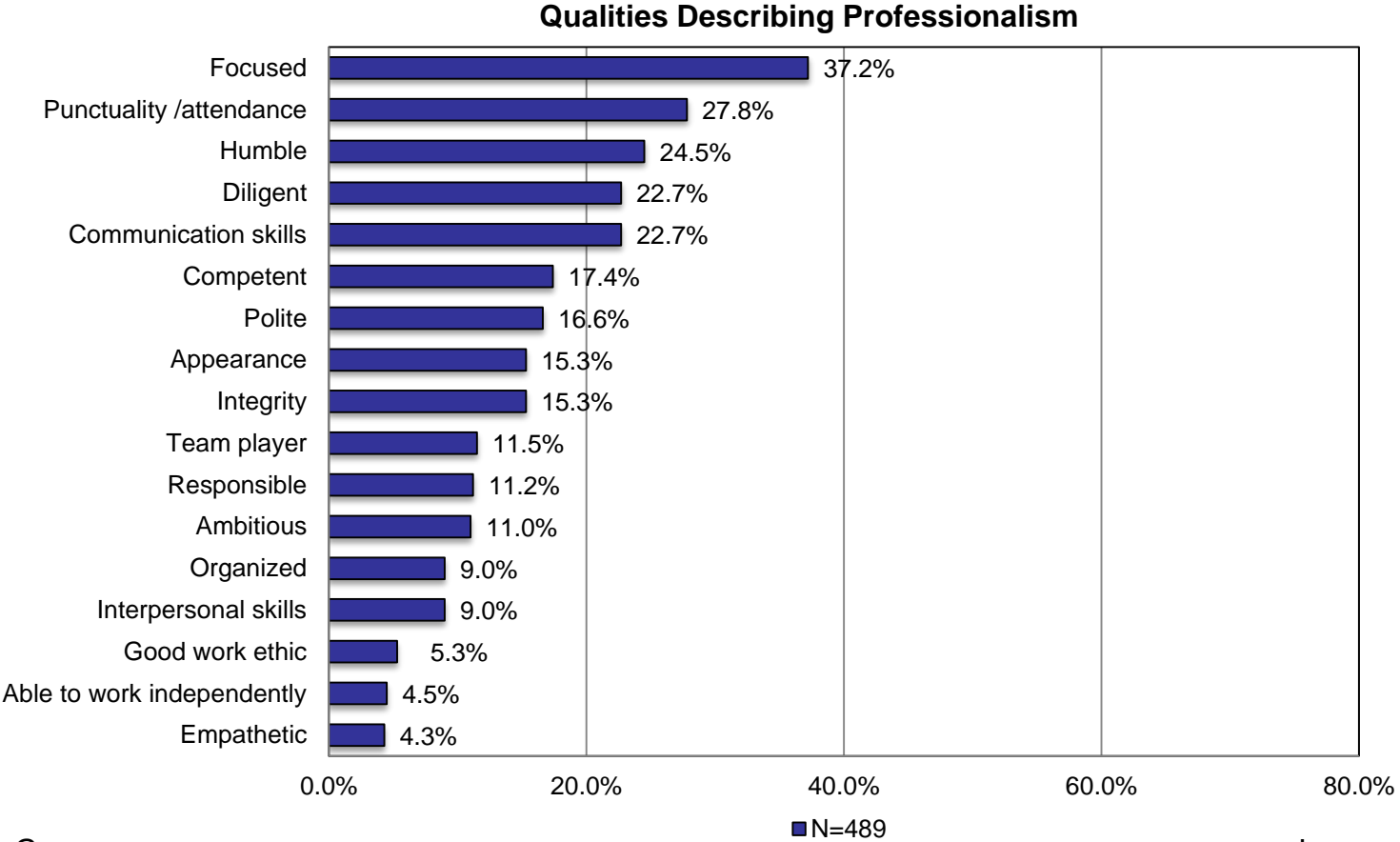
## Qualities of Professionalism

What three qualities or behaviors do you feel best describe a coworker who you consider to be professional?

When naming three qualities associated with a coworker being professional, being focused (37.2%) was the quality named most often. This may be influenced by questions on unfocused employees preceding this question.

Behind this quality were being punctual (27.8%), humble (24.5%), diligent (22.7%), and having communication skills (22.7%).

The graph contains all qualities mentioned by 20 or more respondents.



## Qualities of Unprofessionalism

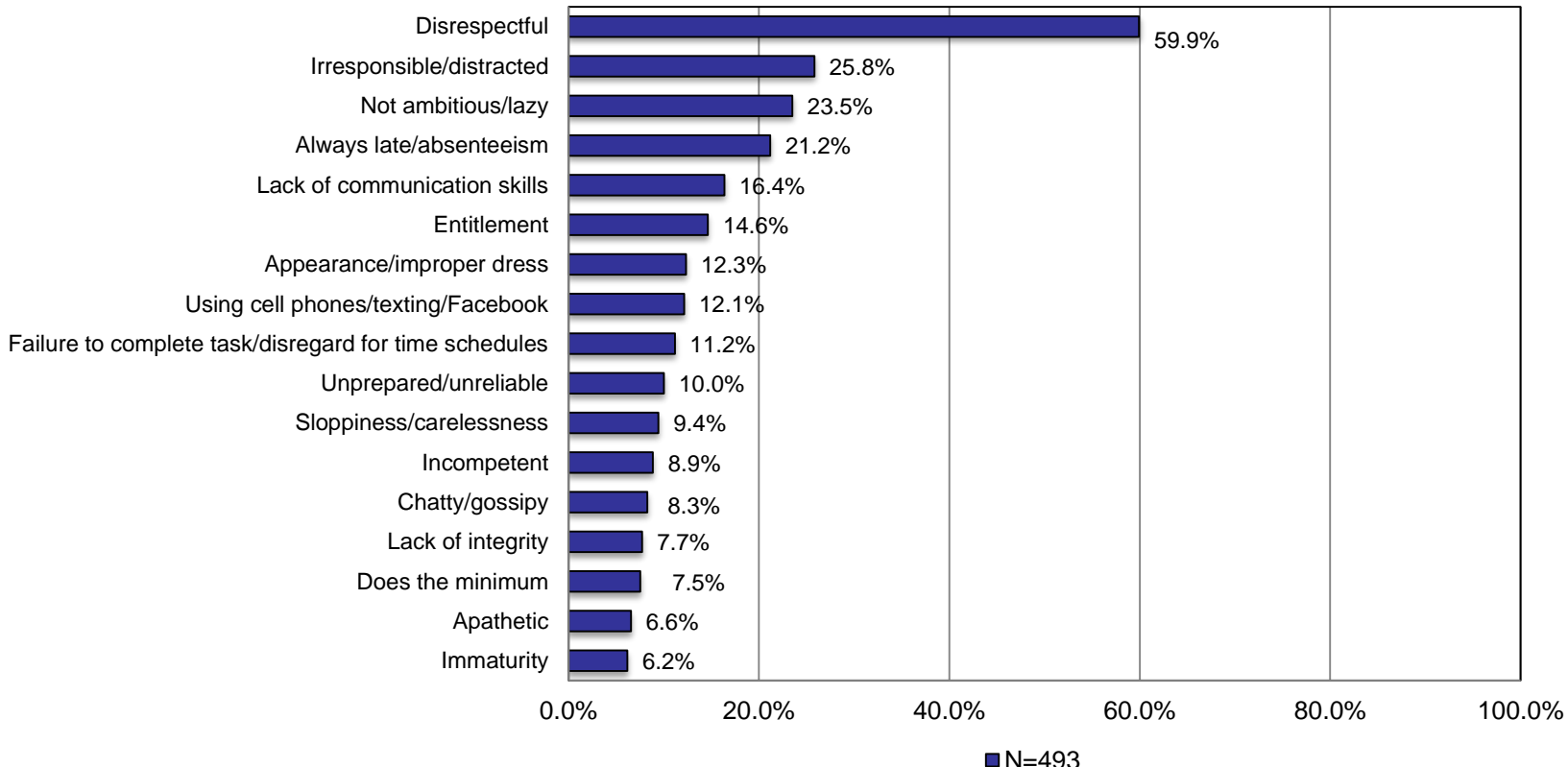
What three qualities or behaviors do you feel best describe a coworker who you consider to be unprofessional?

Respondents also named three qualities they feel describe an unprofessional coworker.

Clearly, at the top, is being disrespectful (59.9%). This is followed by being irresponsible (25.8%), not ambitious (23.5%), and being late or absent (21.2%).

Similar to professionalism, the graph contains all qualities mentioned by 20 or more respondents.

### Qualities Describing Unprofessionalism



## Definitions of Professionalism

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

To gain insight into how flexible the definition of professionalism should be, respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with three statements related to changing definitions of professionalism.

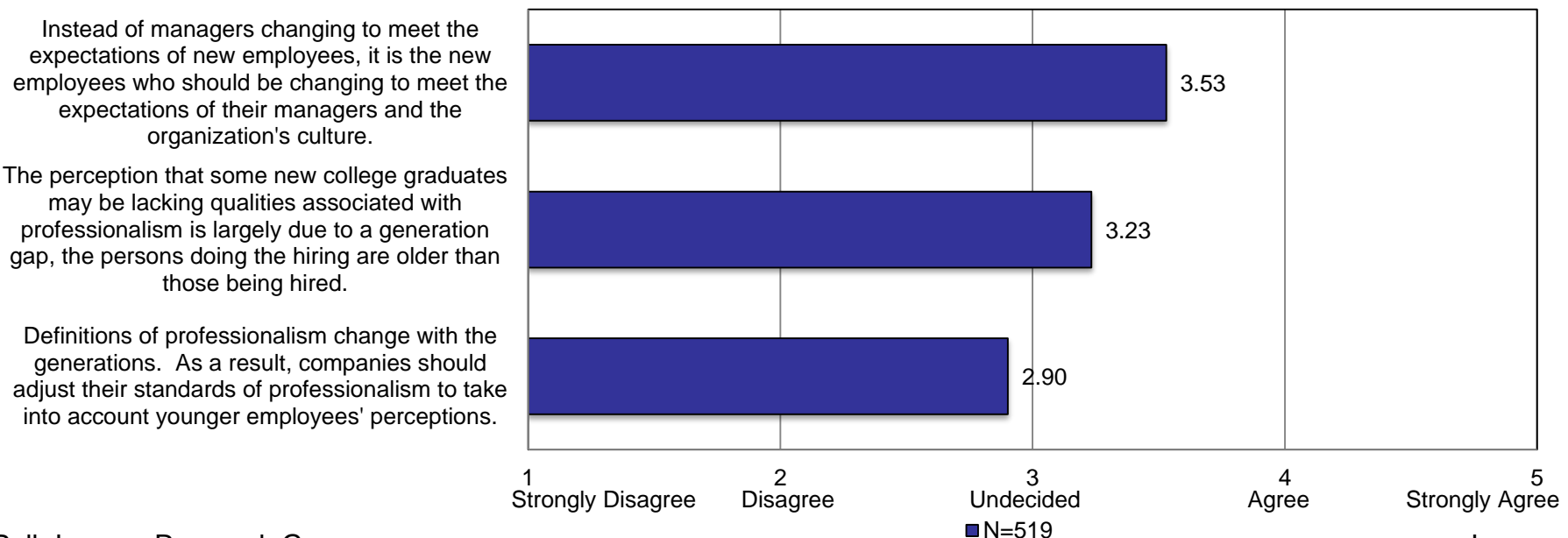
The statement receiving the greatest support was that new employees should be changing to meet the expectations of their manager's and the organization's culture, having a mean rating of 3.53.

Respondents were not as definite in their reactions to the other two statements. They did somewhat agree that the perception of a lack of professionalism could be partially the result of a generation gap (3.23).

They are largely undecided if companies should adjust their standards of professionalism to take younger employees' perceptions into account (2.90).

Females (2.87) are less likely than males (3.00) to believe that new employees should change to meet the organization's culture. They (3.65) are also more likely than males (3.43) to feel complaints about professionalism are due to a generation gap.

### Changing Definitions of Professionalism



# **Appearance/Dress Code**



## Appearance Having a Negative Impact

Which of these factors, if any, related to appearance do you feel should have a negative impact on someone being hired?

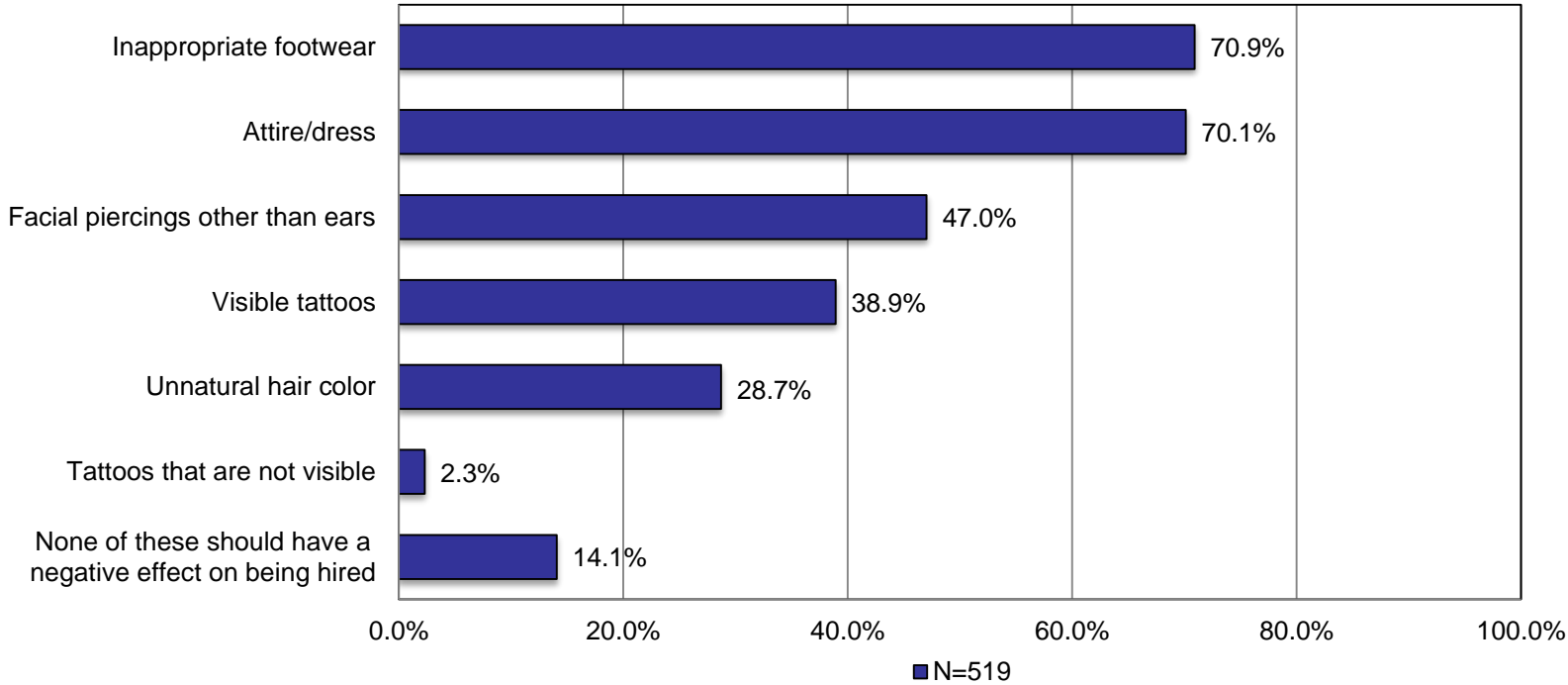
Presented with a list of possible reasons for not hiring someone, respondents most often indicated that inappropriate footwear (70.9%) and attire (70.1%) are factors that should have a negative impact on someone being hired.

Having tattoos that are not visible (2.3%) is named least often.

It should be noted that 14.1% feel none of these should have a negative impact.

Comparing these findings with those from human resource professionals reveals that these younger employees are less likely than human resource professionals to believe these features should have a negative impact, with two exceptions. The exceptions are footwear and attire. On these, employees and human resource professionals agree.

**Negative Impacts on Being Hired**



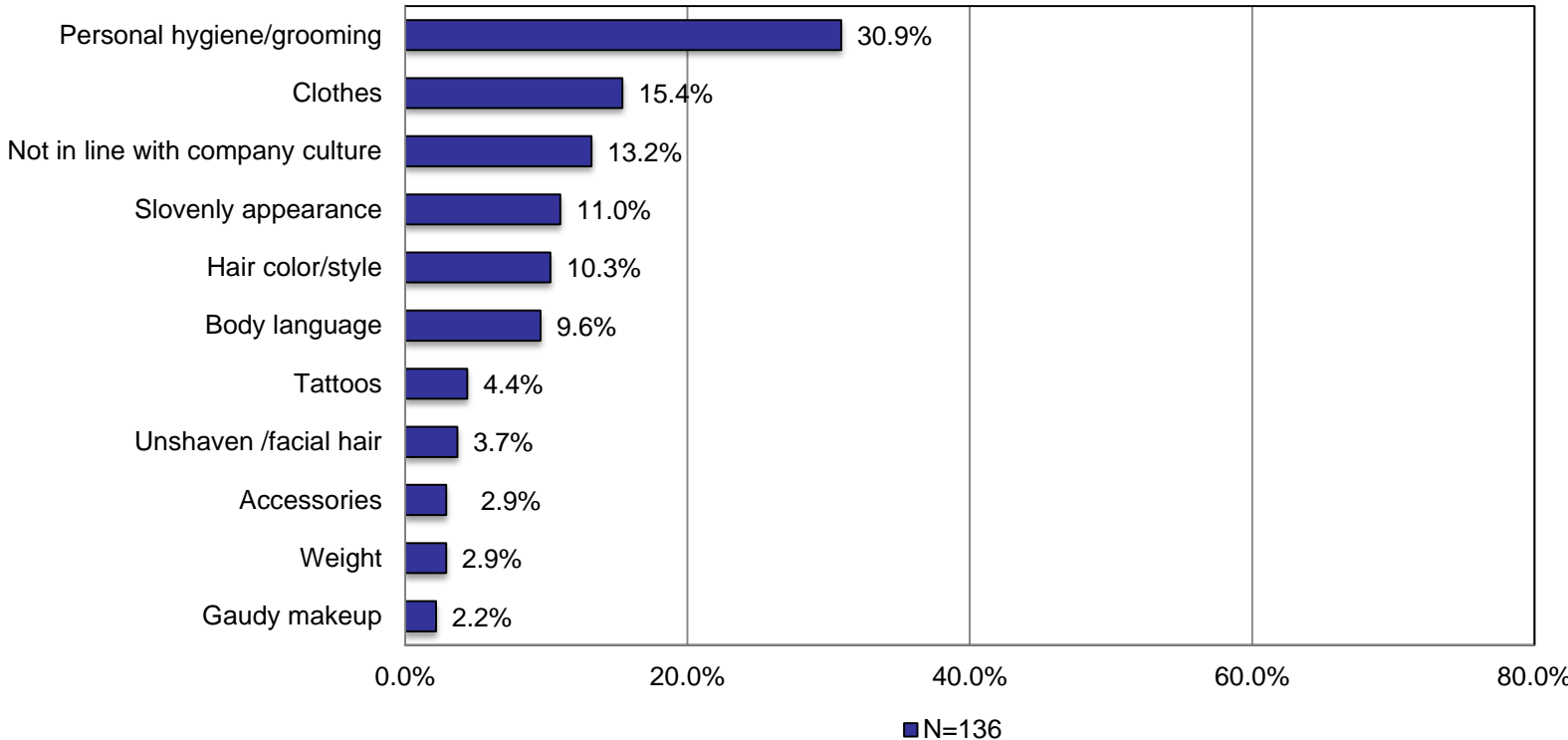
## Appearance Factors With Negative Effect on Being Hired

Please describe any other factors related to appearance that should have a negative impact on someone being hired.

Respondents were able to name other factors that they feel should have a negative impact on being hired. A total of 136 did offer additional ideas.

The most common other reason that could have a negative impact is the candidate's personal hygiene and grooming (30.9%).

Other Factors With Negative Impact on Being Hired



## Impact of Attire/Appearance on Competency

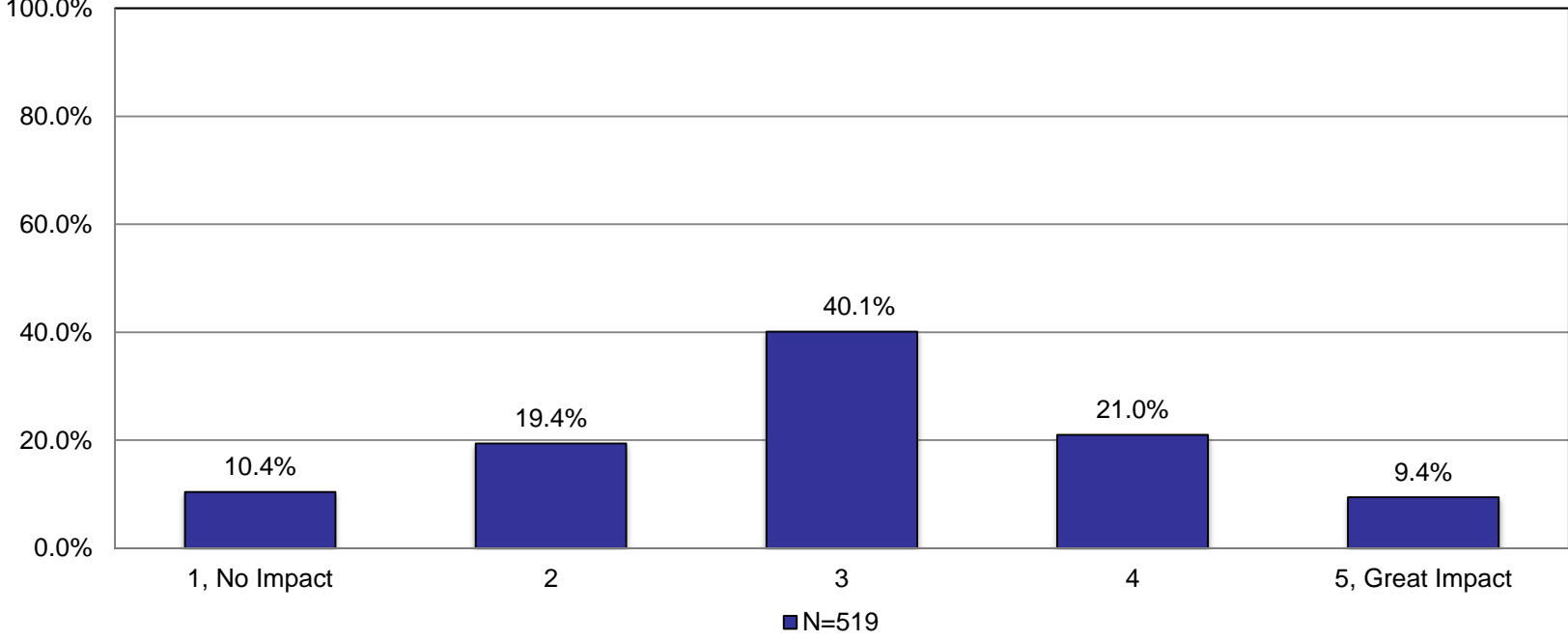
What impact do you feel attire or appearance should have on the perception of an employee's ability to perform their job requirements competently?

It is interesting how reactions to attire and appearance having an impact on the perception of one's ability to perform competently on the job is a bell shaped curve.

Looking at the data for human resource professionals, they are more likely than employees to feel attire and appearance can affect the image of one's abilities.

Those who give the greatest impact to attire and appearance are: 20 to 22, education majors, and those planning on being in their current positions for more than 4 years.

Impact of Attire/Appearance on Competency



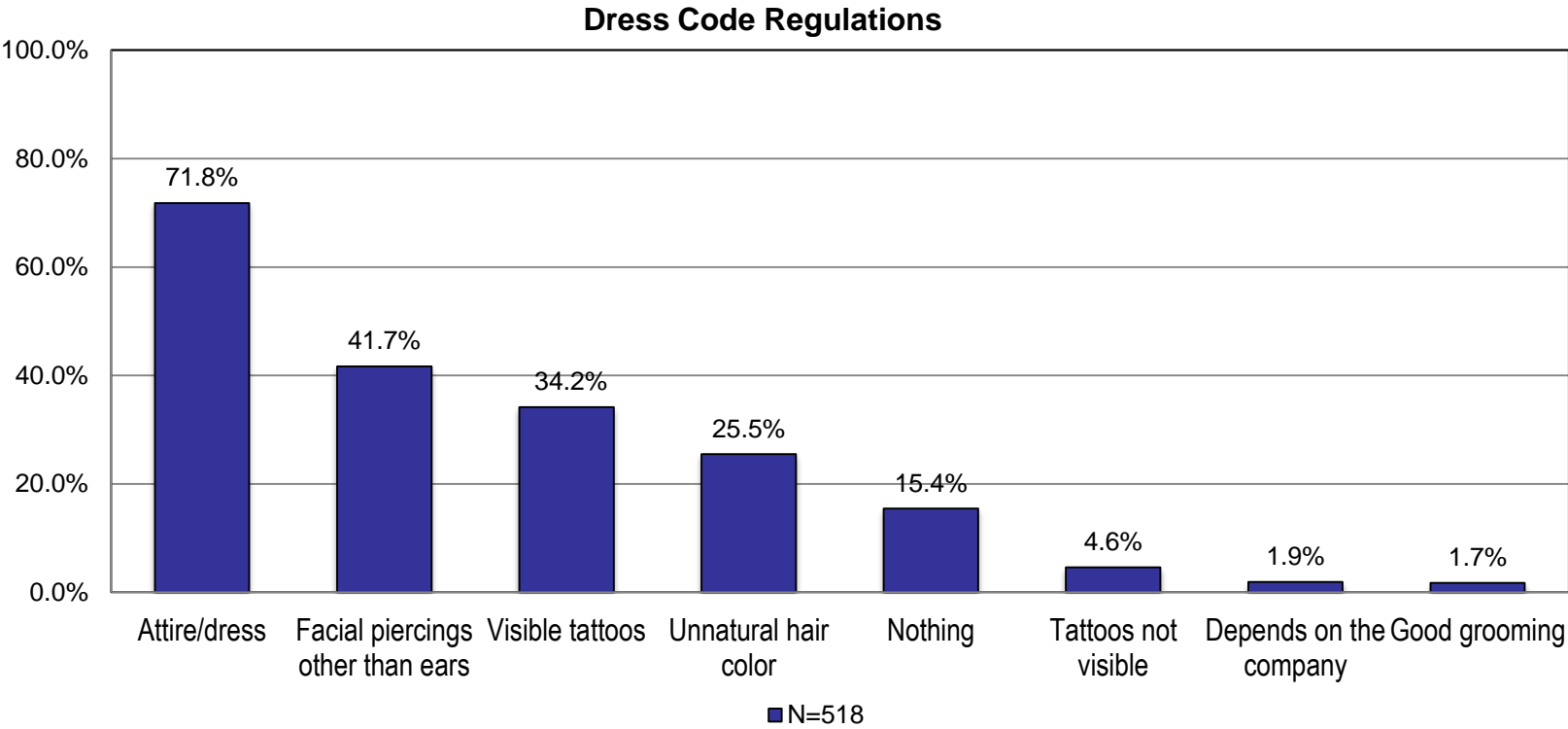
## Dress Code

Do you think companies should have dress codes? To what do you think a dress code should apply?

A total of 62.4% of the respondents feel companies should have dress codes. The remaining respondents were divided between believing they should not (18.7%) and being uncertain (18.9%). 60.0 percent of recent graduates feel that companies should have a dress code.

Attire/dress (71.8%) was the feature the greatest percentage of respondents felt should be regulated.

A total of 15.4% believe that nothing should be subject to a dress code.



## Company's Dress Code

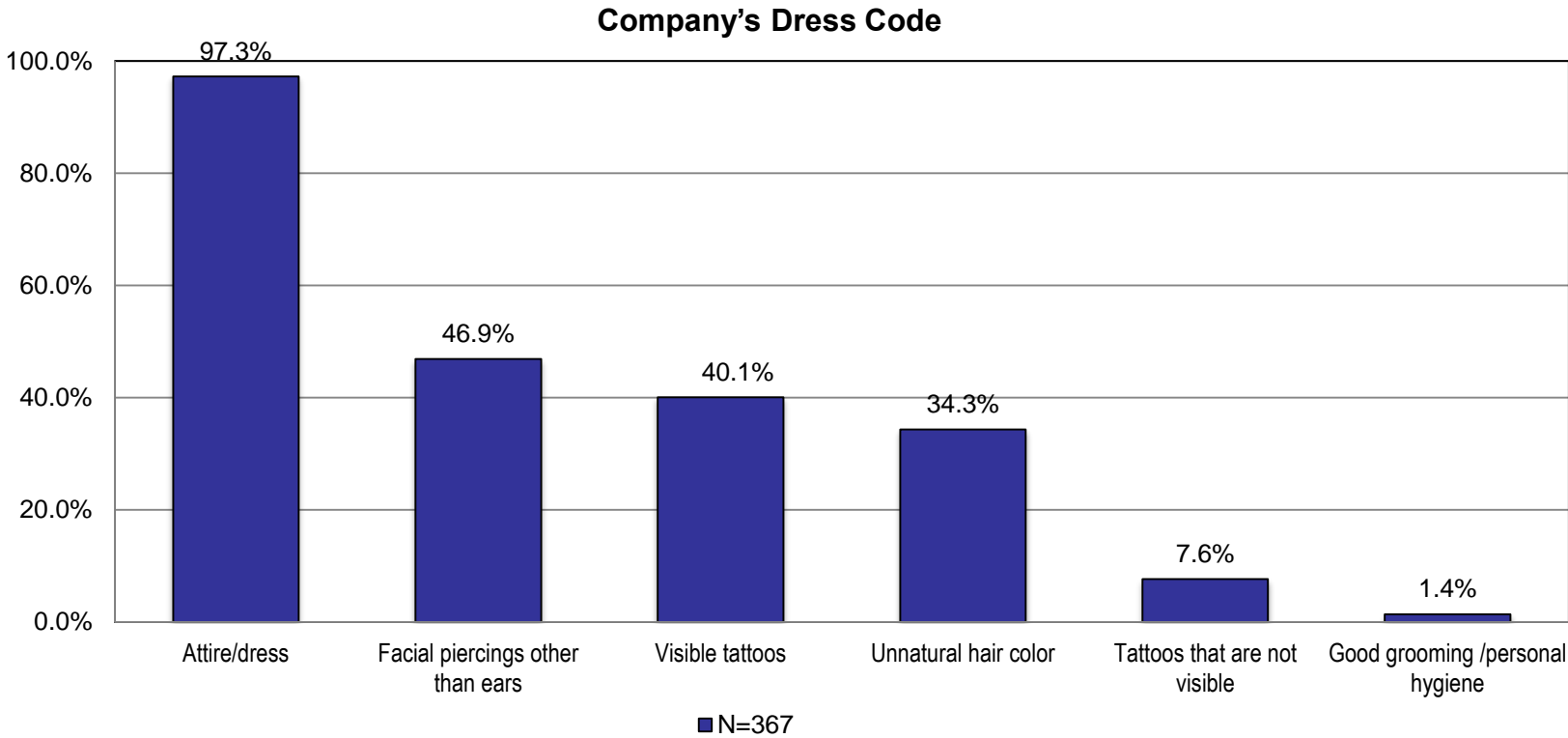
Does your company have a dress code?  
To what does the dress code apply?

A total of 71.1% of the respondents indicate their company has a dress code.

Nearly all (97.3%) with a dress code indicate that it applies to attire and dress.

Fewer report it applies to facial piercings other than ears (46.9%), visible tattoos (40.1%), or unnatural hair color (34.3%).

These findings are similar to what has been found in a survey of human resource professionals.



## Considered Tattoo Removal

Do you have a tattoo?

Has your employer requested that you cover it while performing your job?

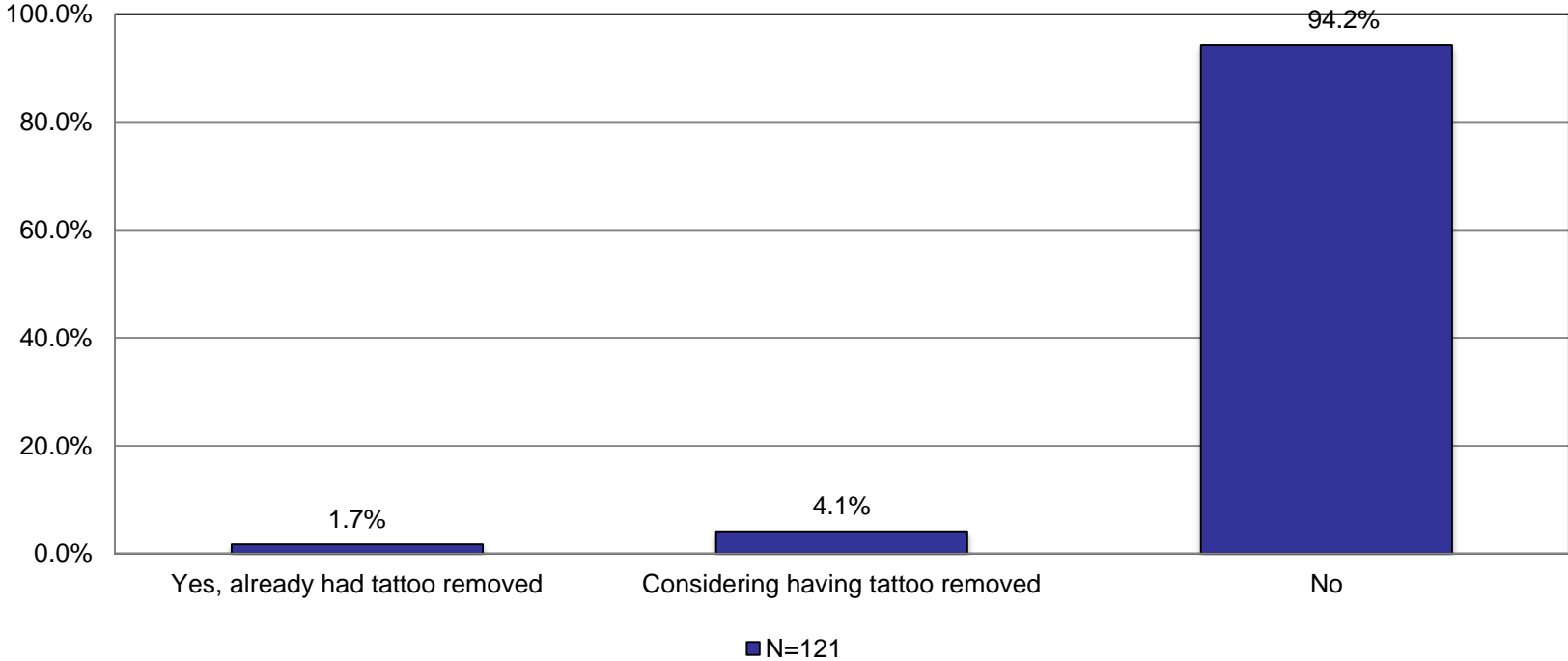
Have you ever considered getting a tattoo removed?

About a fourth of the respondents (23.3%) have a tattoo.

Of these, 14 (11.6%) have had employers request that they cover it while performing their job.

Of the 121 with tattoos, two (1.7%) already had some removed. These two did so because they regretted getting them. Another five respondents (4.1%) are considering having them removed.

Considered Tattoo Removal



# **Attitudes**

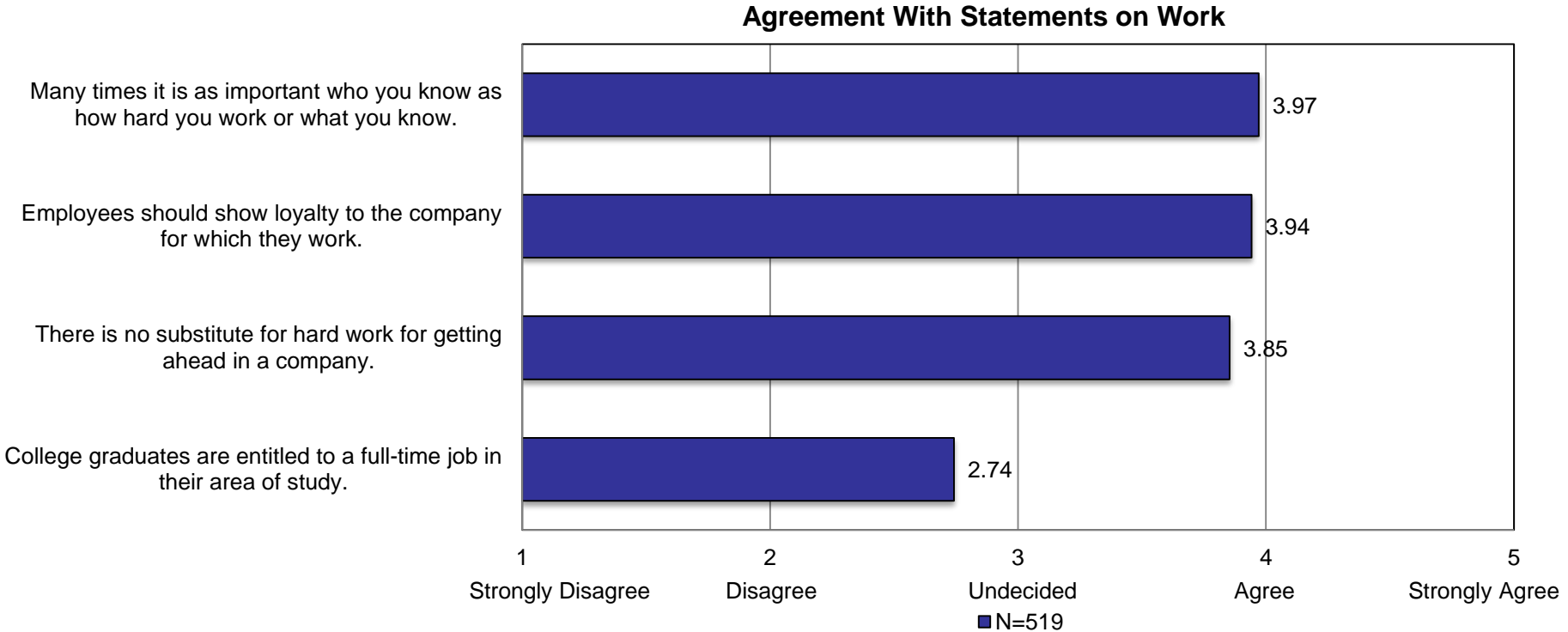
## Attitudes Toward Work

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Respondents indicated the extent to which they agree on statements about work. There is agreement with three of the four statements.

Most agree that who one knows can be as important as how hard you work or what you know (3.97). They also agree that loyalty to a company is right (3.94) and hard work can get one ahead in a company (3.85).

They tend to disagree that college graduates are entitled to a full-time job in their field of study (2.74).





## Attitudes Toward Work (continued)

Statistical analysis discovered some differences involving demographics and responses to these statements. These differences are described below.

### Loyalty to the Company

Females (4.08) are more likely than males (3.80) to believe employees should show loyalty to their company.

Technology (3.70) and business (3.75) majors were the least likely to feel one should show loyalty to their company. All other majors had mean ratings of 4.00 or higher.

### Hard Work Pays Off

The 20 to 22 year olds (4.19) are more likely than the 23 to 24 (3.77) or 25 to 28 (3.85) year olds to believe hard work pays off.

### Graduates Entitled to Jobs

Females (2.84) are more likely than males (2.64) to agree that college graduates are entitled to a full-time job.

Those with graduate degrees (3.05) are also more likely than others (2.69) to feel entitled.

Workers for less than 1 year (2.96) and 1 to 2 years (2.89) are more likely than those who have worked longer (2.58) to feel graduates are entitled to a job.

# **Background Information**

### Employer(s) Requested Transcripts

More than a third of the respondents (35.8%) have had employers request a copy of their undergraduate transcript.

Requested Transcripts	
No	64.2%
Yes	35.8%
	N=519

### Type of College/University

The largest percentage (36.2%) attended a public 4 year undergraduate and graduate school.

Type of College/University	
Public 4 year undergraduate/graduate programs	36.2%
Public 4 year undergraduate only	27.7%
Private 4 year undergraduate/graduate programs	20.2%
Private 4 year graduate only	15.8%
	N=519

### Major

Most respondents were social science (34.0%), natural science (28.8%), or business (23.6%) majors.

Major	
Social sciences	34.0%
Natural sciences	28.8%
Business	23.6%
Technology	6.7%
Arts	3.5%
Education	3.5%
	N=403

## Years Since Graduation

Most have been out of school for 3 to 5 (49.7%) or 1 to 2 (33.15) years.

Years Since Graduated	
Less than 1 year ago	15.0%
1-2 years ago	33.1%
3-5 years ago	49.7%
More than 5 years ago	2.1%
	N=519

## Industry

A wide variety of industries are represented in the sample.

Industry	
Medical/healthcare	15.7%
Education	13.7%
Services	11.4%
Professional services	11.0%
Financial/banking	8.9%
Information technology	8.9%
Government	8.9%
Manufacturing	5.4%
Leisure & hospitality	5.2%
Retail	4.3%
Construction	3.5%
Non-profit	1.7%
Wholesale	1.4%
	N=517

**Years Expected To Stay In Current Position**

There is an expectation of changing positions within a relatively short time frame. A total of 73.2% expect to be promoted or to have moved to another position within 3 years.

Years Expect To Stay	
Less than 1	26.6%
2-3 years	46.6%
4 or more	12.1%
Don't know	14.6%
	N=519

**Age**

Most of the respondents (64.7%) are between 25 and 26 years old.

Age	
20-22	7.1%
23-24	27.2%
25-26	64.7%
27-28	1.0%
	N=519

**Gender** The mix of gender is similar to what is found in the United States.

Gender	
Female	51.1%
Male	48.9%
	N=499

**Education** Most of the respondents (85.9%) have undergraduate degrees only.

Education	
Undergraduate	85.9%
Graduate	14.1%
	N=519

# Appendix