



Broad Solutions to Smartphone Addiction

A Survey of High School Teachers

Michael Mercier

Screen Education



Survey Overview

Background

1. Americans have been concerned about smartphone addiction since the news media began reporting on it in 2017.

2. Screen Education's prior research has found it has a deleterious effect on the school environment.

3. Young people are frustrated by their smartphone addiction, and wish they could control it.

4. Unfortunately, very little has been done to address the problem.

5. We wondered whether high school teachers were sufficiently fed up with their students' smartphone addiction that they were hungry for bold, broad-based solutions.

Primary Objective



To get reaction to a set of bold, broad solutions to smartphone addiction from high school teachers.

Secondary Objectives

1. To determine the extent to which high school teachers believe smartphone addiction among their students is a problem.

2. To understand high school teachers' views of the negative consequences of smartphone addiction among their students.

3. To understand high school teachers' level of concern about smartphone addiction among their students.

4. To understand the degree to which teachers believe students desire assistance in addressing their smartphone addiction.

Research Team

Research Organizations



Research Team Members

Rahul Bhatnager, Director – Platform Solutions, *Innovate MR*

Glenn Stark, Statistician

Sheetal Gupta, Associate Project Manager – Client Services, *Innovate MR*

Molly Strawn, Senior Marketing Strategist, *Innovate MR*

Michael Mercier, President, *Screen Education*

Lisa Wilding-Brown, Chief Executive Officer, *Innovate MR*

Brittany Nicols, VP, Marketing & Communications, *Innovate MR*

Research Process

Recruitment



We recruited participants using
InnovateMR's Vision Suite™.

Participant Qualifications

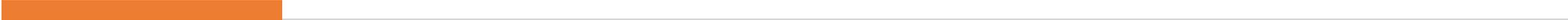
- At least 24 years old
- Employed full-time
- Work in education
- Work as a teacher
- Teaching 2 or more years
- Teach students in grades 9-12

Online Survey



Respondents completed an online survey that was programmed and fielded using Innovate MR's Vision Surveys Panel.

Sample Size

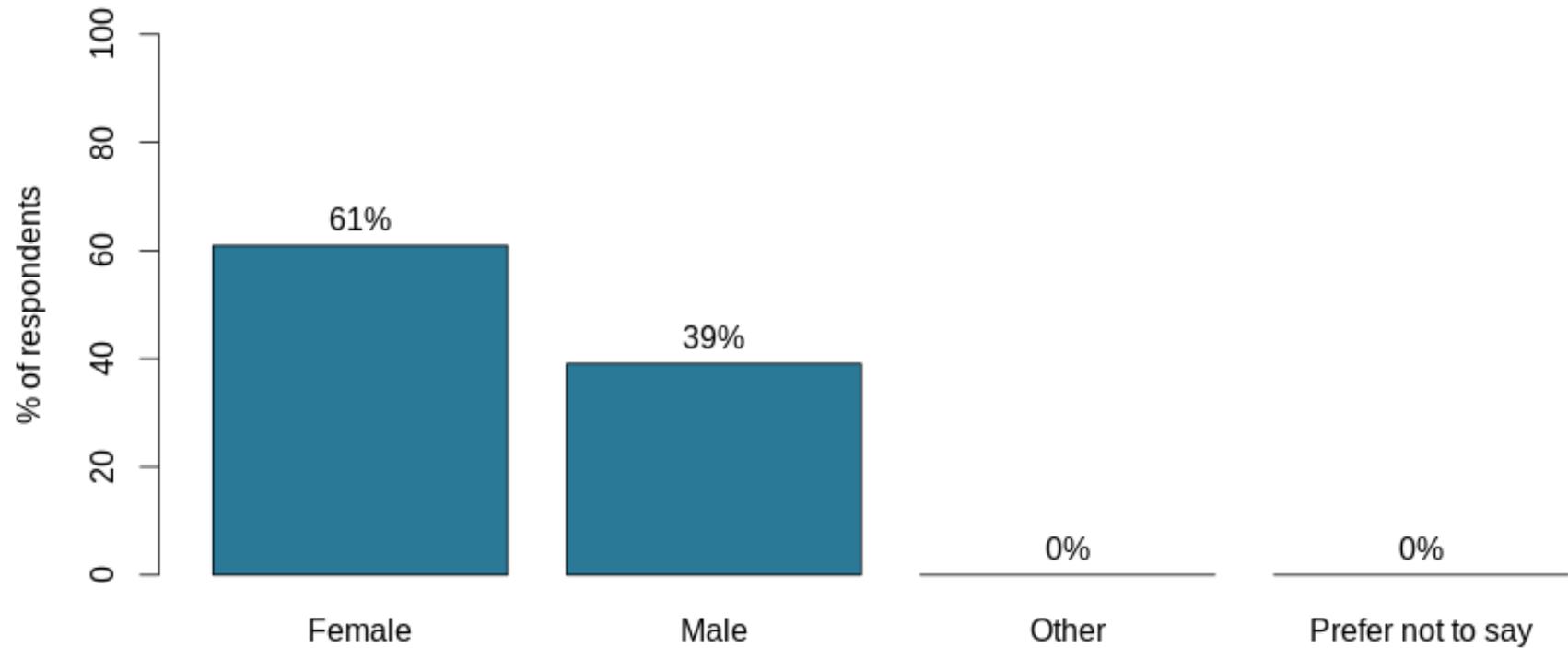


Completed surveys: 353

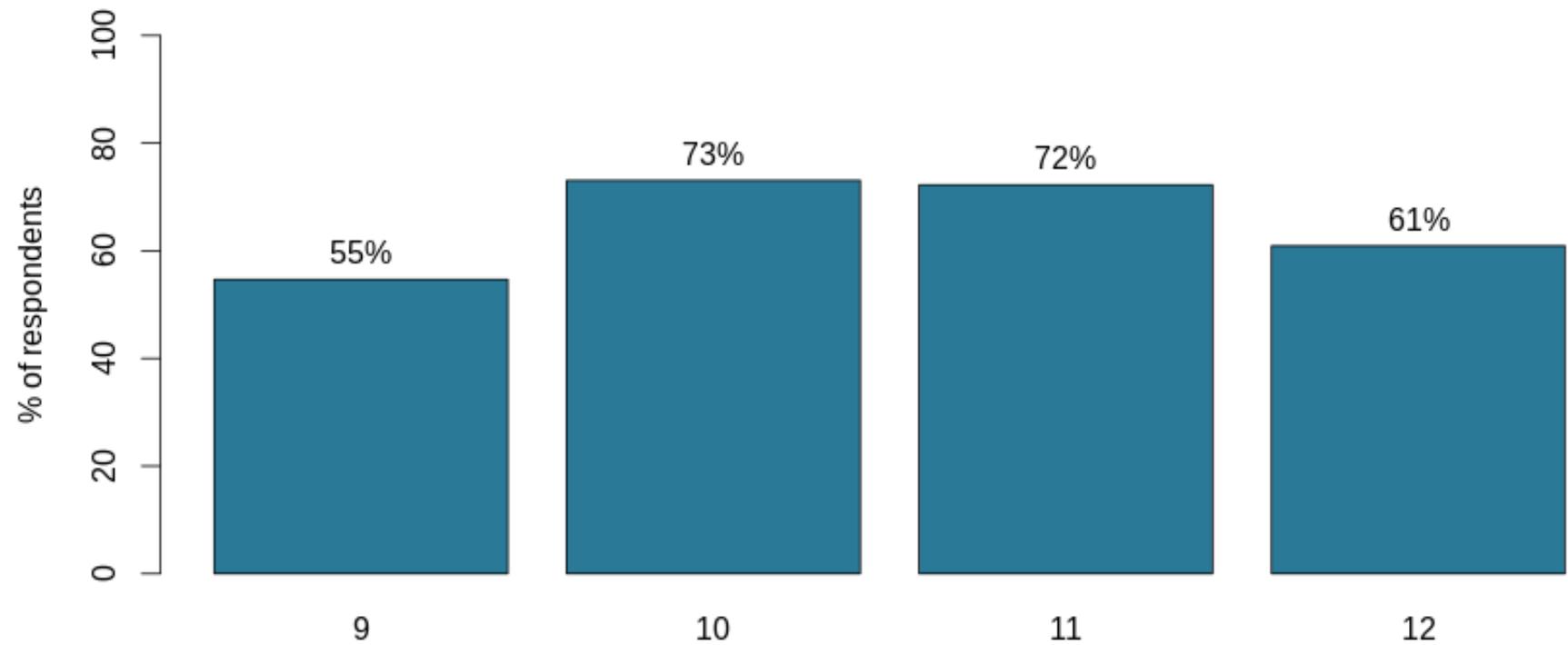
Margin of error: 5%

Respondent Demographics

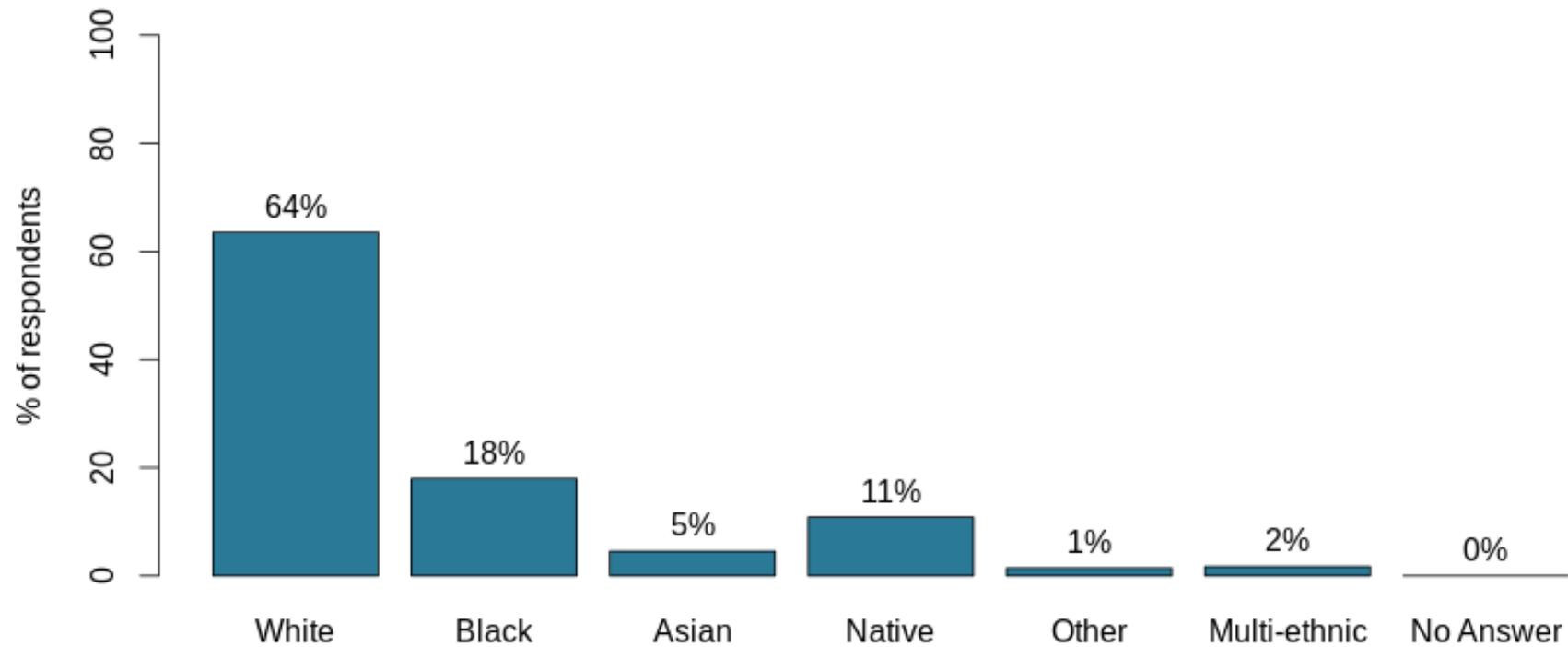
Gender



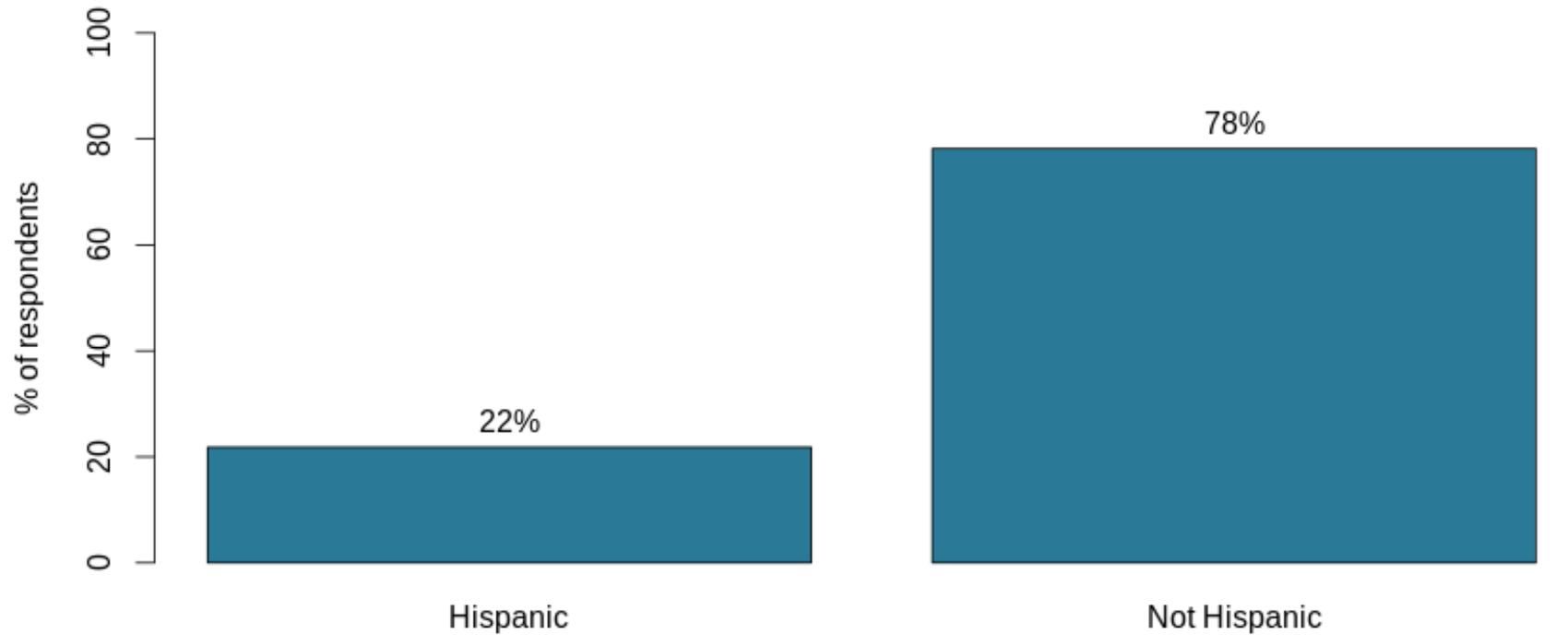
Grades Taught



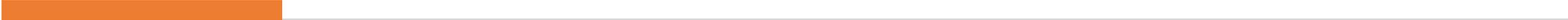
Race



Ethnicity



How widespread is smartphone addiction?



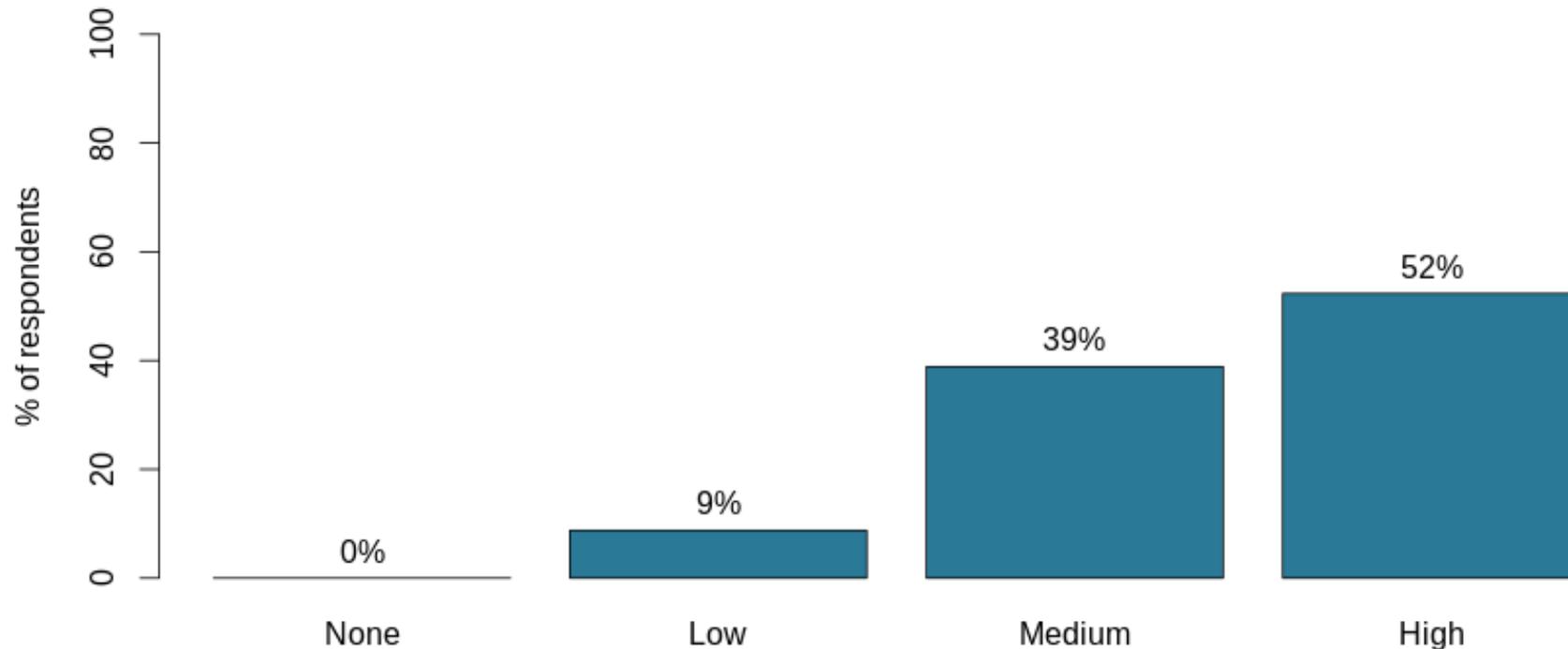
Respondents estimate **63%** of the students they teach are addicted to their smartphones



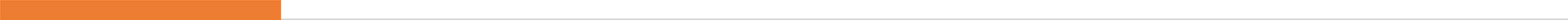
Respondents estimate **61%** of the students they teach have some trouble controlling, regulating, or self-limiting the amount of time they spend using their smartphones each day

Level of Concern

Which of the following statements best represents your level of concern about the excessive use of smartphones among students, and its impact on their lives?

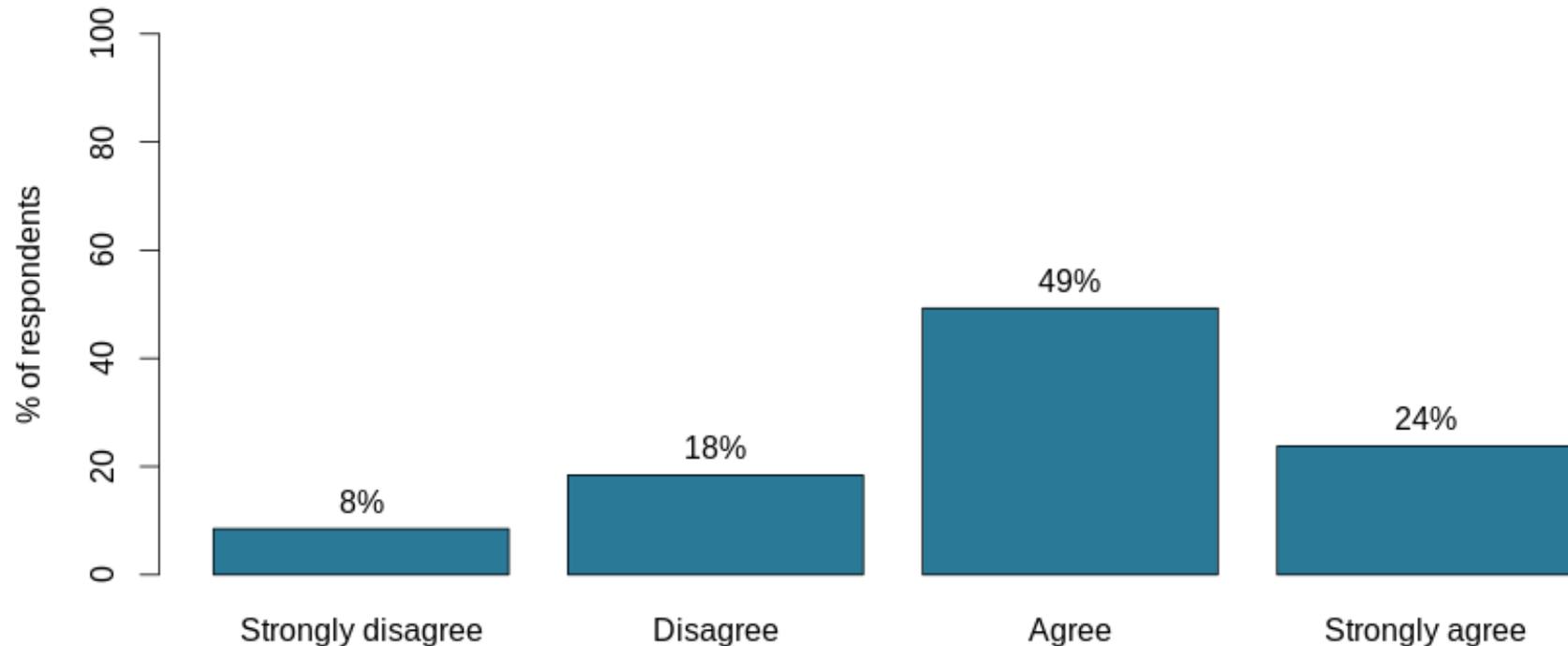


Excessive phone use is causing
problems

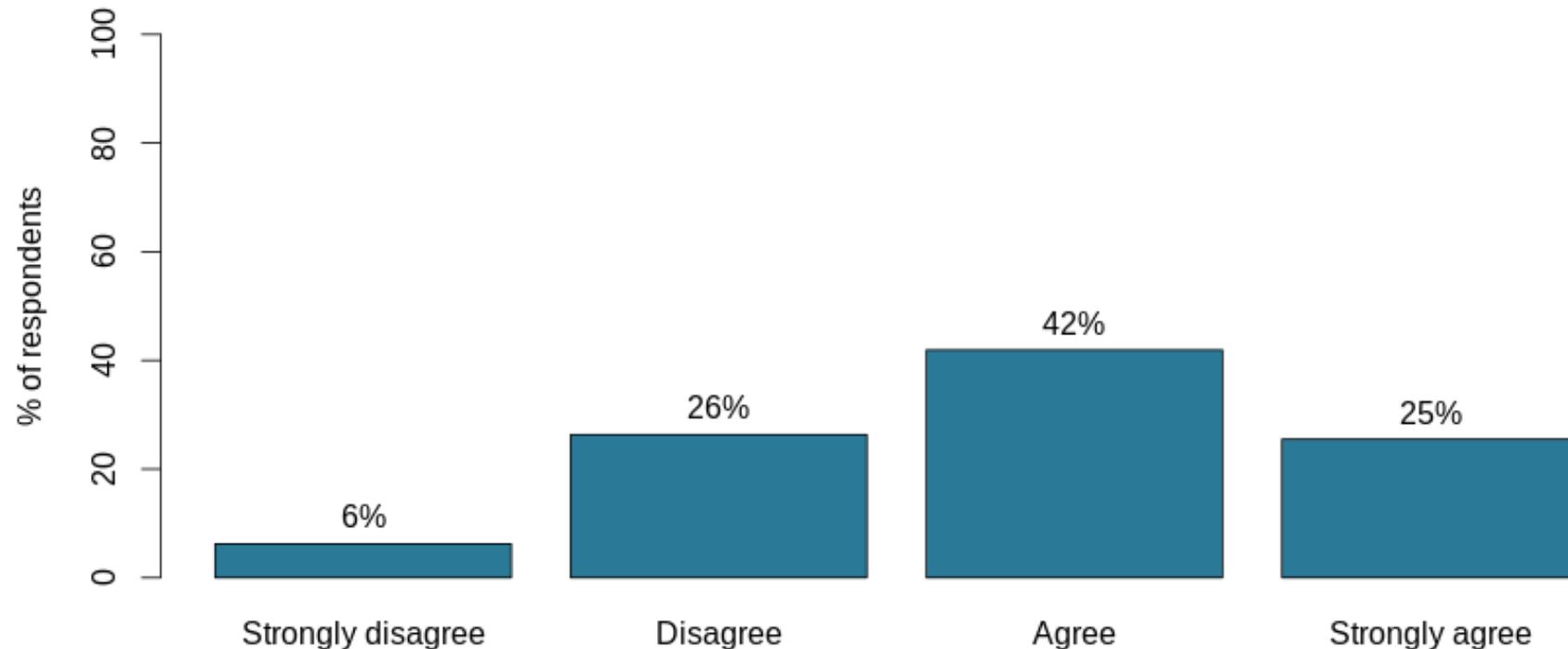


79% of respondents feel that students' excessive smartphone use is an obstacle to their achieving the grades they're capable of achieving

Agree or disagree: Smartphones have provided a social lifeline to kids during the COVID-19 quarantine. However, thinking back to the way things were prior to COVID-19, smartphones were having a harmful social-emotional effect on students.



Agree or disagree: My students' excessive smartphone use impedes my ability to accomplish all that I wish to accomplish with them.



How is your students' excessive smartphone use an impediment?

“Kids are really distracted and it seems like they never care about anything else.”

“As far as children with no self-discipline are concerned, mobile phones are the main culprits leading to their failure to complete tasks.”

“Everyone likes to watch something that has nothing to do with study. It has a great influence.”

“Smartphones have a huge impact on their ability to complete tasks.”

“I never seem to have their full attention. It's easy to tell teachers to just take them, but I have 175 students.”

How is it an impediment?

“When students have time to work, many waste time on their phone instead.”

“Many students text during class or use their phones and pay little attention to the lesson.”

“If I have students put their phones up, they’re upset and anxious. If I let them leave them out, they’re distracted and preoccupied with them.”

“I spend a ton of class time asking students to put the phone away and focus.”

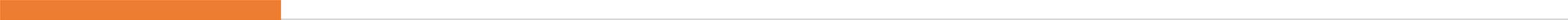
“I spend too much time telling students to put their phones away, or, even worse, the amount of time I spend with a student who refuses to put their phone away. After I call the principal to deal with the situation I’ve lost 10 minutes of instruction time.”

How is it an impediment?

“In class, most will text, visit social media, play games, even watch movies.”

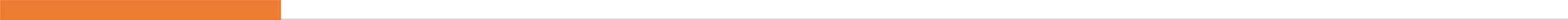
“It creates a distraction that’s almost impossible to combat.”

“There have been severe incidents of bullying with cell phone recordings. This bullying leaks into class time, and it is impossible to keep the attention of children concerned with bullying.”



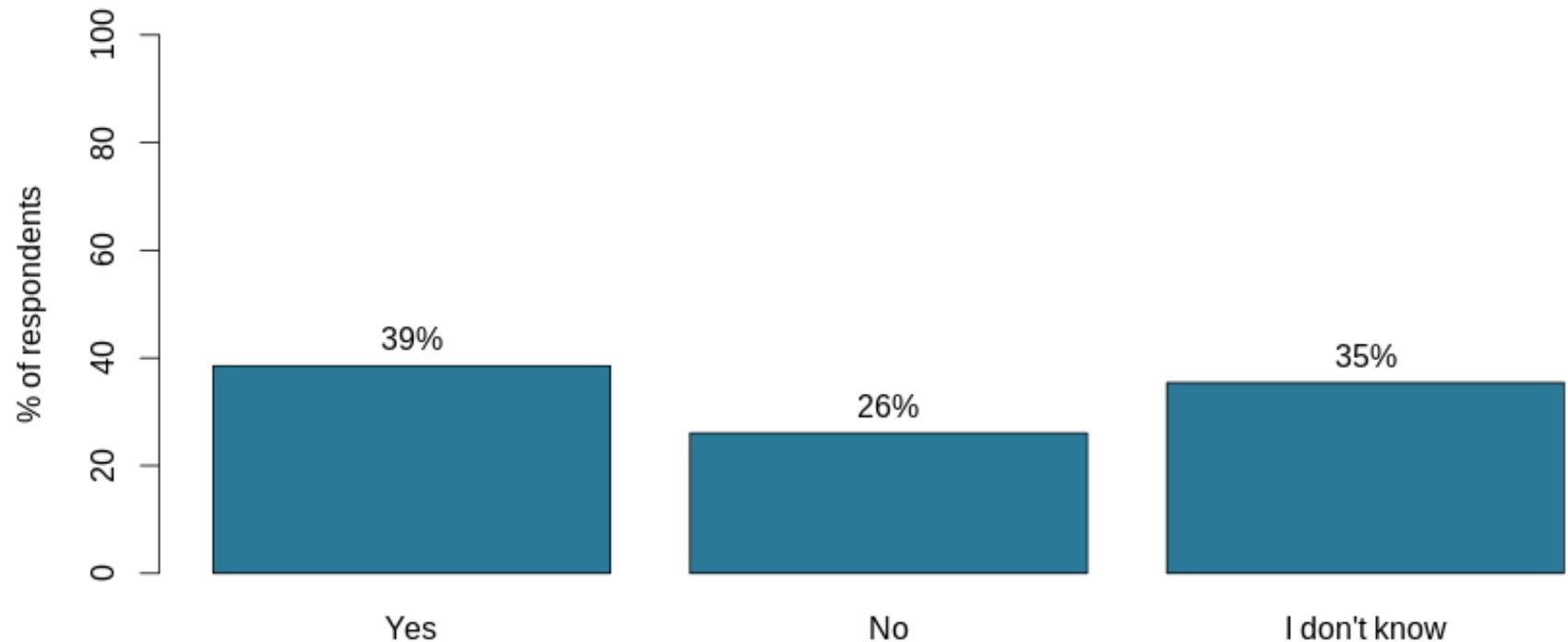
68% believe some students are avoiding participation in some extracurricular activities because they prefer to spend time on their phones instead

Overcoming the Problem



66% of respondents believe students who have trouble controlling their smartphone use wish they were better able to do so

Have any of your students ever tried to limit, control, or reduce their smartphone use on their own initiative?

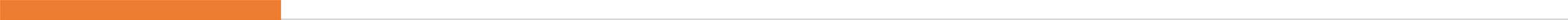




68% of respondents believe students who have trouble controlling their smartphone use would like to be taught how to do so



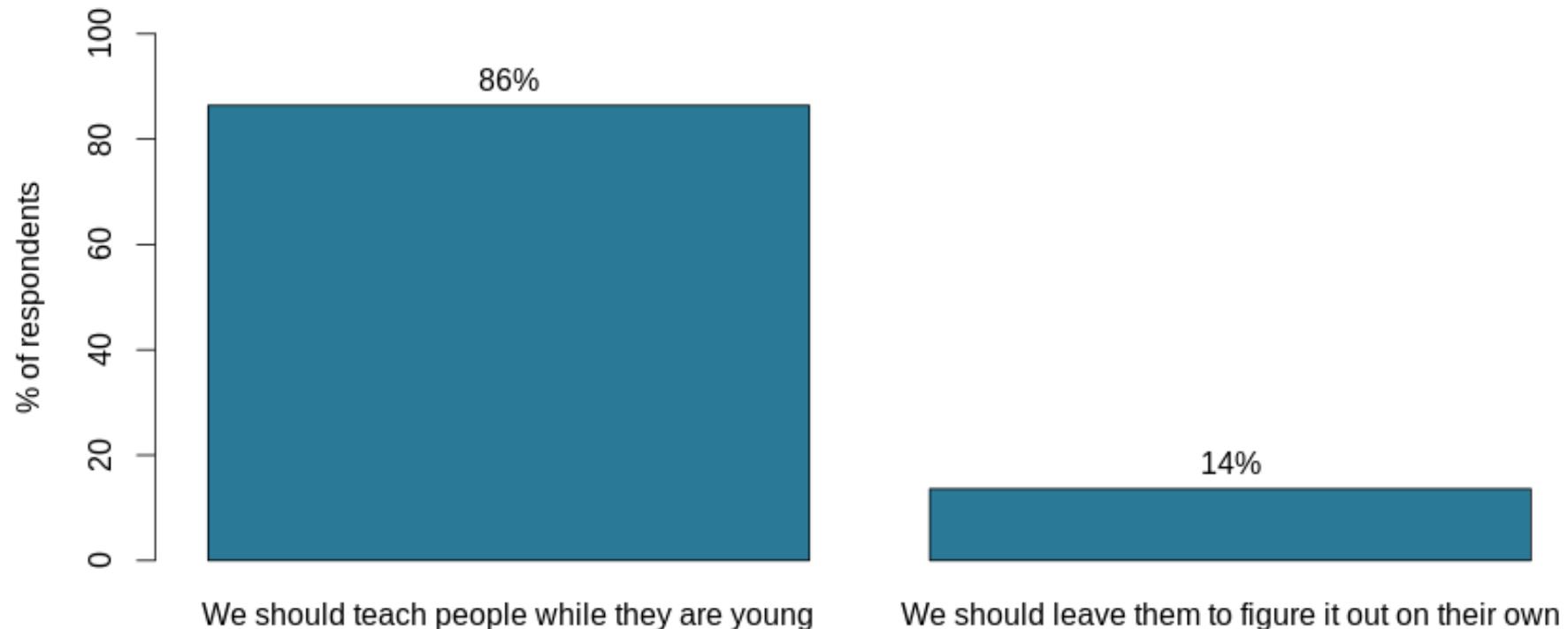
55% of respondents believe students who have trouble controlling their smartphone use wish someone would help them reduce the time they spend using their smartphone by imposing daily time limits on them.



82% of respondents believe students would be better-equipped to succeed in life if they had a greater ability to self-limit their smartphone use.

Should we address the problem?

Do you believe we should begin to teach people while they are young how to self-limit their smartphone use, or, should we leave them to figure out on their own how to self-limit their smartphone use?

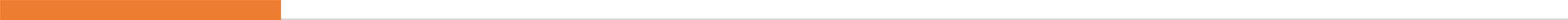


Solutions: School-Driven



66% of respondents say their school has a policy disallowing the use of smartphones during class

those respondents whose school has a policy estimate **57%** of teachers at their school enforce the policy

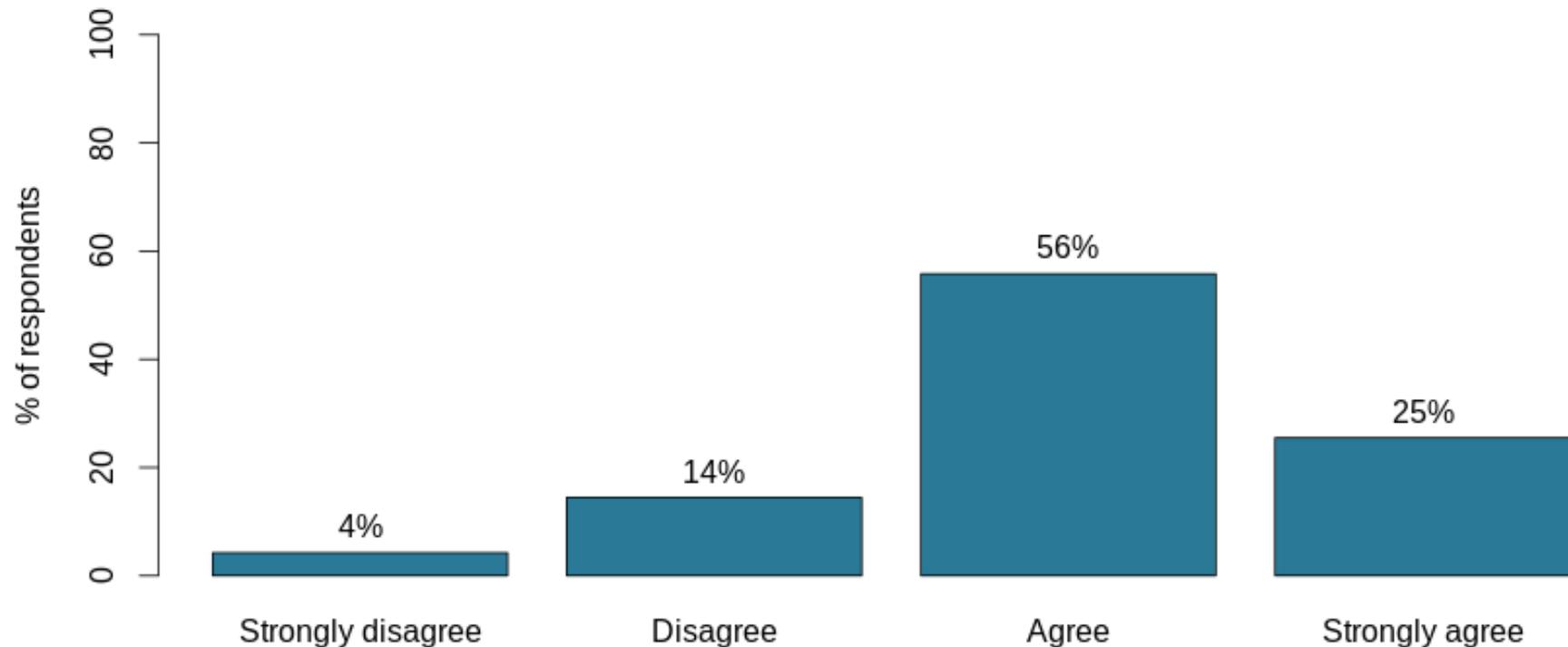


82% of respondents think schools could be effective in helping students develop the ability to self-limit their screen time



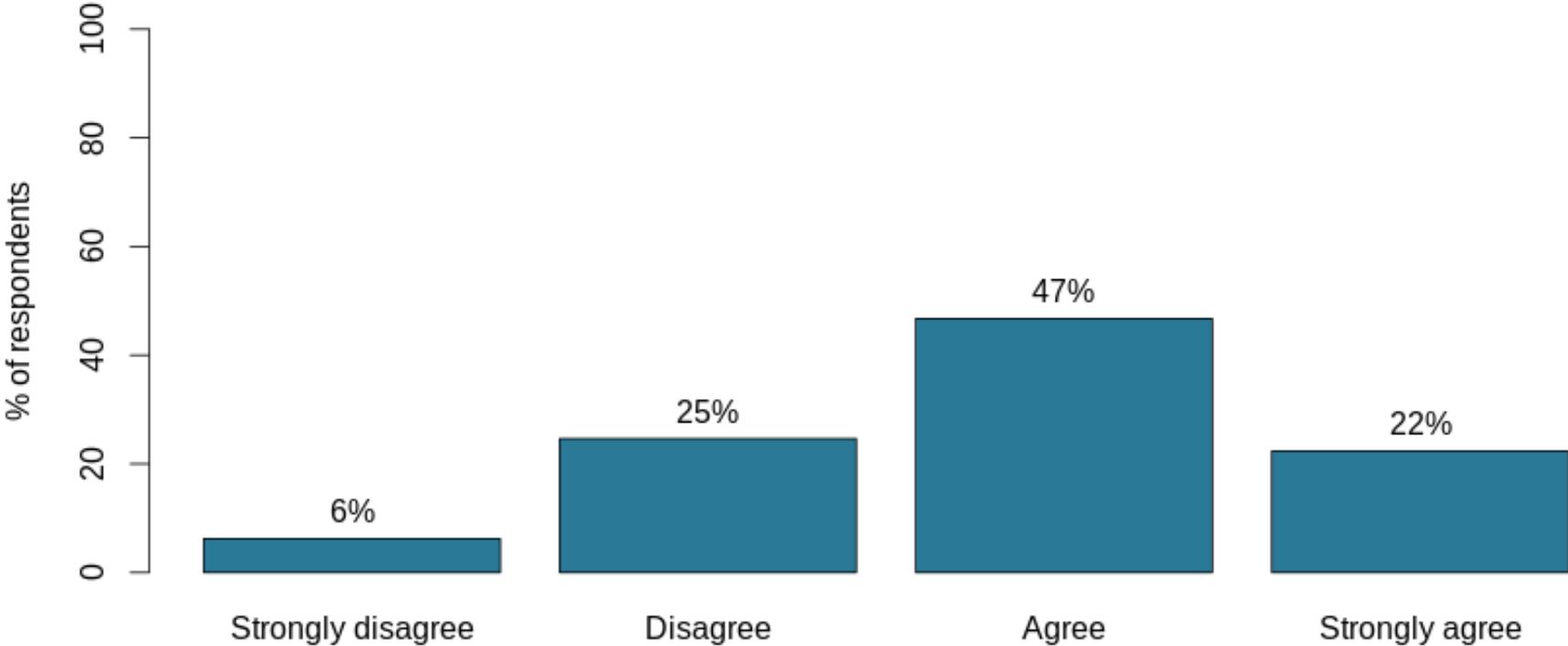
82% of respondents feel schools should play a role in teaching students how to develop the ability to self-limit their screen time

Agree or disagree: School systems should educate students, as they progress through each grade level, about smartphone addiction in order to instill in them, over time, the ability to independently self-limit their screen time.



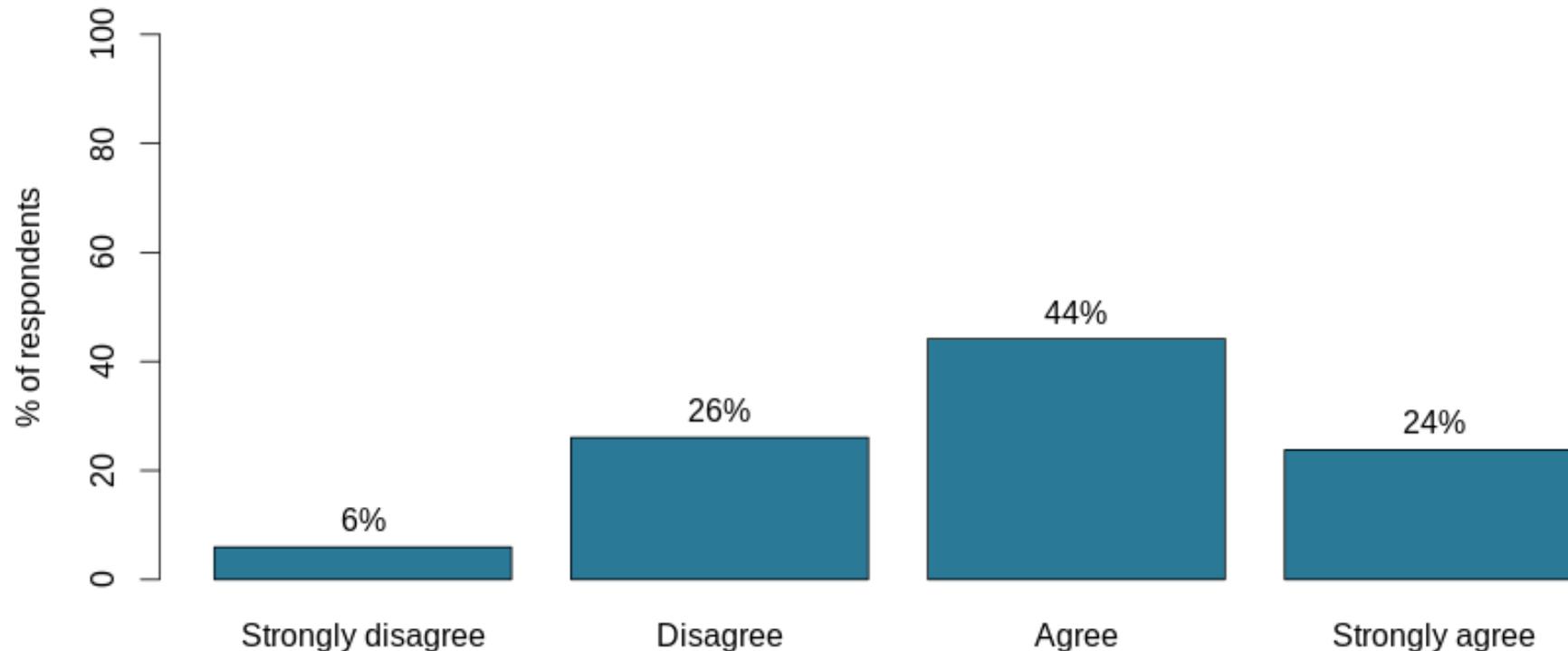
Solutions: Policy

Agree or disagree: There should be regulations requiring the companies that create the apps that are considered most addictive --- games, social media, streaming video --- to place daily time limits on young people in order to help reduce their daily screen time.

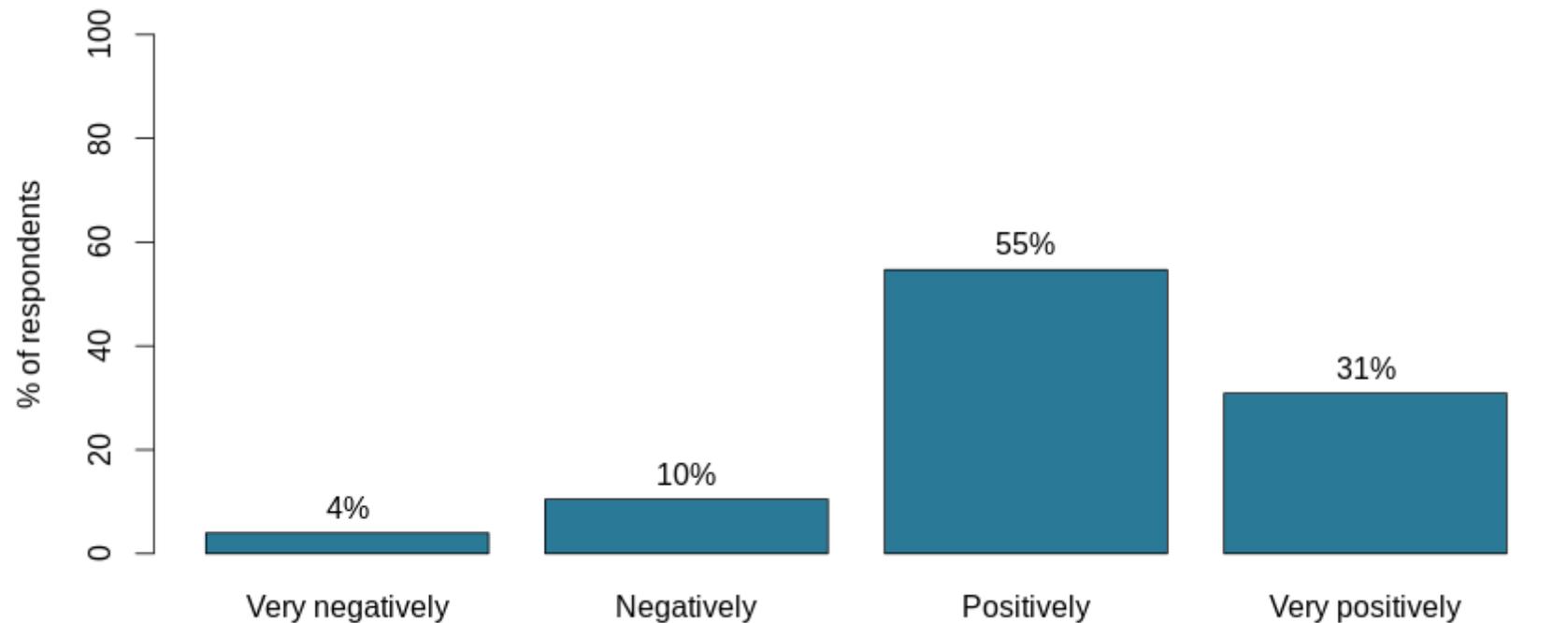


Solutions: Apps-Based

Agree or disagree: The companies that create the apps that are considered most addictive --- games, social media, streaming video --- should place daily time limits on young people in order to help them reduce their daily screen time.

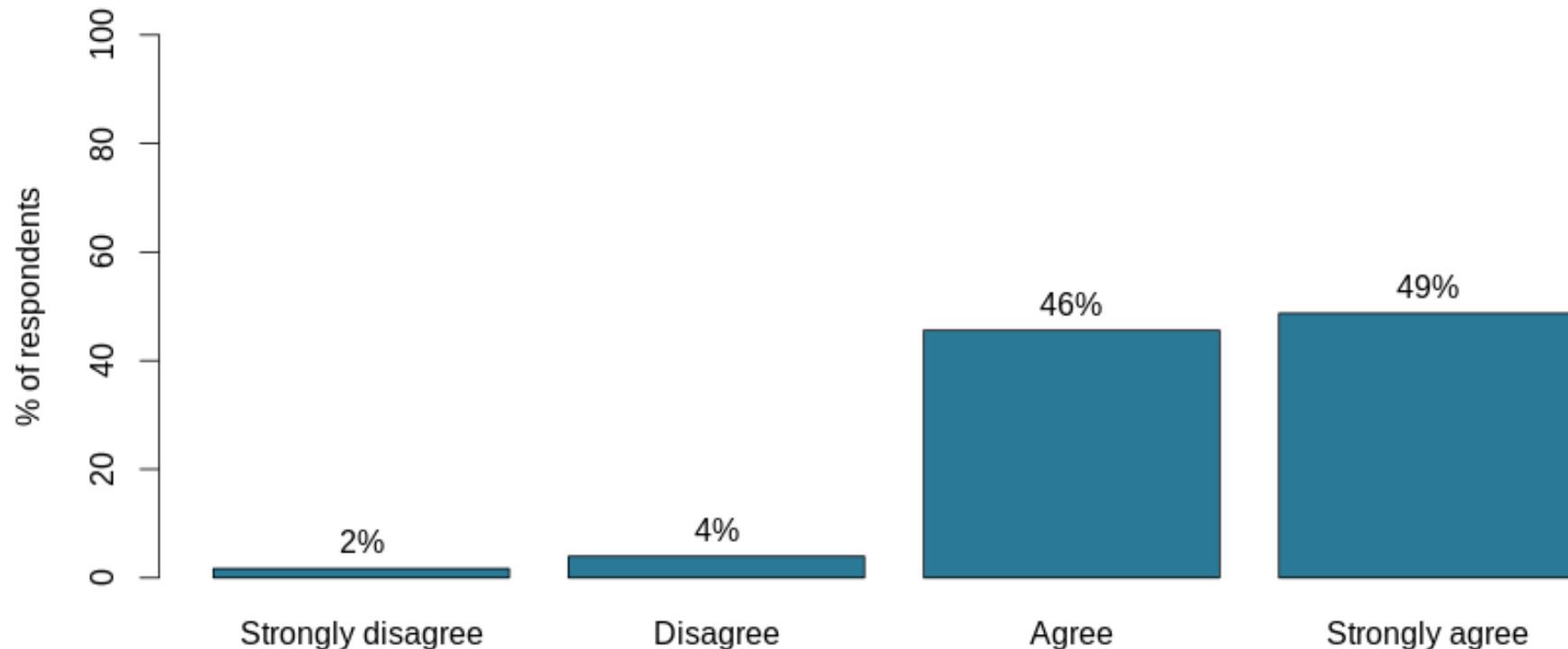


Imagine all smartphones had a built-in application that sensed when young people are using their smartphone in an addictive way, and that helped them regain control by coaching them, and by temporarily limiting their access to the addictive content. How would you react to this application?



Solutions: Culture-Driven

Agree or disagree: It would be good if society began placing greater emphasis on developing within young people personal qualities that would help them control their screen time --- qualities like discipline, self-control, sacrifice, and a focus on achievement.



Summary

1. High school teachers believe excessive smartphone use is a widespread problem among their students.

2. High school teachers believe their students' excessive smartphone use negatively impacts their academic performance, their social lives, and their involvement in extracurricular activities..

3. High school teachers believe their students are frustrated by their excessive smartphone use and wish they could control it.

4. High school teachers believe we should address smartphone addiction when people are young, rather than waiting until they are adults.

Summary

5. Very strong majorities of high school teachers support organized, broad, bold initiatives that will:

(1) impose limits on young peoples' phone use

(2) help them develop the ability to independently self-limit their screen time

6. The broad-based solutions high school teachers support include the integration of principles of digital wellness into the school curriculum, apps and apps features that assist in reducing smartphone use, regulatory approaches to reducing smartphone use, and a renewed emphasis on key cultural values that would assist in controlling smartphone use.

Implications

1. Schools should develop curricula to teach students how to self-limit their smartphone use.

2. Apps providers should get serious about doing something to help young people by limiting the time they can spend each day using their apps.

Implications

3. Congress should consider regulations to address smartphone addiction among youth.

4. We should consider reviving traditional values that would help reorient the culture around spending less time on smartphones and more time being productive discipline, self-control, sacrifice, and a focus on achievement.



Michael.Mercier@ScreenEducation.org

(513) 535-7377

