



WORKFORCE ISSUES IN LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE

WILIS



Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science (WILIS):

The Impact of Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Age

WILIS Short Report 9

**WORKFORCE ISSUES IN
LIBRARY & INFORMATION
SCIENCE**

The logo for Workforce Issues in Library & Information Science (WILIS) is located in the bottom right corner. It consists of a dark gray rectangular box containing the text "WORKFORCE ISSUES IN LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. Below this text, the letters "WILIS" are displayed in a large, light gray, semi-transparent font.

WILIS is a collaborative research partnership of the UNC Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science and the UNC Institute on Aging, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through its Librarians for the 21st Century Program.

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WILIS



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The WILIS studies

- WILIS 1 is a comprehensive study of the career patterns of graduates of LIS programs in North Carolina since 1964.
- WILIS 2 is a project to develop a shared recent graduates survey that may be used by all LIS programs.

Participating LIS programs

- Appalachian State University Library Science Program
<http://www.ced.appstate.edu/departments/les/>
- Central Carolina Community College Library and Information Technology Program
http://www.cccc.edu/Programs/Library_Info_Technology.html
- East Carolina University Department of Library Science and Instructional Technology
<http://lsit.coe.ecu.edu/>
- North Carolina Central University School of Library and Information Sciences
<http://www.nccuslis.org/>
- UNC Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science
<http://www.ils.unc.edu/index.html>
- UNC Greensboro Department of Library and Information Studies
<http://www.uncg.edu/lis/>

Methodology

WILIS 1 components

- **University-based LIS programs**

1964–2005 graduates of five LIS programs in North Carolina

- Pilot survey of 750 graduates (April-May 2007)
- Non-response survey of 400 non-respondents (June-August 2007)
- Full survey of remaining 7,566 graduates (Sept-Dec 2007)
 - Includes 169 UNC-Chapel Hill 2006-2007 graduates who received email-contact only (Oct-Dec 2007)

- **Community college-based LIS program**

All 58 graduates of the Central Carolina Community College program since its founding in 2000

- Full survey (Dec 2007-March 2008)



WILIS 1 pilot study method

- 505/9089 – 5.5% unable to contact
- Randomly selected 750 graduates from the five university programs
- Solicited updated alumni contact information
- Sent postcards to check accuracy of the lists (119 cases updated)
- Sent invitation letter
- Sent email reminder
- Sent second letter and/or email
- Conducted non-response study

WILIS 1 non-response study

- Conducted June-August 2007
 - Web, paper and telephone surveys
- Comparison of pilot participants and non-respondents indicated representativeness
- Conducting the non-response study increased the overall pilot study response rate by 8%
- As a result, we added an additional mailed letter to the full survey design

WILIS 1 method

- Obtained alumni contact information from LIS programs
- Used AlumniFinder to update contact information
- Used listservs to solicit updated contact information from alumni
- Used postcards to check address accuracy
- Sent invitation letter
- Sent second letter reminder
- Sent email reminders

Context

Diversity in LIS

- Dimensions of diversity
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Age

Diversity in LIS

- Profession needs to increase racial and ethnic diversity
 - Current library workforce is not representative of the constituencies it serves.
 - Only 11% of the American Library Association are members of a racial/ethnic minority.
 - Only 13.5% of professional staff in member libraries in the Association of Research Libraries are from racial/ethnic minorities.

Diversity in LIS

- Challenges

- Recruiting minorities to LIS education
- Retaining minorities in the workforce
- Mentorship is crucial to retention, but there are fewer senior librarians of color to mentor new librarians.

The gendered organization of work

- Feminized occupations
 - Have a higher proportion of female workers
 - Many LIS occupations, particularly librarianship, are *feminized*.

The gendered organization of work

○ Challenges

- Challenges common to women workers
 - Higher rates of career disruption
 - More issues related to work-family balance
 - Greater need for flexible or non-standard work arrangements (e.g., part-time, temporary, job-sharing)
 - Unclear definitions of retirement (due to transitions into or out of other gendered non-paid work including homemaking and childcare)

The gendered organization of work

- Challenges common to feminized occupations
 - Relative devaluation of “women’s work,” or jobs held predominantly by women
 - Female-male wage gap

The changing workforce

- Most of the projected growth in the US labor force between 2000 and 2050 will be composed of workers aged 55 and over.
- Workers aged 55 and over will account for a larger share of the US labor force (12.9% in 2000; 18.8% in 2050).

Source: Toosi, Mitra. "A century of change: the US labor force, 1950-2050."
Monthly Labor Review, May 2002, Bureau of Labor Statistics

LIS as an aging workforce

- The Institute for Museum and Library Services estimates that 58% of librarians will retire by 2019.
- 46% of students in ALA-accredited master's degree programs during 2003 were 35 years or older
- In 2000, median age of the U.S. labor force was 39.3 years
- The WILIS median age of working LIS grads was 50.0 years
- The WILIS average age at LIS graduation was 32.7 years

Factors affecting the LIS workforce

- Lack of diversity
- Feminization
- Aging workforce
 - More late entrants
 - Lower hiring rates, 1980s/1990s

Results

WILIS 1 response rates

- 7,566 graduates from the five LIS university programs in NC
- 35.1% response rate for all programs
- 31.4% response rate for graduates with a library science master's degree
- 26.2% response rate for graduates with an information science master's degree

Demographic composition

Currently working	N=1903
Gender	80.4% female
Mean age	47.86, sd 10.9
Median age	50
Ethnicity	11% non-white

Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity (N=2,630)

White	African-American	Asian	Other			
			Native American	Pacific Islander	Multi-racial	Unspecified
87%	6%	2%	.2%	.1%	2%	3%

Earnings of LIS graduates

	Median
White (N=1646)	\$50,000
African-American (N=111)	\$51,000
Asian (N=41)	\$60,000
Other (N=71)	\$52,500
	Mean
White (N=1646)	\$55,063, sd \$27,095
African-American (N=111)	\$55,018, sd \$23,935
Asian (N=41)	\$66,300*, sd \$29,577
Other (N=71)	\$52,603, sd \$24,160

Significant differences between Asian and White, Asian and Other, $p < .05$

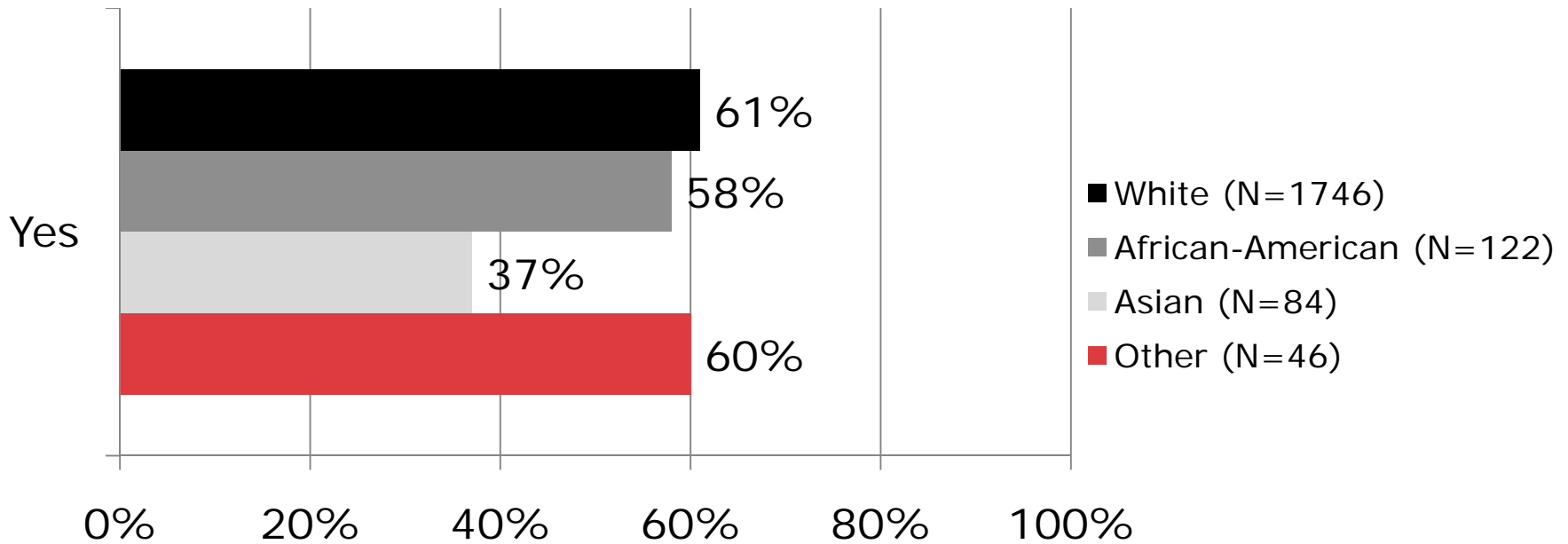
Setting of current job

Which of the following best describes your current job?

	White N=1756	African-American N=122	Asian N=46	Other N=84
Library setting, using LIS skills	78%	74%	48%	73%
Library setting, NOT using LIS skills	.2%	1%	0%	1%
Non-library, using LIS skills	11%	16%	26%	8%
Non-library, NOT using LIS skills	5%	6%	15%	5%
Self-employed	3%	1%	2%	9%
Other	3%	2%	9%	4%

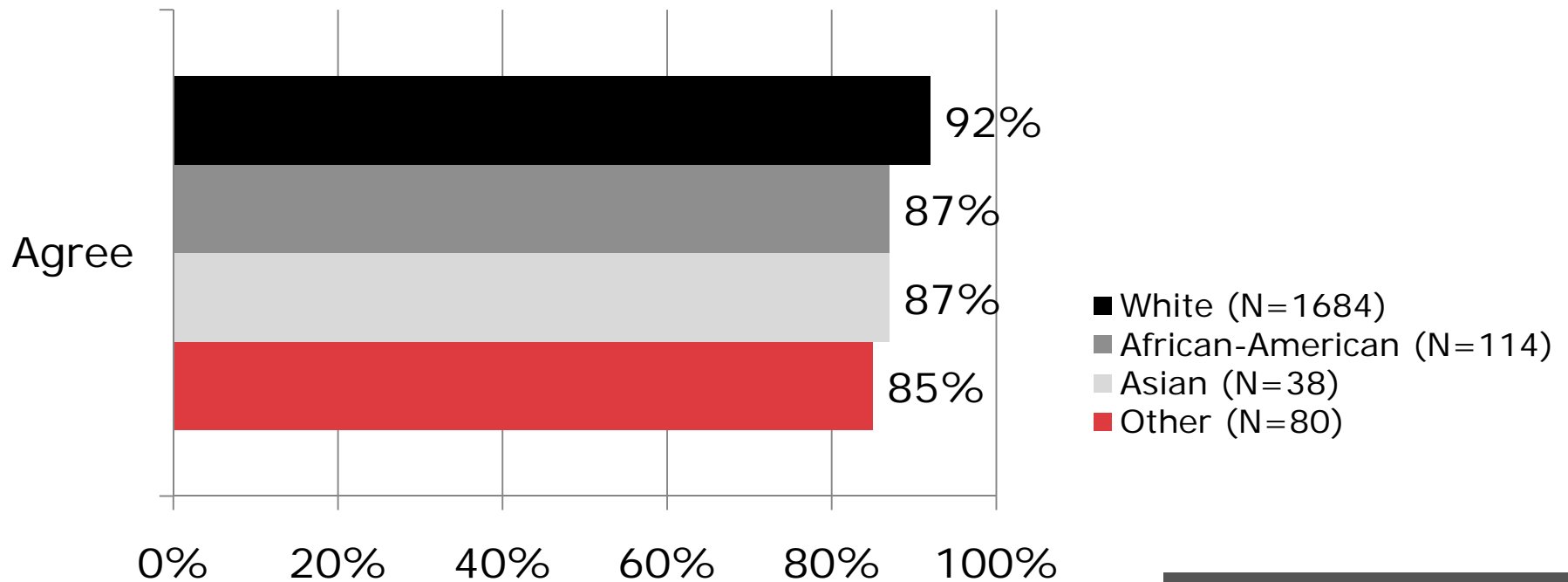
Current job

Do you supervise (manage) other people in this job?



Job satisfaction

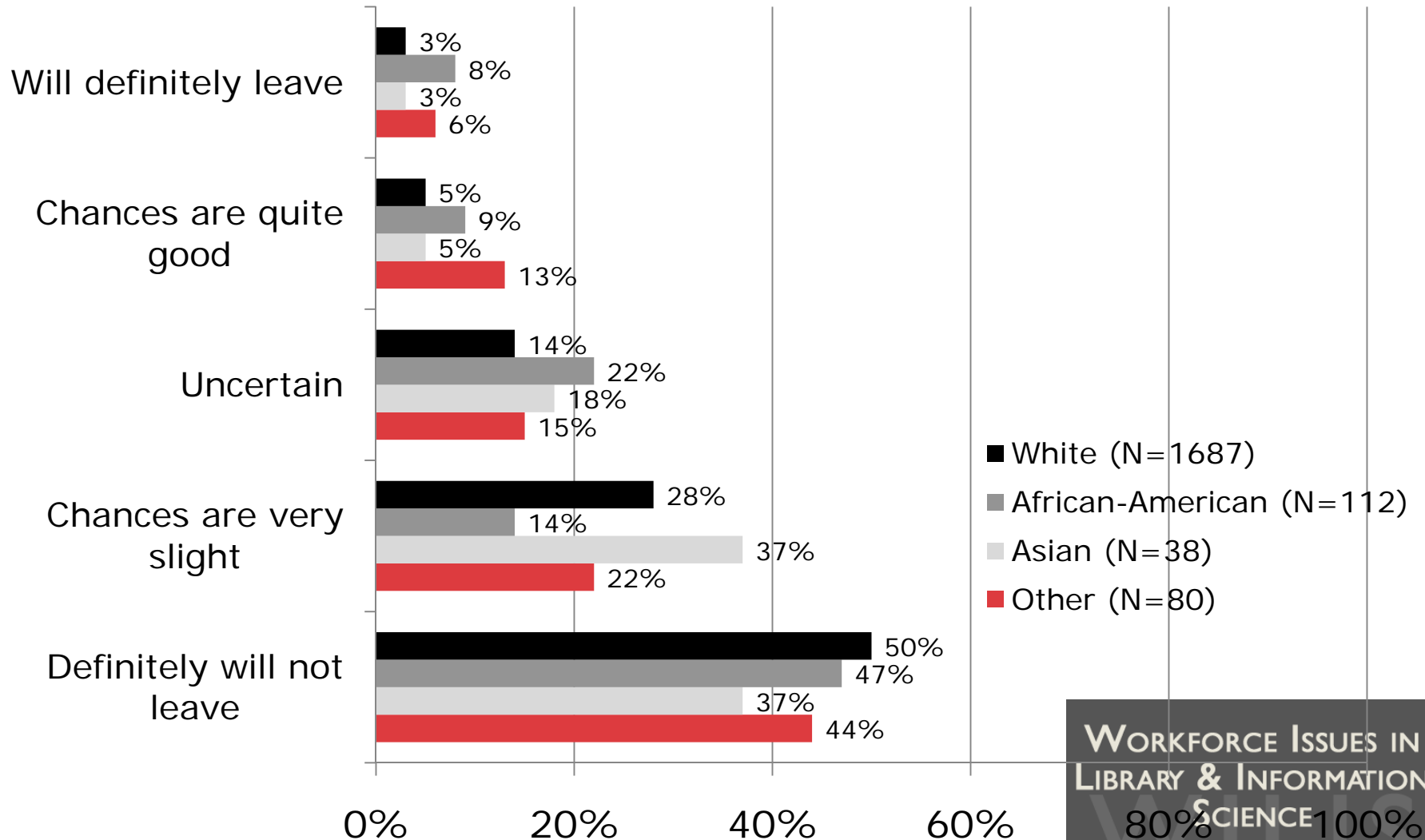
Overall, I am satisfied with what I do on my job



Categories were collapsed (strongly agree/agree)

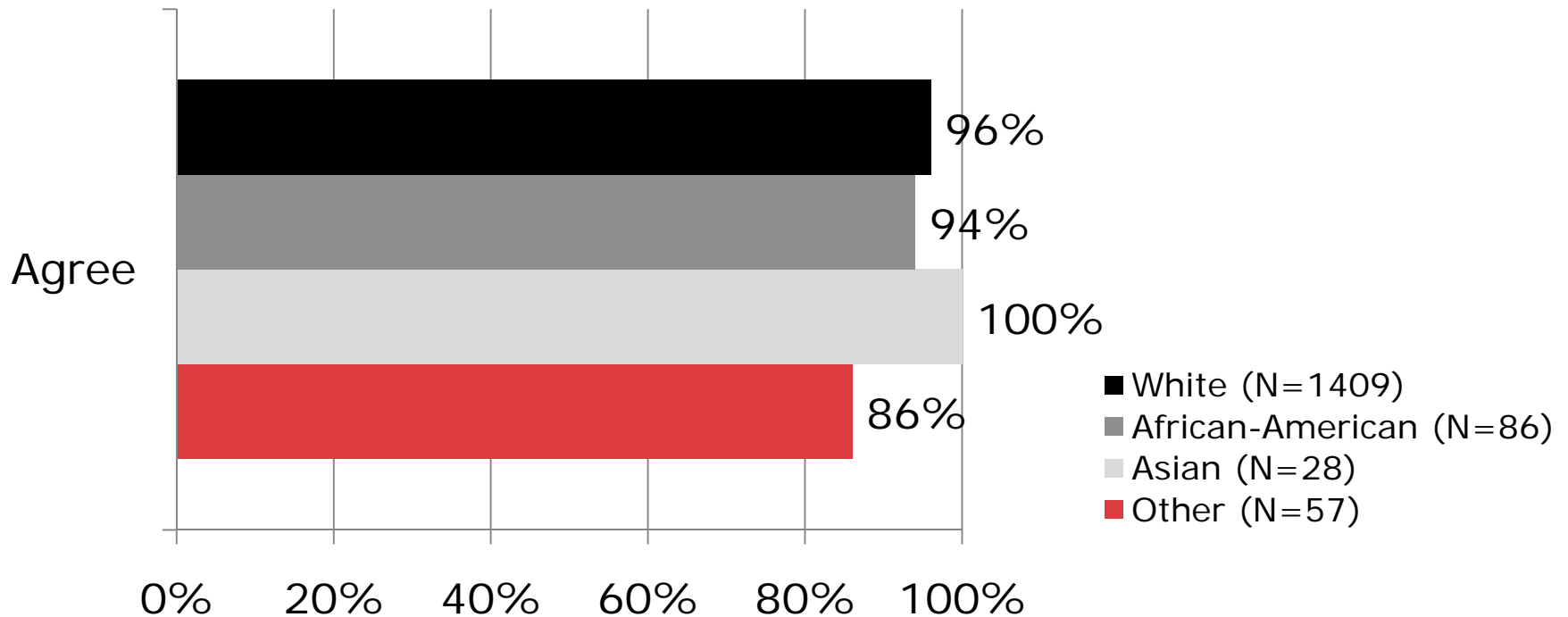
Retention

Do you expect to leave your current employer in the coming year?



Career satisfaction

Overall, I am satisfied with LIS as a career



Categories were collapsed (strongly agree/agree)

Gender

Earnings of LIS graduates

	Median
Male (N=356)	\$61,000
Female (N=1442)	\$50,000
	Mean
Male (N=356)	\$84,211*, sd \$155,859
Female (N=1442)	\$54,122, sd \$22,854

*p<.001

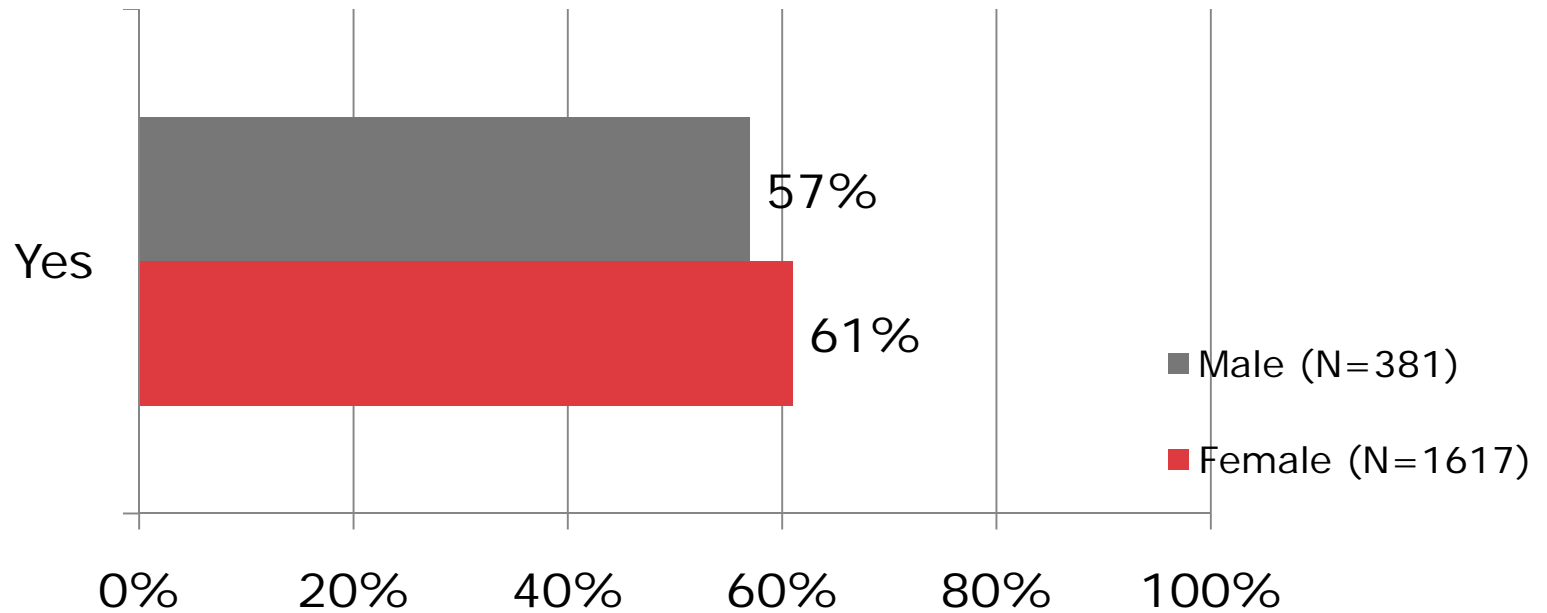
Setting of current job

Which of the following best describes your current job?

	Male N=382	Female N=1626
Library setting, using LIS skills	68%	77%
Library setting, NOT using LIS skills	1%	.1%
Non-library, using LIS skills	16%	11%
Non-library, NOT using LIS skills	9%	5%
Self-employed	3%	4%
Other	3%	3%

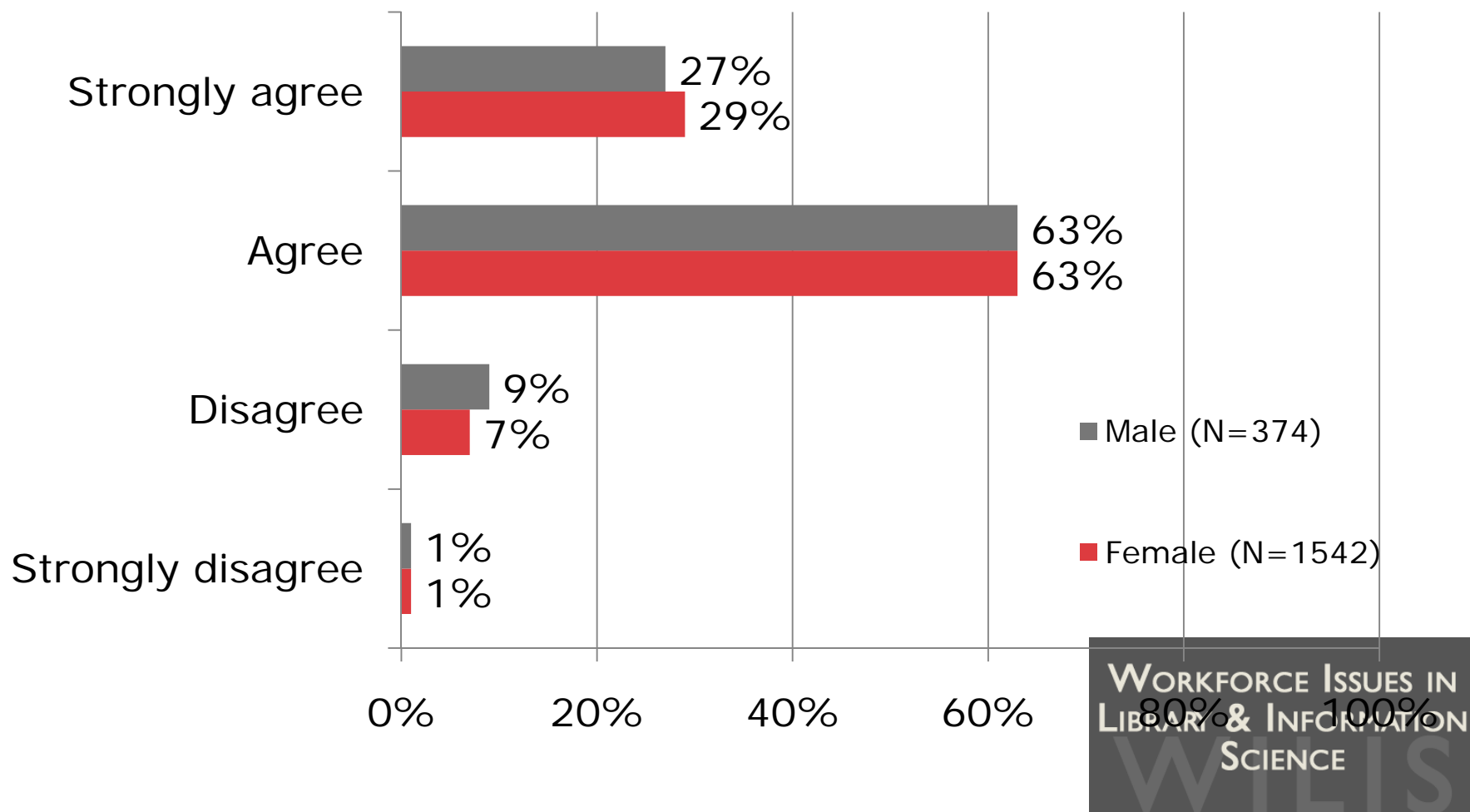
Current job

Do you supervise (manage) other people in this job?



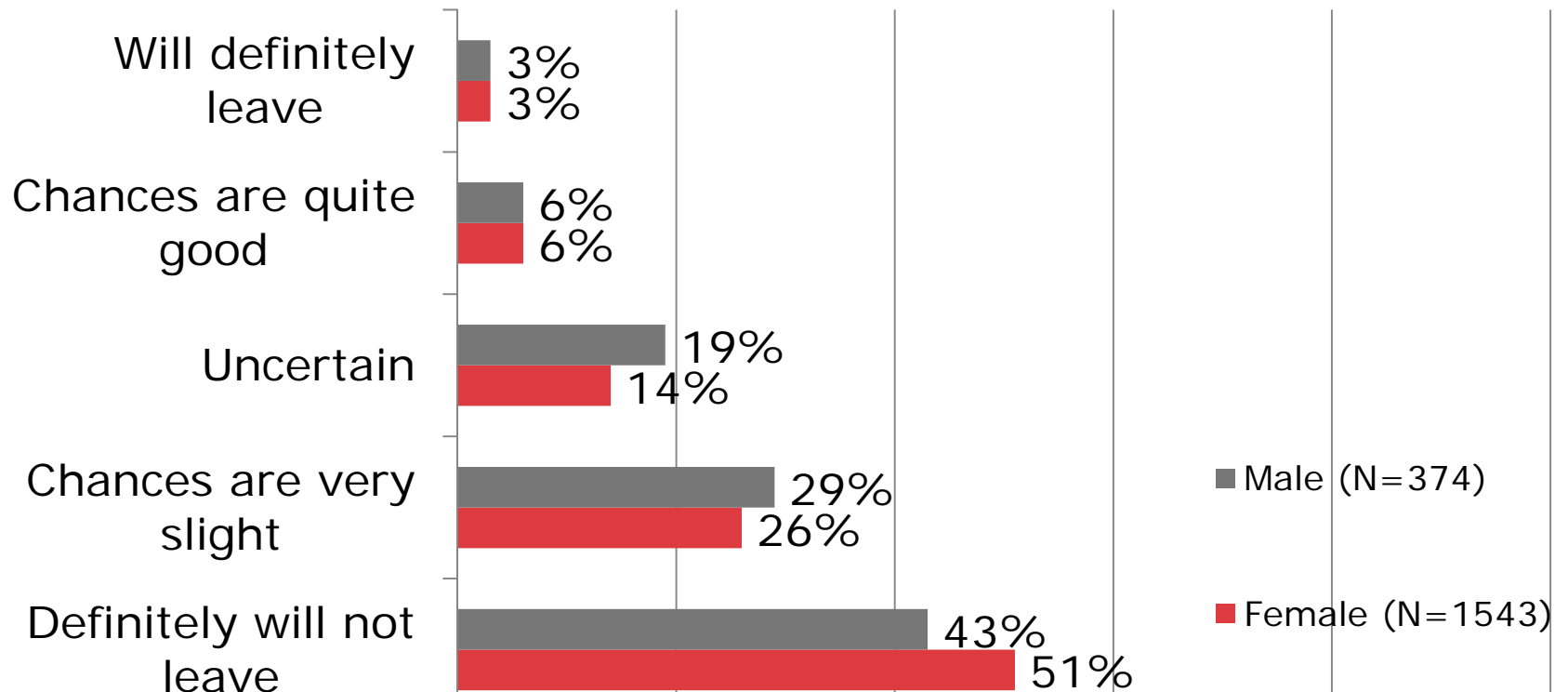
Job satisfaction

Overall, I am satisfied with what I do on my job



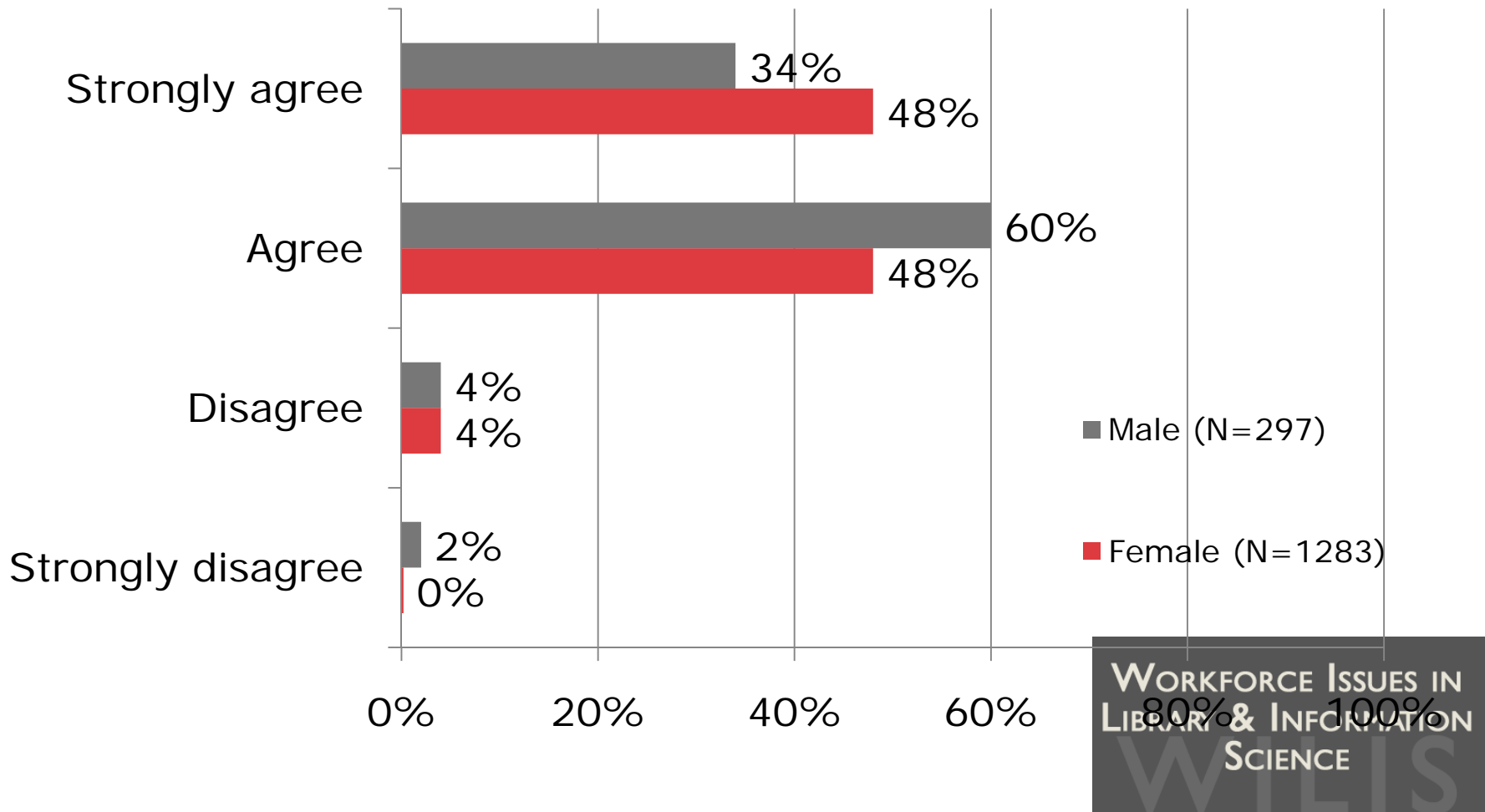
Retention

Do you expect to leave your current employer in the coming year?



Career satisfaction

Overall, I am satisfied with LIS as a career



Family demands

Financial Situation	Female N=2149	Male N=471
I (or my family) depend completely on my paycheck	45%	55%
I (or my family) can live better because of my paycheck	48%	38%
I (or my family) do not depend on my paycheck	7%	7%

Marital Status...	Female N=2149	Male N=471
Single	16%	20%
Married / Committed Relationship	70%	70%
Separated/Divorced	11%	9%
Widowed	3%	1%

Family demands, continued

- Average number of living children: 1.97, sd .92
- Caregiving breaks
 - 23% of women and 3% of men took at least one break to care for children that lasted more than 6 months.
 - 28% of women and 4% of men took at least one break to care for children that lasted from 1 to 6 months
 - 6% of women and 2% of men took at least one break to care for other family members that lasted from 1 to 6 months

Age

Average age, by setting of current job

Which of the following best describes your current job?

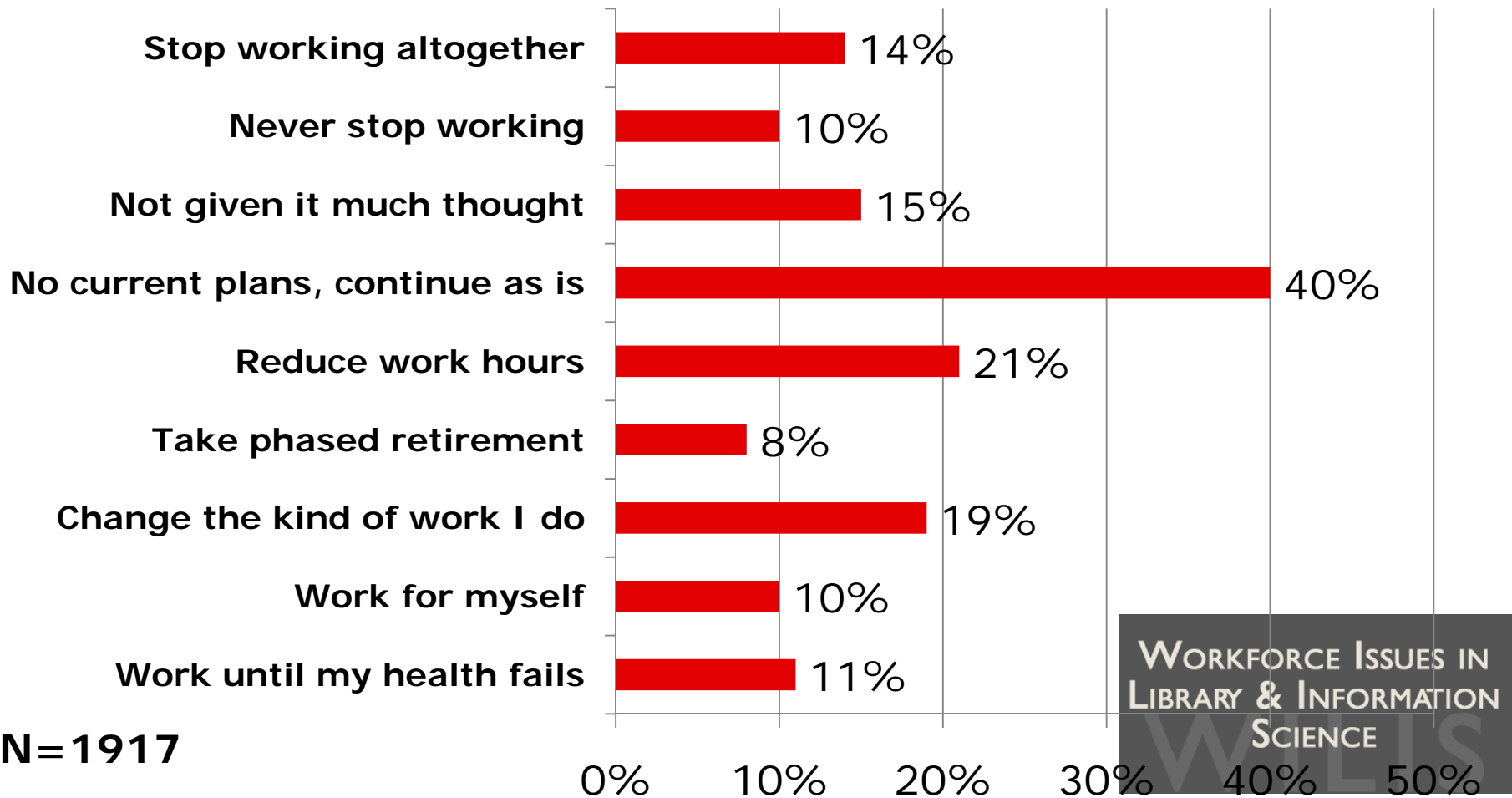
	Average Age
School library (N=506)	48.9, sd 9.6
Public library (N=310)	48.0, sd 11.2
Academic library (N=466)	46.9, sd 11.1
Special library (N=253)	46.4, sd 11.3
Non-library workplace (N=499)	48.5, sd 11.4

Retirement

- 25% will definitely be working full-time after 62 (N=1912)
- 8% will definitely be working full-time after 65 (N=1458)
- 23% will definitely NOT be working full-time after 65 (N=1458)

Retirement plans

Regarding your retirement plans, which of the following do you plan to do?



N=1917



Workforce projections

How many are likely to leave the full time workforce? (if intentions hold true)

- 5 years from now (2013), 49% of those 62+ are likely to have left – 12% of workforce
- 10 years from now (2018), 63% of those 62+ are likely to have left – 23% of workforce



Workforce projections

What types of libraries will experience the most retirements?

- Of those who will likely retire 5 years from now (2013) (n=182)
 - 41% are school librarians (n=74)
 - 23% are public librarians (n=42)
 - 27% are academic librarians (n=49)
 - 9% are special librarians (n=17)

- 71% are from NC, SC, GA, and VA, but the other 29% are distributed across the US



Workforce projections

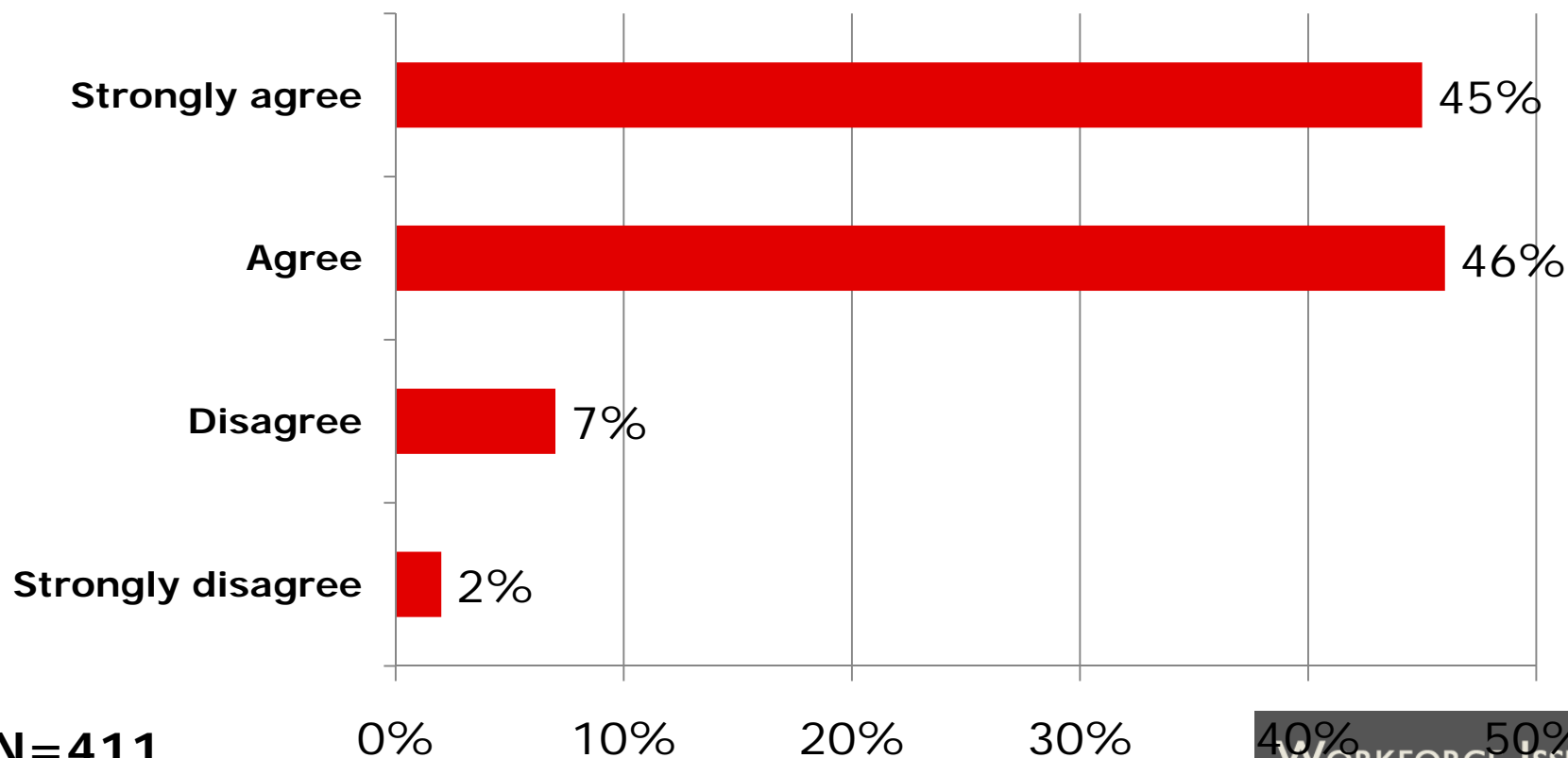
What types of libraries will experience the most retirements?

- Of those who will likely retire 10 years from now (2018) (n=357)
 - 43% are school librarians (n=154)
 - 23% are public librarians (n=81)
 - 25% are academic librarians (n=88)
 - 9% are special librarians (n=34)

- 78% are from NC, SC, GA, and VA, but the other 22% are distributed across the US

Career satisfaction of retired LIS professionals

Overall, I am satisfied with LIS as a career



N=411

Implications

Initiatives to diversify the LIS workforce

- **American Library Association**
 - Spectrum Scholarship Program
 - Mission: "Improving service at the local level through the development of a representative workforce that reflects the communities served by all libraries in the new millennium."*
 - Diversity Research Grants
 - Diversity Leadership Institutes
- **Association of Research Libraries**
 - Initiative to Create a Diverse Workforce
 - Leadership and Career Development Program
- **OCLC**
 - Minority Librarian Fellowship Program

Common retention challenges for feminized occupations

Work-family and lifestyle accommodations

- Flexible work arrangements
 - Part-time work
 - Flexible scheduling
 - Seasonal employment
 - Telework
 - Overtime arrangements

Common retention challenges for feminized occupations

Flexibility in accessing benefits

- Leave arrangements for caregiving/parental leave
- Benefits coverage related to part-time work (e.g., health insurance, tuition)
- Sick, compensation, and vacation time

Unique retention challenges for LIS

Older workforce

- Bridge jobs / Recareering
- Meaningful work vs. career development
- Workplace accommodations for aging workers

Retirement and retention

- Retirement and replacement
- Phased retirement and flexible scheduling options
- Organizational knowledge retention
- Pension policy
 - Flexibility for rehire
 - Flexibility related to benefits

Highlights

○ **Race**

- LIS needs to increase participation of under-represented groups in the profession.
- Career outcomes are similar, but minority groups are slightly less satisfied in their jobs and careers.

○ **Gender**

- Women make up 81% of those working in LIS, but are making significantly less than men in LIS.
- Women are more likely to disrupt careers to care for children or family members.

○ **Age**

- LIS graduates working in school, public, and non-library workplaces are slightly older than those working in academic and special libraries.
- By 2018, 63% of those 62+ are likely to have left (23% of workforce)

Note that these are preliminary descriptive results only. For further information, contact the investigators at wilis@unc.edu