



Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Profession: the Case of Estonia

Katrin Saks, Reet Soosaar, Helen Ilves
DKG Estonia, Beta chapter
Borås, 2015

Outlines

- Introduction and background
- Study I – students' perceptions of teaching profession (2013/2014)
- Study II – teachers' perceptions and reflections of their job (2014/2015)
- Conclusions

Background

Population: 1.3 million people

No of schools: 546

No of teachers: 24,693

No of teachers in primary and secondary education: 14,329

Average age of teachers: 48

Average length of service: 22 years

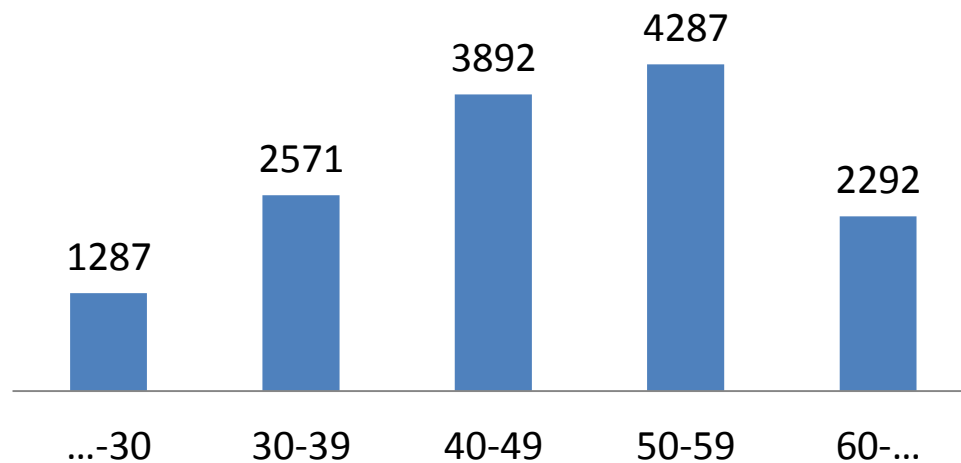
Female teachers: 68%

Male teachers: 32%

Teachers' average salary in 2014: 962 euros



Division of teachers according to age



Study I – Students' perceptions of teaching profession (2013/2014)

Problem

- Ageing staff at schools
- Low popularity of teaching profession
- Little interest in teacher training curricular

Aim of the study

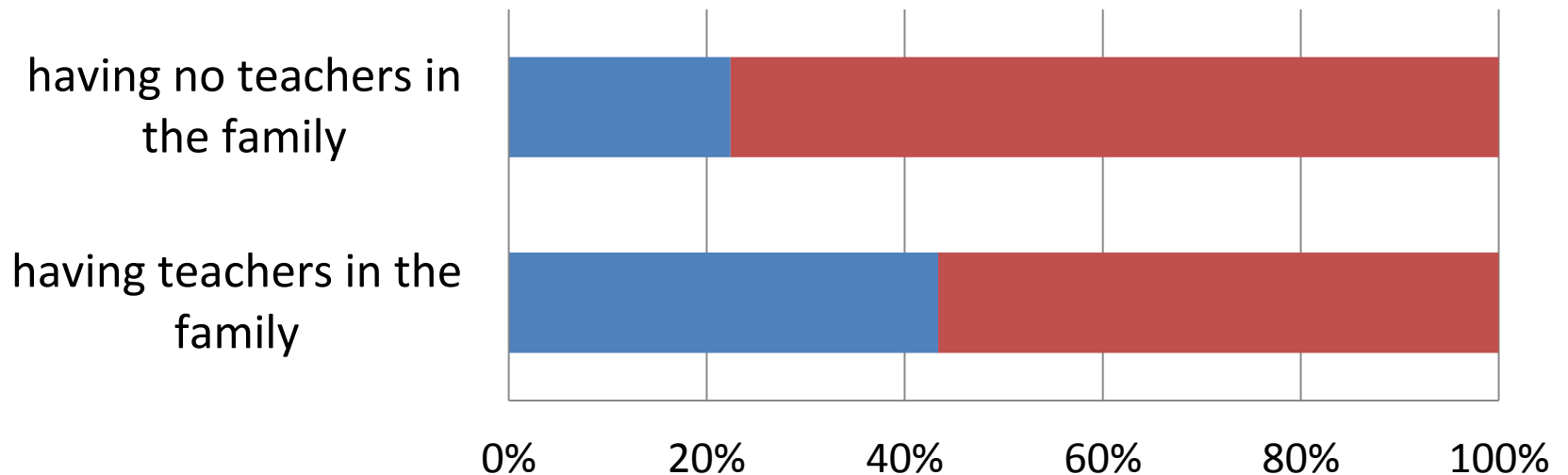
- To find out which are the students' perceptions of teaching profession

Sample and procedure

- 275 final grade students of all 5 gymnasia in Pärnu (72% of the total amount)
- Girls – 53%; boys – 47%
- Average age 18.1 (SD=0.41)
- Questionnaire with 10 questions

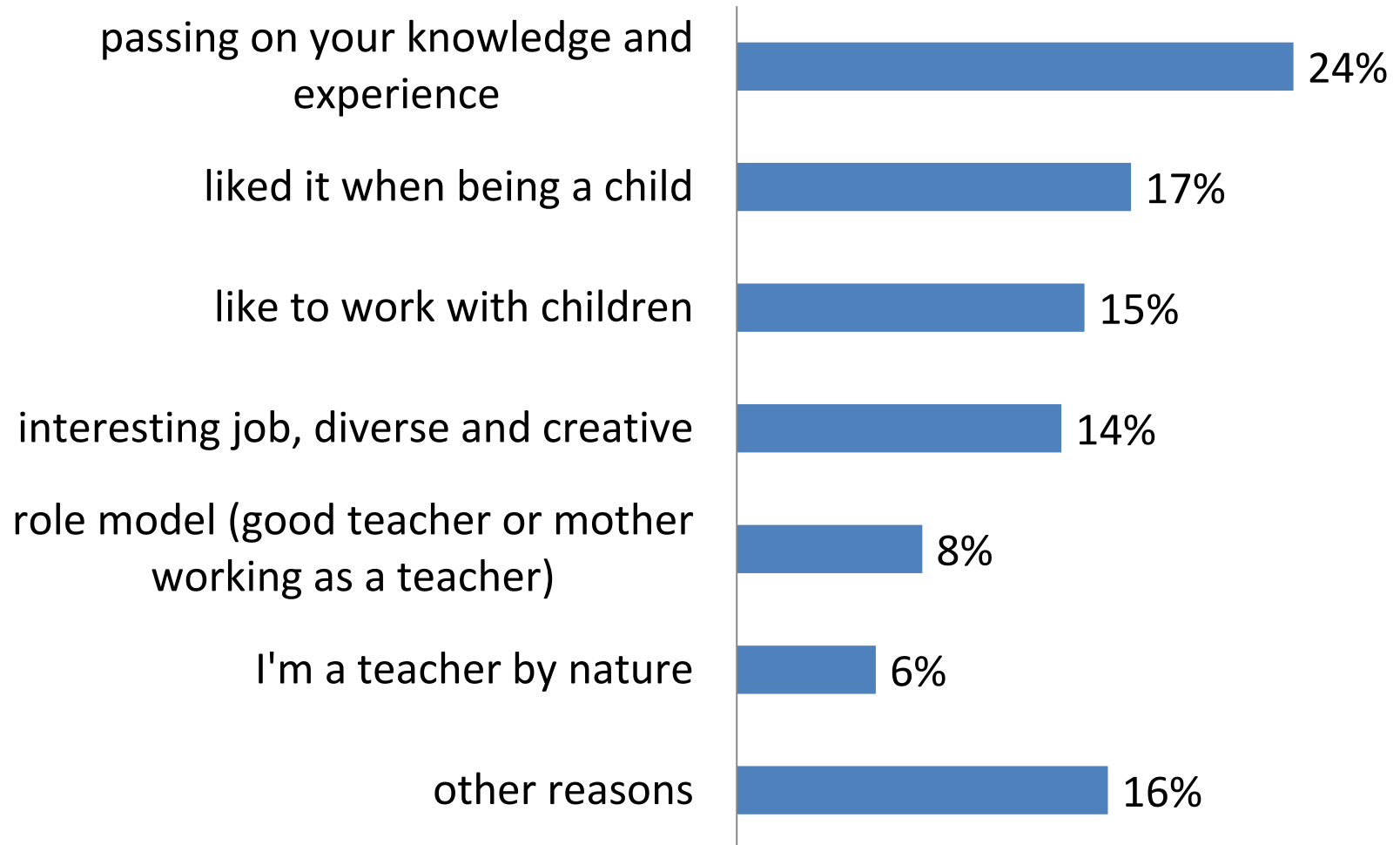
Have you ever considered becoming a teacher?

Yes – girls 38%, boys 19%

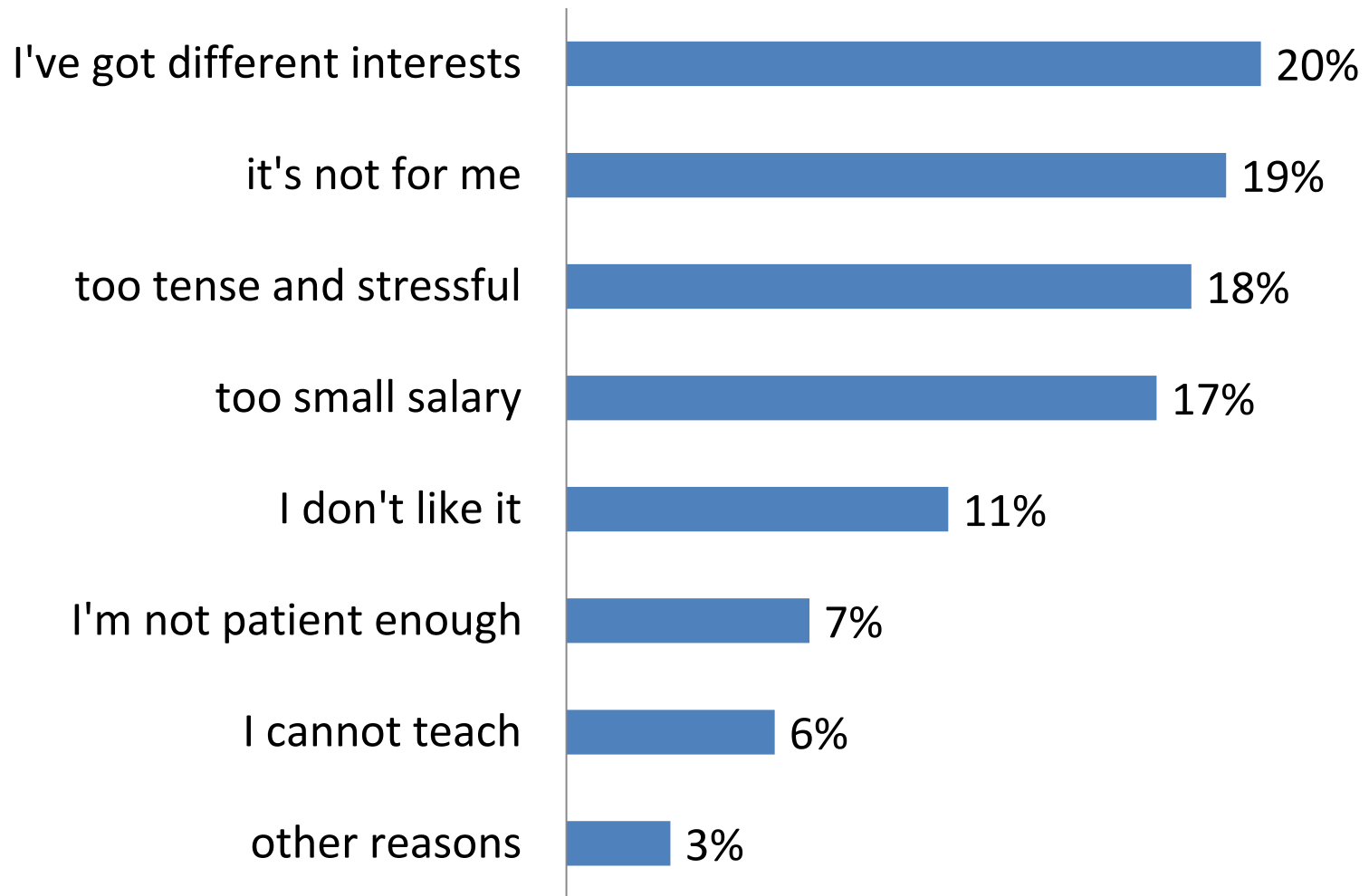


	having teachers in the family	having no teachers in the family
■ have considered becoming a teacher	36	43
■ have never considered becoming a teacher	47	149

Reasons for becoming a teacher



Reasons for not becoming a teacher

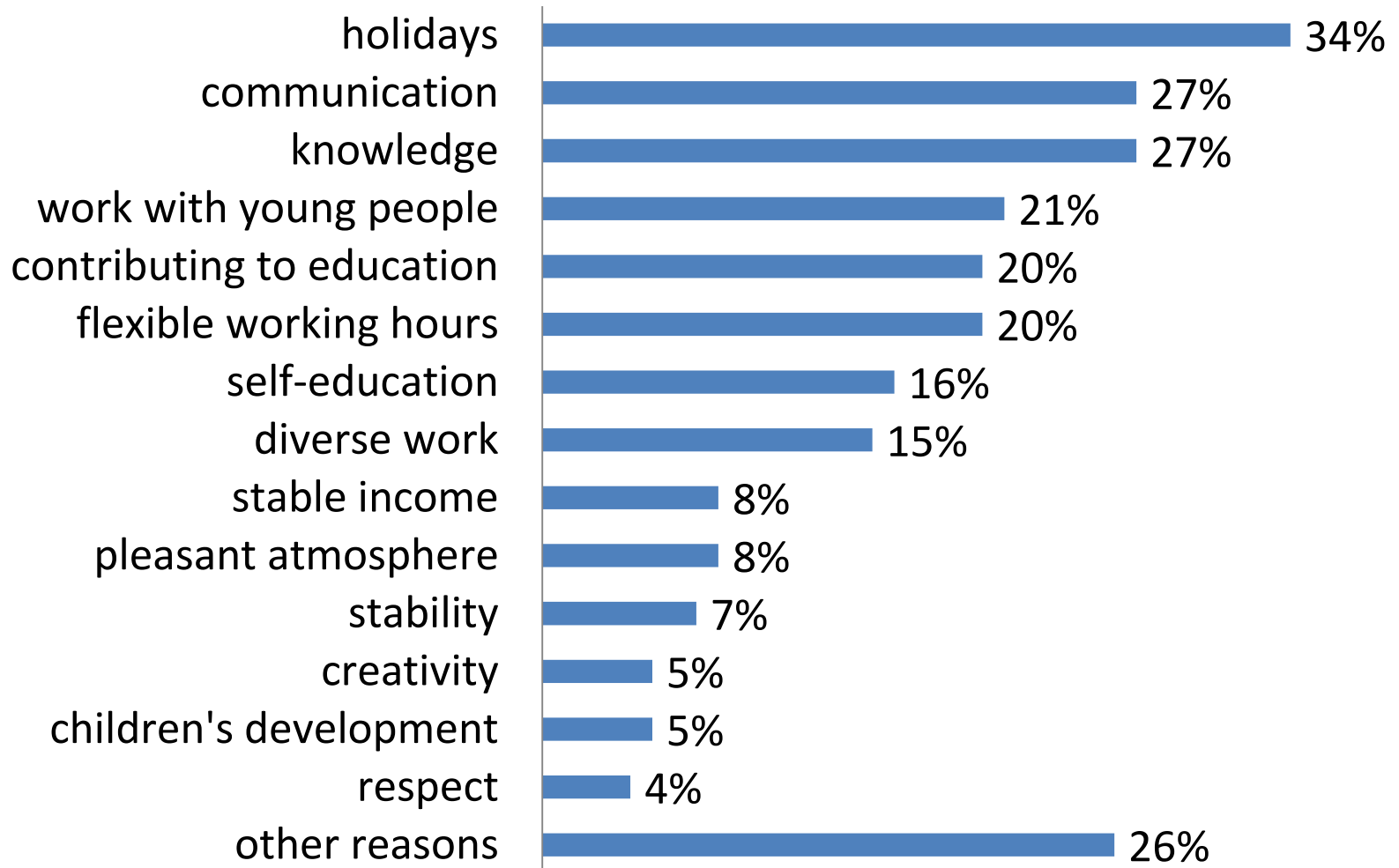


Reputation of teaching profession in the Estonian society on a scale of 1-5 is **3.14**

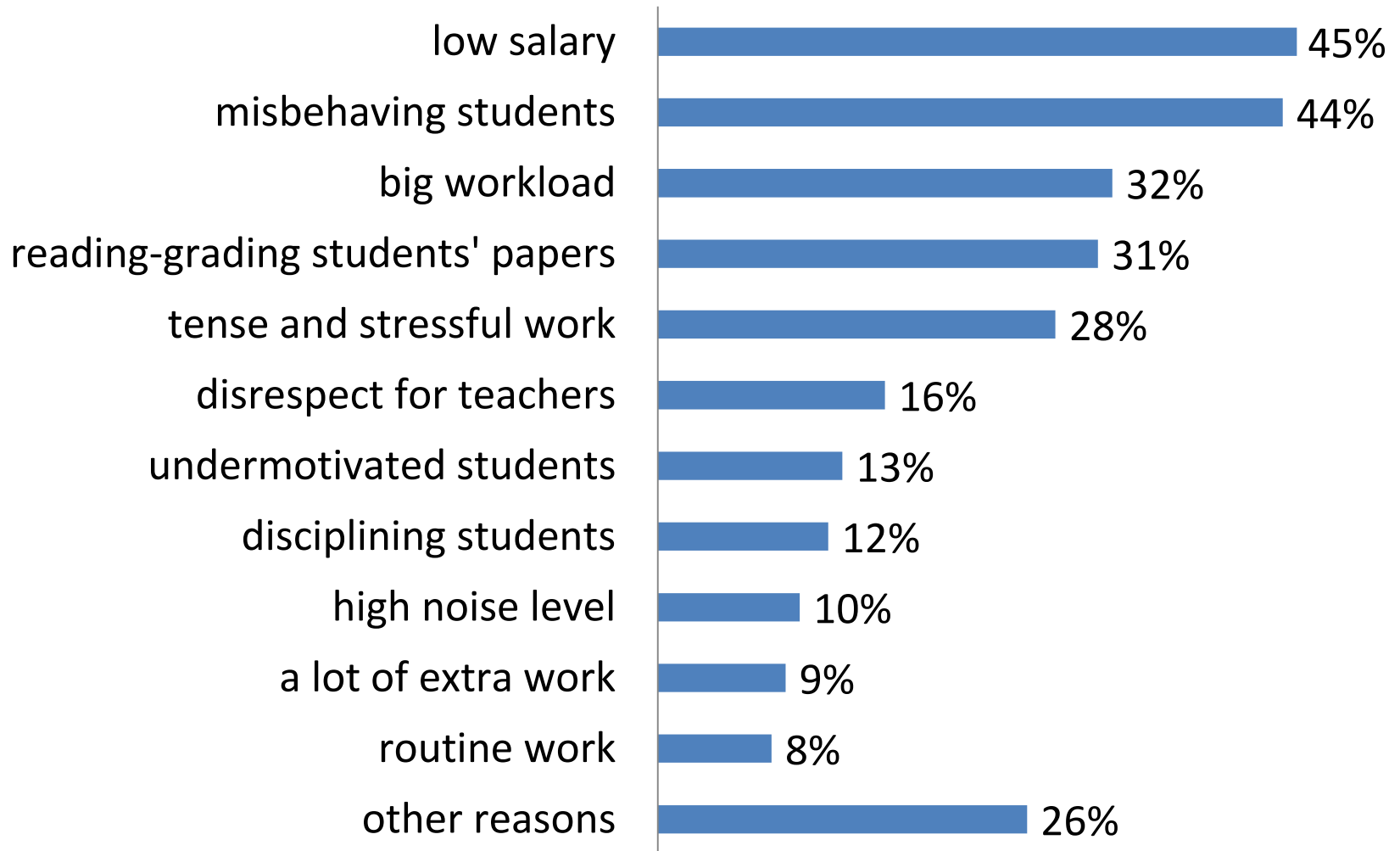
Reputation chart of 12 professions:

1. Manager
2. Medical doctor
3. Lawyer
4. Public official
5. Politician
6. Real estate agent
7. Nurse
8. Actor/actress
9. Bank cashier
- 10. Teacher**
11. Shop assistant
12. Manicurist

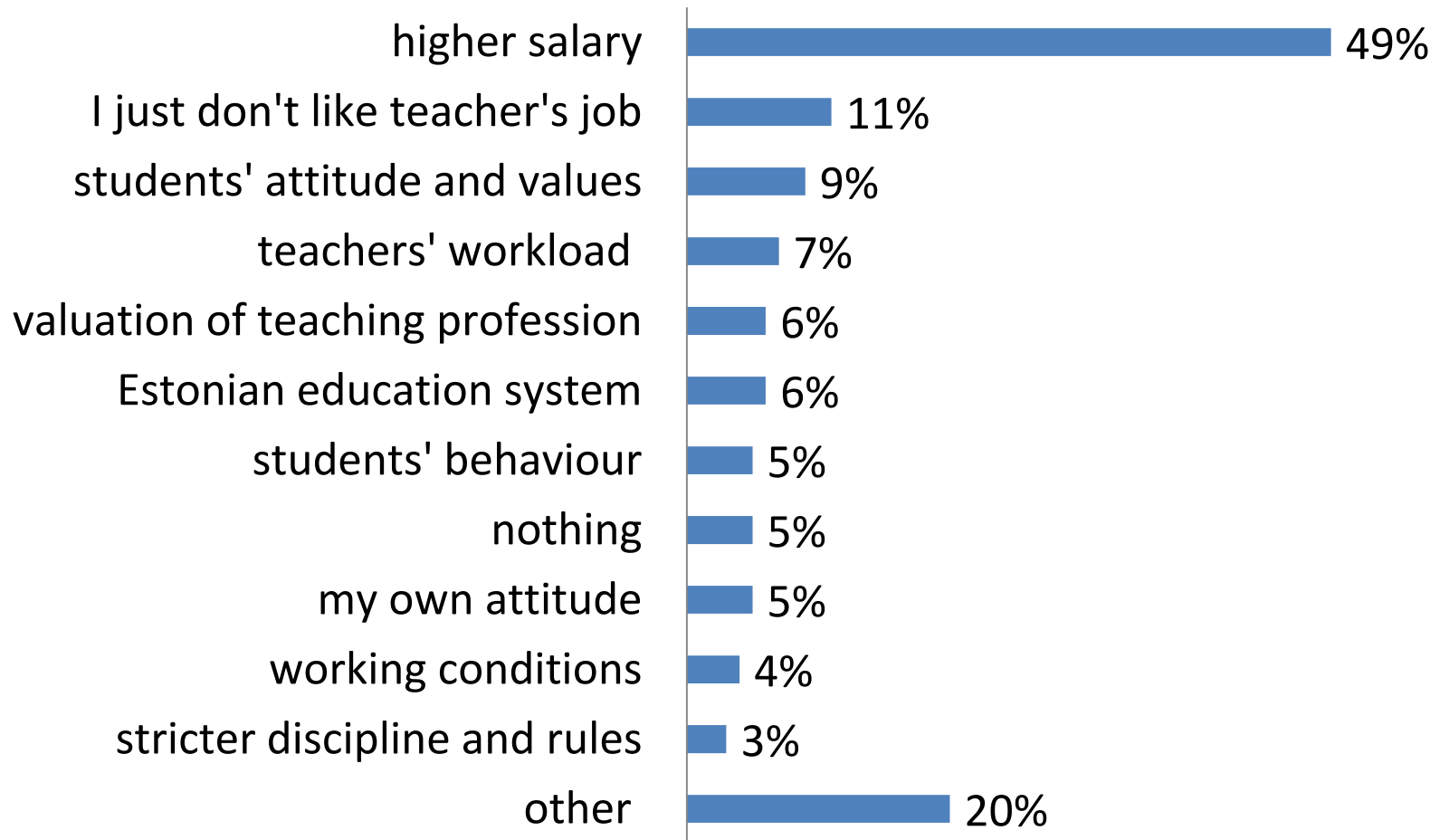
Positive aspects of teaching profession



Negative aspects of teaching profession



What kind of changes should take place for you to consider a teaching profession?



Students' comments on teaching profession

- Some people are born to be teachers. Teaching involves much more than just passing on the knowledge. Teacher's role in guiding the young person's future is enormous.
- Teacher's job is important and involves a lot of responsibility.
- Wonderful and praiseworthy profession.
- More recognition and higher salary for the teachers, because teacher's job is actually one of the most important ones.

- One of the most difficult jobs in reality, full of responsibility, so much in your future depends on a teacher.
- Teacher's job is extremely complicated and their contribution should be more valued and respected.
- Not many choose to become teachers because it's stressful and low salary doesn't compensate it.
- Sometimes I feel sorry for them.
- Respect for those teachers who put their soul and heart into their job. Motivating them would help.
- I respect all the people who have chosen this profession.

- A teacher should be friendly and tolerant, otherwise the pupils lose their motivation.
- Teachers should treat pupils as individuals, behave humanly and not disparage them.
- A teacher should have a sense of humour and avoid irony when communicating with pupils.
- A teacher should be nice, smart and funny, treat everyone equally as if teaching her own children.
- If teacher's life were less stressful, children would be more cheerful and acquire more knowledge.

Conclusions (Study I)

- Students understand well that the requirements to the teacher's job and their salary are not in balance.
- Notably much attention was paid to the drawbacks in students' behaviour and upbringing at home.
- If a student has a positive experience with his/her teacher, he/she might consider being alike and becoming a teacher.
- Students have a relatively adequate understanding of the teaching profession, but realizing its difficulties and problems wouldn't inspire many of them to follow this path and want to become a teacher.

Study II – Teachers' perceptions and reflections of their job (2014/2015)

Problem

- Students understand the importance and value of the teaching profession
- However, this job is not appealing to them

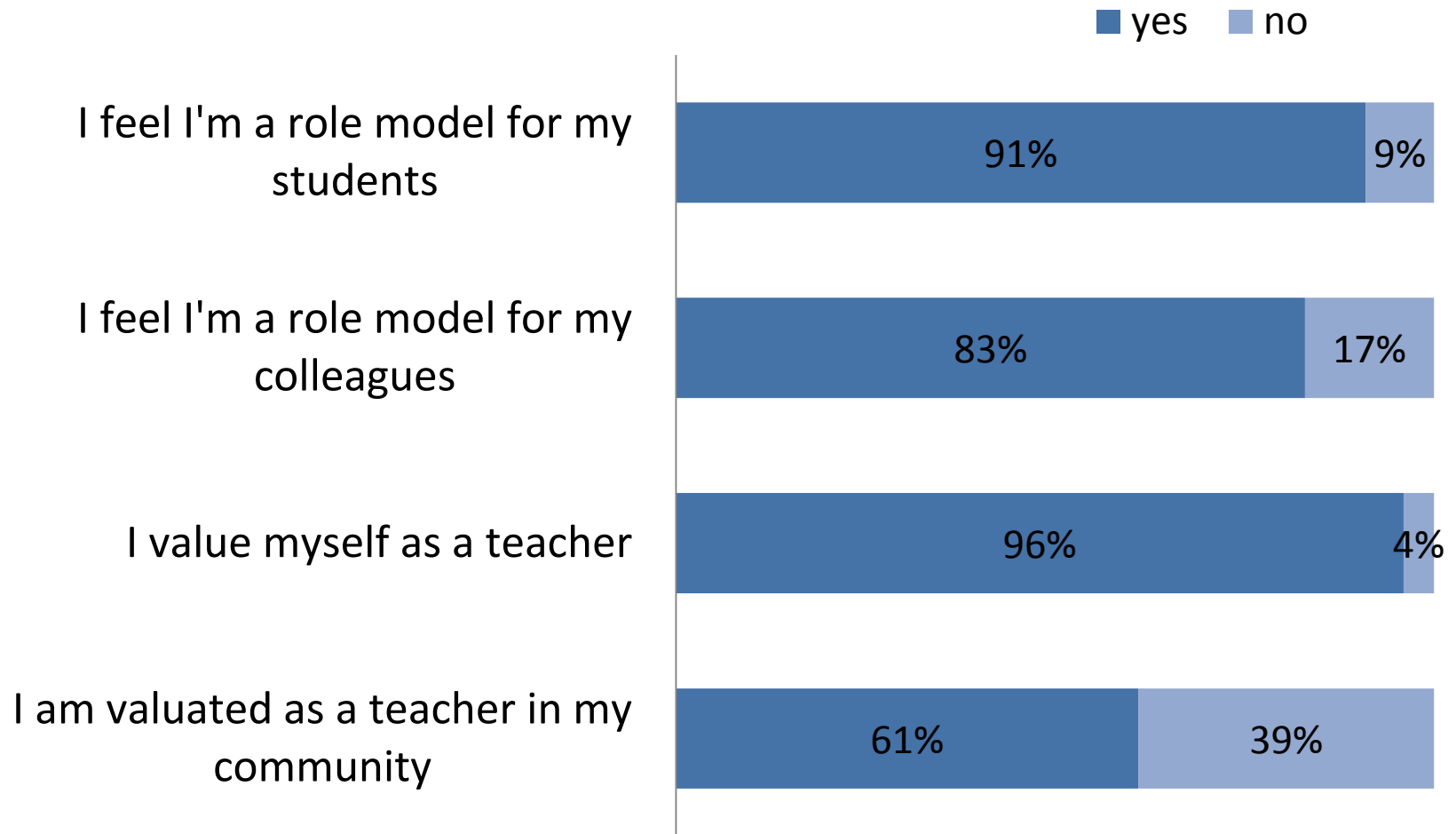
Aim of the study

- To find out how teachers feel in their job, whether they value their job
- To find out how teachers reflect their job to the students

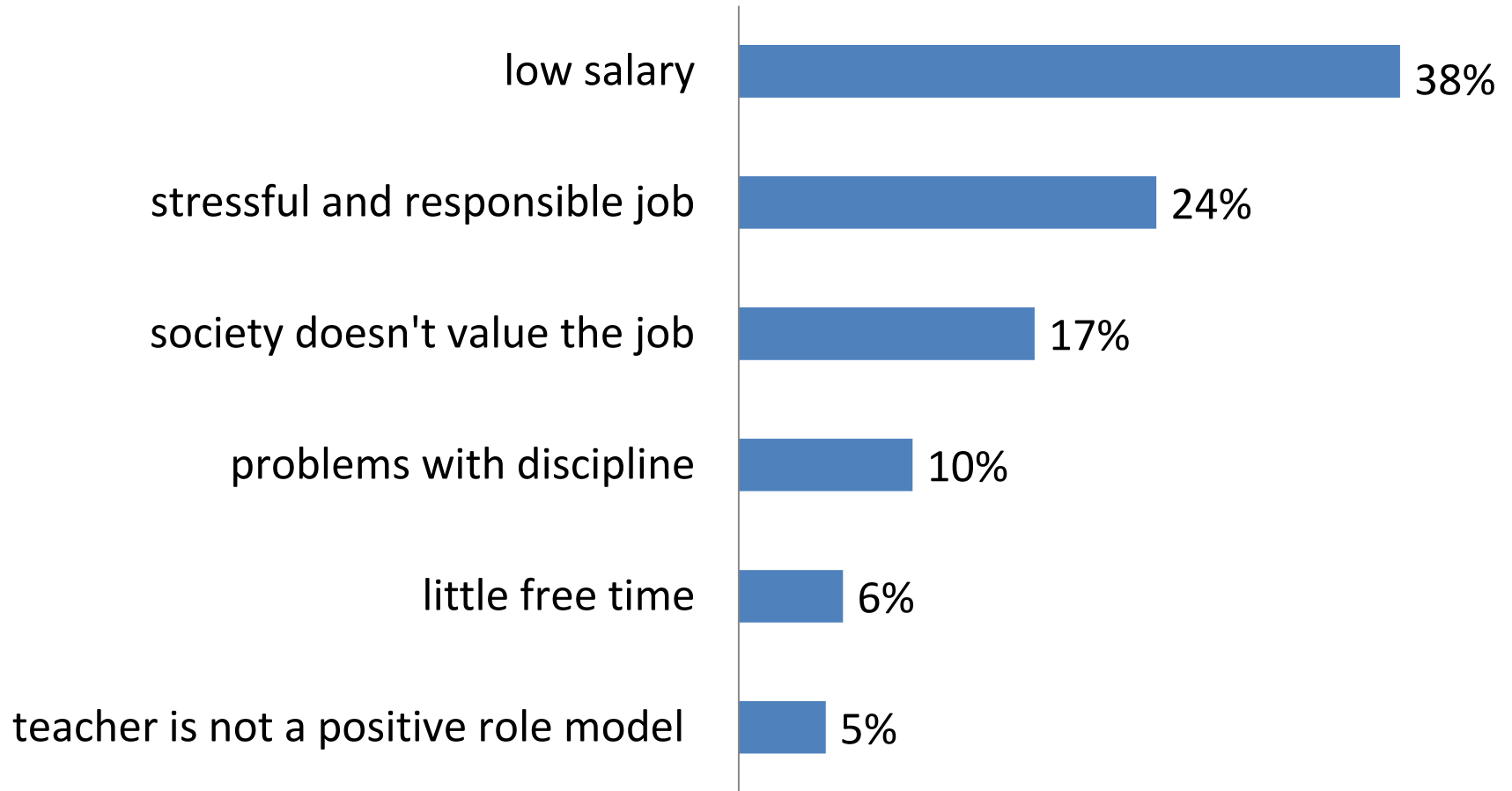
Sample and procedure

- 226 teachers of 13 schools in Pärnu (31% of the total amount)
- Female – 78%; male – 8%; N/A – 14%
- Average age 48 (SD=9.9)
- Average length of service 24 years (SD=11)
- Questionnaire with 15 questions

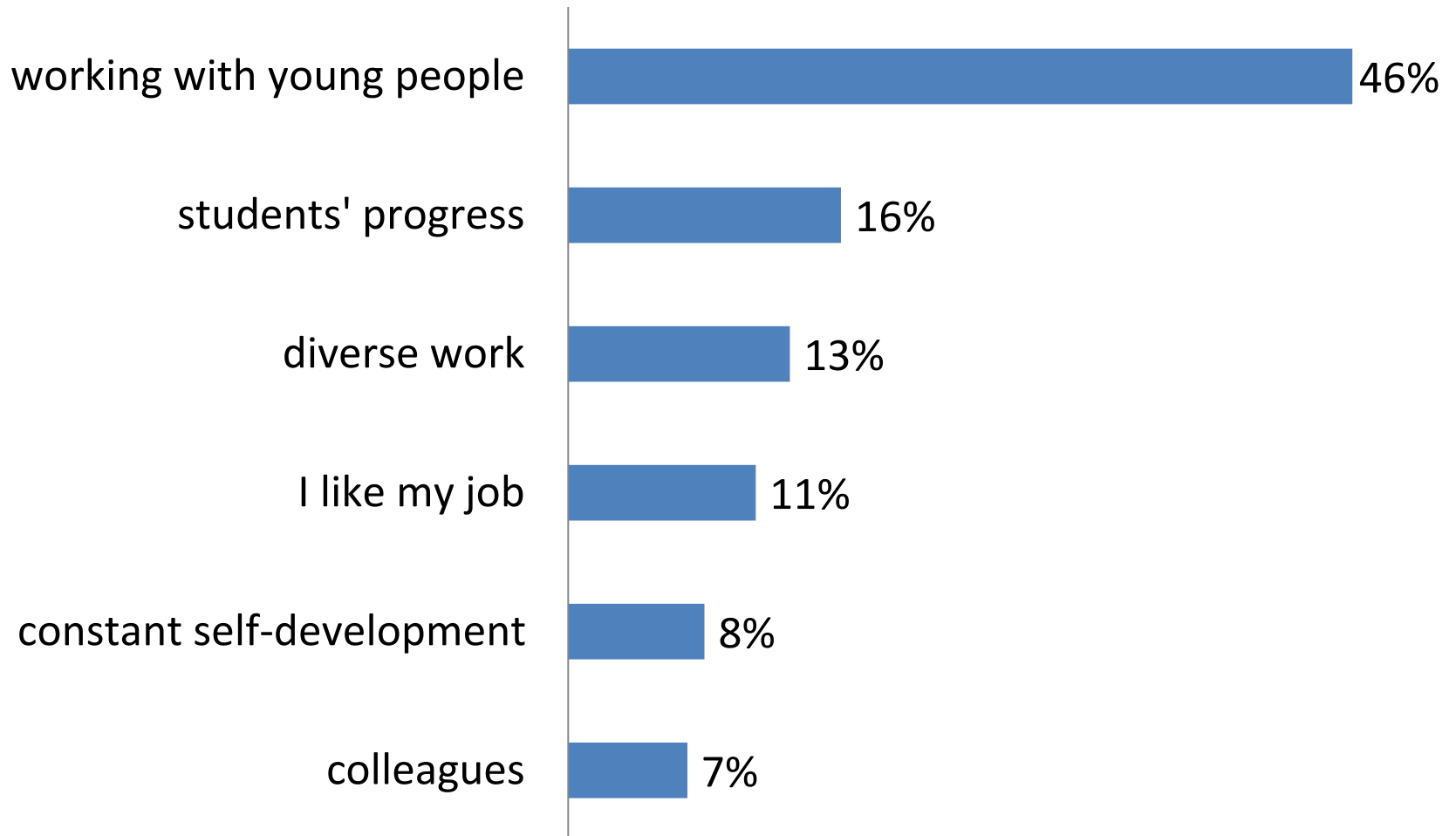
Teacher as a role model



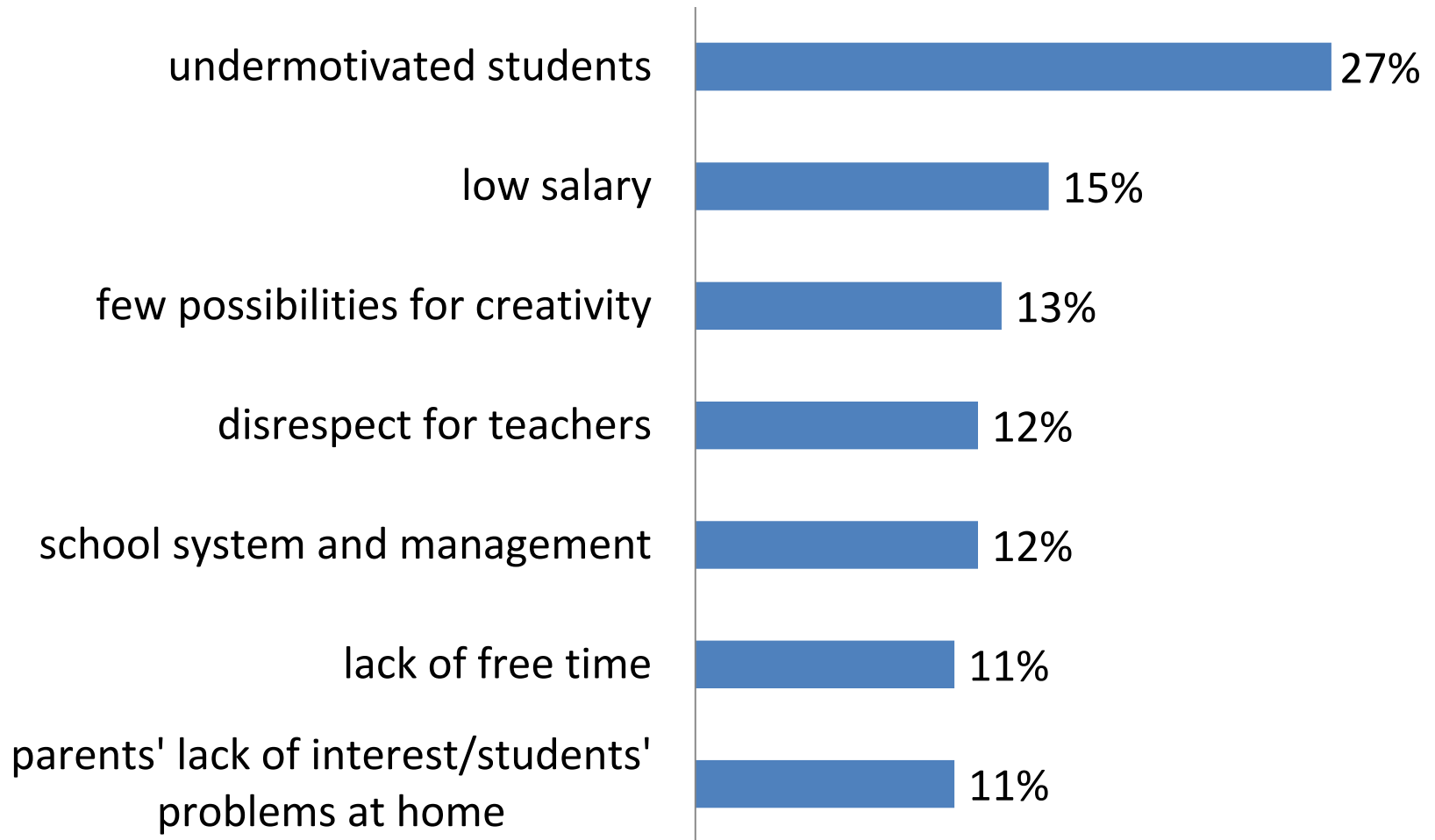
In my opinion students do not want to become teachers because of...



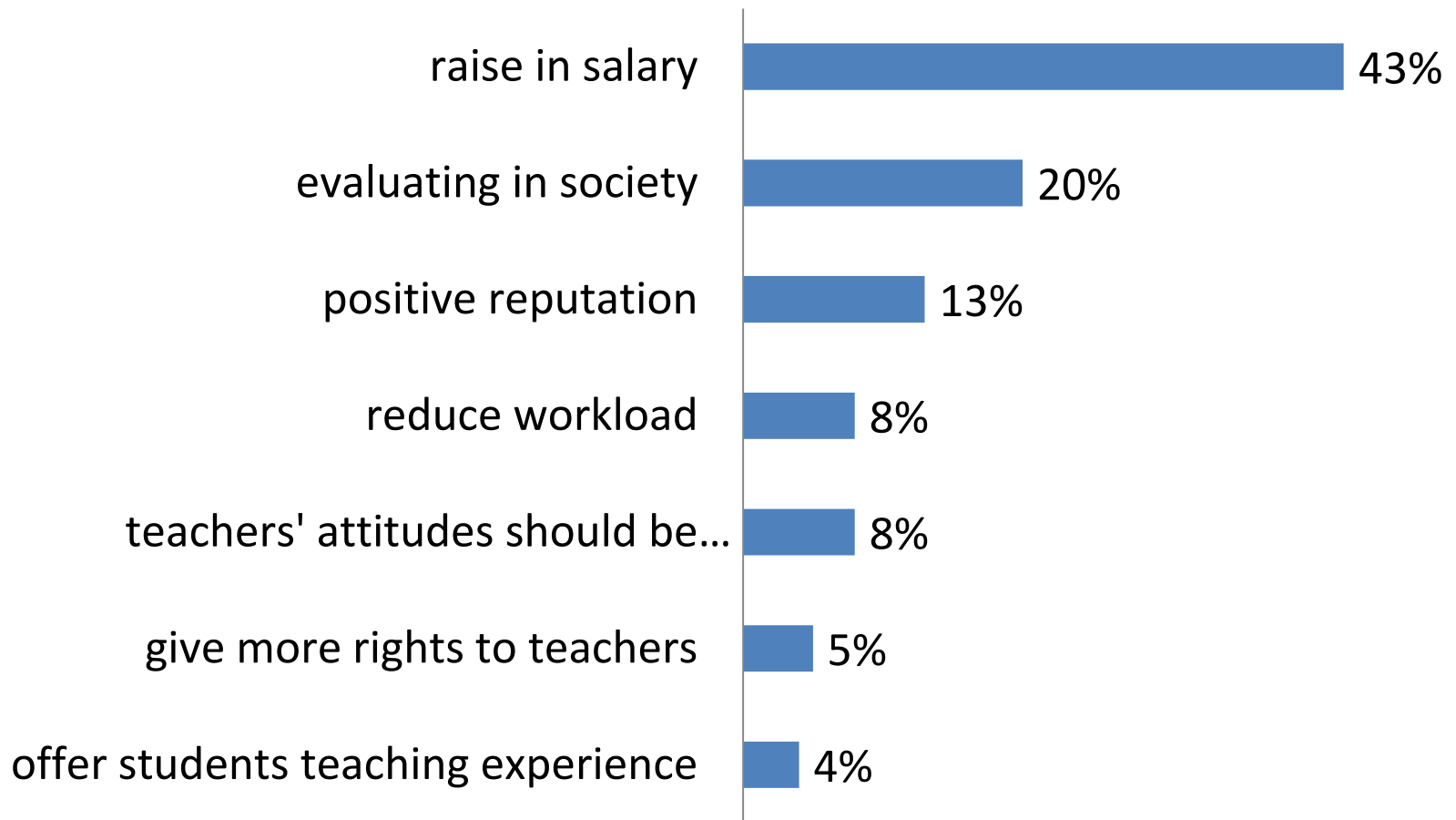
What makes you happy today?



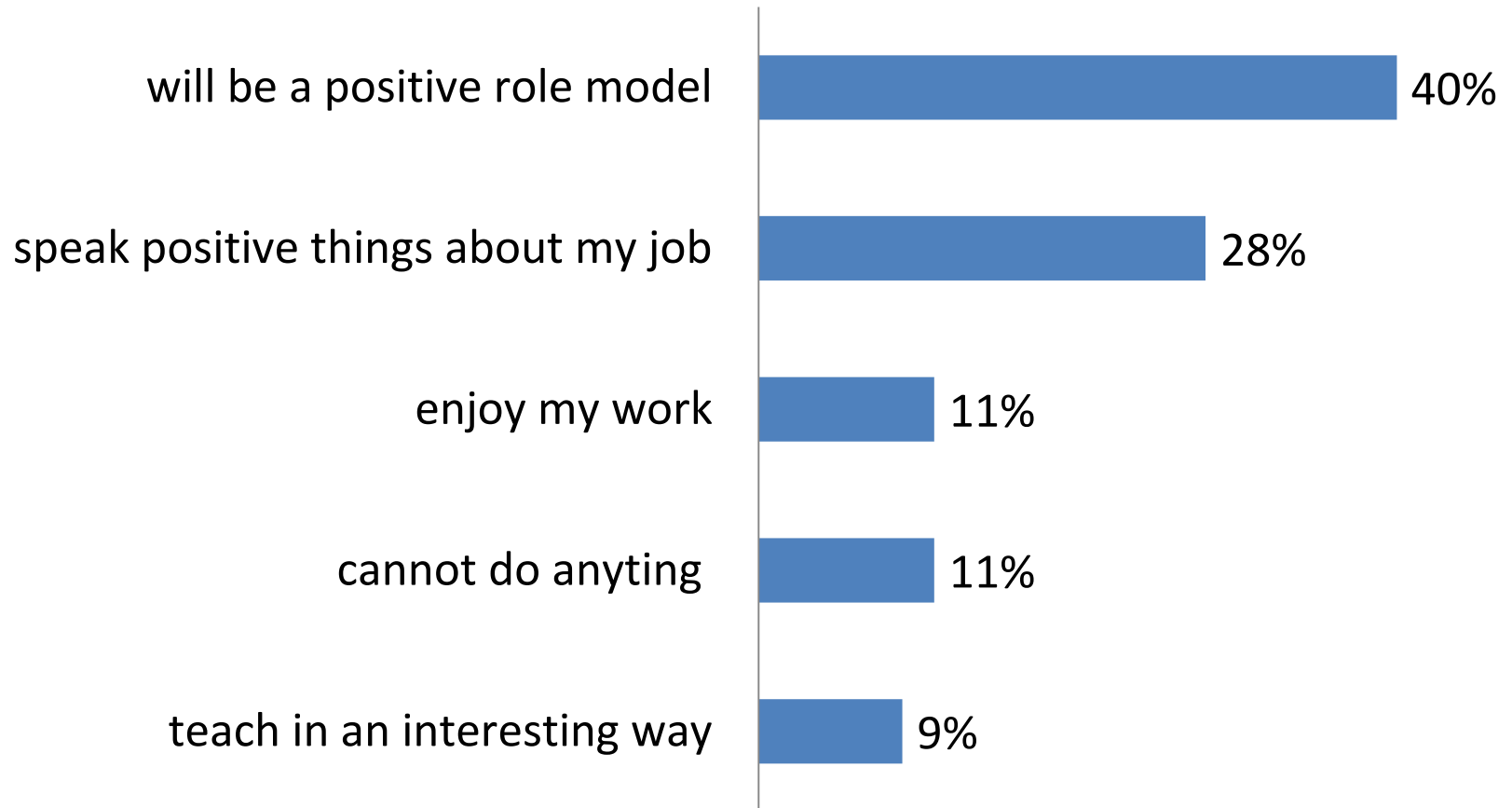
What worries you today?



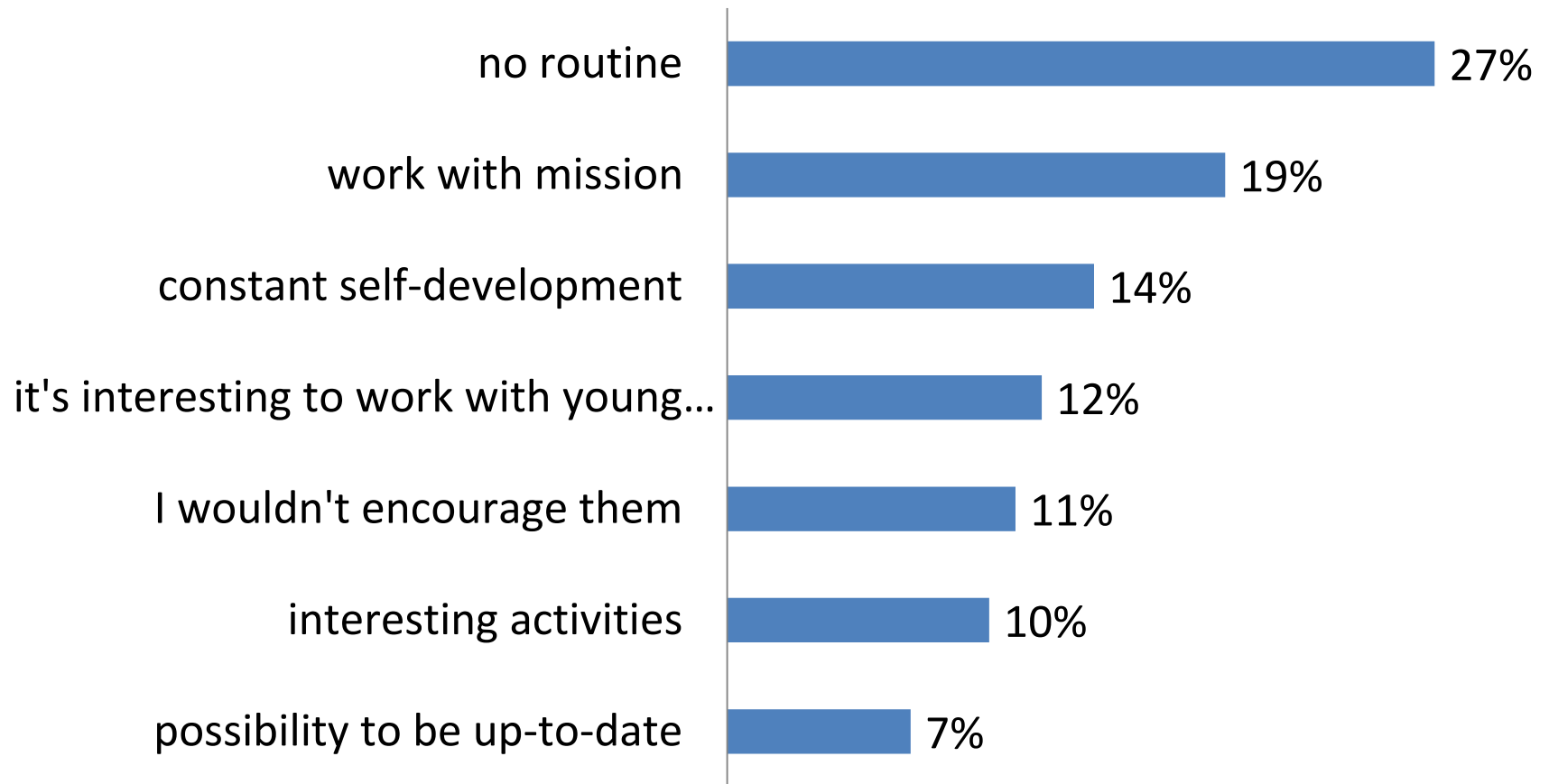
Measures to make young people choose the teaching profession...



What can I do to popularize the teaching profession?



I would encourage my students to choose the teaching profession because...



Teachers' comments

- I love being a teacher.
- I have never regretted my choice. I will leave school only when I retire.
- It's very important to have a friendly working atmosphere – management and colleagues. It's important to feel that you're trusted.
- Parents should also trust teachers. If their attitude is hostile, there can't be any cooperation.

Conclusions – Study II

- A big part of teachers have positive feelings about their job
- Teachers evaluate working with young people and pleasant working atmosphere
- About 10% of the teachers have negative feelings about their job that they also reflect it to their students
- The biggest problems connected with teaching profession reported by teachers are low salary, big workload and high stress

Further activities?

- Teachers' salary and workload – political decisions
- Working atmosphere, stress and tension, support – school administration, colleagues
- Personal feelings, attitudes, values – ourselves





Thank you for attention!

Katrin Saks

katrin.saks@ut.ee