



Perception of Romance Readers: An Analysis of Missouri Librarians

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Library Research Search III
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Arguments Against Romance

- Appeals to prurient interests
- Encourages women's dependence on men
- Encourages passive behavior
- Discourages feminist action



Arguments for Romance

- “Escape” from problems
- Exploration of sexuality
- Portrays strong female characters
- Reinforcement of “feminine” values



Method

- Survey distributed to 126 Missouri public libraries
- 43% response rate (as of October 1)
- Respondents:
 - 51 female, 3 male
 - Modal age category, 50-59 (35%)
 - Modal education level, MLS (46%)

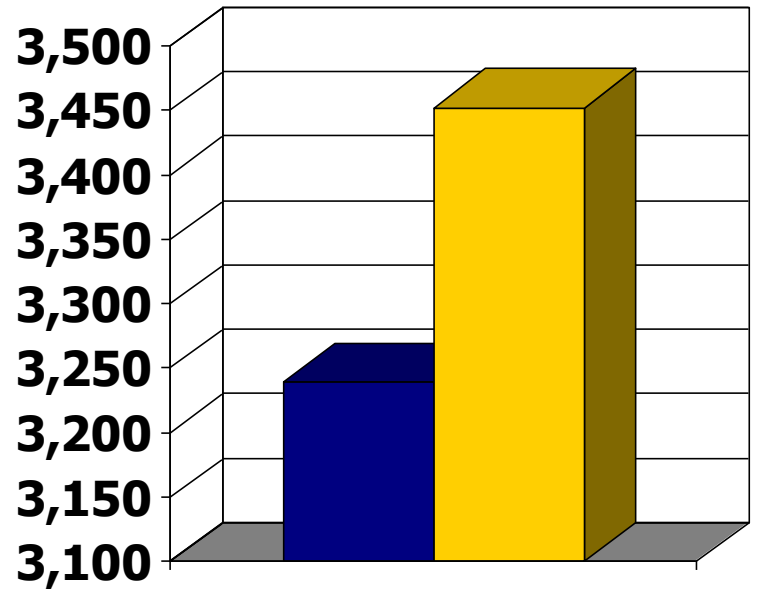


Service Response

- The top responses were:
 - Current Topics & Titles (43)
 - General Information (42)
 - Lifelong Learning (23)
 - Local History & Genealogy (15)
 - Basic Literacy (10)

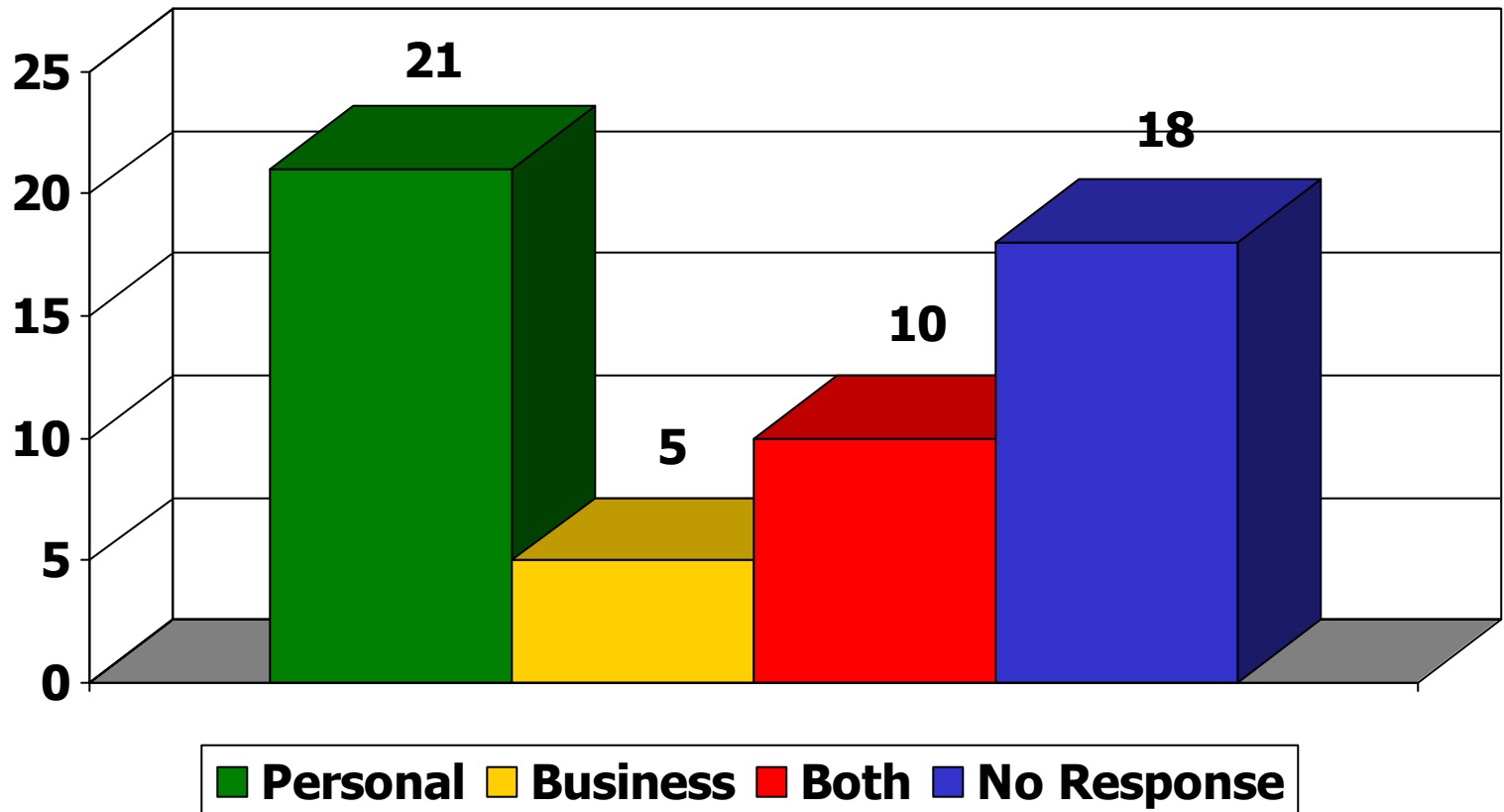
Mean Size of Collection

- Hardbacks 3,239
- Paperback 3,452

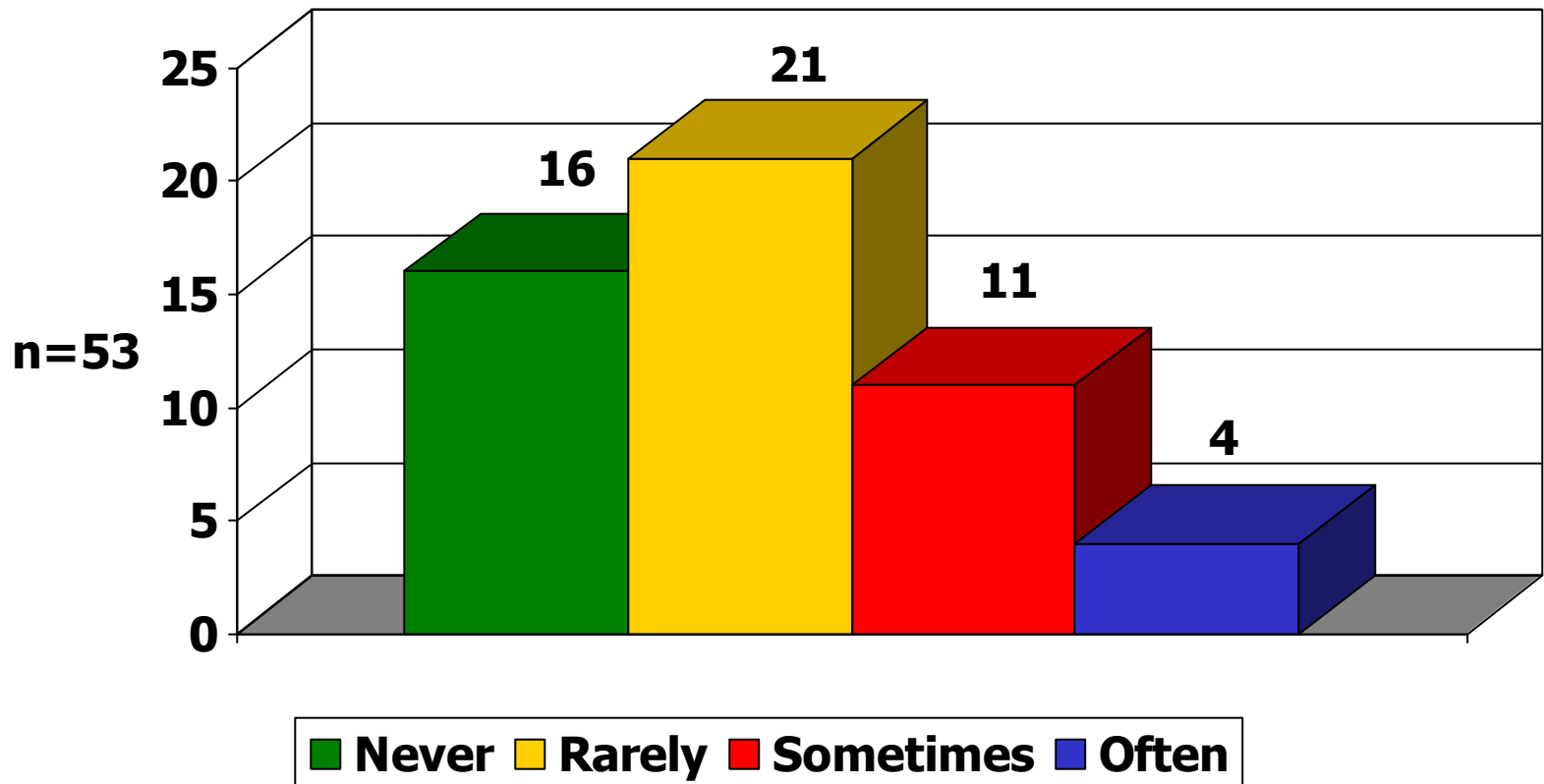


■ Hardbacks ■ Paperbacks

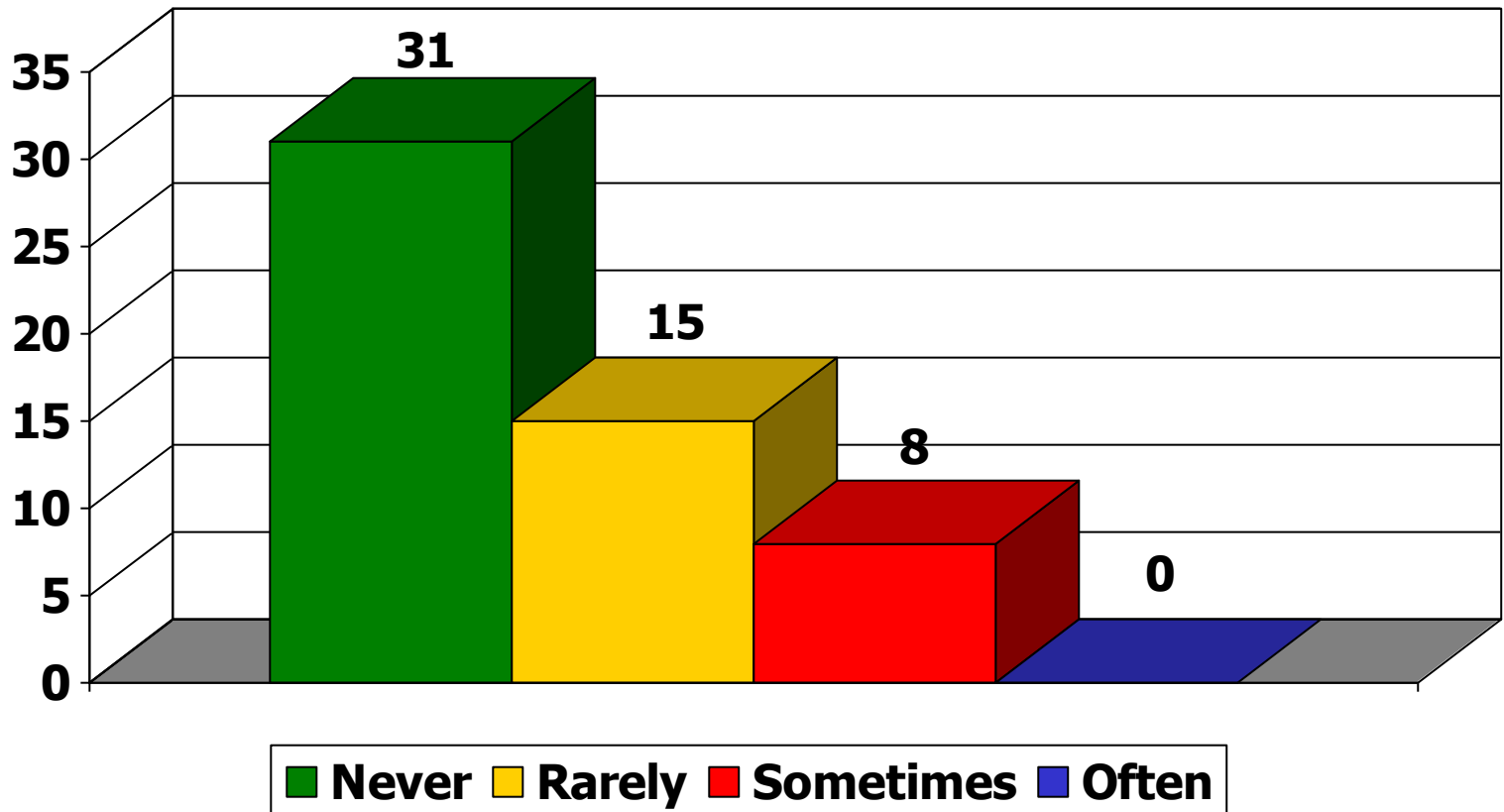
Read Romance Novels for Work-Related Reasons



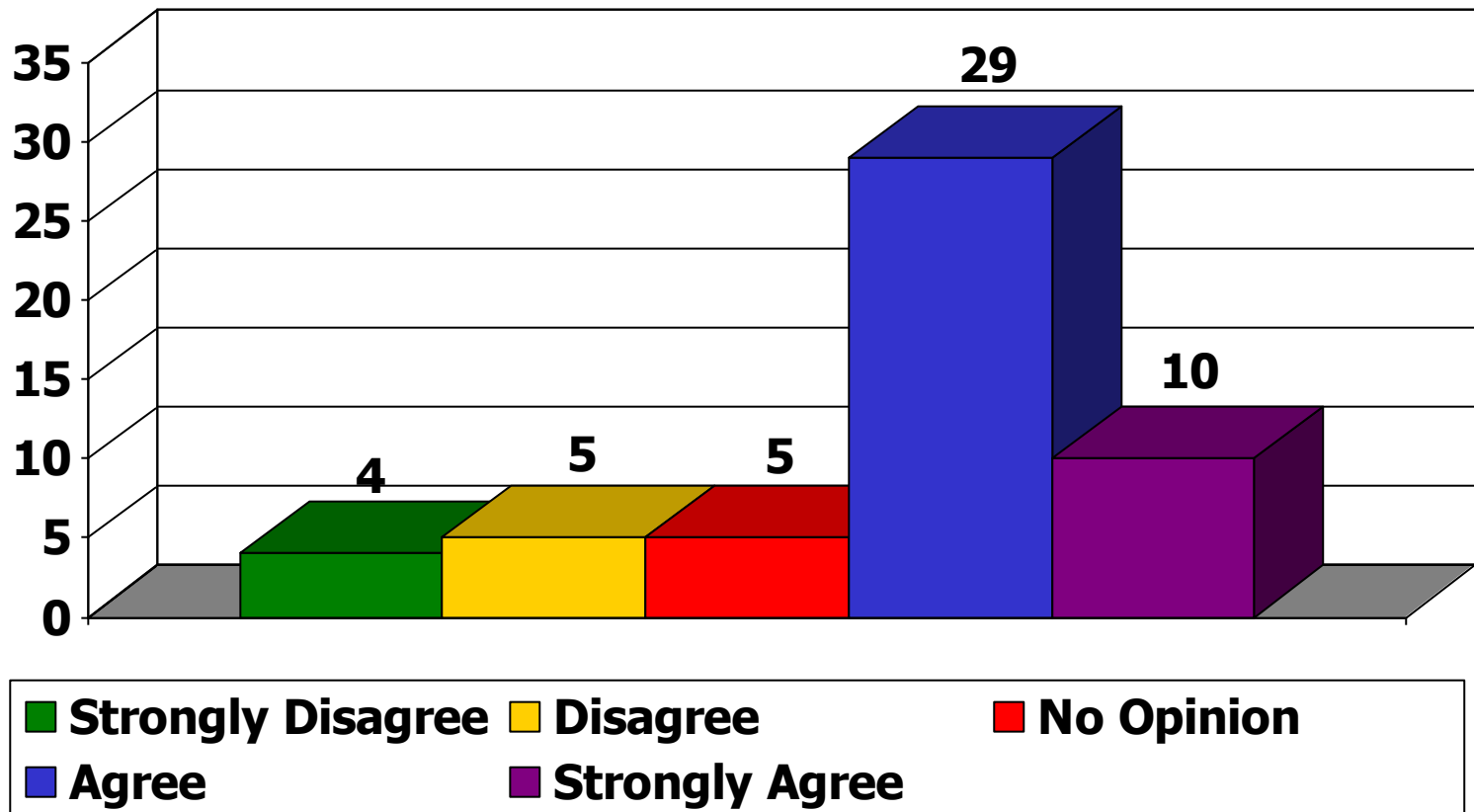
Discuss Romance Novels with Colleagues



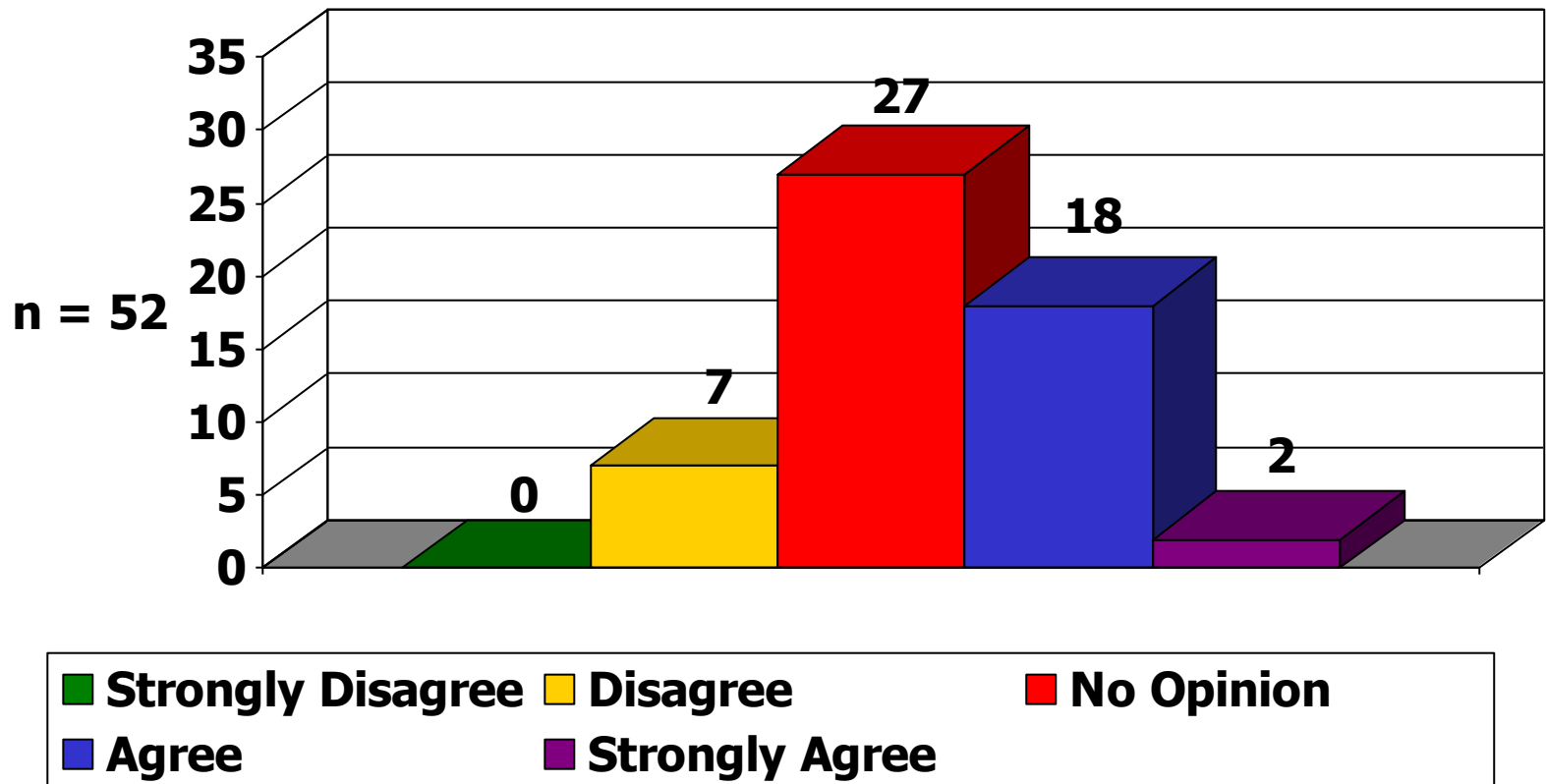
Staff Comments about Romance Reading Patrons



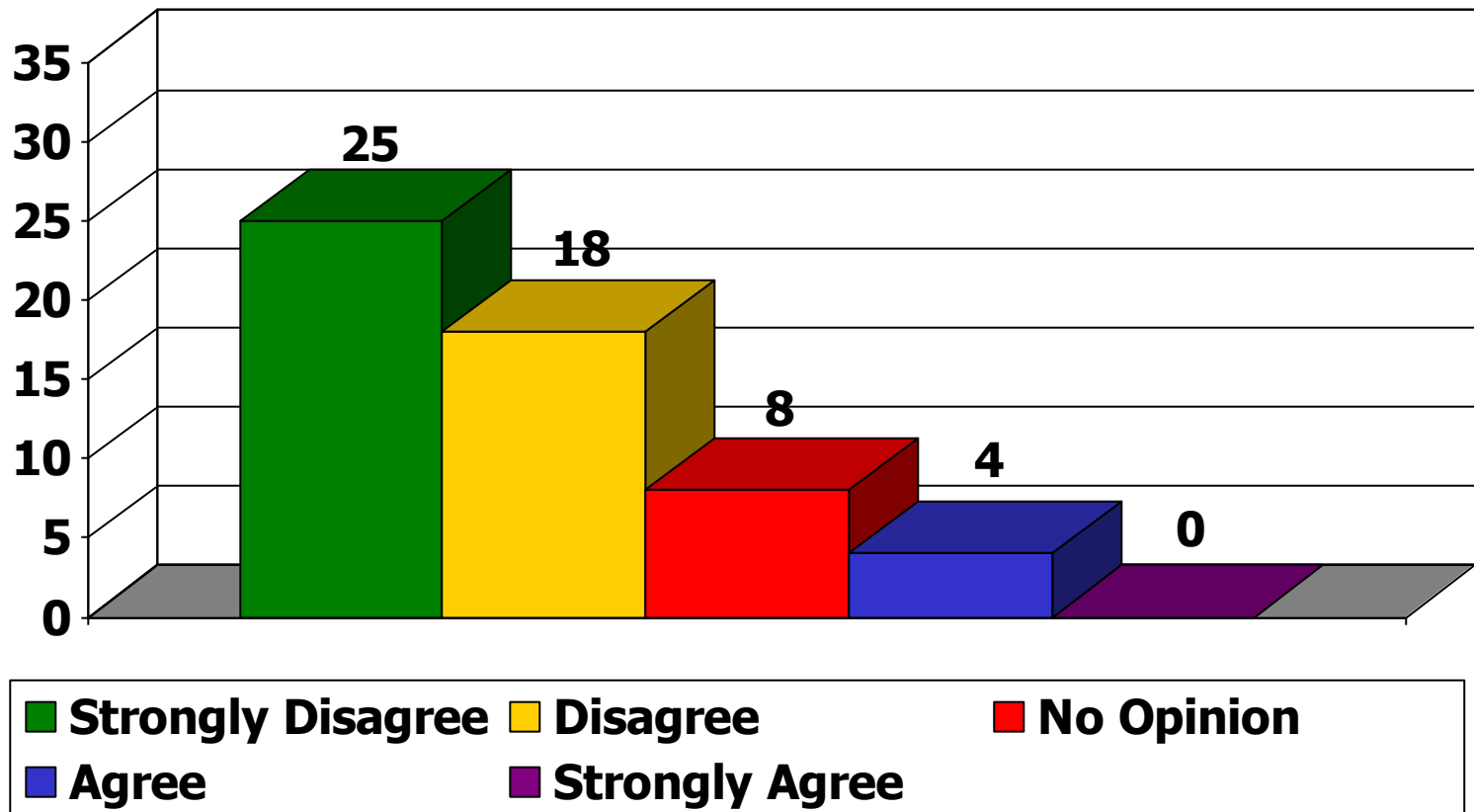
Romance Novels are Very Popular, High Circulating Items



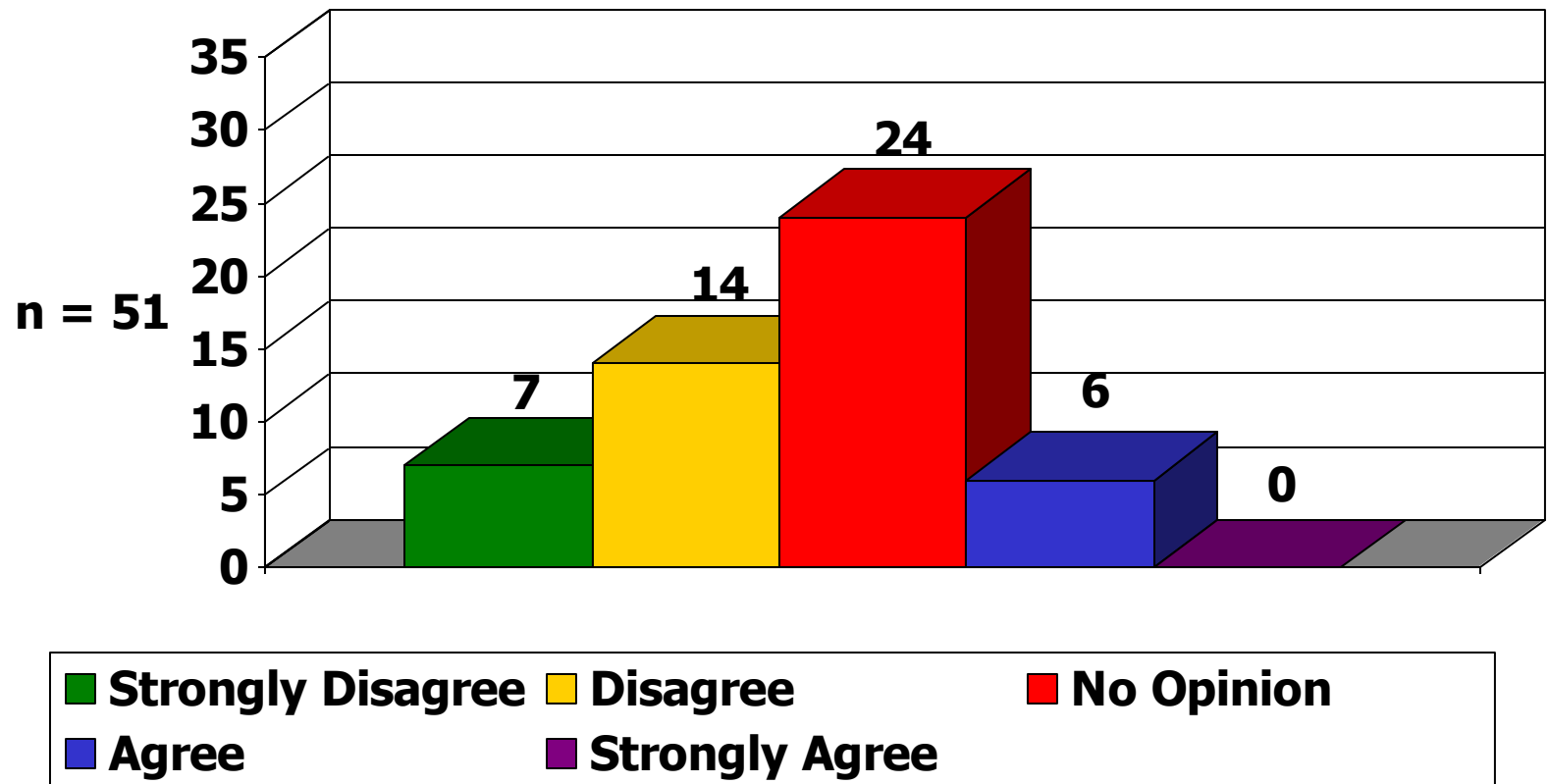
Romance Novels Show Women as Strong, Active Characters that Forge Their own Destinies



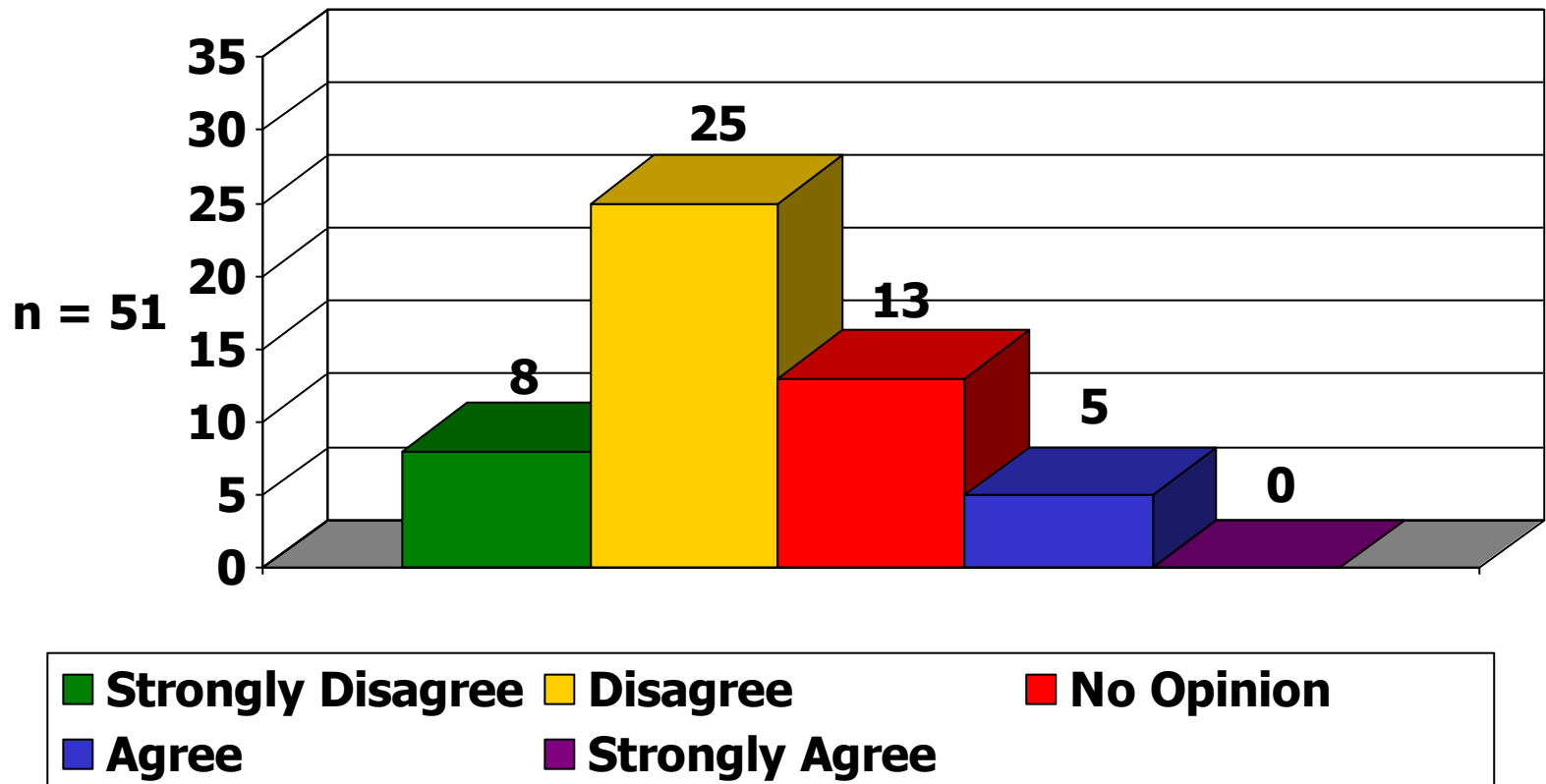
Romance Readers are Less Educated Than Those Who Read Other Kinds of Fiction



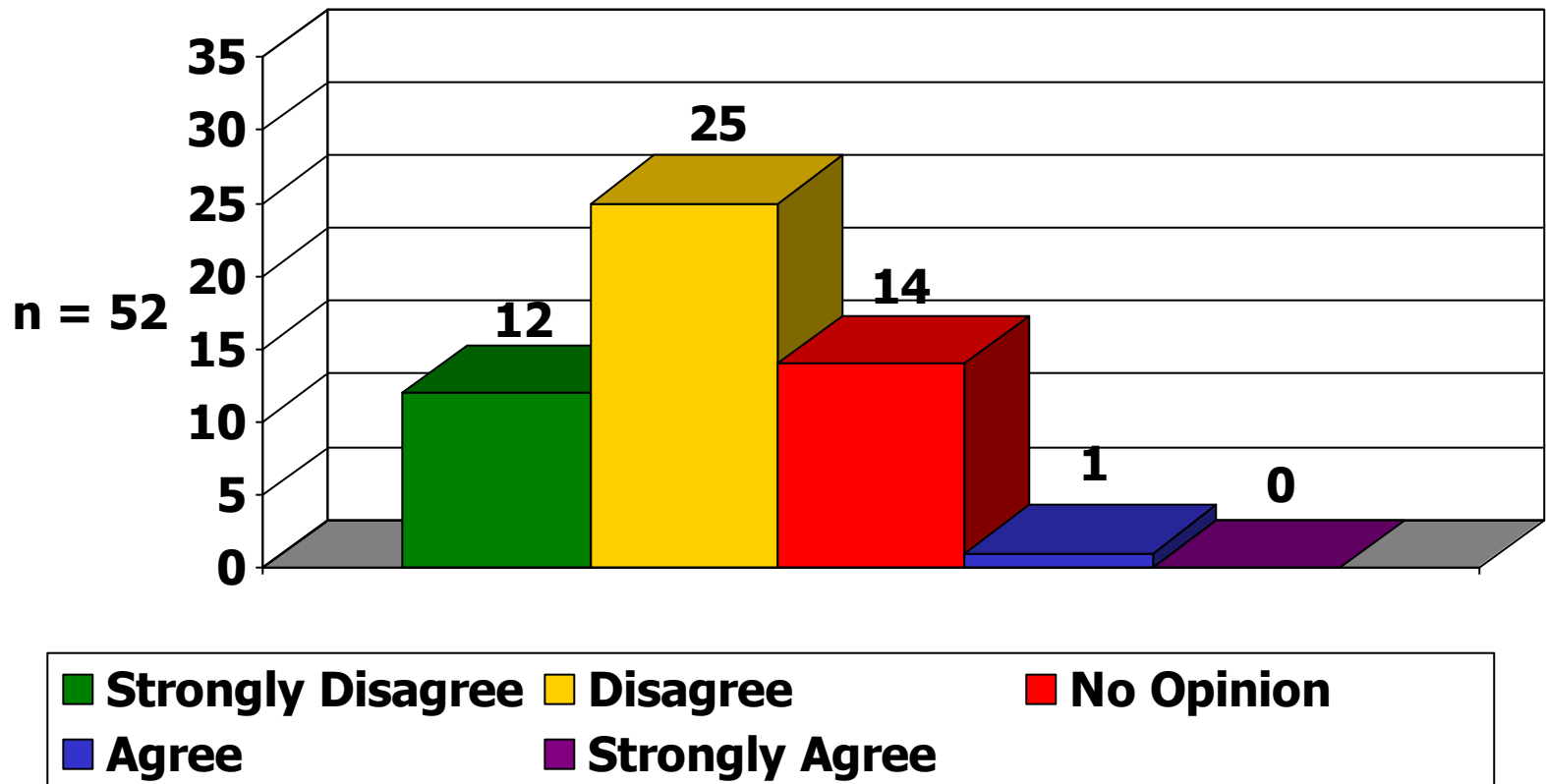
Romance Readers Learn Attitudes and Behaviors from Romance Novels



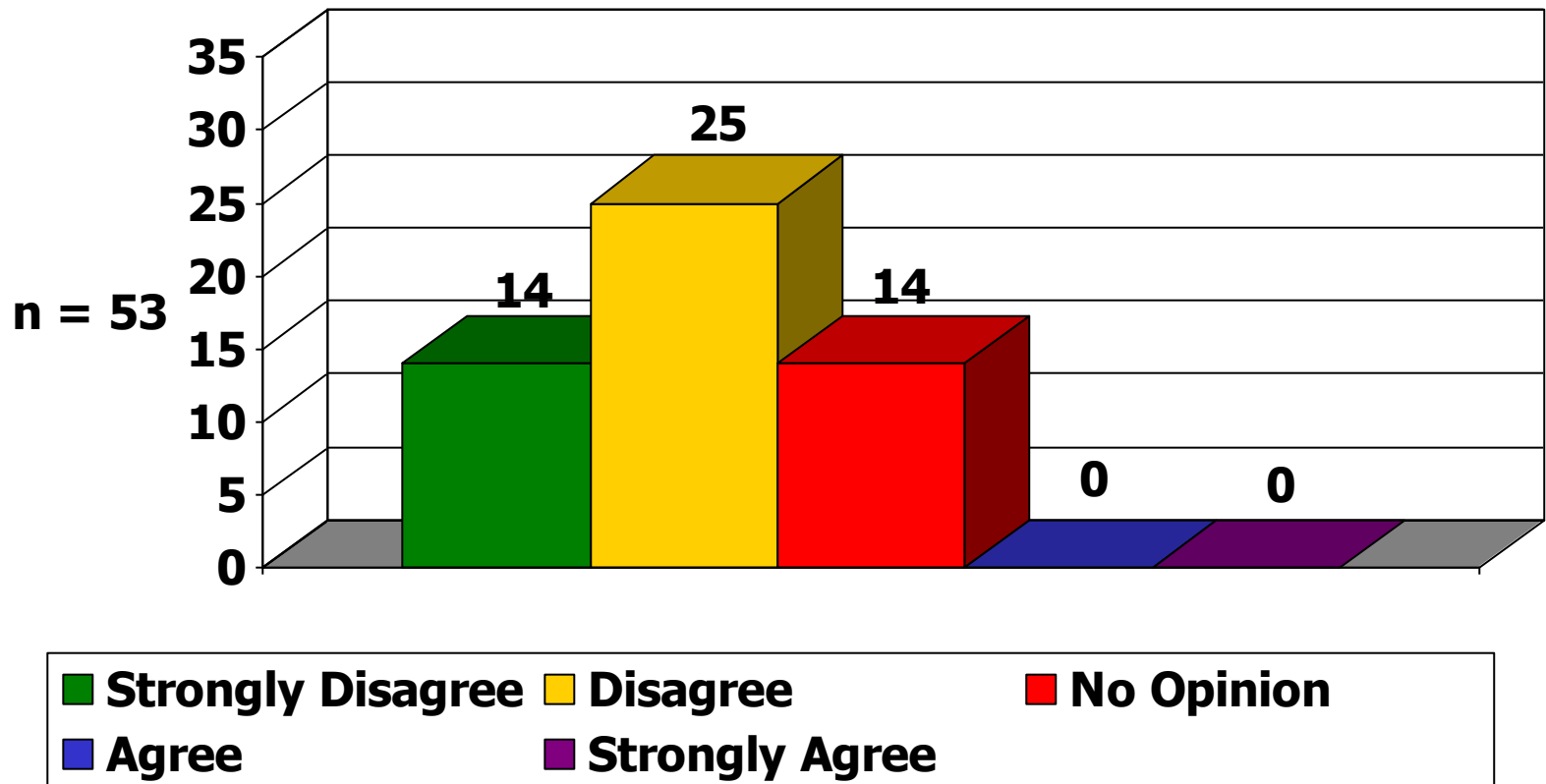
Romance Novels Suggest that a Woman's Happiness is Bound Up in the Traditional Roles of Wife & Mother



Romance Novels are Pornography for Women



Romance Novels are Instruction Manuals on How to "Catch a Man"





Conclusions

- How do Missouri librarians feel about romance novels?
 - How do they feel about pleasure reading?
 - Real opinions versus library school ideology
 - Reader advisory education