

What is evaluation?



osf.io/h65zm/

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“

The process of...
providing *useful*
information for
judging decision
alternatives.”

Daniel Stufflebeam (1973)



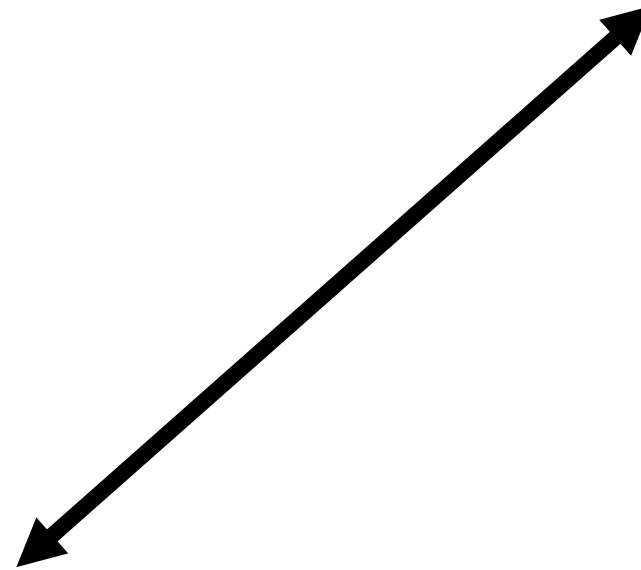
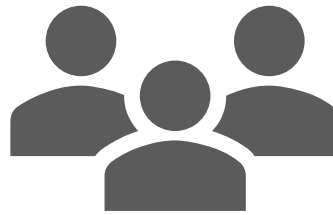
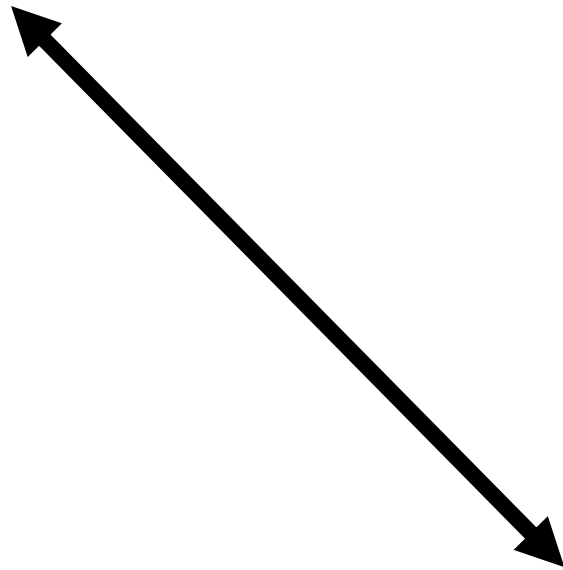
“

The *systematic* determination of the *merit, worth,* or *significance* of something. ”

Michael Scriven (1980)

Decision
Making

Value
Judgment



Research

Seek to generate new knowledge

Researcher-focused

Hypotheses

Make research recommendations

Publish results



Methods & Analysis

Evaluation

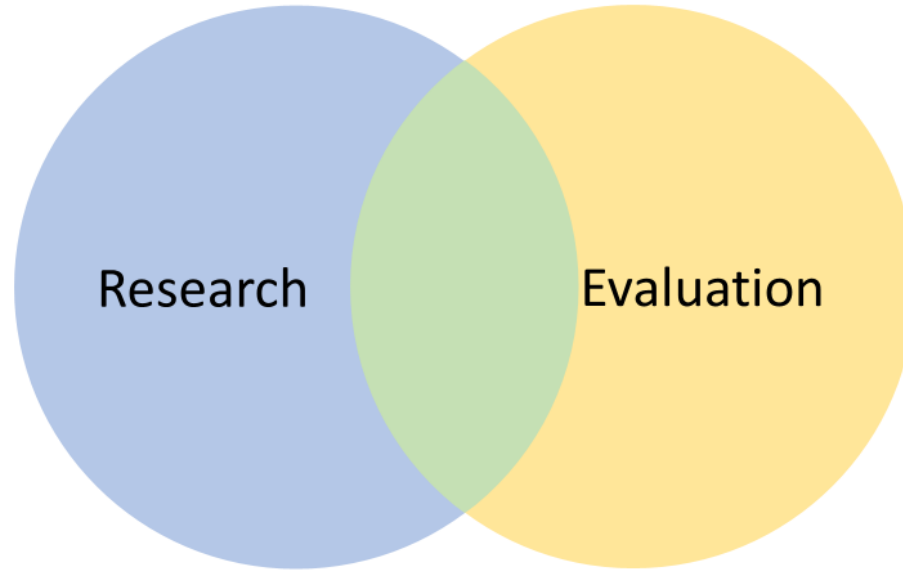
Information for decision-making

Stakeholder-focused

Key questions

Recommendations based on key questions

Report to stakeholders





1. How do evaluators and researchers *define* evaluation?
2. How do they *differentiate* evaluation from research?



**Number
Invited**

985

1563

**Participation
Rate**

233 (23.7%)

499 (31.9%)

**Completion
Rate**

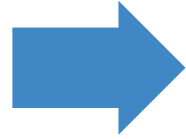
165 (70.8%)

330 (63.5%)

Total: 520

Part I

- “Do you consider yourself primarily a researcher or evaluator?”
- “How do you define program evaluation?”
- “How, if at all, do you differentiate evaluation from research? What is similar and different?”



Part II

- Choose one of the five diagrams that best match their description of how evaluation and research differ (or not)
- Rate how much the two differ across 23 areas on a 3-point Likert scale (“Do not differ”, “Differ somewhat”, “Differ greatly”)



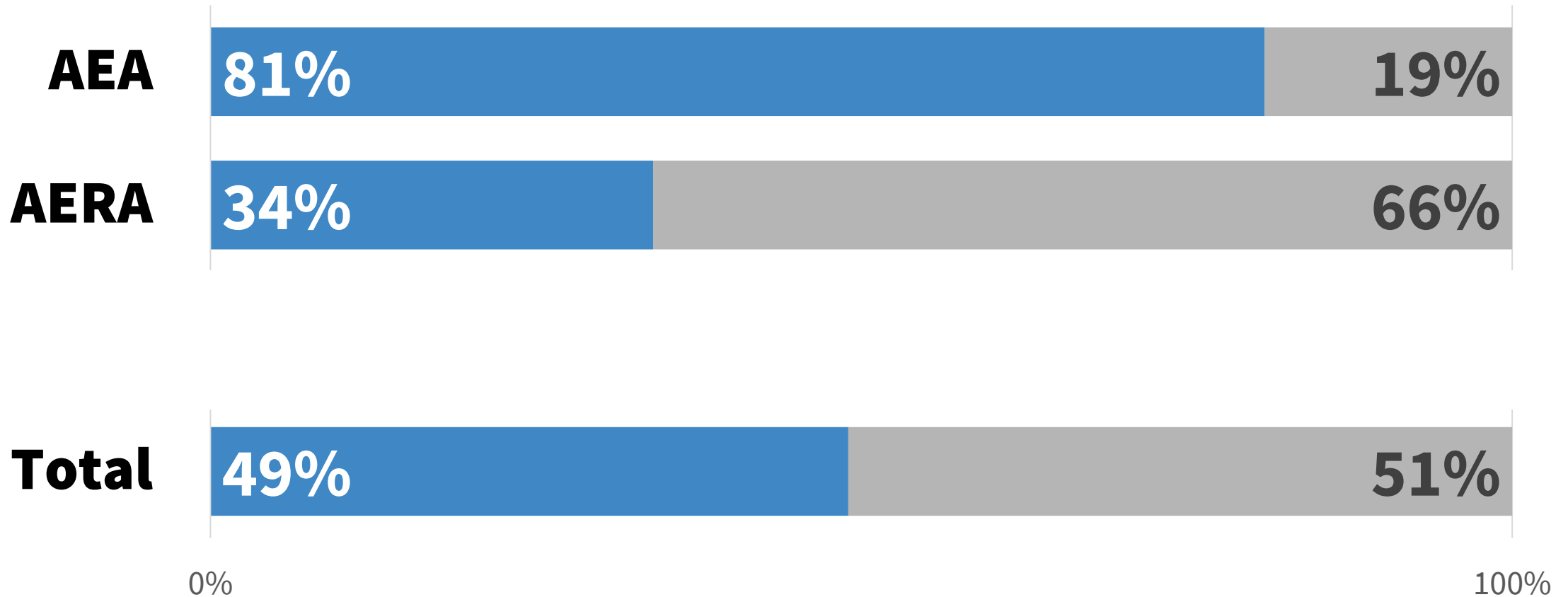
Part III

- Education level and field of study
- Percentage of their work that is evaluation vs research
- Membership in evaluation and research associations
- # of courses and PD in evaluation

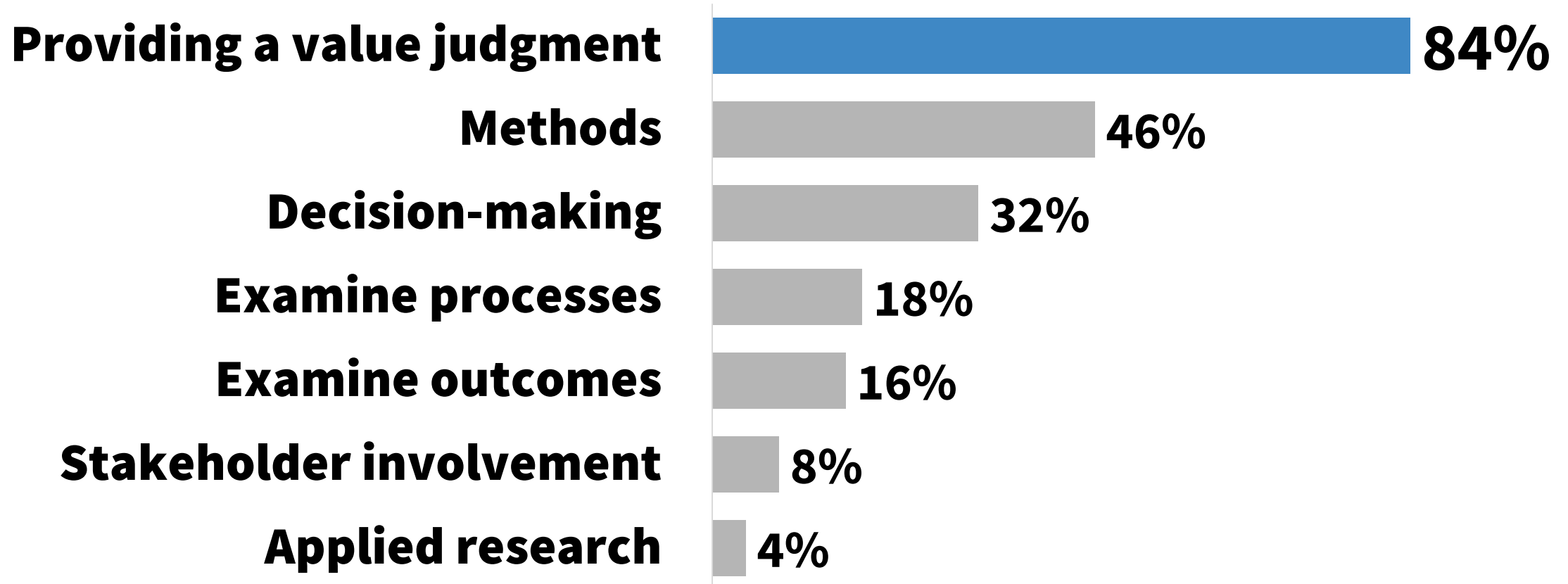
Half of my sample considered themselves primarily an *evaluator*.



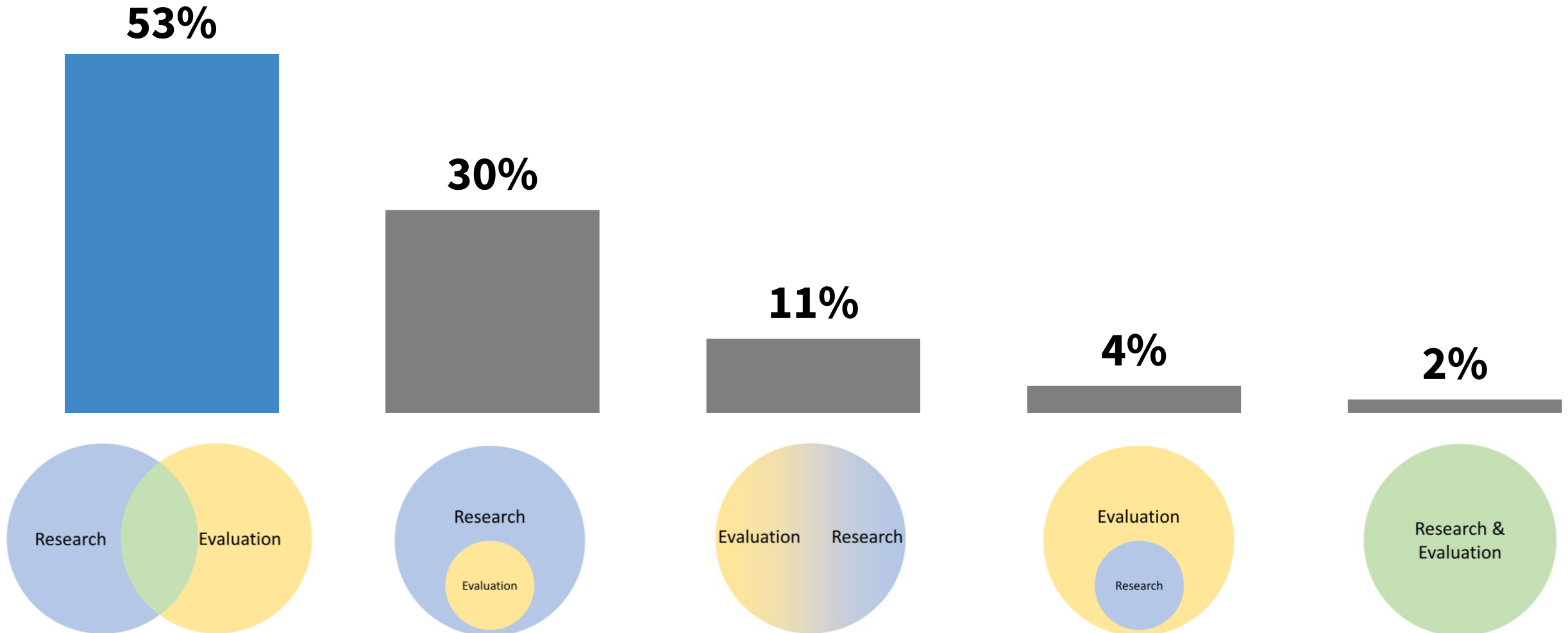
Members of AEA were more likely to consider themselves primarily an *evaluator* than members of AERA DIV H.



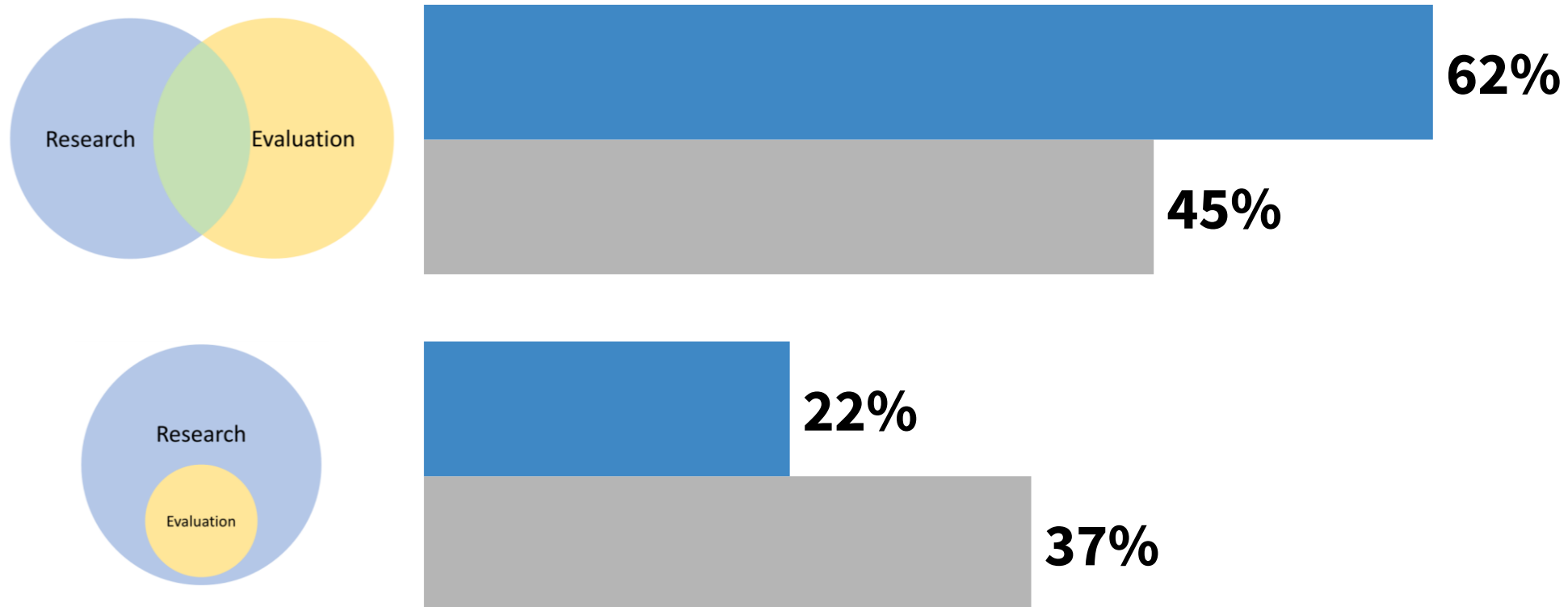
Evaluators and researchers believed evaluation was about *providing a value judgment*.



Most participants thought evaluation and research *intersected*.

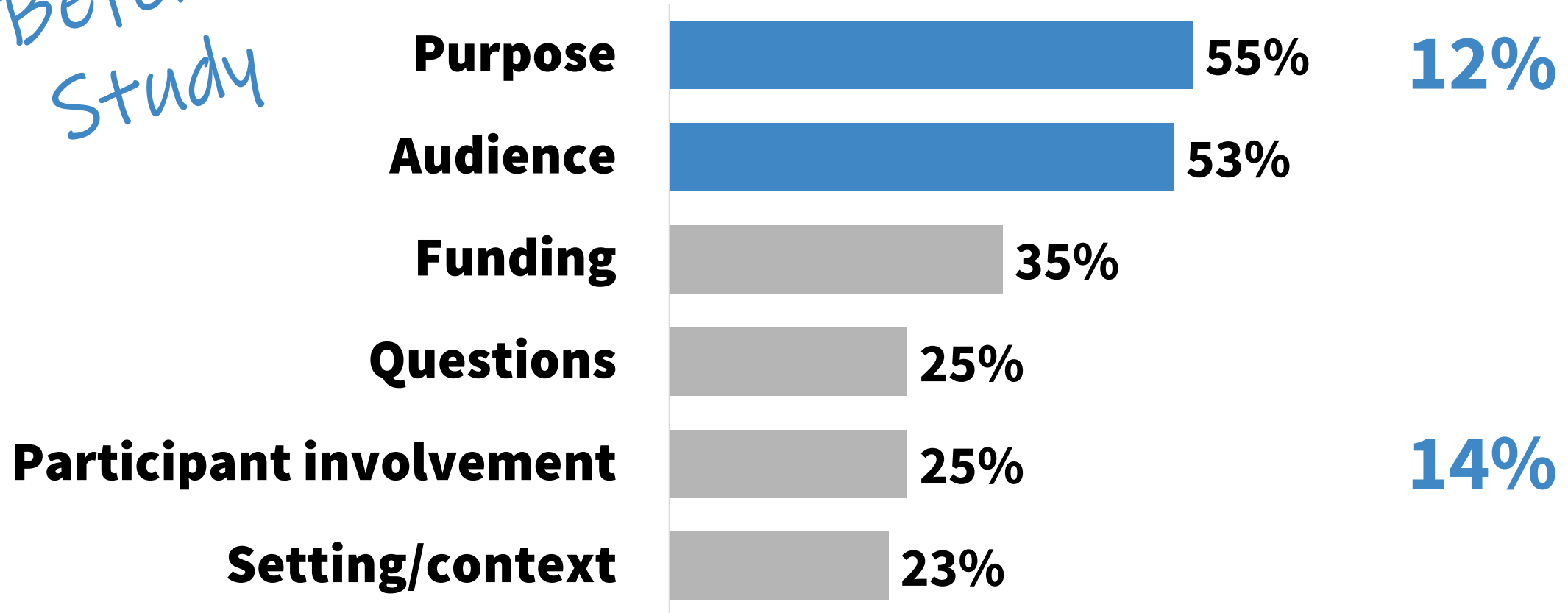


Evaluators were more likely to believe they intersect; *researchers* were more likely to believe evaluation is a sub-component of research.

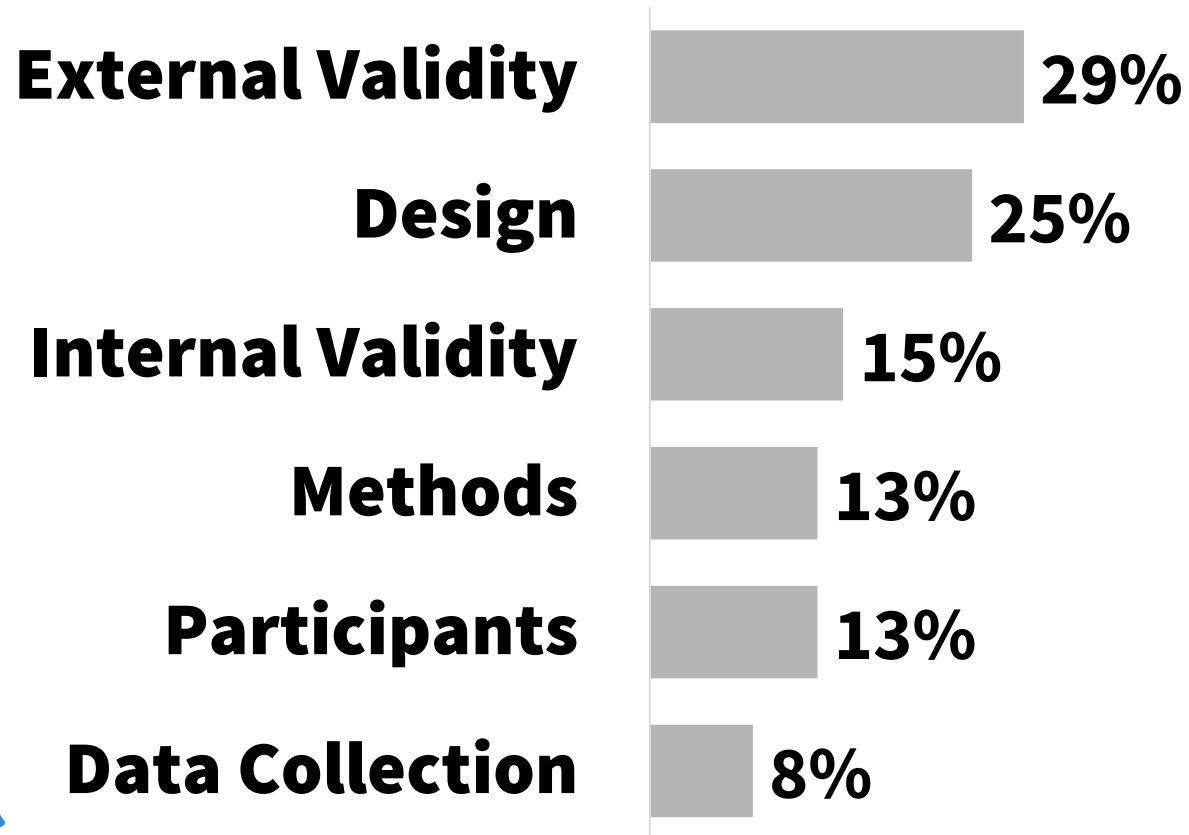


Participants thought evaluation and research differed greatly in *purpose* and *audience*.

Before Study

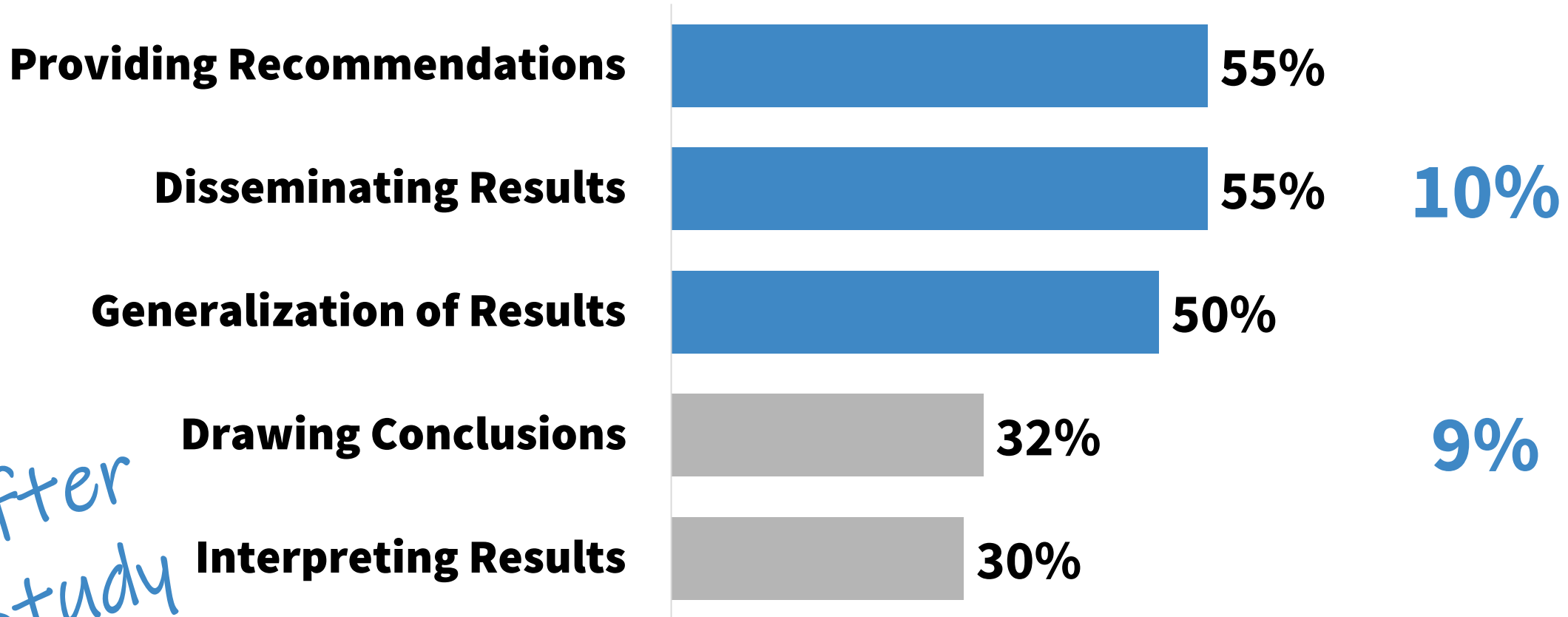


Participants thought they did not differ much in methods/design aspects.



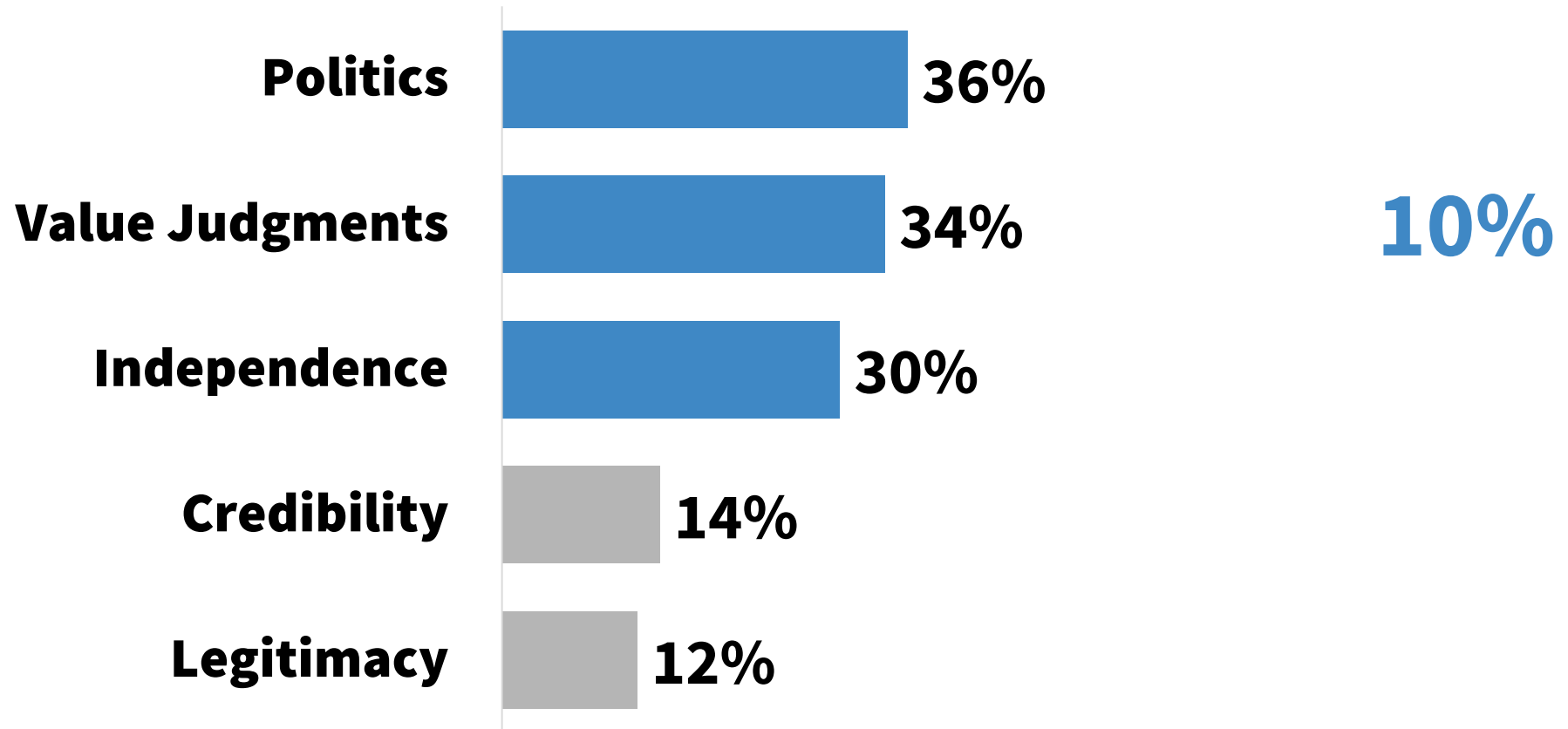
During Study

Participants thought they differed in providing recommendations, disseminating results, and generalization of results.



After Study

Participants thought they differed in politics, value judgements, and independence.



Other
Aspects

1 Evaluation is mostly about value judgments... but 40% of evaluators also think it's about decision-making.

2 Evaluators think evaluation and research overlap; researchers think evaluation is a sub-component of research.

3 Evaluation differs most from research in purpose, recommendations, dissemination, generalization, and audience.

4 More evaluators think evaluation and research differ greatly across many areas compared to researchers.



“

Evaluation is the
largest
profession that
no one's heard of.

”

John Gargani (2016)



//

Evaluation is the
largest
profession that
no one's heard of...
...for now. //

Materials and
preprint
available at

osf.io/h65zm/

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