



Leadership and Team Work Competencies for Librarians and Effective Service Delivery Patterns in the Selected Academic Libraries

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the concepts of academic library, librarian leadership and ways to develop leadership skills through best practices. The present library architecture in the academic environment, roles and responsibility of the staff, professional mentorship and skills, user education and collection development strategies, and their respective service delivery patterns to their users in both the reference service and the information service were discussed. A quantitative approach was used, and data were collected through a questionnaire from the 20 well-experienced academic librarians in selected regions.

This study shall be helpful for library professionals, knowledge management professionals, and LIS aspirants in policy making and the offering of professional training and education for library leaders

KEYWORDS: Leadership Competencies, Academic Library, Library Leaders, Staff Responsiveness

1. EXPLORING LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES:

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Library is a service-oriented sector, aimed at serving the knowledge community and librarianship to enrich, enlighten and empower the public with information both nascent and retrospective (Asha Narang and Jatinder Kumar, 2016). Competence is the adeptness of individuals to do their job in a structured manner. Key Leadership Competencies are the mixture of skills, knowledge, characteristics, and behaviours that contribute to a particular employee's performance in a specific role. The qualities of a successful leader strategically include honesty, ability to delegate, communication, confidence, readiness to take risk, a positive attitude, creativity, initiative, passion, courage, emotional stability, the virtuosity of management, generosity, and the ability to listen. The term "bibliologist" refers to a person who studies bibliography in the field of library in various ways, whether in a junior position or as an administrator. Information and communication technology developments have had a substantial impact on library resources and services. The varying information needs of users make the librarian more competitive and interesting. The development of information technology and the expansion of online content have accelerated the spread of information, thereby increasing the demand for more library features. It has been observed that library professionals are working very hard to manage library collections effectively.

Competencies in information and communication technology, information systems, knowledge management, and eLearning are essential for information professionals working in academic libraries. Teams of academic libraries are expected to conduct themselves with the utmost integrity while interacting with students, faculty, research scholars, other professionals and library members. Professionals must not allow their individual attitudes and opinions to dictate who is obliged and what materials are selected and displayed. Librarian as a professional, requires leadership skills to manage staff, collections, resources and services.

2. LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES:

- **BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCY**

Life skills are problem-solving behaviors used appropriately and conscientiously in management areas. It is a set of skills acquired through education or direct experience that enable us to solve problems and frequently ask questions in people's daily lives. For example, communication, analytical ability, problem resolutions, initiatives etc.

- **FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCY**

Functional proficiency deals with functions, processes and roles within an organization. It includes the knowledge and skills to perform activities necessary to successfully complete a particular job or task. Examples include application system development, networking and communication, database analysis and design, etc.

- **PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY**

Professional competencies are those that enable success in an organizational context. They are the factors that drive performance or – if there is a lack of strength and not enough quality – the reasons why people cannot excel at work. Examples include business environment, industry and professional standards, negotiation, people management, etc.

3. MANDATORY SKILLS FOR LIBRARY LEADERS AND MANAGERS:

- COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- CHANGE MANAGEMENT SKILLS
- TEAM MANAGEMENT AND BUILDING SKILLS
- COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP SKILLS
- EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS
- PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS
- TESTIMONY BASED DECISION-MAKING SKILLS
- CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS SKILLS (PERSONNEL)
- BUDGET CREATION AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS
- FORWARD-THINKING SKILLS
- CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS
- PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS
- MARKETING AND ADVOCACY

4. EXPLORATION, METHODOLOGY AND REVIEW:

EXPLORATION OBJECTIVES AIMS AT

- Identifying the competencies of library professionals working in academic libraries.
- Defining leadership competencies for academic librarians.
- Investigating the training needs of librarians working in academic library environment.
- Exploring user-centric service delivery patterns
- Identifying the LIS professional's ability to communicate and work with different cultured people.
- Understanding the concept of leadership in the purview of academic librarianship
- Discussing service delivery patterns of selected academic libraries in Karnataka, India

5. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY:

Various authors have discussed “leadership competency” based on their personal and professional experiences, studies and observations.

This research is based on primary research which was carried out to review the literature on the skill sets and competencies of LIS professionals working in the digital environment. The sample unit for the study is the selected academic librarian from Karnataka. The total sample size for the study is 30 respondents, and closed-ended questionnaires were prepared. All the academic library leaders hold a professional master’s LIS degree. Their professional work experience ranges from 12 to 30 years, and their experience as library leaders ranges from 4 to 30 years. This shows that the participants had good years of work experience in terms of library leadership positions in academic libraries. The analysis of the study was done using Advanced MS Excel to study the leadership qualities of librarians in the academic sector. The data analysis defined the key skill sets and competencies of academic LIS professionals, classified into three categories: administrative skills, interpersonal skills and conceptual skills.

APPROACHES TO COMPETENCY MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

To explore academic librarians' competency levels and how leadership competencies can be used to structure and support their everyday library management and service delivery patterns. Based on the exploration indicated below, the exploration addresses three managerial leadership skills.

6. LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND COMPETENCY FOR LIBRARIANS:

ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

- I am effective with the detailed aspects of my work.
- Filling out forms and working with details comes easily to me.
- Managing people and resources is one of my strengths
- In my work, I enjoy responding to people's requests and concerns
- Obtaining and allocating resources is a challenging aspect of my job.
- I am effective at obtaining resources to support our programs
- Do you know your ideal client's pain points well enough to encourage them to take action when they hear/see you speak?

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- I usually know ahead of time how people will respond to a new idea or proposal.
- Understanding the social fabric of the organization is important to me.
- I am able to sense the emotional undercurrents in my group.
- I use my emotional energy to motivate others.
- The key to successful conflict resolution is respecting my opponent.
- I work hard to find consensus in conflict situations
- Do you consider yourself to be a recognized industry leader?

CONCEPTUAL SKILLS

- I am effective at problem-solving
- When problems arise, I immediately address them.
- Seeing the big picture comes easily to me.
- Making strategic plans for my company appeals to me
- I enjoy discussing organizational values and philosophy
- I am flexible about making changes in our organization

7. ANALYSING, INTERPRETING DATA AND RESULTS

ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS:

I am effective with the detailed aspects of my work

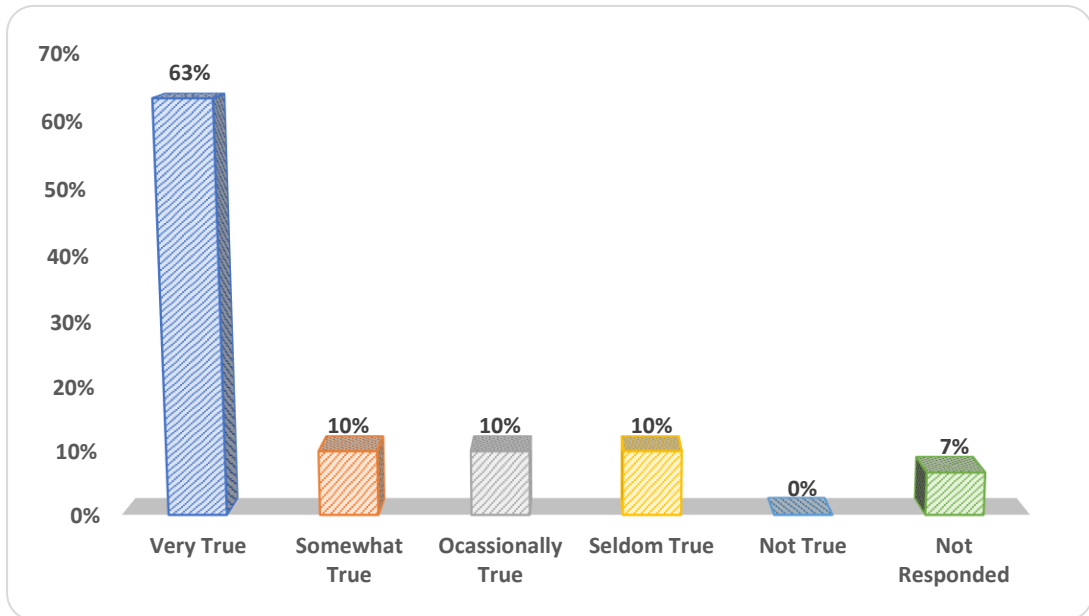


Chart No. 01

- About 63% of the respondents agreed that they are effective in the detailed aspects of their work.
- About 7% of the respondents have not responded to this question.

Filling out form and working with details comes easily to me

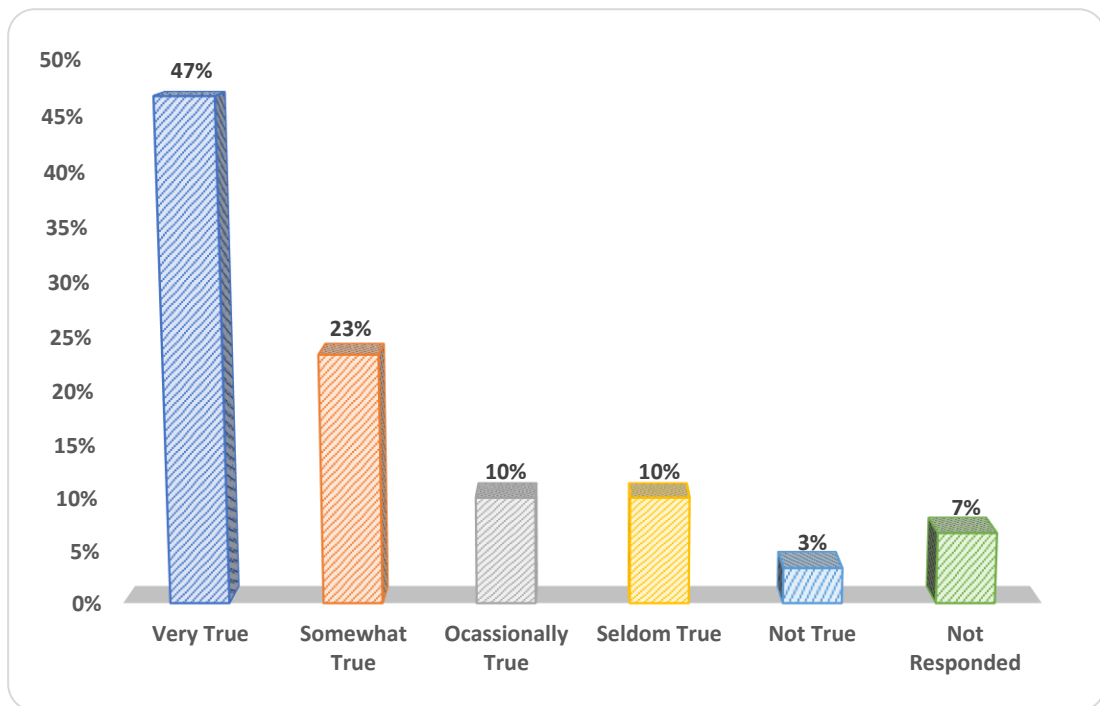


Chart No. 02

- About 47% of the respondents agreed that filling out forms was easy.
- About 3% of the respondents did not agree that filling out forms is easy.
- About 7% of the respondents have not answered this question.

Managing people and resources is one of my strengths

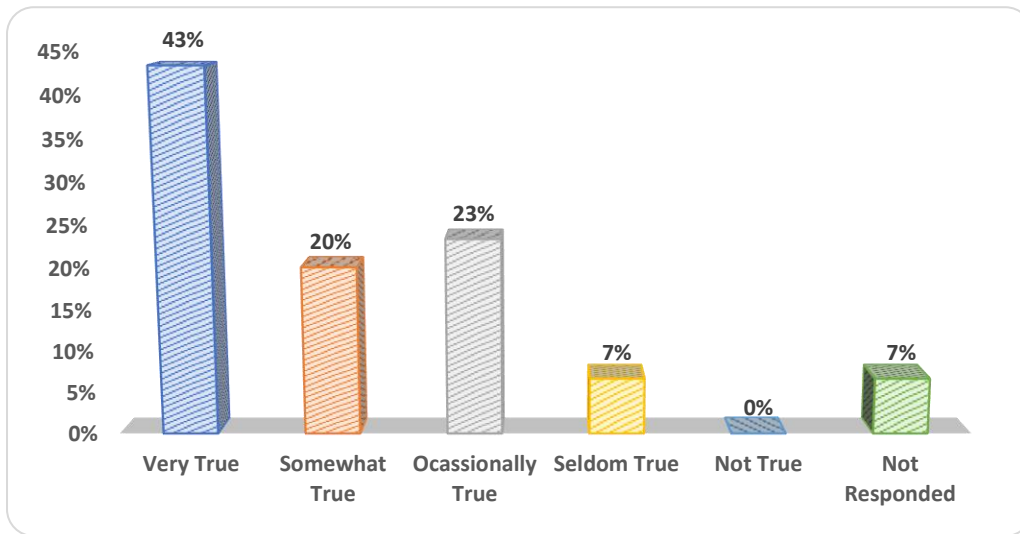


Chart No. 03

- About 43% of the respondents agree that managing people is their core strength.
- About 23% of the respondents are of the view that managing people is not their strength at all times.
- About 7% of the respondents have not answered this question.

In my work, i enjoy responding to peoples’ requests and concerns

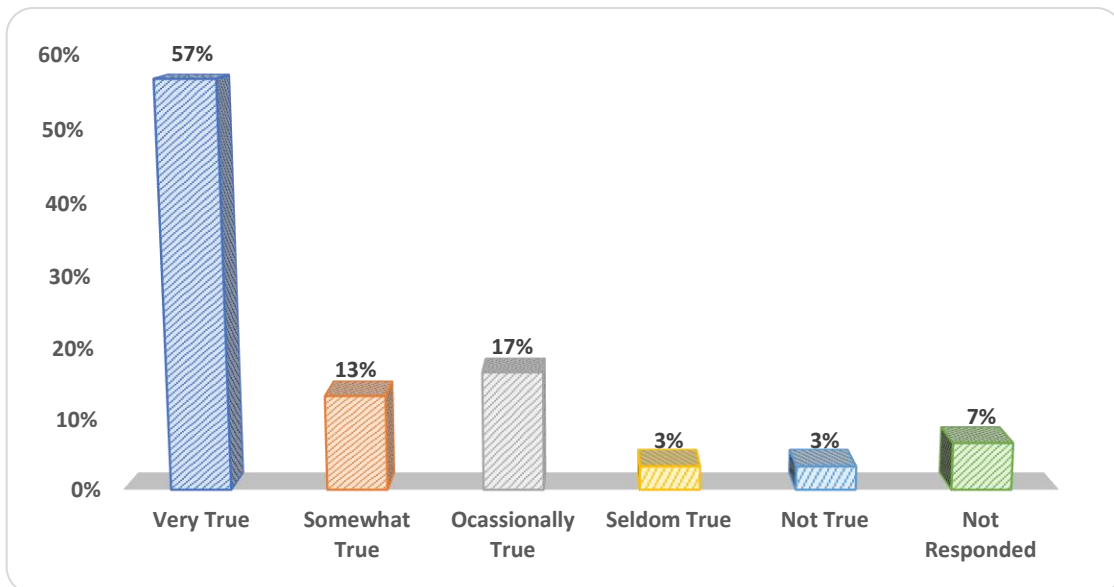
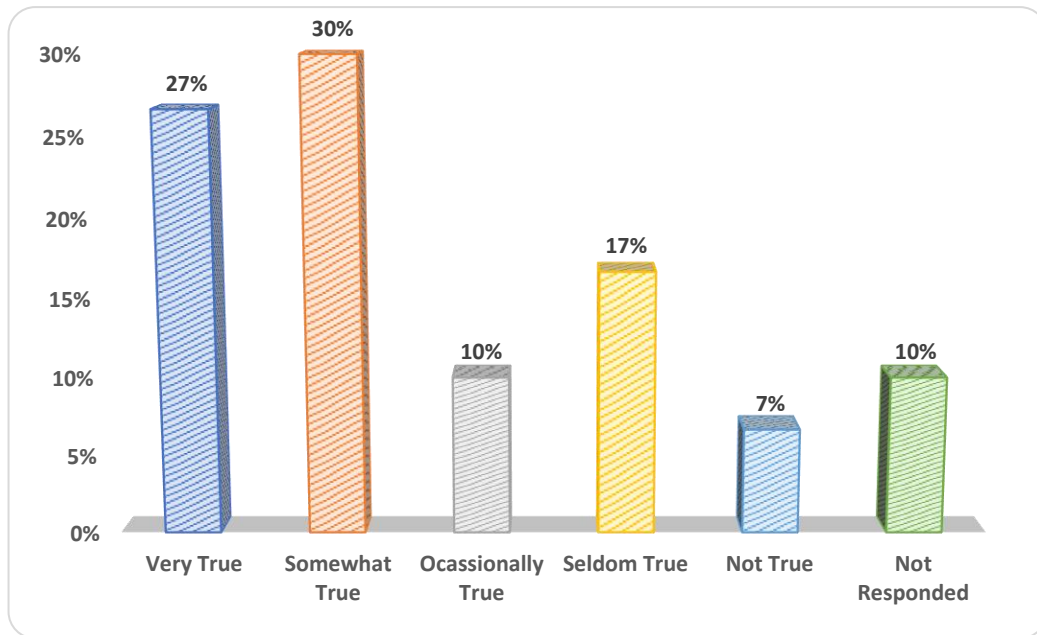
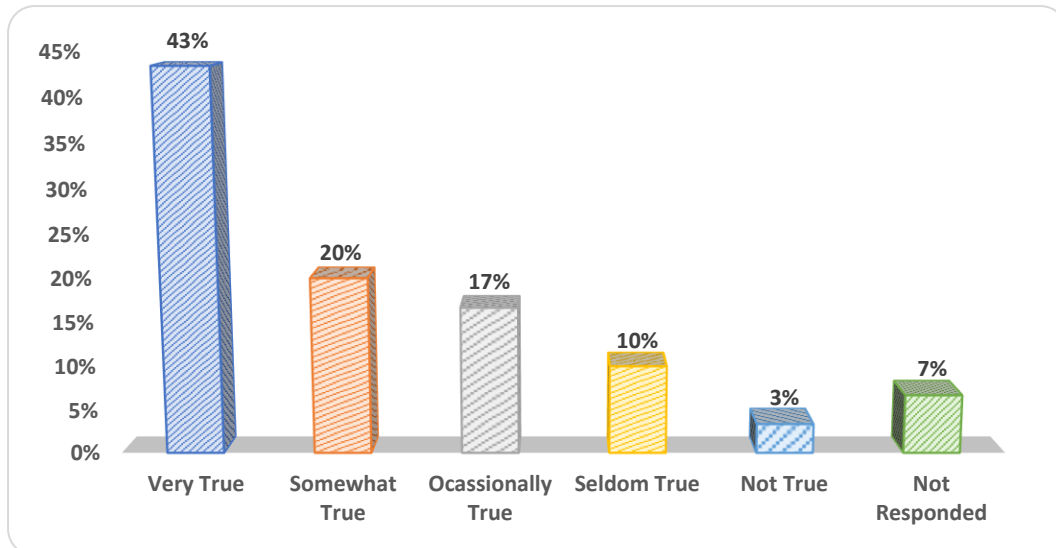


Chart No. 04

- About 57% of the respondents agree that they enjoy attending to the queries during their work schedule.
- About 17% of the respondents are of the view that responding to the queries during their work schedule depends on the priority line.
- About 3% of the respondents are of the view that they are not comfortable in responding to the queries during their work schedule.

Obtaining and allocating resources is a challenging aspect of my job**Chart No. 05**

- About 7% of the respondents are of the view that resource management is not a challenge.
- About 27% of the respondents agree that resource management is a challenge.
- About 10% of the respondents did not answer this question.

I am effective at obtaining resources to support our programs**Chart No. 06**

- About 43% of respondents are confident of getting resources to support their programs whenever required.
- About 3% of the respondents are of the view that getting resources is challenging.
- About 7% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Do you know your ideal clients' pain points well enough to encourage them to take action when they hear / see you speak

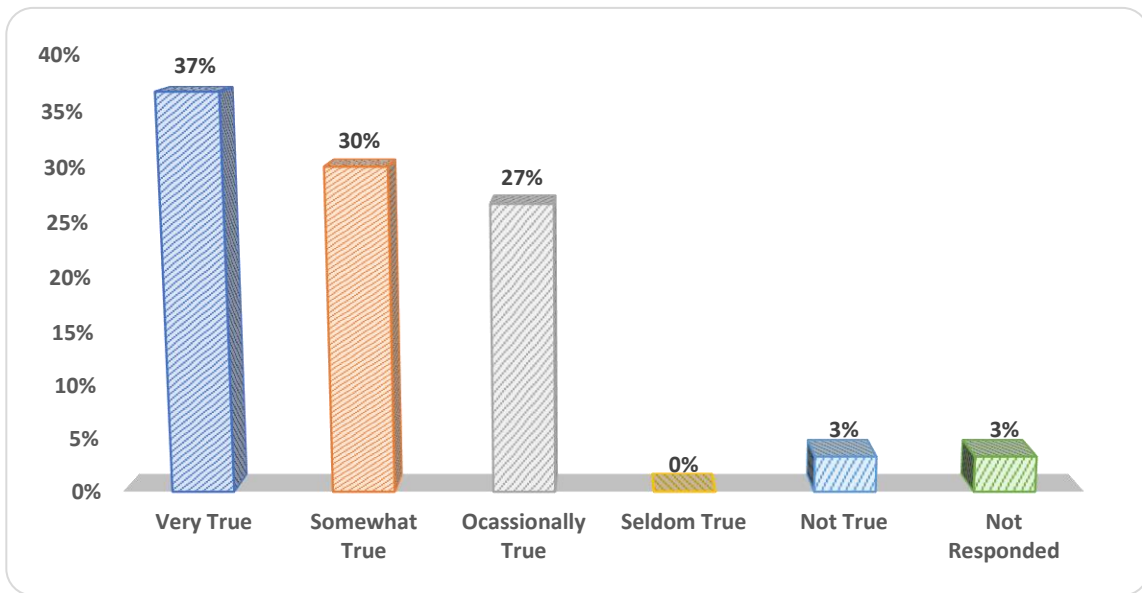


Chart No. 07

- About 37% of the respondents are of the view that they know the pain points of their clients.
- About 3% of the respondents are of the view that they face difficulty in finding the pain points of their clients.
- About 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

I usually know ahead of time how people will respond to a new idea or proposal

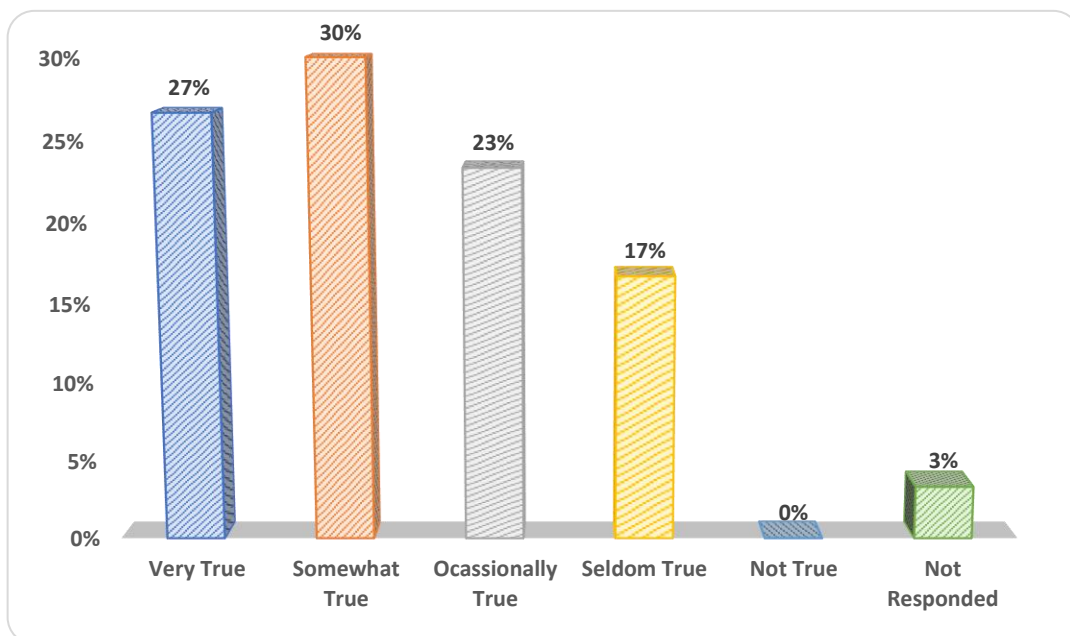


Chart No. 08

- About 27% of the respondents say that they can sense the mindset of the people whenever a new idea is brought to the table.
- About 23% of the respondents have a mixed opinion on the mindset of the people towards new ideas.
- About 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Understanding the social fabric of the organization is important to me

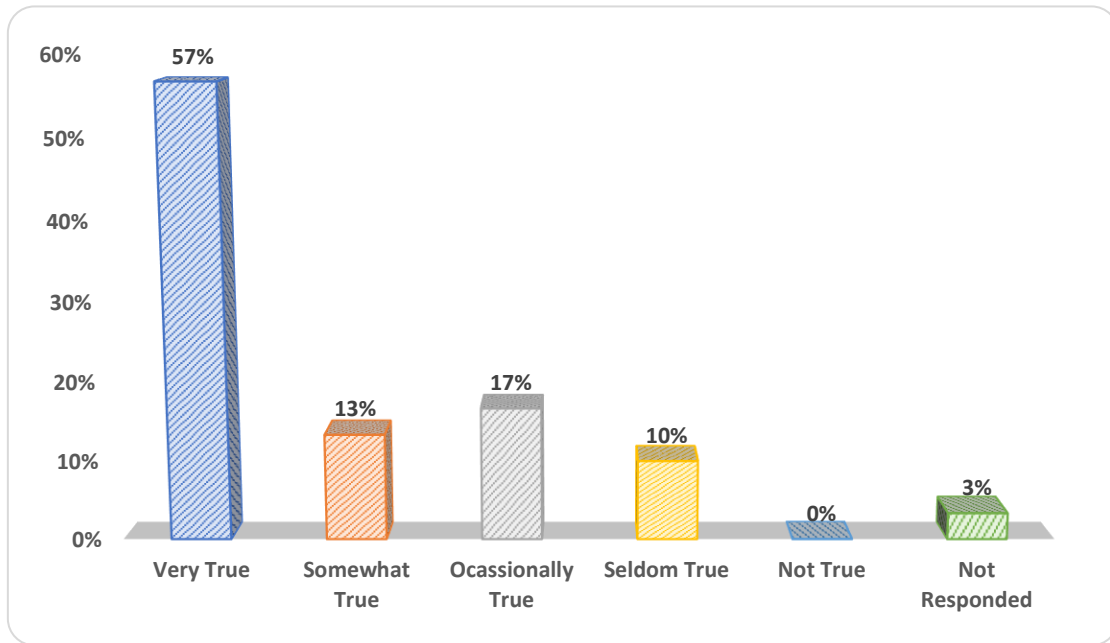


Chart No. 09

- About 57% of the respondents understood the importance of the social aspect of the organization.
- About 40% of the respondents have a mixed view on the importance of the social aspect of the organization.
- About 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

I am able to sense the emotional undercurrents in my group

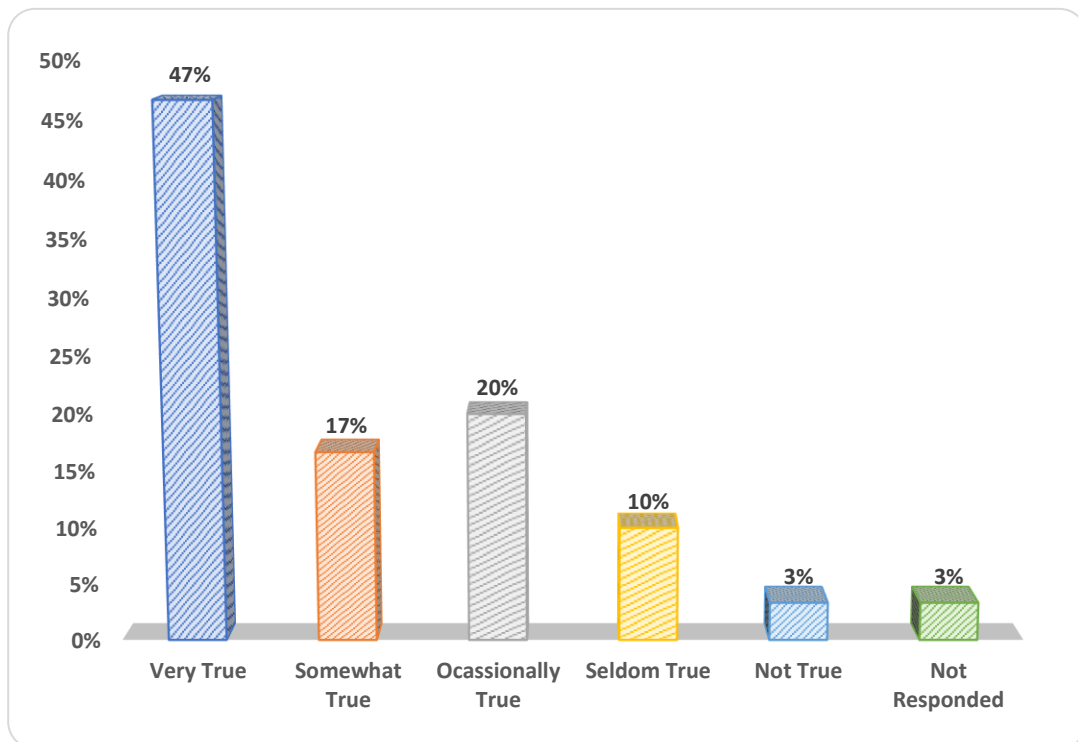


Chart No. 10

- About 47% of the respondents are comfortable sensing the emotional intelligence in their group.
- About 3% of the respondents are of the view that they are not able to sense the emotional intelligence in their group.

- About 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

I use my emotional energy to motivate others

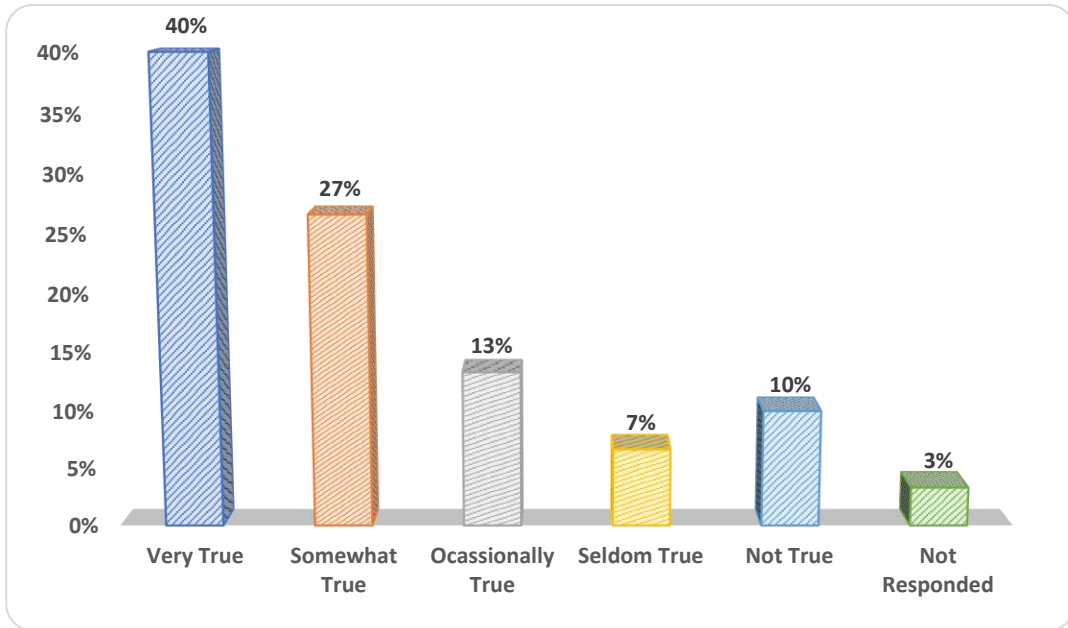


Chart No. 11

- 40% of the respondents use their emotional intelligence to motivate people.
- 37% of the respondents are of the view that they use their emotional intelligence only occasionally.
- 10% of the respondents are not comfortable using their emotional intelligence to motivate others.
- 3% of the people did not answer this question.

The key to successful conflict resolution is respecting my opponent

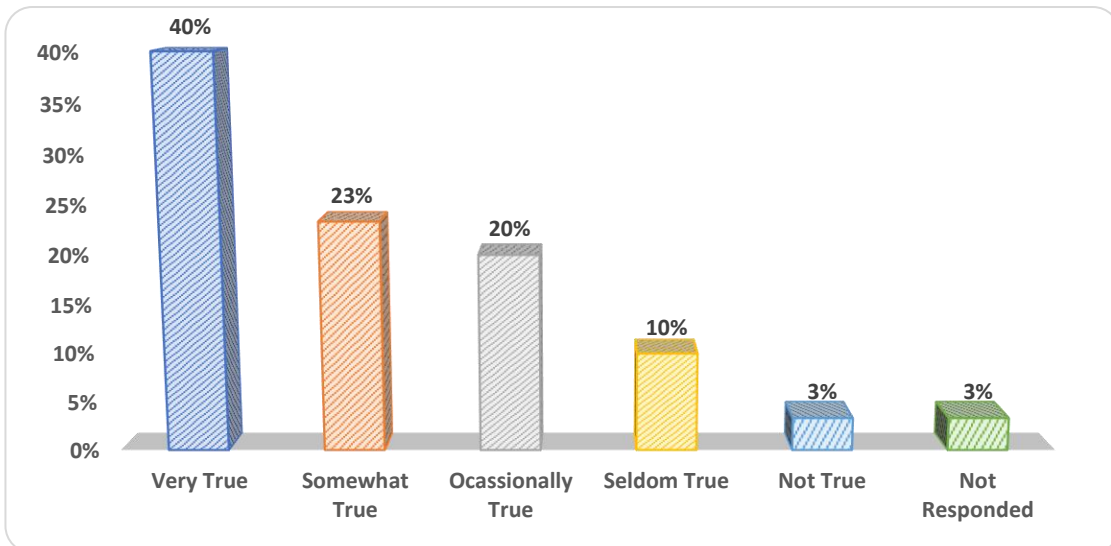


Chart No. 12

- 40% of the respondents agree that they respect the opponent's view in order to resolve the conflict.
- 3% of the respondents are of the view that respecting the opponent's view is not a criteria for conflict resolution.
- 3% of the people did not answer this question.

I WORK HARD TO FIND CONSENSUS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

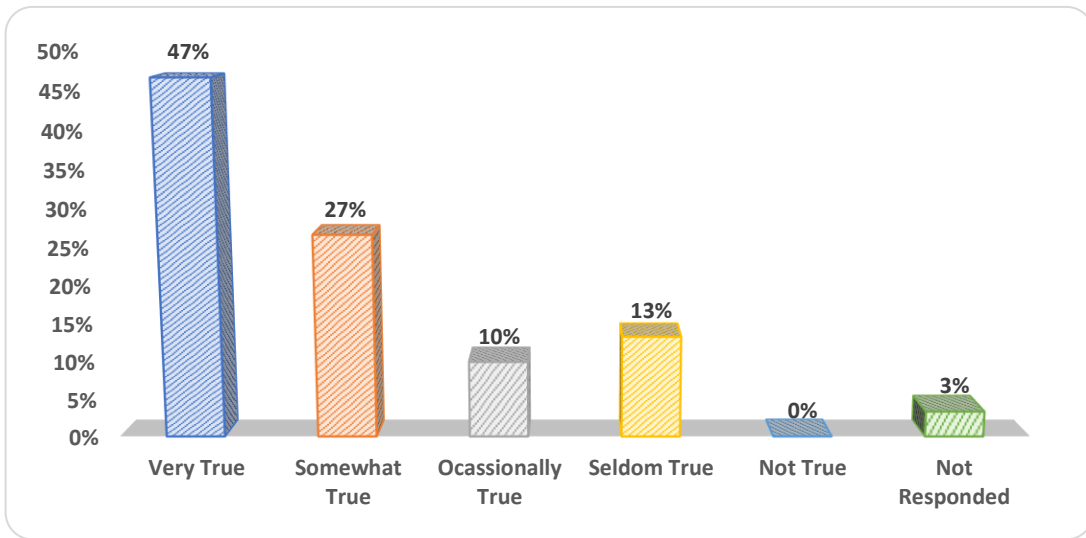


Chart No. 13

- About 47% of the respondents believe in working hard to find consensus in conflict situations.
- About 50% of the respondents are of the opinion that not only working hard but also working smartly is required in conflict resolution.
- 3% of the people did not answer this question.

Do you consider yourself to be a recognized industry leader

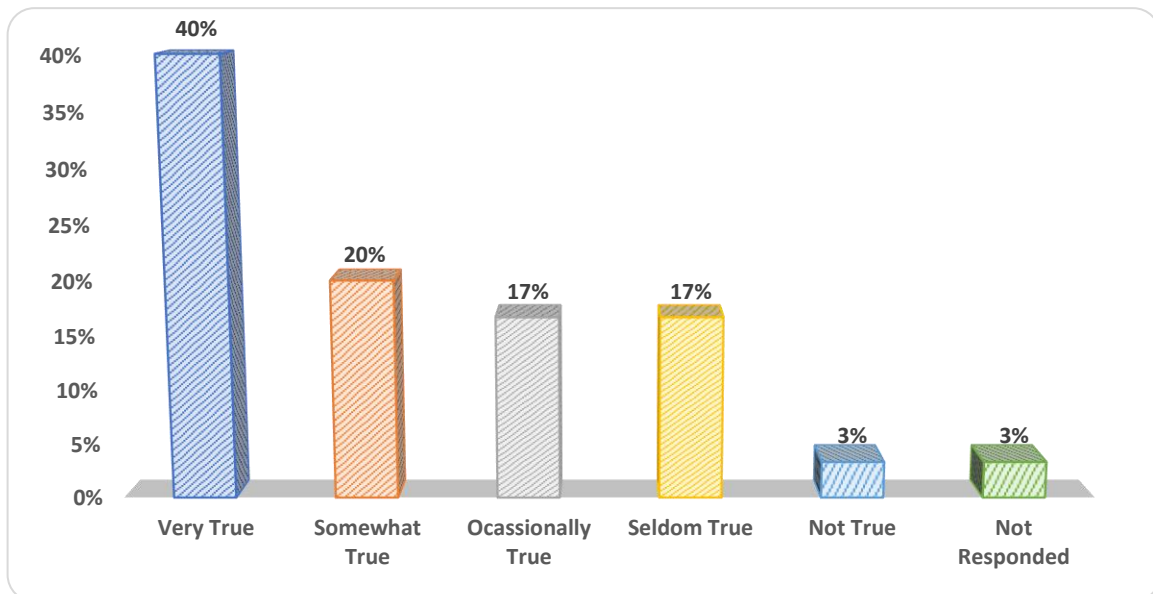


Chart No. 14

- 40% of the respondents say that they have been recognized as leaders in the industry in which they work.
- 3% of the respondents are of the opinion that their hard work is not recognized in the industry in which they work.
- 3% of the people did not answer this question.

CONCEPTUAL SKILLS :

I am effective at problem-solving

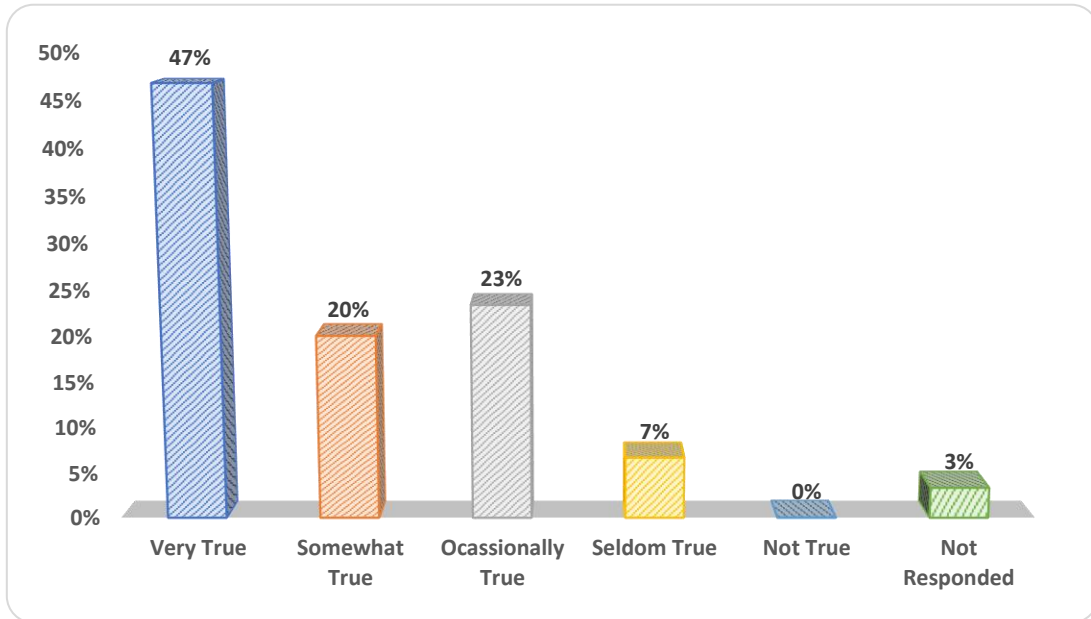


Chart No. 15

- 47% of the respondents believe that they are effective in problem-solving.
- 50% of the respondents differ in their opinion that they are effective in problem-solving at times.
- 3% of the people did not answer this question.

When problems arise, i immediately address them

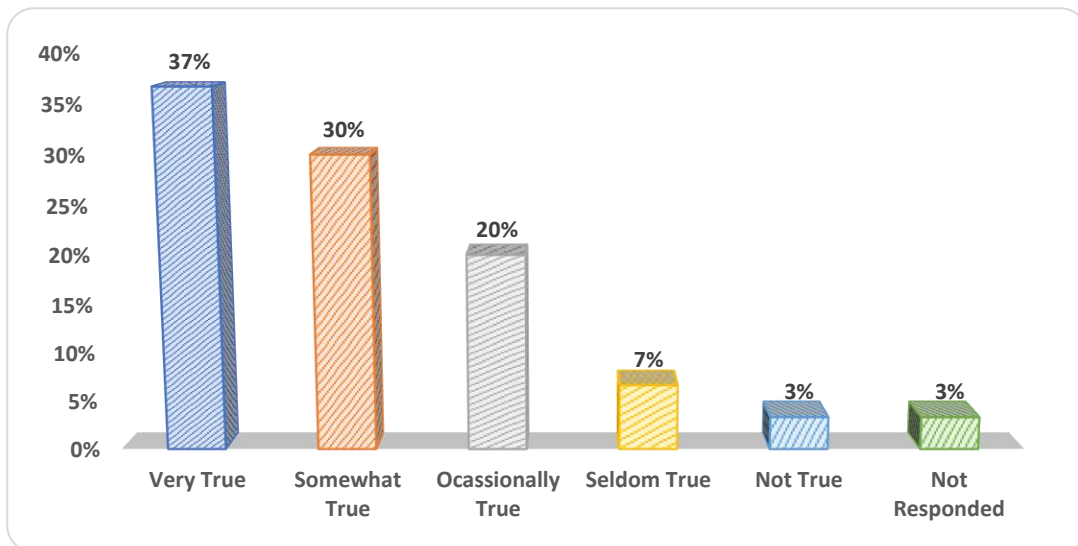


Chart No. 16

- 37% of the respondents believe that they are quick to address problems as and when they arise.
- 57% of the respondents are of the opinion that they prioritize their work in addressing the problems.
- 3% of the respondents are of the opinion that they do not act on the problems immediately.
- 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Seeing the big picture comes easily for me

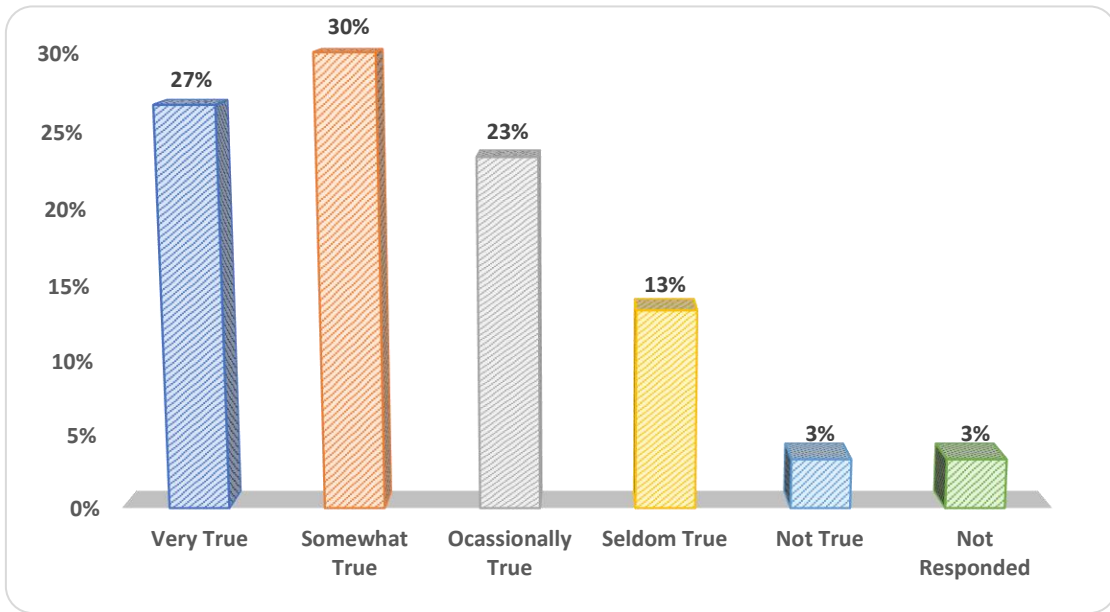


Chart No. 17

- 27% of the respondents are of the opinion that they are open-minded.
- 66% of the respondents are of the mixed opinion that seeing the big picture depends on the current situation.
- 3% of the respondents are of the view that they are not able to see the big picture in their work.
- 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Making strategic plans for my company appeals to me

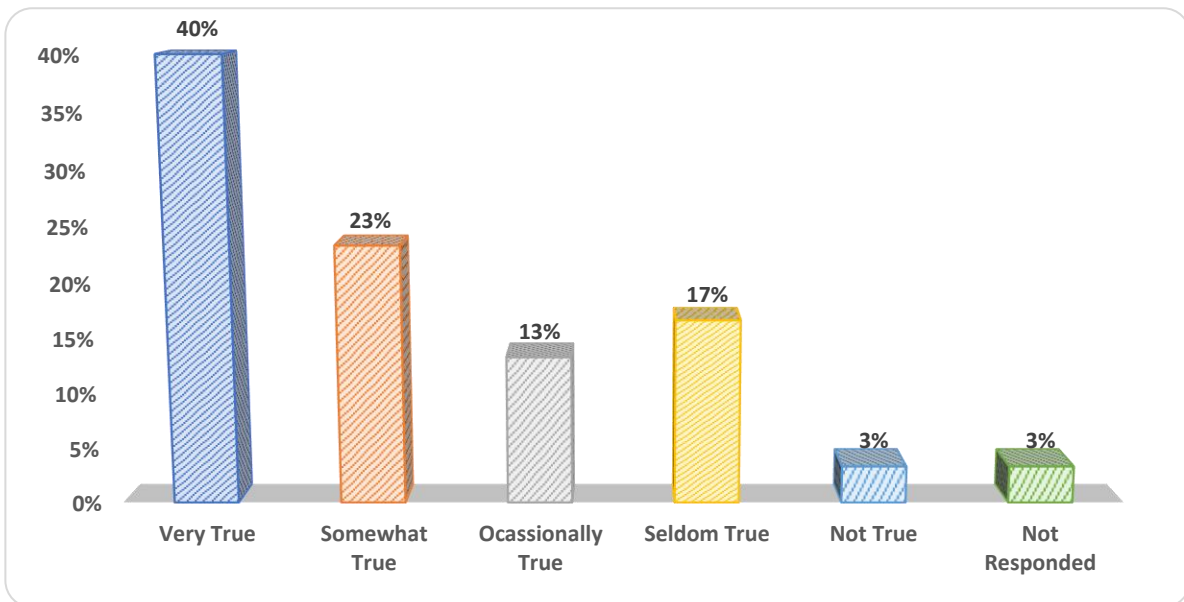
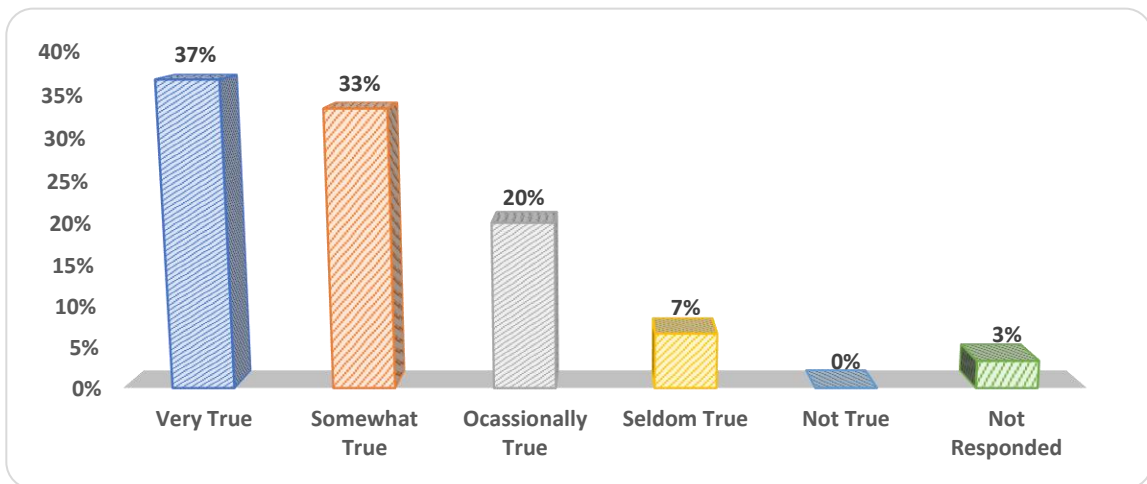
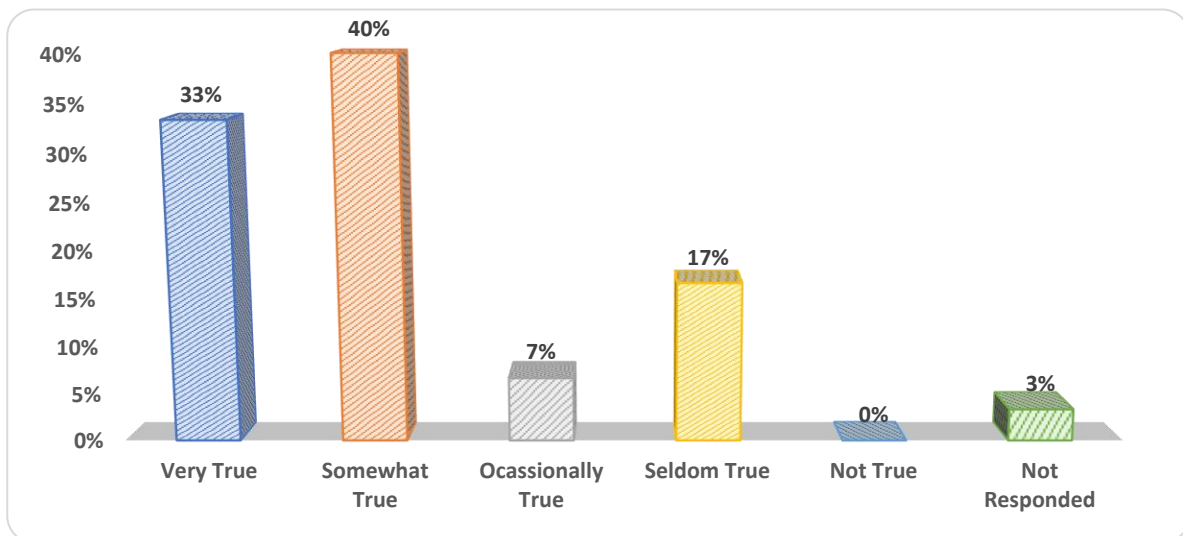


Chart No. 18

- 40% of the respondents believe in working as a strategic leader.
- 3% of the respondents are of the view that they enjoy working in a non-strategic role.
- 50% of the respondents say that working in a strategic role appeals to them, depending on the situation.
- 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

I enjoy discussing organizational values and philosophy**Chart No. 19**

- 37% of the respondents believe that as a leader, their utmost priority is to align with organizational values and philosophy and they enjoy discussing these matters.
- 33% of the respondents believe that they often enjoy discussing organizational values.
- 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

I am flexible about making changes in our organization**Chart No. 20**

- 33% of the leaders believe in change management. They also believe in making changes in the organization as and when required in tandem with global industry guidelines.
- 40% of the respondents say that they are a little hesitant about making changes in the organization considering the business requirements.
- 3% of the respondents did not answer this question.

8. CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this survey is to evaluate the fundamental leadership skills of the leaders' specific to Library and Information Science industry. This survey was conducted considering various aspects or parameters in three different skill sets viz. administrative skills, interpersonal skills and conceptual skills.

Though, we have made our sincere efforts in capturing the best possible feedback from the respondents on the above skills, the results depicted in various graphs are only indicative. The feedback that the leaders provide may vary according to their needs and the role they play in the industry.

It might be difficult to conclude based on the above survey since, it is a small targeted group of people which we approached. However, we would like to conclude the survey as below:

CATEGORY – 1

- An average of 12.5% of the leaders are confident in their role and are highly influenced on the skills they possess.
- The above average is calculated across the skill sets i.e. administrative, interpersonal and conceptual skill sets.
- The respondents are happy being a leader in their industry.
- The respondents enjoy working in a strategic role.
- The respondents believe in delegating the power to the staff below line in order to get the best results out of it.
- The results of the above category show that the leaders have a high level of satisfaction while discharging their duty.

CATEGORY – 2

- An average of 15.4% of the leaders are of different opinion.
- The survey shows that about 15.4% of the leaders are of the opinion that the satisfaction is based on the role that they play.
- The respondents are of the view that there is a scope to develop their skills from time to time.

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