

# Qualities of Servant Leaders and Stakeholder's Satisfaction?

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## LITERATURE

### Nonprofits

Per Internal Revenue Service on irs.gov (2016), the exempt purposes set forth in section 501(c)(3) are charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, and preventing cruelty to children or animals. .

### Servant Leadership

A servant leader is an altruist, who believes making a difference is a must. "A servant leader meets needs for competence by focusing on growth and development, promotes autonomy by empowering followers, and fulfills related needs by being inclusive and listening. In the workplace, the fulfillment of these needs is associated with a recipient's job satisfaction" (Neubert, 2016, p. 4). "The defining feature of servant leadership is its focus on benevolent service to others" (Neubert, 2016, p. 1)

### Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people who have an interest, claim, or stake in the organization, in what it does, and in how well it performs (Krashinsky, 1997). They could be the clients they serve, employees, members of the organization, the board of directors, the community around them even the government, corporate sponsors, or donors. For this study stakeholders are financial members of the nonprofit organization

### What We Know

Most of the current studies on servant leadership focus on what servant leadership is and how to define it. There are very few studies discussing the stakeholder's satisfaction with servant leaders. The industries that *have* been studied are nursing, hair salons and restaurants (Neubert, 2016). The leaders in these industries were found to possess consistently similar traits. It could be said that stakeholders of the service organizations in the Neubert study may have desired the traits of a servant leader because the respondents generally possessed the same types of traits themselves.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Generally, nonprofit executives are tasked with leading the efforts of the nonprofit organization. More specifically to govern, lead and advocate for the organization, its mission and goals. This can only be done successfully if internal and external stakeholders have confidence in the executive. The Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, successfully equips us with the necessary skills to effectively communicate the organization's vision and goals. Being familiar with the different leadership styles and knowing one's own personal traits and leadership style will enhance one's ability to be an authentic leader. This focus of this study is the servant leadership style and stakeholder satisfaction. The hope is the information in this study will help one to personally develop their own leadership style by evaluating their traits to determine if they are a servant leader.

When it comes to stakeholder's satisfaction, what traits are looked for in a nonprofit leader and where do the traits of a servant leader rank in comparison to other leadership traits?

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study examines the traits of servant leadership and identifies any correlations to stakeholder satisfaction. Servant leadership is defined as a leadership style that is primarily focused on the growth and well-being of individuals.

- A convince sample was chosen from a group where all the members of the group are also members of at least three nonprofit organizations.
- The anonymous survey was attached to a post in a closed/private group on Facebook with over 3, 000 members of a female service group.
- Using an online survey company, a twelve-question, three-part nominal survey was created with the following three parts. Part one (Demographics),Part-Two (Length of membership and Leadership Traits) and Part Three (Satisfaction)
- A Google search was done looking for posters about leadership and servant leadership and the nineteen traits below were selected from the posters and included in the survey.

## STUDY FINDINGS

Most research studies describe servant leadership using passive phrases; driven by a sense of duty, purpose, deeply held values, a strong moral compass Greenleaf (2003), has an ethical agenda, humble, authentic, collaborate with others, and act with empathy and out of the box thinkers. (Flynn, Smither, & Walker, 2016). Sivro, 2012) "looks beyond themselves" or considers the interest of others or the community" (Waal and Sivro, 2012). Personal qualities such as integrity, wisdom, authority, judgment, "leadership", courage, independence, a positive outlook, tact and diplomacy. Vision and a strategic perspective that should embrace the totality of the company's operations, situation and context (Coulson-Thomas, 2009).

This research has shown servant leadership traits may not be traits but the values and causal actions of leadership traits. I was not able to clearly rank the values, characteristics and actions. Comparing the traits ranked in this ordinal survey to the descriptors of the servant leader we could draw parallels between the actions of a servant leader to all nineteen ranked traits. The following is an example of the possible relationship of the traits to the characteristics of servant leadership.

A Dependable person is conscientious you can count on and puts others. An honest person is one with a strong moral compass. A competent person is capable to meet the required needs. Inspiring is someone with a positive outlook. Based on this data, it is not known if organizational or leadership satisfaction and the traits listed are related.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Most research studies describe servant leadership using passive phrases; driven by a sense of duty, purpose, deeply held values, a strong moral compass Greenleaf (2003), has an ethical agenda, humble, authentic, collaborate with others, and act with empathy and out of the box thinkers. (Flynn, Smither, & Walker, 2016). Sivro, 2012) "looks beyond themselves" or considers the interest of others or the community" (Waal and Sivro, 2012). Personal qualities such as integrity, wisdom, authority, judgment, "leadership", courage, independence, a positive outlook, tact and diplomacy. Vision and a strategic perspective that should embrace the totality of the company's operations, situation and context (Coulson-Thomas, 2009).

The analysis of the descriptions of servant leadership would greatly improve this study. The descriptions of servant leadership are not traits but maybe values and results of traits. Therefore, to do a true ranking or comparison of traits further research on the definition of servant leadership should be done to defined in traits or behaviors not just the values and/or causal actions

Also, studies on stakeholder satisfaction with regards to non-profit leadership would help find a direct correlation between servant leadership an organizational satisfaction. Other drivers like the enjoyment of the work, belief in the cause or the joy of giving, etc. could be the cause of their satisfaction.

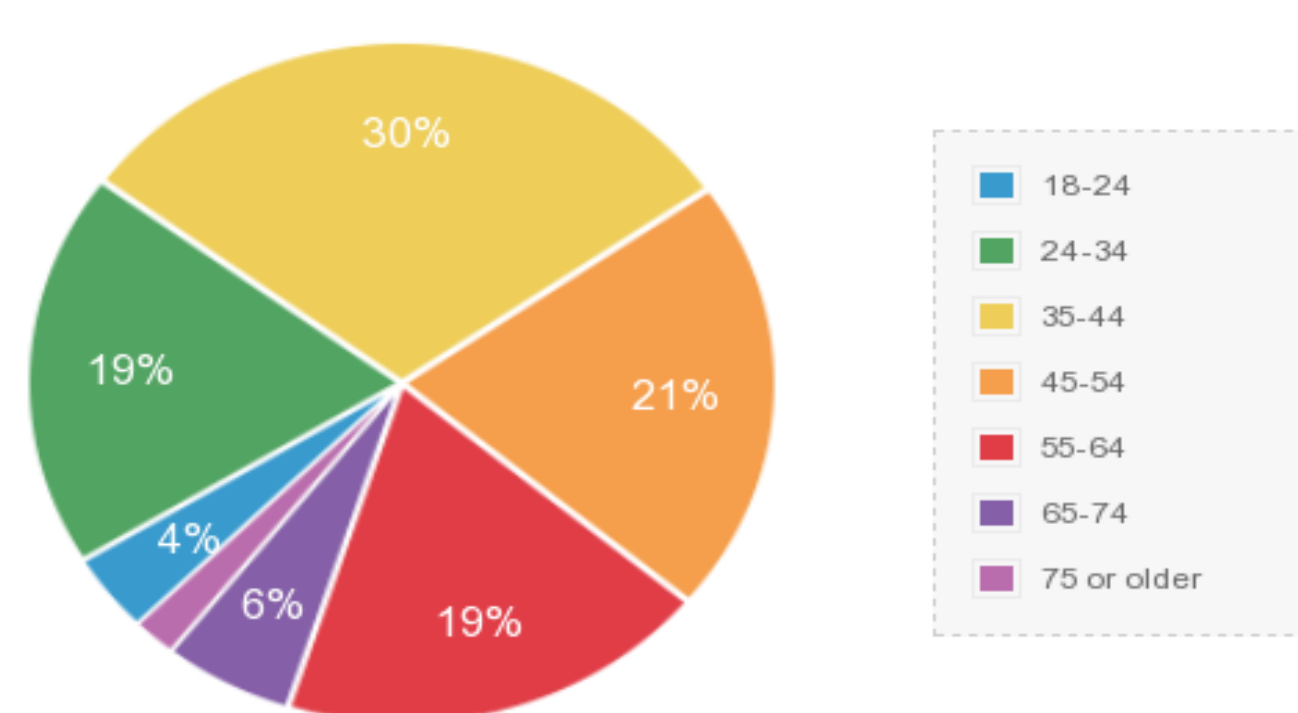
## Results and Analysis

### (Demographics)

52-53 of the participants identified as female. Due to the survey criteria, the 1 participant survey who identified as "other" was not included in the results.

#### Age

Answered: 53 Skipped: 27

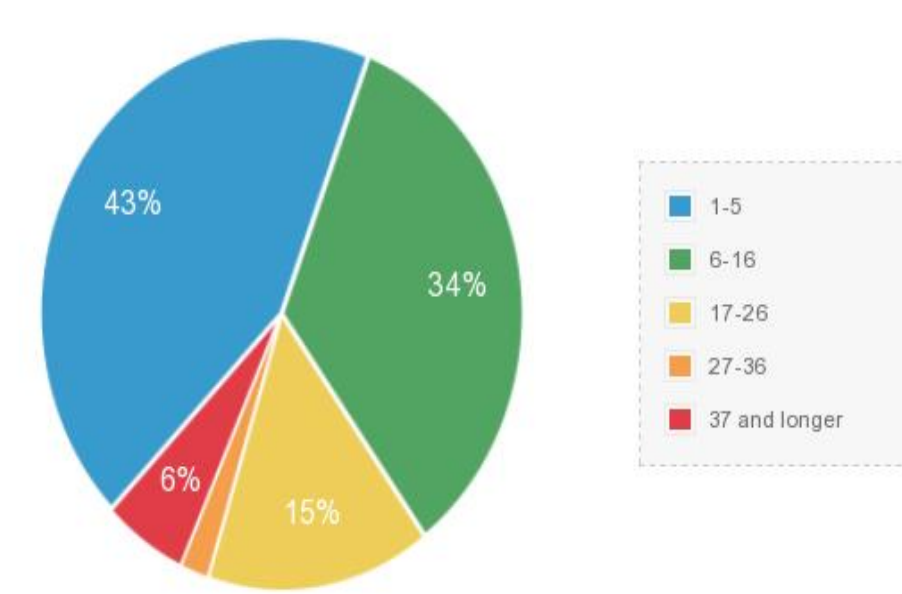


60% of the participants in this survey were 24-55 years' old (19%-24-34, 30%-34-44, 21%-45-54)

### (Length of membership and Leadership Traits)

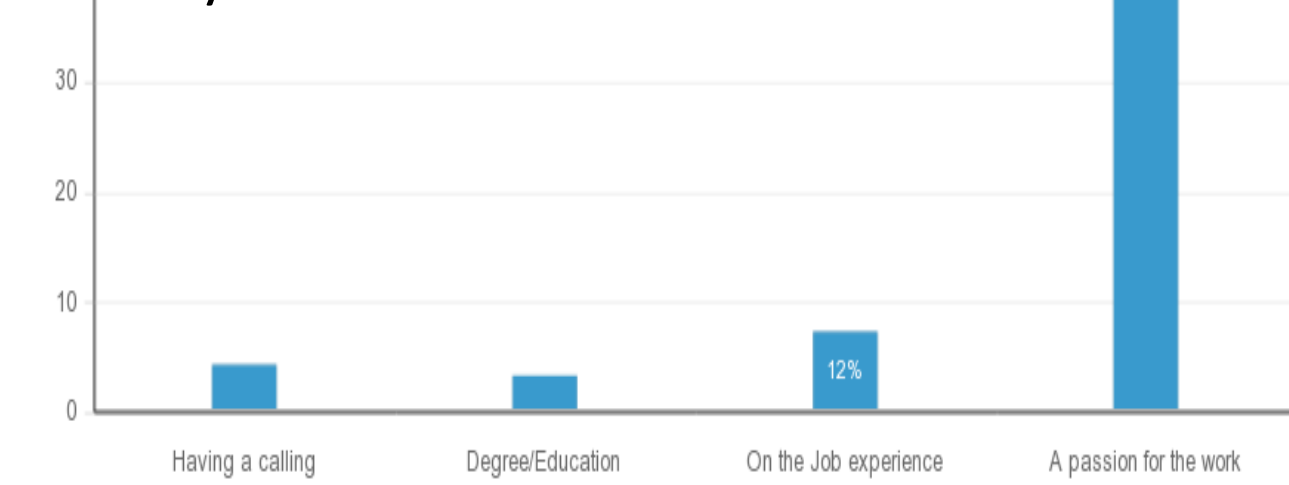
Please think of a non-profit organization you belong to. (excluding Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.) How many years have you been a member?

Answered: 53 Skipped: 27



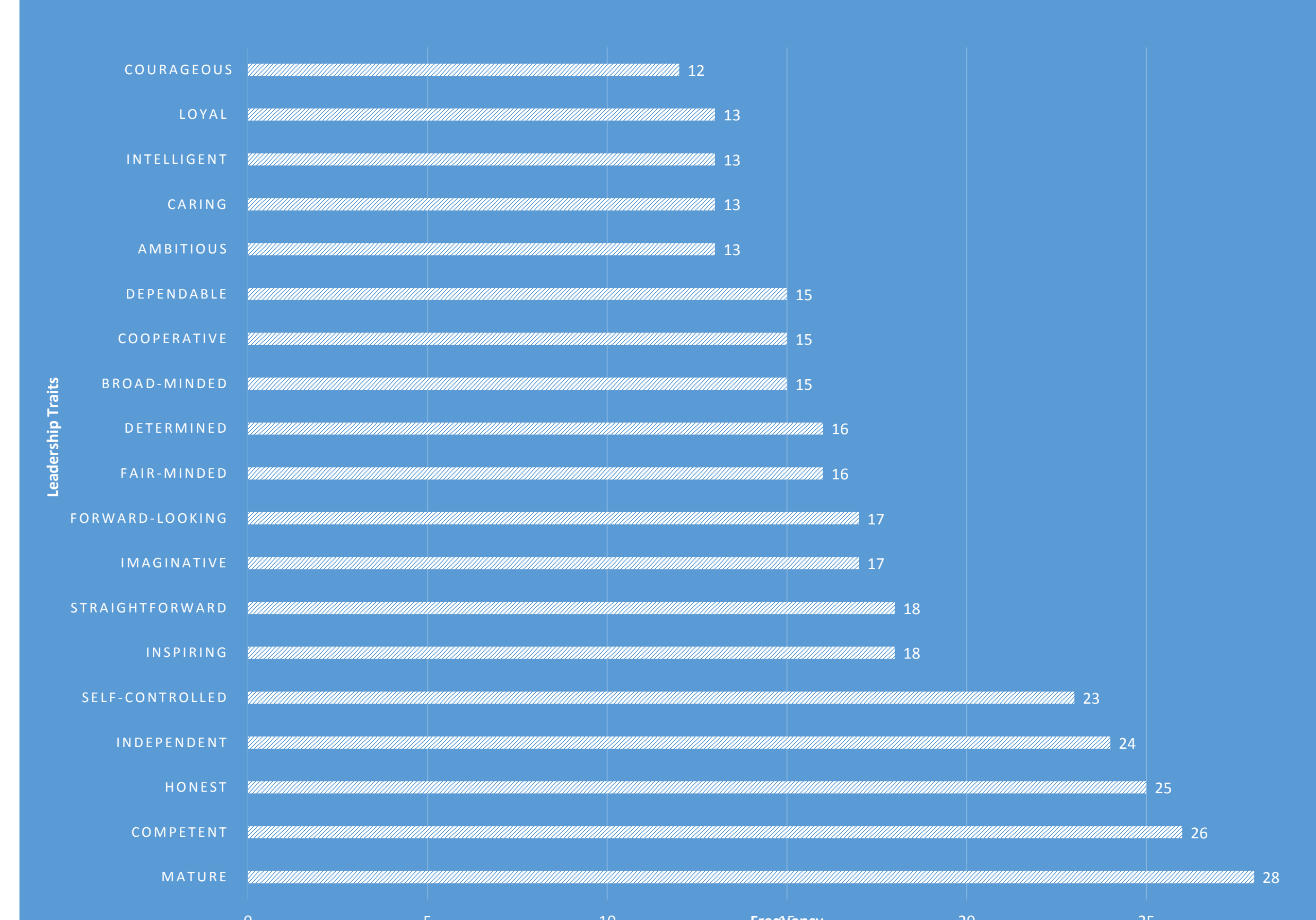
77% of the participants in this survey have been members of a nonprofit 16 years or less.

Choose the characteristic you most look for in a leader.



The results showed that 77% of the participants felt that a passion for the work was the characteristic they most look for in a leader..

PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING IN THE ORDER THAT YOU MOST LOOK FOR AND ADMIRE IN A LEADER, THAT IS, SOMEONE WHOSE DIRECTION YOU WOULD WILLINGLY FOLLOW.

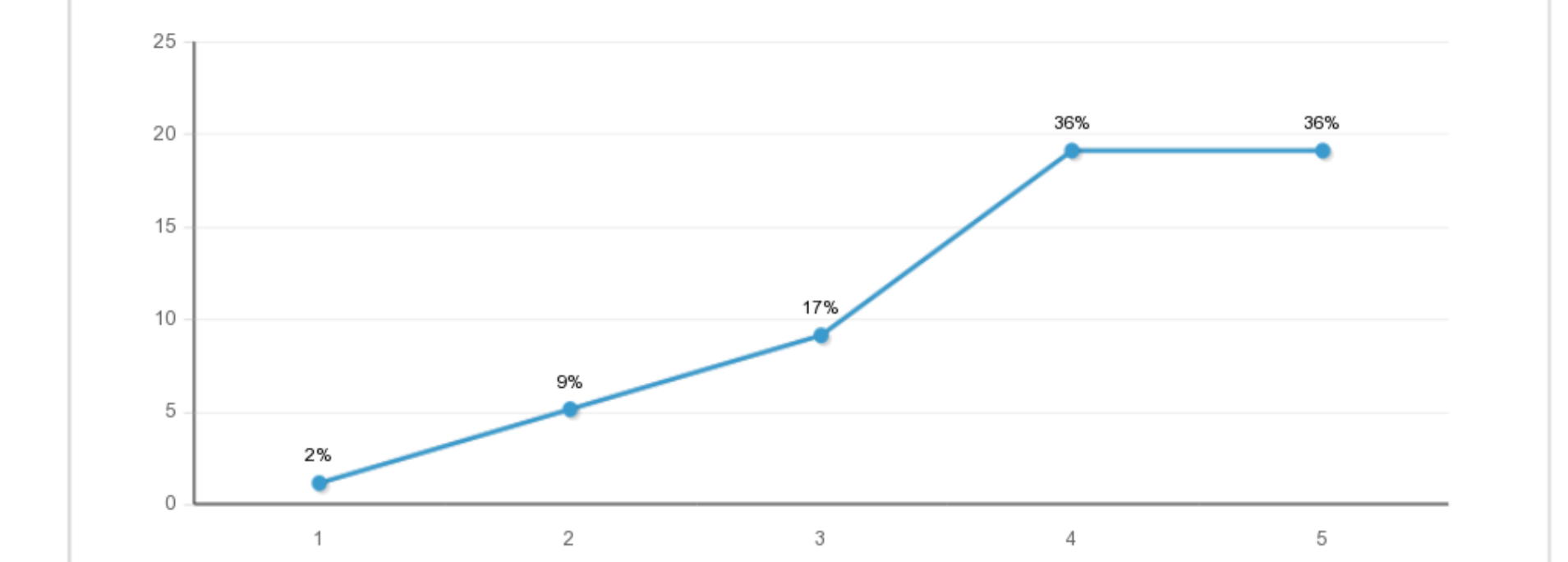


This chart combines the data from the three questions regarding ranking the nineteen traits the mode was used to rank the results of this ordinal data.

### (Satisfaction)

How happy are you with your membership in the non-profit organization you used for this survey?

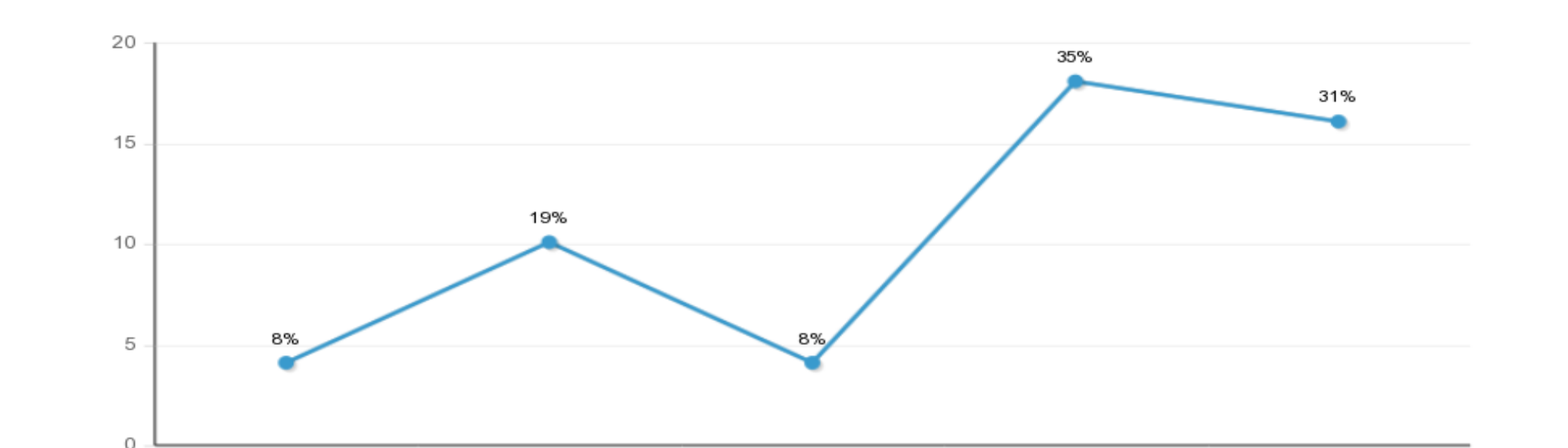
Answered: 53 Skipped: 27



Using the Likert scale from one (least satisfied) to five (most satisfied), 30% of the respondents are very satisfied with their organization

How satisfied are you with the leadership of the non-profit organization you used for this survey?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 28



Using the Likert scale from one (least satisfied) to Five (most satisfied), 31% of those surveyed are very satisfied with their organization.