

Review of Supports & Services



February 2025

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Introduction

IPPN provides a suite of supports and services to members in order to enhance leadership capacity and effectiveness and to better ensure the sustainability of school leadership roles. It is essential that those supports and services are in keeping with and informed by the needs of members.

Accordingly, it was agreed that it would be opportune to review the supports and services that IPPN provides and that such a review would be informed by data/evidence directly sourced from members. This collated data/evidence could then be considered by support office staff and Board members to assess

- the value that members attribute to individual supports and services
- the impact of those supports and services
- the levels of member engagement with those supports and services
- whether existing supports and services could be enhanced and
- whether other supports and services need to be developed and made available to members.

The data/evidence, presented in this report, was sourced directly from members in two ways

1. through small group or open discussion at each of the 27 city/county network autumn meetings – these meetings were attended by a total of 540 school leaders
2. through a survey issued to members in October – there were 1501 respondents to the member survey.

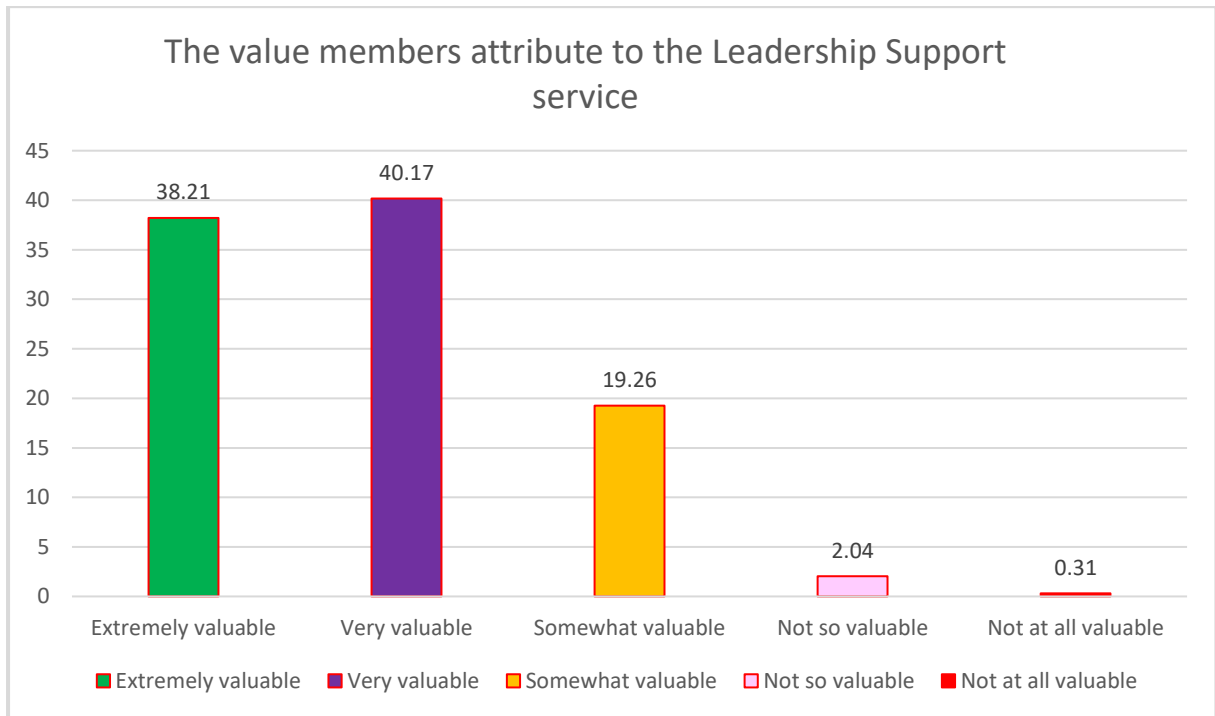
Each individual support or service is considered separately with reference to four metrics

1. the value members attribute to the support or service
2. how helpful they found the support or service (if they have availed of it)
3. the frequency of engagement they have had with the support and service
4. levels of engagement by specific cohorts of members – teaching deputy principals, administrative deputy principals, teaching principals and administrative deputy principals

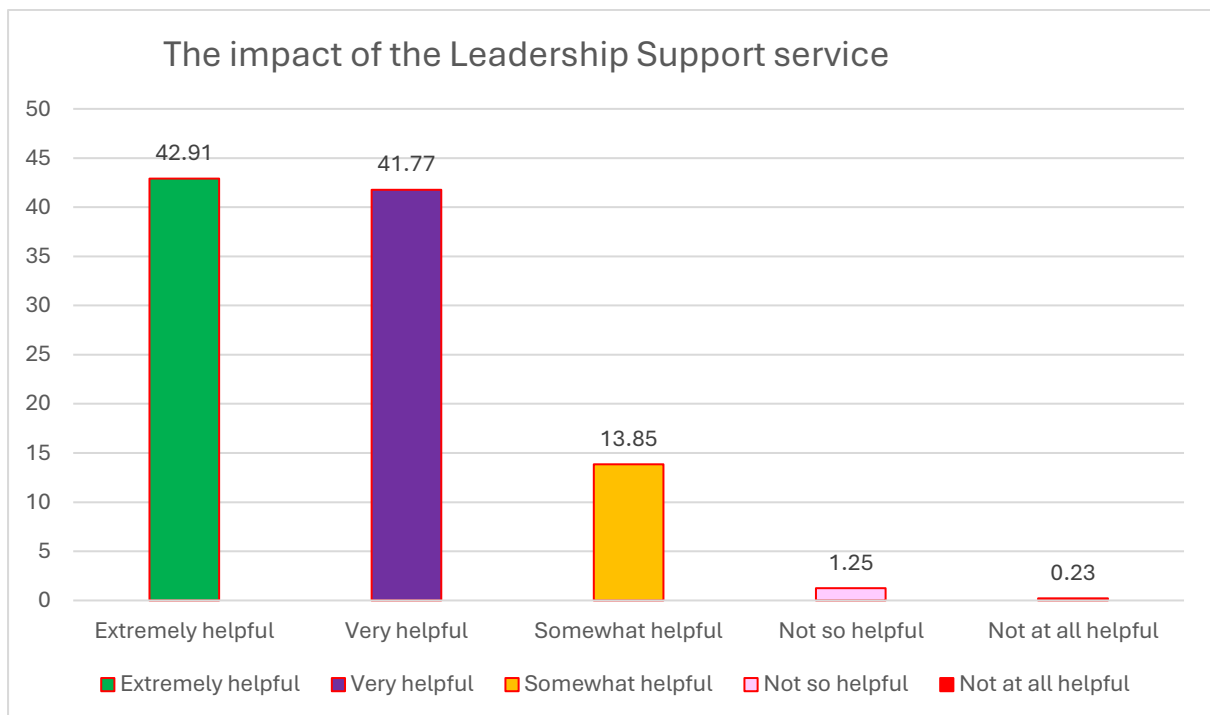
Thereafter, comparative data is offered for consideration.

Finally, the qualitative data sourced from members, through their feedback at the autumn meetings and the freeform responses to survey questions, is summarised with key themes emerging in relation to IPPN's supports and services.

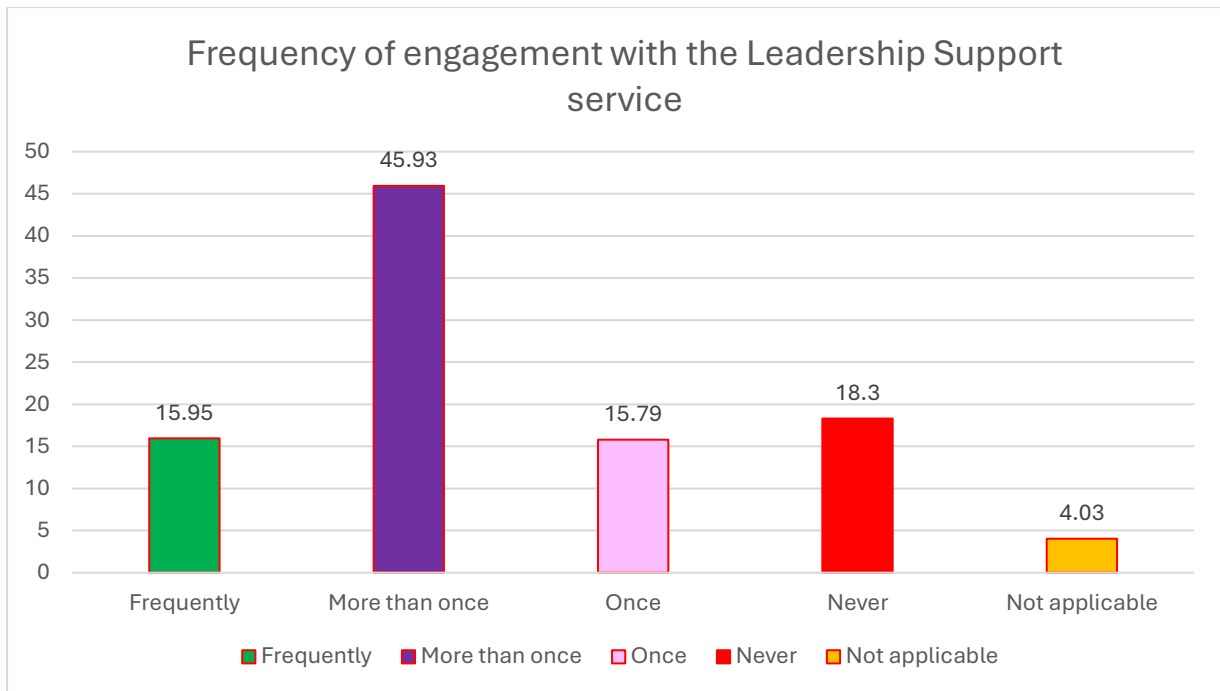
Leadership Support



Based on 1272 responses



Based on 881 responses

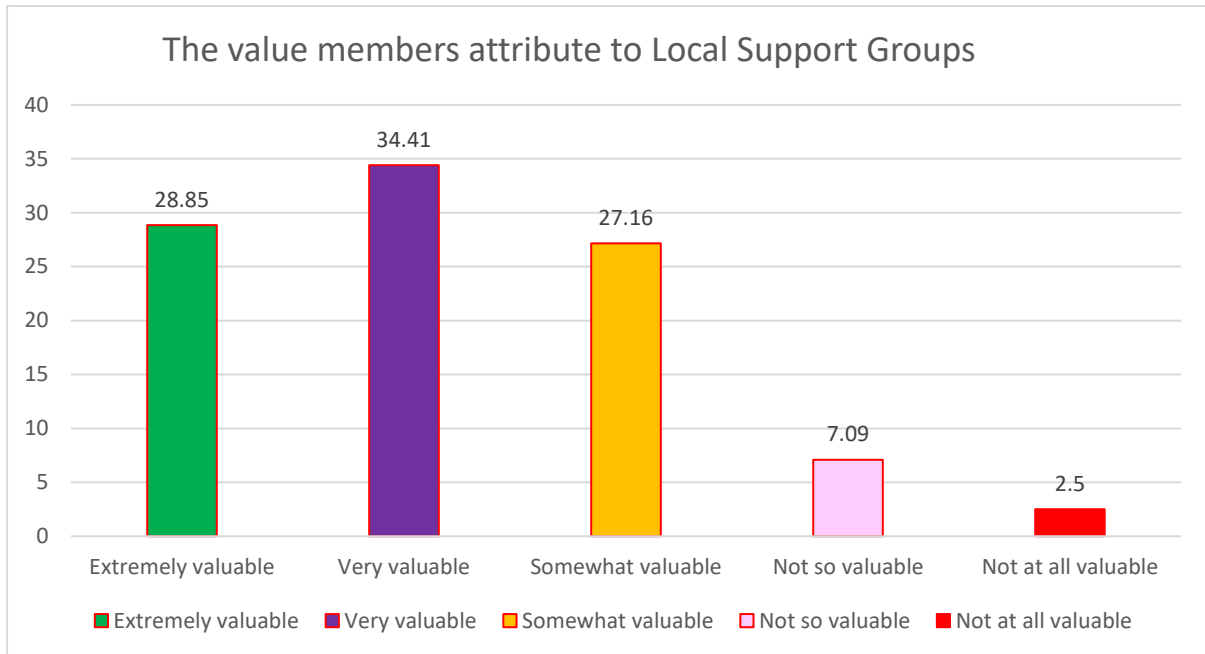


Based on 1191 responses

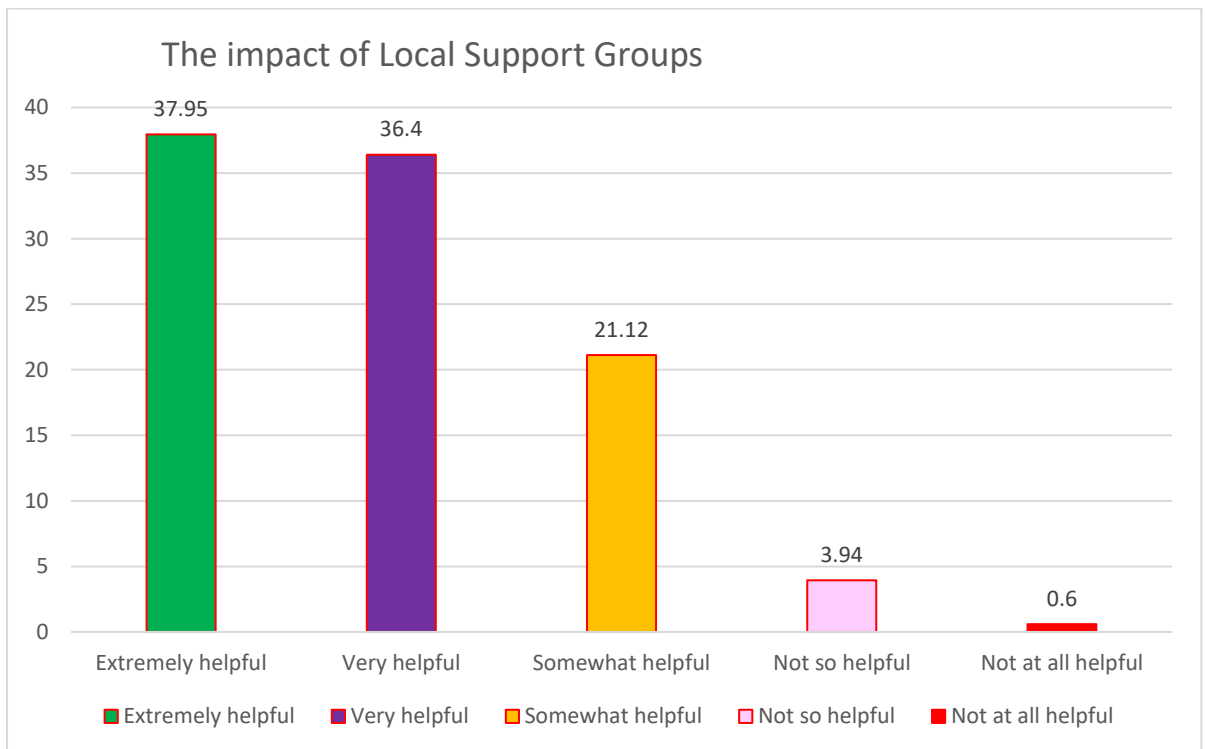
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	19%	21%	5%	18%
More than once	57%	45%	31%	21%
Once	13%	17%	18%	20%
Never	9%	15%	36%	36%
Not applicable	2%	2%	10%	5%

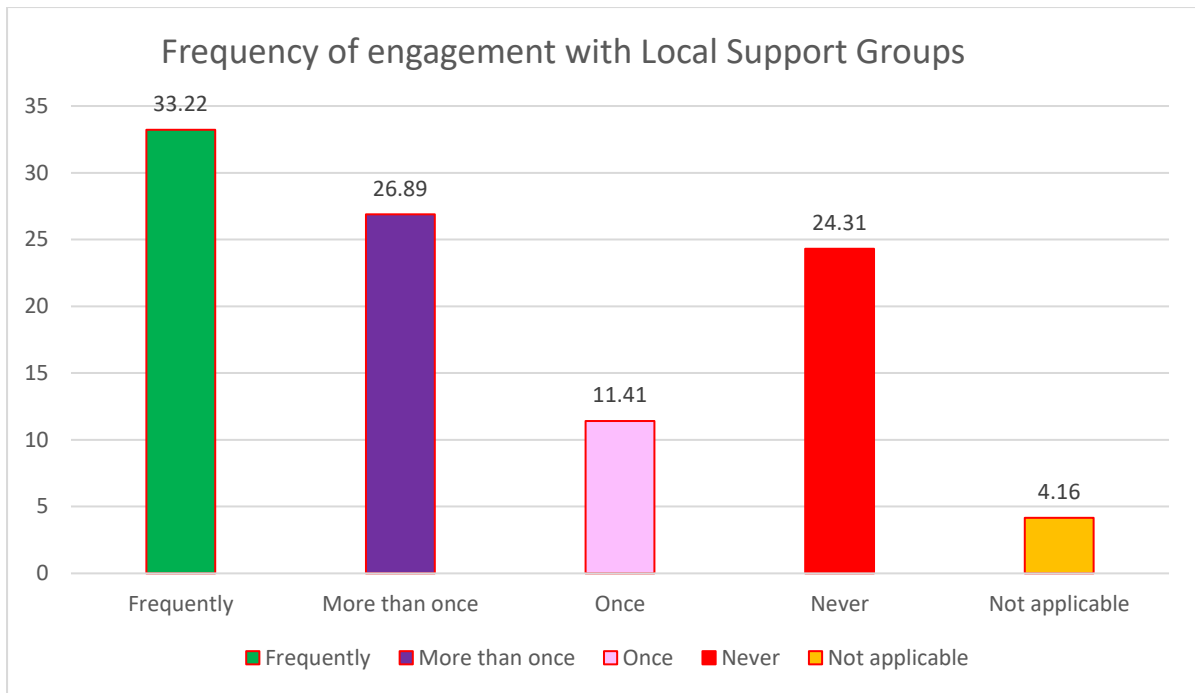
Local Support Groups



Based on 1241 responses



Based on 838 responses

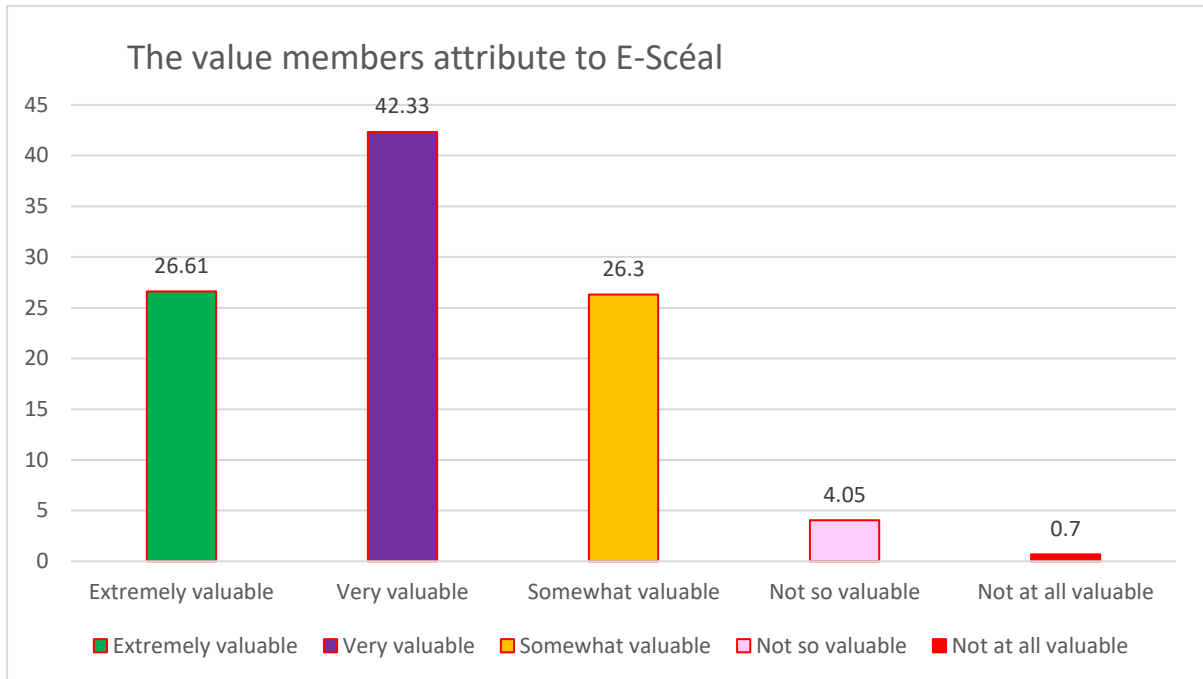


Based on 1201 responses

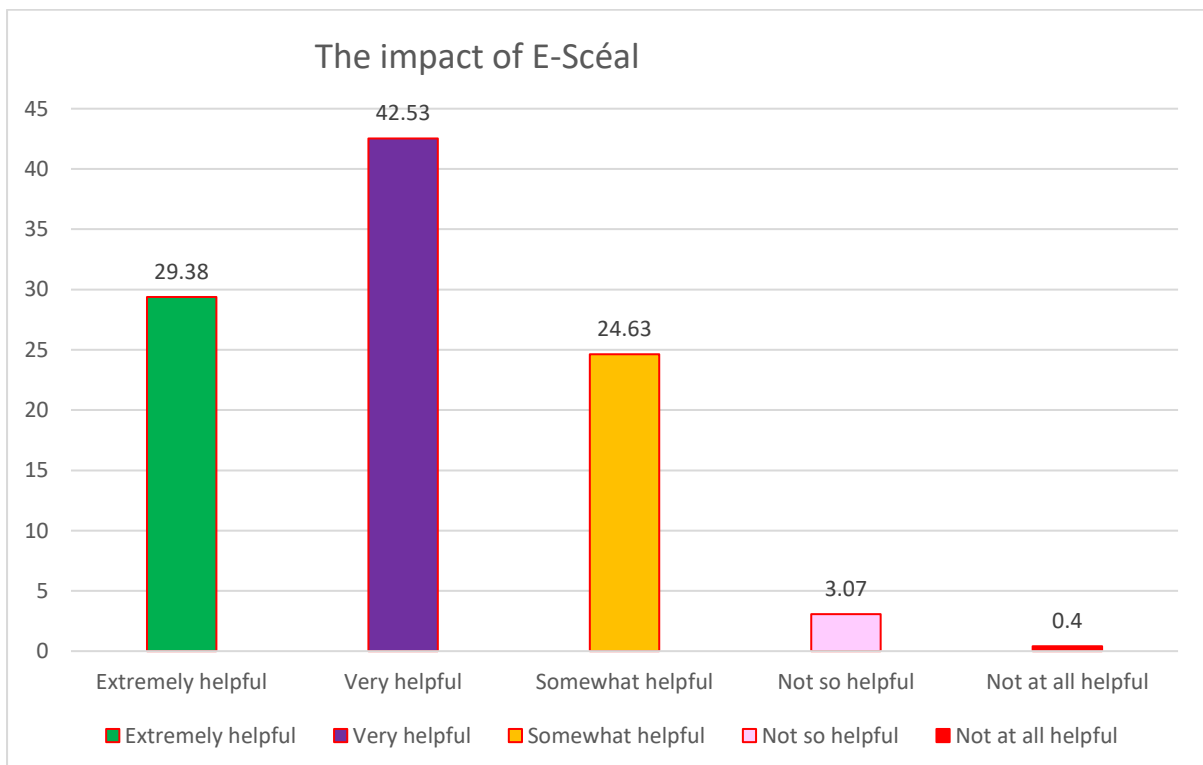
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	48%	32%	12%	24%
More than once	25%	33%	23%	27%
Once	8%	13%	16%	5%
Never	15%	19%	44%	39%
Not applicable	4%	3%	5%	5%

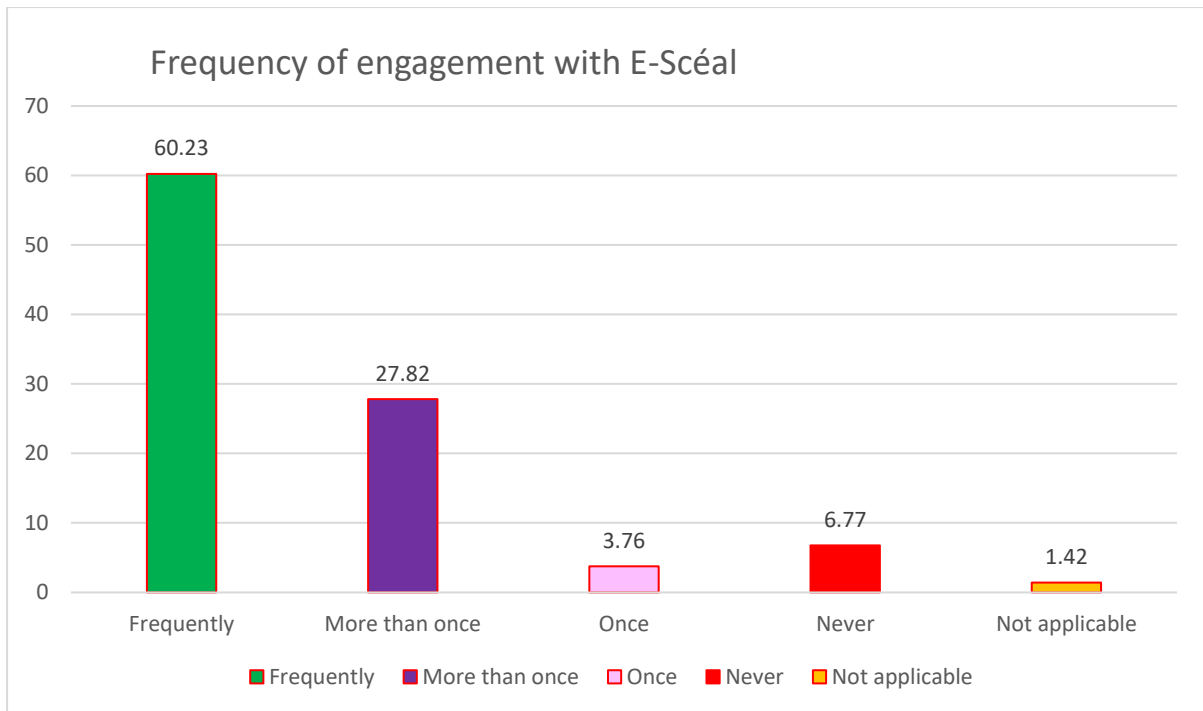
E-Scéal



Based on 1285 responses



Based on 1011 responses

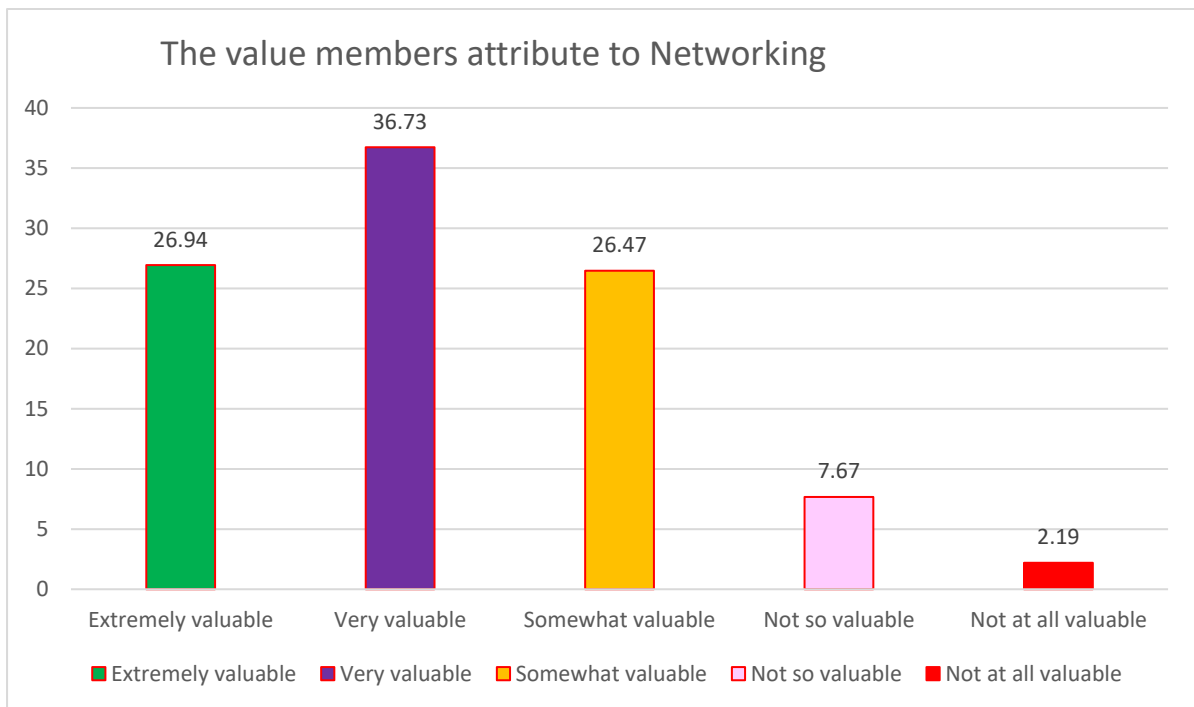


Based on 1197 responses

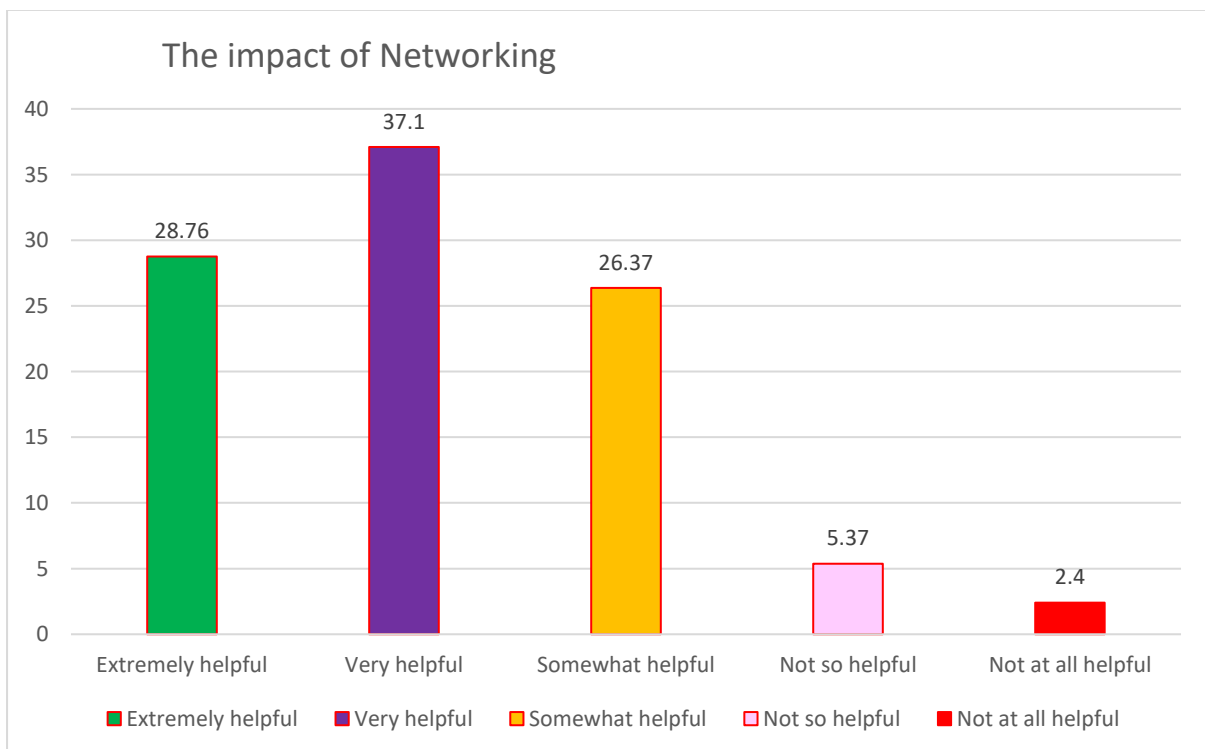
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	64%	64%	48%	63%
More than once	25%	26%	35%	29%
Once	2%	4%	6%	3%
Never	8%	5%	8%	5%
Not applicable	1%	1%	3%	0%

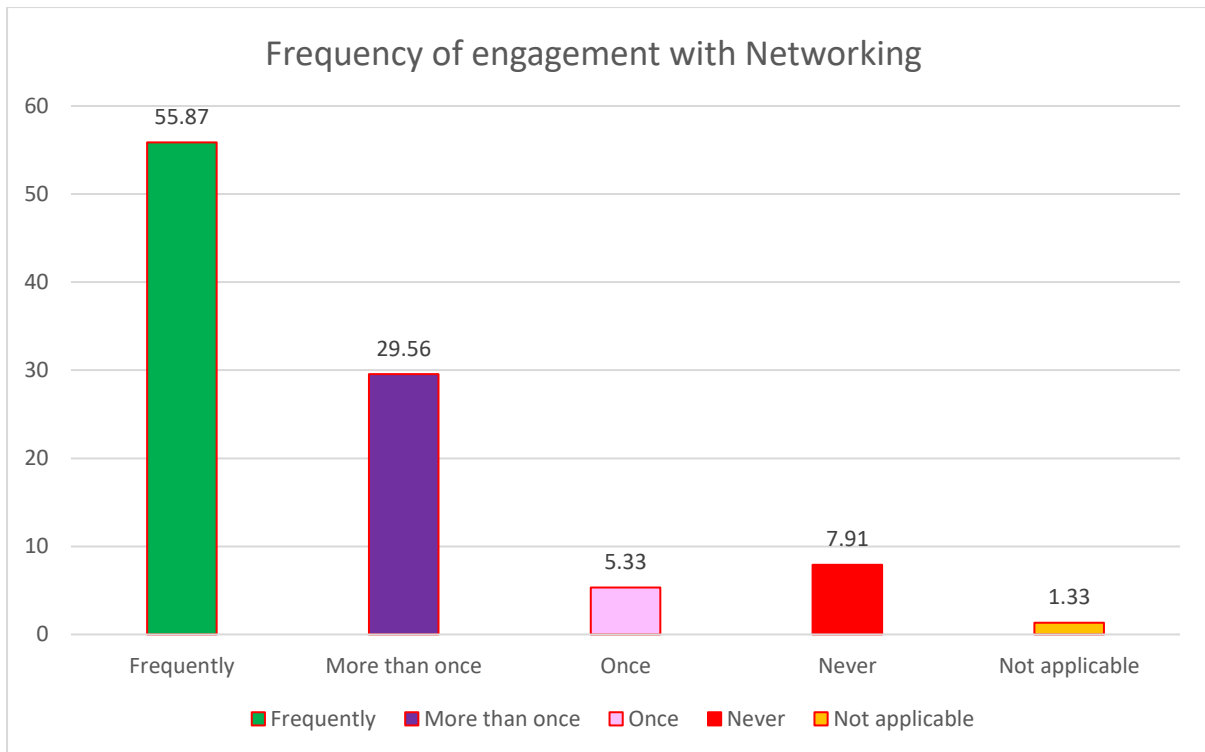
Networking



Based on 1277 responses



Based on 1043 responses

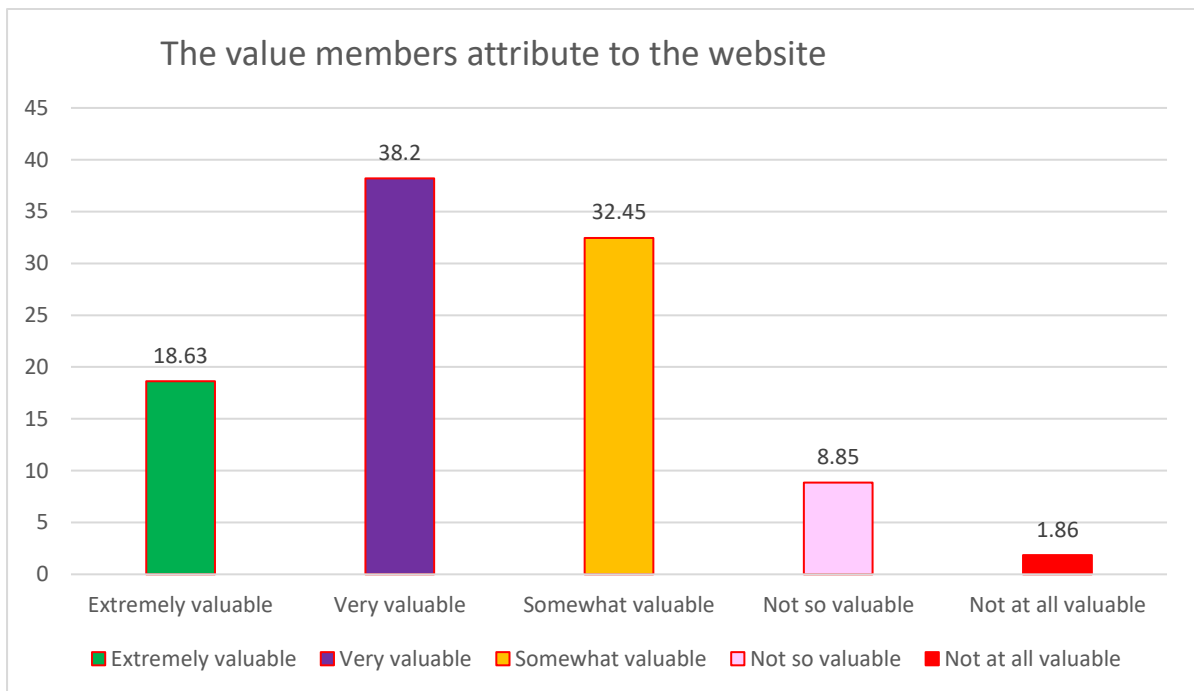


Based on 1201 responses

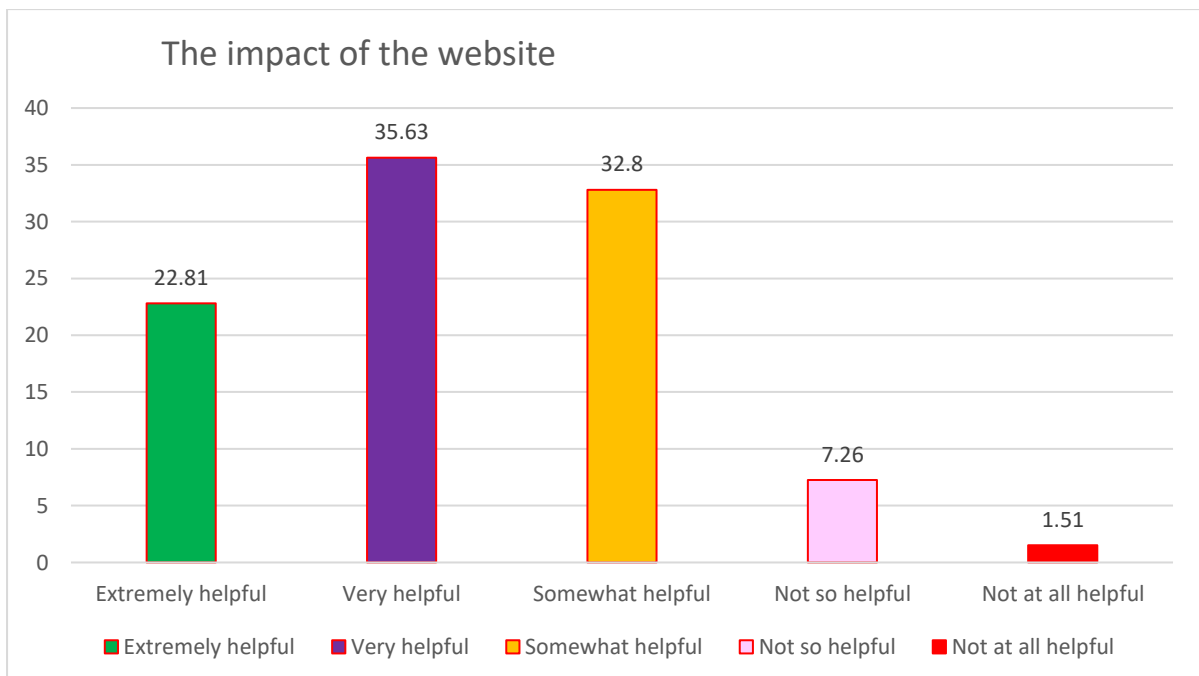
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	57%	61%	48%	55%
More than once	32%	24%	34%	16%
Once	5%	7%	4%	11%
Never	6%	6%	12%	16%
Not applicable	0%	2%	2%	2%

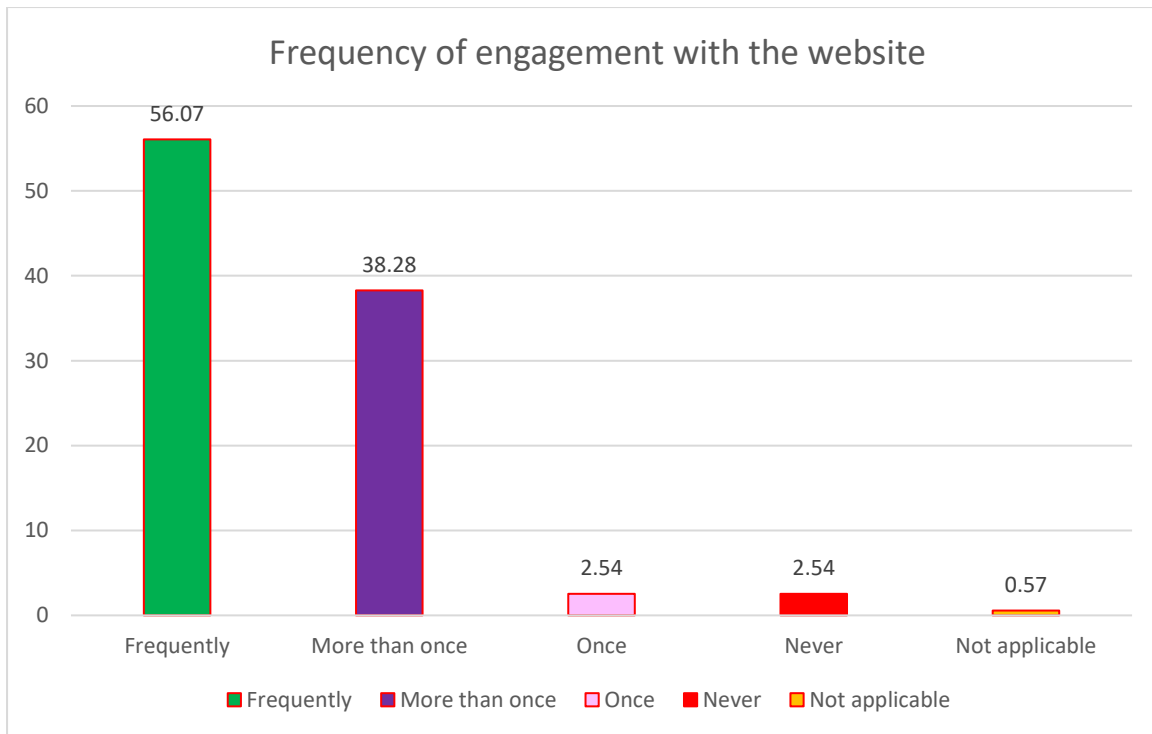
Website



Based on 1288 responses



Based on 1061 responses

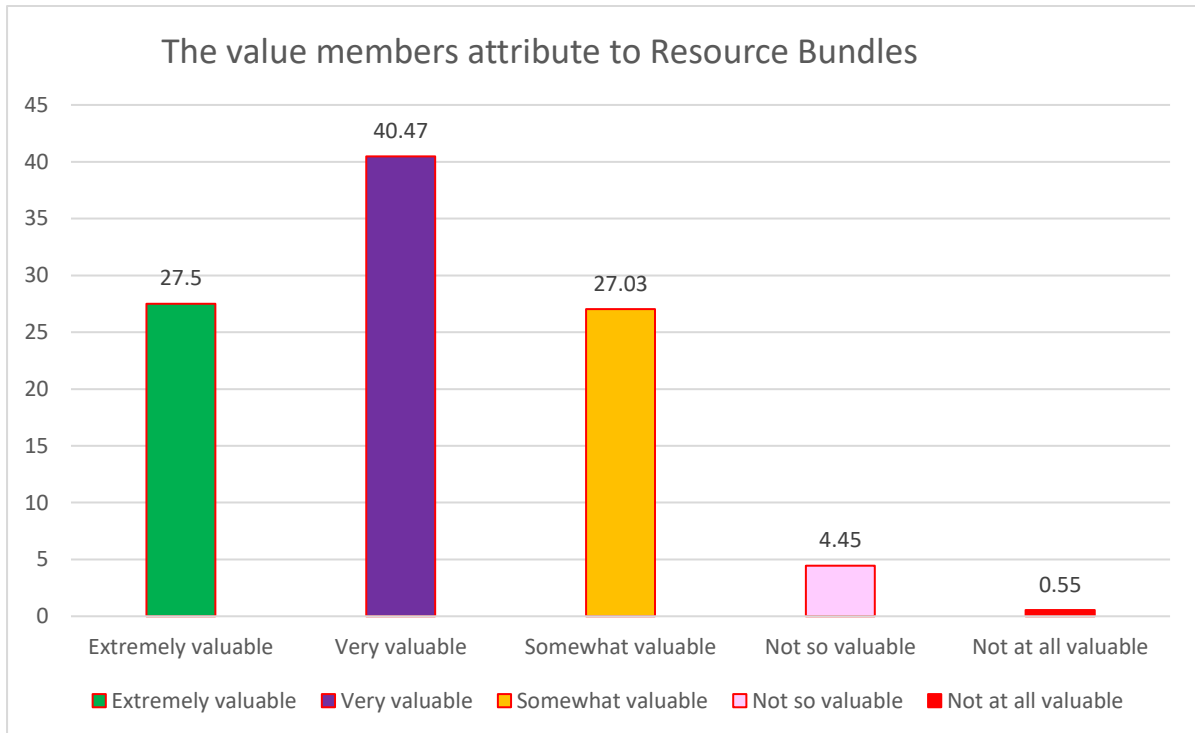


Based on 1220 responses

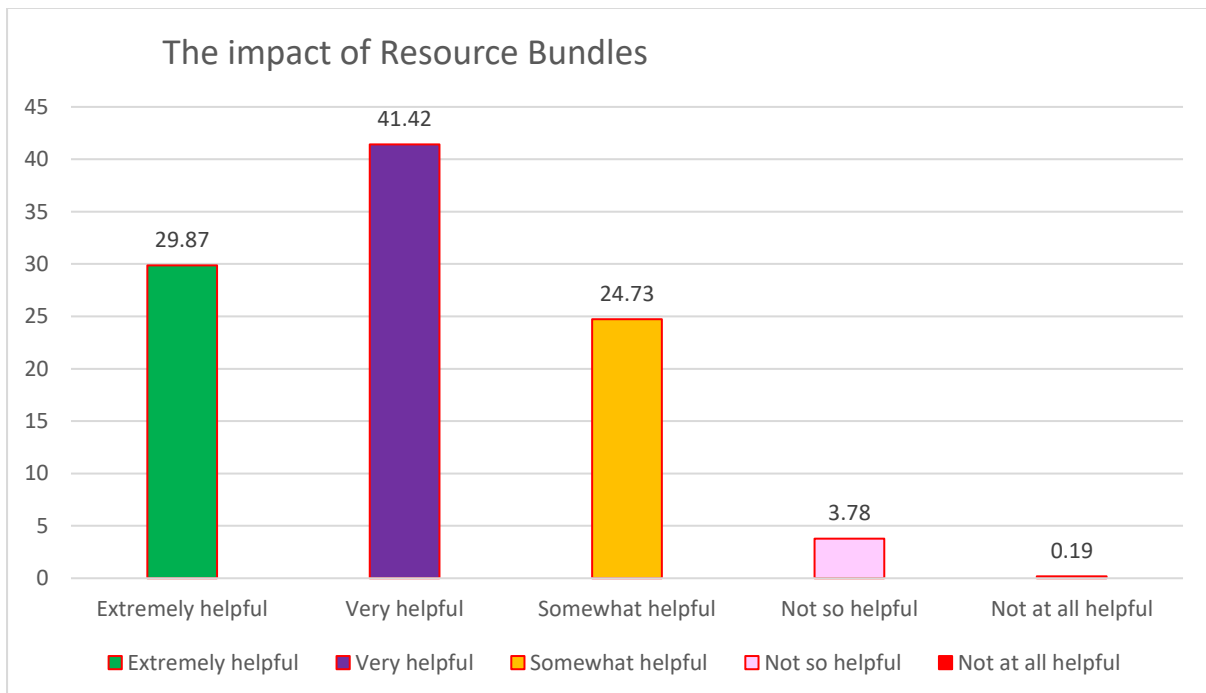
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	59%	60%	45%	73%
More than once	37%	36%	46%	17%
Once	3%	2%	3%	5%
Never	1%	2%	5%	5%
Not applicable	0%	0%	1%	0%

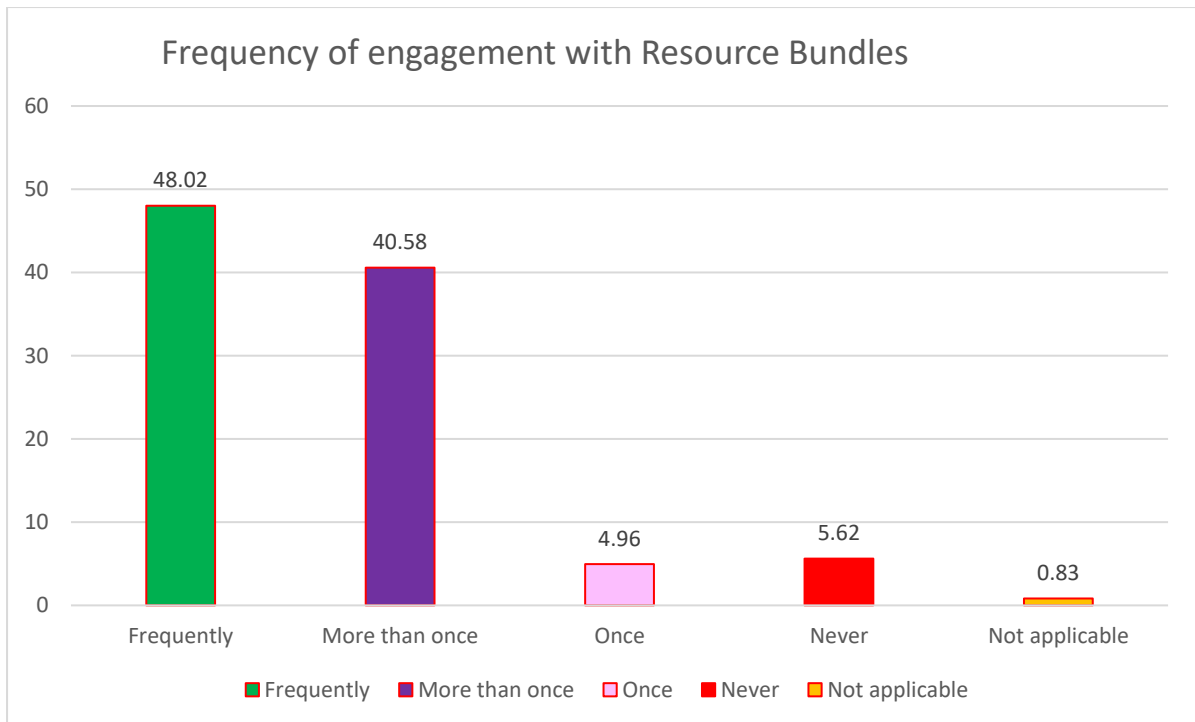
Resource Bundles



Based on 1280 responses



Based on 1031 responses

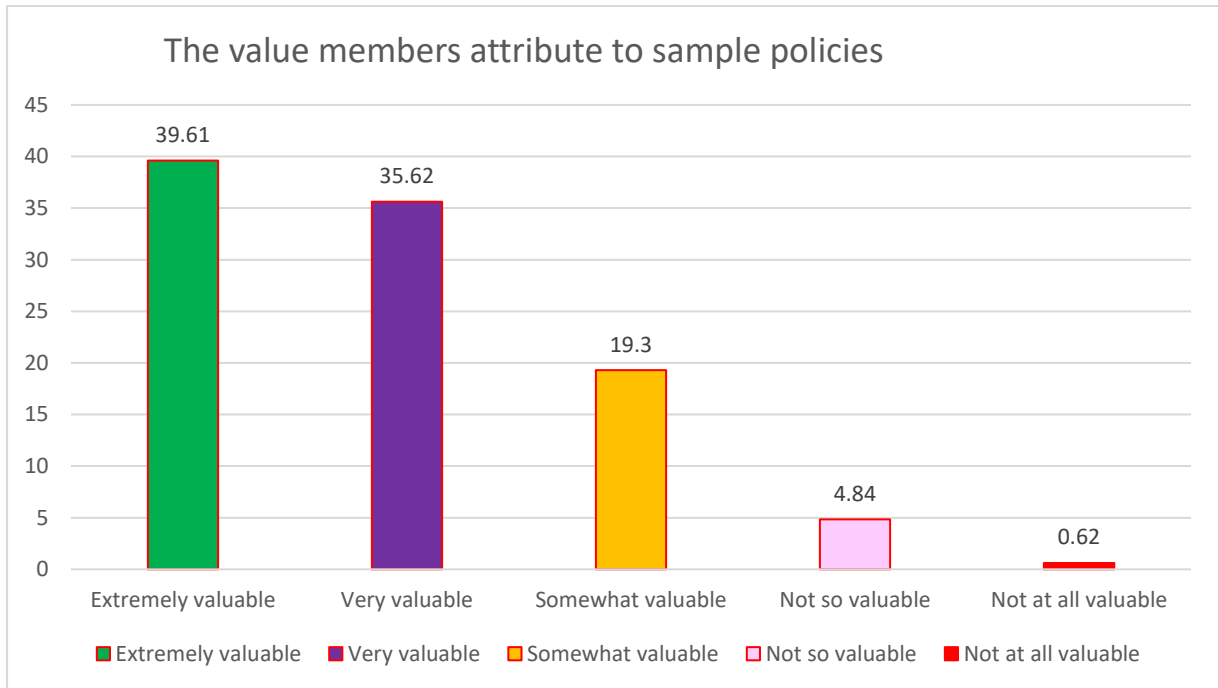


Based on 1210 responses

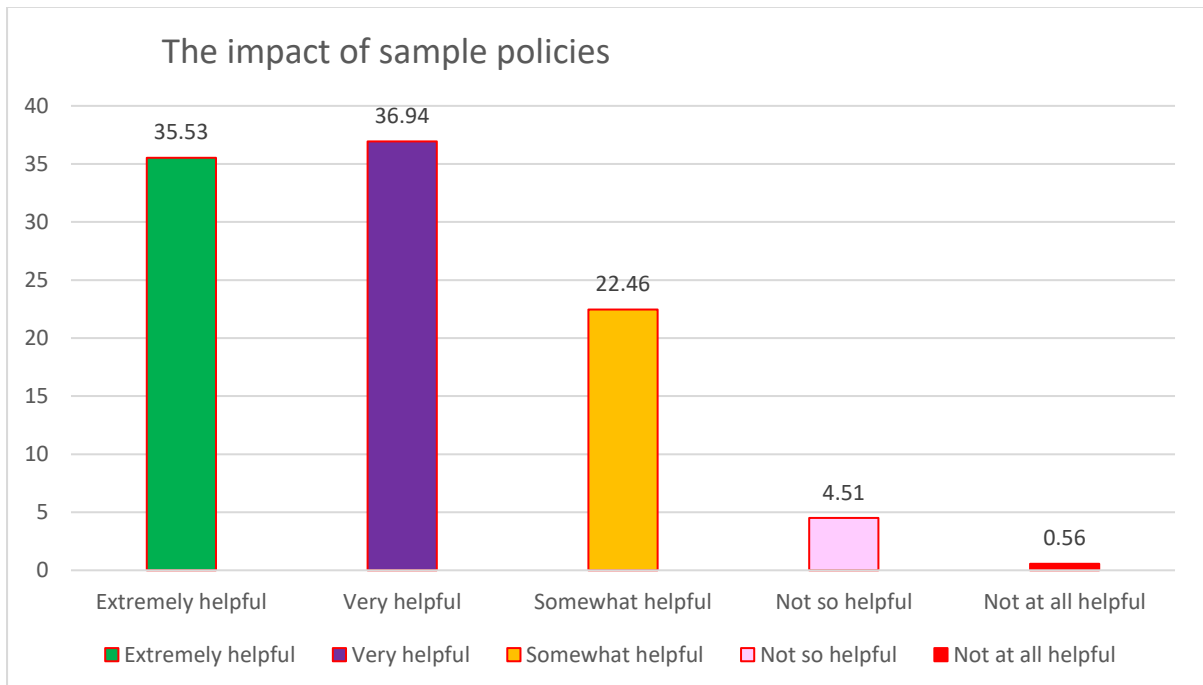
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	51%	53%	35%	54%
More than once	42%	37%	42%	38%
Once	4%	5%	6%	8%
Never	2%	4%	15%	0%
Not applicable	1%	1%	2%	0%

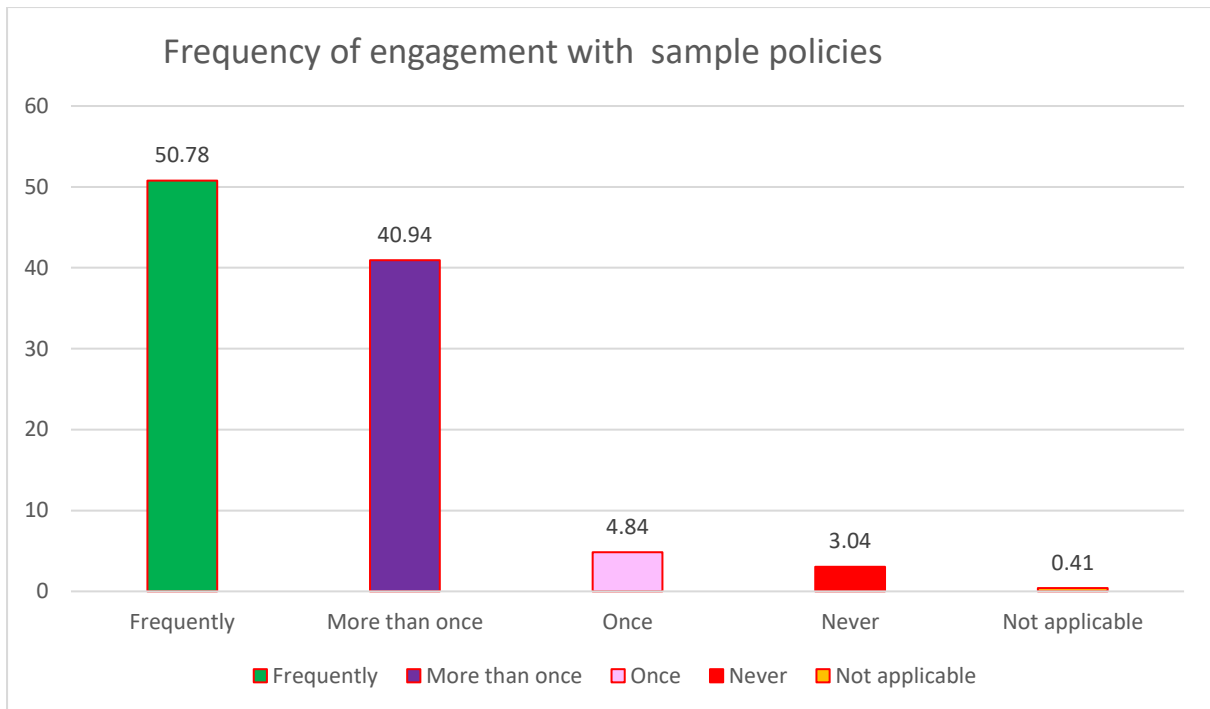
Sample Policies



Based on 1280 responses



Based on 1064 responses

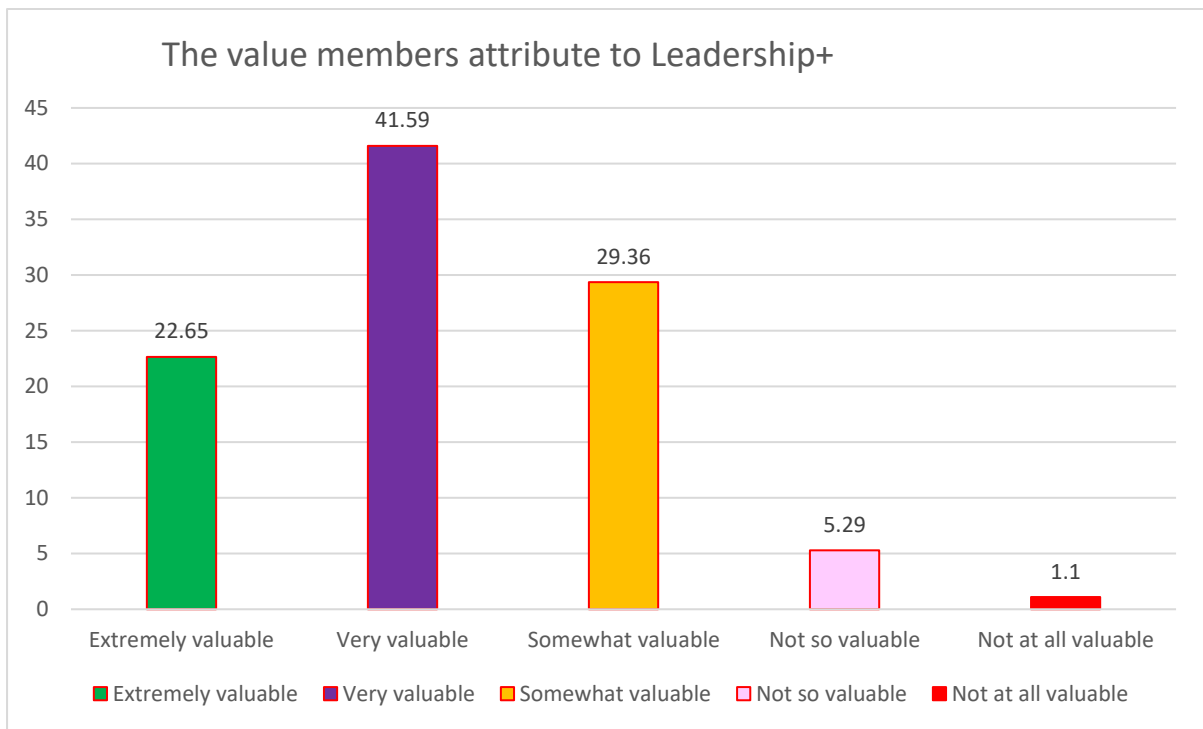


Based on 1219 responses

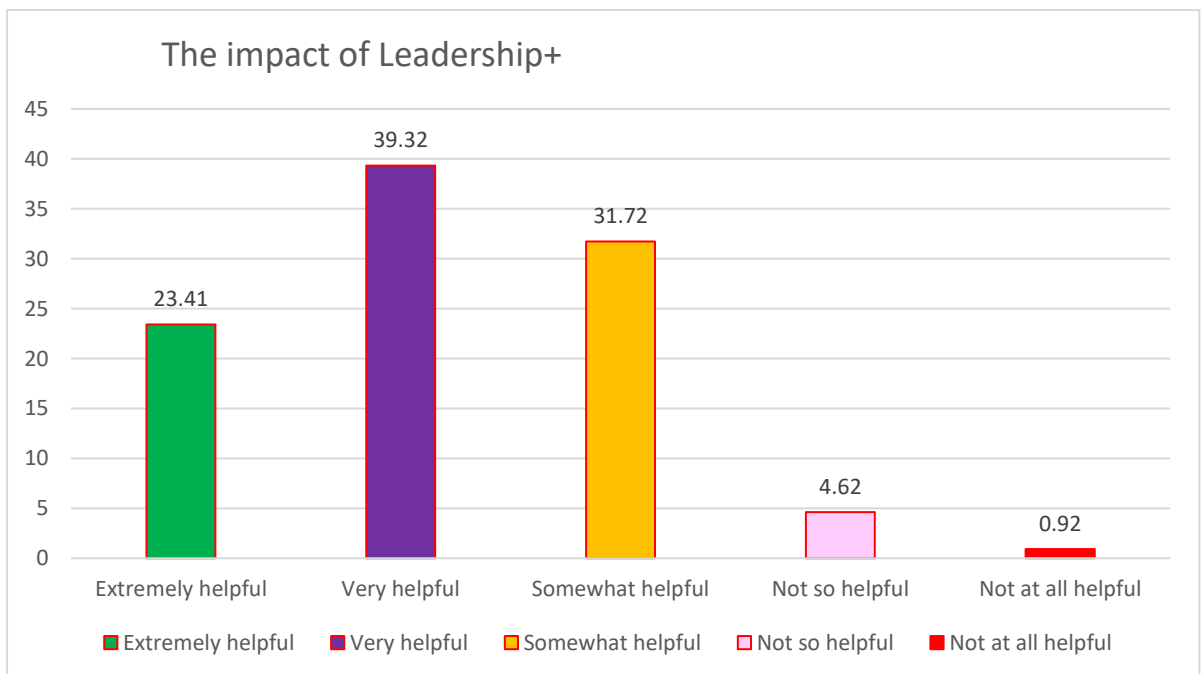
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	52%	60%	38%	53%
More than once	42%	34%	48%	40%
Once	4%	4%	7%	5%
Never	2%	1%	6%	2%
Not applicable	0%	1%	1%	0%

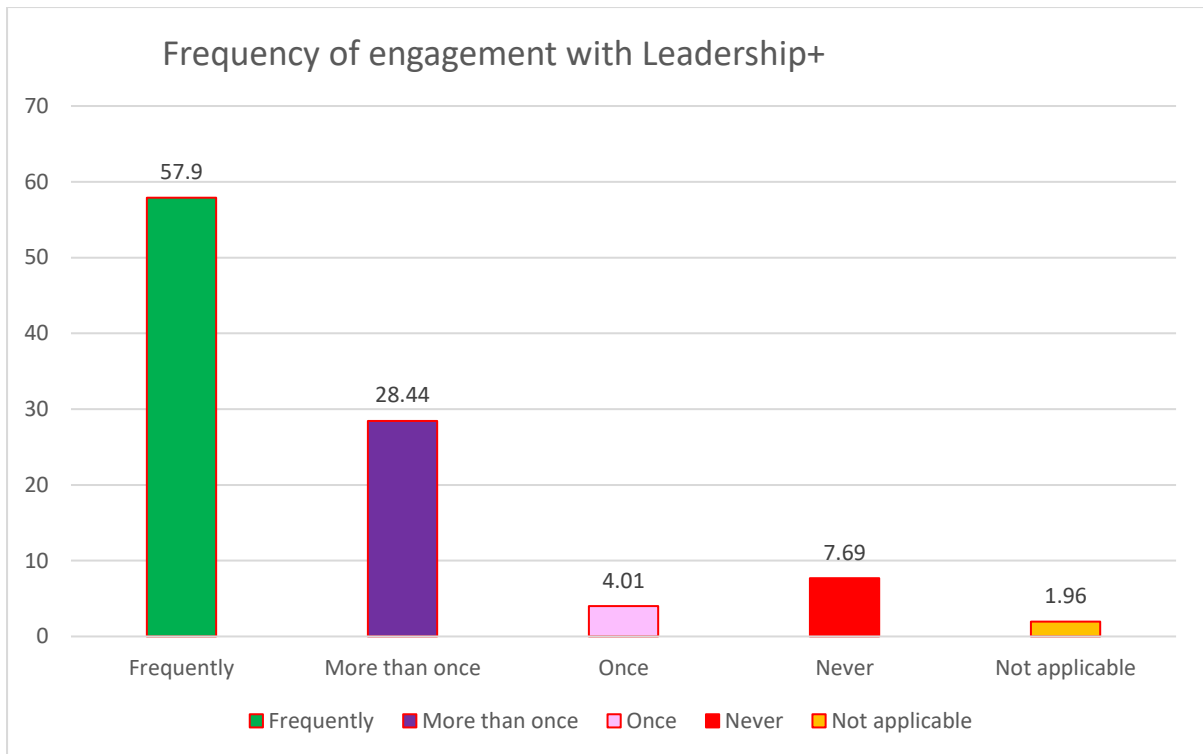
Leadership+



Based on 1267 responses



Based on 974 responses

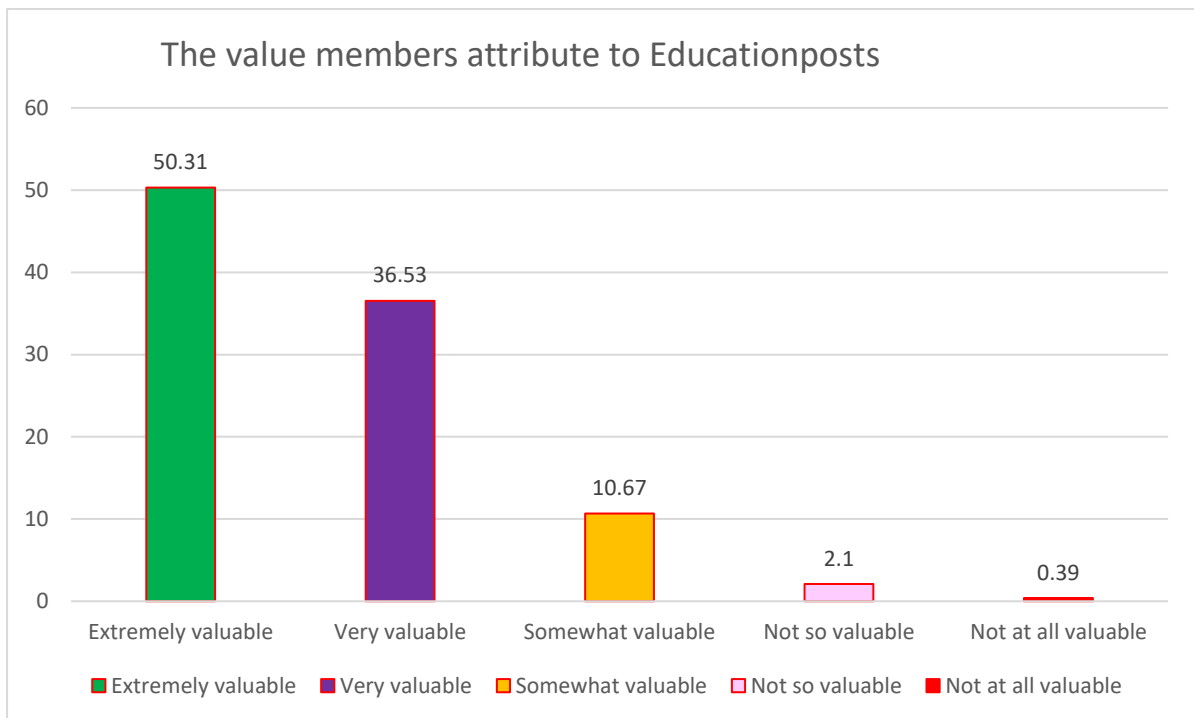


Based on 1171 responses

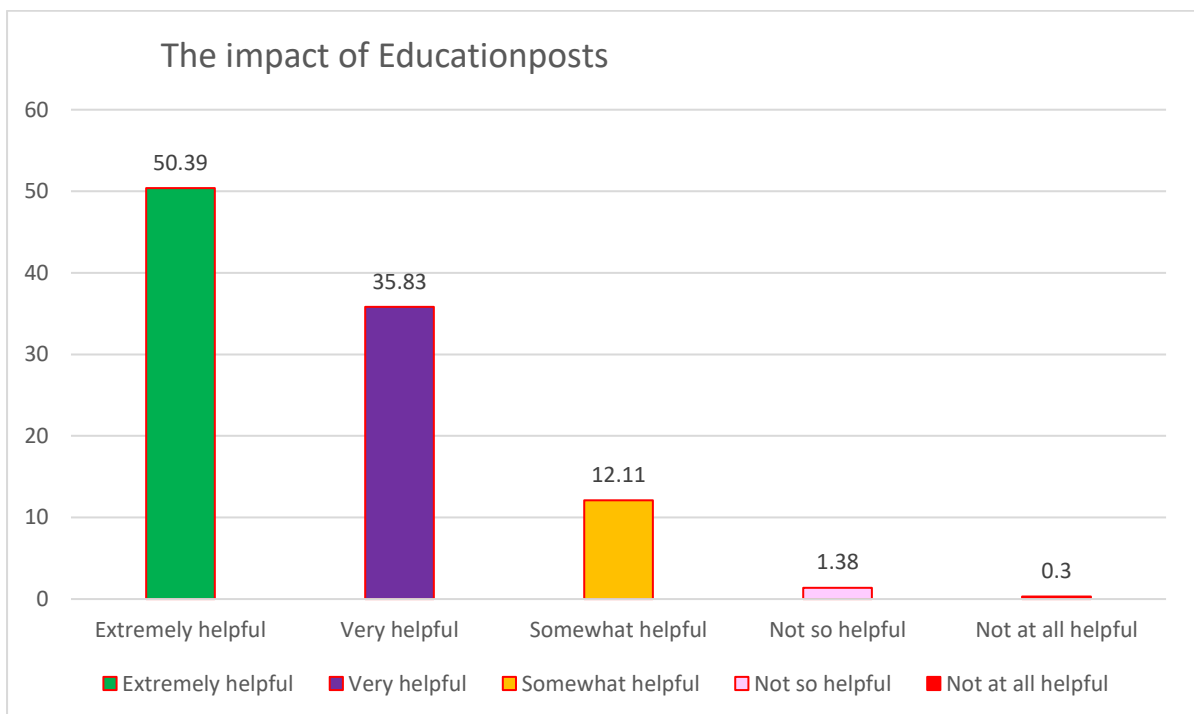
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	63%	55%	51%	66%
More than once	28%	30%	28%	18%
Once	3%	5%	4%	8%
Never	5%	8%	13%	8%
Not applicable	1%	2%	4%	0%

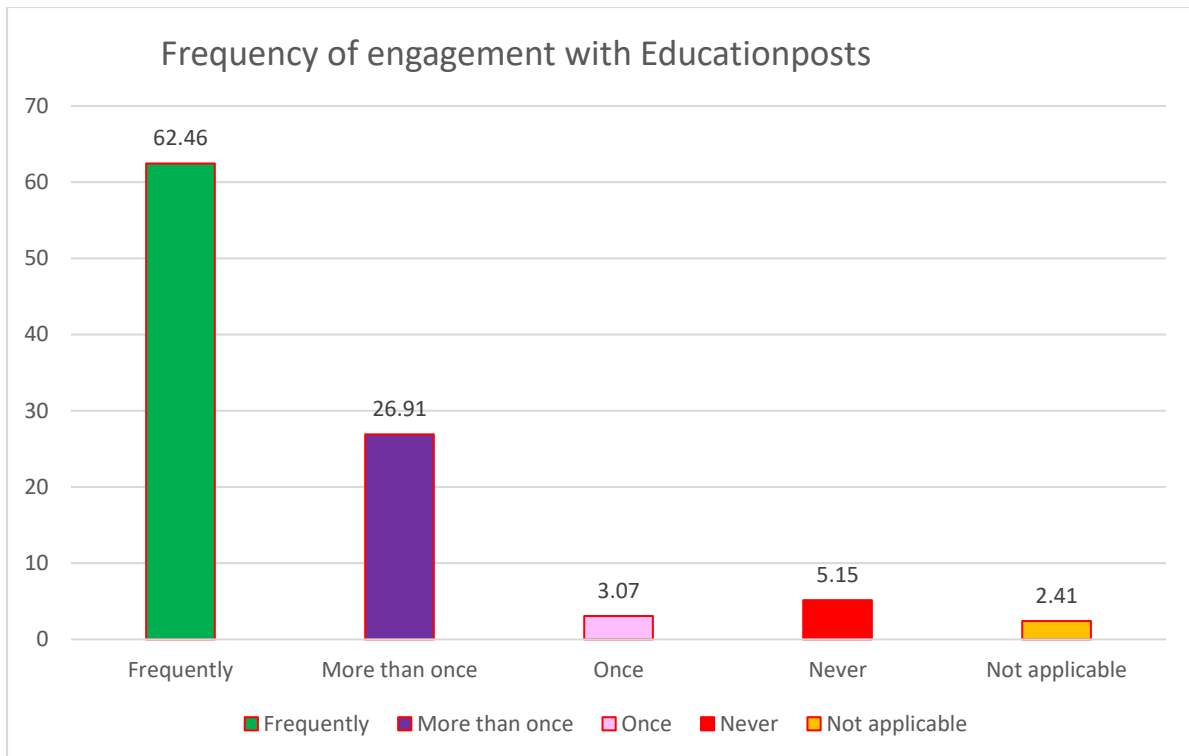
Education Posts



Based on 1284 responses



Based on 1016 responses

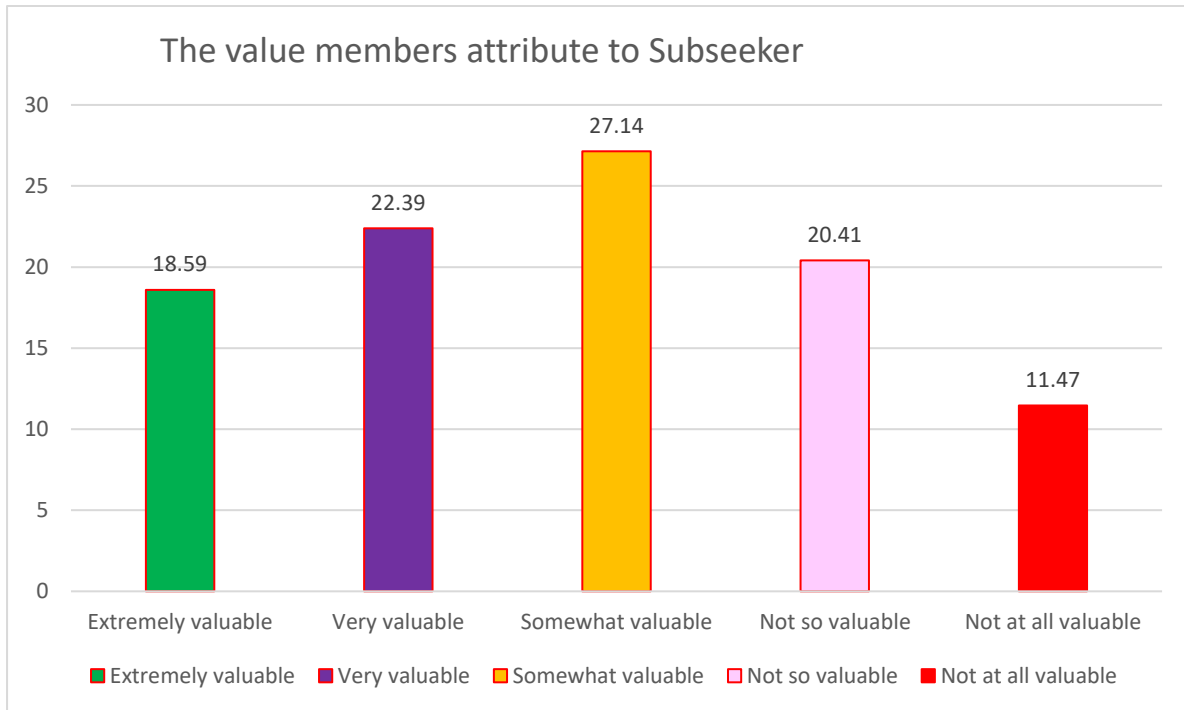


Based on 1204 responses

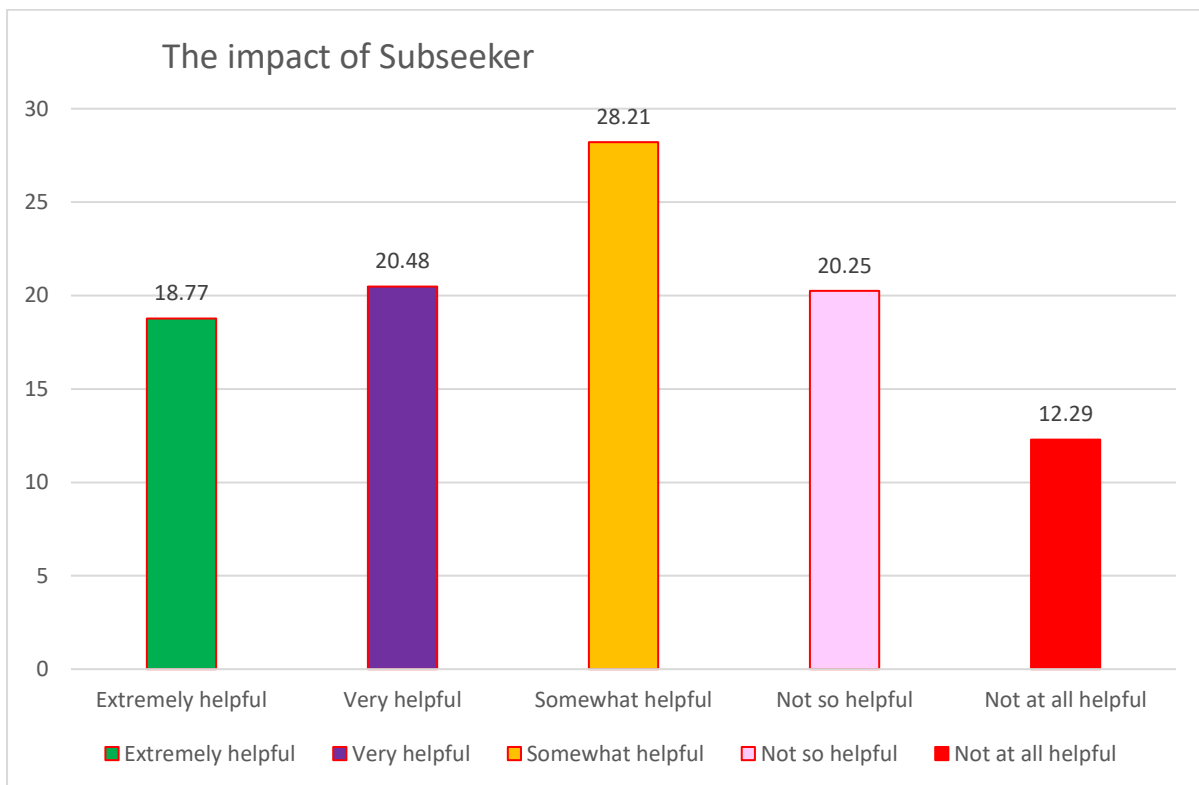
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	82%	54%	39%	54%
More than once	15%	37%	35%	28%
Once	1%	4%	6%	0%
Never	1%	4%	14%	13%
Not applicable	1%	1%	6%	5%

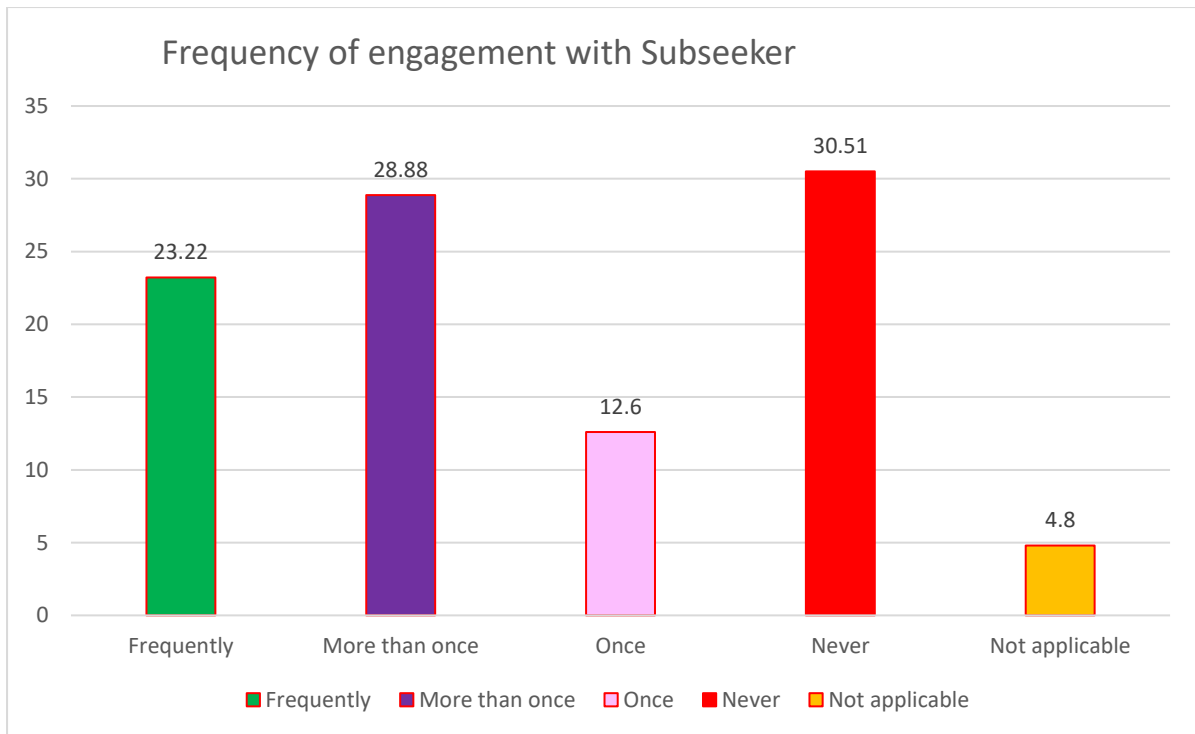
Subseeker



Based on 1264 responses



Based on 879 responses

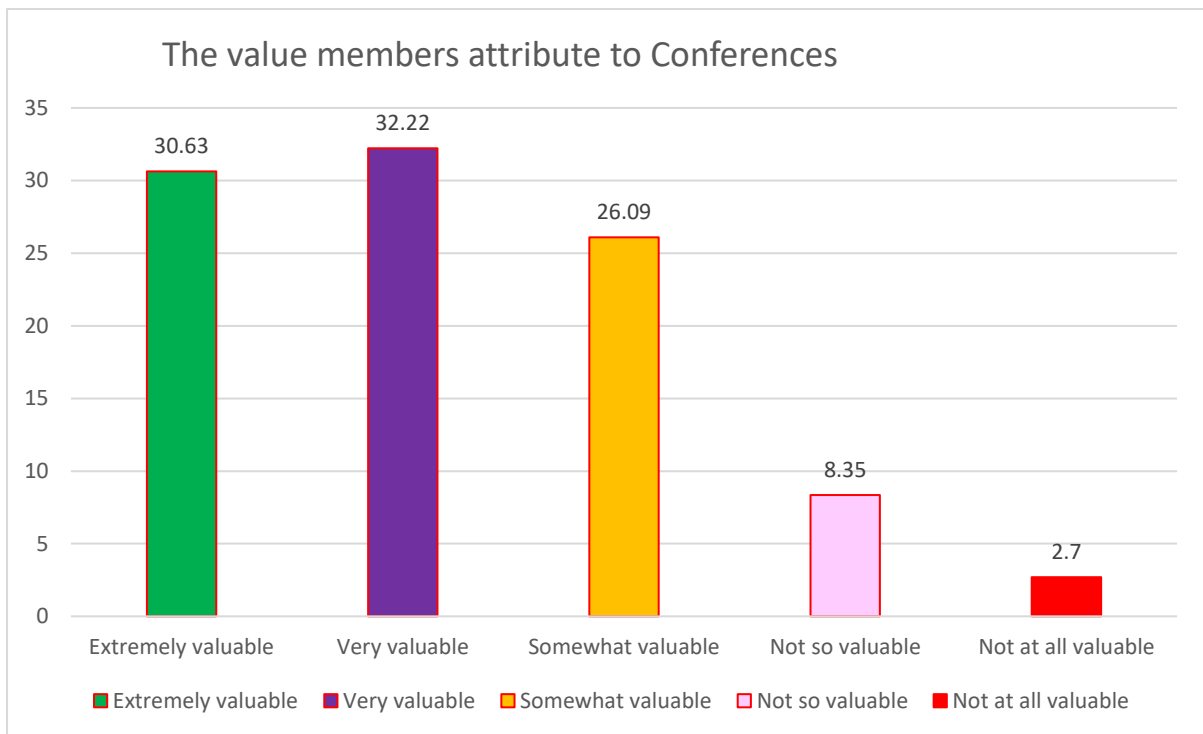


Based on 1167 responses

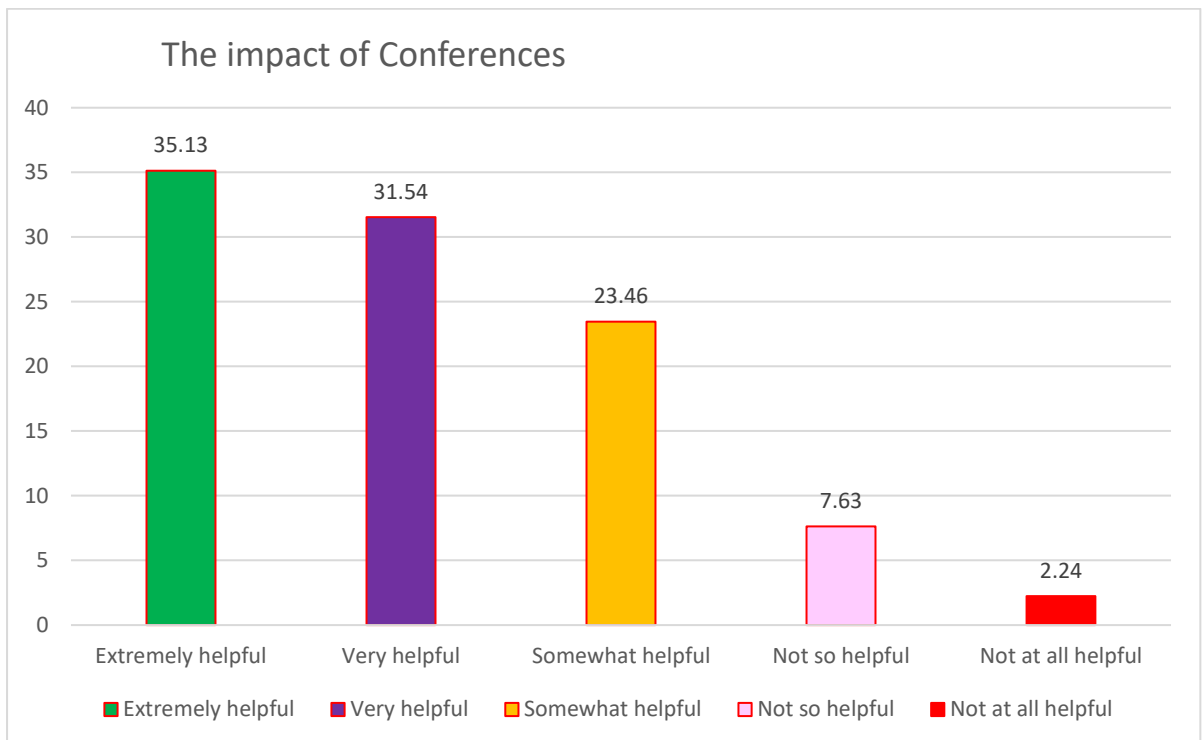
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	30%	19%	16%	32%
More than once	31%	28%	29%	13%
Once	14%	12%	11%	10%
Never	24%	36%	33%	37%
Not applicable	1%	5%	11%	8%

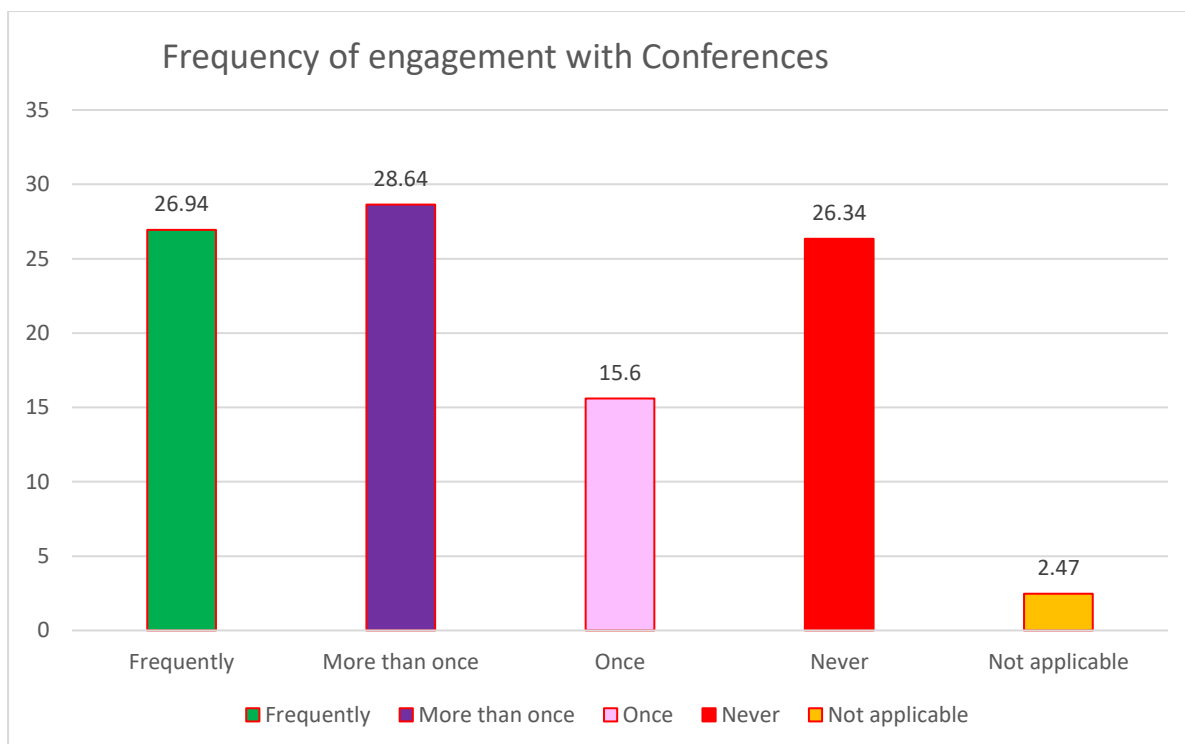
Conferences



Based on 1257 responses



Based on 891 responses

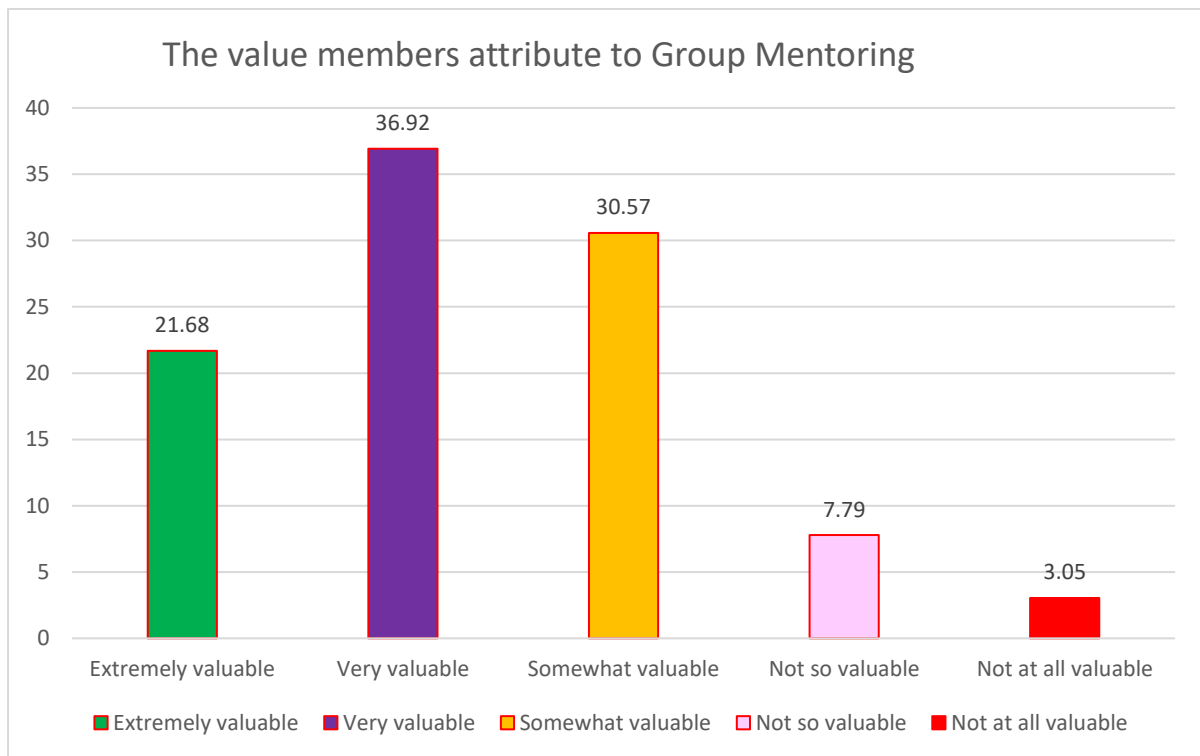


Based on 1173 responses

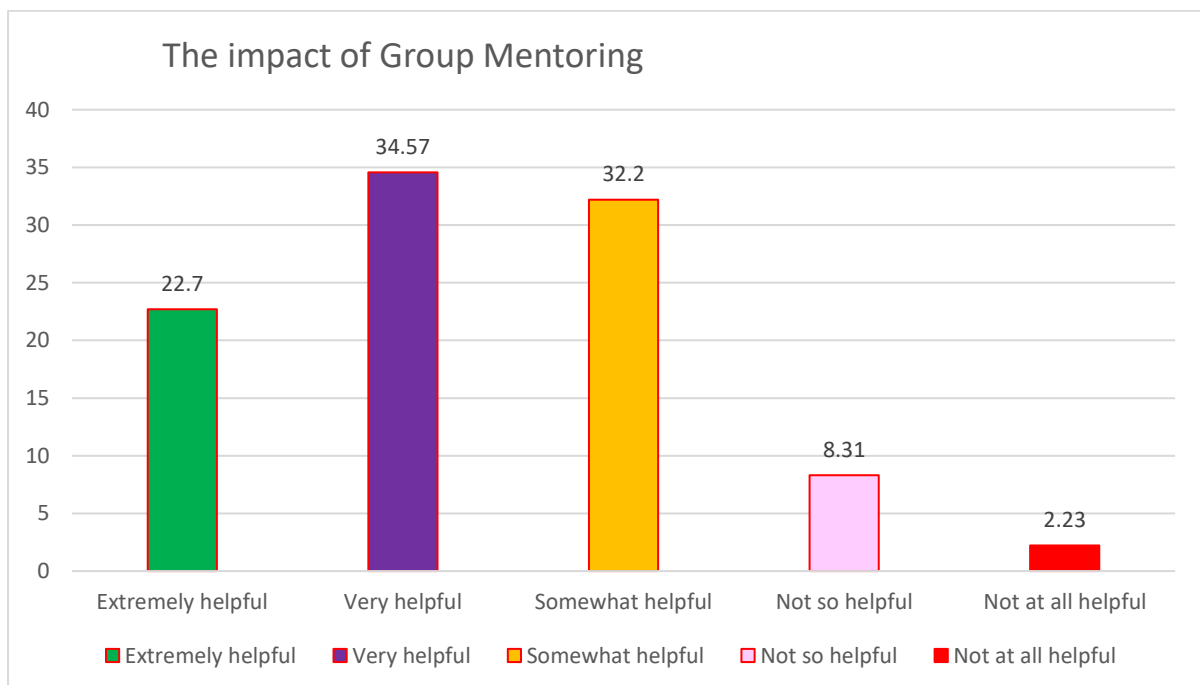
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	44%	17%	10%	28%
More than once	32%	28%	24%	30%
Once	10%	14%	25%	20%
Never	13%	38%	36%	22%
Not applicable	1%	3%	5%	0%

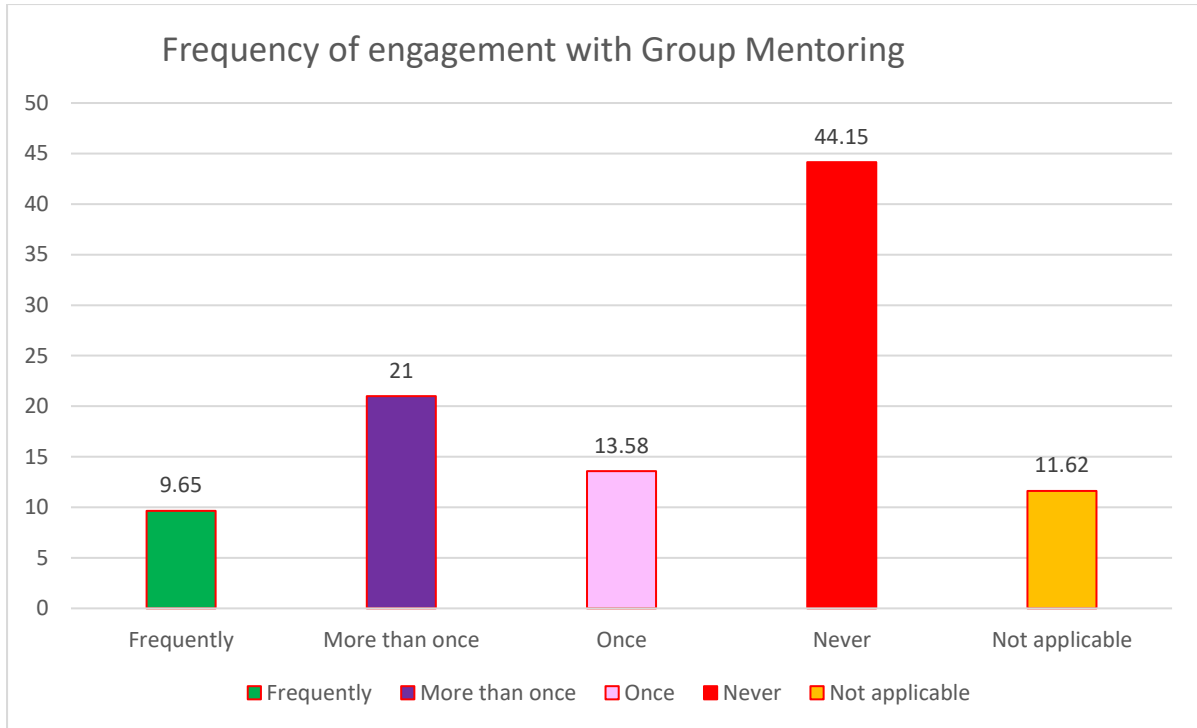
Group Mentoring



Based on 1181 responses



Based on 674 responses

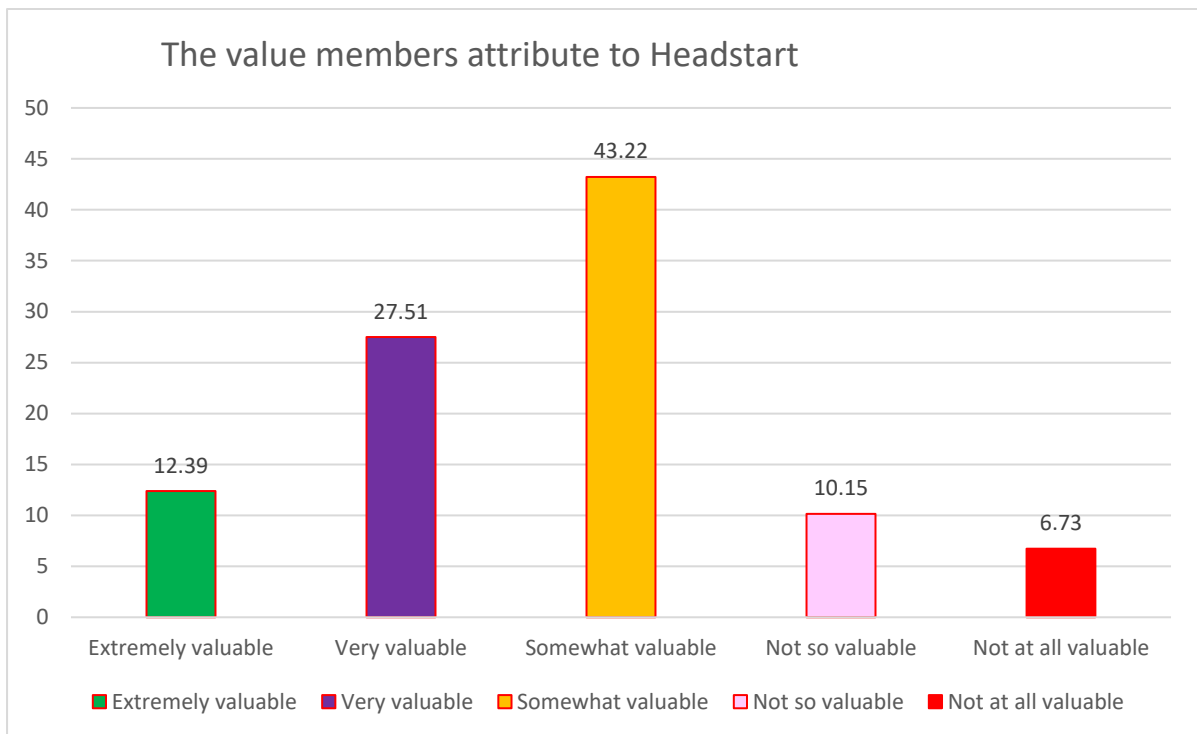


Based on 1119 responses

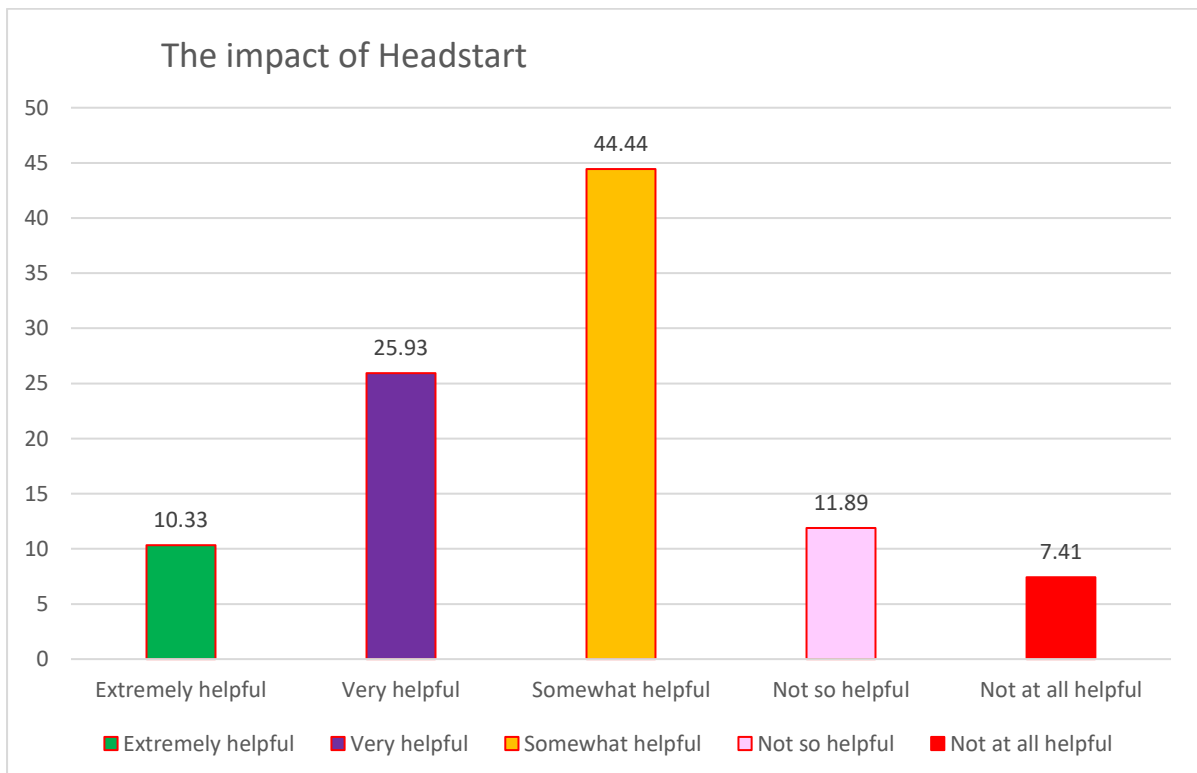
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	14%	10%	3%	6%
More than once	26%	23%	9%	26%
Once	15%	15%	10%	13%
Never	34%	43%	62%	45%
Not applicable	11%	9%	16%	10%

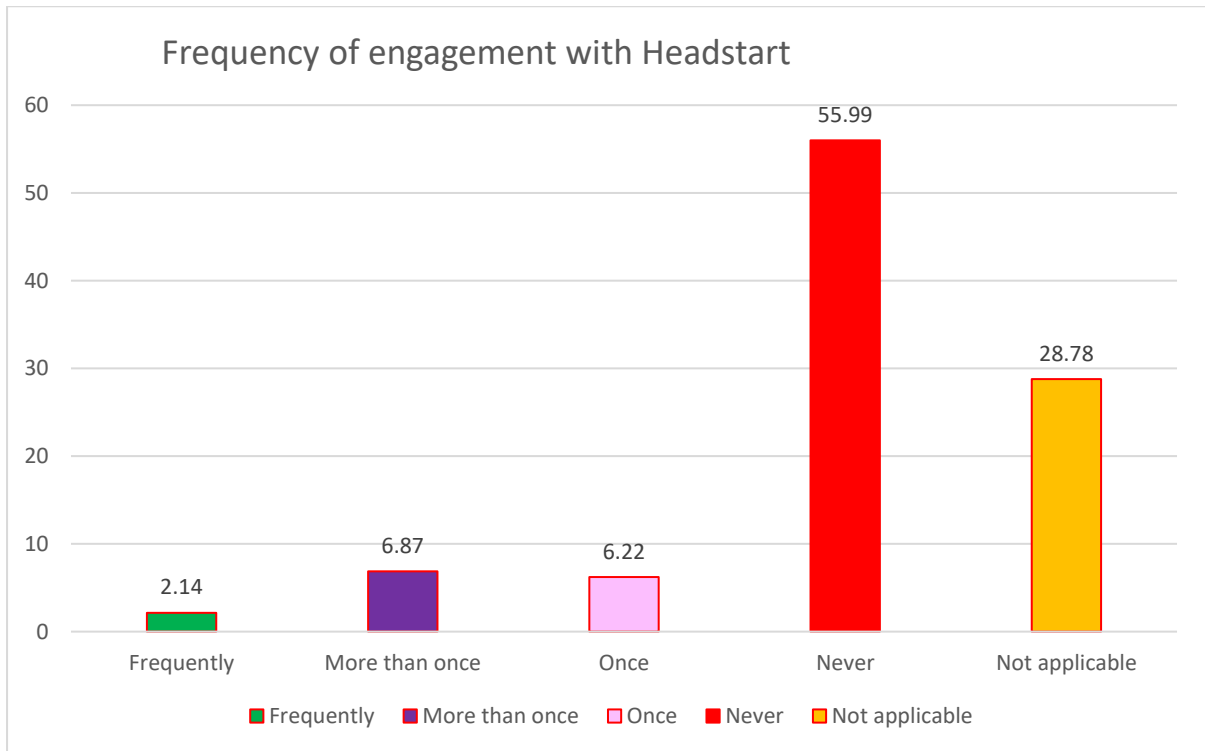
Headstart



Based on 1025 responses



Based on 513 responses

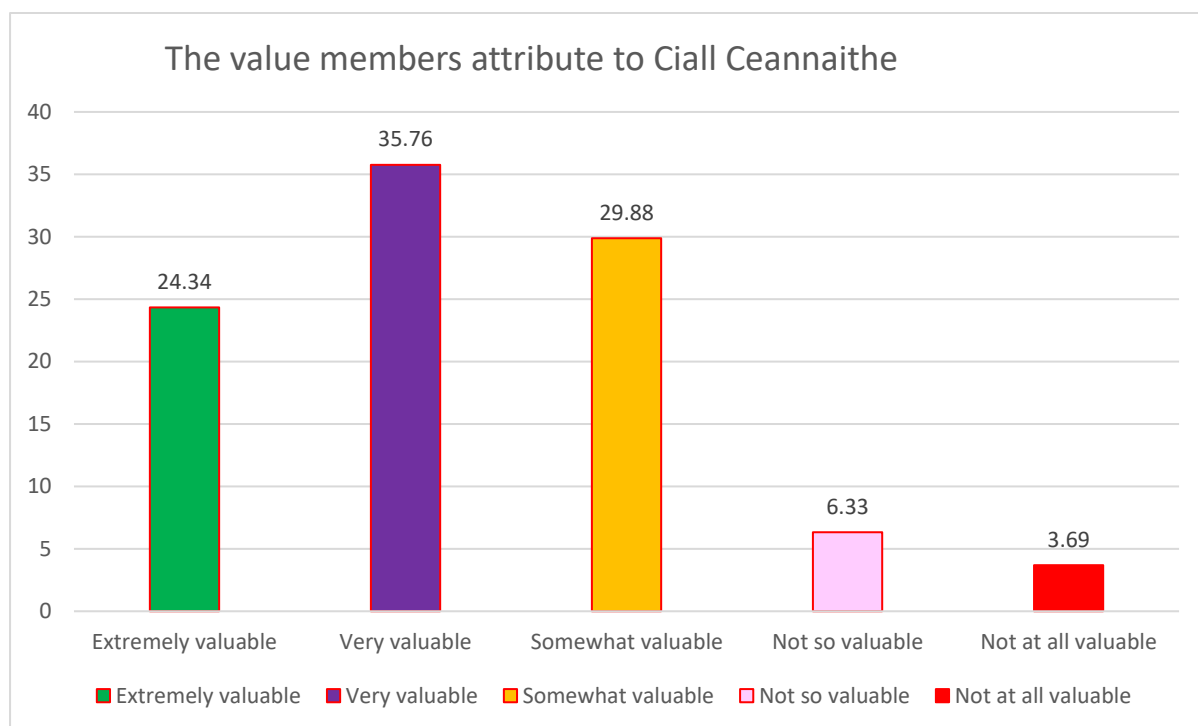


Based on 1077 responses

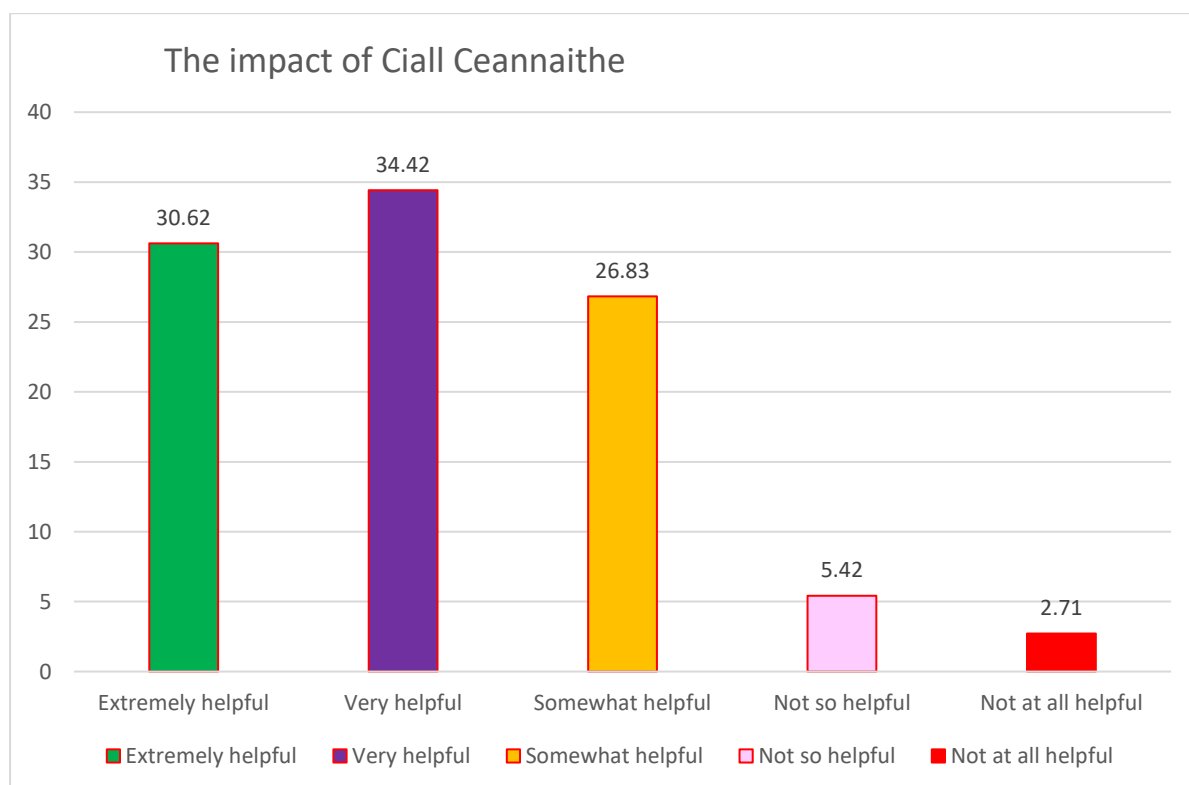
Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	3%	3%	1%	3%
More than once	9%	8%	3%	0%
Once	5%	8%	6%	4%
Never	52%	56%	62%	62%
Not applicable	31%	25%	28%	31%

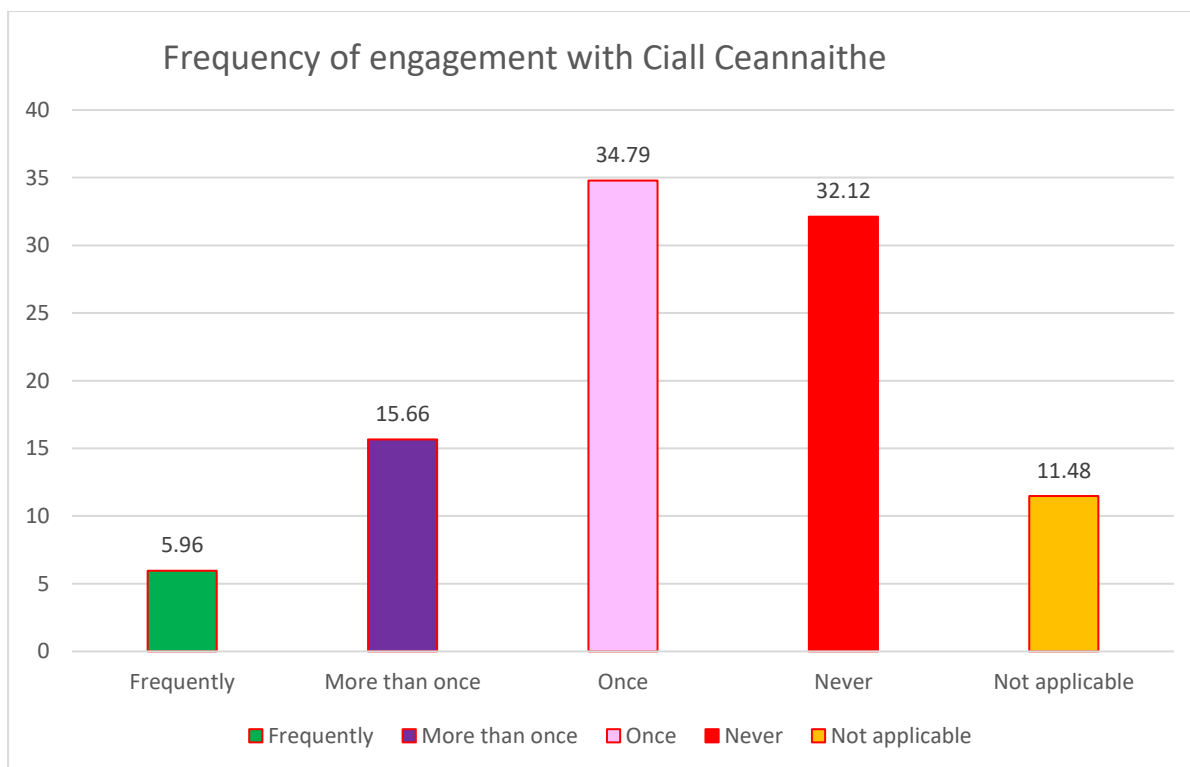
Ciall Ceannaithe



Based on 1138 responses



Based on 738 responses



Based on 1124 responses

Analysis of engagement by role

	Administrative Principals	Teaching Principals	Teaching Deputy Principals	Administrative Deputy Principals
Frequently	6%	6%	5%	3%
More than once	24%	12%	8%	6%
Once	36%	38%	28%	40%
Never	23%	33%	46%	33%
Not applicable	10%	11%	13%	18%

Comparative Data

In the following table, a weighting is given to each support/service based on the totality of the responses. To calculate the weighting, a score of 1 is given for each “*extremely valuable*” response, 2 is given for each “*very valuable*” response, and so on to 5 for each “not at all valuable” response. The scores are totalled and divided by the number of respondents, giving a mean score between 1 and 5. The lower the score, the more value is attached by members to the support/service. All scores that are less than 3 have a positive favourability rating.

Support/Service	Value Weighting
Education Posts	1.66
Leadership Support	1.86
Sample Policies	1.91
E-Scéal	2.10
Resource Bundles	2.10
Local Support Groups	2.20
Conferences	2.20
Networking	2.21
Leadership+	2.21
Ciall Ceannaithe	2.29
Group Mentoring	2.34
Website	2.37
Headstart	2.71
Subseeker	2.84

Similarly to the previous table, a weighting is given to each support/service based on the totality of the responses. To calculate the weighting, a score of 1 is given for each “*extremely helpful*” response, 2 is given for each “*very helpful*” response, and so on to 5 for each “not at all helpful” response. The scores are totalled and divided by the number of respondents, giving a mean score between 1 and 5. The lower the score, the more impactful the support/service is rated by members. Again, all scores that are less than 3 have a positive favourability rating.

Support/Service	Impact Weighting
Education Posts	1.65
Leadership Support	1.74
Local Support Groups	1.93
Sample Policies	1.98
E-Scéal	2.03
Resource Bundles	2.03
Conferences	2.10
Ciall Ceannaithe	2.15
Networking	2.16
Leadership+	2.20
Website	2.29
Group Mentoring	2.33
Headstart	2.80
Subseeker	2.87

In the following table the value and impact weightings are compared and the variance between the two scores is calculated. Where there is a negative variance, where the impact score is lower (better) than the value score, it indicates that the experience of those who availed of the support/service is better than the value attached to that support/service by the wider cohort of members who may or may not have availed of the support/service. It is a case of a negative variance being indicative of a positive reflection on the support/service.

Support/Service	Value Weighting	Impact Weighting	Variance
Education Posts	1.66	1.65	-0.01
Leadership Support	1.86	1.74	-0.12
Local Support Groups	2.20	1.93	-0.27
Sample Policies	1.91	1.98	+0.08
E-Scéal	2.10	2.03	-0.07
Resource Bundles	2.10	2.03	-0.07
Conferences	2.20	2.1	-0.10
Ciall Ceannaithe	2.29	2.15	-0.14
Networking	2.21	2.16	-0.05
Leadership+	2.21	2.2	-0.01
Website	2.37	2.29	-0.08
Group Mentoring	2.34	2.33	-0.01
Headstart	2.71	2.8	+0.09
Subseeker	2.84	2.87	+0.03

The table below details the weightings calculated in respect of the frequency with which members engage with each individual support/service. A score of 1 is given for each response of “never”, 2 is given for each response of “once”, and so on. The scores are totalled and divided by the number of respondents, giving a mean score between 1 and 5. In this instance, the higher the score, the more frequently a support/service is availed of by members.

Support/Service	Engagement Weighting
Education Posts	3.54
Website	3.50
E-Scéal	3.46
Leadership+	3.42
Sample Policies	3.41
Networking	3.37
Resource Bundles	3.33
Local Support Groups	2.82
Leadership Support	2.72
Conferences	2.64
Subseeker	2.59
Headstart	2.42
Group Mentoring	2.31
Ciall Ceannaithe	2.30

Summary of Qualitative Data

As referenced in the introduction to this report, qualitative data relating to IPPN's supports and services was sourced from members through discussion at the autumn meetings and from their responses to our member survey. The qualitative data received has been analysed and summarised. The comments and suggestions of members relating to specific supports and services are as follows:

Website

Issue:

A significant number of school leaders consider the IPPN website to be outdated, difficult to navigate, and populated with irrelevant or out-of-date content.

Suggestions:

Overhaul the website to ensure

- a more user-friendly interface,
- updated and easily searchable resources
- digital bundles with hyperlinks
- more intuitive and accessible categorization

Sample Policies

Issue:

A significant number of school leaders report that sample policies are often outdated and do not reflect changes in legislation, circulars and best practices

Suggestions:

- Ensure all sample policies are reviewed and updated annually.
- Ensure sample policies reflect contemporary practices, positive language, and neuro-affirmative approaches.
- Provide access to a single, high-quality, thoroughly vetted policy template that is easy to adapt to individual school contexts, including small schools, special schools and Gaelscoileanna.
- Provide a clear list of mandatory policies.

Resource Bundles

Issue:

A significant number of school leaders report that Resource Bundles are often outdated and do not reflect changes in legislation, circulars and guidelines.

Suggestions:

- Ensure all resource bundles are reviewed and updated annually so that they remain legally robust and relevant.

Networking

Issue:

According to some school leaders, the Networking mailing list is considered to be less effective than it might be.

Suggestions:

- Replace networking with a more robust, searchable forum to promote knowledge sharing
- Separate practical issues from leadership discussions to avoid overwhelming subscribers.

Local Support Groups

Issue:

Some school leaders report difficulties with regard to access to and organization of local support groups.

Suggestions:

- Ensure access to a local support group for all principals and deputy principals who wish to join one
- Organise local support groups to ensure members are matched with schools of similar size and challenges.
- Create smaller, more manageable regional WhatsApp groups for sharing advice.

Conferences

Issue:

For some school leaders, attendance at conferences is compromised by logistical issues such as location and timing, as well as no substitute cover. Content relevance can also be an issue.

Suggestions:

- Seek alternative venues for conferences.
- Consider staging smaller events in accessible locations for all regions.
- Secure substitute cover to attend conferences.
- Conference fees should be tiered based on school size
- Consider allowing virtual attendance or single-day options to support participation.
- Content of conferences should address real, practical challenges and focus on current issues in education leadership.
- Consider a greater focus on uplifting themes, practical sessions and diversity of topics to promote engagement.

E-Scéal

Issue:

Some school leaders find it difficult to take account of the information contained in E-Scéalta due to lack of time and headspace.

Suggestions:

- Adopt a more structured and streamlined approach to circulars and updates, including projected timelines and summaries for easier navigation.
- Consider integrating wellbeing initiatives, such as podcasts or mindfulness segments

Headstart

Issue:

There is a certain lack of clarity with regard to the role Headstart plays in the spectrum of supports for newly appointed school leaders.

Suggestions:

- Clear, concise, and structured communication about IPPN offerings, particularly for new members, would reduce information overload and improve engagement.
- Consider development of a “welcome pack” or a manual for newly appointed principals

More general observations/suggestions not related to specific supports or services

Suggestions:

- Greater access to coaching and mentoring for all school leaders and leadership teams
- Supports and professional development opportunities, to be developed and offered that are specific to the needs of DPs, teaching principals, leaders of small rural schools, leaders, special school leaders, DEIS school leaders and leaders of Gaelscoileanna.
- Consideration should be given to the timing of inputs and meetings with evening or night times being more conducive to the attendance of those with families.
- One school leader felt that Education Posts should be free to primary schools.
- Suggestions for a centralized HR helpline and specific support for managing ancillary staff
- Calls for more wellbeing initiatives, such as mental health resources, and policies to prevent out-of-hours work demands
- Requests for more focused CPD on HR, finance, and project management.
- Calls for technology-driven solutions to manage administrative workload