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# Transformational leadership and its influence in the high school choral setting

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS  
INFLUENCE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL SETTING**

by

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## **Dedication**

To my mother, who believed in me and encouraged me to never give up.

To my wife, who supported me even during the impossible times.

To Jim, who cared about his students as people, not simply as singers in his choir.

To Ruth, whose guidance and affirmation sustained me along my journey.

## **Acknowledgements**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study makes a unique contribution to the body of literature in choral-music education by equipping high school choral directors with a theory-based understanding regarding how their leadership behaviors influence the attitudes and perceptions of students. I employed Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership as the framework for this investigation in order to understand the effects, if any, that leaders have on their followers, and to determine the net impact among the behaviors that they use to achieve these effects. The following research questions guided this investigation: (1) What specific leadership behaviors may be attributed to effective high school choral directors? (2) To what degree do the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors influence students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness? I employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X-Short), an online survey tool, to measure 223 choral students' perceptions regarding the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors of five high school choral directors. Multiple regression analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship among the transformational leadership behaviors of directors and all three outcome variables. The findings

illuminated ways that transformational leadership behaviors can be used to foster positive personal relationships and improved pedagogical strategies that may lead to greater satisfaction within high school choral music education.

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## Chapter One: Setting the Stage

### Prelude

As an apprentice under Jim (pseudonym), who served as my advisor while I worked on my music teacher certification, I was in awe of the poise he exhibited with his ensembles. Jim's choirs were amazing. They were completely in tune, and well balanced. Their phrasing was beautiful, and the purposeful decisions that they made highlighted their careful attention to detail and nuance. I often wondered if I would ever be able to produce ensembles of that caliber. Jim showed me the teaching strategies and methods that he used with his choirs, which in turn helped me develop my own techniques for improving choral sound. We discussed topics centered on technical considerations such as breath support and the clarity of entrances that are prepared and intentional. Jim helped me design lessons that would improve the students' understanding of spatial awareness and how it influenced the development of choral tone, vowel uniformity, and blend. These pedagogical concerns were often coupled with discussions about the development of a safe learning environment that would encourage singer self-confidence, risk taking, and exploration.

Years later, my approach to choral directing was altered when I was invited to a high school choral concert and reception in honor of Jim's many years of service. The organizers of the reception had set up a table display containing pictures, memorabilia, and other commemorative artifacts. During the reception, Jim's students chronicled his teaching career by presenting a slideshow they had created. Afterward, past and present choir members gave speeches about their experience in Jim's choirs. Each person spoke

about what he meant to them as a person and as a leader.

The words they spoke changed how I viewed choral leadership. When Jim's students got up to speak that night, it surprised me that technical skills were never mentioned. Rather, choir members spoke about the ways Jim had inspired them, about how he challenged them to try new things, and how he had helped them to learn how to work together as a team. For example, one rather reserved individual offered a moving personal account of how Jim's leadership had inspired him to apply for medical school. "Jim always encouraged us to go for things 100 percent," he said, "and when I asked him whether or not I should attend medical school his confidence in my decision was immediate and unrelenting."

As I heard the story, I began to realize that my success as a high school choir director would never be based upon my own musical excellence, my gestural capacity on the podium, or degrees that I earned. I recognized what made Jim special to his students and brought him success as a director were the personal connections that he forged with his students, the way that he chose to interact with them, and the way that he made them feel as people.

That night, Jim's students mentioned how he had inspired them by stressing a collective sense of mission, and by reassuring them that the obstacles that were to be faced would be overcome in due time. Many spoke of how their motivation soared because of the team spirit that he aroused in his choirs. Yet, despite this sense of collectivity, virtually every one of Jim's students mentioned how he had taken the time to get to know them as people beyond their role as a member of his choirs. Jim was not

simply interested in building strong choirs. His focus was on building relationships, and his leadership abilities were the result of that endeavor.

## **Introduction**

High school choral directors aspire to provide their students with exemplary choral instruction. Yet there is much to be learned about the specific behaviors that effective directors employ while leading ensembles, and about how specific behaviors influence the attitudes and perceptions of students (Allen, 1988; Allen & Apfelstadt, 1990; Williams, 2014). This study will examine the relationship among the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors and students' extra effort, satisfaction, and overall assessment of director effectiveness.

In this chapter, I establish an argument for the study of leadership behaviors within high school choral music education. I begin by discussing the importance of leadership within the ensemble setting. Next, I describe and define transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership will be the lens through which leadership within high school choral music education will be examined. I present concerns regarding contemporary high school choral instruction in order to illuminate the need for the current study. The chapter concludes with the statement of purpose and the research questions that have guided this inquiry.

## **Leadership Within the High School Choral Setting**

Choral leadership is a many-sided art. A vast array of skills are requisite in order to be effective (Apfelstadt, 1997; Armstrong & Armstrong, 1996). Harris (2001) noted that strong musicianship skills are of fundamental importance. However, nonmusical

attributes may be of equal significance for developing effective leadership. Apfelstadt (2009) stressed that understanding the behaviors that directors use while leading their ensembles may be a necessary step toward understanding what makes them effective.

Demaree and Moses (1995) suggested that an effective choral leader should be:

Musician, scholar, coach, communicator, educator, diplomat, disciplinarian, executive, planner, budget manager, personnel officer, efficiency expert, advocate, publicist, guide, leader, visionary: The ideal conductor combines all of these roles in an intricate vocation (p. 1).

Although these qualifications develop over time, it is a director's conscious attempt to manage these attributes that will ultimately contribute to their effectiveness.

A director's personality is of critical importance for effective choral leadership (Demaree & Moses, 1995). Robinson and Winold (1976) stressed that a director's personality is essential because it provides the means to merge a heterogeneous group of individuals into a homogeneous collective whole.

Sound training, technical conducting skills, musical talent of the highest order, thorough knowledge of musical style, consummate musicianship, and experience are indispensable ingredients for the development of a good conductor. However, even these qualities may not ensure that a person will be a successful and inspiring conductor. The intangible qualities of personality, which are essential for forceful leadership in other fields, are also necessary ingredients in musical leadership, because many personalities with heterogeneous characteristics and intellectual capacities are to be merged into one homogenous sounding musical unit (pp. 30-31).

Phillips (2016) suggested that a director's personality helps a leader develop positive relationships and establish open communication within an ensemble. Gordon (1989) stressed that the personality of a director is important insofar as it fosters the group dynamics that lead to successful rehearsal and performance. Similarly, Demaree and Moses (1995) argued that a director's personality serves as a conduit of communication

between an ensemble and its audience; projecting the confidence and success of an ensemble to the audience, while simultaneously accepting the audience's response to the performance. A director's personality is not something to simply be accepted or taken for granted. Rather, it is something that carries weight, providing directors with the ability to influence individuals within ensembles in specific and deliberate ways.

In previous studies, the leadership behaviors of directors have been noted to develop skills, increase motivation, and foster positive emotions. Boerner et al. (2004) examined the relationship among directors' leadership behaviors and the perceptions of ensemble members. The results of their study suggested that a directive-charismatic leadership style positively influenced the skill and motivation of individual musicians, as well as the artistic quality of ensembles. Rowald and Rohmann (2009) investigated the leadership styles of German choir directors and the perceptions of volunteer choral singers. Their analysis revealed that the transformational leadership behaviors of directors were related to followers' positive emotions, including joy, pride, admiration, and enthusiasm. Noting that singers with positive attitudes might be willing to show extra effort, Rowald and Rohmann (2009a) suggested that a director's behaviors are important in that they encourage positive emotions and thereby contribute to ensemble success. As with personality traits, previous studies have indicated that a director's leadership behaviors are not something to be overlooked. The leadership behaviors of directors have the potential to positively influence every student within an ensemble. Therefore, leadership should be considered to be an integral component of choral-music education.

Effective leadership behaviors have been shown to have a positive influence on

choral students in a number of significant ways. For example, Yu (1999) investigated how different leadership styles exhibited by directors were perceived by chorus members at a Philadelphia high school. The results indicated that a more relational leadership style, as opposed to a more task-oriented approach, was associated with higher levels of member satisfaction, self-motivation, and overall group cohesiveness. In a similar study, Williams (2014) examined the influence of leadership style on the success of a high school choral program. Through in-depth interviewing, direct observations, and document collection, the author concluded that the leadership behaviors of the choir director contributed to students' musical independence and encouraged them to excel beyond the initial expectations of the director.

I have concluded that the leadership behaviors of choral directors are important for several reasons. First, leadership behaviors of directors impact relationships within an ensemble. Relationships contribute to the groups' collective identity and this in turn influences the group's level of performance (Demaree & Moses, 1995; Gordon, 1989; Phillips, 2016). Second, leadership behaviors sway the emotions and the self-motivation of ensemble members (Rowald & Rohmann, 2009a; Yu, 1999). Finally, leadership behaviors impact the skill level and artistic quality of ensembles because they cultivate musical independence and increase the level of musicianship among individual members (Boerner et al., 2004; Williams, 2014).

I wanted to understand the ways that high school choral directors' leadership behaviors motivated and engaged students. As I read through the literature, I determined that Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership provided a viable framework for

my research. To date, this theory has not received much attention within choral music education. Therefore, it is my hope that this study will provide new perspectives regarding leadership and instruction, and that the results of this study, may in turn, open the door for positive changes in high school choral music education.

### **Transformational Leadership**

I employed Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership in order to examine the specific leadership behaviors that high school students attribute to effective choral directors. Transformational leadership is centered on the effects leaders have on their followers, and the behaviors that they use to achieve these effects (Yukl, 1999). Transformational leaders seek to motivate and inspire followers by stimulating their creativity, challenging them, and empowering them. Bass's framework has been used to explain how effective leaders help followers grow and align their objectives to those of the leader, the group, and the larger organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Rather than prescribing behaviors that leaders should employ in order to be effective, Bass's theory is centered on the needs of followers. I chose this framework because it was well-suited to the research questions that guided my inquiry.

Bass's (1985) model distinguishes three types of leadership: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Transformational leadership encompasses behaviors that allow leaders to engage with followers "in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to high levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Transformational behaviors are distinguished by their ability to effect change in both the leader and the follower in such a way that they are bound together in

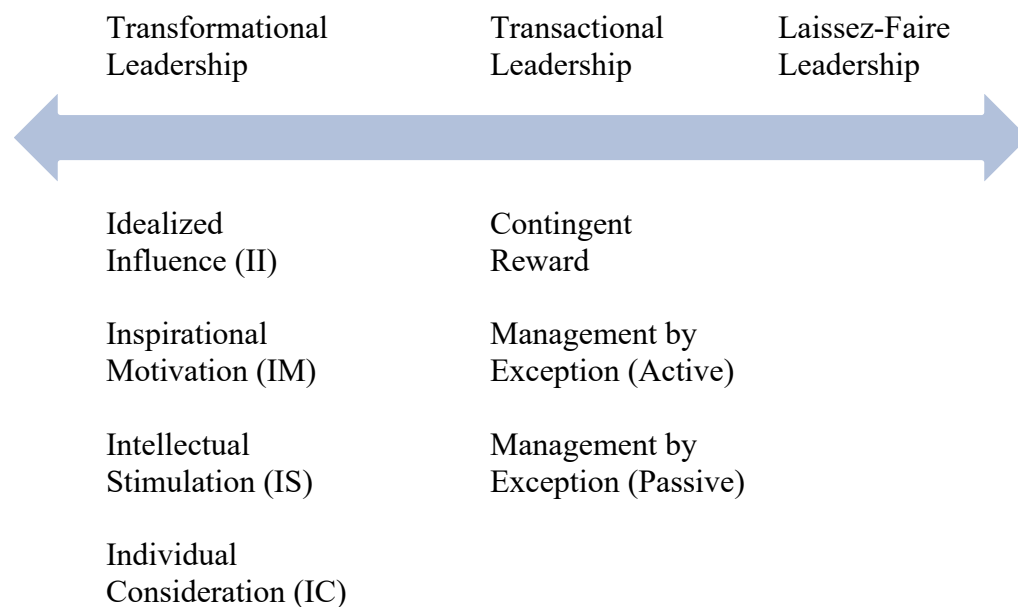
the mutual pursuit of a higher purpose (Burns, 1978). Transactional behaviors are focused on mutual exchange between leaders and followers in order to obtain the goals of both parties (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978). Beyond this process of negotiation, however, leaders and followers are not bound together by anything further and are free to “go their separate ways” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Laissez-faire leadership refers to the absence of leadership itself (Northouse, 2019). In this instance, leaders abdicate responsibility, delay decisions, provide no feedback, and make little effort to engage with followers (Northouse, 2019). By addressing these three types of leadership behavior within a single framework, Bass’s (1985) theory provides a wide lens for examining the combined leadership behaviors of high school choral directors. The framework makes it possible to concentrate on specific behaviors associated with transformational leadership. As such, the macro/micro characteristic in this framework was an important factor when selecting a model for the current study.

Bass designed the Full Range of Leadership (FRL) model as a means for comprehending transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership along a three-point continuum (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In order to further delineate the specific behaviors associated within these three categories, the model distinguishes seven different sub-factors (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2019). Specific types of behavior are associated with each sub-factor within this model (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1997; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bycio, et al., 1995; Howell & Avolio, 1993). This study will employ the four sub-factors of transformational leadership as a means for analyzing the behaviors of high school choral directors;

behaviors that are specifically associated with transformational leadership. The four sub-factors are: Idealized influence (II), in which leaders are admired, respected and trusted; Inspirational motivation (IM), in which leaders motivate, inspire, and provide meaning to followers; Intellectual stimulation (IS), in which leaders stimulate innovation, encourage creativity, and value the ideas of followers; and Individual consideration (IC), in which leaders recognize the individual needs of followers, personalize their interaction with followers, and delegate tasks as a means of developing the individual potential of followers (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*Bass's Full Range of Leadership model*



*Note.* Adapted from Northouse, P. G. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and practice*, p. 191.

Sage Publications, Inc.

The most recent version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the MLQ (5X-Short), contains 45 questions designed to measure followers' perceptions of a

leader's behavior (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The questionnaire addresses three main categories of leadership (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and their respective sub-factors. The MLQ is the most widely used measure of transformational leadership, and the version used for this study is the only one available in print (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Northouse, 2019). This survey was designed to measure the four sub-factors of transformational leadership, and to provide a means for determining if a relationship exists among independent and dependent variables. The dependent variables used for this study were: students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and the assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. The MLQ was particularly well-suited for use as a data collection tool and for answering the research questions that guided this inquiry.

### **Transformational Leadership in Context**

Research on transformational leadership has been conducted within a range of geographical and situational contexts (Bass & Riggio, 2006). For example, McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002) investigated the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee performance in an Australian-based pharmaceutical firm. The findings indicated that the transformational leadership behaviors of superiors had a significant, though indirect, influence on performance by increasing optimism and reducing employee frustration. Waldmann, et al. (1990) investigated the effects of transformational and transactional leadership behaviors among graduates of the United States Naval Academy. They discovered that charisma (later referred to as idealized influence) augmented the effects of contingent-reward behaviors (behaviors associated with

transactional leadership). Zhang, et al. (2011) examined how leadership behaviors affected team performance in a Chinese telecommunication firm. Results from their study indicated that transformational leadership behaviors were positively correlated with team members' adoption of a cooperative approach to conflict management, which in turn was associated with effective team performance.

The transformational leadership behaviors of educators have been examined in a variety of cultural settings. Pounder (2008) conducted a survey in order to examine the effects of instructors' leadership behaviors on students within a university business school in Hong Kong. Results from the study indicated that there was a significantly positive correlation between instructors' transformational leadership behaviors and students' extra effort, perception of instructor effectiveness, in addition to overall satisfaction with their teachers. Pounder (2008) contended that the results of the study favored the cross-cultural applicability of the transformational model within an Asian context. Nguni, et al. (2006) surveyed 700 Tanzanian primary-school teachers in order to examine the effects of transformational and transactional leadership. Findings indicated that transformational behaviors significantly augmented transactional behaviors in predicting teachers' job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior. These studies suggest the applicability of the transformational leadership model within the context of various educational and cultural settings.

### **Transformational Leadership in Musical Contexts**

There are but few studies supporting the application of Bass's theory within music education. The results of studies by Rowald and Rohmann (2009a) and Williams (2014)

suggested that the transformational leadership behaviors of choral directors positively influence the perceptions of followers and contribute to individual and ensemble success. A study by Boerner and von Streit (2005) regarding the effects of transformational leadership within German symphony orchestras revealed that the relationship between a director's transformational leadership behaviors and the artistic quality of the ensemble was contingent upon the cooperative nature of the work environment within the ensemble.

Ludwa (2012) investigated choral leadership ability within the collegiate setting. Results from the study indicated a strong correlation between directors' self-rated levels of magnitude and transformational leadership behaviors. By focusing on the self-rated perceptions of directors, the study illuminated how the transformational model may be used to provide choral directors with insight into how their leadership behaviors are perceived by students, and how their leadership behaviors might be modified for the purpose of creating stronger relationships among directors and ensemble members.

### **Summary**

Transformational leadership has been examined within a wide range of educational and cultural contexts. All of the inquiries presented have emphasized the importance of effective leadership and its potential to positively influence followers. Despite this, exactly how directors influence followers in the high school choral setting is still largely unknown.

Through the lens of Bass's (1985) theory, the transformational leadership behaviors of leaders may be identified and categorized. Using the Multifactor Leadership

Questionnaire (MLQ), researchers have determined there is a correlation between the behaviors of leaders and effects on followers. In previous studies, the leadership behaviors of directors have been shown to influence followers' emotions (Rowald & Rohmann, 2009a), their satisfaction and self-motivation (Yu, 1999), and their level of musical independence and achievement (Williams, 2014). This study will address unanswered questions regarding the effects of transformational leadership. In particular, I examine the ways that transformational leadership might influence students within the high school choral setting. This inquiry will contribute to and expand upon previous literature regarding transformational leadership in choral music education.

### **The Traditional Paradigm: Concerns for Music Education**

*Weston, what is teaching all about? All the choirs you've worked with, all the bands...  
Oh James, it's a simple question. It's about affirming people.*

Conversation with Weston Noble  
as related by James Jordan  
(Jordan, 2008, 1:48:50)

In the traditional paradigm of high school choral education, effective teaching is associated with the perceived success of an ensemble's performance, and the director's ability to guide students to execute the specific musical skills implicit in the repertoire (Bartel, 2004; Freer, 2011; Reimer, 2003; Williams, 2014). In order to be successful, choral directors work tirelessly to lead their performing ensembles at competitive festivals and contests sponsored by music education associations and other recognized agencies (Stamer, 2006). Directors who receive high scores and favorable comments at these events often use these ratings as a means of substantiating the effectiveness of their leadership and as an indicator regarding the success of their program. (Abril & Gault,

2008; Price, 2006).

Although traditional approaches to instruction are the norm within a performance-based setting, scholars have noted that problems may arise when successful performance becomes the primary goal of instruction (Austin, 1990; Roher, 2002). For example, Williams (2014) contended that the pressure of striving for superior ratings at festivals and competitions may force some conductors to become dependent on ratings as a means of validating and substantiating their leadership. Freer (2011) claimed that the focus on performance goals in music classrooms is so pervasive that all other educational goals may be compromised.

A singular focus on competitive performance marginalizes the educative process. Austin (1990) suggested that competing may encourage some directors to ignore the individual needs of students by viewing them solely in terms of skill level and their ability to contribute to ensemble success. It appears from these arguments that performance excellence does not necessarily correspond with effective leadership, nor does it ensure that students will be satisfied and motivated as learners within a high school choral ensemble.

There is far more to effective choral leadership than the simple passing down of requisite musical skills needed and performance excellence (Apfelstadt, 1997; Demaree & Moses, 1995; Phillips, 2016; Robinson & Winold, 1976). Noble (2008) encouraged music educators to consider that the behaviors directors use to lead their ensembles may be more important for students than ratings that they receive or the level of performance that they achieve while in an ensemble. Therefore, the leadership behaviors of choral

directors can no longer be seen as simply a means by which performance excellence is achieved. Viewed from this perspective, the leadership behaviors of choral directors must be seen as a primary focal point of an educative process that reaches far beyond performance excellence or the acquisition of musical skills.

I undertook this research because I wanted to know what leadership behaviors matter most to choral students, whether it be a superlative performance or the way that a director makes students feel as they work together toward the performance goals that have been set before them. By conducting this study, I set out to discover which leadership behaviors influence students, and to expand upon what is currently known about students' attitudes and perceptions regarding effective leadership within today's high school choral classrooms.

### **Need for the Study**

Existing studies have provided compelling evidence suggesting that leaders have the potential to positively influence followers. However, little is known about the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors, or about the ways certain behaviors influence the perceptions and attitudes of students within their ensembles (Allen, 1998; Allen & Apfelstadt, 1990; Davidson, 1995; Yu, 1999; Williams, 2014). Moreover, because there is not a standardized means for examining the leadership behaviors of directors, leadership in contemporary choral classrooms can only be viewed in relation to the personal characteristics and instructional practices of individual directors. It stands to reason that a clearer understanding regarding the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors is needed.

This study will identify leadership behaviors attributed to effective high school choral directors and the ways these behaviors influence students. Employing a survey methodology, I will ascertain which, if any, leadership behaviors matter most to students and attempt to determine if there is a relationship among these behaviors and the attitudes and perceptions of the students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership behaviors that students attribute to effective high school choral directors. Leadership behaviors were viewed through the lens of Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership. This investigation was designed to determine if there is a relationship among the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors and students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness.

There were two objectives guiding this inquiry. The first objective was to identify and categorize the specific leadership behaviors that effective high school choral directors exhibit while leading their ensembles. The second objective was to determine the association between leadership behaviors and the perceptions and attitudes of students.

### **Method**

Using a quantitative method, I collected descriptive data through the administration of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). After the completion of the survey, I utilized multiple regression analysis to determine the predictive power of the transformational leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors upon

students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. This method was useful because it allowed me to examine the variance among variables with several predictors simultaneously present (Field, 2013). The sample of effective high school choral directors was comprised of directors who oversee a sequential 9–12 choral program with auditioned and non-auditioned choirs; directors who have received consistent exemplary performance ratings at regional choral festivals sponsored by the California Music Educators Association (CMEA); and directors who have been recognized as prominent in the field by regional officials and choral adjudicators for CMEA.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What specific leadership behaviors may be attributed to effective high school choral directors?
2. To what degree do the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors influence students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness?

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I argued for the need to examine the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors. Using Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership, I conducted this inquiry for the purpose of understanding how the behaviors of effective high school choral directors may be affecting the attitudes and perceptions of their students. The results of this inquiry will expand upon the literature and provide new

information for the purpose of improving choral-music education.

In the following chapter, I review literature relevant to transformational leadership. First, I define and then describe theoretical developments of transformational leadership. Next, I discuss the development of instruments designed to measure transformational leadership qualities. Finally, I review related studies within education and various musical settings. The methodology employed and research design are outlined in Chapter 3. The focus of Chapter 4 will be to present data analysis procedures. In the final chapter, I will answer the research questions guiding this inquiry, discuss findings, make recommendations for future research, and reveal implications for high school choral music education.

## **Chapter Two: Review of Relevant Literature**

My review of the literature led to the discovery that thousands of books, journal articles, and dissertations have been published that address effective choral leadership from a broad range of perspectives. After considering the goals of this study, I decided to focus on the following three categories. I begin with research studies on the origins, history, and theoretical developments of transformational leadership. Next, I discuss strategies for the measurement of transformational leadership alongside the development and evolution of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). I offer a critical assessment of the MLQ and discuss alternatives to the MLQ. Finally, I review studies on transformational leadership within music settings. The chapter concludes with a summary that explains how the literature has informed the practical decisions and theoretical perspective that guided this inquiry.

### **Teacher Effectiveness**

What makes an effective teacher is a question that has no clear answer (Steele, 2010). Although every teacher has certain personal characteristics and learned behaviors that make them unique, I wanted to determine if some of these behaviors recurred more frequently than others in a choral setting. Considering the influence that directors have upon the success of an ensemble, I sought to identify the behaviors employed by effective high school choral directors.

Assuming that consummate musicianship skills are necessary for all directors, I sought to identify other behaviors that were important to effective choral leadership. In a yearlong study that examined music teaching competency measures within 29 elementary

schools, Taebel and Coker (1980) found that administrators rated teaching skills more important than musical skills. In a second study by Taebel (1980), 201 public-school music teachers were asked to develop a list of effective teaching competencies to improve student learning. More than half (54%) of the competencies listed were classified as general teaching competencies. In a separate study, Steele (2010) found three characteristics that are commonly associated with effective music teaching: nonverbal communication, teacher self-efficacy, and servant leadership. As the author noted, “a servant leader is one who is focused on the needs of others rather than on himself or herself and puts the needs of the organization first” (2010, p. 75). Thus, Steele (2010) argued that effective musical leadership was a student-centered endeavor focused on serving the needs of students rather than those of the director. The findings from these studies suggested that effective musical leadership resides in areas beyond mere musical competencies traditionally associated with success on the podium. Both of these assertions become central themes during this inquiry.

### **Personal Characteristics and Behaviors**

Throughout history, the personal characteristics and behaviors of great leaders have been of interest (Guise, 2013). Scholars have examined the conduct and attitudes of leaders in politics, the military, business, and royalty, in order to identify the qualities that made them effective. Inquiries regarding leadership in music and music education have been no different. Lebrecht (1991) contended that, like warriors, athletes, and martyrs, great conductors exist to serve as the mythical superheroes that every society and culture demands. Mason (1985) distilled the requirements for being an effective choral director

into the following list:

- Know the score thoroughly
- Acquire the skill to speak precisely and inspirationally
- Develop the ability to hear
- Be a thoroughly trained musician
- Acquire skill on an instrument
- Develop a trained mind
- Attain good physical coordination
- Contain a musical imagination
- Recognize the composer's rights
- Be open-minded to new ideas (p. 7)

Glenn's (1991) list of requirements added the need for choral directors to possess a strong work ethic and an understanding of the different ways in which people learn. Discussing the evolution of what it means to be a contemporary music educator, Hendricks (2018) posited that music teachers are moving away from a focus on external standards toward an educational approach that fosters a connection between teachers and students that is based on their equal participation within the process of shared music-making. These studies were important for my research because they encouraged me to look beyond the musicianship skills of directors in order to explore the behaviors that are common to effective leaders. These studies reinforced the idea that choral directors need to have a deep understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of their students in order to discern what is truly impactful to the students themselves. Moreover, these studies reminded me

that the relationship between directors and students is often based upon a personalized connection that resides in a place far deeper than the mutual understanding of external standards. Because of these inquiries, I sought to identify the leadership behaviors employed by effective directors within the high school choral setting.

When writing about best practices in choral conducting, expert practitioners have examined the characteristics of choral directors from a broad range of perspectives. Looking beyond the musical skills needed on the podium toward the nonmusical tasks encountered by directors, Apfelstadt (2009) contended that directors need to have the ability to serve as managers, amateur psychologists, and public relations experts. Discussing the obligations that directors have as the leaders of organizations, Demaree and Moses (1995) noted that directors need to possess strong administrative skills, the keen judgment of an efficiency expert, and the communicative capacity of a public-relations liaison. Noting that communication within an organization is a critical component of success, Phillips (2016) posited that interpersonal skills are also an essential characteristic that allow directors to maintain and foster positive relationships within a choral program.

These previous studies illustrate the variety of ways that a choral director's personal characteristics influence his or her success. If effective leadership is about motivating individuals toward positive action, then it seemed necessary to examine the behaviors and characteristics that help directors to accomplish this task. Because the results of this investigation are framed in choral music pedagogy, these resources, were deemed to be an important part of that literature.

## **Student Motivation**

Student motivation is another aspect of choral leadership that distinguishes effective high school choral directors. Stamer (1999) identified four leadership behaviors that positively influenced student motivation. The behaviors were: Creating a nurturing environment, providing feedback, assigning meaningful repertoire, and presenting achievable challenges. Subsequently, Stamer (2009) conducted a related study that corroborated the original findings, thereby suggesting that these behaviors are of central importance in motivating high school choral students to learn.

Similarly, Mudrick (1998) examined factors contributing to student motivation within high school choral programs and discovered that several other leadership behaviors positively influenced student motivation. Examining data from interviews and observations, Mudrick found that students were motivated by their directors' ability to communicate a clear vision and strong expectations for the program, structured approach to rehearsal organization, and unwavering work ethic. Moreover, Mudrick discovered that students were motivated by their directors' honest approach to instruction and assessment, their sense of humor and willingness to have fun, and by their authentic care and concern for the students in their program.

In a study that investigated how the leadership behaviors of directors influence the motivation of students within the collegiate setting, Saunders (2005) reported that students were more motivated when rehearsals were goal-oriented, fast-paced, and well organized. College students articulated preference for rehearsals that displayed the directors' passion for music and overall concern for the quality of the students' choral

experience.

Director feedback that provides students with detailed information regarding their individual and ensemble progress contributes to student motivation and director success within the choral setting (Stamer, 2009). In a survey of 515 high school choral students from four schools in Arizona, the author reported that offering students explanations regarding the development of students' singing ability was an effective strategy for increasing singers' motivation. Stamer (2009) also noted that female students ranked positive feedback, specifically compliments regarding individual and ensemble work ethic and praise for successful performances, higher than male students who participated in the study. Schmidt (1995) found that females responded more favorably to positive feedback than males. The author also noted that approval feedback that focused on improvement rated higher than norm-referenced feedback oriented toward comparison or competition with others.

Research on feedback and motivation provided compelling evidence that choral directors have the ability to influence their students in numerous ways. In addition, these studies demonstrated that the behaviors of choral directors may be perceived differently by different types of students. I wanted to understand what leadership behaviors were important to students, and to determine if similarities or differences existed among them.

### **Précis**

One of the most striking aspects regarding the body of literature on leadership in choral-music education is the importance placed on the perspective of the singers.

Jansson (2019) wrote: "For the singer, it does not matter what lies beyond the

conductor's leadership – his or her training, particular style or intentions. It is how the leadership is perceived that creates the impact: perception is reality” (p. 868). Based on this premise, one of the primary objectives of this investigation was to hear and understand the singers' perceptions regarding choral leadership. By obtaining the perspective of the students, director's leadership takes on both educational and developmental significance. The theory of transformational leadership provided me with a purposeful lens for discovering the perceptions of students, and for understanding particular aspects of choral leadership within high school choral classrooms.

### **Origins of Transformational Leadership**

The term transformational leadership was first employed by Downton (1973). Transformational leadership can be traced to three seminal works: *Rebel leadership: Commitment, and charisma in a revolutionary process* by Downton (1973), *A 1976 theory of charismatic leadership* by House (1977), and *Leadership* by Burns (1978). Downton (1973) linked a leader's charisma with the commitment of followers by examining the leadership tendencies of revolutionary leaders including Hitler and Lenin. House (1977) extended this line of inquiry by proposing hypotheses for the investigation of charismatic leaders. By exploring the link between leadership and followership, Burns (1978) extended the characteristics and tendencies associated with charismatic leaders. Burns posited that leaders use the motives and values of followers to achieve common goals. Moreover, the method by which leaders accomplished these goals represented two opposing forms of leadership: transactional and transformational. By delineating these forms of leadership, Burns established transformational leadership as an independent

construct. This was of critical importance for this study, insofar as it allowed me to identify specific behaviors associated with transformational leadership.

According to Burns (1978), transactional leadership behaviors are focused on the mutual exchange of goods and services between leaders and followers in order to achieve the goals of both parties. Beyond this process of negotiation, however, leaders and followers are not bound together by anything further. Although a leadership act may take place, it is not one that binds leaders and followers together toward a pursuit of anything beyond the bargaining process (Burns, 1978). Conversely, transformational behaviors allow a leader to engage with followers “in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to high levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20).

Transformational behaviors, therefore, are distinguishable specifically because of their ability to effect change in both the leader and the follower in such a way that they are bound together in the mutual pursuit of a higher purpose (Burns, 1978). Within choral-music education, this suggests that the transformational leadership behaviors of directors may encourage followers to become more active in the learning process as they align their goals with those of the director.

Bass (1985) developed the Full Range of Leadership Model (FRL) by combining Burns’s (1978) notion of transformational leadership with House’s (1977) theory of charismatic leadership. Bass and Riggio (2006) added laissez-faire leadership to this model as a means of accounting for all of the potential leadership behaviors that exist along a single continuum. This model provided a theoretical framework with which to examine the transformational leadership behaviors of directors.

There have been multiple revisions to the Full Range of Leadership Model (FRL). Bass and his colleagues identified and elucidated four distinct groups of behaviors demonstrated by transformational leaders (Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1994). In the following section, I focus on specific aspects of transformational leadership.

### **Idealized Influence (II)**

Transformational leaders behave in ways that allow them to serve as role models for their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Followers identify with transformational leaders and want to emulate them. Transformational leaders exhibit behaviors for which they are admired, respected and trusted. Wright (1996) documented how behaviors associated with idealized influence (II) were perceived within the high school choral setting, using a mixed-method design to examine the non-musical aspects of an exemplary high school choral program. After analyzing data from visitations, interviews, observations, and the collection of artifacts, Wright identified three emergent themes: “a charismatic choral director, clear goals, and recruiting procedures” (1996, p. vi).

Students, administrators, and community members described the choral director as a charismatic leader who was more than just a teacher (Wright, 1996). Administrators explained how the large size of the choral program was a testament to the director’s leadership and the enthusiasm that he fostered. The results of the study indicated that the director established clear goals and maintained a strong management style during daily rehearsals. The director’s leadership encouraged students to step up and take on their own leadership roles within the choir program to the extent of exceeding the normally expected levels of performance. Wright (1996) explained how the director had developed

successful strategies of recruitment for building and maintaining the choral program. The director worked to support the growth of the middle school choral program and encouraged the younger singers to see choir as a positive part of their future in high school.

The educational community in Wright's (1996) study saw the director as a charismatic leader who was driven with a strong sense of purpose. The director's leadership behaviors were encouraging to students, who in turn, viewed him as a role model that could be respected and trusted. Wright's (1996) study provided clear examples of specific behaviors associated with idealized influence within the theory of transformational leadership.

### **Inspirational Motivation (IM)**

Transformational leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By providing meaningful experiences, they arouse team spirit. Transformational leaders create clearly communicated expectations that followers want to meet and inspire commitment to goals and a shared vision. Saunders (2005) described how behaviors associated with inspirational motivation (IM) influenced students within the collegiate choral setting, using a mixed-method design to examine how the behaviors of conductors contributed to students' motivation to participate in choir. Data from interviews, observations, and a questionnaire helped provide insight into students' and conductors' attitudes and beliefs regarding the role of motivation. Students indicated that they were motivated to participate in choir for several reasons. Participants explained that the desire to improve or develop themselves musically were important

factors in their continued participation. Saunders (2005) described how students were motivated by high-energy, fast-paced rehearsals, and by the director's strong classroom management skills. Students expressed how they enjoyed engaging in challenging repertoire that could be related to their interests and needs. Moreover, students reported that the directors' leadership behaviors contributed to their overall choral experience and made them feel more successful.

The choral directors in Saunders's (2005) study exhibited strong interpersonal skills and a passion for music. The directors were able to provide their students with meaningful experiences, opportunities to challenge themselves, and musical growth. This study was significant within the current investigation because it demonstrated how behaviors associated with inspirational motivation can have a positive influence on individual students' growth and on the collective success of choral ensembles.

### **Intellectual Stimulation (IS)**

Transformational leaders stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), effective leaders continually question assumptions, reframe problems, and approach old situations in new ways. Followers are encouraged to try new approaches, and their ideas are not dismissed or criticized simply because they differ from the leader's ideas.

Çekmecelioğlu and Özbağ (2016) examined the relationship between transformational leadership and individual creativity in the business sector of Kocaeli, Turkey. Using a creativity measure by Tierney et al. (1999), Çekmecelioğlu and Özbağ sought to measure individual creativity. The sample population consisted of 275

employees from 45 firms identified through the Kocaeli Chamber of Commerce.

The authors identified a positive correlation between the behaviors associated with intellectual stimulation and individual creativity. Results indicated that behaviors associated with intellectual stimulation encouraged employees to take risks, challenge assumptions, and approach problems in new ways. Manager behaviors associated with intellectual stimulation were found to be an important mechanism for encouraging employees' individual creativity in the workplace. Based on these results, the authors advised that organizations should work toward enhancing and developing managerial behaviors associated with intellectual stimulation as a means of generating and improving employee creativity. This example from the literature fostered my understanding regarding how behaviors associated with intellectual stimulation within the broader theory of transformational leadership may be influential as a source of positive change, particularly within the business sector.

### **Individual Consideration (IC)**

Transformational leaders consider individual follower's needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By acknowledging followers' needs, transformational leaders strive to maintain personalized connections with followers (Northouse, 2019). Individualized consideration takes place when new learning opportunities are created in a supportive climate. Bromley (2019) employed a qualitative case study design to demonstrate how behaviors associated with individual consideration (IC) can be influential within a collegiate jazz combo. During this study, Bromley, acting as a participant/researcher, coached the ensemble and gathered data

through observations and interviews. By focusing on person-centered learning, Bromley created a positive and supportive learning environment within the ensemble that promoted cooperation, communication, and self-discipline.

Bromley (2019) reported that this sort of person-centered type of leadership within the jazz combo fostered a cooperative environment where members shared ideas and worked as a team. Combo members welcomed peer suggestions, feedback, and the input and guidance of the coach. Students remarked that learning to listen to the perspectives of others also contributed to the cooperative climate within the group. Bromley (2019) observed that the development of communication skills contributed to the combo's ability to function as a group. As the students indicated, learning how to communicate verbally and through the music helped the combo improve while also serving to maintain the person-centered atmosphere that was of central importance to the group.

Bromley (2019) contended that the combo members' self-discipline was an important factor that contributed to the person-centered environment within the combo. Being dependable was an important part of self-discipline. Dependability was of critical importance because it fostered trust within the group.

The behaviors associated with individualized consideration (IC) provided students with a personalized instructional experience that encouraged growth and achievement within the ensemble setting. The results of Bromley's (2019) study suggested that behaviors associated with transformational leadership can be effectively implemented regardless of the ensemble setting.

### **The Augmentation Effect**

Bass (1985) determined that the four subfactors of transformational leadership were of particular importance because they augmented or enhanced the effects of transactional leadership on followers' commitment, satisfaction, extra effort, and overall performance. Transformational leadership behaviors were not simply alternative behaviors associated with another form of leadership. Rather, transformational leadership behaviors were superior *because* of the effects that they had on followers (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). By employing behaviors associated with transformational leadership, leaders altered the way that followers viewed themselves in relation to the leader, the organization and their work to the degree that performance exceeded previous expectations (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The following research studies provide evidence in support of these claims.

In an examination of the impact of leadership style and emotions on employee performance, McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002) surveyed 139 sales representatives in an Australian-based pharmaceutical firm. By comparing full and partial mediation models, the authors confirmed that transformational leadership behaviors directly increased followers' sense of optimism and indirectly increased follower performance. However, as transformational leadership behaviors were perceived to decrease, followers experienced higher levels of frustration, reduced optimism, and a reduction in performance. Examining these results, I questioned whether or not the augmentation effect might be applicable within alternative organizational settings.

Waldman, et al. (1990) investigated the effects of both transformational and

transactional leadership behaviors among graduates at the United States Naval Academy. The researchers used hierarchical regression to show how charisma—a factor of transformational leadership—augmented the effects of behaviors associated with transactional leadership. Because of these findings, I sought to determine the relevance of the augmentation effect of transformational leadership within the context of choral-music education. The following studies provided additional evidence supporting the applicability of the transformational model within varied educational contexts.

A study conducted by Brown and Moshavi (2002) explored the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership behaviors among department chairs with regard to department members in a university setting. The researchers conducted a survey using the rater version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) with 440 university faculty members within 70 academic departments in order to explore the relationship among the transformational leadership behaviors of department chairs and department members' satisfaction with supervision, willingness to exert extra effort, and perceptions of organizational effectiveness. Using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and hierarchical regression, Brown and Moshavi found that transformational leadership behaviors were positively associated with all three performance outcomes. The researchers also noted that the mean score for idealized influence (2.89) was significantly higher than scores reported in previous research. Brown and Moshavi concluded that behaviors associated with idealized influence may be particularly important for academic department chairs. The positive nature of these findings in an educational context influenced me to use a similar survey instrument

during this study.

In order to examine the effects of transactional and transformational leadership within a primary school in Tanzania, Nguni, et al. (2006) surveyed 700 primary-school teachers. Through the computation of descriptive statistics and regression analyses, the authors indicated that transformational leadership behaviors significantly augmented transactional behaviors in predicting teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. This study supported the augmenting effect of transformational leadership, and suggested the universality of the transformational model, demonstrating its applicability within a developing nation.

Research on transformational leadership has been conducted across the globe. Over the years, the number of studies in fields such as management and business has grown, and now includes professions such as nursing, education, and industrial engineering (Antonakis, 2012). This surge in popularity is due in large part to the development of measurement tools designed to assess these behavioral constructs (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Although other measures of transformational leadership exist, the next section is dedicated to a discussion on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), – the most widely accepted quantitative instrument for measuring the components of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

### **Conceptual Weakness of Transformational Leadership**

Bass and his colleagues distinguished between behaviors associated with transformational and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 2004; Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, scholars have argued that the distinction between these two

styles of leadership may be unwarranted (Andersen, 2015; Tejada et al., 2001; Yukl, 2010). For example, Lowe et al. (1996) reported a strong correlation between transformational leadership and contingent reward behaviors associated with transactional leadership. This finding indicated that leaders may actually be using a combination of these behaviors in a complementary fashion.

### **The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire**

The first Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (1985) consisted of 73 behavioral statements that measured four factors of transformational leadership, and three factors of transactional leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Revisions were made to eliminate statements that were not directly related to leader behavior before the first published version of the MLQ was released (Bass & Avolio, 1990). This revised version contained 67 statements measuring factors within the Full Range of Leadership model. Nine items measuring outcome criteria, including extra effort, leader effectiveness, and overall satisfaction with the leader, were included in the first published version (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

At the time of this study, there were two versions of the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The Leader Form asked leaders to rate the frequency of their leadership behavior. The Rater Form asked subordinates to rate the frequency of the leadership behavior of their superiors. I employed the Rater Form, known as the MLQ (5X-Short), in this study because it was the only version available in print (<https://www.mindgarden.com>). The form consisted of 45 statements to which raters were asked to respond using a 5-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (always) (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

The 45 statements addressed the three dependent variables within this study, extra effort, satisfaction, and the overall assessment of leader effectiveness. I found that this form, the MLQ (5X-Short), was well suited for this investigation because it provided a means of focusing on students' responses regarding the leadership behaviors of their choral directors and for examining the dependent variables I was concerned with during this study.

### **Critiques of the MLQ and Alternative Instruments of Measure**

Researchers have challenged the validity of the MLQ. Using an earlier version of the MLQ (1990), Tracey and Hinkin (1998) showed significant overlap between the four categories of transformational leadership. They suggested that these four categories were not independent. However, their analysis was based upon an early version of the MLQ and the study was focused on a subset of the items now contained within the Full Range of Leadership model (FRL). Tejada, et al. (2001) argued that the correlation among the four categories of transformational leadership was too high for them to be considered distinct. However, both of these studies employed an older version of the MLQ.

I employed the FRL model because it allowed me to delineate between specific behaviors. The FRL model complemented my choice of transformational leadership as a framework and provided me with a lens for thinking about leadership. The specific characteristics and behaviors I sought to understand were ideals, inspiration, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and the consideration of individuals (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The MLQ is not without limitations. I examined several alternatives to the MLQ and decided that they were inappropriate for answering the research questions driving this

inquiry. One such alternative, the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), developed by Kouzes and Posner (1988), allowed followers to rate leaders on a five-factor structure. However, the LPI did not address followers' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their leaders' overall effectiveness. In addition, I considered the Transformational Leadership Behavior Inventory (TLI) (Podsakoff, et al., 1990). Though the TLI measured most of the dimensions of transformational leadership, it did not account for transactional leadership or laissez-faire leadership to the same extent as the MLQ. Finally, I examined the Conger-Kanungo Scale (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), which measured the charismatic aspects of transformational leadership, but did not measure transactional leadership or laissez-faire leadership. Because of these limitations, I determined that the MLQ would be the most appropriate measurement instrument for the current investigation.

### **Transformational Leadership in Educational Settings**

Transformational leadership is one of the most popular and encompassing approaches to leadership in modern scholarship, because it is centered on the processes that leaders employ to influence followers (Northouse, 2019). Pounder (2008) conducted a survey of the effects of instructors' leadership behaviors on students at a university business school in Hong Kong. Employing a modified version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X Short), Pounder conducted a correlational analysis of the data. Results indicated that instructors' transformational leadership behaviors were significantly and positively correlated with students' extra effort, perception of instructor effectiveness, and overall satisfaction with their teachers. I found Pounder's (2008)

research compelling because of the focus placed on the same dependent variables that are addressed within the current study. This prompted me to employ the same measurement tool (MLQ 5X-Short) and similar statistical measures in my own work.

In a similar study that focused on the influence of transformational leadership behaviors within the United States, Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) administered a series of seven surveys, including the MLQ, to 165 undergraduate students. A correlational analysis of the data supported a positive association among instructors' transformational leadership behaviors and student learning outcomes, in particular, cognitive learning, affective learning, and motivation. Moreover, the authors indicated that the transformational leadership behaviors of instructors positively influenced students' perceptions of instructor credibility. Reading this study encouraged me to examine transformational leadership within the high school choral setting because it demonstrated that transformational behaviors can be influential across a wide range of instructional outcomes. The studies that follow within this section provided additional evidence to confirm this claim.

Wilson, et al. (2012) examined how leadership behaviors influenced Canadian elementary students in physical education classes. Using a multi-level structural equation model, the researchers found that students' perceptions of transformational leadership behaviors predicted student self-determined motivation and behavioral engagement. The authors reported that the teachers' transformational leadership behaviors were positively associated with the satisfaction of children's basic psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The findings of this study suggested that the

transformational leadership behaviors of teachers have the ability to influence students across a wide range of educational settings.

Transformational leadership behaviors may have an influence beyond the limits of the teacher-student relationship. For example, Nguni et al. (2006) found that the transformational leadership behaviors of administrators positively influenced teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. In a similar study focused on transformational leadership within educational administration, Koh et al. (1995) surveyed 846 teachers from 89 schools in Singapore. The researchers used five measurement instruments, including an older version of the MLQ (Bass, 1985), to investigate the effects of principals' transformational leadership behaviors on teacher attitudes and student performance. By means of hierarchical regression analysis, the authors found that principals' transformational leadership behaviors significantly augmented the effects of transactional leadership in predicting teachers' organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and satisfaction with their leader. Results from the study indicated that transformational leadership behaviors had a positive, though indirect, effect on students' academic achievement. The studies by Wilson, et al. (2012), Nguni et al. (2006) and Koh et al. (1995) were of significance to the current investigation because their results demonstrated the positive influence of transformational leadership behaviors across a wide range of outcomes regardless of the specific educational context in which they are employed.

### **Transformational Leadership in Musical Settings**

Research within musical settings has produced findings that suggest that the

influence of transformational leadership behaviors may be far more significant than previously understood within choral-music education. Rowald and Rohmann (2009a) used the MLQ to examine the perceptions of singers within German volunteer choruses concerning the leadership styles of their directors. The results of a hierarchical regression analysis showed that the transformational leadership behaviors of conductors were related to followers' positive emotions, including joy, pride, admiration, and enthusiasm. Noting that singers who experience positive emotions might be willing to show extra effort, the authors also suggested that encouraging these emotions might indirectly contribute to ensemble success. In a second study, Rowald and Rohmann (2009b) examined the effectiveness of transformational and transactional leadership styles within German volunteer orchestras. Through the computation of partial least-squares data analyses, the authors discovered that both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors positively contributed to performance. In addition to influencing the positive emotions of ensemble members, both studies suggested that the transformational leadership behaviors of directors may contribute to additional outcome criteria such as commitment, retention, and turnover within voluntary musical ensembles.

Boerner and von Streit (2005) demonstrated that transformational leadership can also be influential within professional music settings. The authors investigated the degree to which a director's transformational leadership behaviors favorably affected the artistic quality of professional symphony orchestras in Germany. Using a self-designed survey instrument intended to measure leadership, group-climate, and artistic quality within an orchestra-specific context, the researchers surveyed 208 musicians from 22 German

orchestras. After conducting a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the researchers concluded that a cooperative group climate fully mediated the relationship between a director's transformational leadership behaviors and the artistic quality of the ensemble. As such, the authors contended that there is a direct relationship between the transformational leadership behaviors of directors and the emotions and attitudes of their followers.

The MLQ has been used to examine the transformational leadership behaviors of directors within choral settings. Davidson (1995) conducted an investigation to determine if differences existed among the leadership behaviors of effective collegiate choral directors based upon gender, years of experience, or tenure at their current position. Participants were nominated by officials from the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). A total of 27 male and 24 female directors were selected. Davidson used three distinct theoretical perspectives to examine the participants' leadership styles: Stogdill's Behavioral and Attitudinal Leadership Theory (1948), Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (1969), and Bass's theory of Transformational Leadership (1985). After analyzing data from four different questionnaires, Davidson (1995) reported no significant difference concerning leadership styles based upon gender. The majority of the directors in the study preferred a leadership style that was highly organized, highly task-oriented, and relationship-centered. Results derived from the MLQ indicated that the transformational leadership style scored significantly higher than the transactional style. Davidson concluded that the transformational leadership behaviors of directors led students to recognize and seek out higher goals and ideals.

Beyond studies focused on gender within the choral setting, the MLQ has been used for the purposes of evaluation and self-assessment. Ludwa (2012) sought to develop a choral leadership assessment instrument as a means of improving collegiate choral ensembles. The researcher surveyed 20 choral directors from liberal arts colleges, 437 choral students, and 19 of the directors' colleagues. Using a self-designed survey instrument based upon preexisting models, the author created three different versions, with modified wording, suited to fit each sub-group. Part I of the survey instrument measured directors' communication skills, listening skills, and conductor magnitude. Part II of the survey, designed by Podsakoff et al. (1990), distinguished among the transactional and transformative leadership behaviors of choral directors. In Parts III and IV, Ludwa (2012) used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X-Short (Bass & Avolio, 2004) to assess the combined factors within the Full Range of Leadership model (FRL) and the outcome variables of extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction regarding directors' leadership. Part V of the survey instrument included general questions that measured participants' responses regarding their directors' impact on the overall success of the organization.

Ludwa (2012) indicated that directors used transactional behaviors in order to accomplish musical goals, but they valued their transformational behaviors more than their transactional behaviors. The results suggested little to no correlation between directors' and students' scores regarding magnitude of leadership. Based on these findings, Ludwa recommended that directors may need to explain more of the intent behind their decisions in order to help followers understand their overall vision for the

ensemble. Ludwa provided me with insight into how the transformational model can be used to provide directors with an understanding regarding how their behaviors are perceived by students. The results illuminated how specific leadership behaviors might be modified in order to create a stronger bond between choral directors and their ensemble members.

Focusing on the teacher-student relationship, Williams (2014) demonstrated how the transformational leadership behaviors of choral directors can positively influence the attitudes and perceptions of high school students. Williams (2014) utilized a qualitative design to examine how the leadership behaviors of the director contributed to the success of a high school choral program. The criteria for ensemble participation included a recent performance at a state music conference, consistent high rankings at adjudicated choral performances, and the inclusion of one non-select chorus within the program. Williams employed a case-study design utilizing ethnographic techniques. Semi-structured interviews with students—individually and in focus groups—helped Williams understand both individual and collective perspectives regarding the success of their choral program. Classroom and concert observations helped orient the researcher to the learning environment and culture of the choir program. Williams collected artifacts in the form of worksheets, photographs, performance evaluations, letters, and commendations. These documents provided valuable information about the program and served to demonstrate the director's priorities for the program. Ethnographic data collection techniques allowed Williams to generate an in-depth narrative regarding the culture, attitudes, and beliefs that comprised this choral program.

After analyzing transcribed and coded data, Williams (2014) identified four primary themes: supportive classroom atmosphere, repertoire selection, developing independent musicians, and creating a chorus community. Williams (2014) noted that many of the leadership behaviors of directors intersected with behaviors associated with transformational leadership. These behaviors were: “setting clear, challenging goals; holding high expectations for music reading and performance; providing support in a friendly classroom environment; establishing a sense of community in the chorus; and genuinely caring for the needs of students” (p. vi-vii). The results indicated that the transformational leadership behaviors of the director not only contributed to students’ musical independence, but also encouraged them to exceed beyond expected levels of achievement. Williams’s (2014) findings reinforced the notion that specific behaviors associated with transformational leadership can profoundly influence the attitude and level of achievement of students within a choral setting.

### **Literature Review Summary and Conclusions**

Research on teacher effectiveness within the choral setting has indicated that effective choral leadership is a student-centered endeavor that reaches beyond mere musical competencies commonly associated with conducting and performance success (Steele, 2010). Ensemble conductors such as Battisti (2007), Mason (1985), and Phillips (2016) contended that a director’s personal characteristics and behaviors have the ability to profoundly influence their effectiveness on and off the podium. Mudrick (1998) and Saunders (2005) indicated that a choral director’s ability to motivate students is a critical aspect of effective choral leadership. This body of literature suggested that the leadership

behaviors of choral directors influence followers' emotions, attitudes, and actions.

Transformational leadership theory has been widely used to study leadership since the 1980s (Northouse, 2019). In particular, Bass's (1985) Full Range of Leadership Model (FRL) has encompassed a broad scope of leadership behaviors along a single continuum. The FRL provided me with a framework for examining the transformational leadership behaviors of directors, and a means for identifying and categorizing how these behaviors may be related to other aspects of leadership.

I employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) because it is the most widely accepted quantitative instrument for measuring the behaviors of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2019). I considered several alternatives, but I determined that the MLQ was the most appropriate measurement tool for answering the questions guiding the current investigation.

Studies within general education have confirmed that the transformational leadership behaviors of teachers can positively influence both the attitudes and effort exhibited by students (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009; Pounder, 2008). In addition, a positive correlation exists among the transformational leadership behaviors of directors, student learning outcomes, and students' basic psychological needs (Wilson et al., 2012). Studies regarding the leadership of educational administrators have indicated a positive correlation between transformational leadership behaviors and several outcome criteria, including teachers' job satisfaction, teachers' organizational commitment, and teachers' organizational citizenship behavior. After examining how the transformational leadership behaviors of both teachers and administrators influenced followers across a wide range of

educational contexts, I reasoned that these same behaviors might influence followers within the context of a high school choral setting.

Ensemble directors and music teachers at various levels of instruction exhibit behaviors directly associated with transformational leadership (Bromley, 2019; Saunders, 2005; Wright, 2016). Wright's (2016) study detailed how the leadership behaviors of a high school choral director encouraged students to see him as a role model that could be trusted and respected. Saunders (2005) highlighted how the leadership behaviors of music teachers motivated students to engage in instruction and inspired them to take on new challenges. Bromley (2019) demonstrated how the leadership behaviors of a music teacher created a learning environment that fostered cooperation, communication, and self-discipline. As a result of my review, I learned that behaviors associated with transformational leadership can profoundly influence students regardless of the specific ensemble setting in which they occur.

The transformational leadership behaviors of directors can influence the emotions, effort and performance level of ensemble members (Boerner & von Streit, 2005; Rowald & Rohmann, 2009a, 2009b). Moreover, the transformational leadership behaviors of choral directors can encourage ensemble members to seek higher goals, as well as contribute to increases in their level of musical independence and achievement (Davidson, 1995; Williams, 2014). The literature within choral-music education demonstrates that the transformational leadership behaviors of directors can have an influence on the lives of ensemble members personally, musically, and in terms of their academic achievement.

In the following chapter, I illustrate the participant selection process. I then describe the survey instrument and provide information regarding the data analysis procedures employed during this investigation. I conclude by addressing the limitations within this investigation.

### **Chapter Three: Methods**

Leadership in the choral setting entails more than simply the development of requisite skills for successful performance. In the previous chapter, I argued that the leadership behaviors of directors influence followers in a variety of ways. I detailed studies suggesting that the transformational leadership behaviors of directors can influence followers emotionally and impact their levels of self-motivation and achievement (Rowald & Rohmann, 2009a; Williams, 2014). In spite of this, studies on transformational leadership within the context of high school choral instruction remain insufficient, particularly within choral-music education. As a profession, we do not yet understand how specific leadership behaviors of high school choral directors may influence students within their ensembles. Moreover, I maintain that these behaviors and their potential influence within the high school choral setting warrant further investigation.

I conducted this inquiry in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the transformational leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors and to determine how specific behaviors may be perceived by choral students. Utilizing a survey methodology, I sought to determine if there was a relationship among the transformational leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors and their students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness.

Using Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership as a framework, I employed the following four sub-factors as independent variables: Idealized Influence

(II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). The dependent variables were students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. I conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine the predictive power that directors' transformational leadership behaviors have on the attitudes and perceptions of their students. I then calculated the coefficient of determination to examine the degree of variance shared by these outcome variables.

The following chapter comprises four sections. First, I review the purpose of this research and the questions that guided this inquiry. Next, I describe the participants and the selection process. I then describe the survey instrument and data analysis procedures employed during this investigation. I explain the processes for obtaining administrative assent, student assent, and the safeguards utilized to protect the identity of student participants.

### **Research Purpose and Questions**

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors and the attitudes held by their students. The investigation was centered on two objectives. The first objective was to identify and categorize the transformational leadership behaviors that effective high school choral directors exhibit while leading their ensembles. The second objective was to determine the extent to which these leadership behaviors were perceived to influence the perceptions and attitudes of students. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What specific leadership behaviors may be attributed to effective high school choral directors?
2. To what degree do the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors influence students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their director's overall effectiveness?

### **Design**

To answer the research questions guiding this inquiry, I employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ has shown evidence of success for measuring the components of transformational leadership (Lowe et al., 1996; Northouse, 2019). The MLQ was well suited for this investigation because it is specifically designed to focus on the importance of followers within the leadership process as detailed in the previous chapter.

It was necessary to modify the MLQ before I could collect data for this research. The first modification was to create a web-based version of the MLQ using Survey Monkey. Next, I modified the survey statements to align the language with high school choral instruction, and to match the comprehension of high school aged participants. Lastly, I added five demographic questions to the end of the survey.

I utilized a web-based, cross-sectional research design in order to collect data from participants across a wide geographic area in California within a specific period of time. According to Bryman (2016):

*A cross-sectional design entails the collection of data on a sample of cases and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables (usually many more than two), which are then examined*

to detect *patterns of association* (p. 53).

This design was useful because it provided me with a systematic and standardized method for gauging variation among participants and for examining the level of association between individual variables.

At the time of this study, digital literacy was a requirement for all high school students attending public school in California. A majority of high schools in California make computers available to students to ensure equity and access to technology. Based on this knowledge, I conducted the survey based on the assumption that participants possessed the requisite skills necessary to complete the survey and to ensure that web-based data collection would be possible (Fowler, 2009).

### **Sampling Procedures**

The target population for this study was comprised of high school choral students who worked with effective high school choral directors in the state of California. Effective high school choral directors were defined as those who oversee a sequential choral program of multiple ensembles: including non-auditioned and audition-only choirs. Effective directors were further delineated as those who had received consistent exemplary performance ratings at regional choral festivals sponsored by the California Music Educators Association (CMEA); and those who had been recognized as prominent in the field by regional officials and choral adjudicators of CMEA.

I utilized a multi-level sampling process in order to contact the target population directly. I began with a purposive sample of effective high school choral directors (level I), followed by a simple random sample of high school choral students (level II) (Fowler,

2009). This process was employed in order to maximize the number of participant responses.

The California Music Educators Association (CMEA) promotes and maintains standards of excellence in choral music through publications, professional conferences and symposia, choral workshops, mentorship and professional development offerings, and adjudicated performance festivals (CMEA, n. d.) As such, officials and adjudicators of CMEA were able to supply information regarding effective high school choral directors in California for this study. Officials were sent an introductory email explaining the nature and the purpose of the study along with an attached ballot (See Appendix C). Regional officials and adjudicators of CMEA nominated high school choral directors to participate in this study. An equal number of male and female directors were identified as possible candidates.

Per protocols determined by the Boston University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I contacted the gatekeepers: Superintendents of school districts and the principals of high schools in order to gain permission to conduct research. After obtaining authorization, I contacted individual choral directors via email and invited them to participate in the study. The participants were selected on a first-come, first-served basis. A total of 5 directors—2 male and 3 female—were chosen. Each choral director was contacted by email and sent a copy of the assent/consent form (see Appendix B). The assent/consent form provided information concerning the voluntary nature of the study, and a link to the survey for students who wished to participate. Because participation was voluntary, clicking on the link served as the necessary means to document student assent.

In order to maximize the number of responses, all students within the five selected choral programs were allowed the opportunity to participate in the current study. This ensured that data would later be able to be generalized to the larger target population. In sum, this study involved 5 high school choral directors and 223 students within 5 public high schools in California.

### **The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire**

At the time of this study, the MLQ™ (April 18, 2020) was the leading survey instrument used for measuring the components of transformational leadership (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Northouse, 2019). The MLQ has been used by followers to identify and rate the leadership behaviors of their superiors (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Yukl, 1999). The questionnaire was designed to measure the perceptions of respondents regarding a leader's behavior (Bass & Riggio, 2006, Northouse, 2019). These features prompted me to adapt the survey for use in this study.

The MLQ™ (April 18, 2020) consisted of 50 statements in total, four statements for each sub-factor within the Full Range of Leadership model (Idealized Influence, Inspiration Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individual Consideration, Contingent Reward, Management by Exception [Active], Management by Exception [Passive], Laissez-Faire Leadership), and five additional demographic statements. The MLQ also included nine statements to address the three dependent variables within this study, *extra effort*, *leader effectiveness*, and *satisfaction*. Each statement was formulated as a declaration of feeling, to which participants were asked to respond using a 5-point Likert scale, rating the frequency of that feeling from 0 (never) to 4 (always).

Because of restrictions imposed by the publisher, I was not able to reproduce the entire MLQ™ for inclusion within this dissertation. However, per the licensing agreement, I have included four sample statements (see Figure 2).

## Figure 2

### *MLQ Sample Statements*

Sub-factor	Sample Item
Idealized Influence (II)	“My director makes me feel proud to be associated with him/her.”
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	“My director promotes a positive vision for the future.”
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	“My director encourages students to look at problems from many different perspectives.”
Individualized Consideration (IC)	“My director treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of the group.”

*Note.* From “Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Manual and Sample Set (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), by B. J. Avolio, & B. M. Bass, 2004. Copyright 2004 by Mind Garden, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Researchers have suggested that the visual design and presentation layout of surveys can influence participant response and affect completion rates (Fowler, 2009; Stern et al., 2014; Sue & Ritter, 2012). With that in mind, I created a welcome screen that introduced participants to the survey. The welcome screen contained the purpose of the study, a reminder of the voluntary nature of participation, and a statement of confidentiality. Contact information for the principal investigator, the dissertation advisor, and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Boston University were also included on the welcome screen. I designed the main body of the survey using a six-page

format in order to simplify the overall presentation for the participants. This multi-page format was selected in order to minimize the need for excessive vertical scrolling and clicking such as “next,” “continue,” “submit,” etc., at the end of individual pages. The first 45 questions were divided into 10 questions per page for the first four pages, and five questions on the fifth page. The survey concluded with five demographic questions on page six that were separated from the main body of the questionnaire.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Scholars have employed several different methods for confirming the reliability and validity of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Lowe et al. (1996) conducted a meta-analysis of the literature on transformational leadership using the MLQ. Their analysis revealed that the transformational leadership scales of the MLQ were reliable and significantly predicted leadership effectiveness across the studies examined within their investigation. Antonakis et al. (2003) examined the psychometric properties of the MLQ and confirmed that the MLQ clearly distinguished nine factors within the Full Range of Leadership (FRL) model. Muenjohn and Armstrong (2008) found that the overall fit of the nine-factor structure of the Full Range of Leadership (FRL) model was statistically significant. Furthermore, these authors contended that the nine-factor structure of the Full Range of Leadership model may be the best theoretical construct representing the MLQ. Based on these findings, I decided that the nine-factor structure of the Full Range of Leadership model was the most comprehensive means for examining all of the leadership behaviors along Bass’s (1985) continuum. Therefore, the MLQ was the best instrument to help me answer the research questions that guided this

inquiry.

### **Preliminary Procedures**

Prior to conducting the study, I obtained permission from the superintendents of participating school districts and the principals of all participating high schools. The first contact was made via email in July 2018 (see Appendix D). Superintendents who failed to respond were sent a second email on September 26, 2018. I followed up this email by telephone within that same week in order to ensure that the email had been received.

Permissions from participating school districts were completed by November 7, 2018.

The first contact with individual principals was made via email on April 29, 2019 (see Appendix F). Principals who failed to respond were sent a second email on May 28, 2019. I followed up this email by telephone within that same week in order to ensure that the email had been received. Permissions from individual high school principals were completed by June 19, 2019.

Adhering to the protocols set forth by the Boston University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I waited to contact individual directors until permission to do so had been granted. After permission was granted, directors nominated by officials and adjudicators of the California Music Educators Association (CMEA) were sent an invitation to participate in the study via email (see Appendix E). In addition, I contacted each director by telephone in order to personally invite them to participate in the study. Directors who agreed to participate in the research were emailed information that included a description on the survey instrument, and a copy of the assent/consent form.

Because Mind Garden, Inc., holds the publication rights to the Multifactor

Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), I was required to obtain a license to modify content and to administer the MLQ through a non-Mind Garden Survey system. I used Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, to reproduce the 45 items of the MLQ (5X-Short) version of the questionnaire. At the time of this research, the MLQ (5X-Short) was the only validated version available from the publisher for reproduction purposes. All 45 items were reproduced in their original order. I simplified the original 5-point Likert scale in order to make individual ratings clear and distinguishable for the target audience. For example, I changed the original ratings of “not at all, once in a while, and sometimes” to “never, rarely, and sometimes” in order to more clearly define these statements and to avoid the ambiguity between “once in a while” and “sometimes.” I added 5 questions in order to gather demographic data from participants. I separated the demographic questions from the main body of the questionnaire to ensure that the flow of the survey was not interrupted by questions that may be perceived as too personal or unrelated to the questionnaire (Sue & Ritter, 2012).

I pre-tested the modified Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) in two separate educational settings with high school students. Prior to administering the pre-test, I adapted each statement of the questionnaire in order to align the wording with choral music instruction and altered the language to craft age-appropriate questions. Students who completed the questionnaire were asked to report any language they found to be confusing or words they did not understand. Based on student feedback, I altered six questions; five were amended in order to eliminate ambiguous language, and one was altered to improve comprehension.

Several security measures were employed in order to ensure participants' anonymity. Each participant was assigned a secured password. The survey was configured to disable both the IP address and email tracking in order to ensure participant anonymity. To fortify data security in storage, Survey Monkey's data centers utilize continuous video surveillance, maintain 24 x 7 entry requirements, and are certified as SOC 2 accredited facilities. To maintain data security in transit, Survey Monkey utilizes Transport Layer Security (TLS) to protect data through server authentication and data encryption. All data were stored by Survey Monkey on firewall-protected servers within the United States that utilized two-factor authentication (Secure VPN, 2FA) to maintain access control (Survey Monkey Security Statement, n.d.).

### **Data Preparation**

Data were collected over a two-week period. After the data collection period, the survey was deactivated in accordance with contract regulations. I examined all of the responses to ensure that the surveys had been completed. A total of 250 high school choral students were invited to participate in this study. After the screening process, a total of 223 surveys from high school choral students were deemed to be usable, resulting in an effective response rate of 89.2%. Data exported from Survey Monkey were imported to SPSS (version 26) for all analyses.

### **Data Analysis**

Preliminary data analyses entailed the calculation of descriptive data, including mean scores and the preparation of tabular displays organized by subgroup. Next, I employed multiple regression analysis to examine and assess the relationship among

directors' transformational leadership behaviors and students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. A summary of the methods employed for analyzing data for each research question follows.

***Research Question 1:***

What specific leadership behaviors may be attributed to effective high school choral directors?

To determine leadership behaviors, I calculated mean scores and standard deviations for all directors so as to provide a macro-perspective on the total leadership behaviors attributed to directors in this study. To narrow the results, I compared the mean scores and standard deviations of male participants to those of female participants and examined these scores with respect to grade level and years of experience. To narrow the focus further, I examined the mean scores and standard deviations of each subgroup according to the independent variables of Idealized Influence (II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC).

***Research Question 2:***

To what degree do the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors influence students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their director's overall effectiveness?

In order to address the second research question, I conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine if a relationship existed among students' self-reported outcome levels and the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors. This procedure was useful because it allowed me to examine the variance among

variables with several predictors concurrently present (Field, 2013). The dependent variables were students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. Independent variables were derived from the four categories of transformational leadership: Idealized Influence (II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). Prior to conducting the analysis, I generated scatterplots in order to visually examine the nature and relative magnitude of the relationship among individual variables. I used multiple regression analysis to determine the predictability of directors' transformational leadership behaviors on each of the dependent variables. After completing the regression analyses, I used the output data to calculate the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) in order to determine the degree of variance shared between individual variables.

## **Limitations**

### ***Sampling Error***

High school choral directors who participated in this study were nominated by regional officials and adjudicators of the California Music Educators Association (CMEA). Because the sample was not randomly selected, it is unknown whether the sample represented a larger target population. This represented a threat to external validity.

### ***Common Method Error***

The results of this study may have been inflated because data were collected from the same source. Research participants who are trying to be consistent regarding their responses may search for similarities in questions and thereby contribute to an artificial

covariance between independent and dependent variables that otherwise might not exist (Lee et al., 2003). Because participants were asked to respond to questions concerning the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors as well as questions regarding their own self-reported outcome levels, common method bias may have influenced these results.

### ***Social Desirability Bias***

Participants may have selected answers that they believed were more likely to be favorable (Bryman, 2016). Alternatively, some participants may have been reluctant to select answers that they believed to be negative or less than favorable. There is a possibility that the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors perceived to be more positive by participants may have been overreported, while the leadership behaviors deemed to be less favorable may have been underreported.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I described the methodology used in this study. The research design enabled me to identify the transformational leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors and to determine the degree of association among these behaviors and students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. I discussed the recruitment and the sampling procedures employed. Finally, I described the means for obtaining administrative consent, safeguards utilized to ensure participant anonymity and data security, and data analysis techniques. In the forthcoming chapter, I present the results of the data analysis that emerged from this investigation.

## Chapter 4: Presentation of Results

In this chapter, I present the data collected from the survey in order to better understand the transformational leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors and their influence upon the attitudes and perceptions of students. The following research questions guided this inquiry.

1. What specific leadership behaviors may be attributed to effective high school choral directors?
2. To what degree do the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors influence students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness?

Data collection took place from May 4 to May 15, 2020, during the world-wide COVID 19 pandemic. Although the state of California was under a mandatory shelter-in-place order at the time, I was able to collect data because the study was administered remotely using Survey Monkey, an online survey tool. Data were collected from students enrolled in five public high schools in California.

Following the methods employed by Nguni et al. (2006) and Rowald and Rohmann (2009a), I decided that multiple regression analysis was appropriate for this investigation. This procedure allowed me to examine the influence of several predictors upon the dependent variables concurrently. I used SPSS statistical software version 26 to analyze the data that follows.

This chapter contains four sections. First, I present my approach to data screening, response rates, and participant demographics. Next, I describe the scoring procedures for

the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 2004). In the third section, I present the data analysis associated with the first research question. The analysis included mean scores, standard deviations, and tabular displays for all directors in this study, providing a macro-perspective on total leadership behaviors. I narrowed the results by comparing the mean scores and standard deviations of male and female participants, and by examining participants' scores with respect to years of experience. In the fourth section, I present data associated with research question two. I generated scatterplots to visualize the relationship among variables. I conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine the predictive power of directors' leadership behaviors upon the three outcome variables of extra effort, satisfaction, and overall assessment of director effectiveness. I then calculated the coefficient of determination to examine the degree of variance shared by these outcome variables.

## **Data Preparation**

### ***Response Rates***

The sample population for this study consisted of 223 high school choral music students from five public high schools in California. The participants were obtained through a simple random sample in order to maximize the number of participant responses. Data examination revealed an effective response rate of 89.2%. Response data, including the total number of surveys returned from each school and the effective response rates for all participants were determined (see Table 1). Pseudonyms were used to represent each high school in order to ensure participant confidentiality.

**Table 1***Response Rates for Participating High Schools*

	Subgroups			Total
	Male	Female	Undisclosed	
<b>Norwood High School</b>	17	33	0	50
<b>Acosta High School</b>	20	26	4	50
<b>Lynnhaven High School</b>	20	22	0	42
<b>Meadowbrook High School</b>	15	18	0	33
<b>Pine Grove High School</b>	25	21	2	48
<b>Expected Response Rates</b>	43.5%	54%	.03%	223

*Participant Demographics*

More than 50% of the participants in this study (n = 116) reported that they were underclassmen in the first two years of high school (see Table 2). Similarly, the majority of participants in this study (n = 137, 62.56%) had limited experience within their respective choral programs. Regarding age, 18-year-old participants were the least represented subgroup, comprising only 14.61% (n = 32) of the survey's participants. Students with four years of experience (those most likely to be 18 years of age) also represented the smallest group of participants (n = 37, 16.89%).

**Table 2***Participant Demographics*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Age</b>		
14 years	34	15.53%
15 years	58	26.48%
16 years	50	22.83%
17 years	45	20.55%
18 years	32	14.61%
<b>Grade Level</b>		
Freshman (9 <sup>th</sup> )	70	32.11%
Sophomore (10 <sup>th</sup> )	46	21.10%
Junior (11 <sup>th</sup> )	47	21.56%
Senior (12 <sup>th</sup> )	55	25.23%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	97	44.70%
Female	120	54.30%
<b>Audition Status</b>		
Yes	123	56.68%
No	94	43.32%
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
First year	83	37.90%
Second year	54	24.66%
Third year	45	20.55%
Fourth Year	37	16.89%

**Scoring of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire**

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), chosen for its reliability and validity, measures the frequency of the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors attributed to effective high school choral directors. Leadership behaviors are measured through the nine subscales associated with the Full Range of

Leadership model (FRL). The subscales for transformational leadership are idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. The subscales for transactional leadership are contingent reward, and management-by-exception (active). The laissez-faire leadership subscales are management-by-exception (passive) and laissez-faire leadership (see Table 3). All of these subscales contain four items. The MLQ also contains items to measure the outcome variables of extra effort, satisfaction, and overall assessment of director effectiveness (see Table 4). Extra effort contains three items, satisfaction contains two items, and assessment of director effectiveness contains four items.

Bass and Avolio (2004), who developed the survey, recommended that scores be averaged by summing the items and dividing the score by the number of items representing each subscale. If an item is left blank, the authors note that the score can be derived by dividing the total for that subscale by the number of items answered. Treating the scores of groups of participants as aggregate data further allows for the computation of means and standard deviations that can then be compared.

**Table 3***MLQ 5X-Short Leadership Items*

<b>Survey Items</b>	<b>Scale Name</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>
10, 18, 21, 25	Idealized Influence (Attributed)	Transformational
6, 14, 23, 34	Idealized Influence (Behavior)	Transformational
9, 13, 26, 36	Inspirational Motivation	Transformational
2, 8, 30, 32	Intellectual Stimulation	Transformational
15, 19, 29, 31	Individual Consideration	Transformational
1, 11, 16, 35	Contingent Reward	Transactional
4, 22, 24, 27	Management-by-Exception (Active)	Transactional
3, 12, 17, 20	Management-by-Exception (Passive)	Laissez-Faire
5, 7, 28, 33	Laissez-Faire	Laissez-Faire

**Table 4***MLQ 5X-Short Itemized Leadership Outcomes*

<b>Survey Items</b>	<b>Outcome Variable</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>
39, 42, 44	Extra Effort	Leadership Outcome
38, 41	Satisfaction	Leadership Outcome
37, 40, 43, 45	Assessment of Effectiveness	Leadership Outcome

**First Research Question**

I sought to determine the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors. To gain a macro-perspective on the total leadership behaviors of directors, I calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for students' responses for the nine subscales contained within the survey. The mean scores and standard deviations associated with transformational leadership were generally higher than the scores related to other the other leadership styles (see Table 5). However, contingent reward, a subscale associated with transactional leadership, received the second highest overall score. The lowest mean scores and standard deviations were given to the subscales of management-by-exception (passive) and laissez-faire leadership.

**Table 5***Descriptive Statistics: Total Leadership Behaviors*

<b>Subscale</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	12.5936	3.29917
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	12.0645	3.04222
Inspirational Motivation	13.5688	2.81656
Intellectual Stimulation	11.3917	3.33035
Individual Consideration	12.6210	3.18939
Contingent Reward	12.7202	2.63260
Management-by-Exception (Active)	10.9585	2.58613
Management-by-Exception (Passive)	5.0369	3.47858
Laissez-Faire	3.8539	3.17482

*Note.* The subscales for transformational leadership are: Idealized Influence (Attributed), Idealized Influence (Behavior), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration.

Female participants assigned directors higher ratings in both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors (see Table 6). I identified a positive trend in the responses of female participants regarding the leadership behaviors of directors by comparing mean scores of participants by gender. Female participants assigned higher mean scores to the laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors. These results corroborate findings by Stamer (2009) and suggest that female choral students may be more influenced by the leadership behaviors of directors than their male counterparts. Higher mean scores for laissez-faire leadership suggest that female choral students may be more aware of the absence of effective leadership than males.

**Table 6***Leadership Totals by Gender*

<b>Leadership Style</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Transformational Total Score	Male	95	61.2947	12.617
	Female	117	63.0940	14.03
Transactional Total Score	Male	96	23.6042	4.42357
	Female	117	23.7949	4.35996
Laissez-Faire Total Score	Male	94	8.7660	5.49570
	Female	119	8.9832	6.52172

First-year choral students assigned directors the highest mean scores for transformational leadership. These students also assigned relatively high scores for transactional leadership. Second-year choral students assigned directors lower scores for transformational and transactional leadership behaviors than all other participants (see Table 7). In addition, second-year choral students assigned higher mean scores for laissez-faire leadership behaviors. However, the transformational and transactional leadership scores assigned by students with three years of experience were higher than the scores of second-year students. Conversely, the laissez-faire leadership scores assigned by third-year students declined in comparison to the scores of students with two years of experience.

**Table 7***Leadership Totals by Years of Experience*

<b>Leadership Style</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Transformational Total Score	First Year	83	64.2410	12.69683
	Second Year	52	58.3846	15.81902
	Third Year	44	62.6364	12.25142
	Fourth Year	35	63.4286	11.65758
Transactional Total Score	First Year	82	24.4146	4.03060
	Second Year	53	22.2075	4.48655
	Third Year	44	24.6136	3.48562
	Fourth Year	36	23.2500	5.18996
Laissez-Faire Total Score	First Year	82	7.9634	5.17936
	Second Year	52	9.6923	6.98889
	Third Year	44	8.9773	6.71163
	Fourth Year	37	9.4054	6.13034

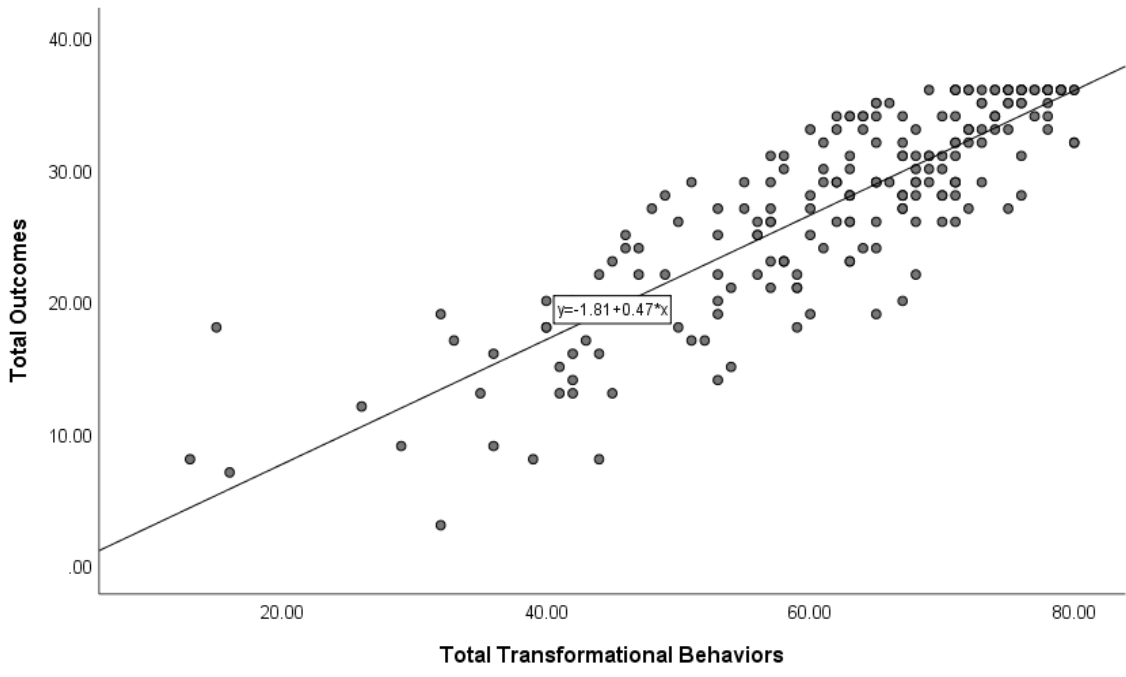
**Second Research Question**

I conducted a multiple regression analysis in order to determine the predictive power of the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors upon students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. Before conducting the analysis, I generated scatterplots to obtain a visual representation of the basic relationship among these variables. I was able to identify a positive relationship among directors' overall transformational and transactional

leadership behaviors and the three outcome variables (see Figures 3 and 4). Concurrently, a negative relationship was found between the laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors and the dependent variables (see Figure 5). This finding suggests that a lack of effective leadership negatively influences students' extra effort, satisfaction, and overall assessment of director effectiveness.

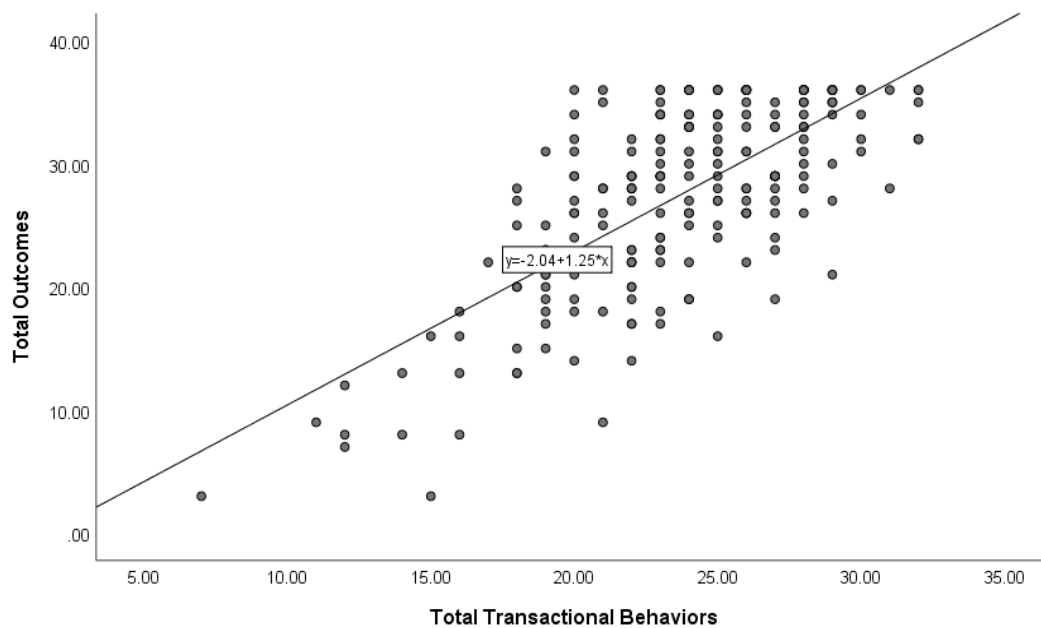
**Figure 3**

*Total Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Total Outcomes*

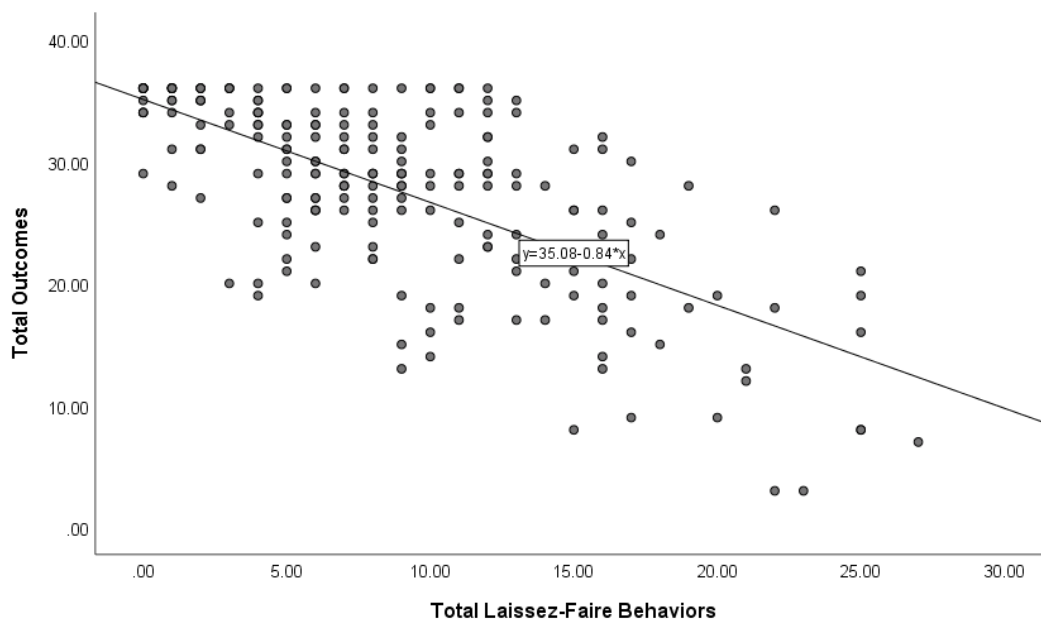


**Figure 4**

*Total Transactional Leadership Behaviors and Total Outcomes*

**Figure 5**

*Total Laissez-Faire Leadership Behaviors and Total Outcomes*



I conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine the predictive power of directors' leadership behaviors on the dependent variables of extra effort, satisfaction, and overall assessment of director effectiveness. This statistical procedure was employed because it allowed me to examine the variance among variables with several predictors simultaneously present. The results (see Tables 8, 9, 10) suggested that there is a significant positive relationship between the leadership behaviors of directors and all three outcome variables ( $R^2 = .695, .782, .789$  and  $p < .05$ ). Although all five subscales of transformational leadership predicted a significant amount of variance in at least one dependent variable, Idealized Influence (Attributed) was the only independent variable found to be significant with respect to all three. Transactional leadership behaviors were not significant predictors of students' extra effort. However, behaviors associated with Management-by-Exception (Active) significantly predicted students' satisfaction, and the assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness (see Tables 8, 9, and 10). Results indicated that behaviors associated with Management-by-Exception (Passive) significantly predicted students' extra effort (see Table 8). Participants reported that the laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors predicted a significant amount of variance in students' self-reported levels of satisfaction and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness (see Tables 9, and 10). These results suggest that students may respond positively to directors who relax their leadership behaviors in certain instances in favor of a less directive approach to instruction and personal interaction with students.

**Table 8***Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis: Leadership Behaviors and Extra Effort*

<b>Extra Effort</b>	<b><i>R</i><sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adj. <i>R</i><sup>2</sup></b>	<b>F</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Model Summary	.695	.682	52.90		.000
Transformational Behaviors					
Idealized Influence (Attributed)				.479	.000
Idealized Influence (Behavioral)				-.080	.152
Inspirational Motivation				.006	.917
Intellectual Stimulation				.252	.001
Individual Consideration				.128	.084
Transactional Behaviors					
Contingent Reward				.060	.367
Management-by-Exception (Active)				.071	.116
Laissez-Faire Behaviors					
Management-by-Exception (Passive)				-.111	.047
Laissez-Faire				.107	.084

*Note.*  $p < .05$

**Table 9***Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis: Leadership Behaviors and Satisfaction*

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b><i>R</i><sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adj. <i>R</i><sup>2</sup></b>	<b>F</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Model Summary	.782	.772	83.08		.000
Transformational Behaviors					
Idealized Influence (Attributed)				.542	.000
Idealized Influence (Behavioral)				-.093	.050
Inspirational Motivation				.109	.027
Intellectual Stimulation				.048	.431
Individual Consideration				.097	.122
Transactional Behaviors					
Contingent Reward				.080	.158
Management-by-Exception (Active)				.081	.033
Laissez-Faire Behaviors					
Management-by-Exception (Passive)				-.029	.543
Laissez-Faire				-.114	.030

*Note.*  $p < .05$

**Table 10**

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis: Leadership Behaviors and Assessment of Director Overall Effectiveness*

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>F</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Model Summary	.789	.780	86.88		.000
Transformational Behaviors					
Idealized Influence (Attributed)				.394	.000
Idealized Influence (Behavioral)				-.130	.005
Inspirational Motivation				.032	.505
Intellectual Stimulation				.086	.151
Individual Consideration				.310	.000
Transactional Behaviors					
Contingent Reward				.053	.345
Management-by-Exception (Active)				.137	.000
Laissez-Faire Behaviors					
Management-by-Exception (Passive)				-.030	.521
Laissez-Faire				-.112	.029

*Note.*  $p < .05$

I calculated the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) in order to determine the degree of variance in each of the outcome variables that could be explained by transformational leadership (see Table 11). The R-square ( $R^2$ ) values indicated a strong positive relationship among the transformational leadership behaviors of directors and all three dependent variables. Beta scores revealed that behaviors associated with Idealized Influence (Attributed) exerted the strongest influence upon each dependent variable ( $\beta = 48\%$ ,  $54\%$ ,  $39\%$  and  $p < .05$ ). These percentages highlight the strong relationship that exists among the transformational leadership behaviors of directors and all three dependent variables. As such, these findings underscore the need for directors to be aware of the leadership behaviors that they employ, and to fully understand the potential

influence that these behaviors are likely to have upon students. I then conducted the same analysis for transactional leadership. The R-square ( $R^2$ ) values, though less than those associated with transformational leadership, indicated a strong positive relationship between the transactional leadership behaviors of directors and each of the dependent variables. However, beta scores revealed that the unique contributions of individual predictors were less robust (see Tables, 8, 9, 10).

**Table 11**

*Coefficients of Determination: Transformational and Transactional Leadership*

<b>Leadership Style</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Transformational	Extra Effort	.610	.000
	Satisfaction	.675	.000
	Assessment of Effectiveness	.675	.000
Transactional	Extra Effort	.409	.000
	Satisfaction	.675	.000
	Assessment of Effectiveness	.487	.000

*Note.*  $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

### Summary

In this chapter, I reported the findings of data preparation, including response rates and participant demographics. I presented the results of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses with regard to the first two research questions. Research question 1 focused on the identification and categorization of the specific leadership behaviors attributed to effective high school choral directors. Research question 2 addressed the predictive power of the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors upon students' self-expressed levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and overall assessment of their directors' effectiveness.

Comparatively, females ranked directors higher than their male counterparts in both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. Female participants scored higher in their attribution of laissez-faire leadership behaviors, which suggests that females may be quicker to respond to a lack of leadership when it occurs.

I found a noticeable decline in the way second-year choral students rated transformational and transactional leadership. Data also indicated that second-year choral students assigned the highest mean scores for laissez-faire leadership. These findings suggested that returning choral students may feel a lack of leadership during their second year of participation. Moreover, because of the rebound in scores (both positively and negatively) reported by participants with three years of experience, I noted that students' attitudes concerning the leadership behaviors of directors may be susceptible to change over time.

By generating scatterplots to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables, I discovered a positive association between the transformational and transactional leadership behaviors of directors and the attitudes and perceptions of students. As expected, this process revealed a negative relationship between the laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors and the emotions of students.

I conducted a multiple regression analysis to examine the influence of directors' leadership behaviors upon the dependent variables. I discovered a significant positive relationship between the transformational leadership behaviors of directors and the attitudes and emotions of students. Data revealed that contingent reward behaviors associated with transactional leadership were not significant predictors of the dependent

variables. However, participants reported that Management-by-Exception (Active) behaviors significantly predicted students' satisfaction, and the assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. Further analysis indicated that behaviors associated with Management-by-Exception (Passive) significantly predicted students' extra effort (see Table 8). Respondents also noted that the laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors predicted a significant amount of variance in students' self-reported levels of satisfaction and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. Further analyses indicated that transformational and transactional leadership behaviors explained a significant amount of variance in the attitudes and perceptions of students with individual  $R^2$  values falling between .409 and .675. These results shed light upon the strong relationship that exists among independent and dependent variables. As such, these findings suggest that the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors are an integral component of instruction that need to be understood if their potential for positive influence upon students is to be fully realized.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

Existing studies have shown that effective leaders have the potential to positively influence followers. However, little is known about the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors or about how their behaviors may be influencing students. Because there is currently no standardized means for examining the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors, leadership in contemporary choral classrooms can only be viewed as a byproduct of the personal characteristics and behaviors of individual directors. I conducted this study to equip high school choral directors with a theory-based understanding regarding how their leadership behaviors influence the attitudes and perceptions of students. In this chapter, I discuss findings regarding the transformational leadership behaviors of high school choral directors and discuss implications for high school choral-music teaching. I will provide recommendations for future research on transformational leadership within choral-music education, and situate the current investigation within the context of current scholarship.

Transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985) provided me with a framework to examine the effects that high school choral directors have on students, and the behaviors that they use to achieve these effects. I employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X-Short) as the primary survey instrument for this investigation (Bass & Avolio, 2004). This online survey contained 45 items designed to measure choral students' perceptions regarding the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors. The survey also provided a means for determining if a relationship existed among the leadership behaviors of directors and students' self-

reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and the assessment of directors' overall effectiveness. Because of its applicability as a data collection tool, the MLQ 5X-Short was determined to be the most appropriate instrument for addressing the research questions that guided this inquiry.

The sample population for this study consisted of 223 high school choral-music students from five public high schools in California. Participants were obtained through a simple random sample in order to maximize the number of participant responses. Data collection took place between May 4 and May 15, 2020, with an effective response rate of 89.2%. Mean scores and standard deviations for all participants were calculated for each of the nine subscales contained within the survey. Total mean scores for transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership were then calculated in order to compare participants' responses according to gender and years of choral-singing experience.

## **Findings**

In the field of music education, little is known about the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors or about how these behaviors influence the attitudes and perceptions of students. I set out to solve this problem by conducting a survey to determine if there was a relationship between the transformational leadership behaviors of high school choral directors and students' self-reported levels of extra effort, satisfaction, and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. I conducted this investigation in order to provide high school choral directors with a theory-based understanding of how their leadership behaviors positively influence students within their

ensembles. This study revealed that high school choral directors, like leaders in a wide variety of situational contexts, have the ability to significantly influence followers in numerous ways.

To build upon the literature, I designed a study that provided a macro-perspective regarding the total leadership behaviors attributed to high school choral directors as well as a means for narrowing the investigation through the comparison of differing subgroups. My data analysis revealed that participants rated the transformational leadership behaviors of directors higher than behaviors associated with transactional or laissez-faire leadership styles. However, contingent reward behaviors associated with transactional leadership received the second-highest overall ranking with mean scores above four of the subscales for transformational leadership. This finding suggested that the transformational and transactional leadership behaviors of high school choral directors have the ability to positively influence students within their ensembles. To investigate further, I examined student responses according to variable subgroups.

I examined mean scores and standard deviations by gender and discovered that female participants ranked directors higher than their male counterparts in both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. Female participants assigned higher mean scores to the laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors, which suggests that females may be quicker to perceive the absence of effective leadership than males.

Analyzing student responses according to years of experience, I discovered that first-year choral students ranked the transformational leadership behaviors of directors higher than students with more choral-singing experience. Results showed a decline in

the transformational and transactional scores assigned by second-year choral students coupled with an increase in participants' rankings of laissez-faire leadership behaviors. The mean scores assigned by third-year choral students indicated a rebound in this negative trend, with increased scores for transformational and transactional leadership and lower scores for laissez-faire leadership. Examined collectively, the variability in participants' rankings suggested that the attitudes and perceptions of students regarding the leadership behaviors of directors may shift over time as students advance through the choral program.

Studies on transformational leadership, including those implementing the MLQ, have been undertaken in numerous countries across the globe (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, despite the apparent universality of this model, Bass (1985) argued that environmental factors and organizational characteristics had the ability to influence the effectiveness of transformational leadership. If that is the case, then the influence of transformational leadership is contingent upon the specific situational context in which it occurs. The focus of this investigation was to examine how the transformational leadership behaviors of directors influenced the attitudes and perceptions of students within the specific context of high school choral instruction.

I used Rowald and Rohmann (2009a) as a methodological model to determine the predictive power that high school choral directors' leadership behaviors have upon students in the California public school system. However, I determined that descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were appropriate for the current study because of the clear presentation of ideas made possible by these forms of analysis. These

procedures were employed because they provided a straightforward means for answering the research questions that guided this investigation.

I generated scatterplots before conducting the analysis in order to obtain a visual representation of the basic relationship among variables (Miethe & Gauthier, 2008). Results indicated that there was a positive relationship between the transformational and transactional leadership behaviors of directors and the three outcome variables. However, a negative relationship was found between the outcome variables and directors' laissez-faire leadership behaviors. These preliminary results supported the earlier findings of Rowald and Rohmann (2009a), thereby adding credibility to the use of this framework within the specific context of high school choral-music education. Looking deeper, I conducted a multiple regression analysis in order to determine the specific relationship that existed among independent and dependent variables.

Results from the regression analysis indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between the leadership behaviors of directors and all three dependent variables ( $R^2 = .695, .782, .789$  and  $p < .05$ ). All five subscales of transformational leadership predicted a significant amount of variance in at least one dependent variable. However, Idealized Influence (Attributed) was the only independent variable found to be significant with respect to all three. Taken as a whole, transactional leadership behaviors were not significant predictors of students' extra effort. Despite this, behaviors associated specifically with Management-by-Exception (Active) significantly predicted students' satisfaction, and the assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. Results indicated that behaviors associated with Management-by-Exception (Passive) significantly

predicted students' extra effort. Participants also indicated that the laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors predicted a significant amount of variance in students' self-reported levels of satisfaction and assessment of their directors' overall effectiveness. These findings suggested that it may be appropriate for directors to employ a less directive approach to leadership in certain instances in order to provide students with more freedom and independence within the learning environment.

In order to view these results from a slightly different perspective, I calculated the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to determine the degree of variance in each of the outcome variables that could be explained by transformational and transactional leadership. The analysis revealed that the transformational and transactional leadership behaviors of directors explained a substantial amount of variance in the attitudes and perceptions of students with individual  $R^2$  values falling between .409 and .675 (see Table 11). The results indicated that implementing both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors may help choral directors optimize their leadership potential within the high school choral setting.

### **Limitations**

Data regarding the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors and the attitudes and perceptions of students were collected from the same source. As a result, common-method variance may have inflated the degree of correlation among these variables (Avolio et al., 1991). The desire to maintain consistency and to provide responses that appear rational may have encouraged participants to search for similarities in the questions asked of them. The desire to be consistent may have thereby contributed

to an artificial covariance between independent and dependent variables. Due to the focus on the differing responses of male and female participants within this study, respondents were not asked to identify as LGBTQ+ within the questionnaire. As such, participant responses within this investigation may not adequately reflect the social identity of the target population.

### **Implications for Teaching**

In the field of music education, more information is needed regarding effective choral leadership. I conducted this investigation in order to provide high school choral directors with a theory-driven understanding of choral leadership that can be used as a basis for informing and improving high school choral instruction. Results indicated that understanding how students feel about effective choral leadership has several implications for high school choral instruction.

Findings from this study revealed a strong positive relationship among the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors and students' extra effort, satisfaction, and overall assessment of director effectiveness. These results suggest that high school choral directors may need to be informed regarding how their leadership behaviors can influence the attitudes and emotions of students. Results also revealed a strong negative relationship among the total laissez-faire leadership behaviors of directors and these same outcome variables. These findings are consistent with earlier studies on transformational leadership within musical and non-musical settings (Nguni et al., 2006; Pounder, 2008; Rowald & Rohmann, 2009a). Despite this, individual predictor variables associated with laissez-faire leadership predicted a significant amount of variance in

individual dependent variables. This suggested that there may be times where it is appropriate for directors to reduce their level of direct involvement so that students may be afforded the opportunity to work through specific circumstances in a more independent manner. Based on these results, I provide implications for high school choral instruction regarding (a) students' gender, (b) students' years of experience, and (c) the combination of transformational and transactional leadership behaviors.

### ***Student Gender***

The results of this study indicated that female students assigned higher scores on both transformational and transactional leadership. The data suggested that male and female students respond differently to the leadership behaviors of their directors. These findings correspond with previous studies within the literature. In a study that explored the motivational strategies of high school choral directors, Stamer (2009) found that female students assigned higher scores to all of the motivational strategies implemented by directors. Exploring the participation of male students in middle-school chorus, Freer (2007) provided a wealth of evidence regarding the different learning styles of adolescent boys and girls, while arguing for the need to address these differences more vigorously within choral-music education. Adding support to these earlier studies, the data within the current investigation suggest that directors may need to be aware that the leadership behaviors that high school choral directors employ are likely to be perceived differently based upon gender differences. Moreover, the data indicate that high school choral directors may need to modify their leadership behaviors to better address the needs of male students.

Considering these findings, several implications arise with regard to gender. First, high school choral directors may need to ensure that their behaviors foster a nurturing environment where both male and female students feel appreciated. Second, directors should work toward developing and modifying behaviors in order to show a clear acknowledgment of both male and female students. Third, directors should strive to employ behaviors during rehearsals that encourage both male and female students to improve and succeed. Fourth, directors can work toward helping all students engage in the learning process by acknowledging the interests and individual needs of both male and female students. Finally, although this study was limited to the examination of the differing responses of male and female participants, directors should be encouraged to strive toward a better understanding of how their leadership behaviors influence students regardless of gender or social identity.

### *Years of Experience*

Examining the responses of students in relation to years of experience within their respective choral programs provided evidence that students' perceptions of choral directors' leadership behaviors may change over time. Results indicated that there was a decline in the transformational and transactional leadership scores of second-year choral students. However, the findings revealed a noticeable rebound in the scores for students with three years of experience. As such, these results suggested that high school choral students' perceptions of the leadership behaviors of directors may be mediated by their years of participation.

Noting that effective choral leadership is an ongoing process that is continually

changing rather than a static set of permanent instructional procedures, these findings have several implications for high school choral directors. First, directors may need to reengage with students periodically as they advance through the choral program in order to ensure that students' needs are continuing to be met. Second, as students experience lulls in enthusiasm over time, directors may need to be prepared to modify their leadership behaviors in order to make sure that students are continuing to stay engaged in the learning process. Third, directors may need to work to ensure that their behaviors are continuing to encourage students to challenge themselves and take on new roles of leadership within their respective choral programs. Lastly, directors may need to behave in ways that encourage students to continue to explore new ideas and fresh perspectives as they strive to meet ever-changing musical goals.

### ***Combining Transformational and Transactional Behaviors***

Comparing participants' responses regarding the transformational and transactional leadership behaviors of high school choral directors provided evidence that both leadership styles might be employed as a means of improving choral-music instruction. Findings from this investigation revealed a strong positive relationship among the total transformational and transactional leadership behaviors of directors and the attitudes and perceptions of students. This is consistent with Bass and Riggio's (2006) claims regarding the usefulness of these leadership dimensions. However, results from multiple regression analysis indicated that individual independent variables were not always significantly predictive of variance in each dependent variable. This suggested that more work may need to be done to pin down the exact behaviors that significantly

influence the attitudes and perceptions of high school choral students.

These results have implications for high school choral instruction. Directors may want to pursue in-service training options of transformational and transactional leadership in order to gain a better understanding of the potential influence that specific leadership behaviors may have on students. Although these programs are limited, universities in California offer training via extension courses, credentialing programs, and seminar sessions. Individual districts are also able to pursue transformational leadership training through partnerships with organizations such as California Department of Education, the California Teachers Association, and the Association of California School Administrators. Directors may desire to use the results of this study to begin to develop new strategies for balancing and blending transformational and transactional leadership practices as a means of improving the communication and emotional connection that they share with students. Directors may also wish to develop longitudinal measures of self-evaluation that allow them to: (a) reflect upon their use of transformational and transactional leadership behaviors, and (b) provide them with a basis for adapting their leadership behaviors as they continue to meet the needs of students over time.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In the field of music education, research on the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors has been limited to the work of a handful of scholars. I set out to address this issue by conducting a theory-based investigation of effective choral leadership in order to draw attention to the importance of directors' leadership behaviors and their potential influence on students within the high school setting. Findings from this

study indicate that future research on the transformational leadership behaviors of high school choral directors has the potential to greatly benefit current scholarship and contemporary practice within music education. Based on the results of this investigation, I provide recommendations for future research regarding (a) the factor validity of the MLQ, (b) pre-service and in-service training, and (c) the influence of transformational leadership within localized instructional settings.

### ***MLQ Factor Validity Studies***

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is the most widely used instrument for measuring the components of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2019). However, scholars have continued to question the factor validity of the MLQ due to its lack of conceptual clarity and the high rates of correlation between individual leadership components (Andersen, 2015; Lowe et al., 1996; Tejada et al., 2001; Tracey & Hinkin, 1998; Yukl, 1999). In the present study, participants ranked contingent reward behaviors higher than those associated with four of the five transformational leadership subscales. However, when examined concurrently with other variables, contingent reward behaviors were not significant in predicting variance in the three dependent variables. I recommend that future researchers in music education continue factor validity studies of the MLQ that focus on reducing ambiguities in the conceptual definitions associated with the MLQ and its usage within music-specific contexts.

### ***Pre-Service and In-Service Training***

Results of the current study indicated that there is a strong positive relationship between the transformational and transactional leadership behaviors of high school choral

directors and the attitudes and perceptions of students. These findings supported earlier studies from within music education and beyond (Nguni et al., 2006; Pounder, 2008; Rowald & Rohmann, 2009a, 2009b; Williams, 2014). Moreover, some scholars have argued that transformational leadership can be taught (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 2004; Northouse, 2019; Pounder, 2009; Sosik & Jung, 2010). I recommend that future music-education researchers work toward developing a model of transformational choral leadership specifically designed for use within the high school choral setting. The development of such a model would then provide universities and other supporting agencies with a basis for developing training programs aimed at enhancing high school choral-music instruction.

### ***Localized Studies***

Research on transformational leadership has been conducted across a wide range of educational contexts (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009; Koh et al., 1995; Nguni et al., 2006; Pounder, 2008; Williams, 2014; Wilson et al., 2012). The current study focused on the influence of directors' transformational leadership behaviors within the context of high school choral-music education. However, research on transformational leadership within music education is still limited to the work of only a few scholars. I recommend that future researchers continue to explore the influence of transformational leadership within various contexts of music education. For example, research on transformational leadership might be conducted to address issues such as participation and attrition within middle-school choral programs. Where more localized results are needed, studies on transformational leadership in music education could be designed to address issues such

as the relationship between transformational leadership and socio-economic diversity, the influence of transformational leadership on minority and marginalized populations, and the influence of transformational leadership on music students' community activism. Research on the development of tools like the transformational choral leadership model could also provide teachers, school administrators, and district personnel with data that could be used to guide instruction, target interventions, and maximize students' engagement in the learning process.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this investigation was to identify the transformational leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors and to determine if there was a relationship among these behaviors and the attitudes of students. This study contributes to current literature about transformational leadership in musical settings by corroborating the work of Rowald and Rohmann (2009a, 2009b) and Boerner and von Streit (2005). Within music education, this study provides supporting evidence regarding previous research on choral leadership conducted by Davidson (1995), Ludwa (2012), and Williams (2014). The results of this investigation make evident the applicability of the transformational leadership model within music-education research. It is my hope that this research will contribute to future scholarship regarding the positive influence that choral directors can have on the lives of their students.

### **Postlude**

My story began with Jim, whose students transformed my views on choral leadership. Their stories encouraged me to want to learn more about how students

perceive leadership in high school choral ensembles. Their narratives prompted me to seek a better understanding of effective leadership in choral music education. Now that this dissertation is complete, it has become clear to me that Jim' students have been guiding me along each step of the way. I have learned it is important to listen, to ask questions, and to choose leadership behaviors that will have a positive effect on students. It is my hope that this research might encourage others to do the same.

## Appendix A

## IRB Approval Letter

Boston University Charles River Campus Institutional Review Board

25 Buick Street  
Room 157  
Boston, Massachusetts 02215  
T 617-358-6115  
www.bu.edu/irb

**Notification of IRB Determination: Not Human Subjects Research**

June 24, 2019

Christian Emigh, M.A.  
Boston University College of Arts and Sciences  
855 Commonwealth Ave  
Boston, MA 02215

**Protocol Title:** Transformational Leadership and its Influences in the High-School Choral Setting  
**Protocol #:** 5060X  
**Funding Agency:** Unfunded

Dear Mr. Emigh:

On June 24, 2019, the IRB determined that the above-referenced protocol is not human subjects research as defined by 45 CFR 46.102. Per the protocol, The purpose of this survey study is to examine the leadership behaviors that high-school choral students attribute to successful high-school choral directors.

IRB review of this protocol is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, please submit the **Clarification Form** located at <http://www.bu.edu/researchsupport/compliance/human-subjects/>. No changes can be implemented until they have been reviewed by the IRB.

If you have any questions, please contact Shayne Deal at 617-358-6116.

Sincerely,

Shayne C. Deal, CIP  
Senior IRB Analyst  
Charles River Campus IRB

cc: Dr. Ruth Debrot, PhD

## Appendix B

### IRB Assent/Consent Form

#### **Student Assent/Parent Consent Letter**

##### Transformational Leadership and its Influence in the High School Choral Setting

Dear Students, Parents, or Guardians,

Please read this form carefully. The purpose of this form is to provide you with important information about taking part in a research study being conducted through Boston University. We are doing this study because we would like to learn more about how the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors influence the attitudes and perceptions of their students. We would be happy to answer any questions. If you have any questions about the research or any portion of this form, please feel free to contact the primary investigator, Christian Emigh, at [emighc@mdusd.org](mailto:emighc@mdusd.org).

#### **Key Information**

The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors in order to learn more about how these behaviors influence the attitudes and perceptions of their students. Students who wish to participate in this study will be provided with a link to an online survey that can be completed outside of school hours in approximately 10-15 minutes. Students wishing to participate in this study will be given access to the survey for two weeks in May, 2020. The survey can be completed at any time during this period, and will not interrupt regular classroom instruction. The risks of taking part in this research study may include feeling anxious while taking the survey. We will do our best to protect the privacy of student participants by assigning secured passwords to replace all personal identifiers, by changing the name of the school, and by storing all data that we collect on a password-protected computer. However, it is also possible that someone may guess the name of student participants or the name/location of the school. If you are interested in learning more about this study, please continue to read the rest of this form.

#### **Confidentiality**

We may use your study information for future research studies and/or may send your study information to other research collaborators. If we do this, we will remove all personal identifiers such as your name. We will label all of your study information with a code. Nobody outside of this study will know which study information belongs to you.

The following people or groups may review your study information for purposes such as quality control or safety:

- The Researcher and any member of his/her research team
- The Institutional Review Board at Boston University. The Institutional Review board is a group of people who review huma research studies for safety and protection of people who take part in the studies.
- Federal and state agencies that oversee or review research

### **Potential Benefits**

There are no benefits to you from taking part in this research. The purpose of this research is to expand upon what is currently known about the leadership behaviors of high school choral directors and the effects that these behaviors have on the attitudes of their students. This research is being conducted in the hope that others may benefit in the future from the information learned in this study.

### **Will I be paid to do this study?**

No, we will not pay you to be in this study.

### **What will it cost me to take part in this study?**

There are no costs to you for taking part in this research study.

### **Participation in this Research Study**

Students do not have to take part in this research study. Students can say ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ Students can say ‘Yes’ now and change their mind later. No one will be mad if you do not wish to take part in the study or if you change your mind about taking part in the study. Parents/Guardians can also decide to have their son/daughter stop taking part in this study—that is OK too.

You can call or email us with any concerns or questions. Our contact information is listed below:

**Christian Emigh, Researcher**  
**Concord High School**  
**Arts**  
[emighc@mdusd.org](mailto:emighc@mdusd.org)  
510-599-7393

**Dr. Ruth Debrot, Faculty Advisor**  
**Boston University College of Fine**  
[rdebrot@bu.edu](mailto:rdebrot@bu.edu)  
617-353-5093

If you have any questions about your child's rights as a research participant or want to speak with someone independent of the research team, you may contact the Boston University IRB directly at 617-358-6115.

By clicking the link below, you are agreeing to participate in this research study.

## Appendix C

## IRB CMEA Nomination Letter

Regional Officials and Adjudicators  
California Music Educators Association

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to ask for your assistance in a research project that I am conducting as part of my doctorate in music education through Boston University. This research study examines the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors, and the influence that these behaviors have upon the attitudes and perceptions of their students. The results of this study may provide valuable insight into the types of leadership behaviors that help high school choral directors to be successful, and to provide directors with information that will allow them to tailor their instruction to better meet the needs of more students within their ensembles.

I would like your assistance and expertise as you work with many high school choral directors throughout California. I have attached a ballot to this letter, asking for your nominations of high school choral directors that satisfy the criteria for selection outlined within this study. "Effective" high school directors are defined as directors that oversee a sequential choral program of multiple ensembles that includes both non-auditioned and audition-only choirs; directors who have received consistent exemplary performance ratings for multiple choirs at regional choral festivals sponsored by CMEA; and directors recognized as prominent in the field of choral music education by regional and divisional officials of CMEA.

In order to obtain this information in an efficient manner, I am asking that you return the ballot as an attachment to the following address: [emighc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:emighc@sbcglobal.net). Please return your ballots no later than June 15, 2018. Your responses will remain confidential per IRB regulations.

I would be honored to share the results of this investigation with CMEA in order to assist with professional development within the organization. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Christian Emigh  
Doctoral Candidate, Boston University

## Appendix D

## IRB District Superintendent Permission Letter

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Christian Emigh, and I am a doctoral student at Boston University writing to seek your permission to conduct research in the Acosta Union High School District as part of my dissertation. My proposal for research has been accepted by the faculty of the College of Fine Arts. As such, I am hoping to conduct research for this study during the upcoming academic year of 2019-2020 beginning in May.

The purpose of my study will be to examine the leadership behaviors that students attribute to their high school choral directors. I am seeking to learn about the effects that choral directors have on students and to understand the behaviors that they use to achieve these effects. I believe that my research may help improve the field of music education by providing choral directors with a better understanding of their own behaviors and instructional practices.

Data for this study will be collected using an online survey known as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). In order to protect the identity of all students who volunteer to participate in the study, participants will be asked to log on to the survey by means of a secured password. When the results are written, all names and locations will be replaced with pseudonyms.

Because the survey will be completed online, classroom instruction will not be interrupted. Students will be informed by their teachers that participation in the study is completely voluntary, and that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. In accordance with Boston University's IRB regulations, a student assent/parent consent letter will be obtained and properly stored before research begins.

Thank you for your consideration. Please respond via email no later than October 4, 2018 so that I may make arrangements to implement the survey with your music supervisor and/or choral director. If you have any further questions or would like additional information regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at [emighc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:emighc@sbcglobal.net) or my advisor, Dr. Ruth Debrot, at [rdebrot@bu.edu](mailto:rdebrot@bu.edu).

Sincerely,

Christian Emigh  
Director of Choirs/Performing Arts Chair  
Concord High School  
[emighc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:emighc@sbcglobal.net)

Ruth Debrot  
Lecturer in Music Education  
Boston University  
[rdebrot@bu.edu](mailto:rdebrot@bu.edu)

## Appendix E

## IRB Director Invitation Letter

Dear Mr.

As a result of your nomination by regional officials and adjudicators of the California Music Educators Association, I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study being conducted through Boston University that is focused on the leadership behaviors of effective high school choral directors. The purpose of this investigation is to examine the leadership behaviors that students attribute to their directors in order to better understand the effects that choral directors have on their students and the behaviors that they use to achieve these effects.

Data will be collected from students for this study through the use of an online survey known as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The survey consists of 50 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Because the survey can be taken outside of class time at students' discretion, there will be almost no disruption to your instructional time. All materials and instructions will be provided to you before the survey begins, and participation will require just a few basic steps.

- Read the Assent/Consent Form to students wishing to participate
- Administer the Assent/Consent Form to students wishing to participate
- Remind non-responding students to complete the survey within the allotted time

Completion of this survey is voluntary and all the information that students provide will be kept completely private and confidential. Students who opt into the survey will be provided with the survey link found at the end of the Assent/Consent Form.

As the primary researcher for this investigation, I want to thank you for considering participation in this worthwhile project. My hope is to improve the field of music education by providing high school choral directors with a better understanding of their leadership behaviors and the impact that these behaviors have on the students themselves.

Please feel free to respond to this email directly to indicate your willingness to participate. If you have any further questions or would like additional information regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at [emighc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:emighc@sbcglobal.net) or my advisor, Dr. Ruth Debrot, at [rdebrot@bu.edu](mailto:rdebrot@bu.edu).

Sincerely,

Christian Emigh  
Director of Choirs/Performing Arts Chair

Concord High School  
[emighc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:emighc@sbcglobal.net)

Dr. Ruth Debrot  
Lecturer in Music Education  
Boston University  
[rdebrot@bu.edu](mailto:rdebrot@bu.edu)

## Appendix F

## IRB Principal Permission Letter

Dear Principal XXXXX,

My name is Christian Emigh, and I am a doctoral student at Boston University seeking to conduct research within your district for my dissertation. I have already received permission from Dr. XXXXX, your superintendent. However, the IRB at Boston University would like additional documentation from your school so that I may conduct a short online survey with the students of your choral director, Mr. Scott XXXXX. A simple response to this email will suffice.

If you have any questions or concerns about my research, I would be happy to address them. Feel free to contact me via email or by phone: 510.599.7393.

Thank you for your assistance, and for the opportunity to advance music education.

Sincerely,

Christian Emigh  
Doctoral Candidate  
Boston University

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**CURRICULUM VITAE**

