Orchestral conductors as transformational leaders: preferences of professional instrumentalists in South Africa

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Abstract

This article explores the preferences and reasons of professional South African instrumentalists concerning the preferred transformational leadership behaviours as displayed by orchestral conductors. Both quantitative and qualitative data (explanatory sequential mixed method design) was collected by means of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) as well as semi-structured interviews respectively. 47 professional South African orchestral players completed the questionnaire of which five were further invited to partake in an interview to establish the preferences of orchestral musicians pertaining to the transformational leadership behaviours of conductors. Three transformational leadership behaviours frequently displayed by conductors were identified through the collection of quantitative data: Idealised Influence – Attributes, Idealised Influence – Behaviours and Inspirational Motivation. Interviewed participants favoured all transformational leadership behaviours demonstrated by conductors, but at varying levels. Key ideas of transformational leadership, which include reciprocal trust between players and the conductor, as well as the conductor's ability to prepare for rehearsals and have the necessary skill and vision to lead and adapt with an orchestral

environment, are highlighted. Participants often referred to a “fine line”, where conductors could easily be either too active or too passive in their approach to specific transformational leadership behaviours. The positive effects of two types of transformational leadership behaviours as displayed by orchestral conductors in the professional South African context are substantiated through evidence: Idealised Influence – Attributes (IIA) and Inspirational Motivation (IM).

Keywords: orchestral conducting, leadership behaviours, transformational leadership, South Africa

Introduction

Literature on conducting frequently utilises the term ‘conductor’ and ‘leader’ interchangeably (Schuller, 1997), yet formal education and training still places greater emphasis on the art of gesture and musical interpretation rather than focus on how to successfully lead an ensemble (Ulrich, 2009). Highly skilled and qualified musicians do not necessarily equate to good conductors, especially if they lack the necessary leadership skills to command a professional ensemble. Although talent, skill, knowledge and personality are key components, leadership is a determining factor in great conductors and great ensembles (Wis, 2007). The relationship between conductor and orchestra as experienced by the players themselves is rarely explored, and notably missing in literature within the unique South African context. Exploring the preferences of orchestral musicians concerning the leadership styles of conductors can assist in equipping directors with the necessary aptitude to lead their ensembles with confidence and astuteness. The study will therefore be guided by the following main research question: Which transformational leadership behaviours of orchestral conductors are preferred by professional South African instrumentalists? Research pertaining to leadership in a variety of contexts has

been well-documented within the workplace (Amankwaa et al., 2019; Chai et al., 2017; Loon et al., 2012), education (Anderson, 2017; Geijsel et al., 1999; Quin et al., 2015), the arts (Abdullah & Varatharatjoo, 2017; Cray et al., 2007; Williams, 2014), and specifically conducting (Atik, 1994; Boerner & Gebert, 2012; Kammerhoff et al., 2019; Tebyani, 2023). Despite the popularity of research into leadership, there is not consensus between scholars on a clear definition (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005), making the study thereof problematic (Bolden, 2004). One of the great challenges is that the concept of leadership is continuously evolving and adapting as society changes (Avery, 2004), further compounded by the increasing sophistication of leadership itself as humanity continues to become more diverse and complex (Fullan, 2001). In recent times, organisations operate in rapidly changing contexts with institutions and business changing in paradoxical ways (Avery, 2004), making it necessary for academics to constantly categorise leadership into different streams (Tyssen et al., 2013). Leaders need to be effective and operate in a rapidly changing world, requiring the constant renewal of paradigms in all aspects of society, both in theory and in practice. Leadership styles are applied differently depending on the culture, context, working environment or even regulated institutionally (Kahn et al., 2016). Transformational leadership is a prominent style associated strongly within social science and education, the arts, and especially conducting (Atik, 1994; Bass, 1999; Boerner & Gebert, 2012; Boerner & Von Streit, 2005; Cray et al., 2007; Den Hartog et al., 1997; Tebyani, 2023). This leadership paradigm inspires followers within a specific organisation to share in an idealised vision of achievement as presented by a specific leader. (Den Hartog et al., 1997). In such an event, transformational leaders expect a group of followers to understand this shared vision, while simultaneously surpassing their own self-interest to benefit the group as a whole (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Orchestral conductors might inspire members of professional orchestras to practice their specific parts in relation to

a common group musical goal, individually. These practice sessions after or between rehearsals occur without monetary compensation, but may result in achieving an articulated shared vision.

There are five common behaviours of the transformational leader supported in literature, namely idealised influence - behaviours, idealised influence - attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass, 1999; Diaz-Saens, 2011; Rowe & Guerrero, 2011). Furthermore, transformational leadership is systematic, consisting of an organised search for change, an analysis of the organisation and its team members, and an improvement from lesser to greater productivity to bring about a positive transformation (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

Transformational leadership in business

With an array of positive effects on employees, outcomes and organisation changes, the transformational leadership style makes a compelling argument for its presence in business. Examples include innovation in business and innovative work behaviour (Amankwaa et al., 2019), positive influence on job related learnings (Loon et al., 2012), a positive influence on organisational commitment (Chai et al., 2017), and improved business performance (Strukan et al., 2017). The effects of transformational leadership on innovative work behaviour, using simultaneous multiple mediating mechanisms was examined in a qualitative study involving 358 Ghanaian banking employees (Amankwaa et al., 2019). Transformational leadership traits were determined by using the MLQ developed by Bass and Avolio (1997). Results indicate that the relationship between innovative work behaviour and transformational leadership is mediated through job autonomy and support from management rather than commitment from employees alone. Transformational leadership and innovation in the workplace has been linked to organisational performance (Samad, 2012), small to medium size business (Matzler et al., 2008), and the role of management (Zuraik & Kelly, 2019). The influence of transformational

leadership applied to job-related learning was determined using the MLQ as a research instrument, received from 400 surveys completed by respondents from diverse backgrounds, various industries and occupations, with varying levels of education (Loon et al., 2012). Idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual appreciation are four factors of transformational leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990) which function as central components to positive job-related learning. These four components formed a theoretical basis to determine the impact of transformational leadership between 127 companies and their respective managers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Struken et al., 2017). The results indicated that transformational leadership has a positive effect on business performance, identifying five main contributing factors; a strong sense of charisma and being a role model, strongly developed moral values, competency in a field of expertise, reliability, the ability to create a vision, and motivating followers to accept and implement said vision (Struken et al., 2017). In further research, 4126 Korean employees were asked to complete a survey for their company, divided into 455 teams (Chai et al., 2017). This study aimed to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational commitment at the team level, and further to determine how the relationship is mediated by a shared vision within these teams. The research advocates for human resource practitioners to develop transformational leaders within organisations to effectively communicate the shared vision of the company, as the study found that such leaders positively influence the level of commitment of the organisation when embracing a shared vision. In Anwar et al.'s (2023) study in the private banking sector of Pakistan, they underscore the importance of leadership styles in enhancing employee performance and commitment within the competitive business landscape. Their research reveals that transformational leadership serves as a vital motivator, inspiring employees to achieve organizational goals. The study, based on a cross-sectional survey of 466

bank employees, confirms the positive influence of transformational leadership on both employee performance and commitment, highlighting its pivotal role in organizational success.

Transformational leadership in education

Within recent years, the enormous speed of global change in education is coupled by an increased demand for quality educational delivery (Mathew, 2010), forcing educational organisations to adapt to more complex and a rapidly changing environments (Balyer, 2012). The education sector is required to become more innovative, efficient and effective, and by default, revisit its leadership structures (Herbst & Conradie, 2011). The improvement of organisational performance and morale (Anderson, 2017), the advocating of better learning competences and enhanced academic achievement (Hamzah et al., 2011; Quin et al., 2015), as well as the adaptation to large-scale innovation (Geijsel et al., 1999), are some of the positive effects of transformational leadership within the education sector. Moreover, in the context of higher education institutions (HEIs), the concept of innovation in administrative processes remains a pressing concern. Owusu-Agyeman (2021), grounded in transformational leadership theory, investigated the factors that enhance innovation among administrative staff in an HEI. Their research underscores the significance of engagement, motivation, communication flow, communication utilization, and decision-making in promoting innovation among administrative staff, reaffirming the strong link between these factors and the influence of transformational leadership on innovation. Over the past two decades, the positive effects of transformational leadership have steered educational institutions in the United States (Anderson, 2017) and Malaysia (Hamzah et al., 2011) to be managed more like business organisations. Research advocates for transformational leadership within the school setting as a precursor to the enhancement of organisational performance and morale. An online survey was conducted to determine and compare the leadership qualities of principals from high and low performing schools in Southwest Mississippi, USA (Quin et al., 2015). The sample

included 92 teachers, and utilised five values of transformational leadership to determine the difference in leadership practice. These values were modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Principals from high performing institutions effectively and regularly utilised all five values in comparison to those in poorer performing schools. The greatest comparison was inspiring a shared vision (Quin et al., 2015), an important component in creating positive organisational change (Struken et al., 2017 & Chai et al., 2017), which is an integral element of the transformational leadership style (Geijsel et al., 1999).

Transformational leadership in the arts

Similar to business organisations and educational institutions, the arts are experiencing major change in the 21st century, which include challenges in governance, funding, and competition (Cray, 2007). The arts sector applies leadership styles that are similar to those of other industries, but due to factors distinctive to the arts, the method in which they are offered differ substantially. Art forms and art institutions are culturally specific, unique, and widespread and thus are bound to present varying leadership styles with different outcomes (Caust, 2010). Literature and visual arts are more individually inclined, whereas performing arts (orchestras, choirs, dance, and theatre) largely work in collaborative modes and organisational structures. Research pertaining to the relationship between the arts sector and transformational leadership are not as commonplace as similar studies relating to business and the education sector.

A mixed method study aimed at executives of an arts organisation had the purpose of determining how transformational leadership leads to positive organisational change (Abdullah & Varatharatjoo, 2017). Through investigation, idealised influence and intellectual stimulation were two aspects of transformational leadership, which inspired employees within the organisation to perform beyond the required expectations. Administrators survey across 91

performing and visual art schools in the USA were found to implement transformational leadership qualities more than other leadership styles (Koppang, 1996), and research pertaining to the success of a choir in the USA (Williams, 2014) was directly linked to the conductor who displayed the four transformational leadership behaviours as identified by Bass (1999).

Transformational leadership in conducting

Social capability in leadership and leadership style is strongly linked to the conductor of a music group (Carnicer et al., 2015), with this association between the conducting profession and the competence as a leader often used as a model for leaders within other organisations (Cook & Howit, 2012; Dickson et al., 2020; Eichengreen, 1987). Studies in the leadership behaviour of conductors themselves, in contrast to those that use conductors as metaphors for leaders, are not commonplace (Hunt et al., 2004). However, when examining how a symphony orchestra functions as an organization, we can draw parallels and distinctions with other businesses. Just like in conventional organizations, an orchestra requires effective leadership to function cohesively. The conductor plays a central role in this regard, serving as both a symbolic and practical leader. Much like corporate leaders, conductors need to inspire, guide, and motivate their team members to achieve a common goal. The scant literature that is available form consensus that transformational leadership is efficient for the context of the conductor-orchestra relationship (Boerner et al., 2004). An orchestra's artistic quality has a positive outcome in a cooperative climate with a high group mood, a direct result of a conductor's transformational leadership style (Boerner & Von Streit, 2005; Boerner & Von Streit, 2007). Transformational leadership emerged unexpectedly when instrumentalists, administrators and conductors from three major orchestras in the United Kingdom were interviewed (Atik, 1994). Analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed two phases pertaining to the leader-follower relationship, namely a testing phase (authority and trust between parties) and a transactional; phase (the acceptance by both parties to work together to

achieve a common goal). Findings indicated that the players in the orchestra were motivated to perform beyond their expectations, a potential third phase, which could be achieved through transformational leadership punting a shared responsibility with minimal hierarchical boundaries. Although this finding was significant, it was reported that the majority of instrumentalists in this study preferred a strong directive leader who could achieve maximum results within the shortest period of time, despite the interviewees largely dismissing an autocratic leadership style (Atik, 1994). Further research justifies the need for transformational leadership as a precursor to a positive group environment, ultimately uplifting the artistic performance within an orchestra (Boerner & Gebert, 2012). An orchestra is comprised of a diverse group of individuals, playing different instruments, with varying levels of professional experience, age, gender, nationality and tenure, creating varying levels of hierarchical placement within the group. This diversity can influence the orchestra positively or negatively, elevating the importance of the transformation leader (conductor) to promote the former while negating against the latter (Boerner & Gebert, 2012). A quantitative study, which included data obtained from 1535 surveys completed by instrumentalists across 462 non-profit orchestras in Germany, tested the relationship between performance, satisfaction and transformational leadership (Kammerhoff et al., 2019). Using the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1997) as a research tool, results indicate that satisfaction and positive performance outcomes are directly related to a transformational leadership style, advocating its implementation within orchestras.

It is universally accepted that leadership exists across boundaries and within all cultures, yet its application must be viewed as culture specific (Dorfman et al., 1997). This promotes the need to conduct research on leadership within the South African context to determine cultural specific variants of its effects. As transformational leadership may lessen the negative effects of workgroup diversity (Wang & Hsieh, 2013), the findings of such an investigation could prove to be significant, especially within a country as richly diverse as South Africa.

Transformational leadership within the South African context has been linked to the business environment (Keevy & Prumal, 2014), education (Chipunza & Gwarinda, 2010), and government institutions (Mokgolo et al., 2012), but notably there is a lack of research pertaining to the art sector, and more specifically symphony orchestras.

Method

A mixed method approach with an explanatory sequential design was utilised to determine which transformational leadership behaviours of orchestral conductors are preferred by professional instrumentalists in South Africa. Primarily, the transformational leadership traits displayed by conductors in general needed to be established and this was achieved using a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) – an instrument used extensively in research to measure transformational leadership (Amankwaa et al., 2019; Busari et al., 2019; Kammerhoff et al., 2019; Loon et al., 2012). The questionnaire was emailed to the only three professional orchestras in South Africa (Burdukova, 2010) and completed by 47 musicians (n=47). Burdukova's research into the status of orchestras in South Africa shows that in 2010 there were 149 full time employed musicians within these three orchestras. This is in line with this research, which found 148 professional musicians currently playing in permanent orchestras or on an ad-hoc basis. In correspondence with managers and promoters during investigations for this research, it was established that by 2017 one of the three major orchestras in South Africa had restructured, only offering positions on an ad-hoc basis. The target population size may thus be expressed as N=148. Communication via email, social media, phone correspondence and discussions with professional instrumentalists in person yielded 88 contacts who received an initial invitation via email to participate in the research project. This google form provided a thorough explanation of the intended research (with all its procedures and ethical considerations), contained a letter of informed consent, and further required respondents to provide information pertaining to their contact details, their willingness to

participate in the research and finally to specify the instrument they played professionally. 66 respondents completed the google form agreeing to participate, with a final total of 47 completing the MLQ. Respondents completed the MLQ with conductors that they have worked with in general in mind and not any specific conductor. Completed forms indicated that 58.5% of respondents were string players, 26.2% were woodwind players, 13.8% occupied a position in the brass section, and 1.5% were percussionists. Further to this 68% of respondents were female and 32% were male. A similar ratio of instrumental groups is comparable in the various sections of a standard symphony orchestra, indicating a well-represented sample of professional orchestral musicians in South Africa.

Quantitative data collection

47 respondents completed the questionnaire (MLQ-5X) which contains 45 items that identify and measure leadership behaviours and outcomes set by Avolio and Bass (2004). A Rater Form evaluates to what degree leaders are observed to engage in specific leadership behaviours. Using a five-point Likert scale, it was possible to rate the frequency of specific leadership behaviours:

Table 1: Likert Scale Ratings

0	Not at all
1	Once in a while
2	Sometimes
3	Fairly often
4	Frequently, if not always

The rating scale included the measurement of five transformational, two transactional, two passive avoidant, and three outcome scales (Figure 1). Although the MLQ-5X measures other leadership styles, such as transactional and passive-avoidant, this research only focuses on the transformational leadership outcomes and all additional data was not included.

Characteristic	Scale Name	Scale Abbrev	Items
Transformational	Idealized Attributes or Idealized Influence (Attributes)	IA or II(A)	10,18,21,25
Transformational	Idealized Behaviors or Idealized Influence (Behaviors)	IB or II(B)	6,14,23,34
Transformational	Inspirational Motivation	IM	9,13,26,36
Transformational	Intellectual Stimulation	IS	2,8,30,32
Transformational	Individual Consideration	IC	15,19,29,31
Transactional	Contingent Reward	CR	1,11,16,35
Transactional	Mgmt by Exception (Active)	MBEA	4,22,24,27
Passive Avoidant	Mgmt by Exception (Passive)	MBEP	3,12,17,20
Passive Avoidant	Laissez-Faire	LF	5,7,28,33

Characteristic	Scale Name	Scale Abbrev	Items
*Outcomes of Leadrshp	Extra Effort	EE	39,42,44
Outcomes of Leadrshp	Effectiveness	EFF	37,40,43,45
Outcomes of Leadrshp	Satisfaction	SAT	38,41

*As the term connotes, the Outcomes of Leadership are not Leadership styles, rather they are outcomes or results of leadership behavior.

Figure 1: Leadership Styles and Outcomes Measured by the MLQ-5X

Source: Avolio and Bass (2004)

The MLQ-5X is an accepted standard instrument for assessing transformational leadership behaviour, has been translated into numerous languages (Rowald, 2005), and revised to insure and improve its construct validity (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The Transform System by Mindgarden Inc. is an online survey hosting and analysis platform, which was utilised to simplify and analyse the data collected from the questionnaires. Through a licensing agreement, the questionnaire (with systematic instructions on how to complete the MLQ-5X Rater Form) was emailed directly to respondents.

Quantitative data analysis

The raw data and scale scores received by the 47 respondents was provided in a .csv file through the Transform System online hosting platform. To interpret these results, a MLQ Group Report was purchased, which provided aggregate scores, standard deviations, comparisons to universal norms, and the most frequently observed transformational leadership behaviours. Aggregate scores were compared to universal norms (27285 completed MLQs) to align the frequency of transformational leadership behaviours displayed by orchestral conductors in accordance to that of leaders in a multitude of fields and professions. Thereafter, standard deviations were inspected to determine the accuracy of the results obtained from the 47 respondents. The variation in response to the MLQ measured the group standard deviations of the frequency ratings for the leadership scales and outcomes. All five transformational leadership behaviours had a standard deviation of between 0.7 and 0.8 from the norm. The most frequently displayed transformational leadership sub-behaviours were inspected and aligned to the results of the top three most displayed overall transformational leadership behaviours. These behaviours were then compared to a theoretical analysis of each to set up a related interview schedule to guide the qualitative phase of this research.

Qualitative procedures

An interview schedule was created and informed by data retrieved from the MLQ, which was designed to gain further insight into the views of participants. Using a purposive sampling strategy, five participants, drawn from the respondents in the quantitative phase, were selected by the researchers to partake in semi-structured interviews.

Table 2

Participant and Interview Information

Pseudonym Allocated	Instrument	Male/Female	Length of Interview
Participant 1	Violin	Male	39’47”
Participant 2	Percussion	Female	38’22”
Participant 3	Viola	Female	33’34”
Participant 4	Trumpet	Male	27’25”
Participant 5	Oboe	Male	41’24”

Respondents initially indicated if they were willing to participate in interviews, and from this list, the researchers selected three males and two females representing different instrumental sections within the orchestra. Interviews lasted between 28 and 42 minutes and pseudonyms were assigned to keep the identity of the participants confidential.

Qualitative data collection

The researchers opted to conduct semi-structured interviews as to allow more freedom in the responses from the participants. The quantitative part of this research was initiated to determine the transformational leadership behaviours presented by orchestral conductors, whereas the qualitative phase aimed at understanding the preferences of these qualities as expressed by the instrumentalists. Open-ended questions were set up by the researchers prior to the interviews and were informed by the quantitative data. Participants were asked to complete a consent form, which duly outlined the purpose and risks of their involvement and noted their rights to withdraw from the research at any time. All interviews were conducted online via a conferencing platform as the data collection took place during the Covid-19 pandemic. All interviews were recorded and notes were made during each interview allowing for follow up

questions, followed by observations and reflections at the conclusion. Verbatim transcriptions were made of all interviews (conducted in English) using Otter.ai software. Interviews were extensively listened to while checking the transcriptions with any and all errata fixed manually. All transcriptions were returned to participants for member checking where additions and or corrections were made. Participants were asked to verify that the transcriptions reflected their views honestly.

Data analysis

Using qualitative content analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), it was possible to sort the data into themes and sub-themes, while integrating the responses into the text of the report. Coding was used to sort the data into categories using a set of identifying labels (Kumar, 2014), which was followed by an in-depth discussion of the interconnectedness of the themes which led to conclusions being drawn. All themes and secondary themes were related to the transformational leadership behaviours and sub-behaviours that were observed in orchestral conductors.

The authors are satisfied with the validity of the data retrieved from both data sets. The quantitative data was obtained using a trusted research instrument that had been adapted and used for decades (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The MLQ-5X has been used in numerous South African studies (Garg & Ramjee, 2013; Ristow et al., 1999; Van Jaarsveld et al., 2019) meaning it had been tested across different cultural landscapes. The validity of the qualitative data was established using four constructs; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which included member-checking procedures, recording interviews and making verbatim transcripts and constantly reading and making notes of the data. The authors do acknowledge that bias is a part of research although procedures were followed to minimise bias on their part.

The authors needed to purchase a licence to legally use the MLQ-5X Rater Form as part of the data collection process. There was no cost incurred by the respondents/participants, neither were they compensated for their involvement. Consent was received prior to the collection of data and involvement in this study was voluntary. Personal information of all contributors remained confidential and this research contains no identifying information of those involved. As the data was collected during the Covid-19 pandemic, all communication took place virtually and thus there were no medical risks associated with participation.

Results

Data was obtained using the MLQ as a research tool, surveying 47 professional South African musicians. These results, which determine transformational leadership traits displayed by orchestral conductors within South Africa, informed the semi-structured interview schedule used to gather further qualitative data. The MLQ-5X provided the results of the quantitative data through a Group Report, measuring five main leadership qualities as well as their sub-behaviours. The main groups, known as the five "I's" are; Idealised Influence – Attributes (IIA) referred to as *Builds Trust;* Idealised Influence – Behaviours (IIB) referred to as *Acts with Integrity*; Inspirational Motivation (IM) referred to as *Encourages Others*; Intellectual Stimulation (IS) referred to as *Encourages Innovative Thinking*; and Individualised Consideration (IC) referred to as *Coaches and Develops People.* A Likert scale, ranging from 0 (no evidence of a conductor displaying a certain behaviour), to 4 (significant evidence of a specific leadership behaviour being displayed often, if not always) was used to rate all of these items to determine which qualities of transformational leadership are displayed by orchestral conductors. Data collected from respondents determines the group agreement by measuring standard deviations (ranging from 0.0 to 3.0), with lower deviations indicating a higher group agreement. The five "I's" all had a standard deviation less than 1.0 ($SD<1.0$), indicating that all five leadership behaviours are displayed by orchestral conductors.

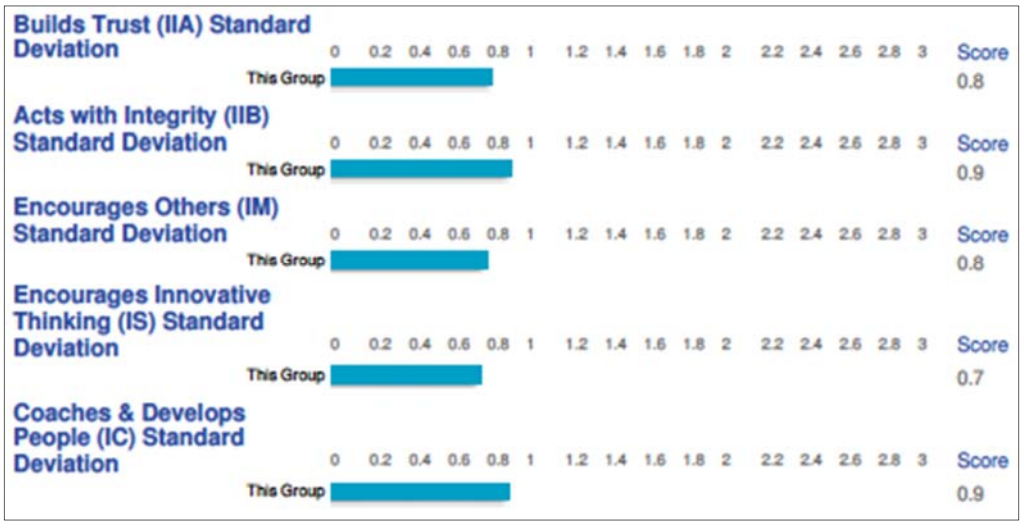

Figure 2: Standard Deviations of Respondents

The deviations of respondents (Figure 1) were further compared with universal norms (Figure 2), to establish the frequency of observed transformational leadership behaviours. Two transformational leadership behaviours are observed at a significantly lower frequency than the universal norms (27 285 completed raters), with *Encourages Innovative Thinking* (IS) and *Coaches and Develops People* (IC) scoring 1.0 and 0.8 respectively and have thus been excluded from the research. The remaining three had deviations of 0.4 or less (Figure 2).

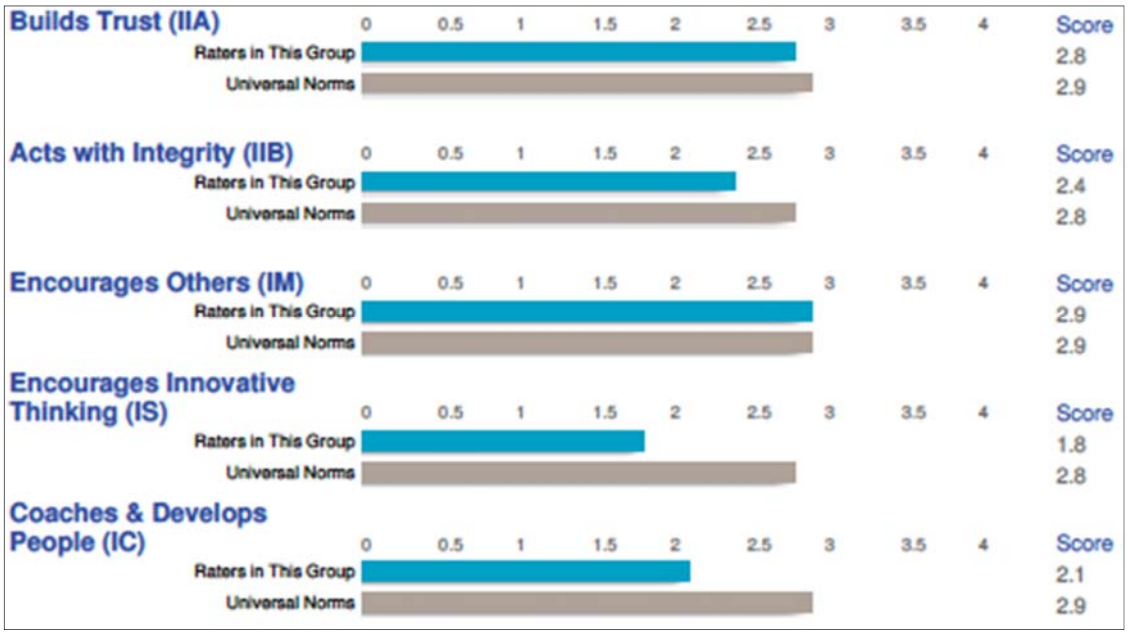

Figure 3: Comparisons with Universal Norms

Each of the remaining groups contain four sub-behaviours, totalling 12 items related to transformational leadership, and are represented in Figures 3-5 below:

Builds Trust (IIA)

Score	Scale	Item
3.4	Builds Trust (IIA)	Displays a sense of power and confidence
2.7	Builds Trust (IIA)	Acts in ways that builds my respect
2.6	Builds Trust (IIA)	Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group
2.6	Builds Trust (IIA)	Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her

Figure 4: Builds Trust (IIA), Individual Items Measured

Encourages Others (IM)

Score	Scale	Item
3.1	Encourages Others (IM)	Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved
2.9	Encourages Others (IM)	Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished
2.8	Encourages Others (IM)	Talks optimistically about the future
2.5	Encourages Others (IM)	Articulates a compelling vision of the future

Figure 5: Encourages Others (IM), Individual Items Measured

Acts with Integrity (IIB)

Score	Scale	Item
2.8	Acts with Integrity (IIB)	Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission
2.4	Acts with Integrity (IIB)	Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions
2.2	Acts with Integrity (IIB)	Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose
1.9	Acts with Integrity (IIB)	Talks about their most important values and beliefs

Figure 6: Acts with Integrity (IIB), Individual Items Measured

The MLQ Group Report has set criteria for determining the presence of transformational leadership as observed by the respondents. These include a standard deviation of less than 1.0 (SD<1.0) and that results need to be compared to universal norms. Finally, the sub-behaviours need to be listed in the top 10 most frequently observed transformational leadership behaviours. Table 2 below indicates which sub-behaviours meet the criteria, as well as those that fall short and therefore are excluded from this research.

Table 3: Observed Relevant Transformational Leadership Sub-behaviours

Transformational Leadership Sub-behaviours	**Meets Criteria**
Builds Trust (IIA)	
Displays a sense of power and confidence	Yes
Acts in ways that builds my respect	Yes
Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group	Yes
Instils pride in me for being associated with him/her	No
Acts with Integrity (IIB)	
Emphasises the importance of having a collective sense of mission	Yes
Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions	No
Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose	No
Talks about their most important values and beliefs	No
Encourages Others (IM)	
Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved	Yes
Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	Yes
Talks Optimistically about the future	Yes
Articulates a compelling vision of the future	Yes

Eight sub-behaviours linked to three transformational leadership behaviours meet all the criteria to be included in the results of this study. This data collected from the respondents helped inform the semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix A), which formed part of the qualitative phase of the research. Behaviours and sub-behaviours were consequently utilised to

identify and dissect the qualitative data obtained from participants that formed part of the second phase of the research, and are displayed below (Table 3):

Table 4: Main and Secondary Themes

Main Themes	**Secondary Themes**
I. Builds Trust (IIA)	i. Displays a sense of power and confidence
	ii. Acts in a way that builds my respect
	iii. Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group
II. Acts with Integrity (IIB)	i. Emphasises the importance of having a collective sense of mission
III. Encourages Others (IM)	i. Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved
	ii. Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished
	iii. Talks Optimistically about the future
	iv. Articulates a compelling vision of the future

Five interviews were conducted and the researchers were satisfied that the data collected was sufficient for this phase of the study as reoccurring themes were constantly emerging and thus saturating the findings. Verbatim quotes were collated and grouped within the themes and sub-themes as presented in Table 3 above. Evidence from these interviews (by means of verbatim quotes) are combined within the discussion section of this article to substantiate the findings.

Discussion

The first observed transformational leadership behaviour, *Building Trust,* received an aggregate score of 2.8, which is similar to the findings of a study by Wood (2010), reporting a combined score of 2.6 for the same behaviour as expressed by 390 American musicians rating

the leadership behaviours of orchestral conductors. *Display a sense of power and confidence* (3.4) is the most observed sub-behaviour as rated on the MLQ, substantiated by participants commenting on it being "extremely important" and "absolutely the most important thing". Leaders who exercise authority without being threatening are more effective as these individuals "increase their personal power by empowering others in the organization" (Fuqua, 2000, p. 4). This process of negotiation between conductor and musician is ongoing (Koivunen & Wennes, 2011) with constant resistance against a conductor who pushes "absolute authority" (Adenot, 2015, p. 51). Interview data supports this: "The conductor, actually, should be more of a collaborator with his colleagues and works in respect with the orchestra rather than just somebody that pushes down his authority". Conductors display confidence when they have a high degree of knowledge (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991), continually working to increase their expertise, which enhances their effectiveness (Fuqua et al., 2000). Participants in the interviews are of the belief that a conductor displaying confidence will "deliver a better product" and that this confidence is "transferred to the orchestra". In contrast to these findings, Engels (2018) reported no link between transformational leadership and improved artistic quality. This study, however, shows evidence of a positive connection between the artistic output of an orchestra and the transformational leadership style of the conductor.

The second sub-behaviour, *acts in a way that builds respect*, scored 2.7 on the MLQ, a notion supported in the qualitative data with participants viewing respect as a precursor to artistic success. Participants quantified respect from a conductor on two main principals: knowing the music and greeting them before the start of rehearsals. Although the latter might seem superfluous to mention, interview data shows that orchestral conductors ignoring instrumentalists is a common occurrence, with some seeing this omission as conductors who portray themselves to be too "high and mighty", while others added they have simply been "ignored". Effective leadership, especially within creative groups, is a direct result of the

respect shown between the leader and his followers and this mutual understanding is a "prerequisite of the creative process and [its] success" (Abfalter, 2013, p. 301). An orchestra's ability to produce high artistic quality is directly related to transformational leadership if a group mood is high (Boerner & Gebert, 2012). One participant poignantly said: "If you are able to get an orchestra behind you, and have their respect, you can do amazing work with an orchestra".

Going beyond self-interest for the good of the group (2.6) is a frequently observed leadership sub-behaviour with participants commenting on conductors needing to become "servants of the music". The relationship between the conductor and instrumentalists is damaged if self-interest intercepts the leaders' ability to rehearse meticulously and honour the composer's wishes. Self-interest is a "key characteristic of destructive leadership" (Schmid et al., 1403) and conductors who act with self-interest rather than as part of a team cause disunity in an orchestra. Participants commented on being "more open to new musical ideas" and willing to "buy in" to the conductors proposals if integrity was at the forefront of the music making process. "Honesty and integrity are virtues in all individuals, but have special significance for leaders" (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 53), a notion well supported within the interview data collected.

Acting with integrity (2.4) is a transformational leadership behaviour that has one sub-behaviours relevant to this study namely *placing an emphasis on the importance of a collective sense of mission* (2.8). "Teamwork" was a common thread expressed by the participants in the study and a precursor to achieve a common goal. Several participants observed that this collective sense of mission was not always verbal, but achieved through gesture, a finding well supported in literature (Bathurst & Cain, 2013; Koivunen & Wennes, 2011; Watson, 2012; Zel & Onay, 2012). The orchestral musicians can view a conductor who talks too much as incompetent (Adenot 2015). The majority of participants linked a collective sense of mission

to the output of ensemble playing, which relates to the interconnection of phrases and harmonies between the various instrumental sections within the orchestra. To achieve maximum artistic output, the musicians need to know and have a thorough and collective understanding of the music, which results in more enjoyment. Participants linked this tight ensemble playing to a "sense of camaraderie" and a precursor for them to reach a "common goal". Participants did point out aspects within the unique South African context, which made striving towards a common goal challenging. Some instrumentalists have held prominent positions in orchestras for decades and are reluctant to think or adopt "new ideas", with one participant recalling a concertmaster "refusing to cooperate", creating a very "sour" environment. Such conflicting beliefs need to be negotiated by transformational leaders in order to maintain a sense of satisfaction amongst musicians (Kammerhoff et al., 2019). This initial power play between conductors and instrumentalists will determine the level of success only once leaders "signal their readiness to build trustworthy and respectful relationships with musicians" (Khodaykov, 2014, p. 64). South African instrumentalists observe the importance of a collective mission as a necessary aspect to performing the music better, although most participants expressed that this transformational leadership behaviour can be approached in a more subtle manner.

Encouraging others (2.9) is the most significant transformational leadership behaviour as quantified by the data received from the respondents. The data provided evidence of four additional sub-behaviours displayed by South African conductors and experienced by instrumentalists: e*xpressing confidence that goals will be achieved*; *talking enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished*; *talking optimistically about the future* and *articulating a compelling vision of the future.*

Conductors who *express their confidence in goals being achieved* (3.1) instil both excitement and encouragement in the players equating to more than a mere business transaction. Participants spoke of being placed in the "ethereal realm" when conductors challenged and encouraged them to achieve difficult yet attainable goals, further adding that positive feedback from the conductor regarding the orchestra's progress added to the "buy in" of the players. Literature supports the idea of conductors creating a "forward looking atmosphere" (Wis, 2002, p. 22), while simultaneously working towards achieving maximum potential from the players. Confidence in the players should be expressed both on and off stage for the orchestra to move to a realm of true artistry. Participants revealed their desire to move from mere contracted players to artists that have the opportunity to "create magic" on stage and this can be achieved by the conductors' belief in their abilities and the realisation of achieving a common goal. Participants were also quick to point out that the converse is true, and the "absence of confidence that goals will be achieved, on or off stage, creates panic".

Talking enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished (2.9) is a leadership sub-behaviour frequently observed amongst South African instrumentalists. Enthusiasm displayed by orchestral conductors in rehearsals and concerts is infectious and will pass onto every member of the group (Zel & Onay, 2012), elevating the entire groups level of motivation (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1996). Participants agreed with these findings, but were quick to add that an overenthusiastic conductor may be viewed as "disingenuous" or even "patronising". Such leaders may even exhaust their followers (Jacobson & Staniok, 2020), leading to an artistic product that lacks creativity and engagement (Orsini & Rodrigues, 2020).

Participants described the transformational leader who *talks optimistically about the future* 2.8), as one who is both "palpable" and "rubs off on the orchestra". Both qualitative and quantitative data support the importance of this leadership sub-behaviour, a notion reinforced

in literature. Finnish musicians see optimism as an expected leadership trait in a conductor and opt to be led by someone who genuinely is aware of their strengths and knowledge to enhance their overall output (Lind, 2016). Data again points to the overly optimistic conductor as one that can come across as false, creating a negative environment. Participants view their profession as a "true and noble craft" and do not require an overzealous conductor to trump the level of "earnestness required". The converse is also true, for a conductor who remains neutral or shows a lack of optimism can create an environment that is stale, effecting both the productivity and artistry of rehearsals and performances. A conductor's behaviour should be optimistic, but void of any pretence or insincerity.

Articulating a compelling vision of the future (2.8) is a prevalent transformational leadership sub-behaviour, with participants stating that an "inspiring vision" is necessary to create a "musical product that is worthwhile". An important part of a conductor's role is to create an environment that is both compelling from an artistic and organisation viewpoint which will inspire followers (Zel & Onay, 2012). The conductor-musician relationship is cooperative with members needing to believe in the vision and direction of the leader, while contributing their technical expertise and creative abilities to achieve this shared goal (Hunt et al., 2004). Participants stated the importance of the conductor's belief in their abilities to "achieve the desired musical vision", adding that the ensemble can "lose sight of the conductor's intentions", if this direction is ambiguous. Communication can be both verbal or through effective gesture, as participants commented on the importance of "body language" in understanding and striving towards a common vision. In the South African context, professional instrumentalists pointed out the conundrum of always working with guest directors as opposed to a resident employee, making a "future vision" for the ensemble nonsensical, as conductors were not permanently contracted. This cyclical occurrence results in limited interactions, eliminating the opportunity for a relationship to manifest between the orchestra and conductor. Conductors thus have the

"unenviable task of having to immediately engage with the musicians, making them believe in their vision", despite both parties knowing very little about the other, as documented in interviews by the participants. Guest conductors are required to give a credible performance from the onset, investing a far greater deal in impressing management than a resident music director does. This relationship between the two entities is often short term with an uncertain future (Khodaykov, 2014). Although data substantiates the significance of articulating a compelling vision for an orchestra, participants verbalised the difficult task guest conductor's face, especially in the South African context.

Conclusion

This research provides evidence in support of the preference of two transformational leadership behaviours displayed by orchestral conductors due to their positive effects as expressed by professional musicians within the South African context : Idealised Influence – Attributes (IIA) and Inspirational Motivation (IM). The investigation into this phenomenon is a first of its kind in South Africa, adding to the limited literature that exists on transformational leadership within the arts sector, specifically pertaining to the orchestral conductor as leader. Insights into the preferences of musicians can be meaningful to conductors as they continue to navigate environments that are diverse and continuously adapting. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study. First and foremost, our research focused exclusively on the application of transformational leadership theory. While this approach allowed us to delve deeply into the intricate subject matter, future research could benefit from exploring other leadership theories within the same context. Leadership is a multifaceted concept, and different theories may shed additional light on the dynamics of orchestral leadership. Data pertaining to both preferred and unwanted behaviours could assist conductors in structuring and executing rehearsals in a manner that will lead to optimal results. The researchers are aware that a greater sample size would enhance and enrich these findings, yet argue that within the context of South

African professional orchestras, data obtained for this study was sufficient. Future research could include a broader sample size, or investigate the roles conductors play in amateur and educational orchestras within schools, universities and communities.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. Why do you think a conductor needs leadership skills?
2. In your opinion, what personal traits in a conductor are beneficial to the success of the orchestra?
3. To what extent do you believe the conductor influences the success or failure of an orchestra? Elaborate.
4. What personal traits displayed by conductors could negatively affect you as orchestral musician?
5. Why do you think it is important for conductors to set an example?
6. Why should conductors of professional orchestras share their vision with the group?
7. Why is it important for the conductor to assist individual orchestral musicians during rehearsals?
8. How should conductors challenge musicians to perform better?