

THE EFFECT OF CHOIR LEADER INTERVENTIONS ON SINGERS' MORALE AND ATTAINMENT

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INTRODUCTION

- About me
- The research topic
- Purpose, aims and objectives
- What to expect

Singers



Why do we sing?

What do we want?

Conductors



What do I want?

What can I do?

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Narrative Literature Review
- Builds on and develops an earlier literature review¹
- Examines Motivation Theory as it relates to singing
 - Established branch of Psychology²
 - Why people do things
 - What makes them succeed
 - Widely used in Education³ and Business⁴
 - Some studies for instrumentalists and professionals
 - Self-determination theory⁵
 - Attribution theory⁶
 - Gap in literature for choirs and singing students, which the study aims to address
 - “A vast array of theoretical perspectives that are relatively disjointed”⁷



1. (Fayle, 2023)
2. (Wigfield and Koenka, 2020)
3. (Evans, 2015)
4. (Derfler-Rozin and Pitesa, 2021)
5. (Azharabu et al., 2021)
6. (Staufer, 2018)
7. (Evans, 2015, p. 65)

11 INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES FOR CONDUCTORS

Opportunities to
Perform

Choir
Goals⁸

Singer
Goals

Time
Pressure

Flow⁹
Repertoire

Singer Self-
Perception¹¹

Elitism

Intrinsic Motivators¹⁰

Musical
Experience

Technical
Complexity¹²

- 8. (Caliga, 2020)
- 9. (Theorell et al., 2023)
- 10. (Pendergast, 2023)
- 11. (Juan-Morera et al., 2023)
- 12. (Gupta, Li and Goto, 2022)

METHODS

- Constructivist/Pragmatist lens¹³
- Mixed methods
 - Qualitative data from interviews¹⁴
 - Quantitative data from surveys¹⁵
- Interviews coded
 - In vivo coding with 3 passes¹⁶
 - Structured around 11 techniques
- Surveys
 - Self-directed questionnaires using 5-point Likert scale¹⁷
 - Compared means¹⁸
 - Normalised results



- 13. (Sundin and Johannisson, 2005)
- 14. (Opdenakker, 2006)
- 15. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017)
- 16. (Saldana, 2016)
- 17. (Allen and Seaman, 2007)
- 18. (Norman, 2010)

STUDY PHASES

Study Phases

1. Literature Review produced 11 Intervention Techniques
2. Selected Study Choir and Control Group
3. Pre-study interview with Study Choir Conductor
4. Pre-study survey to set baseline
5. Field study using Intervention Techniques
6. Interviews with three other conductors
7. Post-study survey to measure changes
8. Post-study interview with Study Choir Conductor



FIELD STUDY

CHESTER CATHEDRAL CHOIRS



Cathedral Music Department

- Three full-time organists
- Two choirs
- Both sing services every week

Study Group – Nave Choir

- Auditioned volunteer choir

Control Group – Cathedral Choir Lay Clerks

- Professional singers

Same conductor, venue and repertoire

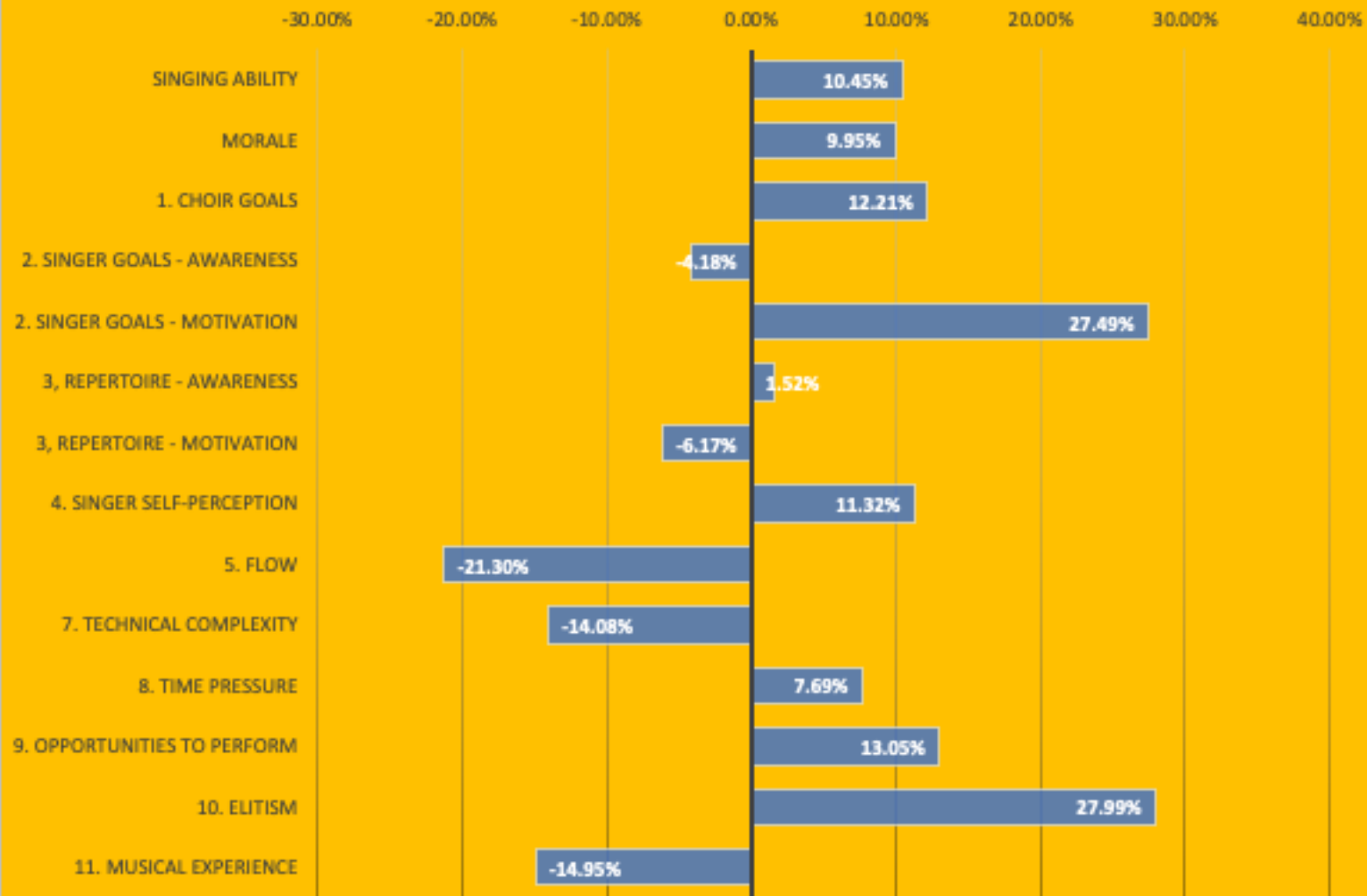
ETHICS

- The study passed the UWTSD Ethical Review
- The participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and provided informed consent before participating
- Data privacy concerns
 - Interview transcripts and Survey responses
 - Redacted to remove data that might identify respondent or others
 - Anonymous
 - Data stored securely according to GDPR¹⁹
- Agreed to exclude children
- Consulted closely with conductor throughout to ensure techniques did no damage
- Concern about choir members who didn't participate in surveys



19. (Laybats and Davies, 2018)

Change in survey results following study



FINDINGS



Motivation Category	Topic	Mentions
3. Repertoire	Suggestions	5
1. Choir Goals	Enjoyment	4
2. Singer Goals	Growth	4
2. Singer Goals	Leadership	4
5. Flow	Location	4
7. Technical Complexity	Listen	4
9. Performance opportunity	Concerts	4
11. Musical Background	Positive	4
11. Musical Background	Time pressure	3
11. Musical Background	Inclusion	3
11. Musical Background	Variety	3
11. Musical Background	Social	3
4. Singer Self-Perception	Selective	3
4. Singer Self-Perception	Positive message	3
4. Singer Self-Perception	Shared responsibility	3
6. Intrinsic Motivators	Positive	3
6. Intrinsic Motivators	Ownership	3
8. Time pressure	Plan	3
8. Time pressure	Change rarely	3
8. Time pressure	Church visits	3
8. Time pressure	Lack of state school singing	3

INTERVIEW CODING

“Mentions” records in how many of the five interviews the theme was raised by the conductor

Used during analysis of survey results for each Intervention Technique

In vivo coding used to extract themes from the vocabulary used during the interviews²⁰

“I do try and take into consideration their wishes, because it makes for, you know, a happy choir, and they know that they're being listened to”

20. (Khamung, Miller and Hsu, 2022)

ANALYSIS

- The general survey results supported the Hypothesis
- Results could have been stronger without the Intervention Techniques that produced a negative result
 - Repertoire, Flow, Technical Complexity, Musical Experience
 - Interviews suggest these may be starting to work, but need more time
- Flow is critical and underestimated by conductors
 - Core mechanism enabling life satisfaction, positivity, emotional connection while making music²¹
 - Something good that just happens, "a perfect storm of, you know, music that we use it that's achievable for us to do really well"
- Technical Complexity needs guarding against²²
- Recognising Singer Goals and fighting Elitism were very effective

21. (Koehler et al., 2021)
22. (Radu-Giurgiu, 2023)

LIMITATIONS

- Small sample size²³
- Cathedral choir not typical
- Professional singers in control group²⁴
- Only time to measure motivation, not impact
 - Retention, attainment, recruitment
- Intervention Techniques designed for study choir may not be generally applicable
- Insider research bias²⁵



23. (Ulitzsch, Lüdtke and Robitzsch, 2021)

24. (Appelgren *et al.*, 2019)

25. (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2013)



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further research
 - Large-scale study
 - Focus group of experienced conductors to refine Intervention Techniques
 - Include different choir types
 - Chamber group
 - Choral Society
 - Community Choir
 - Singing for Health Choir

IMPACT

- The study choir has benefitted from the study
 - Improved confidence and singing ability
 - Increased motivation
- The interviewees have acquired some understanding of Motivation Theory as it applies to their practice
- The study conductor has a new set of techniques he can use with any choir
- Prior research suggests this will improve retention, attainment and recruitment over time²⁶
- Concepts explored are relevant to all singing leaders
- Eventually, it could help get more people singing
 - Benefits for professional practices
 - General health and well-being benefits for society²⁷

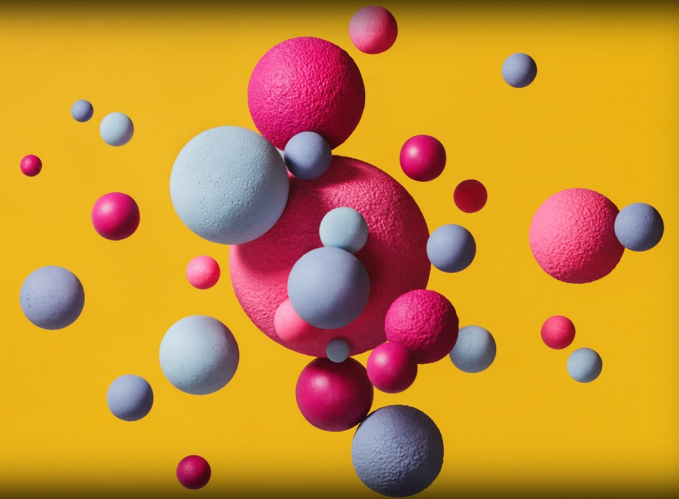


26. (Fayle, 2023)

27. (Yi and Kim, 2023)

CONCLUSION

- Focus on motivation can bring measurable benefits to a choir
- Potential for future research
- Possibility to build a 'Motivation Toolkit' for singing leaders
 - Introduction to Motivation Theory
 - Set of techniques to select and use
 - Access to survey
 - Collect more responses over time to build large body of evidence
- Everybody had fun!



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