

Chapter 6 – Analysis and Findings

This study explores UK-based choral singers' expectations of choral leadership, with particular reference to the voice-centred aspect of this role. The previous chapter outlined a bespoke methodology which was created for this project, pragmatically combining a set of complementary data gathering methods and analytical processes to produce a research design capable of responding to the stated research questions. This chapter will begin by outlining the procedure followed for both phases of data analysis. Following this, findings will be presented as responses to each of the study's research questions.

6.1 Analytical procedure

The following sections will outline the procedure followed in analysing the data, beginning in phase 1 using the job advert sample. Selected methodologically relevant results of the job advert analysis will be presented as the justification for the construction of a codebook used in phase 2 of data analysis. The procedure followed in phase 2 in analysing the singer survey will then be outlined.

6.1.1 Job Adverts - Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The procedure for the Reflexive Thematic Analysis was based upon Braun & Clarke's Reflexive TA process as outlined in their 2006 paper *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology* (Braun & Clarke, 2006), along with their more recent work in this area, entitled *One size fits*

all? What Counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? (Braun & Clarke, 2020b).

The first step in analysis was familiarisation with the data during repeated readings of the job adverts. During the familiarisation phase, notes were made of any observations relating to patterns or interesting features present in the data set. These observations were then used to formulate an initial list of possible codes. During the process of analysis, hard copies of the job adverts were used during initial readings of the data. Following this, the text from the adverts was copied into an Excel spreadsheet to be used during the coding and recoding process. Individual adverts were organised into separate columns across the top of the spreadsheet, and codes were listed in a column on the left-hand side of the spreadsheet. This allowed units of code to be easily copied and pasted from each advert into a corresponding code box. This allowed for the easy viewing and cross-referencing of units of code and their original context in the adverts. It also allowed units of text to be moved easily between codes and for the merging/dividing of codes as the data was reinterpreted during an iterative process of reading and rereading the data set as a whole. Using a pragmatic approach, during coding an attempt was made to move beyond a semantic level of analysis to a deeper, latent level of data interpretation. It was deemed pragmatically appropriate for prior experience of research and practice to be used in influencing the reading of the job adverts in order to move to this deeper, latent level of interpretation. This is seen in the multi-layered coding hierarchy produced as a result of the analysis (see Appendix).

After the process of coding and recoding was complete and the final list of codes had been produced, the code list was reviewed and common ground between sets of codes was sought. These sets were grouped, labelled as themes and descriptions of each theme were written. Three themes were generated, *Job focused information*, *Choir focused information* and *Candidate focused information*. A table showing the hierarchy of coding including the lower level sub-codes for this analysis can be found in the Appendix (see p.360). The first two meta-themes related to logistical demands made in the job advert (e.g., location) and descriptions of the choirs writing the job adverts and were therefore rejected for further use in the study. *Candidate focused information*, was selected for use in the development and analysis of the singer survey data set. This decision was justified in relation to the study's research questions which explore singers' expectations of choral leaders. Below, Figure 14 shows an extract from this table, displaying the *Candidate focused information* meta-theme:

Meta-theme	Theme	Code	Sub-codes											
Candidate focused information	Skills	Skills/capabilities/ knowledge	Keyboard			Conducting			Musical			Vocal		
		Experience	Experience required (general)	Conducting	Vocal	Repertoire	Musical experience	Looking for experience	Performance	Community / outreach work	Musical collaboration			
		Qualifications	'Suitably' qualified		Degree or diploma in music/ conducting		Vocal qualification		Teaching qualification	Professional / amateur				
		Interpersonal/ communication skills	Work/ communicate well with the group			Communication style		Sociable/ approachable			Verbal / written skills			
	Influence	Contacts/network	Access to a network of musicians				Work with / develop key contacts for the choir				Opportunity to make new contacts			
		Leadership	Positive leadership	Inspiring		Support		Motivating		Leading (general mentions)	Calm & confident style	Management		
			Authoritative	Vision		Standards		Choir's goals		Collaboration	Development	Figurehead		
	Personal qualities	Commitment	Make long-term commitment to choir				Not be over-committed elsewhere				Dedication to the choir			
		Personality Traits	Sense of humour	Energetic / Enthusiastic	Patience/ Support	Creative	Ambitious	Friendly	Engaging	Charisma	Reliable/ organised	Willing to reflect		
		Values (Candidate)	Inclusive / diversity			Dedication to each singer			Safeguarding (vocal & general)			Equal opportunities		

Figure 1 - Candidate focused meta-theme generated during job advert analysis

The following section of this chapter will now describe the procedure followed in analysing the singer survey, using the results of the job advert analysis as a codebook for data analysis.

6.1.2 Singer Survey - Analytical procedure and construction of codebook

The analysis of the singer survey follows the structure of the survey by firstly focusing on expectations of the role of the choral leader in general, and secondly on specifically the voice-related aspects of the role.

The results of the job advert analysis shown above in Figure 14 related more to expectations of the role of the choral leader generally and less specifically about the voice-related aspects of the role. It was therefore decided that it would be appropriate to continue with the planned Codebook TA of the role-related data, but then to analyse the voice-related data with an inductive Reflexive TA as this analysis could not be based upon previous results to generate a codebook. Again, in both forms of TA, the analysis aimed for a latent level of interpretation, drawing on prior experience as a guide in this process.

6.1.2.1 Codebook TA of role-related data

The first step of the analysis was to create a codebook for use as a framework for the process. This was constructed based on the results of the job advert analysis in the following way. Firstly, the themes and codes relating to “candidate focused information” (see Figure 14, p.168) were placed in the codebook. On reviewing the codebook, it was decided that the codes within the leadership/influence theme were too shallow to be useful in analysis of the leadership styles/attributes of such a large data set, particularly as this thesis focuses specifically on expectations of the role of a choral *leader*, within a leadership theory framework. Therefore, this section of the codebook was expanded to examine participants’ conception of the choral leader’s style in greater detail. This was also critical in responding to the sub-research-question relating to leadership in a choral context.

As shown above in Figure 14, the ‘leadership’ code is made up of 14 sub-codes: Positive; Inspiring; Support; Motivating; Leading/directing (general); Calm & Confident; Management;

Authoritative; Vision; Standards; Choir's Goals; Collaboration; Developing; and Figurehead.

Figure 15 (below) shows each of these sub-codes mapped onto Avery's four paradigms of leadership. The table outlines: each of the 4 leadership paradigms; which paradigm each code corresponds to; and indicates the total number of data units in each code found within the job advert data set.

		Classical	Transactional	Visionary	Organic
Avery's description of the 4 leadership paradigms	Management or leadership	Management	Management	Leadership	Leadership
	Key Players	Leader	Leader, minimal input from followers	Leader. High input from followers	Leader or followers
	Sources of leader power	Position, reward coercion, expert, referent, ownership	Position, reward, coercion, interpersonal skills, negotiated agreements	Position, referent, expert, personal vision, followers' emotions, charisma.	Group Power, expertise, collaboration, sharing power, member attributions.
	Decision making	Leader decides alone	Leader consults, then makes decision	Leader collaborates	Mutual decisions
Leadership code from adverts					
Positive				10	
Inspiring				17	
Support			4	4	
Motivating			8	8	
Leading/directing (general)		22	22	22	
Calm & Confident		4	4	4	4
Management		2	2		
Authoritative		4	4		
Vision				5	
Standards		6	6	6	6
Choir's Goals				5	5
Collaboration				5	5
Developing			12	12	
Figurehead		3			
Total units of code in paradigm found in job advert data set		41	62	98	20

Figure 2 - Mapping of sub codes from 'Leadership' code onto Avery's 4 paradigms of leadership

Further analysis of these leadership-related codes generated insight into what type of leadership choirs are seeking from their choral leaders. Firstly, the data suggested that whilst there are a variety of leadership styles sought by choirs, leadership which fits into the Visionary paradigm is most popular. This is demonstrated in Figure 16, below:

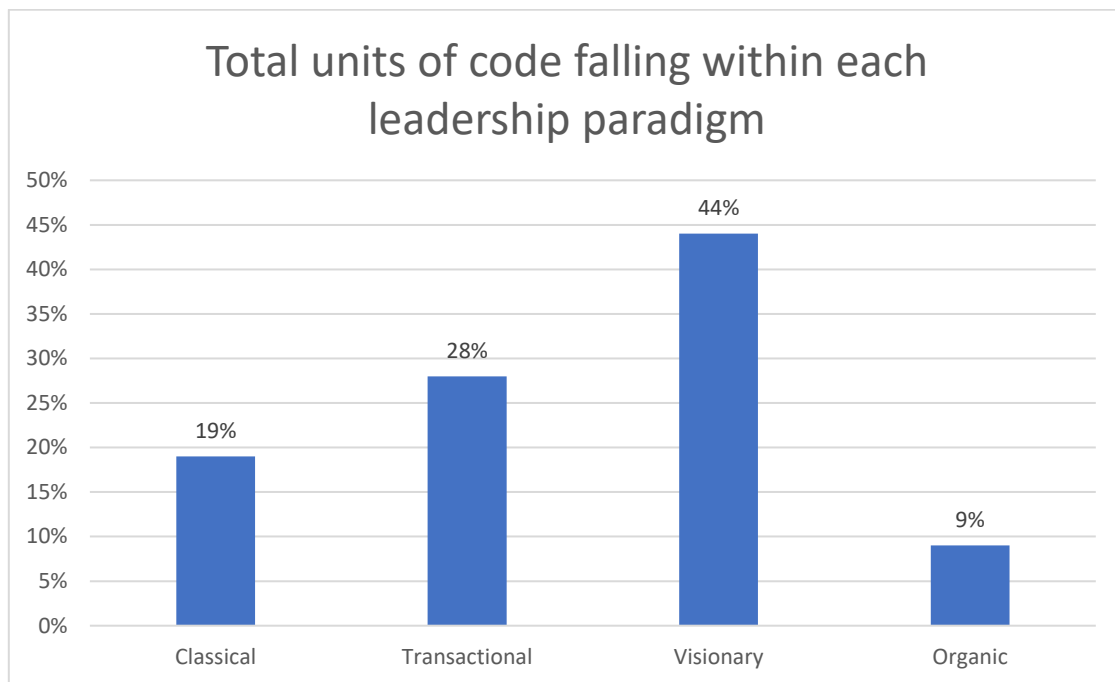


Figure 3 - Graph displaying total number of units of code from 'Leadership' code in job advert analysis matching each paradigm of leadership

Consequently, the "leadership" section of the codebook with additional codes falling within the Visionary paradigm was enhanced. As outlined in the literature review, Bass' Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM) (Bass & Riggio, 2006) is used as the basis for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, an assessment of leadership styles with a focus on distinguishing Transformational Leadership (the most widely researched theory of leadership falling within the Visionary paradigm) from Transactional and absent leadership styles. Nine styles of leadership identified in the FRLM were therefore added to the codebook. These were: Idealised Influence (attributed); Idealised Influence; (behaviours); Inspirational Motivation;

Intellectual Stimulation; Individual Consideration; Contingent Reward; Management By Exception (Active); Management By Exception (Passive); and Laissez-Faire Leadership (*Ibid.*).

After adding the FRLM codes, the initial codebook to be used for analysis was ready for use.

The prepared codebook comprising both the codes from the job advert analysis and the FRLM is shown in Figure 17, below, with codes which were added from the FRLM marked with an asterisk.

Themes	Codes	Sub-codes
Skills	Skills/capabilities/knowledge	Keyboard Conducting Musical Vocal
	Experience	Experience required (general) Conducting Experience Vocal Repertoire Musical Experience Looking for experience Performance Community/Outreach work Musical Collaboration
	Qualifications	'Suitably' qualified Degree or diploma in music/ conducting Vocal Qualification Teaching Qualification Professional/amateur
	Interpersonal/communication skills	Work/ communicate well with the group Communication Style Verbal/Written Skills Sense of Humour
Influence	Contacts/network	-
	Leadership	Idealised Influence (attributed) * Idealised Influence (behaviours) *

		Inspirational Motivation * Intellectual Stimulation * Individual Consideration * Contingent Reward * Management By Exception (Active) * Management By Exception (Passive) * Laissez-Faire Leadership * Authority/figurehead Vision Tone setting
Personal qualities	Commitment	Make long-term commitment to choir Not be overcommitted elsewhere
	Personality Traits	Energetic / Enthusiastic Patience/support Creative Ambitious Friendly Engaging Sociable/approachable Charismatic Reliable/organised
	Values (Candidate)	Inclusive / diversity Dedication to each singer Safeguarding (Vocal and general) Equal Opportunities

Figure 4 - Codebook for use in analysis of role-related data

Questions 1-4 of the survey, i.e. those gathering data relating to general expectations of the choral leader's role, were then collated and an Excel spreadsheet was used to display each participant's responses across the top row of the worksheet. The initial set of codes was inserted into columns on the left-hand side of the worksheet, maintaining the hierarchy of themes/codes/sub-codes from the prepared codebook shown above in Figure 17.

The process of analysis from this point onwards was similar to the previously described TA procedure. The data were initially coded using the coding structure shown in Figure 17 but, as before, during an iterative process of coding and recoding this code list was expanded and merged as necessary in order to generate a set of codes which were judged to satisfactorily describe the data. After coding, the code list was reviewed and common ground between codes was sought to generate a list of themes under which the codes and sub-codes could be grouped. Finally, a description of each theme was written including examples from the data. The full hierarchy of themes, codes, sub-codes and quotes will be presented in the next chapter.

6.1.2.2 Analysis of voice-related data

Analysis of the voice-related data from the survey fell into two categories:

1. Basic statistical analysis of the yes/no questions

As stated above, the quantitative information gathered in this survey was minimal and not intended to lead to generalisable results, only to add context to the qualitative analysis which is the primary focus of this study. This was necessary due to the relative lack of voice-related information apparent in the analysis of the job adverts during the first stage of this project.

Analysis of the quantitative data involved calculating percentages of participants answering yes/no to whether or not:

- their choral leader led warm-up exercises
- taught vocal skills during choral sessions
- they found these experiences useful/they would prefer to have them included in rehearsals.

Results of these percentage calculations are presented in the following chapter.

2. Reflexive TA of the qualitative voice-related data

The final stage of analysis performed was a Reflexive TA of the 4 qualitative, voice-related questions:

- **Can you give 1 or more example(s) of something a conductor has done which made you feel that your voice was being looked after well?**
- **Can you give 1 (or more) example(s) of something a conductor has done which made you feel that your voice was not being looked after well?**
- **Can you give 1 (or more) example(s) of a way in which a conductor has developed your voice or taught you a vocal skill?**
- **Can you give 1 (or more) example(s) of a time when a conductor did not teach you a vocal skill when it would have been helpful for them to do so?**

The process of analysis for this data was procedurally similar to the Reflexive TA which was performed on the job advert data set, described above. Again, an Excel spreadsheet was used to manage the data with participant responses displayed across the top of the worksheet and, as they were generated, codes added in a column at the left-hand side of the worksheet. Again, an iterative process of reading, rereading and coding was used to generate a set of themes and codes, aiming to code first at a semantic level and then to move to a deeper, latent level where possible. The resulting set of themes, codes and theme descriptions including examples from the data is presented in the following chapter.

6.1.2.3 Coding of “any other information” questions

A final Reflexive TA, following the same procedure outlined above, was performed on the questions which asked participants for any information which they wished to supply which was not already gathered within the other question groupings. The output of this analysis was reviewed for similarities to the output of the previous analyses carried out on the main body of the data. Much overlap between the results of this analysis and previous analyses was found. In the following chapter, resulting themes which are *not* already described within the other analyses will be presented.

6.2 Findings

During the course of data gathering, more data was collected than had been anticipated due to an unexpectedly high rate of interest following a widely shared Facebook advert, with 1075 responses received to the singer survey. In order to ensure clarity in presenting the project's findings, this chapter will be structured around the study's research questions, with relevant extracts of data and analytical output presented in sequence as a response to each of the questions/sub-questions. The research questions responded to are:

1. What do singers expect of a UK-based choral leader, with particular reference to the voice-centred aspects of their role?

1a. What areas of the singers' experience is the choral leader expected to take responsibility for?

1b. How might they enact responsibility in these areas?

1c. Might this set of responsibilities vary across genres/contexts?

1d. With which voice-centred areas of choral work are singers expecting a choral leader to be concerned?

2. What forms of leadership are valued within a choral context?

The final research question, **2a. What does *voice-centred* choral leadership look like in practice?**, will be addressed in the following chapter (Discussion, Chapter 8).

Standard outputs from TA generally consist of: sets of overarching themes (also known as meta-themes (Robinson et al., 2011)); themes; and codes within each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Due to the large scale of data collection and analysis in this project however,

it was determined that within certain codes, an additional layer of sub-codes would need to be generated to further synthesise the lower level coding and take account of the abundance and variety of data within these codes. Four layers of coding were therefore generated during analysis, namely: meta-themes; themes; codes; and sub-codes.

Results responding to the two primary research questions will be drawn from the meta-themes and themes within the coding hierarchy. These four meta-themes and subsequent themes are:

Meta-theme 1 - Areas of Responsibility

- Vision
- Safeguarding
- Coordination
- Teaching

Meta-theme 2 - Attributes

- Personal Qualities
- Conducting Tools
- Leadership Style

Meta-theme 3 - Variance

- Balance of Responsibility
- Variety of Experience

Meta-theme 4 - Voice-centred Concerns

- Vocal Advising
- Vocal Duty of Care
- Demands

Results responding to the sub-questions will also be drawn from deeper in the coding hierarchy and will be presented as themes, codes, sub-codes, and code descriptions. Tables showing the collective hierarchy of all findings in this study can be found in the appendix to

this thesis (see pp.361-367) which clearly illustrate the hierarchical links between each level and section of coding along with illustrative quotes from the data set. All quotations from participants found in this chapter have been taken from the singer survey data set. As this data was supplied anonymously, no participant names have been used to reference these quotes. In place of names, all participants have been assigned participant numbers which have been used to reference quotes. Quotes included in this chapter have been selected as representative examples as there would not be space to include full sets of quotes for each level of coding. Further examples of representative quotes for every section of coding are supplied in the tables found in the appendix to this thesis (see pp.361-367).

Within the tables of results presented below, each level of coding is accompanied by an indication of what percentage of the higher-level coding is represented, that is to say that themes are broken down as percentages of meta-themes, and codes are broken down as percentages of themes. This quantification is in no way intended to represent an attempt to produce generalisable results. Instead this quantitative information is presented only to contextualise the themes and codes presented. Due to the high volume of data collected, presenting themes and codes without an indication of whether the theme was either strongly supported by the data or appeared only infrequently, would not be useful and potentially misleading. The comparison of code frequencies, whilst not appropriate in all forms of TA, such as Reflexive TA carried out within a constructivist paradigm, is justifiable within forms of TA performed within positivist or pragmatic paradigms (Braun & Clarke, 2020a; Guest et al., 2014).

6.2.1 Demographic information – singer survey

The singer survey remained open for 7 days in February 2020 and in this time 1075 responses were collected. No responses were rejected on any grounds for inclusion in the analysis. The average age of the participants was 55 however the age range of participants spanned between 18 – 82 years old. The gender of participants within the sample was as follows:

Female	85%
Male	13%
Non-Binary/Genderless	1%
No response	1%

Figure 5 - Gender of participants in singer survey

The types of choral singing participated in represented in the sample were as follows:

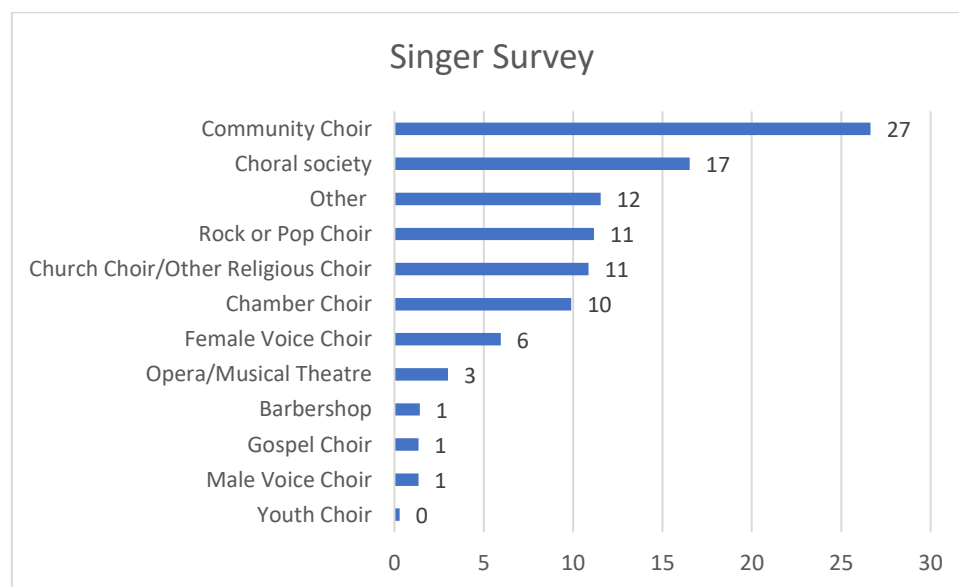


Figure 6 - Type of choral singing in participated in (Singer survey)

6.3 Research Question 1 - What do singers expect of a UK-based choral leader, with particular reference to the voice-centred aspects of their role?

Results which respond to this research question will be presented in two parts:

- **Part 1** - the first responding to the first half of the question, *what do singers expect of a UK-based choral leader*
- **Part 2** - the second responding to the second half of the question, making *particular reference to the voice-centred aspects of their role*.

As described above (see section 6.1), analysis of the survey data took place in two separate batches with a Codebook TA performed on the conductor role-related data, and a Reflexive TA performed on the voice-centred data. The results responding to each half of the question are therefore based on analysis of separate data sets collected in the singer survey.

Part 1 is responded to using results of the analysis of responses to questions which related to the overall role of the conductor generated from Section 1 of the survey (see Appendix p.354). **Part 2** is responded to using results of analysis of questions in Section 2 which specifically asked participants about voice-centred aspects of the conductor's role (see Appendix p.354). The only exception to this division of analysis is seen within the *Variance* meta-theme. Data used to generate the contents of this meta-theme was drawn from analysis of both **Part 1 and Part 2** of the survey. Examples of *Variance* were found throughout responses to both sections of the survey and the decision was therefore taken

to merge this data and present the results as a single meta-theme to avoid repetition of concepts.

In the findings presented below, each level of coding is accompanied by an indication of what percentage of the higher-level coding is represented. Further to this, results responding to **Part 1** of the research question are accompanied by additional results of quantitative analysis, comparing code frequencies between different types of choir. A full rationale for analysing the data set by type of choir is presented in Chapter 7 (see p.282). Although 12 types of choir were represented within the sample, 6 types of choir were rejected for use in this analysis due to low numbers of singers indicating that they participated in these groups. The table below shows the number of singers within the sample participating in each type of choir:

Type of Choir	N
Community Choir	314
Choral Society	196
Rock or Pop Choir	146
Chamber Choir	95
Female Voice Choir	70
Religious Choir	69
Barbershop	16
Musical Theatre	15
Male Voice Choir	14
Gospel Choir	12
Opera	3
Youth Choir	3

Figure 7. Number of participants in each type of choir

Due to small numbers in: Barbershop; Musical Theatre; Male Voice Choir; Gospel Choir; Opera; and Youth Choir groups, these types of choir were removed from the quantitative analysis.

This quantitative analysis was performed only on the output of the Codebook TA. This analysis was not performed on the output of the Reflexive TA as this was considered to be inappropriate for a form of analysis which emphasises the role of researcher subjectivity in the analytical process. Findings responding to **Part 2** of the question are therefore not accompanied by any further quantitative analysis.

Responses to sub-questions will also be presented accordingly as they relate to the two halves of the question.

6.3.1 Research Question 1, part 1 - What do singers expect of a UK-based choral leader?

Two meta-themes respond directly to this question: *Areas of Responsibility*; and *Attributes*.

The first describes what singers describe as expectations in terms of conductor duties and the second describes what singers expect in terms of capabilities and qualities used to perform the conductor's role. These meta-themes will be briefly outlined here and then broken down into individual themes and codes to be fully explored below in response to relevant sub-questions.

6.3.1.1 Meta-theme 1 - Areas of Responsibility

The first, *Areas of Responsibility*, summarises the four key areas which singers reported expecting conductors to be responsible for during choral singing experiences. These four

areas, namely: *Vision*; *Safeguarding*; *Coordination*; and *Teaching*, are described below in

Figure 21:

Meta-theme	Theme	Theme as % of Meta-theme
Area of responsibility	Vision The conductor's role in bringing vision, direction or purpose to the choral activity	36%
	Safeguarding Any activity the conductor engages in which supports, protects or enhances the physical or psychological wellbeing of choral singers	25%
	Coordination Any conductor activity which brings the choir together as a unit as opposed to a group of individual singers	24%
	Teaching Any pedagogical activity engaged in by the conductor	15%

Figure 8 - Areas of Responsibility

Conductor responsibilities within the *Vision* theme relate to the purpose or direction of the group. These could be closely related to repertoire, such as an expectation that they will “organise interesting and exciting programmes” [254] or provide “[a]rtistic direction [which] helps the choir to interpret the music and words, improving enjoyment and delivery” [172]. Alternatively they may relate to general guiding principles for the group such as “ensur[ing] that the membership and musical aims match the aspirations of the group” [770] or

providing “direction in the broadest possible sense both in terms of the programming, choice of concerts, the actual music, but also in terms of the choir’s ethic and purpose” [254].

Safeguarding also featured frequently in singers’ reporting of their expectations of conductors. Many singers expected to be taken care of by the conductor, with many reporting that they expected a conductor to have “a certain level of pastoral care skills” [788], that they should “pay attention to the whole of the choir, but also to individuals” [92] or that they “find it helps for the conductor to be great at encouraging a choir [1007].

Conductor activities relating to *Coordination* include any which help unify the group of singers, ranging from a general expectation that they will “[b]uild a cohesive choir” [325] to more specifically that they will be an “[e]xpert at bringing sounds together beautifully” [294]. There is an overall expectation that conductors will unify the sound the choir produces but in certain cases a further expectation that the conductor’s role extends to bringing together the disparate personalities within the group to form a cohesive team or community of singers.

Data falling within the fourth area, *Teaching*, was less varied in focus than within the other three themes. In describing expectations of the types of teaching they should receive, singers tended to report either expecting to be taught how repertoire should sound, in terms of which notes to sing or stylistic/interpretive instructions, or that they should be

taught vocal skills by the conductor. Conductors were therefore generally expected to “teach parts in turn until we [the singers] feel confident and able to sing as a group” [104], or “to teach [the group] about singing as well as the songs” [231].

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the four themes within the *Area of Responsibility* meta-theme for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

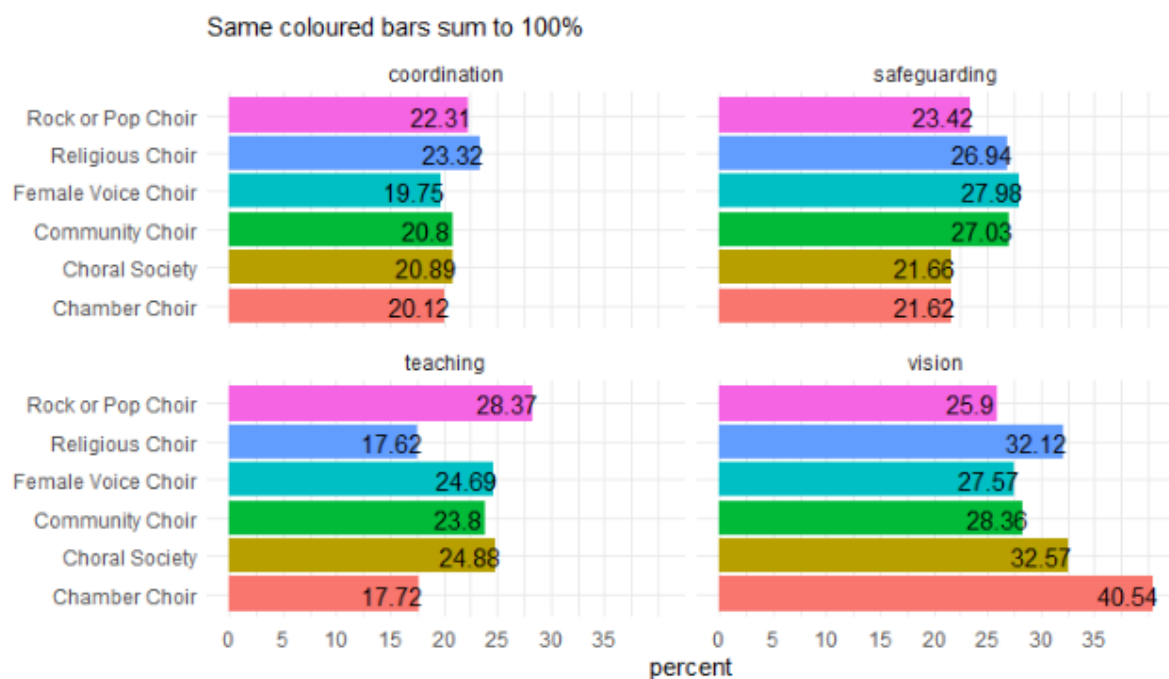


Figure 9. Percentage of coding assigned to each theme within Area of Responsibility meta-theme, split by type of choir

As shown above, there is some agreement in emphasis on each of the four themes by different types of choir. The largest differences are found within the *Vision* theme, in which there is a 15% difference found between Chamber Choirs and Rock or Pop Choirs. There is also an 11% difference found between Rock or Pop Choirs and Religious Choirs within the *Teaching* theme. Within the *Safeguarding* theme smaller variances are found with a 6% difference found between Female Voice Choirs and Choral Societies. The smallest variation

is found within the *Coordination* theme where the largest difference is just 4%, found between Religious Choirs and Female Voice Choirs.

6.3.1.2 Meta-theme 2 - Attributes

The second meta-theme that responds to the question *What do singers expect of a UK-based choral leader?* is named *Attributes* and contains themes and codes relating to the skills and personal qualities that singers expect conductors to possess and use in their work.

The themes within this meta-theme are: *Personal qualities*; *Conducting tools*; and *Leadership Style*. These are described in Figure 23, below:

Meta-theme	Theme	Theme description	Theme as % of Meta-theme
Attributes	Personal Qualities	Personality traits displayed by conductors during their practice	40%
	Conducting tools	The range of skills, knowledge, experience and capabilities expected of conductors by singers	38%
	Leadership Style	The range of leadership styles and skills used by conductors	22%

Figure 10 - Attributes

A wide range of *Personal qualities* were suggested by singers to be important in a conductor. Singers were clear on what they expected and, interestingly, were also clear on what they would not expect or tolerate. Many positive characteristics were cited as

desirable with some singers expecting that “I would expect the conductor to be very personable when dealing with individuals and be approachable” [960] or that they should show “[c]onfidence and ability not to despair and to persevere” [151]. On the other hand, many singers also identified desirable qualities in relation to the attributes they would not desire in a conductor. Singers stated that “I do not want to work with an intolerant egotist” [216], that they appreciated “the opposite of pomposity!” [219], and that “[p]oliteness and kindness are more effective than sarcasm and criticism. I have left a choir when [the] conductor was rude” [775].

The *Conducting Tools* theme contains singers’ expectations of conductors’ knowledge and skills. Singers’ expectations varied considerably with some focusing on the musical skills necessary for the role such as “the ability to spot and correct mistakes within a complex texture of sound” [15]. Others however focused on desirable communication skills such as “[t]he ability to communicate what he requires verbally, or better still demonstrate vocally” [665]. Finally, pedagogical skills were expected of conductors by some singers who expected that the conductor would be “[a]ble to teach us to improve the sound our voices make, to give tips about better breathing, where the voice should come from etc” [175] or that they should function as a “music theory and historical context coach” [538].

Leadership skills were also reported as an expectation by participants in this study. The *Leadership Style* theme will be more fully explored later in this chapter in relation to Research Question 2. **What forms of leadership are valued within a choral context?** (see Section 6.9). It is interesting to note here however that leadership skills were one of the

three primary *Attributes* expected of a conductor, with singers expecting that conducting should be considered “[a] leadership role rather all encompassing...[which will] make the post more than just a music teacher or conductor” [137].

The *Attributes* meta-theme outlined above is explored in more detail below (see section 6.5) using a breakdown of the themes and codes it contains in response to sub-question **1b. How might they enact responsibility in these areas?**

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the three themes within the *Attributes* meta-theme for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

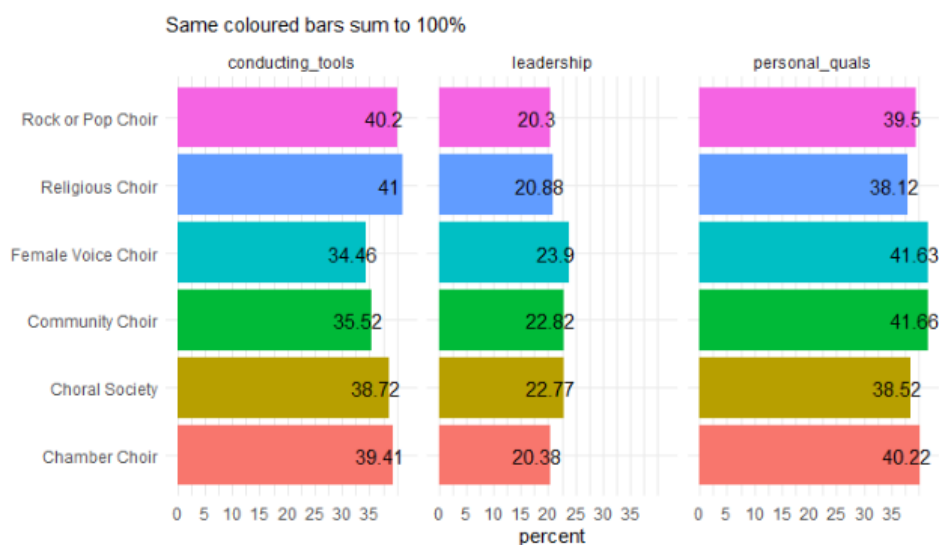


Figure 11. Percentage of coding assigned to each theme within *Attributes* meta-theme, split by type of choir

As shown above, there was some agreement between all types of choir on the level of emphasis placed on each *Attribute*. The largest difference found between types of choir was

found within the *Conducting Tools* theme, with a variance of 6% between Female Voice Choirs and Religious Choirs.

6.4 Research Question 1a. What areas of the singers' experience is the choral leader expected to take responsibility for?

As shown above, the meta-theme relating to *Areas of Responsibility* for a conductor contains 4 themes, namely: *Vision*; *Safeguarding*; *Coordination*; and *Teaching*. These four themes will be described in more detail below through a breakdown of the codes they contain.

6.4.1 Vision

The first *Area of Responsibility* identified was *Vision* and relates to a choral leader's role in giving purpose to choral activity. This theme and the corresponding set of codes is outlined below in Figure 25:

Theme	Code	Code description	Code as a % of theme
Vision The conductor's role in bringing vision, direction or purpose to the choral activity	Atmosphere/ tone	The tone-setting functions of the conductor	44%
	Programming	Selection of appropriate repertoire for rehearsals and concerts	26%
	Interpretation of the music	The conductor's role in interpreting the music e.g. in terms of dynamics, timbre, articulation	17%
	Choir ethos/purpose	Work aligning with the choir's fundamental reasons for existing	13%

Figure 12 - Vision

Atmosphere/ tone

The *Atmosphere/tone* code contains references made by singers to the tone-setting functions of a choral leader. All responses within this code implied that a positive atmosphere was a desirable goal during choral activity. Within the code three primary visions for the working environment were described by participants: that conductors would ensure that the group's activities are fun; that conductors would not talk down to singers; and that positivity would be imbued in the choral experience. Generally, singers reported that the choral leader "has a huge influence on the mood and atmosphere of the rehearsal and the choir overall" [23].

Programming

Participants frequently reported that a choral leader would play a role in programming repertoire. There was however a division within responses between those that stated that a choral leader would take sole responsibility for this and those that preferred that others such as committee members or singers in the choir would participate in the repertoire selection process. Certain singers focused on the selection of appropriate repertoire in terms of the conductor's responsibility "to select suitable and varied music which is at the most appropriate standard for all singers" [47] whilst others focused instead on the enjoyment of the selected repertoire stating that they expected the conductor to choose "an interesting and diverse repertoire for the enjoyment of the choir and their audience." [169].

Interpretation of the music

Data within this code relate to any work a choral leader carries out in relation to guiding the choir in interpreting repertoire in terms of, for example, dynamics or articulation. Within this code, singer expectations relate to the choral leader's role in moving past the notated score and "turn[ing] accuracy into performance" [37] or "draw[ing] out the emotion of the music from the singers" [35]. Many singers also described an expectation that the choral leader would take the lead in interpreting the music as opposed to collaborating with the singers in this area and that they would guide the singing "in order to create their vision of the music" [10].

Choir ethos/purpose

This final code in this theme incorporates singer responses relating to the choral leader's role in providing purpose for the choir and/or aligning their activities with the group's ethos. Responses falling within this code vary from a general sense that a choral leader will "ensure that the membership and musical aims match the aspirations of the group" [770] to expectations relating to a more specific type of choral group such as "I work with a charity that sings with people living with breathing difficulties. We have trained and employed several singing teachers. They are all very different but they all share one quality a love of singing and a belief that it improves health outcomes" [566].

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the four codes within the *Vision* theme for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

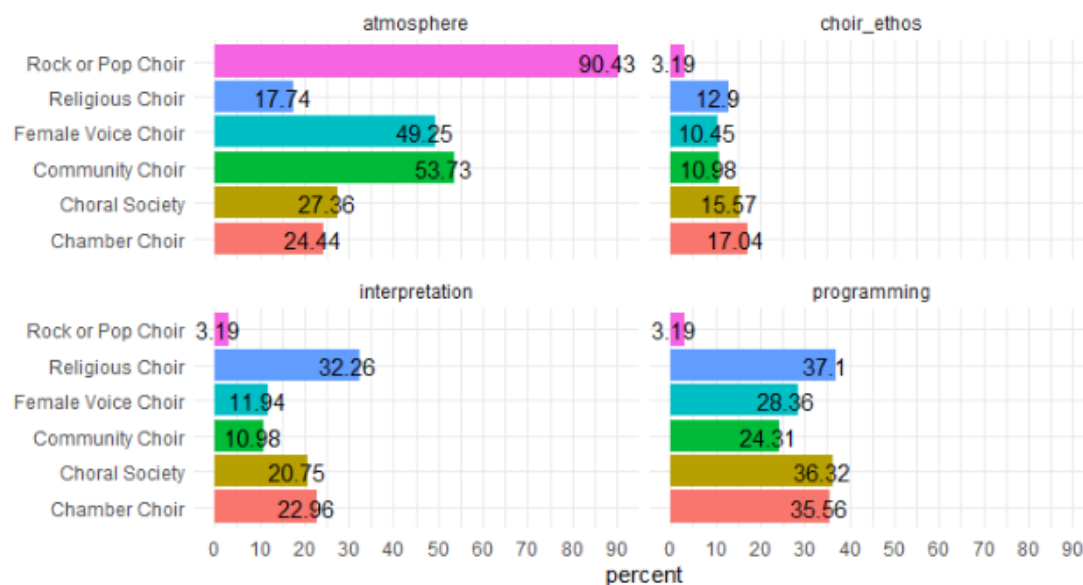


Figure 13. Percentage of coding assigned to each code within Vision theme, split by type of choir

As shown above, there are clear differences apparent in the level of emphasis placed on codes by different types of choir. The largest difference found was within the *Atmosphere/Tone* code, with a difference of 73% between Rock or Pop Choirs and Religious Choirs. Within the *Choir Ethos/Purpose* code a smaller level of variation was found with a difference of 14% between Rock or Pop Choirs and Chamber Choirs. A difference of 11% was found between Rock or Pop Choirs and Religious Choirs within the *Interpretation of the Music* code and the same groups differed by 34% in the *Programming* code.

6.4.2 Safeguarding

The third area of responsibility identified within the analysis is *Safeguarding*. In this theme, *Safeguarding* refers to the general safeguarding of the singers as people as a whole.

Safeguarding of singers' voices will be addressed separately below within the *Voice-centred Concerns* meta-theme, under the theme *Vocal Duty of Care* (see section 6.8.2). Codes within this theme are shown in Figure 27, below:

Theme	Code	Code description	Code as a % of theme
Safeguarding Any activity the conductor engages in which supports, protects or enhances the wellbeing of choral singers	Understanding of choir's capabilities (also challenge)	An awareness of the choir's potential and limitations	36%
	Sensitive to choir members personally/ individually	Being attentive to choir members' feelings and personal needs on an individual basis	33%
	Support	Offering support to singers	13%
	Caring	Being perceived as caring about singers as a group	10%
	Respect for singers	Being respectful of the individuals in the choir or acknowledging singers' abilities/ contributions	6%
	Takes responsibility	Accepting responsibility for the group in terms of success and support	2%

Figure 14 – Safeguarding

Understanding of choir's capabilities (also challenge)

An interesting recurring response within the *Safeguarding* theme was a need for choral leaders to understand the musical ability and experience level of the singers within their group. This code made up 36% of the coded data units falling within the Safeguarding theme. Responses in this code pertained both to a need for understanding the limits on how far a group could be pushed and also a desire to be challenged appropriately to expand their current capabilities. References were often made to the difficulty level of the repertoire being sung with a desire that the choral leader would “select suitable material which is manageable but challenging and interesting” [104]. In terms of performance level, singers also expressed a desire for a leader who could “get the right balance between asking for the highest standards while encouraging the singers and understanding limitations” [129]. Overwhelmingly there was a recurring expectation that, whatever the ability level of the choir, a choral leader would “bring out the best in every member of the choir” [188].

Sensitive to choir members personally/individually

Many singers expected that choral leaders would have an “ability to recognise and help anyone who requires it without making them feel embarrassed” [67] and would nurture singers individually in addition to their duties to the overall running of the group. Mentions of this individual attention made up 33% of the coding within this theme suggesting that singers view this as an important part of safeguarding that conductors may offer.

Support

Offering support to singers was also a large code within this theme. Singers expected that conductors would “support people to get them to progress” [1048] and be “[a]ble to teach supportively” [30]. Although most responses falling within this code refer to the conductor’s actions, this code links to the *Support materials* code generated within the *Voice-centred concerns* which is discussed further below (see section 6.8.2).

Caring

Related to supportive behaviour, singers also indicated that being a person who genuinely cares for the people they are leading was a desirable feature in a conductor. Singers reported an expectation that their conductor would have “the best interests of the choir and members as their priority” [183] and be “someone who wants the best for their choir and the people in it” [1004].

Respect for singers

Singers described expecting respect from the choral leader and the “ability to recognise and help anyone who requires it without making them feel embarrassed” [67] was appreciated. There was a general expectation that adult singers would not be treated as children, with singers expecting that conductors would “tell us what to do but to this in an adult way” [210] and that they would “like to be able to see [the conductor] as an equal as soon as we are out of rehearsal” [86].

Takes responsibility

Finally in this theme, a small number of singers explicitly stated that they saw the conductor's responsibility involving taking responsibility for the choir and the singers within it. Although this code made up only 2% of responses within this theme, statements included within this indicated that these participants felt strongly about this issue. Singers reported high expectations, stating that the conductor should "metaphorically hold us" [710] and "should ultimately take responsibility for success of a performance" [274].

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the seven codes within the *Safeguarding* theme for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

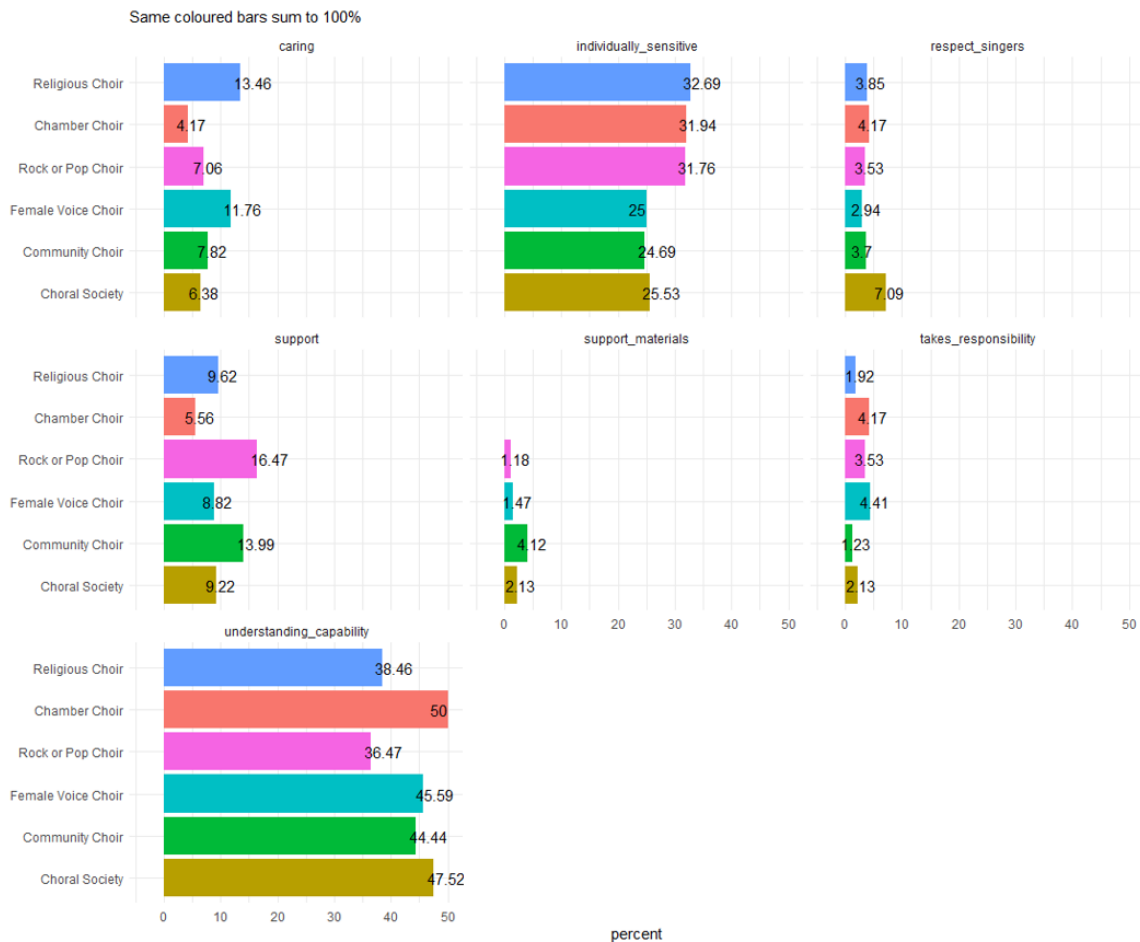


Figure 15. Percentage of coding assigned to each code within Safeguarding theme, split by type of choir

As shown above, there are some differences apparent in the level of emphasis placed on codes by different types of choir. Although these differences were relatively small across most codes, a difference of 14% was found between Chamber Choirs and Rock or Pop Choirs within the *Understanding Capability* code. It is also interesting to note that no coding at all was generated from data from singers in Religious Choirs in the *Support Materials* code, indicating that this is not expected of conductors of the Religious Choirs represented in this study.

6.4.3 Coordination

The *Coordination* theme is made up of five codes which are shown below in Figure 29 along with a brief description of each code:

Theme	Code	Code description	Code as a % of theme
Coordination Any conductor activity which brings the choir together as a unit as opposed to a group of individual singers	Rehearsal and concert scheduling, running, and pacing	Any duties relating to ensuring the choir's activities are run	44%
	Pulse-keeping, cueing	Any action the conductor takes to ensure the choir's sense of timing is kept together	24%
	Team and/or community	Any activities the conductor engages in pertaining to unifying the choir socially or as a bonded group	17%
	Balance and blend	Unifying the sound a choir makes	11%
	Facilitator	Enabling the choir to make music as a group – as distinct from being the driving force of the group	4%

Figure 16 - Coordination

Rehearsal and concert scheduling, running, and pacing

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was the largest code within this theme. Units of code placed here include any reference to the general running of rehearsals or performances, and scheduling duties either within individual rehearsals or across terms. Singers generally

expected that conductors would have an “ability to plan an effective rehearsal schedule” [20]. This code also incorporates references to the pacing of choral activities, such as expectations that conductors will “run rehearsals that are pacy, so we feel we are learning” [298]. There was a clear feeling that conductors should respect the time invested in the singing activities by their singers, for example singers expect conductors to be “[c]lear thinking and organised so the rehearsal schedule ie [Sic] which pieces on which week are going to be rehearsed is set out at the start and time is not wasted” [216].

Pulse-keeping, cueing

Codes within the *Pulse-keeping, cueing* theme relate to a conductor’s role in ensuring that tempo and musical entries are clearly signalled and/or unified. Some singers gave examples of ways in which a conductor might achieve this such as “mouth[ing] the words and mak[ing] sure we come in at the right time” [194] whilst others simply state that they expect a conductor to be “[a]ble to keep time, encourage different dynamics, prompt different parts to come in, indicate when to come off notes” [713].

Team and/or community

The *Team and/or community* code refers to conductor efforts to elicit non-musical bonding between singers within the group. Singers reported expecting a conductor to “take an active part in the growth of the choir in terms of new members and encouraging the choir to feel like a single entity rather than disparate individuals” [299]. The idea of a choir becoming more than a group of individuals was represented strongly within the data set with many

singers expecting their choral leader to “[b]uild a cohesive choir” [189] and “[b]ring[] us together emotionally” [199].

Balance and blend

Balance and blend refers to the work done by a conductor in unifying the voices of a choir as one sound. Singers expect conductors will “[t]each[] us to blend into a sound rather than stand out and distort the sound we make” [637] or “bring together disparate voices and help to form a harmonious whole” [166]. Certain participants made reference to particular ways of achieving this such as prescribing vowel sounds for singers to match, however the majority of responses in this code referred generally to an expectation that the conductor would be responsible for a unified sound without suggesting exactly how this might be achieved.

Facilitator

The *Facilitator* code was placed within the *Coordination* theme, although consideration was also given to incorporating this as part of the *Leadership* theme. The final decision to include it within this code was based on the participants’ focus on coordinating functions falling within this section of coding such as expectations that conductors should “facilitate a coordinated delivery of the music as it is written” [467] and “facilitate a cohesive sound” [806]. Facilitation was therefore framed in terms of the conductor enabling a choir to deliver a coordinated rendition of a piece of repertoire. This code contained the smallest number of units of data within this theme.

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the five codes within the

Coordination theme for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

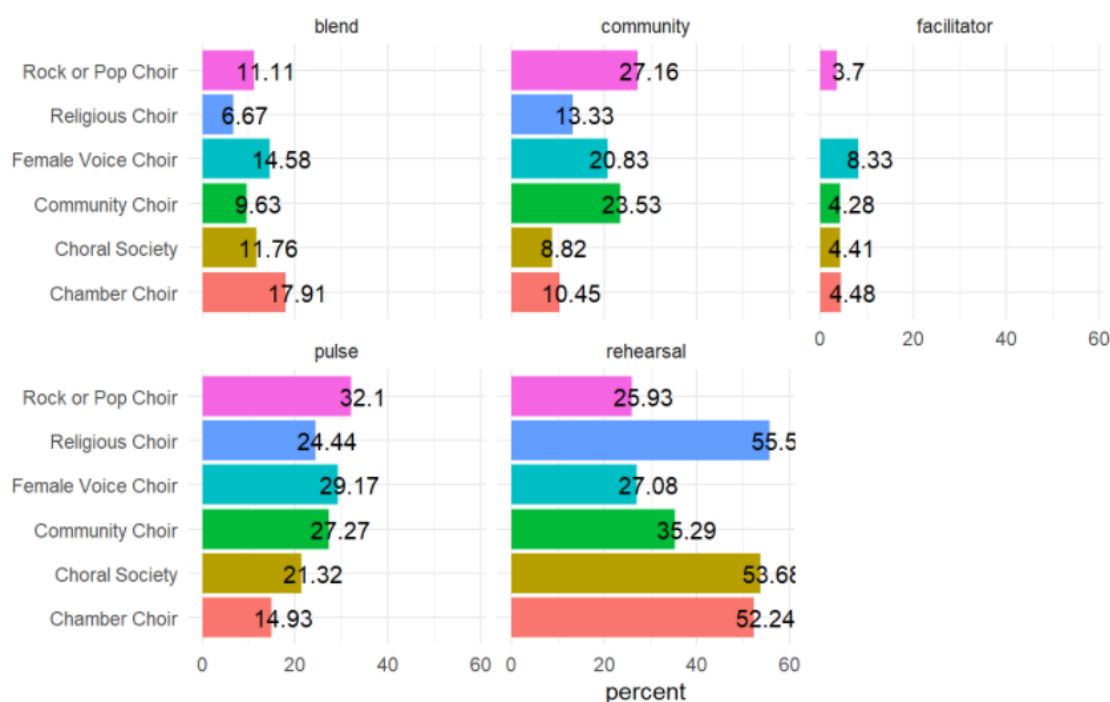


Figure 17. Percentage of coding assigned to each code within Coordination theme, split by type of choir

Some variance is found between types of choir in terms of emphasis placed on each code within the theme. The largest levels of difference were found within the codes shown at the bottom of Fig.30., with Rock or Pop Choirs and Chamber Choirs differing by 17% in their emphasis on *Pulsekeeping/cueing* and Religious Choirs and Rock or Pop Choirs differing by 30% in their emphasis on *Rehearsal and concert scheduling, running, and pacing*.

6.4.4 Teaching

The final theme describing an area of responsibility for choral leaders is *Teaching* which describes choral pedagogical activity. This theme and its codes are outlined below:

Theme	Code	Code description	Code as a % of theme
Teaching Any pedagogical activity engaged in by the conductor	Teaching vocal skills	Choral-vocal pedagogy	51%
	Teaching repertoire	Teaching singers how their part of the piece should sound	49%

Figure 18 - Teaching

Teaching vocal skills

The first code in this section relates to choral-vocal pedagogy. Many responses mentioned an expectation that the choral leader would either teach vocal skills generally to the choir as part of ongoing rehearsals or that they would specifically “tailor vocal exercises to match the piece” [10] being rehearsed. Within this code, participants expected vocal skills to aid their development as a singer, stating that the choral leader should be a “[v]oice coach: through exercises and tuition helps the choir to improve vocal reproduction” [172] and also that when teaching vocal skills should protect their voices, teaching “about singing as well as the songs...be[ing] mindful of safety in singing” [231].

Teaching repertoire

Many instances of repertoire teaching expectations were found within the data set. These expectations fell broadly into two categories: those of singers who expected their leader to teach them the notes they would be required to sing; and those who instead expected the leader to teach singers *about* the repertoire in terms of, for example, stylistic conventions, expected timbral adjustments, or the relation of each separate part to the whole. Singers in the first category describe expectations of such as: “[I e]xpect them to teach parts in turn until we feel confident and able to sing as a group in 3 and 4 part harmonies” [104], or that conductors would be responsible for “[t]eaching the songs, harmonies, movements” [695]. Responses falling within the second category include an expectation that a conductor will “help us understand how our parts relate to the others” [37] and “teach how to interpret a piece on the way it should be sung” [433].

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the two codes within the *Teaching* theme for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

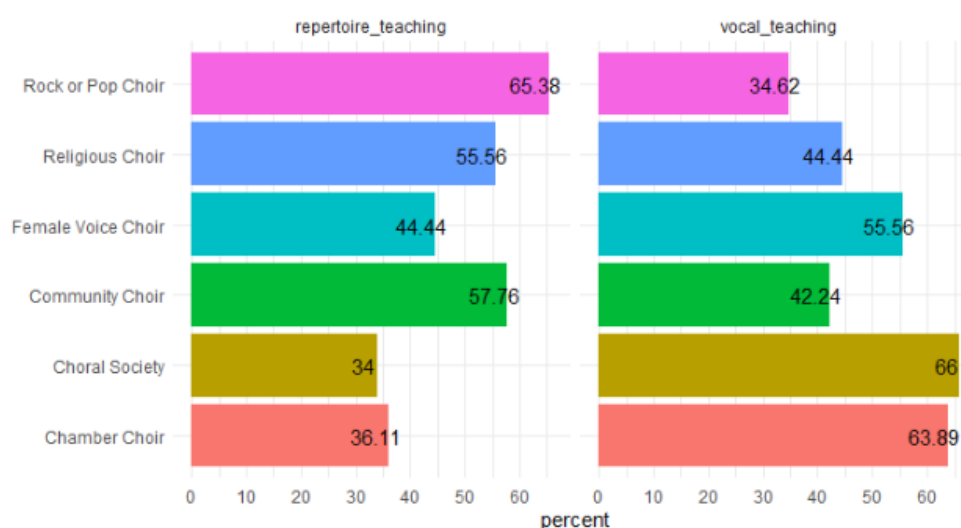


Figure 19. Percentage of coding assigned to each code within Teaching theme, split by type of choir

Again some difference is found between choirs in levels of emphasis on each of the codes within the theme, with Rock or Pop Choirs and Choral Societies showing the largest difference in their levels of emphasis on each type of teaching.

6.4.5. Comparing levels of emphasis on *Areas of Responsibility* across choir types

In order to compare the levels of emphasis placed on each of the codes within themes,

radar plots were produced for themes within the *Area of Responsibility* meta-theme. These

are shown below. Firstly, plots were produced for the *Vision* theme:

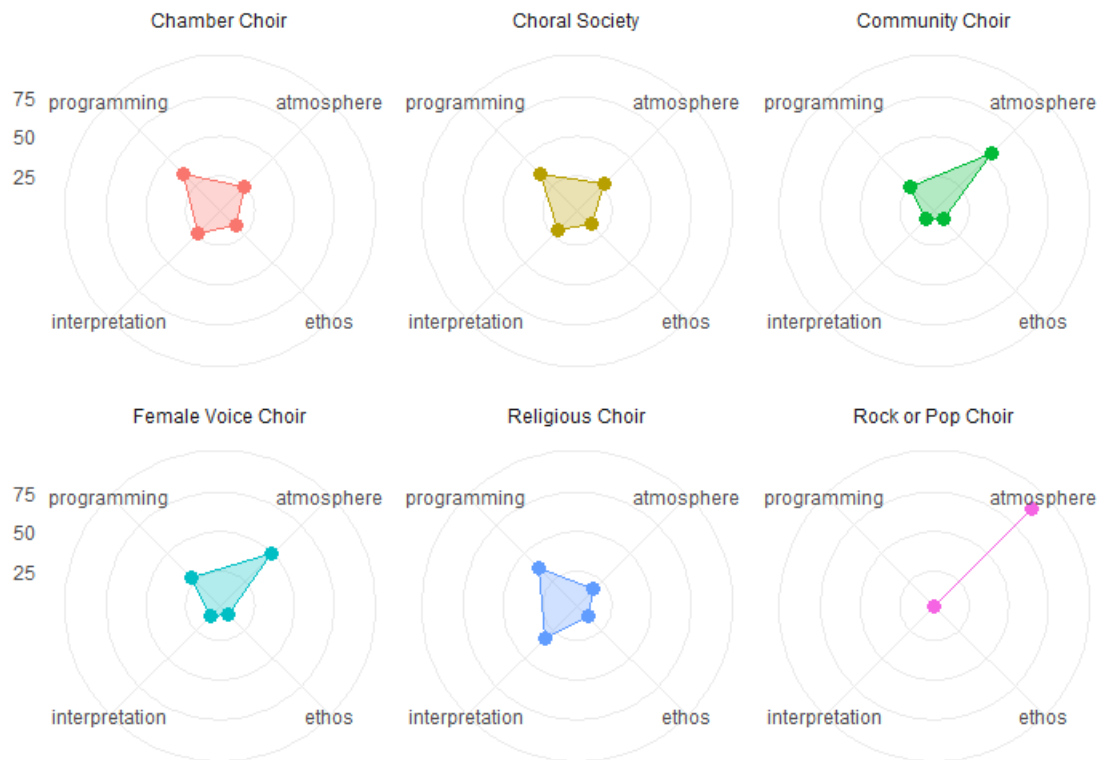


Figure 20. Radar plots of codes within Vision theme, by Type of Choir

As shown above in Figure 33., the plots for Chamber Choirs, Choral Societies, and Religious choirs broadly show similar levels of emphasis in all areas of the *Vision* theme, with a fairly equal split of emphasis level between the four *Vision* codes. The plots for Community Choirs and Female Voice Choirs show broad similarities, showing more emphasis on *Atmosphere* than the first grouping. The plot for Rock and Pop Choirs shows an unique shape, with almost all the emphasis placed on *Atmosphere*.

Plots showing the *Safeguarding* theme, split by type of choir are shown below:

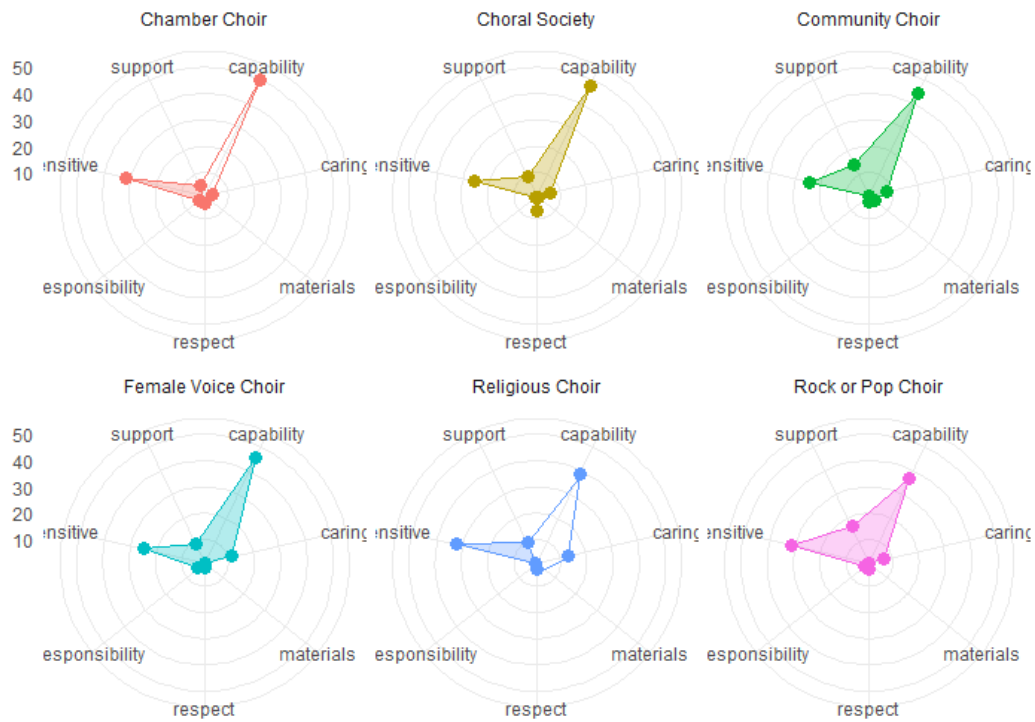


Figure 21. Radar plots of codes within Safeguarding theme, by Type of Choir

The plots above show broadly similar shapes, indicating fairly consistent levels of emphasis across the codes for each type of choir, although Female Voice Choirs, Religious Choirs and Rock or Pop Choirs places slightly less emphasis on the *Understanding Capability* code than the other three types of choirs.

Plots showing the *Coordination* theme, split by type of choir are shown below:

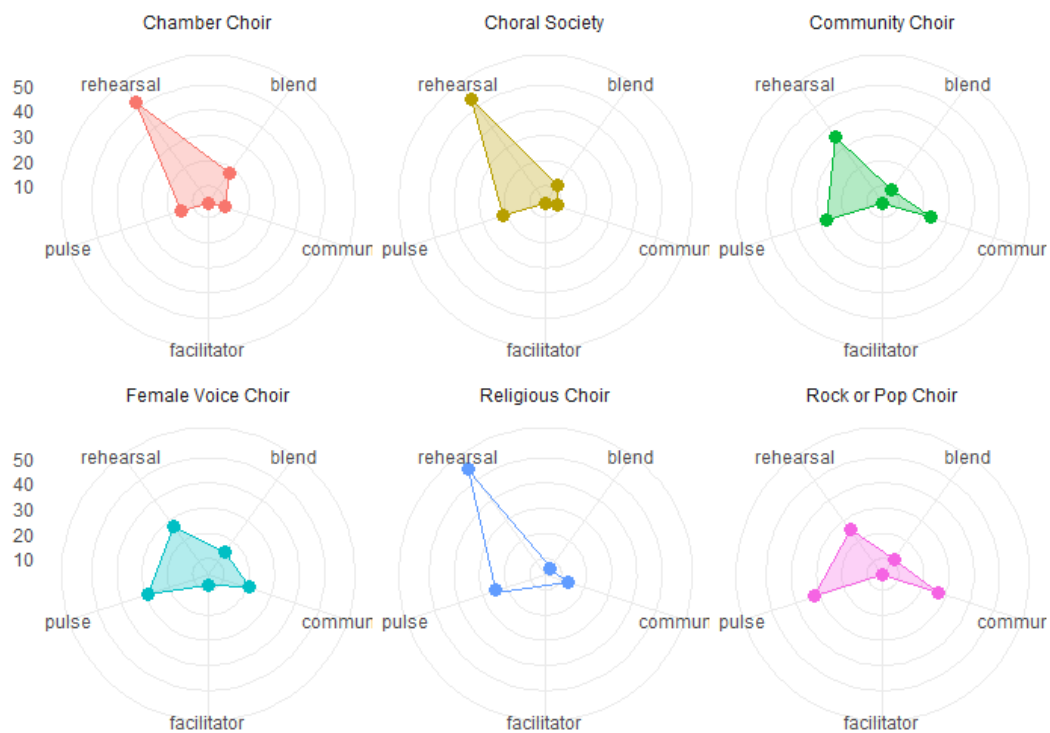


Figure 22. Radar plots of codes within Coordination theme, by Type of Choir

As shown above, the plots for Chamber Choirs, Choral Societies, and Religious Choirs share a broadly similar shape, indicating fairly consistent levels of emphasis across codes, with a strong focus on rehearsal coordination. Community Choirs and Rock or Pop Choirs form a second grouping sharing a broadly similar shape, with a focus on rehearsal coordination, community coordination, and coordination of pulse. The plot for Female Voice Choirs however shows a focus on rehearsal coordination and coordination of pulse, with less of an emphasis on blend, community coordination, or facilitation.

It was not possible to produce a plot for the *Teaching* theme, due to there only being two codes within this theme, and the theme was therefore not suitable for generating a radar plot.

6.4.6 Areas of Responsibility – Levels of Solo Training

A further analysis was performed on the Areas of Responsibility meta-theme, in which the percentage of codes within this theme generated from data from singers who had engaged in solo singing training were compared with data from those who had no previous solo singing training. The results of this analysis are shown below:

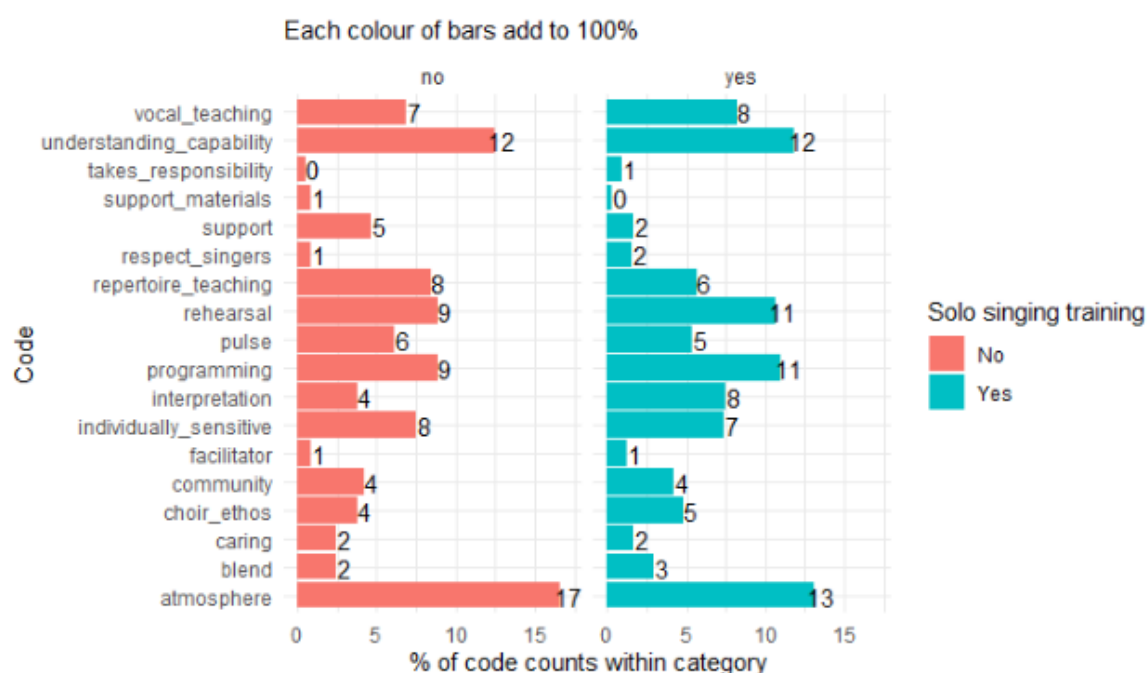


Figure 23. Comparison of coding from solo trained and non-solo trained singers

As shown above, there was a high level of agreement between trained and untrained singers in terms of emphasis placed on individual codes. The largest difference found was 4% between the groups within the *Interpretation* code and the average difference between the groups across all codes was just 1%.

6.4.7 Conclusion – Areas of Responsibility as a response to sub-question 1a.

The section above has explored the *Areas of Responsibility* theme as a response to sub-research question 1a., **What areas of the singers' experience is the choral leader expected to take responsibility for?** Four themes were generated, *Vision, Safeguarding, Coordination, and Teaching*, each of which contained a number of codes which were outlined to illustrate the content of each overarching theme. Example quotes from the data set were used to further demonstrate participant responses contained within each code. Results of the quantitative analysis on the codes and themes contained within the *Areas of Responsibility* meta-theme were also presented.

The following section will use a similar format to the section above, i.e. outlining the content of themes broken down into individual codes, to explore the meta-theme *Attributes* as a response to sub-research question 1b.

6.5 Research Question 1b. How might they enact responsibility in these areas?

As shown above (see p.179), the second meta-theme generated was named *Attributes* and contains 3 themes: *Personal Qualities; Conducting Tools; and Leadership Style*. Codes within these themes respond to sub-question 1b. **How might they enact responsibility in these areas?** in that they describe the skills and qualities that singers expect conductors to possess and use in their work. These codes will be explored below, with the exception of those falling within the *Leadership Style* theme which will be examined later in this chapter in response to research question 2 which directly addresses leadership in choral settings.

6.5.1 Personal Qualities

The first theme generated in the *Attributes* meta-theme (see Figure 23, p.188) is a grouping of all mentions of *Personal Qualities*, displayed by conductors during their practice. The codes within this theme are shown and described below in Figure 37:

Theme	Code	Sub-code	Code description	Code as % of theme
Personal Qualities	Truthful & consistent	Patience	Showing tolerance for the variety of ability levels and contributions of singers	28%
		Reliability/organisation	Showing a consistent and dependable approach to the role	
		Commitment	Showing commitment or dedication to the choir	
		Willingness to reflect	A person who shows humility and is willing to examine their own practice in order to improve their work	
		Honesty	Someone who communicates directly and gives honest feedback	
	Supportive	Friendly	Someone who is friendly, approachable, personable, or warm	27%
		Kind	Showing compassion and being sympathetic to singers in the group	
		Empathetic	Showing understanding of singers and the choral singing experience	
		Inclusive Values	A person who works to promote accessibility, inclusivity, fairness and, does not show favouritism	
		Calm, relaxed	Maintaining an even temperament	
	Dynamic	Charismatic	Being perceived as charismatic, dynamic, or possessing an ability to engage the group	24%
		Confidence	Displaying personal confidence and/or resilience (as distinct from having confidence in the singers)	
		Creative	Someone taking imaginative approach	
		Energetic, enthusiastic	An upbeat, enthusiastic approach to conducting and interacting with the group	
		Flexible	Someone capable of multi-tasking, problem solving or who is open to changing their approach to their work	
		Passionate	Displaying a love of choral singing and/or the choral repertoire	
		Ambitious	Encompassing both personal ambition and ambition for the choir	
	Authoritative	Commands attention	Holding the attention of the singers	21%
		Control	Able to maintain control of the group	

		Decisive	A decision maker	
		Determined	Focused and willing to persevere	
		Disciplined	Maintaining discipline within the group	
		Perfectionism	Pushing for perfection or high standards	
		Respected by choir	Earning the respect of the group	

Figure 24 - Personal qualities

The *Personal Qualities* theme constituted 40% of the coding in the *Attributes* meta-theme (see Figure 23 p.188). Singers reported desirable personality traits and characteristics in greater numbers than skills or capabilities. There was a clear sense within the data set that *who the conductor is*, or at least how they present themselves to be, was deemed by singers to be as important as their training or skillset. Singers generally described the *Personal Qualities* of conductors they worked with in positive terms.

Truthful and Consistent

Firstly, many singers reported that they expected that their conductor would be *Truthful and Consistent*. Sub-codes relating to these concerns include *Patience*; *Reliability/organisation*; *Commitment*; *Willingness to reflect*; and *Honesty*. Within this subset of responses, *Patience* was by far the most frequently reported expectation. Aside from a general wish for a conductor to show “endless patience!” [15] to the group, singers appreciated conductors who could show understanding and tolerance to individuals and “have patience with those who may need a little extra coaching” [184] or “be patient with individuals who may be less talented” [792]. Reliable conductors were also often described positively by singers. Reliability was expected in terms of “[g]ood time management &

organisational skills” [209] but also in terms of their preparation, with singers expecting that “[a] conductor should prepare and know the music well” [55] and “[s]hould be a good analyst and researcher, so that all necessary pre preparation of pieces to be rehearsed/performed is carried out” [734]. Closely related to reliability, *Commitment* was another concern shared by many participants. Commitment was expected not only in terms of fulfilling any contractual elements of the conducting role and a “good work ethic” [447], but more than this, several singers reported an expectation that a conductor would show a “[g]enuine commitment to the choral community” [1057] or more specifically that they would “[believe] in the choir and [be] proud to present us at concerts” [724]. Finally, honesty and a willingness to reflect were conductor qualities mentioned by a number of singers as desirable. Relating to honesty, singers generally appreciated a “straightforward approach” [1015] and leaders who are “willing to give both positive and negative feedback” [345] to the choir. The notion of honest feedback related strongly however to an appreciation of conductors who would examine their own practice, have “the ability to admit when they are wrong” [225], and “[t]o be open to self development through education and training” [169].

Supportive

Next, and relating loosely to the expectation of *Support* code discussed in the *Safeguarding* theme above, participants related expectations of supportive *Personal Qualities* which could be grouped under the code heading *Supportive*, containing the sub-codes: *Friendly*; *Kind*; *Empathetic*; *Inclusive Values*; and *Calm/Relaxed*. Of these, the *Friendly* code contained by far the largest number of units of code. Singers described their preferred conductor as “a

friend who looks after all of us” [662] and expected their conductor to be “[s]omeone who you could maintain a friendship with” [275]. Similar responses were placed in the *Kind* code though these referred more to the manner in which the choral leader conducts themselves than their relationship with the singers. Responses indicated a preference for someone who is “[k]ind and pleasant” [1007] and observations such as “[p]oliteness and kindness are more effective than sarcasm and criticism” [775]. Alongside kindness, empathy was often frequently reported to be an important conductor quality. Singers showed a strong preference for someone who is understanding of their experience, simply put: “One who understands what it is like to both sing in a choir and be the conductor” [20]. Finally, *Inclusive Values* were frequently mentioned in participant responses. This group of responses includes references to inclusivity in terms of protected characteristics, but also more broadly to mentions of inclusive behaviour relating to ability levels, such as: “the ability to make music accessible even to those choir members who don’t have a music background” [276] and also fairness, such as: “To treat individuals fairly; not to have favourites. To give members who wish the opportunity for solos and to support them” [726]. Many singers also expected “calmness, ability to hear/see what’s [sic] gone wrong without losing the plot at the choir” [157] and the “ability to stay calm during performance and keep ensemble focused” [523].

Dynamic

The third code within this theme contains reports of singers preferring a *Dynamic* conductor. Sub-codes relating to this preference include the following: *Charismatic; Confidence; Creative; Energetic; Flexible; Passionate; and Ambitious*. Many singers expected

that a choral leader would have “[c]harisma and the ability to hold the attention of a group of people who have probably been at work all day” [57] or be able to “manage own stress and anxiety so appear confident and relaxed” [18]. Creativity was also valued with some singers expressing an appreciation of “[i]nnovative” [49] or “experimental” [69] leaders. Passion for music, particularly choral singing, was of clear importance to singers. Alongside “[a] passion for music and singing” [324] a number of singers also expected that conductors will show passion for the group they are leading, with statements including: “Lastly - passion you want to do well for her as she believes in you and the group with all her heart” [620]. Energy and enthusiasm were also cited as positive qualities in a choral leader. Singers report expecting conductors to show “[c]heerful enthusiasm in rehearsals” [16] and have the “[a]bility to transmit enthusiasm and energy” [118]. Finally, singers also described expecting conductors to be ambitious in a number of areas. Singers expected conductors to show “ambition for the choir in their repertoire and vocal ability”. Personal ambition was also appreciated, with singers stating that they expected conductors to show “[c]hallenge/ambition (for himself and for the choir)” [189].

Authoritative

Finally, singers’ responses also related heavily to conductors who show authority. Singers expect a choral leader “to be confident and be able to hold everyone's attention. They should be someone that the choir looks up to and wants to listen to” [224]. Decisiveness and determination were also frequently reported as important qualities. High levels of *Control* and *Discipline* were also expected by a large number of participants. These qualities were often related to rehearsal pacing, with participants stating that conductors should “be

able to control some very (sometimes) rowdy people and to do this in a very joyful way” [976] and many indicating a preference for a choral leader who is “[p]leasant and encouraging to people but also [sufficiently disciplined] and authoritative to be in control of proceedings (eg [*Sic*] nothing worse than singers chatting during a rehearsal)” [328]. These qualities also related to many singers’ expectations that a choral leader should have the “ability to command respect of the choir” [228] or that they “need to be worthy of respect” [456]. Participants’ appreciation of discipline was often related to *high standards*, with many singers desiring a conductor who shows “a little perfectionism” [115] or stating that they “also expect her to keep raising her expectations of what we can do” [302].

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the four codes within the *Personal Qualities* theme for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

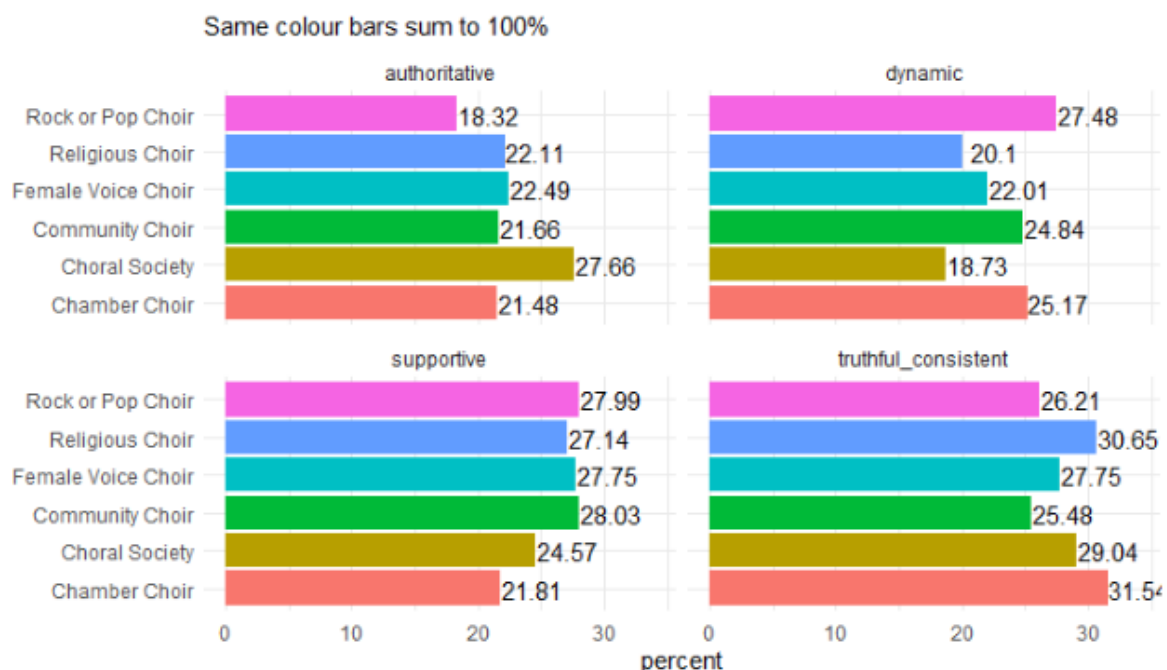


Figure 25. Percentage of coding assigned to each code within Personal Qualities theme, split by type of choir

Within the *Personal Qualities* theme shown above, the largest differences between types of choir are found between Choral Societies and Rock or Pop Choirs, with differences in the *Authoritative* and *Dynamic* codes of 10% and 9%, respectively.

6.5.2 Conducting tools

This theme (see Figure 23, p.188) describes the range of skills, knowledge, experience and capabilities expected of conductors by singers. Within this theme, four primary codes were generated: *Musical Skills*; *Communication Skills*; *Teaching skills*; *Qualifications, training, experiences, and professionalism*. Figure 39 below shows a table of the codes, sub-codes, and code descriptions within this theme:

Theme	Code	Sub-codes	Code description	Code as a % of theme
Conducting Tools	Musical skills	Arranging repertoire	Compositional and/or arranging skills	46%
		Aural skills, error detection, diagnosis of issues	The ability to hear the difference between accurate and inaccurate choral singing	
		Keyboard skills	The ability to play a keyboard instrument to support the choir in rehearsal and/or performance	

		Music literacy, theory, history and musicianship	Theoretical and musicianship skills	
		Performance skills	Any skills relating to the public performance of music both solo and choral	
		Singing skills and experience	Technical vocal ability	
	Communication skills	Articulating instructions and expectations	Verbal communication skills	44%
		Physical communication	Gestural, facial and bodily communication	
		Interpersonal	The ability to communicate with a range of singers with varying personalities, expectations and temperaments	
		Humour	The ability to use humour effectively and/or make people laugh	
	Teaching skills	Technical	The ability to teach choral-vocal pedagogy	6%
		Repertoire	The ability to train singers to accurately perform the required repertoire	
	Qualifications, training, experiences, and professionalism		Any prior musical education/training or certification, and/or a sense of professionalism in conducting practice	4%

Figure 26 - Table of Codes falling with the Attributes Theme

Musical Skills

Musical Skills were reported as an expectation by many participants. Many participants did not specify particular expectations of types of musical skill, only that they expected “[m]usical ability” [14] or “[l]argely excellent musical skill” [16] of their choral leader. The skills that were specified by participants fell into 6 sub-codes. The first, *Arranging repertoire*, refers to singers’ expectations that a conductor will “be able to arrange pieces to suit the different voices in the choir” [113]. Singers described expectations both that conductors

would arrange and rearrange repertoire, these were both placed within this sub-code. The second, *Aural skills, error detection, diagnosis of issues*, includes descriptions of the conductor's "[a]bility to hear all different parts and analyse difficulties singers/parts may be having" [78] and "the ability to spot and correct mistakes within a complex texture of sound" [15]. Some singers also expected that a conductor would have "At least basic piano skills" [23] or be "able to read music and notebash on a piano" [301]. These *keyboard skills* were usually described as a tool for conductors to use to support the choir either in their learning of repertoire or as an accompaniment to the singing, as opposed to a requirement for solo keyboard performance skills. The largest sub-code generated within this code was *Music literacy, theory, history and musicianship*. Many singers expected choral leaders to possess a sound knowledge of choral repertoire, stylistic conventions, and musical theoretical knowledge. Expectations included "a knowledge, or the ability to develop it, of the music (anthems, psalms, hymns, organ voluntaries) appropriate for the different times of the church year" [726] or a "[g]ood understanding of popular songs/genres and how they should sound eg [Sic] a "spiritual" v a pop song" [973]. Alongside a sound grasp of music theory, singers also expected conductors to demonstrate practical use of this theory, in areas such as displaying "[e]xcellent timing to keep to the beat of the piece" [150].

Performance skills were cited as important to some singers though there was little consensus between participants over whether these should be performance skills specific to the conductor in their own right, or whether "a good sense of what makes a good performance" [148] for the choir was of importance. Finally, *Singing skills and experience* were expected by many participants. Again, opinions diverged over whether these skills were important in their own right or whether the skills should be developed as a functional tool to be used in work with choirs. Some participants expected that "Being a strong singer

him/herself is almost a must for this” [339] whereas others link this to rehearsing, expecting the “ability to sing to demonstrate parts” [85].

Communication Skills

The *Communication Skills* code has been broken down into 4 sub-codes: *Articulating Instructions and Expectations*; *Physical Communication*; *Interpersonal*; and *Humour*. Whilst the inclusion of humour as a communication skill as opposed to a personality trait may seem incongruous, this definition is supported by Foot & McCreaddie who argue in their chapter of *The Handbook of Communication Skills* that whilst humour is often considered as a relatively stable way of expressing of personality, it is more useful to consider humour as a skill which can be nurtured and deployed at will. We are after all “in control of what we say and we do ‘initiate’ humour in order to achieve some interpersonal goal” (Foot & McCreaddie, 2006, p.294).

Data falling within this code demonstrate that singers expect conductors to be able to communicate clearly and in an appropriate manner at all times. Verbal communication skills are needed “[t]o be able to explain complex instruction/details clearly” [3] and to communicate succinctly what is being asked for and why. Non-verbal communication skills were also deemed to be of importance with singers expecting conductors to be “[a]ble to give crystal clear direction in conducting and to be consistent in what [their] non verbal directions mean when conducting” [175]. Interestingly, whilst non-verbal communication skills were often simply termed “conducting” by participants, this was not the most widely

reported communication-related expectation within the data set. Instead, a significantly larger number of data units were categorised into both the *Interpersonal* and *Humour* codes. *Interpersonal* data units refer to a conductor's ability to successfully communicate with a wide range of people. Singers expected conductors to have the "ability to communicate with people from all walks of life" [106] and to have "[p]eople skills - able to build trust and good a relationship with the choir so the choir is able to give their best" [700]. Diplomacy was often cited as an important quality in relation to interpersonal skills with an expectation the conductors would be able to balance differing viewpoints within the choir and communicate effectively and in a pleasant manner with those holding differing opinions. There was a real sense within the data set that many participants were willing to forgive other flaws within a conductor if balanced by good interpersonal skills. Finally, *Humour* was by far the largest sub-code in terms of the number of references within the data set. A sense of humour was often cited as a tool to be used either "to be able to cope when things don't go according to plan" [319] or to soften feedback by "inject[ing] some humour into any criticism" [150]. Many singers explained the function of conductor humour as a pacing tool, giving responses such as "[o]ur conductor has a brilliant sense of humour so we expect to be entertained by her wit while we are working hard - it makes the hard work fun" [904]. Having a sense of humour was frequently seen as "obligatory!!" [435] or the most important tool for a conductor to use and, for some singers, humour was a non-negotiable baseline expectation in a choral leader.

Teaching Skills

Although related to the *Teaching* theme within the *Areas of Responsibility* meta-theme, the *Teaching Skills* code relates specifically to descriptions of pedagogical skills and experience necessary to enact the conducting role, as opposed to expectations of types of teaching held by singers in terms of conductor duties/responsibilities.

Teaching skills expected of conductors fell into 2 sub-codes: *Technical* and *Repertoire*.

Technical skills refer to choral-vocal pedagogy and ranged from a formal expectation that a choral leader would take on the role of “Voice coach: through exercises and tuition helps the choir to improve vocal reproduction” [172] to a more informal expectation that they would be “[a]ble to teach us to improve the sound our voices make, to give tips about better breathing, where the voice should come from etc” [175]. Many singers also expected their leader to be skilled in teaching *Repertoire*, that is to say that they would have the “ability to teach voice parts to people who can't read sheet music” [551] or possess “[a]bilities to teach harmonies in 3 or 4 parts” [104]. Alongside teaching the notes, some singers also expected conductors to perform the role of a “music theory and historical context coach” [538]. Many singers reported appreciating the ability to teach contextual information, giving responses such as: “[h]e is also a musicologist, so gives lots of helpful and interesting information on composers, history and influences” [2].

Qualifications, Training, Experience, and Professionalism

Perhaps surprisingly, the number of data units referencing qualifications, training, or experience was low. Within this code, participants frequently referred instead to expecting a general sense of professionalism. Those participants that did expect qualifications generally did not specify that there should be a specific choral focus, instead that the conductor should be “[h]ighly qualified musically [with] a degree in music” [457] or that they should have “[t]raining and qualifications in performing arts, ideally to degree level and specialising in singing” [286]. Certain singers acknowledged that the type of qualifications earned might depend “on the age of the conductor, musical preferences of the conductor and choir (a PhD in medieval [*Sic*] music may not be valuable in someone conducting a barber shop group!)” [1075]. Generally however, responses grouped within this code referred more generally to an expectation that the conductor would be “[p]rofessional in work and choir relationships” [62] or more simply would demonstrate “[u]tmost professionalism” [130] in their work.

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the four codes within the *Conducting Tools* theme for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

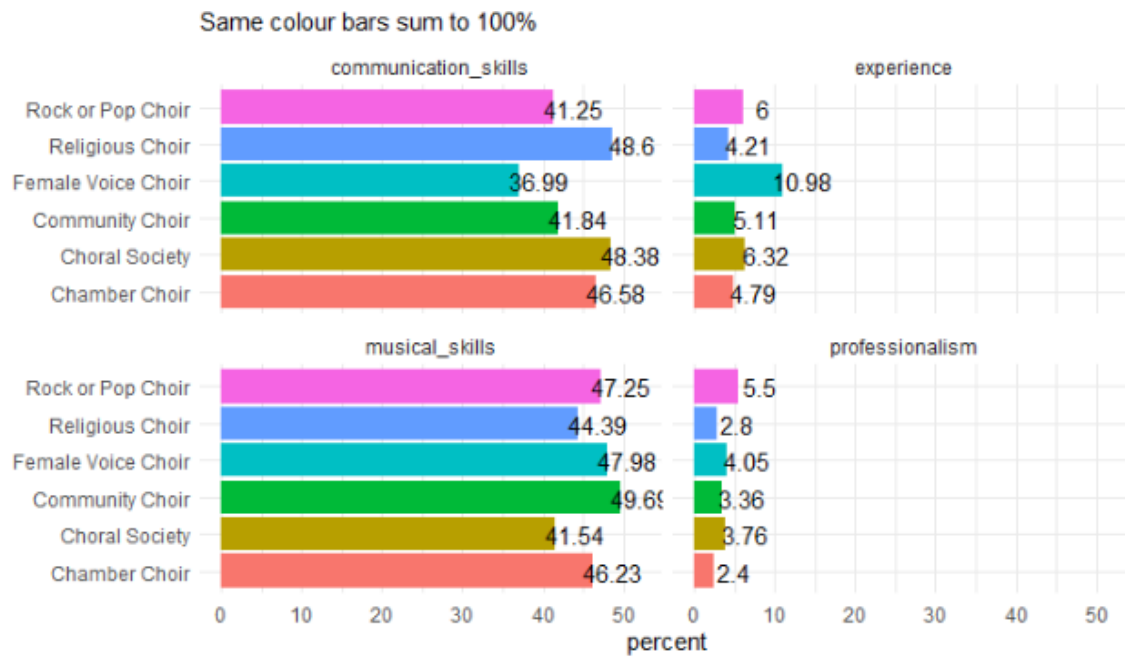


Figure 27. Percentage of coding assigned to each code within Conducting Tools theme, split by type of choir

Within the *Conducting Tools* theme shown above, the largest difference between types of choir is found within the *Communication Skills* code with a difference of 12% found between Religious Choirs and Female Voice Choirs.

6.5.3 Leadership Style

Leadership was identified as a theme within the *Attributes* meta-theme. Although these results respond in part to sub-question 1b., they also form a major part of the response to research question 2. As stated earlier, these results will therefore be presented alongside the main body of leadership-related results presented later in response to research question 2. It is important to note here however that *Leadership Style* was one of the 3 themes

identified as responding to sub-question 1b. **How might they enact responsibility in these areas?**

6.5.4 Conclusion – Attributes as a response to sub-question 1b.

As shown above, a wide range of themes and codes were generated within the *Attributes* meta-theme which respond to sub-question 1b., **How might they [conductors] enact responsibility in these areas?** Three themes were generated, namely: *Personal Qualities*; *Conducting Tools*; and *Leadership style*. Two of these were explored above and illustrated using quotes from the data set. *Leadership style* as a theme will be examined below in relation to the second overarching research question (see section 6.9). Before this, sub-question 1c. will be addressed.

6.6 Research question 1c. Might this set of responsibilities vary across genres/contexts? Meta-theme 3 – Variance

Results of the analysis suggest that singers do expect, or at least perceive, there to be variety in the potential responsibilities and behaviours of the choral leader across different choral settings. This is shown in the *Variance* meta-theme, shown in Figure 41, below:

Meta-theme	Theme	Code	Sub-Code	Sub-code description	Theme as % of meta-theme
Variance	Balance of responsibility	Expertise	Conductor expertise	Conductors' knowledge and skill in the use, development, and protection of singers' voices	61%
			Lack of conductor expertise	Singers perceptions of areas where a conductor's expertise has been insufficient	
			Singer expertise	Singers reporting being more knowledgeable or skilful than the conductor they have sung with	
			Singers' lack of expertise	Singers reporting not having a level of vocal knowledge or skill	
			Singing teacher	Mentions of any work with a singing teacher outside of the choral setting	
			Learning from other choir members	Skills or knowledge which have been picked up from other choral singers as opposed to a conductor or teacher	
		Singer/conductor responsibility	Singer responsibility	A perception that it is the singer's responsibility to care for/develop their own voice	
			N/a	Statements indicating that vocal care/development doesn't apply to the group the singer is/has been part of	

			Lack of care/development	A perception that a desired level of care or development has been absent from the singer's choral experience	39%
	Variety of experience	Bad experiences		Behaviour of conductors which has resulted in a negative experience for singers such as bullying, arrogance, or neglect	
		Context dependant/ variety of approaches		References by singers to having sung in multiple choirs and experiencing differing approaches to conducting by the different conductors they have worked with	

Figure 28 - Variance

Within the *Variance* meta-theme, two themes were generated: *Balance of Responsibility* and *Variety of Experience*. Each of the codes within these themes are explored below.

6.6.1 Balance of Responsibility

This theme contains two codes, *Expertise* and *Singer/conductor responsibility*.

Firstly, singers provided many interesting and introspective responses relating to the level of *Expertise* they perceived themselves to have, and that of their choral leader(s). This code was grouped within the *Balance of responsibility* theme due to participants frequently linking their descriptions of *Expertise* to whether or not they considered the conductor to have a role in voice-centred activity.

The notion of *Conductor expertise* and conversely any *Lack of conductor expertise* featured heavily within this code. Many singers expressed trust that “[my conductor] is experienced enough to not put us under undue pressure” [700] and that “I think both our conductors have a depth of knowledge about vocal health” [854]. Conversely, several participants believed that their conductor lacked expertise. Responses in this category however usually referred to specific areas of scarcity of knowledge such as: “[s]pending more time on breath and support would help with one choir I sing with, but the conductor doesn't seem to know how to fix that problem” [37] or “[i]n a tricky fast piece where the conductor just kept saying to “roll with it”. Nobody understood and she couldn't explain it” [606]. Particular negative references were made within this code to “non singer conductor[s]” [742], with many singers believing that “[g]enerally, instrumental musicians are better at conducting instruments not voices” [769].

In other cases, singers reported that “I have more vocal training than any amateur choir conductor I have worked with” or that “I'm a trained singer and teacher myself” [1039] and “I think my expertise exceeds that of my conductor on this one” [117]. In general, participants reporting *Singer expertise*, with a few exceptions, did not relate this to any expectation that conductors should not protect/develop other singers' voices, only that “[p]ersonally...[I] know what I need to do to protect my voice” [522]. On the other hand, several other participants commented on their perception that, as singers, they lacked expertise, and that therefore “I look to them to know when this is necessary. I wouldn't

know about the vocal skill if the conductor hadn't taught it" [493] or that "I'm not a trained singer so I listen to every word they say" [976].

Participants also reported gaining vocal skills or vocal care advice from other sources such as a *Singing teacher* or that they feel they are often *Learning from other choir members*. The *Singing teacher* sub-code was one of the larger sub-codes within the *Expertise* field. Data units within this field relate to singing teaching which takes place either privately, where singers report that "I received all technique training from singing lessons and not from any conductors" [620] or to teaching provided by the choir, such as: "in the choir I sang in above we were encouraged to have singing lessons (teachers were provided and we used to miss half an hour of rehearsals when we attended lessons)" [341].

The second code in the *Balance of responsibility* theme is *Singer/conductor responsibility*. This code contains data units which describe explicitly singers' opinions on where the responsibility for protecting or developing voices lies. The first sub-code within this code, *Singer responsibility*, describes responses from participants believing that "I mainly consider it to be my own responsibility to look after my voice. It is a large choir and I am not a soloist" [111]. As one participant points out, "An orchestral conductor wouldn't teach flute technique in a rehearsal and singers should be expected (and allowed) to take responsibility for their own vocal skills" [254]. Conversely however, other responses indicate a perceived *Lack of care/development* on the behalf of the conductor, with singers stating that "I don't believe the conductor considers our voices during our rehearsals, so generally does nothing to care for them" [1007]. One participant reflected that "[c]ompleting this survey makes me

realise I'm not being taught skills. Thanks for that" [1072], suggesting that this *Balance of responsibility* may not be something which singers necessarily consider when participating in a choir. Other participants rejected the idea that vocal care/development was an aspect of their choral activity, stating that "[p]rofessional conductors in professional choirs or ensembles do not usually do this!" [279] or more simply that "this is not a part of the choir I sing in. Warmup, straight to singing and nothing else" [423]. This was the only code in which data units *explicitly* mentioned a difference of approach being necessary for professional choirs.

6.6.2 Variety of Experience

A number of singers reported experiencing negative treatment from conductors. Many accounts of *Bad experiences* exist within the data set, with a large proportion of these suggesting that the participant had since stopped working with the conductor in question due to the negative experience they had. These bad experiences included instances of bullying such as: "I was in a choir for 8 years. The music was brilliant. The conductor was horrible, sharing his bad mood, berating sections and picking on them. I used to flinch walking into the Chapel. He seemed to like his singers scared" [18]. Other reports, instead of referring to conductors who targeted individual singers for negative treatment, described generally arrogant or aggressive individuals who were not appreciated by participants. Data within this code suggests that singers do not appreciate rehearsals centring around "the egocentric career aspirations of the MD." [339].

Other negative experiences described however related to the second code in this theme, *Context dependent* behaviours. The participant quote below is a good example of this, describing a conductor's negative behaviour being contingent on the employing committee's influence:

"I was a member of a traditional choral society which was dominated by a clique.

The clique decided how things should be and the conductor who was employed by the committee/dominant clique did as he was told. This meant that decisions that should have been made purely on musical grounds, such as who did solos and semi choruses, were made on political grounds, the clique had to be appeased" [74].

Not all *Context dependent* data units described negative behaviours. Many of these responses described observations singers made in relation to the conductor's level of responsibility in the overall running of the choir. Singers observed that "expectations vary from choir to choir. [T]he conductor could simply be involved in leading the musical delivery or take on a broader role in developing the culture of the choir and promoting the choir to the [p]ublic" [241]. It was also noted that the choral leader might adjust their level of musical expectations depending on the ability level of the singers. As one participant observed, "Depends on the choir. In my choral.society [*Sic*] of unauditioned singers the conductor interprets the music for the singers. In my semi professional chamber choir the conductor coaxes the singers to use their own knowledge and experience to best effect in performance, providing only guidance" [501].

It was also observed by a few participants that “[e]ach conductor is very different” [141] or even that “[e]very conductor leads in their own unique way” [139]. One participant went as far as to say “I can't [describe the role of my conductor] I'm afraid because I have had approximately 12 conductors in several choirs. It's just too impossible to answer = sorry!” [758]. Some conductors were judged to be better than others, or at least preferred by singers over others they have worked with, on the basis of their unique approach.

6.7 Research question 1, part 2 - What do singers expect...with particular reference to the voice-centred aspects of [the choral leader's] role?

Part 2 of research question 1 relates specifically to voice-centred activity, as defined earlier in Chapter 2 of this thesis (see section 2.3). The response to this half of the research question will be presented as the themes and codes generated in the voice-centred analysis, with general descriptions of each theme given. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the results presented in this section are based on the voice-centred data gathered via section 2 of the singer survey. Within these results, a small number of codes relating to vocal pedagogy were generated that were similar to those presented within the *Areas of Responsibility* and *Attributes* meta-themes above. These themes were generated based on data responding specifically to voice-centred questions and have therefore not been incorporated in the overall role focused results presented in response to part 1 of the research question. The codes presented below therefore do not represent a repetition of

results presented earlier, rather that similarities in low-level codes have been generated from separate data sets.

Following the presentation of voice-centred themes in response to question 1, responses to the related sub-question 1.d, **With which voice-centred areas of choral work are singers expecting a choral leader to be concerned?** will then be presented using codes and sub-codes generated within these themes, using quotes from the data set to illustrate each of these in greater detail.

6.7.1 Meta-theme 4 - Voice-centred Concerns

Figure 42, below, shows an overview of the themes and related codes generated in this stage of the analysis:

Meta-theme	Theme	Codes	Theme as % of Meta-theme
Voice-Centred Concerns	Vocal Advising	Vocal skills	45%
		Choral skills	
		Range/registers	
		Placement	
	A Vocal Duty of Care	Physical care	28%
		Flexibility	
		Conductor behaviour	
		Accessibility	
	Demands	Prioritising singers	27%
		Prioritising music	

Figure 29 - Voice-centred Concerns

The first theme, *Vocal Advising*, describes any instructional or developmental work a choral leader engages in with singers. This incorporates all choral-vocal pedagogy, and the development of repertoire-specific singing skills such as being “[t]aught staggered breathing by choir is okay for long notes” [249] or “exercises to learn to recognise the subject of a fugue and then to not to overtire oneself in the lesser parts of the fugue for each section” [227]. Responses within this theme suggested that singers were particularly concerned about receiving advice about the negotiation of register transitions or reaching notes at the extremes of their registers. Relating to this, singers also expressed concern about conductors’ role in helping them situate themselves in an appropriate section of the choir in

responses such as one participant's appreciation of a conductor who "[listens] to each section making sure we are in the right part for our voices" [453].

The second theme, *Vocal Duty of care*, refers to descriptions given by participants of behaviours observed in conductors which either protect singers or make choral activity inclusive and accessible to them. This theme relates to the *Safeguarding* theme discussed earlier, however this theme relates specifically to voice-centred concerns, in contrast to the more general notion of *Safeguarding* which related to care of the singers as a whole. Within this, four codes were generated: *Physical care; Flexibility; Conductor behaviour; and Accessibility*.

The third theme, *Demands* relates to descriptions of demands placed on singers, both those perceived as reasonable and those as unreasonable. This is divided into two codes, one which focuses on demands which prioritise singers, and the other on those which prioritise musical concerns. Many data units within these codes refer to the pacing of rehearsals, fatigue, and the extent to which the choir is challenged or pushed too far by conductors. Singers described both conductors who prioritise the singers in a positive way, and those who prioritise the music in a negative way. Singers reported appreciating considerations such as "[e]nsuring we don't sing for too long without a break" [113] and disapproving of demands such as "'More, basses, more, more!' When we're croaking away at C2 and can't give any more volume, and he bloody well knows that" [330].

The summary of the themes and codes above responds to research question, 1, part 2 -

What do singers expect...with particular reference to the voice-centred aspects of [the choral leader's] role? In the following section the codes and sub-codes grouped within these themes will be explored in greater detail in response to sub-question 1d.

6.8 Research Question 1d. What voice-centred areas of choral work are singers expecting a choral leader to be concerned with?

As shown above, results of the voice-centred analysis produced 3 themes: *Vocal Advising*; *Vocal Duty of Care*; and *Demands*. These themes have been grouped within a meta-theme named *Voice-Centred Concerns* (see Figure 42, p.236). Codes within these themes will be examined below, alongside selected quantitative results of questions from the singer survey, in response to sub-question 1d.

6.8.1 Theme 1 - Advising

Within the advising theme, 4 codes were generated. These are shown below in Figure 43 alongside the sub-codes contained within them and a description of each:

Theme	Code	Sub-code	Code description	Theme as % of meta-theme
Advising	Vocal skills	General vocal technique	Mention or examples of choral-vocal pedagogy	63%
		Explaining purpose	Explaining the reasoning behind any vocal demands placed on singers by the conductor	
		Diagnosing/fixing issues	Any vocal technical advice given relating specifically to the repertoire being sung	
		Feedback on singing	Conductor feedback to singers	
		Workshops/external coaches	Any workshops or coaching sessions offered to singers in addition to their regular choral singing	
		Lack of vocal teaching	Mentions of the absence of desired choral-vocal pedagogy	
		Not explaining how to meet demands	Absence of an explanation on how singers can meet the demands placed on them either by the repertoire or by the conductor	
	Range/registers (advising how to negotiate)	Rehearsing down an octave	Singing an octave lower than written in the score	19%
		Help with high notes/low notes	Technical advice to aid singers in reaching notes at the extremes of their ranges	
		Offering alternatives to notes outside range	Arranging repertoire to suit singers' voices or rearranging existing repertoire which contains notes outside of singers' comfortable ranges	
		Offering movement between voice sections	Giving the singers the option to move from one section of the choir to another to suit their comfortable singing range	
	Choral skills	Choral technique	Skills necessary for choral singing as opposed to solo singing	13%

		Style guidance	Advice on altering the way the voice is used to ensure the singing is appropriate for the genre/style of the repertoire	
		Interpretation	Interpretive advice, specific to each piece of repertoire including dynamic directions or breathing marks	
	Placement	Within sections	Advising/instructing singers on which section of the choir they should sing in	5%
		Venue or seating	The physical placement of the singers relating either to the rehearsal/performance venue choice or the singers' placement within this venue	

Figure 30 – Advising

Vocal skills

The first code, *Vocal skills*, refers to any developmental or remedial advising carried out with singers. This theme relates to *Teaching* as described earlier under the *Areas of Responsibility* theme, wherein singer responses indicated a general expectation that vocal skills would be taught by conductors. The *Vocal Skills* theme presented here contains specific descriptions of vocal exercises and actions cited by singers as examples of ways in which conductors teach vocal technique.

The largest sub-code within this code was *General vocal technique* which refers to choral-vocal pedagogy. Data units in this code include both general references to conductors carrying out this teaching such as “[a] lot of focus on using our air and our bodies, to produce a healthy sound” [31] but also multiple specific examples of techniques taught to

singers such as “move the tongue to make an 'ee' sound, instead of moving the lips” [175] and “[t]eaching the difference of sound with the position of the head ie [*Sic*] not lifting the head back on higher notes to avoid straining” [39]. A large majority of units of code which referred to specific techniques being taught described breathing exercises.

Related to this, a *Lack of vocal teaching* was mentioned in several responses. This sub-code incorporates any responses which describe frustration or disappointment with conductors who have neglected to teach vocal skills. Many singers describe being deeply affected by this perceived neglect, giving responses such as: “20 years ago a conductor (not current) urged us altos to sing a section of *Candide* by L Bernstein which has top F# at ff. [I]t was catastrophic for my voice as I am not a trained singer, just very experienced. He should have advised us about breathing and supporting the voice. It took 3 years for my voice to recover with help from speech therapy” [728] and: “In the past I sang alto for a very long time because I didn't know how to use my head voice and thought I couldn't sing above an E. Definitely due to lack of vocal coaching from school teachers and amateur choir masters!” [991].

Participants also report appreciating *Workshops/external coaches* being provided to aid with choral-vocal pedagogy. Some singers mention “[b]ringing in a vocal coach” [217] from outwith the choir, whilst others describe “a series of workshops run by our conductor” [256]. All responses included in this sub-code indicate that the provision of workshops and external coaching was received positively by singers.

Vocal skills – quantitative data

Related to these sub-codes, quantitative results of questions about the teaching of vocal skills from the singer survey suggest that the majority of singers in the sample appreciate choral-vocal pedagogy. All participants were asked: *Does your conductor teach you vocal skills as part of a rehearsal (i.e. do you learn singing technique during rehearsals as part of or in addition to singing pieces of music?)* 1053 responses were received to this question. 740 participants responded “yes”, and 313 responded “no”. These responses are shown as percentages in Figure 44 below:

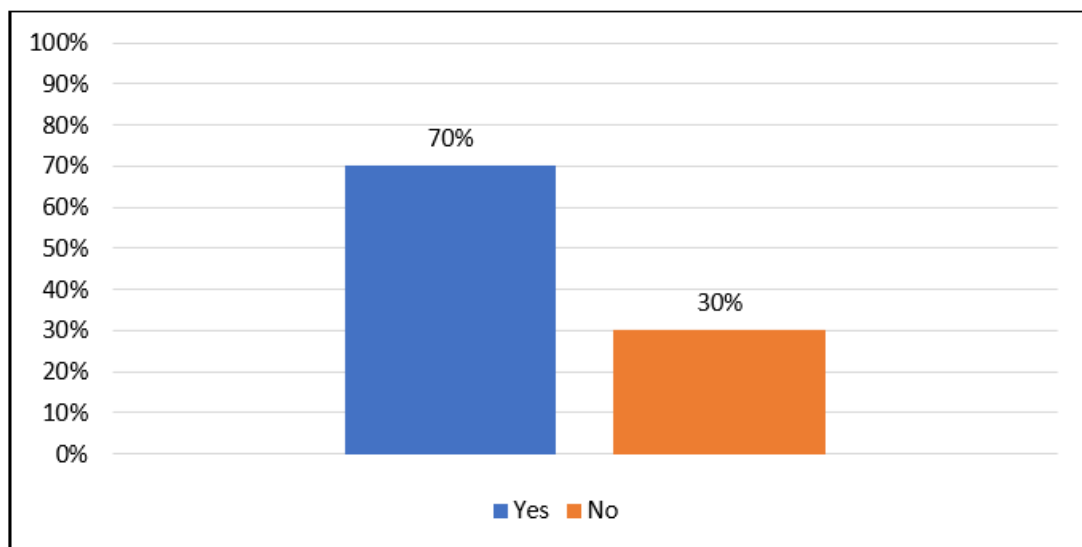


Figure 31 - Responses the question Does your conductor teach you vocal skills as part of a rehearsal (i.e. do you learn singing technique during rehearsals as part of or in addition to singing pieces of music?)

Those participants who answered “yes” to the previous question were then asked: *Do you find the vocal skills that you are taught are useful to you?* 736 responses were received to

this question. 724 participants responded “yes” and 12 answered “no”. These responses are shown as percentages in Figure 45, below:

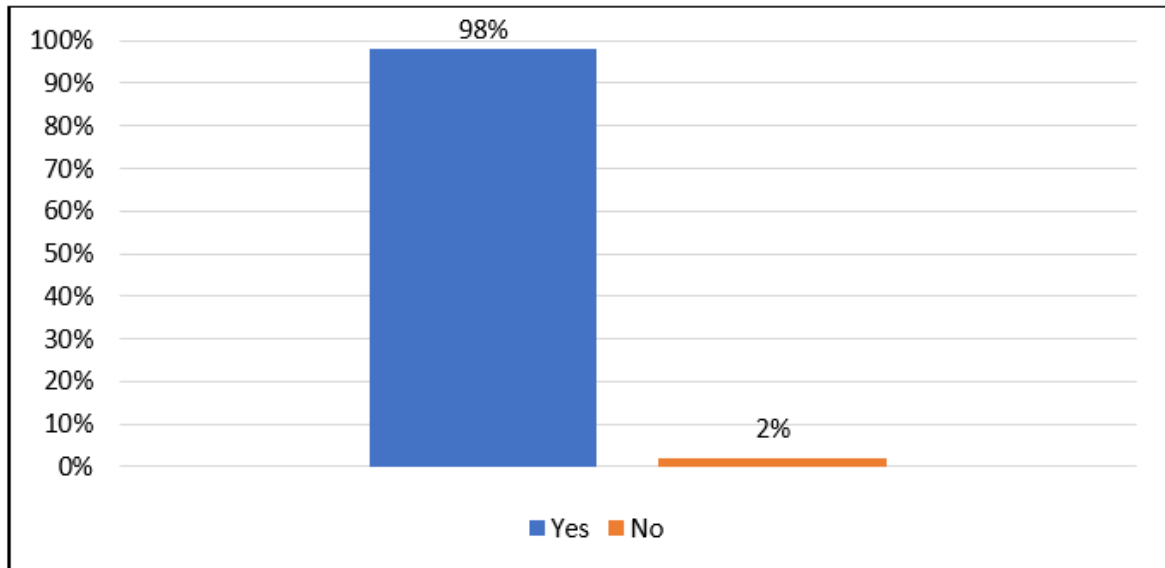


Figure 32 - Responses to the question Do you find the vocal skills that you are taught are useful to you?

As shown above, 70% of the singers in the sample are being taught vocal skills during choral rehearsals and 98% of these people do find this useful.

Those participants who answered “no” to the first question, *Does your conductor teach you vocal skills as part of a rehearsal...?* were instead asked *Would you like your conductor to teach you vocal skills as part of a rehearsal?* 309 responses were received to this question. 166 participants responded “yes” and 143 responded “no”. These responses are shown as percentages in Figure 46, below:

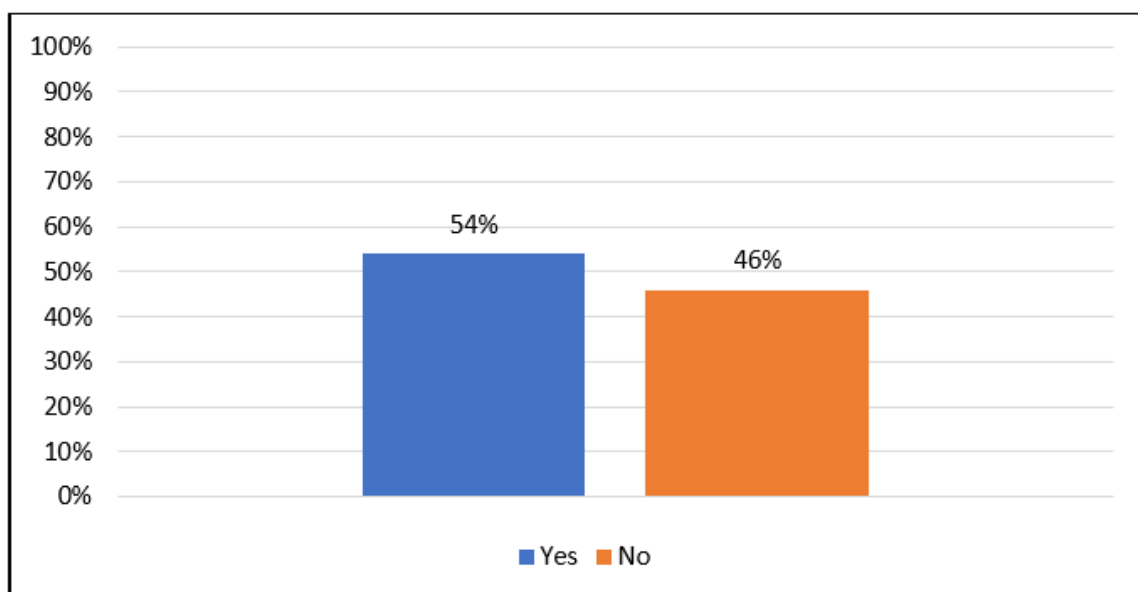


Figure 33 - Responses to the question Would you like your conductor to teach you vocal skills as part of a rehearsal?

A total of 1045 participants responded to questions 2 and 3. Of these participants, 724 answered “yes” to the question *Do you find the vocal skills that you are taught are useful to you?* A further 166 participants responded “yes” to the question *Would you like your conductor to teach you vocal skills as part of a rehearsal?* These responses are shown in Figure 47, below:

	Yes	No	Total
Do you find the vocal skills that you are taught are useful to you?	724	12	736
Would you like your conductor to teach you vocal skills as part of a rehearsal?	166	143	309
Total	890	155	1045

Figure 34 - Responses to vocal skills questions 2 &3

A total of 890 participants, or 85% of respondents to these questions, either find choral-vocal pedagogy useful, or would like the conductor to engage in choral-vocal pedagogy.

Alongside singers' descriptions of *General vocal technique*, many singers also report a desire for an explanation of the purpose of any vocal teaching which takes place. Singers appreciate conductors who "explain[] the biology behind what we do" [124] and who provide "[r]egular exercises with clear explanation of how to create different sounds for different purposes. Explained clearly and effectively" [343]. *Explaining purpose* relates closely to the negative descriptions contained within the *Not explaining how to meet demands* sub-code. Frustration was expressed by several participants with conductors requesting specific sounds from singers, or repertoire demanding a certain technique, without support being provided by the conductor in achieving these things. Singers state that "[s]hout[ing] 'all produce the same vowel sound, not 100 different ones' without advising which sound was sought" [152] is frustrating and that "I think too much is assumed. Lots of people [*Sic*] have spoken about "support" and "diaphragm" but didnt [*Sic*] explain what that all meant. Its only since having lessons I found teh [*Sic*] right muscles! Same with vowels people talk about rounded vowels [*Sic*] but what on earth does that mean? The language isnt [*Sic*] explained sufficiently" [565].

The *Diagnosing/fixing issues* sub-code relates to the teaching of vocal skills however focuses specifically on conductors' abilities to perceive vocal difficulties being experienced by singers related to the repertoire being sung and/or their role in fixing these issues. Singers

report appreciating “[p]articular emphasis on support generally and care around the passagio [or bridge between vocal registers] for higher notes” [33] and “[s]mall things for single pieces that often stick with you being encourage[d] to think about the hard palate in a low section of Brahms Requiem, or the soft palate (through yawning) for something high in Messiah” [37]. Responses also suggest that singers appreciate *Feedback on singing* such as generally “[p]roviding timely and appropriate feedback on the sound the choir produces” [56] or more specifically “[h]elp with breathing and posture. They can see how I am standing when I might not realise I'm leaning etc” [94]. Some singers felt very passionately that neglecting feedback was detrimental, with responses including: “Being allowed to sing badly when you kind of know you are but don't know what you are doing or why it is bad. I [crave] feedback then but sometimes am given positive [acceptance] of my flaws.. Fuck that!” [1021].

Range/registers

Whilst the *Range/registers* code could have been incorporated within *Vocal Skills*, the high number of references to range and registers justified this appearing as a code in its own right and makes up 19% of total coded units within this theme. Of primary concern was the expectation that singers would sing notes at the extremes of or outside of their comfortable singing range. The offer of alternative notes in this situation or the opportunity to move to a different section within the choir to avoid this eventuality was valued, with singers speaking positively of conductors who “acknowledge[] when pieces are at the edges of our ranges and adjusts the arrangements so none of us have to strain or struggle” [183] or that “our

conductor has always stressed that we are not bound to our vocal section. If the soprano section is too high then we can drop an octave or sing the alto part and vice versa" [221]. Several singers preferred however not to move section or adjust the arrangement of a piece but instead that the conductor helps them to extend their range by offering technical advice. As one singer puts it: "I'm an alto and, like many altos, I fear high notes and am convinced I can't reach them but of course I can! Our choir leader uses her knowledge of recoil breathing, the anatomy and physiology of the vocal folds and her own experience as a soprano singer to help us reach those notes" [566]. Finally, several singers note that whilst notes may not lie outside of their range, being asked to sing in a particularly high/low tessitura for a long period of time causes them fatigue and they appreciate "[r]ehearsing some sections an octave lower than written to save voice strain" [274].

Choral skills

Choral skills refers to any advice or instruction given by conductors which relates to the performance of choral music but is not solely focused on vocal technique. Participants describe appreciating advice on *Choral technique*, that is to say repertoire-related work which alters their vocal tone, such as "[l]ots of work on IPA [International Phonetic Alphabet] and making our vowel sounds the same to improve blend" [198] and being advised to "[breathe] with the choir (otherwise you feel there is no permission to breathe and the voice gets tighter and tighter" [254].

Descriptions of tone altering instructions are also found in the *Style guidance* sub-code, however this code refers more specifically to alterations made in relation to the genre in which the choir is singing. Singers observe that “[l]earning songs from other cultures means learning how to sing in different ways eg being more nasal or singing further back in your throat” [104] or appreciate guidance in finding “[a] way of singing to achieve Georgian, African etc music” [100].

Finally, singers also report appreciating advice relating to *Interpretation*, noting that “[w]e are taught how to put inflection into our songs so we are not belting things out constantly” [824] or that they find it helpful to “[sing] the words with meaning; with interest, excitement, etc to lift the voice preventing the tendency to sing under the note” [172]. Breathing was of particular concern within this sub-code with singers finding it constructive for conductors to “[encourage] singers to take more breaths! So many conductors expect choral singers to survive on such limited breathing” [1000].

Placement

The final code within the *Advising* theme is *Placement* which refers to the physical placement of singers within the choral situation, not to ‘placement’ of the voice which is covered in the *Range/registers* code. Singers’ concerns relate to their placement *Within sections* of the choir and within the *Venue or seating* configuration. Singer placement within sections relates to the conductor’s role in “[f]itting you in the correct voice section after audition” [62]. Several singers described auditions as a positive experience in relation to this

code with the audition providing the opportunity to discuss with the conductor where it would be appropriate for them to be placed within the choir. Many participants who did not have this experience report disappointment or perceived neglect, giving responses such as: “When I first started there was no check to see where I would fit. I began singing in the middle section but it hurt my voice so I moved up a section eventually” [662] and “[w]hen auditioning for a part, told voice was not in correct part of choir but not being time for discussion or ways of slotting into right part of choir. Felt like rug was pulled from under me feet and a huge loss of confidence but not support to put right” [187].

Singers’ placement within a venue and the choice of venue was of clear concern to several participants. Responses indicated a preference for consistency and careful consideration of atmospheric and acoustic conditions, with some complaining of singing “in lots of different places, in the cold” [13] or of “[t]oo many sings outside in fields (such as CarFest) where we all felt we just had to sing loud” [595]. Appreciation however was reported for guidance from the conductor on “when to stand or sit during rehearsal” [802] with some singers giving specific reasons for this such as: “Sometimes I'd like to stand for the more difficult pieces to ensure I am giving my voice enough support ” [415].

6.8.2 Theme 2: Vocal Duty of Care

Within the *Duty of Care* theme (see Figure 42, p.236), four codes were generated: *Physical Care*; *Flexibility*; *Conductor behaviour*; and *Accessibility*. These codes and their related sub-

codes are shown and described in Figure 48 below and each theme is then examined in further detail following this.

Theme	Code	Sub-Code		Code description	Code as % of theme
Vocal Duty of Care	Physical Care	Voice care	Vocal hygiene/ health	Conductor involvement in looking after the physical health of the singers' voices	69%
			Hydration	Advice and action on maintaining singers' hydration levels	
			Diet	Advice/action relating to singers' diets	
		Warm-ups	Warmups	Mention of warm-ups or examples of warm-up exercises used in choral settings	
			Benefits of warm-ups	Singers' perceptions of the benefits of the warm-ups engaged in	
			Lack of warm-ups	Mentions of the absence of warm-ups in choral settings	
			Physical	Particular mention of physical movements involved in warm-ups as opposed to vocal exercises	
			Cool downs	Exercises performed at the end of singing activity to warm-down the voice	
	Flexibility	Solo opportunities		Offering singers the chance to sing as a soloist within the choral singing	16%
		Letting people sit out if ill		Giving singers the option not to participate on the basis of health concerns	
		Giving time		Allowing singers time to reflect, repeat or collect themselves	
		Individual attention or sectional attention		Attention paid by the conductor to individuals or small groups of singers within the choir or conversely, not giving attention to individuals/small groups	
		Checking in		Consulting the singers during the process of rehearsing/performing.	
	Conductor behaviour	Demonstrating		Demonstrating desirable or undesirable vocal practices	11%
		Gesture		The use of gesture which aids/hinders the singers' vocal production	

		Encouragement/discouragement	The encouraging/discouraging manner in which the conductor interacts with the singers	
		Bullying/harassment	Verbal abuse or other negative treatment of singers by the conductor	
	Accessibility	Music available	Providing copies of sheet music to singers for use during and between sessions	4%
		Support materials	Providing resources which support singers in their learning/development outside of choir meetings	
		Medical considerations	Conductor actions which take account of or improve singers' health conditions	

Figure 35 - Duty of Care

Physical care

The first code generated in the *Duty of care* theme is *Physical care*. Within this code two main sub-codes exist: *Voice care*; and *Warm-ups*. A further level of coding was also generated to further synthesise this data. This coding hierarchy is shown in Figure 48 (above). The *Voice care* sub-code contains mentions of vocal hygiene or any reference to dietary or hydration advice given by conductors. Hydration was an area of concern for a large number of participants with many appreciating “[s]uggestions regarding adequate liquid intake” [49] or that “[w]ater is available at all rehearsals” [771]. Interestingly however, the specific instructions which participants reported receiving from conductors varied widely in relation to dietary and hydration advice. Data units contained instructions asking singers to hydrate anywhere between a number of days before singing, to 2 hours, 4 hours, and a few minutes before any singing activity. Dietary advice most often took the form of restrictions placed on singers with certain choral leaders asking singers to “avoid milk/dairy and avoid chocolate” [54] and others “[r]eminding us not to eat too much cake before rehearsal (wheat/gluten)” [564]. A very few participants reported instead being positively

instructed to eat particular foods such as “Kendal mints” [1019]. Vocal hygiene advice was mentioned by far fewer participants and was usually non-specific and more often an observation that “[o]ur director does a lot of ongoing research on singing and will give examples of things to avoid which can strain or damage your voice” [170] or that singers receive “[r]egular check ins and instructions on vocal health” [607].

The *Warm-ups* sub-code was one of the largest sub-codes generated during the voice-centred analysis. Warm-ups were almost unanimously referred to in a positive light in relation to voice-centred activity. Whilst some singers referred to a pedagogical element to some warm-up activity, linking this to the *Vocal skills* sub-code described above, the vast majority of participants viewed warm-ups as a precursor to vocal activity designed to prepare and protect voices and this sub-code was therefore placed within the *Physical care* code. Many responses referred to vocal strain, and gave specific examples of ways this was avoided, describing that “[singing] up and down the register using vowels and noises, and sing[ing] soft and loud, and...tongue and lip exercises which make my voice feel ready to go and easy before we start singing so it doesn’t feel strained” [337]. In addition to vocal exercises, several singers observed that the “order of material sung contributes to the warm up” [91] or that, as opposed to vocal warm-up exercises, physical exercises such as “dance type movements done as part of warm up is good reminder about needing to be relaxed in the body” [249]. Negative comments coded within this sub-code refer primarily to conductors who begin work without engaging the singers in warm-up exercises. Several participants strongly objected to “[c]harging into challenging repertoire not warmed up” [238], “not giving warm-up exercises but expecting us to reach very high notes” [455] or in

one case “singing last mvmt of Beethoven 9 without a warm up!!!!” [34]. A smaller number of responses referred not only to warm-up sessions, but also cool-down activities. There were very few specific examples of exercises used in cool-down periods. The general cool-down process was most often referred to in tandem with warm-ups, with singers observing that their choral leader “[e]ncouraged a warm down as well as warm up” [390]. All mentions of *Cool-downs* were described as a positive voice-centred activity.

Warm-ups – quantitative data

In relation to *Warm-ups*, a set of yes/no questions were asked. All participants were asked *Does your choir use warm-up exercises during rehearsals?* 1072 responses were received to this question. 966 respondents answered “yes” and 106 answered “no” to this question.

These responses are shown as percentages in Figure 49 below:

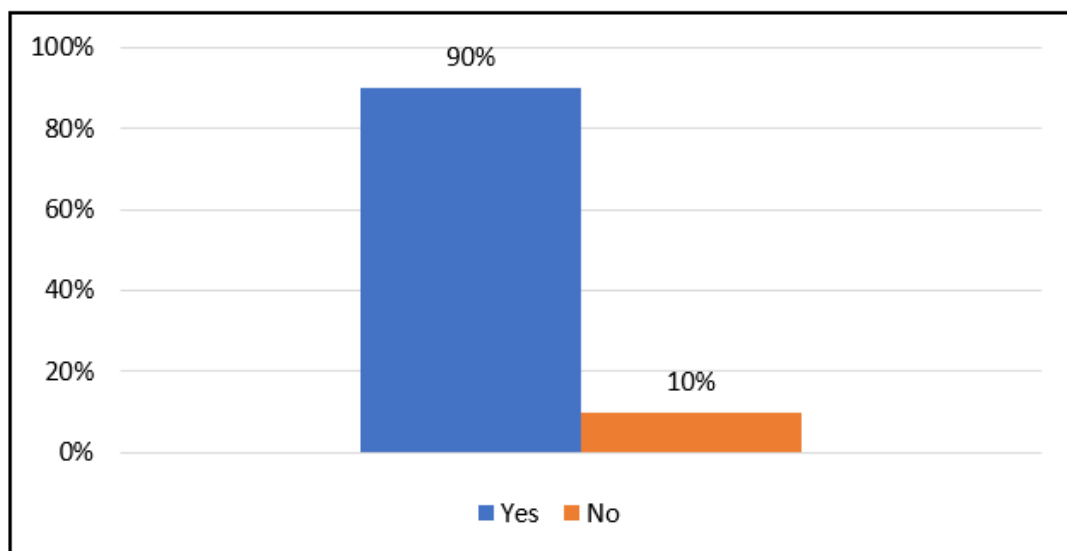


Figure 36 - Responses to Does your choir use warm-up exercises during rehearsals?

Those participants who answered “yes” to the previous question were then asked *Do you find these exercises useful?* 965 responses were received with 900 participants responding “yes” and “65” responding “no”. These responses are shown as percentages in Figure 50 below:

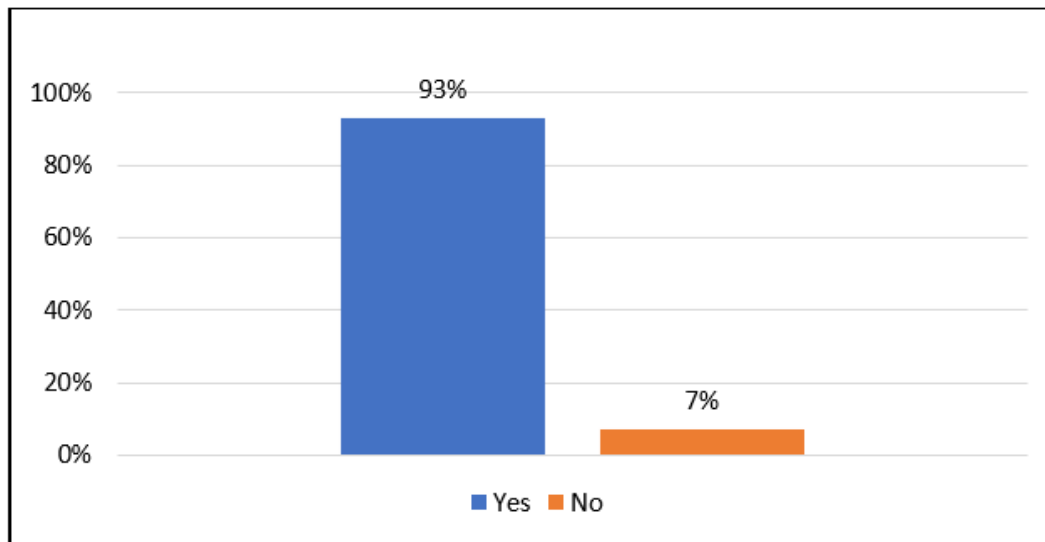


Figure 37 - Responses to Do you find these exercises useful?

If participants answered “no” to *Does your choir use warm-up exercises during rehearsals?* they were then asked *Would you prefer that your group used warm-up exercises?* 106 responses were received to this question with 62 participants answering “yes” and 44 answering “no”. These responses are shown as percentages in Figure 51 below:

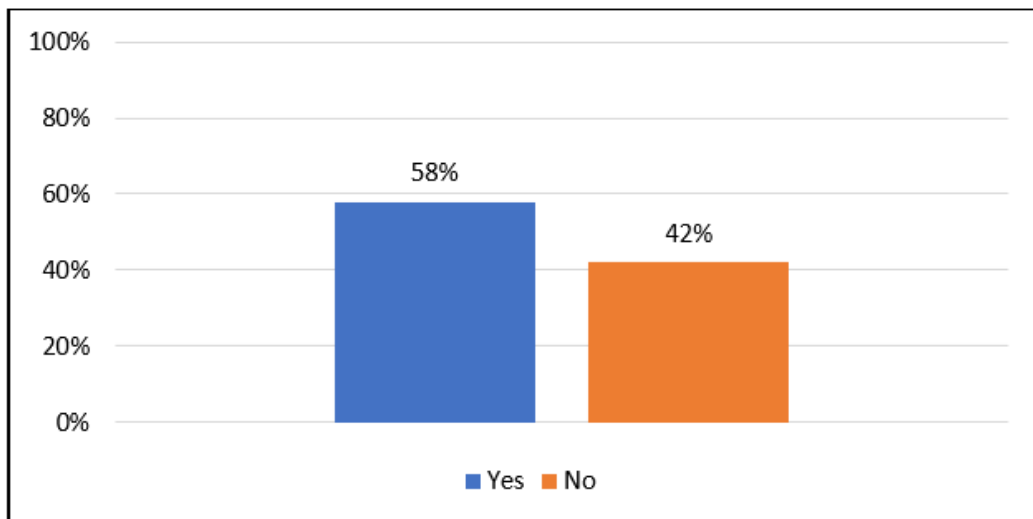


Figure 38 - Responses to Would you prefer that your group used warm-up exercises?

As shown in Figures 50 and 51 above, 90% of singers in the sample are currently given warm-up exercises as part of rehearsals and 93% of these singers find these exercises useful. This is 84% of the total sample.

Below, the number of responses to questions 2 and 3 are displayed:

	Yes	No	Total
Do you find these exercises useful?	900	65	956
Would you prefer that your group used warm-up exercises?	62	44	106
Total	962	109	1062

Figure 39 - Answers to warm-up questions 2 and 3

As shown above, 962 respondents out of a total 1062 either find warm-up exercises useful or would prefer to have them used in rehearsals. 90% of respondents therefore either currently find warm-up exercises useful or would prefer to use them.

Flexibility

The *Flexibility* code contains a number of sub-codes which refer to individual-focused consideration, namely: *Solo opportunities*; *Letting people sit out if ill*; *Giving time*; *Individual attention or sectional attention* and *Checking in*.

Solo opportunities were mentioned by many participants and were often cited as a method of developing skill and/or confidence in singers. Responses in this sub-code include: “My conductor gave me the confidence to do my first solo and I wasn’t sure I can sing to start with” [718] and “previous conductor in my main choir encourages members to sing solo parts during rehearsals, which boosted my confidence, and has led to me taking a solo in performances occasionally” [85]. Additionally, singers appreciated conductors being flexible in terms of attendance and input during periods of illness, reporting that “[i]f we have sore throats or colds, he won't push us to sing but does encourage us to attend so we get the benefit of the practice” [46] or that the conductor simply “[a]ccepts when you can't sing or got a cold” [28]. Individual/sectional attention was also generally perceived as useful with singers giving examples such as: “We have occasional one to two sessions when our MD sees us in pairs to help us make adjustments. These are very helpful but necessarily brief given time constraints...I think our MD is very approachable so if I was experiencing a particular issue I could just ask her for her advice” [240].

Participants also indicated that a conductor *Giving time* to reflect or revise was beneficial, stating that “[j]ust taking a few seconds to ground, breathe and stand tall makes a difference” [18] or that “[g]oing over something we are struggling with and exploring ways we can sing it more easily” [180] is helpful. Related to *Giving time* to singers, *Checking in* with choir members was also perceived as a positive behaviour which gives singers an opportunity to influence the course of a rehearsal in instances such as “[w]here pieces are demanding vocally and also had to be repeated several times, the conductor regularly checked with the relevant section as to how their voices were holding up” [228].

Conductor behaviour

The conductor’s behaviour was generally perceived by singers to influence their voice-use. Participants gave positive descriptions of conductors who were adept at *Demonstrating* good vocal practice or using *Gesture* to support effective vocal production. Singers gave examples of specific conductor behaviours in these areas such as: “Our conductor often demonstrates right and wrong techniques by singing them to us (she has a great voice and is a singing teacher too) and then gets us to copy them. I find it very useful” [359]. Examples of negative behaviours in these areas were also given, with singers perceiving that “[u]sing gestures/facial expressions which feel oppressive also tighten the voice” [254].

The choral leader’s behaviour in engaging with singers was also frequently mentioned. Positive responses make up the majority of data units within this sub-code, with singers reporting that “[t]hrough their encouragement and their inclusive non judgemental

approach I have learnt to believe that I can actually sing” []. *Encouragement* such as this was often deemed to be very important to singers, particularly in relation to their ability to commit to a high level of vocal effort. Other singers however report disappointment that their choral leader “uninspired me so I stop wanting to sing to the best of my abilities” [743]. The most negative responses in this code are contained within the *Bullying/harassment* sub-code. These data units are similar to those within the *Bad Experiences* code discussed earlier, however within this theme they refer specifically to bullying relating directly to individual singers, and particularly their vocal performance. Singers reporting bullying describe being deeply affected by this treatment, for example:

“I was once part of a popular music choir at school (mandatory extra credit for music gcse). The conductor was very against any use of using your stomach for singing and very much pushed for singing through the nose. She would even mockingly characture [*Sic*] a stomach voice and say it sounded silly. As a classical singer I felt alienated and like a lot of my valuable techniques gained with my singing teacher were being untaught for me and I was worried I would get in to bad habits for my private singing lessons and singing exams” [221].

Responses in this sub-code also indicate that singers do not believe that this behaviour will improve vocal performance, and instead that “[n]egativity and irritable criticism affects the voice enormously and easily becomes a vicious cycle” [254].

Accessibility

Making participation in choral activity accessible was of concern to participants. As discussed earlier, *Inclusivity* and *Support* were both codes that were generated in analysis of data relating to the overall role of the choral leader. Within the voice-centred analysis however *Accessibility* related primarily to 3 areas: making *Music available*; *Support materials*; and *Medical considerations*. The first two of these sub-codes refer to physical materials provided by conductors to support singers in choral music making. Providing sheet music was deemed helpful both in terms of singer preparation and in aiding development. Singers noted that “[m]aking difficult music available in advance of rehearsals beginning so there is the opportunity to work it into the voice before rehearsing it” [254] was helpful in preparing them vocally for rehearsals and also that development could be achieved in this way, stating that “by giving us the score, I have gradually learnt to read music. I could[] not do this before” [155]. In addition to scores, participants also reported conductors providing other support materials such as “arranged for [the singer] to borrow an electric piano so that I can practise reading music & singing” [434] or that the “[d]irector arranges recordings of each part for those of us who do not read music” [412]. In certain cases, choral leaders encouraged the use of supporting materials available externally, with responses including: “A choirmaster said “we’re not going to go over this section again because I know it’s hard on your voices. Please go and listen to a recording”” [534].

Medical considerations were also included within the *Accessibility* code. Several singers stated that their participation in a choir was either driven by or affected by a medical condition and that the conductor’s treatment of their voice should therefore take

consideration of this. Both positive and negative experiences were reported by participants. Many references to conditions that affect breathing such as COPD and asthma were made by participants. Some singers mentioned positive experiences with conductors in relation to their health conditions such as “I suffer badly from asthma and sometimes am unable to sustain a line. I have been given breathing and vocal techniques, specifically to aid my singing” [160]. Other singers however reported neglect on the part of the conductors saying that it was not appropriate to “[try] to get people to hold a note for a very long time. Can be unreasonable for people with lung or breathing problems like asthma and can lead to coughing spasms” [897]. Within this code, more negative than positive experiences were reported, with some referring to health issues they believed to be directly caused by poor choral leadership such as, as an example of voices not being looked-after well during choral singing, a complaint that: “Bizarrely, to not sing and strain my vocal chords [*Sic*] on a particularly high song. (I paralysed one about 20 years ago and it took a year to recover - but I went from soprano to alto and that’s as good as it will ever be)” [895].

6.8.3 Theme 3: Demands

Demands (see Figure 42, p.236) made of singers were categorised into two codes:

Prioritising singers; and *Prioritising music*. These themes and their relevant sub-codes are shown in Figure 53 below. Whilst the content of some of these sub-codes contains both singer and music prioritising behaviours, each sub-code was placed into the theme which best represented the tone of the majority of responses. Occasional illustrative quotes have been included in the full coding hierarchy (see Appendix) however to demonstrate responses which described the sub-code from an opposing perspective.

Theme	Code	Sub-code	Sub-code description	Code as % of theme
Demands	Prioritising singers	Session structure	The order in which activities are carried out within a rehearsal or performance	72%
		Breaks	The length, frequency and placement of breaks within a singing session	
		Repertoire choice	The selection of repertoire and the effect this has on voices	
		Concert day pacing	The length, frequency and timetabling of activities on the day of a performance	
		Not pushing past fatigue	Taking account of singers' endurance levels and not working past these	
		Discouraging over-singing	Advising singers not to force their voices past their comfortable working levels or allowing singers to 'mark'	
		Letting individual sections rest	Allowing sections of the choir to rest while the other singers continue rehearsing in order to allow rest/recovery time	
		Pacing within a piece for singers	Ensuring that vocal demands on singers are varied within an individual piece of repertoire	
		Teaching repertoire fully	Ensuring repertoire is learned/revised sufficiently for singers to sing comfortably	
		Challenging the choir	Pushing singers to develop through tackling bigger challenges and/or not demanding too much of singers in terms of skill level	
		Improvement/increased confidence	Singer development through long term participation in a choir	
	Prioritising music	Overwork	Demanding that singers push past their vocal limits in terms of e.g. volume, length of time singing, singing during illness	28%
		White/straight tone	Asking singers to produce a sound containing no vibrato	
		Singing outside of comfortable range	Demanding notes from singers which lie outwith their comfortable singing range	

Figure 40 - Demands

Prioritising singers

Responses in this area showed a clear concern for where the conductor's priorities lie during choral activity. Overall, sub-codes within this code refer primarily to pacing of work, and to the challenge/development of singers.

In terms of pacing, several singers' concerns centred around the *Session structure*, number and timing of *Breaks*, and *Not pushing past fatigue*. Responses suggested that singers are sensitive to fatigue levels and appreciate consideration shown for this in conductors' session planning. Singers preferred that "[w]e never spend too long on demanding pieces. The layout of the rehearsal always has something easier to start, a difficult and taxing work, and soemthing [*Sic*] easier to finish...[t]he structure of the rehearsal guarantees we do not stretch ourselves too far" [415]. Participants also described negative experiences in this area, such as: "Too many pieces in one rehearsal which had extremely highly demanding vocal sections. The accumulative affect [*Sic*] wasn't fully considered" [228]. Singers also appreciated conductors who show "[u]nderstanding when a piece is vocally tiring and not flogging the singers to death" [72] or "rehearsals being shortened when we get tired" [151]. Alternatively, breaks in the activity to allow singers to recover were also appreciated by many participants. Singers noted that not only was it important for there to be "regular breaks" [578], but also that the conductor should "[e]nsure rest periods are evenly spaced if a rehearsal is long" [279].

Pacing of activity was reported to be of particular concern in relation to performance occasions. *Concert day pacing* was one of the largest bodies of code within the *Demands* theme. Singers referred to a range of concerns/preferences however all of these related to pacing, either in terms of when/how long they were asked to sing, or in terms of permission to 'mark', that is to say not sing at full-voice, during rehearsals. Singers objected strongly to "[p]re concert rehearsals with orchestra where the choir is expected to stand, under lights, for long periods on the day of the concert. We are often too exhausted to sing well in the evening" [74] and complained that "[o]ften we have long rehearsals immediately prior to a concert, which puts a huge strain on the voice" [78].

Pacing also relates to three further sub-codes in this theme: *Discouraging over-singing*; *Letting individual sections rest*; and *Pacing within a piece for singers*. Participants spoke positively of choral leaders who discourage over-singing by "[e]ncouraging to mark when repeatedly going over things" [30] or "[help] us with not 'shouting' during loud bits, using dynamics and breathing more" [278]. Being permitted to rest whilst other singers work was also seen as an action that protects voices. Conductors who "break[] up the rehearsal by instructing different sections of the choir, allowing us to rest our voices" were appreciated [581]. Additionally, "[t]he way in which repertoire is rehearsed so that no undue strain is put upon the voice eg [*Sic*] tackling sections of pieces rather than just going fro [*Sic*] start to finish" [319] was seen as a positive measure which conductors could take to protect singers' voices.

The final pacing-related sub-codes relate specifically to repertoire. Participants described two separate repertoire-related actions that they perceived to be voice-centred. The first, *Repertoire choice*, was frequently described as a tool which conductors could use to develop singers' voices through participation in the singing group. Pacing the difficulty level of repertoire attempted across time was therefore seen as a positive conductor behaviour. Singers also noted generally that "[w]e sing such a wide repertoire we develop" [9]. Simply put:

"We are taught new techniques through the choices of repertoire. There are always new works which demand different techniques and having such a wide variety of pieces means there is always something [*Sic*] new to learn and develop" [415].

The second repertoire-related sub-code generated was *Teaching repertoire fully*. Within this sub-code, several singers complained of conductors showing a "[l]ack of patience, trying to put a concert together in to [*Sic*] short a time" [827]. Several singers suggested that this was counterproductive, and criticised conductors "[m]oving on with a very fast piece when some slow "note bashing" would have improved confidence and execution" [926].

Whilst many respondents criticised conductors moving too quickly in rehearsal, others pointed out that *Challenging the choir* was an important voice-centred aspect of the choral leader's role and, in some cases, related this to *Improvement/increased confidence*. Many participants perceived challenge as a welcome aspect of choral participation, saying "[our

c]hoir leader gives us parts which I wouldn't normally attempt but then gives us tips on how to approach the part i.e. using a different mouth technique" [922] or that the conductor will "encourag[e] me to sing through longer passages than I thought were possible in one breath" [16]. Conversely however, several participants reported disappointment in conductors who they believed failed to challenge their choir. Complaints were made by a number of participants such as: "I have witnessed, when in less experienced choirs, conductors who ignore choir members who may be incorrect simply because they don't think they can do it correctly" [275] and "leaving people singing flat on top notes and not correcting it or helping them find a way to reach them" [328]. For singers whose conductors did challenge them, or who simply found longer-term participation resulted in *Improvement/increased confidence*, voice-centred satisfaction was frequently reported. Singers were not always certain of what had been improved, but made observations such as "I am no musician and do not know much about "vocal skill"but I do know that I understand more now about how to make my voice sound brighter, lighter and stay in tune. However, I couldn't tell you exactly how this has been taught" [488]. Singers appreciated conductors who took time to help them, stating that "[b]uilding trust and confidence in my own ability has been the biggest skill I've been taught. Treating people as intelligent humans works wonders" [169].

Prioritising music

The second code, *Prioritising music* contains sub-codes in which the majority of data units refer to situations where conductors treated singers as a secondary concern, with musical or personal interests being favoured. Singers overwhelmingly expressed frustration and anger

towards conductors who did not treat singers as their priority in the choral situation.

Descriptions of *Overwork*, such as “[l]ong all day rehearsals [and r]epetitive singing of same passage with no feedback. Not working with the strength of force available in the choir and expecting too big a sound from a small group” [96] were described as negatively affecting voices and in some cases singers report that they lost their voice or even “couldn't sing for [Sic] weeks after!” [114]. The data set also contained many examples of what singers perceived to be inappropriate demands such as “Being told to take off all vibrato” [321] or “Putting altos on tenor parts that have sustained very low notes” [409]. These types of demand were recognised by singers as demands which conductors had made of them to meet their own aims without necessarily considering the effect this may have on the singer.

6.8.4 Conclusions – sub-question 1d.

As shown above, singers report expecting conductors' voice-centred concerns to lie within 3 areas: *Vocal Advising*; *a Vocal Duty of care*; and *Demands*. Within these themes a range of codes and sub-codes were generated and are described above.

This concludes the sets of results that respond to research question 1 and the related sub-questions. The next section of this chapter will move on to explore results of the analysis which respond to Research Question 2.

6.9 Research Question 2 - What forms of leadership are valued within a choral context?

6.9.1 Singer Survey Findings – Leadership Style Theme

Codes generated within the *Leadership style* theme, along with their descriptions are shown

below in Figure 54:

Theme	Code	Code description	Code as % of theme
Leadership Style	Visionary Leadership	Leadership which involves engaging followers emotionally and uniting the team around a shared vision (Avery, 2004)	84%
	Transactional Leadership	Leadership which depends on either/both incentivisation or threat of punishment Avery (2004)	13%
	Organic Leadership	Leadership arising naturally from a group or being shared within a group according to appropriate expertise or experience (Avery,2004)	1%
	Classical Leadership	The “Great-Man” style of leadership (Avery, 2004)	1%
	Contacts and/or Network	Networking skills and/or a pre-existing network of musical contacts that may be shared with the choir	1%

Figure 41 - Leadership Styles

The only code from the codebook (see Figure 17, p.174) which was not supported by any data was *Laissez-faire leadership*, that is to say the leader allowing followers autonomy, offering no guidance or sanctions for their behaviours. No data units were found which supported this code and therefore it does not appear in the results of the analysis. All participants were asked *What do you expect of your conductor as a leader?* The fact that no responses were received indicating a preference for a Laissez-faire style of leadership suggests that this approach would not be acceptable to singers.

The set of graphs below show the proportional split of the four paradigms of leadership coded within the *Leadership* theme, for each of the 6 types of choir selected for analysis:

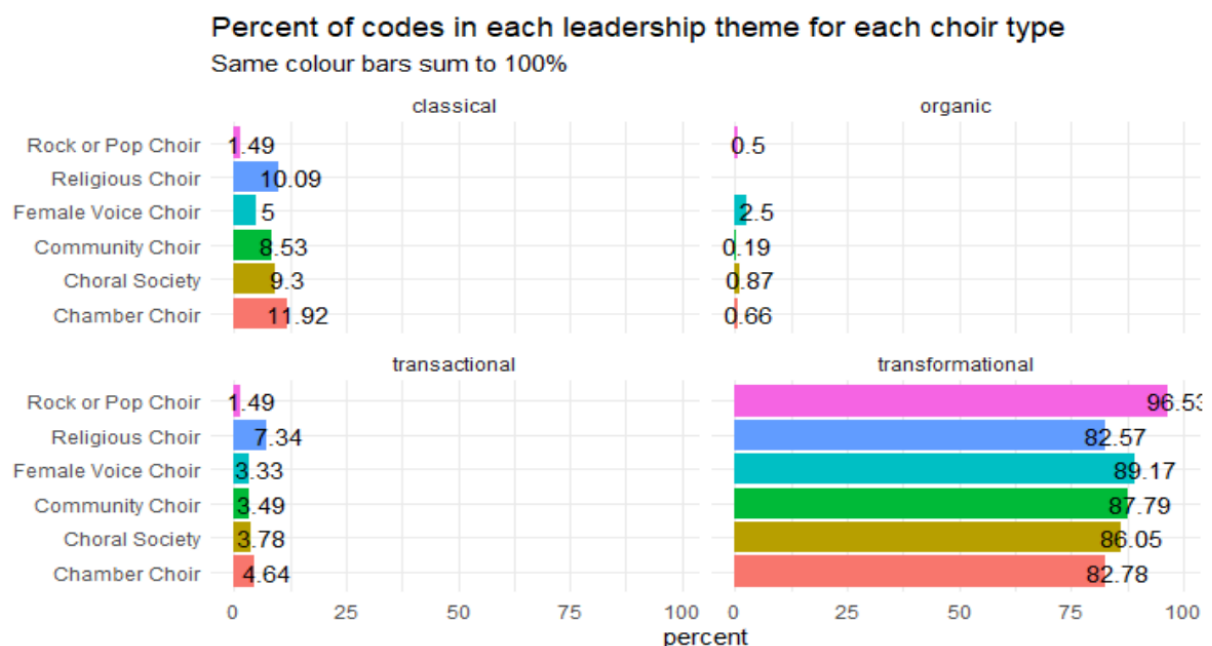


Figure 42. Percentage of coding assigned to each code within the Leadership theme, split by type of choir

Although the majority of coding shows a preference for Transformational Leadership by all types of choir, there are some differences found between types of choir within the other three codes in this theme. In particular, a 10% difference was found between Rock or Pop Choirs and Chamber Choirs within the *Classical* leadership code.

The vast majority of data units within the *Leadership style* theme were placed within the *Visionary Leadership* code. Many singers gave accounts of *Visionary* leadership in general, suggesting that choral leaders should “be able to help all choir members to reach a common goal” [810]. Two participants made explicit reference to Visionary leadership styles, one stating that the conductor should offer “Servant Leadership” [222] and the other that the conductor should “be a transformational leader” [940].

As outlined previously (see section 6.1.2.1) four sub-codes relating to *Visionary* leadership were generated using the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM) (Bass & Riggio, 2006): *Idealised Influence; Individualised Consideration; Inspirational Motivation; and Intellectual Stimulation*. These four codes are the markers of Transformational Leadership (*Ibid.*). The selection of Transformational Leadership as a theory of *Visionary* leadership for use in this analysis was justified as this is “arguably the most widely researched theory” (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020, p.2) of leadership and “[c]omparisons to [other Visionary] leadership approaches including authentic leadership, ethical leadership, servant leadership...highlight both strong relative predictive validity and incremental validity of transformational leadership over and above other leadership constructs” (*Ibid.*).

6.9.2 Transformational Leadership

Strong support was found for each of these codes within the data set. The codes, their descriptions, and illustrative quotations are shown below in Figure 56. Multiple quotations have been included in this table to reflect the large number of responses which were categorised into these four sub-codes.

Code	Sub-code	Code description	Sub-code as % of code	Example quotations
Visionary Leadership	Inspirational Motivation	Motivating and/or inspiring followers using positivity, enthusiasm, or describing attractive future states	36%	<p>“the ability to encourage and inspire the volunteers who comprise the choir.”</p> <p>“To get the best out of everyone and bring us all together to create beautiful music”</p> <p>“I would expect them to be able to make my senses come to life for a couple of hours a week.”</p> <p>“She motivates us to get going after a long day at work”</p> <p>“motivating, she keeps us going when she can see we are struggling.”</p> <p>“I want to be inspired and persuaded to be the best singer that I can be.”</p>
	Idealised Influence	Acting as a role model, displaying charisma and/or competence	27%	<p>“Leadership by example - always engaged, always listening, always polite, decisive when necessary.”</p> <p>“The conductor is the heart and soul of our choir.”</p> <p>“The most amazing person I’ve ever met.”</p> <p>“The one and only!”</p> <p>“Goddess”</p> <p>“Guru”</p> <p>“He is someone everyone looks up to and has an important role.”</p> <p>“Be able to sing and model.”</p>
	Individualised Consideration	Nurturing individuals, coaching and	23%	<p>“they ensure those with limited singing experience can gain the maximum from the process of choral singing in a performing choir.”</p>

		mentoring them as needed and offering opportunities for development or increased autonomy when appropriate		“supporter and advisor of members having learning issues.” “build skills of choir members” “to enable singers to sing better and to grow their skills as singers including vocal technique.” “recognising areas of strength and deficit within the choir,s [sic] vocal skills and working to improve on these.” “to help us individually to develop.”
	Intellectual Stimulation	Encouraging innovation and creativity and asking followers to input, to question routine processes and offer alternatives	14%	“Needs to listen to the committee. Also to the choir members. If he does not people will not come to sing.” “I expect them to be very open to outside ideas. Every conductor is a human, therefore not all knowing. If they listen to ideas from other singers (i.e. international singers like me, who have grown up with a different, sometimes more suitable singing culture), it gives them a chance to spice up songs and make them a more unique sound. Also, it gives them a chance to bring something different into the choir.” “willing to help/ hear you out, someone who is willing to compromise.” “...the conductor coaxes the singers to use their own knowledge and experience to best effect in performance, providing only guidance.”

Figure 43 - Singer survey responses analysed in relation to Bass & Riggio’s (2006) markers of Transformational Leadership

Inspirational Motivation

The largest sub-code within the *Transformational leadership* code was *Inspirational Motivation*. This sub-code describes motivating followers through inspiration, usually by describing attractive future states such as the achievement of a shared goal (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Many singers described their conductor as inspirational or motivating in general, however many others described specific inspirational expectations such as the responsibility “[t]o share their vision with us and ensure we understand it and buy into it” [31] or to

“[k]now how to get singers to join him or her in the shared idea of how the music should sound” [330].

Idealised Influence

Idealised influence is characterised by role modelling, leading by example, and/or being perceived as charismatic by followers. Certain followers may even perceive their leader to have extraordinary capabilities (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Participants’ responses described conductors as “[t]he most amazing person I’ve ever met” [177], “[t]he one and only!” [666], a “[g]oddess” [673] or “[g]uru” [677], and “the heart and soul of our choir” [23]. Singers also expected “Leadership by example” [15] and that the choral leader will “[b]e able to sing and model” [697]. Singers in the sample generally report looking up to their choral leaders and perceiving them to be charismatic and talented people.

Individualised Consideration

Individualised consideration involves coaching and mentoring followers and offering opportunities for development if/when appropriate (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Again, a large number of singers reported that their choral leader will “help us individually to develop” [266] or act as a “supporter and advisor of members having learning issues” [106]. Data within this sub-code suggests that singers appreciate conductors who can identify individuals in need of support and “ensure those with limited singing experience can gain the maximum from the process of choral singing” [31].

Intellectual Stimulation

The final sub-code in this area of analysis, *Intellectual stimulation*, whilst comprising the smallest number of data units within the *Transformational Leadership* code, was also supported by the data set. Data within this code relate to the encouragement of innovation in followers, inviting input, and a willingness to alter practices on the basis of this input. Although fewer data units were generated within this code, singers described conductors offering *Intellectual stimulation* in highly positive terms. Singers also frequently relate an expectation of *Intellectual Stimulation* to their own perceived level of musical ability. A typical response included within this sub-code states:

“I expect them to be very open to outside ideas. Every conductor is a human, therefore not all knowing. If they listen to ideas from other singers (i.e. international singers like me, who have grown up with a different, sometimes more suitable singing culture), it gives them a chance to spice up songs and make them a more unique sound. Also, it gives them a chance to bring something different into the choir” [86].

More generally, singers expected conductors to be “willing to help/ hear you out, someone who is willing to compromise” [275] and that “the conductor coaxes the singers to use their own knowledge and experience to best effect in performance” [501].

As found in the job advert analysis, responses to the singer survey also suggested strongly that Visionary leadership was preferred by singers, although again some support was found for other forms of leadership.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership codes made up 13% of the *Leadership Style* theme. Within this code, participants stated that “[p]eople management skills” [515] or being “able to manage a huge group of people” [178] were positive skills for conductors to possess. Although references were made to management, these descriptions were brief and it was not possible to ascertain the extent to which passive or active management was expected. Most data units within this code refer to the management of large groups of people and imply that rehearsal discipline is expected as part of the choral leader’s role. Singers also indicated that in their opinion a conductor’s role should involve “mak[ing] demands to increase levels of performance” [91], a behaviour which sits squarely within the Transactional paradigm. These data units do not refer however explicitly to any sanctions that choral leaders are expected to place on the singers being disciplined. This code however did contain some coding which overlapped with the *Individualised Consideration* sub-code described above. Data which referred to a conductor’s role in coaching and guiding singers was incorporated within this code. It was determined that leadership theories such as Situational Leadership Theory which fall within the Transactional paradigm require leaders to engage in coaching followers and this data was therefore included within this code.

6.9.3 Organic Leadership

The clearest account of *Organic leadership* in the data set was described by singers who participated in Sacred Harp groups, such as:

In my Sacred Harp singing group, the "conductor"'s [sic] role rotates between each song. The song "leader" chooses the speed and duration (how many verses) of the song, keeps time simply, brings in parts if she wishes to and leads minimal changes in dynamics and tempo [284].

Although some accounts of practices such as this were found within the data set, very few instances of *Organic leadership* as the sole leadership approach for any choral group were reported. More common within the responses were accounts such as

"We have a Chorus Director (and a Deputy), who prepares the Chorus for all concerts; doing warm ups, advising on vowel placement, mouth/throat/tongue use to provide the desired sound and not to burn out, working on the text (with language coaches where applicable), the notes, and so on. The Conductor comes in at the final few rehearsals to bring their vision to fruition" [766].

These examples however could be more accurately described as organic leadership practices, such as shared responsibility, as opposed to truly organically collaborative leadership approaches.

6.9.4 Classical Leadership

Classical Leadership was described by only a very few participants, and this code made up only 1% of the total coding within the *Leadership style* theme. Those who did describe this approach did so in positive terms and related this style of leadership to their conductor's level of expertise, saying that "[t]he conductor is a professional and should be given professional autonomy" [74] or that "[h]e is the music leader and is the 'expert'. He has final say on what we sing in a concert" [258].

6.9.5 Contacts and/or Network

Related to their leadership role, conductors who have access to *Contacts and/or a Network* which choirs can access were described as preferred candidates for the leadership role by a small number of participants. Although references to *Contacts and/or Network* made up only 1% of the coding within this theme, singers reported clear reasoning for why they believed a conductor's access to these networks could be important. Singers stated that their conductor will have "[i]deally also good connections in the wider music world to get the best performance opportunities for the choir" [1040] and that "[c]onnections with other musicians who can play and sing to a good standard at performances is valuable" [16].

6.9.6 Conclusions - Leadership

A variety of expectations were reported within the *Leadership style* theme. Although some participants described leadership behaviours relating to *Classical, Transactional, and Organic* leadership approaches, these descriptions appeared much less frequently than descriptions of Visionary leadership. In particular, strong support was shown for the use of

Transformational Leadership within a choral setting. All four areas of Transformational Leadership were represented within the data set, with *Inspirational Motivation* being described as an expectation most frequently, and fewer descriptions of *Intellectual Stimulation* being found. All data units relating to *Transformational Leadership* described this approach in positive terms.

6.10 Research Question 2a. What does voice-centred choral leadership look like in practice?

The response to sub-question 2a. will be addressed in the following chapter (Discussion) as this response follows a reflection on all results presented above relating to the choral leader's role, the voice-centred aspects of this role, and the leadership style adopted.

6.11 Conclusions

This chapter has presented the results of analysis of the job advert data set and the singer survey data set in response to the study's research questions. Question 1, **What do singers expect of a UK-based choral leader, with particular reference to the voice-centred aspects of their role?** was responded to in two halves, by presenting meta-themes and themes produced during analysis. Sub-questions were then responded to using the codes and code descriptions generated during analysis.

In response to the first half of question 1, **What do singers expect of a UK-based choral leader?**, two meta-themes were presented. The first, *Areas of Responsibility*, referred to expectations of the conductor's role in terms of duties to be carried out. The second meta-theme, *Attributes*, referred to the qualities and skills expected to be necessary to fulfil this role.

The themes within these meta-themes were then explored in response to the sub-research questions. In response to question 1a., **What areas of the singers' experience is the choral leader expected to take responsibility for?**, four themes were generated to describe singers' expectations: *Vision*; *Safeguarding*; *Coordination*; and *Teaching*. Three themes were then presented in response to sub-question 1b., *How might they enact responsibility in these areas?* within this: *Personal qualities* *Conducting tools*; *Leadership style*.

Sub-question 1c., **Might this set of responsibilities vary across genres/contexts?**, was then responded to with a description of the *Variance* meta-theme, containing two themes: *Balance of Responsibility* and *Variety of Experience*.

The second half of research question 1, **What do singers expect...with particular reference to the voice-centred aspects of [the choral leader's] role?**, was then responded to with an overview of the themes relating to voice-centred conductor activity which fell within the *Voice-Centred Concerns* meta-theme. Three themes were generated: *Vocal Advising*; *A*

Vocal Duty of care; and *Demands*. These themes and their related codes were explored in further detail in response to sub-question 1d., **What voice-centred areas of choral work are singers expecting a choral leader to be concerned with?** A small amount of quantitative data was also presented alongside themes relating to *Vocal skills* and *Warm-ups* showing that the majority of singers approve of the use of warm-ups and the teaching of vocal skills as part of choral rehearsals.

Finally, research question 2, **What forms of leadership are valued within a choral context?** was responded to. A small amount of data was found describing *Classical*, *Transactional*, and *Organic* leadership approaches, however the vast majority of responses suggested that *Visionary* leadership was preferred by singers. In particular, *Transformational Leadership* was described by participants in positive terms.

Following this presentation of results responding to the research questions, the next chapter will present a discussion of these findings. A response to research question 2a., **What does voice-centred choral leadership look like in practice?** will also be presented following this discussion.