

**A Survey of African American Female Choral Conductors  
on Spirituality and "It Factor" Choral Performances**

By

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## Abstract

Stunningly beautiful choral performances move audiences. Educators have debated why some musical moments touch listeners deeply and others, although technically sound, are nonetheless unremarkable. Some experts note that an audiences' emotional engagement heightens enjoyment (Thompson, 2007) and that choral expressiveness is a key factor in their engagement (Condon, 2015). Moreover, others attest that spirituality plays a role in how one experiences transcendence and transformative musical experiences (Palmer, 1995; Jordan, 2015; Habron & Van der Merwe, 2017). This study will explore prominent choral conductors' perspectives on the qualities and practices that produce unforgettable, charismatic, "It Factor" choral performances. More specifically, the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate if there is a correlation between the "It Factor" choral performance and spirituality.

The It Factor is an experiential phenomenon that defines choral performances which produce a conglomeration of the following attributes: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, and expressed levels of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional engagement of all participants (audience, conductor, and choir), producing not merely a performance, but a performance experience that is transformative and transcendent. This definition was developed as a result of the researcher's Ed.S. field project study entitled "The 'It Factor' in Producing Exceptional and Aesthetically Pleasing Choral Performances: Qualitative Interviews with Four Distinguished Choral Conductors" (Shuford, 2019).

The present study investigated African American women choral conductors' perceptions concerning spirituality and the "It Factor". The researcher collected information needed for the study by a web-based Qualtrics survey that the researcher developed that also included The

Intrinsic Spirituality Scale by Hodge (2003). Participants ( $N = 41$ ) rated the extent to which the nine constructs represent the “It Factor”. Most participants indicated that all constructs: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, mental engagement, physical engagement, emotional engagement, spiritual engagement, transformation, and transcendence are necessary and important in “It Factor” choral performances. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation test revealed that spiritual engagement is positively correlated with the “It Factor” as it concerns spiritual engagement being important, and necessary in generating “It Factor” performances, and in how confident one feels in generating “It Factor” performances.

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I am grateful beyond measure for this extenuated educational journey. While it has been filled with multiple and diverse learning encounters, hills and valleys, rivers to cross, and mountains to climb, I can say like the hymnist Andre' Crouch, "through it all, I have learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God"! I would truly like to honor my dissertation chairperson, Dr. Jane Kuehne. I would liken her unto as unto both a Joan of Arc—a fierce, shrewd and wise warrior who will go into battle with and for you, and a "John the Baptist" who has gone before me (and countless others) to prepare the way for me to be successful in navigating through this journey. Thank you for the countless hours of guidance, wisdom, knowledge, and assistance. I am thankful to Dr. Powell who helped initially helped me to verbalize and make sense of the whole "It Factor" concept that was brewing in my heart and imagination. To the additional members of my committee, Dr. Chih-hsuan Wang, and Dr. Guy Harrison, thank you for your wisdom, guidance, encouragement, and support. I am grateful to Dr. Strom for his refreshing input and sacrifice of time as my outside reader. I also honor Dr. Nancy Barry who began this initial journey with me by giving me a paradigm "shift" concerning the possibility of me becoming a researcher and pursuing a Ph.D., and for assisting me with my Ed.S. field project which was the foundation for this study. I would also like to thank Dr. Henry Findlay, Dr. Wayne Barr, Dr. Elisha Dung, and Dr. Natasha Jenkins for the many times I asked for your wisdom and assistance, and you so kindly extended it to me.

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an end but who have also been cheering me on. Thank you for your love and support, always. To my grandchildren Markese, Kayliana, Bryson, and Majesty—I love you too, and I am thankful for your support. To my big brothers and sisters-in-love, thank you for your love and support. To my church family, former students, current students and close friends, thank you for being a blessing in my life.

Finally, to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the true and living God, whose name I have called upon continuously, and the one who sees and hears me, the undeniable “It Factor” be all praise, glory and honor, now and forever—Thank you Lord for seeing me through.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, who managed a household of five children, handled the books for my father's construction business, modeled continuing education for me as she went to technical college later in life to gain a degree in upholstery. She has been my biggest cheerleader and a model of what a strong and Godly woman looks like. I also dedicate this dissertation to my sister, who has inspired me all of my life as a phenomenal musician, singer, conductor, educator, counselor, and minister of the Gospel. Thank you for pushing me, believing in me, and encouraging me ALL of my life. You are my hero.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	4
Dedication.....	6
List of Tables .....	11
List of Figures .....	13
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	14
Background.....	17
Need For the Study .....	18
Purpose of the Study .....	19
Assumptions.....	19
Delimitations.....	20
Limitations .....	20
Research Questions.....	20
Definitions.....	21
Chapter 2 Review of Literature.....	23
Aesthetics.....	23
Spirituality.....	27
Exceptional Musical Technique/Technical Accuracy .....	30
Multi-level Connectivity/Synergy .....	34
Mental, Physical, Spiritual, and Emotional Engagement .....	37
Transcendence and Transformation.....	39
Chapter 3 Methods .....	41

Participants.....	41
Advantages and Disadvantages.....	45
Chapter 4 Results .....	49
The Respondents.....	49
Choral Experiences of Adjusted <i>N</i> Conductors .....	53
Research Question 1: To what extent do respondents agree/disagree that the nine constructs that represent the “It Factor” choral performance?.....	54
Aesthetic Beauty .....	54
Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression, and Interpretation .....	56
Interconnectedness and Spirituality .....	58
Mind and Body .....	61
Emotional, Spiritual, Transformation, Transcendence .....	63
Research Question 2: How much do participants agree the nine “It Factor Areas” are necessary and important for “It Factor” performances? .....	66
Research Question 3: How confident are participants in their ability to generate “It Factor” qualities in choral performances, and how often? .....	69
Confidence .....	69
Occurrence .....	71
Research Question 4: How do participants define their own spirituality based on Hodge’s (2003) Intrinsic Spirituality Scale? .....	73
Research Question 5: How does spirituality correlate with the “It Factor” choral performance?.....	75



Research Question 6: What effect does spirituality have on participants’ self-reported abilities to generate It Factor-type choral performances? .....	77
Understanding, Interpretation, and Performance .....	77
The Effect is Null/Small, Helpful Not Necessary.....	77
Transcendence.....	77
Connectivity .....	77
Research Question 7: How do participants self-define the It Factor? .....	78
God or Spirit generates the “It Factor”/is the “It Factor” .....	78
Musicality, Engagement, Synergy, and Movement .....	78
Connectivity, Transcendence and Power .....	79
Musical Artistry Transformation and Transcendence.....	79
Final Comments: Do you have any additional comments about this topic or survey?.....	80
Chapter 5 Discussion .....	81
Summary.....	81
Implications.....	82
Finding One: The “It Factor(s)” makes our choral performance-experience more enjoyable/Aesthetic Beauty is important in generating the It factor(s) .....	83
Finding Two: Exceptional musical technique, expression, and interpretation are important in generating the “It Factor” .....	83
Finding Three: Connectivity and Engagement are important in generating the “It Factor(s)” .....	84
Finding Four: Spirituality is important in generating the “It Factor” .....	85
Conclusions.....	87

References.....	89
Appendix A: Survey Instrument.....	99
Appendix B: Email and Social Media Invitations .....	111
Email.....	111
Social Media .....	111
Appendix C: IRB Approval Email.....	112
Appendix D: Open-ended Question and Comments Responses.....	113
In your opinion what effect (if any) has spirituality had on your ability to generate "It Factor" type choral performances? .....	113
Earlier, I defined the "It Factor" in this survey, but how would you define the “It Factor” in choral music? .....	115
Do you have any additional comments about this topic or survey? If so, please type them below. (optional).....	117

## List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Data Analysis Plan</i> .....	45
Table 2 <i>Reliability Statistics</i> .....	48
Table 3 <i>Respondent Ethnicities, Age, and Sex Assigned at Birth</i> .....	50
Table 4 <i>Level of Choral Group, Years of Experience, and Highest Degree</i> .....	51
Table 5 <i>Religious Affiliations</i> .....	52
Table 6 <i>Aesthetic Beauty Descriptive Statistics</i> .....	55
Table 7 <i>Aesthetic Beauty Frequencies</i> .....	56
Table 8 <i>Descriptive Statistics for Performance Enjoyment and Exceptional Technique</i> .....	57
Table 9 <i>Frequencies for Performance Enjoyment and Exceptional Technique</i> .....	58
Table 10 <i>Descriptive Statistics for Levels of Connectivity</i> .....	59
Table 11 <i>Frequencies for Levels of Connectivity</i> .....	59
Table 12 <i>Descriptive Statistics for Connectedness as Audience Member and Conductor</i> .....	60
Table 13 <i>Frequencies for Connectedness as Audience Member and Conductor</i> .....	61
Table 14 <i>Descriptive Statistics for Mind and Body</i> .....	62
Table 15 <i>Frequencies for Mind and Body</i> .....	63
Table 16 <i>Descriptive Statistics for Emotion and Spiritual Engagement</i> .....	64
Table 17 <i>Frequencies Emotion and Spiritual Engagement</i> .....	65
Table 18 <i>Descriptive Statistics for “It Factor” Performances</i> .....	67
Table 19 <i>Descriptive Statistics for “It Factor” Performances</i> .....	68
Table 20 <i>Descriptive Statistics for “It Factor” Performance Confidence</i> .....	70
Table 21 <i>Frequencies Table for “It Factor” Performance Confidence</i> .....	70
Table 22 <i>Descriptive Statistics for “It Factor” Performance Occurrence</i> .....	72

Table 23 <i>Frequencies Table for “It Factor” Performance Occurrence</i> .....	73
Table 24 <i>Intrinsic Spirituality Scale Descriptive Statistics</i> .....	74
Table 25 <i>Frequencies for Spirituality Scale</i> .....	74
Table 26 <i>Significant Spearman’s rho Correlations</i> .....	76

## List of Figures

Figure 1 <i>Connections Between Conductor, Music and Score, The Choir,</i> <i>Audience, and Spirit</i> .....	36
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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

As a child, I was drawn to the beauty, aura, and mystical power of the sound of the church choir. As a result of growing up attending church, and being surrounded by musically talented siblings Gene, James, and in particular my sister Barbara, I acquired an early love and affinity for choral music. I was often intrigued by my church's young adult choir, the Voices of Zion, which my sister directed at times. In the early seventies, the Voices of Zion sang gospel music in four-part harmony instead of 3-part harmony, as a result of having grown up participating in their school music programs, but also as a result of having been trained by one of the former pastor's wives—Mrs. Mamie L. Schultz. My siblings periodically reminisced about the discipline she required, and how she required them to learn anthems and spirituals.

My siblings also ruminated on the teachings of their college choral conductor, Dr. Otis D. Simmons. Hearing the accounts of his strategic vocal training techniques, his imaginative and creative methods of interpreting biblical stories, coupled with his ability to bring meaning and life to a text fascinated me. Over the years, the repeated recollections of my siblings' stories and love for music made a profound impact on my perception and understanding of choral music. Unbeknownst to them, they were building within me a reservoir of perspectives and qualities that would enhance my love for choral music, impact my teaching practices, and embellish my teaching philosophy.

One of the most potent and impactful influences in my choral music development occurred while I was in high school. Our high school choir attended a concert by Morgan State University, at this time under the direction of Dr. Nathan Carter. After attending this concert, my perception of choral sound was never the same. Dr. Nathan Carter and the Morgan State

University Choir was phenomenal. I could not believe the level of excellence that pervaded not only their classical repertoire, but also the rousing, yet polished culminating gospel selections they performed at the end of the concert. I was mesmerized by the sound they evoked and intrigued to discover how it was accomplished. At the beginning of my sophomore year at Huntingdon College, I was favored with a scholarship to study at Morgan and accompany the choir occasionally on the gospel selections. This was one of the most exciting and enriching educational experiences in my musical evolution. During this period, Dr. Carter taught me, indirectly as through osmosis, about cultivating and crafting choral sound, voice training within the choral rehearsal, evoking the essence of “choral excellence,” and creating transcendent and spiritual singing experiences. I made many mental notes that I would later take back to my church choir, and later add and implement into my choral philosophy and pedagogy. These notes reflect things such as Carter's attention to details in sound production such as pronunciation, diction, and enunciation, the selection of repertoire, and the song order during a concert.

Initially, as I considered a topic of focus for my research, I was intrigued to investigate the qualities and practices which produce these types of compelling and transcendent choral performances. In doing so, I had hoped that I could confirm my own hypotheses and consequently design a roadmap for others who had similar interests to follow. The spiritual aspect of the phenomenon, the “It Factor” seemed to compel my attention; however, when I discussed it with some, my idea was met with some hesitancy and caution, as to not be offensive or polarizing to those who may not embrace religious tenants or who may view spirituality in a non-academic manner. In an attempt to comply and align my study with more academically acceptable frames of thought, I was unable to completely escape considering the concept of spirituality as a key component in this academic discovery/journey. It is interesting to note that

the origins of Western music history (the first 1400 years) which date back to the Medieval time period (450 A.D- 1450 A.D) are firmly rooted in religion and spirituality through chants, the establishment of singing schools, and a vast collection of liturgical music through the Roman Catholic Church (Willoughby, 2010). Therefore, because of my own roots in the Christian church, I must acknowledge the vital impact that religion and spirituality have played in both my understanding and personal ability to implement and produce music within the choral setting—therefore I did not attempt to exclude these factors.

What is the It Factor? Is it flawlessly executed vocal technique, sensitively shaped phrases, and demonstrative dynamics? Is it aesthetically pleasing to the audience’s ears and eyes with its balance and blending of voices, crisp consonants, and properly placed vowels? Is an “It Factor” choral performance reflective of choristers with facial expressions that parallel the meaning of the text and an overall visual presence on stage that is synonymous with excellence? Does it exude synergy and connectivity among the conductor, the choristers, the composition, and the audience? Does it deliver an emotionally expressive and meaningful textual interpretation that is transcendent, reaching not only the mind and intellect, but also the heart and innermost being of its listeners? Does spirituality play any role in delivering such a compelling performance? The English Oxford Living Dictionary defined “compelling” as “evoking interest, attention, or admiration in a powerfully irresistible way” (“Compelling,” 2020). This study seeks to investigate the combined results of these qualities and characteristics to define the compelling performance more clearly and thus add to the conceptual understanding of the It Factor. Additionally, the study seeks to understand what role, if any, does spirituality play in generating the compelling choral performances. In my Ed.S. field project, I interviewed four distinguished choral conductors on their practices and the qualities that produce exceptional and aesthetically



pleasing choral performances. The research from this project assisted me in developing the following working definition of the It Factor. The It Factor is an experiential phenomenon that defines choral performances which produce a conglomeration of the following attributes: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, and expressed levels of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional engagement of all participants (audience, conductor, and choir), producing not just a mere performance, but a performance-experience that is transformative and transcendent. Considering this definition and the aforementioned qualities and questions, it is evident that an It Factor performance is a powerful yet complex process and a combination of multiple musical and non-musical elements that will be further expressed throughout this study.

## **Background**

“What we have to offer, for consciousness, is a correct analysis of what the world is like. Up to now we have had a partial analysis. Everything that explains the world has in fact explained a world that does not exist, a world in which men are at the center of the human enterprise and women are at the margin ‘helping’ them. Such a world does not exist—never has. Men and women have built society and have built the world. Women have been central to it. This revolutionary insight is itself a force, a force that liberates and transforms” (Lerner, 1981).

Research reveals that women, in general, are an underrepresented and marginalized population in society and as it concerns many professions (Wooten, 2017; Begeny, Ryan, Moss-Racusin and Ravetz, 2020). The Black female is even more marginalized as our American history reveals her perilous plight in this country. The African American woman’s role in American society was altered significantly from that of her African-derived ancestry (Burgess, 1994). In Western Africa prior to colonization, women had leadership positions and substantial

influence in areas of trade, economics, and politics (Achebe, 2011; Adu-Boahen, 2018; Sudarkasa, 1986). The perils of slavery in America altered the African woman's reality and purpose from one that reflected leadership and value to a reality of domination, subjugation and cruelty. African women were societally and culturally refashioned to accommodate a caste system of slavery. As the property of the slave owner, black women were repurposed as slave breeders for the plantation, mammys, field workers, and as sexual objects. She [the African American Woman] has evolved from not being seen as a person of worth beyond breeding and plantation work, and being denied an education, to now attaining to the highest levels of academia. These levels of prestigious leadership include positions in music as educators, performers, and conductors. As reflected in the words of Maya Angelou, "out of the huts of history's shame...up from a past that's rooted in pain, I rise" (Angelou, 1978). Although the primary focus of this study is to explore the relationship between spectacular choral performances and spirituality, because I am a Black woman, I have chosen to highlight this particular group to increase my knowledge of those who currently make up this population and to contribute to a body of research that addresses and gives voice to the perspectives, feelings, and expressions of distinguished black female musicians/conductors.

### **Need For the Study**

While current scholarship has addressed significant aspects of choral performance and pedagogy, prior to this study, there are gaps in the literature concerning studies that address this specific combination of elements defined in the It Factor performance - which includes a combination of the technical, expressive, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual qualities of musical performance. Consequently, there is a gap in understanding how all of these components work

together in creating the It Factor-type performance, therefore this study is needed to evaluate these variables and address how spirituality may also impact these components.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American female choral conductors on the “It Factor” choral performance and to determine the effect, if any, that spirituality has in generating these types of performances. The results of this study can potentially provide conductors with information that can assist them in understanding the exceptional and aesthetically pleasing choral performance and the role that spirituality plays in its execution. Data from this study could also be used as an instrument for assessment, reflection, and improvement in developing transcendent and transformative choral performances. This study does not attempt to reflect specifically on the African American female experience as a choral conductor, but attempts to give voice to this specific population’s perspective on the “It Factor” and seeks to determine if there is a correlation between the “It Factor” performance and spirituality.

### **Assumptions**

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Participants would respond honestly and accurately.
2. It was appropriate for these research participants to participate in this study because they were African American female conductors who have received doctoral or masters level degrees.
3. These participants have highly successful careers as choral conductors having taught on the middle school, high school, collegiate, community, or professional level.

4. The results of this study will provide significant teaching resources for both novice and experienced choral conductors.

### **Delimitations**

This study will involve African American female choral conductors who have earned a graduate degree, and who have facilitated highly successful choruses at the middle school, high school, university or professional community chorus level. These conductors also have choral groups that have consistently received superior ratings in adjudicated performances, and/or have participated in events sponsored by their professional music affiliations on the state or national levels. This study will also include conductors of prominent community choral groups who have an established reputation and are in high demand to perform at select community events and performances. Conductors of instrumental ensembles will not be included in this study because the study focused on conductors of choral music.

### **Limitations**

The data gathered for this study will be limited to the accessibility of the participants, and their availability to complete the study. The results of this research may not be generalizable because this is a limited population which may result in a small sample size.

### **Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, mental engagement, physical engagement, emotional engagement, spiritual engagement, transformation, and transcendence represent the “It Factor” choral performance? (42 Rating Items, Part 2)

2. How much do participants agree the following “It Factor Areas” are necessary and important for “It Factor” performances? (18 rating Items, Parts 3 & 4)
3. How confident are participants in their own abilities to generate “It Factor” qualities in choral performances and how often are the areas evidenced in their choral performances? (18 Rating Items, Parts 5 & 6)
4. How do participants define their own spirituality based on Hodge’s (2003) Intrinsic Spirituality Scale? (6 Rating items, Part 7)
5. How does spirituality correlate with the “It Factor” choral performance? (6 Rating Items, Part 7 and 3 Rating Items from Spiritual Engagement, Part 2)
6. What effect does spirituality have on participants’ self-reported abilities to generate It Factor-type choral performances? (Part 8, Q1)
7. How do participants self-define the “It Factor”? (Part 8, Q2)

## **Definitions**

- **Spirituality:** Pertains to an “integrating life force which permeates and co-creates other dimensions and includes a transcendent aspect that provides a pathway to higher levels of consciousness, higher power, or universal intelligence; it also pertains to “a dynamic process that involves a search for meaning, purpose, truth, love/caring, and a connection to others, nature, and possibly a Higher Power” (Delaney, 2003).
- **Connectivity:** A multi-level synergistic bonding process that is engendered between spirit (one’s own spirit through mindfulness and or a divine presence) and the conductor, musical score, choir, and ultimately an audience, resulting in an exceptional and charismatic performance-experience.

- **Transformative:** “An experience is fundamentally transformative in that it changes one’s relationship with the world.” How one perceives and values the world is enlarged, and therefore causing the “individual to interact with and be in the world differently” (Pugh, 2011, p.110).
- **Transcendent:** “An occasion of music making that is distinguished by two main qualities. The first quality is that the performer is functioning at his or her very best – at the height of his or her abilities. Second, these experiences are marked by the performer’s sense of being a part of something larger than oneself in some way – perhaps by being a part of a long-standing musical or cultural tradition, by being a part of a particular social group, or by being a part of larger forces of nature or of the universe” (Bernard, 2009)
- **Aesthetics:** can be defined as the philosophical study of beauty and taste (Britannica, 2020).
- **It Factor:** is an experiential phenomenon that defines choral performances which produce a conglomeration of the following attributes: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, and expressed levels of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional engagement of all participants (audience, conductor, and choir), producing not just a mere performance, but a performance-experience that is transformative and transcendent.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

There is an extensive body of research covering the various aspects of choral music performance but limited research in the areas that address the specific combination of qualities addressed in the “It Factor”, particularly as it concerns aesthetics, technique, expressivity, and spirituality. The review of literature in this study is designed to provide a deeper understanding of the following areas: (a) aesthetics, (b) spirituality, (c) exceptional musical technique, (d) multi-level connectivity or synergism, (e) mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual engagement (f) transformative and transcendent performance-experience. This literature review will examine the related research gathered from peer-reviewed journal articles, research studies, textbooks, and dissertations in order to gain a deeper understanding of the components of the “It Factor”. It will also build a foundation for understanding spirituality and its correlation, if any, in delivering “It Factor” performances.

#### **Aesthetics**

While many elements contribute to producing the “It Factor” in choral performances, a philosophical discussion of aesthetics offers a primary starting point to begin this journey into understanding how we perceive, value, analyze, and experience art. Aesthetically pleasing performances engage both the hearts and minds of listeners and performers. The goal of the “It Factor” performance is for performers to transcend the average and ordinary, and achieve that which is stunningly beautiful and emotionally captivating. The “It Factor” represents this type of artistic expression, and it reveals aesthetic beauty in its highest form. According to Reimer (1970), “Any success at all in capturing and presenting a sense of expressiveness that is of ‘feelingfulness’ is artistic success” (p. 39).

Aestheticism can be defined as the philosophical study of beauty and taste (Britannica, 2020). Many philosophers attest that aesthetics should be implemented in the educational process. Reimer (1970) suggested that the major task of aesthetic education, as it concerns aesthetic experience, is to impact one's capacity to have "aesthetic experiences" (p. 82). Dalcroze also advocated the importance of teaching aesthetics in music education. He urged teachers to awaken a "love for life in beauty, and beauty in life" in their pupils (Jacques-Dalcroze, 1930, p. 190). Plato posited that the "end" or purpose of music was the "love of beauty," (Plato, 2017, Line 403-C) and that this beauty had the ability to affect all of the other areas in a person's life (Plato, 2017, Line 401-E). Therefore, musical training was considered by these philosophers as a necessary tool in cultivating a sense of beauty within humanity.

Scruton (2016) suggests that we as humans possess a need for beauty that longs to be satisfied so that one might experience a fulfilled existence. Consequently, we encounter experiences in which beauty transports and engages us with experiences that are "sacred, mysterious, and beyond the reality of this present world" (Scruton, 2016, p.8). Kant also determines that "every rational being needs aesthetic experience and is significantly incomplete without it" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). The It factor concept represents these types of aesthetic experiences that exhibit the power to move us beyond our present realities to an elevated awareness of beauty. Habron and Merwe (2017) purported that when this awakening and awareness of beauty occurs, a state of ecstasy becomes possible. Bogdan (2010) related this aesthetic experience to "being seized and transported outside of oneself and experiencing pleasure so intense that it seems too painful to endure" (p. 119). Emily Parker (2011) concurred with these beliefs concerning the experiential nature of musical performance. She asserted that when participants sing the correct notes and execute other significant elements of music, the



singers enjoy a “sense of accomplishment” (Parker, 2011, p. 308). Parker further explained that this “sense of accomplishment” consequently produces a “musical high” that, once experienced, fuels students’ desire to achieve it again (Parker, 2011, p. 308).

Aesthetic beauty goes beyond mastering basic musical technique. While it combines the foundational elements of music (melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, timbre, texture, and form), its success is contingent upon how these elements are perceived, executed and expressed. Expression is an essential part of what makes musical performance significant and valuable (Juslin, 2003). Expression causes audiences to prefer a live performance over a computer generated one, or the preference of one version of a song above another (Juslin, 2003). Considering these qualities, it is without question that musical and emotional expression are elements of musical performance that significantly contribute to the production of the It Factor. Elson’s Music Dictionary defines “expression” as “that quality in a composition or performance which appeals to our feelings, taste or judgment displayed in rendering a composition and imparting it to the sentiment of the author” (Expression, 1905). Conductors of choral ensembles cultivate musical expression in many ways: through textual interpretation, storytelling, by manipulating dynamics and other musical cues in the music, and through conducting gestures.

Spacing, sound, and acoustics have profound effects on the quality, perception, and reception of a compelling performance. Spacing arrangements can improve visibility for the audience, giving them more ability to react and interact with others (Daugherty, 2013). Choral spacing also has an impact on sound in a performance setting. Historical evidence (in forms such as treatises, paintings, and wood carvings) has suggested that groups of singers have used various configurations (including circles, semicircles, geometric designs, and straight lines) to enhance sound quality historically (Daugherty, 2013). These elements continue to be important in

creating a compelling performance today. Daugherty (2013) explored different ways of experiencing a choral performance, all of which celebrated the traditional use of space in the choral tradition. These included a concert setting in which the ensemble's voices physically surrounded both the room and the audience and fully engaged the room's acoustical qualities (Daugherty, 2013).

Acoustics also play an important role in constructing the overall aesthetic quality of the sound of an ensemble. The acoustics of performing venues can vary greatly. When in particularly acoustical venues, performers may need to experiment in order to determine optimal spacing and configuration (Daugherty, 2013). Poor acoustical environments can impact even the best choral performances, while an acoustically live, reverberant room can enhance a choral performance (Diocese of Columbus, 2003). Choral configuration and spacing, and the sound quality of the room are important factors in creating a compelling performance.

Scruton (2009) said, "beauty is not simply a redundant addition to the list of human appetites" (p. 7). Human beings have an innate predisposition to discover and create beauty; therefore, aesthetic beauty is not only a desire but also a need (Scruton, 2009). When choral music is produced in an exceptional and aesthetically pleasing manner, it enhances our human existence by bringing beauty and meaning to the mysteries of life, nature, patriotic ideals, and our perception of God and spirituality.

Every choral group, audience, and choral director should have the opportunity to experience choral performances that are above average, aesthetically pleasing, and exceptional; however, there are many choral directors who are not adept in delivering such performances. This study has aimed to identify the qualities of exceptional choral performances and the means of achieving those qualities in order to lessen the gap between the performances of average-

sounding choral groups and those whose performances are stunning and spectacular. Although musical expression, emotion, technical accuracy, and many other elements necessary for exceptional performances are discussed widely in academic literature, few studies have addressed methods for producing performances that demonstrate the It Factor—a combination of the technical, expressive, and emotional, and aesthetic aspects of music performance.

### **Spirituality**

...there is a deep yearning among teachers and students today—a yearning for embodied meaning—that will be fulfilled only as education embraces the fact that what is inward and invisible is at least as important as what is outward and empirical. —Parker Palmer (1998)

Encyclopedia Britannica explained that while the term “spirituality” is frequently used to refer to religious experiences, beliefs, or practices, that “the term is also frequently used in a non- (or even anti-) religious sense to designate a preoccupation with or capacity for understanding fundamental moral, existential, or metaphysical questions, especially regarding the nature of the self (or soul, or person), the meaning of life, the nature of mind or consciousness, and the possibility of immortality” (“Spirituality,” 2019). The Cambridge Dictionary defines spirituality as “the quality that involves deep feelings and beliefs of a religious nature, rather than the physical parts of life” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2020).

Similar to its breadth of usage in language as a whole, the concept of spirituality as it relates to music education and music performance in an academic setting can be approached from various perspectives. The National Association for Music Education attested that spirituality impacts music in education and performance because “music is a universal expression of the human spirit, and that music education uplifts the human spirit and fosters the

well-being of society” (National Association for Music Education Strategic Plan, 2014). In a case study on North American practitioners of Japanese music, Matsunobu (2011) advocated spirituality as the universal language of music. The researcher explored a group of Shakuhachi practitioners in North America (N=12) to investigate how they strengthened the spiritual dimensions of musical experience. Data were collected and generated from extended observations from over a two-year period, and from 27 interviews, and two focus group interviews. The article suggests that North American music students were motivated by their willingness to “explore the shared realm of human experience, namely spirituality”, as opposed to an experience that was mainly focused on the “culture-specific dimensions of music” (Matsunobu, 2011, p.2)

Bryan (2014) approached the concept of “spirit in music,” as an amalgamation of both the sacred and the secular (p.2). Bryan maintained that both the sacred and secular could co-exist because of many shared attributes and similarities, especially as it concerned the religious and secular nature of the spiritual; however, Bryan’s interest was more concerned with sacred music examples that are not clearly identified as either sacred or secular, but that approach the concept of “spirit in music” as a combined and intermingled construct (Bryan, 2014, p.2).

In a qualitative study, Hodge and McGrew (2006) conducted research with social work students (N=303) who were affiliated with the National Association of Social Workers on the interrelationship between spirituality and religion. A wide variety of definitions for both spirituality and religion emerged from the data. The four leading categorical definitions for spirituality revealed that 33% defined spirituality as being constructed from one’s personal beliefs with “no reference to the transcendent”; 23% defined spirituality as “a belief in/experience of a higher power”; 13% defined spirituality as “a belief/experience of God”; and

11% defined spirituality as having attributes beyond the self with implications “to the transcendent” (p. 645). While most participants supported that there was some type of relationship between religion and spirituality, a smaller yet noteworthy percentage of participants attested that the relationship between these constructs was non-existent or minimal.

Hay and Nye (2006) indicated that there are five dimensions of spiritual awareness that reveal man’s spiritual relationships and experiences. These dimensions were developed from the authors’ combined research on spirituality, child psychology, and a pilot study in which they utilized their interviews with children from the Children’s Spirituality Project at Nottingham University (Hay & Nye, 1996). These dimensions include:

1. the here and now experience: when one is fully involved and engaged in the immediate and present moment, or the “here and now;”
2. tuning: when one is “in tune” with an experience that is outside of one’s self “such as nature or a musical performance;”
3. flow: when one is so completely consumed in an act that all else seems oblivious, and the task seems to perform itself;
4. focusing: when one experiences a deep connection within their physical body “bodily felt sense;” and
5. relational consciousness: when one feels a deep connectivity with self, others, God, and the world around him/herself (p.65).

Similarly, Habron and Van der Merwe (2017) conducted a qualitative conceptual study to understand how a hermeneutic phenomenological model for spirituality in music education could inform our understanding of spirituality in selected writings by Jacques-Dalcroze. The researchers questioned the applicability of spirituality theory (Van Der Merwe & Habron, 2015)

and used the third revised edition of the Eurhythmics of Jacques-Dalcroze (1920) to develop a modified theory on Dalcroze and spirituality (Habron & Van der Merwe, 2017). From this study, the researchers developed a hermeneutic phenomenological model for spirituality which involves the following themes: relationality, in which spiritual experiences are encountered as one's ability to connect to self, the world, and others; spatiality, in which spiritual experiences of "awe and wonder" are encountered through mindfulness and awareness during activities which involve music education; temporality, in which spiritual experiences are encountered as a journey, flow, or peak experience, that transcend time; and corporeality, in which spiritual experiences are experienced through a connection with the physical body (p. 53-61). For the purposes of this study, spirituality will reflect the ability of the conductor and choral performers to deliver a stunning and transformative performance which transcends the present moment and touch the minds and hearts of the listeners with a beautiful execution of the music and a beautifully expressed interpretation of the text.

### **Exceptional Musical Technique/Technical Accuracy**

Exceptional musical technique and technical accuracy reflect a high level of skill or training which is expressed in Dutton's seven universal signatures in human aesthetics. Dutton's document lists "expertise and virtuosity" as the first of these signatures and further stated that society is known to notice, appreciate, and reward this level of technical artistry (Gaut and Lopes, 2005, p. 266-267). Exceptional musical technique and technical accuracy can only be achieved through strategically effective practice and preparation. Although correct notes, rhythms, dynamics, and artistic shaping of phrases are foundational prerequisites for any musical performance, careful and consistent practice are tools which provide opportunities to develop and refine these foundational prerequisites. Barry and Hallam (2002) asserted that musicians

practice these skills in order to develop technical proficiency and musical interpretation.

Research has shown that practice is central to the development of musical expertise (Barry & Hallam, 2002; Klickstein, 2009). Strategic practicing is a crucial element in producing striking and aesthetically appealing choral performances. Instrumental pedagogy has supported this premise. Partington posited that students' "knowledge and awareness of how to play the music comes from intense technical and artistic preparation" (Partington, 1995, p. 118). Musicians practice for many reasons, including to gain technical proficiency, learn new repertoire, develop musical interpretation, memorize music, and prepare for performances (Barry & Hallam, 2002; Freer, 2011).

Many scholars have agreed that the acquisition of technical skills (such as music reading, technique, specific concerns for performance literature, musical creativity, music history, and expressive interpretation) is extremely important (Broomhead, 2001; Eychaner, 2015; Freer, 2011). Eychaner (2015) gave a list of keys to unlocking artistic choral performances, some of which included technique and technical aspects of the crafting the performance by addressing topics such as the text, rhythm and pitch, meter and note groupings, dynamics and articulation, the treatment of the melody in relation to stress, tone and tempo, and the conductor's technique and artistry. Eychaner (2015) also addressed "the gap between uninspired reading of the notes on the page and an artful performance" by elaborating on key strategies for producing artistic and compelling choral performances such as: "authenticity and honesty" in tone color, the use of movement to enhance sound production, the "passionate pursuit of artistic excellence", and the process of "nurturing the artist in you" through continued education and personal growth (p.85-90).

Although technical accuracy is a key factor in delivering a compelling choral performance, many practitioners have maintained that accuracy is more effective when combined with other factors. Studio teachers have deemed performance technique, creativity, and the ability to interpret music as necessary components in developing expressivity (Strand & Brenner, 2017). These teachers maintained that each of these three components was intertwined and that one would not be sufficient without the other two (Strand & Brenner, 2017). Similarly, Broomhead (2001) posited that music reading and technical skill are among the many topic areas that music educators prioritize. He asserted that although the technical and expressive aspects of performance are different concepts, they are strongly dependent on each other and function most effectively when they work in tandem (Broomhead, 2001).

Performance preparedness and overall musicianship are both important to develop in the rehearsal room. There are times when the pressure of preparing for upcoming performances, a short-term goal, can seem to outweigh the need to properly educate a student musician, a long-term goal. Freer (2011) referred to these as “competing goals” which create a challenge and a “performance-pedagogy paradox” (Freer, 2011, p. 164). He concluded that choral music teaching should be guided by a balance of both pedagogical and performance goals, as neither one is more important than the other. While preparing for the performance is a primary goal of practice, the music educator must also prioritize the chorister's education. The choir should be perceived not only as a collective music-making entity but also as individuals who have the potential to develop high musical standards and musicianship (Durrant, 2013; Guise, 1999). Once the choral group has achieved musical performance skills and technical mastery through practice, they may use this foundation to support another level of artistry—emotional expressivity.



Emotional expressivity is often culturally defined and is reflected in the great contributions of performers who made major impressions on music culture. The “emotional impact of particular expressive performers such as C.P.E. Bach, Niccolò Paganini, and Jimi Hendrix has always been a source of great fascination” to music enthusiasts and has influenced the standards of many performers. (Juslin & Persson, 2002, p. 219). Motivated by these famous musicians and composers, many performers pursue common performance objectives, which convey both emotional expressivity and connectivity (Condon, 2015; Roesler, 2014). Musical expressivity and connectivity are necessary tools for interpreting and producing exceptional and aesthetically pleasing choral performances (Condon, 2015).

Music students, teachers, and performers have agreed that expressivity may be the most important and appreciated aspect of a performer’s skills (Laukaa, 2004; Lindström, Juslin, Bresin, & Williamon, 2003; Woody, 2000). Scholars have concurred that it is expression that makes music sound individual, human, and worthwhile (Juslin, 2003; Palmer, 1997). Indeed, Juslin (2003) noted it is often on the basis of expressive features that one performance is preferred to another.

Some music educators and performers have had contrasting views concerning music and emotional expression. Arts philosophers emphasize the “thesis of ineffability” and tout music’s ability to express aspects of the “human experience,” including emotive states that verbal expression alone cannot evoke (Woody, 2006, p. 21). Davies (2001) maintained that “music is not sentient” or capable of expressing emotion (p. 26). He concluded that although the expression of emotion in music may be a problematic idea, many musical works do express emotions such as happiness and sadness (Davies, 2001).

The performer is critically responsible for generating emotionally expressive performances. Partington (1995) argued that the key element in performing is to make sound express emotion in music. Many authors have emphasized the centrality of expressiveness to musical performances (Condon, 2015; Juslin, 2003; Lindstrom et al., 2003; Partington, 1995; Silvey, 2014). Emotional expressivity is an essential element for producing the It Factor. Without an appreciation for emotional expressivity, students will only deliver a sterile performance devoid of life and passion.

### **Multi-level Connectivity/Synergy**

Connectivity and synergism. Both terms are non-musical in nature, and yet they are critical components in producing the “It Factor” performance. Connectivity can be defined as “the quality, state, or capability of being connective or connected” (“Connectivity,” 2019). Synergy or synergism “refers to the combined effects produced by two or more parts, elements, or individuals” (Encyclopedia.com). While connectivity deals with making the necessary attachments and connections, synergism deals with blending these attachments to create an overall outcome that is greater than the sum of all its individual parts. The It Factor concept represents several individual factors (It Factors), but also reflects a synergistic, and singular product (It Factor).

In the following anecdotal sources, Maxwell and Wooden supported the concept of connectivity as vital and effective for communication, relationships, and success. Maxwell, a motivational speaker, stated that working hard and doing a good job is important but not enough for achieving success; instead, success requires communication that fosters connection with others (Maxwell, 2010). Maxwell argued that even beyond words, connectivity is a key factor in successfully creating and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Wooden (2018) developed and

implemented his “Pyramid of Success,” as the foundational principles for training teams. Out of the fifteen principles he identified, three relate to generating connectivity: team spirit, loyalty, and friendship (Wooden, 2018).

Holdhusen (2016) also suggested that creating a “choral bond” by implementing the values of love, trust, pride, and passion encourages a shared love for the music, ensemble, and individual members. Holdhusen maintained that “the ability for a choral ensemble to grow together into one cohesive unit is a significant aspect in building the quality of performance” (Holdhusen, 2016, p. 1). Parker (2011) stated that her students enjoyed the “interpersonal knowing” aspect of music-making, and its ability to bind people together (p. 309).

Choirs and choral performances generate connectivity on many different levels. Connectivity is cultivated within the group socially; between the group, the music, and the text; between the conductor and the choir; and between the choir and the audience. Lamont (2012) also described the importance of connectivity: “For the performer, a successful performance is the synthesis of their practice, a high level of technical ability, and connecting to, and with other performers and the listener” (p. 574). Conductors have maintained that making a connection with the audience is an important skill to be implemented in music performances (Juliano, 2014; Lamont, 2012; (Peponi, 2009).

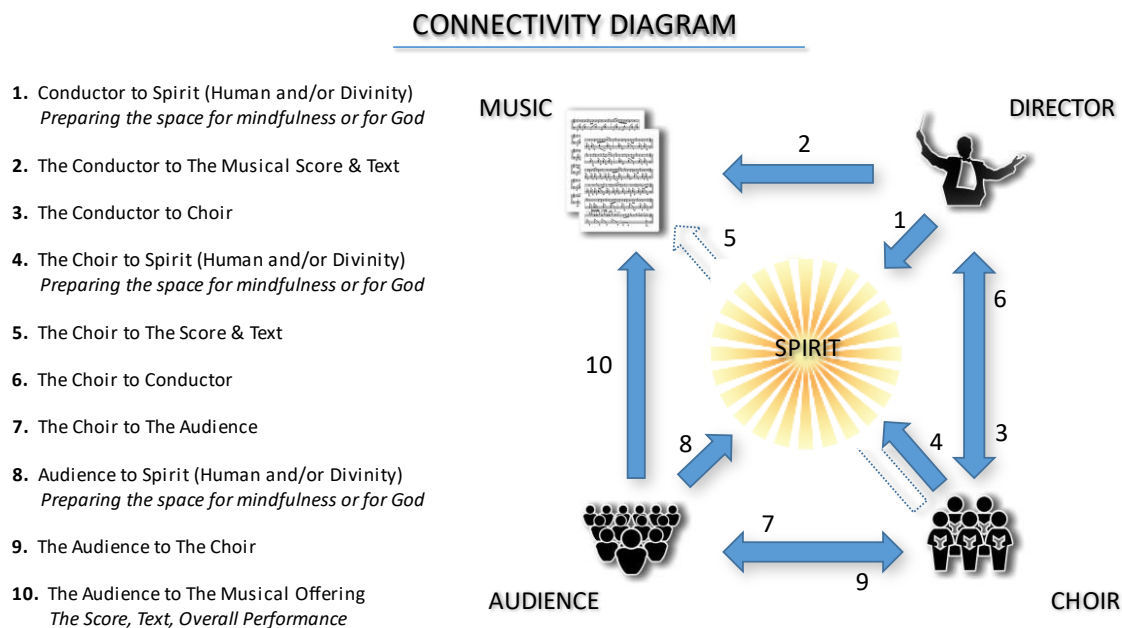
In a choral setting, the choral conductor can strategically cultivate connectivity through systematic planning. The conductor/educator may implement teaching strategies and musical leadership as both teacher and conductor (Durrant, 2009). The conductor/educator is ultimately responsible for generating connectivity among the choir members; among the choir and the conductor; and among the choir, conductor, and audience. Communication is pivotal for generating connectivity. Durrant stated that communication involves interaction, exchange of

ideas, and consultation between people (Durrant, 2009). The conductor’s musical leadership facilitates interactions among the conductor and choir, as well as among the choir members themselves, during rehearsals and performances. The conductor facilitates social cohesiveness, emotional release, and interpersonal skill development to cultivate connectivity (Durrant, 2013). The conductor is the most important factor in creating connectivity through both spoken and unspoken communication, which facilitates a unified effort and a oneness of sound.

Connectivity plays a major role in facilitating the It Factor performance, as it reflects multiple connections with various factors and combinations of participants.

**Figure 1**

*Connections Between Conductor, Music and Score, The Choir, Audience, and Spirit.*



1. **The conductor connects to Spirit.** At some point in the preparation/connectivity process, the conductor will connect to an aspect of “Spirit” that resonates with the individual conductor.

2. **The conductor connects to the musical score and text.** The conductor will spend the necessary time to study and become intimately acquainted with the score (Jordan, 1996).
3. **The conductor connects to the choir.** The conductor will train the ensemble through the use of warm-ups, relative teaching materials, and selected repertoire.
4. **The choir connects to Spirit.** At some point in the process, the choir will make a spiritual connection to the text and music.
5. **The choir members connect to each other.** As individual singers develop consistent habits of rehearsing and singing together, they will become a connected unit or team (Jordan, 2015).
6. **The choir connects to the conductor.** As the relationship between conductor and choir matures and evolves, the choir will develop a unified connection with the conductor.
7. **The choir (and conductor) connects to the audience.** The choir will deliver a carefully crafted musical offering to the audience.
8. **The audience connects to Spirit.** The audience will prepare themselves to receive the musical offering by connecting to spirit through mindfulness or quiet meditation.
9. **The audience connects to the choir.** The eyes, ears, and minds of the audience members will engage in a sensory experience.
10. **The audience connects to the musical offering.** The audience will utilize the senses to embrace, interpret, assess, and receive the musical offering.

### **Mental, Physical, Spiritual, and Emotional Engagement**

Multi-level connectivity or synergism can be achieved through mental, physical, spiritual and emotional engagement. Music has the ability to impact each aspect of our human nature: the spirit, the soul and the body. Jaques-Dalcroze (1930) stresses the interconnectedness of the body

and mind, and/or “It must likewise be possible for the individual’s motor powers...to be placed in immediate contact with the cerebral and the emotional faculties, for soul and body to be in mutual and intimate communion” (p. vii). Music can undoubtedly affect our mood and promote feelings of peace, feelings of anger, melancholic feelings, joy, and excitement, to name a few. Music has a profound effect on the physical body and the senses. Researchers have discovered that playing and listening to music can boost the immune system by promoting increased levels of immunoglobulin A, and the body’s natural killer cells” (Levitin, 2006). Research studies have also found that listening to music can have a significant effect in the reduction of cortisol levels in the body, a decrease in feelings of anger and depression, and an improvement in participants' overall sense of wellbeing (le Roux, Bouic & Bester, 2007). These types of effects were evidenced in the biblical account of King Saul who reigned during the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2020). King Saul was tormented by an evil spirit, and music was the instrument that facilitated his relief from this spirit of melancholy (Hirsch and Nowack, 2022).

The audience also plays an important role in the perception and reception of the choral performance. There are times when a “cold” and unresponsive audience can intimidate and squelch the confidence of a group of performers. There are other times when a warm and responsive reception can bolster the confidence of an inexperienced or nervous group. This positive reception is most commonly and apparently expressed through applause. Applause does more than simply show the performers the audience’s approval; it also has the potential to influence the audiences’ perception of performance quality and level of enjoyment (Springer et al., 2018).

The choir’s connection to the text is another recurring element in compelling performances, and this is especially profound when that connection is apparent to the audience.

Choristers must understand the text and strive to not only make personal and emotional connections to the text but also convey those connections in their delivery. Eychaner (2015) posited that when choirs choose to convey the intent of the lyrics, the result is communication that is more honest and purposeful. Further, Silvey (2014) said, "The goal of song interpretation is not only to communicate or express what the composer intended but also to convey a personal response to it" (p. 14). When a personal connection to the meaning of the text is cultivated, it can increase a chorus's potential to not only produce compelling performances, but performances that are transcendent. ‘

### **Transcendence and Transformation**

Music has been noted by some to have the power to deliver transcendent experiences (Bernard, 2009; Nietz & Spikard, 1990; Bryan, 2014; Juliano, 2014; Tillman, 2000). Transcendent experiences cause one to become fully absorbed and engaged in the moment (Maslow, 1971). More specifically to the music-experience, transcendent performance-experiences enrapture both the audience and the performers (Lamont, 2012), and cause them to be overcome with feelings akin to ecstasy and joy (Bogdan, 2010). These transcendent-type experiences have been given different expressions such as flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991), self-actualization and peak experiences (Maslow, 1971) in which the performer experiences a high level of mastery over themselves and mastery in executing the task, or trance and altered states of consciousness (Borgo, 2003) in which “musicians stress performance goals ranging from total relaxation or catharsis, to a transcendental feeling of ego-loss and cosmic consciousness” (p.3). Maslow (1969) states thirty-five different meanings or expressions of transcendence, which highlight concepts such as becoming one with something greater than self, and to “surpass” and do more than was conceived. Bogdan offered an approach to exploring what might be considered

“a musical spiritual experience” as the “shimmer and shiver factors” (Bogdan, 2010, p. 111). The “shiver factor” describes the physiological effects and feelings that one may experience during a moving performance, and the “shimmer effect” describes a musical performance that is authentically “transcendent and transformational” (Bogdan, 2010, p.111).

When we are aesthetically moved by music, “encountering the divine momentarily suspends us in time and space and we transcend the mundane of this life, moved by a higher force to an expanded reality of ourselves and the world” (Debenham & Debenham, 2008, p. 47). Especially in this category, transcendence, it is evident that we do not only transcend space when we are aesthetically moved by music, but we also transcend time, place, and body (Debenham & Debenham, 2008).

Many studies reveal that each of these qualities: aesthetics, music technique, connectivity, transcendence, and transformation contribute to the nature of an exceptional and charismatic choral performance in one way or another both individually and in various arrangements. However, this study seeks to investigate the combined results of these qualities and characteristics to more clearly define the compelling performance, and therefore add to the conceptual understanding of the It Factor. Additionally, the study seeks to investigate if there is a correlation between the “It Factor” performance and spirituality.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods**

The purpose of this study was to gain further understanding of the “It Factor” in choral performance, and to determine if there is a correlation between the It Factor and spirituality by examining the perceptions of highly successful African American women choral conductors. This chapter outlines the methodology used in the current study, which begins with the research design, a discussion of the participants, and a description of the data collection instrument. Next, reliability and validity will be discussed. After the data collection process is described, the chapter will conclude with an overview of the statistical analysis.

#### **Participants**

The participants were recruited to participate in the survey via email, through NAFME’s research assistance program, and the following Facebook groups: Black Women Choral Conductors Network, Black Choral conductor’s Network, Women Choral Conductors, and the American Choral Directors Association. Convenience and snowball sampling were also used to generate a list of possible participants with any of the following qualifications: those who have received doctoral or masters level degrees, and those who have successful careers as choral conductors. The sample included choral directors throughout the United States who teach in middle or secondary choral music positions, college or university choral positions, and those who are directors of professional, community or church choirs. Further, this sample also included conductors with choral groups that had participated in some of the following conferences or events: their state vocal association’s winter conference, the American Choral Directors’ Association’s national conference, and highly respected community events. Conductors were

selected from these organizations because of the high level of artistry needed for groups selected to participate in these types of conference settings.

### **Research Data Collection and Analysis**

Quantitative and qualitative data were used in this study. In this case, the study will investigate expert choral conductor's beliefs concerning spirituality and the "It Factor" choral performance. The survey was designed using ideas that were influenced by the researchers' unpublished Ed.S. field project entitled "*The "It Factor" in Producing Exceptional and Aesthetically Pleasing Choral Performances: Qualitative Interviews with Four Distinguished Choral Conductors*". Face and content validity will be established using the Delphi Method. Qualified colleagues who have research experience will review the survey to provide feedback.

This web-based survey will be administered online through *Qualtrics* (See Appendix A for the full survey). The survey consists of demographic, Likert-type questions, six Likert-type rating questions from Hodge's (2003, p. 48) *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale*, and two open-ended questions. The survey ends with an optional comments question. More specifically there are:

1. eight demographic questions (ethnicity, age, years of experience, choral group level, religious affiliation, choral performances, and lecture experiences),
2. Forty-seven 5-point Likert-type rating questions categorized into 9 areas:
  - a. Aesthetic Beauty (ten items)
  - b. Exceptional Musical Technique (thirteen items)
  - c. Multi-Level Connectivity or Spirituality (eleven statements)
  - d. Mental Engagement (2 items)
  - e. Physical Engagement (2 items)

- f. Emotional Engagement (2 items)
  - g. Spiritual Engagement (3 items)
  - h. Transformation (2 items)
  - i. Transcendence (2 items)
3. 36 5-point Likert-type rating questions; participants will rate the same nine items based on four different 5-point rating scales (36 total items). The Likert-type rating scales include (a) agreement (necessary), (b) importance (important), (c) ability (confidence), and (d) frequency. The nine items include:
- a. aesthetic beauty
  - b. exceptional musical technique
  - c. multi-level connectivity or synergism
  - d. mental engagement
  - e. physical engagement
  - f. spiritual engagement
  - g. emotional engagement
  - h. a transformative performance-experience
  - i. a transcendent performance-experience
4. six 10-point Likert-type rating areas in Hodge's (2003) *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale* including asking participants to rate areas in their lives based on their own Spirituality. Hodge uses this definition: "...spirituality is defined as one's relationship to God, or whatever you perceive to be Ultimate Transcendence" (p. 48).
5. two open-ended questions focusing on (a) how spirituality affects their own abilities to generate "It Factor" choral performances, and (b) how they would define the "It Factor."

The data analysis included descriptive statistics, Spearman's Rank Order Correlation, Coefficient test, and Thematic Content Analysis. The data were used to determine if there was any correlation between general spirituality/spiritual practices and the "It Factor" choral performance, and to examine the extent to which each construct: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, mental engagement, physical engagement, emotional engagement, spiritual engagement, transformation, and transcendence represents the "It Factor". General spirituality was be addressed through three questions under the heading Spiritual Engagement and additionally through the *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale* (Hodge, 2003). The Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient test was used to address the research question: How does spirituality correlate with the "It Factor" choral performance? Descriptive Statistics was used to measure participant's responses to the "It Factor" as it concerns agreement/disagreement, importance, ability, frequency of inclusion, and basic data such as demographics. Thematic content analysis was used to analyze the two qualitative questions concerning participants' self-reported abilities to generate the qualities defined in the "It Factor", and their personal definitions of the "It Factor". Alpha significance level for my study was  $1-.95 = .05$  with 95% confidence that my analysis was correct. More specifically, Table 1 shows the detailed data analysis plan.

**Table 1***Data Analysis Plan*

Research Question / Area	Survey Question(s)	Data Type	Analysis/Test Used
Demographic Information is collected to describe participants in this study.	Part 1	Nominal	Frequencies, %
To what extent does aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, mental engagement, physical engagement, emotional engagement, spiritual engagement, transformation, and transcendence represent the “It Factor” choral performance?	Part 2, 42 Rating Items	Interval	Descriptive Statistics (Frequencies, %, SD, M, etc.)
How much do participants agree the following “It Factor Areas” are necessary and important for “It Factor” performances? [nine items listed in Chapter 1]	Parts 3, 4, Nine Rating Items	Interval	Descriptive Statistics (Frequencies, %, SD, M, etc.)
How confident are participants in their own abilities to generate “It Factor” qualities in choral performances and how often are the areas evidenced in their choral performances?	Part 5, 6	Interval	Descriptive Statistics (Frequencies, %, SD, M, etc.)
How do participants define their own spirituality based on Hodge’s (2003) intrinsic spirituality scale?	Part 7	Interval	Descriptive Statistics (Frequencies, %, SD, M, etc.)
How does spirituality correlate with the “It Factor” choral performance?	Part 7 and Spiritual Engagement items in Pat 2.		Correlation (Spearman)
What effect does spirituality have on participants’ self-reported abilities to generate It Factor-type choral performances?	Part 8 (q 1)	Qualitative	Thematic Content Analysis
How do participants self-define the It Factor?	Part 8 (q 2)	Qualitative	Thematic Content Analysis

**Advantages and Disadvantages**

Electronic data collection is a convenient aspect of the online survey. Surveys can be emailed and completed asynchronously, and data can be collected and categorized immediately, cutting down on possible processing errors and time factors (Coughlan, et al, 2009). Surveys can reduce anonymity by linking responses to each participant’s email address. Surveys are also cost effective as they can be distributed electronically (Treadwell, 2016); however, response rates are reportedly lower when surveys are self-administered (Coughlan et al., 2009). Although surveys

provide the numbers for requested information, they often do not provide sufficient information for the reasons behind the numbers (Treadwell, 2011).

For my research, I needed to contact a relatively large number of individuals that I did not know, and have them answer several questions regarding my topic. Survey research is conducive for contacting a large sample and having the participants respond to several questions relatively quickly (Treadwell, 2011). Although this is a quantitative study, I also included 2 optional, open-ended questions that provided some qualitative data to reveal a deeper understanding of the participants' and their lived experiences (McMillian, 2022).

Hodge (2003) stated that there have been many instruments created to measure spirituality and religion; however, many of these measures are considered faulty and have limitations. These instruments either contained terms which limited their appeal to non-theists, or the researchers neglected to build upon the previous studies (Hodge, 2003). In an attempt to address these concerns, Hodge (2003) adapted what is considered “the most prominent measure in the psychology of religion, Allport and Ross’ (1967) measure of intrinsic religion” to address spirituality (p. 41). Hodge developed a modified six-question scale to assess the extent to which spirituality drives one’s principal motive among theists and non-theists, both inside and outside of a religious setting. This Intrinsic Spirituality Scale demonstrated both validity and reliability in measuring the degree to which spirituality was a “motivational influence” in the lives of those considered theists or non-theists, and among those whose spirituality both embraces and excludes religion (Hodge, 2003, p. 57).

### **Survey Distribution**

After making several adjustments to the survey based on the expert review from members of my committee, and later receiving IRB approval, I began the process of requesting groups to

distribute the survey. I contacted the administrators of the potential Facebook group participants, and upon approval, I submitted an initial post, and then a follow up post slightly over a week later to the following Facebook groups: *Black Women Choral Conductors and Composers Network*, and *Women Choral Conductors*. Only one post was made in the *Black Choral Conductors Network* page as I did not gain approval for a second post. I researched African American female choral conductors from the *Women Choral Conductors* page, located their email addresses, and sent the survey via email. A moderate amount of phone calls, text messages/personal contacts were made in an attempt to increase participant numbers, and boost Snowball sampling,

Once participants clicked the link, the information letter was revealed and participants had the opportunity to give consent and continue, or to withdraw and be directed to the end of the survey. Since the survey was designed to address African American female choral conductors, if a participant's sex at birth was not female, or if the participant was not African American/Black, they were directed to the end of the survey. Data were saved in Qualtrics and downloaded into SPSS for analysis.

### **Survey Validity and Internal Consistency**

Content and face validity for this survey was measured using Expert Reviews technique. This is a method in which a "subject matter expert, or survey methodologist" pretests the questionnaire by looking for potential problems with wording or administration that could cause an error in measurement (Ikart, 2019). After receiving feedback from the professionals, I made the necessary adjustments and corrections to the survey instrument to include, eliminating some questions, rephrasing questions, adding to, reconstructing, and revising the sections to improve clarity, flow, and efficacy as it concerned the research questions and purpose of the survey. Once

data collection resided, a Cronbach's Alpha was conducted for the Likert-type items which resulted in an acceptable alpha of 0.909. Hodge (2003) stated that a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .96 was obtained for the *Intrinsic Spirituality scale*. I recoded to make the scale's number values so the direction for each was the same for each item. Originally, for the odd numbered questions, zero represented the absence of spirituality and ten represented the maximum amount of spirituality, and for the even numbered questions, zero represented the maximum amount of spirituality and 10 represented the absence of spirituality. After recoding the values, this also resulted in an acceptable alpha of 0.775. See table two below.

**Table 2**

*Reliability Statistics*

<i>Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
Spirituality Scale	0.92	6
Spirituality Scale (recoded)	0.775	6



## Chapter 4

### Results

The purposes of this study are to gain further understanding of the “It Factor” in choral performance, and to determine if there is a correlation between the “It Factor” and spirituality by examining the perceptions of highly successful African American women choral conductors.

#### **The Respondents**

There were 126 respondents who opened the survey link. Seven decided not to participate, which left 119 participants indicating a completion rate of 0.94. Among 119 participants, most respondents were African American/Black ( $n = 54$ , 45.4%). Among African American female participants, 41 completed the survey ( $n = 41$ ), indicating a usable rate of 0.34.

Most people indicated having received the link from NAFME ( $n = 65$ , 51.6%) followed by Personal Contact ( $n = 38$ , 30.2%), Facebook ( $n = 14$ , 11.1%) and then ACDA ( $n = 5$ , 4%), with a completion rate of 0.94. The second largest number of participants were White ( $n = 52$ , 43.7%); however, those who did not select African American were sent to the end of the survey. This ended the survey for approximately 70 respondents (55.6%). Most of the remaining respondents' sex-assigned at birth was female ( $n = 53$ , 42.1% of 126), with 3 who said they were male. If they did not select female, they were sent to the end of the survey.

**Table 3***Respondent Ethnicities, Age, and Sex Assigned at Birth*

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
African American/Black	41	100
Birth-assigned Sex:		
Female	41	100
Ages		
Error	1	2.4
21-30	2	4.9
31-40	4	9.8
41-50	9	22.0
51-60	8	19.5
61-70	10	24.4
71-80	3	7.3
Total	37	90.2
Missing	4	9.8
Total	41	100

The data in Table 4, revealed that most of the respondents had between 16 and 20 years of choral directing experience ( $n = 6, 14.6\%$ ). Further observation of the data indicated that just over 13% had either a doctorate ( $n = 14, 34.1\%$ ) or a masters ( $n = 12, 29.3\%$ ). Most respondents were between the ages of 61 and 70 ( $n = 10, 24.4\%$ ). Additionally, respondents conducted a variety of different choirs. Their responses are below in Table 4.

**Table 4***Level of Choral Group, Years of Experience, and Highest Degree*

<i>Demographic</i>		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Ethnicity	African American/Black*	41	100
Birth Assigned Sex:	Female	41	100
Ages	Error**	1	2.4
	21-30	2	4.9
	31-40	4	9.8
	41-50	9	22.0
	51-60	8	19.5
	61-70	10	24.4
	71-80	3	7.3
	Total	37	90.2
	Missing	4	9.8
	Total	41	100
Years as a Choral Director (Experience)	0-5	2	4.9
	6-10	4	9.8
	11-15	3	7.3
	16-20	6	14.6
	21-25	2	4.9
	26-30	4	9.8
	31-35	4	9.8
	36-40	3	7.3
	41-45	4	9.8
	46-50	5	12.2
	Missing	4	9.8
	Total	41	100
What is your highest earned degree?	Masters	12	29.3
	Masters+30 (or Education Specialist)	6	14.6
	Doctoral Degree (PhD, DMA, etc.)	14	34.1
	Bachelors Degree	2	4.9
	Associate Degree	3	7.3
	Missing	4	9.8
	Total	41	100
Levels of Choral Groups Taught	Middle School	12	29.3
	High School	18	43.9
	College	18	43.9
	Adult/Community Choir	12	29.3
	Adult Church Choir	18	43.9
	Adult Professional Choir	7	17.1
	Other:	4	9.8
	Baptist convention youth choirs male and female	1	2.4
	Youth Children's Choir	1	2.4
	Youth Church Choir	1	2.4
	Total	41	100

*Note.* Participants could select more than one ethnicity. If they chose African American, they were included. One person inadvertently put that they were 1 year old.

The findings reported in Table 5 are for participants regarding their religious affiliations. The data showed that most of the participants were associated with being a Christian ( $n = 41$ , 32.5 %), with the remaining indicating Spiritual but not Religious ( $n = 3$ , 2.4 %), or non-Religious ( $n = 2$ , 1.6 %).

**Table 5**

*Religious Affiliations*

<i>Which of the following best describes your affiliation?</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Christian	32	78.0
Spiritual, but not Religious	3	7.3
Non-Religious	2	4.9
Missing	4	9.8
Total	41	100

*Note.* Other affiliations were included: Christian, Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, New Age, Spiritual, but not Religious, Non-Religious. This table includes only the answers participants selected.

I was unable to determine a response percentage rate because of the ways this survey was initiated and distributed to include convenience and snowball sampling. Because this is a small population, it was difficult to get a large number of responses. People are often disinclined to participate in surveys because they seem bothersome and intrusive, making it difficult to secure a sufficient number of respondents (Dillman et al., 2014). Some questions were skipped by respondents; however, most of the questions were answered.

Once the demographic analyses were completed, the respondents who had not selected African American and had not selected female were removed as well as any who did not complete 50% or more of the survey. This yielded a total adjusted  $N$  of 41, indicating a usable rate of 0.34. The remaining analyses will use this adjusted  $N$ . Many of the respondents throughout inadvertently skipped some items or chose not to respond to certain items. If they did not respond, they were counted as "missing" in the remaining analyses. Although the data are not generalizable because of the small sample size, it still provides valuable information concerning

these respondents' viewpoints, practices, and perspectives on the "It Factor" of choral performance and spirituality. The analyses of the data are presented under the following headings.

1. The Demographic Characteristics of the Conductors
2. Research Question 1: To what extent does aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, mental engagement, physical engagement, emotional engagement, spiritual engagement, transformation, and transcendence represent the "It Factor" choral performance?
3. How much do participants agree the following "It Factor Areas" are necessary and important for "It Factor" performances?
4. How does spirituality correlate with the "It Factor" choral performance?
5. How do participants define their own spirituality based on Hodge's (2003) Intrinsic Spirituality Scale?
6. What effect does spirituality have on participants' self-reported abilities to generate It Factor-type choral performances?
7. How do participants self-define the It Factor?

### **Choral Experiences of Adjusted *N* Conductors**

Respondents were asked to select items that were true concerning the performance habits/outcomes of their choirs and their professional exposure as a lecturer or conductor. They could select multiple answers. Many respondents indicated that their choir was often called upon to perform at community events ( $n = 39, 95.1\%$ ), and that their choir often received standing ovations ( $n = 35, 85.4\%$ ). About half ( $n = 20, 48.8\%$ ) indicated their choirs consistently receive superior ratings at adjudicated festivals.

Respondents also indicated that they had been selected as a guest lecturer for choral focused professional development conferences ( $n = 24, 58.6\%$ ), and that their choir has performed at a state convention or festival ( $n = 23, 56.1\%$ ) and some had performed at a national convention/festival ( $n = 11, 26.8\%$ ). Finally, several were invited to conduct regional, state, or national all state choral festivals/honor choirs ( $n = 12, 29.3\%$ ).

**Research Question 1: To what extent do respondents agree/disagree that the nine constructs that represent the “It Factor” choral performance?**

*Aesthetic Beauty*

Research question one asked participants to rate how much they agree/disagree with two statements that involve one’s enjoyment of a choral performance. The first statement asked respondents to rate the things which caused them to enjoy performances *more*, and the second statement was rephrased to assess if respondents would enjoy the performance *regardless of* those things (for example, *I enjoy the performance more when the performers are dressed beautifully*, versus *I enjoy performance regardless of how the performers are dressed*). Participants ranked these statements using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Overall, data indicated that, for these respondents, Aesthetic Beauty does play a part in how much they enjoy a performance. More specifically, ( $n = 30, 73.2\%$ ) participants strongly agreed that they enjoy the performance *more* when *the performer's facial expressions emote and match the message of the music*. Similarly, ( $n = 27, 65.9\%$ ) strongly agreed that enjoy the performance more when *performers enter the stage with confidence*. Conversely, ( $n = 4, 9.8\%$ ) indicated they strongly disagreed that they enjoy the performance *more* when the *venue is beautiful*. Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics and Table 7 shows frequencies for these items.

Concerning statement two (I enjoy the performance *regardless of...*), most somewhat agreed ( $n = 20$ , 49.9=8%) that they enjoy the performance *regardless of the performers' dress*. In addition, 29.3% ( $n = 12$ ) indicated that they enjoy the performance *regardless of the venue*. Interestingly, 36.6% ( $n = 15$ ) strongly disagreed that they enjoy the performance *regardless of how much or little performer's facial expressions emote and match the message of the music*. Remaining data for this content data are found in Table 6 and Table 7.

**Table 6**

*Aesthetic Beauty Descriptive Statistics*

<i>I enjoy the performance more when the...</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
performers are dressed beautifully	41	0	3.7	4	4	1.1	1.1	1	5
venue is beautiful	40	1	3.4	4	4	1.1	1.3	1	5
performers enter the stage with confidence	41	0	4.4	5	5	1.1	1.2	1	5
performers' facial expressions emote and match the message of the music	40	1	4.5	5	5	1.1	1.2	1	5
singers use movement to express the words and the meaning of the text	40	1	4.1	5	5	1.1	1.3	1	5
<i>I enjoy the performance regardless of...</i>									
the performers' dress	40	1	3.5	4	4	1.1	1.2	1	5
the venue	38	3	3.6	4	4	1.2	1.3	1	5
how performers enter the stage	38	3	2.9	3	2	1.3	1.7	1	5
how much or little performers' facial expressions emote and match the message of the music	39	2	2.2	2	1	1.3	1.8	1	5
how much or little singers use movement to express the words and the meaning of the text	40	1	2.5	2	2	1.2	1.3	1	5

**Table 7***Aesthetic Beauty Frequencies*

<i>I enjoy the performance more when the...</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>		<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Missing</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
performers are dressed beautifully	3	7.3	1	2.4	11	26.8	18	43.9	8	19.5	1	2.4	41	100
venue is beautiful	4	9.8	3	7.3	12	29.3	16	39.0	5	12.2	1	2.4	41	100
performers enter the stage with confidence	3	7.3	0	0.0	2	4.9	9	22.0	27	65.9	0	0.0	41	100
performers' facial expressions emote and match the message of the music	3	7.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	17.1	30	73.2	1	2.4	41	100
singers use movement to express the words and the meaning of the text	2	4.9	1	2.4	8	19.5	8	19.5	21	51.2	1	2.4	41	100
<i>I enjoy the performance regardless of...</i>														
the performers' dress	1	2.4	10	24.4	4	9.8	20	48.8	5	12.2	1	2.4	41	100
the venue	1	2.4	7	17.1	8	19.5	12	29.3	10	24.4	3	7.3	38	93
how performers enter the stage	6	14.6	10	24.4	9	22.0	8	19.5	5	12.2	3	7.3	38	93
how much or little performers' facial expressions emote and match the message of the music	15	36.6	12	29.3	4	9.8	4	9.8	4	9.8	2	4.9	41	100
how much or little singers use movement to express the words and the meaning of the text	7	17.1	19	46.3	6	14.6	5	12.2	3	7.3	1	2.4	41	100

***Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression, and Interpretation***

Participants were asked to respond to the statement *I enjoy the performance more when the performers demonstrate exceptional...* specific technical, expression, and interpretation characteristics. Tables 8 and 9 show the specific areas as well as the descriptive statistics and frequencies for each item. results for participants' ratings based on exceptional technique, expression, and interpretation. Data indicated that, in general, participants somewhat to strongly



agreed for all of the areas, and they mostly strongly agreed with each area (see Table 8 and Table 9 for areas). Over 75% ( $n = 31$  to  $n = 38$ ) of participants indicated strong agreement with eight areas including balance and blend, sound quality (tone, pitch, blend), phrasing, articulation, intonation, rhythm accuracy and tempo, execution of dynamics, and expression (musical and emotional). In addition, 65.9% to 73.2% strongly agreed that they enjoy the performance more when the performers demonstrate (a) unification of vowels, (b) diction, (c) execution of consonants, (d) execution of the meaning of the text, and (e) interpretation of the score. Interestingly, *unification of vowels* was the only item where participants were somewhat spread out ( $SD = 1.0$ ). Specifically, 4.9% ( $n = 2$ ) strongly disagreed. 2.4% ( $n = 1$ ) somewhat disagreed (2.4%), 4.9% ( $n = 2$ ) neither agreed nor disagreed, 22% ( $n = 9$ ) somewhat agreed and 65.9% ( $n = 27$ ) strongly agreed. Similarly, respondents were somewhat spread out on their responses for *interpretation of score* ( $SD = 1.0$ ). However, most still strongly agreed ( $n = 29$ , 70.7%) or somewhat agreed ( $n = 7$ , 17.1%).

**Table 8**

*Descriptive Statistics for Performance Enjoyment and Exceptional Technique*

<i>I enjoy the performance more when the performers demonstrate EXCEPTIONAL</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Unification of vowels	41	0	4.4	5	5	1.0	1.1	1	5
Balance and Blend	40	1	4.7	5	5	0.8	0.6	1	5
Sound Quality (tone, pitch, blend)	40	1	4.8	5	5	0.7	0.6	1	5
Phrasing	40	1	4.7	5	5	0.8	0.6	1	5
Diction	40	1	4.7	5	5	0.7	0.5	1	5
Articulation	41	0	4.7	5	5	0.7	0.6	1	5
Intonation	38	3	4.7	5	5	0.9	0.8	1	5
Rhythmic Accuracy and Tempo	41	0	4.8	5	5	0.7	0.5	1	5
Execution of Consonants	40	1	4.6	5	5	0.7	0.6	1	5
Execution of the meaning of the text	40	1	4.7	5	5	0.7	0.5	1	5
Execution of Dynamics	40	1	4.8	5	5	0.7	0.5	1	5
Expression (musical and emotional)	40	1	4.8	5	5	0.7	0.5	1	5
Interpretation of the score	40	1	4.5	5	5	1.0	1.0	1	5

**Table 9***Frequencies for Performance Enjoyment and Exceptional Technique*

<i>I enjoy the performance more when the performers demonstrate EXCEPTIONAL...</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>		<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Missing</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Unification of vowels	2	4.9	1	2.4	2	4.9	9	22.0	27	65.9	0	0.0	41	100
Balance and Blend	1	2.4	0	0.0	2	4.9	6	14.6	31	75.6	1	2.4	41	100
Sound Quality (tone, pitch, blend)	1	2.4	0	0.0	1	2.4	4	9.8	34	82.9	1	2.4	41	100
Phrasing	1	2.4	0	0.0	1	2.4	7	17.1	31	75.6	1	2.4	41	100
Diction	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	22.0	30	73.2	1	2.4	41	100
Articulation	1	2.4	0	0.0	1	2.4	6	14.6	33	80.5	0	0.0	41	100
Intonation	2	4.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.9	38	92.7	3	7.3	41	100
Rhythmic Accuracy and Tempo	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	14.6	34	82.9	0	0.0	41	100
Execution of Consonants	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	29.3	27	65.9	1	2.4	41	100
Execution of the meaning of the text	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	22.0	30	73.2	1	2.4	41	100
Execution of Dynamics	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	14.6	32	78.0	2	4.9	41	100
Expression (musical and emotional)	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	9.8	35	85.4	1	2.4	41	100
Interpretation of the score	2	4.9	0	0.0	2	4.9	7	17.1	29	70.7	1	2.4	41	100

***Interconnectedness and Spirituality***

Respondents rated how much they agreed with three statements. Over 85% ( $n = 35$ ) of participants strongly agreed that *during exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances, there is a sense of interconnectedness among the singers in my choir*. Similarly, 82.9% ( $n = 34$ ) strongly agreed that *during exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances, there is a sense of connectedness between the singers and the music*. Interestingly, less participants ( $n = 28$ , 68.3%) strongly agreed that *during exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances, there is a sense of connectedness between the music, audience, and the singers*. In addition, 19.5% ( $n = 8$ ) somewhat agreed, 4.9% ( $n = 2$ ) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 4.9% ( $n = 2$ ) strongly disagreed. Table 10 and Table 11 show all results for these statements.

**Table 10***Descriptive Statistics for Levels of Connectivity*

<i>During exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances, there is a sense of...</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
1. interconnectedness among the singers in my choir.	41	0	4.8	5	5	0.7	0.5	1	5
2. connectedness between the singers and the music.	40	1	4.7	5	5	0.9	0.8	1	5
3. connectedness between the music, audience, and the singers.	40	1	4.5	5	5	1.0	1.0	1	5

**Table 11***Frequencies for Levels of Connectivity*

<i>During exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances, there is a sense of...</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>		<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Missing</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
1. interconnectedness among the singers in my choir.	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	12.2	35	85.4	0	0.0	41	100
2. connectedness between the singers and the music.	2	4.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	9.8	34	82.9	1	2.4	41	100
3. connectedness between the music, audience, and the singers.	2	4.9	0	0.0	2	4.9	8	19.5	28	68.3	1	2.4	41	100

Participants rated how much they agreed with four items using two statements, first based on being audience member and second based on being a conductor. Table 13 and Table 14 show the full results for these two items including descriptive statistics and frequencies.

As audience members, participants somewhat or strongly agreed that *during exceptional and emotionally moving performances they felt a sense of connectedness with God/higher power, the music, the choir, and the conductor*. However, 4.9% ( $n = 2$ ) neither agreed nor disagreed that they felt connected with *God/higher power*, and 4.9% ( $n = 2$ ) strongly disagreed with this.

Similarly, as conductors they strongly agreed that *during exceptional and emotionally moving performances they felt a sense of connectedness with God/higher power, the music, the choir members, and the audience*. However, 19.5% ( $n = 10$ ) neither agreed nor disagreed that they felt connected with *the audience*, and 4.9% ( $n = 2$ ) somewhat disagreed with this.

**Table 12**

*Descriptive Statistics for Connectedness as Audience Member and Conductor*

<i>Items</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
<i>As an audience member, during exceptional and emotionally moving performances, I feel a sense of connectedness with...</i>	God/higher power	41	0	4.4	5	5	1.0	0.9	1	5
	the music	41	0	4.6	5	5	0.8	0.6	1	5
	the choir	41	0	4.4	5	5	0.9	0.8	1	5
	the conductor	40	1	4.0	4	5	1.1	1.2	1	5
<i>As the conductor, during exceptional and emotionally moving performances, I feel a sense of connectedness with...</i>	God/ higher power	41	0	4.6	5	5	0.9	0.8	1	5
	the music	40	1	4.8	5	5	0.7	0.5	1	5
	the choir members	41	0	4.8	5	5	0.5	0.2	3	5
	the audience	41	0	4.2	5	5	0.9	0.9	2	5

**Table 13***Frequencies for Connectedness as Audience Member and Conductor*

<i>Statements and Items</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>		<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Missing</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<b><i>As an audience member, during exceptional and emotionally moving performances, I feel a sense of connectedness with...</i></b>														
<i>God/higher power</i>	2	4.9	0	0	2	4.9	13	31.7	24	58.5	0	0	41	100
<i>the music</i>	1	2.4	0	0	1	2.4	9	22	30	73.2	0	0	41	100
<i>the choir</i>	1	2.4	1	2.4	3	7.3	11	26.8	25	61	0	0	41	100
<i>the conductor</i>	2	4.9	1	2.4	8	19.5	12	29.3	17	41.5	1	2.4	41	100
<b><i>As the conductor, during exceptional and emotionally moving performances, I feel a sense of connectedness with...</i></b>														
<i>God/higher power</i>	1	2.4	1	2.4	3	7.3	4	9.8	32	78	0	0	41	100
<i>the music</i>	1	2.4	0	0	1	2.4	2	4.9	36	87.8	1	2.4	41	100
<i>the choir members</i>	0	0	0	0	2	4.9	3	7.3	36	87.8	0	0	41	100
<i>the audience</i>	0	0	2	4.9	8	19.5	10	24.4	21	51.2	0	0	41	100

***Mind and Body***

Respondents rated how much they agreed regarding their own mental engagement during exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances and how they physically responded as an audience Table 15 and Table 16 show the full results for these items. In general, a majority of respondents somewhat to strongly agreed that their minds are (a) engaged in assessment, (b) with the meaning of the text, and (c) that their body responds with some type(s) of movement *during exceptional and emotionally moving performances*. Interestingly, 9.8% ( $n = 4$ ) somewhat disagreed and one person strongly disagreed that their mind was engaged in assessment. Over

75% ( $n = 31$ ) strongly agreed, with 14.6% ( $n = 6$ ) that they have a physical response at the end of these types of performances.

**Table 14**

*Descriptive Statistics for Mind and Body*

<i>Regarding exceptional and emotionally moving performances,</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
<i>DURING these performances,</i>	my mind is engaged with assessing the overall performance and its various components (i.e., rhythm, melody, harmony, form etc.)	39	2	4.4	5	5	1.1	1.2	1	5
	my mind is engaged with the meaning of the text.	39	2	4.6	5	5	0.6	0.3	3	5
	my body responds with some type(s) of physical movement(s).	39	2	4.6	5	5	0.6	0.3	3	5
<i>at the END of these performances...</i>	my physical body responds with demonstrative applause or a standing ovation.	38	3	4.8	5	5	0.5	0.2	3	5

**Table 15***Frequencies for Mind and Body*

<i>Regarding exceptional and emotionally moving performances...</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>		<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Missing</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>DURING these performances,</i>														
my mind is engaged with assessing the overall performance and its various components (i.e., rhythm, melody, harmony, form etc.)	1	2.4	4	9.8	0	0.0	8	19.5	26	63.4	2	4.9	41	100
my mind is engaged with the meaning of the text.	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.9	10	24.4	27	65.9	2	4.9	41	100
my body responds with some type(s) of physical movement(s).	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.9	10	24.4	27	65.9	2	4.9	41	100
<i>At the END of these performances,</i>														
my physical body responds with demonstrative applause or a standing ovation.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	6	14.6	31	75.6	3	7.3	41	100

***Emotional, Spiritual, Transformation, Transcendence***

Respondents rated several items focused on their experiences during musical performances. Table 17 and Table 18 show the full results for these items. As with many previous items, respondents somewhat to strongly agreed with most items. However, their responses were spread across ratings for *I can become spiritually engaged with the music when the performance becomes an experience that mystically touches my heart, mind, and emotions* ( $SD = 0.9$ ). Specifically, 7.56% ( $n = 31$ ) strongly agreed, 12.2% ( $n = 5$ ) somewhat agreed, and one person neither agreed nor disagreed, one person somewhat disagreed, and one person strongly disagreed (one person is 2.4% of the population). Participants ratings for *exceptional*

and emotionally moving choral performances can alter or transform my mind or position (about various topics or issues) were also somewhat spread out *IR* Specifically, 34.1% ( $n = 14$ ) strongly agreed, 31.7% ( $n = 13$ ) somewhat agreed, 17.1% ( $n = 7$ ) neither agreed nor disagreed, 9.8% ( $n = 4$ ) somewhat disagreed, and one person strongly disagreed with this statement.

**Table 16**

*Descriptive Statistics for Emotion and Spiritual Engagement*

<i>Items</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	
<i>I can become emotionally moved when...</i>	the text is meaningful, profound, and beautifully executed	39	2	4.8	5	5	0.4	0.2	4	5
	when the music elements are beautifully executed (melody, harmony, dynamics, timbre, balance, and blend)	39	2	4.6	5	5	0.8	0.6	1	5
<i>I can become spiritually engaged with the music when...</i>	the text and music beautifully express my core beliefs about God/or a higher power.	39	2	4.7	5	5	0.6	0.4	3	5
	the performance uplifts my human spirit by beautifully addressing topics that reflect our humanity (i.e., peace, love, brotherhood, patriotism, freedom, etc.).	39	2	4.6	5	5	0.5	0.3	3	5
	the performance becomes an experience that mystically touches my heart, mind, and emotions.	39	2	4.6	5	5	0.9	0.8	1	5
<i>Exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances can...</i>	alter or transform my emotions (i.e., make me feel happy when sad, etc.)	39	2	4.8	5	5	0.4	0.1	4	5
	alter or transform my mind or position (about various topics or issues)	39	2	3.9	4	5	1.1	1.2	1	5
	transcend the present moment (i.e., cause one to forget about one's current situation or state of mind)	39	2	4.7	5	5	0.4	0.2	4	5
	lead to physiological effects and feelings (such as chills, tears, uplifted hands, etc.)	39	2	4.8	5	5	0.5	0.2	3	5



**Table 17**

*Frequencies Emotion and Spiritual Engagement*

Statements	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>		<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Missing</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>I can become emotionally moved when...</i>														
the text is meaningful, profound, and beautifully executed	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	17.1	32	78.0	2	4.9	41	100
when the music elements are beautifully executed (melody, harmony, dynamics, timbre, balance, and blend)	1	2.4	0	0.0	1	2.4	8	19.5	29	70.7	2	4.9	41	100
<i>I can become spiritually engaged with the music when...</i>														
the text and music beautifully express my core beliefs about God/ or a higher power.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	7.3	4	9.8	32	78.0	2	4.9	41	100
the performance uplifts my human spirit by beautifully addressing topics that reflect our humanity (i.e., peace, love, brotherhood, patriotism, freedom, etc.).	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	12	29.3	26	63.4	2	4.9	41	100
the performance becomes an experience that mystically touches my heart, mind, and emotions.	1	2.4	1	2.4	1	2.4	5	12.2	31	75.6	2	4.9	41	100
<i>Exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances can...</i>														
alter or transform my emotions (i.e., make me feel happy when sad, etc.)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	14.6	33	80.5	2	4.9	41	100
alter or transform my mind or position (about various topics or issues)	1	2.4	4	9.8	7	17.1	13	31.7	14	34.1	2	4.9	41	100
transcend the present moment (i.e., cause one to forget about one's current situation or state of mind)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	24.4	29	70.7	2	4.9	41	100
lead to physiological effects and feelings (such as chills, tears, uplifted hands, etc.)	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	5	12.2	33	80.5	2	4.9	41	100

**Research Question 2: How much do participants agree the nine “It Factor Areas” are necessary and important for “It Factor” performances?**

Research question two required participants to rate how much they agree/disagree on the nine “It Factor” areas as being (1) necessary in generating “It Factor” performances, (2) important in generating “It Factor” performances, and (3) to assess their confidence in generating these “It Factor” qualities. Participants ranked these statements using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from none at all (1) to a great deal (5). There were four areas in which participants agreed “a great deal” and considered these areas necessary in generating “It Factor” performances: exceptional musical technique 71% ( $n = 25$ ), multi-level connectivity/synergism, 63% ( $n = 22$ ), mental engagement, 60% ( $n = 21$ ), and emotional engagement, 59% ( $n = 9$ ). The area with the least amount of agreement among the participants was aesthetic beauty ( $SD = 1.09$ ).

Respondents rated the areas they considered “important” in generating “It Factor” choral performances. Participants generally somewhat to strongly agreed that all areas were important. Specifically, ( $n = 25$ , 71%) indicated that exceptional musical technique had “a great deal” of importance. Similarly, 57% ( $n = 20$ ) said that multi-level connectivity/synergy, mental engagement, and emotional engagement had “a great deal” of importance. Interestingly, 56% ( $n = 19$ ) indicated that spiritual engagement had “a great deal” of importance in generating the “It Factor” choral performances. Ratings for Aesthetic Beauty were more spread out ( $SD = 1.10$ ,  $Var = 1.2$ ). Specifically, 29.3% ( $n = 12$ ) felt it had a great deal of importance in generating “It Factor” choral performances, while 31.7% ( $n = 13$ ) said it had A Lot of importance, 14.6% ( $n = 6$ ) said it had a moderate amount of importance, 9.8% ( $n = 4$ ) said it had a little importance, and one person (2.4%) said it had no importance. See Table 19 and Table 20 for the complete results for these items.

**Table 18***Descriptive Statistics for “It Factor” Performances*

Items		<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
How much are following qualities necessary in generating “It Factor” choral performances?	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	36	5	3.8	4	4	1.1	1.2	1	5
	Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression, and Interpretation (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	36	5	4.6	5	5	0.7	0.5	3	5
	Multi-level connectivity or synergism	36	5	4.6	5	5	0.6	0.4	3	5
	Mental engagement	36	5	4.6	5	5	0.6	0.3	3	5
	Physical engagement	36	5	4.1	4	4	0.9	0.9	2	5
	Spiritual engagement	36	5	4.1	4	5	0.9	0.9	2	5
	Emotional engagement	36	5	4.5	5	5	0.6	0.4	3	5
	A Transformative performance-experience	35	6	4.5	5	5	0.7	0.4	3	5
	A Transcendent performance-experience	35	6	4.3	4	5	0.8	0.6	3	5
	How important are the following qualities in generating “It Factor” choral performances?	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	36	5	3.9	4	4	1.1	1.2	1
Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression, and Interpretation (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)		36	5	4.6	5	5	0.6	0.4	3	5
Multi-level connectivity or synergism		36	5	4.5	5	5	0.7	0.4	3	5
Mental engagement		36	5	4.5	5	5	0.6	0.4	3	5
Physical engagement		35	6	4.2	4	5	0.9	0.9	2	5
Spiritual engagement		35	6	4.2	5	5	1.0	1.0	1	5
Emotional engagement		36	5	4.5	5	5	0.6	0.4	3	5
A Transformative performance-experience		35	6	4.3	4	5	0.7	0.5	3	5
A Transcendent performance-experience		35	6	4.3	4	5	0.8	0.6	3	5

**Table 19***Descriptive Statistics for “It Factor” Performances*

Items		<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
How confident are you in your own ability to generate the following “It Factor” qualities in choral performances?	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	35	6	4.3	5	5	0.8	0.6	3	2	5
	Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression, and Interpretation (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	34	7	4.4	4	4	0.6	0.4	2	3	5
	Multi-level connectivity or synergism	33	8	4.3	4	5	0.8	0.6	3	2	5
	Mental engagement	35	6	4.5	5	5	0.7	0.5	3	2	5
	Physical engagement	34	7	4.3	5	5	0.9	0.9	3	2	5
	Spiritual engagement	35	6	4.2	5	5	1.1	1.1	4	1	5
	Emotional engagement	35	6	4.4	5	5	0.7	0.5	2	3	5
	A Transformative performance-experience	35	6	4.2	4	5	0.8	0.6	2	3	5
	A Transcendent performance-experience	35	6	4.2	4	5	0.8	0.6	2	3	5
	How often are the following “It Factor” areas evidenced in your choirs’ performances?	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	35	6	4.3	4	4 <sup>a</sup>	0.8	0.6	3	2
Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression, and Interpretation (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)		35	6	4.1	4	4	0.8	0.6	3	2	5
Multi-level connectivity or synergism		35	6	4.2	4	4	0.7	0.5	2	3	5
Mental engagement		35	6	4.1	4	4	0.6	0.4	2	3	5
Physical engagement		35	6	4.0	4	4	0.9	0.8	3	2	5
Spiritual engagement		35	6	3.9	4	4	1.0	1.0	3	2	5
Emotional engagement		35	6	4.2	4	4	0.8	0.6	3	2	5
A Transformative performance-experience		35	6	4.0	4	4	0.9	0.8	3	2	5
A Transcendent performance-experience	35	6	3.8	4	4	1.0	0.9	3	2	5	

*Note.* a. multiple modes exist. See frequency table.

**Research Question 3: How confident are participants in their ability to generate “It Factor” qualities in choral performances, and how often?**

Respondents assessed their how confident they felt in their ability to generate “It Factor” qualities in choral performances. Similarly, they were asked how often these areas were evidenced in their own choirs’ performances.

***Confidence***

The Likert rating scale was *None at all = 1 through A Great Deal = 5*. Respondents indicated they had some level of confidence in their abilities to generate each of the “It Factor” qualities in choral performances. More specifically, 48.8% ( $n = 20$ ) indicated “a great deal” of confidence in their ability to generate emotional engagement. Likewise, 46.3% ( $n = 19$ ) indicated “a great deal” of confidence in their ability to generate spiritual engagement, and 43.9% percent ( $n = 18$ ) indicated “a great deal” of confidence in their ability to generate mental engagement, with the same number indicating the same for aesthetic beauty. Finally, participants were confident in their ability to generate exceptional musical technique with 78.1% indicating they had “a lot” or “a great deal” of confidence. Table 21 and Table 22, and Table 23 show the full results for these items.

**Table 20***Descriptive Statistics for “It Factor” Performance Confidence*

Items		<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
How confident are you in your own ability to generate the following “It Factor” qualities in choral performances?	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	35	6	4.3	5	5	0.8	0.6	2	5
	Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression. and Interpretation (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	34	7	4.4	4	4	0.6	0.4	3	5
	Multi-level connectivity or synergism	33	8	4.3	4	5	0.8	0.6	2	5
	Mental engagement	35	6	4.5	5	5	0.7	0.5	2	5
	Physical engagement	34	7	4.3	5	5	0.9	0.9	2	5
	Spiritual engagement	35	6	4.2	5	5	1.1	1.1	1	5
	Emotional engagement	35	6	4.4	5	5	0.7	0.5	3	5
	A Transformative performance-experience	35	6	4.2	4	5	0.8	0.6	3	5
	A Transcendent performance-experience	35	6	4.2	4	5	0.8	0.6	3	5

**Table 21***Frequencies Table for “It Factor” Performance Confidence*

<i>How confident are you in your own ability to generate the following “It Factor” qualities in choral performances?</i>	<i>None At All</i>		<i>A Little</i>		<i>A Moderate Amount</i>		<i>A Lot</i>		<i>A Great Deal</i>		<i>Missing</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	0	0.0	1	2.4	4	9.8	12	29.3	18	43.9	6	14.6	41	100
Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression. and Interpretation (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.9	18	43.9	14	34.1	7	17.1	41	100
Multi-level connectivity or synergism	0	0.0	1	2.4	3	7.3	13	31.7	16	39.0	8	19.5	41	100
Mental engagement	0	0.0	2	4.9	5	12.2	9	22.0	18	43.9	7	17.1	41	100
Physical engagement	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	41	100
Spiritual engagement	1	2.4	2	4.9	4	9.8	9	22.0	19	46.3	6	14.6	41	100
Emotional engagement	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	12.2	10	24.4	20	48.8	6	14.6	41	100
A Transformative performance-experience	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	17.1	13	31.7	15	36.6	6	14.6	41	100
A Transcendent performance-experience	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	19.5	13	31.7	14	34.1	6	14.6	41	100

## *Occurrence*

Concerning the how often respondents indicated “It Factor” qualities evidenced in their own choirs’ performances, 22% to 36.6% ( $n = 9$  to  $n = 15$ ) indicated these were evidenced “a great deal.” Specifically, aesthetic beauty was evidenced the most ( $n = 15$ , 36.6%). In addition, multi-level connectivity or synergism, physical engagement, spiritual engagement, and emotional engagement were experienced at equal levels ( $n = 12$ , 29.3%), which is just slightly lower than aesthetic beauty. While a part of respondents indicated these characteristics occurred “a lot,” the majority of respondents marked “a lot” for these items (36.6% to 48.8%). Specifically, 48.8% ( $n = 20$ ) experienced a transformative performance experience and mental engagement, 46.3% ( $n = 19$ ) evidenced emotional engagement, and 43.9% ( $n = 18$ ) evidenced exceptional musical technique. A smaller number of participants indicated that they evidenced the following qualities a “great deal” in their performances: aesthetic beauty ( $n = 15$ , 36.6%), multi-level connectivity/synergism ( $n = 12$ , 29.3%), physical engagement ( $n = 12$ , 29.3%), and emotional engagement ( $n = 12$ , 29.3%). Table 23 and Table 24 show the full results.

**Table 22***Descriptive Statistics for “It Factor” Performance Occurrence*

Items		<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
How often are the following “It Factor” areas evidenced in your choirs’ performances?	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	35	6	4.3	4	4 <sup>a</sup>	0.8	0.6	2	5
	Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression, and Interpretation (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	35	6	4.1	4	4	0.8	0.6	2	5
	Multi-level connectivity or synergism	35	6	4.2	4	4	0.7	0.5	3	5
	Mental engagement	35	6	4.1	4	4	0.6	0.4	3	5
	Physical engagement	35	6	4.0	4	4	0.9	0.8	2	5
	Spiritual engagement	35	6	3.9	4	4	1.0	1.0	2	5
	Emotional engagement	35	6	4.2	4	4	0.8	0.6	2	5
	A Transformative performance-experience	35	6	4.0	4	4	0.9	0.8	2	5
	A Transcendent performance-experience	35	6	3.8	4	4	1.0	0.9	2	5



**Table 23***Frequencies Table for “It Factor” Performance Occurrence*

<i>How often are the following “It Factor” areas evidenced in your choirs’ performances?</i>	<i>None At All</i>		<i>A Little</i>		<i>A Moderate Amount</i>		<i>A Lot</i>		<i>A Great Deal</i>		<i>Missing</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	0	0.0	1	2.4	4	9.8	15	36.6	15	36.6	6	14.6	41
Exceptional Musical Technique, Expression, and Interpretation (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	0	0.0	1	2.4	6	14.6	18	43.9	10	24.4	6	14.6	41	100
Multi-level connectivity or synergism	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	14.6	17	41.5	12	29.3	6	14.6	41	100
Mental engagement	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	12.2	20	48.8	10	24.4	6	14.6	41	100
Physical engagement	0	0.0	2	4.9	7	17.1	14	34.1	12	29.3	6	14.6	41	100
Spiritual engagement	0	0.0	5	12.2	5	12.2	14	34.1	11	26.8	6	14.6	41	100
Emotional engagement	0	0.0	2	4.9	2	4.9	19	46.3	12	29.3	6	14.6	41	100
A Transformative performance-experience	0	0.0	4	9.8	2	4.9	20	48.8	9	22.0	6	14.6	41	100
A Transcendent performance-experience	0	0.0	5	12.2	5	12.2	17	41.5	8	19.5	6	14.6	41	100

**Research Question 4: How do participants define their own spirituality based on Hodge’s (2003) Intrinsic Spirituality Scale?**

Respondents were asked questions to measure their own spirituality. The six questions use a sentence completion format with a scale ranging from 0 to 10 to measure various spiritual qualities. Interestingly, the value of the numbers 0 to 10 begins with 0 indicating no amount of spirituality and 10 indicating the maximum amount of spirituality, but this scale inverts on the even questions indicating 0 as the maximum amount and 10 as the minimum amount. The respondents were asked to choose the point along the continuum that reflected their initial feeling. Most participant responses indicated that spirituality was an important part of their life. The results are described in Table 24 below.

**Table 24***Intrinsic Spirituality Scale Descriptive Statistics*

<i>Items*</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers...no questions (0): absolutely all my questions (10)	35	6	8.3	9	10	2.3	5.5	0	10
Growing spiritually is.. of no importance to me (0) : more important than anything else in my life (10)	35	6	7.4	9	10	3.7	13.5	0	10
When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality... plays absolutely no role (0) : is always the overriding consideration (10)	34	7	8.3	10	10	3.1	9.3	0	10
Spirituality is...not part of my life (0) : the master motive of my life, directing every other aspect of my life (10)	33	8	7.7	10	10	3.8	14.2	0	10
When I think of the things that help me to grow and mature as a person, my spirituality...has no effect on my personal growth (0) : is absolutely the most important factor in my personal growth (10)	32	9	8.8	10	10	2.4	5.9	0	10
My spiritual beliefs affect...no aspect of my life (0) : absolutely everything of my life (10)	32	9	7.7	10	10	3.8	14.2	0	10

*Note.* \*Data were recoded so that each item moved from low to high.

**Table 25***Frequencies for Spirituality Scale*

<i>In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers... no questions (0) : absolutely all my questions (10)</i>													
Scale	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Missing	Total
<i>n</i>	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	3	4	8	14	6	41
<i>%</i>	2.4	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.4	2.4	4.9	7.3	9.8	19.5	34.1	14.6	100

<i>Growing spiritually is.. of no importance to me (0) : more important than any-thing else in my life (10)</i>													
Scale	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Missing	Total
<i>n</i>	5	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	7	15	6	41
<i>%</i>	12.2	2.4	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	4.9	4.9	4.9	17.1	36.6	14.6	100

<i>When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality... plays absolutely no role (0) : is always the overriding consideration (10)</i>													
Scale	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Missing	Total
<i>n</i>	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	7	19	7	41
<i>%</i>	7.3	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.4	0.0	4.9	2.4	17.1	46.3	17.1	100

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*Spirituality is...not part of my life (0) :  
the master motive of my life, directing every other aspect of my life (10)*

Scale	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Missing	Total
<i>n</i>	4	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	5	19	8	41
<i>%</i>	9.8	4.9	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	4.9	0.0	0.0	12.2	46.3	19.5	100

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*When I think of the things that help me to grow and mature as a person,  
my spirituality...has no effect on my personal growth (0) :  
is absolutely the most important factor in my personal growth (10)*

Scale	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Missing	Total
<i>n</i>	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	7	18	9	41
<i>%</i>	2.4	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.4	7.3	17.1	43.9	22.0	100

---

*My spiritual beliefs affect...no aspect of my life (0) : absolutely everything of my life (10)*

Scale	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Missing	Total
<i>n</i>	4	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	5	18	9	41
<i>%</i>	9.8	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.4	2.4	0.0	12.2	43.9	22.0	100

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Note. \*Data were recoded so that each item moved from low to high.

### **Research Question 5: How does spirituality correlate with the “It Factor” choral performance?**

To assess general spirituality, respondents were asked to complete The Intrinsic Spirituality Scale. Respondents were asked six questions to assess various spiritual qualities with a response range from 0 to 10. The majority of the participants indicated that spirituality or “their spiritual beliefs” were important according to each question (See Table 20). The scores from the Spirituality Scale were combined and correlated using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation with the three questions from the spiritual engagement items in part 2 of the survey. Each individual spirituality scale item was correlated with the specific spirituality-related items in the survey. There were five significant, moderately positive correlations between respondents’ answers on items in the Hodge (2003) Spirituality Scale and their answers correlated spirituality and the “It Factor” in the survey. Table 26 shows the significant correlations. Interestingly, there were three correlations with the first item in the spirituality scale, and these were focused on

spiritual engagement being (a) necessary in generating “It Factor” performances, (b) important in generating “It Factor” performances, and (c) how confident they felt in generating “It Factor” performances.

**Table 26**

*Significant Spearman’s rho Correlations*

<i>Choral Music Statements</i>	<i>Spirituality Scale Statements</i>	<i>Spearman's rho</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>95% Confidence Intervals (2-tailed)<sup>a,b</sup></i>	
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
I can become spiritually engaged with the music when the text and music beautifully express my core beliefs about God/or a higher power.	When I think of the things that help me to grow and mature as a person, my spirituality... has no effect on my personal growth (0) : is absolutely the most important factor in my personal growth (10)	0.425	0.015	0.079	0.679
I can become spiritually engaged with the music when the performance uplifts my human spirit by beautifully addressing topics that reflect our humanity (i.e., peace, love, brotherhood, patriotism, freedom, etc.).	When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality...plays absolutely no role (0) : is always the overriding consideration (10).	0.343	0.047	-0.005	0.617
How much are following qualities necessary in generating “It Factor” choral performances? <i>Spiritual engagement</i>	In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers...no questions (0) : absolutely all my questions (10).	0.447	0.007	0.124	0.685
How important are the following qualities in generating “It Factor” choral performances? <i>Spiritual engagement</i>	In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers...no questions (0) : absolutely all my questions (10)	0.392	0.022	0.051	0.651
How confident are you in your own ability to generate the following “It Factor” qualities in choral performances? <i>Spiritual engagement</i>	In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers...no questions (0): absolutely all my questions (10).	0.353	0.040	0.007	0.624

*Note.* a. Estimation is based on Fisher's r-to-z transformation. b. Estimation of standard error is based on the formula proposed by Fieller, Hartley, and Pearson.

**Research Question 6: What effect does spirituality have on participants' self-reported abilities to generate It Factor-type choral performances?**

Respondents were asked what effect spirituality has on their abilities to generate the “It Factor”. Their responses can be divided into eight categories, four of which I will briefly list here. Full responses for each respondent who answered are in Appendix D.

***Understanding, Interpretation, and Performance***

Respondents stated that spirituality effected their ability to understand the elements of the music and the text. They also stated that spirituality affected their overall interpretation, presentation, and performance.

***The Effect is Null/Small, Helpful Not Necessary***

One respondent attested that spirituality had no effect on her ability, and that it was only for her personal preparation. Other respondents said that spirituality was of some effect, and that while it was helpful, it was not necessary.

***Transcendence***

Many concurred that spirituality caused them to experience the following: connection with God, a sense of “feeling God”, closeness with a higher power, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and getting to a transformative space.

***Connectivity***

Respondents attested that spirituality influenced their ability to generate the “It Factor” through various means of connectivity, such as: making a connection with God, connecting with the music, connecting with the conductor, and connecting with the audience.

### **Research Question 7: How do participants self-define the It Factor?**

Respondents were asked to consider the following question: Earlier I defined the “It Factor” in this survey, but how would you define the “It Factor”? Two of the participants’ responses supported the “It Factor” definition in this study. Others had an interesting perspective or twist to their definition. I will highlight four categories that stood out in particular. Full responses for each respondent who answered are in Appendix D.

#### ***God or Spirit generates the “It Factor”/is the “It Factor”***

One participant stated:

“I would define the “It Factor” in choral music as “the anointing” bestowed by God, the Creator of music, which is very important to its creator. Dr. Lamar Boshman, in his book, “The Rebirth of Music,” notes that music is so important to God that it is mention[ed] over 980-plus times in scriptures. Music, therefore, as with all art forms, I believe [it] is designed to emit a spiritual aura and, that aura—the anointing—is the “It Factor”. Theologically, we believe that the Holy Spirit/-being the third person in the Godhead (the Trinity) is a Person and is not referred to as an “It”. However, I believe the Spirit is the “It Factor.”

#### ***Musicality, Engagement, Synergy, and Movement***

This respondent attested:

[The] It factor for a choir means that every aspect of musicality is exhibited. The entire choir is engaged and focused on the performance, and there is palpable synergy amongst the director and the members. Members visibly show their engagement by moving either deliberately or subconsciously.

### ***Connectivity, Transcendence and Power***

Another respondent stated:

“I would add that I believe an "It" happens when everyone is contributing the best of themselves. It sort of feels accidental, in the sense that you can't manipulate it. You as the *director can create the conditions for it, and prepare yourself to be open to it, but the singers have to do that work ...*The "It" for me is really when we *are ALL doing our very best* and it becomes so clear that we couldn't create such magic without each person present... It's an experience that transcends individuals, and our individual beliefs and mindsets, and brings into fruition the power of us all together. It's like we are creating a whole new presence in the space.”

### ***Musical Artistry Transformation and Transcendence***

This respondent quoted:

“The it factor plays a very important role when the music and text and the artistry of the performance has great precision, dynamics, accuracy of notes, and a strong delivery of diction and singers are able to deliver the text with great conviction [and] the audience will be greatly influence[d] which will results in many continuous applauses, crying may also be displayed, receiving letters and donations. I call this the “It Factor”.

Respondents indicated a variety of responses and definitions. Some of the respondents made comments that embraced the definition given in this study. Some had definitions like the ones above which highlight spirituality or a higher power. However, there were others who suggested that the “It factor” is simply musicality, or musical excellence, and that it is necessary.

**Final Comments: Do you have any additional comments about this topic or survey?**

The survey ended by asking respondents if they had any additional comments. There were thirteen comments in this section. Many did not reply or responded “not applicable” or none. There were others who implicated that the survey was important, interesting, and that they looked forward to learning more about it and reading the results. The answers for this item are listed in Appendix D.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The purposes of this study are to gain further understanding of the “It Factor” in choral performance, and to determine if there is a correlation between the “It Factor” and spirituality by examining the perceptions of highly successful African American women choral conductors. While current scholarship has addressed multiple aspects of choral performance and pedagogy, prior to this study, there are gaps in the literature concerning studies that address the specific combination of elements defined in the It Factor performance - which include a combination of the technical, expressive, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual qualities of musical performance. Participants ( $N = 41$ ) completed a researcher created online survey consisting of 95 ranking and Likert-scale questions, 2 open-ended questions, and 1 optional final comments question about their perspectives on variables concerning the “It Factor” choral performance and spirituality. The survey was divided into five sections: (a) demographic screening questions/demographic questions after screening, (b) aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, expression, and interpretation, interconnectedness, and spirituality, mind and body, emotional, spiritual, transformation, transcendence, (c) necessary, important, confidence, and frequency, (d) spirituality scale, (e) open-ended questions: spirituality and the “It Factor”.

#### **Summary**

Participants ( $N = 41$ ) rated the extent to which the nine constructs represent the “It Factor”. Most participants indicated that all constructs: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, multi-level connectivity or synergism, mental engagement, physical engagement, emotional engagement, spiritual engagement, transformation, and transcendence are necessary and important in “It Factor” choral performances, with aesthetic beauty being rated only slightly

lower than the other areas. African American female conductors indicated they were confident in their own ability to generate all the qualities related to the “It Factor”, but ranked their ability to generate spiritual engagement, transformation, and transcendence slightly lower. Many conductors indicated that most of these areas are evidenced in their choir’s performances, with transcendence and spiritual engagement being evidenced slightly less often. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation test revealed that spiritual engagement is positively correlated with the “It Factor” as it concerns spiritual engagement being important, and necessary in generating “It Factor” performances, and in how confident one feels in generating “It Factor” performances. Most of the participants in this study indicated that spirituality was an important part of their existence and that it had affected their ability to generate It Factor-type choral performances. Several of the conductors provided their own definitions of the concept “It Factor” to include themes such as connectivity, transcendence, transformation, and terms which reflected the divine, such as “Holy Spirit”, “higher spiritual plane”, “The Higher Power” and “the anointing.” The concept “It Factor” reflects a combination of aesthetics, exceptional choral music performance, connectivity, engagement, and spirituality.

Four key findings emerged from this study. First, aesthetic beauty is important in generating the “It Factor(s)”. Second, exceptional musical technique, expression, and interpretation are important in generating the “It Factor”. Third, connectivity and engagement are important in generating the “It Factor(s)”, and fourth, Spirituality is important in generating the “It Factor.”

## **Implications**

There are several implications that emerged from this study. They are organized below by headings.

***Finding One: The “It Factor(s)” makes our choral performance-experience more enjoyable/Aesthetic Beauty is important in generating the It factor(s)***

Results indicated that participants enjoy performances more when the choir’s performance reflects aesthetic beauty. Seventy-three percent of the participants ( $n = 30$ , 73%) reported that they enjoyed performances more when the choir’s facial expressions emote and match the message of the music, 66.9 % of participants ( $n = 27$ , 65.9%) reported that entering the stage with confidence causes more enjoyment, and slightly over 50% of participants ( $n = 21$ , 51.2%) reported more enjoyment when choir’s use movement to express the words and the meaning of the text. Additionally, participants’ responses indicated strong disagreement with the reverse statement, “I enjoy the performance regardless of how the performers emote or regardless of their facial expressions”, which further indicates that participants consider this an important attribute. While the literature does not specifically state a case for “more enjoyment”, philosophers and music educators agree that we have a human need to experience beauty (Dalcroze, 1930; Scruton, 2016), and that our need for beauty is relative to one experiencing a “fulfilled existence” (Scruton, 2016). Similar to the list of attributes represented under aesthetic beauty, Noppe (2012) affirmed that certain behaviors appear to have a positive effect on an audience’s perception of the “overall performance” such as “smiling, eye contact, a brisk confident walk onstage, bowing, movements in character with the music, and a sense of physical relaxation and comfort (p.23).

***Finding Two: Exceptional musical technique, expression, and interpretation are important in generating the “It Factor”***

Results indicated that exceptional musical technique, expression, and interpretation were necessary and important in generating the “It Factor” performance for these participants.

Participants strongly agreed that all of the following indicators were important: unification of vowels, balance and blend, sound quality, phrasing, diction, articulation, intonation, rhythmic accuracy and tempo, execution of consonants and meaning of the text, dynamics, expression and interpretation of the score. Each of these areas received a mean score between 4.6 and 4.8. Over 70% of participants indicated strong agreement across seven areas of exceptional musical technique to include exceptional intonation, exceptional expression (musical and emotional), exceptional sound quality (tone, pitch, blend), exceptional rhythmic accuracy and articulation, the exceptional execution of dynamics, and exceptional balance and blend. These findings are consistent with the literature. Many scholars concur that the acquisition of technical skills (such as music reading, technique, specific concerns for performance literature, musical creativity, music history, and expressive interpretation) is extremely important (Broomhead, 2001; Eychaner, 2015; Freer, 2011).

***Finding Three: Connectivity and Engagement are important in generating the “It Factor(s)”***

Results indicated that connectivity, and engagement were areas of importance for participants in the study. Concerning connectivity, the majority of participants, ( $n = 35$ , 85.4 %) indicated strong agreement on a sense of connectedness among the singers in the choir during exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances. Correspondingly, 83% strongly agreed there was a sense of connectedness between the singers and the music. Further, 68.3% of participants agreed strongly that there was a sense of connectedness between the music, audience, and singers. These findings are relevant to the literature. Lamont (2012) also described the importance of connectivity in terms of a “successful performance” being the “synthesis of their practice, a high level of technical ability, and connecting to, and with other performers and the listener” (p. 574). Conductors have also advocated that making a connection with the

audience is an important skill to be implemented in music performances (Juliano, 2014; Lamont, 2012; Peponi, 2009). Jaques-Dalcroze (1930) also stressed the importance of mind and body interconnectedness.

Concerning engagement, most respondents (70%, n = 26) strongly agreed that their mind was engaged with the meaning of the text, most respondents (81%, n = 29) strongly agreed that at the end of these performances, their physical body responds with demonstrative applause or a standing ovation, and the majority of the participants, 81% (n = 30) indicated strong agreement about becoming emotionally moved when the text is meaningful, profound, and beautifully executed. Considering the literature, music scholars advocate that the use of emotions in music performance is important (Juslin & Timmers, 2010). Juslin & Timmers also stated that performers engage emotionally when manipulating certain performance features such as tempo or loudness (p.2), and this emotional engagement is contingent upon both the delivery of the performer, and the audience's perception of that delivery.

***Finding Four: Spirituality is important in generating the “It Factor”***

Spirituality was addressed early in the survey as “spiritual engagement” and later with the Hodge (2003) Intrinsic Spirituality Scale. The results indicated that over 80% of the participants strongly agreed that they can become spiritually engaged with the music when the text expresses their core beliefs about God/ higher power, and 32% somewhat agreed concerning becoming spiritually engaged when the performance uplifts their human spirit by addressing core beliefs about humanity. The literature supports the concept of music having the ability to uplift the human spirit. The National Association for Music Education Strategic Plan, 2014 stated affirmed that spirituality impacts music in education and performance because “music is a universal expression of the human spirit, and that music education uplifts the human spirit and fosters the

well-being of society”. The literature does not specifically address spiritual engagement with the music through the text; however, it states that when choir members are capable of making emotional connections to the text, it makes the performance more honest, personal, and purposeful (Eychaner, 2015).

Spirituality was further addressed through the results of the Hodge Spirituality scale. The results of this assessment indicated (1) for most of the participants, spirituality or “their spiritual beliefs” were important according to each question and (2) there is a significant relationship between spirituality and the “It Factor”. More specifically, spirituality is (a) necessary in generating “It Factor” performances, (b) important in generating “It Factor” performances, and (c) impacted how confident they felt in generating “It Factor” performances. This relates to the literature in how spirituality can connect us to meaningful musical experiences. Habron & Van der Merwe (2017) developed a hermeneutic phenomenological model for spirituality which involves the following themes: relationality, in which spiritual experiences are encountered as one’s ability to connect to self, the world, and others; spatiality, in which spiritual experiences of “awe and wonder” are encountered through mindfulness and awareness during activities which involve music education; temporality, in which spiritual experiences are encountered as a journey, flow, or peak experience, that transcend time; and corporeality, in which spiritual experiences are experienced through a connection with the physical body (p. 53-61). The relationship between spirituality and the “It Factor” reflects the ability of the conductor and choral performers to generate a transcendent and transformative choral performance.

## Conclusions

Some choral conductors produce exceptional and aesthetically pleasing performances—performances that amaze and enrapture their audiences. There are other conductors who produce performances perceived as average and perfunctory. These performances leave the audience, conductor, and choir aesthetically unfulfilled. During the early stages of preparing for a performance, it is very important for singers to learn the correct notes, rhythms, dynamics, and other key directives in the music, but beyond these basic and core fundamentals, there are many other ambiguous qualities to be developed which require more internal retrospection. Qualities such as connectivity and synergy, emotional, mental, and spiritual engagement should be considered. Jordan (2015) attests, “our listening must dig beneath the surface of pitch, rhythm, intonation, and color of sound... and burrow deeply into the things that radiantly color sound with the ingredients of human connection and human spirit” (p.3).

What are the qualities that cause one group to produce a musically and emotionally stunning performance, while another produces one that is not stunning? This unique study attempts to unravel the complexity of this type of performance and bring more understanding to its innerworkings. Through an examination of the concept of the “It Factor” and its components, and by taking a look at spirituality both within the choir and the life of the conductor, it is apparent that there exists some type of relationship between them. I do not attempt to prove but to shed light on this phenomenon termed in this study, the “It Factor”.

Developing exceptional and compelling choral performances is a complex task. While there is a vast amount of research detailing each of the areas defined in the “It Factor”, there remains a gap concerning the sum total of them combined. While music scholars and educators continue to employ the standard protocols of choral music theory, vocal technique, teaching

philosophies and strategies that will yield exceptional technique, it may also benefit us to consider the element of spirituality, and how it can enhance our performance practices. How does one generate choral performances that not only impress us musically, but that engage our heart and spirit? There is a level that transcends the technical, and engages the heart and the spirit, the emotional and the spiritual. Conductors and educators must remain reflective practitioners, and constantly evaluate how we can create more meaningful choral experiences for our choirs and audiences alike.

### **Recommendations**

This study was designed to explore the perceptions of African American female choral conductors on “It Factor” choral performances and to determine if there was a correlation between the “It Factor” and spirituality. The findings in this study revealed that the attributes and concepts in the “It Factor”, for this population, to have merit and reveals that there is a relationship between the “It Factor” and spirituality. Future considerations for research include (1) expanding the base of African American female choral conductor population to reach globally, (2) investigating other ethnicities perceptions, (3) a qualitative study with interviews to a more robust and in-depth study, (4) a gender based study investigating female conductors/male conductors, and (5) an investigation of college and university choral conductors in the U.S. I would also consider for future study, the effect of the occasion, and repertoire selection on the “It Factor”.



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## Appendix A: Survey Instrument

### ONLINE SURVEY: Effect of Spirituality on "It Factor" Choral Performances

#### Information Letter for Research Study Entitled: *Effect of Spirituality on "It Factor" Choral Performances*

**You are invited to participate in a research study** to explore expert choral conductors' wealth of knowledge and insight regarding the effect of spirituality on "It Factor" choral performances (briefly 'It Factor' is the phenomenon where aesthetic beauty and exceptional musicality align to create those unforgettable moments in choral music). This study is being conducted by researcher Brenda Shuford, Ph.D. Candidate at Auburn University, under the direction of Dr. Jane Kuehne, Professor of Music Education.

**You are invited because** you are an *African-American, female choral conductor at the middle school, high school, collegiate, community or professional level and are 18 years of age, or older.*

**What will be involved if you participate?** If you decide to participate in this research study, you will complete an online survey regarding your perspectives and experiences with choral music performances, spirituality, and "It Factor" experiences. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** The potential risk or discomfort you may have in this study is completing an online survey asking your specific perspectives and experiences with choral music performances, spirituality, and "It Factor" experiences.

**Are there any benefits to yourself or others?** There are no direct benefits to you. However, your answers may help provide information about this subject area to choral music directors and choral educators.

**Will you receive compensation and/or are there any costs for participating?** There is no compensation nor are there any costs associated with this survey.

**If you change your mind about participating,** you can withdraw at any time during the study at any time prior to clicking on the final submit button. Once you submit your data, it is anonymous and cannot be withdrawn.

**Your decision to participate or to stop participating** will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the College of Education, the Department of Curriculum & Teaching, the Music Education Program, nor the Department of Music at Auburn University.

**Data obtained in this study** will remain anonymous. I will protect your privacy and the data you provide by ensuring all collected data are anonymous and encrypted for storage. Information collected through your participation may be used for future research, poster presentation, conference presentation, and/or publication.

**If have questions about this study,** please contact the researcher, Brenda Shuford ([bzs0057@auburn.edu](mailto:bzs0057@auburn.edu)) or her advisor, Dr. Jane Kuehne ([kuehnjm@auburn.edu](mailto:kuehnjm@auburn.edu)).

**If you have questions about your rights as a research participant,** you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at [IRBadmin@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBadmin@auburn.edu) or [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu).

**HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY SURVEY. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE SERVES AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE. YOU MAY PRINT THIS INFORMATION LETTER PAGE TO SAVE A COPY OF THIS LETTER FOR YOUR RECORDS.**

#### 1. Do you wish to continue to the survey?

- YES, I wish to participate in the study.
- NO, I do not wish to participate in this study.

*Skip To: End of Survey If Do you wish to continue to the survey? = NO, I do not wish to participate in this study.*

**PAGE BREAK**

**PART 1. A. DEMOGRAPHIC SCREENING QUESTIONS**

2. **How did you receive this survey invitation? (Select all that apply)**

- Facebook
- NAFME
- ACDA
- AVA
- Personal Contact

3. **Have you already completed this survey?**

- 4. Yes
- 5. No

*Skip To: End of Survey If Have you already completed this survey? = Yes*

**PAGE BREAK**

4. **What is your ethnicity? (Select All That Apply)**

- Asian
- African American/Black
- White
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Native American
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to respond

*Skip To: End of Survey If What is your ethnicity? (Select All That Apply) does not = African American/Black*

**PAGE BREAK**

5. **What is your birth-assigned sex?**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

*Skip To: End of Survey If What is your birth-assigned sex? Does not = Female*

**PAGE BREAK**

6. **Which of the following is true for you? Please select all that apply.**

- My choir has performed at a state convention/festival
- My choir has performed at a national convention/festival
- My choir consistently receives superior ratings at adjudicated festivals
- My choir often receives standing ovations
- I have been invited to conduct regional state national all state honor choir festivals
- I have been a guest lecturer for choral-focused professional development conferences
- My choirs are often called upon to perform at community events
- None of the above

*Skip To: End of Survey If Which of the following is true for you? = None of the above*

**PAGE BREAK**

**PART 1. B. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AFTER SCREENING**

7. **What is your age? Type the number.** \_\_\_\_\_
8. **How many years have you been a choral director? Type the number.** \_\_\_\_\_
9. **What is your highest earned degree?**
- No College-level Courses
  - Associate Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree
  - Master's
  - Master's+30 (or Education Specialist)
  - Doctoral Degree (PhD, DMA, etc.)
10. **What is/are the level(s) of your choral group(s)? (Select all that apply)**
- Middle School
  - High School
  - College
  - Adult/Community Choir
  - Adult Church Choir
  - Adult Professional Choir
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
11. **Which of the following best describes your affiliation?**
- Christian
  - Catholic
  - Buddhist
  - Muslim
  - Mormon
  - Hindu
  - New Age
  - Spiritual, but not Religious
  - Non-Religious
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to answer

**PAGE BREAK**

**Please read this definition and keep it in mind as you complete the next several questions.**

*The “It Factor” is an experiential phenomenon that defines choral performances which produce a conglomeration of the following attributes: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, expression, and interpretation (an exceptional execution of stage presence, musical artistry, technique, and sound quality), multi-level connectivity or synergism, and expressed levels of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional engagement of all participants (audience, conductor, and choir), producing not just a mere performance, but a performance-experience that is transformative and transcendent.*

**Part 2. A. AESTHETIC BEAUTY.**

**Rate how much you agree or disagree. *I enjoy the performance more when the...***

#	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
12.	performers are dressed beautifully	0	0	0	0	0
13.	venue is beautiful	0	0	0	0	0
14.	performers enter the stage with confidence	0	0	0	0	0
15.	performers’ facial expressions emote and match the message of the music	0	0	0	0	0
16.	singers use movement to express the words and the meaning of the text	0	0	0	0	0

**Rate how much you agree or disagree. *I enjoy the performance regardless of...***

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
5.	the performers' dress	0	0	0	0	0
6.	the venue	0	0	0	0	0
7.	how performers enter the stage	0	0	0	0	0
8.	how much or little performers’ facial expressions emote and match the message of the music	0	0	0	0	0
9.	how much or little singers use movement to express the words and the meaning of the text	0	0	0	0	0

**PART 2. B. EXCEPTIONAL MUSICAL TECHNIQUE, EXPRESSION, AND INTERPRETATION**

Rate how much you agree or disagree.

*I enjoy the performance more when the performers demonstrate EXCEPTIONAL:*

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
17.	Unification of vowels	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Balance and Blend	0	0	0	0	0
19.	Sound Quality (tone, pitch, blend)	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Phrasing	0	0	0	0	0
21.	Diction	0	0	0	0	0
22.	Articulation	0	0	0	0	0
23.	Intonation	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Rhythmic Accuracy and Tempo	0	0	0	0	0
25.	Execution of Consonants	0	0	0	0	0
26.	Execution of the meaning of the text	0	0	0	0	0
27.	Execution of Dynamics	0	0	0	0	0
28.	Expression (musical and emotional)	0	0	0	0	0
29.	Interpretation of the score	0	0	0	0	0

**PART 2. C. INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND SPIRITUALITY**

Rate how much you agree or disagree. *During exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances, there is a sense of...*

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
30.	interconnectedness among the singers in my choir.	0	0	0	0	0
31.	connectedness between the singers and the music.	0	0	0	0	0
32.	connectedness between the music, audience, and the singers.	0	0	0	0	0

Rate how much you agree or disagree. *As an audience member, during exceptional and emotionally moving performances, I feel a sense of connectedness with...*

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
33.	God/higher power	0	0	0	0	0
34.	the music	0	0	0	0	0
35.	the choir	0	0	0	0	0
36.	the conductor	0	0	0	0	0

Rate how much you agree or disagree. *As the conductor, during exceptional and emotionally moving performances, I feel a sense of connectedness with...*

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
37.	God or a higher power	0	0	0	0	0
38.	the music	0	0	0	0	0
39.	the choir members	0	0	0	0	0
40.	the audience	0	0	0	0	0

**PAGE BREAK**



**Keep this definition in mind as you complete the next several questions.**

*The “It Factor” is an experiential phenomenon that defines choral performances which produce a conglomeration of the following attributes: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, expression, and interpretation (an exceptional execution of stage presence, musical artistry, technique, and sound quality), multi-level connectivity or synergism, and expressed levels of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional engagement of all participants (audience, conductor, and choir), producing not just a mere performance, but a performance-experience that is transformative and transcendent.*

**Part 2. D. MIND AND BODY**

**Rate how much you agree or disagree. *Regarding exceptional and emotionally moving performances...***

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
41.	<i>DURING these performances</i> , my mind is engaged with assessing the overall performance and its various components (i.e., rhythm, melody, harmony, form etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
42.	<i>DURING these performances</i> , my mind is engaged with the meaning of the text.	o	o	o	o	o
43.	<i>DURING these performances</i> , my body responds with some type(s) of physical movement(s).	o	o	o	o	o
44.	<i>At the END of these performances</i> , my physical body responds with demonstrative applause or a standing ovation.	o	o	o	o	o

**Part 2. E. EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL, TRANSFORMATION, TRANSCENDENCE**

Rate how much you agree or disagree. *I can become emotionally moved when...*

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
45.	the text is meaningful, profound, and beautifully executed	o	o	o	o	o
46.	when the music elements are beautifully executed (melody, harmony, dynamics, timbre, balance, and blend)	o	o	o	o	o

Rate how much you agree or disagree. *I can become spiritually engaged with the music when...*

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
47.	the text and music beautifully express my core beliefs about God/or a higher power.	o	o	o	o	o
48.	the performance uplifts my human spirit by beautifully addressing topics that reflect our humanity (i.e., peace, love, brotherhood, patriotism, freedom, etc.).	o	o	o	o	o
49.	the performance becomes an experience that mystically touches my heart, mind, and emotions.	o	o	o	o	o

Rate how much you agree or disagree. *Exceptional and emotionally moving choral performances can...*

	Areas	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
50.	alter or transform my emotions (i.e., make me feel happy when sad, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
51.	alter or transform my mind or position (about various topics or issues)	o	o	o	o	o
52.	transcend the present moment (i.e., cause one to forget about one's current situation or state of mind)	o	o	o	o	o
53.	lead to physiological effects and feelings (such as chills, tears, uplifted hands, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o

**PAGE BREAK**

**Keep this definition in mind as you complete the next several questions.**

*The “It Factor” is an experiential phenomenon that defines choral performances which produce a conglomeration of the following attributes: aesthetic beauty, exceptional musical technique, expression, and interpretation (an exceptional execution of stage presence, musical artistry, technique, and sound quality), multi-level connectivity or synergism, and expressed levels of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional engagement of all participants (audience, conductor, and choir), producing not just a mere performance, but a performance-experience that is transformative and transcendent.*

**PART 3. NECESSARY, IMPORTANT, CONFIDENCE, AND FREQUENCY**

*How much are following qualities necessary in generating “It Factor” choral performances?*

	Areas	None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
54.	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
55.	Exceptional Musical Technique (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
56.	Multi-level connectivity or synergism	o	o	o	o	o
57.	Mental engagement	o	o	o	o	o
58.	Physical engagement	o	o	o	o	o
59.	Spiritual engagement	o	o	o	o	o
60.	Emotional engagement	o	o	o	o	o
61.	A Transformative performance-experience	o	o	o	o	o
62.	A Transcendent performance-experience	o	o	o	o	o

How ***important*** are the following qualities in generating “It Factor” choral performances?

	Areas	None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
63.	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
64.	Exceptional Musical Technique (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
65.	Multi-level connectivity or synergism	o	o	o	o	o
66.	Mental engagement	o	o	o	o	o
67.	Physical engagement	o	o	o	o	o
68.	Spiritual engagement	o	o	o	o	o
69.	Emotional engagement	o	o	o	o	o
70.	A Transformative performance-experience	o	o	o	o	o
71.	A Transcendent performance-experience	o	o	o	o	o

How ***confident are you in your own ability*** to generate the following “It Factor” qualities in choral performances?

	Areas	None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
72.	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
73.	Exceptional Musical Technique (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
74.	Multi-level connectivity or synergism	o	o	o	o	o
75.	Mental engagement	o	o	o	o	o
76.	Physical engagement	o	o	o	o	o
77.	Spiritual engagement	o	o	o	o	o
78.	Emotional engagement	o	o	o	o	o
79.	A Transformative performance-experience	o	o	o	o	o
80.	A Transcendent performance-experience	o	o	o	o	o

How ***often*** are the following “It Factor” areas ***evidenced in your choirs’ performances?***

	Areas	None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
81.	Aesthetic Beauty (dress, venue, confidence, stage presence, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
82.	Exceptional Musical Technique (vowels, balance/blend, sound quality, phrasing, etc.)	o	o	o	o	o
83.	Multi-level connectivity or synergism	o	o	o	o	o
84.	Mental engagement	o	o	o	o	o
85.	Physical engagement	o	o	o	o	o
86.	Spiritual engagement	o	o	o	o	o
87.	Emotional engagement	o	o	o	o	o
88.	A Transformative performance-experience	o	o	o	o	o
89.	A Transcendent performance-experience	o	o	o	o	o

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**PART 4. SPIRITUALITY SCALE**

For the following six questions, spirituality is defined as one’s relationship to God, or whatever you perceive to be Ultimate Transcendence (Hodge, 2003).

The questions use a sentence completion format to measure various attributes associated with spirituality.

An incomplete sentence fragment is provided, followed directly below by two phrases that are linked to a scale ranging from 0 to 10. The phrases, which complete the sentence fragment, anchor each end of the scale. The 0 to 10 range provides you with a continuum on which to reply, with 0 corresponding to absence or zero amount of the attribute, while 10 corresponds to the maximum amount of the attribute.

In other words, the end points represent extreme values, while five corresponds to a medium, or moderate, amount of the attribute.

*Please choose the point along the continuum between the two levels that best reflects your initial feeling.*

*Please read each item's choices carefully.*

90.	<i>In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers...</i>		
	no questions	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	absolutely all my questions
91.	<i>Growing spiritually is...</i>		
	more important than	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	of no importance to me
92.	<i>When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality...</i>		
	plays absolutely no role	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	is always the overriding consideration
93.	<i>Spirituality is...</i>		
	the master motive of my life, directing every other aspect of my life	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	not part of my life
94.	<i>When I think of the things that help me to grow and mature as a person, my spirituality...</i>		
	has no effect on my personal growth	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	is absolutely the most important factor in my personal growth
95.	<i>My spiritual beliefs affect...</i>		
	absolutely everything of my life	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	no aspect of my life

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**PART 5. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS: SPIRITUALITY AND THE "IT FACTOR"**

**In your opinion what effect (if any) has spirituality had on your ability to generate "It Factor" type choral performances?**

Earlier, I defined the "It Factor" in this survey, but how would you define the "It Factor" in choral music?

**OPTIONAL FINAL COMMENTS**

Do you have any additional comments about this topic or survey? If so, please type them below. (optional)

**SUBMIT BUTTON**

**CONFIRMATION PAGE**

Thank you for completing this survey!

If you know another African American female choral conductor who should participate in this study, please feel free to send her the link to this survey.

<https://aub.ie/it-factor-survey>

## **Appendix B: Email and Social Media Invitations**

### **Email**

Dear Fellow Choral Director,

My name is Brenda Shuford and I am a Ph.D. student in Music Education at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. I am writing to ask you to please consider participating in my dissertation study survey investigating perceptions of African American female choral conductors on the “It Factor” choral performances, and to determine the effect, if any, that spirituality has in generating these types of performances. An “It Factor” performance is one that is considered especially moving, and often can be considered highly aesthetic. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at [bps0057@auburn.edu](mailto:bps0057@auburn.edu), or my faculty advisor, Dr. Jane M. Kuehne at [kuehnjm@auburn.edu](mailto:kuehnjm@auburn.edu). Thank you for your consideration.

SURVEY LINK: <https://aub.ie/it-factor-survey>

### **Social Media**

Hello! Please consider participating in my dissertation study survey investigating perceptions of African American female choral conductors on the “It Factor” choral performances, and to determine the effect, if any, that spirituality has in generating these types of performances. An “It Factor” performance is one that is considered especially moving, and often can be considered highly aesthetic. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at [bps0057@auburn.edu](mailto:bps0057@auburn.edu), or my faculty advisor, Dr. Jane M. Kuehne at [kuehnjm@auburn.edu](mailto:kuehnjm@auburn.edu). Thank you for your consideration.

SURVEY LINK: <https://aub.ie/it-factor-survey>

## Appendix C: IRB Approval Email

**From:** IRB Administration <irbadmin@auburn.edu>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 25, 2022 12:12 PM  
**To:** Brenda Shuford <bzs0057@auburn.edu>  
**Cc:** Jane Kuehne <kuehnjm@auburn.edu>; Paul Fitchett <pgf0011@auburn.edu>  
**Subject:** Shuford Approval, Exempt Protocol #22-376 EX 2208, "Effect of Spirituality on "It Factor" Choral Performances"

Use [IRB Submission Page](#) for protocol-related submissions and [IRBadmin@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBadmin@auburn.edu) for questions and information.

The IRB only accepts forms posted at <https://cws.auburn.edu/vpr/compliance/humansubjects/?Forms> and submitted electronically.

Dear Ms. Shuford,

Your protocol titled "Effect of Spirituality on "It Factor" Choral Performances" has been approved by the IRB as "Exempt" under federal regulation 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Attached is a copy of your approved request.

Official notice:

This e-mail serves as official notice that your protocol has been approved. By accepting this approval, you also accept your responsibilities associated with this approval. Details of your responsibilities are attached. Please print and retain.

Expiration:

Continuing review of this Exempt protocol is not required; however, all modification/revisions to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.

When you have completed all research activities, have no plans to collect additional data and have destroyed all identifiable information as approved by the IRB, please notify this office via e-mail. A final report is no longer required for Exempt protocols.

**PLEASE NOTE: If any unfunded, IRB-approved study should later receive funding, you must submit a MODIFICATION REQUEST for IRB review. In the request, identify the funding source/sponsor and AU OSP number. Also, revise IRB-stamped consent documents to include the Sponsor at the top of page 1 and the "Who will see study data?" section of consent documents." (see online template consent documents).**

Best wishes for success with your research!

IRB Admin  
Office of Research Compliance  
Auburn University  
540 Devall Drive  
Auburn, AL



## Appendix D: Open-ended Question and Comments Responses

*Note: Items were not changed to correct respondents' typos.*

**In your opinion what effect (if any) has spirituality had on your ability to generate "It Factor" type choral performances?**

- None. It is fundamental to my own preparation, but I trust my singers to be taking their own journey in preparation -- whatever that is for them.
- Closeness with a higher power towards excellent performances
- The performances are an outgrowth or product of my connection with God and dependence upon Him.
- In selecting a repertoire and implementing performances, I base what is generated on the belief of lyrics penned by Donald Lawrence that suggest we are spiritual beings in a natural environment. Therefore, I tap into the spiritual component of the performers, the compositions and the leading of the Holy Spirit—the third person in the Godhead and the Spirit's unction.
- Spirituality has a great effect in my ability to generate "It Factor" type performances. Before and sometimes during performances I engage in prayer and meditation for guidance, to relieve anxiety, and to ask that our/my musical presentation move the listeners.
- Is the connection between you the audience and Christ. Words have power
- My choir sings mostly music composed and arranged by African-Americans. It is inherently spiritual and in turn so have our performances been.
- I'm in a Gospel collegiate choir, so a lot of the songs we sing are spiritual in nature. Singing in the choir helped me work through a lot of the trauma and frustration I had with Christianity and growing up in the Baptist church. It helped me feel like I could reconnect with God, which I feel like comes across in performance. Feeling God while performing helped me learn how to feel Him in other aspects of my life. One of the best parts of music is its ability to connect and touch people, and being able to identify that feeling in song myself helped me be more comfortable being emotive in music.
- My spiritual beliefs define my purpose, my goals and provide me strength to focus and to move forward courageously and lovingly
- Spiritually IS the reason behind the "It Factor." It is God's power manifested through me and through my choir. "It" is God's leading that gets us to that powerfully transformative space and place in time.
- In any organized system, the parts are a reflection of the head. The ensemble will model the director subconsciously and consciously. In my spiritual walk, even in its failures, I'm striving to exemplify God in all I do and say.
- Spirituality and the ability to discern what needs to be done in performances, is what has motivated me.
- It helps with the overall interpretation and performance.
- My spirituality helps me understand and convey the elements of the music through my interpretation.

- I think my spirituality has allowed to facilitate understanding of text so that the singers and present it thoughtfully. Hopefully they relate to the text in a personal way that effects their performances.
- Some effect
- Beautiful texts (many about God or the Lord) as well as melodies and harmonies can positively affect how I approach a piece of music. Making sure that chords line up perfectly so that the chord sounds as it was intended is key.
- I believe in doing all things as unto the Lord, so I always try to do things in an excellent manner.
- Vital in choral music
- My faith is a part of who I am so it's my it facorr
- Spirituality is the source of generating the "It Factor" for all performances.
- I ask for guidance BEFORE selecting songs. Even with secular songs. If I do not feel a spiritual connection with the song, it will be very hard for me to bring it out of the students.
- When performing pieces that talk about spirituality/faith, community and love I find it easier to generate qualities of the "It Factor". When spirituality is the main theme of a song I find that a lot of my students can relate and connect to the meaning which in turn makes them more focus and in tune with one another while singing.
- My first thought in preparing for a performance is how to bring Glory to God through our performance. My second thought is how to engage the audience with the same goal of spiritual uplifting.
- Significant.
- Being confident in my own connection with God helps me to teach my students the importance of spiritual connectivity. I teach at a Catholic university so I have liberty to do this.
- I pray about the choice of music and lean into the leading of the Holy Spirit about which songs to do (or not do) during the concert.
- If your choir can feel the presence of GOD exuding from you as a conductor, I believe that it can transform their singing and heighten the experience for the audience. In essence, it creates a change in the entire atmosphere!
- The ability to take the audience on the journey with you.
- My spirituality has been the primary component in the ability to generate the "It Factor".
- Spirituality helps when trying to have an "It factor" experience however, not always a must have when singing lyrics about God. The director plays an important role when discussing the text and guiding singers to accent key words, stressing the dynamics that is placed on those key words and the facial expressions of the singers all of these factors help to generate the "It Factor".

**Earlier, I defined the "It Factor" in this survey, but how would you define the "It Factor" in choral music?**

- Pretty much how you described it! I would add that I believe an "It" happens when everyone is contributing the best of themselves. It sort of feels accidental, in the sense that you can't manipulate it. You as the director can create the conditions for it, and prepare yourself to be open to it, but the singers have to do that work as well, however it is that works for them. The "It" for me is really when we are ALL doing our very best and it becomes so clear that we couldn't create such magic without each person present. "It" has happened while teaching beginning middle school choir and while working with college music majors! It's an experience that transcends individuals, and our individual beliefs and mindsets, and brings into fruition the power of us all together. It's like we are creating a whole new presence in the space.
- When conductors and their students make a connection
- I agree with your definition.
- I would define the "It Factor" in choral music as "the anointing" bestowed by God, the Creator of music, which is very important to its creator. Dr. Lamar Boshman, in his book, "The Rebirth of Music," notes that music is so important to God that it is mentioned over 980-plus times in scriptures. Music, therefore, as with all art forms, I believe is designed to emit a spiritual aura and, that aura—the anointing—is the "It Factor". Theologically, we believe that the Holy Spirit/-being the third person in the Godhead (the Trinity) is a Person and is not referred to as an "It". However, I believe the Spirit is the "It Factor"
- I define "It Factor" in choral music as presenting a performance that is emotionally engaging as a result of performing at a high level of technical execution, interpretation, and confidence of the performers and conductor.
- The qualities that make a great choir through the look, how you present yourself, the sound and passion
- I believe the "It Factor" to be a synergy of mind, body, spirit, and musicality.
- The "it factor" is when music touches something in you. It goes beyond technical and note correctness and pulls in emotions to reach the performers and the audience. It's the difference between going "Oh that's a pretty song" and crying because the music touched you that much.
- The "It Factor" for me is the shared experience of the choir and attendees where we are all inspired, invited and moved to share an uplifting and transcendent moment. This is a moment where the Holy Spirit abounds and touches me and others in an unforgettably wondrous experience. This is how I would describe the moment, others will interpret it in their own ways.
- The presence of God expressed by the Holy Spirit--God's self in our midst.
- One's overall perception of excellence
- The ability to be touched, reached, moved emotionally and musically.
- Understanding and conveying the messages of the music effectively.
- It factor is the polish to the music. This includes the overall experience of the music and how it is conveyed to the audience.

- It musically sound (in tune, phrasing, dynamics, etc.). It also takes the text and allows the music to enhance it.
- The connection between chorus, text and audience
- It factor for a choir means that every aspect of musicality is exhibited. The entire choir is engaged and focused on the performance, and there is palpable synergy amongst the director and the members. Members visibly show their engagement by moving either deliberately or subconsciously.
- The implementation of total musicality within a performance.
- Necessary in choral music
- A choir that performs a piece that leaves the audience speechless on all cylinders while connecting to the singers and choral director as one.
- The “It Factor” is the essential element that spiritually connects the conductor, performers, and the audience to choral music.
- The connection between director and students is essential. If they can create the ambiance desired by the composer, the connection WILL be made with the audience.
- In choral music, the "It Factor" is a song that allows the ensemble to become a united and create a conscious performance. The "It Factor" doesn't necessarily have to be a slow or legato piece but it needs to have a strong theoretical foundation and direction throughout the piece.
- The "It Factor" for me is the exact combination of preparation, performance skill and musicality used toward a goal of lifting the choir and audience to a higher spiritual plane.
- Choir feeling, communicating, and executing well as many aspects of the music, text, expression/dynamics, etc) as possible and having the congregation/audience hear/feel/ receive the "message."
- I like to think of an old Quincy Jones song. The words are what good is a song if it can't inspire, if it has no message to bring. If a song cannot send you higher, it's not good enough to sing. While I want my singers to get all of the musical elements right, if I have to choose, I err on the side of helping them love singing and the experience of making music and sharing it with an audience.
- When there is no separation between you and the choir and the audience. All are in His amazing presence!
- The ability to transform the atmosphere of a performing experience, spiritually and create a sense of inspiration.
- An understanding of the music, development of a connection with the music and the world at the time the music was written.
- The “It Factor” is a cataclysmic occurrence when the synergy of The Higher Power, the skill, knowledge, and musical components of the performers, collides with the listener and they unite as one!
- The it factor plays a very important role when the music and text and the artistry of the performance has great precision, dynamics, accuracy of notes, and a strong delivery of diction and singers are able to deliver the text with great conviction the audience will be greatly influence which will results in many continuous applaudes, crying may also be displayed, receiving letters and donations. . I call this the “It Factor”.

**Do you have any additional comments about this topic or survey? If so, please type them below. (optional)**

- Not at this time.
- No
- This was an interesting and thought provoking survey. I am invested in seeing the results of your research.
- Its important to designate the TYPE/GENRE of music that is being performed. I primarily direct gospel music where the message and the truth of that message outweighs the emphasis on technical aspects - although they are important. However, in a classical/euro genre, the technical aspects are critical to the successful performance. So the audience expectation, and how they respond would be different! Without addressing the cultural/spiritual differences of the genres, the comparisons are missing an important component, in my opinion.
- Survey: Note - I have previously directed several church choirs but did not mark "church" in that question because it asked what choir(s) I direct [in the present not in the past]. This "It Factor" has happened many, many times in my church choirs.
- This is a great study. I can't wait to read the results. Thank you for the opportunity.
- N/A
- No
- This study will truly add major contributions to the field of music performance and music education. I'm interested in reading the results of the research and learning how to possibly strengthen and grow the "It Factor" in the music in which I conduct, perform, or perhaps, create.
- Hope you get meaningful results from the survey. Best wishes!
- This is an excellent topic and I'm glad to see that you are exploring it.
- I love that someone is asking about this very important but often ignored aspect about directing gospel choirs!