

Leadership Attributes for Innovation and Change in a Cultural Arts Organization

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Abstract

Historically, research in successful change leadership has focused on models and attributes grounded in episodic change. However, advancements in technology and globalization have moved organizations into continuously changing environments, which require leaders to abandon historic leadership models and embrace leadership attributes that engage all stakeholders to ensure ongoing organizational success. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to explore trends in stakeholder perceptions of attributes required to bring about organizational change in a continuously changing environment across key leadership roles in a Midwest American orchestra. The survey results indicate nine of the top ten leadership attributes are common across all leadership positions (i.e., Board President, CEO/Executive Director, and Artistic Director) regardless of stakeholder group affiliation (musicians, staff, Board of Directors). Focus groups' review of the survey results suggested widespread agreement with the survey results. These research findings provide broad opportunities to learn more about successful leadership in a continually changing environment, particularly in succession planning and leadership development programs in the cultural arts environment.

Key Words: change management, leadership change theory, continuous change, key leadership attributes, and leadership characteristics

Introduction

Historically, organizational change research has been dominated by assumptions of organizational stability with attempts to isolate episodic change conditions (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Episodic is defined as organizational changes that are infrequent and discontinuous. Even in episodic change, Beer and Nohria (2000) contended: “The brutal fact is that about 70 percent of all change efforts fail” (p. 133). Christensen (2016) further asserted that even before the internet and advancements in globalization, a leader’s ability to effectively manage change was broadly unsuccessful.

Friedman (2016) asserted that all organizations have entered a constant state of destabilization, and thus humanity must learn to thrive in a state of continuous change. Therefore, leaders need to disregard thoughts of static stability and learn to manage in a state of dynamic stability (Friedman, 2016; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). While it is universally acknowledged that arts organizations are undergoing considerable changes, little is known about the impacts of change leadership in this sector (Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). Higgs and Rowland (2000) defined change leadership as the ability to influence others through personal interaction, vision and motivation, and to marshal resources to construct a solid platform for change.

In recent years, many authors have compared traditional (long-established) episodic approaches with more dynamic and continuous approaches to change management and change leadership that has emerged from increased organizational complexity (Lawrence, 2015). The results of Lawrence’s research suggested that many leaders are at least intuitively aware of the limitations of traditional approaches to change leadership and, therefore, do not rely on conventional change leadership models and associated leadership attributes. Moreover, efforts to identify these key leadership attributes for successfully managing change are further complicated by the continuously changing environments in which organizations must operate today (Lobonea, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Given the limitations of traditional approaches, historic leadership characteristics are not useful in the age of continuous and accelerating change (Lawrence, 2015). Moreover, well-established leadership characteristics from past research generally tested small groups of leadership attributes in isolation. Coupled with the increased complexity of the environment in which arts organizations, specifically American orchestras, must operate, arts leaders must come to terms with the plethora of leadership research that seeks to instruct them on the characteristics they need to be successful in this dynamic world. Additionally, the lack of leadership research in the cultural arts further complicates a leaders’ role in this rapidly changing environment. Thus, 21st-century leadership challenges require the identification of new leadership qualities (Lobonea, 2014). Moreover, are the selection of these leadership attributes aligned across leadership perceptions of different stakeholder groups.

Case Study Organization

American orchestras are different in size, number of musicians, season length, and annual operating budgets. While no two orchestras are precisely alike, size and complexity are approximated by groupings based on annual operating budgets. Of the 1200 orchestras, 792 or 66% work with annual budgets of less than \$300,000, and 24 or 2% operate with annual budgets

above \$20 million (League of American Orchestras, 2020). The Midwest midsize orchestra selected for this study, at an annual operating budget of \$7 million, effectively represents 32 percent of the medium-sized population with operating budgets between \$2 million and \$20 million.

This Midwest American orchestra also operates in a very challenging and rapidly changing environment. Tepavac (2010) argued that orchestras are facing continuous challenges to their traditional operating models and thus working hard to keep the art form alive. Kaledin (2016) asserted: “For several decades, U.S. orchestras have been caught in a changing landscape” (p. 1). Pompe and Tamburri (2016) echoed these concerns stating, “The economics, demographics, and competition that Symphony orchestras are facing today create challenging dilemmas in this shifting environment” (p. 70). While many American orchestras are actively questioning long-held orthodoxies and traditions, successfully leading these organizations with new and innovative approaches can be challenging (Tepavac, 2010). The consequences of these challenges have eroded patron reach and associated earned revenue while limiting philanthropic interest. The associated economics make innovation difficult to finance, and thus relevance continues to decay. These challenges are unique to the cultural arts community given earned income seldom funds 50% of the annual operating budget, and therefore, economic operating models rely heavily on the generosity of the philanthropic community (League of American Orchestras, 2020).

Theoretical / Conceptual Framework

Leadership Change Theory. Christensen (2016) and Friedman (2016) expressed concern about the pace of globalization and the speed of advancements in technology. This global transition from organizational stability to dynamic stability, or a constant state of organizational change, is an important distinction in attempting to understand the historic research in leadership attributes required to lead in this continuously changing environment. Lawrence (2015) contended researchers require a new school of thought to bring insight into the complexity of this globalized phenomenon of perpetual change. Moreover, he suggested research needs to understand better how people make sense of change, how leaders revise their mental models of organizational change, and how leaders adapt and thrive in a changing environment.

Therefore, episodic change models are not effective for organizations experiencing continuous and accelerating change driven by the globalization of the economy and advancements in technology (Lawrence, 2015). Moreover, isolating change leader characteristics for universal application has proven to be extremely difficult (Lawrence, 2015). However, the research is starting to yield an understanding of the complexity of change leadership

Metcalf and Morelli (2015) argued, “To thrive long-term, business leaders must make implementing change a core competency to capitalize on our changing world instead of merely trying to adapt to it” (p. 84). They asserted that the existence of accelerating change in technology and markets, and thus, organizations, presents additional complexity for leadership. This is increasingly important in the orchestral world where technology has provided consumers and music lovers immediate access to virtual music from around the globe and lessened the need for consumers to attend live performances. These technological advances are not unique to the cultural arts community. However, cultural arts leaders must embrace leadership characteristics that allow for change to occur within their orchestral communities and overcome the current lack of leadership courage and confidence to lead through this changing environment (Abrams, 2019).

Abrams (2019) further argued, the industry knows it needs to continually rethink itself, and thus overcome this leadership timidity. While this can and is occurring, leaders must adopt a leadership approach that reflects the broader market with leadership attributes that support innovation and collaboration.

Bernotavicz, McDaniel, Brittan, and Dickinson (2013) took a proactive approach to address this perpetual change, or, as the authors called it, *perpetual whitewater*. The authors rejected the simplistic leadership models of historic research and contended that a broader set of leadership skills were necessary to be successful in continuously changing environments.

Leadership Attributes Research

Oreg and Berson (2011) asserted that organizations continually face new challenges and thus need to navigate changing environments. Additionally, the authors acknowledged the degree to which most change efforts fail. To gain more insight into these failed organizational change efforts, Oreg and Berson (2011) examined the relationship of leaders' attributes and transformational leadership behaviors to follower resistance to organizational change. The researchers concluded that leaders must be inspirational, intellectual, and individualized to overcome followers' measured resistance to change. Of specific interest, the results further suggested that the inspirational leadership dimension yielded the strongest follower motivation to support change efforts (Oreg & Berson, 2011).

Ajmal, Farooq, Sajid, and Awan (2012) completed an extensive review of the role of leadership in change management literature to determine the factors that facilitate change within an organization. Their effort sought to illustrate the significance of leadership in the change management process and to identify leadership qualities necessary to drive effective organizational change. The researchers found that the common change leadership attributes required to successfully manage change were: self-confidence, ambition, drive and tenacity, realism, psychological openness, appetite for learning, creativity, fairness, dedication, and collaborative decision making.

Moreover, Anca (2014) argued that successful change efforts lie in the perceptions of employees and not specifically the adopted leadership style. Anca's (2014) research began the discussion of the importance of followership as it relates to successful change leadership. Anca (2014) conducted research in Romanian organizations to understand employee perceptions and beliefs of leadership in generating successful change. The employee survey suggested that 78% of employees believed it is the leader's responsibility to drive change. Additionally, 59% of employees in Anca's study (2014) believed that change leaders who collaborate with team members and offer rewards are more effective. Anca's (2014) research concluded that leaders must effectively communicate the vision, prepare followers for change, empower followers to implement the change, and continually communicate the progress of the change efforts. Additionally, the followers under study contended that effective change leaders must be creative, intelligent, visionary, flexible, and maintain a positive attitude to be successful (Anca).

Rast, Hogg, and Giessner (2016) completed a robust study to determine the subordinate trust of change-oriented leaders versus stability-oriented leaders in times of heightened organizational uncertainty. University students participated in the study, which concluded, students with low self-confidence tended to trust stability-oriented leaders more than change-oriented leaders when organizational uncertainty was high. Alternatively, students with high self-confidence trusted change-oriented leaders under similar circumstances (Rast, Hogg & Giessner). Rast et al. (2016) conducted a second study with British employees in various

organizations. The results were similar but not conclusive. While the Dutch study may not provide results applicable in real-world settings, the research further explained the strong correlation between leader and follower. More specifically, the research expanded on the importance of collaboration identified by Anca (2014) and Lawrence (2015).

Peters (2012) came to the same conclusion about the importance of peer and subordinate engagement as a key success factor for leaders managing continuous change environments. Peters (2012) suggested that historic leadership models that support change efforts are overly simplistic and only work in cases where only one path exists. Additionally, Peters argued that change leaders who have poor decision-making skills would fail to successfully lead organizational change efforts in dynamic environments where complexity and uncertainty exist. He contended that complex change efforts require many decisions and leading down many paths with paradoxical solutions.

Through two consultant engagement case studies, Peters (2012) highlighted paradoxical moments in change efforts. Results indicated that ineffective leaders often stall when making decisions, given the complexity of the decisions before them. Leaders often fail even to identify the paradox, suggesting a do-nothing strategy until the path is more certain. This desired certainty is unlikely to arise in an environment of constant change. Thus, this avoidance tactic can unwind change efforts by stalling or stopping the change initiative. Peters (2012) recommended that effective leaders acknowledge the paradox, resist jumping to either solution and engage all stakeholders in looking for solutions that bridge the gap between two alternatives. This collaborative effort ensures that collective reframing occurs where individuals and groups can assess the potential outcomes of each opportunity and potentially gain the benefits of both paths (Peters, 2012). Again, the ability of leaders to effectively collaborate surfaces, regardless of the method or model under study.

Bernotavicz, McDaniel, Brittain, & Dickinson (2013) researched turbulent organizational environments and suggested leadership at all levels need to understand, focus on, and hold to the organizational vision to operate effectively. Moreover, Bernotavicz et al. (2013) asserted, the challenge is to change an individual's self-perception from a technical expert to a leader skilled at dealing with internal and external complexities of a changing environment. Leaders, through this active process, can create a positive organizational climate in which all stakeholders can reach their full potential (Bernotavicz et al.).

From a sociological perspective, Spillane (2005) indicated that change efforts are successful not by the leadership characteristics of the transformational leader, but by their ability to release the collective leadership talents of everyone in the organization. In his study of distributed leadership, Spillane (2005) argued that effective leadership takes form in the interactions between leaders and followers. Therefore, leadership characteristics are not indicative of the success of organizational change. Instead, successful change leadership lies in a leader's ability to manage the interaction of leaders, followers, and situation (Spillane, 2005).

Iachini, Cross, and Freedman (2015) contended that transformational leadership is ineffective in bringing about change, and thus, leaders must provide inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention to employees to achieve distributed leadership. The belief that all people can grow and develop their capabilities to become effective leaders underlies their Social Change Model (SCM) (Iachini, Cross, & Freedman, 2015). Specifically, the SCM values of consciousness of self, collaboration, and controversy with civility are the three key leadership characteristics from their application of the model in community-based organizations.

Pietinalho (2017) suggested that hierarchical leaders fail to conceptualize the evolutionary patterns of organizations and thus fail to align change efforts that support individual change. Further, she argued, as firms become increasingly successful, they become increasingly less supportive of change, even when social change patterns are evident. For organizations to continue their successful past, leaders must envision, allow, and support evolutionary change efforts from within the organization (Pietinalho, 2017). This collaborative effort suggests that leaders who engage all followers in change leadership will be successful in organizational change efforts.

Therefore, Pietinalho's (2017) concern was not the lack of crucial leadership characteristics of the individual charged to bring about change, but the inability to release the mass flourishing of followers. From a sociological perspective, Spillane (2005), Iachini, Cross, and Freedman (2015), Berzin and Pitt-Catsouphes (2015), and Pietinalho (2017) agreed. Whether defined as distributed leadership, collaboration, or social innovation, the ability of a leader to release the mass-flourishing of their followers is central to their ability to bring about successful change.

Conclusion

While the historic research identified numerous change leader characteristics, no exhaustive list has identified and tested. Moreover, the stakeholder perceptions of change leader attributes could provide unique insights into stakeholder engagement and expand on the mass flourishing of followers Pietinalho identified.

Overall, the literature suggests that continuously changing environments require leaders to abandon historic leadership models and embrace leadership attributes that engage all stakeholders to realize ongoing organizational success. Thus, understanding the stakeholder's perceptions of key leadership characteristics necessary to successfully lead in a continuously changing environment will help explore this area of research. Therefore, the purpose of this mixed-methods research was to understand stakeholder views of perceived leadership attributes required to bring about successful organizational change in key leadership roles in a Midwest American orchestra.

Research Methodology

Research Question

Gentry and Sparks (2012) argued for the need to research leadership competencies given the increasing complexity of an advancing globalized economy. Lobonea (2014) further asserted this research into key leadership attributes for successfully managing change needs to occur in this ever-changing organizational landscape. Therefore, this study explored the following research question. What are the key leadership characteristics to successfully lead in a continuously changing environment, and can these key leadership characteristics be universally applied across all leadership positions within a Midwest American orchestra?

H₀: There is no difference in means in leadership attributes selected/ranked by each stakeholder group for the three discrete leadership positions.

H₁: There is a difference in means in leadership attributes selected/ranked by each stakeholder group for the three discrete leadership positions.

Leadership Attribute Survey Instrument

While leadership attributes in episodic change conditions have been widely studied, the research in continuously changing environments has just begun to emerge around complexity and complex adaptive systems (Lawrence, 2015). Therefore, the selection of a mixed-methods case study is consistent with the recommendations of Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) that suggested this methodology is appropriate to examine areas of research where there are a limited number of studies and theories to guide the research and to test a new instrument (Creswell, 1999).

Given the recent emergence of research of leadership in continuously changing environments, a survey instrument was not available to specifically determine if an industry and the organizational environment was continuously changing nor provide an expansive leadership attribute list for testing. The survey instrument must establish the participants' perception of the industry and organizational environment as continuously changing, and the leadership attribute list must be sufficiently expansive to provide the potential for the highest amount of between and among disparate groups across different leadership roles. Therefore, a new instrument was developed for this case study. The research designed questionnaire maintained alignment with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative and the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research guidelines (CITI, 2019 & NIH-OER, 2019).

Sequential Explanatory Design

The researcher selected a sequential explanatory design for this study, which incorporated a quantitative survey and qualitative focus groups. Tashakkori and Teddlé (1998) asserted this methodology remains the most straightforward of the six major mixed-methods designs. In this sequential design, a substantive quantitative analysis is followed by a limited qualitative analysis. Creswell (1994) referred to this as a dominant-less dominant model with more priority applied to the quantitative research. Specifically, this mixed-methods study utilized a survey questionnaire and focus groups of the Board of Directors, staff, and musicians of a Midwest American Orchestra to gather stakeholders' perceptions of key leader attributes necessary for successful change leadership. As suggested by Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989), this complementarily mixed-methods study will elaborate, enhance, and clarify the results from the survey with open discussion from the focus groups.

Participants. Participants for this study included the Board of Directors, staff, and musicians of a Midwest American orchestra. The potential pool of case study participants (108) consisted of 39 directors, 21 staff, and 48 musicians. The Board of Directors consists of regional for-profit business owners, for-profit business executives, and prominent civic leaders. The staff was full-time employees in small departments inclusive of finance and accounting, production, patron services, and development (fundraising). The musicians were from diverse backgrounds and are instrumentalists by profession. Several musicians in this pool also compose and conduct symphonic music in other venues. The musicians were under contractual employment with the orchestra for approximately 30 weeks a year.

Questionnaire. Participants received a voluntary and anonymous web-based survey, included in Appendix I. The survey asked each participant to select the organizational environment in which the Midwest American orchestra currently operates. This initial question sought to understand participant perceptions of the nature of the current industry and organizational environment as either a stable environment (little change) or a continuously changing environment.

Next, each participant selected and ranked the top ten key leadership attributes from a list of twenty-five that they thought were important to successfully operate in the environment they previously selected. Twenty-four of these leadership attributes were selected from Khandakar Akhter Hossain's (2015) research report. The twenty-fifth attribute, collaboration, was added to this list, given the repetitive emergence of this leadership characteristic from the literature review. While these leadership attributes are commonly found in leadership literature, the use of an expansive list of 25 was crucial in determining the variance of selection among and between stakeholders. This attribute ranking occurred across three key leadership positions, including the Board President, CEO/executive director, and artistic director. Finally, participants provided group affiliation and general demographic information.

A web-based electronic survey instrument controlled for question order and list order bias, given its ability to randomize questions and answer lists. Question order and list order bias manifest in primacy and recency bias and occur when the order of questions influences the respondent to select an answer or combination of answers (Perreault, 1975; Duffy & Crawford, 2008). The respondent's tendency to choose one of the first options presented is primacy bias. Participants' tendency to pick an answer option presented to them at the end of a list is recency bias (Duffy & Crawford, 2008). If not controlled for through randomization, both biases could potentially impact the selection of attributes and lead to common responses when none existed.

Post-survey analysis. The researcher examined survey results separately by stakeholder groups (Board of Directors, staff, and musicians), then across participant groups, seeking to understand participant responses to the perceived organization environment—either stable or continuously changing. Next, the researcher evaluated participants' perceptions of the top-ten key leadership attributes, in the same manner, to isolate for stakeholder group differences and to determine whether congruity existed.

The researcher provided all stakeholders who received the survey the researcher's analysis of the survey results through email. A message in the email requested follow-up participation in focus groups consisting of 8 to 10 individuals organized by subgroup.

Focus groups. Focus groups reviewed the analysis of the survey results and discussed their perceptions of the analysis/results. A third-party researcher coded focus group data for themes and patterns that provided greater insight into the survey results. Last, the focus groups evaluated the potential to find common ground on key change leader attributes that should/could be included in succession planning and leadership development strategies that would serve the broader stakeholder group.

Positionality of Researcher. The researcher was the current president of the Board of Directors of the Midwest American orchestra during this research. This voluntary, unpaid position influences the strategic direction of the organization under study. To control for this potential influence, the research (survey and focus groups) was separated into two stages: the data collection stage and the analysis stage. The data collection stage was managed by a third-party research assistant who collected, anonymized, and aggregated the survey results before providing the data to the researcher. The primary researcher managed the analysis stage and functionally drew conclusions from the aggregate data provided by the third-party research assistant.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

One hundred eight participants received surveys, and 81 responded. However, the analysis utilized only the 71 completed questionnaires. The balance (10) appeared to have started the survey but failed to complete one or more leadership attribute questions and the demographics section.

In the selection of statistical testing for variance in responses for three or more unrelated groups, Brightman and Schneider (1994) recommended the use of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. Given the three unrelated groups in this survey (musicians, staff, and the Board of Directors), the researcher used an ANOVA test to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the selected and ranked means of leadership attributes. However, Brightman and Schneider (1994) also point out the limitations of one-way ANOVA testing and suggest the use of post-hoc tests to confirm or reject the variance(s) identified in the ANOVA test. Richter and McCann (2012) asserted Tukey-Kramer's omnibus post hoc test, where unequal sample sizes exist, address these ANOVA limitations. The researcher conducted both the ANOVA and Tukey-Kramer tests to determine which specific variances were statistically different between and among groups. From these leadership attribute rankings, the researcher calculated the average ranking for each answer choice to determine which answer choices were most preferred by each group and then across all groups. The average ranking was calculated as follows, where:

w = weight of the ranked position

x = response count for the answer choice

$$\frac{X_1W_1 + X_2W_2 + X_3W_3 \dots\dots X_nW_n}{\text{Total Response Count}}$$

Total Response Count

To facilitate statistical testing, the researcher applied weights in reverse order to reflect the largest mean score for the most preferred leadership attribute. More specifically, of the ten ranked leadership attributes, the respondent's most preferred choice (ranked #1) had the largest weight (10), and the last ranked-choice (ranked #10) had the lowest weight (1). The data analysis utilized the weighted average mean scores for each subgroup's responses to determine their most preferred leadership attributes for the three discrete leadership positions in the survey. The answer choices with the largest average mean score ranking were the most preferred. The subgroup mean score rankings were then combined to determine the ranked list of leadership attributes regardless of subgroup affiliation or leadership position surveyed. These average mean scores provided the final list of universal key leadership attributes to successfully manage in a continuously changing environment.

In seeking universal key leadership attributes regardless of subgroup affiliation and regardless of leadership position surveyed, the researcher analyzed the degree of variation of responses consistent with the recommendations of Brightman and Schneider (1994). One-way ANOVA tests calculated the degree of variation in responses between subgroups and within subgroups for all 25 leadership attributes for each position (Board President, CEO/executive director, artistic director), for a total of 75 tests.

Labovitz (1968) suggested selecting a conventional significance level of 0.05 for smaller sample sizes produced consistent results. This significance level would indicate a 5% risk of concluding that a difference exists when there is no actual difference in responses. If a corresponding P-value was less than 0.05, then the variation within and between subgroups

weighted average responses were statistically significant, and the null hypothesis was rejected. Alternatively, if any P-values were higher than 0.05, then weighted average responses were not statistically significant, and the null hypothesis was accepted as indicated by Brightman and Schneider (1994).

For each leadership attribute, by discrete organizational position, that indicated a P-value of less than a significance level of 0.05, the researcher conducted a Tukey-Kramer post hoc test. As recommended by Dunnett (1980), the researcher selected the Tukey-Kramer (HSD) test for this single-step multiple comparison procedure and statistical analysis, given the unequal sample sizes (musicians $n = 30$, staff $n = 17$, Board $n = 24$). This test compared the means of every response to the means of every other group response for analyzing pairwise comparisons to identify any difference that is greater than the expected standard error. The calculated q-value was compared to the studentized range distribution at the 0.05 significance level to determine the variance among and between groups if any.

Qualitative Analysis

Following the survey and analysis of the quantitative results, the third-party research assistant conducted stakeholder focus groups (three) to gain further insight into the survey results. This qualitative effort sought to find common ground on key change leader attributes that would serve the broader stakeholder group and, thus, should be included in succession planning and leadership development strategies.

The third-party research assistant moderated the three focus group sessions to control for positionality bias of the researcher. All focus group sessions were voice recorded, transcribed, and anonymized by the third-party researcher to protect the identity of the participants. The third-party researcher destroyed all paper and audio records post-transcription.

The third-party researcher provided the anonymized transcriptions to the primary researcher for coding. Coding was conducted consistent with Saldaña's (2013) recommendation of searching for patterns of participants' perceptions. This pattern coding methodology allowed for similarities, differences, frequency, and causation to emerge. Therefore, coded terms and phrases were grouped and color-coded between all three focus groups. The researcher aggregated common colored text and then analyzed for emerging themes, which included: staying innovative to maintain relevance, the speed of change, the importance of communication, and the need for collaboration.

Survey Results

Respondent Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides an overview of the general descriptive statistics of the respondents who fully completed the survey.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics (N=71)

Role Group	N	%
Musician (n= 48)	30	62.50%
Staff Member (n=21)	17	80.90%
Board of Director (n=39)	24	61.50%
Gender		
Female	35	49.30%
Male	36	50.70%
Educational Attainment		
Some high school or less	0	0.00%
High school graduate or equivalent	0	0.00%
Some college or technical school	2	2.82%
College graduate	29	40.85%
Advanced degree	40	56.34%
Age		
18-24	2	2.82%
25-34	10	14.08%
35-44	12	16.90%
45-54	17	23.94%
55-64	12	16.90%
65+	18	25.35%
Years with Orchestra		
0 to 5	26	36.62%
6 to 10	9	12.68%
11 to 15	10	14.08%
16+	26	36.62%

The sub-groups survey response rate was 62.5% for musicians, 80.9% for staff, and 61.5% for the Board of Directors. While the aggregate results were equally distributed across gender, the staff was 70.6% female, and the Board was 66.7% male, which balanced the results. Of equal interest, the educational attainment level was equally distributed across the college graduate and advanced degrees. Both the musicians and the staff reflected a normal distribution across the age range, with the Board more skewed towards the upper end of the range consistent with other cultural arts organizations.

Industry Environment

The Leadership Attribute Survey established the respondent's perception of the environment in which this Midwest American orchestra operates. Of the survey responses, 56 of the 71 respondents or 78.9% selected a continuously changing environment over a stable environment.

Leadership Attributes Analysis

Board President position. Of the 25 selected and ranked attributes, the results indicate that only two reflected a statistically significant variance. Between board and musicians, knowledgeable resulted in a significant difference at the $p < .05$ level, $[F(2.68) = 3.83, p = 0.026]$.

Committed showed a significant variance between staff and board at the $p < .05$ level, $[F(2,68) = 4.213, p = 0.018]$. Post-hoc Tukey-Kramer HSD tests reflected that the musicians rated knowledgeable significantly higher than the Board, and the staff rated committed higher than the Board. Additionally, the balance of attributes (23) reflected P-values greater than the 95% confidence interval, indicating that no statistically significant results exist. Table 2 contains the test results.

Table 2
Board President - Mean Variance Testing / Confirmation
Knowledgeable (learner)

Within Groups		Difference	n (Group 1)	n (Group 2)	SE	q	df	Q Score	q > Q Score	Difference
Musicians	Staff	2.416	30	17	0.77	3.14	68	3.399	<	No
Staff	Board	0.049	17	24	0.80	0.06	68	3.399	<	No
Board	Musicians	2.367	24	30	0.69	3.41	68	3.399	>	Yes

Committed

Within Groups		Difference	n (Group 1)	n (Group 2)	SE	q	df	Q Score	q > Q Score	Difference
Musicians	Staff	1.069	30	17	0.82	1.30	68	3.399	<	No
Staff	Board	3.319	17	24	0.86	3.88	68	3.399	>	Yes
Board	Musicians	2.250	24	30	0.74	3.04	68	3.399	<	No

While both attributes, knowledgeable and committed, reflect statistically significant variances in their means, both attributes ranked in the top ten by all three stakeholder groups. Of greater importance, eight of the top ten attributes selected were common across all subgroups. The characteristics of visionary and inspirational ranked just out of the top ten for some groups with visionary ranking 12th for musicians and 16th for staff. Additionally, inspirational, while in the top ten for musicians and Board, ranked 14th by staff.

CEO/Executive Director. Using the same methodology as in the Board President analysis, the CEO/executive director reflected similar results. Three leadership attributes revealed statistically significant differences among the three subgroups of survey respondents. Knowledgeable showed a significant variance between the staff and Board at the $p < .05$ level, $[F(2,68) = 6.794, p = 0.002]$. Shares credit results at the $p < .05$ level were $[F(2,68) = 3.196, p = 0.047]$, suggesting a significant variance between the Board and musicians. Last, inspirational reflected a significant difference between both the staff and Board and the Board and musicians at the $p = .05$ level at $[F(2,68) = 6.178, p = 0.003]$.

Both the musicians and staff highly ranked knowledgeable; however, it was not in the top ten for the Board respondents. The staff ranked knowledgeable as their number one leadership attribute. Tukey-Kramer tests, reflected in table 3, confirmed significant variances for both knowledgeable and inspirational, however, reject the variance identified in the ANOVA tests for shares credit.

Table 3
CEO/Executive Director - Mean Variance Testing / Confirmation
 Knowledgeable (learner)

Within Groups		Difference	n (Group 1)	n (Group 2)	SE	q	df	Q Score	q > Q Score	Difference
Musicians	Staff	1.059	30	17	0.74	1.44	68	3.399	<	No
Staff	Board	3.725	17	24	0.77	4.84	68	3.399	>	Yes
Board	Musicians	2.667	24	30	0.66	4.01	68	3.399	>	Yes

Shares Credit

Within Groups		Difference	n (Group 1)	n (Group 2)	SE	q	df	Q Score	q > Q Score	Difference
Musicians	Staff	0.055	30	17	0.42	0.13	68	3.399	<	No
Staff	Board	1.203	17	24	0.44	2.75	68	3.399	<	No
Board	Musicians	1.258	24	30	0.38	3.33	68	3.399	<	No

Inspirational

Within Groups		Difference	n (Group 1)	n (Group 2)	SE	q	df	Q Score	q > Q Score	Difference
Musicians	Staff	1.529	30	17	0.62	2.45	68	3.399	<	No
Staff	Board	2.819	17	24	0.65	4.32	68	3.399	>	Yes
Board	Musicians	4.348	24	30	0.56	7.72	68	3.399	>	Yes

Alternatively, the Board ranked inspirational as their 6th most important leadership attribute, but the musicians and staff ranked inspirational 15th and 17th, respectively. The post hoc tests confirmed these results. Last, shares credit, while well out of the top ten rankings for all subgroup respondents and reflecting an ANOVA P-value of 0.0471, the Tukey-Kramer test results suggest the difference between the Board and musicians were just outside the realm of significance.

Not unlike the Board President results, the CEO results indicate that even with the statistically significant variances in mean responses, eight of the top ten ranked attributes were common among all subgroup responses.

Artistic Director. While attributes chosen for the artistic director were like those deemed important for the Board President and CEO/executive director, creative, competent, visionary, and inspirational led the top-ten group. Of the three positions, the artistic director showed the greatest variance among subgroup respondents. However, even with these variances, only three attributes were within the top ten. Creative reflected a significant variance between the Board and musicians at the $p < .05$ level, $[F(2.68) = 4.265, p = 0.017]$. Inspirational results at the $p < .05$ level were $[F(2.68) = 5.910, p = 0.004]$. Last, collaborative reflected a significant variance at the $p = .05$ level at $[F(2.68) = 6.385, p = 0.002]$. Tukey-Kramer post hoc tests were computed to confirm the significance of these results. Table 4 contains these results.

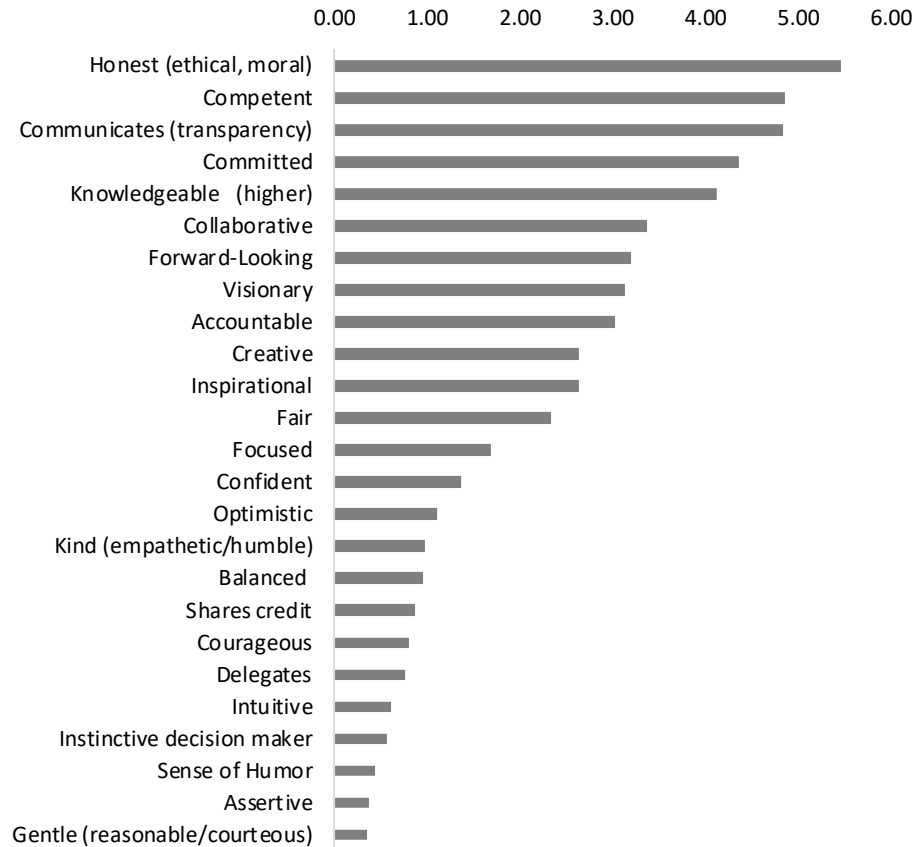
Table 4
Artistic Director, Mean Variance Testing / Confirmation

Creative										
Within Groups		Difference	n (Group 1)	n (Group 2)	SE	q	df	Q Score	q > Q Score	Difference
Musicians	Staff	0.325	30	17	0.69	0.47	68	3.399	<	No
Staff	Board	2.150	17	24	0.73	2.96	68	3.399	<	No
Board	Musicians	2.475	24	30	0.63	3.95	68	3.399	>	Yes
Inspirational										
Within Groups		Difference	n (Group 1)	n (Group 2)	SE	q	df	Q Score	q > Q Score	Difference
Musicians	Staff	3.120	30	17	0.68	4.57	68	3.399	>	Yes
Staff	Board	2.936	17	24	0.71	4.11	68	3.399	>	Yes
Board	Musicians	0.183	24	30	0.62	0.30	68	3.399	>	No
Collaborative										
Within Groups		Difference	n (Group 1)	n (Group 2)	SE	q	df	Q Score	q > Q Score	Difference
Musicians	Staff	3.294	30	17	0.66	5.03	68	3.399	>	Yes
Staff	Board	2.377	17	24	0.68	3.48	68	3.399	>	Yes
Board	Musicians	0.917	24	30	0.59	1.55	68	3.399	<	No

Universal leadership attributes. To obtain the universal leadership attributes in a continuously changing environment and, thus, answer the research question, the researcher calculated the 25 ranked leadership attributes means for the “Top Ten Attributes Regardless of Subgroup” and the “Top Ten Attributes Regardless of Position”. The sum of attribute means of all three positions and all three subgroups were calculated and ranked. Of the top ten attributes, regardless of position and regardless of subgroup, the top nine ranked leadership attributes were common among both results. The only difference was the tenth and eleventh positions, which alternated the attributes of inspirational and creative. The means for the balance of characteristics dropped considerably after the top 11.

While the research sought to identify the top ten leadership attributes for a changing environment, the relatively even mean scores for creative (2.646 and ranked 10th) and inspirational (2.636 and ranked 11th) would suggest that the respondents found very little difference between the two. Of equal interest, the top leadership attribute of honest (ethical/moral) was first in all three lists. Figure 1 reflects the universal leadership attributes.

Figure 1
Universal Leadership Attribute Mean Scores



Focus Groups

The focus groups were not only aware of their continuously changing environment, but 53% selected this environment as positive, and 30% neither positive or negative. This positive understanding and focus on the speed of change within their industry indicated their full appreciation of the need to innovate to maintain relevance in the cultural arts community. Both themes were undergirded by the importance of communication and the need for collaboration.

The focus groups further asserted that leaders need to be aware and oriented to this changing industry. The importance of understanding the dynamics of the industry will enhance their overall ability, through collaboration, to assist in inventing the future for the organization. If this understanding is not present, orchestras will suffer from the associated economic instability that surrounds the lack of relevance. These sentiments support the leadership attribute of knowledgeable (learner) that continued to surface throughout the survey and the follow-on discussions.

While all three focus groups expressed initial surprise at the congruence of the top ten leadership attributes, after discussion, all wholeheartedly agreed with the leadership attributes selected and their associated ranking. However, there was a common concern that inspirational

was not higher in the ranking. Additional leadership themes from these discussions suggest leaders: need to be engaged, work collaboratively across all stakeholders, be open to and lead innovation, be optimistic about the future of the organization, and invoke the desire to succeed in everyone. Moreover, leaders who effectively engage followers (collaboration) could move an organization to become an industry leader in an ever-changing cultural arts environment.

Discussion

The survey results, even with the identified mean variances, suggest significant commonality in the top ten leadership attributes included in table 5.

Table 5
Universal Leadership Attributes

Ranking	Attribute
1	Honest (ethical, moral)
2	Competent
3	Communicates (transparency)
4	Committed
5	Knowledgeable (higher)
6	Collaborative
7	Forward-Looking
8	Visionary
9	Accountable
10	Creative
	* Inspirational

These leadership attributes suggest their universality regardless of position evaluated or stakeholder group doing the ranking. The survey results, coupled with the focus group themes indicated staying innovative to maintain relevance, understanding the speed of change, the importance of transparent communication, and the need for collaboration as central elements of successfully leading change. Moreover, the importance of honest, ethical, and moral behavior of the leader, which manifests in organizational trust and a supportive organizational culture, undergirded these themes.

The results reflect significant similarities to the research findings of Ajmal, Faroog, Sajid, and Awan (2012). Their extensive review of the literature and the results of this survey identified change leaders' success as being closely related to fairness, creativity, the appetite for learning (knowledgeable), collaboration, and dedication (committed). While Ajmal et al. (2012) concluded that organizations and their respective leaders need to be more adaptive to change, the focus groups in this research argued that adaptive leadership simply does not go far enough. The focus group participants universally suggested that leaders in changing environments must not only be knowledgeable, but focused on "what could be" and, thus, sufficiently forward-looking and visionary to see through current industry issues and committed to bringing about what the



Photo by Frankie Steele/courtesy of Louisville Orchestra

future holds. Additionally, like the earlier research of Anca (2014), most of the participants in this study strongly believe that it is the leaders' responsibility to drive change efforts. They further asserted that it is the leaders' responsibility to routinely communicate about evolving industry matters, envision the future, prepare the organization and its stakeholders for continuous change, empower stakeholders to act, and continually communicate the outcomes. These

results align with the earlier work of Oreg and Berson (2011) and Anca, who argued

this followership mentality reflects a normal resistance to organizational change.

Moreover, the results for both the Board President and the CEO/executive director contain nine of the same top ten leadership attributes. The weighted average score for only inspirational and fair ranked slightly different. In the Board President's results, the mean score for inspirational was only 0.20 higher than fair, which ranked 11th or just out of the top ten. Alternatively, the CEO/executive director results ranked inspirational 11th or just 0.31 lower than fair.

Of equal importance, the findings reflected exhibiting strong moral and ethical underpinnings the highest-rated leadership attributes, closely followed by the ability to effectively communicate as a competent and committed leader of the organization. The focus groups contended strong moral and ethical underpinning ensured that all stakeholders could rely on the decisions of their leaders, given their pro-social intentions. Like the results of the research of Rast, Hogg, and Giessner (2016), these high self-confidence stakeholders can establish trust in change-oriented leaders in times of uncertainty. Further, the focus groups argued they could quickly ascertain the underlying tendencies from which an individual leads (pro-social or pro-self), and they respond accordingly.

Creativity continued to emerge in discussions around the artistic director leadership role. The respondents found the potential for creativity, not only within the artistic repertoire but in the way the symphony engages the community, as vitally important. The focus groups saw the role of the artistic director as being the catalyst for change within the community and potentially within the broader industry (Wagoner, 2019). These thoughts on leadership engagement highlight the conclusions of Peters (2012), Anca (2014), and Lawrence (2015), who all argued the importance of peer and subordinate engagement as a key success factor for leaders managing continuously changing environments.

Limitations

This research effectively derived universal key leadership attributes for a continuously changing cultural arts environment regardless of the respondents' group affiliation and regardless of the leadership position under evaluation in this Midwest American Orchestra. The universality of these leadership attributes, either within the balance of American orchestras or to other continuously changing market sectors, would require additional research and testing. While this

research isolates one aspect of the complexity of change and change leadership identified in the earlier work of Lawrence (2015), it requires much more academic contemplation.

Areas for Future Study

Future research should consider testing the survey instrument in other orchestras and cultural arts organizations to determine the universality of these key leadership attributes. If replication can be achieved with reliable results, the application of these key leadership attributes in a new leadership model could provide greater insight into the complexity of change leadership in continuously changing environments.

Conclusion

The research question sought to determine the key leadership characteristics to successfully lead in a continuously changing environment, and whether these key leadership characteristics can be universally applied across all leadership positions within this Midwest American orchestra. For this midsize orchestra, the study established stakeholder perceptions of the existence of a continuously changing environment. Additionally, the research suggests minimal variance among stakeholder groups in the selection of a common set of leadership attributes and that these leadership characteristics can be universally applied across discrete leadership positions.

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Appendix I

LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTE SURVEY*

*Web-based electronic survey instrument was utilized because of its ability to randomize questions and answer lists to control for question order and list order bias.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

1. Please select “Your” perceptions of the current environment in which the Orchestra operates.

- Stable environment (little change)
- Continuously changing environment.
- Other (please specify)

2. Do you think this environment is Positive, Negative, or Neither Positive or Negative?

- Positive
- Negative
- Neither Positive or Negative

3. Please help us understand why you selected the answer above?

ATTRIBUTES

4. Please select the top ten leadership attributes “YOU” think are important for the Orchestra Board President role from the 25 attributes listed below.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Accountable | <input type="radio"/> Courageous | <input type="radio"/> Inspirational |
| <input type="radio"/> Assertive | <input type="radio"/> Creative | <input type="radio"/> Instinctual Decision Maker |
| <input type="radio"/> Balanced | <input type="radio"/> Delegates | <input type="radio"/> Intuitive |
| <input type="radio"/> Collaborative | <input type="radio"/> Fair (consistent/just) | <input type="radio"/> Kind (empathetic/humble) |
| <input type="radio"/> Committed | <input type="radio"/> Focused | <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable (learner) |
| <input type="radio"/> Communicates (Transparency) | <input type="radio"/> Forward-looking | <input type="radio"/> Optimist |
| <input type="radio"/> Competent | <input type="radio"/> Gentle (reasonable/courteous) | <input type="radio"/> Sense of Humor |
| <input type="radio"/> Confident | <input type="radio"/> Honest (ethical, moral) | <input type="radio"/> Shares Credit |
| | | <input type="radio"/> Visionary |

5. Please RANK your previous choices for Orchestra Board President by selecting 1 through 10 next to the attributes with 1 being the “most important” and 10 being the “least important”. (Answers will be randomly presented for ranking from the prior answers)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Accountable | <input type="radio"/> Courageous | <input type="radio"/> Inspirational |
| <input type="radio"/> Assertive | <input type="radio"/> Creative | <input type="radio"/> Instinctual Decision Maker |
| <input type="radio"/> Balanced | <input type="radio"/> Delegates | <input type="radio"/> Intuitive |
| <input type="radio"/> Collaborative | <input type="radio"/> Fair (consistent/just) | <input type="radio"/> Kind (empathetic/humble) |
| <input type="radio"/> Committed | <input type="radio"/> Focused | <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable (learner) |
| <input type="radio"/> Communicates (Transparency) | <input type="radio"/> Forward-looking | <input type="radio"/> Optimist |
| <input type="radio"/> Competent | <input type="radio"/> Gentle (reasonable/courteous) | <input type="radio"/> Sense of Humor |
| <input type="radio"/> Confident | <input type="radio"/> Honest (ethical, moral) | <input type="radio"/> Shares Credit |
| | | <input type="radio"/> Visionary |

6. Please select the top ten leadership attributes “YOU” think are important for the CEO/Executive Director role from the 25 attributes listed below.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Accountable | <input type="radio"/> Courageous | <input type="radio"/> Inspirational |
| <input type="radio"/> Assertive | <input type="radio"/> Creative | <input type="radio"/> Instinctual Decision Maker |
| <input type="radio"/> Balanced | <input type="radio"/> Delegates | <input type="radio"/> Intuitive |
| <input type="radio"/> Collaborative | <input type="radio"/> Fair (consistent/just) | <input type="radio"/> Kind (empathetic/humble) |
| <input type="radio"/> Committed | <input type="radio"/> Focused | <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable (learner) |
| <input type="radio"/> Communicates (Transparency) | <input type="radio"/> Forward-looking | <input type="radio"/> Optimist |
| <input type="radio"/> Competent | <input type="radio"/> Gentle (reasonable/courteous) | <input type="radio"/> Sense of Humor |
| <input type="radio"/> Confident | <input type="radio"/> Honest (ethical, moral) | <input type="radio"/> Shares Credit |
| | | <input type="radio"/> Visionary |

7. Please RANK your previous choices for CEO/Executive Director by selecting 1 through 10 next to the attributes with 1 being the “most important” and 10 being the “least important”. (Answers will be randomly presented for ranking from the prior answers)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Accountable | <input type="radio"/> Courageous | <input type="radio"/> Inspirational |
| <input type="radio"/> Assertive | <input type="radio"/> Creative | <input type="radio"/> Instinctual Decision Maker |
| <input type="radio"/> Balanced | <input type="radio"/> Delegates | <input type="radio"/> Intuitive |
| <input type="radio"/> Collaborative | <input type="radio"/> Fair (consistent/just) | <input type="radio"/> Kind (empathetic/humble) |
| <input type="radio"/> Committed | <input type="radio"/> Focused | <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable (learner) |
| <input type="radio"/> Communicates (Transparency) | <input type="radio"/> Forward-looking | <input type="radio"/> Optimist |
| <input type="radio"/> Competent | <input type="radio"/> Gentle (reasonable/courteous) | <input type="radio"/> Sense of Humor |
| <input type="radio"/> Confident | <input type="radio"/> Honest (ethical, moral) | <input type="radio"/> Shares Credit |
| | | <input type="radio"/> Visionary |

8. Please select the top ten leadership attributes “YOU” think are important for the Artistic Director role from the 25 attributes listed below.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Accountable | <input type="radio"/> Courageous | <input type="radio"/> Inspirational |
| <input type="radio"/> Assertive | <input type="radio"/> Creative | <input type="radio"/> Instinctual Decision Maker |
| <input type="radio"/> Balanced | <input type="radio"/> Delegates | <input type="radio"/> Intuitive |
| <input type="radio"/> Collaborative | <input type="radio"/> Fair (consistent/just) | <input type="radio"/> Kind (empathetic/humble) |
| <input type="radio"/> Committed | <input type="radio"/> Focused | <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable (learner) |
| <input type="radio"/> Communicates (Tranparency) | <input type="radio"/> Forward-looking | <input type="radio"/> Optimist |
| <input type="radio"/> Competent | <input type="radio"/> Gentle (reasonable/courteous) | <input type="radio"/> Sense of Humor |
| <input type="radio"/> Confident | <input type="radio"/> Honest (ethical, moral) | <input type="radio"/> Shares Credit |
| | | <input type="radio"/> Visionary |

9. Please RANK your previous choices for Artistic Director by selecting 1 through 10 next to the attributes with 1 being the “most important” and 10 being the “least important”. (Answers will be randomly presented for ranking from the prior answers)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Accountable | <input type="radio"/> Courageous | <input type="radio"/> Inspirational |
| <input type="radio"/> Assertive | <input type="radio"/> Creative | <input type="radio"/> Instinctual Decision Maker |
| <input type="radio"/> Balanced | <input type="radio"/> Delegates | <input type="radio"/> Intuitive |
| <input type="radio"/> Collaborative | <input type="radio"/> Fair (consistent/just) | <input type="radio"/> Kind (empathetic/humble) |
| <input type="radio"/> Committed | <input type="radio"/> Focused | <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable (learner) |
| <input type="radio"/> Communicates (Tranparency) | <input type="radio"/> Forward-looking | <input type="radio"/> Optimist |
| <input type="radio"/> Competent | <input type="radio"/> Gentle (reasonable/courteous) | <input type="radio"/> Sense of Humor |
| <input type="radio"/> Confident | <input type="radio"/> Honest (ethical, moral) | <input type="radio"/> Shares Credit |
| | | <input type="radio"/> Visionary |

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please answer the following questions for classification purposes.

10. In which group do you reside?

- Musician
- Staff Member
- Board of Directors

11. How many years have you been with the Orchestra?

- 0 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 plus

12. In what range does your age fall?

- 18 to 24 45 to 54
- 25 to 35 55 to 64
- 35 to 44 65 plus

13. What is the last grade or level of schooling that you completed?

- Some high school or less
- High school graduate or equivalent
- Some college or technical school
- College graduate
- Advanced degree

14. Gender

- Male
- Female

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