

Developmental Music History and Typical Engagement's Impact on Overall Well-Being

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Introduction

•Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle believed music was the most efficacious and influential of all the arts, improving quality of life and affecting human behavior. Music is not a driving force of life in modern society, but it is still an extremely prevalent in the lives of many.

•Improved quality of life is what many individuals seek and wish upon others, which led several psychologists to scientifically study human strengths and positive human functioning through positive psychology. Positive psychology defines subjective well-being as the global term for a person's current status in the world according to Lopez and Snyder (2008). High subjective well-being or optimal human functioning includes several aspects of well-being: emotional well-being, social well-being and psychological well-being.

•Research suggests that music contributes to the following:

- Emotional, social, and psychological well-being
- Regulating and modulating emotion
- Develops social and personal skills
- Teamwork, increased social cohesion and sense of belonging
- Increased sense of identity, achievement, and enhanced personal satisfaction, self-esteem, and confidence.

•Finally, due to music's emotional, physical, and aesthetic effect on human beings, it is also used as therapy.

Hypothesis

•Prevalence of music in developmental history and typical engagement in music positively correlates with subjective well-being scores.

Participants

•106 Participants (50 Male, 56 Female) from Southern Illinois Community, some of which were college students.

•Ages: 18-66 ($M = 26.5$, $SD = 9.0$)

Measures

•Design: Online survey format.

•The Developmental Music History Inventory:

- Self report scale developed by the researcher that assessed prevalence of music at three developmental stages (pre-school, childhood, and adolescence).
- The Developmental Music History Inventory overall had excellent internal consistency (42 items, $\alpha = .92$).

•Altered Levels of Music Engagement Scale (LME) derived from Greasley & Lamont (2006).

- Self report scale (1, not at all, to 7, extremely)
- Questions included:
 - How much do you enjoy listening to music
 - How important do you consider music to be in your life?
- Participants indicated approximately how many hours they listened to music per day, selected from a list of genres, and identified which genres of music they listened to on a regular basis.

•Lastly, to assess overall subjective well-being the following were used:

- The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)
--Developed by Sonja Lyubomirsky Ph.D..
- The Satisfaction with Life Scale
--Developed by Ed Diener Ph. D., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign .

Results

•Score distributions for each variable were all near normal and appropriate for correlation analysis.

•A subjective well-being score = participant's subjective happiness score + satisfaction with life score.

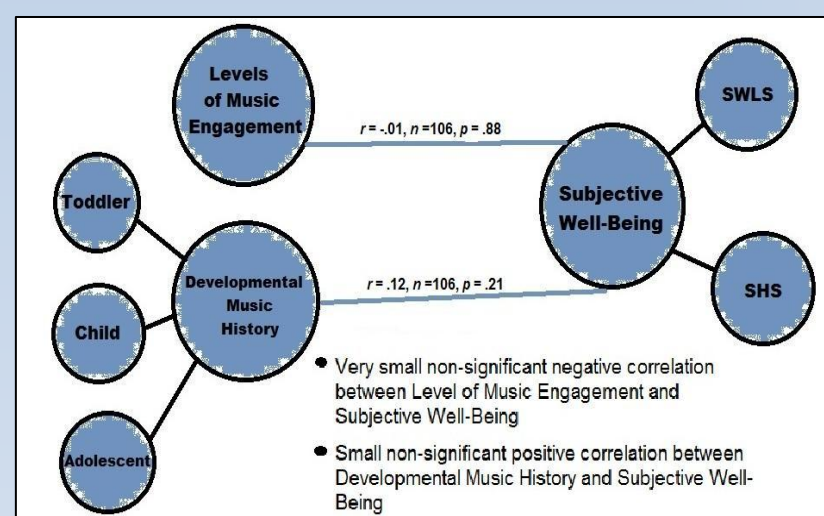


Diagram 1.

Correlation Analysis Results

•A multiple regression analysis investigated developmental music history scores and level of music engagement scores as predictors of subjective well-being scores.

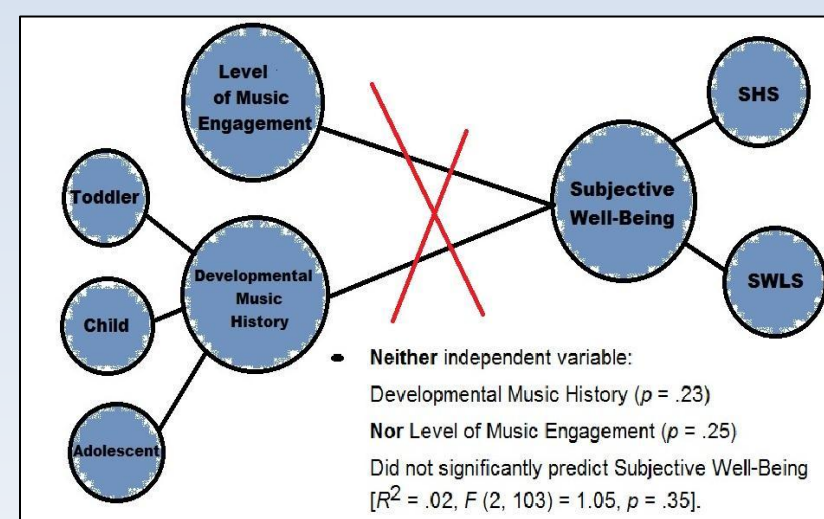


Diagram 2.

Multiple Regression Results

A post-hoc analysis eliminating age outliers revealed a small, significant, positive correlation between developmental music history scores and subjective happiness scores, one of two scales that contributed to the composite subjective well-being scores.

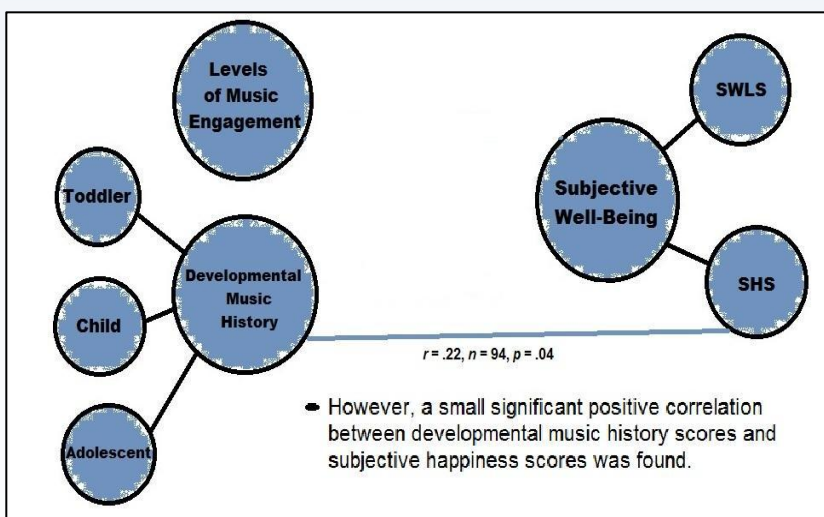


Diagram 3.

Restricted Sample Correlation Analysis

• Two tailed t-test compared developmental history scores for males and females:

- Significant difference in scores for males ($M = 57.17$, $SD = 20.98$) and females [$M = 68.5$, $SD = 18.24$; $t(104) = 2.87$, $p = .005$, two-tailed].

- Magnitude of the differences in means (mean difference = 11.13, 95% CI: 3.42 to 18.83).

Results (continued)

•Further investigation revealed :

- A small, positive zero-order correlation between the pre-school to toddler of the developmental music history inventory and subjective well-being to be significant for females, $r = .28$, $n = 56$, $p = .03$.

- Regression analysis also showed this subcategory of developmental music history ($p = .01$) to be predictive of subjective well-being for females ($R^2 = .19$, $F(4, 51) = 1.89$, $p = .12$).

Discussion

•“The role of music in the lives of those who participate regularly may be hard to describe, but it is undoubtedly significant in strengthening their well-being and sense of self” (Clarke et al., 2010, p. 166). There are possible reasons for discrepancy between current results, the previous statement, and the proposed hypothesis.

•One possible reason for the non-significant results may be the measures used.

- The Developmental Music History Inventory is a measure developed by the primary researcher of this study, due to the lack of a similar measure within the literature. Although the Developmental Music History Inventory had good internal consistency this does not mean it is a valid measure of participants' developmental music history.

•Moreover, the Music Engagement Measure assessed hours an individual listens to music, how important music is to an individual, enjoyment, and number of genres listened to.

- Measure not predictive of and did not significantly correlate with subjective well-being in any analyses run. This measure may be too simplistic due the fact that music engagement is multidimensional.

- There are different ways to listen to music; passively or actively, and different ways to participate in performing; in a rock band or in an orchestra, etc.

•Likewise, listening to recorded music is much different than being in the presence of live music.

- The ways in which or how participants' engage in music is a more appropriate measure than the Levels of Music Engagement measure in determining music's effect on well-being.

•Another possible reason for the outcome of the current results is sample size.

- Power analysis.
- With the present sample, power was more than adequate to detect a medium effect size (power near 95%).
- However, an extremely small effect is feasible given the many different influences on well-being, implying the need for a larger sample size.

•Additionally the \$50 gift certificate drawing incentive may have biased who participated in the study, which may have had an effect on the outcome.

Conclusion

•Despite all theoretical reasons behind the incongruent results of this particular study and the results of the existing body of literature on the impact of music on the lives of human beings, the relationships examined in the present study remain of interest.

•Subjective well-being is a multifaceted construct in which every aspect of human life affects an individual's subjective well-being. Music may only contribute a small effect on well-being, not large enough to detect without sufficient specificity of measures and sufficient power to detect small effects.

•Future research is important to gaining an understanding of how music may affect well-being. Researchers should address questions such as the following: at what age is music engagement important in contributing to subjective well-being and on what dimension of music engagement does music promote positive well-being?

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