



# Neurological and Psychological Common Points of Life Skills Obtained From Musical and Sports Activity Experience

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## Abstract

Modern human are categorized for “homo sapiens” and also “homo ludens” by Johan Huizinga. It means important “play” of society and culture, such as music and sports activity. Through these activities, people obtain useful and beneficial life skills during young period. They include emotional skills, social skills, goal setting, leadership, teamwork and so on. Another category shows five specific life skills as control, optimism, self-determination, emotional stability and conscientiousness. These skills make it easier to adapt to changes in lifestyle habits during each person's life cycle. In this way, music activity and experience contribute much to the significant life.

**Keywords:** Homo ludens; Johan Huizinga; Sports activity; Life skills; Music activity

## Commentary Article

We always pursue for mental and physical health in our daily lives, associated with physical exercise, playing sports and cultural activity. Enjoying music seems to be part of life and indispensable [1]. These matters would be found in the area of integrative medicine (IM) and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) [2]. The authors have continued research in IM, CAM, music therapy (MT), rehabilitation, sports, and general medical care [3]. Through music activities, people can relieve their daily stress and gain vitality. This benefit can be obtained regardless of age, gender, nationality or health condition [4]. Music has been used for patients with various diseases and also healthy people as wide concept of MT. MT session can be usually performed with reminiscence therapy and rhythmic exercise practice [5]. Therefore, there attempts contribute health promotion.

Historically speaking, modern humans are categorized as “homo sapiens”, as homo=human and sapiens>sapiō=know, understand

(by Carl von Linné, 1707-1778, at 1758). In middle 20th century, the book “Homo Ludens” was published by cultural theorist and historian Johan Huizinga [6]. He discussed the important factor of the play of society and culture. Human beings tend to play some interesting matters in the culture, such as exercise and music. Thus, the activities of exercise and music are originally free without strict rules, which lead to well-being or happiness [7]. Japan has the Basic Act on Sport (Act No. 141 of 1961-, totally revised 2011). Japan Sport Council has been the central organization specializing in sports promotional activities and the maintenance and enhancement of school children's health. [8]. General concept can be translated as follows: Sports are athletic competitions and other activities that are performed by individuals or groups. It is physical activity for sound development of mind and body, maintenance and promotion of health and physical strength, acquisition of mental satisfaction, self-discipline and other spiritual cultivation [9].

Sports activities not only allow us to move our bodies, but also enable us to acquire basic skills necessary for living as a human

being, which are called as life skills [10]. Eight factors are involved in sports activities [11]. They are emotional skills, social skills, goal setting, leadership, time management, teamwork and interpersonal communication skill (IPCS), problem solving and decision making. By multiple regression analyses, these skills tended to show positive associations with coach and parent mastery-oriented climates.

Life skills are defined by WHO as “ability necessary to constructively and effectively deal with the various problems and demands that arise in the daily life“ [12]. They consist of general psychosocial skills, and seem to be very close perspective of the “zest for living”, that was advocated by the Central Council for Education. Among them, five specific life skills have been investigated for 8119 cases (mean 67 years), which were control, optimism, self-determination, emotional stability and conscientiousness. They are associated with professional and educational success during early age and also elder period. In particular, higher degree of these skills are found with larger greater financial comfort, social and psychological well-being and better health [13]. The results of examined life skills values may predict physical impairment, lower incidence of chronic disease, psychological well-being and less loneliness in the future.

From mentioned above, participating in sports activities may enhance life skills. We can apply music activity similar to sports activity, which seems to obtain widespread recognition [14]. The authors have experienced this matter for ourselves and in long school lives for years. Learning and experiencing music activities not only improve musical knowledge, technique and performance, but also bring about personally psychological growth. Participation in musical activities develops abilities and qualities of the person, and then social expectations for beneficial phenomena are increasing more.

Several examples are found. Elementary school students who participate in music lessons, sports, or after-school clubs show greater attention, discipline, flexibility, task tenacity, learning autonomy and a desire to learn more. Adolescents who received music training tended to be more industrious, liberal and ambitious. Music undergraduates show improved IPCS and ability to achieve goals during 4 years. The target students could adequately identify issues, plan skills, possess flexibility and understand the situation [15]. Furthermore, music college students showed higher resilience, suggesting that they had several opportunities to experience hardship feelings and overcome challenges.

Thus, gaining musical learning and experience from childhood to college period can provide appropriate and superior psychological and social skills. These skills make it easier to adapt to changes in lifestyle habits during each person's life cycle. In particular, lifestyle habits may change dramatically from middle to elderly

age [16]. For such situations, previous music and sports activities that provided necessary life skills would be useful and beneficial. In this way, music experience and activity contribute much to the life changes. Life skills have played key role in promoting educational and occupational success in early life. However, their relevance in older period has been uncertain. The number of life skills has showed the relationship with various factors [17]. They are income, wealth, a sense of well-being, decreased depression, loneliness, low social isolation, closer relationship, less chronic diseases, fast walking speed, better self-rated health degree, and impaired ADL.

Furthermore, beneficial influence of acquired life skills have been also found in laboratory data for physical measurements. For example, people associated with higher life skills scores apt to show lower cholesterol values, lower C-reactive protein (CRP) values [13]. Blood CRP level means the possible existence of inflammatory status or disease, and decreased abdominal circumstances indicating less accumulation of visceral fat tissues and metabolic syndrome.

In summary, common points of life skills obtained from musical and sports activity experience were discussed in this article from neurological, psychological, physical and cultural points of view. Acquired life skills can contribute much to the life changes from adolescence to elderly period. This article is expected to become useful reference for various research in the fields of medicine, music, sports and culture.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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