

The editing in this sample includes APA 5<sup>th</sup> edition citation formatting. Citation formatting may be ordered along with editing. Our editing service addresses grammar, style and voice, and APA citation formatting addresses parenthetical references and the reference list. We can also edit in Turabian and MLA styles.

### Summary of Study

The purpose of this paper was to critically analyze a study of the effects of music participation on quality of life of the elderly. The authors of the study analyzed investigated participants' self-concept, life satisfaction, socialization, music attitude, and music self-concept using experimental and control groups (Vanderark, Newman, & Bell, 1983). The participants were residents in two nursing homes.

Two social workers from each of the homes selected 60 elderly residents, half for the experimental group and half for the control. The participants met the following qualifications: (a) at least 60 years of age, (b) able to answer questions, (c) not self-sufficient, (d) able to hear, and (e) no scheduling conflicts. After the social workers selected the 60 participants, the investigators interviewed them and selected an experimental group from one nursing home (n = 20) and a control group from the other (n = 23). The latter group continued to receive their usual treatment.

For 5 weeks the experimental group participated in biweekly 45-minute sessions for a total of 10 sessions. The investigators introduced participants' favorite songs. Then

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the group played various instruments (e.g., tone bells, autoharp, and movement and rhythm instruments) and improvised over a story. The participants completed

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questionnaires before and after the session as the investigators read to the participants.

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The investigators developed three instruments: (a) the Perceived Satisfaction and Quality of Life Index (Measurement 1), (b) the other people's (who were in a similar

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situation) perceived satisfaction and quality of life index (Measurement 2), and (c) the Music Attitude and Self-Esteem in Music Inventory for the Elderly (Measurement 3)

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(Vanderark et al., 1983, pp. 75-76). The investigators discarded Measurement 2 because the participants could not understand the concepts in the questionnaire.

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The results indicated that although participants were not randomly assigned to groups, the mean and standard deviation of each group were similar. It was appropriate

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to conduct research. However, two elements (e.g., self-concept and self-concept in music) proved significantly different in pretests, with the experimental group showing a

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higher score than the control group. After the treatment, the experimental group showed significant difference in life satisfaction, music attitude, and self-concept in music.

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Overall, the experimental group presented a higher score than the control group on all five outcomes.

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## Analysis and Discussion

### 1. Profile of participants

There were several interfering variables in the study. First, the investigators did not randomly assign the experimental and control groups because the groups were determined by the participants' residence. Therefore, it was impossible for both groups to receive similar services. Timulack (2008) stated, "Treatment-as-usual has problems that lack of control, no control over the control group, do not know what kinds of

treatment they had been receiving" (p. 32). Also participants' length of residence might have interfered with the study (i.e., levels of adjustment and formation of a new community might have been higher in the control group). The control group participants had stayed at the site longer than the experimental group, which might have affected the quality of the participants. Other possible interfering variables included the participants'

wide age range, which was from 60 to 95; the unbalanced gender ratio (10 men to 50 women); and variation in level of physical and psychological disability.

### 2. Types of Measurement

It is important to have multiple instruments that cover multiple perspectives (Timulack, 2008). In this study, the investigators developed three instruments, and used

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two. The two instruments used addressed participants' level of life satisfaction and quality of life (Measurement 1), and their attitude toward music and toward their self-concept in music (Measurement 3). The investigators asked participants identical questions before and after the treatment.

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Timulack (2008) cautioned that a therapist's bias toward an expected outcome might influence the content of instruments. When I analyzed Measurement 1, I found that only three of 19 prompts were negative ("I feel old," "I feel tired" and "The things I do here are boring"). In Measurement 3, the investigators only used one negative prompt out of 17 ("I have never been very good at music"). Participants might have been trying to be nice to investigators by not disagreeing. Therefore, the investigators should have added different types of questions, such as, "I did not find an activity that interested me," "I want to be alone," "I do not have anything to do with my time," or "I am not satisfied with my life."

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Also, by excluding negative prompts, the questionnaires sent hidden messages to participants that they should feel happy while engaging with music. Furthermore, the investigators unconsciously sent messages to participants such as *I want to make you happy through music*. Thus, participants might have responded positively to the questions due to the investigators' influence.

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### 3. Treatment Procedures

The participants had **recreative** experiences in **their** music sessions. They were asked to play **an** instrument (**e.g.**, tone bells, autoharp, **or** movement or rhythmic instruments) **and follow** the investigators' cues while **singing** a familiar song. Each instrument **was** aimed at **a** different musical purpose (e.g., ostinato patterns, chordal playing, or tempo). **However**, the investigator did not discuss how these musical elements influenced participants' outcomes **in terms of** self-esteem, satisfaction, **and** self-concept.

The investigator tried to create a manual **for a** music program **and assess** participants' needs and **apply** various musical activities **using the interventions**. **Although** the music program **had a consistent** structure, **each** song **might have brought** **out a** different mood **or** meaning **for participants**. Also each participant **could have had a** different interpretation **of each** song. **The investigators could** have **facilitated** a group discussion after the **intervention to explore the** benefits for the participants and the investigators. Through group discussion, the participants **could have shared** their stories and concerns, **which might have** resonated with **the** others. **In terms of** the research results, **it would have been** valuable to have participants **make a** qualitative self-report

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during the music sessions, in addition to administering the pre- and post-test self-reported measurements.

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## Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that the control group showed lower levels than the experimental group for every outcome (i.e., the dependent variables). Timulack (2008) explained that there was possibility influence in variables (e.g., participants who

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were included in research study that influenced their outcomes). The experimental

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group might have been more excited than the control group to participate in the research study.

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Although the experimental group showed significant improvement in self-concept and self-concept in music, it did not demonstrate a significant difference in life

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satisfaction, socialization, and music attitude. Socialization had the lowest score among the outcomes. The investigators should have considered changing the musical

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intervention to improve socialization. Instead they discussed altering the selection of subjects, sample size, and length of treatment to improve the research results. Although

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the investigators tried to create a music program for elderly individuals, they did not emphasize musical interventions that would enhance quality of life.

As I critically analyzed this research, I asked, was this a music psychotherapy study? The answer is yes and no. It could have been music psychotherapy because the outcome measures addressed participants' psychological concerns (e.g., self-concept, life satisfaction, and socialization) through psychotherapy. However, the investigators relied on their own instruments to measure those elements, and did not define how each musical intervention enhanced participants' self-concept, life satisfaction, socialization, music attitude, and self-concept in music.

## References

Timulak, L. (2008). *Research in psychotherapy and counselling*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Vanderark, S., Newman, I., & Bell, S. (1983). The effects of music participation on quality of life of the elderly. *Music Therapy*, 3(1), 71-81.

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