

# Effects of Early Childhood Group Music Lessons on Children's Non-Cognitive Skills

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## Background

Our previous study showed that the age at the onset of group music lessons in early childhood influences the later development of empathy and communication behaviors

However, it remains unclear whether group music lessons at music schools specifically impact children's later non-cognitive skills compared with other types of lessons in which Japanese children frequently participate.

## Aim

This study examined whether group music lessons in music schools nationwide and other types of lessons in early childhood have different effects on later noncognitive skills.

This study focused on five activities: (1) group music lessons (GM); (2) private piano lessons (PPL); (3) group cram schools (GCS); (4) swimming schools (SS); and (5) no activities (NA).

## Methods

The survey was conducted with parents of third-grade children who had participated in the aforementioned activities when they were 4-5 years old.

The number of participants in each group was as follows: GM (66), PPL (57), GCS (65), SS (84), and NA (200).

The survey used the intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation scale, the Big Five scale, and daily life skills items as measurement tools.

## Results

GM showed significantly higher values than NA for mastery and enjoyment of the intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation scale and agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness of the Big Five scale ( $ps < .05$ ).

The daily life skills scores of the SS group were higher than those of the NA group ( $p < .01$ ).

The neuroticism score of the PPL group was higher than that of the GCS group ( $p < .05$ ).

The openness scores of the SS and PPL were significantly higher than those of the NA ( $ps < .05$ ).

## Conclusion

Compared to other types of lessons, children who participated in GM had;

1. higher values on the two motivation subscales than NA
2. higher values for three of the Big Five factors (i.e., agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness).

Our findings highlight the benefits of early group musical training on the acquisition of noncognitive development and provide an additional understanding of the impacts of different extracurricular activities on child development.

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This work was supported by Yamaha Music Foundation