

Those with More Education and Higher Household Incomes are More Likely to Have Had Music Education

Music education Influences Level of Personal Fulfillment for Many U.S. Adults

Whether it's chorus, band or just violin lessons, music impacts Americans' lives. While singing in a chorus or playing an instrument is fun, it can also provide important skills like creative problem solving that can help lead to higher education and incomes as well as personal fulfillment.

Three-quarters (75%) of American adults were involved in some type of music program while in school. Half (51%) were involved in chorus while 42 percent had some type of formal instrumental lessons. Just over one-third (35%) were in a school instrumental ensemble, such as an orchestra or band while 14 percent were part of an informal group, such as a garage band and 12 percent had formal vocal lessons.

Music education is associated with those who go on to higher education. In looking at what groups may have participated more in music, education shows the largest differences. Two-thirds (65%) of those with a high school education or less participated in music compared to four in five (81%) with some college education and 86 percent of those with a college education. The largest group to participate in music, however, are those with a post graduate education as almost nine in ten (88%) of this group participated while in school.

Music education is also associated with higher incomes. Three-quarters of people (74%) with household incomes of \$34,999 or less and 72 percent of those with incomes of \$35,000-\$49,999 participated in music, compared to 83 percent of those with incomes of \$150,000 or more.

These are some of the findings of a Harris Poll of 2,565 adults surveyed online between October 9 and 15, 2007 by Harris Interactive®. This survey was conceived and developed by Harris Interactive and was not commissioned by any organization. However, we sought and received valuable input from the National Association for Music Education on this subject.

Certain other groups are more likely than others to have participated in music in school. Women are more likely than men (80% versus 70%) and African Americans are more likely than Whites or Hispanics to have participated in music (80% versus 75% and 73%). Age wise, the younger one is, the more likely they participated in music as 83 percent of Echo Boomers (those aged 18-30) participated compared to 69 percent of Matures (those aged 62 and older). Also, the higher the household income, the more likely they participated in a music program.

Music Education Provides Personal Fulfillment

Seven in ten U.S. adults say that music education had at least some influence on their current level of personal fulfillment, with more than one-third (37%) saying that their music education has been extremely or very influential and one-third (33%) saying it was somewhat influential. Just one-quarter say music education had no influence at all. Those with a post-graduate degree are more likely to say music education was extremely or very important than those with a high school or less education or a college graduate (51% compared to 28% and 38%, respectively).

The type of music program one was involved in and how long that involvement lasted also matters when

looking at personal fulfillment. Over half of those who had vocal lessons (52%) or were in a garage band (54%) say music education was extremely or very influential to their current level of personal fulfillment as do 46 percent of those who took instrument lessons. And, while it's probably not surprising that over three-quarters (78%) of those who are still involved in music say it was extremely or very influential, three in five (60%) of those with more than five years of involvement also say music education was extremely or very influential to their current level of music fulfillment.

We Can Work It Out: The Skills Music Education Provides

Besides just the music, participating in music programs can also provide people with certain skills that can be utilized in a job and career. Just under half (47%) of those who were in a music program say music education was extremely or very important in giving them the ability to strive for individual excellence in a group setting. A plurality (44%) say music education was extremely or very important in teaching how to work towards common goals and two in five (41%) say it was extremely or very important in providing them with a disciplined approach to solving problems. Just over one-third say music education gave them the skill of creative problem solving (37%) and how to be flexible in work situations (36%).

The more education one has, the more likely one thinks that music education was important in providing each of these five skills. In fact, almost six in ten (58%) post graduates say music education was extremely or very important as they strive for individual excellence in a group setting. Besides post-graduates, African Americans are also more likely to say that music education was important in providing them with each of these skills.

In looking at what the learnings and habits from music education provide, two-thirds of adults (66%), and 72 percent of those who were involved in music, say it equips people to be better team players in their career. Music education also helps one to solve problems – three in five adults (61%) and two-thirds (66%) of those involved in music say music education provides people with a disciplined approach to solving problems. Music also provides a sense of organization. Three in five adults (59%) and almost two-thirds (64%) of those who had music education say that it prepares someone to manage the tasks of their job more successfully.

The Beat Goes On

Even when the lessons could end, those who had music education continued with the program. Just one in six (14%) continued with their program for less than one year, while one-third (33%) continued for 1 to 3 years. Almost one-quarter (22%) participated for three to five years and 19 percent of those who had music participated for over 5 years. One in ten adults are still involved in a music program. Education also plays a role as those with post graduate degrees are more likely to be involved in music longer; three in ten participated for over 5 years and 14 percent are still involved.

Type of music program also impacts how long one participated. One-quarter of those who took instrumental lessons (24%) and orchestra (25%) continued with their programs for more than five years. Also, one in five of those who take vocal lessons (22%) and are in a garage band (20%) are still involved in a musical program. With these, as opposed to chorus, the knowledge of reading music is necessary and, with that skill, one may want to continue their involvement longer.

So What?

Whether it is singing with a group of other students, playing trumpet in the junior high orchestra or taking years of piano lessons, music education hopefully provides, on its face, an appreciation of music. But it also provides much more than that. Even after the lessons are long gone, the skill set that those years provided lives on for those who had music education. Whether it's learning to work in group settings or becoming more disciplined, music education provides certain fundamentals and those with this background now say it was influential in contributing to their current level of personal fulfillment. With all the benefits of music education, its continued importance in education is something that cannot be denied. In fact, in looking at how those with more education are more likely to have been in a music program, we can probably say that

music education is a tool to not only get students to stay in school, but to continue to further their education.

TABLE 1

MUSIC PARTICIPATION

"During your years in school, when and how did you participate in music?"

Base: All Adults

	Total	Elementary School	Jr. High School	High School	College	None of these
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Chorus or vocal group	51	29	27	27	5	49
Formal lessons involving an instrument	42	29	22	15	3	58
School instrumental ensembles, such as orchestra or band	35	19	22	18	4	65
Informal groups such as garage bands	14	5	5	6	3	88
Formal vocal lessons	12	1	3	10	4	86
Something else involving music	24	10	10	15	10	76

TABLE 2

WHO PARTICIPATED IN MUSIC?

"During your years in school, when and how did you participate in music?"

Base: All Adults

	Total
	%
All Adults	75
Gender	
Men	70
Women	80
Region	
East	79
Mid West	75
South	73
West	74
Age	
Echo boomers (18-30)	83
Gen X (31-42)	76
Baby Boomers (43-61)	74
Matures (62+)	69
Race/Ethnicity	
White	75

African-American	80
Hispanic	73
Education	
High School or less	65
Some college	81
College graduate	86
Post graduate	88
Income/Household	
\$34,999 or less	74
\$35,000 – \$49,999	72
\$50,000 – \$74,999	75
\$75,000 - \$99,999	78
\$100,000 - \$149,999	78
\$150,000 +	83

TABLE 3

TIME WITH MUSIC PROGRAM

"How long did you continue with this music program?"

Base: Involved in Music Program

	Total	Education			
		HS or less	Some college	College grad	Post grad
	%	%	%	%	%
Less than one year	14	16	15	12	9
One to less than three years	33	34	33	35	24
Three to five years	22	27	18	18	22
More than five years	19	14	17	23	30
Still involved in a music program	9	5	11	10	14
Not sure	4	4	5	2	1

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

TABLE 4

TIME WITH MUSIC PROGRAM – By type of music program

"How long did you continue with this music program?"

Base: Involved in Music Program

	Total	Type of Music Program				
		Chorus	Instrument lesson	Orchestra or band	Vocal lessons	Garage band
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than one year	14	12	11	10	9	13
One to less than three years	33	34	29	25	25	20

Three to five years	22	21	23	25	20	21
More than five years	19	19	24	25	22	21
Still involved in a music program	9	10	11	11	22	20
Not sure	4	3	3	3	2	6

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

TABLE 5

INFLUENCE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

"Thinking back on your music education, how influential do you believe music education has been in contributing to your current level of personal fulfillment?"

Base: Involved in Music Program

	Total	Education				Ethnicity		
		HS or less	Some college	College grad	Post grad	White	Black	Hispanic
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXTREMELY/VERY INFLUENTIAL (NET)	37	28	42	38	51	35	41	42
Extremely influential	17	13	19	18	24	16	21	18
Very influential	20	15	23	21	27	19	20	24
Somewhat influential	33	35	30	35	26	35	32	23
Not influential at all	25	27	25	22	22	25	18	29
Not sure	6	10	3	4	1	5	9	6

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

TABLE 6

INFLUENCE OF MUSIC EDUCATION – By type of program and length of involvement

"Thinking back on your music education, how influential do you believe music education has been in contributing to your current level of personal fulfillment?"

Base: Involved in Music Program

	Total	Type of Music Program					Length of Involvement			
		Chorus	Inst. lesson	Orchestra or band	Vocal lessons	Garage band	Less than 3 years	3-5 years	More than 5 years	Still involved
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
EXTREMELY/VERY INFLUENTIAL	37	39	46	44	52	54	24	31	60	78

(NET)										
Extremely influential	17	19	21	21	32	26	9	13	28	51
Very influential	20	20	25	22	20	27	15	19	32	28
Somewhat influential	33	32	33	33	32	31	32	42	32	13
Not influential at all	25	23	17	19	14	8	38	22	6	4
Not sure	6	6	4	4	3	7	6	4	2	5

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

TABLE 7

MUSIC EDUCATION PROVIDES SKILLS

"Music education has the ability to provide various skills that you may need for success in a job or career outside of music. For example, instilling work habits or ways of thinking about things learned in music that can be applied to the job or career. How important was music education in providing you with the following skills?"

Base: Involved in music program

	Extremely/Very Important (NET)	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not important at all	Not sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Striving for individual excellence in a group setting	47	23	25	18	22	13
Working towards common goals	44	21	23	21	22	13
Disciplined approach to solving problems	41	19	23	20	25	13
Creative problem solving	37	17	20	22	27	14
Flexibility in work situations	36	16	20	22	28	14

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

TABLE 8

MUSIC EDUCATION PROVIDES SKILLS

"Music education has the ability to provide various skills that you may need for success in a job or career outside of music. For example, instilling work habits or ways of thinking about things learned in music that can be applied to the job or career. How important was music education in providing you with the following skills?"

Those saying "Extremely/Very Important"

Base: Involved in music program

	Total	Education				Ethnicity		
		HS or less	Some college	College grad	Post grad	White	Black	Hispanic
	%	%	%	%	%			
Striving for individual excellence in a group setting	47	40	51	49	58	45	58	51
Working towards common goals	44	36	52	45	53	42	56	45
Disciplined approach to solving problems	41	37	43	43	51	39	48	47
Creative problem solving	37	33	39	39	46	35	45	44
Flexibility in work situations	36	31	38	36	44	33	44	40

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

TABLE 9

WHAT MUSIC EDUCATION PREPARES PEOPLE FOR

"Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Base: All adults

	AGREE	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	DISAGREE	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
	(NET)	%	%	(NET)	%	%	%
Learnings and habits from music education equip people to be better team players in their career	66	27	38	13	7	6	21
Learnings and habits from music							

education provide you with a disciplined approach to solving problems	61	21	39	16	9	7	24
Learnings and habits from music education prepare someone to manage the tasks of their job more successfully	59	20	39	16	10	7	24

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

TABLE 10

WHAT MUSIC EDUCATION PREPARES PEOPLE FOR

"Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Those saying "Strongly/Somewhat Agree"

Base: All adults

	Total	Participated in music		Education			
		Yes	No	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Post grad
	%	%	%		%	%	%
Learnings and habits from music education equip people to be better team players in their career	66	72	46	60	70	69	76
Learnings and habits from music education provide you with a disciplined approach to solving problems	61	66	44	54	65	63	75
Learnings and habits from music education prepare someone to manage the tasks of their job more successfully	59	64	43	53	65	60	69

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding

Methodology

This Harris Poll[®] was conducted online within the United States between October 9 and 15, 2007 among 2,565 adults (aged 18 and over), of whom 1,928 participated in a music program in school. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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