A case study of music-based program in Samsung Group's executive education

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Abstract

This case study examines the types and effectiveness of music-based program used by Samsung Group for executive education. The author designed and taught music-based program to newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors at Samsung for seven years (2004–2010), analyzed the program, and obtained the following results. (1) Music-based program content was used increasingly in emotional intelligence education courses for executives. (2) In music-based program, video lectures and recital-and-interpretation lectures generated better educational performance among trainees than did general lectures. (3) Participants responded more favorably to recital-and-interpretation lectures than to video lectures. (4) In the recital-and-interpretation lectures, preferences for music genres (classical, popular, local, etc.) and instrumental compositions of classical music (strings, winds, etc.) varied depending on trainees’ positions and occupations. Finally, the study presents hypotheses on improving the emotional intelligence of executives and improving organizational performance through music-based program.

Keywords: executive education, emotional intelligence education, music-based program, recital-and-interpretation lecture, three phases of music education

1. Research content and method

This article discusses the types and effectiveness of music-based program. The case used here is the music-based program as part of an emotional intelligence education program that was held from 2004 to 2010 by Samsung Group’s Human Resources Development Center.

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Samsung Shared Value Program was developed and designed by Samsung Human Resources Development Center for newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors. The emotional intelligence education program was part of the Shared Value Program and was based on cultural and artistic content. A large proportion of the subjects were music, art, plays, and films. It also included humor, exercise (yoga, stretching, dance), and wine. The artistic-cultural programs allowed trainees to experience and participate in performances from each genre. Among the artistic-cultural programs, the music-based programs in the form of recitals and interpretation, which I designed and taught, was most frequently selected regardless of employee position or occupation.

2. The need for music-based programs to improve managers’ emotional intelligence

Corporations both domestic and overseas began to pay attention to emotional intelligence as a way to address the complex social and economic situations in the 21st century. Particularly, large global corporations such as Samsung paid attention to the artistic-cultural programs. They found that the artistic-cultural programs would improve constituents’ emotional intelligence, which would spread throughout an organization and create organizational emotional competence. In essence, corporate artistic-cultural programs help individuals and organizations develop and practice creativity and emotional intelligence. Music-based programs stimulate people’s musical natures and awaken their innate sensitivity.

However, it is difficult to find case studies that explicitly explain music-based programs with executive education. Furthermore, I could not find any studies that would show managers’ emotional competence being enhanced through music-based programs. Consequently, with the case study described in this article as a basis, one may need to develop a music-based program for executive education. In addition, it is necessary to study the elements of music as stimuli for enhancing managers’ emotional intelligence.

3. Theoretical background

I postulate that musical experiences may stimulate managers’ emotional intelligence and improve their emotional competence. Specifically, I wish to examine the following postulates: “Emotional intelligence is the ability of a person to accurately understand and control one’s own, as well as others’, emotions in order to maintain well-rounded relationships. Emotional competence is the capability for a manager to effectively manage the emotional aspect of horizontal relationship among peers and vertical relationship among superiors and subordinates. It also enables positive empathy among team members. The leader’s accurate understanding and effective management of constituents’ emotional aspect result in successful performance of the organization.”

Neff and Citrin (1999) presented 15 common traits of 50 successful leaders who led high-ranking businesses. Of the 15 common traits of these successful leaders, only 3 were related to intellectual or technical competence; the other 12 were related to emotional intelligence, such as attitude or will.

Goleman (1997) grouped necessary components of managers’ emotional intelligence into five categories: self-awareness, self-regulation, internal motivation, empathy, and social skills. Further, Goleman, Boyatzis, & Mckee (2002) defined practical capability based on emotional intelligence as emotional competence and stated that emotional competence could undergo improvement through learning. They also argued that a manager could improve her or his emotional competence by enhancing relatively weak areas among the five components of emotional intelligence.

Song (2000) reported that experience with music positively affected Goleman’s five components of emotional intelligence. According to her, one can improve “self-awareness” and “self-regulation” by understanding one’s own emotional states and learning to express negative sentiments in more controlled ways through one’s responses to the

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† Goleman, et. al. (2002) defined emotional competence as the capability for managers to effectively address the various emotional issues that organizations face and to ultimately lead their businesses to success.
music. In addition, because the general population is not familiar with classical music, joy is intensified when listening to classical music because of the delayed satisfaction and anticipation, which are obtained instantly with pop music. Therefore, one can acquire “internal motivation” by experiencing worth and expression through educational programs based on classical music. Finally, one can acquire “empathy” and “social skills” by experiencing shared feelings and joy through music that symbolically expresses many different feelings and thoughts.

4. Case Study: the music-based program as a part of Samsung Group’s executive education

Many Korean corporations have begun to provide education and development programs to their managers and employees. These programs include self-development, job training, collective training, and experience management, as well as programs that develop emotional intelligence.

Samsung Group is one of the pioneer in adopting emotional intelligence education. Samsung Group’s Human Resources Development Center (HRDC) invited me to design a music-based program in 2004. I accepted the invitation, and designed the music-based program for Samsung Group’s executive education. My program was offered to newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors of Samsung Group of 18 affiliated companies in 2004. The program has become an annual event until 2014 for 11 consecutive years. I was given the responsibility of designing and teaching the program from 2004 to 2013 for 10 consecutive years.

When I was designing the music-based program for Samsung HRDC for the first time in 2004, I decided to use the 3 phases of music appreciation, i.e., listening, feeling and understanding, as a means for the trainees to catch the 4 elements of music. In essence, I wanted trainees to go through the 3 phases of music appreciation in order to catch rhythm which would be as either regular coupled with a sense of stability or irregular coupled with a sense of instability. Melody and harmony generate trainees' sentiments accompanied by their own memories, such as happy childhoods. Context is the relationship between music pieces and the composers’ social and cultural backgrounds. Trainees learn the essence and background of music from the context of the pieces they encounter in their music-based programs.

Then, I developed a set of hypotheses that relate the 3 phases of music appreciation with the 5 components of emotional intelligence as follows: In essence, I wanted trainees to (1) increase self-awareness through "listening" by awakening innate emotions, (2) strengthen self-regulation and internal motivation through "feeling" by bringing the past into the present, and (3) enhance empathy and social skills through "understanding" by connecting with others. Figure 1 graphically illustrates the relations among the 4 elements of music, the 3 phases of music appreciation, and the 5 components of emotional intelligence.
The music-based program that I had developed in 2004 became a part of the emotional intelligence education within Samsung Group's executive education. Details of this program is explained below:

4.1 Emotional intelligence education as part of employee education and development at Samsung Group

There are a number of employee education and development programs based on employee position levels and education programs for all subsidiaries of Samsung Group. Each education program includes an emotional intelligence curriculum.

First, the employee education and development program for the corporation in this case study is divided into the Shared-Value Leadership Program, the Business Leadership Program, and the Global Leadership Program. The Shared-Value Leadership Program is based on employee position levels and is geared toward officers in the first

†† This chapter is only based on emotional intelligence components from the employee education and development materials of Samsung Human Resources and Development, an education and development institute of Samsung Group.
year of their roles. The purpose of the program is to provide clear understanding of leadership and increase organizational cohesiveness. The Business Leadership Program helps mid-level managers improve their management and leadership skills. The Global Leadership Program aims to develop talent for the company’s international stage. This case study only discusses the Shared-Value Leadership Program, because it continuously had trainees in a wide range of positions for a number of years.

4.2 Emotional intelligence education in the Shared Value Leadership Program

The Shared Value Leadership Program is for all team members based on employee position level and is offered to managerial employees in the first year of their positions. In the Shared Value Leadership Program curriculum, “attainment” and “others” are included in emotional intelligence education. The purpose of this curriculum is to stimulate emotional intelligence by introducing different arts and to expand knowledge. Before the emotional intelligence curriculum was designed, trainees had to attend a concert to complete the program. However, attending concerts proved to involve many complications, such as scheduling conflicts and traveling, and proved to be ineffective. In addition, the levels of understanding of the concerts and trainee satisfaction were not as high as was expected. For this reason, attending concerts was eliminated from the education program, and three lecture types—regular, video, and recital-and-interpretation—were developed.

The Shared Value Leadership Program for newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors consists of four to five days of camp training at a training site with an average of approximately 30 education hours during the period. Of this time, emotional intelligence education lasts for 1.5 to 3 hours. Data was collected from 2004 to 2010, which represented the proportion of emotional intelligence education and the lecture types in the employee education and development program for newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors.

4.2.1 The shift in the proportion of emotional intelligence education in the executive education program

The proportion of emotional intelligence education in the employee education and development program was analyzed from 2004 to 2010 based on the education program. The average number of hours for emotional intelligence education for newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors in 2004 was 1.28 hours out of 28, or 4.5%, and 2 hours out of 24, or 8.3% in 2010 (Table 1).

The proportion of emotional intelligence education has been equivalent to the original proportion or has gradually increased since 2004. As employee position levels increased, the emotional intelligence lecture proportions also increased. Consistently, 120% more hours were required for emotional intelligence education lectures for newly promoted directors than for newly promoted assistant directors in 2010.

![Fig. 2. Ratio of emotional intelligence education to the full education and development program by year](image)

4.2.2 Weight of music-based program in emotional intelligence education
The curriculum for emotional intelligence comprises artistic and cultural content, including film, arts, humor, health, wine, music, and so on. Trainees are to attend one lecture based on the seniority of their positions, and they do not have the freedom to choose classes. The rate of music-based program\(^\D\) for newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors increased from 45.4% in 2004 to 100% in 2010. Music is frequently used as a way to directly stimulate emotional intelligence in executive education.

![Graph showing rates of music-based program in emotional intelligence education by year](image)

**Fig. 3. Rates of music-based program in emotional intelligence education by year**

### 4.2.3 Music-based program lecture types and their proportions in each program

This discussion is the result of analyzing music-based lectures as categorized by the author into three characteristic types: regular, video, and recital-and-interpretation lectures. Regular lectures focused on listening to, describing, and commenting on music. Video lectures are carried out with the use of video materials and media, and typically use vocals or operas. Recital-and-interpretation lectures are carried out with lecturer commentary and live performances. The proportions of the three lecture types in the music-based program for newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors were, respectively, 12.5%, 63.2%, and 24.3% in 2004. The respective proportions were 11.1%, 61.7%, and 27.2% in 2005 and 0%, 18.7%, and 81.3% in 2006. From 2007 on, music-based program was taught with 100% recital-and-interpretation lectures. As the music-based program content increased in emotional intelligence education, the lecture type trend shifted from regular lectures → video lectures → recital-and-interpretation lectures.

This shift reflected trainees’ preference for recital-and-interpretation education, and it resulted in expanding the variety of recital-and-interpretation lectures. Video lectures were limited to lectures on operas.

### 4.2.4 Trainee satisfaction with music-based program lecture types

Samsung Group’s Human Resources Development Center surveyed trainees on their satisfaction with the music-based program lecture types. For each type of lecture, trainees were asked to fill out a survey with five levels of satisfaction: very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied.

From the survey, the sum of the responses “very satisfied” and “satisfied” was set as the trainee satisfaction score, and the average trainee’s satisfaction scores for the three lecture types were calculated from this sum.\(^\D\)\(^\D\)

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\(^\D\) In this study, unlike “music education” to foster musicians, “music-based education” is defined as education to promote musical sensitivity in trainees.

\(^\D\)\(^\D\) The emotional intelligence curriculum tended to show high satisfaction levels compared with the other curricula. In fact, support for maintaining the emotional intelligence curriculum in Samsung Group operating education programs scored between 80 and 85 points.
In 2004, the trainee satisfaction scores of the newly promoted managers, assistant directors, and directors for the regular, video, and recital-and-interpretation lectures were 87.3, 92.6, and 96.8, respectively; that is, the video and recital-and-interpretation lectures received higher trainee satisfaction scores than did the regular lectures. In 2005, the scores were 71.1, 96.6, and 96.4, respectively, similar to the 2004 scores. From 2006 on, regular lectures were eliminated because of low trainee satisfaction, and the video and recital-and-interpretation trainee satisfaction scores were 96.3 and 97.3, respectively. Furthermore, only recital-and-interpretation lectures were offered from 2007 on, because they received the highest scores, 98.7, 98.9, and 99.1, 98.8 respectively from 2007 through 2010.

Fig. 4. The shift in the percentages of recital-and-interpretation lectures

4.2.5 The genres and programs of music-based program

Music-based program took place through three different programs, vocal, Korean music, and opera. The genres for the music-based programs for each year were as follows: In 2004, in the last portion of the curriculum for newly promoted assistant directors, lectures on instruments called “A Little Music Recital with a Story” were first introduced. In 2005, a greater variety of music-based programs were introduced, including understanding Korean classical music, classical music from soundtracks, world music, and opera. In 2006, the lectures were on classical music from soundtracks, operas, jazz, and musicals. After 2007, because all of the music-based program was replaced by recital-and-interpretation lectures, the genre taught was 100% classical.

Fig. 5. The shift in trainee satisfaction with the music-based program lecture types
For recital-and-interpretation lectures, only piano trios were introduced in 2004, but the pieces had expanded by 2010 to piano solos and duets (piano and violin, piano and flute, violin and guitar, etc.), piano trios, string quartets, and brass quintets. After 2007, when piano trios had become the main piece, vocals were added.

**5. Case analysis: Current state of music-based program operations at Samsung Group**

The analysis of music-based program for the education and development of managers, assistant directors, and directors showed that the proportion of emotional intelligence education increased from 4.5% in 2004 to 8.3% in 2010. Moreover, as employee position levels rose, the proportion of emotional intelligence education also increased.

Given that the proportion of music-based program in the emotional intelligence education curriculum increased from less than 50% in 2004 to 89.8% in 2006—and that it has comprised 100% since 2007—the need for and effectiveness of music-based program in executive emotional intelligence education are evident. Particularly as a means to overcome passive employee participation and induce active participation in education and development, music-based program seemed to prove effective.

Among the lecture types, the trend in music-based program was for recital-and-interpretation lectures. Specifically, as the importance of music-based program in emotional intelligence education increased, regular-style lectures were no longer offered and were replaced by video and recital-and-interpretation lectures.

There seemed to be no difference between video lectures and recital-and-interpretation lectures in terms of trainee satisfaction scores. However, while the author conducted both types of lectures, it became evident that there was a much stronger reaction from the trainees for the recital-and-interpretation lectures. As the proportion of recital-and-interpretation lectures increased, the scope of the lectures was expanded to include various categories of music genres, performance styles, and instrument. This variety reflected different preferences of trainees by positions and occupations on the kind of music being performed.

In categorizing the genres of music-based program, there was an inclination of trainees’ preference for classical music in general, and for instrumental music in particular. Albeit minimal, vocal music was introduced through operas and musicals. The lectures on Korean classical music in 2004 and world music in 2005 received low trainee satisfaction scores, and therefore, were no longer offered.

Employees’ position level tended to positively correlate with their age. There was a vast difference in musical genre and composition preferences based on employees’ position levels. Newly promoted directors preferred lectures on operas as they tended to go to operas with other VIPs in business. Newly promoted assistant directors in their mid 40s preferred string instruments. This is also the group that showed the most interest in music history and theory. Newly promoted managers, who are usually in their 30s, are the youngest in management. They preferred brass wind instruments and showed excitement for such genres as the tango. It is necessary, therefore, to customize on genre and composition for trainees with different position levels.

A point to be noted in the music-based program at Samsung Group is that more effective education was achieved by presenting live performances during the introduction of classical music. **Recital-and-interpretation** lectures were effective not only in stimulating trainees’ emotional intelligence but also in delivering to trainees musical theory that incorporates harmony, melody, rhythm, and context.

In addition, during the recital-and-interpretation lectures, it was possible to help managers expand their horizons through enhanced content related to music, such as art, dance, literature, and other artistic genres. Furthermore, it was effective to link artists’ activities and works to the words that were frequently used by managers, such as “communication,” “harmony,” and “creation.”

**6. Limitations of this study and recommendations for future research**

This article reported a case study on music-based program at Samsung Group’s Human Resources Development Center from 2004 to 2010. The nature of the case study led me develop a set of original hypotheses rather than proving hypotheses.
I designed and taught Samsung’s music-based program for the entire 7 years, but did not participate in the assessment of its educational effects. Therefore, I could not categorically analyze the intended impact of the music-based program upon trainees’ capability in listening, feeling, and understanding.

Nonetheless, this article has depicted growing demand of corporate educators for emotional intelligence education. It also revealed Samsung Group’s current state of emotional intelligence education Samsung Group is one of Fortune’s global 15 companies, but little is known about its employee education and development programs.

The following issues need to examine more carefully:
1. How can we measure the impact of music-based programs?
2. What aspects of the 3 phases of music appreciation (listening, feeling, and understanding) link to the elements of music (rhythm, melody, harmony, and context) and the 5 components of trainees’ emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, internal motivation, empathy, social skills)? How can we design the music-based program so that it improves, individually and as a whole, the five components of emotional intelligence necessary for managers as leaders?
3. If the scope of music-based program is expanded into artistic-cultural education, what areas of managerial capabilities would be stimulated and improved?
4. How can we incorporate artistic-cultural program in designing an executive education program for leadership?

Currently, I am planning studies that address the following two hypotheses.
1. The 3 phases of music appreciation in the music-based program improve the 5 components of emotional intelligence. Specifically, listening provides the ability to understand oneself. Feeling provides self-regulation and internal motivation, and understanding provides the ability to create rapport and build interpersonal skills.
2. The 5 components of emotional intelligence in managers could improve managers’ leadership capability, ultimately resulting in the improved operational achievement of the organization.

By verifying the above two hypotheses, I wish to establish theories related with music-based executive education which link music and business administration.
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