
Miok KIM and Min Ah JUNG*

Dept. of Social Welfare, Chonbuk National University, 567 Baekje-Daero, Deokjin-Gu, Jeonju-Si, Jeollabuk-Do 54896, Korea
*Corresponding author

Keywords: Developmental disability, Youth, Orchestra, Photovoice.

Abstract. The purpose of the research was to identify the potential effects of participating in the orchestra on youth with developmental disabilities. Using ‘photovoice’ research method, this study qualitatively analyzed the thoughts and feelings of the members of a youth orchestra comprising teenagers with developmental disabilities. As a result, orchestra members’ perception of the music, the meaning of participating in the orchestra, and the effects of participating in orchestra activities were identified. The results showed the positive effect of participating in the orchestra on the changes in personal and social lives of young people with developmental disabilities. This research suggests the need to expand the participatory opportunity of orchestra, i.e., cultural welfare for the development of many valued social roles and improvement of social awareness of people with developmental disabilities.

Introduction

The provision of the opportunity for people with developmental disabilities to participate in the orchestra is related to the Wolfensberger’s concept of the ‘social role valorisation’, which emphasises the need to increase competences of people with disabilities and improving their image [1,2]. The ‘social role valorisation’ focuses on reorganising the social service system to contribute to the creation of the valued social role for people with disabilities [3].

In line with El Sistema, which is a musical education program for children from low-income families, and other orchestra activities for the young people from vulnerable background, participating in an orchestra could have positive effect on the social life of people with developmental disabilities. This research focuses on how the orchestra experiences are related to the changes in personal and social lives of youth with developmental disabilities and explores the potential of people with developmental disabilities who participate in the orchestra to create the valued social role and improve public’s awareness of youth with developmental disabilities. Therefore, this research analysed the participatory experiences of youth with developmental disabilities and identified the effects of participating in the orchestra on youth with developmental disabilities.

‘Photovoice’ for Research Regarding People with Developmental Disabilities

The photovoice is a participatory qualitative research method that explores research themes using both narrative contents and visual images, such as photos. A qualitative research that includes narrative and visual content is particularly helpful when targeting participants who have difficulties in communicating with others. The visual images (photos) could complement the verbal expressions of thoughts and feelings, which are limited in individuals with developmental disabilities. Some studies have been conducted on communication problems of people with disabilities, on child caring experiences of parents with intellectual disabilities [4], and on life experiences of people with mental illness in general [5]. For this reason, this study employed the ‘photovoice’ as a research method to
quantitatively explore the orchestra participation experiences of youth with developmental disabilities.

The ‘photovoice’ conducted with four members of H Orchestra, which is the first orchestra performed by youth with developmental disabilities in S. Korea. Two young people with developmental disabilities and two young people with autism participated in this research. The research participants are in their late 10s and early 20s. There were three sessions in the ‘photovoice’ research. The first session of study was an induction session which the purpose of research and the process of ‘photovoice’ were explained. After this session, four research participant (PA) took several photos regarding their experiences in H Orchestra. They brought these photos into the second and third sessions and participated in group interviews by explaining the meaning of these photos and their experiences in orchestra activities. The qualitative data from the ‘photovoice’ were analysed using content analysis.

Results

The Orchestra Members’ Perception of Music

The ‘photovoice’ participants identified their uncertainty in their musical abilities and in their choices of career path as professional musicians. They described themselves as ‘a person who standing in borderline’. However, they expressed their love for ‘music’ and regarded their musical instruments as valuable one. They thought that they felt healed by the comfort and happiness from music. As a member of orchestra, they wish their musical skill would be improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I still lack performing skills. I cried much in my mind though I didn't show my emotion outwardly. (PA B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Music performer vs getting a job
This is a certificate of a bread baker training. My dream in the future is to have a job and become independent from my parents. (PA C) |
| Precious and precious
This trumpet is precious and precious…. I chose it cause I liked it. … and there’s nothing so worthy as this one. (PA A) |
| Like the beautiful nature and trees
The nature and trees are beautiful. I saw them recently. Like them, I wish to play music very well and delicately. How beautiful…. I feel happy when I play music. It’s my dream, the only thing I can do. (PA D) |
The Meaning of Orchestra Activities to Its Members

The orchestra has a certain meaning for its members. Actually, participating in orchestra requires consistent practice. However, youth with developmental disabilities who participate in the orchestra reported feeling integrated into a group. Youth with developmental disabilities experienced the happiness of inclusion and integration. Moreover, the orchestra encouraged them to experience the real world with positive and friendly support from orchestra members and music teachers, which the individuals with developmental disabilities seldom experience in their lives.

Unity and harmony
Harmony... Harmony.. it's so great to play various string and brass instruments to create melody and chord. (PA B)

A window to communicate with the world
Playing music is a way to communicate with friends. (PA A)

Practice after practice (more 'efforts' than 'innate talent')
"Having talent doesn't make your skill better unless you make efforts. I think both are important" (PA A)

Improvement of confidence
I become quite confident standing on the stage and performing in the orchestra. (PA B)

Now I can concentrate better than before
I try to play music as our conductor instructed. This is important, very important. The concentration, the concentration has increased. (PA A)

Listening to others
We have to listen to the sounds of other instruments and mustn’t perform a solo. I feel we are harmonised while playing music together. (PA D)

The Effectiveness of Orchestra on Youth with Developmental Disabilities

This study identified the effects of participating in the orchestra, as perceived by the youth members with developmental disabilities. The orchestra performances helped young people with
developmental disabilities increase their musical competence and confidence. Moreover, participating in the orchestra contributed to the improvement of their social skills through the cooperation and communication with other members.

Conclusion
This study explored the participatory experience of youth with developmental disabilities in an orchestra. The various experiences in the orchestra play important roles in strengthening musical capability and positive self-concept of youth with developmental disabilities. These experiences could form the basis for the social life of youths with developmental disabilities as adult members of society. Furthermore, the effectiveness of orchestra activities could be extended to families of its members and a society in terms of their thinking and attitudes toward people with developmental disabilities. Hence, we could expect the effect of orchestra performed by people with developmental disabilities to be significant and positive, i.e., it is expected to contribute to cultural welfare, which creates the positive image of the people with developmental disability and lays the foundation for social integration. Additional work needs to be done to explore the social effect of cultural welfare on people with developmental disabilities.

Acknowledgement
This research was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea funded by Korean Government(MOE) (22B20152513362). The contents including photos are part of a “The effectiveness of Heart-to-Heart Orchestra on youth with developmental disability” and edited for AEME 2016.

References