

# EVERYDAY LISTENING TO MUSIC AND EMOTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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## Abstract

This study attempted to reveal the relationship between everyday listening to music and emotion among college students. Participants were 13 female and 2 male college students who were given booklets to record the following over an 8-day period: dates and times of their everyday experiences of listening to music, duration of listening, locations and contexts of listening, active or passive listening, emotions before and after listening, and titles and artists to which they listened. Results indicated that the participants listened to music for 5 to 30 minutes while driving or riding in a car. Emotions reported both before and after listening to music were mainly 'happy', 'calm', and 'dull'. When participants listened to music actively, their emotions before and after listening to music were essentially the same as the above. With respect to the relation between emotions before listening to music and characteristics of the music they chose to listen to, when feeling 'sad', 'anxious', or 'lonely' before listening, they actively chose music having positive as well as negative affective characteristics. These results suggest that their music use in part reflects the iso-principle.

**Keywords:** everyday listening to music, iso-principle, active music listening

## 1. Introduction

Many studies had showed a close relationship between music and emotion so far. Sloboda and O'Neill (2001) concluded that music made listeners feel better in general in everyday listening to music by the experience sampling method (ESM). Adachi and Yoshimoto (2009) also suggested that strong relationship between everyday listening to music and emotion, and it was confirmed using a collective taking back method.

However, previous studies have not showed how emotion was changed when listening to music actively in an everyday life. Besides, iso-principle has been taken in music therapy and has been useful for patients. Its procedure is that patients firstly listen to music similar to patients' negative emotion, and gradually listen to music opposite to patients' initial negative emotion. But, it is not unclear whether iso-principle is taken in our everyday lives.

This study attempted to explore how emotion was changed by listening to music actively in everyday lives among college students. In addition, also whether iso-principle was used in everyday lives were examined.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

13 female and 2 male college students ranging in age from 18 to 31 years ( $M=22.93$ ,  $SD=4.91$ ) participated in this study.

### 2.2. Booklet

The booklet included following items. Participants were asked to fill those on each music experience. The booklet was A5-size.

1) Dates and times of their everyday experiences

Participants were asked to write a date and a time when they started to listen to music.

2) Duration of listening

They were asked to write duration of listening to music.

3) Locations of listening

They were asked to choose one from 'In a house', 'In a sidewalk', 'In a car (or in a train)', 'In a shopping mall', 'In a restaurant', and 'Others' as a location of listening to music.

4) Contexts of listening

They chose one from 'Just when waking up', 'Getting ready for being out', 'Walking or riding a bicycle or a car', 'Working part-time', 'Going shopping', 'Having a meal', 'Keeping house', 'Watching a TV', 'Studying or reading a book', 'Using a cellular phone or a personal computer', 'Taking a rest', 'Thinking of creating a diversion', 'Just when going to sleep', and 'Others' as a context of listening to music.

5) Active or passive listening

They chose one from 'I listened to it actively', 'I listened to it which other person chose', 'I listened to it of which selection was unrelated to my intention', and 'Others' as an active or passive music listening.

6) Emotions before listening

They chose one from 'Pleased', 'Happy', 'Sad', 'Anxious', 'Lonely', 'Angry', 'Dull', 'Tense', 'Calm', and 'Others' as emotion occurred before listening to music.

7) Titles and artists of music

They were asked to write titles and artists of music which they listened to up to 5 on each listening experience.

8) Emotions after listening

They chose one from 'Pleased', 'Happy', 'Sad', 'Anxious', 'Lonely', 'Angry', 'Dull', 'Tense', 'Calm', and 'Others' as emotion occurred after listening to music.

## 2.3. Procedure

Participants were handed a booklet, and asked to carry it with them at all times and record their music experiences over 8-days. After the period was finished, booklets were collected directly.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The number of total recorded music experiences was 202. Participants recorded from 2 to 34 music experiences during 8-days ( $M=13.47$ ,  $SD=8.24$ ). The number of music experiences recorded per a day was from 0 to 6 ( $M=2.15$ ,  $SD=1.44$ ).

### 3.1. Dates and times of their everyday experiences

Participants started to listen to music at from 12 to 14 o'clock (24.75%) and from 6 to 8 o'clock (17.82%) frequently.

### 3.2. Duration of listening

They listened to music from 6 to 30 minutes (55.46%) and from 31 to 60 minutes (21.78%) frequently.

### 3.3. Locations of listening

They listened to music 'In a house' (52.48%) and 'In a car (or in a train)' (32.66%) frequently.

### 3.4. Contexts of listening

They listened to music when 'Walking or riding a bicycle or a car' (38.12%), 'Taking a rest' (10.39%), 'Keeping house' (7.43%), and 'Getting ready for being out' (6.93%) frequently.

### 3.5. Active or passive listening

The percentage of listening to music 'Actively' was 62.81%. 'Listening to music which other person chose' was 16.08% and 'Listening to music of which selection was unrelated to my intention' was 20.10%.

### 3.6. Emotions before listening

They felt 'Calm' (26.23%), 'Pleased' (16.83%), and 'Dull' (16.33%) frequently before listening to music.

### 3.7. Tiles and artists to which they listened

Many of music that participants recorded were J-pop.

### 3.8. Emotions after listening

They felt 'Calm' (36.63%) and 'Pleased' (36.13%) frequently after listening to music. The percentage of 'Pleased' was more than twice that before listening to music. Other emotions except 'Calm' and 'Pleased' were few after listening to music.

### 3.9. Relation between active music listening and emotions

Participants felt 'Calm', 'Pleased', or 'Dull' frequently before listening to music whether they listened to it actively or not. However, when listening to music actively, they felt not only 'Calm', 'Pleased', and 'Dull' but also 'Sad', 'Anxious', and 'Lonely' (Figure 1).

### 3.10. Relation between active music listening and emotions

After collecting the booklets, participants were asked to choose one from 'Pleased', 'Happy', 'Sad', 'Anxious', 'Lonely', 'Angry', 'Dull', 'Tense', 'Calm', and 'Others' as an image of each music. The following was only when participants felt negative emotions before listening to music (Table 1).

When participants felt 'Sad' before listening to music, they chose not only 'Pleased' music but also 'Sad' or 'Lonely' music. When participants felt 'Anxious' before listening to music, they chose not only 'Pleased', 'Happy', or 'Calm' music but also 'Lonely', 'Anxious', and

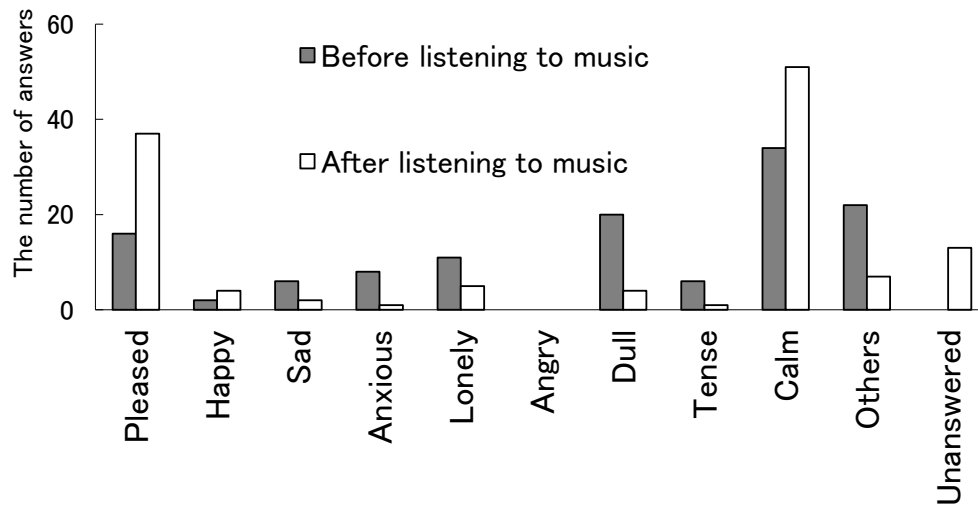
'Tense' music. Besides, when participants felt 'Lonely' before listening to music, they chose not only 'Pleased', 'Happy', or 'Calm' music but also 'Lonely' music. On the whole, when participants felt negative emotions, they chose both types of music that had a positive image and that had a negative image.

As a result, many college students listened to music moderately in everyday lives including riding in a car. They listened to music when feeling pleased, calm, and dull, and their positive emotions were kept or negative emotions were regulated to positive emotions by listening to music. Therefore iso-principle was supported partly in everyday music listening.

## References

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**Figure 1.** The Number of answers for emotions before and after listening to music when participants listened to actively

**Table 1.** Emotions before listening to music and images of music

Emotion before listening to music	Number of selection	Image of music	Number of selection
Sad	6	Pleased	2
		Sad	2
		Lonely	2
Anxious	8	Pleased	1
		Happy	1
		Calm	2
		Lonely	2
		Anxious	1
		Tense	1
Lonely	11	Pleased	3
		Happy	1
		Calm	4
		Lonely	1
		Unidentified	2