CultureCase

The effect of choral singing on wellbeing

This research was conducted by **Nick Alan Joseph Stewart** and **Adam Jonathan Lonsdale** at **Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust** and **Oxford Brookes University, UK**

Summary

This paper looks at whether singing in a choir leads to greater psychological wellbeing compared to team sports and solo singing. The authors recruited 375 participants and asked them to complete a range of questionnaires measuring wellbeing, the extent to which participants felt connected to the group, and the motivations for doing an activity. They found that choral singers and team sport players reported higher levels of wellbeing compared to solo singers, suggesting that membership of a group might be a more important influence on wellbeing than singing itself.

Singing in a group can provide 'connectedness'

People who sang in a choir reported they felt more connected to their group than those who played in a team sport. The authors suggest this indicates that they may experience the group as more meaningful than team sport players might. The results showed that connectedness to a group also positively affected wellbeing, supporting the argument that choir singing may provide more group cohesion by singing together at the same time, for example.

A wide range of psychological factors affect wellbeing

The psychological need to be competent at an activity, having a level of independence (autonomy) and need for social connection (relatedness) were found to influence levels of wellbeing in all three groups. Autonomy was lowest

for choir singers which suggests that choral singing may require individuals to cooperate as part of a broader group effort. However, competence and relatedness did not differ across the study groups. This indicates that although solo singing was not a group activity, singing itself satisfied the need to connect with others and master a task or activity. The authors suggest that these findings have practical implications for the use of choral singing as a way to improve psychological wellbeing.

This summary is by **Tanya Graham, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

UK **singing** **experiment** **music** **choral**

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