

Effects of Singing vs. Non-Singing Activities on Older Americans



Nancy Gleason, Lily Chen-Hafteck/Faculty Advisor

Conservatory of Music, Kean University, Union NJ USA, gleasnan@kean.edu



Background

Past Research Findings

Benefits of Group Singing Activities

- Enjoyment
- Mental well-being
- Physical improvement (e.g., breathing)
- Better concentration & memory
- Higher self-perceived health & better quality of life
- Easier to cope with challenges
- Alleviates depression & lifts spirits

Benefits of Non-Singing Group Activities

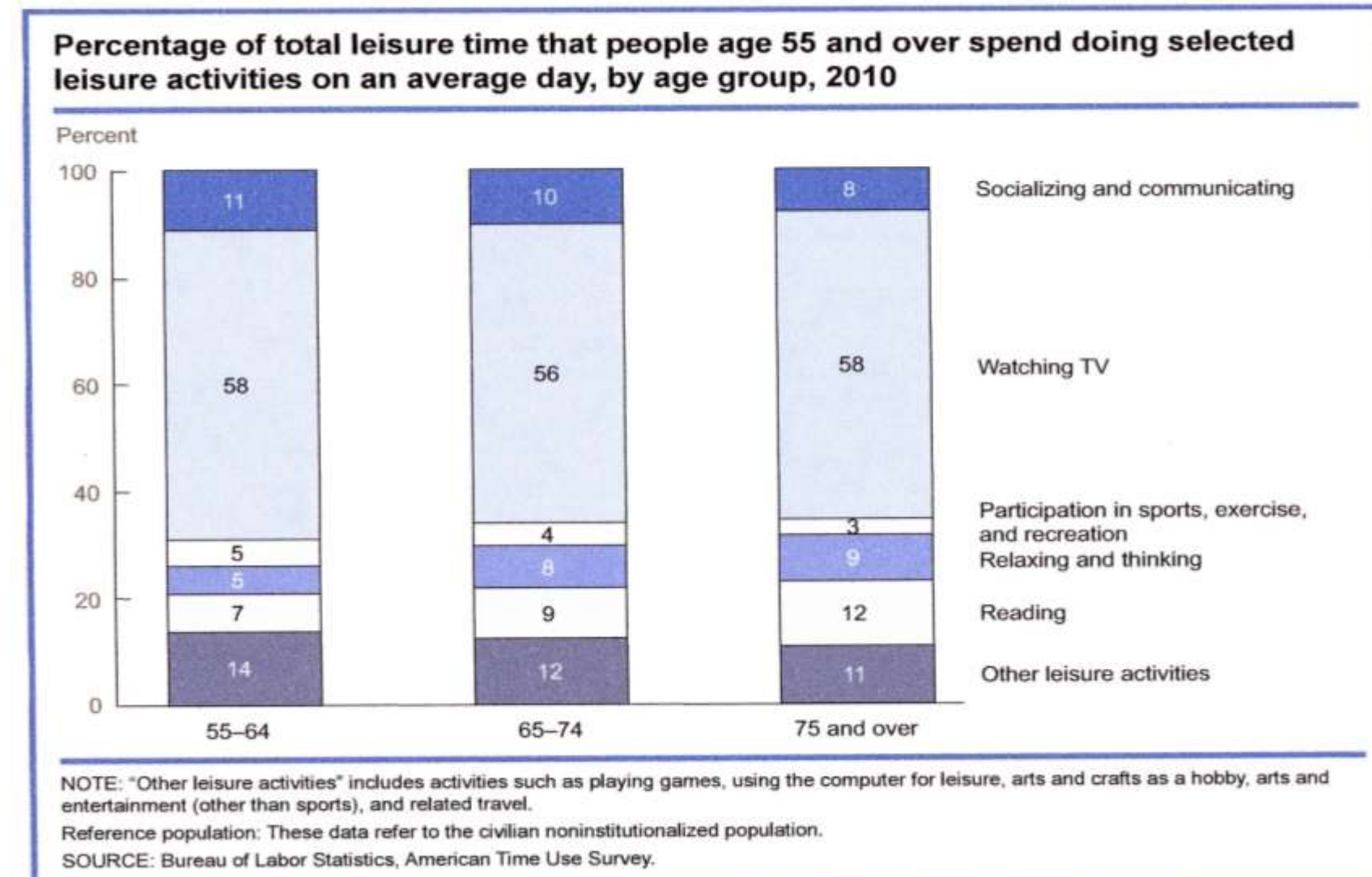
- Protects against cognitive decline & dementia
- Better physical condition
- Improved mental health
- Less medication usage
- Fewer doctor visits
- Increased involvement in other activities
- Provides social opportunities to meet new people



Are there any differences in health & wellness benefits to seniors from participating in singing vs. non-singing group activities?

The U. S. Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics (US FIFARS, 2012) study reveals that U.S. citizens ages 65-74 spend very little of their free time on these activities.

Leisure activities are those done when free from duties such as working, household chores or caring for others. During these times, individuals have flexibility in choosing what to do.



With all these proven & documented benefits, why is Senior Citizen participation in these activities so low?

Objective

To investigate how participation in singing and non-singing group activities affects the health and well-being of older adults (ages 65+).

Methods

Case Study

Interviews

- Customized Interview Protocol
- World Health Organization Quality of Life Brief Questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF)
 - {Audio/Video Recordings}
 - {Written Notes & Reflections}



Singing Group

8-10 Individual Participants
• "Seniors Sing" Chorus

Non-Singing Group

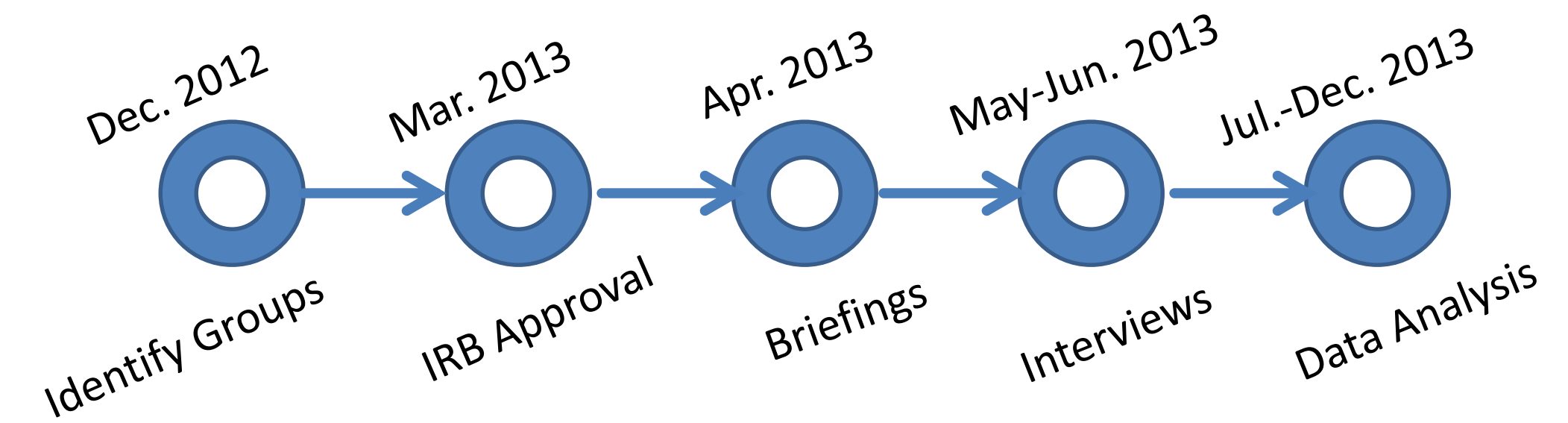
8-10 Individual Participants
• Tai-Chi Class
• Card Game Group
• Exercise Class



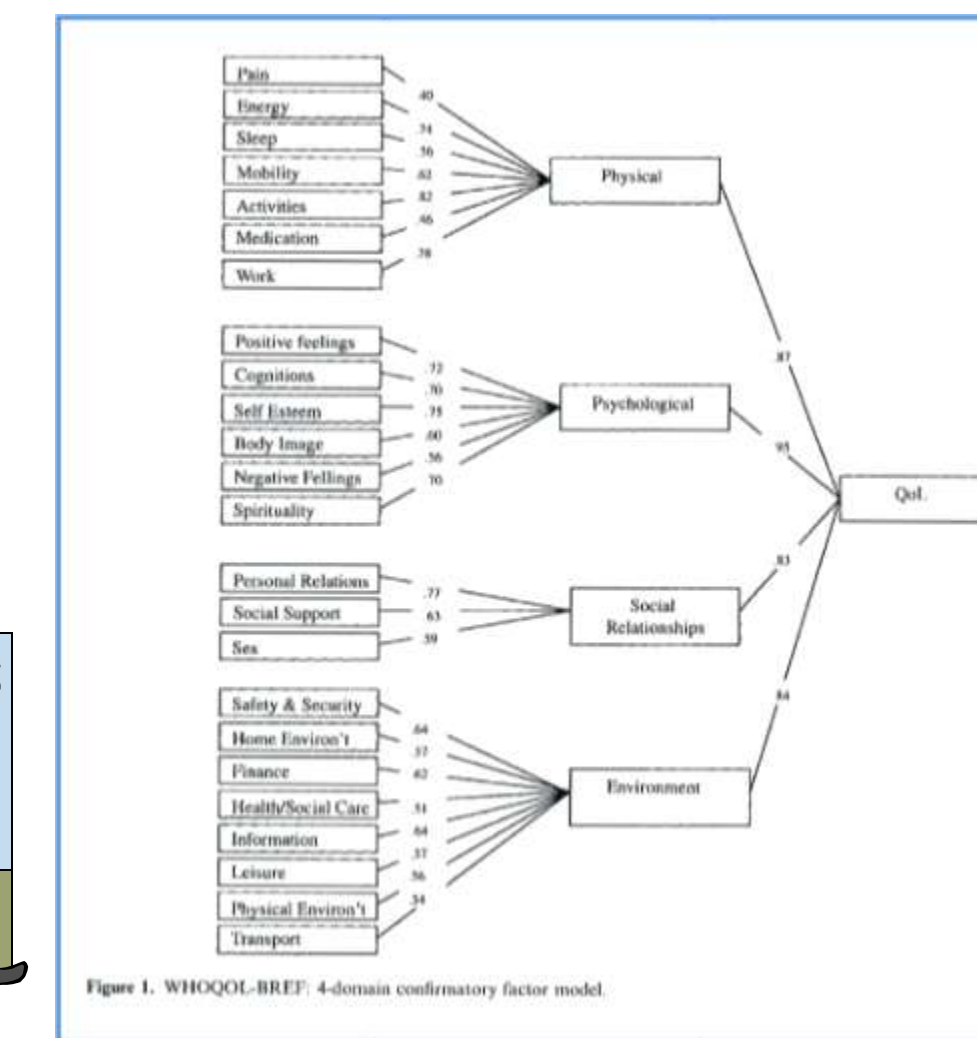
Group Observations

{Audio/Video Recordings}
{Written Notes & Reflections}

Materials & Timeline



WHOQOL-BREF



KEAN UNIVERSITY World-Class Education
Effects of Singing versus Non-Singing Group Activities on the Well-Being of Older Americans
Interview Protocol

PART B - ACTIVITY-RELATED QUESTIONS

- 1) What made you think of joining the (Seniors Sing chorus) (Other Activity)? (Follow up questions may include: Was there any other reason that you joined? Was it difficult or easy to sign up and get started?)
- 2) What do you like most about the (Seniors Sing chorus) (Other Activity)? (Follow up questions may include: Do you think being part of the activity has made you happier or healthier in any way? Please tell me about it.)
- 3) What do you think is the most important reason for (Singing with the Seniors Sing Chorus) (doing the Other Activity) every week? (Follow up questions may include: Are there any other important reasons that you participate in this activity?)
- 4) How do you feel after the (Rehearsal) (Other Activity) each week? (Do you feel any different than you did before the class?)



What can we learn from the people who DO participate to improve available services, & help get more older Americans involved, active, & healthier?

References

Bonomi, A. E., Patrick, D. L., Bushnell, D. M., Martin, M. (2000). Validation of the United States' version of the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL) instrument. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 53(1), 13-17. Downloaded from: http://depts.washington.edu/seaqol/docs/WHOQOL_Info.pdf.

Bungay, H., & Skingley, A. (2010) The Silver Song Club Project: Singing to promote the health of older people. *British Journal of Community Nursing* Mar: 15, (3):135-40

Cohen, G. D., Perlstein, S., Chapline, J., Kelly, J., Firth, K. M. and Simmens, S. (2006) The impact of professionally conducted cultural programs on the physical health, mental health, and social functioning of older adults. *The Gerontologist* 46, 726-734.

United States Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics (USFIFARS). (2012) Older Americans 2012: Key Indicators of Well-Being. *Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office. June 2012.

The WHOQOL Group (1998). Development of the World Health Organization WHOQOL-BREF QoL Assessment. *Psychological Medicine*, 28, 551-559.