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Creation of Pentatonic Etude 1 as Teaching Material Development for Solfeggio Course

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ABSTRACT

Solfeggio is one of the basic subjects that must be mastered by students enrolled in music education programs. Through solfeggio courses, students are equipped with basic competencies in the form of the ability to hear, feel, play, read, and write both melodic and rhythmic notation. Over the past three years, students' abilities have declined. The most drastic decline occurred among the class of 2022, resulting in many students failing the solfeggio course. Some students struggled to keep up with the material presented. This problem prompted researchers to develop teaching materials by creating pentatonic etude 1 because the materials taught so far have been limited to the use of diatonic scales. The creation of works used as teaching materials is very important to help overcome students' difficulties in learning solfeggio. The research was conducted in several stages, including situation analysis, data collection, artistic work, work testing, and application of the work into lecture teaching materials. The research method used was practice-led research. The results of the study show that pentatonic etude 1 is a development of teaching materials for solfeggio courses that can help students master the pentatonic scale.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Music can influence humans, both physiologically and psychologically (Phumend, 2025). Everyone, especially music education students, has their own musical tastes, which may differ from one person to another. Differences in musical tastes can certainly influence how students think, feel, and behave. This is because music can influence a person's thoughts, behavior, and feelings (Shaleha, 2019). Musical taste is influenced by background, habitus, and repeated habits (Bourdieu, 2018). Therefore, it can be said that a person's musical preferences are a reflection of their life experiences and cultural environment.

Music education students come from different backgrounds. Some students come from families involved in music, while others come from families who know nothing about music. Some students come from vocational music schools, while others come from high schools. Some have taken music courses, while others are self-taught. Differences in family background, environment, and education certainly affect the knowledge of music theory among students in the music education study program. Proficiency in music theory is the basis for students to be able to take other courses in the field of music, one of which is solfeggio. Thus, a solid understanding of theory becomes an important foundation for mastering practical musical skills.

Solfeggio is an exercise to improve the ability to hear musical sounds (Lukina, 2018). There are two aspects that must be possessed in solfeggio skills, namely the ability to read notation (sight reading) and the ability to sing notation (sight singing). Sight reading is usually done by reading notation directly without any special training or preparation (Gilbert, 2018). While sight singing is the ability to sing notation directly without any prior preparation or training (Zhukov, 2017). These two competencies are combined in one of the compulsory courses in the music education study program, namely the solfeggio course. The solfeggio course is part of the music arts curriculum in higher education institutions not only in Indonesia but also abroad. This reinforces the argument that solfeggio is an important competency that music students in music education programs must possess. In other words, solfeggio plays a crucial role in shaping students' overall musicianship and sensitivity to pitch and rhythm.

Solfeggio is a basic skill that students must have in order to build a foundation of musicality. Therefore, the solfeggio course in the music education study program, FBS, UNJ, is a prerequisite course that is taken for two semesters. This course is compulsory for all students in the first semester under the name solfeggio one, then continued in the second semester under the name solfeggio two. The researcher, who is also a lecturer in the solfeggio course in the music education study program, observed that students' solfeggio skills and learning outcomes have been declining, especially in the last three years. This decline indicates the need for a deeper evaluation of the teaching process and learning materials used in the course.

Each student has different musical abilities that are shaped by various factors (Hamzah, 2010). The curriculum in the music education study program at UNJ consists of approximately 70 percent Western music and the rest traditional music. Therefore, students must learn solfeggio with the main requirements of being fluent in reading musical notation and being able to hear and feel a note. However, from the initial findings of the researcher as a lecturer in music theory, problems were found in solfeggio learning. Not a few elementary level students had difficulty following the material provided. Some students tended to be slow and took a long time to understand the material. Students had difficulty

singing a note in the notation reading material. Not all students were able to do the assignments well. Based on the existing problems, the researcher attempted to develop the material in order to improve the quality of solfeggio learning and help students achieve the expected competencies more effectively.

2. METHOD

The methods used in this paper are qualitative research methods with a case study approach and practice-led research methods. A case study is a research approach that focuses on the specifics of a case in an event, whether it involves individuals, cultural groups, or a portrait of life (Swanson & Holton, 2005). Practice-led research is used in the process of creating a work (Draper & Harrison, 2011). Researchers place their creative practices in research and conduct various experiments on the work they will create (Wilson, 2011). The research instruments used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The data obtained in this study was then analyzed using categorization with coding and using an analytical approach in the practice-led research method. There are three stages in practice-based research analysis, namely the creation of ideas or concepts for works of art, the selection of ideas (subjective/systematic), and the selection of ideas for the development of works of art. The three data analyses will produce outputs in the form of documentation and the production of works of art (Steagall & Grieve, 2023).

In addition, the combination of the case study and practice-led research methods allows researchers to explore not only the process but also the meaning behind artistic practice. This integrative approach provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between theory and practice, as the researcher becomes both the creator and the observer of the creative process. Through this dual role, the study can reveal how practical experimentation contributes to theoretical insights and vice versa, thereby strengthening the validity and richness of the research findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The solfeggio course is an important component in music education that helps students understand the basic elements of music, such as melody, rhythm, and harmony. However, some students may experience challenges in understanding the concepts of tone patterns, harmony, and melodic ability. Therefore, this study was conducted to create Pentatonic Etude 1 as additional teaching material that can help students deepen their understanding of solfeggio material.

The method used includes several main steps to create Pentatonic Etude 1 as teaching material development in solfeggio courses. The initial stage of this research was to conduct an in-depth literature study on the basic concepts of solfeggio, etude theory, and pentatonic scales. Through this literature, the researcher gained a strong understanding of the main material of solfeggio, how this material is usually taught, and how etudes can be applied in a music teaching approach.

In addition, the literature study also involved research on supporting literature related to creative and innovative music teaching. This helped the researcher identify gaps in existing teaching approaches and see how pentatonic etudes could be an effective alternative in developing teaching materials. Based on the understanding gained from the literature study, the researcher entered the stage of creating Pentatonic Etude 1. This process involved applying the music theory that had been studied in the composition of the etude.

The pentatonic scale, as a central element in this etude, was used as the basis for creating the melody. The selection of interesting pentatonic patterns and varied melodies became an important part of the creation of this etude.

This etude not only focuses on developing students' melodic abilities but also considers the introduction of simple rhythmic concepts. Therefore, the selection of simple rhythms and melodies that are in accordance with the pentatonic scale is an important consideration in the creation of the etude. After Pentatonic Etude 1 was created, the next step was to conduct validation. This process involved the lecturer teaching the solfeggio course and a number of students. The etude was sent to them to be assessed from various aspects, including the completeness of the material, the clarity of the instructions, the appropriateness of the level of difficulty, and the extent to which the etude supports the objectives of solfeggio teaching.

The feedback received from the validators, especially from the perspective of lecturers and students, will be the basis for improving and refining the etude. Further development based on this feedback can improve the quality and effectiveness of the etude as teaching material. After going through the validation and refinement stages, Pentatonic Etude 1 is implemented in the context of solfeggio course teaching. This material is presented to students as part of the curriculum. The implementation process includes providing material and conducting related melody and harmony exercises with etudes, as well as measuring students' reactions and performance in relation to the material taught.

Through this implementation phase, researchers can directly observe how students respond to the etude as supplementary material in solfeggio learning. Continuous evaluation of student learning progress and the impact of this new teaching material can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the etude in achieving the established learning objectives. The overall research method includes systematic and structured steps to create, validate, and implement Pentatonic Etude 1 as a teaching material development in solfeggio courses.

Solfeggio learning is a method commonly used in music education to train musical hearing and vocal skills. Pentatonic etudes, which are based on the pentatonic scale, can be an effective tool in enriching and deepening solfeggio learning. This study created an etude for new teaching materials so that the researcher also analyzed the usefulness of creating pentatonic etudes in the context of solfeggio learning and its impact on the development of students' vocal abilities.

Pentatonic etudes can help improve students' musical hearing abilities. Because the pentatonic scale has distinctive characteristics, practicing with these etudes can train the ability to recognize intervals and melodies better. Specially designed pentatonic etudes can help train vocal quality, breath control, and intonation. Practicing with these etudes can help students overcome vocal challenges that may arise in solfeggio songs. Pentatonic etudes can provide variety in solfeggio learning, making it more interesting and enjoyable. This can increase students' motivation to study and practice more diligently. Pentatonic etudes can also stimulate students' creativity. They can be given the opportunity to create variations or improvisations based on the etudes, which can help them understand musical concepts more deeply.

The creation of pentatonic études has very interesting and significant potential in enriching the solfeggio learning process and developing students' vocal skills, especially for those studying in the Music Education Study Program at Jakarta State University. Pentatonic études, which are based on a five-note scale, are an interesting approach to helping students hone their musical and vocal abilities. In the context of the Music Education Study

The Pentatonic Etude 1 was composed in 4/4 time and consists of four sections. Each section has eight bars and different note values. These differences are intended to represent different levels of learning. The first section is in bars 1–8. The notation in the first section is dominated by whole notes with a value of four beats per note. This first section emphasizes good and correct breathing technique. Breathing technique in solfeggio is a major and important aspect, so the researcher created this section in the first part.

The second section is in measures 9 to 16. This section is composed using half notes, where each note has two beats. Then the third part is in bars 17 to 24. The notes in the third part are quarter notes, which have one beat per note. Next, the fourth part is in bars 25 to 32. In the fourth part, the researcher uses eighth notes and sixteenth notes simultaneously to train the ability to play shorter beats in the pentatonic scale.

In the work created, the researcher used motif development techniques in the form of repetition and diminution of value. In this first work, the researcher deliberately did not include rests in the measures at the beginning or in the middle. The researcher wanted to first build the students' ability to understand melodies in the pentatonic scale. Pentatonic Etude 1, created by the researcher, is a musical work that falls into the category of absolute music. Absolute music, also known as pure music, is a type of music that bases its existence on the exploration of musical elements such as harmony, melody, rhythm, and structure without any specific narrative story. The main focus in absolute music is on the intrinsic characteristics of the music itself, not on the depiction of a particular story or theme.

Pentatonic Etude 1 places its main emphasis on the use of the pentatonic scale as the basis for composition. The pentatonic scale, which consists of five notes, creates a simple yet powerful melodic foundation. This composition may explore interval play, repetitive patterns, and melodic variations within the pentatonic scale. In musical analysis, attention will be focused on how the composer arranges and manipulates these elements to create a distinctive structure. Harmonic and interval characteristics may also be important aspects in the creation of Pentatonic Etude 1. Although absolute music has no clear external narrative, its harmony and movement can still provide expressive richness. The possible use of notes derived from the pentatonic scale may evoke certain emotions.

In addition, Pentatonic Etude 1 also allows for the exploration of rhythm and dynamics as part of the exploration of musical elements. Although there is no story or narrative to follow, variations in rhythm and dynamics can provide different nuances in the interpretation and listening of music. Pentatonic Etude 1 is a musical work created with a focus on how the composer organizes the pentatonic scale to create the work. The work created is a piece that will later be developed into subsequent works. Therefore, the researcher provides a series as a sign of the numbering of the level at which the etude was created. The work in this study is the first series in the creation of etudes with a pentatonic scale. Further research will be conducted on the second series and so on as a development of teaching materials to be used in solfeggio courses.

4. CONCLUSION

This study presents the creation of *Pentatonic Etude 1* as an initiative to develop innovative teaching materials for the Solfeggio course. The etude was designed to enhance students' theoretical understanding and practical skills in solfeggio through exercises based on the pentatonic scale. Throughout the research process, *Pentatonic Etude 1* was tested

with students to assess its pedagogical effectiveness and relevance to the learning objectives of the course. The findings indicate that the etude serves as a valuable addition to solfeggio instruction by integrating elements of music theory, vocal practice, and experiential learning. Through consistent use, students can improve their aural perception, pitch accuracy, and rhythmic awareness while deepening their conceptual grasp of musical structure.

Moreover, the development of *Pentatonic Etude 1* underscores the importance of incorporating creative composition as part of pedagogical innovation in music education. This approach not only addresses students' learning challenges but also bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and artistic practice. The outcomes of this study are expected to encourage further exploration in designing etudes or other creative materials that utilize diverse tonal systems and rhythmic complexities. Future research may expand upon this work by examining the long-term impact of such creative teaching materials on students' musical proficiency, motivation, and overall academic achievement in higher music education.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism. In addition, all authors have contributed significantly to the preparation of this article, including in the design, data collection, analysis, and writing processes. The authors have also ensured that all sources and references used in this study are properly cited in accordance with academic standards. This statement reflects the authors' commitment to maintaining research integrity and upholding ethical principles in scientific publication.

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