

CHAPTER I

Preface

1.1 Background

Music creates valuable opportunities for students to explore and communicate emotions, strengthening their emotional awareness and regulation abilities (Juslin, 2013). Studies show that music helps children grow emotionally and do better in school. Researchers at Cambridge University looked at 21 different studies and found clear evidence that music education improves kids' emotional development and school performance (Angeles, 2017). While emotional expression through music is crucial for students (Juslin, 2013), studies indicate that children aged eight to eleven struggle to convey complex emotions like sadness, anger, or fear, often expressing only happiness more easily (Guarnera, 2015). Additionally, teachers face challenges in nurturing these emotional skills (Brener, 2013), partly due to insufficient training in emotional development strategies (Steven, 2021).

As a result, music educators must explore effective methods to help students articulate a wider range of emotions in their musical practice. Musical expression is conveyed through elements such as dynamics, tempo, and articulation (Sarrazin, 2016). Learning these elements is essential for students to recognize and express themselves musically (Kwidura, 2023).

However, teaching musical expression remains a challenge, as many educators struggle to integrate it effectively into lessons (Roussy, 2020). While teachers can introduce concepts like *forte* or contrasting dynamics, explaining

their expressive significance in music proves difficult (Kumar, 2022). This gap highlights the need for innovative approaches to make musical expression more accessible to students.

One potential solution is color notations, which use color to distinguish musical concepts, enhancing comprehension and engagement (Rogers, 2016). Research shows that colors influence emotional states and facial expressions (Minami, 2018), and children, in particular, process visual information more effectively through color than black-and-white formats (Lindborg, 2015). Applying color notations in music education could therefore help students grasp expressive elements more intuitively.

This study examines eleven-year-old Grade VI students at School X, who are developmentally positioned to benefit from color-coded notation. According to Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, children at this concrete operational stage (Reynold, 2023) demonstrate strong classification skills - particularly for visual attributes like color and shape - making them ideal candidates for this multisensory approach. While existing research has focused on using color notation with younger children for basic music reading, this study pioneers its application for developing expressive musicianship in upper-primary students, filling a critical gap in music pedagogy.

The urgency of this intervention became clear through classroom observations and teacher interviews. Many students displayed technical competence but struggled profoundly with musical expression, often performing with mechanical accuracy but little emotional engagement. As the music teacher explained, "They can hit every note correctly, but their performances lack

dynamic variation or phrasing - it's like they're afraid to interpret the music." This expressive barrier, common in traditional music education, motivated the study's action-research design to test whether color notation could provide the structured yet creative scaffold these developing musicians need. By transforming abstract concepts like dynamics and phrasing into visual, classifiable elements, the method aligns with students' cognitive strengths while addressing their artistic challenges.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background above, the research questions in this study are:

1. Is there any effect of color notations on the musical expression in the Grade VI students in School X?
2. How is the improvement of Grade VI students' musical expression after using color notations at School X?

1.3 Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Analyze whether there is an effect of color notation on the musical expression of grade VI students at School X.
2. Analyze the improvement results of grade VI students' musical expression at School X after using color notations.

1.4 Scope of Research

1. This research will take research samples from Grade VI students at X School

2. This research aims to observe students only using color notation to develop musical expressions.

1.5 Benefits of Research

1) Theoretical Benefit

a. Further Research

This research can be useful for other researchers who are interested in studying more about color notations to develop musical expressions.

2) Practical Benefit

a. Teachers

The findings of this research can provide useful suggestions for teachers to fix issues that occurred in developing students' musical expression.

b. Students

These research findings can provide a new alternative for students to develop their musical expression in the classroom.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter I – Preface

This chapter discusses the identifying problems that often occur in the music classroom and the purpose of why this topic is raised, the advantages of this research, theoretical definitions, and chapter outlines.

Chapter II – Theoretical Framework

This section focuses on the theoretical framework that supports the study of color notations. Moreover, this chapter presents a literature review about musical expression, under predetermined age-related methods.

Chapter III – Research Methodology

This section focuses on how action research procedure, which will be carried out according to the assessment rubric. In it, this chapter will also describe pre-test and post-test data collection techniques which will then be processed. Moreover, participants in this study will be taken according to the grade and age that have been determined.

Chapter IV – Data Analysis

This chapter tests hypotheses, examines expected problems, and explores conjectures. This chapter will also report information on the results found using quantitative descriptive and qualitative analysis. Which will be processed based on existing data before the research on the subject and the results after the research.

Chapter V – Conclusion

This chapter contains a summary of the problems raised and the results obtained from the research. Contains recommendations, suggestions, or actions based on the results. In this section, conclusions and limitations of research regarding color implementation will be present.