The Symbolic Interaction between the Worship Leader and the Music Ministers in Christian Accompaniment Music at Isa Almasih Church, Deliksari Gunungpati, Semarang

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Abstract

Music is an important component of Christian worship in churches, which serves as the accompanying music. This is particularly true in charismatic churches, which primarily use contemporary music that evolves with current trends. In charismatic Christian worship, music plays a role in accompanying and creating the atmosphere for praise and worship songs. This research addresses the issue of symbolic interaction between worship leader and the accompanying music in Christian worship at Isa Almasih Church, Deliksari Gunungpati Semarang. This research employed descriptive qualitative method and used data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Triangulation was used to ensure the data validity. For analysis, this research used data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions, and verification. The findings show that the symbolic interactions between the worship leader and music ministers during worship involves music elements such as pitch, dynamics, rhythm, tempo, melody, and tone color or timbre. This symbolic interaction is formed through agreements made during practice sessions between the worship leader and the music ministers.

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INTRODUCTION

Church worship services are inherently accompanied by music, which plays a crucial role in leading praise and worship during the service. The hymns sung are an expression of gratitude to God. According to Hardy (2015), in church services, hymns are not only vocal but are also accompanied by musical instruments, which help create the worship atmosphere. Without musical accompaniment, the service lacks vitality and solemnity. Accompanying music is an integral part of the church liturgy. Hardy (2015) also notes that each church has different accompanying music, which means the music used in worship services varies from church to church. Similarly, charismatic churches, with their unwritten liturgies, use contemporary instruments that follow current trends. Most, if not all, charismatic churches use a band as their accompanying music. These bands typically include keyboards, guitars, bass, and drums, and some churches even add instruments such as saxophones, violins, flutes, and others.

The development of music, especially church music, has been rapid, with church accompaniment music becoming more complete and sophisticated. However, this growth in music and the addition of instruments in churches can affect the atmosphere of worship, particularly in charismatic church liturgy. According to Nugroho et al., (2021), charismatic churches use an oral or unwritten liturgy, where the worship is led by a worship leader who guides the congregation in praise and worship. In charismatic church services, praise and worship flow seamlessly, meaning there are parts of the liturgy where songs are connected or medleyed. This is closely related to the accompaniment music, as church hymns encompass a variety of music genres.

With the various music genres and instruments used in church worship, it is important to pay attention to the transition between songs. Since most praise and worship songs are connected or medleyed, special interaction or communication between the worship leader and the musicians is necessary. This interaction is not only for transitioning between songs but also for repeating sections of songs that are played or sung. To facilitate communication during song transitions or repetitions, the worship leader gives symbols or codes to the musicians, according to Wijayanto et al., (2015).

Similarly, in worship at Isa Almasih Church in Deliksari Gunungpati, Semarang, which is one of the charismatic churches, there are variations among worship leaders and musicians. Worship service roles such as worship leader, singer, and music ministers at Isa Almasih Church in Deliksari Gunungpati, Semarang, are scheduled by the music coordinator. Worship leaders come from the congregation of Isa Almasih Deliksari Church, from Isa Almasih Manyaran Church, and sometimes from Christian Spiritual Unit (UKK) students at UNNES. With a variety of worship leaders serving at Isa Almasih Deliksari Church, it can be concluded that the codes or symbols used in interaction and communication between worship leaders and musicians also vary.

METHOD

R. Semiawan (n.d.), in his book "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif", states that a method is a technique used in research. Achieving research results requires methods, processes, or techniques to collect data obtained from the field. Commonly used techniques or methods in research include observation, interviews, documentation, or surveys. Meanwhile, research methods involve stages aimed at identifying, understanding, and delving into a phenomenon, fact, or problem under study. In research methods, researchers not only discuss and present the phenomenon in general but also conduct thorough exploration from selecting the phenomenon or topic for study, gathering and analyzing data, ultimately leading to a conclusion that provides an understanding of the researched phenomenon.

Similarly, in this research article, the researchers also employed research methods to aid in data collection and

analysis. The research method used in this study was qualitative descriptive research, which involved techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. Qualitative descriptive research is a method that employs data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation to address a research problem (Wahidmurni, 2017).

Wahidmurni (2017) also discusses data collection techniques. The first technique, observation, involved collecting data by directly observing activities at the research site. In addition to observation, this data collection technique required researchers to gather information related to the research issue or topic. In this research problem, the researchers observed all activities at Isa Almasih Church in Deliksari Gunungpati, Semarang. The second data collection technique was interviews, which involved engaging with key informants such as Pastor Mr. and Mrs. Gembala and other church officials to gather data. The interview technique collected data through question-and-answer sessions with the informants. The final data collection technique was documentation, where researchers gathered data such as photos of church activities, interview transcripts, and other relevant documents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Isa Almasih Church in Deliksari Gunungpati, Semarang, is one of the charismatic churches in Semarang. It originated as a satellite church of Isa Almasih Church in Manyaran, which serves as its headquarters. Established since 1985, it began with prayer fellowships in homes and eventually acquired a church building, which steadily grows to its current size. The congregation at Isa Almasih Church in Deliksari has grown from 7 to 10 families to now encompassing 50-60 members. The congregation includes not only residents of Deliksari but also members from outside the area and students studying in Gunungpati.

Isa Almasih Deliksari Church is a charismatic church where the worship order or liturgy used is unwritten, which means the worship proceeds according to the directions or signals from the Worship Leader (WL) or praise leader (Nugroho et al., 2021). The flow of worship at Isa Almasih Deliksari Church is spontaneous, and praise and worship also flow according to the directions or signals from the praise leader. With such an unwritten and flowing liturgy, it affects the accompanying music and interactions during the worship service.

Music is a crucial component of church worship. Nearly all churches, including local ones, use music as accompaniment for singing praises. Aside from being an accompaniment in worship, Sirait (2021) argues that music also serves to express and communicate the congregation's devotion to God. With its varying dynamics, tempo, and rhythm, music helps the congregation to deeply engage in singing praises to worship God, whether in joyful praise, adoration, or worship.

The accompanying music in charismatic worship plays a crucial role in supporting praise and worship during services (Wijoyo, 2014). Music utilized in charismatic church services predominantly involves contemporary styles, which often employs a band with instruments like keyboards, guitars, bass, and drums. Similarly, at Isa Almasih Deliksari Church, they also use a band comprising keyboards, guitars, bass, drums, and occasionally additional instruments such as saxophone or violin.

With a band and a flowing, unwritten liturgy, there are certainly several things to consider to ensure the worship service runs smoothly. In the liturgy of charismatic church services, there are several songs that are medleyed or seamlessly connected. These medleyed songs also vary in tempo, dynamics, and rhythm, necessitating coordination between the worship leader and the musicians.

Leaders and musicians, or music ministers, also play a crucial role in the

church worship service. According to Dakhi (2021), in the liturgical order of church worship, there needs to be human resources involved in both vocal and musical service. This means that when musical resources and facilities are available in a church, particularly young members of the congregation should utilize these facilities effectively for musical service during worship. Apart from serving in worship activities, the goal is to regenerate altar servants, both worship leaders and musicians. Without regeneration of music ministers and worship leaders, if they leave the church to work or pursue further education outside the city, and there is no succeeding generation continuing the service of music and worship leadership, worship activities will become less solemn.

Musical Elements

Accompanying music in worship is a fundamental element with a crucial role and a sacred nature, as it is used to support hymns and worship songs offered to God. Therefore, worship leaders, singers, and music ministers must pay close attention to musical elements to avoid significant mistakes. According to Paula & Sumaryanto (2018), songs and hymns sung during church services are expressions of worship to God, which highlight the importance of understanding hymnology, the study of church music, for worship leaders and music ministers. One essential area of music that needs to be understood and studied is musical elements. Hidayatullah & Hasyimkan (2016) identify several musical elements that influence accompanying music: 1) Pitch: During worship, if the pitch of either the vocals or the musical chords is off, it will sound discordant and can disrupt the congregation's concentration and focus. 2) Rhythm: This refers to the beats that help stabilize tempo and cadence. The rhythm of the accompanying music can significantly affect the flow of worship. If the rhythm of the song played is not appropriate, the tempo, cadence, and dynamics of the song will also be misaligned.

The next element is 3) Tempo, which refers to the speed or pace of a song or music. It is crucial to pay attention to tempo to ensure that the worship leader and musicians stay in sync, which prevents either the music or the vocals from getting ahead or falling behind. The fourth element is 4) Melody, a series or arrangement of harmonious notes that enhance the beauty of the music. The melody usually appears in the middle of the song, which consists of chord arrangements without lyrics or vocal sounds. The fifth element is 5) Dynamics, often defined as the loudness or softness of the sound in a song. Dynamics play a role in expressing the song and conveying its mood. This is particularly important in charismatic church worship, which is often passionate, whether in joyful praise or deep worship. Expression is vital in worship to create a reverent atmosphere. The last element is 6) Timbre, or tone color, which refers to the quality of sound. In worship songs, certain parts are often emphasized. The emphasis requires a fuller and louder voice to be clearly heard by the congregation.

Symbolic Interaction

Based on the explanation of the musical elements provided above, this can be linked to the interaction between the worship leader and the musicians. It is necessary to make this connection because the liturgical order of charismatic church services features a dynamic sequence of songs, which often leads to changes in tempo, rhythm, dynamics, and even key. These changes form the basis for the interaction between the worship leader and the musicians

The interaction between the worship leader and the musicians to signal song repetitions is done through codes rather than verbally. The purpose of this is to avoid disrupting the worship atmosphere. These codes are symbolic gestures that convey meaning, which can also be described as symbolic interaction because they use symbols. One notable figure who discussed and developed the theory of symbolic interactionism is George Herbert Mead. Siregar (2016)

states that George Herbert Mead was interested in interactions and developed the theory that nonverbal activities, such as physical gestures or body language, as well as verbal expressions or agreed-upon words, are forms of symbols that hold significant meaning.

In his book "Sociology: A Multiple Paradigm Science", Ritzer (1992) states that all activities performed by humans within a societal environment are fundamentally actions. In this book, George Herbert Mead argues that the meaning of symbols arises first through interaction and communication, and second through interpretation. Mead also believes that symbolic interaction is formed through both verbal and nonverbal human interactions.

This also applies to a church service, which is part of a community. In a church service, there are key participants: the worship leader and the musicians, both of whom play important roles. The worship leader and the musicians are responsible for leading the service and accompanying it with music. Moreover, the musicians, especially the worship leader, must create a reverent atmosphere supported by the accompanying music (Limbong & Raharja, 2021).

The atmosphere in a worship service is created through good interaction between the worship leader and the musicians. Tumanan (2015) believes that the atmosphere of worship is formed through songs of praise accompanied by flowing chord patterns, repeated to create a sense of the Lord's presence in the worship space. Besides flowing chord patterns, the accompanying music also includes modulation, improvisation, finger codes, open chords, and ending patterns. Even when the worship leader and musicians are able to create a good atmosphere, without the support of the accompanying music, the worship experience will not be truly alive. This is especially true in charismatic church services, which have a dynamic and expressive liturgical order. Worship in a charismatic church tends to flow, with both the liturgy and the songs of praise and worship being guided and signaled by the worship leader. Therefore, the songs played in charismatic church services are dynamic and variable, changing in key, tempo, rhythm, and dynamics.

Because the liturgy and praise songs are dynamic, it is essential to have good interaction between the worship leader and the musicians to ensure that the music and the sung songs are harmonious. This interaction is not done verbally because speaking can disrupt the congregation during praise and worship. According to Durikase & Purba, (2020), the worship leader and the musicians must have good interaction and communication during the service to avoid disturbing the congregation. In charismatic churches, this interaction and communication often take the form of symbols or finger codes given by the worship leader to the musicians during the service.

Although most charismatic churches use symbols or finger codes for interaction between the worship leader and the musicians, this does not mean that the symbols or codes are the same in every church. The use of symbols or codes in worship is not based on a specific theory, so the finger codes in each church, and even with each worship leader, can differ. These finger codes or symbols are established through agreements between the worship leader and the musicians during practice sessions before the service. For example, at Bethany Church in Blora, there are specific finger codes agreed upon: finger code 1 signals a return to the initial verse of a song, code 2 indicates a return to the chorus section, and the thumb code signifies a key modulation up by one note. Another code, finger code 3 (middle finger, ring finger, and pinky), signifies the song's ending, while a clenched fist gesture indicates a transition (tancet) where the music continues but the drums stop. The final code, which resembles a telephone gesture with the thumb and pinky, indicates a song change or medley.

Similarly, at the Church of Isa Almasih Deliksari, which is also a charismatic

church, the same practice is applied—using symbols or finger codes as a means of communication and interaction by the worship leader. They have agreed upon the use of 8 specific finger codes, which are as follows:

1). Finger code 1 (index finger) is used to signal a song returning to the initial verse.

2). Finger code 2 (index and middle fingers) is used to signal a song returning to the chorus section.

3). Finger code 3 (index, middle, and ring fingers) is used to signal the song entering the bridge. However, there are worship leaders at the Church of Isa Almasih Deliksari who use this 3-finger code to signify the ending or coda.

4). Finger code 3 (middle, ring, and pinky fingers) is used to signal that the song is entering the ending.

5). Finger code 5, while rotated or swayed, is used to indicate that the music continues playing and is part of the worship. However, some worship leaders use finger code 5 without rotating or swaying it, which can be interpreted as a bridge.

6). The "call" finger code (thumb and pinky) is used to indicate that one song is transitioning to another or that it is a medley.

7). The thumb code is used to indicate that the song is modulated and raised by one note.

8). A clenched fist gesture is used to signal that the song is finished and the music stops.

Those are the codes or symbols used for interaction and communication between the worship leader and musicians. While some codes may be similar but have different meanings, most worship leaders and musicians at Isa Almasih Deliksari Church frequently use these eight codes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, a conclusion can be drawn. Accompaniment music and the worship leader are crucial components of a Christian worship service, especially in charismatic churches that feature contemporary and dynamic music.

Music is inseparable from church worship, as it enhances the atmosphere of praise and worship, which makes it more joyful, reverent, solemn, happy, or sorrowful. In addition to the music, the worship leader helps create the worship atmosphere by providing motivation, words of encouragement, strength, and reinforcing Bible verses for the congregation.

To create a worship atmosphere that is reverent, solemn, sorrowful, joyful, and filled with gratitude, effective communication and coordination between the worship leader and the musicians are essential. This interaction and communication are primarily non-verbal to avoid disrupting the congregation's focus during worship. The non-verbal communication follows the concept of symbolic interaction by George Herbert Mead, where interactions and communications are carried out through actions in the form of symbols that hold specific meanings.

Similarly, at Isa Almasih Church in Deliksari, symbolic interaction between the worship leader and musicians is conducted using finger symbols. These include finger code 1, finger code 2, finger code 3 (index finger, middle finger, ring finger), finger code 3 (middle finger, ring finger, pinky), finger code 5, thumb code, fist code, and call code (thumb and pinky).

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