



Music as A Therapeutic Medium at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation

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Abstract

Music plays several significant roles in life, one of which is as a medium for healing and therapy. The objective of this study was to identify and describe the utilization of music as a therapeutic medium at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang. The use of music as a therapeutic medium at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang is evident in terms of the musical form and the application process. This study employed qualitative descriptive method. The data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis used interactive model, and data validity was ensured through triangulation of data, sources, and time. The findings reveal that the form of music employed in music therapy activities at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang involves the use of tambourine musical instrument. The process of music therapy itself takes place in the school building's hall owned by the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang, and employs specific methods and considers various crucial aspects throughout the music therapy process. The objective of music therapy activities utilizing tambourine is not only entertainment but also serves as a relaxation therapy medium for foster children, particularly those with anxiety disorders.

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INTRODUCTION

Music has been an integral part of human existence since ancient times, offering enjoyment through various mediums. For example, music can be heard playing from speakers in restaurants while dining or in public transportation like *angkot* (public minivan) through the vehicle's radio (Saleha, 2019). Jamalus as cited in Sinaga (2017) defines music as a form of artistic creation that involves sound formed into compositions. These compositions express the emotions of its creator through elements such as rhythm, melody, harmony, song structure, and expression, and result in a cohesive entity.

Bahari, as mentioned in Sinaga (2017), describes music as a discipline that explores the rhythmic combination of tones, whether vocal or instrumental, and incorporates harmony and melody as expressions of conveyed emotions or messages. The presence of music as an integral part of human life is not a recent phenomenon. Various regions across the world have developed music that is specifically created to be enjoyed by members of their respective communities during significant events. Music is also utilized in specific rituals and ceremonies, including weddings and funerals. In addition, music serves as a supporting element that complements diverse forms of art within different cultural contexts (Djohan in Rodiyah, 2012).

Music plays a significant role in human life across various aspects and remains a universally popular medium. According to a survey conducted by APJII, there are 10 YouTube contents that are most favored by Indonesian netizens. Among these contents, music-related videos hold the second-highest

position in terms of viewership, with a percentage of 13.6%. This places them just below videos discussing films.

Music serves not only as entertainment but also functions in education, religious rituals, and as a commercial medium. It is also closely linked to psychological aspects such as mood, perception, and other psychological elements. Burner in Sinaga (2017) states that music is an excellent stimulus for influencing one's mood, a fact supported by poets, playwrights, composers, and researchers over the past two centuries. Music, as a source of entertainment, also provides a sense of relaxation to its listeners, which suggests that it has therapeutic qualities as well.

Music, although familiar to human civilization, is still underutilized as a tool for relaxation and symptom alleviation, whether related to illness or anxiety (Utomo & Santoso, 2013). Music serves not only as a means of entertainment but also holds therapeutic benefits in reducing stress and anxiety levels. This is attributed to music's calming, comforting, relaxing, and structured nature. It is common for individuals to engage in relaxation therapy using music to lower anxiety levels, as music therapy is readily accepted by the human auditory system and processed by the brain, influencing emotions. Music, as a therapeutic medium, signifies its ability to bring tranquility to every listener. It is believed that music has an impact on healing based on the combination of rhythm, melody, and harmony within the music itself (Sinaga, 2017).

Music and the sense of hearing are interconnected, but psychologically, music is related to various psychological functions in humans,

such as mood, perception, abstraction, and other psychological functions. The tempo of music, whether fast or slow, influences the perception of auditory stimuli, and results in different interpretations of meaning. Fast-paced songs can uplift the spirits of listeners, and the same applies in reverse (Sinaga, 2017). Music relaxation therapy is believed to help reduce emotional levels and induce a state of parasympathetic nervous system dominance by calming the cerebral cortex (Setyawan, Susilaningih, & Emaliyawati, 2013).

Music has long been recognized as a therapeutic medium for relaxation. Music therapy is a skill that aims to improve or restore human physical health using elements within music. Music therapy is a multidisciplinary process that must be mastered by a therapy expert, with music itself being the fundamental element. A therapy expert should also possess proficiency in music techniques, knowledge of research methods, and a comprehensive understanding of music-related materials. Moreover, they should be skilled in playing at least one musical instrument and have proficiency in an alternative choice as well (Djohan in Rodiyah, 2012).

The use of music as a healing method dates back to the time of Pythagoras and Plato. Pythagoras had an understanding, consistent with various scientists today, that music can alter behavior. Pythagoras regarded the universe as music itself, and believed that there are cosmic vibrations capable of entering humans through their thoughts. According to Merritt in Rodiyah (2012), someone who is in harmony with these cosmic vibrations is considered healthy.

Over time, the use of music as a healing method has gained popularity.

Music therapy has been employed to assist veterans and victims in their recovery from the First and Second World Wars. Through the use of music therapy, veterans and war victims have reported faster recovery (Rodiyah, 2012). The definition of music therapy itself is inclusive and focuses more on the function of music as a therapeutic tool (Situmorang, 2017).

Experts in Indonesia have highlighted the effectiveness of music therapy in relieving pain and treating various illnesses. Prof. Tjut Nyak Deviana Daudsjah, the founder of the Indonesian Institute of Music Therapy (IMDI), highlights that music therapy can be beneficial for treating conditions such as stroke, heart disease, epilepsy, and even depression (Tirto.id, 2020).

In Indonesia, there are several institutions or foundations that utilize music as a medium for music therapy, and one of them is the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang. The foundation has been operating since 2014 in the city of Semarang. It is located in the Pedurungan area and provides care for approximately 80 foster children along with several foundation staff members.

The children's daily activities at the foundation include attending regular school, engaging in religious practices and Quranic studies, learning screen printing for T-shirts, and more. The Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang also provides music therapy facilities for the foster children under its care. While there are a few foundations or social institutions that use music as a therapeutic medium, they are relatively scarce, making them rarely encountered. This fact strongly motivates the authors to

conduct this research. In addition, the therapeutic nature of music, as supported by numerous studies, adds further interest to investigating the implementation of music as a therapeutic medium at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang.

METHOD

This research employed qualitative method. Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. The researchers conducted direct observations regarding the utilization of music as a therapeutic medium at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang. The observations focused on providing an overview of the foundation, the types of music used in music therapy, and the process of music therapy activities.

In addition to direct observation, the researchers also conducted interview sessions. According to Chaleunvong (2009), interviews are a data collection technique that involves asking various oral questions to respondents, either individually or in groups.

The researchers conducted interviews with reliable sources of information who could provide relevant data and information related to the research problem, which is the utilization of music in the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage in Semarang as a therapeutic medium. The interview technique used by the researchers was structured interviews. Interviews were employed to gather data and information regarding the use of music in the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage in Semarang.

The interviews were conducted with the foundation's management and music therapy facilitators at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage in

Semarang with the aim to obtain comprehensive and valid data on all aspects related to the utilization of music in the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage in Semarang.

During the course of the research, the researchers also made sure to carry out documentation. Suharsimi in Arikunto as cited in Melynda (2020) explains that documentation is a method used to seek data in the form of records, transcripts, books, magazines, inscriptions, meeting minutes, agendas, and so on. In qualitative research, documents are used to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations that have been conducted.

In the documentation technique, the data gathered in this research consisted of the physical condition of the foundation, its location, facilities and infrastructure, the situation of the management and foster children within the foundation, the daily activities of the foster children, as well as the activities related to music therapy in the foundation. The researchers collected data through written records or notes to obtain information on the utilization of music as a therapeutic medium in the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang.

The data analysis technique in this study utilized the interactive model of analysis, also known as the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman. The process of the interactive analysis model involves data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The steps of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing sequentially represent the success of a research study.

The technique used to ensure data validity or data validation in this study

was data triangulation. Triangulation in data technique involves comparing and cross-checking information obtained through different sources and at different times on the utilization of music as a therapeutic medium. This approach is used in qualitative research to enhance the credibility of the information gathered (Moleong in Melynda, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research on the utilization of music as a therapeutic medium was conducted at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang, Central Java. The foundation was established in 2005 and serves as a social institution. It provides care for orphaned children, single-parent children, as well as those in need and impoverished. Currently, the foundation takes care of 85 children, consisting of 48 boys and 37 girls. The foundation conducts various activities typical of an orphanage, such as educational activities, daily religious teachings, commemorations of Islamic holidays, and additional recreational activities for the foster children.

The facilities and infrastructure at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Orphanage Foundation in Semarang are considered quite complete. Furthermore, in 2020, they successfully completed the construction of the MTS/MA (Madrasah Tsanawiyah/ Madrasah Aliyah; Islamic secondary schools) Daarussolihin Semarang building, which is located not far from the orphanage.

The construction of the new building aims to provide additional facilities for the foster children, and make the learning process more convenient for them. Moreover, the MTS/MA building is frequently used

for religious gatherings, celebratory events, and other activities. The building consists of several rooms, including offices, classrooms, and a multi-purpose hall, one of which is utilized for music therapy sessions.

Forms of Music Used as Therapy Medium

The form of music used in music therapy is called "rebana" music. The rebana instrument is chosen as the sole therapy method at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation. Rebana is a musical instrument originating from the Middle East, and it is known for its association with the Islamic values within the gambus musical ensemble. The presence of rebana instrument is deeply rooted in the lives of the communities along the north coast of Central Java, spanning from rural areas to urban regions.

Sutiyono (2014) stated that rebana is one of the many arts that have developed in Indonesia, although rebana instrument itself does not originate from Indonesia but rather from the Middle East. The introduction of rebana playing as a music therapy method began in 2012. Prior to that, the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation used a different music therapy method, not involving playing rebana instrument. Rebana instrument represents a regeneration of the previous music therapy activities that existed in the foundation. The music therapy activities using rebana instrument have continued to evolve in the foundation, with different facilitators taking on the role in various periods. Since 2020, Zaki has been serving as the music therapy facilitator in the foundation.

Zaki explained that the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation recognizes the benefits of playing rebana instrument for the foster children, both in terms of providing entertainment and serving as a medium for relaxation therapy. This is because rebana is classified as a rhythmic musical instrument, and playing it can improve motor skills. This aligns with the theory proposed by Luthfa, Khasanah, and Puspita Sari (2015), which suggests that rebana music therapy has a positive impact in reducing pain intensity, alleviating stress, and reducing anxiety. These effects have been observed through improved respiration, lowered blood pressure, slower heart rate, and muscle relaxation.

The aim of introducing music therapy at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation is to provide the foster children with engaging activities, preventing them from feeling bored or anxious. It also serves as a source of relaxation, helping the children maintain a positive outlook while going about their daily routines at the foundation.

The target of music therapy at the Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation is all the foster children who have an interest in playing rebana musical instrument. However, the music therapy sessions with rebana instrument are prioritized for foster children who have anxiety disorders.

The Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation provides care for approximately 85 children. Among them, some foster children experience mental issues, particularly anxiety disorders. These children with anxiety disorders are encouraged to participate in the main activity of rebana music therapy to

enhance their engagement and alleviate their frequent anxiety.

Process of Music Therapy Implementation

The rebana music therapy sessions are conducted in the auditorium. During the music therapy sessions, the foster children who will participate in the rebana music therapy are welcomed into the auditorium to take their positions for playing rebana. There is no differentiation in treatment between the foster children with anxiety disorders and those without, as the goal is the same: to prevent the foster children from feeling anxious and bored. Meanwhile, other foster children who are not actively participating in the therapy session join as spectators and also participate in playing rebana to create a lively and enjoyable atmosphere.

Before the music therapy session takes place, the music therapy facilitator must ensure that the foster children are in good health and able to play rebana instrument. This is done because if any of the foster children are in a less than optimal health condition, it would be challenging to carry out the music therapy session. Once this has been confirmed, the foster children are then invited to enter the auditorium.

During the rebana music therapy session, they are also watched by several other male and female foster children who are not engaged in any activities. The facilitator of the music therapy session then advises the observing foster children to maintain a conducive environment for the session to proceed smoothly. Not only do they hear the sound of rebana instrument during the music therapy session, but the rebana playing is also accompanied by vocals singing songs or reciting solawat (praise to the

Prophet). The playing of rebana instrument is repeated, with a new song introduced after each previous song has been played several times. This is intended to enhance the foster children's memory skills while also preventing boredom since multiple songs are performed.

After the music therapy session is completed, the music therapy facilitator asks the foster children about their feelings after playing rebana instrument. He inquires if there are any lingering issues or if they feel alright following the music therapy session. In addition, the music therapy facilitator provides an evaluation and guidance regarding positive activities that the children should engage in after the music therapy session concludes.

In addition to being used as a therapeutic tool, rebana instrument is also utilized to develop the potential of the foster children in playing this Middle Eastern rhythmic instrument. At the inception of the rebana music therapy program, the interested foster children at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation undergo a selection process. Those who show potential are chosen as core players and are later involved at performances and competitions. The foundation has even won several competitions in rebana music performances.

In an interview, Zaki, the music therapy facilitator, explains that in the rebana music therapy activities, several important aspects need to be considered. These include paying attention to the condition of the foster children, ensuring the availability of necessary equipment and facilities, and overseeing the entire process from the beginning to the end of the session.

In general, when playing rebana instrument, it is common to sing

specific songs with an Islamic theme. Likewise, at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation, where rebana instrument is used as a therapeutic tool, they also incorporate specific songs while playing this traditional Middle Eastern instrument.

In the rebana music therapy sessions at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation, they play the Middle Eastern instrument while singing several songs with Islamic elements. When starting the rebana playing session, the vocalist sings a song individually, and then other members join in singing together throughout the activity.

The songs they sing during the music therapy sessions are of Islamic nature, such as melodic recitations of "sholawat." According to Sinaga (2001), "sholawat" is a chant that uses the book of Maulid. The book of Maulid tells the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW from birth to passing. "Sholawat" is performed in Arabic language and its lyrics contain beautiful literary touches. It is an expression of love from the Muslim community towards the great Prophet Muhammad SAW.

During the rebana music therapy sessions, the rebana, which is a rhythmic musical instrument, is used to accompany "sholawat" recitations that contain praise for Prophet Muhammad SAW. Among the songs they often sing, the researchers provide two examples: "sholawat Isyfa Lana" and "Sidnan Nabi."

In the continuation of the music therapy activities at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation, they employ specific methods to ensure structured and clear instruction. According to Syafnidawaty (2020), methods are

essential in research to establish a strong foundation. The methods used in the music therapy activities at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation include group-based methods, playing while singing, repetition methods, and reading lyrics while playing musical instruments.

CONCLUSION

The form of music utilized as a therapeutic medium at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation is through the playing of rebana instrument. The rebana music therapy at the foundation is a regeneration of previous music therapies that were implemented. The target recipients of rebana music therapy are the foster children, particularly those who experience anxiety disorders.

The rebana music therapy at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation takes place in the school building's auditorium, which was constructed by the foundation. The rebana music therapy activities employ various methods, including group playing, repetition, and playing accompanied by vocals from different Islamic-themed songs. Throughout the music therapy sessions, the facilitator pays attention to essential aspects to ensure the smooth progress of the therapy. The purpose of the rebana music therapy at Kyai Ageng Majapahit Semarang Orphanage Foundation is not only to provide entertainment but also to induce relaxation and alleviate anxiety and boredom among the foster children.

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