

Behavioral Difficulties in Sight-Reading: A Quantitative Study on Uitm Classical Guitarist Students

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This study aims to analyze the behavioral issues experienced by classical guitar students concerning poor sight-reading skills and factors that hinder students' excelling in this skill. Data were collected from thirty respondents from the Universiti Teknologi MARA's Faculty of Music, degree departments for this research. A descriptive analysis of this investigation was presented in frequency and percentages. The outcome of this research found that the majority of the respondents were not able to sight-read. They were not capable of reading music fluently at first sight. The study also found that the majority of classical guitarist students were used to learning music by utilizing other alternatives such as reading tabs, watching tutorials, and imitating fingerings, instead of sight-reading. The analysis of this research has proven that the majority of classical guitarist students among the Faculty of Music neglected their sight-reading due to poor habits. This study will contribute to the understanding of the causes behind classical guitarist students who neglect sight-reading to understand its intention of sight-reading benefiting musicians. The findings will benefit classical guitarist students to realize the advantages if they mastered the sight-reading skill.

Keywords: *Behavioral studies in music, music education, classical guitar technique, sight reading in music*

Introduction

Classical guitar is an instrument with six strings and has more than ten fretboard positions. Capable of recognizing the notes in every position of this instrument took a high level of understanding and patience. Based on Thompson & Lehmann (2004), *“In sight-reading, the musician is confronted with unfamiliar music and has to play through it at first sight, imitating-as convincingly as possible-a rehearsed performance with regard to tempo and expression”*. Reading music is the same as reading a book. One does not only read the words, but understand everything that the author wants to deliver. Regarding music, understanding the connections of every note in terms of intervals, harmonics, chords and cadences that the composer tries to point out in his or her compositions. Sight-reading is not only about understanding the notes, but also understanding the music.

“Guitarists are notoriously poor readers compared to other instrumentalists. They tend to learn pieces by laboriously working them out measure, attempting to memorize as they go. If you can avoid this trap you will progress much faster in the long run and become a better all around musicians” (Frederick 2009). The statement indicates that classical guitarists are among musicians that will face problems to achieve accurate sight-reading. Although other instrumentalists might come across the same issue, it is researched and proven that classical guitarists will always have the tendency to cultivate bad habits, because they want to quickly execute the reading task. This certainly will resolve bad fingering habits and inaccuracy in interpretation. It is a general importance that reading notations is one of the earliest steps in music education. To be able to acquire this skill, a learning musician must achieve precision not only at the notes but solidly on rhythms and interpretations as well.

As a music student majoring in classical guitar, the researchers have identified a few issues that usually happen, where many classical guitar students neglect sight-reading. The poor understanding of the importance of sight-reading will lead to wrong ways of learning music, and affect their future after they graduate. Some students did not realize that sight-reading is one of the most important skills to be polished. Therefore, this research is to open the classical guitar students' minds about the great significance they can gain from mastering sight-reading.

Setting up the Scene

There are several reasons that contribute to the inefficiency of acquiring the skills of sight reading, especially for beginners, or in other words, those who are learning to play classical guitars for the first time. It is always a tendency for beginners to be gravitated to utilize tabs instead of reading notations. Another factor that contributes to this issue is that the guitar has more than 10 fretboard positions and fingering placements. Moreover, it is a tendency to learn new pieces by ear while finding the melody and accompaniment instead of reading music sheets. This will cause inaccuracy of interpretation, rhythmic patterns and the overall

soundscape.

Firstly, based on our observation, students learn new pieces by listening to the music on the internet as a platform to transfer it to their playing. That is a good way to train your ear, but it will lead to laziness in reading notations. There would be a limitation for yourself in terms of the level of the pieces you received. Not all the pieces are playable merely through listening, especially when it comes to masterpieces. At the end of the day, you will limit yourself on the selections of the pieces that you want to play.

Secondly, there are few students who love to learn their repertoires by finding the tabs on the internet. There are lots of tabs of pieces that can be found nowadays. No doubt that it helps students to play faster and easier. But, this is actually the wrong way, where musicians only depend on tabs instead of learning the score. It just gave you numbers of frets and positions, but not fingering. Hence, the music produced is all about the correct notes pressed, but without truly understanding the music played. Moreover, not all tabs have accurate articulations or dynamics. If one chooses to read notations, they are specific in articulations, dynamics and which notes on what positions will be effective in the playing in terms of sound production as that is actual interpretations from the composer. Reading tabs is not good for academic learning. This will reduce one's ability to sight-read.

Besides, students neglect sight-reading practice and just assume it as a “must-pass” for an exam. This will cause the awareness of having good sight-reading skills to become lesser in students, and inaccuracy in playing even simple phrases. These are not healthy habits for students to be practiced, which might lead to lack of precision in reading music. Music is a language for musicians that can be used in future.

Perimeter of the Study

The survey involved only thirty respondents consisting of Faculty of Music, UiTM Shah Alam, Selangor classical guitarist students. Due to the small sample size, it only allowed researchers to use descriptive statistics and thus, the findings could not be generalized to the broader population of UiTM. The duration of this study was 14 weeks, starting from October 2020 until February 2021.

Sight Reading in Music for Musical Instruments

Sight-reading is the skill that students should master in order to become a professional classical guitarist. “*Ability at sight-reading involves the capacity to play the music accurately and fluently (i.e. without pauses or breaks in the musical flow) at an acceptable tempo and with adequate musical expression*” (Thompson & Lehmann, 2004). This statement indicates that

sight-reading is a skill that requires you to play the music fluently which means no stop in between, accuracy in terms of dynamics, articulation and emotional as well. Sight-reading is not only required to play the correct notes, but everything written on score must be done well too. The first sight of looking at the score, then the brain trying to figure out what the notes are, is not considered as good sight-reading. It is because the struggle to identify only what notes are written is not defined as sight-reading. Sight-reading is the same as reading a book. Take a lot and read it with understanding what the author wants to deliver. The imagination appears in the mind about the situation in the book. Same as reading the notes. Understanding the notes, dynamics, articulation, rhythm and emotion required as well. So, this can be related to reading another language which is music language.

“Music reading is the process of translating the written symbolic language of the materials of music into concept, action, and artistic product (including expressivity), whether mentally conceived (as in silent audiation) or actual performance” (David, 2015). The phrase showed that sight-reading is a process of someone who reads the music and expresses it through expressions either mentally or actual performances. Sight-reading is a skill in which musicians are able to play music at first sight with a deep understanding of what they are playing. If this can be achieved by classical guitarists, their skill on sight-reading will be at a high level of understanding music. However, generally most students always neglect sight-reading although it is compulsory for musicians to be able to read the music without any difficulties. It is exactly the same as reading a novel, which can be read fluently without the need of spelling the words one after the other. Reading music is when you are able to play the music without any pause or stuck in any bar either in a slow or fast tempo. This is what sight-reading is all about. As classical guitarists, the ability to read music with deep understanding of what they are playing is not only about plucking the notes, this is what we as not just classical guitarists, but musicians who appreciate the music as much as we love the music we performed. Somehow, music is not just to be performed but also to be appreciated, a language that is able to be read and produced with sound. Sight-reading skill is such an important skill to have in every classical guitarist, in order to enhance their ability of playing music.

Communication In music

Anne Ku (2008) asserted that *“the ability to sight-read is considered extremely important for accompanists and other collaborative playing (chamber music) and very important for the student to explore new repertoire”*. *“The inability to sight-read well or at all is one big reason for students to stop their lessons”* (Anne Ku, 2008). Sight-reading skill is indispensable for musicians especially when involving other musicians. Statement from Anne Ku clearly showed that sight-reading skill is crucial when musicians need to collaborate with other musicians. In other words, one should aim to make the learning process faster and easier in learning pieces. This is important when there is a lack of time for rehearsal or practice before working with other musicians. Instead of spending too much time on finding notes on different positions of

the guitar, focusing on ensemble technique with other musicians can increase the performance quality of an ensemble. One needs to adopt an attitude like a repetiteur (or a highly skilled pianist), where substantial training and persistence are necessary to acquire sight or score reading skills to ensure successful accompaniment; such as accommodating for transpositions or key changes by request of the soloist (Mohammed, 2016, 2021).

For example, as for guitar ensemble which usually have four or three parts of guitar which first guitar will role as main melody, second guitar as accompaniment third or fourth usually playing bass note. The interaction with each other is really important in order to make music sounds alive and audiences could feel the give and take relationship between classical guitarists. During rehearsal, it will become hard if one of the classical guitarists has poor sight-reading. It can drag time just for finding notes instead of more focus on dynamics changing, articulations and note positions of playing which can make the sound brighter, rounder or to differentiate the tone from other parts that may have the same notes. Therefore, the high ability of sight-reading can make the communication between musicians easier and faster without any other member needing to wait for discussing important things to bring out the good tone, fix tempo problems, decide the que for any specific phrase and to focus on the mood required to perform the music. Sight-reading can make musicians ease other musicians' work. The performances will be outstanding if the members are capable of building up the understanding with each other when performing. This is how musicians communicate in music. Planning, understanding and compatibility.

Expansion of the Career

Researcher Scott Dirkse had asserted that, *“for professionals, having a reputation as a strong sight-reader may lead to more employment opportunities”* and had include statement from Lorina Havill (1971), enunciated that *“a facility in sight-reading may enable the professional to be a better accompanist and to access more of the vast repertoire of piano literature”*. As for classical guitarists too, the ability of sight-reading may open a chance to perform frequently because musicians will be easier to collaborate with. Possibilities to get offers are huge especially if they involve an orchestra or guitar ensemble that perform frequently and this allows classical guitarists to have a stable job. *“Difficult to be a working musician on any level if you cannot read and absorb music quickly and efficiently”* (Spillman, 1990). Unable to sight-reading may cause the musicians to survive. Even though classical guitar is a solo instrument, the need for sight-reading is very important. If it only depends on the repertoire that has already been mastered, still the requirements of each event organizer are different. Besides, as a musician, there are lots of chances to perform without any planning or rehearsal. People can call anytime for the performances, therefore to be able to grab work opportunities also depends on how fluent the musicians can read at sight. Guitar repertoire may be challenging even though memorizing the work is easier. Sometimes, to refresh a few parts of the pieces will be time consuming if one is poor in reading. As mentioned, the classical guitar has more than 12

fret boards that need to be remembered. Take for example, a piece composed by J. Sagreras, Maria Luisa.



Figure 1

In Figure 1, the circle is to point out that the fingering show is in first position. If the students are able to sight read fluently not only on music score but also on instrument itself, they can choose to play it in fourth position which starts with fourth finger on D string for note A. This can differentiate the tones in between the notes because of twice repetitions in section A and after section B as long as the student did not misinterpret the actual intention of the composer, and is acceptable with no clashing between notes, it is allowed. The ability to think fast on which position to play makes the piece sound beautiful. In other, similar and easier to understand words, this situation can be related when we choose to put ketchup on our dish to make it taste more delicious. This will enhance the opportunities to get offers frequently because of the creativity in performing music. Based on Daniel (2005), he inserted McPherson, (1994), stating that *in early stages of music training, sight-reading skill is not significantly correlated with ability to perform rehearsed music. However, as students mature, the correlations between sight-reading and performance skills are strengthened.* Sight-reading is able to improve classical guitarist students, causing them to have a standard performance stage.

Strengthen Techniques

Sight-reading is a skill that can improve classical guitar technicalities on classical guitar. Why? This is because, the concentration of trying to fix the technical problems contained in the repertoire in one sight will make classical guitarists learn new ways with detail and increase the ability of thinking while playing. For example, one of the difficult pieces with techniques, is composed by Francisco Tarrega, Recuerdos de la Alhambra, which includes the Tremolo technique. Tremolo is a classical guitar technique which consists of the rapid repetition of the same note produced by alternating fingers of the right hand. The techniques need to be executed and require well controlled coordination of both hands, for which a prolonged and diligent study is necessary (Vladimir Bobri, 1985).

As a classical guitarist, the fundamentals of tremolo technique had developed in lessons but not that much. When classical guitarists have a strong skill of sight-reading, they can strengthen the tremolo technique throughout the piece. As *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* requires tremolo from the beginning to the end. This makes classical guitarists more independent to use the basics of learning into new repertoire that require such a high level of technicalities. Classical guitarists not only play music from the classical period, but from Baroque, Romantic, and 20th century music as well. Each period has its own style of musicality on how composers composed the music (Tajuddin et al., 2021). For example, the piece from the Romantic period, *Asturias (Layenda)* by Issac Albeniz which is influenced from his own origin, Spanish, is rich with cultural expression composition. In that piece, there is one technique called *rasgueados*. *Rasgueados are really more of a percussive effect than an astrum. It is done by hitting the strings with the backs of the nails* (Scott Tenant, 2005). *Rasgueados* technique is the hitting of the strings of the guitar with all four fingers or less of the right hand except the thumb. It can be either in an upwards or a downwards direction. Regarding the difference between strum and *rasgueados*, which are always confused by classical guitarists, basically *rasgueados*, is a type of strum that is very much percussive-sound delivering effect in a rapid way, no matter in one finger or more at once. Normal strum is more like an arpeggios effect in a rapid way.

Usually, most classical guitar students will have problems with unstable chords with *rasgueados* technique because the left hand is too weak to hold the note tight and firm. The notes on the 7th and 9th position of guitar while strumming are quite difficult, students tend to make mistakes and produce an unstable sound. To be related with sight-reading, it is actually helpful to strengthen the techniques where the students have the sight for the first time with slow tempo and no rushing to think about what notes, instead, focus more into right hand technique and press the notes on left hand confidently. It sounds hard and impossible to play *Asturias* at first sight, but if students have mastered sight-reading and use the ability of *rasgueado* technique, it will be easier for them to strengthen the capability of technicalities they have in future when no guidance. In Scott Dirkse (2005) research, Deutsch Leonhard (1977) stated that *a good sight-reading ability is of great value to piano students. It provides opportunities to develop technique, coordination, musicianship, style characteristics, kinetic memory, audiation skills, and tactile sense by exposing students to a great volume and variety of music.* It is going to be the same as classical guitar students where sight-reading can strengthen their techniques after graduation as they are going to bring themselves to a bigger industry. There is limited time for classical guitarists to spend their time on finding notes instead of having the ability to sight-read the music at the same time with good musicality.

Ways to Improve Sight-Reading

There are hundred ways to improve sight-reading skill for students. Sight-reading cannot be built without patience, determination and consistent practice. Before reading music, an early step to master sight-reading is that a classical guitarist is required to understand every single

note on the fretboard (Anuar & Ismail, 2021). Classical guitar have more than 12 fret boards which can up to 19 fret board. To memorize all notes in every positions may lead to unstable and not fluently played while sight reading. Instead of memorizing the notes on the fretboard, the understanding of notes on every position will make classical guitarists become more secure and confident in their playing. Separate the position to make it work easier. For example, separate the learning of notes on specific position, first, fifth and seventh position. As for twelve position, it is actually produced the same notes as open strings. Open string from first string up to sixth is E-B-G-D-A-E, same as the notes on 12th position. David Braid (2001) enunciated that, *at this point, (fret XII) the fingerboard begins repeating itself, but an octave higher. Other than on the top two strings, the notes from position XII upwards are rarely used, as the same notes can be found lower down the neck with much better tone quality. Generally speaking, the longer the section of string left to vibrate, the clearer the sound.* Therefore, if students are able to recognize the notes on first, fifth and seventh position, it will be stable enough during sight-reading process.

Besides, one way to improve sight-reading skill on rhythmic structure is to include practicing new pieces every day in daily practice sessions. This is because it will strengthen the ability to identify different types of rhythmic patterns in every music. If students used to practice the same piece or except, every day, they will be exposed to a limited type of rhythmic pattern. Thompson S. Lehman had included Wates et. Al, 1997, *statement that related to memory is pattern recognition. Combinations of notes that occur frequently within a style are, over time, stored in memory as discrete entities rather than sets of individual events. They can then be easily retrieved from memory and used in novel contexts. An expert musician may see a certain familiar scale and immediately recognize what to play without further looking or thinking.* He also added that *different musical styles have their own characteristic patterns of notes and rhythms that recur and that are instantly recognizable from the page. This essentially means that highly familiar stimuli "stick out" more and attract attention immediately without the performer having to do much. Expert sight-readers can identify familiar patterns.* Therefore, the concept of practicing the sight-reading skill in different pieces everyday can lead to the ability of recognizing the style and pattern specifically in each piece. This will provide a good musicality in student's ability and being able to sight read in any kind of pattern and style of rhythm fluently.

Anne (2008) had included Bernstein (1981) standard tips on how to improve sight-reading. Even though it is specifically for pianists, it can benefit classical guitarists too, with both instruments involved with reading bass and melody at the same time. The difference is piano score divided for right and left hand but classical guitar not. First step he point out is before playing, study the music silently, taking special note of the key and time signatures. This method is being practiced for every musician either during any exam of sight reading, interview or practice which requires thirty or one minute to analyze a few bars before being evaluated or practiced. First thing that needs to be confirmed is of course the key and time signatures as it is important to play accurate accidentals when sight read. Second, clap the rhythm. Clapping

the rhythm is one of important component in sight-reading which lead musicians to play accurately the music. It is better to do mistakes on the wrong notes than the wrong rhythm because it defined the ability of knowing the basic of music. In early step of learning music, musicians are exposed to rhythm first then notation. Next, keep your eyes on the score at all times. This way, classical guitarist can improve their ability of sight reading because without looking at left hand, they can focus on the score and there are no need of distraction on left hand. As mentioned, when one succeeds to conquer the notes on the fretboard, it is not needed to watch their left hand all the time and focus on score.

Next, S. Daniel Galyen had included that research *has tended to focus on the vocalization of tonal patterns as well as Kodály methods involving the singing of solfège syllables. Several studies indicate that these vocalization techniques have no significant effect on sight-reading ability* (Bernhard, 2003; Dunlap, 1990; Mann, 1991). *Vocalization activities may be more beneficial in improving the sight-reading skills of less experienced instrumentalists* (Mann, 1991) *and may help improve melodic ear playing ability* (Bernhard, 2003). Ability to hear music in the brain can improve sight-reading. Consistency of practicing solfege after identifying the key and time signature and rhythm, singing the solfege able to make classical guitarists improve their sight-reading. Singing or humming the upper strings, the high notes which indicate the melody can help to sight read fluently.

Designing the Approach

In this study, a quantitative design was chosen to collect information regarding the behavioral issues experienced by classical guitar students in UITM Shah Alam related to sight-reading, specifically from degree departments. I have created the questionnaire through Google Form to fulfill my objectives toward this study. The questions were mainly about students' practice routines of sight-reading and how and why they neglect sight reading, to answer my research questions. Due to the current situation we are facing, which is the COVID-19 pandemic, it has limited the data to be collected through interviewing and experimenting students' abilities of sight-reading directly. Therefore, collecting data through an online questionnaire will be convenient to all respondents.

Research Sample

The sample used in this study are students who are majoring in classical guitar from Faculty of Music, UiTM Shah Alam, specifically from degree departments. They were chosen to contribute to collect data towards the behavioral difficulties experienced by classical guitarist students in relation to poor sight reading. The questionnaires were distributed to thirty classical guitarist students from semester two until six.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was chosen to be the research instrument for collecting the information from the respondents. This method was more effective rather than interviewing them face-to-face. The first section of the questionnaire asked about the respondents' backgrounds which are gender, age, music departments and semester. For the second section, the questions are mainly about sight-reading issues. The 30 responses will be compiled and presented with the use of Google Form. Second section's responses are important parts where people are required to answer questions based on their behaviors regarding sight-reading. This will contribute to collecting data about behavioral issues experienced by classical guitar students in relation to poor sight reading and why they neglect it. A questionnaire was chosen to be the research instrument for collecting the information from the respondents. The developing the questions on questionnaire is based on the current situation faced by classical guitar students toward the poor of sight-reading.

Data Collection

This questionnaire took approximately 2 weeks to be answered by classical guitarist students only. The data obtained is then analyzed. The responses from classical guitarist students will be kept confidential solely for the purpose of the research.

Data Analysis

The data achieved from questionnaires that have been responded and returned is collected. The quantitative method was used for my research. The data from the questionnaire will be analyzed using Google Form. All the questions are mainly about behavioral issues experienced by classical guitar students regarding poor sight-reading and why they neglect it. The Pie chart and graph will be the main tools to analyze the data.

Method for Data Analysis.

This study used descriptive analysis to analyze the data. The analyzed data were converted from frequency count into percentages and presented in charts.

Respondents' Profile

The data collected will be presented in this section. There are two main objectives to achieve in this study which are, to analyze the behavioral issues experienced by classical guitar students in relation to poor sight reading and identify why they neglect it.

There are 30 respondents from classical guitar students in the Faculty of Music, Shah Alam specifically in the degree department. The question of this part is to identify the basic things

about sight-reading. Starting from section B questions, prepared with simple questions which are, did they know about sight-reading and what are the levels of their sight-reading ability. The first part of the questionnaire is kept confidential as it is private information.

1. Do you know what is sight-reading?

30 responses

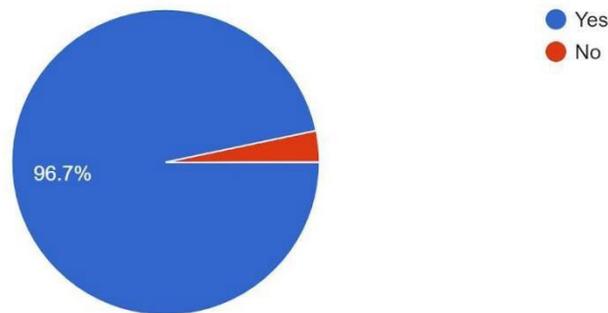


Figure 2

The data showed that, mostly the classical guitarist students know about sight-reading skills. This proved that students are alert about it. Majority answered *yes* on what is sight-reading.

2. Have you mastered sight-reading?

30 responses

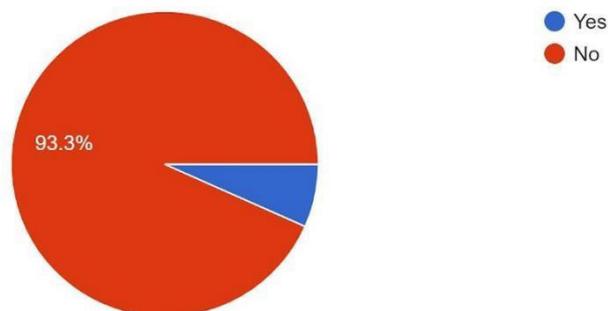


Figure 3

Figure 3 clearly showed that, majority of classical guitar students have not mastered sight-reading skills. There is 93.3 percent, of which 28 students are not able to sight-read well.

3. How good are you at sight-reading?
30 responses

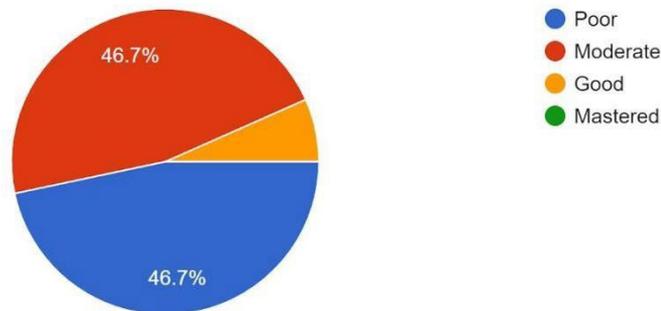


Figure 4

The pie chart showed the percentages of the level of ability on sight-read among classical guitarist students. There were four categories of level on sight-read which are *poor*, *moderate*, *good* and *mastered*. The highest and most frequent category of level chosen by respondents were poor and moderate, which 46.7%. The lesser categories chosen by respondents were good and lastly mastered which was not selected at all. From the chart, we can conclude that the majority of respondents are not mastering sight-reading skills.

Frequency of time spent on practicing sight-reading.

The pie chart below showed that, majority of the classical guitar students used sight-reading as an important skill to practice daily. 50% of the students answered *No* which means they did not include sight-reading in their daily practice sessions. *Rarely* being chosen up to 30%, *sometimes* and *yes* shared the same percentage which only 10%. This clearly proved that, most of the students did not realize that sight-reading should be in their daily planner of practicing. Sight-reading is important in order to enhance their musicality and development of good sight-reading skills.

4. Did you practice sight-reading?

30 responses

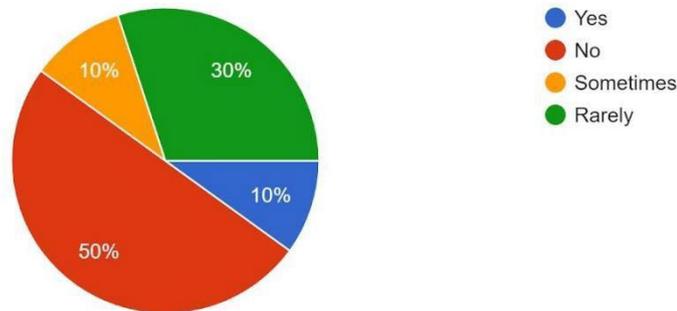


Figure 5

The pie chart represents the time spent on practicing sight-reading.

5. How long did you spend to practice sight-reading?

30 responses

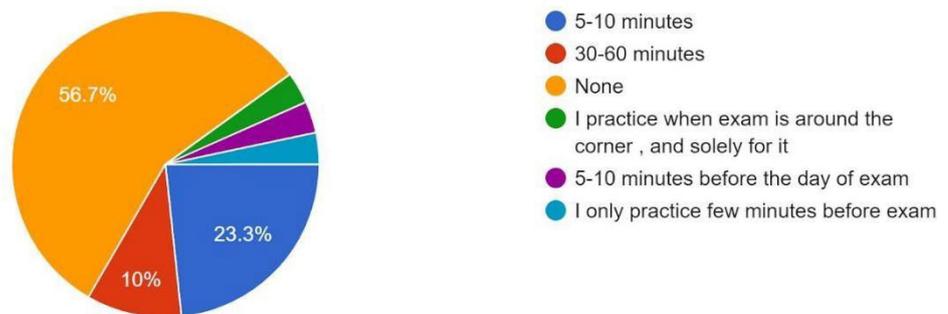


Figure 6

The time spent of respondents on practicing sight-reading were prepared in five categories and one column of 'other' provided for respondents to answer. 56.7% of the chart was filled by the participants which did not spend their time on practicing sight-reading, which proved half of the respondents. The following 23% of the chart were the students who did their sight-reading practice within 5-10 minutes. The least group is 30-60 minutes with only 10% who did sight-reading 30-60 minutes in their practice sessions. This question gave a chance for classical guitar students to answer other options related to time spent on practicing sight-reading. Data showed that, mostly will practice before exam or only during exam. So, this can be categorized as no

sight-reading practice had been done in their daily practice sessions in order to improve this skill. Practicing sight-reading would not work well if it is meant to be done within a few hours before an exam, and solely for it. Behavioral issues experienced by classical guitarist students regarding poor sight-reading and why they neglect it.

6. How did you practice new pieces?
30 responses

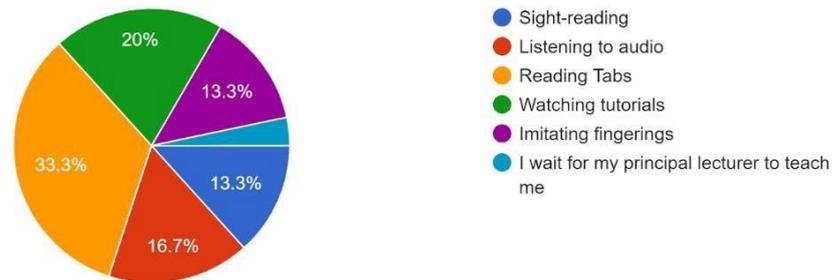


Figure 7

The pie chart shown in figure 6 is the frequency of ways used to practice new pieces among Faculty of Music classical guitarist students. There were five categories that can be chosen and one column provided to answer in their own way. Five categories of ways used to practice new pieces are, sight-reading, listening to audio, reading tabs, watching tutorials and imitating fingerings. The highest and most frequent category of way used chosen by respondents was reading tabs, which is 33.3%. Utilizing tabs was one of the clear and obvious non-proper ways to learn the music, it is not academically practiced for musicians. Students tend to read tabs as it is the fastest way to learn new pieces as tabs provided the number of frets and which strings needed to be played. This is due to inability to read music notations well at first sight and a normal routine to practice with tabs. Sight-reading categories were fulfilled with 13.3%, which is too few students to occupy their time practicing new pieces with first sight first before enhancing their playing. This situation clearly showed that, majority of classical guitar students chose not to sight-read the new pieces as it is the early step for musicians to enlarge their sight-reading skill.

11. What makes you did not/ rarely practice sight-reading?

30 responses

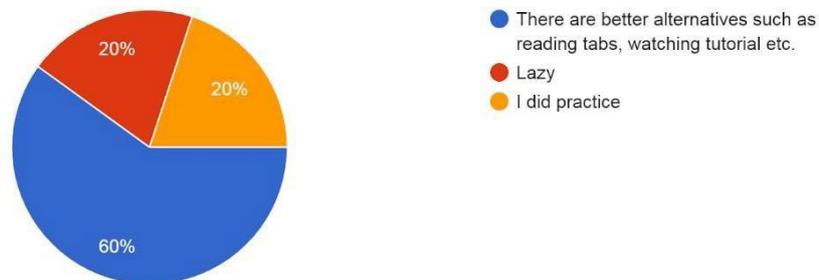


Figure 8

To relate with figure 6's result, most classical guitarists were choosing other alternatives than sight-reading. Up to 60% were used to watching tutorials, reading tabs etc than practicing sight-reading which will make their skill weak. This will reduce their capabilities to read music fluently at first sight.

12. What is the reason to use other alternatives instead of sight-reading?

30 responses

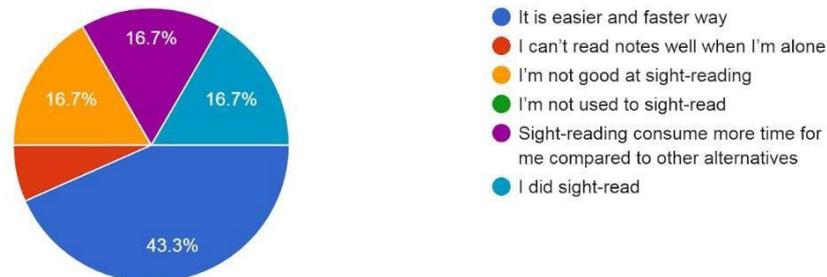


Figure 9

The data from figure 8 showed that most of the classical guitar students used to learn with other alternatives because it is easier and faster instead of sight-reading which is 43.3%. The researcher Carol M. Hayward, 2009 states that, *The skill of music sight-reading—the ability to read and play music at first sight --is highly valued in the field of music education. The inclusion of music sight-reading at state contests in secondary schools suggests that the ability to read and play with speed and accuracy is an important indicator of music achievement.* This statement indicates that reading music is crucial in order to become professional classical guitarists. It is good to find other alternatives to practice any new pieces but it is not academically trained as it will slowly reduce the ability to enhance and develop sight-reading.

7. What is your preparation for sight-reading exam? Please state
30 responses

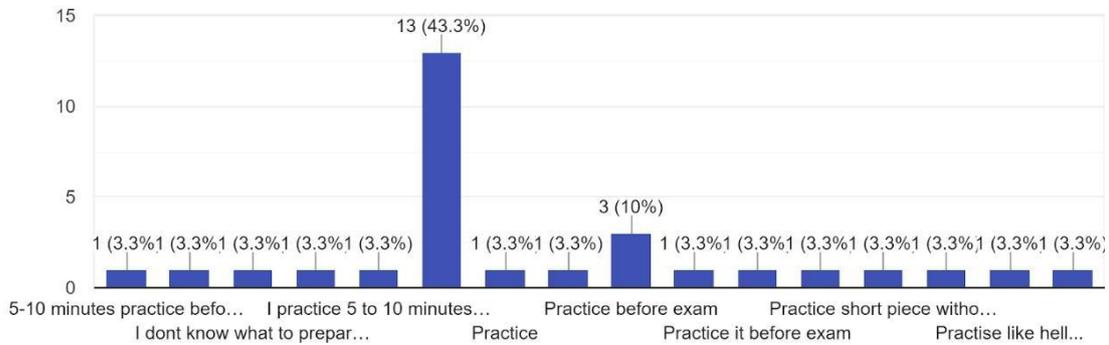


Figure 10

The bar chart (Figure 10) showed the frequency of classical guitarist students responding to open questions in preparation for sight-reading exams. They were required to write an answer about their preparation. 43.3% indicates no preparation toward sight-reading. This chart is generally being compiled as mostly classical guitar students did not practice their sight-reading skill and rushed to practice it before the exam. This shows that they were used to “last minute” behavior. This question’s result can be related with figure 5 as they mostly did not consider practice sight-reading as crucial and only practiced it for exam purposes.

The pie chart (Figure 10) showed the frequency of the first step done during sight-reading among classical guitarist students.

9. What are your first step to sight read?
30 responses

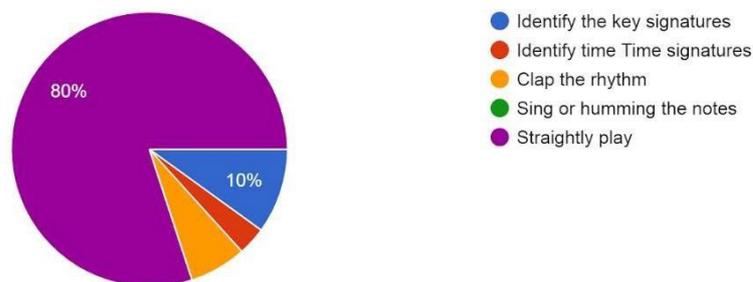


Figure 11

The chart above represent the data obtained from questionnaire related to early step of sight-

reading process. 80% of classical guitarist students straightly played the music. This situation was identified as wrong step to do as a first step during sight-reading. It is because, key and time signatures played an important role as to identify the rhythm counting and accidentals content in the pieces. If counting of the rhythm is not being analyzed, the tendency to count tempo wrongly is huge. Straightly played the music will make classical guitarist students rushing to pluck and press every single notes on the scores and played fast. Anne Ku (2008) had included Bernstein (1981) standard tips on how to improve sight-reading. Even though it is specifically for pianists, it can benefit classical guitarists too, since both instruments involve reading bass and melody at the same time. The difference is piano score divided for right and left hand but classical guitar not. First step he point out is before playing, study the music silently, taking special note of the key and time signatures. This really helpful in order to improve sight-reading.

8. Did you able to sight-read without constantly changing your sight between fingerings and piece?
30 responses

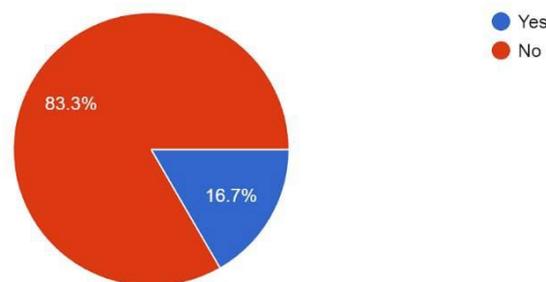


Figure 12

The pie chart (figure 12) showed that, majority of classical guitar students are not able to stay focused on the score while sight-reading. The habits of constantly changing the sight between fingerings and pieces will lead to messy playing. This is because, reading the score while looking at the fingerings will distract the focus of continuing reading the notes. Students will lose focus and cannot maintain the current bar they played. This will contribute to poor sight-reading. With 83.3% of frequency of choosing *no* to the question prove that classical guitarist students are not able to maintain their sight properly on pieces.

Effects on academic result

13. Are utilizing other alternatives decrease your sight-reading exam's result?
30 responses

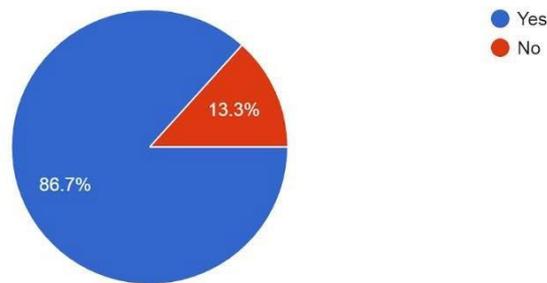


Figure 13

Pie chart from figure 13 showed that, classical guitarists realize, by utilizing other alternatives instead of sight-reading they decrease their capability on this crucial skill. There are 86.7% responses clearly proving that, without proper practice reading the notes will reduce their ability to sight-read which affects their presentation on sight-reading exams.

The chart below represents the data obtained from a questionnaire related to typical score for sight-reading among classical guitarists.

10. What is your typical score for sight-reading exam?
30 responses

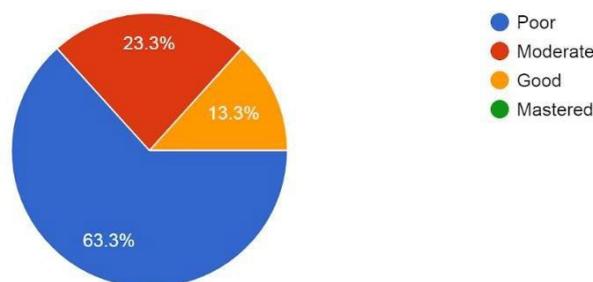


Figure 14

This question is prepared in five categories. They are *poor*, *moderate*, *good* and *mastered*. 63.3% of the chart was filled by the participants which got a poor result on their sight-singing. This showed that, majority of the classical guitarist students are not able to achieve their sight-reading capability to read music fluently with only first sight. The following 23.3% of the chart

was the classical guitarist students who moderate toward sight-reading skill. The least is from good categories with only 13.3% who obtained acceptable results for sight-reading. For mastered categories, it is 0% where no one answered it. This showed that between thirty students of classical guitar are not able to read fluently which is an important skill to develop.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions, the majority of respondents are not able to sight-read. Sight-reading is a skill that is important to become a professional classical guitarist. Reading music is a crucial skill for students to understand and play music well. Reading music is the same as reading a book. We read fluently and understand the meaning. What makes it different is the way we deliver it. If we can read music well, it will be easier to transfer through playing.

The data obtained showed that the majority of classical guitar students neglect sight-reading because the other alternatives nowadays are more convenient and the fastest step to learn forward rather than sight-reading. Classical guitarist students mostly did not spend their time looking deeper into sight-reading and chose an easy way to learn new music. However, the data collected proved that there are still a few classical guitarist students who did their sight-reading practices.

Unfortunately, the majority of classical guitarist students did not achieve good marks in sight-reading evaluations. This is because sight-reading is the least marks required to be compared with other examinations, like playing pieces, scales, and technicalities. Students did not spend their time sight-reading as much as they did toward practicing the other skills contained in the pieces.

In conclusion, we can see the advantages to having the ability to sight-read that can upgrade ourselves as classical guitarists. There are also the chances for us to have a brighter future and be able to perform with musicians all around the world. Classical guitarists need to be more alert in building up sight-reading ability. Do not hold to learn deeper on how to be able to sight-read fluently. It is never too late to study a new thing. Learning new knowledge will bring better understanding and explore huge new things. This research also elaborates each point with details for better understanding about how important sight-reading could be.

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