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## Participation Interest In Orchestra Class among Degree Students in UiTM Faculty of Music

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### Abstract

This paper aims to find the participation interest in orchestra class among music degree students in the UiTM Faculty of Music. The study's research objectives were to investigate students' perceptions towards orchestra class among music degree students and to determine the level of interest in orchestra class among music degree students. A questionnaire survey was distributed to 40 students doing their degree program and majoring in the orchestral instrument. Findings showed that the majority agreed that participating in orchestra class was very important in improving their performance skills, ensemble skills, communication skills in the ensemble, and developing orchestra repertoire knowledge.

Keywords: orchestra class; orchestra performance; orchestra interest; ensemble class

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### 1.0 Introduction

This study was carried out among bachelor's degree music students majoring in the orchestral instrument in UiTM Faculty of Music. A total of 40 students took part in this survey. They were all majoring in orchestral instruments and a combination of students who were taking orchestra classes and not. The orchestra class was offered for all students, especially those majoring in the orchestral instrument. It was a large class to enhance students' experience performing in an orchestra. It requires a large number of participations from the students to run the orchestra class, but somehow the participation was decreasing from time to time. Therefore, the researcher was keen to find out the participation interest of music degree students and the factors that affect students' interest to participate in orchestra class. Hence, the researcher's objectives were: 1) to investigate students' perceptions in orchestra class among music degree students; and 2) to determine the level of interest in orchestra class among music degree students.

### 2.0 Literature Review

Orchestra was a well-known name for a large group of ensemble performances. According to the dictionary of music and musicians, "Grove"; "Orchestra" is the portion of a theatre or concert room that is set apart for the accommodation of the instrumental band, chorus, or both, according to the repertoire. Orchestra usually consists of strings family, winds family, brass family, and percussion family. In the string family, they consist of violin, viola, cello, and double bass. The winds family usually consists of flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. In the brass family, they consist of the trumpet, french horn, trombone, and tuba. Lastly, the percussion family consists of timpani, marimba,

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xylophone, piano, harp, and percussion instruments. The confusion arose when they tried to establish an exact number regarding how many instruments should be formed to make an orchestra because the composers at the moment who wrote their works usually did not specify the number of instrumentations to be used but rather indicated the range that the instruments or singer should cover.

### 2.1 Orchestra Style

The Baroque orchestra as we know it now started to emerge during the baroque era (1600–1750), albeit its exact beginning is uncertain because the compositions did not specify the instrumentation to be employed. The first illustration is "Dafne" by composer Jacopo Peri, most likely performed around 1598. Sadly, the libretto and a little portion of the music have been saved. Years later (in 1607), composer Claudio Monteverdi presented his Opera "L'Orfeo Favola in Musica" published in Venice in 1609. In this work, Monteverdi establishes a predetermined list of instruments consisting of the following: 2 harpsichords, two double basses (violone), ten violas da braccio, one double harp, two actual violins, two theorbos, two pipe organs, two viola da gamba, four trombone, one virginal, two cornets, one pan flute, one trumpet, and three muted trumpets. This example is an orchestra already made up of 4 sections: woodwinds, brass, keyboards, and strings.

The Classical orchestra has evolved in late classicism with the contribution of musicians and composers such as Beethoven. The orchestra was made up as follows, woodwinds; one piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, a contrabassoon, a brass section; 2 horns, two trumpets, three trombones, percussions; timpani, snare, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, string section; one harp, approximately 14 1st violins, ten 2nd violins, ten violas, eight violoncellos, six double bass, and choir (according to the repertoire).

The classical orchestra remained during early romanticism, but with contributions from musicians such as Richard Wagner and Berlioz, the number of instruments increased. Therefore the romantic orchestra was made up of the following instruments, woodwind section, 1-2 piccolos, 3-4 flutes, 3-4 oboes, cor anglais (also called English horn), 3-4 clarinets (commonly in A and B-flat), bass clarinet, 3-4 bassoons, contrabassoon, brass section; 4-8 horns, 3-6 trumpets (commonly in F, C, and B-flat), 3-4 trombones, 1-2 tubas, 0-4 Wagner tubas (according to the repertoire), percussions; 4-6 timpani, snare, bass drums, cymbals, triangle, tam-tam, tambourine, glockenspiel, xylophone, tubular bells, celesta, keyboard section; pianoforte (piano), string section; harp, approximately 16 1st violins, 14 2nd violins, 12 violas, 12 violoncellos, ten double bass and choir (according to the repertoire).

Nowadays, the number of musicians that play in a symphony orchestra is over 100 or 200 players in works with choir and additional instrumentations. The repertoire and its new demands have made the orchestra's growth reach such numbers.

### 2.2 Orchestra Development

Orchestra has been developed not only for professional musicians but also for schools and university students. Orchestra has been used as a subject of study. The addition of the orchestra subject allowed students to engage in the organization apart from the knowledge and experience before becoming a member of an international orchestra. In addition, participation in the orchestra class has to be the highest requirement in school and university. Biasutti & Eleonora (2013) stated that the development of many abilities, not just those directly related to rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic components, is significantly influenced by music instruction. Chiodo (1997) added that regardless of the informants' employment level, the most significant advantages of music engagement were self-expression, fun, and personal enrichment.

The enjoyment of the music in the orchestra class can influence students' emotional and positive feelings and affect their participation. However, every student should have discipline and enthusiasm to participate in class orchestra. Some students who already have a background in music might not have a problem because they already have experience, but for those students who have no experience, participation in orchestra class may be less convincing. Playing an orchestra instrument activates the whole brain (Pink, 2006; Sparks, 2013) and develops social skills (Ritblatt et al., 2013).

### 2.3 Orchestra Benefits

Participation in orchestra class is very helpful in developing students' playing skills and social skills. Participation in orchestra class also develops a love for the arts. Students need to have the opportunity to experience various orchestra music to develop an appreciation for different types of music. Kelley (2012) stated that participation in the art classes and found that long-term instruction in the arts had much higher educational benefits. It shows that participation in music class will help the student to be more effective and also helps students develop a strong work ethic and discipline. Walton (2013) believes that music is a component of the answer, not the issue. Most studies support that music class participation helps students improve their academic achievement. According to Davenport (2010), as cited by Helwig & Thomas, 1973; Kafer & Kennell, 1998; Schneider & Klotz, 2000, Caterall, 1998; Gouzouasis, et al., 2007 stated that many studies had found a link between musical participation and high academic achievement.

### 2.4 Orchestra Factors

The role of the conductor is vital in ensuring the smooth operation of any group of musicians, big or small. The conductor is the one who interprets musically the piece that is performed in the orchestra. According to Stern (1994), the conductors must know everything from the point of view of the composers. He must know when all of them are put in together. Additionally, all of these can happen when the conductor keeps firm hands. What comes out is something that came from his head just before it happened. Other conductors have different styles of conducting and rehearsing. Leadership can be considered both an innate and an acquired skill: from a very early age, many leaders demonstrate a set of unique personality traits, and thanks to the situations they experience, they can develop these characteristics and skills. According to Goldman (2011), developing emotional intelligence is essential for acting in a leadership capacity.

Besides that, choosing the repertoires is the most important in gaining interest from the students. As performers, we want the audience to focus and enjoy our performance. Budiansky's 2005 study (as cited by Britton 1991) stated that even if playing is enjoyable, it only remains if we engage in worthwhile play. Reynolds (2000) also stated that the choice of repertoire affects what skills pupils learn and do not learn, enhancing their appreciation of and knowledge of music. Even though we are professional players, playing with reasonable skill and having a good tone, the repertoires should support the performer's ability. Any program that stresses the attainment of a high-performance level by rehearsing a small number of pieces during a school year is not challenging the student to develop their full musical potential and appreciation.

Next according to Fleming & Younger (2012), a positive classroom environment is essential in keeping behavior problems to a minimum. Fraser (2012) stated that the shared opinions of students and teachers in the classroom could be used to characterize the atmosphere in the classroom.

### 3.0 Methodology

A set of questionnaires had been developed to be used as tools to collect data. There were four sections to this questionnaire. In the first section, section A, there were six questions regarding the standard information of the respondent. The second section, section B, had six questions about the perception of the importance of orchestra class participation among music degree students. The third section, section C, had ten questions divided into three sections, C.1 The Conductor, C.2 The Repertoires, and C.3 Time/Equipment/Environment regarding the level of interest towards orchestra class among music degree students. The last section, section D, had five scale questions and one opinion question. This section addressed general questions about themselves and opinions about the orchestra class. The data from the questionnaires were inserted in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Specific steps in the data analysis were made clear and consistent with the research questions and the research methodology.

### 4.0 Findings

40 respondents taking part in this research were from four programs of bachelor's degree in UiTM Faculty of Music. The summary of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Respondents

Bachelor's Degree Program	Program Code	No of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Bachelor Degree of Music Education (Hons.)	MU220	12	30
Bachelor Degree of Music Composition (Hons.)	MU221	5	12.5
Bachelor Degree of Music Performance (Hons.)	MU222	17	42.5
Bachelor Degree of Music Business	MU223	6	15

The scope of this research focused solely on bachelor's degree students who were majoring in orchestral instruments. From the questionnaires distributed, the analysis showed that 95% of the respondents agreed that orchestra class is very important

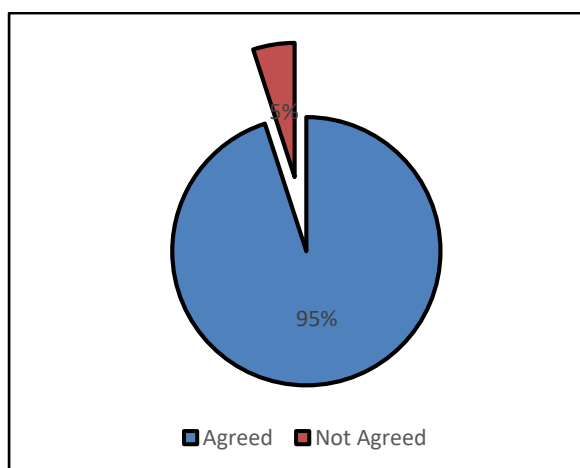


Fig. 1: The Importance of Orchestra Class

The majority of the respondents agreed that the orchestra class helps them to improve their performance skills (97.5%), improves their ensemble skills (95%), helps in communication skills (95%), and improves their repertoire knowledge (97.5%). The summary of the respondents is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Students' Perception Towards Orchestra Class

Matter	No of Respondent Agreed	Percentage of Respondent Agreed (%)
Orchestra class help to improves performance skills	39	97.5
Orchestra class help to improve ensemble skills	38	95
Orchestra class help to improves communication skills in an ensemble	38	95
Orchestra class helps to improve repertoires knowledge	39	97.5

4.1 Interest Factors

The questionnaire shows that several factors played an important role to gain interest among students to participate in orchestra class. Those factors are; 1) the conductor, 2) the repertoires selected, and 3) the facilities and environment.

97.5% of the respondents agreed that the conductor's gestures and attitude played very important role in developing their perception and attitude towards orchestra class. The summary of the respondents is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' Perception Towards Conductor

Conductor's	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Attitude	20	19	1	0	0
Techniques	18	20	2	0	0
Gestural Techniques	22	16	2	0	0
Showmanship	21	19	0	0	0
Attire	16	23	1	0	0

Repertoire selection also played a very important role to attract the students' interest to participate in orchestra class. The result showed that 57.5% of the respondents said that the repertoires were moderately difficult and 42.5% of the respondents will find the information regarding the repertoires after they played them a few times.

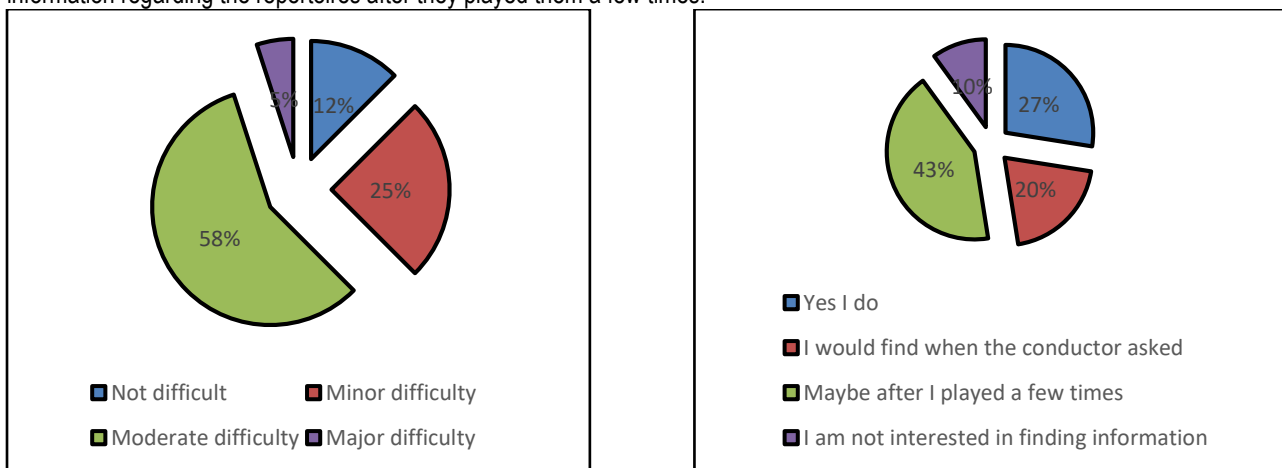


Fig. 2: Student's Perception Towards Repertoires Selection

Most of the respondents enjoy the repertoires selected. There are a few elements of the repertoires that interest them to learn it. The summary of the respondents is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Students' Perception Towards Repertoires' Elements

Repertoire's Elements	No of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Nice Melodies	27	67.5

Interesting Rhythm	26	65
Interesting Harmonies	29	72.5

Another factor that affects the students' interest in orchestra class is the facilities and environment. About 52.5% of the respondents said that the facilities for orchestra class in UiTM Faculty of Music were in fair condition, followed by 20% who said it was in poor condition. Furthermore, 39% of the respondents agreed that the orchestra hall was in fair condition, followed by 24.4% who said it was in poor condition.

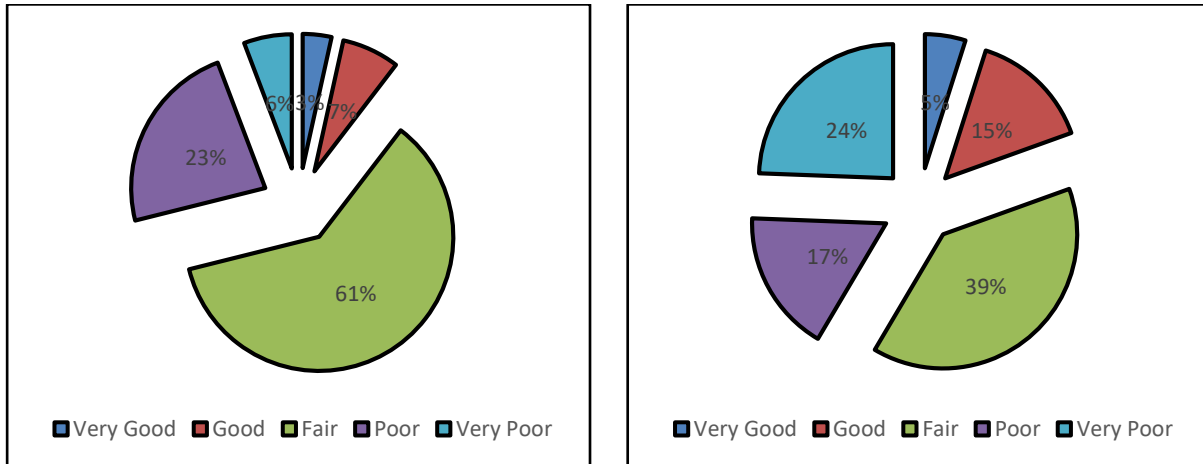


Fig. 3: Students' Perception Towards Facilities and Environment

## 5.0 Discussion

### 5.1 Importance of Orchestra Class

Most studies support that participation in music class helps students improve their academic achievement. Analysis of the first research question, "how do music students perceive the importance of orchestra class" reveals that the majority agreed that orchestra class is essential to them, especially in developing their performance skills, ensemble skills, communication in ensemble playing, and developing orchestra repertoires knowledge. These seem to concur with the research literature suggesting that participation in art classes will give much higher educational benefits (Kelley, 2012).

### 5.2 Factors of Interest towards Orchestra Class

Data on the second research question, "what are the factors that affect students' interest in orchestra class" found a fascinating reaction. It can be concluded that three main factors affect the student's interest in participating in the orchestra class. Those factors are 1) conductor, 2) repertoire selection, and 3) facilities and environment. The conductor is the main factor that creates interest among students to participate in orchestra class. A conductor's attitude, style, and techniques will determine the student's perception of an orchestra. A different conductor has a different style of conducting and rehearsing. The second factor is the repertoire selection. Almost half of the respondents agreed that the repertoires chosen were beyond their capability to play. Even though it is essential to learn most of the repertoires, it must be enjoyable and playable to the students. These seem to concur with the research literature that the choice of the repertoire affects the student's skills and enhances their appreciation of and knowledge of music (Reynolds, 2000). The third factor is regarding facilities and environment. Almost all respondents agreed that the facilities and environment for orchestra class were fair and in poor condition. This is crucial because, according to Fleming & Younger (2012), a positive classroom environment is essential in keeping behavior problems to a minimum.

## 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The study reveals that learning orchestra is significant to all music students despite their background and musical education. It gives them a solid foundation to build their musical skills such as performance, ensemble, communication skills in ensemble playing, and developing orchestra repertoire knowledge. Connelly (2013) supports Wallick (1998) and Ray (2006) by saying that playing in an orchestra may be a defining factor in higher student achievement. Undoubtedly, music learning is also capable of producing a more disciplined musician. Additionally, the orchestra can be a great source of joy and personal enrichment for all its participants.

Nevertheless, the three main factors in increasing students' interest must be considered to develop it. The factors are 1) conductor's quality, 2) repertoires selection, and 3) facilities and environment quality. These three factors are critical. The students will make a judgment

about the orchestra class regarding based on these factors. It is suggested that further research be carried out for bachelor music students in various institutions and probably some methods to gain interest to participate in orchestra class.

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