INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Vol 7, Issue 3, (2017) E-ISSN: 2222-6990

Kodaly's Teaching Method Increasing Preschool Children's Solfege Singing Skills

Loy Chee Luen
Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education and Human Development
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia.

Aminah Ayob
Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education and Human Development
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia.

Colleen Wong
Department of Music and Music Education, Faculty of Music and Performing Arts
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia.

Christine Augustine
Department of Music and Music Education, Faculty of Music and Performing Arts
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia.

DOI Link: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i3/2739

Published Date: 15 March 2017

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the difference between the children's solfege singing skills in terms of the diction, pitch accuracy and rhythm between the treatment group and the control group. The solfege notation selected and evaluated in this study encompasses (i) *so mi* and *(ii) so mi la.* The duration of this study is two weeks. Fifty children from two preschools were selected as the respondents in this study. This study adopts the quasi-experimental design with one treatment group and one control group of twenty five children, respectively. The treatment group sang using hand signals, while the control group sang without the hand signals. The study finding shows that the Kodaly teaching method using hand signals is more effective to increase the skills in diction, pitch accuracy and rhythm if compared to the teaching method without the hand signals. Kodaly teaching method has given a positive impact based on the fact that the solfege notation needs to be used to improve children's musical skills.

Keywords: *Kodaly Teaching Method*, Preschool, Children, *Solfege Singing, Singing's skills*

Introduction

Solfege singing with the hand signals in the Kodaly teaching method practised by pre-school teachers is said to be able to encourage children's active and creative learning as well as increase their singing skills. The activity practised helps achieve the focus and standard of learning of children listed in the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (2016).

Kodaly (1965 & 1974) introduced solfege singing and stated that music is for everyone including preschool children. Curwen (1816-1880) introduced the use of hand signals to increase the effectiveness of learning solfege singing introduced by Kodaly (Rainbow, 1980). Since then, researchers abroad such as Autio (2013) and Bowyer (2015) had carried out studies on the teaching and learning based on Kodaly's music teaching method. Other than that, researchers in Malaysia like Justina and Chang (2011) also Ng (2011) also carried out a study to identify the effectiveness of Kodaly music teaching method in enhancing children's solfege singing. The aim of this study is to identify the difference of children's solfege singing skills in terms of the diction, pitch accuracy and rhythm between the treatment group and the control group.

Literature Review

Devries (2001) and Bennett (2005) proposed to teachers who practised Kodaly music teaching method with the solfege singing syllabus that starts with *so mi* followed by a higher notation level. Teachers who teach music to children have to make an innovation in teaching so that it will have an effective and beneficial teaching method for the children.

The study by Autio (2013) suggested that teachers apply the Kodaly music teaching method because this method fulfils the needs and requirements of the preschool children and can improve their musical development and skills. The study by Bowyer (2015) finds that Kodaly music teaching method is not only confined to solfege singing with hand signals, this teaching method also has its own syllabus of rhythm, movement and teaching aid that are used by teachers. Teachers who put this method into practice also take into account the appropriateness of the teaching aid and teaching plans that can meet the requirements and wishes of the children.

The study carried out by Justina and Chang (2011) also Ng (2011) demonstrated that the Kodaly music teaching method is able to improve children's solfege singing skills. Before the study is carried out, it is found that children have problems in diction, pitch and rhythm musical skills. After the study, it is found that there is an improvement in the same set of skills. The findings for all these studies show that children's achievement in the singing skills has improved after following Kodaly teaching method.

In sum, studies local and abroad have proven that Kodaly teaching method can help improve children's musical skills especially diction, pitch and rhythm. Therefore, this study is implemented by applying Kodaly music teaching method to improve children's solfege singing skills. Other than that the diction, pitch accuracy and rhythm of the children are identified in this study.

Methodology

Two songs containing selected solfege notation will be used in this study. The first song has a solfege notation of *so mi* whereas the second song has the notation of *so mi la.* A check list is used to identify the children's solfege singing skills.

Song 1 (so-mi)

so	mi	so	mi	so	mi	so	mi	so	mi	so	mi
											

Song 2 (so-mi-la)

so	mi	la	la	so	mi	la	la	so	mi	la	la	so	mi	la	La
															

The duration of this study is two weeks. Fifty children from two preschools were selected by the respondents in this study. This study adopts the quasi-experiment design with the treatment group and control group of twenty five children, respectively. The treatment group sang using hand signals, whereas the control group sang without hand signals.

Findings

The study finding demonstrates that Kodaly teaching method with the hand signals is more effective to increase the skills of diction, solfege pitch accuracy and rhythm if compared to the teaching method without the hand signals.

The difference of children's solfege singing skills in terms of the diction, pitch accuracy and rhythm between the treatment group and the control group.

1. The Skill of Solfege Singing with Notation so-mi In Terms of The Diction

Table 1

The t-test for the independent respondents concerning the solfege singing skills in terms of the diction for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals

Construct (Dependent Variable)	Factor (Independent Variable)	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Diction	Hand signals	25	1.72	.458	5.977	.000
	Without hand signals	25	1.08	.276		

Table 1 shows the respondents' independent t-test that was carried out to compare the solfege singing skills in terms of the diction for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals. The analysis result finds that there is a difference between the solfege singing skills in terms of diction taught with and without hand signals. Children taught with the hand signals had achieved the mean of 1.72 and SD =

.458 and children taught without the hand signals had achieved mean 1.08 and SD = .276. The finding of the t-test for these independent respondents further proves that Kodaly music teaching method for solfege singing skills in terms of the diction using hand signals is more effective if compared to the teaching without the hand signals ($p > 0.05$).

2. The Skill of Solfege Singing with Notation so-mi In Terms of Pitch Accuracy

Table 2
The t-test for the independent respondents concerning the solfege singing skills in terms of the pitch accuracy for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals

Construct (Dependent Variable)	Factor (Independent Variable)	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Pitch Accuracy	Hand signals	25	1.64	.490	2.342	.023
	Without hand signals	25	1.32	.476		

Table 2 shows the respondents' independent t-test that was carried out to compare the solfege singing skills in terms of the pitch accuracy for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals. The result of the analysis establishes that there is a difference in the achievement of solfege singing skills in terms of the pitch accuracy between the two groups of children. Children taught with the hand signals had achieved the mean of 1.64 and SD = .490 and children taught without the hand signals had achieved mean 1.32 and SP = .476. The finding of the t-test for these independent respondents further proves that Kodaly music teaching method for solfege singing skills in terms of the pitch accuracy using hand signals is more effective if compared to the teaching without the hand signals ($p > 0.05$).

3. The Skill of Solfege Singing with Notation so-mi In Terms of the Rhythm

Table 3
The t-test for the independent respondents concerning the solfege singing skills in terms of the rhythm for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals

Construct (Dependent Variable)	Factor (Independent Variable)	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Rhythm	Hand signals	25	1.68	.476	4.274	.000
	Without hand signals	25	1.16	.374		

Table 3 shows the respondents' independent t-test carried out to compare solfege singing skills in terms of the rhythm for children taught with hand signals and without the hand signals. The result of the analysis establishes that there is a difference in the achievement of

solfege singing skills between the two groups of children. The children taught with the hand signals achieved the mean of 1.68 and SD = .476 and for children taught without the hand signals, they achieved the mean of 1.16 and SD = .374. The finding of the t-test concerning rhythm suggests that teaching with the hand signals is more effective compared to teaching without the hand signals ($p > 0.05$).

4. The Skill of Solfege Singing with Notation so-mi-la In Terms of The Diction

Table 4

The t-test for the independent respondents concerning the solfege singing skills in terms of the diction for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals

Construct (Dependent Variable)	Factor (Independent Variable)	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Diction	Hand signals	25	1.48	.278	5.796	.000
	Without the hand signals	25	0.88	.136		

Table 4 shows the respondents' independent t-test that was carried out to compare the solfege singing skills in terms of the diction for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals. The analysis result finds that there is a difference between the solfege singing skills in terms of diction taught with and without hand signals. Children taught with the hand signals had achieved the mean of 1.48 and SD = .278 and for children taught without the hand signals, they achieved the mean of 0.88 and SD = .136. The finding of the t-test suggests that teaching with the hand signals is more effective compared to teaching without the hand signals, in terms of the diction ($p > 0.05$).

5. The Skill of Solfege Singing with Notation so-mi-la In Terms of The Pitch Accuracy

Table 5

The t-test for the independent respondents concerning the solfege singing skills in terms of the pitch accuracy for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals

Construct (Dependent Variable)	Factor (Independent Variable)	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Pitch Accuracy	Hand signals	25	1.44	.370	2.440	.045
	Without hand signals	25	1.31	.353		

Table 5 shows the respondents' independent t-test that was carried out to compare the solfege singing skills in terms of the pitch accuracy for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals. The analysis result finds that there is a difference between the solfege singing skills in terms of diction taught with and

without hand signals. Children taught with the hand signals had achieved the mean of 1.44 and SD = .370 and for children taught without the hand signals, they achieved the mean of 1.31 and SD = .353. The finding of the t-test suggests that teaching with the hand signals is more effective compared to teaching without the hand signals, in terms of the pitch accuracy ($p > 0.05$).

6. The Skill of Solfege Singing with Notation so-mi-la In Terms of The Rhythm

Table 6
The t-test for the independent respondents concerning the solfege singing skills in terms of the rhythm for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals

Construct (Dependent Variable)	Factor (Independent Variable)	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Rhythm	Hand signals	25	1.55	.467	4.137	.041
	Without hand signals	25	1.48	.436		

Table 6 shows the respondents' independent t-test that was carried out to compare the solfege singing skills in terms of the rhythm for children taught with the solfege singing with hand signals and solfege singing without the hand signals. The analysis result finds that there is a difference between the solfege singing skills in terms of the rhythm, taught with and without hand signals. Children taught with the hand signals had achieved the mean of 1.55 and SD = .467 and for children taught without the hand signals, they achieved the mean of 1.48 and SD = .436. The finding of the t-test suggests that teaching with the hand signals is more effective compared to teaching without the hand signals, in terms of the rhythm ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion

In terms of the notation *so-mi* in solfege singing, in general, it has proven that Kodaly music teaching method with the hand signals is more effective to improve the skills of solfege singing in terms of the diction, solfege pitch accuracy and rhythm if compared to the teaching without the hand signals.

In terms of the notation *so-mi-la* in solfege singing, in general, it has proven that Kodaly music teaching method with the hand signals is more effective to improve the skills of solfege singing in terms of the diction, solfege pitch accuracy and rhythm if compared to the teaching without the hand signals.

Conclusion

All in all, the study findings show that the solfege singing skills for both notations of *so-mi* and *so-mi-la* under the Kodaly music teaching method are more effective to improve solfege singing in terms of the diction, pitch accuracy and rhythm if compared to the teaching method without the hand signals, body movement and the musical glass. The findings have been consistent with those established in Autio (2013), Bowyer (2015) Justina and Chang (2011)

also Ng (2011) that Kodaly music teaching method using hand signals can improve children's diction, pitch and rhythm.

Acknowledgement
This research is funded by University Research Grant from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris.

Corresponding Author
Dr. Loy Chee Luen
Department of Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Education and Human Development
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
Perak Malaysia
Email: loycheeluen@hotmail.com

References

Autio, J. (2013). Kodaly: The next generation-reflection of a pre-service music educator. *Canadian Music Education*, 55.2, Winter: 24-28.

Bennett, P. D. (2005). So, why sol-mi? American music education can benefit from a reexamination of the practice of centering music education programs for young children around the sol-mi interval. *Music Educators Journal*, Jan 2005: 43.

Bowyer, J. (2015). More than solfege and hand signs: Philosophy, tools and lesson planning in the authentic Kodaly classroom. *Music Educators Journal*, 102.2: 69.

Devries, P. (2001). Reevaluating common Kodaly practices. *Music Educators Journal*, Nov. 2001: 24.

Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. (2016). *Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education Malaysia.

Kodaly, Z. (1965). *Let us sing correctly.* London: Boosey & Hawkes.

Kodaly, Z. (1974). *The selected writings of Zoltan* Kodaly. London: Boosey & Hawkes.

Ng, Y. W. (2011). *Menambahkan kemahiran menyanyi pic so dan mi yang tepat dalam kelas Tahun 3 melalui pendekatan Kodaly*. *Kajian Tindakan.* Raja Melewar Teaching Institute, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

Rainbow, B. (1980). *John Curwen: A short critical biography*. Sevenoaks: Novello.

Simon, H. (1973). *Song and words: A history of the Curwen Press*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.