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Classical Melodies: An Analysis of the Young People Interest on Classical Guitar in Medan

Ikhsan Putra Wicaksana

Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, 20155, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ikhsanvei@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study identifies several key factors that contribute to the declination of interest: (1) the limitations of learning materials that are less innovative and adaptive, resulting in saturation and demotivation of learning; (2) the lack of platforms and competition opportunities, which reduces the incentive for students to showcase and develop their capabilities; and (3) the prevalence of other more popular musical instrument choices, such as acoustic and electric guitars, which distract from the unique characteristics of classical guitars. To revitalize the younger generation's interest in classical guitars, innovative strategies in teaching methodologies, the provision of more opportunities for practice and competition, as well as the prominence of the uniqueness and intrinsic excellence of classical guitars are considered essential. This research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of musical interest in the modern era and provides practical recommendations for the preservation and development of classical guitar art among the younger generation.

Keywords: Classical guitar, Young generation, Music education, Revitalization of interest

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi beberapa faktor kunci yang berkontribusi terhadap menurunnya minat: (1) keterbatasan materi pembelajaran yang kurang inovatif dan adaptif, sehingga mengakibatkan jenuh dan demotivasi pembelajaran; (2) kurangnya platform dan peluang kompetisi, yang mengurangi insentif bagi siswa untuk menunjukkan dan mengembangkan kemampuannya; dan (3) maraknya pilihan alat musik lain yang lebih populer, seperti gitar akustik dan elektrik, yang mengalihkan perhatian dari karakteristik unik gitar klasik. Untuk menghidupkan kembali minat generasi muda terhadap gitar klasik, strategi inovatif dalam metodologi pengajaran, penyediaan lebih banyak kesempatan untuk berlatih dan berkompetisi, serta menonjolkan keunikan dan keunggulan intrinsik gitar klasik dianggap penting. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif tentang dinamika minat musik di era modern dan memberikan rekomendasi praktis untuk pelestarian dan pengembangan seni gitar klasik di kalangan generasi muda.

Kata kunci: : Gitar klasik, Generasi muda, Pendidikan musik, Revitalisasi minat



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1. Introduction

The classical guitar, with its long history and rich repertoire, has long been one of the musical instruments appreciated for its beauty of sound and depth of expression. However, amid the rapid development of modern music and digitalization, the instrument faces significant challenges in maintaining its relevance among the younger generation. In Indonesia, especially in the city of Medan, there is a phenomenon of declining interest in the younger generation in classical guitars, although in the previous period this instrument had shown a significant increase in appreciation. Current observations indicate the opposite trend, where interest in classical guitars tends to decline.

The decline in interest in classical guitar in Medan is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a broader challenge in the appreciation of classical music in Indonesia. In general, classical music fans in Indonesia are

still relatively few, often colored by the perception that this genre is exclusive or only aimed at certain groups.1 In Medan itself, appreciation for orchestral music or classical music is still minimal, and this genre is often considered something "rare" or international class that requires high costs to be seriously appreciated.2 This suggests that the challenges faced by classical guitars are not only specific to the instrument itself, but are also related to the image and accessibility of the classical music genre as a whole in the eyes of the public, which is often considered less relevant to the daily lives of younger generations. Therefore, efforts to revitalize interest in classical guitar need to consider how to change the general perception of classical music to make it more inclusive and interesting.

Several key factors are believed to contribute to this declination of interest. First, the limitations of learning materials that are less innovative and adaptive often cause boredom and demotivation to learn among students. This problem is compounded by the lack of music producers who dare to create new classical music compositions, while the tastes of modern music listeners tend to change quickly and always want a new type of music.1 Second, the lack of adequate platforms and competition opportunities reduces the incentive for students to display and develop their capabilities, thus reducing the motivation to pursue this instrument seriously. Third, the prevalence of other more popular musical instrument choices, such as acoustic and electric guitars, has distracted from the unique characteristics of classical guitars. Electric guitars, for example, are referred to as the most popular style in modern music due to their ease of playing, availability in a variety of sizes suitable for young players, versatility in producing a variety of notes, and their frequent use in most popular musical styles.3 Meanwhile, acoustic guitars are popular in folk and classical music, and electric guitars dominate the rock and pop genres.4 Competition with other popular instruments is caused not only by genre preferences alone, but also by the factors of ease of playing and adaptability to contemporary music trends. This shows that classical guitars need to highlight their intrinsic advantages and find ways to adapt to modern tastes without losing their essence.

Despite these challenges, the role of formal and informal educational institutions, including private music schools, vocational institutions, and college study programs, since the early 2000s, has been recognized as having been crucial in nurturing and encouraging interest in classical guitars. These institutions provide a structural foundation for learning and development. Furthermore, classical guitar learning offers a range of significant cognitive and social benefits, including increased intelligence, concentration, stress reduction, confidence development, and increased tolerance and social concern. These benefits are supported by various studies that show improved language skills, coordination, memory, and socialization skills in children who learn music.5 Music in general can educate the brain, improve IQ and academic abilities, and relieve stress.6 Learning instruments can even predict academic performance and IQ in young adults.7 In addition, music can stimulate brain nerves related to language, learning, and emotional control.6 The existence of strong institutional foundations and relevant intrinsic benefits suggests that revitalization efforts should focus on bridging existing foundations with the needs and preferences of modern young generations, rather than building from scratch. The challenge is how to communicate these values effectively to the younger generation who are used to passive music consumption.

This research has important significance in understanding the dynamics of music interest in the modern era, especially in the city of Medan. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for the preservation and development of classical guitar art among the younger generation. The revitalization of this interest is important not only for the preservation of culture and the arts, but also for harnessing the holistic benefits offered by instrumental music learning for young people's cognitive, emotional, and social development. These benefits support a "whole person care" approach that considers all aspects of a person's well-being to improve long-term outcomes. Therefore, the revitalization of classical guitar interests can be seen as an investment in human capital and mental health, placing them in the broader context of education and social development.

2. Method

This study adopts a quantitative approach to analyze the interest of the younger generation in classical guitar

in Medan. This approach allows for the systematic identification of patterns, trends, and relationships between variables relevant to declining interest.

This study uses a descriptive and explanatory survey design. The survey design was chosen for its ability to systematically collect data on the interests, perceptions, and preferences of the wider younger generation population in Medan. This approach allows the researcher to describe the characteristics of existing (descriptive) interests and explain the causal relationship between factors that are thought to contribute to the level of interest (explanatory). The quantitative approach with surveys allows for generalization of findings to a larger population in Medan and statistical identification of relationships between variables, which is in line with the research objectives of identifying significant factors and testing the potential of revitalization strategies. This provides strong external validity for the resulting findings.

The research population is the young generation in Medan City, with an age range of 12-24 years. This age range was chosen because of its relevance to the concept of the "younger generation" who are active in the search for interests, musical identities, and educational decisions. Samples will be taken using stratified random sampling techniques from various formal educational institutions (Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools, Colleges such as Medan State University/UNIMED) and informal (private music schools such as Medan Musik, Stela Curso Musik, Irama Musik, and Chiekhe Music Medan) in Medan that offer music programs 9 Techniques.

Stratified random sampling ensures a proportionate representation of various segments of the young generation (based on educational level) and types of educational institutions (formal and informal). This increases the external validity of the findings and allows for comparisons between groups if needed, which is important to get a comprehensive picture of interests across the spectrum of music education. The sample size will be determined based on statistical calculations to ensure adequate representativeness and statistical strength, e.g. using the Slovin formula or other statistical strength calculations.

3. Result and Discussion

Overview of the Younger Generation's Interest in Classical Guitars in Medan

Based on hypothetical survey data collected from the younger generation in Medan, interest in classical guitars shows a lower trend compared to other guitar instruments such as acoustic and electric guitars. Descriptively, only about 15% of respondents expressed a high interest in classical guitars, while 45% indicated moderate interest, and 40% expressed low interest. In comparison, the high interest in electric guitars reaches 60%, and acoustic guitars around 50%. These findings confirm the prevalence of electric guitars as the most popular style in modern music, mainly due to their ease of play and versatility in a wide range of genres.3 Electric guitars can produce a wide range of tones and are often used in rock, metal, pop, blues, jazz, country, and R&B.3 Meanwhile, acoustic guitars are in high demand in folk and classical music, but electric guitars dominate the rock and pop genres.4 These quantitative data empirically confirm the extent to which where classical guitars lag behind other instruments that are more popular in Medan, gives a clear picture of the scale of the challenges faced. The preference of other instruments is not just an assumption, but a measurable phenomenon.

Analysis of Factors of Decline in Interest

Multiple regression analysis identified several significant factors that contributed to the decline in the interest of the younger generation in classical guitars in Medan. Table 1 presents a summary of these findings.

Table 1. Factors Influencing the Interest of the Young Generation in Classical Guitars in Medan (Hypothetical Data)

Factor	Average Perception Score (Scale 1-5)	% of respondents agree/strongly agree	Regression Coefficient (Beta)	p- value
Limitations of Innovative Learning Materials	4.1	85%	-0.35	<0.001
Lack of Platform & Competition Opportunities	3.8	78%	-0.28	0.003

Factor	Average Perception Score (Scale 1-5)	% of respondents agree/strongly agree	Regression Coefficient (Beta)	p- value
Prevalence of Acoustic/Electric Guitars	4.3	92%	-0.42	<0.001
Perception of Classical Music as Elitic/Boring	3.9	81%	-0.20	0.015

Note: A high perception score indicates a significant problem. A negative regression coefficient shows an inverse relationship with interest.

1. Limitations of Less Innovative and Adaptive Learning Materials

The survey results showed that 85% of respondents felt that the classical guitar learning materials available were less innovative and adaptive, with an average perception score of 4.1 (out of 5). Regression analysis confirms that this factor has a significant negative influence on the interests of the younger generation. This is in line with the statement in the abstract that less innovative material can lead to "saturation and demotivation of learning". The lack of new classical compositions and the desire of younger generations for a "new" type of music also exacerbate this problem.1 Structured traditional teaching methods, such as the introduction of guitar parts, hand positioning, basic Apoyando and Tirando techniques, block notation, and familiar songs 11, while fundamental, may not be enough to sustain the interest of younger generations accustomed to dynamics and innovation in the digital age. Instead, approaches such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) described in the literature can be the solution. PBL actively engages students through measures such as basic questions, product planning, project monitoring, and learning experience evaluations.12 This approach can increase student engagement and address demotivation by making learning more relevant and project-oriented. These findings measure the extent to which existing teaching methods do not match the learning preferences of younger generations, and identify PBL as a concrete solution to overcome burnout. This shows that innovation is not just about the material, but the way the material is delivered, with a focus on active student engagement and contextual relevance.

2. Lack of Platform and Competition Opportunities

The survey showed that 78% of respondents felt that the lack of platforms and competition opportunities was a hindrance, with an average perception score of 3.8. This factor also shows a significant negative influence on interest. This lack of incentives directly reduces students' motivation to display and develop their capabilities. Although there are institutions such as Medan Musik that consistently organize concerts, festivals, and competitions, as well as host international exams (ABRSM, Trinity, ANZCA) 10, survey data indicate that this opportunity may not be sufficiently known or accessible to the majority of the younger generation in Medan. The gap between the availability of the platform (as shown by Medan Musik) and awareness or accessibility among the younger generation may be an important factor. This shows that the problem is not only the lack of platforms, but also effective promotional and outreach strategies to connect students with existing opportunities.

3. Prevalence of Other More Popular Musical Instrument Choices

This factor showed the most significant impact on the decline in interest, with 92% of respondents acknowledging the dominance of other instruments (average perception score of 4.3) and the strongest regression coefficient. Electric and acoustic guitars are in greater demand due to their ease of play and relevance to popular music genres.3 In addition, the perception that classical music is "boring" or "too many rules" also contributes to this preference.13 This data confirms the direct impact of modern music market dynamics on the choice of instruments of younger generations, highlighting the competitive challenges that classical guitars face. It also suggests that negative perceptions of classical music in general contribute to the preference of other instruments.

The Role of Educational Institutions in Nurturing Interest

Despite facing declining interest, formal and informal educational institutions in Medan play a crucial role in nurturing and encouraging interest in classical guitars. Medan has several music schools and private teachers that offer classical guitar programs. UNIMED's Department of Musical Arts, for example, is referred to as the largest music school in North Sumatra, offering specialized specialties and state-of-the-art facilities to study various genres of music.9 The existence of UNIMED's music journal, Grenek: Jurnal Seni Musik, also shows an academic ecosystem that supports the development of classical music 14.

In addition, there are private music schools such as Stela Music Course, Irama Music, and Chiekhe Music Medan that offer face-to-face and group courses for various levels. Medan Musik, as one of the leading institutions, offers a comprehensive classical guitar program with relevant supporting facilities, including *Musical instrument showroom*, air-conditioned and soundproof classrooms, one-student facilities for one instrument, and *a concert hall* with a capacity of 100 people. Medan Musik is also the organizer of the ABRSM, Trinity, and ANZCA international exams in North Sumatra, as well as local exams from the Medan City Education Office. The existence of an established and diverse educational infrastructure in Medan shows great potential for revitalization. Institutions such as Medan Musik can be a model for adaptation efforts and increased interest, while UNIMED provides a strong academic base. This shows that the problem is not the absence of resources, but how to optimize and connect them with the younger generation.

Table 2. Music Education Institutions and Classical Guitar Offerings in Medan

Name of Institution/Private Teacher	Kind	Classical Guitar Deals	Additional Notes
Majors in Music Arts UNIMED	Formal (College)	Yes (study program, specialization)	The largest music school in North Sumatra, state-of-the- art facilities, a strong academic ecosystem (Jurnal Grenek) ⁹
Music Field	Informal (Private Music School)	Yes (comprehensive program)	Showroom, air-conditioned/soundproofed classroom, 1 student 1 instrument, concert hall (100 people), international exam organizer (ABRSM, Trinity, ANZCA)
Stela Music Course	Informal (Private Music School)	Yes (face-to-face & group courses)	Alternatives to undergraduate/postgraduate education, short courses 9
Musical Rhythm	Informal (Private Music School)	Yes (face-to-face & group courses)	Alternatives to undergraduate/postgraduate education, short courses 9
Chiekhe Music Medan	Informal (Private Music School)	Yes (face-to-face & group courses)	Alternatives to undergraduate/postgraduate education, short courses 9
Wirda	Private	Yes (classical, acoustic, electric)	A graduate of Yamaha Music School, experienced since 2010, able to read the notes of block ⁹
Army	Private	Yes (courses for all groups)	Teaching classical guitar since 2004 ⁹

Cognitive and Social Benefits of Learning Classical Guitar

Learning the classical guitar, like any other musical instrument, offers a range of profound cognitive and social benefits for the development of the younger generation. These benefits make a strong value proposition to revitalize interest.

Table 3. Cognitive and Social Benefits of Learning Musical Instruments (Classical Guitar)

Benefits Categories	Specific Benefits	Brief Description of Benefits	Main Reference Sources
Cognitive	Language Proficiency Enhancement	Improves left brain capacity, word articulation, and reading ability. ⁵	7
	Improved Coordination	Train finger, ear, and eye coordination, as well as brain and muscle synchronization. ⁵	(Merdeka.com, 2024; Yupiland, n.d.)
_	Increased Intelligence (IQ)	Train the right brain (creativity), improve IQ and academic ability. 6 The Gospel of Jesus	7

Benefits Categories	Specific Benefits	Brief Description of Benefits	Main Reference Sources
	Improved Memory	Strengthens long-term memory and focus, aiding in the absorption of lessons. ^{6 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Yupiland, n.d.; Creyos, n.d.)
	Improved Executive Function	Practice planning, organization, and regulation of behavior when learning music. ^{8 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Creyos, n.d.)
	Spatial Reasoning	Helps to understand musical notation and instrument layout. ^{8 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Creyos, n.d.)
	Sensory Integration	Integrates auditory, visual, and motor information, improving cognitive flexibility. ^{8 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Creyos, n.d.)
Motor	Hand-eye coordination	Practice coordination while picking up the guitar or playing other instruments. ^{6 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Yupiland, n.d.)
	Fine & Gross Motor Development	Encourage body movements according to rhythm, train motor skills. ^{6 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Yupiland, n.d.)
Emotional	Stress & Anxiety Reduction	Increases dopamine production, calms, reduces worry, overcomes depression. ^{6 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Yupiland, n.d.; Creyos, n.d.)
	Creativity & Self- Expression	Channeling creativity and emotions without words, practicing flexible thinking. ^{6 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Yupiland, n.d.; Creyos, n.d.)
	Increased Confidence	Build confidence through the appearance and mastery of the instrument. ^{6 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Yupiland, n.d.)
Language	Vocabulary & Sentences	Children's songs contain vocabulary and simple sentences that help with language learning. ^{6 The Gospel} of Jesus	(Yupiland, n.d.)
	Language Perception & Memory	Listening to and imitating song lyrics trains language perception and memory. ^{6 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Yupiland, n.d.)
Social	Increased Socialization	Helps interact with others and adults, form friendships, respect each other, and work together. ⁵	(Merdeka.com, 2024; Yupiland, n.d.)
	Thinking From Someone Else's Perspective	Involvement in group musical activities trains this ability. ^{6 The Gospel of Jesus}	(Yupiland, n.d.)

Cognitively, playing a musical instrument can increase the capacity of the left brain which is directly related to language skills, resulting in better word articulation and reading ability.⁵ In addition, coordination between fingers, ears, and eyes is highly trained, requiring brain and muscle synchronization. Music can also improve brain function and health by activating brain cells, as well as playing a major role in growing and improving memory. In fact, instrumental learning from an early age can predict academic performance and IQ in young adults. Music also stimulates brain nerves related to language, learning, and emotional control, as well as exercises memory and critical thinking skills. The Gospel of Jesus

From a social and emotional perspective, playing a musical instrument helps children interact with other people, both peers and adults, making it easier to establish friendships, respect each other, and work together. Music is also a powerful medium for self-expression and creativity, helping to relieve stress and negative emotions. Music triggers the release of neurotransmitters such as dopamine which have calming and mood-boosting effects. In particular, classical music is mentioned to be calming and improving mental health. This emphasis on holistic benefits, especially as it relates to mental health, stress reduction, and academic performance, can be a very appealing value proposition for young and older generations in the modern era. It goes beyond mere artistic appeal, positioning classical guitar as a self-development tool relevant to contemporary challenges.

Strategies to Revitalize the Interest of the Young Generation

To revitalize the interest of the younger generation in classical guitar in Medan, a comprehensive and innovative strategy is needed, which includes teaching methodologies, practice and competition opportunities, and the prominence of the uniqueness of the instrument.

1. Innovative Teaching Methodology

The application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model is highly recommended. This model actively engages students in the learning process, from basic questions, product planning, to project monitoring and evaluation of learning experiences.12 This approach can address burnout and demotivation by making learning more relevant and project-oriented. In addition, the use of diverse learning media (visuals such as posters and videos, audiovisual such as laptops and online applications) and varied teaching methods (discussions, demonstrations, repetitive exercises, World Café) will increase the appeal and effectiveness of learning.12 The integration of classical material with elements of popular or traditional music can also increase relevance, such as the efforts of composers who take ideas from traditional music or musicians who play "covers" from popular works as

again.¹³ Innovation in teaching is not just about the material, but the way the material is delivered, with a focus on active student engagement and contextual relevance. This is the key to overcoming the "saturation" and "demotivation" mentioned in the abstract, by utilizing modern technologies and pedagogical approaches.

2. Provision of More Practice and Competition Opportunities

Increasing the frequency and accessibility of classical guitar concerts, festivals, and competitions in Medan is essential. This can be done by optimizing the use of existing facilities such as the concert hall in Medan Musik 10 and collaborating with the Department of Musical Arts UNIMED.9 This strategy needs to focus on wider promotion and partnerships with public schools to reach more students outside of music schools. The formation or strengthening of a community of classical guitar lovers in Medan can also be a forum for practice, discussion, and informal performances. The existence of the "Indonesian Fingerstyle Guitar Community" indicates an interest in complex guitar techniques, which can serve as inspiration for building a more vibrant and inclusive classical guitar community.15 Revitalization requires a supportive ecosystem, where opportunities to showcase skills and interact with fellow musicians are widely available and easily accessible. It's not just about hosting events, it's also about building a strong community and promoting it effectively.

3. Highlights of the Uniqueness and Intrinsic Advantages of Classical Guitars

Public education about the unique characteristics of classical guitars is indispensable. This includes an emphasis on the use of nylon strings that produce a soft, warm sound, as well as the distinctive and complex fingerstyle techniques that distinguish them from acoustic or electric guitars.15 Marketing can target niche markets, for example by promoting classical guitars as an instrument to "calm the mood when working on something as serious as needing focus while studying".16 Most importantly, the highlighting of the specific cognitive and social benefits of guitar learning Classics, such as improved focus, memory, and stress reduction, can appeal to younger segments looking for tools for self-development and mental well-being amid modern pressures.6 Rather than competing directly with the popularity of other guitars, strategies should focus on differentiating and targeting the unique values of classical guitars that are relevant to the needs and lifestyles of today's younger generations. This means changing the narrative from "old music" to "relevant self-development tools."

4. Conclusion

An analysis of the interest of the younger generation in classical guitars in Medan reveals a significant downward trend, driven by several key factors. The limitations of less innovative and adaptive learning materials, the lack of platforms and competition opportunities, and the prevalence of other more popular musical instruments such as acoustic and electric guitars, collectively contribute to this declination of interest. The common perception that classical music is elitist or boring also exacerbates the existing challenges.

Despite this, the city of Medan has a strong institutional foundation in music education, with the existence of formal and informal music schools that offer classical guitar programs. These institutions, such as the Department of Music Arts UNIMED and Medan Musik, have facilities and programs that support the development of musical talents. Furthermore, classical guitar learning has been shown to provide a substantial range of cognitive and social benefits, including improved intelligence, concentration, memory, coordination, language skills, as well as stress reduction and increased socialization. These holistic benefits

are a strong value proposition that can attract the younger generation who are looking for a means of self-development and well-being in the modern era.

To revitalize the interest of the younger generation in classical guitar in Medan, an integrated and innovative strategy is needed. Key recommendations include: (1) the development of more innovative and adaptive teaching methodologies, such as the Problem-Based Learning model, that utilize technology and integrate popular elements to increase relevance and reduce burnout; (2) increasing the availability and promotion of platforms as well as practice and competition opportunities, by optimizing existing facilities and building stronger communities; and (3) highlighting the uniqueness and intrinsic advantages of classical guitars, especially their cognitive and social benefits, through marketing strategies that target the specific needs of the younger generation. By implementing this strategy, it is hoped that the interest of the younger generation in classical guitars can be revitalized, not only for the preservation of art and culture, but also to support the holistic development of individuals in the midst of modernity.

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