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Introduction There has been considerable research output in the development of expertise in musicians and the contribution choir training makes in this direction. Choir training classes are relatively larger in size than the regular classes. Being a practical class, it requires a lot of classroom management strategies. Tested in this study is the low-level learning strategy (Sullivan and Cantwell, 1999). The focus of this study is to determine the quality of practice and the types of practicing strategies that teachers adopted in teaching 4 classical pieces to two levels of University students. Cantwell and Millard's (1994) study of the relationship between approach to learning and learning strategies in learning music; and Sullivan and Cantwell's (1999) study of the planning behaviors of musicians engaging traditional and non-traditional scores; identified and classified learning strategies into three levels: lower-level (rote learning, trial and error and sight reading); mid-level (special alteration, linking of elements); and high-level strategies (interpretation, patterning, prioritizing and monitoring). They found that for the traditional score, there is significant relationship between the mid-level strategies and the use of a deep approach to learning (Sullivan and Cantwell 1999, 245-266). Since this study covered the lower levels of the University, the low level strategy was adopted and tested in this study. Conceptual Clarification Tonic sol-fa is a pedagogical technique for teaching sight reading as invented by Sarah Ann Glover (1795-1867) of English. Gradually it has since then become a method of teaching vocal music. None the less different approaches are applied to teaching choral groups. Each group has its own peculiarity if perceived from the purpose of groping- community singing group, school singing group, church choir, children, men or women choir. A preliminary research of the use of tonic sol-fa among the students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the study showed different perspectives like: I enjoy singing but I cannot sing with tonic sol-fa; the songs become too difficult when tonic sol-fa is applied; I prefer solo singing; I enjoy group singing with no part singing; it is difficult to apply the text after learning in tonic sol-fa; people laugh at me when I make mistakes trying to use tonic sol-fa and so on. This preliminary survey pointed to the fact that using tonic sol-fa may be problematic among Nigerian students and this prompted this study (Abiodun 2013,173-183). Other variables controlled included: Those with hoarse voices; Those with trained voices; Those who can sing in sol-fa notation; and Those who cannot sing in sol-fa notation Hanley (1998) notes that the technical aspects of teaching students in music class are laced with problems ranging from those not singing in tune otherwise feeling incapacitated in music (Hanley 1998, 36-39). Such technical aspect is the use of sol-fa notation to teach choir, reading from score and performing without the score sheets. The ability to sing or play (performance) has always been recognized as a desirable musical accomplishment among musicians of the world. It contributes in no small measure to the development of expertise in musicians (concerts and general performances). In the absence of any musical instrument, the natural instrument- the voice is capable of singing without instrumental accompaniment (a cappella). It may be said that everyone who has a voice ought to naturally sing or learn to sing. This is because singing is the most natural expression of music and singer is provided with an instrument that costs him nothing, which never requires tuning and which is always ready for use. Singing has also become a useful framework to teaching other subjects in the curriculum especially language proficiency. Training to sing is therefore paramount to acquiring and promoting cognitive and motor sensory. Singing has a well-known impact on the emotional state, while it can also be a motivating activity. "Of all the diverse kinds of instruments, the human voice plays by far the greatest part." (Ekwueme 1992, 67). The voice can imitate all the instruments (Western and African). Singing gives all an opportunity to make music together and it fosters the spirit of working as a team. Music as a subject in Nigeria can be traced to the "Flurry of Missionary activities" in the Southern Nigeria during the second half of the 19th Century. Teaching and learning of Music started with the introduction of singing into our schools and for years, singing consistently appeared on our school time-table and still remains the only aspect of music taught in Nigerian schools especially primary schools. Rudiments and theory of music is currently sparsely taught at the primary schools in Nigeria. Okafor (1988), Ekwueme (1992), and Vidal (2004) confirmed this in different studies. Studies have confirmed that the non-inclusion of music per se in the curriculum of our primary schools and the absence of music as a subject in most of our secondary schools was as a result of non-availability of trained teachers. The implication of this will include zero level of preparedness for music education at higher level and non-exposure to musical training. The results also showed the direct adverse effect this had on the teaching and learning of music in our higher institutions. Candidates admitted into our tertiary institutions have little or no knowledge of rudiments of music (Okafor, 1988, 15). This affects generally the output of the music graduates of College of Education, Polytechnic and University (Abiodun 2013, 180). To ameliorate this problem, music Educators in the training institutions over the years have carried out many researches in order to discover suitable methods of teaching Music. Charles Benner observed: "If school music is to have relevance for the general populace, music educators must be capable of devising strategies, method, musical materials and experiences through which most students will discover appropriate uses for music as personal medium of interest and expression." (Faseun 1994, 8). Singing especially Western classical pieces is such an area where students with little or no background in music rudiments have difficulty during choir rehearsal. The Nigerian folk songs are learnt through rote learning method and melodies of such are passed down through ascription from one generation to another. With the new technology, the media forum- radio and television helps in transmitting the melodies regularly where Nigerians learn one folk song or the other. Classical pieces are seldom played on Nigerian media, it is therefore not popular. Studies have shown that Western Music items dominate the curriculum contents of the Music curricular in Nigerian schools, Colleges and Universities (Nzewi 1991; Omojola 1995). As much as music Educators are clamoring for inclusion of African Music in our curriculum, the Nigerian trained Musicians still use western notation to write the indigenous music. This is a blessing in disguise since this helps to make African music available to the rest of the world and to make its performance universal. Rote learning is a described characteristic of informal apprenticeship system of music education and training procedures in Nigeria (Abiodun 2013, 179); while tonic sol-fa which was first used by the members of the clergy called monks during the medieval times was evolved by Guido de Arezzo and developed into the first system of teaching choral music (Grout 1973). Musical experience in Nigerian primary schools is limited to singing in a choir and playing the local instrument in the school band (Okafor 1988, 15). Most often, the experience does not include singing in parts (S.A.T.B) neither does it include the use of tonic sol-fa to teach. Where the choir or the band has an organ/keyboard, the choir repeats the melodic phrases after the keyboard and where there is no instrument; the choir re-echoes the melodic phrases after the choir leader. More emphasis is placed on singing in our schools because it is the only medium that people understand and many still assume that music as a subject means just singing and drumming alone. The singing which however is limited to the folk tunes of various cultural background devoid of the western melodic pattern is not challenging enough to prepare the mind of students for a Western classical music. One of the problems faced by music educators in Nigeria is the inclination and preference of the students to listen to popular and traditional music rather than western 'serious' music. There is much of Western items in our curriculum but much popular music on Nigerian streets and in the air. Studies equally showed that there is still no audience for Western classical music in Nigerian musical scene (Ekwueme 1992, 67). Classical music (Vocal and instrumental) is only appreciated by the academic musicians. Its performance is limited to classroom stages, academic music conferences and very few churches in Nigeria. With many Africans still non literate and most Africa being musically illiterate; classical music has not yet got a stable audience in Nigeria. It has equally been observed that Africans find it difficult to sing musical pieces with semitone which is one of the outstanding features of classical piece. Ekwueme (1992, 69) asserted that "the preponderance of the Africa pentatonic scale which has no semitone interval at all, makes the proper intonation of semitone extremely difficult for many African Choirs." Teaching classical pieces by rote learning may as a result of the problems identified above pose a challenge and alter the actual intonation and melodic sequences in such songs. In a way this also may contribute to variation in musicality and standard. Some factors determine this and such factors according to Akosua (1998, 141) include language, materials and structure of the music which dictate the pitch accuracy. Evidence in her studies suggested that linguistic content influences musical ideas, particularly, melodic movement in the singing of children. Other problems African may have as shown in Akosua's studies include that if African language patterns are being articulated in a Western tonal environment, they seem to produce in children a restricted pitch range focused around a tonal center. Their children produced a narrow range of vowel pitches. According to her, one reason for this is the general assent among adult Akan speakers that singing the major seventh can be problematic. In a study of quality, pedagogy and governance in private; higher education institutions in Egypt, Barsoum (2017, 193-211) found out that both types of institutions fall short of providing student-activating teaching methods. The need to research into appropriate teaching methods is still paramount in all students. In Firrincielli's (2016, 1520-1525) study of Maieutic, a teaching method and learning approach as applied to western music investigated how Western methodologies can be efficient and valuable in non-western cultures. He concluded that music teaching and learning must be part of a cultural and artistic approach towards diverse heritage as found out in the result of this study. No matter how efficient a method is, it must be adaptable to different cultures because of the peculiarity of each song within a culture. Mapaya notes that music pedagogy places a premium on written notation, sometimes to the demerit of orality (Mapaya 2016, 53). His position explains while many choirs in Nigeria depend on rote-learning method and there is always a challenge of which of the methods is better in teaching students with less formal musical experience. This is particularly typical when training students to perform as a professional singer and attaining good scholarship in vocal performance. The entry requirement for undergraduate studies in music is a minimum of five credits grade of which music and English language are compulsory. However, students without formal music training who showed musical ability at screening excises are also considered based on their performance at the screening excise. Generally such students learn the basic rudiments upon admission. Researches showed that the diagnostic test at the point of admission does not probe musical ability as they are mostly subjective, biased, flexible and sentimental. Faseun (1994) Vidal (2004) and Abiodun (2013) confirmed this in their studies. The implication of this is that in the singing class we eventually find those not singing in tune or otherwise feeling incapacitate in music (Hanley 1998, 39). In the class, we will find those with bad voices, those with trained voices, those who can sing in sol-fa notation and those who cannot (Abiodun 2013,180). Behavioural Management in Chorus Classroom It is assumed in this study that the fundamental principles of classroom management applied. From the experience of the researcher for over thirty years as a choir teacher, trainer and conductor, the first step of hypnosis and establishing routines and classroom management tools formed the basis of any methods adopted in this study. Todd Finley (2016) reiterated that successful classroom management depends on conscientiously executing a few big strategies and a lot of little ones (Todd Finley 2016, 57). This because authors have noted that no single method is enough to teach practical subjects like the chorus class and thus concluded that related methods could be combined in practical oriented subjects. Over some time, Nigerians from birth have formed and assumed singing habit accruing from learning procedures such as learning from parents, peer groups and children game songs through listening, participation, collaborating, self practice and learning by rote. Through this a relatively permanent singing habit has been formed. These procedures have been confirmed in different studies by Ekwueme (1992), Adeogun (2001) and Abiodun (2013). The studies also confirmed that little or no musical literacy in terms of Western oriented singing is found in the Nigerian school system. Kardos (2012) noted with dismay that she has witnessed display of genuine distress and fear of over having to read music in classroom setting. She further observed that sometimes students have natural resistance to engaging with the world of classical or art music, often citing it as too difficult to understand (Kardos 2012, 143-151). Behavioral management in chorus classroom entails managing the voice, the large classroom and the professional ethics. In all these, the voice which is the basic musical instrument, requires some basic managerial strategies. This study has adopted some of the basic managerial principles. This includes validating the chorus items as an appropriate section of Nigerian music curriculum. Finley also suggested that appropriate curriculum as a classroom management strategy. He equally listed rehearsing transition, keeping student's behavior at arm, appreciating good behavior and building content-related anticipation as strategies. It has been observed that in big classes, autonomy of the students will enhance better management of the class. Jessica Hockett and Kristina Doubet (2017) agitated for the promotion of students' autonomy as a managerial strategy. According to them, "flexible classrooms rely on students exercising a certain degree of independence. If teachers want to maximize their time working with individuals and small groups, for example, they need the rest of the class to be self-sufficient." (Hockett and Doubet 2017, 36-49). Autonomy as applied to this study required that each part is autonomous and sing independently. Each part with a student coordinator rehearsed separately for thirty minutes before the four parts sing together. The 1-2-3 Then Me approach makes students to rely first on their own and their peers' understanding of a task. This made the students to work together in a class situation and encouraged working together outside the class. Different approaches were adopted to resolving classroom management challenges. Embry and Biglan (2008) recommended the kernels approach described as "fundamental units of behavior influence" which is the most appropriate for a large class like the chorus class (Embry and Biglan 2008, 18-34). Being a practical class of four groupings: Soprano, Alto, Tenor and bass; the teacher needs a flexible approach to coordinate the class. Todd Finley (2017) saw the kernel approach as "Research-based classroom management strategies embedded into more complex constellations of evidenced-based behavioral programmes because of their effectiveness in cuing self-regulation and pro-academic dispositions" a list of eleven approaches was given by the author (Todd Finley 2017, 49-61). Two of the approaches closely related to this study were the non-verbal cues approach which justifies the position of a conductor in chorus performance; while the When-Then approach is an intervention to help students make responsible decisions. For instance, when you asked me to sing soft, I sing soft. Studies showed that using this approach, classroom instructions systematically teach self-regulation, relationship management and responsible decision making. Mary Poppins' study generated a list of 14 classroom strategies that are equally useful in a large class like the chorus class (Mary Poppins, 2014, 12-19). Natahe Schwartz's (2017) study suggested a set of hints on successful classroom management (Natahe Schwartz's2017, 49-56). One of them is that effective classroom management should be based on learnable set of skills which in this study requires that the classroom teacher should select pieces according to the age, the experience, exposure, ability and musical knowledge of the choir members. This is in line with Abiodun (2013) who reiterated that educational management has to be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education (Abiodun 2013, 173-183). NataheSchwartz (2017) suggested leadership approach defined as influencing other's actions in achieving desirable end. He further emphasized the importance of theory in education management. According to him, theory provides a rationale for decision making, theoretical framework underpinning practice in educational institution (Natahe Schwartz ... ibid). A good knowledge of rudiments and theory of music will enhance good quality musical rehearsals, practices and performance. The Problem Many choirs in Nigeria cannot read the staff notation like most of the African choirs. The choirs use mainly the rote learning method and few depend on sol-fa notation. There is always a challenge of which of the methods is better in teaching students with less formal musical experience. This study therefore investigated experimentally the effect of teaching a choir with two different methods: (a) tonic sol-fa method and (b) rote learning method with a focus on four classical musical pieces. This author observed for many years as an organist and a performer that Nigerian choirs do not sing classical songs very well. This study assumed that the problem may be as a result of bad method of teaching, choir incompetence, teacher's inexperience or phobia for classical songs. This study therefore investigated experimentally the effect of two different methods of teaching a choir and the effect on student's academic performance in musicianship. Four classical pieces were purposely selected for the study: Hallelujah Chorus (excerpt from Handel's Messiah 1685-1759) Te Deum Laudamos (Samuel Akpabot 1975) He shall be great (Peterson's Down from His Glory (1977) My love for you (excerpt from Omojola's Odyssey of an innocent, 1994) The two methods used are rote learning and tonic sol-fa methods. Research Hypothesis H01: There will be no significant difference in the post-instruction performance of students taught with tonic sol-fa method and their counterparts taught with rote learning method. H02: There will be no significant difference in the post-instruction performance in songs composed by Western and Nigerian composers. Methodology The target population for this study was the 200 levels students of Department of Music, ObafemiAwolowo University 2015/2016 session. There were a total of eighty eight students in the class. Half of the class (n=44) students were the control group (rote learning method) while the second half (n=44) were the experimental group (tonic sol-fa method) 300 and 400 level students were not involved in the study because they have studied some of these classical pieces previously. The study was conducted in the second semester of 2015/2016 session. The musical scores used were compositions of two Western composers, G.F. Handel (1685-1759) and John Peterson (1977), and two Nigerian classical composers Samuel Akpabot (1975) and Bode Omojola (1994). To keep the teacher variable constant for the two songs, two lecturers in the Department were involved in the teaching of the songs using the two methods of teaching separately. The two lecturers were always present during instruction period. The four musical scores chosen were taught for one semester. At the end of the instructional period, the students were given the same questions irrespective of the group. The two lecturers were also involved in examining the students and the average scores were used to get the raw scores of each of the students. The scores used were not the total score in the semester course but the scores in the Examination taken. Continuous assessment scores were not used. The t-test statistical tool was used to test the two stated hypotheses by comparing the mean scores of the two levels in each of the dependent variable of different methods and different composers of different geographical setting and different exposure. Results Table 1 Mean Rating of control and experimental groups on the items in the two different methods. S/N Items Method Used Mean Rating 1. Hallelujah Chorus A* 6.71 B** 5.09 2. Te Deum Laudamus A 6.32 B 4.68 3. He shall be done A 7.03 B 5.54 4. My Love for You A 7.21 B 5.59 *Experimental group (tonic sol-fa method) **Control group (Rote learning method) From table 1, it is clearly shown that the experimental group had higher ratings than the control group in all items. Table 2 The t-test result on post-instruction performance scores of experimental and control groups in the two methods used. Method Used N X S.D Calculated t-value Table t-value DF Experimental 44 27.28 2.27 8.39 2.069 23 Controlled 44 20.09 1.7 In table 2, the calculated t- value of 8.39 is far greater than the critical t- test of 2.069 (at 23 df and 0.05 level of significance). This implies that students taught with tonic sol-fa had significantly more positively post instruction performance than their counterparts in the control group. Even if there were differences in individual scores of both groups as a result of natural talent, interest, exposure and voice parts, the difference is insignificant as much as no particular score was exceptionally too high among others. The null hypothesis (H0) that there is no significant difference in respect of the two different methods used is rejected since the critical t-value is less than the calculated value. The mean rating (table 1) confirms this. Table 3 Western and Western Composers (compared) Composer Group N X S.D Calculated t-value Table t-value DF Western 1 44 13.75 1.35 6.82 2.069 23 Western 2 44 10.36 0.94 The t-test on post instruction performance of experimental and control group based on composer's geographical settings (Western and Western Composers Compared). Table 4 Western and Nigerian Composers (compared) Composer Group N X S.D Calculated t-value Table t-value DF Nigerian 1 44 13.75 1.3 7.19 2.069 23 Western 2 44 9.8 1.17 Table 3 shows that the critical t- value of 2.069 (at df 23 and 0.05 level of significance) is far below the calculated t- value of 6.82. This means that students taught with Tonic sol-fa even in Western songs performed significantly better. Similarly in table 4 the result showed that the calculated value of 7.19 (in favor of experimental group in songs composed by Nigerians) is higher than the critical value of 2.069. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Discussion and Conclusion The findings of the study are both interesting and have important implications for the teaching of a choir within and outside academic circle. This study has validated the use of tonic sol-fa in the singing ensembles. It has equally confirmed its general usage in different types of classical songs of various geographical settings with different musical elements such as form and structure, range, totality, intonation, harmony, melodic pattern, rhythmic movements and so on. This study assumed that the problem may be as a result of bad method of teaching, choir incompetence, teacher's inexperience or phobia for classical songs. The result showed that the effect of method used for teaching does not affect significantly the performance output compared to the effect of culturally nuances. Such cultural indices include the duality of choir performance situations. The Nigerian choirs are product of two situations: a) Creative musical ability (outside school) emanating from: Band outside school Church choir Moonlight play Musical and non-musical events (festivals, social events like naming, traditional marriage and funeral ceremonies) The griots and minstrels (solo performance along the streets) b) School choir Nursery rhymes Primary school singing group Secondary school singing groups mostly a capella groups University choir The two situations are relatively managed and are instrumental to performance outcomes of Nigerian choirs. The ability to manage the different performance situations shows significantly when contesting with Nigerian voice texture and the pitches of the melody on one hand and the intonation of the text and melodic contour of the pieces on the other hand. The study also affirmed that Western-trained Nigerian musicians who used European idioms equally produced music that are of high standard like their counterparts in Europe. It shows that more Mozart in West Africa have been produced- the first being Rober Coker (Omojola 1995). Firrincielli (2016) reiterated that western teaching approach methodologies could be efficient and valuable in a variegated context which in this case among the choirs in Nigeria where this study has also confirmed that Western method (tonic sol-fa) was efficient in teaching African oriented melodies. The "musical exchange" between Nigeria and the West and in most African countries contributed in no small measure to a radical re-definition of art music in Nigeria. At least we still use Western notation system to write our compositions. Singing for a long time has been a misrepresentation of music as a subject on the time table in our schools. The only method used for this singing exercise is rote learning. The teacher leads and the pupils repeat after him. She/he only beats the desk to maintain rhythmic pattern and tempo. She/he relies on her/his own suitable pitch of voice to determine the key and she/he eventually sings all the songs in the same key. With the singing as the only aspect of music most cherished, it should be thoroughly taught and it is high time we set aside rote-learning method for a more desirable method capable of developing positive attitude, musical habit, and musical skills in singing. More positive attitudes were identified with this study. The tonic sol-fa method is discovered to be capable of creating a permanent learning status rather than casual learning and offers an opportunity for self-practice and revision at one's convenience. Use of tonic sol-fa methods makes learning less difficult; reduces enormous task of teachers, help the unmusical and greatly improve musical performance. More importantly, it makes a choir more confident, composed and assured. It facilitates fast learning of songs irrespective of the geographical setting of the songs. Use of tonic sol-fa could go a long way to make pupil more musical and a persistent use would eventually eradicate the rote learning method and make singing a more expressive, moving exhilarating and beautiful experience. In Firrincielli's (2016) study of Maieutic, a teaching method and learning approach as applied to western music investigated how Western methodologies can be efficient and valuable in non-western cultures (Firrincielli 2016, 1520-1525). This study confirmed Firrincielli's study. In this study, we were able to identify the inter-cultural nuances in the teaching methods considering the Nigerian singing culture within the context of a musical event and even in events that are not musical like the festival where singing only features. Teaching singing in schools could be effective when these two independent inter-cultural methods are combined. It will go a long way in blending the Western and African cultures. No matter how efficient a method is, it must be adaptable to different cultures because of the peculiarity of each song within a culture.

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