

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CLASSICAL MUSIC ON STUDENTS READING
COMPREHENSION

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received: January 15, 2026 Revised: February 25, 2026 Accepted: May 10, 2026 Published: June 30, 2026 Keywords: First keyword (10pt) Second keyword (10pt) Third keyword (10pt) Fourth keyword (10pt) Fifth keyword (10pt)	Reading comprehension remains a major challenge for many secondary school students, highlighting the need for effective instructional strategies that enhance engagement and cognitive performance. This study investigates the effectiveness of classical music as a learning aid in improving students' reading comprehension, with particular attention to literal and inferential comprehension. Using a quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent control group, the study involved eleventh-grade students at UPT SMA Negeri 1 Takalar. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests and analyzed statistically. The findings indicate that students exposed to classical music achieved greater improvement than those in the control group, with post-test means of 91.21 and 84.00, respectively. The most notable gains occurred in inferential comprehension, suggesting that classical music enhances concentration and higher-order thinking during reading. This study contributes empirical evidence supporting the integration of classical music as an innovative pedagogical strategy to improve reading comprehension in English language classrooms.
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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important abilities that every student must have in the learning process. Reading is an activity that we do to obtain information. So, reading is not only about reading aloud, but also how you can find out the main topic and the ideas contained therein. Apart from that, by reading we can convey perceptions, opinions, feelings and desires.

According to Tattersal, (2021) reading is studied in various fields of research, library and information science, comparative literature, language studies, educational sciences and psychology. In these different disciplines, reading is approached and understood with different methods. Reading is one of the fundamental abilities required for education.

Understanding and meaning interpretation are as important as text decoding skills when reading. According to Aksoy (2023), reading is crucial for obtaining knowledge and has a big impact on students' academic success.

reading is the ability to comprehend, analyse, and evaluate the information contained in texts. According to Yanku (2023), understanding has a few components, such as the understanding of background, inferential memory. Factors such as learning motivation and attitude also have an impact on this ability. Generally, in contrast to the amount of other genres consumed Within the music industry, classical music is typically regarded as a genre that is certain to go extinct. Numerous causes could be involved in this event, but Josiah, a music specialist, the two main factors contributing to the demise of the classical music genre are the decline in enjoyment of music and unfavourable changes in the classical music industry. It has long been thought that classical music enhances cognitive abilities. Swaminathan (2019) claim that listening to classical music can aid in concentration and stress relief, both of which are beneficial for learning. Furthermore, a lot of studies demonstrate that classical music listening aids in the activation of brain areas related to information processing and creativity. Schellenberg (2019) asserts that improved cognitive abilities, including language and comprehension, are associated with training in listening skills.

According to Nurfadillah, (2024) In addition to the necessity of practicing reading activities, reading comprehension involves an interactive process to determine and get the message that the author is trying to deliver to the reader. Reading comprehension is a crucial skill for students to possess. Nevertheless, kids' passion in reading has a big impact on these abilities. The state of education is getting worse due to the poor reading willingness. It is influenced by internal elements such as motivation, emotions, and attention. One way that people convey their enjoyment of reading is through their feelings. This is because of the component of a person's motivation and focus on the reading they do. In addition, the atmosphere has an impact on this; most pupils become disinterested and uneasy about continuing their reading activities in a school setting that is unsuitable for different tasks. The media used in this research is classical music. The goal of the research is to use this instructional medium to help students with good competence enhance their reading abilities. Thus, the goal of this study is to enhance secondary school pupils' reading abilities through the use of instructional media, specifically classical music.

To help senior high school students better comprehend and interpret musical scores as complicated texts, researchers are incorporating reading comprehension techniques into the curriculum. Reading music calls for critical thinking, emotional interpretation, and contextual awareness in addition to symbol recognition, much like reading literature. Teachers hope to help students perform with greater insight and expression by training them to "read" music using comprehension skills. Additionally, this method encourages

interdisciplinary education, links music to cognitive and literacy development, and makes classical music more approachable and interesting for younger students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental method using a nonequivalent control group design to examine the effect of classical music on students' reading comprehension. The independent variable was the use of classical music during reading activities, while the dependent variable was students' reading comprehension achievement. Two classes were assigned as the experimental and control groups. Both groups completed a pre-test and a post-test; however, only the experimental group received the treatment of reading while listening to classical music. The study was conducted at UPT SMA Negeri 1 Takalar, located in Pattalassang District, Takalar Regency, Indonesia. The population comprised 432 eleventh-grade students distributed across 12 classes, with 36 students in each class. Two intact classes were selected as the research sample, consisting of 72 students in total. Class XI-1 served as the experimental group, while Class XI-2 served as the control group. Data were collected using reading comprehension tests in the form of multiple-choice questions designed to assess students' literal and inferential comprehension of narrative texts. The pre-test measured students' initial reading comprehension before the treatment, whereas the post-test assessed their reading achievement after the intervention. The research procedure consisted of three stages: pre-testing, treatment, and post-testing. Both groups first completed the pre-test. During the treatment phase, the experimental group participated in reading comprehension lessons while listening to classical music, whereas the control group received the same reading instruction without music. The treatment lasted for two weeks and comprised five instructional sessions (two sessions in the first week and three sessions in the second week), with each session lasting 40 minutes. Throughout the treatment, students studied narrative texts and completed reading comprehension activities. At the end of the intervention, both groups completed the post-test. The pre-test and post-test scores were then analyzed statistically to determine whether the use of classical music significantly improved students' reading comprehension compared with conventional instruction.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The classification of student scores from reading comprehension tests, consisting of pre-tests and post-tests, formed the basis of the research results. In this case, the researchers sought to answer the research questions from the previous chapter by conducting two tests at the beginning and end of the study. The researcher measured and confirmed the effectiveness of classical music on students' reading comprehension in terms of literal and inferential comprehension after the treatment by administering a post-test after the study was completed, which was done to confirm the effectiveness of classical music on students'

comprehension in terms of literal and inferential comprehension before the treatment began. If the post-test results are higher than the students' pre-test results, this means that classical music is effective in improving students' reading comprehension.

1. Mean score of The Effectiveness of Classical Music on Students' Reading Comprehension

The mean score of The Effectiveness of Classical Music on Students' Reading comprehension are shown determined through the result of pre-test and post-test. It can be seen clearly in the table:

Tabel 1 Mean Score

Mean Score Control Group		Mean Score Experimental Group	
Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
82,27	84,00	83,06	91,21

The table above shows that 60 students took the pretest and 60 students took the posttest. In the control class, 32 students took the pretest and 32 students took the posttest, while in the experimental class, 28 students took the pretest and 28 students took the posttest. This shows that the average scores of students in terms of literal and inferential reading comprehension were higher in the posttest than in the pretest. This is evidenced by the table showing the average scores of students in the experimental class of 83.06 (class XI 4) and the control class of 82.27 (class XI 2) on the pretest, then the average scores of students in the experimental class became 91.21 and the control class became 84.00 on the posttest. The percentage increase in student scores in terms of literal and inferential reading comprehension after being given treatment using classical music was 9.8%.

2. The data statistic pre-test and post-test

The following are the statistical results from the research that has been conducted. The results are as follows:

Table 2 Data Pre-Test

Group Statistics					
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Score	Control	32	82,27	10,613	1,876
	Experimental	28	83,06	14,123	2,670

This table shows that the average score for the control class was 82.27 with a standard deviation of 10.613, while the experimental class obtained an average of 83.06 with a standard deviation of 14.123. The number of samples that took the pre-test was 32 students for the control class and 28 students for the experimental class. The difference in the average is only 0.79 points, which indicates that both groups have almost the same initial reading ability.

Tabel 3 Independent Samples Test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	,45	,506	-,25	60	,803	-,79	3,15	-7,09	5,51
	Equal variances not assumed			-,29	58,9	,803	-,79	3,15	-7,09	5,51

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The results of the difference test using the Independent Samples Test show that based on Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, a significance value of 0.506 (> 0.05) was obtained. This indicates that the data in the control group and the experimental group have homogeneous variances, so that the t-test can be interpreted using the assumption of equal variances (Equal variances assumed).

In the t-test, a value of $t = -0.25$ was obtained with a degree of freedom (df) = 60 and a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.803. This value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the average scores of the control group and the experimental group. The mean difference between the two groups was only -0.79 points, indicating that although the experimental group had a slightly higher mean than the control group, the difference was not statistically significant. The 95% confidence interval is in the range of -7.09 to 5.51, which includes zero, reinforcing the conclusion that there is no real difference between the two groups.

Tabel 4 Data Post Test

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group	60	1	2	1,47	,503
Score	60	40	100	87,50	13,535
Valid N (listwise)	60				

The descriptive table shows that students' post-test scores varied between 40 and 100, with an average of 87.50 and a standard deviation of 13.535 from a total of 60 respondents. This indicates a general increase in scores after the treatment, with the majority of students scoring in the high range.

Tabel 5 T-Test

Group Statistics					
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Score	Control Class	32	84,00	15,615	2,639
	Experimental	28	91,21	9,845	1,714

In the control group of 32 students, the average post-test score was 84.00 with a standard deviation of 15.615. Meanwhile, the experimental group consisting of 28 students obtained a higher average score of 91.21 with a standard deviation of 9.845. The difference in mean of 7.21 points shows that the experimental group obtained better results after being given classical music treatment.

Tabel 6 Independent Sample

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	2,05	0,158	-2,31	58	0,025	-7,21	3,12	-13,46	-0,96
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,29	55,7	0,026	-7,21	3,15	-13,52	-0,91

Based on the results of the analysis using the Independent Samples t-test, a significance value of 0.158 (> 0.05) was obtained for Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. This result indicates that the data from the control group and the experimental group have homogeneous variances, so that the t-test interpretation was performed using the assumption of equal variances (Equal variances assumed).

The t-test results show a value of $t = -2.31$ with degrees of freedom (df) = 58 and significance (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.025 (< 0.05). This finding indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the average scores of the control group and the experimental group. The mean difference between the two groups is -7.21 points, which leads to the conclusion that the experimental group obtained a higher average score than the control group. This is further reinforced by the 95% confidence interval ranging from -13.46 to -0.96, which does not include zero. Thus, the results of this analysis provide empirical evidence that the treatment given to the experimental group had a significant impact on increasing the participants' scores.

3. Frequency and percentage of the students' scores in pretest and posttest

The frequency of student scores in the control class and experimental class on the effectiveness of classical music on student comprehension shows the distribution of student scores and their percentages in each category.

Control Group

Number	Categories	Score	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
			Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Very Good	90 - 100	10	31,25	7	21,88
2	Good	70 - 89	9	59,38	22	68,75
3	Fair	50 - 69	3	9,38	3	9,38
4	Poor	30 - 49	0	0	0	0
5	Very Poor	10 - 29	0	0	0	0
Total			32	100	32	100

Tabel 7 Experimental Group

No	Categories	Score	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
			Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Very Good	90 - 100	7	25,00	21	70,00
2	Good	70 - 89	17	60,71	9	30,00
3	Fair	50 - 69	4	14,29	0	0
4	Poor	30 - 49	0	0	0	0
5	Very Poor	10 - 29	0	0	0	0
Total			28	100	30	100

The two frequency tables above show that the distribution of pre-test scores indicates that the majority of students in both groups are in the Good and Very Good categories.

After the intervention, the distribution of scores shifted strongly to the Very Good category in both groups, with a proportion of 31,25% in the control class and 25,00% in the experimental class. The disappearance of the low category in the post-test indicates that the use of classical music during reading lessons contributed positively to student performance, as reflected in the dominance of the Very Good category and the reduction in the Good to Poor categories.

Discussion

The findings of the study on the effectiveness of classical music on the reading comprehension of students in class XI 2 (control class) and class XI 4 (experimental class) at UPT. SMA Negeri 1 Takalar are presented in this section, with reference to the research objective, which is to determine how effective the use of classical music is in improving students' reading comprehension as a learning medium to enhance literal and inferential comprehension in both classes. The researcher took several steps to achieve the research objectives. Tests were used as research instruments by the researcher to collect data. The data collection steps were as follows: pre-test, treatment during 4 meetings, and post-test at the last class meeting.

The use of pre-test activities in this study was to test the participants' level of knowledge of the material to be delivered. The pre-test activities were conducted before the learning activities were given. The advantage of conducting a pre-test was to determine the participants' initial knowledge of the learning material to be delivered. The researcher would be able to determine how the learning would be delivered later by knowing the participants' initial abilities.

According Ariska (2024), after the post-test treatment was conducted, it can be seen that classical music has a significant effect on students' reading comprehension. In the initial stage (pre-test), the average scores of the control group (82.27) and the experimental group (83.06), so it can be concluded that the initial abilities of the two groups were equivalent. However, after the treatment (post-test), the average score of the experimental group increased higher (91.21) than the control group (84.00) with a statistically significant difference of 7.21 points. The control group only improved by 2.1%, while the experimental group achieved 9.8%, indicating that classical music treatment had an impact that was almost five times greater Herda., (2024). In terms of reading comprehension types, literal comprehension experienced moderate improvement because most students were already able to understand explicit information from the outset. Conversely, the most notable improvement was seen in inferential comprehension, where classical music helped students

to be more focused, relaxed, and critical in drawing conclusions and understanding implicit meanings Nurfadillah (2024).

These results are consistent with the theory that classical music can improve concentration and support cognitive processes, and are consistent with previous studies that have found a positive effect of music on reading skills Pramono (2019). Thus, it can be concluded that classical music is effective not only in strengthening literal comprehension, but especially in improving students' inferential comprehension skills Ahmad (2020).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of classical music significantly improves students' reading comprehension. Although both the experimental and control groups demonstrated comparable reading abilities before the intervention, students who learned while listening to classical music achieved significantly higher post-test scores than those who received conventional instruction. The findings indicate that classical music is particularly effective in enhancing inferential reading comprehension by promoting greater concentration, relaxation, and critical thinking, enabling students to interpret implicit meanings and draw appropriate conclusions from texts. In contrast, improvements in literal comprehension were relatively limited because most students had already demonstrated adequate performance in identifying explicit information before the treatment. Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that integrating classical music into reading instruction is an effective pedagogical strategy for improving students' reading comprehension, especially higher-order inferential comprehension, and can serve as an innovative approach to English language teaching.

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