

## The opinions of the preservice music teachers regarding the teaching of orchestra and chamber music courses during distance education process

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### Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the opinions of preservice music teachers on the processing and efficiency of Orchestra and Chamber Music courses which are based on collective playing and singing, among the online music teaching undergraduate courses conducted in the distance education process that started in Turkey in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study group of the study consisted of 40 students studying at the 3rd and 4th grades in Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Fine Arts Education Department, Music Education Department. In this study, the case study method which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The study data were collected online with a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher based on the literature and current researches, and were tabularized by evaluating with content analysis. According to the results of the study, it was determined that the preservice music teachers thought that the Orchestra and Chamber Music courses were not suitable for distance education and were not taught efficiently, and partition playing and video merging techniques were used in their online courses. In addition, it was concluded that they thought that lesson teaching methods in distance education had no advantage and that the biggest disadvantage was the not being able to play music together. Preservice music teachers suggested that face-to-face education should be initiated in order to teach lessons more efficiently, or that courses should be taught by eliminating connection and technical problems on different online platforms that allow making music together.

Keywords: Distance Education, Music, Orchestra, Chamber Music

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## 1. Introduction

During the COVID19 outbreak, that was accepted as a global pandemic in March 2020, a series of regulations regarding the process were made in higher education institutions in Turkey, as in many educational institutions in the world. After it was understood that the COVID-19 pandemic would spread, the primary and secondary education in Turkey was transformed into distance education and after a 3-week break, it was announced that the 2020 spring semester of higher education would be held entirely by distance education (The Council of Higher Education (CHE), 2020; ctd. Telli Yamamoto and Altun, 2020). On March 12, education was suspended for one week starting from March 16 in all higher education institutions with a state decision. Within this period, distance education opportunities and capacities of universities were detected and Distance Education Roadmap was determined. Studies have been carried out in the areas of legislation, infrastructure, human resources, content and implementation in this determined road map. It was stated that digital opportunities and distance education methods will be used for the theoretical courses in practice-based programs, that the application courses will be given at the most appropriate time determined by the universities (including the extension of the calendar), and that by using distance education and digital facilities provided that they are auditable, there will be no interruption in these processes (Saraç, 2020).

In this crisis period, which education systems have never encountered and were unprepared for, distance education practices were implemented in many countries in order to minimize the loss of learning. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools and education have made it necessary for teachers to take a break from everything customary for a while, and to completely reform teaching and learning, albeit temporarily (Çetinkaya Aydın, 2020).

Every teacher and students, with or without experience in distance education, had to give or take courses via distance education in no time at all. Educational institutions and educators searched for how the courses can be done with distance education and how to use various online materials (Karip, 2020).

Distance education, in which learning takes place, where all kinds of interaction between learner and teacher are provided, and where learner and teacher come together, differ within the scope of education process from the formal education. In this case, it can be said that the factors affecting learning also differ. Some of the factors that affect the educational process in general are motivation, sense of community, cognitive load and anxiety levels (Enfiyeci, Büyükalın Filiz, 2019, p.21). It is possible to list the reasons for the emergence of distance education as an alternative to the traditional education system in this context as follows. 1) The number of students increases day by day due to the increasing population, 2) The number of qualified teachers does not increase in response to the increasing student population, 3) The educational institutions are not evenly distributed in all regions, 4) Increasing demand for education among adults, 5) Reflection of technological developments in education, 6) The most important capital of knowledge in the process we live in, 7) Maintaining a planned and systematic education understanding during distance education model, 8) Increasing internet users day by day, 9) Having the same content and structure with formal education, 10) Epidemic diseases (Andrade, 2015). Due to its multidimensional and complex structure, distance education, where speed and quality education is the main goal, contains many goals.

The distance education model is also used in educational institutions in our country. There is a distance education system called EBA within the Ministry of National Education, where primary and secondary education is affiliated. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the ministry tried to improve the system within a week. After a one-week break, distance education was initiated and the remaining

weeks of the spring term continued with distance education. Higher education institutions, on the other hand, have their own distance education infrastructure. Some courses at universities are conducted by distance education method. Therefore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, universities have developed their existing distance education systems in a way that all students can use, and universities that do not have such a system have been able to switch to distance education by creating a new infrastructure. Higher education institutions completed the rest of the spring term with the distance education model (Kahraman, 2020). Due to the fact that the pandemic could not be taken under control, distance education had to be continued in the 2020-2021 academic year. However, the distance education system was generally used in theoretical courses in the period before the pandemic. For this reason, while distance education can be easily implemented in theoretical courses after the pandemic, some difficulties have been encountered in implementing it in the applied courses.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the education of the students studying at the Music Education Departments in Turkey was also tried to be continued with distance education and online methods. Orchestra and Chamber Music is one of the courses that require collective singing and playing among the music teaching undergraduate program, which is mostly consisted of practice-based courses. The content of these courses are generally stated in the content of the music teaching undergraduate program as follows; listening and following parties in orchestra and chamber music studies; the harmony of orchestra member and conductor, and discipline; chamber music and orchestras in various musical genres in our country and in the world; preparing/arranging and applying concert events and/or chamber music events; composing repertoire and rehearsal discipline; representing our country in national and international music events with a group, developing the awareness of national unity and togetherness through music; to be able to present examples from Turkish and world music at events, to gain the ability to share music together (CHE, 2018). An important question arises as to how and to what extent the goals such as sharing music together, listening and following parties, and ensuring harmony and discipline within the group, which are among the most important goals of Orchestra and Chamber Music courses, can be achieved through distance education.

Based on this, how the Orchestra and Chamber Music courses are carried out with distance education, whether they are efficient for the students, and what the problems and the solution suggestions can be in this process constitute the problem situation of the research.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Study Model*

In this research, the case study method was used. Qualitative research is a research method in which perceptions and events are monitored to be completely revealed in their natural environment with qualitative data collection methods like observation, document analysis or interview, (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). On the other hand, case study is a method in which social actions and structures related to a particular situation are investigated in a holistic and in-depth manner in their natural environment (Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg, 1991).

## 2.2. Study Group

The study group of the study consists of the 3rd and 4th grades students, 20 for each, studying in Mehmet Akif Ersoy University and completing Orchestra and Chamber Music courses through distance education in the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year.

## 2.3. Data Collection Tool

In this research, a semi-structured online interview form consisting of 6 questions prepared by the researcher based on the relevant studies and literature was used in order to determine the opinions of the preservice music teachers. The interview form included 2 close-ended and 4 open-ended questions. The form was finalized with the opinions of two field experts so that the questions were understandable and suitable for the purpose of the study.

## 2.4. Analysis of Data

The data obtained in the study were analyzed by descriptive analysis and content analysis method. Data obtained in descriptive analysis are summarized and interpreted according to themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Data summarized and interpreted in descriptive analysis are subjected to deeper process in the content analysis. For this purpose, the data collected must first be conceptualized and then organized in a logical manner according to the emerging concepts, and the themes explaining the data must be determined (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). With the content analysis, the codes regarding the opinions regarding the distance education of the preservice music teachers were determined and themes were created in line with these codings. The data obtained according to the framework created in accordance with the codes and themes were arranged, selected, and brought together in a significant way. The opinions were calculated as frequencies and percentages and presented in tables, and students' opinions were also included with direct quotations.

## 3. Finding

Table 1. Distribution of preservice music teachers participating in the study by the type of high school they graduated from

Themes	f	%
Non suitable	28	70
Indecisive	9	22,5
Suitable	3	7.5

According to the answers in Table 1, 70% of the preservice music teachers stated that orchestra and chamber music courses were not suitable for distance education, 22.5% were indecisive and only 7.5% stated that it is suitable. It is seen that the majority of the preservice music teachers participating in the study think that orchestra and chamber music courses are not suitable for distance education.

Table 2. Opinions on the efficient teaching of Orchestra and Chamber Music courses during distance education process

Themes	f	%
Not taught efficiently	24	60
Indecisive	12	30
Taught efficiently	4	10

When the answers in Table 2 were examined, 60% of the preservice music teachers stated that Orchestra and Chamber Music courses were not taught efficiently during distance education process,

30% were indecisive, and 10% stated that they were taught efficiently. It can be said that the majority of the participants are of the opinion that Orchestra and Chamber music courses are not taught efficiently during distance education process.

Table 3. Answers regarding the methods of teaching Orchestra and Chamber Music courses during distance education process

Themes	f	%
Playing partition in the online course	20	50
Playing partition in the online course	13	32,5
Sending partitions as video recording	6	15
Playing/singing with teacher in the online course	1	2,5

As seen in Table 3, opinions on how Orchestra and Chamber music courses are taught during distance education process are as 50% playing partitions online in the course, 32.5% playing all partitions by the same person and combining them with video merger programs, 15% sending the partitions as video recordings, 2.5% playing/singing with the teacher in online courses. According to these data, it can be said that playing partitions and playing all partitions by the same person and sending homework with a video merger program are the most used methods.

Table 4. Opinions on the advantages of the methods of teaching Orchestra and Chamber Music courses during distance education process

Themes	f	%
No advantage	28	70
Video recording allows us to see our mistakes	7	17,5
Comfort of submitting video homeworks	5	12,5

Table 4 shows the advantages of the methods of teaching Orchestra and Chamber music courses during distance education process. 70% of the preservice music teachers thought that there is no advantage of distance education teaching methods. Of the participants, 17% thought that recording a video helps them to see their mistakes more easily, 12.5% stated that sending a video homework provided them comfort. According to the data in the table, it can be said that most of them think that the methods of teaching Orchestra and Chamber music courses in distance education have no advantage. The opinions of some of the preservice music teachers are given below:

"I can't see any advantage of it. Because it is distant, it is not as efficient as face to face lesson with the teacher and we have to work only as exam-oriented. "

"I think it has more disadvantages than advantages"

"Since there is not much advantage of distance education, the methods do not make much difference in this process"

"Because we shoot videos, it makes us getting used to perfection"

"Comfort of shooting and sending videos"

Table 5. Opinions on the disadvantages of the methods of teaching Orchestra and Chamber Music courses during distance education process

Themes	f	%
Not being able to play music together	22	55
It is tiring to play all the partitions of the piece alone	8	20
Too much homework	5	12,5

I'm getting excited while shooting videos, I can't show my full performance	5	12,5
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Table 5 shows the disadvantages of the methods of teaching Orchestra and Chamber music courses during distance education process. Of the preservice music teachers, 55% stated not being able to make music together, 20% stated being tiring to play all the partitions of the piece by one person, 12.5% stated too much homework, 12.5% stated being excited while making videos and not performing full performance, as disadvantages. According to these data, preservice music teachers are of the opinion that in the methods of teaching Orchestra and Chamber music courses in distance education, not being able to make music together and having to play all the partitions alone are the biggest disadvantages. The opinions of some of the preservice music teachers are given below:

"Our lesson is not very enjoyable because we cannot play together"

"We cannot achieve the purpose of the lesson"

"For example, I am asked to play all 3 partitions of the piece that I am supposed to play a single partition, and I merge them and send them. My workload increases from 1 to 3 "

"Giving too much homework to make distance education more efficient"

"We can say that it is our hardest lesson during the term, so we could not concentrate much on other lessons."

"I can't show my actual level because I'm more excited while shooting videos"

Table 6. Participants' suggestions so that Orchestra and Chamber Music courses can be taught more efficiently in distance education

Themes	f	%
Distance education can never be efficient, face-to-face education should be started	13	32,5
I have no suggestions	9	22,5
Courses should be taught on a different online platform that allows to play together.	8	20
Technical and connection problems should be eliminated	6	15
All the partitions should be played by merging video with different people instead of playing one person.	4	10

Table 6 includes the suggestions of the preservice music teachers to teach Orchestra and Chamber music courses more efficiently in distance education. According to Table 8, 32.5% of the music teacher candidates stated that distance education can not be efficient and that face-to-face education should be started, 22.5% did not have a suggestion, 20% stated that courses should be taught on a different online platform that allows playing together. Of the preservice music teachers, 15% thought that technical and connection related problems should be eliminated, and 10% thought that instead of playing all partitions of the piece by one person, it can be played with different people and video merge can be done. According to these data, it can be said that most of the preservice music teachers do not believe that Orchestra and Chamber music courses can be taught more efficiently in distance education and they do not have any suggestions on this issue. The opinions of some of the preservice music teachers are given below:

"Opening schools, obtaining the sounds together, face-to-face,"

"Orchestra and chamber music courses should not be online"

"Distance education is not efficient, I have no suggestions"

"It can be healthier to know what everyone will be responsible for, as in school, and to come together by teaching lessons on different platforms."

"Meeting on a digital platform where individuals can come together and work in group work"

"If everyone has a fast internet, courses maybe more efficient, otherwise, distance orchestra courses are impossible."

"A single person should not play all the partitions of a piece, it should be done as a group work"

#### **4. Results, Discussion and Recommendations**

In this study, which was conducted in order to determine the opinions of preservice music teachers for making Orchestra and Chamber Music courses online after the pandemic announcement, the majority of the preservice music teachers thought that orchestra and chamber music courses were not suitable for distance education, and it was determined that they thought the course was not taught efficiently.

With similar results, Altuntas (2020) stated in her study, in which she investigated the attitudes of the students about the status of distance education applied in the Covid-19 process, that during distance education process, for 12.5% of the students it was productive for applied courses and for 87.5% it was inefficient; for theoretical courses, 21.5% thought it was processed efficiently and for 78.5% of them it was inefficient.

In the study, it was concluded that the most used lesson teaching methods during distance education of orchestra and chamber music courses are playing partitions in online courses and playing all partitions by the same person and combining them with video merger programs. Other methods used are sending the partitions as video recordings and playing/singing with the teacher in the online course.

It was determined that the majority of the preservice music teachers thought that the methods of teaching orchestra and chamber music courses in distance education did not have any advantage. It was determined that sending homework through a video made things easier, and that it made it easier to see their mistakes, were thought as an advantage.

It was determined that the preservice music teachers thought that the biggest disadvantage of the methods of teaching orchestra and chamber music in distance education is not being able to make music together. In addition, playing all the partitions of a piece alone, too much homework and being excited and not performing fully while shooting a video were determined as other disadvantages.

In order for the Orchestra and Chamber Music courses to be taught more efficiently during distance education process, the majority of the preservice music teachers stated that face-to-face education should be started and it is never efficient in distance education. Some of the suggestions of the participants are; to conduct lessons on a different online platform that allows them to play together, to eliminate technical and connection problems, to play all the partitions by merging videos with different people instead of one person playing.

In parallel with this study, Keskin and Özer (2020) in their study in which they evaluated students' feedback on web-based distance education in the Covid-19 process, saw that web-based distance education contributed much more to the theoretical knowledge level of students when compared to practice skills, and they concluded that they could not communicate with the instructors easily (49.9%), and they had opinions that there were technical problems (53.9) during the training.

In the research of Durak, Cankaya, and Izmirli (2020) it was concluded that during the Covid-19 distance education process, the attendance status of the students was followed in approximately half of the universities, but some of the students did not have a computer and had internet connection

problems, and therefore it is not appropriate for such students to follow the attendance status especially in live courses, which may cause them to fail.

According to the results of the study, it would be beneficial to use an online platform where connection, camera and sound problems are minimized, and applications and programs that will allow students to make music together as much as possible in order to teach Orchestra and Chamber music courses more efficiently in distance education.

Improvement and infrastructure studies for the internet connections and technical problems, which are the main problems experienced by the students of the Music Department, should be accelerated, and more technical support should be provided for the applied departments.

More effective and appropriate online tools and materials that can be used during distance education process for music departments can be produced and developed.

This study is conducted with the participation of volunteer students, and the present state can be truly determined by making all students' participation obligatory – by adding the relevant interview form by universities to the student information system

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