

Repertoire determination criteria for intermediate-level flute training from the perspective of educators

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the repertoire determination criteria for intermediate-level flute training from the perspective of educators and thus contribute to flute educators who are new to the profession. In the research, case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was adopted. To collect data for the research, a semi-structured interview form was prepared after the literature review, and the interview form was finalized by taking the opinions of three experts in the field of flute training. In the research, data was collected face-to-face and online. The data obtained was analyzed using the content analysis method. The level defined as intermediate level within the scope of the research covers the 2nd - 3rd years of flute education. In this context, findings were obtained regarding the difficulties experienced by educators in choosing intermediate-level repertoire, repertoire determination criteria, the pieces they used (studied), their processes of deciding on new pieces, and their suggestions on this topic. It was concluded in the research that the participants took the student level and technical support for musical development as criteria when determining the repertoire in intermediate-level flute education. In line with the results, it is recommended to increase studies on note printing in Turkey.

Keywords: Flute, flute training, repertoire determination criteria.

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1. Introduction

Instrument education, which is a sub-branch of music education, and flute education, which is a part of it, constitute an important sub-dimension in institutions where people are raised interested and talented in music. The role of flute educators is extremely important in flute education so that individuals can learn to play the flute, express their emotions, and use the flute effectively. So much so that for this communication between the flute educator and the student to take place effectively, flute educators must have the freedom to choose the best repertoire in different groups. There are studies in the literature that support this idea. According to Reynolds (2000), the primary goal of music educators is to help students gain experience and knowledge through individual means. To achieve this goal, educators need to determine the best repertoire. According to Apfelstadt (2000), repertoire selection is one of the most important tasks faced by music educators. The repertoires selected should not only teach students the curriculum content but also support their musical and technical development. Similarly, Bulut (2008) emphasized that the most important element for the development of students' technical and musical skills is the pieces written for the instrument. In addition, Ertem (2011) also touched upon the importance of the same issue and emphasized that repertoire selections should be made meticulously, stating that this situation is one of the most critical issues. According to Uyan (2014, p. 59), "choosing etudes and pieces appropriate to the student's level is an important dimension of instrument education and therefore flute education. Making this choice correctly is possible by implementing a qualified flute teaching program consisting of main elements such as content - topics, target and target behaviours, teaching-learning situations, testing-measurement situations, and evaluation procedures". In line with this view, some music institutions around the world prepare books with systematic and comprehensive content or determine the level of content to provide a qualified flute education. For example, Cluff, a Canadian flutist and instructor, made a level ranking in which she also included the grade at the Royal Conservatory in Canada and the ABRSM grade. Accordingly, Level 1 is Beginner, Level 2 is Beginner-Novice, Level 3 - 4 is Novice, Level 5 - 6 is Intermediate, Level 7 is Advanced Intermediate, Level 8 - 9 is Advanced and Level 10 is University to Semi-professional level. In addition to writing separate technical and musical competencies for all these levels, she also presented etudes and piece examples. Another example where level contents in flute education are determined is the international music organization ABRSM/Royal Schools of Music Joint Board. Although the flute levels in the ABRSM system differ from the levels specified by Cluff, it offers similar examples of pieces.

When these piece samples are examined, it is seen that the piece samples given for Level 2-3-4 or Grade 2-3 are both few and mostly composed of pieces composed of different instruments. In addition, when the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that the studies carried out according to the level contents in flute education are generally aimed at the beginner level (Diken, 2019; Koç & Karaelma, 2023, Onder, 2012; Uyan, 2014; Cuceoglu Onder, 2012; Cuceoglu Onder & Temiz, 2020). In addition, it has been determined that studies aimed at determining repertoire or intermediate-level repertoire generally focus on other instruments "violin, piano, viola, clarinet, voice training" (Baydag, 2020; Birgul & Nacakci, 2017; Doganay, 2011; Ertem, 2011; Kurtaslan, 2014; Sopaoglu, 2020). A very limited number of studies in the literature on repertoire determination criteria for flute education exist.

1.1. Purpose of the study

This situation creates uncertainty, especially for flute educators who want to be guided in this regard, have difficulty in determining a repertoire, and are new to the profession. The aim was to

determine the criteria for selecting repertoire for intermediate-level flute education from the perspective of educators, thereby contributing to both the literature and providing assistance to novice flute instructors entering the profession. At the same time, it is thought that researching this situation will contribute to the resource needs of flute educators, especially those who are new to the profession, in determining the intermediate-level flute repertoire, which is considered important. The problem statement of the research has been defined as “What the opinions are of flute instructors regarding repertoire selection in intermediate-level flute education?” The level defined as intermediate level within the scope of the research covers the 2nd - 3rd years of flute education.

2. Method And Materials

2.1. Research Design

The research is a case study research, one of the qualitative research methods. According to Merriam (2018, p. 40), a case study is “an in-depth description and examination of a limited system”. In line with these explanations, in the research, interviews will be held and the data obtained will be examined in depth through analysis to determine the opinions of the educators regarding the repertoire determination criteria for intermediate-level flute education.

2.2. Participants

A conveniently accessible sampling method was adopted when creating the study group for the research. Although the study group was determined by an easily accessible sampling method, to ensure diversity, two educators were selected from institutions that provide vocational flute education in Turkey (conservatory, music education department, faculty of fine arts music department, fine arts high school) and a total of eight flute educators were reached.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

In the study, a semi-structured interview form was prepared by the researchers by conducting a topic-specific literature review. This form was sent to three experts in terms of its relevance, content, understandability, and adequacy; The form was given its final shape in line with expert opinions. The content of the form includes 5 questions, including personal information, the difficulties experienced by flute educators in choosing repertoire in intermediate-level flute education, the criteria, the works they use, the usability of the works in the educational process, and their suggestions and opinions on the topic.

2.4. Data Analysis

In the research, data were collected face to face, in writing, or online. In this context, three participants were interviewed face-to-face. Questions were sent to five participants as a Word document. The data obtained within the scope of the research were analysed by content analysis method. Themes and codes were created from the analysed data.

3. Results

This section includes the findings obtained from the interviews with flute educators. As a result of the interviews with the participants in the research, 73 codes, and five themes were created by analysing the data using the content analysis method. The difficulties experienced by the participants in choosing repertoire in intermediate-level flute education are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Difficulties Experienced by Participants in Choosing Repertoire in Intermediate-Level Flute Education

Theme	Codes	Participants
Challenges in the Selection of Pieces	Students' different skills and competencies	P5, P7, P8
	Difficult/easy piece	P4, P1
	Difficulty accessing resources	P4, P6
	The student's liking/adoption of the piece	P2
	The tempo of the piece	P1
	Musical expectations of the piece	P1
	Technical expectations of the piece	P1
	Edition difference	P6

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that educators generally have difficulties choosing the repertoire in intermediate-level flute training due to the different skills and competencies of the students. At the same time, educators stated that they had difficulty accessing resources regardless of whether the pieces were difficult or easy. Some participants' opinions on the theme of "Challenges in the Selection of Pieces" are as follows: "I think the biggest problem and difficulty in this regard is the level differences between the students we call intermediate-level" (P7). "The pieces are either too difficult or too simple for children. Secondly, it is difficult to find foreign sources in Turkey when choosing pieces" (P4).

After these difficulties, educators' criteria for determining the repertoire in intermediate-level flute training became curious and questions were asked in this direction. Table 2 shows the participants' opinions on this topic.

Table 2

Criteria for Determining Participants' Repertoire in Intermediate-Level Flute Training

Theme	Codes	Participants
Criteria	Student level/readiness	P1, P3, P5, P6, P7
	Supporting technical and musical development	P2, P5, P7, P8, P6
	Compatibility with the curriculum	P2, P3
	Student's request	P2, P6
	Tonality	P4, P8
	Melodic pieces	P4
	Turkish pieces that are not too difficult	P4
	Time signature (3/4, 6/8)	P4
	Different period, composer, form	P2
	Piece duration	P6

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that educators mostly use student level/readiness levels and technical/musical development support as criteria to determine the repertoire in intermediate-level flute training. In addition, the student's desire to play the piece, the suitability of the repertoires with the curriculum, and the suitability of tonality are among the other criteria. Some participants' opinions on the theme of "Criteria" are as follows: "I take their technical competence and readiness as criteria" (P5). "The piece must be supportive of the student's technical and musical development" (P2).

Participants' decision criteria for whether the pieces can be used in educational processes are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Participants’ Opinions on The Usability of the Pieces in the Educational Process

Theme	Codes	Participants
Availability	Student level	P2, P4, P5, P7, P8
	Gains	P7, P8
	Technical content	P2, P5
	Compatibility with the tempo of the piece	P2
	Suitability for playing	P1
	The emotion it evokes	P6
	Listenability	P1
	Melodic structure	P7

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that educators determine the usability of the piece in the educational process according to the student level. At the same time, some participants state that they determine the usability of the pieces in terms of technical content and achievement. Some participants’ opinions on the theme of “Availability” are as follows: *“The piece must suit the student’s level. Apart from this, the suitability of the work to the student’s readiness level and the behaviors it will impart to the student are also of great importance” (P7). “I examine the piece considering my student’s level and technical competencies” (P5).*

Table 4 lists the pieces that the participants used in their intermediate-level flute education.

Table 4

Pieces that Participants Benefited from in Intermediate-Level Flute Education

Theme	Codes	Participants	Codes	Participants
Pieces	Seyhan Bulut’s albume	P1	Telemann Suite/A min	P2
	J. Baptiste Loillet Sonata	P3, P2	M. Leclair Sonatas	P2
	M. Blavet Sonatas	P2	Haendel Sonatas	P2, P6, P7, P8
	Vivaldi Sonata/C Major	P2, P3, P7	Gluck Concerto/G Major	P2
	Mozart/Andante	P2	B. Pucihar Flute at Play	P2
	G. Meunier “Andante et Allegro”	P3	P. Proust Prelude et Dance	P2
	P. Hindemith “Echo”	P3	F. Kuhlau “Menuet”	P3
	B. Marcello “Sonata op.2 no.2”	P3	J.B. Loeillet “Sonata No.1”	P3
	P. Gaubert “Sicilliane”	P3	Kohler “Valse Espagnole”	P3
	J. Demmerseman “Le Carnaval de Venice”	P2, P3	Kohler “Serenata Oriental” op77	P3
	Quants “Sonata” no1	P3, P7	J. Pepusch “Sonata”	P3
	J. Ranisch “Sonata”	P3	Krumpholz “Sonata”	P3
	P. Proust “Sonatina”	P3	Fikret Amirov “6 Pieces”	P6, P5
	Bach Sonatas	P4, P5, P6, P7, P8	Telemann Sonata and Concertos	P6
	Telemann 12 Fantasie	P5, P8	Mozart Flute Quartet D Major	P5
	Selected Duets for Flute Volume 1, 2	P4	Chopin “Variations on a Theme by Rossini”	P6

Quantz Concerto G Major	P4	Mozart Sonatas	P6, P7
Necdet Levant "Pieces for Flute"	P6	Taffanel "Andante Pastoral"	P8

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that educators benefit from many pieces in intermediate-level flute education. Educators stated that they generally benefit from Bach and Haendel Sonatas in intermediate-level flute education. It is also seen that there are participants who stated that they benefited from Vivaldi "C Major Sonata", Teleman "12 Fantasie", Fikret Amirov "6 Pieces", Mozart and J. Baptiste Loillet Sonatas. Participants' opinions and suggestions regarding repertoire selection in intermediate-level flute education are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Participants' Opinions and Suggestions Regarding Repertoire Selection in Intermediate-Level Flute Education

Themes	Codes	Participants
Opinions and Suggestions	Accessible pieces	P1, P4
	Technical and musical progress	P2, P8
	Correct technique and difficulty level to prevent injuries	P3, P7
	Accompaniment pieces	P2, P3
	Concerts	P3, P8
	Solfeggio/rhythmic reading/scale exercises	P3, P8
	Album creation	P1
	Playing the student's favourite pieces	P2
	Melodic/dynamic pieces	P3
	Duets	P4
	Parts of the piece can be studied at different times	P1
	Composing original pieces for this level	P5
	Music libraries	P6
	Providing good basic education	P8
	Students should be directed to listen to pieces	P1
Joint repertoire studies with educators	P1	

When Table 5 is examined, it can be seen that educators made many opinions and suggestions regarding repertoire selection in intermediate-level flute education. Accordingly, educators generally expressed their opinions and suggestions regarding the selection of accompanied pieces that provide technical/musical progress and are at the right technique and difficulty level. At the same time, it is seen that there are participants who make opinions and suggestions regarding concerts, rhythmic reading/solfeggio/scale studies, and the accessibility of the pieces. Some participants' opinions on the theme of "Opinions and Suggestions" are as follows: "The repertoire should be chosen at medium difficulty, supported by piano accompaniment, and practiced on stage by organizing class concerts" (P3). "Resources containing simple and mid-level pieces, especially those found abroad, should be found more easily in Turkey" (P4).

4. Discussion

In the study, participants stated that they had difficulty accessing the resources and that the pieces were difficult or very easy. Similarly, Yokus and Demirbatir (2009) concluded in their study that piano

instructors found the pieces either too simple or too difficult. It was concluded in the research that educators mostly use student level/readiness as criteria and whether the pieces support technical and musical development. When the literature is examined, it is seen that educators take students' readiness, level, and musical proficiency into consideration when determining the educational repertoire (Caf & Angi, 2019; Doganay, 2011; Ertem, 2011). In addition, it was determined in the research that the criteria were student desire, compliance with the curriculum, and tonality of the pieces. In parallel with these results, it is stated in the literature that students' opinions are taken into consideration when choosing pieces (Birgul & Nacakci, 2017; Doganay, 2011).

It has been determined that educators mostly prefer Bach and Haendel Sonatas among the pieces they use in intermediate-level flute education. In line with all these results, it has been concluded that educators prefer Baroque Period pieces in intermediate-level flute education. Studies in the literature support this result (Caf ve Angi, 2019; Doganay, 2011; Soytok, 2014; Onal, 2022). In the research, participants stated that access to the pieces should be facilitated, accompanied pieces should be preferred and solfeggio/rhythmic reading/scale should be taken into consideration. Studies in the literature support these results (Ferdian, Putra, and Yuda, 2020; Kara, 2010; Hepyucel and Kurtaslan Yildirim, 2017; Ustun and Ozer, 2020).

5. Conclusion

Based on the data obtained from the participants as a result of the research, the criteria for determining the repertoire for intermediate-level flute education can be listed as the level of the students (readiness), support for technical and musical development, student desire, compliance with the curriculum and tonality. In addition, it was concluded in the research that it was difficult to access the sources, the pieces were difficult or very easy, and Bach and Haendel's sonatas were the most preferred among the pieces. In line with the opinions of the participants, it was determined that access to the pieces should be facilitated, accompanied pieces should be preferred and solfeggio/rhythmic reading/scale studies should be taken into consideration.

In line with all the findings of the research, it is recommended to increase initiatives on note printing in Turkey, to encourage the composition of intermediate-level flute pieces to support education and to develop contemporary Turkish flute music, to increase the recognition of the flute repertoire and its educational application more widely, to establish access to sheet music, both written and recorded, on digital platforms, and to create a platform where flute educators in Turkey could communicate more easily and share their lesson plans.

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