

Vocational Music Education Institutions and Music Teacher Training in Turkey in the 21st Century

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Abstract

In this study, the process of training music teachers working in primary, middle, and high schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in Turkey is examined. Within this scope, Higher Education Programs related to Music Education, Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate Program (PFCEP) and Student Profile/Quality of Music Education Institutions were investigated to answer three fundamental questions. According to the findings obtained, it has been determined that there is a structure of music education in 16 different faculties with various names, apart from the Music Education program in the Faculty of Education, and students studying in these institutions have the right to be appointed as music teachers by completing the (PFCEP). Furthermore, it was determined that the scores of the TYT (Basic Skills Test) determined for admission to 16 different faculties outside the Faculty of Education were very low/insufficient. The education process of the Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate Program does not meet the expected “competencies of the music teaching profession” in training music teachers. In our country, which has a tradition, experience, and accumulation of training music teachers for 100 years, there is a need to re-think and re-imagine the structure and policies of music teacher training in the 21st century. The Ministry of National Education (MONE), the Council of Higher Education (COHE), universities, academicians, civil society organizations, and all stakeholders in music education should take steps to correct the deficiencies, inconsistencies, and contradictions in teacher/music teacher training practices.

Keywords: teacher training, music teacher, teacher qualifications, Basic Proficiency Test (BPT), pedagogical formation education

1. Introduction

Although purposeful music education has a history dating back to the early stages of the imperial era in Turkey, the training of music teachers began for the first time with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1924 at the “Music Teacher School” in Ankara. Despite having a tradition of training music teachers for 100 years, the Republic of Turkey, which has accumulated experience and expertise, has undergone various changes and regulations in the nomenclature of institutions that train music teachers, the duration of education, instructional approaches (formal education, informal education), and curriculum content, leading to the present day.

Music lessons in middle and high schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education are taught by music teachers, while in primary schools, they are taught by classroom teachers. In Turkey, music teachers are trained in two ways to be appointed in primary and secondary education institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. The first is in Education Faculties that directly train teachers in Music Education Programs, and the second is through students studying in different departments within state and private Conservatories and Fine Arts Faculties who complete the Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate program.

“Music plays a significant role in the lives of children and young people. Efficiency in music teaching in schools is crucial for students' cognitive, emotional, psychomotor and intuitive development and the impact of musical skills on language development, literacy, numeracy, measures of intelligence, general attainment, creativity, fine motor co-ordination, concentration, self-confidence, emotional sensitivity, social skills, team work, self-discipline, and relaxation” (Hallam, 2010, 269). Music shapes their social identities and the ways in which they relate to changing times characterized now by globalization and cultural flows, including the mobility of musical traditions and tastes (Aróstegui, 2011).

School music education and practices play an important/central role in the lives of children and young people. The teaching profession, especially the field of music teacher, requires a specialized education. Being able to teach harmony, composition or playing any instrument does not mean that one can be a good music teacher. In addition to music field knowledge in the music teacher profession, knowledge of music teaching approaches and practices that can manage students receiving general music education (middle and high school) is important. These topics include music curricula, school instruments, singing education, Orff method, music and dance/movement, basic music knowledge and musical creativity. In particular, it requires the ability to organize the elements of music (rhythm, melody, timbre, musical forms...) at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels (Özgül, 2009; Schola Europaea, 2017; MONE, 2018; COHE, 1997). Therefore, it is thought that the approach of training music teachers from a wide variety of music faculties will constitute a deficiency / inadequacy in fulfilling the requirements of the music teaching profession. In this sense, it is imperative to examine the current music teacher training/appointment system in Turkey and to re-think and re-imagine a more realistic and qualified music teacher education. The process of training/appointment of music teachers in primary, secondary and secondary education institutions affiliated to the Ministry of National Education will be examined under three headings.

- Higher Education Programs for Music Education
- Student Profiles/Qualifications of Music Education Institutions
- Music Education Institutions and the Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate program

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used a document analysis from qualitative research approaches regarding the practices of Vocational Music Education Institutions and Music Teacher Training” in Turkey in the 21st century. Document analysis allows creating new data through various verbal, numerical, graphical and pictorial data from the documents as a result of analyzing written documents containing information and evidence about the facts and events related to the subject examined within the scope of the research (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011; Özkan, 2019). Document analysis studies provide the opportunity to reveal alternative ideas and approaches for future studies and applications.

2.2 Data Sources

The data sources for the document analysis of this study are the regulations, directives and undergraduate programs of music education institutions in force by the Ministry of National Education and the Council of Higher Education (MoNE, 2017, 2023; CoHE, 2018, 2021, 2023; Resmi Gazete, 2022).

3. Findings

3.1 Higher Education Programs for Music Education/Music Education Institutions

Table 1. Reflection higher education programs serving as the basis for music teacher appointments

Music Education Institutions (Faculties and Conservatories)	Departments
Education Faculties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Fine Arts Education, Department of Music Education • Department of Elementary Education, Division of Classroom Education • Department of Elementary Education, Division of Preschool Education
Music Department	• Individual Voice Training
State Conservatory	• Turkish Folk Music Choir Training
State Turkish Music Conservatory	• Turkish Art Music Choir Training
Faculty of Fine Arts	• Polyphonic Choir Training
Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture	• Turkish Folk Music Instrumental Ensembles
Faculty of Fine Arts and Design	• Turkish Art Music Instrumental Ensembles
Faculty of Fine Arts, Design and Architecture	• Western Music Instrumental Ensembles
Faculty of Performing Arts	• Turkish Folk Music Theory and Practice
Conservatory	• Turkish Art Music Theory and Practice
Faculty of Architecture, Fine Arts and Design	• Western Music Theory and Practice
Faculty of Architecture, Design and Fine Arts	• Wind instruments (zurna, mey, sipsi).

Faculty of Music Sciences and Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stringed instruments (kemancha, Black Sea kemancha, violin bow) double bass, • Flute, violin, guitar, cello, viola, piano • Ney, classical fiddle, drum, clarinet • Bağlama, qanun, lute, percussion, pipe, tar
Faculty of Music and Performing Arts	
Faculty of Art and Design	
Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture	
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities	
Turkish Music State Conservatory	

When applying for teaching positions in official educational institutions under the Ministry and private educational institutions, individuals must demonstrate that they have been admitted to higher education institutions through a special talent examination in the field of music and that at least 70% of the credits they earned in their undergraduate education at the higher education institution were in the “Music” field.

As seen in Table 1, teachers who teach music lessons at the primary, middle, and high school levels in Turkey receive their education in departments/main science branches affiliated with the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Fine Arts, Turkish Music State Conservatory, and State Conservatories (Note 1). Students who graduate from these institutions after completing 4 years of education obtain a bachelor's degree. The characteristics and qualifications of these programs are described as follows:

The Music Education Department/Music Teaching programs of the Faculty of Education's Fine Arts Education Department are characterized by “professional music education.” (Note 2) These programs directly train music teachers. When examining teacher training programs at education faculties, it is observed that the courses are classified into three areas: “subject knowledge,” “teaching profession knowledge,” and “general culture knowledge.” In addition to these three areas, the programs also include courses related to “subject teaching knowledge” (such as music teaching methods, music teaching programs, Orff method and applications, music and dance, etc.) (Özgül, 2021a).

The music courses in the Department of Preschool Education of the Department of Elementary Education are characterized by “professional music education based on general music education.” In these programs, there are mandatory courses under the name of “music in preschool education” for one or two semesters during the 4-year education period. In these programs, knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to music education for children aged 0-6 are imparted. During this process, elective courses are also offered under the names “Orff method, musical games, music, and dance.” (COHE, 2018).

The music programs in the Department of Elementary Education are characterized by “professional music education based on general music education.” In these programs, one or two semesters of mandatory courses with 3-6 credits/hours under the name of “music or music teaching” are included during the 4-year education period. Additionally, elective courses such as “Orff method, music and dance/movement” are available during this process.

The music education implemented in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Turkish Music State Conservatory, and conservatories is characterized by “professional music education.” When the four-year programs of these institutions are examined, it is observed that they focus on “subject knowledge” and “general culture knowledge.” Due to the founding philosophy and objectives of these programs, they do not include courses on “teaching profession knowledge” and “subject teaching knowledge.” For students studying in these institutions who wish to work as music teachers in the Ministry of National Education, they must complete the courses defined in the Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate Program (PFCEP) during their undergraduate education.

3.2 Student Profile/Qualification of Music Education Institutions

In Turkey, music institutions serving different purposes can be examined on three dimensions. These institutions are State Conservatories, Faculties of Fine Arts, and Faculties of Education. These institutions admit students for education by evaluating their scores in the TYT (Basic Competence Test) and special aptitude exams. The Basic Competence Test (TYT), consisting of questions in Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Turkish, measures students' basic knowledge, skills, and competencies in both verbal and numerical fields.

According to the letter dated 11.08.2021 with reference number 57144 from the Directorate of Education-Teaching of the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Turkey, the application conditions for higher education institutions that admit students through special aptitude exams are as follows:

“As is known, in order for candidates to apply to programs where students are placed through higher education institutions' special aptitude exams, it is required to score 150 or above in the Basic Competence Test-TYT, and for teacher training programs, it is required to be ranked at least in the 800,000th place in the Y-TYT, as stated in the YKS Guides. If there are no candidates who have registered for programs in state higher education institutions in the previous year's YKS (except for teacher training programs) up to the specified quotas, applications of candidates with a TYT score of at least 150 or higher should be accepted. In teacher training programs, the designated rank of success should be sought regardless of the number of enrolled students. Programs that admit students through special aptitude exams are allocated separately for all students who take the YKS, and the selection of candidates is made based on preliminary evaluation (special aptitude exam) regarding whether they have a specific preparation or ability, depending on the nature of the program.” (COHE, 2021).

Before 2021, higher education institutions that admitted students through special aptitude exams determined their TYT scores by their own boards. According to the letter from the Council of Higher Education, higher education institutions admitting students through special aptitude exams are implementing the directive regarding TYT scores. Therefore, candidates who wish to apply and become students in the departments of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Turkish Music State Conservatory, and State Conservatory are required to have a TYT score of at least 150 and above (sometimes 140 TYT score), and they become students after succeeding in the special aptitude exams.

For candidates applying to the Faculty of Education's Music Teaching programs to become music teachers, it is necessary to be ranked within the top 800,000 in the TYT. To become a student in the Department of Preschool Education and the Department of Classroom Education in the Department of Elementary Education, one must be among the top 300,000 students in the YKS ranking.

3.3 Music Education Institutions and Teacher Formation Training

In Turkey, music education institutions are classified as follows: Faculty of Education, Faculty of Fine Arts, Turkish Music State Conservatory, and State Conservatory. The Faculty of Education's Music Teaching programs directly train music teachers for primary and secondary education institutions under the Ministry of National Education (MONE, 2023). When examining the teacher training programs in faculties of education, it is observed that the courses in the program are categorized into three areas: “subject knowledge,” “teaching profession knowledge,” and “general culture knowledge” (Resmi Gazete, 2022). In addition to the three areas mentioned in the Faculty of Education's Music Teaching programs, these programs also include courses in the direction of “subject teaching knowledge” (such as music teaching methods and techniques, music teaching programs, Orff Method and applications, music and dance, etc.). When examining the course programs of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Turkish Music State Conservatory, and State Conservatory, it is observed that they mainly focus on “subject knowledge” and “general culture knowledge” courses. The founding philosophy and objectives of these programs, by their mission, do not include courses on “teaching profession knowledge” and “subject teaching knowledge.” Students in these institutions are required to complete the courses defined in the (PFEC) during their undergraduate education. The duration of the (PFEC) is a minimum of two semesters. Courses are divided into two semesters and are defined in a way that can be completed in one academic year. The courses defined in the (PFEC) are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Teacher formation training courses

1.Term	2.Term
Introduction to Education (3-0-3)	Measurement and Evaluation in Education (3-0-3)
Principles and Methods of Instruction (3-0-3)	Educational Psychology (3-0-3)
Classroom Management (2-0-2)	Guidance and Special Education (3-0-3)
Special Teaching Methods (3-0-3)	Instructional Technology (2-0-2)
Teaching Practice 1 (1-6-4)	Teaching Practice 2 (1-6-4)

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of the findings in the study, it was discussed with the development of a multidimensional perspective:

- The student profile/quality of music education institutions.
- Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate Program and its applications, which are the basis for music

teacher appointments.

- Training music teachers as preschool and primary school teachers in the Department of Primary Education.

There is an observed contradiction between the student profile or student resources of music education institutions and the criteria for becoming a teacher and appointments. Candidates who have a minimum score of 150 on the Basic Competence Test (TYT) can apply to the departments of the Faculty of Fine Arts and the State Conservatory of Turkish Music, and after succeeding in the special talent exams, they become students. For students applying to study at these institutions, their ranking is above 2.5 million. For candidates applying to the Music Education programs in the Faculty of Education, it is required that they are ranked in the top 800,000 in TYT. After successful performance in the special talent exams, the applicants become students. While candidates applying to the Music Education programs need to be ranked within the top 800,000 in TYT to become music teachers, for admission to the departments of the Faculty of Fine Arts and the State Conservatory of Turkish Music, and the State Conservatory, a Basic Competence Test (TYT) score of 2.5 million or higher is sufficient (Note 3). Therefore, it has been observed that candidates applying to these institutions answered only 3-5 or fewer questions out of 125 questions related to Turkish, Social Sciences, Basic Mathematics, and Natural Sciences in the Basic Competence Test. TYT, defined as the Basic Competence Test conducted by the Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM), is an exam that measures knowledge and aptitude for students during the university admission process. It is an exam that assesses thinking-based problem-solving skills, logical reasoning, and the ability to deduce (COHE, 2023).

Intelligence is the ability of an individual to learn from experiences and adapt to environments, shape them, and make choices. Research related to intelligence dates back to the early 20th century. Despite various definitions given by scientists and experts, from an average perspective, Intelligence can be described as the ability to engage in purposeful mental activities through active problem-solving, learning, critical thinking, reasoning, logical thinking, adaptability to the environment, and effective and abstract thinking (Pfeiffer, 2001; Sternberg 2012).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the reading, understanding, comprehension, interpretation, problem-solving, logical thinking, reasoning, abstract processing, and learning skills/abilities of candidates applying to or already studying in the mentioned institutions are very weak or insufficient in the areas of Turkish, Social Sciences, Basic Mathematics, and Natural Sciences. Musical ability can be defined as a combination of cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviors related to one or more skills such as musical hearing, sense of rhythm, perceiving, analyzing, and reproducing two or more simultaneous sounds, musical reading-writing, musical singing-playing, and musical creativity (Uçan, 2005, Tarman, 2006).

Within this context, it is believed that individuals with very low TYT scores, or in other words, those with limited “learning to learn” (Note 4) skills in the cognitive domain, may have a limited level of musical ability.

The appointments and professional development, as well as career progression of teachers responsible for carrying out education and training services, were reorganized by a decision dated 14/2/2022 and numbered 31750, issued by the Ministry of National Education. Preparation for the teaching profession is provided through general culture, specialized field education, and pedagogical formation/teacher professional knowledge (Resmi Gazete, 2022). When examining teacher training programs at education faculties, it is observed that the courses are classified into three areas: “subject knowledge,” “teaching profession knowledge,” and “general culture knowledge.” In addition, these programs also include courses related to “subject-specific teaching knowledge” (such as music teaching methods and techniques, Orff Method and applications, music and dance, etc.). When examining the course programs of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Turkish Music State Conservatory, and State Conservatory, it is observed that they mainly focus on “subject knowledge” and “general culture knowledge” courses. The founding philosophy and objectives of these programs, by their mission, do not include courses on “teaching profession knowledge” and “subject teaching knowledge.” Students in these institutions are required to complete the courses defined in the (PFCEP) during their undergraduate education in order to become music teachers. The duration of the (PFCEP) is a minimum of two semesters. The courses are divided into two semesters and are defined in a way that can be completed within one academic year. However, research indicates that the (PFCEP) does not meet the desired/expected competence for the profession of music teaching. Duration of the (PFCEP) is at least two semesters. Findings from research conducted by (Güdek, 2016; Çağlak & Şentürk 2017; Temiz, 2016; Türkmen, 2018, Avcı 2020) have yielded the following conclusions:

- The pedagogical formation education process is not well managed by the institutions conducting the program and is not adequately preparing individuals for a career in music teaching.
- There is a shortage of applied music teaching courses, and the duration of teaching practice courses conducted in schools is insufficient.

- Students are not sufficiently aware of music teaching methods and do not possess the necessary skills to use these methods effectively.
- There is a need to improve the use of instructional technologies and the adaptation of music teaching tools, materials, and resources to the classroom level.
- Students receiving training in instruments like the violin, viola, kanun, bağlama, cello, and voice are inadequate in teaching general/school music education classes.
- They are also lacking in contemporary music teaching methods and approaches such as Orff Schulwerk, Kodaly, Suzuki, and Dalcroze.
- It has been identified that in some institutions, pedagogical formation education certificate program courses, especially “special teaching methods” courses, are taught by instructors who are not experts in the field.

In primary schools and preschool education institutions, music lessons are taught by preschool and classroom teachers. The music courses that preschool and classroom teachers take at the undergraduate level are considered as professional music education based on general music education. From this perspective, preschool and classroom education teachers can be referred to as music teachers in schools. However, one of the most debated topics in our country and around the world is whether classroom teachers or music teachers are more suitable for teaching music lessons in primary schools. Nevertheless, in most countries, educational practices tend to view classroom teachers as music teachers in primary schools. This is because classroom teachers spend most of their time with the same students and are more inclined to integrate music with other disciplines (such as mathematics, Turkish, social studies, and art education, etc.) (Bresler, 1993, 1995; Hash, 2009; Özgül, 2016, 2022). Additionally, the replacement of classroom teachers with music teachers in music lessons may incur extra costs to the economy, and the likelihood of having music teachers in all schools is low. Therefore, current practices may need to remain stable for some time.

5. Recommendations

- The profiles/qualifications of students accepted into education faculties and other higher education programs that are the basis for music teacher appointments are very different from each other. The conditions for student candidates related to the teacher/music teacher training model need to be redefined. The approach of admitting students to music education institutions with very low or insufficient Basic Competence Test (TYT) scores should be re-evaluated.
- Research indicates that there are many deficiencies/inconsistencies in the (PFCEP) education process for training music teachers and that it cannot meet the desired “competencies for music teaching.” In this context, the teacher training process through the (PFCEP) should be thoroughly reviewed.
- The programs of education faculties and institutions outside education faculties, including their founding purposes, the quality/profile of students, course content, and teacher qualifications, are very different from each other. However, ultimately, all graduates from different institutions can become music teachers by completing the (PFCEP) as undergraduate degree holders. In this context, the approach of training music teachers through the (PFCEP) should be questioned, as students with different purposes and TYT scores who graduate as undergraduates from different institutions in Music Education can have the same rights. Because in our country, there are nearly 30 Music Teacher Education programs within Education Faculties.
- Since class and preschool education teachers are referred to as music teachers in schools, the credit/hours, course content, and structure of courses in-class education and preschool education programs should be organized accordingly. Music education courses in these institutions should be taught by instructors trained in the field.
- In music education institutions, experimental and comparative music education research should be conducted regarding students' active problem-solving, critical thinking, learning how to learn, adapting to the learning environment, and engaging in purposeful mental activities through effective and abstract thinking.
- The Republic of Turkey has a tradition of music teacher education with a history of 100 years, along with its experience and accumulation. Taking into account both the accumulated knowledge, experience, and practices in music teacher education in our country and international approaches to music teacher education, it is essential for the Ministry of National Education (MONE), the Council of Higher Education (COHE), universities, faculties of education, academicians, civil society organizations, and all stakeholders in music education to address and rectify the deficiencies, inconsistencies, and contradictions in teacher/music teacher education. A re-evaluation and planning for training music teachers for the 21st century should be

undertaken.

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Notes

Note 1. In the study, the expression “Faculty of Fine Arts, Turkish Music State Conservatory, and conservatories” encompasses all other institutions, as shown in Table 1, that are outside the Faculty of Education and have departments and main science branches related to the field of music, and they receive Pedagogical Formation Education Certificates, which serve as the basis for the appointment of music teachers.

Note 2. “General music education” aims to provide a minimum common general music culture that is necessary for a healthy and balanced human life, without discrimination based on occupation, school, branch, or program type, at all levels, stages, and ages, and for everyone. General music education is music education that is aimed at everyone, regardless of school or program distinctions, at the preschool, primary, middle, and high education levels. “Professional music education,” on the other hand, is music education focused on acquiring the musical knowledge, skills, and habits required for specific professions in the field of music. When approached in this way, the fields that fall within the scope of professional music education can be listed as follows: Music performance, directing education, music research education, music technology, or instrument making-repair education, music teaching education, preschool and primary school/class teacher education, military music or band education, religious music education, or music education for training clergy (Uçan, 2005). The music course programs in the Department of Preschool Education and the Department of Classroom Education in the Department of Elementary Education are characterized by “professional music education based on general music education”.

Note 3. ÖSYM also released statistics for the YKS exam. According to the statistics, out of the 3,527,443 candidates who applied for the Basic Competence Test (TYT), 2,995,638 actually took the exam.

Note 4. When examining the relationship between the “special purposes,” “domain-specific skills,” “achievements covering grades 1-8,” and “Learning Fields” defined in the Music Lesson Curriculum, along with key competencies as a whole, it is observed that the competencies related to “learning to learn,” native language communication, cultural awareness and expression, and social and citizenship have been emphasized the most. On the other hand, competencies related to taking initiative and entrepreneurship, digital literacy, mathematical competency, and science and technology competency have been given less emphasis, and it has been noted that there is no mention of the competency related to “communication in foreign languages” (Özgül, 2021b).

Note 5. A part of this study was presented as an oral presentation at the congress under the title “The Dilemma of training a music Teacher In Turkey” and was published as a summary. “VI. International Halich Congress On Multidisciplinary Scientific Research Istanbul, Turkey”.

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