

Examination of Music Teacher Candidates' Opinions Regarding Distance Teaching Practice Course during the Pandemic¹

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Abstract

This qualitative study aims to determine the opinions of music teacher candidates in Turkey on distant "Teaching Practice" courses during the Covid-19 pandemic. The participants of the study consist of 27 music teacher candidates, 18 female and nine male, studying in the last year (4th grade) of the music teaching department in the 2020-2021 academic year. The experiences gained in the course, the advantages and disadvantages of the process, the problems encountered and solution suggestions were determined through a semi-structured interview form. The data were analysed by content analysis. Music teacher candidates stated that they learned how to create virtual course content and design material, learned distant classroom and time management, gained the ability to communicate remotely and gained self-confidence. While providing ease/comfort, financial savings, opportunity to repeat the course, ensuring the continuation of education, preventing virus spread, time/place flexibility, strengthening technological know-how, strengthening theoretical knowledge, reducing the excitement factor, and providing remote monitoring were considered as advantages of the distance education process by music teacher candidates, limited communication, unreliable assessment and evaluation, limited time and activities, Not being suitable for applied fields, leading to mental laziness, and lack of sense of reality were considered as disadvantages. Inability to provide classroom management and discipline, ineffective teaching, lack of communication, technical problems, lack of music lesson materials, students' indifference, and not participating actively in the lesson are encountered in the distance teaching practice course. For the process to be carried out in a better way, music teacher candidates made suggestions such as compulsory attendance, reliable assessment and evaluation, creating micro-groups, diversifying music activities, designing fun activities, course content, and materials, troubleshooting technical problems, cooperation, assessment of students' requests and attitudes, providing psychological support, and accelerating the transition to face-to-face education.

Keywords: Pandemic, Distance education, Teaching practice, Music teacher candidates

Introduction

Throughout history, wars, terrorism, natural disasters, diseases, and epidemics are the main events that hinder education. Since these events may cause the education to stop for a while, it is tried to find a solution in a short time. Especially during epidemic periods, since the health of students may be affected by the spread of the virus, the continuation of education is ensured by taking precautions (Kahraman, 2020, p.45). 2019-20 Coronavirus (Covid-19) emerged on December 1, 2019, in Wuhan, the capital of the Hubei region of China, and affected the whole world with its rapid spread. The 2019-20 Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, which is declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, has caused many activities to be stopped or suspended (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the widespread closures of schools and universities (Wikipedia, 2020).

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As in the whole world, educational institutions were temporarily closed after the first case emerged in Turkey. Immediately after, there was a rapid transition to distance education in educational institutions at all levels. In its press release dated March 18, 2020, the Higher Education Council of Turkey (YÖK) announced that “It has been decided to conduct distance education for educational activities suspended due to the epidemic” (YÖK, 2020a). On April 7, 2020, it was announced that teacher candidates could complete their deficiencies in practice studies with “course, homework and file preparation” (YÖK, 2020b).

Educational Informatics Network (EBA), which was launched in 2012 and enabled student-teacher communication in the institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, has been actively used in this process. For all students to easily access the lessons during the pandemic process, the infrastructure of this network has been expanded, and the EBA TV channel and EBA Live Lesson Platform have been activated. On March 23, 2020, three separate channels, EBA TV-Primary School, EBA TV-Secondary School, and EBA TV-High School, started broadcasting for distance education. In these channels, from grade 1 to grade 12, each lesson was broadcast for 20-25 minutes and repeated throughout the day. “Activity Time” took place to provide educational and entertaining activities to students between lessons (Başaran et al. 2020, p.371). Distance education courses were carried out in universities with online synchronous methods, offline asynchronous methods, and mixed methods (Kurnaz and Serçemeli, 2020, p. 265-266). Students and teachers needed internet connection and devices such as computers, mobile phones, and tablets to realise distance education.

The distance education system dates back to before the Covid-19 pandemic. Clark (2020, p. 411) refers to the history of distance education and reminds us that this method has been carried out for a long time through letters, radio, books, newspapers, etc. Distance education practices have a long and deep-rooted history around the world. The distinction of distance education in the pandemic process is that it has entered the whole education life in a fast and compulsory way.

The term learning is student-centred and the term teaching is teacher-centred. While one neglects the role of the institution, the other emphasises the institution. Therefore, distance teaching and distance learning explain both halves of the distance education process (Kaya, 2002, p.10). Valentine (2002, p. 4) stated that distance education is a method that has a different structure from traditional education and has its opportunities and problems. Features such as being able to appeal to a wide audience of all ages and professions, no limitations in terms of time and place, being managed according to individual learning qualities, and allowing the use of multimedia tools can be listed as advantages. However, despite these advantages, there are also disadvantages such as the risk of distraction, the possibility of technical malfunctions, the high infrastructure, and technical tool costs (Karakuş et al. 2020, p. 220).

Educational activities in Education Faculties in Turkey are divided into three basic course groups as field courses, professional teaching knowledge courses, and general knowledge courses. Similarly, the Music Teaching Department of the Faculty of Education has courses in three basic course groups. Teaching practice, one of the professional teaching knowledge courses, is an applied course in the last academic year. The teaching practice course is defined as “To make observations about field-specific special teaching methods and techniques and to do micro-teaching practices using these observations, be able to independently plan a lesson, developing course-related activities and materials, preparing teaching environment, managing the classroom, making assessments and evaluation, and reflection.” (YÖK, 2018). The professional teaching knowledge courses, given in the context of teacher training, is aimed to provide pre-service teachers with competencies related to two basic processes: learning and teaching (Şişman, 2000, p.10). The teaching practice course is important in the education of preservice teachers. With experiences gained in practice schools, preservice teachers get the opportunity of developing their vocational skills and learning details related to the profession of teaching (Yadigaroglu, 2021, p. 1). After four years of theoretical education, teacher candidates begin to practice in various secondary and primary education

institutions to prepare for the teaching profession and experience in this field. All of the activities that teacher candidates can practice based on learning by doing in the school and classroom environment are included in the teaching practice course given in the last year of undergraduate education (Baran et al. 2015, p.232).

The review of the literature revealed that, although there are studies on the teaching practice course before the pandemic conducted with teacher candidates, the number of studies conducted with music teacher candidates is quite low. In addition, it was determined that there was no study conducted with music teacher candidates for the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic. The situations experienced by teacher candidates during the teaching practice course are fundamental to their professional lives. At this point, the views and opinions of the teacher candidates, who are at the centre of the process, about the teaching practice course gain importance (Baran et al., 2015 p.232). Therefore, determining the opinions of music teacher candidates regarding the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic, which is a new experience, formed the basis for the emergence of the research.

The research question of the study is as follows: What are the opinions of music teacher candidates regarding the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic? Accordingly, the sub-questions of the research are as follows:

- What are the experiences of the music teacher candidates in the distance teaching practice course?
- What are the advantages of the distance teaching practice course according to the music teacher candidates?
- What are the disadvantages/limitations of the distance teaching practice course according to the music teacher candidates?
- What are the problems faced by the music teacher candidates in the distance teaching practice course?
- What are the recommendations of the music teacher candidates for better execution of the distance teaching practice course?

Method

Research Pattern

A qualitative research approach was used in this study, which was carried out to determine the opinions of the music teacher candidates about the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic, the experiences they gained, the advantages and disadvantages of the process, the problems they encountered, and their recommendations. Qualitative research is a type of research in which qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview, and document analysis are used and that allows events, situations, and perceptions to be revealed in a realistic and holistic way in a natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p.19). The case study design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the study. Since the study examines a case holistically as a single piece (Saban & Ersoy, 2017: 164), the “holistic single case design” was used. The opinions of the senior students about the teaching practice course were analysed in the study.

Working Group

The participants of the study consist of 27 music teacher candidates, 18 female (TC1, TC2, TC3, TC4, TC5, TC7, TC8, TC10, TC11, TC13, TC14, TC15, TC19, TC20, TC21, TC23, TC24, TC27), and nine male (TC6, TC9, TC12, TC16, TC17, TC18, TC22, TC25, TC26), who took the Teaching Practice course at a university in Turkey in the 2020-2021 academic year.

The criterion sampling method was used to determine the participants of the study. The criterion was determined as taking the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic. The music lessons that the music teacher candidates attend in the practice schools are determined by the practice teachers. The music lessons were realised by the synchronous participation of the practice school students, music teacher candidates, and the practice teacher through an online digital communication platform called Zoom. Also, the teaching practice instructor and music teacher candidates held online meetings for two hours a week (Two hours in face-to-face education is considered equivalent to thirty minutes in distance education.) within the scope of the university’s distance education centre.

Data Collection

A semi-structured interview form was used to evaluate student views. Opinions were received from three music education experts conducting teaching practice courses about the semi-structured interview form, and the form was finalised. The interview form consists of five open-ended questions. The form was applied in the last week of the spring semester to determine the opinions of the music teacher candidates about the distance teaching practice course. Within the scope of the study, the form consisting of open-ended questions was submitted to the teacher candidates digitally, and they were asked to fill it in within three days.

Data Analysis

Content analysis of the interview forms filled by the music teacher candidates was performed. The content analysis consisted of the following stages:

- Writing the answers of all participants under each question and obtaining transcripts,
- Gathering similar answers under certain concepts and themes,
- The creation of sub-themes in which participant opinions are concentrated, and the codes explaining these sub-themes,
- Creating and interpreting tables from created themes, sub-themes, and codes.

For the reliability of the study, the data were analysed separately by two field education experts. The themes, sub-themes, and codes created due to the analyses were compared and the data were finalised. The agreement among experts was calculated as 0.86 using the formula “Agreement / (Agreement +

Disagreement) x 100”. The obtained reliability value is considered acceptable for scientific studies (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.278-280).

Findings

In this study, which was conducted to determine the opinions of the music teacher candidates about the distance teaching practice course, 5 themes were determined in line with the data obtained from the opinions of the teacher candidates and the data specified in the problem statement. These themes are experiences, advantages, disadvantages, problems encountered, and solution suggestions.



Figure 1: Themes determined regarding the distance teaching practice course

Findings Regarding the Experiences Sub-Theme of the Distance Teaching Practice Course

The findings regarding the sub-theme of experiences gained in the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic and quotations from the opinions of the music teacher candidates are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Experiences gained in distance teaching practice course and quotes

Code	Frequency	Quote
Gaining distant communication skills TC8, TC26, TC25, TC11, TC10, TC5, TC15, TC16	8	TC16: Distance Teaching Practice course has provided the experience of observing students, communicating with students in a virtual environment, and able to communicate effectively remotely and conveying information accurately.
Creating virtual course content TC10, TC8, TC7, TC6, TC5, TC3, TC1, TC24	8	TC6: One of the first experiences I had was to provide a source of information that would provide control and arouse curiosity and to make it felt that the lessons would proceed in the form of fun-oriented knowledge acquisition. For example, by explaining the subject in the first lesson, in the second lesson creating an interactive environment, opening certain discussion topics, and talking about the subjects that everyone has an opinion on.

Designing virtual course material TC2, TC18, TC1,TC23	4	TC2:As a pre-service teacher, I observed that with the developing technology, different and interesting alternatives and materials could be created for students to conduct practical lessons remotely efficiently.
Professional development TC20, TC21, TC16, TC11, TC9, TC5, TC3, TC13, TC15, TC17, TC23, TC24, TC26	13	TC20: We observed the children in the classroom environment, albeit from a distance. Our distance teaching allowed us to realize our shortcomings and to improve ourselves in this regard.
Learning required software TC7, TC9, TC10, TC12, TC21, TC23, TC25	7	TC12:I have improved my ability to use the software that should be used in the distance education process (zoom, note writing software).
Learning distant classroom management TC18, TC24, TC11, TC10, TC8, TC25, TC26	7	TC12:In terms of managing the process, just like in face-to-face education, I prepared the lesson plan and content in advance and improved my readiness for the lesson and the process of managing the lesson.
Learning virtual time management TC14, TC11	2	TC14:Since the duration of the lesson is 30 minutes, I learned that it is necessary to use time efficiently.
Gaining self-confidence TC4, TC15, TC5	3	TC4:Before this course, I had many fears, such as how to explain, how to do it, but after this course, by observing my teachers, friends, and students, even virtual, some things about the lesson settled in my mind and my fears decreased.
Feeling like a teacher TC8, TC15, TC5	3	TC8:I saw that my students liked me because they asked me personal questions outside of class. I love each of them too.
The positive attitude of the practice instructor TC5, TC15, TC27	3	TC5:Our internship instructor was very good and caring. He gave good directions. He supported and encouraged us. He made constructive criticisms.

As shown in Table 1, the music teacher candidates have gained various experiences in the distance teaching practice course. These experiences are gathered under 10 codes: Gaining distance communication skills (f=8), Creating virtual course content (f=8), Designing virtual course material (f=4), Providing professional development (f=13), Learning required software (f=7), Learning distant classroom management (f=7), Learning virtual time management (f=2), Gaining self-confidence (f=3), Feeling like a teacher (f=3), The positive attitude of

the practice instructor (f=3).

Findings Regarding the Advantages Sub-Theme of Distance Teaching Practice Course

The findings regarding the sub-theme of the advantages of the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic and quotations from the opinions of the music teacher candidates are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Advantages of the distance teaching practice course and quotes

Code	Frequency	Quote
Providing ease/comfort TC10, TC19, TC20	3	TC10:The virtual environment is more comfortable than the real environment.
Financial savings TC9	1	TC9: Saving financial resources, no transportation problems
Opportunity to repeat the course TC20	1	TC11:Students have the opportunity to watch the course later that they cannot attend. They were given the opportunity to watch the lesson they watched many times.
Ensuring the continuation of education TC12, TC8, TC7, TC1	4	TC12: It was good that the education could continue during the pandemic even though it was not as efficient as face-to-face education.

Preventing virus spread TC13, TC22	2	TC13: In this process, no one has infected anyone.
Time/place flexibility TC16, TC18, TC19, TC20, TC12, TC3	6	TC16: Being able to connect to the lesson from anywhere and saving time can be counted as an advantage for this lesson.
Strengthening technological know-how TC22, TC23, TC25, TC16, TC15, TC2	6	TC25:Distance education enabled us to use technology more actively and to be more knowledgeable about it.
Strengthen theoretical knowledge TC26, TC8	2	TC26:Updating the theoretical knowledge in a more applied field such as music contributed.
Teaching distance education TC24, TC21, TC10, TC8 TC4	5	TC21:When the time comes when I need to give distance education, I will have more control over the subject. I learned where and what to do. I have gained experience in how I can help children in the distance education process in this course.
Reducing the excitement factor TC3, TC6	2	TC3:I was less excited while lecturing.
Provide remote monitoring TC8	1	TC8: Even though they were the same age, I saw students who were cognitively different from each other. While some students in some classes were very talkative, some students just preferred to listen to the teacher and remain silent.
Giving more space to digital examples TC17, TC15	2	TC17:Online concerts and samples can be counted as an advantage.

As can be seen in Table 2, the opinions of the music teacher candidates on the advantages of the distance teaching practice course are grouped under 12 codes: Providing ease/comfort (f=3), Financial savings (f=1), Opportunity to repeat the course (f=1), Ensuring the continuation of education (f=4), Preventing virus spread (f=4), Time/place flexibility (f=6), Strengthening technological know-how (f=6), strengthen theoretical knowledge (f=2), Teaching

distance education (f=5), Reducing the excitement factor (f=2), Provide remote monitoring (f=1), Giving more space to digital examples (f=2).

Findings Regarding the Disadvantages Sub-Theme of Distance Teaching Practice Course

Findings regarding the disadvantages sub-theme of distance teaching practice course during the pandemic and quotations from the opinions of the music teacher candidates are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Disadvantages of the distance teaching practice course and quotes

Code	Frequency	Quote
Limited communication TC1, TC2, TC3, TC5, TC11, TC12, TC13, TC14, TC16, TC22	10	TC12:Not being able to have one-to-one (face to face) communication with the student is a disadvantage in itself. Because it is important to understand their feelings and convey our feelings to them while the lesson is being taught.
Unreliable assessment and evaluation TC1, TC8, TC9, TC15	4	TC8: Students are not subjected to exams as in face-to-face education; they are only evaluated by their participation in the course. This is not enough to understand their general situation.
Limited time and activities TC1, TC7, TC20	3	TC1:The short duration of the lesson causes the lesson activities to be limited.
Distantness TC11	1	TC11:The biggest disadvantage is the distance between the student and the teacher.

Not suitable for applied fields TC3, TC6, TC7, TC8, TC10, TC15, TC20, TC22, TC25	9	TC6: Since we cannot interfere with students in terms of hand position, posture and feeling, false learning may be taking place. This is a big limitation for fields where abstract expressions are applied, such as music lessons.
Cause inequality of educational opportunity TC8, TC18, TC19, TC22	4	TC8: There are some requirements for distance education, such as smart phones, computers, and Internet connection. Since it is somewhat costly, students who do not have the means cannot attend the class.
Leading to mental laziness TC5	1	TC5: Instead of responding using their own thoughts, children copy from another device. Copying was more appealing than developing instant ideas for students.
Lack of sense of reality TC4, TC8, TC13, TC20, TC21, TC24, TC27	7	TC4: Not being able to watch the classroom environment, students and the practice teacher alive, and not being able to perform alive lectures.

As can be seen in Table 3, the opinions of the music teacher candidates on the disadvantages of the distance teaching practice course are grouped under eight codes: Limited communication (f=10), Unreliable assessment and evaluation (f=4), Limited time and activities (f=3), Distantness (f=1), Not suitable for applied fields (f=9), Cause inequality of educational opportunity. (f=6), Leading to mental

laziness (f=1), Lack of sense of reality (f=7).

Findings Regarding Sub-Theme of the Problems Encountered Distance Teaching Practice Course

Findings regarding the sub-theme of the problems encountered in the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic and quotations from the opinions of the music teacher candidates are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Problems encountered in the distance teaching practice course and quotes

Code	Frequency	Quote
Inability to provide classroom management TC1, TC2, TC12	3	TC12: It made it difficult to control and manage the student.
Inability to teach effectively TC2, TC8, TC11, TC18, TC22, TC27	6	TC8: Music is a different and fun lesson from all other lessons. It develops cognitive, psychosocial and psychomotor skills of children. However, in this process, the development of these skills as a whole is not included in the lessons.
Lack of communication TC2, TC3, TC7, TC11, TC14, TC22, TC26	7	TC2: It has many problems for both teacher candidates and future generations such as the lack of communication with the student, the lack of control over the course, the inability to transfer the course content efficiently, and the insufficient bond between the student and the instructor.
Technical problems TC3, TC7, TC9, TC10, TC11, TC14, TC15, TC16, TC17, TC18, TC19, TC20, TC21, TC22, TC23, TC24, TC25, TC27, TC12, TC20	20	TC17: The power outage was the main problem. Because I live in the village and there were problems such as power outage and internet slowdowns. Therefore, sometimes I had problems connecting in teaching practice classes, which affected the fluency of the course. For me and the students, this was frustrating.
Lack of material TC3, TC7, TC16	3	TC16: Inability to use materials that will be effective in the course due to the fact that the courses are conducted in a virtual environment
Lack of discipline TC9, TC16, TC17, TC21, TC22	5	TC17: There is the issue of comfort brought by the home environment. This causes laziness in both the student and the teacher. It's become hard to do something. This process has worn out most of us. Of course, we try to stand upright as much as we can.
Mental problems TC9	1	TC9: Students suffer from various mental problems (inability, depression); restricting learning by living; disrupting social habits

Lack of participation TC7, TC14, TC16, TC18, TC12, TC13, TC2 TC11 TC14, TC17,TC19,TC21,TC22,TC23,TC24	15	TC14: The number of students attending the class is very small. For example, in a class where 30 students are registered, the number of students attending the course is sometimes 7-8, sometimes 11-12. The numbers of students, who participate in the lesson, although they appear in the lesson, are sometimes 1-2, sometimes 3-4, sometimes none of them participate.
Student indifference TC6, TC8, TC11, TC18, TC14	5	TC8: There are students who are online in the class and never turn on their cameras and microphones. Even when I ask a question, there are times that I can't get any response from those students. This is bothering me a bit.

As can be seen in Table 4, the opinions of the music teacher candidates about the problems they encounter during the distance teaching practice course are grouped under 9 codes: Inability to provide classroom management (f=3), Inability to teach effectively (f=6), Lack of communication (f=7), Technical problems (f=20), Lack of material (f=3), Lack of discipline (f=5), Mental problems (f=1), Lack

of participation (f=15), Student indifference (f=5).

Findings Regarding the Solution Suggestions Sub-Theme of Distance Teaching Practice Course

Findings regarding the sub-theme of solution suggestions for the problems encountered in the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic and quotations from the opinions of the music teacher candidates are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Solution suggestions for the distance teaching practice course and quotes

Code	Frequency	Quote
Troubleshooting technical problems TC3, TC5, TC6, TC18, TC19, TC20	6	TC5: In this process, in order for this practice to become further, first of all, all students' internet access obstacles should be solved. There were situations that I witnessed. Not everyone had quality devices and stable internet access.
Compulsory attendance TC8, TC10, TC18, TC22	4	TC8: There should be a compulsory attendance rule. There are students who are absent despite the opportunity. There should be a limit for absenteeism as in the formal education; this discipline should also be applied in distance education.
Creating micro-groups TC2, TC14	2	TC2: In order to provide the discipline provided in face-to-face education in the distance education process, the class size can be reduced. Teaching the course in small groups may increase the awareness of personal responsibility, participation rates, and students' interest in the course.
Designing fun activities, course content and materials TC1 TC3, TC4, TC6, TC18, TC22	6	TC4: Since it was a distance course, participation was not achieved; the students did not take the lessons seriously and got bored. One of my suggestions is to prepare a program where students can have fun and learn at the same time and ensure that they participate in the lesson as actively as possible.
Reliable assessment and evaluation TC8, TC22	2	TC8: The report card grade should be decided only by participation in the course but also by evaluating what was learned during the semester.
Providing a suitable environment TC10, TC13, TC16	3	TC16: The course carried out in a virtual environment should not be equated with the course taught face-to-face. The content of the course should be adjusted according to the process we are in.
Ensuring equal opportunity TC12	1	TC12: In order for the course to be carried out better, all students should be in equal conditions and opportunities.

Mutual cooperation TC16	1	TC16: In this process, it is very important that the course follow-up is provided by both the teacher, the student, and the parents. The more students participate in the lesson, the more effective the lesson will be.
Assessment of requests and attitudes TC13, TC22, TC24, TC27	4	TC24: Instead of proceeding according to the official curriculum sometimes, various educational activities can be carried out according to the wishes of the students, taking into account what they want to do. Thus, I think that children will have fun and participation in the lesson will increase.
Providing psychological support TC1	1	TC1: I think that students should be prepared psychologically for this education in case of the anxiety (anxiety) situations that may occur in students during this period.
Accelerating the transition to face-to-face education TC11, TC17, TC21, TC23, TC25, TC26, TC27, TC14, TC7	9	TC17: Distance education will never be like face-to-face education. Especially in music lessons, it is important to talk about the feelings of the students in the classroom environment, to make them love music, to reflect their feelings easily, to understand them, and act accordingly. These can be understood in a face-to-face classroom environment, but unfortunately, it cannot be possible in the virtual environment. The teaching practice course should not be given in distant education.

As can be seen in Table 5, the solution suggestions of the music teacher candidates for the problems encountered during the distance teaching practice course are grouped under 11 codes: Troubleshooting technical problems (f=6), Compulsory attendance (f=4), Creating micro-groups (f=2), Designing fun activities, course content and materials (f=6), Reliable assessment and evaluation (f=2), Providing a suitable environment (f=3), Ensuring equal opportunity (f=1), cooperation (f=1), Assessment of requests and attitudes (f=4), Providing psychological support (f=1), Accelerating the transition to face-to-face education (f=9).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims to determine the opinions of music teacher candidates regarding the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic. It is considered that the findings obtained from the study are significant in terms of helping the teacher candidates, regardless of the field, to identify the problems they encounter during the distance education process and to develop solutions for these problems.

The findings show that the music teacher candidates gained various experiences in the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic (Table

1). When the experiences of teacher candidates during the process were examined, it was observed that codes such as professional development (f=13), gaining distance communication skills (f=8), creating virtual course content (f=8), learning required software (f=7), and learning distant classroom management (f=7) come to the forefront. This indicates that the distance teaching practice course provides teacher candidates with the opportunity to earn professional experience and get to know the profession while adapting to a new system. In a system they have never known, music teacher candidates have had positive experiences for distance education such as communication skills, classroom management, course content, and material development.

The findings of the study reveal that the music teacher candidates consider that distance education has various advantages (Table 2). When these advantages were examined, it was observed that codes such as ensuring the continuation of education (f=4), preventing virus spread (f=4), time/place flexibility (f=6), strengthening technological know-how (f=6), teaching distance education (f=5) come to the forefront. Teacher candidates stated that distance education at least provides the continuation of education and prevents the spread of the virus during the pandemic. They also stated that they could access

courses from anywhere, they get used to using computer and internet software (like zoom) that they have never experienced before. They have a general understanding of the distance education system. In their study, Özdoğan and Berkant (2020) determined that distance education has advantages such as being independent of time and space, being able to watch the lessons many times, meeting the education needs during the pandemic, preventing the transmission of the disease, the importance of technology in education and developing technological skills. These results are similar to the advantages stated by the music teacher candidates in this study.

Similarly, the finding of “providing a flexible learning opportunity” in Gök’s (2015) study, “creating teaching environments regardless of time and place” in Erfidan’s (2019) study, and “affordability and accessibility” in Traxler’s (2018) study were similar to the codes Providing ease/comfort ($f=3$), Financial savings ($f=1$), Time/place flexibility ($f=6$) included in the theme of the advantages in this study. In his study, which aims to present a model for the teaching practice course with distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic, Koç (2020) has concluded that students feel more comfortable in distance education and express themselves better while asking questions and answering. These results are also similar to the findings of Providing ease/comfort ($f=3$) and Reducing the excitement factor ($f=2$) obtained from the study.

The findings of the study reveal that the music teacher candidates consider that distance education has some disadvantages (Table 3). Among the stated disadvantages are Limited communication ($f=10$), Not suitable for applied fields ($f=9$), Lack of sense of reality ($f=7$), Cause inequality of educational opportunity ($f=6$), Unreliable assessment and evaluation ($f=4$) come to the forefront. Although distance education prevented the interruption of education and ensured its continuation during this pandemic, music teacher candidates state that distance education cannot replace face-to-face education in any way. Since music is a field that requires one-to-one and face-to-face training and that teaching practice is an applied course, distance music teaching course creates the perception of “cannot replace the reality” in music

teacher candidates. In the study conducted by Avcı (2020, p.32), it was determined as a result of data collected from music teachers that distance music education is insufficient in terms of theoretical and practical studies, interaction in the lesson, materials and sources, synchronisation, concentration and especially in the performance of an instrument or any performance, meeting the curriculum, videos, song notes, instrument images, playing the instrument, rhythm studies with family, singing, musical games, sound and image quality, live lessons, music culture, and fun course content. These results are closely related to the Lack of sense of reality ($f=7$) code obtained from the study. Also, the disconnections experienced in all aspects of communication negatively affected the students. Music teacher candidates consider that assessment and evaluation in the distance teaching practice course are not reliable. While assessment and evaluation in face-to-face education are evaluated objectively both at the end of the semester and throughout the semester, taking into account the student’s work/effort, attendance, interest, and active participation, this situation is interrupted in distance education. Since compulsory attendance, low grades, and fail class practices are no more applied in distance education, many students do not show enough interest in the lesson with the confidence and perception that they would pass the class anyway without effort. Even if they took the exam at the end of the semester since there was no supervisor in these exams, they quickly found the answers from other devices and, in a sense, they passed the exam by cheating. This has removed the reliability of assessment and evaluation. Also, the fact that the students from low-income families do not have the required tools such as tablets, phones, computers, and an internet connection, that enable them to access distance education is considered as one of the biggest disadvantages of distance education by music teachers candidates. In the study of Özdoğan and Berkant (2020), loss of motivation, lack of assessment and evaluation, the inadequacy of resources such as the internet and computers, inequality of opportunity in education, lack of communication and interaction, technical problems, lack of socialisation and being unprepared for the distance education process were stated as

disadvantages of distance education. These results are similar to the disadvantages stated regarding distance education by teacher candidates in this study. The findings of “causing a lack of social interaction among students” and “experiencing internet access problems” in İşman’s (2011) study, and “not being effective enough in acquiring affective and psychomotor behaviours” in Uşun’s (2006) study are also consistent with the codes collected under the theme of disadvantage in this study.

The study findings reveal that the music teacher candidates face various problems during the distance education process (Table 4). Technical problems (f=20) and Lack of participation (f=15) were determined to be the biggest problems faced by music teacher candidates with a significant difference and by a large majority. When the opinions gathered under the code of technical problems were examined, it was determined to have different dimensions. These are connection problems, synchronisation problems (audio and video are not synchronised), power outages, broken or old devices, etc. Technical problems affected the teaching of the lessons and reduced the efficiency of the lesson. In their study, Karakuş et al. (2020) identified the biggest problem faced by pre-service teachers in the distance education process as the internet/connection problem and the lack of compulsory attendance. This has resulted in many students being arbitrarily absent and not following the lessons.

On the one hand, there were students who wanted to attend the classes but could not attend because they had to work to provide financial support to their families who were in financial trouble during the pandemic; on the other hand, there were students who did not attend the classes arbitrarily, although this was not the case and considered this process as a vacation. Naturally, it is not possible to separate these students with sharp lines and to know who did not attend the class for what reason. However, lack of student participation caused significant problems for the instructor, the teacher candidate, and the practice teacher within the scope of the teaching practice course. Altıparmak, Kurt, and Kapıdere (2011) determined that some factors negatively affect the education perceptions of individuals, such as technical problems will always be possible, a certain

information technology infrastructure is required, individuals who will use the system are not prepared, and financial inadequacies restrict the access of some students to education. Duran (2020), on the other hand, determined that the uneasiness caused by the limited interaction in distance education negatively affects the education perceptions of individuals. Elcil and Şahiner (2014) stated that university students have weak student-teacher interaction in distance education, students encounter problems such as distraction and lack of motivation. Therefore, distance education is less effective than traditional education. Ustati and Hassan (2013) also mentioned that students experienced interaction problems in distance education and stated that education environments should be reorganised according to student needs. The findings of these studies coincide with the codes under the theme of the problems encountered in the distance education process in this study, such as Inability to teach effectively (f=6), Lack of communication (f=7), Technical problems (f=20), Lack of material (f=3), Lack of discipline (f=5), Mental problems (f=1), and Student indifference (f=5).

The findings of the study show that the music teacher candidates made some suggestions for better conduction of the distance education process (Table 5). When these suggestions were examined, it was observed that codes such as troubleshooting technical problems (f=6), designing fun activities, course content, and materials (f=6), and accelerating the transition to face-to-face education (f=9) come to the forefront. Although music teacher candidates state that they have gained experience in this process and that distance education has many advantages, they want to return to face-to-face education quickly. There are two reasons for this; the first is that the music lesson is an applied field that is not suitable for distance education. The second is the loss of motivation and some mental problems that occur in the students due to the lack of socialisation needs. One of the basic needs of human beings is the need for socialisation. The fact that students were separated from many people they love, witnessing the death of many people due to virus-related reasons, and being lockdown in their homes during the curfew period caused some changes in their perspectives and

attitudes towards education and lessons. In this case, the importance of psychological and motivational support becomes evident. It is considered that distance educators and instructional designers will learn the methods that will positively affect the motivation of learners by considering the motivational structures in the learning process when they read the book titled "Motivation in Online Education" by Maggie Hartnett. The author contributes to both motivation and distance education literature (Uçar, 2019, p.108).

Recommendations

The teaching practice course requires various and multidimensional cooperation in both distance and face-to-face education processes. First of all, for the course to achieve the determined objectives, the practice teacher, lecturer, and music teacher candidate should cooperate with maximum communication and interaction. A detailed action plan for the teaching practice course should be distributed to all Education Faculties and practice schools across the country at least one month before the implementation, and the instructors should receive in-service training regarding this. Instructors should know what to do exactly, be equipped at a level not to leave question marks in the minds of their students, and be able to guide the way to be followed. Also, the principal and teachers of the practice school should have similar knowledge about this course.

Ak et al. (2021, p. 24) examined the effect of the online training of trainers program on the self-efficacy and benefit perceptions of the instructors towards distance education. They found that this program had a significant effect on the instructors' self-efficacy perceptions and benefit perceptions towards distance education. The self-efficacy perceptions of the instructors towards distance education were also examined in terms of sub-factors such as learning management, technology management, and virtual classroom management, and it was determined that the education provided had a significant effect on each sub-factor. Therefore, it is recommended to plan online education supports in detail in case of a possible virus outbreak or any state of emergency that may occur and interrupt education again. Thornton (2020) and Walls (2008) mentioned in their studies that distance music

education is a necessity in today's conditions and that establishing the necessary infrastructure, classrooms, and technology laboratories in all educational institutions as soon as possible will provide positive contributions to education, teachers, and students. They also recommended that scientific studies on distance music education should be increased and encouraged.

Music teacher candidates should be required to take the teaching practice course spread over different semesters of their education life, not as compressed into the last year. This course, which they receive in the year they will graduate, coincides with the anxiety for the entrance exam for the profession, professional concerns, and graduation concerns. Taking this course from the second year of their four-year education life will enrich them in every aspect. Therefore, changing the order of teaching practice courses in the curriculum, offering it earlier, and distributing it to a minimum of four semesters is recommended.

The data obtained as a result of this study, in which the distance teaching practice course during the pandemic was evaluated, is limited to the views of music teacher candidates. Including all course stakeholders (practice instructors, practice teachers, school administrators, parents, etc.) in further studies and diversifying data collection tools is recommended.

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