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The Comparison of Flute Education in Undergraduate Studies in Turkey and in the United States of America

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to compile opinions of flute instructors giving education in undergraduate studies in Turkey and in the U.S.A. to assess flute education in line with these opinions, and to determine and compare teaching methods, techniques and materials used. The data collected through "Flute Pedagogy Survey" were interpreted and comparatively assessed in terms of demographic characteristics of instructors, physical conditions of educational institutions, and flute techniques and teaching methods. The "Flute Pedagogy Survey" was applied to 63 instructors in the USA and 34 instructors in Turkey. Academic articles, books, thesis, and online resources published in Turkey and in the USA were reviewed within the scope of literature review. At the end of the study, it was observed that the majority of the instructors do not take lessons for flute pedagogy during their education in both sampling groups. While methods used in teaching flute techniques show similarities in both groups, the results of the study indicated that the lack of Turkish resources creates a serious problem for instructors in Turkey. It was seen that the institutions where instructors work in the U.S.A. sampling group are better in terms of physical conditions (music library, flute types etc.) and they benefit from different materials such as Naxos, Smart Music and tuning CD, online resources and computer programs in flute teaching.

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Keywords: Flute Pedagogy, Music Education, Turkey, United States of America;

1. Introduction

In the Ottoman Empire era, the general and vocational music education was given in the Schools of Enderun which were important education institutions. Tabilhane, Mehterhane and Muzıka-i Humayun (Imperial Military Band) were the military institutions that provided formal music education in the same period as well. Giving of

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music lessons in schools during imperial period was first started in 1869 by coming into effect of the General Education Charter (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi) (Uçan, 1997).

After the proclamation of the republic, the Music Teachers' School (Musiki Muallim Mektebi) which was founded on September 1, 1924 and started to provide education and training on November 1, 1924 would be the foundation of all vocational music training institutions of the Turkish Republic (Tarman, 2006). The Music Teachers' School would be the core of the Ankara State Conservatory founded in 1936 (Mimaroglu, 1987). The Ankara State Conservatory was followed by the State Conservatories opened in Izmir and Istanbul in 1958 and 1969 respectively; and in 1975, the State Conservatory of Turkish Music was founded in Istanbul (Uçan, 1997). The number of conservatories which are among the primary higher education institutions providing performance training has reached up to twenty seven today.

In the USA however, the first music school was established in Boston in 1717 to teach church music. It can be said that the movement called "Singing School" is the starting point in the history of music education of the USA. Lowell Mason (1792-1872) and George Webb (1803-1887) founded the Boston Academy of Music for the purpose of providing music theory, music teaching methods and vocal training in 1832. The Boston School Committee allowed Mason to give music lessons tentatively in Hawes Gramer School in Boston in years 1837-1838 (Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman, 1994). Upon getting success and winning recognition of this trial, music lessons were started to be added to the programs of public schools in the USA as from 1838 (Pernberton, 1988). The first institution to grant bachelor degree in the Music Education field in the USA is the Oberlin Conservatory that was founded in 1865. It was followed by the New England Conservatory founded in 1867.

These developments in the music area had significant effects on the flute area as well. Georges Barrère (1876-1944), Georges Laurent (1886-1964) and Marcel Moyse (1889-1984) who are among the important educators who formed the basis of the flute education in the USA, received education in Paris Conservatory with Paul Taffanel (1844-1908), the distinguished flutist of the era (Fair, 2003).

Following these first generation flutists who migrated from France to the USA, the first famous flutist and flute trainer born and raised in the USA is William M. Kincaid (1895-1967). Kincaid, who is also accepted as the "Father of the American Flute School", was one of the students of Georges Barrère in the Institute of Musical Art in New York City and inherited the legacy of Taffanel (Toff, 1995).

Vocational music education is an area requiring both general education knowledge and personal talent. Instrument training has an important place in higher education institutions providing vocational music education. The aim of the instrument training is to gain performance skills at a certain technical level and improve them (Uçan, 1996). The students in the institutions providing vocational music education gain technical knowledge and skills regarding the instruments they are trained on, improve their performance skills, and reach a certain level in line with their skills and the education aims of the school. Many instruments are being trained on in universities within the scope of instrument training. One of the important branches of the instrument training given in these institutions is flute training. Effective flute training requires not only the ability to play artistically-advanced pieces, but also having a deep knowledge in the needs regarding the particular situation of each student.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the similarities and differences between the major music schools in the USA and the equivalent institutions in Turkey regarding flute training in line with the opinions of instructors, and to make contribution to the flute training in Turkey by means of analyzing pedagogically the flute lectures given in the mentioned institutions.

2. Methodology

The problem statement of the study is determined as "What are the similarities and differences between the methods and techniques adopted in flute training and the flute training applied in the undergraduate music schools in Turkey and the USA?" The data in this study are collected with the survey method. The *Flute Pedagogy* questionnaire that was prepared in Turkish and English was developed based on Linda Karen Lancaster's doctoral

dissertation named *Analyzing Flute Pedagogy: A Discussion with Selected Pedagogues* (Lancaster, 1994). The questionnaire was conducted via the Internet using program *Questionpro*.

In the USA leg of the survey, the population was constituted of the instructors serving in the area of flute in the institutions accredited by the *National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)*. The sample was determined by means of drawing lots among the instructors working in the accredited higher education institutions. Sixtythree (63) of the questionnaires that were sent to hundred (100) instructors serving in these institutions were answered.

In the Turkish leg of the survey, the population was constituted of the instructors working in the area of flute in the institutions affiliated to YÖK (Council for Higher Education). The questionnaires that were sent to 60 higher education institutions were answered by 34 instructors. The data from the questionnaires were tabulated, and interpreted by analyzing with percentage and frequency calculations.

The study is limited to the instructors working in the area of flute in higher education institutions providing undergraduate music education in Turkey and the USA.

3. Conclusion

According to the demographic results revealed in line with the findings obtained in the study, a great majority of the instructors constituting both sample groups have a Masters Degree (USA 46,03%; Turkey 52,94%). The ratio of instructors with a doctoral degree however, share similarity (USA 42.86%; Turkey 35,3%).

The years of service of the instructors in the Turkish sample group is generally 15 years and below (81,82%), while it is over 15 years (68,25%) in the USA sample group. Accordingly, it can be said that the instructors serving in the area of flute in Turkey are mainly consisted of young generation instructors.

It is important that the instructors serving in this field should have playing skills as well as pedagogical formation with respect to creation of common pedagogical values and determination of a set of standards in flute training. However, a considerable majority of the instructors in both sample groups (the USA 60,32%; Turkey 55,89%) stated that they did not receive any lessons regarding flute pedagogy throughout their education.

It is seen that there is a significant difference between the instructors of the two sample groups in terms of participating in short term education studies regarding the area of flute such as seminars, courses, workshops etc. The majority of the instructors (77.78%) in the USA sample group stated that they have participated in such studies more than 5 times. However, this ratio is 26.46% in Turkey. While the percentage of the instructors who haven't ever participated in such studies in the USA is 1.59%, this percentage is 20.59% in Turkey. Considering these ratios, it can be thought that the activities conducted in the area of flute in Turkey are inadequate in number. Organizing such studies more frequently is important in terms of contribution to the flute instructors, thus to the flute training.

When the data obtained in the study are evaluated in terms of physical conditions, striking results come into view. A great majority of instructors in the USA sample group (82.54%) have a music library in the institutions they work for, through which they can access resources concerning the flute. This ratio in Turkey sample group, however, is much lower (20.59%). Considering that the resources in the music libraries in relation to the flute make a contribution to education, it can be said that the deficiency of material affects the flute training adversely. In the USA sample group, 50 instructors (79.36%) stated that there are books and audio records (CD, cassette etc.) containing flute repertoire, 47 instructors (74.60%) stated that solo and accompanied pieces and chamber music pieces, and 39 instructors (61.90%) stated that flute methods are available in their music libraries. In the USA sample group, 9 instructors (14.28%) stated that, apart from these, orchestra scores, DVDs and video cassettes, biographies, journals, records accessible via "Naxos", pieces written for flute ensemble, and "Smart Music" program are available in their libraries. Yet in Turkey, 5 instructors (14.70%) stated that solo and accompanied pieces for flute and chamber music pieces, 4 instructors (11.76%) stated that there are audio records involving flute methods and flute repertoires, 3 instructors (8.82%) stated that there are books available in their music libraries. Accordingly, it is seen that the percentage of the instructors having access to such resources in the Turkey sample group is less than 15%.

It is thought that enabling the students to familiarize themselves with the other flutes of the flute family is important in flute training. One of the significant differences between the two sample groups in terms of physical

conditions is the flute types available as inventory in the institutions. While alto flute and piccolo are available in the institutions that a great majority of the USA sample group work for (alto flute 82.53%; piccolo 73.01%), this ratio is much lower in Turkey (alto flute 5.88%; piccolo 23.52%). While there isn't any bass flute or baroque flute (traverso) in any of the institutions in which the instructors of the Turkey sample group work, there are bass flutes and baroque flutes in the institutions in which 57.14% and 25.39% of the USA sample group works respectively.

When the data obtained in the study are evaluated in terms of teaching of the lessons, it is seen that the instructors in both sample group include sight reading studies in their lectures. The percentage of instructors who haven't ever involved sight reading studies in their lectures is below 3% in both countries. Apart from individual courses, the situation of conducting group lessons is 63.49% and 57.58% in the USA sample group and Turkey sample group respectively.

It is thought that participation of students in class concerts and orchestra/chamber music concerts increases the success and motivation in flute training. A set of problems which are hard to overcome and affecting the success adversely, such as the stage fright, can be overcome by such activities. In this respect, it is thought that the instructors' encouraging their students to play in front of audience by means of organizing concerts is important. 85.01% of the instructors in the USA sample group stated that their students took part in concert activities 3 or more than 3 times in each term. The percentage of the instructors stating that their students took part in a concert activity once in each term is 3.33% in the USA and 60.61% in Turkey.

In line with the findings obtained from the study, it is seen that the method books used in both sample groups show similarity to a great extent. Accordingly, the mostly recommended methods for tone development are *Taffanel & Gaubert: 17 Daily Exercises for the Flute* (USA 87.30%; Turkey 67.64%) and *Marcel Moyse: De La Sonorite* (USA 73.01%; Turkey 79.41%).

It is seen that generally *Taffanel & Gaubert: 17 Daily Exercises for the Flute* and *Marcel Moyse: Exercises Journaliers, Gammes et Arpeges* methods are used for scale and arpeggio studies; and *Taffanel & Gaubert's* same method book is also used in improvement of finger technique and articulation studies is used widely in both countries (USA 85.71; Turkey 79.41). Other methods recommended mostly for improvement of finger technique are *J. Andersen: 24 Etudes op.33, op.15* and *M.A.Reicheart: Exercises Journaliers* in the USA, and *G.Gariboldi: Etude Complete des Gammes, op.127* and *M.Moyse: Gammes et Arpeges* in Turkey. Also, both sample groups recommend the rhythmic variation studies for improving the virtuosity in the finger technique in difficult passages (USA 95,00%; Turkey 96.97%).

It is thought that lip position (embouchure) has an important function in playing the flute because the air transforms into a musical sound at this point. In playing the flute, the lips give the necessary direction to the air, and used in controlling the sounds. Evaluating the instructors' opinion on this issue, both sample groups united on the opinion that the position of the lips might vary from student to student (USA 41,27%; Turkey 35,29%). In the USA sample group 44,44% of the instructors stated that "the lips should be downwards and in a free (sulking) position" and none of them recommended a position of lips "stretched towards the sides (smiling)" in playing the flute. On the other hand, it is seen that 26.47% of the instructors in Turkey sample group recommended a position of lips "stretched towards the sides (smiling)". The famous flute educator *Michel Debost* states in his book named *Simple Flute: From A to Z* that there isn't any ideal lip position in playing the flute, and that the morphology of every lip is unique in terms of form, thinness, prominence and strength. He emphasizes that the most important factor to be paid attention to is the comfortableness (Debost, 2002).

One of the most important elements for tone is *vibrato*. An Italian word *vibrato* can be construed as the *vibration of sound* in its general meaning (Karşal, 2008). The opinions that the instructors in Turkey and USA most commonly share are: (1) *vibrato* varies according to the era of the piece being played (USA 87.30%; Turkey 70.58%), (2) *vibrato* should be handled and studied separately (USA 73.01%; Turkey 61.76%) and (3) it is an important element for tone (USA 60.31%; Turkey 67.64%). While "vibrato should be performed from the diaphragm" is the opinion with which the instructors in the USA agree the least (17.46%), this opinion is among the opinions with which the instructors in Turkey agree most commonly (50.00%).

Despite the opinion "vibrato should be handled and studied separately" which is one of the points with which the instructors in Turkey and the USA agree most commonly, the opinion "vibrato should be allowed to be

developed naturally in the course of time” is another opinion that is supported among and by more than 50.00% of the instructors. Accordingly, it can be said that the two different approaches in development of vibrato are accepted with similar percentages. There are differences of opinions on this issue between the famous flutists as well as between the flute instructors. The flutists such as Moyses, Taffanel, Gaubert, Maquarre and Barrera believe that the vibrato develops naturally (Toff, 1996). None the less, the famous flutist James Galway mentions that the vibrato should be taught (Karşal, 2008).

Intonation, which means *correct sound* in Latin, can be defined as the ability of musicians to give a pitch with an unerring accuracy and precision in a piece performed, and the pureness, color and harmony of sounds (Say, 2002). When the opinions of the instructors on intonation are evaluated, the opinion that it is necessary “to work with a tuner” (USA 85.71%; Turkey 61.76%) and “études and exercises of different methods should be studied regularly in order to obtain the necessary flexibility in the lips” (USA 60.31%; Turkey 79.41%) are the opinions supported the most by the instructors of both countries. As distinct from the Turkey sample group, the instructors in the USA sample group recommend usage of tuning CDs in intonation studies.

Examining the advanced techniques that the instructors in both sample groups teach in line with the studies they conducted with respect to the avant-garde music, it is seen that 69.84% of the instructors in the USA sample group teach *whistle tones/whisper tones* technique, 63.49% teach *multiphonics* technique, and 61.90% teach *throat tuning* technique.

On the other hand, 52.94%, 32.35% and 26.47% of the instructors in the Turkey sample group stated that they teach *glissando*, *throat tuning*, and *whistle tones/whisper tones* technique respectively. Also some of the instructors in the USA sample group stated that they teach the advanced techniques in flute by means of pieces, that they work on the techniques which are required by the pieces they are studying on, and that they do not make any further studies other than these. Two instructors stated that they teach all the mentioned techniques provided that not to be given to all students.

4. Recommendations

Following recommendations have been developed in line with the results obtained from the study:

Playing the flute and teaching how to play it are different from each other. For this reason, it is important that the educators should improve themselves in respect to teaching as well as playing it. The “flute pedagogy” lesson should be given as a supplementary course for the flute education in undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels in the institutions providing vocational music education. The flute educators should learn and be able to apply methods for flute education in all age groups from early flute training to adult training.

It is considered that the use of other types of flutes from the flute family is important to increase interests of the students for the lesson and also to provide opportunity for chamber music studies. Therefore flute instructors in Turkey should initiate projects to eliminate the deficiency on this issue.

The problems encountered in the area of flute education should be handled and discussed in scientific meetings. The courses, workshops, concerts or contests should be organized more frequently, and it should be ensured that the instructors are communicating with each other and come together in various organizations. It is thought that the lack of material adversely affects the flute training. There should be libraries available both for the instructors and the students in the higher education institutions providing vocational music education in Turkey via which it is possible to reach the audio records containing flute repertoire, flute methods, solo and accompanied pieces written for flute, chamber music pieces and books. Additionally, as in the USA, the records accessible via the Internet like “Naxos” and the computer programs supporting the instrument training like “Smart Music” program should be available in the music libraries.

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