

Full Length Research Paper

Current piano education of Turkish Music teacher candidates: Comparisons of Instructors and Students Perceptions

Birsen JELEN

Gazi University Music Education Department, Beşevler, Çankaya, Ankara, Turkey.

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In recent years almost every newly opened government funded university in Turkey has established a music department where future music teachers are educated and piano is compulsory for every single music teacher candidate in Turkey. The aim of this research is to compare piano teaching instructors' and their students' perceptions about the current piano education of Turkish music teacher candidates. Quantitative research techniques were used in order to analyze the collected data to know whether they were adjusted in normal dispersion by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for the comparison of the two groups, because the dimensions in this measurement were not from normal dispersion masses. Results from the research showed that both groups agreed that the piano lesson curriculum is not explicit and is deficient in general, one hour piano lesson a week is not enough for the complicated process of piano education, the facilities and equipment are deficient and compulsory piano lessons do not help enough students to improve the functional piano skills which are so vital in the music teaching profession.

Key words: piano, education, music, teacher candidates, instructors.

INTRODUCTION

Music education in Turkey can be categorized as general, amateur and professional. General music education contains the education given to every person in public schools while amateur music education is given to those who want to improve their musical abilities as a hobby and try to get involved with music by joining a chorus or playing an instrument. The most serious music education, where students are prepared for the field of music professions is professional music education. (Uçan, 2005). Professional music education in Turkey is

conducted in Education Faculties' Music Education Departments, Fine Art Faculties' Music Departments, Music and Performing Arts Faculties, Conservatories and Anatolian High Schools of Fine Arts. Turkish music candidate teachers are trained in Music Education Departments. In recent years almost every newly opened government funded university in Turkey has established a music department where future music teachers are educated. At the moment there are approximately 25 music education departments throughout Turkey.

E-mail: birsenka@yahoo.com. Tel: +535 582 64 66, +312 433 02 11.

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Students in those departments are provided with four years degree programs divided into eight semesters. This program is applied in every music teacher department throughout Turkey and contains three main course fields which are general culture, the music field and professional teaching knowledge¹. It is expected that students develop their knowledge and skills in all three of these fields. As Kalyoncu (2004) stated “Music teachers should achieve various abilities and knowledge during their education. In order to perform effective and appropriate music lessons in their future practice at schools, it is aimed to improve music field knowledge, musical behaviors and to get didactic supplies during their university education” (pp. 510).

One of the most important music field courses given in music teaching departments is the piano course. Buchanan (1964) emphasized that “the ability to play the piano is an asset to a regular classroom teacher, and often times it is the determining factor in being selected for a job. It is of even greater importance to the school music teacher, since playing the piano is an accepted criterion for a teacher of elementary school general music, or a director of a chorus, orchestra or band” (p. 34). Every piano instructor would agree that the piano is a very useful tool not only in music lessons, but also in the music teaching profession as it is one of the few instruments that can encompass harmony and polyphony (Robinson and Jarvis, 1967). The wide range of sounds on the piano provide lots of opportunities which are used in the music teaching process, such as using the piano as an educational tool in aural, choral or harmonization training, for teaching songs, as voice or instrumental accompaniment or just as a solo instrument.

In the Turkish Higher Education description it is stated that “Piano education and teaching piano is the base of the music teaching program. It embraces progressive technical drills and etudes, it embraces compositions from Turkish and other composers around the world, it embraces educational music samples, it embraces piano literature and teaching and learning techniques for school music” (YÖK, 1998, p.80). Moreover according to the Turkish Higher Education Councils’ implemented program, piano education is compulsory for four years for every single candidate music teacher in Turkey. The course is one hour a week under the name ‘Piano’ and only the last semester it is taught under the name ‘Piano and Teaching’. At the beginning of the course basic fundamentals in piano playing are taught, then certain technical and musical structures are aimed to stabilize in the students’ piano playing and finally in the last semester various piano teaching methods are introduced

to the students (YÖK, 2007). After their graduation from music teaching program students become music teachers who can teach in any level at public schools in Turkey where they ultimately use the piano. Purposeful piano education at a university level would motivate future music teachers to work harder on becoming more effective in their future professions. In order to educate better music teachers it would be beneficial to study the conditions and approaches to their current piano training.

The basic fundamentals in piano education are “creating and improving students’ technical or musical attitudes and abilities. There are some prerequisites for building and improving students’ technical skills and musicality skills such as; having relaxed body posture, good coordination of non tensed fingers-hands- wrists-arms-shoulders-legs, concentration, hard working, and solving the basic technical problems connected to playing the piano” (Öztürk, 2006, p. 18). Building those basic behaviors in piano education and achieving positive results, depends on both students’ and teachers’ characteristics and efforts. This process takes a long time also “...there are a number of variables that in reality will mean a great diversity between students in general (e.g. age, length of learning, whether early or late intermediate stage, how motivated they are to learn)” (Daniel and Bowden, 2013, p. 246). Students at music teacher programs in Turkey have various backgrounds concerning their commencement ages of learning piano. The biggest part of them started piano at the Anatolian High Schools of Fine Arts (AHSFA) or at their universities’ music teaching departments and only a very few of them started learning piano in primary school. “The students who have taken instrumental education before university generally come from AHSFA and they are the key human resource in music teacher programs” (Çilden, 2003, p. 297). Even that AHSFA graduates start learning piano at an adolescent age and get four years of intensive piano education, experiences show that they are generally entering the music teaching programs without the expected piano playing knowledge, abilities or attitudes. Many of these students come to university with technical and musical problems, so their piano education at the university level is affected adversely. These problems can be so serious (not being able to read Bass clef, playing only from ear, students that never played etude in their lives and so on) that instructors at university have no choice but to start teaching them the piano from the very first basic level. When it comes to the students that begin playing piano at the university level, they are dealing with even more difficulties. More specifically, performing motor skills and developing basic behaviors is much slower for them than it is for the students who started learning piano at a younger age. Some researchers claim that adult piano learners are easily frustrated because of their cognitive-motor skill disconnection as compared to children (Wristen, 2006). Furthermore, older students require much more time to

¹ General culture contains courses such as Turkish language and philosophy. Music field includes courses such as musical forms, instrumental education and voice education. Teaching profession knowledge contains courses such as introduction to educational sciences, educational psychology and special training techniques (YÖK, 2007).

learn the same skills. It is consequently difficult for students to develop these abilities with limited time and limited programming in the teacher training departments (Iwaguchi, 2012, p. 172).

Consequently, even at the foundation point of piano education at Turkish music teacher programs some of the various resource issues as the adult beginner piano learners, wrong or unsatisfactory pre- university piano education or the limited lesson time in the curriculum is observed.

RELATED LITERATURE

Studies in the related literature pointed out many aspects in the piano education of music teacher candidates. Especially the low level of functional usage of the piano at the music teaching field is discussed. Functional piano skills are the skills which enable the music teacher to function appropriately at the keyboard for the needs of the public school music programs (Lyke, 1968). Sight reading and harmonizing melodies for accompaniment purposes can be categorized as some functional piano skills, since in the existing literature they are often identified as being important for future music educators to learn (Buchanan, 1964; Trantham, 1970; Lowder, 1983; Graff, 1984). According to practicing music teachers the instrumental (Tuğcular, 1994) and piano education (Bilgin, 1998; Bulut, 2004) at Turkish music teacher programs are not functional for music teaching in the classroom. Similarly, Buchanan who examined 312 music educators throughout the USA found that 64% of the band and orchestra directors, 47% of choral directors and 28% of elementary music education majors thought that their college training in piano did not adequately prepare them for their area of teaching (Buchanan, 1964). Furthermore, Bilgin (1998) and Kutluk (2001) highlighted that the practicable accompaniment usage of piano is the main functional skill used in music teaching classes and that music teachers and music teacher candidates, (Şentürk 1994; Öztürk, 2011) are failing in executing those skills. While Kasap (1999) pointed out that the quality of the currently used piano curricula in music teacher education in Turkey was a problem because in most cases, the goals and objectives of the course and measurement and evaluation were not clear in the curricula. In 2008 the knowledge transfer of some of the music field branches, such as music history, musical forms and polyphony to the piano class was examined. The results from the research showed that, while piano instructors believe that the context of music field knowledge should be transferred to the piano course, in practice the music field knowledge from the branches observed in the research were transferred to piano course only at a very low level such as “relatively little” or generally “none” (Kahramansoy and Kalyoncu, 2008). Previous other researches also showed that, by not

including reach analytical insights usually Turkish music teacher candidates’ piano lessons are not practiced holistically (Yüksel, 2003; Akyıldız et al., 2004; Sönmezöz, 2011). According to a research performed by Eğılmez (2010) all experts from the observed 21 Turkish music teachers, agreed on the negative effect of carrying out a piano course with few students for only one hour a week. Even that experts considered that instrumental courses should be necessary carried out individually, in some Turkish music education departments piano courses were taught with more than one student for one hour a week. The researcher found out that the reason for the increased student number in the piano courses was not only the inadequacy of teaching staff but also the illiteracy of the authorities related to the field (Eğılmez, 2010). Lately in 2013 a research enriched the discussion by evaluating the piano instructors’ views about problems in piano education of Turkish music teacher candidates with both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Jelen , 2013).

The studies related to the piano education of the music teacher candidates provided valuable information about the status of piano education in teacher education programs. However, in the latest existing literature there are no current studies comparing piano instructors’ and students’ points of view about the current status of piano education of music teacher candidates in Turkey.

Since the instructors’ points of view about the educational process and the problems related to it is as important as students’ perspectives about the existing problems effecting their education. Including students’ perspectives in the research must be a crucial part of improving the quality of their education (Iwaguchi, 2012). For all the different varieties of levels, periods, dimensions or content in music education, there are mutual components on which music education is based. According to Uçan (1994) those components are student, instructor, curriculum, musical environment, musical teaching maintenance and general environment (Uçan, 1994). In relation to that and with the survey of literature the following possible topics related to the current status of piano education has identified: students’ characteristics, piano instructors’ competency, piano lesson curriculum structure and contents, piano lesson and topics effecting functional piano skills and facilities and equipment. In this context the aim of this research is to compare piano teaching instructors’ and their students’ perceptions about the current piano education of Turkish music teacher candidates.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The research group was formed from 10 randomly chosen piano teaching instructors and 43 randomly chosen fourth grade students from Gazi University and Kırıkkale University Music Teaching

Table 1. Comparison of the perceptions related to “*Students’ Characteristics*”.

Theme	Group	N	\bar{X}	M	SD	Z	P
Beginning piano at adult age has no adverse effect on the educational process.	Student	43	3.58	4.00	1.42	-2.05	0.04
	Instructor	10	4.60	5.00	.52		
The pre university piano education in Turkey has no adverse effect on the educational process.	Student	43	2.72	3.00	1.32	-1.27	0.20
	Instructor	10	3.20	3.00	.42		
The etudes or pieces level of AHSFA graduates is realistic.	Student	43	2.47	2.00	1.35	-1.48	0.14
	Instructor	10	3.20	3.50	1.48		
AHSFA graduates don't have serious technical issues.	Student	43	3.51	3.00	1.42	-1.02	0.31
	Instructor	10	4.10	4.00	.74		
AHSFA graduates don't have serious musicality issues.	Student	43	3.63	4.00	1.51	-0.23	0.82
	Instructor.	10	4.00	4.00	.82		
General	Student	43	3.18	3.20	.91	-2.02	0.04
	Instructor	10	3.82	3.80	.65		

Departments in Turkey which are both located in Central Anatolia. Most of the instructors who participated in the study were females 70% (N = 7) while males made up only 30% (N = 3). Instructors were mainly quite experienced, 30% of which were with more than 16 years teaching experience, another 30% were with 11 to 16 years teaching experiences and the rest 40% were with 1 to 5 years teaching experience. 30 % of the instructors had doctoral degrees. The students that participated in the study were 55.8% females and 44.2% males. Students ages were mostly between 19-25 years old (76.8%) and a very large part of them (86%) had graduated from AHSFA.

Data collection

The data were collected from a 20 question survey. Literature related to the topic was studied and the first frame of questionnaires was formed. During the preparation of the survey the instructors' opinions were noted and some changes were made to the questions in the survey. Then, the pilot survey was applied to 3 piano instructors and 15 students before the final structure of the survey was formed based on the instructors' and students' responses. Quantitative research techniques were used in order to evaluate the collected data.

Data analysis

In order to find out which tests were proper for this research it was checked to see if the data was adjusted in a normal dispersion by the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* test. The *Mann-Whitney U* test was used for the comparison of the two groups, because the dimensions in this measurement were not from a normal dispersion mass. The analyzed results were gathered from five *Likert-type scale*. The results in the research were analyzed by 0.05 significance levels. The IBM SPSS 20.0 package program was used in the overall data analysis.

FINDINGS

Table 1 shows that meaningful differences were found between the general perceptions involving piano instructors and students [$Z=-2.02$; $p<0.05$]. While the instructors answers show that beginning

piano lessons at adult age, pre university piano education, and AHSFA graduates have serious technical issues, thus affecting the educational process at the university level in a negative way. However, the students' perception about students' characteristics and musical readiness and improvement in piano education at university level is the opposite from their instructors.

Table 2 shows that a meaningful difference was found between the general perceptions of piano academics and students [$Z=-2.44$; $p<0.05$] about the piano instructors' competency. Instructors' view themselves as incompetent while in contrast the students found their piano instructors competent.

Table 3 shows that there was no meaningful difference between the piano instructors' and students' points of view [$Z=-0.58$; $p>0.05$] in relation to the piano lesson curriculum structure and contents in the music teacher departments. Table 3 confirms that both groups agreed that the described piano lesson curriculum is deficient citing that it lacks clarity; it is not helpful enough during the educational process; and the weekly one hour piano lesson is insufficient for success.

In Table 4, according to the perceptions on the effectiveness of piano lessons for the music teaching profession and the relationship with topics related to piano playing there was no meaningful difference between the general perceptions of the two groups [$Z=-1.37$; $p>0.05$]. Both piano instructors and students agreed that the way the piano lesson is practiced in their departments has no close interaction with improving sight reading, accompaniment or harmonizing skills. Moreover, the piano lesson does not help enough in improving the functional piano skills which are vital for their future music teaching profession.

Table 5 shows that there was no meaningful difference between the two groups' general perceptions about the status of the facilities and equipment in their departments [$Z=-1.62$; $p>0.05$]. There was a meaningful difference only in their perceptions about “The number of piano practice rooms is enough.” The median asset shows that while instructors think that the number of piano practice rooms is enough, the students think that those rooms are not enough. Both groups similarly stated that practice room pianos are not tuned and repaired regularly.

RESULTS

The results of the first main topic which was the

Table 2. Comparison of the perceptions related to “Piano Instructors’ Competency”.

Theme	Group	N	\bar{X}	M	SD	Z	P
The piano instructors have advanced technical piano skills.	Student	43	1.86	2.00	1.04	-2.44	0.01
	Instructor	10	2.90	3.00	1.20		
The piano instructors have advanced interpretation piano skills.	Student	43	2.05	2.00	1.17	-2.12	0.04
	Instructor	10	3.10	3.00	1.52		
The piano instructors have advanced knowledge about innovative educational techniques.	Student	43	1.79	1.00	.97	-3.37	0.00
	Instructor	10	3.20	3.50	1.03		
The piano instructors are knowledgeable about using the piano as a tool for teaching.	Student	43	2.44	2.00	1.44	-0.86	0.40
	Instructor	10	2.90	3.00	1.52		
General	Student	43	2.01	1.80	1.07	-2.44	0.01
	Instructor	10	3.00	3.10	1.24		

Table 3. Comparison of the perceptions about the “Piano Lesson Curriculum Structure and Contents”.

Theme	Group	N	\bar{X}	M	SD	Z	P
The piano lesson curriculum content is sufficient for music teachers’ piano education.	Student	43	3.51	4.00	1.33	-1.32	0.19
	Instructor	10	3.00	3.00	.94		
The piano lesson curriculum is clear for successful piano education.	Student	43	3.42	4.00	1.31	-0.82	0.42
	Instructor	10	3.20	3.00	.79		
The piano lesson curriculum helps during the educational process.	Student	43	3.23	3.00	1.46	-1.12	0.27
	Instructor	10	2.70	2.00	1.25		
One piano lesson a week is enough.	Student	43	2.88	3.00	1.72	-0.81	0.43
	Instructor	10	3.40	3.00	.84		
General	Student	43	3.26	3.25	.96	-0.58	0.57
	Instructor	10	3.08	3.00	.67		

Table 4. Comparison of the perceptions related to “Piano Lesson and Topics Effecting Functional Piano Skills”.

Theme	Group	N	\bar{X}	M	SD	Z	P
The piano lesson has close interaction with improving sight reading skills.	Student	43	2.60	3.00	1.38	-1.74	0.08
	Instructor	10	3.40	3.00	.84		
The piano lesson has close interaction with improving accompaniment skills.	Student	43	2.77	3.00	1.56	-1.26	0.20
	Instructor	10	3.37	3.50	.85		
The piano lesson has close interaction with improving harmonization skills.	Student	43	2.77	3.00	1.56	-1.74	0.08
	Instructor	10	3.70	4.00	1.06		
The piano lesson helps to improve using the piano as a tool for teaching.	Student	43	3.02	3.00	1.55	-0.28	0.81
	Instructor	10	3.20	3.50	1.23		
General	Student	43	2.80	2.88	1.17	-1.37	0.17
	Instructor	10	3.35	3.50	.82		

comparison of the perceptions about the *students’ characteristics show* that the instructors feel more definite than the students that, the problems in relation to beginning the piano at a late age of instruction and wrong technique or approach in pre university education adversely effects their piano education at university.

The results of the second main topic which was the comparison of the perceptions about the *piano instructor qualifications’ competency* show that, converse to the instructors, students found piano instructors’ competency good enough for teaching piano to the music teacher candidates. Moreover, the students strongly stated that

Table 5. Comparison of the perceptions about the status of the “*Facilities and Equipment*”.

Theme	Group	N	\bar{X}	M	SD	Z	P
The number of piano practice rooms is enough.	Student	43	4.21	5.00	1.28	-2.13	0.04
	Instructor	10	3.50	3.00	.97		
The practice room pianos are tuned regularly.	Student	43	4.09	4.00	1.06	-0.86	0.39
	Instructor	10	3.80	3.50	1.14		
The practice room pianos' care and reparation is done regularly.	Student	43	4.05	4.00	1.17	-0.22	0.84
	Instructor	10	3.90	4.50	1.29		
General	Student	43	4.12	4.33	.92	-1.62	0.11
	Instructor	10	3.73	3.67	.77		

piano instructors have advanced technical-musical skills and knowledge about modern approaches in teaching piano while the piano instructors put their perceptions in the opposite way.

In relation to the third main topic which was the comparison of the perceptions regarding the status of the *described piano lesson curriculum goals and structures*, both groups agreed that the described program concerning piano lessons is not explicit and is in general deficient. Furthermore, the one hour piano lesson per week is not enough for the complicated process of piano education which takes a long time especially when it comes to educating music teacher candidates with different musical backgrounds.

In the results of the fourth main topic which was the comparison of the perceptions pertaining to the problems related with the *topics effecting functional piano skills*, both groups agreed the compulsory piano education in Turkey is not practiced in close enough relation to the topics of *sight reading, accompaniment and harmony* which are directly effecting the functional usage of piano in music teaching. In addition, both groups agreed that, the piano lessons do not help enough in improving *the functional usage of piano* in the music teaching profession.

According to the results with reference to the fifth main topic in the research, which was the comparison of the two groups' perceptions about the status of the *facilities and equipment*; both groups implied similar thoughts about the deficient facilities and equipment in the music teacher departments. Furthermore both groups felt that the pianos are mostly out of tune during the educational period.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the status of piano education in relation to students' characteristics, instructors' capacity, piano lesson curriculum, piano lesson and topics effecting functional piano skills, facilities and equipment in Turkish music teacher departments are not in the best

condition.

In their perceptions related to *student characteristics* instructors stressed more strongly than the students that, AHSFA graduates are playing etudes and pieces of piano music which level is unrealistic. The difference in the perceptions of the two groups can be explained by the fact that teachers are more experienced about the evaluation of students' characteristics and their musical readiness and improvement in piano education. While it is possible that the students do not prefer to openly criticize themselves or do not realize that playing etudes and pieces at unrealistic level (for example at a higher level than they are actually capable of playing) is not worthwhile if they have unsolved technical issues. In relation to those results piano instructors should give more effort to help students be aware about their general piano playing conditions. Instructors should emphasize the importance of good technique and when needed convince students to work harder on getting rid of the incorrect habits that they carry from their pre university piano education. As the results in the present research showed and also as mentioned before, “piano education conducted in AHSFA has especial importance because it is preparation for professional music education and the first steps of students substructure in piano playing behaviors is given in there” (Kalyoncu, 1996, p.5). In this regard since graduates from AHSFA as in the present study also in general are the main student resource in Turkish music teaching departments (Çilden,2003), more attention should be drawn to their piano education. In the present research it is observed that many of these students come with technical and musical problems effecting their piano education at the university adversely. Depending on those results, the piano education's quality in AHSFA should be observed multy dimensionally, than the necessary improvements should be made. Conducting more researches related to this topic can be recommended as a starting point for improving the quality in piano education in AHSFA.

Another aspect questioned in the present study was obtaining participants' perceptions about piano *instructors' competency*. It should be kept in mind that in

teaching piano “the essential skill of a ‘good’ instructor is to diagnose problems accurately and to solve them effectively for the student” (Tomita and Barber, 1996, pp.135). In consequence of the observation of piano instructors training music teacher candidates in this research it should be added also that “those responsible for the preparation of teachers must know the characteristics and abilities needed for effective teaching” (Monsour, 1991, p.13) and be aware about innovative methods and techniques in their educational area. Moreover it is important for undergraduate piano instructors to have rich musical knowledge, playing abilities and have high academic qualities to train music teacher candidates (Sönmezöz, 2011). According to the results of this study, contrary to the students the instructors do not see themselves sufficient in their teaching knowledge and teaching skills capacity. This demonstrates open self criticism and self awareness which are important characteristics for their professional improvement and could affect their quality of teaching positively. These results are opposite with the results from previous research conducted in Black Sea region of Turkey where piano instructors did not see any reason to criticize themselves as reason for the problems in their piano lessons (Kahramansoy and Kalyoncu, 2008). The reason for this difference can be related to the higher competition level for instructors at universities in Central Anatolia or qualifications of the instructors. To raise the level of quality of the piano instructors, local and international experts in piano teaching should be invited to give workshops and to share the latest approaches and their experience with their colleagues and interested students. Additionally, as there are examples of national organizations for piano teachers such as Piano Teachers Society of America or the National Guild of Piano Teachers in the USA, establishing a national organization for piano instructors and teachers in Turkey could help in increasing the quality of the music teacher programs’ piano education field by raising the quality of piano education in general.

The next topic included in the present study was piano instructors and students perceptions of the current piano lesson curriculum. Both groups similarly implied that, the *piano lesson curriculum* in the Turkish music teacher departments causes problems because it is not explicit, not sufficient for music teachers’ piano education and is deficient in general. The fact that current piano lesson curriculum is performance based and mainly concentrated on improvement of technical skills and piano literature repertoire can be shown as a reason for that. Similarly to the results from this study in the related literature it is highlighted that the music teacher candidates’ piano lesson curriculum does not meet the educational demands of public music teaching (Gülhan, 1990; Şentürk, 1994; Tugcular, 1994; Kutluk, 2001; Bilgin, 1998; Bulut, 2004, Jelen 2013). As Kasap previously stated, with addition of the results of the present research, the

quality of the currently used piano curricula in music teacher education in Turkey is still a problem (Kasap,1999). To achieve high quality results from piano lessons, in light of present study’s results, the descriptive piano lesson curriculum needs to be upgraded by more clearly illuminating the music teacher profession oriented aims in which it is going to help the music teacher candidates to develop better in their future profession. As a first step for that (after creating the basic piano skills) the material taught in piano lessons needs to be related to the aim of training music teachers. Moreover piano instructors and students perspectives examined in this research require restructuring the piano lesson curriculum. Adapting and developing new teaching methods and approaches together with adding more lesson hours are possible solutions for the issues of curricular goals and structures in the Turkish music teacher candidates’ piano training.

Another topic of piano instructors’ and students’ perceptions questioned in the present research was the interaction in piano lesson with sight reading, accompaniment and harmonizing. As in other instrumental lessons also in piano lessons association with music knowledge should be provided. Often it is mentioned that, while working on pieces during piano lessons, knowledge about branches such as harmonization, music theory, polyphony, music forms, still knowledge, music history and ex. are discussed (Kahramansoy and Kalyoncu, 2008; Sönmezöz, 2011). “This way as constructing the lessons theoretical base, faster understanding and proper interpretation of the studied piece can be provided” (Kahramansoy and Kalyoncu, 2008, pp.94). With analogous reasons plus their various benefits for the practical usage of piano in music teaching, the interaction in piano lesson with sight reading, accompaniment and harmonizing were observed in this study. Both group participants agreed that the compulsory piano education in Turkey is not practiced in close enough relation of sight reading, accompaniment and harmony which are very important for the practical usage of piano in music teaching. In relation to that, in previous study music teacher candidates’ piano instructors views showed that courses like harmonization, music forms and music history should be in closer relationship with piano lessons and stronger transfer between music knowledge field courses should be maintained. Yet the results of the same study showed that the transfer between those topics and piano courses was not in the desired level. As main reason of those results it was indicated that, topics such as music theory, harmonization, counterpoint and music forms were not included in the implemented 1998 music teacher program as separate courses (Kahramansoy and Kalyoncu, 2008).

However even after the music teaching programs’ revision in 2006 where music theory, accompaniment and harmonization take place as separate courses, in the present study results showed that there is still not strong

enough transfer or interaction between observed courses and piano course. In this case courses like harmonization, music forms and accompaniment should not only exist in the music teacher program but also should be included in the program during the four years period education. Such courses should be taught rigorously by including emphasizing the interaction between them and more effort should be given to strengthen the reflection of this interaction on students piano playing. Additionally, the results from the present research also require that piano instructors should always remember that the context of the education given in music education department is not training instrumentalists but training music teacher candidates.

Furthermore, not only the examined piano instructors but also the students' perceptions reflect that, the obligatory piano lessons do not help enough students in improving on the functional piano skills which are so crucial in the music teaching profession. These results are not surprising as they can be predicted from the issues mentioned before. Moreover these results are similar with the results presented in the reviewed literature where, the unsuccessfulness of music teachers or music teacher candidates on the efficient use of the piano in the classroom is stressed (Gülhan, 1990; Şentürk, 1994; Tugcular, 1994; Bilgin, 1998; Kutluk, 2001; Bulut, 2004; Öztürk, 2011). As researchers recommended in previous studies according to the present results it is also recommended that, music teacher training programs should be closely related to the needs of public school (Kasap, 1999; Kalyoncu, 2004) and special emphasis should be given on the accompanying skills (Gülhan, 1990; Şentürk, 1994; Tugcular, 1994; Bilgin, 1998; Kutluk, 2001; Bulut, 2004; Öztürk, 2011).

The last topic related to the current piano education of music teacher candidates questioned in this research was piano instructors and students perceptions about the facilities and equipment. As Eğılmez stated music education is different than other fields because of its nature. In order that music education is carried out appropriately to its needs, special environments should be provided (Eğılmez, 2010). As it is pointed out in previous researches, in order to improve students' general piano playing skills and achieve better quality in piano lessons, the proper environment and instruments should be provided (Uluçınar, 1996; Çimen, 2004). In the present research as basic facilities and equipment needs for piano education; the number of piano practice rooms, the regularity of the practice room pianos tuning and regularity of the practice room pianos' care and reparation was questioned. Not only piano instructors but also students' perceptions showed that, basic *facilities and equipment* (new pianos and practicing rooms) in the observed Turkish music teacher departments are deficient. These results are similar with the previous results of a study related to the conditions in which piano education which was provided at 21 universities through-

out Turkey. The results indicated that one third of the departments the number of pianos was not enough, and in one fourth of the departments other physical conditions (building and study rooms) were inadequate (Çimen, 2004). In addition Eğılmez (2010) stated that "Only 11 out of the 23 music education departments are training music teachers in buildings that were built especially for music education. In the results of the study it was determined that in 6 universities throughout Turkey the approximate number of students per a piano was 10 (Eğılmez, 2010). All these results give us clear idea about the seriously deficient conditions, equipment and facilities in Turkish music education departments related to piano education. And with the results of the current study it can be stated that universities need to make more effort for the supply of the proper facilities and equipment, because facilities and equipment can be described as the very first step in the long road of achieving good quality education. To succeed, more effort should be given to bring to the surface the problems related to the universities' facilities or contact different organizations for financial support for the improvement of the basic needs of the facilities and equipment.

After all, these results might just be particular to this sample of instructors and students and may need to be replicated in a much larger study by including every single music teaching department in Turkey. Also conducting more extended researches identifying the deficiencies and the needs in piano education at university level plus including AHSFA piano education which obviously affects the university students piano playing can be recommended as a starting point of improving the quality of Turkish music teacher candidates' piano education.

As can be seen from the present study, the current status of piano education of Turkish music teacher candidates is not in the best condition, in direct contradiction it is struggling within its issues and only the good will of the educators and researches for doing better is not enough. According to Wiggins (2007), "excellent teacher education programs provide students with experiences from which they can construct their own understanding of music, education and music education" (p.36). That is what we hope to see in the future in music teacher programs in Turkey. For all that, more research studies need to be conducted about the piano education of music teachers as researchers in the area should look for solutions for the existing problems in order to develop effective practices in the instruction of piano education in particular. Furthermore, the Turkish music teacher programs in general should be more open for using the benefits of new aspects of teaching methods, modern teaching sources and approaches from all over the world.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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STUDENTS' PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

1. Your gender?
(1) Female (2) Male
2. Your age?
(1) 17-20 (2) 21-25 (3) 26 and more
3. When did you start piano education?
(1) Primary school (2) High school (3) University (4) Other
4. For how long are you playing piano?
(1) 1-3 years (2) 4-6 years (3) more than 6 years
5. Which type high school have you graduated from?
(1) General High school (3) Professional High school
(2) Anatolian High School of Fine Arts (4) Other (please explain).....

Current Piano Education of Turkish Music Teacher Candidates: Instructors and Students Perceptions.

Please give your answers about piano education in your department.	Totally Agree Strongly agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly disagree	Totally Disagree
Beginning piano at adult age has not adverse affect on the educational process.								
The pre university piano education in Turkey has not adverse affect on the educational process.								
Piano etudes or pieces level of AHSFA graduates is realistic.								
AHSFA graduates don't have serious technical issues in playing piano.								
AHSFA graduates don't have serious musicality issues in playing piano.								
The piano instructors have advanced technical piano skills.								
The piano instructors have advanced interpretation piano skills.								
The piano instructors have advanced knowledge about innovative educational techniques.								
The piano instructors are knowledgeable about using the piano as a tool for teaching.								
The piano lesson curriculum content is sufficient for music teachers' piano education.								
The piano lesson curriculum is clear for successful piano education.								
The piano lesson curriculum helps during the educational process.								
One piano lesson a week is enough.								
The piano lesson has close interaction with improving sight reading skills.								
The piano lesson has close interaction with improving accompaniment skills.								
The piano lesson has close interaction with improving harmonization skills.								
The piano lesson helps to improve using the piano as a tool for teaching.								
The number of piano practice rooms is enough.								
The practice room pianos are tuned regularly.								
The practice room pianos' care and reparation is done regularly.								

