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A Qualitative Study of the Perspectives of Music Students on Distance Piano Education

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine whether distance education is a viable option for music department students to receive an adequate piano education. Furthermore, the study seeks to discover encountered in distance piano education and to make recommendations about how piano education could best continue during the current pandemic. The study examines the conditions under which university students who receive piano education through distance education are affected either positively or negatively. It highlights the importance of student attitudes toward distance learning as this can determine student feelings, expectations and the desired outcomes of their education. The findings were obtained by conducting qualitative research using the phenomenological design method. For this study, an interview form was prepared and used as a data collection tool to gather student perspectives about piano education. The results of the study revealed that students found piano education through distance learning as not beneficial overall, the overall achievement of students was found to be negatively affected in distance education. Significant disadvantages of piano education were found through distance learning platforms. According to the results of the research, further recommendations are made to improve the current distance education methods.

Keywords: Student, Distance Education, Piano Education, Pandemic, Türkiye

1. Introduction

As was common throughout much of the world, Türkiye in 2020 was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the country has turned to technology as a means of continuing education. The education situation at Turkish universities is not different from other institutions around the world. Music departments, in particular, have been noticeably affected by the challenges of distance education, especially in the field of piano education.

In this study, the details of our research on piano education are discussed as a result of interviews with students studying at Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University Faculty of Education, Music Department who experienced distance education in the spring term in 2019-2020 academic year. The study aims to determine whether distance education is adequate for music department students who specifically are receiving piano instruction. The study also seeks to outline the problems students encounter in distance piano education and to offer recommendations about piano education during the current pandemic. The study also examines the conditions in which university

students who receive piano education through distance education are affected either positively or negatively.

In order to ensure that the individual education was sustainable and not interrupted, different teaching methods were used instead of face-to-face training. Among these methods, various technological education platforms were used primarily. It is understood that the methods of acquiring information and learning have changed with the spread of computers and the internet today (Karahan, 2016, p. 215). Advanced technological tools and equipment enable distance education methods to occur through computers and the internet. The demand for distance education has significantly increased, due to an increasing desire for universities to reach a broader audience, a desire for lower costs by students and an increasing need to efficiently obtain knowledge (Gök & Çakmak, 2020, p. 1917). Distance education is a teaching method in which students and teachers are physically separated yet can connect through audio, video and messaging programs via computer and internet-based technologies (Roffe, 2004). In addition, distance education is a method used in cases where face-to-face education is not available or is not possible especially when there is not adequate infrastructure or face-to-face education cannot continue for health reasons.

Furthermore, Kaya (2002) defines distance education as, “a teaching method from a specific center in cases where it is not possible to carry out classroom activities due to the limitations of traditional learning-teaching methods, between planners and students, through specially prepared teaching units and various environments for communication and interaction.” In other words, distance education aims to provide a more accessible education process (Taşlibeyaz et al., 2014, p. 139). Through distance education, where teachers need to effectively educate and students need to successfully learn, the participants require some kind of technology to meaningfully interact with each other (Daniel, 2006).

Since distance education depends entirely on the development of communication technology, it can be inferred that the limits of distance education are directly proportional to the development of communication technology (Karataş, 2020, p. 155). Ideally, distance learning which encompasses a huge range of educational tools is used to provide students with an easy, cheap and flexible education by using technology, which is cited from Horton (2000) by (Taşlibeyaz et al., 2014). Others have observed that the “integration of computer programs with distance education, access to information on the internet easily, quickly and at low cost, using multimedia tools and techniques, and increasing user interaction with developing technologies have improved,” (Kılınc, 2015).

There is a broad spectrum of advantages to distance education as well as disadvantages. Some of the benefits of distance education can be classified as follows:

- 1 - Physical infrastructure for schools is not required.
- 2- There is no limit on the number of students.
- 3- A variety of student levels is possible.
- 4- The ability to use the latest teaching software and applications.

On the other hand, some of the disadvantages of distance education are as follows:

- 1- Self-study techniques may not be adequately developed in this context.
- 2- It may not be possible to work within the framework of a specific curriculum.
- 3- There may be limited or no access to technology.
- 4- Not being able to benefit from lessons with classroom-based activities.
- 5- Deficiencies in developing appropriate skills or attitude-oriented behaviours.
- 6- Working students may experience a lack of time to devote to studying.
- 7- An excess number of students may lead to limitations in communication.
- 8- Socialization problems may occur.

Nevertheless, despite all the possible concerns, İşman (2011, p. 6) concludes that effective distance education is not only feasible but quite beneficial. Similarly, others have argued that “developments in the field of education show that it is not a necessity for individuals to be in the classroom and to perform teaching-learning activities at certain time intervals in order to learn. Distance education offers the individual the choice to participate in teaching-learning activities,” (Okan & Arapgirlioglu, 2019, p. 212). This study, however, takes into account the

original research of student perspectives in piano education through distance learning. The data obtained in the study can play an important role in considering the advantages and disadvantages of distance piano training.

Distance education is used in a variety of educational fields including music instruction. It is thought that music education, which is continually adapting to the various technological developments, would be much more effective when it utilizes a teaching method that makes use of a variety of developing educational technologies (Yungul, 2018, p. 1335). Due to the current situation with the pandemic, many music instructors tried to quickly adjust their educational activities and general approach to accommodate distance education. Much was done to meet the needs of students through online or remote offline platforms (Hash, 2021). One notable example of distance music education is in the field of orchestral rehearsal and practice. It was shown that orchestral practices through distance education were possible in which there is an advanced audiovisual communication system (Sağır et al., 2014).

Teaching piano, which has an important role in music education, can also be performed online. Various examples of this can be seen through web-based tutorials or online lessons. In addition, Pike and Shoemaker (2013) found that students in online piano classes displayed good communication skills with their teacher during each lesson. In the same study, it was determined that the distance learners exhibited a strong interaction with the material and their learning level was at the same level as the students in the face-to-face group. This study states that children are accustomed to using computer technology during education, thus online piano education presents itself as a viable alternative to face-to-face education. Similarly, a comparative study by Karahan (2016) did not find a significant difference in the development levels of piano performances among students of traditional piano teaching and of those with distance piano education. It was observed that if students had access to a piano, had a healthy working environment, and had the necessary technical infrastructure, then distance education was successful and beneficial to the students. Also, the piano is quite important in the education process as a solo instrument, an accompaniment instrument and as an effective training tool with its polyphonic qualities (Yazıcı, 2013, p. 132). For music teachers, the piano is also an instrument that can be utilized as an in-class or as an extracurricular musical activity (Sönmezöz, 2011). Piano education, which is traditionally carried out in a one-to-one education setting, is conducted in a manner appropriate to the level of each student (Ertem, 2014, p. 3).

Considering that a large number of students who need remote instrument training are those who receive postgraduate education, it is said that distance education makes a great contribution to undergraduate education. Some of the various benefits that distance education offers in this context are the elimination of common difficulties experienced in instrument and student transportation to education facilities and the ability of students to access education regardless of their location or residence (Can & Yungul, 2017, p. 158).

The piano is an essential component of music education in terms of instruction, acquisition, and of course performance. However, the traditional approaches and practices of piano education have entered into a new phase that requires primarily distance education in light of the pandemic. Because of the abruptness of many social restrictions, educators were faced with little or no preparation for the sudden changes. As education patterns were quickly readjusted, many students who received piano education were adversely affected both in terms of a lack of materials and overall morale.

While similar studies on distance piano education have been performed, it should be noted that many of the studies that were conducted were more experimental and related to practicalities. This study, however, focuses on the importance of the student's attitude toward distance learning in piano education. Attitude is critical in determining a student's feelings, expectations and their desired outcomes of education.

In this study, research was conducted that focused on the views of students about distance piano education. All of the piano education in the study was given through distance education due to the pandemic. The data that was obtained in the study will contribute to reconsidering the advantages and disadvantages of distance piano training.

2. Method

This qualitative study was designed phenomenological. Phenomenology is a type of qualitative study that “focuses on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 78). The different facets of the course and how it was applied were examined in detail particularly with respect to variables such as technology, communication, study time and anxiety level.

1.1. Study Group For The Research

The study group consisted of students who took the first-year “Piano Education” course in the Department of Music Education, Faculty of Education, Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University, in the spring term of 2019-2020 academic year in Türkiye. The research consists of students who participated on a voluntary basis. In total, the research was conducted with 23 students who completed several surveys. The ethical consent was received from Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University Ethical Council on 18/12/2020 with the protocol number 11/6

2.1. Data Collection Tool And Data Analysis

Participants completed the course by doing piano training for 1 hour per week via distance learning for a total of 14 weeks. The piano skill level of the students participating in the research was basic. The students who participated in the distance piano education course were asked to participate in the lessons, record their work on video and upload their videos to the distance education system. The piano educator would later follow the development process of the students by watching the recorded videos, giving feedback from a distance about their observations and discuss opportunities for the student to continue to develop.

As a data collection tool in the study, a semi-structured questionnaire was prepared to assess student views on distance piano education. The questionnaire was sent to the students and they were asked to answer the questions in writing. The questions, whose answers were received via email, were numbered and put in order.

1. What are your thoughts about distance piano education before taking the course?
 - Do you think distance piano education is useful?
 - Do you think learning to play the piano through distance education is possible?
 - Do you think learning the piano through distance education affects your overall achievement?
2. What are your thoughts about distance piano education in comparison to face-to-face education?
 - Was piano training through distance learning beneficial for you?
 - Was learning the piano through distance learning understandable?
 - Has distance learning on the piano affected your overall success?
3. What are your thoughts about distance piano education?
 - Did you encounter any problems while studying piano through distance learning?
 - Are there any advantages or disadvantages to piano training through a distance-learning format?
 - Has distance piano training met your expectations in terms of learning an instrument?
 - How would you like piano education to continue in light of the pandemic?

In preparation for the questionnaire, an academic expert in the field was consulted. Certain aspects were evaluated such as the clarity of the questions, the question’s comprehensibility and its scope in the relevant field. Finally, an assessment of the questions was made by a research expert and in order to ensure the validity of the study, reliability measures were taken below in Table 1.

Table 1: Validity and reliability measures

Validity	Internal validity	Taking Expert Opinion
		Confirmation of the participant

		Quoting directly
	External Validity	Explanation of data collection tools and process
		Explanation of data analysis
		Selection and explanation of the working group
Reliability	Internal reliability	Prevention of data loss by using a questionnaire
		Quoting directly
	External reliability	Appropriate discussion of the data

In the study, measures were taken to prevent data loss by asking the participants to answer the questions in the questionnaire in writing. Thus, an effort was made to prevent the use of any false statements. Furthermore, content analysis was used to analyse the data. The responses to the questions were examined by 2 experts, and themes were created by identifying codes that displayed similar characteristics.

In order to ensure external reliability, data collection and data analysis methods have been clearly expressed. The codes and themes created are given in the tables in the findings section. In the findings section, the statements of the participants in the questionnaire were directly quoted. Participants are shown with the letter S (student) for the quotations that were made. Moreover, the data were discussed in comparison with similar studies in the field.

3. Findings

The data obtained as a result of the student responses were analysed, and the findings obtained in line with the research questions are presented below.

3.1. Findings Regarding Student Perspectives About Piano Education Prior to Engaging in Distance Learning

Table 2: Themes and codes for the usefulness of distance piano education

Theme	Codes	f
Helpful	-Distance Learning	4
	-Disciplined Work	2
Not Helpful	-Instrument Availability	8
	-Application	7
	-Return	4
	-Correction	4

Out of the 23 participants in the research, 6 students (26%) stated that distance education would increase the efficiency of their learning. These students assumed that if a program was well organized, working in their home environments and using their time at home would be beneficial for piano education. Conversely, 17 students (74%) stated that distance piano education would not be beneficial. Some of the issues they discussed were lack of ability to practice and the financial difficulty of purchasing an instrument like a piano. They also commented on how

there would be no feedback on whether the work performed during the lesson would be applied correctly or incorrectly in terms of technical issues and other playing criteria. Some of the student views regarding this issue are presented below:

S1: We cannot learn anything and most of our friends do not have the opportunity to complete their piano education at home.

S5: Individual success can be beneficial as it will emerge as a result of planned, devoted and disciplined work as well as a person's abilities.

S8: Every individual who learns piano has to be productive for each hour, since face-to-face education is not possible at the school, a better result can be achieved by studying well during those potentially productive hours.

S18: I think music education will be effective by feeling, touching and being in a musical environment, not in the virtual environment.

S19: The biggest responsibility here falls on the teacher. How they explain the lesson, give homework and check the homework. The learner must also evaluate and study them. This will be useful when the two are working together.

S20: There are downsides to me. While the school environment is more disciplined, organized and provides the opportunity to ask questions to the teachers during the lesson, it requires a great deal of effort to provide these opportunities in the home environment.

From what can be ascertained from the responses of the participants, some students believed that the piano lessons would be beneficial in terms of learning the piano on their own. Yet, as piano education is based on performance, the overall emphasis of the students was a preference for having face-to-face piano lessons.

Table 3: Theme and codes for understandability in distance piano education

Theme	Codes	f
Understandable	-Online course	2
	-Feedback	2
	-Learning	3
Not Understandable	-Application	10
	-Communication	6
	-Technology	2

The participants for this research group also commented on the area of understandability. Four students (17%) expressed that live lectures, other online links and teacher-student feedback would be helpful in understanding the material. In contrast, 19 students (83%) responded negatively and felt that piano education would not be understandable due to the lack of technological infrastructure. They stated that the effectiveness of a piano education course would vary from person to person in terms of communication and that piano education is a skill that requires practice. Several of the student views regarding this feature are presented below.

S3: The instructors should support the students with videos or live lectures if they can be developed in this direction.

S16: Video applications are significant in our weekly lessons and this will be an important option. I don't think there will be any difficulties.

S21: The teacher must personally apply the technique of standing in front of the students and playing the piano.

S23: I think it will be understandable by giving studies and lessons that have various ranges of complexity.

After examining the *responses* of the students, it was found that the comprehensibility level of distance piano education differs from person to person.

Table 4: Themes and codes for general success in distance piano education

Theme	Codes	f
Overall Success	-Piano Education	11
	-Distance Learning	8
	-Teacher-Student communication	3
	-Grade average	6

When *participant's* opinions were gathered about the success of distance learning and the general success of other courses, all 23 students (100%) stated that both the piano lessons and other lessons would affect their overall level of success. However, 7 students (30%) stated that the change to distance education would most likely improve their skill on the piano positively. Some of the student views regarding this are presented below:

S10: *Since* every lesson in the music department is interrelated and piano education is the foundation, it will affect my other lessons positively.

S23: Certainly it is affected, but it doesn't affect the overall success negatively. On the contrary, it has positive effects. It positively affects the overall success of our other lessons on piano. It enables the student to progress in more effective and accurate ways.

However, 16 students (10%) stated that there would be negative effects. They communicated concerns that distance education would not be effective for learning to play the piano and could negatively affect other lessons as well. There were other concerns that the communication level between the teacher and the student would not be sufficient and this would affect the overall grade average of the students. Some of the student views regarding this issue are presented below.

S16: Of course, it will affect our education and the same level of discipline will not be provided. There will be problems with participation. I think there are still deficiencies in the system and in tracking.

S18: Rather than its effect on grade success, the fact the instruction for the instrument that I need to take and use in school and in my professional life will not be communicated effectively through distance education, will end up affecting my future success.

3.2. Findings Regarding Student Perspectives About Piano Education After Transferring to Distance Learning

Table 5: Themes and codes for the usefulness of distance piano education

Theme	Codes	f
Helpful	-Operation time	2
	-Self Study	3
	-Anxiety	1
Not Helpful	-Instrument Availability	9
	- Application	2
	- Concentration	1
	- Communication	1
	- Feedback	2
	- Distance Learning	10

Out of the 23 participants participating in the study, only 3 students (13%) were able to set aside more time for piano education in their home environment through distance learning. They stated that it was beneficial because they were less anxious since they were able to play the piano on their own. By contrast, 20 students (87%) stated that distance piano education was not beneficial. Their reasons consisted of not having the ability to purchase a piano or a similar instrument, they could not receiving adequate feedback on the pieces they practiced, and that the communication between the teacher and student was not effective because of the platform. Some of the student perspectives in this area are presented below:

S8: Since there is no obligation to go to school in distance education, I found the opportunity to study the piano whenever I want, and however I want. I think I got a better result because I usually work at hours that I think are productive.

S17: There was no anxiety for me.

S5: I could not maintain sufficient concentration in my home environment.

S9: The educator also has problems with the student. If the educator does not give positive feedback, the student cannot get enough information about the course.

Table 6: Theme and codes for understandability in distance piano education

Theme	Codes	f
Understandable	-Operation time	2
	-Planning	1
Not Understandable	-Communication	1
	-Piano piece	3
	-Application	6
	-Distance Learning	15

Among the participants in the research group, the 2 students (9%) which spent a significant amount of time studying piano lessons and carrying out consistent planned study times were the same students that found the course to be understandable. However, 21 students (91%) did not find the course to be adequately understandable. They stated that there was a lack of communication between the teacher and the student, that the piano pieces were difficult with respect to the student's level and that the piano lessons were not sufficient for them to fully understand.

Table 7: Themes and codes for general success in distance piano education

Theme	Codes	f
General Success	- Face-to-face education	5
	- Distance Learning	11
	- Grade average	19

When the opinions of students regarding both distance piano education and the general success in other courses were examined, all 23 students (100%) were seen to be effected in this context. However, 21 students (91%) expressed that when piano education was done in a distance education format, it was not a positive learning experience for them and that it negatively affected both piano education and their success in other lessons. Finally, 2 students (9%) reported that they found success in both distance piano education and other distance learning lessons.

3.3. Findings Regarding Student Attitudes About Distance Piano Education

Table 8: Theme and codes regarding the problems students encounter while studying piano through distance education

Theme	Codes	f
Problems Encountered	- Instrument Availability	13
	- Internet connection	1
	-Homework preparation and submission	6
	- System problems	3
	- Family members	2
	- Covid 19 pandemic	3
	- Communication	2

Of the 23 students participating in the study, the largest problem was concerning access to a piano or similar instruments. This was largely due to insufficient financial means. Other issues the students faced were things such as the inability to turn in homework on time because of the lack of internet data or internet infrastructure and the inability to enter the distance education system due to internet issues. Some participants also had problems concerning lack of time due to responsibilities with children or other family members. One other unique issue that was observed was grief due to the pandemic. Students reported how the loss of loved ones to Covid-19 and the worry of catching the virus themselves had a negative effect on them.

3.4. Findings Regarding the Student Perspectives of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Piano Education

Table 9: Theme and codes regarding the pros and cons of distance piano education

Theme	Codes	f
Positive	- Lack of Anxiety	8
	- Operation Time	9
Negative	- Discipline	2
	- Instrument Availability	11
	- Incorrect Learning	9
	- Communication	7
	- Technological Tools	3

Of the 23 students who participated in the study, 15 students (68%) felt they performed better because they were less anxious having they played the piano on their own through distance education. These students stated that the positive aspects were that they were able to learn certain compositions better because they spent significant time on piano education in their home environment. Yet even with less anxiety, all 23 students (100%) stated that distance education created a lack of structure and discipline in piano education. Other issues that were faced were difficulties in obtaining a piano or a similar instrument, at times learning compositions incorrectly, and that the teacher-student communication could not be effectively provided because of technological limitations.

In this context, some of the student perspectives that related to positive elements:

S5: No matter how hard I try in face-to-face training, the only feeling I cannot suppress is my anxiety. Not being confronted one-on-one in distance education ensures that a person is more in control of their anxiety.

S6: Since distance learning involves video shooting, the anxiety factor is easier to overcome and this can be a significant advantage.

S8: Undoubtedly, time was among the advantages of piano education in my distance learning program. Because there was not much time to study piano in a face-to-face setting, I think the time to study piano actually increased with distance education.

Some of the student perspectives related to some negative elements:

S2: Distance piano education is a situation that requires discipline and focus.

S7: Not everyone has a piano at home. The instruments at home are not like the pianos we play at school. Since we could not identify our own mistakes, there was a large deficiency.

S16: There is too much disconnection from the school. There is also a lack of participation and a lack of discipline. There is too much lack of concentration and too much of a lack of seriousness.

S20: The facilities offered at school for playing a piano cannot be provided in the home environment. At home, you also cannot control your working time and you can be distracted.

3.5. Findings Regarding Student Expectations of Learning the Piano Through Distance Education

Table 10: Themes and codes of distance piano education regarding student's expectations

Theme	Codes	f
Expectation	- Operation time	1
	- Learning	10
	- Success	12

Out of the 23 students included in the study, only 1 student (5%) stated that the distance learning program met their expectations. They stated that they were able to devote a large amount of time to piano education in their home environment during the program. The student commented:

S10: I had plenty of time to improve myself. During this time, I had the chance to improve myself by learning a lot of information, including knowledge of notes, accents, and other information.

Conversely, 22 students (96%) stated that distance education hindered their learning of the piano and, thus, their success was negatively affected. Some of the student views regarding this situation are as follows:

S17: I would like to learn more. There are many things I do not know about the piano. I would like to progress, and to be honest I would like to come to the level of accompanying a piece on the piano.

S12: I think it is a rote system. We do not learn engaging information in the lessons in general, not just for the piano lessons.

S5: There is a problem with concentrating in environments outside of school because there are many aspects socially that disrupt you from your work or from your lesson that you are studying. This initially reduces the desire to learn and then prevents learning in more permanent ways.

S1: We could not learn anything and the program was insufficient.

3.6. Findings Regarding Student Perspectives in Performing the Piano Through Distance Education

Table 11: Themes and codes for distance piano education regarding lessons

Theme	Codes	f
Conducting the lesson	- Face-to-face education	7
	- Stopping	4
	- Online education	11

While 1 student (5%) out of 23 participants who were involved in the study did not express any opinion on this question, 22 students (96%) commented on how they believe distance piano lessons should be conducted. Some of the student's perspectives regarding this situation were as follows:

S1: I would like piano training to take place when face-to-face education restarts because we do not see any benefits with distance education. It also affects our other lessons and it also affects our final grades.

S5: Considering the possibility of the school being suspended and reopening later, the piano course can be moved to a different term.

S10: I was pleased with the training our teacher did this term. It was nice to upload videos to the system every week, just like our teacher required, to improve myself. In the same way, I want the piano training to continue by sending videos every week.

S15: I would prefer face-to-face training in our schools with the necessary hygiene and social distancing.

S17: Actually, live lessons could be done instead of recorded videos. The limitations of distance learning don't allow us very many options.

S18: I would prefer my piano education to be postponed to the next school term so the training can occur face-to-face.

S22: In this format, I would like the applied aspects of piano training to be removed and only study the theoretical aspects with the required homework.

4. Discussion

Examining the perspective of students before and after the process of distance education, the findings of this study indicate first that there were difficulties in procuring and purchasing a piano. Shoemaker and Stam (2010) note that in environments where financial resources and equipment are limited, the possibility of learning an instrument or learning vocals through distance education is weak. The observations of this study significantly overlap with our findings. Due to the high cost of pianos and their large size and weight, students had difficulty in purchasing pianos. Although digital pianos provide an alternative in terms of weight and size, they were not purchased because of their high cost. Since institutions that teach piano also provide the instrument in established piano study rooms, the majority of students desired that piano education would be carried out in a face-to-face education format.

In addition, considering that the compositions played on the piano are based on performance, it has been concluded that communication and feedback in distance education presents a major obstacle in the effective transfer of knowledge. This study shows that the communication and feedback by the instructor were not adequate in demonstrating to the students which of their actions needed correction. Dumlavwalla (2017) concluded that while students adapt over time, there is an emotional and personal disconnect in communication between students and teachers during online lessons. Furthermore, Comeau et al. (2019) stated that piano teaching through distance education has substantial disadvantages because verbal communication cannot be adequately provided and there is no physical contact between the teacher and the student to transfer the technical skills required to play the piano. The participants also claimed that distance piano training was not useful because they could not concentrate outside of the school environment. Similarly, Birişçi (2013) also found that "the students who mentioned the technical problems experienced in the video conferencing an obstacle to the communication between the teacher and the student during the lesson and that they had a negative feeling not being in a face-to-face environment with the teacher and not being motivated to participate in the lesson."

Additionally, the students emphasized that the online piano course was not understandable due to significant communication issues. They stated that students with little musical education or knowledge did not understand the topics and the terms mentioned through distance learning, and because of this students generally faced various difficulties understanding the content (Enbuska et al., 2018).

Furthermore, it was concluded that when piano education is not carried out face-to-face, the outcome negatively affects both the success of the student's piano education as well as other lessons. Parallel with this study, Özer and Üstün (2020) identified problems such as challenges with internet connection, unhelpful study environments, difficulties due to lack of materials, and inability to adapt to the distance education systems. They also found further issues such as teachers assigning an unhealthy amount of homework and students both not understanding the lessons and not communicating with the instructors. According to Keskin and Özer (2020), in an online teaching environment, students were able to acquire more theoretical knowledge than applied knowledge. They further found that students could not communicate well with instructors and technical problems with education systems also posed a problem. With similar results, Yılmaz (2020) observed that web-based distance education was not as efficient as face-to-face education specifically for departments where the applied courses were predominant. Based on their findings, the conclusion was made that in both theoretical and applied courses students are inefficiently learning through distance education platforms. Therefore, it is observed that many negative factors experienced by students in a distance education environment have directly affected their success. Among the data obtained, one unique insight was that while some students were anxious and found it difficult to play the piano in a face-to-face setting, when the setting was switched to distance piano learning, the students were able to feel more comfortable and perform better. Kruse et al. (2013) stated that in remote connections through Skype, piano lessons have a natural and comfortable feel, and it enables a level of continuity in the education process despite the distance. The students participating in this study also stated that they were not nervous because they had the freedom to play pieces on their own. However, this situation may also negatively affect the ability of the student to be adequately trained in terms of vocalizing well and maintaining a solid stage performance. As rehearsals and performances are an integral part of performing arts, performance appraisals and practices must also be included in art education (King, 2018).

Finally, when the students were surveyed about how to better perform piano education during the pandemic, it was apparent that the majority of the students believed that the course would have been better if it had been delayed. These students expressed their views on continuing piano education after the pandemic was over when necessary conditions could be better met and face-to-face education was available again.

According to the results of the research, the following is recommended for the sustainability of piano education through distance learning:

- Better developments are necessary for piano education through distance learning methods.
- Piano teachers should receive training for best practices in distance education.
- Educators must provide adequate information to students on how to continue distance piano education successfully.

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