Evaluation of 8th Grade Music Curriculum Utilizing Eisner's Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism Model

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Abstract

This embedded-single case study aims to evaluate the efficacy of the 8th-grade music curriculum through the lens of Eisner's Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism Model. An initial survey involving 146 music teachers was conducted to determine the middle school grade-level music curriculum for evaluation. Subsequently, 15 music teachers, six students, and four faculty members from the music education department participated in the primary investigation, selected using the maximum diversity technique. Data analysis was conducted utilizing content analysis, incorporating insights gleaned from participant interviews, classroom observations, documents, and the researcher's expertise in the field. The study identified several significant factors impacting the implementation of music curricula, including the inadequate preparedness of students who lack exposure to music teachers during their foundational education, insufficiencies in lesson duration, deficient music facilities and resources, and a perceived lack of significance attributed to music instruction by both educational administrators and parents. Furthermore, it was deduced that collaborative efforts between the Higher Education Council and the Ministry are necessary to enhance the curriculum literacy of music teachers and university faculty members, ensuring the alignment of developed curricula. Despite the adequacy of objectives and achievements outlined in the music curriculum, it was concluded that mismatches exist concerning student readiness, with theoretical content surpassing students' proficiency levels and neglecting the student-centered principle.

Introduction

Throughout their lifetimes, individuals derive pleasure from music, assuming roles both as participants and observers. Music possesses the capacity to evoke diverse emotional responses in individuals, enhancing their affective states and functioning as a universally comprehensible medium of expression. Additionally, music holds considerable sway over the cultivation of social and cultural characteristics, as well as the recognition and honing of personal aptitudes (Toraman, 2013; Yurdum et al., 2023). Creativity, regarded as one of the paramount achievements stemming from an individual's aesthetic sensibility, finds facilitation through music, which not only embodies such attributes but also possesses the potential to influence societal frameworks (Demirtaş, 2022; MoNE/MEB, 2018). In this regard, music education emerges as a pivotal avenue for nurturing the musical experiences and developmental trajectories inherent to human existence. Uçan (2005, cited in Aksu, 2018a, p. 8) characterizes music education as the process of integrating and refining musical behaviors within individuals to align with predefined objectives. Furthermore, Uçan delineates the music curriculum as a meticulously formulated blueprint for music education. It is discernible that exemplary music curricula hold the promise of delivering adept music education.

The educational frameworks for music instruction in primary and middle schools have evolved over the years within the Republic's history, undergoing several revisions and name changes. The transition from primary school music curricula (1924, 1926, 1936, 1936, 1948, 1968) to elementary education curricula began with the drafts in 1994, followed by iterations in 2006, 2017, and the final version in 2018. Notably, the music curricula outlined in 1994, 2006, and 2018 are recognized for their comprehensive and meticulously structured nature (Aksu, 2018a). Consequently, ensuring the effectiveness and success of these curricula necessitates rigorous and regular evaluations, as emphasized by scholars such as Demirel (2023), Saracaloğlu (2015), and Uşun (2016).

In Türkiye, the initiation of music education occurs at the primary school stage according to the curriculum outlined by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2018). However, it is noteworthy that music instruction is facilitated by specialized music branch teachers commencing from middle school onward. There are also studies (Dinç Altun & Uzuner, 2018; Kocamanoğlu, 2019; Şeker & Çilingir, 2022) that music teachers should be involved in music lessons starting from primary school. Based on these investigations and the insights gleaned from the principal investigator's own research endeavors, a prevalent critique emerges: there remains a deficiency of music teachers for students at the crucial preschool and primary school stages in music education. Consequently, it is posited that inadequacies in delivering music education at the primary school level by non-specialized music branch teachers may lead to unpreparedness at the middle school level and hinder the successful implementation of middle school music curricula. Hence, a thorough evaluation of these curricula is deemed imperative.

Following an extensive review of the literature, it was observed that between 2011 and 2023, there were 29 theses and 18 articles dedicated to curriculum evaluation studies (Akarsu, 2017a; Aksu, 2018b; Albuz & Demirel, 2019; Altınsoy, 2019; Arıcı, 2011; Baz, 2019; Demirtaş, 2022; Güven, 2019; Güven, 2020; Güven & Çelenk, 2020; İçöz, 2023; Köroğlu, 2013; Ökdem, 2022; Özer & Onuray Eğilmez, 2022; Şahin & Toraman, 2014; Toraman, 2013; Umuzdaş & Levent, 2012). These evaluations primarily centered on the primary music curricula (Keçeci, 2018; Şahin & Toraman, 2014; Yıldırım, 2013) and predominantly scrutinized aspects such as comparisons

with prior curricula, the appropriateness of content for students, teachers, and other stakeholders, as well as assessments of achievement (Akarsu, 2017a, 2017b; Arıcı, 2011; Azılıoğlu, 2019; Baz, 2019; Birgül-Demir & Nacakcı, 2019; Gök & Tufan, 2016; Güven, 2019; Güven & Çelenk, 2020; Keçeci, 2018; Kılıç, 2016; Şahin & Toraman, 2014; Umuzdaş & Levent, 2012). Upon closer examination of these studies, it becomes evident that various factors influencing the practicality of the curricula, such as attainments, content, instructional methods, assessment components, class durations, learning environments, and class sizes, have been thoroughly investigated (Akarsu, 2017a; Albuz & Demirel, 2019; Azılıoğlu, 2019; Baz, 2019; Birgül Demir & Nacakcı, 2019; Çetinkaya, 2017; Güven, 2019; Öğülmüş & Özdemir, 1995; Şahin & Toraman, 2014; Umuzdaş & Levent, 2012).

The efficacy of a curriculum is intricately linked to its efficiency, functionality, alignment with real-life circumstances, and its practical design (Demirel, 2023; Oliva, 2020). Considering the nature of the music curriculum under scrutiny in this study, it was deemed essential to employ a curriculum evaluation model that aligns with its specific characteristics. Compared to previous curricula, it can be stated that the Ministry of National Education conducted extensive monitoring, consultation, and evaluation for the 2018 music curriculum. The curriculum was initially implemented in the 1st, 5th, and 9th grades, and revised a few months after its introduction. It encompasses general attainments and outcomes, the spiral structure/perspective of the programs, subject-specific skills, program implementation, learning domains, process and alternative-focused assessment and evaluation, values, individual differences, and developmental descriptions (MoNE, 2018). It aims to achieve its goals in a complementary manner across preschool, primary, and secondary education stages, building upon all previous efforts.

Upon thorough review of the literature, it was noted that only two studies (Altınsoy, 2019; Köroğlu, 2013) conducted between 2011 and 2023 employed a music curriculum evaluation model, both utilizing the Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model. Stufflebeam's CIPP model is proposed as a framework to systematically guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of service-learning projects and provide feedback and judgement on the effectiveness of the project for continuous improvement (Darama, Karaduman, Kahraman & Gündoğdu, 2018). Curriculum evaluation, as defined by Uşun (2016), involves the systematic collection and analysis of data to assess various aspects of a curriculum, such as its accuracy, relevance, adequacy, efficiency, effectiveness, and feasibility. The scarcity of studies employing dedicated curriculum evaluation models is noteworthy. Therefore, the aim of this study was to gather comprehensive data utilizing various data collection techniques facilitated by an appropriate curriculum evaluation model, thus enhancing the research's quality. Furthermore, given the absence of expert-oriented evaluations and educational criticism of middle school music curricula to date, it was decided to assess the 2018 middle school music curricula within the framework of 'Eisner's Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism Curriculum Evaluation Model' in this study.

Eisner (2017), the architect of the curriculum evaluation model underpinning this study, underscores the significance of examining multiple dimensions, including classroom observations, material scrutiny, student performance, and affective aspects of the curriculum, as well as the invaluable input of teachers in the evaluation process. Eisner characterizes curriculum evaluation as akin to art criticism, casting the evaluator in the role of an art critic. Central to the model is the gathering of data concerning the quality of curriculum

implementation and evaluation, in accordance with expert perspectives (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2015). Eisner also advocates for evaluators who possess both curriculum expertise and a deep understanding of classroom dynamics, emphasizing the need for evaluators to employ an artistic sensibility akin to that of an art critic (Donmoyer, 2014). Eisner's model delineates four sequential dimensions—description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematization—that evaluators are expected to traverse. According to Eisner, soliciting qualitative assessments from curriculum implementers enriches the evaluation process (Eisner, 2017; Kumral & Saracaloğlu, 2011). In this research, the first author, a seasoned music educator, applied Eisner's theoretical frameworks of expertise and criticism to execute an in-depth educational critique of the music curriculum. By integrating authors' specialized knowledge and subjective insights into the evaluative process, this study represents the inaugural extensive critique of music curricula. It provides a valuable foundation for prospective scholarly inquiries. Furthermore, akin to critics, the researchers provided empirical data to support theoretical interpretations and critical analyses of the experiences recounted by various stakeholders within the curriculum implementation settings, as delineated by Eisner (1985).

The main purpose of this study is to examine the 8th grade music curriculum, which was revised in 2018 within the framework of Eisner's Educational Criticism and Evaluation model, from the critical perspectives of music teachers, music education academics, students, and the researchers involved in the study. Since all stages of the study were planned within the framework of this curriculum evaluation model, this study was carried out by considering the four original stages of the evaluation model ('description', 'interpretation', 'evaluation', and 'thematization'), not within the framework of the research questions, and presented in accordance with the stages of the original model.

Method

Research Design

This research undertook a qualitative evaluation of middle school music curricula within the framework of Eisner's 'Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism Model', employing a case study approach (Patton, 2002; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018; Yin, 2003). Given that the evaluation centered on the 2018 middle school music curriculum, it adopted a 'single case design'. Furthermore, as the study involved multiple units of analysis intertwined to identify prevalent curriculum issues, it employed an " embedded single case design" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018; Yin, 2003).

Study Group

Purposeful sampling was employed in the selection of the study group (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). Maximum diversity was sought among participants to ensure a comprehensive dataset. Parameters such as educational region (1-6), school type (public-private-religious [imam hatip], school socio-economic status [low-medium-high], and teachers' professional experience [1-31 years]) were meticulously considered in the composition of participant groups. In the initial phase of the research involving diverse participant groups, the perspectives of 146 middle school music teachers across the province were sought to identify the specific grade level(s) presenting the most significant challenges within the middle school music curricula. This group comprised 122 teachers from public and 24 from private schools.

In this initial stage, it was observed that the 8th grade posed the most common challenges within middle school music curricula.

Subsequently, in the next stage, 15 middle school music teachers teaching in varying socio-economic settings within the Efeler district of Aydın province were engaged. These teachers, selected from the initial pool, represented a range of professional backgrounds, with 12 graduates of music teaching departments from different education faculties exhibiting professional tenures spanning from two to 27 years, and three graduates from state conservatories possessing professional experience ranging from 13 to 30 years. Furthermore, information was gathered from four faculty members, encompassing one professor, two associate professors, and one doctoral faculty member, affiliated with the music education department of a state university. These faculty members collectively boast professional experience ranging from 11 to 18 years. Their instructional repertoire spans a wide array of courses, including violin, harmony, viola, piano, creative drama and musical games, western music practice, orchestra chamber music, cello, polyphonic choir, dance music, musical hearing and reading, as well as Orff instruments. Additionally, they deliver courses such as 'pre-school music education, musical formation, special teaching methods, learning and teaching approaches, teaching practice, and scientific research methods'.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding, two students demonstrating the highest and lowest levels of interest and achievement in music lesson from each selected school were included in the study. Informal interviews were conducted with music teachers to ascertain student selection, with one student each demonstrating high and low engagement from every eighth-grade class. Although there were variations in some of the questions, an attempt was made to ask similar interview questions to all study groups so that appropriate comparisons could be made. Participant anonymity was upheld through coding, with music teachers denoted as 'T', music academics from the university as 'ACD', and students as 'Std'. Additionally, socio-economic levels of schools were categorized as 'low (L)-medium (M)-high (H)'. Supplementary documentation pertaining to the research domain further augmented the study's data pool.

Data Collection and Tools

The duration of primary and middle school in Turkey is four years. From the middle school level, it was an issue which class curriculum should be evaluated. In the initial phase of the study, a Google form comprising two open-ended questions was crafted to administer to 146 music teachers, aiming to identify the most problematic middle school music curriculum (grades 5-8) and elucidate the underlying reasons. This pilot study highlighted the eighth grade music curriculum. A comprehensive exposition of this form is furnished in the 'Description' section. The interview form for music teachers contained five questions and probing questions in addition to some personal information, while the interview form for music academics included eight questions in total. The questions in both interview forms also reflect a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, Opportunities) analysis of music curricula. In the student interview form, there were five questions and some probes. Although the questions in all interview forms have different appearances, care was taken to ensure that they have similar meanings comparatively.

Moreover, semi-structured interview protocols were employed with academics, music teachers, and students, alongside a structured parallel format form devised for classroom

observations. Utilizing the latter, a cumulative duration of 480 minutes of observation was conducted across three distinct classrooms spanning various socio-economic strata, aggregating 12 instructional hours over four weeks. Additionally, a diverse array of documents and the researchers' expertise were harnessed in consonance with the educational criticism model's exigencies. These encompassed the 2018 music curriculum, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) 2020 curriculum evaluation report, minutes from provincial/district/school councils, council resolutions, the 8th-grade music textbook, annual plans for 8th-grade music classes, class notebooks from classes observed across different socio-economic tiers, in-class visual aids, and lesson plans of the observed teachers.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was utilized in the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews with teachers, music educators, academicians and students, while descriptive analysis techniques were employed in the analysis of observation data and documents. All data were analyzed using MAXQDA (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). A content analysis sample of the codes and categories obtained from the raw interview data is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample Content Analysis of Categorisation and Thematization of the Interviews

Raw Data	Codes	Category
T1: I think it is realised to a great extent. Regarding the attainments, I understand that the child should have an ear for listening to music, like music, understand quality music… T: I will enter from the class size, so if our class size is a little less, students can reach 80 per cent, 90 percent of these attainments. T15: I mean, I don't find it applicable. It could be great when it is applied, but time and opportunity should be available for this.	1. Presence of realised attainments 2. Difficulty in reaching attainments in overcrowded classes 3. Incompatibility/insufficiency of course hours with the attainments 4. The presence of feasible attainments 5. Unsuitable instructional environment	Perceptions of the Curriculum Attainments

Reliability and Validity

To ensure the credibility of the interview questions, they were initially vetted by two faculty members specializing in Curriculum and Instruction, then pilot-tested with a music teacher and a middle school student. Following this phase, the substantive content garnered from the actual interviews was shared with two music teachers, and their input was solicited for validation. To enhance transferability, comprehensive details regarding the research design, methodology, data collection instruments, sampling strategies, and data analysis techniques were elucidated, accompanied by the inclusion of pertinent quotations. For consistency, the codes, categories, and themes derived from the data were deliberated upon with an expert faculty member in the field, culminating in consensus regarding their appropriateness for the research objectives. To ensure confirmability, continual verification was maintained through

the examination of the linkages between raw data and study findings, with interview transcripts and observational data retained for potential scrutiny and verification purposes.

Results

In presenting the findings, Eisner's Educational Criticism model, encompassing the dimensions of 'Description', 'Interpretation', 'Evaluation', and 'Thematization' (Eisner, 2017), served as the foundational framework. During the description phase, the current state of the middle school music curriculum was delineated based on data sourced from music teachers, music academics, and students, aligning with the research objectives. In the interpretation phase, these data were analyzed alongside the researcher's experiential insights. Subsequently, the evaluation phase involved conducting educational criticism to assess the quality of findings presented in the description and interpretation phases, drawing on the expertise of the researcher. Additionally, a comprehensive evaluation of the contributions made by previous music curricula and the 2018 curriculum to music education, in terms of their educational value, was undertaken. This evaluation was informed by the perspectives of field experts, data gleaned from the researcher's observations, and document reviews. Finally, in the 'Thematization' stage-the concluding phase of the model-emergent themes from the study were incorporated to foster reader awareness regarding recurrent patterns observed within the collected data.

Description

Grade Level and Challenges Most Frequently Experienced in Music Curriculum

Before initiating the research endeavor, a preliminary needs assessment was conducted utilizing a Google form to ascertain the pertinent grade level for evaluation within the middle school music curriculum. A cohort of 146 middle school music teachers was engaged, tasked with identifying the grade level in which they encountered the most prevalent challenges and elucidating the underlying reasons. Out of the respondents, 51 teachers provided feedback. Nearly half of the participants (47.3%) reported encountering difficulties with the eighth-grade curriculum, while 21.6% cited issues with the fifth-grade curriculum. Additionally, teachers were prompted to articulate challenges encountered during curriculum implementation. The study yielded several noteworthy findings in the realm of music education, encompassing instances of content exceeding students' proficiency levels (31%), inadequate instructional hours for achieving objectives (13.8%), inclusion of outdated materials (12.6%), insufficient preparedness stemming from primary school music instruction delivered by non-specialists (10.3%), and shortages or absence of requisite music classes and materials (6.9%). A minority of teachers (3.4%) reported encountering no issues with the curriculum. With regard to proposed solutions, half of the teachers advocated for simplifying the curriculum, while others suggested augmenting instructional hours to align with intended learning outcomes. Additionally, over a third of the respondents recommended restructuring curriculum content based on students' readiness levels. In light of these responses, it was deemed imperative to undertake an evaluation of the eighth-grade music curriculum.

Opinions on the Implementation of the Curriculum

In the interviews conducted with teachers, a prevalent sentiment emerged indicating a perceived inability to effectively implement the music curriculum to the desired standard in

practice. This sentiment was attributed to various factors, including inadequate instructional hours and educational resources (such as music classrooms and materials), a curriculum design that does not prioritize student-centeredness, inaccurate arrangements for learning environments, and a perceived lack of significance attributed to music education. Noteworthy excerpts from these interviews are provided below:

Regrettably, music, art, physical education, and technology design courses are not included in Supporting and Training Courses. (T10)

Music, unfortunately, is not regarded as an academic accomplishment. (T1)

For instance, teaching about 'Neşet Ertaş' or 'Muammer Sun' is not simply about having students read and pass through the material. These topics, which are typically condensed into five or six pages, cannot be adequately covered in a 40-minute lesson; they are far too superficial. I find it challenging to convey these concepts to students in a meaningful way. (T5)

Primarily, we face issues with inadequate equipment. The majority of music teachers do not lead music classes themselves, and even among those who do, we struggle to facilitate practical instruction due to a shortage of instruments. Upon scrutinizing the curriculum, I notice assertions suggesting that students are capable of recording and creating in a digital environment. However, this notion currently remains highly impractical. We lack the necessary resources to support such advanced skills, rendering them unattainable at present. (T2)

In contrast to the perceptions of academics, who generally regard the curriculum as functional, there is a prevailing concern that students lack the requisite preparedness due to the absence of music branch teachers from the preschool level onwards. Additionally, it is noted that the curriculum's content is overly burdensome and fails to capture student interest. Notably, one academic articulated this viewpoint regarding student readiness and curriculum content:

The primary issue stems from the absence of a music teacher starting from preschool. Consequently, children experience a disconnect and are distanced from music education during their primary school years… Essentially, we withhold access to music branch teachers, who are specifically trained for this role, during a child's most formative years, only to introduce them to musical notation in middle school. This approach inundates children with an excess of technical details, such as scales and notes…" (ACD1)

Furthermore, feedback from academics regarding the adequacy of music facilities in schools where final-year teaching practicum students are placed highlights discrepancies between the resources available at these institutions and those accessible at the faculty:

We utilize a variety of instruments in our teaching practices here at the faculty. However, students report that comparable resources are lacking in the practice schools. (ACD3)

Conversely, during face-to-face interviews with students concerning the curriculum's implementation, it was revealed that they perceived their educational environment as conducive to ample opportunities for engaging in singing and listening activities, alongside the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. This divergence in experiences between faculty and

school settings was elucidated by student perspectives from diverse socio-economic backgrounds:

> *We study musical note terminologies and concepts like duration.* (MStd1)
>
> *We listen to songs and even compose our own.* (HStdT1)
>
> *Our music lessons are highly enriching. Our teacher plays a significant role in helping us understand musical notation.* (LStd1)

Opinions on Goals and Attainments

Music academics argue that the curriculum's objectives are unattainable in practice due to misalignment with its content. Similarly, music teachers express skepticism regarding the achievability of these objectives. While one academic acknowledges the merit of the curriculum's objectives but highlights implementation challenges by stating, "*I believe the objectives of the curriculum are commendable, yet there are obstacles concerning their attainment*" (ACD3), a music teacher emphasizes the potential effectiveness of the curriculum when properly executed, remarking, "*The curriculum may seem impractical, but its efficacy can be realized through proper implementation. To achieve this, schools and students require adequate opportunities*" (T15).

When questioned about the purpose of music lessons, one student (coded as HStd2) opined, "*I perceive the purpose of music lessons as cultivating a love for music in children at a tender age. Even if a child lacks initial interest in music, exposure to music classes may incite interest and inspire future engagement.*" Another student (coded as MStd2) outlined the broader aim of music education, stating, "*I believe music lessons serve to enhance enjoyment and foster increased interest in music among individuals.*"

Consistent views are shared among music academics and music teachers regarding the objectives and outcomes of the music curriculum. Both parties assert that the curriculum's multitude of objectives is overly ambitious. Moreover, they underscore the inadequacy of the educational environment, instructional hours, materials, and textbook contents necessary for students to fulfill these objectives. Exemplary statements addressing these concerns include:

> *I find the allocated time insufficient. Although the curriculum prescribes two weeks, 40 minutes each, I advocate for an extension to three or four weeks as it is insufficient.* (T9)
>
> *Undoubtedly, the allotted time is inadequate. It typically takes me a month to instill rhythm-writing skills in students. Achieving these goals is entirely challenging.* (T7)
>
> *While the quality of music textbooks is acceptable, the duration of lessons is insufficient. Realizing these objectives within a 40-minute class period is unfeasible.* (ACD2)
>
> *Basic infrastructure must meet a certain minimum standard, yet arts and music programs are often relegated to the lowest priority in school budgets.* (ACD3)

Opinions on Learning Domains

Based on the data on the learning domains of the music curriculum, music education academics mainly point out that the content/subjects are insufficient, field activities such as musical creativity and music culture are not qualified, and too much time is spent on certain days and weeks. The prominent opinions of the academics regarding this situation are as follows:

Now, unfortunately, we do not have music culture and musical creativity, so I don't think there is much work done on it. (ACD1)

I think it isn't very detailed and informative content; they tried to give something more visually. (ACD3)

I think too much time is allocated, especially for certain days and weeks. (ACD2)

Drawing from the data concerning the learning domains of the music curriculum, music education scholars predominantly highlight deficiencies in content coverage, particularly in the areas of musical creativity and music culture. Additionally, concerns are raised regarding the quality of field activities, alongside the observation that an excessive amount of time is allocated to specific days and weeks within the curriculum. Key insights from these scholars are as follows:

Presently, there appears to be a notable absence of emphasis on music culture and musical creativity within the curriculum, indicating a deficiency in corresponding instructional efforts. (ACD1)

The content lacks depth and informativeness; it seems as though attempts were made to prioritize visual appeal over substantive detail. (ACD3)

I am inclined to believe that an excessive amount of time is designated for specific days and weeks, possibly leading to imbalances in curriculum implementation and pacing. (ACD2)

In addition to insights gleaned from academics, music teachers echo concerns regarding the weightiness of the curriculum, the predominance of theoretical content, and the absence of practical learning components, advocating for reinstatement of play-based learning. They also critique the suitability of songs included in the curriculum and the lack of corresponding content in the EBA platform. Notably, teachers provide nuanced opinions and recommendations, particularly regarding curriculum content:

The content is overly burdensome. Are we discussing 'Hüseyni' or 'Uşşak'?... Teaching such topics at the middle school level is unfeasible. (T12)

The ability to recognize maqams through listening (an essential skill) is not adequately addressed. Personally, I can identify some maqams due to my interest in Turkish music and my experience playing instruments like the 'bağlama' and 'ud'. (T7)

Including complex Turkish art music pieces that do not resonate with students' interests and skill levels is impractical. (T4)

Reintroducing listening, singing, and playing into the curriculum is imperative. Without these elements, the curriculum remains incomplete. (T1)

Activities such as composition and melody completions are unrealistic. Many fifth-grade students lack foundational knowledge of musical notation, rendering such tasks unachievable. (T5)

The EBA platform lacks comprehensive music content, particularly for primary school levels where music instruction is often absent. (T10)

Content unrelated to students' vocal capabilities, such as songs requiring advanced vocal techniques, should be omitted from the curriculum. (T4)

The inclusion of topics like music technologies and digital recording tasks seems inappropriate and should be reconsidered. (T2)

During interviews conducted with students engaged in music education, it was apparent that they predominantly derived enjoyment from activities encompassed within the listening and singing learning domain. Moreover, students expressed a favorable disposition towards topics covered in the musical perception and knowledge domains, such as notation and music terminology, as well as those pertaining to music culture. Notably, students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds articulated their preferences: Students attending both high and low-socio-economic level schools emphasized enjoyment derived from activities involving listening and singing songs (HStd1), (LStd2), and (LStd1), respectively. Conversely, a student enrolled in a middle socio-economic level school underscored an emphasis on basic music elements and notation proficiency, stating, "… *we mostly learn notes*" (MStd2).

Opinions on Instructional Implementation

The primary concern highlighted by academics is the inability to utilize specialized instructional methods in music education due to inadequate classroom facilities. Furthermore, they argue that music teachers lag behind in professional development and are constrained by limited opportunities for renewal:

Implementing these methods in National Education schools is presently unfeasible, it is merely a vision… While some activities, like teaching nuance through a 'puppet conductor,' may be feasible, most are movement-based, requiring the removal of classroom desks, which is impractical. (ACD1)

Student feedback on music curriculum implementation revolves around learning notes, playing instruments, and engaging with songs of personal interest. For instance, one student expressed a preference for classic songs, citing Barış Manço as an example (HStd1). Another highlighted the appeal of familiar songs, stating, "*If a known song is included, everyone eagerly participates because they enjoy it and want to be involved*" (HStd 2). A third student emphasized the importance of practical activities and engaging practices, stating, "*Playing the flute is enjoyable as it combines reading and performance*" (MStd2).

In regards to curriculum implementation, music teachers' statements can be categorized into three main areas: tools/materials, methods and techniques, and pedagogical principles. Teachers commonly reported utilizing instruments like the 'flute, melodica, smart board, and Orff instruments' (e.g., T1). Instructional approaches often involved demonstration and aural teaching, as explained by one teacher: "*I demonstrate to students interested in playing an instrument, and then they replicate the action*" (T6). Others emphasized student-centered learning through hands-on experiences and individualized instruction. Notably, a teacher (T13) stressed the importance of initial individual instruction followed by collective practice: "*I focus on individual instruction initially, then we collectively perform what we have learned, facilitating easy assessment.*" Additionally, another teacher (T2) highlighted the effective integration of technology, stating, "*I heavily utilize the smart board as it enhances visual learning.*"

Opinions on Measurement and Evaluation

Music teachers and students were interviewed regarding the final aspect of the curriculum, assessment and evaluation. One teacher highlighted the prevalent use of in-class performance rubrics for evaluation, citing their transparency and clearly defined criteria. In response to a query on this matter, T8 affirmed, "*Yes. I develop performance rubrics, document them, and assign* scores." Conversely, some teachers mentioned employing rubrics for assessment purposes. However, a significant portion indicated their lack of reliance on any specific grading scale. When queried about this, the reasons included the challenges posed by large class sizes, making it impractical to implement assessment practices effectively. For instance:

For me, the key is the student's engagement in the lesson. Their attendance and interest in my lesson are paramount. I eschew formal evaluation tools. (T7)

I occasionally utilized assessment tools but found them impractical due to overcrowded classes. (T12)

When questioned about how their progress was assessed in music lessons, one student mentioned class participation as a primary metric, while another emphasized observation-based evaluation: "*I can confidently state that our participation in class is a form of assessment. I believe the teacher tracks who engages in the lesson. That is our 'exam'*" (HStd2). Moreover, a student (MStd1) reported undergoing a practical assessment by performing the 'National Anthem'. Notably, two out of six students stated they were not evaluated using any formal tools (e.g., HStd1), while the remaining four expressed uncertainty regarding the assessment process despite being evaluated.

In interviews with academics regarding assessment and evaluation, observations revealed discrepancies and inadequacies in assessment practices within middle schools. Recommendations were made to develop assessment tools targeting both cognitive and psychomotor domains. Additionally, an academician (ACD3) admitted to a lack of familiarity with assessment procedures conducted in schools.

Curriculum Literacy Awareness

Music teachers and scholars provided insights regarding the domain-specific competencies embedded within the music curriculum. It is evident that a significant proportion of music teachers lack comprehensive understanding, with only a minority possessing adequate knowledge. For instance, Music Teacher T10 expressed uncertainty, stating, "*I mean, I don't have complete information. I can go by making comments, let me not say anything else.*" Similarly, MT9's response, "*Field-specific skills? Are you talking about instrument education?*" reflects a lack of clarity on the concept of domain-specific skills. Moreover, academics demonstrated limited familiarity with the topic, with only one respondent (ACD2) claiming to have some knowledge, albeit vaguely acknowledging that these terms were not well-defined. The request from other academics (ACD3 and ACD4) for further elucidation during interviews underscores their insufficient understanding of domain-specific skills.

In the study, music teachers and academic professionals were queried regarding their familiarity with the concept of curriculum literacy specifically. Responses such as "*I heard this for the first time, frankly, please excuse my ignorance*" (T7), "*Can you explain a little more?*" (T1), and "*Music curriculum literacy? Which curriculum are we talking about?*" (T11) indicate that the majority of music teachers were unaware of the term curriculum literacy. Furthermore, insights

into the characteristics of a curriculum-literate teacher were provided, suggesting that such an educator possesses a comprehensive understanding of the music curriculum and can effectively implement it in their teaching practices. This entails staying updated with advancements in technology and integrating them into classroom instruction (T6).

In interviews with academic professionals, detailed information regarding curriculum literacy was not forthcoming. Questions such as "*Music curriculum literate? Is this a term?*" (ACD1) and general remarks like "*I think he/she is curious, respects his/her job, may be a bit perfectionist, tries to do his/her job well, is not satisfied, I think he/she has a concern about updating himself/herself*" (ACD4) align with previous findings, suggesting a lack of familiarity with the concept among academicians.

Suggestions for Improving the Quality of the Curriculum

Academicians, music teachers, and students have proposed various recommendations to enhance the quality of the existing music curriculum. While academics generally advocate for a revision of the curriculum with a focus on reducing theoretical content, a particularly radical viewpoint expressed by participant ACD1 suggests a complete overhaul of the curriculum. Additionally, teachers suggest that providing in-service training on specialized music teaching methods would be beneficial. Academicians emphasize the importance of early integration of music education into the curriculum, proposing a comprehensive approach starting from nursery school and continuing through primary, middle, and high school levels. This entails ensuring that music instruction is delivered by specialized teachers at each stage of the educational journey. As articulated by ACD3 below, there is a call for music education to be elevated to a state policy, with a unified and coherent framework guiding music instruction across all educational levels:

> *It is imperative to institutionalize music education as a state policy, ensuring a coherent and integrated approach across all educational levels. Rather than fragmented implementations varying between middle and high schools, a holistic framework must be established, starting from early childhood education. Specifically, from nursery school onward, there should be clarity regarding the progression of music instruction, with specialized teachers guiding curriculum development and delivery at each developmental stage. This approach advocates for continuity and consistency in music education, emphasizing the expertise of professionals throughout the educational journey.* (ACD3)

Music teachers' recommendations were categorized into three distinct groups: 'general suggestions, curriculum-related recommendations, and school-related proposals'. In the first category, teachers highlighted the importance of conducting studies to underscore the significance of music education, advocating for comprehensive and high-quality training within university music departments, and emphasizing the need for workshops on drama and music notation software. Within the second category, suggestions centered on the revision and development of a more practical curriculum, with specific emphasis on increasing music lesson durations and integrating activities fostering creativity over heavy theoretical content. In the third category, proposals aimed at enhancing music education opportunities within schools, including reducing class sizes, expanding access to musical materials and facilities, and advocating for greater administrative prioritization of music education. Noteworthy excerpts illustrating teachers' recommendations include calls for a more expansive and diverse university education to reshape students' perspectives on national music culture, advocating

for dedicated music environments within schools, urging for increased music lesson durations, and advocating for the inclusion of contemporary music culture within the curriculum.

Initially, I posit that our students would perceive the country's music culture through a markedly different lens had we undergone a two-year stint in universities, where we received a more comprehensive, qualified, and diverse education akin to the ethos of village institutes. (T7)

It is imperative that music classes be a staple in every school, with a conducive environment tailored to music, including instruments and appropriate furnishings, fostering students' enthusiasm for such experiences. (T8)

Increasing music lesson hours is a very important determinant in increasing the effectiveness of education. (T12)

School administrations ought to accord precedence to arts and sports classes, as articulated by the sentiment that underscores the need for a balanced prioritization of activities and resources, rather than relegating music education as secondary to other subjects. (T14)

The curriculum must incorporate recent musical works to better reflect contemporary music culture, thereby fostering relevance and engagement among students. (T13)

Following interviews with students, it is discerned from the remarks of two participants that there exists a desire for an augmentation in music lesson hours: "*I would like to have more music lesson hours*" (LStd1 and HStd2). Furthermore, aspirations extend beyond the prescribed instruments, such as the flute and melodica, with students expressing a wish for a broader spectrum of instruments to be incorporated into lessons, as evidenced by statements like "*I would actually like the guitar to be played additionally in music lessons*" (MStd2) and "*I would not only work on melodica, I would work on different things, I would like different instruments to be taught*" (LStd2). Additionally, HStd2 posited an intriguing perspective regarding curriculum enhancement and functionality, advocating for modifications within the music book to include a repertoire of foreign and popular songs, positing that such revisions would engender heightened student engagement: "*I would change some things in the music book. For example, if there were more foreign songs, popular songs, songs that we know more, the music book would attract more attention*".

Interpretation

Eisner (2017) articulates that an educational adept should inquire, "What underlies the prevailing challenges? Are the content and objectives suitably structured? The significance of instruction is self-evident, but what level of knowledge is attained? Is the curriculum tailored to student interests and readiness?" In the initial phase advocated by Eisner, the extant curriculum was delineated based on the perspectives of expert participants. The interpretive phase aims to elucidate the implications of the findings; specifically, is the music curriculum practicable? If not, what factors contribute to this? If deficiencies and inaccuracies exist, what circumstances engender them? These queries were scrutinized. During the interpretive stage, the objective was to outline a more comprehensive framework by juxtaposing and interpreting the data gleaned from the description phase alongside data acquired from classroom observations and documents.

The Most Challenging Curriculum Level

During the description phase, it was deduced that the 8th-grade curriculum emerged as the locus of most prevalent issues within the middle school music curriculum. Music teachers highlighted 'weighty subjects, mismatched with student aptitude and engagement, and inadequate readiness' as prominent contributors to these challenges. Moreover, critical factors such as 'limited instructional hours, dearth of music resources, and deficient materials' were noted to adversely impact the execution of the music curriculum. Upon dissecting the root causes of the encountered issues, it becomes apparent that the content dimension stands out as the primary concern. An essential aspect to contemplate in curriculum development is ensuring alignment with principles of student relevance, functionality, and applicability. Notably, inadequate instructional time, paucity of resources, and unsuitable learning environments are pivotal factors impeding curriculum applicability. Given the multitude of objectives in music curricula, the insufficiency of lesson time (one class hour per week equating to 40 minutes) is a recurrent concern hindering goal attainment. Likewise, material inadequacies and deficiencies in the learning environment pose formidable challenges for music teachers striving to achieve instructional objectives. The forthcoming phase will entail a thorough analysis of data garnered from open-ended interview forms, as it is anticipated that insights gleaned from interactions with music teachers and the researcher's classroom observations will augment clarity in discerning pertinent themes and patterns.

Challenges to the Feasibility of the Curriculum

In the research, inductive analysis was conducted to explore the factors influencing the practicality of music curricula, encapsulated within the overarching theme of 'curriculum feasibility'. Resulting categories included 'objectives and outcomes' (comprising quantity of attainments and recommended duration), 'course breadth and content' (encompassing class duration, resources, learning environment, neglect of music instruction, overpopulated classes, lack of preparedness, textbook content, dense theoretical subjects, and challenges in learning domains), curriculum execution (embracing principles, methodologies, and engagement in course activities), and 'assessment and evaluation' (encompassing the caliber of assessment and evaluation). Moreover, curriculum literacy was delineated into 'recommendations' for music teachers, scholars, and learners. The codes and categories derived were consolidated under the rubric of 'Feasibility'. Upon scrutinizing the codes, categories, and themes, it was discerned that pivotal factors influencing the viability of school music curricula encompassed 'inadequate instructional hours, deficient learning environments, material shortages, the inclusion of dense theoretical content, preparation of materials beyond student proficiency levels, and song selection overlooking student vocal developmental stages and interests'.

Challenges On the Goals and Attainments of the Curriculum

During interviews with music teachers, it became apparent that the stipulated achievements outlined in the music curriculum were challenging to attain within the recommended timeframes due to their abundance. Likewise, despite the functionality and careful design of the curriculum, academics argue that the allocated timeframes corresponding to the volume of outcomes remain inadequate. Naturally, students cannot be presumed to possess awareness of the learning objectives. Classroom observations conducted across schools spanning varying socio-economic strata revealed a consistent absence of teachers informing their students about the objectives or elucidating the intended outcomes at the onset of lessons.

Furthermore, although teachers self-reported proficiency in achieving the prescribed objectives, disparities between the curriculum and its enactment were observed in practice. An excerpt from researcher observations pertaining to this phenomenon is provided below:

> "*The duration of 40 minutes allotted to each music lesson poses a challenge for teachers in realizing the intended outcomes. The constrained timeframe often concludes before students can sufficiently internalize the material presented and engage in meaningful activities. Subsequently, the swift transition to new topics the following week, coupled with the necessity for teachers to expedite the acquisition process within the limited time frame, compromises the quality of learning outcomes.*" (Observation notes, Author, 2022).

A music teacher (T15) and academics (ACD2 and ACD4) highlighted the challenge of translating the theoretical feasibility of curriculum objectives and achievements into practical implementation. While initial document analyses suggested alignment between the content of the 8th-grade music curriculum and stated attainments, practical obstacles related to the physical layout of the learning environment and financial constraints may hinder the achievement of crucial attainments.

Challenges On the Lesson Scope and Content of the Curriculum

The consensus among music teachers across diverse socio-economic settings underscores the pivotal role of insufficient class time, inadequate resources, and suboptimal learning environments in impeding the realization of course objectives and achievements. The limited duration of weekly music lessons, typically set at 40 minutes, leads teachers to cover topics superficially, hindering the depth of student learning. To foster a robust and effective music education, it is imperative that learning outcomes are reinforced through varied activities and internalized by students. Observations further reveal that teachers lacking access to dedicated music classrooms and requisite materials often deliver lessons perfunctorily, rushing through content to compensate for resource deficiencies, thereby experiencing heightened stress levels.

A prevalent concern voiced by participants is the inclusion of overly theoretical content surpassing students' comprehension levels. Notably, classroom practices diverge from prescribed textbooks, with teachers incorporating alternative resources and song selections. Moreover, both academics and practitioners advocate for the assignment of music instruction to specialized teachers beginning from primary school, highlighting the consequences of delayed exposure to musical notation, which compromises student readiness upon transitioning to middle school and complicates curriculum implementation.

The domain of 'creativity' emerges as a principal challenge within the curriculum, prompting teachers to question its practical realization amidst large class sizes, some exceeding 50 students. Observational evidence corroborates this issue, suggesting that the predominance of listening and singing activities stems from resource limitations constraining instructional possibilities within the allotted time frame. Critiques regarding the absence of requisite music technologies in educational settings underscore a mismatch between curriculum specifications and practical constraints, particularly evident in the absence of sound recording equipment commonly assumed to be available via computers.

Challenges In the Lesson Implementation

Music teachers predominantly rely on pedagogical techniques such as teaching by ear and demonstration, incorporating instruments such as Orff instruments, flutes, and melodicas to

support curriculum implementation. However, constraints stemming from inadequate learning environments, resources, materials, and instructional hours impede the integration of specialized instructional methods into their teaching practices. Classroom observations reveal that teachers, constrained by the limitations of the renewed music curriculum, often forego instrumental activities, opting instead for instructional approaches centered on listening and singing facilitated by interactive technologies like smart boards. This shift may be attributed to the constraints imposed by current lesson durations. An illustrative observation note from classroom observations is provided below:

Observation notes from low and middle-socio-economic level group music classes indicate that teachers employ a pedagogical approach characterized by improvisation. Teachers employ motivational strategies and provide reinforcements as needed to engage students. Typically, regional songs are selected, and teachers follow a principle of proximity to the distance in their instructional approach. Smart boards are predominantly utilized as instructional aids, while activities primarily focus on the listening and singing domain, employing the teaching by ear method as the primary pedagogical technique. (Observation notes, Author, 07.02.2022)

Challenges In the Measurement and Evaluation

According to music academics, significant challenges persist in the assessment and evaluation practices of middle school-level music education. They contend that the current assessment methods are flawed and insufficient. Interviews with music teachers regarding measures taken to address this issue revealed that while some teachers utilize performance scales, a minority do not employ any formal assessment tools to gauge musical proficiency. A researcher's observation corroborates this finding:

In classrooms across low and high socio-economic strata, formal assessment tools are notably absent, with teachers relying on ongoing observations to evaluate student progress. Conversely, in a middle socio-economic setting, teachers clearly outline evaluation criteria to students and employ in-class performance scales to assess learning outcomes. (Observation notes, Author, 09.02.2022)

Challenges On Curriculum Literacy Levels of the Participants

Teachers' curriculum literacy levels are of great importance in the implementation of the curriculum in accordance with its purpose. The fact that music teachers have a low level of curriculum literacy is also supported by the result of the interviews that they have no knowledge about the 'field-specific skills' specified in the curriculum. In addition, when it is considered that the time suggested for the outcomes in the curriculum is a suggestion, the fact that the teachers who complain about the incompatibility of time are not aware that they can make studies to eliminate this incompatibility while designing their own annual plans reinforces the finding that the level of curriculum literacy is low. Having theoretical knowledge about curriculum literacy is not enough. The fact that one of the participants, an academician, was in charge of the renewed faculty curricula and was conducting the lessons himself caused him to have knowledge about the curriculum. In 2018, adding lessons to music curricula within the scope of delegation of authority to faculties is seen as a positive situation for prospective music teachers. However, it is very important in terms of curriculum literacy that music academics should have knowledge about the whole curriculum, regardless of whether they have their own courses in the curriculum or not.

The proficiency of teachers in understanding and effectively implementing curriculum attainments is crucial for achieving the intended educational outcomes. Evidence suggests that music teachers exhibit a deficiency in curriculum literacy, as indicated by interview findings revealing their lack of familiarity with the specialized skills outlined in the curriculum. Moreover, the observation that some educators perceive suggested timeframes for curriculum outcomes as rigid constraints underscores a broader issue of inadequate curriculum literacy. It is notable that teachers expressing concerns about time constraints often overlook the flexibility inherent in designing their annual plans to address such challenges. Merely possessing theoretical knowledge of curriculum literacy is insufficient. Notably, one participant, serving as an academician responsible for revising faculty curricula and delivering lessons, demonstrated a deeper understanding due to his direct involvement with curriculum development and implementation. The inclusion of music lessons in faculty curricula in 2018, as part of decentralized decision-making processes, presents an opportunity for aspiring music educators. Nonetheless, it remains imperative for music academics to possess a comprehensive understanding of the entire curriculum, irrespective of their specific course assignments, to effectively navigate curriculum implementation and ensure educational quality.

In contrast to the perspectives of teachers and academics, there exists an inquiry into the awareness of students regarding the music curriculum. Music teachers were tasked with identifying students categorized as 'interested' and 'uninterested' in music lessons for interview purposes, yet encountered notable difficulty in pinpointing and recommending uninterested students. This challenge led to the interpretation that students, by and large, exhibited genuine interest in music instruction. Across the board, students demonstrating enthusiasm for music lessons expressed dissatisfaction with the allotted instructional hours. Suggestions were made to shift the focus of music education from theoretical concepts towards more practical and engaging approaches, particularly centered around song-based teaching tailored to students' individual abilities and interests. Furthermore, irrespective of the socio-economic status of the educational institution, students articulated desires for enhancements to the music curriculum. For instance, statements such as "*I would modify certain aspects of the music textbook. Incorporating familiar songs could enhance engagement*" (HStd2) and "*I would advocate for the inclusion of popular instruments like the guitar alongside traditional ones like melodica, expanding the scope of musical instruction*" (LStd2) underscored a collective aspiration for a more diverse and inclusive music program.

Evaluation

In this section, the findings from the study are evaluated in light of the researcher's experiences, classroom observations, document reviews, and existing literature. Since 2018, through interviews conducted with music teachers, faculty members, and students to assess middle school music curricula, it has been determined that there are certain constraints regarding the overall attainability of the curriculum's attainments. Music teachers and scholars assert that while middle school music curricula are theoretically functional and well-crafted, they encounter significant challenges in practical implementation. Examination of relevant literature reveals studies, such as those by Birgül-Demir & Nacakcı (2019), Çetinkaya (2017), and Umuzdaş & Levent (2012), which similarly conclude that music curricula may lack practical applicability, aligning with the findings of this study. Despite encountering various implementation challenges, the study suggests that the attainments of the curricula are generally feasible, as inferred from the researcher's experiences and classroom observations.

Detailed analysis elucidates the underlying reasons for disparities between observational data and participants' perspectives.

Through a content analysis of the music curriculum's aims and objectives, it is contended that these goals and attainments are generally achievable and are formulated with consideration of various learning domains. However, there are certain high-level objectives that pose challenges in attainment. Classroom observations reveal that the primary issue lies not in the objectives themselves but rather in the insufficiency of class hours, inadequate provision of equipment and materials, and unfavorable instructional environments. The participants' concerns regarding the surplus of objectives and insufficient allocated class hours, although commonly shared, are deemed somewhat misaligned upon critical examination of the curriculum. Despite a seemingly balanced distribution of learning outcomes across domains, the observation of 25 outcomes recommended to be covered within 36 lesson hours suggests practical constraints. While participant views and literature findings (Board of Education, 2020; Umuzdaş & Levent, 2012) echo this sentiment, classroom observations reveal a discrepancy wherein music teachers derive their annual plans from online sources without tailoring objectives and durations to suit either prescribed guidelines or specific contextual needs. Consequently, it can be argued that despite theoretical alignment between outcomes and durations, inadequate class time remains a significant impediment to achieving desired outcomes, underscoring the curriculum's tendency towards lesson and content-centeredness.

The study's interpretations underscore several factors contributing to inadequate student readiness and hindrances to effective content delivery, including disregarding student relevance principles, insufficient instructional time, inadequate resources, and unfavorable classroom conditions. Across schools of varying socio-economic backgrounds, it was noted that only the music teacher in the high socio-economic setting deviated from consistent use of the music textbook, opting instead to devise content autonomously. Conversely, teachers in low and middle socio-economic settings adhered to the textbook while exercising discretion in song selection. Observations revealed that teachers across all socio-economic strata encountered challenges in achieving learning outcomes and delivering content comprehensively due to time constraints, resulting in superficial instruction. Examination of the literature revealed research outcomes (Avcı, 2019; Azılıoğlu, 2019; Birgül Demir & Nacakcı, 2019; Çetinkaya, 2017; Umuzdaş & Levent, 2012) corroborating the researcher's observations.

Concerning the learning environment and resources, it was observed that eight out of the 15 interviewed teachers lacked dedicated music facilities in their schools, and those with designated spaces faced shortages in necessary equipment and materials. Notably, one of the high socio-economic level schools surveyed lacked a dedicated music facility altogether, while three out of the remaining four were private institutions. Consistent with prior research (Avcı, 2019; Azılıoğlu, 2019; Birgül-Demir & Nacakcı, 2019; Umuzdaş & Levent, 2012), inadequacies in music facilities, materials, and insufficient class hours emerged as significant obstacles in achieving curriculum objectives. Considering these limitations alongside the specific challenges faced by music teachers in their instructional environments, it becomes apparent that discussions around achieving high-quality music education may necessitate a more cautious approach.

Another notable finding from the study pertained to challenges associated with course content in attaining the specified attainments. The consensus among music teachers, scholars,

and students revealed shared concerns regarding the curriculum content. Music teachers observed that the curriculum comprised predominantly dense theoretical material and lacked alignment with students' vocal development and interests. Scholars further asserted that students not exposed to the music branch instruction in primary school may face readiness deficiencies upon reaching middle school. From the student perspective, the songs included in the textbook were perceived as lacking alignment with their interests. Previous studies (Azılıoğlu, 2019; Birgül Demir & Nacakcı, 2019; Çetinkaya, 2017; Umuzdaş & Levent, 2012) have similarly highlighted content-related challenges impeding the achievement of educational attainments. Classroom observations revealed deviations from the prescribed curriculum content across schools of varying socio-economic backgrounds. While teachers in low and middle socio-economic level schools generally followed the curriculum topics, song selections were often tailored to student interests and vocal abilities. Conversely, the music teacher in the high socio-economic level school demonstrated autonomy by deviating from the textbook and selecting topics and songs independently.

Drawing upon Güven's (2019) findings from his graduate research, which highlighted students' challenges in achieving proficiency in 'makams [melody types]', it is discerned that a significant content-related issue following textbook analysis pertains to 'makams'. Although it is acknowledged that the broader problem concerning learning areas is intertwined with content, the recurring concern is the alteration of the 'listening-singing and playing' learning domain in the prior curriculum, revised to solely 'listening and singing' in 2018. Music teachers consistently assert that this modification is misguided, advocating for the reinstatement of the 'playing' component within the curriculum. Correspondingly, in the curriculum assessment report by the Board of Education and Discipline (2020), music academics express disapproval of the omission of the 'playing' element. While the 8th-grade curriculum indicates the removal of playing activities from the designated field, the 2018 curriculum stipulates that decisions regarding instrument training should be made at music class committee meetings, underscoring the importance of integrating instrument education in accordance with student needs and abilities. Despite these provisions, classroom observations revealed no specific decisions regarding instrument education. Consequently, criticisms regarding this matter from teachers appear unsubstantiated. It is proposed that the curriculum offer guidance for music teachers to provide instrument training to interested and talented students through supplementary courses. However, debate surrounds whether this recommendation aims to alleviate constraints on music class hours, which are perceived as insufficient.

It can be deduced that the conclusions drawn from the assessment of the measurement and evaluation aspect align closely with the observed realities. The identification of valid and reliable standardized tests for assessing music lessons presents a formidable challenge. Despite the utilization of 'in-class performance charts' for assessments, it is noteworthy that contemporary students seldom receive low grades. The researcher, drawing from extensive experience as a music educator, contends that music classes are predominantly perceived as recreational rather than academically rigorous, thereby lacking adequate support and leading to the marginalization of the subject in the eyes of students and parents. Furthermore, the practice of some administrators altering academic achievement grades for music lessons at the end of the academic year implies that minimal effort, such as bringing course materials to class, may suffice to secure favorable grades, thereby diminishing the significance of such lessons.
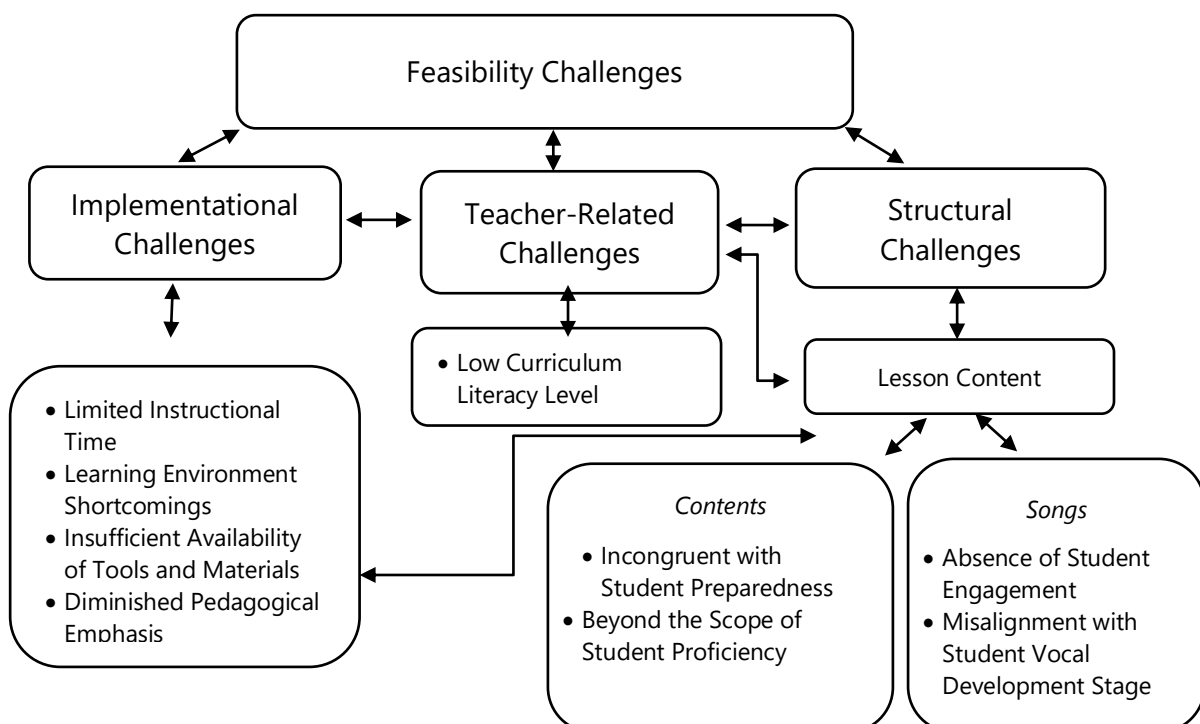
The final and arguably most crucial aspect of the 'Educational Criticisms' outlined in the assessment section pertains to the deficiency in curriculum literacy among teachers and scholars. The research findings indicate that while some teachers were capable of demonstrating curriculum literacy in their instructional practices, the concept itself appeared unfamiliar to many. This highlights a significant shortfall among music teachers, who often either neglect to engage with the music curriculum or do so only superficially. This trend aligns with prior studies (Birgül-Demir & Nacakcı, 2019; Kahramanoğlu, 2019), which similarly underscore the lack of engagement with curricular changes among teachers. It is incumbent upon music teacher training institutions to equip teachers with the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies demanded by the educational system. Interviews with music teachers in this study revealed critiques of their pre-service education and self-reflections on their levels of curriculum literacy. Furthermore, it was noted that since 2018, both academics and prospective teachers have shown an increased awareness of curricular matters. Nevertheless, the examination and oversight of music curricula remain infrequent within teaching practices, emphasizing the need for enhanced collaboration between universities and the MoNE to facilitate professional development initiatives.

Thematization

Previously, it was announced that the study's findings would be structured according to Eisner's Educational Criticism Model, which aims to foster reader awareness. In the final phase of the model, termed 'Thematization', themes were formulated to help readers comprehend recurring patterns in the research outcomes and to cultivate awareness during the evaluation process. The study revealed three primary issues concerning middle school music curricula: 'Implementational Challenges', 'Teacher-Related Challenges,' and 'Structural Challenges' (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Themes and Their Relationships with Each Other

The analysis of emerging themes underscores several challenges in the implementation of the 2018 middle school music curriculum. These include discrepancies between the intensity of learning outcomes and allocated class hours (40 minutes per week), inadequacy of resources and materials, and unfavorable learning environments. It appears that music lessons receive minimal emphasis in low and middle socio-economic level schools, suggesting a lack of significant disparity across public schools with diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, private institutions, alongside the official curriculum, design parallel music curricula, highlighting substantial variations in learning environments and resources between private and public schools. The restriction on music teachers from offering 'Support and Training Courses' (STC/*known as DYK*), unlike in other subject areas, may pose a hindrance to the development of talented students.

One predominant theme identified in the study pertains to challenges associated with teachers. A significant aspect of this theme is the notable deficiency in teachers' curriculum literacy. Moreover, another key theme revolves around structural issues encountered in the implementation of the 2018 middle school music curriculum. Principal content-related challenges include inadequacies such as students' lack of readiness, mismatched levels of instruction, diminished interest, inclusion of complex theoretical topics, and marginalization of music lessons.

Discussion and Implications

The study reveals that while music curricula are designed to be functional, flexible, and supportive for teachers, significant implementation challenges remain. These issues primarily arise from societal attitudes towards art and music. Although the educational system is based on constructivist principles, their practical application is often hindered, obstructing problem resolution. The prevailing emphasis on competitive, profit-driven education limits students' ability to pursue their interests and talents, potentially leading to fulfilling careers.

The findings also indicate that while socioeconomic differences do not significantly affect state schools, there are notable disparities in learning environments and materials between private and public schools. Private schools frequently bypass the official curriculum, prioritizing instrumental training for commercial purposes and neglecting key components such as musical perception, knowledge, creativity, and listening-singing activities. These practices were documented through interviews and observations. State schools struggle with inadequate learning environments, materials, and limited class hours, whereas private schools boast modern facilities. A critical issue is the students' lack of preparedness at the middle school level, attributed to the absence of structured arts education from early childhood. Furthermore, the study identifies a deficiency in curriculum literacy among teachers, with music educators often failing to advance professionally due to insufficient training in curriculum implementation. Even the most well-designed curricula will face challenges if educators are not adequately trained. Effective collaboration between educational faculties and the MoNE, aligning curricula and fostering partnerships between faculty music educators and school music teachers is essential to resolve these issues.

Establishing a nationwide music culture is imperative. Implementing art classes led by experts from early childhood through higher education would address the devaluation of music educators and lessons. Additionally, the current music curriculum structure fails to consider students' readiness and interests, lacking practical examples and relevant content,

necessitating a curriculum redesign. In summary, for curricula to be effective, they must be practical and aligned with students' readiness, interests, and developmental levels. Essential factors include class hours, learning environments, materials, and class sizes. Music teacher training must focus on adequately preparing candidates to meet these challenges. Failure to address these issues undermines the educational value of music classes and impedes the delivery of quality music education.

Based on these discerned themes and their corresponding findings, several recommendations emerge. Firstly, it is proposed that school infrastructures be tailored to accommodate music education, with specific attention given to facilitating music rooms and providing adequate materials. Furthermore, there is a suggestion to augment music class durations. Additionally, it is advisable to establish a national framework for music education philosophy, to commence from preschool levels, and to undertake corresponding initiatives to this end. Enhancing the curriculum literacy of teachers emerges as another imperative. Collaborative efforts between academic institutions and the MoNE could facilitate pre-service and in-service training endeavors, leveraging the expertise of teachers specializing in Curriculum and Instruction. This study, framed as an educational criticism with a focus on curriculum evaluation, underscores the importance of expert involvement. The primary researcher diligently adhered to Eisner's curriculum evaluation model, integrating their insights with those of various stakeholders. Considering the imminent introduction of a new curriculum by MoNE, future studies could replicate this approach, engaging diverse stakeholders, including parents, administrators, and prospective music teachers, to comprehensively assess the efficacy of the updated curricula.

Author Contributions

This research originates from the master's thesis of the first author. Consequently, this author assumes responsibility for undertaking the investigation, gathering, scrutinizing, and delineating the data. The second author provided oversight for the research, contributing to study design, manuscript composition, revision, English translation, and academic writing composition.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Eisner'in Eğitsel Uzmanlık ve Eleştiri Modeline Göre 8. Sınıf Müzik Öğretim Programının Değerlendirilmesi

Giriş

Türkiye'de müzik eğitimine ilkokul düzeyinde başlanmakta, uzman müzik eğitmenleri ancak ortaokul düzeyinde öğrencilerle bir araya gelmektedir. Sonuç olarak, yeterli hazırlık yapılmadan ortaokula başlayan öğrenciler müzik eğitiminin etkinliğini olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Buna ek olarak, standartların altında öğrenme ortamları, uygun olmayan materyaller ve yetersiz eğitim saatleri gibi zorluklar da müzik eğitimini engellemektedir. Programın uygulanması ve içeriğine ilişkin endişelerin yanı sıra bu sorunların ele alınması, sistematik ve tutarlı program değerlendirme çabalarını gerektirmektedir. Program değerlendirme, bir programın doğruluğu, uygunluğu, yeterliği, verimliliği, etkililiği ve uygulanabilirliği gibi çeşitli yönlerini değerlendirmek için verilerin sistematik olarak toplanmasını ve analiz edilmesini içerir.

Öğrenci performansını etkileyen faktörlerin belirlenmesinde hem okul gözlemlerinin hem de müzik öğretmenlerinin bakış açılarının önemine binaen, 2018 yılında güncellenmiş olan ortaokul 8. sınıf müzik öğretim programının Eğitsel Uzmanlık ve Eleştiri Modeli aracılığıyla değerlendirilmesine karar verilmiştir. Eisner (2017) tarafından savunulan bu yaklaşım, eğitim uzmanlarının toplumsal eğitim algısını geliştirmek için eleştirel bir duruş benimsemeleri gerektiğinin altını çizmektedir. Bu açıdan temel çerçeve olarak Eisner'in 'Betimleme', 'Yorumlama', 'Değerlendirme' ve 'Temalaştırma' boyutlarını içeren Eğitsel Uzmanlık ve Eleştiri Modeli modeli kullanılmıştır. Bir müzik eğitimcisi olan ilk yazar, eğitim ortamının genel niteliklerini ayırt etmek için hem gözlemci hem de araştırmacı rollerini üstlenerek, kişisel gözlem ve deneyimlerini aktarmıştır ve böylece programın kapsamlı bir eğitsel eleştirisi yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, Eisner tarafından tanımlandığı gibi, programdan etkilenen çeşitli paydaşlar tarafından aktarılan deneyimlerin teorik yorumlarını ve eleştirel analizlerini desteklemek için ampirik veriler sağlanmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, 2018 yılında revize edilen ve halen uygulanmakta olan 8. sınıf müzik öğretim programının öğretmenler, akademisyenler, öğrenciler ve alanda uzman bir eğitimci olarak araştırmacının deneyimleri ve içgörülerinden yararlanarak eğitsel bir eleştirisini yapmaktır. Bu çalışma, Eisner modelinin toplumda müzik eğitimi konusunda farkındalık yaratma hedefine uygun olarak, müzik programına yönelik ilk eğitim eleştirisi olması bakımından önem taşımaktadır. Ayrıca, çalışma bu alanda gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalar için yalnızca içerik değil, program aşamalarına dayalı raporlandırma açısından da biçimsel bir taslak niteliği taşıdığı söylenebilir.

Yöntem

İç içe geçmiş tek durum çalışması deseninin kullanıldığı araştırmaya Aydın ilinden 146 müzik öğretmeni ve farklı sosyo-ekonomik geçmişleri temsil eden 15 müzik öğretmeni katılmıştır. Öğretmenler ortaokul sınıfları düzeyinde en sıklıkla sorun yaşanan sınıfın sekizinci sınıf ve öğretim programı olduğuna işaret etmiştir. Bu bakımdan bu sınıf düzeyi öğretim programının çalışılmasına karar verilmiştir. Çalışmada farklı gruplar yer almıştır. Örneklem çeşitliliği sağlamak adına on beş müzik öğretmeni yanında, dört müzik akademisyeni ile müziğe ilgisi olan ve olmayan toplam altı öğrenciden yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formları aracılığıyla veri toplanmıştır. Araştırmacı ayrıca sınıf içi gözlemler yapmış ve alan notları tutarak müzik öğretim programı ve ders kitaplarını da analiz etmiştir. Betimsel ve içerik analizi yoluyla görüşme, gözlem ve dokuman incelemesi verileri analiz edilmiştir. Böylece Eğitsel Uzmanlık ve Eleştiri Modeli ile uyumlu nitel verilere dayalı bir içerik analizi yaklaşımı benimsendiği söylenebilir.

Bulgular

Çalışmanın bulguları Eisner'ın Eğitsel Uzmanlık ve Eleştiri Modeli'ne göre yapılandırılmıştır. Modelin "Temalaştırma" olarak adlandırılan son aşamasında, okuyucuların araştırma sonuçlarında tekrar eden kalıpları anlamalarına yardımcı olmak ve değerlendirme sürecinde farkındalık yaratmak için temalar formüle edilmiştir. Çalışma, sekizinci sınıf müzik öğretim programıyla ilgili üç temel soruna işaret emektedir: 'Yapısal Zorluklar', 'Öğretmenlerle İlgili Zorluklar' ve 'Uygulamaya İlişkin Zorluklar'.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Çalışma, müzik öğretim programının uygulanabilirliğini etkileyen, öğrencilerin hazırbulunuşluk eksikliği, yetersiz öğretim süresi, yetersiz tesis ve materyaller ile okul yöneticileri ve velilerin yetersiz desteği gibi çeşitli faktörler tespit etmiştir. Müzik eğitimcilerinin program yetkinliğini artırmak ve program uyumunu sağlamak için Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) arasında işbirliği gerekli görülmüştür. 2018 ortaokul müzik programı amaç ve kazanımları yeterince tanımlasa da, öğrencilerin hazırbulunuşluk ve göreceli yetenek düzeylerini dikkate almamakta ve öğrencilerin kavrayışının ötesinde teorik içeriğe yer vermektedir. Müzik öğretmenleri ve öğretim üyeleri, uygulama zorlukları nedeniyle iyi tasarlanmış programların pratik olmadığını vurgulamışlardır. Bu zorluklar mevcut literatür bulgularıyla örtüşmektedir. Özellikle, erişilemeyen hedefler ve öğrencilerin yeterlik düzeyini aşan teorik içerik gibi sorunlar tespit edilmiştir. Araştırma, müzik eğitimini geliştirmek için yetersiz ders saatlerinin ve elverişsiz okul ortamlarının ele alınmasının çok önemli bir rol oynadığının altını çizmektedir. Ayrıca, program içeriğinin öğrencilerin yetenekleriyle uyumlu hale getirilmesi etkili bir uygulama için çok önemlidir. Gelecekteki çabalar, bu zorlukları kapsamlı bir şekilde ele almak için program geliştirmeye yönelik bütüncül yaklaşımları dikkate almalıdır.

Öneriler

Bu program değerlendirme çalışmasıyla ilgili ilk öneri, okul altyapılarının müzik eğitimine uygun hale getirilmesi, müzik odalarının iyileştirilmesi ve gerekli materyallerin temin edilmesi yönündedir. Bununla birlikte, müzik derslerinin sürelerinin artırılması önerilebilir. Ayrıca, okul

öncesi düzeyinden başlayarak müzik eğitimi felsefesine yönelik ulusal bir çerçevenin oluşturulması ve bu hedef doğrultusunda girişimlerde bulunulması tavsiye edilebilir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin program okuryazarlığının geliştirilmesi de önemli bir gerekliliktir. Akademik kurumlar ile Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı arasındaki işbirliği çabalarıyla, öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimine destek olmak için program ve öğretim konularında uzmanlardan yararlanılabilir.

Bu çalışma, uzman ve paydaş katılımı yoluyla müzik öğretim programını değerlendirmeye yönelik bir eğitsel eleştiridir. Araştırmacı, Eisner'ın değerlendirme modeline ve aşamalarına bağlı kalarak, kendi deneyimlerini çeşitli paydaşların perspektifleriyle entegre etmiştir. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın yakın gelecekte beceri temelli bir anlayışa dayalı yeni öğretim programlarını uygulamaya koyacağı düşünüldüğünde, bu eğitsel eleştiriden elde edilecek bulgular gelecek çalışmalara ışık tutabilir. Bu eğitsel eleştiride özellikle araştırmacı ve öğretmenlerce vurgulanan müziksel becerilerin yeni anlayışa dayalı programların da dikkate alması gereken hususlar olduğu açıktır. Bu çalışma bir durum çalışmasıdır. Yine bu tür program değerlendirme çalışmaları daha geniş ölçekte ve farklı paydaşların bakış açıları da dikkate alınarak nicel yollarla yinelenebilir.