

HİZMET İÇİ EĞİTİM KURSLARINDA DİNİ MUSİKİ ÜZERİNE BİR İNCELEME

An Examination of Religious Music in In-Service Training Courses

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Özet

Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı kuruluşundan bu yana İslam'ın doğru uygulanmasını sağlamak için çeşitli hizmetler sunmuştur. Bu hizmetlerden en önemlisi, şüphesiz din görevlilerine (imam-hatipler, müezzinler, Kur'an kursu öğreticileri vb.) sunulan hizmet içi eğitim kurslarıdır. Bu eğitim kurslarında, toplumun dini hizmetleri etkin bir şekilde alabilmesi için hem teorik hem de pratik bilgiler verilmektedir. Hizmet içi eğitimlerde genel ve özel dini bilgilerin yanı sıra, "dini müzik" kavramı önemli bir unsur olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Dini müzik, yüzyıllar süren İslam yaşamının bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmış ve namaz sırasında, öncesinde ve sonrasında sık sık icra edilerek günlük yaşamla iç içe geçmiştir. Önemi büyük olmasına rağmen, dini müzik üzerine yapılan çalışmalar oldukça sınırlıdır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma dini müziğin hizmet içi eğitim kurslarındaki yerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma sorusu şu şekildedir: "Hizmet içi eğitim kurslarında dini müziğin yeri nedir ve dini müzik nasıl ele alınmaktadır?" Bu amaçla nitel araştırma tasarımlarından biri olan doküman analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, Diyanet Akademisi tarafından sağlanan hizmet içi eğitim kurslarının programları incelenmiştir. Çalışmada, dini müzik kavramının birçok hizmet içi eğitim kursunda farklı krediler ve saatlerle yer aldığı ve birçok hizmet içi eğitim programına entegre edildiği bulunmuştur. Ayrıca çalışma, dini müzik eğitim kurslarının İngilizce olarak verilmesi konusunda önerilerde bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dini Musiki, Hizmetiçi Eğitim, Müzik, Türk Dini Müziği.

Abstract

Since its establishment, the Presidency of Religious Affairs has provided various services to ensure the proper practice of Islam. One of the most important of these services is undoubtedly the in-service training courses offered to religious

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officials (imam-hatips, muezzins, Quran course instructors, etc.). In these training courses, both theoretical and practical information is provided to ensure the effective delivery of religious services to society. In these in-service trainings, alongside general and specific religious knowledge, the term "religious music" stands out as a significant aspect. Religious music has emerged as a result of centuries of Islamic life and has become intertwined with daily life through frequent performances during, before, and after prayers. Despite its importance, studies on religious music are quite limited. Therefore, this study aims to determine the position of religious music in in-service training courses. The research question is: "What is the position of religious music in in-service training courses, and how is religious music addressed?" For this purpose, document analysis, one of the qualitative research designs, was utilized. In this context, the course programs of the in-service training courses provided by the Religious Academy were examined. The study found that the concept of religious music is included in many in-service training courses with varying credits and hours, and it has been integrated into numerous in-service training programs. Additionally, the study offers suggestions on providing religious music training courses in English as a lingua franca.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Religious Music, In-Service Training, Music, Turkish Religious Music.*

INTRODUCTION

Music is an art form based on sound (Tüfekçi, 2001). It is the expression of emotions and thoughts through melodies, conveyed with art, aesthetics, and elegance (Tükenmez & Akdeniz, 2019). Religious music, on the other hand, is a concept frequently encountered in daily life, especially in daily prayers and religious rituals such as the Mawlid. Religious music is defined as a type of music that has emerged through the synthesis of recognized global music culture with the practices and fulfillment of religious duties (Akarsu, 2018). One of the venues where this concept is performed is mosques (Koca, 2016), and it exists as mosque music in our daily religious life. For example, the muezzin calling the iqamah before a prayer or the imam reciting a mihrabiye at the end of the prayer, and the chanting of the takbir during the sermon, all performed with specific melodies, are examples of this practice. In other words, the performance of music that starts in places of worship has spread to other areas where religious duties are performed (Akarsu, 2018). The Mawlid ceremonies held among the people are the most prominent examples of this. In other words, mosque music encompasses various forms, including the adhan (call to prayer), iqamah (call to prayer), tasbihat (glorifications), as well as the eid prayer, Friday prayer, and funeral prayers, temcid (glorifications from minaret), Mawlid-i sharif (praising the birth of the

prophet) and miraciye (praising the ascension of the prophet) (Akpınar, 2008). This form of religious music, which is deeply intertwined with daily life, is especially significant to the public and has thus become a focal point for religious officials. In this regard, Akarsu (2018) notes that the competence of religious officials is often evaluated based on their performance in the field of religious music. Muslims place great importance on the proper performance of mosque music forms that need to be recited both inside and outside of worship, as well as the Quran (Koca, 2016). Therefore, the Diyanet Academy offers in-service training courses to teach and learn these methods. In this context, this study aims to determine the position of religious music in in-service training courses.

Institutional engagement in or promotion of in-service training is critical for ensuring the continuous, effective, and proficient performance of personnel. Taymaz (1997) defines in-service training as a type of education aimed at providing employees with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to their duties, thereby increasing productivity and efficiency. In-service training aims to enhance the productivity and skills of personnel, enabling them to perform their future tasks and responsibilities more effectively (Gül, 2000). It also ensures job satisfaction for the personnel and improves the quality of services (Doğan, 2019). In this context, the Presidency of Religious Affairs also implements in-service training to maintain the effective and competent service delivery of its personnel.

Several studies have been conducted on these in-service training programs. Öngel (2020) conducted a study examining the recitation training provided at the Istanbul Haseki Religious Higher Specialization Center of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The study investigated the historical development of the science of recitation, the recitation training programs at the Haseki Education Center, and the impact of these programs on the trainees. Based on surveys and evaluations, the study identified the current state and areas for improvement in recitation training and offered suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of the program. Another study by Coşkun (2010) examined the in-service training specialization courses of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in the context of tradition and modernity. The research evaluated the training process in these courses and the attitudes of the trainees towards tradition and modernity. The study considered the demographic characteristics of the trainees, the historical development, and the current status of the education centers. The findings revealed that the trainees tended to modernize and that the education programs needed improvement. The conclusion provided suggestions for making the in-service training courses more effective.

Another study by Kara (2006) aimed to evaluate the in-service training specialization courses of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in terms of religious education. The study focused on the historical development, curriculum, and trainees' opinions about this education. Using surveys and observation methods, the research assessed the effectiveness of the courses, identified the problems encountered, and provided solutions. The thesis aimed to analyze the overall structure and educational process of the courses in detail. Another study by Poyraz (2002) examined the legal basis, historical development, curriculum, environment, and facilities of the specialization courses through literature review and observation methods. Additionally, information was provided about the teachers, trainees, personnel, and graduates of these courses. In the second part, the research findings were evaluated and interpreted from the perspective of in-service training.

In addition to the theses on in-service training, an article study by Kaya et al. (2019) examined the effectiveness of the voice training in-service training program provided at the Istanbul Haseki ReisulKurra Abdurrahman Gürses Religious Specialization Center of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The program aimed to increase mosque officials' awareness of voice training and to develop their proper breathing and voice usage skills. The research concluded that the program significantly improved the participants' voice usage skills. The thesis suggested that voice training programs should be developed and systematic training for mosque officials should be organized.

Upon reviewing the studies, it is evident that the concept of religious music has not been the focal point of these studies. Moreover, apart from my ongoing thesis on evaluating the religious music training course program of the Religious Academy, no related study focusing on the concept of religious music in in-service training programs has been presented. Therefore, this study aims to determine the position of religious music in the in-service training programs provided by the Religious Academy. In this context, the research questions of the study are as follows:

- In which in-service training programs is religious music provided?
- How frequently is religious music taught in in-service training courses?
- What are the potential future development areas of religious music education in in-service training courses?

METHOD

Research Design

This study, which examines the position of religious music in the in-service training programs of the Diyanet Academy under the Presidency of Religious Affairs, was conducted using a qualitative research method, specifically the basic qualitative research design. Basic qualitative research aims to understand how individuals make sense of their lives and their surroundings (Merriam, 2018). This approach is suitable for exploring complex phenomena deeply and comprehensively by focusing on participants' experiences and perspectives.

Sample/Study Group

The study's sample consisted of documents related to the in-service training programs provided by the Diyanet Academy. Since this research did not involve human participants directly, but rather focused on the examination of existing documents, the sample included all available printed and digital sources on religious music from the Diyanet Academy's website. This comprehensive collection of documents ensured that the study covered a wide range of relevant data, providing a thorough analysis of the subject matter.

Data Collection Instruments

The primary data collection tool used in this study is document analysis. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating printed and digital materials (Bowen, 2009). The documents analyzed included course programs, training manuals, reports, and supplementary materials related to the religious music courses offered by the Diyanet Academy. The document analysis method allowed for the collection of detailed and contextual data, essential for understanding the position of religious music within these programs.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the documents were analyzed using descriptive analysis, a method that involves categorizing and interpreting the content to identify patterns and themes. The analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how religious music is integrated into the training programs and its perceived importance. By using descriptive analysis, the study was able to highlight key aspects and trends within the data.

Ethical Considerations

This study does not require ethics committee approval as it involves the examination of public documents. All the rules specified under the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions" were followed. None of the actions specified under the "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" section of the second chapter of the directive were carried out. This ensures that the research adheres to the highest ethical standards in handling and analyzing the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the programs in which religious music education is included in the in-service training programs of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, as well as the duration and methods of education provided in these programs, are examined.

- In which in-service training programs is religious music provided?

Table 1. In-Service Training Courses at the Diyanet Academy Where Religious Music is Provided

Number	Training Course Title (İngilizce)
1	Service Preparation Training Program - 2004
2	Qiraat (Ashara-Takrib) Program - 2014
3	Religious Music Program - 2015

Number	Training Course Title (İngilizce)
4	International Memorization and Beautiful Recitation of the Qur'an Competitions Preparation Program - 2016
5	Professional Preparation Training Program for Contracted Imams - 2016
6	Beautiful Recitation of the Adhan Program - 2016
7	Tashih-i Huruf Program - 2017
8	Tashih-i Huruf Guide Teachers Program - 2019
9	Hafizah Preservation In-Service Training Programme - 2019
10	Talim and Tashih-i Huruf In-Service Training Program - 2021
11	Ashara Training Program - 2021 (NEW)
12	Tashih-i Huruf In-Service Training Program (Qur'an Course Instructors) - 2021
13	Preparatory Training Programme (Imam, Muezzin and Quran Course Instructors) - 2022
14	Husn-i Tilawat In-Service Training Program - 2024

Table 1 shows the various in-service training programs of the Presidency of Religious Affairs where religious music education is provided. The "Service Preparation Training Program - 2004" supports new personnel in their preparation for duty, while the "Qiraat (Ashara-Takrib) Program - 2014" aims to teach different recitation methods of the Qur'an. The "Religious Music Program - 2015" seeks to enhance knowledge and skills in religious music, and the "International Memorization and Beautiful Recitation of the Qur'an Competitions Preparation Program - 2016" supports preparation for international competitions. The "Professional Preparation Training Program for Contracted Imams - 2016" aims to enhance the professional competence of contracted imams. The "Beautiful Recitation of the Adhan Program - 2016" ensures the correct and beautiful recitation of the adhan, while the "Tashih-i Huruf Program - 2017" focuses on the correct pronunciation of the Qur'an. The "Tashih-i Huruf Guide Teachers Program - 2019" focuses on training guide teachers, and the "Memorization Maintenance In-Service Training Program - 2019" supports those who have memorized the Qur'an. The "Talim and Tashih-i Huruf In-Service Training Program - 2021" aims

to enhance knowledge and skills in talim and tashih-i huruf, and the "Ashara Training Program - 2021 (NEW)" aims to teach Ashara recitation methods. The "Tashih-i Huruf In-Service Training Program (Qur'an Course Instructors) - 2021" aims to enhance the competencies of Qur'an course instructors, while the "Husn-i Tilawat In-Service Training Program - 2024" aims to develop beautiful Qur'an recitation skills. These programs are designed to support the professional development of personnel and improve the quality of religious services.

When these programs are examined, it is seen that religious music education is included directly or indirectly. The Diyanet Academy offers a total of 22 in-service training programs, and religious music education is provided directly or indirectly in 14 of these 22 programs. When these courses are individually analyzed, the hours and credits dedicated to religious music in each course are as shown in Table 2.

How frequently and in what manner is religious music taught in in-service training courses?

Table 2. Hours and Credits for Religious Music in In-Service Training Programs

Number	Course Title	Hours
1	Husn-i Tilawat In-Service Training Program - 2024	144 hours
2	Preparatory Training Programme (Imam, Muezzin, and Quran Course Instructors) - 2022	18 hours
3	Tashih-i Huruf In-Service Training Program (Qur'an Course Instructors) - 2021	64 hours
4	Ashara Training Program - 2021 (NEW)	48 hours
5	Talim and Tashih-i Huruf In-Service Training Program - 2021	48 hours
6	Hafizah Preservation In-Service Training Programme - 2019	24 hours
7	Tashih-i Huruf Guide Teachers Program - 2019	48 hours
8	Tashih-i Huruf Program - 2017	96 hours
9	Beautiful Recitation of the Adhan Program - 2016	80 hours
10	Professional Preparation Training Program for Contracted Imams - 2016	44 hours

Number	Course Title	Hours
11	International Memorization and Beautiful Recitation of the Qur'an Competitions Preparation Program - 2016	48 hours
12	Religious Music Program - 2015	864 hours
13	Qiraat (Ashara-Takrib) Program - 2014	48 hours
14	Service Preparation Training Program - 2004	Not stated

Table 2 shows the hours allocated to religious music in various in-service training programs. The most comprehensive training is provided in the "Religious Music Program - 2015" with 864 hours. The "Husni Tilawat In-Service Training Program - 2024" includes 144 hours, the "Tashih-i Huruf Program - 2017" includes 96 hours, and the "Beautiful Recitation of the Adhan Program - 2016" includes 80 hours of religious music education. Other programs, such as the "Tashih-i Huruf In-Service Training Program (Qur'an Course Instructors) - 2021" with 64 hours, "Ashara Training Program - 2021 (NEW)," "Talim and Tashih-i Huruf In-Service Training Program - 2021," "Tashih-i Huruf Guide Teachers Program - 2019," and "International Memorization and Beautiful Recitation of the Qur'an Competitions Preparation Program - 2016" each include 48 hours of religious music education. The "Professional Preparation Training Program for Contracted Imams - 2016" includes 44 hours, the "Hafizah Preservation In-Service Training Programme - 2019" includes 24 hours, and the "Preparatory Training Programme (Imam, Muezzin, and Quran Course Instructors) - 2022" includes 18 hours of religious music education. The "Service Preparation Training Program - 2004" does not specify the hours allocated to religious music.

Table 2 highlights the importance given to religious music education over the years and the scope of the programs. The extensive training offered by the "Religious Music Program - 2015" with 864 hours demonstrates the significant emphasis placed on religious music. Other programs focus on more specific areas and aim to develop particular skills of the participants. Overall, it is evident that religious music education is supported through various programs and tailored to different needs.

Religious music education is delivered through three main methods: listening (*sema*), demonstration (*arz*), and practice (*uygulama*). The *sema* method, which means "listening," involves playing religious

music pieces to students, helping them develop their auditory skills and sense of rhythm. Students listen to hymns, odes, mawlid, and other types of religious music performed by masters or instructors, aiming to understand the correct execution and essence of these pieces. This method helps students grasp the nuances and styles of pieces performed in various maqams.

The arz method, meaning "to present" or "to show," involves instructors demonstrating how to perform religious music pieces to students. This practical method allows instructors to perform pieces in front of students, who observe and learn from these performances. Instructors show how to recite, use maqams, follow rhythms, and employ correct breathing techniques. Students carefully observe the instructors' performances to enhance their own skills.

The practice method involves students performing the pieces themselves, allowing for hands-on practice. In this method, students perform the pieces they have learned while being evaluated and receiving feedback from their instructors. This practice method enables students to put their learning into action and improve their individual performances. Instructors listen to the students' performances, correct mistakes, and provide technical and stylistic advice. Through this process, students have the opportunity to identify their own errors and refine their performance techniques.

In summary, religious music education in in-service training programs is delivered through the methods of listening (sema), demonstration (arz), and practice (uygulama). Through the sema method, students learn rhythm and maqams by listening to pieces. The arz method allows instructors to demonstrate how to perform the pieces. The practice method enables students to practice performing the pieces and receive feedback. These three methods together ensure that students receive comprehensive education in religious music and develop their proficiency in this area.

- What are the potential future development areas of religious music education in in-service training courses?

In this context, an examination of the relevant course programs did not reveal any specific information on potential development areas. However, considering the advancements in technology and artificial intelligence applications, several potential development areas can be suggested.

The potential future development areas for religious music education in in-service training courses are expanding with changes in technology and pedagogical approaches. The use of digital education and online platforms will enable reaching a wider audience and providing simultaneous training to religious officials in different regions. Personalized learning approaches will offer customized educational programs tailored to the individual needs and abilities of students, resulting in a more effective learning experience. The use of multimedia and audiovisual tools will facilitate the understanding of complex maqam structures and performance techniques, while mobile applications and e-learning tools will allow students to access education anytime and anywhere. Research and development (R&D) activities will support the continuous renewal and improvement of educational programs, and interinstitutional collaborations and international programs will enhance education quality through knowledge and experience sharing. Finally, to ensure the ongoing professional development of religious officials, in-service training programs should be regularly updated and supported with innovative content, thereby increasing professional competence. These development areas will make religious music education more effective, accessible, and innovative, providing significant contributions to the personal and professional development of religious officials.

Additionally, Turkey has been a prominent advocate of Islam for centuries and holds a significant position both economically and geographically among Islamic countries. In this context, religious music education can be offered to participants from various Islamic countries. Therefore, these courses can be provided in English, the most commonly used lingua franca today. The programs can be translated into English, and their content can include excerpts and materials from international literature and sources on music. Furthermore, educators capable of teaching religious music in English can be trained, and existing experts can offer this education in English, reaching even more diverse cultures.

An important consideration is that Islam is universal, music is universal, and English is a universal language. These three universal elements can be combined by our competent and skilled religious officials to convey the universal message of Islam through music to hearts worldwide.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study aims to determine the position and importance of religious music education in the in-service training courses of the

Presidency of Religious Affairs. The literature review and current findings reveal how religious music education is incorporated into these in-service training programs and underscore its significance.

Religious music is defined as a sound-based art form and holds an important place as a tool used by people to fulfill their religious duties. It is frequently performed in mosques and other religious venues, becoming an integral part of daily life through the adhan, iqamah, tasbehat, mawlid, and other religious rituals (Akarsu, 2018; Koca, 2016). Therefore, religious music education is critical for enhancing the professional competence and public reputation of religious officials (Akarsu, 2018).

The Presidency of Religious Affairs organizes various in-service training programs to ensure that religious officials provide effective and competent service. Among these programs, religious music education is supported by different programs tailored to various needs. For instance, the "Religious Music Program - 2015" offers a comprehensive 864-hour training, while other programs focus on more specific areas and aim to develop particular skills of the participants.

As seen in Table 2, religious music education is provided in different in-service training programs with varying hours. The most comprehensive training is offered in the "Religious Music Program - 2015" with 864 hours, while other programs provide fewer hours of training. This variety demonstrates the changing importance and scope of religious music education across different programs. The methods of delivering religious music education—listening (sema), demonstration (arz), and practice (uygulama)—ensure that students receive comprehensive training and develop their proficiency.

Future potential development areas include the use of digital education and online platforms, personalized learning approaches, multimedia and audiovisual tools, mobile applications, and e-learning tools. These technological advancements will make religious music education more accessible and effective, allowing religious officials to receive training anytime and anywhere. Additionally, research and development (R&D) activities and interinstitutional collaborations will support the continuous renewal and improvement of educational programs. Finally, regular updates and innovative content in in-service training programs will enhance the professional competence of religious officials.

Turkey's significant position in the Islamic world and its developed economy provide great potential for offering religious music education to international participants. In this context, the training programs can be translated into English and enriched with excerpts and materials from

international literature and sources. Furthermore, educators capable of teaching religious music in English can be trained, and existing experts can offer this education in English, reaching even more diverse cultures.

An important consideration is that Islam is universal, music is universal, and English is a universal language. These three universal elements can be combined by our competent and skilled religious officials to convey the universal message of Islam through music to hearts worldwide.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that religious music education holds an important place in in-service training programs and can be further developed with technological and pedagogical advancements. Continued studies in this area will provide significant contributions to the professional development of religious officials and the enhancement of the quality of religious services.

Future research could benefit from conducting interviews with religious officials who have participated in service training programs to gain deeper insights into their experiences. Additionally, the impact of religious music education on their professional development can be explored. Comparative studies between the Diyanet Academy's programs and similar programs in other countries could reveal best practices and areas for improvement. Additionally, exploring the integration of new technologies, such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, in religious music education could uncover innovative approaches to enhance learning experiences. Finally, further studies on the effectiveness of different pedagogical methods (listening, demonstration, practice) in religious music education could help refine and optimize instructional strategies.

Limitations

This study relies solely on document analysis, which may not fully capture participants' lived experiences and perspectives. It focuses only on the Diyanet Academy's in-service training programs, which may not represent all religious music education programs in Turkey or elsewhere. The absence of direct observations and interviews limits understanding of the practical implementation and effectiveness of these programs. Additionally, regional and cultural variations within Turkey are not considered, affecting the generalizability of the findings. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating interviews and observations and expanding the scope to include more diverse programs and contexts.

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Research and Publication Ethics

This study complies with all the rules specified under the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions." None of the actions specified under the "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" section of the second chapter of the directive were carried out.

Ethics Committee Approval

This study does not require ethics committee approval as it involves the examination of public documents.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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AKÜ AMADER / CİLT 11 - SAYI 21 – Ocak 2025

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