

The Opinions and Suggestions of Choral Educators Regarding their Distance Choral Education Experiences

Sevan Nart¹, Ceren Doğan²

¹Bartın University, Faculty of Education, Department of Music Education, Bartın, Türkiye

²Bartın University, Faculty of Education, Department of Music Education, Bartın, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

Music education where applied lessons are intensive is undoubtedly, one of the most challenging educational fields in the distance education process that started with the pandemic. In this field, it is of great importance for the effectiveness and accuracy of learning that most of the courses should be carried out face to face whether one-on-one or in groups. Choral education is one of the applied and face-to-face lessons performed under the supervision of a choral educator. The question of how collective instrument/voice training practices, in which sound and image occur simultaneously (synchronic), will be carried out through distance education, has also come to the fore with the COVID 19 Pandemic. This research was conducted to find an answer to this question and to compile the opinions and suggestions of choir educators based on their teaching experiences regarding distance choir education. For this purpose, an online survey was prepared to collect data and enable educators from different countries to participate. The data obtained was analyzed through descriptive analysis and processed according to the predetermined thematic framework. It is thought that the research findings are important in terms of providing information (how to organize the online education/training environment, teaching methods, techniques and approaches) for the distance education of the relevant applied courses that can be experienced again - if deemed necessary - and is a useful resource in the field.

Keywords: Choir, Choral Education, Collective Singing, Covid-19 Pandemic, Distance Education.

INTRODUCTION

In the distance (remote/online) education process, which started with the pandemic and all of us caught suddenly and unprepared, one of the most difficult areas of education is undoubtedly the field of music education, where applied/performance-based courses are intensive (Karahan, 2023). In this field, it is of great importance for the effectiveness and accuracy of learning that many lessons, especially those involving instrument and voice-based teaching, are carried out face-to-face and under the supervision of a field expert, whether one-on-one or collectively.

Collective voice training and choir lessons are one of applied lessons conducted face-to-face (live) and with a choir conductor/choir educator in music education. In these ensembles where the human voice is used as an instrument, single or polyphonic choral works are practiced and performed together under the direction of the choir conductor. However, in all levels of education from pre-school to higher education, the lack and/or inadequacy of technological equipment, technical knowledge and methods that emerged with the distance education process has led to various problems and needs.

This compulsory distance, online education “digital transformation” (Camlin & Lisboa, 2021) has led educators

to research new creative approaches and pedagogies. Online courses, which have become a new teaching model, mean “all course contents of a subject and teaching activities expressed through net-work, including two parts: the course contents organized according to definite teaching objectives and teaching strategies and the supporting environment for online teaching” (Martins & Kellermanns, 2004 cited in Li, 2017, p. 17-18).

Although music education has started to be implemented through online one-to-one lessons or virtual teaching with

Corresponding Author e-mail: sevannart@bartin.edu.tr

https://or id.org/0000-0002-2129-8227

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video in distance education institutions in many countries around the world for the last 20 years, the question of how to carry out collective instrument/voice education practices in which audio and video occur simultaneously (synchronic) has come to the agenda with the pandemic. Due to the pandemic, educators conducting collective voice and instrumental lessons have endeavored to develop new methods, techniques and strategies and create curricula suitable for the distance learning-teaching environments they have fallen into unprepared. The most important motivation for this study is the lack of sufficient resources that provide information on how to conduct collective voice/choir education remotely.

In order to examine the studies on the subject and to collect information, a search was conducted on the internet under the titles of “distance music education”, “music education in the pandemic” and “ distance, virtual collective instrument/voice education “. It was found that the most comprehensive research on distance music education was conducted in 2002 (Rees, 2002), while the number of experimental studies in the field was quite limited.

In the spring of 2020, Shaw and Mayo conducted a large-scale survey of 1,368 educators to investigate how the transition to distance learning and the policies put into practice affected elementary and middle school music educators in the United States. When the opinions of the music teachers participating in the study were analyzed, it was seen that teachers mentioned that different educational policies were implemented during the distance learning period according to states and regions. They also expressed different opinions on teaching methods, teaching frequency and teacher-student communication. Elementary school teachers reported more difficulties in the distance learning process, while middle and high school teachers had to develop distance learning methods for large-scale music courses. Many elementary music teachers reported being told not to give assignments or contact students regarding music, and instead were asked to provide support for “core”classes. Most of the teachers stated that the participation of students in music education was low and that students did not have enough access to music education, but that they had the opportunity to communicate more with students in the distance learning process. It was also revealed that teachers had new learning needs in terms of the use of technology in the distance learning process. 55% of the teachers stated that they did not have any experience before distance education, while 53,4 % stated that they had received a training in their region. Therefore, teachers’ knowledge and skills about the use of technology in the distance education process need to be developed and improved, and accordingly, they need to be supported by administrators and government resources with distance learning policies for music education.

Çal and Küçükşüleymanoğlu (2022), conducted a research with music and art teachers at a Fine Arts High School in Türkiye and evaluated the opinions of educators about the effectiveness of applied courses in distance education. According to the findings, the problems experienced by 20 music branch teachers in distance education were categorized under headings such as connection quality, sound quality, not reaching the sound simultaneously (synchronization problems), difficulty in doing group work, inability to meet technical requirements (such as tuning problems). However, the teachers stated that they found distance education positive and beneficial in terms of saving time, providing flexibility of space, and allowing students to be involved in the education process independent of time and place. They also add that the graduation concerts of the senior students, which had to be done practically, could not be held, which decreased student motivation and negatively affected participation in the lessons and effective learning, and thus the process. The educators, who stated that especially group or choir activities could not be carried out due to technical problems, suggested that suitable areas should be provided in educational institutions in accordance with the pandemic rules in order for the applied instrument and voice lessons to be efficient.

Yıldız et al. (2021) determined the opinions of educators on distance instrument education at the undergraduate level during the Covid-19 process and found that the majority of the participants did not have any previous distance education experience or knowledge. In the study, the participants listed the first five problems they encountered as the lack of quality sound, sound and video not coming at the same time during the virtual classes, problems in accessing the internet by the student, the lack of an instrument in the student’s location, and lack of motivation. These are followed by the inability to understand and correct students’ posture and technical positions, inadequate transfer of feedback and inability to make corrections. In addition, problems such as lack of personal knowledge and skills related to the technology and lack or inadequacy of technical support (lack of software or hardware) were also identified.

Biasutti et al. (2021) reviewed the experiences of music educators during distant education due to Covid-19 in the United States and Europe (n=15), who were contacted through an online survey. They classify the findings in a variety of titles such as; lesson planning, teaching methods and techniques, assessment and evaluation, use of technology in instrument lessons, etc. The study also mentions a few online programs [projects] that provide distance performance opportunities. The Lola project (<https://lola.conts.it/>), the Swing project (<https://www.aecmusic.eu/projects/current-projects/swing-2018-2021>) and the Intermusic project (<https://www>

aec-music, eu/projects/current-projects/intermusic-) are given as examples. The common aim of these projects is to provide musicians with the opportunity to sing online simultaneously, to share solo instrument performances and to support small group music lessons.

One of the first studies directly related to the topic was a research by Kurt (2021) with choral educators (n= 75) from various middle and high schools, and universities in the United States to determine the successful teaching methods, techniques, and strategies they applied in multiple learning environments (including but not limited to face-to-face, hybrid, remote/virtual, synchronous, and asynchronous) during and after the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges they faced. The core findings of the study indicate that, regardless of the teaching-learning environment, all choral educators have gone through a challenging and exhausting process and were concerned about the future of choral education programs. Within the scope of hybrid teaching, educators successfully spend more one-on-one time with students, but they also stated that unbalanced choirs negatively affect education; although various technologies in distance education increase success, delays, especially due to video conferencing services, make simultaneous choral singing impossible.

In the study conducted by Milliren in 2022, it was aimed to determine the individual distance education experiences of six secondary school choral educators regarding technology during the transition to distance education and throughout the pandemic. According to the findings, apart from music education, other courses such as performance-based art and science education were also affected by the transition to online learning in general. In particular, it was revealed that the fact that fine arts teachers were tasked/obliged to create new curricula to overcome the lack of necessary teaching materials for their courses negatively affected educators. An unexpected and striking result of the research is that students were negatively affected by the process in terms of psychosocial aspects. Similar findings were found in the study by Biasutti et al. (2021). In this study, participants reported feelings of fear, helplessness, disorientation, discomfort, and stress, but also reported that the quarantine brought out skills and qualities such as resilience, adaptability, problem solving, and reflection. Accordingly, despite its negative effects, both teachers and students reported that the quarantine improved communication between them and was effective in increasing their motivation and sense of responsibility for virtual learning.

Yücetoker (2020) conducted a research to provide examples of practices in the distance choral education, to analyze the success status of these practices on students

and to evaluate students' views and attitudes about these practices. To this end, a model for distance learning has been developed and three different methods have been tested over eight weeks by practising seven lessons per week. After each application, open-ended questions were sent to the students and student opinions about these applications were taken. Before the applications, at the beginning of the online lessons, all the groups tried to sing at the same time, but it was seen that simultaneous vocalization could not be performed virtually. Therefore, 3 different methods were applied in order for the lesson to be efficient and suitable for its purpose. In the first application, the students sent the parts they sang and recorded according to their voice groups to each other via e-mail and tried to ensure polyphony by recording the parts they performed on the transmitted recordings. However, it was concluded that this practice was not fully successful due to students' rhythmic disorders, singing anxieties and inability to synchronize. In the second application, the students tried to sing and record their own vocal parts over other pre-recorded parts. This practice was found to be more efficient than the other practices, but it was concluded that this method was not suitable for the polyphonic choir lesson since the pre-recorded vocal parts were not real human voices. Finally, in order to apply musical dynamics, the conductor recorded the conducting video of the choral piece and sent it to the students. The students watched this video and tried to sing their parts in accordance with the conductor. However, it was concluded that this practice was also not efficient due to the inability to follow the notes while watching the video, rhythmic disruptions and many other problems. As a result of the research, it was determined that the students' views on distance choral education were negative and they could not acquire the target behaviors of the choral course.

In a study by Daffern et al. (2021), 3948 choir members and conductors in the UK were asked what kind of virtual choir activities they conducted during the Covid-19 lockdown period and their experiences and opinions about these virtual choir activities. They also were asked to evaluate three virtual choir models: Multi-track, whereby individuals record a solo which is mixed into a choral soundtrack; Live streamed, where individuals take part in sessions streamed live over social media; Live tele-conferencing, for spoken interaction and/or singing using tele-conferencing software. The results revealed that none of these models offered a real-time "singing together experience" where singers could hear and interact with each other. While it was stated that the common emotion in the expressions of all participants was the disappointment and sadness caused by not being able to sing together during the quarantine process. It was determined that the multichannel virtual choir activity, defined as the first

model, was the only model that could “provide the feeling of creating music together”. The results of the study also revealed the positive social and psychological effects of virtual choir activities on individuals and emphasized the importance/value of live choir activities and singing together.

Hassman et al. (2023) interviewed seven (n=7) high school choral educators in the United States to identify the difficulties experienced by them during the COVID-19 pandemic and the new methods they adapted to. In the study, the participating teachers’ experiences and practices of distance choral education are discussed in detail. In this study, it was revealed that educators experienced challenges such as technology and internet access problems, maintaining student participation and providing feedback. In addition to the unexpected benefits of distance education, educators reported having to effectively modify instructional content and expectations to meet the emotional needs of students. Educators stated that they organized their curricula with a focus on solo singing and theoretical studies, and that they provided more online music theory education to their students with the support of the school administration (such as providing additional funds, providing the necessary materials for music education, and conducting face-to-face studies in accordance with social distancing rules). In the study, it was seen that programs and apps which provide virtual lessons contributed to the development of technological and digital skills of the teachers and that educators gained experience.

Theorell et al. (2020) surveyed choristers from Sweden (n=3163) and Norway (n=1881) in order to determine the experiences of choristers when they could not participate in choral activities during the Covid-19 lockdown and lost all their regular choral routines. The choristers were asked which aspect of the choral practices they miss and care about the most. Professional singers report that they miss the aesthetic experiences, flow, and all the physical aspects (physical training, voice training, and breathing training) to a greater degree as compared to reports from amateurs. The importance of aesthetic experiences and physical components appeared to rise with the number of the years that an individual had engaged in choir singing. The value placed on the social role of choral singing was found to be higher in Norway. This finding is thought to be related to the prevalence of amateur choirs in Norway and the fact that stricter social distancing rules were applied in Norway during the pandemic than in Switzerland.

Similarly, in a study conducted by Ang et al. (2022) in Malaysia, they aimed to collect and compare the opinions of 112 participants, 83 (74.1%) of whom were university choir members and 29 (25.9%) of whom were members of amateur choirs, about online and face-to-face choir activities by

applying online questionnaires. The results showed that choir members from both university choirs and community choirs faced similar challenges in virtual choir practices.

Kaçmaz & Bayburtlu (2022) aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of online polyphonic choir lessons from the students’ perspective by applying a structured multiple-choice questionnaire in a study conducted with 254 undergraduate music students in Turkey who participated in the Pandemic online choir education course. In the study, the positive and negative aspects of online choral lessons were shared alongside the importance of technological infrastructure in facilitating distance education and the need for the development of online-digital applications for distance choral education courses were emphasized.

METHOD

Information about the research design, study group, data collection and data analysis is presented in this section.

Research Design

This research serves as qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research in which qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used and a qualitative process is followed to reveal perceptions and events realistically and holistically in a natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). Interview technique has been used for data collection.

Study Group

In the study, choir instructors whom are working in the field of distance choral education are participants. Choral educators participated in the study online and answered the form voluntarily. The study group of this research consisted of 20 choral educators who participated in the research voluntarily. 15 participants are from Turkey and 5 are choir educators who continue their profession abroad.

The personal information questionnaire only aimed to collect demographic information about the participants, the data obtained from this questionnaire were not evaluated. The opinions and suggestions of the participants were presented directly without interpreting, but their names were kept confidential. The educators were defined as “Participant (P)” and named as P1, P2, P3, P4...

Data Collection

In this study, data were collected using the interview technique. “The main purpose of using the interview technique is usually not to test a hypothesis; on the contrary, it is to try to understand other people’s experiences and how they make sense of these experiences” (Türnüklü, 2000, p.544). In order

to formulate the conceptual framework of the research and to prepare the questions to be asked to the participants in the interview, first of all, an extensive review of literature on the subject was carried out. The relevant researches that could be accessed were examined and the opinions of subject experts were largely utilized. For data collection, an online personal information questionnaire and a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher were applied to the participants. Since the personal information questionnaire only aimed to collect demographic information about the participants, the data obtained from this interview were not evaluated. The six open-ended questions in the interview form were prepared within the framework of predetermined themes in order to determine the problems encountered by the instructors while conducting distance choral education courses and the suggestions they offered for these problems.

FINDINGS

Most of the participants in this study (70%) stated that they conduct online courses through the Zoom application (n=14). Other applications are Microsoft Teams and online portals offered by the universities where the educators work. In the literature review, it was seen that Teams and Zoom were the most frequently used applications in the related studies. In addition to these applications, other videoconferencing applications and virtual meeting platforms used in online choir lessons are as follows: Google Meet, Google Classroom, Skype and Whatsapp. Finding can be seen in in Figure 1.

As can be seen in Table 1, when the educators were asked how they followed a path at the beginning of the process in the transition to compulsory distance education, that 35% of

90% of the educators stated that both they and their students had problems with internet connection in distance education and that low speed and poor audio and video quality connection interrupted the lessons. In addition to the technological hardware and knowledge inadequacies related to access to the internet in distance education, the problem of audio and video latency in existing virtual meeting portals was stated to be the most important technological inadequacy that makes distance collective audio education impossible. It is seen that similar results are found in related studies. (Yücetoker, 2020; Yıldız et al., 2021; Biasutti et al., 2021; Daffern et al., 2021; Hash et al., 2021; Martinec, 2021; Shaw & Mayo, 2022; Kaçmaz & Bayburtlu, 2022; Ang et al., 2022; Çal & Küçükşüleymanoğlu, 2022; Hassman et al., 2023; Skinner, 2023). The common findings in the studies reveal problems in distance education, including difficulties with technology availability and access, lack of preparation and training for online education. In all similar studies, it was stated that the most intensive problem stemmed from the internet

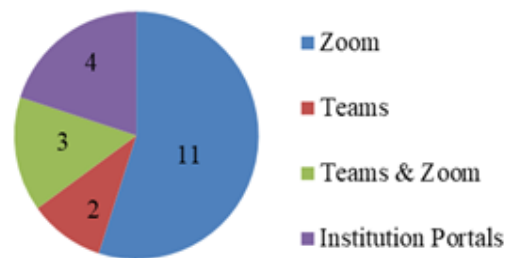


Fig. 1: Distribution of videoconferencing applications and virtual meeting platforms used by educators in distance education

Table 1: Educators’ readiness at the beginning of the distance education process

Concept	Categories	Codes (f, %)	Sample statements
Readiness for transition to distance education	Those who planned the education process	I made a plan and conducted the lessons both theoretically and with audio recordings (6, 30%)	P2: “We listened to works from different choirs. I had them analyze the works. Since there is no program that can present collective performance at the same time, I asked for audio recordings from the students and I listened to solo performances out of necessity”.
		I made a plan and conducted the lesson with voice recordings (5, 25%)	P18: “I sent the notes in pdf. I used the recordings I could access on YouTube. The choir sang on these recordings at home and sent them”.
		I made a plan and taught the lessons theoretically (2, 10%)	P7: “I always thought that choral education through distance education was only useful for teaching theoretical things. There was no voice training”.
	Those who did not have a plan for the education process	I did not make a plan (7, 35%)	P11: “Since it was a very sudden situation, I did not make a plan program for online education beforehand”.

Table 2: Problems and difficulties encountered by educators while conducting choral education courses in the distance education process.

<i>Concept</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Code (f, %)</i>	<i>Sample statements</i>
Problems and difficulties encountered while conducting choral education courses in the distance education process	Technology-related problems	Internet connection problems (18, 90%)	P10: "Due to the problem in the internet infrastructure, both me and my students often experienced audio and video interruptions".
		Synchronization problem (18, 90%)	P2: "Audio synchronization was impossible, this was the biggest problem. It is not possible to get polyphonic feedback".
		Lack of technological equipment (9, 45%)	P12: "I had a lot of problems because the university's computer was old and the speed was low. The camera that the university gave us did not work properly, so it had no function. Again, I used my own computer because it was impossible to work with the computer that the university had not changed for 14 years".
		Lack of technological knowledge (4, 20%)	P18: "Since I could not use the software or other applications and materials that can be used in this field, I had problems in teaching methods and techniques that would enable us to teach the students in the online environment in a healthier and more efficient way. I do not think that the course was taught in accordance with its purpose".
		I did not experience any technical problems (2, 10%)	P11: "I did not experience any problems in terms of technology because I was actively using technological tools and equipment before the pandemic".
	Problems with students	Not displaying images (18, 90%)	P18: "Communication is interrupted when the delay of the sound and the program's inability to detect a second sound are added to the choristers who turn off the video".
		Class participation, absenteeism (7, 35%)	P16: "Since absenteeism was not taken into account, students behaved in a relaxed manner and did not come to class. This created difficulties in maintaining choir discipline".
		Technological deficiencies (15, 75%)	P5: "I think that some of the students could not follow the lessons as they should because they did not have sufficient and necessary equipment in terms of internet and technology".
		Low motivation (3, 15%)	P3: "Failure to teach the course properly negatively affected the motivation of the students, they often did not send the assignments I gave and the recordings I requested".
		Assignments/studies were not done (7, 35%)	P20: "My students were not comfortable recording themselves singing alone with the prepared pieces, so most of them did not submit the assignments. They also resisted any kind of performance-based assignment if they were not going to perform the music live".
		Other (2, 10%)	P1: "They had problems with focusing, listening, not knowing the rules of technological meetings, etc. can also be added".
		Teaching of the lessons (18, 90%)	P12: "The exercises in the singing and choir lessons were impossible. Technical work was impossible. I don't think the ones that were done were efficient. Students had to sing over the recorded correpetition [accompaniment] or over the choral parts. The lessons turned into karaoke parties. None of the dynamics of music could be studied".
	Problems related to teaching methods and techniques	Inadequacy of the online program used (15, 75%)	P3: "... the fact that the note archive and the programs related to music writing and education are paid and expensive, the sound coming from the piano is high pitched while doing exercises, the student takes that high pitched sound and sings it, and the sound we get is also high pitched. I can say intonation".
		Lack of practice (18, 90%)	P18: "It was impossible to use methods and techniques, we need to be honest about this. For our field, it is not possible to do this job exactly as it should be except for a very advanced program for singing together."

Concept	Categories	Code (f, %)	Sample statements
		No assessment and evaluation (1,5%)	P15: "No grades were given in choir lessons this semester".
	Problems with assessment and evaluation	The recordings sent were listened to (19, 95%)	P19: "I asked for video recordings in the exams. There were moments when I had difficulty in evaluating some videos because their resolution and sound quality were low. Also, it was quite tiring to evaluate by listening one by one".
		I didn't have any problems (2, 10%)	P5: "I didn't have any problems in assessment, but I would have preferred to listen live one-on-one. I don't think healthy assessments are made".
	Other	Other Complaints about the neighborhood (2, 10%)	P20: "We could not have a lesson because of the noise because of the family and neighbors of most of them. During my lesson, my student's neighbor raided his house and had a verbal argument with him, saying enough is enough".

infrastructure; both educators and students expressed the problems in terms of not being able to hear quality sound in online courses, audio and video not coming at the same time, and problems in accessing the internet. In addition, problems such as lack of personal knowledge and skills related to technology and lack or inadequacy of technical support (lack of software or hardware) were also revealed (Yücetoker, 2020; Yıldız et al., 2021; Daffern et al., 2021; Rieker & Apanovitch-Leites, 2021; Hassman et al., 2023). In Yücetoker's (2020) study, in addition to the inadequacy of technological equipment and usage, the students stated that they had limited home opportunities for polyphonic choir lessons, that they could not vocalize over the recordings (due to rhythmic and intonation problems), that the time given for homework was short, and that they felt embarrassed and inadequate when singing their parts alone on video.

As shown in Table 2, nearly all of the participants (90%) in this study redesigned the instructions and assignments in a similar way and resorted to the listening of individual recordings rather than performing. Teachers who participated in similar research noted that they had to redesign the lessons entirely, focus on different, non-performance, theoretical studies, and redesign a curriculum with more content, including song analysis and examining the lives of composers (Biasutti et al. 2021; Hassman et al., 2023). The educators participated in this study noted that distance learning does not meet the purpose of choral courses "to make polyphonic music together", adding that this negatively affects the student's motivation. Two educators, pointed out a different point:

K8: "The student could easily hide his voice in mass speaking and sing more comfortably, but there were insufficiencies and shortcomings in the recording... Listening to students alone, even in small groups, reduced group motivation and made the lesson boring".

K19: "My students were not comfortable recording themselves singing alone with the prepared tracks so many didn't turn in the assignments. Also, if they weren't going to perform the music live, they resisted any performance-based assignments".

In the distance education process, the Institute of Higher Education (2002) have removed the obligation to participate in the lessons, and it has been expressed in the interviews that educators have had difficulty in ensuring student participation. Students have turned off their screenshots and voices in virtual lessons, and they have not done the assigned studies and assignments. Similar problems with student involvement have been identified in related studies. (Skinner, 2023). An educator from abroad who participated in the study tried to describe the situation with the following statements:

K20: " We couldn't hear or see any students. This was very difficult, and I didn't know whether I was teaching to 4 or 40 children. Also, I could not teach and deal with the chat/waiting room at the same time, so three staff members were needed per each session of maybe six students. It was a lot of work. I had no idea what they were picking up, because it was like teaching in a black room with nobody there."

As shown in Table 3, although many of the choir educators who participated in the study made various proposals, they pointed out that choir education, which is a collective activity, must be done face-to-face in order to be effective and efficient. Researchers such as Yücetoker (2020) and Biasutti et al. (2021) have tried to determine the feasibility and effectiveness of different methods in distance choral education. In the study by Biasutti et al, educators indicated that they collected metronomically (at the same speed) vocal recordings of students in collective instrument and choir courses to control students' individual performance and mix the tracks together with sound recording program.

Table 3: Suggestions for solutions to the problems faced by educators during distance choral education

Concept	Categories	Code (f, %)	Sample statements	
Suggestions for solutions to the problems faced by educators during distance choral education	Technology-related problems	Internet connection problems (15,7 %)	P7: "Internet access should be better everywhere. High-speed internet connection must be provided".	
		Synchronization problem (18,90%)	P4: "For good training in this area, you need to have improved synchronized paid connections and buy them for field teachers."	
		Technical hardware shortage (10,50%) %)	P12: "It is a big problem that not every student has the same technology equipment or the same quality technology equipment. It's not enough for the instructor to have the necessary equipment. If there's no computer or cell phone to support the music software that the instructor offers, that's a separate problem. With the support and cooperation of the State and the private sectors, students can have access to these technologies at a reasonable rate by means of campaigns, such as 'don't leave students without computers and phones', so that they can have the necessary technological equipment".	
	Problems with students	Technical training support (5,25%)	P12: "I think that since technology is evolving from day to day and is very much integrated into education, seminars, workshops, should be organized to introduce new technologies to educators in particular and to enable them to apply them".	
		I don't think the problem can be solved (2,10%)	P1: "I do not think the problems I mentioned above will be resolved. I don't think that choreography will happen in this way... Notes, archives, programs, devices, internet problems, even if all is solved, it will only be a support for face-to-face lessons. "	
		Not turning on the camera (18,90%)	P18: "COURSE MUST HAVE CONTINUED AND THE CAMERA MUST HAVE BEEN TURNED ON".	
		Lesson attendance, inactivity (13,65)	K16: "LESS ACTIVE ATTENDANCE. DISTANCE EDUCATION SHOULD BE COMPULSORY. ESPECIALLY PRACTICAL LESSONS SHOULD BE DONE LIVE (SENKRON). IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE FOR STUDENTS NOT TO ATTEND THE CLASS AT THE MOMENT AND THEN WATCH IT FROM THE RECORD".	
		Technological deficiencies (6, 30%)	K5: "THEY MAY BE DROPPING OUT OF CLASS BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT. THE TEACHER'S ABILITY TO DEVELOP ORIGINAL ONLINE MATERIAL FOR THE CLASSROOM OR TO UNDERTAKE SOME TRAINING IN THE FIELD OF TECHNOLOGY IS CRUCIAL TO THE STUDENT'S DEVELOPMENT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE STATE PROVIDES THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO ENSURE THAT THE STUDENT ALSO HAS THE TECHNOLOGICALLY NECESSARY EQUIPMENT".	
		Problems related to teaching methods and techniques	Motivating students, studying and doing homeworks (3, 15%)	P3: " WE HAVE TO IMPLEMENT DIFFERENT PROJECTS THAT YOU THINK WILL MOTIVATE THEM INSTEAD OF NEVER WORKING, WE HAVE TO GIVE THEM GROUP AWARENESS TASKS. "
			Methods and techniques suitable for distance learning (3, 15%)	P13: "DIVERSE TEACHING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES CAN BE DEVELOPED, INCLUDING TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN BE APPLIED SEPARATELY FROM CLASSICAL METHODS".
Resource provision of the institution in distance learning (2,10%)	P3: "APPLICATIONS TO BE USED BY UNIVERSITIES WHEN TEACHING ONLINE LESSONS SHOULD BE PURCHASED IN ORIGINAL FORM".			
Problems with measurement and evaluation	Lesson Planning (1, 5%)	P17: "TEACHERS NEED TO PREPARE A LITTLE BIT IN ADVANCE TO DO LESSONS ONLINE AS EFFICIENTLY AS POSSIBLE"		
	I think choral education can only be done face-to-face, together. (5, 25%)	P19: "THE CHOIR IS A SOCIAL EVENT' CHORUS LESSONS CANNOT BE CONDUCTED REMOTELY AND INDIVIDUALLY'.		
	Performance exams can be conducted live via camera (1, 5%)	P20: "IF THE INTERNET IS FAST ENOUGH, THE EXAMS OF THE APPLIED LESSONS CAN ALSO BE DONE LIVE VIA THE CAMERA".		
		It is impossible to make an accurate measurements and assessments (5.25%)	K5: "IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO TAKE ANY PRACTICE EXAM AS THE LESSON CANNOT BE PROCESSED AS IT SHOULD BE"	

However these recordings lacked important factors affecting performance in collective music studies, including musical dynamics and musical narration. They noted that all the methods they tried were not efficient because of technological deficiencies. However, in many of the similar studies, educators have pointed out that even if the technological equipment and skills are provided, distance learning can only be temporary or supporting studies; it cannot replace simultaneous and face-to-face studies that acquire and enhance joint music making skills (Yücetoker, 2020; Biasutti et al., 2021; Akbarova et al. 2021; Rieker & Apanovitch-Leites, 2021; Bahtiar, 2022; Milliren, 2022).

The problem of the “low attendance rate” in online lessons, which has been described as a major problem, is believed to be solved only by the introduction of a compulsory continuation of distance learning and by conducting live (synchronous) lessons instead of asynchrony, and by enabling students to attend classes by turning on cameras.

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to identify the challenges faced by educators conducting distance choral education courses during the Pandemic and their suggestions for solutions. Similar research in the field has shown similar results. Research findings have highlighted once again the need for new technological knowledge and equipment to enable effective and efficient distance learning in performance-based, applied education programmes, such as music education. This need is a necessity in the digital world in which we live, but with the sudden pandemic, educators and students in many fields of education, educational institutions and governments have faced technological deficiencies in this process, unprepared.

In this study, the problems highlighted and most expressed in many other studies in the field are gathered around the lack of existing technological possibilities and the technological deficiencies of educators and students (Yücetoker, 2020; Yıldız et al., 2021; Biasutti et al. 2021; Daffern et al., 2021; Hash et al. 2021; Rieker & Apanovitch-Leites, 2021; Martinec, 2021; Kurt, 2021; Shaw & Mayo, 2022; Kaçmaz & Bayburtlu, 2022.; Ang et al. 2022; Çal & Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2022, Hassman et al. 2023; Skinner, 2023). The most important element in choral education is making music together, and this requires simultaneous (synchronized) singing. Collective performance-based achievements such as homogeneity, intonation, interpretation and musicality, aimed with choir lessons, can only be achieved by face-to-face, simultaneous practices. Therefore, choral educators pointed out that while technology is advancing and enabling simultaneous music

making, alongside distance learning, it will not meet the psycho-social and musical impacts of joint music making on individuals. In this regard, the educators agree that collective instrument and voice education courses should only be taught face-to-face.

Although they did not contribute to achieving the overall objectives of the choral courses, it has been found that the individualized teaching and assessment methods developed by educators in distance learning have contributed positively to both educators and students. Studies both exploring students’ and educators’ opinions have also shown that distance learning enhances sharing and interaction among individuals; improves musical reading and self-control skills. In this process, educators have rearranged their curricula, course content, teaching methods and techniques according to their capabilities, although compulsory; many of them have integrated music technologies and communication technologies into their classes without any training. It can be said that compulsory distance education in this respect contributes to the individual development of both educators and students. Moreover, it has enabled both sides to confront their abilities/deficiencies, develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills in the transition to this “new normal”.

Independently of the pandemic, the role and importance of educational technology, which is emerging every day, has been an integral part of the methods and techniques that educators use permanently in the process. What is important here is to ensure that every student and educator has equal opportunities in technology and access to the Internet. This is of great importance as it is considered to be the most important factor in student participation and learning motivation. Providing technological capabilities in the field is, of course, not enough. The effective use of this technology also requires the inclusion of applicable lessons in the educational programmes and the development of the knowledge and skills of individuals. Noting the place and importance of technology in the production, distribution and consumption processes of music education, as in all areas Ajose (2020) said that the deficiencies and shortcomings arising in all these areas during the pandemic could be addressed by reviewing and renewing the music curricula. Stating that music technology courses should be designed in a way that is functional and responsive to needs in the curricula, Ajose (2020) also recommends Artificial Intelligence (AI) supported music technologies be used in the programmes.

This study was conducted to identify the experiences of the educators in the Pandemic lockdown and their suggestions on how distance choral lessons can be delivered more effectively and identify strategies and precautions that can be developed and to overcome the process more efficiently

in the event of a possible pandemic. Although the study is limited to a small study group of choir educators, it is thought to be useful for future research in the field. Researchers, ICT specialists and software programmers in the field of computer, communication, media and music technology need to work and provide resources for remote/online choir lessons. Undoubtedly, it would be appropriate for this research and work to be carried out primarily with the support of the state, then the related educational institutions and organizations (Hassman et al., 2023; Biasutti et al., 2021).

Finally, although distance education brings with it many problems, art education, which contributes to the socialization, psychological and personal development of the individual, cannot be abandoned during compulsory distance education processes such as the Pandemic. In choral education, the core of choir music is singing by feeling each other, and in this process, it has been shown that “nothing can replace ‘man-to-man connection’ in live choir performances.” (Hooper, 2020). “*Virtual concerts have their place, but nothing can replace the “human to human connection” present during a live choral performance*”

-Prof. John Hooper, Choral Conductor Concordia University of Edmonton-

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