



The relationship between secondary school grade point average scores and musical interest in Turkey¹

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Abstract

In Turkish educational system, students' secondary school grade point average (GPA) scores constitute the basic criteria in determining the high schools they will next attend. Students, who start their high school careers based on this grade, receive their education together with peers who have similar GPA scores. In these pivotal years which play a significant role in developing character, teenagers not only affect each other through interaction, but also shape their likes and dislikes collectively during this high school period. Music interest in students is also shaped during this process. This descriptive study has been conducted at nine high schools in central Konya. The sample group includes a total of 626 students, 195 of whom are from three high schools with high GPA scores, 193 from three high schools with average GPA scores, and 238 from three high schools with low GPA scores. The results of the study reveal not only certain similarities between the student groups, but also significant difference between the groups in terms of the will to play a musical instrument, the music genres the students prefer to listen, singers and bands the students follow, and whether or not to choose music as a career path.

Keywords: musical interest, school grade point, high school, youth, Turkey, Konya.

Introduction

Music, which is considered as the source of virtue, wisdom and grace in all civilization throughout the history, has been a significant means for human beings in expressing happiness, joy, sorrow, etc. Many different factors such as geography, climate and other physical environments have resulted in many different music types and genres as well as various music attitudes as categories of likes and dislikes. In the development of one's musical interest, both the social status of the individual and the community in which the individual lives play a significant role (İmik 2007,1; İlyasoğlu 2001,1). Various music types, composers, and players that individuals encounter as a result of their interaction with factors such as social network, media and musical technologies

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have not only affected their thoughts, emotions, likes and skills, but have also met their musical needs through time (Birol 2003, 12).

Human beings tend to forms certain habits regarding music, as they do in many other facets of their life. (Özgür and Aydoğan 2004,2). The musical behaviors which people follow willingly and regularly in time turn out to be their musical habits and attitudes.

It can also be easily seen that the educational, socio-cultural and socio-economic levels of the community in which the individual lives has a great role on their musical interests. Although every age group is known to be influenced by environmental factors, this influence is much higher and stronger in adolescence. Therefore, high school period is vital in shaping and developing musical tendencies.

High school period (ages 15-18) is not only a crucial period in one's character development, but also the fast transition period from childhood to adolescence during which affective and social developments take place. "This combination of fast development and lack of knowledge and experience results normally in the adolescents' difficulty to adapt to social norms" (Yavuzer 2001,33). While such changes and transformation occur, music is a vital part of socialization process among adolescents; and maybe they choose to express themselves through music (Ulutürk 2008,2). It has commonly observed that adolescents tend to listen to the music preferred by their social network, friends and family rather than to the music of their own taste and will for reasons such as finding a place in the community, responding to environmental pressure, and demonstrating their own identity as an individual.

Adolescents develop their musical attitudes being influenced by their peers, environments, technological tools such as TV and internet, and naturally by the culture of their own region. Although media has proven to be an influential factor in forming such likes and dislikes, different musical tendencies may emerge among individuals with different habits and environments (Aydoğan and Gürsoy 2007,65). In other words, despite living in the same city and being exposed to the same cultural changes, teenagers from different environments may vary in terms of musical interests.

Other factors such as the level of the high school students attend as well as the characteristics of their peers and classmates may also have an effect on their musical interests. Individuals of the same goals and ideals may alter each other's habits and likes. Therefore, this subject is worth studying and scrutinizing since it bears a significant research value.

1. Purpose

Consequently, the research question of the current study is as follows: “What are the differences between the musical interests of high school students who attend schools with low, average and high GPA scores in Konya?”

2. Method and Material

This section includes information on the research design, population and sampling, data collection tools, data collection processes, and data analyses of the study. Throughout the report, grade point average scores will abbreviated as GPASs.

2.1. Research Design

This is a descriptive study based on survey sampling model. Survey sampling models aim to describe a certain condition or situation that existed or still exist. Survey sampling describes the process of selecting a sample of elements from a target population in order to find out the general characteristics of the target population. A survey may refer to many different types or techniques of observation, but in the context of survey sampling it most often involves a questionnaire used to measure the characteristics and/or attitudes of people (Karasar 2010,77-79).

2.2. Population and Sampling

The population of the study is the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade high schools students in central Konya.

The sample group consists of a total of 626 students: 195 are from two high schools with high GPA scores, namely Meram Science High School (488,680 - 496,754) and Meram Anatolian High School (478,465 - 488,372); 193 are from two high schools with average GPA scores, namely Konya Anatolian High School (432,172 - 473,937) and Meram Mehmet Münevver Kurban Anatolian High School (424,805 - 446,277); and 238 are from two high schools with low GPA scores, namely Meram 75.Yıl High School ve Zeki Özdemir Anatolian High School (389,774 - 434,835).

2.3. Data Collection and Analyses

A survey form made up of 11 questions on the musical interests of the participants was used in the data collection procedure of this study. The analyses of the collected data presented frequency counts and percentages. However, for items that did not require single answers, only frequency distributions were given.

3. Results and Discussion

In this part of the study, the quantitative results of the survey are presented and evaluated using tables. Group A tables represent high schools with high GPASs, while group B tables represent high schools with average GPASs, and group C tables high schools with low GPASs.

Results Pertaining to the Differences between the Musical Attitudes of Students in Central Konya High Schools According to Student Gender

Table 1A, 1B and 1C. Student Genders in Groups A, B and C

Table 1A			Table 1B			Table 1C		
Gender	f	%	Gender	f	%	Gender	f	%
Girl	108	55,3	Girl	97	50,3	Girl	132	55,5
Boy	87	44,7	Boy	96	49,7	Boy	106	44,5
Total	195	100,0	Total	193	100,0	Total	238	100,0

According to Table 1A, %55,3 of the Group A participant students are female and %44,7 are male. According to Table 1B, %50,3 of the Group B participant students are female and %49,7 are male. According to Table 1C, %55,5 of the Group C participant students are female and %44,5 are male. The results suggest that female students outnumber the male students in all three groups.

Results Pertaining to the Differences between the Musical Attitudes of Students in Central Konya High Schools According to Student Grade

Table 2A, 2B and 2C. Student Grades in Group A, B and C

Table 2A			Table 2B			Table 2C		
Grade	f	%	Grade	f	%	Grade	f	%
9	86	44,1	9	67	34,7	9	85	35,8
10	35	18,0	10	50	25,9	10	61	25,6
11	43	22,0	11	46	23,8	11	31	13,0
12	31	15,9	12	30	15,6	12	61	25,6
Total	195	100,0	Total	193	100,0	Total	238	100,0

According to Table 2A, %44,1 of Group A students that filled in the survey are 9th graders, %18,0 10th graders, %22,0 11th graders, and %15,9 are 12th graders. According to Table 2B, %34,7 of Group B students that filled in the survey are 9th graders, %25,9 10th graders, %23,8 11th graders, and %15,6 are 12th graders. According to Table 2C, %35,8 of Group B students that filled in the survey are 9th graders, %25,6 10th graders, %13,0 11th graders, and %25,6 are 12th graders.

Results Pertaining to the Differences between the Musical Attitudes of Students in Central Konya High Schools According to the Musical Instrument They Either Play or Would Like To Play

Table 3A1, 3B1 and 3C1. Musical Instrument Students Play / Would Like To Play in Group A, B and C

Table 3A1			Table 3B1			Table 3C1		
Instrument	f	%	Instrument	f	%	Instrument	f	%
Yes, I play	68	35,0	Yes, I play	100	51,8	Yes, I play	52	21,8
No, but I want to play	79	40,5	No, but I want to play	68	35,3	No, but I want to play	147	61,8
I'm not interested	44	22,5	I'm not interested	21	10,9	I'm not interested	31	13,0
No answer	4	2,0	No answer	4	2,0	No answer	8	3,4
Total	195	100,0	Total	193	100,0	Total	238	100,0

According to Table 3A1, %35,0 of the participant students from Group A play one or more musical instruments, %40,5 cannot play any musical instruments but they want to play any instruments, %22,5 of them are not interested in playing a musical instrument, and %2,0 did not answer the question. According to Table 3B1, %51,8 of the participant students from Group B play one or more musical instruments, %35,3 cannot play any musical instruments but they want to play any instruments, %10,9 of them are not interested in playing a musical instrument, and %2,0 did not answer the question. According to Table 3C1, %21,8 of the participant students from Group C play one or more musical instruments, %61,8 cannot play any musical instruments but they want it, %13,0 of them are not interested in playing a musical instrument, and %3,4 did not answer the question.

The results in Tables 3A1, 3B1, and 3C1 reveal that the number of students who play or would like to play a musical instrument is the least in Group C, and Group B has the highest number of students who play or would like to play a musical instrument. When Group C and Group A are compared, it can be suggested that although the number of Group C students who play a musical instrument is less than that of Group A, Group C students are more willing to play a musical instrument.

Table 3A2, 3B2 and 3C2. Musical Instrument Students Play in Group A, B and C

Table 3A2		Table 3B2		Table 3C2	
Instrument	f	Instrument	f	Instrument	f
Guitar	24	Guitar	70	Guitar	29
Block Flute	10	Baglama	15	Block Flute	12
Violin	10	Block Flute	10	Baglama	10
Baglama	8	Org	9	Piano	5
Ney	8	Violin	5	Violin	4
Piano	3	Piano	4	Org	2
Drums	2	Drums	4	Def	2
Org	2	Ney	2	Darbuka	2
Mandolin	1	Def	1	Drums	1
Kanun	1	Darbuka	1	Ney	1
Flute	1	Saxophone	1		
Accordion	1				
Total	71	Total	122	Total	68

The results in Tables 3A2, 3B2, and 3C2 demonstrate that all three groups of participants play a similar variety of musical instruments. Nevertheless, this variety narrows down from Group A to C. Moreover, the number of students who play an instrument is the highest in Group B. This suggests that students from average GPASs high schools have a higher tendency towards playing a musical instrument compared to those from high and low GPASs high schools.

Amount of Time Central Konya High School Students Allocate to Listening to Music

Table 4A, 4B, and 4C. Students' Music Listening Time

	Table 4A		Table 4B		Table 4C	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
I listen to music at every opportunity	152	78,0	167	87,0	181	76,1
I rarely listen to music	30	15,3	22	11	54	22,7
I don't spend time to listen to music	9	4,7	2	1,0	3	1,2
No answer	4	2,0	2	1,0	-	-
Total	195	100,0	193	100,0	238	100,0

According to Tables 4A, 4B and 4C, the number of students who listen to music whenever possible is similar in all three groups. However, Group A has the highest number of students who state that they do not have any time for listening to music.

Results Pertaining to the Differences between the Musical Attitudes of Students in Central Konya High Schools According to the Music Genres Students Prefer

Table 5A, 5B, and 5C. Music Genres Participants Like to Listen

Table 5A		Table 5B		Table 5C	
Music Genres	f	Music Genres	f	Music Genres	f
Foreign Pop Music	125	Foreign Pop Music	105	Turkish Pop Music	169
Foreign Rock Music	105	Turkish Pop Music	104	Foreign Pop Music	121
Turkish Rock Music	92	Foreign Rock Music	95	Turkish Rock Music	82
Turkish Pop Music	78	Turkish Rock Music	82	Rap / Hip-Hop	74
Turkish Art Music	35	Turkish Folk Music	48	Foreign Rock Music	63
Turkish Folk Music	31	Rap / Hip-Hop	45	Arabesque Music	61
Rap / Hip-Hop	28	Turkish Art Music	40	Turkish Folk Music	37
Jazz	26	Arabesque Music	30	Turkish Art Music	32
Religious Music	25	Jazz	24	Religious Music	29
Classic Music	19	Religious Music	17	Jazz	29
Arabesque Music	14	Classic Music	15	Classic Music	18
Other	6	Other	7	Other	2
No answer	1	No answer	1	No answer	2

According to the Tables 5A, 5B and 5C, pop music is the most popular genre in all three groups; Group C mostly listen to Turkish pop whereas Group A and B generally listen to foreign pop music. Results indicate a similarity in the rankings of musical genres in all three groups, Turkish and Foreign pop and Turkish and Foreign rock being the top ranking genres. As we go down in the list, Group C listens to Rap/Hip Hop while Group A and B listen to Turkish rock and Turkish pop. Turkish Classical Art Music ranks 5th and Turkish Folk Music 6th in the list for Group A students, while Turkish Classical Art Music ranks 7th and Turkish Folk Music 5th in for Group B, and Turkish Classical Art Music 6th and Turkish Folk Music 7th for Group C. As for the content of the lyrics, Rap/Hip-Hop, which mostly uses themes such as violence and sex, ranks 5th place in Group C, 6th place in Group B, and 7th place in Group A (for more details: F.Vural, 2007, p.309-320). What is more, Rap/Hip-Hop and Arabesque genres share similar rankings in the list: Arabesque music ranks 6th place in Group C, 8th place in Group B, and 11th place in Group A.

These results suggest that students listen to similar genre of music no matter their groups are. Therefore, as stated above in Tables 5A, 5B and 5C, media is a factor in the similar attitudes towards music. Still, as the GPASs increase, so does the frequency of students who prefer to listen to foreign music.

Related to the previous question, the participants were also given an open-ended question that asked them to write the names of their favorite bands and singers. The responses are interesting since Turkish Rock Band Duman and foreign pop singer Rihanna are the most common answers in all three groups. However, results also reveal that Group A students have a higher interest in foreign music and bands. Moreover, Group A and B show similarity in terms of individual singers, but Group C generally listens to various singers. For instance, the names of arabesque music singers such as Azer Bülbül, Hüseyin Kâğıt, Ferdi Tayfur, İbrahim Tatlıses as well as the names of the those who has songs with excessively violent content such as Asi Styla and Sagopa Kajmer are only written by Group C students. These results put the musical tendencies of Group C students at a very different place than that of Group A and B.

Additionally, some singer happen to more frequently stated as we move from Group A to Group C. For example, Murat Boz is a frequently-listened singer of 11 students in Group A, 19 students in Group B, and 146 students in Group C. Similarly, Emre Aydın is a common singer for 42 students in Group A, 75 students in Group B, and 104 students in Group C. Also, Mustafa Ceceli is a favorite singer for 37 students in Group A, 32 students in Group B, and 169 students in Group C. According to these results, it can be suggested that favorite singers vary in high schools with different GPASs.

Results Pertaining to the Differences between the Musical Attitudes of Students in Central Konya High Schools According to Their Willingness to Choose Music as A Career Path:

Table 6A, 6B, and 6C. Students' Willingness to Choose Music as A Career Path

Table 6A			Table 6B			Table 6C		
Choices	f	%	Choices	f	%	Choices	f	%
Yes	7	3,6	Yes	23	11,9	Yes	37	15,5
No	186	95,4	No	167	86,5	No	198	83,2
No answer	2	1,0	No answer	3	1,6	No answer	3	1,3
Total	195	100,0	Total	193	100,0	Total	238	100,0

As the results presented in Tables 6A, 6B and 6C demonstrate, the percentage of students that are willing to choose music as a career path in Group C is %15,5, that of Group B is %11,9, and that of Group A is a small %3,6. In fact, some students from especially Groups A and B stated that they might consider music as a future profession, but they thought music would be a risky occupation with some insecurity ahead, and added that they would like to choose a career with higher future guarantee.

Results Pertaining to the Differences between the Musical Attitudes of Students in Central Konya High Schools According to Future Career Plans Other than Music:

Table 7A, 7B, and 7C. Students' Occupation Plans Other than Music

Table 7A		Table 7B		Table 7C	
Occupational Areas	f	Occupational Areas	f	Occupational Areas	f
Medical Area	75	Engineering Area	34	Teaching Area	41
Engineering Area	65	Medical Area	27	Health Area	38
Architecture Area	14	Health Area	19	Medical Area	28
Law Area	7	Law Area	17	Engineering Area	16
Health Area	6	Architecture Area	17	Architecture Area	15
Art Area	4	Teaching Area	16	Policing	12
Economics and Administrative Sciences Area	3	Economics and Administrative Sciences Area	5	Law Area	11
Pilotage	2	Translator	4	Economics and Administrative Sciences Area	6
Military Area	1	Pilotage	3	Military Area	6
Public Relations Area	1	Political Sciences Area	2	Sport Area	4
Botanical Area	1	Communications Area	2	Communications Area	2
No Answer	28	Sport Area	2	Tourist Guide	2
		Policing	1	Political Sciences Area	1
		Military Area	1	Art Area	1
		Public Relations Area	1	Public Relations Area	1
		International Relations Area	1	International Relations Area	1
		Tourism and Hotel Management	1	Archeology Area	1
		No Answer	32	Tourism and Hotel Management	1
				No Answer	39

The responses given to this open-ended question are categorized under the given occupational areas. Under the "medical area" are physician, surgeon, cardiovascular surgeon,

pediatrician, plastic surgeon, dentist, ophthalmologist and brain surgeon. Under the “engineering area” are civil engineer, computer engineer, aircraft engineer, aerospace engineer, electronic engineer, genetic engineer, mechanical engineer, and industrial engineer. Industrial design is under “architecture area”, whereas lawyer, judge and prosecutor are under the “law area”. Under the “health area” are nurse, dietician, pharmacologist and physiotherapist. Theatrical arts and photography are under the “art are”, while economist, administrator, manager and district governor are under the “economics and administrative sciences area”. “Teaching area” includes teachers of Turkish, German, English, math, literature, religion and primary school teachers. Finally, “communications area” consists of commercial, radio and television related occupations.

According to Tables 7A, 7B, and 7C, the occupational variety of Group B and C student is fairly wide, whereas the that Group C participants is quite narrow. It is interesting that the Group A students mostly tend to be willing to pursue a career in medical area. Some of the students that left this question unanswered stated that they had not made their minds about their future career choices.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

As far as the instruments that participants play are concerned, %35,0 of Group A students play a musical instrument, while the percentage is %51,8 for Group B students and %21,1 for Group C. Group A students mostly play the guitar, the block flute, and the violin; Group B students typically play the guitar, the baglama (a traditional Turkish instrument), and the block flute; and finally Group C students generally play the guitar, the block flute, and the baglama. Guitar is the most commonly played instrument in all three groups. According to the results, it can be argued that Group B students have a higher interest in playing a musical instrument when compared to other two groups of students. Group A students show the lowest interest.

When the time allocated to listening to music is taken into consideration, students from Group B are those who spend the highest amount of time.

As for the music genres, the highest ranking genres for Groups A and B are Turkish pop, Foreign rock, Foreign pop and Turkish rock, whereas those of Group C are Turkish pop, Foreign pop, Turkish rock and Rap/Hip-Hop. The number of Rap/Hip-Hop listeners is significantly high in Group C. Similarly, Arabesque listeners are higher in Group C than those in the other two groups. It has been concluded that the tendency to listen to foreign music rises as GPASs of high schools increase.

The answers given to next open-ended question are notable. As we move from Group A to Group C, the interest in Arabesque singer increases. The names of singers such as Azer Bülbül,

Ferdi Tayfur, and İbrahim Tatlıses are written by only Group C participants. Moreover, some certain types of singers have a significantly high frequency in different groups. In this respect, Group A shows similarity with Group B (although the frequency of foreign singers is higher in Group A than Group B). Group C is different than the other two. This shows that high schools with different GPASs vary in terms of musical attitudes.

As for the music as an occupation, %3,6 Group A participant stated that they are willing to choose music as a career path, whereas the percentage is %11,9 for Group B, and %15,5 for Group C. This means that Group C has the highest tendency to choose music as a future career. In other words, as GPASs decrease, the willingness to choose music as a career path increases.

When the sample group was asked to indicate their career plans other than music, the results respectively revealed that Group A wanted pursue a career path mostly in the areas of Medicine and Engineering; Group B Engineering, Medicine, Health, Law, Architecture and Teaching; and Group C Teaching, Health, Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, Police Force and Law. It can be argued that as the GPASs increase, the variety in occupational plans decreases and students focus on certain professions.

In order to encourage students in all three groups to be more interested in playing a musical instrument, music rooms with a rich variety of instruments can be formed in schools as well as initiating lessons for those who are willing. Musical instrument training and education not only helps individuals to perceive and evaluate the events around them with common sense and in a healthy and balanced manner, but also facilitates some of their general skills such as attention, memory, perception, and awareness. Therefore, such awareness may be developed in the families and schools' guidance and counseling departments, which will result in motivating students to take such music and instrument lessons.

There is a significant similarity among the variety of instrument the students play in all three groups, common instruments being the guitar and baglama. Thus, the number of music courses and communities might be increased and various other instruments can be presented through such organizations.

Considering the benefits of musical training on students, for instance developing aspects such as socialization, self-expression, relaxation, improvement in academic achievement and self development, musical activities may be broadened in schools and students who have either little or no time to listen to music may be encouraged to engage in such activities that will present to them the above given benefits.

During the music education, more information on both Turkish and World music can be presented to the students in order to make them aware of various genres of music as well as make them discover other genres suitable for themselves.

It is important for students to receive a proper music education in that this will lead them to listen to a variety of music genres and to choose music as a career path. Therefore, music lessons should be obligatory in all high schools no matter the level of GPASs, and music teachers should mention about the positive effects of music and music engagement while encouraging them towards music itself.

It can be observed that as the GPASs increase, the willingness to choose music as a career path decreases. Especially students from higher GPASs have stated that they do not think music is a viable and reliable future profession and added that they do not consider music as a future career. Seminars and conferences on music and music-related professions such as music teachers, musicians, and musicologists may be held for all high school students to give detailed and further information on such occupations, which will increase the interest in such fields. Obviously, the economical and social conditions of these professions should also be enhanced if such an impact is desired in the long run.

Similarly, as the GPASs decrease, the willingness to choose teaching as a profession increases to a great extent. Particularly, none of the Group A students considers teaching as a future career, but they mostly focus around Medical and Engineering jobs. This implies that there is a remarkable necessity to enhance the economical and social conditions of teaching professions in order to motivate the students with higher GPASs into this field.

The high school period, on which this study has focused, has a significant role on students' character development and future plans. Determining the musical attitudes of the students of this age period will naturally provide insights about their psychological conditions, individual tendencies as well as the community to which they belong. The behavior that is formed deliberately and systematically in individuals through education can only be spread by interaction among peers, networks and communities. It may be claimed that the power of education from this perspective has an effect on cultural and societal changes and developments. Before a curriculum is devised, the target population should be analyzed in depth. Therefore, finding out about the musical attitudes of students on a larger scale is of utmost importance. Such findings will help shape music education and contribute to the cultural life of the society. Further research that will encompass the entire country and its target population will be the final proposition of this study.

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