Relationships between daily practice time, attributions and performance level in instrument education

Sabahat Ozmentes a, *

aAkdeniz University, Antalya 07058, Turkey

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships between amount of daily practice time, instrument performance and causal attributions about the success and failure of instrument students in instrument education. The research group consists of 190 students who get vocational instrument education in Antalya and Burdur. The questionnaire was administered to determine the causal attributions for success of instruments in the study and daily practice time and instrument grades were asked. Chi-square analysis indicated significant differences in the amount of daily instrument practice time. Also, instrument grades of students revealed significant difference by the amount of daily instrument practice times (p<.000).

Keywords: Instrument education, attribution, daily practice time

1. Introduction

Regular and disciplined practice is considered as an important factor for being successful in instrument education. In addition to this, quantity and quality of practice is a subject requiring to be addressed significantly for instrument students. In this context, efficient practice habits need to be developed for the students and teachers should mention these habits and make the students adopt these habits. Ozmentes (2010) expressed basic steps of instrument practice as follows: planning time and physical environment for practice use of cognitive tactics and meta-cognitive tactics, concentration, self-monitoring and assessment. It can be stipulated that an instrument student using these processes very efficiently can be more efficient by controlling his learning and via conscious and planned practice more than his own teacher. The student sometimes says that he practices his instrument for hours no matter what the skill level is however, he cannot show the progress that the teacher desires. In this context, the activity that student is engaged for hours is not the practice of instrument; it can be called as playing or performing it. If the student has no target when he starts to practice, is distracted and he does not assess himself in the end of the practice, it seems difficult for him to get efficiency. It is difficult for such a student to progress although he is occupied with playing the instrument. Students are different in terms of personality, mind and skills and the time of practice varies depending on these characteristics. Duration of daily instrument practice has become a subject that the educators and researchers emphasize. In this context, if we address the time of instrument practice as a concept, it is observed that this concept is analyzed in three different ways:

* Sabahat Özmenteş Tel.: +90 242 3106082; fax: +90 2422261953.
E-mail address: sabahatozmentes@akdeniz.edu.tr.
Time and age of starting to play an instrument: It was seen that the success of individuals starting instrument education in early ages is higher than the individuals starting instrument education at a later age compared to them by many researches and evidence (Jorgensen, 2003:195). According to these studies, specialty in instrument education should realize in at least ten-year period and this education should start at early ages. On the other hand, an important point is that it is not certain that every student starting to play an instrument at early age will be a specialist. The quality of the education plays an important role here. For instance, if a child starting to play his instrument at the age of five or six, carries on his education with an instrument educator depriving of sufficient technical and pedagogical approach in this area, he may not progress and also he may adopt some wrong techniques and practice habits and make mistakes that will be difficult to correct in the future. On the other hand, artists starting instrument education at late ages but progressing greatly are frequently seen.

Instrument experience and instrument performance level: Researches in the field of instrument education revealed that individuals being specialized in instruments started their education at early ages and also specialization took for about ten-fifteen years (Ericsson et al., 1993; Sloboda and Howe 1991; Sloboda et al. 1996). In this sense, years of efficient and productive instrument practice bring experience, development and specialization.

Time of practice in a certain period of time and level of instrument performance: Regular and disciplined practice of instrument everyday is considered as an important factor for being successful at the instrument. In addition to this, quality of the practice is an aspect requiring to be addressed as well as its quantity. In many researches in this field, it was understood that instrument performance and practice in a certain period of time has important relations (Wagner, 1975; Zurcher, 1975; Sosniak, 1985; Sloboda and Howe, 1991; Ericsson et al., 1993; Sloboda et al., 1996; Ericsson and Lehmann, 1996; O’Neill, 1997; Hallam, 1998; Williamson and Valentine, 2000; Jorgensen, 2002). According to these researches, students practicing their instruments for hours daily are more successful than the students not practicing. Ericsson et al. (1993) to be seen as the pioneer of such researches studied with the violin students attending to the same class and with the same age at “Musikschule” in Germany and determined that students classified as “the best” practiced for 7410 hours up to that day and students classified as “the good” practiced for 5301 hours. While this research shows the relation between the time of instrument practice and level of performance clearly, it is known that there are studies that no relation between time of practice and instrument performance is found (Hallam, 1998; Sloboda et al. 1996; Ericsson et al. 1993; Jorgensen, 2002). In this regard, quality of the education as well as the quantity of the practice, repertoire and variety of learning tactics and motive of student affect the instrument performance significantly (Ozmenteş, 2007;14).

There are many affective and motivational factors determining the time that student spend for the instrument. In this sense, the attitude of the students for the instrument and the willingness to be successful provide important hints for the time of practice. Examining the theories of motivation in the literature, it is seen that these theories are related to the time of practice. According to attribution theory being one of these theories, attributions called as the beliefs of person about reasons of success and failure affect the expectation, self-perception and other emotional reactions of the person for the same action. (Austin & Vispoel, 1998). The most seen sources of attributions are skill, effort, luck and difficulty of task (Painsi&Parnycutt, 2004). There are attributions specific to the area in music education. These are called as effort, background, classroom environment, musical ability and affect for music (Asmus, 1986). Barry (2007) indicated that attributions have five aspects as skill, effort, luck and difficulty of task and strategies of practice. According to the theory of attribution, to which reasons the person attributes his success and failure change the expectation, motive and behaviors. In this sense, time of practice and the reasons that students attribute their success and failure is a subject required to be examined. Increase of performance and the way of becoming skilled in instruments for the students base on many reasons. In this study, it is aimed to show the
relations of beliefs of students for success and failure with time of practice and time of practice with the instrument performance. In this regard, the answers for following questions were sought:

1. Does pass mark of instrument differ significantly by the daily time of practice?
2. Do the reasons of attributions of success and failure differ significantly by the daily time of practice?

2. Method

190 instrument students attending to Antalya and Burdur were included in the study. Analyzing the daily time of practice of students, it is seen that 24.6% of them practice for at least 1 hour a day, 52.1% of them practice for 1-2 hours, 23.2% of them practice for 3 hours and above. 5 questions were asked to the participants to determine the reasons that they attributed their success and failure and moreover, the daily time of practice and the last instrument performance marks were asked. In the relevant literature for the questionnaire, theory of attribution addressed from the perspective of instrument was analyzed, it was ensured that each question prepared reflected the theory it was related with correctly. Chi-square test and One-way Anova were used for the analysis of data. Scheffe’s test was used to determine the differences of One-way Anova. Questions asked to the students were prepared based on aspects of attribution of Barry (2007). Questions are as follows.

1. My success of instrument depends on my skill. I am a good musician because of this my instrument performance is good (skill)
2. My success of instrument depends on the time of practice. If I practice much, I will pass instrument exam (effort).
3. My success of instrument depends on my luck. If I am lucky at the instrument exam, I will be successful (luck)
4. My success of instrument depends on the level of difficulty of the work I will play. If I need to perform very easy works at the exam, I will be successful (difficulty of task).
5. My success of instrument depends on the way I practice my instrument. If I practice consciously, I will be successful (strategies of practice)

3. Results

The first question of the study is “Does the pass marks of students differ by daily time of practice significantly?” Results of One-Way Anova analysis to answer this question are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice time</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>75.65</td>
<td>16.34</td>
<td>11,798</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>84.21</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 3 hours</td>
<td>86.00</td>
<td>9.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen in Table 1, pass mark differs by the daily time of practice significantly ($F = 11.798; p < .000$). According to the results of Scheffe’s tests being one of the post-hoc analysis techniques to determine the origin of the difference, pass mark of students practicing for less than one hour daily (N=47, X=75.64) and pass mark of students practicing for 1-2 hours (N= 99, X=84.21) and 3 hours and (N=44, X=82.51) differ significantly.

The second question of the study is “Do the reasons of attributions for the success and failure of instruments differ by the daily time of practice significantly?” In this regard, if we examine the chi-square analysis results for the relations of the attributions to the skill with the time of practice, it is seen that the students practicing for less than 1 hour a day answered the expression of “My success of instrument depends on my skill. I am a good musician, because of this, my instrument performance is good” as “I agree” at the rate of 53.2%, this rate for the students practicing for 1-2 hours a day is 57.6% and the rate is 68.2% for students practicing for 3 hours and above a day.
Based on chi-square test results for the answers of this expression, the answers of students do not differ by the daily time of practice significantly \((x^2 = 5.110 \text{ sd}=4 \ p= .271)\).

It is seen by examining the chi-square analysis results for the relation between attributions to the effort and daily practice of time that the students practicing for less than 1 hour a day answered the expression of “My success of instrument depends on the time of practice. If I practice much, I will pass the instrument exam” as “I agree” at the rate of 78.7%, this rate for students practicing for 1-2 hours a day is 86.9% and it is 88.6% for the students practicing for 3 hours and above a day. Based on the results of chi-square tests applied to the answers of the above-mentioned question, answers of students do not differ by the daily time of practice significantly \((x^2 = 3.087 \text{ sd}=4 \ p= .594)\).

It is seen by examining the chi-square analysis results for the relation between attributions to the luck and daily practice of time that the students practicing for less than 1 hour a day answered the expression of “My success of instrument depends on luck. I am lucky at the exam, I will be successful” as “I agree” at the rate of 19.1%, this rate for students practicing for 1-2 hours a day is 17.2% and it is 18.2% for the students practicing for 3 hours and above a day. Based on the results of chi-square tests applied to the answers of the above-mentioned question, answers of students do not differ by the daily time of practice significantly \((x^2 = 0.507 \text{ sd}=4 \ p= .973)\).

It is seen by examining the chi-square analysis results for the relation between attributions to the difficulty of task and daily practice of time that the students practicing for less than 1 hour a day answered the expression of “My success of instrument depends on the level of difficulty of the work. If I need to perform very easy work, I will be successful” as “I agree” at the rate of 37.4%, this rate for students practicing for 1-2 hours a day is 37.4% and it is 22.7% for the students practicing for 3 hours and above a day. Based on the results of chi-square tests applied to the answers of the above-mentioned question, answers of students differ by the daily time of practice significantly \((x^2 = 14.066 \text{ sd}=4 \ p= .005)\).

It is seen by examining the chi-square analysis results for the relation between attributions to the strategies of practice and daily practice of time that the students practicing for less than 1 hour a day answered the expression of “My success of instrument depends on the way I practice. If I practice consciously, I will be successful” as “I agree” at the rate of 80.9%, this rate for students practicing for 1-2 hours a day is 90.3% and it is 86.4% for the students practicing for 3 hours and above a day. Based on the results of chi-square tests applied to the answers of the above-mentioned question, answers of students differ by the daily time of practice significantly \((x^2 = 9.309 \text{ sd}=4 \ p= .020)\).

4. Discussion

According to the conclusions of the research, pass marks of students differ by the daily time of practice significantly. Pass mark of students practicing for less than 1 hour was calculated less than the pass mark of students practicing more significantly. This conclusion supports the conclusions of other research showing the relations between time of practice and performance of instrument (Wagner, 1975; Zurcher, 1975; Sosniak, 1985; Sloboda and Howe, 1991; Ericsson et al., 1993; Sloboda et al., 1996; Ericsson and Lehmann, 1996; O’Neill, 1997; Hallam, 1998; Williamon and Valentine, 2000; Jorgensen, 2002). It can be said that students in the sample do not have much information about efficient practice habits since time of practice has such a great effect on the pass mark of students. According to the conclusions of the research, time of practice of students attributing success and failure of instrument performance to the factors of skill, effort and luck do not differ significantly. In addition to this, time of practice of students attributing the success and failure of instrument performance to the difficulty of task and strategies of practice differ significantly. According to the conclusions of the research, students need to have knowledge about efficient practice techniques. Making these tactics adopted by the students is an important subject to be emphasized by the educators.
References


