



Research Article

Examining music students' attitudes toward music and their religiosity

Serap Duran Subatan¹

Department of Music Education, Department of Fine Arts Education, Faculty of Education, Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Sivas, Türkiye

Article Info

Received: 8 July 2026
Accepted: 27 September 2026
Online: 30 September 2026

Keywords

Attitudes toward music
Music-listening behavior
Music students
Religious attitudes
Music education

3108-3749/ © 2026 the Authors.
Published by Genc Bilge (Young Wise)
Pub. Ltd. This is an open access article
under the CC BY license.



Abstract

Music students engage with music through formal study and everyday listening, yet the relationship between their musical and religious attitudes remains unclear. This cross-sectional correlational study examined attitudes toward music, self-reported music-listening behavior, and religious attitudes among 144 music students (62 men and 82 women) at one university in Türkiye. Music-related attitudes were measured with researcher-developed scales and religious attitudes with the eight-item Ok-Religious Attitude Scale (Ok, 2011). Descriptive statistics and correlations were calculated. Religious attitude was weakly associated with attitude toward music ($r = .23, p < .01$) and with the overall music composite ($r = .19, p < .05$), but not significantly associated with music-listening behavior ($r = .08$). Attitude toward music and musical behavior were weakly associated ($r = .29, p < .01$). Age was negatively associated with religious attitude ($r = -.22, p < .01$), and female students reported more favorable attitudes toward music. These associations describe a single-university sample; they cannot establish change over the course of music education.

To cite this article

Duran Subatan, S. (2026) Examining music students' attitudes toward music and their religiosity. *Scientific Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 2, e008. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23059922>

Introduction

University music students engage with music through both formal study and everyday listening. Their experiences offer a useful setting for examining how attitudes toward music relate to religious beliefs. Quantitative research has examined the association between religiosity and artistic attitudes (Memiş, 2022). Research involving theology students has examined their views of religious music instruction and instructors (Dinç, 2018), as well as their engagement with popular culture (Şahin, 2007). A separate study investigated Imam Hatip High School students' engagement with K-pop and K-drama (Ceylan, 2024). In other educational settings, a values education program has been studied in relation to eighth-grade students' democratic attitudes (Izgar & Beyhan, 2015), and preschool values education has been examined within an institutional setting (Cevherli, 2014). These studies provide context but do not directly examine the association between music students' attitudes toward music and their religious attitudes.

Existing studies address aspects of religiosity, artistic attitudes, and cultural practices. The association among university music students' attitudes toward music, their reported music-listening behavior, and religious attitudes in the same sample remains less clear. The present study examines these distinct relationships.

Listening to music has important functions and serves various purposes in people's lives. Tekman and Hortaçsu (2002) examined listeners' reasons for choosing different musical styles and identified four broad factors: background, movement, identity, and appreciation. Similarly, Schäfer et al. (2013) synthesized 129 statements about music listening from earlier research and grouped its functions into three categories: (a) personal awareness, whereby music helps

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Music Education, Department of Fine Arts Education, Faculty of Education, Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Sivas, Türkiye.
Email: duan.se@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-5331-2732

individuals reflect on who they are, who they want to be, and their lifestyles; (b) social relatedness, whereby music contributes to individuals' sense of social connectedness with others; and (c) arousal and mood regulation, whereby music is used as a means of experiencing positive moods and regulating states of arousal. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that these functions of music may vary to some extent across cultures (see Schäfer et al., 2012).

Given these important functions and the role of music in people's lives, identifying attitudes and behaviors related to music listening, as well as other variables associated with these attitudes and behaviors, becomes important. Doing so may contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon, role, and functions of music listening. The present study has two main aims: (1) to measure attitudes toward music and determine whether these attitudes are consistent with musical behavior, and (2) to examine the relationship between attitudes toward music and religiosity. Although scales measuring attitudes toward music courses are available in the Turkish literature (Özmenteş, 2006; Varış & Cesur, 2012), relatively few studies have measured general attitudes toward music. Özgelen (2025), in his interview article with Prof. Ruhi Ayangil, emphasizes the importance of high-quality repertoire and contemporary educational methodologies for students' musical development in conservatory education.

Religious beliefs may be associated with musical preferences and listening choices. In a sample of Turkish university students, Ok and Erdal (2015) found that religious attitude was positively associated with preferences for traditional music and negatively associated with preferences for rock-metal and jazz.

Ok and Erdal (2015) also discuss the normative interaction between music and religion. Religious teachings and interpretations may shape how listeners appraise particular musical styles. This perspective provides a reason to examine associations between religious and music-related attitudes without presuming that one determines the other.

The present study examines religious attitudes as measured by the four dimensions of the Ok-Religious Attitude Scale: cognition, emotion, behavior, and relationship with God (Ok, 2011). These dimensions are considered alongside music-related attitudes and self-reported listening behavior in the same group of students.

Prior research has examined links between religious attitudes and music preferences (Ok & Erdal, 2015), but the present analysis focuses specifically on students enrolled in music education and distinguishes attitudes toward music from music-listening behavior. Accordingly, the research questions are as follows:

- What are the levels of attitudes toward music, musical behavior, and religious attitudes among university music students, and how are these measures associated with gender and age?
- What is the relationship between attitudes toward music and musical behavior among university music students?
- What is the relationship between attitudes toward music and musical behavior, on the one hand, and religiosity, on the other, among university music students?

Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships among university music students' attitudes and behaviors toward music and their religiosity. A correlational design allows researchers to examine the direction and magnitude of relationships among variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were collected cross-sectionally using self-report measures administered to the participants.

Participants

The participants were 144 students enrolled in music programs at the Faculties of Fine Arts and Education at Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Türkiye. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling from students who were accessible during the data-collection period and volunteered to participate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Sivas is an Anatolian province characterized by varying levels of socioeconomic development. According to official socioeconomic development classifications, Sivas Central District is classified within the second development tier, whereas many of the province's other districts fall within the fourth and fifth tiers (General Directorate of Development Agencies, 2022). Thus, the research setting represents a sociocultural context distinct from Türkiye's highly developed metropolitan areas. Of the participants, 62 were male (43.1%) and 82 were female (56.9%). Their ages ranged from 18 to 32 years, with a mean age of 22.19 years ($SD = 2.94$).

Data Collection Instruments

Attitude Toward Music Scales

Three measures were developed to examine distinct aspects of students' musical experience: (1) the Attitude Toward Music Scale, (2) the Musical Behavior Scale, and (3) the Attitude Toward Music Education Scale. The first assessed attitudes toward listening to music. The two-item Musical Behavior Scale recorded self-reported listening frequency and daily duration. The third assessed students' attitudes toward their music education (see Appendix).

The measures distinguish attitudes toward music, self-reported listening behavior, and attitudes toward music education. Negatively worded attitude items were reverse-scored. The initial pool of 15 music-related items was developed in consultation with two faculty members, one specializing in music and the other in psychology.

Following data collection, the 15 items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and item analysis. Two attitude-toward-music items were removed because they cross-loaded above .40 on two factors, and one music-education attitude item was removed because it formed a single-item factor. The album-ownership and music-expenditure questions remained in the questionnaire as descriptive items but were excluded from the scored Musical Behavior Scale because they reduced internal consistency and formed a separate factor. They are therefore not interpreted as evidence for the scored behavior construct.

The final scored music-related measures comprised 10 items: four concerning music education, two concerning music-listening behavior, and four concerning attitudes toward music (Table 1). The exploratory factor results and internal-consistency coefficients provide preliminary measurement evidence; independent validation would strengthen these measures.

Religious Attitude Scale

The eight-item Ok-Religious Attitude Scale (Ok, 2011) assessed participants' attitudes toward religion. The scale has four two-item dimensions: cognition, emotion, behavior, and relationship with God. In the original validation study, the scale was positively associated with intrinsic religious orientation ($r = .85$) and an adapted measure of attitude toward Christianity ($r = .88$). The original study cites the relevant instruments (Allport & Ross, 1967; Maltby & Lewis, 1997). Internal consistency in the current sample was $\alpha = .86$ (Table 2). Sample items include "I do not think there is a need for religion" (reverse-scored) and "I think I live my life in accordance with religious values."

The attitude items used five-point agreement response options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Partly Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The two music-listening behavior items asked about listening frequency and daily duration rather than agreement.

Procedure

The questionnaires were administered in classrooms in a single session, approximately 20 minutes before the end of the students' classes, after permission had been obtained from the relevant instructors. Participation was voluntary, and all participants signed an informed consent form before taking part in the study.

Data Analysis

Analyses included exploratory factor analysis and item analysis for the researcher-developed music measures, descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and Pearson product-moment correlations. The overall music composite was calculated as the mean of the available scored music-related items; therefore, its N could exceed the N of an individual component scale. Because gender was dichotomously coded (1 = male, 2 = female), correlations involving gender are point-biserial equivalents. Significance tests were two-tailed with $p < .05$. The reported Ns reflect the available responses for each measure; the valid listwise sample was 138.

Ethics

Ethical approval for the study registered under the title "Müziğe Yönelik Tutumlar ile Dindarlık Arasındaki İlişkiler: Müzik Öğrencileri Örnekleme" [Relationships Between Attitudes Toward Music and Religiosity: A Sample of Music Students] was granted unanimously by the Social Sciences Scientific Research Proposal Ethics Evaluation Committee

of the Rectorate of Sivas Cumhuriyet University on December 10, 2025 (Decision No. 16). The corresponding official approval letter was issued on December 12, 2025 (Document No. E-99711239-050.04-648342)..

Results

Factor loadings, item-total correlations, and selected item-specific response percentages for the scored music-related measures are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Factor loadings, item-total correlations, and response percentages for the items of the music and music education scales

Items	ATME	ATM	MB	ITC	SRC (%)
To be honest, I somewhat regret receiving music education (–)	.85			.49	3.5%
If I were to take the university entrance examination again, I would still choose to study in a music department	.79			.40	76.2%
I have realized that the lifestyle associated with the music department is not suitable for me (–)	.70			.61	4.9%
I can say that studying in the music department has had negative effects on my life (–)	.61			.44	6.3%
I think listening to music is harmful to people (–)		.69		.33	5.6%
I believe that listening to music makes people happier		.69		.42	74.5%
Listening to music is nothing but a waste of time (–)		.68	.36	.55	2.8%
Listening to music enriches an otherwise boring life		.66		.41	78.2%
Excluding situations in which you are exposed to music involuntarily, how many hours per day, on average, do you intentionally listen to music?			.87	.30	16.5% (Never/< 30 min.)
Excluding situations in which you are exposed to music involuntarily, how often, on average, do you intentionally listen to music?			.79	.51	6.3% (Never/R arely)

ATME: Attitude Toward Music Education **ATM:** Attitude Toward Music **MB:** Musical Behavior **ITC:** Item-Total Correlation **SRC:** Selected response category

Explained variance by factor (rounded): 35% (Attitude Toward Music Education), 14% (Attitude Toward Music), and 12% (Musical Behavior). Factor loadings below .30 are not presented. For attitude items, percentages indicate Agree/Strongly Agree; for listening behavior, the response categories are specified in parentheses. Descriptive information regarding the scales used in the study is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients of the study variables

Variable	α	N	M	SD
Gender	—	144	1.57	.50
Age	—	144	22.19	2.94
Attitude Toward Music Education (4)	.75	144	4.39	.77
Musical Behavior (2)	.66	140	4.00	.89
Attitude Toward Music (4)	.64	142	4.37	.76
Overall Music Composite (10)	.77	142	4.31	.59
Religious Attitude (8)	.86	143	3.91	.86
Valid N (listwise)		138		

Note. Ns vary because of item nonresponse; valid listwise N = 138. The overall music composite used available-item scoring, so its N may exceed that of an individual component scale. Gender was coded 1 = male and 2 = female. The scale and composite means are based on five-point scores.

Mean scores were 4.39 for attitude toward music education, 4.37 for attitude toward music, 4.00 for musical behavior, and 3.91 for religious attitude (Table 2). Internal-consistency coefficients were .75 for attitude toward music education, .64 for attitude toward music, .66 for the two-item musical behavior measure, and .86 for religious attitude. The modest coefficients for the short music-related measures call for cautious interpretation. Correlations among the study variables appear in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficients Among the Study Variables

Variable	Gender	Age	ATME	MB	ATM	OMC
Attitude Toward Music Education	.09	.01	—			
Musical Behavior	.10	-.07	.34**	—		
Attitude Toward Music	.38**	-.06	.36**	.29**	—	
Overall Music Composite	.28**	-.03	.80**	.62**	.78**	—
Religious Attitude	.17*	-.22**	.11	.08	.23**	.19*

ATME: Attitude Toward Music Education ATM: Attitude Toward Music MB: Musical Behavior OMC: Overall Music Composite

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). Gender was coded 1 = male and 2 = female. Coefficients involving gender are point-biserial equivalents; the remaining coefficients are Pearson correlations. Pairwise Ns vary because of item nonresponse.

Attitude Toward Music and Religiosity

Religious attitude was weakly but significantly associated with attitude toward music ($r = .23, p < .01$; Table 3). It was also associated with the overall music composite ($r = .19, p < .05$). Its correlations with musical behavior ($r = .08$) and attitude toward music education ($r = .11$) were not statistically significant. The results distinguish favorable views of music from reported listening behavior.

Attitude Toward Music and Musical Behavior

Attitude toward music education was positively correlated with musical behavior ($r = .34, p < .01$) and attitude toward music ($r = .36, p < .01$). Musical behavior and attitude toward music were also positively correlated ($r = .29, p < .01$; Table 3). These associations were observed in self-reported measures and do not establish that favorable attitudes caused more frequent listening.

Gender and Attitude Toward Music

Female students reported more favorable attitudes toward music than male students ($r = .38, p < .01$) and higher scores on the overall music composite ($r = .28, p < .01$). Gender was not significantly associated with attitudes toward music education or musical behavior. Female students also reported somewhat higher levels of religiosity than male students ($r = .17, p < .05$).

Selected response percentages for the scored attitude and listening items are given in Table 1. Further descriptive responses are summarized below.

Agreement with the negatively worded attitude statements ranged from 2.8% to 6.3%, whereas 74.5%–78.2% agreed with the positively worded statements (Table 1). For listening behavior, 16.5% reported never listening or listening for less than 30 minutes per day, and 6.3% reported listening never or rarely. These response categories describe distinct aspects of listening.

The album-ownership and music-expenditure questions were excluded from the scored measure and are not interpreted further because they are context-dependent descriptive indicators rather than validated scale items.

Conclusion

The findings distinguish students' attitudes toward music from their reported listening behavior. The two were positively, but modestly, correlated ($r = .29, p < .01$). The researcher-developed music measures showed varying levels of internal consistency; the short scales, in particular, warrant further validation.

Religious attitude was positively associated with attitude toward music ($r = .23$) and with the overall music composite ($r = .19$), but was not significantly associated with listening behavior ($r = .08$) or attitude toward music education ($r = .11$). Thus, the observed association concerns favorable views of music rather than how often participants reported listening. Older students tended to report lower religious-attitude scores ($r = -.22$), but this cross-sectional result cannot show whether individuals become less religious during music education. Female students reported more positive attitudes toward music than male students ($r = .38, p < .01$).

In Table 1, 76.2% agreed that they would choose a music department again. Agreement with specific negative statements about music or music education ranged from 2.8% to 6.3%. Future research could explore how students' educational experiences and career expectations relate to these views.

The study used a convenience sample of music students from a single university, and its cross-sectional, self-report design limits generalization and causal interpretation. Because exploratory scale work and the substantive analyses used

the same sample, the factor structure should be tested independently. Replication across universities and longitudinal research could clarify whether the observed associations persist and how attitudes change over time.

References

- Allport, G. W., & Ross, J. M. (1967). Personal religious orientation and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 5(4), 432–443. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0021212>
- Cevherli, K. (2014). *Okul öncesinde değerler eğitimi: Boğaziçi Eğitim Modeli* [Values education in preschool: The Boğaziçi Education Model]. Master's thesis. Sakarya University. Sakarya, Türkiye.
- Ceylan, E. R. (2024). *Z kuşağı İmam-Hatip öğrencilerinin K-pop ve K-drama etkileşimi* [K-pop and K-drama interaction of Generation Z Imam-Hatip students]. Master's thesis. Ondokuz Mayıs University. Samsun, Türkiye.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Dinç, S. (2018). İlahiyat Fakültesi öğrencilerinin Türk din müzikleri alanında derse giren kadın öğretim elemanları hakkındaki tutumları (Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi örneği) [Attitudes of theology students toward female instructors teaching Turkish religious music: The case of Hitit University Faculty of Theology]. *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 17(34), 505–538. <https://doi.org/10.14395/hititilahiyat.480047>
- General Directorate of Development Agencies. (2022). *İlçelerin sosyo-ekonomik gelişmişlik sıralaması araştırması: SEGE-2022* [District socioeconomic development ranking study: SEGE-2022]. Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Industry and Technology. <https://www.kalkinmakutuphanesi.gov.tr/dokuman/ilcelerin-sosyo-ekonomik-gelismislik-siralamasi-arastirmasi-sege-2022/2568>
- Izgar, G., & Beyhan, Ö. (2015). Değerler eğitimi programının ilköğretim okulu 8. sınıf öğrencilerinin demokratik tutum ve davranışlarına etkisi [The effect of a values education program on eighth-grade primary school students' democratic attitudes and behaviors]. *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, 13(29), 439–470. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ded/article/312343>
- Maltby, J., & Lewis, C. A. (1997). The reliability and validity of a short scale of attitude towards Christianity among USA, English, Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland adults. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 22(5), 649–654. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869\(96\)00244-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(96)00244-9)
- Memiş, M. (2022). Dindarlık ile sanatsal tutum arasındaki ilişki üzerine nicel bir araştırma [A quantitative study of the relationship between religiosity and artistic attitudes]. *Türk Din Psikolojisi Dergisi*, 6, 125–163. <https://doi.org/10.59379/tdpd.1087169>
- Ok, Ü. (2011). Dini Tutum Ölçeği: Ölçek geliştirme ve geçerlik çalışması [Religious Attitude Scale: Scale development and validation]. *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi*, 8(2), 528–549. <https://www.j-humansciences.com/index.php/IJHS/article/view/1936>
- Ok, Ü., & Erdal, B. (2015). Religious and demographic indicators of music preference in a Turkish sample. *Musicae Scientiae*, 19(1), 23–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864914558965>
- Özgelen, O. Z. (2025). Türk makam müziğinin teorik ve akademik ufukları üzerine Prof. Ruhi Ayangil ile görüşme. *Türk Müziği*, 5(3), 263–271. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17152777>
- Özmenteş, G. (2006). Müzik dersine yönelik tutum ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi [Development of the attitude scale toward music class]. *İlköğretim Online*, 5(1), 23–29. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ilkonline/article/107219>
- Schäfer, T., Sedlmeier, P., Städtler, C., & Huron, D. (2013). The psychological functions of music listening. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, Article 511. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00511>
- Schäfer, T., Tipandjan, A., & Sedlmeier, P. (2012). The functions of music and their relationship to music preference in India and Germany. *International Journal of Psychology*, 47(5), 370–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2012.688133>
- Şahin, M. C. (2007). *İlahiyat fakültesi öğrencilerinin popüler kültür unsurlarına ilişkin yaklaşımları üzerine sosyolojik bir araştırma* [A sociological study of theology faculty students' approaches to elements of popular culture]. Doctoral dissertation. Ankara University. Ankara, Türkiye.
- Tekman, H. G., & Hortaçsu, N. (2002). Aspects of stylistic knowledge: What are different styles like and why do we listen to them? *Psychology of Music*, 30(1), 28–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735602301005>
- Varış, Y. A., & Cesur, D. (2012). Ortaöğretim müzik dersine yönelik tutum ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi [Development of an attitude scale toward secondary school music lessons]. *Fine Arts*, 7(4), 361–374. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/nwsafine/article/213054>

Appendix 1. Scored and Descriptive Questionnaire Items

Scale	Dimension / Item No.	Item
Attitude Toward Music Education Scale	1	If I were to take the university entrance examination again, I would still choose to study in a music department.
	2	To be honest, I somewhat regret receiving music education. (–)
	3	I can say that studying in the music department has had negative effects on my life. (–)
	4	I have realized that the lifestyle associated with the music department is not suitable for me. (–)
Music Listening Behavior Scale	1	Excluding situations in which you are exposed to music involuntarily, how often, on average, do you intentionally listen to music?
	2†	How many music albums that you have purchased and personally own (e.g., CDs or USB drives) do you have at home, at work, or in your car?
	3†	Approximately how much money have you spent on music (e.g., purchasing CDs or attending concerts) during the past three years?
	4	Excluding situations in which you are exposed to music involuntarily, how many hours per day, on average, do you intentionally listen to music?
Attitude Toward Music Scale	1	I think listening to music is harmful to people. (–)
	2	I believe that listening to music makes people happier.
	3	Listening to music is nothing but a waste of time. (–)
	4	Listening to music enriches an otherwise boring life.
Ok-Religious Attitude Scale	Cognition – 1	I think religion is unnecessary. (–)
	Cognition – 2	I think religious belief does more harm than good to people. (–)
	Emotion – 3	I become emotionally moved when I listen to religious recitations such as the call to prayer, prayers, or Qur'anic verses.
	Emotion – 4	I genuinely enjoy participating in religious activities.
	Behavior – 5	I pay attention to whether my way of life is consistent with religious values.
	Behavior – 6	I try to fulfill the requirements of the religion I believe in.
	God – 7	I believe that God helps me during difficult times.
	God – 8	I feel that God is very close to me.

Note. (–) indicates reverse-scored items. † Descriptive music-listening behavior items were excluded from the scored two-item behavior measure.