

Democracy and Democracy Education in the Parameters of Rights, Freedoms, Equality and Responsibilities

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Abstract

The present study was carried out with the aim of revealing the observations and expectations of 416 teachers serving in Bursa regarding democracy and democracy education in Turkey. In the study, in order to obtain teachers' observations and expectations related to democracy in the right, freedom, equality and responsibility parameters of democracy, a 7-point Likert type scale was used. According to the teachers' opinions, in Turkey, rights are used at a rate of 37%, freedoms are used at a rate of 42%, equality is realized at a rate of about 35% and responsibilities are fulfilled at a rate of 34%. A high and significant negative correlation was found between the teachers' expectations from democracy and their observations. In the study, 93% of the teachers stated that democracy in a country can be achieved through education. Based on this data, the teachers' opinions about democracy education were obtained with a semi-structured interview form. According to the results obtained from the interview form, a great majority of the teachers stated not having received a sufficient democracy education, either through their schools or their families, where they believe that democracy education should begin.

Keywords: Democracy, education, democracy education, democracy parameters, Turkey

Introduction

For a political system to acquire a democratic characteristic, it is necessary that it should grant people personal, political, ideological, and economic rights and freedoms and be based on popular sovereignty (Ateş, 1994). The way of achieving this is to have an educational understanding, including fundamental democratic values such as human rights, freedom, responsibility and equality (Serter, 1997). Starting from this point of view, it can be stated that in the establishment of a democracy, the general educational levels of the citizens play an important role. For democracy can become a life style more easily in a society composed of individuals equipped with knowledge, attitudes and skills required by a democratic life (Dewey, 1967). Therefore, teachers' perceptions and opinions related to democracy play an important role in having students acquire democratic values (Oğuz, 2004). The present study was carried out with the aim of revealing both the observations, expectations, and opinions of teachers working in Bursa, Turkey related to democracy and democracy education.

Despite all the struggles made since the time of the ancient Greeks (Doğan, 1992; Erdoğan, 2005) and the arrangements made starting from the middle of the last century onwards at both the national and international levels to develop human rights and freedoms (Kılıçbay, 1998) in favour of democracy, it seems impossible to state that barriers related to putting rights and freedoms into practice have been removed (Çiçek, 1999), or that we live in a world dominated by democracy (Yılmaz, 1997; Akyuva, 2010). However, we must state that quite important developments have been made with respect to the matter of democracy in the last century because of the importance attached to democracy.

Because of the importance attached to the values of democracy today, it is observed that protection of human rights and providing human rights education have become an obligation to be met by all countries. When viewed from a historical perspective, it is observed that UNESCO (United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organization), starting its work on 4 November 1946, has assumed an important responsibility in the establishment of democracy and the matter of human rights education.

In the process of having people acquire the values of democracy, for the first time on 10 December 1948, the idea of the protection of human rights and freedoms through education and instruction at an international level was put forward in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” by the United Nations (Prime Ministry, 1949). With the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, various tasks have been assigned to the nations with respect to the matter of providing a democratic environment to implement democracy education (Kepenekçi, 2000). Likewise, in the introduction to the European Convention of Human Rights, the fact was emphasized that one way of establishing unity among the member states is to protect and develop human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the provision of human rights education at schools was made compulsory. In addition, the convention on the rights of children can be evaluated as the most comprehensive document regulating children’s rights. According to the 42nd article of this convention, it was foreseen that all the principles related to the rights included in the convention should be taught both to children and adults and learned by everyone (Gölcüklü and Gözübüyük, 1998).

The International Understanding, Education for Cooperation and Peace and Educational Recommendation concerning Human Rights and Fundamental Rights expressed by UNESCO (1974) can be evaluated as one of the most important steps taken towards the universalization of democracy education (UNESCO, 1974). The European Council’s decision made in 1978 toward providing “Human Rights Teaching” carries importance in terms of the international approach to human rights and democracy education. With this decision, the European Council required its members to take all necessary measures for the teaching of human rights at all educational stages and to include democracy education among elective courses offered at universities with the aim of protecting human rights at both national and international levels, and for public and security officers to respect human rights and take appropriate and sufficient training to protect these rights (Kepenekçi, 2000).

In the decision of human rights teaching, the European Council considers that all humans should learn about human rights and related responsibilities at the earliest age possible, and regard as compulsory the teaching of human rights and fundamental freedoms brought about by a democratic society. The “International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights” held in 1978 in Vienna carries importance in this respect, as teachers, education specialists, those working in the field of human rights, and public officials came together and brought their work to the agenda for the first time at this congress. Moreover, at this Congress, the United Nations General Assembly also suggested that founder countries should attach importance to education and teaching, aiming to develop respect for human rights in international understanding, cooperation and peace (UNESCO, 1978).

In the recommendation approved by the European Council on 14 May, 1985, too, countries’ obligations covered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and about the realization of human rights included in the European Human Rights Convention aiming to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms were repeated. Moreover, two years later at the International Congress on Human Rights Teaching, Information and Documentation held in Malta (1987), six suggestions were made under the heading of “suggestions on the training and protection of teachers and other educators” to achieve the training of people giving human rights education and working in safety (Kepenekçi, 2000). A few years later, at the international congress on human rights and democracy education held in Montreal (1993), through discussions on the issues of human rights and democracy education, attention was drawn to the following points:

- Special importance should be attached to human rights and democracy education in order to benefit from human rights and fundamental freedoms at the highest levels,
- The fact that human rights and democracy education is a right should be accepted, and thanks to the presence and use of this right, it becomes possible for societies to develop and live in justice and peace,
- Human rights and democracy education help prevent violations of human rights,
- For human rights education to be successful, the education process should be democratic (UNESCO, 1993).

It can be stated that the general essence of the decisions made at Conferences for Security and Cooperation in Europe is composed of human rights and freedoms education. These are:

1. Encouraging the adoption of the idea of developing and protecting human rights and fundamental rights both at school and in other educational institutions,
2. Providing instruction that aims for the acquisition of democratic values and democratic practices at educational institutions, while fostering an environment of free discussion,

3. Encouraging understanding and tolerance by taking precautions at various levels in areas where exchange of education, culture and information takes place,
4. Emphasizing the fact that human rights education should be the basis of educational programs, and that people should be educated about the fact that all individuals are obliged to respect rights and freedoms included in international documents signed by states through international law (Larrain, 1995).

Developments in Democracy and Democracy Education in Turkey

In this part, democratic practices and developments in democracy education in Turkey are discussed.

Developments in the Area of Democracy

It cannot be stated that democracy has a long history in Turkey. Essentially, it is accepted that in Turkish history, democracy began with Sened-i İttifak which, in the Ottoman State, the Grand Vizier Bayraktar Mustafa Paşa signed in the name of the Padishah with the Anatolia and Rumelia Governors in October 1808 (Çavdar, 1995). The second democracy movement in Ottoman history was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mustafa Reşit Paşa's, making Padishah Abdülmecit accept the 1839 Gülhane Hatt-ı Humayun (Karpaz, 1996). Kanun-i Esasi, a third stage of the Ottoman democracy movement, was the first Turkish constitution (Doğan, 2002). With this constitution, a parliamentary order was established, but a parliamentarian order could not be established (Kızılcılık and Erdem, 1996). In the Ottoman Empire, the parliamentary order gaining a "parliamentarian" characteristic, at least in terms of form, became possible through various constitutional changes realized after the declaration of the 2nd Constitutional Monarchy (1908). With this declaration, the Monarch's authority, which was not included in the Constitution in the parliamentary order, was abolished and the government came under the responsibility of the Meclisi Mebusan (Eroğlu, 1990).

The establishment of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 23 April 1920 can be viewed as the first important democracy movement of the republican period (Niyazi, 1995). The most important attempt made by this assembly in the name of democracy was its preparation of the 1921 Constitution based on the principle "Sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation" (Öztekin, 1993). Subsequently, making civil marriage obligatory with the code of civil law taking effect on 4 October 1926, and granting women the right to elect and to be elected in general elections on 5 December 1934 can be presented as examples of the developments in the area of democracy in the first period of the republican period. Additional examples of the democratic developments in the period extending from World War II to recent years include the emergence of more than one political party (1945), holding general elections in Turkey (1946), holding elections for the first time under the inspection and guarantee of judges on the basis of free, secret voting, open counting, and reporting (1950), and establishing a rather comprehensive constitution in terms of democracy by the constitutional assembly (1961) (Erdoğan, 1998; Özbudun, Kalaycıoğlu and Köker, 1995).

However, when we look at the developments regarding democracy in recent years, it is observed that the Turkish Code of Civil Law dated 17 February 1926 was replaced by the new Code of Civil Law starting on 1 January 2002. After that, on 7 May 2004, with the law numbered 5170, the articles of the constitution numbered 10, 15, 17, 30, 38, 87, 90, 131, 143 and 160 were changed; the article numbered 90 was worded in this way: "In the disagreements which might appear due to the inclusion of different decisions by international agreements put into effect with respect to fundamental rights and freedoms and the laws about the same matter, decisions made by international agreements are taken as a basis". Moreover, with the article numbered 10, the statement that women and men have equal rights and that the state is obliged to put this equality into effect as well was included in the constitution (Emekli, 2008).

In 2006, the minimum age to be elected as a deputy was lowered to 25, and with the referendum held in 2010, articles in the constitution related to the removal of obstacles to democracy were accepted. Although in Turkey the above specified developments were made in the field of democracy, it is observed that interventions and restrictions were brought to the spontaneous movement of the social system periodically as well. In the years of 1960, 1973, 1982 and 1990, the military interventions made directly or indirectly can be shown as examples of these restrictions (Doğan, 2002).

Although Turkey's experience with democracy is not very long, it can be stated that important political and social advancements have been achieved in the development and adoption of democratic values such as rights, freedom, equality and responsibility.

However, both domestic and foreign evaluations are still being made regarding the fact that democracy has not been established completely, and that democratic values have not been adopted by society completely in Turkey.

Developments in the Area of Democracy Education in Turkey

Democracy education in Turkey was included in the course programs of the Ottoman State before the establishment of the Turkish Republic under the name of Citizenship Education (Üstel, 2005). However, the essential developments regarding this matter started with the Republic (Altunya, 2003). In the Republican period, the subjects of democracy education were included in the courses of Natural Science and Social Studies in the first stage of Elementary Education (first five years) and Social Studies and Turkish Republican History of Revolutions and Kemalism in the second stage (last three years) (Kurt, 2007).

With program changes implemented soon after the acceptance of the Tevhid-i Tedrisat Law dated 3 March 1924, the courses including the concepts of rights and freedom and democratic values were included mostly in the courses of "Civics" in 1926, and "Knowledge of Citizenship" in 1948 within the curricula of elementary and secondary schools and elementary teacher training schools (Altunya, 2003). Goals and objectives directed towards democratic values were arranged under the name of Citizenship Education in the 1948 program in a more detailed way. They were gathered under one roof in the 1962 elementary school program with the courses of geography and history (Kurt, 2007), and in the new elementary school program prepared in 1968, the name Citizenship Education was changed to Social Studies (Karataş, 2002).

With the 11th article of the National Education Basic Law accepted on 14 June 1973, the aim of democracy education was specified as the realization of a powerful and stable, free and democratic social order. For its continuation, students were to acquire the awareness of democracy that citizens are expected to have and develop (MNE, 1973). Moreover, at the 17th National Education Council which convened in November 2006, it was emphasized that human rights, democracy and environmental awareness formation education should be given importance (Toşer, 2007).

The 1995 and 1998 programs follow similar lines to each other in terms of content. Within the year 1995, as a universal necessity, subjects related to human rights were included in the course of citizenship and the name of the course was changed to "Citizenship and Human Rights Education". In the 1998 program, the scope of the subjects related to human rights was expanded, and some subjects, which are the symbols of nationality understanding, were removed from the contents of the course (Kurt, 2007).

In today's Turkey, within the scope of the elementary education programs renewed in 2004, the course of "Citizenship and Human Rights Education" is taught as a compulsory course in the 7th and 8th years of elementary school, and "Democracy and Human Rights" is taught as an elective course in the 2nd year of high school. Within the scope of the democracy education included in the new program, there are many skills and themes directed towards the acquisition of democratic attitudes and behaviours. Such skills as responsibility, participation, sharing, and respect for differences, which are subtitles of self-management included in the natural science program in the first, second and third classes of elementary education, can be listed as important skills included in the new program for the acquisition of democratic attitudes and behaviours. In addition to these, such values included in the elementary education social studies course program as being just, independence, being scientific, solidarity, honesty, tolerance, and responsibility are important values in the acquisition of democratic attitudes and behaviours (MNE, 2004).

The ability of democracy to be established in a country and to become the determinant of social life can be achieved through a democratic education. As demonstrated in previous research, texts relating to law and practices and educational institutions have had an important function in the development of democracy in Turkey. Despite this, in national and international reports related to democratic practices in Turkey, assessments regarding the fact that the required level has not been achieved in making democracy a life style are still being made. The present study can be accepted as important for consideration in terms of putting forth teachers' opinions about democratic practices and democracy education in Turkey.

Method

The present study includes both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative aspect of the study is descriptive and the qualitative aspect is a case study.

Quantitative data were obtained with a scale developed by the researcher to learn participant opinions about democratic practices and expectations from democracy and a semi-structured interview form to gather opinions about democracy education.

Data Collection Tools

When taken from the perspective of democracy and human rights, it can be stated that the concepts of rights, freedom, equality and responsibility are the most fundamental concepts of democracy. It is clear that the concepts of rights, freedom, equality and responsibility were included as the fundamental concepts of democracy in the 1st and 11th articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, dated 26 August 1789, which is accepted as the most important document of recent history (Göze, 1986). These fundamental concepts also receive validation through the 1st, 21st, and 29th articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights accepted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, as well as the 1st, 9th, and 10th articles of the European Convention of Human Rights, accepted on 4 November 1950 (Aktan, 2000). For this reason, the scale used in this study was derived from statements articulating the rights, freedom, equality and responsibility parameters of democracy.

Fourteen items in the scale were included within the rubric of “Rights”, 10 items were related to “Freedoms”, 4 items for “Equality” and 19 items under “Responsibilities”. For the qualitative data of the study, a semi-structured interview form was created and administered to 32 people selected randomly from among those who completed the scale.

Quantitative Data Collection

For quantitative data, the sample of the study was formed with the technique of random stratified proportional sampling. The scale was composed of two separate parts including teachers’ observations and expectations regarding democratic values. The opinions in the scale were graded into 7 points (Figure 1).

Democracy Realization Level							Democracy Expectation Level									
Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree			Not Important at all				Very Important		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
<u>S t a t e m e n t s</u>																
1	Being able to use the right to live and having the right to develop one's material and spiritual being															
2	Having the right to benefit from health services															
3	Being treated equally before the law without being discriminated against because of one's language, religion, race, gender and similar reasons															
4	Having opportunities to make oneself feel safe															
5	When one is in need of protection, having the right to benefit from assistance provided by the government															
6	Having the right to get education and instruction															
7	Having the right to elect and be elected															
8	Having the right to work															
9	Having the right to take service in public service and benefit from public services															
10	Having the right to a protected private life and secrecy of family life															
11	Having the right to domiciliary inviolability (not giving permission to enter residences without a court decision)															
12	Having the right not to give permission for the use and publication of personal information without a court decision															
13	Having the right to use the right of property and inheritance															
14	Being able to benefit from public services equally without being discriminated against															
15	Being equal in participation in electing-being elected and in political decisions															
16	Having the right to express opinions comfortably without worry of being condemned or blamed															
17	Having the right to live in a healthy and balanced environment															
18	Having the right to use freely the right to complain to the government and other people															
19	Being able to express opinions freely and not being forced to explain about opinions															
20	Being free to believe in any religion which one wishes and being able to worship comfortably															
21	The ability of the press to perform its duty freely															
22	Being able to explain and spread thoughts freely through such means as words, writings, pictures or others															
23	Being able to enter public service under equal conditions															
24	Being able to use the right to travel freely without being bound by any restrictions or authorities															
25	Being able to settle in any place that one wishes without being bound by any restrictions and to continue one's life in any place which one wishes															
26	Being able to be organized without being bound by any restrictions in order to explain about one's emotions and thoughts or to protect one's interests															
27	Being able to make scientific studies without being bound by any restrictions, to develop one's artistic side and to participate in artistic activities															
28	As an adult, being able to marry a person without being subjected to any preventions															
29	Inviolability of the freedom not to work of those defined as children in international and national agreements and texts of laws															
30	Fulfilling one's responsibilities toward oneself and society															
31	Obeying the rules facilitating social and individual life															
32	The government's administering justice in time and most appropriately															
33	Being obliged to protect, arrange and develop the environment in which people live															
34	Behaving responsibly about participating in political decisions															
35	Taking note of the rights of minorities when making political decisions															
36	The government's preparing and supporting the environment for individuals to achieve social solidarity															
37	Having a compromising understanding rather than a definite judgment															
38	Behaving tolerantly towards those who are different from one another in the way they think and live															
39	The government's giving priority to disadvantageous groups such as the aged, sick, children and those who are unable to work															
40	Having the value of human love															
41	Contributing to the training of individuals in a way that they will contribute to the establishment of a permanent world peace															
42	Nobody, including the government, should abuse a given right, obtain an income from disadvantaged people or let them be exploited															
43	Nobody, including the government, should resort to violence or torture															
44	The government's supporting the use of rights accepted universally and regarding the world as a shared living area where all people live together															
45	Training and developing oneself in a way that is open to changes															
46	Contributing to the taking of precautions for people to obey moral and ethical rules arranging people's living together and making these a life style															
47	Behaving respectfully towards others' rights															
48	Listening to people with respect and patience															

Figure 1. Scale

The scale is composed of two separate parts including participant observations and expectations for democracy. The opinions in the scale were graded via a seven point scale. The scale was administered to 114 teachers working in the central districts of Bursa for validity and reliability purposes. To determine the construct validity of the scale, factor analysis was employed. The suitability of the pilot study data for factor analysis was tested by using the Bartlett test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy test. According to the Bartlett test of sphericity, the 1st and 2nd parts of the data indicated multi-variate normal distribution (1st Part: $\chi^2=18718,883$, $p=0.000$; 2nd Part: $\chi^2=17251,380$, $p=0.000$). The KMO value of the scale was calculated as 0.967 for the 1st part and 0.946 for the 2nd part. Since this value is above 0.60, which is recommended for the KMO, it can be stated that the data is suitable for factor analysis. According to the analysis results of the 1st part, including the behaviors exhibited by the teachers, the factor was calculated to be accountable for 67% of the variance, and according to the analysis results of the 2nd part, the factor was found to be accountable for 59% of the variance (Büyüköztürk, 2003).

To determine the definite number of factors, the Varimax technique was used. The load values of the items included in the 1st part in the factors were determined to be 0.686 as the lowest and 0.897 as the highest, and those of the items included in the 2nd part in the factors were found to be 0.436 as the lowest and 0.880 as the highest (Tabachnick and Fidell 2001). These results suggest that the discriminating power of the items is “rather good” (Büyüköztürk, 2003). In the reliability study conducted for the internal consistency of the scale, the item-total correlations and the Cronbach- α coefficients were calculated. The Cronbach- α coefficient of the 1st part was calculated as 0.989 and that of the 2nd part was found to be 0.982. These results indicate that the scale has high reliability in terms of internal consistency.

For each parameter in the scale, the values belonging to the “Democracy Observation Index” (DOI) and the “Democracy Expectation Index” (DEI) were calculated. From the calculated DOI and DEI values, the “Real Observation Index” (ROI) values were achieved (Shoura and Singh. 1998). The OI and EI values are the arithmetic mean of the total scores of the parameters.

$$D O I = \frac{\sum_{q=1}^n S_q}{n} \quad R O I = \frac{D O I}{D E I} k_1$$

The ROI values were calculated by using the formula of “ROI= (DOI/DEI) X k”. In the study, the “Compatibility factor” (k) constant value was calculated as 0.70.

- DOI= Democracy Observation Index
- DEI= Democracy Expectation Index
- ROI= Real Observation Index
- n= Number of items
- Sq= the score that a person receives in a category
- k= Compatibility coefficient

The opinions obtained from 416 questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS package program. The arithmetic means of the opinions and the correlations between the indices were calculated.

Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative study group for this research was selected from among elementary school teachers working in the central district of Bursa in the 2011-2012 teaching year; 32 elementary school teachers participated in interviews. The selection of those to be interviewed was based on a willingness to participate.

In the study, with the aim of determining teacher opinions regarding democracy education received in the family and at school in Turkey, a semi-structured interview form was used. The interview form included the following questions:

1. At which institutions should democracy education be provided?
2. At which ages should democracy education be given?
3. By whom should democracy education be given?
4. What is the place and importance of the family in democracy education?

5. What is the place and importance of the school in democracy education?
6. What kind of democracy education did you receive in your family?
7. What kind of democracy education did you receive at school?
8. How has the democracy education which you received in your family affected your life?
9. How has the democracy education which you received at school affected your life?
10. What kind of democracy education should be given to children in the family?
11. What kind of democracy education should be given to children at school?

To test the validity of the interview form used in the study (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008: 256), 19 teachers were interviewed prior to the study. In the preparation of the interview forms and the formation of themes, the opinions and suggestions of the academicians working in sociology, law, philosophy, Turkish language teaching, program development in education and assessment, and evaluation fields of universities were taken into consideration. The answers given to 11 questions were categorized into 6 themes and subsequently analyzed.

The following themes emerged:

1. Democracy education received in the family
2. Democracy education received at school
3. Effects of democracy education received in the family on individuals' lives
4. Effects of democracy education received at school on individuals' lives
5. Contents of democracy education to be given in the family
6. Contents of democracy education to be given at school.

The data obtained in the pilot study were primarily subjected to validity and reliability studies in accordance with standard qualitative research practices. The coding was made by the researcher and another researcher in the field. To test the reliability of the coding made by the researchers, the following formula was used (Iftar and Tekin, 1997).

$$\text{Harmony between Observations} = \frac{\text{Agreement}}{\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}} \times 100$$

According to this formula, it was observed in the calculation made for the consistency of the coding, in accordance with the grading of the opinions of 19 subjects participating in the pilot study about each theme, that the harmony between observations varied between 81% and 92.3% according to the themes (Table 1). Because reliability between observations was higher than 80%, it was decided that the themes could be used in the study (Iftar and Tekin, 1997).

Table 1. Harmony between observation values according to the themes

Themes	Harmony between Observations (%) N=33
Democracy education received in the family	92.3
Democracy education received at school	84
Effects of democracy education received in the family on individuals' lives	86
Effects of democracy education received at school on individuals' lives	84.5
Contents of democracy education to be given to children in the family	81
Contents of democracy education to be given to children at school	91

Preliminary interviews were held with the participant teachers and the aim of the study was explained to them. The interviews were held at institutions where the teachers worked. In the interviews, the participants were asked the questions prepared beforehand and asked to express their opinions about the questions. Some of the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants by using a recording device; the others were recorded by taking notes. Although a standard time had been planned for the interviews, it was not always be adhered to.

Data Analysis

The answers obtained from the interviews held with the participants were coded and subjected to content analysis (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). The answers of 32 participants obtained from the interview forms were coded in preparation for interpretation. The teachers whose opinions were asked were coded as Teacher1 (T1) and Teacher2 (T2).

The coding was carried out by the researcher and another researcher in the field. The answers given by the teachers were compared and the responses, which were not always direct answers to the questions but were believed to contribute to the study, were codified for later use in the interpretation of the findings. Following the categorization of themes, a comparison was made with responses from the pilot study. A general confluence of themes between the two studies emerged. With this as a starting point, starting from this point, it was concluded that the concepts were perceived by the teachers in a similar way. Tables indicating the frequency of the themes and concepts determined as a result of the analysis were made and the findings were prepared for description and interpretation.

Findings

This section illustrates the findings obtained from the data regarding a) demographic information, b) quantitative data, and c) qualitative data belonging to the participants.

a. Participant demographics

53.6% of the participant teachers were female and 46.4% were male. 89.4% of the participants were younger than 45 years of age. 98.8% of them voted in the last election held in 2010. 71.9% of them stated having received one or more than one courses related to democracy during their formal education, and 74% of them stated having read at least one article on democracy. 52.4% of them stated that their income levels were “good or better”, 62% of them stated having been born in small towns and villages. 93% of the participant teachers stated that in a society democracy could only be given through a democratic education. These findings, at the same time, constituted the foundation for the qualitative dimension of the study.

b. Quantitative data findings

Within the “rights” parameter, the teachers stated that while they attached most importance to the right of “Having opportunities to feel safe” ($X=6.51$), they attached least importance to the right of “Having the right to express opinions comfortably without worry of being condemned or blamed” ($X=6.53$; $X=6.22$).

Within the “freedoms” parameter, the teachers stated that while they regarded the freedom of “Believing in any religion which they like and performing worship related to one’s religion comfortably” as the most important ($X=6.45$), they regarded the freedom of “Expressing one’s emotions and thoughts or being able to be organized to protect one’s interests without being bound by any restrictions” as the least important ($X=5.30$).

Under “equality”, the teachers stated that while they attached most importance to “Being treated equally before the laws without being discriminated against due to such reasons as language, religion, race, gender and the like” ($X=6.51$), they attached least importance to “Being able to benefit from public services equally without being discriminated against” ($X=6.26$).

Under “responsibilities”, the teachers stated that while they regarded the responsibility of “The government’s administering justice in time and most appropriately” as the most important ($X=6.54$), they regarded the responsibility of “Taking note of the minorities’ rights when making political decisions” as the least important ($X=5.97$).

It was observed that the participant teachers generally have high expectations from democracy. On the other hand, according to the observations of the participants, while the teachers regarded “Having the right to use the right of property and inheritance” as the most important ($X=4.83$), they regarded “Having the right of being able to express one’s opinions without worry of being condemned or blamed” as the least important ($X=3.27$).

Under “freedoms”, the teachers stated that while they attached most importance to the freedom of “As an adult, being able to marry a person without being subjected to any preventions” ($X=4.74$), they attached least importance to the freedom of “Inviolability of the freedom not to work of those defined as children in international and national agreements and texts of laws” ($X=3.45$).

Under “equality”, the teachers stated that while “Being able to benefit from public services equally without being discriminated against” was realized at the highest level ($X=4.60$), “Being equal in participating in electing-being elected and political decisions” was realized at the lowest level ($X=3.79$).

Under “responsibilities”, the teachers stated that while the responsibility of “The government’s giving priority to disadvantaged groups such as the aged, ill, children and those who are unable to work” was fulfilled at the highest level ($X=4.58$), the responsibility of “Listening to people with respect and patience” was fulfilled at the lowest level ($X=3.54$).

According to the participant-teachers’ opinions, the rights included under the rights parameter are realized at a level of 37%, the freedoms are realized at a level of 42%, equalities are realized at a level of 35%, and responsibilities are realized at a level of 34%. When the correlations between the teachers’ expectations from democracy and their observations were examined, a high significant negative correlation was observed between the teachers’ opinions (Table 2).

Table 2. Teacher observations and expectations regarding democracy

Democracy parameters	DOI		DEI		ROI %
	X	SD	X	SS	
Rights	3.94	1.57	6.37	0.92	43
Freedoms	4.15	1.57	6.07	0.99	48
Equality	4.05	1.65	6.41	0.99	44
Responsibilities	3.90	1.65	6.39	0.90	43
Correlations(r): DOI-EOI= -.79		DOI-ROI=.91		DEI-ROI= -.95	

When the opinions are evaluated in terms of the parameters, it is observed that the teachers’ expectations about equality are at the highest level. Conversely, teachers perceive that individuals and the government fulfil their responsibilities at a low level. It is meaningful that the expectations in the freedoms parameter fulfilled at the highest level are lower when compared to the other parameters. This finding seems to support the opinion that “satisfied needs decrease expectations”. In contrast, a high negative correlation was found between the teachers’ democracy observations and their expectations from democracy (Table 2).

c) Qualitative data findings

This section includes the findings regarding the teachers’ opinions about such matters as democracy education received in the family and at school, effects of democracy education received in the family and at school on individuals’ lives, and the content of democracy education to be given in the family and at school.

While 61% of the participants stated that democracy education should be provided by the family, 33% stated that it should be provided by school. The percentage of those who stated that democracy education should also be given outside the family and school was 9%.

41% of the participant teachers stated that they had grown up in a democratic family environment and had gained fundamental behaviours related to democracy in their families. 54% of the participants stated that they had not grown up in a democratic family environment, and for this reason they could not have acquired democratic behaviors in the family environment. Apart from these, 5% of the participants stated that democracy had existed partly in their families but this situation had not affected them.

In this section of the study, the findings obtained through the qualitative research methodology were put forth for consideration and interpreted under the headings of “Democracy education in the family, its effects and suggested solutions” and “Democracy education at school, its effects and suggested solutions”.

Findings Regarding Democracy Education in the Family, Its Effects, and Suggested Solutions

Of the teachers stating that there was not a democratic environment in their families and for this reason they could not have acquired democratic behaviors, T1 explained this situation by stating that:

“I did not receive any democracy education in my family. As it was the case in thousands of homes, there was not any democracy in our home, either. For I was a child in the 1980s and in those years there was not any democracy in Turkey”. and T2 by stating that:

“In our family, decisions were generally made by my father. I do not remember having been asked for my opinion about any matter. Due to democracy education which we could not receive, I have become a person who has become alienated from politics and his country, who is coarse and who does not understand and cannot put up with others”

T4 reflected the democracy environment in the family by stating that:

“I did not receive any democracy education at all in my family. I have grown up with the traditional Turkish family structure and in an order where fathers are dominant. There was not a democratic environment in the family. Since we are a patriarchal family, generally my father was influential. Attention was not paid to what the children said.”

In contrast, T5, recalling democracy partly in his family, explained the democratic environment by stating that:

“I received democracy education in the family, but the effects of this democracy education were limited. In very important decisions, we did not have democratic freedom, but, in the general sense, an informal democracy education was scattered through our lives. When decisions were made, I was asked for my opinion, but the limits were determined by my family.”

Moreover, T7, spoke of learning what democracy is through his experiences in the family, emphasizing the leadership characteristics acquired thanks to democracy by stating that:

“The unjustifiable events which I have witnessed or experienced in the family (in relatives and other relations), the books I have read and what I have watched have made me acquire a general philosophy of life by myself. I have become a teacher knowing what equality is and appreciating each of the students. I have self-confidence and I am in the position of ‘a leader’ in the group.”

The teachers who stated having acquired democratic behaviors through the democracy education they had received in the family stated that they had learned about leadership, self-confidence, choice, being disciplined, taking responsibility, and evaluating events objectively through the democratic environment that their families had provided. Concerning this matter, T4, who remembered receiving democracy education in the family, expressed her opinion with the following words:

“In a family environment where everybody has an equal right to be able to speak and express oneself, I received a democracy education based on equality. When making a decision regarding the family, I was asked for my opinion and I expressed my opinion about the matter. At home, everybody spoke and expressed their opinions. Sometimes the contradicting ideas of the adults and the children were discussed, but the adults listened to excited marginal remarks with tolerance.”

T5, expressing his experiences in the decision-making process in his family, uttered the following:

“There was always democracy in my family. Decisions were made together. Nobody intervened in another’s life. Before a decision was made, the fact that everybody must be asked for their opinions and decisions to be made must be for the benefit of everybody was emphasized.”

Moreover, with the following statement, T8 stated having been able to put the democracy education she received into practice:

“I am a teacher and I practise my habit of behaving justly and impartially which I had received in my family in my life.”

Regarding the democracy education which she received in her family, T9 offered the following explanation, mentioning the fact that democracy education in the family could be transferred to future generations:

“The democracy education which I had received in my family affected my life about my behaving respectfully toward people’s opinions and thoughts and establishing healthy relationships with people in shared living areas. Thanks to the democracy education which I received in the family, I have become an open-minded person. I have learned that any decision can be questioned thanks to my family. Now in the home I have established I am paying attention to my wife and child’s having the right to voice an idea, and freedom of speech should be valid for each of us.”

The teachers participating in the study emphasized receiving democracy education in the family is critical, and that importance should be attached to children’s ideas and that they should participate in decisions, have an equal right to voice an idea in decisions to be made, and be taught primarily the limits of rights and freedoms. In this context, to the question of “What kind of democracy education should be given in the family?” T9 responded by stating that;

“Different ideas should be respected, and when making decisions, everybody’s thoughts should be resorted to. Equal right to voice an idea should be given, thought should be respected, opportunity to achieve success and possibility to make a choice should be granted, but it should be taught that every desire of a child or another person cannot be performed. Children should be taught well about the rights and freedoms they have. However, children should be given duties and responsibilities, their emotions and thoughts should be respected, everyone in the family should participate in decision-making processes, and everyone should be given the right to make preferences when their needs are met.”

However, T10, on the point of tolerating differences and children having the right to voice an idea, offered the following:

“We should start by considering children’s desires and needs important and giving them the right to voice an idea without any prejudice and this right should be given to children of every age. Tolerance towards different religions and sects and rejection of racial discrimination should be taught. Families should not exhibit a negative attitude towards their children’s problems like “Shut up, you do not know!” and listen to them. We should make them feel that their thoughts are important.”

About the matter of having the right to voice an idea and expressing opinion freely, T11 expressed these opinions:

“From their birth on, children should be instilled with the idea that they are each an individual and have the right to voice an idea even in decisions about unimportant matters concerning the family. They should be given the thought of voicing an idea and opinion, having the right to comment on decisions, taking care of sick and old people and helping them.”

Moreover, T12, emphasizing that teachers should be models, expressed these thoughts on this matter:

“As conscious adults being aware of individual and social rights and duties, knowing about and loving their country, longing for democratic government, we should be models for our children and they should be given real education. First of all, they should be presented with a life example where democratic rules are put into practice.”

Findings Regarding Democracy Education at School, It’s Effects and Suggested Solutions

While 67% of the teachers stated not having received a good democracy education at school, 33% of them stated that the democracy education they received at school had become effective in their lives. A great majority of the participants stated that in the education process at school, teachers are not sufficiently qualified to effectively teach democracy, that they exhibit authoritative behaviours, that they only learn pieces of information about democracy at school, and that teachers perceive democratic practices only as the election of a class monitor.

The teachers stated that democracy education at school should focus on such matters as respect for rights and freedoms, participation in the decision-making process, being treated equally and having responsibilities, and that democracy education should be applied rather than theoretical.

Of the teachers stating a positive opinion about democratic practices at school and their effects, T13 expressed his opinion thusly:

“In class monitor elections, we got acquainted with democracy at school. Later, in social studies lessons, we learned that when a country is governed with democracy, this will have benefits for our countrymen and about how this system functions.”

Emphasizing that she had met her first democracy practice in class-monitor elections, T19 offered this insight:

“We got acquainted with democracy at school in natural science lessons, later in class monitor elections we saw democratic practices, but at elementary school, in our classrooms there was dysfunctional democracy; sometimes we were given duties which we did not want by force. I remember the course of citizenship and I think this course provided us with very useful education about democracy.”

Moreover, of the teachers emphasizing the importance of school in democracy education, T21 spoke of learning about boundaries:

“When I learned about my democratic rights and freedoms, I directed my behaviours accordingly. Especially when I was doing my job, I paid attention to being democratic. I understood that where my rights and freedoms end, those of others start.”

T27 explained what democracy understanding at school helped him acquire with the following thought:

“It made me become a conscious individual about such matters as making decisions unanimously, respect for different ideas, respect for rights of others, being aware of one’s own rights and benefiting from these.”

Of the teachers mentioning the insufficiency and ineffectiveness of democracy education at school, T14 explained about her democracy experience at school like this:

“Unfortunately, we did not receive any democracy education at school. For those at school were unaware of democracy as well. What I remember about democracy: beating, hair cut completely with scissors ... I do not remember that the principle of participation in decisions at school worked at school.”

T15 shared this memory of young people being seen, not heard, when it came to democracy:

“In our time, being quiet and not speaking was accepted as the fundamental criterion of respect. Moreover, the main democratic rules were only rules and we did not even have an idea about what those rules meant. As young people of the 80s, we were children unaware of the concept of democracy. And teachers were authoritative and intolerant.”

Echoing the dominance of strict rules at schools rather than democratic practices, T20 explained about the democratic structures at the schools where he received education by making this statement:

“There were times when I met a system where the right to elect and be elected and decisions of society were in effect at our schools. However, it can be stated that generally there was not a democratic structure there, either. Our opinions were not important at all. In general, at schools, in our time, there were strict rules and democracy was not mentioned very often.”

T26, stressing the dysfunctional nature of democracy understanding at school, explained the ineffectiveness of democracy understanding at her school by stating:

“I am not of the opinion that school life left positive democratic traces on me. I think that since we experienced suppression, pressure and utilitarianism, this caused the emotions of introversion, faint-heartedness, mistrustfulness and lack of confidence to occur.”

Of the teachers expressing opinions about the kind of democracy education which should be given at school, T29 stated that democracy should be included in both explicit and implicit acquisitions by stating that:

“First of all the government, institutions, school administrations and teachers should be democratic. Then students should internalize it by seeing and living these. Not only should democracy education be included in the contents of the courses at school, but it should also be practised in every area of school life, the rules of the classroom should be put in a democratic way and the democratic freedom of an individual over other individuals should be emphasized.”

Moreover, T30, mentioning the active education process regarding democracy, shared the belief that:

“Children should be given applied democracy education. They should be provided with an educational environment including activities through which they can learn about democracy by doing-experiencing. The processes by which they transform their learned democratic life rules into behaviours should continuously be controlled.”

T31, referring to the equality and generality characteristics of democracy, expressed this opinion:

“Students should be made to adopt the fact that generally everybody has an equal right to voice an idea under the school roof and to be given democracy education without making any discrimination and by making the rules work.”

Furthermore, T32 expressed his opinion about different ways of making people adopt pluralism understanding in democracy education in this way:

“Democracy should be experienced at school; student participation should be achieved in decisions made by students’ councils. The importance of plurality should be taught; the respect for religious and belief freedom should be given importance; man-woman equality, unlocking the path for women into politics, explaining the problems which women experience in working life.”

T9 echoed these thoughts:

“An environment where students can express their ideas freely without hesitation should be prepared. Putting up with different ideas should be taught.”

T7, again referring to the fact that democracy education at school should be provided in a way directed towards practice, explained her thoughts this way:

“The clichéd democracy definitions given at school should be abandoned; instead, fundamental rights and freedoms, freedom of expression and freedom of belief should be emphasized. Nobody should be deprived of some rights due to their clothing styles and thoughts.”

Discussion

According to the teachers who participated in this study, people in Turkey can only use their rights and freedoms at a rate below 50%. However, it is observed that the teachers’ expectations are rather high. In this case, it seems difficult to state that the practices meet the expectations (Figure 2).

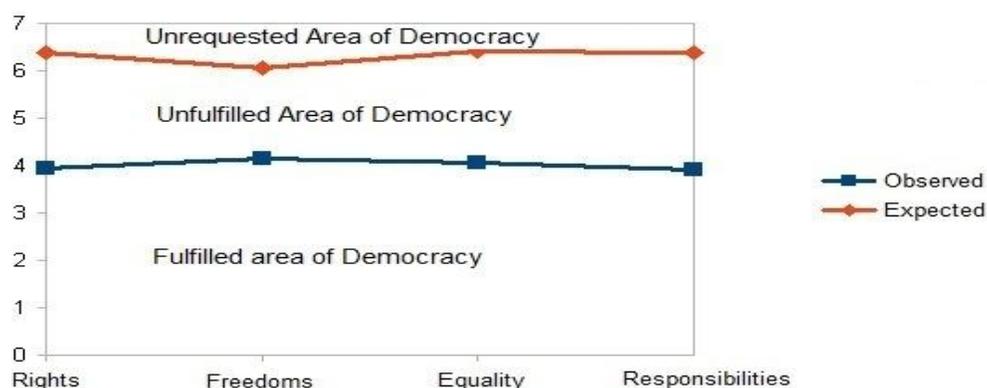


Figure 2. Teacher observations and expectations in democracy parameters

This result seems to support national and international assessments of democratic practices in Turkey. If it is necessary to provide examples, we can say that Turkey occupies one of the lowest spots in the reports of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), is the country which has the highest number of lawsuits in the European Court of Human Rights and still applies limitations related to the right to elect and be elected and the use of democratic rights and freedoms.

In the European Union's report published in 2010, the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), aiming to prevent torture against human rights in Turkey, is still tabled in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and although some advances have been achieved concerning women's rights and societal gender equality, torture against women still continues to be a problem for Turkey (European Commission, 2010). According to the UNDP human development index, Turkey was placed eighty-third in the year 2010 with a score of 0.679 and was listed as a country with medium human development (UNDP, 2010).

According to the World Economic Forum 2011 Woman-Man Equality Report, Turkey was placed 122nd among 135 countries (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi, 2011). That the rate of female members of parliament in Turkey is only 14.2% is a strong illustration of this situation (GNAT, 2011). In the "2011 World Democracy Index" of the Economist magazine, Turkey was placed 88th among 167 countries (The Economist, 2011) and in the Gender-Based Development Index it was placed 101st among 109 countries (UNDP, 2011). According to the Report of Freedoms in the World, Turkey is a "partly-free" country (Freedom House, 2012). Moreover, according to the Press Freedom Index 2011/2012 report by the Reporters without Borders (RWB), Turkey was placed 148th among 179 countries (RWB, 2012).

According to the European Court Of Human Rights (ECtHR), Turkey is the country with the highest number of court filings and rights violations among the 47 member states (ECtHR, 2012). According to the data of the Human Rights Directorate of the Prime Ministry, the number of complaints about rights violations in Turkey is gradually increasing. When the number of litigations made against Turkey are examined, during the period from 1999 until 2011, the number of litigations reached 5821, a thirteen-fold increase. Moreover, in 2011, the number of litigations made against Turkey reached 8702 by increasing about 50% when compared to 2010. On the other hand, when the decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights from 1959 until the end of 2011 regarding rights violations in Turkey are examined, the most violated rights, similar to the situation across the European Council, were right to a fair trial (33%), right of property (16%) and right of freedom and security (15%) (Prime Ministry of Republic of Turkey, 2012). As it is seen in the national and international documents and EU Progress Report, it can be stated that problems related to democracy and experiencing democratic values in Turkey continue to exist. It is meaningful that the results obtained through the study are in accord with the assessments highlighted above.

When the situation is discussed in terms of education, according to the 2010 data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) regarding the educational status of those aged 15 and above, the rate of those with elementary education level and below is 42%, the rate of elementary school or secondary school graduates is 23%, the rate of high school and equivalent school graduates is 21%, the rate of faculty or vocational school graduates is 8%, and the rate of those with a master's or doctoral degree is 1% (TurkStat, 2010). According to the exam results of PISA, in which a total of 65 countries participated including OECD countries, Turkey was placed 31st in PISA 2009 with an average score of 464 among the 33 OECD countries and 39th among 65 countries participating in PISA 2009 in the field of "Reading Skills", and 42nd among 65 countries and 31st among the OECD countries with a score of 454 in the field of "Science Literacy". Moreover, in the field of "Mathematics", it was placed 41st among all the participant countries and 31st among the OECD countries with a score of 445 (OECD, 2010). On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that while the mandatory schooling period in developed countries is between 9-12 years, this duration in Turkey is only 6.5 years (Şeker, 2011).

Although important developments in Turkey in the field of education have taken place, when the literacy and schooling rates are examined, it is clear that inequality against girls and women persists. Although there have been increases in recent years, the fact that while the gender parity index was 0.94 in developed countries between the years of 1990-2008, during the same period it remained at 0.88 in Turkey, confirming this situation (Kavak, 2010). On the other hand, the fact that the situation observed in schooling rates for girls shows regional disparities appears as another challenge regarding gender inequality.

A stark example of this situation is seen in that the net schooling rate in secondary education is 90.99% among boys and 74.5% among girls in Erzincan located in the eastern of the country, 88.88% among boys and 74.1% among girls in Kütahya located in the western part of the country, and 50.57% among boys and only 30.57% among girls in Siirt located in the southeastern part of the country (UNICEF, 2012).

Moreover, when the rate of women in the workforce is examined, it is observed that the rate of men among those with a degree below high school is 66.7%, while that of women is 23%. However, at a higher education level, these rates range between 85.1% for men and 70.4% for women. As can be understood from the data, as the education level decreases so does the rate of women's participation in the workforce. That the difference between men and women with a diploma below high school level is 43.7%, whereas it decreases about three times and becomes 14.7% for higher education can be taken as important evidence supporting this outcome (TSI, 2012).

According to Dewey (1967), a great number of the problems in a country can be removed through appropriate democracy education. Given the assertion that the democracy level increases with an increasing educational level, put forward according to the results of a study made on reports from 192 countries prepared by the educational institutions of the Freedom House, UNESCO, World Bank and United Nations and based on democracy criteria with the aim of investigating the extent of the contribution of compulsory education towards the possession of democratic values (London, 2011), and the attestation that students' political tolerance levels increased as a result of the "We the people; the citizen and Constitution" program applied to 1005 high school students in the state of New York, these studies can be accepted as supporting the above judgement. In the study, the fact that 93% of 416 teachers stated that democracy can be realized in a society through democracy education is important in terms of supporting the above judgment.

When the opinions of the teachers participating in the study about the matter of democracy education are examined, it is observed that the majority of the teachers are of the opinion that democracy education should be given in the family. This situation can be explained by the fact that schools fall short of providing adequate democracy education. However, at the top of the list of the fundamental institutions to have individuals acquire democratic values comes the school; administrators and teachers at school play an active role in children's developing democratic attitudes and behaviors (Doğanay, Çuhadar and Sarı, 2004). The fact that the study carried out with 11 teachers with the aim of emphasizing the importance of democracy education by combining democracy education work required both during the first and later years of teaching with social equality and democratic practices found that during the first years of their profession the teachers made an effort to create an environment including democratic values for their students, that the received education yielded positive results in terms of the teaching of democratic values, and that the teachers basing their practices on democratic principles left a positive impression on their students and caused an increase in learning of democratic values can be given as an example for this situation (Gleeson, 2011). For in the early childhood period, children learn to rely on their abilities and their making correct decisions, to trust others, to undertake responsibility for their behaviors, to develop independence and competency skills, to discover and value their own and others' capabilities, to comprehend that difference is not a bad thing, to respect their own and others' existence, to appreciate being a member of a group and commitment to a social group, and to become aware of their own thoughts and values greatly at school (Erwin and Kipness, 1997).

The fact that the teachers who were asked for their opinions in the study stated that although they were in charge at school, their schools fell short of offering adequate democracy education, and for this reason they were of the opinion that democracy education should firstly be given in the family, can be accepted as a meaningful result. The fact that a doctorate study entitled "human rights and democracy education at school and in the family" made by Yeşil (2001) with 900 students, 900 student parents and 208 teachers, found that both the students and the families thought that family environment, was more suitable for democracy education is important in terms of supporting the findings of this study. Moreover, in Yeşil's study, another important finding supporting this study is students' statements regarding the fact that a great majority of teachers have insufficient information about democracy and human rights, awareness of rules, and the dimensions of expression, participation, social relationships and responsibility. For this reason, according to opinions given ten years ago about democracy education at schools, today this situation has not changed greatly. However, it is a well-known fact that teachers regard students as citizens of the future and are aware of having necessary social and political duties on the way toward becoming ideal citizens (Kanner, 2005).

The results of the study carried out by Büyükkaragöz and Kesici (1996) with 393 elementary school teachers with the aim of determining teachers' attitudes toward democracy and tolerance are important in terms of supporting this judgment.

Conclusion

In a country, the values related to democratic life can be acquired only through democratic education. In other words, democratic education plays a critical role in the democratization and development of a country. For this reason, teacher beliefs in democracy and possessing democratic values are essential. The results of the study indicate that the teachers were of the opinion that their expectations about democracy in the Right, Freedom, Equality and Responsibility parameters have not been met sufficiently. That there is a negative relationship between the expectations and observations in the study can be evaluated as a very meaningful result. This result can be evaluated in the sense that with an increase in the use of rights and freedoms equally and of the fulfilment level of responsibilities, the expectations in this regard will decrease. This finding in the freedoms parameter carries importance in terms of supporting this judgment. Conversely, that the teachers stated that democracy education should be given in a practice-oriented way starting primarily in the family can be evaluated as an important finding of the study. This result can be evaluated as a suggestion based on the results obtained from the study.

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