

Views of the Teachers on the Behaviors and the Personal Characteristics of the School Principal Which are Effective in Formation of a Democratic School Environment

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ABSTRACT This study aims to determine the school principal's behaviors which are effective in occurring in a democratic school environment. In line with this purpose, 105 teachers serving in the schools in the city centre of Kirsehir were interviewed for their opinions in the academic year 2013-2014. Research was carried out in eight primary and seven secondary schools, in total 15 schools with 58 primary and 47 secondary, in total 78 teachers. As data was collected through semi-structured interview, 73 responses were found valid out of these 105 interviews for the qualitative study. The obtained data was analyzed by descriptive method. Finally, it was concluded that the school principal's behaviours are decisive factor in occurring a democratic school environment.

INTRODUCTION

Today the ideal point in the state administration is democracy, which provides that the ruled class have a say in management because democracy is both facilitator of operation and more humane than the others. Democracy is "the form of government based on the sovereignty of people" (TDK 2014). This definition appears to be the most common definition of democracy (Dogan 2007). People, communities or social groups can interpret the democracy in the context of their own specific values, preferences and requests as they see democracy as a measurement of an ideal (Saylan 1998).

As democracy is accepted as a way of life, it is a must to educate individuals according to this lifestyle. Democracy can only be improved and perpetuated by the individuals who understand and embrace it (Tamer 2011). Moreover, this is dependent on democracy education given to the individuals. With the education of democracy, it is aimed to bring permanent status to democratic behaviors and create a common awareness of democracy (Tourain 2002). Educational institutions and institutional education have a major role in upbringing the citizens who are sensitive to differences, creative, aware of rights and freedoms; have critical thinking ability and have a higher level of consciousness and are aware of their responsibilities which are the needs of the democracy as a theory of freedom and tolerance (Bakir 2012; Tamer 2011; Kocabas

and Cakir 2016). Upbringing individuals who understand democracy and adopt the democratic lifestyle in society is the responsibility of the educational institutions, namely the schools. Schools should also transmit the culture of democracy as they are performing the function of cultural transmission (Hotaman 2010).

It is one of the aims of the school to provide individual commitment to democracy and to prepare individuals to live by the necessities of the democratic society. As the initial point of the process of socialization, the school ensures the realization of democracy in a social environment. Therefore, individuals obtain the democracy and make it a lifestyle (Sayin 2010). Schools are very important in bringing democratic values and the conversion of the democracy related knowledge, skills and attitudes to the behaviors (Genç 2006). Dewey (2010) has highlighted the need for the school contribution to the process of building democratic knowledge and understanding in a democratic society.

There are also practices for the formation of the democratic principles in the managements of the institutions and organizations that constitute the sub-units of the state in countries ruled by democracy. A democratic restructuring is also needed by schools, which will settle democracy in society. Even democratic restructuring can be seen as a must for schools. Schools must prepare appropriate conditions in their very own organization that will create democratic environment as they aim to bring up citizens who will be

effective in the life of the society and actively participate in democracy (Macedonia Civic Education Center 2012). In other words, schools should be the institutions that convert democratic knowledge, skills and attitudes to the behaviors. A democratic educational environment allows freethinking to the individuals not only politically but also in all areas of human life. All types of classroom and extracurricular activities are designed and edited in accordance with the democratic principles. A democratic school is a school in which all stakeholders find the opportunity to participate in discussions about all the problems of the school and all the students are fixed to live with democracy with the necessary information, skills and attitudes (Mncube 2009). According to McCowan (2010), schools having a democratic structure contribute to the students' academic and social development. In democratic schools most importantly democratic thinking habit is acquired by this way and this provides the basis for the development of skills and interests (Bakir 2012).

Like all institutions, schools are affected by different factors. Administrators, teachers, students, non-teaching staff, professional organizations / pressure groups, supervisor staff, families, political structure, education policy, management structure, labor market, changes and developments are the factors that affect schools (Sisman 2007). These variables have also an effect on democracy in schools. Internal elements of the school (administrators, teachers, students, and non-teaching staff) are more deterministic in the formation of a democratic environment. Being both the leader of the school's internal components and the person who will make the aims of the school real, keep its structure alive, cherish its climate and develop its qualities, the school principal is an important factor in the formation of a democratic environment (Ünal 2009). If it is wanted to settle democratic values in the society, these values should be habituated in the daily work. This subject is important for the administrations of all types of institutions but especially for the school administrators (Bäckmen and Trafford 2007). As being the most important role model for students and teachers, school principal's democratic attitude and application of democratic values in his / her life will be the determinant of the peaceful and confident school environment and effective and efficient school management. Sharing the responsibility

and the authority of the school management with stakeholders and incorporating the stakeholders in decision making will make it easy to control the effective factors in school management (social, political, economic, scientific, technological etc.) and create an effective school and efficient educational environment. Democratic approach of school principals to the students and the teachers will increase the success of the education and the level of the harmony in the school (Okutan 2003). Such a development will affect the commitment to school and the motivation of the teachers and the students positively. The continuation of these benefits is dependent on the continuation of the stakeholders' participation in decision making.

Democracy in schools is closely related to the level of democratic values that the school principal is on and whether s/he internalizes them or not. A democrat school administrator sees the people around him / her as helping people in order to bring the organization to the goal; gives values to people with whom s/he works together in order to reach the goal; avoids finding their mistakes; asks questions frequently; creates an environment that will allow criticism of the work; avoids an attitude that s/he pretends to know the best of everything and gives importance to the decision that is a joint decision of the people who constitute the organization (İlgar 2000). A school principal who does not believe in democracy and ignores the achievements of democratic life will negatively affect democracy in schools by means of the management authority. Forasmuch management is the influencing the human resources through the process of organizing, manipulating, directing and evaluating.

That there are significant problems in the education system and the need of a revision in the education system is accepted and expressed by both service providers and the people receiving services. The consensus is that this revision should start from the top. That the expectation of the education system will be put in order starting from the top is a false expectation is becoming widespread. A recovery at the base of the education system, namely schools, is a requirement for improvement in education. The competent school principals, who embrace the democratic thinking and acting, live the democracy and keep it alive in schools will be decisive in the overcoming deficiencies in the structure and functioning of the education system (Açikalin 1998).

It is primarily the task of the school principal to create a physically, socially and psychologically suitable environment for the realization of the school objectives. In order to fulfill this task school principals have to be subjected to a formal education and have to be educated as school leaders (Dönmez et al. 2014). Leadership is a major role of principals in democratic schools, as it also extends to others in the school community; and as such, flattens traditional leadership hierarchies (Naidoo et al. 2015). Showing school leadership behaviors rather than the school management behaviors in the school, principal will gain the ability to impress the teachers, students and the other people in the school (Can 2007). The school principal who wants to have educational leadership characteristics, in other words who wants to have the ability to impress the school must represent democratic attitude and make the democracy live (Çalık 2003). In this way, the school principal will lay the foundation of a democratic school environment and will ensure the continuation of its presence.

Educational leadership (school leadership) is the process of influencing and directing the school staff and its environment to reach its goals (Gümüşeli 2005). Educational leadership covers the behaviors that school principal has to fulfill as well as the behaviors of the other people by influencing them (Sisman 2002). Educational leadership will be the most important role that school principals will undertake to create a democratic environment as democracy can be realized only by leadership not by itself (Yörük and Kocabas 2010; Sakiz 2016). The democratic approach that a school principal can contribute to the formation of a democratic environment by leadership will adopt, ensure the continuation and the success of leadership (Bäckmen and Trafford 2007).

In the light of the information provided, the school principals are said to be very effective in the formation of a democratic school environment. Therefore determining the behaviors and the personal characteristics of school principals that affect the formation of a democratic school environment is very important. To determine the school principals' behaviours and personal characteristics which are effective in the formation of a democratic school environment primarily the teachers' views should be taken due to they are the most competent persons at school who can evaluate the school principal and they are one of the internal elements of the school that effects

the school environment. The purpose of this study is to determine the teachers' views about the effective behaviors and the personal characteristics of the school principals in the formation of a democratic school environment.

METHODOLOGY

In this section the research design and the study group are defined and data collection and the analysis are emphasized.

Research Design

This research is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is a technique that is used for the systematic investigation of the meanings that are gathered from the experiences of the people that the research is conducted on (Ekiz 2003). Sensitivity to the natural environment, researcher's having a participant role, the identification of the perception, flexibility in the research design and an inductive analysis are the important features of the qualitative research (Yildirim and Simsek 2011). To explain the meaning of the answers to the "Why?" and "How?" questions which cannot be expressed by quantitative values and so to explain the behaviors of the participants, social phenomena and events better are the main objectives of the qualitative research (Demirbas 2014).

The research data was obtained by the "interview" which is a qualitative data collection technique. Interview is the communication process that is carried out between two people to gather information about a particular topic (Aktas 2014). Interviews in this study are conducted in the form of "semi-structured interviews". Semi-structured interviews are not as strict as the "structured interviews" and are not as flexible as "unstructured interviews". Therefore semi-structured interviews are situated between the two extremes that allows the flexibility and easiness to the researchers (Karasar 1999).

Study Group

This research was carried out in eight primary and seven secondary, in total 15 schools with 58 primary and 47 secondary, in total 78 teachers in the city center of Kirsehir who has served at least three years. Only voluntary teachers were included in this study. The data has been obtained from the answers of 78 teachers.

The study group was determined by means of convenience sampling method of purposeful sampling utilized in qualitative research. Therefore, voluntary participants with minimum three years of teaching experience and who could be reached easily were interviewed.

Sample selection process in qualitative researches is quite flexible. Sampling selection develops and evolves in parallel to the progress gained during course of study. Sampling is replenished on continuous base in order to strengthen and support the major subject according to gained progress on the subject or theory (Kuzel 1992). Thus, interviews were continued with the voluntary participants between February 2014 and June 2015 until sufficient data was gathered and to acquire sufficiently qualitative data set required by the study. All interview sessions were conducted by researchers. In Table 1, the demographical information of the participant teachers is given.

Table 1: Demographical information of participant teachers

Seniority	Number of teachers
3-9 years	22
10-16 years	40
17 years and more	16

Data Collection and Analysis

At the beginning, 15 minutes face-to-face interviews were conducted with eight randomly selected teachers to determine the effective behaviors and personal characteristics of a school principal in the formation a democratic school environment. It has been tried to decide which questions can be asked also by examining related literature. A semi-structured interview form that consists of five open-ended questions and one multiple-choice question were developed from the interviews with the teachers and literature review. The questionnaire's draft was examined by measurement and assessment, Turkish language teaching and educational sciences experts. One open-ended question has been removed from the interview towards the experts' views. Thus the internal validity of the questions is ensured. Then, questions were put in an order and preliminary application was implemented with 12 teachers. In the preliminary applica-

tion, it was determined whether the interview questions were comprehensible to answer, and whether they did not violated its designated scope, or not. Hence, data collection tool was assessed through a trial. Yet, the assessment of the data collection tool is directly correlated with validity and reliability of the research (Yildirim and Simsek 2011).

The data was collected through the answers that the teachers gave to the questions during the interviews. The interviews were carried out one by one with each participant and the places and the time that they set. Each interview that lasted ten minutes in average and completed in a single session, recorded with voice recorders. In addition to the questions in the interview form, such questions were asked to the teachers to be able to determine their ideas exactly: "What is the reason for this idea?", "Why do you think so?", "How do you explain this idea?", "Can you explain what you want to tell with these words?"

The research questions that were asked to the participants during the interview are presented below:

1. *Given that a democratic school environment as a whole, what are the constituent elements of this whole? In other words what are the components of a democratic school environment?*
2. *What a democratic school environment will affect positively at school?*
3. a. *Do you think that the school principal affect the formation of a democratic school environment?*
b. *Do you think that the school principal or another factor is more decisive in the formation of a democratic school environment?*
4. *Which of the principal's behaviors are effective in the formation of a democratic school environment?*
5. *Which of the school principal's personal characteristics are effective in the formation of a democratic school environment?*

Firstly, recorded interviews into the voice recorder were analyzed and transferred to the paper form. During this transfer process, it was paid attention to transfer answers of participants to the relevant question to the paper form without allowing any alteration. Then, transferred data on the paper form was checked once more with the voice records so that all collected data was captured in the paper form.

Collected data was analyzed through content analysis. During the content analysis process, raw data obtained from interview sessions were transformed into codes; then, categories were formed through codes. Categories were presented under themes revealed earlier by the research questions (McMillan and Schumacher 2010).

In qualitative studies, data can be transformed into quantitative form. The basic motives behind conversion of qualitative data into quantitative form are increasing reliability, reducing bias, and making comparison among categories (Yildirim and Simsek 2011). Similarly in the present study, qualitative data was converted into quantitative form; and frequencies of findings captured from teachers' opinions were determined, and they were exhibited in the frequency charts.

In the results section, some opinions of teachers were directly quoted so as to ensure "validity" (Patton 1987). In direct quotation, due to scientific ethics, participant teachers' names were disguised; each of them was assigned a reference starting from T-1 to T-78; and the teacher, whose respective opinion was directly expressed, was indicated with this reference.

FINDINGS

Democratic School Environment Components

The first of these questions was as follows "Given that a democratic school environment as a whole, what are the constituent elements of this whole? In other words what are the components of a democratic school environment?" Democratic school environment components determined from the answers given by the participants to the first question are presented on Table 2.

Most highlighted three elements as a component of democratic school environment are "justice", "equality" and "stakeholders's participation in decision making". "Justice" and "equality" elements are also shown as the basic concepts of democracy by Novak (1994) and Osler and Starkey (1994) and this supports these findings. Considering the frequency of the phrase "respect for human rights and freedoms" and "respect for diversity" also seem to be important components. In the study "Democracy Education as an Alternative For All Schools" by Arnstine and Futernick in 1999, a similar conclusion has been drawn. In that study "respect for others"

Table 2: Democratic school environment components

<i>Component</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Justice	12
Equality	11
Stakeholders' participation in decision making	11
Sharing of the authority and the responsibility	10
Stakeholders' commitment to the democracy	8
Respect for human rights and freedoms	8
Respect for diversity	7
Freedom of expression	7
Education based on principles and values	6
Trust among stakeholders	6
Effective communication of the stakeholders	4
Democracy training for the teachers and students	4
Equality of opportunity	3
Group awareness of the stakeholders	3
Stakeholders' coordination	3
Accountability	3
Strong, qualified stakeholders	2
Solidarity of the stakeholders	2
Tolerance	1
Commitment of teachers and students to the school	1
Individuals being open-minded	1
The adoption of scientificity in schools	1
Democratic practices	

has been identified as the most prominent feature of the people living in a democratic society. Another study with similar results is Criblez's (1999) study in which he sought to answer this question: "What makes a school democratic?" In this study "equality" in democratic organizations have been one of the outstanding elements. Apple and Beane (2007) also stated that valuing different opinions is one of the features of a democratic school.

T-25 coded participant who thinks that "justice" is one of the elements of a democratic school has said these words regarding to this subject: "From time to time we are witnessing the usurpation of our rights as a teacher. They can talk about democracy as much as they can, but unjust practices are destroying democracy. We can say that there is a democracy if there is justice."

T-69 coded participant has stated following remarks about "equality": "If becoming a member of a syndicate makes an advantage in schools and if someone gets ahead of somebody just because of his/her syndicate, this affects democratic school environment adversely. No difference should make somebody move forward. In a democratic school environment, we should see that everyone is equal and we should believe it."

T-48 coded participant has stated following remarks by underlining “stakeholders’s participation in decision making”: *“Teachers’ opinion should be considered important by school administrators. Opinions of teachers and even students’ ideas should be taken into consideration in decision making. Thus the decisions will be embraced. Democratic management is already the management that everyone has a say.”*

T-77 coded participant stated following statements about “human rights and freedoms” component: *“To talk about democracy, everyone must realize that everybody is human and has rights and freedoms. We can talk about democracy as long as human rights and freedoms are maintained. However the rights and freedoms of both teachers and students are ignored.”*

T-24 coded participant said these about the component “effective communication of the stakeholders”: *“To understand and to respect each other are very important acts for the operation of the school. To understand each other the communication must be sufficient. Sufficient communication provides to respect individuals rights and freedoms. And the rights and freedoms of individuals are very important for democracy.”*

T-67 coded participant emphasized “democratic practices” component with these words: *“All kinds of election should be made democratically. Democratic elections make the participation sincere and increase the number of the participants.”*

Elements Affected Positively by the Democratic School Environment

The second questions prepared for the purpose of the study is as follows: *“What a democratic school environment will affect positively at school?”* When the answers that the participants gave to this question were examined, the elements on Table 3 were found to be affected positively by the democratic school environment.

According to the participants, the elements that the democratic school environment affects positively most are “commitment of teachers and students to the school”, “justice” and “equality”. That “justice” which was emphasized most frequently as a component of a democratic school environment in the first question and which was stated as the second element that the democratic school environment affects positively most;

Table 3: Elements affected positively by the democratic school environment

Element	Frequency
Commitment of teachers and students to the school	14
Justice	10
Equality	9
Confidence in the school administration	6
Human rights and freedoms	6
Implementation of the decisions	6
Self-confidence of the teachers and the students	5
Collaboration of the stakeholders	5
Students’ behaviours	5
Students’ school success	5
Communication of the stakeholders	4
Critical thinking skills of the individuals	4
Problem solving skills of the individuals	4
The efficiency of instruction	3
Motivation of the teachers and the students	3
Group awareness of the stakeholders	3
Student centered teaching	2
Unity and solidarity of the stakeholders	2
The creativity skills of the teachers and the students	2
Scientific, social and cultural activities	1
Discipline in the school	1
Empathy skills of the individuals	1
Utilizing the interests and talents of individuals	1
Operation of the school	1
Objectivity in the evaluation	1

shows there is a strong relationship between justice and the democracy in the schools.

“Problem solving skills of individuals”, “the efficiency of instruction”, and “student centered teaching” are indicated as the elements that are affected positively by a democratic school environment. Allen (1999) has also stated that a democratic school develops the problem solving skills and provides a better organisational environment for learning.

T-31 coded participant who stated that the “commitment of teachers and students to the school” is an element that democratic school environment affects positively told as follows concerning this issue: *“Appropriating the school, loving the school and being happy are all about to see the existence of democracy. Democracy in the schools provides coming to school everyday more willingly and with strong emotions and appropriating the school. It helps you to fulfill your responsibilities more delicately.”*

T-51 coded participant stated that “justice” is affected positively by a democratic school environment, with these following statements: *“Democracy brings justice. Democracy is the*

guarantee of many values such as justice. In a school community of which members embrace the democracy, everyone will care to protect the rights of the other."

T-52 coded participant drew attention to the "equality" with these words: *"Not all the teachers and students benefit from the opportunities provided by the Ministry of National Education. People may cause this. Of course this means arbitrariness. However if the democracy is kept alive in the schools, nobody will step ahead instead of each other and everyone will benefit from the opportunities offered. Democracy, which will protect the individuals' rights will also maintain the rights to benefit from the opportunities."*

T-11 coded participant stated that the democratic school environment has a positive impact on "the implementation of the decisions" with these statements: *"School administration should consult all the opinions of the stakeholders in decision making. This is a very important behavior to believe that democracy exists in the school. Thus people will believe that there is democracy in the school. Because of this perception, adoption of the decisions and the implementation of them will be easy. Our school principals tend to ignore this point."*

T-35 coded participant stated that the democratic school environment has a positive impact on "the human rights and freedoms" with these words: *"Democracy means freedom. Freedom is the feeling that we want to feel most in the schools. If there is democracy we don't need any others to protect our rights and freedoms. In a sense, democracy is the guarantee of our rights and freedoms. Our self-confidence will increase and we will realize that we are individuals as long as we benefit from our rights and freedoms."*

T-17 coded participant stated that the democratic school environment has a positive impact on the critical thinking ability of the individuals with these statements: *"I think the most important skill that we have seen a lack in both teachers and the students is criticism. Different kind of pressures causes this problem. The pressure of the school management, the pressure of the administrative chiefs etc. And even individuals pressure to one another cause this. Because of this pressure no one dares to criticize a policy or an individual. This skill will disappear if you don't criticize. Democratic school environment ends the pressure and we get the habit of criticism."*

Rationales Presented by Teachers Who Think that the School Principal is More Decisive in the Formation of a Democratic School Environment

The third question of the study is composed of two items. The question in the first item is: *"Do you think that the school principals affect the formation of a democratic environment?"* All the participants answered this questions by saying "Yes". The question in the second item is: *"Do you think that the school principal or another factor is more decisive in the formation of a democratic school environment?"* 66 of the 78 participant, that is, 85 percent answered that *"The school principal is more decisive."* The rationales of these ideas were asked to the 66 participant who think that school principal is more decisive than the other factors in formation of a democratic school environment. It is understood from the rationales that were presented, the facts of the why a school principal is thought more decisive in the formation of a democratic school environment are:

- ♦ *the leadership role of the school principal*
- ♦ *the experience of the school principal in management*
- ♦ *the management authority of the school principal*
- ♦ *the school principal's mastering the knowledge of management*
- ♦ *being the most important source of information that instructs the stakeholders*

Participants think that these facts make the school principal more decisive in formation of a democratic school environment. In other words, the reasons presented above ensures the school principal's being perceived as a more effective variable in formation of a democratic school environment.

School Principal's Behaviors Effective in the Formation of a Democratic School Environment

The fourth question is *"Which of the school principal's behaviors are effective in the formation of a democratic school environment?"* The behaviors that the participants underlined are presented on Table 4:

"Justice", "equality", and "stakeholders' participation in decision making" are the foremost components which were fixed from answers giv-

Table 4: School principal's behaviors effective in the formation of a democratic school environment

<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
To act fair	19
To incorporate stakeholders in decision making	13
To treat everyone equally	10
To share the authority and the responsibility with the stakeholders	10
To respect human rights and freedoms	7
To take into consideration the different demands of the individuals or groups	6
To give the right to vote to the individuals or groups	6
To respect the differences	5
To explain when it is required	5
To organize activities that strengthen the communication of the stakeholders	5
To ensure the equality of opportunities	5
To implement democratic values in her / his life	5
To pay attention that her / his messages are clear and understandable	4
To praise and reward success	4
To give freedom in teachers' and students' works	4
To organize activities to strengthen the collaboration of the stakeholders	4
To keep promises	4
To trust stakeholders	4
To approach friendly to the stakeholders	3
To perform the division of labor and task distribution according to the interests, abilities and merit	3
To listen to the problems of the stakeholders	3
To make self-criticism	2
To question education policies	2
To instruct stakeholders	2
To be accessible	2
To communicate frequently with the stakeholders	2
To create the necessary environment for the expression of the freedom	1
To be objective in assessment	1
To support the social, cultural and scientific activities in the school	1
To make the individuals feel valued	1
To develop empathy	1

en to the first question and this finding explains why the participants stated the behaviors “to act fair”, “to incorporate stakeholders in decision making” and “to treat everyone equally” in the formation of a democratic school environment more than the other behaviors in answers given to the fourth question. As the participants see “justice”, “equality”, and “stakeholders’ participation in decision making” as the most important elements of a democratic school environment, it can be said that participants expect some tasks from school principals such as “to act fair”, “to incorporate stakeholders in decision making” and “to treat everyone equally”,

T-21 coded participant who thinks that “to act fair” is one of the effective behaviors of the school principal in the formation of a democratic school environment, stated following statements: “*School principal may affect all the teachers with justice. His acting with justice makes us think that s/he is a democratic administrator. The justice s/he represents will also serve democracy with regard to the protection of human rights and freedoms.*”

T-73 coded participant expressed the ideas that drew attention to the “to incorporate stakeholders in decision making” behavior with these words: “*The school principal can be withdrawn, can build walls around him/her, can also see teachers as strangers and even enemies. A school principal like this takes the decisions alone. In this case, teachers do not back up the decisions and do not embrace them. However a school principal who includes all the stakeholders in decision making will deserve to be seen as a democratic school principal and this will enable teachers and all the stakeholders to back up the decisions willingly without resisting.*”

T-3 coded participant expressed ideas about “to treat everyone equally” with these statements: “*One of the behaviors of a democratic administrator is ‘to treat everyone equally’. In democracy, everyone’s vote has the same value. Not any person or clan is superior in management. The same is true for the schools. Everyone is equal including the school principal and has the right to vote with the same value. Therefore, what expected from a school principal is not to see someone or some groups superior than the others. A school principal must treat everyone equally.*”

T-11 coded participant stated following statements about “to praise and reward success” behavior of the school principal: “*The school principal must give the people what they deserve as a necessity of democracy. The school principal must observe and praise the hardworking people and must give what they deserve. Success tends to continue if it is praised. The school principals’ praise will certainly be effective as they are role models. Unfortunately school principals grudge praising teachers and students just because they see this behavior as a weakness.*”

T-8 coded participant stated following sentences about “to perform the division of labor and task distribution according to interests, skills

and merit" behavior: "Nothing can be left to chance. Everything must be planned and carried out accordingly. The highest level of efficiency should be obtained. The school principal should make use of workforce at hand for this purpose. The school principal must know the abilities, skills, capabilities and interests of everyone and in the task distribution s/he should look for skills, abilities and experience."

School Principal's Personal Characteristics Effective in the Formation of a Democratic School Environment

In this study, the last question to the participants is "Which of the school principal's personal characteristics are effective in the formation of a democratic school environment?" The school principal's personal characteristics that participants stated are exhibited in Table 5.

Table 5: School principal's personal characteristics effective in the formation of a democratic school environment

Personal characteristics	Frequency
Fairness	17
Impartiality	14
Leadership	11
Democratic	11
Unprejudicedness	9
Humanity	8
Reliability	8
Being open to criticism	7
Stability	6
Tolerant	6
Mediation	5
Consistency	5
Professional morality	4
Sincerity	4
Sensitivity	3
Humility	2
Honesty	2
Geniality	1
Inquisitiveness	1
Boldness	1
Entrepreneurship	1

The most frequently mentioned personal characteristics by the participants are "fairness", "impartiality", "leadership" and "democratic". Although "fairness" and "impartiality" are very close characteristics, the participants emphasized "fairness" by stating, "fulfilling the right" and emphasized "impartiality" by stating, "not to be on the side of any group, class or person". As can be seen there are nuances between two per-

sonality characteristics and participants could reflect these nuances in their answers.

The participants stated many personal characteristics of the school principal which are effective in the formation of a democratic school environment. "Reliability" and "honesty" are two of them. In a research conducted by Ünal (2002) teacher has also emphasized reliability and honesty as the features of the school administrators. In a research done by Lee et al. (2011), reliability stood out as one of the characteristics of the school administrators.

T-21 coded participant who thinks that "fairness" is an effective personal characteristic of a school principal in the formation of a democratic school environment stated following words: "The fairness of a school principal affects positively both the prevailing democracy culture in school and commitment of the stakeholders to the school. The existence of fair administrators is also very important for the whole education system."

T-64 coded participant has stated these sentences about "impartiality": "In the education institutions, there is no place for partiality and advocacy. The school principal is the first person to pay attention and follow this. A neutral school principal only gives importance to the merit, works and talent. S/he is not affected by any political opinion or any trend. When solving a problem that occurred among people, the school principal should not take any sides. School principal's being neutral will strengthen the democratic school environment."

T-39 coded participant drew attention to the "leadership" with these words: "The school principal affects us, directs us, and guides us. This is because of his/her leadership skills. A school principal, who wants the formation of a democratic environment in the school, can accomplish this by influencing other factors. I think a school principal should be a leader so that he can create an ideal school. A leader is the influential person."

T-37 coded participant emphasized "unprejudiced" with these words: "A school principal who says that s/he is democratic, shouldn't make decisions about the employees referring to the syndicate or hometown. If s/he classifies the employees according to this; s/he may eliminate some powers that provide real benefits. S/he must like everybody and recognize him or her fully before making assessment."

T-75 coded participant underlined the “mediation” with these sentences: *“Conflicts and disagreements in the schools are inevitable. It may happen sometimes among teachers and sometimes among students. As democratic school leaders, school principals should end fights and conflicts, meet people on a common ground, to reconcile them.”*

DISCUSSION

In this study, “justice” and “equality” as the components of democracy, “to act fair” and “to treat everyone equally” as the behaviors of a school principal; “fairness” and “impartiality” as the personal characteristics of a school principal are the prominent factors that affect the formation of a democratic school environment. This result shows that democracy in schools is firstly dependent on “justice” and “equality” according to the answers of the participants. Having been witnessed and exposed to many violations of justice and equality, participants have such a perception because of this reason. Participants have structured their views from the experiences of them and the others gave examples from the violations of justice and equality in schools. It is thought provoking that to learn from the 78 teachers who have served at least three years, that there have been many violations of justice and equality in schools. Strier and Katz (2015) asserted the importance of democracy in another perspective which is parental involvement. Their survey involved of 404 parents in 12 Israeli Democratic Schools. Findings show that different types of trust have diverse direct, indirect and sometimes paradoxical effects on parent participation in schools of choice. Following these findings in parallel with this study’s findings, it can be suggested that educators and policymakers should consider the positive and negative implications of our findings when planning programs of parental involvement.

Participants emphasized the behaviors of the school principals through the negative, anti-democratic behaviors they have encountered in real-life. In this study it is understood that the school principals are seen more decisive in the formation of a democratic school environment. Considering this it can be a serious problem that the school principals showing anti-democratic behaviors. Several other advantages of democratic participation in groups discussed recently as

well. Hahn (2015) underlines that democratic school environment supports the Danish welfare system and values free expression featuring strongly in the Danish schools in her study.

CONCLUSION

These results were obtained from this study:

1. The components of a democratic school environment are as follows according to the frequency: I. Justice II. Equality III. Stakeholders’ participation in decision making IV. Sharing of the authority and the responsibility V. Stakeholders’ commitment to the democracy VI. Respect for human rights and freedoms VII. Respect for diversity (11) VIII. Freedom of expression (8) IX. Education based on principles and values X. Trust among stakeholders XI. Effective communication of the stakeholders XII. Democracy training for the teachers and students XIII. Equality of opportunity XIV. Group awareness of the stakeholders XV. Stakeholders’ coordination XVI. Accountability XVII. Strong, qualified stakeholders XVIII. Solidarity of the stakeholders XIX. Tolerance XX. Commitment of teachers and students to the school XXI. Individuals being open-minded XXII. The adoption of scientificity in schools XXIII. Democratic practices.
2. The elements that a democratic school environment affects positively are as follows according to the frequency: I. Commitment of teachers and students to the school II. Justice III. Equality IV. Confidence in the school administration V. Human rights and freedoms VI. Implementation of the decisions VII. Self-confidence of the teachers and the students VIII. Collaboration of the stakeholders IX. Students’ behaviours X. Students’ school success XI. Communication of the stakeholders XII. Critical thinking skills of the individuals XIII. Problem solving skills of the individuals XIV. The efficiency of instruction XV. Motivation of the teachers and the students XVI. Group awareness of the stakeholders XVII. Student centered teaching XVIII. Unity and solidarity of the stakeholders XIX. The creativity skills of the teachers and the students XX. Scientific, social and cultural activities XXI. Discipline in the school XXII.

- Empathy skills of the individuals XXIII. Utilizing the interests and talents of individuals XXIV. Operation of the school XXV. Objectivity in the evaluation (1).
3. All the participants think that school principal is effective in the formation of a democratic school environment and most of them think that school principal is more decisive in the formation of a democratic school environment than the other factors.
 4. The behaviors of the school principal that are effective in the formation of a democratic school environment are as follows according to the frequency: I. To act fair II. To incorporate stakeholders in decision making III. To treat everyone equally IV. To share the authority and the responsibility with the stakeholders V. To respect human rights and freedoms VI. To take into consideration the different demands of the individuals or groups VII. To give the right to vote to the individuals or groups VIII. To respect the differences IX. To explain when it is required X. To organize activities that strengthen the communication of the stakeholders XI. To ensure the equality of opportunities XII. To implement democratic values in her / his life XIII. To pay attention that her / his messages are clear and understandable XIV. To praise and reward success XV. To give freedom in teachers' and students' works XVI. To organize activities to strengthen the collaboration of the stakeholders XVII. To keep promises XVIII. To trust stakeholders XIX. To approach friendly to the stakeholders XX. To perform the division of labor and task distribution according to the interests, abilities and merit XXI. To listen to the problems of the stakeholders XXII. To make self-criticism XXIII. To question education policies XXIV. To instruct stakeholders XXV. To be accessible XXVI. To communicate frequently with the stakeholders XXVII. To create the necessary environment for the expression of the freedom XXVIII. To be objective in assessment XXIX. To support the social, cultural and scientific activities in the school XXX. To make the individuals feel valued XXXI. To develop empathy (1).
 5. The personal characteristics of the school principal in the formation of a democratic

school environment are as follows according to the frequency: I. Fairness II. Impartiality III. Leadership IV. Democratic V. Unprejudicedness VI. Humanity VII. Reliability VIII. Being open to criticism IX. Stability X. Tolerant XI. Mediation XII. Consistency XIII. Professional morality XIV. Sincerity XV. Sensitivity XVI. Humility XVII. Honesty XVIII. Geniality XIX. Inquisitiveness XX. Boldness XXI. Entrepreneurship.

NOTE

1. This study was presented at the III. International Conference Interdisciplinary Research In Education on October 29-31, 2014 in Milano, Italy.

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