# Views of School Managers and Teachers Regarding the School Councils Project

Sedat Yüksel
Uludag University

Engin Karadağ
Eskisehir Osmangazi University

**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to determine teachers' views regarding democracy education and the Project for School Councils which have been used in schools in Turkey. In the study, the researchers developed a perception scale for the project (PSPDA), which was administered to the teachers. Based on the results of this research, female teachers and elementary school teachers had more positive views than male teachers and high school teacher. Although staff members have had positive views regarding the school councils  project, the lack of power and responsibility of the councils will turn project practices into a mere ritual.

*Keywords:* School Councils Project, democracy, schools

Views of School Managers and Teachers Regarding the School Councils Project

The 21st century places high demands on education with regard to globalisation, multiculturalism, democracy, and human rights. Students should graduate from schools after they incorporate an understanding of democracy that satisfies these demands. Teaching students about democracy and other relevant subjects through theoretical lessons alone does not raise awareness about democracy in students. The key factor is that students accumulate experiences based on the principles of democracy at many points in their lives, but these opportunities occur more frequently at school. There is no doubt that teaching theoretical information to students is insufficient to make democracy a lifestyle. The most basic characteristic of democracy is that it is an idea form and a cultural matter. It cannot be integrated into individuals through laws, regulations, enforcement, or teaching through school lessons. The information should be conveyed through experiences. The individual should learn democratic values at school; however, the key is to practice these values with the help of the teacher (Beane, 2005; Mosher, Kenny, & Garrod, 1994).

. Practicing democratic education depends on configuring school and class media based on the principles of democracy. Rusch (1994) states that democratic practices at schools should consist of two related parts: (*i*) the values achievable in reality (creating an intellectual base for beliefs and practices); and (*ii*) specific practices for attendance of the individuals at school completely. Calabrese (1990) states that there are several basic democratic practices, including: of the promotion of justice, a cherishing of equity, the maintenance of integrity, constituents (active and full participation), a norm of inclusion, equity in the distribution of resources, and reasonable recourse for grievances. Considering these principles, it is evident that a participatory structure should be formed at school.

One of the most important elements of democracy is participation. Participation is the basis of an education in democracy. Democracy may be better learned in democratic environments where participation is encouraged, ideas are sincerely expressed and discussed, freedom of expression is truly experienced by teachers and students, and justice exists. Democratic relationships between all parties (managers, teachers, students, other employees, and families) participating in school life are desired. These democratic relationships will facilitate the formation of a participatory environment. As a result, providing democratic participation in schools is a process that includes managers, students, and guardians. A system to increase the effectiveness of teachers and guardians was planned during the 1990s, and efforts were undertaken to implement this system (Levin, 1998). Recognition of teachers within school management and their contributions to making these decisions were seen as a factor in making the education process democratic. The idea of student participation in school management appeared after the 1990s (Perlin, 2004).

**School Councils**

One of the key methods for raising student participation in school management and making democracy education effective is to form "student councils" "student assemblies". According to this practice, managers, teachers, and students should work in cooperation for modifications at school (Alderson, 2000). School Councils also gather students and make them aware of projects at their schools (Baginsky & Hannam, 1999). Students can explain their demands about their schools, which will increase the quality of education and bring attention to matters ignored by management. Students will take responsibility during councils, rather than observe events around them as a spectator; this will lead students to show the required sensitivity that is appropriate in these councils. They will not hesitate to explain their ideas about the events

(Cotmore, 2004). According to studies, students, teachers, and guardians look favourably on active student participation in management, and believe that school councils are effective and helpful in developing democratic behaviours (Parker & Leithwood, 2000; Veugelers & Kat, 2003). However, according to some studies, teachers and students do not look on active participation of students in management with the same favour; teachers do not believe that student councils have a positive effect on schools and classes (Parker & Leithwood, 2000). Some teachers complain that student councils create additional work burdens. Students state that they cannot explain their ideas in meetings due to the time restrictions. However, it is understood that students are willing to take responsibility and have positive views on school councils (Alderson, 2000; Cotmore, 2003). However, it has been observed that school managers do not want student groups to participate in matters relating to schools, thus keeping their participation levels to a minimum (Clune & White, 1988; Conley, 1991; 1993; Malen & Ogawa, 1988).

### School Councils in the Turkish Educational Context

Turkish Education System has democratic, modern, scientific secular and coeducational characteristics. The purpose of the Turkish Education System is to increase the welfare and happiness of the Turkish citizens and Turkish society, to support and facilitate economic, social and cultural development in national unity and integration and to make the Turkish nation a constructive, creative and distinguished partner in modern civilization (MEB, 2002). The age of entry to school is six or seven in Turkish Education System. Since 1997, secondary education follows eight years of basic education and covers general, vocational and technical high schools that provide three or four years of education. General high schools do not prepare students for a specific profession but rather for higher education. The following institutions are considered to fall within general secondary education: high schools; high schools with intensive foreign

language teaching; Anatolian high schools where a foreign language - English, French or

German - is taught during the preparatory year and the teaching of certain subjects is provided in

that language in upper grades; science high schools; teacher training high schools; Anatolian fine

arts schools; multi-curricula high schools; evening high schools; and private high schools. In

general high schools, the average number of weekly periods of teaching in each grade varies

from a minimum of 33 to a maximum of 41. In their second year, students in high schools where

the general programmer is applied may choose to attend branches which specialize in the natural

sciences, literature and mathematics, the social sciences, foreign languages, art or physical

education.         Vocational high schools provide three-year secondary education, train qualified

people for various professions and also prepare students for higher education. Technical high

schools offer a four-year programmer. Subjects offered in the first year are the same as in the

vocational high schools. Secondary education students obtain the diploma which is the

prerequisite for entry to higher education (WHED, n.d.). The most important reason for this

development, the European Union and the Modernization of the Turkish Education System

examines the reconstruction of Turkish history/social studies curriculum and accesses how well

the program conforms to the established European Union (EU) directions and norms. In this age

of globalization, the extent to which the EU can impose its educational norms on Turkish

education as the membership process unfolds is in question. Therefore, the problem addressed in

this study concerns the relationship between educational and national development in Turkey and

the degree of influence the EU can exercise appropriately on that development (Tarman, 2008).

Although positivism –as well as its corollary in the social sciences, structural-

functionalism – continues to resurface as an influential paradigm, the last two decades have

witnessed the emergence of a variety of new perspectives and approaches. These include: critical

theory (Foster, 1986), hermeneutics, feminism (Capper, 1999), (critical) pragmatism (Maxcy,

1991, 1995), and postmodernism/post-structuralism (Capper, 1998, 1993) (see also, Derrida,

1982, 1984; Lyotard, 1984; Foucault, 1979, 1992; Anderson & Grinberg, 1998).

Anderson and Ginsberg (1998) have offered a subtle theoretical account of how

Foucault's ideas on power can illuminate the field of educational administration. The

deployment of a range of discursive techniques has been an essential element in the legitimating

of educational policies and management practices in a period of rapid change. According to

Turan (2000), citizens have not comprehended the importance of participatory democracy in

Turkey since the Turkish government has not made the necessary arrangements in schools which

would create a democratic environment or prepared the administrators who would implement

those arrangements.

School councils and practices for cooperative decision-making have been seen in Canada,

the U.S., New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom (Malen & Ogawa, 1992; Mohrman,

Wohlstetter & Associates, 1994; Murphy & Beck, 1995). These practices have also been started

in Turkey.

Democracy education has consistently been discussed in Turkey. One of 15 basic

principles in Turkish education is to provide democracy education (Official Gazette, 24 June

1973). Considering the legal fundamentals of education, this indicates the importance that is

attached to education. However, the quality of democracy education has frequently been

discussed. Theoretical teaching in democracy education in Turkey has been dominant, and

attitudes and skills have been ignored until recent years. With respect to the theoretical teaching

of democracy to students, subjects regarding human rights and democracy have been included in

other lessons. In addition, lessons regarding "human rights and democracy" are beginning to be

taught in elementary and senior schools after the relevant program was recently developed in

Turkey. However, it is claimed that the contents of these lesson are insufficient (Kepenekçi,

2000) and the subjects of human rights and democracy are not properly emphasized in lesson

books (İnal, 2004; Akbaşlı, 2000).

Theoretical aspects of democracy were discussed within lessons; however, there was no

practical application that could help students relate to democracy at schools. Thus, discussions of

organising school councils began in Turkey, and "The project for Democracy Education and

School Councils -PDESA" was put into effect. This project was enabled by a protocol signed

between the Ministry of National Education (MNE) and the Turkish Grand National Assembly

(TGNA) on 13 January 2004, and was based on the idea that democracy can only be learned

through practice. In the same year, pilot practices of the project began at 300 schools. Due to the

positive results that were obtained, PDESA was implemented in all schools across Turkey in the

2004-2005 academic years. "The project for Democracy Education and School Councils -

PDESA," executed by the Ministry of National Education (MNE) and the Turkish Grand

National Assembly (TGNA), cooperatively aims to raise children, starting at early ages, with an

awareness of democracy. This will make students more sensitive to democratic subjects, such as

elections, becoming elected, voting, critical thinking, cooperation, participation, forming public

opinion, and the adoption of democratic leadership (MEB, 2007).

There are three separate councils in the execution of this project. First, the school

assembly is founded according to the votes of all students at the school; this assembly assigns

one student as president through election. The City's Student Assembly is founded on a general

city basis, and assigns one student as president through election, who is then sent to the TGNA to

represent the city assembly. The presidents coming from various cities make up the Turkish

Students' Assembly, and discuss matters relevant to education in their cities during Sovereignty

Week, which starts on the April 23rd of each year. The City's Student Assembly notifies the

Minister of National Assembly of its decisions, reached during this week, as recommendations

for education (Tezgel, 2006).

There is no doubt that school managers and teachers are key factors in democracy

education and in the execution of the projects for school Councils. Studies on attitudes, thoughts

and behaviours of managers and teachers with respect to Turkish democracy education indicate

that managers and teachers adopt democratic principles and also consider themselves sufficient

to practice them at school (Bilgen, 1993; Işıkgöz, 1999). However, there are often shortcomings

in teachers' democratic behaviours (Ertürk, 1970; Tezcan; 1982; Gözütok, 1995; Şahin, 1995).

The physical conditions of schools often obstruct teachers' abilities to demonstrate democratic

behaviours (Yeşil, 2001). Studies conducted after the implementation of democracy education

and the Project for School councils confirm the results mentioned above. Accordingly, teachers'

opinions on democracy are positive, and they believe that democracy can only be learned

through education. Therefore, they reported positive views regarding the project; however, there

are a number of problems with respect to execution due to school conditions. Teachers complain

that participatory mechanisms cannot be instituted at schools, and that school managements have

general intentions to supervise participation and keep the project under control (Cılga, 2004;

Emir  & Kaya, 2004; Kıncal & Uygun, 2006; Metin, 2006). However, these studies were

conducted only a short time after the project was put into effect. Consequently, it was assumed

that teachers were still experiencing difficulties in satisfying the requirements of the project for

democracy; therefore, results obtained before the project is fully and correctly integrated may be

subject to change. As a result, it was decided to review the practicability of school councils at the

end of the third year.

The aim of this study is to determine teachers' views about democracy education and the Project for School Councils and its practice. The key role of teachers in democracy education and the importance of practising the concepts at school and in class have both been highlighted in the literature (Giroux & Penna, 1983; Holmes, 1991). Thus, teachers' contributions to the execution of the project will remain high, and there is no doubt that opinions on the project will directly affect the result of its execution.

**Method**

**Participants**

This is a descriptive study and was carried out on 235 managers and teachers working in Istanbul and Bursa at the end of the 2006-2007 academic years. Istanbul and Bursa are intensely populated cities, and are also industrial and commercial centres. Migration to these cities occurs at high rates. As a result, schools in these cities contain students from lower, middle, and higher socio-economic classes. Table 1 shows data regarding the schools in which the participants work.

Table 1

*Distributions of the Schools at Which the Participants Included In the Sample Work*

| City | Elementary School | | Senior School | | Vocational High School | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* | *N* | *%* | *n* | *%* |
| Istanbul | 61 | 45.9 | 29 | 21.8 | 43 | 32.3 | 133 | 100 |
| Bursa | 50 | 49.0 | 25 | 24.5 | 27 | 26.5 | 102 | 100 |
| Total | 111 | 47.2 | 54 | 23.0 | 70 | 29.8 | 235 | 100 |

Almost half of those participating in this research (%47.2) work at elementary schools. 29.8 and 23 percent of the participants work at vocational high schools and senior high school respectively.

Table 2 shows data regarding personal features of the participants who were included in the study.

Table 2

*Distributions of Personal Features of the Participants Who Were Included In the Study*

| Options | | 1 | 2 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male | Female | – |
| Gender | *n* | 130 | 105 | 235 |
| | % | 44.7 | 55.3 | 100.0 |
| | | Manager | Teacher | – |
| Job | *n* | 19 | 216 | 235 |
| | % | 8.1 | 91.9 | 100.0 |
| | | School of Education | Other Faculty | – |
| Education | *n* | 155 | 80 | 235 |
| | % | 66.0 | 34.0 | 100.0 |

As can be seen at table 2, the ratios of participants were mostly female (55.3 %), teachers (91.9 %), and graduates of School of Education (66 %).

**Instrument**

In the study, the researchers developed the Perception Scale for the Project for

Democracy Assembly (PSPDA), which was applied to the teachers. The scale was designed to question the views of the teachers regarding democracy education and the school council's project applied in elementary and senior schools. The correlations of item-total and item-residue were calculated based on data collected from 235 teachers in order to determine the distinguishing powers of the individual criteria of the 37 questions in the draft form with respect to its features. Correlation coefficients, which were obtained in item-total correlations, ranged between 0.19 and 0.80; item-residue correlations ranged between 0.23 and 0.78. All items were statistically meaningful. To determine the distinguishing power of the items existing in the draft form, raw scores (which were obtained from the scales) were ordered from highest to lowest. The scores can also be evaluated in one dimension due to the total point, which may be obtained from the form. A significant difference at a level of *p<.01* was determined by comparing this ordering result with the average scores of the lower and upper groups of 27% through an independent group t test. Analytic and Confirmatory factor analyses were employed to determine the structural validity of PSPDA.

**Analytic factor analysis**

For analytic factor analysis, Kaiser Meyer was calculated as Olkin=.943, and Bartlet analysis was calculated as [p<.01]. The perpendicular axial rotating technique was then performed to generalise the data to be obtained from the scale in this study. The Varimax technique for perpendicular axial rotation was preferred due to the multifactor nature of the scale (Kline, 1994; Stapleton, 1997; Stewens, 1996; Rennie, 1997). It was understood that the items of the scale consisted of two (2) subscales. The specific values of each subscale are greater than 1. The total of the specific values of the subscales in the scale is 11.87. The explained variance percentage total is 56.57, and factor charges for the items of the subscales range between 0.44

and 0.78 (*see* Table 3).

When factor analysis was repeated for the remaining 21 items resulting from factor analysis, it was seen that the factor charges of these items were higher in only the subscale directly below. These subscales are as follows:

(*i*) Awareness of democracy: This consists of sixteen items, which are all positive. High scores obtained for this scale indicate that the project will help in raising awareness of democracy in the individuals.

Samples from the items:

(1) Endeavouring to be elected is a good opportunity for students to bring their personal characteristics to the fore.

(2) PDESA encourages students to express their ideas.

Table 3
*The Results of Analytic Factor Analysis for the PSPDA Scale*

| Subscales Item No | Awareness of democracy Factor charge | National and global values Factor charge |
|---|---|---|
| ITEM 15 | .83 | |
| ITEM 23 | .76 | |
| ITEM 14 | .72 | |
| ITEM 29 | .71 | |
| ITEM 28 | .69 | |
| ITEM 25 | .68 | |
| ITEM 30 | .68 | |
| ITEM 24 | .67 | |
| ITEM 17 | .67 | |
| ITEM 3 | .67 | |
| ITEM 20 | .66 | |
| ITEM 31 | .63 | |
| ITEM 27 | .62 | |
| ITEM 16 | .61 | |
| ITEM 9 | .59 | |
| ITEM 18 | .57 | |
| ITEM 6 | | .82 |
| ITEM 7 | | .78 |
| ITEM 21 | | .74 |
| ITEM 8 | | .57 |
| ITEM 11 | | .53 |
| Specific value | 7.80 | 4.07 |
| Explained Variance | 37.18 | 19.38 |

(*ii*) National and global values: This consists of five items, all of which are positive. High scores obtained for this scale indicate that the project will contribute to raising national and global values in the individuals.

Samples from the items:

(1) PDESA will help to raise awareness of scientific thinking in students.

(2) PDESA will help to raise awareness of being open to global values in students.

**Confirmatory factor analysis**

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed in two stages as another effort to support the scale's structural validity. In the first stage, it was determined whether the estimated values exceeded the theoretical limits before evaluation of the Confirmatory analysis results of the subscales (which were obtained as a result of analytic factor analysis of the scale). According to the results, no values were found to exceed the theoretical limits. The consistency indices for Confirmatory factor analysis seen on Table 4 were calculated as chi-square $(\chi^2)$ value $[\chi^2=241.64,\ df=89,\ p<.01]$ for the scale. Also, other consistency wellness indices $[GFI=0.88,\ AGFI=0.84,\ PGFI=0.65]$ show that the model recommended for scale is suitable. Furthermore, factor charges, which were obtained in the confirmatory factor analysis for the scale, range between 0.54 and 0.81.

Table 4

*Consistency Parameters of the Scale for the Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model*

| Consistency parameter | Coefficient |
|---|---|
| GFI | 0.88 |
| AGFI | 0.84 |
| PGFI | 0.65 |
| *Df* | 89 |
| $\chi^2$ | 241.64 |
| $\chi^2/df$ | 2.71 |

*Cronbach's Alpha* coefficients for interrelation in the scale were found to be 0.80 and 0.94 for the subscales, and 0.94 for the scale in general. Table 5 shows the *Cronbach's Alpha*

coefficients of subscales and item numbers of the subscales of the scale.

Table 5

*Reliability Coefficients of the Subscales and Item Numbers*

| Subscales | n | Item number | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1- Awareness of democracy | 235 | 16 | 0.80 |
| 2- National and global values | 235 | 5 | 0.94 |
| TOTAL | 235 | 21 | 0.94 |

Table 5 shows the scale is consist of two subscales (awareness of democracy, and national and global values). *Cronbach's Alpha* coefficients of subscales are 0.80 and 0.94. .

**Analysing the data**

In the study, demographic variables of the sample group were grouped before statistical analysis, and the scale was then scored according to a 5-point Likert system. Sample number ($n$), describing demographic features of the teachers included in the sample, as well as percentage values (%), were calculated. Sample number ($n$), mean ($X$), and standard deviation ($SD$) scores were calculated for the scores obtained by the scale. The distribution of the data was checked. Kolmogorov-Smirnov's normality test was performed to determine whether the distribution was normal. According to the result of the test ($p<.05$), the data was not distributed normally. In other words, the distribution was non-parametric.

Table 6

*Test of Normality: Kolmogorov-Smirnov*

| Dimension | Z | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1- Awareness of democracy | 2.32 | 235 | .012 |
| 2- National and global values | 1.78 | 235 | .013 |
| TOTAL | 1.43 | 235 | .033 |

Accordingly,

- The *Mann-Whitney-U Test* was employed to determine whether the scores of the teachers included in the sample varied depending on gender and job variables.
- The *Kruskal Wallis-H Test* was employed to determine whether the scores of the teachers included in the sample varied depending on the following variables: the type of school in which the teachers worked and the socio-economic level of the school's district.
- If variation was seen between the groups according to the *Kruskal Wallis H Test*, the *Many Whitney-U Test* was employed to determine the cause of the variation [between the groups].
- *Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis* was employed to determine the relationships between the scores of the teachers and their experiences.

**Findings**

The findings of the research are as follows:  Table 7 shows the results of the *Many Whitney-U Test* for variations in participants' views regarding the school council's project depending on gender.

Table 7

*Mann-Whitney U-Test Results for Participants Depending on Gender*

| Subscale | Female n=105 | | Male n=130 | | U | z | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | X | SD | X | SD | | | |
| 1- Awareness of democracy | 4.09 | .55 | 3.91 | .62 | 5400.0 | -2.756 | .006 |
| 2- National and global values | 3.87 | .62 | 3.54 | .73 | 5069.5 | -3.409 | .001 |
| TOTAL | 7.97 | 1.10 | 7.45 | 1.22 | 5012.5 | -3.499 | .000 |

According to the statistical results, meaningful variations were found for female participants in favour of the School Councils  Project in the subscales of Awareness of democracy and National and global values, as well as in the total. That is, female managers and teachers are more positive about the School Councils Project than males.

Table 8 shows the results of the *Mann-Whitney-U Test* for variations in participants' views about the school council's project depending on the job variable.

Table 8

*Mann-Whitney U-Test Results for Participants Depending on the Job Variable*

| Subscales | Manager n=19 | | Teacher n=216 | | U | z | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | X | SD | X | SD | | | |
| 1-Awareness of democracy | 3.76 | .65 | 4.01 | .59 | 1591.0 | -1.626 | .104 |
| 2-National and global values | 3.53 | .64 | 3.70 | .71 | 1739.0 | -1.109 | .268 |
| TOTAL | 7.30 | 1.03 | 7.72 | 1.20 | 1561.5 | -1.727 | .084 |

According to the statistical results, no meaningful variations were found for the school councils project in the subscales of Awareness of democracy and National and global values, or in the total. Thereby, the opinions of participants about School Councils Project do not change whether they are managers of teachers. This is an important finding. It would have been thought that managers would perceive such projects negatively since managers worry that students can have more power in school administration (Levin, 1998), the discipline and governance of the school might be disturbed by the propaganda and election campaigns (Furman & Starratt, 2002). However, managers are aware of the importance of School Councils Project and perceive it positively like teachers.

Table 9 shows the results of the *Kruskal Wallis-H Test* for variations in participants' views about the school council's project between groups divided according to the socio-economic levels of particular school districts.

Table 9

*Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results for Participants Depending on the Socio-Economic Levels of the Districts in Which the Schools Exist*

| Subscales | Group | *n* | $X_{rank}$ | *df* | *p* | *Variation* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lower | 89 | 120.02 | | | |
| 1- Awareness of democracy | Middle | 134 | 118.69 | 2 | .488 | – |
| | Upper | 12 | 95.29 | | | |
| | Lower | 89 | 116.67 | | | |
| 2- National and global values | Middle | 134 | 118.11 | 2 | .892 | – |
| | Upper | 12 | 126.58 | | | |
| | Lower | 89 | 116.13 | | | |
| TOTAL | Middle | 134 | 119.46 | 2 | .930 | – |
| | Upper | 12 | 115.54 | | | |

According to the statistical results, no meaningful variations were found for the School Councils Project in the subscales of awareness of democracy and national and global values, or in the total. That is, the opinions of the participants do not change according to socio economical level of schools at which they work. It had been assumed that those participants working at low socio-economical environments would have perceived this projects negatively since the process of the election might have been troublesome in those schools. However, these managers and teachers do not worry about the process of the elections.

Table 10 shows the results of the *Kruskal Wallis-H Test* for variations in participants' views about the school council's project depending on the school type variable.

Table 10

*Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results for Participants Teachers Depending on the School Type*

| Subscales | Group | n | $X_{rank}$ | df | P | Variation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Elementary School | 111 | 126.12 | | | |
| 1- Awareness of democracy | Senior High School | 54 | 104.59 | 2 | .150 | – |
| | Vocational  High School | 70 | 115.47 | | | |
| | Elementary School | 111 | 129.24 | | | |
| 2- National and global values | Senior High School | 54 | 103.32 | 2 | .043 | 1-2 |
| | Vocational  High School | 70 | 111.49 | | | |
| | Elementary School | 111 | 129.13 | | | |
| TOTAL | Senior High School | 54 | 102.38 | 2 | .043 | 1-2 |
| | Vocational  High School | 70 | 112.40 | | | |

According to table 10, it was found that variation occurs between elementary and senior school managers and teachers. The variation is in favour of the elementary school managers and teachers according to the results of the *Many Whitney-U Test* performed to determine which groups caused the variation. However, no meaningful variation was found for the school council's project in the subscale of Awareness of democracy. These results show that managers and teachers in elementary schools perceive this project more positively. The reason why high school managers and teachers perceive this project negatively might be that there would be undesirable interactions among students during elections such as fighting.

Table 11 shows the results of the *Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis* done to determine the correlation between participants' views on the school council's project and their job experience.

Table 11

*Pearson Correlation Matrix between Participants' Views and Their Job Experience*

| Variables | Awareness of democracy | National and global values | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Job experience | -.060 | -.057 | -.063 |
| *n*=235 | | | |

According to the statistical results, no meaningful correlation were found for the school councils project in the subscales of Awareness of democracy and National and global values, or in the total. Namely, there is no relationship between job experience and the opinions about School Council Project. In fact, as the seniority of managers and teachers increase, they might have been expected to have negative opinions about this project. However, it is very important that there is no finding in this research supporting this expectation. This means that, this project does not meet considerable resistance by managers and teachers in schools

**Discussion**

Turkey, which is a candidate for member statehood in the European Union, is undertaking efforts to satisfy EU criteria. Accordingly, it is making changes in its social welfare and education systems, in addition to its official government bodies. Without a doubt, one of the most important criteria of change is to make democracy an integral part of Turkey's social life. Strengthening social attachment and enabling the efficient participation of citizens in social and political life are among the essential considerations of governments and the EU. Schools are considered to be important organisations that can contribute significantly to the socialisation of citizens and the future development of democracy. Accordingly, the Council of Europe

announced that 2005 was 'European Citizenship Year through Education' (Council of Europe, 2008). The Council of Europe wishes to highlight the importance of education by raising awareness of citizenship and through participation in democratic society. It was seen in many European states in recent elections that participation and interest in political life and public life are decreasing, which is cause for concern, especially with regard to young people. This organisation aims to make young people aware of the need to participate in democratic life. The Council of Europe aims to highlight individuals' critical thinking abilities, as well as their abilities to discuss matters within the limits of tolerance and logic (Kepenekçi, 2000). Thus, the development of individuals who have adopted democracy into their social lives and are respectful of democracy has become increasingly important. The Turkish education system has been modified such that the lessons of democracy and human rights have been put into schools, and these subjects are now taught in Social Information lessons. The second stage requires that students learn democracy through experimentation and practical experience at schools. Accordingly, the project for democracy education and school councils was put into effect. It is expected that democracy will effectively take place in school life if this project is successfully completed.

Without a doubt, two of the most important factors for integrating democracy into schools are managers and teachers. Some of the most important tools in the project are the attitudes, beliefs, and views of teachers regarding democracy and democratic practices at school. The study shows that managers and teachers view the project favourably and believe in its benefits for students. This result is very important, especially since managers and teachers retain favourable views despite the additional workloads incurred due to the project. Also, it is significant that managers and teachers have taken on such views since the beginning of the

project in light of the fact that many managers and teachers had poor views on the benefits of

school councils in the beginning (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). Another important finding is

that managers and teachers' positive views do not vary according to the school's socio-economic

level. It was possible that staff at schools with lower socio-economic level would think that

students could not benefit sufficiently from the project due to their lower socio-economic

conditions. Another interesting finding is that no correlation was found between the staff's job

experience and their views on the project. It is well-known that resistance to change increases

with increasing experience and age (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Gonzalez, Nelson, Gutkin &

Shwery, 2004; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2008; Şimşek & Seashore, 2008). It is significant that the

staffs' views on student council, as well as participation at older ages, were positive. More

positive views from the staff working for elementary schools are normal. It may be said that

students of elementary schools may benefit more from the project compared with those attending

senior schools

The important matter is whether this council will be effective in school management and

practice. For example, Leithwood & Menzies (1998) failed to find strong proof for direct or

indirect effects in their reviews, which covered 83 studies on the effects of site-based

management and school councils. It must be said that various factors influence the effectiveness

of school councils. These factors include: the makeup of the councils in direct relation to student

participation (Wohlstetter et. al., 1994), the council's goals, clearly-defined objectives and

purpose (Daresh, 1992; Jenni, 1991; Malen, Ogawa & Kranz, 1990), and the management style

of the council (Easton & Storey, 1994). In considering the school councils project from these

points of view, the election process for making up the council was clearly defined. However, the

council's goals and mission were not defined. In fact, students in the council were not authorised

to make decisions in the school, and they carried no significant responsibilities. The authority is mostly held by a central organisation in the ministry, and partially by school managers, as was previously the case.

As a result, although staff members have had positive views regarding the school Councils  project, the lack of power and responsibility of the councils will turn project practices into a mere ritual. Unfortunately, the lack of power and responsibility of the councils (and consequently, the students) indicates that the traditional approach is still valid; this approach underestimates student participation in decision-making processes, considering them to be insufficient, illiterate, and unreliable. However, when schools fail to rely on students, who account for the main element of the school, the school fails to rely on democracy. Development of a democratic lifestyle at school depends on raising awareness of 'us' in a school's mentality. Consequently, the project should be seated on strong foundations, relieved of its mere 'project' status, and made into a reality in practice. In addition, school councils should be authorised as required by a democratic lifestyle. As a result, individuals will make democracy a lifestyle in the future, which will influence and contribute to the development of democracy in society. For these reasons, Turkish Ministry of Education should give more power to the school councils since this research reveals that managers and teachers favor school councils. Thus, these educators are not expected to resist or obstruct the activities of school councils. In this respect, the power of school councils should be increased and its participation in school administration should be encouraged. As a result of this, democracy will strongly take place at schools and students will acquire more easily the democratically attitudes.

This research reveals the opinions of managers and teachers about School Councils Project. The same topic can be studied with different samplings. Moreover, quantitative and

qualitative research can be conducted to find the possible problems in the operation of school

councils in high schools. Since senior high school managers and teachers perceive this project

more negatively, the reasons for this negative perception can be studied in detail by conducting

research in high schools.

## References

Achinstein, B., & Ogawa, R. T. (2006). Fidelity: What the resistance of new teachers reveals about professional principles and prescriptive educational policies. *Harvard Educational Review, 76*(1), 30-63.

Akbaşlı, S. (2000). İlköğretim II. kademe vatandaşlık ve insan hakları eğitimi ders kitaplarının değerlendirilmesi [The analysis of human rights and civics education at the second level of the Turkish elementary schools]. Unpublished master's thesis, Selçuk University, Konya, Turkey.

Alderson, P. (2000). School students' views on  school councils and daily life at school. *Children & Society, 14*(2), 121-134.

Anderson G. & Grinberg, J. (1998). Educational administration as a disciplinary practice: appropriating Foucault's view of power, discourse and method. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 34(3), 329-353.

Baginsky, M., & Hannam, D. (1999). *School councils: The views of students and teachers*. London: NSPCC.

Beane, J.A. (2005). *A reason to teach: creating classrooms of dignity and hope.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Bilgen, H. N. (1993). *Çağdaş ve demokratik eğitim* [Modern and democratic education]. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı.

Calabrese, R. L. (1990). The public school: A source of alienation for minority parents. *Journal of Negro Education, 59,* 148-154.

Capper, C. (1993). Educational administration in a pluralistic society: A multiparadigm approach. In C. Capper (Ed.) *Education in a pluralistic society*. (pp. 1-35). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Capper, C. (1998). Critically oriented and postmodern perspectives: Sorting out the differences and applications for practice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 34 (3), 354-379.

Capper, C. (1999). (Homo) sexualities, organizations and administration: Possibilities for in (queery). *Educational Researcher, 28*(5), 4-12.

Cılga, İ. (2004). *Okulda katılımcı demokrasi modeli* [Model of participatory democracy in school]. Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Clune, W., & White, P. (1988). *School-based management: Institutional variations, implementation, and issues for further research*. New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Policy Research in Education.

Conley, D. (1991). *Restructuring schools: Educators adapt to a changing world*. Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearing House on Educational Management.

Conley, D. (1993). *Roadmap to restructuring: Policies, practices, and emerging visions of schooling*. Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearing House on Educational Management.

Cotmore, R. (2003) 'Organisational competence: the study of a school council in action', *Children & Society, 18,* 53-65.

Cotmore, R. (2004). Organizational competence of a school council. *Children & Society, 18*(1), 53-65.

Council of Europe (2008). 2005 European Year of Citizenship through education. Retrieved January 13, 2009, from http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/ECD/intro.asp.

Daresh, J. (1992) Impressions of school-based management: The Cincinnati story. In J. J. Lane, & E. G. Epps (Eds.), *Restructuring the schools: Problems and prospects* (pp.109-121). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Derrida, J. (1982*). Margins of philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. (1984).Deconstructions and the other: An interview with Jacques Derrida. In R. Kearney (Ed), *Dialogues with contemporary continental thinkers* (pp.107–126). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Easton, J. Q., & Storey, S. L. (1994). The development of local school councils'. *Education and Urban Society, 26*(3), 220-237.

Emir, S., & Kaya, Z. (2004). Demokrasi eğitimi ve okul meclislerine yönelik öğretmen görüşleri [Democracy education and teachers opinions about the student councils project]. *Abant İzzet Baysal Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 4*(8), 69-89.

Ertürk, S. (1970). *On yıl öncesine kıyasla öğretmen davranışları* [Ten years ago, compared the behavior of teachers]. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı.

Foster, W. (1986*). Paradigms and promises: New approaches to educational administration*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. NY: Vintage.

Foucault, M. (1992). What is enlightenment? In P. Waugh (Ed), *Postmodernism: A reader* (pp.96–107). London: Edward Arnold.

Furman, G & Starratt, R. (2002). Leadership for democratic community in schools. In J. Murphy

(Ed.), *The educational leadership challenge: Redefining leadership for the 21st century*, Part I, (pp. 105-103). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Giroux, H. A., & Penna, A. N. (1983) Social education in the classroom: The dynamics of the hidden curriculum. In  G. Henry, & D. Purpel (Eds.), *The hidden curriculum and moral education* (pp.100-120). Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Gonzalez, J. E., Nelson, J. R., Gutkin, T. B., & Shwery, C. S. (2004). Teacher resistance to school-based consultation with school psychologists: A survey of teacher perceptions. *Journal of Emotional & Behavioral Disorders, 12*(1), 30-37.

Gözütok, F. D. (1995). *Öğretmenlerin demokratik tutumları* [Democratic attitudes of teachers]. Ankara: Türk Demokrasi Vakfı.

Holmes, E. E. (1991). Democracy in elementary school classrooms. *Social Education, 55*, 176-178.

İnal, K. (2004). *Eğitim ve İktidar: Türkiye'de ders kitaplarında demokratik ve milliyetçi değerler* [Education and Power: In Turkey, the democratic and nationalist values in textbooks]. Ankara: Ütopya.

Işıkgöz, E. (1999). *Demokrasi eğitiminde ilköğretim okulu yöneticilerinin etkililiği* [The Effectiveness of the elementary school directors in democracy education]. Unpublished master's thesis, Sakarya University, Sakarya, Turkey.

Jenni, R. (1991). Application of the school-based management process development model. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 2*, 136-151.

Kepenekçi, Y. K. (2000). *İnsan hakları eğitimi* [Human rights Education]. Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.

Kıncal, R. Y., & Uygun, S. (2006). Demokrasi eğitimi ve okul meclisleri projesi uygulamalarının değerlendirilmesi [The evaluation of democracy education and school council project]. *Milli Eğitim, 37*(171), 31-42.

Kline, P. (1994) *An easy guide to factor analysis.* New York: Routledge.

Leithwood, K., & Menzies, T. (1998). Forms and effects of school-based management: A review. *Educational Policy, 12*(3), 325-346.

Levin, B. (1998). The Educational Requirement for Democracy. *Curriculum Inquiry, 28*(1), 57-79.

Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Malen, B. & Ogawa, R. (1988.) Professional-patron influence on site-based governance councils: A confounding case study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *10*(4), 251-270.

Malen, B., & Ogawa, R. T. (1992). Site - based management: Disconcerting policy issues, Critical policy choices, In J. Lane, & E. Epps  (Eds.), *Restructuring schools: concepts and cases* (pp.185-206).  National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Malen, B., Ogawa, R., & Kranz, J. (1990.) What do we know about school-based management? A case study of the literature, a call for research. In W. H. Clune, & L. Witte (Eds.), *Choice and control in American education Volume 2: The practice of choice, decentralization and school restructuring* (pp. 289-342). Philadelphia: Falmer.

Maxcy, S. (1991). *Educational leadership: A critical pragmatic perspective*. NY: Bergin.

Maxcy, S. (1995). Democracy, chaos, and the new school order. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

McKenzie, K. B., & Scheurich, J. J. (2008). Teacher resistance to improvement of schools with diverse students. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *11*(2), 117-133.

MEB (2007). *Demokrasi eğitimi ve okul meclisleri projesi* [Democracy, education and school councils project]. Retrieved January 13, 2009, from www.okulmeclisleri/meb.gov.tr.

MEB. (2002). *Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education*. Ankara: MEB.

Metin, T. (2006). *Demokrasi eğitimi ve okul meclisleri projesine öğretmen ve okul yöneticilerinin katılım düzeyi* [Participation level of the teachers and administrators staff of the school to the democracy education and school councils]. Unpublished master's thesis, Kırıkkale University, Kırıkkale, Turkey.

Mohrman, S. A., & Wohlstetter, P. (1994). *School-based management: Organizing for high performance.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mosher, R., Kenny, R. A., & Garrod, A. (1994). *Preparing for citizenship: Teaching youth to live democratically.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Murphy, J. & Beck, L. (1995). *School-based management as school reform: Taking stock*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Official Gazette (24 June 1973). *Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu* (1739 S. K.) No: 14574.

Parker, K., & Leithwood, K. (2000) School councils' influence on school and classroom practice. *Peabody Journal of Education, 75*(4), 37-65.

Perlin, G. (2004). *International assistance to democratic development: A review.* IRPP Working Paper Series no. 2003-04. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy.. Retrieved May 15, 2010, from http://www.irpp.org/wp/archive/wp2003-04.pdf.

Rennie, K. M. (1997). *Exploratory and confirmatory rotation strategies in exploratory factor analysis*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED406446).

Rusch, E. A. (1994). *Gaining voice: Democratic praxis in restructured schools*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED374500).

Şahin, A. (1995). *İlköğretim okullarında yönetimin demokrasi ve otokrasi boyutlarında arasındaki yeri* [The Position of the administration between the dimension of democracy anf autocaracy in elementary education schools]. Unpublished master's thesis, Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey.

Şimşek, H., & Seashore, K. (2008). Teacher unions, new unionism and shifting cultural metaphors. *Eğitim Araştırmaları*, *31*, 93-113.

Stapleton, C. D. (1997). *Basic concepts and procedures of confirmatory factor analysis.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED407416).

Stewens, J. (1996). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social science*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Tarman, B. (2008). *The European Union and the Modernization of the Turkish Education System*. New York: Cambria Press.

Tezcan, M. (1982). *Kuşaklar çatışması: Okuyan ve çalışan gençlik üzerine bir araştırma* [Generations of conflict: a survey on youth and working] Ankara: Kadıoğlu matbaası.

Tezgel, R. (2006). *Demokrasi eğitimi ve okul meclisleri* [Democracy, education and school councils]. Ankara: TBMM.

Turan, S. (2000). John Dewey's report of 1924 and his recommendations on the Turkish Educational System Revisited. *History of Education*, *29*(6), 543–555.

Veugelers, W., & Kat, E. De (2003). *Moral and democratic education in public elementary schools.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED479166).

WHED, (no date). *World higher education database*. London: Macmillan.

Wohlstetter, P., Smyer, R., & Mohrman, S. (1994). New boundaries for school-based management: The high-involvement model. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 16*(3), 268-286.

Yeşil, R. (2001). *İlköğretim düzeyinde okul ve ailenin demokratik davranışlar kazandırmadaki etkisi* [The Effects of schools and families on the elementary school students in the process of gaining democratic behaviours] Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Turkey.

**About the Authors**

*Authors*: Sedat Yüksel & Engin Karadağ

*Affiliation*: Uludag University & Eskisehir Osmangazi University

*Address*: Uludag University, Education Faculty, Department of Educational Sciences, 16059 Gorukle, Bursa, Turkey

*Email*: sedaty@uludag.edu.tr

*Biographical information*:

Sedat Yüksel is an associate professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Uludag University. His research interests include hidden curriculum, student resistance, democracy education and effect of teaching courses in teacher education.

Engin Karadağ is an assistant professor of Elementary Education at Eskisehir Osmangazi University. His research interests include educational leadership, social constructivism, advanced educational statistics.

# Current Issues in Education

## editorial team