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The Structural Relationship Between
Fluent Reading, Reading Comprehension and Eye Movements[1]

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Abstract

Since reading and meaning-making are basic skills that students continuously use in their academic lives, efforts are made to help students acquire these skills from an early age. However, it is frequently stated in various studies and reports that students still have reading and comprehension problems. Studies for the solution of these problems firstly depend on revealing the reasons that may be related to the problems. In this sense, different direct or indirect measurements have been made for years. However, today, with the development of technology, more detailed data has started to be produced in the field of reading as in every field. For example, tracking eye movements with high accuracy while reading is an important achievement of technology in this field. Eye movements, which are still a new field of study, and their relationship with different variables of reading have become the focus of researchers' attention. However, how eye movements occur in the reading process and how this affects reading and reading comprehension is not sufficiently known in terms of both national and international literature. In In this study, students were asked to read texts aloud using an eye-tracking device, and their reading comprehension and fluency skills were measured. The study group of the research consists of 284 third grade primary school students and the study was conducted in the survey model. The measurement results obtained from the research aimed to reveal how students' eye movements during reading affect reading fluency and comprehension. As a result of the research, significant relationships were found between fluent reading skills, reading comprehension and eye movements. Accordingly, a positive relationship was found between fluent reading and reading comprehension. A negative relationship was found between fluent reading and eye movements. On the other hand, no significant relationship was found between eye movements and reading comprehension. In the context of other studies in the literature, the research findings were examined and analyzed.

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Introduction

Reading is an important component of individuals' knowledge acquisition and learning process; it is considered as the cornerstone of academic success and lifelong learning. Reading involves not only decoding the text, but also the process of making sense of it quickly and effectively. Today, the complex cognitive and neurological mechanisms underlying the reading process can be better analysed through research (Ye et al., 2022). The relationship between fluent reading, reading comprehension and eye movements has become an important field of study for researchers in recent years (Castelhano & Rayner, 2008).

When a person reads without comprehension and with dysfunctional literacy, he/she cannot use the information related to the text in his/her own life. Until recently, the high number of illiterate individuals was one of the most important problems of education systems (UNESCO, 2005). In the latest PISA 2022 report, it is seen that most of the students in Türkiye are at an inadequate level in reading comprehension (OECD, 2023). As in the rest of the world, reading comprehension is one of the common educational problems in Türkiye and there is not enough research on the causes of this problem. Especially as a preventive approach, eliminating the causes of reading problems is a very important issue.

The ability to read and make meaning is a skill that is tried to be acquired by children from an early age. One of the reasons why reading skills are so important is that it has a decisive place in students' academic lives. This situation has been addressed in many studies in terms of both academic life and motivational variables (Chevalier et al., 2017; Koç and Arslan, 2015; Urška, 2013; Ünal and İşeri, 2012; Yıldız, 2013). In order to make more detailed inferences about the quality of reading skill, this skill should be directly observed. Especially in studies on affective and motivational variables of reading, it is not possible to observe these variables directly. Variables such as accurate reading, reading speed and prosody constitute the directly observable aspect of reading. It is theoretically possible to say that direct observation produces clearer data than indirect observations. Therefore, it is possible to argue that new variables should be added to the observable dimension of reading or new data should be produced through detailed analyses. With the development of technology in recent years, it has become possible to produce more detailed data in the field of reading as in every field. For example, tracking eye movements with high accuracy while reading is an important achievement of technology in this field.

The reading comprehension process is influenced by many cognitive, linguistic and environmental factors. Cognitive factors include phonological awareness (Wagner et al., 2013), working memory capacity (Nouwens, et al., 2021) and attention processes (Duke et al., 2021). Linguistic factors include vocabulary (Smith et al., 2021), morphological awareness (Kotzer et al., 2021) and syntactic skills (Mackay et al., 2021); while environmental factors include reading experience (Kaban & Karadeniz, 2021), educational interventions (Donegan & Wanzek, 2021) and family support (Buckingham et al., 2013). Wade-Woolley et al. (2021) examined the effect of prosodic reading on reading comprehension and empirically supported the role of prosodic reading in the comprehension process.

Fluent reading skills have an important place in students' academic success as well as reading comprehension. Recent neuroimaging studies have revealed the relationship between the development of fluent reading skills and brain activation. Lee and Stoodley (2024) stated that the brain activation patterns of fluent readers differ from individuals with reading difficulties. Locher and Pfost (2019) put forward the concept of "Matthew Effect" and stated that students who acquire fluent reading skills in the early period improve their skills by practicing more reading over time, while students who have difficulty in this skill avoid reading and the problem deepens over time. Kang and Shin (2019) emphasised the importance of systematic and regular interventions in the development of reading fluency skills. Similarly, Duke et al. (2021), in a meta-analysis study examining the effectiveness of strategies used in fluent reading instruction, stated that repeated reading and supported reading strategies showed significant effects. These strategies stand out as effective tools for students to improve their fluent reading skills. Ecalle et al. (2020) stated that the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension has strengthened over time and that these two skills support each other and increase the overall reading performance of the reader.

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Eye movements during the reading process provide us with clear data to better understand and make inferences in the areas of reading comprehension and reading fluency. Hindmarsh et al. (2021) state that eye movements in the reading process consist of three basic types of movements: Saccadic movements (forward jumps), fixations (focussations) and regressions (returns). Each of these movements provides important information about how the reader processes the text. Saccadic (leap) movements refer to rapid transitions of the eye from one point to another. The movement of the eye to the right and left, during which the eye does not perceive new information, is called a saccade. When this movement progresses forward, it is referred to as a progressive saccade, and when it moves backward, it is called a regressive saccade. The eye movement from the end of one line to the beginning of the next is known as a return sweep. Lastly, the movement in which the eye remains stable and perceives new information is called fixation (Ayhan, 2019). Fixations are the moments when the eye is fixed at a certain point and visual information is processed during this time. The average fixation duration is 200-250 milliseconds (Castelhano and Rayner, 2008). Regressions are the movements of the eye back to the previous words or sentences during reading, that is, eye movements in the opposite direction to normal reading. Regressions constitute 15-25% of eye movements during normal reading (Rayner and Pollatsek, 1989).

Although eye movements allow a microscopic examination of the reading process, they play a crucial role in understanding reading behavior. Advances in eye-tracking technologies have enabled us to study readers' eye movements and their role in the comprehension process in detail (D'Mello et al., 2020). Ye et al. (2022) and Jamil et al. (2023) examined the relationship between eye movements and brain activation in detail using fMRI technology and provided evidence supporting this relationship. It is seen that eye movements are a sensitive indicator of cognitive movements in the reading process and are therefore closely related to the comprehension process (Castelhano and Rayner, 2008). Studies in this field show that eye movements will be useful in explaining not only word tracking on the text but also processes such as reading fluency, reading comprehension and processing.

Researchers are particularly interested in eye movements, a relatively new area of study, and how they relate to various aspects of reading. Studies have investigated the relationship/interaction between eye movements and variables such as homophones (Jared and Bainbridge, 2017), reading practices in adults (Mantei and Kervin, 2016), dyslexia and other language-related processes (Huettig & Brouwer, 2015), and memory and attention (Hernandez et al., 2017). The importance of eye movements in the reading process is not only limited to individual reading skills, but also contributes to the development of reading instruction and intervention programmes (Fella vd., 2023). The fact that the studies conducted are mostly in clinical settings is an indication that they are addressed after the problem occurs. However, conducting earlier and predictive studies periodically can provide an opportunity to take precautions before many problems arise. From this point of view, investigating the explanatory and predictive relationships between eye-tracking technology and variables related to students' reading and comprehension provides a unique resource for educators at the point of planning educational environments and taking measures. When the studies in Türkiye on the subject are examined, it is seen that eye-tracking technology is mostly focused on information systems, web design, e-commerce (Akgüngör et al., 2011; Bayram and Yeni, 2011; Özdoğan, 2008; Yeniad et al., 2011). In the studies on reading, on the other hand, topics such as italic writing-plain writing, reading texts (Karaman et al., 2016), the effect of page design on the directivity of reading in newspaper reading behaviour (Onursoy et al., 2010) were studied. However, the process of learning reading skills and the subsequent process of forming the purpose of reading to obtain information is a time interval that is decisive on the future of our children. The number of studies conducted with children during this time interval, where different variables of reading are examined in detail, is nearly nonexistent. More studies are needed to reveal the extent to which the variables of eye-tracking obtained with the support of technology have an effect on reading skills or to make inferences about what kind of problems they can be used to predict.

The role of eye movements in the reading process helps us to understand how readers interact with the text. In particular, eye movement parameters such as fixation duration, saccade length and regression number reveal the reader's difficulties and strategies in the process of making sense of the text (Bouma, 2022). While Hautala et al. (2024) emphasised the effect of saccadic movements on

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reading speed, Veenendaal et al. (2016) examined the effect of eye movements on reading prosody, phonological awareness and comprehension. Moreover, readers' eye movement patterns vary depending on the difficulty of the text and the reader's knowledge (Van den Broek and Helder, 2017). When we look at the subject from different perspectives, the eye movements of individuals with reading difficulties show significant differences from normal readers. Students with dyslexia exhibit more regression and longer fixation periods, indicating that these students have more difficulty in the reading process (Bonifacci et al., 2023).

Prior to eye-tracking technology, researchers have neglected the relevance of certain eye movement behaviours during reading to text decoding and comprehension. For instance, readers allocate approximately 10% to 15% of their reading time to regressions in eye movements. The average fixation duration within a word or saccade length varies according to the function of the word (novelty, familiarity, strangeness, ambiguity, or relevance) (Rayner, 1993). In relation to these eye movement parameters, readers are categorised as: a) proactive readers (long saccades, many regressions) and b) conservative readers (short saccades, few regressions). The reading strategies used by both are related to low or high levels of reading experience, respectively (Koornneef and Mulders, 2017; Vorstius et al., 2014).

Most eye-tracking research on reading has focused on textual (i.e., literary) comprehension and is usually assessed by reading sentences (Barnes and Kim, 2016; Booth and Weger, 2013; Rayner, 1993; Vorstius et al., 2014). On the other hand, longer studies (i.e. fairy tales, scientific reports) and inferential questions are also used to investigate reading comprehension (Koornneef and Mulders, 2017). However, proactive readers show higher reading comprehension than conservative readers, despite the length of the text (short or long) and the complexity of the question (literary, textual or inferential). Related to the subject, Krstić et al. (2018) conducted a study to assess eye movement during reading with 15-year-old students with low and high reading skills in the PISA test; scores in reading speed (number of words read per minute) and reading comprehension capacities were used to classify reading skills. According to the results of the study, it was found that students with high reading skills performed better on text-dependent and inferential comprehension questions than students with low reading skills. As in other studies, saccade width (length) and regression percentage were found to be higher in students with higher reading skills (Koornneef and Mulders, 2017). According to eye movement patterns, the groups differed according to the complexity of the texts and questions. On the other hand, the eye movements of readers with low reading skills showed more variability and irregularities were observed.

Although these studies have established a link between eye movements and reading skills at a certain level, it is not clear enough how fluent readers' eye movements are and how this situation is related to comprehension. In this context, this study investigated the causal relationship between the eye movements of 3rd grade primary school students during reading and how they affect reading fluency and reading comprehension. Students' reading speed, reading comprehension skills and eye movements during reading were analysed by means of "eye-tracking device".

In terms of scope, third grade primary school students were asked to read a narrative text; reading and monitoring were carried out individually. In the study, students' fluent reading skills, reading comprehension and eye movements during reading were evaluated; possible relationships between the variables of reading aloud, fluent reading, reading comprehension and the variables of focusing time, time until the first focusing, duration of the first focusing, number of focusing, the coordinate of each focusing point on the screen in pixels, the distance of the user to the screen during recording were investigated.

Method

Research Design

The research was conducted in the survey model. Firstly, the students were made to read aloud over the given text through the eye-tracking device. The eye-tracking device is integrated with a computer and a monitor. The students read on the computer screen (monitor) and the application was carried out individually for each student. The duration of the application for a student was approximately 4-8 minutes. In the second stage, students were given comprehension questions about the text they read.

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After the data were collected, the data obtained from reading aloud, reading comprehension and eye-tracking device were analysed comparatively and causally.

Participants

The study was conducted with 284 third grade students studying in a public primary school in Istanbul. The necessary permissions for the study were obtained from the Provincial Directorate of National Education. Through the measurement results obtained from the research, it was aimed to reveal how the eye movements of 3rd grade primary school students during reading affect reading fluency and reading comprehension. The study was conducted with third-grade primary school pupils, as they are in the critical age range for observing the development of reading behavior.

Data Collection and Analysis Process

Within the scope of the study, a 200-word narrative text was used to collect data. The students read the texts aloud and their reading was recorded with an eye-tracking device. From these records, students' eye movements during reading, reading speed and correct word recognition percentages were measured. After the eye-tracking device recording, students' reading comprehension was measured with questions prepared for the reading text. The applications were carried out individually and the eye-tracking device was calibrated separately for each student at the beginning of the application to ensure that the data of the study was reliable. In order not to distract the students' attention, the applications were carried out in a simple and quiet environment, and a structure suitable for the natural reading styles of the students were created.

The "Error Analysis Inventory" adapted into Turkish by Akyol (2013) was used to analyse the student's reading and comprehension levels. For this inventory, the student's reading speed, correct reading and comprehension percentage are calculated according to the following formulae.

Reading Speed: (1 min X Number of words read correctly) ÷ (Time to read the whole text)

Accuracy Percentage: (Number of words read correctly X 100) ÷ (Total number of words in the text)

Percentage of Understanding: (Points received X 100) ÷ (Full points)

Comprehension questions consist of two types of questions as surface and deep comprehension. In the students' responses to simple comprehension-level questions, 2 points were awarded for complete answers, 1 point for partial answers, and 0 points for unanswered questions. Similarly, in their responses to deep comprehension-level questions, 3 points were awarded for complete and effective answers, 2 points for slightly incomplete answers that still contained the expected response, 1 point for partial answers, and 0 points for unanswered questions.

The eye movements of the student during reading aloud were recorded with the SMI device and these were transcribed and converted into analysis data for analysis. The data obtained from reading speed, correct word recognition, reading comprehension and eye movements were analysed using descriptive and comparative tests and structural equation modeling using AMOS 23.0 software.

Findings

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution for the gender variable

Gender	f	%
Female	130	45.8
Male	154	54.2
Total	284	100.0

Of the students participating in the study, 45.8% (n=130) were female and 54.2% (n=154) were male. A total of 284 third grade primary school students participated in the study.

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Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the variables analysed in the study

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading Speed	284	87.51	32.48
Accurate Reading	284	94.98	5.03
Simple Comprehension	284	3.2	2.29
Inferential Comprehension	284	3.7	1.34
Total Comprehension	284	6.83	3.09
Focusing Time	284	245.85	65.51
Saccading Time	284	249.52	68.42
Average Blink Duration	284	294.48	441.88
Total	284		

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the students participating in the study regarding the variables in the study. Accordingly, the mean reading speed of the students was 87.51, the mean accurate reading rate of the students was 94.98, the mean simple comprehension level was 3.2, the mean inferential comprehension level was 3.7, and the mean total comprehension level was 6.83. Accordingly, the reading speed of the students is at an average level according to the grade level. On the other hand, students' accurate reading levels are below the expected level. In addition, students' reading comprehension levels are low. According to the measurement tool used in the research, the min-max score range that students should get is between 0-15. The mean focusing time of the students during reading was found to be 245.85; the mean saccading time was found to be 249.52; and the mean blinking time was found to be 294.48.

Table 3. Correlational relationships between fluent reading, reading comprehension and eye movements

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Reading Speed	r	1							
2.	Accurate Reading	r	.454**	1						
3.	Simple Comprehension	r	.240**	.245**	1					
4.	Inferential Comprehension	r	.326**	.333**	.402**	1				
5.	Total Comprehension	r	.320**	.327**	.917**	.734**	1			
6.	Focusing Time	r	-.372**	-.348**	-.096	-.162**	-.142*	1		
7.	Saccading Time	r	-.360**	-.347**	-.091	-.149*	-.132*	.992**	1	
8.	Average Blink Duration	r	-.130*	-.052	-.037	-.046	-.047	.191**	.171**	1
		N	284	284	284	284	284	284	284	284

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the correlational relationships between the variables in the study. Accordingly, medium-level (r = .46) and significant relationships were found between reading speed and accurate reading; low-level (r = .24) and significant relationships between reading speed and simple comprehension; low-level (r = .33) and significant relationships between reading speed and inferential comprehension; and low-level (r = .32) and significant relationships between reading speed and total comprehension. All relationships were positive. Accordingly, as reading speed increases, reading accuracy, simple comprehension, inferential comprehension and total comprehension levels also increase.

There were medium (r= -.37) and significant relationships between reading speed and focusing time; low (r= -.36) and significant relationships between reading speed and saccading time; low (r=-.13) and significant relationships between reading speed and blinking time. All relationships were negative. Accordingly, as reading speed increases, focusing time, saccading time and blinking time decrease.

Low level (r= .25) and significant relationships were found between accurate reading and simple comprehension level; low level (r= .33) and significant relationships were found between accurate reading and inferential comprehension level; low level (r= .33) and significant relationships were found

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between accurate reading and total comprehension level. All relationships were positive. Accordingly, as the percentage of correct reading increases, simple comprehension, inferential comprehension and total comprehension levels also increase.

Low level (r= -.35) and significant, low level (r= -.35) and significant, low level (r= -.05) and insignificant relationships were found between accurate reading and focusing time, saccading time and blinking time. All relationships were negative. Accordingly, as the percentage of accurate reading increases, focusing time, saccading time and blinking time decrease.

There were medium level (r= .40) and significant relationships between simple comprehension and inferential comprehension level, and high level (r= .92) and significant relationships between simple comprehension and total comprehension level. All relationships are positive. Accordingly, as the students' simple comprehension level increases, their inferential comprehension and total comprehension levels also increase.

Low level (r= -.09) and insignificant relationships were found between simple comprehension and focusing time; low level (r= -.09) and insignificant relationships were found between simple comprehension and saccading time; and low level (r= -.03) and insignificant relationships were found between simple comprehension and blinking time. All relationships were negative. Accordingly, focusing time, saccading time and blinking time were not significantly related to simple comprehension.

A positive, high level (r= .73) and significant relationship was found between inferential comprehension level and total comprehension level. Accordingly, as the inferential comprehension level of the students increases, their total comprehension level also increases.

Low level (r= -.16) and insignificant relationships were found between inferential comprehension and focusing time; low level (r= -.15) and insignificant relationships were found between inferential comprehension and saccading time; and low level (r= -.04) and insignificant relationships were found between inferential comprehension and blinking time. All relationships were negative. Accordingly, as inferential comprehension increases, focusing time, saccading time and blinking time decrease.
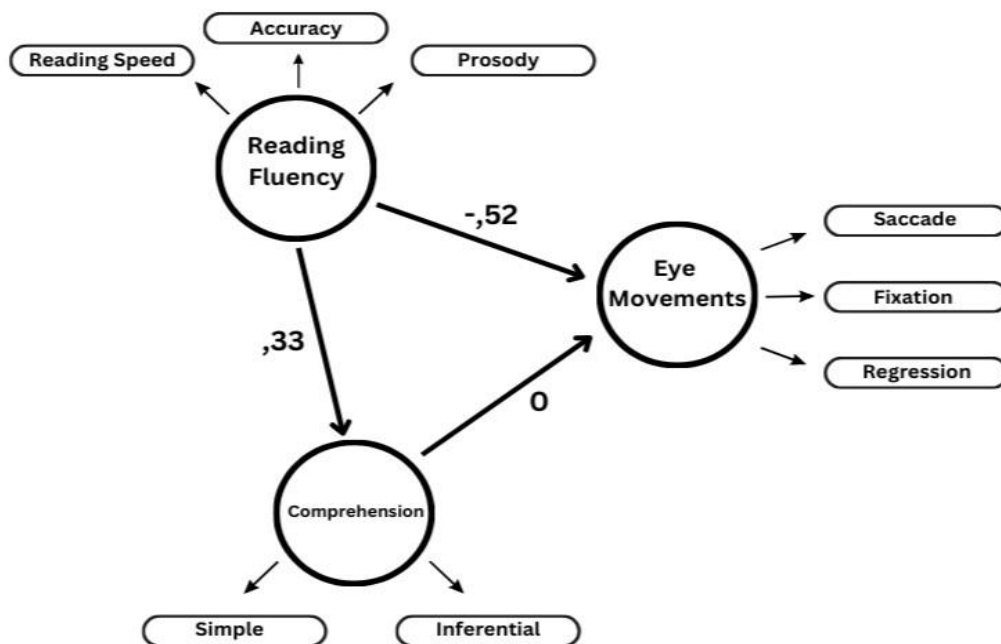
Figure 1. Structural model

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Table 4. Fit indices and acceptance intervals for the structural relationship model between reading fluency, eye movements and reading comprehension

Fit Indices	Good Fit	Acceptable	Structural model
RMSEA	0<REMSEA<0.05	0.05 ≤ RMSEA ≤	0.048
NFI	0.95 ≤ NFI ≤1	0.90≤ NFI ≤ 0.95	0.99
GFI	0.95 ≤ GFI ≤1	0.90≤ GFI ≤ 0.95	0.99
AGFI	0.90 ≤ AGFI ≤1	0.85≤ AGFI ≤ 0.9	0.97
$\chi X2/df$ 0<$\chi X2/df$<3 0<$\chi X2/df$<5 10.121 /11=.92; (p=.000).			

*Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, and Müller (2003).

Table 4 shows the fit indices of the model. Accordingly, the RMSEA value for the model was found to be 0.04. Among the other indices, NFI was .99, GFI was .99 and AGFI was .97. These values show that the fit values of the model are acceptable and have good fit.

Table 5. Regression weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Eye Movements	<---	Reading	-1.522	.249	-6.112	***
Comprehension	<---	Eye	.002	.001	1.717	.086
Comprehension	<---	Reading	.033	.006	5.135	***
Reading Speed	<---	Reading	1.000			
Accurate Reading	<---	Reading	.147	.020	7.434	***
Focusing Time	<---	Eye	1.000			
Saccading Time	<---	Eye	1.008	.017	58.350	***
Blink Duration	<---	Eye	1.403	.376	3.728	***
Inferential Comprehension	<---	Comprehension	1.000			
Simple Comprehension	<---	Comprehension	1.251	.256	4.892	***

Table 5 shows the path coefficients of the model tested in the study. Accordingly, the relationship between fluent reading and reading comprehension and eye movements is significant. However, the path coefficient from eye movements to reading comprehension was not significant.

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

This study was conducted to examine the structural relationship between focusing, fluent reading and reading comprehension through eye-tracking devices. Within the scope of the research, although it was initially aimed to examine the relationship between fluent reading and reading comprehension and focusing, other eye movement data from the eye-tracking device were also handled during the research process and blinking and saccading movements were also examined along with focusing. All of these components together were evaluated as "eye movements" in the research.

Accordingly, positive relationships were found between accurate reading, reading speed and reading comprehension. A positive development in one of these skills also showed an increase in the others. These results coincide with other studies in the literature (Baştuğ and Akyol, 2012; Baştuğ and Keskin, 2012; Foorman et al., 2015, Padeliadu and Antoniou, 2013, Price et al., 2016; Quirk and Beem, 2012; Yıldırım, 2013). In these studies, positive relationships were found between fluent reading skills and reading comprehension. This is explained on the basis that students read the words in the text with a certain automaticity and allocate the necessary number of mental resources to comprehension (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974). The development of fluent reading skills points to the development of reading comprehension skills.

When the results related to the model between fluent reading, eye movements and reading comprehension skills were analysed, the paths between fluent reading, eye movements and reading comprehension were found to be significant. On the other hand, the path between eye movements and reading comprehension was not significant. Concerning the model, the fit indices are at an acceptable

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level. The relationships in this direction were analysed in detail. Accordingly, significant negative relationships were found between eye movements and reading accuracy and reading speed. As students' fluent reading skills increase, the functionality in eye movements decreases. As reading speed increases, the number and duration of focussing, blinking and saccading decreases. This suggests that as reading speed increases, students spend less time focusing, blinking, and saccading on each word and sentence. Similarly, as students' accuracy in reading improves, their focusing, blinking, and saccading times decrease. As the correct reading percentages increase, the parameters of the students' eye movements decrease. Readers with low reading fluency skills make more regressions during reading and their looking on what they read is damaged (Barnes and Kim, 2016; Booth and Weger, 2013; Koornneef and Mulders, 2017; Vorstius et al., 2014). On the other hand, no relationship was found between students' reading comprehension skills and eye movements. Accordingly, the patterns of eye movements in reading do not seem to be related to reading comprehension. This may be due to the fact that reading comprehension is related to other variables such as vocabulary, comprehension strategy, and affective factors in reading besides reading fluency and eye movements.

Eye movements play a critical role in explaining word recognition and text comprehension processes (Rayner, 1998; Raney et al., 2014). Blythe and Joseph (2019) state that it is possible to evaluate eye-tracking technology as an objective tool that can be used in the early diagnosis of reading difficulties. It has been observed that strategies to be developed for students in reading skills and reading fluency increase students' success (Bigozzi et al., 2017). Southwell et al. (2020) study shows that eye movements play an important role in reading comprehension. Accurate analysis of eye movements can help to develop effective strategies in the education of individuals with reading disorders or reading difficulties.

Eye-tracking technology has revolutionised the field of reading research by providing precise and real-time data on eye movements that serve as indicators of cognitive processes during reading. This technology allows researchers to measure various eye movement parameters during reading, such as focusing time, saccade length, and regression rates, which can help explain some of the cognitive mechanisms involved in reading (Çorbacı and Kahraman, 2022). Today, we can say that there are two types of eye-tracking devices, one of which is wearable in the form of glasses, and the other is a device that works simultaneously with a computer and a screen.

The applications of eye-tracking technology in reading research are diverse. Van Der Sluis and Van Den Broek (2022) state that eye-tracking technology is effective in determining the comprehension and interest levels of individuals more accurately during reading. Their research used the participants' eye movements during reading as an important indicator of how much they interacted with the text and their interest in the text in certain sections. In particular, it is emphasised that as the difficulty of the text increases, the eye movements of the participants increase. By analysing eye movements, researchers can gain insight into how readers distribute their attention, how they process information and how they make inferences during reading, thus expanding our understanding of the reading process.

As a result of this research, basically three hypotheses were tested. The first of these hypotheses is that there is a positive and significant relationship between fluent reading skills and reading comprehension. This hypothesis was confirmed. This finding is consistent with many studies in literature. In the longitudinal study conducted by Kim and Wagner (2015), it was revealed that reading fluency has a direct effect on reading comprehension. Similarly, Rasinski et al. (2016) stated that reading fluency is a strong predictor of reading comprehension. In studies conducted in Türkiye, Yıldız and Çetinkaya (2017) found that fluent reading skills explained approximately 25% of reading comprehension performance. This shows that the automatisation of word recognition in the reading process allows the reader to direct cognitive resources to the comprehension process. In their large-scale experimental study, Ecalle et al. (2020) stated that first-grade students' reading comprehension skills were also strengthened immediately after they became fluent readers after the intervention. Fuchs et al. (2012) stated that interventions for reading fluency are especially important for beginning students. It is also emphasised that there is a strong relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension. By improving students' reading skills, they can better understand what they read. In this context, increasing reading fluency can help students understand the text more effectively.

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The relationship between reading fluency and comprehension is particularly striking. Studies have shown that fluent readers tend to understand texts better than their less fluent peers. This interaction between fluency and comprehension emphasises the need for targeted instructional strategies that develop both skills simultaneously. The automaticity theory proposed by LaBerge and Samuels (1974) also supports this finding. According to this theory, when word recognition becomes automatic in the reading process, the individual can allocate more cognitive resources to extract the meaning of the text. This situation contributes to an increase in reading comprehension levels. Other studies in the literature (Baştuğ and Akyol, 2012; Foorman et al., 2015) also support these findings. In these studies, it is seen that fluent reading skills have a strong effect on reading comprehension and that these two skills support each other. Kim et al. (2012) show that the interaction between reading fluency and reading comprehension increases significantly from 1st to 2nd grade. In particular, it was observed that as reading fluency increased, students' reading comprehension skills also improved. This suggests that students' reading speed and accurate reading skills support their comprehension processes and facilitate comprehension. It was also emphasised that understanding this relationship would be useful in recognising students' reading difficulties and developing teaching strategies.

The second hypothesis of the study was that there is a significant negative relationship between fluent reading skills and eye movements. This hypothesis was also confirmed. This finding can be interpreted as the fact that as the reading speed increases, readers focus less on each word and sentence and make less backtracking. This shows that individuals who have a higher fluency in the reading process can scan the text faster and more fluently. In a study conducted by Schotter et al. (2012), it was found that individuals with advanced reading skills exhibited more effective eye movements and had fewer backward movements in reading. Similarly, Vorstius et al. (2014) found that the eye movements of fluent readers were less complex and more regular. Cheng et al. (2021) stated that as reading fluency increases, fewer reversals in eye movements and faster reading are observed. These findings suggest that eye movements are an important indicator for analysing reading skills and support the negative relationship found in this study.

Temereanca et al. (2012) emphasise in their study that fluent readers exhibit efficient eye movement patterns, characterised by longer eye movements and shorter fixations, which facilitate faster word recognition and comprehension. This efficiency is important for maintaining reading flow as it minimises cognitive load and allows readers to devote more cognitive resources to text comprehension. They also stated that deficits in eye movement control can lead to impaired reading skills, especially in individuals with dyslexia and other reading disorders, and that interventions aimed at improving eye movement coordination will contribute to reading fluency and overall reading comprehension.

Other studies have shown that increased sentence complexity leads to longer fixation durations and more regressions, resulting in greater cognitive load on the reader (Dirix et al., 2020). Similarly, researchers have used eye-tracking tools to investigate the effects of word frequency and predictability on reading behaviour and found that high-frequency words are processed faster, leading to shorter fixations (Kaakinen and Hyönä, 2010). These experimental studies allow researchers to link eye movement measurements to reading outcomes, providing valuable insights into the cognitive processes involved in reading fluency and comprehension. It is observed that as the reading speed of readers increases, their fixation time naturally decreases (Yıldız et al., 2024). Repeated reading exercises in which the same text is read multiple times can increase fluency and reduce fixation times, allowing more cognitive resources to be allocated to comprehension tasks. Language skills can significantly affect the regularity of eye movements during reading. In particular, individuals with high language skills process sentences faster and more accurately, while individuals with low language skills spend more time and attention in the reading process (Kuperman and Dyke, 2011).

The third hypothesis of the study is that there is a significant negative relationship between eye movements and reading comprehension. This hypothesis could not be confirmed. This shows that eye movement parameters alone are not sufficient to explain reading comprehension. While this result contradicts some research findings, it is consistent with some others. Pan et al. (2022) argue that eye movement patterns can predict reading comprehension performance. As Perfetti and Stafura (2014) stated in their reading systems framework theory, the reading process is not limited to visual perception and eye movements but involves the interaction of multiple components such as word recognition,

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syntactic processing, and meaning construction. The reading comprehension process is under the influence of many variables such as vocabulary knowledge, comprehension strategies and affective factors. Therefore, although eye movements provide some clues about the comprehension process, they are not sufficient to explain all the components of this process. Abundis-Gutiérrez et al. (2018) also supported this finding and revealed that eye movements do not have a direct effect on reading comprehension. Medland et al. (2010) investigated the interaction between reading speed, comprehension and eye movements and found that these factors are intricately linked. In their study, the relationship between reading speed and comprehension is complex because while increased speed usually leads to increased fluency, it is not always associated with higher levels of comprehension. It appears that eye movement measures can be helpful in understanding the development of reading skills and reading difficulties, but a broader evaluation and consideration of other factors is needed.

Understanding eye movement patterns during reading can significantly improve instructional strategies in educational settings. Eye-tracking studies have revealed that individual differences in eye movement behaviours such as fixation duration and regression rates are related to reading proficiency and comprehension outcomes. For example, in this study, children with stronger vocabulary knowledge were able to read the text faster and made fewer regressions. In contrast, children with weaker vocabulary knowledge showed more pauses and regressions. This suggests that vocabulary knowledge is directly related to reading speed and efficiency (Luke et al., 2015). By analysing eye movement patterns, specific areas where students may need additional support can be identified and more personalised and effective reading instruction can be provided. Raney et al. (2014) investigated the effect of sentence complexity on eye movements and found that more complex sentences lead to longer fixation times and increased regression rates. Their research showed that when readers encounter syntactically complex structures, they often need to devote additional cognitive resources to decoding the information, leading to a slower reading speed. This increased cognitive load can lead to eye movement behaviours such as more frequent regressions to re-read sections of text for clarification.

Integrating eye movement training with traditional reading interventions can create a comprehensive support system for struggling readers. For example, combining eye movement training with phoneme recognition training or vocabulary development can allow us to address multiple aspects of reading difficulties simultaneously (Krieber et al., 2016). This holistic approach not only targets the mechanical aspects of reading, but also promotes a deeper understanding of the text, ultimately improving overall literacy skills. Furthermore, researchers should examine the impact of technologies such as digital reading platforms on eye movements and reading comprehension. As reading increasingly takes place in digital formats, it is important to understand how these platforms influence reading behaviours and outcomes (Tsou, 2011).

The results of the research show that by using eye movement analyses in reading instruction, students' reading difficulties can be better understood and personalised instructional strategies can be developed. In particular, training programmes aimed at developing fluent reading skills can positively affect students' reading comprehension levels by increasing their reading speed and accuracy. However, given that eye movements do not have a direct effect on reading comprehension, it is concluded that other components of reading skills should also be focused on. The findings of the study show that the reading process has a multifaceted structure and that components such as reading fluency, reading strategies and eye movements are in complex relationships with each other in this process. For this reason, it is recommended to develop approaches for the individual needs of students in reading instruction and to support these approaches with technology-based methods.

Despite advances in eye-tracking technology and its applications in reading research, several challenges and limitations remain. One important challenge is the variability in individual reading skills and strategies that can influence eye movement patterns. For example, differences in cognitive skills such as working memory and language proficiency can lead to variability in how individuals process text and how they are distracted (Tywoniw, 2023). This variability can complicate the interpretation of eye movement data because it can be difficult to determine whether observed differences are due to experimental manipulation or to individual differences between participants.

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The results of this study showed that while fluent reading skills affect eye movements and reading comprehension, eye movements have no role in reading comprehension. The results of the research brought a new perspective on reading comprehension and reading fluency, especially theoretically, through the variable of eye movements. Conducting similar studies at different grade levels and with larger sample groups on different variables will increase the generalisability of the findings. Secondly, it is suggested that sub-variables (e.g. working memory, vocabulary) that may affect the relationship between eye movements and reading comprehension should be examined. Finally, a comparative analysis of eye movements of students with and without reading difficulties will contribute to the diagnosis and intervention processes.

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Primary Education Graduate Students' Views on Democracy Education in Primary Schools

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to examine the views of primary education graduate students on democracy education in Türkiye. Qualitative research method was used since the views of primary education graduate students regarding the concept of democracy education were discussed in detail in the study. The study included 40 participants who were graduate students in the field of primary education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. Criterion sampling method was used to determine the participants. In order to reveal the views of the participants, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 6 questions prepared by experts was used and interviews were conducted online. The data obtained were analysed by more than one researcher using the content analysis method. The findings obtained through content analysis were modelled with NVIVO 14 software. In line with the findings, the participants stated that democracy education is "necessary" for a country and that the level of democracy education in Türkiye is "insufficient". The biggest obstacle to democracy education in Türkiye is seen as "educational practices". The research revealed that the curriculum in democracy education in Türkiye should be "student-oriented" and "institutional policy-oriented" studies should be carried out to improve democracy education.

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Introduction

1.1. Democracy

Democracy can be expressed as a management and lifestyle based on the nation. Despite the signing of international agreements regarding human rights violations today, rights are still not defined. One of the main reasons for this is education. It is important for democracy to be evaluated as state-education-individual. Because with a regular balanced education level, the developments of life against democracy and human rights are parallel to each other. People first transfer the attitudes and social learning encountered in the family and then from the remaining teachers to their lives. The foundations of democracy are laid in the family and continue in schools, which can be stated as the smallest areas of society (Kışlalı, 1989). This is because democracy can only be learned through exposure to democratic environments (Atasoy, 1997).

It is a great responsibility for people to be able to plan their own future. In this context, democracy shares an understanding of the individual's humanity, which allows the individual to act as a signboard on his computer. Democracy contains the differences and divisions in the thoughts of individuals, who are the cornerstones of society, as a richness. Democracy is distinguished from other systems and is seen as extraordinary by defending the rights of people and valuing them just because they are human (Doğan, 2007). The indispensable part of democracy is the existence of human rights and human values (Göney, 2021). Because democracy is not only a form of government but also a way of life and contributes to the society living together in tolerance and having a peaceful life (Kaypak, 2016). Democracy enriches and gives meaning to individual life, values each member of society, and positions the individual as the core of society (Şahin, 2021). Since democracy is a way of life, it should not be seen as a goal to be achieved, but as a concept that is transmitted throughout time and inherent in life (Yeşil, 2004). Parents with a democratic attitude are those who take responsibility for creating a peaceful family environment based on mutual respect, love, and tolerance, while also showing respect to the child as a matter of courtesy. The child takes his/her place in the family with his/her own identity. It is not possible for an ideal and democracy to reach a democracy because it renews itself as the continuity of democracy and brings new requirements (Özsoy, 2004; Şahin, 2021). The level of development of democracy in a country is parallel to its level of development.

Dahl (2019) has highlighted democracy as the system that supports the self-development of its people the most. The main elements that fill this understanding are the right to freedom. People who care about democracy strive for social welfare as well as their own happiness; they are people who love to share, are tolerant, and are open to new ideas (Göney, 2021; Maboçoğlu, 1999). There are sustainable responsibilities and things to do in order to protect and ensure the continuity of democracy in a holistic way: They should actively participate in social life as democratic and fulfill their political responsibilities (Güven, 2008). Citizens should use the smart and logical way while fulfilling their political responsibilities (Göney, 2021; Yağcı, 1998). The protection and continuity of democracy can only be made possible by cultivating permanence that knows its value.

1.2. Democracy Education

The main institutions that are effective in the process of individuals gaining awareness and realizing the importance of democracy are: family, school, friends, social media, civil society organizations and political parties. However, the external factors that affect the individual the most are school and family. Therefore, the cooperation of school and family members is very important for the success of democracy education (Güven, 2008). While the school is a tool responsible for educating individuals and ensuring cultural transfer, the family is a more comprehensive school for the individual. Therefore, the first individuals to assume a teaching role in democracy education are the parents (Yeşil, 2004). As with all forms of education given to a child, democracy education also begins within the family. The environment that the family offers to the child should be loving and compassionate, liberal, and respectful towards the child by accepting the individual as an individual (Maboçoğlu, 1999). The characteristics of such an environment can be stated as the democratic understanding and attitudes between the parents. Thus, children have the opportunity to observe and internalize democratic attitudes from an early age.

Citizens can only be provided with democracy education to recognize their rights and responsibilities in many areas, especially in social and political areas within the society, as well as to consciously use and protect human rights (Göney, 2021). In addition to the fact that the school has a function that helps to convey the values of the education system and the culture of the society, since democracy is also a lifestyle dimension integrated with the culture, the school environment is seen as one of the most suitable places where democracy education can be provided to individuals (Doğanay & Sarı, 2004). The necessity of democracy education to be given in schools for the society to gain democracy awareness is supported by laws. Creating a free and democratic society and keeping this awareness alive is the responsibility of the state. The state aims to fulfill this responsibility through education and training activities. Article 11 of the Constitution also includes this issue (Gülmez, 2001). In order for democracy to become a way of life in a society, it is an important factor for individuals to be equipped with democratic attitudes and skills. Experiences ensure that the basic values of democracy are permanently internalized in the individual. For this reason, the basic guarantee of democracy is conscious citizens. The most effective source in acquiring these democratic values is education (Şimşek, 2000). John Dewey, whose first arrival in our country in 1924 and the years after, had a turning point in our educational history, gradually explains the importance of establishing democratic values in his book "Democracy and Education". According to Dewey, education is important for its continuation in social life to be meaningful (Dewey, 1996, as cited in Bali & Kanat, 2023). The concept of democracy in education was mentioned for the first time in the 4th National Education Council held in 1949. Tahsin Banguoğlu, the Minister of National Education at the time, emphasized democratic education with the phrase: "Democratic administration is a matter of new education, it is the appropriation of a new idea." and pioneered the Turkish Education System to experience a turning point in this regard. The impact of this turning point was demonstrated by the inclusion of democracy under the title of "Basic Principles of Education" in the Basic Law of National Education, which came into effect in 1973 (Göney, 2021; Okutan, 2010). With the MoNE Democracy Education and School Assemblies Directive published in 2004, regulations were made in democracy education and it was ensured that democracy education was compatible with newly prepared programs (Göney, 2021; Okutan, 2010). Unfortunately, since the project could not be implemented consistently and regularly in the country, it was a disappointment in terms of our democracy education history, and it officially ended in 2013 and de facto in 2019.

Democracy, although theoretically included in educational programs, is neglected in practice and use. This situation reveals that the education provided is of poor quality. The reason for this poor quality education is that student-centered education cannot be fully implemented in schools and that students are not given priority to acquire basic skills such as thinking and self-expression (Yeşil, 2004). Democracy education can only be achieved by ensuring that educational rights continue to exist in a way that is accessible to everyone, that all materials, educational programs and methods and techniques used by the implementer are organized in accordance with democracy and that education is democratized (Gürşimşek and Göregenli, 2004). In addition to providing materials, creating a democratic classroom environment is essential for democracy education. It is the duty of teachers to create a democratic classroom environment where students can listen to each other respectfully and express their ideas without hesitation. Democracy education is independent of the teacher's dominance because students cannot feel free and comfortable in a classroom where the teacher is the authority. If students are not allowed to create their own worlds, they cannot develop awareness about democracy and cannot implement it. Therefore, the biggest obstacle to democracy education is teachers who have adopted an imposing understanding (Duman, 2008).

Democracy education should be given to students as an effective course at every level of formal education, starting from preschool education until the end of the last year of secondary school. An uninterrupted democracy education should be given between all levels and in a way that is connected to other courses and not disconnected from life. Democracy education is a value that should be internalized by society and turned into a way of life. Therefore, democracy education is actually a process that should last a lifetime (Gülmez, 2001).

Democracy education can be defined in its simplest form as "education in which human rights are lived and the principles and rules of democracy are taught" (Kepenekçi, 2003). Democracy education aims for a free and democratic social order. In the context of this purpose, it gains continuity with the

guarantee of human rights (Gözütok, 1995). In the education process, it includes respect for the value and integrity of the student as a human being. Since the individual is in the decision-making position in democracy, the subject of democratic education is also the student. In democracy education, every child is seen as a special individual and has the same rights. However, democracy education does not mean that everyone can behave as they wish in school or teach as they wish. On the contrary, compliance with the existing rules is required in democratic education. For example, students are expected to comply with the prepared disciplinary regulations in schools. However, when the rules are requested to be changed, students are made to express their opinions openly.

It has been observed that "democratic education" and "democracy education" are examined together or confused with each other. These two concepts support each other but differ from each other in several points. In current studies, researchers have continued their studies by focusing on democratic education or the Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy course that starts in the 4th grade of primary school (Ulusoy & Erkuş, (2016), Haçat & Demir (2017), Aktepe, (2015). Özdemir, Aydın & Çapa, (2023), Şara., Yalçın, Bıyık, & Özbek, (2023)). It is thought that the concept of democracy should be felt by individuals starting from the basic education level. For this reason, the opinions of primary school teachers on democracy education are undeniably important. This study was conducted with participants who are both postgraduate students in the field of primary school teaching and actively teaching in the field. The main purpose of the study is to reveal how primary school teachers studying in the field of primary education and living and teaching in different geographical regions of Türkiye view democracy education in the country. Therefore, since the views stated are expressed by teachers working in primary schools from the field, it will be important for democracy education in Türkiye to be taken into consideration. Since this study was conducted with primary school teachers studying for a postgraduate degree in the field of primary education, it is limited to primary schools. In addition, the following sub-problems are included in the study.

1- Is Democracy Education necessary for a country?

2- What is the level of democracy education in Türkiye?

3- What are the obstacles to democracy education in Türkiye?

4- How should the curriculum for democracy education be in Türkiye?

5- What should be done to develop democracy education in Türkiye?

6- What are the practices of in-class democracy education?

Method

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher considers how the participants make sense of the problem (Creswell, 2013, p. 187). This method is used to understand the experiences, thoughts and perspectives of the participants. Studies in the field of education show that qualitative research method is the most appropriate option to reveal the experiences of students and teachers and their views about it (Tahnh & Tahnh, 2015, p. 25). Qualitative research aims to address and explain events or situations in a social context (Arslan, 2012). In qualitative research, it is essential to adopt a holistic approach in the natural context of the researched subject by using techniques such as document analysis, interview and observation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In research designed using qualitative methods, it is aimed to examine the event or phenomenon studied in depth (Baltacı, 2019). In this study, it is aimed to reveal the views of graduate students of primary education on democracy education in Türkiye. For this reason, the case study design, which is a descriptive research method widely used in the field of social sciences, was used. The descriptive case study enables the researcher to address the concepts, events and phenomena encountered in life with an in-depth understanding. The researcher emphasizes the uniqueness and contextual details of the situation and tries to reflect the real experiences of the participants (Yin, 2017, p. 50). In this study, an interview form was used and the data were collected in a natural way and from a holistic perspective without interfering with the study group.

Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 40 graduate students of primary education studying at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in the 2022-2023 academic year. Criterion sampling, one of the

sampling methods, was used to determine the study group. When determining the sample group with the criterion sampling method, participants are included in the research in line with predetermined criteria (Yıldırım and Şimşek). The criteria for the study were determined as "education in the Primary Education program of the Department of Primary Education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University" and "teaching courses including democracy education and its sub-dimensions". The students who were continuing their education in the field of primary education and who were also actively working as primary school teachers were selected for the study. Regarding democracy education and its sub-dimensions, these students were based on the fact that the courses "Comparative Education, Alternative Education, Primary School Programs, Democracy Education and Problems, Program Development and Applications in Primary School" in the curriculum contributed to specialization in the field. The aim of the research is to reveal the opinions of primary school teachers since it is important to make students feel democracy education from the basic education.

Data Collection Tools

In the research, interview questions were prepared as data collection tools and presented to the participants. In the preparation of the interview questions, the researchers first created a question pool and then decided to ask 6 questions for the purpose of the research and considering the variables. Interviews were conducted in a virtual environment. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The reason for choosing the interview method among the data collection methods was to obtain more detailed information about the research problem from the study group.

Data Analysis

The answers of the interview form for graduate students applied in the research were determined by content analysis. The reason for this is the emergence of different codes and themes that are not found in the literature (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The content analysis is done by coding and systematically categorizing the data within the framework of a certain discipline (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017). Content analysis method was used to analyze the data obtained in the study. Content analysis method is frequently used in the field of social sciences and reveals general trends related to the subject studied (Metin & Ünal, 2022). The codes obtained by the content analysis method were modeled through the NVIVO14 program. In the findings section of the study, the models are presented by including frequency values (f). The frequency values (f) indicate the number of opinions expressed, not the number of people.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the questions were prepared by an expert on democracy education. The questions prepared were appropriate for the purpose and kept within the framework of the problem statement. In order to ensure that the prepared questions comply with the rules of Turkish grammar and are comprehensible for the purpose of the problem, they were reviewed by different grammar field experts in the staff of the Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education. Feedback was received in terms of the target appropriate question patterns of the research questions and the spiral staging of the questions. Necessary corrections were made by the researchers. The researchers administered the revised semi-structured interview form with 6 questions to the participants. The fact that at least two researchers agreed on common views during data analysis is among the factors that increase validity and reliability (Arslan, 2022). The data were analyzed simultaneously by two different coders, and then the emerging themes were compared. It is very important that the majority of the themes revealed by the coders are similar (Fidan & Öztürk, 2015). In order to measure the internal consistency of the reliability of the coding, Miles and Huberman's (1994) "percentage of agreement formula" "Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement)x100" was used. The reliability of the study was measured as 87%. According to Miles and Huberman's (1994) statement that the agreement between coders should be at least 80%, the validity and reliability of the study is high.

Findings

In this section, the findings related to the sub-objectives of the research problem are given. The findings obtained are evaluated in relation to the information in the theoretical framework.

1. *Findings on the Necessity of Democracy Education for a Country*

The first question asked to the primary school teachers in the study was "What is the necessity of democracy education for a country?".
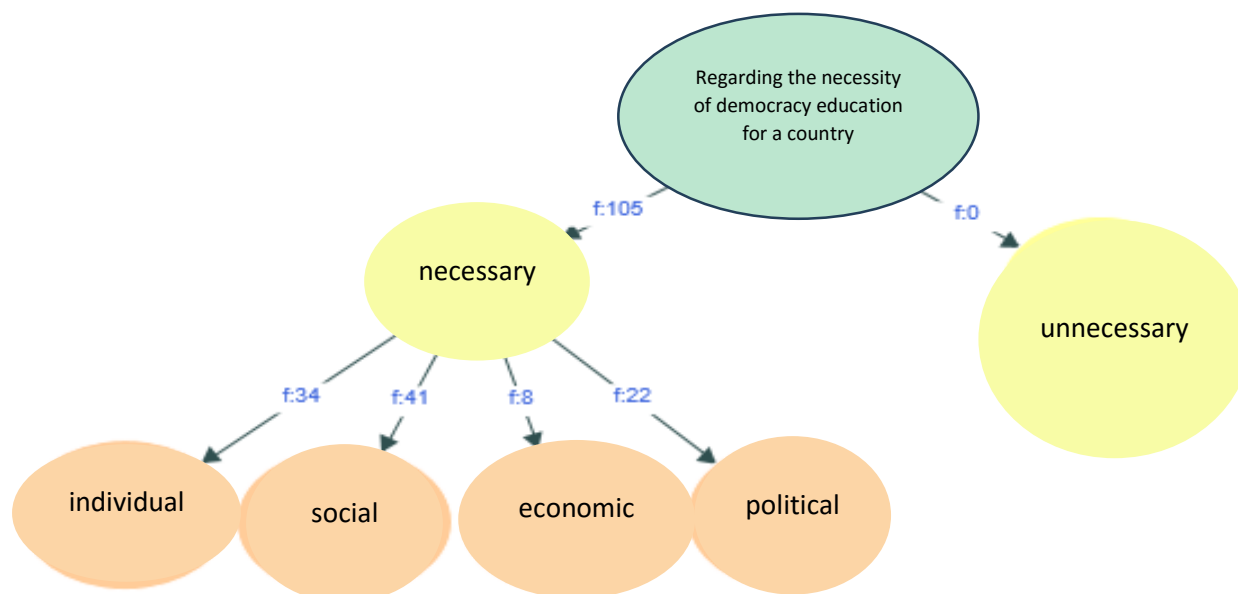
Figure 1. Modeling the necessity of democracy education for a country

According to Figure 1, graduate students' views on the necessity of democracy education for a country are divided into two as "necessary" (f:105) and "unnecessary" (f:0). However, all of the participants stated that democracy education is necessary for a country. The view that democracy education is "necessary" for a country was divided into themes as "individual" (f:34), "social" (f:41), "political" (f:22), "economic" (f:8) according to the participants' statements.

The sub-themes of the "individual" theme, based on the statements of the participants, were "ensuring the acquisition of critical thinking skills" (f:9), "ensuring personality development" (f:7), "ensuring that it becomes a way of life" (f:6), "ensuring the internalization of human values" (f:5), "ensuring the learning of personality rights" (f:5), "ensuring the acquisition of skills to support social life" (f:2).

When the statements of the participants who put forward "social" reasons among the opinions based on the necessity of democracy education for a country are examined, "raising individuals who know their fundamental rights and freedoms" (f:11), "ensuring the establishment of a sense of social belonging" (f:9), "raising individuals who respect differences" (f:9), "creating a free environment" (f:8), "establishing a social consciousness open to development and change" (f:4) were shown as reasons.

From the answers given by the participants, the sub-themes of the theme of "political" reasons were "raising active citizenship consciousness" (f:9), "having an individual-centered management style" (f:7), "a fair manager selection method" (f:2), "raising individuals with universal values" (f:1), "being able to show resistance against oppressive understanding" (f:1), "ensuring a balanced distribution of power between institutions" (f:1).

When "economic" reasons were considered, the views of "supporting development" (f:4), "raising productive individuals" (f:2), "raising individuals with vision" (f:1), "curiosity about the world economy" (f:1) emerged.

The views of some participants who see democracy education as necessary for a country due to social reasons are as follows:

S27: "For this reason, democracy education is a must in all geographies of our country that we live together with, especially in the Republic of Turkey, which aims to reach the level of contemporary civilizations and even to go even further by leaving this civilization behind."

The view of a participant who finds democracy education necessary for "individual" reasons is as follows:

S33: "Individuals who first discover themselves, then understand the environment and the world, can perceive problems and produce solutions should be created. An educational approach that values and values the value and integrity of the student as an individual, working together, mutual respect, tolerance and personality should be adopted."

Some of the participants who see democracy education as necessary for a country due to political reasons have the following views:

S29: "Individuals should be taught a way of life where the ideas of the political parties that take over the administrative power are mostly adopted and implemented, but also the rights and freedoms of the opposition, which consists of one or more political parties, and the citizens they represent are protected by law, and differences are respected regardless of language, religion, gender and race."

One of those who stated that democracy education is necessary for a country due to "economic" reasons has the following view:

S4: "It is necessary for economic development and a life order based on participation."

2.Findings on the Adequacy of the Level of Democracy Education in Türkiye

The views of the participants on the adequacy of the level of democracy education in Türkiye are as follows:
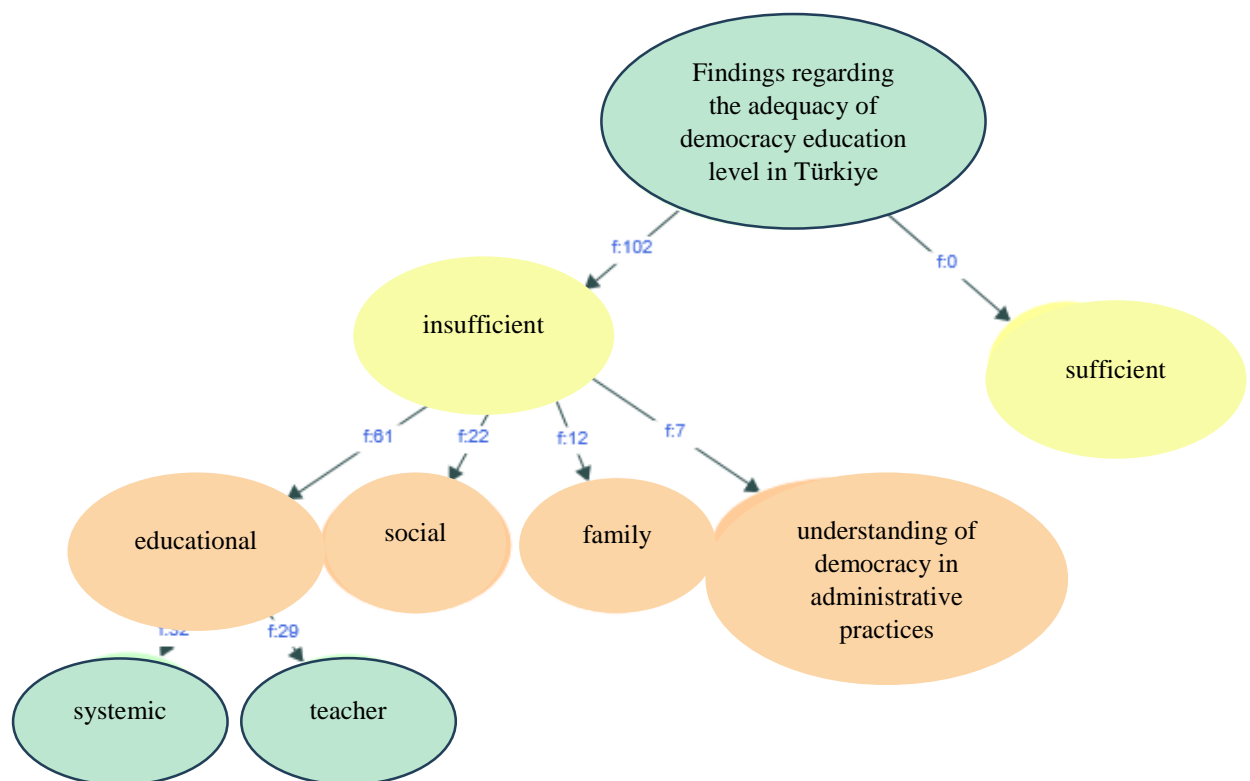
Figure 2. Modeling the adequacy of the level of democracy education in Turkey

Based on Figure 2, all of the participants find the level of democracy education in Türkiye "insufficient" (f:40). The opinions of the participants who found it inadequate were divided into themes as "educational" (f:61), "social" (f:22), "family" (f:12), "understanding of democracy in administrative practices" (f:7).

The opinions of the participants who considered the level of democracy education in Türkiye inadequate due to "educational" reasons were divided into two as "systemic" (f:32) and "teacher" (f:29). The expressions of the participants who stated "systemic" reasons are as follows: "insufficient practices in schools (f:9), "lack of detailed coverage in the curriculum" (f:8), "continuation of traditional education approach" (f:6), "lack of adoption of democratic school culture" (f:5), "ignoring disadvantaged children" (f:2), "low level of education" (f:1), "lack of a comprehensive approach to democracy literacy" (f:1). The statements of the participants who expressed their opinions as "teacher" were grouped under the titles of "inconsistency between theory and practice" (f:9), "ignoring the activities related to the concept of democracy" (f:6), "abandoning the traditional teacher approach" (f:6), "insufficiency of teacher training programs on democracy education" (f:3), "lack of belief in democracy education" (f:1).

According to the statements of the participants who found the level of democracy education in Türkiye insufficient due to "social" reasons, "not becoming a way of life" (f:9), "not seeing the child as an individual" (f:4), "patriarchal social structure" (f:3), "lack of respect for differences of opinion" (f:3), "not adopting democratic values" (f:2), "not internalizing human rights and universal values" (f:1) emerged.

The opinions of the participants who considered the level of democracy education in Türkiye inadequate due to the "family" factor were "lack of democratic parental attitudes" (f:8), "providing an environment that supports individual development" (f:2), "failure to adapt to democracy" (f:1), "raising children with low self-awareness" (f:1).

The following were identified as the sub-themes of the "understanding of democracy in administrative practices" view: "insufficient understanding of democracy in the country's administration" (f:5), "uneasiness of misinterpretation of political expressions" (f:1), "failure to create educational content with an impartial understanding" (f:1).

One of the participants' opinions on the theme of "family" is as follows:

S1: "I do not find the level of democracy education in Türkiye sufficient. I do not think that democracy education is adequately practiced both in the family and in schools. There should be practices of democracy in families so that children can internalize it. When I think about the families in Türkiye and the family I grew up in, I cannot imagine that family meetings are held; that the opinions of both father, mother and children are taken on important issues; and that ideas are exchanged about current issues at dinner tables."

The opinions of some of the participants who consider the level of democracy education in Türkiye inadequate due to "social" reasons are as follows:

S22 : " People often fail to approach differing ideas with maturity; they may exclude those who think differently and even resort to violence. They want tolerance to be shown only to themselves. We can see that we are an impatient, quarrelsome and impatient society first in the classroom, then in hospitals, in traffic, in the bank where we have to wait in line."

The opinion of one of the participants who did not find the level of democracy education in Turkey sufficient due to "educational" reasons is as follows:

S3: "Educational practices in our country are rote learning and stereotyped. The teacher tells and the student accepts. The teacher is essential for the student to get the necessary information. Student opinion is not important. There is no democratic environment for students to develop their personality and for democratic education to be practiced in normal life. Especially in primary education, because education is rote learning, students' thinking skills are not developed, they are not encouraged to research, their skills and scientific thoughts are not formed. They do not have the necessary skills and knowledge in social life. The person hesitates to express his/her opinions. It is very difficult to expect them to be active, participatory, productive and researcher. These reasons are the result of not being able to use democracy education in life."

The opinion of a participant who found democracy education in Turkey inadequate due to "the understanding of democracy in management practices" was given:

S40: "The fact that political parties, the representatives of democracy, do not have a democratic attitude and that education is organized according to political authority rather than expert opinion shows that democracy education in Turkey is not yet at a sufficient level."

3. Findings on the Obstacles to Democracy Education in Türkiye

Participants were asked about their views on the obstacles to democracy education in Türkiye.
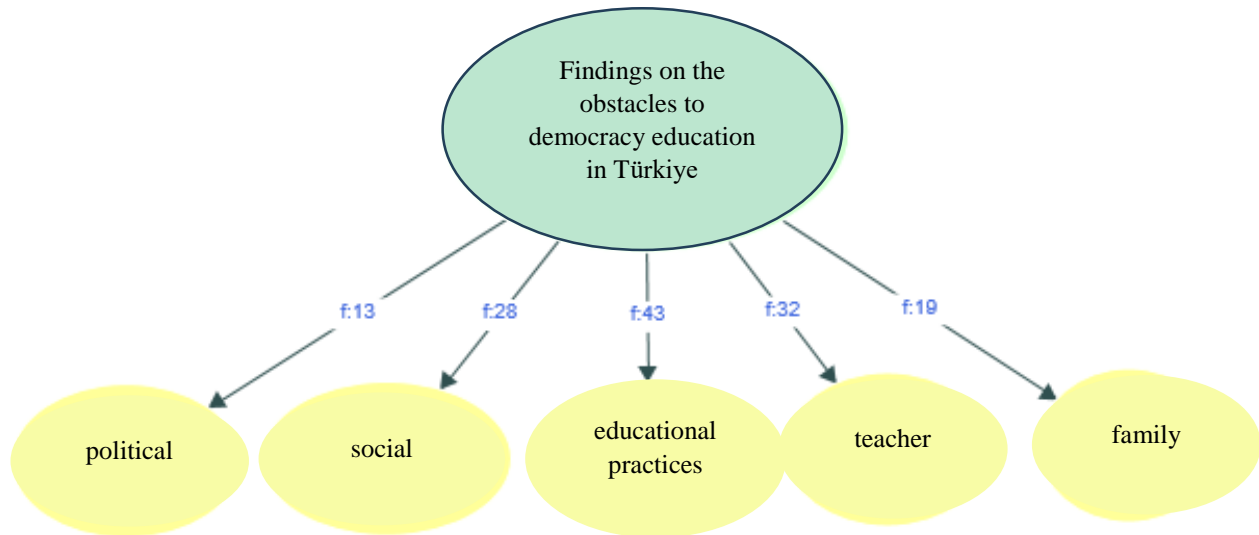
Figure 3. Modeling on the Barriers to Democracy Education in Turkey

When Figure 3 is examined, based on the opinions of the participants, the obstacles to democracy education in Türkiye are analyzed under the titles of "educational practices" (f:43), "teacher" (f:32), "social" (f:28), "family" (f:19), "political" (f:13).

The participants, who argued that "educational practices" is one of the obstacles to democracy education in Türkiye, expressed the following statements: "failure to create a democratic school and classroom culture" (f:13), "wrong educational policies" (f:11), "limitations in practice in schools" (f:7), "lack of democracy education in higher education programs" (f:5), "continuation of traditional education approach" (f:4), "insufficient space in curricula" (f:2), inequality of opportunity (f:1).

As sub-dimensions of the "teacher" theme, "weak belief in the importance of democracy education" (f:10), "authoritarian classroom management approach" (f:8), "inadequacy of transfer skills" (f:8), "teacher attitudes and behaviors" (f:5), "inadequate pre-service and in-service training" (f:1) were identified.

The participants who expressed "social" obstacles expressed their views as "not understanding the impact of democratic understanding on society" (f:8), "social pressures" (f:5), "anxiety of being a thought criminal" (f:4), "regional differences in social values" (f:4), "inability to ensure equality between individuals" (f:3, "unlimited freedom understanding of individuals" (f:3), "ignoring cultural and social values" (f:1).

The participants who saw the concept of "family" as one of the obstacles to democracy education in Türkiye expressed the views of "authoritarian family structure" (f:10), "socioeconomic status of the family" (f:4), "family attitudes in raising children" (f:3), "gender discrimination" (f:1), "patriarchal family structure" (f:1).

The participants who characterized the obstacles to democracy education in Türkiye as "political" expressed the following opinions: "the effect of political views on human relations" (f:3), "lack of equality of opportunity and opportunity" (f:2), "unqualified political language" (f:2), "the effect of political events on the country's economy" (f:2), "the effect of different views on the country's economy" (f: 2), "different views being in the minority in the country's administration" (f:1), "lack of respect for differences in religious and political views" (f:1), "political events in recent history" (f:1), "lack of a democratic administration" (f:1).

The opinion of the participant who sees one of the obstacles in front of democracy education in Türkiye as educational practices is as follows:

S16: "One of the biggest obstacles to democracy education in Türkiye is undoubtedly the effort to raise a single type of person. It is the effort to maintain an understanding of education that raises individuals who accept things as they are, who adopt traditional methods, and who only look out for personal benefit."

The opinion of one of the participants who sees one of the biggest obstacles as "teacher" is as follows:

S2: "First of all, the educators who will provide this education should realize and accept the importance of democracy education. This will be reflected in the seriousness and credibility of the education to be given to students. In short, educators who do not believe in the importance and impact of democracy education are an obstacle to democracy education in Türkiye."

The opinion of the participant who expressed one of the obstacles to democracy education as "political" reasons is as follows:

S19: "Respect for human rights, tolerance, social justice, pluralism, understanding of freedom cannot be learned where there is no freedom of demonstration and organization."

The opinion of the participant who expressed the obstacles to democracy education in Turkey as "social" obstacles is given below:

S23: "Another obstacle in Turkey is human rights. In our society, which has a patriarchal family structure, women and children's rights are not given the necessary attention. Considering that these two groups, who cannot have a say in decisions about the home, continue to repeat the same situation in the individuals they will raise in the future, democracy will continue in our country only as a so-called concept. The main goal of human rights and democracy education, "raising self-respecting and self-confident citizens, cannot be realized in individuals under pressure."

The opinion of the participant who stated that one of the obstacles in front of democracy education in Turkey is "family" is as follows:

S17: "When the family comes into play, the situation becomes unmanageable. Again, some families do not give their children responsibility and spoil them too much under the name of "freedom". Families who argue that their child's rights are violated at school criticize the teacher and interfere with his/her work."

4. Findings on the Need for Curricula in Democracy Education in Türkiye

The answers given by the participants about how the curricula should be in democracy education in Türkiye are as follows:
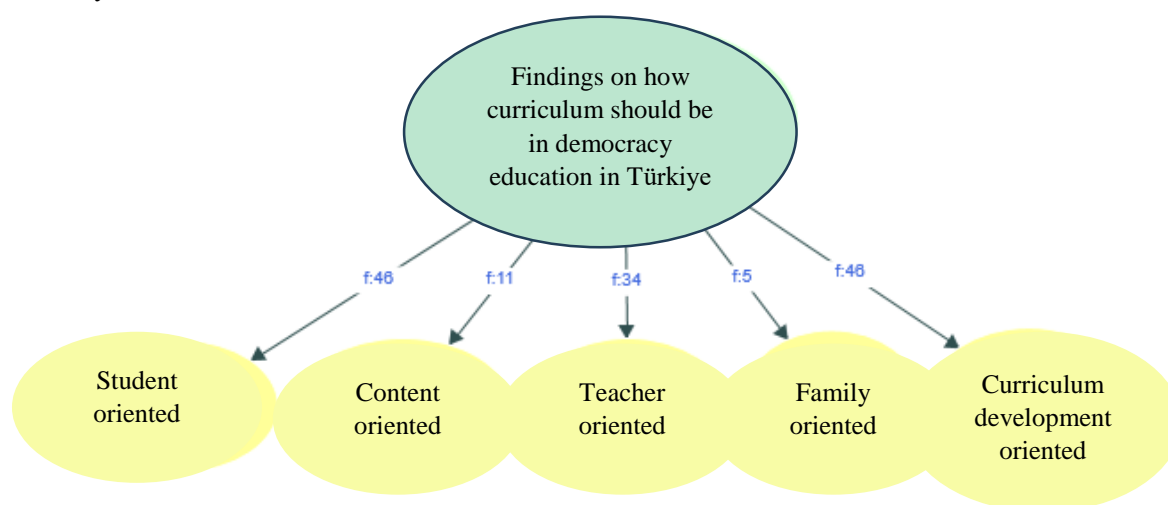
Figure 4. Modeling of how curricula should be in democracy education in Turkey

According to Figure 4, the participants stated that the education curriculum in democracy education in Türkiye should be "student-oriented" (f:46), "curriculum development-oriented" (f:46), "teacher-oriented" (f:34), "content-oriented" (f:11), "family-oriented" (f:5).

The participants who advocated the "student-oriented" view stated following opinions; "taking into account the differences between individuals" (f:12), "students being active" (f:11), "authentic experience" (f:7), "recognizing freedom of thought" (f:3), "using high-level thinking skills" (f: 3), "using appropriate teaching materials" (f:3), "aiming to raise effective world citizens" (f:2), "providing an environment of respect" (f:2), "putting the student at the center" (f:2), "integrating technology into teaching" (f:1).

Based on the opinions of the participants who expressed that studies should be carried out "for curriculum development", these expressions have been found; "It should be aimed at the development of social emotional skills" (f:5), "It should be included as an independent course" (f:5), "It should be included in primary education levels" (f:5), "It should be in accordance with the principle of vitality" (f:5), "It should be included in pre-school curricula" (f:5), "An interdisciplinary approach should be adopted" (f: 5), "It should include process-oriented assessment" (f:4), "It should include high-level thinking skills" (f:3), " It should be based on critical thinking skills" (f:2), " It should be created with a holistic approach" (f:2), " It should aim to raise an effective world citizen" (f:2), " It should create a flexible curriculum" (f:2), " It should be prepared by experts in the field (f:1).

As the sub-themes of the theme "being "teacher-oriented", the views that "Student-centered teaching methods and techniques should be used" (f:12), "Positive classroom climate should be provided" (f:5), "It should be supported through experiences" (f:5), "Free thinking environment should be provided" (f:4), "It should be associated with daily life" (f:3), "Individual differences should be taken into account" (f:2), "Art lessons should be actively realized" (f:1) emerged.

The participants who expressed that the curricula in democracy education in Türkiye should be "content-oriented" expressed the views as "achievements should include universal human rights" (f:6), "activities related to active citizenship awareness should be included" (f:3), "the functioning of the systems of developing societies should be included" (f:1); "a simple and understandable language should be used" (f:1).

According to the statements of the participants who argued that the teaching curriculums in democracy education in Türkiye should be "family-oriented", titles such as "family education curriculums should be designed" (f:2), "family structures should be examined" (f:2), "cooperation between families and teachers should be ensured" (f:1) were reached.

One of the participants who argued that democracy education in Turkey should be "student-oriented" expressed his/her thoughts as follows:

S5: "In all educational processes, from primary school to the end of university, the system should be freed from the monopolistic mentality and the transfer of the one and only truth determined by the official ideology to students through memorization should be abandoned. All currents of thought, right or wrong, should be discussed, examined and questioned, and education should be carried out in an environment of freedom in accordance with the principles of pluralist democracy, with the student at the center. Methods based on rote memorization methods of scrutinizing, questioning and discussing should be followed, avoiding them at all costs."

The statement of one of the participants who stated that democracy education in Turkey is "program development oriented":

S21: "curricula should be created within the framework of programs in which inclusive education and curricula are felt intensively, and a new system should be created outside of traditional programs."

The opinions of some of the participants who stated that democracy education should be "teacher-oriented" are given below:

S7: "Democracy education should be effectively embedded into the education and training processes in the classroom. The most fundamental element of the education system is the teacher. First of all, the teacher should believe in human rights, the inevitability of differences, tolerance, and the beauty of democratic life style, and then he/she should make his/her students live this belief."

The opinion of a participant who stated that democracy education in Turkey should be "family-oriented" is as follows:

S23: "Families should be included in the education and they should be educated within the framework of the behaviors and information they should apply about the child."

The opinion of a participant who stated that democracy education in Turkey should be "content-oriented" is given below:

S12: "Students are expected to be able to relate their immediate environment, region and homeland to the world and space in physical and social terms; to understand how social institutions (economic, political, family, etc.) are formed; to comprehend the current cultural differences in time and in the world, to know the ways of humanity to access accurate and reliable information in the dimension of time; to understand how humanity has achieved basic values such as justice, equality, freedom, to be aware of important problems in society and in the world and to have knowledge about them"

5. Findings on the Development of Democracy Education in Türkiye

The answers given by the primary school teachers to the question "What should be the curriculum for democracy education in Türkiye?" are as follows:
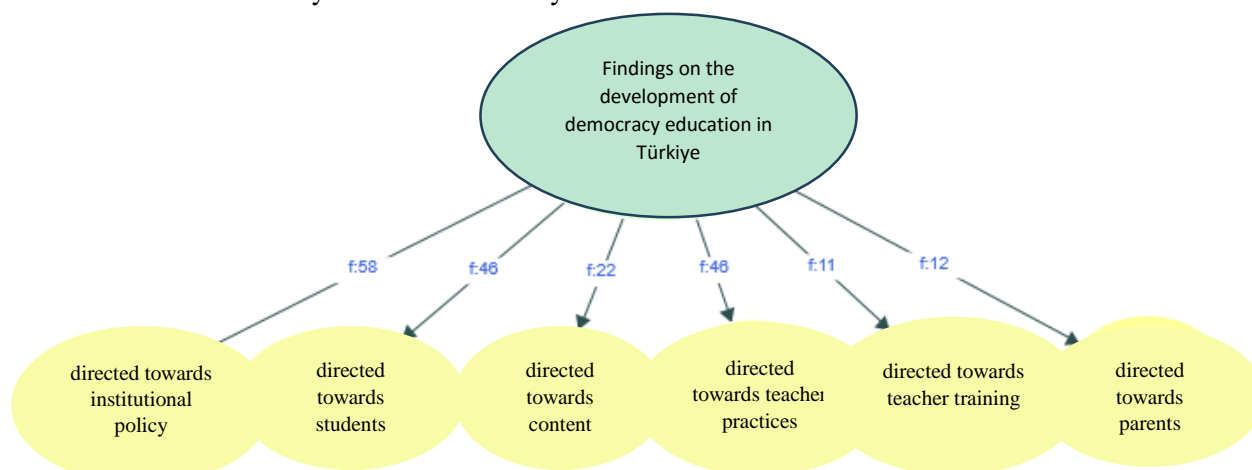
Figure 5. Modeling of what is needed to improve democracy education in Turkey

When Figure 5 is analyzed, it is seen that the participants responded that the development of democracy education in Türkiye should be "directed towards institutional policy" (f:58), "directed towards students" (f:46), "directed towards teacher practices" (f:46), "directed towards content" (f:22), "directed towards parents" (f:12), "directed towards teacher training" (f:11).

The responses of the participants who expressed the view that the development of democracy education in Türkiye should be "towards institutional policy" were grouped under the titles of "Democratic school culture should be created" (f:24), "Cooperation between education stakeholders should be strengthened" (f:15), "Equality of opportunity and opportunity should be provided" (f:9), "Cooperation with public institutions and organizations should be ensured" (f:6), "It should be applicable in every institution" (f:3), and "A suitable environment should be provided in educational institutions" (f:1).

The participants who stated that improvements should be made "for the students" presented the views that "Effective participation should be ensured in the decisions to be taken within the school" (f:20), "Equality of opportunity and opportunity should be provided" (f:9), "Priorities should be determined for interests and needs" (f:8), "Student assemblies should be given importance" (f:5), "A free environment should be provided in the classroom" (f:4).

The participants who argued that improvements should be made "for teacher practices" expressed the views that "Democratic attitudes should be developed" (f:11), "Democratic classroom management should be provided" (f:11), "Teachers should be role models in daily life" (f:9), "Teachers should include student-centered activities" (f:7), "Teachers should use techniques for discussion" (f:4), "Teachers should include team work" (f:4).

The opinions of the participants who argued that "content-oriented" improvements should be made in the development of democracy education in Türkiye were grouped under the following headings: "Curricula should be developed for practice" (f:5), "Learning environments including a holistic approach should be created" (f:5), "It should be blended with interdisciplinary activities" (f:3), "Scientific research should provide resources as a guide" (f:3), "Social skills activities should be emphasized" (f:3), "It should be included as an independent course" (f:1), "Collaborative learning environments should be created" (f:1), "Philosophy courses should be included in primary education programs" (f:1)

Participants who thought that improvements should be made "for teacher education" expressed their opinions as "Qualified in-service trainings should be prepared" (f:6), "Values education should be included in teacher training programs" (f:4), "Personal development should be given continuity" (f:1).

The opinions of the participants who expressed that changes should be made "for the family" in the development of democracy education in Türkiye are as follows: "Parents should develop awareness of democratic attitudes" (f:9), "School-family communication should be kept strong" (f:2), "Democratic family culture should be created" (f:1).

The opinion of one of the participants who stated that changes should be made "towards institutional policy" in the development of democracy education in Türkiye is given below:

S36: "Considering the impossibility of creating democratic societies without democratic schools, the functions of schools should be reviewed. The aim of democracy education in schools should be to teach democracy conceptually as well as to create and actualize a culture of democracy. The most effective method to achieve this is to enable students to take part in their own educational processes."

The opinion of one of the participants who stated that changes should be made "towards teacher practices" in the development of democracy education in Türkiye is as follows:

S41: "It is not possible for students to express themselves freely in classrooms where teachers try to teach with a harsh authority. In democracy, there is a philosophy of governing together. The presence of class management characterized by harsh authority that disregards democratic principles indicates serious problems with democracy in schools. For example, most of the teachers try to manage the class by shouting and intimidating and use punishment frequently. Most of them teach with the understanding that "I know, what I say is right." They teach with the understanding that "I know, what I say is right. Teachers need to prepare a classroom environment where students are not afraid to speak their minds. For example, different types of homework on the same subject can be organized in a way that leaves different task assignments to the students' choice."

The statements of some of the participants who stated that practices should be carried out "for teacher education" in the development of democracy education are as follows:

S27: "To design, plan, implement and develop the necessary policies in order to create and improve the professional preparation of prospective teachers studying in faculties of education on Democracy Education in cooperation with Y.Ö.K."

A participant who stated that "content-oriented" changes should be made to improve democracy education expressed his/her views as follows:

S16: "Democracy education should expand the curricula, it should not be limited to a few objectives in courses such as citizenship and life science, but should be spread to all curricula. The objectives in the program should be spread into life and based on learning by doing and living. Curricula should be student-centered and democracy education should primarily include explicit and implicit goals for students to know and express themselves, to know their rights and freedoms, to respect the rights and freedoms of others, to question, criticize and develop."

The opinion of a participant who stated that changes should be made "according to the student" in order to improve democracy education in Turkey is given below:

S5: "The priority of curricula is not to teach disciplines, but to respond to the interests and needs of students. Because the needs, requirements and expectations of each student group may be different, and it is possible to see these differences among the students in a class. This shows how important it is for curricula to be flexible in the development and education of individuals. The Ministry of National Education should increase the number of elective courses and make arrangements to enable students to take responsibility for their own education by choosing courses according to their interests, needs and requirements."

6. Findings on Democracy Education Practices in the Classroom

In the study, the participants were asked what kind of practices teachers carry out in the classroom regarding democracy education.
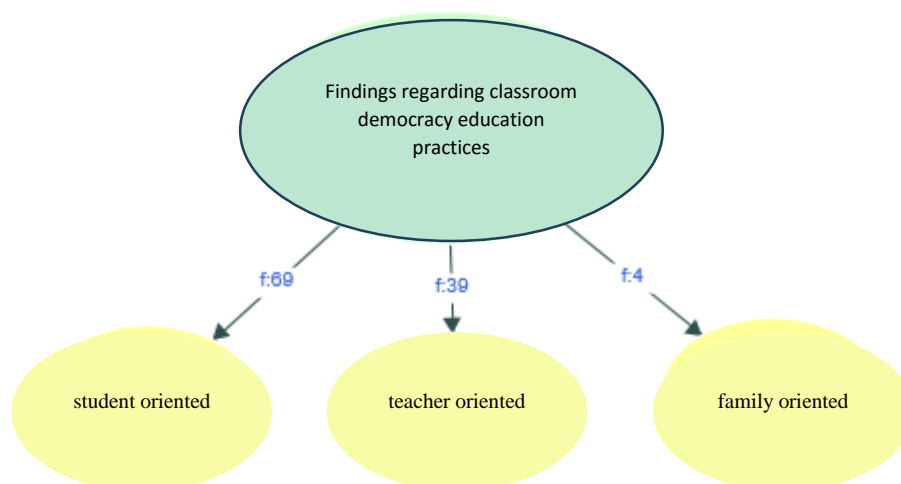
Figure 6. Modeling for classroom democracy education practices

When Figure 6 is analyzed, the participants stated that classroom democracy education practices should be "student-oriented" (f:69), "teacher-oriented" (f:39) and "family-oriented" (f:4).

The participants who thought that classroom democracy education practices in Türkiye should be "student-oriented" expressed their views as follows: "conducting activities for values education" (f:20), "determining leadership through elections" (f:12), "conducting activities for higher-order thinking skills" (f:10), "assigning responsibilities that ensure cooperation" (f:10), "using student-centered teaching methods and techniques" (f:10), "applying creative drama and role-playing activities" (f:4), "conducting activities that support social-emotional skills" (f:3).

The participants who presented their views "teacher-oriented" and expressed that teachers have a responsibility in democracy education practices in Türkiye, expressed their views as "voting on joint decisions" (f:14), "displaying democratic leader attitudes and behaviors" (f:10), "demonstrating attitudes and behaviors of democratic leaders" (f:10), "demonstrating attitudes and behaviors of democratic leaders" (f:10): 10, "being a role model with attitudes and behaviors" (f:5), "giving positive feedback" (f:4), "making sure that all students have a say" (f:2), "creating a positive classroom climate" (f:2), "guiding during the teaching process" (f:2).

The opinions of the participants who think that "family-oriented" studies should be carried out in classroom democracy education practices are grouped under the titles of "cooperating with family-teacher-guidance" (f:3), "including family participation activities" (f:1).

The opinion of one of the participants who stated that "student-oriented" studies should be carried out in classroom practices is as follows:

S13: "I believe that respect for nature, stray animals and the environment makes it easier to respect each other. We feed stray animals. We keep our environment clean. We spend a lot of time in

nature and leave the place clean. In order to have responsibilities, I assign tasks such as watering the trees on the street in summer and leaving water for animals.

In the research, the views of the participant who stated that teachers should carry out practices related to "family" in the classroom are given below:

S17: "I am in constant communication with parents and involve them in the education process. I often repeat that education and teaching are different things from each other until they understand that parents are their children's teachers. A child who cannot express himself/herself in the family environment cannot express himself/herself in the school environment. No teacher can easily fix what the parents have broken."

The opinions of some of the participants who stated that there were "teacher-oriented" activities in their classroom practices are as follows:

S36: "I do not distribute homework to my students. I leave the homework I have prepared for all my students on my desk and I want my students who want to do this homework, who think that this homework is useful for them, to take the homework and do it properly. Because I think that the homework forced on students does not contribute to the development of children."

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

Discussion and Conclusion

The first sub-problem of the research, the necessity of democracy education for a country, is mostly evaluated by the primary teachers from a social perspective and stated that it is necessary for raising individuals who know their fundamental rights and freedoms. The democratization of the administration in the country and the democratization of education are directly proportional to each other. Countries with a democratic understanding will bring democratic education, and generations raised with a democratic education will nurture democracy in their countries. A study that overlaps with the findings of this research is Edwards' (2008) study, in which he found that the main purpose of education in democratic countries is to raise generations who have internalized democracy, who have placed it in their lives and who can develop this understanding. Another result obtained in the study regarding the first sub-objective is that it provides a sense of social belonging. This finding coincides with the result of Yeşil's (2003) study in which he stated that democracy education primarily focuses on the individual and prepares the ground for learning the rights and freedoms that facilitate adaptation to social life. Guttmann and Ben-Porath (2015) support the findings of this study by concluding that in societies where democracy education is based on democracy education, schools have missions such as providing children with autonomous personality development and the acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as the acquisition of common values. For this reason, human rights and democracy education is one way to raise selfless citizens who embrace democracy and work for its protection and strengthening.

In response to the question about the necessity of democracy education for a country, which was aimed to be measured in the first sub-problem of the research, all of the participants presented opinions stating that it is necessary. According to the interviews, the necessity of democracy education for a country is mostly due to social reasons. Among the social reasons, the views of "raising individuals who know their fundamental rights and freedoms, raising a sense of social belonging, raising individuals who respect differences" come to the fore.

Regarding the second sub-problem of the research, the adequacy of the level of democracy education in Turkey, primary teachers found it inadequate in terms of education. It is stated that the practices in schools are inadequate due to systemic reasons. In this context, Göney (2021), in his study with Social Studies teachers, concluded that middle school students' perceptions of democracy were insufficient. The participants listed the reasons for this as family, stakeholders at school, and the teacher's inability to provide a democratic environment. Another opinion about inadequacy is that activities related to the concept of democracy are not given importance due to teachers. According to the pre-service social studies teachers who participated in Memişoğlu's (2022) study, for an adequate level of democracy education, it is necessary to develop democratic attitudes in the classroom, increase practices

and election activities. In addition, methods and techniques should be diversified so that students can better understand the concept of democracy. These results are similar to the findings of the research.

Regarding the second sub-problem of the research, in the interviews about the adequacy of democracy education in Turkey, all of the participants found democracy education inadequate. When we look at the reasons why democracy education in Turkey is seen as inadequate, educational factors are seen at the forefront. Educational factors are systemic and teacher-related. The majority of the participants cited systemic factors as the reason for the inadequacy of democracy education in Turkey. In the interviews, the participants drew attention to statements such as "inadequate practices in schools, the lack of detailed coverage of democracy education in the curriculum and the continuation of the traditional understanding of education".

The third sub-problem of the research is that the biggest obstacle to democracy education in Turkey is seen by the class teachers who are doing postgraduate education as educational practices. A knowledge-level democracy education will not be sufficient to establish a democratic understanding of life in the student. For this reason, it is necessary to implement the main elements of the concept of democracy in the context of authentic experiences in the classroom climate and to carry out the teaching (Kondu and Sakar, 2013; Kuzgun, 2000). Another view that stands out in the research is the obstacles originating from the teacher. These obstacles are expressed as the weak belief in the importance of democracy education and the authoritarian classroom management approach. Kudrnac (2021) and Miklikowska, Rekker and Kdurnac (2022) reached the finding that positive attitudes develop among the students thanks to the discussion environment of the teachers regarding universal values including democratic and human rights in the classroom.

The research results are parallel to the studies in the literature. In line with the third sub-problem of the research, educational practices emerged as the biggest obstacle in the interviews conducted with the participants regarding the obstacles to democracy education in Turkey. Most of the participants who indicated educational practices as one of the obstacles to democracy education in Turkey included the views of the failure to create a democratic school and classroom culture, wrong education policies and limited practices in schools in their statements.

The fourth sub-problem of the research, which is that the curriculum in democracy education in Turkey should be focused on students and program development, stands out. Büyükkaragöz (1998) emphasizes the strengthening of students' self-control with increasing intrinsic motivation as an indicator of effective democracy education. Öztürk and Can (2020) concluded in their research that the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in primary school are the main factors in shaping children's futures. In this context, it can be stated that children gain social values such as friendship, justice, peace, freedom, responsibility, love, respect, participation, leadership, helpfulness, citizenship and democratic behaviors in schools, which are educational environments, during primary school. Studies in the literature are similar to the findings regarding the development of social emotional skills, which are among the elements to be considered in program development.

The findings of this study regarding the inclusion of curriculum in basic education levels for program development are parallel to the findings of Samancı (2010) regarding the inclusion of activities such as student-centered, democratic classroom climate, qualified teacher guidance, respect for different opinions, increasing democratic awareness, and games that support democratic mentality in primary school curriculums.

The findings regarding the compliance of curriculum with the principle of vitality for program development are noteworthy. The development of democratic values, namely democracy education, is not limited to higher education and basic education only. Family is one of the cornerstones of democracy, therefore the importance of family in democracy education is a priority. Family attitudes are noteworthy in making democracy education meaningful for the child. While schools provide the official side of democracy education, it is also provided by schools, and it is implicitly acquired by the family and the environment (Chomsky, 2007; Bali & Hayır Kanat, 2023). In this context, Büyükkaragöz (1994) reached the finding that it is realized through implicit learning in the family environment and all environments in daily life. In all formal learning in a child's life, the family, which comes before primary school, is seen as the most important socializing element (Tan, 1989). Because there is a strong

connection between democracy and family structure. An environment with authoritarian parents cannot be expected to be democratic (Büyükkaragöz, 1994). Studies in the literature emphasize the concept of "family" in the context of individual, education and environment in democracy education. This supports the research findings.

Interviews were conducted with the participants about how democracy education should be in Turkey regarding the fourth sub-problem of the research. In this direction, the participants mostly stated that democracy education should be student-oriented and that studies should be carried out to develop programs in this regard. The views of the participants who stated that there should be a student-oriented democracy education, "individual differences should be taken into consideration, the student should be active", draw attention. The participants stated that studies should be carried out to develop programs in democracy education as "it should be aimed at the development of social emotional skills, it should be included as an independent course, it should be included in the basic education levels, it should be in accordance with the principle of vitality".

The fifth sub-problem of the research In Turkey, which is a country with a democratic education system, the importance of institutional policies for the development of democracy education is the creation of a democratic school culture. The concept of "Participation" has an important place in the establishment of democratic culture and values. Students need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to actively participate in the democratic process. In the research of Okutan (2010), the finding that the inclusion of school stakeholders, primarily students, school administrators, teachers and when necessary auxiliary personnel in the management process supports these gains and ensures the development of the institutions' operational policies is consistent with the findings of the research.

School is the most important institution where the democratic values acquired by the child in the family can be enriched. In ensuring this development, it is important that discussions and criticisms in schools are carried out with respect and tolerance and democratic disciplines. In the research of Bali & Hayır Kanat (2023), it was found that the school is a democratic environment that aims to ensure equality and justice for each individual. This is parallel to the finding regarding the establishment of democratic school culture from the institutional policies revealed in this research.

Regarding the fifth sub-problem of the research, the participants expressed their views on the development of democracy education in Turkey that democracy education in Turkey can be developed with studies on institutional policies. According to this result, the statements "democratic school culture should be established, cooperation between education stakeholders should be strengthened, and equality of opportunity and possibility should be provided" stand out.

The sixth sub-problem of the research, which is the implementation of activities that include values education for the student in the classroom democracy education practices, stands out. Values are an important factor in the formation of a strong personality and character of the individual. The results of the study are similar to Şişman, Güleş & Dönmez (2010), who stated that the methods to be applied in democratic classroom activities should include open communication between students, collaborative practices, critical thinking by establishing cause-effect relationships between events, using estimation and analysis skills, and being able to solve daily life problems. It has been found that value education with level-appropriate activities in the preschool period develops emotional, social, moral and academic skills (Öztürk & Can, 2020; Lovat, 2017). In the process of acquiring democratic values, it is important to provide and express democratic attitudes and critical thinking skills (Hotaman, 2010). In the light of the mentioned studies, the findings of the research, which are in-class democracy education practices, are parallel to the importance of activities aimed at teaching values.

In line with the sixth sub-problem of the study, it was investigated how democracy education should be in in-class practices. Accordingly, the vast majority of the participants stated that in-class practices should be according to the student. According to the participants' views, practices aimed at students should be in the form of "conducting activities aimed at values education, determining leadership through elections, assigning responsibilities that ensure cooperation, and using student-centered teaching methods and techniques."

Suggestions

Based on the results of the research on the necessity of democracy education, first of all, educators need to embrace democracy. A teacher should have a character that constantly improves and renews itself and follows the path of science. In this direction, teachers should conduct their own studies on democracy and its benefits and be conscious.

One of the obstacles to democracy education in Turkey has been seen as systemic obstacles. Accordingly, democratic obstacles in our education system should be determined by experts, the recently organized curriculum should be examined and the curriculum should be renewed accordingly. Curriculum renewal studies should also be carried out with democratic processes and participation. Along with the renewal of the curriculum, textbooks and classroom practices recommended in the books should also be reviewed.

Based on the results of the research problem, teachers can be advised to break away from traditional understandings and adopt democratic practices and contemporary approaches in classroom practices. Teachers should include details about democracy in interviews with parents such as parent meetings and social environments.

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Sınıf Eğitimi Lisansüstü Öğrencilerinin İlkokullarda Demokrasi Eğitimine İlişkin Görüşleri

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Öz

Yapılan araştırmada sınıf eğitimi lisansüstü öğrencilerinin Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimine ilişkin görüşlerini incelemek amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada var olan demokrasi eğitimi kavramına dair sınıf eğitimi lisansüstü öğrencilerinin görüşleri detaylı şekilde ele alındığı için nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi sınıf eğitimi alanında lisansüstü eğitim gören 40 katılımcı dahil olmuştur. Katılımcıların belirlenmesinde ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Katılımcıların görüşlerini ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla uzmanlar tarafından hazırlanan ve 6 sorudan oluşan bir yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu hazırlanmış ve online ortamda görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler birden fazla araştırmacı tarafından içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. İçerik analizi ile elde edilen bulgular NVİVO 14 programı ile modellenmiştir. Ortaya çıkan bulgular doğrultusunda katılımcılar demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için "gerekli" olduğunu, Türkiye'de ise demokrasi eğitimi düzeyinin "yetersiz" olduğunu dile getirmişlerdir. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki en büyük engel "eğitsel uygulamalar" olarak görülmektedir. Araştırma, Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminde öğretim programının "öğrenciye yönelik" olması gerektiği ve demokrasi eğitimini geliştirmek için "kurum politikasına yönelik" çalışmalar yapılması gerektiği ile ilgili sonuçları ortaya koymuştur.

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Giriş

1.1. Demokrasi

Demokrasi, millet egemenliğine dayanan bir yönetim ve yaşam biçimi olarak ifade edilebilir. Günümüzde insan hakları ihlallerine ilişkin uluslararası anlaşmalar imzalanmasına rağmen yine de hak tanımamazlık devam etmektedir. Bunun temel nedenlerinden biri eğitim kaynaklıdır. Demokrasi kavramını devlet-eğitim-birey bağlamında değerlendirilmesi önem arz etmektedir. Çünkü bir ülkedeki toplumun eğitim düzeyi ile demokrasi ve insan haklarına karşı farkındalığın gelişmesi birbiri ile paralellik gösterir. Kişiler önce ailede, sonra okulda öğretmeninden karşılaştığı tutum ve davranışları sosyal öğrenme ile yaşamlarına transfer etmektedirler. Demokrasinin temelleri ailede atılır ve toplumun en küçük örneklemi olarak belirtilebilecek okullarda devam eder (Kışlalı, 1989) Çünkü demokrasi, sadece demokratik ortamlara maruz kalarak öğrenilir (Atasoy, 1997).

Bireylerin kendi geleceklerini planlayabilmesi büyük bir sorumluluk barındırmaktadır. Bu bağlamda demokrasi, bireyin geleceğinde tabela görevi görmesine fırsat veren, kişinin faydasına yönelik bir anlayışı paylaşmaktadır. Demokrasi, toplumun yapı taşı olan bireyin düşüncelerdeki çelişkileri ve ayrışmayı bir zenginlik olarak barındırır. Demokrasi, insanın sadece insan olma özelliğinden dolayı hakları olduğunu savunup insana değer vermesiyle diğer başlıca sistemlerden ayrılır ve üstün görülür (Doğan, 2007). Demokrasinin olmazsa olmazı insan hakları ve insani değerlerin varlığıdır (Göney, 2021). Çünkü demokrasi yönetim biçimi olmanın yanında aynı zamanda bir yaşam biçimidir ve toplumun birlikte hoşgörü içerisinde yaşamasına dolayısıyla o toplumun huzurlu bir hayat sürmesine katkıda bulunur (Kaypak, 2016). Demokrasi, bireyin yaşantısının daha değerli ve anlamlı kılınmasını sağlar, toplumdaki her bir ferdi değerli bir birey olarak ele alır ve bireyin toplumun özü olarak betimler (Şahin, 2021).

Demokrasi bir yaşam biçimi olduğu için ulaşılması gereken bir hedef olarak değil, sürece yayılmış ve yaşamın doğasında bulunan bir kavram olarak görülmelidir (Yeşil, 2004). Demokratik tutuma sahip ebeveyn, karşılıklı saygı, sevgi ve hoşgörü çerçevesinde; huzurlu bir aile ortamı için sorumluluk alan aynı zamanda da çocuğuna da aynı tutum içerisinde bir birey olarak saygı duyan kişilerdir. Çocuk aile içinde öz benliği ile yer edinir.

İdeal ve tamamlanmış bir demokrasiye ulaşmak mümkün değildir çünkü demokrasi devamlı olarak kendisini yeniler ve yeni gereklilikler getirir (Özsoy, 2004; Şahin, 2021). Bir ülkenin demokrasinin gelişimini ne düzeyde desteklediği gelişmişlik seviyesi ile paralellik gösterir.

Dahl (2019) demokrasinin insanın kendini geliştirmesini en çok destekleyen sistem olarak öne çıktığını ifade etmiştir. Bu anlayışın altını dolduran ana unsurlar; özgürce ifade özgürlüğü hakkıdır. Demokrasiye önem veren insanlar, kendi mutluluğunun yanı sıra toplumun refahı için de çabalarlar; paylaşmayı seven, hoşgörülü, yeni fikirlere açık insanlardır (Göney, 2021; Maboçoğlu, 1999). Demokrasinin korunması ve devamlılığının nitelikli bir şekilde sağlanabilmesi için vatandaşların birtakım sorumlulukları ve yapmaları gereken görevleri bulunmaktadır: Demokratik vatandaşlar sosyal hayata aktif olarak katılmalı, siyasi sorumluluklarını yerine getirmelidir (Güven, 2008). Vatandaşlar bu siyasi sorumluluklarını yerine getirirken akıl ve mantık yolunu kullanmalıdır (Göney, 2021; Yağcı, 1998). Demokrasinin korunması ve devamlılığının sağlanabilmesi ancak onun değerini bilen vatandaşların yetiştirilmesi ile mümkün kılınabilir.

1.2. Demokrasi Eğitimi

Bireylerin bilinç kazanması ve demokrasinin önemini fark etmesi sürecinde etkili olan kurumların başlıcaları: aile, okul, arkadaşlar, sosyal medya, sivil toplum örgütleri ve siyasi partilerdir. Fakat bireyi en çok etkileyen dış faktörler okul ve ailedir. Bu nedenle okulun ve aile bireylerinin iş birliği içerisinde hareket etmeleri demokrasi eğitiminin başarıya ulaşmasında oldukça önemlidir (Güven, 2008). Okul bireyleri eğitmek ve kültür aktarımını sağlamakla görevli bir araç konumunda iken birey için aile daha geniş kapsamlı bir okul niteliğindedir. Dolayısıyla demokrasi eğitiminde birey için öğretici konumundaki ilk insanlar ebeveynleridir (Yeşil, 2004). Bu nedenle çocuğa verilecek her türlü eğitimin olduğu gibi demokrasi eğitiminin de başladığı nokta ailedir. Ailenin çocuğa sunduğu ortam sevgi ve şefkat dolu, özgürlükçü, bireyi birey olarak kabul ederek çocuğuna saygı duyan bir aile ortamı olmalıdır (Maboçoğlu, 1999). Böyle bir ortamın özellikleri anne baba arasındaki demokratik anlayış ve tutumlar olarak belirtilebilir. Böylece çocuklar küçük yaşlardan itibaren demokratik tutumları gözlemleme ve içselleştirme imkanı bulurlar.

Vatandaşların toplum içindeki sosyal, siyasi alanlar başta olmak üzere birçok alandaki haklarını ve sorumluluklarını tanımaları, bunun yanında insan haklarını bilinçli olarak kullanmaları ve korumaları ancak demokrasi eğitimi ile sağlanabilir (Göney, 2021). Okulun, eğitim sisteminin değerleri ve toplumun kültürünü aktarmaya yarayan bir işlevi olmasının yanında demokrasinin de kültüre entegre bir halde yaşam biçimi boyutu olduğundan demokrasi eğitiminin bireylere kazandırılabileceği en uygun yerlerden biri de okul ortamı olarak görülmektedir (Doğanay ve Sarı, 2004). Toplumun demokrasi bilincini kazanması için okullarda verilmesi gereken demokrasi eğitiminin gerekliliği yasalarla desteklenmiştir. Özgür ve demokratik bir toplum oluşturmak ve bu bilinci yaşatmak devletin sorumluluğu altına alınmıştır. Devlet bu sorumluluğunu eğitim öğretim faaliyetleri aracılığı ile yerine getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Anayasanın 11. maddesi de bu konuyu içermektedir (Gülmez, 2001).

Bir toplumda demokrasinin yaşam şekline dönüşmesi için bireylerin demokratik tutum ve becerileriyle donanmış olması önemli bir etkendir. Yaşantılar bireyde demokrasinin temel değerlerini kalıcı bir şekilde özümsenmesini sağlar. Bu sebeple demokrasinin temel güvencesi de bilinçli yurttaşlardır. Bu demokratik değerlerin kazandırılmasında en etkili kaynak eğitimdir (Şimşek, 2000). 1924 yılında ülkemize ilk gelişi ve sonrası eğitim tarihimize dönüm noktası gibi etkiler yapan John Dewey, "Demokrasi ve Eğitim" adlı kitabında, demokratik değerler üzerine kurulmasının önemini aşamalı olarak açıklamaktadır. Dewey'e göre, eğitim, toplumsal yaşamda devamının anlamlı olması için önem taşımaktadır (Dewey,1996, Bali & Kanat tarafından alıntılanmıştır, 2023) 1949 yılında gerçekleşen 4. Milli Eğitim Şurasında ilk kez eğitimde demokrasi kavramından bahsedilmiştir. Dönemin Milli Eğitim Bakanı Tahsin Banguoğlu: "Demokrasi idaresi yeni bir terbiye meselesidir, yeni bir fikrin mal edilmesidir." ibaresiyle demokratik eğitime vurgu yaparak Türk Eğitim Sisteminin bu konuda dönüm noktası yaşamasına öncülük etmiştir. Bu dönüm noktasının etkisi 1973 yılında hayata geçen Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu'nda "Eğitimin Temel İlkeleri" başlığı altında demokrasiye yer verilerek gösterilmiştir (Göney, 2021; Okutan, 2010). 2004 yılında yayınlanan MEB Demokrasi Eğitimi ve Okul Meclisleri Yönergesi ile demokrasi eğitiminde düzenlemeler yapılarak demokrasi eğitiminin yeni hazırlanan programlara da uyumlu hale gelmesi sağlanmıştır (Göney, 2021; Okutan, 2010). Proje ülkede maalesef istikrarlı ve düzenli uygulanamadığından demokrasi eğitimi tarihimiz açısından hayal kırıklığı olmuştur, resmen 2013' te fiilen de 2019 yılında bitmiştir.

Demokrasi, eğitim programlarında teorik olarak yer almasına rağmen uygulamalarda ve kullanımda ihmal edilmektedir. Bu durum verilen eğitimin niteliksiz olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Uygulanan bu niteliksiz eğitimin nedeni ise okullarda öğrenci merkezli öğretimin tam olarak gerçekleştirilemiyor oluşu ve öğrencilere düşünme, kendini ifade etme gibi temel becerilerin kazandırılmasına öncelik verilmemesidir (Yeşil, 2004).

Demokrasi eğitimi ancak eğitim haklarının herkes için ulaşılabilir şekilde varlığını sürdürmesi, ders için gerekli tüm materyallerin, eğitim programlarının ve uygulayıcının kullandığı yöntem ve tekniklerin demokrasiye uygun olarak düzenlenmesi ve eğitimin demokratikleştirilmesi ile gerçekleşebilir (Gürşimşek ve Göregenli, 2004). Materyallerin sağlanmasının yanı sıra demokratik bir sınıf ortamı oluşturulması demokrasi eğitimi için oldukça elzemdir. Öğrencilerin birbirlerini saygıyla dinleyebilecekleri ve çekinmeden fikirlerini ortaya koyabilecekleri demokratik bir sınıf iklimi yaratmak öğretmenlerin görevidir. Demokrasi eğitimi öğretmenin egemenliğinden bağımsızdır çünkü öğretmenin otorite olarak var olduğu bir sınıf içinde öğrenci kendini özgür ve rahat hissedemez. Öğrencilere kendi dünyalarını kurmaları için müsaade edilmezse demokrasiye ilişkin farkındalık geliştiremezler ve uygulayamazlar. Dolayısıyla demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki en büyük engel dayatmacı anlayışı benimsemiş öğretmenlerdir (Duman, 2008).

Demokrasi eğitiminin öğrencilere okul öncesi eğitimden başlanarak ortaöğretim son sınıf bitene kadar örgün eğitim boyunca her kademede etkili bir ders olarak verilmesi gerekmektedir. Tüm kademeler arasında ve diğer derslerle bağlantılı olacak şekilde yaşamdan kopuk olmayan ve kesintisiz bir demokrasi eğitimi verilmelidir. Demokrasi eğitimi toplum tarafından içselleştirilmesi ve yaşam biçimi haline getirilmesi gereken bir değerdir. Bu nedenle demokrasi eğitimi aslında yaşam boyu sürmesi gereken bir süreçtir (Gülmez, 2001).

Demokrasi eğitimi, en sade haliyle, "insan haklarının yaşatılarak, demokrasinin ilke ve kurallarının öğretildiği eğitim" olarak tanımlanabilir (Kepenekçi, 2003). Demokrasi eğitimi özgür ve demokratik bir toplum düzenini amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç bağlamında da insan haklarının güvence altına alınması ile süreklilik kazanır (Gözütok, 1995). Eğitim sürecinde ise öğrencinin insan olarak

değerine ve bütünlüğüne saygıyı barındırmaktadır. Demokraside karar veren konumundaki birey olduğundan, demokratik eğitimin öznesi de öğrencidir. Demokrasi eğitiminde her çocuk özel bir birey olarak görülür ve aynı haklara sahiptir. Fakat demokrasi eğitimi, herkesin okulda istediği şekilde davranabileceği ya da istediği gibi öğretim yapabileceği anlamına gelmemektedir. Aksine, demokratik eğitimde var olan kurallara uyum gerekmektedir. Örneğin okullarda öğrencilerden hazırlanmış olan disiplin yönetmeliğine uymaları beklenir. Fakat kuralların değiştirilmesi istendiğinde öğrencilerin fikirlerini açıkça belirtmeleri sağlanır.

"Demokratik eğitim" ve "demokrasi eğitiminin" bir arada incelendiği ya da birbirine karıştırıldığı görülmüştür. Bu iki kavram birbirini destekler niteliktedir ancak birbirlerinden birkaç noktada ayrışmaktadır. Yapılan güncel araştırmalar da sık rastlanan daha çok araştırmacılar demokratik eğitim ya da ilkokul 4. Sınıfta başlayan İnsan Hakları, Yurttaşlık ve Demokrasi dersine odaklanarak çalışmalarını sürdürmüşlerdir (Aktepe, 2015; Haçat ve Demir, 2017; Özdemir, Aydın ve Çapa, 2023; Ulusoy ve Erkuş, 2016; Şara, Yalçın, Bıyık, ve Özbek, 2023). Demokrasi kavramının bireylere temel eğitim düzeyinden itibaren hissettirilmesi gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Bu nedenle sınıf öğretmenlerinin demokrasi eğitimi konusundaki görüşleri yadsınamayacak derecede önemlidir. Yapılan bu çalışma hem sınıf öğretmenliği alanında lisansüstü öğrenim gören hem de sahada aktif bir şekilde öğretmenlik görevlerini yürütmekte olan katılımcılar ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada temel eğitim alanında öğrenim gören ve Türkiye'nin farklı coğrafi bölgelerinde yaşayan, öğretmenlik yapan sınıf öğretmenlerinin ülkedeki demokrasi eğitimini nasıl gördüklerini ortaya koymak temel amaçtır. Bu nedenle belirtilen görüşler ilkokullarda çalışan öğretmenler tarafından saha içerisinden ifade edildiği için dikkate alınması Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimi açısından önemli olacaktır. Yapılan bu çalışma sınıf eğitimi alanında lisansüstü öğrenim gören sınıf öğretmenleriyle gerçekleştirildiğinden dolayı ilkokullar ile sınırlı kalmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra araştırmada aşağıda alt problemlere yer verilmiştir.

1- Demokrasi Eğitimi bir ülke için gerekli midir?
2- Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin düzeyi nedir?
3- Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engeller nelerdir?
4- Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimine yönelik öğretim programları nasıl olmalıdır?
5- Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesine yönelik olarak neler yapılmalıdır?
6- Sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamaları nasıldır?

Yöntem

Nitel araştırmalar yürütülürken araştırmacı, katılımcıların var olan problemi nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını dikkate alır (Creswell, 2013, s. 187). Bu yöntem, katılımcıların yaşantılarını, düşüncelerini ve olaylara bakış açısının anlaşılmasında kullanılır. Eğitim alanındaki çalışmalarda, öğrenci ve öğretmenlerin, deneyimlerini ve buna ilişkin görüşlerini ortaya çıkarmak için nitel araştırma yönteminin en uygun seçenek olduğunu göstermektedir (Thanh ve Thanh, 2015, s. 25). Nitel araştırmalar olayları ya da durumları sosyal bağlamda ele alıp açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır (Arslan, 2012). Nitel araştırmalarda doküman analizi, görüşme ve gözlem gibi teknikler kullanılarak araştırılan konunun doğal bağlamında bütüncül bir yaklaşım benimsemek esastır (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2021). Nitel yöntemler kullanılarak desenlenen araştırmalarda çalışılan olayı veya olguyu derinlemesine incelemek amaçlanmaktadır (Baltacı, 2019). Araştırmada Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimine dair sınıf eğitimi lisansüstü öğrencilerinin görüşlerinin ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmıştır. Bu sebeple, sosyal bilimler alanında yaygın olarak kullanılan ve betimsel bir araştırma yöntemi olan durum çalışması deseni kullanılmıştır. Betimleyici durum çalışması, araştırmacının yaşamda karşılaşılan kavram, olay ve olguları derinlemesine bir anlayışla ele alabilmesini sağlar. Araştırmacı, durumun özgünlüğünü ve bağlamsal ayrıntılarını vurgular ve katılımcıların gerçek deneyimlerini yansıtmaya çalışır (Yin, 2017, s. 50). Yapılan araştırmada görüşme formu kullanılmış olup, çalışma grubuna müdahale edilmeden veriler doğal bir şekilde ve bütüncül bir bakış açısıyla toplanmıştır.

Çalışma Grubu

Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Çanakkale On sekiz Mart Üniversitesinde 2022-2023 eğitim öğretim yılında öğrenim görmekte olan 40 sınıf eğitimi lisansüstü öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma

grubu belirlenirken örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi ile örneklem grubu belirlenirken önceden belirlenmiş ölçütler doğrultusunda katılımcılar araştırmaya dahil edilir (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2021). Yapılan araştırma için "Çanakkale On sekiz Mart Üniversitesi Temel Eğitim Anabilim Dalı Sınıf Eğitimi Bilim Dalı Lisansüstü Öğrenimi" ile "Demokrasi eğitimi ve alt boyutlarını içeren öğretim dersleri" ölçüt olarak belirlenmiştir. Çalışmanın sınıf eğitimi alanında öğrenimine devam eden ve aynı zamanda aktif olarak sınıf öğretmenliği görevine devam eden öğrencilerden seçilmiştir. Bu öğrencilerin demokrasi eğitimi ve alt boyutlarına ilişkin olarak ise öğretim programında yer alan "Karşılaştırmalı Eğitim, Alternatif Eğitim, İlkokul Programlar, Demokrasi Eğitimi ve Sorunlar, İlkokulda Program Geliştirme ve Uygulamaları" derslerin yer alması ile alanda uzmanlaşmaya katkı sağlaması noktasında temellendirilmiştir. Araştırmanın yapılmasının amacı demokrasi eğitiminin öğrencilere temel eğitimden itibaren hissettirilmesi önemli olduğundan sınıf öğretmenlerinin görüşlerini ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Yapılan araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak görüşme soruları hazırlanmış ve katılımcılara sunulmuştur. Görüşme sorularının hazırlanmasında araştırmacılar tarafından öncelikle soru havuzu oluşturulmuştur. Daha sonra araştırmanın amacına yönelik olarak ve değişkenler göz önüne alınarak 6 soru sorulmasında karar kılınmıştır. Görüşmeler sanal ortamda yapılmıştır. Her görüşme yaklaşık olarak 30 dakika sürmüştür. Veri toplama yöntemlerinden görüşme yönteminin seçilme nedeni araştırma problemi ile ilgili çalışma grubundan daha detaylı bilgiler elde edebilmektir.

Verilerin Analizi

Araştırmada uygulanan lisansüstü öğrencilerine ilişkin görüşme formunun cevaplar içerik analizi ile belirlenmiştir. Bunun sebebi literatürde bulunmayan farklı kod ve temaların ortaya çıkmasıdır (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2021). İçerik analizi; verilerin belirli bir disiplin çerçevesinde kodlanması ve sistematik olarak kategorileştirilerek yapılır (Büyüköztürk vd., 2017). Araştırmada elde edilen verilerin analizinde içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. İçerik analizi yöntemi sosyal bilimler alanında sıklıkla kullanılmasının yanı sıra çalışılan konu ile ilgili genel eğilimleri ortaya koymaktadır (Metin ve Ünal, 2022). İçerik analizi yöntemi ile elde edilen kodlar NVIVO14 programı aracılığı ile modellenmiştir. Araştırmanın bulgular kısmında modellemeler frekans değerleri (f) de dahil edilerek yer almaktadır. Belirtilen frekans değerleri (f) kişi sayısını değil, belirtilen görüş sayısını ifade etmektedir.

Geçerlilik ve Güvenirlik

Araştırmanın geçerlik ve güvenirliğini sağlamak amacıyla, sorular demokrasi eğitimi ile ilgili bir uzman tarafından hazırlanmıştır. Hazırlanan soruların amaca uygunluğuna ve problem cümlesi çerçevesinde kalmasına dikkat edilmiştir. Hazırlanan soruların Türkçe dilbilgisi kurallarına uyması ve problemin amacına yönelik olarak anlaşılırlığının sağlanması amacıyla Türkçe ve Sosyal Bilimler Eğitimi Bölümü kadrosunda yer alan farklı dilbilgisi alan uzmanları tarafından denetlenmiştir. Araştırma sorularının hedef uygun soru kalıpları ve soruların sarmal olarak aşamalandırılması bağlamında dönütler alınmıştır. Gerekli düzeltmeler araştırmacılar tarafından yapılmıştır. Araştırmacılar 6 sorunun yer aldığı revize edilmiş yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formunu katılımcılara yöneltmişlerdir. Verilerin analizi sırasında en az iki araştırmacının ortak görüşler üzerinde karar kılması geçerlik ve güvenirliği arttıran unsurlar arasındadır (Arslan, 2022). Verilerin analizi iki farklı kodlayıcı tarafından eş zamanlı olarak gerçekleştirilmiş, daha sonra ortaya çıkan temalar karşılaştırılmıştır. Kodlayıcıların ortaya çıkardığı temaların çoğunluğunun benzer olması oldukça önemlidir (Fidan ve Öztürk, 2015). Kodlamanın güvenirliğinin iç tutarlığın ölçülebilmesi için Miles ve Huberman'ın (1994) "uyuşum yüzdesi formülü" olan "Görüş Birliği /(Görüş Birliği + Görüş Ayrılığı)x100" kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın güvenirliği %87 olarak ölçülmüştür. Miles ve Huberman'ın (1994) kodlayıcılar arasındaki uyumun en az %80 olması gerektiği ifadesine göre çalışmanın geçerlik ve güvenirliği yüksek denebilir

Bulgular

Bu bölümde araştırmanın probleminin alt amaçlarına ilişkin bulgulara yer verilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, kuramsal çerçevede yer alan bilgilere ilişkin olarak değerlendirilmiştir.

1.Demokrasi Eğitiminin Bir Ülke İçin Gerekliliğine Yönelik Bulgular

Bu başlıkta araştırmanın birinci alt amacı olan "Demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekliliği nedir?" sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Katılımcı cevapları analiz edilerek, "gerekli" ve "gereksiz" şeklinde 2 ana temaya ayrılmıştır. Bu ana temalar ile ilişkili kodlamalar sonucu ile , "bireysel", "toplumsal", "ekonomik" ve "siyasal" alt temaları oluşturulmuştur. Demokrasi Eğitiminin Bir Ülke İçin Gerekliliğine Yönelik görüşleri Şekil 1'de belirtilmiştir.
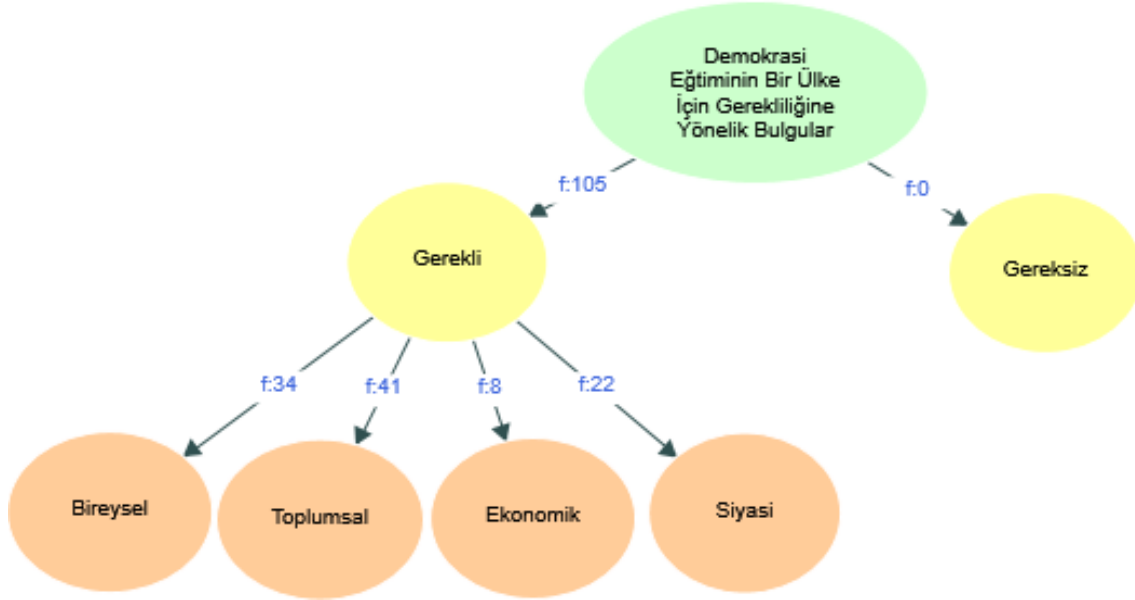
Şekil 1. Demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekliliğine yönelik modellemesi

Şekil 1'e göre lisansüstü öğrencilerin demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekliliğine dair görüşleri "gerekli" (f:105), "gereksiz" (f:0) olmak üzere ikiye ayrılmış. Ancak katılımcıların hepsi de demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekli olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Demokrasi eğitimi bir ülke için "gereklidir" görüşü katılımcıların ifadelerine göre "bireysel" (f:34), "toplumsal" (f:41), "siyasi" (f:22), "ekonomik" (f:8) şeklinde temalara ayrılmıştır.

"Bireysel" temasının alt temaları katılımcıların ifadelerine dayanarak "eleştirel düşünebilme becerisinin kazanılmasını sağlaması" (f:9), "kişilik gelişimini sağlaması" (f:7), "yaşam biçimine dönüşmesinin sağlanması" (f:6), "insani değerlerin içselleştirilmesinin sağlanması" (f:5), "kişilik haklarını öğrenilmesinin sağlanması" (f:5), "sosyal hayatı destekleyici beceriler kazanılmasının sağlanması" (f:2) alt temaları ortaya çıkmıştır.

Demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekliliğine dayalı görüşlerden "toplumsal" nedenleri öne süren katılımcıların ifadeleri incelendiğinde "temel hak ve özgürlüklerini bilen bireylerin yetişmesi" (f:11), "toplumsal aidiyet duygusunun yerleşmesini sağlaması" (f:9), "farklılıklara saygı duyan bireylerin yetişmesi" (f:9), "özgür bir ortam oluşturması" (f:8), "gelişime ve değişime açık toplum bilincinin yerleşmesi" (f:4) nedenler olarak gösterilmiştir.

Katılımcıların verdikleri cevaplardan "siyasi" nedenler temasının alt temaları olarak "aktif vatandaşlık bilincinin yerleşmesi" (f:9), "birey merkezli yönetim biçimi olması" (f:7), "adil bir yönetici seçim yöntemi" (f:2), "evrensel değerlere sahip bireylerin yetişmesi" (f:1), "baskıcı anlayışa karşı direnç gösterebilme" (f:1), "kurumlar arası dengeli güç dağılımının sağlanabilmesi" (f:1) alt temalarına ulaşılmıştır.

"Ekonomik" nedenler ele alındığında "kalkınmayı desteklemesi" (f:4), "üretken bireylerin yetişmesinin sağlanması" (f:2), "vizyon sahibi bireylerin yetişmesinin sağlanması" (f:1), "dünya ekonomisine ilişkin merak" (f:1) görüşleri ortaya çıkmıştır.

Demokrasi eğitimini bir ülke için toplumsal nedenlerden dolayı gerekli gören katılımcılardan bazılarının görüşleri şu şekildedir:

Ö27 : "Bundan dolayı demokrasi eğitimi muasır medeniyetler seviyesine çıkmayı ve hatta bu medeniyeti geride bırakarak daha da ileriye gitmeyi hedefleyen başta Türkiye Cumhuriyeti olmak üzere evrensel açıdan birlikte yaşadığımız ülkemizdeki tüm coğrafyalarda olmazsa olmazların başında gelmektedir."

Demokrasi eğitimini "bireysel" nedenlerden dolayı gerekli bulan bir katılımcının görüşü şu şekildedir:

Ö33: "Önce kendini keşfeden, daha sonra çevre ve dünyayı anlayan, sorunları algılayabilen ve çözüm üreten bireyler oluşturulması gerekmektedir. Öğrencinin birey olarak değerine ve bütünlüğüne, birlikte çalışmaya, karşılıklı saygıya, hoşgörüye, kişiliğe değer ve önem veren eğitim anlayışı benimsenmelidir."

Demokrasi eğitimini bir ülke için siyasi nedenlerden dolayı gerekli gören katılımcılardan bazılarının görüşleri şu şekildedir:

Ö29: "Yönetim erkini eline alan siyasi partilerin ağırlıklı olarak fikirlerinin benimsendiği ve uygulandığı değil, kalan bir veya birden fazla siyasi partilerden oluşan muhalefetin ve temsil ettiği vatandaşların da hak ve özgürlüklerinin yasanın koruması altında olması, dil, din, cinsiyet ve ırk ayrımı yapılmaksınız farklılıklara saygı gösterildiği bir yaşam biçimi bireylere öğretilmelidir."

"Ekonomik" nedenlerden dolayı demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekli olduğunu ifade edenlerden birinin görüşü şu şekildedir:

Ö4: "Ekonomik olarak kalkınma gerçekleşmesi ve katılıma dayalı bir yaşam düzeni olması için gerekir."

2.Türkiye'de Demokrasi Eğitimi Düzeyinin Yeterliliğine Yönelik Bulgular

Bu başlıkta araştırmanın ikinci alt amacı olan "Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimi düzeyinin yeterliliği nedir?" sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Katılımcı cevapları analiz edilerek, "yeterli" ve "yetersiz" şeklinde 2 ana temaya ayrılmıştır. Bu ana temalar ile ilişkili kodlamalar sonucu ile , "eğitimsel", "toplumsal", "aile" ve "yönetim uygulamalarında demokrasi anlayışı" alt temaları oluşturulmuştur. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimi düzeyinin yeterliliğine yönelik görüşleri Şekil 2'de belirtilmiştir.
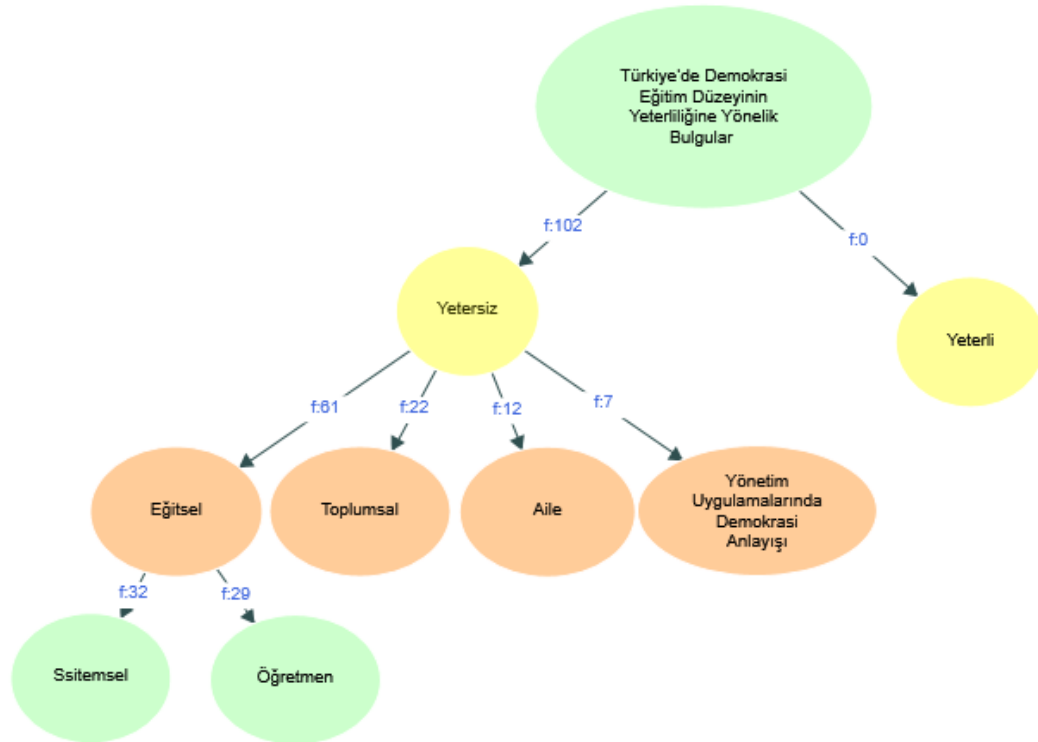
Şekil 2. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimi düzeyinin yeterliliğine yönelik modelleme

Şekil 2'den yola çıkarak katılımcıların tamamı Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimi düzeyini "yetersiz" (f:40) bulmaktadır. Yetersiz bulan katılımcıların neden yetersiz bulduklarına dair görüşleri

"eğitsel" (f:61), "toplumsal" (f:22), "aile" (f:12),"yönetim uygulamalarında demokrasi anlayışı" (f:7) olarak temalara ayrılmıştır.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimi düzeyini "eğitsel" nedenlerden dolayı yetersiz gören katılımcıların görüşleri "sistemsel" (f:32) ve "öğretmen" (f:29) olarak ikiye ayrılmıştır. "sistemsel" nedenleri öne süren katılımcıların ifadeleri "okullarda uygulamaların yetersiz olması (f:9), "eğitim müfredatında ayrıntılı yer almaması" (f:8), "geleneksel eğitim anlayışının devam etmesi" (f:6), "demokratik okul kültürünün benimsenmemesi" (f:5), " dezavantajlı çocukların göz ardı edilmesi" (f:2), "eğitim seviyesinin düşük olması" (f:1), "demokrasi okuryazarlığının kapsamlı ele alınmaması" (f:1) şeklindedir. "Öğretmen" şeklinde görüş bildiren katılımcıların ifadeleri "teori ile uygulama ortamlarındaki tutarsızlık" (f:9) "demokrasi kavramına ilişkin etkinliklerin önemsenmemesi" (f:6), "geleneksel öğretmen yaklaşımının terk edilmesi" (f:6), "öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının demokrasi eğitimi konusunda yetersiz olması" (f:3), "demokrasi eğitimine olan inancın olmaması" (f:1) başlıkları altında toplanmıştır.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitim düzeyini yetersiz bulan katılımcılardan "toplumsal" nedenleri gösterenlerin ifadelerine göre "yaşam biçimi haline gelmemesi" (f:9), "çocuğun birey olarak görülmemesi" (f:4), "ataerkil toplum yapısı" (f:3), "görüş farklılıklarına saygının olmaması" (f:3), "demokratik değerlerin benimsenmemesi" (f:2), "insan haklarının ve evrensel değerlerin özümsenmemesi" (f:1) ortaya çıkmıştır.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitim düzeyini "aile" faktöründen dolayı yetersiz gören katılımcıların görüşleri "demokratik anne baba tutumunun olmaması" (f:8), "bireysel gelişimi destekleyici ortamın sağlanmaması" (f:2), "demokrasiye uyumun sağlanamaması" (f:1), "öz farkındalığı düşük çocukların yetişmesi" (f:1) olarak ele alınmıştır.

"Yönetim uygulamalarında demokrasi anlayışı" görüşünün alt temaları olarak şunlar belirlenmiştir: "ülke yönetiminde demokrasi anlayışının yetersiz kalması" (f:5), "siyasi ifadelerin yanlış yorumlanma korkusu" (f:1), "eğitim içeriklerinin tarafsız bir anlayışla oluşturulamaması" (f:1).

Katılımcılardan "aile" temasına yönelik görüşlerden biri şu şekildedir:

Ö1: *"Ben Türkiye' deki demokrasi eğitimi düzeyini yeterli bulmuyorum. Hem ailede hem de okullarda demokrasi eğitiminin yeterli yapıldığını düşünmüyorum. Ailelerde demokrasinin uygulamaları olmalı ki çocuk bunu özümsemeli. Türkiye' deki aileleri ve kendi yetiştiğim aileyi düşününce aile toplantılarının yapıldığı; önemli konularda hem babanın, hem annenin, hem de çocukların fikirlerinin alındığı; yemek sofralarında güncel konularla ilgili fikir alışverişlerinin yapıldığını hayal edemiyorum."*

Katılımcılardan Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimi düzeyini "toplumsal" nedenlerden dolayı yetersiz görenlerden bazılarının görüşleri şu şekildedir:

Ö22 : "İnsanlar birbirlerinin fikirlerini olgunlukla karşılamıyor kendileri gibi düşünmeyenleri her türlü dışlayıp şiddete başvurabiliyorlar. Hoşgörüyü sadece kendilerine gösterilsin istiyorlar. Geçimsiz ve kavgacı sabırsız bir toplum olduğumuzu önce sınıfta sonrasında hastanelerde, trafikte, bankada sırada beklememiz gereken yerlerde görebiliyoruz."

Türkiye'deki demokrasi eğitimi düzeyini "eğitsel" nedenlerden dolayı yeterli bulmayanlardan birinin görüşü aşağıdaki gibidir:

Ö3: "Ülkemizdeki eğitim uygulamaları, ezbercidir, kalıplaşmıştır. Öğretmen anlatır öğrenci kabul eder. Öğrencinin gerekli bilgileri alması için öğretmen şarttır. Öğrenci görüşünün önemi yoktur. Öğrencinin kişiliğini geliştirmesi, demokratik eğitimin normal hayattaki uygulamaları için demokratik bir ortam yoktur. Özellikle ilköğretim çağlarında eğitim ezberci olduğu içi, öğrencinin düşünme yetenekleri gelişmez, araştırmaya sevk etmez kişinin becerileri, bilimsel düşünceleri oluşmaz. Toplumsal yaşamda gerekli beceriye, bilgiye sahip değildir. Kişi fikirlerini söylemekten çekinir. Aktif, katılımcı üretken, araştırmacı olmasını beklemek çok güçtür. İşte bu nedenler, demokrasi eğitiminin hayatta kullanamamanın bir sonucudur."

Türkiye'deki demokrasi eğitimini "yönetim uygulamalarında demokrasi anlayışından" dolayı yetersiz bulan bir katılımcının görüşüne yer verilmiştir:

Ö40: "Demokrasinin temsilcisi siyasi partilerin demokratik bir tutum içinde olmaması, eğitimin uzman görüşüne göre değil siyasi otoriteye göre düzenlenmesi Türkiye' de demokrasi eğitiminin henüz yeterli düzeyde olmadığını göstermektedir."

3.Türkiye' de Demokrasi Eğitiminin Önündeki Engellere Yönelik Bulgular

Bu başlıkta araştırmanın üçüncü alt amacı olan "Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engeller nedir?" sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Katılımcı cevapları analiz edilerek, "siyasi", "toplumsal", "eğitsel uygulamalar", "öğretmen" ve "aile" şeklinde 5 ana temaya *ayrılmıştır*. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellere yönelik bulgular *Şekil 3'de belirtilmiştir.*
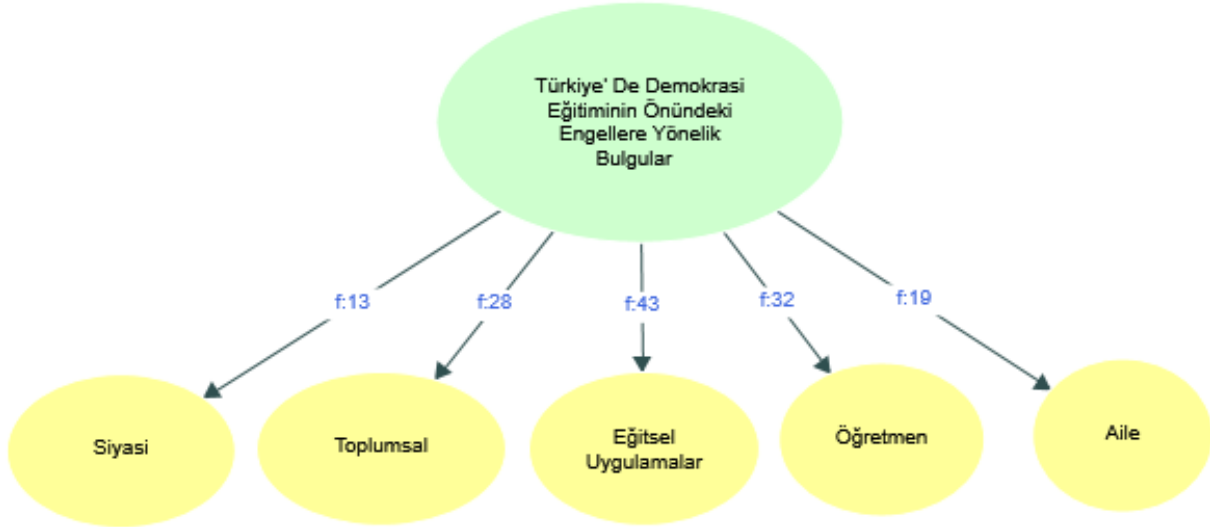
Şekil 3. Türkiye' de Demokrasi Eğitiminin Önündeki Engellere Yönelik modelleme

Şekil 3 incelendiğinde katılımcıların görüşlerine dayanarak Türkiye'deki demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engeller "eğitsel uygulamalar" (f:43), "öğretmen" (f:32), "toplumsal" (f:28), "aile" (f:19), "siyasi" (f:13) başlıkları altında incelenmiştir.

"Eğitsel uygulamalar" Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellerden biridir görüşünü savunan katılımcılar "demokratik okul ve sınıf kültürü oluşturulamaması" (f:13), "yanlış eğitim politikaları" (f:11), "okullarda uygulamadaki sınırlılık" (f:7), "yükseköğretim programlarındaki demokrasi eğitiminin eksik olması" (f:5), "geleneksel eğitim anlayışının devam etmesi" (f:4), "öğretim programlarında yeterince yer verilmemesi" (f:2), fırsat eşitsizliği (f:1) ifadelerini dile getirmişlerdir.

"Öğretmen" temasının alt boyutları olarak "demokrasi eğitiminin önemine ilişkin inancın zayıf olması" (f:10), "otoriter sınıf yönetim anlayışı" (f:8), "transfer becerisinin yetersizliği" (f:8), "öğretmenin tutum ve davranışları" (f:5), "hizmet öncesi ve hizmet içi eğitimin niteliksiz olması" (f:1) belirlenmiştir.

"Toplumsal" engelleri dile getiren katılımcılar görüşlerini "demokratik anlayışın topluma etkisinin anlaşılmaması" (f:8), "toplumsal baskılar" (f:5), "düşünce suçlusu olma kaygısı" (f:4), "toplumsal değerlerdeki bölgesel farklılıklar" (f:4), "kişiler arası eşitliğin sağlanamaması" (f:3, "kişilerin sınırsız özgürlük anlayışı" (f:3), "Kültürel ve toplumsal değerlerin göz ardı edilmesi" (f:1) şeklinde ifade etmişlerdir.

"Aile" kavramını Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellerden biri olarak gören katılımcılar "otoriter aile yapısı" (f:10), "ailenin sosyoekonomik durumu" (f:4), "çocuk yetiştirilmesindeki aile tutumları" (f:3), "cinsiyet ayrımcılığı" (f:1), "ataerkil aile yapısı" (f:1) görüşlerini ifade etmişlerdir.

Türkiye'deki demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engelleri "siyasi" olarak nitelendiren katılımcılar "siyasi görüşlerin insan ilişkileri üzerindeki etkisi" (f:3), "fırsat ve imkan eşitliğinin bulunmaması" (f:2), "siyaset dilinin niteliksizliği" (f:2), "siyasi olayların ülke ekonomisine etkisi" (f:2), "farklı görüşlerin ülke yönetiminde azınlıkta kalması" (f:1), "inançsal ve politik görüş farklılıklarına saygı gösterilmemesi" (f:1), "yakın tarihteki siyasi olaylar" (f:1), "demokratik bir yönetim olmaması" (f:1) olarak görüş bildirmişlerdir.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellerden birini "eğitsel uygulamalar" olarak gören katılımcının görüşü aşağıdaki gibidir:

Ö16: "Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki en büyük engellerden biri kuşkusuz tek tip insan yetiştirme çabasıdır. Olanı olduğu gibi kabul eden, geleneksel yöntemleri benimseyen sadece kişisel yararı gözeten bireyler yetiştiren bir eğitim anlayışının sürdürülme çabasıdır."

En büyük engellerden birini "öğretmen" olarak gören katılımcılardan birinin görüşü şu şekildedir:

Ö2: "Öncelikle bu eğitimi verecek eğitimcilerin demokrasi eğitiminin önemini fark etmeleri ve kabullenmeleri gerekmektedir. Bu durum öğrencilere verilecek olan eğitimin ciddiyetine ve inandırıcılığına da yansıyacaktır. Kısacası demokrasi eğitiminin önemine ve etkisine inancı olmayan eğiticiler Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önünde bir engeldir."

Demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellerden birini "siyasi" sebepler olarak ifade eden katılımcının görüşü şu şekildedir:

Ö19: "insan haklarına saygı, hoşgörü, sosyal adalet, çoğulculuk, özgürlük anlayışı, gösteri ve örgütlenme özgürlüğünün olmadığı yerde öğrenilemez."

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engelleri "toplumsal" engeller olarak ifade eden katılımcının görüşüne aşağıda yer verilmiştir:

Ö23: "Türkiye de bir diğer engel insan haklarıdır. Ataerkil bir aile yapısına sahip toplumumuzda kadın ve çocuk haklarına gerekli özen gösterilmemektedir. Ev ile ilgili kararlarda söz sahibi olamayan bu iki grup, gelecekte yetiştirecekleri bireylerde de aynı durumu tekrarlamaya devam ettiği düşünülürse demokrasi sadece sözde bir kavram olarak ülkemizde devam edecektir. İnsan hakları ve demokrasi eğitiminin en baş amacı ''kendine saygı ve kendine güveni bilen vatandaşlar yetiştirmek ifadesi baskı içindeki bireylerde kesinlikle oluşamamaktadır."

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellerden birinin "aile" olduğunu belirten katılımcının görüşü şu şekildedir:

Ö17: "İşin içine aile girince durum içinden çıkılmaz bir hal almaktadır. Yine bazı aileler çocuklarına sorumluluk vermemekte, onları "özgürlük" adı altında gereğinden fazla şımartmaktadır. Okulda çocuğunun hakkının ihlal edildiğini savunan aileler öğretmeni eleştirip onun işine karışmaktadır."

4.Türkiye'de Demokrasi Eğitiminde Öğretim Programlarının Nasıl Olması Gerekliliğine Yönelik Bulgular

Bu başlıkta araştırmanın dördüncü alt amacı olan "Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminde öğretim programlarının nasıl olması gerekir?" sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Katılımcı cevapları analiz edilerek, "öğrenciye yönelik", "içeriğe yönelik", "öğretmene yönelik", "aileye yönelik" ve "program geliştirmeye yönelik" şeklinde 5 ana temaya *ayrılmıştır.* "Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminde öğretim programlarının nasıl olmasına yönelik bulgular *Şekil 4'de belirtilmiştir.*
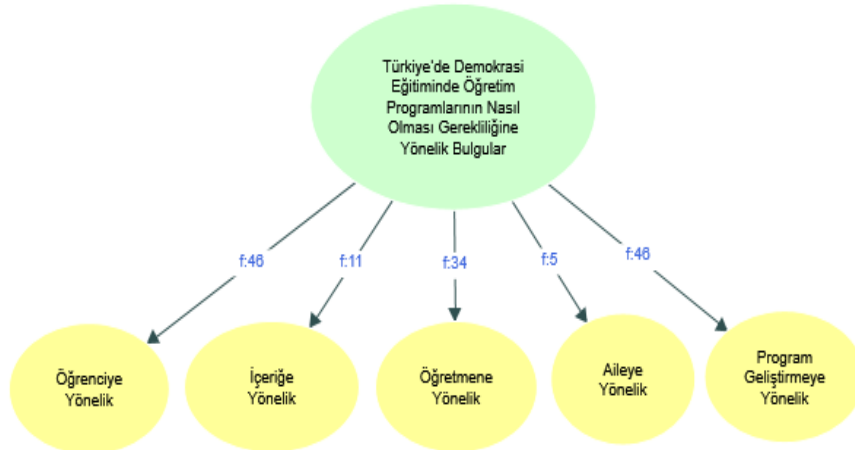
Şekil 4. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminde öğretim programlarının nasıl olması gerekliliğine yönelik modelleme

Şekil 4'e göre katılımcılar Türkiye'de ilkokullarda demokrasi eğitiminde eğitim öğretim programlarının "öğrenciye yönelik" (f:46), "program geliştirmeye yönelik" (f:46), "öğretmene yönelik" (f:34), "içeriğe yönelik" (f:11), "aileye yönelik" (f:5) olması gerektiğini dile getirmişlerdir.

"Öğrenciye yönelik" görüşünü savunan katılımcılar "bireyler arası farklılıkların dikkate alınması" (f:12), "öğrencinin aktif olması" (f:11), "otantik yaşantı" (f:7), "düşünce özgürlüğünün tanınması" (f:3), "üst düzey düşünme becerilerinin kullanılması" (f:3), "uygun öğretim materyallerinin kullanılması" (f:3), "etkin dünya vatandaşı yetiştirilmesi hedeflenmeli" (f:2), "saygı ortamının sağlanması" (f:2), "öğrenciyi merkeze almalı" (f:2), "teknolojinin öğretime entegre edilmesi" (f:1) görüşlerini ifade etmiştir.

"Program geliştirmeye yönelik" çalışmalar yapılması gerektiğini dile getiren katılımcıların görüşlerine dayanarak "sosyal duygusal becerilerin gelişimine yönelik olmalı" (f:5), "bağımsız ders olarak yer almalı" (f:5), "temel eğitim kademelerinde yer almalı" (f:5), "hayatilik ilkesine uygun olmalı" (f:5), "okul öncesi öğretim programlarında yer almalı" (f:5), "disiplinler arası bir yaklaşım benimsenmeli" (f:5), "süreç odaklı değerlendirmeyi içermeli" (f:4), "üst düzey düşünme becerilerini içermeli" (f:3), "eleştirel düşünme becerisini temele almalı" (f:2), "bütüncül bir yaklaşımla oluşturulmalı" (f:2), "etkin bir dünya vatandaşı yetiştirilmesi hedeflenmeli" (f:2), "esnek bir müfredatın oluşturulması" (f:2), "alanında uzman kişiler tarafından hazırlanmalı (f:1) ifadelerine ulaşılmıştır.

"Öğretmene yönelik" olmalı temasının alt temaları olarak "öğrenci merkezli öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerinin kullanılması" (f:12), "olumlu sınıf iklimi sağlanmalı" (f:5), "yaşantılar yoluyla desteklenmeli" (f:5), "özgür düşünce ortamı sağlanmalı" (f:4), "gündelik yaşamla ilişkilendirilmeli" (f:3), "bireysel farklılıkların dikkate alınması sağlanmalı" (f:2), "sanat derslerinin aktif olarak gerçekleşmesi" (f:1) görüşleri ortaya çıkmıştır.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminde öğretim programlarının "içeriğe yönelik" olması gerektiğini dile getiren katılımcılar "kazanımlar evrensel insan haklarını içermeli" (f:6), "aktif yurttaşlık bilincine ilişkin etkinlikler yer almalı" (f:3), "gelişen toplumların sistemlerinin işleyişine yer verilmeli" (f:1); "sade ve anlaşılır bir dil kullanılmalıdır" (f:1) görüşlerini ifade etmişlerdir.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminde öğretim programlarının "aileye yönelik" olması gerektiğini savunan katılımcıların ifadelerine göre "aile eğitimi programları tasarlanmalı" (f:2), "aile yapıları incelenmeli" (f:2), "aile ve öğreticiler arası iş birliği sağlanmalı" (f:1) başlıklarına ulaşılmıştır.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin "öğrenciye yönelik" olması gerektiğini savunan katılımcılardan biri düşüncelerini şu şekilde dile getirmiştir:

Ö5: *"İlköğretimden üniversite sonuna dek, bütün eğitim süreçlerinde, sistem tekelci zihniyet niteliğinden kurtarılarak, resmi ideolojinin belirlediği tek ve biricik doğrunun ezber yoluyla öğrenciye aktarılmasından vazgeçilmelidir. Doğru veya yanlış, bütün düşünce akımları tartışmalı, irdelemeli, sorgulamalı bir biçimde ele alınarak eğitim, çoğulcu demokrasinin ilkelerine uygun bir özgürlük ortamında, öğrenci merkeze alınarak gerçekleştirilmelidir. Ezbere dayalı yöntemlerden kesinlikle kaçınarak, irdelemeli, sorgulamalı, tartışmalı yöntemler izlenmelidir."*

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin "program geliştirmeye yönelik" olduğu görüşünü belirten katılımcılardan birinin ifadesi:

Ö21: *"öğretim programları kapsayıcı eğitim ve öğretim programlarının yoğun olarak hissedildiği programlar çerçevesinde oluşturulmalı geleneksel programların dışında yeni bir sistem oluşturulmalıdır."*

Demokrasi eğitiminin "öğretmene yönelik" olması gerektiğini ifade edenlerden bazılarını görüşleri aşağıda yer almaktadır:

Ö7: *"Sınıf içindeki eğitim öğretim süreçlerinin içine demokrasi eğitimi etkili bir biçimde yerleştirilmelidir. Eğitim sisteminin en temel öğesi öğretmendir. Önce öğretmenin insan haklarına, farklılıkların kaçınılmazlığına, hoşgörüye, demokratik yaşam biçiminin güzelliğine inanması ve ardından da öğrencilerine bunu yaşatması gerekir."*

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin "aileye yönelik" olmasını gerektiğini belirten bir katılımcının görüşü şu şekildedir:

Ö23: "Eğitim içerisinde aileleri de eğitime katmalı ve onları çocuk konusunda uygulamaları gereken davranış ve bilgiler çerçevesinde eğitilmeleri sağlanmalıdır"

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin "içeriğe yönelik" olması gerektiğini ifade eden bir katılımcının görüşü aşağıda verilmiştir:

Ö12: "Öğrencilerin yakın çevresini bölgesini ve yurdunu dünya ve uzayla fiziksel ve sosyal açılardan ilişkilendirebilme; sosyal kurumların (ekonomik, politik, aile vb.) nasıl oluştuğunu anlama; zaman içinde ve dünyada şu andaki kültürel farklılıkları kavrayabilme, zaman boyutu içinde insanlığın doğru ve güvenilir bilgiye ulaşma yollarını bilme; insanlığın adalet, eşitlik, özgürlük gibi temel değerlere nasıl ulaştığını anlama, toplumda ve dünyada yaşanan önemli sorunların farkında olma ve onlar hakkında bilgi sahibi olma becerilerine sahip olmaları beklenmektedir"

5.Türkiye'de Demokrasi Eğitiminin Geliştirilmesine Yönelik Bulgular

Bu başlıkta araştırmanın beşinci alt amacı olan "Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesi nelere yönelik olmalıdır?" sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Katılımcı cevapları analiz edilerek, "kurum politikasına yönelik", "öğrenciye yönelik", "içeriğe yönelik", "öğretmen uygulamalarına yönelik", "öğretmen eğitimine yönelik" ve "aileye yönelik", şeklinde 6 ana temaya *ayrılmıştır*. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesi nelere yönelik bulgular *Şekil 5'de belirtilmiştir*.
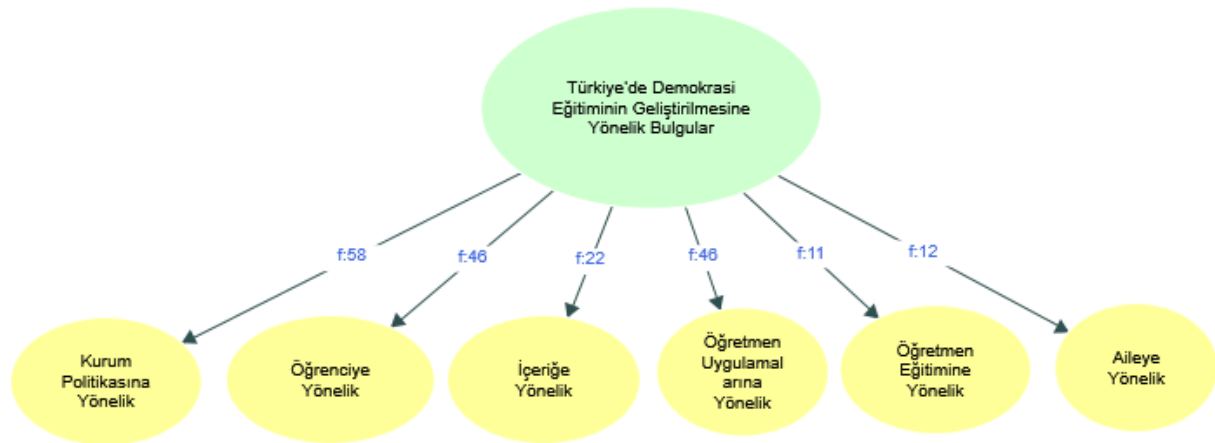
Şekil 5. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesi nelere yönelik modelleme

Şekil 5 incelendiğinde katılımcılar tarafından Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesi "kurum politikasına yönelik" (f:58), "öğrenciye yönelik" (f:46), "öğretmen uygulamalarına yönelik" (f:46), "içeriğe yönelik" (f:22), "aileye yönelik" (f:12), "öğretmen eğitimine yönelik" (f:11) olarak cevaplanmıştır.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesi "kurum politikasına yönelik" görüşünü dile getiren katılımcıların yanıtları "demokratik okul kültürü oluşturulmalı" (f:24), "eğitim paydaşları arasında iş birliği güçlendirilmeli" (f:15),"fırsat ve imkan eşitliği sağlanmalı" (f:9), "kamu kurum ve kuruluşlarıyla iş birliği sağlanmalı" (f:6), "her kurumda uygulanabilir olması" (f:3), eğitim kurumlarında uygun ortam sağlanabilmesi" (f:1) başlıkları altında toplanmıştır.

"Öğrenciye yönelik" geliştirmeler yapılması gerektiğini ifade eden katılımcılar "okul içi alınacak kararlarda etkin katılım sağlanması" (f:20), "fırsat ve imkan eşitliği sağlanmalı" (f:9), "ilgi ve ihtiyaçlara yönelik öncelikler belirlenmeli" (f:8), "öğrenci meclislerine önem verilmeli" (f:5), "sınıf içi özgür bir ortam sağlanmalı" (f:4) görüşlerini sunmuşlardır.

"Öğretmen uygulamalarına yönelik" iyileştirmeler yapılması gerektiğini savunan katılımcılar "demokratik tutum geliştirilmeli" (f:11), "demokratik sınıf yönetimi sağlanmalı" (f:11), "gündelik hayatta rol model olmalı" (f:9), "öğrenci merkezli etkinliklere yer vermeli" (f:7), "tartışmaya yönelik teknikler kullanmalı" (f:4), "ekip çalışmalarına yer vermeli" (f:4) görüşlerini dile getirmişlerdir.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesinde "içeriğe yönelik" iyileştirmeler yapılması gerektiğini savunan katılımcıların görüşleri şu başlıklar altında toplanmıştır: "uygulamaya yönelik öğretim programları geliştirilmeli" (f:5), "bütüncül yaklaşımı içeren öğrenme ortamları oluşturulmalı" (f:5), "disiplinler arası etkinliklerle harmanlanmalı" (f:3), "bilimsel araştırmalar rehber olarak kaynak sağlamalı" (f:3), "sosyal beceri etkinliklerine ağırlık verilmeli" (f:3), "bağımsız bir ders olarak yer verilmeli" (f:1), "işbirlikçi öğrenme ortamları oluşturulmalı" (f:1), "temel eğitim programlarında felsefe derslerine yer verilmeli" (f:1)

"Öğretmen eğitimine yönelik" iyileştirmeler yapılması gerektiğini düşünen katılımcılar "nitelikli hizmet içi eğitimler hazırlanmalı" (f:6), "öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında değerler eğitimine yer verilmeli" (f:4), "kişisel gelişimine süreklilik kazandırılmalı" (f:1) olarak görüşlerini dile getirmişlerdir.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesinde "aileye yönelik" değişimler yapılması gerektiğini dile getiren katılımcıların görüşleri şu şekildedir: "ebeveynler demokratik tutuma karşı farkındalık geliştirmeli" (f:9), "okul-aile iletişimi güçlü tutulmalı" (f:2), "demokratik aile kültürü oluşturulmalı" (f:1).

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesinde "kurum politikasına yönelik" değişimler yapılması gerektiğini ifade eden katılımcılardan birinin görüşüne aşağıda yer verilmiştir:

Ö36: *"Demokratik okullar olmadıkça, demokratik toplumların oluşturulmasındaki imkânsızlık göz önüne alındığında okulların fonksiyonlarının gözden geçirilmesi gerekmektedir. Okullarda demokrasi eğitiminin amacı, demokrasinin kavramsal olarak öğretilmesiyle birlikte demokrasi kültürünün oluşturulması ve hayata geçirilmesi olmalıdır. Bunu gerçekleştirmede en etkili yöntemse öğrencilerin kendi eğitim süreçlerinde rol almalarını sağlamaktır."*

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesinde "öğretmen uygulamalarına yönelik" değişimler yapılması gerektiğini ifade eden katılımcılardan birinin görüşü şu şekildedir:

Ö41: *"Öğretmenlerin sert bir otorite ile öğretmenlik yapmaya çalıştıkları sınıflarda öğrencilerin özgür bir biçimde kendilerini ifade etmeleri pek mümkün değildir. Demokraside hep birlikte yönetme felsefesi vardır. Buna uymayan sert bir otorite ile sınıf yönetmenin olması okullarda demokrasi ile ilgili ciddi sorunlar olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Örnek verecek olursam; öğretmenlerin çoğu sınıflarda bağırıp korkutarak sınıf yönetmeye çalışıyor ve aynı şekilde cezayı sıkça kullanıyor. Çoğu kişi de "Ben bilirim, benim söylediklerim doğrudur." Anlayışı içerisinde öğretmenlik yapıyor. Öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin düşüncelerini söylemekten korkmayacağı bir sınıf ortamı hazırlamaları gereklidir. Örneğin aynı konuyla ilgili farklı ödev türleri, farklı görev dağılımlarını öğrencilerin seçimine bırakacak şekilde düzenlenebilir"*

Demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesinde "öğretmen eğitimine yönelik" uygulamalar yapılması gerektiğini belirten katılımcıların bazılarına ait ifadeler şu şekildedir:

Ö27: *"Y.Ö.K. ile iş birliği yaparak eğitim fakültelerinde okuyan öğretmen adaylarının Demokrasi Eğitimi konusunda mesleki hazırlıklarının oluşturulması ve geliştirilmesi adına gerekli politikaları dizayn etmek, planlamak, uygulamak ve geliştirmek."*

Demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesi için "içeriğe yönelik" değişiklikler yapılması gerektiğini söyleyen bir katılımcı görüşlerini şu şekilde ifade etmiştir:

Ö16: *"Demokrasi eğitimi öğretim programlarını genişletmeli, yalnızca vatandaşlık hayat bilgisi gibi derslerde yer alan birkaç hedefle sınırlı bırakmamalı tüm öğretim programlarına yaymalıdır. Programdaki hedefler, hayatın içine yayılmalı ve yaparak yaşayarak öğrenmeyi temel almalıdır. Öğretim Programlarını öğrenci merkezli hazırlamalı ve demokrasi eğitiminde öncelikle öğrencinin kendisini tanıma ifade etme, hak ve özgürlüklerini bilen ve başkalarının hak ve özgürlüklerine fikirlerine saygılı olan, sorgulama, eleştirme ve geliştirmeye yönelik açık ve örtük hedeflerine yer vermelidir."*

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesi için "öğrenciye göre" değişiklikler yapılması gerektiğini ifade eden bir katılımcının görüşüne aşağıda yer verilmiştir:

Ö5: "Öğretim programlarının önceliği, disiplinlerin öğretimini değil, öğrencilerin ilgi ve gereksinimlerine cevap verebilme özelliğini taşımasıdır. Çünkü her öğrenci grubunun ihtiyaçları, gereksinimleri ve beklentileri farklı olabileceği gibi, bir sınıftaki öğrenciler arasında da bu farklılıkları görmek mümkündür. Bu durum, öğretim programlarının esnek olmasının, bireyin gelişiminde ve eğitiminde ne kadar önemli olduğunu göstermektedir. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı seçmeli derslerin sayısını artırıp öğrencinin ilgi, ihtiyaç ve gereksinimlerine uygun seçim yaparak kendi eğitimi hakkında sorumluluk almasını sağlayacak düzenlemeler yapmalıdır."

6. Sınıf İçi Demokrasi Eğitimi Uygulamalarına Yönelik Bulgular

Bu başlıkta araştırmanın altıncı alt amacı olan "sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamaları nelere yönelik olmalıdır?" sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Katılımcı cevapları analiz edilerek, "öğrenciye yönelik", "öğretmene yönelik" ve "aileye yönelik", şeklinde 3 ana temaya *ayrılmıştır.* sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamalarına yönelik bulgular *Şekil 6'da belirtilmiştir.*
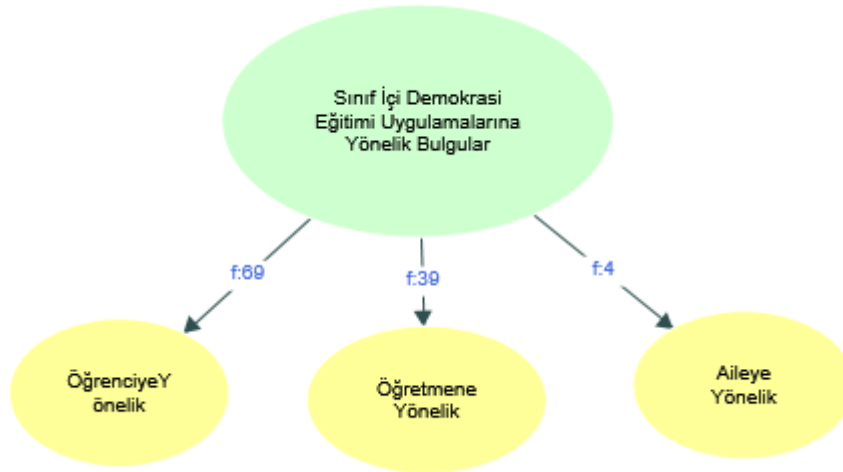
Şekil 6. Sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamalarına yönelik modelleme

Şekil 6 incelendiğinde katılımcılar sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamalarının "öğrenciye görelik" (f:69), "öğretmene yönelik" (f:39), "aileye yönelik" (f:4) olması gerektiğini dile getirmişlerdir.

Türkiye'de sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamalarının "öğrenciye yönelik" olması gerektiğini düşünen katılımcılar görüşlerini şu şekilde ifade etmişlerdir: "değerler eğitimine yönelik etkinlikler yapma" (f:20), "liderlikleri seçimle belirleme" (f:12), "üst düzey düşünme becerilerine yönelik etkinlikler yapma" (f:10), "iş birliği sağlayan sorumluluklar verme" (f:10), "öğrenci merkezli öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerini kullanma" (f:10), "yaratıcı drama ve rol oynama etkinliklerini uygulama" (f:4), "sosyal-duygusal becerilerini destekleyici etkinlikler yapma" (f:3).

"Öğretmene yönelik" görüşlerini sunan, Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimi uygulamalarında öğretmene sorumluluk düştüğünü dile getiren katılımcılar görüşlerini "ortak kararları oylamaya sunma" (f:14), "demokratik lider tutum ve davranışları sergileme" (f:10), "tutum ve davranışlar ile rol model olma" (f:5), "olumlu geri dönüt verme" (f:4), "tüm öğrencilerin söz hakkı almasına dikkat edilme" (f:2), "olumlu sınıf iklimi oluşturma" (f:2), "öğretim sürecinde rehberlik etme" (f:2) şeklinde ifade etmişlerdir.

Sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamalarında "aileye yönelik" çalışmalar yapılası gerektiğini düşünen katılımcıların görüşleri "aile- öğretmen-rehberlik ile iş birliği yapma" (f:3), "aile katılımı etkinliklerine yer verme" (f:1) başlıkları altında toplanmıştır.

Sınıf içi uygulamalarda "öğrenciye yönelik" çalışmalar yapılması gerektiğini ifade eden katılımcılardan birinin görüşü şu şekildedir:

Ö13: "Doğaya, sokak hayvanlarına, çevreye saygının birbirimize saygı duymayı kolaylaştırdığına inanıyorum. Sokak hayvanlarını besliyoruz. Çevremizi temiz tutuyoruz. Doğada sıkça zaman geçiriyoruz ve gittiğimiz yeri temiz bırakıyoruz. Sorumlulukların olması için yazın sokaktaki ağaçları sulama, hayvanlara su bırakma gibi görevler veriyorum

Yapılan araştırmada öğretmenlerin sınıf içinde "aile" ile ilgili uygulamalar yapılması gerektiğini ifade eden katılımcının görüşlerine aşağıda yer verilmiştir:

Ö17: *"Veliler ile sürekli iletişim halinde olur eğitim sürecine onları da katarım. Eğitim ve öğretimin birbirinden farklı şeyler olduğunu eğitim işinde asıl velilerin çocuklarının öğretmeni olduğunu anlayana kadar sık sık tekrar ederim. Aile ortamında kendini ifade edemeyen bir çocuk okul ortamında da kendini ifade edemez. Velilerin bozduğu bir şeyi hiçbir öğretmen kolay kolay düzeltemez."*

Sınıf içi uygulamalarında "öğretmene yönelik" çalışmalar bulunduğunu ifade eden katılımcılardan bazılarının görüşleri şu şekildedir:

Ö36: *"Öğrencilerime ödev dağıtmıyorum. Masamın üzerine tüm öğrencilerim için hazırlamış olduğum ödevleri bırakıyorum ve bu ödevi yapmak isteyen, bu ödevin kendisi için faydalı olduğunu düşünen öğrencilerimin ödevi almalarını ve hakkıyla yapmalarını istiyorum. Çünkü öğrencilere zorla verilen ödevin çocukların gelişimine hiçbir katkı sağlamadığını düşünüyorum."*

Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Araştırmanın birinci alt problemi olan demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekliliğini sınıf öğretmenleri en fazla toplumsal açıdan değerlendirerek, temel hak ve özgürlüklerini bilen bireylerin yetişmesi için olarak belirtmektedirler. Ülkedeki yönetimin demokratikleşmesi ile eğitimin demokratikleşmesi birbiri ile doğru orantılıdır. Demokratik bir anlayışa sahip ülkeler beraberinde demokratik eğitimi getirecek, demokratik bir eğitim ile yetişmiş nesiller ise ülkelerindeki demokrasiyi besleyeceklerdir. Bu araştırmanın bulgularıyla örtüşen bir çalışma Edwards'in (2008) demokratik ülkelerde eğitimin temel amacını; demokrasiyi özümsemiş, yaşamına yerleştirmiş ve bu anlayışı geliştirebilecek nesiller yetiştirmek olduğu bulgusuna ulaştığı araştırmasıdır.   Araştırmada birinci alt amaca dair elde edilen sonuçlardan diğeri de toplumsal aidiyet duygusunun yerleşmesini sağlamasıdır. Elde edilen bu bulgu Yeşil'in (2003) araştırmasında demokrasi eğitimine yönelik olarak öncelikle bireyin merkezde olduğu, toplum yaşamına uyumunu kolaylaştıran hak ve özgürlüklerinin öğrenilmesine zemin hazırlaması sonucunu belirtilen çalışma sonucu ile örtüşmektedir. Guttmann ve Ben-Porath, (2015) demokrasi eğitiminin temele alındığı toplumlarda okulların, çocukların donanımları için özerk bir kişilik gelişimi ile bilgi ve becerileri kazanmalarını, ayrıca ortak değerlerin edinimini sağlamak gibi misyonları bulunduğu sonucuna ulaşarak bu araştırmanın bulgularını desteklemektedir. Bu sebeple demokrasiyi benimseyerek onun korunması ve güçlenmesi için çalışan özverili vatandaşların yetişmesinin bir yolu da insan hakları ve demokrasi eğitimidir.

Araştırmanın birinci alt probleminde ölçülmesi amaçlanan demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekliliği ile ilgili soruya katılımcıların tamamı gerekli olduğunu belirten görüşler sunmuştur. Yapılan görüşmelere göre demokrasi eğitiminin bir ülke için gerekliliği en çok toplumsal nedenlerden dolayıdır. Toplumsal nedenlerden "temel hak ve özgürlüklerini bilen bireylerin yetişmesi, toplumsal aidiyet duygusunun yetişmesini sağlaması, farklılıklara saygı duyan bireylerin yetişmesi" görüşleri öne çıkmaktadır.

Araştırmanın ikinci alt problemi olan Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitim düzeyinin yeterliliğine yönelik olarak sınıf öğretmenleri eğitsel yönden yetersiz bulmuştur. Sistemsel kaynaklı olarak okullarda uygulamaların yetersiz olduğu yönünde görüş belirtilmektedir. Bu bağlamda Göney (2021) Sosyal Bilgiler öğretmenleri ile yaptığı çalışmada ortaokul öğrencilerinin demokrasi algılarının yetersiz olduğu sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Katılımcılar tarafından bunun sebebini ise aile, okuldaki paydaşlar, öğretmenin demokratik bir ortam sağlayamaması olarak sıralanmıştır. Yetersizliğe yönelik belirtilen bir diğer görüş ise öğretmen kaynaklı olarak demokrasi kavramına ilişkin etkinliklerin önemsenmemesidir. Memişoğlu (2022) araştırmasına katılan sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adaylarına göre yeterli düzeydeki bir demokrasi eğitimi için sınıf içinde demokratik tutumlar geliştirilmesi, uygulamaların ve seçim çalışmalarının arttırılması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca öğrencilerin demokrasi kavramını daha iyi anlamlandırabilmeleri için yöntem ve teknikler çeşitlendirilmelidir. Bu sonuçlar araştırma bulgusu ile benzerlik göstermektedir.

Araştırmanın ikinci alt problemine ilişkin olarak Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin yeterliliğine dair yapılan görüşmelerde katılımcıların tamamı demokrasi eğitimini yetersiz bulmaktadır. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin yetersiz olarak görülmesinin sebeplerine bakıldığında eğitsel faktörler ön planda görülmektedir. Eğitsel faktörler, sistemsel ve öğretmen kaynaklıdır. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitimindeki yetersizliğin nedeni olarak bu iki başlıktan sistemsel faktörleri göstermiştir. Yapılan görüşmelerde katılımcılar "okullarda uygulamaların yetersiz olması, demokrasi eğitiminin eğitim müfredatında ayrıntılı yer almaması ve geleneksel eğitim anlayışının sürmesi" gibi ifadelere dikkat çekmişlerdir.

Araştırmanın üçüncü alt problemi olan Türkiye'deki demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki en büyük engel olarak lisansüstü eğitim yapan sınıf öğretmenleri eğitsel uygulamaları görmektedir. Bilgi düzeyindeki bir demokrasi eğitimi öğrencide, demokratik bir yaşam anlayışının yerleşmesinde yeterli olmayacaktır. Bu sebeple demokrasi olgusunun otantik yaşantılar bağlamında başlıca unsurları sınıf iklimide de uygulanarak öğretim gerçekleştirilmesi gereklidir (Kondu ve Sakar, 2013; Kuzgun, 2000). Araştırmada öne çıkan bir diğer görüş ise öğretmen kaynaklı engellerdir. Bu engeller ise demokrasi eğitiminin önemine ilişkin inancın zayıf olması ve otoriter sınıf yönetim anlayışı olarak ifade edilmektedir. Kudrnac (2021) ile Miklikowska, Rekker ve Kdurnac (2022) tarafından öğretmenlerin sınıf içi demokratik ve insan haklarını içeren evrensel değerlere ilişkin tartışma ortamı sayesinde öğrenciler arasında olumlu tutumun geliştiği bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Yapılan araştırma sonuçları alan yazında yer alan çalışmalarla paralellik göstermektedir.

Araştırmanın üçüncü alt problemi doğrultusunda Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellere dair katılımcılar ile yapılan görüşmelerde eğitsel uygulamalar en büyük engel olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellerden biri olarak eğitsel uygulamaları gösteren katılımcıların çoğu ifadelerinde demokratik okul ve sınıf kültürü oluşturulamaması, yanlış eğitim politikaları ve okullarda uygulamalardaki sınırlılık görüşlerine yer vermiştir.

Araştırmanın dördüncü alt problemi olan Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminde öğretim programlarının öğrenciye ve program geliştirmeye yönelik olması yönündeki görüşleri öne çıkmaktadır. Büyükkaragöz (1998) etkili bir demokrasi eğitiminin göstergesi olarak öğrencilerin artan içsel motivasyon ile özdenetimlerinin güçlenmesini vurgulamaktadır. Öztürk ve Can (2020), araştırmasında çocukların geleceklerinin şekillenmesinde ilkokul çağında kazanılan bilgi, beceri ve tutumlar temel faktör olduğu sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Bu bağlamda ilkokul döneminde çocuklar arkadaşlık, adalet, barış, özgürlük, sorumluluk, sevgi, saygı, katılım, liderlik, yardımseverlik, yurttaşlık ve demokratik davranışlar gibi toplumsal değerleri öğretim ortamları olan okullarda kazanıldığı ifade edilebilir. Alan yazında araştırmalar, program geliştirmede dikkate alınacak unsurlar arasında olan sosyal duygusal becerilerin gelişimine ilişkin bulgular ile benzerlik göstermektedir.

Yapılan bu çalışmanın öğretim programlarının program geliştirmeye yönelik olarak temel eğitim kademelerinde yer almasına ilişkin bulguları ile Samancı'nın (2010) ilkokul öğretim programlarının öğrenciyi merkeze alan, demokratik sınıf iklimi, nitelikli öğretmen rehberliği, farklı görüşlere saygı duyma, demokratik farkındalığı artırma, demokratik zihniyeti destekleyen oyunlar gibi etkinliklere yer verilebilmesine ilişkin bulguları paralellik göstermektedir.

Öğretim programlarının program geliştirmeye yönelik hayatilik ilkesine uygun olmasına ilişkin bulgular dikkat çekmektedir. Demokratik değerlerin gelişimi yani demokrasi eğitimi yalnızca yükseköğretim ve temel eğitim ile sınırlı değildir. Aile, demokrasinin temel taşlarındandır, bu sebeple demokrasi eğitiminde ailenin önemi önceliktir. Demokrasi eğitiminin çocuk için anlamlı hale gelmesinde aile tutumu dikkat çeker. Okullar demokrasi eğitiminin resmi yanını sağlarken yanı okullar tarafından sağlanırken, örtük olarak ise aile ve çevre tarafından kazandırılmaktadır (Chomsky, 2007; Bali & Hayır Kanat, 2023). Bu bağlamda Büyükkaragöz (1994) aile ortamı ve gündelik yaşamdaki tüm ortamlarda örtük öğrenme ile gerçekleştiği bulgusuna ulaşmıştır. çocuğun yaşamında tüm biçimsel öğrenmelerde ilköğretimden önce gelen aile, en önemli toplumsallaştırıcı unsur olarak görülmektedir (Tan, 1989). Çünkü demokrasi ile aile yapısı arasında güçlü bir bağ vardır. Otoriter ebeveynlerin olduğu bir ortamın, demokratik olması beklenemez (Büyükkaragöz, 1994). Alan yazındaki çalışmalar demokrasi öğretimini birey, eğitim ve çevre bağlamında "aile" kavramını vurgulamaktadır. Araştırma bulgularını desteklemektedir.

Yapılan araştırmanın dördüncü alt problemine yönelik olarak katılımcılar ile Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin nasıl olması gerektiği konusunda görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda katılımcılar çoğunlukla demokrasi eğitiminin öğrenciye yönelik olması gerektiğini ve bu konuda program geliştirmeye yönelik çalışmalar yapılması gerektiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Öğrenciye yönelik bir demokrasi eğitimi olması gerektiğini belirten katılımcıların "bireyler arası farklılıkların dikkate

alınması, öğrencinin aktif olması" görüşleri dikkat çekmektedir. Demokrasi eğitimi konusunda program geliştirmeye yönelik çalışmaların yapılması gerektiğini ise katılımcılar "sosyal duygusal becerilerin gelişimine yönelik olmalı, bağımsız ders olarak yer almalı, temel eğitim kademelerinde yer almalı, hayatilik ilkesine uygun olmalı "şeklinde ifade etmişlerdir.

Araştırmanın beşinci alt problemi olan Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesine yönelik olarak kurum politikasının önemine ilişkin görüşlerde demokratik okul kültürü oluşturulması ön plana çıkmaktadır. Demokrasi kültürünün ve değerlerinin yerleştirilmesinde "Katılım" kavramı önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Öğrencilerin demokratik süreç içerisinde aktif bir katılım gösterebilmesi için gereken bilgi ve becerilerle donatılması gerekmektedir. Okutan (2010)araştırmasında öğrenciler başta olmak üzere okul idarecileri, öğretmenler gerektiğinde yardımcı personelini kapsayan okul paydaşları yönetim sürecine dâhil edilmesi bu kazanımları destekleyerek kurumların işleyiş politikalarının gelişimi sağladığı bulgusu araştırmanın bulguları ile örtüşmektedir.

Okul, çocuğun ailede kazanılan demokratik değerlerin zenginleştirilebileceği en önemli kurumdur. Bu gelişimin sağlanmasında okullarda tartışmaların ve eleştirilerin saygı ve hoşgörü ile demokratik disiplinler dikkate alınarak yapılması önemlidir. Bali & Hayır Kanat (2023) araştırmasında, okulun her bir birey için eşitlik ve adaletin sağlanmasını amaçlayan demokratik bir ortam olması bulgusuna ulaşmıştır. Bu da yapılan bu araştırmada ortaya çıkan kurum politikalarından demokratik okul kültürünün oluşturulmasına ilişkin bulguyla paraleldir.

Araştırmanın beşinci alt problemi ile ilgili Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilmesine yönelik katılımcılar kurum politikasına yönelik çalışmalar ile Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin geliştirilebileceği konusunda görüş belirtmişlerdir. Bu sonuca göre "demokratik okul kültürü oluşturulmalı, eğitim paydaşları arasında iş birliği güçlendirilmeli, fırsat ve imkan eşitliği sağlanmalı" ifadeleri öne çıkmaktadır

Araştırmanın altıncı alt problemi olan sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamalarında öğrenciye yönelik olarak değerler eğitimini içeren etkinliklerin yapılması görüşü öne çıkmaktadır. Bireyin güçlü kişilik ve karakterinin oluşmasında değerler önemli bir faktördür. Araştırmanın sonuçları ile benzerlik gösteren Şişman, Güleş & Dönmez, (2010) araştırmasında demokratik bir sınıf içi etkinliklerinde uygulanacak yöntemlerin öğrenciler arası açık iletişimi, iş birlikli uygulamaları, olaylar arasında sebep-sonuç ilişkisi kurarak eleştirel düşünmesini, tahmin ve analiz becerisini kullanmasını ve günlük yaşam sorunlarının çözümünde kullanılabilmesinin önemini belirtmektedir. Okul öncesi dönemde düzeye uygun etkinlikler ile değer eğitiminin, duygusal, sosyal, ahlaki ve akademik becerileri geliştirdiği bulunmuştur (Öztürk & Can, 2020; Lovat, 2017). Demokratik değerlerin edinim sürecinde, demokratik tutum ve eleştirel düşünme becerisini kazandırma ve ifade edebilmesini sağlamak önemlidir (Hotaman, 2010). Belirtilen çalışmalar ışığında araştırma bulguları olan sınıf içi demokrasi eğitimi uygulamaların da değerler öğretimine yönelik etkinliklerin önemi ile paralellik göstermektedir.

Araştırmanın altıncı alt problemi doğrultusunda demokrasi eğitiminin sınıf içi uygulamalarda nasıl olması gerektiği araştırılmıştır. Buna göre katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu sınıf içi uygulamaların öğrenciye göre olması gerektiğini bildirmişlerdir. Katılımcıların görüşlerine göre öğrenciye yönelik uygulamalar "değerler eğitimine yönelik etkinlikler yapma, liderlikleri seçimle belirleme, iş birliği sağlayan sorumluluklar verme, öğrenci merkezli öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerini kullanma" şeklinde olmalıdır.

Öneriler

Araştırmanın demokrasi eğitiminin gerekliliğine yönelik sonuçlarından yola çıkarak öncelikle eğitimcilerin demokrasiyi benimsemeleri gerekmektedir. Bir öğretmen kendini sürekli geliştiren, yenileyen, bilimin izinden giden karaktere sahip olmalıdır. Bu doğrultuda demokrasi ve getirileri konusunda öğretmenler kendi çalışmalarını yürütmeli ve bilinç sahibi olmalıdır.

Türkiye'de demokrasi eğitiminin önündeki engellerden biri sistemsel engeller olarak görülmüştür. Buna göre eğitim sistemimizdeki demokratik engeller uzmanlar tarafından belirlenmeli, Son düzenlenen öğretim programları incelenerek müfredat buna göre yenilenmelidir. Müfredat yenileme çalışmaları da demokratik süreçlerle ve katılımla gerçekleştirilmelidir. Müfredatın yenilenmesiyle beraber ders kitapları ve kitaplarda önerilen sınıf içi uygulamalar da gözden geçirilmelidir.

Araştırma problemine dair sonuçlardan yola çıkarak öğretmenlere, geleneksel anlayıştan koparak demokratik uygulamalara, sınıf içi uygulamalarda çağdaş yaklaşımlara benimsenebilir. Veli

toplantıları, sosyal ortamlar gibi ebeveynler ile yapılan görüşmelerde demokrasi ile ilgili detaylara öğretmenler yer vermelidirler.

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An Investigation into Preschool Teachers' Perspectives on Abuse

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Abstract

This study aims to explore preschool teachers' perspectives on abuse. Designed as a phenomenological study, the research employed a convenience sampling technique to select participants. Accordingly, the study group consisted of 15 preschool teachers working in Rize province during the 2023-2024 academic year, all of whom participated voluntarily. Data for the study were collected through semi-structured individual interviews with the teachers. These interviews, lasting approximately 40 minutes, were conducted using an interview form comprising five open-ended questions. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed about the study's purpose. To ensure the accuracy of the data and to prevent any loss, the participants' responses were recorded with their consent. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis. Findings revealed that preschool teachers had limited knowledge of the concept of abuse and lacked clarity on the appropriate steps to take in cases of suspected abuse. Additionally, they expressed hesitation in reporting such incidents. Moreover, the study found that most preschool teachers had encountered at least one child who had experienced some form of abuse during their professional careers. In these cases, their primary course of action was to arrange meetings with the child's family. However, all participants agreed that these meetings were often ineffective in resolving the issue and frequently resulted in conflicts with the family.

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Introduction

Abuse is the misuse of power by the one who holds the power in relationships between unequal parties (Gökalp, Kaya & Övün, 2018). Child abuse is defined as physical, emotional, or sexual maltreatment, as well as abuse for commercial or other purposes, that is actually or potentially harmful to the life, development, health, or dignity of the child (UNICEF, 2013). Although countries guarantee to protect children from all kinds of abuse by signing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, unfortunately, child abuse is a universal problem today. In recent years, it has been noteworthy that there has been a significant increase especially in cases of child abuse in Türkiye and around the world. For instance, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), approximately three out of four children between the ages of two and four are regularly physically and emotionally abused by their parents or caregivers. Furthermore, according to the WHO (2023), one in every five women and one in every thirteen men reported having been sexually abused during childhood (between 0 and 17 years of age). The situation in our country is not pleasant either. It is known that one in every three children in Türkiye is subjected to at least one form of abuse (Boduroğlu, 2023). In the Türkiye-Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Research Study (UNICEF, 2010), it was reported that 56% of the children participating in the study witnessed physical abuse, 49% witnessed emotional abuse, and 10% witnessed sexual abuse; while 43% were subjected to physical abuse, 52% to emotional abuse, and 3% to sexual abuse. In the same study, all of the children stated that they witnessed or were subjected to abuse by their parents, teachers, friends and neighbors at home, school or on the street. From a legal point of view, according to the statistics of Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Justice, at least 100 new cases on child sexual abuse are filed annually at the chief public prosecutor's offices between 2015 and 2023. It is observed that only in 2023, 193 cases were filed (Justice Statistics, 2023). Moreover, it is believed that there are many cases of abuse that are not reported or withdrawn after being reported. For instance, it is known that physical abuse is not reported because it is perceived as a disciplinary measure by families (Bakır & Kapucu, 2017). Indeed, according to the gender statistics of TurkStat (2021), physical abuse is identified as one of the punishments that parents inflict on their children. Accordingly, 72% of parents punish their children by scolding, 32% by slapping and 20% by beating. Therefore, it can be said that the cases filed are the tip of the iceberg.

Studies reveal that abuse results in both physical and psychological harm, including depression, anxiety, introversion, self-harm, and other related issues in children (Başkak, 2023; Hailes, Yu, Danese & Fazel, 2019; Kocakaya, 2019). There are also studies indicating the emergence of health-related issues such as obesity, eating disorders, schizophrenia (Hemmingsson, Johansson & Reynisdottir, 2014). Furthermore, being subjected to abuse has a negative impact on children's future lives. For instance, children subjected to physical abuse may perceive violence as a legitimate way of enforcing their will on others (Yanık & Ediz, 2022). Individuals who are subjected to abuse may abuse their spouses and children in the following years (Doğanlı & Karaörs, 2017). Therefore, there is a need for both preventive studies and intervention programs on abuse.

Eliminating and preventing all forms of abuse against children is included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by the United Nations member states by the end of 2030 (SKA, 2023). In order to achieve these objectives, countries have committed to developing various measures and practices. Key measures to protect children worldwide include the identification, reporting, referral, investigation and follow-up of child abuse (Ayling, Walsh & Williams, 2020). At this point, individuals from all segments of society and every professional group have various duties and responsibilities. Among these, teachers are one of them. Because after family life, children spend most of their time in school with their teachers. Teachers can easily observe children, identify risk situations, intervene and can make the necessary notifications by reporting. Aksel & Yılmaz Irmak (2015) stated that when children do not feel safe and have negative experiences, they often share this situation with their teachers. Since teachers have the opportunity to interact with parents as well as children, they can carry out awareness and consciousness raising activities for both children and parents. Therefore, it is important that teachers have sufficient and accurate knowledge about abuse.

Although branch teachers spend limited time with a large number of children during class hours, preschool teachers spend time with the same children during all class hours throughout the year. In Türkiye, a child enrolled in preschool education at a dual-language educational institution spends 30

hours a week with their preschool teacher. When club activities are included or when the education period is full day, this period increases even further. Therefore, preschool teachers are among the first group of teachers who can detect and intervene in all kinds of abuse signals against children as early as possible.

It is known that the implementation of preventive education programmes for abuse should start in early childhood (Kenny & Wurtele, 2012). Studies in the literature indicate that the awareness of children and families about the concept of abuse increases with abuse prevention education programmes given especially in early childhood (Çırık, Efe & Velipaşaoğlu, 2019; Çıtak Tunç, 2016; Kenny & Wurtele, 2010; Kenny, Wurtele & Alonso, 2012; Zhang, Chen, Feng, Li, Zhao & Luo, 2013). In this context, preschool teachers who lack sufficient knowledge about abuse may have shortcomings in the implementation of preventive education programmes, and therefore the children will not be able to access accurate, sufficient and safe information about abuse in their initial education. Correcting incomplete or inaccurate information may take more time than building new knowledge. For this reason, it becomes crucial to determine preschool teachers' views and level of knowledge about abuse.

This study aims to determine the views of preschool teachers on abuse. Within this scope, preschool teachers' recognition of abuse, encountering abuse in professional life and their intervention situations were examined. By this way, it is thought to contribute to the literature by determining the views of preschool teachers, analysing in-class experience and reporting situations by guiding the experts.

Method

This study was designed as a phenomenological study within the qualitative research approach. Studies conducted within this framework explore individuals' perceptions and interpretations of events and phenomena they experience (Patton, 2014). This study focuses on the phenomenon of abuse.

Study Group

The convenience sampling technique was used to determine the study group. Convenience sampling involves obtaining data from readily available and easily accessible participants (Baltacı, 2018). In this context, the study group consisted of 15 preschool teachers working in Rize province during the 2023-2024 academic year. Participation in the study was based on voluntariness. To ensure data diversity, teachers working in different institutions and with varying years of professional experience were included in the research.

All participating teachers were female. Three were employed in private schools, while twelve worked in public schools. Of the public-school teachers, five were based in the city center, five in district centers, and three in village schools. All private school teachers were located in the city center. The teachers' years of experience ranged from two to twelve years.

Data Collection Tool

The interview method was employed in this study as it provided an opportunity for an in-depth exploration of participants' personal perspectives on the subject (Seggie & Bayyurt, 2017). A semi-structured interview format was chosen, allowing the researcher to pose additional questions during the discussion. An interview form, developed by the researchers, was utilized throughout the interviews. In the development process, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, leading to the initial preparation of ten draft open-ended questions. These questions were subsequently reviewed by four field experts, and following a revision process, the number was first reduced to seven and then to five.

The study data were collected through individual interviews, each lasting approximately 40 minutes. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed about the study's purpose and engaged in a brief conversation. They were encouraged to express their views in detail. To prevent data loss, responses were recorded with the participants' consent.

Data analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed through content analysis. This method involves examining textual or verbal data with an emphasis on meaning. Codes and themes are employed to identify and interpret patterns within the data (Gül & Nizam, 2021).

Findings

As a result of the analysis of the participant views, the findings obtained under the following themes are presented by including the participant views in line with the objectives.

Definition, types and prevalence of abuse

The preschool teachers were initially asked 'What do you think abuse is and what are its types?', subsequently the question was expanded by asking 'Which type of abuse do you think is the most common? Why?'
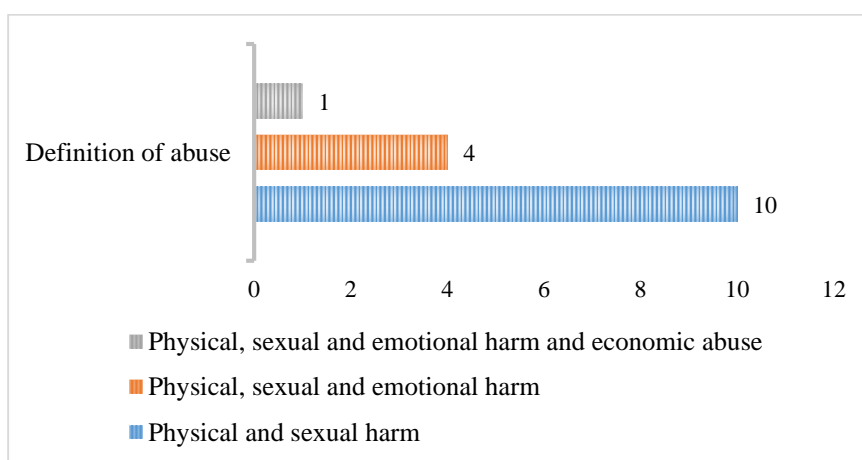
Figure 1. Preschool teachers' definitions of abuse

As seen in Figure 1, most of the teachers defined abuse as 'intentional physical and sexual harm'. Some teachers emphasized that emotional harm is also within the scope of abuse in addition to physical harm, while one teacher highlighted the economic dimension of abuse. Some of the teacher's opinions obtained on this issue are as follows:

"In my opinion, abuse is harming a person's body and emotions and attempting to control them."-T1

"In my opinion, abuse is the unauthorized touching of people's private parts, any part of their body"-T5

"Abuse is harming one's body. Physical violence, sexual touching of private parts or being forced to touch someone else's private parts are all forms of abuse. "-T11

T4 *"I think abuse is about someone gaining power and control over others, dominating, bullying, exploiting and using them, like mendicity."* With this statement, attention is drawn to the economic abuse dimension of abuse.

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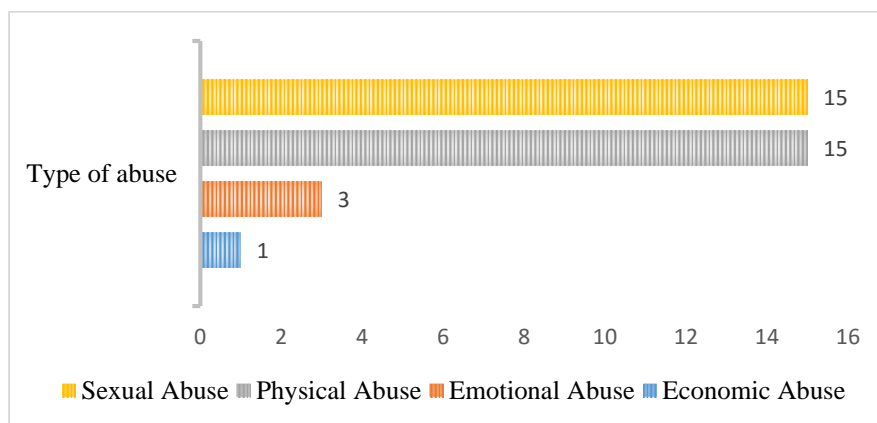
Figure 2. Types of abuse according to preschool teachers

Regarding the definitions of abuse, all the teachers answered physical and sexual abuse while explaining the types of abuse. Whilst three teachers also included emotional abuse, only one teacher explained the types of physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse. Sample statements on this subject are as follows.

"As far as I know, the types of abuse are physical and sexual abuse."-T2

"There is physical abuse, sexual abuse, and also abuse of emotions." -T13
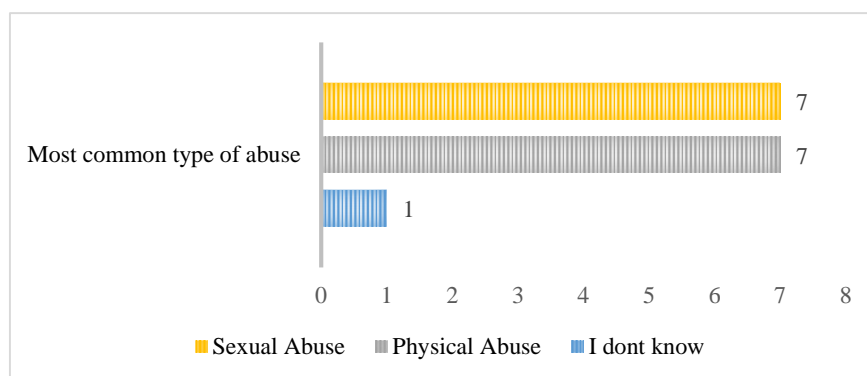
Figure 3. Most common type of abuse

As seen in Figure 3, in response to the question, 'Which type of abuse do you think is the most common?' one participant stated, 'I don't know.' Meanwhile, half of the participants identified physical abuse as the most common type, while the other half mentioned sexual abuse.

T7 justified their response as follows: *"... I think the most intense is violence, physical abuse. Even children, by observing adults, are hitting each other or animals and throwing stones. Pushing, shoving, and slapping has become so normal…"*.

T14 said, *'... We encounter news of sexual abuse at every turn. Maybe each day a woman dies from abuse. There is too much sexual abuse."* indicating that she/he decided on the most common type of abuse based on media and communication tools.

Risk group and effective factors

Preschool teachers were asked the question, "What are the groups with a high risk of being abused and what are the effective factors?'.
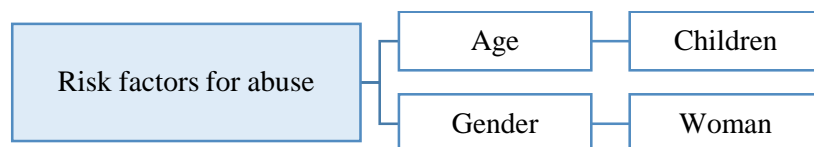
Figure 4. Risk factors for abuse according to preschool teachers

All teachers stated that risk groups emerged based on age and gender, with children being more likely to abuse due to age and women being at a higher risk due to gender. Teachers T2, T9, and T15 expressed their views as follows:

"I think abuse is more likely to be experienced by vulnerable people. I mean, I think it can happen to women and children more easily." -T2

"Abuse is something that men resort to in order to humiliate women's dignity. There are many men who abuse women to oppress them. Likewise, there are many men who only have power over children and try to compensate for their inadequacy by harming children. ... They see the child as weak, underestimate the age of the child and abuse him/her." -T9

"I think it happens to children. Children are very open to being deceived and intimidated, they are much more susceptible. They scare them by saying, 'No one will believe you, if you tell someone something, I will do this or that to you, I will harm your family'. That is why the child cannot tell anyone about the abuse. They are also young, they cannot resist the abuser, and so the abuse carries on and on." -T15

All participants stated that children are more likely to be abused in early childhood compared to other age groups. T1 explained his/her opinion on this issue with his/her reasons as follows: *"The rate of abuse is higher in early childhood compared to other ages. The main reason for this is that children are not aware that they are being abused and because they cannot resist in terms of power, they cannot resist the people who scold them, emotionally destroy them, rough them up, beat them, sexually harass them, most of the time they do not realize or because it is carried out as a game, children are abused very often."* The opinion of T4 is as follows:'*...Of course, babies and preschool children are abused more. Because their defenses are lower than other adults or older children. They need love and care, meaning they cannot survive on their own, they are dependent on someone. This makes them more vulnerable to all kinds of dangers."*

Encountering abuse in professional life

Teachers were asked the question "Have you encountered abuse in your professional life?" Four teachers stated that they had not. Eleven teachers stated that they had encountered abuse, and their experiences were analyzed with the questions "Which type of abuse did you encounter? How did you recognize it? What made you suspicious?". Then, they were asked how they intervened in the encounter of abuse.
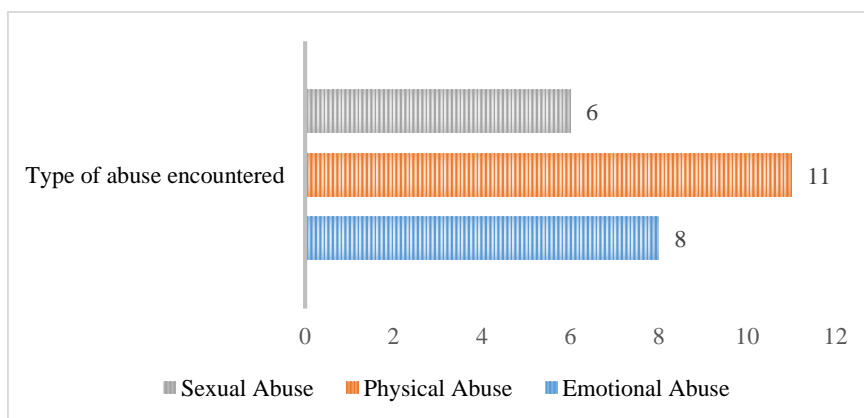
Figure 5. Types of abuse encountered by preschool teachers

Teachers stated that they encountered different types of abuse in their professional life. The types of abuse that teachers indicated that they encountered the most are physical, emotional and sexual abuse respectively. By giving examples, they explained that they benefited from children's conversations among themselves, in-class observations, individual interviews with children and observations of parents in determining abuse. Some of the abuse situations encountered by teachers are as follows:

"How did I understand? I understood the words he/she used and the meaning of the words. When I read a book about turtles laying eggs, he/she would say things like 'Do you know what birth is? Do you know what a child looks like? Do you know why turtles lay eggs?' and he/she would say that he/she knew things that other children did not know. Later, during several conversations with the child, … mentioned watching videos in which children's underwear was removed, and girls were hugged. In another conversation, I noticed that … frequently explained things such as the existence of sexual organs in men and women, that children are born that way, and that men hug women, and women become pregnant. I came to the conclusion that the child was abused because he/she knew the meanings of special words, used these words in detail and continuously, knew things emotionally older than his/her age, and wanted to talk about them." -T1

"I realized the case from what the child was telling in the class. He thought that other children were playing by holding his willy. Sometimes he would run after other children and squeeze their willy when he caught them. When I asked him what he was doing, he ran away without answering. One day, while reading a story with a grandfather as the main character in the class, that child said, 'Teacher, I play catch with ……. When ……. catches me, he grabs my willy, pulls and tickles it. It is very funny." I learnt from there." -T8

"I suspected that a child was being emotionally abused. What made me suspicious was the mocking and derogatory words the mother used to the child. He/she didn't use them in our presence, or if he/she blurted them out, he/she pretended to be joking, but the words he/she used were not nice… Another parent used to drag the child away from school. I saw him/her slap the child's mouth and cheek a few times outside the school…" -T13

"… I saw numerous children with bruises and signs of pinching on their arms and legs. When I asked the mother, she would say things like "he/she hit somewhere, he/she fell". Sometimes children can also be injured in the classroom, while playing or in the garden, but when I saw the marks on the same child, I realised that it was abuse…." -T3

"…I can say that I saw emotionally abused children a lot. Such as humiliation, not being valued, conditional love. For example, if you do this, I won't love you, if you do that, I won't be your mother anymore, you will stay on the streets." -T14

In addition, some of the teachers emphasized that abuse leads to behavioral problems in children while describing their abuse experiences.

"… When a child experiences violence from the family, he/she does the same in the classroom. He/she hits his/her friend, takes the toy away from them, provokes other children to start a fight, pushes them." -T12

"… This makes children passive, they are either too timid or too aggressive. …" -T14

Intervention to abuse

Teachers were asked what they did in cases of abuse they encountered, and all of them stated that they verbally reported the situation to the counsellor or the school principal. While most of the teachers emphasized that they made joint decisions with the school administration in their solution strategies, some of them stated that they struggled individually against the pressure and obstacles of the school administration. The solution strategies used by the teachers are shown in the graph below.
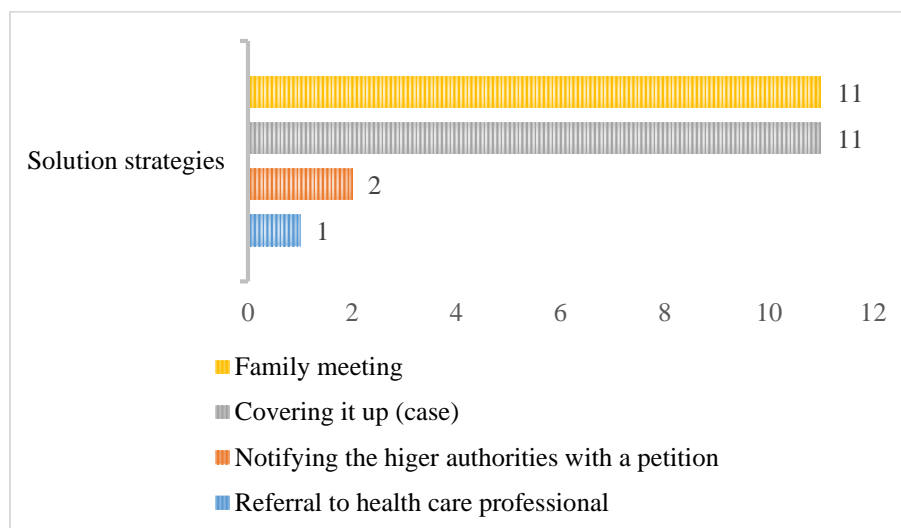
Figure 6. Solution strategies of teachers in intervention to abuse

All the teachers stated that they first contacted the family in case of abuse they encountered. They mentioned that they were subjected to reactions such as shouting, accusing them of slander, walking up to them and threatening them during family meetings. The opinions of some of the teachers on this subject are as follows:

"Firstly, I informed the school counsellor, then the counsellor informed the principal and said that we should call the family to the school and inform them. The family came to the school. After talking about general topics, I asked, 'Do you know if your child talks about adult content? Does he/she talk about it to you too?". The mother and father started to raise their voices and shout. They walk up to me and threatened me. So I realised that this abuse was also known, approved and indirectly supported by the family. ... The family constantly threatened the school. I'm not sure how the threats were made or how it was covered up, but I know that they said things like 'I will finish you, I will kill you,' and 'I will shut down your school.' They made it clear that we couldn't be held accountable in any way." -T1

"What did we do in this case? Firstly, we talked to the child's family. We thought that if the situation was repeated, we would take serious measures, but of course we did not tell the family that. We explained the severity and importance of the case. We told them that if we witnessed it again, we would report it to the official institutions, and that in such a case, it could get much more serious..." -T2

"Firstly, I called the mother to school. I told her about what the child said while reading a book. 'Yes, teacher, she said, that is the way he/she likes (by squeezing his willy). My son is the first male grandson, we named him .... loves him very much. They are joking among themselves,' she said. I told her that this was wrong, that the child showed the same behavior to other children in the class. The mother did not believe me. She didn't react much at first, but she didn't believe it. She said 'I have never seen him do that, he never does that in the park or when he plays with his cousins.' I told her that she did it in the classroom and that this behavior was wrong. I asked them to talk to ..... and tell him/her not to touch the child's body in this way. She said 'I could never say to ..... such a thing, If you want, you can tell my husband.'' When the father and mother came to school, there was an argument. The father was very angry about what was said to his relative and said, '....What are you trying to say? Do you think you know everything. Who are you? Who do you think you are?' he shouted. He didn't even let me talk. The male teachers at the school heard the voices and came. The man walked up to me, the teachers intervened. The principal came. They took me out of the room, the principal and a few male teachers talked to the parent... ."-T8

T13 stated that she/he referred to a child's parent who was in the process of divorce and who was not aware that she was harming his child to a health expert as follows: *"The parent was recently*

divorced, I was aware of the troubled process she was going through during the divorce. Her behavior towards the child had changed, she was constantly saying things like "you are like your father, you are incompetent, why are you like this" without realizing it. I had a chat with the parent as if we were having a routine meeting. Then, without offending her, I told her that it is not a shame to get support in difficult times, on the contrary, it is a necessity. I told her that I also received support for a while. She understood anyway, she said that she did not say those sentences on purpose, that she regretted it afterwards, that she went home and cried..."

In addition, T1 and T8 stated that they attempted to report the situation to the school and district national education with a petition as well as family meetings. All the teachers stated that the solution strategies were not effective and the case was covered up with the guidance of the school administration. While teachers working in private schools stated that they let the school administration cover up the case due to the fear of being dismissed and the fear of parents harming them outside the school, teachers working in public schools stated that they accepted the cover-up of the case because they did not believe their school administration and official procedures would solve the problem.

"I wrote a 3-4 pages petition to the school principal, stating in detail that the child was abused and that the family reacted in this way. The principal said that he did not process my petition and put it aside. He said that he did not approve of this situation at all, that this would get much bigger, that they were very bad people, that they would harm me and my family, and end the matter somehow. Private schools have this aspect where you can think about what should happen up to a certain point. After a certain point, you have to think about whether I will be fired or what will happen to me. What the principal said also affected me, the man had the potential to harm me. I was afraid for a while on my way home. Then I left that institution anyway. The biggest reason was that they were not behind me and they said OKAY to everything to look cute to the parents." -T1

"...They calmed the parent down and sent him away. They told me that I was right but not to drag this out. After that day, whatever they said at home, the child became distant towards me. The child said "My father calls you s.... teacher". I went and argued with the principal. I said, 'You didn't do anything, the kid called me a ... in the middle of class. I petitioned both the school and the district Directorate of National Education. The District Director of National Education called me and spoke to me in a fatherly manner and told me that I was still young and that I would see many more things and drop the matter." -T8
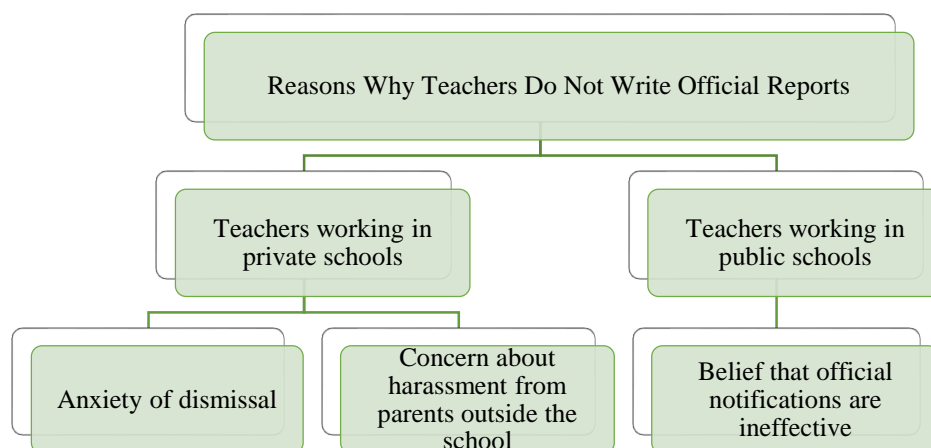
Figure 7. Reasons why teachers do not write official reports

When teachers were asked why they did not submit an official report in writing, it was observed that their reasons varied depending on the type of school in which they worked. Teachers in private schools stated that they refrained from reporting due to fear of dismissal and concerns about possible retaliation from parents outside the school, instead allowing the school administration to suppress the incident. On the other hand, teachers in public schools indicated that they accepted the school

administration and official procedures covering up the incident, as they lacked confidence in their ability to resolve the issue. Some teachers explained their reasons for not filing an official report as follows:

"... The thing about private schools is that, up to a certain point, you can think about what should happen. After a certain point, you have to think about whether I will be fired or what will happen to me. What the principal said also affected me, he had the potential to harm me. I was afraid for a while on my way home. Then I left that institution anyway. The biggest reason was that they did not stand behind me and said everything was okay to look cute for the parents." –T1

"... Of course nothing happened. I am so fed up with the fact that every negative thing that happens at school is accepted by us as normal. I used to object before, but I don't object anymore, because nothing happens. I told the family about the situation, I told them about the harm it would cause to the child, I reported the situation to the principal. I mean, I did what I could do." -T12

Teachers' Support Requests

The teachers were asked the question "What kind of support do you need to raise awareness about abuse?" All teachers stated that they primarily needed to raise awareness of the family and suggested that free seminars could be organized by university staff. They indicated that if such training is planned, topics such as the effect of abuse on children's future life, that anyone can be an abuser, and the definition of special regions should be emphasized in its content. Moreover, it was suggested that activity suggestions and book list that teachers can use in classroom activities should be prepared by the Ministry of National Education. In this way, it was indicated that it would be easier to handle the subject of abuse in classroom activities. The opinions of some of the teachers on this issue are as follows:

"I think people should be scared about this issue. For instance, it should be said that the abuser may be very close to you. This is already true, but at the same time this information makes people very uneasy, it is scary. It can be emphasized that we can be abused by our relatives so do not force children to kiss their relatives. I think it would raise awareness if a longitudinal study is demonstrated, explained and conducted on what kind of characteristics children may have when they grow up after especially emotional abuse and how their characters may be damaged. In other words, the biggest support is to raise this awareness in the people who care for children around them." -T2

"Especially in rural areas, districts and villages, we are left alone with the public. I think university lecturers should come to such remote areas from time to time and give free training. We are also working on something, but if we cannot agree on something with the parents, we get a bad reputation. Everything we do is labelled as bad and wrong. Even if you try to teach something good and useful, society does not accept it. I think it would be useful for them to hear similar things from different people from outside." -T5

"Actually, my biggest requirement in this regard is the support of informing the people around the child, the family. Because the teacher somehow becomes conscious, has to become conscious. But the family grows and expands in isolation from this..." -T6

"... Even book selection is a different issue in itself. The Ministry of National Education or university field experts can do this easily. Like 100 fundamental works, a list of books recommended for privacy can be created. Activity suggestions can be prepared with these books. It would be very nice. This would make us even stronger. I would know what to do when I want to work abuse in my class." -T15

T8, who works in the village, emphasized that the source of information of people living in rural areas is television and that informative programs should be prepared for families:

"As far as I can see, the source of information for people in the village is television. They believe whatever the television says, their daily conversations are always based on what they see on television. From TV series to the news. If these people learn through television, informative broadcasts that are not dull can be added to television. I am not talking about channels such as EBA TV, TRT Documentary, etc. These channels are already followed by people with a high level of awareness. In order to reach the

public, these issues should be discussed briefly even in TV series. For example, a short half-hour information programme could be broadcast simultaneously on all channels at 15.00 hours. My biggest demand would be the use of television and media intertwined with education..."

Teachers working in private schools stated that they need training for all school staff, emphasizing that the staff working in private schools have different levels of education.

"If you are working in a private school, your school principal may not be a teacher, so not knowing about this issue scares him/her. For example, he/she does not want to talk about abuse. School principals, school staff, cafeteria staff and especially parents should be informed in a planned and programmed manner by experts and university professors, and the training should be compulsory and continuous." -T10

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

In this section, the findings obtained are discussed in line with the literature. In the study, it was observed that the participants mainly defined abuse as physical and sexual abuse. In connection with the definitions, all teachers mentioned physical and sexual abuse while explaining the types of abuse, and some teachers stated that emotional abuse is also a type of abuse. Physical abuse is the easiest type of abuse to identify as it has visible signs on the body such as bruising, scarring and bleeding (Doğanlı & Karaörs, 2017). Therefore, teachers' awareness about physical abuse may be high. In recent years, there has been a lot of news about sexual abuse in the media. The situation of expressing opinions and reactions to sexual abuse news on social media has become quite widespread. Dumanlı Kürkçü (2017) examined the reactions of Twitter users to sexual abuse cases and analyzed a total of 26,112 tweets posted in five days against sexual abuse cases. The number of tweets in this short period of time is noteworthy. In Sağır's (2013) study conducted with 474 preschool and primary school teachers, one third of the teachers stated that the source of information about abuse was the Internet. Teachers may have included sexual abuse in their definitions because they were exposed to a lot of news, reactions and opinions about sexual abuse on social media and news. When Figure 3 is analyzed, although most of the teachers mentioned that they saw children exposed to emotional abuse in their classrooms, they did not include emotional abuse in the definition of abuse and its types. It is thought that this situation stems from the fact that teachers have insufficient knowledge about abuse. However, in order for teachers to be able to recognize abuse correctly and report it to the authorities, they should have the necessary knowledge and skills about the procedures for identifying and reporting abuse (Dinehart & Kenny, 2015). There are studies in literature that support the findings of the study. For instance, Erdoğan and Aslan (2020), in a study conducted with preschool teachers, stated that although teachers have sensitivity about abuse, their knowledge is insufficient. Similarly, according to Olcay's (2021) study, preschool teachers consider themselves partially competent in identifying negative child experiences and sexual abuse, and competent in identifying physical abuse and emotional abuse.

Half of the teachers, referring to their classroom observations, stated that physical abuse was the most common type of abuse and that children were both victims and abusers in terms of physical abuse. The other half, on the other hand, stated that sexual abuse is the most common type of abuse by emphasizing the news on social media as well as classroom observations. When the teachers were asked about the group most vulnerable to abuse, all of them answered women and children. When the crimes committed by children and against children in Türkiye are analyzed, it is found that physical and sexual abuse is at a high rate among the crimes (TÜİK, 2024 [in English Turkish Statistical Institute]). Gökalp, Kaya and Övün (2018) indicated that women and children are more vulnerable to abuse in every society and in every period. Therefore, teachers' definition of the group most vulnerable to abuse is correct. However, the reason for this situation may also stem from teachers' gender perception.

Most of the teachers indicated that they had encountered different types of abuse in their professional life. The most common types of abuse they reported to have encountered were physical and emotional abuse. Almost half of them (n=6) also stated that they had encountered sexual abuse. In

determining the abuse, it was observed that they benefited from children's conversations among themselves, in-class observations, individual conversations with the child, and parents' attitudes and behaviors. Children often reflect on the situations they experience and witness in daily life in their games and share them with their peers. Children may try to attract attention by explaining a new topic to their peers and try to gain power among peers (Gündoğdu & Yaşar, 2021). Therefore, children's conversations among themselves and in the classroom are considered to be an important resource for teachers. It was observed that teachers verbally reported to the school principal and school counsellor when they encountered abuse. Similarly, in the study of Tener and Sigad (2019), teachers stated that they reported to the school administration and counsellor in case of abuse. In this study, only two teachers wrote a petition and ensured that the situation was officially recorded. However, according to the Turkish Penal Code, it is a duty of citizenship to report any crime to the competent authorities. Furthermore, according to Article 279 of the Turkish Penal Code, a public official who, in connection with his/her duty, learns that an offence requiring investigation and prosecution on behalf of the public has been committed and neglects to notify the competent authorities or shows delay in this regard shall be punished with imprisonment from six months to two years. Therefore, teachers are legally required to officially report any case or suspicion of abuse. It is considered that teachers' lack of knowledge about reporting and legal responsibility affects their reporting status. In this study and in the literature, it is observed that preschool teachers are reluctant to report abuse. In the study conducted by Yetiş and Ziyalar (2018) with 513 teachers, it was found that 49.9% of the teachers did not have information about the reporting obligation and penalty in Article 279 of the Turkish Penal Code. Nguyen-Vu (2018), in his study examining the decision-making process of preschool teachers in reporting abuse, stated that although teachers had concrete suspicions, they were not willing to report child abuse based on suspicions because they were not sure what to do. In the study of Dinehart and Kenny (2015), early childhood educators stated that although they had the necessary knowledge about child abuse and reporting, they would report to the school administration when they encountered abuse and would not make any reporting process. Aksel and Yılmaz Irmak (2015), in their study on sexual abuse, found that teachers mostly preferred referral to authorities (authorities, school administration, guidance service, psychiatrist) and family meetings as interventions in case of abuse encountered at school. Olcay's (2021) study revealed that teachers do not have clear information about how to report abuse.

In this study, the reasons why teachers did not make official notifications differed according to the type of school they worked in. While teachers working in private schools indicated that they did not report due to work and aggression concerns, teachers working in public schools stated that they did not believe that procedures would solve the problem. In Widerberg and Eklund's (2018) study, fear of conflicts that may arise with parents and fear of the reaction of parents were among the reasons for not making official notifications. This difference according to school type can be explained by the lack of job security and parent satisfaction policy of private schools. Indeed, in Çimen and Karadağ's (2020) study, it is stated that teachers in private education institutions have the thought of being unemployed at any moment, and that they experience the stress of whether their contract will be renewed in the presence of every problem and solution strategy. In the same study, it is also observed that the role attributed to the teacher in the parent-teacher-school relationship is an element of pressure on the teacher. According to Can Yaşar, Kaya, and Karaca's (2021) study, preschool teachers' personal concerns about reporting increase as their seniority increases. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that teachers working in the public sector do not believe that procedures will solve problems. This may be due to teachers' past negative experiences. Experiences such as the fact that previous notifications were not taken into consideration, remained unresolved or took time to be resolved may have reduced teachers' trust in procedures. It is suggested that this issue should be analyzed through in-depth research.

Most of the teachers indicated that they acted jointly with the school administration in the presence of abuse, and that they mostly met with the family as an intervention. They stated that they encountered aggressive reactions such as shouting, threats, and walking up to them during the meetings with the family. Nguyen-Vu (2018) stated that preschool teachers tend to meet with families and obtain more detailed information in case of suspicion of abuse. In the study by Tener and Sigad (2019), the family of the victim child reacted to the teacher with shouting and rejection. All of the teachers

participating in this study stated that the solution strategies were not effective, and the case was covered up with the guidance of the school administration. In Tener and Sigad's (2019) study, teachers also stated that the school administration was unprepared for the abuse and reluctant to officially report the abuse.

As a result of the research, it was found that preschool teachers did not have sufficient knowledge about abuse and perceived abuse mostly as physical and sexual abuse. Furthermore, according to preschool teachers, women and children are more vulnerable to be victims of abuse because they are defenseless. Another result of the study was that preschool teachers frequently encountered different types of abuse in their professional lives. Teachers identified abuse by conducting individual meetings with their children, observing children's communication with each other and observing parents' behaviors towards their children. In the face of this situation, it was observed that teachers mostly preferred to report verbally to the school administration and counsellor but did not report officially.

Within the framework of these results, the following recommendations are suggested in the study:

- In-service training programs can be given to preschool teachers on the definition, identification and intervention of abuse.

- A planned and programmed abuse awareness training program can be developed for preschool teachers and parents.

- Courses on abuse can be added to the preschool teaching undergraduate curriculum. In this way, awareness and consciousness can be created in preschool teachers before they step into the teaching profession.

- Research examining the level of knowledge and in-class observations of teachers according to the types of abuse can be conducted.

- The underlying reasons why preschool teachers do not officially report cases of abuse (but only report them verbally) can be investigated.

- In order to encourage teachers to officially report in case of abuse or suspicion of abuse, rewards such as promotion in rank and service points can be added to the Teaching Profession Law.

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Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin İstismar Konusundaki Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi

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Öz

Bu araştırma okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismar konusunda görüşlerini belirlemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma, nitel araştırma yaklaşımında fenomenoloji (olgubilim) olarak desenlenmiştir. Çalışma grubunun belirlenmesinde kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda 2023-2024 eğitim öğretim yılında Rize ilinde çalışan 15 okul öncesi öğretmeni araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Çalışma gurubunda yer alan öğretmenlerin belirlenmesinde gönüllülük esası dikkate alınmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri öğretmenler ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış bireysel görüşmeler ile elde edilmiştir. Beş açık uçlu sorunun yer aldığı görüşme formu ile gerçekleştirilen bireysel görüşmeler yaklaşık 40 dakika sürmüştür. Görüşmeye başlamadan önce katılımcılara araştırmanın amacı açıklanmıştır. Veri kaybını önlemek amacıyla katılımcıların izni alınarak yanıtları kayıt altına alınmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen veriler içerik analizi tekniği ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismar kavramı hakkında sınırlı bilgiye sahip oldukları, istismar şüphesi duyduklarında ne yapacakları hakkında net bilgi sahibi olmadıkları ve şüpheli durumlarda bildirimde bulunmakta çekimser kaldıkları görülmüştür. Ayrıca, araştırmaya katılan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çoğunluğunun meslek hayatı boyunca sınıflarında en az bir istismar türüne maruz kalan çocuklar ile karşılaştıkları ve bu durumda genellikle aile görüşmeleri yapmayı tercih ettikleri belirlenmiştir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin tamamı aile görüşmelerinin problemi ortadan kaldırmada yetersiz kaldığını ve aile ile çatışma yaşadığını ifade etmiştir.

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Giriş

İstismar; eşitsizler arasındaki ilişkilerde gücü elinde bulunduranın, bu gücü diğerine karşı kötüye kullanmasıdır (Gökalp, Kaya ve Övün, 2018). Çocuk istismarı; çocuğun hayatı, gelişimi, sağlığı veya onuru açısından fiilen veya potansiyel olarak zarar verici fiziksel, duygusal ve cinsel kötü muamele ile ticari veya başka amaçlı sömürü olarak tanımlanmaktadır (UNICEF, 2013). Ülkeler çocuk hakları sözleşmesini imzalayarak çocuğu her türlü istismardan korumayı garanti etse de ne yazık ki günümüzde çocuk istismarı evrensel bir problem olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Son yıllarda Türkiye'de ve dünyada özellikle çocuklara yönelik istismar vakalarının ciddi oranda artışı dikkat çekmektedir. Örneğin, Dünya Sağlık Örgütü'ne (WHO, 2020) göre dünyada iki-dört yaş arasında yaklaşık dört çocuktan üçü ebeveynleri veya bakıcıları tarafından düzenli olarak fiziksel ve duygusal olarak istismar edilmektedir. Ayrıca, her beş kadından biri ve 13 erkekten biri çocukluğunda (0-17 yaş arasında) cinsel istismara uğradığını ifade edilmektedir (WHO, 2023). Ülkemizdeki durum da iç açıcı değildir. Türkiye'de her üç çocuktan birinin istismar türlerinden en az birine maruz kaldığı bilinmektedir (Boduroğlu, 2023). Türkiye-Çocuk İstismarı ve Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırmasına (UNICEF, 2010) katılan çocukların %56'sının fiziksel istismara, %49'unun duygusal istismara ve %10'unun cinsel istismara tanık olduğu; %43'ünün fiziksel istismara, %52'sinin duygusal istismara ve %3'ünün cinsel istismara maruz kaldığı belirtilmektedir. Yine aynı araştırmaya katılan çocukların tamamı ebeveynleri, öğretmenleri, arkadaşları ve komşuları tarafından ev, okul ve sokakta istismara tanık olduğunu veya maruz kaldığını ifade etmiştir. Hukuki açıdan incelendiğinde, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Adalet Bakanlığı istatistiklerine göre cumhuriyet başsavcılıklarında çocuk cinsel istismarına yönelik 2015-2023 yılları arasında her yıl en az 100 yeni dosya açılmaktadır. Sadece 2023 yılında 193 dosya açıldığı görülmektedir (Adalet İstatistikleri, 2023). Bunun yanında ihbar edilmeyen veya ihbarı geri çekilen pek çok istismar vakasının olduğu düşünülmektedir. Örneğin fiziksel istismar, aileler tarafından bir disiplin aracı olarak görüldüğü için bildirim yapılmadığı bilinmektedir (Bakır ve Kapucu, 2017). Nitekim, TÜİK toplumsal cinsiyet istatistiklerinde (2021) anne ve babaların çocuklara verdikleri cezalar arasında fiziksel istismarın olduğu görülmektedir. Buna göre anne babaların %72'si azarlama, %32'si tokat atma, %20'si dövme şeklinde çocuklarını cezalandırmaktadır. Bu nedenle açılan dosyalar için buzdağının görünen kısmı demek mümkündür.

Yapılan araştırmalar istismarın çocuklarda depresyon, kaygı, içe kapanıklık, kendine zarar verme vb. fiziksel ve psikolojik hasarlara yol açtığını göstermektedir (Başkak, 2023; Hailes, Yu, Danese ve Fazel, 2019; Kocakaya, 2019). Obezite, yeme bozukluğu, şizofreni gibi sağlıkla ilgili sorunların ortaya çıktığını belirten çalışmalar da mevcuttur (Hemmingsson, Johansson ve Reynisdottir, 2014). Ayrıca, istismara maruz kalma çocukların ileriki hayatlarını da olumsuz etkilemektedir. Örneğin, fiziksel istismara maruz kalan çocuklar şiddeti, başkalarının istediğini yaptırmanın meşru bir yolu olarak algılayabilir (Yanık ve Ediz, 2022). İstismara maruz kalan bireyler ilerleyen yıllarda eş ve çocuklarını istismar edebilmektedir (Doğanlı ve Karaörs, 2017). Bu nedenle istismar konusunda hem önleyici çalışmalara hem müdahale programlarına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Çocuklara yönelik her istismar türünü ortadan kaldırmak ve önlemek Birleşmiş Milletlere üye ülkelerce 2030 yılının sonuna kadar ulaşılması planlanan Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Amaçları (SKA) kapsamında yer almaktadır (SKA, 2023). Bu amaçlara ulaşmak için ülkeler çeşitli tedbirler ve uygulamalar geliştirmeyi taahhüt etmiştir. Dünya çapında çocukları korumaya yönelik temel tedbirler arasında çocuk istismarının belirlenmesi, raporlanması, sevk edilmesi, soruşturulması ve takibi yer almaktadır (Ayling, Walsh ve Williams, 2020). Bu noktada toplumun her kesiminden bireye ve her meslek grubuna çeşitli ödev ve sorumluluklar düşmektedir. Bunlardan biri de öğretmenlerdir. Çünkü çocuklar aile hayatından sonra vakitlerinin çoğunu okul hayatında öğretmenleri ile geçirir. Öğretmenler çocukları rahatlıkla gözlemleyebilir, risk durumlarını belirleyebilir, müdahale edebilir ve raporlayarak gerekli bildirimleri yapabilir. Aksel ve Yılmaz Irmak (2015), çocukların güvende hissetmediklerinde ve olumsuz yaşantılara sahip olduğunda bu durumu sıklıkla öğretmenleriyle paylaştıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenler çocuklar kadar ebeveynleri ile de etkileşim imkânına sahip olduklarından hem çocuklara hem de ebeveynlere yönelik farkındalık ve bilinçlendirme çalışması yapabilirler. Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin istismar konusunda yeterli ve doğru bilgiye sahip olmaları önemlidir.

Branş öğretmenleri çok sayıda çocuk ile ders saati boyunca sınırlı vakit geçirse de okul öncesi öğretmenleri yıl boyunca aynı çocuklar ile tüm ders saatlerinde vakit geçirmektedir. Türkiye'de ikili eğitim veren bir eğitim kurumunda okul öncesi eğitim alan bir çocuk okul öncesi öğretmeni ile haftada 30 saat vakit geçirmektedir. Kulüp çalışmaları eklendiğinde veya eğitim süresi tam gün olduğunda ise bu süre daha da artmaktadır. Bu nedenle okul öncesi öğretmenleri olabildiğince erken yaşlarda çocuklara yönelik her türlü istismar sinyallerini fark edebilecek ve müdahale edebilecek ilk öğretmen grubunda yer almaktadır.

İstismara yönelik önleyici eğitim programlarının uygulanmasına erken çocukluk döneminde başlanması gerektiği bilinmektedir (Kenny ve Wurtele, 2012). Literatürde yer alan çalışmalar özellikle erken çocukluk döneminde verilen istismarı önleyici eğitim programları ile çocukların ve ailelerin istismar kavramına yönelik farkındalıklarının arttığını göstermektedir (Çırık, Efe ve Velipaşaoğlu, 2019; Çıtak Tunç, 2016; Kenny ve Wurtele, 2010; Kenny, Wurtele ve Alonso, 2012; Zhang, Chen, Feng, Li, Zhao ve Luo, 2013). Bu bağlamda istismar konusunda yeterli bilgiye sahip olmayan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin önleyici eğitim programı uygulamalarında eksiklikler olabilecek, dolayısıyla çocuklarında istismar konusunda aldıkları ilk eğitimde doğru, yeterli ve güvenli bilgiye ulaşabilmeleri mümkün olmayacaktır. Eksik veya yanlış bilgileri düzeltmek yeni bilgi inşa etmekten daha çok vakit alabilir. Bu nedenle okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismar konusundaki görüşlerini ve bilgi düzeyini belirlemek önem kazanmaktadır.

Bu araştırma ile okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismar konusunda görüşlerini belirlemek amaçlanmaktadır. Bu kapsamda okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismarı tanıma, meslek hayatında istismarla karşılaşma ve müdahale durumları irdelenmiştir. Bu sayede okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüşlerinin belirlenmesi, sınıf içi yaşantı ve bildirim durumlarının incelenmesi ile uzmanlarına yol göstererek literatüre katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Yöntem

Araştırma, nitel araştırma yaklaşımında fenomenoloji (olgubilim) olarak desenlenmiştir. Bu desen ile yürütülen çalışmalar insanların deneyimledikleri olay ve olgulara yönelik algılarını ve anlamlandırmalarını irdelemektedir (Patton, 2014). Araştırmanın odağındaki olgu istismar kavramıdır.

Çalışma Grubu

Çalışma grubunun belirlenmesinde kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme ile veriler mevcut olan, ulaşılması hızlı ögelerden elde edilir (Baltacı, 2018). Bu bağlamda 2023-2024 eğitim öğretim yılında Rize ilinde çalışan 15 okul öncesi öğretmeni araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Çalışma grubu gönüllülük esası dikkate alınarak oluşturulmuştur. Veri çeşitliliği olması için farklı görev yerlerinde çalışan ve farklı kıdem yılına sahip öğretmenlerin araştırmaya dahil edilmesine özen gösterilmiştir.

Çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerin tamamı kadındır. Öğretmenlerin üçü özel okulda, on ikisi devlet okulunda görev yapmaktadır. Devlet okulunda görev yapan öğretmenlerin beşi il merkezinde, beşi ilçe merkezinde ve üçü köy okulunda çalışmaktadır. Özel okulda çalışan öğretmenlerin tamamı il merkezinde çalışmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin kıdem yılları iki ile on iki arasında değişmektedir.

Veri Toplama Aracı

Araştırmada katılımcıların konuyla ilgili paylaşmak istediği kişisel bakış açısını derinlemesine inceleme fırsatı sunması (Seggie ve Bayyurt, 2017) nedeniyle görüşme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Araştırmacıya hazırladığı soruların yanında sohbet esnasında ek sorular sorma imkanı tanıdığı için yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği tercih edilmiştir. Görüşmelerde araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Form geliştirilirken öncelikle kapsamlı literatür taraması yapılmış ve açık uçlu on taslak soru hazırlanmıştır. Dört alan uzmanının görüşüne başvurulmuş ve sorular üzerinde revize çalışması yapılarak soru sayısı önce yediye, ardından beşe indirilmiştir.

Araştırmanın verileri bireysel görüşmeler ile elde edilmiştir. Görüşmeler yaklaşık 40 dakika sürmüştür. Görüşmeye başlamadan önce katılımcılara araştırmanın amacı açıklanmış ve katılımcılarla bir süre sohbet edilmiştir. Katılımcıların kendilerini detaylı ifade edebilmeleri desteklenmiştir. Veri kaybını önlemek amacıyla katılımcıların izni alınarak yanıtları kayıt altına alınmıştır.

Verilerin Analizi

Araştırmadan elde edilen veriler içerik analizi tekniği ile analiz edilmiştir. İçerik analizinde, veri olarak elde bulunan metinler veya konuşmalar incelenerek anlama odaklanılır. Anlamı ortaya çıkarırken kod ve temalardan yararlanılır (Gül ve Nizam, 2021).

Bulgular

Katılımcı görüşlerinin çözümlenmesi sonucunda aşağıdaki temalar altında elde edilen bulgular amaçlarla uyumlu olacak şekilde katılımcı görüşlerine yer verilerek sunulmuştur.

İstismarın tanımı, türleri ve görülme sıklığı

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerine ilk olarak "Sizce istismar nedir, türleri nelerdir?" diye sorulmuş, ardından "Sizce en sık görülen istismar türü hangisidir? Neden?" denilerek soru genişletilmiştir.
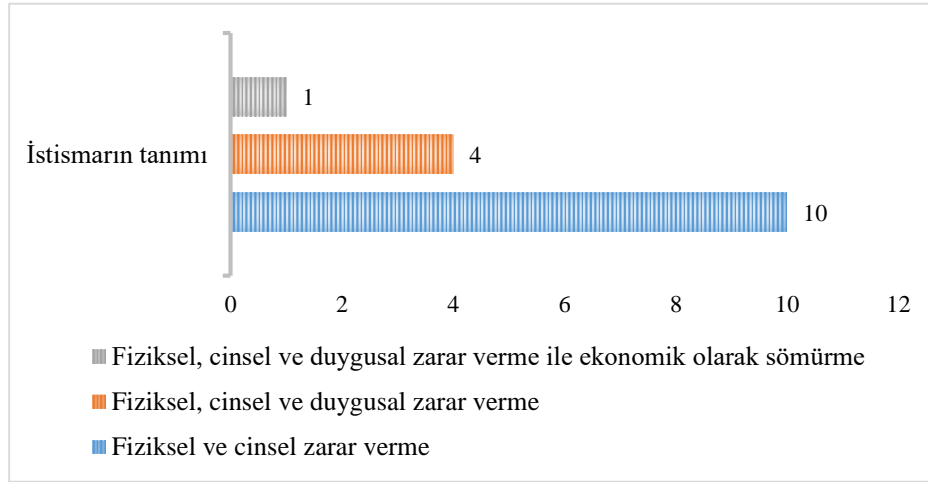
Şekil 1. Okul öncesi Öğretmenlerinin İstismar Tanımları

Şekil 1'de görüldüğü gibi öğretmenlerin çoğu istismarı "kasıtlı olarak fiziksel ve cinsel zarar verme" olarak tanımlamıştır. Bazı öğretmenler fiziksel zararın yanında duygusal tahribatın da istismar kapsamında olduğunu vurgulamışlarken bir öğretmen istismarın ekonomik sömürge boyutundan bahsetmiştir. Bu konuda elde edilen öğretmen görüşlerinden bazıları şu şekildedir:

"Bence istismar kişinin bedenine ve duygularına zarar verilmesi, kontrol edilmeye çalışılmasıdır."-Ö1

"Bana göre istismar insanların özel bölgelerine, vücudunun herhangi bir yerine izinsiz dokunulması" -Ö5

"İstismar kişinin bedenine zarar verilmesidir. Fiziksel olarak şiddet görmek, cinsel olarak özel bölgelere dokunulması veya başkasının özel bölgesine dokunmaya zorlanması bunların hepsi istismardır."-Ö11

Ö4 *"Bence istismarda birilerinin başkaları üzerinde güç ve kontrol sağlaması, hakimiyet kurması, zorbalık yapması, sömürmesi, onu kullanması söz konusudur, dilencilik gibi."* Bu ifadeyle istismarın ekonomik olarak sömürülme boyutuna dikkat çekilmiştir.
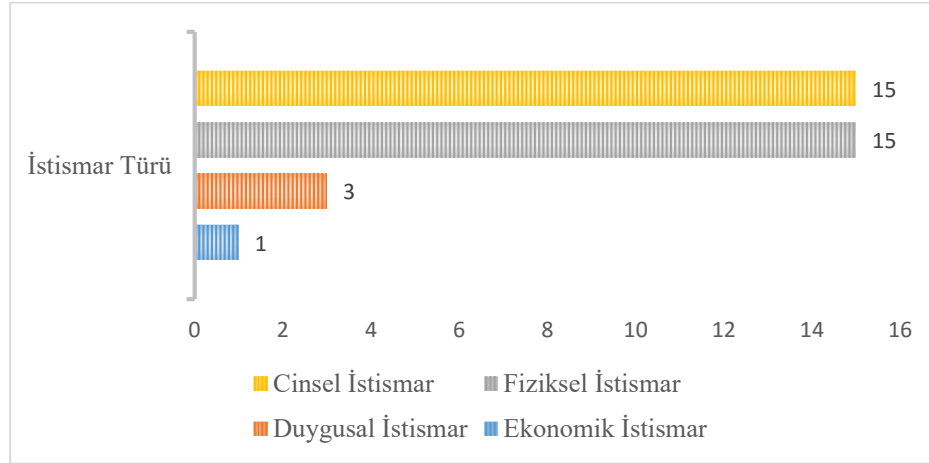
Şekil 2. Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerine Göre İstismar Türleri

İstismar tanımları ile bağlantılı olarak öğretmenlerin tamamı istismar türlerini açıklarken fiziksel ve cinsel istismar cevabını vermiştir. Üç öğretmen duygusal istismara da yer verirken sadece bir öğretmen fiziksel, duygusal, cinsel ve ekonomik istismar türlerine yönelik açıklamalar yapmıştır. Bu konudaki örnek ifadeler şu şekildedir.

"İstismar türleri fiziksel ve cinsel istismar bildiğim kadarıyla."-Ö2

"Fiziksel istismar var, cinsel istismar var, bir de duyguların istismar edilmesi var." -Ö13
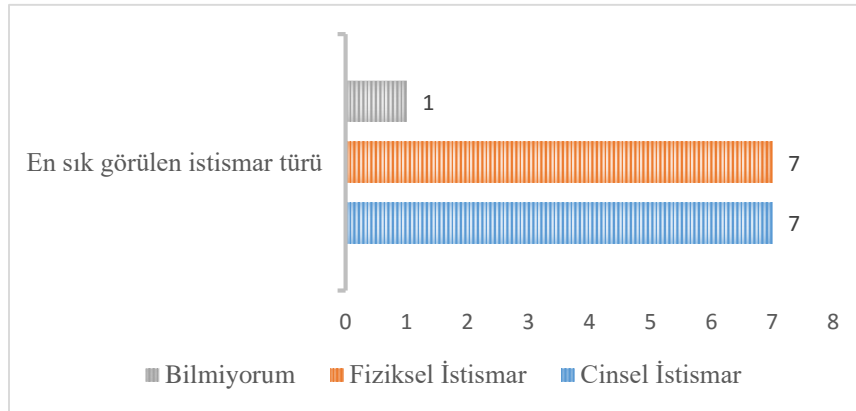
Şekil 3. Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerine Göre En Sık Görülen İstismar Türü

"Sizce en sık görülen istismar türü hangisidir?" sorusunu bir katılımcı "bilmiyorum" şeklinde yanıtlarken, katılımcıların yarısı fiziksel istismar diğer yarısı cinsel istismar cevabını vermiştir.

Ö7 cevabını şu şekilde gerekçelendirmiştir: *"… En yoğun olan bence şiddet uygulanması, fiziksel istismardır. Çocuklar bile yetişkinlerden göre göre birbirlerine, hayvanlara vuruyorlar, taş atıyorlar. İtip-kakma, tokat atma o kadar normal oldu ki…"*.

Ö14 ise *"… Adım başı cinsel istismar haberi ile karşılaşır olduk. Her gün bir kadın istismardan ölüyor belki de. Kesinlikle cinsel istismar çok fazla."* sözleriyle medya ve iletişim araçlarını baz alarak en sık görülen istismar türüne karar verdiğini belirtmiştir.

Risk Grubu ve Etkili Faktörler

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerine istismara uğrama riski yüksek olan grup ve etkili faktörler nelerdir?" sorusu yöneltilmiştir.
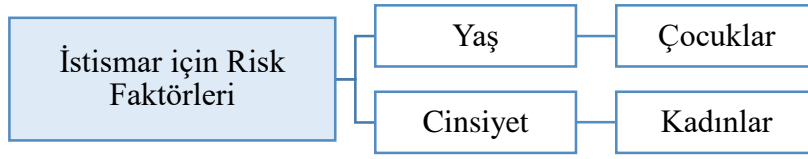
Şekil 4. Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerine Göre İstismar İçin Risk Faktörleri

Öğretmenlerin tamamı yaş ve cinsiyete bağlı olarak risk gruplarının ortaya çıktığını: yaş faktörüne göre çocukların, cinsiyet faktörüne bağlı olarak kadınların istismara uğrama ihtimalinin daha yüksek olduğunu belirtilmiştir. Öğretmenlerden Ö2, Ö9 ve Ö15 görüşlerini şöyle açıklamıştır:

"İstismar savunmasız insanların başına daha çok geliyor diye düşünüyorum. Yani kadınların ve çocukların başına daha kolay gelebilir bence." -Ö2

"İstismar kadınların onurunu aşağılamak için erkeklerin başvurduğu bir şey. Kadını ezmek için istismar eden bir sürü erkek var. Aynı şekilde çocuklara gücü yeten, kendi yetersizliğini çocuklara zarar vererek gidermeye çalışan bir sürü erkek var. ... Zayıf görüyor, çocuğun yaşını küçük görüyor ve istismar ediyor." -Ö9

"Bence çocukların başına geliyor. Çocuklar kandırılmaya ve korkutulmaya çok açık, çok daha müsait. Sana kimse inanmaz, birine bir şey söylersen sana şöyle yaparım, ailene zarar veririm diye korkutuyorlar. Çocuk da bu yüzden istismarı kimseye söyleyemiyor. Yaşları da küçük, karşı tarafa gücü yetmiyor. Ve böylece istismar devam edip duruyor." -Ö15

Katılımcıların tamamı çocukların erken çocukluk döneminde diğer yaş gruplarına göre daha çok istismar edildiğini ifade etmiştir. Ö1 bu konudaki görüşünü gerekçeleriyle birlikte şöyle açıklamıştır: *"Erken çocukluk döneminde diğer yaşlara göre istismar oranı daha fazla. Bunun en büyük sebebi çocuklar istismar edildiğinin farkında değil ve güç olarak karşı koyamadıkları için, onları azarlayan, duygusal olarak tahrip eden, hırpalayan, döven, cinsel yönden taciz eden kişilere karşı koyamadıkları, çoğu zaman fark etmedikleri ya da oyun olarak yapıldığı için çocuklar çok sık istismar ediliyor."* Ö4'ün görüşü ise şöyledir: *"...Bebekler ve okul öncesi çocuklar daha çok istismar ediliyor tabi. Çünkü savunmaları diğer yetişkinlere veya büyük yaşlara göre daha düşük. Sevgiye ve bakıma muhtaçlar, yani tek başına hayatta kalamazlar birine bağımlılar. Bu da onları her türlü tehlikeye daha açık hale getiriyor."*

Meslek Hayatında İstismarla Karşılaşma Durumu

Öğretmenlere "Meslek hayatınızda istismar durumuyla karşılaştınız mı?" sorusu yönetilmiştir. Dört öğretmen karşılaşmadığını belirtmiştir. Karşılaştığını belirten on bir öğretmen ile deneyimleri "Hangi istismar türü ile karşılaştınız? Nasıl anladınız? Sizi şüphelendiren neydi?" soruları eşliğinde irdelenmiştir. Ardından istismar durumu karşısında nasıl bir müdahalede bulundukları sorulmuştur.
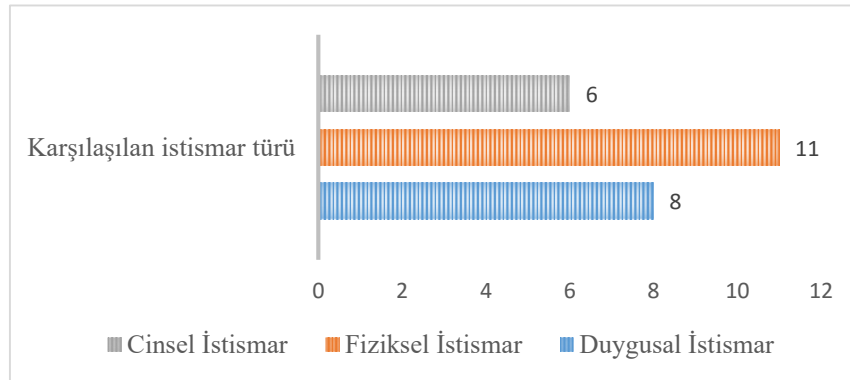
Şekil 5. Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Karşılaştıkları İstismar Türleri

Öğretmenler meslek hayatında farklı istismar türleri ile karşılaştığını ifade etmişlerdir Öğretmenlerin sırasıyla en çok karşılaştıklarını ifade ettikleri istismar türleri fiziksel, duygusal ve cinsel istismardır. İstismarı belirlemede; çocukların kendi aralarındaki konuşmalarından, sınıf içi gözlemlerinden, çocuk ile bireysel görüşmelerinden ve ebeveynleri gözlemlerinden faydalandıklarını örnekler vererek açıklamışlardır. Öğretmenlerin karşılaştıkları istismar durumlarından bazıları şunlardır:

"Nasıl anladım? Kullandığı kelimelerden ve kelimelerin anlamını bilmesinden anladım. Kaplumbağaların yumurtladığı anlatan bir kitap okuduğumda "Sen doğum nedir biliyor musun? Çocuk nasıl olur biliyor musun? Kaplumbağalar neden yumurtlar biliyor musun?" gibi cümlelerle diğer çocukların bilmediği şeyleri bildiğinden bahsediyordu. Sonrasında birkaç kez çocukla konuştuğumda ......'nın videolar izlediğini, videoda çocukların iç çamaşırının çıkarıldığını, kız çocuklara sarıldığını söyledi. ... Başka sohbetlerimizden birinde kadınlarla erkeklerin cinsel organlarının olduğunu, çocukların o şekilde dünyaya geldiğini, doğduğunu, erkeklerin kadınlara sarılıp kadınların hamile kaldığı gibi şeyleri sık sık açıkladığını fark ettim. Özel kelimelerin anlamlarını bilmesi, detaylı ve sürekli olarak bu sözcükleri kullanması, duygusal olarak yaşından büyük şeyleri bilmesi, konuşmak istemesi nedeniyle çocuğun istismara uğradığı kanısına vardım." -Ö1

"Çocuğun sınıf içinde anlattıklarından fark ettim olayı. Diğer çocukların pipisini tutarak oyun oynadığını sanıyordu. Bazen de diğer çocukların peşinden koşup yakaladığında pipisini sıkıyordu. Ne yapıyorsun diye sorduğumda cevap vermeden kaçıyordu. Bir gün sınıfta kahramanı dede olan bir hikaye okurken o çocuk dedi ki "Öğretmenim ben ...... ile yakalamacılık oynuyorum. .... beni yakalayınca pipimi tutup çekiyor, gıdıklıyor. Çok komik oluyor." Oradan öğrendim." -Ö8

"Bir çocuğun duygusal olarak istismar edildiğinden şüphelendim. Beni şüphelendiren şey annenin çocuğa kullandığı alay edici ve aşağılayıcı kelimeleriydi. Bizim yanımızda bunları kullanmıyordu veya ağzından kaçırırsa şaka yapıyor gibi davranıyordu ama kullandığı kelimeler hoş değildi...Başka bir velim çocuğu sürükleyerek götürüyordu okuldan. Birkaç kez okul dışında çocuğun ağzına, yanağına tokat attığını gördüm..." -Ö13

"...Kolunda, bacağında morarma, cimcikleme izi olan çocuklarla çok karşılaştım. Anneye sorduğumda bir yere çarptı, düştü gibi şeyler söylüyordu. Bazen çocuklar sınıfta da yaralanabiliyor, oynarken veya bahçedeyken ama sürekli aynı çocukta izler görünce istismar olduğunu anladım. ..." -Ö3

"...Duygusal olarak istismar edilmiş çocuklarla çok karşılaştığımı söyleyebilirim. Aşağılanma, değer görmeme, koşullu sevme gibi. Mesela şöyle yaparsan seni sevmem, böyle yaparsan artık annen olmam, sokaklarda kalırsın gibi söylemlerle çok karşılaştım." -Ö14

Ek olarak, öğretmenlerden bazıları istismar yaşantılarını anlatırken istismarın çocuklarda davranışsal problemlere yol açtığını vurgulamıştır.

"... Çocuk aileden şiddet gördüğü zaman sınıfta da aynısını yapıyor. Arkadaşına vuruyor, oyuncağı elinden çekip alıyor, diğer çocukları kavga çıkarması için tahrik ediyor, itiyor. -Ö12

"... Bu durum çocukları pasif yapıyor ya çok ürkek oluyorlar ya çok saldırgan. ..." -Ö14

İstismara müdahale

Öğretmenlere karşılaştıkları istismar durumlarında ne yaptıkları sorulduğunda tamamı okuldaki rehber öğretmene veya okul müdürüne durumu sözel olarak bildirdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin çoğu çözüm stratejilerinde okul yönetimiyle ortak karar verdiklerini vurgularken bir kısmı ise okul yönetiminin baskısı ve engellemeleri karşısında bireysel mücadele verdiğini ifade etmiştir. Öğretmenlerin kullandıkları çözüm stratejileri aşağıdaki grafikte gösterilmiştir.
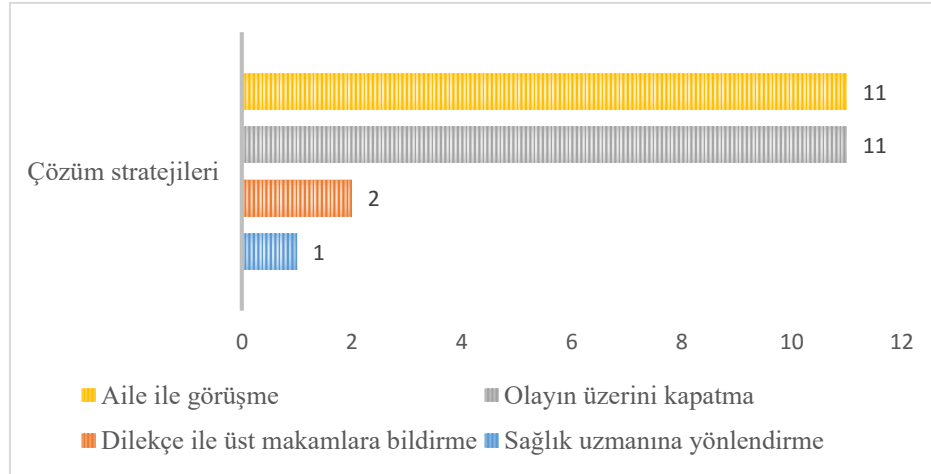
Şekil 6. Öğretmenlerin İstismara Müdahalede Kullandıkları Çözüm Stratejileri

Öğretmenlerin tamamı karşılaştıkları istismar durumunda ilk olarak aile ile görüştüklerini belirtmiştir. Aile görüşmelerinde bağırma, iftira atmakla suçlama, üzerine yürüme, tehdit etme şeklinde tepkilere maruz kaldıklarından bahsetmişlerdir. Bu konuda öğretmenlerden bazılarının görüşleri şu şekildedir:

"İlk olarak okulun rehber öğretmeniyle paylaştım. Sonra rehber öğretmen müdüre haber verip aileyi okula çağırmamız ve bilgilendirmemiz gerektiğini söyledi. Aile okula geldi. Genel konulardan bahsettikten sonra "Çocuğunuzun yetişkin içeriklerinden bahsettiği hakkında bilginiz var mı? Size de bahsediyor mu?" şeklinde sordum. Anne ve baba sesini yükseltmeye, bağırmaya başladı. Benim üzerime geldiler, tehdit ettiler. Yani bu istismarın aile tarafından da bilindiğini, onaylandığını ve dolaylı olarak arkasında durulduğunu fark ettim. ... Aile sürekli olarak okulu tehdit etti. Yani nasıl tehdit etti de üstü böyle kapatıldı bilmiyorum. Sizi bitiririm, öldürürüm. Siz de okulunuza kapatırım. Bu konuda hiçbir şekilde bizim üstümüze gelemezsiniz gibi şekilde üstümüze geldiğini biliyorum." -Ö1

"Bu durumda neler yaptık? İlk önce çocuğun ailesiyle konuştuk. Hani durum tekrarlanırsa özellikle ciddi bir şekilde tedbir alırız diye düşündük ama aileye böyle demedik tabi. Olayın ciddiyeti ve önemini anlattık. Bir daha şahit olursak resmi kurumlara bildireceğimizi, böyle bir durumda işin çok daha büyüyebileceğini söyledik..." -Ö2

"İlk olarak anneyi okula çağırdım. Çocuğun kitap okurken söylediklerinden bahsettim. "Evet hocam dedi, ... sevme şekli (pipisini sıkarak) o. Oğlum ilk erkek torun, adını da ......adı koyduk. ...... onu çok seviyor. Şakalaşıyorlar aralarından öyle" dedi. Bunun yanlış olduğunu, çocuğun sınıftaki diğer çocuklara aynı davranışı sergilediğini söyledim. Anne inanmadı. Başta çok tepki vermedi ama inanmadı. "Ben hiç görmedim, parkta ya da kuzenleriyle oynarken hiç öyle şeyler yapmıyor" dedi. Sınıfta yaptığını söyledim ve bu davranışın yanlış olduğunu söyledim. .... konuşup bu şekilde çocuğun bedenine dokunmamasını söylemelerini istedim. "Ben ...... öyle bir şeyi asla söyleyemem" dedi anne. İsterseniz eşime siz söyleyin" dedi. Ben de kabul ettim. Baba ile anne okula geldiğinde tartışma çıktı. Baba yakınına söylenene çok kızdı ve "....Ne demeye çalışıyorsunuz? Her şeyi de siz biliyorsunuz zaten. Siz kimsiniz? Kim olduğunuzu sanıyorsunuz?" diye bağırıp çağırdı. Beni konuşturmadı bile. Okuldaki erkek hocalar sesleri duyup geldi. Adam üzerime yürüdü, hocalar araya girdi. Müdür bey geldi. Beni odadan çıkardılar, veli ile müdür bey ve birkaç erkek öğretmen konuştu...."-Ö8

Ö13, boşanma sürecinde olan ve çocuğuna zarar verdiğinin farkında olmayan velisini sağlık uzmanına yönlendirdiğini şöyle ifade etmiştir: *"Velim yeni boşanmıştı, boşanma aşamasında yaşadığı sıkıntılı sürecin farkındaydım. Çocuğa davranışları değişmişti, sürekli baban gibi şöylesin, beceriksizsin, niye böylesin tarzı şeyler söylüyordu çocuğa farkında olmadan. Velimle rutin bir görüşme yapar gibi sohbet ettim. Ardından kırmadan zor zamanlarda destek almanın ayıp olmadığını, tam tersi ihtiyaç olduğunu söyledim. Bir dönem benim de destek aldığımı söyledim. Anladı zaten, o cümleleri isteyerek kurmadığını, sonrasında pişman olduğunu, eve gidip ağladığını söyledi..."*

Ek olarak Ö1 ve Ö8, aile görüşmelerinin yanı sıra dilekçe ile okula ve ilçe milli eğitime durumu bildirme girişiminde bulunduğu ifade etmiştir. Öğretmenlerin tamamı çözüm stratejilerinin etkili olmadığını ve okul yönetiminin yönlendirmesi ile olayın üzerinin kapatıldığını söylemiştir.

"Detaylı bir şekilde çocuğun istismar edildiğine ve ailenin bu şekilde tepki verdiğine dair okul müdürüne 3-4 sayfalık bir dilekçe yazdım. Müdür dilekçemi işleme almadığını, bir kenara koyduğunu söyledi. Bu durumu hiçbir şekilde onaylamadığını, bu işin çok daha da büyüyeceğini, onların çok kötü insanlar olduğunu, bana ve aileme zarar vereceğini söyleyip bir şekilde konuyu kapattı..." -Ö1

"...Onlar veliyi sakinleştirip yollamışlar. Bana da haklı olduğumu ama bu konuyu uzatmamamı söylediler. O günden sonra artık evde ne dedilerse, çocuk da bana karşı soğuk olmaya başladı. Babam "O... öğretmen" diyor size dedi. Gittim müdürle tartıştım. Siz bir şey yapmadınız çocuk sana sınıf ortasından o... diyor dedim. Hem okula hem de ilçe MEM'e dilekçe verdim. İlçe Milli Eğitim müdürü beni çağırdı ve babacan bir tavırla konuşup daha çok genç olduğumu, daha neler göreceğimi söyledi ve konunun üzerini kapattı." -Ö8
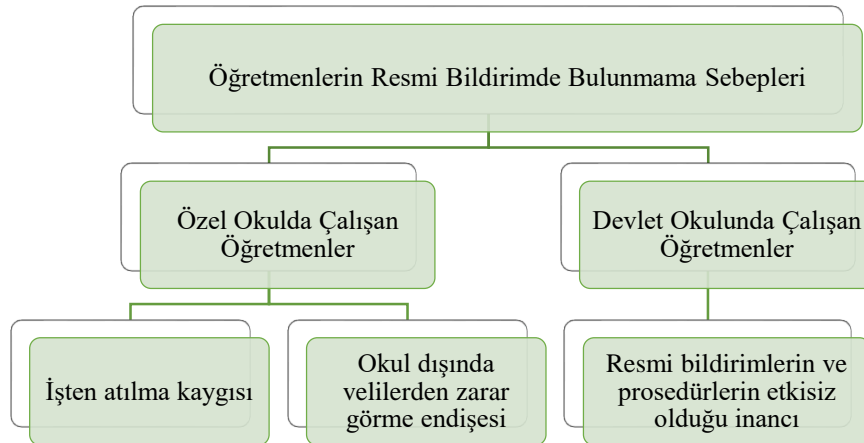
Şekil 7. Öğretmenleri Resmi Bildirimde Bulunmama Sebepleri

Öğretmenlere neden yazılı olarak resmi bildirimde bulunmadıkları sorulduğunda öğretmenlerin çalıştığı okul türüne göre sebeplerinde farklılık gösterdiği görülmüştür. Özel okulda çalışan öğretmenler işten atılma kaygısı ve velilerin okul dışında kendilerine zarar vermesi endişesiyle okul yönetiminin olayın üzerini kapatmasına göz yumduğunu belirtirken, devlet okullarında çalışan öğretmenler okul yönetiminin ve resmi prosedürlerin sorunu çözeceğine inanmadığı için olayın üzerinin kapatılmasını kabullendiğini belirtmiştir. Öğretmenlerden bazıları resmi bildirimde bulunmama sebeplerini şöyle açıklamıştır:

"... Özel okulların şöyle bir tarafı var, bir yere kadar olması gerekeni düşünebiliyorsunuz. Bir yerden sonra işten atılır mıyım, başıma ne gelir diye düşünmek zorunda kalıyorsunuz. Müdürün söyledikleri de beni etkiledi yani, adamın bana zarar verme potansiyeli vardı. Bir süre korku yaşadım eve giderken. Sonra o kurumdan ayrıldım zaten. Arkamda olmamaları ve veliye şirin gözükmek için her şeye tamam demeleri en büyük sebebi oldu." –Ö1

"... Tabi ki hiçbir şey olmadı. O kadar yıldım ki okulda yaşanan her olumsuzluğun normalmiş gibi bize kabullendirilmesinden. Önceden itiraz ederdim, artık itiraz da etmiyorum. Bir şey olmuyor

çünkü. Sistemi bize diyor ki gözünüzü kapatın, sorun çıkarmayın. Aileye durumu söyledim, çocuğa vereceği zararı söyledim, müdüre durumu bildirdim. Yapacağımı yaptım yani." -Ö12

Öğretmenlerin Destek Talepleri

Öğretmenlere "İstismar konusunda farkındalık kazanmak için ne tür desteğe ihtiyaç duyuyorsunuz?" sorusu yöneltilmiştir. Öğretmenlerin tamamı öncelikle ailenin bilinçlendirilmesine ihtiyaç duyduklarını belirtmiş, üniversite personeli tarafından ücretsiz seminerler verilebilir önerisinde bulunmuşlardır. Böyle bir eğitim planlanırsa içeriğinde; istismarın çocukların ileriki yaşamına etkisi, herkesin istismarcı olabileceği, özel bölgelerin tanımı gibi konuların vurgulanması gerektiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca, öğretmenlere yönelik sınıf içi etkinliklerde kullanabilecekleri etkinlik önerileri ve kitap listelerinin MEB tarafından hazırlanması önerilmiştir. Bu sayede sınıf içi etkinliklerde istismar konusunun işlenmesinin daha kolay olacağı belirtilmiştir. Öğretmenlerden bazılarının bu konuda görüşleri şöyledir:

"Bence bu konuda insanların korkutulması lazım. Mesela istismar eden kişi çok yakınınız olabilir denmeli. Bu doğru zaten, aynı zamanda bu bilgi insanı çok tedirgin ediyor, korkutucu. Akrabalarımız tarafından istismar edilebiliriz, çocukları akrabalarını öpmeye zorlamayın şeklinde vurgular yapılabilir. Özellikle duygusal istismar sonrasında çocukların büyüdüklerinde ne gibi özelliklere sahip olabilecekleri, karakterlerinin nasıl zedelenebileceğine ilişim boylamsal bir çalışma gösterilirse, anlatılırsa, yapılırsa farkındalık yaratır diye düşünüyorum. Yani en büyük destek, çocukların çevresinde bakımını veren insanlarda bu farkındalığı yaratmaktır" -Ö2

"Özellikle kırsal bölgelerde, ilçelerde ve köylerde halk ile çok baş başa bırakılıyoruz. Bence üniversiteden hocaların zaman zaman böyle uzak bölgelere gelip ücretsiz eğitimler vermesi lazım. Biz de çalışmalar yapıyoruz ama veli ile bir konuda anlaşamıyorsak adımız kötüye çıkıyor. Yaptığımız her şey kötü ve yanlış olarak adlandırılıyor. İyi ve faydalı bir şey öğretmeye çalışsan bile toplum kabul etmiyor. Dışardan farklı kişilerden de benzer şeyleri duymaları faydalı olur diye düşünüyorum." -Ö5

"Aslında bu konuda en büyük ihtiyacım çocuğun çevresinde olan insanların, ailesinin bilgilendirilme desteği. Çünkü öğretmen bir şekilde bilinçleniyor, bilinçlenmek zorunda kalıyor. Ama aile bundan izole bir şekilde büyüyor, genişliyor…" -Ö6

"… Kitap seçimi bile başlı başına ayrı bir konu. MEB veya üniversite alan uzmanları bunu rahatlıkla yapabilir. 100 temel eser gibi mahremiyet için öneriler kitaplar listesi oluşturulabilir. Bu kitaplarla etkinlik önerileri hazırlanabilir. Çok da güzel olur. Bu bizi daha da güçlü yapar. Sınıfımda istismar çalışmak istediğimde ne yapmam gerektiğini bilirim." -Ö15

Köyde çalışan Ö8, kırsal bölgelerde yaşayan insanların bilgi kaynağının televizyon olduğunu belirterek aileleri bilgilendirici programlar hazırlanması gerektiğini vurgulamıştır:

"Köyde insanların bilgi kaynağı gördüğüm kadarı ile televizyon. Televizyon ne derse ona inanıyorlar, günlük konuşmaları hep televizyonda gördükleri üzerine. Dizilerden tutun haberlere kadar. Madem bu insanlar televizyonla öğreniyorlar, televizyona sıkıcı olmayan, bilgilendirici yayınlar eklenebilir. EBA TV, TRT Belgesel gibi kanallardan bahsetmiyorum. Buraları zaten bilinç düzeyi yüksek kişiler takip ediyor. Halka inmek için dizilerin içerisinde bile kısa kısa işlemek lazım bu konuları. Mesela saat 15.00'da tüm kanallarda aynı yayın ve yarım saatlik kısa bir bilgilendirme programı konulabilir. Benim en büyük talebim televizyonun ve medyanın eğitimle iç içe kullanılması olur…"

Özel okulda çalışan öğretmenler ise özel okullarda çalışan personelin farklı eğitim seviyesinde olduğunu vurgulayarak tüm okul personeline yönelik eğitim ihtiyacı duyduklarını belirtmiştir.

"Eğer özel bir okulda çalışıyorsanız okul müdürünüz öğretmen olmayabiliyor ve o yüzden bu konu hakkında bilgisi olmaması onu korkutuyor. İstismardan konuşulmasını istemiyor mesela. Afişle, broşürler değil kesinlikle uzman kişiler, üniversite hocaları tarafından bilinçli bir şekilde planlı, programlı bir şekilde okul müdürlerine, okul personellerine, yemekhanedeki çalışanlara ve en önemlisi ailelerin bilgilendirilmesi gerekiyor ve bu eğitimlerin zorunlu olması ve süreklilik sağlaması gerekiyor." -Ö10

Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler

Bu bölümde elde edilen bulgular literatür doğrultusunda tartışılmıştır. Araştırmada katılımcıların istismarı çoğunlukla fiziksel ve cinsel istismar olarak tanımladığı görülmüştür. Tanımlarla bağlantılı olarak tüm öğretmenler istismar türlerini açıklarken fiziksel ve cinsel istismardan bahsetmiş, bir kısım öğretmen ise duygusal istismarın da bir istismar türü olduğunu belirtmiştir. Fiziksel istismar morarma, iz bırakma, kanama gibi vücutta somut belirtileri olduğu için belirlemesi en kolay istismar türüdür (Doğanlı ve Karaörs, 2017). Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin fiziksel istismar hakkında farkındalıkları yüksek olabilir. Medyada cinsel istismara yönelik son yıllarda oldukça fazla haber yer almaktadır. Sosyal medyada cinsel istismar haberleri karşısında görüş bildirme ve tepkisini ifade etme durumu oldukça yaygınlaşmıştır. Dumanlı Kürkçü (2017) Twitter kullanıcılarının cinsel istismar olaylarına verdikleri tepkileri incelediği araştırmasında cinsel istismar olayı karşısında beş günde atılan toplam 26.112 tweeti irdelenmiştir. Bu kısa sürede atılan tweet sayısı dikkate değerdir. Sağır'ın (2013), okul öncesi ve sınıf öğretmenlerinden oluşan 474 kişi ile yürüttüğü araştırmasında öğretmenlerin üçte biri istismar konusunda bilgi kaynağının internet olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Öğretmenler sosyal medyada ve haberlerde cinsel istismara yönelik çok fazla haber, tepki, görüş bildiren içeriklere maruz kaldığı için tanımlarında yer vermiş olabilirler.

Şekil 5 incelendiğinde, öğretmenlerin çoğu sınıflarında duygusal istismara maruz kalan çocuklar gördüğünü ifade etmesine rağmen duygusal istismara istismar ve türleri tanımında yer vermemiştir. Bu durumun öğretmenlerin istismar konusunda yetersiz bilgiye sahip olmasından kaynaklandığı düşünülmektedir. Oysa öğretmenlerin istismarı doğru bir şekilde fark edebilmeleri ve yetkililerine rapor verebilmeleri için, istismarı tanımlama ve raporlama prosedürleri konusunda gerekli bilgi ve becerilere sahip olması gerekir (Dinehart ve Kenny, 2015). Literatürde araştırmanın bulgusunu destekleyen çalışmalar mevcuttur. Örneğin, Erdoğan ve Aslan (2020), okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile yürüttüğü araştırmasında öğretmenlerin istismar konusunda duyarlılığa sahip olmakla birlikte bilgilerinin yetersiz olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Benzer şekilde Olcay'ın (2021) araştırmasına göre okul öncesi öğretmenleri olumsuz çocuk yaşantılarını ve cinsel istismarı belirlemede kendilerini kısmen yeterli, fiziksel istismar ile duygusal istismarı belirlemede kendini yeterli görmektedir.

Öğretmenlerin yarısı sınıf içi gözlemlerini örnek göstererek en çok fiziksel istismarın görüldüğünü, çocukların fiziksel istismar konusunda hem mağdur hem istismarcı konumunda olduğunu belirtmiştir. Diğer yarısı ise sınıf içi gözlemlerinin yanı sıra sosyal medyadaki haberleri vurgulayarak en sık cinsel istismarın görüldüğünü ifade etmiştir. Öğretmenlere istismar edilmeye en açık grup sorulduğunda tamamı kadınlar ve çocuklar cevabını vermiştir. Türkiye'de çocukların işlediği ve çocuğa karşı işlenen suçlar incelendiğinde fiziksel ve cinsel istismarın suçlar arasında yüksek oranda olduğu görülmektedir (TÜİK, 2024). Gökalp, Kaya ve Övün (2018), kadınların ve çocukların her toplumda ve her dönemde istismara daha açık bir grup olduğunu belirtmiştir. Dolayısıyla, öğretmenlerin istismara en açık grup tanımlamaları doğru olarak kabul edilebilir. Fakat, bu durumun sebebi öğretmenlerin toplumsal cinsiyet algısından da kaynaklanıyor olabilir.

Öğretmenlerin çoğu meslek hayatında farklı istismar türleri ile karşılaştığını belirtmiştir. En çok karşılaştıklarını ifade ettikleri istismar türü fiziksel ve duygusal istismardır. Neredeyse yarısı (n=6) cinsel istismar ile karşılaştığını da ifade etmiştir. İstismarı belirlemede çocukların kendi aralarındaki konuşmalarından, sınıf içi gözlemlerinden, çocuk ile bireysel görüşmelerinden, ebeveynlerin tutum ve davranışlarından faydalandıkları görülmüştür. Çocuklar günlük hayatta yaşadıkları ve şahit oldukları durumları sıklıkla oyunlarına yansıtmakta, akranları ile paylaşmaktadır. Çocuklar akranlarına yeni bir konuda açıklamada bulunarak dikkat çekmeye, akranlar arasında güç sağlamaya çalışabilir (Gündoğdu ve Yaşar, 2021). Bu nedenle çocukların kendi aralarında ve sınıf içinde konuşmalarının öğretmenler için önemli bir kaynak olduğu düşünülmektedir. Öğretmenlerin istismar ile karşılaştığında sözel olarak okul müdürü ve okul rehber öğretmenine bildirim yaptıkları görülmüştür. Benzer şekilde Tener ve Sigad'ın (2019) araştırmasında öğretmenler istismar durumunda okul yönetimi ve rehber öğretmene bildirim yaptıklarını belirtmiştir. Bu araştırmada sadece iki öğretmen dilekçe yazarak durumun resmi kayıtlara geçmesini sağlamıştır. Fakat, Türk Ceza Kanunu'na göre herhangi bir suçu yetkili makamlara bildirmek

vatandaşlık ödevidir. Ayrıca TCK'nın 279. Maddesine göre, kamu adına soruşturma ve kovuşturmayı gerektiren bir suçun işlendiğini göreviyle bağlantılı olarak öğrenip de yetkili makamlara bildirimde bulunmayı ihmal eden veya bu hususta gecikme gösteren kamu görevlisi, altı aydan iki yıla kadar hapis cezası ile cezalandırılır. Dolayısıyla, yasal olarak öğretmenlerin istismar durumu veya şüphesinde resmi olarak bildirimde bulunmaları gerekmektedir. Öğretmenlerin bildirim yapma ve yasal sorumluluk konusundaki bilgi yetersizliğinin bildirim yapma durumlarını etkilediği düşünülmektedir. Bu araştırmada ve literatürde okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismar durumunda bildirimde bulunmakta çekimser davrandığı görülmektedir. Yetiş ve Ziyalar'ın (2018) 513 öğretmen ile yürüttüğü araştırmasında öğretmenlerin %49,9'unun TCK madde 279'da yer alan bildirim yükümlüğü ve ceza durumu hakkında bilgi sahibi olmadığı görülmüştür. Nguyen-Vu (2018), okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismar bildirimde karar verme sürecini incelediği araştırmasında, öğretmenlerin somut şüpheleri olmasına rağmen ne yapacaklarından emin olmadıklarını için şüphelere dayanarak çocuk istismarı bildiriminde bulunmaya istekli olmadıklarını ifade etmiştir. Dinehart ve Kenny'nin (2015) araştırmasındaki erken çocukluk eğitimcileri çocuk istismarı ve raporlama konusunda gerekli bilgiye sahip olmasına rağmen istismarla karşılaştığında okul yönetimine bildireceklerini, herhangi bir raporlama işlemi yapmayacaklarını belirtmiştir. Aksel ve Yılmaz Irmak (2015) ise cinsel istismar üzerine yürüttüğü araştırmasında öğretmenlerin okulda karşılaştıkları istismar durumunda müdahale olarak çoğunlukla yetkililere (resmi makamlar, okul idaresi, rehberlik servisi, psikiyatrist) yönlendirme ve aile görüşmelerini tercih ettiğini bulgulamıştır. Olcay'ın (2021) araştırması öğretmenlerin istismar bildirimi konusunda nasıl bir yol izleyecekleri konusunda net bir bilgiye sahip olmadıklarını göstermiştir.

Şekil 7 incelendiğinde öğretmenlerin resmi bildirim yapmama sebeplerinin çalıştıkları okul türüne göre farklılık gösterdiği görülmektedir. Özel okulda çalışan öğretmenler iş ve saldırganlık kaygısı ile bildirim yapmadığını belirtirken devlet okulunda çalışan öğretmenler prosedürlerin sorunu çözeceğine inanmadığını ifade etmiştir. Widerberg ve Eklund'un (2018) araştırmasında da resmi bildirim yapmayan öğretmenlerin bildirim yapmama sebepleri arasında velilerle ortaya çıkabilecek çatışmalardan korkma ve velilerin tepkisinden çekinme yer almaktadır. Okul türüne göre oluşan bu farklılık, özel okulların iş güvencesinin olmaması ve veli memnuniyet politikasıyla açıklanabilir. Nitekim, Çimen ve Karadağ'ın (2020) araştırmasında özel öğretim kurumlarında öğretmenlerin her an işsiz kalma düşüncesi taşıdıkları, her problem ve çözüm stratejisi karşısında sözleşmem yenilenir mi? stresi yaşadıkları ifade edilmektedir. Aynı çalışmada veli-öğretmen-okul ilişkisinde öğretmene yüklenen rolün öğretmen üzerinde baskı unsuru olduğu da görülmektedir. Can Yaşar, Kaya ve Karaca'nın (2021) araştırmasına göre okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kıdemleri arttıkça bildirim yapma konusunda kişisel kaygıları artmaktadır. Diğer yandan kamuda çalışan öğretmenlerin prosedürlerin sorun çözeceğine inanmadıkları bulgusu dikkat çekmektedir. Bu durum öğretmenlerin geçmiş olumsuz deneyimlerinden kaynaklanıyor olabilir. Daha önce yapılan bildirimlerin dikkate alınmadığı, çözümsüz kaldığı veya çözümün zaman aldığı gibi deneyimler öğretmenlerin prosedürlere güvenini azaltmış olabilir. Bu konunun derinlemesine araştırmalar yapılarak incelenmesi önerilmektedir.

Öğretmenlerin çoğu istismar karşısında okul yönetimi ile ortak hareket ettiğini, müdahale olarak çoğunlukla aile ile görüşüldüğünü ifade etmiştir. Aile ile yapılan görüşmelerde bağırma, tehdit, üzerine yürüme gibi saldırgan tepkilerle karşılaştıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Nguyen-Vu (2018) okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismar şüphesi karşısında aileler ile görüşme ve daha detaylı bilgi edinme eğiliminde olduğunu belirtmiştir. Tener ve Sigad'ın (2019) araştırmasında da mağdur çocuğun ailesi öğretmene bağırma ve reddetme tepkileri vermiştir. Bu araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin tamamı çözüm stratejilerinin etkili olmadığını ve okul yönetiminin yönlendirmesi ile olayın üzerinin kapatıldığını söylemiştir. Tener ve Sigad'ın (2019) araştırmasında da okul yönetiminin istismar konusunda hazırlıksız ve istismarın resmi olarak bildirimi konusunda isteksiz olduğunu belirten öğretmenler olmuştur.

Araştırma sonucunda okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismarla ilgili yeterli bilgiye sahip olmadığı, istismarı çoğunlukla fiziksel ve cinsel istismar olarak algıladığı görülmüştür. Bununla birlikte okul öncesi öğretmenlerine göre kadınlar ve çocuklar savunmasız oldukları için istismar mağduru olmaya daha açıktır. Araştırmanın bir diğer sonucu, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin meslek hayatlarında farklı istismar türleri ile sıklıkla karşılaşmış olmasıdır. Öğretmenler çocukları ile bireysel görüşmeler yaparak,

çocukların birbiri ile iletişimini gözlemleyerek ve ebeveynlerin çocuklarına davranışlarını gözlemleyerek istismar durumunu belirlemiştir. Bu durum karşısında öğretmenlerin çoğunlukla okul yönetimi ve rehber öğretmene sözel olarak bildirimde bulunmayı tercih ettiği, resmi olarak bildirimde bulunmadıkları görülmüştür.

Bu sonuçlar çerçevesinde araştırmada aşağıdaki önerileri sunulmaktadır:

- İstismarın tanımı, belirlenmesi ve müdahale edilmesi konusunda okul öncesi öğretmenlerine hizmet içi eğitimler verilebilir.

- Okul öncesi öğretmenlerine ve ebeveynlere yönelik planlı ve programlı istismar farkındalık eğitim programı geliştirilebilir.

- Okul öncesi öğretmenliği lisans programına istismara yönelik dersler eklenebilir. Bu sayede öğretmenlik mesleğine adım atmadan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinde farkındalık ve bilinç oluşturulabilir.

- İstismar türlerine göre öğretmenlerin bilgi düzeyini ve sınıf içi gözlemlerini inceleyen araştırmalar yapılabilir.

- Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istismarı resmi olarak bildirmeme (sözel olarak bildirme) eğitimlerinin altında yatan nedenler araştırılabilir.

- İstismar durumunda veya şüphesinde öğretmenleri resmi olarak bildirim yapmaya teşvik etmek için kademe yükseltme, hizmet puanı ekleme gibi ödüller Öğretmenlik Meslek Kanununa eklenebilir.

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Case Study Method Supported by Educational Films in the Teaching of the Solar System and Beyond Unit

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate whether the case study method supported by educational films in the teaching of the Solar System and Beyond Unit of the 7th grade has an effect on academic achievement and interest level in science subjects. Study group of the research consisted of 43 students who were studying in the 7th grade of secondary school in Şırnak in the fall semester of 2021-2022 academic year. Research was designed according to a quasi-experimental design. The data collection tools used in this research were the Solar System and Beyond Academic Achievement Test, developed by the researchers, and the Science Interest Scale, introduced by Laçin Şimşek and Nuhoğlu (2009). As a result of the study, it was found that the post-test scores of the academic achievement test and interest scale for science subjects of the experimental and control group students differed significantly in favor of the experimental group. In other studies, participants from different age groups can be selected and the effect of the educational film-supported case study method on different variables can be investigated.

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Introduction

In today's world, where globalization is accelerating, technology is transforming education, and access to information is becoming easier, it is of great importance for education systems to respond to current developments and needs (Aşkar, Topçu, Altun, Cırık, & Kandırmaz, 2023). At this point, education systems are being updated rapidly, and teaching programs that are synthesized with a contemporary education approach, aim to develop individuals mentally, socially, emotionally, physically, and morally, and that train individuals equipped with the knowledge and skills appropriate for the needs of the 21st century are being developed (Arslankara & Arslankara, 2024; MoNE, 2024). Similar updates are also needed in science curricula. One of the main reasons for this need is the difficulty encountered in teaching and learning certain science subjects. This is particularly evident when it comes to abstract concepts, as students often struggle to comprehend them. Concretization of abstract concepts is one of the most meaningful components of the science teaching process (Ayvacı & Durmuş, 2016; Gülçiçek & Güneş, 2004; Suprapto, 2020). Especially astronomy units, which are the subject of this study and included in the science course, contain abstract concepts. Astronomy units are accepted by students as one of the science subjects that are difficult to understand and perceive at the conceptual level. In teaching these subjects, learners need to visualize the spatial positions of the celestial bodies, their relative sizes, the distances between them and their geometric shapes (Şensoy & Yıldırım, 2018; Türk, Alemdar & Kalkan, 2012). This is only possible with the use of innovative teaching methods and technologies in the classroom. In these courses, students should actively participate in the process, and the process should be made understandable and remarkable for students (Akbay et al., 2022; Gökmen, 2021, Kiraz, Gökmen, & Çimen, 2024; Özel, Taşdelen, Güven-Yıldırım, & Önder, 2022; Taşdelen & Özel, 2024). Based on this, it is thought that the case study method, which makes students have to deal with real life problems that are problematic to them, includes mystery, and encourages them to actively participate in learning tasks (Bonney, 2015), will be especially effective in teaching astronomy subjects.

The case study method is an intensive and systematic teaching method that creates a student-centered and active learning environment, allows for the in-depth examination of a real event, the establishment of cause-effect relationships, and effective decisions (Cantimer & Şengül, 2022; Heale & Twycross, 2018). The case study method is also defined as the "best practice" by many educators in the education-training process, which enables the development of learners' analytical and critical thinking skills by establishing a relationship between theory and practice (McFarlane, 2015). The method is based on the principle that students examine problems and construct their own views on the basis of problems found in real-life stories with many solutions (Pilato & Ulrich, 2014). The main purpose of this method is for the student to examine the real situation or problems in full detail and make a decision based on the mentioned case study (Ateş Yerköy & Yerköy, 2024; Doğan & Aslan, 2024; Forsgren, Christensen, & Hedemalm, 2014). In this respect, the method provides the opportunity to transfer theoretical knowledge to practice, integrates what is learned with real life, and makes students responsible for their own learning (Caveião et al., 2018; Gallego et al., 2013). Students who experience learning with the case study method develop their thinking and communication skills, students analyze the events in the environment where they occur, approach events from a different perspective, and produce solution suggestions for problems (Ol & Kabapınar, 2021). Therefore, during the learning experience, learners develop skills such as analysis, seeing relationships, creativity, generating options, and future-oriented problem solving (Büchler et al., 2021; Doğan & Aslan, 2024). In addition, since the case study method is a completely student-centered method, it increases interest in the course, develops higher-order thinking skills, encourages students to work collaboratively, ensures active participation of students in the course, and has positive effects on academic achievement (Bonney & Escartin, 2015; Gözütok, 2020). Again, especially in science courses conducted with the case study method, students work together with their peers while searching for a solution to a complex and serious problem that requires skills from daily life, and in this way, they can produce answers to problems, learn concepts and principles, develop ideas, and develop thinking skills (Nkhoma et al., 2016). In this study, case studies are supported by educational films. It is believed that educational films can be used alongside the case study method to help concretize abstract concepts in science education. Educational films are considered highly effective instructional tools, as they allow students to gain experience with topics they are unfamiliar with, facilitate the concretization of abstract concepts, and help learners observe theoretical knowledge in practice (Güven-Yıldırım, Köklükaya, & Selvi, 2015). Films are defined as teaching

materials or resources that address events that have occurred or are likely to occur, appeal to more than one sense organ of students, and create an impressive educational environment (Korkmaz, 2017). Educational films are defined as films with educational content that address educators, educational environments, and stakeholders of these environments in a multifaceted manner (Oruç & Sarıbudak, 2015). When applied in an educational context, educational films can foster the development of critical thinking, a variety of new ideas, and respect for social justice activities inside and outside the classroom (Selman & Testa, 2021; Cromarty, Young, & Elias, 2023). These films provide a general experience even on subjects and events that students have never seen, embody the concepts in the lesson and offer the learners the chance to see the theory in practice (Yılmaz, 2018). For this reason, it is thought that educational films will be suitable for both in-class and extra-curricular learning environments with the support of technology, and will provide great convenience in teaching units such as Astronomy, which are difficult to experience, especially to secondary and primary school students.

The significance of the study

Following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 and the earthquake disaster in our country in 2023, distance education was initiated. As a result of this transition, the digitalization of education and training also began. Despite the reduced impact of the pandemic today, the use of technology-based learning activities in schools continues to increase. This is due to factors such as enabling uninterrupted education beyond school boundaries, facilitating learning processes, and engaging students more effectively than traditional methods. Educational films are also included in these learning technologies. Educational films can be an effective tool in both educational practice and theory, particularly in stimulating students' imagination, which in turn can enhance motivation for learning (Cromarty, Young, & Elias, 2023). However, a review of the literature reveals that there is a limited number of studies focusing on educational films (Bilbokaitė, Bilbokaitė-Skiauterienė, & Marmokaitė, 2022; Güvenir & Güven-Yıldırım, 2023; Kızılcık, 2021; Kızılcık, 2024; Kurtdaş, 2021; Uzun, Güven-Yıldırım, & Önder, 2020; Topal, Güven-Yıldırım, & Önder, 2020). These studies examine the effectiveness of educational films on different variables, especially in science education. Similarly, the case study texts included in the case study method can be easily converted into digital text. Various studies were found in the literature review on the use of the case study method in science teaching (Karaosmanoğlu 2018; Pehlivan & Şahin, 2007; Sancar 2010; Şahin & Çakmak, 2016; Temiz 2010). Furthermore, these studies examine the effectiveness of the case study method in the context of science education. However, a review of the literature revealed no previous studies in which the case study method was supported by the use of educational films. Studies on the subject show that both educational films and the use of case study method in teaching activities increase students' academic achievement, interest, motivation, etc. reveal its contribution to the variables. As a result, the effect of the case study method supported by educational films on the students' interest levels and academic achievement in the Solar System and Beyond Unit of the 7th grade science course was examined with this research. In order to ensure the teaching of the Solar System and Beyond Unit and to enrich the learning activity, while the lesson was taught by applying the case study method, educational films were also shown to the students in accordance with the outcomes. At this point, it is thought that both educational films and case studies will be suitable for both in-class and extra-curricular learning environments with the support of technology. At the same time, it is believed that the case study method supported by educational films will offer significant advantages in teaching units such as Astronomy, which are difficult to experience directly—particularly for primary and secondary school students. Therefore, this study is considered both original and important, and it is expected to contribute meaningfully to the field. With this study, it is aimed to examine the effect of the case study method supported by educational films on the academic achievement and interest levels of the students in the 7th grade science course Solar System and Beyond Unit.

Method

Research design

In this research, quasi-experimental design, one of the quantitative research designs, was used to obtain the data for the purpose of the research. Quasi-experimental designs are explained as the designs in which the experimental and control groups are randomly planned. However, individuals to

be included in the groups in this design cannot be randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. Quasi-experimental designs are defined as designs that include all the characteristics of experimental research, except that participants cannot be randomly assigned to groups (Mertler & Charles, 2011).

Study group

Convenience sampling method was used to determine the study group of this research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The researcher determines a sample group that is convenient and easy to access as the study group in convenient sampling (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). Based on this, research study group consisted of 43 students selected from two branches, studying in the 7th grade of a secondary school in Şırnak Province in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. One of the groups in two branches, which were decided to be equal because they had the same learning experiences in the same school, was determined as the experimental group by drawing lots. Additionally, the pre-test scores showed that the groups were equivalent.

Data collection tools

The data collection tools for this research included the Solar System and Beyond Academic Achievement Test, developed by the researchers, and the Science Interest Scale, introduced to the literature by Laçin Şimşek and Nuhoğlu (2009). Information on the development stages of the achievement test developed by the researchers is summarized below.

Development of the achievement test

During the development of the test, the stages of creating the item pool, seeking expert opinions, conducting the pilot application, and analyzing validity and reliability were followed (Özkan & Yadigaroğlu, 2020). In the process of developing the Solar System and Beyond Unit Achievement Test, first of all, questions were prepared for all the learning outcomes of the unit in the 2018 Science Curriculum. Sample questions of the Ministry of National Education, the textbook of the Ministry of Education, textbooks based on science learning outcomes were used while preparing the questions (MoNE, 2018).

The Solar System and Beyond unit consists of 10 outcomes. To select questions with high item difficulty and discrimination indices, a total of 29 multiple-choice questions were prepared, ensuring that at least two questions were included for each outcome. This was done to ensure content validity. In the next stage of the development of the prepared achievement test, expert opinions were sought. The content validity of the test prepared by three faculty members working in the Science Education Department and a faculty member working in the Physics Education Department, measurement-evaluation by a faculty member working in the Measurement and Evaluation Department in Education. The questions were also reviewed for grammar and clarity by an instructor from the Department of Turkish Education. After receiving feedback from experts, test questions and answer options were reviewed, necessary changes/corrections were made, and an experimental achievement test consisting of 29 questions were prepared. The trial form, prepared based on expert feedback, was administered to 12 eighth-grade students at a public school for the pilot study. The pilot study was used to assess the clarity of the test items and determine the duration of the test administration. Since all the items were found to be understandable by the students, no change was made in the number of questions. The application time of the test was determined as 30 minutes.

In the next stage, 29 items in the trial form were applied to a total of 208 eighth-grade students studying at a public school. After this application, item and test analysis was started and the answers to the questions were evaluated in the SPSS 26 package program. During the analysis of the items, the difficulty (p_j) and discrimination (r_{jx}) indices of each item were calculated. Difficulty level of the test developed as a result of the analysis. Two questions below .29 and five questions above .70 were excluded from the test. Then, item discrimination (r_{jx}) indices of the questions were calculated. Since there was no item with a discrimination index less than .30 in the test, no item was removed from the test. As a result, the test consisted of a total of 22 items with item difficulties ranging from .30 to .69 and discrimination indices ranging from .30 to .64. The difficulty and distinctiveness indices of the items are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Achievement test item analysis

Item number	Pj	rjx	Item number	Pj	rjx
1	.69	.51	16	.75**	.60
2	.53	.45	17	.57	.55
3	.63	.48	18	.60	.64
4	.50	.50	19	.30	.41
5	.29*	.31	20	.29*	.47
6	.70**	.55	21	.46	.57
7	.46	.48	22	.48	.55
8	.59	.55	23	.54	.30
9	.48	.48	24	.64	.63
10	.73**	.63	25	.48	.57
11	.46	.46	26	.65	.61
12	.47	.46	27	.54	.56
13	.71**	.61	28	.71**	.46
14	.60	.45	29	.47	.54
15	.55	.46			

* Items with an item difficulty index of .29 and below
**Items with an item difficulty index of .70 and above

After the item analysis, whether there were a differences between the lower and upper 27% slices was tested with the independent samples t-test. Then, it was seen that all the items in the test were in accordance with the desired criteria and no items were removed from the test. The t-test results of item analysis based on the mean difference of the lower and upper groups are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Item analysis t-test results based on lower and upper group mean difference

Dependent variable	Group	n	M	SS	Sd	t	p
Item 1	Sub group	56	.36	.49	110	7.49	.00
	Upper group	56	.93	.26	83.82	7.49	.00
Item 2	Sub group	56	.29	.46	110	7.81	.00
	Upper group	56	.88	.33	100.80	7.81	.00
Item 3	Sub group	56	.33	.47	110	7.17	.00
	Upper group	56	.88	.33	99.08	7.17	.00
Item 4	Sub group	56	.18	.39	110	7.33	.00
	Upper group	56	.75	.44	108.38	7.33	.00
Item 7	Sub group	56	.16	.37	110	8.05	.00
	Upper group	56	.77	.43	107.93	8.05	.00
Item 8	Sub group	56	.18	.39	110	9.70	.00
	Upper group	56	.86	.35	109.12	9.70	.00
Item 9	Sub group	56	.22	.42	110	7.65	.00
	Upper group	56	.80	.40	109.89	7.65	.00
Item 11	Sub group	56	.18	.39	110	7.01	.00
	Upper group	56	.73	.45	107.76	7.01	.00
Item 12	Sub group	56	.13	.34	110	8.51	.00
	Upper group	56	.75	.44	102.88	8.51	.00
Item 14	Sub group	56	.36	.49	110	6.60	.00
	Upper group	56	.88	.33	97.71	6.60	.00
Item 15	Sub group	56	.24	.43	109	7.20	.00
	Upper group	56	.80	.40	108.21	7.20	.00
Item 17	Sub group	56	.20	.40	110	9.30	.00
	Upper group	56	.88	.33	105.25	9.30	.00
Item 18	Sub group	56	.16	.38	110	10.72	.00
	Upper group	56	.88	.33	108.81	10.72	.00
Item 19	Sub group	56	.05	.23	110	6.65	.00
	Upper group	56	.57	.50	87.76	6.65	.00

Table 2. Item analysis t-test results based on lower and upper group mean difference (Continued)

Dependent variable	Group	n	M	SS	Sd	t	p
Item 21	Sub group	56	.16	.37	110	11.31	.00
	Upper group	56	.89	.31	106.91	11.31	.00
Item 22	Sub group	56	.16	.37	110	10.72	.00
	Upper group	56	.88	.33	108.81	10.72	.00
Item 23	Sub group	56	.38	.50	110	3.80	.00
	Upper group	56	.71	.46	109.48	3.80	.00
Item 24	Sub group	56	.18	.39	110	13.91	.00
	Upper group	56	.98	.13	67.08	13.91	.00
Item 25	Sub group	56	.13	.34	110	9.30	.00
	Upper group	56	.79	.41	105.25	9.30	.00
Item 26	Sub group	56	.27	.45	110	11.46	.00
	Upper group	56	.98	.13	64.76	11.46	.00
Item 27	Sub group	56	.16	.37	110	10.21	.00
	Upper group	56	.88	.33	107.71	10.21	.00
Item 29	Sub group	56	.36	.49	110	10.72	.00
	Upper group	56	.84	.37	108.81	10.72	.00

During the test development process, the K-20 reliability analysis of the final test was started. Findings related to the analyzes performed are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Achievement test analysis results

n	M	SD	Med.	Mod	Average difficulty	Average distinctiveness	KR-20
208	15.85	7.15	17	20	.53	.51	.89

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the average difficulty and discrimination indices of the developed test comply with the criteria determined in the literature. The Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) reliability coefficient was calculated to determine the internal consistency coefficient of the test. The KR-20 coefficient varies between 0 and 1, and as the value approaches 1, the reliability of the test increases. KR-20 coefficient values of .70 and above are interpreted as indicating sufficient internal consistency of the measurement tool (Kuder & Richardson, 1937; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The KR-20 reliability coefficient for the developed test was calculated as .89. The value found shows that the test is a highly reliable test.

The test, whose validity and reliability analyses had been completed, was finally rechecked for content validity to ensure it aligned with the unit outcomes. The achievement test questions were aligned with the outcomes of the relevant unit, resulting in the following specification table, which confirmed the test's consistency with the unit outcomes (Table 4).

Table 4. Table of outcome–question alignment for the 'Solar System and beyond' unit

Learning outcome number	Question number
7.1.1.1.	1, 2 and 3
7.1.1.2	4
7.1.1.3	7,8 and 9
7.1.1.4	11 and 12
7.1.1.5	14 and 15
7.1.1.6	17
7.1.2.1.	18 and 19
7.1.2.2.	21, 22 and 23
7.1.2.3.	24,25 and 26
7.1.2.4.	27 and 29

After the validity and reliability analyzes were completed, an achievement test consisting of 22 questions was obtained (Appendix 1). The highest score that can be taken from the test is 22, the lowest score is 0, and considering the first pilot application, the response time of the test was determined as 25 minutes.

Science interest scale

Another data collection tool used in the study is the Science Interest Scale, which was brought to the literature by Laçin Şimşek and Nuhoğlu (2009). This scale includes 27 Likert type items. Originally developed by Harty and Beall (1984), it is an interest scale that aims to measure children's interest in science. Laçin Şimşek and Nuhoğlu (2009) completed the validity and reliability analyzes during the development of the scale and the KMO value of the scale was calculated as .68. As a result of the factor analysis, it was revealed that there were 6 factors in the scale and the factor loads of the items in these factors were found between .46 and .75. Finally, the researchers used the reliability coefficient calculations of the scale and the reliability value of the scale was calculated as Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient α= 79. In this study, the reliability value of the scale was recalculated by the researchers and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was found as α= .72.

Data collection

This research continued for 4 weeks and 16 lesson hours within the scope of the 7th grade science lesson Solar System and Beyond Unit. Before the application started, the Solar System and Beyond Unit Achievement Test and the Science Interest Scale were applied to the experimental and control groups as a pre-test. Then the application was carried out.

In the experimental group, teaching was carried out in accordance with the learning outcomes, by supporting the case studies selected by the researchers beforehand with the educational films selected by the researchers. In the control group, the learning methods and activities specified in science curriculum were applied in the teaching of the unit. Prior to the application phase of the research, five case studies, selected from current news sources by the researchers to ensure the scope validity of the unit, were reviewed multiple times to assess their suitability for the students and the course content. Questions appropriate to the students' levels were added to the case studies selected by the researchers. The finalized case studies were examined by two faculty members in terms of content validity and by one expert in terms of intelligibility for language and age groups. As a result of the comments from the experts, three of the questions in the case studies were corrected. The case study texts used according to the unit outcomes and the questions asked to the students after these texts are given below (Table 5).

Table 5. Case studies based on unit outcomes

Learning outcome number	Case Studies and Questions to Students
7.1.1.1. 7.1.1.2. 7.1.1.3	Case Study 1: https://tr.euronews.com/next/2017/11/23/uzayin-buyuyen-sorunu-atiklar 1. Which space explorations do you think have contributed to the emergence of space pollution? 2. According to the first solution in the text, what kind of actions should we take to avoid producing too much waste? 3. What kind of different problems do you think space pollution can cause? 4. In your opinion, what kind of technological studies can be done to clean up the garbage existing in space at the moment? 5. Do you think this method is sufficient to eliminate space pollution? What are their shortcomings? What could be added? 6. Does the advancement of technology cause space pollution to increase or decrease? 7. Which of the developed spacecraft do you think is more effective in the formation of this pollution than the others?

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Table 5. Case studies based on unit outcomes (Continued)

Learning outcome number	Case Studies and Questions to Students
7.1.1.4. 7.1.1.5. 7.1.1.6.	Case Study 2: https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/galileonun-teleskobu-400-yasinda,ETomHy6b6EyHB4Cn5rNv7A 1. What do you think the telescope is good for? 2. What contribution do you think the existence of telescopes might have made to space studies? 3. At what stage do you think space studies would be today if Galileo had never invented the telescope? 4. If you were to design a telescope, what kind of telescope would you design? In addition, which celestial objects would you like to observe with your telescope that you have designed? 5. Do you think that only a telescope designed by Galileo, or one similar to it, should be used for space observations?
7.1.1.4. 7.1.1.5. 7.1.1.6.	Case Study 3: https://www.trthaber.com/haber/bilim-teknoloji/dag-teleskobu-erzuruma-ulasti-559881.html 1. In your opinion, what are the differences between the telescope designed by Galileo and the one built in Erzurum? 2. What do you think might be the reason for the telescope built in Erzurum to be built on an area of 3170 attitudes? 3. What contribution do you think such large telescopes make to space studies? 4. If Galileo had not invented the telescope, could we build large observatories like the DAG or space telescopes that work in space? 5. Do you think that the development of science and technology occurs in stages?
7.1.2.1. 7.1.2.2.	Case Study 4: https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/teknoloji/gokyuzundeki-en-parlak-yildizlardan-biri-patlamak-uzere-41430605 1. What is the reason for the explosion of stars? What cycle do you think they have? 2. Do you think the Sun will explode one day? 3. When we read the news, it is seen that the sizes and colors of the stars can be different. What characteristics of stars do you think these differences might be due to? 4. Do you think the explosion event mentioned in the news is a common occurrence only in stars or in other celestial bodies? 5. Based on the explosion of the Betelgeuse Star, what do you think might happen to the Earth during the end of the Sun's life?
7.1.2.3. 7.1.2.4.	Case Study 5: https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-43626858#:~:text=Bilim%20insanlar%C4%B1%2C%20g%C3%BCne%C5%9F%20sistemimizi%20de,Galaksisi%20saniyede%20500%20metre%20geni%C5%9Fliyor. 1. Let's start with this news. Do you think there is a concept bigger than galaxies? 2. Which feature of the Universe do you think shows the convergence of the Milky Way and the Andromeda Galaxy? 3. How do you think the shapes of galaxies are formed? 4. Do you think that all the lights we see in the night sky come from celestial bodies in the Milky Way Galaxy?

In the research process, case studies were also supported by educational films. Before the application, 22 educational films that were thought to provide the content validity of the unit were selected by the researchers. Then films watched several times by the researchers to determine whether they were suitable for the students and the course content. Care was taken to ensure that the educational films selected for the application were both in a way that would meet the unit's outcomes and that they were suitable for the level that the students could understand. Additioanlly, while choosing the films affective, psychomotor, cognitive developments of the participants and the fact that the films were completed in a time that would not because distraction were taken into account. Twenty-two films that

were considered to be suitable for these criteria were then examined by two faculty members for content validity, and by one expert in terms of intelligibility for language and age groups. After the feedback from the experts, it was decided that four educational films were not suitable, and the implementation process continued with eighteen educational films.

In the control group, lessons were carried out with the research inquiry-based teaching foreseen by the curriculum without using the educational film-supported case study method. Similar to the experimental group, the teaching of the same unit was planned to be 4 weeks and 16 lesson hours. Before starting the teaching of the unit, detailed lesson plans were developed, and lessons were carried out by taking into account the activities in the curriculum. During these activities, students were actively involved in the activities and other in-class activities in accordance with the curriculum. The same test and scale were applied to both groups as a post-test and the application process was concluded upon its completion.

Data analysis

The data of this research were analyzed with the SPSS 26.0 package program. Descriptive statistics techniques were used to decide whether the data obtained from the answers given by the students to the test and scale showed normal distribution, and the central deviation and central distribution values of the answers were reported. Independent samples t-test was used for inter-group comparisons. The significance level of the data in the analysis was determined as .05.

Research ethics

Ethical rules and principles were followed during the data collection, planning, analysis, reporting of the research. The study was carried out after obtaining the permission of the ethics committee of GaziUniversity.

Findings

Before analyzing the data of the study, it was aimed to decide on the statistical method to be used in the analysis of the data obtained from the test and scale. In the analysis of the data collected in quantitative studies, parametric or non-parametric tests can be used depending on whether the data provide the normality assumption. The use of parametric tests in the analysis of data is possible if the data set collected within the study shows a normal distribution. Therefore, the normality of the data obtained from the measurement tools used in the studies should be investigated first and one of the parametric or non-parametric tests should be preferred according to the findings (Çepni, 2007; Sim and Wright, 2002). In this study, first of all, normality analysis was performed on the data obtained from the test and scale, which was used as a data collection tool, and the analysis method to be applied to the data set was selected according to the findings. The results of the analysis are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive data on the solar system and beyond unit achievement

Test	Group	N	M	Sd	Med.	Mod	Kurto.	Skew.	Var.
Pre-Test	Experimental	22	8.72	4.86	10.50	11	-1.53	-.23	23.63
	Control	21	8.85	3.94	8.00	7	.34	.35	15.52
Post-Test	Experimental	22	16.23	4.13	17.00	17	1.37	-1.24	17.09
	Control	21	13.80	4.08	13.00	13	-.56	-.18	16.62

Table 6 shows the descriptive data regarding the mean achievement test scores applied to both groups as a pre-test and post-test. The data in the table show that the achievement pre-test mean score (M=8.72) in the experimental group and the mean pre-test achievement score (M=8.85) in the control group are close to each other. It is seen that there is a difference in favor of the experimental group between the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups. When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the mean, median and mode values of the achievement test pre- and post-test scores of the experimental and control group students are close to each other. The fact that these values are close to each other is interpreted as a normal distribution of the data in the literature (Büyüköztürk, Çokluk, & Köklü, 2018). The kurtosis skewness values between +2 and -2 also show that the data are normally distributed (George & Mallery, 2012). As a result of descriptive statistics, it was concluded that the data obtained from the Solar System and Beyond Unit Achievement Test showed a normal distribution. For

this reason, parametric tests were used in the analysis of the data. Before the application, independent samples t-test was applied to the pre-test achievement scores of the Solar System and Beyond Unit Achievement Test in order to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the achievement pre-test mean scores of the students in the experimental and control groups. The data obtained are tabulated and presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Independent samples t-test results of the achievement test pre-test scores

Group	N	M	Sd	t	p
Experimental	22	8.72	4.86	-.096	.92
Control	21	8.85	3.94		

When the data in Table 7 are examined, the students' mean scores on the Solar System and Beyond Unit Achievement Test before the application were calculated as M=8.72 in the experimental group and M=8.85 in the control group. There was no statistically significant difference between the pre-test achievement scores of the groups (t=-.096, p > .05).

The fact that there is no significant difference between the achievement scores of the groups before the application process supports the evaluation of the effectiveness of the educational film-supported case study method on students' academic achievement. Before the application, it was determined that the pre-test mean scores of the Solar System and Beyond Unit Achievement Test did not show a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, and the independent samples t-test was applied to the post-test scores of the groups. Data obtained are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Independent samples t-test results of the achievement test post-test scores

Group	N	M	Sd	t	p
Experimental	22	16.23	4.13	2.08	.04
Control	21	13.80	4.08		

When the data in Table 8 were examined, it was found that the Solar System and Beyond Unit Achievement Test post-test mean score of the experimental group students was M=16.23, and the Solar System and Beyond Unit Achievement Test post-test mean score of the control group students was M=13.80. It was determined that there was a statistically significant. difference in favor of the experimental group between the post-test mean scores of the students in the experimental and control groups (t=2.08, p < .05). Effect size calculations were made for the result obtained and it was seen that the effect size "d value" was 0.60. Researchers state that this effect size value is "medium" (Cohen, 1988).

In the research, normality analyzes were conducted to determine the statistical method to be applied to the quantitative data obtained from the Science Interest Scale. For this reason, the data taken from the relevant scale were analyzed and it was examined whether the data showed a normal distribution. The obtained results are given in Table 9.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics for the interest scale in science subjects

Test	Group	N	M	Sd	Med.	Mod	Kurto.	Skew.	Var.
Pre-Test	Experimental	22	104.77	12.59	108.50	109	-.51	-.48	158.66
	Control	21	104.33	12.15	106	106	.44	-.03	147.63
Post-Test	Experimental	22	116.04	11.26	117.50	116	.08	-.79	126.80
	Control	21	108	10.55	109	109	.69	-.02	111.40

When the data in the table were examined, it was determined that the students in the experimental group had an interest in science pre-test score average of M=104.77, and the students in the control group had an interest in science pre-test score average of M=104.33. It was determined that the mean scores of the scale were close for both groups. When the post-test mean scores of the groups are examined, it is seen that the interest scale mean score of the experimental group students (M=116.04) is higher than the interest scale post-test mean score of the control group students (M=108). When the table is examined, it is seen that the average, median and mode values of the students in both the

experimental and the experimental group and the control group of the Science Interest Scale pre- and post-test scores are close to each other. The fact that the median, mode and mean values for the Science Interest Scale are close to each other is interpreted as a normal distribution in the literature (Büyüköztürk, Çokluk, & Köklü, 2018). In addition, the fact that the kurtosis skewness values in the table are in the range of +2 and -2 shows that the data are normally distributed (George & Mallery, 2012). As a result of descriptive statistics, it was concluded that the data obtained from Science Interest Scale showed a normal distribution. For this reason, parametric tests were used in the analysis of the data. The independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the groups' pre-test scores on the Science Interest Scale. The data obtained are given Table 10.

Table 10. Independent samples t-test results on the pre-test scores of the science interest scale

Group	n	M	Sd	t	p
Experimental	22	104.77	12.59	.12	.91
Control	21	104.33	12.15		

According to the data in Table 10, the pre-test means scores of the students on the Science Interest Scale are M=104.77 for the students in the experimental group and M=104.33 for the students in the control group. When the data in the table are examined, there is no statistically significant difference between the students in the experimental and control groups in the pre-test scores of the Science Interest Scale (t= ,12, p > .05).

Independent samples t-test was applied for the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups and the findings are given in Table 11.

Table 11. Independent samples t-test results on the post-test scores of the science interest scale

Group	n	M	Sd	t	p
Experimental	22	116.04	11.26	2.42	.02
Control	21	108.00	10.55		

According to the data seen in Table 11, the students' average scores on the Science Interest Scale post-test mean scores are M=116.04 for the students in the experimental group and M=108 for the students in the control group. When the data in the table are examined, there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores of the Science Interest Scale in favor of the experimental group (t=2.42, p < .05). Effect size calculations were made for the result obtained and it was seen that the effect size "d value" was 0.74. Researchers state that this effect size value is "medium" (Cohen, 1988).

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

As a result of this research, it was concluded that the educational film-supported example method positively affected the academic achievement of the students. This situation was attributed by the researchers to the fact that the educational films attracted the attention of the students to the lesson and the case study method ensured the active participation of the students in the lesson. In addition, it is thought that this situation is due to the fact that the educational films provide students with the opportunity to read the information visually and evaluate it critically (Bilbokaitė, Bilbokaitė-Skiauterienė, & Marmokaitė, 2022). Furthermore, Önen Öztürk (2017) stated that with the use of educational films in the teaching process, students understand scientific terms better and can be associated more with daily life, the teaching process becomes easier, and students gain questioning skills. This situation can be considered as the reason for the increase in the academic achievement of the students. The researchers also recommend that educators incorporate educational films, multimedia, sound design, music, and screen theory into the curriculum to nurture the imagination, particularly of students with learning difficulties (Stokes, 2017). Educational films, in particular, can help students develop their imaginations in transformative ways, generate new ideas and possibilities, and ultimately achieve greater success in their classes (Kushnir, 2022; Seligman et al., 2013). Similarly, learning environments designed with the case study method present students with problem situations that can be encountered in real life and have more than one solution, and then students develop ideas for these situations and produce solutions (Davis, 2009; Pilato & Ulrich, 2014). Students who have the

opportunity to learn on their own actively participate in the lesson more in learning environments where the case study method is used (Candaş, Kıryak, & Suat, 2021; Çiftçi & Topçu, 2021; Escartín et al., 2015), and this situation is reflected positively in academic achievement (Anderson & Baker, 1999; Bonney, 2015; Demircioğlu & Selçuk, 2018). There is no other study in the literature where educational films and case study methods are used together in a way that supports each other. However, it is possible to reach the results of the studies showing that educational films and case study methods affect learning effectiveness positively both alone and when combined with different methods, techniques, strategies or materials. The literature review reveals that the results of the studies on the subject are parallel to the results obtained from this research.

The use of films in learning environments offers numerous educational benefits, such as capturing students' attention, enhancing the retention of learned information, facilitating the understanding of complex concepts, and increasing students' motivation and sensitivity toward the subject matter (Duchastel, Fleury, & Provost, 1988; Martins, 1990). This is because films can expose students to contemporary issues and help them gain a deeper understanding of problematic situations (Smieszek, 2019). Moreover, films encourage students to engage in self-directed learning, a process that positively influences both their overall learning experience and the effectiveness of their learning (Bilbokaitė, Bilbokaitė-Skiauterienė, & Marmokaitė, 2022). Öztaş (2008) also states that as a result of his research, educational films improve students' thinking skills and success. Similarly, as a result of other studies conducted in science education, it is revealed that educational films increase the academic achievement of students (Güvenir & Güven-Yıldırım, 2023; Uzun, 2019; Uzun, Güven-Yıldırım, & Önder, 2020; Topal, Güven-Yıldırım & Önder, 2020). It is thought that the use of the case study method in educational activities increases academic achievement, as in educational films. Because the higher-order thinking skills of the students who receive education with the case study teaching method develop and their success increases as they actively participate in the course (Yadav, Prabhu, & Chandy, 2007). In the study conducted by Gençoğlan (2017), the effect of argumentation-supported case study teaching method on students' academic achievement and scientific process skills in Acids and Bases in the 8th grade science course of middle school was investigated. At the end of the study, an increase was observed in the students' academic achievement. Moreover, in another study conducted by Demir (2017), it was stated that science subjects were perceived as difficult by students due to reasons such as being abstract and not being able to relate them to daily life. As a result of the study in which the researcher taught the course with the case study method, an increase in the students' academic achievement was observed. İbrahimoğlu (2010) explains the positive effect of the case study method on students' academic achievement as the method encourages students to think critically and the method positively affects students' attitudes towards the course. Jones (1997) also states that students like to teach using the case-based learning method. In his study, the researcher formed student groups in order to enable students to perceive the science lesson as a part of their lives, and approximately 200 students participated in the study. At the end of the study, the students stated that they liked this activity and the roles they assumed and stated that they found this educational activity and method, which made the science lesson consistent with their own lives, enjoyable. He also stated that this method can be applied to other science courses as well. Lincoln (2006) stated that the case study method was loved by the students, student participation in his work was at high levels throughout the application process, and this situation was very effective in increasing the academic achievement of the students. This result shows parallelism with the results of other studies that show that the case study method increases course success (Çakır, Berberoğlu, & Alpaslan, 2001; Field, 2003; Gabel, 1999; Kesner, Hofstein, & Ben-Zvi, 1997).

With the research, it was aimed to investigate the effect of the educational film-supported case study method on the level of interest in science subjects. For this purpose, the Science Interest Scale was applied to the control and experimental groups as a pre-test before the application, and it was determined that there was no significant difference between the groups' pre-test mean scores. Thereupon, the education and training activity was completed as planned. Afterwards, the Science Interest Scale was applied to the experimental and control groups again as a post-test, and it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the groups in favor of the experimental group. From this point of view, it was concluded that the educational film-supported case study method positively affected students' interest in science subjects.

When the relevant literature is examined, it has been determined that educational films are only few study examining the level of interest of students in science subjects (Laprise & Winrich, 2010; Sen, 2022; Uzun, Güven-Yıldırım, & Önder, 2020; Wyss, Heulskamp, & 2012). As a result of one of these research conducted by Uzun, Güven-Yıldırım and Önder (2020), it was concluded that educational films positively affect students' interest levels in science subjects, similar to the result obtained from this study. Apart from this study, some studies investigating the effects of educational films on motivation and interest towards the lesson were encountered. In the study by Laprice and Winrich (2010), science fiction films were used in science courses as a pedagogical tool to motivate student interest in science. At the end of the study, similar to the findings obtained from this study, the students stated that science fiction films increased their interest in science. For example, in another study, Topal, Güven Yıldırım and Önder (2019) aimed to reveal the opinions of pre-service teachers about the use of educational films in science lessons. The results obtained from the study showed that pre-service teachers stated that educational films increase the interest in the lesson, facilitate learning the subject, concretize the subject and provide permanent learning. It is also stated by researchers that educational films should be used to align the education system with students' interests, as appropriately prepared and selected films offer stories, perspectives, and visuals that help shape students' ideas and worldviews. Through films, students not only learn but also discover new hobbies, acquire new knowledge and skills, and develop a deeper interest in the field of film (Bilbokaitė, Bilbokaitė-Skiauterienė, & Marmokaitė, 2022). When the literature on the case study method used in this study was reviewed, no other research was found that specifically examined the effect of the case study method on students' interest in science subjects. However, it has been determined that there are studies investigating the effect of the method on the students' interest, attitudes and motivations. As a result of his research, Çolak (2017) states that students' attitudes towards the case study method are positive and points out that this situation may have an effect on the problem solving skills of the case study method. In another study, Yalçınkaya (2010) determined that the case study method created a significant difference in students' motivations and attitudes towards the lesson. Furthermore, according to the research results of Tarkın (2014), the case study method is an effective method in increasing students' attitudes towards course subjects, their motivation and self-efficacy beliefs.

The research focused on students' achievement levels and their interests in science subjects. Teachers' knowledge and experience in these subjects is important in order to apply both the case study method and educational films in science lessons. With other studies to be done, teachers' competencies in case management and educational films can be examined. Within the scope of this research, no comparison was made according to the gender of the participants. In the light of these findings, the effect of educational film-supported case study method on academic achievement and interest levels in science subjects can be investigated for different units/subjects in science with future research. In other studies, the application process can be repeated by choosing participants from different age groups, the effect of the educational film-supported case study method on different variables can be investigated, the effects of the case study method supported with different learning objects on different variables can be investigated.

Limitations

The educational films used in this study were chosen in small numbers and for a short time due to the limitation of the course hours. In different studies to be conducted, the duration of educational films can be increased.

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Appendices

7.SINIF GÜNEŞ SİSTEMİ VE ÖTESİ UNITESI AKADEMIK BAŞARI TESTI

Soru1) Yakın geçmişe kadar insansız, tek kullanımlık ve manevra kabiliyetleri kısıtlı olarak bildiğimiz, ancak günümüzde insanlı, çok kez kullanılabilen ve gelişmiş manevra kabiliyetleri yapabilen oldukça hızlı uzay aracı hangisidir?

a.) Yapay Uydu
b.) Uzay Sondası
c.) Roket
d.) Uzay Istasyonu

Soru2) Bazı teknolojik buluşlar veya icatlar Uzay teknolojilerinin gelişimi ile ortaya çıkmıştır. Aşağıdakilerin hangisi Uzay teknolojilerinin gelişimiyle beraber icat edilip hayatımıza giren teknolojik ürünlerden değildir?

a.) Hassas Termometreler
b.) MR Cihazı
c.) GPS Sistemleri
d.) Internet

Soru3) Dünya'mızın yörüngesinde bulunan Yapay uydular, gezegenimizdeki haberleşme, iletişim, hava durumu tahmini, televizyon yayınları, askeri gözlem vb. amaçlarla kullanılmaktadır. Ülkemizin Dünya yörüngesinde bulunan hangi uydusu haberleşme, iletişim ve televizyon yayını gibi amaçlarla kullanılmaktadır?

a.) GÖKTÜRK 2
b.) TÜRKSAT 4B
c.) RASAT
d.) BILSAT

Soru4) Uzay kirliliğinin sebeplerinden bazıları; uzaya gönderilen araçların kullanım sürelerinin dolması, kullanım süresi dolan araçların meteorlarla veya birbirleri ile çarpışarak parçalanmaları, uzay istasyonlarından bırakılan çöplerdir. Uzay kirliliği son 40-50 yıldır ortaya çıkmış bir sorundur. Dünya dışındaki ortamda kullanımını yitirmiş tüm insan yapımı nesneler Uzay kirliliğine neden olur. Uzay kirliliği sorunu bu hızda büyümeye devam ederse ve önlemi alınmazsa 20-30 yıl içerisinde Uzay araştırmaları açısından çok büyük bir sorun olacaktır. Bu metindeki bilgiler içerisinde aşağıdaki sorularından hangisinin cevabı yoktur?

a.) Uzay kirliliğinin gelecekte ortaya çıkaracağı sorunlar nelerdir?
b.) Uzay kirliliğinin önlenmesi için alınacak tedbirler nelerdir?
c.) Uzay kirliliği sorunu ne zaman ortaya çıkmıştır?
d.) Uzay kirliliğinin nedenleri nedir?

Soru5) Teleskopun keşfedilmesi ve teleskobun gök cisimlerini incelemek için kullanılmaya başlamasından sonra Uzay araştırmaları hız kazanmış ve çok hızlı bir şekilde gelişme göstermiştir. Bu bilgiler doğrultusunda aşağıdaki ifadelerden hangisine ulaşılabilir?

a.) Teleskop Uzay araştırmaları için keşfedilmiş bir araçtır.

b.) Teknolojik gelişmeler Uzay araştırmalarının daha hızlı gelişmesine katkı sunmaktadır.

c.) Teleskop Uzay araştırmalarında kullanılan tek araçtır.

d.) Uzay araştırmaları her zaman çok hızlı gelişim göstermiştir.

Soru6) Uzay araçlarının yüksek hızlar ile Atmosfere giriş ve çıkış yaparken yanıp parçalanmaması için dış kaplamalarının dayanıklı malzemelerden üretilmesi gerekmektedir. Bu amaçla üretilen ve şimdilerde günlük yaşamımızda da sıklıkla kullandığımız ürün hangisidir?

a.) MR Cihazı

b.) Teflon

c.) Hassas Termometre

d.) GPS

Soru7) Uzay araştırmaları ile teknoloji arasındaki ilişki aşağıdakilerin hangisinde doğru bir şekilde ifade edilmiştir?

a.) Uzay araştırmaları olmazsa teknolojik gelişim gerçekleşemez.

b.) Teknoloji olmazsa Uzay araştırmaları alanında çalışma yapılamaz.

c.) Teknolojik gelişmeler Uzay araştırmalarından bağımsız gerçekleşir. Ancak Uzay araştırmalarını olumlu yönde etkiler.

d.) Her ikisi de birbirini etkilemektedir. Uzay araştırmaları ve teknolojinin gelişimi birbirine bağımlı olarak gerçekleşir.

Soru8) Aşağıdakilerden hangisi teleskop çeşitlerinden değildir?

a.) Aynalı Teleskop

b.) Radyo Teleskop

c.) Işık Teleskop

d.) Mercekli Teleskop

Soru9) Teleskopun çalışma mantığı aşağıdakilerden hangisi gibidir?

a.) Teleskop yakında bulunan cisimleri küçülterek cisimleri daha uzaktaymış gibi görmemizi sağlar.

b.) Teleskop yakındaki cismi olduğu gibi görmemizi sağlar.

c.) Teleskop uzaktaki cismi olduğu gibi görmemizi sağlar.

d.) Teleskop uzaktaki cisimlerin

Soru10) Teleskoplar genellikle yeryüzünden gökyüzünü incelemek amacıyla kullanılır. Ancak bazı teleskoplar Dünya'nın yörüngesine oturtularak daha net bir gözlem yapmak amacıyla kullanılır. 1990 yılında Dünya yörüngesine yerleşerek görevine başlayan ve adını ünlü bir bilim insanından alan bu teleskobun adı nedir?

a.) Hubble Uzay Teleskobu
b.) Newton Uzay Teleskobu
c.) Einstein Uzay Teleskobu
d.) Galileo Uzay Teleskobu

Soru11) Farklı özelliklere sahip teleskop çeşitleri vardır. Bu teleskopların her biri farklı yöntemlerle gözlemler yaparak Uzay araştırmalarına katkı sunarlar. Aşağıdakilerden hangisi teleskopların Uzay araştırmalarına sağladığı faydalardan değildir?

a.) Yeni gök cisimlerinin keşfedilmesini sağlarlar.
b.) Gök cisimlerinin hareketleri hakkında bilgi edinmemizi sağlarlar.
c.) Evren hakkında daha detaylı bilgilere sahip olmamızı sağlarlar.
d.) Kara delikleri görüntüleyerek haklarında bilgi edinmemizi sağlarlar.

Soru12) Aşağıdaki seçenekte verilen malzemelerden hangisi basit bir teleskop modeli içerisinde kullanılabilecek malzemelerdendir?

a.) Metal Levha
b.) Büyüteç
c.) Buzlu Cam
d.) Cam

Soru13) Uzayda gaz atomları ve toz parçacıkları belirli yerlerde yoğunlaşırlar. Yoğunlaşan bu yapılar Yıldızların oluşum sürecini başlatan yerlerdir. Uzaydaki bu yapıların adı nedir?

a.) Asteroit Kuşağı
b.) Yörünge
c.) Bulutsu (Nebula)
d.) Kara Delik

Soru14) İnsanlar nasıl doğar, yaşar ve ölürse Yıldızlar da doğarlar ve belirli bir süre sonra ölürler. Zamanla Yıldızların yapısında değişiklikler meydana gelebilir. Aşağıdakilerden hangisi Yıldızların oluşturabileceği bir yapı değildir?

a.) Kırmızı Dev
b.) Siyah Cüce
c.) Kara Delik
d.) Beyaz Dev

Soru15) Aşağıdakilerden hangisi Yıldızların özelliklerinden değildir?

a.) Doğal ısı ve ışık kaynağıdırlar.
b.) Mavi renkli Yıldızlar daha soğukturlar.
c.) Bazıları tek başına gözlemlenebilirken bazıları takım halinde gözlemlenebilirler.
d.) Dünya'dan bakıldığında ışıkları titreşimli bir görüntüye sahiptir

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Soru 16) Aşağıdakilerden hangisi bizim Yıldızımız olan Güneş'in özelliklerinden değildir?

    a.) Orta büyüklüktedir.

    b.) Sarı renklidir.

    c.) Ömrünü tamamladığında Kara delik oluşturabilir.

    d.) Yüzey sıcaklığı 5.500 C derece civarındadır.

Soru 17) Son dönemde adını sıkça duyduğumuz ve Orion (Avcı) takımyıldızı içerisinde yer aran Betelgeuse yıldızı bir Süper Dev yıldızdır. Yapılan gözlemler sonucunda Yıldızın enerjisini yavaş yavaş kaybettiği tespit edildi. Bu yıldız ömrünü tamamladığında aşağıdakilerden hangisini oluşturabilir?

    a.) Kızıl Dev

    b.) Gezegenimsi Bulutsu

    c.) Siyah Cüce

    d.) Kara Delik

Soru 18) Milyonlarca Yıldız, Gezegen, uydu, gaz bulutu vb. yapıları içerisinde barındıran sistemlere ne ad verilir?

    a.) Bulutsu (Nebula)

    b.) Gökada (Galaksi)

    c.) Kara Delik

    d.) Gezegenimsi Bulutsu

Soru 19) Aşağıdakilerden hangisi Gökada (Galaksi) çeşitlerinden değildir?

    a.) Sarmal Galaksi

    b.) Eliptik Galaksi

    c.) Dağınık Galaksi

    d.) Düzenli Galaksi

Soru 20) Dünya'nın içerisinde bulunduğu Samanyolu galaksisi sarmal yapıda bir galaksidir. Samanyolu uzayda çok yavaş hareket etmektedir. Yine sarmal yapıda olan ve Galaksimize en yakın olan diğer galaksinin adı nedir?

    a.) Anten

    b.) Siyah Göz

    c.) Andromeda

    d.) Cüce Karina

Soru 21) İçerisinde Galaksileri, yıldızların, meteorların, kuyruklu yıldızların ve Dünya'nın da bulunduğu yapıya ne ad verilir?

    a.) Evren

    b.) Uzay

    c.) Kara Delik

    d.) Bulutsu

Soru 22) Evren ile ilgili aşağıdakilerden hangisi doğrudur?

    a.) Sürekli genişleyecek şekilde hareket halindedir.

    b.) Boşluktan oluşmaktadır.

    c.) Büyük ve hareketsizdir.

    d.) Sürekli daralacak şekilde hareket halindedir.

Examining the Relationship Between Teachers' Professional Commitment, Inclusive Competence and the Social Acceptance of Students with Special Needs[1]

Mehmet YAVUZ[2]

Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between teachers' professional commitment, inclusive competence, and the social acceptance of students with special needs. The correlational survey model was used as a research model. According to the study results, while there were no significant differences in teachers' professional commitment according to gender and colleague support, significant differences were found in favour of those with more years of service and those who received support from administrators. While significant differences were found in favour of female teachers and those who received support from administrators in terms of inclusive practice efficacy, no significant differences were found in terms of support inclusion students, significant differences were found in favour of female teachers and those who received support from colleagues in the gender variable, while no significant differences were found in the variables of year of service and level of support from administrators. In addition, positive relationships were found between professional commitment, inclusive practice efficacy and inclusion student acceptance.

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Introduction

Children with special needs need to be able to fulfill their daily life skills in order to adapt to society and live as independent and productive individuals within it (Cavkaytar, 2011). Children with special needs can adapt to society to the extent that they can fulfill their daily living skills. In order for them to fulfill their daily life skills and adapt to society, they need to receive education in well-organized educational environments (Şahbaz & Kalay, 2010). One of the educational environments where children with special needs receive education is inclusive environments (Renzaglia, Karvonen, Drasgow, & Stoxen, 2003; Şahbaz & Kalay, 2010). Inclusion is a multidimensional practice that encourages collaboration among children with special needs, typically developing children, families, teachers, school administrators, staff, and all members of the community (Cologan, 2013). The concept of inclusion is a philosophy that encompasses and values the school, the neighborhood, the society in general, and everyone regardless of their differences. In this practice, all physical and necessary educational services are provided for the education of all children (Renzaglia, Karvonen, Drasgow, & Stoxen, 2003).

One of the most important factors that ensure the success of inclusive education is teachers' belief in the benefits of inclusive (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). If teachers believe in the benefits of inclusion, they will make more effort for the success of their students (Sucuoğlu & Kargın, 2006). When they make more effort for their students, they will raise more successful students who adapt to society. For this reason, teachers working with inclusive students should have certain characteristics. Some of these characteristics are professional commitment (Green, 2011), inclusive practice efficacy (Ismailos, Gallagher, Bennett, & Li, 2019), and acceptance of children/students with special needs (Mouchritsa, Romero, Garay, & Kazanopoulos, 2022).

Professional Commitment, Inclusive Competence, and the Social Acceptance of Students with Special Needs

Professional commitment is an individual's dedication to their profession and their feeling of responsibility for fulfilling the requirements of their profession (Klein, Molloy& Brinsfield, 2012). Professionally committed individuals believe in their careers and strive to improve themselves in order to perform their professional duties effectively. Professional commitment is a desired characteristic of teachers because high professional commitment levels contribute to a more qualified education (Celep, 2014). Teachers with low levels of professional commitment fail and may experience burnout (Goulet & Singh, 2002). In addition, teachers with high levels of professional commitment have high levels of life and professional satisfaction, are proud of their profession, and make more effort to improve themselves (Ünal, 2015).

Another variable that increases success in inclusive settings is the perception of inclusive practice efficacy (Sharma, Loreman & Forlin, 2012). Teachers' perception of effectiveness in inclusive implementation also affects their attitudes towards inclusion (Weisel & Dror, 2006). A teacher's efficacy belief is his/her judgment of his/her abilities to engage even difficult students or students who are not motivated to participate in the lesson and to provide students with learning outcomes appropriate to educational goals (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers' perceptions of professional efficacy significantly influence their behaviors and overall professional success. Those with a high sense of efficacy tend to be more successful in the classroom. When teachers perceive themselves as professionally effective, they demonstrate greater commitment to their profession, show increased interest in their work, and invest more effort in achieving the goals of the school (Yavuz, 2017). In addition, teachers with a high perception of efficacy spend more effort for the success of their students, always support their students, are more cheerful, make their students freer, and strive to raise more qualified students (Almog & Shechtman, 2007).

The attitudes of teachers working in inclusive settings toward inclusion and students with special needs are important (Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008). Teachers' acceptance of students in inclusive settings contributes significantly to the success of inclusive education. As a concept, social acceptance is defined as the positive attitudes of individuals with normal development towards individuals in need of special education and not seeing individuals in need of special education as different people (Özyürek, 2016). When the literature is examined, it is seen that teachers have negative attitudes towards inclusion

(Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Negative attitudes toward inclusion naturally lead to lower levels of acceptance of students in inclusive settings. The reasons for these negative attitudes include students' social skills, learning, and behavioral problems. Even if their teachers accept them, their peers and other teachers may not accept them socially (Sucuoğlu & Kargın, 2006). Students who are not accepted in inclusive environments do not like school and fail in their lessons (Snell & Janney, 2000).

When we look at the literature, we come across various studies examining teachers' professional commitment levels (Collie, Shapka & Perry, 2011; Green, 2011; Sakalli Demirok, 2018; Özkan Hıdıroğlu, 2021). In addition, there are various studies measuring teachers' inclusive competence levels (Kazak, 2022). In addition, various studies examine teachers' social acceptance levels (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014; Mouchritsa, Romero, Garay & Kazanopoulos, 2022; Saloviita, 2020).

When the literature is examined, there is no research examining the relationship between professional commitment, integration practice competence and the social acceptance levels of teachers working in integration settings. This research is thought to contribute to literature in this respect. Furthermore, if the variables that affect teachers' professional commitment, the efficacy of inclusive practices, and the social acceptance levels of inclusive students are identified, and solutions are developed for these variables, teachers will be able to fulfill their professional roles more effectively. In this case, teachers will be better able to support their students. This research is thought to contribute to literature in this respect. For this reason, this study aims to examine the relationship between teachers' professional commitment, inclusion competencies and the social acceptance of students with special needs. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

- Do teachers' professional commitment, inclusion competencies, and the social acceptance levels of students with special needs differ significantly based on gender, support from colleagues, support from administrators, and years of service?
- Is there a relationship between teachers' professional commitment, inclusion competencies and the social acceptance levels of students with special needs?

Method

This section describes the study model, participants, data collection instruments, data collection processes, and data analyses.

Study Model

In this study, the correlational survey model was used as a research model to determine the existence and/or degree of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2012).

The dependent variables of this study are teachers' professional commitment, integration competence and the social acceptance levels of students with special needs. Independent variables are gender, level of support from colleagues, years of service and level of support from administrators, integration competence and the social acceptance levels of students with special needs.

Participants

Table 1. The participants' demographic characteristics

Gender	n	%	Receiving support from colleagues	n	%
Male	96	44.7	Yes	174	80.9
Female	119	55.3	No	41	19.1
Support from administrator	n	%	Year of Service	n	%
Yes	160	74,4	1-10 years	38	17.7
No	55	25,6	Between 11-20 years	88	40.9
			21 years and above	89	41.4

As seen in Table 1, 96 (44.7%) of the teachers were male (44.7%), 119 (55.3%) were female (119.3%), 174 (80.9%) received support from their colleagues and 41 (19.1%) did not receive support

from their colleagues. In addition, 160 (74.4%) of the teachers receive support from administrators and 55 (25.6%) do not receive support from administrators.

Instruments

Demographic Information Form

The researcher's Demographic Information Form included questions regarding gender, support from administrators and colleagues, years of service, and support from the administrator.

Professional Commitment Scale

The Professional Commitment Scale developed by Ergen (2009) consists of a total of 14 items and three sub-dimensions: "Professional Pleasure", "Social Gain" and "Professional Career". The five-point Likert-type scale is scored as Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Most of the time (4), Always (5). 386 primary school teachers participated in the scale development phase. The factor loadings of the scale items ranged between .53 and .84. The contribution of the factors to the total variance was 59.93%. In the internal consistency analysis of the scale, Cronbach (α) coefficient was determined as .92.

Competency Scale for Inclusive Practices of Schools (CSIPS)

Developed by Yazıcıoğlu and Sümer-Dodur (2021), the CSIPS consists of a total of 25 items and 4 sub-dimensions: "School Guidance Services (SGS)", "Support Education Room Services (SERS)", "Environmental Educational Arrangement (EEA)", and "Teacher Knowledge Level (TKL)". The scale is scored as "Never", "Rarely", "Undecided", "Usually" and "Always". The scale was administered to a total of 582 teachers during the development phase. Cronbach's Alpha reliability (internal consistency) coefficient of the scale was found to be .95. The reliability coefficients of the factors were found to vary between .87 and .94.

Teacher Social Acceptance Scale for Individuals with Special Needs (TSASISN)

Developed by Aktan (2021), the TSASISN consists of 31 items and two sub-dimensions, namely "Teacher social acceptance behaviors (TSAB)" and "Developing social acceptance competencies (DSAC)". The scale is organized as a five-point Likert scale and is scored as "never (1)", "rarely (2)", "quite often (3)", "mostly (4)" and "always (5)". The Cronbach Alpha reliability level for the overall scale was calculated as .94, for the TSAB sub-dimension as .94, and for the DSAC sub-dimension as .92. Regarding the convergent validity of the scale, the correlation values between the scale and its sub-dimensions ranged between .46 and .87, and a significant positive relationship (p=<0.01) was observed between the overall scale and the sub-dimensions.

Data Collection

The research data were collected during the 2022-2023 academic year. First of all, permissions were obtained from the ethics committee and Edirne Directorate of National Education for the collection of research data. Subsequently, schools were visited, teachers were interviewed face-to-face, and the purpose of the study was explained to them. The scales were given to teachers who volunteered to participate in the study and explained how to fill them out. As a result of the examinations, 45 scales were found to be incorrectly or incompletely filled and were excluded from the evaluation. The approval of the ethics committee of the research was obtained from T.C. Trakya University Rectorate Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee with the letter numbered E-29563864-050.04.04.04-232417 and dated 28.03.2022.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed with SPSS 24 program. The normality test was first applied to the data. After the normality test, the skewness and kurtosis values of the data were examined. It was observed that the skewness value of the Professional Commitment Scale was 2.35 and the kurtosis value was 4.18, the skewness value of the TSASISN was 2.43 and the kurtosis value was 3.10, and the skewness value of the CSIPS for was 3.01 and the kurtosis value was 3.46. According to Bachman (2004), skewness and kurtosis values between -2 and +2 assume a normal distribution of the data. For this reason, Mann Whitney U Test, Kruskal Wallis Test and Pearson Correlation Coefficients test were applied, assuming that the data of this research did not show normal distribution.

Results

Table 2 shows that the professional commitment levels of the teachers showed no significant differences in Professional Pleasure (U = 5623.000, p>.05), Social Gain (U = 5200.000, p>.05), and Professional Career (U = 4705.500, p>.05), Professional Commitment main score sub-dimensions (U = 5625.000, p>.05) in terms of gender variable.

Table 2. The Mann-Whitney U test results for professional commitment based on the gender variable

Variable	Variable	N	Rank average	Rank Total	U-Value	p
Professional Commitment	Male	96	108.91	10455.00	5625.000	.848
	Female	119	107.27	12765.00		
Professional Pleasure	Male	96	107.08	10279.50	5623.50	.839
	Female	119	108.74	12940.50		
Social Gain	Male	96	102.67	9856.00	5200.000	.257
	Female	119	112.30	13364.00		
Professional Career	Male	96	108.48	11374.50	4705.500	.235
	Female	119	109.54	11845.50		

Table 3 reports no significant differences in the sub-dimensions of teachers' professional commitment levels in terms of receiving support from colleagues, professional commitment scale main score (U = 3427.500, p>.05), Professional Pleasure (U = 3541.000, p>.05), Social Gain (U = 3350.500, p>.05), and Professional Career (U = 3557.000, p>.05).

Table 3. The Mann-Whitney U test results according to the variables of professional commitment and support from colleagues

	Variable	N	Rank average (RA)	Rank Total	U-Value	p
Professional Commitment	Yes	174	107.20	18652.50	3427.500	.697
	No	41	111.40	4567.50		
Professional Pleasure	Yes	174	107.85	18766.00	3541.000	.940
	No	41	108.63	4454.00		
Social Gain	Yes	174	106.76	18575.50	3350.500	.544
	No	41	113.28	4644.50		
Professional Career	Yes	174	107.94	18782.00	3557.000	.978
	No	41	108.24	4438.00		

Table 4 shows significant differences in teachers' professional commitment levels based on the variable of years of service, both in the overall score of the Professional Commitment Scale (x^2= 8.909, p<.05), and in the Social Gain sub-dimension (x^2= 10.709, p<.05). According to the results of the Binary Mann-Whitney U Test, significant differences were detected in the leading score of the professional commitment scale and the Social Gain sub-dimension between those who worked between 1-10 years and those between 11-20 years, in favor of those between 11-20 working years. No significant differences were detected in the Professional Pleasure (x^2= 5.215, p>.05) and Professional Career (x^2= 3.790, p>.05) sub-dimensions.

Table 4. The Kruskal-Wallis test results for professional commitment based on the variable of years of service

	Variable	N	Rank Average	SD	x²	P	Significant Difference
Professional Commitment	1-10 years	38	132.07	2	8.909	.002	2 high between 1-2
	Between 11-20 years	88	96.22				
	21 years and above	89	109.38				
Professional Pleasure	1-10 years	38	122.59	2	5.215	.074	
	Between 11-20 years	88	97.82				
	21 years and above	89	111.84				
Social Gain	1-10 years	38	133.66	2	10.709	.005	2 high between 1-2
	Between 11-20 years	88	94.65				
	21 years and above	89	110.24				
Professional Career	1-10 years	38	125.57	2	3.790	.150	
	Between 11-20 years	88	105.40				
	21 years and above	89	103.07				

Table 5 shows a significant difference was observed in the leading score of the professional commitment scale (U = 4017,000, p<.05) and in the sub-dimensions of Professional Pleasure (U = 4104,000, p<.05), Social Gain (U = 4031,000, p<.05) and Professional Career (U = 4029,500, p<.05) according to the variable of receiving support from administrators. According to the variable of receiving support from administrators, a significant difference was observed in the leading score of the professional commitment scale and the sub-dimensions of Professional Pleasure, Social Gain, and Professional Career in favor of those who received support from administrators.

Table 5. The Mann-Whitney U Test results according to the support from administrators

		N	Order average	Rank Total	U-Value	p
Professional Commitment	Yes	160	134.96	16897.00	4017.000	.003
	No	55	85.61	6323.00		
Professional Pleasure	Yes	160	133.38	16984.00	4104.000	.000
	No	55	86.15	6236.00		
Social Gain	Yes	160	134.71	16911.00	4031.000	.000
	No	55	85.69	6309.00		
Professional Career	Yes	160	134.74	16909.50	4029.500	.006
	No	55	85.68	6310.50		

Table 6 reveals significant differences in the sub-dimensions in terms of the CSIPS gender variable, teachers' CSIPS main score (U = 5273.000, p<.05), SGS (U = 5273.000, p<.05), SERS (U = 5261.000, p <.05), EEA (U = 4655.000, p<.05), and TKL (U= 4829.000, p<.05). In the main CSIPS score, significant differences were detected in favor of female teachers in the SGS, SERS, EEA, and TKL sub-dimensions.

Table 6. The Mann-Whitney U Test results according to the CSIPS gender variable

	Variable	N	Order average	Rank Total	U-Value	p
CSIPS	Male	96	103.43	9929.00	5273.000	.000
	Female	119	111.69	13291.00		
SGS	Male	96	103.43	9929.00	5273.000	.000
	Female	119	111.69	13291.00		
SERS	Male	96	103.30	9917.00	5261.000	.013
	Female	119	111.79	13303.00		
EEA	Male	96	99.12	11425.00	4655.000	.000
	Female	119	119.01	11795.00		
TKL	Male	96	98.80	9485.00	4829.000	.000
	Female	119	115.42	13735.00		

Table 7 shows no significant differences in terms of the variable of receiving support from CSIPS colleagues in the main CSIPS score (U = 3302.500, p>.05), SGS (U = 3399.000, p>.05), SERS (U = 3157.500, p>.05), EEA (U = 3448.000, p>.05), and TKL (U = 3524.000, p>.05) sub-dimensions.

Table 7. The Mann-Whitney U test results for CSIPS based on the variable of receiving support from colleagues

	Variable	N	Rank average	Rank Total	U-Value	p
CSIPS	Yes	174	109.52	19056.50	3302.500	.460
	No	41	101.55	4163.50		
SGS	Yes	174	108.97	18960.00	3399.000	.634
	No	41	103.90	4260.00		
SERS	Yes	174	110.35	19201.50	3157.500	.251
	No	41	98.01	4018.50		
EEA	Yes	174	108.68	18911.00	3448.000	.726
	No	41	105,10	4309.00		
TKL	Yes	174	107.75	18749.00	3524.000	.903
	No	41	109.05	4471.00		

Table 8 shows no significant differences in the sub-dimensions in terms of the teachers' years of service variables in the CSIPS main score (x^2= .031, p>.05), SGS (x^2= 1.372, p>.05), SERS (x^2= .948, p>.05), EEA x^2= .168, p>.05), and TKL (x^2= 3.392, p>.05).

Table 8. The Kruskal-Wallis test results based on the years of service variable in the CSIPS

	Variable	N	Rank Average	SD	x^2	P
CSIPS	1-10 years	38	107.32	2	.031	.985
	Between 11-20 years	88	107.40			
	21 years and above	89	108.88			
SGS	1-10 years	38	116.42	2	1.372	.504
	Between 11-20 years	88	102.91			
	21 years and above	89	109.43			
SERS	1-10 years	38	99.28	2	.948	.623
	Between 11-20 years	88	110.73			
	21 years and above	89	109.03			
EEA	1-10 years	38	104.62	2	.168	.920
	Between 11-20 years	88	108.16			
	21 years and above	89	109.28			
TKL	1-10 years	38	93.11	2	3.392	.183
	Between 11-20 years	88	107.34			
	21 years and above	89	115.01			

As shown in Table 9, no significant difference was observed in the main score (U = 3855,000, p>.05), SGS (U = 3835,000, p>.05), SERS (U = 3960,000, p>.05), EEA (U = 4110,000, p>.05), and TKL (U=4293,000, p>.05) sub-dimensions of PBES according to the variable of teachers receiving support from administrators.

Table 9. The Kruskal-Wallis test results examining CSIPS scores according to the support received from administrators

		N	Order average	Rank Total	U-Value	p
CSIPS	Yes	160	111.41	17825.00	3855.000	.171
	No	55	98.09	5395.00		
SGS	Yes	160	111.53	17845.00	3835.000	.150
	No	55	97.73	5375.00		
SERS	Yes	160	110.75	17720.00	3960.000	.267
	No	55	100.00	5500.00		
EEA	Yes	160	109.81	17570.00	4110.000	.442
	No	55	102.73	5650.00		
TKL	Yes	160	107.33	17173.00	4293.000	.786
	Hayır	55	109.95	6047.00		

Table 10 indicates significant differences in the sub-dimensions in terms of gender in the TSASISN main score (U = 4017.000, p<.05), TSAB (U = 4104.000, p<.05), and DSAC (U = 4031.000, p<.05). Significant differences were detected in favour of female teachers according to the gender variable of the teachers in the social acceptance scale's main score, TSAB, and DSAC sub-dimensions.

Table 10. The Mann-Whitney U Test results according to the TSASISN gender variable

	Variable	N	Order average	Rank Total	U-Value	p
TSASISN	Male	96	100.13	11304.50	4775.500	.037
	Female	119	117.76	11915.50		
TSAB	Male	96	99.46	11384.50	4695.500	.021
	Female	119	118.59	11835.50		
DSAC	Male	96	100.67	11240.50	4839.500	.049
	Female	119	117.09	11979.50		

Table 11 reveals significant differences in favour of those who received support from their colleagues in terms of the 'receiving support from colleagues' variable in the TSASISN main score (U = 3445,000, p<.05) and TSAB (U = 3533,000, p<.05), DSAC (U = 3448,500, p<.05) sub-dimensions. Significant differences were detected in the TSASISN main scale dimension and its sub-dimensions in favour of those who received support from their colleagues.

Table 11. The Mann-Whitney U test results based on the variable of receiving support from TSASISN colleagues

	Variable	N	Rank average	Rank Total	U-Value	p
TSASISN	Yes	174	118.70	18914.00	3445.000	.001
	No	41	95.02	4306.00		
TSAB	Yes	174	118.20	18826.00	3533.000	.002
	No	41	97.17	4394.00		
DSAC	Yes	174	118.68	18910.50	3448.500	.005
	No	41	95.11	4309.50		

Table 12 shows no differences in terms of the variable, years of service. There was a significant difference in the TSASISN main score (x^2= .821, p>.05), TSAB (x^2= 3.392, p>.05), and DSAC (x^2= .948, p>.05) sub-dimensions.

Table 12. The Kruskal-Wallis test results based on the TSASISN years of study variable

		N	Rank Average	SD	x^2	P
TSASISN	1-10 years	38	112.70	2	.821	.663
	Between 11-20 years	88	103.54			
	21 years and above	89	110.40			
TSAB	1-10 years	38	93.11	2	3.392	.183
	Between 11-20 years	88	107.34			
	21 years and above	89	115.01			
DSAC	1-10 years	38	99.28	2	.948	.623
	Between 11-20 years	88	110.73			
	21 years and above	89	109.03			

Table 13 shows no significant difference was observed in the leading score of the social acceptance scale (U = 4026,000, p>.05) and the sub-dimensions of TSAB (U = 4051,500, p>.05) and DSAC (U = 4023,500, p>.05) according to the variable of receiving support from administrators.

Table 13. The Mann-Whitney U test results based on the variable of receiving support from TSASISN administrators

		N	Rank average	Rank Total	U-Value	p
TSASISN	Yes	160	110.34	17654.00	4026.000	.342
	No	55	101.20	5566.00		
TSAB	Yes	160	110.18	17628.50	4051.500	.368
	No	55	101.66	5591.50		
DSAC	Yes	160	110.35	17656.50	4023.500	.332
	No	55	101.15	5563.50		

Table 14 shows positive relationships between professional commitment (r = .410, p < .01), inclusive competence, professional commitment, and the inclusive of student social acceptance (r = .248, p < .01).

Table 14. The Spearman-Brown coefficients for the relationships between teachers' professional commitment, inclusive competence, and inclusive student social acceptance levels

CSIPS	r	.410 **		
	p	.000		
	N	215	215	
TSASISN	r	.248 **	.387 **	
	p	.000	.000	.
	N	215	215	215

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

In the inclusive education process, teachers' professional commitment, inclusive practice competence, and social acceptance levels of inclusive students are essential variables. Teachers' professional commitment, inclusive practice competence, and social acceptance levels of inclusive students affect the support teachers offer to students in the classroom. From this point of view, studies on these variables are essential in understanding the variables affecting teachers' attitudes towards their profession, competence in inclusive practice, and acceptance of inclusive students. The findings of this study provide essential data on the variables affecting professional commitment, inclusive practice competence, and social acceptance levels of inclusive students and contribute to the literature.

According to the results of the present study, no significant differences were detected in the commitment scale total scores and scale sub-dimensions in terms of the gender variable of teachers' professional commitment levels. Collie, Shapka and Perry (2011) reported that female teachers in their

study group, including special education teachers, are more committed to professional work. In studies conducted with special education teachers, Green (2011) and Demirok (2018) reported that female teachers were more committed to their profession. On the other hand, Özkan Hıdıroğlu (2021) analyzed teachers who work with typically developed children and reported no significant general differences in their professional commitment. Although society considers the teaching profession to be performed mainly by women in terms of social structure and gender characteristics, and although teaching is mainly preferred by women (Foster & Newman, 2005), gender does not affect professional commitment.

No significant differences were detected regarding the teachers' professional commitment or colleague support. Contradictory findings have been reported in the literature. According to Bogler and Somech (2004) the support received from colleagues in an educational institution positively contributes to professional commitment. In his study on special education teachers, Elitharp (2005) found that receiving colleague support positively affects professional commitment. In his research on teachers of typically developing children. According to Yu, Jiang & Kei (2021) colleague support positively affects teachers' professional commitment. According to the results of the present study, there was no significant difference between support from colleagues and professional commitment. It might be that the teachers who participated in the present study preferred to work individually. According to Sarı (2011), working in collaboration does not provide enough satisfaction for some individuals; working in partnership can bring obstacles and more responsibilities to the individual.

The teachers' professional commitment showed significant differences in the main score and social gain sub-dimension of the professional commitment Scale in favour of those with more years of service according to the years of service variable. Contradictory findings were observed when the literature was reviewed. In their studies of special education teachers, Green (2011) and Sakalli Demirok (2018) detected a significant difference in professional commitment regarding the working year variable. Collie, Shapka and Perry (2011) detected increased professional commitment as the number of years of work experience increased in their study group, which included special education teachers. In their study conducted with teachers of typically developing children, Ergen (2016) reported that professional commitment increased as the years of working in the profession increased. On the other hand, in their study conducted with teachers of typically developing children, Hıdıroğlu Özkan (2021) and Yu, Jiang and Kei (2021) reported more professional commitment from teachers who have just started their careers. According to the results of the present study, a review of the literature reveals that inexperienced teachers working with students with special needs tend to experience higher levels of burnout and encounter more challenges (Stempien & Loeb, 2002; Whitaker, 2000). However, as the duration of working in the teaching profession increases, teachers invest more in their profession, become more experienced and approach their profession more emotionally.

According to the variable of receiving support from administrators, a significant difference was observed in the overall score of the professional commitment scale and the sub-dimensions of professional pleasure, social gain and professional career in favour of those who received support from administrators. The literature has results similar to those of this research. Elitharp (2005), in his study with special education teachers, observed that receiving support from administrators positively affected professional commitment. Berry (2012), Lee and Nie (2014) and Ware and Kitsantas (2007) observed that special education teachers who receive support from administrators have high professional commitment. Receiving support from administrators positively influences teachers' professional commitment. In particular, school administrators who are able to accurately perceive and respond to teachers' emotions (George, 2000), motivate them to work and appreciate their efforts (Eisenberger et al., 2002), and establish a fair balance among staff while considering their needs (Eisenberger et al., 2002) contribute to teachers' positive perception of the profession. When employees believe that their organization values them and cares about their well-being and happiness, it positively influences their professional commitment, increases job attendance, and reduces turnover rates (Akın, 2008).

Significant differences were detected in favour of female teachers in the overall score and sub-dimensions of the scale regarding the gender variable of teachers' proficiency levels in inclusive practices. On reviewing the literature, conflicting findings were observed. In their study, Kazak (2022) and Yavuz (2017) did not report significant differences in terms of the gender variable in teachers' inclusive practices proficiency levels. Ismailos et al. (2019) and Özokcu (2017) reported that female

teachers have higher perceptions of inclusive competence. Alnahdi et al. (2019) reported that female teachers in Saudi Arabia had higher inclusive competency perceptions in their study; they comparatively examined the inclusive practice proficiency levels of Saudi Arabian and Finnish teachers. In Finland, no significant gender differences were detected in teachers' perceptions of inclusive competence. According to the results of the present study, the high level of competence among female teachers may be because the teaching profession is viewed as a woman's profession. In addition, male teachers working with students with special needs experience more burnout (Çiftçi, 2015). This sense of burnout may have negatively affected male learners' inclusion competence levels.

Significant differences were detected in favour of female teachers in the overall score and sub-dimensions of the scale regarding the gender variable of teachers' proficiency levels in inclusive practices. A review of the literature revealed conflicting findings. For instance, Kazak (2022) and Yavuz (2017) did not report any significant differences in teachers' proficiency levels in inclusive practices based on gender. Ismailos et al. (2019) and Özokcu (2017) reported that female teachers have higher perceptions of inclusive competence. Alnahdi et al. (2019) reported that female teachers in Saudi Arabia had higher inclusive competency perceptions in their study; they comparatively examined the inclusive practice proficiency levels of Saudi Arabian and Finnish teachers. In Finland, no significant gender differences were detected in teachers' perceptions of inclusive competence. According to the results of the present study, the high level of competence among female teachers may be because the teaching profession is viewed as a woman's profession.

No significant differences were detected regarding teachers' proficiency levels in inclusive practices or receiving support from colleagues. When the literature was reviewed, we found results that contradicted the findings of this study. In their study conducted with primary school teachers, Ryan and Mathews (2021) reported that receiving support from colleagues positively affects teachers' inclusive practice competencies. Donohoo (2018), Goddard and Goddard (2001), and Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) found that teachers who worked with children with disabilities collaboratively developed professional competence and positive attitudes towards inclusion. According to the results of the present study, the reason there is no significant difference in teachers' proficiency levels in inclusive practices and the 'receiving support from colleagues' variable might be because of the individual working characteristics of the teachers in the present study. Similarly, Yavuz (2020) stated in his research on the professional self-efficacy levels of teachers who worked in special education schools that some teachers preferred to work alone.

No significant differences were detected in teachers' inclusive proficiency levels regarding the years of service variable. Contradictory results have been previously reported. Güner (2011), Hofman and Kilimo (2014) did not report significant differences in the year of service variable in their study. However, Aküzüm and Altunhan (2017) and Aslan and Gönülal (2023) conclude that professional competence increases with the number of years of service. According to the results of the present study, the reason for the lack of a significant difference in teachers' inclusive practice proficiency levels in terms of the working year variable is that young teachers gain experience by observing experienced teachers.

No significant differences were observed in the overall scores and sub-dimensions of the scale regarding the variable of receiving support from administrators. Leifler (2020) and Weisel and Dror (2006) emphasize that administrative support is crucial for the success of inclusive practices. Additionally, Şahan (2019) examined the self-efficacy perceptions of guidance counselors concerning special education and their attitudes toward inclusive education. The study concluded that administrative support positively influences attitudes toward inclusion. Ryan, Ryan and Mathews (2021) conducted research with primary school teachers and found that administrative support positively impacts teachers' competencies in inclusive practices. Despite these findings, this study revealed no significant difference in teachers' competence in inclusion practices related to the reception of administrative support. This may be attributed to the view that teaching is a sacred profession; teachers are often committed to fulfilling their duties and responsibilities regardless of external support. Consequently, this study's teachers may have independently upheld their professional ethics and responsibilities. In addition, according to Başaran (2000), educational administrators can adopt authoritarian, indifferent, cooperative, submissive and confrontational management styles. What is hoped for and desired in

educational environments is democratic management style. Democratic management approach is preferred due to the fact that it cares about people and the work done, employees participate in decisions, adopt team spirit and teamwork, create cooperation between managers and employees, and employees are positively affected by managers. The administrators in the schools within the scope of this research may have adopted a democratic methodology. For these reasons, there may not be a significant difference between teachers who receive support from administrators and those who do not (Sağır & Deveci, 2023).

Significant differences were detected in the overall score and sub-dimensions of the scale in favour of female teachers regarding the gender variable of teachers' social acceptance levels. A review of the literature revealed contradictory findings. Aktan (2023), Mouchritsa et al. (2022), and Saloviita (2020) detected significant differences in the social acceptance levels of teachers in favour of female teachers. Conversely, Avramıdıs, Baylıss and Burden (2000) did not report any significant differences in terms of the gender variable. In addition, Bhatnagar and Das (2014) and Sharma et al. (2015) reported that male teachers have a more accepting attitude towards children/students with special needs. According to the results of the present study, the reason teachers' social acceptance levels favour female teachers in terms of gender variables can be attributed to the fact that female teachers are more sensitive. Given these contradictory findings, teachers' social acceptance levels require further study regarding gender variables (Saloviita, 2020).

Significant differences were detected regarding teachers' social acceptance levels and receiving support from colleagues in the overall score of the scale and all sub-dimensions, in favour of those who received support from their colleagues. Previous studies are consistent with this finding. Teachers may need support from colleagues, especially in the school environment (Özçelik, 2019). In addition, receiving support from colleagues reduces professional burnout (Zabel & Zabel, 2001) and positively affects life satisfaction levels (Yavuz, 2019). According to Ruble, Usher, & McGrewn (2015), colleague support positively affects teacher self-efficacy. Based on these perspectives, receiving colleague support contributed positively to all variables. Therefore, it is possible to argue that teacher support from colleagues positively affects the social acceptance of inclusive learners.

No significant differences were detected in the scale's overall score and all sub-dimensions regarding teachers' social acceptance levels and working year variables. Contradictory findings were observed when the literature was reviewed. Avramıdıs, Baylıss and Burden (2000) did not report significant differences in the year of service variable. Ertunç (2008) concluded in his study that the attitudes of young teachers were more positive. Alghazo and Naggar-Gaad (2004) concluded that as the number of years of service increased, teachers' social acceptance levels of inclusive students also increased. Unexperienced teachers might have acquired new information from more senior teachers or by observing them, contributed positively to their social acceptance of inclusive students.

No significant difference was observed in the main score and all sub-dimensions of the scale according to the variable of receiving support from administrators. Avramidis and Norwich (2002), Kristian Øen and Rune Johan Krumsvik (2021), MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013), and Malmqvist (2016) concluded that administrators have a key role in inclusive education. Şahin and Gürbüz (2016) concluded that the support of administrators is important for the success of inclusion. According to this research, social acceptance may not only be affected by receiving support from administrators. Different variables and the combination of different variables may have affected it.

A positive relationship was found between teachers' professional commitment and inclusive competence levels. When the literature was reviewed, no study examined the relationship between teachers' professional commitment and inclusive competence levels. Professional commitment positively affects several variables. For example, when teachers have high levels of professional commitment, they do not think of quitting their jobs, experience more professional satisfaction (Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006), are more motivated towards their work, and are more qualified in their profession (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Thus, there may be a positive relationship between professional commitment and inclusive competence because the level of proficiency in inclusive practices is also related to teachers' professional skills; as teachers' professional commitment increases, their inclusive competence levels increase.

A positive relationship was detected between teachers' professional commitment levels and the social acceptance of inclusive students. Teachers who had high professional commitment were reported to be less stressed (Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006), exert more effort at work, show more interest in their work (Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006), have better relationships with parents and students (Bogler & Somech, 2004), and be more committed to teaching, school, and students (Somech & Bogler, 2002).

Limitations and Recommendations

This study has some limitations. First, its results cannot be generalized, as it was conducted only with teachers in Edirne. In addition, it only examined professional commitment, inclusive competence, student acceptance, gender, support from colleagues, years of service, support from administrators, and age. In future studies, the variables of economic level, marital status, education level, and whether or not to take special education courses can also be examined. Additionally, future research should include longitudinal studies. This study examined the professional commitment, inclusive competence, and student acceptance levels of teachers working in inclusive settings. Each variable could be investigated using mixed models in future studies. Finally, based on the study results, we recommend that teachers in inclusive classes receive regular seminars on inclusive practices and the development and learning characteristics of students with disabilities.

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Environmental Engineering Education in Türkiye within the Framework of Capacity Building in Vocational Education and Training (CB VET) Approach

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Abstract

In this study, the current structure of environmental engineering undergraduate programmes in Türkiye has been evaluated in a multidimensional manner through informal interviews with graduates and sector representatives and data-driven analyses from open sources. Within the scope of the study, the capacity building in vocational education and training (CB VET) approach, which attaches great importance to the improvement of vocational and technical education, was evaluated as an important approach that could increase the institutional capacity of environmental engineering programs. According to this competency-based education model, specialization of faculty members, regular feedback from the sector and graduates, improvement of laboratory and field facilities, and dissemination of long-lasting workplace practices such as 7+1, which accelerate the processes of students learning to solve problems and gaining experience in the field, are important. Accreditation processes such as MÜDEK and ABET institutionalize continuous improvement cycles for programs and thus ensure that the curriculum remains up-to-date. In conclusion, adopting the CB VET approach in environmental engineering programs in Türkiye will be a strategic step in training engineers who are sensitive to current environmental problems and have high industry skills with a level of quality assurance that meets international standards. In this way, both students with the competencies demanded by the industry can be graduated and their employability can be increased, and the lack of qualified human resources in the implementation of national environmental policies can be resolved.

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Introduction

For a long time, there has been a disconnect between theoretical education and practical sector needs in engineering education in Türkiye. This situation is noticeable in different sectors for different engineering fields. Graduates of engineering departments usually graduate without sufficient practical knowledge and as a result have difficulty in adapting to the sector in business life. In addition, due to the differences among university programs, there are also inconsistencies between the qualifications of engineers graduating from different universities. Due to the inadequacy of practical education, limited sectoral cooperation in education and insufficient institutional infrastructure, the gap between engineering education and professional expectations is widening. In addition, although accreditation processes aim to standardize quality, the lack of equal opportunities and capabilities among institutions further exacerbates this situation. In order to address these problems, the implementation of competency-based education and systematic capacity development studies are necessary. Thus, by increasing the cooperation between universities and public institutions and industrial organizations in Türkiye, by improving laboratory and field education and by adopting practical learning methodologies, qualified engineering graduates who can meet both national and international demands can be trained.

Strengthening vocational education and training has become primary policy areas in the educational policy priorities of many countries today (Jeon, 2019). Capacity building, now also referred to as capability building, not only incorporates such transformation of institutional or program structures but also holds a holistic approach toward developing the competencies and skills of individuals and organizations in knowledge, skills and competencies (Brockmann et al., 2008). This process concentrates on continuing improvement and up scaling of talent of the stakeholders in the education system to achieve sustainable results such as students, academics, employers, and decision makers (Whelan et al., 2024). Capacity building serves the purpose of creating a dynamic learning ecosystem that will quickly adapt to the new technological advances, changing labor force needs and global standards. Therefore, capacity building (also known as capacity development) or capability building is concerned with the sustainable empowerment of institutions and individuals in knowledge, skill, and ability (Lusthaus, 1999). Its impact in relation to the context of vocational and technical education is embedded in the CB VET (capacity building in vocational education and training) approach. CB VET proposes revising curricula to fit the needs of the real-world sectors, improving the occupational competencies of trainers and managers, popularizing practical learning methods, strengthening laboratory and field infrastructures and formalizing partnerships with industry in the educational system. Thus, vocational and technical education might be seen to assure a sustainable advantage in international and national competitive contexts.

Although engineering education in Türkiye has a historically solid foundation in science and mathematics (Birgül Tantekin et al, 2004), it has been voicing concerns for many years about applied and industrial experience (Özsoy, 2013). Criticism points out the fact that students in different engineering departments have had quite a few compulsory courses with their peers but have not acquired some neccessary skills such as problem-solving and communication skills or innovation and entrepreneurship after graduation (EMO, 2012). For example, it is a notable area of concern that such important topics as consultancy and advisory services in the field do not appear at all in academic curriculum or are presented too superficially. That adds to the disconnection between what is expected in industry and what is offered by universities. Furthermore, in that direction it contributes to diversity in the levels of knowledge and skills of graduates due to the significant infrastructure differences between engineering departments across the country (such as laboratory facilities, internships and field practices, faculty-staff-student ratios, and so forth) (Özsoy, 2013). On the other hand, the low salaries offered recently by the private sector from graduation onwards and the lack of career satisfaction of young engineers is another major problem (Koyuncuoğlu, 2017). This is mainly due to frequent complaints from employers that graduates are mostly equipped with theoretical knowledge, but not enough knowledge about field practices, new engineering technologies, project management approaches or the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

According to current Higher Education Council (in Turkish Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu - YÖK) data (YÖK Atlas, 2025), there are 74 Environmental Engineering undergraduate programs in different universities in Türkiye. Some of these programs are accredited by Association for the Evaluation and

Accreditation of Engineering Programs (MÜDEK) or have been internationally accredited by Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Accreditation is seen as evidence that the education program will meet some quality standards and will provide students with "learning outcome based", "hands-on", and "employability-focused" experience (Özçiçek and Karaca, 2019). Therefore, the aspects of capacity building in terms of such as MÜDEK and ABET accreditation processes should be important tools in continuous renewal and complementing the missing ones within institutions (Ergin et al., 2023). However, between the departments of environmental engineering in Türkiye, there are many differences both in the content of the lectures and also in laboratory and field applications. Some universities emphasize compulsory general and vocational courses, while others offer specific elective courses such as air pollution control technologies, climate change, solid waste recovery, sustainability and membrane processes. In universities with a very heavy classical education load, there are insufficient courses on "current" or "business-oriented" skills such as creativity and entrepreneurship, and little emphasis on practical training. As a result, the majority of graduates enter the labor market directly into the labor market ill-equipped with the basics of consultancy and advisory services, project management and financing, or even very basic skills such as effective communication and leadership skills.

Capacity-building approach, which is a model aimed at continuously improving the capacities of educational institutions and individuals (Malyan and Jindal, 2014), assumes a very critical position with respect to environmental engineering education. The CB VET approach requires constant updating in engineering departments, from the curriculum to the sector and current needs (Agamuthu and Hansen, 2007). Some of these updates are presented below,

- Increasing the professional competencies of educators and administrators;

- Equipping students not only with technical knowledge but also with entrepreneurial skills, innovation, project management, and leadership when they graduate;

- Improving laboratory and field training infrastructure through university-industry collaboration projects;

- Improving acknowledgment (MÜDEK, ABET, etc.) processes to be seen as a chance and introducing continuous improvement mechanisms.

The model of CB VET creates a detailed sketch for the improvement of quality and relevance of vocational education in areas like Environmental Engineering, as shown in Figure 1. It operates through four key pillars: laboratory infrastructure, academic staff development, applied courses and stakeholder engagement. These items are bound to address the existing gaps in institutional capacity, practical training opportunities and match with industry demands. Laboratory infrastructure takes a predominant role in establishing practical learning environments, accreditation processes and field experience acquired by the students. Continuous professional and specialization development is what academic staff development signifies; it ensures an educator's competency in curriculum delivery, which is up to date and relates to the industry. Applied courses help in enhancing the skills of the students through project-based learning as well as field learning activities, and stakeholder engagement encourages working with industry, government, and other organizations involved in creating a fully aligned program according to the market. This is a system approach based on principles of competence-based education; it leads to sustainability, interdisciplinary learning, and collaboration among various stakeholders so that graduates can address key problems faced in the newly formed world such as climate change, strategies for circular economy operations, and sustainable development. In synthesizing all these elements into one comprehensive picture, the CB VET model has created a context that will allow countries to develop highly skilled and flexible manpower attuned to both national and international quality standards.
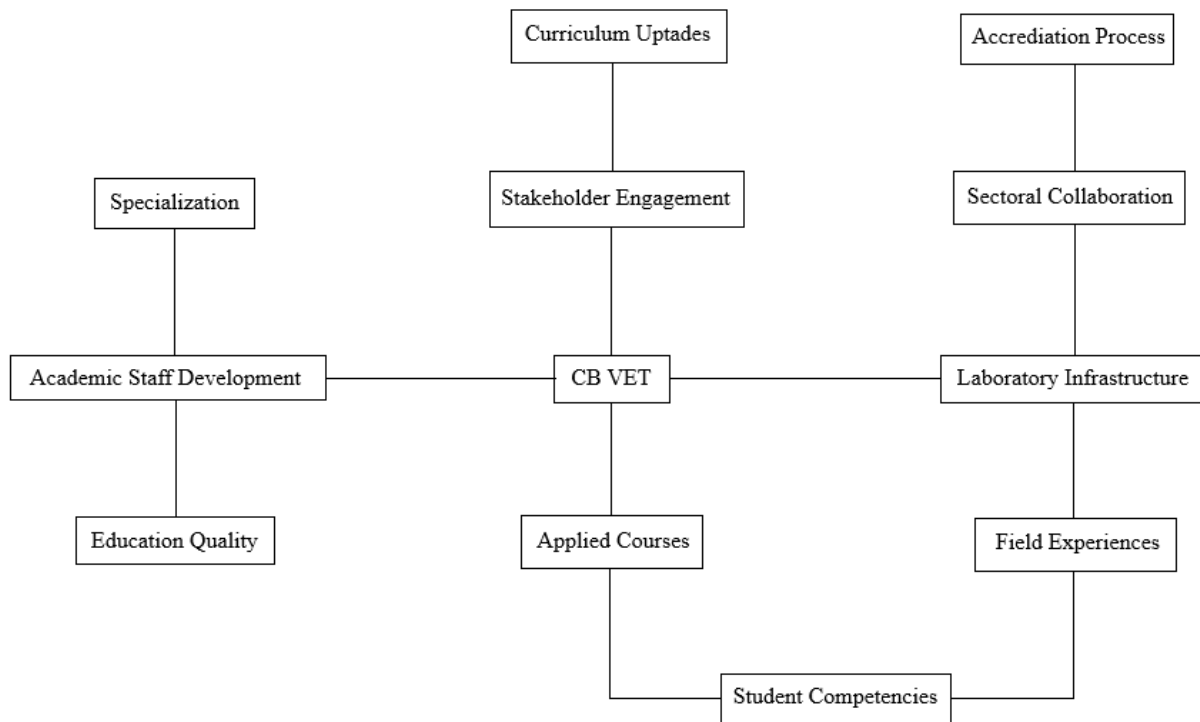
Figure 1. Building blocks of the CB VET model and engineering education.

The main objective of this research is to analyze the setting of the environmental engineering education in Türkiye through the CB VET approach derived from capacity building perspective and post suggestions for improving the program's quality, implementation capacity, and sectoral linkages. The paper will first cover the state of engineering in general, and Environmental Engineering in particular, in Türkiye; it will then discuss problems observed at educational institutions (curriculum not being matched to actual professional practices, not enough on consultancy and advisory service provision, lack of courses that improve entrepreneurial and innovative skills, lack of overload on courses, etc.). How capacity building opportunities provided by MÜDEK and ABET accreditations can be converted into added value will also be examined in this process. Finally, concrete contributions will be made to the solutions that can be proposed through CB VET and applicable strategies for a much more qualified and competitive environmental engineering education. In addition, the study, which aims to illuminate the improvement of quality and accreditation processes in engineering faculties, provides a reference framework for stakeholders who aim to strengthen vocational and technical education. Especially in today's conditions, it is becoming increasingly important to include the rapid development of virtual reality, augmented reality and artificial intelligence into the curricula of engineering departments. In addition, the increasing impact of environmental problems and the climate crisis will require a comprehensive review of Environmental Engineering education with a capacity-building approach.

Method

Data Collection Process

This study used a qualitative research design using document analysis and informal interviews with industry representatives to examine environmental engineering programs in Türkiye within the framework of the CB VET approach. Primary data sources included printed and online documents such as course plans, program quotas, accreditation standards and reports published by MÜDEK and ABET, Vocational Qualifications Authority (in Turkish Mesleki Yeterlilik Kurumu-MYK) regulations, and various strategic plans, quality assurance reports, and accreditation self-assessment documents available on university websites. In addition, informal interviews were conducted with graduates and professionals from engineering firms to gain insight into the practical challenges faced by graduates and the fit between university curricula and industry needs. Secondary data sources such as national and

international academic articles, conference proceedings, industry reports, and capacity building project reports funded by the European Union (e.g. Erasmus+ and IPA) were also analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Document analysis method was applied to systematically review and categorize program information and curricula for the last five years, thus ensuring timeliness and reliability in the findings of the study.

Data analysis

A content analysis was conducted on the collected data. The study focused on the main themes of the departments' curriculum structures (mandatory/elective courses, applied courses, credit distribution), practical training opportunities (laboratories, internships, field studies, project-based courses), and competency-based education practices (entrepreneurship, leadership, innovation, communication, and project management skills). The impact of accreditation processes (MÜDEK and ABET) on education quality was also examined, and a comparative review of differences between institutions was conducted. While the document analysis provided structured insights, informal interviews with graduates and industry representatives over a period of two years helped contextualize the findings. Thus, the study bridged the gap between formal education policies and real-world industry expectations. These interviews revealed both the professional problems experienced by environmental engineering graduates in business life and identified employers' industry concerns regarding the competencies of these graduates. However, given the informal nature of these discussions, they were not transcribed verbatim, but instead were used to identify recurring themes and industry expectations. Since this study is mainly based on secondary data and informal qualitative insights, no formal surveys or structured interviews were conducted. The data collected are presented in the following sections under the main themes of CB VET principles, the general structure of Environmental Engineering education in Türkiye and the contribution of accreditation processes, aiming to provide a general framework on the scope of educational programs, practical educational integration and the current status of competency-based educational approaches.

Findings

The results obtained from the analysis on the confront of CB VET and competence based vocational education perspective of the Environmental Engineering undergraduate programs in Türkiye are discussed in discussion holistically. The study analyzed the university curricula, academic staff structures, laboratory and field infrastructures, accreditation (such as MÜDEK and ABET) processes, international funds and project mechanisms, sector and graduate feedback, and literatures "competence-based VET" principles. The analysis indicates that environmental engineering programs had to cope with structural and institutional challenges demanded by competence-based education in providing required practical and interdisciplinary experience. Under the following headings, causes, consequences and recommendations to overcome these challenges are discussed. The fact that environmental engineering departments, especially in the eastern and central Anatolian regions, are closed to undergraduate education or are less preferred may also be an opportunity for the transformation of these departments. On the other hand, the gradual decrease in the success scores of students who are accepted to environmental engineering undergraduate programs, as in other engineering departments, is another important problem that needs to be solved within the higher education system in Türkiye.

Alignment between Curriculum Design and Competency-Based Education

VET envisages that students acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also somehow 'horizontal competencies', skills of applications, problem solving, collaborative effort and communication (Inayat et al., 2013). However, when the curriculum of Environmental Engineering departments in Türkiye is analyzed, it is seen that it revolves around compulsory science-mathematics based courses in addition to classical engineering courses (water and wastewater treatment, air pollution control, solid waste management, etc.) (Sarıoğlu-Cebeci and Yılmaz, 2014). This describes a good academic base. However, it shows how existing practice-oriented courses such as "waste recycling and management", "hazardous waste disposal", "noise pollution and control", "air pollution modeling" have different depths across universities. Table 1 lists the courses included in the environmental engineering curriculum of universities. While the courses included in this table are offered in the elective course

pool in some universities, these courses are either not included at all or are offered as a general course in other universities. Some of the reasons that make this situation more evident in certain professional courses are the faulty departmental structures in terms of low institutional capacity (low competence of staff and inadequate laboratory/field infrastructures) and insufficient staff (non-specialist staff managing the relevant departments). The competency-based VET approach requires both theory and practice to be integrated into a course structure and also requires students to encounter and solve real-world industrial or public problems (Azemikhah, 2005). This should be combined with the availability of specialized academics to conduct the relevant courses practically, as well as all the equipped laboratory-field conditions they need for this approach to function effectively. These shortcomings above lead to a weakening of the professional skills of graduates and a further mismatch of education with the world of work. The lack of consultation with sector representatives in the development of education and training plans and curricula is another obstacle to the widespread adoption of competency-based education. The sector has knowledge about the nature and degree of difficulty of the problems that graduates will face in real working life and can provide invaluable input on how to adapt course content to these problems. There is also a need to establish important feedback mechanisms for continuous updating and improvement of the curriculum (Davis, 2008), and to regularly analyze alumni and employer feedback and student satisfaction survey results. The data from these studies will provide invaluable information on how to adapt course content to current problems. Important feedback mechanisms for continuously updating and improving the curriculum will also be the regular analysis of alumni feedback and student satisfaction survey results. This feedback will show to what extent the expectations of both students and the sector are met for these courses. In addition, it is necessary to increase the number of courses that will ensure active participation of students through projects and to update the equipment used in these courses. Universities can make practical training in the laboratory or field mandatory and regularly evaluate the feedback from the relevant sector to ensure the continuity of these trainings. In this way, students have the opportunity to put their theoretical knowledge into practice and step into the labor market more prepared.

Table 1. Courses and Classification of Environmental Engineering Departments (Sarıoğlu-Cebeci and Yılmaz, 2014)

Basic Courses	Vocational Courses	Construction-Geology Courses
Mathematics	Environmental Economics	Thermodynamics
Physics	Introduction to Environmental Engineering	Fluid Mechanics
Chemistry		Hydrogeology
Technical Drawing	Environmental Ecology	Geostatistics
Basic Information Technologies	Environmental Chemistry	Statics and Strength
	Environmental Problems	Surveying Materials
Differential Equations	Environmental Microbiology	Hydraulics
Statistics	Environmental Pollution	Soil Mechanics
Basic Computer Science	Control Solid Wastes	Hydrology
Engineering Mathematics	Environmental Impact Assessment	Structural Engineering
Computer Aided Drawing		Geology
etc.	Environmental Law	etc.
	Water Supply and Disposal	
	Water Quality and Control	
	Hazardous Wastes	
	Air Pollution and Control	
	Environmental Modeling	
	Soil Pollution and Control	
	Environmental Management	
	Urbanism and Regional Planning	
	Groundwater Pollution	
	Noise Pollution and Control	
	etc.	

Table 1. Courses and Classification of Environmental Engineering Departments (Sarıoğlu-Cebeci and Yılmaz, 2014) (Continued)

| Treatment Focused Lessons	Social Lessons	Elective Courses
Basic Processes (Physical, Chemical and Biological) Fundamentals of Treatment Treatment Plant Design Operation of Treatment Plants Wastewater Engineering Treatment of Drinking Water Treatment of Wastewater Treatment of Industrial Wastewater Treatment Sludges Anaerobic Treatment Sea Discharges etc.	History of Atatürk's Principles and Reforms Turkish Language Foreign Language Other social courses offered by the University	Elective courses offered by the university and department

The Critical Role of Hands-On Training and Field Experience

In the competency-based vocational education approach, learning is expected to take place primarily in "real-life contexts outside." Environmental engineering is a field where it is very difficult to gain sufficient expertise through laboratory and field experience, especially in the areas of solid/hazardous waste management, air and noise pollution monitoring, and wastewater treatment process optimization. Therefore, it is very important for the institutions with ABET and/or MÜDEK accreditation among the universities examined to spread the internships over two semesters (2 x 20 working days, etc.), make project-based courses mandatory, and add field trips to the program. For example, in the air pollution control course, students are expected to make measurements with real instruments, to make noise measurements in accordance with the relevant standards, to make technical observations in solid waste recycling facilities, to prepare and present Environmental Impact Assessment reports through group work, to report the measurement results in accordance with field experience, and to prepare their projects in the format they should be in business life, which will better prepare students to face the problems they will encounter in the field when they graduate. Another important issue is that in accredited departments, students do laboratory and field practices in small groups with fewer people rather than with the whole class, and they have the opportunity to observe better and even conduct experiments themselves. In addition, in accredited departments, quizzes before experiments and student reports after experiments are clear indicators of what the relevant course adds to the student. In other words, it has been observed that practical training is more limited in non-accredited programs. Although field trips or project-based topics are included in the curriculum, it is also a fact that these are limited in practice in universities where specialized faculty members and laboratory infrastructure are weak. this leads to students graduating with less knowledge and experience and entering business life. On the other hand, "network-based" learning in higher education, where universities, private sector firms and public institutions carry out applied projects through a strong network of cooperation, has not yet taken an institutional or systematic shape in Türkiye. A schematic representation of this ideal structure for competency-based vocational education and training in universities is presented in Figure 2.

As illustrated in Figure 2, in order to improve environmental engineering education, first of all, an approach that eliminates the deficiencies in the current system should be adopted. As seen in the figure, the integration of three main components (field education, accreditation and network-based learning) is important to achieve the ideal situation in education. By increasing the interaction between field education and accreditation, students can be enabled to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. Supporting this interaction with more collaboration and network connections will provide students with the ability to cope with real-world problems. In addition, the accreditation process should be constantly reviewed in terms of the compliance of educational programs with quality standards. Finally, strengthening the network-based learning infrastructure will create an environment that will

enable students to follow global developments and learn innovations in the field of environmental engineering. In this way, environmental engineering education can be made more competitive and suitable for the labor market both locally and internationally.
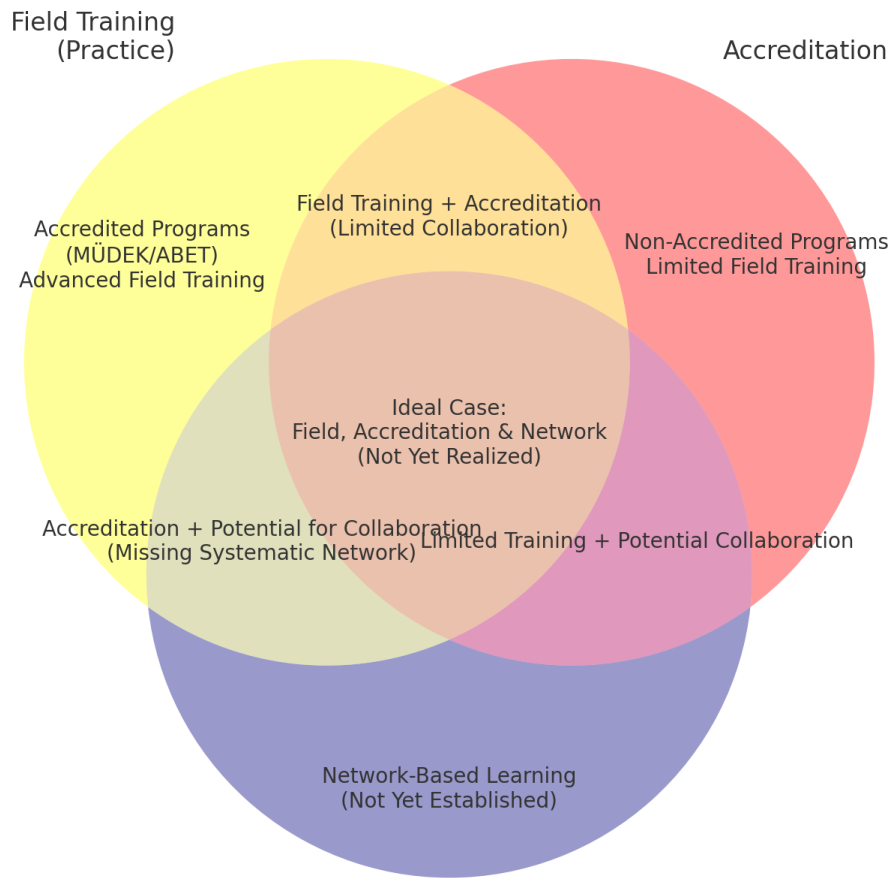
Figure 2. A schematic representation of competency-based vocational education and training in Türkiye.

Contribution of 7+1 Education Model

The new 7+1 education model that started to be implemented in some universities in Türkiye with engineering faculties is an important opportunity for increasing applied education and field experience (Özsoy, 2013; Yavuz, 2019). This model is designed to have one of eight semesters of undergraduate education spent full-time and integrated with industry to strongly network students with the sector (Özsoy, 2013). Therefore, the students who had taught theoretical and applied courses in the first seven semesters, will strengthen their professional competencies with one term of on-the-job experience within real projects in the eighth semester. This active involvement of industry representatives would facilitate students to develop multiple competencies related to workplace problem-solving, teamwork, corporate communication like multidimensional competencies well before they actually graduate. Therefore, this 7+1 model will be seen as an appropriate "shaping and networking" strategy for the approach of competence-based VET. Especially in department such environmental engineering that require a great deal of field experience, this 7+1 model will serve as a bridge between learning in laboratories and in the field and adaptation to the job market. The wider adoption of this model in each university would also allow quicker reflection of sector feedback on course contents and improve competitive advantages at the labor market for the graduates. In this new model, students will reinforce the subjects they have learned in their workplaces and work in real conditions, which will increase their adaptation to the job market and their success after graduation.

Department Structure and Distribution of Faculty Members

Within environmental engineering programs, basic science majors such as "air pollution and control" and "solid waste management" will generally reflect the disciplines of the field. However, the

examination of the CVs of academic staff on department websites and open sources within the scope of this study revealed that errors were made in personnel planning based on departments in some universities. For example, while academics who do not have expertise in air pollution may be assigned to the "air pollution and control" major in some universities, it was observed that some academics who do not have experience in "solid waste management" were employed in these fields. Employment of personnel outside the field of expertise in departments causes curricula to narrow, specific courses requiring expertise to not be opened, efficiency in applied training decreases and ultimately the quality of education and training decreases. Naturally, this means that the expectations of stakeholders in the public and private sectors from graduates cannot be met. This situation draws a picture that is exactly the opposite of the principle of "subject-specific applied experience, expertise and direction", which is the essence of the Competency-Based Vocational Education approach. Figure 3 shows an example of an ideal department organization (Lane Community College, 2025). As can be understood from this graph, the strengths of the program, opportunities for improvement, expectations, outputs (program-specific outputs and indicators), peer evaluation feedback and in-depth evaluation of program improvement suggestions are very important for the structuring of the department. However, it is the academic staff employed in the departments who should do all of these. As a result, making mistakes in personnel selection causes the entire structure to fail.

Another important problem encountered in some universities is that the department's infrastructure planning is not done by academicians who are experts in the relevant field or that sufficient budget is not allocated for any reason. Incorrect decisions made by academicians who can be assigned from outside the field can reduce the department's infrastructure and field research potential. As a result, for example, the incorrect selection of noise pollution measurement devices by people who do not have practical experience will cause courses to be limited to theoretical frameworks most of the time and the necessary applications and reports will not be fully done. The inadequacy of the department's machinery and equipment will also cause students to be inadequate in engineering practices. In addition, priority investments in laboratory budgets and budgets allocated for instrumentation and software infrastructures of these departments are postponed and they do not have the opportunity to develop capacity. Finally, the "personnel plan" problem will cause the enrichment of the curriculum with competency-based courses to be postponed and will further distance students from the field of practice. Therefore, it may be very important to obtain opinions from relevant stakeholders in the structuring of engineering departments. Professionals working in the fields of air pollution, noise pollution, and hazardous waste management can help identify the areas of expertise that are urgently needed, as well as the subjects in which students are lacking. In addition, the opinions of alumni and student satisfaction surveys will provide guidance on staff adequacy, the efficiency of courses and up-to-dateness of the curriculum.
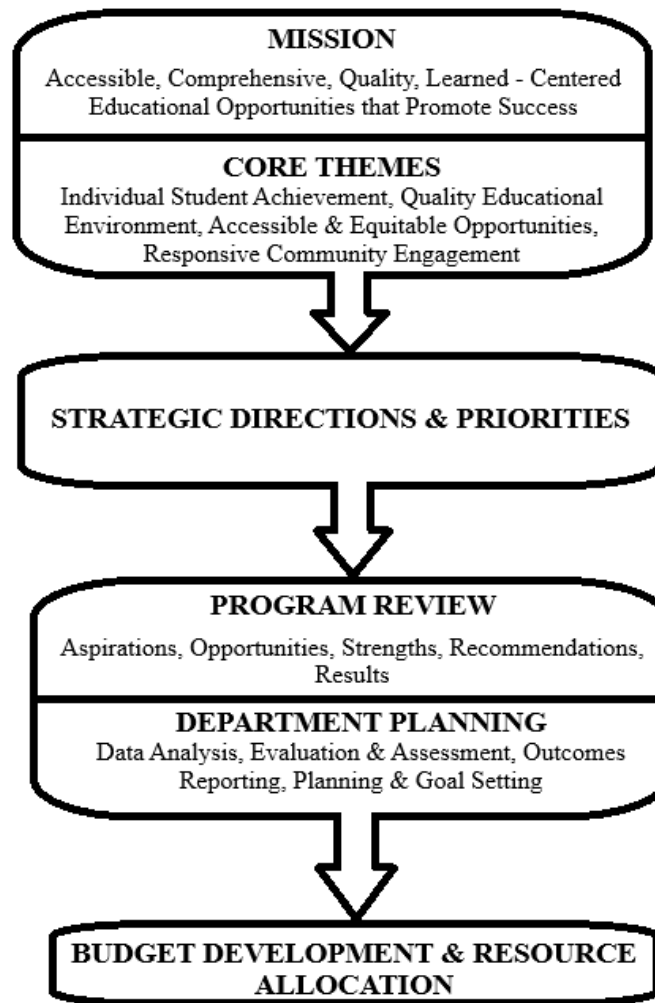
Figure 3. Department planning framework

As understood from Figure 3 (Lane Community College, 2025), strategic planning and management should be established to increase the quality of professional education in environmental engineering programs in Türkiye. With the adoption of this approach, opportunities for quality education will be accessible and the concept of education will become student-centered. Departmental planning should be designed to maximize individual student success. Programs should equip students with the knowledge and skills to address the problems they will encounter in the job market in the field of environmental engineering. Student success should be the focus of the program and quality learning environment, access to learning opportunities and stakeholder participation should be the main themes. Further improvement of the quality of laboratories, field studies and other learning tools is vital for achieving sustainable development. Under strategic orientations and priorities, environmental engineering departments should continuously review their programs, identify strengths, opportunities and disadvantages and produce solutions for them. Monitoring of educational programs, data analysis of effectiveness, collection of student and industry feedback and updating educational strategies based on these will also fall into the category of this strategic orientation and goals. Environmental engineering departments should also ensure maximum resource allocation to laboratory and field education facilities in their strategic approaches to strengthening educational infrastructure. This will move environmental engineering departments to a more competitive and industry-relevant status and increase the quality and employability of graduates in the labour market. In this context, program accreditations such as ABET and MÜDEK provide a roadmap for these departments.

Accreditation Processes, Importance of Sector and Alumni Participation

In Türkiye, MÜDEK and ABET accreditations are strong and important mechanisms that establish the "continuous improvement" and "stakeholder participation" cycle for environmental

engineering programs (Engin et al., 2023; MÜDEK, 2023; Taşçı and Lapçın, 2023). Accredited programs are expected to design curricula according to learning outcomes; increase the proportion of practical courses; and regularly update curricula using feedback from engineering companies, public institutions, and alumni (ABET, 2025). Therefore, accreditation criteria mostly coincide with the goal of "equipping students with various skills (Shuman et al., 2005)", which is at the core of the Competency-Based Vocational Education and Training approach. In addition, both CB Vocational Education and Training and accreditation processes are based on a competency-based framework and emphasize continuous improvement and stakeholder participation. And, international funding and project calls (e.g. Erasmus+, IPA projects, etc.) have the potential to provide additional resources and technical expertise for capacity building initiatives. Universities could possibly fund projects such as providing laboratory equipment for hazardous and non-hazardous waste, soil pollution, air pollution, noise pollution and other field-specific courses, practical training for faculty members and participation in international training programmes. However, for these projects to yield productive results, they are highly dependent on the participation of sector representatives (public, private and NGOs) and alumni in the curriculum development process. Regular alumni surveys, student satisfaction measurements and feedback from industry will further identify gaps in education to facilitate the effective use of funds and to form the basis for robust accreditation processes in the future. The problems that students will face after graduation and the competencies they need to address these problems should be determined in close collaboration with the industry and integrated into the curriculum. Industry representatives should help universities shape their educational content by determining what skills they expect graduates to have in the labor market. In addition, a monitoring and evaluation system that includes student and industry feedback should be established. In this way, programs can be brought closer to the industry, increasing the employability of environmental engineering graduates.

Competence-based Shaping, Networking and Recommendations

The success of the competency-based vocational education model is based on the principles of "shaping" (shaping the dimensions of students with rich skills) and "networking" (increasing real-life learning opportunities by creating common networks with stakeholders) (Bohne et al., 2017). Environmental engineering departments in Türkiye need to focus on the following points to progress in this perspective:

➢ Academic staff and department structures should be re-evaluated.

➢ The curriculum needs to be restructured to ensure theory-practice balance.

➢ Laboratory and field infrastructures should be improved.

➢ Effective use of financial resources, including non-university project resources, should be ensured.

➢ A quality assurance system based on continuous improvement and stakeholder participation should be established.

➢ The industrial experiences of faculty members should be continuously developed.

➢ Priority should be given to the student-centered approach.

➢ The classical environmental technology and environmental sciences department structure should be abandoned and a specialization-oriented department structure such as water and wastewater treatment, soil pollution and solid waste control, air pollution control and climate change should be implemented.

Future Perspective: Digital Transformation in Education

International environmental policies and global agendas are showing a very rapid development rate in subjects such as climate change, circular economy and digitalization. Environmental engineering education should be updated to protect this new paradigm in sustainable technologies and holistic management approaches. Preparing digital subjects such as "waste recycling for circular economy", "smart sensor technologies" or "pollution monitoring with remote sensing technologies" as courses and presenting them through sectoral collaborations will ensure that Competency-Based Vocational

Education and Training is well aligned with the demands of the time. Such improved courses should also integrate technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) into the learning model, which will provide a more effective dissemination of theoretical knowledge as well as equip students to develop practical application skills primarily through student practice (Mwaura, 2024; Ghazali et al., 2024; Soliman et al., 2021). The formation of virtual laboratory environments with the help of VR technologies allows students to learn through direct experience on complex processes (Soliman et al., 2021). Besides, AI-based learning tools may offer personalized learning pathways. These types of innovative approaches will ensure that students are quick to prepare for the applications of future environmental engineering. At this juncture, opinions of representatives of industries in addition to alumni and students provide valuable insights into the answers to questions such as which technologies are spreading faster and where additional skills are needed. Therefore, shaping educational plans, academic staff appointments, and laboratory investments according to the feedback received regularly from these stakeholders will increase the competitiveness of departments. In order to increase the usability of these technologies in education, curricula need to be restructured to focus on digital skills. In particular, simulations of complex processes such as environmental engineering can be performed in virtual laboratories so that students can experience various scenarios. In addition, thanks to these digital technologies, students can learn about innovative applications and technologies in environmental engineering. This transformation will not only teach students the basics of environmental engineering, but will also make them better equipped for future workforce needs.

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

From this holistic study, it appears that Environmental Engineering programs in Türkiye can evolve into a fully equipped, practice and innovation-oriented education model as envisaged by Competency-Based VET. However, multidimensional improvements are needed at both institutional (in terms of curriculum, laboratory facilities, accreditation, strategic planning) and personal level (faculty expertise, continuous professional development and student field experiences). Addressing these phenomena at the national level through educational policies and taking advantage of international funding opportunities and projects can accelerate this evolution. Stakeholder feedback, especially from industry representatives, alumni and students, should be regularly mentioned as an important aspect of new curriculum development and revision. Data collected from such organizations can provide important insights into areas that require specialized faculty, courses that need to add practical components, and better ways to improve students' field experiences. Feedback mechanisms such as student satisfaction surveys, alumni surveys and industry advisory boards can serve as the most important engines for institutionalizing competency-based education and CB VET principles in educational institutions. In this context, models such as the "7+1 education model," which offers students extended interaction with the professional world, emerge as concrete implementations of CB VET. This model allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world work environments during a dedicated internship period, effectively bridging the gap between academic preparation and professional practice.

When YÖK Atlas is examined, it is seen that there are differences between environmental engineering programs in terms of the number of students and minimum entrance scores. There are also significant differences in academic performance, laboratory infrastructures and research facilities in the departments of different universities. In these respects, improvements should be made to increase the capacity and quality of education in universities. CB VET emphasizes that environmental engineering departments should not only improve existing course content, but also include a holistic curriculum approach that includes improving laboratory and field infrastructure, increasing faculty members' industry experience, and institutionalizing stakeholder engagement. The curriculum should also be aligned with real-life issues such as waste management, air pollution control, climate change adaptation and circular economy, which will prepare graduates well to meet current environmental challenges. In engineering departments, accreditation (e.g. MÜDEK, ABET) and external grants are crucial for capacity building. CB VET recognizes possible opportunities for training of academic staff, renewal of laboratory infrastructure and the creation of a wider network of industry-university cooperation. Through the continuous improvement cycle and quality assurance strategy, environmental engineering

departments will become an important program that increases the employability and career opportunities of its graduates and contributes to solving very complex environmental problems.

Environmental engineering education in Türkiye needs to be transformed into a competency-based, field practice-based and stakeholder-oriented system. Moreover, given the increasingly complex nature of environmental problems and global competition, it is essential for Turkish universities to compete with universities in developed countries. The implementation of competency-based educational principles, coupled with a robust stakeholder management plan and effective quality assurance, will result in environmental engineering graduates as skilled, internationally recognized professionals with experience in the field, analytical thinking skills and innovative ways of solving complex problems. This transformation will strengthen the position of graduates in the labor market, increase the quality of solutions to Türkiye's environmental problems, and bring Türkiye closer to its sustainable development goals by both solving problems and producing environmental technologies.

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