

# *EVALUATION OF PROSPECTIVE MUSIC TEACHERS DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT VARIABLES*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the present study is to evaluate the democratic attitudes of prospective music teachers with regard to gender, class, parental educational status. In the present descriptive study, data was collected using "Democratic Attitude Scale" Gözütok (1995). 241 prospective music teachers from the music teacher education departments in Istanbul and Konya are the participants of the present study.

In the evaluation and interpretation of the data; *t* test and ANOVA were used to determine the differences. The analysis of the data obtained has been made using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS17:00). In the present study, evaluating the democratic attitudes of prospective music teachers evaluated according to the variables of gender, class, parental educational status, the findings suggest that music teachers have "good" democratic attitudes and these do not change according to the mentioned variables.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In its largest sense, democracy is a political system and form of government based on the sovereignty of the people. In term of social life; however, it is considered to be a way of living, understanding, and organizing social life. In democracies, the focus is on man who is considered to be of supreme value. In a democratic society, each individual is valuable and has the rights of free expression, to express personal thoughts freely, and self actualization (Kuzgun, 2000). In other words, the basic tenet of a democracy is to respect man per se but also his will, thoughts, and character (Yeşil and Aydın: 2007). In order to establish democratic values in social life, democracy has to be accepted as a way of living. Family and school have important roles in the acquisition of democratic values by the individuals. Hence, for the establishment of democracy in the society, democratic environments have to be found in the families as well as in the schools.

The first social environment that a child is born into and lives within is the family. Therefore, democratic values are taught and put into the practice in the family. Parents have to establish a healthy communication environment in which children are brought up as responsible, cooperative, self disciplined, constructive, and creative children (Nazlı, 2000, in: Üstün and Yılmaz, 2008). In a family with democratic attitudes and believes based on human dignity, family members are respectful to each other and have mutual love, responsibility, trust, sharing, and tolerance. In a family environment practicing democracy, children are brought up as responsible individuals who can make their own decisions, have high self-esteem, respect, and self control (Onur and Gençdoğan, 2005, in Üstün and Yılmaz, 2008). Children growing up in families disrespecting emotions and thoughts cannot be expected to have a democratic identity.

Democracy and education are two inseparable entities completing each other. Education does not only affect the individuals enrolled in the system, but defines also the future of the society as a whole. Therefore, "the education of individuals who value democracy and enable its continuity is of great importance" (Yeşil, 2002: 42). As democratic values and behaviours are learned socially, education is to have a part in fostering greater democracy. It is therefore important that schools and education systems play a part in fostering knowledge, skills, and values necessary to promote and protect a democratic political culture (Harber, 2002). Dewey stated that the threads caused by the changes and developments in a democratic society could only be overcome through appropriate and democratic education. However, it is quite different to foster democracy through traditional methods of instruction (Schweisfurth, 2002, in Kayabaşı, 2011). Education cannot provide a ready and quick solution to the problems of democratization; yet, it can help to embed democratic politics in a more supportive and sustaining culture over time and it would be short-sighted to ignore the importance of that potential role (Harber, 2002).

Teachers, thus, can enable their students to acquire the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills for fostering democracy in a democratic classroom environment. In a democratic class, the teacher is neither authoritarian nor indifferent. The students should have a say in the determination of class rules and be motivated by the cognizance of the benefits of doing educational tasks and participating in the processes for rather than the rewards and punishments. Teachers as democratic leaders take students' views into consideration, reaches a consensus with them about the tasks to be done and gives them the right of choosing the ways of doing the tasks (Başar, 2004: 72, Kayabaşı, 2011). Democratic teachers should give importance to democratic values in their classrooms. Shechtman (2002) stated the democratic values or beliefs a teacher should have are freedom, equality, and justice (in Kesici, 2008).

The existence of democracy in the class will not only contribute to students' success, but also enable them to acquire democratic attitudes and conducts. Teachers displaying democratic attitudes, especially in their classes, can be role models of democracy to their students (Aydoğan and Kukul, 2003).

The relationship of the students in the class with their teachers and classmates and of the teachers with their students will determine the atmosphere of the class. Authoritarian class atmosphere will keep communication and interaction in the class at a minimum. Fears and worries will be widely spread in such classes. A good classroom atmosphere is created by a teacher who uses learning processes appropriately and is a democratic leader. In such an atmosphere students are on the task as quickly as wanted and are on the task as long as it takes with interest. The existence of a democratic atmosphere is not only a factor with an impact on students' success but also on the development of democratic attitudes and conducts (Büyükkaragöz, 1990, in Tekin et. al., 2009). A democratic classroom is the one in which students' needs are answered, their rights are guaranteed in a safe and active learning environment (Raywid, 1987).

In traditional-authoritarian classrooms the teacher and the learning content are on the foreground. The student is passive; yet, the teacher constantly active. In democratic education, the basic aim is, together with a respect of the traditions, to bring up free minded individuals who can think more effectively. The students are constantly active at every stage of the lesson. The role assigned to the teacher is that of a guide. Guiding the students to think and do research are the basics of democratic education (Taçman, 2009:32). In a comparative study made, students in a democratic group developed positive attitudes to their classmates, enjoyed their work, and the success of the class increased slightly; whereas in the authoritarian group, success was higher but there were tensions among the students and negative attitudes towards their friends and teachers. The group of the students who were left free was the least effective unsuccessful group (Başar, 2004). Unfortunately, however, as in many regions of the world, schools have traditional tendencies to promote authoritarian values and practices discouraging participation, debate, responsibility and critical enquiry and preferring instead to use chalk and talk, rote memorization, and corporal punishment to reinforce teacher-centred discipline (Harber, 1997).

The differences between traditional education and democratic education are given in the table below (in Büyükkaragöz and Çivi, 1999).

Table 1. Differences between traditional education and democratic education

Traditional Education	Democratic Education
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tries to teach facts and phenomena related to basic sciences.</li> <li>2. Prepares for the University.</li> <li>3. Teaches the topics within a continuum..</li> <li>4. Encourages memorization of the phenomena and their transcription in the teaching process.</li> <li>5. Enables summary and transfer.</li> <li>6. Emphasizes disciplines related to cognitive development.</li> <li>7. Develops habits in line with the demands of the adults.</li> <li>8. Has a competitive stance.</li> <li>9. In the learning process, monotonous teacher guidance is practiced.</li> <li>10. Forces the student to take the classes labeled as "very good", "beautiful" by the adults.</li> <li>11. Disregards individual differences, expects obedience</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tries to develop attitudes and concepts for a democratic life.</li> <li>2. Prepares for life within a democratic attitude.</li> <li>3. Teaches the topics in an applied way to make the students have a successful life.</li> <li>4. Tries to create changes in thinking and behaviors of learning.</li> <li>5. Enables them to have social life experiences for learning.</li> <li>6. Provides the individuals to have experimental interactions with their environment.</li> <li>7. Participation in group projects is emphasised and self control habits.</li> <li>8. Develops an attitude for cooperation.</li> <li>9. Creativity, efforts, and skills development for students' self actualization and learning are</li> </ol>

<p>from each of the students.</p> <p>12. Prevents the students to express their views in discord with the coursebooks.</p> <p>13. Artificial motivation.</p> <p>14. The youth is bound with the adult culture.</p>	<p>essential.</p> <p>10. Students are guided to make their own decisions for realizing their own aims.</p> <p>11. Provides differing experiences according to individual differences and skills.</p> <p>13. Motivation according to interests and demands.</p> <p>14. The youth try to develop their own culture besides that of the adults.</p>
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Turkish National Educational system underwent recently a reform redesigning the whole educational system according to constructivism led by the Ministry of National Education (MNE). Art education gained further significance with the constructivist approach in education, in practice since the 2007-2008 academic year (MNE, 2006). This newly gained understanding can be said to have similar features like the democratic class in Table 1. According to a constructivist program "the teacher, instead of answering the question for the learner, provides a conducive environment and guides the students via thought provoking questions to explore and solve the problems" (Brooks ve Brooks, 1999 in Ataman, Okay, 2009). On examining the principles in Table 1, in democratic educational settings students are provided with guidance, in line with the tenets of constructivism, to make the decisions to realize their own goals, to plan, to exert self-discipline, to evaluate, and to cooperate with others during an activity.

In music classes, the first practices that come to the mind are musical activities. In the constructivist approach activities such as learning by doing, interaction and communication with their peers, making music (very simple rhythmic or melodic structures) are the basic elements of music education. Nowadays, constructivist music education is practiced with activities under four learning areas. Two of these learning areas are "listening, singing, playing" and "musical creativity" encompassing activities directly related with making music.

A constructivist music teacher pays attention to activities related to musical practices to enable students' self expression, to produce their own creative music samples, playing together the pieces made in choirs and social learning activities such as using Orff instruments for playing and singing together. All of these practices and a principled approach can only be possible within a democratic classroom environment.

According to the constructivist approach in practice, considering the above mentioned principles, a music teacher has to create a democratic learning environment in which the program concept is continued to obtain qualified musical feedback. Any music teacher who wants to provide qualified music education, has to consider this approach as a necessity. Jaffurs, adding that the music teacher has to add personal satisfaction as well, quotes the following: "Only an authoritarian mind can regard educational activities as boring. Democratic educators do not produce boredom but derive pleasure simultaneously from activities aiming only to teach, to learn, and to see a serious process of study (Freire, 2000, 1997, in Jaffurs, 2004).

Another issue on the mind of educationalist specialist is that music education, besides the teaching of music, it is also an educational practice for democratic individuals. Democracy education aims to create common democracy awareness by fostering democratic conducts. Therefore, improving democratic attitudes by means of music education is worth studying. Çuhadar proposes related songs that understanding the lyrics and singing, and having a music education will lead in the youngsters to an awareness of democracy and human rights (Çuhadar, 2008).

The art of music leads people to accompany each other. They have to follow the same rhythm sometimes in a common and at other times in individual tasks. Music is a discipline that enables people to play, work, share, produce, feel the same emotions and live peaceful and harmonious in a society. Although there are no certain data about the emergence of music, there are views that it was used first as a tool of communication and later as a social tool bringing primitive societies together. Hence, the nature of music pushing people into a democratic environment.

The democratic structure in the nature of music can be discussed better with the following example: There are various instrumental groups in an orchestra. There is a chief of every instrumental group, a concertmaster responsible for the whole of the orchestra, and a maestro to make all the groups play in musical balance. The orchestra has to play different musical themes as a single, well-balanced musical piece. For example, if too much or too little volume is generated, a distance from the ideal musical character might be created. Thus, a theme in the foreground and musicians/singers of this theme are to be in the background if necessary. Therefore all musicians and instrumental groups have to listen to each other carefully. This is the one beautiful example showing that individuals do not enjoy unlimited freedom in democracy and that individuals can not act as they like.

As emphasized in the relevant literature, for democratic values to be embedded at every layer of the society, to become a perspective and behavior, the concept of democratic education has to settle at schools. Music education, among the important dimension of education in Turkey, has its most common application in form of music lessons at schools. Due to the nature of music, the teaching and learning environment is to be democratic. Music classes are among the the classes in which cooperation, mutual assistance, listening, and respect to each other can be fostered easily.

Chorus and orchestra are the most beautiful examples of democracy as each group is a different musical character and these distinct characters come together and produce works of ultimate aesthetics. Therefore, the environment of music education containing the phenomenon of democracy in its nature has to be democratic. It is impossible to make music within an authoritarian atmosphere where the bodies and minds are tense. Hence, democratic attitudes and behaviors of music teachers have an important role in making the students learn and make music.

The aim of the present study is to determine the democratic attitude levels of prospective teachers according to the variables of gender, class, and parental educational background.

### **METHOD**

The present study is a descriptive study aiming to determine the democratic attitudes of prospective music teachers. Among the quantitative research methods, survey has been employed in the present study. Survey models are used to research and describe a present condition or phenomena. The topic of the study, a phenomenon, person, or an entity, is described as it is in its current condition. No attempts are made to alter or affect them. There is an issue to be studies and it is right there. What counts is to "observe" it appropriately and define it (Karasar, 2000:77).

### **Universe and Sample**

The universe of the study: 241 prospective music teachers studying at Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Kelesoglu Faculty of Education Music Education Department and Marmara University Atatürk Faculty of Education Music Education Department. The sample of the study consists of prospective music teachers who have volunteered to participate in the present study chosen according to random sampling method. Out of these, 71 are female and 71 male, 142 in total, studying at Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Kelesoglu Faculty of Education Music Education Department and 65 female and 34 male students from Marmara University Atatürk Faculty of Education Music Education Department studying at classes ranging form one to four.

### **Data Collection Tool**

The data collection instrument was the "Democratic Attitude Scale" adapted to Turkish by Gözütok (1995). The scale was developed in order to determine the levels of teachers and prospective teachers' democratic attitude levels. The attitude scale consists in total of 50 Likert type items. The scores that might be obtained vary from 0 to 50 and the higher the scores the higher is the democratic attitude. The scale was developed by the adaptation of the G and H forms of "Teacher Opinonaire on Democracy" "Published for the AttitudeResearch Laboratory" in 1980 and applied in many countries. At the first stage, the scale consisting of 130 items was in line with expert opinions reduced to 100 items. Then it was applied to a teacher group consisting of 400 teachers working at the primary, secondary, and tertiary level. Afterwards, in order to make it more compatible with the Turkish Education System, after the elimination of unnecessary items only 50-items remained Finally, it was applied to a mixed teacher and academician group of 100 with one month interval and the test - retest determined the reliability coefficient scores between the two applications as 0.87 (Gözütok, 1995).

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The research was conducted with the data collected prospective music teachers enrolled at the Music Education Departments of Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Kelesoglu Faculty of Education and Marmara University Atatürk Faculty of Education. The data obtained from the attitude scale applied 241 prospective music teachers has been evaluated statistically using frequency analysis for identifier values, t-test and ANOVA to determine the degree of relations among the independent variables.

### **FINDINGS**

In this section, the democratic attitudes of prospective music teachers have been evaluated according to the independent variables of gender, class, and parental educational background and the findings obtained presented in tables.

Table 2. Prospective music teachers' democratic attitude scores

N	Minimum	Maximum	$\bar{\chi}$	Ss
241	22	46	35,01	4,61

In the distribution of the democratic attitude scores in Table 2, it can be seen that prospective music teachers have an average of 35 points, equal to 70 points on a 100 points scale. According to this average score, prospective music teachers displayed positive democratic attitude tendency at a "good" level.

Table 3. Evaluation of prospective music teachers' democratic attitudes according to gender.

Gender	N	$\bar{\chi}$	Ss	Sd	t	P
Male	104	34,52	4,85	239	-1,436	,396
Female	137	35,39	4,39			

In Table 3 providing information about prospective music teachers' democratic attitudes distribution by gender, there is not a statistically significant difference between male and female participants according to the independent variables t-test results ( $t = -1,436$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ). Hence, it can be said that there are not any differences according to the gender in the democratic attitudes of the participating prospective music teachers.

Table 4. Evaluation of prospective music teachers' democratic attitudes according to grade-level

Class Level	N	$\bar{\chi}$	ss	Source of Variance	Total of Squares	Sd	Average of Squares	F	P
1. Grade	57	36,14	3,94	Between Groups	153,762	3	51,254	2,461	,063
2. Grade	74	34,97	4,68						
3. Grade	66	33,92	4,99	Within Groups	4936,172	237	20,858		
4. Grade	44	35,27	4,44						
Total	241	35,02	4,61	Total	5089,934	240			

According to Table 4, the ANOVA test conducted to see changes in the democratic attitudes of prospective music teachers according to the grade they are currently in revealed no statistically significant results ( $F = 2,461$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ).

Table 5. Evaluation of prospective music teachers' democratic attitudes according to maternal educational background.

School Level	N	$\bar{\chi}$	Ss	Source of Variance	Total of Squares	Sd	Average of Squares	F	P
Elementary	60	35,90	4,22	Between Groups	76,037	3	25,346	1,198	,311
Middle	37	35,19	4,31						
High	84	34,74	4,90	Within Groups	5013,897	237	21,156		

Undergraduate and postgraduate	60	34,42	4,70						
Total	241	35,02	4,61	Total	5089,934	240			

The ANOVA test conducted to see differences in the democratic attitudes of prospective music teachers according maternal educational background revealed no statistically significant results ( $F= 1,198$ ,  $p<0,05$ ) as seen at Table 5.

Table 6. Evaluation of prospective music teachers' democratic attitudes according to paternal educational background.

School Level	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Variance	Total of Squares	Sd	Average of Squares	F	P
Elementary	32	35,5000	5,17438	Between Groups	20,834	3	6,945	,325	,808
Middle	40	35,4250	4,03756						
High	68	34,7500	4,80166	Within Groups	5069,099	237	21,389		
Undergraduate and postgraduate	101	34,8812	4,53715						
Total	241	35,0166	4,60522						

As seen on Table 6, the ANOVA test conducted revealed no statistically significant differences ( $F= ,325$ ,  $p<0,05$ ) between the democratic attitudes of prospective music teachers and their paternal educational background.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

In line with the findings obtained, no statistically significant difference can be seen in the democratic attitudes of the participating prospective music teachers studying at the Music Education Departments of Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Kelesoglu Faculty of Education and Marmara University Atatürk Faculty of Education. However, the findings of other studies related to the democratic attitudes of the participating prospective music teachers according to gender differ quite in other studies. The findings of these students show that female students have better democratic attitudes compared to male students (Tekin et al., 2009, Akın and Özdemir, 2009, Genç and

Kalafat, 2008). Similarly, in the study conducted by Demoulin and Kolstad (2000) with 1452 prospective teachers, female candidates have higher democratic maturity compared to males (in Akın, Özdemir, 2009).

In the present study, there was no statistically significant difference in the contribution of paternal educational background levels to the democratic attitudes of prospective music teachers. This outcome is in line with that of Genç ve Kalafat (2008); yet, in the study made by Tekin et al. (2009), the democratic attitudes of prospective physical education teachers were influenced by parental educational levels. The higher the parental educational background levels the higher were the democratic attitude levels. In other words, the democratic attitude level of students whose fathers were graduated from secondary education was higher compared to those whose fathers were graduated from primary education. Likewise, the democratic attitude level of students whose mothers were graduated from secondary education had higher education levels compared to those whose mothers were graduated from primary education. The democratic attitude level of students whose mothers were graduated from tertiary education was the highest.

If the findings of the present study is compared with other studies using the same scale (Tekin, et al 2009, Genç and Kalafat, 2006, Karahan, et al 2006), the findings of the present study is parallel with the findings of Karahan et al., (2006) considering the gender variable; yet, not with the findings of Tekin, et al. (2009) and Genç and Kalafat (2006). According to class level variable, they are parallel to the findings of Tekin, et al. (2009) and Genç & Kalafat (2006) but not with the findings of Karahan et al., (2006). Considering the findings of the present study regarding parental educational backgrounds, they are similar to the findings of Genç and Kalafat (2006), but not with the findings of Tekin, et al. (2009).

All these findings show that prospective music teachers have a "good" democratic attitude level and this does not change according to various independent variables. The "good" democratic attitude level is an indicator of the fact that these teachers will display democratic behaviours in their future classes. The lack of any differentiation based on gender, class, parental educational background indicates that these prospective teachers who have music as a shared interest do not have variation regarding their views of democracy. Prospective music teachers live during their B.A. years within the principles of musical interaction and communication. Hence, we can state that musical way of thought caused by musical living as a common point in prospective music teachers had a positive influence on the formation of democratic beliefs. This result shows the importance of music education in formation of democracy concept in the society.

Increasing the demographic variables of the study and applying the democratic attitude scale to teachers from other fields and disciplines, studying the differences underlying the democratic attitudes might be within the scope of future studies.

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