

The Development of the Democratic Behavior Scale: A Validity and Reliability Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop a scale to determine the democratic behavior levels of children in early childhood. The study group included a total of 486 children attending kindergartens and primary school nursery classes in Melikgazi, Kayseri. Scale reliability was tested by using intra-group correlation values, item analysis coefficients, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient (0,98), and the Hotelling T2 test result [830,12 and (p<0.001)]. For validity testing purposes, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, KMO test result (0,97), the Bartlett test and item analysis (p<0.001) were calculated. It was consequently decided that the scale was suitable for factoring, and AFA was used in principal component analyses. Following this, the structural equation model of DFA was performed, which confirmed that the model suited the data and that the 3-factor structure of the scale was valid. Confirmed as valid and reliable, the scale consisted of a total of 38 items in the sub-dimensions of "Knowing Your Rights", "Autonomous Behaviors" and "Democratic Behaviors". The highest score possible from the scale is 190, while the lowest possible score is 38.

KEYWORDS

Preschool education; early childhood education; democracy education; democratic behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a way of life as well as a form of government based on the sovereignty of the people. A democratic society needs individuals who embrace democratic values and a culture of democracy. According to Dewey (1996), the pioneer of the democracy education movement in US schools in the first half of the twentieth century, democracy is the most important element of education. In order to ensure the continuity of democracy, Dewey emphasizes the necessity of raising autonomous individuals with critical thinking skills instead of passive individuals who blindly believe what they hear. According to Dewey, democratic education should be a system with clear rules which respects the individual rights of students and values freedom, responsibility and respect as opposed to coercion, unnecessary strictness and authority (Huang, 2014).

Attitudes and behaviors acquired in schools and classrooms through democratic education extend into social life and contribute to the creation of a culture of democracy (Yeşil, 2010). Teaching children about democracy means preparing them to become citizens who will protect and shape democracy in the future. However, young children are neglected as citizens. The culture of human rights and democracy will not develop on their own in today's children who are citizens of the future. A conscious, well-planned intervention is necessary. It is therefore important to start democracy education at an early age in order to raise democratic individuals (Pettman et al., 1986). According to Elkatmış (2007), "it is easier to teach democratic behaviors such as respect and tolerance to fresh minds who have not yet developed prejudices and rigid attitudes and who are still blank slates open to innovation, change and tolerance". The important principle when selecting and planning content and teaching method is to remember that every child is unique (Bath & Karlsson, 2016; Torun & Duran, 2014).

With early childhood democracy education, children are awarded the opportunity to make decisions about their own lives, increase their self-confidence and grow up as individuals who know their responsibilities and are useful to themselves and the society. Democracy education starting from early childhood helps develop democratic behaviors such as knowing and protecting one's rights, respecting differences, establishing cooperation, helping, sharing, being sensitive to public events, taking responsibility, communicating effectively, innovative thinking, and problem solving (Yılmaz & Ölçer, 2018).

A review of earlier studies on democracy education and the democratic attitudes and behaviors of children shows that they generally concern elementary and secondary school students (Bağçeli Kahraman & Onur Sezer, 2017; Bartels et al., 2016; Bartels et al. 2018; Çetinkaya & Kıncal, 2015; Çullu & Samancı, 2016; Erbil, 2014; Korkmaz & Gümüşeli, 2013; Lowry, 2002; Mapiasse, 2007; Okutan, 2010; Özer, 2004; Sadık & Sarı, 2012; Thornberg & Elvstrand, 2012; Ulubey & Gözütok, 2015). The lack of a study aiming to measure the level of democratic behaviors displayed in early childhood has led the researcher to study this topic. The study therefore aims to determine the level of democratic behaviors displayed by children in early childhood based on teacher opinions and to develop a democratic behavior scale.

METHOD

The quantitative research method of scale development was used in developing the Democratic Behavior Scale for 48-72 month-old children. The process involved item pooling, expert opinion, pilot study, scale implementation and validity and reliability testing.

The study group included a total of 486 children attending kindergartens and primary school nursery classes in Melikgazi, Kayseri. The demographic data belonging to the participants are given in Table 1

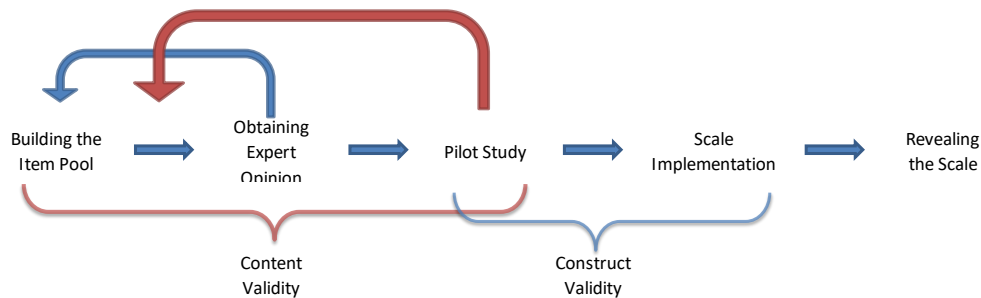
Table 1. Frequency Distribution Table of Participants' Demographic Information

		Total	
		n	%
Gender of child	F	246	50,62
	M	240	49,38
	Total	486	100
Age of child	60-72 months	300	61,73
	48-60 months	186	38,27
	Total	486	100
Years in Preschool Education	1 year	273	59,35
	2 years	146	31,74
	3 years	41	8,91
	Total	460	100
Mother's Educational Status	Elementary	38	8,54
	Secondary	52	11,68
	High school	132	29,66
	Undergraduate	35	7,87
	Graduate	188	42,24
	Total	445	100
Father's Educational Status	Elementary	31	7,05
	Secondary	37	8,41
	High school	116	26,36
	Undergraduate	28	6,36
	Graduate	228	51,82
	Total	440	100

FINDINGS

While developing the Democratic Behavior Scale for 48-72 month-old children, the scale development process modeled by Doğan et al. (2015) was followed. Figure 1 displays the model.

Figure 1. The Process of Scale Development



Building the item pool

Inductive and deductive methods were used jointly when creating the item pool of the Democratic Behavior Scale for children aged 48-72 months (Doğan et al., 2015). To begin with, the existing literature was reviewed by using the deductive method. The current pre-school education program and the developmental characteristics of 48-72 month-old children were examined. A total of 42 items were created by making sure that the characteristics to be included in the scale items were observable behaviors. In the second stage, views of field experts were taken by using the inductive method, and new statements were added to the item pool upon their suggestions. An item pool consisting of 52 statements was prepared with 7 new statements thus added.

Obtaining Expert Opinion

The item pool was presented for the views of a total of 11 experts, consisting of two professors, one associate professor, three assistant professors and one faculty member from the field of preschool education, as well as two kindergarten teachers, a classroom teacher and a statistician. The content validity of the 52-item scale was evaluated, and a content validity index of 0.93 was found.

Pilot Study

Revisions to the scale items suggested by the experts were made and the pilot trial started. The 5-point Likert-type trial form included the options "never", "sometimes", "occasionally", "often" and "always", and the pilot study was conducted with 80 children. In order to determine the measuring power of each item as a result of the pilot trial and to make the scale more reliable, item-total correlation coefficients were examined. These coefficients are expected not to be negative and to be greater than +0.3. Items 6 and 44 did not meet this assumption and were revised. After the pilot trial, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.935.

Scale Implementation

Forms with missing data were removed from the study and a total of 460 scales were examined for validity and reliability.

Reliability Measurement

The analyses used in reliability testing are given in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Reliability Measurement

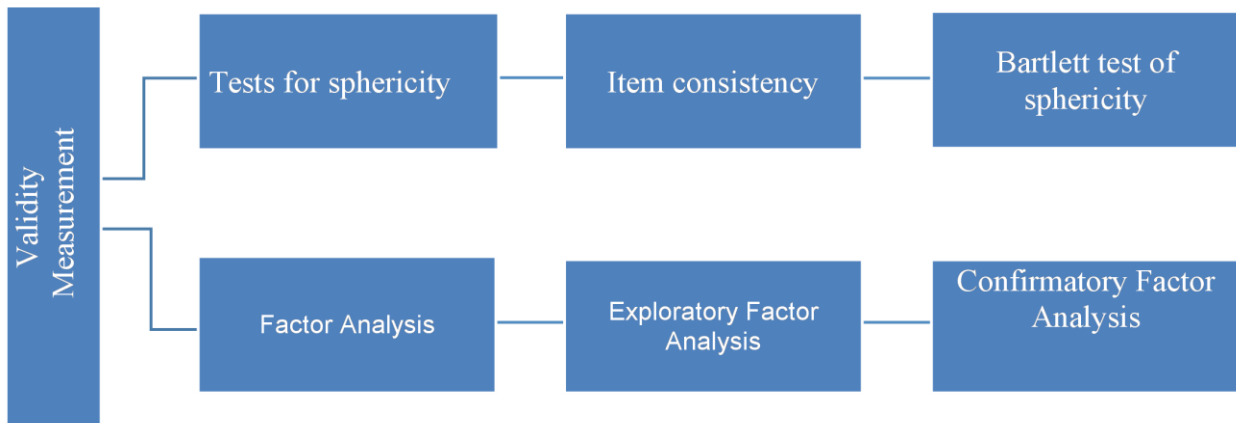


In order to determine the measuring power of each item in the scale and to make the scale more reliable, item total correlation coefficients were examined. The item total correlation coefficient of the item is expected not to be negative but to be greater than +0.3 (Terzi, 2019). Item 44 was removed from the scale for not meeting this criterion.

Based on the statistics, the total Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.98, and the split-half results were Cronbach Alpha 0.97 for Part 1 and Cronbach Alpha 0.97 for part 2. In addition, the Hotelling T² value was found to be 830.12 and significant for testing model fit ($p < 0.001$). As a reliability coefficient close to 1 is ideal in a Likert-type scale, it can be argued that the total scale is highly reliable (Tezbaşaran, 1997).

Validity Measurement

When testing validity, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used for internal consistency between items, the KMO test for the adequacy of the number of units in the sample, and the Bartlett test for factorability and item analysis (Şeker & Gençdoğan, 2014). It was concluded as a result that the scale was suitable for factoring and AFA was performed in principal component analysis. The items thought to harm the item scale structure as a result of AFA were removed from the scale upon expert opinion. Then, the structural equation model DFA was performed and the 3-factor structure of the scale was shown to be valid. The analyses used in validity calculation are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Validity Measurement

The KMO and Bartlett tests were conducted to understand whether the scale was suitable for factor analysis. The KMO test result is expected to be 0.50 and above, and the Bartlett sphericity test result is expected to be statistically significant (Büyüköztürk, 2018). In this study, the KMO test result was found to be 0.97, and the Bartlett test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$) was significant.

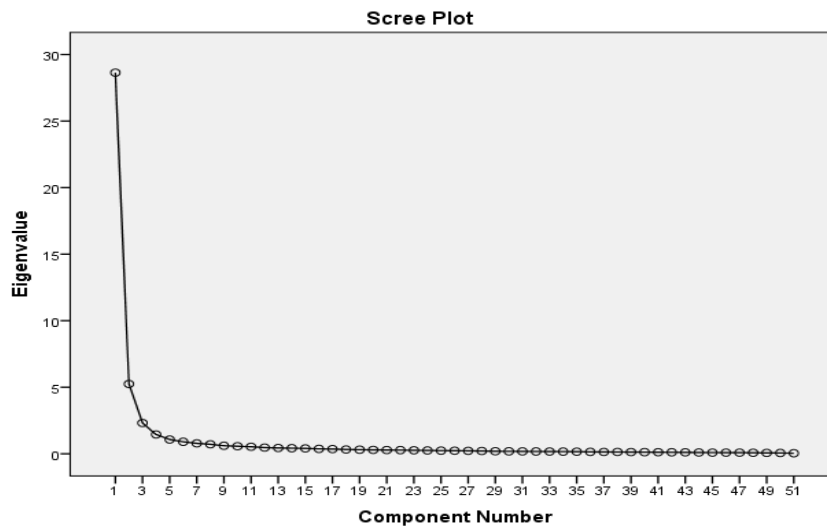
Accordingly, high correlations were observed between the variables and it was concluded that factor analysis could be performed on the scale. The data from the Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Sphericity tests are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. KMO and Chi-square Test Results

Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO)	Bartlett test Chi-square	sd	p
0,97	28730,256	1275	<0.001

With the data obtained according to the values in the table, the scale was decided to be suitable for factor analysis. After factor analysis, the factor load of the scale items should be above 0.30 (Büyüköztürk, 2018). As no item had a factor load below 0.30 in the analyses, none was removed from the scale.

"Exploratory Factor Analysis" was used to statistically test the validity of the scale. Varimax Vertical Rotation was performed in order to determine the factors under which the scale items being evaluated were gathered. The factor number of the scale can be seen in the line scree plot created according to the eigenvalue.

Figure 4. Scatter Diagram of Factor Eigenvalues

An examination of the graph in Figure 4 shows that the eigenvalue acceleration above +1 is broken after the 3rd factor, reaching a horizontal position and starting to become linear. This shows a scale with 3 factors. Findings of the exploratory factor analysis conducted on the three-factor structure of the Democratic Behavior Scale are presented in Table 3

The factor analysis showed that the three-factor structure explained 71% of the total variance. Accordingly, the first factor explains 30.5% of the total variance, the second factor explains 20.3% of it, and the third factor explains 20.12%. In factor analysis, factors should explain more than 40% of the total variance (Evcı & Avlar, 2017). Based on these results, the scale can be said to have high validity.

The factors in the scale were named by considering the characteristics of the scale items. At this stage, considering the theoretical structure and taking the opinions of field experts, Factor 1 consisting of 24 items was named “Democratic Behaviors”, Factor 2 consisting of 15 items was named “Knowledge of Rights” and Factor 3 consisting of 13 items was named “Autonomous Behaviors”.

According to Yurdugül (2005), the items intended to measure the relevant structure in factor analysis are reserved for the final form of the scale (each factor representing a group), and the items that are not represented in the factors are not admitted to the final form. Accordingly, four items (I20, I21, I25, I26.) that did not comply with the sub-dimension of Knowledge of Rights were removed from the scale.

Table 3. Democratic Behavior Scale Factor Analysis Load Values

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
M1	0,152	0,646	0,500
M2	0,242	0,787	0,352
M3	0,247	0,875	0,249
M4	0,245	0,881	0,221
M5	0,206	0,820	0,147
M6	0,128	0,723	0,027
M7	0,187	0,720	0,400
M8	0,239	0,861	0,269
M9	0,159	0,794	0,177
M10	0,217	0,775	0,384
M11	0,155	0,447	0,655
M12	0,288	0,521	0,555
M13	0,357	0,332	0,729
M14	0,267	0,355	0,646
M15	0,321	0,432	0,578
M16	0,348	0,296	0,710
M17	0,359	0,342	0,715
M18	0,409	0,157	0,685
M19	0,338	0,228	0,641
M20	0,273	0,568	0,498
M21	0,218	0,735	0,323
M22	0,265	0,326	0,744
M23	0,280	0,300	0,727
M24	0,706	0,152	0,327
M25	0,557	0,132	0,611
M26	0,413	0,529	0,503
M27	0,454	0,542	0,505
M28	0,449	0,395	0,615

M29	0,828	0,208	0,175
M30	0,676	0,305	0,383
M31	0,782	0,299	0,146
M32	0,781	0,174	0,341
M33	0,601	0,229	0,542
M34	0,611	0,168	0,514
M35	0,744	0,149	0,219
M36	0,694	0,299	0,375
M37	0,641	0,207	0,424
M38	0,790	0,264	0,208
M39	0,858	0,126	0,156
M40	0,783	0,305	0,08
M41	0,833	0,142	0,258
M42	0,839	0,180	0,194
M43	0,749	0,140	0,238
M45	0,759	0,212	0,178
M46	0,603	0,237	0,407
M47	0,771	0,241	0,257
M48	0,821	0,216	0,246
M49	0,706	0,141	0,405
M50	0,738	0,166	0,440
M51	0,625	0,156	0,516
M52	0,664	0,258	0,450
Eigenvalue	28,64 0	5,250	2,320
Variance explained %	30,55 7	20,30 0	20,12 0
Total variance explained %	30,55 7	50,85 7	70,97 7
Cronbach Alpha values of sub items (Item based standard cronbach alpha)	0,979	0,967	0,958

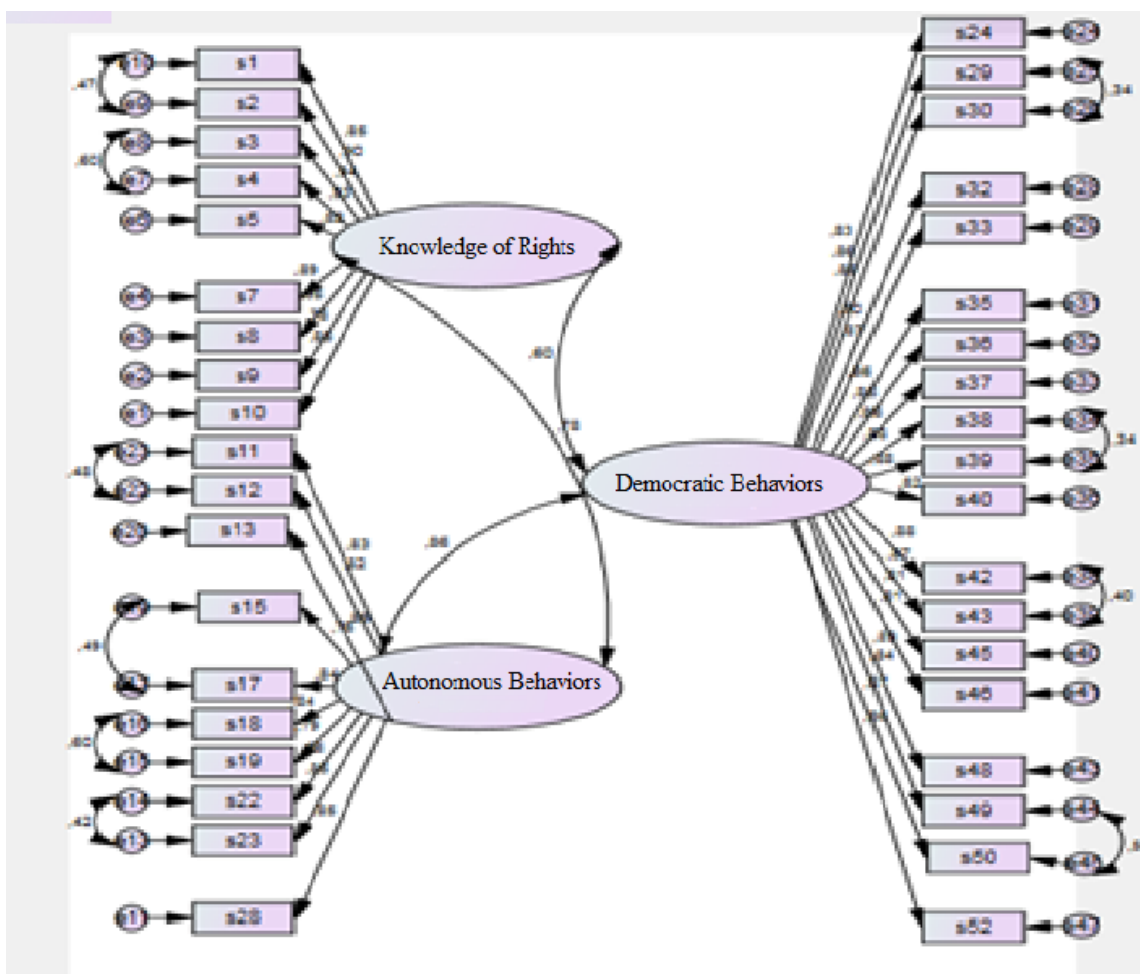
Confirmatory Factor Analysis was applied by using the AMOS program in order to verify the 3-factor structure created after the Exploratory Factor Analysis. The analysis used the

“Maximum Likelihood-ML” technique. After a model is created and tested in accordance with the analyses in a given study, confirmatory factor analysis may require the model to be changed. These corrections after the analyses are important in terms of improving the model (Evcı and Avlar, 2017). Therefore, the standardized regression coefficients of the model were examined and the items with low coefficients (<0.7) were removed one by one and recalculated, and 9 items (I6, I14, I16, I25, I31, I34, I41, I47, I51) were removed from the scale. At the same time, covariance connections were added to the path diagram in line with the modification suggestions.

The results showed the fit to be acceptable as the goodness of fit indexes χ^2/df (CMIN/DF)= 3,326 was below 5, RMSEA =0,79 was below 0,80, CFI = 0,920 and IFI=0,920 values were greater than 0,90. In addition, as S-RMR= 0.047 is below 0,05, it is a perfect fit. However, although the values of GFI=0,75, AGFI=0,72, NNF=0,89 are below 0,90, the scale was used in this form as these values are close to acceptable fit and in order not to harm content validity. Based on the model created as a result of confirmatory factor analysis, it was concluded that the data confirmed the factors (Brown, 2006; Erkorkmaz et al. 2013; Evcı & Aylar, 2007).

The factorial model obtained as a result of confirmatory factor analysis and findings on the factor-item relationship are given in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Findings on the DFA Factorial Model and Factor-Item Relationship



The process of developing a democratic behavior scale for early childhood started with the preparation of an item pool consisting of 52 statements. Then, expert opinion was sought for the scale items and the content validity index of the 52-item scale was calculated as 0,93. With the expert opinion, adjustments were made to the scale items and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0,935 after the pilot application.

According to the statistics during the reliability calculation phase, the total Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.98, and the split-half results were Cronbach Alpha 0.97 for Part 1 and Cronbach Alpha 0.97 for part 2. At the same time, the Hotelling T2 value was found to be 830.12 and ($p < 0.001$) significant for testing the model fit.

During the validity calculation phase, the KMO test result was found to be 0.97, and the Bartlett sphericity test ($p < 0.001$) was found to be significant. As a result of the analyses, the scale items regarded to be suitable for evaluation were found to have a 3-factor structure. The factor analysis showed that the three-factor structure accounted for 71% of the total variance. The first factor explained 30,5% of the total variance, the second factor explained 20,3% of the total variance, and the third factor explained 20,12% of the total variance. In factor analysis, factors are expected to account for at least 40% of the total variance (Evcı & Avlar, 2017). The validity of the scale can therefore say to be high.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to confirm the 3-factor structure reached after Exploratory Factor Analysis. The results obtained in the analysis suggested good fit as the goodness of fit indexes χ^2/df (CMIN/DF)= 3,326 was below 5, RMSEA =0,79 was below 0,80, and CFI = 0,920 and IFI=0,920 values were greater than 0,90. In addition, the S-RMR= 0.047 value below 0,05 also showed perfect fit. Even though GFI=0,75, AGFI=0,72 and NNF=0,89 were below 0,90, the scale was not changed in order to protect content validity, considering that the values were close to acceptable fit and owing to their importance in the measurement tool and in the explanation of the relevant factor. It was concluded that the data obtained from the model created as a result of confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the factors.

The scale of democratic behavior is a 5-point Likert scale consisting of a total of 38 items, with 9 items in the "Knowledge of Rights" sub-dimension, 10 in the "Autonomous Behaviors" sub-dimension, and 19 in the "Democratic Behaviors" sub-dimension. The highest possible score from the scale is 190, and the lowest score is 38. As a result of the analyses, the scale was concluded to be valid and reliable.

DISCUSSION

In order to be a society with a culture of democracy, individuals living in that society must be raised as self-confident and autonomous individuals who can think freely, express themselves clearly, make their own decisions, question, criticize, research and solve problems, and know themselves realistically. Raising individuals with these characteristics is only possible with an education that develops the culture of democracy which should start in early childhood, an important stage in the character development of children (Yılmaz & Ölçer, 2018).

In the Knowledge of Rights sub-dimension of the democratic behavior scale, the awareness levels of children regarding the protection, development and participation rights in the children's rights convention are measured. Article 42 of the Convention states that children's rights should be taught to adults as well as children. In this way, it is accepted as a fundamental right of children to know the rights granted to them by laws and contracts. In a study evaluating the views of preschool teachers on children's rights, Kor (2013) concluded that teachers believed that the articles of the Children's Rights Convention regarding the right to life, development, health and education can raise awareness in children in early childhood. Baydar and Yazıcı (2015), in their study aiming to determine the perception of children aged 60-72 months about children's rights, concluded that the majority of children expressed the right to development in their paintings, while more than half included the right to life, almost half the right to protection, and some the right to participation. Baydar and Yazıcı's findings corroborate the idea that early childhood is an appropriate time to starting rights education.

The Democratic Behaviors sub-dimension of the Democratic Behavior Scale measures the levels of social development behaviors that every person should display for the development of a democratic culture, such as obeying rules, participating in decisions, cooperation, sharing, helpfulness, respect and tolerance. Lowry (2002) contended that democracy is a moral behavior and that both equality and problem solving will be encouraged in the classroom via democracy education. Sundawa (2015) stated that the use of the classroom as a democracy laboratory has a strong effect on the development of students' democratic skills and that teachers are an important player in developing students' democratic character at school.

The Autonomous Behaviors sub-dimension of the democratic behavior scale measures the levels of behaviors in to the social and cognitive development area that every person should display for the development of a democratic culture, such as asking questions, doing research, solving problems, starting and maintaining a conversation, expressing opinions, protecting the rights of oneself and others. According to Ak (2016), democracy in the preschool period means that children can make decisions about their own lives. With a democratic approach, while children create social and group awareness, they also get to know themselves. In this way, self-efficacy, self-development, self-experience, self-responsibility and self-control skills develop (Dürr, 2005; Elkatmış, 2007). The development of students' self-regulation and decision-making skills, an increase in their motivation levels and the road to becoming lifelong learners require high student autonomy (Yılmaz & Ölçer, 2018). According to the competencies for a culture of democracy model, autonomous learning skills are those that are necessary for individuals to perform, organize and evaluate their own learning according to their own needs, through self-direction and self-organizing, without help from others (COE, 2016).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the democratic behavior levels of children by using the DBS completed by pre-school teachers. As the scale is also suitable for parental use, studies which examine children's democratic behavior levels based on their parents' observations may also be conducted.

In addition, preschool teachers may be offered in-service training programs and seminars on children's rights and democracy education in early childhood in order to enable them to develop activities and practices that support children's knowledge of children's rights and democratic behavior.

Families' attitudes, behaviors and knowledge levels have a great impact on the development of children. For this reason, families may also be offered training on how to approach their children with rights-based democratic attitudes and behaviors in order to help children develop democratic behaviors from a young age.

Authors' Note

This article is based on Sevi Kent Kükürtcü's doctoral thesis titled "The Effect of Child Rights and Democracy Education on Children's Democratic Behaviors" (Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey).

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