ADOLESCENTS' VIEWS ON ART-BASED DEMOCRACY EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal adolescents' views on art-based democracy education applied to raise awareness of the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities in a democracy. The study is qualitative research conducted through action research, one of the qualitative research designs. The study group of the research consisted of 24 students attending the eighth grade of a secondary school in Bursa. To collect data, an art-based democracy education program consisting of 10 sessions, two hours a week, including creative drama, music, painting, and literature, was implemented for students to acquire democratic values. Students' opinions were obtained through structured observation of individual and focus group interviews. The results obtained from the sessions were described by the qualitative data analysis technique and interpreted according to the dimensions and values of democracy. According to the study results, the use of art-based practices in the education of a different discipline, such as democracy, was welcomed positively by all children in the study. It was observed that the children's acquisition of sub-values of democracy increased with art-based democracy education and that they were willing to apply these values to their lives. In addition, the interviews conducted before and after the education revealed that children had more knowledge about their rights, freedoms, and responsibilities after such an applied education.

Keywords: Democracy education, education through art, creative drama, adolescence.

INTRODUCTION

In the recent world characterized by escalating complexity, liberal democracies on a global scale face many formidable challenges. These challenges encompass notably globalization, migratory dynamics, and climate change. A segment of populist actors, subscribing to a dualistic worldview, actively contribute to the erosion of trust in democratic principles and their corresponding institutional framework, thereby instigating disintegration processes (Hamdaoui, 2022). To protect society against all these disintegrations in the 21st century, participatory democracy is emphasized instead of representative democracy in societies governed by democracy.

For individuals to participate in the decision-making processes of democracy and in a way that can influence this process, they must first have this awareness. Therefore, democracy and education are interrelated concepts. One of the most important functions of education is to raise participatory individuals who know their rights, freedoms, and responsibilities, who are equipped with democratic qualities and who are helpful to society (Ersoz & Duruhan, 2015). Since democratic behaviors cannot be demonstrated without acquiring democratic skills, democracy education has gained importance for adopting democratic values in all areas, from interpersonal relations to individual-institution relations and shaping the policies of institutions (Kus & Cetin, 2014). Democracy education covers all the activities necessary for individuals to adopt democratic values such as respect, equality, freedom, tolerance and trust and to become citizens who can use these values in their daily lives. The earlier these values are taught, the easier for individuals to take this responsibility and reflect these ideals in their behavior (Subba, 2014).

Indeed, at the outset of the 21st century, many researchers expressed concerns regarding the diminished levels of political involvement among the younger demographic. The investigations revealed a decline in the youth's inclination towards political matters, a reduced proclivity to stay informed about current events, and a decreased likelihood of affiliation with advocacy groups (Delli Carpini, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Wilkins, 2000). Responding to this apprehension, various researchers

contended that the decline in youth political engagement did not necessarily denote a waning interest but rather a transformation in its manifestation. Subsequently, youths appeared to adopt a paradigm of "engaged citizenship," characterized by their proclivity to engage in activities such as volunteering, participating in protests, and integrating political elements into their everyday routine (Dalton, 2009; Earl et al., 2017). Moreover, the youth population has also embraced participatory politics as a means of political expression and information dissemination, wherein political news and opinions are shared, consumed, and reconfigured through interactions within online social networks (Cohen et al., 2012). Considering that the democratic levels of young people, who will maintain the democratic system of government in the future, are closely related to the course of the country's democratic process in the future, a democratic education that takes into account these details that young people care about is of vital importance. For adolescents who spend significant time at school, school is an essential living space for acquiring democratic skills. In the school environment, adolescents acquire many new and different experiences that they may encounter in life (Ozyurek & Ozkan, 2015). Schools that assume a socializing role in adopting a democratic culture can fulfill this task with contemporary curricula, appropriate teaching environments and teachers (Ozbey & Saricam, 2018). To raise young people who are conscious about democracy in a changing and developing world, it is necessary to use educational programs that can provide the opportunity to associate what is learned with daily life, explore the details, enrich the content, criticize, and evaluate it, instead of directly transferring information in schools (Ucak & Erdem, 2020).

Furthermore, democratic education programs must strive to preclude student disengagement and a sense of powerlessness. In pursuit of this objective, learners must be imbued with a profound sense of agency and the motivation to change within the classroom (Petrie et al., 2019). A qualified structured educational program can provide productive and accurate utilization of cognitive and socio-emotional processes. Educational programs are enriched with various methodologies and strategies to provide children with alternative avenues for enhancing their learning experiences (Clark et al., 2017). The consistent implementation of these methodologies and strategies at specified intervals significantly contributes to the acquisition of skills among children. These encompass educational approaches such as direct instruction in social problem-solving, cognitive-process-based social problem-solving education, collaborative learning techniques, peer-mediated teaching methodologies, modeling and video-based instruction, role-playing techniques, coaching, homework assignments, and the utilization of dramatic methods (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004; Webster-Stratton, 2012). Significantly, the creative drama method related to art incorporates a comprehensive synthesis of many of these instructional approaches, embodying an eclectic perspective (Kayili & Erdal, 2021).

Democracy and related concepts are challenging to learn and perceive because they are abstract. Understanding the place of these concepts in life will help democracy to develop as a value in individuals. Since students' acquisition of a few concepts related to democracy will cause them to have a shallow understanding of democracy, democracy education needs to reveal how democracy is taught conceptually in the courses where democracy education is given (Karatekin & Elvan, 2016).

Creative drama, used predominantly in this study, provides a learning-by-doing environment, and paves the way for developing social skills indispensable for democratic functioning. Since group interaction is at the forefront, students can learn how to decide and act together, which is the key to democracy, and problems can be revealed more strikingly by using drama techniques such as improvisation and role-playing (Gurbuz & Ilgaz, 2021). Thus, students can grow up as individuals who are aware of their responsibilities, aware of their citizenship rights and duties, and able to make the right decisions (Chatterjee, 2019). In addition, drama facilitates students' self-discovery, delineating their identity and its boundaries, and engenders a comprehensive examination of their potential personas. This experience holds the potential to serve as a source of inspiration, inciting students to envision and cultivate a more constructive societal paradigm. Also, it may serve as a countermeasure against the divisive of populist movements (O'Sullivan & Franz, 2023).

The positive impact on democracy education can be said for creative drama and all other art branches. The arts are pivotal in nurturing creative and critical thinking, facilitating affirmative interpersonal connections, and developing empathy (Travis et al., 2020), so art may positively affect democratic

education. Indeed, it is not unexpected that art can be used in democracy education, as art and democracy share certain resemblances. Biesta (2010) indicates that thinking and reflecting capacity do not simply define humanity; at the same time, being human means having the freedom to create something entirely novel. According to him, the zenith of democratic activity is political action in the public, and this action's freedom is like the freedom felt when creating a work of art. Correspondingly, McDonnell (2014) asserted the essential of conceiving the relations between democracy and art not in isolation but as a series of interrelated components within the contextual framework of the everyday experience of democracy and art. Democratic education, integrated with lived experiences, underscores the imperative for an increased emphasis on laboratory, studio, and workshop-based investigations. Briefly, art is both a practical guide and an intellectual instrument for engaging with the external world in democracy education (Hernández, 2022).

When the democratic education given to eighth-grade students according to the education system in Turkey is examined in detail, it is seen that the education program prepared for the 2023-2024 academic year includes only two hours of "Turkish Revolution History and Kemalism" among the compulsory courses and two hours of "Thinking Education" among the elective courses. Accordingly, even if democracy skills and processes are implicitly taught in other courses, the duration of democracy education given to students within the scope of the course is too short for democracy to be internalized and actively used in daily life. Similarly, when the courses for arts education are analyzed, "Visual Arts" and "Music" courses are one hour each in compulsory courses. In contrast, "Visual Arts" and "Music" courses are two hours each in elective courses, and there is no Drama course in elective courses (MEB, 2023). In this research, it is thought that bringing together democracy education and art education, which are rarely included in the weekly curriculum, will shed light on the lack of skills and experiences to be gained from these trainings and will lead to future studies. Although democracy issues are included in education programs in Turkey and legal arrangements are made in the field of education, it is seen that democratic values are frequently violated. An important reason is the ineffective applied educational approach and teaching methods (Yesil, 2004). In this context, the effectiveness of the methods used in democracy education should be reviewed. Although there are many studies in the literature on student views and attitudes towards democracy (Karatekin & Elvan, 2016; Karacali Taze & Aktın, 2019; Sahin & Kilic, 2020; Kus &Yakar, 2021), there are very few studies in which an abstract and theoretical discipline such as "democracy" is brought together with an application-oriented discipline that includes creative processes such as "art" in democracy education (Alatas & Turhan, 2022). In this sense, it is thought that the study will contribute to the field as an example of practices for democratic education in the classroom. In addition, the research is essential because democratic education given for the active and conscious use of the basic concepts of democracy in daily life through art instead of traditional methods will bring a different and innovative approach to education.

In line with all this information, this study aims to reveal the opinions of adolescents who participated in art-based democracy education about education. Accordingly, the central question of the research is whether art-based democracy education will be effective in gaining awareness of democratic skills. In the study, democracy was dimensioned as rights, freedoms and responsibilities, and separate sessions were implemented for the values of each dimension by including practices from art branches, especially creative drama. At the end of each session, the feelings and thoughts felt were discussed with the students, and the connection between the practices and real life was established and interpreted together with the students.

METHOD

Research Design

Action research technique, one of the qualitative research techniques, was used in the study. Action research involves collecting and analyzing data directly by the practitioner or a researcher to reveal the problems related to the implementation process and solve the problems (Beyhan, 2013). In action research, researchers and participants produce knowledge together. Since it will be possible to obtain

information about adolescents' needs, wishes and suggestions regarding democracy education during the training implementation, it was deemed appropriate to use this research design.

Study Group

The study was conducted with 24 eighth-grade students in a public secondary school in the Osmangazi district of Bursa province. The purposive sampling method was used to form the study group. In qualitative research, the aim should be to obtain maximum information through purposive sampling from participants who are thought to provide the most comprehensive information about the research problem (Brinkmann, 2013). Maximum diversity sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was preferred in the study. The students in the study group were 13 girls and 11 boys, and their socioeconomic status was between middle-income (70%) and low-income (30%) level groups. All of the students in the study group participated in the study voluntarily and had no previous experience in applied democracy education. However, all the students had taken "Social Studies" and "Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy" courses in primary and secondary school. They had a theoretical background in the basic concepts of democracy.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

The study applied structured observation individual and focus group interviews, which are qualitative data collection techniques. The interview technique form was used in individual interviews with the study group after the implementation. This study used the interview technique to interpret and evaluate the data obtained from students participating in art-based democracy education.

Semi-structured Interview Form. A semi-structured interview form was prepared to obtain the opinions of the eighth-grade students in the study group about the effectiveness of art-based democracy education. While preparing the interview questions, the related research in the literature was examined and the scope of the research prepared interview questions. After the interview questions were prepared, the interview questions were finalized as a result of the pre-application study conducted with three eighth-grade students who were not included in the research. The interview form included four open-ended questions about how they found art-based democracy education, which activities they enjoyed the most, and what kind of democracy education they suggested.

Art-Based Democracy Education Program. The study implemented a program of 10 sessions of two hours each, including activities from creative drama, music, literature, dance and painting, to help students acquire the values of democracy. Before starting the education program with the study group, a one-week session was held for acquaintance and cohesion. Each week was based on topics dealing with different values of democracy, and drama techniques such as improvisation, role-playing, role cards, photo memory, frozen image, meeting technique, forum theater, writing in role, and teacher role-playing were used in the sessions. In addition, the program also included practices from different branches of art, such as creative story/poem writing, dance choreography, composing, and poster preparation. While structuring the program, the values that makeup democracy were divided into three dimensions: rights, freedoms and responsibilities. Appropriate values were placed under each dimension and the program sessions were shaped accordingly. The activities to be used in art-based democracy education were finalized after consulting two academicians who are experts in the field and making the necessary corrections. The sessions in the program and the democratic values expected to be gained from the session are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Content of the arts-based democracy education program

Sessions	Subject	Democracy Values Expected to be Acquired
Session 1	**Introductions and Orientation Activities**	Collaborates and participates in group work
Session 2	**Complying with the Rules**	Right: Right to Property, Right to Travel Freedom: Freedom to settle wherever you want Responsibility: Self-control, following the rules
Session 3	**Justice and Equality**	Right: Right to equal opportunities, right to criticize Freedom: Freedom of belief and conscience Responsibility: Being fair

Table 1 (Continued). Content of the arts-based democracy education program

Sessions	Subject	Democracy Values Expected to be Acquired
Session 4	Environmental Protection Awareness	Right: Right to environment, right to health, right to complain Freedom: Freedom of Association Responsibility: Environmental awareness, social solidarity, cooperation and reconciliation
Session 5	Right to Vote and Election	Right: Right to vote and be elected, suitable to participate in decision-making Freedom: Freedom of thought and expression Responsibility: Listening, pluralism, political participation
Session 6	Privacy of Private Life and Freedom of Communication	Rights: Inviolability of person and dwelling, right to privacy Freedom: Freedom of communication and communication Responsibility: Respecting the personal rights of others
Session 7	Right to Education and Training	Right: Right to education and training Freedom: Freedom of science and art Responsibility: Acceptance and respect for disadvantaged groups
Session 8	Right to Work and to Enter the Public Service	Right: Right to work, Right to access and benefit from public services Freedom: Freedom to enjoy equal access to public services Responsibility: Complying with ethical rules
Session 9	Right to Life and War	Rights: Right to life, Right to protection of children in armed conflict Freedom: Freedom to fulfill one's needs Responsibility: Love of humanity, Rejection of violence, Brotherhood, Peace
Session 10	Sensitivity to Abuse	Right: Right to security, right to protection Freedom: Freedom of children not to work Responsibility: Sensitivity to abuse
Session 11	Universality	Right: Right to live in another country and cooperate with other countries Freedom: Freedom to travel to other countries, freedom to marry another nationality, freedom to communicate Responsibility: Being open to social changes, Respecting differences

Data Analysis

Document analysis, one of the qualitative research techniques, was applied to the data obtained from written documents, photographs and videos obtained during the practices carried out within the framework of art-based democracy education. The data obtained in the sessions were evaluated using qualitative data analysis techniques. In one session, the data obtained through a questionnaire were interpreted by taking frequencies. Video recordings and photographs also supported the findings. A semi-structured interview form was applied after the implementation process to learn the opinions of the students in the study group regarding the applications. The qualitative data obtained from this form were subjected to content analysis. Content analysis is the objective and systematic classification, transformation into numbers, and inference of the message contained in verbal, written, and other materials in terms of meaning or grammar (Tavsancil & Aslan, 2001). Qualitative data were evaluated by creating categories and codes. To ensure the security of qualitative data, another expert in the field and the researcher coded the qualitative data separately and then compared them. In other words, the interview data regarding the evaluation of art-based democracy education in the study were calculated with the formula (Consensus/(Consensus + Disagreement) x 100) developed by Miles and Huberman (2015). The value was found to be 89%, and it was determined that the interview form analysis of the form was reliable.

RESULTS

The qualitative data analysis technique evaluated the findings obtained in the study, and the results were given under two main headings: the conclusions of the art-based democracy education program and the interviews conducted after the training.

Findings Related to the Art-Based Democracy Education Program

This section presents the brief content of each session and the findings obtained during the training program, which consisted of 11 sessions, including one session of introductory activities. The findings were obtained from some students' opinions directly related to the sessions, the researcher's observations and the documents obtained from the sessions.

Session 1 (Introductions and Orientation Activities): Basic acquaintance games were included in the first session to enable students to meet and mingle. While selecting these games, the preparatory warm-up games of creative drama were utilized, and a simple role-playing example was made with the groups using the improvisation technique in the role-playing stage. At the end of this session, the feedback from the students showed that they enjoyed the activities, especially the role plays, and that most of the students were eager to participate in the democracy education program.

Session 2 (Complying with the Rules): In this session, students were asked to act out a day on an island without rules after a sea accident. At the end of this session, in which creative drama was used predominantly, the importance of rules in society was discussed. In the reenactments, the students saw one of them as an authority. However, they did not listen to the authority when their freedoms were restricted. They resorted to violence to solve problems and even killed the troublemakers. The evaluations at the end of the session stated that the lack of rules actually restricted our freedom. Some student comments on the session are as follows:

S1: Rules may seem tedious, but I have seen their importance for peace of mind. It starts well, but then what others do for their freedom restricts the freedom of others and chaos ensues.

S5: You are on a deserted island and only have a few options. You have to live with others out of necessity. I chose to live in isolation on one end of the island, but after a while, we argued about fishing in the same place. The game turned into the movie "The Hunger Games".

Session 3 (Justice and Equality): In this session, which focused on the themes of justice and equality, students were asked whether justice and equality are the same based on pictures. In addition, the "Heinz dilemma", one of Kohlberg's moral dilemmas, was discussed and reenactments were made. In the reenactments made with the forum theater technique, Heinz's trial scene was also included, and the majority decided that Heinz was innocent and acquitted with a public penalty. In the same workshop, the metaphors and their meanings in the sculpture were discussed through the picture of Themis, the statue of justice, and then the students animated the statue of justice with the frozen image technique. At the end of the session, the students were asked about the most evocative concepts related to the meaning of the concept of "justice" and the frequency analysis of the answers was taken. It was determined that the most repeated concepts were equality (f:19), power (f:12), order (f:11), right (f:9), punishment (f:7) and righteousness (f:4), respectively. The statue of Themis, which the students visualized with the frozen image technique, is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Revitalization of Themis statue with frozen image.

Session 4 (Environmental Protection Awareness): In this session, students were asked to create a drama about what happened when they were villagers living in a small village on the edge of a forest and one day, the authorities came to the village to mine and started to cut down the trees. In the reenactment, the students resisted preventing cutting down trees, first collecting signatures and applying to the governorship with an official petition. They took action when they could not get a result from the governorship. Before the action, they made many preparations together, such as preparing banners, drawing posters, choosing a spokesperson, and preparing a speech text. It was observed that the students were mainly influenced by current events and similar events on the agenda

while acting. At the end of the session, the villagers met with the authorities and mine owners and decided that the existence of forests was more critical and ensured the closure of the mine. Some student opinions about the session are as follows:

S7: We watch it on the news. They uproot olive trees in olive groves to operate mines. Furthermore, they do this with laws, and the state paves the way. Does an olive tree overgrow? In today's session, especially in the protest scene, I felt better about what the villagers there were going through.

S12: The work we did today was a very real-life situation. The villagers' action in the Akbelen forest to prevent the cutting down of trees came directly to my mind. I was one of the officials at the mine owner, but I had difficulty defending what I was doing.

Session 5 (Right to Vote and Election): In this session, students elected the student council group representing their school. While some students became voters, others prepared for the election process. The groups participating in the election first conducted an election campaign, resulting in the election of the candidate supported by all groups. All groups made preliminary preparations for the election campaign, such as finding election slogans, writing election promises, preparing posters, and composing election songs. When the students were asked why they chose that group, they said that the promises of the winning group were more realistic and solution-oriented. The election preparations made by the students during the session are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Students' preparations for the election campaign.

Session 6 (Privacy of Private Life and Freedom of Communication): In this session, students acted out role-plays about how much intrusion into private life can be based on different role cards they were given, both from real life and the private life of a famous person. Students argued that everyone should have a private life and that even those closest to them should respect this situation. It was also observed that students commented on the effects of social media on private life. Students stated that people's private lives can be misunderstood, and social media can misinterpret reality and expose people to mobbing. Some student opinions from the session are as follows:

S15: Especially on social media, influencers live there almost always and share everything to make money and get more followers. Some do ridiculous things. I find this much exaggerated.

S18: Some people can act without thinking when they comment about you. For example, if I share a photo and someone I do not know writes something wrong under it, my mood can drop directly. Just because of this, some get depressed and magnify the situation. Once, a person wrote to a girl that her nose was too big. The girl does not like herself anymore and says she is already ugly. This is also a great evil.

Session 7 (Right to Education and Training): Creative writing skills were emphasized in this session. Students were asked to write a letter to the Minister of National Education from the perspective of someone who wanted to read but needed more means. After all students read their letters, a few letters were selected from among them and they acted out according to the topics in the letter. The students wrote their letters mainly from the perspective of people who had financial difficulties, had many siblings, had to work, or were forced to marry. The reenactments ended by

helping the victimized students and having them read the letters. The students stated that everyone has the right to education, regardless of gender, financial status, or disability, and that the state has a great duty to ensure this right. An example of the students' reenactments is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. An animation about a disabled student's right to education.

Session 8 (Right to Work and to Enter the Public Service): In this session, students used the forum theater technique to reenact a housewife exercising her "Right to Work and Enter Public Services". At the end of the reenactment, the students stated that women also have the right to work but that women should not neglect their roles as wives and mothers. In addition, they argued that in terms of benefiting from public services, especially those who are financially robust, they are always prioritized and do not believe there is merit in recruitment. Some of the student opinions on this session are as follows:

S4: Under Turkish conditions, it is more important for women to study and acquire a profession than men. I do not think that women and men work under equal conditions. Women have a lot of burdens and responsibilities.

S8: Women should participate in working life but only steal a little time from their time with their children. She should strike that balance well; otherwise, she may have problems in her relationship with her children.

S11: Unfortunately, I cannot predict my future right now. Let us say I won the university and graduated. There is no guarantee that I can find a job and work immediately. In this era, finding a job is difficult if no one is behind you.

S20: If you have financial power or status, doors open quickly everywhere. People with low incomes are victimized everywhere in this world.

Session 9 (Right to Life and War): In this session, students were asked to act out dramatizations based on photographs related to the war. In this session, music and dance were mainly utilized, and the students performed their reenactments by showing the editing of the photographs they chose with music and dance. The whole group was then asked to create a war memorial and write a story using words that evoked this memorial. All the students argued that war is unacceptable, no matter the cause, and they united in the standard view that innocent people generally die in wars. A sample of the choreographies that the students created with creative dance and music based on photographs related to war is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Creative dance choreography based on a war-themed photograph.

Session 10 (Sensitivity to Abuse): In this session, dramatic moment cards on "physical abuse", "emotional abuse" and "social abuse" were distributed to the groups, and they were asked to make dramatizations. After the dramatizations, the groups wrote the words evoked by each dramatization on the cards and then wrote a poem using their groups' words. Some of the student opinions from this session are as follows:

S3: When we think of abuse, physical abuse is the first thing that comes to mind. I mean, that is what I thought. However, after today's session, I realized we can all be exposed to social and emotional abuse. We may have even seen it in our family.

S9: I had a friend I do not see now, but I was once on excellent terms with them. Today I realized that he emotionally abused me with a few behaviors, such as scaring me alone and using me according to his interests. I was enlightened about this, and I am glad I parted ways. We should not let anyone make us feel worthless.

Session 11 (Universality): Students were asked to divide into groups and act out dramatic flashcards about "freedom to travel", "freedom to live in another country" and "freedom to marry someone from another country". At the end of the dramatizations, each group wrote slogans describing the freedom given to their group. When these slogans were analyzed, it was seen that, according to the students, marrying someone from another country or wanting to live in another country was a natural desire and that they saw no harm in making their own choices. Some students said that they wanted to live abroad and that they could make personal choices, such as friends and spouses from different countries, regardless of language, religion and race. The slogans prepared by the students in this session are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Slogan designs were prepared for the session on universality.

Findings Related to Interviews

After the training, the students were first interviewed in a general focus group and then their views on art-based democracy education were obtained through individual interviews. In the interviews, the students were first asked whether their views on democracy had changed after the training. A great majority of the students stated that they now see the definition of democracy as a concept they can underline rather than a rote definition. Some student opinions on this subject are as follows:

S2: When I thought of democracy, the first thing that came to my mind was voting. I knew we had rights and freedoms, but this was the first time I understood our rights broadly and that democracy is a way of life.

S13: Democracy is the best form of government when used correctly and the rules are applied relatively to everyone.

As the second question, the students were asked about their opinions on the art-based democracy education given to them. All the students said they liked the activities and that addressing these issues increased their interest in this subject. Some student opinions on this subject are as follows:

S10: We had lessons on this subject at school, but neither in the lessons we took in previous years nor in this year's lesson. I had never learned these concepts with so much fun and knowledge in my mind. If such subjects are done in such a practical way, these concepts are learned better.

S17: I would never have thought of learning about democracy by combining it with art in this way. When I was first told about the training, I could not imagine what it would be like. I came every week wondering what we were going to do this time. We have very few class hours related to art, such as music and painting, and we need classes like theater and dance. For us, it made up for our shortcomings in this regard and made democracy education enjoyable.

As the third question, students were asked their opinions on which activities were most effective in the art-based democracy education they received. While most students stated that the parts related to creative drama were the activities, they enjoyed the most, they were particularly impressed by the session on the theme of War. This session was thought to be more memorable than the others due to the combination of many art branches, such as music, dance, painting and photography. Some student opinions on this subject are as follows:

S1: All the activities were excellent and complemented each other. I especially enjoyed the reenactments on stage and learned I have a talent for this. The workshop that has stayed in my mind the most was about war. I was very impressed by it. The workshop where we did action was very creative.

S16: I love writing very much, and it was fun to write stories, letters and essays accompanied by music and then act out the ones we chose. I felt like a screenwriter.

As the fourth and final question, students were asked their opinions on how democratic education should be provided. Almost all of the students argued that democracy education should be given in this kind of applied way to internalize the concept of democracy. They also stated that art branches increase the quality of the education given. Some student opinions on this subject are as follows:

S14: If we are to be active and conscious citizens in the future, the education system needs to educate us about democracy in real life from a very young age. However, this should not be taught from books but by doing and living this way. It is a good idea to include art in this education. In addition, young people's opinions on solutions to problems related to themselves and society can be listened to more, and environments can be created in schools where young people can make their voices heard.

S23: I think that for us to use democracy in our lives, we must be ready for it in our environment. Everyone should be sensitive to this issue, from our family at home to the teacher in the classroom. They should be the suitable model first. In addition, the state must also sanction wrongdoing to ensure democracy. Otherwise, no one will believe in democracy and justice in the country. It will be effective if the laws are regulated and democracy is practiced more in the education system.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and SUGGESTIONS

Democracy requires individuals who are aware of their responsibilities, think about the consequences of their actions, internalize democratic values, and adopt democratic behaviors. In a society where individuals realize the importance of democracy and apply it in their daily lives, it will be possible to

sustain democracy (Sahin & Kilic, 2020). The need to develop individuals' skills to participate in democracy is also emphasized in the 11th Development Plan of the Republic of Turkey (2019) and the Copenhagen criteria. Mcdonnel (2014) stated that art can impact both the feasibility and infeasibility of democracy. In other words, democratic subjectivity has to be related to art to be audible, visible and sayable within the society. Considering this relationship between democracy and art, this study aims to reveal the views of today's adolescents, who will maintain the democratic government system of the future, on art-based democracy education.

According to the study's findings, all of the adolescents who participated in the research stated that they welcomed the art-based democracy education positively, that their theoretical knowledge about democracy increased after the education and that they better understood its meaning. In addition, it was observed that they were willing to continue the rights, freedoms and responsibilities they acquired in the practices of their daily lives. This situation can be interpreted as a positive effect of art on democracy education. There are studies supporting this result in the literature. For example, in the study of Choleva et al. (2021), teachers were given 20 hours of human rights training with the creative drama method. At the end of the training, the participants gave positive feedback about the training and it was revealed that they tended to apply the activities they learned in their lessons. Similarly, Alatas and Turan (2022) implemented a six-week human rights and democracy training with creative drama method with fourth-grade primary school students, and the students increased their success in active citizenship and stated that they had positive thoughts about the study. These results show that democracy education programs based on multifaceted and practice-oriented activities are needed to teach students democratic skills.

While the students who participated in the research were more inclined to show violence and negative behaviors against each other, such as pushing, hitting, or verbally abusing each other in the first sessions, it was observed that they were more reconciliatory and showed positive behaviors to each other while finding solutions to problems in the following sessions. When we look at the reason for this result, the healing and unifying feature of art used as a tool in democratic education can be considered. Studies in the literature showing the positive effects of art on adolescents support this result (Apaydinli & Senturk, 2011; Opoz, 2017; Farrington et al., 2019; Karatas & Guler, 2020, Lashley & Halverson, 2021; Ferrer et al., 2022).

According to the researcher's observations, the students adhered to a specific authority in obeying the session rules. However, they argued they could be challenged if the rules restricted their freedoms. In addition, although the students thought that women and men should have equal rights, the fact that they argued that women should not disrupt their roles as mothers and wives shows that these students adhere to social and cultural values in their lives and that they are in an environment where they act according to the decisions of authority rather than a democratic environment. Many students also argue that there are injustices in working life and a lack of merit in recruitment. This situation increases their anxiety about the future, but this order should be corrected again. A path should be opened for the deserving to reach where they want. A similar result can be seen in the Turkey Youth Survey (2023) by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Turkey Representative Office. According to this report, almost all young people between the ages of 18-25 (98.4%) stated that the most common problems in Turkey are economic conditions, law and justice, unemployment, nepotism, corruption and bribery, and 71.3% of them think that merit is not respected in government recruitment.

In addition, according to the students in the study, there is no harm in marrying people from different countries and identities or living in a different country and making such choices. Some of the students in the study have the idea of living and working abroad in the future. In the Turkey Youth Survey (2023) report, when respondents were asked about their preference to live in another country, 63% said they would like to live in a country other than Turkey. Only 37% said they would prefer to live in their country in Turkey. The report and survey results show that today's youth are concerned about their future in Turkey. In addition, all of the students think that people and the environment should be cared for and that there should be a united struggle to protect world peace. Ulus and Isik (2021) also examined the views of young people between 18-24 on climate change. They found that young people know about environmental awareness, climate change, and global warming. However, they do not

have information about ecological footprint and ecological literacy and do not find existing laws and sanctions sufficient. This can be interpreted as showing similar results with the literature.

In general, as the sessions progressed in the art-based democracy education process, it was observed that students preferred more sensitive, concrete, and constructive solutions to problems. It was also observed that students were positively affected by their creativity skills and ability to look at things from different perspectives and produce original products. This situation can be interpreted as that while the students were only expressing what should be ideal about democracy, at the end of the training, they turned towards ideal behaviors for democracy and their awareness increased. In the interviews with the students at the end of the research, almost all of the students stated that democracy education is more effective when it is practiced in this way, especially when combined with art. Ulubey and Gozutok (2016) also emphasized in their study that democracy and human rights education should be given with interactive teaching methods instead of traditional methods and that students are enthusiastic and excited about the lesson due to using these methods.

When the study results are analyzed, art-based democratic education positively affects adolescents and students demand such applied activities more. Accordingly, to increase the effectiveness and permanence of education, such as democracy, which should be transformed into a way of life, it can be given as a research suggestion that it should be integrated with other disciplines, such as art. In addition, it can be suggested that the content of the courses on democracy education given for each level in schools should be revised accordingly, and in-service training should be given to teachers to enable them to teach practice-oriented courses.

Ethic

Regarding this study, the author declares that she has acted by ethical rules in all research processes.

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