

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The implementation of a democratic classroom atmosphere in elementary schools is still very rare because most of them are still authoritarian and focus on the teacher, even though a democratic classroom atmosphere is very important because it can foster students' enthusiasm for learning, increase student participation in learning, teach democratic values, and create a classroom culture that reflects democratic character. Therefore, this research is important to find out the strategies and ways that teachers can create a democratic classroom atmosphere by recognizing the diverse characteristics of their students. Part of the purpose of this research is to find out teachers' understanding of a democratic classroom atmosphere, efforts, forms of implementation, and evaluations made by teachers in implementing a democratic classroom atmosphere in elementary schools. This study used a sample of 30 students from grades V and VI of SD Muhammadiyah 1 Ketelan Surakarta. This research is a type of descriptive qualitative research by describing the data that has been obtained and analyzing the results of the research. Data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Data analysis of research results using transcription and classification. The results in this study show that teachers have successfully implemented a democratic classroom atmosphere. Teacher perceptions are in accordance with the concept of a democratic classroom atmosphere, teacher efforts and implementation are carried out by fostering active participation of students in discussion activities, providing equal access and facilities, appreciation, interpreting diversity, and giving students freedom to express and speak without fear of being punished. Teacher evaluation uses reflection and direct observation during learning.

Keywords: democratic classroom; democratic atmosphere; democratic character; elementary school

Abstrak

Implementasi suasana kelas yang demokratis di sekolah dasar masih sangat jarang dijumpai karena Sebagian besar masih bersifat otoriter dan focus pada guru, padahal suasana kelas demokratis itu sangat penting karena dapat menumbuhkan semangat belajar siswa, meningkatkan partisipasi siswa dalam pembelajaran, mengajarkan nilai-nilai demokrasi, serta menciptakan budaya kelas yang mencerminkan karakter demokratis. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini penting dilakukan untuk mengetahui strategi dan cara yang dapat dilakukan oleh guru untuk menciptakan suasana kelas yang demokratis dengan mengenali beragam karakteristik siswanya. Bagian dari tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pemahaman guru tentang suasana kelas demokratis, upaya, bentuk implementasi, dan evaluasi yang dilakukan guru dalam mengimplementasikan suasana kelas yang demokratis di sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan sampel 30 siswa dari kelas V dan VI SD Muhammadiyah 1 Ketelan Surakarta. Penelitian ini merupakan jenis penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dengan menggambarkan data yang telah didapat dan menganalisis hasil dari penelitian. Data yang dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara, penyebaran kuisioner, dan dokumentasi. Analisa data hasil penelitian menggunakan transkripsi dan klasifikasi. Hasil dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru sudah berhasil mengimplementasikan suasana kelas yang demokratis. Persepsi guru sesuai dengan konsep suasana kelas demokratis, upaya dan implementasi guru dilakukan dengan cara menumbuhkan partisipasi aktif siswa dalam kegiatan diskusi, memberikan akses dan fasilitas yang sama, apresiasi, memaknai keberagaman, dan memberikan kebebasan siswa untuk berekspresi dan berbicara tanpa takut dihukum. Evaluasi guru menggunakan refleksi dan observasi langsung saat pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: kelas demokratis; suasana demokratis; karakter demokratis; sekolah dasar

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Introduction

Approximately 30% of students in the United States experience discomfort when engaging in class discussions due to the fear of making mistakes, as reported by a poll conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (Democracy Education in United States, 2022). Some students may hesitate to engage in class discussions or activities due to concerns about evaluation or lack of recognition. Research data from Educational Leadership shows that in certain classes, only approximately 20% of students engage actively in class discussions. Some students with prominent personalities or more comprehensive knowledge may overshadow others in class discussions, leading to their neglect.

According to the results of (Chayati et al., 2015) Identify issues in education, including the lack of meaningful learning experiences that hinder the development of students' personalities, leading to a decline in the quality of their character and awareness as responsible citizens. The lack of quality and quantity of educators and students who are able to implement democracy in everyday life is a problem in educational democracy (an-nur, 2023). Many educators and students still use authoritarian learning methods. To address these issues, it is crucial to establish a democratic learning environment in the classroom (Fadhilaturrahmi, 2018). In addition, a democratic classroom atmosphere regularly involves students in developmentally appropriate ways in shared decision-making, which increases their responsibility in helping to make the classroom a good and comfortable place to learn (Biamba, et al., 2021).

In carrying out the teaching and learning process in the classroom, of course, it requires a comfortable, conducive, and democratic classroom atmosphere so that learning objectives can be achieved and students can also learn optimally (Puspitaningrum, 2017). Teachers as facilitators and motivators for their students, all decisions do not have to be determined by the teacher (Fahri et al., 2022). Teachers must involve students regarding decision making in the learning process so that the classroom atmosphere becomes democratic (Janet, 2020). A democratic learning atmosphere is the existence of equal rights and obligations and the same and fair treatment of teachers to all students without discriminating from all aspects in learning activities both in the classroom (Juli *et al*, 2022). A democratic learning environment ensures that all students have equal opportunities to participate in the learning process regardless of their religion, ethnicity, race, or social status. This allows students to freely express their opinions and cultivate their potential during the learning experience (Mahmudah, 2018). Educational democracy requires students to actively engage and freely voice their perspectives in the learning process, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge from teachers without any opportunity for exchanging opinions or engaging in discussions (Pribadi, 2022).

Teachers treat their students as individuals who are responsible, valuable, capable of making decisions and can solve problems encountered (Mansyur, 2021). The impact of a democratic atmosphere is the growth of self-confidence, mutual acceptance and trust in each other, both between teachers and students and between students (Mustafida, 2021). Teachers lead, cultivate, and distribute responsibilities among all class members, including themselves. This democratic classroom environment will positively benefit instructors and students by

providing opportunities for mutual understanding, assistance, and open expression of emotions (Anisah, 2018). Teachers will understand the circumstances and characteristics of each of their students, while students will see excellent behavior and emulate it as a model to follow and imitate (Hidayati & Rukmini, 2021). An environment that emphasizes democracy in learning will produce better learning outcomes than an authoritarian and authoritarian culture with rigid discipline imposed by the teacher, but students will also feel less valued in their classroom environment (Biamba, et al., 2021).

For instance, individuals of varying socioeconomic statuses receive disparate treatment in educational settings, and students with differing levels of intelligence are also treated unequally in the classroom (Lestari *et al.*, 2022). An example of discrimination in Jakarta on a 2021 date, illustrating the different educational treatment of rich and poor students (Rosyidi, 2021). In elementary school, teachers still treat smart and less smart students, as well as rich and underprivileged students, differently, leading to some students feeling overlooked in the classroom (Zahrawati, 2018). Suharti, in a webinar on the readiness of limited PTM implementation on January 3, 2022, stated that the study results indicate a 10 percent increase in the learning gap between children from affluent and impoverished families, as reported by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (kemendikbudristek.com, 2022).

A democratic classroom has a significant impact on student learning and character, for example: Increased Student Participation, in a democratic classroom, students are given the opportunity to speak up, participate in discussions, and express their opinions. This not only increases student engagement in the learning process, but also helps them feel more motivated and excited to learn (Sari & Bermuli, 2021). Development of Communication Skills, students who are active in a democratic classroom often develop better communication skills. They learn how to communicate effectively, listen to the opinions of others, and express their opinions in a polite and respectful manner (Sulistyaningrum, Sutama, & Dessty, 2021). Character Building Responsibility, a democratic classroom also plays an important role in the character building of students' responsibility. Students learn how to take responsibility for their tasks, how to work in teams, and how to respect different opinions. This not only helps them in their daily lives, but also in their future careers (Teegelbeckersa, Nieuwelinka, & Oostdam, 2023). Improved Learning Quality, with students' active participation in the learning process, the quality of learning tends to improve. Students who are more involved in a democratic classroom tend to have a better understanding of the material being taught, as they participate more often in discussions and learning. Critical Skill Development, in a democratic classroom, students are taught to criticize and evaluate the ideas and opinions of others. This helps them develop critical skills, which are essential in an ever-changing and competitive world (Şeyma Şahin & Kılıç, 2021).

Establishing a democratic classroom setting is crucial as it can enhance student engagement in learning, boost student involvement, instill democratic principles, and cultivate a classroom environment that embodies democratic principles (Pribadi, 2022). Moreover, fostering a democratic classroom environment can help narrow the educational disparity between affluent and underprivileged students in elementary schools. In a democratic classroom setting, students feel more appreciated and their rights are acknowledged, leading to more enthusiasm for learning and increased involvement in educational activities (Silviana, 2023). Furthermore, pupils are instructed to respect differing perspectives and embrace variety in order to cultivate a tolerant demeanor (Aliyyah, 2022). The teacher's duty is to act as a motivator and facilitator in the learning process (Santika *et al.*, 2023). Teachers must establish a learning

environment characterized by mutual respect, support, and encouragement among all groups (Satria, 2023). The democratic learning approach creates a positive and enjoyable learning environment for pupils (Sumarsih *et al.*, 2022).

This research is crucial for identifying techniques and methods that instructors can use to establish a democratic classroom environment by acknowledging the many features of their students. To ensure teachers can establish a democratic classroom environment and engage students in the learning process, it is important to utilize effective teaching approaches tailored to student characteristics. To create a democratic classroom culture where students feel comfortable learning, avoid authoritarian practices that inhibit students from expressing their opinions and ideas (Sunandar, 2014).

This research is crucial because there is a lack of studies that detail the process of establishing a democratic classroom environment, focusing instead on the execution and practice of democratic education. There is a limited number of studies on the democratic environment in elementary schools. Researchers have only identified one study connected to implementing educational democracy in elementary school student learning (Khuzaimah, 2022). Further research (Nur, 2015) was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Kartasura and (Momon, 2023) at SMP Negeri 02 Mungka. Then (Herly, 2020) conducted research at the high school level at SMA Kolese De Baritto Yogyakarta. Researchers are interested in examining how teachers perceive and implement a democratic classroom culture in primary schools.

Since there is still not much research related to the implementation of a democratic education atmosphere at the elementary school level, this research is important to do because it includes new findings at the elementary school level. Researchers found several studies that analyzed the implementation of democracy at the junior and senior high school levels, but at the elementary school level it was still lacking. The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers' understanding of a democratic classroom atmosphere, efforts, forms of implementation, and evaluations made by teachers in implementing a democratic classroom atmosphere in elementary schools.

Research Method

This research is qualitative and aims to determine the methods for establishing a democratic classroom environment in primary schools. This research is designed using phenomenology. Researchers will study primary school teachers' comprehension of a democratic classroom environment, their execution of democratic learning, and the assessment of this implementation. The results to be analyzed are described using descriptive language. The study was carried out in SD Muhammadiyah 1 Ketelan Surakarta, situated at Jl. Kartini No. 1 Ketelan Banjarsari Surakarta, with the postal code 57132. The researcher selected the school due to its reputation as a top private institution in Surakarta and existing evidence of a democratic culture, demonstrated through activities like principal meetings and teachers engaging in discussions to enhance the teaching and learning experience in classrooms.

The study focuses on the learning process occurring in the classroom. The participants in this study were students and teachers from the school where the research took place. Researchers selected a sample of pupils in grades 5 and 6 who possess the ability to express opinions in order to determine if the class is democratic. Students in higher grades tend to be more articulate in expressing their thoughts than students in lower grades. Researchers in this project will utilize data collection strategies such as:

Classroom Observation: Researchers will directly monitor the learning process in the classroom using the sit-in technique. Researchers monitor the extent to which teachers and students engage in a democratic learning process.

An interview will be conducted with the teacher to acquire insight into their understanding, tactics, and how to execute them in the learning process. The interview will be recorded and transcribed to facilitate data analysis. The interview instrument will consist of 17 questions, with the possibility of additional questions being added during the course of the interview.

Documentation: Researchers will collect and analyze documentation pertinent to the research goals, including teacher observation notes, lesson plans, instructional materials, and evaluation reports. The documents will offer detailed information on how teachers implement learning, whether it is conducted democratically or not.

The researcher distributed paper questionnaires to sixth-grade students to gather their comments on the classroom learning environment and the implementation of the teacher's learning strategies and models. The questionnaire comprises 25 questions that students need to respond to, including 18 statements about students and their peers, and 7 statements concerning student-teacher interactions.

The data analysis method in this study involves data reduction through transcribing and classification. The data analysis procedure is to transcribe interview recordings with teachers and students and then classify them based on related aspects. Then checking the answers to the questionnaires distributed, analyzing the answer data and transcribing it into data results and classifying based on related aspects.

Results and Discussion

This section will present the findings of study conducted by researchers in the field. The study's results are based on data obtained from interviews, observations, and questionnaires. This research focuses on examining teachers' perceptions and the establishment of a democratic classroom environment at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Ketelan Surakarta. Table 1 displays the distribution of questionnaires completed by 5th and 6th grade students at SD Muhammadiyah Ketelan Surakarta.

Table 1. Results of Questionnaire Analysis of the Implementation of a Democratic Classroom Atmosphere in Grades V and VI

Interval	Category	Student	Frequency	Percentage
40-70	Low	AT, FE, AL, GR, FA, DI	6	20%
71-100	High	ATH, KEA, VIE, ALV, KHA, ARU, KEE, AUD, BA, RA, AY, SE, VA, NA, ZA, YU, DA, NAT.	24	80%
Total			30	100%

After analyzing the data distribution of a high-class questionnaire completed by 30 students, it was found that 20% of students scoring between 40-70 rated the classroom atmosphere as less democratic, whereas 80% of students scoring between 71-100 rated the

classroom atmosphere as democratic. The data indicates that 80% of students believe that their homeroom teacher has established a democratic classroom environment.

Questionnaire data will be collected from 5th and 6th grade students to assess the democratic classroom atmosphere. Subsequently, interviews and observations will be conducted to identify the characteristics of the democratic classroom atmosphere established by their homeroom teacher.

Teachers' Perceptions of a Democratic Classroom Atmosphere in Elementary Schools

Elementary school teachers' views on a democratic classroom environment The 5th and 6th grade teachers of Muhammadiyah 01 Ketelan Surakarta elementary school demonstrate a strong grasp of the concept of a democratic classroom culture, as evidenced by observations and interviews. Teachers understand the significance of allowing students to participate in decision-making and promoting democratic values in education. According to Mrs. "EL," a democratic classroom atmosphere allows both teachers and students to fulfill their responsibilities without judgment or labels, enabling them to freely express opinions and thoughts. Mrs. "TR" believes that creating a democratic classroom culture is essential for children to feel safe and comfortable while studying. Another viewpoint from Mrs.. "EN" who said that *"a democratic classroom does not only focus on one person's decision, all students are involved in the learning process, for example in a decision-making process involving students with the aim of shaping student leadership, for example in entrepreneurship subjects will make products such as simple food / drinks / craft materials, children are involved, so if the teacher decides later students are sometimes not enthusiastic"*.

Then Mrs. "EN" also added *"besides being able to form children's leadership, it also makes them excited. So, democratically, all decision-making involves all parties in the learning process here because the teachers and students are involved, so we involve the students"*. Mrs. "EL" gave the opinion that *"For me, a democratic atmosphere is important to be able to appreciate. Not necessarily, students do not bring information, so from the first time I found the uniqueness of children, the key is when we want to apply a democratic atmosphere in learning in the classroom, we must be equally self-aware and there is no sense of patronizing, that is the key that is not authoritarian"*.

So, from the opinions given by homeroom teachers 5 and 6 as well as subject teachers, it can be concluded that they have implemented a democratic atmosphere in classroom learning. Because all homeroom teachers' opinions and perceptions about understanding the concept of a democratic classroom atmosphere are in accordance with what they should be.

Teachers' Efforts in Creating Democratic Learning Atmosphere in Elementary School

In trying to create a democratic learning atmosphere, teachers have various efforts that differ from one teacher to another. Some of the efforts include providing opportunities for students to speak up in class discussions, involving them in decision-making about class rules, and providing space for students to express and share their opinions. In addition, teachers also actively organize collaborative activities that allow students to work together and collaborate in learning.

Table 2. Students Collaborating with Teachers in Learning Activities

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ever	25	83,333%
2	Never Been	5	16,667%
	Total	30	100%

According to table 2, 83.333% of students have engaged in collaborative learning activities with teachers, while 16.667% have not. Students who have not previously worked with the teacher tend to have independent tendencies and are less likely to engage in collaboration. During an interview with the class instructor, Mrs. "EN" mentioned that "passive students have repeatedly been forced to collaborate with the teacher and other students, but if they are forced to do something that they don't want then it's useless they don't really do it".

The instructor's attempts to encourage student collaboration have been successful 83.333% of the time. For the unsuccessful cases, the teacher will assess themselves and discuss with the student. Teachers and students collaborated on an environmental project with fifth-grade pupils in the IPAS topic. Teachers and students collaborated to design this initiative with the goal of enhancing students' environmental consciousness and social accountability. The teacher conducted group discussions in class on pertinent environmental topics like recycling, water conservation, and wildlife habitat preservation. They together select a project theme to investigate and pursue through democratic means.

The teacher collaborated with Grade 6 pupils on a project to promote awareness about the sustainability of the school environment in the IPAS course. The teacher initiated a class discussion regarding the significance of upholding the school environment and its influence on students' everyday experiences. They collaborate to pinpoint specific areas inside the school that require enhancement, such as trash management, energy consumption, or the school garden. Subsequently, teachers and students established a school environment committee comprised of Grade 6 pupils. They are responsible for organizing and executing a range of events to promote awareness and sustainable practices inside the school. They coordinate the effective utilization of water and power, as well as maintain the school garden. Teachers serve as mentors who offer guidance and technical assistance to students in organizing and executing activities. They also enable committee meetings for students to discuss, share ideas, and assess the project's development.

Table 3. Students Taking Part in the Selection of Teacher Methods when Teaching

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ever	28	93,333%
2	Never Been	2	6,667%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 3, it can be seen that 93.333% of students have participated in choosing the teacher's method when teaching, while 6.667% have never participated in choosing the teacher's method when teaching. In this aspect, students who have participated in choosing the teacher's teaching method give their opinions, such as the opinion of students with the initials "RA" *who argue that "I prefer to be taught by teachers using the quiz method because it is more exciting and challenging to learn and it is easier to understand because usually when the quiz takes place suddenly we have not learned and get bad grades, so it becomes a lesson to always learn"* while "SE" argues that *"I prefer it when teachers teach using the game method because it is fun to play while learning, I still like to play, especially when I have the desire to win it is very challenging"*. Students who have not been involved in selecting the teacher's teaching style may not have the option to choose their preferred method of learning. Consequently, their learning experience may lack personal motivation, unlike 93.333% of their peers. Although many options are similar, individuals have nevertheless participated in selecting their preferred approach for the learning process. Mrs.

"TR" stated that children have a role in selecting their learning techniques, which might vary from day to day. For instance, they may utilize the quiz method for learning mathematics one day and the game method the next, as children generally prefer games and quizzes.

Table 4. Students Feeling Valued and Appreciated for Their Contributions to Learning

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ever	23	76,667%
2	Never Been	7	23,337%
	Total	30	100%

According to table 4, 76.667% of students feel respected and acknowledged for their contribution to learning, whereas 23.337% feel they have never been recognized for their effort. Students who feel valued and appreciated are satisfied with praise, acclaim, and recognition rather than tangible prizes. Some pupils may not feel valued or appreciated unless they receive tangible benefits. Mrs. EL stated that children can receive occasional rewards like candy or snacks, but it should not be frequent. The key emphasis should be on the teacher and classmates praising and encouraging those who speak up and take on challenges. If youngsters become accustomed to receiving rewards in the form of commodities, they may develop a continual expectation for rewards rather than focusing on becoming more intelligent and knowledgeable. Aside from giving praise, the teacher typically rewards pupils who demonstrate courage by sharing their ideas with additional points.

Table 5. Motivated Students are not Afraid of being Punished when Expressing Opinions and Incorrectly Working on Problems

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Motivated	20	66,667%
2	Not Motivated	10	33,333%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 5, it can be seen that 66.667% of students have been motivated not to be afraid of being punished when expressing opinions and doing the wrong questions, while 23.337% have not been motivated so they still often feel afraid of being punished and blamed when doing problems so they prefer to be silent and not come forward to do the questions. Mrs. "EL" has said that *"as a teacher I have repeatedly talked to all my students that it is okay to be wrong, don't be afraid of being punished, we are all here learning, teachers also learn students also learn so we are learning together. As a human being, it will not escape mistakes, unlike intentional mistakes that are wrong. So, even though there are students who do the wrong questions forward but have the courage to come forward with confidence, there is still a value, and the answer is not blamed on one party but all students can see when correcting it so that they do not repeat the same mistakes in the future if they find this kind of problem."*

Forms of Implementation in Creating a Democratic Classroom Atmosphere in Elementary Schools

Through the sit-in technique of observing classroom learning, the researcher observed variations in the implementation of a democratic classroom atmosphere among the teachers who participated in this study. Although most teachers showed efforts to implement the concept, there were differences in the level of successful implementation. Some teachers

succeeded in providing significant participation space to students, while others may still experience obstacles in applying the concept consistently.

Table 6. Teachers Facilitate Discussion and Democratic Decision-Making

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Facilitated	30	100%
2	Not Facilitated	0	0%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 6, it can be seen that 100% of students already feel that the teacher facilitates their discussions and decision making. According to the student with the initials "AU" in this aspect "the teacher has provided a lot of space for expression and space for students to argue, the teacher is also not authoritarian and must go according to what the teacher plans, so learning can be more flexible but still serious also during discussions the teacher provides sufficient time for students to process information and formulate answers or opinions before speaking in class discussions". The student's statement is in accordance with what Mrs. "TR" said that *"every discussion the teacher always provides space for each group to organize the information obtained and formulate answers as well as the division of tasks for each group is determined by each group member itself, so the teacher has not distributed the tasks of each group member"*.

Table 7. Teachers Become Role Models in Democratic Behavior

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Already	20	66,667%
2	Not Yet	10	33,333%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 7, it can be seen that 66.666% of students already feel that the teacher is their role model in behaving and behaving democratically in the learning process, while 33.333% have not made the teacher a role model in being democratic. As a student with the initials "NA" said that *"During the learning process in class, the teacher always listens attentively when I or my classmates speak, always shows interest in our opinions and experiences as students, and shows empathy for students' feelings and needs. That can be an example of an attitude that needs to be emulated, maybe when a friend or interlocutor is talking we should also show our empathy and not ignore it"*. Student with the initials "VI" said that *"During class learning, the teacher has given equal opportunities to all students to participate in class discussions, answer questions, or express opinions. The teacher does not favor certain students and ensures that all voices are heard. But it usually depends on the students whether they want to come forward to answer questions or not, answer discussion questions or not, want to express their opinions or not"*. As for students who answered that they have not made their teachers role models in being democratic, this is because according to them, it is not that the teacher's attitude is not democratic, but that they cannot distinguish from all the teacher's attitudes in the classroom which include democratic attitudes.

Table 8. Teachers Give Appreciation when Students Contribute to Learning

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Already	28	93,333%
2	Not Yet	2	6,667%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 8, it can be seen that 93.333% of students feel that the teacher has given appreciation when students contribute to learning, while as many as 6.667% have not felt appreciated when contributing to learning activities. In implementing this democratic classroom atmosphere, the existence of students must always be valued and appreciated, especially when they have the courage to voice their opinions. According to students who have felt appreciated, "No matter how small our contribution as students, even if we only raise our hands to ask questions, the teacher always gives a plus point even though it is not visible, but what is seen is that the teacher always gives applause. Even though it is a simple thing, it can make us as students feel appreciated and not ignored, because as elementary school students we are still hungry for praise". Because in a democratic classroom atmosphere, not only the teacher, but students must also appreciate the teacher when teaching, such as when the teacher explains the subject matter, do not play alone or with friends, listen to the teacher's explanation, and respond when the teacher offers. Because when students dare to respond about the material being discussed, the teacher feels very appreciated and appreciated. Sometimes that small and simple thing is all that is needed.

Table 9. Teacher Tolerance of Student Diversity in the Classroom

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Already	23	93,333%
2	Not Yet	7	6,667%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 9, it can be seen that 93.333% of students have recognized that the teacher has high tolerance during learning, this is evidenced by a statement from a student with the initials "AL" saying that *"During learning, the teacher never differentiates between students, the treatment is the same from one student to another, the same opportunities to ask and answer, no one gets more attention, there is no term that A is Mrs. TR's golden child, all children in the class are Mrs. TR's children, which Mrs. TR often says to us"*. There are smart and less smart in the class, but the teacher appreciates the strengths and weaknesses of each student, never labeling anything. Some students said that when the teacher spoke in a high voice, it did not mean that she was angry but that she was firm when some of our classmates were busy by themselves and did not respect when the teacher was explaining.

Table 10. Teachers Providing Equal Access and Educational Facilities to All Students

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Already	25	83,333%
2	Not Yet	5	16,667%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 10, it can be seen that 83.333% of students feel that teachers have provided equal access and educational facilities to all students, this is evidenced by the statements of several students saying *"All students already have equal access to learning materials, such as textbooks, textbooks, audiovisual materials, and other reference materials. Teachers also always make sure that all students have copies of the materials needed to follow the lessons well"*. So, no students are specifically given their own books/notes from the teacher to study/for study materials for upcoming exams, no one is given leaked exam questions/sudden exam notifications. Although there are teachers

also provide grids to all students without exception for study materials when approaching the midterm or final semester exams. Especially in today's digital era, technological facilities play an important role in education. All students should have equal access to technological devices such as computers, laptops or tablets if needed for learning. If the school uses technology in teaching, make sure that all students have access to the same devices. This is also evidenced when using school computers, all students hold one computer for one person.

Table 11. Aspects of Teachers Providing Freedom of Expression and Speaking Without Fear of Punishment

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Already	24	80%
2	Not Yet	6	20%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 11, it can be seen that 80% of students already feel given the freedom to speak and express without fear of being punished during learning, while 20% of students are still afraid of being punished when speaking and expressing. This is in accordance with the statements of several students who already feel given the freedom *"The teacher when carrying out learning activities has said that it is wrong not to be afraid of being punished, the name of the opinion is nothing wrong, we are here learning together, the teacher learns from you, you also learn from the teacher. So, there is no authoritarian action at all that the teacher does as he pleases because learning is two-way, mutual respect. The teacher always emphasizes to all students that "If you want to be respected by someone no matter old or young then you must first respect others, if you alone cannot respect others, how can others start to respect you"*.

Teacher evaluation after implementing a democratic classroom atmosphere in elementary schools

Teacher evaluations after implementing a democratic classroom atmosphere tend to vary. Some teachers shared positive experiences, where they observed an increase in students' motivation and active involvement in learning. For example, the evaluation conducted by the 5th grade mayor Mrs. "TR" said that *"The evaluation is a kind of reflection together with the children about what has been achieved and what has not been achieved in today's learning, how this democratic classroom atmosphere can increase students' motivation and active participation in learning. Then the reflection will be discussed together and do follow-up"*.

Table 12. Students Who Participate in Evaluating the Learning That has Taken Place

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Already	27	90%
2	Not Yet	3	10%
	Total	30	100%

Based on table 12, it can be seen that 90% of students have participated in evaluating the learning that has taken place, while 10% of students have not participated in evaluating this learning, saying that when the teacher held an evaluation 10% of these students were absent. While some students who have participated in evaluating this said that with teachers implementing a democratic classroom atmosphere they feel valued, considered, appreciated, not afraid to express opinions, not afraid to be punished when answering the wrong questions,

can collaborate with the teacher during learning projects, can foster leadership because they are given space to speak and express, dare to take responsibility for what is done, can interpret diversity among friends.

While the evaluation method carried out by Mrs. "EN" is by direct observation during learning activities, seeing oh this child has been active in the discussion, this child is not active, then thinking about how to make this child active, seeing whether these children are comfortable learning in class or not by implementing this democratic classroom atmosphere, whether they are motivated to learn yet, and teachers see a lot of progress after implementing this democratic classroom atmosphere. For example, students' academic performance, which was previously lacking, has now improved, children who were passive in class have become active, all have mingled in learning, no one discriminates against friends, all have mutual respect, mutual respect.

A democratic classroom atmosphere is where the learning atmosphere in which there is two-way interaction between teachers and students (Ayun, 2020). Teachers provide learning materials by always providing opportunities for students to actively react, students can ask questions or give critical responses without fear of being wrong, fear of being punished, as teachers and students can appreciate and respect each other (Comalasari, E., & Harapan, 2020). The impact of implementing this democratic classroom atmosphere is that students feel heard, valued, comfortable learning in class, feel appreciated, can interpret diversity so tolerance increases (Afriza, 2014). All aspects of a democratic classroom atmosphere on average more than 50% can be said to have successfully implemented a democratic classroom atmosphere.

Teachers' Perceptions and Efforts to Implement a Democratic Classroom Atmosphere in Elementary Schools

Fostering Students' Active Participation

In this aspect, students at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Ketelan Surakarta are almost all active in responding to the teacher when explaining learning material, this is because the teacher always emphasizes all students to be active in learning because there will be a plus point, so students are competing to be active in learning (Djaafara *et al.*, 2018). This is in accordance with the opinion of (Srijanti *et al.*, 2013) that students must actively express their ideas, ideas, and thoughts to the teacher, students have motivation to be more advanced and mature and develop sensitivity to the surrounding environment.

Equal Access and Opportunities

In this aspect, students already feel that the access and opportunities provided by the teacher in teaching and learning activities are equal between one student and another. Based on the results of the study, teachers always provide opportunities for all students to present the results of their work through presentations. Students make presentations both individually and in groups, both in front of the class and on the spot. Individual presentations were seen when students read the results of the poems they had made in front of the class in turn, students also showed the results of the lemon tea work they had made by placing them on their respective desks (Biamba, et al., 2021). Group presentation is also done by presenting the results of their work in front of the class in groups.

Not always in front of the class, sometimes the teacher also asks students to present the results of their discussions in their respective seats by presenting the results by standing up from their seats. There is no discrimination of ability whether it is smart or less smart, the teacher never labels the golden child in the class. This is in accordance with (Desi, 2020) opinion that "All students must have equal access to educational facilities, information, and opportunities to

learn. There should be no element of discrimination based on social origin, economy, thinking ability, etc."

Freedom of Expression and Speech

According to (Desi, 2020) "A democratic classroom atmosphere provides freedom for every student to express their opinions without fear of oppression or punishment. The teacher is tasked with facilitating open and in-depth discussions in the learning process". This is in line with the results of research at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Ketelan Surakarta, grade 5 and 6, almost all students have dared to express and speak without fear of being punished by teachers or afraid of friends as long as their words or opinions do not corner only one party. The teacher has also facilitated open discussions well without taking sides with one of the students, so the teacher here becomes the mediator for students.

Interpreting Diversity

In one class, there must be a lot of student diversity, whether it is ethnicity, race, religion, ability, talent interest, and student learning style. As a teacher, you must appreciate and respect this diversity. Teachers must consider these differences in designing and planning lessons. Teachers also always give understanding to all students to recognize and respect these differences. This has been successfully implemented by teachers in grade 5 and 6, where despite many differences all students still mingle in harmony without anyone feeling alienated or unaccompanied. Because grade 6 must equally strengthen and embrace each other, soon to graduate so learning must be improved again.

Shared Decision Making

According to (Desi, 2020) "In this democratic classroom atmosphere, decisions related to learning, such as teaching methods or class projects are made jointly by teachers and students. So, students also take part in determining projects in the learning process, not only one party but both parties, teachers and students". This is in accordance with the implementation of this concept of a democratic classroom atmosphere in the 5th grade of SD Muhammadiyah 01 Ketelan Surakarta which has involved students in determining learning projects.

For example, during entrepreneurship subjects, children want to make what the teacher asks first, then later the children will answer various wants to make pencil cases, make flowers from straws, etc. Because if children are not involved and the teacher wants to make them, then the teacher will ask them what they want to make. Because if children are not involved and the teacher determines it himself sometimes makes children feel unenthusiased during learning.

Individual Contribution Award

Based on previous research (Desi, 2020) said that "In a democratic classroom atmosphere, every student is valued for their contribution to the learning process, their achievements and efforts are recognized and appreciated. Giving appreciation to every student who has contributed to learning and emphasizing not to be afraid to be wrong in learning". This is in accordance with the results of research in class 5 that no matter how small the contribution of students should not be ignored, it must be appreciated, said the homeroom teacher because that way the child becomes enthusiastic when carrying out the next lesson, his mood is good if he is appreciated and appreciated even if it is just applause or applause from the teacher and other children. In addition, teachers usually also give appreciation in the form of pluses or 5 stars.

The pattern of creating a democratic classroom atmosphere by teachers at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Ketelan Surakarta is:

Teacher as Model and Exemplar

The most important pattern is that teachers must be models and role models for students,

because all their activities, whether in their style of speech, work routines, clothes used, interactions with people, lifestyles and ways of making decisions, are all considered by students even in detail (Djamarah, 2016). Therefore, teachers must be an example for their students by implementing a democratic culture and democratic attitudes to create a democratic classroom atmosphere as well.

Teachers are Close and Familiar with Students

In establishing and maintaining a harmonious relationship, it should be done with intimacy, calm, comfortable and full of love and affection (interpersonal relationship), thus, students in dealing with their teachers feel comfortable and do not feel reluctant and stiff (Tanjung, 2022).

Open and Respectful in Diversity

Teachers and students are open to various opinions and points of view (Wulandari & Nurhaliza, 2023). Each student respects and feels valued for the contribution of expressing opinions from their point of view, the teacher must also respect the opinions of students. A democratic classroom atmosphere recognizes and values the diversity of students' abilities, interests and learning styles. Teachers consider these differences when planning lessons. Teachers must also provide understanding for students to recognize and appreciate the diversity that exists within the classroom.

Active Participation

All students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process. No student is ignored or considered unimportant. So, in the learning process in the classroom all students have the right to actively participate (Sulistiyono, 2021).

Providing Freedom of Speech and Expression

A democratic classroom atmosphere provides freedom for every student to express his/her opinion without fear of oppression or punishment. Students also do not feel afraid when they do the wrong questions/answer the teacher's questions because the teacher has emphasized that there is no need to be afraid of being wrong, we are all learning here, even from mistakes we can learn. The teacher is also in charge of facilitating open and in-depth discussions in the learning process (Arfandi, 2021).

Shared Decision Making

Decisions related to learning, such as teaching methods or class projects, should be made jointly by teachers and students. So, students also take part in determining projects in the learning process, not just one party but two parties between teachers and students.

Equal Access and Opportunities

All students have equal access to educational facilities, information and learning opportunities. There is no discrimination based on social origin, economics, thinking ability, etc. No one is favored by the teacher.

Recognition of Individual Contributions

Every student is valued for their contribution to the learning process. Their achievements and efforts are recognized and appreciated. Giving appreciation to each student who has contributed to the learning and emphasizing that don't be afraid to be wrong when it comes to learning. This can be done by giving applause, great applause, salute applause by the teacher and classmates (Asraf, 2022).

Personal and Academic Development

A democratic classroom atmosphere supports the personal and academic growth of each student. They are encouraged to develop skills, knowledge and positive attitudes towards learning. By creating a democratic classroom atmosphere students' personal/character

development as well as academic development is enhanced and improved (Hidayati & Rukmini, 2021).

Involving Students in Evaluation

Teachers conduct learning evaluations involving students by providing surveys or questionnaires on how the learning went, what they liked and what they didn't like, whether there is material that has not been understood, how the teacher was when teaching, etc.

Conclusion

The results and discussion show that teachers at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Ketelan Surakarta have successfully implemented a democratic classroom atmosphere. Teachers' perceptions are in accordance with the concept of a democratic classroom atmosphere in elementary schools, which is very influential on its implementation as well. The efforts that teachers have made are to provide opportunities for students to speak in class discussions, involve them in making decisions about class rules, and provide space for students to express and share opinions. In addition, teachers also actively organize collaborative activities that allow students to work together and collaborate in learning. The form of implementation carried out by teachers to create a democratic classroom atmosphere is by facilitating discussions and decision making, teachers become role models for students in democratic behavior, teachers always give appreciation for students' contributions when active in classroom learning, teachers have high tolerance about the diversity of students in the classroom, teachers provide equal access and facilities, and teachers provide freedom of expression and speech without fear of being punished. For evaluation, teachers use reflection at the end of learning and direct observation when learning activities involve students. This research shows that teachers have successfully implemented a democratic classroom atmosphere in elementary schools, then the researcher hopes that it can be a literature for developed research findings.

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