

FREEDOM AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE:
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES
OF ALBANIAN MATURA STUDENTS AT SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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APPROVAL PAGE

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ABSTRACT

The classification of Albania as a flawed democracy with fragile civil liberties, political rights, and the insufficiency of internal democratization mechanisms revealed the need for an internal and bottom-up process of democratization. Education, considered an internal factor, affects the quality of citizenry, political culture and values in a sustainable manner. Albania inherits a communist past when indoctrination and centralization in education were common. In such a context, this study aims to explore Albanian Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom and distributive justice as two key values of democracy, in the school environment. A questionnaire, used as an instrument, was completed by a sample of 1846 Matura students of the 2020-2021 academic year. Quantitative methods and descriptive and inferential analysis were used to answer the research questions and to test the hypothesis. The findings in this study, based on respondents' self-reporting answers, revealed that experiences and perceptions of freedom differ based on type of school, gender, geographic area (location) and directorate. In addition, all types of freedom under study demonstrated a positive correlation between experience and perception. Regression analysis revealed evidence linking experiences of freedom with perceptions of freedom, the highest being that of freedom of action, in which 8.5 % of variation in perception is explained with experience ($B=.297$), followed by freedom of choice 6.2 % ($B=.232$), and freedom of expression 3.5 % ($B=.125$). Perceptions and experiences of principles of distributive justice differed based on type of school,

gender, geographical area and directorate. In addition, equality and need are significantly related with a positive correlation between experiences and perceptions. Experiences of equity are negatively correlated with perceptions of equity. Regression analysis demonstrated evidence linking experience with perception; for equality 4.3% of variation in perception is explained by experience ($B=.150$), for need 4.6 % ($B=.120$), and inversely for equity it is explained by 1% ($B=-.089$). The findings expose school sociodemographic characteristics and school experience related to freedom and distributive justice. A proper understanding of freedom and distributive justice from the new generation is significant for the civic (political) culture with education used as an internal democratization factor.

Keywords: Education, Democracy, Albania, Matura Students, Freedom, Distributive Justice

**LIRIA DHE DREJTËSIA DISTRIBUTIVE:
PERCEPTIMET DHE PËRVOJAT E MATURANTËVE SHQIPTARË
NË MJEDISIN SHKOLLOR**

ABSTRAKT

Klasifikimi i Shqipërisë si demokraci problematike, me liri civile, e të drejta politike të brishta si dhe me pamjaftueshmëri të faktoreve të brendshëm demokratikë, ka nxjerrë në pah nevojën e një procesi të brendshëm demokratizimi të nisur nga baza. Arsimi, i cilësuar si faktor i brendshëm, ndikon në cilësinë e masave, kulturën politike dhe vlerat në mënyrë të qëndrueshme. Shqipëria mbart një të shkuar komuniste gjatë së cilës indoktrinimi dhe centralizimi në edukim ishin të zakonshme. Në një kontekst të tillë, ky studim ka për qëllim të zbulojë perceptimet dhe përvojat e Maturantëve Shqiptarë rreth lirisë dhe drejtësisë distributive si dy vlera kyçe të demokracisë, në mjedisin shkollor. Instrumenti, një pyetësor, u plotësua nga 1846 nxënës Maturantë të vitit akademik 2020-2021. Metoda sasimore, analiza përshkruese dhe inferenciale u përdorën për t'u dhënë përgjigje pyetjeve kërkimore dhe për të testuar hipotezat. Gjetjet e këtij studimi, bazuar në përgjigjet vetë-raportuese të të anketuarve, tregojnë se përvojat dhe perceptimet e Maturantëve rreth lirisë në ambientin e shkollës ndryshojnë sipas gjinisë së tyre, llojit të shkollës, zonës gjeografike, dhe drejtorisë rajonale arsimore. Për më tepër, të gjitha llojet e lirisë nën studim, tregojnë korrelacion pozitiv mes përvojave dhe perceptimeve. Analizat e regresionit dëshmojnë për lidhje të përvojës me perceptimet e lirisë, ku më e larta është liria e veprimit 8.5% (B=.297), e ndjekur nga liria e zgjedhjes 6.2 % (B=.232), dhe liria e shprehjes 3.5 % (B=.125). Perceptimet dhe përvojat e principeve të drejtësisë distributive

ndryshojnë sipas llojit të shkollës, gjinisë, zonës gjeografike, dhe drejtorisë rajonale të shkollave të Maturantëve. Së tepërmi, përvojat dhe perceptimet rreth principeve të barazisë dhe nevojës në kontekstin shkollor janë të lidhura dukshëm nëpërmjet një korrelacioni pozitiv. Përvojat rreth principit “equity” lidhen me anë të një korelacioni negativ me perceptimet rreth këtij parimi. Analizat e regresionit dëshmojnë lidhje mes përvojës dhe perceptimit, përkatësisht për barazinë 4.3 % ($B=.150$), për nevojën 4.6 % ($B=.120$), dhe anasjelltas për parimin equity 1% ($B= -.089$). Gjetjet vënë në dukje se karakteristikat socio-demografike dhe përvoja në shkolla lidhet me vlerat e lirisë dhe drejtësisë distributive. Brendësimi i vlerave të lirisë dhe drejtësisë distributive nga këta të rinj është domethënës për cilësinë e kulturës politike me edukimin si faktor të brendshëm demokratizimi.

Fjalë Kyçe: Edukim, Demokraci, Shqipëri, Maturantë, Liri, Drejtësi Distributive

DEDICATION

First and foremost, this thesis is dedicated to my daughters who have experienced the most my absence while researching and preparing this thesis. They were the main drive to the beginning of this journey and the reason to conclude it. My husband is to be thanked for all the encouragement, patience and support he has shown from the start. My dear parents, my mother and father, my sister have motivated and assisted me through this challenging path. In particular, my thanks go to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Enriketa Sogutlu, who was a kind friend and supporter.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Ph.D. thesis, titled “Freedom and Distributive Justice: Perceptions and Experiences of Albanian Matura Students at School Environment”, is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that this thesis has not been previously or concurrently submitted for the award of any degree, at Epoka University, or any other university or institution.

Albana Çekrezi

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SE Europe	South Eastern Europe
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
DJ	Distributive Justice
DRAP	General Regional Directorate of Pre-University Education (Drejtoria Rajonale e Arsimit Parauniversitar)
DPAP	General Directorate of Pre-University Education (Drejtoria e Përgjithshme e Arsimit Parauniversitar)
MASR	Ministry of Education and Sports (Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit)
ZVAP	Local Office of Pre-University Education (Zyra Vendore e Arsimit Parauniversitar)
ZVA	Local Education Office (Zyra Vendore Arsimore)
WB	The Western Balkans
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics (Instituti i Statistikave)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
SDG-4	Sustainable Development Goal 4
IZHA	Institute of Educational Development (Instituti i Zhvillimit të Arsimit)
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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A. Journal Publications

1. Çekrezi, A., Zenelaj Shehi, R., & Kabashi, F. (2022). The Elusive Relationship of State Power and Societal Peace: Reflections on the Case of Kosovo. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai Sociologia*, 67 (LXVII)(2), 39-62.
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“An anxiety about what is being communicated to the young, about the culture we are perpetuating in time”- Maxine Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom*

"Education is a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hand and who is struck with it." --- V. Stalin to H. W. Wells

“What is the first part of politics? Education. The second? Education. And the third? Education.”— Jules Michelet

1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Significance of Education in Democracy. Arguments in Favor of Education

Democratization as a process is influenced by both external and internal factors. Internal democratization considers domestic contributors to democracy. The nature of political culture characterizing a country is among the factors that affect deeply political life and as a result the source of values is important. In such a case as a source of gaining civic democratic values: Can education influence politics? This question has been a matter of inquiry since the ancient times of the Greek philosopher Socrates, who was sent to trial and executed for “impiety and corrupting the young” (Arblaster, 2002, p. 18). For many centuries to come, scholars, philosophers, political scientists, sociologists, and educators have contributed to this debate. Certainly, nowadays, one cannot avoid discussing the impact of education on society as nearly all societies make use of education to socialize and integrate their members. The aim is to communicate the values, information, and abilities necessary for the maintenance of social order. In democracies, however, education makes citizens push for further democratic governments and policies; it sets the balance between the self-development of individuals and the achievement of common will and it assists, supports, and nurtures democratic procedures and practices (Gutmann & Ben-Porath, 2015). This said as a starting point, there are many arguments posed as the rationale behind the choice of education when considering democratic development in Albania.

First and foremost, education is an internal factor that sustains democratization. Both external and internal factors can be witnessed in a democratization process. For instance, externally, the USA and the EU have been the main advocates of democracy globally

(Babayan & Risse, 2017). In general, external promoters facilitate the process, however, democratization from within is a must for long-term sustainability. As in many other political spheres, in education the impact of international donors continues to be the main pushing factor in reforms of pre-university education system. However, more attention needs to be given to human resource development (Bonomi, Hackaj, & Reljić, 2020). This suggests that many arrangements cannot be imported from outside, but need to grow internally. Therefore, for democracy to be “legitimate, the construction must be the work of local people making decisions about the design and operation of their institutions” (Inkeles, 1991, p. 69). In this case, internally, democracy should be the product of the efforts demonstrated by those people who will be under its influence. Education, in this case, can be a field of investment that promotes constructive collective change (European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2017).

Secondly, education targets the quality of the citizens because democracy is in essence ruled by them. Education is important for the development and improvement of human resources (UN General Assembly, 2005). As democracy is the rule of the majority of citizens, then the quality of these citizens is significant for democracy. Education stands as an important factor among the many used to improve political culture. Changes in society should start with education (Segalerba & Latyshev-Maysky, 2020). In this discussion, education deals with the roots of problems, more than the consequences. It deals with the education of political actors before they actively perform their roles as citizens or politicians.

Thirdly, education affects the quality of the political culture during democratization in a sustainable manner. Democratization, being a challenging process itself, has been at the center of various debates and assumptions. Education has the potential to perform such a role during this demanding process. It affects massively individuals, communities, states, and entire societies. It prepares society for democracy because “there is no democracy without democrats” (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 134). For sure, an educated electorate is more informed on election campaigns and candidates (Milligan, Moretti, & Oreopoulos, 2004). Education strengthens the capacity of individuals and communities (Türkkahraman, 2012).

It helps citizens make knowledgeable choices while participating in politics (Isaksson, 2010). The Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights considers education a factor that helps face the challenges of societies (Council of Europe, 2017). More educated societies can better preserve and protect democracy against dictatorships as education can improve participation given the fact that schools teach the benefits of political participation (Glaeser & Ponzetto, 2007).

Furthermore, education can lead to changes in values. Almond and Verba (1963) in their study *The Civic Culture*, presented educational attainment as a factor that leads to change in values (Dalton & Welzel, 2014). This means that the preferences and orientations of citizens will change with education. Additionally, Inglehart (1977) considers education a source of change in values. He suggests that differences in values may come from differences in education. In this regard, the more educated tend to value more post-materialist values like political liberties and fewer materialist ones like economic and political security. What is more, the values of citizens are found to change more quickly when they are young and less when they are adults (Rohrschneider, Miles, & Peffley, 2014; Welzel, Inglehart, & Kligemann, 2003). As values are not innate, this makes value education in schools effective (Turkkahraman, 2014). Given that most students come to university with already formed values and attitudes (Mintz, 1998), the question remains what values they attain before this period. From this point of view, educational attainment changes values, and these changes occur more at a younger age. Beyond what has been said, education develops core democratic values and is a safeguard (Council of Europe, 2010). As schools impact the formation of political values, attitudes, and behavior (Neundorf & Smets, 2017), they can fuel the proper understanding of values. In terms of the development of core values, education is found to establish foundations that lead to greater political activity (Verba, Nie, & Kim, 1978). It promotes political and civic participation (Witschge, Rozer, & Van de Werfhorst, 2019) and affects political ideology by shifting beliefs to the right spectrum (Meyer, 2016).

1.2 The Need for Internal Democratization in Albania

Keeping in mind the quest for democracy and the function of education, many routes lead to the case of Albania in this discussion. The refusal done to the theories of transition for countries emerging from the third democratization wave (Huntington, 1991) brought the assumption that these states are not necessarily in a transition phase, but somehow in a gray zone, stuck position, and halfway democracy, including Albania (Carothers, 2002). There are two main syndromes for these states: feckless pluralism and dominant-power politics. The lack of devotion and dedication to democratic values was seen as a factor of democratization itself. The improvement of the quality of political actors, and the citizenry are among the key suggestions for countries that suffer from feckless pluralism.

In Albania, during the last 30 years, external actors like the EU and USA have contributed to democratization in the Balkan region, mostly reflected in the form of observation of elections, assistance, aid, impositions, sanctions, and diplomacy (Wolff & Spanger, 2017). The EU has used the *conditionality* factor to influence externally the democratization process in the countries of Southeast Europe (Western Balkans included). It is because of the limitation of the internal factors; the external donors have served as complementary factors. However, their influence has been partial as many problems persist. The researcher Çullhaj (2012, p. 16) claims that this exportation of democracy in Albania has resulted in a *'political abortion'*. Domestic factors do play a significant role and cannot be underestimated (Freyburg & Richter, 2010). Rather than a top-down process of external imposition, a bottom-up and political culture-oriented approach would better fit this context.

Next, according to Democracy Index 2022, Albania ranked 64th from 167 countries with a total score of 6.41 and 6.25 in political culture and was classified as a flawed democracy (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023). The categorization has been hybrid and remained unchanged for at least 14 years since 2006 (The Economist, 2020) and only during 2020 advanced from hybrid to flawed. Political culture and civil liberties were identified as

some of the problematic issues of democracy (Taylor, 2020). This signifies that over a long time, the political culture has resulted to be problematic. At the same time, Freedom House confirms that the country is partly free with fragile liberties and rights (Freedom House, 2020). The same is confirmed by the latest findings of the European Commission report on Albania where freedom of expression and gender equality remain problematic areas (European Commission, 2021; European Commission, 2022). These results indicate that there is a need for qualitative improvements of political actors and citizenry. Kaltsounis (2010) emphasizes this need for the internal democratization of Albania. He notes: “The ordinary citizens had to be mobilized to play an active role in the democratization of the country” (Kaltsounis, 2010, p. 168). Overall, one of the main challenges of democracy nowadays is strengthening democratic political culture (Arenilla, 2010).

Last but not least, internal effort and motivation are crucial energizing elements of political culture. In Albania, the change of systems happened more because of the reaction to the communist regime rather than as a regular and systematic effort to construct democracy (Democracy International, 2006). During the communist regime, the authoritarian state used education to exercise excessive influence over the political culture of the citizenry. The same cannot be said after its fall because the population experienced a vacuum in this regard. The problem with democracy may not be related so much to the utopian aspects it promotes (Mills, 2007), but also to the ones *who* implement democracy based on their interest (He, 2011). Education in this case can revitalize democratization. In a few words, today’s young adults are tomorrow’s voters, party members, leaders, representatives of the media, policymakers, and actors in legislation, the economy, and education. Therefore, they become part of the same cycle.

Countries like Albania were considered fertile soil for democratization and appeared less in post-communist discussions and studies compared to other countries (King, 2000). Very few studies on Albania point to the importance of values, and education. Ymeraj (2018) in “Clash of Values and the New Profiles of Albanians in An Endless Transition” offers a discussion of two values during transition: solidarity and equality. The author recognizes

the importance of these values. As a result, the academician calls for the education of the citizenry. This combination of new values and the communist mindset are found present in many post-communist countries (Birzea, 2012).

In his book “Democratization from Within-Political Culture and the Consolidation of Democracy in Post-Communist Albania”, Çullhaj (2012) presents a thorough analysis of the Albanian political culture developments. The author examines through many arguments the factors that have been indicative of the political culture in Albania. The author calls for a democratization process based on the characteristics and authenticities of the country. Most of the discussion points to the communist legacy which produced a fragile civil society (considered as a subject and submissive culture) with weak democratic attitudes. Çullhaj evaluates the studies of another important academician, A. Koçani, who has conducted various studies with a focus on the political culture in post-communist Albania, among them “Transition in Albania and Values” (Kocani, 1999), which reveals a fight between communism-influenced values and democratic ones. The influence of communism is seen in the support for the value of equality of income, even though social differentiation is supported. Çullhaj supports his thesis by adding results from World Value Survey for Albania in 1998, 2004, 2008, and 2012 that suggest that the youth is disinterested, there exists low trust for domestic institutions, conflicting values persist, and democracy is supported only theoretically. Support for materialist values like economic security and order dominates more than support for freedom (Çullhaj, 2012, p. 154). The author notes this instability of values, calls for authentic values, and requests a form of a “*precondition*” upon which to build these values (2012, p. 272).

Another important contribution made to the field of democratization of Albania through education has been done by Kaltsounis and has been reflected in his book “The Democratization of Albania-Democracy from Within” (Kaltsounis, 2010). Kaltsounis, a greek minoritarian born in Albania and schooled in the USA advocates for the democratization of Albania with an approach where education is an internal factor. The scholar trusted the role that youngsters have in democratization and in providing a solution for citizens’ empowerment. The academician implemented a project motivated by the idea of a bottom-up democratization process. The Washington University project aimed to

further democratization by training teachers on methods, practices, materials, and preparation of youngsters for both schools and communities. The project lasted for 13 years, and ended in 2004 leaving a vacuum for the years to come. After the project, the author envisions the youth of Albania guided by rationality and fairness. Nevertheless, the author remained faithful to the idea that democracy in Albania is to be built by the young generation, using educational institutions as central networking sites.

1.3 The Significance of the Study

Considering the above-mentioned scholars, referring to the literature on democratization, keeping also in mind that value education depends on the context of the country (Almalki, 2016; Bäckman & Trafford, 2007; Weil, 1985), and that one third of the population in Albania is involved in the educational system (National Strategy of Education 2021-2026, 2021), more investigation was to be done on the case of Albania. The impact of education on values is seen over a long-term period and there are differences in values between those who had received a high school education and those who had not as regards values like freedom and equality (Hyman & Wright, 1979). The target group in this study, that of high school students has been little researched, and in the case of Albania, a country that aspires to join the EU and become democratic, the experiences and the perceptions of the youth and young generation are an area to be researched.

Adolescence has a notable role in value formation from a cognitive development perspective. Superka (1976) signalizes that value education as a process is nested and matured during adolescence. Adelson discovered an increase in the use of political judgments in the later years of adolescence (Adelson & O`Neil, 1966). Furthermore, Kohlberg and Gilligan (1971) considered adolescence important for moral development and viewed adolescents as philosophers surrounded by peer culture, while educational institutions were considered important because they serve to connect to society. Values, according to Shi (2001) are inner standards attained during the early socialization of

individuals. Bush (1970) found that older teenagers were more democratic, and showed maturation in political thought not only over tangible issues concerning politics but went beyond to take into account considerations of the future and community. Connell (1971) in *“The Child’s Construction of Politics”* emphasizes that the period (13-16 years old) was indicative of the rational formation of political ideas of youngsters and by the age of 15, 16 youngsters had clear unified thoughts. Damon (1977) notes these ages are important in the way children conceptualize principles of distributive justice. Principles of justice develop and change with age because early ages prioritize equality (8-11), older ones (11-12) equity, and need making youngsters of older ages take into account personal differences when thinking of fairness (Piaget, 1969).

Given that there has been a lack of research by scholars focusing on education in post-communist countries, analyzing topics concerning education gives information on how they are progressing (Webber & Liikanen, 2001). Democratization in Albania has been considered and researched less from the perspective of internal actors of democratization. For this reason, this study serves to occupy the geographical gap in the literature that attempts to examine the contribution of education to democracy as an internal factor. It follows the bottom-up rationale of democratization. Furthermore, this study takes into account two democratic values and tries to understand how students experience and perceive them in the school environment. All in all, there is little empirical research that measures freedom and distributive justice from youngsters’ perspective, in this case, Matura students’ perspective. These studies do not tell us about the relation between education, freedom and distributive justice. Moving further, it examines the relation between experiences and perceptions of these values. The current study extends previous literature because it situates the research in the Albanian context; it also offers a study on experiences and perceptions of the values of freedom and distributive justice in the school environment offering implications for internal democratization.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

This study aims to explore *how education in Albania contributes to democratization through the internalization of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice among Matura students?*

Research Objectives:

RO1: To identify Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom within the school environment.

RO2: To examine and detect any relationship between Matura students' experiences and perceptions of freedom in the school environment.

RO3: To discover Matura students' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice within the school context.

RO4: To discover possible relationships between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research question is used as a principal guide in this study, detailed in four sub-questions as presented below.

Main Research Question:

How is education in Albania contributing to democratization through the internalization of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice among Matura students?

The four sub-research questions used in this study are as follows:

RQ1: What are Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom within the school environment?

RQ2: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students?

RQ3: What are Matura students' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice within the school environment?

RQ4: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students?

1.6 Definition of Main Concepts

Given the focus of this thesis, the following definition has been used to describe freedom and distributive justice. The definition of freedom used in this study is cemented on the negative-positive, internal-external, and individual-social perspectives. The negative-positive division is distinguished by the lack of external limitation for negative freedom and freedom found in the use of rationality, responsibility, reasonableness, and refinement of knowledge for positive freedom, as guided by Berlin (1969), Hegel (1991), Adler (1958), and Foucault (2015). The internal perspective of freedom refers to one own's freedom submitted to reason and rationality, and the external one to being free from outer or external limitations (Adler, 1958; Dewey, 1938; Kant, 1785; Gustavsson, 2014). The individual level of freedom covers the individual sphere, and the social one relates to society (Dimova-Cookson, 2013; Heyman, 1992).

Freedom of expression (here being positive, external, and social) is the expression of ideas following rules of communication and debate (Hanson & Howe, 2011; Parker, 2010).

Freedom of action (here being positive, external, and social) is acting responsibly towards self and others (Locke, 2017; Guyer, 2010).

Freedom of choice (referring here to positive, internal, and individual) relates to making informed choices (Guyer, 2010; Gould, 2013).

Distributive justice principles

Distributive justice is one main form of justice that considers the principles on which the distribution of resources is done. The definition for principles of distributive justice: equality, need, and equity, has emerged based on the explanations offered from various sources (Adams, 1965; Bierhoff, Buck, & Klein, 1986; Deutsch, 1975; Homans, 1961; Konow & Schwettmann, 2016; Rawls, 1971, 1999; Miller, 1992). The resources distributed in education refer to educational opportunities (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016), educational places and programs (Noddings, 2008), exercises (activities) (Freeman, 2006), assessment (grades) (Deutsch, 1985), and teacher-student relation (attention) (Baker, 1999).

Equality is the principle of distributive justice based on which distribution of resources in education such as educational opportunities, educational places, and programs, exercises (activities), assessment (grades), and teacher-student relation (attention) is done according to the rule: to each distributed equally. **Equity** is the principle of distributive justice according to which resources/rewards are distributed to each based on meritocracy, effort, ability/skill, talent, work, performance, and how much they contribute. In education, this principle is used for the distribution of resources such as educational opportunities, educational places and programs, exercises (activities), assessment, and teacher-student relations, to successful students or students with achievements, considering their effort, performance or work. **Need** is the distributive principle of distributive justice according to which resources are distributed to each based on needs. In education, this principle is used for the distribution of resources such as educational opportunities, educational places and programs, exercises (activities), assessment, and teacher-student relation to students with special needs, lower performing students (weak students), or those having/facing individual difficulties.

1.7 Thesis Organization

This thesis starts with a short introduction that brings some arguments in favor of education. It positions democratic values and their significance in democracy and presents the problem in the Albanian context and the need for an internal factor that contributes to democratization through a bottom-up process. The second chapter presents theoretical considerations and elaboration on the values of freedom and distributive justice. The theoretical discussion contains theories and models on education and democratic values. This is followed by a discussion on the theoretical discourse on the connection between education with freedom and distributive justice. This chapter ends with a review of empirical research conducted in different countries on education and the values of freedom and distributive justice. Details on sampling and the questionnaire are presented in the methodology chapter. The chapter “Education in Albania” describes briefly the educational context, history, current situation, recent data and ends with how freedom and distributive justice are projected in education policy documents. In the findings and discussion chapter, all the descriptive and inferential results are presented in response to four research questions and the raised hypotheses, and these two chapters converse on findings related to similar findings abroad and as explained by theory. The conclusion chapter marks the end of this thesis settling and exposing the role of school in experiences and perceptions of freedom and distributive justice.

2 CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Before discussion in this thesis the values of freedom, distributive justice, and education, firstly, it seemed appropriate to situate the position of democratic values (freedom and distributive justice included) in democracy. Further, their significance for political culture will be expounded to ultimately proceed with education. A bulk of research, both theoretical and empirical, will justify and give meaning to the relation between education and these values. The theoretical understanding will present a variety of discourses that evaluate the implications between education and freedom initially, and with distributive justice later. The different perspectives presented here vary from the liberal and progressivist standpoint to the deliberative and critical one.

2.1 Democratic Values and Political Culture in Democracy

Democracy, more than externally driven, should be internally sourced, motivated, grown, constructed and evolved. In many cases, the problems with democracy have derived from domestic factors. External actors have not been successful enough in bringing stability. Internal growth is achieved with the efforts demonstrated by citizens. The building of democracy is primarily the duty of these citizens. Political culture is one of the domestic factors that defines internal democratization. Constructed from within, the system of values that the political culture shares is of the utmost importance. These values determine the quality of citizens, so necessary in democracy. Internally, democratic values are important for democracy because they furnish the political culture (Duch & Gibson, 1992). Values are mechanisms for cultural orientation and change (Doyle, 1997). The systematic behavior, attitude, and orientation demonstrated by the polity toward a certain political

system can result in either political stability or instability (Ulam, 2016). This means that value orientation dictates attitude toward a wide range of topics important for democracy (Alemán & Woods, 2015). The political culture around the world is important because it affects political life deeply. This suggests that beliefs in politics are defined by values and the development of these values is significant. One example comes from the political instability in Spain leading to the Spanish Civil War and the possible relation with the values that the political elites shared (Gunther, Montero, & Botella, 2004). Political culture is both *space* and *process* by which different events and contexts are reflected in political behavior and attitude (Berns-McGown, 2005). Political culture never remains static, but changes over time and is dependent on the source of the values that furnish it and the process through which these values are formed (Heck, 2004).

Given that political culture plays an important role in the internal democratization of a country, then the source of values that feed political culture becomes significant. Education, among others, is one of them considering that education and democracy are connected in many ways. The quality of political development is related to the quality of education next to economy and urbanization (Cutright, 1963). Naturally, the education of a country reflects some sets of values (Hahn, 1999). Schools and education are considered social institutions (Selznick & Steinberg, 1969). These social units may influence one's understanding of politics (Almond & Verba, 1989, pp. 266-267). Socializing agents like schools, teachers, and peers, through the process of political socialization, affect the perception of politics. Different political cultures reflect different values and some of these values are selected by education policy (Wirt, Mitchell, & Marshall, 1988). The educational system transmits the already existing political culture of a country (Weil, 1985) as schools are led by a certain "value-orientation" (Parsons, 1951, p. 236). For instance, practices of freedom are found to be important for the promotion of democracy in education and the development of political literacy (Perry-Hazan, 2015). Even liberalism makes use of education. Education for citizenship (or political education) serves to form liberal democratic citizens who are needed to maintain democratic institutions in liberalism (Levinson, 1999) and in this case, liberal education is mostly expressed in humanities (Pring, 1999). Nowadays, a comprehensive school approach based on

democratic values and human rights as presented theoretically by the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (Council of Europe, 2018), emphasizes the necessity of the development of democratic political culture. It is a medium and long-term investment in the attainment of competencies needed in a democratic society aiming for the formation of a sustainable democratic society.

The succeeding section explains the meaning of the values of freedom and distributive justice. Many philosophers and political scientists have tried to find the essence and components that lie in each value. Even though these values are still debated notions, they are misunderstood by many.

2.2 Freedom and Distributive Justice within the Frame of Democratic Values

The system of values that citizens share is the driving force behind the decisions they take considering that their actions are integral for the proper functioning of democracy in a country. The process of democratic culture development and the values that democracy promotes have been questioned widely (Kurki, 2010). There are counted many arguments why these values, shared by the political culture of a state are helpful for internal democratization.

Values are pondered over many models of democracy because they reduce the disputation over which democracy has been internationally contested as a concept; they overcome the lack of universality which characterizes many models of democracy as typifying national contexts; and thirdly, as values are normative, they uncover the obscure and non-ideal aspects of democracy (Kuyper, 2016). Furthermore, values and their embodiment best characterize democracy (White, 1999). The civic virtues of citizens define the quality of democracy (Almond & Verba, 1989; Putnam, 2000). The United Nations is committed to core democratic values (United Nations, 2005). Nowadays, values are part of the civic competence framework next to attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Council of Europe, 2018; Hoskins, Villalba, & Van Nijlen, 2008).

Democratic values represent the 3rd face of democracy, next to popular sovereignty, rights and liberties, and economic democracy (Sodaro, 2004). Sodaro (2008) visualized an old Greek temple to describe what modern democracy looks like. This sanctuary of democracy is grounded on two important steps: Democratic Values and Rule of Law. The three columns that rise upon them are sovereignty, rights and liberties, and economic security. The first and most important step in this temple of democracy are democratic values. They consist of values like freedom, equality, equity, tolerance, respect, inclusiveness, trust, and compromise. These values support the structure of the temple and generate firmness in it. The solidity of these values affects the whole building and cracks in these values may destroy the whole temple. They are the initial step, the source of democracy, and represent its foundation.

Departing from such a context, freedom and distributive justice are distinguished within the constellation of democratic values. These values are viewed as fundamental (Munck, 2014) and can be traced to many models of democracy. Freedom of discussion (McWhorter, 1951) and justice (Aristotle & Jowett, 1999) guided the Athenian citizenry, even though restricted to Athenian adult males (Held, 2006). Freedom and fairness characterized democracy in the city-republics with equality of men before God, self-determination, and accountability of the political community only to itself (Held, 2006, p. 34). Laws were to be made by all people (Tierney, 2014) and citizens were encouraged to enjoy liberty, freedom of speech, association, and expression, and to be equally represented in a mixed form of government (Balot & Trochimchuk, 2012). Freedom and equality were assured and regulated through the general will, the agreement between the citizenry and government in Rousseau's Social Contract (Wade, 1976). Freedom of the press was particularly articulated by Bentham, a 19th-century British philosopher who saw it as a protection against despotism (Schofield, 2019). Freedom of individuals, freedom of choice in economic, religious, and political matters, freedom of the church and state, the right to property, and equal rights were typical of the liberal tradition. Locke's understanding of the state of nature was related to the freedom and equality of reasonable individuals (Lucci, 2018). Liberty is found in the institutionalized separation of the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary, distinguished by Montesquieu (Krause, 2000).

The liberty of individuals is defended by Mill (Ten, 1969), who also advocated equality between genders. Freedom (freedom of choice, independence) and equality (equal opportunity) are among the final aimed ones (Rokeach, 1973). All these examples confirm the idea that both freedom and forms of distributive justice are common in various forms of democracy.

The development of democracy itself is the development of two core values: liberty (freedom) and equality (fairness) (Arenilla, 2010). According to the revised theory of evolutionary modernization, self-expressive values (in comparison to survival values) like freedom and equality are more common in liberal advanced democracies (Inglehart, 2018). Varieties of freedom like the freedom to associate, freedom of media, freedom in academia, research, curricula, freedom in religious, social, and cultural activities ease the functioning of democracy (Inkeles, 1991). Additionally, fairness and freedom (self-determination) appear as a form of living when values are integrated into democratic competencies (Dürr, 2005). Freedom and fairness are among the emancipatory values needed in helping understand democracy in schools (Himmelmann, 2013). In the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, article 10 highlights freedom of thought, expression, and religion stating that displaying it is a right. Article 11 recognizes freedom of expression and transmission of ideas, opinions and having no external limitation from any authority (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2012). Article 15 highlights freedom to choose work and occupation. Title 3 entitled equality, gives space to equality before the law, equality despite gender, religious, ethnic, linguistic differences, and nationality. The rights of the children, elders, and the ones with special needs are to be respected. Article 31 recognizes the need for fair working conditions ensuring one's safety and dignity.

Consideration of freedom is important in the Albanian context due to the communist past when the main forms of freedom were violated under the regime and in the post-communist period freedom was misunderstood with anarchy. Similarly, equality as a principle of distributive justice was considered the main and only criterion of distribution of resources.

All these considered, *freedom and distributive justice* remain central values investigated in this thesis.

2.3 Theoretical Considerations of Values in Education

Until now, we have discussed why freedom and principles of distributive justice are important. Moving forward, the upcoming review begins with general theories on education and democratic values. It presents the philosophical discussion and how many philosophers have interpreted this relation. Afterward, it continues with the theory of transformative experience which has at its core the idea that educational experiences impact values. Having finished with the broad view, the target of the next part is the presentation in detail of interpretations of freedom, distributive justice, and discourses that connect each of them to education.

2.3.1 Philosophical Discussion

As a domestic factor, education serves politics and democracy in many ways. This relation between education and politics has caught the attention of many classical, early modern, and contemporary philosophers, scholars, political scientists, and educational theorists. It is through education that the character of the youth is prepared for social responsibilities by equipping him with morality and rationality. It suggests that the internal democratization rational is valid even from a philosophical point of view. The discussion goes further to the point where the most knowledgeable should have more chances of voting. Socrates believed that the youth need to be guided and he defended an individualistic education for democracy (Pangle, 1985). Plato and Aristotle set the roots of research on the influence of education on youth. Plato's idealistic thoughts favored education for character and citizenship (Lodge, 2000); education that forms elites who will

govern the state (Moore, 2010), and education that saves the youth from being blind to a world of faults (Murphy, 2015). Aristotle on the other hand believed that the final result of education should be the formation of good citizens and societies.

Other early modern philosophers have contributed to the matter. Kant envisioned an education that makes man moral (Locke, 1692, 2021; Forster, 2005) and that aims the formation of a class of thinkers (Sorina & Griftsova, 2017). Whereas J.S. Mill supported educational elitism and was suspicious of the political ability of the electorate and therefore advised that the wisest and most knowledgeable citizens have more votes compared to the working class (Held, 2006). Rawls envisioned the educated society as rational that shares a culture of norms and values while directing institutions (Brooke & Frazer, 2010).

In contemporary debates, the link education-politics has narrowed to education-democracy. In these debates, democracy is approached through education, as an inner element that serves to cultivate, maintain and develop it. What education does, is to deal with citizens who play a central role in the consolidation of democracy in a country. Its benefits vary from the favorable ground preparation for democracy, influencing understanding and conceptualization and to maintenance and continuation of the system. Democracy, as randomly happens, cannot be approached mainly and only from the elections' standpoint but should be nurtured as well (Carr & Lund, 2011). It is agreed in theory that education positively affects democracy. Primarily, education is seen as a necessary condition for democracy (Lipset, 1959). "If we cannot say that a "high" level of education is a sufficient condition for democracy, the available evidence does suggest that it is close to being a necessary condition in the modern world" (Lipset, 1959, p. 80). As part of the socio-economic elements, it prepares favorable grounds for democracy (Fukuyama, 1992). When the level of educational attainment increases, so does the level of democracy (Alemán & Kim, 2015). Education perpetuates the system (Dewey, 1916) and this has been supported by various studies across many countries (Apergis, 2017; Karış & Tandoğan, 2019; Türedi & Terzi, 2017). Most of them applaud the potential found in education (Keating, Benton, & Kerr, 2012), and how the increase of extra years of

education increases support for liberalism (Meyer, 2016). In a democratic environment, in addition to having an institutionalized effect (Fortunato & Panizza, 2015; Meyer, 1977; Murtin & Wacziarg, 2014) and affecting growth (Barro, 1999; Baum & Lake, 2003; Bittencourt, 2014; Chen, 2008; Glaeser, La Porta, Lopez-De-Silanes, & Shleifer, 2004), education impacts conceptualization on democracy. Education stimulates ideas and understanding of democracy because political thought is dependent on education (Jacoby, 1988). Additionally, political trust is influenced by education through the mediation of democratic values (Kołczyńska, 2020). Schools are among the main factors, next to family and the media, that influence the way individuals conceptualize politics and democracy (Print, 2007). Schools organized democratically can better promote a democratic culture (Harber, 1997). In addition to this, education influences civil liberties and gender equality (Campbell & Horowitz, 2016). For this reason, factors related to the social and economic context of schools should not be underestimated (Buchmann & Hannum, 2001).

2.3.2 Theory of Transformative Experience and Value Education

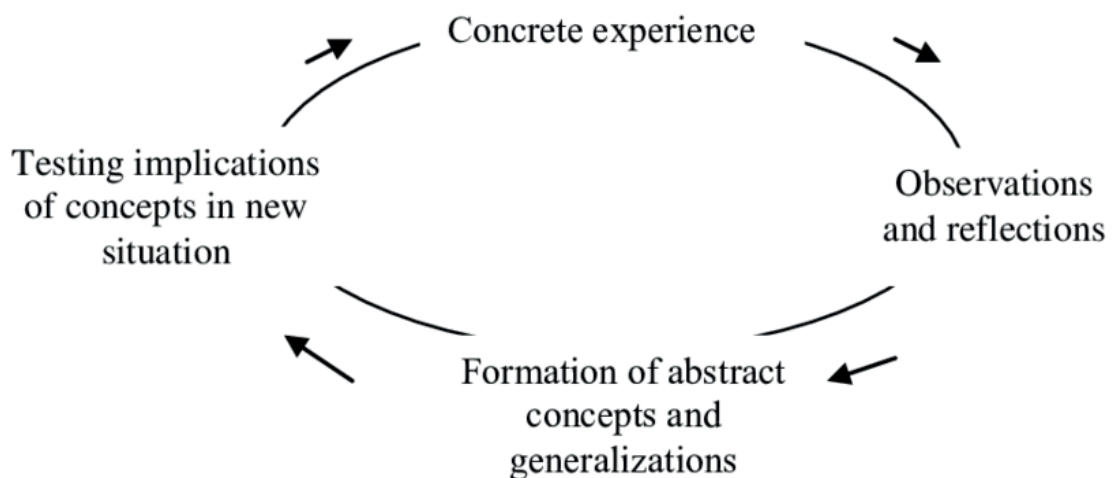
There exist two main theories that identify the way political learning occurs in a school: the acquisition theory and the participation theory (Sfard, 1998). The acquisition theory considers that students are recipients of knowledge. The transmission of information occurs between the teacher and the student using books and other teaching materials. The second theory, the participation theory, views participation in various activities as a way that facilitates political learning. Students are participants in discussions, debates, school councils, etc.

In this line, recently, many scholars have paid attention to a new emerging concept: the theory of transformative experience (Curren, 2021; Kemp, 2021; Koller, 2021; Yacek, Rödel, & Karcher, 2021; Murdoch, English, Hintz, & Tyson, 2021; Paul & Quiggin, 2021). This theory is based on experience. Mezirow (2003) introduced the idea of transformative learning through which certain fixed beliefs, assumptions, social relations, norms, and values are changed through reasoning as a result of communication and critical reflection.

In addition, experience has been elaborated by Paul (2014) in “Transformative Experience” where she presents a transformative view on how personal experience is important for the development of perceptions, abilities, and capacities.

In reality, in consideration of education, educational experience resurfaces as a significant attribute of education, and values are experienced in everyday activities (Meyer, Burnham, & Cholvat, 1975). The discussion presented here is framed from the perspective of the young or the student. It is set in a school context, and it is the product of the everyday, informal and continuous interaction of individuals when in contact with the school environment. This experience is personal and daily. Even though it is mostly unplanned and unintended, it remains very influential. Experiences are part of everyday informal events, and individuals can learn from their experiences (Andresen, Boud, & Cohen, 1995; Costa, 2014). It is educational and is referred to as the experienced curriculum (Pinar, 2015). Experience is essential because it helps notions, thoughts, and ideas to be reshaped continuously, thus making learning a process that is continually defined by experience (Kolb, 1984). Knowledge is the result of experience. The learner experiences, reflects, conceptualizes, and acts as indicated in the Experiential Learning Cycle theorized by Kolb (2015).

Figure 2.1 The Experiential Learning Cycle



Note. Kolb (2015, p. 123)

Thoughts on the impact of educational experience can be traced back to John Dewey (Pugh, Kriescher, Cropp, & Younis, 2021). Dewey and his book “Experience and Education” (1938) offers a philosophy of education based on experience. He emphasizes the relationship between education and personal experience. Experience becomes important and necessary because it impacts habits. Naturally, not every experience is acceptable as experience can also be damaging. There are two main conditions for experience: continuity and interaction. “Experience influences the formation of attitudes, of desires of purpose” (Dewey, 1938, p. 15). Within the school environments, the continuity of certain processes, social interaction with teachers and mates produces “collateral learning” (Dewey, 1938, p. 20). Another valuable contributor to the theory has been Dale (1946) with the cone of experiences which refers to learning through seeing, feeling, hearing, real-life experiences, learning through observation, learning from what one sees, and hears as essential to learning. This suggests that students retain only a small percentage of what they are lectured, and a majority of what they read, see, and hear, from demonstrations, discussions, and practices (Dale, 1970).

In “Pedagogy of Freedom-Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage” (2000), Freire emphasizes that individuals should not only be taught but also let to experience and live. Only by doing this, students are witnesses to the truth they learn. It is also important that they are let to practice. Correct thinking can be achieved only through co-engagement, dialogue, and communication. He offers the idea of “critical educational practice” (Freire, 2000, p. 25) in which learners experience themselves as individuals who are social and historical beings; creative but also understand that they are some sort of target. Experiences, daily informal events in schools, the gestures of teachers, and socialization are underestimated due to the limited understanding of education. “Educational experience enables subjective and social reconstruction” (Pinar, 2015). One of the main reflections of the relation between educational practices and freedom is self-assurance in decision-taking, discussion, critical observance, and discussion.

Importantly, Greene (1988, p. 9) in the “The Dialectic of Freedom” suggests that the difficulties, limitations, and barriers that the young face cannot be considered “unreal”.

Education can increase understanding and awareness, equip them, enrich their understanding, open new doors to learning and develop them intellectually. Consistent with these ideas, Carr, Thésée, Zyngier, Porfilio, & Brad (2018) offered a new model of transformative education which centralizes educational experience at the core of the process of investment in democracy. Education for democracy is seen as a process of cultivation that goes beyond the curriculum and extends to teaching methods, policies, activities, practices, and real experiences. This model of transformative education sees education as a political plan. Individuals are challenged to question existing society and order (Centre for Faculty Development, 2018).

Experiences taken from the school context or school environment have undeniable importance for value education. Democratic value education is based on a real-world setting (Puolimatka, 2003). Considered from a sociological perspective, youth is influenced by the educational environment because of the contact with the socializing actors (Durkheim, 1982). Schools are sites of social interaction (Boocock, 1973). The contact with socializing agents in the school setting serves to communicate values (Wentzel, 2015). School and the social environment influence self-confidence (Simmons, Blyth, & Mitsch, 1979). The young are seen as the product of a process of socialization in the educational environment who acquires characteristics demanded by the broader political society. Additionally, experiences lived within the school context are much more influential when it comes to value education compared to the direct transmitting of knowledge (Snook, 2007). The environment is influential (Ozolins, 2007). We are influenced by our experiences and educational sites must offer democratic involvement (Wood, 1998). And above all, the educational experience is significant not only when it is unified and has continuity, but also when it enables the youth to connect to real-life (Hinchliffe, 2011). Value education is grounded in practices that individuals face (Brown, 2007). Values should be practiced (Carleheden, 2007). The discussion over value education is a discussion that should extend to the environment, be practiced, and not remain limited to theory (Lee, 2007).

2.3.3 The Education Effect and Models on Democratic Values

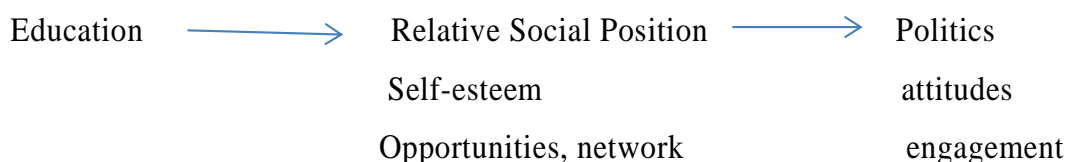
Two main theories are found to explain the link between education, politics, and democratic values. In broad lines, two main models expose the connection between education and politics: the correlated effects and the direct effects model which is represented by two essential lines: the direct model and the relative effect model (Emler & Frazer, 1999). According to the correlated effects model, education, and politics (and their connected variables) are outcomes of third variables like cognitive abilities (verbal ability, reasoning) character traits, and socio-economic status of the individual. In this model, education is simply an outcome without effects on politics. Meanwhile, according to the direct effect model, education affects politics straightly because education (values and knowledge) influences political attitudes and knowledge directly. In the relative effects model, education affects primarily the social position like opportunities and networks and then politics with the related engagement and attitudes. Thus, education indirectly influences politics. To generalize, the effect that education (more specifically formal education) has on politics can be in the form of the direct and indirect effect. More clearly these models are represented below:

Figure 2.2 The Education Effect

1. Direct effect model



2. Relative effects model



Note. Adapted from Emler and Frazer (1999, p. 260)

A more elaborate version of the impact of education on democratic values has been theoretically proposed by Stubager (2008). Stubager suggests three specific models that explain the ways through which education affects values through the direct effect model: the psychodynamic model, the cognitive model, and the socialization model. Firstly, the psychodynamic model considers education as influencing values through psychological characteristics like one's security feelings and tolerance. On the other hand, the cognitive model is focused on cognitive development as education improves knowledge and sophisticates it. The final model, the socialization model consists of the idea that certain socializing agents and experiences serve to instill values in students. The teaching process, the teacher-student, and the student-student interaction serve to impact the formation of values in students. This model received criticism because it does not explain how behaviors are learned; it views students as passive and not active individuals (Bowles & Gintis, 2002).

2.4 Freedom: Concepts, Dimensions and Types

The first value chosen for this thesis is the one of freedom. Freedom is simultaneously much debated and aimed by people, and the process of clearly defining it is challenging. It is similarly controversial because many authors make interpretations to claim it. Generally, in literature, the terms liberty and freedom are used interchangeably by both philosophers and political scientists. From the many attempts to define freedom, two classifications emerged in this part of the review: the positive-negative and the internal-external duality. Based on this classification, we can attribute any type of freedom that will be discussed below the positive or negative as well as the internal, and external nuances. The same can be valid for the classification of freedom at the individual, social and political levels discussed below.

2.4.1 Positive-Negative and Internal-External Freedom

Berlin was the one who famously classified liberty (freedom) as two-folded: negative and positive liberty in “Two Concepts of Liberty” (1969). The source of this distinction derives from factors guiding freedom. Negative liberty refers to a condition in which there is a lack of external enforcement and interference, while positive liberty is strongly associated with self-control and being your own master. This last version of liberty is more of a form of rational self-fulfillment. The first form of freedom gives the individual total freedom in the absence of outer factors. Here we can mention any external authority: peers, teachers, parents, police, army, government, and other institutions. Positive freedom ensures that inner factors guide freedom. Berlin was a critic of positive liberty in the sense that it conflicts with what one wishes as opposed to what one should do. In addition, the danger comes from the idea that one’s inner self-mastery may be imposed on another individual leading to coercion rather than liberation (Gustavsson, 2014).

Earlier, Hegel clearly emphasized positive freedom and saw it as internally motivated. His elaboration on freedom centralizes on what he calls “freedom of the will” (Hegel, 1991, p. 48). It is a freedom ensured by reflection, self-awareness, and self-actualization. Hegel criticizes the average person’s ideas on freedom that circulate on doing whatever one wishes. Freedom is guaranteed if one lives a principled life. Otherwise, his desires and tendencies confine him. The same holds true for freedom of action; it is possible when action is guided by reasonableness. Freedom of choice and action can be reached through reasonableness and freedom of the will through morality (Guyer, 2010). Additionally, the term is used to refer to what is logical and reasonable as opposed to being confined by madness and foolishness. Other philosophers like Aquinas viewed freedom as free will. Humans are given free will and, in this way, they control and master themselves (Mitchell, 2015). This free will is confined by ignorance and the only way to reach real freedom is when wisdom and will are combined. Sartre’s freedom is combined with the choices one makes, consciousness, and the responsibility it brings. He equalized freedom with freedom to choose and this choice is motivated by self-consciousness and responsibility (Natanson,

1952; Sartre, 1992). When we are free, at the same time we are also responsible. Therefore, freedom also brings responsibilities. So, Sartre's freedom is bound and depends on consciousness, a reflection of positive freedom (Merrill, 1961). To Tocqueville, liberty should be established with morality and ethics (2000).

Rousseau viewed freedom as an absolute value (Rousseau, 1893 (1762)) and for him the common interest is above personal freedom. Liberty is limited only when harm to others interferes (Mill, 1859/1991). The individual's liberty is restricted only to preventing harm to others and when his justifications to harm others are not valid and acceptable. This notion of harm is not limited solely to physical injury but covers verbal offense, harm to good manners, harm to animals, etc. Harm is also failing to realize the assigned duties, treating properly those who are your dependents. Rawls explains freedom based on three elements: who is free; what are the rules, regulations, responsibilities, obligations they are free from and what are the things they are free to do (Rawls, 1971, 1999, p. 177). He articulates three main forms of liberty: liberty of thought and consciousness, political freedom, and individual freedom under the protection of the law (Rawls, 1971, 1999, p. 180).

Likewise, Kant sees both forms of freedom: internal and external, and he considers rationality as the ultimate limitation to freedom of action (Kant, 1785). Internal freedom for him refers to guidance by reason, for instance, action guided by rationality makes you free. The same for freedom of choice, if one chooses in opposition to reason, it makes him not free (González, 2010). External freedom is linked to law and the judiciary. It is based on free will, morality, and rights as separated from one's predispositions and others' caprices (Demenchonok, 2019).

Hobbes on the other hand is well known for his interpretation of negative liberty as based on the lack of limitation of external agents referring to liberty as "the absence of all the impediments to action" (Hobbes, 1999, p. 38). However, he extends the notion to discuss free will producing a much more complicated concept (van Mill, 1995). For Locke, freedom exists when the individual's actions and movements are guided by his mind

(Locke, 2017). He sees freedom as not dependent on free will, which is a different form of power, but on the agent. This means that it is the person who decides, permitted by his free will. However, here the question is how this decision is taken and what guides the agents to take this decision. In particular, Foucault (2015) refers to freedom as parrhesia. Parrhesia or freedom is understood as the doing and saying of what the individual wants. In other cases, parrhesia means speaking the truth. So, it is understood here more as freedom of speech. It is about moral purity, otherwise one is a slave.

Likewise, Dewey (1938, p. 26) understands freedom from two perspectives: external and internal. External freedom is seen as a lack of external power, whereas internal one is in the form of freedom of thought, freedom of desire, and purpose. A person who is guided by instincts and impulses internally has no difference from one who is controlled by another power externally. Adler (1958) in his analysis of freedom concludes that the discussion over freedom is based on two notions: laissez-faire and freedom guided by moral, religious, and scientific standards. The first one suits more to “*doing as one wishes*”, and the second to “*doing what one ought*” (Adler, 1958, p. 381). The first is based on desire and determined by external circumstances, and conditions of life. On the contrary, the second form of freedom is internal, based on one’s character, discipline, and maturity; is disciplined by science, morality, and religion. MacCallum (1967, p. 312) has a “triadic” definition for freedom: as freedom of something, from something, and to do something. He looks at both forms of freedom from a different angle: negative freedom deals with the presence of things that limit freedom; positive freedom claims that even the absence of something limits freedom. Fromm labels these two forms of freedom as “freedom from” and “freedom to” (2001, p. 27). The first form is the typical negative version of freedom. This form is an attempt that drives one against any form of obstacle or burden leading to inferiority, submission, lack of security, and humiliation. The second form is consistent with the idea of positive freedom. It enables individuals to be self-responsible, self-realized, self-fulfilled, active participants, critical thinkers, and spontaneous. This conception of positive freedom does not include isolation and a critical stance does not exclude contact with society. The achievement of this form of freedom is through self-fulfillment.

2.4.2 Levels and Dimensions of Freedom

Heyman (1992) based on Blackstone's "Commentaries on the Laws of England" (Blackstone, 1723-1780), classifies liberty into three major levels: natural, civil, and political. Each of these contains both negative and positive forms of freedom. Natural liberty is the freedom to act as one wants in a state of nature under no control. Its positive side rests in the ability to act, and its negative in resistance to limitation. Civil freedom is regulated by law and is both private and public, each with its positive and negative aspects. Negative freedom for both is found in the lack of interference by others, both civil law and government. On the other hand, positive freedom is found in action done within what civil law (civil society), and the government prescribes. Political freedom is societies' ability to self-direct themselves. The positive aspect relates to formulating rules for the common good, and the negative, naturally, gives unlimited freedom to this society. It is apparent that positive freedom is the possibility to act (the natural version); this action should happen in the circle of what is defined by society and it extends to what the government suggests.

Dimova-Cookson (2013) in the book chapter entitled "Defending Isaiah Berlin's Distinctions between Positive and Negative Freedoms" claims that individual characteristics of the person combined with society-related factors define the tension within the notions of positive and negative freedom. This means that freedom is conceptualized in two different levels: the first one, freedom at the individual level is two-fold. This leads to two more forms of freedom at the social sphere. Freedom at the individual level is necessary to be studied on how it works in a social context. The author suggests that Berlin's definition of negative freedom is based on a social context and positive freedom on personal grounds. However, the exact definition of positive freedom is harder to make when compared to the negative one. Dimova-Cookson (2013, p. 78) refers to the notion of "true" freedom which encompasses what one can be and ought to be. In reality, this idea of true freedom refers to the combination of both negative and positive freedom. Nevertheless, positive freedom refers to some shared characteristics and

cannot be found solely in one simple definition. What can be said is the idea that positive liberty rebuilds negative liberty when the individual rationally accomplishes his potential. This rationality is considered as another form of limitation that positive liberty puts to the negative one. Another problem that the author notices with the idea of freedom is social justice. When we discuss freedom at a social level, social justice interferes. From Berlin’s perspective, the position of negative freedom at the social level when compared to the positive one is clearer. Negative freedom does not care about social justice and conditions such as poverty and exploitation are the result of the domination of negative freedom over justice. On the contrary, positive freedom can be better combined with fairness because the social level of positive freedom is related to justice. The same author attributes positive freedom qualities like connection to morality, production of moral goods for others, and consciousness-guided action for the good of society (Dimova-Cookson, 2003). The negative version of freedom is based on receiving two forms of goods: ordinary and moral, which creates this distinction between the two forms of freedom. Juristic freedom is similar to negative freedom, but in a personal context as it is true freedom for positive freedom, but again in a personal context. Table 2.1 below explains this division.

Table 2.1 Freedom in the Personal and Political Context

	Ordinary Action	Moral Action
Political Context	Negative Freedom	Positive Freedom
Personal Context	Juristic Freedom	‘True’ Freedom

Note. (Dimova-Cookson, 2003, p.511)

Spector (2010) recognizes 4 main categories of freedom: positive, negative, natural, and civil. As observed from the Table below, positive freedom rests in self-mastery and self-management of the citizen, and self-government (for civil). Therefore, his positive freedom is not a sphere that pertains only to the personal level. The responsible citizen, the self-rule, and the management of a community are examples of positive liberty in a society.

Table 2.2 Spector’s Conception of Freedom

Dimensions	Negative	Positive
Natural	1. Non-interference/ non-domination	2. Self-mastery
Civil (juridical)	3. Civil liberty	4. Collective self-government

Note. (Spector, 2010, p. 792)

Gould (2013) in “Retrieving Positive Freedom and Why It Matters”, considers that positive liberty is the base of justice. The author criticizes Berlin’s definition of negative freedom as undermining the importance of social and political implications. This notion of negative freedom is based on lack of interference, domination, tyranny, and exploitation. Positive liberty, on the other hand, is effective liberty. For instance, effective choice is better than simply freedom to choose. Positive freedom is a concrete action applied in a certain context and much more than simple self-realization. The 19th Century English philosopher T.H. Green’s theory of freedom (Green, 1886/2011) refers to juristic, moral, and perfect freedom. The first one is the absence of limitation which resonates with Berlin’s negative liberty. The second one is based on reason and the third one is the application of moral freedom in self-perfection. Self-determination is common in all three forms of freedom. For Green, positive freedom is when all individuals give up their powers for the sake of the common good (Green, 1886/2011, p. 373). Positive freedom is in line with liberal democratic values and is safer when it comes to issues such as cultural oppression, the power and influence of the media, and bias (Crowder, 2015).

2.4.3 Types of Freedom

When looking at closer lenses, freedom is classified into various types. One of the classifications divides freedom into three main categories: the ones representing the basic conditions of existence, the freedoms of the mind, and the third ones are those of a broader level: the social and political ones (Roshwald, 2000, pp. 20-21). The first group includes

freedom from fear, freedom from want, personal liberties, and freedom of property. “Freedom from want” refers to well-being and welfare, whereas “freedom from fear” deals with individual safety (Roshwald, 2000, p. 14). Freedom from fear is included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a component of societies that aim for peace and are free from violence and crimes (UN Secretary-General, 2017). These are guaranteed freedoms from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948) and are seen mostly in the light of rights.

Under the second group, there is freedom of thought, expression, action, and the one to choose without external suppression. These are connected to the freedom of consciousness, which is related to the liberty of feelings, thought, freedom of opinion, expression, and sentiment over theology, science, morality, etc. Freedom of speech is based on one’s reflection and argumentation and the exchange of ideas. Even for freedom of expression, it is necessary to follow some rules like respect for one-another while expressing ideas (Rostbøll, 2011). Following freedom of choice, the individual can conduct his life as he wishes, can choose the way to best plan life in self-realization, and have the ability to choose as one wishes without being coerced and it cannot be compromised (Berlin, 2002, p. 103). Individuals are free even when they choose not to participate.

The third type includes freedoms concerning social and political issues. Here, we can consider individual and collective freedom. Individual freedom can become part of the collective one. Individual freedom is supposed to exist when someone’s will is not limited by others. Normally, despotic governments infringe on this kind of freedom through arrest or detention. Collective freedom refers to the freedom to enjoy the cultural or linguistic heritage one belongs to. Additionally, the liberty of assembly refers to the possibility to unite without force. If these conditions are not respected, then no society is considered to be free. However, the real condition when freedom exists is the one in which the individual is searching for his good independently and without damaging others. Forms of power that limit autonomy and action contradict freedom (Baum, 1998). Both individual liberty and self-government are essential forms of freedom; none of them is superior to the other. Personal freedom is a type that leads to intuition and imagination (Greene, 1988, p. 34). It

is a form of self-reliance, self-determination, and self-directiveness and schools can free individuals from domination through an emphasis on naturalness, interaction, and communication. Degrees or nuances of freedom vary from formal freedom to negative, positive freedom, development to needed and wanted levels, self, rational and global determination, to wellbeing, and finally, to global wellbeing and prosperity (Bhaskar, 2008, pp. 264-265).

2.4.4 The Essence of Freedom

Overall, the above review demonstrated that types of freedom can be both positive and negative. Freedom encompasses the individual being able to overcome internal fears initially, and then external ones (Taylor, 1985). Not only should the individual have no external limitations, but internal limitations as well. Internally, any form of ignorance that prevents him from expanding his knowledge, horizon, imagination, or action can be considered as part of the limitations that prevent him from maturing, advancing, and progressing. This means that one is considered free when he is equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and power (Bhaskar, 2008). The focus of positive liberty concentrates on the ability of the individual to rationally use his freedom in various forms of benefit. From this point of view, freedom does not rest in having the opportunities to speak or act as one wishes to, but in speaking and acting with rationality and responsibility. The form of freedom represented here contains rationality and responsibility in all forms and types of freedom. Freedom occupies a spectrum that starts with a lack of external agents, exterior limitations, enforcement, and inferences. This form of negative freedom is also confined by caprices, desires, and ignorance as well. One is not free when limited by both these internal impulses and external agents (be it the individual or authority). Freedom is fulfilled when positive freedom is realized through wisdom, self-consciousness, self-fulfillment, self-awareness, self-control, guided by morality, science, and religious principles in action, decision, and speech. Overall, freedom rests on rationality, self-development, responsibility, and argumentation. Freedom enables the individual to enjoy

richness and wellbeing, to feel secure and unthreatened by an authority at the same time. It favors conditions that allow citizens to express their naturalness in personal creativity, in the collective culture and in the heritage to which they belong. To conclude, freedom exists only in the absence of some limitations and constraints which also depend on the nature of humans (Nelson, 2005).

2.5 Theoretical and Political Discourse on Freedom in Education

To screen appropriately the associations between education and freedom, this section introduces the philosophical and political perspectives. The views brought to attention here can be grouped under the umbrella of the progressivist, critical theory, liberal and deliberative views. Each of these views defends a certain effect of education on freedom.

2.5.1 The Progressivist and Liberal View

Various progressivists indicate that education is an example of domination and oppression rather than freedom. Rousseau, noted among the main thinkers, wrote on the education of the child and his freedom. He considers schools as institutions that limit freedom. In his famous book “Emile or on Education”, Rousseau declares that “All his life long man is imprisoned by our institutions” (1762, p. 9). Seeing schools as important institutions that shape the lives of children, in Rousseau’s viewpoint they infringe the liberty of a child. It is society and community that endanger man’s liberty. However, he considers that the final goal of education has to be a form of freedom that leads to the achievement and self-control of the individual.

Additionally, J.S. Mill presents his views of freedom of thought and discussion in education in “On Liberty” (1859). First of all, he is an advocate of the liberty of opinions, discussion, writing, and of the press. He supports the expression of opinions and ideas, be them true or false, because in both cases, they will lead to the truth. In education, Mill

advises the discussion and debate of topics in politics, religion, morality, and similar social subjects. Secondly, in education, his criticism is of teachers and students who remain comfortable in the positions of teaching and learning without questioning them. The “educated man” he says, “... have never thrown themselves into the mental positions of those who think differently from them” (1859, pp. 67-68). This is to say that individuals do not consider other perspectives and points of view. For this reason, Mill forces the minds of the educated to think beyond what they have been taught in schools by teachers and books. The limitation of free discussion and free speech is damaging. Thirdly, when evaluating 18th and 19th-century education, he promotes compulsory education regulated by the state, but at the same time warns of the dangers that may come from it when considering freedom (Mill, 1859, p. 190). State education can turn out to be a device that will make students lose their individuality by fabricating a similar type of citizenry as requested by and pleasing the dominant authority. This would result in a lack of freedom, subordination, and obedience. Thus, mass education can result in despotism (West, 1965) and indirect censorship of liberty. This kind of education damages individual freedom and infringes diversity of talents, character, etc. In this way, he stands against standardization. Education can serve to suppress the mind making it easier for the body to submit. In a few words, Mill considers that education should enjoy freedom from the state because the judgment of the individual can be better than that of the state.

J. Dewey, a philosopher, and thinker of the 20th century is another representative of this theoretical approach best characterized as a child-oriented philosophy. He critiques state education for its hierarchy, for its detachment from reality, and considers schools as a community in itself and part of a larger society (Darling & Nordenbo, 2003). Education is not only crucial for politics, but it is a prerequisite for democracy too (Dewey, 1916). Experience, individuality, and practiced-based education are central to this philosophy (Radu, 2011). John Dewey remarkably wrote about the value of freedom in schools in his book “Democracy and Education ” (Dewey, 1916). In the chapter entitled “The Individual and the World”, he discusses freedom from two perspectives: personal freedom and social control. The first one is internal and the second one is external. For him, the core of freedom is the necessity of conditions that will help the individual contribute to the

community. Dewey understands freedom in education more from a personal point of view. Dewey considers freedom in education as “the part played by thinking—which is personal—in learning: —it means intellectual initiative, independence in observation, judicious invention, the foresight of consequences, and ingenuity of adaptation to them” (1916, p. 310). So, in some sense, he is an advocate of intellectual freedom. His conceptualization of freedom is also some kind of achievement in independent reasoning and argumentation. Dewey does not deny the importance of associations with others. Group work does not limit one’s freedom. Instead, freedom should serve to expand and refine knowledge, stimulate imagination, not solely reproduce, and memorize. Reproduction and memorization lead only to oppression and obedience to authority. Furthermore, freedom in education is promoted by developing one’s capacities, giving information, improving skills, stimulating reflection, argumentation, questioning, and independent thinking (Roshwald, 2000, pp. 170-180).

Adler, in general, considers compulsory education as a way to prepare youngsters as future citizens for citizenship and to be able to take on the required responsibilities (Adler, 1982). In education, he sees two forms of freedom: the *laissez-faire* that centralizes on students’ spontaneity and interest, and the one that disciplines youngsters towards maturity (Adler, 1958, p. 382). Freedom of choice is an opportunity where individuals somehow declare their interests and talents (Adler, 1983).

The current liberal debate is oriented towards democratic education and has extended beyond freedom, a dominant value in liberalism (Ten, 1969). Nausbam’s (2010) democratic education distinguishes between education that serves an economic purpose and one that is focused on humanities. This form of democratic education is based on five main pillars: capacity building, cooperation with the needy, consideration of others, familiarity with other cultures, and critical thinking. Alexander’s (2007) liberal theory of education is based on a coexistence that is funded by self-realization, and exposure to reality as against independence. On the other side, Pennington (2014) puts and questions parental freedom of choice in between discussions of the role of the state and democratic education. For others, democratic education aims knowledge and humanist goals, rather

than specific subjects (Duarte, 2016). Biesta (2007) sees democratic education as concerning the individual from three aspects: the individualistic, the social, and the political. The first two consider education as one of the sources which produce the citizen; the third one is more action-focused and requires individuals to experience.

2.5.2 Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy

Critical theory, a school of thought linked to the Frankfurt School with representatives such as Habermas and Fromm, opposes forms of external oppression done to the individual and society (Peca, 2000). Its bases are on the critique and questioning of the reality, existing relations and status-quo through the acquisition of knowledge and truth. Habermas is one of the main representatives of critical theory (Keat, 1980). He viewed language as a tool of compromise and cooperation through an informed debate on important issues of education (Terry, 1997). He highlighted the colonizing practice of the system pointing to language as a solution that can be used to stop it. Habermas, a defender of liberal values, defends their construction through a critical society (Wain, 2004) to which education is the key. For him, democracy rests on communication and cooperation. The education of the 21st century in Western countries is leading students toward obedience (Martin-Sanchez & Flores-Rodriguez, 2018). These schools limit critical thinking and autonomy. As a result, students are led to unconscious subordination through the acceptance of norms and the reproduction of the same ideas.

Critical pedagogy itself sources from critical theory. With critical pedagogy, critique is imported into the educational landscape, an area yet in need of exploration (Blake & Masschelein, 2003). Critical Pedagogy claims that education is linked to a certain ideology and under the effect of power and politics. The Brazilian leading philosopher and educator Paulo Freire is unique in how he voiced issues of oppression in education. In his celebrated book “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (1970), he addressed the relation of education with freedom and oppression. Coming from an experience in Brazilian schools, Freire

introduced the notion of oppression in education and the need for liberation. He is against any form of imposition but calls for dialogue (Durakoglu, Bicer, & Zabun, 2013). Firstly, Paulo Freire refers to an approach found vastly in education. He termed it “the banking concept” and considers students passive recipients being filled like empty vessels (Freire, 1970, p. 72). This method dominates thought, stops critical thinking, and inhibits creativity. So, this banking approach in education damages freedom and leads to oppression and obedience. It controls their freedom of thought, expression, and action. He stresses that the relation between teacher-students is that of the oppressor and the oppressed. The result is the development of a culture of silence and the oppressed has no longer the ability to freely criticize the dominant culture. To Freire, politics and education are interrelated and education serves a certain political agenda. Education can offer freedom only when the students are considered connected to the world, not isolated, and not dehumanized. When the authority in schools is in favor of freedom, then students are thought of as conscious beings, not simply recipients. Freire’s liberation is a process that makes people reflect on how to transform the world.

In his essay “Schools for Fearlessness and Freedom”, Eugene McCreary (1965) discusses freedom in schools. He described the context of the 1960s in America and notes a state of estrangement of man, the product of education. He stresses the fact that the dependence, control, and pressure used in school seriously damages freedom. They harm the independence of thought and action to result in agreement and submission to politics or culture. Similar ideas are supported by Fromm (2001) in “The Fear of Freedom”. The scholar warns that education can damage genuineness and naturalness. Through the use of methods and other mechanisms, education shapes individuals so that they fit into society. In this way, it serves the purpose of the powerful by killing creativity and thinking. Instead, in his article “Moral and Political Clarity and Education as a Practice of Freedom”, Glass (2004) suggests that education should be a place where freedom is practiced. Educational sites are places for both personal and collective transformation. The author proposes some classroom practices that are an embodiment of the practice of freedom like questioning, awareness-raising, and confrontations. Similarly, in “Education as the Practice of Freedom” (2005), Greene offers the idea that to achieve freedom, teachers should engage

cooperatively with their students so that these last develop critical thinking and responsible choice-making. Other authors have contributed to the theory by questioning the existing social relations in schools (McLaren, 2015), criticizing lack of creativity (Shor, 1999), promoting critical literacy (Giroux, 2016) and by suggesting that educators should be a model critically dedicated to freedom and justice (Darder, 2017). Deliberations made by Kellner (2003) offered a compression of the existing Deweyan and Freirean theories as well as theories based on race, and gender to achieve new literateness against the challenges of globalization and diversity of cultures. However, another group of researchers warns of what might be the real consequences of schools. Students in schools encounter some constraints instead of enjoying freedom, which is more testimony to hierarchy than to equality as in the case of America (Merelman, 1980). This happens due to deficiencies that exist in the education culture. Stevenson (2010) considers that democratic education is based on experience. It cannot be limited solely to knowledge transfer. His perspective of democratic education takes into account the relations of freedom and authority. Most importantly, he is a supporter of Freire's critical evaluation of education. Similarly, Hantzopoulos (2015) evaluates critical democratic education based on students' experiences and claims that education does not offer transformation, but it is a place of negotiation and is in continuous change. Howard & Turner-Nash (2011) reflect on how educational practices are related to democracy.

2.5.3 The Deliberative View

From the deliberative standpoint, the main arguments come from Amy Gutmann. Gutmann (1999), well known for her most important contribution to political theory "Deliberative Democracy", offers a democratic theory of education in her book "Democratic Education". This theory promotes the empowerment of citizens and attachment to democratic values. Debate and communication are part of democratic virtues (Fishkin & Luskin, 1999). Democratic education targets comprehension and approval of freedom and fairness considering varieties of standpoints. She also suggests egalitarian cosmopolitanism, which

is equal respect for citizens and their unique identities. Education is needed to “further democratic politics” (Gutmann, 1999, p. 18).

Supporters of deliberative education suggested normative ideals be reached in education. Parker (2010) defends discussion and deliberation as a practice in education. He is in favor of discussion, debate, and political deliberation over controversial and problematic issues. Hanson and Howe (2011) argue over educational practices that offer the exchange of arguments and critical outlook on issues to meet ideals of deliberative democracy. Nevertheless, some criticism has been offered as well. Fraser-Burgess (2009) discusses deliberative-focused education over pluralism and how Gutmann’s view is a weak version of pluralism since it is based on personal freedom. The scholar offers an educational theory based on reciprocity and at the same time, it is freedom-allowing. Haav (2008) examined the Estonian case to find that no educational authority is focused on deliberative education. And, apart from other defenders of deliberative education in theory (Lefrançois & Ethier, 2010), political literacy (Hess, 2008), and meta-deliberation (Nishiyama, 2021), others pointed to a change in educational practices from the transmission of ideology towards deliberation, research, and compromise (Fallace, 2016).

2.6 Distributive Justice and Related Concepts

To start a discussion on justice without first mentioning fairness is impossible. Terms like fairness, social justice, or simply justice are used to refer to similar ideas and they are seen as positive values among many cultures. For some, fairness corresponds to a transparent process without biases (Verba, 2006). Social justice is viewed as part of human rights education (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1993). Justice is connected strongly to reasonableness while making choices, acceptability, and support, and it is related to what is good (Mandle, 1999).

The upcoming section starts with justice considered as fairness by Rawls. It then continues with forms of justice such as restorative justice, retributive justice, procedural justice, formal justice, and so on. The topic will narrow down to distributive justice. Distributive justice will be at the heart of the elaboration in this part. It will be interpreted from three key principles of distribution: equality, equity, and need.

2.6.1 Forms of Justice

Rawls is significantly one of the most influential figures in the discussion over justice and principles for a just society (Meyer & Sanklecha, 2016). His theory was based on justice as fairness, an interpretation developed earlier by Kant. In his view, the stability of society depends on the principle of justice as fairness. He assumes that individuals are rational and cooperative. His understanding of a just society is based on the collaboration of equal and free citizens, exemplified by the original position. The first focus of social justice is “the arrangement of major social institutions into one scheme of cooperation” (Rawls, 1971/1999, p. 47). The principles of justice are arranged into a four-step model to present how they are applied (Rawls, 1971/ 1999, pp. 171-176). Firstly, individuals have to decide on what justice needs; secondly, rules and regulations need to be just and represent all individuals (constitutional level); thirdly, the process, procedure, machine, or arrangement is to give just results (legislative level); and finally, judges have to apply rules to cases, and all this is transparent with the public. For instance, after the parties at the constitutional level define basic liberties like freedom of speech, in the following levels this is specified with the right for political deliberation, political speech, and freedom to criticize (Wenar, 2008, 2017).

The above-mentioned cases are mirrored in many forms of justice: formal, procedural, retributive, and restorative. Formal justice is the “impartial and consistent administration of laws and institutions” (Rawls, 1971/ 1999, p. 51). The target of issues of justice and formal justice are institutions. This means that rules are applied fairly, consistently and

their outcomes are not disputed. Procedural justice has to fulfill two main conditions: “independent criterion” and “desired outcomes” (Rawls, 1971/ 1999, p. 74). The distribution of resources is based on fair procedures and methods (Vermunt & Steensma, 2016). The process has to be based on impartial norms, standards, and the results are expected to be beneficial in political, social, and economic institutions. An independent criterion is essential in just procedures. Equal liberties, fair opportunities, and equal rights are among the characteristics of procedural justice. Procedural justice is reflected better in a just structure guided by principles of equality of opportunity and cooperation in distribution.

Other interpretations of justice can be realized through retributive and restorative ones. Retributive justice is the retribution or punishment given to those individuals who have acted against rules, regulations, laws, or norms (Wenzel & Okimoto, 2016). Restorative justice targets the repair and regulation of the relationship between the victim, the wrongdoer, and society (Cohen, 2016). This can be in the form of an apology, return of goods, etc. Retributive justice is centralized on the offender and the punishment, whereas restorative justice targets the regulation of the bond between actors.

2.6.2 Distributive Justice

Distributive justice brings a different perspective to fairness. It refers to one of the forms of justice. Many are the views and interpretations used to define it. Primarily, distributive justice, as the name suggests, focuses on the distribution of goods and concerns three actors: the one who distributes, the one to whom these are distributed, and the observer (Jasso, Törnblom, & Sabbagh, 2016). The *distribution of goods* is at the heart of justice (Reidy, 2010). The just distribution depends on the kind of resource and the situation in which the distribution is done. Two key issues need explanation before moving further in this part of the thesis. The first one is to clarify what are the goods or resources that can be distributed, and the second one: what are the principles that guide this distribution.

The first aspect deals with the definition of goods and it is multifold. Resources are defined in Resource Theory as “any item, concrete or symbolic, which can become the object of exchange among people” (Foa & Foa, 1980, p. 78). These resources can be classified into universal and particular. Universal resources include goods, money, and information. Particular resources refer to status, affiliation, or friendship and services. This suggests that the distributed goods are not solely limited to financial goods but include other resources such as positions, influence, knowledge, etc. Resh & Sabbagh (2016) in the chapter “Justice and Education” part of “Handbook of Social Justice Theory and Research” see distributive justice as substantial in education. They refer to resources in education concerning distributive justice like the right to education, educational places, educational practices, assessment, and teacher-student relation (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016; Sabbagh, Resh, Mor, & Vanhuyse, 2006).

Distributive justice aims to form a community in which the distribution of goods is done based on a formula (Garvin, 1945). This formula or principles of distribution are the objects of discussion among scholars. Nozick (1973) has two theories to justify distribution: the entitlement theory and the transfer theory. The first refers to how things come to be initially possessed, and the second to how things are transferred from one person to another. For some, the principles of justice are equality, truth, and desert and their priority in application depends on the context (Halliday, 2004). When it comes to the distribution of incomes, this formula can operate in three ways: equality, everyone being paid equally; random or lottery-based payment; and thirdly, systematically one can choose between gender, age, need, or else between the criteria to apply income distribution (Jasso & Rossi, 1977).

Neatly, there are three main criteria to be considered about justice “desert, equality, and need” (Miller, 1992, p. 559), as highlighted previously by other scholars (Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961), or equity, equality, and need as suggested by Deutsch (1975). In other words, to each based on his merit, to each equally, and to each based on his needs. These principles define the way goods are being distributed and represent the conditions or standards over which decisions of distribution are made. These values of distribution imply

that if we follow equality, allocation is done equally among individuals; if we respect equity, allocation is based on the proportion between input-outcome; and following need, allocation is done based on individual needs (Bierhoff, Buck, & Klein, 1986). The main distinction between equality and equity rests on the idea that equality is applied when there is much similarity between members and equity when there are differences.

Table 2.3 maps these characteristics. When taking into account equality, no prior information is necessary for the distribution because it is already done equally to individuals. Applying equity requires that distribution is done taking into consideration more information on the receiver of the distribution and other conditions before this distribution takes place.

Table 2.3 Characteristics of Equity and Equality

	Equity	Equality
Prior knowledge of performances	Necessary	Not necessary
Emphasis on individual differences	Yes	No
Domain	Economic, scientific, and technical productivity	Mutual support, close relationships
Consequences	High individual efficiency, alienated work	Interpersonal harmony, solidarity

Note. (Bierhoff, Buck, and Klein, 1986, p. 167)

The criteria of equity (desert) stress effort, work, and talent (Rawls, 1971/ 1999, p. 32). This is understood as meritocracy and is based on individual effort, personal differences, ability, performance (Refer to the following Table 2.4). Equality refers to the sameness and need for equal distribution of what individuals necessitate like opportunity, outcome, treatment. Need refers to distribution to those who are in necessity and hardship. As a result, given that the distribution of goods is based on these criteria, their abandonment leads to injustice or unfairness in this sense. In terms of educational opportunities, if we obey the equality principle, there is an equalization of different social or economic backgrounds; the principle of equity leads to the promotion of students with achievement

(Bierhoff, Buck, & Klein, 1986, p. 166). If we follow Rawls’s point of view, distributive principles are equality for goods like basic rights; equality of opportunity for power and authority; and the difference principle is applied for income and wealth for those who have the least of them (Rawls, 1971/ 1999). This view, however, excludes the ones who are naturally disabled or have special needs.

Table 2.4 Distributive Justice Tree

Principle	Sub-Principle
Contribution/Equity	effort, ability, performance
Equality	opportunity, outcome, treatment
Need	biological, basic, useful

Note. Adapted from Tornblom and Kazemi (2015, p. 30) in The Oxford Handbook of Justice in the Workplace

2.6.3 Equality

Equality is an agreement between different items, people, procedures, or conditions (Gosepath, 2021). In general, respecting this principle means that resources are allocated equally to all members of a community. Equality of opportunity, for instance, suggests that all are offered equal chances (Heyneman, 2004).

This principle is significant in democracy as well. Political equality is an important criterion for fairness. Fairness is related to the equality of policies as they should apply equally to everyone. In case these are violated, democracy is violated and limited too. Citizens in a democracy have an equal say in making collective decisions. Equal Voice is important because democracy is about citizen consent. In case there are inequalities regarding voices, this will challenge the consent of citizens. Equal voice is linked to transparency, to rule of law, and to freedom as well. Furthermore, some conditions are distinguished for an equal voice like having equal rights, the possibility to exercise these rights equally, the ability to exercise them, and having social and institutional support to

exercise them (Verba, 2006, p. 508). In a representative democracy, citizens are equal in electing their representatives; one citizen, one vote. In a direct democracy, there exists equality of votes; in participatory democracy, having equality in access to public discussions and debates; in interest groups, equality in membership, and equality in accessing courts. Therefore, for a fair polity, we need an equal citizen voice. Nevertheless, it may result in inequalities. In addition, equality may take other forms: equality of income, outcome (like salaries), opportunity, positions (such as status, and rank), and equality of procedures.

Rawls presents justice as the main value with two principles (Bentley, 1973). The first principle deals with equality of rights, liberties and duties. This means that everyone is entitled to equal rights. On the other hand, the second principle offers inequalities in two cases. In the first case, inequality is related to positions, based on the principle of equality of opportunity to all. This means that inequality of outcome is acceptable after individuals have been offered equal chances. This suggests that inequalities of outcome can vary dependent on individuals' work, skills or talent. The second case, also referred to as the difference principle, offers economic and social inequalities, like income to active members of the society, only to compensate for the least advantaged individuals. This is to provide some opportunity even to those individuals or groups that are disadvantaged. For this principle, he uses two conditions: (1) a just or fair institution and (2) the individual that has "taken advantage of the opportunities it offers to further one's interest" (Rawls, 1971/ 1999, p. 96). In this line, he includes some duties of the natural sense like reciprocally aiding others, not hurting or harming them. In education, the just distribution is based on these values or norms: equality, which means offering equal opportunities to all; and need, offering opportunity based on what the individual, in this case, students' needs (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016, p. 350).

2.6.4 Equity

Equity and the theory that lies behind it is driven by the rationale that individuals should be rewarded based on how much they work or contribute, and the principle is suitable in a setting of productivity of work (Deutsch, 1986). This means that equity operates on the principle that individuals are to be rewarded based on their contributions, so an input and output balance (Folger, 1986). Individuals are rewarded based on what they produce and how much they contribute. This input and output rapport lies at the center of the theory. At the same time, this theory suggests that people who consider themselves as either under or over-compensated will be disturbed, which makes them work and contribute more (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987).

Some scholars refer to this principle as the contribution criteria (Shewinger, 1986, p. 212). Contribution (or equity, or merit) includes contribution based on one's abilities, merit, work, and sacrifice (as observed in Table 2.2). This certainly does not take into account the personal needs of individuals. For instance, in terms of payment, equity is achieved when the reward is based on what contribution is done, upon valuing input like education, skills, talent, and output like wages and rewards (Carrell & Dittrich, 1978). According to equity theory, fairness exists when individuals understand that all members in a relationship receive what they deserve (Walster & Berscheid, 1973). Desert and meritocracy are two versions of equity. Desert is dependent on the characteristics and the work of the individual, merit on contribution.

Equality and equity in education are commonly confused concepts (Ma Rhea, 2014). Equity in education covers individual and social differences like gender, economic status; it does not stop one's skills from being fulfilled; opposes equality of outcome, equality in teaching the same source, or distribution of the same resources to all (OECD, 2022). Following the principle of equity, opportunities are distributed according to individual characteristics, like someone's ability, effort, performance, or work (Konow & Schwettmann, 2016). Meritocracy in education is applied when a student's achievement is the result of talent and work, but not other social and economic circumstances

(Brighthouse, 2010). Equity in education is a top priority in OECD countries because education impacts one's life, job, earnings, and society signifying that the division of resources in education impacts outcomes in education.

2.6.5 Need

The definition of need focuses on the scarcity of something. Maslow's famous pyramid of needs ranks these needs from the most basic ones to the peak as follows: physiological, security, affection, esteem, and self-fulfillment needs (1943). Needs vary from biological to mental and psychological ones. The distributor of resources, whatever the needs, has to allocate them based on this principle. This means that the division of resources is done based on needs and other factors like work or effort are not taken into account. Need is seen not necessarily as a response to a lack of resources, but as a different principle of distributive justice (Shcwinger, 1986, p. 233). It is the only theory of distributive justice that takes into account individual and social differences. The distribution in such a case may result in those in need receiving more, despite them contributing less (Shyman, 2013).

In education, students with special needs are the product of the combination of individual and environmental features (Terzi, 2010). In education, this need is applied to a variety of contexts. One is to refer to those students who have differences in learning in schools and to whom education has not served properly (Portelli, Shields, & Vibert, 2007). Another is for those who have difficulties in learning or the ones that come from disadvantaged backgrounds (social, economic, cultural) (Education GPS, OECD, 2022). Education in this sense applies practices based on needs to attain certain results (Ma Rhea, 2014).

2.6.6 General Theories of Distributive Justice

Among the many theories that circulate on distributive justice, here, four of them will be mentioned as noted by Plaz (2020) in “Theories of Distributive Justice” respectively: right-liberalism (Hayek), left-liberalism (Rawls), libertarianism (Nozick), and socialism (Cohen). Each of these theories emphasizes principles of distributive justice, distinct or common from each other based on what they aim to achieve in society.

To begin with, **right-liberalism** highlights the idea that society is the primary actor. The system of freedom ensures happiness for all. The state should perform roles such as efficiency like institutions should help individuals and sufficiency through which social goods are enabled. Its principles of distributive justice are efficiency, freedom, and sufficiency (Hayek, 1993/ 1998). The aim is human happiness and liberty is an important principle. Efficiency suggests that no one should be poor, so it stimulates the idea of better use of resources. Sufficiency explains that members of society should have sufficient or enough goods. Equality of opportunity is not accepted as a principle of justice because opponents disagree with the idea of the government interfering in society. In addition to this, instead of equality of opportunity, we should have the maximization of opportunity. So, distribution is done based on how one acts and contributes to others.

Left liberalism defends the idea that individuals are free, equal, and cooperate with one-another. The state makes sure that individuals act respecting rules. The main principles of distributive justice are equality for basic rights (the liberty principle), equality of opportunity, and the difference principle (compensation for the talented and inequalities to the benefit of the least advantaged) (Rawls, 1971/ 1999). For **libertarianism** freedom of choice is important. It is the individual himself that decides the choices to make, rather than others. All members of society have rights and their choices should be respected. From the distributive justice perspective, the main principles of this theory are liberty and rights (Nozick, 1974).

Socialism rests on the idea of a perfectionist society. It tells how members of the community should be and connect with one-another. The state is an instrument used to achieve this goal. Equality of opportunity and outcome are the main principles (Cohen, 1986). It tackles the source of inequality, whatever the inequality is, be it goods, talents, or skills. However, Cohen reminds us of the entity that has the power to make distribution and the ways used to maintain it such as hiding differences of power and showing the current system as one upon which it has been agreed (1986).

To sum up, among the many argued principles of distributive justice, the three are the main concepts and principles upon which distribution is done: equality, equity, and need. These are found in some theories of distributive justice. Some more details on each principle will be presented below.

2.7 Theoretical and Political Discourse on Distributive Justice in Education

The relation between the duality education-fairness is important because of three main reasons. First of all, it suggests that the inequalities that exist in society are mirrored in schools as well (Harris, 2002). As education is believed to be one of the focal spheres where to observe issues related to justice (Walzer, 1983), deliberations that link both of them have significant importance. In reality, the linkage between education and social justice reflects the troubled relationship between the citizens and the government (Zajda, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2006, p. 13). Secondly, this injustice has been discussed because somehow events, procedures, and the way individuals are treated influence their understanding of justice (Fischer & Skitka, 2006). Similarly, perceptions of justice are based on how individuals are treated (Rasooli, 2021). Finally, schools are important sites because theories of justice require stable and self-generating instruments and they can accomplish such a duty (Costa, 2009). Therefore, such a discussion brings up three main observations: schools are themselves sites where to observe issues of justice; this is important because it affects the ways young citizens conceptualize justice; and finally,

schools can be used as sustainable mechanisms that generate both experiences and perceptions of fairness. Now, as regards the theoretical debates on this relation, two main political philosophies emerged in this part of the review: the liberal-progressivist and the critical one.

2.7.1 The Liberal and Progressivist View

What most authors in this part of the thesis have in common is education that aims to be just and bring justice. Dewey, as a progressivist, envisioned fairness related to the way we build community. This process can be achieved through communication and rationality. This community has to be built not solely thinking about the ones in need, but also considering how it would impact everyone's children and society in general (Noddings, 1998). The liberal understanding of education has in common non solely freedom, but fairness as well. For Rawls, education should serve social stability (Brooke & Frazer, 2010, p. 523). Rawls states that education is an instrument for achieving wealth, status, and other social goods (Klees & Strike, 1976). Equality of opportunity includes equal chances given to all in terms of education and culture, open positions, and the arrangement of institutions (operating within the context of free market). Additionally, equal opportunities should be given to students despite their class differences (Rawls, 1971/ 1999, p. 63), but the state should do more than just provide education of high quality for the least advantaged (Wenar, 2008/ 2017). Rawls considers the principles of distributive justice in education as follows (Rawls, 1971/ 1999, p. 101):

But the difference principle would allocate resources in education, say, so as to improve the long-term expectation of the least favored. If this end is attained by giving more attention to the better endowed, it is permissible; otherwise not. And in making this decision, the value of education should not be assessed solely in terms of economic efficiency and social welfare. Equally if not more important is the role of education in enabling a person to enjoy the culture of his society and to take part in its affairs, and in this way to provide for each individual a secure sense of his own worth.

Based on his principles of justice, we can assume that considering the first one, education is a right in itself that should be provided to all. The principle of equality is seen in giving the possibility to everyone to participate, be involved, and be informed on shared values and beliefs, and to also develop themselves. However, applying the difference principle, education serves both the least advantaged and the skilled in the long term. Consequently, this principle is implemented for two categories: the disadvantaged and the talented. This follows the rules of need and meritocracy. Therefore, Rawls sees education not only in economic and social terms but also in the context of the inclusion and involvement of the individual in society.

Many scholars have offered detailed models on the relationship between education and aspects of fairness. For instance, Perry (2007) offered a theoretical model of democratic education that evaluates policy based on five principles among which equality and the other ones being choice, diversity, consistency, and participation. Menashy (2007) proposes efficient tools and attention to both financial and human-centered aspects that lead to social justice in education. Meens and Howe (2015) offer a discussion over democratic education which approaches fairness from the equal educational opportunities' perspective, seeks deliberation and accountability, and promotes participation and diversity. Finally, Gibson and Grant's (2012) understanding of democracy and democratic education goes beyond issues of voting, is too sensitive to multiculturalism and targets justice and equity.

2.7.2 The Critical View

The majority of the critical research done in the area of critical democratic education centers on issues of justice and fairness. The central idea points to the injustice, unfairness, unfair distribution, and maintenance of a system that serves the dominant culture, oppression, and control. The views found in this part of the review criticize injustice in the educational systems because they are set and prepared by those in power to the

disadvantage of the less powerful. Schools are only a mirror of the injustice in society, so injustice detected in school is also found in society. What is unjust in education is the teacher-student relation, the language, practices, means, and the rules used. Economic differences are visible. To add more to this, the attainment of education not necessarily improves democracy.

First of all, this view criticizes education because it oppresses students. Freire (1970) is notable for his calls on the injustice reflected in education. These injustices are evident in the relation between the teacher and the student who are connected through a relationship similar to that of the oppressor and the oppressed. Education functions only through the banking model where youngsters have only the function of the obedient. This is the reason why he calls for liberation and conscientiousness of the oppressed (2013) in “Education for Critical Consciousness”. In addition, Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977/ 1990) book “Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture” points to how educational systems are structures produced by dominant cultures and in turn used to perpetuate domination. That “contributes to the reproduction of the relations between the groups or classes (social reproduction) (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977/ 1990, p. 54)”. They argue about imposition, legitimization of certain latent powers of control, and reproduction of this dominant culture. Bowles and Gintis consider education as a reflection of a “heterogeneous and unequal society” (2002, p. 15). Educational attainment may not necessarily bring democracy (Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson, & Yared, 2005). Others request a critical understanding of values and suggest that practicality should be included in the evaluation of value education (Cummings, 2009).

Moreover, contemporary scholars call for more experience-based, practice-targeting research if we want education to transform society (Apple, 2011; Veugelers, 2007). Walsh (2008) views education as a representation of real-life and draws attention to the language used and the reproduction of hegemony in the modern capitalist world. The author’s criticism is towards real educational practices that reflect hegemony. Carr (2008) questions and requests reflection on how teachers are engaged in offering democratic experiences. He shows interest in justice in education and advises for critical approach and social justice

to be taught critically to future educators initially. McCowan (2010) tests if schools can be an embodiment of a democratic society. Attempts to increase the involvement of students in decision-making improve this culture, but damage relations between teachers and students.

Camangian (2021) goes against colonial education that has suppressed black and indigenous people in the USA based on color and ethnicity. The author requests more research based on the educational experiences of students and teacher-student relations. DeJaeghere (2009) deliberated on a framework of critical citizenship education appropriate for multi-culturalism where students discuss their experiences and interrogate oppression, power, and inequalities in society. Darder (2016) discusses issues of justice in education from the point of view of Latinos in the U.S.A. The scholar urges for the critical lens to be used in discussions over political and economic unfairness and offers the principle of cultural democracy. Criticism has been projected on individualism and those practices of individual freedom not motivated by terms of nondiscrimination, equal respect, and socially-based considerations (Sung, 2010). Sibbett (2016) challenges both critical pedagogy and critical thinking scholars and tries to surpass what they have offered when introducing the notion of “transformative criticality”. This theory focuses on three approaches: justice-oriented practices, engagement, and a common understanding. Oxley & Morris’s (2010, p. 18) critical comprehensive structure for citizenship education, which couples critical pedagogy and the curriculum, covers the following aspects: “politics/ideology, social/collective, self/subjectivity and praxis/engagement”.

Most researchers agree that policies in education, the usage of just means to achieve just aims, access to information, and practices in schools are crucial for social justice. For instance, individualism and nationalism-centered practices as well as content damage issues of fairness, and, while traditional education is a condition for a just society, it is not a sufficient one as he worries “more about the schooled than about the unschooled” (Purpel, 1999, p. 18). The source of injustice in education is rooted in individualistic practices like ICT learning (Arnot, 2006). Similarly, Lawy and Biesta (2006) offer inclusive practices that are inclusive, embrace students who belong to different economic,

social, and cultural backgrounds, and eliminate such inequalities. However, Smith, Todd, and Laing (2018) extend the discourse of fairness in education by pointing to the importance of educational experiences. Another criticism is towards standardization and equalization of educational practices, and school systems which are discriminatory (Shyman, 2013, p. 194). The problem rests in the idea that there are attempts to demonstrate that individuals are and should be equal (Flew, 1976). When there are differences in abilities, intelligence, and traits among individuals and societies that cannot be underestimated. Clark says education can be used as one instrument for social justice in its internal and external dimensions (2006). Nevertheless, it may not be successful in a larger-scale and longer-term dimension. Internally, the curriculum can serve to raise awareness of inequalities and ways to achieve social justice; externally, he evaluates and questions the use of practices such as having mixed schools with students coming from different religions, gender, and income backgrounds.

2.8 Conclusion

Democratic values like freedom and distributive justice are important components of political culture and educational systems select certain values to be transmitted to youngsters. The value of freedom in this thesis has been discussed from four different dimensions. The first one refers to the difference between positive and negative freedom. Positive freedom refers to one's ability to be self-responsible, realized, and rational in decision-making, choice-taking, speaking, and acting. Negative freedom refers to being free from any kind of outer limitation and doing as one wishes. Internal and external freedom distinguishes on the basis that internal freedom has to do with the individual and his ability to manage oneself, one's vices, caprices, and such. External freedom refers to the sphere of communication between the individual and the society or state. Natural liberties are found in the state of nature, and civil ones are regulated by civil law. Political freedom refers to the society's ability to self-guide itself. Some of the distinguished types of freedom refer to freedom of thought, expression, action, choice, and collective. These

types of freedom can be defined from any of the perspectives and classifications made above. The theoretical discourse on freedom and education indicates four tracks of thought that explain this connection: the progressivist, the current liberal, the critical theory, and the deliberative view. Each of these views identifies unique characteristics of this relation. The progressivists emphasize that schools endanger one's liberty, but also help the individual be self-realized. They defend freedom of expression, questioning, exploration, diversity, independent reasoning, and argumentation. The current liberal debate considers education as a source of the production of self-realized citizens. Critical theory and critical pedagogy criticize and question the potential of schools because they oppress and subordinate individuals, maintain existing status-quos, suppress students' abilities to be critical, and lead them to obedience. Students are left with no freedom and have lost their characteristics. The deliberative view defends debate, discussion, communication, and deliberation in education.

Distributive justice is one of the main forms of justice. It operates based on two key tracks: resources and criteria of distribution. Resources can be material and non-material, individual and universal. Any thing that can be exchanged between individuals is considered a resource. The criteria of distribution are summarized as equality, to each equally; equity, to each based on his merit, and talent; and need, to each based on needs. The theoretical discourse on distributive justice and education marks two lines of thought: the liberal-progressivist and the critical view. The first highlights the idea that education is an instrument for social stability, and equal chances in education for all despite class, and gender differences, moving beyond this for the disadvantaged and needy. The defenders of the critical view maintain that schools are places of injustice, and unfairness, ask for inclusion practices, do not address the needs of students, are individualistic, and lead to inequalities.

3 CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES: FREEDOM AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

The following section assesses studies conducted on the implications of education with freedom and distributive justice related issues. The first part uncovers studies that examine freedom of thought, expression, choice, and action in education. Literature on principles of distributive justice will evidence the distribution of resources in education.

3.1 Freedom in Education: Review of Empirical Studies

The selected empirical research presented here locates studies of freedom in the sphere of education. Some researchers have examined the impact of curricula on academic freedom (Hart, 1982; Simmons & Page, 2010; Watson, Mcewen, & Dawson, 2006). Perceptions of academic freedom at higher education level have been examined extensively as well (Akçay & Üzüm, 2016; Dykstra, Moen, & Davies, 2011; Rogers, Eaton, & Voos, 2013; Swezey & Ross, 2011; Zain-Al-Dien, 2016). Additionally, Dorsey (2008), Greenawalt (2009), Long (1990), and Otteson (2000) have argued over religious freedom and schooling and Martinson (2001) considered freedom in education only from teachers' perspective. The current review points to types of freedom and their relation to education. They concern freedom of thought, expression, choice, and collective freedom. These studies deal with many forms of freedom examined from the two points of view: experience and understanding of each form.

3.1.1 Freedom of Thought and Expression

Although little attention is given to freedom of thought, nowadays it has been renowned worldwide (Shiner & O’Callaghan, 2021). Freedom of thought and expression are connected with one-another as expression is the outcome of thought. Scholars have explored freedom of thought and expression in school only from the context of rules and regulations without considering gender differences (Taskin, 2014). Institutionalization, school setting, and environment are related to freedom of thought and expression. The process of the institutionalization of silencing hides many problems and suppresses critical talk. Thomas and Berk (1981) investigated the impact of school setting on creative thinking finding that females were more affected by the school environment and the way students perceived the school environment affected their self-control, management, academic and intellectual development (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Next, Church, Elliot, and Gamble (2001) demonstrated school environment affected performance and motivation, which again are related to freedom of the mind. In the same way, a study conducted with students in California demonstrated that the environment of the class and school affected students’ academic achievement (McMahon, Wernsman, & Rose, 2009), which again implies freedom of the mind.

Family background, nationality, race, and type of school are related to this type of freedom. Fine (1987) examined public school students coming from low-income backgrounds in Manhattan and concluded that in schools, silencing has been institutionalized, and is part of policies and practices. Students accept being muted to avoid complications and to continue their further studies. Quiroz (2001) used the narratives of 27 Latino adolescents in the U.S.A. to understand their experience in schools and found that students’ voices were silenced and ignored. Castagno (2008) found that for freedom of expression in schools, teachers silenced students on topics related to race and eventually, they used coded language. In practice, this lack of freedom of expression on race is criticized for stimulating an educational culture that maintains the status quo and justifies positions on inequalities, more specifically that of the Whites over African-Americans. These results

are in opposition to John and Osborn's (1992) study which found evidence that democratic schools positively affect freedom of expression. In some states like U.S.A. and France, schools offer freedom from religious indoctrination as in Desmond M. Clarke's study (1986).

In post-communist countries, Latvia, Estonia, and Russia, the connection between experiences of freedom of expression in the classroom were examined following two different types of pedagogy: the traditional and the interactive (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2010). The findings show that in these countries, in terms of experiences of freedom of expression, both methods are found: the traditional and the interactive one. In terms of the promotion of democracy in the countries of Western Balkans, The Council of Europe has implemented many projects in the region and in Albania, which aim to promote inclusion in education such as the project "Fighting bullying and extremism in the education system" (Council of Europe, 2018). Another important project is "Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania" aiming to improve citizenship education in Albania (Council of Europe Office in Albania, 2020). The project "Free to speak, safe to learn" operating in many countries across Europe, aims to conserve the main democratic values through schools that will serve society (Council of Europe, 2020), but, unfortunately, it is not operating in Albania.

3.1.2 Freedom of Choice

Already assigned roles, teachers' influence, and institution obstacles are related to freedom of choice. Studies on freedom of choice in schools indicate that students are already assigned roles, races, and statuses that they can occupy when becoming adults (Lincoln, 1995). All these practices leave no place for freedom of choice and thought. Schools offer little space for freedom in terms of selection. Specifically, Yonezawa, Wells, and Serna (2002) use data from six different schools with mainly Latino and African American students to discuss the reasons why teachers' attempts to use freedom of choice in tracking

courses give little results. The results suggest that freedom of choice in these schools (where students can choose courses according to their abilities) is insufficient because in the future, students encounter difficulties related to institutional and structural obstacles. The same is valid for teachers' influence on students and students' low self-esteem. Even though schools offer freedom of choice, students are discouraged by future institutions that will limit this kind of freedom. A dominant idea perpetuates the silencing of voices and lack of initiative, resembling the self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948).

3.1.3 Freedom of Identity

Some studies directly emphasize the idea that issues related to freedom are not the focus of schools at all (Irizarry, 2011). A study conducted with k-12 Latino students in the USA aimed to understand their search for freedom in the school context. Using Critical Race Theory, the results suggested that schools' focus is solely on achievement and issues related to freedom are neglected. Students' educational experiences in these schools as Latinos in the USA resulted in a reduction of their freedom, which leads to their missed opportunities in the future. Therefore, experiences in the school environment impact individuals' freedom. Related to the region of the Western Balkans, Del Re (2013) published the article "Language, Education, and Conflicts in the Balkans: Policies, Resolutions, Prospects" where she notes that language in the Balkan countries, due to minorities is strongly related to identity. Additionally, education in these countries has served to promote policies of identity and nationalism. Through her analysis, she maintains that education and mainly history textbooks have served to stimulate problems.

3.1.4 Controversy

In some cases, education promotes the opposite of freedom as found by Kawashima and Martins (2015) for Sao Paulo where obedience to authority was stimulated as a value in the early years of schooling. Similarly, in the Australian context, a good citizen is one who develops freedom of thought and constructively builds arguments, but in China, a good citizen is one who is loyal to his culture and politics (Print & Tan, 2015).

In the Balkans, Pavlović, Todosijević, and Komar (2019) recently published an article entitled “Education, Authoritarianism, and Party Preference in the Balkans” using data from the European Values Survey, the third wave found a noteworthy and negative correlation between education and totalitarianism in each Balkan country. In these countries, values connect education to political preferences. In ex-Yugoslav countries like Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia, values connect education with political preferences and liberal views. However, in countries like Kosovo and the Republic of North Macedonia, where ethnic divisions interfere, education is not necessarily connected to party preferences. Nationalism and ethnic division in these countries is a strong influence and has a greater impact than education in the formation of values. An interesting article written by Selenica (2018), examines the role of education in Kosovo, in the post-war period. The internationally directed education promotes multiculturalism which clashes with nationalism promoted by internal one.

3.2 Distributive Justice in Education: Review of Empirical Studies

The following section presents a revision of research on distributive justice in education. In this review, research signalizes that the distribution of resources in education relates to justice. The discourse on the distribution of resources in education concerns opportunities, investment, school area, distribution, teacher-student relation, and assessment. Apart from

the elements mentioned, educational attainment emerges as a factor that diminishes economic inequalities in many studies (Chu, 2000; De Gregorio & Lee, 2002; Lin, 2007; Psacharopoulos, 1988; Ram, 1990; Tinbergen, 1972).

3.2.1 Educational Opportunities

Educational opportunities include offering various resources like books, computers, labs, and different facilities (Young, 1990). Jonsson and Erikson's (2000) article on Sweden indicate that differences of social class led to disparities in educational performance and choices made at various transition phases of the educational system. Machin and Vignoles' study (2004) for UK discovered that family income affects the educational attainment of individuals because rich children benefit more from higher education than the ones with better abilities. Equally, Speciale (2012) explores how investment in public education for both developing and developed countries affects educational inequality because education policies only enhance the difference between successful and less successful students. Similarly, gaps in income in high school and college students in Massachusetts are reflected in differences in educational attainment (Papay, Murnane, & Willett, 2015), because the economic background of students' families affects their future success. However, this has been opposed because when the same quality of education is offered, differences in achievement are reduced (Montt, 2011). Family background has a stable role in education, when compared to educational policies for teenagers in Sweden (Rudolphi, 2014). At higher levels of education, inequality among students increases, and the effects of education policy are observed in Sweden only for a long-term perspective (Meschi & Scervini, 2014). In addition, offering students more access to information and means of critical examination, letting them consume knowledge of different fields and arming them with judicious abilities, enriches and equips students with abilities that help criticize oppression (Fischman & McLaren, 2000).

In the region, in terms of opportunities, Barakoska (2014) investigated high school students in Skopje, North Macedonia on how education impacts their values exploring differences in the type of education that youngsters received as concerns the ethics and religious content of these schools. Students receiving neither religious nor ethics lessons emphasized equity and social justice as a value. In Albania, the latest publication by Zhllima, Imami, Rama, & Shahini (2018) “Corruption in Education during Socialism and the Postsocialist Transition” conducted with university students relates to the lack of fairness in education in Albania. The authors attempt to examine the different forms of corruption in education during communist and post-communist Albania. Communism triggered the development of some negative attitudes like favoritism and corruption in education. In Albania, related to educational attainment, the study from Faniko, Lorenzi-Cioldi, and Buschini (2010) detected that the more educated individuals and males support meritocracy more than the lesser educated.

3.2.2 Investment in Education: School Background

Another factor that has resulted in a reduction of economic differences is investment in education (2007). Specifically, public policies and expenditures were found to diminish inequalities in countries of East Asia (Lee & Lee, 2018). About policy, Keller’s study (2010) revealed that education policy positively impacts the distribution of income at the global level, especially the effect of primary education. Babones, Felmet, and Hwang (2007) found that education’s effect over income inequalities tends to be stable because over time countries tend to have a stable level of education and income as changes are not immediate but occur over decades. However, Rehme (2007) states that it is true that education impacts both development and economic inequality, but it does not necessarily diminish inequality. Geo-Jaja (2006) argues that decentralization in education gave no results in terms of funds for equal education in Nigeria. In the Western Balkans, education can serve to impact economic differences, as suggested by the findings of Ognjen (2018) who confirmed that for the countries of WB, the educated population is important for

development. Picard and Wolff (2010) investigated if in Albania the inequalities in education are sourced from dissimilarities between families or within them. Their results suggest that inequalities in education are the result of the inequalities among families, rather than those within families.

Schools in disadvantaged areas put greater pressure on quality and as a result on social justice. Lupton (2005), in the study conducted with four schools in some deprived areas in England, found that the school context and education quality had implications for social justice. In their recent book, Hoskins and Janmaat (2019) argued that schools promote inequality in participation because students are offered different opportunities, thus reproducing inequalities in participation because students coming from the working class were not offered the same opportunities in schools as the middle-class ones.

3.2.3 Distribution into Groups

Distribution into groups relates to how classes or groups are distributed in schools. This has to do with selection and acceptance to certain schools, admission to classes, or study groups. Noddings (2008) criticizes the standardization of American schools through certain reforms for the sake of improving equality and especially that of the outcome, because they undermine talent and equity. Equality in education is dependent on political equality as argued by Anderson (2015) who examines the link between power and educational equality in America from a historical perspective. The chief argument he makes is that politically more powerful groups attend better schools and benefit more from educational opportunities than vulnerable ones.

Educational practices refer to the distribution of rules, practices, and methods used by the teacher. Importantly, the content of what students learn and the way they learn it are connected to justice. Freeman (2006) found that teaching methods and content of curriculum have undermined the culture and capabilities of Black Americans, risking assimilation of culture, and bringing social inequality. On the other hand, Enslin and

Tjiattas (2004) view issues of justice from an international perspective and propose cosmopolitan citizenship education and relevant multicultural associations as a way to target issues of global justice.

3.2.4 Teacher-Student Relations

Teacher-student relations are considered an essential variable in considerations of education (Baker, 1999). Building supportive and caring relations between students and teachers or other members is important in making education work (Portelli, Shields, & Vibert, 2007). Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso in a study conducted in three universities in America, based on the experiences of African American students, found that students' voices were silenced and discouraged (2000). In the research conducted by McBrien (2009), educational experience of female adolescents revealed unfair treatment by teachers and mates in US schools. Conversely, in another study, teachers who represented a positive model had a positive impact on students' experiences (Lizzio, Wilson, & Hadaway, 2007). The study concluded that the understanding that students have on fairness is strongly related to ideas they have on good teaching methods and practice.

Chory-Assad (2002) focused on identifying the link between students' understanding of procedural and distributive justice and their approach to the course, learning, and instructor, finding a positive link among them. Similar results come from a study in Italy, France, England, Belgium, and the Czech Republic which aimed to examine the experiences of these students regarding fairness in their schools (Gorard, 2012). This study indicated that students' ideas on fairness were related to their relation with teachers and the type of school. Similarly, Lovat (2007) believes that values education, in general, is related to teachers being positive role models in terms of fairness, respect, and attention given to students. The same was reported by Chory (2007) on the impact that the figure of the instructor had on the perception of justice. Similarly, Young, Horan, and Frisby (2013) found that the rapport between teachers and students predicts the perception of three types of justice in the classroom: distributional, procedural, and interactional.

3.2.5 Assessment

Assessment or grading is an indicative field of fairness in education, and a mirror of social inequalities (Hanesworth, Bracken, & Elkington, 2018). It is a sphere of education where justice is involved and can be seen as the distribution of assessment (Deutsch, 1985). The values on which the distribution of grades is based in schools are *equality* (of input and output), *need* and *equity* (effort, ability, work) (Deutsch, 1985, p. 31). Contrary to common belief, McArthur (2015) believes that simply conducting fair procedures in assessment is not enough for fairness as long as characteristics of the students are not addressed. Procedural injustice as concerns assessment was perceived by students as happening more often compared to distributive and interactional justice in the study conducted by Horan, Chory, and Goodboy (2010). Very few studies evaluate how experiences of fairness connect to perceptions of fairness (Brookhart, 2009; Keen & Arthur-Kelly, 2009; Rasooli, Zandi, & DeLuca, 2018; Gipps & Stobart, 2009; Wallace & Qin, 2021).

3.3 Conclusion

From the studies mentioned above it is noticed that freedom of action is not included in the review. The majority of research documents evidence on experiences of freedom and less on the understanding of freedom. The above studies concentrate mostly on the effects of education concerning distributive justice and fairness. Few measure perceptions of distributive justice in education. The literature on the region and Albania is limited. Studies in Albania concentrate on political culture, inequalities, and corruption. Nevertheless, distributive justice has not been researched widely and the influence of education on freedom is an area in need of exploration. They also offer research on political culture, inequalities, corruption, and lack of fairness. However, as noted by Dimou (2009), all externally driven educational reforms in the region have been short-lived.

4 CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain in detail the steps conducted in this study. It will include the research design, research questions, and hypotheses. Details on the sample, collection of data, and analysis will follow.

This study has used an exploratory approach. In this type of research, concepts are examined, scanned systematically and there is flexibility because of “picking and choosing” hypotheses (Goeman & Solari, 2011; Burton, 1979). This study employs quantitative methodology and examines perceptions and experiences of freedom and distributive justice, separately, as well as relationships between the experience and perception of each value, among high school seniors in Albania. It falls into the descriptive methods of research because it examines relations between variables and aims to answer questions such as “What” and “How” (Russell & Purcell, 2009). Various items on perceptions and experiences of each concept (types of freedom and distributive justice) are explored alone and correlated together to build evidence and examine the extent to which experiences in the school environment shape the perceptions of young people.

The survey was conducted during April-May-June 2021 and included a quantitative exploration of the concepts of freedom and distributive justice among pre-university students, taking into consideration the current knowledge gap about this topic across Albanian literature/studies, at the time of the research.

4.2 Research Design

As already mentioned, this research employs quantitative method. Quantitative studies include discussion and analysis of data that has been produced in the form of numbers (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006) and is based on the interpretation of statistical data (Halperin & Health, 2017, p. 6). It includes several stages such as sampling, questionnaire preparation, collection and procession of data. Pierce (2008) considers that this type of research offers many advantages in research such as trusted results, facts presented by an objective researcher, and practicality in the use of online surveys because they can be reached by remote participants and the data is processed by a computer. The main instrument used in the study is a questionnaire and the results were analyzed statistically.

4.2.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions have guided this research:

Main Research Question:

How is education in Albania contributing to democratization through the internalization of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice among Matura students?

Sub-Research Questions:

RQ1: What are Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom within the school environment?

RQ2: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students?

RQ3: What are Matura students' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice within the school environment?

RQ4: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students?

Empirical studies suggest that there are gender differences in experiences of freedom in school (Thomas & Berk, 1981). Similarly, experiences of freedom differ based on the school environment, characteristics of the school (Church, Elliot, & Gamble, 2001, Wang & Holcombe, 2010), type of school (Fine, 1987), school in underprivileged areas (Fine, 1987; Quiroz, 2001), and the school's geographical position (Yonezawa, Wells, & Serna, 2002). Considering the Albanian context, differences in experiences and perceptions of freedom are expected. Therefore, the following research hypothesis has been developed:

RH1: Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (gender, geographical area, school type, and General Directorate of Pre-University Education affiliation).

The literature suggests that experiences are important in developing understanding (Paul, 2014), values (Mezirow, 2003), learning (Andresen, Boud, & Cohen, 1995) and understanding of democracy (2013). Experiences in education help students' freedom (Dewey, 1916). Individuals conceptualize after experiencing through reflecting (Kolb, 1984). Keeping in mind the educational context in Albania, and the educational policy, it is expected that experiences and perceptions of freedom are related.

RH2: There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among high school Matura students.

In theory, principles of distributive justice are present during adolescence (Damon, 1977) (Piaget, 1969). There are differences in experiences of distributive justice principles in literature (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977/ 1990; Freire, 1970; Resh & Sabbagh, 2016; Sabbagh, Resh, Mor, & Vanhuysse, 2006). Principles like equity in education concern individual and social differences like gender, and economic status (OECD, 2022) and some studies report gender differences in perceptions of principles of distributive justice (Faniko, Lorenzi-Cioldi, & Buschini, 2010). Experiences of distributive justice principles change based on school geographical area (Lupton, 2005), and socio-economic background (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019). Considering the mixture of the Albanian context,

communist past, and educational attempts aligned with European values, differences in experience and perception of distributive justice principles in schools are expected. Therefore, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

RH3: Matura students' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (gender, geographical area, school type, and General Directorate of Pre-University Education affiliation).

Similarly, as above, studies point out that experiences are important in developing understanding (Paul, 2014), values (Mezirow, 2003), and learning (Andresen, Boud, & Cohen, 1995). Individuals conceptualize after experiencing through reflecting (Kolb, 1984). Considering that experiences influence understanding of justice (Fischer & Skitka, 2006), perceptions of justice are based on how individuals are treated (Rasooli, 2021), and knowing that inequalities that exist in society similarly are mirrored in schools (Harris, 2002), not forgetting about the educational context in Albania, a connection between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice principles is expected.

RH4: There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among high school Matura students.

4.2.2 Instrument

Given the Covid-19 pandemic, the restrictions, and the limited access to places that it brought, the instrument used in this thesis for data collection was a self-administered web-survey containing closed-ended questions. It is widely known that surveys are instruments used extensively to make interpretations by investigating a part of the population (Young, 2015). The usage of questionnaires has many advantages. The researcher can collect large amounts of data using emails, even by web-based platforms or online format; it is manageable online; the collected data can be processed and analyzed easily making it appropriate for statistical study (Burns, 2000, p. 568). Furthermore, questionnaires are reliable due to the same set of items and questions used for all the respondents and offer

practicality in terms of time and cost. Respondents take their time to finish it; they complete it without being exposed to the researcher directly; and a large number of respondents and areas are covered. Another crucial element of surveys, especially those conducted online, is confidentiality. Respondents were not taken any names, and surnames. They were assured at the beginning of the questionnaire that this survey served research purposes only and they were free not to complete it.

Surveys offer the possibility to explore a variety of topics bringing a trustworthy understanding of what participants think. The use of surveys enables the collection of data from a group, and it provides more convincing evidence of phenomena than any other method as it is based on the beliefs, facts, and attitudes of involved individuals (Visser, Krosnick, Lavrakas, & Kim, 2013). Additionally, with survey research, many questions can be asked in one questionnaire conducted to a large number of individuals within a short period (Needham & Vaske, 2008). In particular, web surveys have some advantages because they offer a variety of visual means to offer questions to participants; the responses are downloaded automatically; thus, saving the researcher time and easing coding the responses (Bryman, 2008, p. 646). In addition to this, e-surveys have low cost; the responses are received faster; they cover remote geographical areas; the completion rate is high; data entry is computerized; and there is less chance for errors (Bryman, 2012). The pandemic changed the rules of research (Sparks, 2022), and many surveys were conducted online (De Man, et al., 2021; Rasooli, 2021).

The self-administered survey used for this study contained three main sections: the first was the demographic section that collected sociodemographic data about respondents' profiles; the second section explored the concept of freedom, and the third section was about the value of distributive justice. Perceptions and experiences were explored through a set of positive statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale, in which the respondents expressed the level at which they disagree or agree with each of the items. Likert scaling is well known to identify the intensity of attitude that participants have towards a given statement (Bell, 2005) and is advantageous because it is simultaneously easy to prepare and increases the reliability and validity of the instrument (Burns, 2000). On the matter of

formulation of statements, the literature suggests that mixing positive with negative statements in Likert scaling damages the scale's internal consistency, with respondents not necessarily agreeing with items as a result of tendency (Salazar, 2015). No differences were found when comparing both types of answers to both types of items (Sauro, 2011). Mixing can damage the validity and reliability of the instrument (Chyung, Barkin, & Shamsy, 2018). Additionally, it damages the internal consistency of scales (Zeng, Wen, & Zhang, 2020). The order of the Likert Scale is advised to be ascending (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree) to lower respondents giving positive answers (Chyung, Kennedy, & Campbell, 2018); (Nicholls, Okubo, & Matia Loftus, 2006), or to be attentive while scoring positively worded items (Friedman & Pollack, 1994). Considering these, the statements in this study were constructed using a 5-point Likert scale of frequency where students were asked to rank statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated *Strongly Disagree* and 5 *Strongly Agree*. In this case, students were offered a series of positive statements in an ascending order (*1 Strongly Disagree* and *5 Strongly Agree*).

The instrument was drafted after a thorough exploration of the literature and the education policy documents in Albania. The questionnaire contained 52 questions, of which six were multiple-choice, one open-ended, one ranking and the rest 44 were Likert Scale. The items on freedom used negative-positive division as distinguished by lack of external limitation for negative freedom and freedom found in the use of rationality, reasonableness, and refinement of knowledge for positive freedom, as guided by Adler (1958), Berlin (1969), Hegel (1991), and Foucault (2015). Formulation of the internal and external perspective of freedom was guided by Adler (1958), Dewey (1938), Kant (1785), and Gustavsson (2014), while the individual, and social level of freedom by Dimova-Cookson (2013), and Heyman (1992). In addition to this, the above-mentioned classifications were infused in the main types of freedom as found to be present in the education context: freedom of thought (here is positive, internal, and individual) (Dewey, 1916); freedom of expression (here being positive, external, and social) (Hanson & Howe, 2011; Parker, 2010; Roshwald, 2000); freedom of action (here is positive, external, social) (Locke, 2017; Guyer, 2010); freedom of choice (referring here to positive, internal, and individual), (Gould, 2013; Guyer, 2010); freedom of identity (suggesting here the negative, external,

social perspectives), (Fromm, 2001, p. 27; Irizarry, 2011). In total 17 questions in the questionnaire were about freedom (5-21), 6 on perception of freedom, nine on experience of freedom and two on factors related to freedom in schools.

Table 4.1 Qualities of Perspectives and Types of Freedom used in the Study

Freedom	Perspectives		
Types	Positive-Negative	Internal-External	Individual-Social-Political
Thought (Mind)	positive	internal	individual
Expression	positive	external	social
Action	positive	external	social
Choice	positive	internal	individual
Identity	negative	external	social

Note. Prepared by the author of this thesis

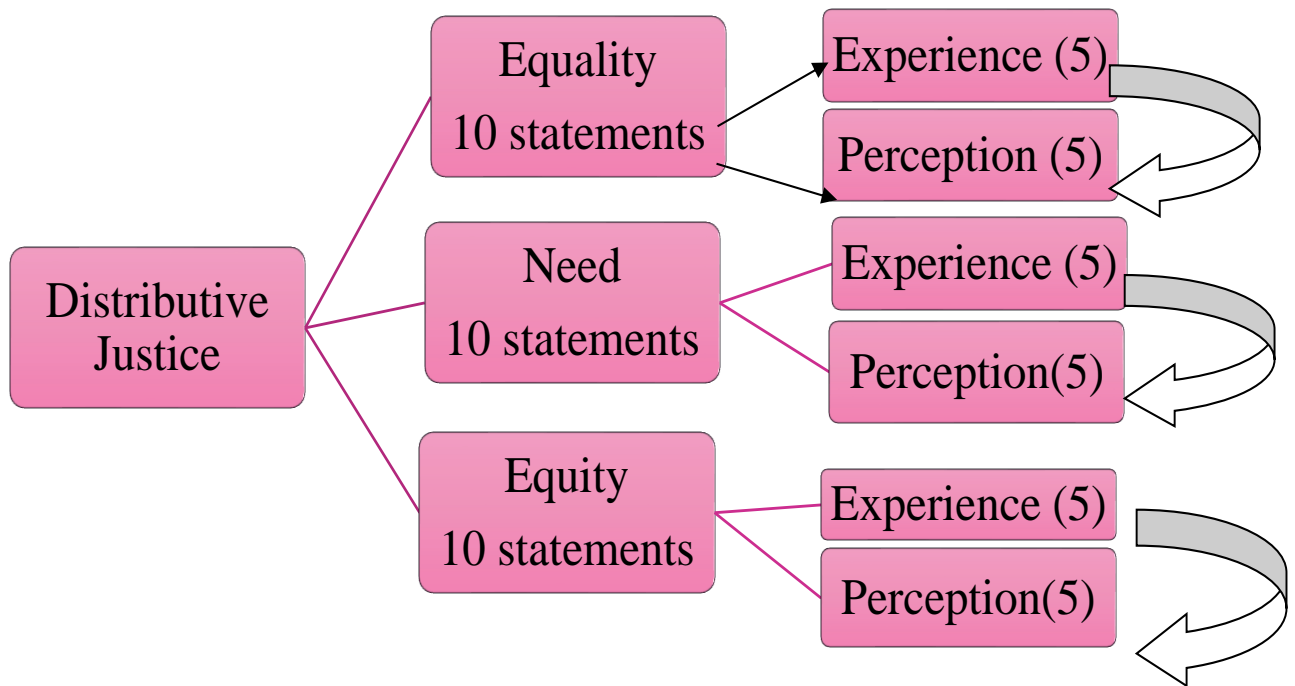
Distributive Justice Principles

Statements referring to the principles of distributive justice: equality, need, and equity have emerged based on the explanations offered from various sources (Adams, 1965, Bierhoff, Buck, & Klein, 1986; Deutsch, 1975; Konow & Schwettmann, 2016; Homans, 1961; Miller, 1992; Rawls, 1971/ 1999). The resources distributed in education refer to educational opportunities (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016), educational places and programs (Noddings, 2008), exercises (activities) (Freeman, 2006), assessment (grades) (Deutsch, 1985), and teacher-student relation (attention) (Baker, 1999).

The statements on equality, equity, and need were devised guided by Miller' (1992); (Reidy, 2010) and Rawls's (1971, 1999) criteria of distributional justice in the following domains of education (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016): opportunities (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019), course (Noddings, 2008), exercises (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016), assessment criteria (Deutsch, 1985), and teacher treatment (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Young, Horan, & Frisby, 2013). In total, the questionnaire contained 30 questions on distributive justice principles, 15 for experienced principles (equality, equity, need) in the school context and 15 for

perception of principles (equality, equity, need). Totally there were 10 statements for each principle. The plan for distributive justice principles is given in the figure 4.1 below together with items used in the questionnaire (Table 4.2).

Figure 4.1 The Outline for Distributive Justice Principles and Variables in the Questionnaire



Note. Produced by the author of this thesis

Table 4.2 The Items in the Questionnaire for Freedom and Distributive Justice

Variables	
Freedom	
Experienced Freedom	Perceived Freedom
Experienced +/-freedom (Q.11, 12)	Perceived+/-freedom (Q. 5)
Experienced F. Mind (Q. 13, 14, 15)	Perceived F. Mind (Q. 6)
Experienced F. Expression (Q. 16)	Perceived F. Expression (Q. 7)
Experienced Collective F. (Q. 17)	Perceived Collective F. (Q. 9)

Experienced F. Action (Q. 18)	Perceived F. Action (Q. 8)
Experienced F. Choice (Q. 19)	Perceived F. Choice (Q. 10)
Distributive Justice	
Experienced	Perceived
Experiences Equality (Q.38, 41, 44, 47, 50)	Perceived Equality (Q.23, 26, 29, 32, 35)
Experienced Need (Q. 40, 43, 46, 49, 52)	Perceived Need (Q.25, 28, 31, 34, 37)
Experienced Equity (Q.39,42, 45, 48, 51)	Perceived Equity (Q.24, 27, 30, 33, 36)

Note. Prepared by the author of this thesis

The variables used for freedom were ordinal and the ones used for principles of distributive justice were scale. The latter was measured with multiple indicators. For the used values, the author not only made use of the theory on freedom and distributive justice, but also reviewed education policy documents to clarify the way freedom and distributive justice are used in policy documents.

4.2.3 Validity and Reliability

Generally, validity is related to how much the questions reflect what is intended to be measured and is dependent on how we define concepts (Halperin & Health, 2017, p. 171). To establish the validity of a questionnaire, it is necessary to consider face, content, and construct validity.

Face validity demonstrates if indicators are related to the concept and how the intended participants would react to it. A pre-test of the questionnaire can be used to determine if the questions fulfill this requirement. For this reason, the researcher conducted a pilot study. Piloting the questionnaire has importance because it helps identifying the time needed to complete the questionnaire, any changes to be done to the formulation of the

questions, and any confusion, and misunderstanding of any of the questions (Boynton, 2004). This means that piloting and pre-testing the questionnaire ensures that any question that leads to misunderstanding by the respondents, is re-formulated again. In this stage, the researcher aimed to find an answer to the following questions: “Are the questions and statements in the questionnaire clearly understood by respondents?”, and “Do I need to reword any of them?”. For this purpose, the questionnaire was piloted with 37 high school seniors. The feedback received during the process together with the results helped to make some revision in the questionnaire. For instance, the researcher omitted one question related to the profile of studies: scientific or social since such a division was not valid anymore for the high schools in the country. Instead, the researcher decided to add the name of the directorate the school of the participants belonged to as guided by the division made by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the name of the directorate the school belonged to, resulted to be confusing for the students, given also to the recent changes in the classification and division of schools into regional directorates in Albania (National Strategy of Education 2021-2026, 2021). These four education regional directorates (DRAP), namely, Durrës, Korça, Fier, and Lezhe have been authorized to monitor, evaluate, inspect and plan the budget of the schools under control, to make sure the curricula and standards are applied, to offer technical assistance, to employ teachers and so on. The directorate was added by the researcher because students were confused about the exact directorate their school belongs to. Therefore, this practice eliminated the confusion the question on the directorate caused to students. The other questions turned out to be clear and understandable.

Content validity signalizes if the necessary aspects, indicators, or dimensions of the construct have been included in the measurement. So, it checks if the content of the questions is a reflection of the content of the concept. To ensure its adaptability, the questionnaire was firstly demonstrated to some researchers, academicians, and education specialists. They evaluated the appropriateness of questions in measuring the intended variables. Initially, the questionnaire was drafted in English to be later translated to Albanian. In addition, the Albanian version was reviewed by a professor of Albanian language at University College Beder to assess its clarity in the Albanian language.

After the finalization of the questionnaire, the reliability test through Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was conducted to measure its reliability and internal consistency. Following Cronbach's Alpha, the items of the instrument are split into two parts and examined whether their results are connected or not. In case the value of alpha is close to or higher than 0.70, then in terms of reliability the instrument is highly reliable (Taber, 2018). Nevertheless, 0.50 to 0.70 indicates moderate level of reliability, and 0.70 to 0.90 high level of reliability (Hinton, Brownlow, McMurray & Cozens, 2004, p. 364). Cronbach's alphas for all the items altogether (44 items) in the current questionnaire were $\alpha = .90$ which indicated a good internal consistency. For each distributive justice scale, Cronbach's alphas also indicated good internal consistency, equality (10 items, $\alpha = .70$), need (10 items, $\alpha = .76$), equity (10 items, $\alpha = .64$), freedom understanding (5 items, $\alpha = .71$), and freedom experiences (9 items, $\alpha = .89$) as seen in the following Table 4.3. Reliability Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha for the total and variables).

Table 4.3 Reliability Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha for the Total and Variables

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Total	.904	.910	44
Freedom Perception	.712	.720	5
Freedom Experience	.894	.896	9
Equality	.702	.709	10
Need	.767	.758	10
Equity	.642	.640	10

4.2.4 Population and Sample

A nonprobability sampling technique, purposive sampling was used for this study. Nonprobability sampling is less costly and practical in terms of time, and it is used when there is no exact data on the number of the population. Purposive sampling is characteristically used in research when the researcher aims to study a certain group and purposefully chooses participants (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014 Jun). It is advantageous when there is maximum variety of the characteristics of the

sample. These participants are intentionally chosen because they provide insight to the topic under study. The characteristics of the sample suit the requirements of the purpose of the study (Andrade, 2021). Respondents are selected on purpose (Stratton, 2021). The strongest advantage of this type of sampling is that the sample matches the objectives of study, thus increasing the credibility of the results (Campbell, Greenwood, & Walker, 2020). However, the conclusions drawn from this kind of study need to be verified in full-scale probability sampling. Given the general conditions for this type of sampling, the first criteria for selection were to survey Matura students, and for them to be dispersed into the four educational directorates, into public and private schools, rural and urban geographical areas, and lastly cover both genders.

Detailing the above information, the study group of this study was 12th-grade Matura students from public and non-public high schools in Albania for the 2020-2021 academic year. The selection criteria applied for participation in the study were: being a high school senior in the academic year 2020-2021 and being willing to voluntarily complete the survey. The statistics on the exact population number of Matura students for the academic year 2020-2021 were officially declared by INSTAT only after the period this study was done, a time when students had already graduated from high school referring to them as graduates (Graduated by Educational Level, 2022), making it impossible for the exact population to be known before. Given the lack of data on the exact number of the population under study and the limitations of the pandemic, purposive sampling resulted in being a useful choice.

As a result, a total number of N=1846 of Matura students participated in the study of which 72.7% (n=1342) were female and 27.3% (n=504) were male. In general, female students are known to be more active in survey participations (Porter & Whitcomb, 2005); female response rates are higher when compared to males even in higher education institutions (Smith, 2008). The participants were from 67 different places, both rural and urban. The survey was conducted in the four regional educational directorates in Albania: Durres, Fier, Korce, and Lezhe, based on the division made by the Ministry of Education (Drejtoritë Arsimore Rajonale, 2021). Participants from the DRAP of Durres were from

Tirana, Kavaje, Durres, and Diber. The DRAP of Fier included students from Fier, Gjirokaster, and Vlore. The DRAP of Korça had participants from Korça, Elbasan, Pogradec, and Peqin. Lastly, the DRAP of Lezha had participants from Lezha, Milot, Kurbin, Shkoder, Lac, Mamurras, and Kukes. From the DRAP of Durres were 978 participants, from Fier 291, from Korça 353, and from Lezha 224. Table 4.4 below provides more detailed information on the number and city or village the respondents participated in at the time this survey was conducted.

Table 4.4 Number and Directorate with City/Village of Participants

DRAP-Durres			DRAP-Fier			DRAP-Korce			DRAP-Lezhe		
		Total						Total			Total
Kavaje	114	123	Vlore	66	74	Korce	82	100	Milot/ Kurbin	7	16
Synej/ Kavaje	8		Novosele/ Vlore	8		Liqenas/ Korce	5		Gorre/ Kurbin	8	
Luzi Vogel/ Kavaje	1					Mollaj/ Korce	7		Kurbin	1	
						Dvoran/ Korce	6				
Tirane	317	440	Gjirokaster	70	78	Pogradec	44	103	Lezhe	37	62
Ndroq/ Tirane	76		Libohove/ Gjirokaster	8		Buçimas/ Pogradec	12		Ishull Lezhe/ Lezhe	4	
Vaqarr/ Tirane	44					Hudenisht/ Pogradec	7		Balldre/ Lezhe	5	
Shengjergj/ Tirane	1		Lushnje	33	50	Blace/ Pogradec	17		Zejmen/ Lezhe	6	
Kllonje/ Tirane	2		Gorre/ Lushnje	9		Proptisht/ Pogradec	15		Shenkoll/ Lezhe	6	
Bathore/ Kamez	16	148	Krutje/ Lushnje	8		Udenisht/ Pogradec	8		Blinisht/ Lezhe	4	
Kamez	132										
Durres	76	145	Fier	70	89	Elbasan	59	97	Shkoder		50
Sukth/ Durres	9		Libofshe/ Fier	15		Gjinar/ Elbasan	10		Lac		25
Katund i Ri/ Durres	16		Verri/ Fier	4		Paper/Elbasan	14		Mamurras		26
Shenavlash/ Durres	10					Kuqan/ Elbasan	14		Kukes	23	45
Kulle/ Durres	4								Shtiqa/ Kukes	7	
Sukth/ Durres	9					Peqin	25	53	Shishtavec/ Kukes	6	
Laknas/ Durres	3					Pajove/Peqin	28		Bardhoc/ Kukes	3	
Manez/ Durres	18								Topojan/ Kukes	2	
Silove/ Diber	18	122							Novoseje/ Kukes	1	
Kastriot/ Peshkopi	25								Gostil/Kukes	4	
Maqellare/ Diber	79										
		Durres 978			Fier 291			Korce 353			Lezhe 224
											Total 1846

Note. Prepared by the author of this thesis

4.2.5 Demography of the Sample

A total of N=1846 respondents, Matura students were surveyed for the study. As shown in Figure 4.2, 72.7% (N=1324) of respondents were female and 27.3% (N= 504) male. At the time of the research, 67.1% of respondents were living in urban areas while 32.9% in rural areas (Table 4.5).

Figure 4.2 Gender

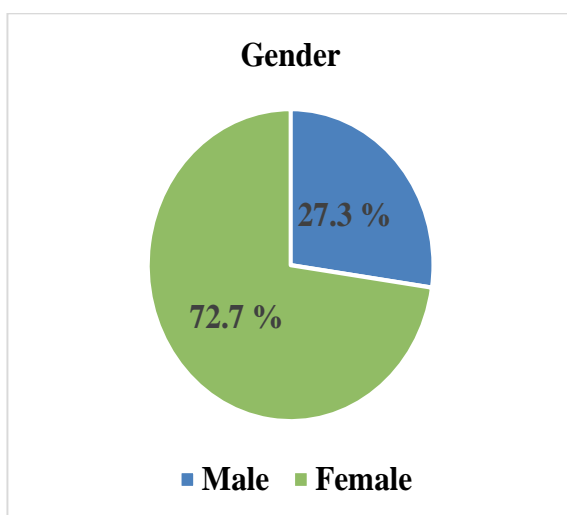
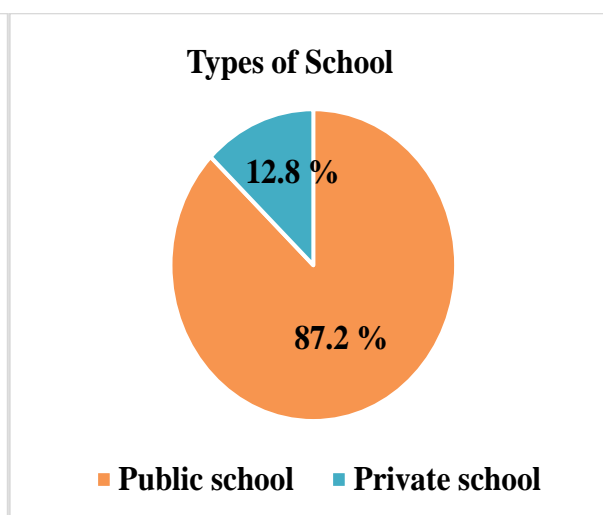


Figure 4.3 Type of School



The vast majority (87.2%) of surveyed students attended public schools and 12.8% attended the non-public ones. Regarding the General Directorate of Pre-University Education (hereafter referred to as directorate), half of the respondents (53.2%) belong to Durrës, 19.1% to Korça, 15.8% to Fier, and 12% to Lezha. Please refer to Table 4.5 for a detailed sociodemographic profile of surveyed respondents.

Table 4.5 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Participants' characteristics		
	n	%
Gender		
Female	504	27.3
Male	1342	72.7

Geographical Area		
Rural	608	32.9
Urban	1238	67.1
Types of School		
Public	1610	87.2
Non-public	236	12.8
General Regional Directorate of Pre-University Education		
Korça	352	19.1
Durres	982	53.2
Fier	291	15.8
Lezha	221	12.0

4.2.6 Data Collection

The data were collected via internet-based and to diversify the representativeness of the participants, it took place during April, May, and June of the academic year 2020-2021. Due to time, budget, lack of a consolidated database with high school seniors' contacts, and Covid-19 restrictions, it was done via Web-based surveys shared through email and WhatsApp to the population. Through web surveys, analysis is faster, making it possible for more data to be collected, when compared to the traditional paper-based data collection method (Wyatt, 2000).

However, one of the main reasons influencing the decision to collect data remotely was the pandemic situation that required an urgent shift in the way of collecting data. In light of this, Welsch (2020) argues that the efforts to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus through public health measures, lockdowns undertaken globally, and social distancing required all stakeholders to rethink the ways how data will be collected during the pandemic. Quoting Welsch (2020, p. 4), the “rule of thumb in this pandemic should be: collect remotely; if you can’t, think of why this information is essential and provide arguments for why you can’t get it any other way”. Using methods of data collection tailored to the target group, and also considering the possibilities of access during the pandemic is feasible than using other means of data collection as done under normal circumstances. Considering this, a Google Form was created for data collection purposes

and the link was shared through email, WhatsApp groups, and social media to high school seniors across Albania. In Albania, a post-communist country, a researcher faces many barriers that prevent him/her from delivering such a questionnaire formally through the help of the Ministry of Education. Under such conditions, the distribution of the questionnaire was done informally.

The online completion of the questionnaire had multiple benefits. Primarily, it was accessed by students even in remote areas of Albania during the pandemic. It enabled a greater number of respondents and wider coverage of the areas of the respondents. The online completion of the questionnaire by youngsters can be considered beneficial because they are considered the Z-generation. They were born in the time of internet and social media. They are users of different social platforms, have technological abilities, and are multitaskers in this sense (Csobanka, 2016). From statistics, it has been observed that 53% of Albania's population were users of Facebook, 35% of Instagram, and about 40% of messenger, from which the group aged under 30 makes up more than 50 % (Social Media Users in Albania at the End of 2020, 2020). Therefore, completing such an online questionnaire does not bring intimidation or threat to the way they respond to questions.

4.2.7 Data Analysis

Row data collected through Google Forms was downloaded and exported into excel files. To ensure the quality and the validity of the collected data, the dataset went through the data cleaning process, and codification and was finally transferred to statistical software. Both excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were used for statistical analyses. Descriptive data such as frequencies and percentages were conducted to explore each item alone, cross-tabulations and inferential analyses were run to assess the relation between items, as well as to look for differences based on socioeconomic profile. The research results are presented in detailed description in the chapters to follow.

4.2.8 Ethical Considerations

This study followed the ethical standards applied in research design and implementation such as:

i. Informed Consent

All participants were informed regarding the purpose of the study through informed consent. They were also informed on what purpose and how their responses would be used.

ii. Voluntary Participation and Harmlessness

In the questionnaire shared with potential participants, it was clearly stated that their participation was voluntary, and they would not be affected or harmed in any way because of their participation or not in the study.

iii. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Matura students were informed that they would not be identified by name or any other way. All the provided information was to be kept confidential. Gathered data would be used only for cumulative analysis, and findings would be used only for academic study purposes.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter contained information on the methodology used for this study. The chapter began by explaining the research design. It then informed the reader on the research questions and hypotheses. The instrument was explained in how it was constructed, the type of questions and statements that were used, and the theoretical context that backed it. The validity and the reliability of the questionnaire were explained in the following section. In addition, this chapter explains the population and the sample used in the study,

in this case purposive sampling. More information is presented on how data was collected and analyzed.

Having explained the details of the study, the following section will give information on the educational context in Albania. It will set the background and will be of help in briefly understanding the history, the developments, the reforms, and the legislation. Having this information provided will ease the explanation of the findings.

5 CHAPTER 5: EDUCATION IN ALBANIA

5.1 Introduction

Given that the current study considers education in Albania, it was seen as necessary to highlight some focal information that explains the background of education in the country. Given the aim, in the coming section I present a brief history of education under the communist influence, education in the post-communist period, the way pre-university education is organized, and later focus on education policy documents. Focusing on policy documents aims to see if and how freedom and distribute justice are integrated into these documents. It is to be remembered that these documents represent official aims and plans related to pre-university education in Albania.

5.2 Developments in the Albanian Education System

In studies dealing with the role of education in democratization, it is necessary to understand countries' background history (Wells, 2008). In the countries of Eastern Europe, politics and education have had an undeniable history together. These states were influenced by drastic changes in the political system and experienced a shift from communism to democracy, which was manifested in changes in education as well. The communist doctrine was reflected in education and as a result, it impacted the understanding of those generations who were schooled during this period. In his journal article "Structure and Organisation of Secondary Education in Central and Eastern

Europe”, Kotasek (1996) evaluated the educational system and policy in the countries of CEE. Firstly, he noted that these countries were affected by economic drawbacks at the beginning of the 20th century. Naturally, this was reflected in the educational system and later the situation was revitalized during socialism. In this period, these countries’ educational system was influenced by the Soviet model of state, and the Marxist understanding of education, and indoctrination. After the fall of communism, changes in the political system were reflected in changes in education. In a way, political instability echoed in transition in the educational systems.

Over the years, education in Albania has been the reflection of the socio-political and economical changes. At the beginning of the 20th century, very few schools offered education in the Albanian language because most of them were either Turkish or Greek. After the independence in 1912 and until the communist regime, the educational system in Albania was managed by several occupying countries like Italy and Germany. During the first years of the communist regime, education was conceptualized following the Soviet philosophy. This led to an increase in enrolment rates and was reflected in low levels of illiteracy until the fall of communism. Eradication of illiteracy was achieved through compulsory education and extra evening classes. Nevertheless, education under the communist state was centralized and was used to indoctrinate students. The communist state through the Ministry of Education had total control on all school levels, from the primary (7th or 8th grade) and secondary (high school) to university level education (Roucek, 1958). The education system was one of the main vehicles of indoctrination, adding to this the Communist Party which operated through its youth organizations. The duty of education was to educate the new generation about the communist ideology and principles. Education, science, and art were communist instruments. Recruitment and selection of students after their completion of secondary education was carried out according to rigorous vetting procedures. There was no freedom of choice because the selection was based on the average cumulative secondary education results, the “personal biography” of the individual, and his/her family. Family, relatives, and friendship networks were supportive forces in smoothing the selection because children of the then elite were much more favoured during selection, while children of the persecuted, those

coming from families with a bad biography were left aside (SOT.COM.AL, 2013). The quality of education was affected not only by the constitution of the student body but also by an increase in enrolment that could not be properly managed by the authorities. Enrolment was formally regulated through the Five-Year Plan because of the lack of infrastructure and financial resources. Lack of freedom of choice of the curricula, centralized education and control from the state; the imposition of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and teacher-centred education were typical of the communist period education (Sota, 2012). Centrality and control of the state were observed in infrastructure and teacher indoctrination (Bassler, 1995).

The fall of the regime led to instabilities and reforms in the education system. During this time, schools in Albania were very similar to those of the communist period. There was a centrality of planning, and education served the necessities of the then-political agenda. Given that education was a useful tool used by the previous regime, education was somehow detached from reality. Following the change of systems, most school buildings were damaged and occupied by the homeless. Economic crisis led to spending on education to its lowest degree. In terms of reforms, the fall of the old regime and the new system followed three main phases of educational reforms in Albania (Sota, 2012). The first occurred between 1992 and 1996 with a focus on right to education and the ratification of some conventions and the adoption of the Law on Pre-University Education in 1995. The second phase, after 1997, focused on decentralization and the preparation of the first National Strategy of pre-university Education covering the period from 2004 to 2015. During the third phase, after 2005, reforms in education tried to align with European goals. Two more national strategies of education followed and will be explained in the sections below.

5.3 The Current Pre-University Education in Albania

Returning to the current pre-university education, in Albania, it covers the basic education and the upper secondary education. Basic education includes two cycles: the primary (from

1st until the 5th grade) and secondary (from 6th until the 9th grade). Upper secondary education, which is not mandatory, includes high schools or gymnasiums, vocational schools, and oriented schools with a focus on foreign languages, arts, or sports. According to the latest published statistics, there are 456 schools in the upper secondary system, from which 332 are high schools, 17 are oriented (those with sports, arts and foreign language orientation); 349 (76.5 %) are public, 107 (23.5 %) private; students studying in public schools make up 86.9 % and those in non-public schools 13.1 % (MASR, 2020, p. 16) of the total number of students in pre-education. Non-public schools, different from public ones are “not established, not financed or administered by the central or local government” Article 2 (Law On Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania, 2012). The pre-university educational system is managed in three levels: the national one (the ministry of education), the regional one (regional directorates: DRAP, ZVA) (Struktura dhe Organika e DPAP, DRAP dhe ZVAP, 2021) and the school-based one.

Various reports shed light on several problems education is facing. Although reforms concerning the curricula, textbooks, organization, and structure of pre-university education have been conducted, findings suggest that teacher’s education and preparation need to be improved because teachers lack compatibility in applying theory into practice; no attention is given to students with special needs; and education faculties accept students with low performance (European Commission, 2013). Another indicator is the protest of students in the region (Croatia, Kosovo, Slovenia, etc.) and in Albania that signaled the need for further transformations in education (Zaviršek, 2014). The report entitled “Current State of Education in countries of the Balkan Region” (Treska, 2017) noted that education is still under the influence of politics, is corrupt, and centralized. The phenomenon of private tutoring in education occurring during the post-communist period in Albania is a reality and it is leading to more inequalities because students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds have limited access to these courses (Herczyński, 2007). In addition, the report prepared by Ikononi, Musai, and Sotirofski (2010) aiming to evaluate inclusion in education in Albania and teachers’ perspective on the matter, evidences problems with the preparation of teachers whose profession has lost the old status in society and this is translated in a lack of motivation. Similarly, reports on the needs of

teachers in Albania based on the personal perspective in the school context and also external evaluation emphasize the need for further training (Beara & Petrović, 2020).

Expenditure on education remains low. As concerns infrastructure, the misdistribution of resources allows those with better conditions to enjoy better resources, leaving behind the ones in need. Pisa achievement results in the region and Albania in 2018 are still low and teacher-centered practices are still dominant. It is questionable how educational systems use assessment to direct students into certain tracks based on their social and economic background. This has implications for students' freedom of choice in education. Another phenomenon is that the number of students in rural areas decreased and it rose in urban ones leading to overcrowded classes with up to 40 students in gymnasiums in Tirana and the existence of satellite schools (connected to another one), and collective classes in rural areas due to the low number of students. This is one of the reasons for the ineffective resource distribution (OECD, 2020).

Personal characteristics of students in Albania like gender, urban-rural, and public non-public school were related to the achievement of students (Njësia për Sektorin e Arsimit Rajoni i Europës dhe Azisë Qendrore, 2014). Equality of opportunity for students in Albania was found to be connected with personal characteristics like gender and socio-economic status. Although economic differences are not that deep, differences in outcomes between high-performing students and low-performing ones are noticeable. This difference is explained by access to books and the limitation that students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds have in this sense. These differences are connected to differences in achievement between students. Differences between public and non-public schools again are explained with differences related to family socio-economic background and the fact that students studying in non-public schools have better resources. There is inequality in terms of the dispersal of schools. Students from similar economic backgrounds tend to frequent similar schools. All these differences are significant. Educational achievement in Albania is dependent on social stratification and this is a determining factor for further opportunities offered to children in disadvantaged conditions (Psacharopoulos, 2017).

In the same way, recent developments in education in the region and Albania point to differences among geographical areas of schools, gender differences, and resource allocations (OECD/UNICEF, 2022). The achievement outcomes in Albania, based on Pisa results, are under the international level. Achievement gaps exist between students coming from disadvantaged and advantaged groups 31% in Albania, a 27 % (p.7) gap between rural and urban, and a 20 % (p.8) gap between gender. The same document indicates that spending on education in Albania and the region remains low, there is inequitable source distribution in the region, mainly for schools in disadvantaged areas, teacher-centred practices as perceived by students are dominant (p.14) (Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure) - Albania, 2022). Hopefully, as envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, some goals in the field of education in Albania are set, together with the ministries of Education and Welfare. By 2030, they aim to provide equitable education despite gender differences, schooling access to vulnerable students, and facilities for the less-abled and to ensure that learners are prepared to promote equality (UNESCO, IED, 2017).

However, the earthquake in November 2019 and the Covid-19 pandemic triggered and exposed a series of problems in education. After the earthquake, 24% of the infrastructure of schools was destroyed and over 20 thousand students were transferred to host schools. Online education uncovered a lack of teachers' IT skills. With 3.6% of the budget dedicated to education in 2021, no progress was made in the decentralization of schools; no attention was given to students with disabilities; and the Roma and Egyptian students' enrolment in school declined to make only a few of them continue upper secondary school (European Commission, 2022). Although the adopted curricula were based on competence, the report emphasizes the need for more equitable policies in education.

5.4 Freedom and Distributive Justice in Education Policy Documents in Albania

In the debate over education in Albania, it was considered important to review education policy, which consists of context, text, and implementation (Taylor, Rivzi, Lingard, & Miriam, 1997). Shortly, context and text include formulation of policies while implementation is realized in schools. In terms of context, the education policy in Albania has been oriented towards international and European programs like European Union's Education Benchmarks for 2020 and SDG4-Education 2030 (UNESCO; IZHA, 2017). The content of education policy is found in the texts or documents that represent it. Keeping this in mind, the researcher tried to filter policy documents for freedom and distributive justice aiming to explore them as presented through the perspective of education policy documents.

In general, when we think of the freedom and distributive justice found in legislation, they have been addressed in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the Law on Youth. Primarily, Article 3 of the Constitution addresses these guaranteed values (Albania Constitution, 2016). Other forms of freedoms are articulated as well: freedom of expression (Article 10, Article 22), access to information (Article 22), freedom of consciousness (Article 24), collective freedom for minorities to express their cultural, and ethnic characteristics (Article 20), freedom of means of communication (Article 36); freedom cannot be invaded (Article 42) and freedom of assembly (Article 47, 50). Equality of religious communities (Article 10) and that of minorities (Article 20) are guaranteed as well. In the same way, the Law on Youth (Law Nr.75/2019 on Youth, 2019) defends the rights of young citizens (15-29 years old) and promotes inclusiveness (Article 1), equality, equal opportunities when participating in decision-making areas and freedom of initiative (Article 4).

Nevertheless, the researcher limits policy documents only to those that cover the sphere of education. These documents are intended and are valid for all the students in pre-university education in Albania. These documents are the best representative and reflection of the

education policy. They are the main documents of policy in education and represent not solely policy, but other documents related to education policy as well.

In legislation, the Pre-University Law in the Republic of Albania addresses openly in various cases examples of freedom and equality (Law On Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania, 2012). In general lines, from the adaptations made with the requirements of the EU, formally, the pre-university system aims to build values, knowledge, and attitude needed in a democratic society. Students are supposed to obtain general civic and cultural values (Article 3). The competence of communication, expression, and civil competence can be found among the basic competences (Article 13). The cultivation of values is prescribed at the preschool and basic education levels (Article 22). The curricula are developed as one for all educational levels as regards the formation of values, basic competences, principles of teaching, learning, and assessment. So, there is a unification of the curricula (Article 44).

As regards freedom, it is present throughout four main levels: in the pre-university system, the educational institutions, teachers, and students. In general, education is given free to all (Article 5, 2) in state schools, and Article 6, 2 defends the rights and freedoms of the individual (children). The pre-university system is de-politicized (Article 8); this makes it free from political indoctrination. Educational institutions themselves enjoy autonomy in all the system (Article 6, 9). The curricula enable freedom of choice for students according to their needs and interests (Article 44, 6). Teachers are free to implement and develop the curricula (Article 56) and to choose the textbooks (Article 47). As for students, the law guarantees many aspects of freedom. To begin with, they are free to choose the school (Article 61). In a school, the Ethical Commission has the function to hear all students' complaints and their voice is to be heard (Article 33). Students' voices are represented on the Board of the Educational institution (Article 34). Students' government aims to represent students' interests, and voices in scientific, cultural, and sportive fields (Article 36). Students are given freedom of choice in terms of curricula with choice (Article 45). They are free to express their views related to their education and free to complain (Article 61, D). Students among others (teachers, and parents) are guaranteed the right to freely

express their points of view and to be listened to on issues regarding the quality of education (Article 6,8). In addition, Article 7 assures freedom from religious influence.

The law reflects a conceptualization of justice and distributive justice in various forms. Firstly, the law guarantees the right to education to all, despite the racial, ethnic, language, sexual, political, religious, economic, social, location, and ability differences (Article 5, 1). Furthermore, Article 6,4 points to inclusiveness. Protection from discrimination is in reality a right to achieve educational services despite differences (Article 6, 3). Article 6,5 guarantees openly equal chances for education to all. Albanian language and history courses are thought to help students belonging to different ethnicities achieve equality of participation (Article 10). Finally, the curricula guarantee equal education for all (definition nr. 8 of the curricula).

A subsequent review only of the key official education policy documents was conducted to filter them for freedom and distributive justice. The Law on Pre-university Education, the Strategy of the Pre-university Education 2014-2020 (Eurydice, 2019), the Curricular Frame, and The Curricular Manual for Social Sciences were selected for this process. To begin with, the Law on Pre-University Education enjoys the highest position in rank regarding the legislation on education. The Strategy of the Pre-university Education for 2014-2020 sets out lines on how to develop a national education policy. Normally, strategy is used to define the way to reach the aims that have been highlighted by policy (UNESCO, 2013). The Curricular Frame is the essential curriculum document that outlines the aims, competences, and results expected from students concerning their skills, attitudes and knowledge. It sets in broad lines all that the curricula are about: formal documents, applied curricula, and perceived curricula (The Curricula Framework of the Pre-University Education of the Republic of Albania, 2014). The Curricular Frame is part of the curricula documents. It was included in this part to be analyzed together with other policy documents because it is the main document that mirrors the policies and strategies of development in education (The Curricula Framework of the Pre-University Education of the Republic of Albania, 2014). Curricula only reflect in content the above-mentioned documents. The Curricular Manual for Social Sciences is part of the documents of the curricula and

includes standards to be achieved by students in social sciences and lines of themes included in subjects (IZHA, 2010). It is a detailed reflection of the Curricular Frame.

The majority of forms of freedom found in policy documents are related to the positive forms of freedom which consist mostly of self-development, refinement, and self-control. Examples of negative freedom are mentioned above. Freedom found indirectly covers freedom of the mind (or intellectual freedom), freedom of expression, freedom of action, freedom of choice, and collective freedom. The topics related to freedom of the mind can be summarized under the umbrella of independent thinking, refinement, as well as critical, and creative thinking. Freedom of expression (indirectly) ranges from the expression of ideas to constructive and creative communication (ethics, civility). Issues related to freedom of action (indirect) vary from independence in action to responsible action. Freedom of choice (indirect) is represented through making responsible choices, choosing agreeing opinions, elective curricula, programs that enable students to get involved where they desire, desire, students' right to choose their school, etc. Freedom of choice is given not only as the freedom to choose but as making a responsible choice as well. Collective Freedom (indirect) is given through one central theme: cultivation of personal, social, and national identity and culture.

Distributive justice targets equality, equity and need. The issues on equality are assembled to equality of genders, in opportunity, participation, and education. References to equality (indirect form) are found as referring to issues such as each person has the right to education, each student can be successful, learning chances for all, and each student should be given the chance to demonstrate himself. Additionally, it should be mentioned that topics related to the law, respect for the law, breaking the law, the aim of the law, and the constitution are common as well. Eventually, the main themes cover inequality, equality of rights, and chances. Distributive justice based on need, targets students' needs, special needs, families in need, the needs of the school, learning difficulty, disability, education for special groups (minority, migrants, disabled), and infrastructure. Distributive justice

based on equity addresses extra courses, differentiated tasks¹ and projects, refinement of knowledge based on students' interest, appropriate assessment of students based on performance, scholarship etc. Thus, equity is seen in the light of performance; scholarship; successful students, etc.

To sum up, education policy views freedom mainly in the positive versions expressed in the refinement of knowledge, critical and creative development, self-control, informed decision-making, and constructive dialoguing. More than external lack of limitation, freedom is internal development. Freedom is, firstly: self-development, refinement of knowledge, creative and critical thinking, independent thought, observation, and evaluation. Then, freedom means: not simply freedom to act, but responsible action-taking; not simply freedom to choose, but informed decision-making; and not solely freedom to speak, and debate but constructive debating as well. Distributive justice is conceptualized as equality, equity, and need. Education policy documents recognize students in need and recognize merit and talent. However, mostly, it is equality with references such as each person has the right to education, each student can be successful, learning chances for all, etc. All these can be summarized in the following list. They have helped to reconfirm the items of the questionnaire.

Table 5.1 List of Key Notions Extracted from Policy Documents

Freedom		Distributive Justice	
Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
to communicate, to express, to write freely, students are free to change their opinions	Freedom, Mind Self-development, independent thinking, refinement, critical, creative thinking, observation, evaluation Freedom, Expression	Equality equality of genders, in opportunity, participation, education Need	Equality Inequality, equal rights, equal chances Need Protection, learning difficulty, disability, education for special

¹ This has been found both for need and equity as it may be a course addressing needs, or a course for further refinement of knowledge addressing equity.

	<p>expression of ideas, to constructive and creative communication (ethics, civility).</p> <p>Freedom, Action vary from independence in action to responsible action.</p> <p>Freedom, Choice given not only as freedom to choose but also as making informed, responsible choice.</p> <p>Freedom, Collective cultivates personal, social, national identity and culture.</p>	<p>students' needs, special needs, families in need, needs of the school.</p>	<p>groups (minority, migrants, disabled), infrastructure.</p> <p>Equity performance; interest, scholarship; successful students</p>
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Note. Prepared by the author of this thesis

5.5 The New National Strategy of Education (2021-2026)

In addition to the documents mentioned above, the new National Strategy of Education (2021-2026), relies among others on equality and aims to strengthen democracy (National Strategy of Education 2021-2026, 2021). In this strategy, the vision of education is built keeping in mind students' needs and interests and offers them opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and values. Equality and students' needs are crucial elements in offering quality education.

The challenges presented in the document refer mainly to issues related to distributive justice like equality and need, and less to those of freedom. One is the problem with gender inequality in upper secondary education. Students with special needs are not integrated properly. Those coming from vulnerable groups are still under the average in terms of

achievement. The problems with infrastructure in schools, overcrowded classes in urban areas, and collective classes in rural areas are present. To this, we can add the fragility of psycho-social services.

The statistics mentioned in this document claim that 11% of the students with special needs are in upper secondary education (p.35). It recognizes that despite efforts to train teachers in inclusive practices for students with special needs or vulnerable ones, schools do not fulfill conditions for them in terms of facilities, assessment, curricula, and infrastructure. These students receive their education in normal classes, with no adoptions of the curricula or teaching methods. The number of students frequenting with hearing problems and those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds (the Roma) has tripled. The culture and history of the latter remains still not included in the curricula, but there is given space to those of the Greek and other minorities. However, the assessment of students with special needs remains a challenge. By 2017, there was one computer for 27 students. The same is mentioned about digitalization because access to the internet in schools is enabled only in IT labs. Projectors, wireless, and other appliances, especially in public schools are missing in classrooms.

5.6 Conclusion

Overall, the education system in Albania has been under continuous challenges and changes. It has also been sensitive to changes in political systems. During communism, education was centralized, controlled by the state, indoctrinated with the communist ideology, and with teacher-centered practices. After the fall of the regime, decentralization and a series of reforms followed with schools that lacked infrastructure, and a student population that emigrated.

Given the aim of this thesis and respecting the values of freedom and distributive justice, the education policy documents were reviewed for these values. The review of these documents answers two questions: “Are these values found in policy documents?” and

“How do they refer to them?”. Following the review, both values are integral parts of the documents. Freedom of mind (intellectual freedom) is independent thinking, refinement, critical, and creative thinking. Freedom of expression (indirectly) ranges from the expression of ideas to constructive and creative communication (ethics, civility). Freedom of action varies from independence in action to responsible action. Freedom of choice is given not only as the freedom to choose but as making informed and responsible choices as well. Freedom of identity or collective freedom refers to personal, social, national identity and culture. These findings have served to improve the items used in the questionnaire.

6 CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS FOR FREEDOM

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a detailed explanation of the findings on the concept of freedom. These findings are based on descriptive and inferential analysis. Initially, descriptive results are given for statements on the general perception of freedom and experiences of freedom in the school environment. Later, for freedom of expression, freedom of action, and freedom of choice descriptive data in the form of graphics reflect findings for experience and perception. Then, cross-tabulation is presented, followed by inferential analysis demonstrating correlation and regression between experiences and perceptions. All findings for this chapter are discussed with theoretical considerations, similar studies in Albania, the region, and further.

6.2 Freedom

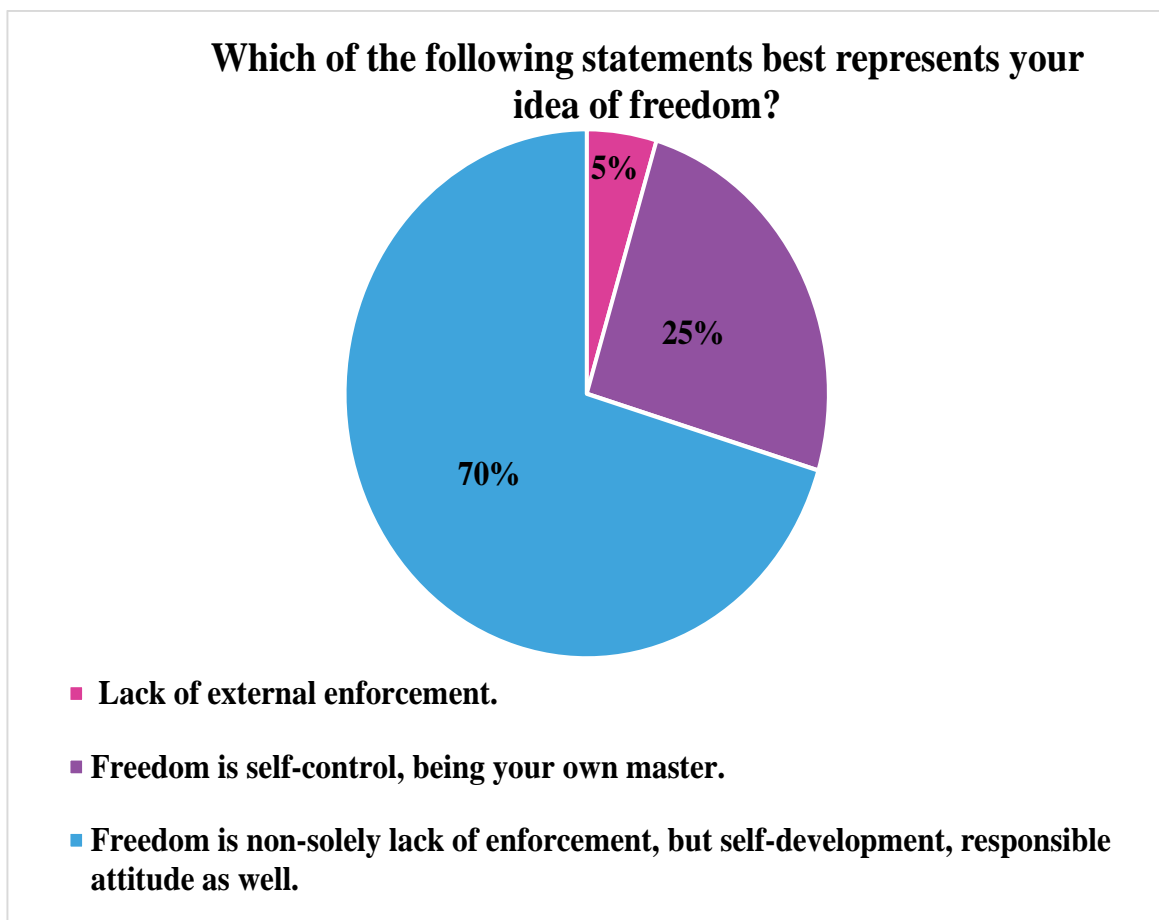
This section of the thesis aimed to understand the experiences and perceptions of freedom for Matura students in the school environment guided by the subsequent research questions:

RQ1: What are Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom within the school environment?

RQ2: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students?

Earlier, it was hypothesized that Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (gender, geographical area, school type, and General Regional Directorate of Pre-University Education affiliation) (RH1). Similarly, it was hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students (RH2). The following part gives details on how students perceive and experience freedom based on a close-ended question and 2 Likert Scale statements.

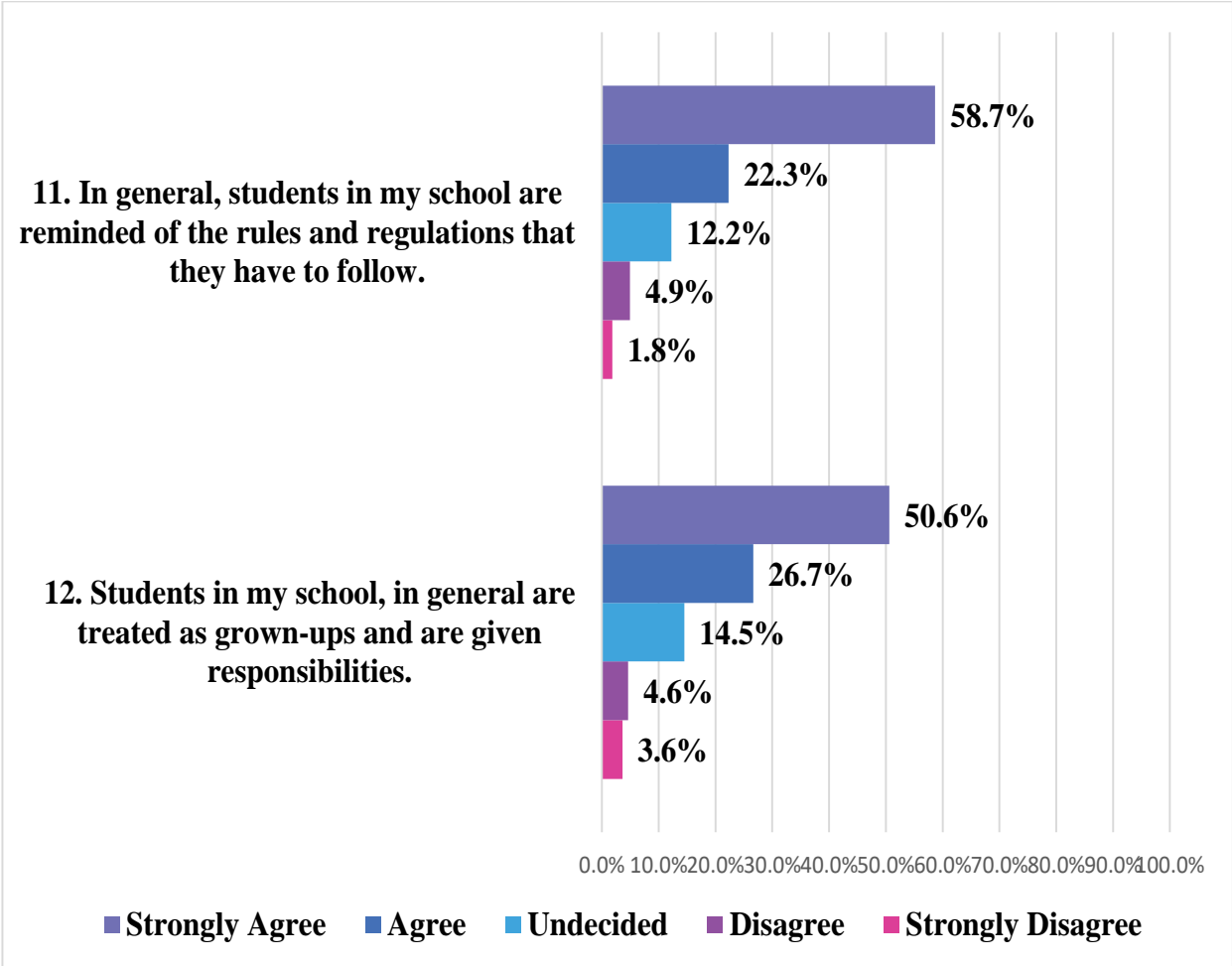
Figure 6.1 General Understanding of Freedom



Note. N = 1846 (Question 5) Which of the following statements best represents your idea of freedom?

As shown in Figure 6.1 above, when asked: “Which of the following statements best represents your idea of freedom?”, 70.3% report perceiving freedom as ‘non-solely a lack of enforcement, but self-development and as a demonstration of responsible attitude’. 25% of them perceive it as ‘self-control, being your own master’ while only 4.7% believe it is a ‘lack of external enforcement’. This means that the majority have a general understanding of freedom which reflects both negative and positive forms of freedom. Only a few perceive freedom as negative, so as lack of external enforcement, or external limitation.

Figure 6.2 Experiences of Positive and Negative Freedom

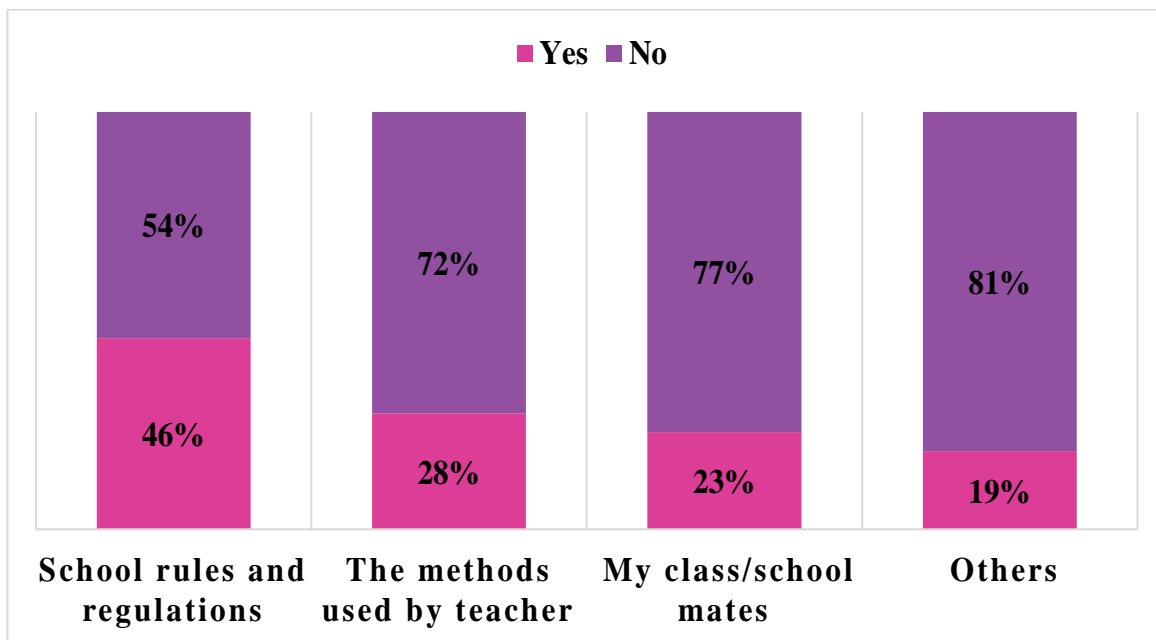


Note. (Statement 11, 12) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements related to experiences in school settings?

Figure 6.2 above presents findings on how much Matura students agree or disagree with statements reflecting experiences of positive and negative freedom. The results show that

58.7% of respondents strongly agree that students at their school are reminded of the rules and regulations to be followed, which represents an example of negative freedom experienced in the school environment. For experienced positive freedom in the school environment, 50.6% of surveyed respondents reported strongly agreeing that at their school students are treated as grown-ups and are given responsibilities. This leads to the idea that students' experiences in school are both examples of positive and negative freedom, with negative being a bit higher (58.7%). This can also be explained by the fact that Albania is a post-communist country and in countries with similar backgrounds, the methods used in schools are both traditional and interactive (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2010), which may have resulted in both experiences of freedom. The results of positive experience of freedom (50.6%) in this study, few or less, confirm similar results of Albanian students scoring highly in liking school (61.9%) reported in Miluka, Agolli, Jorgoni, and Ymeri's study (2016), which suggests their positive attitude towards school and positive school experiences.

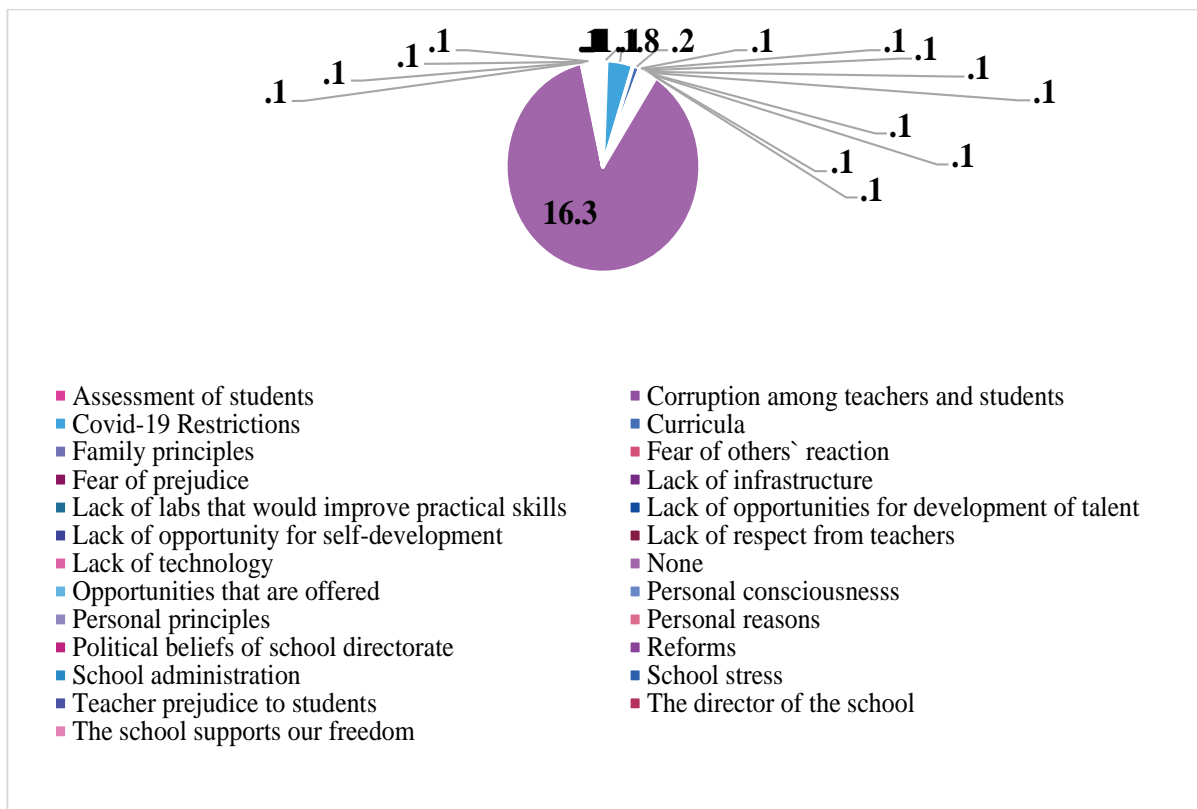
Figure 6.3 Factors of Pressure in the School Environment



Note. (Question 20) Which of the options related to school has been a pressure for you? (You can select more than one answer.)

In addition, surveyed respondents were asked to report if any of the factors has been a pressure for them in the school environment. This served to understand if these factors have limited their freedom in the school environment, in this case, negative freedom. For each factor, results are presented in Figure 6.3 above. 46% of surveyed respondents reported that school rules and regulations have put them under pressure. The methods used by the teacher were reported as a factor of pressure with 28% of answers. The impact of peers and school mates was reported as less influencing (23%). Therefore, in terms of negative freedom in the school environment, school rules and regulations are perceived as the factors that limit their freedom most. These results somehow are in line with what Freire (1970) criticizes as limiting students' freedom in education: methods and teacher-student relation. In addition, when investigating more, the "other" option has a percentage of 19%. The following chart gives details on the options given to the alternative "other".

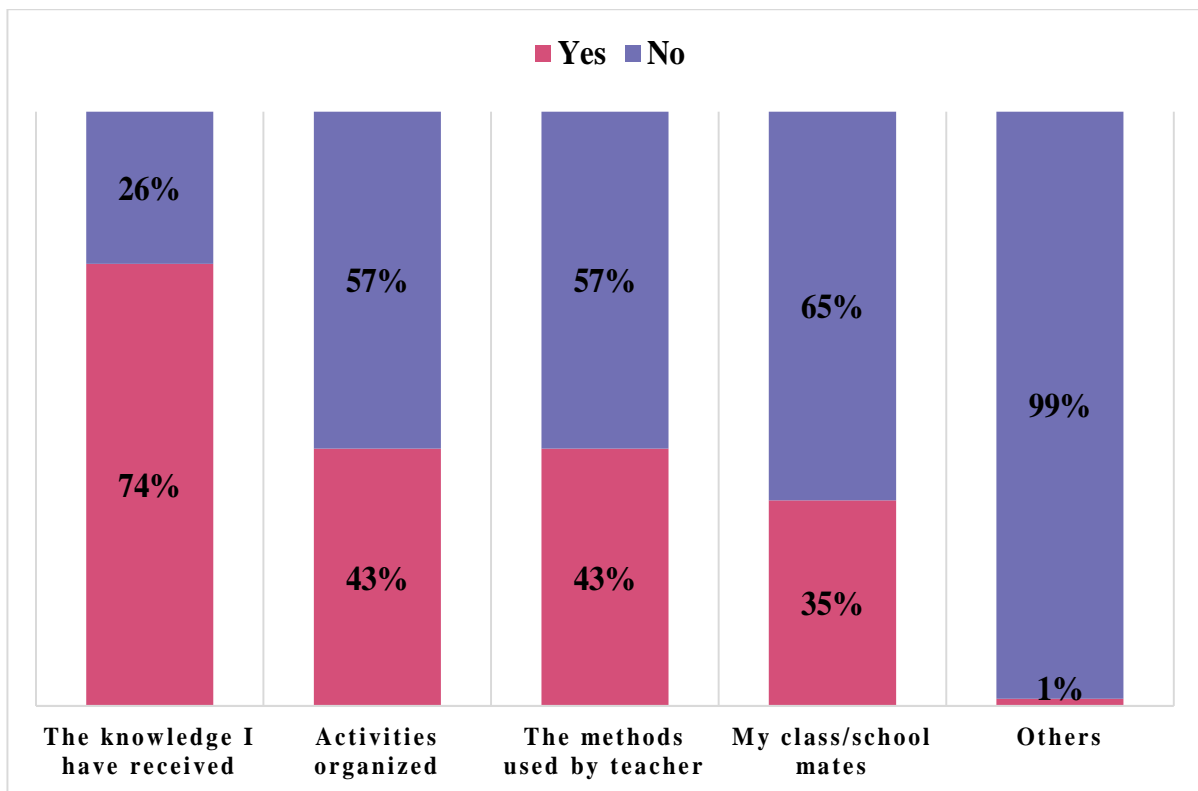
Figure 6.4 Factors of Pressure in the School Environment Chosen in the Option 'Others' (Percentage)



Note. None/No limitation (N=295); Covid restrictions (N=15); the rest of alternatives N=1 per each.

Among surveyed participants that have selected the option ‘Others’, the majority reported that there are no such limitations (16.3%), followed by respondents who mentioned Covid restrictions (0.8%) while all the other options are mentioned once or twice such as lack of opportunities for personal development, fear of prejudices, lack of respect from teachers, political beliefs of school directors, etc. (Figure 6.4)

Figure 6.5 Factors Contributing to Responsibility



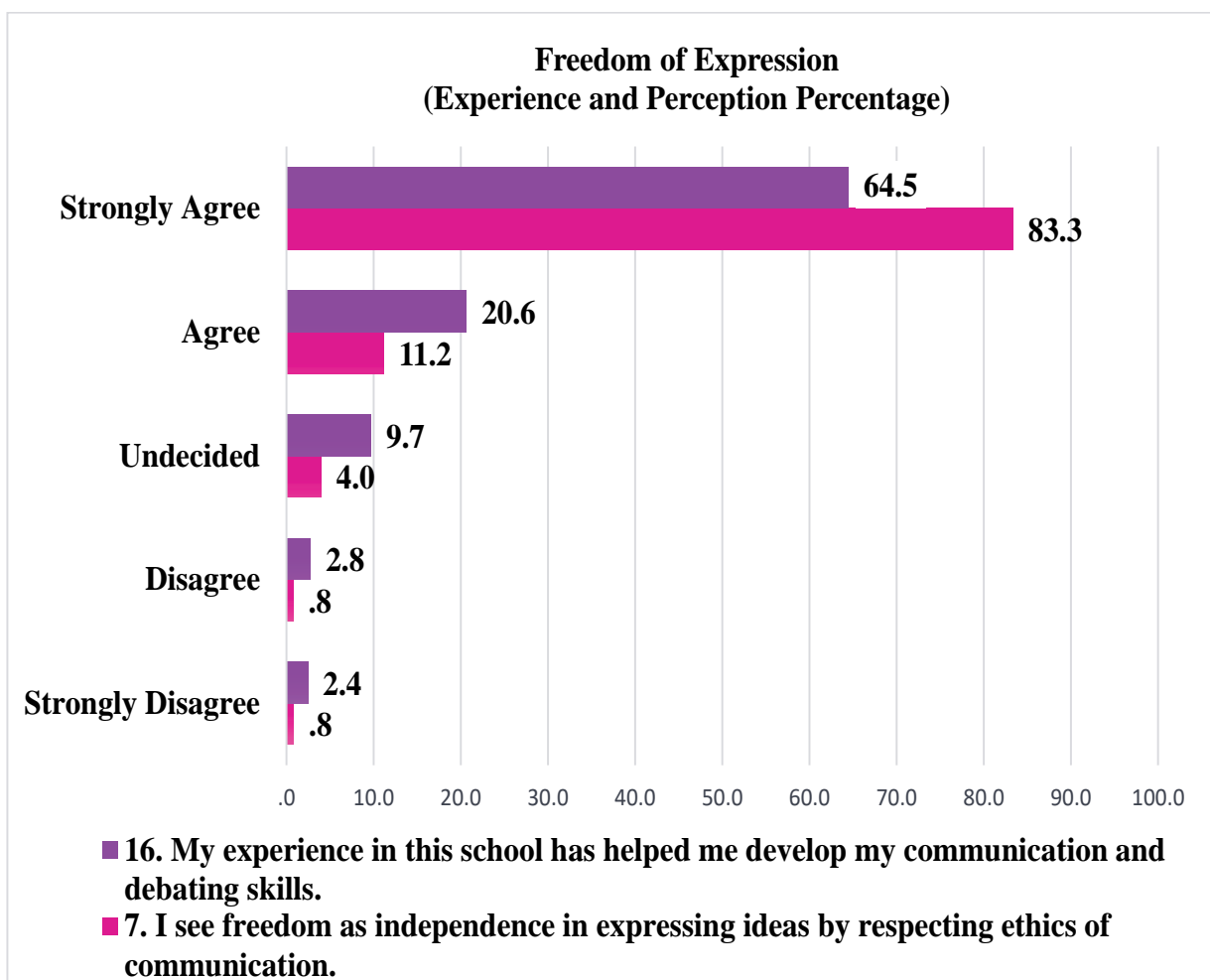
Note. (Question 21) Which of the options related to school has helped you become more responsible? (You can select more than one answer.)

Moreover, students have been asked if some factors have affected them to become more responsible at school, which deals with positive and internal freedom. The knowledge received at school is reported as the highest in percentage with 74% of reported answers, followed by activities organized at their school and teaching methods similarly being chosen by respondents with 43%, agreeing that these have affected them to be more responsible. Referring to peers’ influence, 35% of the respondents reported that their schoolmates have helped them act responsibly in the school environment and only 1% have chosen the other option. (Figure 6.5). It is understood that the knowledge students receive

is reported as factor that has mostly impacted their experiences of positive freedom in the school environment by helping them to become more responsible, followed by activities, methods, and peers. These results sustain what Dewey (1916) believed to support freedom in education: intellectual development and cooperation with peers.

6.3 Freedom of Expression

Figure 6.6 Experienced and Perceived Freedom of Expression



Note. (Statements 16 and 7) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

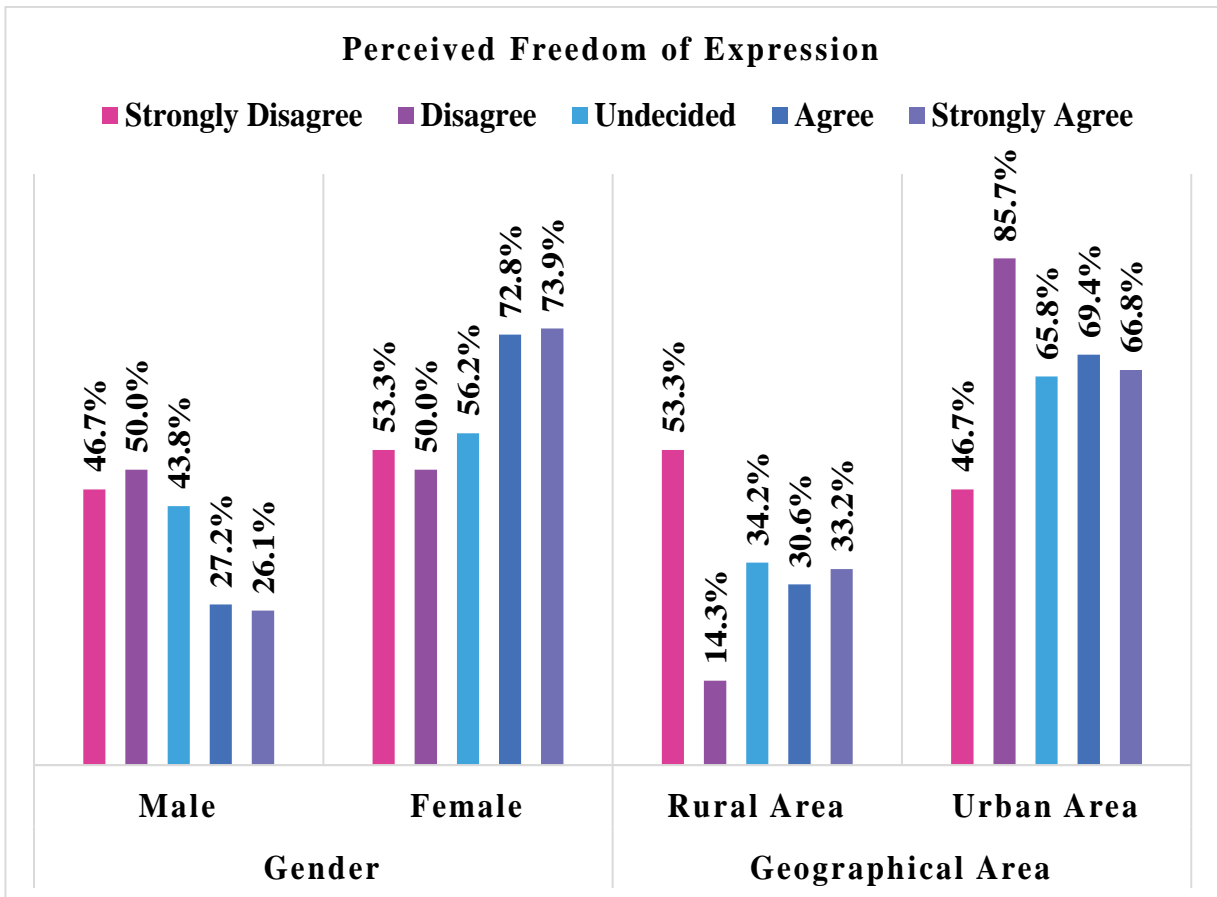
Related to freedom of expression, Matura students were asked about their agreement or disagreement with experiences and perceptions. As observed in Figure 6.6, 64.5% of respondents strongly agree that their experience in their schools has helped them develop

communication and debating skills, while a higher percentage 83.3% strongly agree with the statement that they consider freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication. Their perception of freedom of expression is higher compared to their experience of freedom of expression in their school environment. In terms of their experiences of freedom of expression in schools, the majority of students claim that school experience has helped them develop communicating and debating skills. Interpreted from the deliberative perspective, this is important because education should promote debate and communication (Fishkin & Luskin, 1999). Their perception of freedom, in this case of expression based on ethics, is similar to Tocqueville's idea of liberty based on morality and ethics (2000), but against Foucault's (2015) conception of freedom as parrhesia, understood as doing and saying what one wants.

The results of the current study are in line with the study conducted earlier in Albania which reported that (56%) of students aged 15-18 years old stated that school experience has helped them increase their self-confidence and take important decisions for their life (Boce & Shabani, 2015, p. 76). The same study has shown that 52% of respondents declare that students are asked by teachers to express their ideas, 64% say teachers listen to what students have to say, and 74% declare that teachers offer them opportunities to express their ideas and opinions, suggesting that a majority of students claimed to have experienced freedom of expression and that in this case teachers of the school have helped them in terms of freedom of expression. However, the results of the current study are in contradiction with Quiroz' (2001) study which indicated that Latino students' voices in school in the U.S.A were silenced, and the study conducted in Utah concerning issues of race with teachers silencing students on topics related to race (Castagno, 2008). In the same way, adolescents in vocational schools were found to experience few opportunities at school to express ideas, especially those concerning democratic issues (Vaessen, Daas, & Nieuwelink, 2022), thus demonstrating their lack of experiences of freedom of expression in schools.

6.3.1 Perceived Freedom of Expression

Figure 6.7 Perceived Freedom of Expression (Distribution by Gender and Geographical Area)



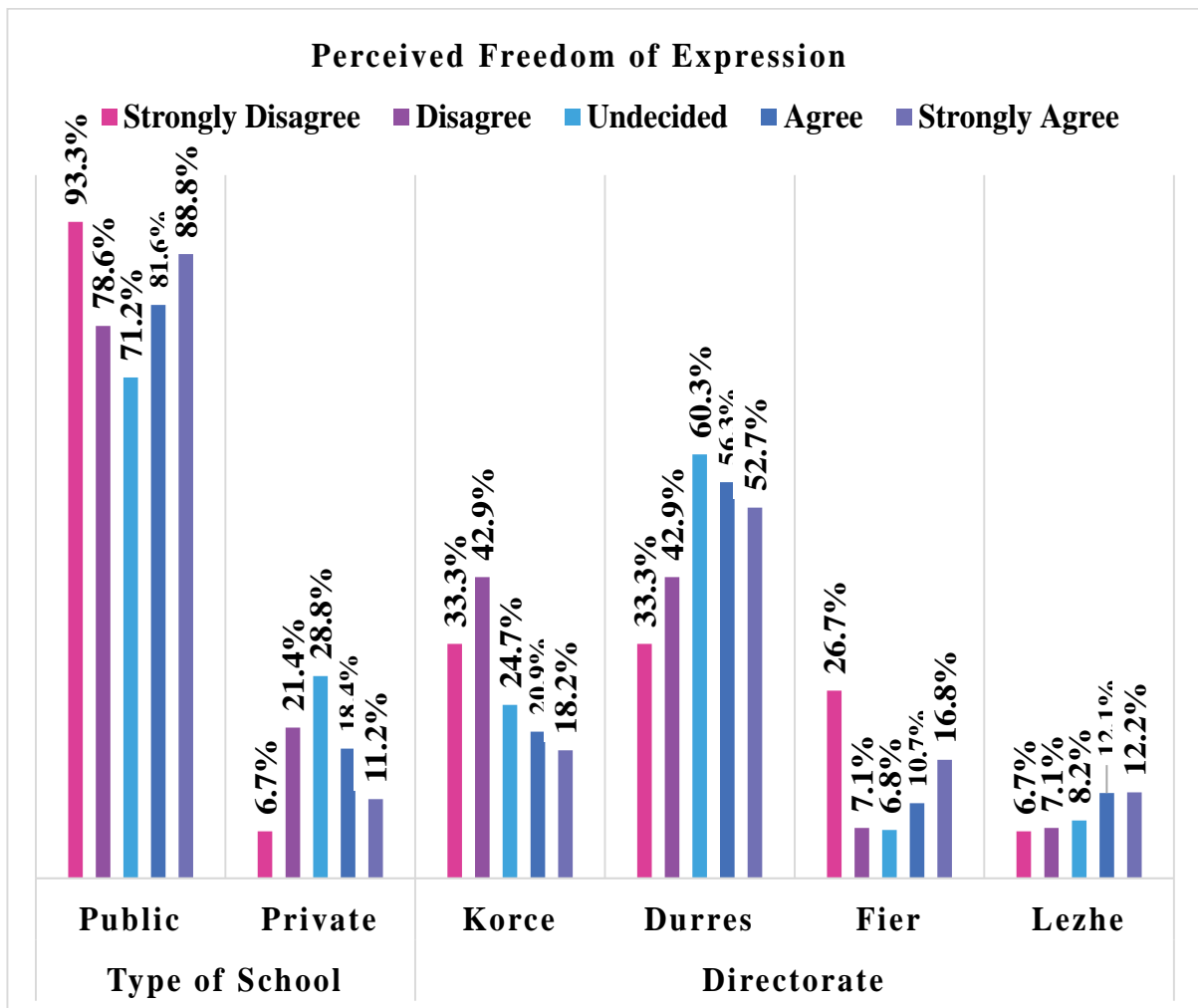
Note. (Statement 7) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

I see freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication.

Data in Figure 6.7, regarding perceived freedom of expression, measured through the statement “I see freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication” reveals distribution by gender and geographical area. When looking at the distribution between genders, data show that the majority of males (50% and 46.7%) disagree and strongly disagree with the statement, while the highest percentage of females strongly agree (73.9%). This means that freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication is perceived differently by genders. It suggests that for males, freedom of expression is not necessarily based on respecting ethics of

communication. On the other hand, females strongly agree that freedom of expression should follow ethics of communication. Respondents in rural areas have prioritized strongly disagreeing (53.3%), and those in urban areas disagree (85.7%). This means that although those in urban areas are more in percentage, both urban and rural areas have no differences in perception of the statement.

Figure 6.8 Perceived Freedom of Expression (Distribution by Type of School and Directorate)



Note. (Statement 7) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

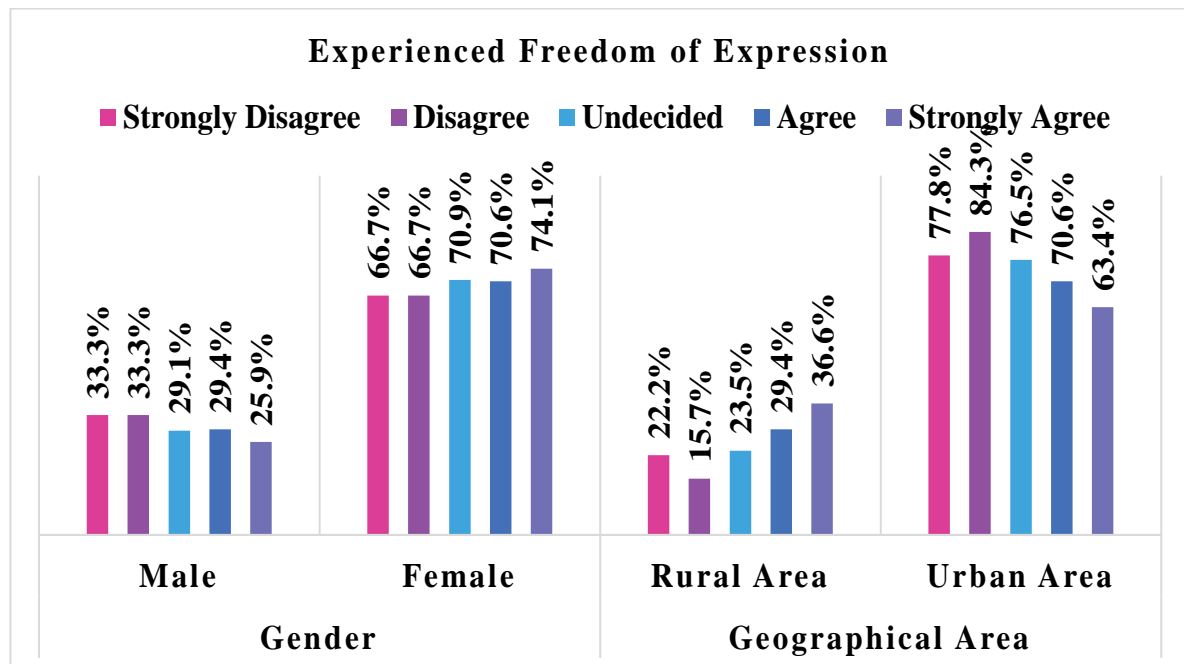
I see freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication.

The graphic above reveals that the majority of respondents in public schools strongly disagree (93.3%), and those in private school are undecided (28.8%), thus revealing some

differences. In terms of directorate, students from the directorate of Korça tend to disagree (42.9%), those in Fier mostly disagree (26.7%), and those in Lezhe strongly agree and agree that they consider freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication. Those in Durres are mostly undecided (60.3%), given that the population in this directorate is mixed and comes from different areas of Albania after the migration of the population after the 1990s. This suggests that students in different types of schools and directorates have differences in perception of freedom of expression as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication with those of public schools strongly disagreeing and those in private being undecided. Similarly, directorates reveal differences.

6.3.2 Experienced Freedom of Expression

Figure 6.9 Experienced Freedom of Expression (Distribution by Gender and Geographical Area)

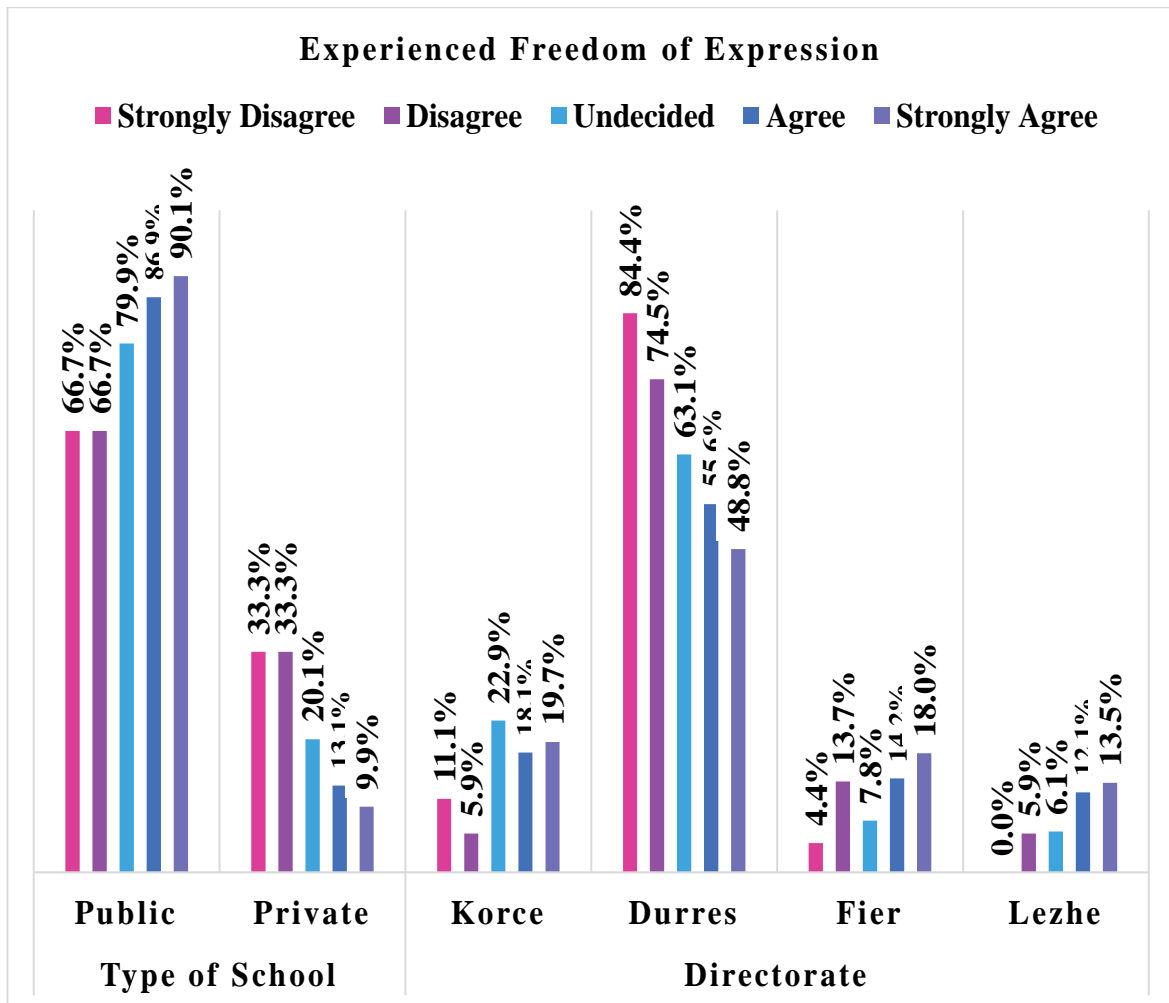


Note. (Statement 16) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills.

Related to the statement presented in Figure 6.9 above, in general, the trend for males between strongly disagreeing and strongly agreeing is nearly similar. The same can be stated for females. Even though gender differences in experiences of freedom of expression in the school context have not been given attention by scholars (Taskin, 2014), in this study, no differences in experiences for genders are found. As for differences of geographical area, respondents from rural areas tend to strongly agree (36.6%), while those from urban areas mostly disagree (84.3%) with their experience in school having helped them develop their communication and debating skills, making them more critical to these experiences. This indicates that students from different geographical areas have differences in experiences of freedom of expression. After the 90s, the change in the demographics of the population brought overpopulation in schools in urban areas and overcrowded classes (National Strategy of Education 2021-2026, 2021), which can explain the disagreement with the statement for students in urban areas.

Figure 6.10 Experienced Freedom of Expression (Distribution by Type of School and Directorate)



Note. (Statement 16) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

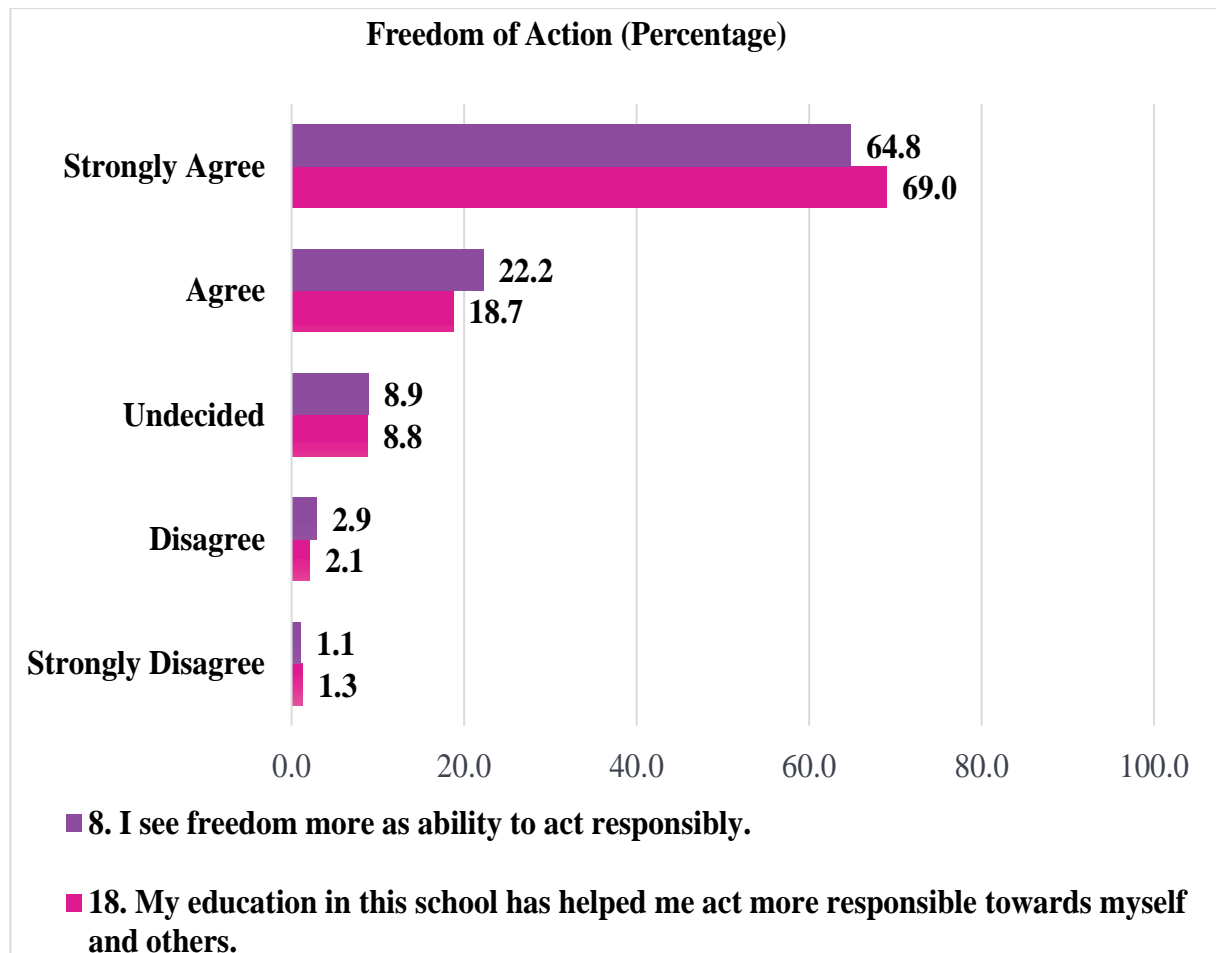
My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills.

For the statement “My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills”, representing experienced freedom of expression, students from public schools (90.1%) strongly agree, while those from private schools strongly disagree and disagree (33.3% and 33.3%). This suggests that those from private schools are more critical to experiences of freedom of expression in their schools, while those from public are not. These results for students of public schools somehow lead to what Fine (1987) found in his study that in public schools, silencing has been institutionalized. As for directorates, respondents from the directorate of Korça tend to be undecided (22.9%), those from Durres

strongly disagree (84.4%), those from Fier and Lezhe tend to strongly agree, respectively with 18.0%, and 13.5%, revealing differences of directorate with those from Durres being more critical. Once again, the disagreement of students in the directorate of Durres with experienced freedom of expression can be explained by overpopulated schools and overcrowded classes in this directorate.

6.4 Freedom of Action

Figure 6.11 Perceived and Experienced Freedom of Action



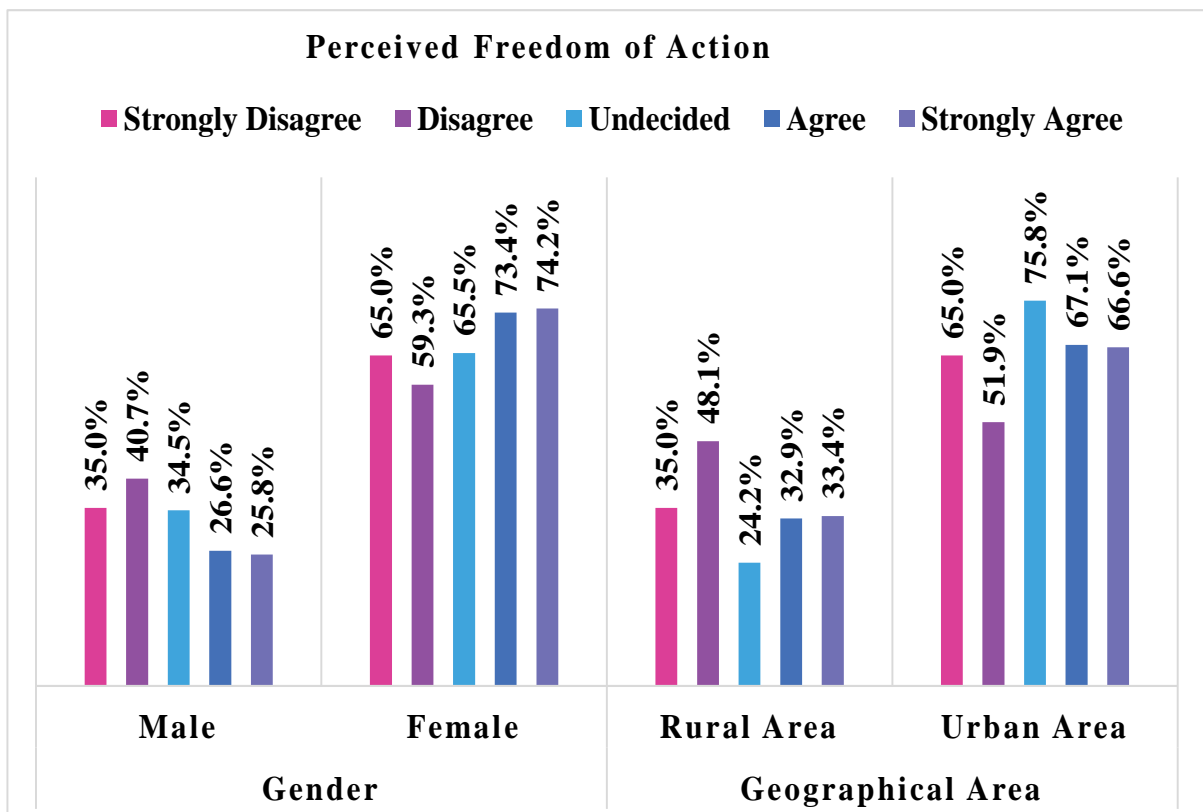
Note. (Statements 8, 18) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

The chart above reflects data in percentage for both experience and perception of freedom of action. The majority of the surveyed participants (64.8%) reported that they strongly agree with the statement “I see freedom as the ability to act responsibility”. In addition,

69% of participants said that they strongly agree with the statement that education at school has helped them act more responsibly, which represents experienced freedom of action. The majority of respondents consider freedom of action as relying on responsibility, which has been claimed by Hegel (1991) whose idea of freedom is based on awareness, and reasonableness (Guyer, 2010). Similarly, the findings are in agreement with Kant’s conceptualization of freedom of action who considers that action guided by rationality makes one free (Kant, 1785), and Locke’s understanding of freedom of action that is guided by one’s mind (Locke, 2017).

6.4.1 Perceived Freedom of Action

Figure 6.12 Perceived Freedom of Action (Distribution by Gender and Geographical Area)

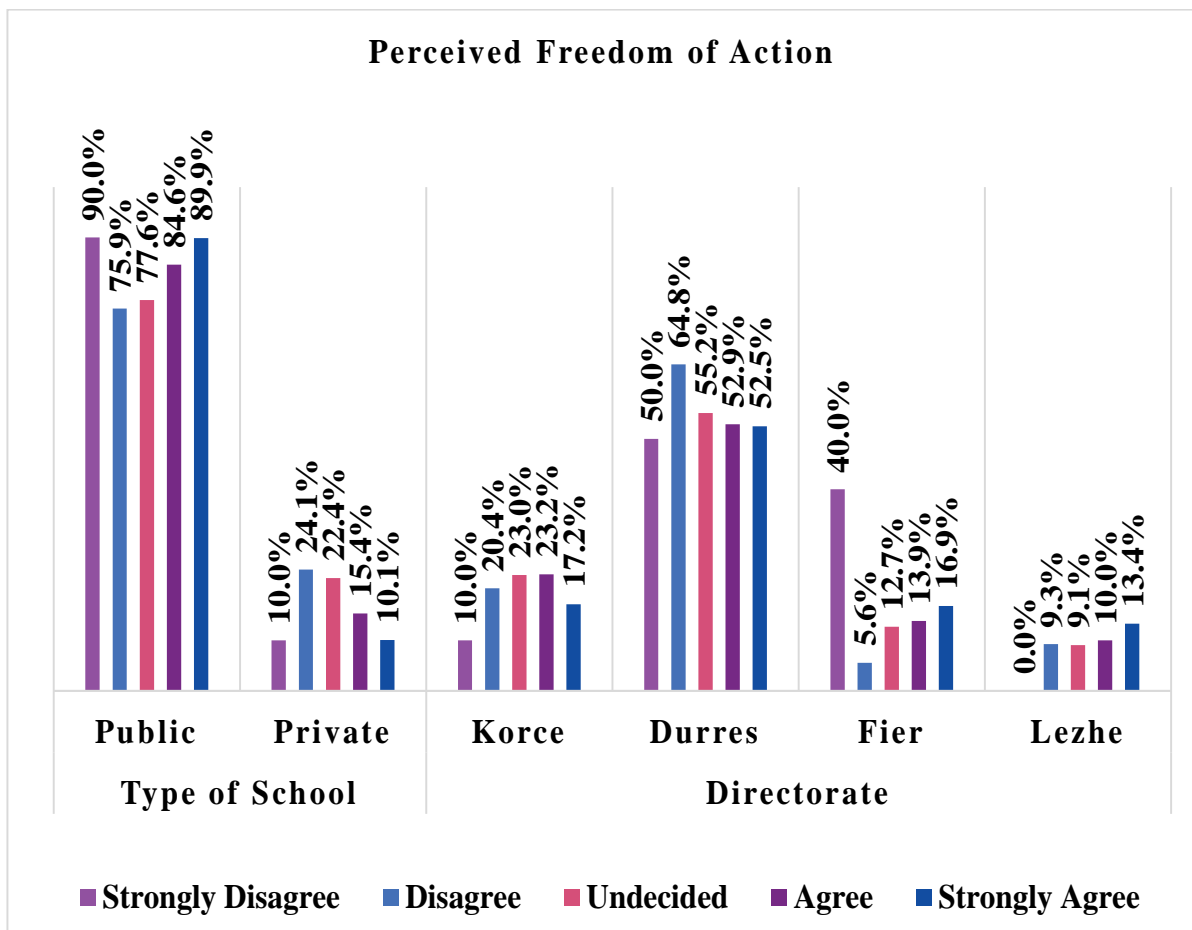


Note. (Statement 8) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

I see freedom more as the ability to act responsibly.

For perceived freedom of action represented through “I see freedom more as the ability to act responsibly”, Figure 6.12 above demonstrates that males tend to disagree (40.7%), and females tend to strongly agree (74.2%) revealing that different genders have differences in perception of the statement. As for the geographical area, students from rural areas disagree (48.1%), while the majority of those from urban areas are undecided (75.8%). This means that students from rural areas do not consider freedom of action as acting responsibly, while for those of urban ones, there is a dispersal into the five given alternatives.

Figure 6.13 Perceived Freedom of Action (Distribution by Type of School and Directorate)



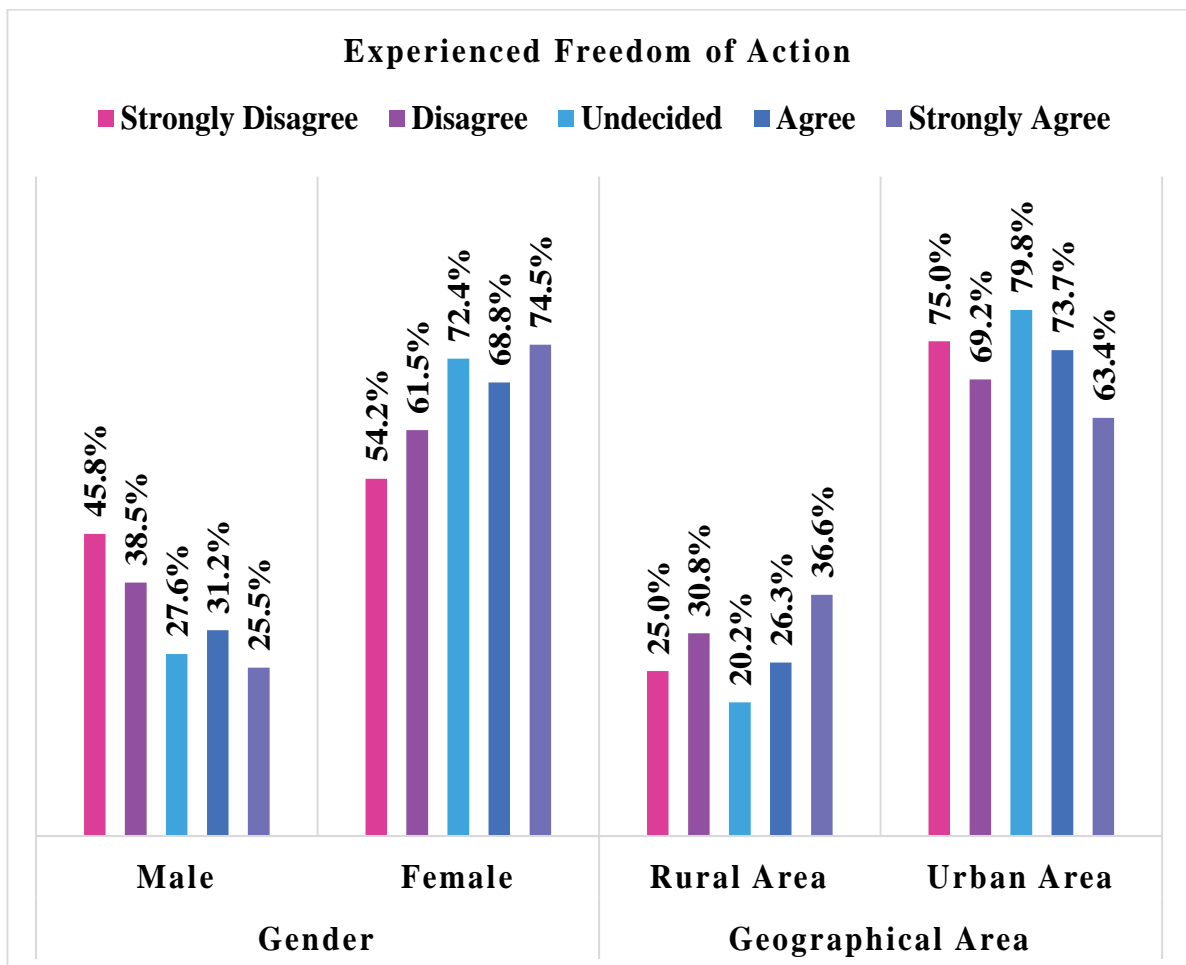
Note. (Statement 8) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

I see freedom more as the ability to act responsibly.

Distribution by type of school and directorate is given in Figure 6.13 for the perception of “I see freedom more as the ability to act responsibly”. Although the distribution is not significantly different in what students from public schools prioritize (both strongly agree and strongly disagree), those from private schools tend to mostly disagree (24.1%) or are undecided (22.4%). As for the directorate, differences are observed: students from the directorate of Fier mostly disagree (40%), those from Durres disagree (64.8%), and those from Lezha strongly agree (13.4%). These findings suggest that differences are observed based on directorate.

6.4.2 Experienced Freedom of Action

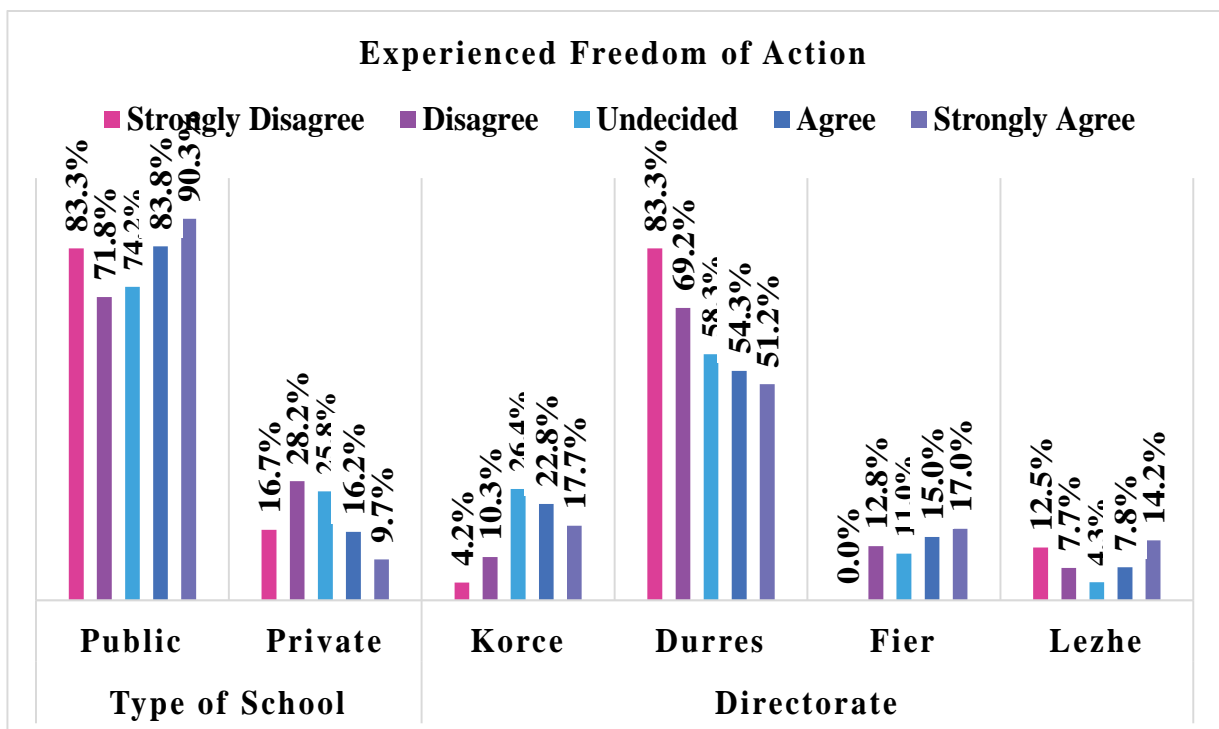
Figure 6.14 Experienced Freedom of Action (Distribution by Gender and Geographical Area)



Note. (Statement 18) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?
My education in this school has helped me act more responsibly toward myself and others.

In Figure 6.14, data regarding experienced freedom of action, measured through the statement “18. My education in this school has helped me act more responsible towards myself and others” presents gender and geographical area distribution. When looking at the distribution for gender, the majority of males strongly disagree (45.8%) to consider their school education as helping them act more responsibly, while the majority of females strongly agree (74.5%), suggesting that their experiences of this type of freedom differ making males more critical of experiences of freedom. Girls have shown a more positive attitude to school compared with boys (58%, 66%) as shown by the study conducted in 2014 with children aged 11, 13, and 15 (Albanian Institute of Public Health, 2014) with 61.9% loving school a lot. In terms of geographical distribution respondents from rural areas strongly agree (36.6%) with that statement, while those in urban areas tend to be undecided (79.8%) followed by strongly agreeing (75%). Schools in urban areas have mixed demographics, and crowded classes, because students from rural areas have joined urban schools.

Figure 6.15 Experienced Freedom of Action (Distribution by Type of School and Directorate)

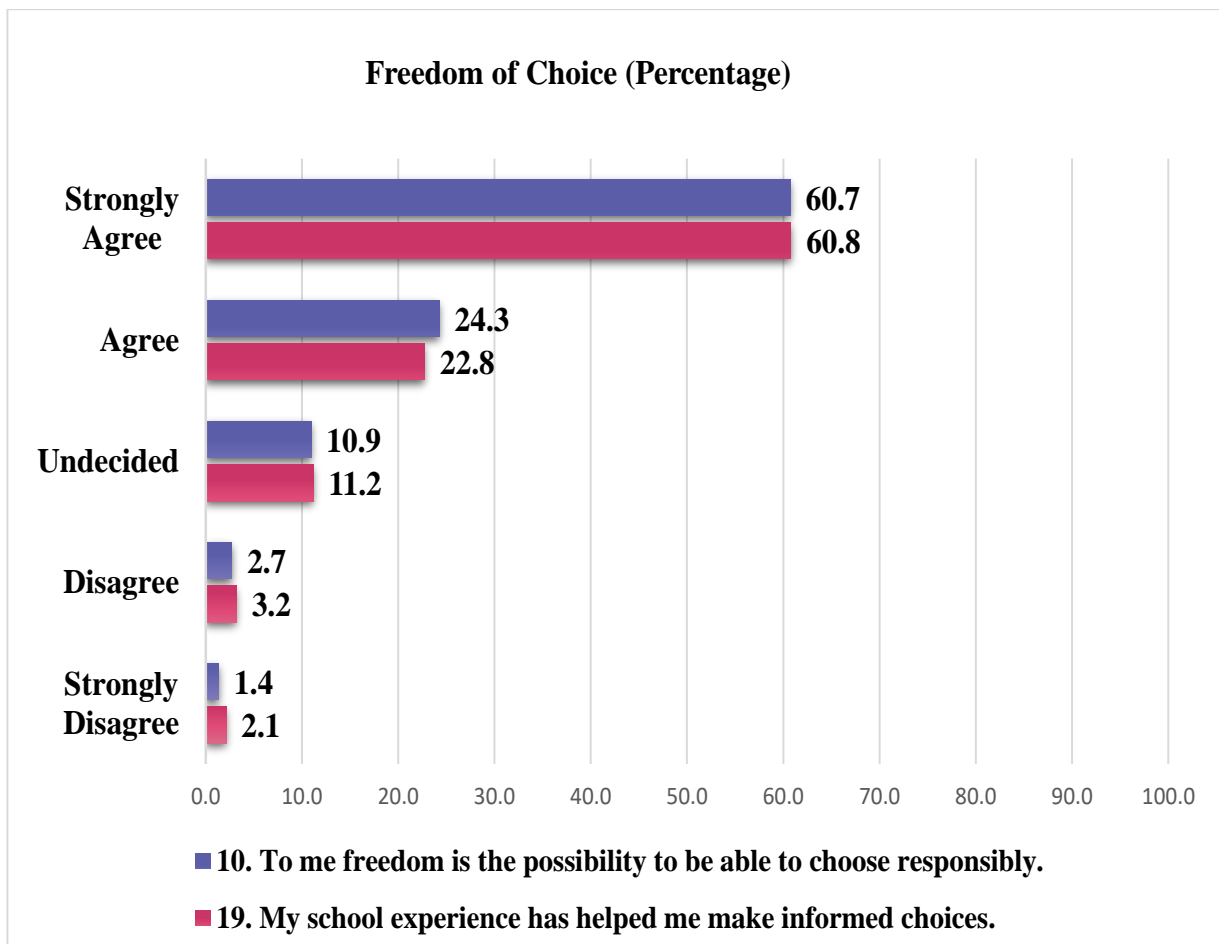


Note. (Statement 18) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?
My education in this school has helped me act more responsibly toward myself and others.

Figure 6.15 above shows the distribution of data based on participants' type of school and directorate affiliation regarding the experienced freedom of action. In terms of the type of school distribution, those studying at public schools (90.3%) report strongly agreeing with the statement, while the majority of those enrolled at private schools (28.2%) disagree making them more critical. As per directorate affiliation, those from the directorate of Durres strongly disagree (83.3%), those from Fier tend to strongly agree (17%), students from Korça are undecided (26.4%) and those from Lezha strongly agree (14.2%), revealing differences of directorate. This means that students in the directorate of Durres are more critical and the schools in this directorate are overpopulated.

6.5 Freedom of Choice

Figure 6.16 Freedom of Choice (Experience and Perception)

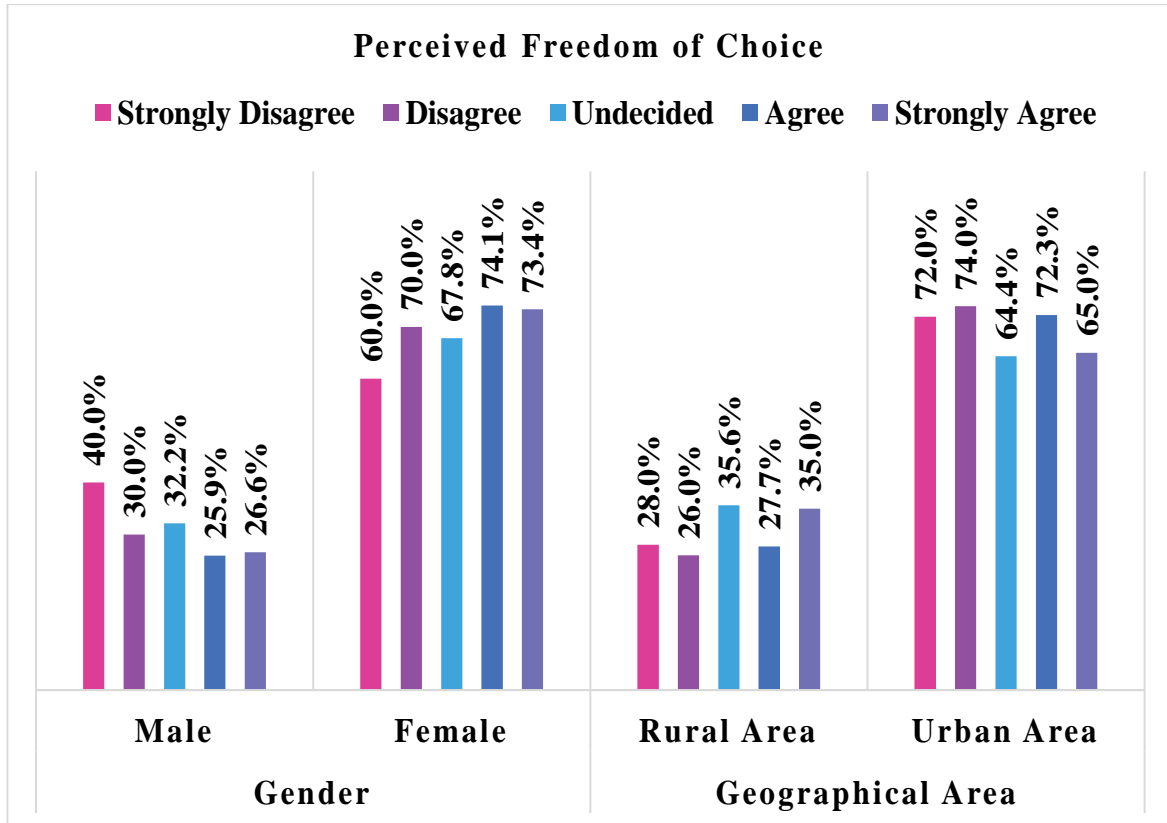


Note. (Statements 10 and 9) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

The chart above gives the percentage for both experience and perception of freedom of choice. Interestingly, results indicate that for both experiences and perceptions of freedom of choice, students strongly agree with nearly the same percentage, 60.7% for perception (To me freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly), and 60.8% for experience (My school experience has helped me make informed choices). This means that the majority consider freedom as the ability to choose responsibly and at the same time their experiences in school have helped them make informed choices. Students' perception of freedom of choice is explained by Sartre's explanation of freedom given that he equalized freedom to choose motivated by self-consciousness and responsibility (Natanson, 1952; Sartre, 1992), and the fact that choosing in opposition to reason, makes one not free (González, 2010). Although the literature is silent on how youngsters and high school seniors perceive many types of freedom, in terms of freedom of choice, MacArthur (1974) examines freedom of choice among adolescents. Although limited because it does not consider gender differences, his study shows that there exist differences between what students think is done and what they should do in terms of freedom of choice. This means that students' experiences of freedom of choice are different from their understanding of this freedom, different from the current study which revealed that both experiences and perceptions of freedom are similar.

6.5.1 Perceived Freedom of Choice

Figure 6.17 Perceived Freedom of Choice (Distribution by Gender and Geographical Area)

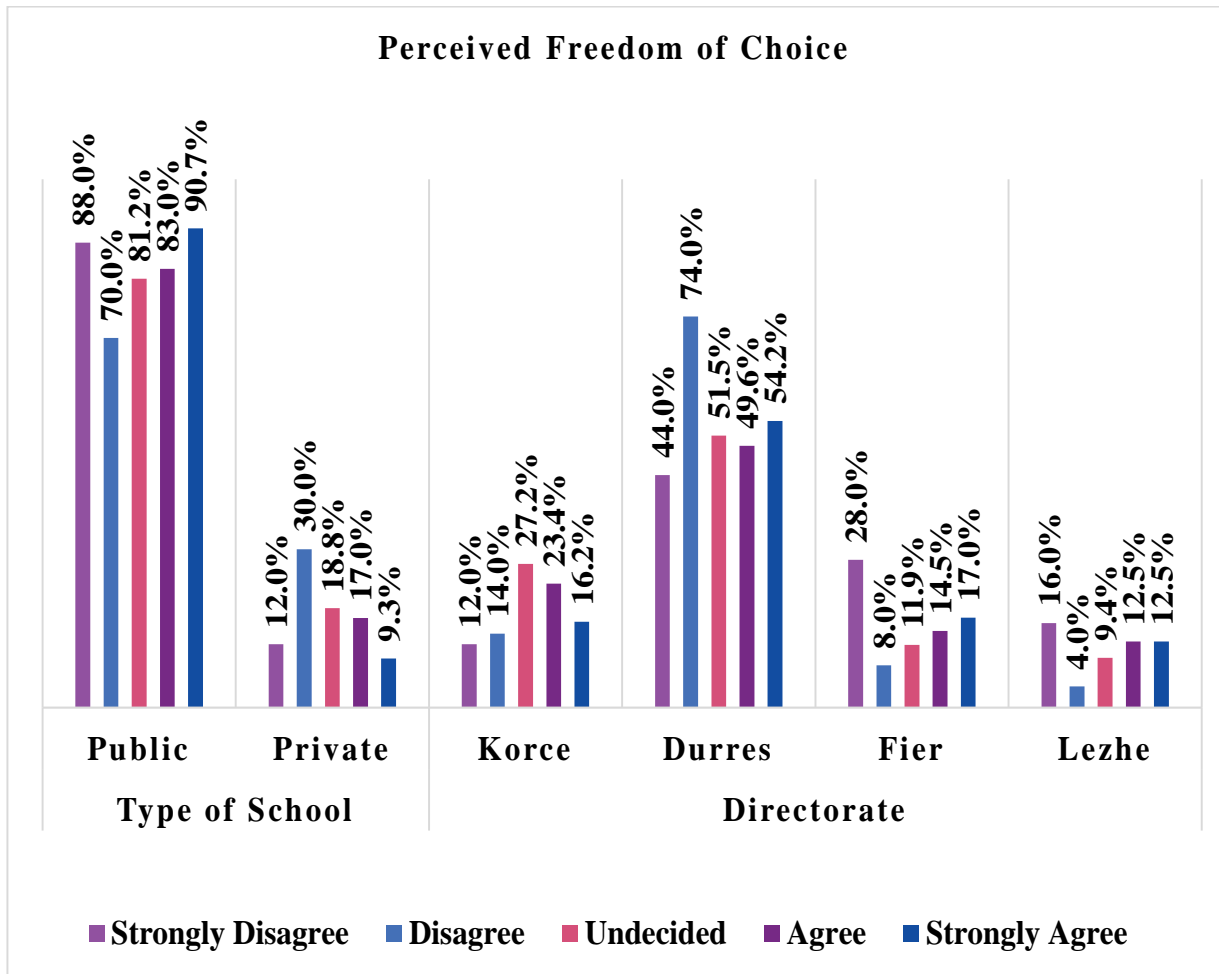


Note. (Statement 10) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

To me, freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly.

When exploring the graphic in Figure 6.17, which represents the distribution by gender and geographical area, data demonstrate that the distribution of chosen alternatives within and between genders does not differ significantly although males slightly tend to strongly disagree (40%), females tend to agree (74.1%) or disagree (70.0%) with the statement that freedom is the possibility to choose responsibly. On the other hand, students from rural areas are equally undecided and strongly agree (35%). Students from urban areas tend to disagree (74%), although with slight differences with other alternatives. In conclusion, there are no differences between geographical area and gender.

Figure 6.18 Perceived Freedom of Choice (Distribution by Type of School and Directorate)

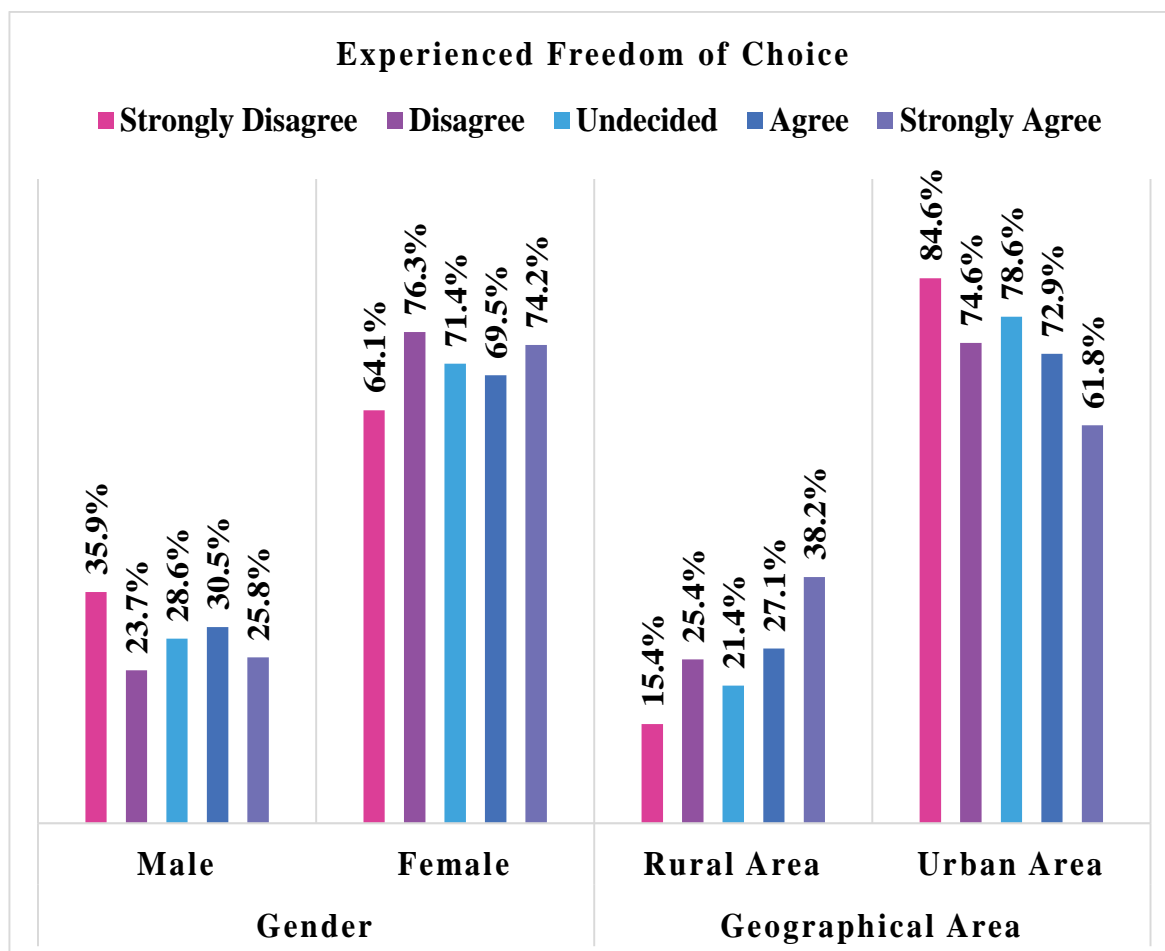


Note. (Statement 10) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?
To me, freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly.

Figure 6.18 presents perception distribution by type of school and directorate for the statement “To me, freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly”. Those in public schools slightly tend to strongly agree (90.7%), while the majority of private schools disagree (30%). As for differences in directorate, it is evident that respondents from Durres (74%) disagree, similarly those from Fier strongly disagree (28%), those from Lezha (16%) strongly disagree, and those from Korça are undecided (27.2%). These results mean that students from public and private schools differ in their perception of the statement, but no significant differences are found for directorates, apart from Korça (undecided).

6.5.2 Experienced Freedom of Choice

Figure 6.19 Experienced Freedom of Choice (Gender and Geographical Area Distribution)



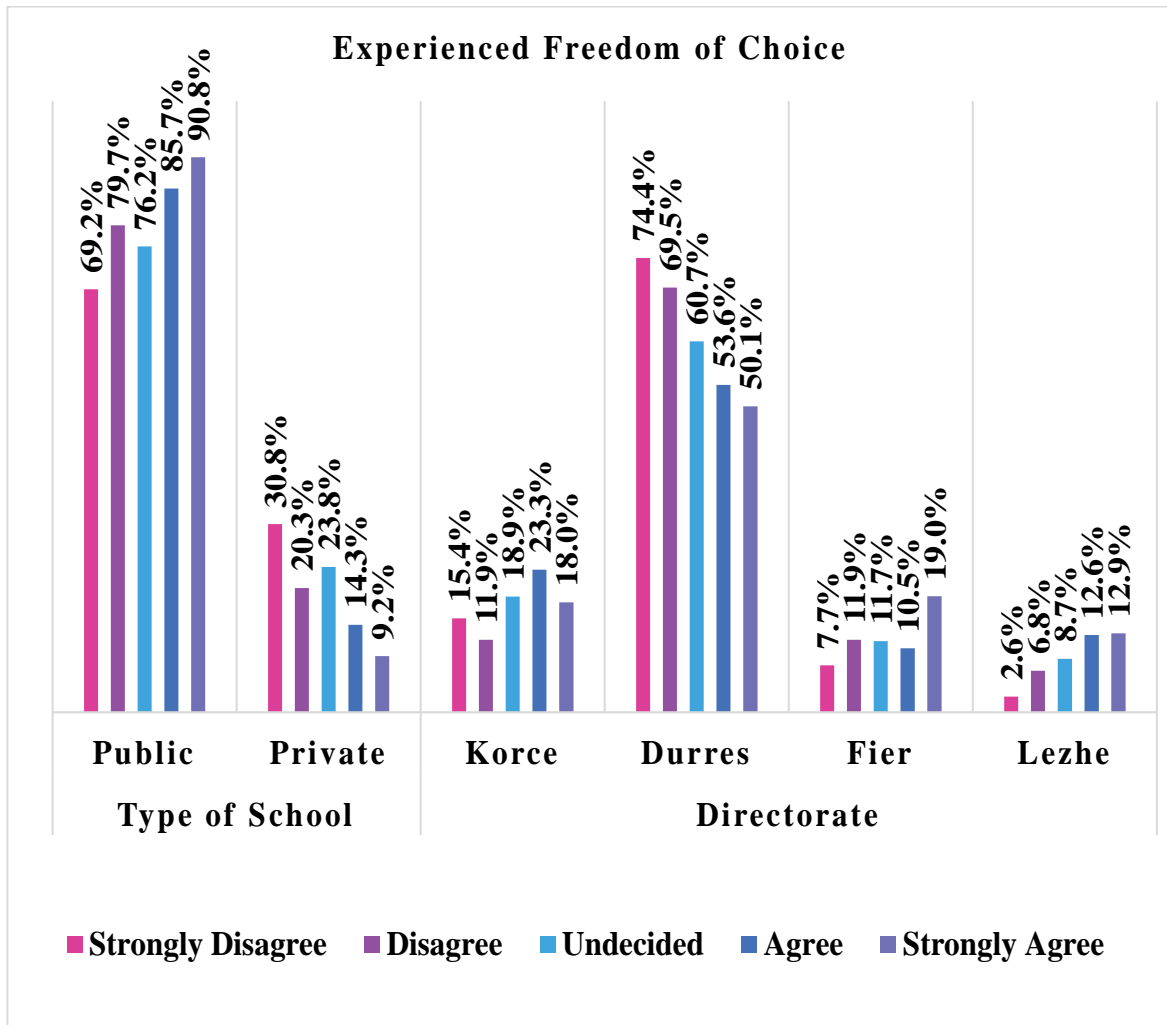
Note. (Statement 19) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

My school experience has helped me make informed choices.

Data in figure 6.19, regarding experience of freedom of choice, measured through the statement “My school experience has helped me make informed choices”, indicates that when observed for gender distribution, males tend to strongly disagree (35.9%), and females similarly disagree (76.3%). When explored for geographical area differences, students from rural areas strongly agree (38.2%); while those from urban areas strongly disagree (84.6%), making those in urban areas more critical to experiences of freedom of choice in their school environment. This can be explained by crowded schools and lack of infrastructure due to migration from rural to urban sites. Gender differences are not

considered in Yvonna S. Lincoln's (1995) study which notes that in schools, students are already assigned roles, races, and statuses. As a consequence, they have no freedom of choice. Similarly, another study conducted in the U.S.A. suggested that schools' focus is solely on achievement (Irizarry, 2011). This means that in reality these students are left with no options to choose from because the system already has planned the positions they will occupy in the future. So, no choice is given to students because of institutional and structural obstacles.

Figure 6.20 Experienced Freedom of Choice (Type of School and Directorate Distribution)



Note. (Statement 19) How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

My school experience has helped me make informed choices.

As for distribution of type of school, Figure 6.20 above indicates that students from public schools strongly agree (90.8%), while those from private schools strongly disagree (30.8%). Distribution per directorate reveals that those from Durres strongly disagree (74.4%), those from Fier strongly agree (19%); those from Lezha strongly agree (12.9%); and those from Korça agree (23.3%). This means that respondents from Durres differ from those of Fier. Therefore, students from private schools and Durres directorate tend to be more critical of their experiences of freedom of choice in the school environment, Durres possibly explained with populated schools.

6.6 Freedom Experiences and Perceptions Relations

RQ2: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students?

Findings in the following paragraphs seek to answer the above research question by examining the extent to which experiences and perceptions of freedom are related and to assess if experiences shape perceptions of high school seniors in the school environment. Similarly, for this part, the built hypothesis was that there is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students (RH2). The statistical analysis reflects data on freedom of expression, freedom of action, and freedom of choice. Table 6.1 summarizes the findings of correlation and regression for experiences and perceptions of three types of freedom. When r is closer to 0 correlation is weak, and for r closer to 1 correlation is strong. In the field of political studies for $r < 0.2$, this correlation is weak, for $0.2 < r < 0.3$ it is moderate, for $0.4 < r < 0.6$ it is strong, while for $r > 0.7$ it is very strong (Akoglu, 2018).

Table 6.1 Correlations of Experiences and Perceptions of Freedom: Expression, Action, Choice

Relations	Sig. (2-tailed) - p	Pearson Correlation
Freedom of Expression: Experiences and Perceptions	.000	.186**
Freedom of Action: Experiences and Perceptions	.000	.292**
Freedom of Choice: Experiences and Perceptions	.000	.249**

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=1846

As observed in Table 6.1, for the relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom of expression, the Pearson correlation test showed that the two were significantly related, $r(1846) = .186, p = .000$. The result suggests that a weak positive correlation exists between experiences and perceptions related to freedom of expression. This means that when experiences of freedom of expression increase, the perception of freedom of expression increases. For the relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom

of action, the Pearson correlation test showed that the two were as well significantly related, $r(1846) = .292, p = .000$. Based on findings, a moderate positive correlation exists between experiences and perceptions of freedom of action. Similarly, this signifies that when experiences of freedom of action in the school environment increase, perception of freedom of action increases as well. As for the relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom of choice, the Pearson correlation test revealed that the two were significantly related, $r(1846) = .249, p = .000$. Data indicates that a moderate positive correlation exists between those two. This suggests that although both variables tend to go up in response to one another, the relationship between them is not very strong. Overall, the three correlations turned out to be significant, with the highest correlation being that for freedom of action, followed by freedom of choice and expression.

Table 6.2 Regressions Table of Experiences and Perceptions of Freedom of Expression, Action, Choice

Relations	R Square	Sig.	B
Freedom of Expression: Experiences and Perceptions	.035	.000 ^b	.125
Freedom of Action: Experiences and Perceptions	.085	.000 ^b	.297
Freedom of Choice: Experience and Perception	.062	.000 ^b	.232

a. *Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Freedom*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Experiences of Freedom*

Table 6.2 summarizes results of simple linear regression results between experiences and perceptions of freedom of expression, action, and choice. More specifically, for freedom of expression, the overall regression was statistically significant $R^2 = .035, F(1, 1844) = 66.01, p = .000$. The results of the regression indicated that experiences of freedom of expression (as a predictor) explained 3.5% of the variation in perceptions regarding this type of freedom. The regression coefficient ($B = .125$) indicated that an increase in experiences corresponds to an increase in perceptions score of .125 points. So, the total variance in freedom of expression perception is explained by 3.5% of the experience of freedom of expression.

Similarly, for freedom of action, the overall regression was statistically significant ($R^2 = .085$, $F(1, 1844) = 171.4$, $p=.000$). Based on the results of the regression, experience of freedom of action as predictor explained 8.5% of the variation in perceived freedom of action. The regression coefficient ($B=.297$) shows that an increase in experiences corresponds to an increase in perceptions score of .297 points.

In the same way, related to freedom of choice, the overall regression was statistically significant ($R^2 = .062$, $F(1, 1844) = 121.9$, $p=.000$). The results of the regression reveal that experiences on freedom of choice as predictor explained 6.2% of the variation in perceived freedom of choice. The regression coefficient ($B=.232$) demonstrates that an increase in experiences corresponds to an increase in perceptions score of .232 points. For more information, refer to the Tables in Appendix B.

Overall, all three types of freedom under study revealed a correlation between experiences in the school context and perceptions. The highest value is for freedom of action (8.5%), followed by choice (6.2%), and expression (3.5%). These findings confirm Kolb's theory that experiences impact and shape thoughts, and ideas (1984), Dewey's idea that experience impacts attitudes (1938), and Paul's (2014) claim that personal experience influences the development of understanding. Although there is a lack of empirical research that exposes the relation between experiences and perception for freedom of action and choice, for freedom of expression, it was found that the environment of democratic schools positively affects freedom of expression (John & Osborn, 1992), as opposed to authoritarian ones. Further studies can examine in more details how experiences of freedom of action in schools (the highest), and freedom of expression (the lowest) determine perceptions of such freedoms. In addition, attention can be given to the study of other intervening variables.

6.7 Summary

To summarize, for the values of freedom, this study revealed that the majority (70.3%) of respondents have reported perceiving freedom as ‘non-solely a lack of enforcement, but also as self-development and as a demonstration of responsible attitude’. Students’ experiences in school are both examples of positive and negative freedom. School rules and regulations are the mostly chosen factor (45.8%) by Matura students as having put them under pressure, while the knowledge received at school (74.4%) is chosen by the majority of graduates reported to have helped them become more responsible, thus contributing to positive freedom.

The majority of Matura students’ perception of freedom for freedom of speech, action, and choice is in line with the positive form of freedom as the majority agree with the given statements that freedom of speech is respecting ethics, and that freedom of action and choice requires responsibility. Secondly, this study indicates that, as expected from hypothesis (RH1), perceptions of **only** some types of freedom for Matura students differed based on **type of school** they attend, **gender**, **geographical area**, and the **directorate**. Gender differences were found for perception of freedom of expression, and freedom of action with male students tending to disagree. This means that males’ understanding of freedom is less in agreement with freedom of expression as respecting ethics of communication, and action as acting responsibly when compared to females. The study reveals that students studying in public schools have an understanding of freedom more as positive freedom in their general perception of freedom of expression, action, and choice. The ones agreeing less with the statements were students at non-public schools who vary in their answers.

Directorate made a difference. Students in the directorate of Durrës agree with freedom of expression but disagree with that of action and choice. The ones in Lezhë agree with freedom of action and expression, but not that of choice. The ones from Fier disagree with the three types. The schools in the directorate of Fier (in this study from Vlorë, Gjirokastër, and Fier) belong mainly to the southern region of Albania. The school in the directorate of

Lezha (in this study from Milot, Kurbin, Lezhe, Lac, Mamurras, Kukes and Shkoder) belong to the northern part, in which still customary law, the Kanun dominates with its values and the norms shared by these communities. Meanwhile, students from the directorate of Durres come from diverse and heterogeneous backgrounds. Overall, the majority of respondents in this study agree with the forms of freedom that rely on responsibility, and rationality.

In this study, students' experiences of freedom in school are both examples of positive and negative freedom and the majority agree with examples of positive experiences of freedom. Similarly, for types of freedom, this study found that the majority agreed that experiences at school has helped them develop communication and debating skills, that their education at school has helped them act more responsibly towards themselves and others, and that their school experience has helped them make informed choices. As expected, the current study indicates that experiences of freedom for Matura students differ based on the **type of school**, geographical **area**, and **directorate** of schools and **gender** only for freedom of action (RH1). For freedom of expression, Matura students from urban areas, Durres directorate, and private schools were the ones disagreeing with the idea that their experience in school helped them develop their communication and debating skills. When it comes to freedom of action, male respondents, those in private schools, and the directorate of Durres agree less that their education in school helped them act more responsibly towards themselves and others. Finally, while females and males share the similar experiences, respondents studying at private schools, urban areas, and the directorate of Durres were more likely to report negative experiences of freedom of choice as concerns their school experience having helped them make informed choices. While it is understood that the disagreement with statements representing positive experiences of freedom of students in the directorate of Durres is due to overcrowded classes, the agreement of students in public schools does not necessarily lead to the idea that students in public schools are offered more possibilities in this regard. State schools are much more centralized when compared to private ones, which have variations in practices and methods used. This can also mean that students at private schools are more critical to what their schools offer them, as compared to students of public schools that fit uniformity and

submission to what schools offer them. In conclusion, the first hypothesis is **fulfilled partially**. In conclusion for experiences, respondents from non-public schools, males, those in urban areas, and the directorate of Durres, are the ones that agree less with experiences of freedom of expression, action, and choice in schools. This implies that they are more critical of experiences of freedom, and less submissive.

Albanian society is rooted in patriarchy where males are promoted to express their thoughts, while females are offered violence, are silenced and are led to obedience in the name of good manners (United Nations in Albania, 2019), which in this case is reflected in schools. This may explain the reason why males, concerning their experiences, tend to be more critical of experiences of freedom and probably speak openly. The regional directorate of Durres is the largest in Albania and includes schools in the capital Tirana, together with districts like Durres, Kamez, Kavaje, Diber, Vore (DRAP, 2021), where most of the population in the country resides. To add more, a variety of both public and private schools are found in the capital. Only Tirana has 32.2% (912,190 inhabitants) of the total population of the country (2,829,741); and Durres has 10.3% (292,029) (INSTAT, 2021). This can be another factor why the respondents in this directorate agree less due to overcrowded schools. As for those in rural public schools and directorates of Korça, Lezha, and Fier, the results indicated the opposite. This may suggest that these students may have not considered critically the way school education affects the above-mentioned freedoms, given that 81% of respondents agreed (agree and strongly agree) that they are reminded of rules and regulations, which is an example of negative freedom.

In terms of experiences, apart from males, those in private schools and those in the directorate of Durres, the others are not critical of experiences of freedom in their schools. Viewed inversely, female students, students from public schools, and in the directorates of Lezha, Korça, and Fier are the ones that are not critical of experiences of freedom in the school environment. Interpreted from the progressivist point of view, these students are staying too comfortable in their positions learning what they are taught without questioning them, without thinking differently, and without pushing the limits of what they are taught in schools (Mill, 1859, pp. 67-68). This agreement can be translated as the

agreement of the same type of studentry, a standardized studentry, without any differences in perceptions regarding the issue. This agreement may result in pleasing any dominant authority and would produce, in reality, a lack of freedom, subordination, and unconscious obedience, following the critical perspective. Since, freedom in education itself is promoted when there is some reflection and questioning (Roshwald, 2000, pp. 170-180), which in this case is not sensed. Similarly, the current liberal debate that emphasizes humanities and critical thinking as a main pillar, suggests that these students lack this critical questioning that concerns what they perceive as freedom and what they have perceived as freedom in school. However, following the critical perspective which criticizes 21st-century education (Martin-Sanchez & Flores-Rodriguez, 2018), this kind of education leads students to be obedient, by limiting critical thinking. They are led to this unconscious subordination by accepting norms. Students are submissive to what the school offers in this regard. Even this high level of agreement is a reproduction of the same idea.

Thinking critically involves diversity and a difference in beliefs and thoughts (Portelli, 1994). This means that students are told, instructed, taught, are being convinced, and made to believe that school helps them with the mentioned forms of freedom, when in fact this lack of diversity in opinion is lack of freedom in the opinion itself. This may result in what Freire describes as the development of a culture of silence where the oppressed have lost the ability to freely criticize (1970). Questioning as an embodiment of the practice of freedom is missing (Glass, 2004). Schools might offer more constraints than freedom (Merelman, 1980). This is typical for post-communist countries, where due to the consequences of communism, the figure of teachers was central, and students were expected to obey (Favakhishvili & Sarjveladze, 2001). In terms of experiences of freedom, other studies can also examine further and explore why males tend to be more critical and less obedient when it comes to experiences of freedom in schools, given that in the current study, they agree less.

6.8 Discussion and Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter contained quantitative analysis and findings of the statements related to the concept of freedom. Primarily, the chapter introduced the findings for experiences and perceptions of freedom in the school environment, specifically for freedom of expression, action, and choice. The quantitative analysis continued with findings and discussion.

In general, when asked about their perception of freedom, the majority (70.3%) of the respondents reported perceiving freedom as ‘non-solely a lack of enforcement, but self-development and as a demonstration of responsible attitude’ indicating that their perceptions in this case represents both negative and positive freedom. Specifically, the majority of Matura students’ perception of freedom of expression, action, and choice is in line with the positive form of freedom as the majority agree with the given statements that freedom of expression is respecting rules and ethics, and that freedom of action and choice requires responsibility. The findings suit the liberal philosophy with freedom based on reasonableness (Hegel, 1991; Guyer, 2010), freedom of action based on rationality (Kant, 1785) and guided by one’s mind (Locke, 2017).

These results are fragments of the nature of the new political culture in Albania. First of all, agreement with freedom of expression, action and choice reveals that these youngsters value them. The results are double encouraging because these Matura students agree with freedom that relies on responsibility and rationality. Sharing these forms of freedom is important for the democratic political culture. The results are promising because belief in freedom helps democracy (Inkeles, 1991). Typically, belief in freedom is present in many liberal advanced democracies (Inglehart, 2018). Some liberals have maintained that these forms of freedom for sure are not typical of the ordinary citizen (Hegel, 1991; Rousseau, 1893 (1762)). Such acceptance indicates that the new generation, through the internalization of freedom, demonstrates having one of the crucial elements of democracy: belief in freedom based on rationality. Because freedom of expression is understood as

respecting ethics, and that freedom of action and choice as requiring responsibility, then these students also accept that their liberty is limited if it harms others (Mill, 1859/1991). In addition, perception based on positive freedom is in line with liberal democratic values and is a safeguard against cultural oppression, the power and influence of the media, and bias (Crowder, 2015). In this sense, the results are encouraging for the development of democratic culture and internal democratization of Albanian society.

In addition, students' experiences in school are both examples of positive and negative freedom and the majority agreed that experiences at school have helped them develop communication and debating skills, act more responsibly towards themselves and others, and guided them to make informed choices. Çullhaj (2012), when finding that in Albania there was a higher support for materialist values than for freedom, insisted on a "*precondition*" upon which to cultivate such a value (2012, p. 272). By offering experiences of freedom, education can serve as a precondition. On one hand, practices of freedom are important for the promotion of democracy in education and the development of political literacy (Perry-Hazan, 2015). However, a warning goes to the high agreement with experiences of freedom in school because it lacks criticism, as discussed in the section above. Even though idealistically, from the liberal perspective, education should promote freedom that relies on self-control and rationality (Rousseau, 1762).

Another point made in this chapter is that these perceptions differ based on socio-demographic characteristics (RH1). In particular, male students, those from non-public schools, and specifically those from Fier disagree with such version of freedom. This group needs more exploration of the reasons why they share such understanding. Secondly, perceptions of types of freedom resulted to be related with experiences in schools proving the second hypothesis (RH2). For freedom of expression, a weak positive correlation was found between experiences and perceptions; for freedom of action, a moderate positive correlation characterized experiences and perceptions; and for freedom of choice, this correlation was moderate and positive.

All these results for freedom indicate that not only do Matura students agree with the given forms of freedom, but they change dependent on qualities of school like type of school, geographical area, directorate, and gender. Simultaneously, they are correlated with experiences of freedom in schools. Importantly, recognizing such a link between education and freedom, is of great interest for the development of democratic culture in Albania.

7 CHAPTER 7: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS FOR DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

This chapter presents findings and discussions of the principles of distributive justice: equality, equity, and need. The findings are discussed as related to the Albanian context, the literature in the world, and the context of countries with a communist past. At the same time, findings are given theoretical nuances and discourses that relate education with distributive justice and democratization of Albanian society.

7.1 Introduction

The concept of distributive justice was explored by measuring Matura students' perceptions and experiences of three main principles namely equality, equity, and need in the school environment. For each of the principles, based on the literature review, a set of statements was used to assess respondents' level of agreement or disagreement, measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree). Then for each of the principles two variables were created, one for perceptions and one for experiences, each composed of 5 statements. This process was based following the standardization of scores process, which in statistics means putting a set a different/various variable on the same scale.

The first step was to compute each variable on SPSS dataset (sum of five items measuring a specific concept such as equality). Specifically, the formula applied for the composition was: **Compute = ((variable name-minimum score)/ (max score- minimum score)) *100.**

After computing each variable, through Recode, they were converted into scale variables with a range from 0-100 points. Then, through the recode option, the labeling of values has been categorized into three levels of agreement: 0-33 low level (coded 1), 34-66 medium level (coded 2), and 67-100 high level (coded 3) (Fischer & Milfont, 2010). This range applies for all the following scales. To illustrate, below is given an example with equality.

Equality DJ Perception

5 sub scales - 5 points Likert scale (1-5)

1. Sum up all 5 items (Compute Equality_DJ_Perceptions= Q23+Q26+Q29+Q32+Q35)
2. Then for percentage: Compute Equality Perception percentage= ((EqualityDJ_P-5)/(25-5) *100

*where 5 represents the minimum score (5 scales * 1 point in the Likert Scale) and 25 represents the maximum score (5 scales * 5 points in the Likert Scale).*

The creation of such standardized item allows for more detailed statistical analysis, especially for comparison purposes based on different types of variables (such as differences on gender etc. that have been presented in this chapter). For instance, for equality perception (as observed below in Figure 7.1), 86.2 % have reported a high level of agreement. This means that a high majority of respondents (86.2%) report high scores regarding the perceptions of equality (since 86% falls in the scale 67-100 that was categorized as ‘High level’).

The research questions that guided this chapter were:

RQ3 What are Matura students’ perceptions and experiences of distributive justice within the school environment?

RQ4 What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students?

For this value, it was hypothesized that Matura students’ perceptions and experiences of principles of distributive justice will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (gender, geographical area, school type, and directorate) (RH3). Similarly, it was hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice principles among Matura students (RH4).

7.2 Equality

What are high school seniors' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice within the school context?

For the principle of equality, Table 7.1 provides detailed information on answers given for both perceptions and experiences of equality. The principle of equality in the school environment has been measured concerning resources like opportunities, the division into programs of study, exercises solved, assessment criteria, and teacher-student relations.

Table 7.1 Statements Measuring the Principle of Equality

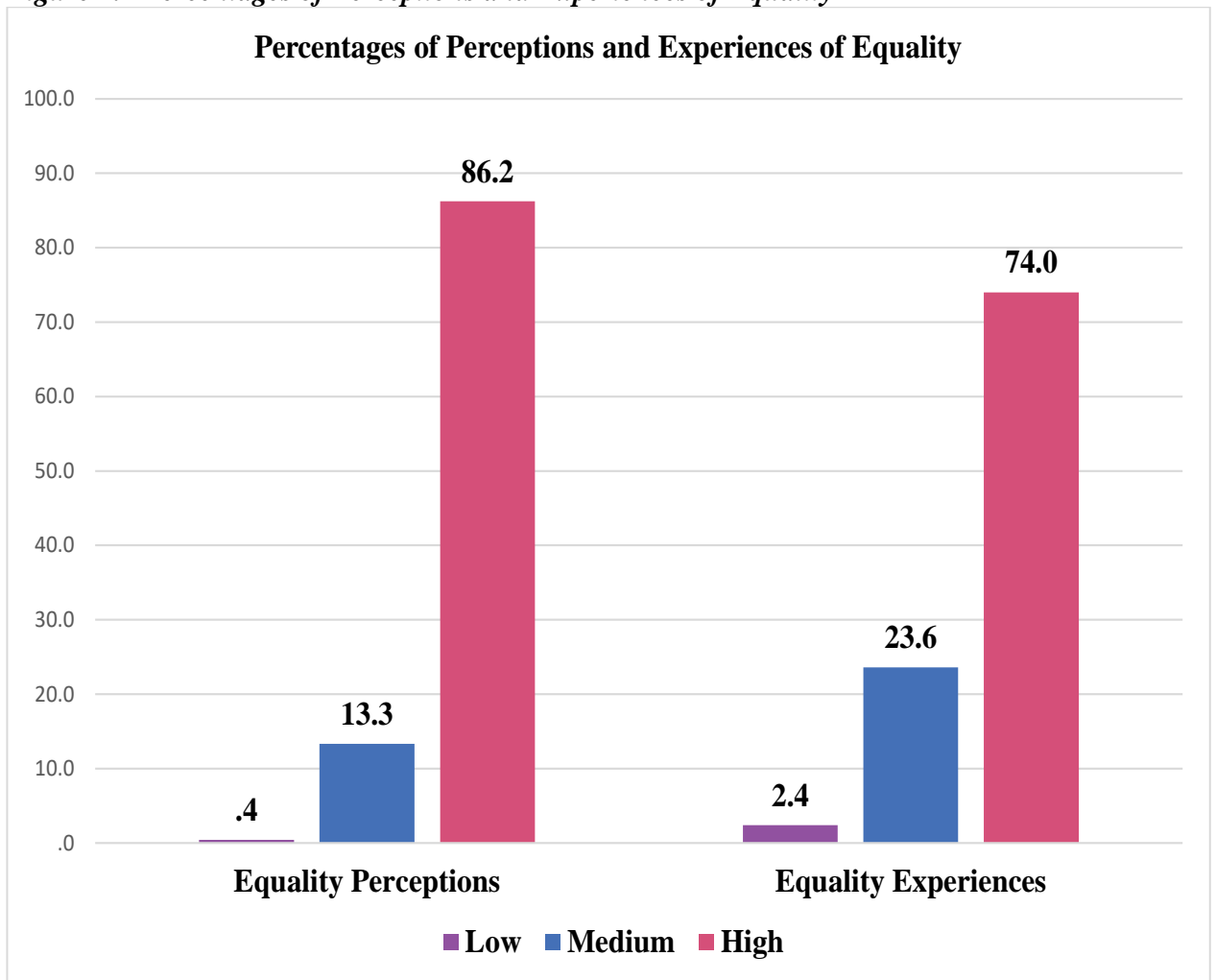
EQUALITY		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Perceptions	23. Schools should offer the same educational opportunities to all students.	.4%	.7%	2.7%	5.6%	90.7%
	26. Students should enroll into schools that offer standardized programs for all.	5.1%	6.5%	16.1%	15.2%	57.1%
	29. All students should solve the same exercises.	13.5%	12.4%	26.6%	17.8%	29.6%
	32. Assessment criteria should be the same for all students.	2.1%	3.2%	10.3%	12.1%	72.3%
	35. Teachers should treat students in the same way.	.3%	.8%	3.4%	6.7%	88.8%
Experiences	38. In my school, all students are offered equal educational opportunities.	6.8%	5.3%	14.4%	17.0%	56.6%
	41. In my school, all students enroll in the same courses.	4.2%	4.7%	13.8%	19.9%	57.5%
	44. In general, in my school all students are given the same exercises to solve.	4.4%	6.7%	19.4%	26.2%	43.3%
	47. All students in my school are assessed following the same criteria.	3.7%	3.5%	13.2%	20.0%	59.5%
	50. In my school, teachers treat all students equally.	7.0%	6.6%	12.7%	17.0%	56.8%

Note. N=1846

Referring to the data for each of the listed statements for perceptions of equality, results show that more than half of the respondents strongly agreed with each of the statements, except one related to solving same exercises (29.6%). The highest and strongest agreement is for the perception of equality of opportunity (90.7%), teachers treating students in the same way (88.8%), followed by having the same assessment criteria (72.3%), enrollment of students into same courses (57.1%), and sameness of exercises to be solved (29.6%).

Similarly, for experiences of equality in the school environment, the majority tend to strongly agree that based on their experiences, distribution of the resources has been done following equality. The highest agreement is with assessment based on the same criteria (59.5%), followed by enrollment of students into same courses (57.5%), teachers treating all students equally (56.8%), offering equal educational opportunities (56.6%), and sameness of exercises (43.3%). As concerns experiences of equality in the school context, 87% of respondents in Boce and Shabani's study (2015, p. 78) for Albania reported that teachers apply the same exercises, instead of differentiated ones. This was however higher in percentage compared to the current study's results in terms of equality of exercises given to students (43.3%) which is a form of experience of equality. The following section provides details in graphs for this principle and its distribution based on gender, geographical area, type of school, and directorate, for three levels of agreement: low, medium, and high.

Figure 7.1 Percentages of Perceptions and Experiences of Equality

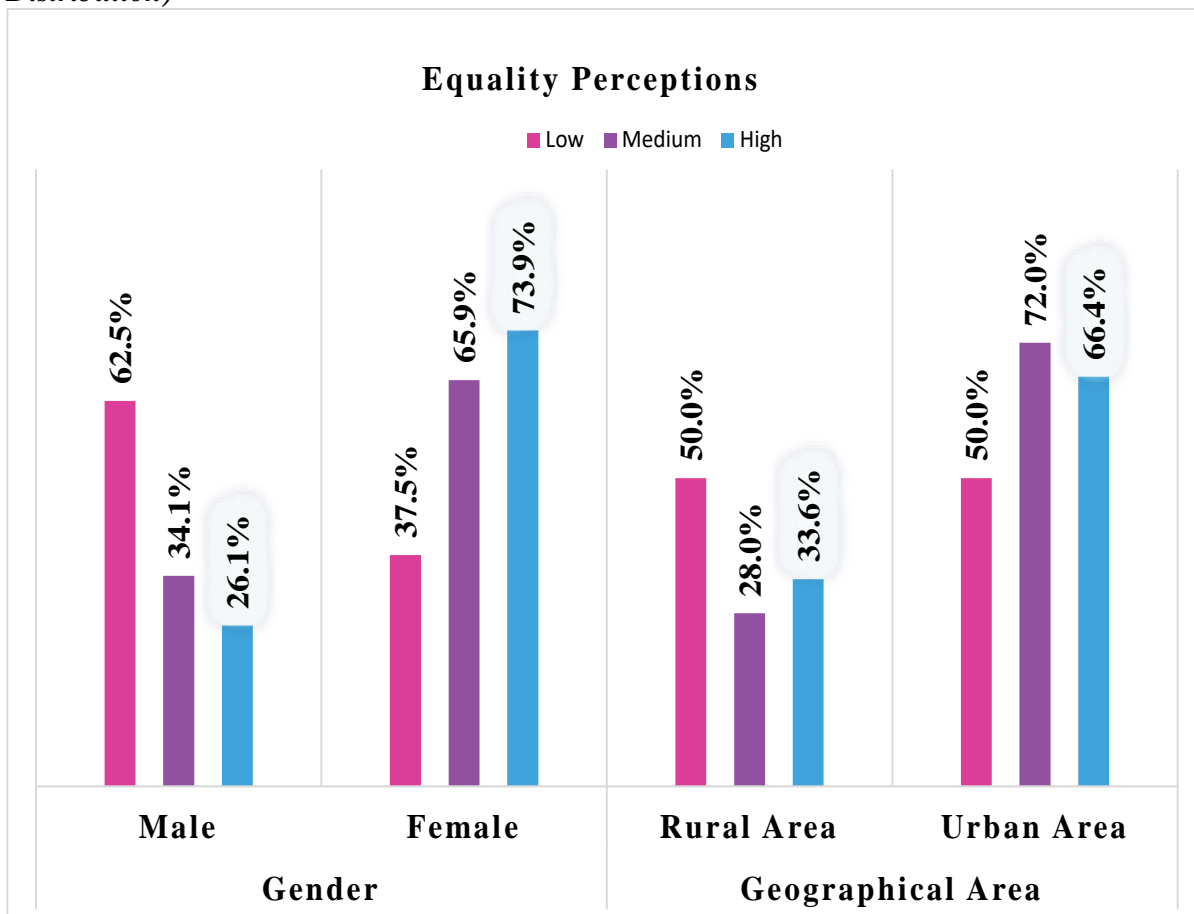


Note. N = 1846 Values reported (out of Low, Moderate, High)

Figure 7.1 reflects in a synthesized version the results of perceptions and experiences for equality. As noticed, in terms of perception, a high majority of respondents (86.2%) report high scores regarding the perceptions of equality, which means they highly agreed that equality should be a criterion of distribution of resources in their school environment. Their agreement with equality as a principle of distribution fits socialism which highlights equality as the main principle of the distribution of resources (Cohen, 1986), and suggests that there are remains of the communist ideology. Referring to their experiences on equality, results show that the majority of respondents report high scores (74%) in experiences of equality, which defenders of the critical view have criticized because equality leads to standardization and is simultaneously discriminatory for students (Shyman, 2013) because it does not take into account personal differences like talent.

7.2.1 Equality Perceptions

Figure 7.2 Levels of Agreement for Equality Perceptions (Gender and Geographical Area Distribution)

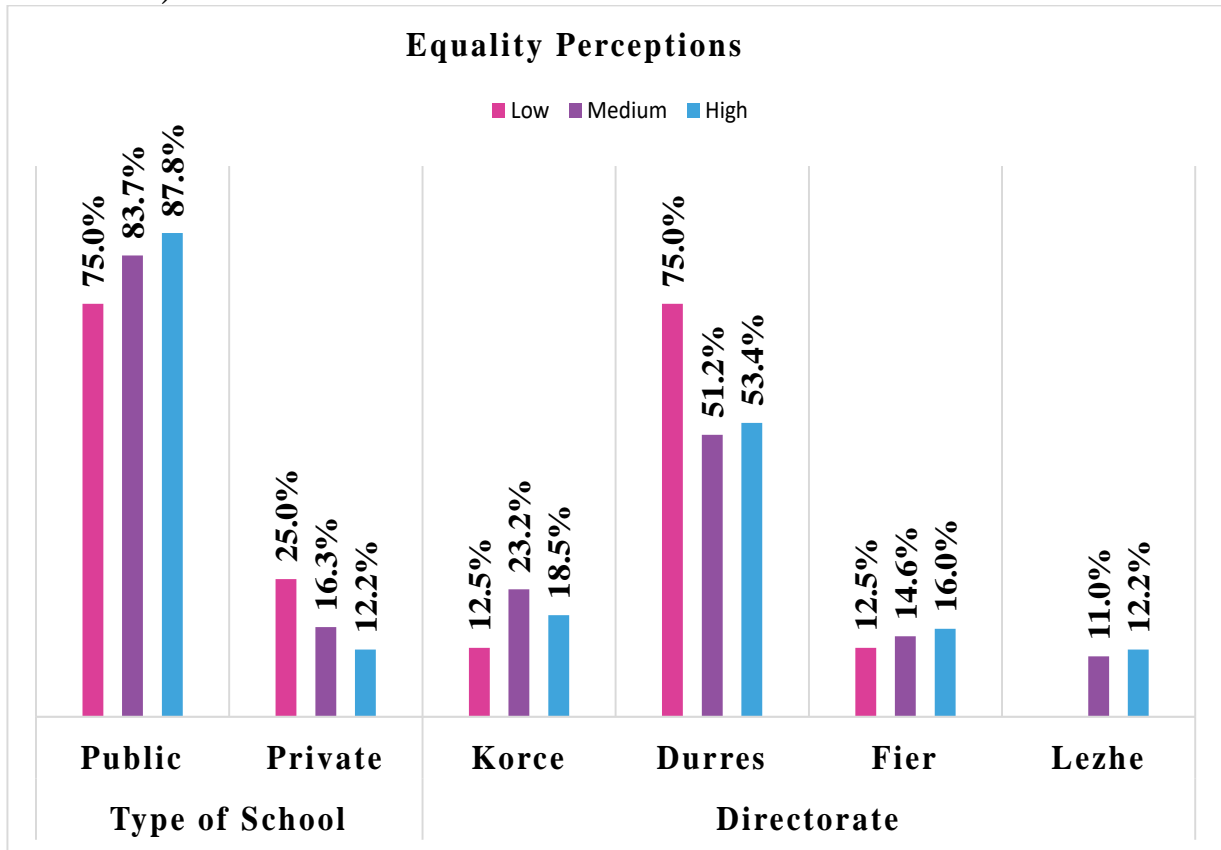


Note. Statements 23, 26, 29, 32, 35

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

Focusing on the perception of equality, Figure 7.2 presents perceptions of the principle of equality as distributed by gender and geographical area. As it is shown from the graph, 62.5% of males have a low agreement with the perception of the principle of equality, while females (73.9%) have a high level of agreement. This shows that unlike males, females prefer equality as a principle. For geographical areas, students from rural areas have a low agreement with the perception of equality (50%), and those in urban areas have a medium level of agreement (72%), given that the population in urban areas is more diversified. In the same way, for the perception of equality, rural and urban areas differ.

Figure 7.3 Levels of Agreement for Equality Perceptions (Type of School and Directorate Distribution)



Note. Statements 23, 26, 29, 32, 35

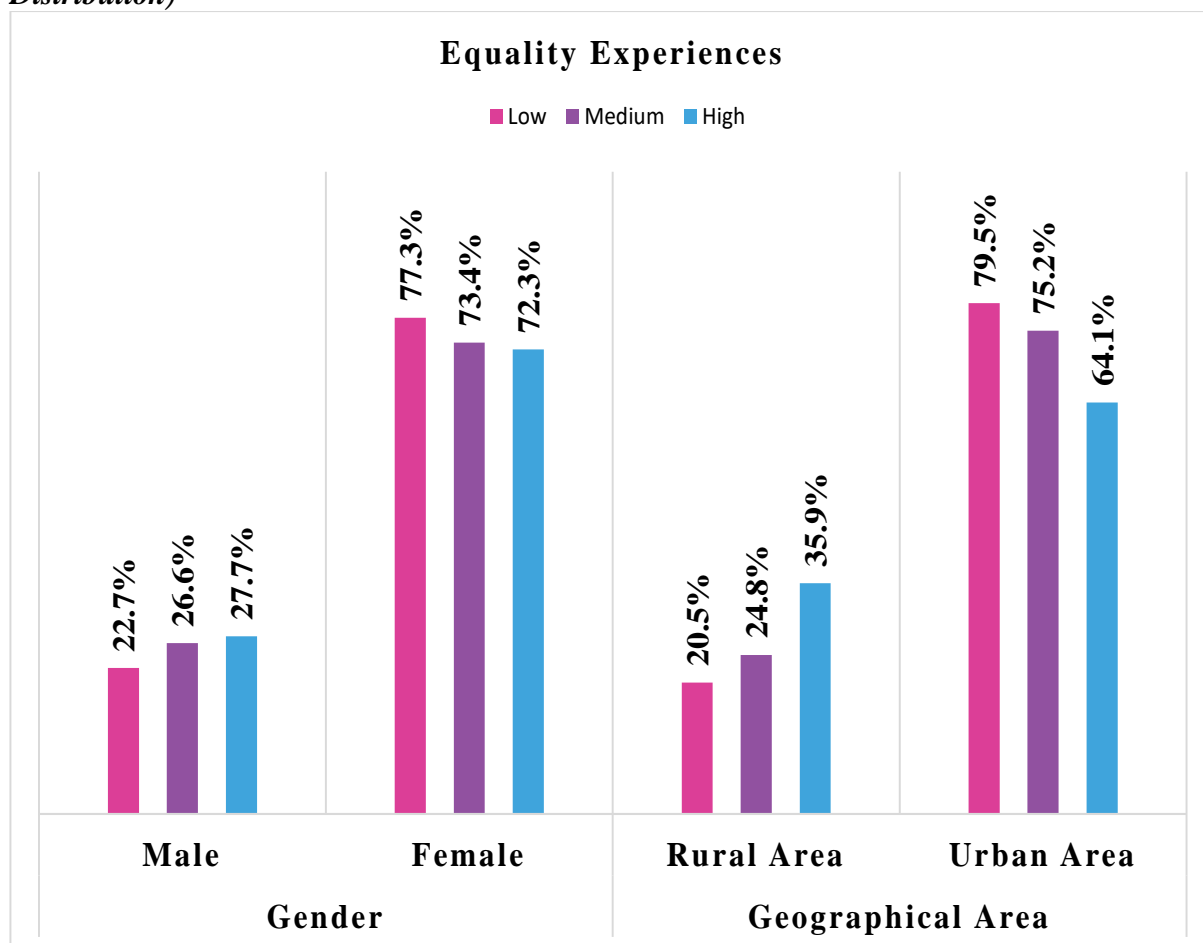
Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

The perception of equality, as demonstrated based on the type of school and directorate, is given in Figure 7.3. The graphic reveals that students from public schools have a high level of agreement (87.8%) with equality, while those from private ones do not because they report a low agreement (25%) with equality. Public schools are more dependent on the administration of the state and state policies when compared to private ones. This was expected and in line with the theory as private school students, coming from a rich background, perceive differences and are not expected to favor equality. This means that students belonging to different types of schools have differences in their perception of equality. In terms of the directorate, Durres tends to have a low level of agreement (75%), Fier has a high level of agreement (16%), and Korça has a medium level (23.2%), although

the differences are not so significant. The directorate of Durres, different from other directorates where the population is homogenous, has a much more diversified population.

7.2.2 Equality Experiences

Figure 7.4 Levels of Agreement for Equality Experiences (Gender and Geographical Area Distribution)



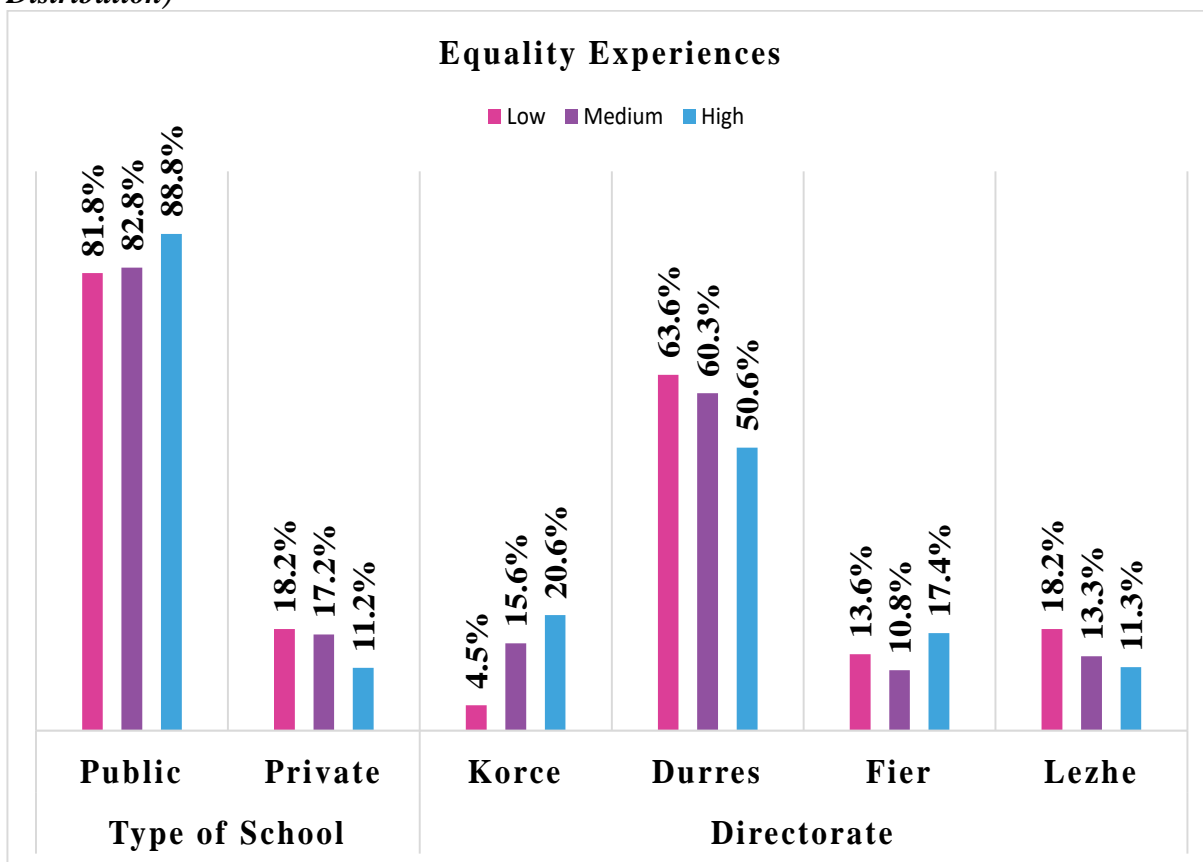
Note. Statements 38, 41, 44, 47, 50

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

Moving forward with experiences of equality in the school environment, in the results of this study, it is witnessed that there are differences between students in rural and urban schools, but not significantly between genders. Students in rural areas tend to highly agree that distribution in their school has been done based on equality as a principle (35.9% for high level of agreement), while those in urban areas do not (79.5% report a low level of

agreement). Said differently, they disagree. The population in urban areas is more heterogeneous when compared to rural ones. These differences in experiences of equality in the school environment between geographical areas are in opposition with Rawls's arguments that equal opportunities should be given to students despite their class differences (1971/ 1999, p. 63), given that the population in urban areas tends to be economically superior compared to those in rural ones.

Figure 7.5 Levels of Agreement for Equality Experiences (Type of School and Directorate Distribution)



Note. Statements 38, 41, 44, 47, 50

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

In the same way, Figure 7.5 shows that students from public schools have highlighted having a high level of agreement (88.8%) with experiences of equality in the school environment, while those in private schools highlight a low level of agreement (18%). Therefore, students from public and private schools have differences in experiences of equality. Differences between public and non-public schools again are explained with

differences related to family's socio-economic background and the fact that students studying in non-public schools have better resources (Unit for the Education Sector Europe and Central Asia Region, 2014), and are offered more than simply equal resources in education, but diversified resources as well. In terms of directorate, students from the directorate of Durres emphasize a low agreement with 63%, students from Korça, Fier, and Lezha report high agreement with 20%, 17%, and 18.2% respectively. In this way, students from the directorate of Durres claim that they have had fewer experiences of equality in their school environment. To sum up, findings suggest that while females and males share similar experiences, respondents studying at public schools, affiliated with the directorate of Korça, and residing in rural areas were more likely to report positive experiences of equality. Change in the demographics as a result of emigration and migration in the country can be part of the explanation. Apart for cities like Tirana, Durres and Vlora, which experienced population growth, other prefectures like Elbasan and Fier experienced significant decline of population (INSTAT, 2014), which obviously is felt in the composition of schools in these areas, and therefore accounts for students from Durres reporting fewer experiences of equality.

7.2.3 Findings for Equality

For the value of distributive justice, two hypotheses were developed: 1) Matura students' perceptions and experiences of principles of distributive justice will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (RH3) and 2) there is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students (RH4). The findings of this study revealed that the majority of respondents agreed on having positive perceptions of **equality** (86.2%), but less on witnessing the presence of an equal distribution of resources among all students at school premises (74%). The perceptions of equality differ by **gender** and **type of school**, making female respondents and those in public schools more prone to agreeing with the principle of equality as a criterion for the distribution of resources. While females and males share the same experiences, **type of school** indicates differences. Respondents studying at public schools, affiliated with the

directorate of Korça, and residing in rural areas were more likely to report positive experiences on the equality principle. Again, the type of school and geographical area impact experiences of equality. Furthermore, data on this study suggested that a moderate positive correlation $r(1844)=.208$ exists between experiences and perceptions on the principle of equality, indicating that although both variables tend to go up in response to one another, the relationship between them is not very strong ($B=.150$).

Discussing equality in education goes beyond the field of education because of its political or cultural implications (Zhang, Chan, & Boyle, 2014). This study displayed that the majority of respondents agreed on having high perceptions of equality (86.2%), but less on witnessing the presence of an equal distribution of resources among all students at school premises. This means that they consider equality a principle to be applied in the school context, but also highly experienced (74%). Students' high agreement with the principle of equality is to be looked at with caution, taking into account the communist background of the country. The results resemble the findings from the study in post-communist Poland, where it was found that the effects of the communist ideology were present in respondents' perception even fifty years after indoctrination had taken place (Costa-Font, García-Hombrados, & Nicińska, 2020).

In this study, female respondents and those studying at public schools were more likely to share high perceptions of equality. While respondents' perceptions of the principle of equality were affected by respondents' geographical area and directorate affiliation, female respondents and those in public schools were more prone to agree with the principle of equality as a criterion for the distribution of resources. Scores of experiences of equality were reported to be 74%. While females and males share similar experiences, the type of school indicates differences. Respondents studying at public schools, affiliated with the directorate of Korça, and residing in rural areas were more likely to report positive experiences on the equality principle, given that demographic characteristics are more homogeneous. Public schools, differently from non-public ones, report more experiences of equality because they are more under the influence of state policy. Public schools tend to be more directed by the state, which requests a certain form of standardization.

Standardization contains in itself uniformity and sameness, and it can cause unfairness (Portelli & Vilbert, 2002).

While attempting to rationalize equality in education, Willett (2015) suggests that education cannot reduce differences because students already come from different backgrounds and education cannot bring equality. Even in industrialized countries like Sweden, students that come from a higher social class benefit more from education (Jonsson & Erikson 2000), despite similar resources provided. However, the division of schools into public and non-public schools is itself a cause of exclusion, inequality, and inequity (Boyle, Zhang, & Chan, 2014, pp. 217-218). Even awareness of the fact that some differentiation is found in non-public schools in this study, signaled that the latter offers more opportunities for diversity, rather than simply resources divided equally.

Experiences of equality (in this study there was an agreement of 74%) have meaning within the theories of distributive justice. Liberals consider that equal opportunities should be given to students despite their class differences (Rawls, 1971/ 1999, p. 63). Left liberalists defend equality, while right liberalists oppose the idea of equality of opportunity defending more a maximization of these opportunities, as equality of opportunity and outcome are defended by socialism that tackles any source of this inequality (Plaz, 2020). The truth is that with standardization, and equalization of educational practices, school systems are discriminatory (Shyman, 2013, p. 194). Another problem is that there are attempts to demonstrate that individuals are equal and at the same time they should be equal (Flew, 1976). When in fact there are differences in abilities, intelligence, and trait among individuals and groups that need to be taken into account (Evetts, 1970). Therefore, the equalization of experiences in this study signals that there are attempts to exterminate differences (be them natural) through opportunities and practices. The kind of education that promotes equality, and standardization is at the same time damaging because it produces the same kind of students, losing diversity, and being inclined to be subordinated (West, 1965).

7.3 Need

As presented in Table 7.2 below, the principle of need uses a collection of statements developed to measure the perceptions and experiences of need in the school environment. Students' needs have been used to refer to weak or lower-performing students, individual difficulties, and students with special needs. This principle has been measured through statements representing resources like opportunities, the division into programs of study, exercises solved, assessment criteria, and teacher-student relations.

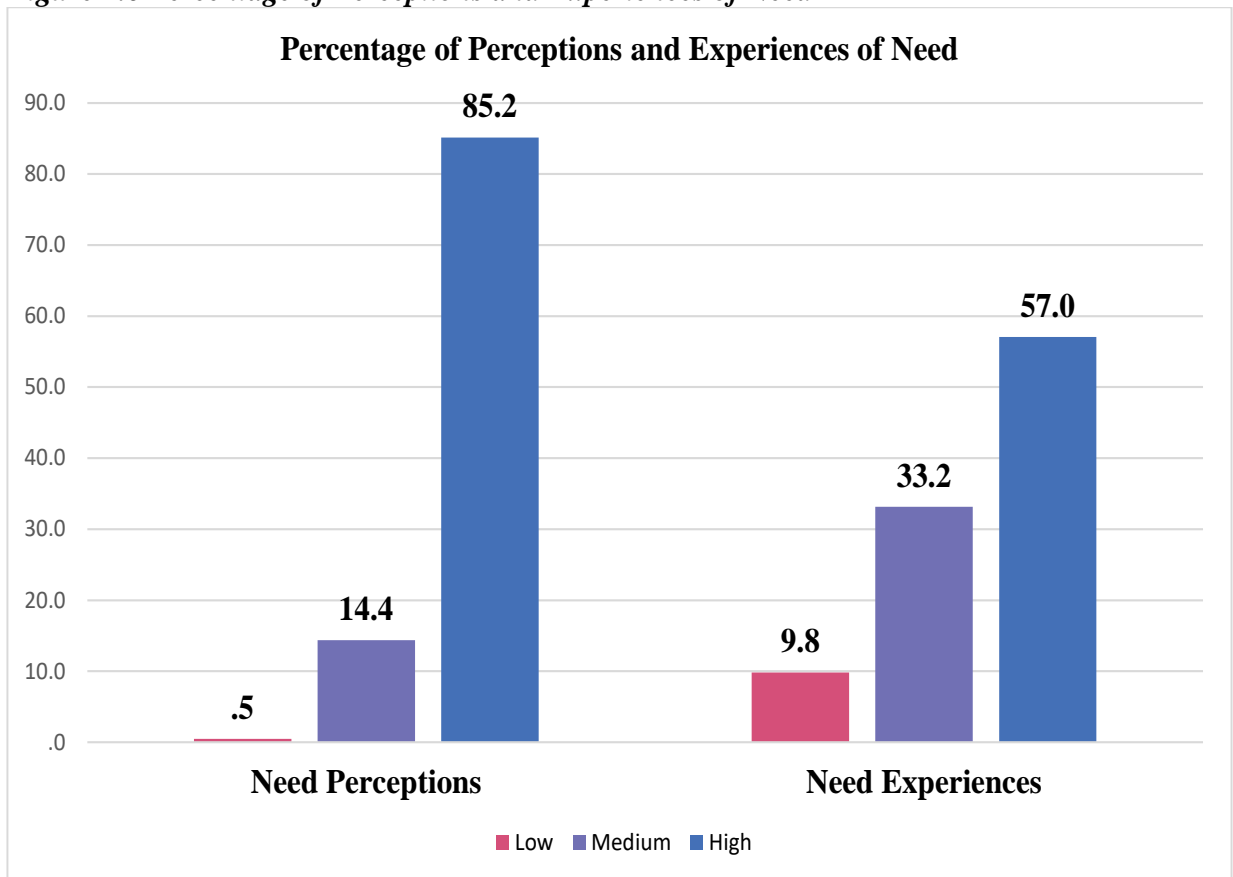
Table 7.2 Statements Measuring the Principle of Need

NEED		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Perceptions	25. Schools should offer educational opportunities to students based on their needs.	3.6%	3.0%	12.3%	17.4%	63.8%
	28. Students should enroll into schools that offer programs based on their needs.	2.0%	3.5%	14.3%	23.2%	57.0%
	31. Weak students should be helped to solve exercises in order not to fall behind.	1.7%	2.4%	10.3%	16.2%	69.4%
	34. When assessing, students' individual difficulties should be taken into consideration.	1.7%	3.7%	11.5%	20.5%	62.7%
	37. Teachers should give more priority to students with special needs.	3.3%	3.4%	16.6%	21.6%	55.2%
Experiences	40. In my school, lower performing students are offered opportunities that help them improve their abilities.	5.9%	7.9%	16.6%	21.5%	48.1%
	43. In my school, lower performing students can enroll into courses that fulfil their needs.	12.5%	12.6%	18.5%	18.2%	38.2%
	46. Students who face difficulties are given exercises that help them improve their proficiency.	7.0%	6.7%	14.5%	23.9%	47.9%
	49. A different assessment is applied for students with special needs.	11.4%	8.2%	20.9%	23.1%	36.5%
	52. In my school, teachers' pay more attention to students with special needs.	9.9%	10.5%	25.6%	22.7%	31.4%

As is observed in Table 7.2, the majority of respondents (69.4%) strongly agree that students in need, in this case weak (lower performing) students should be helped with exercises in order not to fall behind. The division of exercises is followed by educational opportunities (63.8%), assessment (62.7%), enrollment into programs (57.0%), and teacher-student relations (55.2%).

Concerning their experiences of need in the school environment, the highest agreement is for lower-performing students being offered opportunities that help them improve their abilities (48.1%). It is followed by students facing difficulties being given exercises that help them improve their proficiency (47.9%). Lower-performing students that enroll in courses that fulfill their needs report an agreement of 38.2%, followed by a different assessment applied for students with special needs (36.5%), and teachers' paying more attention to students with special needs (31.4%). Specifically, teachers paying more attention to students in need in this study (54% for Strongly agree and Agree) were somehow similar to the findings of Boce and Shabani (2015, p. 76) where 53% of participants aged 15-18 years old in Albania reported that in particular teachers help students in need, especially when they need extra explanations. Thus, findings suggest that for the principle of need, surveyed high school seniors' highest agreement is for the distribution of exercises. The subsequent graphs will illustrate experiences and perceptions of need cross-tabulated with sociodemographic characteristics.

Figure 7.6 Percentage of Perceptions and Experiences of Need

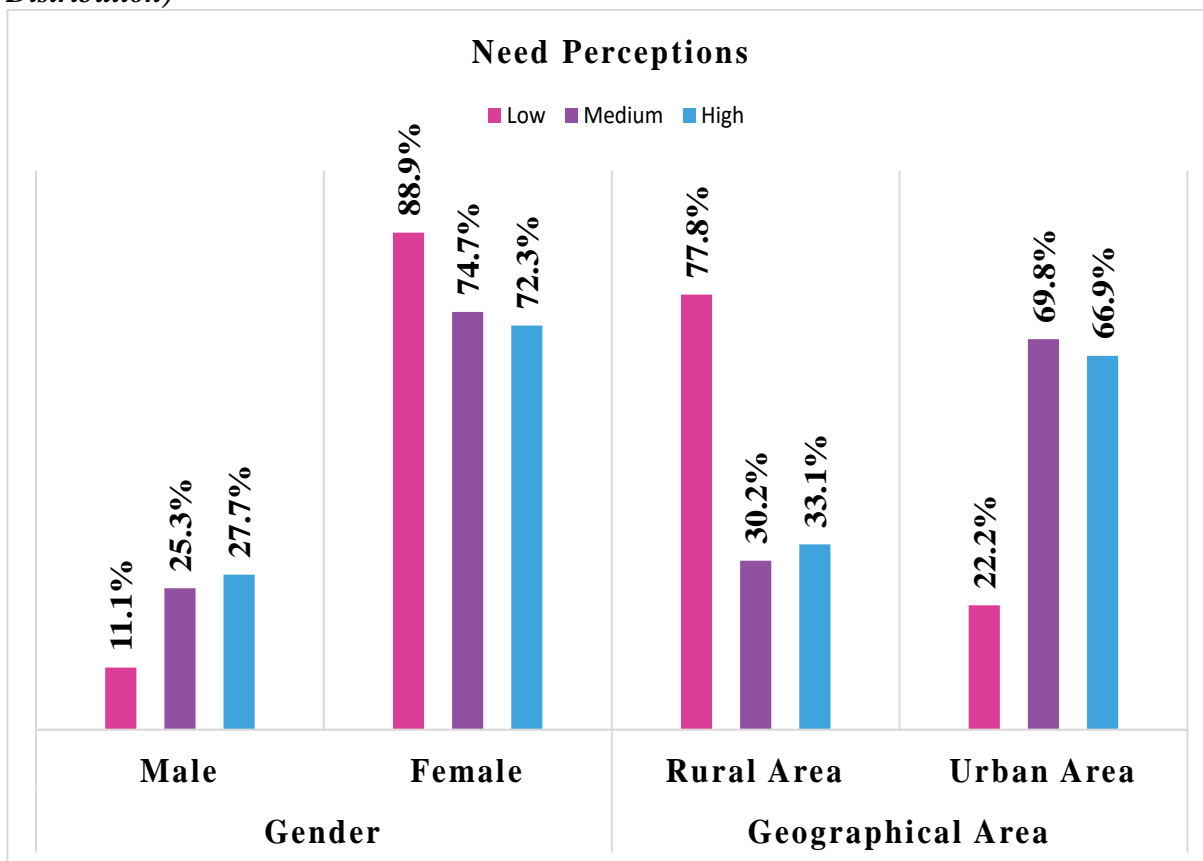


Note. N = 1846 Values reported out of Low, Moderate, High

As summarized in Figure 7.6, even though the majority of respondents tend to have a high level of agreement (85.2%) with the belief that resources should be distributed to each based on needs, when assessing their experiences in this regard, they agree less that the distribution of resources in their schools takes place based on students' needs (57%). Their perception on need suggests that those in need should receive more, despite contributing less (Shyman, 2013) and is in line with Rawls' understanding that education should serve both the least advantaged and the skilled in the long term (Rawls, 1971/ 1999).

7.3.1 Need Perceptions

Figure 7.7 Levels of Agreement for Need Perceptions (Gender and Geographical Area Distribution)



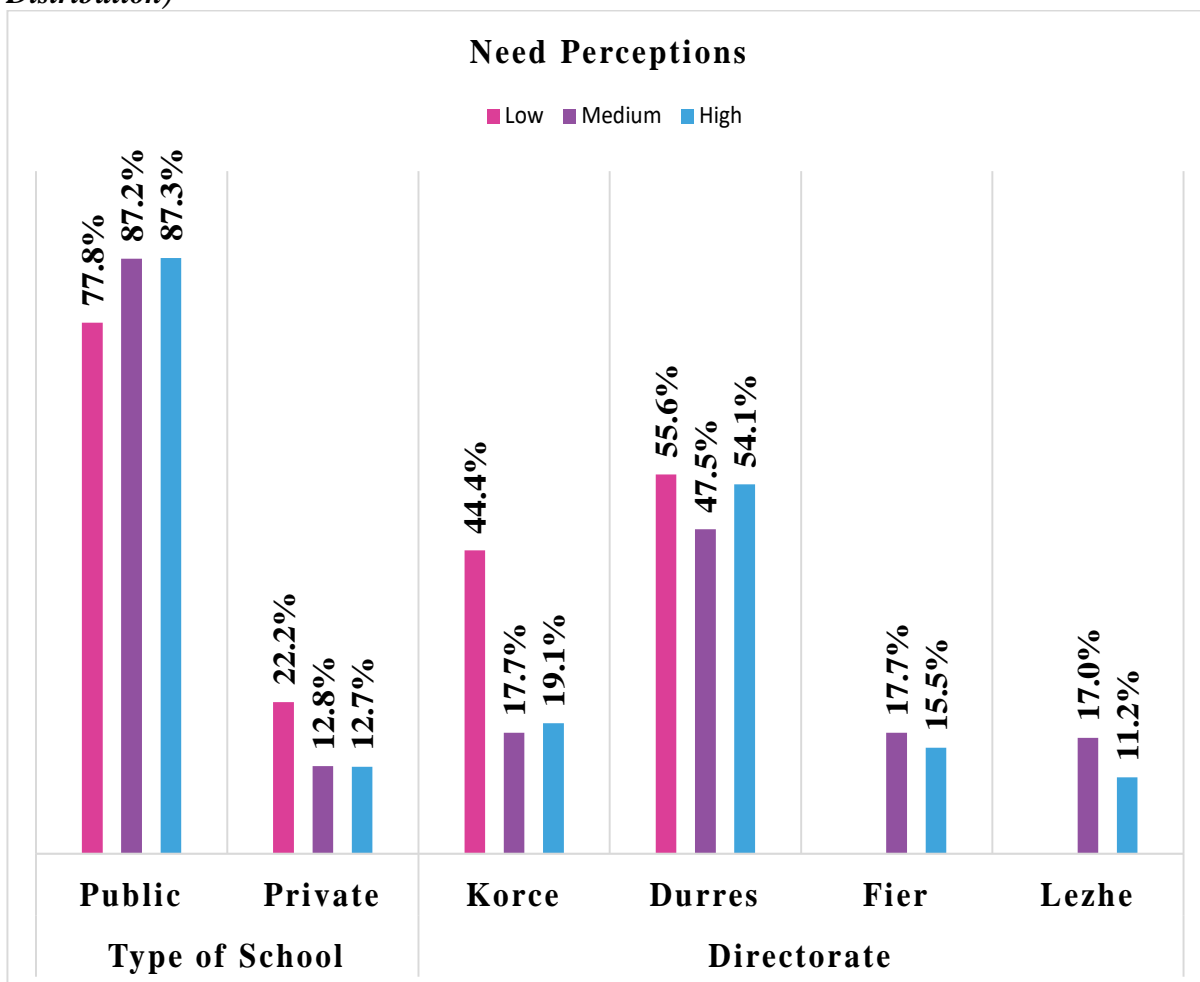
Note. Statement 25, 28, 31, 34, 37

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

Figure 7.7 above demonstrates Matura students' perception of 'need' following gender and geographical area distribution. It is noticed that while females disagree by highlighting a low level of agreement with need perceived as a criterion of distribution of resources (88.9%), males show a high level of agreement (27.7%). In other words, males tend to emphasize need as a principle of distribution, differently from females. Rural areas highlight a low level of agreement (77.8%) thus not emphasizing need as a principle of distribution of resources in the school context, while urban ones have a medium (69.8%) and high level of agreement (66.9%), prioritizing need. The agreement of the students in urban areas with need can be explained with the idea that they are already in favor of the

principle given that schools in these areas are populated and attention needs to be given to students.

Figure 7.8 Levels of Agreement for Need Perceptions (Type of School and Directorate Distribution)



Note. Statement 25, 28, 31, 34, 37

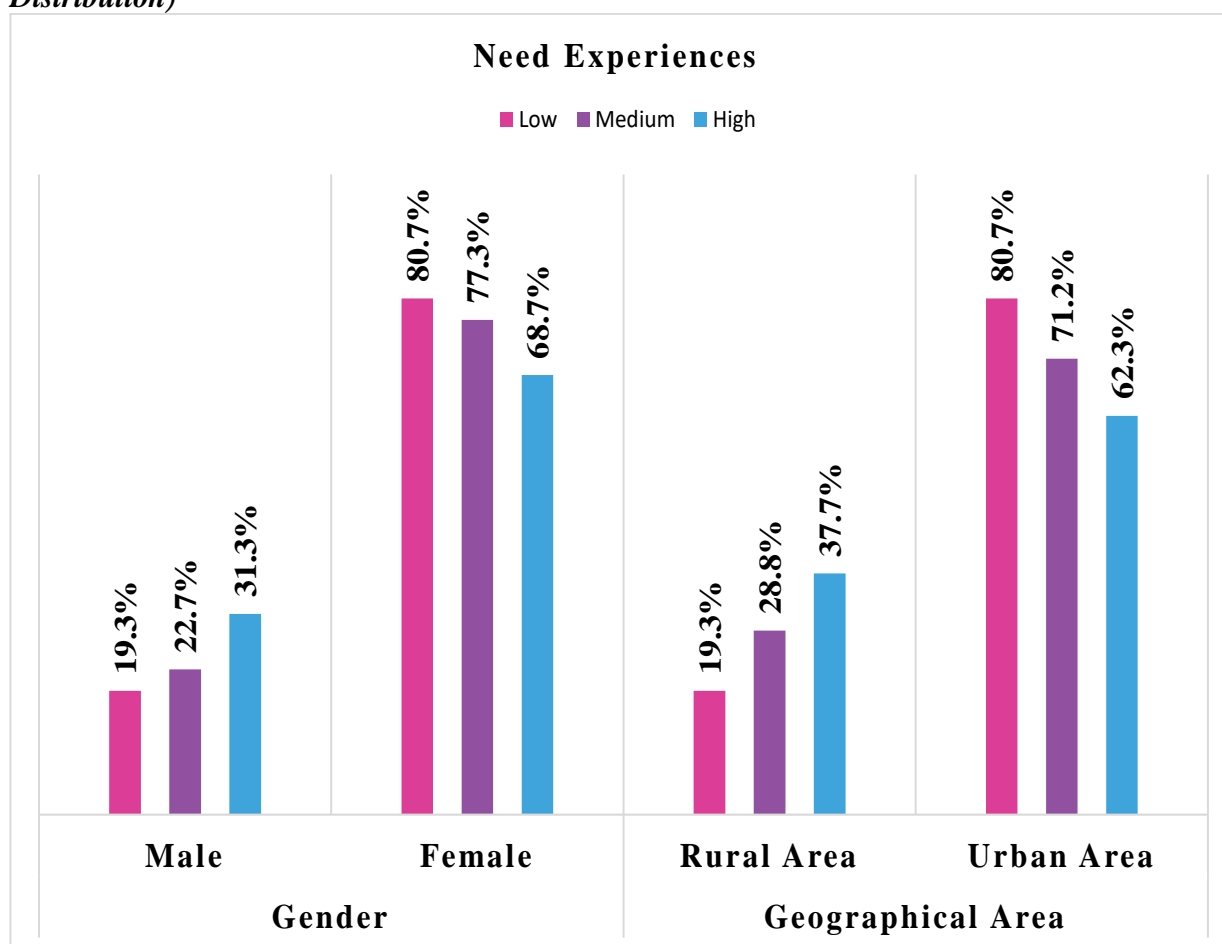
Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

In terms of the type of school, private schools tend to disagree (have a low level of agreement 22.2%), while public ones highlight need with high (87.2%) and medium levels of agreement (87.3%). The students of private schools do not highlight need. This may be explained by the idea that favoring and offering opportunities to the least advantaged may trouble meritocracy (Brighouse, 2010, p. 42), given that students of private schools, due to more opportunities being offered, can advance more in the improvement of their abilities, compared to students of public schools. The results for public schools may be

explained by the fact that students from similar economic backgrounds tend to frequent similar schools. When compared with students at private schools, those studying in public schools tend to come more from disadvantaged backgrounds, thus highlight need in their understanding of need as a principle of distribution of resources. The directorate of Durres and Korça has the low level of agreement, with respectively 55.6% and 44.4%, while both Fier and Lezha report a medium level of 17.7%.

7.3.2 Need Experiences

Figure 7.9 Levels of Agreement for Need Experiences (Gender and Geographical Area Distribution)

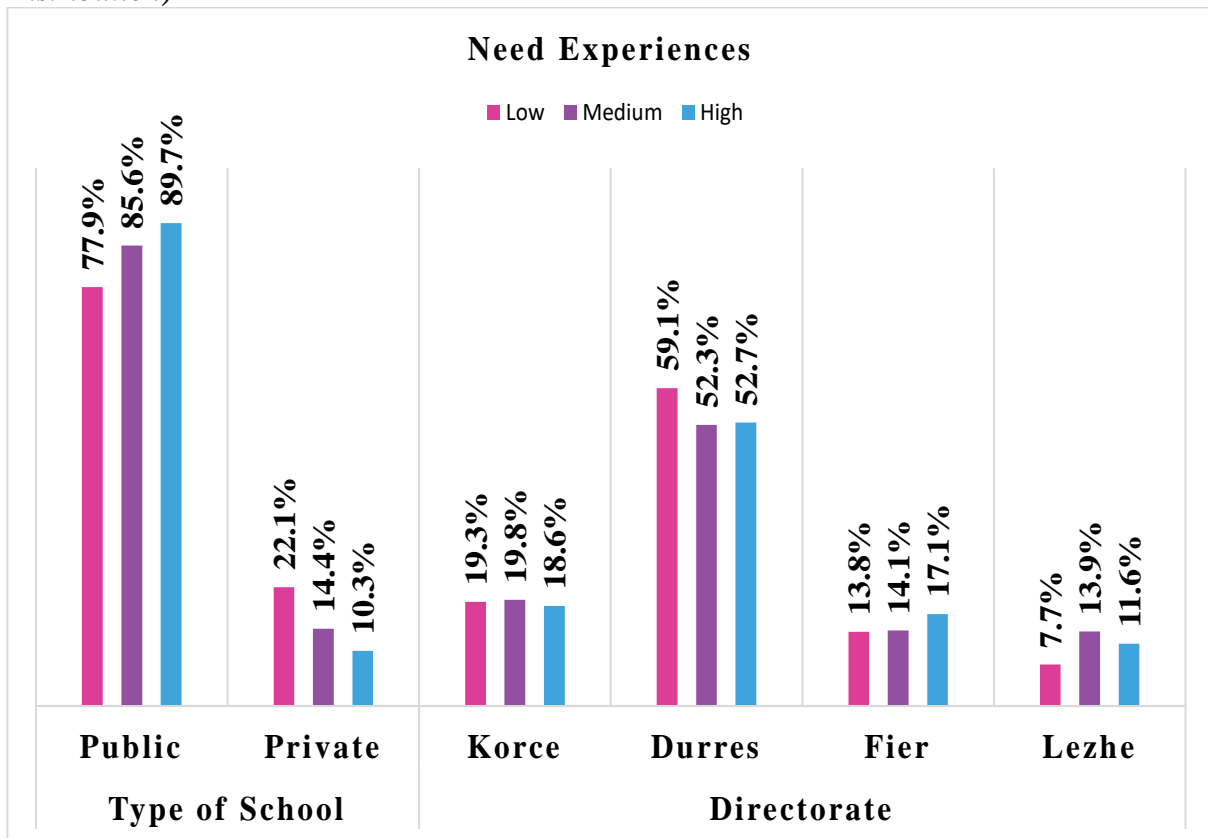


Note. Statement 40, 43, 46, 49, 52

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

The graphic in Figure 7.9 reveals that based on their experience, males report a high level of agreement (31.3%) which indicates they have experienced the application of need as a principle of distribution of resources in their schools. The opposite is reported by females because they have highlighted a low level of agreement with need being experienced (80.7%), suggesting that the distribution of resources for them has not taken into account their needs. Albanian society, being patriarchal, discriminates and even abuses females as inferior (INSTAT, 2007). This can be the case when injustice in society is projected into schools (Harris, 2002). Interestingly, Matura students from rural areas stress high agreement with experiences of need (37.7%) which means students' needs are taken into consideration while distribution of resources is done, although those in urban areas have a low level of agreement (80.7% for low). This means that the distribution of resources based on need in the school environment is perceived differently by genders and students of rural-urban areas. The change in the demographics in Albania, the migration of the population from rural to urban areas, resulted in mixed demographics of the urban areas and overcrowded classes (OECD, 2020). This can be a factor that explains why students of urban areas report low agreement with resources distributed based on need in their school environment due to the overcrowded classes in urban schools or to lack of infrastructure that responds to this increase in population. Furthermore, another problem with schools in urban areas is the teacher-student ratio. In urban areas, the number of teachers does not satisfy the increase in the number of students. This ratio is smaller only in schools in rural areas, with 1 teacher for 13 students (National Strategy of Education 2021-2026, 2021).

Figure 7.10 Levels of Agreement for Need Experiences (Type of School and Directorate Distribution)



Note. Statement 40, 43, 46, 49, 52

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

As observed in Figure 7.10, Matura students from public schools emphasize a high level of agreement with experiences of need (89.7%), while those in private schools report a low level of agreement (22.1%) which means students of private schools, interestingly, claim that resource distribution in their school has not been done based on need. This, however, does not lead to the idea that resource distribution in public schools in Albania, part of the study, meets fully the principle of need. These results are different from Psacharopoulos' (2017) claim that social stratification in Albania is a determining factor for further opportunities offered to children in disadvantaged conditions. This means that students coming from different socio-economic background study in different schools. The socio-economic background of students is mirrored in the type of schools they study in, and this is a disadvantage for students in need. Another explanation of the results of public schools

is that students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds like children of the Roma community do not frequent schools at all.

As for directorate, students from the directorate of Durres highlight a low level of agreement (59.1%). The directorate of Durres is a very diversified directorate that includes schools in cities like Tirana, Durres, Kamez, etc. These schools are overcrowded with over 40 students per class, a condition that leaves no opportunity for attention paid to students in extra need of assistance. Despite Fier (17.1% for high), no significant differences are observed for the directorates of Korça and Lezha. Another reason may be the fact that most students with disabilities do not attend schools at all (UNICEF for Every Child-Albania, Education, 2022). To summarize, female respondents, residing in urban areas, and those attending non-public schools maintain that resource distribution has not been done following the principle of need.

7.3.3 Findings for Need

For **need**, though the majority of respondents tend to agree with the belief that resources should be distributed to each based on needs (85.2%) when assessing their experiences in this regard, they tend to agree less that the distribution of resources in their school environment takes place based on students' needs (57%). Interestingly, this study found that Albanian Matura students' perceptions of need in the school environment differed based on gender with males agreeing that distribution should take place based on need, while only students from rural areas and private schools tend to disagree, no significant differences were observed for geographical area and type of school.

Contrarily, their experiences of need in the school environment varied by gender, type of school, and geographical area with respectively females, students of urban areas, and those of private schools reporting negative experiences of distribution of resources in the educational environment based on need. The negative experience of females can be related to the social and cultural background of Albanian society that leads to the discrimination of females, possibly reflected in schools as well. Schools in urban areas are crowded and

to add more, schools in Albania do not fulfill the necessary conditions in terms of resources like infrastructure, assessment, or curricula that include students with different needs. To this, we can add the consequences of the earthquake in 2019 and Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of directorates, differences were observed between Durres reporting negative experiences because of crowded classes and Fier, which reported the opposite.

Furthermore, a moderate positive correlation was evidenced between experiences and perceptions on the principle of need $r(1844) = .214$, suggesting that even though both variables tend to go up in response to one another, the relationship between them is not very strong. The results of the regression indicated that experiences of need explained 4.6% of the variation in perceptions regarding the principle of need with a regression coefficient ($B=.120$).

Even though the majority of respondents tend to have a high level of agreement (85.2%) with the belief that resources should be distributed to each based on needs, when assessing their experiences in this regard in the school environment, they tend to agree less that the distribution of resources in their schools takes place based on students' needs (57%). Female Matura students, those in urban areas, those in the directorate of Durres, and interestingly, those of private schools are the ones that disagree that based on their experiences in the school environment, need has been applied as a criterion of distribution of resources.

Unfortunately, exclusionary practices are still present in education in many countries for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds (Anderson, Boyle, & Deppeler, 2014). In many countries, teachers engage less in teaching students with special needs (OECD, 2020). The spectrum of educational needs in education does not account for the way the advantaged can harm the least advantaged (Boyle, Zhang, & Chan, 2014, p. 217). In response to this, there should be a supplementary distribution of resources to students with special needs (Terzi 2010, p. 164). In schools, theoretically, the use of the syllabus can serve to raise awareness of inequalities. However, real practices aware of differences in backgrounds are to be questioned (Clark, 2006). The characteristics of students'

backgrounds (which dictate their needs) and their previous experiences should be treated with respect and recognized rather than justified (Portelli & Vibert, 2013). From the progressivist and liberals' point of view, the ideal community is constructed by considering the ones in need and how they will affect other children and society in general (Noddings, 1998). Considering education, the state is to do more than just provide education of high quality for the least advantaged (Wenar, 2008/2017), because addressing the needs of the disadvantaged in education means projecting its outcomes in the long run.

7.4 Equity

Table 7.3 below presents data on the principle of equity through a collection of statements developed to measure the perceptions and experiences of equity in the school environment. Equity as a principle has been considered for students with abilities, skills, successful students, and meritocracy. Data obtained for each item show that the vast majority of respondents agree (Agree + Strongly Agree) with perceptions and less with experiences.

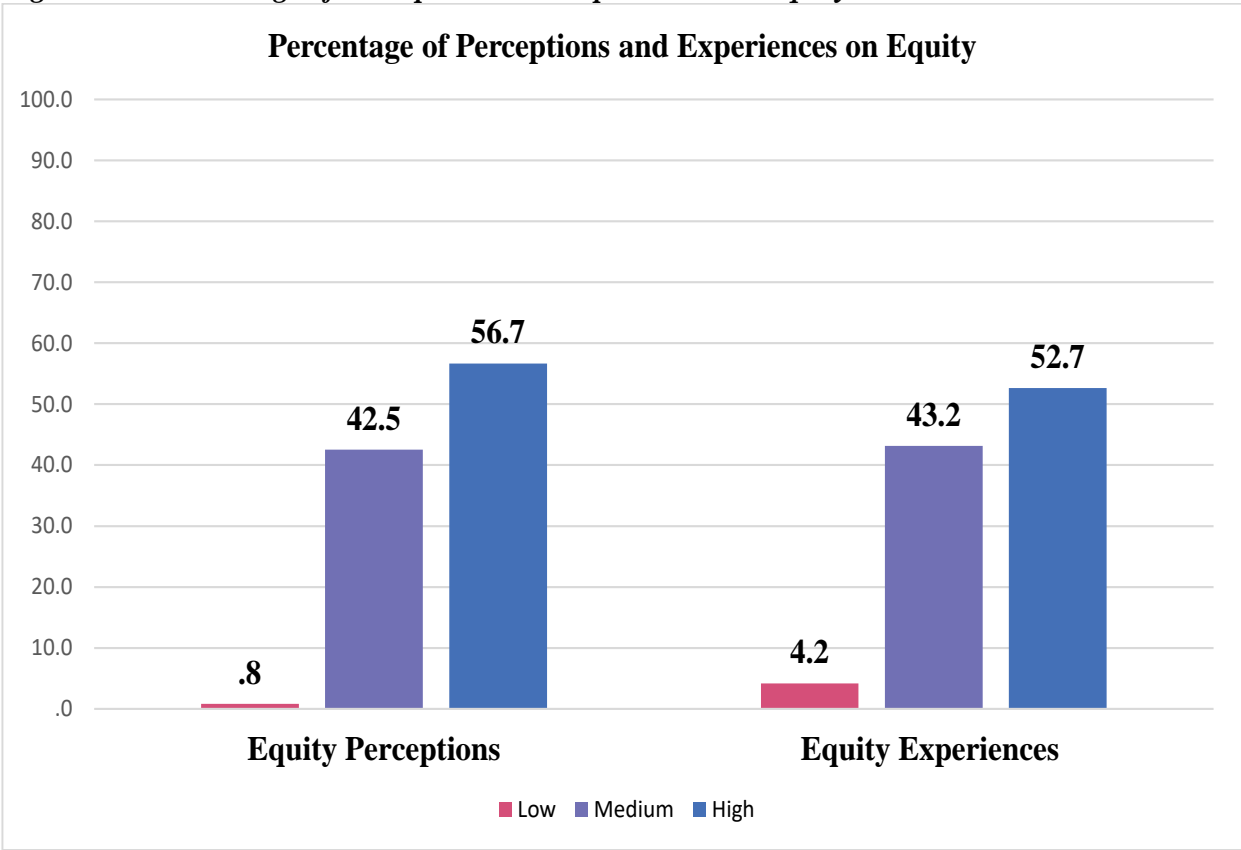
Table 7.3 Statements Measuring the Principle of Equity

EQUITY		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Perceptions	24. Schools should offer educational opportunities to students according to their abilities.	11.2%	4.7%	12.9%	15.3%	55.9%
	27. Students should enroll into those schools that offer programs based on their skills.	3.0%	3.9%	15.0%	21.3%	56.8%
	30. Successful students should solve more difficult exercises*.	18.0%	8.9%	19.8%	23.3%	30.0%
	33. During assessment, meritocracy should be taken into consideration.	1.1%	1.2%	6.3%	14.7%	76.7%
	36. Teachers should favor successful students*.	47.9%	11.2%	15.0%	8.9%	17.0%
Experiences	39. In my school, successful students are offered opportunities that help them improve their skills, talents.	8.2%	10.3%	16.2%	19.3%	45.9%
	42. In my school, students can enroll into courses based on their skills.	13.1%	11.8%	18.4%	19.9%	36.8%
	45. Successful students are given more difficult exercises.	9.3%	7.9%	16.8%	26.4%	39.6%
	48. Students in my school are assessed based on what they merit.	6.1%	5.3%	14.0%	20.9%	53.7%
	51. In my school, teachers pay more attention to successful students.	20.6%	11.6%	21.0%	18.3%	28.4%

Note. *Reversed scores for negative items

Table 7.3 presents in detail that the highest agreement for perception is for assessment criteria following meritocracy (76.7%). In addition, surveyed Matura students believe that students should enroll into those schools that offer programs based on their skills (56.8%), followed by opportunities offered based on abilities (55.9%), successful students should be given difficult exercises (30%), and the least agreed statement of teachers favoring successful students (17%). Their experiences with equity are somehow similar to their understanding of equity. Students assessed based on meritocracy have reported the highest agreement (53.7%), followed by division of opportunities (45.9%), exercises (39.6%), courses (36.9%), and attention given to successful students (28.4%).

Figure 7.11 Percentage of Perceptions and Experiences on Equity



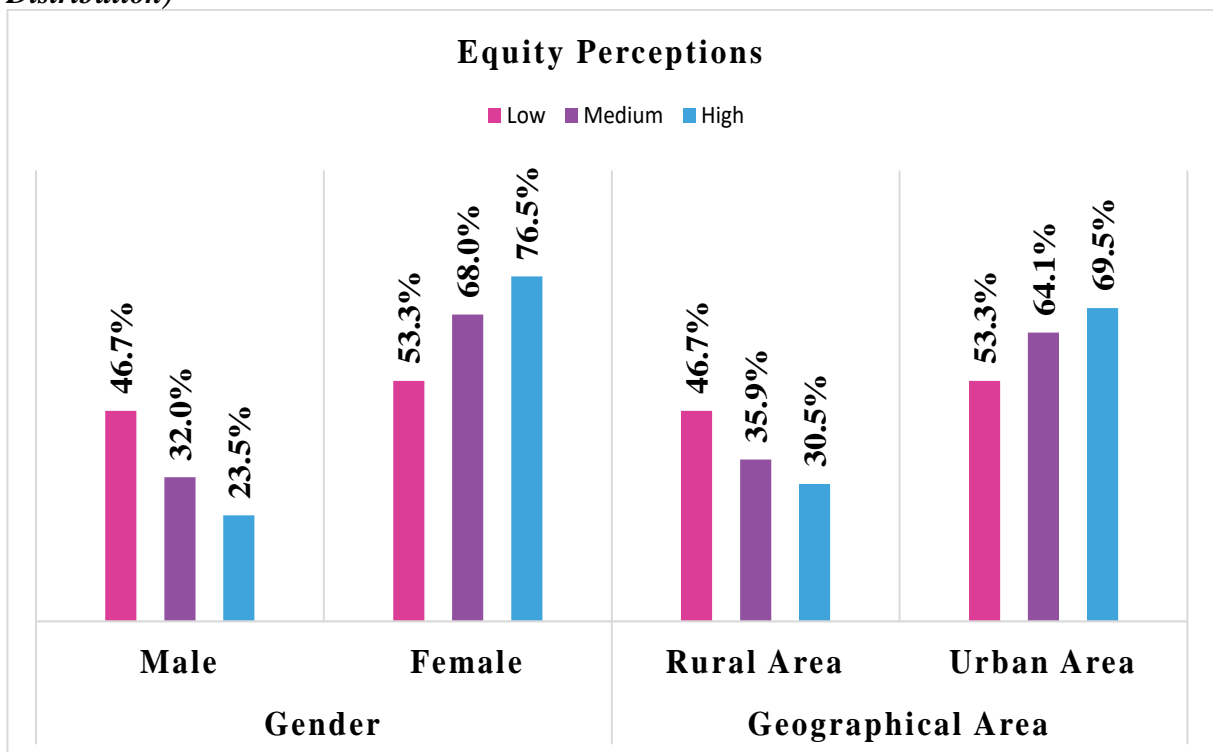
Note. N = 1846 Values reported out of Low, Moderate, High

Referring to Figure 7.11, which provides in a condensed manner the findings for perceptions and experiences of equity, the majority of respondents for both equity perceptions (56.7%) and experiences (52.7%) have a high level of agreement with resource distribution following the principle of equity. In the wider context, this agreement for equity or meritocracy is supported by right-liberals who defend the maximization of

opportunity and distribution based on how much one contributes, which suggests meritocracy as a principle. Similarly, left-liberals, due to the difference principle, protect the compensation of the talented. Nevertheless, for liberals, the skilled should be prioritized only if it serves the benefits of the least advantaged in long term (Rawls, 1971/1999). The charts below present more details on equity perception and experiences cross-tabulated with sociodemographic characteristics.

7.4.1 Equity Perceptions

Figure 7.12 Levels of Agreement for Equity Perceptions (Gender and Geographical Area Distribution)



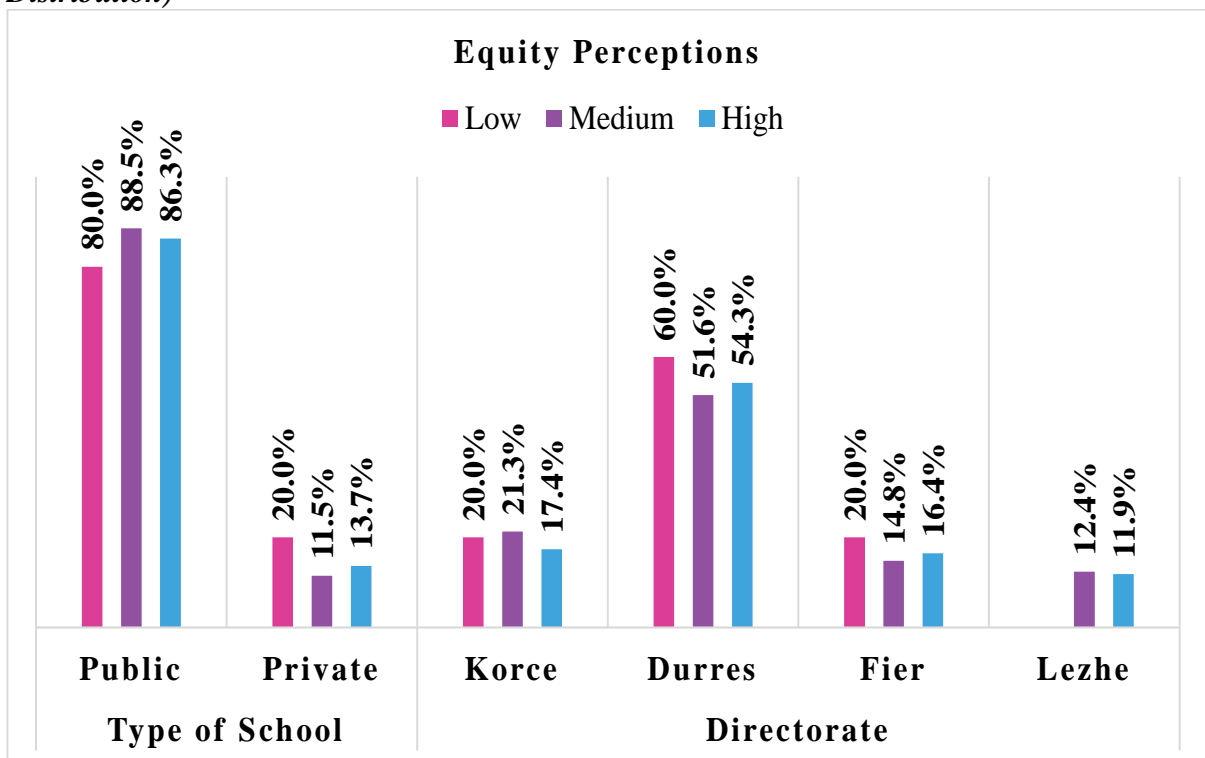
Note. Statement 24, 27, 30, 33, 36)

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

Figure 7.12 shows equity perception results as per gender and geographical area distribution. Equity, perceived as a principle of distribution of resources, is reported by females (76.5% high level of agreement), but not by males, who disagree (46.7% low level of agreement). Given the social and cultural attitude towards females in Albanian society, where they are discouraged because of their gender, female students in this study are in

favor of recognition of meritocracy during resource distribution in education. The results are in disagreement with Faniko, Lorenzi-Cioldi, and Buschini's (2010) study where males were found to support meritocracy more. In addition, differences are observed based on the geographical area because Matura students from urban areas support equity (69.5% for a high level of agreement), while those from rural ones do not (report a low level of agreement with equity 46.7%). This makes students from urban areas emphasize equity more than those in rural areas given that urban schools are overpopulated, there is more competition, and recognition of meritocracy may be necessary.

Figure 7.13 Levels of Agreement for Equity Perceptions (Type of School and Directorate Distribution)



Note. Statement 24, 27, 30, 33, 36

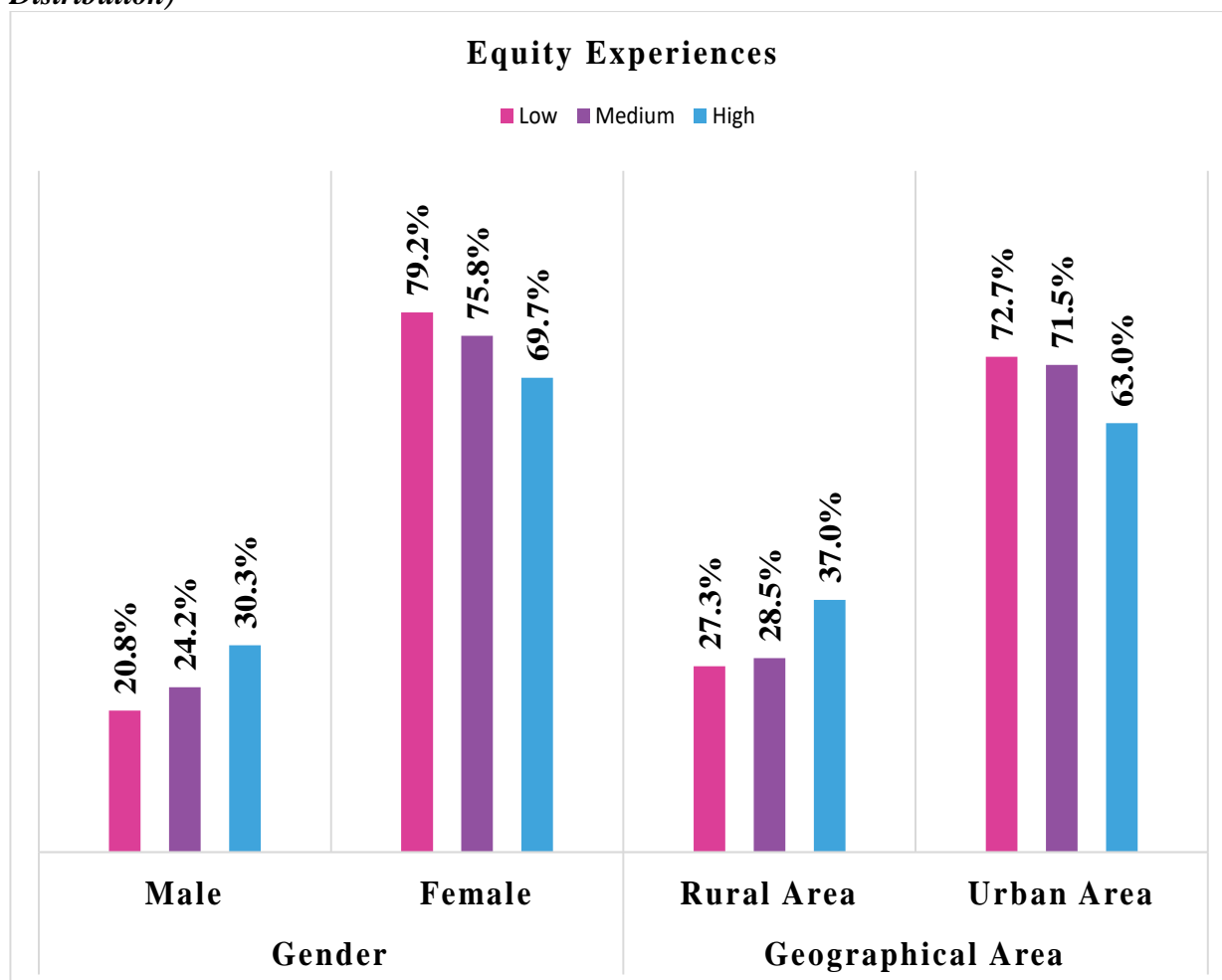
Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

As for the perception of equity, despite students at private schools disagreeing with equity as a principle of resource distribution in the school environment (favoring a low agreement with 20%), those of public schools show no significant difference. Students from the directorate of Durres disagree (show a low level of agreement by 60%), similar to those in

Fier (20% favor a low level of agreement) and those in Lezha who are between a medium and high level of agreement.

7.4.2 Equity Experiences

Figure 7.14 Levels of Agreement for Equity Experiences (Gender and Geographical Area Distribution)



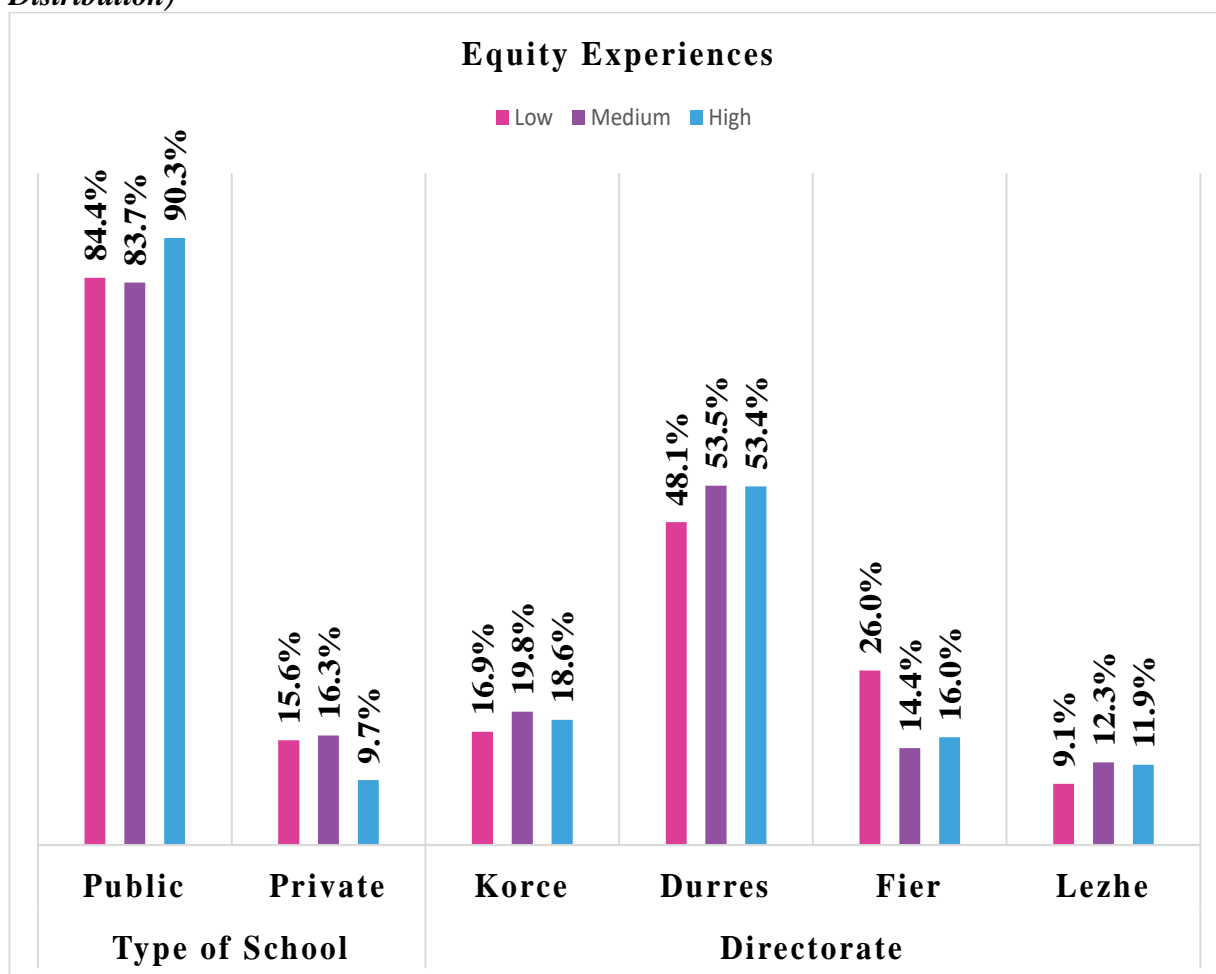
Note. Statement 39, 42, 45, 48, 51

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

As concerns experiences of equity in the school environment, gender differences are revealed because males agree (high level of agreement 30%) and females disagree (report a low level of agreement 79.2%) that based on their experience, equity has been applied as a principle of resource distribution. Unfortunately, Albanian society, being still under the influence of the patriarchal family, has led to females having a lower social and

economic status compared to males (INSTAT, 2007; The World Bank, 2020). Females are also given less credit in the workplace and are offered fewer opportunities, regardless of their educational attainment. Under such circumstances, what females are offered in schools resembles a projection of the social and economic background of society. Moreover, there are found geographical area differences because students of rural areas agree (report a high level of agreement 37%) and those in urban areas are in between the low and medium level of agreement (72% and 71%), thus disagreeing with equity experienced in their school environment. These findings are uncharacteristic of the geographical areas given that based on other statistics, there is an inequitable source distribution, mainly for schools in disadvantaged areas (Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure) - Albania, 2022). However, again this may be explained by the fact that urban schools are overcrowded, and this leads to inequitable resource distribution in these schools. The teacher-student ratio in urban schools with fewer teachers responding to an increased number of students may have led to students in urban areas disagreeing that resources are distributed based on equity.

Figure 7.15 Levels of Agreement for Equity Experiences (Type of School and Directorate Distribution)



Note. Statement 39, 42, 45, 48, 51

Levels of agreement: Low: 0-33; Medium: 34-66; High: 67-100

As observed in Figure 7.15, for the type of schools, students at public schools tend to agree (90.3% high level of agreement) while those of private schools have a medium level of agreement that resource distribution in their schools has followed the principle of equity and meritocracy, even though there is no significant difference. However, this is in contradiction with the literature on this matter because socio-economic conditions (like family income) may affect the educational attainment of individuals and rich children would benefit more from education compared to the ones simply with better abilities (Machin & Vignoles, 2004). The well-offs, who due to better conditions are sent to private schools, are offered more resources and opportunities, and can improve their skills. Regarding experiences of equity per directorate, no significant differences are observed

among the four directorates. Some schools in the directorate of Fier (Gjirokaster 19.26% of schools) are known to have collective classes with two different classes being held into one (National Strategy of Education 2021-2026, 2021, p. 38). This can probably explain the disagreement of students in the directorate of Fier with resource distribution in schools based on equity.

7.4.3 Findings for Equity

Overall, respondents report lower scores (52.7%) about experiences related to equity at their school premises compared with perceptions of equity (56.7%), indicating that there are chances that they are undecided if they fully agree to have experienced/witnessed the distribution of resources or rewards to each based on meritocracy. Perceptions and experiences of equity among Matura students differ based on respondents' sociodemographic profiles. Females were more likely to be in favor of equity than males, while males were more likely to report positive experiences related to the concept of equity. Even though respondents attending both types of schools were likely to share similar perceptions of equity, they differ in experiencing the principle of equity with graduates of public schools more likely to share positive experiences on equity. Respondents residing in rural areas were more likely to report positive experiences of equity. Similarly, students of urban areas report disagreement (low level of agreement) with equity experienced in their school, but a high level of agreement with the division of resources done according to the principle of equity.

For **equity**, these findings suggest that respondents report lower levels of experiences (52.7%) related to equity at their school premises compared with perceptions of equity (56.7%). Recognition of meritocracy or talent in schools is essential because individuals are characterized by differences in abilities, intelligence, and traits. Trying to demonstrate that they are equal is in itself an issue of injustice (Flew, 1976) because it automatically neglects equity. Perceptions and experiences on equity among high school seniors differ

based on respondents' sociodemographic profiles. Experiences and perceptions of equity were affected by gender and geographical area. Data indicate that females were more likely to be in favor of equity than males, while males were more likely to report positive experiences related to the concept of equity explained by the supportive and encouraging approach of the society to males, contrarily with that towards females. Students from urban areas emphasized equity more than those in rural areas, given that in urban areas there is more population and as a result competition as well. In terms of experience, students in rural areas report having experienced equity and those in urban areas are in between the low and medium level of agreement (72% and 71%) with equity experienced in their school environment. Almost no significant differences were found for type of school because students at public schools tended to agree (90.3% high level of agreement) while those of private schools have a low and medium level of agreement with experiences of equity revealing no significant differences. In the same way, despite students at private schools disagreeing with equity as a principle of resource distribution in the school environment (favoring a low agreement 20%), those of public schools show no significant difference. Compensation for the talented is an important requirement for left liberals together with the benefits provided to the least advantaged (Rawls, 1971/ 1999). Conclusively, the third hypothesis (RH3), that experiences and perceptions differ based on students' sociodemographic profile is **partially fulfilled**.

7.5 Principles of Distributive Justice, Experience and Perception Relation

RQ4: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Albanian high school seniors?

Table 7.4 Correlations Table of Experiences and Perceptions for Equality, Need, and Equity

Relations	Sig. (2-tailed) - <i>p</i>	Pearson Correlation
Equality Experiences and Perceptions	.000	.208**
Need Experiences and Perceptions	.000	.214**
Equity Experiences and Perceptions	.000	-.100**

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=1846

As shown in Table 7.4, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between equality-related experiences and perceptions. The findings reveal a moderate positive correlation between the two variables, $r(1844)=.208$, $p=.000$. This means that although both variables tend to go up in response to one another, the relationship between them is not very strong. In the same way, the Pearson correlation test demonstrated that experiences and perceptions of the principle of need were significantly related, $r(1844) = .214$, $p = .000$. Based on the results, a moderate positive correlation exists between experiences and perceptions of the principle of need. Again, even though both variables tend to go up in response to one another, the relationship between them is not very strong. For the correlation between experiences and perceptions of equity in the school environment, the results of the Pearson correlation coefficient demonstrate that there is a significant negative correlation between the two variables, $r(1844) = -.100$, $p = .000$. Although a weak negative correlation characterizes this relation, to affirm that when Matura students face positive experiences on equity, they will be less likely to share positive perceptions of equity (or vice versa), further studies are needed. It is also to be considered that other factors may interfere and be the cause of such a connection. However, if we refer to the findings of experienced and understood equity, for females, equity is experienced less as a principle of resource distribution in schools, and therefore females highly report equity as a principle. Following the same rationale, it is because equity is experienced less by students at urban schools, and it is reported by them as a principle of resource distribution.

Overall, the three principles of distributive justice revealed correlation between experiences and perceptions. This means that experiences in schools of these principles were correlated with how Matura students perceive them, thus exposing that experiences are connected to perceptions Matura students have of each principle.

Table 7.5 Regressions Table of Experiences and Perceptions for Equality, Need, and Equity

<i>Relations</i>	R Square	Sig.	B
Equality Experiences and Perceptions	0.43	.000 ^b	.150

Need Experiences and Perceptions	.045	.000 ^b	.120
Equity Experiences and Perceptions	.010	.000 ^b	-.089

a. Dependent Variable: Perceptions Recoded b. Predictors: (Constant), Experiences Recoded

Table 7.5 demonstrates simple linear regression used to predict if experiences of equality significantly predict perceptions of equality. The overall regression is statistically significant, $R^2 = .043$, $F(1, 1844) = 83.7$, $p = .000$. The results of the regression indicated that experiences of equality explained 4.3% of the variation in perceptions of the principle of equality. The regression coefficient ($B=.150$) indicated that an increase in experiences of equality corresponds to an increase of .150 points in equality perceptions score. These results indicate that other factors may contribute to the perception of this principle. Further studies may investigate the impact of the communist legacy, parents' system of values, or teachers' system of values on youngsters' values.

As can be observed from the same Table, a moderate positive correlation exists between experiences and perceptions on the principle of need, suggesting that even though both variables tend to go up in response to one another, the relationship between them is not very strong. The results of the regression indicated that experiences of need explained 4.6% of the variation in perceptions regarding the principle of need with a regression coefficient ($B=.120$). This means that experiences of need are correlated with perception of need. Again, given that experiences of need in the school environment explain only 4.6% of perceptions of need, other factors may contribute to this perception like students' socio-economic background.

Lastly, for the principle of equity, the overall regression was statistically significant ($R^2 = .010$, $F(1, 1844) = 18.7$, $p=.000$). The results of the regression indicated that experiences on equity explained 1% of the variation in perceptions regarding the principle of equity. The regression coefficient ($B=-.089$) indicated that an increase in experiences corresponds to a decrease in perceptions score of .089 points. While the fourth hypothesis ***RH4: There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students*** is verified for the principles of equality and need, it is not fulfilled

for equity, making it only **partially fulfilled**. The connection between the experiences of these principles and how they understand them, once more, suggests that schools affect the reconstruction of values. For more details on each principle refer to Appendix C.

7.6 Discussion and Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, this study revealed that regarding the perception of distributive justice principles, Matura students highlight equality as the principle with the highest percentage of agreement (86.2%), followed by need (85.2%), and equity (56.7%). Equality prevails for the perception of educational opportunities (90.7%); need perception prevails with the distribution of exercises (69.4%); and perception of equity in assessment prevails 76.7%. For experience, equality prevails 74%, with assessment done based on the same criteria 79.5%, followed by need 57% with students in need given exercises that help them improve their proficiency 71.8%, and equity at 52.7% with students assessed based on what they merit 74.6%.

The low agreement for meritocracy and need requires attention. In this study, teacher-student relations based on students self-reporting experiences were 56.8% strongly agreeing for teachers equally treating students, 31,4% for teachers respecting students with needs, and 28.4% for teachers respecting students based on meritocracy. The literature in this regard warned that the relationship between teachers and students is that of the oppressor and the oppressed (Freire, 1970). The way students are treated is important because it can cause the reproduction of an existing relationship between classes in society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977/ 1990). Schools should offer experiences to the benefit of all (Brighouse, 2006). However, one of the main reasons for ineffective resource distribution in education in Albania relates to changes in the number of students in rural and urban areas (OECD, 2020). In the current study, the differences detected due to sociodemographic characteristics like gender, geographical area, and type of school can be explained in relation to the differences in students' socioeconomic backgrounds (Njësia për Sektorin e Arsimit Rajoni i Europës dhe Azisë Qendrore, 2014).

Socio-demographic Differences in Experiences and Perceptions of Distributive Justice

For distributive justice, it was hypothesized that Matura students' perceptions and experiences of principles of distributive justice will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (RH3). For the principle of equality, it was found that perceptions of equality differed by **gender** and **type of school**, but respondents' perceptions of the principle of equality were not affected by geographical area and directorate affiliation. As for experiences of equality, findings reveal that experiences of equality differed based on **type of school, directorate, and geographical area**, but not gender. For the principle of need, findings demonstrate that students' perception of need in the school environment differ based on respondents' gender, but no significant differences were found for type of school and geographical areas despite the tendency of the rural and private school respondents to disagree with need as a principle of distribution. However, their experiences of need **differed** based on **gender, type of school, and geographical area**, thus making male respondents, those attending public schools and those residing in rural areas more likely to share positive experiences on needs in the school environment. Perceptions of equity differed based on **gender and geographical area**; experiences differed based on **type of school, gender, and geographical area**. As observed, division into directorates, apart from experiences of equality, does not make a difference for other principles. Nevertheless, social, cultural and economic factors together with the communist background may have contributed to these differences. The third hypothesis (RH3), that experiences and perceptions of principles of distributive justice differ based on students' sociodemographic profile is **partially fulfilled**.

Correlation and Regression of Experiences and Perception

Similarly, it was hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice principles among Matura students (RH4). For the three principles, a correlation exists between experiences and perceptions. The highest correlation was found for the principle of need (4.6%), followed by the principle of equality (4.3%) and equity (1%). Apart from equality and need which were characterized

by a moderate positive correlation, the principle of equity is characterized by a weak negative correlation between experiences and perception of the principle in the school environment. This indicates that while the above hypothesis (RH4) is verified for the principles of equality and need, it is not fulfilled for equity, making it only **partially fulfilled**.

The relation found between perceptions and experiences is in line with what has been suggested by Fischer and Skitka (2006) for whom the way individuals are treated influences their understanding of justice. Similarly, they are in accordance with Rasooli's (2021) study who suggested that a weak positive correlation exists between experiences and perceptions specifically for the principle of equality in the school environment. This is significant for the way distribution of resources in schools is done and how it influences students. This means that the way resources are distributed relates to students' understanding of these values. The opportunities youngsters are offered in education are related to their understanding of these values. And belief in principles of distributive justice is a matter that concerns democracy. If, democracy in Albania is to be constructed internally, having youngsters that share such values fulfils this aim.

Overall, the highest agreement in perception is with the principle of equality. This order, however, is in disagreement with Piaget (1969) and Damon (1977) who found that early ages prioritize equality (8-11), but older ones prioritize equity and need making youngsters of older ages take into account personal differences when thinking of distributive justice. Nevertheless, the tendency to value equality was also found by Kocani (1999) in a study conducted more than two decades earlier in which was noted the presence of communism-influenced principles next to democratic values in adults in the early years of post-communist Albania.

For sure, equality is important in democracy, especially in the case of equal rights of citizens, equality of votes and access to public discussions and debates in direct democracy, and equality in membership in participatory democracy. However, it may also result in inequalities. Distributive justice as an important component of justice, at the same

time as crucial pillar of values distinguished in democracy, aims not only equality, but also recognition of equity and need. Matura students' agreement with equality as a principle and its experiences (74%) is to be looked at with caution, because of communist background of Albania and similar results found in other post-communist countries given that it is difficult to eradicate such beliefs in time (Costa-Font, García-Hombrados, & Nicińska, 2020). The trust they have demonstrated in equality requires consideration. This finding may also be typical of countries with a communist background. Nevertheless, it is important to observe how political culture orients itself in the long run. Currently, equality and need are the values these Matura students highlight. The fact they also report need is another call from this political culture. They highlight it but have experienced it less. This demand indicates more priority should be given to groups in need. Naturally, building a democratic and stable society requires consideration of others and specifically the ones in need to understand how it impacts everyone's children and society in general (Noddings, 1998).

Matura students' both perception (52.7%) and experiences of equity (56.7%) are lower when compared to the other two principles of distributive justice. It is important that these youngsters reflect more consideration of equity. The recognition of meritocracy is important in democracy. Likewise, the presence of equity in education is a priority in OECD countries because education impacts the individual and the society. Having an understanding of distributive principles is later reflected in the way the community is formed (Garvin, 1945). This way, schools can be an embodiment of a democratic society (McCowan, 2010).

8 CHAPTER 8: OVERALL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter finalizes the thesis by bringing into attention two important elements. Initially it presents an overall discussion on the implications of the sociodemographic variables like gender, geographical area, type of school and directorate with the value of freedom and distributive justice in a comparative perspective. Secondly, it considers the overall contribution of the findings for both values to the internal democratization of Albania. The chapter ends with conclusion, limitations and further implications brought by the study.

8.1 Overall Discussion

Although some discussion has been presented in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven of this thesis for each value separately, some more attention is necessary on both freedom and distributive justice. The discussion highlights two standpoints: both values discussed from a comparative perspective and an overall consideration of how Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom and distributive justice at schools contributes to the consolidation of democracy in Albania. The aim of this section is to give an overall discussion of the impact that socio-demographic characteristics of schools have on perceptions and experiences of these two values and the general relation to the internal democratization of Albania. By focusing on socio-demographic variables and comparing these values, some similarities and differences will be put forward. The results discussed here are a concentrate of the results presented in chapters six and seven. This crosstabulation conducted with questions of the questionnaire and the variables in discussion is reflected below into four parts based on the four independent variables (gender, geographical area, type of schools and directorates) used in this study, summarized in the tables below. (Table 8.1, Table 8.2)

Table 8.1 Summarized Crosstabulation of Perception and Experienced Freedom with Sociodemographic Variables

Socio-demographic Variables	Gender		Geographical Area		Type of School		Directorates	
	Male-Female	%	Urban-Rural	%	Public-Private	%	Durres, Fier, Lezha, Korca	%
Freedom								
F. Expression Perception	Males D and SD Females SA	50% and 46.7% 73.90%	Urban D Rural SD	85.70% 53.30%	Public SD Private U	93.30% 28.80%	Korça D Lezhe SA	42.90% 12.20%
F. Expression Experience	Males SD Females SD <u>No Difference</u>	33.3% 66.7 %	Urban D Rural SA	84.30% 36.60%	Public SA Private SD, D	90.10% 33.3% and 33.3%	Fier and Lezhe SA Durres SD	18.0% and 13.5% 84.40%
F. Action Perception	Males D Females SA	40.70% 74.20%	Urban U Rural D	75.80% 48.10%	Public SA, SD Private D, U <u>No Difference</u>	90% 89.9% 24.1% 22.4%	Lezha SA Durres D	13.40% 64.80%
F. Action Experience	Males SD Females SA	45.80% 74.50%	Rural SA Urban U	36.60% 79.80%	Public SA Private D	90.30% 28.20%	Fier SA Durres SD	17% 83.30%
F. Choice Perception	Males SD Females A, D <u>No Difference</u>	40% 74.1% 70.0%	Rural U, SA Urban D, A <u>No Difference</u>	35.6% 35% 74 % 72.3%	Public D Private D <u>No Difference</u>	88.8% 30%	Korça U Durres D	27.20% 74%
F. Choice Experience	Males SD Females D <u>No Difference</u>	35.9% 76.3%	Rural SA Urban SD	38.20% 84.60%	Public SA Private SD	90.80% 30.80%	Fier SA Durres SD	19% 74.40%

Note. SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

For directorate, only directorates with significant differences were reflected.

For more information on perception and experience differences on freedom refer to the figures in chapter 6 (from Figure 6.7 to Figure 6.20).

Table 8.2 Summarized Crosstabulation of Perception and Experienced Distributive Justice with Sociodemographic Variables

Socio-demographic Variables	Gender		Geographical Area		Type of School		Directorates	
	Male-Female	%	Urban-Rural	%	Public-Private	%	Durres, Fier, Lezha, Korca	%
Equality Perception	Males Low	62.5%	Urban Medium	72%	Public High	87.8%	Durres Low	75%
	Females High	73.9%	Rural Low	50%	Private Low	25%	Fier High	16%
Equality Experience	Males High	27.7%	Urban Low	79.5%	Public High	88.8%	Durres Low Korça, High Fier, High Lezha High	63%
	Females Low, High	77.3% 72.3%	Rural High	35.9%	Private Low	18%		20%
	No Difference							17% 18.2%
Need Perception	Males High	27.7%	Urban Medium High	69.8% 66.9%	Public High	87.2%	Korca Low Durres Low Fier Medium Lezha Medium	44.4%
	Females Low	88.9%	Rural Low	77.8%	Private Low	22.2%		55.6% 17.7% 17%
Need Experience	Males High	31.3%	Urban Low	80.7%	Public High	89.7%	Durres Low	59.1%
	Females Low	80.7%	Rural High	37.7%	Private Low	22.1%	Fier High	17.1%
Equity Perception	Males High	46.7%	Urban High	69.5%	Public Medium	88.5%	Korca Low Durres Low Fier Low Lezha Low	20%
	Females Low	76.5%	Rural Low	46.7%	Private Low	20%		60%
	No Difference							20% 12.4%
Equity Experience	Males High	30%	Urban Low, Medium	72% and 71%	Public High	90.3%	Korca Medium Durres Medium Fier Low Lezha Medium	19.8%
	Females Low	79.2%	Rural High	37%	Private Medium	16.3%		53.3%
	No Difference							26.0% 12.3%

Note. Levels of Agreement: Low, Medium, High.

For directorates only significant differences of directorates were reflected

For more information on perception and experience differences on distributive justice refer to the figures in chapter 7 (from Figure 7.2 to Figure 7.15).

8.1.1 Gender Differences

When comparing both values, gender is observed to impact more distributive justice than freedom. Only equality experiences are not affected by gender differences, while need and equity perceptions and experiences change dependent on gender (Table 8.2). For freedom, no gender differences were observed, specifically for freedom of choice and experienced freedom of expression, indicating that gender is significant only for perception of freedom of expression, and freedom of action (both perception and experience). (Table 8.1)

Still for freedom, it is **males** that do not perceive freedom of expression (50% Disagree and 46.7% Strongly Disagree) and action (40.7% Disagree) as based on respecting ethics of communication, rationality and reasonableness, contrary to females (Strongly Agree 73.9% for freedom of expression) (Strongly Agree 74.2% for freedom of action). Males' understanding of freedom challenges somehow the liberal philosophy with freedom guided by reason (Hegel, 1991; Guyer, 2010), freedom of action based on rationality (Kant, 1785) and thought (Locke, 2017). The latter is a protection against cultural oppression, and the power and influence of the media (Crowder, 2015), all factors that can damage the internal democratization of a country.

On the other hand, for distributive justice, it is **females** that have reported disagreement with experiences of need (80.7% for Low level of agreement) and equity (79.2% for Low level of agreement) in their school environment, indicating that they are affected by these experiences in the school setting similarly as previously observed in other studies (Thomas and Berk, 1981). This perception of the school environment is connected to their self-control, management, academic and intellectual development (Wang & Holcombe, 2010), which in return are necessary for the quality of citizens in democracy. Specifically, their experiences of equity are reported as low, while their understanding of this principle is high (76.5% for high level of agreement), giving meaning to the negative correlation between them. It also points to the idea that female students have to work harder in schools. Their work and talent are not recognized and for this reason they highlight it. Female

students have experienced lack of fairness in schools even in US schools, particularly from teachers and peers (McBrien, 2009).

In addition, the findings of this study point to further implications related to gender roles in the Albanian society. It is mentioned in the literature that issues of justice in society are found in schools too (Harris, 2002). In our case, the Albanian society is patriarchal and discriminates females (INSTAT, 2007). This is a significant signal for how females are treated, their needs fulfilled, and talents recognized in schools because in democracies both genders are citizens with rights and contribute to the inner development and consolidation of democracy. Therefore, it should be considered how female students are treated in schools and how these educational institutions prepare them for life in democracy. Education can serve as a site of inclusion of both genders, given that democracy is better constructed collectively (European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2017). It is in schools that human resources, again important in democracies, are prepared (UN General Assembly, 2005). If we need internal democratization, then we have to pay attention to these characteristics because such domestic factors are significant for democratization (Freyburg & Richter, 2010). From a human resource development perspective, attention to both genders, specifically females, can provide once more a bottom-up, political culture-oriented approach to democratization. Furthermore, both genders through education can reach and maintain a balance between their self-development and the achievement of common will (Gutmann & Ben-Porath, 2015). Education is attributed the institutionalized effect in democratization by preparing citizens that will serve in its institutions (Fortunato & Panizza, 2015; Meyer, 1977; Murin & Wacziarg, 2014). If democracy is to be home grown, then local citizens, both males and females are expected to contribute by designing and operating its institutions (Inkeles, 1991), guided by these democratic values.

8.1.2 Geographical Area Differences

Geographical area was found to impact all the three principles of distributive justice: both perceptions and experiences, but not the same can be said for the value of freedom.

It is recognized that continuous changes in the number of students in rural and urban areas is one of the reasons of ineffective resource distribution in education in Albania (OECD, 2020). In the current study, students of urban areas reported disagreement with the experiences of equality (79.5% for low), need (80.7% for low) and equity (72% for low). Similarly, those of urban areas were disagreeing mostly with experiences of freedom of expression (84.3% Disagree), undecided for freedom of action (79.8%) and choice (84.6% Strongly Disagree), while those in rural schools were agreeing. However, for the value of freedom, no changes were observed only for perception of freedom of expression and choice (Table 8.1). It is interesting to notice and to some extent it is expected that students of rural areas agree with most of the experiences of freedom and distributive justice in schools.

Somehow, the findings revealed that students of **urban areas** were more critical to their experiences in schools when compared to the rural ones. It is the ones in rural areas that are more in agreement with what schools offer them. This may indicate a lack of criticism from their outlook to how they are treated and opportunities offered in schools. Differently from rural areas, urban ones are characterized by overpopulation, crowded classes, more heterogeneous backgrounds, mixed demographics, low teacher-student ratio, and competition. All these elements taken together have their say in how opportunities are translated into experiences of freedom and distributive justice in schools.

Having a critical outlook is necessary for democracy. It is essential that rural area students assess critically what they are offered in schools given that in some cases students are already appointed certain roles and positions (Yvonna S. Lincoln's, 1995). Otherwise, only some youngsters are promoted, leading to discrimination and lack of recognition of meritocracy. Therefore, the youth should be aware of such conditions and challenge these existing status-quo reflected in roles and positions in society.

In the same way, students of rural areas have disagreed with freedom of action relying on reasonableness, need and meritocracy applied as principles of distribution of resources. These are meaningful because they point to some values they share. No recognition of need

and meritocracy is not appropriate for democratization. It is similarly in conflict with the left-liberals for whom the talented should be compensated and the least advantaged be given benefits (Rawls, 1971/ 1999). Otherwise, we would be led to support what J.S. Mill maintained, that the political ability of the electorate is suspicious and the knowledgeable citizens should have more votes (Held, 2006).

In the same line, this study found a negative correlation (Table 8.4) between experiences and perceptions of equity for students of both areas. For students of urban areas, they demonstrated a low level of equity experienced in schools (72% highlighted low), but high level of perception (69.5% revealed high level of agreement). These students, due to lack of opportunities offered, lack of infrastructure in schools and overcrowded classes, reflect low experiences of equity, but highly value this principle in perception. On contrary, those of rural areas, report to have experienced it (37% for high level of agreement), but do not highlight it as a principle (46.7% for low). The low level of equity experienced in schools requires attention because meritocracy in education should not depend on students' social and economic status (Brighthouse, 2010). There is a reason why equity in education is a priority in OECD countries. In the end, education impacts one's life, job, earnings, positions, status, wealth and the whole society (Klees & Strike, 1976). Attempts to invest in human resources development, an integral part of internal democratization starts with education (Segalerba & Latyshev-Maysky, 2020). Overall, the geographical area of schools is significant for principles of distributive justice in both experiences in schools and perceptions, but for freedom it impacts only freedom of action, and experiences of freedom of expression and choice.

8.1.3 Type of School Differences

The type of school that Matura students frequent was significant for freedom of expression (perception and experience), experienced freedom of action and choice, but not perceptions of these types of freedom (Table 8.1). Private school students disagreed with the three types of experiences of freedom revealing that they were more critical when

compared to public school ones. It is unanticipated that they agree to have positive experiences of freedom in their schools, due to the state administration, crowded classes and lack of opportunities when compared to the ones in private schools. In reality, public schools' students may be the ones not offered experiences of freedom as recognized by the literature (Mill, 1859). It is state education that makes students lose their individuality by fabricating a similar type of citizenry which results in a lack of freedom and subordination (West, 1965).

Interestingly, for distributive justice, the type of school made no significant difference to the principle of equity (see Table 8.2). This means that no significant differences were found between students of public and non-public schools when it comes to perceptions and experiences of this principle. Conversely, this resulted different from what is mentioned in the literature because the type of school is related to the family's economic background. Students from more economically powerful status mostly will attend non-public schools. Therefore, under such conditions, the literature suggests that these students would advance more because of educational opportunities offered to them when compared to students having simply abilities and talents (Machin & Vignoles, 2004). Students coming from advantageous backgrounds are sent to private schools, are offered more resources and opportunities, and as a result improve their skills.

In contrast, the type of school was indicative for differences observed in perception and experiences of equality and need. While there is variation in the differences for types of freedom, for equality and need (perception and experience), students of public schools were in agreement with statements representing perceptions and experiences in schools (see Table 8.2). It is the ones of private schools that are critical of experiences of three types of freedom: expression, action and choice. This is both surprising and suspicious because students of public schools were expected to have criticism to what their schools offer them in terms of freedom. It is known that classes in such schools are crowded, with infrastructure and other opportunities that are missing. However, they are also pressured by state administration.

For experiences of need in schools, the results are unexpected because other findings suggest that needs of students, in particular of those with special needs, are not given attention in schools in Albania (European Commission, 2013). Following the rationale of the progressivists and liberals, needs of students have to be considered given that community is constructed including them and that they affect the whole society (Noddings, 1998). Thus, fulfilling the needs of the disadvantaged in education means projecting its outcomes in the long run.

Students studying in public schools come from a more disadvantaged background and these schools are under the administration of the state. This can explain the agreement with experiences. However, it does not necessarily indicate that students' needs are fulfilled because the division of schools into public and non-public schools itself is a source of exclusionary practices, inequities and therefore needs cannot be fulfilled (Boyle, Zhang, & Chan, 2014). Similarly, students of non-public schools demonstrated disagreement with perceptions and experiences of the principles of distributive justice (apart from equity). These differences were expected because students studying there are offered better, diverse resources and opportunities. Considering the correlation found between experiences and perceptions of these values, then in the case of distributive justice principles, an understanding of distributive principles impacts the way society is molded (Garvin, 1945). Overall, schools can serve as a preparation for a democratic society governed by its typical values (McCowan, 2010).

8.1.4 Directorate Differences

The directorate of schools of the Matura students under study revealed to be significant for the perceptions and experiences of all three types of freedom included in this study (see Table 8.1). On the contrary, for the principles of distributive justice, the directorate of schools demonstrated no differences in both perceptions and experiences of equity as well as perceptions of need (see Table 8.2). Directorate was significant only for perceptions and experiences of equality and need experience.

Interestingly, students participating from the directorate of Durres, revealed low level of agreement with statements representing perceptions of equality and experiences of both equality and need. Once more, the directorate of Durres, is characterized by students coming from mixed demographics, mixed populations, backgrounds. Many schools in this directorate are overpopulated. There is a lack of the necessary infrastructure and a low teacher-student ratio. As the literature notices, over the last thirty years, Albania has undergone many changes in the demographics due to the migration of the population from rural to urban areas, resulting in populated schools in cities like Tirana and Durres (OECD, 2020).

Similarly, we notice that the directorate of Durres is significant for the value of freedom. Students from this directorate were either strongly disagreeing with experiences of freedom of expression (84.4%), experienced freedom of action (83.3%) and choice (74.4%) or disagreeing with perception of freedom of choice (74%), and perception of freedom of action (64.8%). Overall, students from the directorate of Durres were the ones that disagreed the most when compared with students of other directorates. Once again, schools located in this directorate share some characteristics. Schools are overpopulated, the demographics and backgrounds of students are mixed. In some schools, the lack of infrastructure, need for new schools and more teaching staff is mirrored in disagreement with all experiences of freedom, and distributive justice, apart from equity. Experiences of freedom in schools are critical to how freedom is developed because freedom in education is promoted by developing one's capacities, improving skills, stimulating reflection, argumentation, questioning, and independent thinking (Roshwald, 2000). Freedom is also found in how the individual contributes to the community (Dewey, 1916).

Students of this directorate had low agreement with experiences of three forms of freedom in schools. This means that their school experience had not served to develop their communication skills, take action and choices based on rationality. In this regard, for freedom of expression, and action, Freire criticized schools for developing cultures of silencing and oppression (Freire, 1970). The consolidation of democracy requires exchange of arguments and criticism between its main actors to issues to achieve ideals

such as that of deliberative democracy (Hanson and Howe, 2011). Debate and communication are part of democratic virtues necessary in democracy (Fishkin & Luskin, 1999).

While for the directorate of Fier, students studying in the schools of this directorate, are the ones that tend to mostly agree or have a high level of agreement. For instance, they strongly agree with experiences of freedom of action (17%) and expression (18.0%) and have a high level of agreement with experiences of need (17.1% for high), equality (17.1% for high) and perceptions of equality (16% for high). There exists another element that distinguishes the directorate of Durres with the one of Fier. The directorate of Durres encompasses schools in major cities like: Tirana, Durres and populated areas like Kamez. Beside this, this directorate includes the largest number of non-public schools in the country. As already mentioned above, and expected, the type of school that students frequent is an important factor given the opportunities that it offers. Non-public schools are attended only by those students who come from an advantageous background, and the literature on this regard maintains that students of different economic backgrounds, given that they frequent different types of schools, are offered different opportunities (Hoskins and Janmaat, 2019).

Another important element to be noted is the fact that students from the directorate of Fier are in agreement with many experiences that their schools offer like: for freedom of action, expression, need and equality. The majority of the students in this directorate study in public schools. These schools are under the state administration and influenced by its control. Furthermore, this sameness of agreement is criticized by literature specifically when it comes to the perceptions and experiences of equality in schools because they neglect talent and need (Noddings, 2008). The equalization of educational practices in school is unfair in itself (Shyman, 2013). And as already noted in Chapter Seven, belief in equality is one of the remains of communism, so present in countries with this background (Costa-Font, García-Hombrados, & Nicińska, 2020).

Another interesting finding discussed is the fact that directorate made no difference for need perception and equity (perception and experiences) (see Table 8.2), while revealing differences in all types of freedom (see Table 8.1). Students of the four directorates demonstrated no difference when asked about their perception of needs in schools. This suggests that the division into four directorates is not significant for students because even in the directorate of Durres, the demographics is mixed with students belonging to both advantageous and disadvantageous backgrounds. In this way, the perception they have of need is not dependent on how directorates are divided. Moreover, as already mentioned for the type of school, directorate revealed no differences for equity. Students' perceptions and experiences of equity do not change based on directorate. This suggests that, concerning investment in schools as part of the internal democratization efforts, more than focusing on equity and need as per directorate differences, improvement in schools should be done based on type of school and geographical area.

8.1.5 Reflections on Contributions of Matura Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Freedom and Distributive Justice at Schools towards Consolidated Democracy in Albania

Considering the problems with democracy around the world and the insufficiency of externally promoted democratization, internally-based democratization has been the main track of this thesis. The lack of dedication to democratic values is seen as a problem of democratization itself. In this context, one of the current problematic issues of democracy is the characteristics of political culture in a country (Taylor, 2020). It is never static and changes in time dependent on the source that furnishes its values (Heck, 2004). The development of democratic political culture is an investment for competencies needed in a democratic society. This democratic society is the one that can construct democracy internally (Inkeles, 1991; Carr & Lund, 2011). Education is one factor which political thought is dependent on (Jacoby, 1988). The quality of democracy is defined by the virtues and values citizens have (Almond & Verba, 1989; Putnam, 2000) and schools are among the main components that influence the way individuals conceptualize politics and democracy (Print, 2007). This way education sets favorable grounds for democracy

(Fukuyama, 1992), and becomes a necessary condition for it (Lipset, 1959), thus contributing to the consolidation of democracy. Counting these, the current study sourced from the idea that education is an instrument that impacts internal democratization through the development of political culture.

Formal education is an internal democratization factor. It deals with the quality of the citizens, feeds political culture, offers sustainable change during democratization, and changes values. In Albania, attempts made through the EU conditionality and the political exportation of democracy resulted to be insufficient democratization mechanisms. The recent classification of Albania as a flawed democracy with fragile civil liberties, political rights, and problems with liberties and equality, has pointed to the need for the internal democratization of Albania. As democracy is the rule of the majority, then the quality of these citizens is significant for democracy. The requirement for a bottom-up democratization process has led to considerations over education.

As a response to the main research question: “How is education in Albania contributing to democratization through the internalization of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice among Matura youngsters?”, this study provided the following explanations.

First and foremost, education is offering experiences of freedom and distributive justice to these students. The results on these youngsters are significant because in Albania, particularly freedom of expression and equality between genders are problematic areas (European Commission, 2021; European Commission, 2022). Considering their experiences is meaningful because experiences within the school context are effectful for value education (Snook, 2007). Based on the results of this study, Matura youngsters have reported agreement with experiences of freedom. Practices of freedom in schools are a useful way for stimulating and advancing democracy through education (Perry-Hazan, 2015). However, this result needs to be considered with caution, given that in their responses there is a high agreement with experiences of freedom in schools where school experience is reported to have had a beneficial impact. What the literature warns in this

regard is the high agreement with what schools offer because the high agreement leads to subordination, and submission. This subordination, indirectly can serve any dominant authority, thus damaging citizens in democracy. In this regard, education as a process and educational institutions target individuals sustainably and perpetuates its political culture. Regarding experiences, Matura youngsters believe schools promote equality and this signifies that education to their perception is prioritizing sameness. This uniformity which undermines the uniqueness of individuals produces the same type of citizenry easy to be dominated. The fact that freedom and distributive justice are present in education suggests their perpetuation because schools are self-generating instruments (Costa, 2009) and when used properly, can contribute to social stability (Brooke and Frazer, 2010).

Furthermore, these experiences vary based on the **socio-demographic** characteristics of schools. This study exposed the fact that experiences and perceptions of freedom and distributive justice in the school environment change based on sociodemographic characteristics of schools (RH1: Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (gender, geographical area, school type, and General Directorate of Pre-University Education affiliation). RH3: Matura students' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (gender, geographical area, school type, and General Directorate of Pre-University Education affiliation)). As a consequence, factors related to the social and economic context of schools should not be underestimated (Buchmann & Hannum, 2001). Sociodemographic characteristics like gender, school geographical area, type of school, and directorate, as discussed above, impact democratic values in the school environment in how they are experienced and perceived.

Students from urban schools, the directorate of Durrës, and private schools are critical to their experiences of freedom in schools. Female students and those in urban areas are less experiencing resource distribution based on need and equity. There are social, cultural, and economic factors related to schools beyond the socio-demographic variables used in the study, the influence of which is felt. In Albania, the migration of the population after the 1990s created overcrowded urban schools that lacked facilities and human resources

to cope with the increasing number of students. On the other hand, satellite schools and collective classes were formed in rural areas in order to justify the insufficient number of students in these areas. To these socio-economic factors, we can add the discriminatory social and cultural approach to females in Albanian society. These are some of the possible reasons related to the country's background that are reflected in schools. This means that the socio-economic factors reflected in schools impact students in varied ways and forms based on these factors.

Based on the empirical evidence, this study identified that students under study believe freedom relies on rationality, agree having experienced freedom in their school environment; highlight equality as a principle of distribution of resources, followed by need and less equity, and have experienced more equality when compared to need and equity. Keeping in mind the Albanian context, Matura students under study value both freedom and particularly equality. Belief in the version of positive freedom is a promising sign in terms of internal democratization. However, it is to be cautious with how much they agree with equality and less with other principles of distribution. It is of great interest to consider the perceptions that youngsters in this study have of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice because values define the quality of democracy (Almond & Verba, 1989; Putnam, 2000) and furnish political culture (Duch & Gibson, 1992). When it comes to Matura students' perception of principles of distributive justice, the principle of equality is still a highly valued principle, together with need, but less for equity. High agreement with equality indicates that remains of the communist ideology are still present, and their perceptions are more in line with socialism. Similarly, high agreement with perception of need and less with experience is another warning for proper fulfillment of youngsters needs in schools. These beliefs are crucial to consider because it is the values that citizens share that orients them towards many issues important in democracy (Alemán & Woods, 2015).

Experiences of freedom and distributive justice are correlated with the perceptions Matura students have of these values, pointing to the role schools have in the internalization of democratic values of freedom and distributive justice. Experiences of these values in the

school environment have a significant correlation and contribution to how the students under study perceive and understand these two values. This is to say that experience in schools, and sociodemographic characteristics are related to how these youngsters perceive the two key democratic values in this study (RH2: There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among high school Matura students. RH4: There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among high school Matura students.) This suggests that at some point schools occupy a place in the equation of education and democracy. The findings point to the role and importance of educational sites as places that shape the youth's understanding of these values. Experiences of freedom and distribution of resources in educational environments offered to Matura students impact how they understand these values. It is known that the way students are treated in schools reflects an existing connection between classes in society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977/ 1990). These results indicate that education is a reflection of the broader society and it sustains existing status-quos. Such positions are made known to youngsters being educated through the values they experience and perceive in the educational environment. Nevertheless, other variables intervene and may explain the contribution made to the perception of these values, apart from education.

The correlation between experiences and perceptions for both freedom and distributive justice, indicates that as part of the equation education-democratization, education performs a sustaining role in experiences of freedom and distributive justice it offers and the internalization of democratic values, thus impacting democratic culture. This suggests that educational institutions have significance for both perceptions and experiences of freedom and distributive justice. Approximately 30 years after the fall of communism, the insufficiency of the impact of external democratization factors, can be complemented with the role of domestic ones. Having one third of the population in Albania continuously as part of the educational system, democracy in Albania can be built using schools as networks and sites of preparation for life in a larger community that values the essence of democracy: its founding values.

These beliefs are part of political culture. The values shared by the sample under study reveal some characteristics of the nature of political culture to which democracy is sensitive. Education does not prepare youngsters solely for school, but also for the community through the preparation of human resources, of the citizens of the future, and the quality of citizens so integral for internal democratization.

Albania has suffered from a lack of devotion to democratic values and problems with its political culture. The results of perceptions and experiences of freedom in this study are both promising and intimidating. The priority given to the values of freedom from the youngsters under study is a promising sign of a culture of democracy that values freedom that rests on rationality, given that Albanians have suffered from lack of freedom during the communist regime, but have also experienced a form of negative freedom after its fall.

Freedom and equality were guaranteed values in the agreement between the citizenry and government in Rousseau's Social Contract (Wade, 1976). Locke defended the freedom and equality of reasonable citizens (Lucci, 2018). Freedom of discussion (McWhorter, 1951) and justice (Aristotle & Jowett, 1999) are found in some models of democracy. Sharing values like freedom, equality, equity represent the foundations and source of democracy (Sodaro, 2008). They are emancipatory values needed in helping understand democracy in schools (Himmelmann, 2013).

Considered together, belief in both freedom and equality are characteristics of social democracies. This signals that the political culture of the group under study is oriented towards social democracy. This democratic culture values both freedom and equality, values prioritized by left-liberals. The youngsters of the study are part of the larger political culture in Albania. Such presence of both freedom and equality was observed in other ex-communist countries (Birzea, 2012). It may mean that Albania has to follow its own path to the consolidation of democracy, considering the nature of its political culture. Democratization infused externally has resulted to be insufficient. Therefore, human resource development (Bonomi, Hackaj, & Reljić, 2020), and investment in the political culture are complementary tools. Democracy constructed from within is the product of its

people. Democracy will not be consolidated, advanced and institutionalized unless Albania undergoes internal democratization where young generations are equipped with such values as guidance. A proper understanding of freedom and distributive justice from the new generation will impact the quality of political culture through education used as an internal democratization factor that prepares vigilant and rational citizens. Their experiences of these values may signalize continuation of practices of freedom, sameness, and need but less meritocracy, also required in democracy.

8.2 Conclusion

The Albanian context with its communist past has given evidence of a long period of indoctrination and centralization in education. After the fall of communism, and approximately thirty years following it, education is still under-budgeted, centralized, and with infrastructure problems. With the assumption that education in this thesis has been elaborated as a fundamental tool in preparing the citizens of the future, the present research aimed to investigate how education in Albania contributes to democratization through the internalization of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice among Matura students? The main research question was posed as below:

How is education in Albania contributing to democratization through the internalization of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice among Matura students?

Specifically, four sub-research questions have elaborated this main research question:

RQ1: What are Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom within the school environment?

RQ2: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students?

RQ3: What are Matura students' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice within the school environment?

RQ4: What is the relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students?

In addition, four research hypotheses derived from the literature, two per each value:

RH1: Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom in the school environment will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (gender, geographical area, school type, and General Regional Directorate of Pre-University Education affiliation).

RH2: There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students.

RH3: Matura students' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice in the school environment will differ based on their socio-demographic profile.

RH4: There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students.

To answer these questions, this thesis was structured into eight chapters. The first introduction chapter presented the rationale behind the choice of education as an internal factor of democratization. It included views that point to the need for internal democratization in Albania, considering the inefficiency of external actors over the past thirty years. Emphasis was given to the role citizens and youngsters play in democracy. In addition, this chapter signaled the importance of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice, so crucial in democracies, also so current in the Albanian context.

The second chapter contained the conceptual and theoretical framework of this thesis. In this section, all the conceptual and theoretical ground was reviewed. Initially, the chapter pointed to the importance of political culture in democracy. It highlighted freedom and justice as core values of democracy and the theoretical considerations that connect education to democracy in general lines. The chapter proceeded with the review of

literature that defines freedom and distributive justice. For each value, a theoretical and political discourse was presented. The relation between education and the value of freedom was explained through three views that emerged from the review: the progressivist and liberal, the critical theory/critical pedagogy and the deliberative view. For the value of distributive justice, the review pointed to two views: the liberal/progressivist and the critical view.

In Chapter Three, empirical studies conducted in different countries on freedom in education were examined, along with distributive justice in education. The chapter aimed to explore how the value of freedom was researched in the educational context and the implications it brings. The review helped understand the main forms of freedom present in the education context. Similarly, the review of studies on distributive justice and education determined the most present educational resources like opportunities, investment, etc. All together, they outlined important points for the questionnaire.

Chapter Four presented the methodology used in this thesis. It explained the main research question, its four sub-questions and four hypotheses. This chapter described the development of the questionnaire, its components, assessed its validity and reliability. Similarly, it presented the population and the sample in the study, characteristics of the demography of the sample, data collection procedure and analysis.

Chapter Five served to review the education system in Albania and presented the main developments it has undergone through. It portrayed the current Pre-University Education and focused on the review of the education policy documents. This focus aimed to bring a better understanding of how the values of freedom and distributive justice are found in these official documents. By doing this, the statements prepared in the questionnaire were reconsidered.

Chapter Six presented the results of analysis for freedom. This chapter answered the first two research sub-questions: RQ1 What are Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom within the school environment? and RQ2 What is the relationship between

experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students? The results, displayed in the form of graphics and tables, revealed that the majority (70.3%) of respondents perceived freedom as ‘non-solely a lack of enforcement, but also as self-development and as a demonstration of responsible attitude’. Their perception of freedom of speech, action, and choice were in agreement with the given statements that freedom of speech is respecting ethics, and that freedom of action and choice requires responsibility. While students’ experiences in school are both examples of positive and negative freedom, the majority agreed that experiences at school have helped them develop communication and debating skills, that their education at school has helped them act more responsibly towards themselves and others, and that their school experience has helped them make informed choices. Secondly, this study indicated that perceptions and experiences of **only** some types of freedom for Matura students differed based on **type of school** they attend, **gender**, **geographical area**, and the **directorate**. Furthermore, all three types of freedom under study revealed a correlation between experiences in the school context and perceptions, for freedom of action (8.5%), of choice (6.2%), and expression (3.5%). As a result, **the first hypothesis RH1: Matura students’ perceptions and experiences of freedom in the school environment will differ based on their socio-demographic profile (gender, geographical area, school type, and General Regional Directorate of Pre-University Education affiliation) was partially fulfilled and the second hypothesis RH2: There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of freedom among Matura students was confirmed fully**. The results are promising because belief in freedom helps democracy (Inkeles, 1991) and is extant in many liberal advanced democracies (Inglehart, 2018). In this sense, the results are encouraging for the development of democratic culture and internal democratization of Albanian society.

Similarly, Chapter Seven contained the results of analysis for distributive justice for the principles of equality, need and equity answering RQ3 and RQ4. Matura students highlighted equality as the principle (86.2%), followed by need (85.2%), and equity (56.7%). Their agreement with equality as a principle (86.2%) and its experiences (74%) is to be looked at with caution, because of the communist background of Albania. Similarly, the low agreement for meritocracy and need requires attention, given that it is

not highlighted by males, considering also the determining role that males have in the Albanian society. All these point to the inclusion of both genders in democracies because they are citizens with rights and responsibilities essential for the internal progress and advancement of democracy. The fact that these students highlight need but have experienced it less requires more attention to be paid to those groups in need because building democracy requires the consideration of the ones in need as part of the citizenry and with a determining role in decision making in democracy. In the same way, recognition of meritocracy or talent in schools is crucial because individuals are different in their abilities, intelligence, and traits. Attempting to show they are not is an matter of injustice (Flew, 1976). Both experiences and perceptions of distributive justice differed only by certain socio demographics making **the third hypothesis RH3: *Matura students' perceptions and experiences of distributive justice in the school environment will differ based on their socio-demographic profile, to be partially fulfilled.*** Apart from equality and need, which were characterized by a moderate positive correlation, experiences of the principle of equity are negatively correlated with perceptions of the principle in the school environment bringing into attention once more the connection between experiences and perceptions. Overall, the fourth **hypothesis RH4: *There is a positive relationship between experiences and perceptions of distributive justice among Matura students was verified for the principles of equality and need, but not for equity, making it only partially fulfilled.***

Chapter Eight brings an overall discussion to both values of freedom and distributive justice and concludes the thesis. The overall discussion compares and contrasts these values by considering the sociodemographic characteristics of these schools. Internal democratization through education has to acknowledge gender implications, urban-rural differences, type of school characteristics and directorate. In this part of the chapter, it was presented the final reflections on the contribution of Matura students' perceptions and experiences of freedom and distributive justice at schools towards consolidated democracy in Albania, thus providing a response to the main research question.

As a final word, the Albanian democratization process cannot undermine the internal characteristics of its citizens. Youngsters are the main driving force behind its construction. Home grown political culture that is initiated by the youth can serve better democracy. Education, as an internal actor and contributor to the growth of citizenry, is a factor that can be used to construct democracy internally. In this construction, the typical characteristics of schools like urban-rural differences, the type of school frequented, directorates or gender roles cannot be out of consideration. The growth of youth, so determinant for democratization, passes through schools.

Altogether, education offers experiences of freedom and distributive justice to these students. These experiences vary based on the socio-demographic characteristics of schools. Experiences of freedom and distributive justice correlate with the perceptions Matura students have of these values as a driving force towards democratization, pointing to the role schools have in the internalization of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice. Therefore, through education used as an internal and sustainable democratization factor, the so-called '*political abortion*' (Çullhaj, 2012, p. 16) of external actors can be complemented with the healthy birth of a democracy constructed and consolidated through the internalization of its core values by youngsters.

8.2.1 Limitations

When considering the findings of the study, referring to Stratton (2021) some sample-level implications should be kept in mind such as:

1. The study was limited by the sampling approach that does not allow generalization of the results to the whole population, but they apply only to the participants in the research. Even though the research is based on a quantitative approach purposive sampling, it does not allow for the calculation of sampling error or precision of data. However, the research aims to explore the topic and generate findings and insight that might be further explored

by other researchers, rather than generate representative findings for the whole population under study.

2. Since a self-administered questionnaire was used, it might be limited by the respondents' self-disclosure level. Even though data were collected by assuring anonymity and confidentiality, it is likely that high school seniors may have not been honest and may not have submitted their perceptions and experiences with complete transparency.

3. Volunteer participation in the research of the study participants may have led to non-response bias.

4. Collection of data through a web-based method might have affected the results. Specifically, the findings might be biased towards individuals with regular internet access, excluding the perspectives of vulnerable communities (especially remote areas) without internet access.

5. Lack of previous research on the topic across Albanian literature can be considered as a limitation when confirming what was already known about the study topic, or how exactly its findings add to previous studies.

8.2.2 Implications

The findings attained from the study offer implications related to sociodemographic characteristics and experiences in the school environment which can be of use to policymakers, school principals, and teachers as concerns practices. From the practices' point of view, this study offered the dimension of sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, geographical area, type of school, and directorate that impact experiences and perceptions of freedom and distributive justice in the school environment. Teachers can consider dimensions such as gender, geographical area, and type of school in their educational practices. Policymakers should consider gender dimensions, geographical area (school locations), type of school, and directorate in the formulation and preparation of

education policy. Urban and rural areas, gender, type of school, and directorate differences should be considered in the distribution of educational resources. Policymakers can carefully review the distribution of resources in education because as evidenced in the study, the division of resources is related to the perception of distributive justice.

Educational institutions should consider improving the educational experience for urban and rural areas of high school students and narrowing the differences between the urban and rural areas of high school students. Policymakers need to review at closer lens differences in experience between public and non-public schools and evidence the application of policies concerning issues related to freedom and distributive justice. Educational institutions should consider supporting the educational experiences of freedom and distributive justice because as evidenced by this study, experiences of freedom and distributive justice in the school environment are related to perceptions of these values in the school environment. Similarly, as important actors school directors and teachers need to critically examine their methods and practices in offering experiences of freedom and distributive justice.

8.2.3 Recommendations for Future Studies

The main conclusions of the study projected the development of several research topics that would deepen knowledge as concerns freedom, distributive justice, and education. Interested researchers and scholars may focus on:

- Influence of educational policy on freedom and distributive justice understanding and experience of students.
- Impact of distribution of resources on the understanding of justice.
- Identification of major themes as concerns students' needs in the Albanian educational context.
- Qualitative exploration of students' conceptualization of meritocracy.

- Relation between freedom understanding and experiences in the school context and freedom understanding in the political sphere.
- Relation between distributive justice understanding and experiences in the school context and distributive justice understanding in the political sphere.
- Qualitative exploration of the impact of education on politics, democracy, and other democratic values like tolerance, diversity, and participation.
- Exploration of other contributors like family background, and cultural norms to the perception of freedom, distributive justice and other democratic values.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Freedom and Distributive Justice: Perceptions, Experiences at School Setting among Albanian Matura Seniors

Informed consent

Dear Matura student,

My name is Albana Çekrezi and I am working for my doctoral degree at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Epoka University. The aim of my research is to understand students` experiences and perceptions of the democratic values of freedom and distributive justice in the school context.

This is an anonymous self - completion questionnaire and will take approximately 15 minutes to fill. It should be completed only by Matura students. Your answers are extremely valuable for my research and they will remain confidential.

I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in the study voluntarily. Finishing this survey means that you are consenting me to use answers, combine them with the ones of other students in order to attain data for the study. In case you have any question or concerns please contact me at the following email address: acekrezi17@epoka.edu.al.

I accept to take part in the study

Yes

No

Section I: Demographics

1. The high school where you study city (village)_____/_____
2. School location Rural Area Urban Area
3. Type of school Public Private
4. Gender Male Female

Section II: Perceptions and Experiences of Freedom

- 5. Which of the following statements best represents your idea on freedom?**
(Please circle only one option.)
- a) Freedom is lack of external enforcement.
 - b) Freedom is self-control, being your own master.
 - c) Freedom is not solely lack of enforcement, but self-development, responsible attitude as well.

According to your opinion, in a scale from 1-5 how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements? (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree)

Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
6. To me, real freedom rests in the refinement of knowledge.					
7. I see freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication.					
8. I see freedom more as ability to act responsibly.					
9. I see freedom as the possibility to freely express my identity (culture, ethnicity, origin, religion).					
10. To me freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly.					

According to your opinion, in a scale from 1-5 how much do you disagree or agree with the with the following statements, related to experiences at school settings? (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree).

Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
11. In general, students in my school are reminded of the rules and regulations that they have to follow.					
12. Students in my school, in general are treated as grown-ups and are given responsibilities.					

13. Receiving education in this school has helped me expand my knowledge.					
14. The experience in my school has helped me to approach reality from different perspectives.					
15. My school experience has helped me analyze information independently.					

16. My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills.					
17. During my experience in this school, I have felt confident in sharing information related to my identity (culture, ethnicity, origin, religion).					
18. My education in this school has helped me act more responsibly towards myself and others.					
19. My school experience has helped me make informed choices.					

20. Which of the options below related to school has been a pressure for you? (You can select more than one answer.)

1. School rules and regulations
2. The methods used by teachers
3. My class/school mates
4. Other (specify).....

21. Which of the options below related to school has helped you become more responsible? (You can select more than one answer.)

1. The knowledge I have received
2. The organized activities
3. The methods used by teachers
4. My class/school mates
5. Other (specify)....

Section III: Perceptions and Experiences of Distributive Justice

22. Please rank the statements on the following rank: 1 -most important, 2 – moderately important and 3- least important.

- a) Everyone should be offered equal opportunities. (equality)_____
- b) Opportunity should be given based on what the individual needs. (need)_____
- c) Opportunity should be given according to individual characteristics, like someone`s ability, effort, performance, or work (equity)_____

According to your opinion, in a scale from 1-5 how much do you disagree or agree with the with the following statements? (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree)

Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
23. Schools should offer the same educational opportunities to all students (books, access to labs, playgrounds etc.)					
24. Schools should offer educational opportunities to students according to their abilities.					
25. Schools should offer educational opportunities to students based on their needs.					
26. Students should enroll into schools that offer standardized programs for all.					
27. Students should enroll into those schools that offer programs based on their skills.					
28. Students should enroll into schools that offer programs based on their needs.					
29. All students should solve the same exercises.					
30. Successful students should solve more difficult exercises.					
31. Weak students should be helped to solve exercises in order not to fall behind.					
32. Assessment criteria should be the same for all students.					
33. During assessment, meritocracy should be taken into consideration.					
34. When assessing, students' individual difficulties should be taken into consideration.					

35. Teachers should treat students in the same way.					
36. Teachers should favor successful students.					
37. Teachers should give more priority to students with special needs.					

According to your opinion, in a scale from 1-5 how much do you disagree or agree with the with the following statements, related to experiences at your school settings? (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree).

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
38. In my school, all students are offered equal educational opportunities (books, access to labs, playgrounds etc.).					
39. In my school, successful students are offered opportunities that help them improve their skills, talents.					
40. In my school, lower performing students are offered opportunities that help them improve their abilities.					
41. In my school, all students enroll in the same courses.					
42. In my school, students can enroll into courses based on their skills.					
43. In my school, lower performing students can enroll into courses that fulfil their needs.					
44. In general, in my school all students are given the same exercises to solve.					
45. Successful students are given more difficult exercises.					
46. Students who face difficulties are given exercises that help them improve their proficiency.					
47. All students in my school are assessed following the same criteria.					
48. Students in my school are assessed based on what they merit.					
49. A different assessment is applied for students with special needs.					
50. In my school, teachers treat all the students equally.					
51. In my school, teachers pay more attention to successful students.					
52. In my school, teachers pay more attention to students with special needs.					

Thank You!

Appendix B: Correlation and Regression for Freedom of Expression, Action and Choice

Table B2 Correlation of Experiences and Perceptions on Freedom of Expression

		16. My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills.	7. I see freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication.
16. My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills.	Pearson Correlation	1	.186**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1846	1846
7. I see freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication.	Pearson Correlation	.186**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1846	1846

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

Table B3 Experiences and Perceptions of Freedom of Expression (Regression Tables)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.186 ^a	.035	.034	.628

a. Predictors: (Constant), 16. My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.004	1	26.004	66.017	.000 ^b
	Residual	726.341	1844	.394		
	Total	752.345	1845			

a. Dependent Variable: 7. I see freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication.

b. Predictors: (Constant), 16. My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills.

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.200	.070		60.208	0.000
	16. My experience in this school has helped me develop my communication and debating skills.	.125	.015	.186	8.125	.000

a. *Dependent Variable: 7. I see freedom as independence in expressing ideas by respecting ethics of communication.*

Table B4 Correlation of Experiences and Perceptions on Freedom of Action

		18. My education in this school has helped me act more responsible towards myself and others.	8. I see freedom more as ability to act responsibly.
18. My education in this school has helped me act more responsible towards myself and others.	Pearson Correlation	1	.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1846	1846
8. I see freedom more as ability to act responsibly.	Pearson Correlation	.292**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1846	1846

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

Table B5 Experiences and Perceptions on Freedom of Action (Regression Tables)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.292 ^a	.085	.085	.820

a. *Predictors: (Constant), 18. My education in this school has helped me act more responsible towards myself and others.*

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	115.159	1	115.159	171.466	.000 ^b
	Residual	1238.455	1844	.672		
	Total	1353.614	1845			

a. *Dependent Variable: 8. I see freedom more as ability to act responsibly. Predictors: (Constant), 18. My education in this school has helped me act more responsible towards myself and others.*

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.127	.104		30.019	.000
18. My education in this school has helped me act more responsible towards myself and others.	.297	.023	.292	13.095	.000

a. Dependent Variable: 8. I see freedom more as ability to act responsibly.

Table B6 Correlation of Experiences and Perceptions on Freedom of Choice

		19. My school experience has helped me make informed choices.	10. To me freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly.
19. My school experience has helped me make informed choices.	Pearson Correlation	1	.249**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1846	1846
10. To me freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly.	Pearson Correlation	.249**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1846	1846

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

Table B7 Experiences and Perceptions on Freedom of Choice (Regression Tables)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.249 ^a	.062	.062	.858

a. Predictors: (Constant), 19. My school experience has helped me make informed choices.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	89.801	1	89.801	121.908	.000 ^b
	Residual	1358.342	1844	.737		
	Total	1448.143	1845			

a. Dependent Variable: 10. To me freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly.

b. Predictors: (Constant), 19. My school experience has helped me make informed choices.

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	3.388	.094		36.015	.000
	19. My school experience has helped me make informed choices.	.232	.021	.249	11.041	.000

a. Dependent Variable: 10. To me freedom is the possibility to be able to choose responsibly.

Appendix C: Correlation and Regression for Principles of Distributive Justice

Table C1 Correlation of Experiences and Perceptions on the Principle of Equality

<i>Correlations</i>		Equality Experiences	Equality Perceptions
Equality Experiences	Pearson Correlation	1	.208**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1846	1846
Equality Perceptions	Pearson Correlation	.208**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1846	1846

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

Table C2 Experiences and Perceptions on the Principle of Equality (Regression Tables)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.208 ^a	.043	.043	.35344

a. Predictors: (Constant), Equality Experiences Recoded

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.466	1	10.466	83.779	.000 ^b
	Residual	230.349	1844	.125		
	Total	240.815	1845			

a. Dependent Variable: Equality Perceptions Recoded

b. Predictors: (Constant), Equality Experiences Recoded

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.450	.045		54.015	0.000
	Equality Experiences Recoded	.150	.016	.208	9.153	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Equality Perceptions Recoded

Table C3 Correlation of Experiences and Perceptions on the Principle of Need (Correlations)

		Need Experiences	Need Perceptions
Need Experiences	Pearson Correlation	1	.214**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1846	1846
Need Perceptions	Pearson Correlation	.214**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1846	1846

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

(2tailed).

Table C4 Experiences and Perceptions on the Principle of Need (Regression Tables)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.214 ^a	0.05	.045	.36508

a. Predictors: (Constant), Need Experiences

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.845	1	11.845	88.876	.000 ^b
	Residual	245.769	1844	.133		
	Total	257.615	1845			

a. Dependent Variable: Need Perceptions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Need Experiences

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.550	.033		78.202	0.000
	Need Experiences Recoded	.120	.013	.214	9.427	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Need Perceptions

Table C5 Correlation of Experiences and Perceptions on the Principle of Equity

		Equity Experiences	Equity Perceptions
Equity Experiences	Pearson Correlation	1	-.100**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1846	1846
Equity Perceptions	Pearson Correlation	-.100**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1846	1846

Table C6 Experiences and Perceptions on the Principle of Equity (Regression Tables)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.100 ^a	.010	.010	.51035

a. Predictors: (Constant), Equity Experiences

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.893	1	4.893	18.788	.000 ^b
	Residual	480.288	1844	.260		
	Total	485.181	1845			

a. Dependent Variable: Equity Perceptions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Equity Experiences

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.780	.052		52.960	0.000
	Equity Experiences Recoded	-.089	.021	-.100	-4.334	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Equity Perceptions Recoded