

Values Education in Social Studies Course

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To Cite This Chapter:

Can, H. G., Kiray, O. F., Can H., & Kucukgencay, Z. (2023). Values education in social studies course. In F. R. Dar & N. Kucukgencay (Eds.), *Current Studies in Social Sciences 2023* (pp. 31-39). ISRES Publishing.

Introduction

Education not only aims for individuals to have the best skills but also desires for them to have the best character and consciousness. Education across the world also desires individuals to adopt the value judgments of the society in which they are born and raised. As stated as a goal in Turkish national education policies, our education system has important duties, especially in achieving the goals emphasized in the objectives of Turkish national education and in raising the conscious, cultured, value-oriented citizens that society needs in this direction. There is a need to assess whether the values, which are among the general objectives of the education system, are acquired by the students. While the levels of cognitive behaviours are constantly monitored in schools, affective behaviours are not consistently taught and measured. Determining the levels of students' achievement in the values stated in the general objectives of primary school education curricula will be enlightening both for the success of our schools in gaining affective behaviours and for social values (Sağlam & Genç, 2015, 107).

The rapid acquisition of cultural knowledge, developments in science and technology, and the interaction between different societies in a globalizing world undoubtedly affect the values that exist in society and family structure. This change manifests itself in all areas of life in moral, social and cultural dimensions, especially in schools as educational institutions. Competitiveness in the education system puts the acquisition of national, cultural and universal values and raising good citizens in the background. It can be argued that individuals who cannot acquire values such as tolerance, honesty, compassion, responsibility and kindness are more easily involved in violent incidents (Deveci et al., 2008). In the rapidly changing world order, there is a constant change in the concept of value, which holds an important place in societies. Therefore, parents who want their children to have a more harmonious, happy and sociable role cannot

easily achieve this today. This is because, undoubtedly, the most significant contribution to raising healthy and socially beneficial individuals lies with the family (Şen, 2007).

According to many educators, the family, which is considered the child's first educational environment, forms the basis for essential moral sensitivities, love, respect, trust, and many other values and skills that are crucial for children's future (Sağlam & Genç, 2015).

A society builds its future only through well-educated individuals with a range of values and capabilities. The process of raising these individuals continues first in the family and then at school. As a social reality, every family consciously or unconsciously tries to pass on certain values to their children. The most important thing here is to find an answer to the question "Which values should be passed on, at what age and how?". Giving certain values to individuals, especially from the primary school age, is among the most important tasks of our education system (Yel & Aladağ, 2009). Instead of constantly portraying pessimistic scenarios about the world and people during the value acquisition, it would be more beneficial to be conscious as parents, teachers, or community members about how to support students." Especially in difficult times, relying on positive thoughts that have positive implications both in the world and in human life, and putting those thoughts into practice rather than discussing and complaining, would be a more appropriate behaviour. During value acquisition, social change can be achieved through individuals, especially parents or educators, exhibiting an optimistic worldview starting from themselves and their immediate environment, including their children. Family, environment and school are important and indispensable parts of values education. The values to be taught in the family, as well as those taught in the environment and school, will be close and complementary to each other. Therefore, it should not be forgotten that values can be encountered at all times and everywhere (Ulusoy & Dilmaç, 2014). Values become an identity personality dimension through experiences (Sağlam & Genç, 2015, 108).

Therefore, it is extremely important that children's emotions are nurtured and developed in the family environment, their interests are encouraged and supported in the home environment, and their talents, skills and sensitivities are developed (Hökelekli & Gündüz, 2007).

Values Education in Primary School Social Studies Teaching

Primary education is defined by the Turkish Language Association as "the first eight-year stage of the formal education system consisting of several education stages that provide basic knowledge and skills, primary education, compulsory education". In primary education, children are provided with the rules and skills to live in harmony with other individuals in society and the basic knowledge and skills necessary to live their lives in a better way.

In developing countries like Turkey, where the dropout rate from formal education is high, primary education holds a crucial place within the education system for individuals in society to at least acquire basic knowledge and skills (Baysal, 2008).

Social studies course is actually a course of values education. Because it is important in terms of acquiring good values as it has a historical content and tells different cultures and life stories. The multidisciplinary nature of the social studies course can also be considered a richness in terms of teaching values (Kan, 2010).

Social studies focuses on the interaction of people with each other and with their environment. The values, attitudes and beliefs of individuals cause this interaction. Therefore, social studies education plays an important role in developing democratic values, attitudes, and beliefs in individuals, making them aware of existing values, and revealing how these values impact their interactions with other people and their environments.

The Concept of Values in Social Studies Education

Values are fundamental beliefs that help to distinguish between right and wrong. By adding balance and meaning to life, they enable us to live together with individuals who make up society. Values raise the quality of an individual's own life as well as the experiences of others. Values are not innate but are learned through experiences, observation, and interaction (Bostrom, 1999). The main purpose of social studies teaching is to enable individuals to solve the problems they face in order to reach the level of contemporary societies in today's world and to reach the level of ideal citizens with a well-rounded education in the culture they live in. In this sense, the main outcome of social studies curricula is to raise individuals who can make decisions based on moral ethics and value systems, respect justice, appreciate beauty and think. The social studies course is expected to educate individuals who give importance to the development of ethical and democratic values, which are integral parts of being a good citizen, and who have adopted the role of justice and law in society and the responsibility of individuals in creating a good society.

Besides, historically literate individuals who embrace their social history and have cultural values are the aims of social studies curricula for the development of society and the country. Social studies always offer important opportunities for human rights education. Through the curriculum of this course, students learn the historical foundations of our country and the world. In this context, they learn the lives of important people who have contributed to the development of humanity, democratic governments and the functioning of these governments, and the beliefs and values within the rich cultural mosaic of our country. In this way, they begin to develop a sense of responsibility towards their country. The concept of value shows itself as attitude and behaviour in every aspect of human life. Values are the determinants of lifestyle. Stein described values as "self-definition" (Sarı, 2005).

Values are abstract generalised principles of behaviour that provide a fundamental standard for judging specific actions and goals and are formed by the strong emotional attachment of members of a group. However, values cannot be considered independently of culture. Culture is the whole of shared values, symbols, ideologies, beliefs and experiences. Values have consistently been topics of interest in the field of social sciences.

This interest arises from the fact that many social scientists consider values as having a fundamental importance in explaining human behaviour. Furthermore, the fact that values are a concept that can provide information to researchers at both individual and group levels can be considered among the reasons for this interest. The values issue is important not only theoretically but also in terms of its relevance to our society, which is seeking its place in a rapidly changing world. The healthy functioning of new social regulations, which emerge as an inevitable result and sometimes as a means of socio-economic development, is closely related to the compatibility of the values of individuals with such regulations. This problem of compatibility requires a good understanding of society and therefore a detailed examination of values. Values education is not only limited to curricula and activities in curricula but has also spread to a wide area with books, magazines, TV programs and internet sites for families for society to raise their children better. Values education is generally carried out under the title of character education and moral education throughout the world. Values education is not limited to the curriculum and in many countries, it is aimed for students to internalise values and reflect them in their lives as *living values*.

In 1995, the "Living Values" program, prepared by the Brahma Kumaris educational organisation in India to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, includes 12 core values. The aim of the program, carried out by UNESCO in different countries, is to facilitate students to become individuals who can make decisions, have a respected place in society and ensure their personal development (Living Values, 2006).

In Belgium, the ethics curriculum aims to "reveal values". These courses emphasise the discovery of values through discussion methods, without imposing any ideas on the students. Within the framework of the principle of *moral dilemma*, making students find moral truths through case studies and drama methods is one of the most commonly used methods in the course (Aydın, 1999). The new education curriculum prepared in our country covers most of the values given within the scope of values and also includes national and cultural values and the teaching of these values. In the curriculum, priority values were determined and it was stated that contemporary approaches such as value explanation, value analysis and moral reasoning should be used in teaching these values (Akbaş, 2006). In the primary social studies curriculum, the teaching of values intensifies in the fourth and fifth grades. The determined values are:

- Fairness
- Giving importance to family unity
- Independence
- Peace
- Scientificity
- Diligence
- Solidarity
- Sensitivity
- Honesty
- Aesthetics
- Tolerance

- Hospitality
- Freedom
- Valuing Health
- Respect
- Love
- Responsibility
- Cleanliness
- Patriotism
- Generosity

Characteristics of Values in Social Studies Course

Value is a common thought, purpose, basic moral principle or belief that is accepted as true and necessary by the majority of the members of a social group or society in order to ensure and maintain its existence, unity, functioning and continuity. The curriculum emphasises the characteristics of values as follows; *Values are unifying facts adopted by society or individuals. They are criteria believed to meet the social needs of the community and contribute to the well-being of individuals. They are judgements that concern not only consciousness but also emotions and excitement. Values are the motives that exist in the consciousness of the individual and guide the behaviour. The difference between values and norms is that values have a more general and abstract nature than norms. Values also include the norm* (Özgüven, 2000). To understand what values are, it is necessary to know the value characteristics specified by Schwartz and Bilsky, who have conducted studies on values in recent years (Kuşdil & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000). Which are:

- 1- Values are beliefs. However, they are not completely free from objective emotions and do not have the character of ideas. When activated, they are intertwined with emotions.
- 2- Values are related to the goals of the individual and the behavioural patterns that are effective in achieving these goals.
- 3- Values are above specific actions and situations. For example, the value of obedience applies at home, at work, at school and in all unfamiliar relationships.
- 4- Values function as standards that guide the choice or change of behaviour, people and events.
- 5- Values are ranked among themselves according to their significance. This ranking creates a system that determines value priorities.
- 6- Values are structures open to change. There may be changes in value priorities over time to meet interaction and new needs that arise.
- 7- Values are general standards that guide human behaviour and attitudes (Baydar, 2009, 18). Values form a hierarchy within themselves and change as a result of interaction (Baydar, 2009).

Necessity of Values Teaching and Factors Affecting Teaching

Comprehensive studies on values education are carried out today. The aim of values education, which is among the basic principles of citizenship education in the United

States of America, is to help students being raised as "purposeful, diligent and positive" individuals (Kıncal, 2002). Values form the fundamental structure of individuals' attitudes. Values are defined as stable motives that force individuals to choose certain goals among various options (Özgüven, 2000).

Values are the criteria that lead the activities. Individuals facing a certain situation resolve contradictions and make decisions by using their value system. Individuals make choices and take a stand in social events through their values. When individuals are informed about their values, it will be easier to predict their behaviours (İlgar, 1996).

Families, teachers and other people who care about personality development in societies try to shape the future of their young people and want to raise them with the best values. However, not everyone agrees on what and how it should be. Families give different opinions to children. Also, various social groups put pressure on children. Religious and political social groups are effective in making children accept and believe in values. Character education aims to create behaviours and personal codes that include values such as rules of life, faith, responsibility, and respect. Especially during childhood, personal values and world views develop and change. Along with other formal and informal social structures, family and school help to shape the worldview, values and behaviour of individuals. In a democratic society, children are expected to be brought up in an environment of religious independence with democratic rules, equal rights, personal rights, judicial rules, freedom of speech and freedom of religion. All societies have a unique culture and a system of values developed by this culture. Society and the individuals living in this society create a hierarchy among these values. Society may see economic values at the top depending on the experiences it has gone through. The most important thing for people in this kind of society would be material welfare. For example, in pre-industrial societies, the ones who lived the longest gained the most knowledge and experience. Therefore, relationships between different age groups were more clearly defined compared to today. There was always excessive respect and obedience to those who were older. Today, on the other hand, age has lost its former importance. The value given to the father as a teacher in the past has decreased with the emergence of schools. Also, as the economic power of the father has decreased, the value perception has differentiated (Güngör, 1998). Families strive to raise their children in the best life conditions. However, everything is not in their hands.

Preparing children for life is actually the best thing that can be done to make their lives easier and more beautiful. Values should be taught to children in schools as well as in the family. This is because values education is one of the most necessary education for children to be happy. However, there are many criticisms about the applicability and variability of values education. These criticisms are significant because they reflect some characteristics of values education. The criticisms focus on the following titles: *Values education*. *Values clarification*. *Religion and moral education*. *Moral education*. *Individual and social education*. *Person, society and moral education*. *Person, society and health education*. *Judgement*. *Citizenship education*. *Character education*. These titles not only represent common points of criticism but also indicate in which areas of life values education is present. It is discussed to seek answers to questions such as "Which values should be given, with

what methods, to whom, and for what purposes? How should the identified values address the individual and society? In which area should individuals be prioritized for education? In which area should individuals be developed?" These discussions are important because they help to design and develop educational curricula. Criticisms should be regarded as the correct delivery of education and the reflection of the education given. Also, these titles show that values education is in an important position both individually and socially. Values education holds an important role in adapting to social life, living as a modern person, respecting and accepting people and their rights, participating in economic and cultural activities as a member of society and understanding life better. Goals are the outcomes that societies consider important and want to achieve. Therefore, the values of a society become what its goals are. A society will try to develop a value system appropriate to the goal it wants to achieve. If the goal is development, then values are developed accordingly. If the goal is to reach the level of modern civilisation, it is necessary to have different values (Güngör, 1998). New values imposed by rapidly changing lifestyles in our age can be said to be passed on to new generations, especially through the media, without much discussion, leaving them in an environment of uncertainty. Values education can provide students with the presentation of centuries-old human values knowledge that goes beyond popular culture. Through this knowledge, they can make decisions. Defining education as making the individual useful to society highlights the values education in schools. According to L. Küçükahmet, schools fix the incomplete and faulty teaching of the children's natural educators through real educators (Küçükahmet, 2004). Briefly, schools eliminate the negative effects that may occur on the children and put them into the process of re-socialisation. This process is the process of making the newly socialised individual useful to society through social values.

Conclusion

Childhood and the environment in which this period is experienced are important in identity formation (Hotaman, 2014). Therefore, secondary school periods can be considered as an important time for the creation and development of values. Values education should not be limited to a certain period, a certain institution and a certain group. On the contrary, it should cover all times and include all students.

Schools must play a productive role in helping families and societies as environments where students learn fundamental values (Pala, 2011). The importance of parent-school association in the process of values education is accepted as an undeniable fact. Including the parents of the students in the study was welcomed by both the students and the parents. Especially the students stated that the support, encouragement and motivation of their families to the studies carried out and this situation increased their level of readiness. Therefore, it is recommended that parents should also take part in the education process in any planned values education study.

Students today like to have fun and the monotony of school environments bores them. Therefore, preparing environments where students can have fun in schools can contribute to making the process of values education more enjoyable and desirable. Textbooks are one of the main sources where students encounter historical figures. Therefore, textbooks taught in schools should be prepared as value-oriented. This way, students will be raised holistically by taking value issues together with academic courses.

While conducting values education activities with students with different characteristics and different learning styles, different activities should be included to cater for each individual and different aspects of each individual (nursing home visit, site visit, theatre, drama, environmental cleaning activity, marketplace activity, reading and evaluating stories, writing stories, Hacivat and Karagöz play, watching and analyzing films, watching and evaluating short films, debate technique and brainstorming). The most important feature of drama is that it stimulates students' emotions, expands their imagination and helps them to empathise. Therefore, both within lessons and through independent activities, drama and theatre activities can be conducted to help students discover, develop, and reinforce their values.

Values education is process-oriented. This process cannot be limited to daily, weekly and monthly periods. When preparing activities for values education, it is expected that these activities will be more efficient the longer they are spread over a longer period. It is not sufficient for students to only know or feel values; furthermore, the ability to apply them to life can be considered the ultimate goal of values education. Therefore, it is recommended to carry out activities that will provide opportunities for students to bring values to life.

In this context, social life should be accepted as a laboratory environment and should be used as an application centre and a reinforcement area in the process of values education. Nature and the environment offer educators much more than they can find in the classroom environment as educational materials in many areas, especially during values education. Therefore, students should be provided with direct experiences to acquire values. This is possible through practices based on activities in which nature and the environment can be used as an educational space. Taking students to a park or a pond and simply collecting rubbish may not ensure that the targeted values are acquired at the desired level. Cognitive processes of students such as reasoning and analysing should be activated in the process with an activity prepared with a well-made plan. The process should be enriched with affective and cognitive activities. Creating an environment where students will be in touch with nature by taking them out of the classroom environment in order to gain values such as sensitivity to natural heritage and sensitivity to cultural heritage plays an important role in providing permanent and efficient values education.

One of the points that educators need to pay attention to in the values education process is concretising abstract value concepts for students. Concrete activities, especially for students who have not yet reached the abstract stage, help them perceive more easily and experience more permanent learning. As value role models, firstly family members (especially parents), then teachers and historical figures were mentioned. Therefore, it is recommended that those in the immediate environment, especially parents and teachers, should be good role models. Therefore, teachers should live in accordance with values and, if necessary, explain the wisdom behind their actions to students.

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