

# The evaluation of secondary school students' attitudes towards social values in terms of gender

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate values education in a broad perspective; to reveal the attitudes of secondary school students towards social values and how these attitudes are influenced by gender. In order to collect data quantitative research method was used. The research was carried out in three different secondary schools and 402 students participated. The result of the research revealed that the perception rate of secondary school students about social values is high; there is a difference between the scores of both genders (males and females), though; and the scores of the female students are higher. In accordance with the results of the study, it might be suggested that values education should be provided as a broader area and the attitudes of male students towards values education require to be enhanced.

**Keywords:** Values education, secondary school, gender.

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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of values, which was contributed to Social Sciences by Znaniecki, was produced from the stem *valere* which means 'be of value, be powerful' in Latin (Bilgin, 1995: 83). Values are purposes of which importance is desired differently and goals beyond situation that shape the lives of individuals (Güngör, 2000: 84). They are also common ideas, purposes, fundamental moral principles and beliefs accepted right and necessary by the majority of a social group or community in order to maintain and sustain its own existence, unity, functioning and maintenance (Kızılçelik and Erjem 1994: 99). Defining what individuals consider important; values indicate desires, preferences, and desired or undesired situations (Erdem, 2003: 56). It is possible to multiply these definitions however although several definitions have been made for values an exact and unique definition has not been agreed on. Generally values are desired opinions and rules accepted by society in terms of directing human behavior for good.

This study was prepared on the basis of thesis study titled "The Evaluation of Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Social Values In Terms of Gender."

Fichter stated that these three factors must be

considered examining social values:

1. The object itself which is an actual value,
2. The capacity of the object fulfilling social requirements,
3. People's appreciation for this object due to their satisfaction and the capacity to satisfy (Özensel, 2003: 225).

Besides behaviors, values are closely related to belief, judgment, purpose, attitude, and purpose concepts. While giving shape to these concepts they also give shape to values concept and contribute to its boundaries and aspects. There is mutual relationship between them. Basically although values are associated with beliefs and attitudes they are more inclusive than both beliefs and attitudes (Demircioğlu and Tokdemir, 2008). The features of the value can be specified as:

1. Values are connective phenomena adopted by individuals or society.
2. They are criteria believed to be for the good of

individuals and fulfill social requirements of the society.

3. They are judgments not only regarding consciousness but feelings and excitements as well.
4. Values are prompts that direct behavior that takes place in the consciousness of individual.
5. The difference between values and norms is that: norms have more general and abstract qualification while values include norm (MNE, 2004).

In this sense it is possible to systematize general features of values as below (Gökçe, 1994).

- a. A socio-cultural value is a standard of selective orientation fundamentally. In this process value is the general criterion of the consciousness and purposeful behavior. In other words value fulfills the tasks as a reference point for the acceptable desires and requests of a person doing an act.
- b. Values take shape in a culture and at the same time influence the culture as a directive. In other words values take shape in the developmental process of a culture.

Values are identified with humans. Within the process of socialization values are learned and undertaken by people. While social learning and taking as a model have ossified certain values, some of them vanished due to globalization and the wind of change.

There is a superiority and priority relationship among values (Güngör, 1993: 23). This relationship is not determined with definite lines. It is shaped via personal experiences. For some individuals while the prior value is respect, for some it is love or neatness. Yet the priority here is not a system that ignores others but a hierarchic structure unity that integrates all. This situation describes a hierarchy that people or societies aim to go towards the ideals they accepted step by step (Güngör, 2000: 23).

Social approval is important in the emergence of values. Socially approved ones constitute values in progress of time becoming behavior criterion (Sarı, 2005: 75). Unfortunately modesty value which existed in the past and the people who had it were appreciated, has now become an unfavorable value as a result of the change in the structure of the society. Values are the main aspects of persons' cognitive construction. A harmony at high level among values is one of the obligatory conditions of person's environmental adaptation. Therefore a consistency between individuals' social adaptations and behaviors is a matter of discussion (Özensel, 2003: 228).

All fundamental institutions such as economy, politics, family, law, education and religion that constitute the social structure include individual values of their own. However just as the process of these institutions cannot be considered independent, so it is not possible to consider values independent from one another (Özensel, 2000: 228).

Individual is the building block of the society. It is influenced by all of the qualities of the community. On the

other hand society shapes the individual according to the desired profile in order to transfer the culture from past to future and to the point aimed. It hands over the language, belief system and values coming from past to individuals and make them individuals of their own. Especially in present world in which globalization is extensive individuals must acquire certain values definitely. This acquisition is obtained via values education at school and values transfer in family.

Values education is closely related to the acquisition of behaviors that takes place in affective domain by individual (Taşpınar, 2009). Developing people's understanding and knowledge directly or indirectly, values education, which is the process of teaching values to people clearly and consciously, is the activity of internalizing information and skills necessary in order to behave individually and conformably to the society which they are members of (Brown, 2005).

Values education starts in family. Individuals lay the foundations of values education in family via what they see from parents and siblings. Via values education transferred within educational institution after family individual will gain characteristics within the scope of society's desire. In this regard values education must be planned in every stage of educational institutions and must be transferred to students. Since it was observed that students had deficiencies at the point of values education, by measuring their attitudes the effect of gender on this attitudes was attempted to be revealed. In this regard in this study it was aimed to determine female and male students' attitudes towards values and contribution to the point of the effect of gender factor on values education.

### Scale selection/methodology

In this descriptive research survey/screening model was used. The questionnaire which was prepared in order to determine the attitudes of secondary school students towards social values was implemented to students during class. When literature was surveyed it was seen that there was a scale that measures the secondary school students' attitudes towards social values and had 0,86Cronbach-Alpha reliability coefficient and this scale was developed by Ebru Bakaç. The scale consisted of 23 items and 5 rating system was used with respond options as "I totally agree", "I agree", "Indecisive", "I disagree", "I totally disagree". The scale was performed with totally 402 students with an instruction that presents information regarding total expression number, respond type, gender average responding time.

### Population and sample

The population of the study consisted of female and male students that attended secondary education institutions in

Turkey in 2015-2016 education year.

402 students, who attended three different public schools in Gaziantep city Nurdağı province in 2015-2016 education year, participated in the sample of the study. The information of the students who participated in the study is given in Table 1.

### Analysis of the data

Grading participants' responds given to the expressions that take place in the test form, responds were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 package program. Within the period of processing responds positive expressions were rated from "I totally agree" option to "I totally disagree" option from 5 to 1, and negative items were scored from "I totally agree" option to "I totally disagree" option from 1 to 5 (Bakaç, 2013).

### Findings

When Table 2 is examined, the score averages that participants took from social values scale it is seen that maximum point scored from social values perception scale is 115.00 and the minimum value is 23.00. The

average point scored from the scale is 90.10.

When Table 3 is examined it is seen that 179 of the students participated in the study were female (44.5%), and 223 of them (55.5%) were male.

When Tables 4 and 5 are examined together in results of t-test which was carried out in order to determine whether Social Values Scale and the group participated in the research indicate a significant difference or not, considering the points of genders it was seen that female students' social values perception rate was higher compared to male students. Also the difference between gender variable and point averages scored from the scale was not found significant statistically. ( $p > .05$ ) Within this frame the acquisitions and schedule of value education must be planned independently from gender variable.

**Table 1.** Frequency and percentage distributions regarding demographic information of the participants.

Variables	N	%
Female	179	44.5
Male	223	55.5
Total	402	100.0

**Table 2.** Social values perception scale descriptive statistics

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
402	23.00	115.00	90.10	17.22

**Table 3.** Frequency and percentage distributions regarding researchers' demographic Information.

Variables	f	%
Female	179	44.5
Male	223	55.5
Total	402	100.0

**Table 5.** Points scored according to gender.

Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Female	90.5084	179	15.30344
Male	89.7803	223	18.64609
Total	90.1045	402	17.22114

**Table 4.** T-test results for the difference between social values scale and gender.

Gender	N	X	SS	Sd	T	p
Female	179	90.50	15.30	400	6.474	.674
Male	223	89.78	18.64			

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Values that are the resource of behaviors and used for judging at the same time showing the tendencies and preferences of individuals are no doubt the headstones of

the society. Values are indispensable for a community in terms of their connective aspects; enabling individuals and the community access a better life sustain their existence. Values that sustain the society begin to be acquired in family and continue at school under the title of values education. In this sense schools are on the threshold in terms of providing these values, which start in family, to be obtained. Hereby the values to be obtained and internalized will not only influence entire life of the students but social life as well. In this respect it is important to gauge value perception at schools. For this purpose, when the data obtained from Perception Scale of Social Values carried out with the assumption that value attitude would be affected from gender was

examined, it was revealed that secondary school students' rate of perceiving values were high. Although female students' rate was higher than that of male students, this difference was not very significant. From this point of view it can be stated that values perception rate is not affected by gender in large measure and secondary school students' attitudes towards values are close. Values education must include same acquisitions independently from gender towards all students and aim to gain fundamental values of the society.

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**APPENDIX 1: SOCIAL VALUES PERCEPTION SCALE**

Dear students, expressions below were prepared in order to see your opinions regarding social values. Read the expressions below and answer them sincerely putting (x) in one of the options opposite each expression considering which one is appropriate for you. Total time is 15 minutes.

		I totally Disagree	I Disagree	Indecisive	I Agree	I Totally Agree
1	Family protects us from bad people and bad situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	We must protect our both physical and mental health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Respect is learned in family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Societies interested in science have a brighter future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	We must keep being honest even if we have disadvantage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Everybody must be aware of his/her responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	We must display solidarity even on better days.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	For a healthy life we must care for others' health as well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	We should not talk behind other people's back.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	A person must be honest first then expect others to be honest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	People must be more sensitive to other living beings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Healthy people are happier.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Protecting the country is not provided only by fighting during the warfare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Beauty is everywhere but it must be seen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Beauty is in what people do with care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Without solidarity society would not exist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	People who fulfill their responsibilities become more successful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Lives of people who do not fulfill their responsibilities become difficult.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Hardworking people are more beneficial to their country and community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	We might not be honest all the time to get what we want.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Only scientists must be interested in science.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	When people become sensitive to each other things get difficult.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	We cannot be dishonest when the people around us are not honest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>