What Does ‘Value’ Evoke For Children? A Detection Study as to Transferring Values to Daily Life*

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Abstract

Many studies have been carried out because of the importance of values education in recent years. The studies have shown their effects on the curriculum of 2005. In many classes it is aimed to provide individuals with the gains kneaded with appropriate values. Social Studies are one of them. However, no satisfactory studies as to whether the values envisaged in this class are gained or not have been conducted up to now. Therefore, how the children interpret the values and mirror them in daily life was investigated. The study was made through the use of phenomenological pattern, one of the qualitative methods. This pattern was preferred to determine what the children know about the values, a phenomenon term and how they transfer what they know to their daily life. The study including typical sampling was conducted together with 58 students in elementary school in Hendek, Sakarya Province. 12 values (honesty, respect, good health, self-regulatory, conciliatory, responsibility, patience, fairness, affection, self-confidence, benevolence, courage) taught in Social Studies were chosen to be asked such kind of questions as “What does .... [value] evoke for you? Can you give an example for this value from your daily life?” The answers of the questions were subject to content analysis. Statements were encoded for every value and themes were obtained thanks to these codes. Immediately afterwards, the themes were confirmed by receiving an expert opinion. The relationship between what the values evoke and examples given by the students was predicated as a frequency. At the end of the study, it was determined that the values like benevolence, good-health and responsibility were correctly perceived while the ones like self-confidence, self-regulatory were not interpreted by the students. The concepts that the students confused these values with were also detected.

Key Words

Values Education, Values in Daily Life, Elementary Education.

Human being is alone when s/he thinks. However, s/he has to comply with certain rules in a community or society to sustain his or her life. Both these rules and the characteristics shaping the identity of an individual gain him or her value. Hence these values direct the attitudes and behaviors of an individual (Sevinç, 2006). Because value is a belief, preference and standard of human (Rokeach, 1973). Surely every person has to adopt a value acceptable to everyone, make preferences to direct to good attitudes and behaviors and establish a certain standard in order to enhance social life. Globalization has been one of the factors determining value preference of people recently. Below is presented a letter. At the bottom of tortures and other treatments by educated people in the concentration camp mentioned in the letter sent to the teachers at the school opening every year by high school principal in the USA lie the phenomenon of globalization abovementioned (Düvenci, 2009).

I am one of those surviving in a concentration camp. I witnessed what nobody should see; the gas chambers built by well-educated engineers, the children poisoned by well-trained doctors, the babies killed by accomplished nurses, the women and children hit

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and burnt by high school and university graduates… Therefore I am skeptical of education. I want you to endeavor to make your students decent people; not to let your endeavors end up with well-educated monsters, skilled psychopaths; only if reading, writing and mathematics enable the children to be more decent, will they matter (p. 254).

Because as before mentioned the globalization is one of the factors forming the values and changing them. The ambitions, desires of people to govern the world inaugurated such kind of wars. Unfortunately because of the globalization defined as the downsizing of the world into a town inhuman values like hunger, poverty, war, violence, exploitation, hatred and social injustice have replaced the values like peace, social justice, happiness and equality, all of them the fruits of modern civilization (Köylü, 2006). As the phenomenon of globalization cannot be averted, an education of high quality enabling the internalization of basic human values is a must to prevent people from going through wrong channels and changing their values.

The question of ”Does a family or a school play a central role in where and how the values are gained to children and young generations today?” is answered as “school” (Erden, nd.; Topçu, 1998). Today the constructive role of family in the value education has declined considerably (Keskin, 2008). However, the individuals with the basic human values can be integrated into society only through the education given with the compound of a family, school and society (Ekşi, 2003). Thus it is a big mistake to hold only schools responsible for such kind of education. Though it may be a bigger mistake to deny the importance of education in schools, one of the compounds where the value education is given. Because this, value education has started to gain importance in our country along with other countries around the world and many studies about this issue have been carried out (e.g. Aladağ, 2009; Balci, 2008; Budumlu Akkiprik, 2007; Çengelci, 2010; Demirhan İşcan, 2007; Deveci & Selanik Ay, 2009; Keskin; Yalal, 2010). Because of the importance of value education noticed, such kind of education has been included in the curriculum put into practice in 2005 for the first time. In many classes it is aimed to provide individuals with the gains kneaded with appropriate values. One of these classes is Social Studies. Social Studies are taught by branch teachers in the 6th -7th grades of elementary school. There are twenty values envisaged to gain the students, yet no satisfactory studies as to whether these values are gained or not have been conducted up to now. From this point forth, this study was carried out to answer the questions like “Do the 6th and 8th grade students of elementary school interpret values correctly? and Do they transfer these values to a daily life and use them correctly?” Hence it was aimed to determine how the children interpret the values taught them and mirror these values in a daily life. At the end of the study suggestions were put forward in line with the findings.

**Method**

**Research Model**

The study was carried out through the use of phenomenological pattern, one of the qualitative methods. As is known, qualitative researches aim to help understand how the people establish their social world and how they interpret the world they live in phenomenological researches may include phenomena; events, cases, experiences or concepts. The phenomena in the research are the values given below. In a phenomenological pattern existing case may be described in detail. That is why, this pattern was preferred to determine what the children know about the values and whether they can transfer these values to a daily life or not.

**Study Group**

A typical sampling was applied to determine the participants from whom the data were obtained. According to Patton, typical cases are not chosen with the aim of making generalizations. It is aimed to have a rough idea about the study environment studying these typical cases. Therefore, the research was made together with 60 students in an intermediate elementary school in Hendek, Sakarya Province. However, two students were not evaluated in the participant group because of the lack of data. Half of the participants were 6th grade students and the other half were 8th grade ones of elementary school. One of the reasons why the participant group was chosen in this way was to see how the values gained in the 6th grade would come out to be in the 8th grade.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

As stated beforehand, the research was restricted to Social Studies. 12 values were chosen from the curriculum of this class. These values are honesty, respect, good-health, self-regulatory, conciliatory, responsibility, patience, fairness, affection, self-confidence, be-
The 12 values were divided into two groups made up of 6 values. In different times the questions like “What does … (name of value) evoke for you? Can you give an example for this value from your daily life?” were asked regarding these values. The answers of the questions were subject to content analysis (Öğülmüş, 1991) because the dissociated interests, attitudes included a quantitative description to evaluate the content of a document or a message. First of all, the statements of the students for every value were encoded. Then descriptions were made getting through to themes thanks to these codes. In the context of themes, two categories composed of correct and incorrect interpretation were specified for every value. When these categories were transmitted to the table a shorter version “incorrect or correct meaning” was used to save up the space from time to time.

After the themes were obtained, the answers given by the students for every value were tabulated. Whether the codes and themes were correctly determined was confirmed by opinions of 6 experts making a search about value education. On the other hand, the relationship between what the value in question evokes and the example given by the student was evaluated as frequency. For the frequency evaluation three categories made up of correct, partially correct and incorrect were determined. The answer given to the question “(1) What does … (name of value) evoke for you? (2) Can you give an example for this value from your daily life?” was evaluated as the definition of value in number 1 and as the transfer of the value to a daily life in number 2. If the student answered the both questions as correct, both as incorrect, the question 1 as correct and the question 2 as incorrect they were evaluated in (a) correct category, in (b) incorrect category and in (c) partially correct category respectively. Out of them just (a) both of them correct was evaluated in the category of correct interpretation; (b and c) incorrect or partially incorrect was evaluated in the category of incorrect interpretation. Because the student who makes a correct definition but refers to unrelated concepts and values in the examples from a daily life identifies the value incorrectly. For example, if the student who defines benevolence as “helping others” for the first question gives an example of “I become a benevolent person when I give others material and moral value.” for the second question, it shows that the student transfers this value to a daily life incorrectly. It was evaluated both in the category of partially correct and incorrect interpretation.

In the samples used to exemplify the content analysis, the name, gender of the students and first letters of their name and surnames were shortened. For example, a coding like FZY-6 stands for Female Zeynep Yaman 6th grade.

**Results**

**The Findings for the Identification Frequency of Values**

Good health, benevolence, responsibility and courage were the values mostly interpreted correctly by the students. These values were interpreted by nearly the same amount of students in 6th and 8th grades. On the other hand, while the values of fairness, self-regulatory and self-confidence were not interpreted correctly by sufficient number of 6th grade students (less than one third), they were interpreted correctly by two third of the 8th grade students. While the values of affection, respect and patience were interpreted correctly by nearly two third of the 6th grade students, the value of affection and the values of respect and patience were interpreted correctly by nearly two third of the 8th grade students. The fact that the level of value interpretation of the 8th grade students was higher than that of 6th grade students indicates that the value education given to the students was effective. However, familial, environmental and individualistic impacts should not be ignored in this situation. Because the children are exposed to value education not only at school but also in the environment of home, television, street and friends informally.

One of the issues that draw attention in the table above is that the value of conciliatory was more interpreted correctly by the 6th grade students than the 8th grade ones. The fact that the value of honesty was interpreted correctly by almost half of the 6th and 8th grade students and interpreted incorrectly by almost half of the 6th grade students draws attention too. The reasons for these should be investigated.

**The Findings for the Interpretation of Values and Transfer of These Values to Daily Life**

It was determined that as the students associated the values with some concepts and values incorrectly, they transferred them to daily life incorrectly. Generally the students associated:

- the value of good health with the concepts, behaviors and values like good person, brotherhood, good thinking and friendship
• the value of benevolence with the concepts, behaviors and values like being a pure heart, love to show, to be morally good behavior
• the value of responsibility with the concepts like entrust, getting along, not tell a lie
• the value of courage with the concepts, behaviors and values like attack, generosity, respect, patience, diligence, honesty, freedom, cooperation, leadership, no to fight
• the value of conciliatory with the concepts, behaviors and values like appeasement hatred, honesty, not offended, man is at peace with itself, jibe, agree with, make friends, be respectful, to persuade, to be knowledgeable and marriage
• the value of affection with the concepts, behaviors and values like respect, happiness, not envy, like a thing, to help, not tell a lie, say a kind word
• the value of patience with the concepts, behaviors and values like confidence, to obtain what he wants, respect, solidarity, to do good, a nice treat and to know be silent
• the value of honesty with the concepts, behaviors and values like respect for elders, charity, being quiet, friendship-building, not make bad friends, being generous, self-confidence, diligence, patience and obedience
• the value of respect with the concepts, behaviors and values like affection, obedience, honesty, loyalty, being disciplined, self-control, charity
• the value of fairness with the concepts, behaviors and values like honesty, respect, affection, judge.
• the value of self-regulatory with the concepts, behaviors and values like self-confidence, measuring the success by an exam, controlling others, the control of supervisor, not being able to express oneself, being under doctor control, being honest, respectful, being controlled at school, democracy, independence,
• the value of self-confidence with the concepts, behaviors and values like confiding in others, keeping secrets, honesty, independence, taking good care of oneself incorrectly.

According to Kant, the way for the people to reach happiness and for the governments to look to the future with confidence is raising moral, righteous people (Yayla, 2005). Value education should be given to raise moral and righteous people. According to Doğanay (2006) there is no specified time for the values education. Value education can be given at any time. Though childhood years when the personality development is shaped is a critical period for value education. Therefore, family is where the first education is given. People transmit their basic values to other generations through family. Individuals learn their first religious and moral knowledge and attitudes from their families (Aydın, 2005). Values are closely related to the environment in which every person lives and the experiences s/he has. Parents give an education of values to their children albeit not under the name of values education. Also media and information technologies play a role in creating the values of children. However, the education given by family, media, information technologies and environment is informal (Keskin, 2008). Since an informal education is superficial, one cannot be sure about whether the values required to be gained by the child have been gained or not. As the education is not given within a regular and systematic program, it is difficult to understand which basic values have been developed in a child and how this has been achieved (Balat & Balaban Dağal, 2006). That is why, the values should be taught within a formal education systematically, concretely, consciously and controllably.

The content of Social Studies, one of the important elements of formal education is made up of knowledge. However, the curriculum of Social Studies is knitted with the facts like behavior, belief, theory, hypothesis, skill and value. These rich concepts which are intricate and are usually intertwined in the class of Social studies. Therefore, functional knowledge is structured in the classes of Social Studies in which people use their hand, heart and brain all together (Klages, 1999). That individuals use their hand, heart and brain all together indicates that the value education will be given in this class effectively. Because of this, in the study to what extent the twelve values belonging to the class of Social Studies were gained and transferred to life was investigated.

As stated in the findings about the values of good health, benevolence, responsibility and courage, these values were interpreted correctly by almost all the 6th and 8th grade students. This situation can be interpreted in the way that the values mentioned were gained in the pre-school period and the first years of the elementary school. In the study carried out by Cebeci (2005) it was determined that the elementary school students mirrored the value of benevolence in their daily life. Moreover, in the doctorate study of Demirhan-İşcan (2007) it was detected that the children internalized mostly the value of benevolence. This can be resulted from the benevolent campaigns
and other activities made because of either society belief or education or hunger, earthquake and natural disasters through many channels especially media. Although the value of responsibility was interpreted correctly by almost all the students, it was determined that in the research this value was confused with behaviors, values and concepts like entrusting, not telling lies, getting on with others. In his study Demirhan-İşcan applied a character program. It was discovered that before this program was applied, the students emphasized the value of responsibility mostly while describing the values whereas after the application of character education program the use of this value by the students increased even more. This case coincides with the results of our research. In the same study Demirhan-İşcan discovered that while the students described the behavior of “not fulfilling a duty” related to the value of responsibility mostly before the application of the program, they described the behavior of “fulfilling the responsibility of protecting environment” related to this value mostly after the application of this program. This case indicates that the values are gained more functionally thanks to character education programs. On the other hand, that the students confused the value of courage with the behaviors, concepts and values like attacking, fighting can be interpreted as the indicator of the necessity for peace education. Because the students expressed the value of courage with just bullying and violence prone behaviors. For example, that the student MMK-6 uses the notion of attacking instead of courage as in his statement “... when you confide in yourself, you can beat your rival. You will attack your rival so brutally that he will be afraid of you.” reinforces this finding. However, Coşkun (2008) her study research that children want to topics how about a world. Children stated that want to a peaceful world, a world free from evil, a world without war, a peaceful environment, where they can live with their families and a clean natural environment. This is a contradiction. And so, reason for this discrepancy should be investigated.

In the study they carried out with the students of elementary school, Yiğit, Tokgöz, and Esenay (2001) found out that the children did not adopt the style of healthy life and nutrition. However, in this study it was determined that the children mirrored the value of good health in daily life correctly. Because of this conflict it is necessary to determine the current situation conducting a comprehensive study (data based observation, interview) and to determine the points about which precautions should be taken and to educate people in this way. Because in her study intended for health education, conducted with the elementary school students, Durusu (1996) found out that when the students are given sustainable education as to hygiene, bad habit, cleanliness, dental care, prophylaxis and regular nourishment, significant changes arise in their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. This case proves the importance of the education for the value of good health.

In the research as to the values of fairness, self-regulatory and self-confidence, it was determined that these values were interpreted correctly by the two third of the 8th grade students while they were not interpreted by a sufficient number of the 6th grade students.

According to Kohlberg's stages of moral level, it is known that the first level (preconventional level) generally reflects the moral reasoning of children and has got an egocentric perception. Therefore, the sense of justice is not well-developed. This period corresponds to ages 5 to 8. An individual in the second level (conventional level) has got a sense of injustice meeting the family expectations. That is to say, the interests of not an individual but the group s/he is involved in are in the foreground (Senemoğlu, 1997; Woolfolk, 1998). Thus, the result of the research that the value of fairness is not well-developed in the 6th grade students but is developed in the ratio of two third in the 8th grade students is not surprising. Consequently, the value of fairness should be handled intensely at this age period. In the study it was determined that the value of fairness was confused with the concepts, behaviors and values like honesty, respect, affection and judging. The reasons for this should be investigated.

Self-confidence and self-regulatory are two important factors playing a role in the character development of an individual. Because a child should have self-confidence to take firm steps forward. Moreover, a person has to control and restrict his or her reactions, behaviors or an inclination to head for other purposes in order to achieve a goal (Lawrence Preston, 2007; Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 1996). Namely, while self-confidence means self-knowledge, self-love, setting you opens targets and communicating properly, self-regulatory includes controlling the feelings. In the research it was observed that the value of self-confidence was confused with confiding in others, keeping secrets and self-regulatory was confused with being controlled by others. Because of this, it is necessary to carry out researches about the reasons why the values mentioned are not known adequately and to enrich intramural and extramural activities intended for these values. For example, it is necessary to compare a child through the behaviors like giving him or her responsibility s/he can fulfill, providing an
In the study as to the values of patience, affection and respect, it was determined that the students confused the value of patience with keeping secret, getting what a person pursues, respect, benevolence, doing favor; the value of respect with affection, obeying, honesty, loyalty, being disciplined, controlling oneself and helping. Also that the two third of the 6th grade students and almost all the 8th grade students interpreted the values of affection, respect and patience correctly shows that children gain these values in the period of elementary school. In her study Çengelci (2010) found out that children understood the values of respect, affection, responsibility, tolerance, honesty, cleanliness from the sense of value. She inferred that they had no difficulty in transferring the values of respect, tolerance and benevolence to a daily life. In this case, it can be said that the students internalize the values of affection and respect at early ages. Notwithstanding it was determined that the studies as to the value of health were not available in literature. It is necessary to conduct studies with several dimensions about this value.

In the research findings as to the values of conciliatory and honesty, it was determined that the students confused the value of conciliatory with the behaviors, concepts and values like quelling the hate, honesty, not being offended, being at peace with oneself, compatibility, agreement, fraternization. Moreover, that the value of conciliatory was better interpreted by the 6th grade students compared to the 8th grade students in the study draws attention. The finding of the research carried out by Kesen, Deniz, and Durmuşoğlu (2007) with the students in the orphanages that as the adolescents grow older, they become more violence prone may be an indicator of why such kind of result emerged in the study. However, this case should be investigated in the studies as to the psychological counseling and guidance with the students in other schools.

Besides these researches, it is necessary to arrange character education programs and apply them in schools. As a matter of fact, Bulach (2002) states that character education programs help to reduce bullying behaviors and violence. Because these programs enable the students to be tolerant and gain compatible, empathetic, compassionate, conciliatory personality traits thus not allowing them to adopt aggressive attitudes.

In the study it was determined that the value of honesty was interpreted correctly by the same number of students in both grades, but the ratio of incorrect interpretation by the 6th grades was three times higher than that of the 8th grade students. Also the students associated the value of honesty incorrectly with the concepts, behaviors and values like respect to elders, benevolence, staying calm, making a friend, not making bad friends, generosity, self-confidence, diligence, patience, obeying and not using bad language. Demirhan-İşcan (2007) found out that before the application of value education programs, the only positive behavior that the students displayed as to the value of honesty was “confessing to telling lies”. That is to say, the awareness of the students as to the value of honesty is similar to the results of this research. On the contrary, in the study conducted by Cebeci (2005) using moral analytical stories it was observed that two third of the students made statements as to the values of truthfulness and honesty. Moral analytical stories may have led to this result because such kind of stories forms one of parts of value education.

To evaluate broadly, in the study it was determined that the students had difficulty in mirroring some of the values in daily life and were not able to mirror some others effectively enough. It is necessary to provide the students with the activities as to the values especially they have difficulty in mirroring in daily life and the values of affection, respect and patience including the values of fairness, self-regulatory and self-confidence in the first step. Moreover, the activities as to affective skills should be designed for an individual to interpret the values and mirror them in daily life correctly. The activities based on the cooperation of school, family, environment and individual should be arranged for the value education too. As Berkowitz (2005) stated parents being educated and involved in the programs is important in terms of both academic and character outputs (cited in Uysal, 2008). Comprehensive researches as to the reasons “why the students interpret the values incorrectly” should be carried out as well.
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