

## Values Education Experiences of Turkish Class Teachers: A Phenomonological Approach

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### Abstract

*Problem Statement:* Teachers endow children with values through education. The effective role they play in the teaching of values has been documented through extensive research. These studies have shown that teachers should act as favorable role models reflecting values accurately inside and outside schools, creating ethical classroom environments, and using different strategies to provide children with various value-related experiences formally in the classroom and informally outside of the classroom. Naturally, individuals with democratic citizenship skills who will contribute positively to their society can only be raised by teachers who are equipped to offer values education. For these reasons, the opinions and experiences of teachers regarding the process of values education are important.

*Purpose of the Study:* The study aims to identify the values education opinions of class teachers who have a critical role in transmitting the basic values of the society to children, and to describe their thoughts and experiences regarding this process.

*Method:* In line with the problem and the general aim of the study, a qualitative research paradigm was used. As the study aims to identify the opinions and experiences of primary school class teachers, it is a phenomenological case study. The data was collected through focus group interviews using a semi-structured form based on the literature. Participants were selected using convenience, homogeneous, and criterion sampling. The data was analysed with content analysis and NVivo2.0.

*Findings:* Data obtained from the focus group interviews was analysed and the findings were presented using the "Category (theme) based data display approach." Teacher opinions regarding the process of values education were collected under three categories. The "meanings attributed to values" category refers to how teachers perceive values and the general meaning of the concept of value. The "process of values education" category explains why values need to be taught; where, when and by

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whom they should be taught; and how teachers equip children with values. The “values education and problems” category denotes the problems encountered by teachers during the process of values education.

*Conclusions:* The results showed that teachers: prioritised “patriotism” among the values to be taught to children; tried to explain values using other concepts such as belief, attitude, virtue, character, ethics, esthetics, or morals; believed that values education should start at home and parents should play a more active role in the process until schools take over; organized different activities in and out of the classroom to equip children with values; and encountered numerous problems in the process of values education stemming particularly from the insufficiency of the family and the environment.

*Keywords:* Education, instruction, class teacher, values, values education

Values are ethical rules, basic beliefs, and standards explaining the rights and wrongs that guide behavior; they are life-related attitudes that shape the decision-making process and help to make an accurate assessment of beliefs (Erdem, 2007; Halstead, 1995; Nesbitt & Henderson, 2003). They are the protection and defense of people’s human values (Kucuradi, 1999). Schwartz and Bilsky (as cited in Kagitcibası & Kusdil, 2000; Kurtulan, 2007) used the characteristics agreed upon by various theorists and defined values as follows:

1. Values are beliefs but they are not completely objective ideas freed from emotions; they are intertwined with emotions.
2. Values are related to the aims of individuals and the behavior patterns used to successfully reach these aims.
3. Values are beyond specific actions and situations. For instance, the value “obedience” applies to all of our relationships regardless of place or agents.
4. Values function as standards that guide behaviors, beliefs and situations.
5. Values are prioritized according to their importance.

Taking these into consideration, a major question to ask ourselves is: “Why do we teach values?” The answer is easy. We teach them because society relies on them to continue, they give meaning to the socio-cultural elements of a society (Ryals & Foster, 2001), and they are crucial in understanding a society. They lie at the heart of culture, which ensures the unity and continuity of the society. They reflect the characteristics of the society and its subunits (organizations, groups, individuals) (Ersoy, 2006).

Regardless of their different definitions, values have a direct or indirect effect on people’s social adaptation and daily performance. However, they may not be acquired solely on individual effort. Schools should therefore ensure that every individual is equipped with the values that promote appropriate moral decisions and behaviors. It is the responsibility of education in general and social studies in particular to help individuals acquire democratic values, attitudes and beliefs, and to become aware of existing values and how these affect their interaction with others (Doganay, 2006). Education should also aim for whole person education (cognitive,

social, psychological, ethical, affective education). If education only appeals to the cognitive domain, it cannot fully fulfill its function; it falls short of meeting its aim (Bacanli, 2006). Seen from this perspective, schools should aim to raise academically successful individuals and individuals with basic values (Eksi, 2003). With the help of education, it is possible to raise self-actualized and innovative individuals who are equipped with the desired value judgments. Societies with such individuals are better prepared for the future (Akbas, 2004a). Schools then have an important role in giving individuals a tendency for positive behavior, as well as in maintaining this tendency. When certain values are supported by the society, they become reinforced but when the support wanes, so do the values (Dilmac, 1999; Gungor, 1993). In order to stop values from disappearing, schools should reinforce them.

As can be concluded, there is an increasing interest in values education. The recent rise in violence in schools make researchers wonder if children are receiving proper values education (Hayes & Hagedorn, 2000). Bohlin (as cited in Hayes & Hagedorn, 2000) argues that this discussion should revolve around the concept of values education at primary and high school levels. In other words, schools should play a more prominent role in equipping students with values of civic education (honesty, respect, tolerance, responsibility, helpfulness, moral values, etc.).

The most important element in values education is the teacher. Studies suggest that teachers should act as role models reflecting values inside and outside the school, create ethical classroom environments, engage children in various tasks and use different strategies to equip them with values formally in the classroom and informally outside of the classroom (Milson, 2000; Ryan, 1986; Ryals & Foster, 2001). Naturally, individuals taught by competent values education teachers will acquire democratic citizenship skills and will contribute to society. It is, therefore, important to know teachers' opinions and experiences regarding the process of equipping children with the basic values.

This study focuses on classroom teachers' opinions about values education and attempts to describe their thoughts and experiences about the process. In line with this general aim, the following questions were studied:

1. What does the concept of "value" mean for classroom teachers?
2. What are the views of classroom teachers about "why" children need to be equipped with values?
3. What are the views of classroom teachers about which values children need?
4. What are the views of classroom teachers about "when" children need to receive values education?
5. What are the views of classroom teachers about "where" children need to receive values education?
6. What are the views of classroom teachers about "who" should give children values education?
7. "How" do classroom teachers equip children with values?
8. What are the "problems" that classroom teachers encounter during values education?

### Method

This qualitative study is a phenomenological case study which allows the researcher to record participants in detail, thus yielding a rich account of the case (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2002). A case study is different from other types of research in that it is based on the questions of “how” and “why,” and lets the researcher conduct an in-depth study into an uncontrolled subject or event (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005). The present study aimed at “exploration,” which is the discourse of interpretive paradigm, instead of “proof,” the discourse of rational paradigm. As such, the study focused on obtaining the quality of participants’ thoughts, experiences and the meaning they derived from these experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

The most common data collection methods used in case studies are interviews, observations, and document analysis. This study made use of the interview technique, more specifically the focus group interview (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005). Focus group interviewing is the interactive discussion of an existing or new group, in a limited time period, on a prespecified topic (Brotherson, 1994; Överlien, Aronsson & Hydén, 2005). It was developed in the early 1940s by Merton to study the war period. It was later adapted by Morgan (1992, 1996) for use in various fields such as sociology, pedagogy, education and political science. The responses given to the questions in a focus group interview are shaped as a result of the group interaction. The fact that a member’s response is heard by others in the group gives them an opportunity to construct their thoughts around this response. In other words, group dynamics is the most important factor affecting the scope and depth of the responses. This characteristic of focus group interviews is important as it helps the formation of a rich data set (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005).

#### *Participants*

The study was conducted in three primary schools attended by students from the lower socio-economic background in Kirsehir during the spring term of 2007-2008. More than one sampling method was used. Convenience sampling was used initially to select the three closest primary schools to the researcher’s university. Secondly, homogeneous sampling was used in order to ensure that the selected schools were at the same socio-economic level. The aim here was to define a specific sub-group by forming a small, homogeneous group. According to Patton, this is the way to collect effective information in focus group interviews (Patton, 1990). Then, criterion sampling was used to ensure that the participants were all class teachers with at least 10 years of experience in teaching different grade levels (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades). Three sessions of focus group interviews were held with a total of 20 class teachers from three different schools meeting these criteria.

**Table 1**  
*The Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

School	Teacher	Gender	Grade Level Taught	Work experience
School A	1	M	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	25 years
	2	M	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	28 years
	3	M	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	27 years
	4	M	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	30 years
	5	F	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	14 years
School B	1	F	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	17 years
	2	F	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	16 years
	3	M	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	20 years
	4	M	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	19 years
	5	M	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	17 years
	6	M	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	27 years
	7	M	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	16 years
	8	M	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	20 years
	9	F	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	18 years
	10	F	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	20 years
School C	1	F	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	21 years
	2	F	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	24 years
	3	M	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	19 years
	4	M	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	25 years
	5	M	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	21 years

#### *Procedure*

Prior to the focus group interviews, the participants and school principals were informed about the aims of the study and their consent was obtained. Interviews were held in three different schools in the afternoon. The number of participants ranged between five and ten in each interview group. At the beginning of each interview, the aims of the study were announced. Participants were then told that the study had a voluntary nature and they could quit at any point. Also, they were informed that their names would be coded for confidentiality purposes and the codes would not be revealed to anyone outside of the group. They were also told that they would not be judged, tested, or evaluated as there were no right or wrong answers. This was done to increase their sense of trust and give them an opportunity to express themselves freely. Before the interviews, the participants were asked warm-up questions such as: "What is your name?", "How many years have you been

teaching?”, and “Which grade level are you teaching?” This too was done to create a relaxed atmosphere. These steps were repeated in all three sessions, each of which lasted between 90 and 130 minutes.

#### *Interview Form and Role of the Moderator*

The study used a “semi-structured interview form” to collect data. To prepare the form, the literature was reviewed and pilot questions were written. Expert opinion was then taken to revise the questions. Following a pilot application, the questions that did not best serve the purposes of the study were removed and the form was finalized with eight questions that worked well. Considering the risk of misunderstanding, “alternative questions” were included in the form. “Probing questions” were also included to delve further into the responses given to the original questions, help the decision-making process of participants, and be able to collect more detailed data. The study was conducted with three assistant researchers in addition to the main one. The first assistant took notes during the interviews and completed analysis forms, the second assistant took care of participants’ needs, and the third assistant handled the audio and video-recording. The main researcher’s responsibilities, on the other hand, were to announce the aim of the study at the beginning of the interviews, handle any arguments that might interfere with the study, ensure that the interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere by not diverting from the topic, encourage participants to enter into a meaningful dialogue with each other, and continue on to a new question when appropriate.

#### *Ethical Considerations*

The interviews were held in line with the knowledge obtained from the literature. The study was not guided by the researchers’ personal judgments. When the questions were prepared, care was taken to write questions which would facilitate discussion. The participants were offered an environment where they could freely share their opinions. The names of the participants and their schools were coded in the forms. Additionally,

- Participants were allowed the freedom to quit the study at any time during the sessions.
- The opinions and behaviors of the participants were not abused during the interviews.
- Participants were informed in detail about the study.
- Distractions during the interviews were minimized.
- No outsiders were allowed to sit in on the focus group interviews and the data obtained was not passed on to school personnel. All responses remained confidential and were coded for future studies and presentations.

#### *Recordings and Transcriptions*

Focus group interviews were recorded using audio and video-recording tools and analysis forms. These were transcribed and, thereafter, the selected parts were further detailed.

### *Data Analysis*

Content analysis and NVivo2.0 was used for data analysis. The data was initially computed by using MS Office. The texts were read several times and codes were chosen. The concepts used in the coding were obtained from the literature. The continuous comparison method, which aims to help the researcher to clearly and briefly state bulky data (Kvale, 1996), was used in the analyses. Related codes were brought together to find the commonalities between them, and the draft themes (categories) were identified. These themes were based on interview questions. In the following stage, the qualitative analysis program NVivo2.0 was used. The aim was to re-analyze the raw data and thus confirm the categories drawn up by the researcher. Following this, the codes under the themes were interrelated, explained and interpreted (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Theoretical explanations and related research findings were used in interpreting the data, and both corroborating and conflicting results were given with their reasons. Results from the interview analyses were presented in conjunction with Miles and Huberman's (1994) "category (theme) based data display approach."

### *Trustworthiness*

Readjustments were made by supporting the interpretations here with those of other researchers. Additionally, results were shared with the participants to eliminate researcher bias and thus increase the trustworthiness of the study. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) have claimed that this will confirm researchers' interpretations and help develop different perspectives.

The content analysis was supported also by the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis program NVivo2.0. Analysis forms were used. More specifically, standardized copy forms were used to reveal the most complex parts of interviews. These forms typically show the pauses during the interview, the emphasized parts and intervals (as cited in Roberts & Priest, 2006; Shenton, 2004). The frequencies of words and sentences used in the coding are given in numerical form in the findings section.

The trustworthiness of the study was maximized by submitting the raw data, codes, themes, written copies, audio, and video-recordings of the study to an independent researcher to confirm that the results were based on data rather than personal opinions. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) and Mason (1996) state that such peer debriefing is a trusted way of confirming the accuracy and trustworthiness of qualitative research.

To support the interpretations of the researcher and reflect participants' opinions, sample quotations from transcriptions are given below. The abbreviations used in the study are: A, B, C for schools, M for male teachers and F for females. Each teacher was also identified by a number. To illustrate, (AM1): A: School, M: Male teacher, 1: first teacher, (BF3): B: School, F: Female teacher, 3: third teacher.

The following figure shows the stages followed in the analysis of qualitative data.

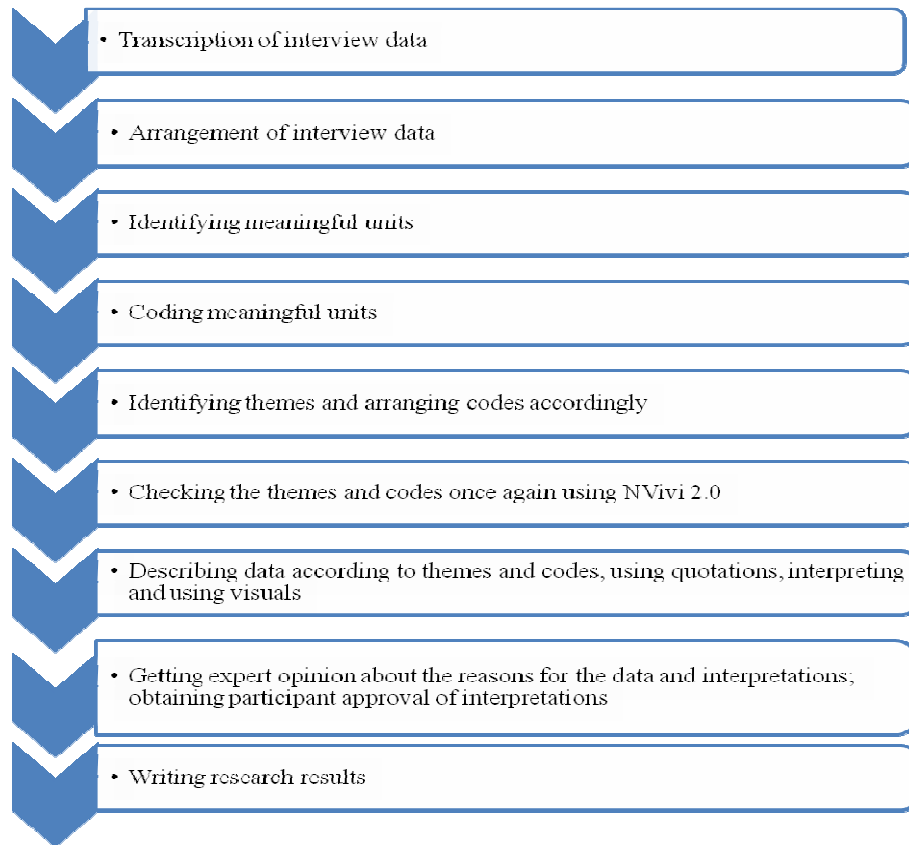


Figure 1. Stages followed in the analysis of data regarding teachers' opinions on values education.

## Findings

This part includes findings from the analyses of focus group interview data. The findings were presented in conjunction with Miles and Huberman's (1994) "category (theme) based data display approach."

### *Meanings Attributed to Values*

In order to understand teacher conceptions of values, they were asked the meaning of the concept of "value." The most common responses were "rules that define acceptable behavior" and "elements that ensure the continuity of a society." While the former was stated by five class teachers, the latter was stated by six. Apart from these, the teachers associated values with basic beliefs (three teachers), the rights and wrongs guiding individuals (one teacher), suggestions for right behavior (two teachers), truth that changes from person to person (two teachers), ideal life

standards (one teacher), moral values thought appropriate by the society (three teachers), distinguishing characteristics of societies (two teachers), a must for human life (one teacher), socialization period (one teacher) and attitudes toward life (three teachers). Samples of teacher responses are as follows:

*"Maximizing success, working better and more consciously. (AM3)"*

*"Things that form a nation, that distinguish societies. (BM5)"*

*"National and moral rules agreed by a society. (BF10)"*

*"A sample of social life that ensures a more comfortable life. (CF2)"*

*"Things I like and have adopted; things that reflect me. (AM1)"*

#### *Values Education Process*

The teachers stated that the values children should acquire were patriotism (eleven teachers), working hard (three teachers), giving importance to family (two teachers), sensitivity (two teachers), respect (four teachers), love (five teachers), honesty (two teachers), freedom (one teacher), tolerance (one teacher), helpfulness (one teacher), solidarity (one teacher), giving importance to health (one teacher), and conducting scientific studies (one teacher). Below are some sample teacher statements about the values that children should acquire:

*"They should learn to value human beings, live a humanistic life, value their family and society. (AM2)"*

*"Our country has some values. Teachers need to equip children with a love of their flag and country. (CM4)"*

*"I'd like to raise individuals who have national values and who love their country, nation, and flag. (BM8)"*

*"I'd like to raise individuals who respect themselves, their elders and friends, and who are loyal to national and moral values. (CM5)"*

*"We need to equip children with values that will make them self-confident; loyal to national, moral and ethical values; responsible for the flag, country and nation; sociable; helpful; willing to solve problems. (BF1)"*

While the teachers stated that there is a need to raise children who have an awareness of patriotism (seven teachers), are loyal (one teacher), value their families (four teachers), are responsible (three teachers), make an effort for the continuity of the society (nine teachers), work towards being peaceful and happy (one teacher), accept and respect diversity (seven teachers), are thoughtful of others (one teacher), value cleanliness and health (three teachers) and seek peaceful solutions in conflicts (two teachers), two teachers claimed that values need to be taught to allow the socialization of children, four said to create a sensitive society, and one said to ease the children's lives. The concepts of country and society emerge from teacher

responses as most important items. Below are some responses to the question of why children need to be equipped with values:

*"We all live in this country, we should equip children with values so that they love their country, respect ancient Turkish traditions, and care for their families. (BM3)"*

*"So that children can interact with the society, adapt to it, become one with it and live without problems. (CF1)"*

*"We should take responsibility for these values so that we are helpful to the society, elevate the nation to the level of modern civilizations as Atatürk said, establish positive social relationships with people of different countries, and ensure a bright future for the country. (BM8)"*

*"Values need to be taught so that we can become a good society. (AM2)"*

*"Children who have learned values do not conflict with their families and the environment. They feel ownership of their nation and have self-confidence. (BF9)"*

*"Firstly, it is necessary for the mental health of the society. Secondly, it is necessary for the protection of the family. Also, national unity and oneness are necessary for the future of this country because these are the values that we thrive on. (BM4)"*

The participating teachers voiced different opinions about when, where, and by whom the children need to be taught values. Many (fifteen teachers) argued that values education should start at home and families should play an effective role in the process until school, whereas five teachers said that the family would not be able to offer proper values education and, therefore, schools should teach them. Below are sample quotations from teachers:

*"There are different values to be taught in each age group. Children who come to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade need to be given the values of cleanliness and good health. (AM3)"*

*"From the very first days at school, children need to be taught about the values of their society. (BM6)"*

*"Values education should start in the family and continue at school. (CF1)"*

*"As an infant is mostly at home, values education should start at home; once the child starts school, teachers should take over values education. (BM5)"*

*"The process actually starts at birth because the child, like a camera, reflects what s/he sees. If parents have wrong attitudes, the child will only imitate that. Later on, values education continues at school. (BF10)"*

*"Basic values need to be taught at home by family members and then schools ought to take over. (CM3)"*

*"Values are learned at home first, followed by the environment and school. (AM4)"*

The teachers stated that they tried to transfer values to children by modeling proper behavior in and outside the school (two teachers), establishing democratic classroom environments (two teachers), using stories including different values in the classroom (eleven teachers), making use of the texts in course books (four

teachers), explaining right and wrong by using situations and drama (eleven teachers), organizing group work (one teacher), direct lecturing (two teachers) and questioning classroom events together with children in order to make values more understandable (five teachers). As can be seen, teachers said they used different techniques to equip children with values. Sample teacher opinions about how they teach values to students are as follows:

*"We use imitation and drama in class. (CM3)"*

*"We focus on the heroes mentioned in the reading texts. We associate the positive and negative aspects of these heroes with the children's immediate environment and give examples. (BM8)"*

*"We use examples from the past. For instance, we discuss the heroes of Çanakkale War to teach children love of one's country. (AM2)"*

*"We use sample cases, drama and real events. (BF9)"*

*"My most common activities are "show and do" and games. If there is a negative behavior, we discuss it and ways to improve it, or I use historical heroes that children are familiar with to teach values. (BM7)"*

#### *Values Education and Problems Encountered*

The teachers summarized the problems they encountered in values education as follows: deficient or insufficient family education (seven teachers), wrong values education by the family (eight teachers), insufficiency of the teacher (one teacher), lack of awareness in the society about values education (two teachers), wrong value guidance by the media and their failure to educate (four teachers), insufficient texts in values education books (one teacher), lack of communication between the school and families (six teachers), and the resulting value conflicts seen in children. On the other hand, three teachers said they did not face any problems. Sample teacher opinions about problems during values education are as follows:

*"Here, many parents have a low level of education. As they misguide their children, we have to tackle difficulties trying to fix their mistakes. (BF1)"*

*"We teach values to children at school but when they go home, they cannot observe these values in their home environment. (BM5)"*

*"Among the reasons why the values we teach cannot become student behavior is the uneducated family and social environment. (AF5)"*

*"Families may sometimes teach wrong values. Subsequently, conflicts arise between the basic values of the society and those taught by the family. (CM4)"*

*"There may be differences between the values given at home and school. Therefore, we encounter difficulties in the process of values education. (AM3)"*

*"The many differences between the values we try to give the students and the ones they see on TV lead to value conflicts. (BM3)"*

### Discussion

The aim of the study was to examine and reveal classroom teachers' opinions and experiences regarding values education; therefore, focus group interviewing was selected as the data collection technique. An important characteristic of focus group interviews is that the researcher who conducts the interview tries to facilitate group discussion. Although the first interview in this study yielded relatively poor information due to the researcher's lack of experience, the subsequent interviews yielded the desired result. The study also attempted to bring to light the facts below the surface, rather than to reach generalizations.

In order to reach accurate and objective findings, the data obtained throughout the study was described step by step. In order to enhance the accuracy and objectivity of the findings, the data was shared with another field expert and re-analyzed with the qualitative analysis program NVivo2.0. Also, sample interview quotations were given.

Most participating teachers were seen to perceive values as rules identifying codes of behavior and elements ensuring the continuity of the society. They attributed to values meanings such as basic beliefs, good and bad things that guide people, suggestions, facts that change from person to person, moral values required by the society, a must of human life, distinguishing characteristics of societies, and attitudes regarding socialization and life. Does a value consist of only a belief or a subjective judgment, or does it represent the objective truth? The definition of the concept of value has become an issue of debate among sociologists. The examination of values has opted for descriptive definitions rather than absolute rational definitions (Ozensel, 2003). According to Schwartz and Bilsky (1990), values are criteria that people use to evaluate events and people including themselves and to choose and justify their actions. Theodorson and Theodorson (1979) define values as abstract and generalized behavior principles offering a basic standard in judging actions and aims, and formed by the strong emotional ties of the members of a group.

Socrates explains values with the concept of virtue. Virtue, according to Socrates, is equal to knowledge in one way. He also thinks that happiness can only be reached through a virtuous life; in other words, the highest and most important good for the spirit is moral virtue in a general sense. He claims that virtue is not inherent but learned, and he encourages people to use his Socratic method (dialectic) to question ideas before adopting them so as to reach the truth (Day, 1994; Guthrie, 1989). Plato, on the other hand, takes virtue as the good side of spirit to control the bad side of reason, the body, bodily wishes and passions, and thus the most superior good reaching for the greatest idea. Virtue has been defined by Aristotle as the resource which bears good effectiveness and virtuous behavior as the way to happiness (as cited in Eren, 2006). As stated by Doganay (2006), values can be explained with the concepts of belief, attitude, virtue, ethics, morals, and character. The differences mentioned in the definitions can be seen in participating teachers' perceptions of values as well.

According to the teachers, values to be taught to children included patriotism, working hard, caring for the family, sensitivity, respect, love, helpfulness, solidarity, caring about health, and conducting scientific studies. Teachers thus mentioned almost all of the basic values covered in the primary school curricula. It is worth mentioning that, among these, the most commonly emphasized value was “patriotism.”

Conflicts may arise as to which value needs to be given priority in a given society, at a given time and under given circumstances. A person may find a value important and worthy of prioritizing in one social situation, but not in others. Also, two contemporary societies may have different value judgments due to the cultural and socio-economic differences between them, showing the cultural relativity of values (Ozensel, 2003). Thus, the emphasis placed on the value “patriotism” by the teachers may have been due to the history of the Turkish society, its current circumstances, and the various internal and external threats in the region.

The teachers stated that values should be taught to raise individuals who have an awareness of patriotism, are loyal, value the family, are aware of their responsibilities, make an effort for the continuity of their society, accept and respect diversity, think about others, value cleanliness and good health, and seek peaceful solutions to conflicts. They also mentioned that values are necessary to help the socialization of children, create a sensitive society, and ease children’s lives. As mentioned by Ozensel (2003), values are the general criterion for conscious and purposeful behavior; they form the basis of culture; they are a part of one’s character; they are used as a tool to judge the social value of people; they guide people’s selection of and fulfillment of social roles; and they become a tool for social control and pressure.

As a result, values reveal the ideal ways of thinking and behaving in a society and set the boundaries of socially acceptable behavior. Bennett (as cited in Milson & Mehlig, 2002) writes that values are needed to raise children with a solid character. Similarly, Eyre and Eyre (as cited in Doganay, 2006) state the need to possess a sound set of values as a source of happiness. The teachers here also emphasized the need to equip children with values to raise individuals who work for their own and other people’s happiness, and are independent but have a feeling of responsibility.

While the majority of teachers claimed that values needed to be taught in the family, others favored the teaching of values at school. Until age five, most children spend the majority of their time with their families. Any education that the family gives is, therefore, important in the shaping of their character. It would then be correct to assume that the proper place to start values education is at home by the family. Values education given to children during early childhood will contribute to the future development of citizenship skills. The school will take over the role of values educator afterwards (Dilmac & Eksi, 2007).

Kucuradi (2007) states that, in particular, values and human rights education should be offered directly or indirectly at all stages of education and that educators

need to develop their programs according to the level they will be teaching, in other words, according to the objectives included in each stage.

The teachers here said that they taught values to children by modeling, using true stories including different values, using situations to explain right from wrong, and continuously questioning classroom events together with the students. It is then evident that the teachers used various techniques to teach values.

Kucuradi (2007) also writes that when offering values and human rights education to students, sample stories from history (those showing ethical successes) can be used to make students aware of the human identity, and that even Socratic questioning can be used as long as it is used at the students' level.

Previous studies also emphasize the need for teachers to become models inside and outside school, make an effort to create ethical classroom environments, and use different strategies to prepare the right environment for children to gain the basic values formally in the classroom and informally outside (Milson, 2000; Ryan, 1986). Naturally, teacher competence comes to the forefront here. Milson and Mehlig (2002) concluded in their study that primary teachers felt confident about modeling, discussing what is right and wrong, and using strategies to bring about positive changes in the students' character.

The teachers here summarized the problems they encountered in values education by stating that the family, environment, and media could not adequately guide students. Another striking result was that a teacher complained that values were not reflected properly in course books. Every society has common basic values to offer to its members. Despite this, it is not impossible to find conflicting values between the basic institutions of the society. If the values emphasized at school do not match the ones acquired at home and from the media, serious problems may arise between these institutions and children may experience value conflicts.

Naturally, teachers have an important role here. If basic values are ignored or misrepresented elsewhere, teachers will have to correct the deficient or wrong teaching of children's natural sources of education (the family, neighbors, the environment). While doing so, the teacher may choose to give examples, approve or disapprove of students' behaviors, or explain the reasons why a certain behavior is wrong (Akbas, 2004b).

In conclusion, values education training for teachers, families and the media may alleviate the lack of cooperation between them, increase their competency in values education, and minimize problems coming from any of these sources during the process. In this way, the Turkish education system may take one step closer to raising constructive, creative, and efficient individuals with physical, mental, emotional and ethical balance and health, with independent and scientific thought, with respect for human rights, with an attachment to an importance of personality and initiative, and with a responsibility towards the society.

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## **Türk Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Değerler Eğitimine İlişkin Deneyimleri: Fenomonolojik Bir Yaklaşım**

### **(Özet)**

*Problem Durumu:*Değer eğitimi konusuna duyulan ilgi ve ihtiyaç gittikçe artmaktadır. Eğitim danışmanları ve eğitimciler bugünün çocuklarını topluma daha yararlı hale getirmek için büyük bir uğraş içine girmişlerdir. Özellikle son zamanlarda okullarda yaşanan şiddet olayları uzmanların dikkatinin bu noktaya yönlenmesine neden olmuştur. Yaşanan bu problemler araştırmacıların aklına doğrudan şu soruyu getirmektedir:

“Çocuklara değer eğitimi gerektiği gibi verilmekte midir?”. Bütün bu tartışmaları ilköğretim ve lise düzeyindeki değer eğitimi kavramıyla ilişkilendirilmesi gerektiği savunulmaktadır. Yani topluma iyi vatandaş yetiştirme üzerine odaklanan değerlerin (dürüstlük, saygı, hoşgörü, sorumluluk, yardımseverlik, ahlaki değerler vb.) kazandırılmasında okulların daha etkili rol oynaması gerektiği belirtilmektedir.

Eğitim sürecinde çocuklara bu değerleri kazandıracak okullardaki en önemli unsurlardan biri olarak da öğretmenler gösterilebilir. Yapılan araştırmalar da öğretmenlerin değerlerin öğretimindeki etkin rolünü önemle ortaya koymaktadır. Öğretmenlerin, okul ortamında ve dışında değerleri doğru yansıtan örnek model olmaları, ahlaki sınıf ortamları oluşturmaları, değişik stratejiler kullanarak formal olarak sınıf içinde, informal olarak da sınıf dışında değerlerin kazandırılmasına ilişkin çocuklara çeşitli uygulamalar yaptırılması gerektiği önemle vurgulanmaktadır. Doğal olarak değer eğitimi konusunda yeterli donanıma sahip öğretmenlerin yetiştirecekleri bireyler de demokratik yurttaşlık becerilerini kazanarak, içinde buldukları topluma gerekli katkıları sağlayacaklardır. Dolayısıyla öğretmenlerin çocuklara temel değerlerin kazandırılması sürecine ilişkin görüş ve deneyimleri önem arz etmektedir.

*Araştırmanın Amacı:* Yapılan bu araştırma ile toplumun sahip olduğu temel değerlerin, kendini ayakta tutan bireylere aktarılmasını sağlayan en önemli unsurlardan biri olan sınıf öğretmenlerinin değerler eğitimi ilişkin görüşleri alınarak, değerlerin kazandırılması sürecine yönelik düşünceleri ve deneyimleri betimlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi:* Araştırmanın ifade edilen problemi ve genel amacı doğrultusunda bu çalışmada nitel araştırma paradigması kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırma, ilköğretimde görev yapan sınıf öğretmenlerinin değerler eğitimine ilişkin görüş ve deneyimlerini belirlemeye yönelik bir çalışma olduğundan fenomenolojik bir durum çalışmasıdır. Bu çalışma 2007-2008 öğretim yılının ikinci döneminde Kırşehir ili merkeze bağlı orta sosyo-ekonomik düzeydeki üç devlet ilköğretim okulunda yürütülmüştür. Yürütülen araştırmada birden fazla örneklem metodu kullanılmıştır. Öncelikle kolay ulaşılabilir örneklem metodundan faydalanılmış ve görev yaptığım üniversiteye en yakın üç okulda çalışılmıştır. İkinci olarak benzeşik örneklem metodu kullanılmış, seçilen okulların sosyo-ekonomik açıdan orta düzeyde olmasına dikkat edilmiştir. Buradaki amaç, küçük, benzeşik, bir örneklem oluşturma yoluyla belirgin bir alt-grubu tanımlamaktır. Aynı zamanda ölçüt örneklem tekniği de araştırmaya dahil edilmiş, katılımcı adaylarının en az 10 yıllık sınıf öğretmenliği tecrübesi ve farklı sınıf düzeylerini (1., 2., 3., 4. ve 5. sınıflar) okutan sınıf öğretmenlerinin olmasına dikkat edilmiştir. Bu koşulları sağlayan toplam

20 sınıf öğretmeni ile toplam üç oturum halinde odak grup görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri odak grup görüşmeleri yoluyla toplanmıştır. Odak grup görüşmelerinde literatüre dayalı hazırlanmış yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi yaklaşımından ve NVivo2.0 programından yararlanılmıştır.

*Bulgular:*Bu bölümde odak grup görüşme verilerinin analizinden elde edilen bulgulara yer verilmiştir. Görüşmelerin analizinden elde edilen bulgular, “kategorilere (temalara) göre veri gösterimi yaklaşımı” izlenerek sunulmuştur. Öğretmenlerin değerler eğitimi sürecine ilişkin görüşleri üç kategori altında toplanmıştır. Bunlar, değerlere yüklenen anlamlar kategorisi; öğretmenlerin değerleri nasıl algıladıkları ve değer kavramının kendileri için ne ifade ettiği. Değerler eğitimi süreci kategorisi; öğretmenlerin değerlerin niçin öğretilmesi gerektiği, değerlerin nerede, ne zaman ve kimler tarafından öğretilmesinin uygun olduğu, öğretmenlerin değerleri çocuklara nasıl kazandırdığını açıklamaktadır. Değerler eğitimi ve yaşanan problemler kategorisi ise öğretmenlerin değerler eğitimi sürecinde yaşadıkları problemleri ifade etmektedir.

*Sonuçlar:*Bu çalışmanın amacı sınıf öğretmenlerinin değerler eğitimine ilişkin görüş ve deneyimlerini derinlemesine incelemek ve ortaya koymak olduğundan, araştırmada uygun veri toplama tekniği olarak odak grup görüşmeleri kullanılmıştır. Odak grup görüşmelerinin en önemli özelliklerinden biri de görüşmeyi gerçekleştiren araştırmacının grup üyeleri arasındaki tartışma ortamını kolaylaştırmaya çalışmasıdır. Bu araştırmada ilk odak grup görüşmesi araştırmacının deneyimsizliğinden dolayı araştırmanın amacı hakkında daha az bilgi vermesine rağmen diğer odak grup görüşmeleri istenilen amaca ulaşmıştır. Odak grup görüşmelerinin amacı elde edilen bulgular doğrultusunda genellemelere ulaşmak değil araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda gizli kalmış çok önemli gerçekleri ortaya koymaktır. Bu çalışmada da bu ilkeye bağlı kalınmaya çalışılmıştır.

Öğretmenlerin çocuklara kazandırılması gereken temel değerler arasında “vatanseverlik” değerini ön plana çıkardıkları, değerleri; inanç, tutum, erdemli olma, karakter, etik, estetik, ahlak gibi farklı kavramlarla açıklamaya çalıştıkları, değerler eğitiminin ailede başlaması ve bu süreçte ailenin daha etkin bir rol üstlenmesi daha sonra çocukların okula başlaması ile bu görevi okulun üstlenmesi gerektiğini ifade ettikleri, değerleri çocuklara kazandırmak için hem sınıf içinde hem de sınıf dışında farklı etkinlikler düzenledikleri ve son olarak da değerler eğitimi sürecinde özellikle ailenin ve çevrenin yetersizliğinden kaynaklanan birçok problemlerle karşılaştıkları şeklinde görüş belirttikleri sonuçlarına ulaşılmıştır. Özellikle bundan sonraki yapılacak çalışmalarda aile, çocuk, çevre vb. unsurlar da araştırma sürecine dahil edilerek değerler eğitimi

konusunda daha net bilgilere ulařılabilir. Ayrıca, deęerler eęitimi srecinde oęretmenlere, ailelere ve medyaya saęlanacak gerekli eęitimlerle aralarındaki iřbirlięi eksiklięi giderilerek, deęerler eęitimi srecine iliřkin yeterlilikleri artırılabilir ve bu srete oęretmenden, aileden ve medyadan kaynaklanabilecek sorunlar asgari seviyeye indirilebilir. Bylelikle Trk Milli Eęitiminin beden, zihin, ahlak ruh ve duygu bakımlarından dengeli ve saęlıklı Őekilde geliřmiř bir kiřilięe ve karaktere, hr ve bilimsel dřnme gcne, geniř bir dnya grřne sahip, insan haklarına saygılı, kiřilik ve teřebbse deęer veren, topluma karřı sorumluluk duyan; yapıcı, yaratıcı ve verimli kiřiler yetiřtirme ilkesine bir adım daha yaklařılacaęı dřnlmektedir.

**Anahtar Szckler:** Eęitim-oęretim, sınıf oęretmeni, deęeler, deęerler eęitimi