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Prospective teachers' views concerning the values to teach in the course of social sciences

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Abstract

This study makes an attempt at determining the views of students attending the university departments of Primary school teaching and Social Sciences teaching concerning the values to teach in the course of Social Sciences. The research data were obtained through a questionnaire form prepared by the researcher. The views of 78 prospective teachers answering the questionnaire were received. The findings led to these results: The prospective teachers stated values to teach in 30 different values, and gave reasons for teaching as self-realization, being successful, socialization, democratization, nationalization, peace, and necessity. They considered the values of respect, love, patriotism, honesty, morality to be prior.

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Keywords: Social sciences; values education; social sciences teaching; prospective teachers' views.

1. Introduction

Education may be defined as the process of individuals' adjusting into the environment in which they live. The adjustment has to be into both natural and social environment. The major knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for adjustment into social environment are the values of the society in which an individual lives. Values are not only among the important issues of research of social sciences, they are also among the fundamental problems of social sciences. Values are closely linked with the dimension of humans' emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. Social scientists state that values have fundamental significance in accounting for human behaviour (Dilmaç & Ekşi, 2007). Schwartz and Bilsky (from, Kağıtçıbaşı & Kuşdil, 2000; Kurtulan, 2007) described values as follows based on the characteristics agreed-upon by various theoreticians:

1. Values are beliefs.
2. Values are related to individuals' aims and behavioral patterns effective in achieving these targets.
3. Values are above specific acts and situations.
4. Values function as standards directing selection or changing of behaviors, beliefs and events.
5. Values are ranked among themselves according to their respective importance.

The set of ranked values constitute a system determining value priorities. In brief, values are thoughts which affect our life and to which we attach importance (Doğanay, 2006).

In the centre of culture, which brings individuals together and enables them to pass down this, is values. It can be said that whether or not the culture in a society is powerful is dependent upon sharing the current values in the society by individuals. In personality development of children, people are more influential than objects. Particularly, close and continuous relationship between children and family members, parents or siblings plays an important role in formation of the values (Aydın, 2006). As Arcus expressed (1980), young children are not capable of properly perceiving values on their own during early childhood years and families have an influential role in appropriate acquisition of the values during these years. On reviewing the relevant literature regarding values education, it was observed that research subjects were mainly focused on describing, classifying

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(clarifying) values and how and by whom they should be taught to individuals (Halstead & Taylor, 1996; Haydon, 1998; Dilmaç & Ekşi, 2007; Doğanay & Sarı, 2004; Silcock & Duncan, 2001; Wilson, 2000).

It is remarkable, however, that the values teachers' and prospective values teachers' views and experiences concerning the process are not sufficiently studied in the relevant literature. Therefore, this study makes an attempt at describing prospective primary education and social sciences teachers' views regarding values to teach.

2. The Aim of the Research

This research aims at determining candidate primary education and social sciences teachers' views on values education in the course of Social Sciences. Answers are sought to the following questions for this purpose:

1. What are the values to teach in line with prospective teachers' views?
2. Based on the prospective teachers' views, what are the reasons for teaching the values in the course of Social Sciences?

3. Restrictions

The source of research data and findings is limited to the 3rd year students attending the Primary Education Teaching and Social Sciences Teaching departments of the Educational Faculty of Ahi Evran University in the Spring semester of 2007- 2008 academic year. Besides, the validity of the data is restricted to the group to which the survey is applied.

4. Method

4.1. The research model

Prospective teachers' views concerning the values to teach in the course of Social Sciences were determined in this research, and an attempt was made to describe the current situation. Hence, a "descriptive method" was used in the research.

4.2. Population and sample

A limited population was used in this research. This is also called working population (Karasar, 2005). The limited population was composed of the 3rd year students attending the Primary Education teaching and Social Sciences Teaching departments of Ahi Evran University. Thus, a total of 492 teacher candidates, of whom 305 were the 3rd year students in Primary Education Teaching department, and 187 were the 3rd year students in the Social Sciences Department constituted the working population. The demographic properties of the students composing the sample were tabulated as in what follows.

Table 1. The distribution of teacher candidates according to departments attended.

Teacher Candidates	f	%
Social Sciences Teaching	28	35,9
Primary Education	50	64,1
Total	78	100

On examining Table 1, it can be stated that prospective teachers within the sample are approximately 1/6 of the population according to the departments they attend.

4.3. Data Collection Instruments

The prospective teachers were asked two open-ended questions in the survey. The questions asked were "list the top five values to teach in order of importance", and "the reasons for the values you consider important to teach" respectively.

4.4. The Analysis of the Data

Content analysis was carried out since the data were of qualitative nature. Of the qualitative data, answers to the first question were put on the computer medium, and percentages (%) as well as frequency values (f) were calculated. When references were made to students in the Findings and Comments part of the research, expressions such as "prospective teacher with a code of 12-S-B (2)" or, more directly, "6-SOS-E (3)" were used; where the numbers stood for the order of the student, the letter S meant the department of primary school teaching, the short form SOS represented Social Sciences teaching, the second letter B meant

female and E meant male, and the number in parentheses represented the order of importance of the value stated. The views were presented with no modifications or additions.

5. Findings and Comments:

1. Findings concerning the question “list the top five values to teach in order of importance”

Findings concerning the question “list the top five values to teach in order of importance” are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Findings concerning prospective teachers' views on the values to teach

Values	Order of Importance	importance1		importance2		importance3		importance4		importance5		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Respect		12	15,4	10	12,8	7	9,0	6	7,7	6	7,7	41	52,6
Love		10	12,8	7	9,0	6	7,7	9	11,5	5	6,4	37	47,4
Patriotism		9	11,5	5	6,4	5	6,4	3	3,8	3	3,8	25	32,1
Honesty		8	10,3	5	6,4	3	3,8	4	5,1	3	3,8	23	29,5
Morality (belief)		7	9,0	5	6,4	2	2,6	2	2,6	4	5,1	20	25,6
Being fair		2	2,6	6	7,7	5	6,4	2	2,6	3	3,8	18	23,1
tolerance		1	1,3	5	6,4	6	7,7	4	5,1	2	2,6	18	23,1
Studiousness		3	3,8	2	2,6	4	5,1	3	3,8	4	5,1	16	20,5
Responsibility		--	--	2	2,6	5	6,4	5	6,4	3	3,8	15	19,2
Being scientific		5	6,4	1	1,3	1	1,3	2	2,6	4	5,1	13	16,7
Socialisation		2	2,6	2	2,6	2	2,6	3	3,8	4	5,1	13	16,7
National consciousness		3	3,8	4	5,1	2	2,6	3	3,8	1	1,3	13	16,7
Considering unity of family important		2	2,6	2	2,6	2	2,6	1	1,3	4	5,1	11	14,1
Self reliance		1	1,3	1	1,3	2	2,6	5	6,4	2	2,6	11	14,1
Considering cultural values important		1	1,3	2	2,6	1	1,3	5	6,4	1	1,3	10	12,8
Independence		1	1,3	3	3,8	1	1,3	--	--	2	2,6	7	9,0
Liberty		1	1,3	1	1,3	1	1,3	3	3,8	1	1,3	7	9,0
Benevolence		--	--	--	--	4	5,1	--	--	3	3,8	7	9,0
Solidarity		1	1,3	2	2,6	--	--	2	2,6	1	1,3	6	7,7
Environmental consciousness		--	--	--	--	2	2,6	--	--	1	1,3	6	7,7
Peace		1	1,3	1	1,3	1	1,3	--	--	1	1,3	4	5,1
Sensitivity		--	--	1	1,3	1	1,3	1	1,3	--	--	3	3,8
Hospitality		--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1,3	2	2,6	3	3,8
Considering being healthy important		--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	3,8	3	3,8
Democracy		--	--	1	1,3	1	1,3	1	1,3	--	--	3	3,8
Ataturkism		--	--	--	--	1	1,3	--	--	1	1,3	2	2,6
Love for the National Flag		1	1,3	--	--	1	1,3	--	--	--	--	2	2,6
Historical empathy		--	--	1	1,3	1	1,3	--	--	--	--	2	2,6
Cleanliness		--	--	--	--	1	1,3	1	1,3	--	--	2	2,6
Being economical		--	--	1	1,3	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1,3
Aesthetics		--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total		71	91,0	70	89,7	68	87,2	66	84,6	64	82,1	77	98,7
No answers		7	9,0	8	10,3	10	12,8	12	15,4	14	17,9	1	1,3
Overall total		78	100	78	100	78	100	78	100	78	100	78	100

It is evident from Table 2 that the prospective teachers represent their answers to the question “list the top five values to teach in order of importance” in 30 different values. Accordingly, they attach the most importance to respect (41), love (37), patriotism (25), honesty (23), morality (20), and being fair and tolerance (18) respectively and the least importance to such values as being economical (1), cleanliness (2), historical empathy (2), love for the national flag (2), Ataturkism (2), and democracy (3).

It was found out that 19 of the 20 values stated in 2005 syllabus of the course of Social Sciences were stated by the prospective teachers (MEB, 2005), and that additional 11 values such as morality, socialisation, national consciousness, love for the national flag, and Ataturkism- which were not available in the syllabus- were also stated by them.

3. Findings concerning the question “write down the reasons for the values you consider important to teach” The findings as what follows:

The prospective teachers' reasons for the value of "being fair": The prospective teacher with the code of 47-S-B (1) stated their reason as "to respect my friends' rights and to understand the meaning of being fair", whereas the student encoded as 37-S-E (2) stated the reason as "because we should treat everybody equally... We should not ignore others' rights. We should be on the side of the one who is right."

The reasons for the value of "considering the unity of family important": The student encoded as 40-S-E (4) stated their reason as "the element which makes a society a society is the family in Turkish nation. Unless there are families, the society is not healthy."

The reasons for the value of "being scientific": 9-S-B (1) stated the reason as "Life should be seen from the perspective of science".

The reasons for the value of "studiousness": 24-S-B (4) said "in order to put the life in the future in order" whereas 18 S-B (5) said "because this country needs studious and productive brains".

The reasons for the value of "sensitivity": 36 S-B (2) stated the reason as "those who know of, see, seek answers to and are curious about what is happening around are effective citizens".

The reasons for the value of "honesty": 20 S-B (2) said "the friendship, love and sincerity of those who are not honest are suspicious". Another student, 23 S-B (3), said "in order for individuals of the society to work cooperatively, they need to be together. Reliance is important to assure the togetherness. The fundamental source of reliance is honesty".

The reasons for the value of "independence": 19-S-E (3), a prospective teacher, stated the reason as "a required concept following honesty and fairness" but another prospective teacher, 9-SOS-E (5), said "one should act at his own will, not at others' will."

The reasons for the value of "tolerance": 46-S-B (4) presented the reason "an atmosphere of tolerance leads to a beautiful world to live in and peace."

The reasons for the value of "hospitality": A candidate teacher, 2-S-E (5), suggested "it is necessary for benevolence, agreement, and tolerance"; another student, 28-S-E (5) said "Turkish society likes guests. This is culture. We must protect our culture."

The reasons for the value of "liberty": In this respect, 6-S-B (5) said "firstly our mind and conscience must be free, which will lead to freedom of our body. No body can force us to do something". The student encoded 20-S-B (4) said, "Liberty is the most important factor in man's creativity."

The reasons for the value of "considering being healthy important": 3-SOS-E (5) stated, "Healthy individuals can understand value judgements."

The reasons for the value of "respect": 1-S-E (1) said, "Firstly respect is required in order for humans to live without hurting one another." And 46-S-B (1) said, "If there is respect among people, free individuals who can express their opinions clearly are raised."

The reasons for the value of "love": 18-S-B (3) said, "Love for nature and people must be instilled into individuals. This leads to such values as understanding, tolerance, and solidarity." Another student, 7-SOS-K (1), said, "Everything originates and develops in the individual. He can perform self-realisation better on condition that he is aware of the self and notices his privileges. Besides, an individual who is capable of loving himself will be open to other values to be taught."

The reasons for the value of "responsibility": A student, 24-SOS-E (2), said, "The man who can take on responsibility can be successful"; 37-S-E (5), on the other hand, said "Having responsibility is necessary for us to live. Humans should be aware of their responsibilities, and thus they won't interfere with others' lives and will know how to live in society."

The reasons for the value of "cleanliness": 24-S-B (3) said, "The prerequisite for being healthy is being clean." 39-S-B (5), on the other hand, said, "All kinds of cleanliness, including physical and spiritual cleanliness."

The reasons for the value of "patriotism": A candidate teacher, 46-S-B (3), said, "The national culture and values rise up to the level of contemporary civilisation and become universal thanks to those who possess a developed consciousness of homeland. And 18-SOS-E (2) said, "This is the only possession of a nation. It is the thing which enables the nation to live and to stand upright. It must be known and loved."

The reasons for the value of "benevolence": 22-S-B (3) said, "Everything becomes easier". And 45-S-B (3) said, "Humans are the creatures who have to live together, and benevolence, which is a requirement, will keep humans stand upright."

6. Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The findings concerning the question "list the top five values to teach in order of importance"

As shown in Table 3, the prospective teachers represent their answers to the question "list the top five values to teach in order of importance" in 30 different values. Accordingly, they attach the most importance to respect (41), love (37), patriotism (25), honesty (23), morality (20), and being fair and tolerance (18) respectively and the least importance to such values as being economical (1), cleanliness (2), historical empathy (2), love for the national flag (2), Atatürkism (2), and democracy (3). Besides, it was found out that 19 of the 20 values stated in 2005 syllabus of the course of Social Sciences were stated by the prospective teachers, the value of aesthetics was not stated, and that additional 11 values such as morality, socialisation, national consciousness, love for the national flag, and Atatürkism- which were not available in the syllabus- were stated by them.

The issue of what values to teach to students who are going to undergo a process of education is still an important question and an important matter. Thus, it seems impossible to talk of agreement on values to be taught. For instance, in an investigation into the system of Turkish National Education, it was seen that such traditional values as developing national consciousness,

considering family important, and being reliable; such democratic values as being respectful and tolerant; such work-labour values as studiousness and responsibility; such scientific values as curiosity and creativeness; and such basic values as cleanliness and being careful about health had been taught in primary education schools (Akbaş, 2004). Moreover, Lickona (1991) states that responsibility; respect, tolerance, common sense, self-control, benevolence, mercy, courage, honesty, justice, and democratic values should be taught whereas Bennet (1993) suggests that such values as mercy, self-control, responsibility, friendship, working, courage, enthusiasm, honesty, sincerity, and reliance should be taught (quoted by Akbaş, 2008). Another research was performed with the 4th and 5th graders' parents in 2007 – 2008 academic year by Tay and Yıldırım; and the parents held the view that the values determined by the 2005 syllabus of the course of Social Sciences except for independence and peace in addition to the value of morality- which was not in the syllabus- should be taught. Considering the research findings, it is observed that the values that the prospective teachers consider necessary to teach overlap with the above recommendations. Apart from that, it can also be said that the prospective teachers are of the opinion that the values of environmental consciousness, socialisation, attaching importance to cultural values, national consciousness, historical empathy, Atatürkism, and being economical should also be taught.

2. The findings concerning the question “write down the reasons for the values you consider important to teach”

The prospective teachers' views concerning the reasons for values they consider important to teach can be divided into seven headings. Namely: self-realisation, being successful, socialisation, democratisation, being national, peace, and necessity.

Ignoring a sensorial dimension in education will result in not using a significant potential that is possessed by humans. The sensorial dimension- which is composed of such elements as emotions, choices, joy, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, feelings of appreciation, values, morals and ethics- is an indispensable dimension for both individual and social life. Therefore, it can be said that this process occupies an important place in individuals' achievements (Bacanlı, 2005). Another process in the teaching of values education is to provide contributions and supports in the process of gaining an internal perspective for humanistic objectives and values. Values education is significant in both generating knowledge and in using the generated knowledge to the advantage of men (Dilmaç & Ekşi, 2007). The above mentioned issues can be said to overlap with the prospective teachers' reasons for teaching the stated values.

The following recommendations can be made in line with the research findings:

1. The prospective teachers described the values to be taught in 30 different values. It should be remembered that 19 of the 20 values stated in 2005 syllabus of the course of Social Sciences were stated by the prospective teachers, the value of aesthetics was not stated, and that additional 11 values such as morality, socialisation, national consciousness, love for the national flag, and Atatürkism- which were not available in the syllabus- were stated by them. Those values should be included in the syllabus and should not be ignored.

2. The prospective teachers stated their reasons for teaching the mentioned values as self-realisation, being successful, socialisation, democratisation, being national, peace, and necessity. The reasons were not restricted to those mentioned. Therefore, values education can be taught to the prospective teachers in various dimensions.

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