

## Middle-School Teachers' Opinions on Values Education

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### Abstract

Values education is a process that starts in family and continues at education institutions. It is considered that individuals who form society should have main value judgments to share common social life and to live in peace together. In this study it is aimed to determine the opinions about values education of teachers who works at secondary education institutions. In the study 31 teachers who work in secondary education institutions in different cities are interviewed by using semi-structured interview form. The obtained datum is analyzed by descriptive analysis. In general, the results are obtained that there isn't sufficient briefing in schools for teachers about values education, the teachers find the values education insufficient in the schools, values education curriculum should be improved and practiced, all the teachers should run the values education together, there should be a specific values education lesson and all the teachers should be a model for the students with their behaviors. Besides, it is determined that there are problems about values education because teachers, students and parents do not attach sufficient importance to values education. In addition to this, as a solution suggestion, giving lectures about values education to trainers and families comes into prominence.

**Keywords:** Values, values education, secondary education

### Introduction

Cultural elements that come in sight as a standard in individual's opinion, attitude and actions can be determined as value. (Çağlar, 2005). According to Katılmış and Ekşi (2011) value that is described in terms of a creature's mental, social, moral or esthetical high or beneficial quality is the key criterion that decides the individual's attitudes and behaviors. Values show alterations according to societies and time but also they form an important part of social culture. Improvement of values happen in a long period and these values guide people how to be and how to behave by leading their behaviors. (Doğan, 2004). Kınca (2002) identifies the values as standards that are used by members of a culture to find what is wanted or unwanted, good or bad, elegant or inelegant. Özgüven (1994), stated that values interact with society's cultural identity and reflect this. In general, values are standards or criterion that affects people's preferences, interests, incentives, necessities, desires, aims, attitudes, decisions and behaviors that they reflect other people. (Tunca, 2012)

Education is responsible for endurance and improvement of the society and generating values that ensure the endurance of the society, preventing disrupting of on-going values, adapting new and old values besides gaining information and abilities to people (Akdağ and Taşkaya, 2011). Values education, which is more valuable at schools nowadays, started to come into prominence by 1920s with the first studies about character education in America (Kirschenbaum, 2000). Education is considered as the most important instrument of getting of social turmoil almost in all countries (Öztürk, 2007). Surviving healthy and solving social problems should be taught to people not to have problem in social relations (Can, 2008). Teaching values, which are stated or not stated in official school program, discipline the students according to identified rules, making contribution to students moral development and affect their characters positively are some of duties of education institutions (Akbaş, 2008). Schools raise the consciousness to students that knowledge is more valuable than illiteracy; social order is more valuable than social disorganization. Therefore, values education will continue to be there where the schools are (Leming, 2000). Values education is applied at schools in curriculums or hidden curriculums. Value education in the curriculum is expressed as direct value teaching, too. With the direct value teaching, teaching values by different methods and techniques in the lessons in a planned way is aimed (Akbaş, 2009).

Values education is a process that starts in family and continues at school. With this process, society's basic values are passed down and a frame for main social rules is formed. Individuals who form the society should have the basic value judgments to share a common social life and live together in peace. Therefore, values education has a great importance. In this regard, because of being responsible for values education at schools,

teachers' opinions are important. Identifying the opinions about values education of teachers who work in secondary education institutions is the aim of this study. In accordance with this purpose, answers to these questions were looked for.

- 1- Do teachers who work in secondary education institutions have knowledge about values education? If they have, where is the knowledge from and how did they get it?
- 2- According to teachers, which values should be gained within the scope of values education? Why?
- 3- According to teachers, is values education at schools adequate? How should be it?
- 4- According to teachers, which teaching methods and techniques or materials can be used for values education?
- 5- What kind of exercises do teachers do within the values education?
- 6- What are the problems do teachers encounter during the values education and what are their own solution suggestions for these problems?

### Method

In this study interview method, which is one of the qualitative research method, was used. Interview method is preferred to detect people's views about any subject. By this way, people's experiments, attitudes, opinions, intentions and comments are tried to be understood. (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

### Working Group

In this study, 31 teachers from 11 different cities and 12 different branches, who work in secondary education institutions, are interviewed. The teachers are determined by using purposeful sampling method. 11 of these teachers are female and 20 of them are male. Their average age is 31.6, their average professional seniority is 7,5 years. 21 of these teachers work in Kocaeli and 6 of them work in Istanbul. There is one teacher from Samsun, Denizli, Iğdır and Şanlıurfa in the workgroup. 7 of them are English teacher, 4 of them are Math teacher, 4 of them Imam Hatip High School profession lessons teacher, 3 of them are Turkish Philology teacher, 3 of them religious culture and moral knowledge teacher, 3 of them Physics teacher, 3 of them are History teacher. There is one teacher from Geography, Philosophy, Chemistry and Biology branches. 23 teachers of them are at license degree, 7 teachers of them master degree and one of them is at doctor's degree.

### Data Collection Tool and Data Analysis

In this study datum is obtained by using semi-structured interview form, which was prepared by researchers. This form consists of 6 open ended questions. The form was put into final form in accordance with 4 education experts' opinions. The teachers, who work in Kocaeli, are communicated and made an appointment and face to face interview was made at their own school. Their answers are written down by researcher. Interviews continued 30-35 minutes averagely. The teachers, who work in other cities, interviewed with written interview forms by using e-mail. Besides, the teachers are connected with telephone and informed about questions in the form. The teachers sent back the forms by e-mail. The entire datum was analyzed by using descriptive analysis. Descriptive analyze consists of four stages. These stages are; creating a frame for descriptive analyze, processing datum according to thematic frame, describing findings and commenting them (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 256). In the study, a frame has been formed from interview questions, datum was organized according to this frame, the organized datum was identified and promoted with direct quotation and the identified datum was explained. The teachers are symbolized for the direct quotation as T1, T2, ..... T31. While identifying some data, number of people, who express this definition, was written in parenthesis with the definitions.

### Findings

The findings that were obtained by interviewing 31 teachers, who work in secondary education institutions, about values education, are presented below according to the interview questions

#### 1. Teachers' opinions about having information about values education in secondary education institutions:

17 of the teachers expressed that there was no information about values education in their schools. 7 of the teachers expressed that they had information about this issue by chance or with their own effort.

*"There was no information activity; there is no conference, too. I think it is not practiced in schools properly. I learnt the value education term only a week ago at province group leaders meeting. (T11)."*

*"I have information about value education relatively. There was no conference or something like this about this issue. I had the information by using the internet. (T14)."*

*"There was no information about this issue. A magazine that is called as value education is sent periodically to school. I know this term from the magazine. (T31)"*

14 teachers expressed that they are informed about values education.

*"There was a conference at the beginning of the year with some other conferences. (T19)"*

*“I have information about value education because I serve in value education commission. We planned monthly value education themes by adding deficient values according to themes that are determined by national education at the beginning of the year. (T15)”*

*“I have some information. Certain information was conveyed us at school meetings. (T29)”*

## **2. Teachers’ opinions about which values should be added to students as part of values education:**

Moral values (13), respect (12) and honesty (9) are the prominent values. Other values were expressed as; sense of responsibility (6), national and cultural values (5), being fair (5) helpfulness (4), having indulgence (4), love (4), the proprieties (3), mercifulness (2), empathy (2), leadership (1), self-confidence (1) and being patient.

*“I think students should have the moral values. It is necessary to be a good person. All the necessary characteristics to be a good person are available in the moral values. (T4)”*

*“I think it is necessary to gain moral values and respect because these are the needs for today’s students. (T16)”*

*“If there are any lack of being respectful and tolerant each other, not telling lies, knowing responsibilities and cooperation values, we can’t train character-wise people and this will be a big problem socially in the future. (T25)”*

*“It is important to teach moral, national and cultural values. Morality is the key element that makes a society civilized and keeps it alive. National and cultural values are important factors gain the society its own identity and associated the past and the future. (T26)”*

## **3. Teachers’ opinions about the applied values education at schools**

All the teachers expressed that the applied values education at schools is inadequate. The suggestions for effective values education are as below;

Values education should have its own curriculum and has a particular lesson (11) or it should be in all the lessons and teachers should be in cooperation (10) and values education should be given practically with social activities (10). Other suggestions are; teachers should be a model to students (5), seminars should be given (3) and school-family cooperation should be provided (2).

*“I find values education inadequate. There can be a separate lesson for this. At schools, something is hung on show boards, only. I think it decreases the affect. (T6)”*

*“Values education at school is absolutely inadequate. Values education should be given at all lessons at least 5 minutes. It should be a collective work. All the teachers should emphasize a value together and all the students should be exposed to it simultaneously. (T21)”*

*“I think it is inadequate. There should be a separate values education lesson but also the teaching should be effective. Also, I think teachers can be effective as role model. Al the teachers should discharge the responsibility. (T25).”*

*“I do not find it adequate. It is too superficial. I think it cannot be done a separate lesson time, too. You can teach something student in a lesson time but teaching a value is a long process that takes 1 week, 1 month and maybe 1 year. Therefore, it must be in all the lessons. (T30)”*

*“I think the applied values education is inadequate. There should be activities at schools and inform parents about values and values education to help them while exemplifying. If the values that are tried to be brought at school can practiced at home, there will be a success. (T22)”*

## **4. Teachers’ opinions about teaching methods that they suggest about value education:**

Five of the teachers did not express an opinion about this issue. Most of the 28 teachers expressed that value education can be affective by role playing/drama technique (11), activity based technics (10) and using visual materials like photos and videos that reflect the daily life. (9) Other suggestions are; making negotiations (2), giving importance to emotional education (1) and making social projects. (1)

*“It is important to be a role model so all the teachers should try to teach the values by role playing and animating in classes. Taking their teacher as an example probably has positive effects on the students. (T22)”*

*“Students should learn the values practically. Practice is more important than theory. I think question and answer teaching method, brain storming and learning by experience/ practice can be effective. (T3)”*

*“Movies and videos that contain slices of life can be showed to students for each value. (T11)”*

*“Some social project can be applied like going to rest homes to teach values to students. (T21)”*

## **5. Teachers’ opinions about their applications within values educations:**

12 of the teachers expressed that they mention about values admonishingly. 8 teachers expressed that they try to bring students the values with examples from the real life and 7 teachers expressed that they try to bring students the values through projects and activities. Other opinions are; being a role model (6), preparing a show board (4), getting students to watch videos (4), hold a competition and giving presidents to students (4), organizing a tout to historical and cultural places (1) and peer teaching (1). 3 teachers did not express an opinion.

*“I get students to watch short videos at lessons. I prefer narrating the events that I came across in my life interestingly. (T10)”*

*“I try to be polite and well-behaved to my students and expect them the same things. (T15)”*

*“I give advices to my students at lessons and mention about how they can behave morally. (T18)”*

*“First of all we determine a value. Then we try to do activities in all aspects to bring students in the value. Show boards are prepared for visuality. Also, we organize slogan competitions and the winners’ slogans are hung on the school walls. T-shirts with these slogans are presented the winners. Moreover we want them to wear the t-shirts at school to motivate the other students. Besides, composition and poem competitions are organized to attract verbal students’ attention. The winners are presented with various gifts at award ceremony in front of the school. If the value is a value like helpfulness or mercifulness, students collect money and donate the collected money to needers. Students, who have the value, from each class are chosen according to their activities and presented. (T28)”*

## **6. Teachers’ opinions about the problems and solution suggestions during values education:**

11 teachers expressed that they have problems in practice because of indifference and unwillingness of the students. 5 teachers expressed the indifference of the parents and teachers ignorance of values education as a problem. The other problems that were expressed by teachers are; values education remains as a theory not practice (3), conflict between the teachers and school administration about values education (3), students are affected negatively from their social environment (2), insufficient time for values education (2), lack of information of school staff (2) and inconsistent behaviors of school staff (1). The solution suggestions of the teachers are; school staff and parents should attach more importance to values education and a team work should be done for this issue (6), activities should be organized that students can learn by doing and experiencing not only at school but also out of the school (5), training the parents about values education (3), Revising the course books and curriculums appropriately with value education (2), giving seminars to teachers and appointing them for values education (2), provide training for values education at a separate lesson time (1) and show interest and love more students (1). Also, 3 teachers expressed that they have no trouble about values education.

*“I think all the teachers do not give importance to values education sufficiently. School staff thinks that values education is only organizing a show board. This is insufficient. Course books and curriculums should be organized according to values education for an affective values education and activities in classes should be increased (T2)”*

*“The time is insufficient for an affective values education. If it is planned as a separate lesson time and proper school activities, values education will be more affective (T5).”*

*“ The factors like attitudes of the students, socio-economic situation of the families and social environment the importance that parents give to values education have an important role for values education and provide positive or negative affect (T11).”*

*“Students bring the values at school but parents do not have the values so the students do not maintain the terminal behavior in a long term. The parents should be trained about values education (T25).”*

*“Students’ indifference and unwillingness about values education is a big problem (T28).”*

*“I think Ministry of National Education should provide an academic education for schools. Most of the teachers do these activities towards his/her point of interest. If there is not a counselor at the school, the activities are done unconsciously or never done. Also, extra effort is needed for these activities and everybody has not the same sensibility. Especially branch teachers have the thought of teaching only his/her own lesson. These attitudes effect the education negatively because all the teachers are responsible for values education. Besides, there is a misconception about values education. Some teachers think that only religious culture and moral knowledge teachers are responsible for values education. This is wrong. All the teachers are responsible for values education. As solution suggestions, Ministry of National Education can give seminars and organize trainings. In addition to this, each teacher can be appointed for at least one value (T30).”*

## **Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations**

The obtained conclusions from the study that about secondary education teachers’ opinions about values education are like these;

1. According to most of the participant teachers there is no training about values education to them.
2. According to the teachers moral values, respect, honesty, sense of responsibility, national and cultural values, fairness, helpfulness, being tolerant, love and etiquette are the principal values.
3. All of the teachers find insufficient the values education at schools. Their suggestions for an affective values education are as below;

Values education should have a lesson time with a special curriculum or all the teachers should do cooperative activities in all the lessons. All the social activities at school should be related with values education and all the teachers should be role model to the students. Seminars should be given about values education and parent-teacher association should be provided.

4. Most of the teachers think that values education can be affective with role playing/ drama technics, activity based exercises and visual materials like photos and videos from real life.

5. Talking about values admonishingly, giving examples from daily life, activity based exercises and projects, role modeling are the prominent teacher applications.

6. Indifference and unwillingness about values education is the most prominent student problem according to teachers. Other prominent problems are indifference of parents and not attaching sufficient importance to values education by teachers and values education remains a theory not practice. The most recommended suggestion by teachers is to attract school staff's and parents' attention to values education. Cooperative activities should be done. Both in school and out of the school certain activities that provide learning by practicing and living should be done.

Studies related with values education support the research results. It is detected in the study about values education, which identifies Turkish teachers' opinions, by Thornberg and Oğuz (2013) that teachers' main method is being a good role model to the students. Both Turkish and Swedish teachers think that students should learn to be respectful, tolerant, helpful, fair and empathize with other people. Yıldırım (2009) investigated the values education experiments of class teachers who have a critical role on transmitting the society's basic values. It was detected that teachers give priority to patriotism among the values. Teachers present some events related with real life and get the students to interrogate the situations and they help them to find the truths and mistakes. Berkan, Efendioğlu and Sürmeli (2014) expressed in their study that teachers may confront with some problems during values education process because of students' attitudes, society and environment and their own workload. Teachers especially expressed that the desired values in school are irrelevant with the family values and this is one of the biggest problems.

In the study, which Balcı and Yelken (2013) interviewed with class teachers and social studies teachers, case study, role modeling and determine the rules with students are the most effective methods according to teachers. Families' socioeconomic conditions and cultural features, lack of social activity area of schools, and negative effects of mass media and technology on students are the most frequently encountered problems of values education. Class teachers' view that available teaching material and activities are insufficient both qualitatively and quantitatively comes into prominence in the study of Şahinkaya and Kelleci (2013). Also it is expressed that there has been problems because of poor content and lack of a values education curriculum. In addition to this, role modeling is commonly used method in values education by teachers.

Arthur and Revell (2006) investigated teachers' values education experiments and detected that they have different point of views in values education. Teachers expressed that values should be structured according to education principles and the values can be brought in each lesson and they can be enhanced.

It came into view in consequence of Kurtdele-Fidan's (2009) study that the most important thing is living with the value in daily life towards values education. Values education is as much important as knowledge. There are problems about values education because of knowledge based lesson structure and the different meanings that people attribute the same value. Values education should be done by schools and parents cooperatively. Otherwise, students seesaw between the values at school and at home. Therefore, they must make a choice or have confusion. At this point, parent-teacher association has a very important duty. Parents should be informed about the values education at school by parent-teacher association and if it is necessary, parents should be integrated the education with certain educational activities like seminars and conferences (2006).

Arpacı (2013) reached the conclusion at the end of his study that curriculums should be organized according to values education and there should be several sample values education activities to help teachers.

Ministry of National Education wanted all the public and private schools to separate the first lesson for values education and do certain activities to create behavioral change with the 2010/53 memorandum (MEB, 2010). In this direction, teachers can interest in values education at schools actively if the necessary support is given to the teachers. Besides, efficiency of values education can be increased by visual and aural materials. To improve the values like love, mercifulness, empathy etc. visits to senior centers and society for the protection of children can be made. Biographies of people who devote his life to service of mankind can be used for students' activities.

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