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## Social values and value education

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### Abstract

Social values and implementation of them in school setting were discussed in terms of both global and national perspectives as well as the structural and functional aspects were elaborated in this study. It was suggested a healthy way to teach of them and it was elaborated the pattern of relationships between these concepts. Social values show the ideal way of thinking and acting in a society. Increasing gap between ways of thinking and behavior of an ideal society and actual world considered to be indicator and ignition for number of social problems. Therefore, it is important that the values of real world and ideal world should be overlapped. Understanding and explaining extremely complex nature of the values at national and global settings and rationale them in a healthy way is the most important condition to build a peaceful society and the world.

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### 1. Introduction

Increasing and accelerating socio-economic and technological changes in recent years have brought along some social problems since values could not be transferred to new generations adequately in many societies. Most of the increasing social problems in society, at home and school are closely related to values. For instance, social violence and intolerance are problems related to those values. It is believed that the most effective way both to avoid and to decrease such problems that ruin the social order is to undergo efficient teaching process of values. Many other instances damaging global and social peace are observed. It is understood that most of the people who are responsible for those instances have not received sufficient teaching on values. Teaching values is the most important item of social control mechanisms. As well as becoming an essential part of social integrity, teaching values is a realistic solution for any existing or potential problems both in social and global scale.

### 2. Value

The word value reflects the importance, worth, desirability and the respect something gets in return (Soykan, 2007). As a sociological concept, values refer to similarities and shared demands. Social values are moral beliefs and principles that are accepted by the majority so as to ensure the continuity of a society (Ergil, 1984). Values, in addition to these qualities, signal not what is there but what should be there in a society in form of moral imperatives

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(Inkeles, 1964). In that sense, values are accepted as truthful opinions and criteria set for what is expected by a society.

In fact, when we say we enjoy similar things and we find the same things beautiful, we refer to shared content of values. What sociologists call collective consciousness are called by philosophers objective soul are the domain of common values (Ülken, 2001). It is clear that without society, there will not be any biological, psychological, and sociological value. Only in society, language, religion, morals, arts, and traditions can appear the result of which is the accepted core of a society. Coming to the world as an organism, human beings come to learn societal dreams, ideals, norms, morals, arts and religion by means of growing into an identity (produce) from an organism (seed) (Türkdoğan, 1982). Ethos is what anthropologists and sociologists call when they mean a society's profile of values which comes from a Greek word meaning common behaviors (Doğan, 2011).

Values that inspire and are inspired by a society can function both as a measure as well as something that are measured. In essence, values should be regarded as positive entities since "honesty" is a value; "intricacy" refers to lacking it. Values guide people as abstract entities that ordain people with ideal thinking and behavioral aspects such as being hard-working all the time. Hence, values are belief-based narratives that shape our approach to stuff and events (Ülgener, 1991). As such, they point at what is good and bad and guide people as abstract entities.

Human beings evaluate the universe and knowledge with what they hold as values. "What's human being? What's life? What's universe and how did it come into being? What's the value and function of knowledge?" Terms such as "Homo Economic us" and humans are machines and humans are created by God differ because of the perceptions and value systems from which these ideas emerge (Coser, 1977). Continuity of values in the 21st century is especially important because of the qualities of this age that is characterized by technological advances. It is also important in this globalizing world to set the principles of values education in an era in which values move around senselessly. The hierarchy and the categorization of values are as follows:

### *2.1. Hierarchy of values*

Some values such as working, producing, and being honest are more important than the others in the social life. Secondly, individuals achieve their desires one by one and one after another. Hence, we can always talk about the hierarchical structure of values such as a pyramidal one. What rest behind an individual's success are not one or two values, but a set of values.

Values make a hierarchical form in our cognitive world. Tools values are at the lowest part in the cognitive world. There are higher values on the tools values which also form a kind of hierarchy within it. At the top there are the ultimate values such as oneness in religion, democracy in society, monogamy in family, justice in social life all of which interact in a given society (Aydn, 2011). In almost all societies, higher values are seen as important indicators of that society's continuity and welfare. In the hierarchy of values, high values are important in all fields such as the value called justice applies to all fields such as economy, politics, and family. In this respect, the hierarchy of values must work in cooperation for the good of society.

### *2.2. Categorization of values*

Values can be categorized in many ways such as by their content (aesthetic, scientific, educational, economic, political, and social values), extensiveness (societal, national and global values) and process (exchange modes) modern and traditional values. Here, we will focus on the categorizations of values on the basis of their extensiveness because of their importance in their dynamic role in society as well as in the world.

### *2.3. Values on the basis of extensiveness*

### 2.3.1 Social values

Societal values; are criteria shared by the majority of a society in an ideal sense, all of which lead them to the better society. Societal values regulate and organize daily life. Such values as honesty, sedulity, helpfulness, and modesty are some of these societal values. From a sociological perspective, ideally, real values are only unique to one society. Hence, values are original to one group at a single moment in time (Doğan, 2011). Individual values are also important as societal ones. Individual values are answers to the questions like which values make me great or inspire me? Alex Law and Michael Weitz define individual values as “inspirational powers” (Bacanlı, 2011).

### 2.3.2. National values

National values are values that are necessary for a nation’s unity and existence. For example, for Turks, the sacredness of the flag and love for the country and the indivisibility of the country are among national values. These values are essentially important to exist in the world as a nation by and large (Doğan, 2011). National values function as keeping us together at home while keeping us different from the rest in the world. Societal values and national values do not contradict, just the opposite, they are built on each other. In that sense, no societal value can exist against the constitutional system which is defined by national values.

### 2.3.3. Global values

Global values are the values that are shared by all societies. Just as traditional values differ from one society to other and change in time, globalization brings new dimensions to modern societies which do not differ from traditional ones in essence. In other words, the way societies see virtue and morals, neighborhood relationships, trust and patronage, fidelity and betrayal, secrecy and privacy, love and tolerance, respect and fear either change or deteriorate under the influences of globalization.

Global values which affect societal values are as follows: knowledge, culture of competition, productivity, total quality, democracy, human rights, free market economy, and the individual. The last one is the most important value of the postmodern society (knowledge society). Global values are not relative like societal ones, but are universal although this very saying depends on societal choices. For example, one can either stay in the global arena or rests in the societal sphere. The main problem is how a traditional society surrounded by traditional values can move beyond the limitations posed by the society itself (Doğan, 2011).

It should not be forgotten that science and technology are values as well. According to D. McClelland, evolution of Western societies into industrial ones relies on the “achieving personality” while for E. Hagen, the main reason is the “innovational/ creative personality” (Barbu, 1971). Hence, a society can shed light to its future if it can educate and present achieving and innovational/ creative individuals.

## 3. Function of values

Values in social system always take part at the beginning of activities, inside and at the end of the process because they are the powers which begin in the world of consciousness and conscience. Human beings and societies exist together with their values. Physical wealth of a society is also based on the perception, belief and values that the society has. Those cultural codes are road maps in a way to determine the routes of an individual and the society. As a result, in almost every society people take values seriously, sacrifice their interest, struggle for them and even they die for them. In this context, some functions of values could be the following:

- 1) They show the ways of thinking and behaving ideally.
- 2) Values are used as means in judging.
- 3) They make people focus on useful and important cultural objects.
- 4) They play a role as a guide to adopt and realize social roles.

- 5) They perform as social control and restraint tools.
- 6) They provide solidarity (Fichter, 1990).

#### 4. Education and values education

##### 4.1. Education

It is not possible for a society to survive without education. Societies survive with education; maintain their existence, development and permanence by means of educational institutions both generally and fundamentally (Mialaret, 2001). Education is a process which aims at biological, psychological, social and moral development of human being, who is a member of the society (Thornburg, 1984). In this sense, education is a institutional structure which helps develop the identity of individual, prepares him for life by transferring data, skills and values necessary for him. There are three general functions of education for society. 1) Protective function: education transmits people the values and culture of the society they are in. People are made to resemble each other through the process of socializing in order to ease collaboration and coherence (Macionis, 1997). 2) Commutative function: education needs to change the human being in better way, desirable behaviour patterns are formed in human beings, undesirable behaviour is also changed. 3) Formative function: It is the function that paves the way for cultural innovation and scientific development of a society, which means improvement of new ideas (Macionis, 1997). Education also aims at social improvement via a plan, which points out the constructive function of education. Societies should not stay content with the knowledge acquired; that is, they must head for further knowledge and thus for the discovery of new worlds (Özden, 1998). The goal of education institutions is not only to teach but also to help students acquire all values necessary as a human being.

##### 4.2. Values education

Human being can be identified in many ways; however, primarily, human is a being that has values and creates values. Human is a unique being that need to live together and deal with each other. The purpose of life is not only to satisfy material desires and aspirations of life but also improve individual as a human being and in spirit. While Manly Hall states “a man without any ethic values is a wild animal released to the world”, Theodore Roosevelt says that “to educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”

The purpose of the values education is to create values and raise individuals who convert their values to behaviours. Values cannot be gained by telling or describing. They should be experienced directly, internalized and should be given with the feelings related to them. Values become identities by experience. The precondition of the values education is to prepare environment to the child where he can use his freewill. The education which is given by insisting, oppression and conditioning leads to actualization others requests rather than its own.

One of the primary goals of education is to give the individual confidence and the consciousness of being an individual. The individuals who are not given that consciousness and subject to excessive socialization cannot be creative. In the excessive socialization, uploading knowledge predominates rather than knowledge generation. Lack of confidence and creativeness effects social development in a negative way (Nickolov, 1991). In that case, the societies have to make the individuals become active members of the society by teaching them the values that they have.

Variables such as, learner, teacher, school environment or atmosphere, family, society, environment etc. are considerably important in the acquisition of values. To ensure that individual develop a personality based on values is only possible with education. Therefore, it is important to imprint values to minds of individuals for the sake society's existence, continuation and future. And this is achieved by education (Koenig, 2000).

The advise of the British Education Philosopher A. Whitehead to the educationists is important “do not attempt to teach everything to the child but teach him very well what you teach so that the child can learn the learning and

thinking” (Whitehead, 1959). The purpose of educational institutions is not only to provide knowledge but also get the learners to gain values that make human beings human. The primary goals of schools are to get learners to gain values that are stated explicitly or not stated in the school programme, discipline the students according to the determined rules, make contributions to their moral values and affect their characters positively.

Values are dreams and ideals that a society wants to accomplish. The key institution in accomplishing the ideals of a society is education. Halil Fikret Kanad states that dynamic and creative factor of education is the ideal factor that is produces. Societies without ideals cannot be happy (Kanad, 1942). The only way to be a values society, information society and stay as a nation is education. Value education means to paint people in a society to the same colour. Individuals in a society both separate themselves from other societies and show predictable behaviour for each other by making similar preferences. This means that people in a society show similar preferences and behaviour (Bacanlı, 2011).

Societies who do not take into account the values they have and transfer those values to their members in the process of socialization cannot proceed on their way. Education systems that cannot see and pay attention to the motivator aspect of values always remain below the targets. In addition, transferring artificial or unknown values to individuals would be the biggest disaster for a society.

Moreover, the recent social and global events which make people say that “Where is the humanity?” “Does a human being do that?” have brought up value education case to the agenda. People in a society expect children to gain their own national values except for or even before the universal values. Society wants to maintain its existence and it can realize this by transferring their own values to new generations. Undoubtedly, this situation does not mean to ignore the universal values. The most important issues in value education are as follows;

- a) One of the most important issues of value education is to determine which values to be gained. For example social values (traditions and customs) and official authority (government) are the sine qua non of value education. Therefore the authority’s decision on which values to teach as well as what the society values are the main problems of values education.
- b) Another vital issue in value education is deciding on to what extent social, national and global values should be included into program.
- c) Additionally, deciding on the level of the learners, the way and quantity of teaching are also important in value education. For instance, the most crucial years in the formation of permanent values are the childhood years when children’s minds are pure. It is very difficult to change the values that are gained in these years. In the same way, to impose values upon adolescents in their secondary and higher education can result in the opposite conclusions of the expectations (Çengel, 2011).
- d) Last but not least issue in value education is to decide the kind of model or method that will be followed. Many factors (such as family, school, religion and media) play roles in forming the individual’s mental and moral world. Unless these social institutions constitute a synergic blend, the values that are given at schools will be inadequate for the value education. In this sense, it is essential for this kind of social institutions to collaborate for the target within the framework of blended model.

## 5. Discussion

Values as social standards; are fundamental beliefs that help to distinguish right and wrong for humans being. Adding balance and meaning in life, values enable individuals to live together within a society. Values are not innate; however, they are learnt and transmitted through observation and interaction, which puts forward the responsibility of schools for values education.

Society has always been in occurrence and change due to its dynamic characteristic. Changes and developments in a society result in new needs, events and problems in time. These changes might be both negative and positive. The positive changes need to be continued and generalized and negative changes need to be changed into positive. The only way to do that is value education. Similarly, the best and at the least costly way of avoiding from social diseases, protecting social structure and improving it is value education. In order to give an effective value

education, firstly a planned and in coincident education percept is needed. Also, in order to apply values as planned which are important for achieving prosperity and take place in educational programmes implicitly or explicitly, the teachers need to have sufficient background, ability and pedagogical skills.

Societies exist with their values and they are valuable owing to their values. Therefore values constitute basis for each culture. It is thought that a culture without values will come apart and its members will lose its unity and value. Thus, values are essential in social life (they take place before human action, institutions and norms) as they form the basis of social formation. Even though value education has the process of teaching things that are worth to teach, it is in fact an education which is alive, because it is less likely for children to gain values that are not present in the environment and adults' behaviours. Social problems increase where values are not functional. Social problems come into existence in relation to social values. When it is not reached to the targeted values or the gap between ideal and reality increases, social problems begin to exist. Social problem is ultimately is improperness between values and norms in a society and real social behaviour.

Value education is, in one way, teaching a set of principles which determine people's preferences. It is important for social life to be formed according to the principles that are approved by the society and transfer and teach values to its members. For a peaceful world and society it is essential for cultures to be developed and transformed through common values that are shared by people. The best way to do it is value education. Value education constitutes a solid basis for a better human being, society and world.

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