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Examining Some Values in the Social Studies Programme Applied in Turkey in Terms of Their Relations

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Abstract

A qualified and an effective citizen is the one who is aware of his values and reflects his virtues into his own life. The course which aims to educate a citizen with these qualities in our country is Social Studies. Social Studies education enables person to have a concept of merit and creates an application area for it. In this sense, it is aimed for the students in primary and secondary education to reveal a value perspective and to create a value comparison. For this purpose values planned to be developed in the social studies programme for 5th-8th grades such as honesty, justice, helpfulness, solidarity have been selected. Singular cross-hatching model has been used in this study among general cross-hatching models. The value association test, which was designed to achieve the goal about the topic, has been applied to 121 5th graders and 148 8th graders, that is to say totally to 269 students. Findings have been analysed in terms of frequency and percentage. Values higher than 30,20,15 and 10 cut- points have been associated with one another via mind maps. At the end of the study, mind maps of the students related with values have been drawn. When findings were examined it has been understood that students are mistaken about cooperation and charity values as well as honesty and justice. Besides, when the replies given to solidarity and helpfulness are examined, it is seen that the common value is helpfulness; similarly, when those of honesty and justice are examined, it is seen that the common values are helpfulness and honesty.

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1. Introduction

Values education is one of the most emphasised subjects in Turkey in recent years, just like it is in the whole world. (Pring, 2010; Keskin & Ogretici, 2013). The values education, which used to exist in the form of moral values and character education in the past, is quite a new field which has started to be handled in many conferences and meetings and on which books and papers have started to be written nowadays. In its simplest definition, the values education is “an open initiative to learn the values” (Keskin, 2008; Keskin & Ogretici, 2013). Values education is a multi-dimensional phenomenon concerning the society as a whole. The values are being used as a reference in the solution of the problems concerning the individual, the society and the whole world (Celikkaya & Filoglu, 2014). Besides, the children come across the values education in the environments outside the school as a result of many stimuli and variables. Even if it is not under the name of values education, the families educate their children about certain values (Aydın, 2005; Balat & Dagal, 2006; Doganay, 2006; Vrasmas, 2001). In addition, the media also has an effect in creating values in the children along with the developing world and technology. However, these effects are a part of an informal values education (Keskin, 2008).

The lesson, in which the values education is provided in a detailed way in our country, is the social studies lesson (MEB, 2010). The social sciences lesson is quite an important lesson in terms of preparing the children for life. In this lesson, many moral, social and cultural values are gained (Coskun Keskin and Keskin, 2013; Keskin, 2008). It is observed that the values education is featured and emphasised in the social studies education program that was renewed and changed in 2005 (MEB, 2010). There are many values to be gained to the children in social sciences education lesson program. However, the concepts that the values of helpfulness, solidarity, righteousness and honesty, which are central values in the social sciences education, remind the 5th and 8th grade students are examined in this research.

2. Method

As the research aims to reveal the concepts created by the chosen values in the minds of the 5th and 8th grade students, it was carried out with the single screening method, one of the qualitative research models. In that, the single screening method is used to determine the formation of the variables as a single kind or amount (Karasar, 1998). The value association tests developed in order to achieve the purpose were applied to 269 students in total, 121 of them being 5th grade students, and 148 being 8th grade students. The purpose of using the value association tests is to reveal the concepts that the students associate with their cognitive structures and the values. Two minutes were given for each value in value association tests. The data obtained were subjected to the percentage and frequency analysis on the basis concept associations. The concepts, of which cut points are above 30, 20, 15 and 10 were associated with the mind maps.

3. Findings

Below are the findings about the perceptions and value comparisons of the solidarity, helpfulness, honesty and justness are included in the social studies program. According to the frequency of the concepts, those with the cut point of 30 and above are shown with the colour green, between 20 and 29 are shown in blue, between 15 and 19 are shown in black, and those between 10 and 14 are shown in purple.

3.1. Solidarity

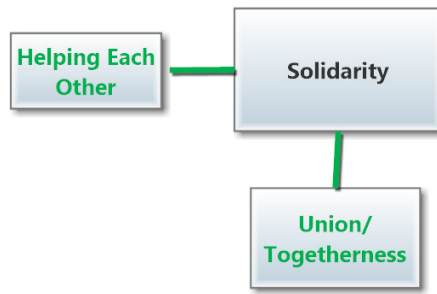


Fig1. 5th Grade Solidarity

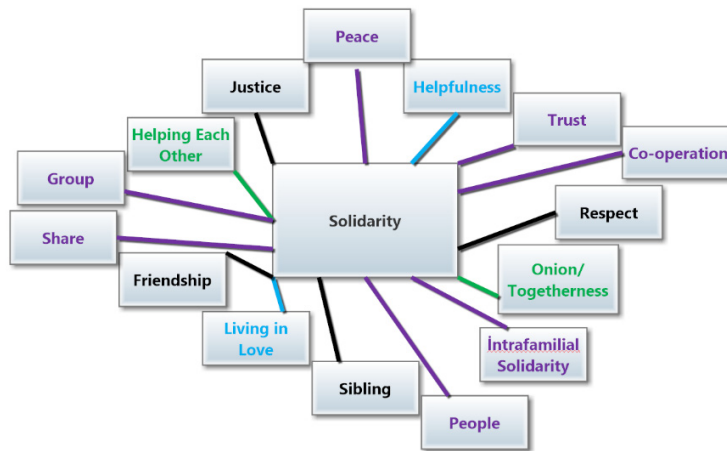


Fig2. 8th Grade Solidarity

As is seen in the mind map above, solidarity reminds the 5th grade students helping each other and union-togetherness. The number of associated concepts, in addition to helping each other and union-togetherness, increased as a result of the education received for 4 years. These concepts are helpfulness, living in love, respect, justice, siblings, peace, trust, cooperation, intrafamilial solidarity, sharing, group and people. Solidarity means “the mutual commitment of those forming a society in terms of emotions, thoughts and mutual interests” (TDK, 2014). In this sense, the features of the solidarity between the individuals and mutual features are brought to the fore. The directly associated features of the values of helping each other, being in unity and togetherness, helpfulness, living in love, friendship and fellowship, cooperation, intrafamilial solidarity, sharing, group and people solidarity are emphasised. However, the values of peace, respect and justice are not directly associated with solidarity.

3.2. Helpfulness

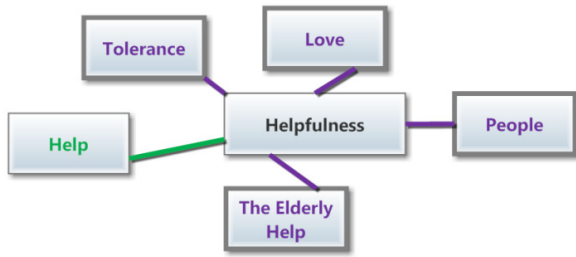


Fig 3. 5th Grade Helpfulness



Fig 4. 8th Grade Helpfulness

When the mind maps of the helpfulness value are analyzed, it is seen that this value mostly reminds the 5th and 8th grade students of the concept “help”. In addition to this, love and tolerance are the mutual associations for the 5th and 8th grade students. 8th grade students associated the value of helping each other with the value of solidarity. Although solidarity is a bidirectional and helping each other is a one-dimensional value, these are values that contribute to and form completeness with each other, but are also different values. In this context, it is observed that the 8th grade students confuse these two values. Besides, it is seen that there is not much of a difference in the associations of the 5th and 8th grade students in the context of this value. There are mutual association concepts.

3.3. Honesty

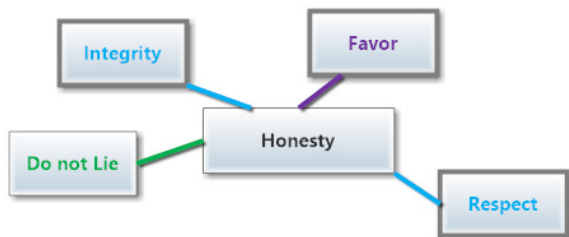


Fig5. 5th Grade Honesty

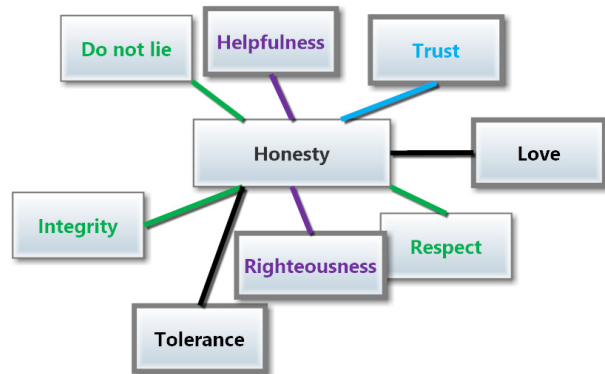


Fig6. 8th Grade Honesty

When the mind map above is analyzed, it is seen that the concepts that are associated with the value honesty most are not to lie for the 5th grade students; and not to lie, righteousness and respect concepts for the 8th grade students. The mutual associated concept of the 5th and 8th grade students is the concept “not to lie”. The shortest definition of the value honesty is “righteousness” (TDK, 2014). But it is not just about not telling lies. In this context, it can be said that the students assessed this value from a single aspect. In addition to this, it is seen that the second most associated concept for the students in both grades is the concept righteousness, which is the definition of the value justice. The value of honesty reminds the 5th grade students “favour”, and the concept “trust” to the 8th grade students.

3.4. Justness

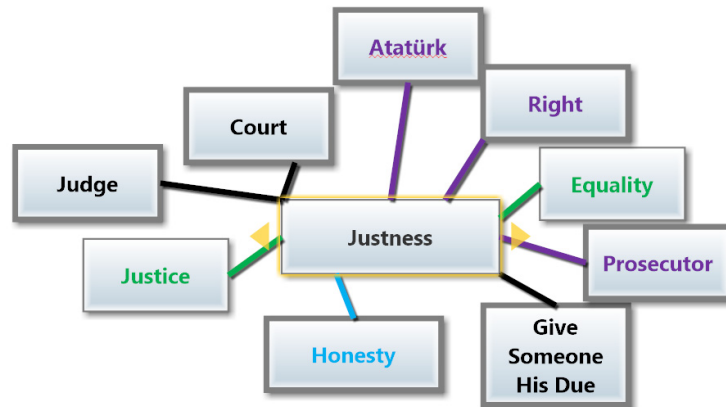


Fig7. 5th Grade Justness

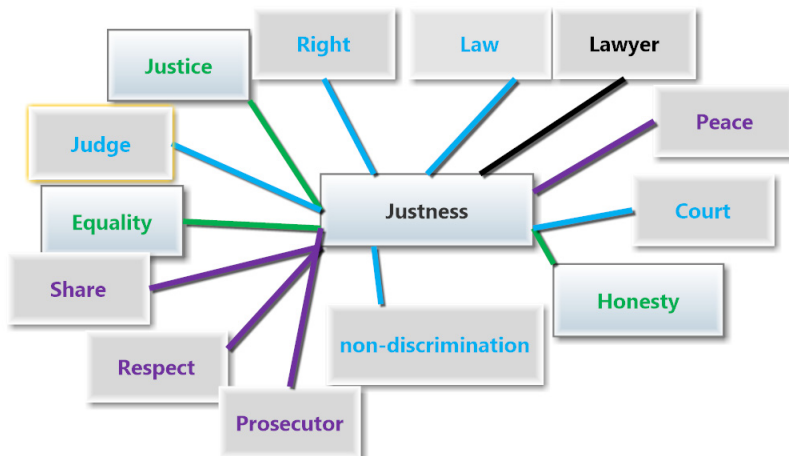


Fig8. 8th Grade Justness

When this mind map of the value of justness is analyzed, it is seen that the concepts that are associated most by the 5th and 8th grade students are justice and equality. Justice and equality are concepts that are associated with the value of justness. The second most associated concept is honesty. While the value of honesty may seem to be associated with the value of justness, that there is such a high frequency at the point of association shows that the students failed to make the adequate association. The concepts of prosecutor, judge, court and right are the other concepts that have a mutual association after the concept of honesty. As is seen, both the 5th and 8th grade students associated the value of justness with the other institutions. One of the bases of the phenomenon religion is to be just. But, the students did not associate this value with religion.

4. Conclusions and Recommendation

In general, the values are the level of importance or priority given for an object, entity or activity. Thus, they are subjective and they may vary according to people and situations (Oncul, 2000). In this sense, it can be said that the meanings attributed to the values may change from person to person, and that the values include the cognitive dimension as well. In this study, it was tried to determine the conceptual associations of the four values (solidarity, helpfulness, honesty and justness) included in the social studies program in the 5th and 8th grade students.

In the study, it was determined that the students wrote many concepts associated with the value solidarity and a great majority of them are associated with this value. In the study carried out on the 5th grade students, Baydar (2009) determined that the students possess the values of solidarity, justness and responsibility at the level that Kohlberg established for the level of maturity of their age. This finding coincides with the results of the research. In the research carried out by Coskun Keskin (2012), it was seen that the 6th grade students confuse the value of justness with such concepts as honesty, respect, love and judge. In this research, the 5th grade students matched the value of justness with the concepts of respect, peace and share.

One of the most emphasised values in the first grade education of the Social studies education program applied in our country is the value of helpfulness (Merey, Kus & Karatekin, 2012). However, when the associated concepts of the 5th and 8th grade students participating in the research were analyzed, it is seen that this value is not adequately associated. Again, during the research carried out by Coskun Keskin (2012), it was seen that the students do not confuse the value of helpfulness with different values. In this study, it was determined that the associated concepts written by the students are quantitatively little, but there is no problem in quality. As a result, it should not be ignored that the concepts written by the students in relation to the four values contain their personal points of view and mental interpretation.

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