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Research Article

# Values Education as Perceived by Social Studies Teachers in Objective and Practice Dimensions

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to reveal the objectives of values education in Turkey, values education-related activities performed in schools, and preferred approaches to values education according to the opinions of social studies teachers. This qualitative study used a phenomenological pattern. The participants of the study were selected from social studies teachers working in the province of Istanbul. Because data triangulation was used in the study, separate participants provided qualitative data and quantitative data. The qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured interview form applied to a total of eight participants, 4 female and four male, selected by purposive sampling. Expert opinion was solicited for the development of the semi-structured interview form used in interviews. Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire, which was found to have a Cronbach's Alpha value of .820, applied to a total of 120 social studies teachers selected via clustering. The data collected using these measurement tools were classified and analyzed, and showed that the participants had ideological approaches and taught values that enabled basic humanitarian values and social structures to be maintained. However, values education activities performed in schools were found to be inadequate, and teachers mostly preferred the infusion approach in values education.

## Keywords

Value • Values education • Social studies • Social studies teacher • Primary education

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Education is a concept about which all individuals in the society have something to say. Because education aims to achieve certain objectives on both an individual and a social basis, its process and outcome dimensions directly influence both the individual and society. Because of this mutual impact, inquiries about what qualities are desired in an individual and how these qualities should be taught incorporate both individual and social expectations. Thus, dimensions of education such as changing behaviors, raising individuals who can adapt to the society, cultivating individuals with qualities beneficial for the society, and achieving personal development through conscious activities (Demirel & Kaya, 2007) are emphasized and elaborated. Based on this elaboration, education may be defined as providing individuals with knowledge, attitudes, values, and behaviors that will positively impact their lives. Since qualities positively impacting individuals' lives are unlikely to form on their own, implicit and explicit programs are employed to cultivate these qualities in individuals (Ekşi, 2003, 2004). The content of these programs are shaped by specific conditions of the specific area or country where the program is to be implemented as well as by the social and material resources currently available (Demirel, 2007). In this context, values education became a higher priority in explicit teaching programs toward the end of the 20th century with the impact of specific qualities of the era (Akbaş, 2004; Katılmış, 2010). Parallel to this development, values education began to be discussed intensively in academic and popular publications. It has been noted in these publications that values that promote correct behaviors are not sufficiently respected by youth; thus, problems stemming from undesired behaviors have increased both quantitatively and qualitatively (Lickona, 1991; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Topçu & Kaya, 2014). The negative effect of change and segmentation in the traditional family structure on children's moral development, the popularity of negative modes presented to youth by the media, and the inability to provide youth with basic humanitarian values such as respect, responsibility, solidarity, and justice have been suggested as reasons for this situation (Lickona, 1993). Following this reasoning, it has been recommended that values education be given higher priority in schools along with raising individuals with high levels of both academic achievement and basic humanitarian values (Ekşi, 2003; Katılmış, 2010). Values education has been deemed important for cultivating citizens able to find ethical solutions to current problems (Kale, 2007). However, some have been critical of values education and have been skeptical of applications of values education. Some critics have interpreted values education as a strategy of the ruling class to maintain the conservative social order by suppressing social change, imposing the dominant culture on all of society, and reinforcing the perpetuation of their rule (Kıroğlu, 2009). Hence, the initiatives implemented within the scope of values education are not universally understood and supported in the same way. When we consider both supportive and critical approaches toward values education together, the most notable objectives in values education

initiatives are those that directly affect the course of values education activities. This is because if values education is taught within narrow ideological templates, it may result in cultivating individuals inclined to perpetuate current problems originating in religion and culture, rather than raising a generation able to contribute to ethical solutions to such problems. In other words, if the objective of teaching humanitarian values such as justice, respect, responsibility, honesty, tolerance, and peace is adopted, values education may cultivate individuals able to address many problems. Thus, the concept of reciprocity or the principle of “Do as you would be done by,” which has existed for thousands of years, may be sustained in social life, and an environment that contributes to cultivating individuals acting freely and justly based on respect and responsibility can be developed.

The concept of values has been addressed by various disciplines of social sciences, and many definitions have been proposed by different researchers. Areas such as guiding individual attitudes and behaviors of, determining the behaviors of individuals, and training individuals with qualities accepted and desired by the society have been emphasized in these definitions (Dilmaç, Kulaksızolu, & Ekşi, 2007; Kuçuradi, 2010, Kuşdil & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000; Ülken, 2001). Because of the broad applicability of these areas, the concept of values has been the focal point in all formal and informal education activities.

Value and values education have often been directly addressed in studies on education sciences toward the end of the 20th century. The concept of values seems to have maintained its significance since the emergence of education itself, because almost all educational activities aim to provide individuals with certain values (Gutek, 2006). In this context, values education may be defined as educational activities conducted to provide basic humanitarian values such as respect, responsibility, justice, honesty, solidarity, tolerance, and peace (Ekşi, 2003). From this definition, the principal objective of values education appears to be raising a generation able to contribute to creating a livable world.

As previously noted, values education has a deep-rooted history in Turkish education. Certain values were taught to students in madrasahs, which were important educational institutions of the Seljuk and Ottoman eras, and later in educational institutions opened within the scope of modernization efforts starting in the Ottoman era and continuing in the Republic era (Akyüz, 2013; Sakaoğlu, 2003). Additionally, the term “values education” was clearly used for the first time in Turkish teaching programs in 2005–2006 primary education programs. Values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, justice, and charity were mentioned as “values to be taught directly” in the social studies teaching program, which was among the programs updated in this period (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2005). Thus, teachers for the

social studies course, one of the courses taught in primary education to train active citizens for a democratic society respectful of human rights (Öztürk, 2009; Topçu, 2010), were responsible for inculcating the values included in the program along with achieving other course objectives (MEB, 2005).

Significant studies have been conducted on values education in Turkey and other countries to reveal the perceptions and expectations of administrators, teachers, students, and parents related to values and values education and determine values to be taught to students (Acat & Arslan, 2012; Arslan & Tunç, 2013; Çelikkaya & Filoğlu, 2014; Gömleksiz, 2007; Haydon, 2007; Oğuz, 2012; Vess & Halbur, 2003; Yiğittir & Öcal, 2010). A literature review shows that studies on the effects of programs in values/personality education on promoting values and academic achievement have been conducted as well (Campbell & Zegwaard, 2011; Costanzo, 2005; Davis, 2006; Dereli-İman, 2014; Dilmaç, Kulaksızoğlu, & Ekşi, 2007; England 2009; Grimbilas, 2009; Katılmış, Ekşi, & Öztürk, 2011; King, 2009; Lovat & Hawkes, 2013; Penny, 2007; Singh, 2011; Tahiroğlu, 2013; Yüksel & Adıgüzel, 2014). Studies have also been conducted on the level of success of values education in a social studies course (Türk & Nalçacı, 2011), the values taught in social studies courses in different countries (Merey, Kuş, & Karatekin, 2012) and problems encountered by teachers during activities related to values education (Kurtulmuş, Tösten, & Gündaş, 2014). In addition to these studies, the perceived self-efficacy levels of prospective teachers regarding values education have also been investigated (Avcı, 2011; Şahin 2013).

None of these studies, however, have focused on teacher opinions on the objectives of values education in Turkish teaching programs and the activities conducted in schools within the scope of values education. Similarly, no studies were found on the opinions of administrators, teachers, or parents about values education in schools. An investigation of these areas, however, is quite important, because teachers are the primary agents determining the quality of training related to values education. For this reason, the success of such training depends on the teacher regardless of the objectives set by program developers or the content of the program (Leming, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to identify the objectives of values education in Turkey, the values education-related activities performed in schools, and the approaches preferred in values education based on opinions of social studies teachers. Specifically, the e study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are opinions of social studies teachers on the objectives of values education given in schools?
2. What are opinions of social studies teachers on the activities performed in relation to values education in schools?

3. What are opinions of social studies teachers on the perspectives of administrators, teachers, and parents on values education?
4. What approaches do social studies teachers prefer in values education?

### Model

The purpose of this study was to perform an in-depth analysis of the objectives of values education in Turkey and values education-related activities performed in schools based on opinions and experiences of social studies teachers. Thus, the qualitative research method, which focuses on in-depth understanding and processes, was chosen for this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The phenomenological pattern was chosen for its fitness for the goals of the study because studies employing this pattern allow the researcher to analyze the subject deeply through experiences and expressions of the participants (Patton, 1987).

### Participants

The study was conducted with social studies teachers serving in a total of six districts, 3 in the European side (districts C, D and E) and three in the Asian side (districts A, B and F), of the province of Istanbul during Fall Semester of the 2015–2016 academic year. The districts were coded and represented as District A-District F.

The purposive sampling technique can be used to select participants in qualitative studies (Patton, 1987). Thus, the participants for the qualitative data of the study were selected by criteria sampling, a purposive sampling technique, according to the following criteria: They had to be social studies teaching program graduates, have participated in a seminar or workshop on values education, and have at least 5 years of teaching experience. We also ensured an equal distribution of participants by gender. A total of eight social studies teachers, four females and four males, were finally selected as the participants of the study.

Table 1  
*Demographical Characteristics of Participants*

Code	Gender	Age	Professional Experience
F1	Female	38	9 years
F2	Female	29	5 years
F3	Female	34	6 years
F4	Female	35	8 years
M1	Male	34	7 years
M2	Male	28	5 years
M3	Male	36	8 years
M4	Male	38	10 years

Data triangulation was used to support the qualitative data with quantitative data. To this end, a clustering technique was employed to select participants for qualitative data collection with each school regarded as a cluster. The qualitative data collection group comprised social studies teachers serving in five schools selected from each district. A total of 112 (100%) social studies teachers, 17 (15.2%) from District A, 19 (17%) from District B, 22 (19.6%) from District C, 21 (18.8%) from District D, 17 (15.2%) from District E, and 16 (14.3%) from District F, were selected as participants. The gender distribution of this study group was 46 females (41.1%) and 66 males (58.9%).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Two different data collection tools were developed to collect qualitative and quantitative data, since the qualitative data for the study were supported with quantitative data. The qualitative data of the study were obtained via interviews. A communication process of asking and answering questions for a predetermined purpose, interviewing is a preferred method for data collection in qualitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). A semi-structured interview form was used in the interviews with the participants. Opinions of experts were solicited in the development of the semi-structured interview form. A pilot application was then performed with two social studies teachers to test the comprehensibility and the fitness of questions. The form was adjusted according to their feedback. The semi-structured interview form used to interview the participants contained four main questions and probing questions to allow the participants elaborate their answers.

Interviews were recorded with the participants' consent, and each interview took 20–30 minutes. All interviews recorded were transcribed verbatim in Microsoft Word, and content analysis was performed. To obtain a general description of the context described by the participants, the interview texts were explored simultaneously. After this general description, the study data were classified, and coding was performed after classification. During the coding process, concepts and words preferred by the participants were employed to preserve the meaning highlighted in texts. Blocks of ideas and sentences were then selected, and the coding process was completed. Categories were created from common dimensions between the codes. To improve the credibility of qualitative studies, confirmation in the form of direct quotes from participants were presented, following Patton, 1987. Codes were used instead of the participants' real names on the quotations. Female participants were coded F1, F2, F3, and F4; and the male participants were coded M1, M2, M3, and M4. To be reliable, a study must be transferable, dependable, and confirmable as well as credible (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). For this reason, study participants were selected via purposive sampling and the qualitative data were supported with quantitative data

to enhance the transferability of the study. To improve the study's dependability and confirmability, the opinions of another researcher were solicited in the development of data collection tools and in the collection and analysis of data.

The quantitative data of the study were collected using a 5-point Likert scale. The relevant literature was reviewed before the items in the questionnaire were created. The first draft of the questionnaire, consisting of 39 questions, was submitted to four researchers conducting academic research on values education, and three social studies teachers and items meeting the 90% expert agreement criterion were kept in the questionnaire form. Following these steps, the 27-item questionnaire form was finalized. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the questionnaire was .820, confirming its reliability. The data obtained from the questionnaire form were interpreted in accordance with purposes of the study.

### Findings

Findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data of the study are presented in detail below.

Findings Related to the Objectives of Values Education: To obtain participants' opinions about why values education has been implemented, we posed the question, "What do you think the purpose/purposes of values education in schools is/are?" The following were cited by the participants as purposes of values education in schools: providing social values, providing ideological education, developing a sense of belonging, providing basic humanitarian values, and preventing moral decay. Participants' answers appear in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Opinions of The Participants Related to Objectives of Values Education*

Theme	Participant
Providing social values	F2, F4, M1, M3
Ideological education	M1, M2, M4
Developing a sense of belonging	M3, F4
Providing basic humanitarian values	F1, F2
Preventing moral collapse	F3, F4

The participants who thought that values education served to provide students with social values mostly emphasized transferring social values to future generations, the gradual disappearance of social values, and the failure of families to provide their children with social values. M1 expressed this opinion as follows: "It [values education] is taught to provide future generations with behavioral patterns accepted and desired by the society." M3 expressed the following sentiment: "I believe that values education is taught to maintain social values and provide students with these values." F4 spoke of the necessity of reviving social values with following statement:

“Values education is the latest product of efforts to raise awareness and revive social values, which have been disregarded and ignored.” Another participant, F2, also emphasized the revival of social values: “Values education aims to provide children with social values that families have been having difficulties teaching lately through collaboration between the school and the family.”

M1, M2, and M4 underlined the ideological objectives of values education. M1, for example, made the following statement:

Every government uses education to perpetuate itself. Governments desire to provide new generations with an education consistent with their own objectives and their own world views to perpetuate their existence. I believe that values education is implemented for this purpose.

M2 and M4 noted the power dimension of the ideological purpose for values education. M2 observed “... it is a program to provide students with the desired values for their ideal individual profile. Although references to universal values are present, the actual objective is to raise a generation that internalizes or at least shares their ideology.”

M4 made the following observation:

Since there is no common system of values for all the different social groups in Turkish society, the values that students must learn, the contents of these values, and the rhetorical context of these values change from one ruling group to another, which makes me believe that the actual objective the Ministry desires to achieve with values education is to equip students with the world view of the current political power.

F4 and M3 cited ensuring social solidarity as an objective of values education. M3 stated that values education aimed to ensure social solidarity by providing students with the values adopted by society. M3 observed, “Values education has the mission of ensuring students internalize good, moral, and right values that have certain meanings for society and create a sense of unity and solidarity in students.” F4 emphasized unity and solidarity: “Values education has been implemented to allow individuals in society to come together, enhance the national consciousness of individuals in society, and enhance unity and solidarity in society.”

As shown in Table 2, F1 and F2 stated that values education was taught in schools to provide students with basic humanitarian values. F1 cited the objective of providing students with universally valid values that contribute to human co-existence:

Today, the world has changed a lot. Because of this change, students need to possess and internalize certain locally and universally valid values. It has become a necessity in today’s world for people with many different value structures to co-exist. I believe that values education is given for this purpose.



F2 made the following observation: “Values education is given because we live in a day and age in which social and humanitarian values in particular are degenerating more and more and basic humanitarian values are disappearing day by day due to technological change and development.” This statement suggests that F2 believed that basic humanitarian values have been corrupted by certain characteristics of the era, and values education is meant to provide students with these values.

Some participants, such as F3, said that society had experienced a moral collapse, and values education was needed to correct this:

The Ministry has realized that due to the technological advancements in recent years, uncontrolled cultural interaction has spread without passing through society’s moral filter, and this has led to the degradation of society’s moral and cultural values. The Ministry employs values education to prevent such moral collapse in the society.

F4 likewise focused on moral degradation: “Values education aims to put an end to social disintegration and moral degradation caused by children being alienated from traditional mores by changing social factors.” For both participants who noted moral collapse, values education serves to protect social morality.

The qualitative data related to values education were supported with quantitative data. Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage values for the distribution of participant opinions about the objectives of values education.

Table 3  
The Distribution of Social Studies Teachers’ Opinions on the Objectives of Values Education

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		
	N	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Values education is given to enable children become better persons.	112	21	18.8	61	54.5	28	25	2	1.8	-	-
2. Values education is given to provide students with basic humanitarian values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, charity, and justice.	112	19	17	79	70.5	12	10.7	2	1.8	-	-
3. Values education is given to raise a conservative generation.	112	32	28.6	39	34.8	17	15.2	10	8.9	14	12.5
4. Values education is given to raise individuals who internalized universal values.	112	12	10.7	31	27.7	32	28.6	37	33	-	-
5. Values education is given because undesired behaviors (violence, fraud, substance abuse, etc.) have spread among the youth.	112	9	8	36	32.1	40	35.7	25	22.3	2	1.8
6. Values education is implemented to create a national consciousness.	112	21	18.8	55	49.1	22	19.6	12	10.7	2	1.8

From these quantitative data, we can conclude that the teachers believed that values education was mostly given to provide students with basic humanitarian values. About 72% of participants responded to this objective (in the first item of Table 3) with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree,” and more than 85% responded to the second objective with “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” On the other hand, more than 65% responded to the 6th objective, on creating a national consciousness, with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.” More than 50% responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to the third objective (maintaining cultural conservatism), while about 20% responded “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” About 40% responded to the 4th objective (providing universal values) with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree,” and about 33% responded “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” About 40% responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to the 5th objective (preventing undesired behaviors among students), while about 24% responded “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.”

### The Perspectives of Administrators, Teachers, and Parents on Values Education

To identify how values education was perceived by administrators, teachers, and parents, we asked the participants, “What are the perspectives of administrators, and teachers, and parents on values education?” Their answers are given in Table 4.

Table 4  
*Participant Opinions on the Perspectives of Administrators, Teachers, and Parents on Values Education*

Theme	Dimension	Participant
Teacher	Values education is useful	F1, F2, F3, F4, M1, M2, M3, M4
	Values education should be left to the family.	F4
	Values education should be opposed for ideological reasons	M1, M2, M4
	Academic achievement is given more significance	F1, F2, M1, M3
Administrator	They support values education	F1, F2, F3, F4, M1, M2, M3, M4
	Achievement in central exams is given more significance	F1, F2, F3, F4, M3, M4
Parent	They support values education	F1, F2, F3, F4, M1, M2, M3, M4
	Academic achievement is given more significance	F1, F2, F3, M2, M4

Table 4 shows that all participants believed parents supported values education in schools. They also noted that the parents’ principal priority was their children’s achievement in central exams. School administrators held similar beliefs. F2 expressed the following opinions:

School administrators and teachers support values education in school. However, teachers do not know exactly how to teach values education. Also, everyone from administrators to parents cares more about success in exams, which is deemed to be more important than anything else. For this reason, I personally care more about course subjects than values.

Another participant, F3, stated that everyone supported values education in school: “No colleague of mine finds values education to be useless or opposes it. Parents

want their children to be taught basic values as well.” F1, however, noted that values education was shadowed by academic achievement: “The most important matter for administrators, teachers, and parents is exam success. However, I have yet to meet someone who is against values education. On the contrary, everyone says that children should be taught basic values.” Similarly, M3 observed, “I do not have a single colleague who is against values education. School administrators and parents want their children to be raised to be good people, but achievement in central exams is more important for them.”

F4 stated that administrators, teachers, and parents usually supported values education in school, but some teachers believed this to be the responsibility of the family and that schools should not be responsible for teaching it:

Generally, all teachers and administrators find values education useful. I have not met a parent who has complained about values education. However, there are differing views about where values are supposed to be taught. For example, some teachers believe that this should be done by the family, not by schools. But nobody believes values should not be taught to children or that they should be free to acquire their own values.

Some participants, such as M2, stated that values education was mostly viewed positively, even though some opposed values education for ideological reasons:

Some teachers with left-leaning political views complain about the religious content of values education. But the vast majority of teachers are not disturbed by values education ... parents want us to provide values education in school, but their priority is their children’s exam success.

M1 expressed the following opinion: “Teachers and administrators in the school where I work usually support values education. But some teachers do not view it positively because they think it is ideological. However, there are only one or two of them. Exams are more important for everyone.” Another participant, M4, echoed these sentiments with the following statement:

The Ministry cares a lot about values education, and therefore administrators support it. To be honest, I have not seen administrators come out against anything the Ministry wants. The vast majority of teachers also support values education because they believe it will help raise respectful and good natured individuals. However, some teachers oppose it because they think it is a scheme of the current government and aims to raise a religious generation.

M4’s statement positions the opposition to and support for values education in terms of its association with the current government. The opinions of social studies teachers on the perspectives of administrators, teachers, and parents on values education are presented in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Opinions of Social Studies Teachers on the Perspectives of Administrators, Teachers, and Parents on Values Education*

Items	N	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
7. Teachers are against values education carried out in schools.	112	-	-	17	15.2	16	14.3	61	54.5	18	16.1
8. Administrators are against values education carried out in schools.	112	2	1.8	4	3.6	8	7.1	78	69.6	20	17.9
9. Parents do not want values education carried out in schools.	112	4	3.6	6	5.4	6	5.4	74	66.1	22	19.6

Table 5 shows that the social studies teachers positively viewed the perspectives of administrators, teachers, and parents on values education conducted in schools, since over 70% of the teachers believed that all three types of stakeholders supported values education. Only 15.2%, of the participants believed that teachers opposed values education in schools, and only 5% of participants believed that administrators opposed values education. Less than 10% of participants believed that parents opposed values education in schools.

**The Fulfillment of Responsibilities Related to Values Education**

In the study, the participants were asked, “What do you do related to values education in schools?” to reveal what activities are performed for values education. The participants gave similar statements with few details. Our analysis of these statements showed that planning for classes in values education occurred outside of school, value boards were prepared values education was left to the teachers’ discretion, and values education was overshadowed by academic goals (Table 6).

Table 6  
*Participant Opinions on The Status of Values Education in Schools*

Theme	Participant
It is overshadowed by academic goals	F1, F2, F3, F4, M1, M2, M3, M4
Planned studies are not carried out	F2, F3, F4, M1, M2, M3, M4
It is left to the teacher’s initiative	F1, F2, F4
Value boards are prepared	M2, M3

A frequently mentioned theme in participant responses about activities related to values education in schools was the lack of planned studies as stated by M2: “I don’t believe that planned and organized studies are conducted for values education in schools. There has been an effort to promote values education in recent years, but it remains limited to decorating a few boards for show only. Keeping up with the curriculum is more important.” M1 asserted, “School is the second most important institution after the family when it comes to teaching values. However, values

education should not remain just a formality.” Another participant, M4, pointed to the lack of planned studies related to values education: “Values education is not formally conducted in schools. There are only values specified in the curriculum. However, there are no activities aimed at teaching values.” Another participant, M3, found the activities performed at schools insufficient: “the values of the month are limited to posters hung on boards and fabricated awards given to these posters and a few activities that do not really raise awareness in students.”

In interviews, some participants mentioned that values education was left to the teachers’ discretion. F2 explained this as follows: “Yes, values education is included in the current educational system, but we leave it to the initiative of the teacher. Some teachers are trying to offer values education, while others do not care about it.” F4 used the following expression: “There is no serious effort in schools related to values education. Values education is left to the teacher, and the teacher’s attitude on this issue is the decisive factor.” F1 observed, “I find values education very useful. I try to carry out activities to allow students learn and internalize many important values in the school where I work.”

It seems that all participants thought that values education was not given enough priority because academic achievement was deemed more important in schools. F3 noted this sentiment as follows:

The primary goal of myself and my colleagues is to achieve success in central exams and keep up with the curriculum, and thus values education is not given the necessary importance. Since the success level of teachers is based on the exam success of students, I don’t believe that my colleagues are so wrong.

Quantitative data on this issue were collected as well and are presented in Table 7.

Based on findings in Table 7, we can conclude that insufficient efforts have been made to promote values education in schools. Only 12.2% of participants responded to the statement “Meetings are held in schools with participation of all teachers to determine what needs to be done within the scope of values education” with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree,” while about 72% responded to this item with “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” About 45% responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to the statement that values education was left to the teacher’s initiative, while about 45% responded to this item with “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.”

The data in Table 7 show that administrators did not provide sufficient support for teachers. Only about 29% answered the 12th item, on the support provided by administrators with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree,” while about 55% responded with “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” The data in Table 7 also show the participants believed that parents were unable to fulfill their responsibilities to equip their

children with basic values, with about 70% responding “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to this belief and about 16.1% responding “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” These data also showed that participants believed that teachers were unable to fulfill their responsibilities related to values education, with only about 20 % responding to the item on the responsibilities of teachers with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” and about 40% responding with “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” On the other hand, the participants found activities performed in schools highly insufficient, with only 16.1% responding agreeing that that school activities on values education were adequate and about 70.1% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Table 7  
*The Distribution of Social Studies Teachers’ Opinions about Activities Related to Values Education Performed in Schools*

Items	N	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
10. Meetings are held in schools with participation of all teachers to determine what needs to be done within the scope of values education.	112	-	-	14	12.2	18	16.1	55	49.1	25	22.3
11. Teachers try to provide students with values which they deem positive.	112	2	1.8	49	43.8	16	14.3	39	34.8	6	5.4
12. School administrators provide adequate support for teachers in relation to values education.	112	2	1.8	30	26.8	18	16.1	60	53.6	2	1.8
13. Parents are careful to teach basic values to their children.	112	-	-	18	16.1	16	14.3	72	64.3	6	5.4
14. Teachers are careful to teach basic values to children.	112	2	1.8	20	17.9	44	39.3	21	18.8	25	22.3
15. I find values education activities in schools sufficient.	112	-	-	18	16.1	16	14.3	56	50	22	19.6

### Findings Related to Preferred Approaches to Teaching Values

Another purpose of the study was to determine the preferred approaches for transmitting values to students. To collect qualitative data on this issue, we asked the participants “What do you do to equip students with values?” Participants responded that they usually used infusion and from time to time, discussion. M2 explained that he tried to teach values by giving examples from historical figures and giving his students research assignments: “I tell stories about values. For example, I explain Umar’s sense of justice. I give students research assignments.” F1 explained her efforts to develop her students’ values: “I give examples from history. For example, I talk about the sense of justice at the time of the Ottoman Empire. I give examples from the sultans, and I sometimes give examples from our time. I have students make inquiries.” M1 said that

he tried to teach values by setting an example and using literary works: “I tell stories. I give examples from the lives of prominent figures. Above all else, I try to be a model myself, because I believe that students watch our every move.” Another participant, F3, also highlighted the infusion approach in values education: “I usually lecture students about values. I sometimes use poems, stories, or biographies related to a given value in my activities.” Having indicated that he used literary works to teach his students about values, M4 explained his efforts as follows: “I have students find poems and stories about values and hang them on the board in the classroom. I have them discuss the events portrayed in posters, poems, and stories.”

F2 used infusion and, to a certain degree, value analysis through discussion to teach values: “For example, I ask questions such as ‘What happens if we help each other and what happens if we do not?’ when teaching students about charity. I talk about my experiences about values or experiences of others.” F4 complained about not having enough time to teach values due to the busy curriculum. She also reported that she used examples from the present and past and tried to empathize with students when teaching values:

Actually, I cannot find enough time for separate activities for values education due to the busy curriculum, because students must take central exams. However, I give examples of values from the past and present. Sometimes I empathize with students so that they better understand values. I have them read stories, poems, or autobiographies.

Another participant, M4, mentioned the use of empathy in teaching values: “I assign students projects related to values. I have them discuss a certain value. For example, I have them discuss the importance of peace when teaching about peace. I have students try to empathize with other in relation to values.”

Quantitative data were also collected to reveal preferred approaches to conveying values. Table 8 presents the quantitative data collected using the questionnaire.

Table 8  
*Approaches Preferred by Social Studies Teachers for Values Education*

Items	N	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
16. I give students the opportunity to develop their own values in activities related to values education.	112	-	-	4	3.6	19	17	52	46.4	37	33
17. I give students the opportunity to use their own reasoning in activities related to values education.	112	-	-	14	12.5	8	7.1	47	42.0	43	38.4
18. I have students discuss moral dilemmas in activities related to values education.	112	2	1.8	18	16.1	11	9.8	24	21.4	57	50.9
19. I use case studies containing a value-related problem in activities related to values education.	112	26	23.2	24	21.4	13	11.6	44	39.3	29	25.9
20. I can carry out values education without imposing my own values to students.	112			22	19.6	44	39.3	23	20.5	23	20.5
21. I make use of literary works to provide students with values.	112	2	1.8	69	61.6	10	8.9	29	25.9	2	1.8
22. I give advice and make warnings to provide students with values.	112	20	17.9	62	55.4	12	10.7	16	14.3	2	1.8
23. I try to provide students with values through examples from historical figures.	112	12	10.7	67	59.8	6	5.4	8	7.1	19	17.0
24. I try to provide students with values through direct instruction.	112	46	41.1	50	44.6	6	5.4	8	7.1	2	1.8
25. I make use of certain commemorative and celebration ceremonies to provide students with values.	112	14	12.5	61	54.5	12	10.7	23	20.5	2	1.8
26. I make use of movies and TV shows to provide students with values.	112	5	4.5	18	16.1	12	10.7	51	45.5	26	23.2
27. I try to set an example for students to teach values.	112	10	8.9	33	29.5	42	37.5	25	22.3	2	1.8

Table 8 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of participant opinions on statements related to preferred approaches to teaching values. Infusion was the most popular approach for values education, with over 60% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing with each of the five statements on activities performed using the infusion approach, and under 27% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with these statements. The data shown in Table 8 reveal that approaches such as explaining values, value analysis, and discussion about moral dilemmas were much less popular among the participants. None of the participants strongly agreed with the 16th and 20th items, on activities using the value explanation approach. Only 3.6% responded “Agree” to item 16, while about 80% responded to the item with “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” Those who answered the 20th item with “Agree” comprised 19.6% of the participants,



whereas about 40% responded with “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” The 17th and 19th items in Table 8 involve activities using the value analysis approach. About 80% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the 17th item, whereas only 12.5% agreed. About 65% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the 19th item, while about 45% agreed or strongly agreed. Over 70% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the 18th item, on discussions about moral dilemmas, while fewer than 20% agreed or strongly agreed. The statement in the 27th item, which emphasized the teacher as a role model in values education, may be considered relevant to all approaches. About 39% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while about 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 37.5% were neutral. The data in Table 8 also show that teachers did not make sufficient use of movies or TV shows to teach students values, with about 65% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the item on at this dimension, and only about 20% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

### **Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations**

The qualitative findings of the study showed that the participants’ thoughts on the objectives of values education mostly focused on teaching social values (F2, F4, M1, and M3). Two participants (F3 and F4) said that preventing moral decay was among the objectives of values education. The quantitative findings showed that approximately 65% of social studies teachers believed that an objective of values education was creating a national consciousness. Evaluating these findings together, we can conclude that the social studies teachers perceived values education to have an important mission in protecting the social structure. This result is consistent with the missions attributed to values education in the literature (Akbaş, 2004, Ekşi, 2003; Ekşi & Katılmış, 2016).

This study found that values education was given to provide students with basic humanitarian values. This objective was particularly emphasized in interviews with F1 and F2. The quantitative findings of the study support this conclusion as well. More than 70% of the social studies teachers agreed with the statements in the questionnaire items on providing basic humanitarian values. This is consistent with previous findings that students must be taught basic humanitarian values such as respect, responsibility, tolerance and justice (Acat & Arslan, 2012; Arslan & Tunç, 2013; Çelikkaya & Filoğlu, 2014; Gömleksiz, 2007; Haydon, 2007). On the other hand, only about 40% of the social studies teachers agreed with statements in questionnaire items on teaching universal values. The differing agreement rates between the statements mentioning universal values and universal values might be due to the association of universal values with Western governments, which impose their own cultural values using their economic and technological superiority (Şeyban, 2015). This association may have influenced the participants’ rate of agreement on the relevant item.

Some participants (M1, M2, and M4) believed that values education was given for ideological reasons. The quantitative findings of the study support this conclusion as well, showing that more than half of the participants believed that building a conservative social structure was among the objectives of values education. This result reflects previous criticism about values education in the literature (Kıroğlu, 2009). In addition, this result is quite important for the future of applications related to values education because the idea that values education may have ideological objectives may prevent teachers from prioritizing it or cause them to oppose it altogether. However, no references with ideological connotations appear in the programs or instructions of the Ministry of National Education concerning values education. According to these publications, the Ministry aims to provide students with basic humanitarian values and raise good people (MEB, 2009). Nevertheless, the perception among social studies teachers that values education has ideological motives must be taken into consideration. Given that teachers are important stakeholders in values education, this perception may cause great difficulties in the transmission of basic humanitarian values in schools. No matter how well-prepared a values education program is, if teachers do not give it the necessary attention, achieving the desired objectives will be difficult.

In summary, objectives that can impact activities related to values education both positively and negatively were found. Those that could positively affect values education include the provision of basic humanitarian values and creating a robust social foundation. Objectives involving ideological connotations, however, could negatively impact values education.

All of the participants who provided qualitative data stated that administrators, teachers, and parents supported values education. This finding was supported by the quantitative findings of the study. Despite this positive finding, values education was not found to be conducted efficiently in schools. Participants reported certain deficits in the actual practice of values education, largely because administrators and parents put more importance on academic achievement. This suggests that administrators, teachers, and parents did not fully believe that the achievement of affective objectives contributes to the achievement of academic objectives. This contrasts with previous findings in the literature on values education that affective objectives and academic objectives were considered mutually complementary in the values education literature, and students with basic humanitarian values such as respect and responsibility tended to have better academic achievement (Arthur, 2003; Ekşi, 2003). In addition, quasi-experimental studies on values education found a positive and significant relationship between increased value levels and academic achievement in students (Campbell & Zegwaard, 2011; Costanzo, 2005; Çokdolu, 2013; Davis, 2006; Dereli-İman, 2014; England, 2009; Grimbilas, 2009; Katılmış, Ekşi, & Öztürk, 2011; King 2009; Lovat & Hawkes, 2013; Singh, 2011).

In the interviews for qualitative data for the study, participants M1, M2, and M3 reported that some teachers were not willing to teach values education for ideological reasons. A similar situation was also found in results related to objectives of values education. Some teachers believed that values education was the responsibility of the family and thus should be left to parents. This belief may hinder the efficient teaching of values to the new generation, since efficient teaching of values in schools requires the collaboration of significant stakeholders, namely the family, the school, and the teacher (Ekşi & Katılmış, 2016).

We concluded from the interviews that no planned activities for values education were conducted in schools. Rather, values education in schools was left to the teacher's initiative. Value boards were prepared as values education activities, and values education was overshadowed by academic goals. These findings were supported by the quantitative data, which showed that about 70% of the social studies teachers reported that none of the necessary meetings were held to determine values education activities, and the values education activities actually practiced were insufficient. In addition, more than half of the social studies teachers believed that administrators failed to provide the necessary support to teachers for values teaching, and families did not pay the necessary attention to teaching values to their children. Moreover, approximately 40% of the participants felt that teachers failed to adequately fulfill their responsibilities. From these findings, we can conclude that no significant progress has been made in activities related to values education, despite it having been a topic of intense discussion and vigorous efforts in Turkey for almost 10 years.

One of the important problems in values education is how to teach values. We see in the literature that approaches such as infusion, value analysis, discussion of moral dilemmas, and value clarification have been employed in values education (Akbaş, 2004; Doğanay, 2009; Katılmış, 2010). The infusion approach was prominent in participant interviews on activities conducted to teach values. This approach may have been chosen because of the teachers' inadequate skills in applying other approaches, as noted by F2. In addition, the intensive use of the infusion approach by social studies teachers could negatively affect students' construction of their own values, since adults tend to use this approach to transfer their own values to the new generation as tested and accurate values (Edginton, 2002). Another finding was that the social studies teachers typically dispreferred value clarification, value analysis, and discussion of moral dilemmas. Based on these findings, we conclude that activities currently used in values education neither employ higher-order thinking skills nor contribute to students' constructing their own values or learning right from wrong by making inferences and finding solutions to value-related problems using their own reasoning skills. However, value analysis, value clarification, and discussion of moral dilemmas have been reported in the literature to improve these abilities (Edginton, 2002; Ekşi & Katılmış, 2016).

Regardless of the approach adopted for values education, teachers' attitudes and behaviors must be consistent with the values to be taught. In other words, teachers must be positive role models for students in the process of teaching values (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). However, out of the participants, only M1 mentioned trying to set an example for students to teach values. Only about 39% of social studies teachers stated that they tried to set an example to teach values, and none of the participants mentioned using movies and TV shows to teach values during their interviews. The quantitative data showed that only 20% of the social studies teachers used these materials.

We can thus conclude that values education was carried out in a teacher-centered manner, mostly using the infusion approach. Given that studies have shown that such applications fail to provide the desired outcomes in values education (Welton & Mallan, 1999), we can conclude that this situation could negatively impact the efficient delivery of values education.

We believe that it is important to investigate the reasons underlying teachers' preference for the infusion approach to teaching values. We found a negative perception among some teachers about the possible ideological motives behind values education. This could negatively affect the achievement of the desired objectives of values education. Thus, the necessary intellectual support must be provided for teachers, who must be convinced that the main purpose of values education is teaching basic humanitarian values. This strategy could turn the negative perception of the ideological motives of values education among teachers into a positive one. We also conclude that it is important to develop school-based character/values education programs, since we found that values education activities were not provided in all schools. With the development of such programs, this negative situation may be corrected.

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