Examining the views of university students on values

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ABSTRACT

Values are the standards that direct our beliefs and behaviors regarding the forms of proper behavior or the purposes of life. The purpose of this research is to examine the views and opinions of university students studying in various departments on values. 411 students studying at various departments of Gümüşhane University in the academic year of 2020-2021 constitute the study group. In the research, the Personal Details Form prepared by the researcher and interview questions about values were used as data collection tools. The descriptive analysis method was used in the data analysis. Based on the results of the study, university students understand values as love-respect, customs, family, respect, love, traditions, culture, importance-worth, religious values, national values, moral-ethics, rule, integrity-honesty, unity-cooperation, patriotism, economy, tolerance, cleanliness, friendship, help, self-control, responsibility, law-justice, solidarity, and freedom. Students consider respect, love and integrity, as the most important values for them, respectively. In addition to the foregoing, all university students stated that they attach importance to values, and the vast majority of them stated that they live consistently with values.

Keywords: Value, university, student.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of value, which was first introduced to social sciences by Znaniecki, is derived from the Latin word root of "valere" and means "to be valuable" or "to be strong" (Izgar, 2013: 14). Value is also defined as the entire belief system that distinguishes people from other living things, covering characteristics that make human beings human and shape the behavior of human beings (Ulusoy and Dilmaç, 2012: 16). According to Aydın (2003: 4), values are phenomena that can be taught and learned. Value can also be defined as "the sum of material and spiritual elements that cover the social, cultural, economic and scientific values of a nation" (TDK - Turkish Language Association, 2014).

Values guide the individuals who create the society about what is important and what should be preferred (Okudan, 2010: 20). It would be fair to say that values are the factors that keep society and individuals strong (Özdaş, 2013). Values differ as moral, religious, social, economic, scientific, artistic and political values (Hökelekli, 2011: 285).

Values determine the behaviors and conduct of individuals and people act in line with the values they have (Cüceloğlu, 2010). Behaviors and conduct of individuals are directly or indirectly guided by values (Özgüven, 1994). Values and beliefs guide people in understanding and interpreting life and shaping their behaviors. In other words, people develop a perspective on life and events with the help of values (Akıncı, 2005; Aksu, 2008). One of the main purposes of researching values is to determine the value orientations of people and to reveal the interactions of these orientations with their attitudes, conduct, social experiences and roles (Mehmedoğlu, 2006).

Values are the source of the inner strength that allows us to acquire our human qualities, helping us to resist the difficulties and obstacles we face in life. Therefore, our education system aims to add value to each individual within the education system (MoNE, 2018). Values are structures that can change and vary based on time and need. Values can also change based the society and

culture (Yazıcı, 2006). The importance attached to the same value by different nations and the care given in that regard is different (Yiğit and Tarman, 2013).

Values have an important impact on young people's identity and personality formation, their understanding of their existence, their perspective to the world, their approach to problems and solutions, and young people also have an important role in the perception of values and reshaping them in society (Aydın, 2003). Value education is becoming more important each passing day in parallel with the increase in suicide rates, substance and alcohol addiction, and crime and murder rates among young people (Tokdemir, 2007).

This study, which was conducted to examine university students' views on values, is very important in determining the perspective of young people on values. In addition to the foregoing, the change of values according to various variables was also examined. This study also provides an insight into what values young people will care about in the future.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this study is to examine the views and opinions of university students studying in various departments on values. For this purpose, answers to the following questions are sought:

1. What is the sense of the value of university students?
2. Do the values that university students attach most importance to vary based on various variables?
3. Do university students care about values?
4. Which values do university students attach most importance to?
5. Do university students live their lives consistent with the values they care about?

METHOD

This study was designed using a qualitative research design. Qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis are used in qualitative research, and the research is carried out by following a realistic and holistic qualitative process within the natural environment without any intervention to events and facts (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). This type of research aims to describe and explain past or present situations. The individual or object subject to the research is tried to be defined in its conditions and as it is, with no effort to change or affect them. These types of researches are conducted in a universe made up of many elements to reach a general judgment about the universe based on the entire universe or a group of samples to be taken from the universe (Karasar, 2002: 77-79). Therefore, the qualitative research method was used in

this research to examine university students' views on values.

Study group

The sample of the study was selected using the convenience sampling method. The convenience sampling method is a type of sampling where the sample is taken from a group of people easy to contact or to reach who are within the immediate environment (Ekiz, 2009). The study group of the research consists of 411 students studying in various departments at Gümüşhane University in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Data collection

In this study, the interview form designed by the researcher to examine the students' views on values was used as the data collection tool. In addition to this, a "Personal Details Form" prepared by the researcher was used to describe the students. The personal information form contains descriptive data such as the student's age, department and gender. Research data were collected using google forms.

Data analysis

This study, carried out in accordance with the descriptive scanning model, was analyzed with the descriptive analysis method by coding the data separately for each student. Descriptive statistics is a type of statistics that are used to describe the subject being researched and makes complex and scattered data understandable and systematic (Özgüven, 1994). Descriptive analysis is one of the qualitative data analysis types that includes summarizing and interpreting data obtained using various data collection techniques based on predetermined themes. The main purpose of this analysis type is to present the findings of a study to the reader in a summarized and interpreted form (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011).

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Descriptive features are provided in Table 1. When Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that 411 students participated in the study. 0.5% of the students are 18 and younger, 94.6% are between the ages of 18-25 and 4.9% are between the ages of 25-30. 85.4% of them are female students and 14.6% of them are male students. 39.4% of university students are studying in the child development program, 35% in the elderly care program, and 25.5% of them in the Faculty of Theology.

Table 1. Descriptive features.

Variables	Groups	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18 and younger	2	0.5
	18-25 years old	389	94.6
	25-30 years old	20	4.9
	Total	411	100
Gender	Female	351	85.4
	Male	60	14.6
	Total	411	100
Department	Child Development	162	39.4
	Elderly Care	144	35
	Theology	105	25.5
	Total	411	100

In Table 2, the frequency table regarding the question "What do you think when you hear the word value?" is presented.

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the university students think of the following when they hear the word "value": 12.6% love-respect, 10.7% customs, 8.5% family, 7.2% respect, 7% love, 6.8% traditions, 6.3% culture, 4.8% importance-worth, 4.1% religious values, 3.8% national values, 3.6% moral-ethics, 3.4% rule, 2.9% integrity-honesty, 2.6% unity-cooperation, 2.1% patriotism, 1.9% economy, 1.7% tolerance, 1.4%, cleanliness, 1.4% friendship, 1.4% help, 1.2% self-control, 1.2% responsibility, 1.2% law-justice, 0.9% solidarity, 0.4% freedom.

Table 3 presents the frequency table regarding the change of the most important value by gender. When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that three values that female university students attach most importance to respect with 49.2%, love with 13.6%, and integrity with 11.9%, respectively. Male students, on the other hand, attach importance to respect with 22.7%, integrity with 22.7% and love with 11.9%, respectively.

Table 4 presents the frequency table regarding the change of the most important value for students by age. When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the three values that the university students between the ages of 18-25 attach most importance to are respect with 45.2%, love with 14.6%, and integrity with 13.3%, respectively. Students between the ages of 25-30 attach importance to respect with 65% responsibility with 15% and justice with 10%.

Table 5 presents the frequency table regarding the change of the most important value for students by their department. When Table 5 is examined, the top three values that the students from the child development department give the most importance to are respect with 46.2%, love with 15.4%, and integrity with 11.7%, respectively. Students from the elderly care department

Table 2. Frequency table regarding the question "What do you think when you hear the word value?"

Values	Frequency	Percentage
Love - Respect	51	12.4
Customs	44	10.7
Family	35	8.5
Respect	30	7.2
Love	29	7
Traditions	28	6.8
Culture	26	6.3
Importance-Worth	20	4.8
Religious Values	17	4.1
National Values	16	3.8
Moral-Ethics	15	3.6
Rule	14	3.4
Integrity-Honesty	12	2.9
Unity-Cooperation	11	2.6
Patriotism	9	2.1
Economic	8	1.9
Tolerance	7	1.7
Cleanliness	6	1.4
Friendship	6	1.4
Help	6	1.4
Self-control	5	1.2
Responsibility	5	1.2
Law-Justice	5	1.2
Solidarity	4	0.9
Freedom	2	0.4

attach importance to the value of respect with 44.4%, integrity with 15.2% and love with 11.1%, respectively. The students from the Faculty of Theology attach importance to the values of respect with 47.6%, love with 16.1% and integrity with 11.1%, respectively.

Table 3. Frequency table regarding the change of the most important value for students by gender.

Values	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Respect		173	49.2
Love	Female	48	13.6
Integrity		42	11.9
Respect		10	22.7
Integrity	Male	10	22.7
Love		6	13.6

Table 4. Frequency table regarding the change of the most important value for students by age.

Values	Age	Frequency	Percentage
Respect		176	45.2
Love	18-25	57	14.6
Integrity		52	13.3
Respect		13	65
Responsibility	25-30	3	15
Justice		2	10

Table 5. Frequency table regarding the change of the most important value for students by their department.

Values	Department	Frequency	Percentage
Respect		75	46.2
Love	Child Development	25	15.4
Integrity		19	11.7
Respect		64	44.4
Integrity	Elderly Care	22	15.2
Love		16	11.1
Respect		50	47.6
Love	Theology	17	16.1
Integrity		12	11.4

Table 6 presents the frequency table for the question "What is the most important value for you?" When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the most important value for university students is distributed as follows: 46% respect, 14.1% love, 12.9% integrity, 9% justice, 5.4% patriotism, 4.4% responsibility, 3.9% friendship, 2.9% helpfulness, 1% patience, and 0.5% self-control.

Table 7 presents the frequency table regarding the question "Do you care about your values?" When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that 99.8% of university students care about their values, while only one student stated that he/she does care about values.

Table 8 presents the frequency table regarding the question "Do you live your life consistent with your values?" When Table 8 is examined, it is seen that 97.3% of university students stated that they live consistently

Table 6. Frequency table regarding the question "What is the most important value for you?"

Values	Frequency	Percentage
Respect	189	46
Love	58	14.1
Integrity	53	12.9
Justice	37	9
Patriotism	22	5.4
Responsibility	18	4.4
Friendship	16	3.9
Helpfulness	12	2.9
Patience	4	1
Self-control	2	0.5
Total	411	100.0

Table 7. Frequency table regarding the question "Do you care about your values?"

Caring	Frequency	Percentage
I care about my values	410	99.8
I do not care about my values	1	0.2
Total	411	100

Table 8. Frequency table regarding the question "Do you live your life consistent with your values?"

Consistency	Frequency	Percentage
I live my life consistent with my values	400	97.3
I do not live my life consistent with my values	11	2.7
Total	411	100

with their values, while 2.7% stated that they do not live consistently with their values.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

411 students studying in various departments of the university participated in this study, which was carried out to examine university students' views on values. University students thought about love-respect, customs, family, respect, love, traditions, culture, importance-worth, religious values, national values, moral-ethics, rule, integrity-honesty, unity-cooperation, patriotism, economy, tolerance, cleanliness, friendship, help, self-control, responsibility, law-justice, solidarity, freedom when they hear the term "values".

In this study, students expressed respect, love and integrity as the most important values for themselves. Young people between the ages of 25-30 stated that they prioritize values of respect, responsibility and justice. Students care about helpfulness, patience and self-control least. In research of TURKSTAT (2015), the values that are the source of happiness for individuals between the ages of 18-24 are seen as health, love, success, money, work and others with 0.8, respectively. In another study, young people placed the values of being knowledgeable, being honest, being moral, being just in the first place, and they placed the options of being loyal to religious values, being obedient, being rich, and having a reputation in the last places (MoNE, 2011). In Arslan's study carried out on parents (2021), it was seen that parents prioritize the values of justice, responsibility, love, integrity, and care about the values of friendship and cooperation least. In another study, it was seen that while parents teach values to their children, they give more priority to the values of love, integrity, respect and responsibility, respectively (Yıldız, 2019). These studies support this research. The most frequent values emphasized by preschool teacher candidates were respect, love, tolerance, friendship, cooperation, and

empathy (Çetingöz, 2015). Based on the research of Çengelci et al. (2013), the basic values that are tried to be taught in the school environment are love, respect, tolerance, solidarity and responsibility. As a result of another research, according to the arithmetic mean, cleanliness, self-respect, health, human rights, independence, being successful, being rich, being smart and being liberal constitute the top ten of values (Aydın, 2003).

It is observed that female students attach more importance to values of hedonism, self-orientation, universalism, optimism, tradition and reliability than male students, and male students attach more importance to values of power, achievement, stimulation and compliance than female students (Mehmedoğlu, 2006). In the study of Yılmaz (2013), it is seen that teacher candidates attach special importance to the values of family unity, responsibility and helpfulness.

In this study, while almost all university students care about values, the vast majority (97.3%) believe that they live consistently with their values. Surprisingly, young people who say that they attach such importance to values often present serious value issues. There is a general understanding among adults in our country that young people are losing their values and becoming corrupt. It is important to understand the value judgments of young people and to approach values from their point of view. Mixed method studies can be carried out to examine university students' views on values. In addition to this, studies to determine which values students care about or which values they feel lacking in themselves during the pandemic period can also be conducted.

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