

Hidden Curriculum on Gaining the Value of Respect for Human Dignity: A Qualitative Study in Two Elementary Schools in Adana

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the functions of hidden curriculum on respect for human dignity which is one of the basic democratic values in detail in two elementary schools with low and high quality school life in Adana-Turkey. In this case study, the data were gathered through observations and interviews from teachers and students. Content analysis was used to analyze the data which were gathered the schools for four months. As a result, although its intensity is different, the hidden curriculums in both schools have inappropriate features for democratic values. For most variables taken into consideration in the study, the hidden curriculum in the school with low quality life has more inappropriate features of respect for human dignity. And also, students in this school showed more frequent misbehaviors regarding respect for human dignity. Therefore it can be said that all sides of the hidden curriculum have mutual relations with each other, that students show parallel behaviors to the environment of the school and that the more students show misbehaviors, the more teachers show antidemocratic responses.

Key Words

Hidden Curriculum, Quality of School Life, Democratic Values, Respect for Human Dignity.

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The concept of hidden curriculum is defined as consciously and deliberately organizing school environment, life, programs, and policies in such a way that they carry out school's aims. It has become more popular after the Jackson's book, *Life in Classrooms* (1968). Hidden curriculum includes everything which is not academic but has important influences on the academic outcomes of the schools. It includes values, attitudes, beliefs, and communication styles of the individuals in the schools. Shortly it refers to the culture of the school. Hidden curriculum is considered as a curriculum which is outside of the official curriculum (Blumberg, & Blumberg, 1994; Eisner, 2003; Ginsburg, & Clift, 1990; Halstead, & Taylor, 2000; Horn, 2003; Mariani, 1999; Martinson, 2003; McGettrick, 1995; Meighan, 1981; Paykoc, 1995; Vallance, 1983; Wren, 1999). Most of the above cited studies indicate that school culture is an important factor in both effectiveness of the school in general and in gaining the process of the values.

Hidden curriculum includes all of the unrecognized and sometimes unintended knowledge, values, and beliefs that are part of the learning process in schools and classrooms (Horn, 2003). Lynch (1989) stated that there are two main approaches on hidden curriculum: The functionalist perspective and Neo-Marxist perspective. The functionalist educators (e.g., Dreeben, 1968; Jackson, 1968) view schools as vehicles through which students learn the social norms, values, and skills they require to function and contribute to the existing society (Skelton, 1997). According to both Jackson (1990) and Dreeben (1968), the social experiences of schools enable students to learn those norms and characteristics which are necessary for their adult life. On the other hand, educators who emphasize the Neo-Marxist perspective (e.g., Anyon, 1980; Apple, 1980, 1989, 1990, 2000, 2004, 2006; Bourdieu, & Passeron, 2000; Bowles, & Gintis, 1976; Giroux, 1983; Giroux, & Giroux, 2006; Giroux, & Simon, 1988; Martinson, 2003; McLaren, 2003) concentrate on the relationships between schooling and work through an exploration of the tacit norms of behavior in both settings. They examine that how the social relations of schooling reproduces the social, racial, and gender inequalities and the relationships between the schooling and the economy. The issue of hidden curriculum may be considered as a new subject in Turkish cultural and educational context. It has not been understood well enough, yet a promising one. But in spite of many curriculum development studies in Turkey, majority have focused on the official curriculum;

only a handful studies focused on hidden curriculum in schools (e.g., Demirel, 2006; Doganay, & Sari, 2004; Gündogdu, 2004; İnal, 2004, 2008; Tezcan, 2003, 2005; Tuncel, 2008; Veznedaroglu, 2007; Yüksel, 2002, 2004, 2005).

There are plenty of studies in the literature in which it was advocated that the values are inseparable parts of education (Burkimsher, 1993; Goodman, 1992; Johnson, 2006; McGettrick, 1995; Moroz, & Reynolds, 2001). Also, many studies emphasize the importance of the hidden curriculum of the school on the process of values (Carlin, 1996; Chi-Hou, 2004; Doganay, 1993; Ehman, 1980; Halstead, & Taylor, 2000; Joseph, & Efron, 2005; Meighan, 1981; Ryan, 1993; Schug, & Beery, 1987; Wren, 1999; Yüksel, 2005). Findings of most of these research show that schools teach only the knowledge of democracy rather than the democratic values, attitudes, and behaviors. Especially, teaching the basic democratic values is one of the primary aims of educational systems in democratic societies. Because, as Medvielle (1992) said, the health of democracy is depended on how much the individuals who form the society have its values. Due to the limits of this study, because of the aim to obtain deeper and more detailed data, only the value of respect for human dignity which was listed between democratic values in the literature (Kinnier, Kernes, & Dautheribes, 2000; National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 1984) was preferred to investigate rather than all of the democratic values.

Dignity can be defined as self-respect or self-esteem which is based on being respected by others, pride, and honor (Turkish Language Foundation, 1998). In the decision of Constitutional Court of Republic of Turkey, published in 27 December 1965, it is stated that human value derived from simply because being human is valued and respected by both others and the society under any circumstances. The value of respect for human dignity has a basic status for the values such as tolerance, diversity, superiority of the law, freedom, independence, self respect, secrecy, honesty, and justice. Kaboglu (2002, p. 13) states that freedom, equality, and human dignity are founding concepts of democracy. According to him, the equation of freedom and equality can be formed only through human dignity. Human dignity is the basis of freedom and a measure of equality. According to Harcum and Rosen (1992), dignity is a property of persons' worth and esteem. For Kucuradi (1996), human being has a special and valuable place among the other living creatures because

of his features. Dignity can be defined as a perception of respect and competence that allows a person to feel valued, to be authentic, to grow and learn, and to value and care about others (Hill, & Tollerud, 1996). According to Mercier (1996), humiliation is detrimental for human being. Thus, teachers should not humiliate their students and the environment of the classroom should be a healthy atmosphere for the students. Ada (2002) emphasized that the relationships which is based on respect for other is the precondition of a healthy psychological environment. Humiliating students, not valuing their ideas or punishment should not be given place in this kind of an environment.

Schools have a responsibility for bringing up good citizens in direction of society's desires. They can hardly manage these responsibilities only through course contents which are placed into overt curriculum. These contents which aimed to teach through overt curriculum cannot go further on transmitting knowledge. This point is especially important for gaining democratic attitudes and values which must be lived rather than taught. For this reason, a hidden curriculum of the school should be created in which democratic values can be lived and, this hidden curriculum should support to adopt the democratic knowledge, skills, and values. It can be said that regulations done by this direction promote increasing the quality of school life and, increasing students' feelings. Therefore, in one hand they grove up as citizens with good character and on the other hand, they learn the necessary knowledge and skills which are required for their real life situations.

Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the functions of hidden curriculum on respect for human dignity which is one of the basic democratic values in detail in two elementary schools with low and high quality school life.

Method

Participants

The sample was drawn in two phases: In the first phase, all teachers who were working in the schools with low, middle, and high socio-economic status were selected by clustered sampling. All participants were voluntary. In addition, students from 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades in the

schools were also selected randomly. The Quality of School Life Scale (QSLs) was administered to the student sample in the study. For this sample, data were collected from 2254 students and 428 teachers from 17 elementary schools. Through the analysis of the data, two schools with low and high quality were selected according to the scores on the scale. In the second phase, through the administration of the Devotion to Democratic Values Scale from 595 fifth grade students, one fifth grade classroom from each of these schools were selected for the observations and interviews. At the end of the observations, 10 teachers and 16 students from each schools were interviewed.

Measures

In this qualitative case study research (Bloor, 2006; Chima, 2005; Merriam, 1988; Yıldırım, & Şimşek, 2005) the basic data gathered through unconstrained observations and interviews. Observation is a method which is used to describe in detail the behaviors at an environment or institution. Marshall and Rossman (1995, p. 80) state that observation is the basic method to bring to light the complex patterns in a natural social setting among all qualitative investigations. Also, interviews are frequently used as a data collection method to gather data in detail (Kaptan, 1991, p. 149; Kerlinger, & Lee, 2000; Kus, 2003; Serper, & Gürsakar, 1989, p. 150). According to Holliday (1994, p. 40), the features under the surface can be best described through qualitative methods. However quantitative methods were also used in this study. Data were collected through the Quality of School Life Scale (QSLs), Devotion to Democratic Values Scale (DDVS), Interview Schedules, Personal Information Form, and unconstrained observations.

The Quality of School Life Scale (QSLs) was developed by Sarı (2007) to measure the level of quality of school life and consists of 50 items. The QSLs is a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale consists of six sub-scales (Administrator, Teachers, Affects towards school, Student-student relationships, Status and Curriculum). These six dimensions explain 53.21% of the total variance. The Cronbach alpha coefficients of internal consistency of these sub-scales were calculated as .93 for "Administrator" sub-scale, .90 for "Teachers" and "Affects toward school" sub-scales, .80 for "Student-student relationship" sub-scale; .74 for "Status" sub-scale and .52

for "Curriculum" sub-scale. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of internal consistency of the total scale scores was .94.

The Devotion to Democratic Values Scale (Doganay, & Sari, 2004) targets 8th grade students and consists of 25 items. Validity and reliability of the scale were studied by its developers and results showed that the positive and negative items came together in two separate dimensions. Cronbach alpha coefficient of internal consistency of these dimensions were calculated as .82 and .79, and for the total scale score was .84. However, it was thought that the positive and negative items under the sub-scales measure the level of devotion to democratic values as a whole and the data can be presented in a more understandable way. The negative items were reversed and the evaluations were done through total scores. In this study, the scale was adopted for 5th grade students. The results of validity and reliability analysis for the present study show that the same factor construction was repeated and 33.93% of the total variance was explained. Cronbach alpha coefficient of internal consistency of the total scale scores was .85.

The basic data of this study gathered through unconstrained observations done both inside and outside of the classroom for four months. Within the scope of the study, 52 inside and 46 outside observations were done. Other main sources for data were interviews with teachers and students. In the interviews, teachers and students are asked to share their views about the characteristics of the hidden curriculum of their schools and they were asked to evaluate the function of the hidden curriculum on the process of respect for human dignity through some questions related to teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships, determination and applying process of the rules, quality of the administration, school-wide social activities, etc. Prepared parallel to each other, semi-structured interview schedules were used in both teachers and students interviews.

Procedure

In the analysis of the data which were obtained through observations and interviews content analysis techniques were used (Creswell, 2003; Walliman, 2006). First, observations, notes, and teachers' responses to the questions were transferred to a word processing program. Next, the data text was read several times by the researcher and the notes for pos-

sible codes were taken. Concepts were formed by the codes used, related literature, research questions, and the data obtained from answers. After coding, formed codes were investigated and common themes were determined. Themes formed the main lines of the findings were formulated.

The validity and reliability of the study was strengthened through some precautions such as lengthening the process of the data collection by long-term observations, triangulation, peer examination, inter-rater reliability, explaining the investigator's position clearly, providing a rich, and thick descriptions of the data etc. (Cohen, & Manion, 1994; Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Kerlinger, & Lee, 2000; Merriam, 1988; Yıldırım, & Şimşek, 2005).

Results and Discussion

Results of inside observations show that the teachers in the school with low quality of school life (QSL) showed 119 behaviors which incompatible with human dignity while the teacher in the other school showed 25 incompatible behaviors. In terms of students' views, the teacher in the school with low QSL showed behaviors which violated the value of respect for human dignity, such as humiliation, shouting, threatening, physical violence, exhibiting in front of others, etc. more frequently than the other teacher who was working at the school with high QSL. In the interviews, this teacher herself stated that she sometimes has to resort to violence against students. Humiliation can be defined as a treatment which makes the individual ashamed in front of others. According to Reyles (2007), humiliation is related to situations and emotions which hurt one's pride and honor and is related to unequal power relationships.

According to Mercier (1996), humiliation makes inroads on humanity of the person. As Hill and Tollerud (1996) emphasized, children who experienced humiliating feedbacks at school or home cannot realize their own worth and their experiences don't support their dignity. Therefore, it can be said that the teacher in the school with low QSL harmed the humanity of the students in many aspects. Harcum and Rosen (1992) define human dignity as a characteristic of an honorable individual who is clearly appreciated and valued by others. Human dignity which has a big importance in interpersonal relationships and

is an important determinant of the person's character is a value which is expected to bring all individuals in the educational systems. In this sense, it is important for children to feel themselves worthwhile. It is difficult to form an honorable generation which has self-respect and respect for others by individuals growth without feeling their worth in an environment in such they are usually being punished, they can't explain their feelings and ideas and, they are often humiliated in front of others. As Williams (1993) stated, "*actions speak louder than words*". Williams's findings indicate that respect is taught best through a hidden curriculum of modeling and quality teaching that create a positive moral climate. According to students' views, teachers whose actions and words were inconsistent were blind to the ways their behaviors affect student's learning and behaviors (Williams, 1993).

On the other hand, students in the school which with low QSL showed 134 behaviors which violated the value of respect for human dignity while the students in the other school showed 71 violated behaviors. Most students in the school with low QSL were the children of families who migrated from Southeastern region of the country and have low incomes. Also, most of them were bilingual, speaking Turkish and Kurdish. Results of this study also show that these students used inappropriate language more frequently. It may be thought that this is the result of re-socialization process of becoming townsman. Tezcan (1997) states that these ethnic groups which are outsider of the sovereign culture evaluate their selves "with obstacles" and have more aggressive behaviors in the educational system which is inspected by the values of sovereign culture and so, create unequal opportunities for its "outsider" members. Also, according to many educators (Bourdieu, & Passeron, 2000; Connell, 1993; Macedo, 1994; McLaren, 2003), while schools generally value and reward students who exhibit the dominant cultural capital which is also usually exhibited by the teacher, the students who have different cultural capital have plenty of disadvantages in the school. Thus, it can be said that the features of the cultural capital may be one of the reasons of the failure of those disadvantaged students. So, the issue of the influences of the cultural and economic capitals on students' achievement is worth to be investigated in Turkish educational system.

According to teachers' views, administrators in both two schools have antidemocratic sense of rule and, show behaviors which violate the value of equality and respect for human dignity for teachers and students

in their schools. Whereas Balay (2000) indicated that the factor which differentiates the good school and the bad school is related to culture and environment qualities of the organization rather than its structure. Research related to school administration indicates that the administrator's quality is an important determinant of school climate (Halawah, 2005; Loertscher, 2006; Quantz, Rogers & Dantley, 1992). However, in spite of the similarities of administrators' behaviors, in the school with low QSL, students' behaviors which violated the value of respect for human dignity were more frequently occurred. Thus, it will be thought that the teacher has more critical role in shaping the hidden curriculum of the school. Also, many educators emphasize the importance of the quality of the relationships between students and teachers (Delfabbro et al., 2006; Johnson, & Selkirk, 1998).

Results on classroom rules determination process show that teacher whose classroom was observed in the school with high QSL preferred participatory rule determination process more than the teacher who was in the school with low QSL. Researchers indicate that students' acceptance and carry out the rules is only possible by collaborative rule-making process (Billings, 1990; Kazu, 2002; Schimmel, 1997; Shore, 1998; Smith, & Sandhu, 2004; Triandis, 1994). According to most of these researchers, rule determination process is an important part of citizenship education. McLaren (2003, p. 254) states that viewing schools as democratic public spheres means regarding schools as sites dedicated to forms of self and social empowerment, where students have the opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to live in an authentic democracy.

The other result of the study is that in the school with low QSL social activities or ceremonies except for determined days and weeks were rarely arranged. According to Wynne (1991), ceremonies can be important because they "teach" and, they encourage participants to adopt new values, or to practice current values with greater rigor. McCabe and Trevino (2002) state that some schools in the United States use rituals and ceremonies to generate greater student commitment to their honor codes and, schools can use the rituals or ceremonies to develop their students' acquisition process of the values effectively. According to Mullis and Fincher (1996), ceremonies and rituals have an important role in character education and, the school wide activities were to highlight the creative, democratic, and supportive culture of the school

community. But unfortunately, it can be said that in the school with low QSL, ceremonies were not benefited enough to form a democratic school climate. On the contrary, even in the compulsory activities, an antidemocratic hidden curriculum was created.

In sum, observation and interview results show that the teacher whose classroom was observed in school with high QSL showed behaviors related to respect for human dignity more than the teacher who was at school with low QSL. It was also found that in the school with high QSL, students have the value of respect for human dignity at the upper level than those who were at the school with low QSL. In addition, in terms of teacher – students relationships, ruling process and sanctions of the rules, social activities in school, school-family relationships and characteristics of home environment, the hidden curriculum in the school with high QSL has more positive features than the hidden curriculum in the school with low QSL. However, the hidden curriculum in two schools are similar in some features such as school administrators who show antidemocratic behaviors both for teachers and students, teachers who show very few model behaviors about democratic values, preferring traditional sitting arrangement in rows in classrooms, not taking enough consideration, interest, desires, or capabilities of the students in giving tasks and responsibilities and, in insufficient physical conditions of the schools.

Turkish National Ministry of Education put into practice a new elementary school curriculum nationwide in the 2005-2006 academic year. In this new curriculum, the course of Human Rights and Citizenship was removed from curricula and since then, it has been applied as an interval discipline which related to all of other subject areas. Also, the project of “Democratic Education and School Council” has been applied since 2004 to help the gaining process of democratic values through creating school environments in which democracy is considered as a kind of life. Actually, it was clear that it was not possible to create the good citizen with only one course in which the knowledge of democracy is mostly taken place. However, the number of objectives related to democracy is still insufficient in the new elementary school curriculum. Also, it is not sufficiently emphasized that democratic school culture should be formed to guarantee that these objectives are learned at upper levels of the affective domain. In the process of the values, attitudes and skills the hidden curriculum is important as the official curriculum of the school.

For example, Doganay and Sari (2004) found that the rate of school related factors' role on gaining process of democratic values was 53% and, this rate was equally divided into two curriculum; 27% of these factors were related to official curriculum and 26% of them related to hidden curriculum of the school. As Eisner (1998, p. 174) stated, the reforms about schools should comprise all sides of the system. Thus it can be said that the Turkish educational system need more regulations not only on the official curriculum but also on the hidden curriculum of the schools.

As a result, although its intensity is different, the hidden curriculums in both schools have inappropriate features for respect to human dignity. In terms of most of the variables taken into consideration in the study, the hidden curriculum in the school with low QSL has more antidemocratic features. And also, students in this school showed antidemocratic behaviors more frequently. These results show that the hidden curriculum of the school have important functions on students' gaining of basic democratic values.

In the direction of these results, it is suggested that administrators and teachers may be trained through in-service courses in terms of basic democratic values to create a school culture on the base of respect for human dignity. It is also suggested that authorities of the National Ministry of Education do regulations to cover not only the overt curriculum but also the hidden curriculum in schools and provide real equal opportunities in physical and foundational facilities among schools.

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