

Values in the Curricula of Religious Education and Social Studies in Primary Schools in the Context of Local–Universal Dilemma*

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the approach of teaching curricula of primary courses of religious education and social studies values and to determine the weight of values found in these programs with regard to various aspects such as being open to novelty-conservatism, individualism-being social, nationalism-universalism, self-expansion-self transcendentalism. To do this, the general approach of these curricula to values has been identified based on the relevant literature and programs, values categories have been established based on Schwartz's values theory and the programs have been scanned with categorical contents analysis technique. The reason why Schwartz's values theory was taken as the basis of category formation is that this theory offers many resources to analyze the relationships between local and global values that are known to have taken place in recent years in our education. As a result, both of the curricula were found to indicate a tendency from local values towards universal values with the changes made in recent years, and social studies were found to be ahead of religious education in terms of reflecting these tendencies in the content of the program.

Key Words

Local-Universal Values in Education, Religious Education, Social Studies Programs, Schwartz's Values Theory.

In order to set up a healthy future and for individual and society's happiness, the values that the individual has and the content of the values education that the individual has been subject to since childhood are very important. As a result of the appreciation of values in individual and society's life, The Ministry of Education has given a place to values education openly and systematically since 2003 (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı

(MEB), 2010a). In the 18th National Educational Council, various suggestions were offered as to what can be done regarding values on school basis and on a more general framework (MEB, 2010c).

This study aims to identify the approach of teaching curricula of primary religious education and social studies to values and to determine the weight of values found in these programs with regard to various aspects such as being open to novelty-conservatism, individualism - being social, nationalism-universalism, self-expansion-self transcendentalism. Towards this end, values categories, formed based on Schwartz's (1992) values theory, were used. The reason why we used Schwartz's scale is that national-universal values that came out with the improvements in values field as a result of the effects of globalization in our education and society-oriented-individual-oriented values perceptions overlap to great extent with Schwartz's values categorization of being open to novelty-conservatism, individualism-being social self-expansion-self transcendentalism. Analysis of the programs based on

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Schwartz's theory will enable us to determine how should the arguments that have been experienced in our education with globalization such as "What values should be taught?" be reflected on programs.

Values in Primary Curricula for Religious Education and Social Studies

With globalization value relations in the modern society gain some new dimensions (Doğan, 2007). Education too gets its share from this situation with great intensity and education system in our country, like in many places in the world, becomes the focus of globalization-locality arguments (Arslan, 2007). Considering globalization and its effects on values, what kind of a values education should be given? How is it going to be possible to establish a balanced values education without sacrificing the society for the individual, or without sacrificing the individual for the society? The problems that emerged as a result of the inability to find a balance between the individual's freedom and the society have been criticized harshly in recent years (Lickona, 1991). The approach that has been suggested to provide this balance is the approach that argues for the need to combine global and local values in conformity (Keskin, 2008).

Social Studies lesson's program, which provides students with necessary knowledge, skills, manners and values in order to raise good and responsible citizens (Erden, nd., p. 8), has adopted a mixed approach in values education and strongly emphasized universal values (Ertürk, 2006, Keskin 2008; MEB, 2004a, 2004b, 2010d). Similarly, Primary Religious Education Program, which was published in 2006, gives modern and traditional values together as different from the previous program (Kaymakcan, 2007a; MEB, 20010b). This situation indicates that the curricula of social studies and religious education are trying to establish a balance between local values and universal values as an inevitable outcome of globalizing world.

Schwartz and Values¹

Schwartz has reached motivational value types such as self-direction, arousal, hedonism, success, power, security, harmony, tradition, spirituality, benevolence, and universality based on the fact that individuals and societies, as members of human-

ity, have three universal needs; satisfying biological needs, establishing inter-personal relations, and the interest of the society that the individual feels himself/herself belong to. Each of the motivational value types is related to one or more of the need areas. For example, "harmony" value is related to regular social engagements, society welfare and satisfying needs, and the security value is closely related to biological needs and also to satisfying societal needs.

Schwartz identified various value statements that measure value types and also determined various harmonies and conflicts between values types based on the research he carried out to encompass different cultures across the world. Same harmony and closeness relations that were identified as a result of bilateral analysis between value groups are as follows:

- a) Caring for other people's development and going beyond personal interests, helpfulness and universalism value types,
- b) Regarding the motivation for superiority and novelty, self-direction and arousal type,
- c) Regarding self-control and submission, traditional and harmony type,
- d) Regarding keeping order and harmony in relations, harmony and security types,
- e) Regarding societal superiority and respect, power and success value types,
- f) Regarding egoism and self interest, satisfaction and success value types

The data obtained point to value groups that have dual-reciprocate conflict relationship that comes from combinations of various types. These value groups are cited as "being open to novelty and conservatism" and "self-transcendentalist and self-expansion". The open-to-change group includes self-direction and arousal types, and the opposite types to these, tradition, harmony and security value types form the conservatism value group. Self-expansion value group include power, success and satisfaction types, universalism, helpfulness and spirituality value types form the self-transcendentalism group.

Schwartz also points out that it is possible to categorize value types as individualistic value types and societal value types. Power, success, satisfaction, arousal, and self-direction values form a separate group that is oriented towards personal interests. The common feature of these types is that personal interests come before societal interests. On the contrary, tradition and harmony values form an opposite group of collective values.

1 In the preparation of this section of the article we used the following writing of S. H. Schwartz: Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 25 (pp.1-65). New York: Academic Press.

Method

Our study is a descriptive research that was carried out using the screening model with qualitative data gathering techniques. In the study, the program contents of lessons for religious education and social studies in primary school (4-5, 6-7 and 8th grades) were analyzed using categorical analysis technique (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001).

For categorization, 12 value type and 64 value statements were identified adding nationalism value type to 11 value types and 56 value statements in Schwartz's theory. In identifying value statements to be used in the study, we made use of Özensel (2004) and, B. Duriez, Jhonny. R. J. Fontaine and P. Ruyten's (2003) studies. Based on locality, we added refraining from sins and goodwill value statements to spirituality value type. In identifying the sub-values of nationality, we made use of the statements related to nationalism Ertürk's (2006) study.

With content analysis we aimed to identify the weight of conservative-innovative, self-transcendentalist-self-expansionist, nationalism-universalism, and societal-individualistic categories in social studies and RCME (DKAB) programs. Sub goals of our study are as follows:

- a) Which value statements have more place in the curricula of Social Studies and Religious Education?
- b) What is the relative weight of value types in the programs?
- c) Self-expansion or self-transcendentalist values has more place in the programs?
- d) Conservativist-orientation or open to novelty value has more place in the programs?
- e) Universalist or nationalist values has more place in the programs?
- f) Societal or individualistic values has more place in the programs?
- g) In terms the emphasis given to certain values, is there a significant difference between Social Studies and Religious Education?

Analysis of Findings

These findings have been reached as a result of categorical content analysis. In social studies, "being responsible", "freedom", "choosing one's own goals", "Turkish Nation" and "protecting the environment" value statements are given the most place. In religious education, "being helpful", "mature love",

"cleanliness", "being responsible" and "Turkish Nation" value statements are given the most place.

In terms of value types Social Studies most give place to self-direction value type that aims an individual's freedom, creativity and inquiry in his/her thoughts, behaviors and choices. RCME (DKAB) program on the other hand, mostly gives place to "helpfulness" value type that aims to focus on other people's good. The value types that have the least place in the programs are "power", "satisfaction" and "spirituality". The self-transcendentalist value group, that states that an individual transcends himself/herself and values the society, and even more, transcends the his/her own society and values the good of all humans, has more place in social studies (478/66) and religious education programs (395/8) compared to self-expansion value group that orients to personal success and power.

It is stated that being-open-novelty value group is placed more in social studies (337/126) and spirituality value group is placed more in the curriculum of religious education (137/75). In social studies, individualistic values are placed more (388), and societal values are given a roughly close place, however, in religious education program it was observed that the balance in favor of societal good (305/79) is disrupted. While social studies give more place to universalist value type, it establishes a balance with nationalist value type (275/238). Religious education program also establishes a same balance, however, nationalist value type finds more place than universality value type.

Discussion

As a result, the literature review and content analysis of the curricula of Social Studies and Religious Education indicate that there has been a tendency from traditional values towards universal values with the changes made in recent years, and it can be said that social studies is ahead of religious education program in terms of reflecting these changing tendencies in its content the findings are also supported by other previous studies (Ertürk, 2006; Kaymakcan, 2007a; Keskin 2008). In line with the changes seen in the programs, how two different, and sometimes conflicting value systems will work in practice and how a mixed approach will be applied without causing dilemmas have some questions. Actually, some studies (Yiğittir, 2010) showed that parents prefer national, traditional and moral values more compared to democratic and environmental values; and that students approve both

traditional and modern religious education in the manner (Kaymakcan, 2007b).

The fact that Social Studies and Religious Education lessons show differences regarding value groups such as conservatism- being open to novelty, individualism-being societal, nationalism-universalism is an issue which should be emphasized. In order for teacher to be able to handle local-universal dilemma, their awareness in values area should be raised and their pedagogic knowledge on values education should be increased, and at the same time it is recommended that qualitative and quantitative studies be conducted to find out how our findings can be applied in practice.

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