

# Identifying the Attitudes and Views of Social Sciences Teachers Toward Values Education in Turkey

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## Abstract

Values are the foundation of culture. The aim of values education is to help learners improve their social tendencies by adopting social and universal values, support character development, raise good citizens, and enhance academic efforts and achievement. In Turkey, values education is offered in the teaching-learning process of all courses through formal curricula in primary and secondary schools. However, it is “social sciences” course that directly relates to values education and intends to teach at least one value in every chapter. This study aimed at identifying social sciences teachers' attitudes toward values education, analyse difference in attitudes based on diverse variables and examine teacher views on values education practices in social sciences course. It is a mixed method study that was conducted using triangulation method. The study group comprised 135 social sciences teachers who participated in the study on quantitative level and 45 social sciences teachers on qualitative level. Results of the study indicated that the teachers held positive and high attitudes toward values education, there was no significant variation in attitudes toward values education based on gender, but attitudes differed based on professional experience while the teachers held positive views concerning values education practices implemented in social sciences class, considering them important. They stated that “being responsible” is the least adopted value among students.

**Keywords:** values, values education, social sciences teachers

## 1. Introduction

As a social being, humans embrace the culture of the society they live in as well as values, attitudes, beliefs and ideas arising in that culture, and guide their behaviours accordingly. Education institutions create safe, orderly and effective learning environments to ensure that learners adopt the cultural values of society according to a specified plan and program, and become individuals conforming to society. There are many definitions as to what is a value. Rokeach describes that “a value is an enduring belief of that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (Rokeach, 1973, s.5). According to Schwartz (1992), value is “a state of affairs having a unifying impact on society or individuals.” On the other hand, Halstead (2005) describes values as “principles and beliefs guiding behaviour and standards that consider certain actions either good or bad”.

Values do not develop in humans automatically; rather they are taught and learned through education beginning at birth (Long, 1999). Berkowitz (2011) defines values education as an attempt to reinforce learners' academic interest and achievement, foster ethical and positive social tendencies and support character development. In recent years, there is an increased awareness of values education throughout the world. Values education is discussed in the West as well as Asia and Latin America under different terminological names like character education, morals education, personal and social education, citizenship education, civic education, religious education, morality, democracy education and pedagogical mission of education (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003). According to Ferreira and Schulze (2014), the reason for such increased awareness is to prevent today's youth –especially young people in countries that are developing economically, trying to improve its democracy and have scarce resources and high needs- from seeing their societies as communities that have too much cultural and religious diversity, with an increase in disorderly families, unemployment and vital risks, and undergoing radical changes. One of the reasons for turning to values education is also to help individuals develop a character committed to their cultural values. Equipping

individuals with values can only be achieved through education. An individual who is given values education and thus, supported for character development will ensure that high values prevail in their family, society, government, work, etc., which will also strengthen social structure. Howard, Berkowitz and Schaeffer (2004) assert that educating students in line with values and ethical principles is an effective step to raise individuals with strong character.

Values education is first given in the family, the first school of children, by parents as their first teachers. Families not only guide their children in development process, but also become role models for them with their behaviours. Children always adopt the values and way of conduct they observe in their parents (Ceka & Murati, 2016). Parents should be aware of their strong impact on their children, and set a good example and guide in providing them with the values and behavioural patterns accepted in society. Given through informal education in the family, values education later continues at school as part of formal education. In school environment, values education is offered to learners under the guidance of teachers through formal programs “explicitly” and through non-formal programs “implicitly” (Thornberg, 2016). Formal programs involve teaching methods and techniques that can be used in values education such as direct instruction, moral reasoning, value analysis, values clarification, child philosophy, Socratic debate, story-based learning, biographical learning, value and development square, drama, peer learning activities and project-based learning as well as practical examples as to their implementation (Thornberg, 2016; Ćurko et al. 2015; Çelikkaya & Filoğlu, 2014; Özdaş, 2013). If values education is offered to learners in formal education institutions implicitly, important responsibilities and roles fall on teachers in this process. As professionals, teachers are expected to have high moral beliefs and self-reflection skill (Ülavere & Tammik, 2017). In addition, children do not acquire values only at home and school environment. Also, some religious organisations and mass media also have a strong impact on value formation. Negative impacts of such external sources may lead children adopt values that might be inappropriate and inconsistent with the values emphasized in school and society. When considered from this viewpoint, the greatest responsibility in organizing values education in a positive manner and teaching children national, moral and universal values lies with teachers (Lingam, 2004). In this case, which values should teachers introduce as part of values education?

Barragan (2008) states that content of values education varies across cultures; a culture determines certain superior values shared by each member, of it, which form the core of that culture, and behaviours of these members are assessed according to these core values. Similarly, Veugelers and Vedder (2003) maintain that values are not personal preferences based on taste, educators and politicians create lists of values which act as a moral agenda for teachers, these lists usually contain values like justice, solidarity, order, self-discipline, autonomy, empathy and critical thinking, and these piles of values embedded in curricula or the pedagogical mission of schools become prescriptions for teachers. In the process of explicit values education, formal programs indicate which values students will be taught. However, in the process of implicit values education, teachers will be their own guide. It is important that teachers internalise the aim and significance of values education in this process.

In Turkey, values education was provided implicitly as part of formal education until 2005, and then, it has been offered explicitly through official curricula since 2005. The First Class Circular numbered 53 and dated 2010 published by the Board of Education under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) expressly states that Turkish education system aims to raise individuals who are conscious of national, spiritual and universal cultural values, internalise these values and translate them into behaviour, and have a sense of duty to convey these values to future generations as well as ensuring and increasing learners' academic achievement (MONE, 2010). The fact that this circular was sent to all primary and secondary schools can be considered as major step for values education in Turkey. In this context, social sciences course offered as requisite in primary and secondary schools in Turkey is also important to equip learners with national, spiritual and universal values, and to implement values education. With its multi-disciplined and historical content, social sciences course explains different cultures and life stories of these cultures, mirror cultural accumulation, and hence, it is significant in terms of inculcating learners with good values (Kan, 2010). Social Sciences Curriculum (4-7 grades) developed by the MoNE in 2017 and implemented nationwide during the 2018-2019 academic year is based on values education. The “specific objectives” of the curriculum are to ensure that “learners are willing to cherish democratic, secular, national and contemporary values; embrace national, spiritual and universal values and recognise the significance and ways of becoming virtuous individuals.” The 2018 curriculum contains 18: justice, caring for the unity of the family, independence, peace, being scientific, diligence, solidarity, sensitivity, honesty, aesthetics, equality, freedom, respect, love, being responsible, thriftiness, patriotism and helpfulness (MONE, 2018). As the implementers of curriculum, social sciences teachers play a major role in equipping learners with these values and ensuring that the curricula achieve specific objectives.

Teachers are among the primary agents in realising educational objectives. Teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward teaching, learning and curricula, their preferred teaching methods and knowledge they acquire during

students' learning process have a strong impact on learners' academic achievement and the realization of the objectives of curricula (Brown, 2006). Thus, the views and attitudes held by social sciences teachers concerning values and values education are crucial. It is considered that teachers who have positive views and attitudes in this regard will execute values education in a more effective way. In this context, the aim of this study was to examine the attitudes and views of social sciences teachers toward values education in Turkey. To that end, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the attitude of teachers toward values education?
2. Does teachers' attitude toward values education differ across gender and professional experience?
3. What is teachers' perspective on values education offered as part of social sciences curriculum?

## 2. Method

This is a mixed method study that was conducted by using triangulation method. Quantitative analysis comprised 135 social sciences teachers who participated in the study voluntarily out of 145 teachers working at secondary schools in central Kars and its districts, Turkey. Of the teachers, 58.5% were female (n=79). As for professional experience, it was found that 43% (n=58) had professional experience of less than 10 years and 27% (n=36) 11-15 years while 30% (n=41) had been teaching for 16+ years. 52% (n=70) stated that they had not received in-service training on values education. On the other hand, qualitative analysis consisted of 45 teachers (n<sub>female</sub>=26, n<sub>male</sub>=19) who were working at the city (n=30) or district centre (n=15), with differing spans of professional experience (less than 10 years n=17, 11-15 years n=13, 16+ years n= 15) and participated in the interviews voluntarily after being selected among the teachers participating in the quantitative analysis by using maximum triangulation method.

### 2.1 Data Collection Tools

The attitudes of the teachers toward values education were collected through "Values Education Attitude Scale" developed by Yaşaroğlu (2014). It is a 5-point Likert type assessment tool consisting of 22 items on a single factor. The items explain 40.48% of total variance. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale is .92. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .91 in this study (Yaşaroğlu, 2014).

Qualitative data for the study was collected through a semi-structured interview form drafted by the researcher. 5 open-ended questions were prepared for that purpose. The questions were submitted to the analysis of experts researching on Social Sciences Education (n=3), Curricula and Teaching (n=1) with studies on values education. In addition, two social sciences teachers outside the study group were asked to read the questions and assess whether they were clear and comprehensible. As result of expert views and teacher assessments, one more question was added to the interview form, and after necessary revisions, the form was finalised. It included the following questions:

1. What is the aim of incorporating values education practices in social sciences class?
2. What is your view on the differences and similarities between the 2005 and 2018 social sciences curricula in terms of values education?
3. What do you think about the adequacy of the values learners are expected to acquire as part of values education in the 2018 social sciences curriculum?
4. What kind of teaching strategies, methods and techniques do you employ for values education in social sciences class?
5. What do you think about the level of adopting the values in the social sciences curriculum?
6. Which values in the social sciences curriculum are adopted most and least?

## 3. Results

Below Table 1 provides the results of the descriptive analysis of the teachers' scores on the Values Education Attitude Scale.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Analysis of the Values Education Attitude Scale Scores

| Scale                           | n   | Min. | Max. | $\bar{X}$ | ss  |
|---------------------------------|-----|------|------|-----------|-----|
| Values Education Attitude Scale | 135 | 94   | 110  | 4.65      | .20 |

According to Table 1, the participating social sciences teachers' average scores on the Values Education Attitude Scale were significantly high for "strongly agree" choice.

Table 2 shows the variation in the scores on the Values Education Attitude Scale based on gender.

**Table 2.** Analysis of the Values Education Attitude Scale Scores Based on Gender - Results of T Test

| Gender | n  | $\bar{X}$ | ss  | d   | t    | p   | Results of the Levene's test |     |
|--------|----|-----------|-----|-----|------|-----|------------------------------|-----|
|        |    |           |     |     |      |     | F                            | p   |
| Female | 79 | 4.67      | .21 | 133 | 1.52 | .13 | 1.30                         | .25 |
| Male   | 56 | 4.61      | .18 |     |      |     |                              |     |

Table 2 reveals that the teachers' scores on the scale did not differ significantly in relation to gender. This finding can be interpreted as that the female and male teachers attach equal importance to values education.

Below Table 3 provides the results of the Kruskal Wallis test demonstrating variation in teacher scores on the Values Education Attitude Scale based on professional experience.

**Table 3.** Values Education Attitude Scale Scores Based on Professional Experience

| Experience  | n  | Average Ranking | sd | $\chi^2$ | p   | Significant difference |
|-------------|----|-----------------|----|----------|-----|------------------------|
| 1-10 years  | 58 | 89.53           | 2  | 58.27    | .00 | 1-10 years/16+ years   |
| 11-15 years | 36 | 76.58           |    |          |     | 11-15 years/16+years   |
| 16+ years   | 41 | 30.00           |    |          |     |                        |

The analysis of Table 3 demonstrates that the participants' scores on the scale differed significantly based on professional experience ( $H=58.27$ ;  $sd=2$ ;  $p=.00$ ;  $p<.05$ ). In the Mann Whitney U test performed to find out at which levels such variation occurs, Bonferroni correction was applied to prevent type I error that might interfere with measuring. In the paired comparisons made according to professional experience, the level of significance was set at 0.016 (0.05/3). According to analysis results, it was found that the teachers with 16+ years of professional experience had lower attitudes toward values education compared to the teachers with 1-10 years of professional experience ( $U=198.00$ ,  $p=.00$ ;  $p<.016$ ) and those with 11-15 years of professional experience ( $U=171.00$ ,  $p=.00$ ;  $p<.016$ ).

Table 4 indicates the views on the question "What is the aim of incorporating values education practices in social sciences class?"

**Table 4.** Views on the Aim of Values Education in Social Sciences Class

| Themes                | Categories   | f  |
|-----------------------|--|----|
| Influence of family   | Meeting educational needs of learners who have received inadequate values education in the family                | 36 |
|                       | Meeting the need for values education in learners who have received inadequate religious education in the family | 2  |
| Influence of society  | Sustaining cultural values of society  | 19 |
| Impact of environment | Reducing the negative impacts of mass media  | 18 |
| Personal development  | Promoting character development  | 9  |
|                       | Increasing academic achievement  | 7  |
| Impact of curricula   | Ensuring that cultural values are taught in a planned and programmed manner                                      | 5  |

According to Table 4, 38 participants referred to the importance of family in values education. 36 of them said students usually do not receive adequate values education in the family and resulting education gap is closed with social sciences course as much as possible. One teacher (T3) remarked that "... Children are unable to receive adequate values education in family. Thus, this course aims to remedy such inadequacy. Social sciences course is a 'life' lesson, reflecting children's family life in the most comfortable way. Last year, one of my students said that '...but Sir/Madame, my mother recently told me not to tell my father that we went shopping, instead if he were to ask, I would tell him that we went to my aunt's, or he would get angry.' Such examples indicate that values education

*provided in the family is either inadequate or different from what is given at school..." Under the theme "influence of family", 2 teachers expressed that the reason for offering values education in this class is inadequate religious education in the family. The teachers added that inadequate religious education makes it difficult to teach certain values such as equality, respect and solidarity, social sciences course has a multi-disciplinary aspect also encompassing religious knowledge, and hence, the gap stemming from inadequate religious education can be filled in this class. T1 stated that *"the child is not taught Islam and its specifics in the family. Values education also relates to religious education. Unable to understand Islam, the child has difficulty in understanding and applying values like being responsible, honesty, solidarity, helpfulness and respect in life. In social sciences class, I teach these fundamental values by also associating them with Islam. ... As this course has many dimensions, it can fill the values gap created by religious inadequacies through education supported with religious knowledge."**

19 teachers who expressed views under the theme "influence of society" remarked that the content of social sciences course is directly related to social life, cultural values should be sustained for the continuance of society, and hence, values education is offered in this class. T26 stated that *"... what guarantees the survival of society is culture and values. The main goal of social sciences course is transferring our values from past to the present to students, and strengthening their commitment to social structure..."*

Regarding "impact of environment", 18 teachers told that we live in a digital age that children adopt certain negative behaviour patterns with the additional impact of mass media, and the scope of this course allows to discuss such behaviours and help students acquire more human values instead of such negative aspects. These views are as follows: *"...Mass media like TV, radio and internet play a substantial role in social life. These devices have the biggest impact on developing negative behaviours. This course enables students to discuss negative behaviours they have seen on TV and internet or behaviours maybe they have adopted..." (T44).*

According to Table 4, 9 teachers who opined under the theme "personal development" stated that the content of social sciences curriculum allows for the multidimensional development of students in cognitive, social, affective, kinetic, etc. areas, and values education provided within this class enables the total development of students, strengthens personality development and make them good citizens with strong character. One teacher said: *"... values education is essential to become a good person, a good citizen and a principled individual with strong character. Social sciences course aims to develop students in every respect including personality development. It is a right decision to focus on values education in this class..." (T10).* Under the same theme, 7 teachers indicated that values education will make it easier for students to fit into society, thus, they will become happier and this happiness will reflect into academic life, increasing their academic achievement in other disciplines and especially in this class. One of them remarked: *"Social sciences course is based on society. This class addresses social life with all its dimensions, and values have a central place in social life. In this class, children learn and apply socially accepted values to their life. Thus, they are not excluded and gain increased social acceptance. As children become pleased and happy, their happiness reaches its peak with academic achievement at school ..." (T33).*

5 social sciences teachers expressed their views under the theme "impact of curricula". They said values education is not only within the scope of social sciences course, but also given in secondary school curriculum with an interdisciplinary approach. The teachers claimed that when cultural values are transferred to learners within the framework of a plan and program, learning becomes more permanent, and hence, it is a correct approach and practice to incorporate values education into the official curricula of all courses. T22 said that *"I congratulate the MoNE on this. Values education is within the scope of every course. National, spiritual and universal values can be introduced to students in every course. It is good to formalize this education. We used to teach values in the past as well, but informally, not in a formal way. So it means that the outcome of informal learning was not sufficient. I hope that we will succeed if we do this in a planned manner."*

Table 5 presents the views concerning the question *"What is your view on the differences and similarities between the 2005 and 2018 social sciences curricula in terms of values education?"*

17 teachers answered this sub-question. 62% of the teachers interviewed (n=28) stated that they had not examined the Social Sciences Curriculum for Grades 4-7 that implemented throughout Turkey in the 2018-2019 academic year. It was found that 13 of the 17 teachers who said they examined the curriculum had 1-10 years of professional experience, most of them were female (n=10) and 13 were working at the city centre. 11 teachers who said they had examined the curriculum stated that the 2005 and 2018 curricula share similarities in relation to values education. T9 expressed that *"I have examined the new curriculum, and seen that no values was replaced."* 6 participants indicated that new values were incorporated into the 2018 curriculum - as distinct from the 2005 curriculum- while 1 teacher said some of the values in the 2005 curriculum were not included in the 2018 curriculum. The views are as follows:

"Yes, I looked through the program. Although I cannot remember their names, I know for sure that new values were added. (T6); "... I noticed differences. New values were added and some of the existing values were excluded. For example, tolerance, which I can say for sure. 2005 curriculum involved tolerance, but the new curriculum does not..." (T18).

**Table 5.** Views on the Differences and Similarities between the 2005 and 2018 Curricula in terms of Values Education

| Views  | f  |
|--|----|
| <b>Similarities</b>  |    |
| Both curricula aim at teaching the same values.  | 11 |
| <b>Differences</b>   |    |
| The 2018 curriculum contains certain values not included in the 2005 curriculum.                                 | 6  |
| Some of the values that the 2005 curriculum aimed at introducing were not incorporated into the 2018 curriculum. | 1  |

Table 6 shows the participants' views on the question "What do you think about the adequacy of the values learners are expected to acquire as part of values education in the 2018 social sciences curriculum?"

**Table 6.** Views on the Adequacy of the Values in the 2018 Curriculum

| Views                                 | f  | Causes   |
|---------------------------------------|----|--|
| The existing values are adequate.     | 19 | Values in the curriculum are fundamental human values. |
| The existing values are not adequate. | 26 | New values should be incorporated into the curriculum. |
|                                       |    | <b>Values</b>  |
|                                       |    | <b>f</b>   |
|                                       |    | <b>Values</b>  |
|                                       |    | <b>f</b>   |
|                                       |    | Empathy  |
|                                       |    | 10   |
|                                       |    | Fear of God  |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Self-confidence  |
|                                       |    | 6  |
|                                       |    | Humility   |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Tolerance  |
|                                       |    | 5  |
|                                       |    | Friendship   |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Conscience   |
|                                       |    | 5  |
|                                       |    | Kemalism   |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Morals   |
|                                       |    | 4  |
|                                       |    | Ethics   |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Critical thinking                                      |
|                                       |    | 3  |
|                                       |    | Trust  |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Compassion   |
|                                       |    | 3  |
|                                       |    | Self-sacrifice   |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Love of the flag                                       |
|                                       |    | 2  |
|                                       |    | Self-expression  |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Privacy  |
|                                       |    | 2  |
|                                       |    | Spirituality   |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Cleanliness  |
|                                       |    | 2  |
|                                       |    | Hospitality  |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Love of God  |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Thriftiness  |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Apologising  |
|                                       |    | 1  |
|                                       |    | Fidelity   |
|                                       |    | 1  |

Table 6 shows that 19 teachers participating in the study on qualitative level remarked that the values in the 2018 curriculum are among fundamental human values, and values education will achieve its aim when students acquire these values. T40 said that "I think teaching of these values is adequate. What really matters is to introduce these core human values. Having a tiny influence on children through these values is important for the next generation." However, the majority of them (n=26) indicated that 18 values incorporated into the 2018 social sciences curriculum are not adequate quantitatively, and diverse values should be included in the curriculum considering our time, individual developmental needs arising in this age and changes in the structure of Turkish society. In this context, one teacher (n=1) said that tolerance that was addressed in the 2005 curriculum, but not included in the 2018 curriculum should be added to the new curriculum. The analysis of Table 6 demonstrates that the teachers (f=10) mostly suggested that "empathy" is a value that should be interwoven into the curriculum (f=10). The views are as follows: "...empathy is a value that must be included in the curriculum. I think we are, as a nation, very poor at this skill ..." (T5); "In digital age, the value of privacy can be included in the curriculum regarding the privacy of individual life for students addicted to social media." (T24); "Students' self-confidence is very weak, they are incapable of expressing themselves even in one or two sentences. It would be better if self-confidence and self-expression were added to the curriculum." (T17).

Table 7 presents the views on the question "What kind of teaching strategies, methods and techniques do you employ for values education in social sciences class?"

**Table 7.** Teaching Strategies, Methods and Techniques Employed in Values Education

| Views   | f  |
|---|----|
| Case method   | 20 |
| Giving examples from daily life                                   | 17 |
| Drama   | 16 |
| Moral reasoning   | 13 |
| Setting a good example  | 11 |
| Preparing visual materials like brochures, photos and exhibitions | 8  |
| Getting students to read  | 5  |
| Giving advice   | 2  |

According to Table 7, teachers stated they usually use instruction methods-techniques like case method and drama, try to give examples by associating values with life and become role models through their behaviours. 13 teachers who expressed views on this sub-dimension said they occasionally use "moral reasoning" which is a special technique used in values education. 5 teachers indicated that they learned this technique in a training seminar on values education, 5 learned it in pre-service training and 3 teachers said they learned the technique by reading the 2005 social sciences curriculum. The views are as follows: *"The previous social sciences curriculum had a technique called "moral reasoning" used in values education. I occasionally employ this technique in my class. I find stories online or prepare myself, and based on these stories I help students' moral development and foster their reasoning and interpretation skills..."* (T4); *"I often use drama. For this, I assign a topic to students; they prepare for it and then, play it in the class. It is quite useful. Sometimes, I get them to read a text on a couple of values which is appropriate for their level. I give examples from daily life, and thus, students can understand the topic..."* (T40).

Table 8 shows the views on the question *"What do you think about the level of acquiring the values in the social sciences curriculum?"*

**Table 8.** Views on the Level of Acquiring Values

| Views                                | Causes   | f  |
|--------------------------------------|--|----|
| Values are acquired at a high level. | Impact of hidden curriculum on students            | 30 |
|                                      | Impact of applied and hidden curricula on students | 20 |
|                                      | Homogeneity of students' family history            | 11 |
|                                      | Developmental characteristics of students          | 5  |

An examination of Table 8 reveals that all the teachers interviewed (n=45) indicated that values incorporated into the social sciences curriculum are usually adopted by students. A striking finding in the Table is that most of the teachers expressing a view on the subject (n=30) underscored the impact of hidden curriculum on the teaching of values and showed many practices implemented in school atmosphere in line with the curriculum. 83% (n=25) of the teachers expressing such views had over 11 years of professional experience. Saying *"We constantly underscore these values and carry out activities (based on these values) at school. Even in break time. When we see a brawl between students, we instantly call and tell them show respect to each other. For example, we make them apologize. It is certainly not easy, but I am sure they will adopt and apply these values over time."*, T28 referred to the importance of hidden curriculum in values education. On the other hand, 20 teachers stated that social sciences curriculum and course books prepared according to the curriculum often lay emphasis on values, a wide range of practices are implemented in the class, and they also attach importance to implicit values education outside the class. The majority of the teachers who expressed their views in this regard (n=17) had 1-10 years of professional experience. T11 remarked that *"...We also see that every chapter in the curriculum intends to teach at least one value. The books are prepared accordingly. Since we teach values in every chapter, students learn these values. We also carry out many extracurricular activities both within and outside the class. There is no rule stating that everything must be according to the book. Sometimes an incident takes place in class or during break, and we can use this event to give values education..."* In addition, 11 teachers suggested that also students' family history is influential in adopting values. Mostly teachers working in the district (n=9) provided such views and stated that students' family history is homogenous, which makes the adoption of certain values easier. T20 remarked that *"... families' experiences in life are very similar. Students who have potential for adopting similar values in the family can acquire certain values easily even with a single activity. For example, independence and freedom. Great-grand fathers and great-grand*

mothers of most students here joined the Sarikamis Operation and died there. At their homes, themes of war, peace, freedom and independence are frequently addressed and the significance of independence is discussed. Therefore, a classroom activity or example suffices to teach such values." Moreover, 5 respondents set forth that students adopt the values in the curriculum because they are most open to learning now due to their age and developmental characteristics. T5 told that "... values are adopted, because the minds of student are wide-open at these ages. Whatever you tell them, they grasp it readily..."

Table 9 presents the views on the question "What do you think about the level of adopting the values in the social sciences curriculum?"

**Table 9:** Views on Most Adopted Values

| Grade | Values  | f  | Causes                                    | f  |
|-------|---|----|---|----|
| 5     | Attaching importance to the unity of the family | 34 | Students' age                             | 28 |
|       | Love  | 32 | Location of the school                    | 21 |
|       | Helpfulness                                     | 17 |   |    |
|       | Solidarity                                      | 16 |   |    |
| 6     | Patriotism                                      | 31 | Students' perception of abstract concepts | 29 |
|       | Freedom   | 28 |   |    |
|       | Solidarity                                      | 25 |   |    |
| 7     | Patriotism                                      | 31 | Course subject                            | 28 |
|       | Peace   | 27 | Teachers' hidden curricula                | 19 |
|       | Diligence                                       | 27 | Preparing for an upper grade              | 11 |
|       | Aesthetics                                      | 4  |   |    |

According to Table 9, the teachers reported that attaching importance to the unity of the family (f=34), love (f=32), helpfulness (f=17) and solidarity (f=16) are most adopted values among students as part of social sciences course in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. 28 teachers stated that 5<sup>th</sup> graders usually do not reach puberty at this age, and hence, they are very attached to their families and mostly find the love they need in their family, which is reflected in values education. T8 remarked that "In my opinion, most adopted values are 'attaching importance to the unity of the family' and 'love', because children are highly committed to their families as they are very young, and when they are loved by their families, it is much easier to adopt and apply these values in their life." In addition, teachers mostly working in the district centre reported that helpfulness (f=17) and solidarity (f=16) are usually embraced values in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The teachers added that rural families help each other more in case of need due to the lack of physical means and there is more solidarity in rural areas than in the cities. T19 said that "In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students mostly acquire the values of attaching importance to the unity of the family, love, helpfulness and solidarity... Families living in the district are more in need of each other's support. Since everyone knows each other, they can unite in good and bad times. The spirit of solidarity is more predominant in such communities. It also reflects to students..."

The participants reported that most adopted values among 6<sup>th</sup> graders are "patriotism", "solidarity" and "freedom" and explained the reason is that abstract concepts are understood by 6<sup>th</sup> graders more easily than 5<sup>th</sup> graders. One teacher said: "I think patriotism and solidarity are the two most adopted values in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Actually, these values are taught in 5<sup>th</sup> grade as well, but not reflected into behaviour. I observe that especially patriotism turns into behaviour more in 6<sup>th</sup> grade ..." (T36). The teachers claimed that "freedom, peace, diligence and aesthetics" are frequently adopted values in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. 28 teachers told that the main factor leading to the adoption of these values is the scope of social sciences course while 19 teachers expressed that hidden curricula are also a determining factor in acquiring these values. On the other hand, 11 respondents explained that the reason for adopting diligence as a value is that students have a clearer idea about their professional choices and central exams they will take next year. Some views are as follows: "...I suppose I also play a role here. As an individual who is devoted to his country and freedom, I consistently emphasize these values in class, intentionally or unintentionally..." (T37); "In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students gradually worry about the exam they will take next year. They try to be more comfortable next year by learning the subjects in this grade. Thus, diligence can be listed among the well-adopted values in 7<sup>th</sup> grade." (T41).

Table 10 presents the views on the question "Which values in the social sciences curriculum are adopted least?"



**Table 10.** Views on Least Adopted Values

| Grade | Values            | f  | Causes                 | f  |
|-------|-------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| 5     | Being responsible | 37 | Family-related causes  | 41 |
|       | Honesty           | 30 | Teacher-related causes | 11 |
|       | Aesthetics        | 13 | Impact of the media    | 7  |
| 6     | Being responsible | 36 |                        |    |
| 7     | Being responsible | 37 |                        |    |
|       | Honesty           | 23 |                        |    |

The analysis of Table 10 indicates that “being responsible” is the least adopted value among students in three grades according to the teachers. 41 teachers stated that the main factor is family; students start formal education without adopting this value adequately in the family, and it is very difficult to teach being responsible in formal education to students who are not raised with the sense of responsibility or whose family members do not adopt this value sufficiently and raise them accordingly. It was also found that 11 participants blame their colleagues in this regard, claiming that classroom teachers in primary school have greater influence on students than subject teachers, and although they have more opportunities to teach this value as role model, they do not make such an effort. Some views are: “*I think being responsible is the least acquired value in 5, 6 and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, because honestly, it is not possible for a child raised by an irresponsible family to adopt this value only at school.*” (T37); “*In every class, ‘being responsible’ is the least embraced value, because this value should be learned first in the family and then, reinforced at school. It is rather difficult to teach this value through school activities to students raised by family members who are unaware of their responsibilities. Secondly, it is also classroom teachers’ fault to some extent. In primary school, students love their classroom teacher like family, and some children even love their teacher more than their own family. Despite knowing it, classroom teachers do not try to teach this value to students by becoming role models...*” (T39). 7 teachers blamed TV shows referring to the “impact of the media”, and said that some youth series and movies on Turkish education system lead young people to display negative behaviours such as alienation from school, cheating and showing disrespectful behaviours to their teachers. T35 remarked that “*There are such shows, films and series on TV that they openly tell students ‘go wherever you want except the school, lie to your teacher, your family, smoke, have a girlfriend or boyfriend, fall in love, leave the school and pursue your love’. Particularly 7<sup>th</sup> graders are much affected by it...*”

#### 4. Discussion

This study investigating social sciences teachers’ attitudes and views toward values education in Turkey found that the participants held high and positive attitudes toward values education, which is very promising. Values are the foundation of culture. One of the aims of values education is to sustain national, spiritual and universal values and convey these values to future generations for the continuance and development of society. When teachers who assume important responsibilities in this process believe in the significance of values, and develop positive attitudes toward values education, it can be reflected in their actions and have a constructive effect on all the factors related to sustaining and conveying values. As is stated by Doğanay (2009), people’s actions mainly stem from their attitudes. The study found that the teachers’ attitudes toward values education did not differ significantly in relation to gender. There are research findings in the literature indicating that the views or attitudes of teachers and teacher candidates toward values education do not differ based on gender (Eğilmez, Eğilmez, & Engür, 2018; Baş, Taşkıran, & Bulut, 2016; Can, 2008).

The study also revealed that the participants’ attitudes toward values education differ based on their professional experience. It was found that the teachers with 16+ years of professional experience held lower attitudes toward values education than the teachers with 1-10 years and 11-15 years of professional experience. In a study exploring classroom teachers’ attitudes toward values education, Yaşaroğlu (2014) found participants’ attitudes toward values education declined as their professional experience increased, which is similar to the finding of this study. This outcome may stem from the difference between pre-service training and values education given to teachers with 11+ years of professional experience, and values education and practices they currently teach their students in the framework of social sciences curriculum. In Turkey, steps were taken to develop the curriculum of this class for primary school between 2005 and 2017. At the same period, there were also curriculum development efforts for undergraduate teaching programs in the faculties of education as teacher training institutions. They demonstrate that teacher training institutions and teacher employing institutions in Turkey work in coordination for curriculum development. However, what should be addressed here is that the social sciences curriculum developed in 2005 was

also implemented by teachers who completed their pre-service training before 2005. Social sciences teachers who saw the practices of giving values education within the hidden curriculum in formal education until 2005 had to give this education directly when they started teaching later. This may have resulted in lower attitudes toward values education in practising teachers who had 10+ years of professional experience compared to teachers with less than 10 years of professional experience. This argument is also supported with the fact that most of the teachers participating in the study on qualitative level and had over 11 years of professional experience underscored the impact of hidden curriculum on the level of teaching values in the curriculum. It shows that there are important initiatives underway to enhance the quality of education and teacher qualifications in Turkey, but not in a “planned” manner, and in-service training provided to complement inadequacies arising from pre-service training is not sufficient. This argument is also supported with the finding that 87% of the participants reported to have received in-service training on values and values education. Many studies investigating teachers’ perspective on in-service training in Turkey indicated that teachers recognise the significance of in-service training and consider they will develop themselves through these activities. However, teachers also have complaints about inadequate or poor quality of in-service training from recruitment of teachers to participate in these activities to the time of activities, from implementation policies to the suitability of the training to teacher needs (Bati, 2016; Karasolak, Tanrıseven, & Yavuz-Konokman, 2013; Arıbaş, Kartal & Çağlar, 2012; Günbatı & Taşdöğen, 2012). In their study examining the attitudes of students and teachers toward civil society and human rights education encompassing values like rights, obligations, responsibilities, democracy, freedom and peace, Piršl, Marušić-Štimac and Pokrajac-Bulian (2007) found a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward introducing human rights and civic education at schools in relation to age. The researchers reported that older teachers link civic education more with extra-curricular activities while younger teachers prefer to address civic education as part of formal programs, and older teachers have less positive attitudes toward civic and human rights education than their younger colleagues, which may be the outcome of their lack of proper qualifications.

The majority of the participants stated that children do not receive adequate education on value judgments and important values in society as well as values necessary in social life, and social sciences course aims to remedy this deficiency. Some studies in the literature indicated that families cannot support their children sufficiently in values education (Yazar & Erkuş, 2013; Türk, 2009; Gökçek, 2007; Tokdemir, 2007). Although children usually learn in similar ways, the values they acquire differ greatly from family to family, because every family has their unique worldview and value system (Bozkurt, 2010). However, children equipped with different values in the family also need to adopt fundamental social values as they will be living as members of society in a shared environment. And these fundamental social values will be taught in school environment. Halstead (2005) maintains that schools reflect and embody the values of society theoretically, and hence, the existence and development of values are closely related to schools which play a significant role in teaching of these values. Accordingly, values education has been given particular emphasis in Turkey through social sciences and other courses in primary and secondary schools particularly since 2010, and the curricula updated in 2018 “aims at raising individuals who adopt national and spiritual values and translate them into a lifestyle” (MONE, 2018). On the other hand, two participants who expressed views concerning “family influence” explained the reason for incorporating values education into social sciences course as inadequate religious education given in the family. They stated that religious education is related to values education, inadequate religious education makes it difficult to learn certain values like equality, respect and solidarity, they teach values based on the teachings of Islam in social sciences course, and thus, students are taught more values. In a similar vein, Stephenson and Killeavy (1998) reported that religion is considered by 17.5% of the participating Irish teachers as one of the basic principles they take into consideration when making decisions with regard to teaching and fostering of the values in curricula, and many teachers stated that religious values and universal and humanitarian values are inextricably linked. Aldieri and Autiero (2013) assert that religion as a component of family life can contribute to the learning of values that affect children’s academic achievement in a positive way. In addition, Kaur and Gupta (2013) state that religion is the source of values, and education systems should reflect the values shared by all religions like “peace”. Values like solidarity, honesty, diligence, freedom, equality, justice, helpfulness, respect and love that curricula in Turkey are in essence values applying to all religions. There is no religion in the world that does not inculcate in their members values like respect, love, solidarity, helping and peace while accepting laziness and lying as important values. At least, there is no divine religion like this. Accordingly, there is no harm in these two teachers’ giving values education based on religion, but they can be criticized for trying to teach values only by giving examples in line with Islamic teachings. Teachers need to keep in mind that there might be students in their class who belong to other religions and cultures. Kars province where this study was conducted is defined as a Turkish city with a multicultural structure though not multi-religious. Every culture embodies many diverse beliefs. However, it is not considered harmful for teachers to reflect the spirit and

moral fibre of different cultures in values education without disrespecting other religious beliefs.

Some teachers expressing views under the category “impact of environment” stated that frequent misuse of mass media such as TV, internet and telephone is one of the major problems of contemporary Turkish society, it leads young people to distance from their family and real society while being drawn to online communities, and prevents the teaching of values satisfactorily. Sağlam (2012) reports research findings in the literature showing that excessive use of new media technologies results in spending less time among individuals within a household, which causes the erosion of family values and negative impact on the transmission of cultural values. That result demonstrates that mass media does not have a negative influence only on Turkish youth. One of the specific goals of social sciences course, an important discipline in Turkish education system, is “to enable learners express their views on the resolution of personal and social problems” (MoNE, 2018). In this regard, it is important that teachers discuss positive and negative impacts of mass media on our values within this course in the classroom atmosphere and ask students’ opinions on taking necessary measures to reduce such negative impacts. Regarding the significance of the content of social sciences curriculum in values education, some teachers remarked that students can learn the cultural values of society in school in a planned manner, and thus, these values can be crowned with permanent behavioural changes. As is indicated by Turan and Aktan (2008), individuals can change and develop the values they hold through an interaction process. School life plays a major role in this process, because a significant part of the learning process of social values encompasses schooling period. However, it should be noted that children start school with their own understanding of values. School is a means to teach children social values within the scope of values education, but it is not the only means. Families, peer groups, mass media, books, etc. also play a role in values education. Some researchers provided evidence that these means are more effective in adopting values than school (Musgrove & Taylor, 1969; Sutherland, 1988; As cited in Powney et al., 1995). Hence, it is critical that school, family and the media cooperate in values education so that children do not face a conflict of values.

Furthermore, some participants stated that one of the main purposes of providing values education in social sciences class is to raise good citizens and increase academic success by fostering character development in students. Values education enables learners to adopt national, spiritual and universal values, develop on an individual and social basis, and become good citizens benefitting society. Such development is also reflected in their academic life and values education has a positive impact on academic success and endeavours (Singh, 2011; Lovat, Toomey, Dally, & Clement, 2009; Benninga, Berkowitz & Kuehn, 2003).

In the qualitative part of the study, some teachers said the 2018 social sciences curriculum is inadequate in terms of the number of values addressed in values education and the 2005 curriculum had more values. The participants stated that values like self-confidence, conscience, morale, compassion, critical thinking, privacy, self-expression, tolerance, trust, humility, spirituality, love of God, thriftiness, hospitality, cleanliness and particularly empathy should be added to the 2018 curriculum. Similar to the result of the present study, Sağlam (2016) reported that parents indicated “empathy” and “tolerance” as principal values that should be taught to their children in values education. Actually, empathy is among the fundamental skills that the 2018 curriculum aims at teaching (MoNE, 2018). The reasons for the teachers’ emphasize particularly on “empathy” in this sub-dimension can be that they might not have fully grasped and examined the social sciences curricula yet. Indeed, this is also supported with the fact that only 17 teachers out of 45 teachers interviewed said to have examined the 2018 curriculum. As some participants did not study the curriculum, they did not know which skills and values students will adopt through it. This is a grim reality for educators in Turkey. There are research results indicating that teachers and principals in our country unfortunately do not have sufficient knowledge of the curricula (Çırak-Kurt, 2017; Bozkurt & Aslanargun, 2015; Ural & Aslim, 2013; Akdeniz & Paliç, 2012). Alsubaie (2016) asserts that when teachers are not involved in curriculum development process sufficiently, they have to strive for knowing and understanding the curricula developed by others. The result of this study indicated that teachers are not making such an effort. Curriculum is a guide showing teachers what to teach and how to teach. When teachers do not study it, they might get confused about what and which knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they will teach in the instruction process, which may result in a decline in the quality of education.

The study revealed that the participants reported that they often use case method and drama, get students do reading and prepare visual materials, give examples from life and try to set a good example with their behaviours in values education. In several studies, participating teachers stated that they conducted activities in values education similar to the instruction methods and techniques mentioned in the present study (Memişoğlu, 2013; Thornberg & Oğuz, 2013; Powney et al., 1995). However, there are also some other special instruction methods and techniques used in values education like moral reasoning, value analysis, values clarification, child philosophy, value and development square. Only 13 teachers out of 45 participants said they used moral reasoning among these methods and techniques.

It is no doubt that teachers can teach students the values in the curricula without using these special techniques. However, teachers' reporting the use of special instruction methods and techniques related to the subject and providing information about how they apply these techniques can be considered as a sign of efforts for professional development. This sub-dimension of the study indicated that the teachers mostly do not go beyond traditional approaches in values education or strive for professional development, whereas it is necessary and important that teachers feel a need for constant professional development to enhance students' learning.

In this study, the participants indicated that values in the social sciences curriculum are generally adopted by the students and most adopted values differ in relation to grade. In addition, the majority of the participants stated that being responsible was the least embraced value in all grades, because the source of this value is family. Most of them added that being responsible is not so meaningful in some families and children who are unable to grasp the importance of this value in the family also cannot understand this value at school. In this context, 11 teachers claimed that classroom teachers also play a role in children's failure to learn being responsible and they do not provide necessary guidance in this regard. The results on this sub-dimension revealed that the participants considered that family, environment, individual developmental characteristics, school location, type of curriculum (curricula, hidden curricula), the media and education system are primary factors affecting values education.

To conclude, this study found that the social sciences teachers held positive attitudes toward values education practices within the social sciences class, and their attitudes did not differ significantly in relation to gender, whereas there was a significant difference in attitudes in line with professional experience. It was seen that the participants with 16+ years of teaching experience had lower attitudes toward values education than the teachers who had 1-10 years, and those with 11-15 years of professional experience. In addition, the teachers stated that the primary aim of values education given in the framework of this class is "family inadequacy". In other words, the majority of the teachers explained that the main aim of incorporating values education into the social sciences class is to satisfy the educational needs of students who cannot receive sufficient values education in the family. Some participants indicated that the social sciences curriculum implemented at secondary schools across Turkey between 2005 and 2018 had differences with regard to values education practices, a couple of values in the 2005 curriculum were excluded from the 2018 curriculum, and the latter is not satisfactory in terms of values intended to be introduced to students. They also expressed views concerning the values that should be added to the 2018 curriculum. The analysis of these views indicated that "empathy" is the most recommended value in this regard. Most of the teachers said they use case study method often in values education, students adopt almost all the values in the program as result of activities in this class, and "responsibility" is the least embraced value in all grades (grades 5, 6 and 7). In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Families, schools and the media should work together to help individuals learn social values and transform them into behaviour. Schools should conduct educational activities as part of values education and ensure the participation of families in such activities. In addition, representatives of the press and media can be involved in curriculum development to gain awareness about values education offered at school, and also public awareness can be raised regarding values education through public service ads.
2. In Turkey, steps should be taken to provide in-service training based on instruction methods and techniques that can be used in values education and the teaching-learning process particularly for the teachers who completed their pre-service education in 2005 and before, and teachers' inadequacy in this regard should be remedied.
3. Trained teachers are recommended to address the importance of professional development particularly within professional teaching knowledge courses, and give examples from the studies focusing on the contribution of teachers' professional development to values education and education in general. Moreover, teacher candidates should be encouraged to participate in workshops, qualification programs and teacher platforms relating to their discipline, and recommended to hold a conference or seminar albeit at a small scale.
4. Ministry of Education can conduct a survey aimed at exploring teacher views in identifying the values learners are expected to adopt as part of values education, because teachers have the opportunity to observe student behaviours for a long time and can indicate which values students need to learn more.
5. To identify the factors affecting the quality of values education, similar studies should be conducted on different samples. Thus, the factors reducing the efficiency of values education can be determined according to the views of teachers as practitioners of this education, and necessary arrangements can be made to eliminate the negative impacts of these factors.

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