AN EXAMINATION OF VALUES EDUCATION BASED ON THE EXPERIENCES OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Abstract: Classroom teachers, who have the duty of fostering values in the socialization of the child, occupy a key position in achieving success in primary education. In this research, the impact of values education on the Turkish education system was revealed, based on the experiences of classroom teachers. The research was conducted in a case study design, which is one of the qualitative research methods. A purposive sampling method was used to determine the study group by considering gender, professional experience, graduate/postgraduate education status, job seniority, work location and class levels. The results revealed that values education enables for students hardworking, honesty, successfulness and virtuousness, solidarity, and cooperation. The values, which is necessary to be nurtured in students are primarily universal, individual and national values. Values education must be supported by integrating it with lessons and by the participation of the family. In order to attain success in a sustainable values education, it is seen that for fostering of basic values, responsibility should be shared among the stakeholders.

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INTRODUCTION

Value is one of the most important virtues of an individual and of being a person. We can recognise this virtue by externalised emotions and behaviours. Value, in which ethics and morals are intertwined, has been discussed as a philosophical subject. And an answer to the meaning of value has been sought, since the beginning of human existence. In order to find an answer to this question, values philosophy came into being. Although good and fine emotions reside in value, these values can only be projected with action. Actions are the all things that humans do. Just as these types of action affect the selection of individuals' aims they also express what is important for them in their lives (Sagiv, 2002; Schwartz, 1994). For this reason, values bring with it personal or, when necessary, social responsibility. In personal and interpersonal behaviours that give harmony and coherence to people and to the art, music, architecture and science that people create, they are the values that create this harmony. While values are affected by a society, in which they belong to the living dynamics of that society, the values also affect that society. While the relativity of values is formed according to the society, culture and surrounding geography that depend on time and space, they also have a universal dimension. At the same time, this universal dimension is an important factor, in ensuring social stability, since values, by defining the ideal behaviours desired by society, consequently direct our actions (Rokeach, 1973).

Although values are perceived as the morals, religion and beliefs, they differ in terms of theoretical structure from morals, religion and beliefs. Actually, they are one of the moral areas most commonly agreed upon by people at a theoretical level. Honesty, integrity, courage and devotion are highly welcomed in every philosophy and faith (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003; Kuçuradi, 2002). On the other hand, just as values accelerate the rise of conflicts in society when they function inadequately, they also have an important place in peace and happiness (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Ornstein and Hunkins, 2017). In this context, values education must form an important dimension of the education to be provided to individuals. Values education has irreplaceable importance both in shaping an individual's character and in enabling social tranquillity and integration (Heslep, 1995; Sönmez, 2018;).

Studies related to the subject of the teaching and fostering of values are given the name of "values education". Values education, consists of all educational efforts carried out towards nurturing and developing awareness of positive values in children, and towards advancement in line with their own potential (UNESCO, 2020). By developing individuals' ability to project their ideas, make judgements and form viewpoints, as well as their ability to acquire values based on the components of their own cultures, values education helps them to understand what is valuable (Kızılhan, 2017). At the same time, values education also develops together with it the qualities of having responsibility, being tolerant, and showing respect for other beliefs and different ideas (O'Connell, 2012).

When values education is considered as a process for individuals' acquisition of identity and socialisation, families and schools have an important duty in children's acquisition of values. By means of values education, the school prepares children as the individuals equipped for society (Lunn et al., 2016). Among the school staff, the main duties of teachers are to instil basic personal and social values in future generations (Yazar, 2018). In this context, teachers constitute the essence of values education. During the process of teaching values, teachers must be a role-model, create a common social area in the classroom, give responsibility to every student, contribute to the development of their values, give students the opportunity to make decisions, and encourage them for cooperation (Colnerud, 2006; Halstead and Taylor, 2000).

The values that are to be nurtured in students should be determined by obtaining the views of students, teachers, families and non-governmental organisations (Brynildssen, 2002). In studies conducted with regard to students' acquisition of values, it is seen that values are taught by integrating them to curricula (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2017; Thornberg, 2016; Ulavere and Veisson, 2015). Furthermore, in previous studies it has been revealed that the values can be fostered in children in values curriculum through family participation (Crowther, 1995). In Turkey, values education was conducted within the scope of the hidden curriculum until the year 2005. In the 2005-2006 academic year, it was included in the Life Sciences, Social Studies, Turkish, Science and Technology, Mathematics, and Religion and Ethics curricula. From the 2010-2011 academic year onwards, values education has been given at all levels of education with in-class and

out-of-class activities (Cihan, 2014). In Turkey, values education as an education policy is given special attention. Projects are carried out to support values education in formal curricula in primary schools in the provinces such as Konya, Denizli, Çanakkale, and Erzincan. However, in previous studies, despite all these efforts, it is revealed that the desired level of success in values education has not been achieved. In addition, there have been problems in transforming the values into behaviour in values curriculum. Moreover, the values which are attempted to be fostered in school have not been supported by families. On the other hand, the preservice and in-service values education in teacher training is inadequate (Aktepe et al., 2020; Çelik, 2020).

Within the context of these problems experienced in values education in Turkey, certain questions need to be examined. Within its characteristics (the values of responsibility, belief, happiness, rationality, diligence, etc.) how values education should be given to children? Should it be provided in the form of an independent "values education course", or should it be interspersed among the contents of certain suitable adjacent subjects? Within this activity, which common educational institutions outside school can be utilised? Are values an indispensable complementary factor that assists in social, sporting, artistic and academic success for an individual? Are a social and well-balanced individual and an organised and harmonious societal life possible in the absence of values? Can we leave the functioning of such a vital phenomenon to another institution? Developing both theoretical solutions to questions and the policies for implementing them are not tasks that can be carried out easily and hastily. Just as it is discussed in philosophical theories, the problem is whether to provide values education as part of Religion and Ethics lesson, or to gain it separately. On the other hand, one another question is the appropriateness of it in terms of democracy culture. In this sense, within the scope of the problems revealed by the related literature and the questions that are examined, the state of values education in primary schools in Rize province is an issue of concern. Within this context, the answers were sought to the following questions:

    1. What are the contributions of values education to students?

    2. Which values should be included in values education?

    3. How should the values curriculum be implemented?

    4. Which factor/factors, such as 'family', 'school', 'peer groups', or 'media' are more effective in values education?

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

This qualitative research was conducted in a case study model. The case study, which is an in-depth description and examination of a limited system, is a methodological approach that includes an examination of how that system operates and functions by collecting multiple data (Merriam, 2013). Factors (environment, individuals, events, processes, etc.) related to a situation are investigated with a holistic approach. Focus is on how these factors affect the related situation and how they are affected by the related situation.

STUDY GROUP

A purposive sampling approach was adopted for selection of the study group. The study group consisted of teachers employed in state primary schools having low, medium and high socio-economic levels affiliated to Rize Provincial Directorate of Education in the academic year of 2018-2019, in Turkey. The participants were selected with the criteria of having at least 10 years' classroom teaching experience at the schools and of having taught different grades (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th). The research was conducted on a total of 36 teachers, working nine state primary schools (3 at low, 3 at medium, and 3 at high socio-economic levels), which met these conditions. The age of teachers ranged from 25 to 62 years old. The job seniority of the participants ranged from10 to 35 years. The study group consisted of 16 female and 20 male teachers. Only five teachers had received in-service training related to values education. Among the participants, six teachers were have master's degree.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

A semi-structured interview form was used for collecting data. The following steps were performed for setting the questions included in the semi-structured interviews. 1. The theoretical framework of the interviewing questions was determined by in-depth examination of the literature related to the subject, and pilot questions were prepared. 2. The views of three experts from three different state universities, with published studies on the subjects of classroom teaching and values education, were obtained. By taking the feedback obtained from the experts into account, the interviewing forms were rearranged and clarified with four questions. In this way, an attempt was made to ensure the content and face validity of the questions. 3. With the aim of determining the lucidity and comprehensibility of the interview questions, a pilot interview was held with three classroom teachers working three different primary schools (1 at low, 1 at medium, and 1 at high socio-economic levels). 4. After the pilot interview, the interviewing questions were rearranged with respect to the format, content validity, and lucidity and comprehensibility. The views of the experts were applied again with regard to the revised questions. By considering the feedback from the experts, the final form to the interviewing questions were given. 5. The revised interviewing questions were used for the semi-structured interviews.

In the pilot interviews, an attempt was made to reveal primarily how present-day values education was perceived and interpreted by the classroom teachers. Three pilot interviews based on the socio-economic group variable were carried out in 2018 and lasted about in 40-65 minutes. The aim of the pilot interviews was to reveal the important facts related to the aim of this research that have remained hidden. An attempt was also made to remain faithful to this principle in this research. The individual interviews were conducted between October 2018 and June 2019. The semi-structured interviews were made with the 36 teachers, each of them lasted about in 50-65 minutes. The individual interviews were audio-recorded, while the recordings were supported by note-taking. The interviews were conducted based on the principle of voluntariness. The participants were encouraged to speak frankly and were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time that they wished without providing a reason (Shenton, 2004). The semi-structured interviews were carried out with respect to the most suitable time and location in the teachers' room after school hours.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analysed by using Marshall and Rossman's (2011) seven steps for content analysis. (1) Raw data were obtained by converting the audio-recorded interviews into written format using the computer-assisted NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software. (2) The research questions, field notes and printouts of all the interviews were read three times by the researcher to confirm their accuracy. (3) The interview documents of this research were coded by examining them with inductive analysis, and the initial themes and subthemes were created. (4) Independent codes for the data were generated by the researcher and three experts working separately. After the data had been grouped according to the research findings, the views of the three experts were obtained and the data were reduced to the codes in the data set (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). Next, the themes were generated. (5) For the creation of the themes and subthemes, differences of opinion in the coding between the researcher and experts were revealed, the determined themes were compared and a consensus was reached. In order to provide clear meanings in some themes, certain statements were revised. (6) For arranging and defining the data according to the codes and themes, and for interpreting the findings, alternative explanations, negative situations and different interpretations of the data were evaluated and the themes were described (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). (7) At the final stage of the data analysis, the obtained findings were explained, and interpretations and conclusions were presented.

With the aim of ensuring the internal validity of this research, the theoretical framework was created by conducting a comprehensive review of the literature related to the subject. Valuable results were accessed that could be used in practice and were consistent with all the criteria in the research by ensuring consistency between the research questions and data collection and analysis techniques in this research (Eisenhart and Hove, 1992). For data triangulation in this qualitative research, attention was given to the variations in gender, professional experience, graduate/undergraduate education status, schools at different socio-

economic levels and voluntary participation in interviews (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). For transferability of this research, the findings were supported with the most up-to-date versions of literary research related to the subject in a local and universal context. Transferability is the ability to adapt the findings of previously conducted studies to similar situations while preserving their meanings and inferences. The transferability of findings is possible by thoroughly describing the factors affecting the research and methods followed in the selection of the sample. One of the basic criteria in evaluating qualitative research is that the researcher should be able to correlate his/her findings with findings in the field literature (Silverman, 2000). Prior to transmission, it is necessary to provide information such as (1) number and locations of schools included in the research, (2) limitations related to participants providing data, (3) number of people included in the field research, (4) methods used for gathering data, (5) number and duration of data gathering sessions, (6) period elapsed since data gathering procedure (Shenton, 2004). In this research, attention was given to all the components that should exist for transmission of qualitative research. Data were supported with direct quotations where required. In cases where a statement in a quotation was long, the parts expressed in the quotations were transmitted by preserving the explanations of the participants. For parts not taken up for transmission, three dots (…) are used next to the quoted part of the statement. In the quoted statements, the number of the participant producing the quotation is shown in the form P-2. P denotes the participant, while 2 indicates his/her number in the list.

Reliability is the detailed explanation, in the analysis and interpretation process, of the themes determined by their effects on the data collection and analysis studies of the research processes (Morrow, 2005). Reliability is the conclusion drawn about the process in general by examination of the research reports by an expert not involved in the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1986). The findings are the acceptability for reflecting the investigated phenomenon as much as possible, free from the beliefs, desires and prejudices of the researcher. In this context, all of the findings belong to the gathered data (Morrow, 2005). It is very important to give assurance that the findings originate from the experiences and opinions of the participants. In this research, acceptability has been ensured with direct quotations by the participants. One of the most effective ways of increasing the reliability of qualitative studies is consensus among coders based on the use of multiple coders for analysis of written data. Consensus is the confirmation of conclusions made by obtaining assistance from experts for analysis of the data. By using the NVivo program for deciphering and coding the sound recordings in the research, the reliability of the research was increased (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2006). Computer programs like NVivo and MAXQDA are among the effective credibility techniques used.

FINDINGS

In this research, by evaluating the data we have obtained from the responses given to the questions we addressed to the classroom teachers, we have tried to throw light on related problems by attempting to describe their opinions and experiences with a holistic interpretation of their viewpoints and experiences related to values education. The opinions of the teachers with regard to the values education process were grouped under five themes. Findings are presented thematically in depth below, according to the process steps followed.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF VALUES EDUCATION

In Theme 1, the contributions of values education are grouped and presented in the Table 1. Values education contributes to diligence, honesty and achievement. It enables virtuous individuals to be raised. It instils national and universal values, it establishes social order. It enables individuals who serve society to be raised. Lastly, it fosters an understanding of work discipline, and it produces individuals who create and share knowledge. The fact that the classroom teachers expressed the contributions of values education in a number of different dimensions, indicating that their awareness of being the implementers of the subject was high, is quite a satisfying situation.

Table 1. The Contributions of Values Education

1. It contributes to diligence, honesty and achievement
2. It enables virtuous individuals to be raised
3. It instils national and universal values
4. It establishes social order
5. It enables individuals who serve society to be raised
6. It fosters an understanding of work discipline
7. It produces individuals who create and share knowledge

In the semi-structured interviews, many teachers stressed the importance of values education for acquiring national and universal values. Some teachers stated that for communal living, in acquiring national and universal values, besides fostering universal values and information sharing and contributing to mankind, values education also contributed to humans' cultural richness and to the conservation of nature. It was again emphasised that by means of values education, virtuous individuals could be raised and societal security could be ensured. In this context, the raising of humanist individuals who valued and accepted others was stressed. The fact that the teaching of national values in values education was stressed by a majority of teachers is quite a striking situation. However, they also expressed different opinions on this subject. There were also views to the effect that values education transformed behaviours into a life philosophy by developing an ethical understanding independently of ethnic and religious elements. Two rather conflicting views, other than those expressing values education for communal living, were stated. These were:

"Values taught independently of ethnic and religious elements make it possible for universal values to be acquired for accessing and sharing information" (P-7). While this statement expresses the opinion that a values education independent of ethnic and religious elements needs to be given in order to achieve universal values, the following view, which is completely contrary to this one, is striking:

"Values education must be given by the family. The codes of ethics that constitute values are not universal. A behaviour considered immoral in our society might be considered a normal behaviour for another society. Values education is important for creating a national consciousness" (P-31).

Classroom teachers expressed the view that the most important contributions of values education were that it contributed to diligence, honesty and achievement. By considering the values of diligence, responsibility, honesty and achievement as very important, the fact that the teachers expressed these as priority values is a striking finding. In all explanations made after this, the contributions of values education were based on diligence, responsibility, honesty and success. The idea that values education contributed to enabling the raising of virtuous individuals was also supported. A few teachers stressed that values education given at young ages would be a means for internalising a work discipline understanding. Teachers' views were as follows:

"Values education is used for developing a consciousness of organised and systematic work and of responsibility" (P-5).

"Of course, values are important for academic achievement. For example, work ethics, work discipline, and refraining from plagiarism in academic studies. Individuals with weak values will also have low levels of success. A person who has received a strong values education will believe in effort and work accordingly" (P-10, P-29).

While a majority of the participating teachers believed that individuals could acquire values of the information society via values education, two teachers expressed the contradictory view that values such as responsibility, diligence, being scientific, and serving the community, etc. could not be fostered in individuals by means of values education. These two examples are as follows:

"The thing that you call value is a costume that in which individuals is dressed in order of experience after belief, customs and traditions. A person has no chance to choose. Academic success is individual and scientific. Achievement cannot be founded on abstract principles" (P-3).

"If you compel people with a set of rules by saying values education, you will reduce their levels of success" (P-13).

It can be said that the views of these two teachers are a reflection of the fact that in Turkey in recent years, values education as a state and education policy has been overemphasised, that is has been given theoretically in the syllabi of almost all subjects, and that preparation of weekly/monthly noticeboards and displays related to the subject has been imposed. None of the classroom teachers who took part in this research had received theoretical or practical training aimed at ways of teaching values education to students during their undergraduate education. Values education is a cultural issue and teachers also need to believe in this issue and internalise it. Values cannot be acquired by students with external impositions. The teacher needs to believe in them first of all, and then to project them onto his/her behaviours and onto the learning environment within the process. This type of teaching is one of the professional values. This is why pre-service training in the acquisition and internalisation of professional values is important. Some teachers regarded values education as a means of establishing social order and of fostering national and universal values. One teacher's view was:

"Of course, values education is important. For society to live in peace and harmony, people should possess such values. Or else society should possess universal principles in its consciousness..." (P-9).

In countries in a pioneering position on a global scale, values education is provided from young ages onwards. In bringing up productive individuals who will form the information society of the future, values education occupies a very important place. The teachers who participated in this research also expressed opinions to the effect that values education acquire an understanding of work discipline, raised individuals who produce and share information and raised individuals who serve the community. Since building the information society of the future is achieved via education institutions and teachers, these findings, that the participants of this research had high levels of awareness of this subject, are very important. One teacher stated:

"Values are precious in the sense that they are important for acquiring, generating and sharing knowledge…" (P-17).

PRIMARY VALUES THAT SHOULD BE GAINED BY STUDENTS

In Theme 2, universal values, which were expressed by the majority of teachers as primary values that needed to be acquired by students, are respect for human rights, equality, freedom, peace, justice and democracy. The fact that the classroom teachers gave priority to the values of respect for human rights, equality, freedom, peace, justice and democracy above individual values is an interesting finding in the sense that they had high levels of awareness of this subject. In one sense, the fact that in the acquisition of the values such as respect for human rights, equality, freedom, peace, justice and democracy, classroom teachers project these values via experiential learning as a model is important for the internalisation of these values by students.

Table 2. Primary Values that Should Be Gained by Students

1. Respect for human rights
2. Equality
3. Freedom
4. Peace
5. Justice
6. Democracy

The views of teachers on this subject were:

"Universal values are founded on the value of humanity, which is a value common to all religions… Human values must be included primarily. In places where there are no human values, whatever you give to someone goes up in the air" (P-1, P-8, P-27).

"Respect for human rights, protecting the environment, preserving and developing social and universal values. Equality, freedom, peace and justice" (P-5).

Individual values come in second place as primary values that should be fostered in students. These values are honesty, diligence, respect, love, patience, empathy, mercy, helpfulness and tolerance. Some teachers' views were:

"Respect, honesty, righteousness, respect for others' efforts, and establishing empathy" (P-17).

"Honesty, diligence, respect for individual rights, and tolerance. If respect is found within a society, then that society will be happier and more at peace" (P-29).

National values were asserted by only 6 teachers. These were patriotism, devotion, loyalty and commitment. Views of two teachers were:

"…Common socio-cultural values, as well as religious belief and commitment to conscience teaching, devotion and loyalty that are requirements for being a human" (P-11).

"Subjects aimed at the essence of the Turkish Nation should be increased. In my opinion, it is very important to educate our students, who are the guarantee of our future, with their own essential culture and make it a lifestyle. Therefore, the values of patriotism especially, as well as devotion, loyalty and commitment should be taught…" (P-15).

IMPLEMENTATION OF VALUES EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

In Theme 3, implementation of values education in the curriculum was categorised as follows: it should be provided in all lessons, it should be given as the school culture, it should be provided as a separate values education lesson, it should be given by combining it with the Religion and Ethics class, and it should be provided by combining it with the subject of Turkish (Table 3). The ways of values education should be implemented in the curriculum were suggested in these five different dimensions by the implementers of the subject.

Table 3. Implementation of Values Education in the Curriculum

1. It should be provided in all lessons
2. It should be given as the school culture
3. It should be provided as a separate values education lesson
4. It should be given by combining it with the Religion and Ethics class
5. It should be provided by combining it with the subject of Turkish

Most of the classroom teachers expressed the view that implementation of values education should be included in all subjects of the curriculum. The fact that the teachers expressed the need for values education to be provided by integrating it into all classes and that implementations should be made in this way is certainly an encouraging situation with respect to values education, since it was revealed that the best example applications of values education need to be given by combining values education with all subjects. This finding revealed by the teachers is very important. In one sense, the implementers of the subject had reached this conclusion with the years of experience they had gained. Views of two teachers on this subject were:

"Values education can be given in all lessons. It would be wrong to associate it with the religion lesson. Sporting values in the physical education lesson, artistic values in art-music classes, scientific values in academic classes, etc. …" (P-9, P-31).

"The contribution of values education to a single class or not one lesson, to all lessons is a necessary subject. Therefore, education on values nested in society should be given in all lessons and in our books…" (P-34).

In contrast with the view that values education should be implemented within all subjects of the curriculum, a limited number of teachers expressed the opinion that it should be given by integrating it with the Religion and Ethics class. It can be said that this view originates from the belief that values are faith-based and from the perception that this subject is like an obligation. Again, a limited number of teachers expressed the opinion that values education was not a subject for the Religion and Ethics lesson and that it should be taught separately as a Values Education lesson or as a school culture. Views on this subject were:

"Values education must be an independent subject" (P-14, P-15).

"It has been integrated with the Religion and Ethics lesson. As if it only belonged to the subject of religion and ethics, when in fact, value is life itself. Religion is not culture. Ethics are not

knowledge at all. The subject of values education should be given in a separate course" (P-18).

"It should be provided, not as lesson content but as a school and social culture…" (P-2, P-36).

Contrary to the views of the other teachers, it was stated that values education should be given by combining it with the subject of Turkish lesson. One teacher's view was:

"Values education should be acquired especially at primary school level. Therefore, I believe that a lot of space should be given to values education in Turkish course books" (P-28).

With this viewpoint, values education has been reduced to a rather narrow and limited area. As is argued in the literature related to the subject, values should be taught as a separate subject under the heading "values education", and yet the idea that it will be internalised does not go beyond a myth. In fact, there cannot be a lesson for value. Values education should be offered to students as a culture both within school and out of school by classroom teachers at primary school level.

EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS FOR VALUES EDUCATION

In Theme 4, institutions that are effective for values education are headed by the family, followed by the media, all of them, school, the family and media, and peer groups. The majority of teachers gave priority to the family at the head of effective institutions for values education. Teachers' views on this subject were:

Table 4. Institutions that are Effective for Values Education

1. Family
2. Media
3. All of them
4. School
5. The family and media
6. Peer groups

"The family is the place where individuals have their first educational experience. The other components are also effective for values education, but I believe that values education begins in the family. Here, the development of the family's understanding of value and its harmony with society are important" (P-4, P-6, P-19).

"The foundation of values education is laid in the family. The gains made in the family will contribute to shaping the following stages of life. If values education has begun in the family, we educators can be even more successful in this subject…" (P-10, P-17).

"The media provide both positive and negative examples. A person may acquire both. Some have a negative effect on societal values. The opposite may also occur" (P-11, P-22).

"The family and media. A person spends most time with his/her family. At home, the vehicles most often interacted with are television and computers. Therefore, these facilities must be used in a positive way" (P-12).

"All of them... Values education begins with the family, but undergoes change with peers and the media, and the behaviours nurtured by the family are damaged over time. When entering adolescence, the most important factor for values education in particular is peer education" (P-18).

A limited number of teachers referred to school, which is a social education institution, among the effective institutions for values education.

"I consider it important for the values that are attempted to be taught in school to be supported at home as well" (P-2).

Here, while the classroom teachers' own reflections should have been made to the effect that school, as a social education institution where values will be acquired in future generations, should go in parallel with the family with regard to providing values education, it is a striking finding that only a limited number of teachers placed emphasis on the school. In fact, this percentage ought to have been a lot higher.

The opinions related to the values education process of the participants in the research were grouped under four themes. As contributions of values education to students, the values of diligence, honesty and

achievement were regarded as very important, while for raising virtuous individuals, the acquisition of national and universal values was included. Other contributions of values education were raising individuals who create and share knowledge and bringing up individuals who serve the community by fostering an understanding of work discipline in them. In the theme related to which should be the priority values that needed to be acquired by students, these included (i) respect for human rights, equality, justice, freedom, peace and democracy as universal values, (ii) honesty, diligence, respect, love, patience, empathy, mercy, helpfulness and tolerance as individual values, and (iii) patriotism, devotion, loyalty and commitment as national values. In the theme about implementation of values education in the curriculum, methods expressed varied among providing it as part of all lessons, under the name of a separate values education subject, by integrating it in the religion and ethics lesson, by combining it with the Turkish lesson, and as a school culture. Regarding which institutions were effective for values education, these were expressed under the headings of the family, the media, school, peer groups, the family and media, and all of them.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, it is aimed to examine values education in depth based on the experiences of classroom teachers. This research also aims to contribute the related subject area in both the national and universal context by means of a thematic discussion within a holistic approach.

In the Turkish education system, values education has been implemented as a state policy by means of a formal curriculum since the year 2005. For the transmission and acquisition of values, this function is performed by teachers in schools, which are the secondary social institution after the family. Serious problems are experienced in this process, such as teachers who do not receive pre-service training for values education, teachers who take the values education course as an elective course in faculties during the preservice period so that this subject remains theoretical, failure of the subject to be accessed by all teachers via in-service training, failure of values education theory to be converted into practice during in-service training, insufficiency of curriculum applications and course books aimed at values education, course books that consist only of reading passages, inadequate family participation in values education, the fact that classroom/school applications turn into mere poster and noticeboard applications, and teachers who are inadequately equipped for the subject of values education (Karabacak et al., 2018; Sezer et al., 2019; Uştu et al., 2016).

The results revealed that the contributions of values education to be diligence, honesty, contributing to success, enabling the raising of virtuous individuals, fostering national and universal values, establishing social order, enabling individuals who serve the community to be raised, fostering an understanding of work discipline, and raising individuals who produce and share knowledge. A rather limited number of studies related to contributions of values education were accessed in the field literature. In Taymur's (2015) and Namlı-Başcı's (2017) studies, the contributions of values education were expressed as factors effective for establishing social order, giving meaning to life, and guiding behaviours. In one sense, values education also contributes to remedying social problems. In this context, to derive the maximum benefit from values education, the most important factor is education. Many thinkers from Plato and Aristotle to Kant and Dewey have stated that one of the main functions of education is for a person to acquire character and worth (Heslep, 1995). Individuals spend a significant part of their lives in educational institutions and during this period, their characters are also formed and moulded. Indeed, values education, whose aim is happiness and welfare, should be developed for everyday situations in all areas of life (O'Connell, 2012). That is, by way of values education, individuals acquire the skill of internalising values based on their own cultural items for developing their viewpoints for having responsibility, being tolerant, and respecting others' beliefs and different ideas.

According to the results, the priority values that needed to be acquired in students were determined as the universal values such as respect for human rights, equality, justice, freedom, peace and democracy. In addition, the results revealed the individual values such as honesty, diligence, respect, love, patience, empathy, mercy, helpfulness and tolerance. Moreover, the results revealed the national values such as patriotism, devotion, loyalty and commitment. The related literature reveals that teachers gave most

importance to the values of "honesty, respect, responsibility, love, diligence and patriotism" as basic values that should be fostered in students, while values such as "virtuousness, courage, commitment, ethics and aesthetics" were included nearer the end (Namlı-Başcı, 2017; Yıldırım, 2009). In studies conducted on classroom teachers, however, values of "honesty, respect, responsibility, love, diligence and patriotism" were given priority by this teaching group. In studies conducted on classroom teachers, although values of "honesty, respect, responsibility, love, diligence and patriotism" were given priority by this teaching group, in studies carried out in secondary schools and especially those aimed at the Social Sciences lesson, it is seen that at the top of the list of priority values were national values and the value of patriotism.

For the 2019-2020 academic year, a large number of values (48) under the headings of "being scientific, aesthetics, prudence, respect, tolerance and responsibility" are included as values to be fostered via the curriculum in students in the fourth grade. Some of these values included as values to be fostered via the curriculum are not suitable values (tolerance, fidelity, loyalty, mercy, modesty, conscientiousness and courage) for fourth-grade students, who are in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development. In fact, values are attempted to be acquired by children in the primary school years based on a concrete context. Values such as purity, good will, gratitude, conviction, humility, forgiveness, sensitivity, devotion, sacrifice, justness, love of truth, shame, tolerance, sincerity, martyrdom, appreciation and fidelity are not suitable for inclusion as values to be fostered through the curriculum in fourth-grade primary students who are in the concrete operational stage. In a study conducted by Batmaca (2016), it was revealed that since the values of being scientific, independence, respect for one's Turkish elders, patriotism and giving importance to family unity, which are among the values included in the subject of 4th grade primary school Social Studies, were too abstract for the students' age and grade level, they could not be acquired by the students. In this context, it can be said that too many values are included in the primary school curriculum. Whereas too many values are included at class level in curricula in Turkey, in the world in general, a limited number of 8 or 10 values are included in curricula implementations. For example, in the education systems of countries such as USA, Australia, Finland, France and UK, it is determined that a limited number of values are targeted to be fostered in all students (Lickona, 2006; UNESCO, 2020; Prencipe and Helwig, 2002; Ryan and Bohlin, 1999). At primary school level, these basic values to be acquired in students are equality, mercy, responsibility, freedom, honesty, reliability, respect, understanding, good citizenship, cooperation and helpfulness.

The results revealed that with regard to the implementation of values education in curricula, opinions expressed were that it would be effective to apply values in all lessons, as a separate values education class, by integrating it with the subject of religion and ethics, by including it in Turkish lessons, and as a school culture. Prior to 2005, values were mainly taught via the hidden curriculum, while from 2005 onwards, it was formally included in the developed curricula. In this implementation, values education is carried out within certain curricula and as part of the school-based hidden curriculum. The teaching of values is included in the curricula for subjects such as Religion and Ethics, Life Sciences, Social Studies and Turkish, and explicitly and implicitly in the curricula of other subjects. A very limited number of studies have been accessed on the subject of implementations of values education in curricula. Similarly, in Taymur's (2015) research, it was stated that values education should be provided continuously, and in this context, that curricula should be prepared in such a way that the subject could be continued outside a lesson or period of time during breaks and in all areas of school. Whereas, Çetinbaş (2015) concluded that a separate lesson with the name of values education should be included. For every individual in the learning age to be equipped with the values and skills that will help him/her to make suitable moral decisions and display behaviours to that effect, values education should be delivered by means of curricula in education institutions. In studies conducted on the subject of fostering values, it is seen that values education is provided by integrating it in curricula (Akpınar and Özdaş, 2013; Gunawan et al., 2018). It is very important that the attitudes of teachers, who are the implementers of values education in the field, should be positive towards values education. In this context, the views and beliefs of teachers about teaching, learning and the curriculum are very effective on what type of learning activities are to be carried out, and on students' learning or achievements. The targets set in curriculum gain functionality with these aims and outcomes of teachers. The values possessed by teachers are related to good quality education.

The results revealed that the institutions which should be effective for values education were expressed as the family, the media, school, peer groups, the family and media, and all of them, in that order. In the opinions of the classroom teachers, the most effective institution for acquiring values was the family. In the limited number of studies carried out, the family is also the most important of the institutions effective for values education (Aksoy, 2017; Gündoğdu et. al., 2019; Kavgaoğlu and Fer, 2020). With regard to the results of this research, this is a rather striking finding, since it would have been expected that teachers, who are in the position of implementers of the field and are the people who foster values in education institutions, would express the school as being the most effective institution for values education. The fact that teachers considered the family to be responsible for values education rather than the school/teachers is a striking finding. Perhaps the fact that the values that teachers attempted to foster in children in school were not converted into behaviour due to insufficient support by families can be said to have affected this result (Acar-Başeğmez and Er, 2017; Doktaş-Yeşiltaş and Mentiş Taş, 2016). In this context, there are studies revealing that family participation efforts are inadequate in Turkey (Aykol, 2019; Kıvrak and Yıldırım, 2020). Contrary to this result, there are also studies related to values education in which the school comes in first place (Akpınar and Özdaş, 2013). In the related literature, it is stated that the school is charged with great social responsibility for acquiring values. It is revealed in the studies carried out that the values in values curriculum can be nurtured in children via the participation of families (Crowther, 1995).

Values education must be designed with the integration of family, school, media and peer groups. Nowadays, values education with only one of these institutions alone is not sufficient. Values education must be provided with the support of all these institutions (Barbour et al., 2018). In this context, in the education systems of countries such as USA, Australia, Finland, France and UK, responsibility for fostering basic values is shared among education stakeholders. Within the framework of basic values, the roles of teachers, administrators and families are specified, and activities aimed at acquisition of values are determined and shared at every level.

In conclusion, the state of values education in primary schools in Rize has been revealed according to the views and experiences of classroom teachers. The classroom teacher, who occupies a position between disciplines, is capable of providing values education to students at young ages with a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach. In this context, classroom teachers must possess the values required by the profession. In one sense, classroom teachers also have the duty of socialising the child. Classroom teachers are in a key position for fostering values in young children through formal and informal means. This research is a tool for revealing the current position of values education in a qualitative dimension. In this context, the following suggestions can be made:

1. At a local level, the problems encountered by classroom teachers in values education can be revealed, and solutions to these problems can be found with scientific methods.

2. For values education of classroom teachers, supportive studies can be made aimed at values acquisition by means of family participation.

3. In school-based values education, curriculum studies can be conducted aimed at acquiring values education as a school culture.

4. Values education should be presented as a culture to preservice teachers in undergraduate classroom curricula and as part of faculty culture.

5. To teach real-life situations in values education via experiential learning methods, the necessary arrangements should be made in in-school and out-of-school curricula.

6. Classroom teachers' deficiencies in values education competencies should be eliminated by means of practical values education with in-service training.

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