

Study of Prospective Teachers' Conceptualization of Value Preferences*

Nermin KORUKLU

Adnan Menderes University

Hilal AKTAMIŞ^a

Adnan Menderes University

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were any changes in the conceptualization of prospective teachers' values preferences during their university studies. The research group was composed of 208 prospective teachers who were studying at Science Education, Social Science Education and Fine Arts Education at Adnan Menderes University. The gender of these participants were $n = 109$ female and $n = 99$ male. The grade level of prospective teachers were $n = 119$ first grade, $n = 89$ were fourth grade. In order to get the data, The Value Scale was used. The data obtained from the scale of values were analyzed with one-way multivariate analysis of variance and follow-up test for each dependent variable was analyzed with analysis of variance. As a result of the analysis, in terms of gender there were significant differences in Aesthetic value dimension in favor of the female prospective teachers. According to the level of the grade, all fourth grade prospective teachers' Theoretical and Political values were higher than first grade prospective teachers' ones, and first grade prospective teachers' Economic and Religious values were found higher than fourth grade prospective teachers' ones. As a result, there is a relationship between prospective teachers' studying field and their values.

Key Words

Values, Prospective Teachers, Discipline, Gender, Grade Level.

Values are one of the main studies of different disciplines like philosophy, psychology and education (Akbaba-Altun, 2003; Atay, 2003; Blanchard & O'Connor, 1998; Densford, 1961 as cited in Dönmez & Cömert, 2007; Durmuş, 1996; Sabuncuoğlu & Tuz, 2003, p. 43; Sağnak, 2004, 2005; Schwartz, 1992). When common features of definitions about values are examined it is seen that values are considered as beliefs leading individuals and societies'

behavior, attitude and ideas (Allport, 1961; Başaran, 1992; Türk Dil Kurumu [TDK], 2005). Allport, Vernon and Lindsey (1960a) defined values as motives and evaluative behaviors based on Spranger's study and examined them under six dimensions. The values scale outlined six major value types; (i) Theoretical values, (ii) Economic Values, (iii) Aesthetic Values, (iv) Social Values, (v) Political Values, and (vi) Religious Values.

Although it is seen that values are linked with individuals' personality and attitudes (Braithwaite & Scott, 1991 cited in Muğaloğlu & Bayram, 2009), values acquisition occurs through experience in other words with learning (Sarı, 2005; Ünal, 1981). In this context the importance of the teacher who is taken as a role model and imitated by the students is obvious (Gökdere & Çepni, 2003). When the literature is reviewed it is seen that there are a lot of study findings showing that teacher values affect student behavior, but the aim of the scales used in these studies was to define personal values (Dilmaç, Bozgeyikli & Çıkcılı, 2008; Dilmaç, Deniz & Deniz,

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a Hilal AKTAMIŞ, Ph.D., is currently an assistant professor at the Department of Primary Education, Science Education. Her research interests include scientific creativity, science process skills, argumentation, astronomy education and values in science education. Correspondence: Assist. Prof. Hilal AKTAMIŞ, Adnan Menderes University, Faculty of Education, Department of Science Education, Aydın/Turkey. E-mail: hilalaktamis@gmail.com Phone: +90 256 214 10 61/1587.

2009; Erdem, 2003; Halstead & Taylor, 2000; Sari, 2005; Yazıcı, 2006; Yilmaz, 2009). This study is different from the ones in literature in that especially the change in scientific, artistic and social values are emphasized and whether there is a change in their conceptualization dimension of values that prospective teachers have during their education is stated. In this context the problem of the study is expressed as “What is the changing level of prospective teachers’ conceptualization of their values during their university education?”

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the changing level of prospective teachers’ conceptualization of their values during their university education.

Method

Model

In this study serway method is used (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2008).

Study Group

Participants of the study is composed of prospective teachers attending Adnan Menderes University Faculty of Education, Science Teaching, Social Sciences and Fine Arts Teaching Departments $n=208$. 109 (52.40%) of the participants are female and 99 (47.60%) of them are male.

Instrument

In this study considering the study group’s conceptualization of values and their psychometric features *Study of Values Scale* developed by Allport et al., (1960a) was used to collect data. Values Scale evaluates theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious values (Allport et al., 1960a).

Cronbach’s α coefficient for reliability was found 0.90 (Allport, Lindzey, & Vernon, 1960b). The scale is adapted into Turkish by Cansever, Gürkaynak and Oğün (cited in Ardaç, Albayrak-Kaymak, & Erktin, 1994). In this study for validity of language the scale was looked through by specialist and words that might cause misunderstanding were corrected by researchers during the reliability study of the scale. Split half method is used for reliability study and reliability coefficient was calculated using Spearman-Brown formula. After it has been administered, 74 university students’ result for every subscale is given in Table 1.

Table 1.
Values Test Split Half and Cronbach Alpha Coefficients

| Values | N=74 |
|-------------|------|
| Theoretical | 0.75 |
| Economic | 0.75 |
| Aesthetic | 0.70 |
| Social | 0.72 |
| Political | 0.71 |
| Religious | 0.81 |

Average reliability for the scale in this study is found 0.74. If reliability coefficient is between $0.60 < \alpha < 0.80$, it is quite reliable (Kalaycı, 2010).

Data Analysis

The data gathered from Values Scale was analyzed using one way multivariate analysis of variance and as a following test for each dependent variable analysis of variance was performed with the help of SPSS 11.5 software. Partial eta-square values were evaluated according to Kittler, Menard and Phillips, (2007). Analysis of the data was performed at a significance level of 0.05.

Results

1. Sub problem: Do Prospective Teachers’ Values Differ in terms of Their Sexes?

When all prospective teachers’ MANOVA results are examined; it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference in their average scores concerning values subscales [$F(6, 201)=1.97, p>0.05$]. At the end of one-way analysis of variance ANOVA results for factor analysis according to sex there is no significant difference between theoretical, economic, social, political and religious subscales. On the other hand there is a significant difference in aesthetic subscale between male and female prospective teachers. In aesthetic values subscale it is seen that male prospective teachers’ average scores (Mean= 39.76) are lower than female prospective teachers’ average scores (Mean= 42.49).

2. Sub problem: Is There a Difference between Freshman and Senior Prospective Teachers’ Values?

When all prospective teachers’ MANOVA results are examined; it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference in their average scores concerning values subscales [$F(6, 201)=3.358, p<0.01$]. At the end of one-way analysis of variance ANOVA results

for factor analysis according to class there is a significant difference between theoretical, economic, political and religious subscales. There is no significant difference in aesthetic and social subscales according to their class level.

When MANOVA results of Science Teaching students are examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference in their average scores from all subscales of the values [$F(6, 51)=0.792, p>0.05$]. At the end of one-way analysis of variance ANOVA results for factor analysis according to class there is no significant difference between their scores from theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social and religious values. For political values there is a significant difference between their average scores.

When MANOVA results of Social Science Teaching students are examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference in their average scores from all subscales of the values [$F(6, 67)=1.563, p>0.05$]. At the end of one-way analysis of variance ANOVA results for factor analysis according to class there is no significant difference between their scores from theoretical, economic, social, political and religious values. There is a significant difference between their scores from aesthetic values.

When MANOVA results of Fine Arts Teaching students are examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference in their average scores from all subscales of the values [$F(6, 69)=2.441, p<0.05$]. At the end of one-way analysis of variance ANOVA results for factor analysis according to class there is no significant difference between their scores from theoretical, economic and social values while there is a significant difference between their scores from aesthetic, religious and political values.

All prospective teachers' theoretical and political values are in favor of seniors and economic and religious values are in favor of freshmen. Science Teaching prospective teachers' political values are in favor of seniors. Social Sciences teaching prospective teachers' aesthetic values are in favor of seniors. Fine Arts teaching prospective teacher's aesthetic and political values are in favor of seniors but religious values are in favor of freshmen.

3. Sub problem: Is There a Difference between Prospective Teachers Values Attending Science, Social Sciences and Fine Arts Teaching Departments?

When all prospective teachers results are examined there is no significant difference in their average scores from all subscales of the values [$F(12,$

$400)=9.402, p<0.01$]. At the end of one-way analysis of variance ANOVA results there is no significant difference between their scores from social, economic, and political values, while there is a significant difference between their average scores from religious, aesthetic and theoretical values concerning their departments.

When freshmen's results are examined there is a significant difference in their average scores from all subscales of the values [$F(12, 222)=5.952, p<0.01$]. At the end of one-way analysis of variance results while there is no significant difference between their scores from religious and economic values, there is a significant difference between their scores from political, social, aesthetic, and theoretical values according to their department.

When the results of seniors examined there is a significant difference in their average scores from all subscales of the values [$F(12, 162)=4.948, p<0.01$]. At the end of one-way analysis of variance ANOVA results while there is no significant difference between their scores from economic and political values, there is a significant difference between their scores from theoretical, aesthetic and religious values regarding their department.

Discussion

When the values are examined according to sex, it is seen that only in aesthetic subscale there is a significant difference in favor of females. Similar studies in literature supports this finding (Allport et al., 1960a; Ersoy, 2009; Flowers, 2006, pp. 337-349; Moir & Jessel, 2002; Mudd, 2002; Rokeach, 1973, p. 10). That women have higher aesthetic values can be explained by their emotional dimension.

When values are examined according to class level, it is seen that all seniors' political and theoretical values are higher while freshmen's economic and religious values are higher. It can be thought that theoretical and political values increased as they are affected by university education. It is observed that Science Teaching prospective teachers' political values increased when they are seniors. One of the possible reasons of this can be seniors beginning to have anxiety about starting their profession and at this point they recognize the "power" represented by political value. Increase in aesthetic values of seniors in Social Sciences teaching can be explained with the art and aesthetic courses they have taken. In Fine Arts teaching aesthetic values increase when they are seniors too, one possible explanation for this is that this department registers students

with special ability tests and during their undergraduate education they attend related courses. The increase in their political values might be a result of competition with their colleagues in their pieces of works. When prospective teachers' developments of religious values are examined according to some theories, the difference between freshmen and seniors can be related to their life experiences (Fowler's "Stages of Faith", cited in Özdemir [2008]; Kohlberg'in, "theory of moral development [1981]; Piaget'in "theory of moral development cited in Woolfolk [1998]). According to this why freshmen are more conformists can be linked with their higher religious values. As it is thought that seniors form their own religious values, decrease in their religious values can be interpreted as natural.

There is a difference among Social Sciences, Fine Arts and Science Teaching Department students, which is in favor of Science Teaching department students. Collette and Chiappetta (1989), Bauer (1996, p. 12) and Hughes (1997) believe that a student of science department should have some basic features. It is expected that science students' theoretical values should be higher than other students in social and art departments. This situation supports the finding of the study. When the literature is reviewed, there is no study comparing value preferences of different departments. The difference in their aesthetic values among Social Sciences, Fine Arts and Science teaching department students is in favor of Fine Arts teaching department. In social values the difference between Science teaching and Social Sciences teaching is in favor of Social Sciences teaching department. In political values the difference between Social Sciences and Fine Arts is in favor of Social Sciences department.

As a consequence, it can be said that there is a correlation between values and departments attended by students. Theoretical values in science teaching, social and aesthetic values in Social Sciences and aesthetic values in Fine Arts prospective teachers might be related with the education they get in their departments. In addition to that the difference between freshmen and seniors in their religious values might be a result of the environment and the period they live in. It can be said that an individual is affected from the culture he has lived in during his education and then he reforms his values by evaluating them in a critical view. When males and females are compared, it is found that females have a higher aesthetic value, which shows females' emotional side is dominant while evaluating events

In the light of these results, it is recommended that more detailed studies should be conducted about the

departments they attend, and their value development and content about improvement of values should be included into the curriculum. This study has been limited to one university with three departments. The study could be carried out with other universities and departments, and development of values could be improved. Moreover, this study has been conducted with only freshmen and seniors, so it is thought that repeating the study in a longitudinal way may contribute to the understanding the role of university education in the development of values.

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