



THE INVESTIGATION OF TEACHERS' VALUES TENDENCIES IN THE PANDEMIC PERIODⁱ

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Abstract:

Passing through critical periods can have an impact on value systems. Our values can change in extraordinary periods such as pandemics. When the COVID-19 pandemic that affect the world is considered as one of these extraordinary situations, passing through this period may have an impact on value systems. This study was conducted to determine whether there was a change in the values of classroom teachers during the lockdown in the pandemic period. Data were collected from 224 teachers using Schwartz's Value Survey. The results of the findings analyzed descriptively were compared with the research findings collected from teacher groups using the same scale before the pandemic in the literature. Conformity was found to be the most important value in this research. Conformity value was ranked fifth, on average, in other studies.

Keywords: value change, pandemic, primary school teacher, conformity, Schwartz Value System, traditional

Özet:

Kritik dönemlerden geçmek, değer sistemlerini etkileyebilir. Pandemi gibi olağanüstü dönemlerde değerlerimiz değişebiliyor. Dünyayı etkisi altına alan COVID-19 pandemisi de bu olağanüstü durumlardan biri olarak değerlendirildiğinde, bu dönemden geçmek değer sistemlerini de etkileyebilir. Bu çalışma, pandemi döneminde karantina döneminde sınıf öğretmenlerinin değerlerinde bir değişiklik olup olmadığını belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. 224 öğretmenden Schwartz Değer Anketi kullanılarak veri toplanmıştır. Betimsel olarak incelenen bulguların sonuçları, literatürde pandemi öncesinde aynı ölçeği kullanarak öğretmen gruplarından toplanan araştırma bulguları ile karşılaştırılmıştır. Bu çalışmada en önemli değer "uyuma" olduğu görülmüştür. Uyuma değeri, diğer çalışmalarda ortalama olarak beşinci sırada yer aldığı görülmüştür.

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Anahtar kelimeler: değer değişimi, pandemi, ilkökul öğretmeni, uyma, Schwartz Değer Sistemi, geleneksel

1. Introduction

Values are criteria that affect people's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors and serve as criteria for human choices. Values, as opposed to attitudes, norms, and characteristics, are a significant, particularly central component of our self and personality. Values play an important role in motivating behaviors and attitudes (Schwartz, 2012). Values are guidelines that help us rationalize meaning, attitudes, and behaviors that would otherwise be considered as individually and socially unacceptable (Rokeach, 1973). When evaluated values in this context, values come into play in human life, being aware of it or not, as preferences. For example, when associated with the pandemic period, a person treating the elderly with respect can be an indicator of his values. A person's respect for his parents can also be considered as an indicator of his values as well. A person who does not display any value under normal conditions may behave by the value depending on his life in the pandemic period. It could be said that the reverse is also possible.

Since values are so treasured, it would be appropriate to talk about theories on values. There are many opinions, theories, or studies about the definition, classification, and measurement of values in the literature. One of the theories frequently used is the value theory of Schwartz. This theory groups ten core values into three basic universal motivations: the needs of individuals as biological organisms, the requisites of coordinated social interaction, and the requirements for the smooth functioning and survival of groups (Schwartz, 1994). Explanations of these ten basic values can be found as follows (Atay, 2003; Demirutku & Sümer, 2010; Kuşdil & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000; Schwartz, 1992, 1994, 2003, 2012):

Table 1: Values and Their Definitions

Value	Exemplary Values	Definitions
Power	Social power, authority, wealth	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources
Achievement	Successful, capable, ambitious	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards
Hedonism	Pleasure, enjoying life	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself
Stimulation	Daring, varied life, exciting life	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life
Self-direction	Creativity, curious, freedom	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring
Universalism	Broad-minded, social justice, equality	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and nature
Benevolence	Helpful, honest, forgiving	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact
Tradition	Humble, devout, accepting my portion in life	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide

Conformity	Politeness, obedient, honoring parents and elders	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms
Security	National security, social order, clean	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and self

The first column of Table 1 lists ten-value categories, each of which is specified in terms of its central goal. The second column contains illustrative unique values that best reflect each form. When people behave in ways that convey or contribute to the fulfillment of these particular values, they advance the central purpose of the value type (Schwartz, 1994). The values stated above also constitute the sub-dimensions of the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS), which is one of the scales aiming to measure the values. The SVS aimed to fill the various gaps in the value measurement of the previous literature. Data collection tool development studies, which were first started by Schwartz and Bilsky in 1987, later carried out by Schwartz as the result of a series of studies. (Kuşdil & Kağıtçibaşı, 2000; Schwartz, 1992, 1994; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987).

When SVS is examined, it is seen that 56 values were created as a result of the literature review. For example, the values related to self-direction are derived from the works of Bandura, Deci, White; values related to hedonism are benefited from the works of scholars such as Bentham, Freud, Morris, and James (Schwartz, 1992). When the other items are examined, it is seen that the value list has been derived from different studies in the literature. As mentioned above, ten sub-factors were determined after analysis of the data collected from different cultures, including Turkey. This value list is used in many studies, as it is more comprehensive than the Rokeach Value Survey.

Numerous studies that use SVS are also conducted in Turkey. However, researches on teacher groups are limited. SVS scale, which was used for the first time in 2000, has been used in different studies in Turkey, until today. Memiş and Günay-Gedik (2010) used SVS to measure the values of the classroom teachers; Şahin-Fırat (2010) used it to measure school principals and teachers' perceptions of school culture and value systems; Dündar (2012) used it to measure the values of teachers; Türkan and Kaya (2019) used this scale to measure the effect of values on proficiency of teachers in interpersonal relationships. However, when the purposes of these studies are examined, it is seen that there is no association with the pandemic period.

Therefore, this study differs, as it aims to determine the classroom teachers' values descriptively in a cross-sectional manner during the pandemic period. Another reason for this study is the thought that passing through a critical period may have a transformative effect on values. Because values are not there from birth, they are acquired in society. Therefore, this research reflects that the pandemic period might also have a possible effect on values.

Another issue that needs to be addressed in the study is the change observed in values over time. Growing empirical evidence, albeit scattered, show that cultures are changing. The World Value Survey that tracked attitudes and values in 81 societies over several years found evidence of "a massive cultural change" even within the relatively brief period covered by the data (Taras et al., 2012). A longitudinal study was administered in

Ankara, Turkey, to 289 young people in 1989, to 318 young people in 1992, and 397 young people in 1995. The findings revealed that in 1989, Turkish youth's value orientations underwent significant shifts, which were manifested in 1992, toward a more competitive and individualistic orientation. The findings revealed that from 1989 to 1992, Turkish youth's value orientations underwent a significant shift toward a more competitive and individualistic direction. In 1995, similar features were expressed in the value preferences of young people, indicating that values are changed in response to societal changes (Çileli, 2000).

When the studies examining the effects of extraordinary situations on values are analyzed, it is seen that values may change. For example, a study determined that the tourism values of tourists differ if there's a risk of terrorism (Veréb et al., 2018). Another study on the effects of the September 11 attacks on adolescents and students in Finland observed that the stimulation value was low immediately after the attack (Verkasalo et al., 2006). Another study examining the possible effects of the financial crisis in Europe on the values of young people showed that the importance of security, tradition, benevolence, and harmony had increased. On the other hand, hedonism, self-orientation, and arousal values were found to decrease (Sortheix et al., 2019).

2. Research Questions

This study aims to measure the value perceptions of classroom teachers during the lockdown in the COVID-19 pandemic. The problem statement of the research is as follows:

- How are the classroom teachers' values affected during their "stay at home" in the pandemic?

3. Material and Methods

The survey research method was used in this study. This method has become an important technique for gathering information about all types of individuals (Stockemer, 2019). It is a research method that systematically collects cross-sectional data about people and their preferences, thoughts, and behaviors, mostly using standardized questionnaires or interviews (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Bryman, 2012; Stockemer, 2019). To collect data about teachers' values, the survey research method was deemed appropriate.

3.1 Samples and Procedure

The study sample consists of 224 classroom teachers who serve in Turkey. Teachers were reached based on convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a technique that aims to reach close, easily accessible, or suitable persons (Bailey, 1994; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Howitt, 2016). It can even be said that social research is frequently based on convenience sampling (Bryman, 2012). The data were collected online when Turkey was in the "stay at home" period in March 2020 during the pandemic. Most of the mailing questionnaires are types of questionnaires in which the same questionnaire is mailed to a large number

of people, and willing respondents complete the questionnaire whenever they want (Bhattacharjee, 2012). After the necessary permissions were taken, the value list was converted into an online form; the link of the online form was sent to classroom teachers via WhatsApp groups, and teachers were asked to fill it in. The link was also shared on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. The data were collected approximately in two months. After the preliminary examination, all of the questionnaires filled in by the teachers were used in data analysis.

3.2 Measurement

The SVS, consisting of 56 values, which was developed by Schwartz (1992) was used in the research as a data collection tool. On the SVS, respondents rank 56 value items in order of importance. The validity of the SVS has been confirmed by studies in over 70 countries. These studies have shown that the SVS's ten principles cover all essential values inside and across cultures and that they have quasi-universal applicability (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987).

Kuşdil and Kağıtçıbaşı (2000) first used this scale (SVS) on the Turkish population to determine teachers' values. Afterward, the scale was adapted to Turkish again by Atay (2003) and Demirutku and Sümer (2010). In this research, the scale adopted to Turkish by Atay (2003) was used as a data collection tool. In the 7-point Likert scale, the participants were asked to evaluate the importance level of the values expressed according to them. Kuşdil and Kağıtçıbaşı (2000) found the reliability coefficients of ten sub-dimensions of SVS between .54 and .77. Atay (2003) used the form translated by Kuşdil and Kağıtçıbaşı instead of re-translating the scale and found the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of this scale as 0.88. In this study, the Cronbach alpha values, which are the internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions, were determined between .67 and .90.

In the Smallest Area Analysis of original of the scale performed by Schwartz (Schwartz, 1994), he determined sub-value dimensions in which the items should be included. In the reliability studies conducted for this study, analyses were made with the Multidimensional Scaling (Proxscal) method in SPSS to determine in which sub-dimension the SVS items are included. It was observed that some of the values did not fit the distribution of the original structure.

Based on the value dimensions determined by Schwartz (1994), the correlation coefficients between the values in each sub-dimension were examined to determine which values are included in the dimensions. Items with a correlation coefficient below .40 were excluded from the sub-dimensions. Accordingly, *wealth* and *preserving my public image* in the "power" sub-dimension; *influential* in "achievement"; *accepting portion in life* from the "tradition"; *obedient* and *self-discipline* from the "conformity"; *sense of belonging* from "security" were removed from the scale. The values of hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, and benevolence remained the same.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data of this study, which aims to determine the values preferences of teachers during the pandemic period, has been analyzed descriptively. Descriptive analysis refers to statistically describing, aggregating, and presenting the constructs of interest or associations between these constructs (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Arithmetic means and standard deviation values of the sub-dimensions of the scale are given. When evaluating the mean of the sub-dimensions of SVS, which consists of 7-point Likert-type items, the range of 1.00 - 1.86 is "Totally not important" (1), the range of 1.87 - 2.71 is "Not important" (2), 2.72 - 3.57 "Not very important" (3), 3.58 - 4.43 "Less important" (4), 4.44 - 5.29 "Moderately important" (5), 5.30 - 6.14 "Important" (6) and 6.15-7.00 "Very Important" (7).

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter shows the results of SVS.

The findings of this study, in which the values tendencies of teachers were determined in the pandemic period based on SVS, are shown in Table 2. The results show the ranking from the most important value to the least important. Teachers consider power as ($\bar{x} = 4.23$) less important, stimulation moderately important ($\bar{x} = 5.19$), achievement ($\bar{x} = 6.08$) and hedonism ($\bar{x} = 5.22$) important; tradition ($\bar{x} = 6.17$), self-direction ($\bar{x} = 6.21$), benevolence ($\bar{x} = 6.33$), universalism ($\bar{x} = 6.40$), security ($\bar{x} = 6.42$) and conformity ($\bar{x} = 6.55$) as the most important values.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of SVS

Values	Reliability Coefficients	Mean	sd	Evaluation Range
Conformity	.70	6.55	.85	7
Security	.84	6.42	.81	
Universalism	.89	6.40	.82	
Benevolence	.90	6.33	.81	
Self-direction	.81	6.21	.86	
Tradition	.72	6.17	.84	
Achievement	.77	6.08	.88	6
Hedonism	.67	5.22	1.13	
Stimulation	.74	5.19	1.22	5
Power	.77	4.23	1.64	4

This study aims to measure the teachers' values in March 2020, with the first case of COVID-19 and lockdown. The results are compared with the results obtained from different researches conducted using the same questions in different periods. Classroom teachers consider the values of conformity, security, universalism, benevolence, self-orientation, traditionalism, hedonism, success, stimulation, and power, respectively.

Conformity is considered as the first important value by classroom teachers. When compared with the previous research findings, it is seen that this value varies. In these studies, conformity is seen as the fifth most important value among ten values (Çelebi,

2014; Demirutku & Sümer, 2010; Kuşdil & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000; Memiş & Güney Gedik, 2010; Türkan & Kaya, 2019). The importance that teachers attribute to the conformity is very different from previous studies. This result shows that the most changing value during the COVID-19 pandemic period is conformity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges and a disproportionate threat to humanity, especially to older adults' lives, relationships, and well-being (Chee, 2020). Respect for the elderly varies by country and time. A recent analysis by the World Health Organization (WHO) using world values survey data of 83.034 adults from 57 countries shows that society have low respect to elder people (Officer et al., 2016). But in collectivist countries, young people traditionally care about respect for the elderly. In Korea, for example, the various forms of elders' respect found among the Koreans reflect the family system and the social structure in which the young maintain familial and social relationships with elderly persons (Sung, 2004). In general, Turkey, as a collectivist society (Aygün & Imamoglu, 2002; Göregenli, 1997) has appeared more individual during the 2000s according to meta-analysis research of Taras et al. (2012).

Respect for the elderly can be evaluated from another point of view as follows. Conformity includes "to be obedient to parents" and "to be polite." During the pandemic, it is observed that the values of being obedient and respectful to parents and being kind to both family and community members gain importance both in the family and society. Among the possible reasons for this, it may be expressed as the proximity of family members because of the negative emotions associated with the disease, and as a result, the strengthening of family ties between members who stayed together during the pandemic period. Or, the fact that the elderly is in a higher risk group during the pandemic period may have given this result. According to this finding, the respect Turkish teachers show to the elderly is higher than in other countries in the world, especially in individualist countries.

Another value that deviates from previous research findings is tradition. Tradition is seen as the fifth most important value in this research. In other studies, (Çelebi, 2014; Demirutku & Sümer, 2010; Kuşdil & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000; Memiş & Güney Gedik, 2010; Türkan & Kaya, 2019), tradition is the ninth most important value in average. Based on the findings of this research, it can be said that the importance that teachers attribute to the value of traditionalism partially increased during the pandemic period.

Compared to previous studies, it is seen that the importance attributed to other values does not differ or shows little change. This finding shows that there is no significant difference in the values of teachers other than conformity and tradition during the pandemic period.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

About the Author

Dr. Cihat Yaşaroğlu is an associate professor with research interests in primary education, moral education, primary school teachers' values system and environmental education. He is affiliated with İnönü University, Turkey.

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