

## Examining the Social Studies Textbooks at the Basic Education Level through Values Education

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**ABSTRACT :** The purpose of this study is to examine the texts in Social Studies textbooks used in Northern Cyprus in terms of values education based on UNESCO List of Values, Living Values List and Rokeach's Value Classification. In this study, which was carried out with the document analysis pattern, one of the qualitative research methods, social studies textbooks used at the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grades in Northern Cyprus in the 2020-2021 academic year were examined. The data are presented by examining all the sentences expressing value in the visuals and texts in the textbooks. At the end of the research, it was determined that the most frequently used values in social studies textbooks were responsibility, freedom, and respect, and the least frequently used values were hospitality, honesty, humility and simplicity. Besides, it is seen that the values in the books are quantitatively dense, but there is no overlap in conveying the values according to grade levels. Therefore, it was determined that some values were not included at all at some grades, and a systematic distribution was not observed in terms of value, theme and grades levels.

**KEYWORDS:** value, social studies textbooks, UNESCO List of Values, Living Values List, Rokeach's Value classification

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of value, which was first used by Zna-niecki in social sciences, comes from the word "valere", which means precious-powerful in Latin (Bilgin, 1995). In addition to being an abstract concept, it is difficult to find a common definition for the concept of value due to the inclusion of different disciplines (psychology, sociology, philosophy) in the field of research. While there are approaches based on the individual's self and behaviors while explaining the concept of value, there are also explanations that prioritize the current social structure or consider values as an evaluation criterion. The Turkish Language Institution (2022) defines value as follows: "The whole of the material and spiritual elements that include the social, cultural, economic and scientific values of a nation." It has been acknowledged that there is a direct relationship between values and behaviors and that values form the substructure of behaviors, but are not seen before they become behaviors (Hofstede, 2001). Value, which is an affective concept, first affects the preferences, beliefs and feelings of the person in the world of the mind and then shapes their behavior (Ulusoy and Dilmaç, 2012). Continuity of culture is at the focus of considering values from a social point of view. At this point, it is important to pass on the values that exist in the society to future generations in order not to lose them. Thus, values play a unifying role in society and their continuity should be ensured. Therefore, even though values education has existed under different names in almost all societies from past to present (such as education, character education, moral education), it is a process designed to ensure that individuals develop a good personality by transferring values. A holistic education system that aims to raise individuals who are aware of the values of the society they live in, have mature behaviors, and whose personality has developed in accordance with their age, is called "values education". Values education creates structures that motivate individuals by supporting the development of ethical sense and competence (Berkowitz, 2011), as well as contributing more true meanings to their own lives (Freakley, Burgh and MacSparran, 2008).

The first environment an individual receives values education is his/her family. School and teachers follow. In each of these stages, the values that society accepts, internalizes and wants to pass on to the next generations are put into service. The responsibility of these institutions for the transfer of values is very important. In this respect, the family's responsibility takes precedence. When the child enters an educational institution, the family and school begin to share this responsibility. Schools are institutions that implement values education in a more planned and organized way. During this application, road maps are provided in the curriculum such as the goals and achievements. First of all, after the rules of the institution are given to the student as "right" and "wrong" and a framework is provided, education on the values belonging to the society and therefore the values predicted

by the programs are conveyed. In addition to being sensitive and rational-minded as a result of the education at school, it is important to raise individuals who can find solutions to the problems encountered in their lives and think critically towards the society. At this point, the responsibility of teachers is of key importance because they must be individuals who are role models by applying these values in their own thoughts and behaviors, beyond being people who just convey them to students. Social studies course, which is defined as citizenship education program, is an important and necessary part of values education which will lay the basis of the profile of individuals that the country desires to raise. Basic knowledge, attitudes and values required by social life are given through social studies course. Through this course, raising a critical and creative citizen who can look at the ongoing stereotypes and values of the society with a critical eye and who has the ability to produce new values can also be achieved. On the other hand, it is also important to cover appropriate and reliable values in social studies courses (Naylor and Diem, 1987).

It is known that a special place is reserved for values education in formal education programs and plans in a global context. In this respect, values education has been included in the curriculum prepared in Northern Cyprus, which is trying to catch up with the age and tries to create its own basic education program for the first time in its history by aiming to follow the theories and practices in the field of educational sciences. For this reason, the Basic Education Program Development Project (TEPGEP) was launched in 2014 on a national scale, and curricula for all courses for preschool and grades 1-8 began to be written. The aims of the social studies course curriculum written within the scope of this project are as follows: (i) to enable students to understand the society they live in, taking into account the global connections within the dimensions of place and time, (ii) to ensure that they value the nature they live in and people regardless of place and difference, (iii) to enable them to make rational decisions and find creative solutions to the problems they encounter by operating the process of reasoning based on accurate information, and (iv) to ensure that they gain knowledge, values-attitudes and skills that aim to ensure their active participation in the democratic process in all the environments they are in.

Values education is among the foreground topics in the studies in the literature, considering the importance it has in the field of education. In this context, in the studies conducted by Kuş, Merey and Karatekin (2013) examining the values included in the primary education 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies textbooks, patriotism, love, solidarity, sensitivity and responsibility were revealed as the most emphasized values. In addition, Ferreira and Schulze (2014) investigated teachers' experiences of value teaching practices in the classroom. The result of this study, which offers the opportunity to compare the opinions of policy makers and teachers, has revealed the gap between planning and implementation. In addition, Mahmood, Rizvi and Perveen (2017) examined the value practices of teachers in the classroom in their study. As a result, it was determined that the teachers focused on the values of compassion, courage, empathy, humility, tolerance and determination during the application. Finally, as a result of the research of Dere and Yavuzay (2020), who aimed to examine the experiences and opinions of teachers about value education in social studies courses, it is seen that social studies teachers first touched on the social, individual and universal dimensions of the concept of "value". It has been determined that the values of patriotism, respect, honesty and justice are prioritized, and in doing so, the family, school and society are equally responsible.

According to the information the author has, it can be seen that social studies textbooks, which were beginning to be used in the context in the 2016-2017 academic year at primary school (4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grades) and secondary school (6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grades) were not subjected to any research based on a list of universal values. It is believed that this study will be important in terms of comparing the harmony between the values conveyed to students with social studies textbooks and universal values. The aim of the study, which was designed based on these results in the literature, is to reveal the extent to which visuals and texts in social studies textbooks, which are very important in terms of values education, are compatible with a total of 22 universal values included in the Living Values List, UNESCO List of Values and Rokeach Value Classification. The sub-goals determined within the framework of this main goal are as follows:

1. How often are universal values mentioned in the Social Studies 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades textbook themes?
2. How often are universal values mentioned in the Social Studies 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades textbook themes?
3. What is the distribution of the values conveyed in the books at the basic education level of the Social Studies course according to the grade level?

## **II. METHOD**

This study, which aims to examine the visuals and texts in the Social Studies textbooks at the basic education level of Northern Cyprus in terms of value transfer, was carried out with qualitative research method (Bryman, 2016) adopted as a research method that emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and

analysis of data. In this study conducted with the qualitative research method, the document review design was preferred. Document review is the systematic analysis of written and visual sources containing information about the phenomena aimed to be investigated (Wach and Ward, 2013). During the study, texts in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies textbooks used in basic education level in 2020-2021 academic year in Northern Cyprus were examined. Depending on the value types defined in Living Values List, UNESCO List of Values and Rokeach Values Inventory, the frequency of mentions for these values in the texts are determined. The values examined in this study consist of 22 values. Values are taken from the Living Values list, namely; humility, peace, honesty, tolerance, cooperation, happiness, freedom, respect, love, responsibility, sincerity, simplicity. Next, values are taken from the UNESCO list of values, namely; diligence, solidarity, aesthetics, hospitality, cleanliness, patriotism, benevolence, giving importance to family unity. Lastly, values like friendship and kindness are drawn from Rokeach's Values Classification. In this context, first of all, sentences expressing value in the analyzed textbooks were determined. Accordingly, in the re-readings, the sentences with uncertain value expressions were removed and the research continued with only definite expressions. The precision of these values was increased by comparing definite values whose accuracy was tested by the researchers with the data obtained in subsequent readings. Descriptive analysis approach was used to analyze the data obtained in the study. During this analysis, the data are processed in depth, and are interpreted and presented as previously formed themes (Dawson, 2009). First, the scope of the descriptive analysis was determined and classified according to themes depending on the dimensions in the analysis of the data. Depending on this classification, the cases of each value in the text are tabulated with their frequencies. Overall, 10 themes are found at 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, and 11 themes are found at 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, making a total of 21 themes in Social Studies textbooks.

### III. FINDINGS

In this part of the research, the findings regarding the distribution of values in the Social Studies course book of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades by grade level are presented below in the form of tables.

**Findings Regarding the First Sub-Purpose :** Findings as regards the question "How often are universal values mentioned in the Social Studies 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade textbook themes?" which is the first sub-purpose of the research are given in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Values in the Social Studies course 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade textbook

Grades	4 <sup>th</sup>					5 <sup>th</sup>				
	I	My Family	Environment	Cultural Heritage	Rights and Responsibilities	Social Institutions	Position of Country	Government of Country	Produce and Share	Country's Connection
Values	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
Peace	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-
Respect	3	2	2	1	2	1	-	5	1	-
Love	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Cooperation	-	7	3	1	4	1	-	2	1	2
Happiness	5	9	3	1	1	1	-	3	2	2
Honesty	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Humility	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Responsibility	1	10	12	2	10	2	3	3	4	3
Tolerance	1	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	1

Freedom	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-
Aesthetic	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	1	-
Solidarity	-	11	3	1	2	3	-	2	1	-
Family Unity	2	17	2	3	2	1	-	-	1	1
Diligence	1	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-
Hospitality	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Cleaning	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Benevolence	1	11	6	2	-	3	-	2	2	2
Patriotism	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-
Kindness	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Friendship	6	2	4	1	3	1	-	2	1	2
Sincerity	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Simplicity	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

According to **Table 1**, in the theme “I”, friendship ( $f = 6$ ), happiness ( $f = 5$ ), respect ( $f = 3$ ) and love ( $f = 3$ ) were the most frequent values; in the theme “My Family”, family unity ( $f = 17$ ), solidarity ( $f = 11$ ), benevolence ( $f = 11$ ) and responsibility ( $f = 10$ ) were the most frequent values; and in the theme “Environment I Live in”, responsibility ( $f = 12$ ) and benevolence ( $f = 6$ ) were the most frequent values. On the other hand, at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level, responsibility ( $f = 23$ ), family unity ( $f = 21$ ) and benevolence ( $f = 18$ ) were the most frequently used values. Freedom, aesthetics and patriotism values were not mentioned at 4<sup>th</sup> grade level at all.

Moreover, as shown in the table above aesthetics ( $f = 7$ ) and patriotism ( $f = 4$ ) are mentioned in Cultural Heritage theme, responsibility ( $f = 10$ ), cooperation ( $f = 4$ ) and friendship ( $f = 3$ ) are mentioned in Our Rights and Responsibilities theme, benevolence ( $f = 3$ ) and solidarity ( $f = 3$ ) are mentioned in Social Institutions theme, responsibility ( $f = 3$ ) is mentioned in the Position of our Country theme, Freedom ( $f = 5$ ) and respect ( $f = 5$ ) are mentioned in the Government of our Country theme, responsibility ( $f = 4$ ) is mentioned in What we Produce and Share theme, and responsibility ( $f = 3$ ) is mentioned in Our Country’s Connection with the World theme. On the other hand, responsibility ( $f = 27$ ) and benevolence ( $f = 11$ ) are the most frequently used values at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level. Honesty and humility were not given any place at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level.

**Findings Regarding the Second Sub-Purpose :** Findings as regards the question “How often are universal values mentioned in the Social Studies 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade textbook themes?” which is the second sub-purpose of the research are given in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Values in the Social Studies course 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade textbook

Grades	6 <sup>th</sup>					7 <sup>th</sup>					
Themes											
	Social Events	The World	Population and Settlement	Human in Time	Social and Cultural Differences	Democracy and Human Rights	Living Together	Needs, Production and Consumption	Technology and Society	Development	Global Dependency

Values	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
Peace	1	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	7
Respect	2	-	1	1	5	20	30	1	5	1	1
Love	2	-	-	-	-	-	10	1	-	2	1
Cooperation	-	1	2	3	1	5	16	4	2	-	1
Happiness	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	2	-
Honesty	2	-	-	-	-	6	1	-	-	-	1
Humility	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	3	2	-	1
Responsibility	-	7	-	1	-	20	20	10	6	-	4
Tolerance	1	-	1	2	4	9	19	1	2	-	6
Freedom	-	-	-	1	-	58	8	1	5	5	3
Aesthetic	3	-	2	1	8	1	1	2	2	1	8
Solidarity	4	5	1	5	2	6	14	3	-	-	6
Family Unity	-	-	-	3	1	1	5	-	1	3	1
Diligence	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	1	-
Hospitality	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cleaning	2	-	-	-	-	3	4	2	-	-	3
Benevolence	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	3	-	-	-
Patriotism	1	-	-	1	-	1	3	-	-	-	6
Kindness	1	-	-	-	-	1	20	-	-	-	-
Friendship	2	-	-	-	1	1	3	-	1	-	1
Sincerity	-	-	-	-	1	-	10	-	-	-	-
Simplicity	-	-	1	2	-	-	2	2	2	-	1

According to **Table 2**, in Understanding Social Events theme solidarity ( $f = 4$ ) and aesthetics ( $f = 3$ ), in the World We Live in theme responsibility ( $f = 7$ ) and solidarity ( $f = 5$ ), in Population and Settlement theme cooperation ( $f = 2$ ) and aesthetic ( $f = 2$ ), in Human in Time theme solidarity ( $f = 5$ ), cooperation ( $f = 3$ ) and family unity ( $f = 3$ ), in Social and Cultural Differences theme aesthetic ( $f = 8$ ), respect ( $f = 5$ ) and tolerance ( $f = 4$ ), in Democracy and Human Rights theme freedom ( $f = 58$ ), respect ( $f = 20$ ) and responsibility ( $f = 20$ ) are the most frequently mentioned values. In addition, freedom ( $f = 58$ ), respect ( $f = 29$ ), responsibility ( $f = 28$ ) and solidarity ( $f = 23$ ) are the most frequently used values at 6<sup>th</sup> grade level. Hospitality value was not mentioned at all at 6<sup>th</sup> grade level.

In accordance with the **Table 2**, the most frequent values in Living Together theme are respect ( $f = 30$ ), responsibility ( $f = 20$ ) and kindness ( $f = 20$ ); the most frequent value in Production and Consumption theme is responsibility ( $f = 10$ ), the most frequent values in Technology and Society theme are responsibility ( $f = 6$ ), respect ( $f = 5$ ) and freedom ( $f = 5$ ); the most frequent values in Development theme are freedom ( $f = 5$ ) and family unity ( $f = 3$ ); and the most frequent values in Global Dependency theme are aesthetics ( $f = 8$ ) and peace ( $f = 7$ ). In addition, at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level, responsibility ( $f = 40$ ) and respect ( $f = 38$ ) are the most used values. At the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level, only the value of hospitality is not mentioned.

**Findings Regarding the Third Sub-Purpose :** Findings as regards the question “What is the distribution of the values conveyed in the books at the basic education level of the Social Studies course according to the grade level **Table 3**.

**Table 3.** Values in Social Studies course 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks

Values	4. Grade	5. Grade	6. Grade	7. Grade	Total
Peace	1	3	4	8	16
Respect	7	10	29	38	84
Love	8	1	2	14	25
Cooperation	10	11	12	23	56
Happiness	17	10	1	7	35
Honesty	2	-	8	2	12
Humility	1	-	2	9	12
Responsibility	23	27	28	40	118
Tolerance	3	5	17	28	53
Freedom	-	5	59	22	86
Aesthetic	-	8	15	14	37
Solidarity	14	9	23	23	69
Family Unity	21	8	5	10	44
Diligence	5	3	2	4	19
Hospitality	2	1	-	-	3
Cleaning	2	1	5	9	17
Benevolence	18	11	-	19	48
Patriotism	-	8	3	9	20
Kindness	1	3	2	20	26
Friendship	12	10	4	5	31
Sincerity	2	1	1	10	14
Simplicity	1	1	3	7	12

According to **Table 3**, responsibility ( $f = 24$ ), family unity ( $f = 21$ ), benevolence ( $f = 18$ ) and happiness ( $f = 17$ ) are the most frequent values whereas peace ( $f = 1$ ), humility ( $f = 1$ ), kindness ( $f = 1$ ) and simplicity ( $f = 1$ ) are the least frequent values at 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. As for 5<sup>th</sup> grade level, responsibility ( $f = 27$ ), benevolence ( $f = 11$ ) and cooperation ( $f = 11$ ) are the most frequent values whereas honesty and humility are not mentioned at all, and love ( $f = 1$ ), hospitality ( $f = 1$ ), cleanliness ( $f = 1$ ), simplicity ( $f = 1$ ) and sincerity ( $f = 1$ ) are the least frequent values. At the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level, freedom ( $f = 59$ ), respect ( $f = 29$ ), responsibility ( $f = 28$ ) and solidarity ( $f = 23$ ) are the most frequent values whereas happiness ( $f = 1$ ) and sincerity ( $f = 1$ ) are the least frequent values. At 7<sup>th</sup> grade level, responsibility ( $f = 40$ ), respect ( $f = 38$ ) and tolerance ( $f = 28$ ) are the most frequent values while honesty ( $f = 2$ ) and diligence ( $f = 4$ ) are the least frequent values. When the values at 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades are examined in general, it can be seen that the most frequent values are responsibility ( $f = 118$ ), freedom ( $f = 86$ ), respect ( $f = 84$ ) and solidarity ( $f = 69$ ) whereas sincerity ( $f = 14$ ), honesty ( $f = 12$ ), humility ( $f = 12$ ), simplicity ( $f = 12$ ) and hospitality ( $f = 3$ ) are the least frequent values. When the transfer of values to students is examined at the level of grades, it can be seen that there is a decrease in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade compared to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the frequency of value transfer in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade has reached a higher rate compared to the previous grades, reaching the highest level at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### IV. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Individuals and groups show differences in terms of prioritizing among values. A value which is very important for a certain society can be at lower ranks for another group. Therefore, the frequency and distribution pattern of the values given in the textbooks may vary. In this study, the conformity of the texts in the social studies textbooks used in the 2020-2021 academic year in Northern Cyprus was compared with the universal values specified in the Living Values List, UNESCO Values List and Rokeach Value Inventory, in terms of values education. When the findings are examined from the perspective of these values, the values of responsibility and freedom come to the fore as the common values that are thought to be gained at school and are most frequently mentioned in the textbooks. This situation seems compatible with the work of Kuş, Meray and Karatekin (2013). Second comes the value of freedom. It is quite natural that the value of freedom comes to the fore for a society that has been living under pressure and in a minority situation for many years. The high level of respect shows a characteristic suitable for the universal individual type that is desired to be raised in the new program. In addition, the low transfer frequency of values such as hospitality, aesthetics, sincerity and cleanliness in a country whose economic resources are largely composed of foreign students and tourists is considered a deficiency. The study also revealed that the frequency of transferring values such as diligence, humility,

honesty, and tolerance is relatively low. One of the most needed values today is tolerance, especially when the recent events in society are considered. Considering that one of the aims of the social studies course is to raise democratic citizens, it is thought-provoking that the value of tolerance is given such a limited place. Especially if young children cannot acquire this value, it will be much more difficult to acquire this in the later years. A successful values education is the process of adapting to society, encouraging reasoning and developing skills and motivation for moral behavior. The aim of values education is to raise moral individuals who do not give harm to others (Lapsley and Narvaez, 2006). For this reason, it is necessary to attach importance to the transfer of values in curricula, textbooks and classroom practices.

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