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REVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD MAGAZINES IN TERMS OF UNESCO UNIVERSAL VALUES: THE CASE OF CURIOUS KIDS

ERKEN COCUKLUK DÖNEMİ DERGİLERİNİN UNESCO EVRENSEL DEĞERLERİ AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ: MERAKLI MİNİK ÖRNEĞİ

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Abstract

This research aims to reveal the extent to which UNESCO universal values are included in the "Curious Kids" children's magazine published for early childhood. Data were collected through document analysis within the scope of the qualitative research method. In this direction, a total of fifty-five issues of the magazine for the years 2017 and 2021 were examined in terms of twelve universal values included in the "Living Values Education Program" determined by UNESCO. Based on these results, unity, cooperation, responsibility, happiness, and love were among the most reflected values. In contrast, honesty, tolerance, and peace are values that are rarely reflected. Similarly, the value of humility was unfortunately not included in any issue. The results obtained in this study are largely similar to the previous study on the same subject and magazine before the 2016 year. The only significant difference from that research is that in the last five years, the value of unity has been given more space in the magazine.

Keywords: Universal values, Children's magazine, Early childhood.

Özet

Bu araştırma, erken çocukluk dönemi için yayınlanan "Meraklı Minik" çocuk dergisinde UNESCO evrensel değerlerine ne ölçüde yer verildiğini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Veriler nitel araştırma yöntemi kapsamında doküman incelemesi yoluyla toplanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda derginin 2017 ve 2021 yıllarına ait toplam elli beş sayısı UNESCO tarafından belirlenen "Yaşayan Değerler Eğitimi Programı"nda yer alan on iki evrensel değer açısından incelenmiştir. Bu sonuçlara göre birlik, beraberlik, sorumluluk, mutluluk ve sevgi en çok

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yansıtılan değerler arasında yer almaktadır. Buna karşılık dürüstlük, hoşgörü ve barış nadiren yansıtılan değerlerdir. Aynı şekilde hoşgörü değeri de ne yazık ki hiçbir sayıda yer almamıştır. Bu çalışmada elde edilen sonuçlar, 2016 yılı öncesinde aynı konu ve dergide yapılan önceki çalışma ile büyük ölçüde benzerlik göstermektedir. Bu araştırmadan tek önemli fark ise, son beş yılda dergide birlik değerine daha fazla yer verilmesi olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evrensel değerler, Çocuk dergisi, Erken çocukluk.

INTRODUCTION

As a natural consequence of the rapid advances in science and technology, countries that compete for existence and even to get ahead in the global world, on the other hand, have been concerned about preparing their children in this direction. The acceleration of communication and the fact that new topics such as world citizenship have begun to be discussed deeply affects all generations, especially Z and alpha. Therefore, while countries are looking for innovative ways on how to bring 21st-century skills to children, on the other hand, they have started to focus on how they can keep their children away from cognitively and emotionally problematic areas and how they can direct them to moral and ethical issues. In this context, personality development in children and related issues have begun to be talked about more than ever before. The problems identified at this point have led educators and policymakers to teach values to children in formal and/or informal ways, just like other subjects and concepts. At this point, it has been started to discuss what the values in question are and which period is the most appropriate time to teach them.

Today, values are an important factor for the successful development of society (Döring, 2010). Although it is not possible to have an absolute consensus among educators on other issues, there is a consensus on the point that children form their own moral and ethical foundations based on what they hear, experience, and society reflected in the growth and socialization process, and that early childhood years are more important than others at this point (Ulavare & Veisson, 2015; Witt & Kimple, 2008). To explain this situation better, it is known that even 18-month-old babies tend to help their parents with daily chores at home. At this point, values, which are abstract ideas, should be gained from an early age (Karatekin & Sonmez, 2014). In a way that supports this argument, a significant part of the attempts in the literature on values education is directed to the pre-school period, that is, to the early childhood period (Symons & Clark, 2000).

There is also a need to define values that are indirectly shared up to this point. Halstead and Taylor (2000, p. 169) defined it as "the principles and core beliefs that generally guide behavior, the standards by which actions are judged as good or desirable". Schwartz, (1999, p. 24-25), on the other hand, defined it as "a social actor who has a role in the selection of behaviors and actions, in the evaluation of events and people, in the explanation of behaviors and actions, as principles that vary in terms of importance in the individual's life and shed light on the individual are desirable ends that serve them". Values, good and desirable things are moral principles that motivate and direct human behavior, affect decision-making processes, and give us ideas about how we should be and how we should behave (Cooper, 2014; Sagiv, 2002; Schaefer, 2012; Schwartz, 1994; Simon, Howe & Kirschenbaum, 1978).

In this context, it is an important issue that children who will make the desired changes in science and technology for the benefit of society are equipped with the desired values (Schiller & Bryant, 2009). On the other hand, the issue of which values it would be more appropriate to equip children with continues to be discussed. For this reason, it is possible to come across types with different value classifications in the literature. It has been stated by different researchers that children can acquire values such as responsibility, love, respect, tolerance, helpfulness, honesty, friendship, cooperation, happiness, compassion, and sharing in early childhood (Dinc, 2011; Warneken & Tomasello, 2007). UESCO (2014) argued that to open the doors to a sustainable society, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values should be acquired first and focuses on twelve universal values, known as living values namely cooperation, freedom, happiness, honesty, love, humility, peace, respect, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance, unity.

In addition to the formal education program in the pre-school period, informal learning environments and written and visual materials followed in addition to parent-child and child-child communication in the family are of great importance in gaining these values to children (Kucuk & Yildirim, 2020). In this context, popular science books that are heavily purchased by children are in a more important position compared to others.

The written and visual elements in these magazines are an important opportunity for children to gain value. When this opportunity is used well, it is possible to give these values without any extra effort. On the other hand, it is a matter of debate how much attention is paid to values in these journals. Recently, while researchers are trying to reveal the value perceptions of children in early childhood based on multiple tools such as interviews, observations, and drawings, on the other hand, they have started to study what the source or resources are in the background of the described situation. In one of these studies done by Alabay et al. (2018), the curious kids' magazine, which was published by the Scientific and Technological Research Institution of Turkey [TUBITAK] and aimed at early childhood, was again examined in terms of UNESCO universal values. As a result of this study, it was determined that the values of "love, responsibility, and cooperation" were mostly included in the magazines published between 2012 and 2016, while the values of "freedom, simplicity, and unity" were rarely included. Although no negative value was encountered, it was determined that the values of "peace, honesty, and humility" were not included at all. However, because the magazine in question raised its sales chart to higher levels and the number of subscribers is approximate, it is still wondered to what extent UNESCO universal values are included in its issues between 2017 and 2021.

One of the factors involved in supporting the development of the child is children's publications that include interactive activity books. Curious Kids Magazine is a publication that has been published since January 2007 and is prepared for children aged between 3 and 6. Published once a month, this magazine has been prepared especially to stimulate children's sense of curiosity and to support research and discovery efforts. In addition, it is a publication with lots of photographs and illustrations, consisting of 36 chapters and 32 pages for children.

This research, it is aimed to determine what the universal values are in the issues of the "Curious Kids" magazine published between 2017-2021 for the early childhood period and to what extent these values are included.

For this purpose, the answer to the following question was sought:

• Which universal values are included in the reviewed Curious Kids magazine and how is their quantitative distribution over the years?

METHOD

Model of the Research

The document analysis method was used within the scope of the qualitative research approach in this study, which was carried out to examine the "Curious Kids" magazine published by TUBITAK in terms of values. Document analysis is the analysis of written documents about the facts and events related to the subject in line with the purpose of the research (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008).

The sample

The sample of the research consisted of 55 issues (from 121st to 175) for the early childhood period published in 2017-2021, belonging to the monthly "Curious Kids" magazine prepared by TUBITAK. The reason why "Curious Little" magazine was selected and included in the research is that Turkey's first monthly pre-school science magazine is regularly published at the beginning of each month, is still on sale, and is easily

accessible. In the journal, the data of the last five years have been examined based on the closest five years to the current time, with the thought that they will be more comprehensive in terms of reliability and validity, and the last five years have been preferred because the values have been integrated into the education program in Turkey. In this study, UNESCO universal values were chosen because they are accessible, widely available, and valid in the world.

Data Collection

In this study, the "Values Document Form" developed by the researchers was used. This form is based on twelve universal values included in the "Living Values Education Program" on UNESCO's website (see https://livingvalues.net/) and sub-categories were created for each value. These core values are: "cooperation, freedom, happiness, honesty, love, humility, peace, respect, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance, unity." By scanning the reviewed issues, it was tried to determine how much space was given to these universal values. After the "Curious Kids" magazine, which was included in the research, was determined, the archive of the Curious Kids magazine for the last five years was reached by document analysis method.

Data Analysis

According to each value sub-category in the form, the texts and images in the children's magazine were examined and the values that were given directly or implicitly under the sentences were determined. The values in the sub-categories of the sentences in the texts were determined, and the values representing the selected categories were discussed and marked. According to the values in the issues examined by content analysis, 55 issues in the last five years of the magazine were examined and analyzed.

The results were tabulated according to their quantitative and qualitative characteristics, and the percentage and frequency values were taken into account. Values were divided into categories and subcategories to ensure the reliability and validity of the data analysis. Both researchers independently reviewed all issues and reported them to the forms. Afterward, the findings were collected by the researchers and reviewed together. In the presentation of the data, direct quotations (text and visuals) were made from the magazine for each value inference.

RESULTS

The percentage and frequency distributions of the findings that emerged as a result of the quantitative evaluation of the universal values within the scope of 55 issues examined in the study are given in Table 1.

Universal values	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Love	6	16,22	4	8,51	7	14,00	6	12,77	4	12,12	27	12,62
Tolerance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3,03	1	0,47
Happiness	6	16,22	10	21,28	8	16,00	8	17,02	4	12,12	36	16,82
Honesty	-	-	-	-	1	2,00	-	-	-	-	1	0,47
Cooperation	8	21,62	9	19,15	7	14,00	10	21,28	6	18,18	40	18,69
Freedom	-	-	1	2,13	1	2,00	1	2,13	-	-	3	1,40
Responsibility	8	21,62	9	19,15	9	18,00	8	17,02	5	15,15	39	18,22

Table 1. Numerical distribution of Unesco universal values in magazines

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Respect	3	8,11	5	10,64	1	2,00	3	6,38	3	9,09	15	7,01
Peace	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3,03	1	0,47
Humility	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unity	6	16,22	9	19,15	12	24,00	8	17,02	6	18,18	41	19,16
Simplicity	-	-	-	-	4	8,00	3	6,38	3	9,09	10	4,67
Total	37	100	47	100	50	100	47	100	33	100	214	100

From Table 1, it is seen that a total of 214 values were found in the magazines included in the research. The distribution of the values found in a total of 55 examined issues is listed as 41 (19.16%) unity, 40 (18,69%) cooperation, 39 (18,22%) responsibility, 36 (16,82%) happiness, 27 (12,62%) love, 15 (7,01%) respect, 10 (4,67%) simplicity, 3(1,40%) freedom, 1(0,47%) tolerance, honesty, and peace from the most to the least. On the other hand, the value of humility is not included in any number. Considering the years, a maximum of 50 values were included in 2019.

Similarly, in another study (Alabay et al., 2018) in which the 60 issues of the magazine, which is the subject of the study, between 2012 and 2016 were examined in terms of values, the values of love, cooperation, and responsibility were reported the most. On the other hand, while unity value was found 3 times (1.14%) in the related study, 41 times (19.16%) in the next issues examined in the current study indicate a significant change. Again, there has been a partial increase in the simplicity value in the last five years. The situation of not including the values of peace and humility, which are in the similar UNESCO universal values list, continues resolutely. In the studies of Tut and Kiroglu (2017) in which they examined the songs that made it to the finals of the TRT Popular Children's Songs Contest in terms of values, they found that the values of hospitality and humility were never included in the songs. Dirican (2013) found that the texts of the children's picture books he examined included the least value of peace. According to the results of Turan and Ulutas's (2016) study in which they examined the books used by preschool teachers in their activities, happiness and kindness are among the values that are most prevalent in the pre-school period, and among the values that are least included are respect and peace.

Just after these numerical data, how the UNESCO universal values are included in the journals is shared below with examples by referring to the articles and images in the relevant sections of the magazines.

Samples of Love Value





In figure 1 and the explanatory text, the value of "love" is clearly expressed by the child hugging a tree. Similarly, in figure 2, the child's love and interest in the horse is related to the value of "love".

Samples of Happiness Value



Figure 3. The year 2017, issue of December Figure 4. The year 2019, issue of December

The characters in figure 3 were delighted to hear the good news about their friend's health and said, "Long live! They expressed their "happiness" by using the phrase "Get well soon rabbit, it's good to see you are well". Although the happiness of a child who has experienced the pottery making process in Figure 4 does not appear as a verbal expression, it is seen that he is quite "happy" to have achieved this experience from the expression on his face and raising his hands in joy.

Samples of Honesty Value



Figure 5. The year 2019, issue of February Figure 6. The year 2021, issue of February

In Figure 5, her teacher warned Tuna not to share the confidential information she gave with her friends, and Tuna did what her teacher said and placed the envelope in her bag to open at home. Thus, in addition to fulfilling its responsibility, the value of "honesty" was also emphasized. In Figure 6, their friends, whose shapes are rolling, cooperate to stop the sphere. "The great-great-grandfather of the semicircle once also rolled around for hours like this. The value of "cooperation" was also verbally emphasized with the expression "The people in the village cooperated to stop him, they were able to stop him by holding hands".

Samples of Cooperation Value



Figure 7. The year 2019, issue of September

Figure 7 clearly shows that people "collaborate" in the process of plucking cabbage from the field and loading it onto the truck.

Samples of Freedom Value



Figure 8. The year 2020, issue of December Figure 9. The year 2019, issue of July

In Figure 8, it is mentioned that the horses on the farm can run freely and that the meadows are located near the barn, and the value of "freedom" is emphasized both in the text and in the image. In Figure 9, on the page describing the life of Mediterranean monk seals, it is explained that the baby Mediterranean monk seal can roam freely in the sea like adults when it grows up enough, emphasizing the value of "freedom".

Samples of Responsibility Value

Figure 10. The year 2021, issue of May

Figure 11. The year 2021, issue of September

In Figure 10, a child named Elif stated that she watered her plants, talked to them, and took very good care of them. Both this statement and the picture emphasize the value of "responsibility". Similarly, in Figure 11, the mother crocodile carries her babies into the river one by one in her mouth, fulfilling the "responsibility" of motherhood.

Samples of Respect Value

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Figure 12. The year 2017, issue of April Figure 13. The year 2021, issue of January

It is seen in Figure 12 and with the text "...the audience applauds. The dancers greet the audience." It is understood that the value of "respect" is emphasized. Similarly, in Figure 13, "people who come here have to be very careful not to pollute the environment. No waste is left to nature in Antarctica. The expression "people take their waste with them when they leave here" emphasizes the value of "respect" for nature.

Samples of Peace Value



Figure 14. The year 2021, issue of May

In Figure 14, the child stated that he accidentally broke his friend's toy and apologized, and his friend also stated that they could fix it together, even though he said he was sorry. Despite his sadness, his friend's behavior in this way is a situation that brings the value of "peace" to the fore.

Samples of Unity Value



Figure 15. the year 2018, issue of December

Figure 16. The year 2017, issue of April

In Figure 15, the value of "unity" is emphasized while a large team of children and adults camping, moving together, staying together, is depicted. Similarly, in Figure 16, the value of "unity" is emphasized when it is told that children celebrate in unity on April 23, National Sovereignty and Children's Day.

Samples of Simplicity Value



Figure 17. The year 2020, issue of November

Figure 18. The year 2019, issue of August

In Figure 17, instead of throwing away worn-out and unused clothes, the repair and reevaluation of the house by the elder is explained, thus emphasizing the value of "simplicity". Similarly, in Figure 18, where the nomadic life is depicted, the tents and environmental conditions of the people are shown, and simple life away from the pomp is depicted, emphasizing the value of "simplicity".

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DISCUSSION

Value studies on materials in written sources for children have become the focus of attention of researchers in recent years. Dirican and Daglioglu (2014), examined the picture storybooks published for children aged 3-6 in terms of some basic values. Korukcu et al. (2016), on the other hand, examined values in children's picture books according to Schwartz's model. The "value" of preschool children's perceptions through various value examples were examined through interviews, the pictures, and also explanations about these (Sapsaglam, 2017; Yildirim, 2018). In a study conducted to examine the achievements and indicators in the 2013 Pre-School Education Program in terms of values according to the development areas, the highest rate was taken by the value of responsibility, followed by the values of respect, solidarity, trust, and love. It was also found that the values of tolerance, freedom, equality, friendship, and justice took place the least in the achievements and indicators (Aral & Kadan, 2018). The other study aimed to determine which values were included in the 52 story and tale books determined in line with the preferences of children, parents, and teachers for preschool children (Cengiz & Duran, 2017). As a result of this research; it has been determined that in the story and fairy tale books prepared for preschoolers, the values of happiness, peace, solidarity, and honesty are included the most, and the value of patriotism is not included at all. While the values of kindness, aesthetics, friendship, cleanliness, and benevolence are frequently emphasized in the books, it has been observed that the values of humility, tolerance, hospitality, and respect are less emphasized. The most aesthetic value was emphasized in the books preferred by children and parents, and the happiness value was emphasized the most in the books preferred by teachers.

In this research, the last five years of the curious kids' magazine prepared by TUBITAK, a state institution for early childhood in Turkey, were examined in terms of twenty values in the UNESCO universal values list. Valid and reliable results were obtained based on the principle of examining each magazine issue in an independent environment by both researchers and then comparing them one-to-one. Based on these results, unity, cooperation, responsibility, happiness, and love were among the most reflected values (see table 1). In contrast, honesty, tolerance, and peace are values that are rarely reflected. Similarly, the value of humility was unfortunately not included in any issue. The results obtained in this study are largely similar to the previous study on the same subject and magazine before the 2016 year (Alabay et al., 2018). The only significant difference from that research is that in the last five years, the value of unity has been given more space in the magazine. In this, it is believed that the failed coup attempt that probably happened in Turkey in 2016 and which is not easily seen in history was effective. Considering that the two references to this value in the previous research belong to 2016, it can be said that this claim is correct.

On the other hand, it is also striking that the results of the value analysis in the examined kids magazine are similar to those in any written materials for early childhood (see Dirican & Daglioglu, 2014; Erdal, 2009; Gonen et al., 2011; Karatay, 2015; Kuzucu, 2016; Oruc, 2010). In other words, "love, responsibility, cooperation and cooperation" values are the most reflected values, while "honesty, peace and humility" are the least reflected values in printed materials. Considering that printed materials are used extensively by children from early childhood, it is important to give a more balanced place to value reflections in terms of universal values. Especially in the 21st century, in a dark period when there is a need for peace more than ever and this need is increasing, when the value of peace is criticized or not given any place in the magazines for both domestic and foreign children, it is an issue that needs to be addressed. The fact that children are fully aware of this value in the visuals depicted in some of the studies aimed at identifying the value of "responsibility", which is one of the values most frequently mentioned in this research and others, can probably be claimed as the most prominent feature of this value in the preschool curriculum and informal magazines and books (Sapsaglam, 2017).

That is, the values in the formal curriculum and written and visual materials are easily accepted by children. However, because children have not yet started to read in early

childhood, it is inevitable to make the first contact with the visuals in the mentioned sources. In this context, visuals, as well as narrative texts in the content, are expected to refer to values. Following the effect of visual and spatial intelligence, the fact that visuals are more attractive to children and even adults requires more attention in the preparation process. On the other hand, even if the values in question are in the content, it is of great importance that parents read and vocalize at home and teachers at school.

CONCLUSION

In this research, the content of a magazine prepared, published, and distributed by TUBITAK, which is only a government institute, was scanned in terms of universal values, and the results were compared with the others. At this point, it is important to include values as a concrete section in the content of the magazine and to distribute twelve issues per year in a balanced manner to each universal value. The fact that universal values are not reflected in a balanced way in the relevant journals and other sources makes it difficult to solve the global and local problems experienced by human beings. In this context, written sources that are closely followed by children and published regularly are an important opportunity. It should be planned to use this opportunity effectively in terms of gaining universal values as well as competencies for children demanded for the 21st century. In future research, investigating the value perceptions of children who regularly follow these early childhood magazines may reveal the usefulness of the publications.

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