

AN ANALYZE OF TEACHERS' VALUE PREFERENCES IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT ON THE BASIS OF LENGTH OF SERVICE VARIABLE

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ABSTRACT

Educational leadership has moral meanings and requires leaders to be aware of their values that are reflected by their behaviors. Values, as the guides of personal preferences, are penetrated into all academic processes, especially into classrooms where the greatest face-to-face interactions are lived. The goal of this study is to determine the most and the least preferred values by teachers in their classroom management on the basis of length of service variable. The research group comprises 68 classroom teachers working in Regional Public Boarding Schools. Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) composed of 36 values was used to receive teachers' views. Participants were asked to choose the most preferred ten values from RVS and rank them from 1 to 10 according to their personal preferences in their classroom management. The analysis of data revealed that the most preferred ten values are generally common and the least preferred ten values had more differences between groups.

Keywords: Values, classroom management, length of service.

INTRODUCTION

Values have been variously defined as things which are considered "good" in themselves (such as beauty, truth, love, honesty and loyalty) and as personal or social preferences (Halstead and Taylors, 1996: 3). Values can be either preferences or principles that represent the opposite ends of the moral spectrum. Values are personal preferences concerning individuals' standards for considering the importance of worthwhile of something for them to think and act (Chin and Lin, 2001: 2).

Argandona (2003: 16) points out those values are reflected in decisions; the repetition of values in decisions shows the existence of a virtue and the body of virtues shapes character, which gives consistency to subsequent decisions until a conduct is defined. In turn, each of these stages makes a mark on other people's values, in the same way that their decisions, virtues, characters and conducts influence our values. Thus, values' individual and social dimensions are interrelated; they influence each other mutually. According to Norris, Barnett, Basom and Terkes (2002: 33), humans look at other people's lives and they are affected by their value centered choices. In this manner, valuing becomes a developmental process which is affected by individual's world-view and the position he/she takes in it. During valuing process, society supports and enriches individual's values and reciprocally individual supports societal values.

Values' effect on conducts seems to be as a regulatory mechanism. From this point of view, values are inner structures which distinguish right from wrong, "do" and "don't do" even there is no one could see. Personal values are uniquely individual and we each tend to set priorities based on our core values and beliefs to help us decide how to act. Jorgensen and Ryan (2004: 223) describe values as internalized sets of beliefs or principles of behavior held by individuals or groups. Glen (1999: 205) gives an operational definition of a value is

something chosen freely from alternatives after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative, prized, publicly affirmed willingly, acted upon and recurring. Salikhova (2010: 82) also demonstrates the persistence of individual expression of unfeasibility realizability of personal values as a style characteristic of personality.

Personal value systems effect leaders' perceptions, points of views to problems, themselves and others; interpersonal relationships, decisions, solutions and also organizational and individual success (Saĝnak, 2005). Brytting and Trollestad (2000: 57) consider leader as someone who must cope with changing and increasingly heterogeneous values. This "coping", how they perceive the challenges and how they go about dealing with them, will depend on their own deeper convictions and concerns.

Leadership and teaching in any endeavor is a moral task. Peters (2003: 23) clarifies this moral task with *"What makes teaching a moral endeavor is that it is human action undertaken in regards to other human beings. Therefore, considerations of what is fair, right, just and virtuous are always present."* And as Hansen (1998: 652) states, the moral meaning of teaching can be derived from the basic terms of the work itself. At this point, educational leaders must be vigilant about the values that they support. It is impossible for an educational leader to take an action that does not also make some comment about how things should be done (Normore, 2004: 1). Leaders who are permanently observed and evaluated, should be in an inquiry and ask the questions themselves recommended by Akbaba- Altun (2003: 10): *"Which values should I have as an educator? What are my ethical principles for my work?"*. Strike, Haller and Soltis (1998: 14) underline the ethical components most of managerial works require. For instance, at the times of making decisions, opening the organizational sources to members' usage, punishing or awarding students; than the questions will be about decisions' democratic or fairy qualities or related to the values like justice, equality, fairness.

In school life, every lesson conveys not only academic but also moral and social meaning. But the academic aspects are usually explicit, whereas the moral and social aspects remain implicit, part of a "hidden curriculum" (Evertson and Neal, 2006: 3). The values of schools are apparent especially in the relationships between teachers and pupils. Values are reflected in what teachers choose to permit or encourage in the classroom and in the way they respond to children's contributions to learning, and children learn values from such responses. Even the seating arrangements in a classroom convey certain values (Halstead and Taylors, 1996: 3). These value loaded relationships between teachers and students are especially felt in classroom climate (Aybek, 2007). These emotional climate which may affect classroom activities directly in a positive or negative manner; could be nervous, formal, authoritarian, sincere, friendly or democratic, related to the values adopted by teachers (Ekşi, 2003: 81). The personality characteristics of the teacher, its needs, values and attitudes predict the climate of its classes (Walberg, 1968)

Classroom management strategies have as much, or perhaps even more, impact on students' moral and social development as they do on their academic development (Evertson and Neal, 2006: 3). Classroom management strategies differ from each other with different values reflected by teachers. For example, in democratic classroom management approach, it is critical for teachers to behave honestly and equally to all students and teachers should have values like humanist, fair, open to communication, consistent, equal, innovative and able to respect differences (Kesici, 2008).

Furthermore, in consultation approach (Erden, 2008: 21), teachers should treat students by not labeling them, express their expectations in a clear and direct manner and should have values of empathy, respect, deeper understanding, sincerity and calmness. Xiaoman (2006: 20) claims that teachers take different roles in their classroom management related to the values they adopt. In other words, teachers' values are effective on the way they take moral communication in classroom. For equality value, teacher's role will be partner; for respect value, role will be "listener" and "participant", for care value, role will be sponsor and aspiring and for sincerity, role will be "model".

METHOD

This study aims to determine the most and the least preferred values by teachers in their classroom management on the basis of length of service variable. The study group comprises 68 classroom teachers working in eight Regional Public Boarding Schools in 2008- 2009 school year in Elazığ (a city in the eastern part of Turkey) and its towns. It was assumed that teachers working in boarding schools could have more opportunity to spend more time and to observe students than the other teachers. 20.5% of study group had 1-5 year (first years at job); 38.2% of teachers had 6-15 year; 41.1% of teachers had 16 and more year length of service in the study group. Teachers in the study were asked to read all the 36 values carefully that were in Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) developed by Rokeach (1973) and then choose 10 values from the list according to their preference in their classroom management and rank them according to the importance they give to these values. The most and the least preferred values in these 10 selected value lists were shown with tables with their percentages and frequencies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Most Preferred Ten Values in Classroom Management On The Basis Of Length of Service Variable

Table: 1 shows the most preferred ten values in classroom management. It is seen that, there are six common values (honesty, responsibility, ambitious, self-control, equality and self-respect) for three groups. This shows the common and continuous sensitivity shared by teachers in classroom management from the first years at job to the latest years. Values of honesty, responsibility and self controlled are also the ones which are highly preferred by American teachers as indicated in Commbis-Richardson and Tolson (2005)'s survey.

Table 1
 The most preferred ten values in classroom management on the basis of length of service variable

| 1- 5 Years | | | | 6-15 Years | | | | 16 and More Years | | | |
|-------------------------|----|-----|----|-----------------|---|-----|----|-------------------|----|-----|----|
| Value | No | % | f | Value | N | % | f | Value | No | % | F |
| Honest | 1 | 79% | 53 | Responsible | 1 | 85% | 57 | Responsible | 1 | 75% | 51 |
| Responsible | 2 | 57% | 38 | Honest | 2 | 70% | 47 | Honesty | 2 | 71% | 48 |
| Ambitious | 2 | 57% | 38 | Self-controlled | 3 | 54% | 36 | Clean | 3 | 64% | 53 |
| Self-controlled | 2 | 57% | 38 | Ambitious | 4 | 50% | 34 | Ambitious | 4 | 57% | 38 |
| Sense of accomplishment | 2 | 57% | 38 | Equality | 5 | 42% | 28 | Equality | 5 | 46% | 31 |
| Happiness | 3 | 50% | 34 | Inner harmony | 5 | 42% | 28 | Self-controlled | 5 | 46% | 31 |
| Helpful | 3 | 50% | 34 | Clean | 5 | 42% | 28 | Inner harmony | 6 | 43% | 29 |
| Equality | 4 | 43% | 29 | Imaginative | 5 | 42% | 28 | Happiness | 7 | 39% | 26 |
| Self-respect | 4 | 43% | 29 | Capable | 5 | 42% | 28 | Helpful | 7 | 39% | 26 |
| Salvation | 4 | 43% | 29 | Self-respect | 6 | 39% | 26 | Self-respect | 7 | 32% | 21 |

For the first group, honesty is the most important value in their classroom management.

These teachers, who are giving great importance to have open communication with students, also give value to trying to manage classroom as it should be, working for professional ideals, evaluating themselves at each managerial step and gaining the sense of success after doing all these. Considering these findings, it is an expected result to see the values of happiness and self-respect in the list. Because, these values can only be felt by ones who did their jobs in the way as they had to. Value of salvation means a saved and eternal life. The points that teachers in the first years of service, consider their management style as something related to their conscience and something that will bring them happiness on condition that they do their job rightly. Findings about values of accomplishment, self-controlled and helpfulness are supported by Yılmaz (2009)' findings which show that teachers have 1-5 year length of service have higher scores related to these values than their colleagues.

Analyze of second group teachers' value preferences shows that there is a big increase at responsibility value with its biggest percentage between groups. The other common values like honesty, ambitious, self-controlled, self-respect and equality protect their similar percentages in the list. On the other hand, first group's happiness and salvation values (that are results of feedback taken from management) give their places to inner harmony which means freedom from inner conflict. A sense of accomplishment that is result of doing something successfully is seen as capability value which is directly related to the proficiency and efficiency gained through years. One of the points that need attention is that, there is cleanness value in this group's list. Cleanness is related to the physical dimension of classroom management (Çelik, 2005) and it is not seen as a critical value by inexperienced teachers. The other point is value of imaginative. This value has taken more attention in the recent times with the changing education paradigms and especially changing education curriculum. So it was expected to see this value in first group teachers' list; but contrary to this assumption, it locates in second group's value list.

For the third group teachers, it is seen that common six values protect their places in the list without big differences. One of the critical point is to see cleanness value in this group. This finding shows that, importance given to cleanness value by classroom teachers rises related to the years spent at job. The other point is; the most experienced teachers give importance to happiness and helpfulness like their inexperienced colleagues.

The Least Preferred Ten Values in Classroom Management on The Basis of Length of Service Variable

Analyze of the least ten preferred values in classroom management shows that 4 of these values are common for three groups. Value of pleasure that comprises to make the classroom life funny and enjoyable for everyone; value of an exciting life that means a stimulating and active life and staying out of monotony, being open to differences; value of wisdom that requires a mature understanding of life and value of loving that emphasizes behaving affectionate and tender are the common least preferred values.

Pleasure, polite, loving and an exciting life values' presence in first group teachers' value list, shows that these teachers don't give priority to values that can make classroom climate hot. This also points the low expectations from classroom management about that can form a funny school life. Values like wisdom and intellectual are accepted as the ones that are related to high level cognitional processes. So that is why classroom teachers, whose students are in the first steps of these processes, didn't give priority to these values. Value of capability was one of the most preferred values by second group teachers; but contrary to this, it is one of the least preferred one by first groups.

This finding shows the awareness that the inexperienced teachers have about their management capabilities. And it is also worth noting that value of world at peace is one of the main democratic values (Kesici, 2008) and it was not seen as a most important one by these teachers.

Table: 2
 The least preferred ten values in classroom management
 on the basis of length of service variable

| 1-5 Years | | | | 6-15 Years | | | | 16 and More Years | | | |
|-------------------|----|-----|---|------------------|----|-----|---|--------------------|----|-----|---|
| Value | No | % | f | Value | No | % | f | Value | No | % | F |
| Pleasure | 1 | 0% | 0 | Exciting life | 1 | 4% | 2 | Pleasure | 1 | 0% | 0 |
| Polite | 1 | 0% | 0 | Pleasure | 2 | 8% | 4 | World of beauty | 2 | 3% | 1 |
| Wisdom | 2 | 7% | 4 | Mature love | 2 | 8% | 4 | Exciting life | 3 | 7% | 4 |
| World at peace | 2 | 7% | 4 | Comfortable life | 3 | 12% | 7 | Independen t | 3 | 7% | 4 |
| Broadminded | 2 | 7% | 4 | World of beauty | 3 | 12% | 7 | Wisdom | 4 | 11% | 7 |
| Intellectual | 2 | 7% | 4 | Wisdom | 3 | 12% | 7 | Capable | 4 | 11% | 7 |
| National security | 2 | 7% | 4 | Loving | 3 | 12% | 7 | Social recognition | 5 | 14% | 9 |
| Loving | 3 | 11% | 7 | Intellectual | 3 | 12% | 7 | Loving | 5 | 14% | 9 |
| Capable | 3 | 11% | 7 | Forgiving | 3 | 12% | 7 | Obedient | 5 | 14% | 9 |
| An exciting life | 4 | 14% | 9 | Independent | 3 | 12% | 7 | Polite | 5 | 14% | 9 |

Value preferences of second group teachers are meaningfully different from the first groups'. Two of these different values, mature love and forgiving, are thought to be as the ones can be functional in relationships management. Additional to this, a beautiful life and a comfortable life values may help to make classroom climate hotter. These findings show that, teachers give importance to the values which directly serve to their academic expectations and not to soft climate in classroom and such kind of assistant values were not categorized by teachers as the main classroom management values. The other critical value is independency value that comprises students' active life and ability to be adequate for them. This finding may be interpreted as a sign that points teachers' traditional management style or as a sign that supports teamwork in classroom.

The biggest similarity between first and the third group is value of pleasure which was not chosen by any of teachers. The first value different from other two groups is value of social recognition that also means respect. This may show the decreased sensitivity felt to students' dignity in classroom or the perspective that had been closed to other people' thoughts about themselves during the years. Second different value in the list is value of obedience. Self controlled and self respect values were two of the most preferred ones by teachers (see Table: 1).

Value of obedience may convey meanings that are directly opposite two these preferred ones. So it is an expected finding to see obedience in the list that emphasizes passive students.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings, honesty, responsibility, ambitious, self-controlled, equality and self-respect are the most preferred values in classroom management without the importance of length of service variable. On the other hand, for 1-5 year teachers, sense of accomplishment, happiness, helpfulness and salvation; for 6-15 year teachers, inner harmony, clean, capable and imaginative; for 16 and more yearned teachers; clean, helpful, happiness and inner harmony are the most preferred values. Results about the least preferred values indicated that there is a much more diversity between groups. Only values of pleasure, an exciting life, wisdom and loving values are common between groups. Values of polite, world at peace, capable, intellectual, national security and broad minded are in 1-5 yearned teachers' list; values of mature love, a comfortable life, intellectual, forgiving, independent, world of beauty are in 6-15 year teachers' list; values of world of beauty, independent, polite, social recognition, obedient and capable are in 16 and more year teachers' least preferred values list.

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