

THE VIEWS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS ON VALUES EDUCATION AND THE PROBLEMS THEY ENCOUNTER

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Abstract

People who are equipped with positive values play an important role in the future of societies. People do not acquire these values spontaneously. Schools have an indispensable role in values education. This study aims to reveal the views of early childhood teachers working at schools about values education and identify the problems they face during the process. The participants of the study were 130 early childhood teachers. The qualitative study collected its data through the use of survey forms. The results showed that early childhood teachers attach importance to offering values education at schools, implement various activities in their classes (such as inviting guest and organizing trips), use the internet and other sources, and face some problems in the meantime (such as adapting the abstract topics to different age groups, finding materials and activities, ensuring the continuity of school education at home as well as participation).

Key Words: Values, Early childhood

1.Introduction

People equipped with positive values and a strong character play a significant role in the future of societies. People do not acquire these positive values by themselves; it happens through values education. The first environment of child is the family they are born into. The family has a major role in the formation of a child's character and the acquisition of values. Parents form their values systems based on the values of their societies and their own parents as well as those they acquire through education. The first seeds of a child's values are sown in this family environment. Family diversity in a society is not adequate on its own to form a social culture and raise generations with positive values. Societies need shared wisdom, values and mesh their shared culture with universal values.

Schools should therefore aim to equip individuals with the values and skills needed to display appropriate moral decisions and behaviors (Ekşi, 2003). They are recognized to play a significant role in values education (Halstead, 1996).

As the main vision of schools has always been to raise successful, good and effective humans, equipping students with values via educational processes is a worthwhile issue (Deveci, 2009). The increasingly common negative

behavior patterns in our day dictate that equipping students with values is too important to let happen incidentally and that organized activities in school curricula are necessary (Ediger, 1998; Tarkoçin et al., 2013).

1.1 Values Education

Even though values are teachable and learnable concepts, it seems more difficult for individuals to master these today. While many of the society's adopted values could be transferred in the past via experiences, life alone is not adequate to teach these in our day owing to an abundance of factors that influence and change children's values systems in social life. Values acquisition should therefore not be left to chance and uncontrolled mechanisms, and new trends in values education should be closely followed (Gomleksiz, 2007).

Educators and parents mostly strive to give children the best education possible. It is as important for children to become part of social life as decent individuals as it is for them to become well-educated and successful adults. Values such as telling the truth, respect for the elders, following customs and rules, helping children and the needy, being just and protecting others' rights have been sought after qualities in many societies throughout history (Yorukoğlu, 2003). Values education is the route to equip young generations with these qualities and make them decent citizens.

1.2 Values in the Preschool Period

The preschool period is the time when the foundation of values are built (Balat & Dağal, 2009; Özbey et al., 2014). The human character takes the first six years of life to shape. This period is particularly important for education and is known as the "critical age" (Önder, 2011).

Early childhood teachers are the first adults that children meet after they leave their mothers for the first time. From day one onwards, children turn to their teachers when confronted with a difficulty. For children, a teacher is the person who teaches, educates, loves and befriends them, strives all day to meet their needs, and lays the foundations of character development (Oktay, 1999). Children start to love values with their teachers and associate the two. They learn respect, love, sharing, cooperation, and friendship from their teachers and display these traits themselves in their future lives.

1.3 Values Education in Turkey

Values education is included in the political agenda of many countries recently (Veugelers & Kat, 2003). In our country since the early years of the Republic, it has a significant role in the education system in terms of bringing up citizens training and development of social values (Balci & Yelken, 2010). General objectives, skills, concepts as well as values education are all defined in the basic elements that make up the general education program (Balci & Yelken, 2010; Cihan, 2014). The Ministry of National Education Head Council of Education and Morality sent circular to governorates, to all elementary and secondary schools to implement value related activities with the law number 6312 dated 7 March 2013 in 2010 academic year. The scope of the educational value of this circular are expressed as follows: "Education is the most important factor in bringing all members of our moral, human, social and spiritual values that make up the social life, connecting people, ensuring progress, happiness and peace, protecting from the risks and threats. The transfer of these gains to our students forms the values education." After updating the new teaching programs, it is seen that values education is included more in the curriculum (Baş & Beyhan, 2012). Besides further studies have been made in the context of preschool programs regarding values education, values and values education had their own special place in the curriculum (Mone, 2013).

1.4 Values Education and Teachers

The teacher is the backbone of the educational system. They have the biggest role in ensuring peace in the society, socializing people and preparing them for social life, and transferring the culture and values of the society to future generations. It is among the most important duties of educators to get to know children in this critical age, discover their talents, and help them consciously (Tarkoçin et al., 2013). The teacher has an indispensable role in values education. She is a guide and a role model. Therefore, it is obvious that their knowledge of values education, expectations, and behaviors towards the students will shape values education.

Values education at schools needs to be healthy and adequate. Even though developing values in young children is necessary for a cohesive society, little is known about early childhood teachers' views on values education (Walker et al., 2011).

This study aims to identify the views of early childhood teachers on values education, their instructional practices, the materials they use, the problems they encounter during this process. The research questions were as follows: (1) Why is it important offer values education at schools? (2) What are values education practices? (3) What sources are used in values education practices? (4) What are the most common problems in values education (in working with students, implementing activities, for families and others)?

2.Method

2.1 Study Model and Group

This study was conducted jointly by Turgut Özal University and Ankara Directorate of National Education. The study was funded by Turgut Özal University Scientific Research Projects Funds project number 2013-04-017. It comprises the teacher views and needs analysis stage of the project. This qualitative research was designed as a case study. Case studies explore a contemporary phenomenon in its own context of real life (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). The study was conducted in Altındağ, a district of the Turkish capital Ankara. Altındağ was preferred as it is a large district with many early childhood teachers and Altındağ Directorate of National Education volunteered to contribute to the study. A total of 130 early childhood teachers working in the district of Altındağ participated in the study.

Of these teachers, 30% were aged 30 and below, 36,9% between 31-40, and 33,1% 41 and above. Women comprised 98,5%. Regarding teachers' work experience, 61,5% had less than 10 years' experience, 7,7% had 11-15 years, and 30,8% had 16 years or more. University graduates constituted 98,5%.

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages of the Early childhood teachers' Age, Gender, Work Experience, and Degree

| | | | f | % |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------|------|
| Characteristics of early childhood teachers | Age | 30 or under | 39 | 30,0 |
| | | 31-40 years | 48 | 36,9 |
| | | 41 or above | 43 | 33,1 |
| | Gender | Female | 128 | 98,5 |
| | | Male | 2 | 1,5 |
| | Work Experience | Less than 10 years | 80 | 61,5 |
| | | 11-15 years | 10 | 7,7 |
| | | 16 years or more | 40 | 30,8 |
| | Degree | University degree | 128 | 98,5 |
| | | Graduate degree | 2 | 1,5 |
| Total | | 130 | 100,0 | |

2.2 Data Collection/ analysis:

Data were collected via survey forms. The validity of the survey was ensured with expert view. Draft questions were prepared and submitted to five field experts. The version revised in line with expert views was piloted with 10 early childhood teachers and finalized in accordance with their suggestions. The early childhood teachers in the study group were then asked to respond to the survey. The questions in it were as follows: "Is it important to you that values education be offered at schools? Please explain why." , "Have you ever implemented values education? If yes, please explain with examples.", "What sources do you utilize in values education?", "What are the most common problems you encounter in values education (while working with students, implementing activities, working with families, or other — please specify)." A total of 145 surveys out of the 160 originally distributed were returned. Out of these, 15 were excluded as some answers were incomplete. As a result, data for this study were obtained from 130 survey forms completed by early childhood teachers. The explanations and statements of the participants regarding value education

were subjected to the qualitative data analysis method of content analysis. Coding and thematization were undertaken and the results were tabulated showing frequencies and percentages, and interpreted. In order to support the interpretations, direct quotations were included. Content analysis is the process of coding and classifying people's spoken and written words following instructions (Balci, 2009). What is basically done here is to bring together similar data around certain themes, and to organize and interpret these in a way the reader can follow (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). As the participants' views will be revealed, their names are not used. In the present study, too, teacher views were given through quotations from teachers symbolized by numbers.

2.3 Limitations:

This study is limited to 130 early childhood teachers participated voluntarily from Altındağ which is one of the central districts of Ankara.

2.4 Ethics:

This study is approved by Directorate of National Education with the number 14588481/604/583656 and date 12/04/2013. Teachers who participated in the study were volunteers.

3. Findings

The purpose of the study was to identify early childhood teachers' views about values education, their instructional practices, the sources they used, and the problems they faced in the process. In order to do this, teacher responses to the following questions were analyzed: (1) Is it important that values education be offered at schools? Please explain why. (2) Have you ever implemented values education? If yes, please explain. (3) What sources do you utilize in values education? (4) What are the most common problems you encounter in values education (while working with students, implementing activities, working with families, or other)?

3.1 The significance of values education

The findings showed that 125 out of 130 teachers (96,2%) believed in the importance of teaching values education at school. These findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of responses to the question "Is it important that values education be offered at schools?"

| Is it important that values education be offered at schools? | f | % |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Yes | 125 | 96,2 |
| No | 5 | 3,8 |
| Total | 130 | 100,0 |

Table 3 reveals why teachers thought it was important to teach values education at schools. As can be seen, 32,3% stated that it was important "because it encourages the learning and practicing of values", 16,9% "because it ensures cultural continuity and the recovery of lost values", 10,0% "because it is beneficial to the society", and 7,72% "because it amends teacher deficiencies in values education". On the other hand, 13,8% did not specify their reason despite believing in the significance of values education.

Table 3. Frequencies and percentages of the responses to the question "Why is it important that values education be offered at schools?"

| Why is it important to offer values education at schools? | F | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|
| 1. Because it is beneficial to the society | 13 | 10,0 |
| 2. Because it encourages the learning and practicing of values | 42 | 32,3 |
| 3. Because it increases awareness in social life | 7 | 5,4 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 4. Because it supports joint value learning of children from different backgrounds | 3 | 2,3 |
| 5. Because it amends teacher deficiencies in values education | 7 | 5,4 |
| 6. Because it helps children's character development and education | 10 | 7,7 |
| 7. Because it emphasizes the role of schools in teaching values | 8 | 6,2 |
| 8. Because it helps cultural continuity and the recovery of lost values | 22 | 16,9 |
| 9. No reason | 18 | 13,8 |
| Total | 130 | 100,0 |

Below are the comments of what some teachers who answered "yes" said:

T (Teacher) 3 : "I find it important for the transfer and continuity of culture. Our country has a great number of cultural elements. I see it necessary to make children aware of this richness.

T 39- I believe we need to revisit the values we are losing with the rise of technology, such as love and respect.

T 87- Children who grow up learning values are more sensitive and respectful to themselves and their environment.

T 90- It is important that children learn, practice and include our values in their lives

Five teachers who answered "no" to this question said (1) Above all, teachers need to have these values, (2) There is no need for separate values education, (3) Arrangements in the school and classrooms are in order first, (4) It would not be appropriate to offer values education in certain patterns, and (5) Teachers themselves need values education first.

Akpınar and Özdaş (2013) studied 55 teachers and found that a great majority (93%) believed in the importance of values education. This is parallel to the findings of the present study. Following their study, a "values education program for early childhood teachers" was organized and online applications were invited. Even though 200 places were initially allocated, 500 applications were received in 2 days and applications were closed. This is further evidence that teachers attach importance to values education.

3.2 Values education practices

The question "Have you ever implemented values education?" was answered "yes" by 98,5% (128 teachers). It can be seen that the number of teachers who implement values education is 2,3% higher than the number of those who think it is important to teach it. This may stem from the attitudes of preschools and the curricula they follow. Owing to these two reasons, some teachers may be implementing values education even though they do not find it important. Considering teachers' values education implementations, 56,2% held classroom activities, 7,77% invited guests and took students on visits, and 16,9% gave guidance to parents.

Table 4. Frequencies and percentages of the responses to the question "Have you ever implemented values education? If yes, please explain with examples."

| Have you ever implemented values education? If yes, please explain. | f | % |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|
| 1. Drama and theater activities | 3 | 2,3 |
| 2. Guidance for parents (Giving information, presenting examples, etc.) | 22 | 16,9 |
| 3. Classroom activities | 73 | 56,2 |
| 4. Preparing visual sources such as brochures, posters, notice boards and exhibits | 2 | 1,5 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 5. Setting a model, teaching values to individual students | 2 | 1,5 |
| 6. Choosing a monthly value and implementing activities (love, respect, etc.) | 6 | 4,6 |
| 7. Inviting guests and organizing trips | 10 | 7,7 |
| 8. Creating publications on values education | 3 | 2,3 |
| 9. No example | 9 | 7,0 |
| Total | 130 | 100,0 |

Akpınar and Özdaş (2013) and Akbaş (2004) found that teachers used the following activities in values education: classroom activities (group work), modeling, drama, working with parents, and presenting examples (cases, stories, posters, etc.). Meydan and Bahçe (2010) concluded that drama and examples were used frequently. According to Johansson et al. (2011), Australian early childhood teachers reported engaging children in moral activities as the best-known approach to values education. These findings are parallel to those reached in the present study. Below are some teacher comments about values education implementations:

T 1- When we studied the topic of helping others, we visited an institution for orphans.

T 63- Friendship wall: Children drew pictures for their friends. We put them up on the walls in the hall. The wall was frequently updated.

T 72- Good behavior box: Families slipped small papers describing children's good home behavior into a box.

T 100- I invited volunteering parents to class. We engaged in some activities with them. With some families, we needed to make home visits to guide and inform the parents and present examples.

T 115-- We invited family elders such as grandparents to the school. Having grandparents and children picnicking together, singing songs, telling stories was an unforgettable experience for not only children and family elders but also us. These activities should be a regular part of school life.

3.3 Sources Used

When asked about the sources that teachers used in values education activities (Table 5), 36,2% responded "Books about values education, visual publications, story books, etc.", 16,2% responded "the internet", and 14,6% stated "Ministry of Education's early childhood education curricula and teachers' handbooks". Also, 8,5% of the teachers reported to produce their own materials, and 16,9% reported not to use any source books or journals.

Table 5. Frequencies and percentages of the responses to the question "What sources do you use in your values education practices?"

| What sources do you use in your values education practices? | f | % |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|
| 1. I don't use sources. | 22 | 16,9 |
| 2. I use materials that I produce myself (stories, games, etc.) | 11 | 8,5 |
| 3. I use the internet. | 21 | 16,2 |
| 4. I use educational journals. | 2 | 1,5 |
| 5. I follow the decisions made at the school (in the values education commission and my department) | 3 | 2,3 |
| 6. I use Ministry of Education's early childhood education curricula and teacher's handbooks. | 19 | 14,6 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 7. I use books on values education, visual publications, story books, etc. | 47 | 36,2 |
| 8. I exchange ideas with my colleagues. | 2 | 1,5 |
| 9. No response | 2 | 1,5 |
| Total | 130 | 100,0 |

Below are some teacher comments about the sources they used:

T 66- I produce materials with the teachers in the early childhood department and we also ask our colleagues in other schools for more. Then we share these sources.

T 75- I make use of the internet and books. I also enrich these sources by using my own creativity.

T 93- I try to use the source books on the market that are about values education. Most source books are not practical, so I can only use them to a limited extent. I believe there is need for sources that offer an activity pool on values.

3.4 Student related problems encountered in values education practices

Table 6 examines the problems teachers encounter in values education with regard to working with students. Of these teachers, 47,7% stated that they did not encounter any problems in implementations with students. However, 23,8% stated that they found it problematic to adapt this abstract concept to different age groups, 3,1% stated that they had problems finding activities, 5,4% stated that big class size was a problem, and 1,5% stated that it was hard to create change in children's behaviors and another 1,5% that it was problematic to ensure participation because of different perceptions of students. At the same time, 13,1% responded that discrepancies between family and school values led to conceptual problems for children and 0,8% responded that they had problems communicating with the students about this topic.

Table 6. Teacher responses about the most common problems encountered in values education practices regarding working with students

| What are the most common problems you encounter in values education (regarding working with students)? | f | % |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|
| 1. I do not have any problems. | 62 | 47,7 |
| 2. I find it difficult to find activities. | 4 | 3,1 |
| 3. I have problems adapting them to different age groups as it is an abstract issue. | 31 | 23,8 |
| 4. I have problems ensuring participation due to different perceptions of students. | 2 | 1,5 |
| 5. I have problems in implementation due to big class size. | 7 | 5,4 |
| 6. Students voice their reluctance as it does not have an adequate place in their lives. | 2 | 1,5 |
| 7. Differences between family and school values cause conflict between children. They experience a conceptual confusion. | 17 | 13,1 |
| 8. I have problems creating the desired change in children's behaviors. | 2 | 1,5 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 9. I have problems communicating with students about this topic. | 1 | ,8 |
| 10. No response | 2 | 1,5 |
| Total | 130 | 100,0 |

The class size issue seems to overlap with the findings of Akpınar and Özdaş (2013), Yalar and Yanpar (2011) and Türk (2009). In addition, Yiğittir and Keleş (2011) and Üner's (2011) results corroborate the problems teachers have in their values education practices with students. Below are some teacher comments:

T 3- I find it hard to work one-on-one with students. I have 27 students and small classroom space but I still implement values activities with joy.

T 52- It takes them time to learn. They forget what they don't repeat. Therefore, there are problems in creating the expected change.

3.5 Family related problems encountered in values education practices

Table 7 shows teachers responses about the problems they encountered in teaching values education with regard to families. As can be seen from the table, 56,2% of the teachers found it hard to ensure continuity of school education at home, 1,5% had problems reaching the families, another 1,5% had problems because of high family expectations about values education, while 29,2% stated they encountered no problems in the process.

Table 7. Teacher responses about the most common problems encountered in values education practices regarding families

| What are the most common problems you encounter in values education (regarding families)? | f | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 1. I do not experience any problems. | 38 | 29,2 |
| 2. I have never worked with families on this. | 1 | 0,8 |
| 3. I have problems with families. (No specific problem mentioned) | 5 | 3,8 |
| 4. I find it hard to reach families. | 2 | 1,5 |
| 5. I have problems because families have high expectations about values education. | 2 | 1,5 |
| 6. I have problems ensuring the continuity of school education at home and in participation. | 73 | 56,2 |
| 7. I have problems because families are not educated. | 6 | 4,6 |
| 8. I have problems regarding language (speech conditions and disorders in children, etc.) | 1 | 0,8 |
| 9. No response | 2 | 1,5 |
| Total | 130 | 100,0 |

Yalar and Yanpar (2011) conducted a study with 50 class teachers and found that they emphasized the role of families in making values education more useful and the need for cooperation between families and teachers. Kurtulmuş et al. (2014) concluded that teachers were affected negatively by family related problems in the values education process, the most prominent problem being the failure of families to reinforce school education. This finding is corroborated by Akbaş (2004), Baydar (2009) and Halstead (1996). Problems stemming from a lack of education on families' part also

emerged in studies by Baydar (2009), Bolat et. al. (2007) and Kurtulmuş et al. (2014). Kuş (2009:124), Meydan and Bahçe (2010) and Yalar (2010) also stated that teachers frequently mentioned families in values education. Studies by Chou et al. (2014), Çelenk (2003), Üner (2011) and Yazar (2012) also emphasize the importance of family-teacher cooperation in values education. Below are some teacher comments:

T 16- I'm not sure whether the informative texts I send home get read by families.

T 22- I need to meet with families often. I try to give them concrete examples about the importance of values education in early childhood, and attempt to increase home reinforcement of school activities.

T 30- The surrounding of my school is socially and culturally poor. Therefore, there are several values deficiencies.

T 67- There are families that don't speak Turkish. As these children's linguistic skills are not the same as others, I have problems in my implementation.

T 124- Families are too child-centered. They tend to give children everything they ask for. This affects home continuity of school education and the participation of families negatively.

3.6 Implementation related problems encountered in values education practices

Table 8 shows teacher responses about the most common problems they encounter in values education with regard to activities. As can be seen from the table, 61,5% said they had no problems, 12,3% said they had problems in finding materials and activities, and 7,7% said they had problems implementing activities as some of them were hard to explain in an abstract way.

Table 8. Teacher responses about the most common problems encountered in values education practices regarding activities

| What are the most common problems you encounter in values education (regarding activities) ? | f | % |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 1. I do not experience any problems. | 80 | 61,5 |
| 2. I have problems. (No specific problem mentioned) | 1 | 0,8 |
| 3. I have problems in issues such as finding time or communicating with the administration. | 6 | 4,6 |
| 4. I have problems implementing activities as some of them are hard to explain in an abstract way. | 10 | 7,7 |
| 5. I have problems implementing them in the group. (Class size) | 5 | 3,8 |
| 6. I have problems finding materials and activities. | 16 | 12,3 |
| 7. I have problems placing the activities in the program. | 2 | 1,5 |
| 8. I have problems creating the environment due to the facilities of the school and the classroom. | 3 | 2,3 |
| 9. My inadequate background in values education causes problems in the implementation of activities. | 5 | 3,8 |
| 10. No response | 2 | 1,5 |
| Total | 130 | 100,0 |

The majority of the teachers (80 teachers) had no problems in this issue. However, 50 reported to have difficulties. Some teachers may have problems implementing the activities (Hassan & Kahil, 2005). Problems regarding the

teaching of values seem to focus mostly on the instructional process (Tokdemir, 2007; Türk, 2000). Values have a prominent place in Turkish education system. The main principles of early childhood education listed in the Ministry of National Education Early Childhood Curriculum emphasize values education, while objectives include values related ones (MoNE, 2013). However, some teachers seem to have problems in their values education practices. Yalar and Yanpar (2011) stress that teachers demand in-service education about the teaching of values. Tokdemir (2007) also states that teachers do not have theoretical knowledge in values education. It is imperative that teachers have skills in values teaching and know how to teach them (Baydar, 2009). Therefore, as mentioned by Veugelers (2000) as well, teachers need to be aware of the values they wish their students to develop. It could then be argued that, in order for values education to reach its goal, educators need to fulfill the roles they have been given (Dilmaç, 2002). It is worth noting that teacher education programs do not offer any values education courses (Yazıcı, 2006). The existing problems may be eliminated by assisting practicing teachers in values education and offering student teachers instruction in values education. Below are some teacher comments on this issue:

T 25- I have difficulty transforming the sources I've read about values into classroom activities. I think the existing sources are inadequate, and new ones are needed.

T 26- I'm totally unprepared. I need instruction in this.

T 87- Sometimes students have difficulty understanding abstract topics. However, they find it easier to learn by doing.

T 96- I have problems regarding materials and activities. We need instruction in values education and sample activities and materials.

3.7 Other problems encountered in values education practices

The question "What other problems do you encounter in values education?" was not replied by 90,8% (118 teachers) (see Table 9). A small number of teachers added the apathy of school administration, the difficulty of designing new activities, and lack of space and sources as other problems.

Table 9. Frequencies and percentages of the responses to the question "What other problems do you encounter in values education?"

| What other problems do you encounter in values education? | f | % |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| No response | 118 | 90,8 |
| 1. I haven't practiced values education. | 2 | 2,3 |
| 2. Space and sources are inadequate. | 1 | ,8 |
| 3. I have difficulty designing new activities. | 6 | 4,6 |
| 4. Paperwork is tiring (lesson plans-inspecting- various reports) | 1 | ,8 |
| 5. My problem is that school administrators are apathetic and do not believe in values education. | 1 | ,8 |
| Total | 130 | 100,0 |

The majority of teachers not having responded to the question shows that they do not face other problems. It may therefore be stated that the topics previously mentioned shed light on teachers' problems. Below are several teacher comments:

T 64-I feel unequipped. Teachers should be given training and seminars on this topic.

T 70-I have problems designing new activities. Training may be given to us with sample activities and we may become inspired to design our own.

T 111- I think the biggest problem is to develop and use materials that will please the inspectors.

4. Conclusion

The results suggest that early childhood teachers find values education during early childhood important but at the same time experience problems in the values education process. Of our respondents, 96,2% stated that it was important to offer values education at schools and 98,5% reported to use values education in their classes. Teachers mostly teach values through classroom activities (56,2%), guide parents (16,9%) and invite visitor-organize trips

(7,7%). As their source material, they mostly use visual publications and story books (36,2%), the internet, and the Ministry of National Education sourcebooks (14,6%). While 47,7% said that they had no problems working with students during values education, those having problems mostly mentioned the difficulty of adapting values teaching for different age groups (23,8%), followed by difficulties stemming from the discrepancy between home and school values (13,5%) and large class size (5,4%). Regarding values education difficulties stemming from families, 29,2% of the teachers said they had no difficulties while 70,3% mentioned some kind of problem. For instance, 56,2% complained that there were problems with continuing school education at home and ensuring family involvement. As for values education activities, 61,5% (80 teachers) mentioned no difficulties while 38,5% (50 teachers) stated some kind of problem.

In light of these findings, it may be recommended that teachers are offered values education seminars, have access to an early childhood values education activity pool based on age groups, are presented with educational opportunities that support values education materials development, are guided in family awareness, and given training in teacher-parent communication. As well as these, it is considered to be necessary to do the following things; reorganization and development of pre-school curriculum in terms of values education, embodying the values education while teaching it to children, organizing seminars, conferences and such activities for parents by experts and academicians in the field about values and values education and encouraging family-school cooperation.

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