

PAPER DETAILS

TITLE: Values Education in the Context of Orphans: Views of Caregivers

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PAGES: 272-284

ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/4079955>



Values Education in the Context of Orphans: Views of Caregivers

Tuğba SELANIK AY¹, Mevlüt YILMAZ²

Abstract

Today, one of the missions of schools is to equip students with 21st century skills and to raise them as citizens equipped with national and universal values. In this way, social cohesion of individuals is aimed. Values education is a process in which school and family take part together. In this context, parents play an important role in values education. However, since parents cannot fulfill this role for children under state protection, caregivers should undertake this role. Therefore, the views and competencies of caregivers regarding values education are of great importance. The main purpose of this study is to reveal the views of caregivers on values education. This study is a phenomenological research because it utilizes the experiences and opinions of the staff who are currently working as caregivers and because it is a research focusing on values education, which has been frequently emphasized in recent years. The participants of the study were 12 caregivers. Interviews were conducted in the fall semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. The views of the caregivers on the values education of orphans were collected under the themes of the primary values they realized with them, the priority values they tried to impart, the people and institutions they received support from, their views on values education in schools, their views on their own values education self-efficacy, the problems and factors that negatively affect children, their expectations from the administration and home managers, and their views on the elements that should be considered in values education. Based on the research results, it is recommended that in-service training on values education be provided to caregiver staff to ensure that the values education for orphans is not left to chance.

Key Words

Orphans
Values education
Qualitative research
Phenomenology
Caregivers

About Article

Sending date: 18.07.2024
Acceptance date: 11.09.2024
E-publication date: 31.12.2024

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Introduction

Today, the mission of schools includes teaching students how and where to apply information, helping them acquire 21st-century skills, and instilling both national and universal values. This provides them with the opportunity to contribute to society and realize their full potential. In parallel with this shift values education has become an indispensable component of educational programs in recent years. There are different definitions of values in the related literature: For instance, NCSS (1989) defines the values as basic principles or standards on which individuals' or groups' behaviours depend. Gelles and Levine (1995) argue that values refer to shared standards about what is corrected, accepted and respected by people. Dilmaç (2010) states that values are information, views and attitudes which identify how individuals behave under which conditions.

Social studies courses emphasize the values about citizenship. It isn't only the cognitive dimension of the values that are desired to be acquired by students during the values education process at schools, but it also focuses on how students can transform their families, schools, states, nations, society and the world into a better place with these values (Zarillo, 2004). Research suggests that parents play a significant role in values education (Sridhar, 2001; Jagger and Wright, 2004; Doğanay, 2006; Dhall, 2008; Uyanık Balat and Balaban Dağal, 2009; Hökelekli, 2011; Harahap, Ausat, Sutrisno, Suherlan and Azzaakiyyah, 2023; Vertel, Korolenko, Shapovalova and Bereziuk, 2024; Suma, Rahman, Dalyan, Rahman and Andini, 2023; Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024). Barni, Ranieri, Scabini and Rosnatti (2011) stated that intergenerational differences may come from choices that parents make regarding which values they will transmit and from choices that children make about accepting or rejecting those values. Therefore, parents play a crucial role in instilling values. However, for children who need protection, this role cannot be fulfilled by their parents but by the caregivers who look after them. Orphans constitute a different category of children in terms of their location and potentials. They have a sociologically important situation in terms of continuing their lives in a social institution that has a different dynamic than family organization (Parin and Bilan, 2007). Therefore, such children need much more support and care. Meeting their needs enables them to be human resources that contribute to society. Caring for such children needs scientific and educational assistance (Kawther and Nagla, 2014). Meeting the needs of orphans provides them with the necessary tools to be productive and to protect them against negative effects in society (Mohamed, 1989 cited in Kawther and Nagla, 2014). Identification, care, education and upbringing of orphans are one of the most important problems in the world since the 19th century when wars were intense.

Children's homes are defined as social service institutions and refer to homes or detached apartments where 5 to 8 children stay in socially and culturally child-friendly regions of each province, preferably in the center of the city and close to schools and hospitals (SHÇEK [in Turkish "Sosyal Hizmetler Ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu" – in English "Social Services and Child Protection Agency"], 2008, article 4). The aim of this study is to reveal the views of the caregivers working at children's homes who are staff of the children's homes coordination centres (ÇEKOM [in Turkish "Çocuk Evi Koordinasyon Merkezi" – in English Children's Home Coordination Center]) about the values education. Although there are many studies concerning values education in Türkiye, there is limited number of studies dealing with the values education targeting orphans. It is hoped that the study will eliminate this deficiency in regard to the topic, provide some evidence than can be used in in-service training studies for the education of values for the staff who are responsible for the care of orphans, and provide resources to shed light on practices to be taken in order not to make the values education of orphans a random educational activity. Based on the aim of the study it attempts to answer the following research questions:

- What are the ÇEKOM caregivers' views on the necessity and importance of values education based on their professional experiences?
- What are the practices of caregivers in teaching values to orphans?
- What are their observations and views on the priority values that orphans should acquire?
- From which institutions and individuals do caregivers receive support in teaching values to orphans?
- What are their observations and views about the educational activities carried out in schools on values education?

- What are their views on their self-efficacy in teaching values to orphans and the reasons for these self-evaluation?
- What are their observations and views about the factors that negatively affect values education for orphans?
- What are their opinions about their level of knowledge about which values are included in the curricula?
- What are their expectations from the administration and home manager in teaching values to orphans?
- What are their observations and suggestions about the points to be considered in teaching values to orphans?
- What are the extra activities they carry out in teaching values to orphans outside of children's homes?

Method

In this part of the study, information on the model of the research, participants, data collection and data analysis are presented. The study is designed in line with the phenomenology which is part of the qualitative research methods. The phenomenological design focuses on those facts which people come across in different styles and are aware of, but don't have an in-depth understanding and deals with the analyses of these facts (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). The significant point in this design is that participants should have a considerable experience about the study topic (Patton, 1990; Baker, Wuest and Stern, 1992). The phenomenological research has two major approaches: descriptive and interpretive. In both approaches, the focus is on the identification of individuals' experiences. However, descriptive approach attempts to describe the perceptions and experiences of individuals. Interpretive approach, on the other hand, focuses on embedded meaning in daily activities (Ersoy, 2016). In this study, the descriptive phenomenology pattern was adopted, since the experiences of the caregiver staff working in the coordination center of the children's homes were analysed regarding the values education targeting the orphans.

Study group

Since the phenomenological research is based on the description and explanation of the experiences of the individuals, a children's house coordination center, where one of the authors is the administrator, was chosen working at this home who selected using the convenience sample method. The participants of the study are 12 caregivers Table 1 presents some characteristics of the participants:

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants

		f	%
Gender	Female	9	75
	Male	3	25
Professional experience	1-5 years	6	50
	6-10 years	3	26
	11-15 years	2	16,66
	16 years and above	1	8,33
Educational background	Associate degree education	22	16,66
	Undergraduate	8	66,66
	Delayed completion of a four-year university degree	1	8,33
	Master of Arts	1	8,33
Major	Social studies teaching	3	25
	Physical training and sports	2	16,66
	History	2	16,66
	Child development	3	25
	Psychology	1	8,33
	Finance	1	8,33

Data Collection Tool

The data for the study were collected using an interview form with twelve open-ended questions, developed by the authors and reviewed and modified based on feedback from five field experts (specialists in social studies teaching and values education). The data were collected through face-to-face interviews with twelve caregivers working at the Children's Houses Coordination Center, between 7 October 2019 and 27 December 2019.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed through descriptive analysis. In descriptive analysis, the data obtained are summarized and interpreted according to predetermined themes. The analysis process consisted of four stages: creating a framework, processing the data thematically, defining and interpreting the findings (Şahin, 2013). The data were presented in tables and supported with direct quotations from the opinions of the caregivers. The Miles and Hubermann formula (1994) was used to analyze 20% of the data by another researcher, and the percentage of agreement was determined to be 0.92.

Findings

The findings obtained are given in tables in this part of the study. The data are supported by direct quotations from the opinions of the participants. Code names were used for direct quotations. It was seen that the views of the caregivers' in the context of values education targeting the orphans are grouped under eleven themes as follows Figure 1.

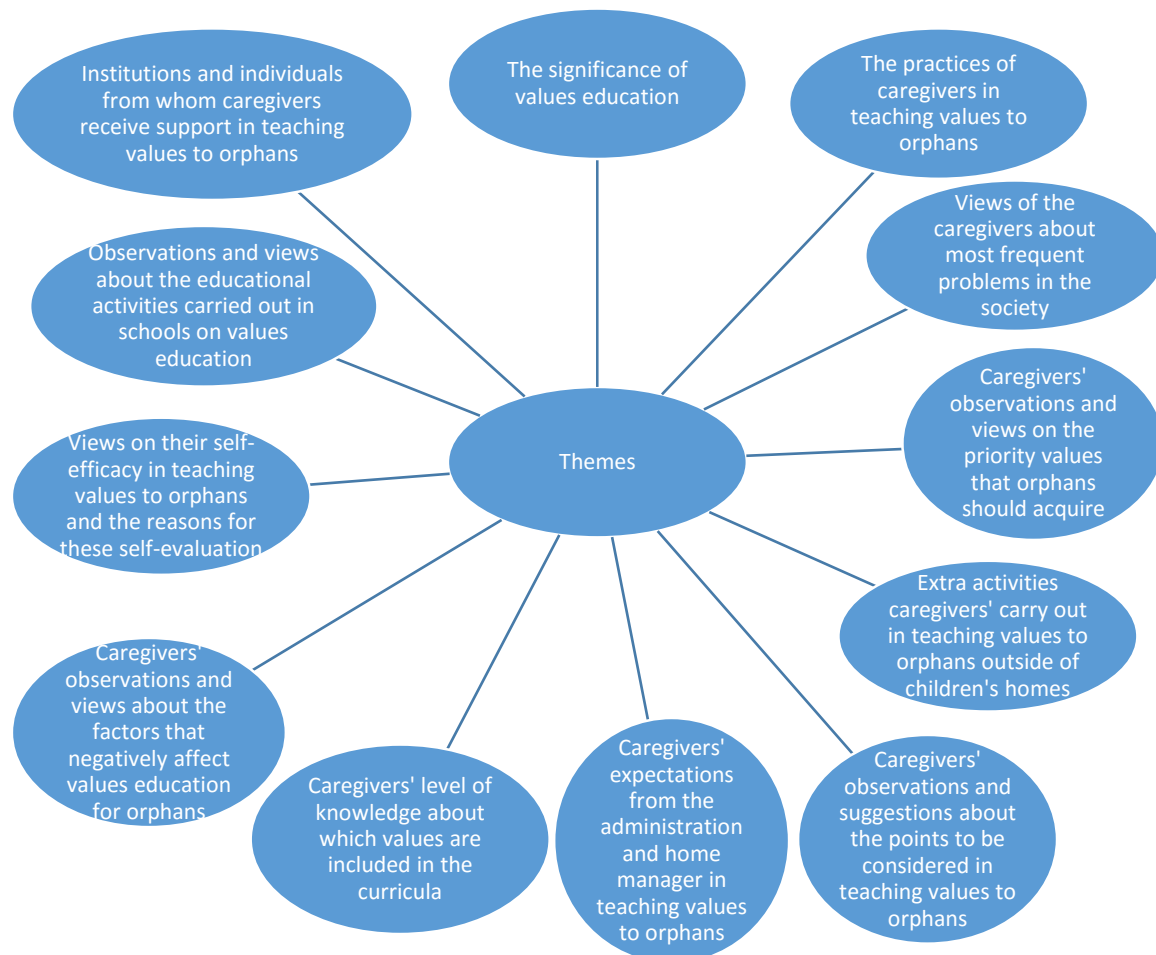


Figure 1. Themes obtained from interviews

Figure 1 indicates that the views of the participants produced the following themes concerning the values education targeting the orphans: views on significance, activities and priority of values education, individuals and institution supporting values education, values education at schools, their self-competency about values education, the problems in values education, factors that negatively affect children in values education, expectations from administration and home manager in values education, views on the factors to be considered in values education and other activities in values education.

Table 2. Participants' views about the significance of values education

Personal qualities	Gaining human qualities Character development Gaining communication skills
Social contributions	Social success Awareness of values Legal awareness Cultural transfer Raising good citizens
Points to be taken into consideration in values education	Being a role model Starting values education from early years Focusing on positive social relationships

Ali who emphasized the significance of values education in terms of character development reported the following:

"Values education is required. As far as I understand it is to correct the child's moral and ethical situation. It is important as the child will continue his education in his future life. It is important because their character started to establish at this age."

Mehmet who said that the most significant topic in values education is individuals' information about their rights stated the following:

"Values education is extremely significant for children. Those children who take values education become aware of certain things. The rights and the law among themselves determine the rights and law for other people."

Table 3. The practices of caregivers in teaching values to orphans

Teaching values implicitly	Empathy Considering individual differences Making them feel valuable Approaching them with respect Being a role model
Teaching values through purposeful activities	Using literary works Activities with religious officials Recreation studies Meal conversations Eid visits Home visits Giving responsibility Discussing case studies

Emphasizing empathy and responsibility at home within the context of practices in bringing value, Ali expressed his views as follows:

"We share work during working hours; cleaning and cooking are done together. I set an example for religious worship. On the other hand, I try to show negative behaviors by empathizing. Because sometimes I observe that they are selfish and don't care about others."

Seda, who emphasized the importance of cooperation with clerics in the context of bringing value through purposeful activities, expressed her views as follows:

“When there are incidents of lying and theft, our religious official comes, and we try to correct these negative behaviours in unity. Religious officials talk about such incorrect behavior giving examples from our religion. It is very effective. We can instantly see the effect on children.”

Table 4. Caregivers' observations and views on the priority values that orphans should acquire

Values included in the educational program of the social studies course	Patriotism Affection Respect Responsibility Helpfulness Solidarity Diligence Equality
Skills	Empathy Social involvement Communication
Other values	Conscience Compassion Morality Respect for personal rights Cultural awareness

Ali who focused on the value of affection reported the following views:

“Orphans who need both love and opportunities to show their love. I wish we had a garden, we would like to provide them with an opportunity to love animals and trees, and to do activities in nature.”

Hatice expressed her views focusing on the value of respect as follows:

“It’s very important for them to learn to respect the staff working for them, to respect each other, and to respect their teachers and their friends. In our culture the value of respect is very important. The value of respect is also important for them to comply with the society.”

Table 5. Institutions and individuals from whom caregivers receive support in teaching values to orphans

Support from the institution	House manager Institutional psychologist Social service
Support from outside the institution	Religious commissary Hospital psychologist Faculties of educational sciences
Personal support	Family members Caregivers from other houses
Printed materials	Books Teacher training courses

Mehmet explained from whom he gets support as follows in teaching basic values to the children:

“In case of trouble, we get support from the institution psychologist. We get support from the hospital psychologist and the religious officer who comes home.”

Hatice explained from whom she gets support as follows in teaching basic values to the children:

“I read various books to support myself. Additionally, I receive support from my sister, who is a graduate of child development, and from a lecturer at the Faculty of Educational Sciences.”

Table 6. Caregivers' level of knowledge about which values are included in the curricula

Not included in the program
Limited to class hours

Ömer expressed his views on the studies on values education at schools as follows:

"I don't have any information about values education at schools. Children generally tell me about what they do at school. During such conversations we try to make contributions to their understanding."

Mehmet expressed his views on the studies on values education at schools as follows:

"Values education is limited to 40 minutes class hour. I don't think that it is enough for children."

Table 7. Views on their self-efficacy in teaching values to orphans and the reasons for these self-evaluation

Lower	I have difficulty in communication I don't have any educational background on values education
Intermediate	I have good relations with children I see some deficiencies I try to improve my self-competency in values education Lack of disciplinary regulations
Higher	Being useful as a role model Treating children as my own children

Most of the participants (66.66%) stated their self-competency in regard to values education at lower level. Bülent who considered himself to have an intermediate level of self-efficacy in values education expressed his views as follows:

"I think I'm at an intermediate level. We are also restricted based on the regulation. However, there is no disciplinary regulations. There is no sanction. I don't think we can be very effective."

The caregiver Seda, who evaluated herself at a lower level in the context of teaching values, expressed her opinion as follows:

"I am not totally adequate. Sometimes I have trouble in understanding the psychology of children. I don't have any problems about food and cleaning. We don't know much about it, because we aren't educated about it."

Table 8. Views of the caregivers about most frequent problems in the society

Economical values	Material dissatisfaction Not being frugal Failure to meet their requirements
Social, ethical and religious	Moral corruption Lack of religious and moral knowledge Disrespect Heartlessness
Values about the media	Distorted relationships in TV series Negative values highlighted in the media
Values about the social order	Freedoms and limits are not known Intolerance Etiquette Lack of empathy and understanding
Values about planning the future	Not seeing the future and difficulties Not being hardworking

Ömer, who emphasized not being frugal and not being able to meet their needs in relation to economy in the context of the most experienced problems in values education, expressed his opinion as follows:

“They finish the pocket money the same day. There is absolutely no budget planning or saving money. They don’t think what they need. The state meets their needs and gives extra pocket money, but they can’t manage to use these pocket money to meet their needs.”

Ayşe expressed her views as follows regarding the sub-theme of future planning in the context of the most problematic issue:

“These children will be employed by the state as civil servants. It is in fact an attempt to help them. However, such a policy makes them not to make any attempt, to ignore the courses and have problem behaviors. Demanding and selfish behaviors are on the rise. It reduces behaviors like following the rules. Because whatever they do, the state promises them a guaranteed future.”

Table 9. Caregivers' observations and views about the factors that negatively affect values education for orphans

Social services regulation	Law No. 3413 Children’s being used to get everything ready Negative impact of children on family visits Invaluability of caregiver job descriptions in the eyes of the child
Personal	Experiences and cases Psycho-social characteristics of children
Social environment	Effects of social environment Lack of parental control Lack of societal control
Media	Internet and social media Visual media

Fatma who emphasized the law numbered 3413 as a negative factor in values education reported her views as follows:

“Through the law numbered 3413 these children are employed by the state. They are called the children of the state. However, given that children know this, we could not teach anything to them. We can’t be effective because we don’t have such sanction. Having every kind of assurance in terms of material, moral and future causes them to be used to get everything ready and not to strive for anything. Of course there should be such help, but the law should be regulated to benefit them.”

Regarding the factors that adversely affect children regarding values education, Ali paid attention to the negative impact of children during their visits to the family and expressed his views as follows:

“The external environment affects the children. They can’t break from their past. Unless they can’t break, they can’t get rid of bad negative things. If they are sent to other provinces, there will be no such effects. Our children, who are under protection, are negatively affected and come back when they go to their families.”

Table 10. Caregivers' expectations from the administration and home manager in teaching values to orphans

Improvements	Frequent visits by administrators More frequent and regular interviews with the institutional psychologist Being meticulous in the implementation of the decisions taken
New suggestions	Systematic handling of values Adding values education to the training of care workers Reconsidering Law No. 3413 Award and penalty regulations Values education delivered through events and games Switching to children's home sites

Stating that more frequent and regular meetings should be held with the institutional psychologist, Seda expressed her opinions as follows:

“Children should meet with the organization psychologist frequently and regularly. There should be a cooperation between psychologist and religious official. This may also include the caregivers. I think it will be very effective.”

Hülya, who emphasized that modifications should be made in the law numbered 3413 regarding values education, expresses her views as follows:

“I think that the biggest obstacle in values education is Law No. 3413. With this law, when orphans graduate from high school, they have the right to work in state institutions without any conditions. For this reason, they never need to gain values such as studying, taking responsibility or exhibiting exemplary behavior.”

Table 11. Caregivers' observations and suggestions about the points to be considered in teaching values to orphans

Topics	Training on different developmental fields Inclusion of moral values Inclusion of sexual education Inclusion of equality
Professional behaviour characteristics	Confidentiality about family background and past information should be ensured Being a role model Having standards in professional behavior Avoiding suppressive behavior Not bringing shame on children Values should be given in an interactive environment

Mehmet expressed his view that the information on children's family and their past experience should be confidential as follows:

“Matters that will offend the child should not be discussed. Anyway, if there is a fragmented family history, this information should not be shared with anyone including the child and should not be emphasized.”

Fatma expressed her opinion about being a role model in teaching value to the children as follows:

“We need to be a role model to the children. Didn't we learn these from our family? We looked at how our parents behave. Even now I say what my mother would do in this situation sometimes.”

Table 12. Extra activities that caregivers carry out in teaching values to orphans outside of children's homes

Social and sports activities	Astroturf Swimming Bowling Going restaurants Shopping Spending time with guests coming houses Visits to nursing homes Involving in the activities of the non-governmental organizations Going movies and plays Visit to veterany clinic Picnics
Educational activities	Assigning tasks and responsibilities Conferences Autograph sessions Using the opportunities

Ayşe expresses her views on participating in the activities of non-governmental organizations as follows:

“Some activities can be conducted with non-governmental organizations. There may be social responsibility projects. Children have to do something and see. They have to experience and understand.”

Seda mentioned the visits to the veterinary clinics as follows:

“There is a veterinary clinic near to the house. We use it to instill love for animals among the children. Thanks to our veterinarian he helps us.”

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the findings it can be stated that values education can also contribute to the attempts to eliminate violence tendency among the orphans. In regard to the support from outside the institution the participants stated that they get assistance from religious commissary, hospital psychologist and faculties of educational sciences. Yılmaz (2014) also suggests that the reading of certain parables from the Quran by religious officials could be used in values education. Nearly all of the caregivers reported that they have insufficient information on values education. It appears that they have misconceptions or incomplete understanding (e.g. there is no values education in the educational programs or values education at schools is limited to couse hours) about the values education. Merentek, Saerang, Lantang, Sumual (2022) emphasized that social volunteers should be utilized in the values education to be given to orphans, especially staff competent in values education and a loving environment where physical conditions are designed like a family environment to make children feel like they are in a family. However, Şahin (2018) found that caregivers have necessary theoretical background on values education. In this study most of the caregivers (66.66%) stated their self-competency in regard to values education at lower level. In the strategic plan developed by the Social Services and Child Protection Agency for the years 2020–2014 (2009, p. 167), it is stated that the physical capacity of the Children and Youth Centres is very limited, and the staff lack specific areas of expertise. It is also added that the number of staff isn't sufficient. It is suggested that in order to improve the quality of services they should be trained through in-service training activities which can't be conducted due to the lack of necessary financial support. Therefore, the reports of the caregivers participated in the study that they haven't received any training on values education, which they cite as the reason for feeling insufficient about values education, supports the relevant strategic plan report. The views of caregivers about the most problematic values for the orphans are grouped into five categories: economy, social morality and religion, media, social order and future. The category of economy includes the following: Material dissatisfaction, not being frugal and failure to meet their requirements. The category of social morality and religion contains the moral corruption, the lack of religious and moral knowledge, disrespect and heartlessness. The category of media is made up of the following: distorted relationships in TV series and negative values highlighted in the media. The category of social order is consisted of freedoms and limits are not known, intolerance, etiquette and the lack of empathy and understanding. The last category, planning the future, includes not seeing the future and difficulties and not being hardworking. The activities that the participants perform in values education, under the category of “teaching values implicitly” the following are stated by the participants: empathy, considering individual differences, making them feel valuable, approaching them with respect and being a role model. Similarly, Dhall (2008) stated that emotional hunger in orphans can lead to selfishness, demanding behavior, and a reduced capacity for caring for others. In the current study, the participants considered the selfish and uninterested acts as a problems and they reported that they try to make them acquire empathy to avoid such behaviours. Therefore, the previous findings are consistent with the current findings.

Caregivers mentioned purposeful activities for teaching values, such as using literary works, engaging in activities with religious officials, conducting recreational studies, having meal-time conversations, making Eid and home visits, assigning responsibilities, and discussing case studies. Kawther and Nagla (2014) used the illustrated children's books to teach values to the orphans, too. Ama and Sandia (2001) also stated that educational stories and animations can be effective tools for teaching 21st-century children values, good habits, and behaviors. In the study, the participants also stated that discussion of several events can contribute to values education. Similarly, Dhall (2008) argued “instead of watching TV, playing group games and healthy discussion environments are very efficient methods to teach values. Some studies (Kozikoğlu, 2018; Ama & Saadia, 2001) have found that primary school teachers use drama, plays, and stories to teach values. It is also found that the majority of the teachers

have problems in values education due to the lack of parental support, the cognitive and developmental qualities of children and deficiencies in the physical capacity of schools. The same activities are also reported by the current participants. The participants similarly reported that the physical capacity of the houses isn't sufficient to provide an effective values education. For instance, they emphasized the need for larger areas to instill love for animals, the nature and sports. The views of caregivers about the priority values that orphans should acquire patriotism, affection, respect, responsibility, benevolence, solidarity, diligence and equality. Under the category of skills, they focused on empathy, social involvement and communication. The values given by the caregivers under the category of "other values" are as follows: conscience, compassion, morality, personal rights and cultural awareness. Kesen and Daşbaşı (2015) found that adults raised in orphanages tend to be hardworking. Şahin (2018) also stated that the values that caregivers emphasize and care about are honesty, trust, respect, affection, success, morality, empathy and tolerance. Therefore, the values cited both studies. Elmacı (2010) stated that to ensure accurate information about orphans, society and the mass media should be properly informed, and children should not exploit their status as needing protection. It is emphasized that the success stories of the orphans, the conditions they were trained and the services provided should be announced to the public through an effective public opinion study. İzci, Uğurlu, Çöllü and Demir (2018) argue that the system of children's houses hasn't been known by society in detail and therefore, people approach this system with caution and bias. The importance of transferring information about and promoting the system towards the society is emphasized and it is suggested that the system should be explained in a transparent way to eliminate the curiosity of the society. The views of caregivers stated media as a factor that negatively affect the children in values education. Yazıcı (2014) argued that the mass media harm social values because it is difficult to control Internet and social media. It is also stated that the negative effects are observed as a result of children's having access to sexual sites, and the inefficiency of age limits, and the access of children to social accounts by making false statements. Under the category of new suggestions on values education for orphans: teaching values once a month, training of caregivers on values education, changes in their employment status, having a regulation of rewards and punishment, teaching values through activities and games and having children's house sites. Mufti (1998) stated that games are the best way for teachers to communicate with children under state protection, and that games are the best tool to improve children's imaginations and creativity and to ensure their participation. In the current study, some participants argued that values can be taught to the children through several games. They also suggested that the current law is a barrier for making these children more responsible and hardworking. Similarly, Bakırcı (2014) analysed the views of the staff about these children. They cited the law numbered 3413 as one of the significant factors having negative effects on the orphans. The participants also emphasized that this law, which was originally passed to eliminate the victimization of the children living in orphanages, had negative effects on the educational life of these children and on their being raised as responsible individuals. In addition, İnce, Kasapoğlu and Sezek (2014) stated that all needs of these children are met by the state, but being aware of this support makes these children irresponsible. This situation was explained by the fact that children are always consumers, they can't learn to make savings, and they can't manage their budgets. They mentioned the negative effects of the fact that the orphans to know that they would have a profession in a short way. In this context, the current findings obtained are compatible with this finding. Yılgör Tekelioğlu (1993) found that adolescents living in orphanages have problems in being friends with opposite sex and also, in sexual information. This finding is consistent with the reports of the caregivers in that they suggested the inclusion of sexual education for the orphans. Otrav (2005) analysed the effects of sports on children. It is reported that those children who have communication and socialization problems begin to have more friends and their socialization improves following their involvement in sports. In the present study the participants also stated that they make use of sports activities in relation to values education. The following suggestions are based on the study's findings:

- In addition to prioritizing graduates from relevant fields when recruiting care personnel, in-service training can be provided by specialists in values education.
- In order for the activities within the scope of values education for orphans to be more effective, children's homes can be designed as sites or campuses and physical facilities can be improved.

- In order to prevent the negative effects of parental interactions, parents can be provided with training and, if necessary, rehabilitation. When this is not possible, parents' interaction with children can be terminated.
- Necessary modifications can be made to the Law No. 3413 in this regard.
- Problems can be prevented by raising public awareness about children's homes, their functioning, structure and orphans.
- Various studies can be conducted to determine the views of orphans in the context of values education and the problems they experience.

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