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An Investigatıon of Values Educatıon Activities Given through Drama in a Kindergarten: a Case Study

Okan Sarigöz[1] · **Duygu Deveci**[2]

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Abstract
This study aims to examine the effects of values education activities delivered through drama in kindergartens, comparing students who received such education with those who did not. To this end, the study addresses the research question: "What are the effects of values education activities implemented through drama in a kindergarten setting?"The study group consists of students from a public school in Turkey. Data were collected over a period of 16 weeks from 10 participants using a values observation form developed by the researcher. The data were analyzed through content analysis to identify emerging patterns and themes.The findings indicate that values education activities conducted through drama during the preschool period led to semantic shifts in students' prioritization of core values. It is recommended that future research develop standardized scales to assess value acquisition in preschool children and apply these tools at regular intervals throughout the educational process.

Keywords Drama · Values education · Value · Preschool

1 Introduction

Communities living in the same geographical region strive to adapt to evolving and changing values to achieve a better quality of life (Abbas et al., 2024; Kišjuhas, 2024; Classen, 2013; Aluş & Selçukkaya, 2015; Yaman, 2012; Ulusoy & Dilmaç, 2020).

✉ Okan Sarigöz
okan.sarigoz@gmail.com

Duygu Deveci
duygu.deveci93@gmail.com

[1] Faculty of Education, Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, No: 139, Alahan, Antakya 31001, Turkey

[2] Ministry of Education, Antakya 31001, Turkey

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Approaches to values emerge as a synthesis of traditional and modern perspectives, renewing themselves over time. Values are widely regarded as dialectical concepts that transform from infancy to adulthood (Basseches, 2005; Lučić, 2016; Bingöl, 2017; Czerniawska & Szydło, 2022).

In this continuously evolving sociological structure, values are viewed from two perspectives: one rooted in naturalistic, scholastic traditions; the other, shaped by rational, pragmatic, and practical experiences, influenced by events, leaders, and both natural and artificial constructs (Frumkin, 1961; Stuhr, 2003; Legg & Hookway, 2008; Kocka, 2021). Within this framework, value structures are understood as historical constructs passed down across generations.

Today's value systems are complex, consisting of stages of formation, adaptation, and assimilation (Silcock & Duncan, 2001; Aktepe & Tahiroğlu, 2019). Fundamental values are rooted in tradition but adapt to secular and rational frameworks (Davronov, 2023). This dynamic relationship between traditional and evolving values supports adaptive functioning in a rapidly globalizing world (Topal, 2019; Rasoolimanesh, 2020). Studies show that values are shaped through interactions within various social contexts such as family, school, and work environments (Başyiğit & Aydınlı, 2021; Kolay & Kaptan, 2021; Özkan, 2011). Furthermore, the most critical period for value acquisition is acknowledged to be between the ages of 0–6, influenced significantly by the cooperation between the family, educational institutions, and the broader environment (Mangır & Baran, 1990; Senemoğlu, 2013; Khulusinniyah, 2023). According to the World Values Survey, early life experiences and environmental interactions are the primary determinants of long-term value development (WVS, 2024).

The family is recognized as the first environment where a child's connection to values begins, while educational institutions act as the setting where these values are formalized and applied (Almond, 2010; Gulla, 2010). In this respect, the educational system is seen as an extension of familial value transmission, with consistent reinforcement across both domains (Pekşen et al., 2020; Králik, 2023).

In preschool education, values are commonly acquired in two main dimensions: socio-emotional through concepts like affection, respect, and tolerance and physical through responsibility, cooperation, cleanliness, and sharing (Aral & Kadan, 2018; Zdanevych et al., 2020). These behaviors, which evolve from simple to more complex forms, are shaped by growing developmental expectations (Yenen & Ulucan, 2021).

Given these considerations, it is necessary to establish flexible and evaluative teaching environments to support early value acquisition. In this study, drama is explored as a pedagogical tool that bridges abstract moral concepts with lived experience (Tombak, 2014; Tığlı & Genç, 2022). The aim is to assess the impact of drama-based values education on children's awareness, interpretation, and behavioral expression of values. Drama was selected for its ability to engage children's imagination and imitation, its suitability across age groups, and its adaptability for family and classroom use (Kandemir & Güler, 2015; Sarıgöz & Deveci, 2023).

A review of the literature reveals that although there are numerous studies on preschool values education, few have examined the role of drama in this context (Elbir & Bağcı, 2013; Memduhoğlu & Yüce, 2020; Ergenekon & Aküzüm, 2021; Rochovská & Švábová, 2022; Şahin & Doğan, 2023). This gap highlights the significance

of the current study, which investigates how drama-based activities contribute to the development of values during early childhood education.

Recognizing that values form the foundation of social life from an early age underlines the importance of providing effective, developmentally appropriate strategies in preschool education. Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the use of drama as an instructional method and to contribute to the literature by assessing its influence on values acquisition in early childhood. The central research questions are as follows:

> RQ1: What are the effects of values education activities given through drama in a kindergarten?

Preschool education is a critical stage for shaping children's values, behaviors, and development. Drama-based activities represent an engaging and interactive method for helping children internalize moral values (Tombak, 2014; Novitawati & Aslamiah, 2020).

> RQ1a) For preschool students who did not receive values education (Cleanliness, Responsibility, Cooperation-Sharing, Respect-Tolerance, Love) through drama, what is the level of value awareness, value acquisition, and implementation of values in classroom and school settings?
> RQ1b) For preschool students who received values education (Cleanliness, Responsibility, Cooperation-Sharing, Respect-Tolerance, Love) through drama, what is the level of value awareness, value acquisition, and implementation of values in classroom and school settings?

2 Method

2.1 Research Model

This study employs a quasi-experimental single-group pretest-posttest design based on structured observation over a 16-week period. Rather than comparing distinct groups, the research focuses on the same group of students before and after the implementation of drama-based values education activities. The goal is to assess how behavioral changes in value acquisition manifest over time through a descriptive comparison of two observation phases.

This design is particularly suitable for naturalistic educational settings, where random assignment or control groups are not feasible or ethical. The research process involved a repeated-measures approach, in which values-related behaviors were recorded across two distinct phases: the first 8 weeks involved standard preschool instruction without drama activities, while the subsequent 8 weeks implemented values education through drama.

Structured observational data were collected using a 50-item observation form aligned with the national preschool education curriculum. These forms were administered consistently by the same classroom teacher, allowing for comparative interpretation of pre- and post-intervention behaviors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cohen et al., 2017).

This quasi-experimental framework is valuable for educational intervention studies, particularly in early childhood contexts, as it facilitates the examination of behavioral changes in natural settings while minimizing disruptions to the learning process—a feature aligned with this study, which was conducted with preschool students who had not previously experienced drama-based values education. Therefore, the uniqueness of the participants' experiences further justified the selection of this research design (Fig. 1).

2.2 Study Group

The study group was determined using criterion sampling, a type of purposive sampling within non-random sampling methods. The selection criteria included being a preschool student, continuing education in the same class, and not having previously received values education through drama activities. These criteria were designed to explore phenomena that provide rich, meaningful data (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Based on these criteria, the study group consisted of 10 preschool students and their classroom teacher, all from a kindergarten class at a primary school in the Kırıkhan district of Hatay Province. The demographic characteristics of the study group are presented in Table 1.

2.3 Data Collection Technique and Process

The data collection process was conducted in two systematically organized phases over a total period of 16 weeks. The steps followed were as below:

Preparation Phase (Week 0): A 50-item structured observation form was developed by the researchers in alignment with the Turkish national preschool curriculum. The form focused on core values such as love, respect and tolerance, cooperation and sharing, responsibility, and cleanliness. Content validity was established through expert consultation and Lawshe's CVR-CVI method (Lawshe, 1975; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

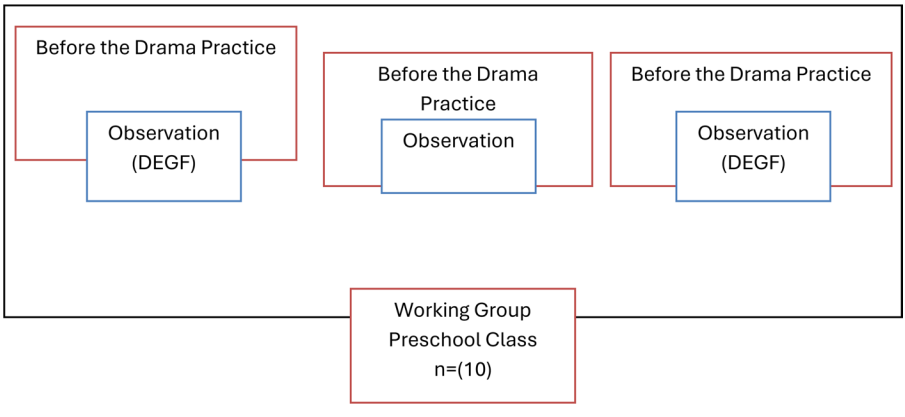


Fig. 1 Single Case Design

Table 1 Demographic Features

teacher		student	
Years of Seniority	7	Range of age	5-6
Graduation Status	Preschool Teaching Curriculum and Instruction Science Specialist	Socioeconomic status	Mid-range
Competences	the leader of drama	the structure of family	the nuclear family - democratic family

Baseline Observation Phase (Weeks 1–8): For the first 8 weeks, the students continued their regular curriculum without any drama intervention. During this period, the preschool teacher completed the structured observation form once per week, recording behaviors observed throughout the week. This form of naturalistic and repeated observation aligns with methods suggested for educational field studies (Karataş, 2017; Cohen et al., 2017).

Intervention Phase (Weeks 9–16): In the second 8 weeks, a drama-based values education program designed by the researchers was implemented twice a week. Activities included role-play, storytelling, and improvisation techniques, which are widely accepted as effective tools in early childhood education for internalizing abstract concepts (Tombak, 2014; Hong & Hong, 2022). The same observation form was filled out by the teacher weekly to monitor behavioral changes.

Supplementary Data Sources: In addition to observation forms, student portfolios were compiled throughout the intervention. These included artwork, drama reflections, and samples of classroom activity outputs related to the target values. Portfolios are recommended in qualitative research as complementary tools for data triangulation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

Documentation and Ethics: Selected drama sessions were audio- and video-recorded with consent to enhance data credibility and enable behavioral cross-checking. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant school authorities, and parental consent was secured for all student participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

2.4 Data Analysis

In this study, the drama activity program based on values education was systematically observed throughout its key stages: initiation, implementation, and conclusion. The data collected during this process were analyzed using content analysis, taking into account children's developmental levels, value awareness, and value acquisition. Content analysis was selected for its capacity to reveal implicit messages and deeper meanings that may not be readily apparent (Metin & Ünal, 2022; Morgan, 1993; Vears & Gillam, 2022).

To ensure effective structuring, each phase of the drama activities was analyzed separately, and individual observations were examined in detail after each session. This approach enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the children's engagement and the impact of the drama-based values education program.

2.5 Validity and Reliability Studies

To ensure the ethical integrity of the study, preliminary interviews were conducted with both the research participants and the teacher, and voluntary participation was emphasized. During the development of the observation form, the items were reviewed by 10 subject matter experts. Feedback was received from 8 experts regarding item relevance and construct alignment.

2.6 Students with Drama-Based Education

For content validity, Lawshe's technique was employed, and the content validity ratio (CVR) for each item was calculated using the formula CVR = (ne – N/2) / (N/2), with the lowest item CVR recorded as 0.75 (Lawshe, 1975). The content validity index (CVI) of the items was computed as CVI = ∑CVR / MS, resulting in a final CVI of 0.87. This figure exceeded the accepted threshold of 0.78, confirming the statistical relevance of the form (Veneziano & Hooper, 1997).

To enhance objectivity, the observation forms were completed by the teacher, and behavioral observations were documented in student portfolios. Selected activities were recorded to ensure data reliability. For triangulation, all data were reviewed and interpreted by a panel comprising two teachers, one academic expert, and one subject expert.

2.7 Findings

This section presents the findings related to the main research question and its subcomponents.

2.7.1 Findings on the Value Awareness of Students Who did not Receive Drama-Based Values Education

Figure 2 illustrates the statements related to the value awareness of preschool students who did not receive drama-based values education. An analysis of these findings shows that out of 10 students, 7 sometimes and 3 always displayed awareness behaviors related to the value of love. Among the values consistently observed, 3 students showed frequent awareness of love, while 8 students displayed occasional awareness of cleanliness. Notably, 2 students demonstrated no awareness of cooperation and sharing, and 1 student showed no awareness of cleanliness and respect-tolerance.

2.7.2 Findings on the Value Practices of Students Who did not Receive Drama-Based Values Education

Figure 3 presents the level of value-based behaviors exhibited by students who did not receive drama-based education. Among the 10 students, the most commonly practiced value was love. According to the graph, 1 student did not display any behaviors related to cleanliness and love, 3 students showed no behaviors associated with responsibility, and 4 students lacked behaviors linked to cooperation and sharing.

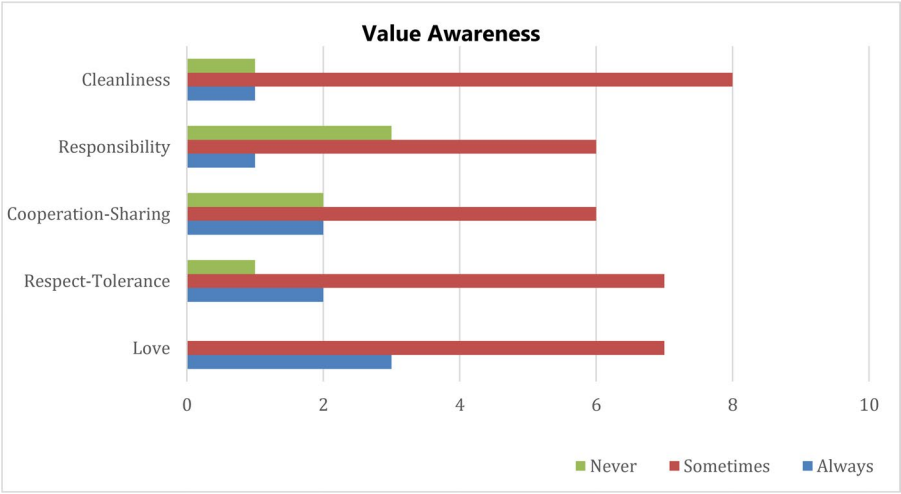


Fig. 2 Value awareness of students who did not receive values education through drama

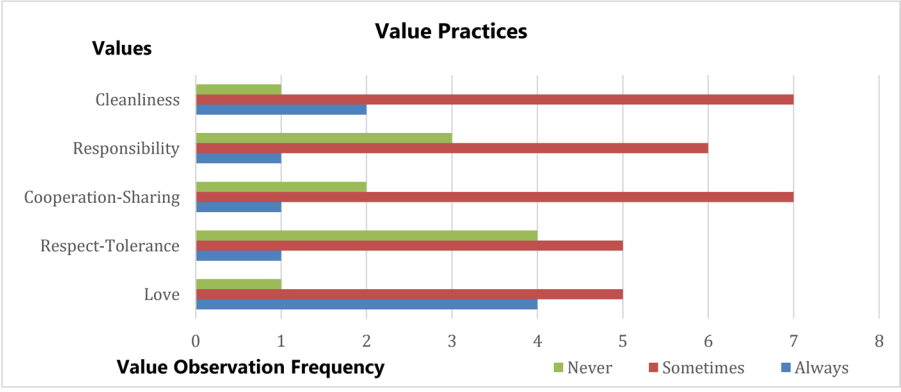


Fig. 3 Value practices of students who did not receive values education through drama

Furthermore, 7 students occasionally exhibited behaviors concerning cooperation-sharing and cleanliness.

2.7.3 Findings on Value Acquisition in Cognitive, Physical, Socio-Emotional, and Language Domains (Students Without Drama-Based Education)

As value acquisition in preschool integrates multiple developmental areas, the results were examined collectively across four domains. Table 2 outlines these behaviors.

In the cognitive domain, value-related skills were generally lacking, except for affection, observed in 3 students. Affection and cleanliness occasionally emerged in 7 students, marking the highest frequency. In the physical domain, behaviors related to respect and tolerance were the least observed. However, affection-related behaviors were evenly

Table 2 Value acquisitions of students who did not receive values education with drama: mental, physical, socio-emotional and language development areas

Values	Value acquisitions of students who did not receive values education with drama											
	Frequency of value gains in students											
	Mental domain value acquisitions			Physical domain value acquisitions			Socio-emotional domain value acquisitions			Language domain value acquisitions		
	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
Cleanliness	2. S.	7.S.	1.S.	2.S.	7.S.	1.S.	1.S.	8.S.	1.S.	3.S.	7.S.	
Responsibility	2.S.	6.S.	2.S.	1.S.	6.S.	3.S.	2.S.	5.S.	3.S.	1.S.	6.S.	3.S.
Cooperation-Sharing	2.S.	6.S.	2.S.		6.S.	4.S.	2.S.	5.S.	3.S.	1.S.	6.S.	3.S
Respect-Tolerance	3.S.	6.S.	1.S.	2.S.	5.S.	3.S.	1.S.	5.S.	4.S.		7.S.	3.S.
Affection	3.S.	7.S.		5.S.	5.S.		4.S.	6.S.		5.S.	5.S.	

distributed between “always” and “sometimes.” In the socio-emotional domain, values such as respect-tolerance and responsibility were expressed equally. Affection-related behaviors were noted in 5 students. In the language development domain, value-based behaviors appeared mostly in the “sometimes” category. Responsibility, cooperation-sharing, and respect-tolerance were completely absent in 3 students.

2.7.4 Findings on the Value Awareness of Students who Received Drama-Based Values Education

Figure 4 shows the value awareness behaviors of students who received drama-based values education. Analysis revealed that respect and tolerance were the most frequently demonstrated values, followed by love, responsibility, and cleanliness, each observed in six students. Only one student did not display awareness behaviors for love.

2.7.5 Findings on the Value Practices of Students who Received Drama-Based Values Education

Figure 5 presents the behavioral levels of students after the drama-based intervention. All students exhibited behaviors related to each value, except for cooperation-sharing, which was displayed by five students. Cleanliness and love were observed equally among 5 and 4 students, respectively. Responsibility-related behaviors were the most frequently demonstrated.

2.7.6 Findings on Value Acquisition in Cognitive, Physical, Socio-Emotional, and Language Domains (Students with Drama-Based Education)

Value acquisition data for the post-drama intervention period are summarized in Table 3.In the cognitive domain, all students exhibited skills in this area. Cleanliness and cooperation-sharing were observed consistently in 6 students, while responsi-

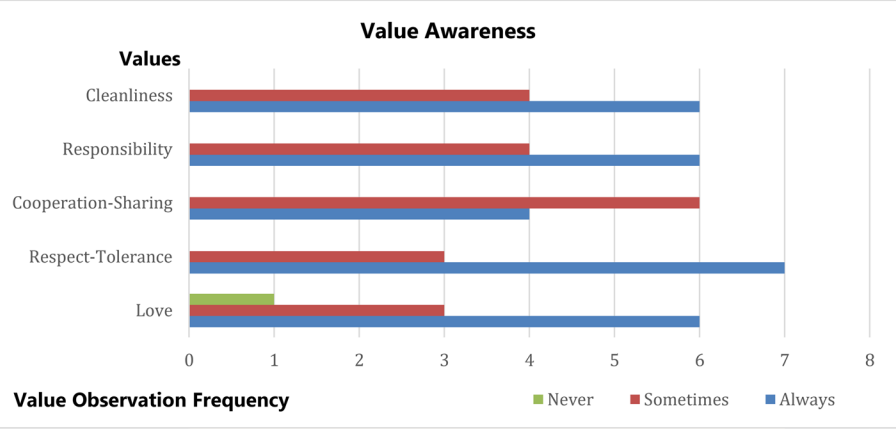


Fig. 4 Value awareness of students receiving values education through drama

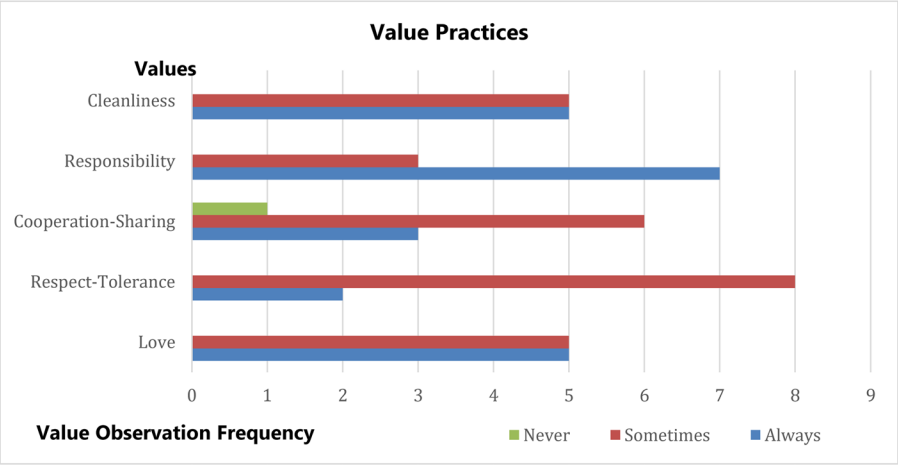


Fig. 5 Value practices of students receiving values education through drama

bility was occasionally demonstrated.In the physical domain, only one student did not show behaviors related to love. The most frequently observed physical skills were related to responsibility and cleanliness (7 students each). In the socio-emotional domain, behavior frequencies were concentrated in the "sometimes" category. Responsibility was dominant among 7 students, followed by love, respect-tolerance, cooperation-sharing, and cleanliness. One student showed no behaviors for cooperation-sharing and cleanliness. In the language development domain, cooperation-sharing and cleanliness were "always" observed in 8 students and "sometimes" in 2. Responsibility-related language skills appeared less frequently.

2.8 Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the foundational values shaping societal structures begin to emerge during early childhood, particularly in the preschool years. The observation of these values in all participating students highlights the critical nature of this developmental period. This aligns with the longitudinal findings of Başyiğit and Aydınlı (2021), who emphasize the importance of preschool as a pivotal stage for value acquisition. However, the variation in the frequency of observed values—from "never" to "always"—suggests that individual, environmental, and pedagogical factors jointly influence children's ability to internalize and practice values.

Consistent with the literature that links values to early cultural and familial experiences (Sugiarti et al., 2021), this study also supports the notion that both family and social context significantly shape children's value systems (Knafo & Galansky, 2008; Kuczynski et al., 1997). A notable contribution of the current research is its demonstration of how educational practices—particularly those involving drama—can positively affect both the visibility and internalization of values in preschool-aged children. These results support Taşdelen's (2013) assertion that values are not simply transmitted but are actively constructed through engagement in learning activities.

Table 3 Value acquisitions of students receiving values education through drama in the areas of mental, physical, socio-emotional and language development (S: Student)

Values	Value acquisitions of students who did receive values education with drama											
	Frequency of value gains in students											
	Mental domain value acquisitions			Physical domain value acquisitions			Socio-emotional domain value acquisitions			Language domain value acquisitions		
	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
Cleanliness	7. S.	3.S.		7.S.	3.S.		1.S.	8.S.	1.S.	8.S.	2.S.	
Responsibility	7.S.	3.S.		7.S.	3.S.		7.S.	3.S.		3.S.	7.S.	
Cooperation-Sharing	4.S.	6.S.		4.S.	6.S.		3.S.	6.S.	1.S.	8.S.	2.S.	
Respect-Tolerance	5.S.	5.S.		6.S.	4.S.		4.S.	6.S.		7.S.	3.S.	
Affection	6.S.	4.S.		5.S.	4.S.	1.S	6.S.	4.S.		6.S.	4.S.	

Following the drama-based intervention, there was a significant increase in values such as respect, tolerance, cooperation, and sharing—values that had previously appeared at lower frequencies compared to love. Cleanliness and responsibility also showed marked improvement post-intervention (Kaya & Antepli, 2018). These findings indicate that drama is not only an effective cognitive engagement tool but also promotes moral, social, and emotional development (Aykaç, 2014; Hong & Hong, 2022).

Despite these positive results, the study found that value acquisition did not consistently reach the highest observable levels across all participants. This underscores the need for complementary pedagogical approaches to maximize the developmental impact of drama. Combining drama with other instructional methods could help address individual learning needs and contextual variations more effectively.

Overall, the findings reinforce the significance of integrating structured, imaginative, and participatory activities into early childhood education to support the development of core values. The use of drama appears especially promising as a method for nurturing these values in a way that is engaging and developmentally appropriate.

3 Results

3.1 Results Related to Value Awareness of Students who did not Receive Values Education through Drama

The study group was examined in two phases: prior to exposure to values education and after receiving drama-based values education. Analysis of students' value awareness before the intervention revealed that all participants demonstrated awareness of the value of love; however, awareness of other values varied significantly, with some students showing no recognition at all. Notably, preschool students who had not received drama-based values education still exhibited limited awareness of certain values, which can be attributed to familial influence. This finding reinforces the pivotal role of the family in early value development, as emphasized by Çankırılı (2015) and Yorulmaz (2017).

3.2 Behaviors of Students who did not Receive Values Education through Drama Regarding Value Practices

In the later stages of the study, the behaviors of students who had not received drama-based values education were analyzed. Results showed that these students still demonstrated value-related behaviors, particularly centered on love. This suggests that value awareness and the enactment of values tend to develop concurrently. This outcome supports the findings of Topaç et al. (2020), who argue that children's value-based behaviors are shaped by adult guidance and their social environment. Additionally, values associated with cognitive processes—such as cleanliness and cooperation-sharing—were observed more frequently than those tied to socio-emo-

tional development, like responsibility and respect-tolerance. This indicates that preschool children may more readily express cognitively rooted values than internalize socio-emotional ones.

3.3 Behaviors Related to Value Acquisition in All Developmental Areas of Students who did not Receive Values Education with Drama

When the results obtained under the title of the third sub-problem of the research were examined, it was revealed that students who did not receive values education with drama had behaviors related to value acquisition in all developmental areas. It was determined that the frequency of the value acquisitions examined in the fields of mental, physical, socio-emotional and language development was always, sometimes and never in all of the steps. The aforementioned situation showed that preschool students could not fully reach value acquisitions without receiving values education in the educational environment. This context explains the necessity of holistic education advocated by Gestalt and Wertheimer (King et al., 1994). In addition, the fact that there was no observation of the phrase "never" in the value of love common to the developmental areas in the study is one of the important results reached in terms of showing the positive effect of the family on the acquisition of love in preschool children.

3.4 Value Awareness of Students Receiving Values Education through Drama

The evaluation of students' value awareness after receiving values education through drama revealed a noticeable increase in the frequency of behaviors associated with value awareness (Yenen & Ulucan, 2021). As emphasized by Kılıç and Namdar (2021), the study reaffirmed the positive impact of drama practices in correcting and reinforcing values that were initially developed on flawed or incomplete foundations.

Moreover, it was observed that the hierarchy of value awareness, as seen before receiving drama-based values education, also shifted during this developmental process. In this context, one of the key findings of the research is the significant contribution of values education through drama to enhancing students' overall value awareness.

3.5 Behaviors of Students Receiving Values Education through Drama Regarding Value Practices

When the level of implementation of the values in the school and classroom environment after the drama was examined, it was determined that the remaining values, except for the cooperation-sharing value, were sometimes and always observed in the students. In addition, it is noteworthy that students who received values education through drama increased their behaviors towards the value of responsibility, which can be observed more concretely. Sapsağlam (2013) conducted painting studies with preschool students regarding the value of responsibility in his study, and Kaya and Antepli (2018) examined the value of responsibility using creative drama method, and all of them reached similar results in their studies as in this study.

3.6 Behaviors Related to Value Acquisition in All Developmental Areas of Students Receiving Values Education with Drama

Finally, the value acquisitions of the students who received values education through drama were examined and it was determined that the frequency of observation of different values was high or equal in each of the developmental areas. Although the frequency of observation of values varied, it was observed that this frequency was higher in each developmental area compared to students who did not receive values education before drama. Therefore, the benefit of drama for value acquisition in preschool period was clearly seen and this was another important result obtained in the study. Ogelman (2014); İnce and Akanca (2021) stated in their research that concrete behaviors are permanent and exhibitable. All these results enabled the direct observation of the positive effects of drama practices on students' adoption and reflection levels of value awareness.

4 Theoretical and Practical Outcomes

- Based on the findings of the research, the following theoretical and practical propositions were developed. Accordingly.
- Scales can be developed within the scope of value acquisitions of preschool children and applied to students at certain intervals during the education process.
- Measurement tools can be developed for preschool teachers' views on values, their application methods and frequency.
- The frequency of drama activities organized for values education for preschool students can be increased and integrated practices can be carried out with other methods.
- A holistic values education program that includes foreign students can be created and implemented in preschool education institutions.
- Values education practices of educational institutions can be planned in line with the demands and needs of students, parents and school environment within the school culture.
- Preschool teachers can be given in-service training on national and world values.
- Interesting materials for values education can be given more space in educational institutions.

4.1 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

This study is based on data collected from 10 students attending a public school in Turkey. The validity and reliability of the findings could be enhanced by expanding the sample size to include participants from multiple schools, using the same or an improved version of the study design. Additionally, conducting similar research in different countries and cultural contexts would provide insights into potential variations between students who receive values education and those who do not, particularly from a cultural perspective.

In this study, drama was employed as a method to concretize values education, which is typically addressed as an abstract concept in the preschool period. Future research could explore the effectiveness of alternative pedagogical methods and techniques to further enhance value acquisition in early childhood education.

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Declarations

Conflict of interest The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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