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Perspectives of Teachers and Students on Values Education in Secondary School Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Course*

Ortaokul Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersinde Verilen Değerler Eğitimine İlişkin Öğretmen ve Öğrenci Görüşleri**

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** Bu makale, Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Anabilim dalında hazırlanmış bir yüksek lisans tezinden türetilmiştir.

Öz: Bu araştırma, Ortaokul Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersinde verilen değerler eğitimine ilişkin öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşlerini değerlendirmek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırmada, karma yöntem desenlerinden sıralı açıklayıcı desen kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya Bolu ili Gerede ve Dörtdivan ilçelerinde yer alan yedi farklı okulda 2021-2022 eğitim-öğretim yılında öğrenim gören 315 ortaokul öğrencisi katılmıştır. Katılımcılar 162 kız ve 153 erkek öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Öğretmen görüşlerini almak için ise MEB'de görev yapan 10 Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi öğretmeninin katılımı sağlanmıştır. Araştırmada verileri toplamak amacıyla, öğrencilere yönelik geliştirilen "İnsani Değerler Ölçeği" ve yarı yapılandırılmış "Öğretmen Görüşme Formu" kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen nitel verilerin analizinde ise betimsel analiz tekniği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulgularına göre; öğrenci değer düzeylerinin ortalamanın üzerinde olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Öğrenci değer düzeylerinin cinsiyete ve sınıflarına göre anlamlı farklılık gösterdiği saptanmıştır. Öğretmenlerin değer eğitimine ilişkin görüşlerinde, öğretmenlerin değer eğitiminde rol model olması gerektiği ve değer eğitiminde teknoloji ve kitle iletişim araçlarının bilinçsiz kullanımı sorunlarıyla karşı karşıya kaldıkları sonuçlarına ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Değer, Değerler Eğitimi, Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersi.

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Abstract: This research was carried out to evaluate the opinions of teachers and students on the values education taught in the secondary school Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course. In this study, sequential descriptive pattern, one of the mixed method designs, was used. 315 secondary school students studying at seven different schools in the 2021-2022 academic year in Gerede and Dörtdivan districts of Bolu province participated in the study. Participants consisted of 162 female and 153 male students. In the research conducted, the opinions of 10 Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (DKAB) teachers employed in the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) were sought. The study utilized the "Human Values Scale," a tool developed for students, and a semi-structured "Teacher Interview Form" to collect data. The qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive analysis technique. According to the results of the research; it was found that student value levels were above average. It was also found that the students' value levels indicated significant differences according to gender and grade. According to the teachers' opinions on value edu-

cation, they emphasized the importance of being role models in instilling values in students. Additionally, the teachers expressed concerns about the challenges posed by the unconscious use of technology and mass media in value education.

Keywords: Value, Values Education, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Course.

Introduction

Value is an abstract criterion that helps to determine the importance of something or the equivalent, worth and usefulness characteristic of something (TDK, 2022). Values can be described as the standards, beliefs, and principles that imbue significance to our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, shaping them accordingly. They serve as a framework of guiding principles that assist us in discerning which actions are virtuous, desirable, morally upright, and ethically sound (Hökelekli, 2011).

Value education places significant emphasis on the process of internalizing values within individuals. It is characterized as a transformative journey that enables students to differentiate between right and wrong, transmit pre-established values, and empowers them to develop their own set of values (Ford and Johnson, 1993; as cited in İşcan, 2019).

In addition, critical thinking and reasoning applied in the learning environment helps the realization of values and ensures the acquisition of values (Veugelers, 2000).

In Türkiye, there is no specific course named 'values education' in the education system. The concept of values is integrated into the content of elementary and secondary school courses. The value concept is seen as an umbrella term in schools, including values such as character education, virtuous behaviors, and moral behaviors. Although these values appeal more to the affective domain of individuals, they are taught in schools through course contents (Baydar, 2009).

When examining the purpose of the DKAB secondary school curriculum, it is defined as "to educate individuals who are aware of the role of religion in giving meaning to human life, who embrace the nationally accepted moral, spiritual and ethical development, and who have succeeded in living together with diversities and differences" (MEB, 2018). In this respect, it can be said that national, spiritual, and moral values form the basis of the program's objectives.

In the study carried out by Milson (2003) in the United States, teachers' perceptions regarding character education were assessed. Based on the findings of

this research, it was determined that teachers possessed competence in character education. However, they expressed skepticism regarding their ability to effectively transmit character education to students who lacked good character themselves. It was concluded that primary school teachers considered themselves as more competent in character education than high school teachers.

In a study carried out by Hofmann and Towfigh (2007), it was analyzed whether there was variance on students' value perceptions according to the type of high school they attended. Students studying in private, public and religious schools took the value inventory test at the beginning and end of the semester. As a result, it was found that the values of traditionalism and hedonism of the students varied according to the types of schools. When the effect of the school on the perception of value was analyzed, it was found to be positive correlation with the religious orientation.

In the book titled "Values Education in Primary School Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge from the Perspective of Teachers" by Genç (2013), a study is presented that includes the opinions of Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (DKAB) teachers regarding the program and their recommendations on values education in DKAB lessons.

A study titled "Teaching Values in Primary School Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (DKAB) Lessons According to Teachers" was conducted by Altıntaş (2014). The study gathered the opinions of 24 DKAB teachers on topics such as values education, materials used in the lesson, problems encountered in values education, planning values education, and the holistic structure of religious education and values education. The results of the study provided insights on these topics based on the data collected from the teachers.

When examining the studies conducted in the field of values education, it can be seen that the most research on values education is conducted in the Social Studies course. It has been concluded that there are also values education studies in the Religious Culture and Ethics and Turkish language courses. In addition to the course-based studies, studies on values education at the level of grades, document review studies examining textbooks and curricula, and studies on values education based on literary works have been included. When analyzing the studies conducted in Türkiye, it becomes evident that academic research primarily focuses on various aspects of values education. These include the scope and significance of providing values education within the school system, classifications and approaches to values, teachers' perspectives on values education, the roles of

schools, teachers, and families in cultivating values, methods and techniques employed in values acquisition, as well as the challenges encountered in values education. These studies collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of values education in the Turkish context and provide insights into the various factors that influence its implementation and effectiveness.

Method

Purpose of the research and sub-problems

The purpose of the research is to determine the opinions of 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students studying at the secondary schools in Bolu province about the value education taught in the DKAB course and the opinions of DKAB teachers working in the Ministry of National Education about the values education taught in the course.

The sub-problems of the research are as follows;

1. Do the value levels of the DKAB course of the secondary school students participating in the research differ;
   - according to the gender?
   - according to the grade level?
2. What are the aims of the values education in the DKAB Curriculum?
3. What are the characteristics of the teachers who will carry out the values education?
4. What are the problems that DKAB teachers encountered in value education?

Research Model

This research, aiming to evaluate the opinions of students and teachers about values education in secondary school Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course, was carried out with a mixed method in which qualitative and quantitative research methods were used together and sequential descriptive pattern, one of the mixed method types, was preferred. The descriptive model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used to evaluate student opinions. In this research, it was desired to reveal the existing situation. Accordingly, the research is a de-

scriptive study in the survey model. The survey model is a research approach that aims to describe a situation that exists in the past and present as it exists (Karasar, 2017). In order to evaluate teachers' opinions, a phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research types, was used. The phenomenological design deals with phenomena that we are aware of but do not have in-depth knowledge. Phenomenology design is used in studies aiming to investigate phenomena that are familiar to us, but whose meaning we cannot fully grasp (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Study Group

The research was carried out with the participation of 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students studying at secondary schools in Gerede and Dörtdivan districts of Bolu province in the 2021-2022 academic year. Maximum variation sampling method, which is one of the sample types and one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the study. 162 female and 153 male students from secondary schools participated in the study. Maximum variation sampling means identifying similar and different situations related to the problems examined in the population and carrying out the research on these situations (Büyüköztürk vd. 2017).

In qualitative research, although the number of participants is low, the amount of data is usually high. Analyzing, interpreting and describing these data is a process that requires intensive work and time (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). For this reason, 10 DKAB teachers working at schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) participated in the research. In the qualitative research, as in the sampling of quantitative data, "maximum variety" sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used as the research sample. The objective of employing this method is to enhance the diversity of teachers who can contribute to the discussion by utilizing a small sample size (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The qualitative data of the working group were created with the participation of 10 DKAB teachers working in the Ministry of National Education. While selecting the teachers in this study, the study was carried out by determining the basic dimensions to ensure variety in terms of gender, province of employment and seniority. Information on the demographic distribution of the students who were applied the human values scale is shown in Table 1 and the demographic characteristics of the teachers are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of the Students

		N	%
Gender	Female	162	51,4
	Male	153	48,6
Grade	5thGrade	89	28,3
	6thGrade	69	21,9
	7thGrade	82	26,0
	8th Grade	75	23,8
School Type	Secondary school	179	56,8
	Religious Vocational (Imam-Hatip)Secondary school	136	43,2
Maternal Education Status	Illiterate	7	2,2
	Primary School Drop-out	5	1,6
	Primary School Graduation	128	40,6
	Secondary school Graduation	81	25,7
	High School Graduation	71	22,5
	University Graduation	23	7,3
Paternal Education Status	Illiterate	3	1,0
	Primary School Drop-out	6	1,9
	Primary School Graduation	78	24,8
	Secondary school Graduation	61	19,4
	High School Graduation	105	33,3
	University Graduation	62	19,7

Table 2: Characteristics of the Respondents

Participant(Codes)	Gender	Seniority	Post
K1	Woman	7 Years	İstanbul
K2	Woman	5 Years	Tekirdağ
K3	Male	11 Years	Bolu
K4	Woman	7 Years	Karaman
K5	Woman	6 Years	Bolu
K6	Male	8 Years	Bolu
K7	Woman	1 Years	İstanbul
K8	Woman	9 Years	İzmir
K9	Male	7 Years	Antalya
K10	Woman	6 Years	Çorum

Data Collection Tools

The research utilized an interview form, which is one of the most commonly used data collection tools in qualitative research, to obtain the views of teachers. For this purpose, *the Teacher Interview Form* developed by Altıntaş (2014) was used. In order to determine student opinions, a questionnaire, one of the quantitative data collection tools, was preferred. The Human Values Scale developed by Dilmaç (2007) was applied in order to assess the acquisition of values education taught the students in the DKAB course.

Teacher Interview Form: There are four sections in the teacher interview form. First, the researcher introduces himself/herself and provide information about the purpose of the research and the interview. The second section includes the consent form indicating that the teachers voluntarily participated in the research, the third section includes the personal information of the teacher and the last section includes the interview questions.

Human Values Scale: "Human Values Scale (HVS)", which is a semi-structured interview form developed by Dilmaç (2007), was used in order to determine the value levels of DKAB course. In the scale, human values are assessed with a total of 42 items. This 42-item scale is a Likert-type scale that can be applied individually or in groups. The items in the scale are expressed as a five-point Likert-type rating scale (Never, Rarely, Occasionally, Frequently, Always). The sub-dimensions of the scale were determined as responsibility, friendship, respect, honesty and tolerance. Since the coefficient of some sub-dimensions was below the limit of 0.70 in the values where the scale was first used, evaluations were made over the entire scale without considering the sub-dimensions in the study. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the entire scale was calculated as 0.841. reliability coefficient evaluation criterion; If $0.00<\alpha<0.40$, the scale is not reliable. If $0.40<\alpha<0.60$, the scale has low reliability. If $0.60<\alpha<0.80$, it is quite reliable. If $0.80<\alpha<1.00$, the scale is highly reliable (Özdamar, 1999). Based on these results, the scale was found to be valid and reliable.

Data Analysis

In this study, where students' opinions on the values education taught in the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course are examined, statistical data on the values collected with the Human Values Scale were analyzed with the SPSS 20 statistical package program. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients were evaluated, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to test whether there was a normal distribution in the scale used, t-test was applied to determine the difference between genders and ANOVA and Post Hoc tests were applied to analyze the difference between grade levels.

In the research, voice recordings were made with the consent of the participants in the interviews where the opinions of the teachers about the values taught in the DKAB course were taken. This method provided the opportunity

to listen to the answers given to the questions again. After the interviews were made, some arrangements were made by using the voice recordings and the answers were transferred to the interview form. In the interviews, code names were given as K1, K2 in order to keep the identity information of the teachers confidential. After all the data were transferred to the forms, all data were analyzed by content analysis method. The method used to analyze the data within the scope of the research is content analysis. Content analysis is a technique used to characterize and compare documents, interview transcripts or recordings (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2016).

Findings

In this study, it was aimed to examine the opinions of secondary school 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in Gerede and Dörtdivan districts of Bolu province and the opinions of the DKAB teachers working in the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) on value education in DKAB course. In this section, the findings and interpretations obtained from the analysis of the data collected in line with the purposes of the research are presented. Tables related to the findings were created and explanations were made through the tables.

Evaluation of value levels according to the gender of the students

The findings of the t-test analysis to determine whether there was a difference between the value levels of the students participating in the study according to their gender are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Evaluation of value levels according to the gender of the students

	Gender	N	X̄	Sd	t/Z	P
Human Values Scale	Female	162	165,03	17,60	4,010	0,000*
	Male	153	157,20	16,97		

*p<0.05

When the value levels by gender in Table 3 were analyzed, it was found that the mean of "female" students (x̄=165.03) was higher than the mean of "male" students (x̄=157.20). In the Human Values Scale, student value levels show the significant difference in favor of female students (p=0.000, p>.05).

Evaluation of value levels according to students' grades

The results of the ANOVA and Post Hoc test to determine whether there was the difference between the value levels of the students participating in the study according to their grades are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Evaluation of Value Levels According to Students' Grades

	Grade	N	X̄	Sd	F/X²	P	Significant Difference
Human Values Scale	5th Grade[1]	89	165,69	17,14	4,165	0,007*	1-3 1-4 2-4
	6th Grade[2]	69	162,40	15,55			
	7th Grade[3]	82	159,85	15,80			
	8th Grade[4]	75	156,36	20,85			

*p<0.05

According to the findings of the Post Hoc test in Table 4, the value levels of the students in the Human Values Scale show the significant difference according to their grades. When the findings are analyzed, it was found that the mean of the "5th Grade" group (x̄=165.69) was higher than the mean of the "7th Grade" group (x̄=159.85) and the mean of the "8th Grade" group (x̄=156.36), and the mean of the "6th Grade" group (x̄=162.40) was higher than the mean of the "8th Grade" group (x̄=156.36) in the Human Values Scale. There was no significant difference between the mean of the "5th grade" group (x̄=165.69) and the mean of the "6th grade" group (x̄=162.40) and between the mean of the "6th grade" group (x̄=162.40) and the mean of the "7th grade" group (x̄=159.85).

DKAB Teachers' Opinions on the Aims of Value Teaching

This sub-problem of the research is based on the question "According to the teachers participating in the research, what are the aims of value teaching?" Participants were asked about their opinions on the aims of value teaching. The answers given by the participants are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Participants' Opinions on the Aims of Value Teaching

Theme	Codes	F
Aims of Value Teaching	To acquire moral values	5
	To ensure actualization of values	4
	To raise a useful and good person for the society	4
	To raise a person whom Allah and His Prophet are pleased with	1

When the opinions of the participants regarding the aims of value teaching were evaluated, the aims of acquiring moral values (5), ensuring actualization of values (4), raising useful and good people for the society (4) and raising people whom Allah and His Prophet are pleased with (1) were found respectively. The opinions of the participants on this issue are as follows:

> *"To teach moral values to our students and to nurture compassion and love within our students. In a moral sense, students need values. Because we need values as a society and as human beings."* K1

> *"As DKAB teachers, we need to have these values. In my works, I aim to make students aware of the values by explaining the moral values through case studies together with the lesson."* K9

When the findings are analyzed, it is possible to say that the participants think that value teaching is effective in acquiring moral values and actualizing the values. According to the participants, value teaching is highly effective in actualizing the values.

Opinions on the Characteristics of Teachers

In this sub-problem, the question "What are the characteristics that should be present in teachers who provide value education, according to the participating teachers in the research?" was formed. The participants were asked about their opinions on the characteristics that should be present in teachers who provide value education. The answers given by the participants are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Participants' Opinions on the Characteristics of Teachers

Theme	Codes	F
Characteristics of Teachers	Being a role model	5
	Knowing what they are doing about religious values	4
	Having the subject matter knowledge	4
	Internalizing the moral values	2
	Having a good human relations	1
	Being friendly	1
	Being fair	1
	Having an inner conscience	1
	Being student-centered	1
	Volunteering	1

The participants provided their opinions on the characteristics that teachers teaching value education should possess. It was the opinions of the participants about the characteristics that the teachers teaching value education should have.

According to the opinions of the participants; being a role model (5), having the subject matter knowledge (4), knowing what he/she is doing about religious values (4), internalizing moral values (2), Volunteering (1), having a good human relation (1), being friendly (1), being fair (1), having an inner conscience (1) and being student-centered (1) were determined respectively as the characteristics that the teachers should have. The opinions of the participants on this issue are as follows:

> *"They need to have the subject matter knowledge. They need to answer adequately to the student's questions. They need to be good at human relations and need serve as role models by embodying the values in their own lives."* K2

> *"They need to have the knowledge of the subject and the subject matter knowledge. It is not enough that they explain values as concepts, they need to be a role model with their behavior, personality and character."* K7

When this sub-problem is evaluated, it is possible to say that the participants care about the teachers' role modeling skills. Being a role model is accepted as a skill that should be at the core of teaching. In addition to this, it is understood that the participants consider having the subject matter knowledge and being aware of behaviors related to religious values as important characteristics of teaching.

Teachers' Opinions on Problems in Value Teaching

In this section, participants were asked about their opinions on the problems encountered in value teaching. The answers given by the participants are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Opinions on Problems in Value Teaching

Theme	Codes	F
Problems in Value Teaching	The negative effect of technology	5
	Assuming that the student knows the values	2
	The transformation of values into behavior over time	1
	Being the student questioning	1
	Undesirable role model behaviors	1
	The increase of tendency towards materialist dimensions	1
	The increase of disinformation	1

When the opinions of the participants regarding the problems in value teaching were examined, it was concluded the findings of negative effect of technology (5), assuming that the student knows the values (2), the increase of tendency towards materialist dimensions (1), the increase of disinformation (1), the trans-

formation of values into behavior over time (1), being the student questioning (1), undesirable role model behaviors (1). Participants' opinions on problems in value teaching are as follows:

> *"We are in the technological era and information is accessed very quickly. Disinformation poses a problem. Value acquisition becomes difficult due to the improper use of technology."* K2

> *"The students have a wide variety of media. The student uses many technological media such as YouTube, internet, social media. The students are adversely and rapidly influenced by these media sources. The impact of social media and technological advancements on students is significant challenge and area of concern."* K5

When the opinions related to this sub-problem are evaluated, it was concluded that the use of technology in today's world prevented students from teaching values. In addition, the fact that students assume that they know values is also an obstacle in teaching values.

Discussion

This his section of the research presents the findings derived from data analysis, which includes the opinions of 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students in the Gerede and Dörtdivan districts of Bolu province, as well as the opinions of DKAB teachers working in the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) regarding value education in the DKAB course. The research aims to evaluate the opinions of teachers and the levels of values among students regarding value education in the DKAB course. The following results were obtained from the study.

When the values education levels of the students in the DKAB course according to their gender are evaluated, there is a significant difference compared to the means score of Human Value Scale. It is understood that the mean of female students is higher than male students. There are similar studies in the literature supporting this result reached in the research. In the research carried out by Bartev (2017), in which the difference of students' value level according to gender was analyzed, it was concluded that there was a significant difference in the gender variable in favor of female students. In the study of Nalçacı (2016), it was determined that the value levels of the students showed a significant difference in favor of female students according to gender.

When the value levels of the students according to their grades are evaluated, there is a significant difference compared to the mean scores of Human Value

Scale. It was found that the mean of the "5th Grade" group was higher than the mean of the "7th Grade" group and the mean of the "8th Grade" group, and the mean of the "6th Grade" group was higher than the mean of the "8th Grade" group in the Human Values Scale. In a similar study conducted by Tekin (2016), the value levels of students were analyzed based on their grade level. The research findings indicated that the mean value levels of 8th-grade students were higher than those of 7th-grade students.

It is understood that teachers have common opinions on the same issues regarding the aims of value teaching taught in the DKAB course. When the explanations are evaluated, it is generally understood that the primary aim among the teachers' aims is to make the students acquire moral values, to ensure that these values are transformed into behavior and actualized, to nurture individuals who are beneficial and morally upright for society, and to raise a person whom Allah and His Prophet are pleased with. In the study of Pırnaz (2020), it was concluded that teachers stated the aims of value education as making individuals acquire positive behaviors, ensuring that they are effective citizens and protecting cultural values. In the study of Boydak (2019), it was concluded that the teachers stated the aims of values education as being a good individual, being helpful and being conscious individuals.

The primary priority in the characteristics of teachers who teach values is that they serve as role models in value education. Additionally, it is crucial for teachers to possess adequate subject matter knowledge related to the subject. Furthermore, there are opinions suggesting that teachers should demonstrate qualities of being proactive, friendly, impartial, and diligent in their approach to value teaching. In the research of Aydın (2019), among similar studies in the literature, it was concluded that that teacher's behaviors are effective in value education and that the most important characteristic of the teacher is to show exemplary behaviors to students on value issues by doing and experiencing. In Altıntaş's (2014) study, it was concluded that teachers lacked comprehensive knowledge about the characteristics they needed to possess, and were inadequate in planning values education, and needed to use more extracurricular activities in values education.

It is revealed that the main problems faced by teachers in the field of value education are the misuse of technology and the misconception that students know about the values. In a similar study carried out by Gözel (2018), the problems faced by teachers in the acquisition of values were revealed as mass media, school, family, environment, student and teaching-learning processes. In Pırnaz's (2020) study,

the problems encountered were discussed as; school, family, environment and social media. When we look at the negativities experienced in value education in the research of Batmaz and Erdoğan (2019); family insensitivity, the negative effect of social media, TV, the environment, and the students' lack of interest in the subjects were stated as the problems encountered. In Altıntaş's (2014) study, it was found that teachers faced similar problems in values education, such as insufficient parental support, negative effects of media, and overcrowded classrooms.

Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained in this section of the study, the following recommendations are presented:

- Providing a course named Values Education in schools in line with the purpose of values education that can help increase students' value acquisition.
- In-service training can be provided for DKAB teachers and other subject teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge in values education.
- Values education can be included as a separate section in the DKAB curriculum and other subject curricula.
- To address the significant issue of technology and social media misuse in values education, it is recommended to offer seminars and presentations on conscious technology use for students and parents.

Etik Beyan / Ethical Statement: Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur. / It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.

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