

## Effects of Songs Containing Social Messages on the Perceptions of Romani Students about Social Values

Hatice Onuray Egilmez

*Music Education Department, Uludag University Faculty of Education, Gorukle, 16059 Nilufer Bursa, Turkey*

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**ABSTRACT** This study was carried out with the aim of determining the effects of songs containing social messages on the perceptions of 60 Romani students (having a tendency toward violence, using slang and bad language in their daily communications, and exhibiting undesired behaviors) educating at the secondary schools in Bursa, Turkey about social values. During the 2014-2015 academic period, 10 songs containing social messages composed by the researcher were taught. At the beginning and end of the study, a perception scale prepared with the aim of measuring social values, was used and the differences between the two measurements were analyzed using the dependent samples t-test, independent samples t-test, and non-parametric tests, with the help of SPSS 17.0. As a result of the study, it was observed that after learning the songs containing social messages, the students' positive perception about social values increased and their negative perception about social values decreased.

### INTRODUCTION

The social, cultural and economic structures of societies depend on how they will raise their next generations. 'Values' are effective on the formation of the character of young people both in the world and in Turkey. Individuals learn to discriminate between good and bad, and right and wrong through social rules, traditions and customs, and acquire a set of manners in the direction of their own ethical principles and values, and this set of acquired manners forms the totality of opinions and beliefs called values (Yazici 2006). Although today values are mostly accepted by some people as religious beliefs (Kurtulmus et al. 2014), at the universal scale, values can be defined as the standards directing one's behaviors. It is also known that the most important function of values is to give shape to social life (Elbir and Bagci 2013).

When the factors affecting social living become negative, such that they increase social problems, uncertain social values, negative peer pressure, negative effect of media, deterioration of the family structure, majority complaining about increasing crime and violence, and are taken into consideration, it can be stated that societies should be equipped with adequate values (cited by Kurtulmus et al. 2014). The world, which they can easily reach and communicate with via television, the Internet and computer games, constitutes their social environment. Today, in addition to the family, there are many other factors affecting the formation of children's values,

and for this reason, most of the time, values directed by other factors differ from those, which the family tries to give. As a result of this difference, such statements as "what will happen to our country?", "the youth is vanishing", "degenerated society", and "there is no respect for the elderly anymore", are now heard in society. Moreover, statistical studies too reveal that the crime rate has been on the increase among children. In the criminal statistics published by the Ministry of Justice (2014), the increase observed in the number of child defendants in court hearings between 2004 and 2014 verifies this situation. While the number of child defendants was 136,358 in 2004, it increased to 179,807 in 2014.

Culture, which is defined briefly as a lifestyle, is the most evident element of social entities. The Romani people, one of the cultural identities of Turkey, included in the sample of the study, have a culture of their own. In Turkey, the Romani people are excluded from the society and not accepted due to the different values they have. Having acknowledged this situation, the Romani people currently unite together to support one another in difficult situations instead of being disobedient and continuing in their wrong lifestyles and values. The same problem of poor values reflects on their children's education process as well. Instead of being interested in their lessons and increasing their success level at school, these children struggle to cling to where they are and eventually break off from the educational environment. When the social and phys-

ical environment where Romani children live starts to threaten them, it makes them form new groups that get involved in triggering violence, legitimating risk elements and exhibiting deviant behaviors (Genc et al. 2015).

Equipping individuals with values regardless of their ethnic identities, whether they are Romani or of a different ethnic origin, must be included among the important duties of the society and the family (cited by Kurtulmus et al. 2014). Moreover, in the social life, the quality of education that changes individuals' attitudes and behaviors in a positive way is very important as well. In Turkey, after the project titled 'Living Values Education Program' and supported by UNESCO in 1995, a circular was issued by the Ministry of National Education in 2010 to have the preschool, elementary and secondary education institutions perform both in-class and out-of-class activities aimed at values education (Cihan 2014). The values were specified by the Ministry of National Education under the headings of love, responsibility, respect, tolerance-sensitivity, self-confidence, empathy, fairness, courage, leadership, politeness, friendship, fraternity, solidarity, cleanness, uprightness, honesty, importance of family unity, thinking independently and freely, optimism, developing esthetic emotions, hospitality, patriotism, benevolence, industriousness, sharing, affection-mercy, greeting, being modest, protecting cultural heritage and self-sacrifice (NME 2012). Today, values education is given via transferring the values placed within the courses that are included in the program. However, unfortunately, not giving these values included in the programs for acquisition prevents the giving of a consistent values education in schools (Elbir and Bagci 2013). According to Cihan (2014), today, rather than giving values education within the subjects of the other courses, it should be given with a non-random, planned educational understanding. Moreover, it is known that values are learned through experience and students cannot learn them simply by studying lessons (Basar 2008). At this point, music having a permanent effect on humans and very important effects on child development also is believed to make important contributions to the acquisition of values (Sager and Karagoz 2011). Music plays an effective role on 'individuals, the individual and the society, the achievement of agreement, solidarity, contraction, sharing, cooperation, unity and integri-

ty between social fractions and communities' (Ucan 1997).

Throughout history, philosophers and sages have asserted the importance and influence of music on the character and the moral formation of the young and on the reproduction of a well-established society. Plato recognized the powerful though elusive the place of music in shaping an individual's character and the society as a whole (Ho 2010). Also, Confucius included songs and music in his curriculum in order to cultivate the sensibility and ethical commitments of his pupils (Kim 2006). Moreover, according to the practices of the Chinese Empire, musical content and style had to be united so that the development of society could be controlled (Ho 2010). Furthermore, according to Khan (1994), music is the most effective means or the shortest way of integrating a human first with himself and then with other humans and the universe. Those who have become aware of real music and solved the secret behind it vibrate at the same frequency with the whole universe and get along with everything.

Moreover, music education enables individuals to acquire cultural, artistic and musical behaviors purposefully, and as a result of these acquisitions, changes occur in individuals and these changes occurring in individuals' behaviors through music education affects the society (Say 2002).

### Objectives of the Study

The study was carried out with the aim of determining the effects of the songs containing messages related to values on the perceptions of the Romani secondary school students about social values.

### METHODOLOGY

To achieve this basic purpose, answers were sought for the following sub-questions:

1. How are the perceptions of the Romani students about social values before learning the songs on values?
2. How are the perceptions of the Romani students about social values after learning the songs on values?
3. Is there a significant difference between the Romani students' perceptions about social values prior to and subsequent to the study?

This study has two main steps. In relation to the values determined at the first step, lyrics were written by the researcher for 10 songs and then they were composed. While writing the lyrics for these songs, attention was paid both to include the values in the curriculum determined by the Ministry of National Education and to show parallelism with the subjects included in the scale used in the study. In this context, attention was paid to make the songs give messages about being industrious, greeting, importance of the family, responsibilities which children are supposed to have, not gossiping, fraternity, precautions which should be taken for a healthy life, necessity of protecting other living beings, peace, friendship and love. When composing the songs, attention was paid to make the lyrics simple enough for the sample group. Attention was paid to compose the songs according to prosody and to make the students learn the melodies by heart. Moreover, since the members of the sample group were at puberty stage as required by their ages, attention was paid to make the sound intervals of the melodies according to this factor. The piano accompaniments of the songs, which were in both major and minor keys, were also arranged.

Moreover, at the second step of the study, a pre-test and a post-test were applied before and after learning the mentioned songs to reveal the differences in the perceptions about social values.

### The Sample

The study used the descriptive model to examine the effects of the songs containing social messages on the perceptions of the secondary school students about social values via a questionnaire study. To reveal the effects, a survey study was carried out. The sample of the study comprised a total of 60 Romani students going to the secondary schools selected intentionally in the province of Bursa. When determining the sample, first of all, an interview was held with the teachers and the administrators at the school, and in this interview, the students having violence tendency, living adjustment problems, frequently exhibiting problematic behaviors and most of whom were of Romany ethnic origin, were determined and included in the study group. At the beginning of the study, information was obtained from the school administrators and the teachers about each student's general academic situation, and family situation. As a result of the

interviews, it was reported that some of the students were inclined to exhibit violent behaviors and used bad language in their verbal communications. Moreover, it was also reported that the students with a different ethnic origin were excluded by other students and socialization could not be achieved among the students. This situation expressed by the teachers throughout the study was clearly observed by the researcher. The detailed information about the characteristics of the study group is given in Table 1.

### Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool is composed of two parts. The first part of the tool includes a Personal Information Form. In the form, there are 15 questions aiming to gather information about the sample group's genders, class levels, number of siblings, housing situations, economic and social lives, and parents.

In the second part, with the aim of determining the difference between the students' perceptions of social values, the Perception Scale for Social Values developed by Bakac (2013) was used. The scale is composed of 23 items including positive and negative situations in them. For the alternative answers, the 5-point Likert type scaling system in the form of "strongly agree", "agree", "neutral", "disagree" and "strongly disagree" was used. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the tool composed of two sub-dimensions, namely "Positive Perceptions about Social Values" and "Negative Perceptions about Social Values" was calculated as  $\alpha=.86$ . The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the "Positive Perceptions about Social Values" was calculated as  $\alpha=.91$  and the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the "Negative Perceptions about Social Values" was calculated as  $\alpha=.80$ .

With the belief that social values can be transferred through music education, the sample group comprising students with Romani children and exhibiting problematic behaviors were taught the 10 songs composed by the researcher and containing messages about values for two hours a week during the spring semester of the 2014-2015 educational session, regardless of their musical aptitudes. Before starting to teach the songs and after the completion of the practice, the scale for measuring social values was administered. The administration of the study lasted for 10 weeks.

**Table 1: Personal information about the sample**

<i>Personal information</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	27	45
Male	33	55
<i>Grade</i>		
5th grade	23	38.3
6th grade	22	36.7
7th grade	15	25
<i>Number of Siblings</i>		
0	3	5
1	34	56.7
2	12	20
3	7	11.7
4	5	6.7
<i>Mother's Educational Status</i>		
Never went to school	3	5
primary school graduate	36	60
secondary school graduate	16	26.7
high school graduate	5	8.3
university graduate	0	0
<i>Father's Educational Status</i>		
Never went to school	1	1.7
primary school graduate	26	43.3
secondary school graduate	14	23.3
high school graduate	13	21.7
university graduate	6	10
<i>Mother's and Father's Working Status</i>		
Only father is working	32	53.3
only mother is working	5	8.3
both are working	20	33.3
none is working	3	5
<i>Family's Socio-economic Status</i>		
Very bad	0	0
Moderate	27	45
Good	24	40
Very good	0	15
<i>Family's Living Quarter Status</i>		
Very bad	3	5
Moderate	33	55
Good	2	3.5
Very good	3	5
<i>Does S/He Live Together With Mother and Father?</i>		
Lives	54	90
Does not live	6	10
<i>Does S/He Live Together with Grandparents?</i>		
Lives	24	40
Does not live	36	60
<i>Has S/He Ever Gone to the Cinema Throughout His/Her Life</i>		
Has gone	36	60
Has not gone	24	40
<i>Do S/He Have an Internet Connection?</i>		
Yes, s/he does	32	53.2
No, s/he does not	28	46.7
<i>Kinds of Television Programs Viewed</i>		
News	3	5
Soap operas and serials	30	50
Entertainment programs	11	18.3
Cartoons	9	15
Documentaries	1	1.7
Quiz programs	4	6.7
S/he does not watch television	2	3.3

## Analysis of the Data

With the aim of analyzing the data, the non-parametric tests, dependent samples t-test and independent samples t-test were used. The pieces of data were analyzed via using the SPSS 17.0. Descriptive statistics were calculated, and the validity and reliability analyses were made.

## RESULTS

The results of the dependent samples t-tests applied as pre-test and post-test for the pieces of data obtained from the perception scale for social values with the aim of determining if there was a difference between the secondary school students' perceptions of social values prior to and subsequent to the administration are given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics table including the scores obtained by romani students from pre-test and post-test of social values perception scale**

		<i>N</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>sd</i>
<i>Positive Social Value Perception</i>	Pre-test	60	4.51	0.54
	Post-test	60	6.76	0.32
<i>Negative Social Value Perception</i>	Pre-test	60	2.60	1.12
	Post-test	60	1.76	0.97

As it can be seen in Table 2, it was observed that the mean of the scores obtained by the students answering the Perception Scale for Social Values from the test applied as post-test in the 1<sup>st</sup> factor (positive perceptions about social values) ( $\bar{X}=4.76$ ;  $sd=0.32$ ) was higher than that of the scores obtained from the achievement test applied as pre-test ( $\bar{X}=4.51$ ;  $sd=0.54$ ). Moreover, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> factor (negative perceptions about social values), it was observed that the mean of the scores obtained by the students from the test applied as post-test ( $\bar{X}=1.76$ ;  $ss=0.97$ ) was lower than that of the scores obtained from the test applied as pretest ( $\bar{X}=2.60$ ;  $sd=1.12$ ).

The descriptive statistics table indicates that the positive perception score means of the students answering the perception scale for social values increased and the negative perception score means decreased at the end of learning the songs containing messages related social values (Table 2).

To test if this difference was significant, the pretest and post-test scores were analyzed using the dependent samples t-test (Table 3).

**Table 3: Dependent samples t-test table related to scores obtained by Romani students from perception scale for social values applied as both pre-test and post-test**

		$M_D$	$SS$	$sd$	$t$	$P$
<i>Positive Social Value Perception</i>	Pretest- Post test	-0.24	0.55	59	0.07	0.001
<i>Negative Social Value Perception</i>	Pretest- Post test	0.83	1.59	59	4.037	0.000

$p < 0.05$

In the sub-dimension of the positive perceptions about social values, a statistically significant negative relationship was found between the scores obtained prior to and subsequent to the study ( $r = -0.24$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the students' low scores prior to learning the songs increased after learning the songs. That the ( $M_D = -0.24$ ) value giving the mean difference was negative indicating that the score mean obtained for the post-test was higher than the one obtained for the pretest. The test statistics was found as  $t(59) = 0.07$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This indicates that the score mean obtained after learning the songs ( $\bar{X} = 4.76$ ) was statistically higher than the score mean obtained before learning the songs ( $\bar{X} = 4.51$ ) (Table 3).

Moreover, in the negative perceptions subscale for social values, a statistically significant positive relationship ( $r = 0.15$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was found (Table 3). This indicates that the students' high scores prior to learning the songs decreased after learning the songs. That the ( $MD = 0.83$ ) value giving the mean difference was positive indicates that the score mean obtained for the post-test was lower than the one obtained for the pretest. The test statistics was found as  $t(59) = 4.037$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This indicates that the score means obtained following the training ( $\bar{X} = 1.76$ ) were statistically lower than those, which were obtained prior to the training ( $\bar{X} = 2.60$ ) (Table 3).

## DISCUSSION

Guclu (2015) has stated that the studies regarding values education in Turkey are studies about what the tools commonly used in values education are and how these tools contribute to values education. According to Guclu (2015), in the 20 studies conducted on the subject, the effects of stories, idioms and semahs (rituals of Alevi and Bektashi communities accompanied by music and dance), newspapers, the 100 fundamental books recommended to educational institutions, sayings, the works of various writ-

ers, cartoons and prayers on values education have been mentioned. It can be clearly seen that there are not enough studies regarding the use of music as a means of teaching values education. One of the very few studies on the subject is Kova's (2014) research. Kova (2014) has stated that idioms and semahs can also be used in values education. Kova (2014) recommends that values can be taught in music classes via the introduction of folk music and the lifestyles of Turkish traditional folk music singers, making students listen to idioms and semahs, and teaching them.

While there are studies in literature stating the positive effects of values education on students' development (Samur and Ozturk 2011; Ergun 2013; Uzunkol 2014; Cevherli 2014), it can be seen that there are not many studies on the usability of music in values education, particularly for students with different ethnic origins. For this reason, it is considered that this paper will make an important contribution to the field and cause similar studies to be carried out in the future.

In this paper, it was observed that the social values positive perception score means of the Romani students answering the Perception Scale for Social Values test after learning the songs containing messages related to social values applied as post-test were higher than the ones which they obtained from the achievement test applied as pretest before learning the songs. A statistically significant negative relationship was found between the scores obtained by the students prior to and subsequent to the training in relation to their positive perceptions about social values. This indicates that the students' low scores prior to the training increased following the training. In conclusion, after learning the songs containing messages whose verses were related to social values, a significant increase was observed in the students' positive perceptions about social values.

The negative perception score means obtained by the Romani students from the test ap-

plied as post-test after learning the songs containing messages whose verses were related to social values decreased. This indicates that the students' high scores prior to the training decreased after learning the songs. In summary, after learning the songs containing messages whose verses were related to social values, a decrease was observed in the students' negative perceptions about social values.

The above findings state that the songs with social messages make a difference in Romani children's perceptions of social values. However, Yukruk and Akarsu (2015) state that the songs and their lyrics, which are in primary school music books in Turkey, do not necessarily reflect most of the values included in the Ministry of National Education directives.

As in another research, it was determined that although music classes were very suitable for teaching values in Turkey, education of values was not sufficiently included in the schedule (Yalcinkaya 2015).

### CONCLUSION

It was observed that the positive perception score means of the students answering the perception scale for social values increased and the negative perception score means decreased at the end of learning the songs containing messages related to social values.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Starting from the findings, it can be stated that in music education lessons, music teachers should choose pieces of music in a way to make a contribution to values education. In order to protect the values of rapidly changing society and pass down cultural values, political and national values to the next generations, the contents of music education courses at schools should be carefully prepared.

It is necessary that the Ministry of National Education should rearrange not only the curricula of the courses in social studies, religious culture and knowledge of ethics, but also for that of the courses in music education and place the subjects related to values education in the curricula.

It is observed that music undertakes an active role in communicating desired messages.

Moreover, it is thought to be that teachers prefer audio-visual aids for the value of solidarity. For this reason, in social quarters at schools, social activities and various lessons, students can be made to acquire values through songs. It is suggested that school administrators and teachers should benefit from the use of songs with this awareness.

Subjects related to values should be included in the contents of the existing courses such as music repertory, given in music education programs of universities.

While the researcher was determining the songs to be used in the study, she observed that there were not many songs in the literature related to social values. For this reason, a wide repertory of songs can be created by paying attention to composing them in a way to include messages related to values and with verses in accordance with the age and voice characteristics of children.

If songs with verses related to values appear in children's programs on television frequently, they will help transfer values into the lives of children easily.

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