

Analysis of Children's Songs in Terms of Values

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Abstract

Children's songs inspire the love of music in children and improve their musical skills and at the same time, teach national values and societal rules, contribute to their personality development, make children feel happier, foster interpersonal communication and particularly contribute to the cognitive and linguistic development of children at early ages. Children's songs, which take place almost every moment of children's life, play an important role in transferring values to children. There are many classifications of value education, but Schwartz's value classification is a very comprehensive and an accepted type of classification. In the literature research, no studies have been done to examine the children's songs in terms of values. In this context, the aim of the research is to examine the 59 children songs which were qualified to the finals at the Popular Children's Song Competition organized by Turkish Radio Television Corporation between 2004 and 2015 according to Schwartz's classification of values. Content analysis method and NVivo 11 Pro program were used in this research. According to the findings of this research, motivational types found in the analyzed songs are achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity, and security. Among these motivational types, it is seen that the most emphasized and prominent values are a world at peace, a world of beauty, protecting the environment, enjoying life, unity with nature. In addition to these findings, there is no value for power and tradition motivational types.

Keywords: Children's songs, values.

1. Introduction

Music is very essential in the life of a human being. Music penetrates into the inner world of man. Children are always intertwined with songs everywhere they go. Sometimes they even unconsciously memorize and place them in their lives. Moreover, children learn many values and notions through the songs.

According to Davanellos (1999), songs can be a source of language for presenting and practicing grammar, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and the skills of listening, reading, speaking, writing and translation. He acknowledged that the song texts are equally important as texts for reading and listening. On the other hand, according to Neelly, music provides a developmentally appropriate way for children to voice, understand, and control their emotions. He mentioned that a meaningful text helps a child learn to express and control emotions (2001, p.34).

It may be possible to list the reasons for why the songs are used as in the following:

Songs are highly memorable

Songs are highly motivating

Songs are personal

Music and songs are part of everyday life

Songs are the natural opportunity for meaningful repetition

Songs provide examples of everyday language

Songs are easy to find

Songs bring variety to the lesson

Songs aid relaxation and group dynamics

Songs are fun

Songs can deal with 'taboo' topics (Davanellos, 1999, p.13).

When studies on children's songs are evaluated, it is revealed that the studies may be divided into two groups in terms of musical and language teaching.

There have been several studies conducted to investigate children's songs from the musical point of view such as the study of Ageton and Farnsworth (1922); in which they compiled a number of school songs to find the most popular songs in the research that they conducted from the musical point of view. In another study Young (1999) described the cognitive value of music, and Regelski (2002) described the value of music. Bresin and Friberg (2011) studied five musical variables: tempo, sound level, articulation, register, and instrument. Niland (2012) explored how new songs could become part of the musical cultures of young children.

On the other hand, there are also studies conducted on children's songs terms of language teaching; Davanellos (1999) mentioned that the songs can be used in language teaching; Kuśnierek (2016) emphasized the role of music and songs in teaching English to students. García Conesa and Juan Rubio (2015) stated that

rhyming and singing are the perfect opportunities for students to improve their language skills in foreign language teaching.

As it can be clearly understood from the above mentioned studies, the effects of children's songs in terms of facilitating musical and foreign language teaching cannot be denied. However, the roles of children's songs are not limited to just these two roles. Another important task of children's songs is to actively take part in the children's daily life and play an important role in their value transfer.

Schwartz defines values as "desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity" (Schwartz, 1994, p. 21), and that the concept of values is specified as they must be in a central position that can combine the diversity of all the sciences concerned with human behaviours (Rokeach, 1973).

Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) made a conceptual explanation of the five characteristics of values through the literature: Values (1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) are about desirable end states or behaviors, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance.

It is known that the study of values is based on Spranger (1928). He has submitted that human values can be classified on these six core values as social, political, economic, religious, theoretical, and aesthetic values. After Spranger; Allport, Vernon and Lindzey (1960) kept working on the value classification of Spranger and put this classification into a form of a scale.

According to Rokeach and Regan, a focus on people's values allows us to entertain the idea that human personalities are capable of change as well as keeping the sameness. Value systems are conceptualized as relatively enduring, thus allowing us to account for the continuity and sameness of personality. At the same time, they are conceptualized as undergoing change, and interpersonal relations, thus allowing us to account as well for a change. There are only just so many end-states of existence that people can strive for (terminal values) and just so many modes of behaviour that are instrumental to their realization (instrumental values) (1980, p. 576-577).

In Rokeach's (1973) classification there are 18 terminal values and 18 instrumental values. The terminal values are as in the following: a comfortable life (a prosperous life), an exciting life (a stimulating, active life), a sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution), a world at peace (free of war and conflict), a world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts), equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all), family security (taking care of loved ones), freedom (independence, free choice), happiness (contentedness), inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict), mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy), national security (protection from attack), pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life), salvation (saved, eternal life), self-respect (self-esteem), social recognition (respect and admiration), true friendship (close companionship), wisdom (a mature understanding of life).

Instrumental values are as in the following: Ambitious (hardworking, aspiring), broadminded (open-minded), capable (competent, effective), cheerful (lighthearted, joyful), clean (neat and tidy), courageous (standing up for your beliefs), forgiving (willing to pardon others), helpful (working for the welfare of others), honest (sincere and truthful), imaginative (daring and creative), independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient), intellectual (intelligent, reflective), logical (consistent, rational), loving (affectionate, tender), obedient (dutiful, respectful), polite (courteous and well-mannered), responsible (dependable, reliable) self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined) (Rokeach, 1973).

Schwartz was influenced by Rokeach's theory of value and based on his work with Bilsky in order to derive a comprehensive value content by evaluating the theory in a broader intercultural context and to demonstrate the universality of his structure, he implemented and revised his theory in 20 countries. In this theory there are 56 values under 11 motivational types (Schwartz, 1992).

In 1994, he worked with 97 samples from 44 countries in order to analyze the theory. The research on the spirituality motivational type, which was included in his work in 1992, was not mentioned in his work in 1994 with a statement that there is a controversial situation between cultures and therefore it may not be recognized implicitly. It is seen that spirituality is subtracted from the motivational types and the remaining 10 types were named as basic types of human values. Schwartz placed 56 values in his research in 1992 and 1994, and added the "work" value in 2004 after a research with Sagiv. Schwartz's classification of values is as outlined in table 1.

Table 1. Definitions of the motivational types of values according to Schwartz

1. Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources
2. Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards
3. Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself
4. Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life
5. Self-direction	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring
6. Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection of the welfare of all people and for nature
7. Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact
8. Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide.
9. Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms
10. Security	Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self

(Schwartz 1992, 1994)

When considered that there are many classifications apart from those mentioned above, it cannot be concluded that there is a fully agreed classification of values.

When we look at the studies on values in children's literature, Carlson (1969) referred to the values in children's books; Huthwaite (1978) examined the values of 20 books in the categories of folk literature, fantasy, and realistic fiction; Ramp, Ridout (1995) and Court, Rosental (2007) described what values exist in the books in children's literature; Jenkins (2011) examined dominant values and cultural identity in children's literature.

Although there are studies on the values in children's literature, it has been determined that examinations are generally based on prose texts such as stories and novels. No research has been encountered on children's songs that children often use and memorize. Studies on children's songs are conducted in terms of musical and foreign language teaching. It was thought that the children's songs which are thought to play an important role in the transfer of values should also be examined in terms of values.

In this context, the main question of this research was determined as in the following:

"How is the distribution of children's songs that were presented in the TRT (Turkish Radio Television Corporation) popular children song contest according to the Schwartz Value Classification?"

2. Method

Data collection methods of a qualitative research are interviews, observations and documents. In this research documents were used as data collection method in the research. A total of 59 children songs which were qualified to the finals at the TRT popular children song contest between the years 2004 and 2015 were listened individually. Approximately 4 to 5 times more time was spent than the length of the song for writing the lyrics of the songs. The voice recordings were written in Times New Roman, font 12. A total of 63 pages of raw data were obtained. Children songs were numbered from one to fifty nine.

The research is limited to 59 songs that were presented in 6 different years, with 10 songs in 2004, 10 songs in 2007, 9 songs in 2009, 10 songs in 2011, 10 songs in 2013, 10 songs in 2015.

These children's songs were individually analyzed and each song's classifications were decided according to the Schwartz Value Classification considering the scope and appropriateness of the content. In the analysis of the songs, the content analysis method and the NVivo 11 Pro program were used.

The children's songs in the study were separately examined by two researchers according to the Schwartz Value Classification.

To test the reliability among researchers, Miles and Huberman's (1994) Reliability Formula = (Agreement) / (Agreement + Disagreement) was used and the reliability rate was found to be 92%. The five songs that caused the separation among the views were re-checked by the researchers and a consensus was achieved. In addition, the analysis was repeated after one month to see if a consistent assessment was made by the investigator and the consistency was found to be 97%.

3. Findings

It has been determined that the children's songs examined in the research are included in 8 of the 10 motivational types of Schwartz. These motivational types are achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity and security. No value was found for power and tradition motivational types in the analyzed songs. Table 2 shows frequency and percentage values for motivational types and values in children's songs.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage values of motivational types and values in the analyzed children's songs

<i>Motivational types</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Values</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Achievement	3	4,5	Ambitious	1	1,5
			Influential	2	3,0
Hedonism	7	10,6	Pleasure	2	3,0
			Enjoying life	5	7,6
Stimulation	4	6,1	A varied life	3	4,5
			An exciting life	1	1,5
Self-direction	4	6,1	Creativity	2	3,0
			Curious	1	1,5
Universalism	34	51,5	Freedom	1	1,5
			Protecting the environment	6	9,1
			A world at peace	11	16,7
			Wisdom	4	6,1
			A world of beauty	7	10,6
			Unity with nature	5	7,6
Benevolence	8	12,1	Inner harmony	1	1,5
			Helpful	1	1,5
			Honest	1	1,5
			Loyal	2	3,0
			Mature love	1	1,5
Conformity	5	7,6	True friendship	3	4,5
			Politeness	1	1,5
Security	1	1,5	Honoring of parents and elders	4	6,1
			Social order	1	1,5
Total	66	100		66	100

66 values were found related to these 8 motivational types. The reason for having 66 values in 59 songs is that some songs have more than one value. Motivational types and values in children's songs are described in Figure 1.

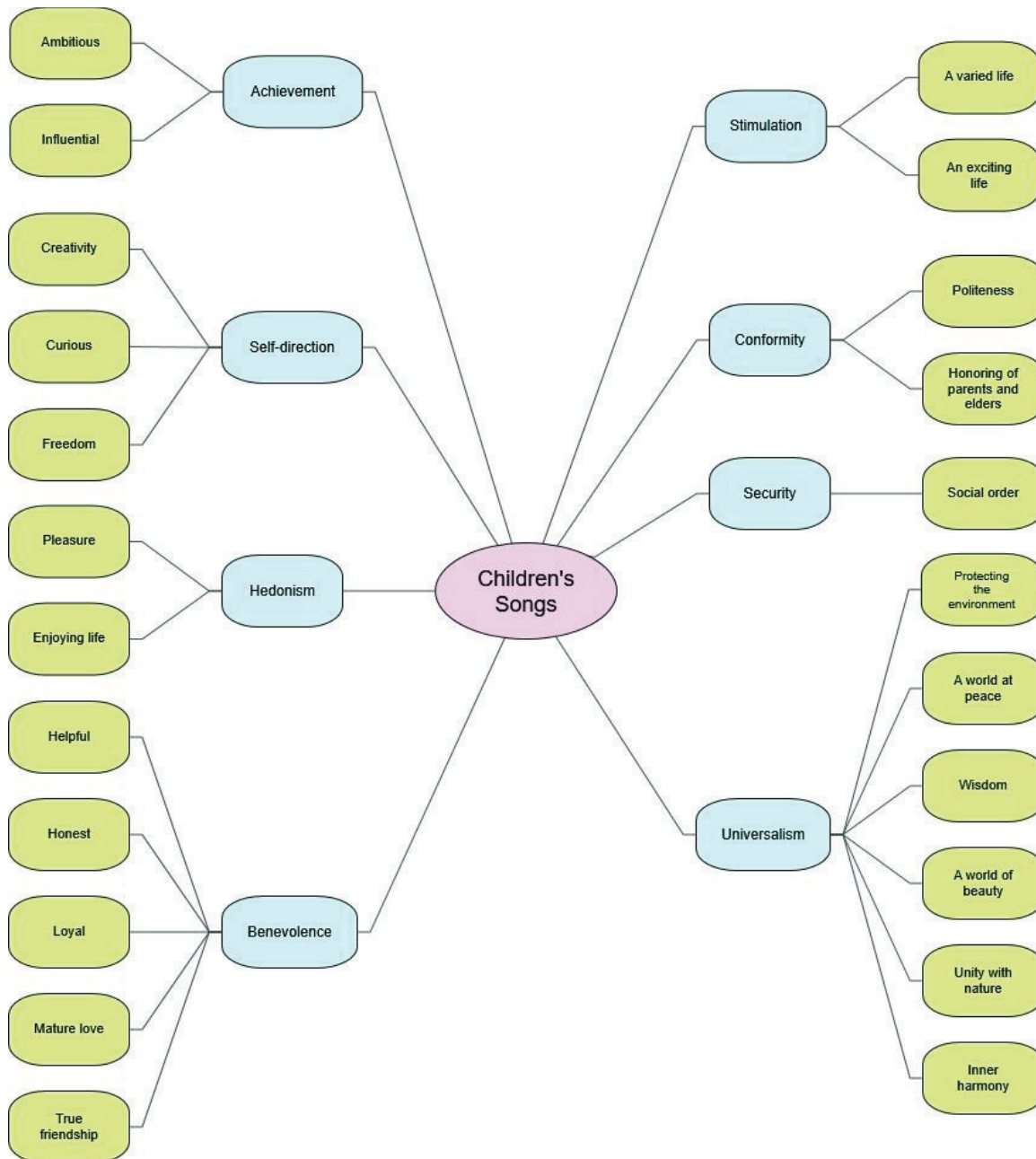


Figure 1. Motivational types and values in the analyzed children's songs

Examples from the findings and children's songs of the eight categories revealed in this research are as in the following:

Category 1. Achievement

In the analyzed children's songs, a total of 3 values were found in the achievement category with 1 for ambitious value and 2 for influential value. An example from the children's songs for this category is as in the following:

*He is a hero
 Who says stop to illiteracy
 Enemy of ignorance
 Same name all over the world
 Does not let the darkness pass through
 Like a guardian
 Enlighten us my teacher (53)*

Category 2. Hedonism

There are 7 values found in the hedonism category. Of these values, 2 are pleasure and 5 are enjoying life values. Some examples of children's songs for this category are as in the following:

Good that we are born, good that we live

*We love the world and enjoy the life
We celebrate life by loving nature (31)
Jump to the sky with a brave heart
Live cheerfully, live happy with the heart of a child
Live merrily do not lose your joy (50)*

Category 3. Stimulation

There are 4 values found in stimulation category; of these values 3 is a varied life and 1 is an exciting life. Some examples of children's songs for this category are as in the following:

*Do not stop now, cheer up yourself, come on go out
Look here is health, energy
Life is very nice with sports (45)*

Category 4. Self-direction

There are 4 values found in the self-direction category. Of these values 2 of them are creativity, 1 is curious, 1 is freedom value. Examples of children's songs for this category are as in the following:

*When you open the door you will go into a journey
You start dreaming by forgetting everything
It surrounds you while reading the first lines Its dreams magnify that magical universe (27)
Let yourself go in the colourful nature
Run freely (50)*

Category 5. Universalism

In children's songs, the mostly established values are collected in the universalism category. There are 34 values, 6 of which are protecting the environment, 11 are a world at peace, 4 are wisdom, 7 are a world at beauty, 5 are unity with nature and 1 is inner harmony. Examples of children's songs in the universalism category are as in the following:

*My goodness
Protect the world from evil
The flags of the peace
Never should descend from the skies (5)
Listen the sound of the wind
Lie down on the lush green grass
The voice of nature, surrounds all around
A cheerful melody (12)
Tell me a fairy tale
Which contains future in it
Children live happily
Brotherhood surrounds the world
Kids shouldn't shot
The future should not be darken
Little hearts of the children
Their dreams should never end (19)
At night the space is decorated with stars
The new moon is the granddaddy of all the children
The river swirls through the trees
The newborn foal playing with joy (48)*

Category 6. Benevolence

There are 8 values for benevolence category. 1 of them is helpful, 1 is honest, 2 are loyal, 1 is mature love, 3 are true friendship values. Some of the children's songs about the benevolence category are as in the following:

*Let there be a shining sun
Let there be an unending fire.
A star at infinity
Our love becomes (7)
Would you be my friend?
At home, in the class, on the street
Inside of a huge laughter
Maybe while flowing in my tears (35)
Sometimes true, sometimes not
Cannot be, should not be
Everything is right, everything is honest
Should be in the world (36)*

Category 7. Conformity

There are 5 values found in the conformity category. 1 of these values is politeness and the rest 4 are honoring of parents and elders. Some of the children's songs in the conformity category are as in the following:

Your trusting words

Endless infinite respect

Your sweet fairytales

Embraced me with compassion (23)

It cannot be without love, respect, tolerance

What a life without love, respect and tolerance (47)

Category 8. Security

There is only one value found related to the security category.

In our warm place

when night comes

My mom sings a ballad beside me

I happily fall asleep.

All together hand by hand

Let's write our own ballad

Let us sing this ballad forever (41)

4. Discussion and Conclusion

There is not any study on the examination of children's songs in terms of values found in the literature reviews. Therefore, this study has an essential place as it examines children's songs in terms of values. In addition, these findings are also important because they contribute to fill the gap of information on the examination of values in children's songs.

In this study, it has been determined that children's songs contain the motivational types of universalism, benevolence, hedonism, conformity, stimulation, self-direction, achievement and security. There is no value found for motivational types such as power and tradition. Although there is no research determined on the values of children's songs in the literature, in the research on the value of children's literature it is seen that children's books contain some values such as in the investigation of Huthwaite (1978) revealing the values of kindness, honesty, responsibility, fairness, cooperation, scientific logic, and respect; Ramp and Ridout (1995) showed honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, perseverance, giving; Court and Rosental (2007) presented mutual respect, friendship, self-acceptance and individualism in their studies. In this research, it is seen that the most emphasized values in children's songs are *a world at peace, a world of beauty, protecting the environment, enjoying life, unity with nature*. In children's songs, it is noteworthy that they are mainly integrating with nature, peace and brotherhood, children and people not being shot, and good tomorrows being sought. The reason why children songs mostly emphasize future anxiety and wishes for a peaceful world may be because those children's songs are being written by the elders. In addition, the frequent processing of universalism value in songs can reveal the idea of only this value should be taught or internalized.

As a result, the research revealed that children's songs concentrate on certain values. When children's songs are being compiled or written, it is thought that the important issue is not only creating a wide spectrum but also paying attention to making selections that affect children's souls in a positive way.

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