



The Relationship Between Moral Value And Emotion Regulation In Adolescents

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between moral values and emotion regulation skills of individuals in adolescence. The participants consisted of 493 individuals attending secondary school's 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. The Universal Moral Values Scale (TUMVS) and the Emotion Regulation Scale for Adolescents (ERSA) were used to collect data. The spearman-Brown Correlation coefficient, t-Test, Mann Whitney U Test, Kruskal Wallis H Test, and one-way analysis of variance were used in the data analysis, taking into account the normality distribution. The study determined that as the moral value levels of individuals in adolescence increased, their functional emotion regulation skills increased, and their dysfunctional emotion regulation skills decreased. The study further determined that the level of behavioral moral values of girls in adolescence was higher than boys, and the level of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, universal moral values decreased as the class level increased. The results indicated that the ability of girls to organize intrinsically dysfunctional emotions was higher than boy individuals, the ability to regulate external functional and external non-functional emotions decreased as the class level increased, and the ability to regulate intrinsically dysfunctional emotions increased.

Keywords: Moral, moral values, emotion, emotion regulation skills, adolescence.

Ergenlerde Ahlaki Değer ve Duygu Düzenleme Arasındaki İlişki

Bilgi

Bu çalışma, ikinci yazar danışmanlığında ilk yazar tarafından hazırlanan yüksek lisans tezinin bir bölümünden üretilmiştir.

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Öz

Bu çalışmada, ergenlik dönemindeki bireylerin ahlaki değer düzeyleri ve duygu düzenleme becerileri arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. Çalışma grubu, ortaokul 5, 6, 7 ve 8. sınıfa devam eden 493 bireyden oluşmaktadır. Veri toplamada Evrensel Ahlaki Değerler Ölçeği ile Ergenler için Duygu Düzenleme Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde normallik dağılımı dikkate alınarak Spearman Brown Korelasyon katsayısı, t Testi, Mann Whitney U Testi, Kruskal Wallis H Testi ve tek yönlü varyans analizi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada ergenlik dönemindeki bireylerin ahlaki değer düzeyleri arttıkça işlevsel duygu düzenleme becerilerinin arttığı, işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin azaldığı belirlenmiştir. Ergenlik dönemindeki kızların davranışsal ahlaki değerler düzeyinin erkeklerden daha yüksek olduğu ve sınıf düzeyi yükseldikçe bilişsel, davranışsal, duygusal, evrensel ahlaki değerler düzeyinin azaldığı belirlenmiştir. Kızların içsel işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin erkek bireylerden daha yüksek olduğu, sınıf düzeyi yükseldikçe dışsal işlevsel ve dışsal işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin azaldığı, içsel işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin ise arttığı belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahlak, ahlaki değerler, duygu, duygu düzenleme becerileri, ergenlik dönemi.

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Introduction

Morality refers to the rules individuals follow in society, encompassing principles of good and bad behaviors, as well as notions of right and wrong actions (Dilmaç, 1999; Türk Dil Kurumu, 2021). Morality is inherently tied to values, which represent what is essential to individuals and act as enduring principles guiding behavior over time (Schwartz, 1992). These values also form a central component of personality, significantly influencing behavior (Bardi & Schwartz, 2013). For instance, moral values such as sharing and compassion are known to promote pro-social behavior and influence moral judgment (Cameron et al., 2022). While moral judgment often reflects the tension between emotion and reason (Helion & Ochsner, 2018), it is deeply associated with emotions such as fear, anger, and disgust from a cognitive-intuitive perspective (Dedeke, 2015).

Emotions not only shape moral judgments but also influence subsequent behaviors. For example, the intensity of emotions can prompt approval of improper actions or disapproval of correct actions (Dedeke, 2015). Scholars have long debated whether moral judgments arise from practical reasoning or emotional processes. Recent psychological research supports both perspectives, highlighting the complexity of moral judgment (Feinberg et al., 2012). It is suggested that the relationship between moral judgment and moral reasoning is governed by emotional controls (Dedeke, 2015). Emotional regulation, therefore, emerges as a critical factor, enabling individuals to manage their emotional reactions to moral stimuli in alignment with their goals (Helion & Ochsner, 2018). Emotion regulation involves processes that initiate, maintain, and modify the intensity and duration of emotional states (Eisenberg et al., 2000). Successfully coping with daily difficulties relies on having a positive attitude and effective emotion regulation skills (Hafiz, 2015). Positive attitudes enable engagement in socially appropriate behavior through correctly directing moral values, such as respect, humility, compassion, and tolerance, which are accepted as universal (Kinnier, 2000).

Moral development is a complex structure involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Uzun & Yazıcı, 2018; Santrock, 2020). Similarly, emotion regulation involves both voluntary and automatic processes, underscoring its complexity (Gotlib & Joormann, 2007). While morality is often considered the ability to overcome emotions through logical reasoning (Narvaez & Vaydich, 2008), emotion regulation is viewed as a foundation of moral development and socialization (Eisenberg, 2000). During adolescence, the reduced influence of family and the increasing importance of peer relationships make advanced emotion regulation skills essential for managing emotional turbulence and behavioral responses (Gross, 2002).

The decision-making of children is initially managed externally by adults and later transitions to individual criteria developed alongside conscience (Berk, 2020).

Adolescents with higher moral competence are better able to regulate their emotions, minimizing disruptions to their social environment (Faiciuc, 2021). Character is a multidimensional concept encompassing emotional, intellectual, and interpersonal traits shaped by demographic factors such as age, gender, and education (Park & Peterson, 2006). Emotion regulation, linked to moral behaviors, moral values and moral judgments, also contributes positively to moral identity (Faiciuc, 2021).

In adolescence, morality begins to develop but is often guided by emotions rather than societal norms (Temel & Aksoy, 2016). The moral law, developed and adopted by each individual, holds individuals responsible for their right and wrong behaviors. As adolescence progresses, individuals enhance their emotional regulation abilities. Expressing a specific emotion reflects the individual's growing awareness of interpersonal and social relationships with peers (Zeman et al., 2006). In addition, adolescence plays a crucial role in emotion regulation as hormonal, neural, and cognitive systems, essential for advancing emotion regulation skills, mature during this period (Gambin et al., 2021). At the same time, flexibly using emotion regulation skills suited to specific situations becomes an important socio-emotional skill, equipping individuals with adaptive features across social and academic domains (Murphy et al., 2004). Many emotions, including guilt, shame, and empathy, fundamentally contribute to morality (Eisenberg, 2000). Positive emotions, in particular, significantly promote moral development. Among these, empathy stands out as one of the most critical emotions. Empathy involves the process of recognizing shared positive and negative emotions by identifying the source of those emotions (Decety & Meyer, 2008). Empathy captures the emotions of others, projects them to generate a response, and involves understanding another person's emotional state to create an appropriate emotional reaction (Eisenberg et al., 2006; Santrock, 2020). Individuals must correctly interpret others' emotions and respond appropriately (Batson et al., 1987). Positive emotions greatly contribute to moral development, while emotion regulation—both positive and negative—guides the moral values adopted by individuals in varying ways (Faiciuc, 2021). Since mature moral function relies on the harmony of emotion, intuition, and reasoning (Narvaez, 2010), the moral standards adopted by individuals serve as a guide for positive behaviors and deter negative ones (Bandura, 2011). Positive social behaviors, such as sharing and cooperation—values essential for regulating social relations—have diminished in prominence today (Sünbül & Güçray, 2016). Considering the highlighted moral disintegration and its societal and individual consequences, this study emphasizes the importance of understanding individuals' moral values and emotion regulation skills.

Adolescence increases the importance of friendships and the influence of environmental factors on individuals. Emotional turmoil begins during this period, and

fluctuations in emotions are reflected in behaviors, making it essential to examine the moral value levels and emotion regulation skills of adolescents. Emotions and emotion regulation skills acquired through a healthy process shape the moral values and behaviors that individuals adopt. Managing and regulating emotions effectively allows individuals to exhibit empathic behavior and morally expected actions. The literature includes studies on the development of moral values during adolescence (Erinç, 2019), the relationship between emotion regulation and mindfulness skills in middle adolescence (Kısmetoğlu, 2019), and the relationship between psychological resilience and emotional regulation in adolescents aged 15-17 (İşözen & Kolay, 2022). Additional studies have explored moral maturity, family belonging, and the parent-adolescent relationship (Özyürek & Basar, 2021), family belonging, emotion regulation strategies, empathy, and social behaviors in middle adolescence (Laghi et al., 2018), and the relationship between adolescents' emotion regulation strategies and parental attitudes (Atalay & Özyürek, 2021). Research has also examined the neural connections involved in adolescents' emotion regulation processes (Desatnik et al., 2021), the components of psychological flexibility and emotion regulation strategies in adolescence (Cobos-Sánchez et al., 2022), the cognitive emotion regulation strategies of adolescents (Betegón et al., 2022), and the relationship between proactive and reactive aggression and emotion regulation difficulties in adolescents (Kokkinos et al., 2019). This study aims to investigate the moral value levels and emotion regulation skills of adolescents in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

-What is the relationship between the moral value levels and emotion regulation skills of adolescents?

-How do the moral values and emotion regulation skills of adolescents vary based on gender, grade level, and parental education?

Method

The research employed the relational survey model, a quantitative research method. This research model determines the existence of change between two or more variables (Öztürk, 2019). The study preferred the relational survey model because it provides clues about the cause and effect of relationships and allows the estimation of one variable's state based on another variable's state.

Participants

The researchers conducted the study in secondary schools selected through purposeful and criterion sampling during the 2021-2022 academic year in the Safranbolu District of Karabük Province. Studies using purposive sampling include the most suitable groups for the research (Baştürk & Taştepe, 2013). The researchers chose criterion sampling to reach more students in a shorter time. The criterion for this research was schools with at least 100

secondary school students. The researchers identified five out of 15 secondary schools in the Safranbolu district that met this criterion. Accordingly, the participants included 493 individuals who attended the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades of these schools, completed the scale forms, and provided voluntary consent to participate. Table 1 presents personal information about the study group. Among the study group, 54.4% were girls, and 45.6% were boys. Additionally, 27.4% of the participants were in 5th grade, 29.0% in 6th grade, 24.3% in 7th grade, and 19.3% in 8th grade. The education level of the mothers was 21.1% primary school, 17.2% secondary school, 30.8% high school, 27.2% university, and 3.7% graduate. The education level of the fathers was 12.6% primary school, 15.6% secondary school, 29.8% high school, 35.9% university, and 6.1% graduate.

Data Collection Tool

The researchers collected the data for this study using a Personal Information Form, which questioned the age, class, gender, and educational status of the mother and father, along with the items from the Universal Moral Values Scale and the Emotion Regulation Scale for Adolescents.

Universal Moral Values Scale (UMVS). Umar and Kanger (2018) adapted this scale. UMVS is a 5-point Likert-type scale (1: strongly disagree, 5: strongly agree) consisting of three sub-dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive, and 48 items. There are 23 items in the behavioral dimension has 17 items, and the cognitive dimension contains 8 items. The sub-dimensions of the scale encompass compassion, responsibility, fairness, honesty, and courtesy. The scale does not include any reverse items. A high score in each sub-dimension indicates that the individual possesses the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics assessed in that sub-dimension. The scale also provides a total score reflecting universal moral values. Scoring involves examining the sub-dimensions and calculating the total score average. The Guttman Split-Half coefficient was calculated for reliability as .93 for the entire scale, .81 for the cognitive dimension, .92 for the emotional dimension, and .98 for the behavioral dimension. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient, calculated for validity, was .97 for the scale, .80 for the cognitive dimension, .92 for the emotional dimension, and .96 for the behavioral dimension. In this study, the researchers calculated the reliability coefficient for the entire scale as .95.

Emotion Regulation Scale for Adolescents (ERSFA). Duy and Yıldız (2014) adapted this scale. The scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale (1: rarely, 5: always) consisting of 18 items and four sub-dimensions: external dysfunctional, internal dysfunctional, internal functional, and external functional emotion regulation. Higher sub-dimension scores indicate a higher frequency of the adolescent's use of the emotion regulation method for that sub-dimension. Conversely, lower scores indicate a

lower frequency of the emotion regulation method for that sub-dimension. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .74 for the internal functional emotion regulation sub-dimension, .76 for the external dysfunctional emotion regulation sub-dimension, .68 for the internal dysfunctional emotion regulation sub-dimension, and .57 for the external functional emotion regulation sub-dimension. The test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated as .51 for the internal functional emotion regulation sub-dimension, .70 for the external dysfunctional emotion regulation sub-dimension, .56 for the internal dysfunctional emotion regulation sub-dimension, and .52 for the external functional emotion regulation sub-dimension. Researchers interpret high scores as indicating a high level of emotion regulation in the relevant sub-dimension. In this study, the researchers calculated the reliability coefficient for the entire scale as .70.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher obtained the necessary ethical permissions from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Karabük University with the decision dated 15/09/2021 and numbered 2021/08-09. The researcher also received approval from the Governorship of Karabük with the decision dated 01.11.2021 and numbered E-44653020-20-36051764 from the Karabük Provincial Directorate of National Education. To collect the data, the researcher determined eight secondary schools with 100 or more students from 15 official secondary schools in the Safranbolu District of Karabük Province. Before data collection, the researcher informed school principals, branch, and guidance teachers about the purpose and scope of the research. Afterward, branch and guidance teachers informed parents about the research via WhatsApp. Parent information and consent were collected via Google Form by sending the study link to the parents through the school administrations of the District

Directorate of National Education. The researcher applied the measurement tools to individuals in the classroom environment during periods determined by the school administration. In the classrooms, the researcher provided explanations about the measurement tools and research content. Individuals received a quiet environment to answer each question, and the researcher ensured sufficient time was given. In the data analysis, the researcher removed extreme values and examined the normality assumption of the data from 493 participants using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, Skewness, Kurtosis values, histogram, and detrended Q-Q plot graphs. For the subscale scores of UMVS and ERSFA, the researcher considered a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test significance value below 0.05, skewness and kurtosis values within the range of ± 2 , a coefficient of variation less than 30%, histogram graphs with a single-peaked structure, and detrended Q-Q plot graphs suitable for normal distribution (Uysal & Kılıç, 2022). To analyze the difference between scale scores by gender, the researcher used the Independent Sample t-Test for data suitable for normal distribution and the Mann Whitney U (MWU) test for data unsuitable for normal distribution. The researcher used one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to analyze differences between grade, number of siblings, family income perception, parental education level, and scale scores, and the Kruskal Wallis H (KWH) test for data not fitting a normal distribution. The researcher set the significance value at 0.05. If the difference between measurement scores was significant, the researcher examined the origin of the difference using Scheffe and MWU tests. The researcher used the Spearman-Brown Correlation Coefficient to determine the relationship between scores obtained from the scales.

Results

This section presents the findings and comments obtained in line with the sub-problems of the study.

Table 1. Number and percentage values of some personal information about the study group

Gender	n	%	Class	n	%
Girl	268	54.4	5th grade	135	27.4
Boy	225	45.6	6th grade	143	29.0
Total	493	100.0	7th grade	120	24.3
			8th grade	95	19.3
			Total	493	100.0
Mother Education			Father Education		
Primary School	104	21.1	Primary School	62	12.6
Secondary School	85	17.2	Secondary School	77	15.6
High School	152	30.8	High School	147	29.8
University	134	27.2	University	177	35.9
Graduate	18	3.7	Graduate	30	6.1
Total	493	100.0	Total	493	100.0

Table 2. UMVS and ERSFA scores of the study group correlation analysis results

		Emotion Regulation Scale For Adolescents			
UMVS		I-FER	EFER	I-DER	E-DER
Behavioral Moral	r	0.462**	0.243**	-0.220**	-0.332**
Value	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Emotional Moral	r	0.420**	0.295**	-0.204**	-0.287**
Value	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Cognitive Moral	r	0.381**	0.284**	-0.118**	-0.243**
Value	p	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.000
Universal Moral	r	0.473**	0.301**	-0.215**	-0.329**
Value	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

UMSV: The Universal Moral Values Scale I-FER: Internal-Functional Emotion Regulation EFER: Externally Functional Emotion Regulation
I-DER: Internally-Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation E-DER: Externally-Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation

When Table 2 is examined, the analysis reveals a significant relationship between the UMVS sub-dimension and total scores and all ERSFA sub-dimensions ($p < 0.001$). This relationship is moderate and positive between UMVS Behavioral MV, Emotional MV, and Universal MV scores and ERSFA Internal-Functional ER scores ($r = 0.462$, $r = 0.420$, $r = 0.473$). The analysis shows a low level of positive correlation between UMVS Cognitive MV and ERSFA Internal-Functional ER scores ($r = 0.381$) and between UMVS Behavioral MV, Emotional MV, Cognitive MV, and Universal MV scores and External Functional ER scores ($r = 0.243$, $r = 0.295$, $r = 0.284$, $r = 0.301$). On the other hand, the analysis indicates a low level of negative correlation between UMVS Behavioral MV, Emotional MV, Cognitive MV, and Universal MV scores and ERSFA Internally-Dysfunctional ER ($r = -0.220$, $r = -0.204$, $r = -0.118$, $r = -0.215$) and Externally-Dysfunctional ER ($r = -0.332$, $r = -0.287$, $r = -0.243$, $r = -0.329$) scores. As the Behavioral ER score of the study group increases, the ERSFA Internal Functional ER and External Functional ER scores also increase, while Intrinsic Dysfunctional ER and Extrinsic Dysfunctional sub-dimension scores decrease. Accordingly, as the moral values of individuals in adolescence increase, functional emotion regulation increases and dysfunctional emotion regulation decreases. Conversely, as moral values decrease, functional emotion regulation decreases and dysfunctional emotion regulation increases.

According to Table 3, the analysis shows that the difference between the gender of the study group and the mean scores of UMVS Behavioral MV, Universal MV score, and ERSFA Internally-Dysfunctional ER sub-dimensions is significant ($p < 0.05$). On the other hand, the analysis indicates no significant difference according to gender in the scores of UMVS Emotional MV, Cognitive MV, and ERSFA Internal-Functional ER, Externally Functional ER, and Externally-Dysfunctional ER scores ($p > 0.05$).

According to Table 4, the analysis reveals that the difference between the class level of the study group and the mean scores of the UMVS Behavioral MV, Emotional MV, Cognitive MV, Universal MV, and ERSFA External Functional ER, Internally-Dysfunctional ER, and Externally-Dysfunctional ER sub-dimensions is significant ($p < 0.05$).

The Scheffe and MWU tests conducted to determine the source of the difference indicate that the scores of 5th grade ($\bar{x} = 104.48$) and 6th grade individuals in the UMVS Behavioral MV sub-dimension ($\bar{x} = 102.34$) are higher than the mean score of individuals in the 7th grade ($\bar{x} = 100.46$) and 8th grade ($\bar{x} = 97.43$). Additionally, the mean score of 7th-grade individuals is significantly higher than the mean score of 8th-grade individuals. The mean score of 5th grade ($\bar{x} = 76.36$) and 6th grade individuals ($\bar{x} = 75.71$) in the UMVS Emotional MV dimension is higher than the average score of 7th grade ($\bar{x} = 73.32$) and 8th grade individuals ($\bar{x} = 69.80$), while the mean score of 7th-grade individuals is significantly higher than the sub-dimension mean score of 8th-grade individuals.

The mean score of 5th-grade individuals ($\bar{x} = 33.55$) in the Cognitive MV sub-dimension of UMVS is significantly higher than the mean score of 8th-grade individuals ($\bar{x} = 31.80$). The mean score of 5th grade ($\bar{x} = 214.40$), 6th grade ($\bar{x} = 211.16$), and 7th grade ($\bar{x} = 206.22$) individuals in the UMVS Universal MV sub-dimension is lower than the mean score of 8th grade individuals ($\bar{x} = 199.03$), which is significantly higher. The mean scores of 5th grade ($\bar{x} = 13.65$), 6th grade ($\bar{x} = 12.98$), and 7th grade ($\bar{x} = 12.97$) individuals in the ERSFA External Functional ER sub-dimension are significantly higher than the mean scores of 8th-grade individuals ($\bar{x} = 11.47$). The scores of 6th grade ($\bar{x} = 13.37$), 7th grade ($\bar{x} = 13.50$), and 8th grade individuals ($\bar{x} = 14.48$) in the Internal Dysfunctional ER sub-dimension of ERSFA are significantly higher than the mean score of 5th-grade individuals. The mean scores of 6th grade ($\bar{x} = 8.27$), 7th grade ($\bar{x} = 9.17$), and 8th grade individuals in the ERSFA Externally-Dysfunctional ER sub-dimension ($\bar{x} = 10.18$) are significantly higher than the mean score of 5th-grade individuals ($\bar{x} = 7.49$). The average score of 7th and 8th-grade individuals is higher than the average score of 6th-grade individuals, while the mean scores of 8th-grade individuals are significantly higher than the mean scores of 7th-grade individuals.

Furthermore, as the grade level increases, the mean scores of individuals' Behavioral MV, Emotional MV, Cognitive MV, Universal MV, and External Functional ER, and Externally Dysfunctional ER decrease, while their Internally Dysfunctional ER score averages increase.

Table 3. Analysis results of UMVS and ERSFA scores by gender

The Universal Moral Values Scale	Gender	n	\bar{x}	S	t	U	p
Behavioral Moral Value	Girl	268	102.78	8.63	-	25000.00	0.001*
	Boy	225	100.02	9.21			
Emotional Moral Value	Girl	268	74.61	7.34	-	27514.00	0.094
	Boy	225	73.64	7.13			
Cognitive Moral Value	Girl	268	33.03	3.82	1.378	-	0.169
	Boy	225	32.55	3.85			
Universal Moral Value	Girl	268	210.43	18.13	2.576	-	0.010*
	Boy	225	206.21	18.09			
Emotion Regulation Scale For Adolescents							
Internal- Functional Emotion Regulation	Girl	268	16.33	2.56	1.270		0.205
	Boy	225	16.04	2.57			
Externally Functional Emotion Regulation	Girl	268	12.89	3.69	0.153		0.878
	Boy	225	12.84	3.57			
Internally- Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation	Girl	268	13.71	4.58	-	26960.50	0.042*
	Boy	225	12.80	4.08			
Externally-Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation	Girl	268	8.59	3.33	-	29530.00	0.691
	Boy	225	8.71	3.36			

*p<0.05

Table 4. Analysis results of UMVS and ERSFA scores by grade level

The Universal Moral Values Scale	Class	n	\bar{x}	S	F	χ^2	p
Behavioral Moral Value	5th grade	135	104.48	8.03	-	37.689	0.000*
	6th grade	143	102.34	9.10			
	7th grade	120	100.46	8.55			
	8th grade	95	97.43	9.06			
Emotional Moral Value	5th grade	135	76.36	6.34	-	55.539	0.000*
	6th grade	143	75.71	7.00			
	7th grade	120	73.32	6.95			
	8th grade	95	69.80	7.24			
Cognitive Moral Value	5th grade	135	33.55	3.69	4.671	-	0.003*
	6th grade	143	33.11	3.93			
	7th grade	120	32.43	3.63			
	8th grade	95	31.80	3.92			
Universal Moral Value	5th grade	135	214.40	16.36	16.311	-	0.000*
	6th grade	143	211.16	18.08			
	7th grade	120	206.22	16.97			
	8th grade	95	199.03	18.40			
Emotion Regulation Scale For Adolescents							
Internal- Functional Emotion Regulation	5th grade	135	16.48	2.50	1.871	-	0.133
	6th grade	143	16.13	2.65			
	7th grade	120	16.36	2.51			
	8th grade	95	15.71	2.57			
Externally Functional Emotion Regulation	5th grade	135	13.65	3.53	7.118	-	0.000*
	6th grade	143	12.98	3.45			
	7th grade	120	12.97	3.58			
	8th grade	95	11.47	3.78			
Internally- Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation	5th grade	135	12.22	4.17	-	14.012	0.000*
	6th grade	143	13.37	4.59			
	7th grade	120	13.50	4.08			
	8th grade	95	14.48	4.40			
Externally-Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation	5th grade	135	7.49	2.75	-	43.059	0.000*
	6th grade	143	8.27	3.22			
	7th grade	120	9.17	3.41			
	8th grade	95	10.18	3.51			

*p<0.05

Table 5. Analysis results of UMVS and ERSFA scores according to mother education status

The Universal Moral Values Scale	Mother Education	n	\bar{x}	S	F	χ^2	p
Behavioral Moral Value	Primary School	104	101.15	8.32	-	2.951	0.566
	Middle School	85	101.69	9.43			
	High School	152	102.06	8.34			
	University	134	101.50	9.84			
	Graduate	18	98.44	9.76			
Emotional Moral Value	Primary School	104	74.72	6.30	-	2.827	0.587
	Middle School	85	74.38	7.89			
	High School	152	74.43	6.65			
	University	134	73.63	8.18			
	Graduate	18	71.72	6.99			
Cognitive Moral Value	Primary School	104	32.75	3.87	0.533	-	0.711
	Middle School	85	32.49	3.69			
	High School	152	32.98	3.67			
	University	134	32.99	4.04			
	Graduate	18	31.94	4.29			
Universal Moral Value	Primary School	104	208.62	16.59	0.678	-	0.607
	Middle School	85	208.57	18.90			
	High School	152	209.48	16.71			
	University	134	208.13	20.41			
	Graduate	18	202.11	19.36			
Emotion Regulation Scale For Adolescents							
Internal- Functional Emotion Regulation	Primary School	104	16.54	2.29	0.733	-	0.569
	Secondary School	85	16.21	2.92			
	High School	152	16.17	2.58			
	University	134	15.97	2.52			
	Graduate	18	16.11	2.56			
Externally Functional Emotion Regulation	Primary School	104	13.06	3.50	1.092	-	0.360
	Secondary School	85	12.89	3.60			
	High School	152	13.02	3.63			
	University	134	12.40	3.74			
	Graduate	18	13.94	3.78			
Internally- Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation	Primary School	104	13.50	4.37	-	2.838	0.585
	Secondary School	85	13.07	4.32			
	High School	152	12.91	4.34			
	University	134	13.59	4.40			
	Graduate	18	14.27	4.86			
Externally-Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation	Primary School	104	8.55	3.14	-	2.793	0.593
	Secondary School	85	8.51	3.27			
	High School	152	8.89	3.46			
	University	134	8.37	3.23			
	Graduate	18	9.77	4.34			

According to Table 5, the analysis shows no significant difference between the mother's education status of the study group and the mean scores of UMVS Behavioral MV, Emotional MV, Cognitive MV, Universal MV, and ERSFA Internal-Functional ER, Externally-Functional ER, Internally-Dysfunctional ER, and Externally-Dysfunctional ER ($p>0.05$).

According to Table 6, the analysis shows no significant difference between the father's educational status of the study group and the mean scores of UMVS Behavioral MV, Emotional MV, Cognitive MV, Universal MV, and ERSFA Internal Functional ER, Externally Functional ER, Internally Dysfunctional ER, and Externally Dysfunctional ER ($p>0.05$).

Table 6. Analysis results of UMVS and ERSFA scores according to father education status

The Universal Moral Values Scale	Mother Education	n	\bar{x}	S	F	χ^2	p
Behavioral Moral Value	Primary School	62	100.32	9.23	-	3.729	0.444
	Middle School	77	102.10	8.53			
	High School	147	101.80	9.20			
	University	177	101.90	8.76			
	Graduate	30	98.93	9.97			
Emotional Moral Value	Primary School	62	74.24	7.16	-	2.457	0.652
	Middle School	77	74.68	7.07			
	High School	147	74.22	7.02			
	University	177	74.22	7.41			
	Graduate	30	72.13	8.25			
Cognitive Moral Value	Primary School	62	32.64	3.86	0.923	-	0.450
	Middle School	77	32.59	3.59			
	High School	147	32.97	3.49			
	University	177	33.02	4.07			
	Graduate	30	31.70	4.52			
Universal Moral Value	Primary School	62	207.20	18.51	0.950	-	0.434
	Middle School	77	209.38	17.43			
	High School	147	209.00	17.86			
	University	177	209.15	18.17			
	Graduate	30	202.76	21.44			
Emotion Regulation Scale For Adolescents							
Internal- Functional Emotion Regulation	Primary School	62	16.03	2.46	0.157	-	0.960
	Secondary School	77	16.36	2.54			
	High School	147	16.22	2.65			
	University	177	16.16	2.59			
	Graduate	30	16.26	2.34			
Externally Functional Emotion Regulation	Primary School	62	13.45	3.13	1.629	-	0.166
	Secondary School	77	12.71	3.53			
	High School	147	13.30	3.61			
	University	177	12.45	3.76			
	Graduate	30	12.50	4.04			
Internally- Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation	Primary School	62	13.25	4.34	-	1.555	0.817
	Secondary School	77	13.03	4.88			
	High School	147	13.35	4.06			
	University	177	13.25	4.44			
	Graduate	30	14.10	4.36			
Externally-Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation	Primary School	62	8.50	3.07	-	2.210	0.697
	Secondary School	77	8.68	3.49			
	High School	147	8.92	3.47			
	University	177	8.37	3.19			
	Graduate	30	9.10	3.71			

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

This study examined the moral values and emotion regulation of individuals in adolescence and determined that as the moral value levels of adolescents increased, both internal and external functional emotion regulation skills increased, while non-functional emotion regulation skills decreased. Adolescents with moral values such as respect, honesty, kindness, and cooperation also exhibit healthy emotional processes. Researchers have shown that the moral values of individuals are related to prosocial behaviors and emotion regulation skills (Benish-Weisman et al., 2019; Yurdakul et al., 2022). A study

examining the relationship between moral personality and prosocial behaviors such as social values (cooperation, sharing), self-regulation, and sympathy with adolescents concluded that low prosocial behavior was associated with sympathy, while high prosocial behavior was associated with values (Padilla-Walker & Fraser, 2014). Researchers have determined a relationship between prosocial behaviors and aggression, negative peer relationships, substance use, and depression (Memmott-Elison et al., 2020). Sociability, peer communication, social interactions, sharing, belonging to a society, and acting according to society's expectations influence individuals' emotional and moral development.

The study determined that adolescent girls have higher behavioral moral values and internal dysfunctional emotion regulation skills compared to boys. Researchers have shown that as the use of negative emotion regulation skills, such as blaming others and destructive behavior, increases among male young adults, their physical and verbal aggression also increases (Çelik & Kocabıyık, 2014). Hormones explain the increased aggression associated with being male (Burney, 2006; Christiansen & Knussman, 1987). Hormones play a role in emotion regulation and neurobiological and neurochemical processes (Eliot, 2021). Researchers have also emphasized the relationship between the MAO-A gene and aggressive behavior, associating the MAO-A gene and low MAO effectiveness with impulsive aggressive behavior. Low neuroadrenal activity and destructive enzymes push individuals toward aggression (Abay & Tuğlu, 2000). Studies reveal differences in the empathy capacity of men and women (Christov-Moore, 2014). Research indicates that adolescent girls outperform boys in emotion recognition tasks (Rowse et al., 2014). Researchers have shown that empathy levels predict moral rule knowledge (Arıkoç, 2019). This finding suggests that individuals with high empathy levels may also have high moral values in addition to their knowledge of moral rules. Empathy is assumed to be partially hereditary (Tocaceli, 2018). Genetic studies indicate that women have an advantage in empathy scores, although limited results exist regarding the gender-specific heritability of empathy (Warrier et al., 2018a; Warrier et al., 2018b). Researchers view anger control as a critical emotional problem in adolescents, as adolescence is a developmental period with potential challenges in individual, social, and societal aspects (Duman et al., 2019). Social roles may stem from cultural expectations that girls exhibit more culturally shaped and directed behavior than boys. Another reason may be that the predominantly patriarchal structure of Turkish families grants sons more rights and fewer restrictions on their behavior (Korkmaz, 2022).

The study found that as the grade level of adolescents increased, cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and universal moral values, as well as external functional and external dysfunctional emotion regulation skills, decreased, while internal dysfunctional emotion regulation skills increased. To obtain a homogeneous study group, the researchers considered the grade level variable instead of the age variable during data collection. Changing moral values and emotion regulation skills in parallel with the increase in grade level highlight the role of the age variable. Moral development theorists Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1980, 1981) viewed moral development as a structure that progresses alongside cognitive development (Bencik-Kangal, 2021). Aydoğan (2020) determined that the age variable influences deliberate actions. Researchers also emphasized the importance of considering age when evaluating other factors affecting moral development (Çelik, 2016). Age regulates the relationship between values and prosocial behavior (Benish-Weisman et al.,

2019), and moral judgment is also related to age (Dell & Jurkovic, 1978). However, the current study shows that moral values decrease with increasing age. This may be attributed to the lower cognitive sub-dimension scores and higher emotional sub-dimension scores of the Universal Moral Values Scale, as seen in the descriptive analysis. Adolescence is a critical period for the maturation of cognitive processes influencing emotional behaviors (Yurgelun-Todd, 2007). The lower cognitive sub-dimension score may cause adolescents to base evaluations on emotion within the context of universal moral values. With age, internal responsibility emerges in moral actions (Krettenauer, 2017), moral rules become more and more personally binding (Nunner-Winkler, 2007), and moral understanding shifts from external regulation to internalization (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). Middle childhood findings show that children preferred minor rule violations and considered rules always valid (Özsarı & Özçelik, 2020). The present study finds that moral values decrease as age increases, suggesting the effectiveness of peer relationships as a determinant of adolescents' universal moral values. Researchers have shown that factors such as the circle of friends and mass media influence moral development (Şengün, 2007). In middle childhood, behaviors reflecting group belonging and adopting group rules may lead to perceptions of minor rule violations as harmless due to peer interaction and developmental features. Safder and Hussian (2018) found that the moral development of secondary school students is related to the school's moral atmosphere, supporting this finding. Adolescents have also been observed to reference teacher authority, peer norms, and school rules during moral reasoning (Daddis & Meadows, 2021). Individuals in peer groups learn to adopt and comply with group norms, express their attitudes, judgments, and evaluations, and remain attached to these norms (Şengün, 2007). While peer groups may appear homogenous, examining individuals within these groups reveals diverse characteristics. Peer attachment is negatively associated with behavioral and emotional difficulties and positively associated with prosocial behavior (Schoeps et al., 2020). Narvaez (2019) examining moral development and values from an evolutionary and neurobiological perspective, stated that moral learning is biosocial. Accordingly, the current research finding aligns with the literature.

The study found that the universal moral values and emotion regulation skills of individuals in adolescence do not differ according to the educational status of their parents. With the onset of school life, individuals transition from a narrow environment such as family and neighborhood to a relatively broader field of interaction. The ability to make decisions, initially managed under parental control, allows individuals to create personal criteria through the development of conscience (Berk, 2020). Researchers emphasize in the literature that prosocial behaviors and moral judgments are not influenced by the educational status of parents (Acuner, 2004; Karaman & Dinçer, 2020). Parental attitudes play a role in shaping the emotion regulation skills of individuals in

adolescence. Karmakar (2015) found that an authoritarian parenting attitude is positively associated with adolescents' external and internal emotion regulation. The differing research findings in the literature may stem from the study group consisting of individuals in adolescence. Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by physical growth and changes, as well as emotional, social, and mental transformations (Salmela-Aro, 2011). The differences in findings can be attributed to the varying developmental characteristics of the adolescent period.

Limitations

The research evaluates children's universal moral values and emotion regulation skills based on the moment they are in and their responses to the survey. Individuals may answer according to their mood or recent events. In this case, their responses to the survey may not reflect the general judgments they have adopted. This situation is considered a limitation. In light of the literature and study findings, the following recommendations are developed:

- Considering the relationship between moral values and emotion regulation skills, adolescents can participate in activities that positively influence their moral values and emotion regulation skills (such as sports activities and pet ownership).

- Given the importance of emotion regulation processes, educators and researchers can develop and implement education and intervention programs on emotion regulation tailored to different age groups.

- This study focuses on secondary school students. Researchers conducting similar studies can explore different age groups and other variables related to the child and family (such as temperament, parental harmony, parental attitude, conflict resolution skills) that impact the development of universal moral values.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Değerler, bireyler için neyin önemli olduğunu ifade etmekte ve zamanla yol gösterici ilkeler olarak hizmet etmektedir (Schwartz, 1992). Aynı zamanda bireylerin davranışları üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olan kişiliğin, merkezi bir yönüdür (Bardi ve Schwartz, 2013). Duygular hem ahlaki bir yargıdan sonraki davranışları hem de ahlaki yargının kendisini etkilemektedir. Yani deneyimlenen duyguların değeri, yanlış davranışı onaylama veya doğru davranışı onaylamama eğilimine sebep olabilmektedir (Dedeke, 2015).

Duygu düzenleme, bireyin duygu durumunun oluşumunu, yoğunluğunu ve süresini başlatması, sürdürmesi ve değiştirmesini sağlayan kontrol süreçleridir (Eisenberg vd., 2000). Bireylerin günlük yaşamdaki zorluklarla mücadele edebilmeleri, doğru tutuma sahip olmalarına ve etkili duygu düzenleme becerilerine bağlıdır (Hafiz, 2015). Doğru tutuma sahip olmak, bireyin benimsemesi beklenen ahlaki değerleri doğru

yönlendirerek olumlu sosyal davranışta bulunması anlamına gelmektedir (Kinnier, 2000).

Ahlak gelişimi, birçok yönü içinde barındıran karmaşık bir yapıdır (Uzun ve Yazıcı, 2018; Santrock, 2020). Benzer şekilde duygu düzenleme becerisinin hem gönüllü hem de otomatik süreçleri içermesi, duygu düzenlemenin zor bir süreç olduğunu düşündürmektedir (Gotlib ve Joormann, 2007). Ahlakın, duyguların üstesinden gelmek ve mantıklı düşünmekle ilgili olduğu varsayılırken (Narvaez ve Vaydich, 2008) duygu düzenleme becerileri ahlaki gelişim ve sosyalleşmenin yapı taşı olarak kabul edilmektedir (Eisenberg, 2000). Duygu düzenleme becerisinin temelini sağlam atılması, çocuğun ileriki yaşamı için de belirleyici olabilir. Özellikle ailenin önemini ikinci plana atıldığı ergenlik döneminde, ergen duygusal çalkantılarıyla baş etmede ve davranışlarını düzenlemede daha başarılı olabilir. Duygu düzenleme becerisindeki eksiklik, psikopatoloji türünün de belirgin özelliği olarak görülmektedir (Gross, 2002). Ergenlik dönemine doğru gidildikçe bireylerin duygu düzenleme yetenekleri artmaktadır. Belli bir duygunun ifade edilişi, bireyin kişilerarası ilişkilerindeki artan farkındalığına ve akranlarıyla arasındaki sosyal ilişkilere bağlıdır (Zeman vd., 2006). Ayrıca duygu düzenleme becerilerinin ilerlemesinde önemli rol oynayan hormonal, nöral ve bilişsel sistemlerin olgunlaşmaya başlaması nedeniyle ergenlik dönemi, duygu düzenleme açısından önemlidir (Gambin vd., 2021).

Yöntem

Araştırmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Çalışma, Karabük İli Safranbolu İlçesinde 2021-2022 eğitim-öğretim yılında, amaçlı ve ölçüt örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenen ortaokullarda yürütülmüştür. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile yürütülen araştırmalarda, araştırmacının amacına uygun gruplar dâhil edilmektedir (Baştürk ve Taştepe, 2013). Ölçüt örnekleme tercih edilmesinin nedeni, daha kısa sürede daha fazla öğrenciye ulaşılmak istenmesidir. Bu araştırmanın ölçütü, en az 100 ortaokul öğrencisine sahip okullardır. Safranbolu ilçesinde yer alan 15 ortaokuldan, en az 100 ve üzerinde ortaokul öğrenciye sahip beş ortaokulun bulunduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda çalışma grubu beş ortaokuldan ve bu ortaokulların 5, 6, 7, ve 8. sınıfa devam eden ve çalışmaya katılmaya gönüllü onamı alınan, ölçek formlarını tam olarak dolduran 493 bireyden oluşmuştur. Bu araştırmanın verileri çalışma grubunun yaş, sınıf, cinsiyet, anne ve baba öğrenim durumunun sorgulandığı bir Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Evrensel Ahlaki Değerler Ölçeği ve Ergenler için Duygu Düzenleme Ölçeği maddeleri kullanılarak toplanmıştır.

Sonuç

Çalışmada ergenlik dönemindeki bireylerin ahlaki değer düzeyleri arttıkça işlevsel duygu düzenleme becerilerinin arttığı, işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin azaldığı belirlenmiştir. Ergenlik dönemindeki kızların davranışsal ahlaki değerler düzeyinin erkeklerden

daha yüksek olduğu ve sınıf düzeyi yükseldikçe bilişsel, davranışsal, duygusal, evrensel ahlaki değerler düzeyinin azaldığı belirlenmiştir. Kızların içsel işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin erkek bireylerden daha yüksek olduğu, sınıf düzeyi yükseldikçe dışsal işlevsel ve dışsal işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin azaldığı, içsel işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin ise arttığı belirlenmiştir.

Tartışma

Çalışmada, ergenlerin ahlaki değer düzeyleri arttıkça hem içsel hem dışsal işlevsel duygu düzenleme becerilerinin arttığı, işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin ise azaldığı saptanmıştır. Saygı, dürüstlük, nezaket, yardımlaşma vb. gibi ahlaki değerlere sahip olan ergen bireyin duygusal süreçlerinin de sağlıklı işlemesi, şaşırtıcı bir sonuç değildir. Bireylerin sahip olduğu ahlaki değerlerin, toplum yanlısı davranışlarla ve duygu düzenleme becerileriyle ilişkili olduğu bilinmektedir (Benish-Weisman vd., 2019; Yurdakul vd., 2022). Ergenlerle yapılan sosyal değerler (yardımlaşma, paylaşma), öz düzenleme ve sempati gibi ahlaki kişiliğin prososyal davranışlarla ilişkisinin incelendiği bir çalışmada, düşük prososyal davranışın sempatiyle ve yüksek prososyal davranışın değerlerle ilişkili olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır (Padilla-Walker ve Fraser, 2014). Sosyallik, akran iletişimi, sosyal etkileşimler, paylaşım, bir topluma ait olma ve toplumun beklentisine uygun davranmanın, bireylerin duygusal ve ahlaki gelişimlerinde etkili olduğu söylenebilir.

Çalışmada, ergenlik dönemindeki kızların davranışsal ahlaki değer düzeylerinin ve içsel işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin, erkeklerden daha yüksek olduğu saptanmıştır. Erkek genç yetişkinlerin, diğerlerini suçlayıcı ve yıkım gibi olumsuz duygu düzenleme becerisini kullanma düzeyleri arttıkça fiziksel ve sözel saldırganlıklarının arttığı bilinmektedir (Çelik ve Kocabıyık, 2014). Erkek olmanın saldırganlığı artıran etkisi hormonlarla açıklanabilir (Burney, 2006; Christiansen ve Knussman, 1987). Duygu düzenlemede, nörobiyolojik ve nörokimyasal süreçler de rol oynamaktadır (Eliot, 2021). Ayrıca MAO-A geninin saldırgan davranışla ilişkisi üzerinde durulmuş, MAO-A geni ve düşük MAO etkililiği, dürtüsel saldırgan davranışla ilişkilendirilmiştir. Yani nöroadrenal faaliyet ve yıkıcı enzimlerin düşüklüğü, bireyi saldırgan olmaya itmektedir (Abay ve Tuğlu, 2000). Yapılan çalışmalar erkek ve kadınların empati kapasitesinde de farklılıklar olduğunu göstermektedir (Christov-Moore, 2014). Ayrıca ergenlik dönemindeki kızların duygu tanıma görevlerinde erkeklerden daha yüksek performans sergilediği de bilinmektedir (Rowse vd., 2014). Empati düzeyi, ahlaki kural bilgisini yordamaktadır (Arıkoç, 2019). Bu durumda empati düzeyi yüksek olan bireylerin ahlaki kural bilgisine ilaveten ahlaki değerlerinin yüksek olabileceği yorumu yapılabilir.

Çalışmada, ergenlik dönemindeki bireylerin sınıf düzeyi yükseldikçe bilişsel, davranışsal, duygusal, evrensel ahlaki değer düzeylerinin, dışsal işlevsel ve dışsal işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin azaldığı, içsel

işlevsel olmayan duygu düzenleme becerilerinin ise arttığı saptanmıştır. Ahlaki gelişim kuramcıları Piaget (1932) ve Kohlberg (1980, 1981) ahlak gelişimini, bilişsel gelişime paralel ilerleyen bir yapı olarak ele almışlardır (Akt.: Bencik-Kangal, 2021). Yaşın, değerler ve toplum yanlısı davranış arasındaki ilişkiyi yönettiği (Benish-Weisman vd., 2019), ahlaki yargının da yaşla ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur (Dell ve Jurkovic, 1978). Yaşla beraber ahlaki eylemlerde içsel sorumluluk ortaya çıkmakta (Krettenauer, 2017), ahlaki kurallar gittikçe kişisel olarak bağlayıcı olmakta (Nunner-Winkler, 2007) ve ahlaki anlayış dış düzenlemeden içselleştirmeye evrilmektedir (Hardy ve Carlo, 2011).

Çalışmada ergenlik dönemindeki bireylerin, evrensel ahlaki değer düzeyleri ve duygu düzenleme becerilerinin, anne-baba öğrenim durumuna göre farklılık göstermediği saptanmıştır. Alanyazında toplum yanlısı davranışların ve ahlaki yargıların, anne-babanın öğrenim durumundan etkilenmediği vurgulanmaktadır (Acuner, 2004; Karaman ve Dinçer, 2020). Ebeveyn tutumu, ergenlik dönemindeki bireylerin duygu düzenleme becerilerinin belirlenmesinde etken olabilmektedir.

Öneri

Ahlaki değerlerin ve duygu düzenleme becerilerinin ilişkili olduğundan hareketle ergenler ahlaki değer düzeyleri ve duygu düzenleme becerilerini olumlu etkileyecek faaliyetlere (sportif faaliyetler, hayvan sahiplenme gibi) yönlendirilebilir. Eğitimciler ve araştırmacılara duygu düzenlemeye ilişkin farklı yaş gruplarına hitap eden eğitim ve müdahale programları geliştirip uygulamaları önerilebilir.

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