

Cultural Values: Based on Elementary Students' Views

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Research Paper

Abstract

Identifying how students perceive cultural values is important to educate them as good citizens and their socialization. The aim of this study is to identify elementary school students' perception of cultural values. The study was conducted 6 male and 7 female, totally 13 4th graders studying at Ertugrulgazi Elementary School in the Alpu district of Eskisehir during the spring term of 2014-2015 academic year. Documentary analysis method was used to gather data which were later analyzed through inductive analysis. The results revealed that the students' perceptions about cultural values with 12 themes included: geographical characteristics of Turkey; historical characteristics of Turkey; Turkish cuisine; important values; Turkish family structure; religious festivals; national festivals; traditional ceremonies; folk music, cradlesongs and legends; handicrafts; folk dance and ancestor sports. Based on the results it can be said that they had a positive attitude towards the culture of Turkey and it can also be said that the students were aware cultural values in Turkey.

Keywords: Social studies education, cultural values, elementary education, Turkey, elementary students' perception

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Introduction

Culture, education and values are intimately connected. Culture is what is transmitted from one generation to another by education. The rest is biological inheritance. Values are central although not wholly constitutive of education. Therefore values occupy a central position in culture (Haldane, 2004). Culture is a social system that shares a set of common values, in which such values permit social expectations and collective understandings of the good, the beautiful, and the constructive. Social studies education prepares learners for effective citizenship through inculcation of the right culture and values requirements for sustainable development. Social studies is concerned with person's various interactions and interrelationships between a person and other person, groups, peers, institutions, and with the physical environment. So in essence educates learners about the way of life and living with the requisite values in a society. Social studies education is conscious of human behaviours, both negative anti-social and positive civil behaviours; and that human relationships are not one type. It is through social studies education that learners learn direct about their varied environments in order to develop sound knowledge, skills, attitudes and values about the environment. Education as well as social studies education plays a major role in supporting national development and meeting the needs and aspirations of any society. While the relationship between education and sustainable development is complex, education is the key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainable development, especially when it is directed to improving agricultural productivity, providing skills for work in new industries, enhancing the status of women, promoting environmental protection, developing capacities for informed and ethical decision-making, and improving the quality of life for all, as well as inculcating good moral values for sustainable national development (Arisi, 2015). Çengelci (2012) aimed at a study to examine attainments and activity samples of the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grade Social Studies Education Programs

regarding intangible cultural heritage. The results were obtained from the research are followed about cultural heritage components: oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and feasts, crafts tradition. Deveci (2009) stated that social studies enable us to understand people and the life that they construct together, and to furnish individuals with a social personality. Therefore social studies and culture as a by-product of social life and as a result of interaction among people are closely related.

So identifying elementary school students' perception of cultural values would be valuable in terms of raising good citizens since students are an important part of the society and would be a good source in determining what to include or emphasize in the values education system. The present study has significance in terms of implementing effective Social Studies teaching. It aims to identify elementary school students' perception of "cultural values" and in light of the findings, develop suggestions. The research question of the study is "How is the cultural values perceived by elementary school students?".

Methodology

This section of the study presents the research design, the participants, the data gathering process, and the data analysis.

Research design

As one of the qualitative research methods, documentary analysis was employed in this study. As for analyzing the data, inductive analysis was used.

Participants

6 male and 7 female, totally 13 4th graders studying at Ertugrulgazi Elementary School in the Alpu district of Eskisehir during the spring term of 2014-2015 academic year

were asked to prepare a brochure introducing Turkey with its positive and negative aspects for their foreign peers planning to visit their country and write a letter with their personal opinions attached it. This was a project assignment aiming to enhance their awareness about cultural values and identify their perceptions related to culture of Turkey. Since the researcher worked at this school for seven years. Convenient sampling was used and the study was conducted at the school stated above. After examining the letters and the brochures prepared by the participants, all of them were decided to be included in the study.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Records, documents, artifacts and archives what has traditionally been called “material culture” in anthropology constitute a particularly rich source of information about many organizations and programs. Thus, archival strategies and techniques constitute part of the repertoire of field research and evaluation. In contemporary society, all kinds of entities leave trail of paper and artifacts, a kind of spoor that can be mined as a part of fieldwork. Families keep photographs, children’s schoolwork, letters and other sentimental object that can inform and enrich family case studies. Learning to use, study and understand documents and files is part of the repertoire of skills needed for qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002, pp.293-295). It is quite important to examine written and visual documents related to the research problem in terms of making detailed inferences. In this study, elementary 4th graders were asked to write a letter and prepare a brochure about their country’s cultural values to a foreign peer planning to visit their country for the April 23rd celebrations (National Independence and Children’s Day). In these brochures and letters, they were asked to include cultural values of Turkey. The students’ letters and brochures were analyzed through documentary analysis. The issues that they mentioned constituted the themes and elementary school students’ perception of “cultural values” were examined. Inductive

analysis was used in the analysis of the letters and brochures produced by 13 students participated in the study. Inductive analysis is a process of defining, coding and categorizing the data (Patton, 2002). The primary aim in inductive analysis is to reach concepts and relations which are able to explain the data gathered. Therefore, within inductive analysis, the study followed the steps of coding the data, identifying the themes, turning the data into codes and themes, and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). The pages and the lines in the letters and brochures were assigned numbers, and then the statements covering the students “perception of cultural values” were provided with descriptive index and researcher’s interpretations. Then, the data were coded, the related codes were combined under themes and the findings were presented under related themes. The number of the themes was decided based on the statements that were related to the students’ perception of cultural values. The stages of inductive analysis are shown at Fig.1:

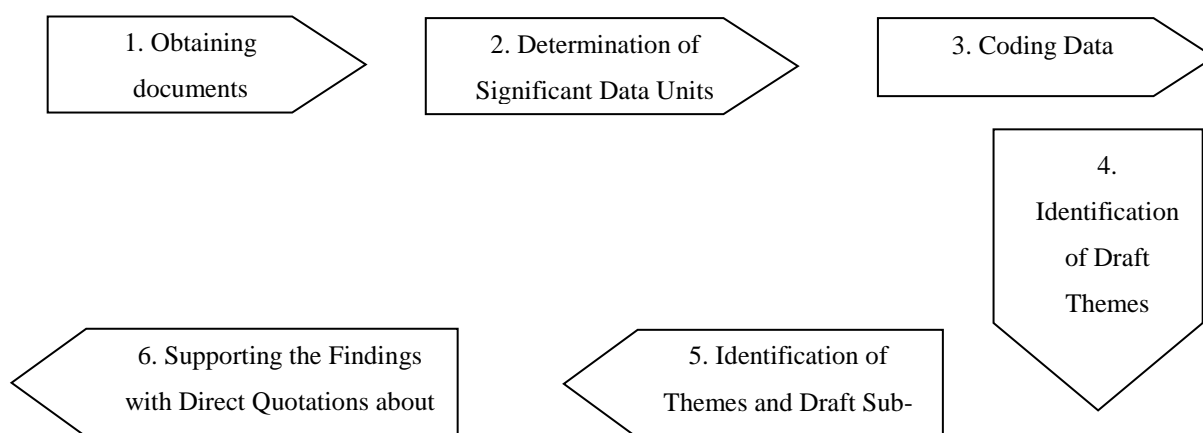


Figure 1. The stages of inductive analysis

To ensure the reliability of the study, the statements were examined by the researcher along with a field expert (whose studies about social studies and qualitative research), and the statements on which there was an agreement or disagreement were identified. Miles and Huberman’s (1994) formula was used and calculated as $p = 90$, so the study was accepted as

reliable. While presenting the quotations from the students' statements, codes were used instead of their real names.

Findings

This section presents the findings related to the elementary school students' perception of cultural values in their letters. The subthemes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Geographical Characteristics Theme's Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Location in the world	Mathematical location
	Neighbouring countries
	Located hemisphere
	Being like a bridge between Asia and Europe
Climate	Continental climate
	Mediterranean climate
	Black Sea climate
Vegetation	Scrub
	Forest
	Steppe
Geographical regions	Names of the regions
Touristic places	Pamukkale
	Fairy Chimneys
	Mount Ağrı
	Lake Uzungöl
	Mount Uludağ
	Lake Van
	İstanbul
	Antalya
İzmir	

As seen in Table 1, the students mentioned the geographical (the location of Turkey in the world, the climate, the vegetation, the geographical regions, touristic places) characteristics of Turkey. About Turkey's location in the world, a student named Sedef said: *"Our country connects Asia and Europe. Who doesn't want to see a country that is located in two continents?"*

About neighboring countries, a student named Meryem said:

“There are countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran and Greece around us but our country is the most beautiful.”

About the climate in Turkey, a student named Selin said:

“There are three kinds of climate in Turkey, for which, I think, we are lucky. Sometimes, while it is snowing in Erzurum, one can swim in Antalya.”

About vegetation, a student named Mustafa said:

“There are forests, mountains and also plains. Anything can grow in our country, that’s why we can eat healthy.”

The geographical regions, a student named Miraç said:

“We have different geographical regions. My city is located in the central Anatolian region. All regions have different aspects. For example our folk dances, daily life, forms and materials that made our homes varies from region to region”

Elementary students stated historical characteristics in Turkish culture. Sub-themes are seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Historical Characteristics Theme’s Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
History of Turkey	Atatürk War of Independence Republic Flag Ottoman Empire Horse
Historical places to see in Turkey	Ayasofya Mosque Dolmabahçe Palace Haydarpaşa Station Sultan Ahmet Mosque Sümela Monastery Çanakkale Martyrdom Aspendos Atatürk's mausoleum Maiden’s Tower Topkapı Palace

	Eyüp Sultan Mosque
	Anatolian Fortress
	Rumeli Fortress
	Yerebatan Cistern
	Mount Nemrut
	Atatürk
	Mevlana
	Yunus Emre
	Mimar Sinan
World-renowned Turks	Mirsad Türkcan
	Tarkan
	Sezen Aksu
	Ajda Pekkan
	İbrahim Tatlıses
	Barış Manço

As for the history of Turkey, the students used expressions related to Ataturk, the Ottoman Empire, tent, horse, the war of independence, the republic and the Turkish flag. About the history of Turkey, a student named Sedef said:

“We are a patriot nation. During the war of independence, our soldiers risked their lives. They saved our land with Ataturk’s leadership. Ataturk is a world-renowned genius and a great Turk.”

The historical places in Turkey that the students mentioned included: Ayasofya Mosque, Dolmabahçe Palace, Haydarpaşa Station, Sultan Ahmet Mosque, Sümela Monastery Çanakkale Martyrdom, Aspendos, Atatürk's mausoleum, Maiden’s Tower, Topkapı Palace, Eyüp Sultan Mosque, Anatolian Fortress, Rumeli Fortress, Yerebatan Cistern, Kız Fortress, Ephesus, Ani Ruins. Apart from the written information, the students also included the photographs of these places in their brochures.

One of the students, Yıldız, introduced Mount Nemrut in her brochure as in the following except;

“If you haven’t seen Mount Nemrut yet, go and see it. Those who wonder how the pyramids were built should think about how the statues in Nemrut were carried and put at the peak.

The world-renowned Turks that were included in the students' works were Atatürk, Mevlana, Yunus Emre, Mimar Sinan, Tarkan, Sezen Aksu, Ajda Pekkan, İbrahim Tatlıses, Mirsad Türkcan and Barış Manço.

About Mimar Sinan, a student named Sude said:

“Mimar Sinan is widely-known in the world. Thousands of tourists visit our country to see his architecture. I think everybody should come and see these places.”

About Tarkan, Yusuf said:

“He is a well-known singer. There are people listening to his songs in other countries. He has a lot of fans.”

Elementary school students were also given place Turkish cuisine in introducing the culture of Turkey. The sub-themes of Turkish cuisine theme's are the following in Table 3.

Table 3

Turkish Cuisine Theme's Sub Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Turkish cuisine	Baklava Mantı Yaprak sarması Kebab Döner Lokum Pide Çiğbörek

For Turkish cuisine, the students mentioned baklava, mantı, yaprak sarması, kebab, döner, lokum, pide and çiğbörek. A student, Burcu said:

“Baklava is sold everywhere now, but we cook or buy baklava only for festivals as a tradition.”

The elementary school students stated some values a part of culture in Turkey as a distinctiveness. These values are following in Table 4.

Table 4

Important Values in Turkey Theme's Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Important values in Turkey	Caring about family Relations with family and relatives Respect Patriotism Hospitality Freedom

With regard to the important values, the students mostly emphasized caring about family, being helpful, relations with family and relatives, respect, patriotism, hospitality, freedom. A student named Yunus said about some of these values that:

“Our parents live with us until they pass away. And we take care of our elderly parents. Siblings are also together. Members of the family are tightly connected to each other.

Elementary school students stated as an important aspect of the Turkish culture is family structure. The sub-themes of family structure theme is following in Table 5.

Table 5

Turkish Family Structure Theme's Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Turkish family structure	Traditional extended family Nuclear family Showing respect to elderly Responsibilities to younger siblings

As seen in Table 5 sub-themes about Turkish family structure theme: traditional extended family, nuclear family, showing respect to elderly, responsibilities to younger siblings One of the students, Sila, said:

“We often visit our neighbours. If a neighbour has a guest coming or a neighbour's child is getting married other neighbours also help and take care of the guests.”

Elementary students stated religious festivals and traditional activities about the festivals while introducing the Turkish culture. Religious festivals theme's sub-themes are following in Table 6.

Table 6

Religious Festivals in Turkey Theme's Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Religious festivals in Turkey	Visits during festivals Serving food to guests during festivals Cleaning before festivals Giving pocket money to youngsters for festivals Festival suits Kissing elderly people's hands Festivals prayers Treating each other people peacefully

As seen in table 6 for religious festivals, the students' statements included visits during festivals, serving food to guests during festivals, cleaning before festivals, giving pocket money to youngsters for festivals, festival suits, kissing elderly people's hands, festivals prayers, and treating each other people peacefully. A student named Mahmut said:

What is nice about festivals is that all the family members visit elderly people in the family. Besides, older people give pocket money to youngsters. And we kiss their hands. Everybody congratulates each other's festival. There are desserts everywhere. And festival days are holidays. So, in our country, everyone looks forward to festivals.

Elementary students stated national festivals and traditional activities about the festivals while introducing the Turkish culture. Religious festivals theme's sub-themes are following in Table 7:

Table 7

National Festivals in Turkey Theme's Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
National festivals in Turkey	Ceremonies Turkish national anthem Flag Stand in silence Speeches Shows Poems

As seen in Table 7 about national festivals, they mentioned ceremonies, Turkish national anthem, flag, standing in silence, speeches, shows and poems. A student named Sena said:

“We sing our national anthem in national festivals. There are speeches made and shows performed. Flags everywhere. We decorate our classrooms. I love our festivals because we have fun. I am proud of my country.”

Elementary students stated traditional ceremonies and meetings as a part of Turkish culture. traditional ceremonies and meetings theme's sub-themes are following in Table 8.

Table 8

Traditional Ceremonies and Meetings Theme's Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Traditional ceremonies and meetings in Turkey	Funerals Visits after births Weddings Farewell to and welcoming pilgrims Circumcision feasts Saying farewell to new soldiers Spring celebrations Regional festivals

As seen in Table 8 in the brochures and letters, the students specified various traditional ceremonies and meetings in Turkey such as funerals, visits after births, weddings, saying farewell to and welcoming pilgrims, circumcision feasts, saying farewell to new

soldiers, spring celebrations, and regional festivals. The excerpts from the students' writings about these themes are as follows: About the funerals, Ayşe said:

“The family of the deceased person are visited and there is a funeral prayer in our religion. People take food to his/her family so that they can serve it to the visitors.”

About the visits to a family who has just had a baby, Zeynep said:

“We visit that family. Prayers are said. A golden or new clothes is given as present. The family serves traditional drinks as well as food.”

About farewell to and welcoming pilgrims, Musa said:

“Pilgrims who are about to begin their travel are said farewell by their relatives and acquaintances who bring presents. In their return, they are again welcomed and this time, the pilgrims bring presents from the holy places.”

About weddings, Nisa said:

“Before wedding, the bride's father is asked for his permission which is followed by an engagement and a henna night. The household goods bought by the families are exhibited in the bride's house. The bride's and the groom's hands are applied henna. All the relatives and acquaintances attend these celebrations. A piece of gold or money is given as present. After the wedding, people visit the couple's house and buy presents.”

About saying farewell to new soldiers, Enes said:

“In our country, joining army is a national duty and compulsory for men. Every men go there with proud. The young people who are about to join the army are said farewell at the station by a crowd of friends and relatives. In their return from the army, animals are sacrificed to show gratitude to god for sending the soldiers back safe.”

For spring celebrations, Gamze said: “

“It is a spring festival. There are picnics went and kites flied. Pieces of clothes are tied to the branches of trees and wishes are made. The ones who want to buy a house or a car make

a small model and tie them to the trees. Young people jump over fire traditionally, which is really fun.”

Elementary students stated Folk music and cradle songs, legends as a part of Turkish culture. Sub-themes are following in Table 9.

Table 9

Folk Music and Cradle Songs, Legends Theme's Sub-Themes

THEME	SUB-THEMES
Folk music and cradlesongs, legends	Dede Korkut Stories Tongue twisters Regional legends (kız kulesi efsanesi, truva efsanesi, ağrı dağı efsanesi, pamukkale efsanesi) Çanakkale Folk Song Bingöl Folk Dance Song Süt İçtim (I drank milk) Folk Song Cradle song (Dandini dandini dastana)

As seen in Table 9 the theme ‘Folk music and cradlesongs, legends’ included tongue twisters, cradlesongs, Dede Korkut stories, regional legends, Çanakkale folk song, Bingöl folk dance song, and Süt İçtim (I drank milk) folk song. Ayla said: Every region has its own cradlesongs and poems. Regional poems are usually funny. We sometimes say these poems and tongue twisters.

Elementary students stated handicrafts as a part of Turkish culture. Sub-themes are following in Table 10.

Table 10

Handicrafts Theme's Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Handicrafts	Carpet weaving Paper marbling Point lace Calligraphy

As seen in Table 10 about handicrafts, what was stated by the students included point lace, paper marbling, calligraphy, carpet weaving and ceramics.

“Beril said: Most women in our country know about lacing and point lace. Girls getting married prepare of these, too. We also have paper marbling and carpet weaving. They are really nice. Foreign people are especially interested in these.”

Elementary students stated Folk dance as a part of Turkish culture. Sub-themes are following in Table 11.

Table 11

Folk Dance Theme’s Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Folk dance	Kolbastı Halay Çiftetelli Zeybek Horon Harmandalı Atabarı

As seen in Table 11 as for folk dances, in their letters and brochures, the students mentioned zeybek, horon, harmandalı, atabarı, kolbastı, halay, çiftetelli.

“We have folk songs. A different one in each region. We perform these dances in our national festivals. And some of them in the weddings.”

Elementary students stated ancestor sports as a part of Turkish culture. Sub-themes are following in Table 12.

Table 12

Ancestor Sports Theme’s Sub-Themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Ancestor sports	Wrestling Javelin

The ancestor sports mentioned by the students in their brochures and letters included wrestling and javelin.

“Yavuz said: Wrestling is our ancestor sport. We always get medals in the olympics. There are a lot of people who are into wrestling in our country.”

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study aiming to identify elementary school students' perceptions of cultural values based on their Social Studies project assignments. The students mentioned the geographical (the location of Turkey in the world, the climate, the vegetation, the geographical regions, touristic places) characteristics of Turkey. UNESCO divided cultural heritage into two groups as tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage. Tangible cultural heritage is consisted of “immovable cultural and natural elements” and “movable cultural and natural elements” (Darçın Şahin, 2010). It is observed that primary students dealt with many elements under the coverage of tangible cultural heritage while presenting Turkish culture. Gardner, Cairns and Lawton (2000) stated that values are located within historical context and traditions. The elementary students specified as for the historical characteristics of Turkey: Turkish history, historical places and world-renown Turks.

As for the history of Turkey, the students used expressions related to Ataturk, the Ottoman Empire, tent, horse, the war of independence, the republic and the Turkish flag. The historical places in Turkey that the students mentioned included: Ayasofya Mosque, Dolmabahçe Palace, Haydarpaşa Station, Sultan Ahmet Mosque, Sümela Monastery Çanakkale Martyrdom, Aspendos, Atatürk's mausoleum, Maiden's Tower, Topkapı Palace, Eyüp Sultan Mosque, Anatolian Fortress, Rumeli Fortress, Yerebatan Cistern, Kız Fortress, Ephesus, Ani Ruins. Apart from the written information, the students also included the

photographs of these places in their brochures. Meydan and Akkuş (2014) attempt to reveal the views of student teachers about this topic. The student teachers reported that museum visits provide an opportunity to acquire historical and cultural values, to improve student awareness about history, to make it possible for students to relate the past to the present time and to develop an attachment to Turkish culture and to observe the development of cultural values. Historical places also play an important role in the acquisition of cultural values. In the study primary students reported that historical places were part of culture and mentioned these places in the brochures they developed and in their letters.

One of the fields in which culture is frequently interpreted is that of art. Art is a field, which is fostered by culture and make the cultural awareness concrete. Art also contributes to acculturation (Bedir Erişti & Akbulut, 2014). Therefore, art is one of the cultural elements. In a similar vein the primary students mentioned Turkish artists under the theme of famous Turks while presenting Turkish culture. Elementary students stated the world-renowned Turks theme included Atatürk, Mevlana, Yunus Emre, Mimar Sinan, Tarkan, Sezen Aksu, Ajda Pekkan, İbrahim Tatlıses, Mirsad Türkcan and Barış Manço.

Turkish culinary culture has diversified elements due to the geographical features of Turkey, past relations with other civilizations and past traditions. This culture is well-established and multi-dimensional and includes original effects of local culinary cultures. Therefore, food traditions are also part of Turkish culture (Kadioğlu Çevik, 2007). For Turkish cuisine, the students mentioned baklava, mantı, yaprak sarması, kebab, döner, lokum, pide and çiğbörek.

There is a close relationship between values and culture. Society is the source for all types of bias. Common culture and values are the basis of social cohesion (Çavdarıcı, 2002). Therefore, values of a society and its culture are inseparable integrity. In the study primary students regarded values as distinctive features of Turkish culture in their presentation. With

regard to the important values, the students mostly emphasized caring about family, being helpful, relations with family and relatives, respect, patriotism, hospitality, freedom. In their study, Coşkun Keskin and Küçük (2009) found that 4th graders used, either directly or indirectly, the terms culture, acculturation, cultural diversity, culture change, cultural conflict, cultural degeneration, culture shock; however, they weren't yet aware of the terms cultural assimilation, cultural imperialism and cultural lag. Besides, it was determined that the students used the values such as love, respect to diversities, toleration and freedom to be able to understand other cultures. In this study, 4th grade students included many values, which shows that the findings are similar. Yiğittir (2010) analysed the views of parents of basic education students about the values which schools should teach to students. It was found that the first value for parents to be taught was the importance attached to family integrity (32%). The other values stated by parents were respect (2.5%) and patriotism (2,8%). Table 4 shows that for the participants in the study hospitality and freedom are part of culture. On the other hand, these values were not stated by parents as important values in the study by Yiğittir (2010). It may be that primary students and parents have different perspectives about important values.

Modernization has effects on all institutions of socio-cultural life, including family. It changes traditional family patterns, the role and functions of family. In this paradigmatic change process the mostly affected institution is family which transmits cultural basics and norm to children and which is a socialization agent. In this context, there is a continuing interaction between family and culture. In their presentation of Turkish culture primary students included some of the characteristics of Turkish familiar patterns (Çelik, 2010). Sub-themes about Turkish family structure theme: traditional extended family, nuclear family, showing respect to elderly, responsibilities to younger siblings.

As for religious festivals, the students' statements included visits during festivals, serving food to guests during festivals, cleaning before festivals, giving pocket money to youngsters for festivals, festival suits, kissing elderly people's hands, festivals prayers, and treating each other people peacefully. About national festivals, they mentioned ceremonies, Turkish national anthem, flag, standing in silence, speeches, shows and poems.

Ceremonies are special events. The basic function of ceremonies is to transmit a specific message or to realize a specific goal. During ceremonies several elements of culture such as heroes, myths and symbols are covered. Therefore, in ceremonies significant cultural norms and values are mentioned and consolidated. Most of ceremonies cover celebrations, which are defined as traditional activities (Özkalp & Kirel, 2003; Çelik, 2000). In their brochures and letters, the students specified various traditional ceremonies and meetings in Turkey such as funerals, visits after births, weddings, saying farewell to and welcoming pilgrims, circumcision feasts, saying farewell to new soldiers, spring celebrations, and regional festivals. 10. Intangible cultural heritage refers to verbal traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and feasts, practices related to nature and the universe and crafts tradition (Oğuz et. al, 2004). In the current study primary students made references to the tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage. Therefore, it can be suggested that these students had awareness about cultural heritage. They regarded both ceremonies and celebrations as part of culture and covered them in their presentation about Turkish culture.

The theme 'Folk music and cradlesongs, legends' included regional poems, cradlesongs, Dede Korkut stories, regional legends, Çanakkale folk song, Bingöl folk dance song, and Süt İçtim (I drank milk) folk song. 11. Gülüm and Ulusoy (2007) analysed the effects of folk songs used as a teaching method in the education of social studies. They concluded that the experiment students who were taught the course through folk songs had

better understanding of the cultural, social, geographical and economic reasons for migration. Bölücek (2008) dealt with the effects of folk songs used as a teaching method in the education of social studies on student achievement. They found that the experiment students who were taught the course through folk songs had higher levels of achievement in contrast to the control students. These findings suggest that in the education of social studies folk songs can be employed as teaching method. In the current study it was found that the participants had awareness about folk songs, which are part of culture. However, it was also found that they did not know so many folk songs. It can be argued that in music classes more folk songs can be taught to students. Those folk songs which the participants were familiar with were covered in the fourth grade music textbook.

The significances of cultural heritage for society can be emphasized in terms of the dimensions of economy, policy, tourism among the others. In Turkey handicraft with touristy significant are mostly traditional and decorative ones. The related examples include carpet weaving, jewelry, ceramics, pottery, stone ornaments, wood carving, marbling, calligraphy, miniature and gilding (Öter, 2010). In the current study the participants made references to carpet weaving, marbling, embroidery and calligraphy in their presentation about cultural values. About handicrafts, what was stated by the students included point lace, paper marbling, calligraphy, carpet weaving and ceramics.

Folk dances are cultural indicators of a society and express a specific cultural identity. Their patterns, content and functions reflect the characteristics of society in terms of aesthetics and communication (Güzeloğulları and Ertural, 2006). In the current study the participants considered folk dances to be part of culture and covered them in their letters and brochures. As for folk dances, in their letters and brochures, the students mentioned zeybek, horon, harmandalı, atabarı, kolbastı, halay, çiftetelli.

In our country sporting events have increased and these events are regarded as recreational activities. On the other hand, there are many traditional sport types. Traditional sports include javelin, wrestling, archery, and camel wrestling (Koçan, 2007). In the study primary students stated that wrestling and javelin are part of our culture. The ancestor sports mentioned by the students in their brochures and letters included wrestling and javelin.

In a study, Ünlü (2012) aimed to identify 8th graders perception of culture. The statements of the students in Ünlü's (2012) study which they related to culture such as Turkish cuisine, hospitality, festivals, folk dances, sports, handicrafts, weddings, love, respect, traditions, cleanness, music, patriotism and spring festivals were also parallel with the elementary school students' statements in this study.

Deveci (2009) made a research named "benefitting from culture in social studies course: examining culture portfolios of teacher candidates". Accordingly, culture portfolios prepared by 35 teacher candidates have been analyzed by descriptive analysis. Findings have revealed that teacher candidates made use of cultural elements such as food, wedding ceremony, and means of subsistence while describing their own culture; and that they explained the relation between social studies course and culture across several aspects such as topic, purpose, program, and teacher. In this study elementary students stated food and ceremonies as a cultural aspect too.

In light of the findings it can be said that elementary students have sufficient knowledge about Turkey's cultural values. Investigating the themes which are obtained from brochures it can be said that elementary students' knowledge is sufficient about Turkey's geographical and historical features and they know about their country's culture in a competent level. As a result of analyzing the brochures and letters it can be said that most of the elementary students like their country and they are satisfied with living their country.

Based on the results of the present study, the following suggestions are presented:

- Studies focusing on identifying elementary school students' perceptions, observations and demands can be conducted.
- It can be conducted quantitative researches to determine elementary students' attitudes towards cultural values and also scales can be improved to determine the attitudes of elementary students towards cultural values.

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