

Social projection and paradox of values of post-modernism

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Abstract. The change that occurred in the 20th Century made it necessary to redefine the world that was formed after modernism. For this reason; radical and global changes and transformations that occurred in social, political, cultural, economical, military, and technological and communication area starting from the mid-20th century in Europe and North America or the western civilization constituted the basis for the emergence of post-modernism. The understanding of post-modernists that ignores objectivity and objects any kind of classification led the criteria that differentiate between knowledge and non-knowledge, correct and incorrect, and good and bad to lose their importance. This point-of-view includes a threat that leads to chaos in science, art, ethics and similar areas. The chaos that emerges should be considered at the stage of determining the main objectives of the education program in terms of the science and philosophy of education. The subject of the study is to assess the social reflections of post-modern thought and its educational aspects based on local and foreign researches.

Keywords. Post-modernism, value, education, society, individual

1 Introduction

The word modern means avant-garde and contemporary [29]. Modernism is a product of the enlightenment movement. It exists in every area of life as a social project since the 18th century. The main objective of modernism is to achieve an “ideal social structure” [11]. Modernism that expresses a tendency that is contrary to conventionalism started the effort to imbed conventionalism and feudality in history, and a process full of capitalist relations was entered instead [19, 7]. Traditional values also changed with the understanding that is based on modernism. While the individuals living in conventional society do not have problems of identity in today’s context, the concept of identity started

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to rise with the prominence of individualization with the disengagement that started in social life [20].

The negative projection of modernism devastated social, economical and political balances and its first objections emerged with the First World War. Post-modernism emerged as of the mid-19th century when the belief and hopes in modernism ended [7]. The first person to use the concept in 1947s is Arnold Toynbee [4].

Post-modernism means “after modern” which is formed with the combination of the word “post”, which means “after” in English and French, and “modern”. It is an internal criticism and an effort to provide an alternative to modernism [27].

It is possible to encounter different definitions of post-modernism in different disciplines. For this reason, it is hard to say that a consensus is reached in the literature about the definition of post-modernism. According to some opinions, modernism and post-modernism are just two aspects of a single movement. Jürgen Habermas puts forth that modernism has not ended, and it is an incomplete project. When the passage to post-modernism is associated to the development process of capitalism, it will be supported with the “idea that post-modernism is a fruit of contemporary capitalism”. Fiske [13] defines post-modern culture as a disintegrated culture [19, 13].

Although post-modernism discussions in art started in the United States, it is known that the first studies that presented themselves as post-modern social theory emerged in France in the late 1970s. Although the pioneers of the development of post-modernism are the French, the real sources of inspiration of post-modernism are German philosophers, and especially Nietzsche and Heidegger [3, 9].

Post-modernists who defend post-modernism object to meta narratives that try to organize and plan the society, universal knowledge and values, transform the societies and perceive the reality as a whole [11]. Another prominent characteristic of post-modernism is “pluralism”. A period was entered when the differences were exaggeratedly brought into the forefront and placed in the centre of identity definitions, rather than the identity definitions made over common ownership [31].

2 Method

The following questions will tried to be answered with this research:

- 1- What are the general effects and aspects that conflict with traditional values system of new values that emerged with the post-modern understanding and changed and shaped the social life and the behaviours of the individual?
- 2- What are the reflections of post-modern understanding on the education system of our country?

A literature review was carried out on the subject after determining the problem sentences of the research. The literature is limited to the resources used in the study. These documents were examined with the document analysis method of the qualitative research pattern. Document analysis includes the analysis of the written materials that contain information on the phenomenon or phenomena aimed to investigate. When the international literature as well as national publications was examined, it was seen that there are authors who expressed that the document analysis method is quite important as a qualitative research method.

The researches carried out on the social reflections of post-modern understanding were generally assessed with the document analysis method. The effects of post-modernism on our education system, behaviours of the individual and the construction of values were dwelt on in the light of the experimental researches with regard to values education

restricted to our country. Suggestion were made on the precautions that can be taken against its aspects that conflict with social, national, international, etc. values.

3 Criticism against post-modernism

One of the spokesmen of post-modernism, Jean Baudrillard interprets this way of thinking more differently and says that the post-modern world lack meaning. According to him, post-modernity is neither optimistic nor pessimistic; the extreme point of the possibilities are reached. With a similar expression, Umberto Eco also says that “the post-modernist individual is a shopaholic tourist and the typical post-modern place is “Disneyland” [7, 3].

That post-modernists object to planning and organizing the society is related to their discourse of *carpe diem* and that the history has ended. In other words, post-modernists ignore the past and future and focus on living “the moment” [11]. The post-modern society is a rapidly changing one. Technology and knowledge constitute the basis of organization, and it constitutes a similarity of knowledge, assimilation and a unity between human beings around the world. While this gives rise to universal nationality, it pushes the limits of the national state and makes it hard for the human beings to find their own place and identity [9].

The process of change that starts with post-modernism made it felt in all areas of life such as poems, literature, culture, production, consumption, urbanization and education in developed and developing societies. The new urban style in the process of change created differences with regard to the physical, ecological and social life-style of people. That the population is heterogeneous and intensive in cities have brought about many problems such as transportation, work, shopping, and so on. That cities bring together different social groups in terms of social and cultural life also brought forward urban integration and unification problems. Cities have become settlements where new habits and ways of behaviours emerge, and thought and emotion patterns and standards of judgement change. In this process, cities have also become settlements where aggressiveness increased, distrustful crowds live, and crime, violence and ethical problems increased, alongside with positive changes.

Besides, the existence of big bazaars and shopping centres kept people from many human relations. The most negative reflections of this change is the weakening of social relationships, the loss of meaning in the concept of family, the increase in such situations as the disruption of the social texture, in short, the degeneration of the values [19].

Another aspect of the change is the economic reflection. In our era when the industry develops at a huge level, the new point in the economical system that went through change and transformation is the target of obtaining the maximum profit. And boundless consumption was chosen in order to achieve this. Consequently, the consciousnesses of individuals are shaped as the consumer in line with the principle of “possession” through various means, and principally media. The communication technology is used in order to create a demand for consumption and the marketing mechanism is put into use. With this consciousness given, people think that they will be satisfied by consuming, become free and happy, and obtain an identity in the society. The system determines the values, preferences, wishes, dreams, tastes, attitudes and behaviours [10]. The new world order makes it necessary for the people in the society to become more aware of their national personalities and identities while at the same time keeping pace with the innovations [10].

According to Gökalp, while culture, the building stone of the national identity, is a harmonious equivalent of a nation's religious, ethical, legal, mental, esthetical, language, economical and technical life as a whole, the civilization is a mutual sum of the social lives of many nations included in the same civilization circle. For example, there is a common Western Civilization among all European nations in Europe and America civilization circle. However, they are actually individual cultures [15].

Mümtaz Turhan says, "If the use of a medicine aims to, for example, reducing a patient's temperature, its function is to give to cure him." Accordingly, the only characteristic of a culture that can be easily understood by other members of the society is its formal and clear behaviour style [28].

Individualism that is supported by post-modernists weakened the consciousness and sense of society and nation, and the concept of identity went beyond national boundaries, multiplied by dividing into characteristics such as the "language group, ethnicity", and thus, left the inspection of the politics. The most important problem that emerges at this point has been the combat started by ethnic groups who regard themselves different in the society under the name of micro-nationalism [9, 25]

4 Post-modern education and values

Values are the rules that increase the life quality and motivation of the individuals and the society they live in, and take the serenity, peace and happiness of the society as a basis [30]. For this reason, they were determined as the targets putting the social life in order in many areas. These targets are determining principles that are mutually accepted and expected to be turned into behaviours. An understanding of education that is cleansed from the values that are this important for the society and individual life cannot be imagined.

The education in the post-modern era is much different than the society of industry, which is the previous period. Rigid and hard grouping systems that are far from individualism, assessment by scores, and the authoritarian attitude of the teacher were the most prominent characteristics of the education in the industrial period. And the widespread orientation in post-modern period is individuals "who have a high imagination, creativity, free enterprise, self-confidence, self-control, self-motivation, self-discipline, who are not like everyone, think, act and produce differently". [26]. Globalization and post-modernism go hand-in-hand. It is possible to say that a change is observed in religious and social values, the globalization itself creates values and spread the values it creates. While the values are not lost in social life, the fact that the values resulting from the process of globalization started to take their place brought about changes in individual and social structure. [24]. These qualifications consist of the technology and the requirements of the information age. It was expressed that in the new education model shaped in accordance with this understanding, it is aimed to raise individuals who possess these qualifications and a new environment that places the student in the centre as an individual and the teacher as a guide [21]. Its consequences were considered in the education programmes, and the "constructivism" approach that places the student in the centre of the education has also become prominent in our country, while much earlier in the West.

Schools of post-modern societies are places dominated by the phenomena of freedom, democracy, trust and responsibility and where these phenomena are experienced. The tendency to give the students the right to choose, the freedom to apply what they choose and bear its consequences, development of the cooperation rather than competition, and to ensure that different age groups conduct activities together are the positive reflections of the

post-modern understanding on the education. It is indispensable to implement these. It also coincides with the expectations of the humanist approach towards education [26].

It is possible to think that post-modernism also has positive features when assessed from these aspects. However, when we consider the multiple aspect of the reflection, the effect of the social and urban change and projection on education, and children and adolescents, who are the centre of the education, are prominent as the reverse of the picture. [11].

5 Status of the values education in Turkey

"In today's rapidly growing, developing and globalizing world and our country, the importance of the values, and especially democratic values is increasing and their social and educational aspects are also emphasised. When the relevant literature is reviewed, it is observed that democratic values are gathered under 20 basic values, being equality, independence, freedom, self-respect, respect to human dignity, friendship, helpfulness, cooperation, privacy, honesty, truthfulness, responsibility, justice, fairness, variation, tolerance, respect to the environment, rule of law, seeking peaceful solutions for conflicts, and international human rights" [16]. When the source of social and inter societal problems is questioned, the fact that these values cannot be internalized and turned into behaviours to a great extent is encountered. Many researches carried out on a local scale strengthen the idea that difficulties are experience in the realization of the values gained at information level when assessed from the point-of-view of the social problems.

In the research carried out by Ilgan et al., it was found out that secondary school students possess the democratic values at a high level. However, as is also expressed by the researcher, the fact that students adopt the democratic values does not guarantee that they turn these values into behaviours. Individuals can face different behaviours in the family, society and various social environments.

Both societies and the young generation are affected by negative situations such as social problems, violence acts, murdering, terror, suicidal, theft, drug addiction, intolerance, irresponsibility and disrespect that become increasingly widespread in world societies and our country. Today's societies face a severe erosion of values. The reason for this is that the individuals raised are not raised in accordance with particular ethical standards. That societies are affected as less as possible from the negative reflections of post-modernism can only be possible by the construction of the values at the level of behaviours.

The answer to the question "How to give the values education" is not that simple. For the values education that should be examined in the framework of affective and emotional education differs from the mental (cognitive) education in many respects. Considering that our teachers are familiar with cognitive education to a great extent, the difficulty of the values education at school is understood better [2].

As a result of the study on the "Opinions of the Teachers with regard to the Values Education at Primary School" mutually carried out by Akpınar and Özdaş, in which teacher opinions are qualitatively analyzed, it was observed that the teachers participating in the study associate the inefficiency of the school in terms of values education with overburdened programmes, limited school-family-environment dialogue and crowded classrooms [2].

"That teachers frequently refer to the family in values education is also supported by the research findings obtained by such researchers as [1, 17, 5]. "Indeed, there are such findings in the researches carried out on values education in the literature as the factors outside the school (family, media, social environment outside the school) are effective in gaining the values, the multi-directional (student, parents, teachers and directors)

communication at school should be developed, publications in mass communication tools containing violence and aggressiveness affect the values education negatively, and teachers should pay attention to carry out activities in order to gain the values” [2].

6 Result and suggestions

Considering the thought pattern of the era and its social educational reflections, it is understood that new opinions and practices to reduce the negative reflections of the post-modern perception, which is indispensable. That education should be an institution that is consistent with the era and is not contradictory is vital in terms of the dynamics of the society and the future of the state. [14].

Although we acknowledge that the understanding of post-modernism is a requirement of the era, it should be sensitively considered by the societies where its extensions and effects develop and for us. The results of the research also show that social change, family, environment and mass media tools create problems in individuals in the construction of the values. It is necessary to separate the aspects of post-modernism that do not match our interests in vital decisions, especially the education policies, just as in all policies, and that overshadow educational targets from its good aspects and to see them.

According to demographical researches, a society with a crowded young population, i.e. a productive and dynamic society awaits Turkey between 2030 and 2040. The most important issue is to educate them [23]. The issues to take into consideration for the effective training of the values were assessed as follows considering the values education literature:

- In societies where the understanding of post-modern society is widespread, the construction of the values should be handled as a social responsibility that includes the state, non-governmental organizations and the media, and mainly the education system and family.
- Attaching importance to the construction of the values at emotional and affective level rather than the cognitive level is indispensable in terms of transforming the information learnt into behaviours.
- The researches carried out show the effective role of teachers in the teaching of the values significantly. Thus, it is necessary to create awareness in teachers with regard to values education. Importance should be attached to ensure that teachers are competent in this area, and value education should be considered in pre-service and in-service training programmes [35, 33].
- The methods to be used in values education should be life-centred, place more importance on the process than the product, and based on practice [32].
- Childhood is the period when properties such as observation, acting by one’s interests and wishes, and doing something when compared to adults, and the socialization of the individual is learnt most effectively [32]. Thus, that values education starts before the school alongside with effective family communication will be effective in ensuring that the values directed towards life and behaviours.
- That Social sciences course books, in which the curriculum of the values education will be provided in the most effective way, is prepared in a way that they contribute to values education should be paid attention meticulously [22]. That it is also emphasised in other lessons is important in terms of the effectiveness of the values education.

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