ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the significance of cultural fairs as a material in the social studies course based on the importance of culture, cultural heritage, and cultural transmission. Culture is a crucial source of prosperity and identity of the nations. Nations maintain their presence through their cultural heritage and transfer these values to the next generations through cultural transmission. So, while the continuity of the culture is ensured, the cultural heritage is preserved. One of the ways to achieve this process is education. Within the education system, social studies course is an interdisciplinary course in which culture is handled with different dimensions. Cultural fairs conducted within the scope of this course are also a set of training in which various aspects of culture and cultural components are handled. In this context, the significance of the practice of cultural fairs as a material in the social studies course and its contributions to the field of education are examined in this study.

INTRODUCTION

The Concept and Significance of Culture

Culture represents a comprehensive structure consisting of various dimensions in material and moral terms. In this sense, the unique way of living, thinking, belief, and behavior of a nation constitutes the moral dimension, while all kinds of tools, materials, and elements utilized for daily life create the
material dimension (Koca, 2003). Culture represents a multi-faceted understanding when considered from a social perspective. This concept reflects a wide range of areas such as the administration style of society, education, law, architectural structure, thinking styles, and their reactions to events. In this respect, culture can be expressed as an essential element, that creates formal structure and identities of societies, and differentiate them (Çulha Özbaş 2014). Another aspect of culture is that it contains many values. All of the national values that nations carried from past to present that make them different from other nations and enable them to have a unique structure, create culture (Ergin, 1986). These elements, defined as national values, are transferred from generation to generation and from past to present, so the culture is built (Kolaç, 2009).

Culture continually renews itself and develops according to time and continuity. In other words, culture has a dynamic structure based on its’ changing and developing structure. Therefore, it has a vital role particularly in terms of ensuring social continuity. In that, the cultural property is defined as memory and information archives of humanity and civilization (Çengelci, 2012). Every nation creates own values and knows, protects, and transfers them to future generations. So, it builds its cultural accumulation. Culture is not innate or instinctive, but the understanding, attitude, and habits that individuals gain through life from birth. In this sense, the fact that culture represents a phenomenon gained through education creates the necessity to coordinate with the rules, laws, and principles of learning (Güvenç, 2003). Nations contribute to world civilization in a universal sense through their cultural values. In this context, each nation perceives the world with own cultural memory and gets a position in common civilization (Ulusoy, 2011). In other words, the first requirement to reach the level of civilizations that contribute to universal values is to prioritize national cultural values in the perception of the world (Çelepi, 2016). The components of national culture provide nations the ability to see the world from a broad perspective and also contribute to the construction of identity.

Nations are confronted with the fact that they are in a difficult time to preserve their cultural values and accumulations acquired in the historical process and to carry them to future generations. Within the framework of the phenomenon referred to as globalization, our world is deeply affected by many aspects, especially science, technology, and economy, and this situation adversely affects the cultural values of societies. As a result, cultural degradation leads to social disintegration, and societies are leading to instability in many areas. The rise in the world population, the development and spread of information communication technologies, and the increase in the diversity of understanding between generations narrow the living space of cultures. Then, the transmission of culture to the next generations becomes more difficult (Arıkan, 2012; Kolaç, 2009). Reducing or eliminating the adverse effects of this is only be possible by preserving cultural heritage, maintaining values, and transferring them to future generations.

The Cultural Heritage

Culture constitutes a fundamental structure for individuals and societies. In this context, the importance of cultural heritage, develops as a result of cultural existence and accumulation, for individuals and societies is an undeniable fact. Cultural heritage is a combination of all kinds of products, components, and values belonging to societies that are wanted to be inherited from the past and transferred to the future. In another aspect, cultural heritage includes all kinds of material and spiritual phenomena that individuals and societies have created and developed for the benefit of humanity for centuries (Erkal, 2010). In this respect, it can be said that the cultural heritage that societies have accumulated from past
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