

Metaphoric Perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School Students towards School

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students towards their schools using metaphors. For this purpose, the following questions were sought. What are the metaphoric perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students towards their schools? How are metaphorical perceptions of Anatolian high school and Vocational High School students' schools conceptualized? What are the likes and dislikes of Anatolian and Vocational High School students about their schools? In this research, maximum diversity sampling was employed to reflect the views of students from different sampling areas and purposeful sampling methods. The study group consisted of students from an Anatolian High School and a Vocational High School in Ankara in the 2016-2017 academic year. The research was conducted with a total of two hundred students, one hundred from each high school. It was found that the students in both groups perceived the school with supervision and rules.

Keywords: School, Anatolian High School, Vocational High School, Metaphoric Perceptions

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Continuous reforms in education have been carried out in Turkey in recent years. These reforms manifest themselves at all levels of education. In particular, the essential building block of the educational process, innovations, and changes in schools affect society and individuals directly because one of the duties of the schools is to contribute to society in helping the members of the community improve themselves. In this context, it is crucial to determine the perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students towards the school as students take steps to guide their future with the education they receive at their school.

This study aims to reveal the metaphoric perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students towards their schools. [Morgan \(1998\)](#) described the metaphor as “a way of thinking or seeing.” The diagrams are similar to miniature models. This feature makes metaphors powerful. Metaphors help to create maps of invisible elements that prevent the organization of thoughts and take further steps on the subjects that are made and processed ([Ertan-Kantos, 2011](#)). This research will help us to understand the education, culture, and climate of Anatolian and Vocational High School students through the metaphors they developed about their schools. Especially in 2016, a decrease was seen in the success rates of the Anatolian High Schools in comparison to the previous years in the university examinations. This decrease went down to 43.52% in 2019, and the success rate of the Anatolian High Schools in the university examinations in 2015 was 58.7 % ([Kaplan, 2019](#)). This has made the education of Anatolian High Schools and Vocational High Schools controversial once again. In particular,

the current study will help us to understand some of the existing problems, such as the fact that Vocational High Schools are the schools with the most absenteeism and the highest dropout rates are seen according to data obtained from the Ministry of National Education. 20 and over absentee students had the highest ratio of 39.81% among Vocational and Technical secondary education students in terms of school types in 2017. In the same report, the grade retention among school types is 10%, and it is 10.08% for Vocational and Technical Secondary School students. The rate of the students who got detention is 9.81 % (MEB, 2018 annual report). Besides, the differences between the support provided by the large companies and the Ministry of National Education to Vocational High School students have been created, and this research aims to determine whether these supports lead to a change in the perception of Vocational High School students.

In the relevant literature, although there are studies on metaphors in education, there is no such a comprehensive study that includes the perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students. This research can fill the gap in this area. It is thought that the findings obtained from this study will support the improvement of the quality of education in both Anatolian High School and Vocational High Schools. Besides, this research aims to reveal what kind of culture is in Anatolian High School and Vocational High School and whether there are differences in the perception of school management, school, teachers, and employees. These differences may serve as a source of discussion on how to work for negative ones. In this context, this study aims to reveal the perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students towards their schools utilizing metaphors. For this purpose, the following questions were sought:

1. What are the metaphoric perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students towards their schools?
2. How are metaphorical perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students' schools conceptualized?
3. What are the likes and dislikes of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students about their schools?

Methods

In this section of the study, research design, sample of the study, data collection tools, data analysis and sub-headings are explained.

Research Design

In this study, which aims to reveal the perceptions of Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students towards their schools through metaphors, the phenomenology design was chosen as the research design. According to [Yıldırım and Şimşek \(2016, p. 352\)](#), perception, behavior, and facts can be explained realistically and holistically in their natural environment in the phenomenology pattern. Also, the concepts and meanings related to these concepts can be understood with the phenomenology approach.

Sample of the Study

In this research, maximum diversity sampling was used to reflect the views of students from different sampling areas and purposeful sampling methods ([Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, 355](#)). The study group consisted of students from an Anatolian High School and Vocational High School in Ankara in the 2016-2017 academic year. The research was conducted with a total of two hundred students, one hundred from each high school

Data Collection Tools

Within the scope of the research, a questionnaire prepared by the researcher was given to the volunteer students, and they were asked to fill out these questionnaires within one hour. After reviewing the literature ([Balcı, 1999](#); [Saban, 2008](#); [Bülbül & Toker-Gökçe, 2015](#); [Ural et al., 2016](#); [Ertan-Kantos & Toker-Gökçe, 2022](#); [Atalay & Balcı, 2018](#)), the researcher developed a questionnaire. The participants were asked to complete the sentence, "The school is like a...; because they ..." to understand their metaphors related to school. These definitions, which the students wrote in their handwriting, were used as the primary data source in this research.

Data Analysis and Sub-Headings

In the analysis of data, content analysis techniques were used. According to [Yıldırım and Şimşek \(2016\)](#), in content analysis, similar data are

gathered around certain concepts and themes, and they are interpreted and organized reasonably. In the metaphor analysis, the metaphors produced by the participants were analyzed in five stages. 1. Coding and screening stage, 2. Sample metaphor image compilation stage, 3. Category development stage, 4. The validity and reliability stage, 5. Frequency and interpretation stage (Saban, 2008). In the coding and screening stages, the metaphors produced by the participants were listed, and a table was formed using frequencies of the metaphors produced by the participants. It was examined whether the students explained the metaphors they produced in the second sentence, and the answers that could not be established were eliminated. The sample metaphor image is compiled; 46 metaphors produced by the students were reviewed for the second time, and a sample metaphor expression was selected from the metaphors of the participants representing each metaphor. AÖ code was used for Anatolian High School students, and VÖ code was used for Vocational High School students. In the category development stage, Anatolian High School students produced 22 metaphors and Vocational High School students produced 25 metaphors. In order to categorize the metaphors produced, the subject of each metaphor image produced by the students was analyzed in terms of the source and the relation between the subject and the source of the metaphor (Saban, 2008). In this research, 5 categories were determined for a total of 47 metaphors. These categories can be listed as “School with supervision and rules, School with teaching and learning, School with unconfirmed and negative behaviors, School with fun and good environment, School with solidarity, love, and friendship.” In the validity and reliability stage, the data collection and results were reported explained in detail. A detailed description of these stages in qualitative research determines the validity of the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this research, these parts were described mainly. In order to ensure the reliability of the research, four different instructors also read and approved to check whether the metaphors divided into categories belong to that conceptual category. In the frequency and interpretation stage, the frequency values of the collected data were found using the SPSS program and interpreted.

Results

Metaphors Produced by Anatolian High School and Vocational High School Students for their Schools

Metaphors Produced by Anatolian High School Students for their Schools

Table 1 Shows the Conceptual Categories and Frequency Values formed by Metaphors Produced by Anatolian High School Students for their Schools

Conceptual Categories	f	Metaphor name (n = 22)
School with supervision and rules	37	prison (n=35); kingdom (n=1); workplace (n=1)
School with teaching and learning	3	Information source (n=1); notebook page (n=1); kindergarten (n=1)
School with unconfirmed and negative behaviors	32	marriage program (n=3); dump (n=3); madhouse (n=5); street (n=1); cemetery (n=1); hell (n=6); barn (n=6); ice cream cone (n=1); money gate (n=1); zoo (n=5)
School with fun and good environment	6	amusement park (n=4); social network (n=1); tripe (n=1)
School with solidarity, love and friendship	22	home (n=17); housing (n=3); slot (n=2)
Total	100	

As seen in Table 1, 5 conceptual categories emerged from 22 metaphors developed by Anatolian High School students. These categories can be listed as “School with supervision and rules, School with teaching and learning, School with unconfirmed and negative behaviors, School with fun and good environment, School with solidarity, love, and friendship.” The metaphors in each category and the findings regarding the expressions of the students are as follows:

School with supervision and rules. The metaphors of Prison (n=35), kingdom (n=1), workplace (n=1) are included. The metaphors developed by 37 students (37%) participating in the research related

to school fall into this category. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (because,) are as follows:

- AÖ16 “School looks like a prison. Because we live here as prisoners.”
- AÖ4 “School looks like a prison. Because there are too many prohibitions.”
- AÖ24 “School looks like a workplace because we get to school in the morning and leave in the evening.”

School with teaching and learning. The metaphors of Source of information (n=1), notebook page (n=1), kindergarten (n=1) are included. The metaphors developed by three students (3%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (because) are as follows:

- AÖ21 “I compare it to the notebook page because when we move to another life, we will be turning this page.”

School with unconfirmed and negative behaviors. The metaphors of Marriage program (n=3), dump (n=3), madhouse (n=5), street(n=1), cemetery (n=1), hell (n=6), barn (n=6), ice cream cone(n=1), money gate (n=1), zoo (n=5) are included. The metaphors developed by 32 students (32%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (because) are as follows: The metaphors developed by 21 students (21%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category

- AÖ7 “I compare it to the mental hospital because everyone is crazy.”
- AÖ32 “I compare it to the marriage show because everyone is paying court to each other.”
- AÖ91 “I compare it to the zoo. Because there are people like animals, let us not insult animals.”
- AÖ57 “I compare it to the cemetery. Everyone seems dead.”

School with fun and good environment. The metaphors of Amusement park (n=4) social network (n=1), tripe (n=1) are included. The metaphors developed by six students (6%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category.

Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (.....) are as follows:

- AÖ45 “I compare it to an amusement park because sometimes I have much fun.”
- AÖ65 “I compare it to an amusement park because I am coming to school to have fun.”

School with solidarity, love and friendship. The metaphors of Home (n=17), housing (n=3), slot (n=2) are included. 22 students (22%) participating in the study have developed into the category of metaphors related to school. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (.....) are as follows: The metaphors developed by 32 students (32%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category.

- AÖ19 “As we are comfortable at home, so are we at school as well.”
- AÖ15 “I compare it to home because school is our second home.”

Metaphors Produced by Vocational High School Students for Their Schools

Conceptual categories and frequency values formed from metaphors produced by Vocational High School students regarding the school are given in Table 2.

Table 2 Conceptual Categories of Vocational High School Students’ Metaphors about School

Conceptual Categories	f	Metaphor name (n = 24)
School with supervision and rules	44	prison (n=40); country (n=2); sleep killer (n=1)
School with teaching and learning	12	Library (n=2); education home (n=2); school (n=5); bus (n=1); closed box (n=2)
School with unconfirmed and negative behaviors	21	champions league (n=2); marketplace (n=2); dried tree (n=2); madhouse (n=5); coffeehouse (n = 4); zoo (n=5); kangaroo (n=1)

School with fun and good environment	3	entertainment center (n=2); social activity area (n= 1)
School with solidarity, love and friendship	20	home (n=11); garden (n=2); oranges (n=1); nest (n = 3); a garden in paradise (n=1); small villa (n = 1); retirement home (n=1)
Total	100	

As seen in Table 2, 5 conceptual categories emerged from 24 metaphors developed by Vocational High School students. These categories can be listed as “School with supervision and rules, School with teaching and learning, School with unconfirmed and negative behaviors, School with fun and good environment, School with solidarity, love, and friendship.” The metaphors in each category and the findings regarding the expressions of the students are as follows:

School with supervision and rules. The metaphors of Prison (n=40,) country (n=2), sleep killer (n=2) are included. The metaphors developed by 44 students (44%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (because) are as follows:

- VÖ6 “Teachers are guards, friends are prisoners, and lessons are punished.”

School with teaching and learning. The metaphors of Library (n=2), education home (n=2), school (n=5) bus (n = 1), closed box (n = 2) are included. The metaphors developed by 12 students (12%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (because) are as follows:

- VÖ4 “I compare it to the library. I like reading hours.”

School with unconfirmed and negative behaviors. The metaphors of Champions league (n=2), marketplace (n=2), dried tree (n=2), madhouse (n=5,) coffeehouse (n=4), zoo (n=5), kangaroo (n=1) are included. The metaphors developed by 21 students (21%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the

data collection tool (because) are as follows:

- VÖ7 “I compare it to the zoo. Because there are rude students in every class.”
- VÖ5 “I compare it to the Champions League. There are all kinds of men.”

School with fun and good environment. The metaphors of Entertainment center (n=2), social activity area (n=1) are included. The metaphors developed by 21 students (21%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (because) are as follows:

- VÖ “I compare it to the entertainment center. Because I spend time with my friends rather than understanding and reading.”

School with solidarity, love and friendship. The metaphors of Home (n=11), garden (n=2), oranges (n=1), nest (n=3), a garden in paradise (n=1), small villa (n=1) retirement home (n=1) are included. The metaphors developed by 21 students (21%) participating in the research related to school fall into this category. Some of the answers given by the students to the second sentence in the data collection tool (because) are as follows:

- VÖ “School looks like a small villa. I love some of my friends.”

Liked and Dislikes of Anatolian and Vocational High School Students about their Schools

Liked and Dislikes by Anatolian High School Students about their School

The likes and dislikes about the schools, which are thought to cause metaphor images developed by Anatolian High School students about their schools, are given in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, the top five places of Anatolian High School students’ favorite places about the school are as follows. While the football field comes with 11% in the first place of the likes, the free course is in the third place with 10%, friends and canteen with 9%, the mirrors are in the fourth place with 7%, and the school garden is in the fifth place with 6%. The issue they disliked the most is that “the toilets were dirty” with 16%. Besides, they did not like things related to smoking with 7% in the second place, 5% discipline in the third-place,

it is dirty with 4% in the fourth place, the canteen is expensive, teachers, vice principals, full lessons, some teachers, the obligation of wearing school uniforms and lessons with 3% in the fifth place.

Table 3 Likes and Dislikes of Anatolian High School Students about their Schools

Likes of Anatolian High School Students about their Schools	f	Dislikes of Anatolian High School Students about Their Schools	f
Mirrors	7	Nothing	16
Benches	1	Being neglected	1
Friends	9	Assistant manager	4
Teachers	6	No discipline	5
Canteen	9	Manager	1
Cancelled lessons	10	Teachers	4
Being fun	2	When our teacher entered the class	1
Playing ball	4	Full lessons	4
Schoolyard	6	Toilets are dirty	16
Activities	3	Smoking	7
Respiration	3	Being Insecure	2
Football field	11	Basketball court	1
Rows	1	Social activity	1
Lessons	2	Playground	2
Class	1	Being dirty	4
Teachers' room	1	Unnecessary students	2
Volleyball court	3	Lessons	3
Discussion emerged	1	Librarian's scolding	2
Being like a family	1	Dress code requirement	3
Toilets	1	Canteen being expensive	4
Close to the lake	1	Having a school	1
Smart people	1	Books	1
Not coming to school	1	Continuous course processing	2
Library	2	The queue at the canteen	2
Boiler room	1	Short breaks	1
School landscape	1	Exams	2
Going sightseeing	1	Lesser grade of teachers	1
Unity togetherness	1	No activity	2
Some teachers	1	Discrimination	1
The environment of the school	1	Teachers' room	1
English Lesson	1	Discipline	1
		Students slang speech	1
		Being old	1
		Having no gym	1
		Having a fight	1
		Some teachers	3
		Classes are dirty	1
Total	100		100

Likes and Dislikes of Vocational High School Students about their School

The likes and dislikes about the schools, which are

thought to cause the formation of metaphor images developed by Vocational High School students about their schools, are given in Table 4.

Table 4 Likes and Dislikes of Vocational High School Students about Their School

Likes of Vocational High School Students about their Schools	f	Dislikes of Vocational High School Students about their Schools	f
Leaving school early	9	Nothing	10
Interns	2	The school itself	2
Everything	7	Getting to school early	7
Billiards table	2	Small garden	3
Being close to the center	2	Canteen is expensive	11
Body lesson	8	Smoking in toilets	4
Reading hours	2	Breaks are few and short	6
Teachers	4	No social activity	3
Lessons	2	No soccer field	2
Assistant director	1	We cannot fight	1
Break	11	No toilet permit	2
We can smoke	3	No locks in toilets	1
Gym	1	Poor quality canteen goods	2
Canteen	5	Lessons start early	5
Not being bored in lessons	2	Laboratory	1
Friends	5	Class sizes are low	1
Meals	1	Computers are out of order	1
Volleyball court	1	Discriminatory teachers and attitudes	2
Spending time	2	Gym	1
Cancelled lessons	5	Lessons	12
Toilets	2	Teachers' room	1
Being close to Kızılay Street	1	No smoking	3
Students	1	Too many lesson hours	4
Education without ringing	2	Exams in the butterfly system	2
School landscape	2	Few number of toilets	2
Lovely teachers	1	Combined classes	7
Having a small school	2	Teachers breaking notes	1
Everybody knows one another	3	Being dirty	2
Smoking in the toilet	8	Few departments	1
Playground	1		
Classes	1		
Fun lessons	1		
Total	100		100

As can be seen in Table 4, breaks are the most liked issue by the Vocational High School students in the school with 11%. Leaving school early with 9% is in the second place. Physical lessons and smoking in the toilet are in third place with 8%. In the fourth place, they stated that they loved everything in the school with 7%. In the fifth place, free lessons, friends and canteens come with 5%. Lessons are the most disliked issue stated in the first place by the Vocational High School students with 12%. In the second place, the canteen was expensive with 11%; in the third place, 10% did not like anything, and in the fourth place, classes were combined with 7%; few and short breaks are in the fifth place with 6%.

Discussion

It was found that the students in both groups perceived the school with supervision and rules. The findings of this study are consistent with the studies of [Balci \(1999\)](#), [Özdemir \(2012\)](#), [Toker-Gökçe, and Bülbül \(2014\)](#), [Atalay and Balci \(2018\)](#). Students consider the school as a disciplined and authoritative environment. In his research, [Özdemir \(2012\)](#) concluded that Anatolian High School students perceive the school as a place of pressure. [Atalay and Balci \(2018\)](#) showed that students produce prison and workplace metaphors, as revealed in this study. The prison metaphor is the most produced one in both groups in this study. Anatolian High School and

Vocational High School students, who have feelings of love and belonging to the school, used the metaphors of the school such as house, garden, paradise garden, nursery, and nursing home. This is also found in the study of [Toker-Gökçe and Bülbül \(2014\)](#). Similarly, Saban (2008) found that elementary school students consider school as a place where love and solidarity are gained. [Aydoğdu \(2008\)](#) found that 6th, 7th and 8th grade students perceive the school as a place that provides information, protects, and gives confidence. In the study in which [Ural et al. \(2016\)](#) investigated the metaphorical perceptions of students studying in middle school 8th grade, they revealed that students perceive being a student as an effort, development and growth, achieving a goal, variability, and strain. [Özdemir \(2012\)](#) concluded that Anatolian High School students have a high level of protection and development of the school. In this study, unlike other results of this study, the rate of metaphors produced by Vocational High School students about education and training is higher than that of Anatolian High School students. We can think of this situation as a positive result of the regulations made by the Ministry of Education regarding Vocational High Schools in recent years. The perceptions of both groups of students towards school are not very positive. The study found that while there are 11% most liked issues, there are 12% most disliked issues about school by the Vocational High School students. In addition, %10 of the students indicate that they do not like the school. This result gives us a clue about the opinions of the Vocational High School students about their school. Anatolian High School students have a football field with 11% in the first place, and 10% cancelled classes in the second place. Anatolian High School students' thoughts about the school are not very positive. "The toilets are dirty" with 16% is in the first place of the disliked issues, and the students state that they do not like anything. From these findings, it can be concluded that students in both groups have low motivation towards school and lessons. The physical characteristics of the school and teacher behavior can be a reason that has a positive or negative effect on students because in both groups, physical features, lessons, and teachers are expressed as disliked issues.

Suggestions

A revision of the physical and educational conditions of the schools is necessary because the school perceptions of all students are negative and related to the authority. [Balçı \(1999\)](#) showed that the Ministry of National Education and non-governmental organizations should be questioned about what the concept of school is or what should it be. The developments in education and students' love of school create the need to develop new school models in order to change their negative thoughts about school. Perhaps some changes need to be made in the perception of the physical structure of the school, which consists of four walls. Apart from the development of the physical structure and thinking of the school as a whole, studies should be carried on how students can be happy. Because the fact that students love their school and feel loyalty to their school is one of the factors affecting success.

In order to increase the motivation levels of students, which are harmful to school and lessons, especially social activity activities should be done or diversified. The quality of both schools and the students will improve with these activities. Research can be conducted on how to change the negative thoughts of both Anatolian High School and Vocational High School students towards their schools. Research and reforms can be made to develop new school models and new school understandings.

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