

Metaphorical Images of School: School Perceptions of Primary Education Supervisors

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Schooling constitutes a significant interest area for many groups in today's society. Governments, parents and employers have various expectations from the schooling system. As expectations of external forces influence the school system, the values, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of those working within the school affect the internal workings of schools and contribute to the general conception of what school is for the society. This study stems from the idea that school perceptions of actors within the schooling system may help us to understand existing school systems more effectively. Because of their significant role in the Turkish schooling system, the present study investigates primary education supervisors' perceptions of school through metaphorical images.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to understand how primary education supervisors conceptualize "the school" in the current conditions of Turkey through the help of metaphorical images.

Methods: The sample of the study consists of 150 primary education supervisors from 17 different provinces in Turkey. Supervisors who participated in an in-service training program as a part of the "Improvement of Teaching Process Project" of the Ministry of National Education that was carried out in Mersin during May-June 2008 were given a questionnaire asking them to describe their metaphorical images of school. Data collected through questionnaires were content analyzed.

Findings and Results: Analyses of the metaphorical images, produced by 150 primary education supervisors to describe school, revealed 8 metaphorical groups. These are named as follows: school as a production unit, an organization with lost goals, a part of life, a world of growth and

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development, a place of discipline and authority, a family atmosphere, a place of knowledge transmission and an institution shaping society. Overall review of the metaphorical groups provides information about the problems and difficulties faced by the Turkish educational system and whether it functions as expected or not.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Analysis of metaphorical perceptions of school provided a chance to understand both positive and contradictory dimensions in schooling. An overall evaluation of the results indicated that primary education supervisors had serious criticisms about the mechanical functioning of the existing educational system in Turkey in which students have become passive participants and schools have acted as a “certificate factory.” Fundamental functions of the schools were found to be the transmission of knowledge, shaping society and cultivation of young people. It was also found that schools had a highly disciplined, authoritarian atmosphere. The results of this study may help policy-makers to have an insight into the educational system in Turkey, its functional and dysfunctional dimensions. In addition, the results may provide information for teacher, principal and supervisor training programs.

Keywords: School metaphors, metaphor, primary education supervisors, school perceptions

The roles and functions of schools have been debated over the centuries since the establishment of public education. Teaching the basic skills, knowledge and values that are necessary for the industrial division of labor and training young generations as citizens have become the major functions ascribed to school systems, leading to the rise of large educational systems. Schools appear to have both conservative and developmental roles at the same time. While schools are expected to transmit and preserve existing cultural values, traditions and norms, they also support the development of society (Kowalski, 2003).

Although the idea of school as an essential mechanism for maintaining the existing social order is shared among the major approaches to the relationship between school and modern society, there are competing explanations since these major traditions have different definitions of social order. For example, in the functionalist tradition schools are the essential mechanisms for preserving modern society by transmitting some basic conceptions, values and norms to young generations and training for some specialization in the division of labor. However, conflict theorists emphasize the idea that schools reproduce the relations of production, which cause the hierarchical, autocratic system of labor (Blackledge & Hunt, 1991).

Unlike the functionalist or conflict theorists, theorists employing a third interpretive approach do not present a global political argument about the role of schools in society, but instead believe that there are many different roles that schools

play in different societies and social contexts. Interpretive theorists focus on the cultural framework of particular schools. They try to understand the ways in which individuals understand and act in specific social contexts rather than finding general laws (Feinberg & Soltis, 1992). Critical theory, on the other hand, is known as a response to mass education that emerged in the nineteenth century and expanded in the twentieth century. The main theme of the critical approach focuses on the **discussion of schools' political, social and economic power.**

As one of the traditional educational philosophies, perennialism perceives the school as an agency for cultivating rationality and the search for and dissemination of the truth. Essentialism, as another traditional educational philosophy, advocates the use of education as a civilizing agency and emphasizes the continuity between the knowledge and values of the past and the requirements of the present. Progressivism emphasizes the individual as a base for social reconstructionism. Progressivists argue that the goals of education should be based on the learner. Higher value should be **given to the learners' freedom to explore and inquire, to their developing self-awareness and self-identity, to their questioning, challenging and self-learning habits and to enhancing sensitivity.** In comparison to other philosophical orientations, existentialism gives the highest priority to the individual and development of an **individual's self-actualizing potentialities** (Brameld, 1971; Ornstein & Levine, 2006).

Sociologists and philosophers provide us with a theoretical framework for understanding schooling. **Investigating "what school is" from the perspectives of real actors** within schools, on the other hand, may present an opportunity for us to better understand and become familiar with the existing schooling process. With the goal of understanding the real context through the eyes and words of participants, the present study aims to investigate school perceptions of primary education supervisors by enabling them to explain their thoughts using their everyday language. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued, metaphorical images are part of our everyday speech, which pervade not only language but also thought and action, and are essential to human understanding. In this sense, metaphors seemed to be analytic and descriptive tools (Inbar, 1996) **for capturing supervisors' conceptions of school** through everyday language.

In the field of education, researchers have begun to see metaphor as a powerful tool that can be used to understand and to explore the current state of educational practices. A brief search in the international educational literature reveals the following research interests which employs metaphorical analysis: educational change, school improvement, educational reform, educational planning (Deal, 1986; Schlechty & Joslin, 1986; Inbar, 1991), teacher thinking, teacher education (Berliner, 1990; Bullough, 1991; Marchant, 1992; Dana & Pitts, 1993), school quality, staff development, organizational culture (Steinhoff & Owens, 1989) and classroom management (Weinstein, Woolfolk, Dittmeier, & Shanker, 1994).

A review of the literature on educational studies in Turkey shows that using metaphorical images as data collection tools is a relatively new approach that began during the 1990s. Metaphorical analysis of several educational concepts seems to be

of interest to researchers. Concepts of school and schooling (Balcı, 1999; Özar, 1999; Saban, 2002; Cerit, 2006; Engin-Demir, 2007; Aydoğdu, 2008), teachers and the teaching profession (Balcı, 1999; Saban, 2004; Aydoğdu, 2008), students (Balcı, 1999; Aydoğdu, 2008; Saban, 2009), school principals (Balcı, 1999), parents (Balcı, 1999), educational inspection (Töremen & Döş, 2009) and knowledge (Saban, 2008) constitute thematical structure of the existing literature. While primary schools and faculties of education constitute the main research settings of these studies, there are also studies comparing samples from public and private schools (Balcı, 1999) and different cultures (Engin-Demir, 2007).

Prospective teachers and primary school teachers, students, administrators and parents were the popular groups that researchers investigated for their metaphorical images. Although they are significant stakeholders of the educational system, there seems to be no research studying the metaphorical images that primary education supervisors hold about school. After new legislative arrangements, primary school supervisors' duties in Turkey have been defined as guidance and in-service training, supervision and assessment, investigation, and examination of teachers, administrators and schools in order to achieve efficient learning environments (MoNE, 2010). Primary school supervisors have been expected to assist in achieving the following goals of the national education system in coordination with teachers and administrators: to follow and to keep teachers and administrators informed about the latest advances and professional publications; to contribute to educational practice consistent with the law and principles of the Turkish education system; to examine physical learning environments and identify needs; and to carry out researches on educational issues such as school enrollment problems of students, maintaining school-environment relations and raising the efficiency of school personnel. With this wide range of roles and duties, primary school supervisors seemed to be a significant reference group for evaluating the existing structure of schooling in Turkey.

In this context, the purpose of the present study is to investigate school perceptions of primary education supervisors in order to enhance our understanding of the existing school picture in Turkey. With this understanding, this study may present data about the strengths and weaknesses of the Turkish education system. The results may provide a valuable source for educational policy-makers, educational practitioners such as teachers and school principals, and for teacher, administrator and supervisor training programs.

What are Metaphors?

Metaphors are fundamental vehicles that human beings have evolved to understand, express, construct, and organize their world (Kliebard, 1982; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Munby, 1987; Dent-Reed & Szokolsky, 1993). That is why metaphors may help us to understand how people construct their realities and perceive the world (Munby, 1987). Since metaphors help us to explain unknown by known experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), they present an economical way to

communicate a complex idea (Crider & Crillo, 1991), help us to describe important features of a complex array of variables in a simple form (Morgan, 1980) and transmit a complete story using only one image (Dickmeyer, 1989). In addition, metaphors provide bold, rich and distinctive windows on the world. According to Fox, they offer dynamic and dramatic views beyond the surface of things, revealing their deeper significance (as cited in Marchant, 1992).

The well known book *Metaphors We Live By* written by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) has contributed to the general interest in metaphors. The authors show how metaphors are part of our everyday speech, how they pervade not only language but also thought and action and how essential they are to human understanding. In fact, a metaphor is a process by which we view the world and lies at the heart of how we think and learn. Metaphors therefore seemed to be sensible analytic and descriptive tools for understanding people's conceptions about the school.

There are many ways to categorize and characterize metaphors. Black (as cited in Leino & Drakenberg, 1993) presented two different theories or views of metaphor: the substitution view and the interaction view. Before sketching his own theory of understanding metaphors, Searle (1990) divided the existing theories into two main groups: the comparison theories and the interaction theories. Comparison theories assert that metaphorical utterances involve a comparison or similarity between two or more objects, while interaction theories claim that a metaphor involves a verbal opposition or interaction between two semantic contents.

According to Richards, a metaphor is often, at least implicitly, considered to consist of two parts, originally called the "tenor" and the "vehicle" (as cited in Leino & Drakenberg, 1993, p. 10). Tenor is nowadays often called "topic" ("subject term" and "principal subject" are also used) and it refers to that of which something is being stated. Vehicle is the term or terms used metaphorically ("metaphoric term" and "referent" are also used) (Leino & Drakenberg, 1993, p. 10).

Example:

Education is like a stairway (Ortony, 1993).

tenor

vehicle

"Metaphors are useful linguistic structures that helped theorists and practitioners generate ideas, concepts, and theories for describing, examining, and understanding phenomena in education" (Bredeson, 1985, p.29). Within this perspective, metaphors seem to provide rich evidence on the school and education system as research tools as well. Both by enabling the participants such as teachers, students, school principals, parents and supervisors express their views and experiences on the school system by using everyday language and with different metaphors generated by these participants it may become possible to get rich data about the school system including both its strengths and weaknesses.

Method

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to understand how primary education supervisors perceive “the school” in the current conditions of Turkey. The research employed both survey and qualitative methods. A questionnaire with open-ended questions was employed to get metaphorical images of the supervisors, and data consisting of the metaphorical images generated by the participants were content analyzed.

Sample

The sample of this study consisted of 150 primary education supervisors from 17 different provinces in Turkey. An in-service training program as a part of the “Improvement of Teaching Process Project” of the Ministry of National Education was carried out during May–June 2008 in Mersin, Turkey. The questionnaire was given to 183 primary education supervisors who participated to the first week of the program. Blank papers and papers that did not include a complete answer were eliminated. Since 150 of the papers had all the criteria to be evaluated, they constituted the sample of the study.

Except in three instances, participants specified the district where they worked. Supervisors from various districts in Central Anatolia constituted 44.66 percent of the sample. The rest of them came from the Mediterranean Region (35.33.9%), the Southeastern Anatolia Region (12.66%) and the Aegean Region (5.33%). The total seniority of the supervisors in this profession ranged between 2 and 40 years (\bar{X} = 13.87; S_s = 6.30).

Research Instruments

A questionnaire with open-ended statements was designed to capture metaphorical images about school and the reason for generating such images.

Example:

School is like a

Because

In order to develop the form of questionnaire, the literature related to the use of a metaphor as a tool for investigating individuals’ thinking and conceptualization was reviewed. In addition, the questions and results of the preliminary study carried out by the researcher were taken as the base. During the review of literature it was observed that a number of studies suggested that the use of metaphors could be a useful way of capturing individuals’ understandings and conceptions about the school (Munby, 1986; Bullough, 1991; Marchant, 1992; Weinstein et al., 1994; Inbar, 1996). Some of these studies derived metaphors from individuals’ behavior or descriptive language, while others asked individuals to generate a metaphor to describe their beliefs and images of the teacher, teaching and the school. This study utilized the latter approach.

Validity and Reliability

For reliability the coding stage of the data analysis was performed by the researcher and an independent coder. The level of agreement between independent coder and researcher was found as 73.68 percent. For the validity of the sample, the questionnaire, analyses and findings were presented in detail and quotations from participants' descriptions were included both in the findings and interpretations.

Data Analysis

Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed by following a qualitative method, which began by reading all the data that included metaphorical images produced by the participants. Then, major labels were identified and metaphorical images were classified according to their contextual similarity and each classified image group was given a name that illustrated the main theme of the group.

Answers in the questionnaires were carefully read one by one in order to gain a general idea about the variety of metaphorical images stated by the respondents. Metaphorical images and reasoning stated by respondents were selected and written by using a word-processing program on a computer. Although the primary purpose of the questionnaires was to get metaphorical images from respondents, similes, analogies, descriptions and sometimes adjectives were also incorporated in the results in order not to miss the richness of information. Afterwards, word files were printed and made ready for labeling.

Labeling was performed by the researcher and an independent coder on a sample of 100 questionnaires. During this stage metaphorical images were grouped according to their contextual similarity and the reasoning stated by respondents for each item. After the grouping process, different groups of metaphors were labeled using headings, which implied their content. After the labeling stage, a total of 150 metaphorical images and demographical information about supervisors were loaded onto an Excel file. Descriptive statistics were carried out on this data.

Example:

metaphorical group:	"school as a world of growth and development"
images grouped:	"tree," "spring," "garden," "living organism," "flower garden," "rose garden," "fruit garden," "fruit trees," "flowerpot," "field"

Then descriptive analyses based on frequencies and percentages were carried out on metaphorical images clustered under each metaphorical group.

Findings and Discussions

The reality of the "complex nature of schooling" (Kowalski, 2003, p. 157) is generally observed in the studies that analyze schools metaphorically. It is common

to have various metaphorical descriptions of school in a specific study. This reminds us of what Morgan (1980) claims about the relationship between metaphor and organization. According to him, “No one metaphor can capture the total nature of **organizational life**” (p. 612). In the present study metaphors generated by primary education supervisors produced a multidimensional picture of the school.

Qualitative analyses of the images produced by 150 primary education supervisors to describe school, have revealed 8 metaphorical groups. The frequencies and percentages of these metaphorical groups are shown in the following table. An overall review of the metaphorical groups provides information about the problems and difficulties facing the Turkish educational system and whether it functions as expected or not.

Table 1

Metaphorical Groups Related to Primary Education Supervisors' Perceptions of School

School as	f	%
a production unit	38	25.33
an organization with lost goals	24	16.00
a part of life	23	15.33
a world of growth and development	20	13.33
a place of discipline and authority	16	10.66
a family atmosphere	15	10.00
a place of knowledge transmission	7	4.66
an institution shaping society	7	4.66
Total	150	100.00

The results revealed that perceiving school as an organization constituted the central theme for primary education supervisors' descriptions of school. There was a similar emphasis in the most frequently preferred metaphorical groups of “school as a production unit” and “school as an organization with lost goals.” Although supervisors mentioned some positive views about the existing school system by referring to organizational images, a critical perspective exists mainly in both of these metaphorical groups.

School as a Production Unit

The metaphorical group labeled “school as a production unit,” which comprises 25.33 percent of the supervisors' choices, includes the images “factory,” “atelier,” “cell,” “small factory,” “business,” “carpenter atelier,” “refinery,” “coolhouse” and “lathe.” The criticism behind these images emphasizes the idea that our schooling system has a one-dimensional goal structure in which students are placed in specific patterns. Supervisors criticize this existing schooling process since “the aim is to produce patterned products.” In addition, if “students are accepted as passive participants and as raw material” in this process, this will reproduce “an authoritarian school atmosphere.” Students are passive participants in the educational process. This conclusion was reached through the analyses of images collected under this metaphorical group and the rationales that supervisors developed to explain the image they used.

While a limited number of the supervisors seem to look on mechanical processes of schooling with favor, the majority of them reject the idea. Critics behind the **primary education supervisors' images of "school as a production unit"** remind us of the classical scientific description of the assembly line or machine metaphors in organizational theory on which classical management theorists Taylor, Fayol and Weber based their theories (Morgan, 1980). This mechanical conception defines schooling as an organizational process in which efficient practices and procedures are carried out to achieve the desired goals (Bredeson, 1988). Schlechty and Joslin (1986) say that accepting school as a factory "supports the argument that principals should be viewed as managers, teachers as workers, and students as products ... human relationships should be characterized by dominance/submission, superordination/subordination, and passivity" (p. 148).

School as an Organization with Lost Goals

Another crucial finding of the present study is related to the supervisors' images of "school as an organization with lost goals." Images that are covered under "school as an organization with lost goals" reflect a schooling system almost as an aimless organization: "an institution for literacy certificate," "character and success rasping institution," "child care institution," "private course," "public office," "certificate factory," "hangar," "job opportunity," "a garden not working well," "labyrinth," "madrasah," "packing factory," "pişmaniye," "a factory without capital," "unsterilized maternity," "driving course," "theater stage," "Turkish Standardization Institute," "inn," and "nursery." This metaphorical group well illustrates the critical descriptions about the existing school system in Turkey.

As in the first metaphorical group there is an organization notion for school, but this time it is as an organization that has lost its basis for existence. While the first thematic group includes a criticism concerning the mechanical functioning of the school organization, criticisms in the second thematic group are related mainly to a **disruption in functioning of the school system**. School is perceived as a "certificate factory" or a "driving course" by the supervisors since "schools do not have any special feature other than giving students diplomas." According to supervisors, the school in Turkey is becoming a dysfunctional organization to which students, parents and teachers have a limited loyalty. They are performing their roles as required by laws and regulations, but with minimum expectation. This situation reminds us of Sergiovanni's proposition about defining school as a community rather than an organization. Sergiovanni (1994) suggested changing the existing perception of schools as formal organizations. According to him, "Since motivation comes from the outside in schools understood as organizations, (...) everyone becomes connected to their work for calculated reasons" (p. 216).

Images of "school as an organization with lost goals" imply also that schools are places of chaos in which goals are not clearly defined and supervised. People in schools feel themselves in a place where every day they come and spend a large amount of time together without knowing, actually, why they are there and what their goals are. For the students, school becomes "a public office" and "they come to

school only to perform their jobs like a civil servant.” It seems that parents also share with this role confusion. In one of the supervisor’s descriptions school is defined as a “child care institution” since parents “leave their child to the school after registration and do not deal with them any more.” It was stressed by the supervisors that teachers perceived their school as “a job opportunity” and “an income source.” In addition, according to supervisors there has been a critical change in the professional purposes of teachers. The goal of training young generations has been distorted because “teachers see their profession as an opportunity to be not unemployed.” The supervisors tried to express this situation by referring to a goal shift process in the school system, which was a result of the existing central examination system. Schools have become “a place to prepare students for [central] examinations through memorization education.”

School as a Part of Life

After the main focus on school as an organization, metaphorical images that describe “school as a part of life” comprises 15.33 percent of the supervisors’ images of school: “bee hive,” “fountain,” “nature,” “life,” “a center for preparing for life,” “light,” “chess pieces,” “theatre,” “anthill” and “a miniature of society.” Metaphorical images and explanations of the supervisors emphasize a parallel between social life and the school. School is almost like “a miniature of the society where various groups of people are represented.” “There are all the colors of life at school.”

Metaphorical images collected together under this group have another characteristic which includes the similarities between school and society in terms of role differentiation and division of labor. School is an atmosphere in which “students, teachers, administrators, and other personnel share an intensive division of labor. Everybody tries to perform what roles they have.” In addition, another emphasis in this metaphorical group describes school as a bridge to life. According to one supervisor, “we teach life at schools” and according to another supervisor, “students learn rules of the life game [at school]”.

School as a World of Growth and Development

“School as a world of growth and development” is one of the most typical definitions of the school that we have met both in national and international literature. The name of this metaphorical group is borrowed from Inbar’s (1996) study on school metaphors and images. Images which have an emphasis on growth and development such as “tree,” “spring,” “garden,” “living organism,” “flower garden,” “rose garden,” “human being,” “fruit garden,” “fruit trees,” “flowerpot” and “field” were brought together.

“The garden metaphor for schools evokes images which portray the organization and participants in it as biological organisms with the potential for growth” (Bredeson, 1988, p. 299). If the school is like a garden, flowers and fruits are the children being raised by the teachers. These images emphasize the functions of transmission of knowledge and cultivation of young people. Although these images seem to include a positive context, they imply a teacher- and knowledge-centered

school system where students become passive participants in the teaching and learning process. This finding indicates a consistency with the functionalist paradigm that perceives schools as teaching the kinds of cognitive skills and norms essential for the performance of later adult roles in society. Although this image seems to be a positive attribute, it conflicts with the principles of contemporary education which insist on active participation of individual learners in the process of teaching and learning.

School as a Place of Knowledge Transmission

Although many of the responses related to *“school as a place of knowledge transmission”* included descriptive expressions rather than images, they were merged in this theme group in order not to lose information. In this theme there are common descriptions of the teaching and learning aspects of schooling, and the knowledge transmission role of school. Images such as *“education home,” “cradle of education,” “educational center,” “a place of knowledge transmission”* and *“teaching center”* were gathered together. Explanations that the supervisors used to justify their images involve ideas that define school as *“a teaching and learning environment,” “a place where basic skills are taught,”* and *“a place where knowledge is provided.”* It is understood that the supervisors ascribe a positive meaning to these characteristics of the school.

In addition to cultivation of young generations, the school’s function in the transmission of knowledge is a common perception in Turkey (Engin, 2007). This perception seems consistent with the basic principles of essentialist philosophy. To essentialists, school education is first and foremost the transmission of basic skills and knowledge found in the cultural heritage. As it is discussed above such an approach to education places knowledge and the teacher in the center of the teaching-learning process.

School as a Place of Discipline and Authority

Metaphorical analysis of school provides a chance to understand varying perspectives of schools. It is possible to observe both positive and contradictory dimensions in the schooling system at the same time. A contradictory situation appeared when images of school as a *“prison,” “military quarters,” “reformatory,” “a locked box”* and *“internment camp”* were analyzed. Images of *“school as a place of discipline and authority”* show that school is perceived as an atmosphere with strict rules and authority, and a place where freedom and creativity are restricted. *“Schooling is a system where a strict discipline is exercised by obsessive teachers and supervisors with limited tolerance.” “Instead of preparing for life, within a framework of rules and regulations conventional knowledge is repeated. An authoritarian discipline perception has not been left yet.”*

Illich (1985) calls school a compulsory residence with the accompaniment of teachers. His statement seems to be consistent with the images produced in this study describing *“school as a prison.”* The authoritarian character of the Turkish educational system is criticized by both Şimşek and Kongar. Şimşek (1997) uses the analogy of military schools. He criticizes the highly centralized, hierarchical and

authoritarian structure of the educational system. Kongar (1994) perceives the Turkish educational system as monistic, which prevents the development of free thought in the society.

If the school is “a reformatory” for the students, then teachers and administrators are the guardians. That means teachers and administrators share the same disciplinary and authoritarian atmosphere of the school. The issue becomes critical when one considers the philosophy behind the existing primary education curriculum, which conceives a democratic school atmosphere. Against the existing traditional schooling, rote memorization and authoritarian school and classroom management, this learner-centered educational perspective rooted in progressivism and constructivism, emphasizes a flexible, permissive and open-ended learning environment (Ornstein & Levine, 2006).

School as a Family Atmosphere

In addition to their other descriptions, supervisors characterize “school as a family atmosphere.” School is like “a family,” “a family with many children” or “like a big family.” In literature, there are different descriptions such as “home away home” (Inbar, 1996), “school as a care-giving place” (Balcı, 1999; 2001) and “caring and safe place” (Aydoğdu, 2008) to represent a warm, safe and caring atmosphere and relations in school. Similarly, supervisors participated to the present study conceptualized the school by using images connoting family and relations in the family. They mentioned the similarities between, for example, parents and teachers, brothers and sisters and students in classrooms, and the atmosphere at home and at school. According to supervisors, “There are close relations [in school].” “Everybody is responsible for each other.” “Mothers and fathers raise their children and educate them at the same time. Teachers and other school personnel have similar responsibilities with mothers and fathers.” “School is like a family atmosphere.”

School as an Institution Shaping Society

Supervisors also emphasized the transmission of culture and directing the society as basic functions of schools. Images describing school as a “cultural center,” a “locomotive” and a “culture house” reflect this perception. These images were collected under the theme of “school as an institution shaping society.” This belief among the supervisors in this study is similar to suggestions of functionalist theory. According to functionalists, each society needs some basic similarity of thought, values and norms among its members if it is to continue. In addition to its contribution to the social and economic development, the school system maintains the survival of the social system as a whole by transmitting existing culture to young generations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Metaphorical analysis of school provided a chance to understand both positive and contradictory dimensions in the schooling system. The main tendency among primary education supervisors was to describe school through organization-like

metaphorical images. This emphasis was observed both in their definitions of “school as a production unit” and “school as an organization with lost goals.” Although a few of the supervisors ascribed positive aspects of an organization to the school, the majority of them used these metaphorical images to highlight their criticisms of dysfunctions in the existing school organizations. A general point in criticisms the supervisors have is related to the mechanical process of schooling in which traditional roles and relationships are experienced.

In addition, in this study, some other problem areas related to our school system appeared. According to supervisors our schools include highly disciplined and authoritarian relations. This finding is consistent with the discussions on school and schooling in Turkey which emphasize that the current educational system is highly authoritarian, hierarchical and oriented to memorization (Kaya, 1993; Kongar, 1994; Sönmez, 1996; Şimşek, 1997). As it is stated by Şimşek (1997) there is a necessity of grand changes in Turkish National Education. In addition, the policy makers need to consider this fact and should try to realize the conditions of democratic education in our schools.

Supervisors also emphasized a parallel between social life and the school. School is like “a miniature of the society” and “a bridge to life.” Other positive definitions for the existing school system included the metaphorical groups named “school as a family atmosphere” and “school as an institution shaping society.” As Dana and Pitts (1993) argued “a prerequisite for educational change may be the examination of existing undesirable educational metaphors and the exploration of more desirable metaphors to take their place” (p. 325). In conjunction with this point, it might be proposed that by supporting and disseminating positive beliefs and attitudes among students, teachers, parents, principals, supervisors and other social groups, the positive perception of school may be strengthened and become a part of societal culture. With the images of “school as a world of growth and development,” “school as a place of knowledge transmission” and “school as an institution shaping society,” the supervisors emphasize the basic functions of schools as cultivation of younger generations, shaping society and transmission of knowledge. The supervisors ascribe positive meaning to these functions. But when the situation is considered in terms of **students’ position in teaching and the learning process it may be inferred that there is a teacher- and knowledge-centered school understanding where students become passive participants.** Although new reforms in the Turkish educational system foresee schools as individual-centered learning environments, it appears that there has not yet developed a parallel between real experience and the goals of the educational system. For this reason, it can be proposed that new roles of all educational practitioners including teachers, school principals and primary education supervisors need to be reconsidered and followed for the success of **existing education policies. Especially the primary education supervisors’ role in following teachers and administrators about the latest advances in the education system becomes significant.**

The variety of the images produced by the supervisors suggests that school is not a one-dimensional institution. To make rational improvements in our educational

system, it may be an influential way to consider it as a whole rather than analyzing only the parts. The results of this study may help policy-makers to have an insight into the school process in Turkey, and its functional and dysfunctional dimensions. In addition, by considering multidimensional aspects of schools, principals and supervisors can identify their roles and make required changes for worthwhile school improvement. Moreover, these results may provide information for teacher, principal and supervisor training programs.

As Bredeson (1988) stated, "The use of metaphors in the field of educational administration is more than a creative exercise for workshops and classrooms. It is more than a trivialization of the complexities of leadership in schools to earthy and clever analogies. The challenge in educational leadership is not to find 'the perfect metaphor' but rather to seek a better understanding of schools, their organization, operation, and administration" (p. 309). Metaphorical images gathered throughout this study and the analyses provided enough evidence that metaphorical images can be used as research tools to reach individuals' perceptions of school and understand schools more effectively.

A review of the Turkish literature showed that prospective teachers and primary school teachers, students, administrators and parents were the popular groups that researchers investigated for their metaphorical images. A future study may be designed to collect information from other significant stakeholders of schools such as teacher education faculty members, employers and educational administrators, which may provide a background for future reforms in the Turkish schooling system. In addition to studies investigating real actors' school images, it is possible to say that case-based metaphorical analyses would be an effective way of studying the organization of single institutions.

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Okul Metaforları: İlköğretim Müfettişlerinin Okul Algıları (Özet)

Problem Durumu: Eğitime yönelik hem ekonomik hem de sosyo-kültürel boyutlarda büyük bir talebin yaşandığı günümüzde, eğitim pek çok toplumsal grubun ilgi alanına girmektedir. Örneğin, hükümetlerin, ailelerin ve işverenlerin eğitim sistemine yönelik birbirinden farklılaşan beklentileri söz konusu olabilmektedir. Bunlar gibi okul dışı grupların beklentileri okul sistemini etkileyebildiği gibi, okul içinde görev yapan aktörlerin de okula yönelik değer, tutum, inanç ve algıları, hem okulun işleyişini hem de toplumdaki genel okul algısını etkileyebilmektedir. Bu çalışmada okul sistemi içinde yer alan aktörlerin bakış açısına başvurulduğunda, eğitim sisteminin işleyişinin daha etkili bir biçimde anlaşılabilceği fikrinden hareket edilmektedir. Okul ile ilgili gerçek bağlamı, katılımcıların gözünden ve sözlerinden anlamaya çalışmak amacıyla ve eğitim sistemindeki önemli rolleri nedeniyle, bu çalışmada ilköğretim müfettişlerinin okula yönelik metaforik tanımlamaları araştırılmaktadır. Gündelik yaşamda sık sık başvurduğumuz metaforlar ise, bizlere insanların kendi gerçekliklerini nasıl kurduklarını ve dünyayı nasıl algıladıklarını kavrama konusunda yardımcı olabilecek belli başlı dilsel araçlar olmaları nedeniyle tercih edilmiştir.

Metaforun genellikle, bir anlam ve bir aktarıcı olmak üzere iki parçadan oluştuğu kabul edilmektedir. Anlam, konu, ana tema, ifade edilen olarak tanımlanırken, aktarıcı ise referans alınan, mecazi olan terim ya da terimler olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Örneğin; "Eğitim bir merdivendir." cümlesinde eğitim anlam, merdiven de aktarıcıdır.

Türkiye'deki eğitim ile ilgili alan yazını tarandığında, metaforlar aracılığıyla veri toplamanın 1990ların ikinci yarısından itibaren başlayan, görece yeni bir yaklaşım olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Eğitim ile ilgili çeşitli kavramların metaforik analizi araştırmacıların ilgisini çekmektedir. Bu çalışmalarda okul, öğretim, bilgi ve teftiş kavramlarının yanı sıra öğretmen, öğrenci, veli ve okul yöneticisi gibi okulun insan boyutuna ilişkin algılar da çalışılmaktadır. İlköğretim okulları ve eğitim fakülteleri sıklıkla temel araştırma birimleri olarak seçilirken, özel ve kamu okulları ile ülkeler arası düzeyde karşılaştırmalı çalışmalara da rastlanılmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı, günümüz Türkiye'sinde ilköğretim müfettişlerinin "okul"u nasıl kavramlaştırdıklarını metaforik tanımlamalar aracılığıyla anlamaya çalışmaktır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırmanın örneklemini Türkiye'nin 17 farklı ilinden 150 ilköğretim müfettişi oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri, 2008 yılının Mayıs-Haziran aylarında Milli Eğitim Bakanlığının "Öğretim Sürecini Geliştirme Projesi"nin parçası olarak Mersin'de yürütülen bir hizmet içi eğitim programına katılan müfettişlere uygulanan bir anket

aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Anket formu, müfettişlerin okul kavramına ilişkin metaforik imgelerini elde etmek üzere oluşturulmuş açık uçlu sorulardan oluşmaktadır. Verilere içerik analizi uygulanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: 150 ilköğretim müfettişinin okul kavramına yönelik olarak ürettikleri metaforik imgelerin analizi sonucunda 8 metafor grubuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu metafor grupları şu şekilde adlandırılmıştır: bir üretim birimi olarak okul, amaçlarını kaybetmiş bir kurum olarak okul, yaşamın parçası olarak okul, gelişim ve değişim dünyası olarak okul, disiplin ve otorite yeri olarak okul, aile atmosferi olarak okul, öğretim merkezi olarak okul ve toplumu şekillendiren bir kurum olarak okul. Bu tanımlamaların genel bir değerlendirilmesi yapıldığında, Türk eğitim sisteminin karşılaştığı problem ve güçlükler, işleyen ve işlemeyen yönleri ile ilgili bilgiler elde edilebilmektedir.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Okul ile ilgili hem olumlu hem de çelişkili boyutların bir arada yer alması metaforik analizlerin genellikle gözlemlenen bir özelliğidir. Bu durum okulun çok boyutlu bir yapı olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu araştırmada da müfettişlerin ürettiği metaforlar okulun bu özelliğini ortaya çıkarma olanağını sağlamıştır.

Müfettişlerin okula ilişkin tanımlamalarındaki merkezi eğilim, okulun bir örgüt olarak algılanmasıdır. Bu eğilim en yüksek frekans ve yüzdelere sahip iki metafor grubunda kendini göstermektedir. Bu gruplardan ilkinde okul bir üretim birimi olarak tanımlanırken, diğer grupta amaçlarını kaybetmiş bir örgüt olarak yer almaktadır. Her iki metafor grubunda da okula yönelik olumlu görüşler oldukça sınırlı kalırken, genel olarak eleştirel bir perspektifin ön plana çıktığı gözlemlenmiştir.

Araştırma bulguları üzerine genel bir değerlendirme yapıldığında, araştırmaya katılan ilköğretim müfettişlerinin Türk eğitim sistemine yönelik çok önemli eleştirilere sahip oldukları görülmektedir. Bu eleştirilerden en belirginini, müfettişlerin, okulların adeta "bir diploma fabrikası" gibi mekanik bir yapı olarak işlediği yönündeki değerlendirmelerinde yer almaktadır. Müfettişler okulları amaçları kaybolmuş birer örgüt olarak algılamaktadır. Ayrıca, böyle bir okul yapısında öğrenciler ve öğretmenler sürecin sadece pasif birer katılanı konumunda kalmaktadırlar. Metafor gruplarına bakıldığında okulun temel fonksiyonları bilgi transferi, toplumun şekillendirilmesi ve genç kuşakların yetiştirilmesi olarak belirlemektedir. Bunun yanı sıra okulların oldukça disiplinli ve otoriter bir yapıya sahip olduğu ve ağır bir yarışma sisteminin etkisinde kaldığı da ilköğretim müfettişlerinin metaforik tanımlamalarından anlaşılmaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın bulgularının Türk eğitim sistemi ile ilgili politika üretenlere, sistemin işleyen ve işlemeyen yönleri hakkında ışık tutabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca bulgular hem öğretmen yetiştirme hem de eğitim yöneticileri ve deneticilerinin yetiştirildiği programlarda kullanılabilecek önemli bilgiler sunmaktadır. Türkiye'de konu ile ilgili alan yazın

incelendiğinde, öğretmen adaylarının, ilköğretim öğretmen, öğrenci, yönetici ve velilerinin eğitim ile ilgili çeşitli konularda metaforik tanımlamalarının araştırıldığı gözlemlenmiştir. Gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalarda öğretmen yetiştiren kurumlardaki eğitimciler, işverenler ve eğitim yöneticileri gibi, okulun diğer önemli paydaşlarının görüşlerine başvurulmasının, Türk eğitim sistemi ile ilgili yapılacak geliştirme ve reform çalışmaları için temel oluşturabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, yine metaforlar aracılığıyla, tek tek okul örgütlerinin incelendiği çalışmaların da önemli katkılar sağlayabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Okul metaforları, metafor, ilköğretim müfettişleri, okula yönelik algılar.