

An Investigation of Senior Vocational School Students' Perceptions of the Future through Their Drawings

Muge YUKAY YUKSEL*

Meryem AKSAK **

Tugce ARICAN***

Muhsin BAKAN****

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Expectations/perceptions of the future are important concepts at every stage of life. However, these concepts become more important in adolescence, during which critical decisions about the future are made. Adolescents' expectations/perceptions of the future are vital from the perspectives of the families they live with, their teachers, and psychological counselors. Thus, it is important to determine these perceptions to better understand the adolescents. We find that their expressions of perceptions as they imagine them in their minds are more effective measures of their thinking than asking them to express themselves in response to predetermined questions.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to reveal the perceptions of the future that senior students in vocational high schools have by means of the symbols they draw.

Method: The participants of this study are 166 (11 male, 155 female) 17-18-year-old senior students in vocational high schools. They were enrolled at three different schools affiliated with the National Ministry of Education in the İstanbul, Kocaeli, and Tekirdağ provinces in the 2014-2015 academic year.

*Corresponding Author: Assoc.Prof.Dr., Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul, muge.yuksel@marmara.edu.tr

** Psychological Counseling and Guidance Teacher., Kazım Karabekir Anadolu Imam Hatip Lisesi, İstanbul, meryemaksak@gmail.com

*** Psychological Counseling and Guidance Teacher., İMKB Darıca Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi, Kocaeli, earane160@hotmail.com

**** Psychological Counseling and Guidance Teacher., Süleymanpaşa Zübeyde Hanım Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi, Tekirdağ muhsinbakan@hotmail.com

Students were asked to draw a symbol "expressing their perceptions of their future." The analysis of the data was carried out by means of content analysis, which is one of the qualitative research methods. The frequency (f) of the occurrence in the data and the percentages (%) were calculated. For the categorization of the symbols drawn by students, the subscales of the Future Expectations Scale for Adolescents (FESA) developed by McWhirter (2008) were used. Symbols were evaluated under four categories taken from the scale (i.e., Work and Education, Marriage and Family, Religion and Society, and Health and Life) as well as under the category of Other. The symbols obtained were grouped under 16 subcategories according to their common features.

Findings and Results: The results of the study indicate that the symbols expressing vocational high school students' expectations for the future are mostly related to the Work and Education category (%58). Other symbols can be evaluated under the following categories, respectively: Marriage and Family (%27), Religion and Society (%6), Other (%6), Health and Life (%2). In the course of our study, the symbols were also investigated based on the variables of gender and socioeconomic conditions, and the expressions were analyzed by calculating their frequencies (f) and percentages (%).

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations: The illustrative and descriptive results of the present study support other studies in the literature in terms of the future job prospects of the adolescents, their future spouses, their future living standards, and their future perspectives. Adolescence is a critical period during which young people choose their professions and act more seriously in their romantic relationships by planning ahead. Therefore, it would be fair to suggest that such picture drawing activities should be applied in schools by psychological counselors and guidance experts because such activities are effective in enabling adolescents to express themselves more comfortably than they might in an interview or questionnaire. In addition, it is recommended that facilities and additional educational activities through which vocational high school students can improve themselves in various areas should be provided.

Key Words: Picture drawing method, analysis of expectations for the future, high school students, content analysis

Introduction

Many children live their lives since birth in line with their parents' expectations and future plans. As time passes by, children are expected to be successful in areas related to their immediate environment, that is, in their courses and other activities. Therefore, dreams of studying at a good university and then having a good job

become their expectations at later stages of their educational lives. Theoretically speaking, expectations related to the future are important as they are strong sources of motivation in making important decisions. Regarded as the pioneer of studies pertaining to expectations for the future, W. I. Thomas (1920) draws attention to the fact that expectations have an influence on outcomes by stating: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Simsek, 2011). People ascribe certain meanings to actions, and these meanings determine their future actions (Tatar, 2005). It is also known that rewards and punishments related to individuals' goals and expectations since childhood play a significant role in future decisions (Berger-Tal, Embar, Kotler, & Saltz, 2014). In many development theories and research studies, youngsters' expectations for the future have been under investigation. These studies revealed that these expectations are related to three processes defined as motivation, planning, and evaluation (Artar, 2003).

Individuals first set goals for the future in accordance with their values, expectations, and wants. Then, they seek ways to achieve these goals and make plans. Finally, they evaluate these plans to identify the possibility of reaching their goals (Simsek, 2011). That is how their perceptions of the future are formed.

Many studies have been carried out about the youngsters' perceptions of the future. For instance, Simsek (2011) found that youngsters' expectations for the future generally relate to their professions, education, and starting a family. In their cross-cultural study, Yavuzer, Demir, Meseci, and Sertelin (2005) came to the conclusion that adolescents' expectations for the future can be categorized into three groups: career, family, and romantic relationship.

Gonullu (2003) carried out a study in the Sivas province and found that high school students have the following expectations for the future: being successful in their jobs, being famous, leading a peaceful life, and being rich. In the Future Expectations Scale for Adolescents (FESA) developed by Mc Whirter (2008), the adolescents' expectations for the future were found to be related to the categories of business and education, marriage and family, religion and society, and health and lifestyle (Tuncer, 2011). In another study investigating such expectations of adolescents living in an orphanage, the researchers found that the adolescents' expectations for the future could be grouped into six categories: education, employment, economic status, family life, social life, and health. The researchers discovered that the expectations of these adolescents regarding their future social life were low (Bayoglu & Purutcuoglu, 2010).

It is also important to be aware of the adolescents' attitudes towards the future. Thus, in a study carried out by İmamoglu and Guler-Edwards (2007), participants' attitudes toward the future were categorized as positive, anxious, and planned. The positive tendency dimension reflects an approach to life that includes positive expectations, while the anxious tendency dimension refers to feelings of anxiety, uneasiness, fear, and discomfort. Lastly, the planned tendency dimension reflects the necessity to start planning for the future in the present time. In the same study, gender had an effect on expectations for the future. The authors found that female

students were more anxious than male students about their future. In their qualitative research study dealing with youngsters' expectations for the future, Aaltonen and Karvonen (2015) investigated how youngsters have shaped their future starting from the early phases of life. They concluded that youngsters shape their perceptions about the future as a result of the emerging feeling that they should either be successful in their academic careers or face "social isolation" because they focus too much on their academic progress.

In studies investigating perceptions of the future associated with the type of high school, general high school and vocational high school students were generally compared in terms of different variables by using quantitative research designs (Sun et al., 2012; Gonullu, 2003; Ozcan, 2010; Cullen, Levitt, Robertson, & Sadoff, 2013). Vocational schools differ from other types of high schools in the purpose of the organization. The purpose of vocational high schools is to train the intermediate staff required in different sectors in the country. However, the inadequacy of the wages in sectors where intermediate staff works and the difficulties of the working conditions in these sectors might cause graduates of vocational schools to get jobs not related to their educational background. The fact that vocational high school graduates do not prefer working in jobs they were trained for because of the low wages and the challenging nature of these jobs might have an influence on their expectations for the future. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate senior vocational high school students' perceptions about the future.

There have been only a few qualitative studies focusing on young people's perceptions of the future, and no studies in which adolescents express these perceptions symbolically by drawing pictures have been encountered in the literature.

As a means to reflect on one's feelings and motives, the picture drawing technique has shown increased interest as a research method (Yavuzer, 2013). Picture drawing is a more effective way than verbal expressions to express emotional situations affecting the individual (Beytut, Bolisik, Solak, & Seyfioglu, 2009). In the literature, studies in which the picture drawing technique has been used on adolescents can be found. The pictures in these studies were generally related to the image of a scientist (Buldu, 2006; Turkmen, 2008), Internet perception (Ersoy & Turkkan, 2009), environment perception (Ozsoy & Ahi, 2014), effects of staying in the hospital (Beytut, Bolisik, Solak, & Seyfioglu, 2009), perceptions about an earthquake (Aksoy, 2013), and the well-being of the adolescents (Yukay Yuksel, Yildirim Kurtulus, & Damar, 2015).

The expectations and perceptions of adolescents about the future are important from the perspectives of their families, teachers, and psychological counselors. Rather than asking adolescents to express themselves based on predetermined questions, we chose to understand them by enabling them to express themselves according to what they envision in their minds. Thus, the aim of the current study is to investigate 12th grade vocational high school adolescents' perceptions of the future by looking into the pictures they draw.

In line with the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are 12th grade vocational high school students' perceptions/expectations of the future?
2. Do the pictures drawn by students vary depending on gender?
3. Do the students' perceptions of the future vary depending on their perceived levels of income?

Method

Research Design

This study is a qualitative study exploring the perceptions/expectations of the future that last-year high school students have, as expressed through the pictures they draw. Qualitative research design is a method in which qualitative data collection instruments are used to reveal perceptions in a realistic and natural context (Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). In this study, the data were analyzed by means of content analysis, which is one of the qualitative data analysis approaches. Content analysis is a scientific approach based on the analysis of written and other materials. It is carried out objectively and systematically (Tavsancil & Aslan, 2001). Often utilized in the social science fields, content analysis is a systematic and repeatable technique paving the way for the researchers to summarize books, book chapters, letters, historical documents, newspaper headlines, and articles using certain coding systems. This analysis is carried out to identify the existence of certain words or expressions in clusters emerging in a certain text or a number of texts (Buyukozturk, Kilic-Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2008). Perceptions of the future experienced by the adolescents taking part in the current study were investigated through the symbols in their drawings using a content analysis method, among other qualitative research techniques.

Research Sample

In this study, three different vocational high schools affiliated with the National Ministry of Education were selected randomly among the vocational schools in the İstanbul, Kocaeli, and Tekirdag provinces in the 2014-2015 academic year. The data were collected from senior students enrolled at the Vocational High School, Girls' Vocational High School, and Religious High School. A total of 166 students (11 male, 155 female) participated in the study. As only the Vocational High School had male students, the number of male students was lower than the number of female students. The age range of the participants was from 17 to 18, and the average age was 17.

Research Instrument and Procedure

The data were collected in the Fall Semester of the 2014-2015 academic year. In face-to-face interviews, students were asked to draw pictures on A4 paper presenting their thoughts in response to the question, "What comes to your mind when you

think about your future? Can you express your thoughts with a symbol?" There was no time limitation for the students to make their drawings. When the researchers made sure that the pictures had been completed, students were asked to explain their pictures. Students wrote a few sentences to express the meaning of their symbols on the papers on which they drew the pictures. On the papers distributed to the students by the researchers, there were also some questions about the participants' personal background (i.e., gender, socioeconomic condition).

Data Analysis

The pictures obtained from the students were analyzed by means of content analysis. The main aim of content analysis is to reach concepts and connections that can justify the collected data. In the process of content analysis, the following steps are followed: processing the qualitative data obtained from the documents, coding the data, revealing the themes, organizing the codes and the themes, identifying and interpreting the findings (Yildirim & Simsek, 2013).

In this study, the pictures drawn by students (166 pictures) were first prescreened to evaluate whether they drew the pictures in accordance with the given instructions. Then, the drawings were semantically examined by four researchers to maintain inter-coder reliability. During this process, the drawings were grouped under certain categories by the researchers. After that, by means of the code list determined in line with the relevant literature, the students' drawings and what they stated about their drawings were evaluated. The coding process was completed after adding to the list participants' expectations of the future that could not be included in the code list. Then, the codes were organized and grouped under codes, and, when appropriate, the data was digitized and then presented. Finally, the findings obtained as a result of the analysis were interpreted.

Code List: In the process of determining the codes based on the literature for the analysis of the data, the subscales of the Future Expectations Scale for Adolescents (FESA) developed by McWhirter (2008) were used. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Tuncer (2011). In this standardized scale, the adolescents' expectations for the future were grouped under the categories of Work and Education, Marriage and Family, Religion and Society and Health and Life. Symbols excluded from the aforementioned categories were grouped under the Other category. This classification resembles the original form of the scale.

Results

In this part of the study, symbols drawn by adolescents to express their expectations for the future were investigated. The content in the symbols were interpreted word for word separately. For these symbols, the following five themes were identified: Work and Education, Marriage and Family, Religion and Society, Health and Life, and Other. For each theme, categories were formed. Themes and categories and relevant findings are presented below in the order of the research questions.

The first research question of the study is: "What are the perceptions/expectations of the future for 12th grade vocational high school students?" The findings pertaining to this question are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Categories Related to 12th Grade Vocational High School Students' Perceptions of the Future

| Symbols Related to Students' Expectations for the Future | <i>f</i> | % |
|---|----------|------|
| Work and Education | | |
| <i>Building and Furniture</i> (holding, hospital, home, bank, office, school, university, cafe, apartment, library, table, pen, watch, test tube, wood, syringe, gown, lamp, bookshelf) | 38 | 22,9 |
| <i>Professional Staff</i> (business manager, solicitor, Koran course teacher, politician, counselor, actor, teacher, nutritionist, cook, nurse, food engineer) | 18 | 10,8 |
| <i>Logos and Symbols</i> (initials, web design logo, Olympic rings, theatre symbol, ellipsis, tick, gold bracelet, DNA, hospital symbol, Mercedes logo, star, programming languages) | 17 | 10,2 |
| <i>Financial Power</i> (gold) | 11 | 6,6 |
| <i>Dreaming</i> (posy, stairs, balloon, thought balloon, cap) | 8 | 4,8 |
| <i>Vehicle</i> (car) | 5 | 3,0 |
| Marriage and Family | | |
| <i>Happiness</i> (smiley face, happy people, father-mother-child, woman) | 30 | 18,1 |
| <i>Love</i> (heart, couple holding hands) | 15 | 9,0 |
| Religion and Society | | |
| <i>Prayer</i> (Koran, mosque) | 7 | 4,2 |
| <i>Return to Islam</i> (month, bird cage, sun) | 3 | 1,8 |
| Health and Life | | |
| <i>Foods</i> (strawberry syrup, apple, tomato) | 2 | 1,2 |
| <i>Muscular Arm</i> | 1 | ,6 |
| <i>Wheelchair</i> | 1 | ,6 |
| Other | | |
| <i>Despair</i> (women's shelters, uncertain faces, empty) | 5 | 3,0 |
| <i>Loneliness</i> (window, cube, coffee cup) | 3 | 1,8 |
| <i>Negative Facial Expressions</i> (fearing face, undecided face) | 2 | 1,2 |
| Total | 166 | %100 |

Table 1 illustrates the conceptual categories of the pictures drawn by the students to express their expectations for the future. The frequencies (*f*) as well as percentages (%) of the ideas expressed in these categories are also presented in the table. As can be seen from Table 1, in addition to 5 predetermined categories, 16 subcategories emerged as a result of the content analysis. The most commonly drawn pictures were

grouped under the categories of Work and Education (97, 58%), Marriage and Family (45, 27,1%), Other (10, 6%), and Health and Life (4, 2,4%), respectively.

The second research question of the study is: "Do the pictures drawn by the students vary according to gender?" The findings for this question are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2.

Categories Related to 12th Grade Vocational High School Students' Perceptions of the Future Based on the Gender

| Symbols Related to Female Students' Expectations for the Future | <i>f</i> | % |
|---|----------|------|
| Work and Education | | |
| <i>Work and Education</i> | 36 | 23,2 |
| <i>Building and Furniture</i> (holding, hospital, home, bank, office, school, university, cafe, apartment, library, table, pen, watch, test tube, wood, syringe, gown, lamp, bookshelf) | 18 | 11,6 |
| <i>Professional Staff</i> (business manager, solicitor, Koran course teacher, politician, counselor, actor, teacher, nutritionist, cook, nurse, food engineer) | 14 | 9 |
| <i>Logos and Symbols</i> (initials, web design logo, Olympic rings, theatre symbol, ellipsis, tick, gold bracelet, DNA, hospital symbol, Mercedes logo, star, programming languages) | 9 | 5,8 |
| <i>Financial Power</i> (gold) | 8 | 5,2 |
| <i>Dreaming</i> (posy, stairs, balloon, thought balloon, cap) | 4 | 2,6 |
| Marriage and Family | | |
| <i>Happiness</i> (smiley face, happy people, father-mother-child, woman) | 29 | 18,7 |
| <i>Love</i> (heart, couple holding hands) | 15 | 9,7 |
| Religion and Society | | |
| <i>Prayer</i> (Koran, mosque) | 7 | 4,5 |
| <i>Return to Islam</i> (month, bird cage, sun) | 3 | 1,9 |
| Health and Life | | |
| <i>Foods</i> (strawberry syrup, apple, tomato) | 2 | 1,3 |
| <i>Muscular Arm</i> | 1 | ,6 |
| Other | | |
| <i>Despair</i> (women's shelters, uncertain faces, empty) | 4 | 2,6 |
| <i>Loneliness</i> (window, cube, coffee cup) | 3 | 1,9 |
| <i>Negative Facial Expressions</i> (fearing face, undecided face) | 2 | 1,3 |
| Total | 155 | %100 |

Table 2 Continue

| Symbols Related to Male Students' Expectations for the Future | <i>f</i> | % |
|--|----------|------|
| Work and Education | | |
| <i>Logos and Symbols</i> (initials, web design logo, Olympic rings) | 3 | 27,3 |
| <i>Building and Furniture</i> (holding, table) | 2 | 18,2 |
| <i>Financial Power</i> (money) | 2 | 18,2 |
| <i>Vehicle</i> (car) | 1 | 9,1 |
| Marriage and Family | | |
| <i>Happiness</i> (smiley face) | 1 | 9,1 |
| Health and Life | | |
| <i>Muscular Arm</i> | 1 | 9,1 |
| Table 2 Continue Other | | |
| <i>Despair</i> | 1 | 9,1 |
| Total | 11 | %100 |

Table 2 illustrates the conceptual categories emerging as a result of the analysis of the pictures drawn by 12th grade vocational school students to express their expectations for the future, according to gender. The table also presents the frequencies (*f*) and the percentages (%) of these categories. As can be seen from Table 2, the most common symbols drawn by the female students can be grouped under the following subcategories: Building and Furniture (36, 23,2%), Happiness (29, 18,7%), and Professional Staff (18, 11,6%). On the other hand, male students drew pictures in the following subcategories: Logos and Symbols (3, 27,3%), Building and Furniture, and Financial Power (2, 18,2%).

The third research question of the study is: "Do the students' perceptions of the future vary depending on their perceived level of income?" The findings related to this question are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Categories Related to 12th Grade Vocational High School Students' Perceptions of the Future Based on Income Level

| Symbols Related to the Expectations for the Future of the Students Coming from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds | <i>f</i> | % |
|---|----------|------|
| Work and Education | | |
| <i>Building and Furniture</i> (holding, hospital, home, bank, office, school, university, cafe, apartment, library, table, pen, watch, test tube, wood, syringe, gown, lamp, bookshelf) | 4 | 22,1 |
| <i>Logos and Symbols</i> (initials, web design logo, Olympic rings, theatre symbol, ellipsis, tick, gold bracelet, DNA, hospital symbol, Mercedes logo, star, programming languages) | 2 | 11,1 |
| <i>Professional Staff</i> (business manager, solicitor, Koran course teacher, politician, counselor, actor, teacher, nutritionist, cook, nurse, food engineer) | 1 | 5,6 |
| <i>Financial Power</i> (money) | 1 | 5,6 |
| <i>Vehicle</i> (car) | 1 | 5,6 |
| <i>Dreaming</i> (posy, stairs, balloon, thought balloon, cap) | 1 | 5,6 |
| Marriage and Family | | |
| <i>Love</i> (heart, couple holding hands) | 3 | 16,7 |
| <i>Happiness</i> (smiley face, happy people, father-mother-child, woman) | 2 | 11,1 |
| Religion and Society | | |
| <i>Prayer</i> (Koran, mosque) | 1 | 5,6 |
| <i>Return to Islam</i> (moon) | 1 | 5,6 |
| Other | | |
| <i>Loneliness</i> (coffee cup) | 1 | 5,6 |
| Total | 18 | %100 |
| Symbols Related to the Expectations for the future of the Students Coming from Middle Socioeconomic Backgrounds | <i>f</i> | % |
| Work and Education | | |
| <i>Building and Furniture</i> (holding, hospital, home, bank, office, school, university, cafe, apartment, library, table, pen, watch, test tube, wood, syringe, gown, lamp, bookshelf) | 30 | 22,7 |

Table 3 Continue

| Symbols Related to the Expectations for the Future of the Students Coming from Middle Socioeconomic Backgrounds | <i>f</i> | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| <i>Professional Staff</i> (business manager, solicitor, Koran course teacher, politician, counselor, actor, teacher, nutritionist, cook, nurse, food engineer) | 16 | 12,1 |
| <i>Logos and Symbols</i> (initials, web design logo, Olympic rings, theatre symbol, ellipsis, tick, gold bracelet, DNA, hospital symbol, Mercedes logo, star, programming languages) | 12 | 9,1 |
| <i>Financial Power</i> (money) | 10 | 7,6 |
| <i>Dreaming</i> (posy, stairs, balloon, thought balloon, cap) | 5 | 3,8 |
| <i>Vehicle</i> (car) | 4 | 3 |
| Marriage and Family | | |
| <i>Happiness</i> (smiley face, happy people, father-mother-child, woman) | 25 | 18,9 |
| <i>Love</i> (heart, couple holding hands) | 11 | 8,3 |
| Religion and Society | | |
| <i>Prayer</i> (Koran, mosque) | 5 | 3,8 |
| <i>Return to Islam</i> (birdcage, sun) | 2 | 1,5 |
| Health and Life | | |
| <i>Foods</i> (strawberry syrup, apple, tomato) | 2 | 1,5 |
| <i>Muscular Arm</i> | 1 | ,8 |
| <i>Wheelchair</i> | 1 | ,8 |
| Other | | |
| <i>Despair</i> (vague face, women's shelters, empty) | 5 | 3,8 |
| <i>Negative Facial Expressions</i> (fearing face, undecided face) | 2 | 1,5 |
| <i>Loneliness</i> (window) | 1 | ,8 |
| Total | 132 | %10 0 |
| Work and Education | | |
| <i>Building and Furniture</i> (table, syringes, gowns) | 4 | 25 |
| <i>Logos and Symbols</i> (Trabzonspor emblem) | 3 | 18,8 |
| <i>Dreaming</i> (balloon) | 2 | 12,5 |
| <i>Professional Staff</i> (teacher) | 1 | 6,3 |
| Marriage and Family | | |
| <i>Happiness</i> (smiley face) | 3 | 18,8 |
| <i>Love</i> (couple holding hands) | 1 | 6,3 |
| Religion and Society | | |
| <i>Prayer</i> | 1 | 6,3 |
| Other | | |
| <i>Loneliness</i> (window) | 1 | 6,3 |
| Total | 16 | %10 0 |

Table 3 illustrates the conceptual categories emerging as a result of the analysis of these students' pictures drawn to express their expectations for the future, depending on the level of income. The table also presents the frequencies (f) and the percentages (%) of these categories.

It can be seen from Table 3 that the most frequent symbols drawn by students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are grouped under the following subcategories: Building and Furniture (4, 22.1%) and Love (3, 16.7%). On the other hand, the analysis of the symbols drawn by students at the middle socioeconomic levels to express their expectations revealed that their drawings belong to the Building and Furniture (30, 22.7%) and Happiness (24, 18.9%) subcategories. The symbols drawn by students from high level socioeconomic backgrounds generated the following subcategories: Building and Furniture (4, 25%), Logos and Symbols (3, 18.8%), and Happiness (3, 18.8%).

Some sample responses given by students expressing their perceptions of the future as found in the Work and Education category:

"I would like to teach people something by touching them with my writing, making them feel with my pictures, and sometimes listening to their comments, and I will hopefully (inşallah) become a student of Sinan the Architect by designing nice architectural structures with my pen." (pen)

"For me, there is something much more valuable than clothes, foods, etc. That is a book." (book)

- "I drew a test tube because I will hopefully invent in the future." (test tube)

- "I have my own table and students that I can teach something, and happiness." (teacher desk)

- "Car ... (I inserted an ellipsis; it continues and continues) Cars are a passion, and they are probably my only skill." (car)

- "I would like to read many books and do my best to serve humanity (to understand religion); I would like to tell people the realities from the book of life. I want to have a good job." (having a good job)

- "I would like to represent Turkey in the judo branch in the Olympics." (Olympic rings)

- "A golden key can open any doors." (200TL banknote)

- "I want to complete my goals." (The tick symbol)

- "A good individual who has a job; a woman who can stand on her own legs." (Star)

Some sample responses given by students expressing their perceptions of the future as found in the Marriage and Family category:

- "I think that I will be very happy in the future." (smiley face)

-“I believe that I will be happy in all aspects and make people happy in the future as I will improve myself.”(happy people)

-“What I would like to express in the picture is my desire to fill my heart with nice things.”(heart)

Some sample responses given by students expressing their perceptions of the future as found in the Religion and Society category:

- “I want the number of Muslims to increase. I wish the mosques would be as full as the salat al eid in every dawn prayer. I hope that there are not any hungry people.”(mosque)

-“What I want to tell with this picture is that I want to teach children something related to religion in a Koran course or in a place affiliated with the Directorate of Religious Affairs.”(Koran)

Some sample responses given by students expressing their perceptions of the future as found in the Health and Life category:

-“I would like to produce cure-all medicines that taste good.” (strawberry syrup)

-“I would like to be a teacher of the mentally handicapped. I tried to depict mentally handicapped people. Helping them makes me happy. I want to be useful to them in the future.” (wheelchair)

Some sample responses given by students expressing their perceptions of the future as found in the Other category:

-“I could not find a picture to express myself, so I drew one of the cubes I generally draw. In the cube, there might be the things I would like to give to the world. My cube is expressionless as people find it strange.” (cube)

-“I look at myself from each perspective I would like to have, so I drew a window from an exterior angle. Each window represents my dream, and the flowers in my window represent the objectives I reached.” (window)

-“What I want to tell in this picture is that while I smile on the one hand, I have a purposeless happiness on the other hand. I am confused about questions whose answers I cannot find.” (undecided face)

Discussion and Conclusions

In this research, the pictures drawn by adolescents enrolled at vocational high schools were investigated to reveal the students' perceptions and expectations of the future. These students' symbols were mostly related to the category of Work and Education. The high school period is a critical period for choosing a profession. This period, when the students are between the ages of 15-18, is the period when individuals start evaluating themselves and their abilities to make decisions about

their professions in the future (Yesilyaprak, 2006; Paa & McWhirter, 2000). It is an important period also because if the adolescents choose their professions, they thus determine their prospective living standards (Simsek, 2011). This study supports the findings of the study carried out by Gonullu (2003), who found that one of the most common expectations for the future is being successful and respectable individuals at work. Participants in our study expressed their expectations in this category by means of various buildings and furniture. Another category including the symbols drawn to express expectations for the future was Professional Staff. In this category, there were symbols related to many professions (e.g., business manager, solicitor, Koran school teachers, politicians, counselors, actors, teachers, nutritionists, cooks, nurses, food engineer). Similarly, Karakus (2010), whose study focused on homeless children, found that their expectations for the future were to be a policeman, teacher, or doctor. In light of these findings, it would be fair to state that 12th grade students in vocational high schools make plans mostly for a better career and a better standard of living than what they presently have.

Following the Work and Education category, the symbols expressing the students' expectations for the future can be grouped under the Marriage and Family category. In many societies, a good job, a high standard of living, and marriage are status symbols for adolescents (Yavuzer, Demir, Meseci and Sertelin, 2005). Therefore, in line with the general developmental features of adolescents, their expectations for the future are mostly as follows: being successful and making a name for themselves in a job, getting married, having spouses and thus children (Tuncer, 2011). In this study, the smiley face was the most commonly used symbol among adolescent students. On the other hand, a small number of students expressed their expectations by means of symbols representing instability and uncertainty. These symbols were grouped in the Other category. According to Simsek (2011), negative expectations for the future are expressions of an individual's despair. We could argue that the reasons behind Turkish adolescents' pessimistic feelings about their future might be their inability to achieve a satisfactory financial condition and to replan their professional careers while experiencing unemployment after they graduate from vocational high schools aiming to prepare adolescents as the intermediate staff in our country (Aydin, Erdogan, Yurdakul & Eker, 2013).

As for the results of the present study regarding gender, no significant differences between the male and female expectations were found. The symbols drawn by both male and female students were mostly grouped under the category of Work and Education. This finding corroborates the results of earlier studies (Simsek, 2011; İmamoglu & Guler-Edwards, 2007; Bayoglu & Purutcuoglu, 2010; Zhang, Tze, Buhr, Klassen, & Daniels, 2015). However, the only significantly meaningful finding related to gender was that female students were more pessimistic than male students about their future. Categorized as Other, negative facial expressions and symbols expressing despair and loneliness were only drawn by the female students. This result may be explained by females' higher anxiety levels (İmamoglu & Guler-

Edwards, 2007). In addition, it may be fair to state that because of the feelings of anxiety and instability, females are more influenced than males are by their mothers, friends, and teachers in their choice of jobs (Paa & McWhirter, 2000; Cunningham, Mars, & Burns, 2012). It is worth noting here that because the number of males taking part in the study was much lower than the number of female participants, the findings obtained regarding gender were generally concentrated on the girls. That is the reason why the findings about the expectations and perceptions of the future from the boys were given little focus in the findings part of the study. That might be a reason why the number of concerns held by girls regarding the future is higher than that held by the boys in the study.

When the students' perceptions of the future were investigated from the perspective of their perceived income levels, it was revealed that while expressing their expectations, students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds mostly used symbols that were grouped under the category of Work and Education. According to Tuncer (2011), as the socioeconomic level increases, adolescents' motivation for success and inclination to change increase as well. However, more fatalistic and pessimistic expectations for the future were found among students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Investigating the poverty, self-esteem, and despair levels of adolescents enrolled at secondary school or the first grade of high school, Eksi, Otrar, and Yukay (2003) found that the self-esteem levels of adolescents do not vary depending on the socioeconomic level but revealed that the despair levels of adolescents coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds are higher than those of students coming from middle or high socioeconomic backgrounds. In this study, on the other hand, the symbols expressing pessimism were generally drawn by students perceiving themselves in the middle socioeconomic levels. On the flip side, students perceiving themselves in the low socioeconomic group less frequently drew symbols expressing pessimism. Although this finding might also be true for the students taking part in this study, the reason behind this finding may be that students attending vocational high schools are more anxious about getting a job after they graduate from their schools.

Some recommendations can be made considering the findings of the present study. Because the high school period is an important one in which youngsters make critical decisions regarding their future professions, proper guidance for these students is essential. Their professional decisions are highly influenced by their families, teachers, friends, the social environment, and mass media (Ozcan, 2010). For that reason, it is recommended that through cooperation among the students, families, teachers, and psychological counselors, students' awareness about their future could be raised (Kuzgun, 2014; Bakircioglu, 2005). Centering their expectations for the future generally on professional goals, students in our study were found to have awareness about the importance of choosing a proper job for themselves to lead a peaceful and happy life. We also recommend that a curriculum be designed that will pave the way for vocational high school students to have training and self-

development opportunities in other areas outside the vocational domain as well. Such a curriculum might lead these students to prepare for life more consciously and to feel better psychologically. Moreover, by supportive counseling activities at schools, students coming from families with low incomes can be encouraged to discover their abilities, to get to know themselves, and thus find more appropriate jobs for themselves.

Another striking finding of the present study was the difference between girls and boys in their expectations for the future. It was found that girls were more pessimistic about the future than boys were as they used more negative facial expressions and symbols expressing despair and loneliness. As the number of female participants in this study was much higher than the number of male participants, these findings were evaluated from the perspective of female participants. In further studies involving a higher number of boys, adolescents' expressions of the future can be more objectively evaluated. Also, it is recommended that future research studies focus on different variables such as the educational background of parents, number of siblings, and cities where their parents live. Further studies are likely to provide valuable data to psychological counseling and guidance specialists working in vocational high schools so that they can better provide students with psychological support and vocational guidance.

In the process of the data collection, we found that students had not previously thought much about their future, and they enjoyed expressing their expectations as this study triggered them to think about their future. Therefore, we suggest that a form that would include picture drawings should be developed and administered to students in the guidance hours at schools. The students' drawings about their expectations for the future give a lot of information about the students. Also, these expectations provide psychological counselors with the necessary information about how students perceive themselves and how they evaluate the events in their surroundings. Besides, the information collected through such student drawings can help professionals take precautions regarding alarming issues such as school dropout, addiction, harmful habits, and bullying at school.

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Meslek Lisesi Lise Son Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Gelecek Algılarının Çizdikleri Resimler Yoluyla İncelenmesi

Atf:

- Yukay-Yuksel, M., Aksak, M., Arican, T., Bakan, M. (2016). An investigation of senior vocational school students' perceptions of the future through their drawings. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 64, 265-286
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Özet

Problem Durumu: Bir çocuk dünyaya geldiği andan itibaren anne babasının onunla ilgili beklentileri ve gelecek planları içerisinde yaşamını idame ettirmeye başlar. Okula başladığı andan itibaren yakın çevresinin başarı beklentisi, süreç içerisinde, çocukta dersleri ve sürdürmekte olduğu diğer etkinlikleri başarma ihtiyacına dönüşür. İlerleyen eğitim hayatı içerisinde de iyi bir okul ve gelecekte iyi bir iş sahibi olma hayalleri çocuğun gelecekte beklenenleri haline gelir. Bireyler önce değerleri, beklentileri ve istekleri doğrultusunda güdülenerek geleceğe ilişkin bir amaç oluştururlar. Daha sonra bu amaçlarını gerçekleştirmenin yollarını arar ve bir plan

oluştururlar. Bu planı değerlendirerek amaçlarına ulaşma olasılıklarını belirlerler. Bu şekilde de gelecek algılarını yapılandırır. Gelecek beklentileri/algıları, insan yaşamının her evresinde önemli kavramlardır. Ancak yaşamının geri kalanıyla ilgili önemli kararların alındığı bir dönem olması sebebiyle ergenlik döneminde, önemi daha da artan bir kavram olarak yaşamımızda yer etmektedir. Ergenlerin gelecekte beklenenin/algılarının onlarla yaşayan aileleri, öğretmenleri ve psikolojik danışmanlarının açısından büyük önemi vardır. Önceden belirlenmiş sorulardan yola çıkarak kendilerini ifade etmelerinden ziyade, kendi zihinlerindeki gelecek algılarını ifade etmeleri onları anlamada daha etkili bir yol olabilir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu araştırmanın amacı, meslek lisesi son sınıf öğrencilerinin çizdikleri semboller aracılığıyla gelecek algılarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu temel amaç doğrultusunda; meslek liselerine devam eden 12.sınıf öğrencilerinin gelecek algıları/beklentilerinin nasıl olduğu ve öğrencilerin gelecek algılarına yönelik çizdikleri resimlerin cinsiyet ve algılanan gelir düzeyi değişkenlerine göre farklılaşp farklılaşmadığı sorularına cevap aranmıştır:

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu, 2014-2015 eğitim öğretim yılında İstanbul, Kocaeli ve Tekirdağ illerinde, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı üç farklı lisede öğrenim gören, 166 (11 erkek, 155 kız) öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Söz konusu okullardan sadece Ticaret Meslek Lisesi'nde 4. sınıf düzeyinde 11 erkek öğrenci olduğu için, erkeklerin sayısı kızlara oranla daha düşük kalmıştır. Yaş aralığı 17-18 olan öğrencilerinin yaş ortalaması 17'dir. Öğrencilerden "gelecek algılarını ifade eden bir sembol çizmeleri" istenmiştir. Verilerin analizi, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden içerik analizi ile yapılmıştır. Veriler belirtilme sıklığı (f) ve yüzde (%) hesapları yapılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda çizilen öğrenci sembollerinin kategorileşmesinde, McWhirter (2008) tarafından geliştirilen FESA (Future Expectations Scale for Adolescents) ölçeğinin alt ölçeklerinden faydalanılmıştır. Ölçekten alınan dört kategoriye (İş ve Eğitim, Evlilik ve Aile, Din ve Toplum ve Sağlık ve Yaşam) "diğer" kategorisi de eklenerek çizilen semboller değerlendirilmiştir. Elde edilen semboller, benzer özelliklerine göre 16 alt kategoride toplanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Araştırmanın sonucunda, meslek lisesi öğrencilerinin gelecek beklentilerini ifade eden sembollerin "İş ve Eğitim" kategorisinde (%58) toplandığı görülmüştür. Devamında sırasıyla "Evlilik ve Aile" kategorisi (%27), "Din ve Toplum" (%6) ile "Diğer" (%6) ve son olarak da "Sağlık ve Yaşam" (%2) kategorilerinde semboller çizildiği görülmüştür. Çizilen semboller, cinsiyet ve sosyo-ekonomik durum değişkenlerine göre de incelenmiştir. Kız öğrencilerin "bina ve eşyalar" (36, %23,2) "mutluluk" (29, %18,7) ve "meslek elemanı" (18, %11,6) alt kategorilerinde semboller çizdikleri görülmüştür. Erkek öğrenciler ise "logolar ve semboller" (3, %27,3) "bina ve eşyalar" ile "maddi güç" (2, %18,2) alt kategorilerinde çizimler yapmışlardır. Alt sosyo-ekonomik düzeyden öğrencilerin gelecek beklentilerine ilişkin çizdikleri sembellere bakıldığında en fazla "bina ve eşyalar" (4, %22,1) ve "sevgi" (3, %16,7) alt kategorilerine ait çizimler çizdikleri, orta sosyo-

ekonomik düzeyden öğrencilerin en fazla “bina ve eşyalar” (30, %22,7) ve “mutluluk” (24, %18,9) alt kategorilerine ait çizimler çizdikleri, üst sosyo-ekonomik düzeyden öğrencilerin ise en fazla “bina ve eşyalar” (4, %25), “logolar ve semboller” (3, %18,8) ile “mutluluk” (3, %18,8) alt kategorilerine ait çizimler çizdikleri görülmektedir.

Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler: Ergenlerin gelecekte hangi mesleğe sahip olacakları, kiminle hayatını birleştireceği, nasıl bir yaşam tarzına sahip olacağı ve geleceğine ilişkin duygusal bakış açılarını da ortaya koyması açısından yapılan bu araştırma, literatüre de uygunluk gösteren açıklayıcı ve betimleyici sonuçlar ortaya koymuştur. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular incelendiğinde meslek liselerine devam eden öğrencilerin gelecek beklentilerini ifade eden sembollerin daha çok “İş ve Eğitim” kategorisinde ve sonrasında da “Evlilik ve Aile” kategorisinde toplandığı görülmüştür. Araştırmanın cinsiyet değişkenine göre elde edilen bulguları incelendiğinde, kız öğrenciler ve erkek öğrencilerin geleceğe yönelik beklentilerinde anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmamıştır. Kız ve erkek öğrencilerin çizdiği semboller en fazla iş ve eğitim kategorisinde toplanmıştır. Ancak bu konuda anlamlı bulunan bir bulgu ise, kız öğrencilerin erkek öğrencilere oranla geleceğe daha karamsar baktıkları şeklindedir. Kızların kaygı ve kararsızlıklarından dolayı mesleki tercihlerinde, annelerinin, kız arkadaşlarının ve öğretmenlerinin etkisinde, erkeklere göre daha çok kaldıkları düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca araştırmaya katılan erkek öğrencilerin sayısı kız öğrencilerden daha az olduğu için, cinsiyet değişkenine göre elde edilen bulgular daha çok kızların ekseninden değerlendirilmiştir. Bu nedenle erkek öğrencilerin gelecekle ilgili algı ve beklentilerinde ilişkin ifadeler bulgularda daha az yer almıştır. Kızların gelecekle ilgili kaygılarının erkeklerden daha fazla görünmesinin sebeplerinden biri de bu durum olabilir. Öğrencilerin gelecek algıları algılanan gelir düzeyi değişkenine göre incelendiğinde, alt sosyo-ekonomik düzeydeki öğrencilerin gelecek beklentilerini ifade ederken kullandığı semboller ağırlıklı olarak “iş ve eğitim” kategorisinde toplanmıştır. Karamsarlık ifade eden semboller genellikle kendilerini orta sosyo-ekonomik düzeyde algılayan öğrenciler tarafından çizilmiştir. Buna karşın kendilerini düşük sosyo-ekonomik düzeyde algılayan öğrencilerin karamsarlık ifade eden sembolleri daha az çizdikleri görülmüştür. Bu durum araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerle sınırlı olabileceği gibi, öğrencilerin meslek liselerine devam ediyor olmalarının da etkisiyle, mezun olduktan sonra iş sahibi olmayla ilgili fazla kaygı taşımamalarından da kaynaklanabilir.

Yapılan bu araştırma sonunda çeşitli önerilerde bulunulabilir. Lise dönemi, gençlerin gelecekteki yaşamlarına ilişkin kararlar aldıkları bir dönem olması sebebiyle oldukça önemlidir. Bu dönem, ergenlerin meslek seçimi yaptıkları, romantik ilişkilerini geleceğe dair planlar açısından daha ciddi düzeyde yaşadıkları kritik bir dönemdir. Bu sebeple, okullarda çalışan psikolojik danışman ve rehber uzmanlar aracılığıyla bu tarz resim çizim çalışmalarının yapılması, ergenlerin kendilerini daha rahat ifade etmelerini sağlayan bir teknik olarak görülmektedir. Bunlara ek olarak meslek lisesi

öğrencilerinin, farklı alanlarda da kendilerini ortaya koyabilecekleri imkânlar ve gerekli ek eğitim hizmetlerinin okullar aracılığıyla sağlanması önerilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Resim çizim yöntemi, gelecek algısı analizi, lise öğrencileri, içerik analizi.